

HOLY CROSS CROSSROADS



Beloved Members and Friends of Holy Cross,

Christ is in our midst! He is and shall always be!

*“Wishing to restore all people to life, You accepted crucifixion, O Christ our God!
Burning with boundless love for man, You took the quill of the Cross in Your
hands. Dipping it in the ink of royal crimson, You signed our release with Your
hands stained with blood. Though temptations assault us, may we never again
forsake You. Have mercy on Your despairing people, O long suffering Master.
Arise and fight our enemies in Your almighty power.”*
(Great Vespers, Sunday of the Holy Cross)

What the Lord has accomplished in His love for us continually leaves us speechless. Hopefully we understand that the entire Lenten season is for us to recognize that the Lord voluntarily died (and arose) for us. We enter into this mystery of salvation to be penetrated by it. We struggle to be united with Christ through our obedience to Him. When we suffer, we suffer with Christ, we suffer in Christ, and we suffer for Christ, the source of our salvation. Jesus enables us to draw near to His Throne with confidence that we will find mercy and forgiveness, and the grace to help us in all times of trial, living in a fallen world.

In our fallen world, the devil wants us to believe that we have been abandoned by all, especially the Lord Himself. The adversary wants us to believe that there is no point in our sufferings and moments of trial and temptation. We should simply surrender ourselves to our sinful desires and passions. The Lenten season stands against this understanding and hopelessness. We fight against our passions, we struggle to forgive and to be obedient to the will of God and His Holy Church. During Holy Week we enter into the mystery of Lord’s passion and walk with Him to Golgotha. We witness not only the physical, but the unimaginable mental anguish of our Lord being abandoned and killed by His creation. Below is an excerpt from the Gospel of St. Matthew – Holy Thursday Vespertal Liturgy.

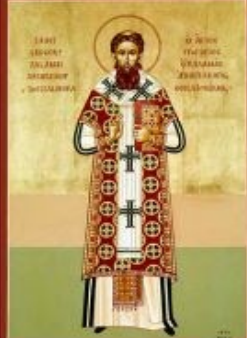
OUR JOURNEY TO PASCHA! 2024

Created by Fr. Jonathan Bannon (ACROD)

SUNDAYS	THEMES / GOSPEL READING	HOW TO PARTICIPATE:
2nd Sunday of Lent MARCH 31st	 ST GREGORY PALAMAS Epistle: Hebrews 1:10-2:3 Gospel: Mark 2:1-12	Bring a prayer rope to be blessed today! Use it and pray the Jesus Prayer each day this week.
3rd Sunday of Lent APRIL 7th	 VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS <i>HALF WAY TO PASCHA!</i> Epistle: Hebrews 4:14-5:6 Gospel: Mark 8:34-9:1	Wear your cross to church and kiss the cross each morning with a bow!
4th Sunday of Lent APRIL 14th	 ST JOHN of the LADDER Epistle: Hebrews 6:13-20 Gospel: Mark 9:17-31	Every time you climb stairs this week ask St. John to help you reach Paradise with the sign of the cross!
5th Sunday of Lent APRIL 21st	 ST MARY of EGYPT Epistle: Hebrews 9:11-14 Gospel: Mark 10:32-45	Ask the Theotokos to offer you and the world pure thoughts and ideas this week.
FLOWERY (PALM) SUNDAY! APRIL 28th GREAT WEEK BEGINS	 GREAT AND HOLY WEEK ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM Epistle: Philippians 4:4-9 Gospel: John 12:1-18	Place your palm branches and pussywillows behind an icon at home and in your car!
GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY MAY 3rd	 GREAT AND HOLY FRIDAY <i>JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS</i> CHECK WITH YOUR PARISH FOR ROYAL HOURS AND VESPERS SCHEDULE	Refrain from TV, Internet & Phones to honor Christ's Death.
FEAST OF FEASTS! MAY 5th NO FASTING!	 BRIGHT WEEK HOLY PASCHA! (CHRIST IS RISEN!) Epistle: Acts 1:1-8 Gospel: John 1:1-17	Greet everyone with "CHRIST IS RISEN!" & say it before good morning and goodnight!

"...every day we should stand in awe of Him, as He is with us, and do what is pleasing before Him. If we are unable now to perceive Him with our physical eyes, we can, if we are watchful, see Him continuously with the eyes of our understanding, and not just see Him, but reap great benefits from Him. This vision destroys all sin, demolishes all evil, and drives away everything bad. It gives birth to purity and dispassion, and bestows eternal life."

--St. Gregory Palamas



Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church

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Under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America and His Eminence Metropolitan SAVAS of Pittsburgh

The mission of Holy Cross is to keep and proclaim, pure and undefiled, the Orthodox Christian faith and traditions in conformity with the doctrine, canons, worship, discipline and customs of the Church.

Fr. Michael Kallaur, Presiding Priest

Fr. Daniel Korba, Presbyter

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Office Hours Monday-Friday 9am-5pm

***Services:**

Sundays:	8:15am Orthros 9:30 am Divine Liturgy
Mondays:	6:30pm Paraclesis
Wednesdays:	7 pm Bible Study and <i>via Zoom</i>
Weekdays:	8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy
Saturdays:	Vespers 5pm

**See monthly calendar for all services.*

Organizations & Committees

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Phil. Membership	Adrienne Dickos	(412) 833-4980
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	Didra Kirschner	(412) 561-2892
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Funeral/Memorial information: Use of the Community Center is available for parishioner funeral lunches at no charge. Parishioners may contact any caterer they choose to purchase and prepare their **Makaria** (Mercy Meal). For **Kollyva**, you may bring your own or contact Denise Melis directly (412) 341-9264.



Coffee Hour fellowship is an extension of our Divine Liturgy! Please gather with family, koumbari or friends to sponsor/prepare one Sunday. See the calendar on website for open dates, and call the church office to confirm.



“And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. Then Jesus said to them, “You will all fall away because of me this night; for it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’ But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee. Peter declared to Him, “Though they all fall away because of You, I will never fall away.” Jesus said to him, “Truly I say to you, this very night, before the cock crows, you will deny my three times.” Peter said to Him, “Even if I must die with you, I will not deny You.” And so said all the disciples.

Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and He said to His disciples, “Sit here, while I go yonder and pray.” And taking with him Peter and two sons of Zebedee, He began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then He said to them, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here and watch with Me.” And going a little farther He fell on His face and prayed, “My Father, if it possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”

And He arose from prayer, He came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow, and He said to them, “Why do you sleep? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation.”

And He came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and He said to Peter, “So, could you not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Again for the second time, He went away and prayed, “My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, Your will be done.” And He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So, leaving them again, He went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. Then He came to His disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going; see My betrayer is at hand.” (Gospel from Holy Thursday (morning) Vespers Liturgy)

Immediately after the Mystical Supper, Jesus and His disciples depart for the Garden of Gethsemane. It is here we are given insight into the mental agony of Jesus' torment. He knows the mission that is before Him, yet He still asks the Father if there is another way? The response is silence. Seeking support from His disciples, the Lord finds them sleeping, unable to watch even one hour with Him. Three times the Lord beseeches the Father and there is no response. Christ responds, “Your will be done.”

Mother Alexandra (foundress of the Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Ellwood City, PA and the former Princess Ileana of Romania) wrote about this passage when we encounter disappointment and loneliness in our relationships with one another.

“It is this image of Christ that we should have in mind when we stand on the empty shore of our bitterness and disillusionment and call upon that all embracing love to replenish the emptied reservoirs of our poor

human affections. To love in spite of all, as Jesus loved, not only forgiving His enemies, but also His cowardly friends who had run away in fear and mistrust, thinking that in His seeming defeat He had failed them.

When all around you lies in ruins, when those who love and understand you are far away, and no one is there to sustain you, it is then that you should remember the First Commandment (You shall love the Lord Your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.) It is easy to remember it when all is running smoothly and our cup runs over with spiritual and physical wellbeing. It is when you stand emptied of all illusion, trust, and knowledge and know not where to turn, it is then you may perceive a glimmer of that love that saves mankind. As the Psalmist says: 'Look on my right and see, there is no one to befriend me, ... I invoke you, O Lord... my refuge and my heritage in the land of the living.' (Ps. 142)

At such a moment do not run away, face your trouble remembering that the Lord is a very present help in trouble. Learn to bless hours of trial for it is at such times that God is closest or rather that we are closer to Him sharing His pain, which is our pain, the pain of all fallen and misguided humanity who still runs after a will-of-the-wisp stumbling of the marshland of our own errors." (From the journal, "**Life Transfigured**", *The First Commandment*, pg. 3-4)

My brothers and sisters in Christ, as we now have been granted another opportunity to experience another Holy Week and Pascha of our Lord, let us run with boldness and without hesitation to our Holy Church. Let us immerse ourselves in the Scriptural accounts of our Lord's Passion and enter deeply into the mystery of His plan of salvation for all mankind. Having prepared ourselves through fasting, prayer, Holy Confession, and acts of mercy***, let us go up to Jerusalem and bear witness to all the things that the Lord has done for our salvation. The Lord welcomes all, those who labored from the very beginning (the first hour) and those who arrive at the last hour (the eleventh hour), there is always room in God's House.

Wishing you and your families a blessed Holy Week and Pascha of our Lord!

Kalo Pascha!
With love and prayers,
Fr. Michael

*** A thought for your almsgiving –

We are still collecting funds for the new seminary in Guatemala, to provide the necessary furniture of beds and desks. (Goal is \$10,000). We have collected over \$2500.00 so far.

Newsletter – Lent 2024

Dear friends and benefactors of St. Gregory Palamas Monastery,

Another Great Lent is on the way. This means another chance to cleanse ourselves from the pollution of sin, to wash our spiritual eyes of the dross of carnal thinking and to enter the Lenten Spring with renewed hope and energy. We wish you a good and soul-profitting 40 days and a spiritual resurrection before the resurrection.

The structure and content of the Orthodox services of the Triodion, both the Pre-lenten period and the Lenten period is really a magnificent spiritual and literary work of art. It shows the profound and precise understanding that the Holy Fathers had for the spiritual condition of humanity. The Sundays of the Pre-lenten period lead us through the steps that prepare us for spiritual struggle and spiritual healing.

The Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee teaches us that even a multitude of good deeds is meaningless and powerless if there is no humility. The Pharisee stood up to pray, and yet his prayer was not a prayer it was a recital of all his good deeds. He was bragging and congratulating himself. This was further poisoned by the fact that he compared himself favorably to the Publican and in his negative judgment of the Publican, he unwittingly condemned himself. His pride was truly his downfall.

The week following this Sunday is a week of no fasting in preparation for the Sunday of the Prodigal Son. Folk wisdom said that the week of no fasting is in celebration of the return of the Prodigal Son. The Sunday of the Prodigal Son teaches us that the humility of the man who had ruined his life in riotous living, prepared him to be received with great love and compassion as he returns to his father. True, the parable expresses the limitless love of the father, however humility is the necessary precondition for receiving that mercy. Humility is realized when the Prodigal gets out of the pig pen and makes the arduous return to his father's house. This happens to us as we confess our sins, convict ourselves of our unrighteous deeds and thoughts and return to God our Father. The week following is a week of the normal fasting on Wednesday and Friday (and for monastics the usual Monday fast).

The Sunday of the Last Judgement, also called Meatfare Sunday because it is the last day of eating meat, proclaims the Last Judgement and the glorious Second Coming of Christ. Here, we are taught that we should not delay our repentance and return to God and a godly way of life. In other words, time runs out and we should not dilly dally in making amends for our sins and transgressions. Now is the time for repentance. Now is the time to correct ourselves. We should not take advantage of our God's mercy. He is longsuffering and awaiting our correction and our return to the path life with Him.

Every morning in the morning prayers and in monasteries, at the Midnight Office we pray, *Of a sudden the Judge will come and the deeds of each shall be laid bare. But let us cry out in fear in the middle of the night, Holy, Holy, Holy art thou O God. Through the Theotokos, have mercy on us.*

There is a distortion of the mercy of God which is the heresy of universal salvation. This is the opinion that everyone will be saved, whether or not he wishes or desires to be saved. This opinion found adherents even in ancient times, even in spite of the overwhelming testimony of the Sacred Scriptures and the teaching of the Holy Fathers. This heresy is certainly prevalent in the current culture. I have often heard people say of someone who has reposed, "They are in a better place", or "They are now in heaven." Maybe this is the case. Hopefully this is the case. However, only God can say for sure.

One year, while serving in the parish, in a matter of months, I attend two heterodox funerals. These were the funerals for the fathers of faithful Orthodox Christians. Although one funeral was in a Roman Catholic setting and the other in an Evangelical Protestant setting, the clergy essentially said the same thing. In the one the pastor said that the deceased man liked to camp, hunt and fish and he was up in heaven waiting for the family to join him. In the other the Latin priest said that the deceased was a party animal and he was up in heaven, waiting for the party to begin. There was no sense of a need for prayer mercy and forgiveness and there was no sense that Paradise is opened to us because of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. There was no sense that we needed to pray for the forgiveness of sins and a place of repose. It seemed that their view was that the deceased went straight to heaven and this was already a done deal. There was no mention of the particular judgement nor the Last Judgement with Lord's return. All of the Biblical, dogmatic, patristic, and liturgical references to the Last Judgement were completely out of the picture.

We, as Orthodox, certainly have hope and faith because of the Death and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. However we do not presume anything. We pray for the forgiveness of the sins of those who have fallen asleep in the hope of everlasting life. Saints might have had insights into the judgements of God, but in no way do we make statements one way or the other about the condition of those who have died. We do not play the role of God. No one is without sin. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. We are unable to do this because only God knows the heart and desires of each man and he does not violate the free will of anyone.

This heresy of universal salvation is a distortion of the words of the Divine Scriptures and the various Holy Fathers that wrote of their hope and prayer that all would be saved and spared the torments of

hell. This certainly is a worthy hope, a reason for evangelical outreach and prayer, and it seems this should be the prayer of all Orthodox Christians. I remember a very elderly woman who said that she always concluded her daily prayers with the simple words that her mother taught her, *O Lord help and save everyone in the world but don't forget about me!* St. Silouan of Athos of Mount Athos had a similar evangelical prayer. *I pray You, O merciful Lord, for all the peoples of the earth, that they may come to know you by the Holy Spirit.*

There is a big difference between sincere Christian hope and prayer for the salvation of the world and the fact that God does not force anyone to love him or desire the life of blessedness that begins now and continues unto eternity. As hard as it is to believe, there truly are people who believe in God in the way that one might believe that there is a moon that circles the earth. They hate Him and cling to the miserable condition in which they live their lives and they have no desire to change or repent. Yes, they may even be believers in God in the manner of the demons who believe and nevertheless they war against Him. It has been said, that for some it is ontologically too late before it is chronologically too late. Meaning, although they are still alive and there is still time for repentance, they want no part in this blessed medicine. This would describe the Enemy of mankind and those who have so habituated themselves to their evil desires to the extent that they have disfigured their souls and can only take pleasure in evil. Although the Divine Liturgy and the prayers of the faithful are for the life of the world and its salvation we cannot dogmatize an opinion that contradicts the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is a day when our lives will end. That is a time when the opportunity for repentance will come to an end. There is a day of Judgement when believers who repent will be ushered into the eternal kingdom and sinners will be condemned to eternal punishment. What would be the point of the Gospel's preaching of repentance and the commission to teach and baptize all nations in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit if this were not the case?

On the Sunday of the Last Judgement we read the Gospel of the Lord's return and the separation of the sheep from the goats, the separation of the faithful from the sinners, the eternal blessedness of the ones saved and the eternal torment of the others who have rejected love. The moment when we will appear before God and have our deeds and inner thoughts revealed is very sobering and fearful. Knowing and believing this is meant to motivate us to examine and correct our lives so that we can live now in the joy of the Lord and on that fearful day we will greet the Lord's glorious return with joy and

thanksgiving, not because we have lived perfect lives but because we have repented, received forgiveness and have made an effort to receive and share the love of God. We must remember that the saints who will rejoice in His glorious return are sinners who repented and corrected their lives. Among the redeemed will be St. Mary of Egypt. What will the Lord be looking for when He returns? He will be looking to see His own image in each of us. *I was hungry and you fed me. I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was naked and you clothed me. I was sick and in prison and you visited me.*

The Mystery of Confession is our experience of the Last Judgment, before the last Judge. By voluntarily acknowledging our sins before the priest, by leaving our sinful ways and hearing the word of forgiveness we free ourselves from the rights that the evil one has over us so that on the day of death and the day of our Lord's return we might run to Him without any hindrance. The holy season of the Great Fast is the time to do this with the support of the whole church.

May God help us, cleanse us, renew a right spirit within us and restore to us the joy of His salvation.

In Christ our merciful God.

Fr. Joseph and the Brotherhood of St. Gregory Palamas Monastery

What is idle talk and why is it a spiritual concern?

It seems that we talk continually. We talk about important matters and we talk about matters that do not matter at all. Most of the time we do not exercise much voluntary control or direction regarding what we say. Very often our talk just prevents silence. We seem to be afraid of stillness.

The Apostle James tells us in his general epistle: The tongue is a little thing but boasts of great things. Behold how great a forest a little fire ignites. And the tongue is a fire. (James 3:5-6) Indeed we put bits in the horses' mouth and they obey us, and we turn their whole body. Look also at ships: although they are so large and driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a small rudder. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is also able to bridle the whole body. (James 3)

The tongue is just the manifestation of our inner thoughts, our mental landscape. We can choose to direct our speech, and our thoughts. St. James shows us clearly the significance of what we say. It gives direction to our whole life. The ship of life does not fare well when it is left to drift without direction. We make little progress and often, eventually, end up wrecked on the rocks. The tongue is fire, and if

directed fire can warm us and cook our food, but neglected the conflagration can be most damaging.

Speech can build human relations or destroy them. Idle talk is a gateway to gossip and slander. Intentionally malicious speech can be devastating. But just as dangerous can be the idle word, the unintended offense. We must be careful. I can perhaps control what I say, but I have less control over what others understand, what they think they hear me say. We pray for forgiveness and protection from both voluntary and involuntary sins. Voluntary sins tend to be obvious, conscious. The involuntary sins that the Devil sneaks in under the guise of mere negligence are more insidious. A small spark can ignite a whole forest, and we may not even know where it came from. *From flint and steel comes fire; from chatter and joking comes lying. Lying is the destruction of charity, and perjury the very denial of God. ... Break up bad company in a devout way be setting before them the thought of death and judgement. (Climacus step 12)*

Talkativeness is the throne of vainglory on which it loves to display itself and show off. Talkativeness is a sign of ignorance, a doorway to slander, a leader of jesting, a servant of lies, the ruin of compunction, a summoner of despondency, a messenger of sleep, a dissipation of recollection, the end of vigilance, the cooling of zeal, the darkening of prayer. (Climacus step 11)

Excessive talkativeness often arises out of pride, the belief that one knows better and others just need to learn to appreciate my brilliance. That is an obvious problem and can - to some extent - be dealt with directly. More subtle and thus more difficult are the apparently spontaneous, apparently random thoughts that grow into idle talk. Random thoughts, random speech, dissipate grace, dissipate energy. This is shown when while doing some task during which we commonly allow ourselves to daydream we choose rather to turn our thoughts to the Jesus Prayer. The prayer goes along, energy is conserved, and the work goes much more smoothly. Notice that when we are attentive to something, more precisely when something attracts our attention, other random distracting thoughts naturally fade away. Focus spontaneously comes and is maintained. When God is present, we attend to whatever God puts before us and are much more effective.

He who restrains his mouth from speech guards his heart from passions... A silent mouth interprets God's mysteries, but the garrulous man is distant from his Creator. ... The more a man's tongue flees talk-

ativeness, the more his intellect is illumined so as to be able to discern deep thoughts; for the rational intellect is bemuddled by talkativeness. (St. Isaac the Syrian)

You can avoid idle talk only when your mind is focused elsewhere. You need much practice for this - particularly when you are with relatives and friends. Unless one is a monastic it is not always possible to avoid the idle talk that passes for 'polite conversation'. Restraint is required at all times. Restrain yourself from saying what you think at the moment. Become the 'good listener'. You keep saying, "Well, well." Even if they go on telling you more stories. And say to yourself, "Since God permits it, am I to say no?" Have the prayer constantly in your heart, the unceasing prayer. You should listen to everything, because what they are telling you is of vital importance to them. Can you say to them, "Sorry, I have something to attend to now"? No! Pay attention. But talking always leads to something else. It turns into dialogue and there lies danger. When they ask you a question, give a brief answer. That will prevent anyone from embroidering with his imagination on what you have said and presenting it differently. There is great danger in that. Because then they may start saying, "She told me this and that". Keep your eyes open, your ears open and your mouth shut. For only then will God grant you discernment to know where you stand. God gave us two ears but only one mouth, so we should listen twice as much as we speak. Be careful about laughter. This is a nervous reaction with many people. Better get rid of that. Only divine grace can truly still the random thoughts that give rise to idle talk, but we must also do our part.

Intelligent silence is the mother of prayer, freedom from bondage, custodian of zeal, a guard of our thoughts, a watch on our enemies, a prison of mourning, a friend of tears, a sure recollection of death, a painter of punishment, a concern for judgment, servant of anguish, foe of license, a companion of stillness, the opponent of dogmatism, a growth of knowledge, a hand to shape contemplation, hidden progress, the secret journey upward. For the man who recognizes his sins has taken control of his tongue, while the chatterer has yet to discover himself as he should. The lover of silence draws close to God. He talks to Him in secret and God enlightens him. (Climacus step 11)

Better to fall from a height to the ground than to slip with the tongue. (Eccl. 20:18)

Grant Rest, O Lord, to the Souls of your Servants

Once St. Silouan the Athonite asked a fellow ascetic, “Should I pray for the dead?” He sighed and gave this response: “‘Were It possible I would pray everyone out of hell, and only then would my soul be easy and rejoice.’ As he spoke, he made a gesture with his arms as if he were gathering up sheaves of corn in a field, and tears streamed from his eyes.”

(St. Silouan the Athonite, p 468)

In these upcoming weeks of Triodion and Lent, we will also enter the field of prayer. Our labors will not be just for ourselves, but for the whole church, including those who have gone before us into the mysterious realm of eternity. In the love of the one body of Christ, we pray for the departed and they pray for us. And if they are not able to pray for us, that is all the more reason to pray for them. “Inasmuch as ye have done unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me.” (Matt. 25:40)



We pray for departed souls throughout the year, but it is intensified and amplified in the approaching season. The first Soul Saturday comes the day before the Sunday of the Last Judgment. We beg for mercy for those who have gone before us, in part, because we also desire to be treated with mercy on the Day of Judgment. “With the measure you mete, it will be measured to you.” (Mark 4:24)

In the year 842, the last iconoclast emperor, Theophilos, breathed his last. He was a fierce persecutor of the defenders of icons, and was responsible for imprisoning, torturing, banishing, and killing many holy men and women. But Theophilos had a saintly wife, the Empress Theodora (commemorated Feb 11). St. Theodora mourned his passing and prayed ardently for his repose. She knew he was suffering bitterly for the sins of his life.

Just before Lent, she, the Patriarch Methodios (commemorated June 14), and a host of holy men restored the veneration of icons to the church. But while they were all together, rejoicing in God's mercy, she asked them to join her in prayer for her departed husband. They

at first refused, but they were won over by her tears and pleading, for on his deathbed the Emperor had repented, venerated icons, and confessed his error.

These assembled holy men, many of whom had been actively persecuted by Theophilus, fasted, supplicated God, and held all-night vigils throughout the first week of Great Lent. At the end of the week, it was revealed to them through dreams and signs that Christ had released Theophilus from his torments.

This triumph of forgiveness was a triumph of joy for all who took part. God's love, working through St. Theodora and the others prevailed and saved Theophilus. In great joy, the Empress, Patriarch and assembled faithful processed with the icons and gave us the Sunday of Orthodoxy tradition (First Sunday of Great Lent).

This narrative pictures the union of our repentance with prayer for the departed. We purify ourselves during the five weekdays of Lent, and then we offer ourselves and our prayers on behalf of the departed souls. Even Lazarus Saturday and Great and Holy Saturday have this implicit significance for departed souls as we focus on Christ's defeat of death and His descent into Hades.

The Soul Saturdays are part of a larger liturgical pattern of prayers for the departed.

- On the day of a person's repose, a memorial service is served.
- The funeral follows within the next few days.
- On the third day, another memorial service is offered in honor of the Trinity who gives being to the soul.
- On the ninth day, the memorial is offered so that the soul may dwell with the nine ranks of angels.
- On the fortieth day, the memorial is held in view of Christ's ascension on the fortieth day, and we pray that the deceased may be united with Christ in the heavenly Kingdom.
- Once again in honor of the Trinity, the memorial is held at the three-month anniversary as well as the six month and nine-month anniversary.
- The one-year memorial is then observed.
- In conjunction with the above, it is also important for the name of the deceased to be submitted for commemoration during the Divine Liturgy.

Continued pg. 14→

The above liturgical pattern also reflects a healthy grieving cycle. We give the grief of death its due, but not in unrelenting fashion. The tapering off of the services coincides with the allaying of our grief and the resumption of normal activities.

Memorial services may or may not be accompanied by kollyva. St. Symeon of Thessalonica explains the significance of Kollyva as follows: "The kollyva is offered because man is also a seed and like a fruit from the earth. And like a seed sown in the earth he will be raised up again by God's might." (Synaxaristes, Triodion volume, p. 81)

Often the psalter is read on behalf of the departed soul. Other prayers may be said, alms given, or other good deeds performed in the name of the departed soul.

St. John Chrysostom gives us this encouraging word to pray for departed souls.

Help him, as far as possible, not by tears, but by prayers and supplications and alms and offerings. For not unmeaningly have these things been devised, nor do we in vain make mention of the departed in the course of the divine Mysteries, and approach God in their behalf, beseeching the Lamb Who is before us, Who taketh away the sin of the world; - not in vain, but that some refreshment may thereby ensue to them... Yea, it is by the ordinance of the Spirit that these things are done. For in truth one body are we all, though some members are more glorious than others; and it is possible from every source to gather pardon for them, from our prayers, from our gifts in their behalf, from those whose names are named with theirs. Why therefore dost thou grieve? Why mourn, when it is in thy power to gather so much pardon for the departed? (Synaxaristes, Triodion volume, p 86)

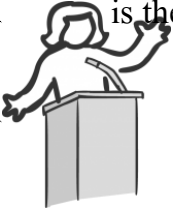
We are members of each other so let us pray for one another that we may be healed (cf. James 5:16). Let us be merciful as our Father in heaven is merciful. He desires to help the departed souls through our prayers. And as we focus the rays of prayer on ourselves and everyone, both the living and the departed, may we harvest an abundance of joy in the Lord.

Attention GOYAns! (Grades 7-12). This year we will be hosting our Annual Saint John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival on Friday April 5th, at 7:30 following Salutations.

This is a great opportunity for Middle and High School students to deepen their understanding of the Orthodox Faith through preparing a short speech on a topic concerning an aspect of faith. In addition, finalists at the parish level will move on to the Metropolis level, where there



is the potential to receive scholarship money. If you would like to know more or to receive a list of topics, please contact Elias Diamond at ediamondhcpgh@gmail.com.



The miraculous Myrrh Streaming Icon of the Theotokos - Kardiotissa (Tender Heart) will be at St. Nicholas, Monongahela on Fri April 5 at 7pm

This icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary has been oozing large amounts of fragrant oil for the past 13 years. This has been witnessed by numerous Orthodox bishops, clergy and thousands of people of many Christian faiths.

Father Mark Leasure of St. George Church in Taylor, PA, the custodian of the icon, will share many of the miraculous stories associated with the icon.



HOLY CROSS GOYA

SPECIAL
EVENT

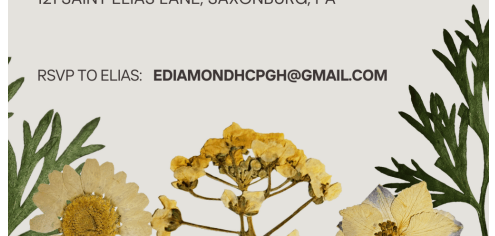
MONASTERY *April* PILGRIMAGE

Join us for a Lenten pilgrimage up to one of our more local monasteries!

APRIL 20, 2024
FROM 10:00 – 2:00 PM

**NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS
MONASTERY**
121 SAINT ELIAS LANE, SAXONBURG, PA

RSVP TO ELIAS: EDIAMONDHCPGH@GMAIL.COM



JOY visits WQED studios





Judgement Sunday Sermon

Our culture is obsessed with end of the world. Movies, television shows, novels, video games – there are so many forms of media which make a spectacle out of apocalyptic scenarios. Why is this? We have always been fascinated by what makes us anxious. The bloodiest of Greek tragedies would retain a grip upon their audience for the very reason that people want to confront their fears, through the safety of fiction, that is. However, all the big budget movies depicting the fall of society and the chaos of the world's end covers up a more basic truth – that all of us, will one day, known only to the Lord, leave this life. One doesn't need any cataclysmic scenario for that to be true – this has been true since the dawn of humanity.

We can deal with this anxiety in two ways. The first, we can turn away, we can distract ourselves, we can bury ourselves amidst the fleeting pleasures of life so we don't have to confront a frightening truth. The other way is to confront it, and to ask – if I am to leave this life, how must I live the time I have? The Lord gives us an answer to this. He tells us that whatever we do for the least amongst us (the sick, the hungry, the stranger, the prisoners) is as if it was done for Christ Himself. When we care for those in need, we care for the image of God found within them, an image that reflects the humility of God Himself who came to us in the form of a poor and humble carpenter from Nazareth and suffered the shames of imprisonment, torture and death, all for us.

Yet, on the other hand, those who fail to help those in need, those who do not do their due diligence in at-

tending to the sufferings of the least amongst us, earn the harshness of the Lord's judgement, for it was as if we were turning away from the Lord Himself, just as so many turned away from Him when He was mired in the depths of suffering at His passion. We must think of this whenever we are faced with the homeless, with the ill, with those in prison – do we often tell ourselves that they have brought this upon themselves, that they deserve what has befallen them? My brothers and sisters, we must not, for the point of the Lord's teaching is that judgement is reserved for God. What is reserved for us, however, is to show mercy, to show compassion. The Lord doesn't qualify his statement, saying we should feed the hungry only if they have been model citizens or minister to the prisoners unless there are certain varieties of crimes we don't like which they have committed. The Lord's word is very straightforward, even if it is more comfortable for us if we treat it as if it is not.

When we hear about the Last Judgement or Judgement Sunday, our mind may run to all kinds of bleak and fantastical images which have been conjured out of the depths of our media saturated society. However, we must train our minds, so that when we think of the judgement, we instead picture the faces of those living on the streets we walk everyday, of those faces that can only be seen through a row of iron prison bars, of those languishing on the sick beds in every corner of the globe. That is what we must think of, for when the time of judgement comes to us, our judgement will be based on whether we turned away from those faces or not.

~Elias Diamond

*Golden Club Lenten covered dish,
featuring Vasso Palicuras sharing the inspirational story
of the creation of Lending Hearts*











GOYA Volleyball
@ St. Nick's



Holy Cross

Sun	Mon	Tue
	<p><i>1</i></p> <p>6:30pm Great Compline</p> <p>8pm YAL "Pickup" Basketball  in Community Center</p>	<p><i>2</i></p> <p>7pm IOCC Meeting</p>
<p><i>7 Sunday of the Holy Cross</i></p> <p>8:15am Orthros</p> <p>9:30am Divine Liturgy</p> <p style="background-color: yellow; display: inline-block; padding: 2px;">No Memorials</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>	<p><i>8</i></p> <p>6:30pm Great Compline</p>	<p><i>9</i></p>
<p><i>14 St. John Climacus</i></p> <p>8:15am Orthros</p> <p>9:30am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>Coffee Hour sponsored by Fotaine Kalakos </p>	<p><i>15</i></p> <p>6:30pm Great Compline</p>	<p><i>16</i></p> <p>9:15am Golden Club (details p. 35)</p> <p>7pm Parish Council</p>
<p><i>21 St. Mary of Egypt</i></p> <p>8:15am Orthros</p> <p>9:30am Divine Liturgy</p>	<p><i>22</i></p> <p>6:30pm Great Compline</p>	<p><i>23</i></p> <p><i>7pm Sts. Mary & Martha</i></p>
<p><i>28 Palm Sunday</i></p> <p>8:15am Orthros</p> <p>9:30am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>Coffee Hour sponsored by Philoptochos</p> <div style="float: right; width: 50px;">  </div> <p style="background-color: yellow; display: inline-block; padding: 2px;">No Memorials</p> <p>5pm Bridegroom Service</p>	<p><i>29 Holy Monday</i></p> <p>9am Presanctified Liturgy</p> <p>6:30pm Bridegroom Service</p>	<p><i>30 Holy Tuesday</i></p> <p>9am Presanctified Liturgy</p> <p>6:30pm Bridegroom Service</p>

April 2024

Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
3 4:30PM GREEK SCHOOL 6PM PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY Lenten Potluck after	4 7PM CATECHUMEN CLASS	5 9AM PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY 6:30PM SALUTATIONS III 7:30pm Oratorical Festival	6 4PM CATECHUMEN CLASS 5pm Vespers & Confessions
10 4:30PM GREEK SCHOOL 6PM PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY	11 7PM CATECHUMEN CLASS	12 9AM PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY 6:30PM SALUTATIONS IV	13 11:30am IOCC Youth Health Kit Assembly 4PM CATECHUMEN CLASS 5pm Vespers & Confessions
17 4:30PM GREEK SCHOOL 6PM PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY Lenten Potluck after	18 10am Pascha Bread Making  7PM CATECHUMEN CLASS	19 9AM PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY 6:30PM AKATHIST HYMN	20 10am-2pm GOYA/YAL to Saxonburg Monastery 4PM CATECHUMEN CLASS 5pm Vespers & Confessions
24 4:30PM GREEK SCHOOL 6PM PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY YAL Dinner after	25 7PM CATECHUMEN CLASS	26 9AM PRESANCTIFIED LITURGY  5pm Palm Cross Prep	27 Lazarus Saturday 8:30 am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy ~Palm Cross Making ~Confessions ~Church Cleaning ~Acolyte Preparation for Holy Week 5pm Great Vespers
1 May Holy Wednesday 9am Presanctified Liturgy 3pm Holy Unction 6:30pm Orthros of Holy Thursday w/ second anointing	2 Holy Thursday 9am Vespertal Liturgy 6:30pm Passion of Our Lord/Reading of 12 Gospels 10pm-6am Vigil by the Cross & Sandwiches for the Homeless	3 Holy Friday Office Closed 9am Royal Hours 3pm Vespers/Taking down from the Cross 6:15pm Trisagion by tomb 6:30pm Praises/Orthros of Holy Saturday	4 Holy Saturday 9am Vespertal Liturgy (First Resurrection) 10pm Nocturnes 10:30pm Receive the Light 11pm Orthros/Liturgy of the Resurrection AGAPE MEAL

CATECHETICAL HOMILY FOR THE OPENING
OF HOLY AND GREAT LENT
+ **BARTHOLOMEW**
BY GOD'S MERCY
ARCHBISHOP OF CONSTANTINOPLE-NEW ROME
AND ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH
TO THE PLENITUDE OF THE CHURCH,
MAY THE GRACE AND PEACE
OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST,
TOGETHER WITH OUR PRAYER, BLESSING AND
FORGIVENESS BE WITH ALL

* * *

Most honorable brother Hierarchs and blessed children in the Lord,

The grace of our God of love has once again vouchsafed for us to enter the soul-benefiting period of the Lenten Triodion and arrive at Holy and Great Lent, namely to the arena of ascetic struggle replete with gifts from above and the joy of the Cross and Resurrection. During this blessed period, the spiritual treasure and dynamism of the ecclesiastical life as well as the soteriological reference of all its expressions are revealed with clarity.

We have already learned much from the impasse and self-righteous arrogance of the Pharisee, from the barren moralism and hard-heartedness of the elder son in the Parable of the Prodigal Son, and from the callousness and condemnation on the Day of Judgment of those who proved indifferent to the "least of our brothers" that were hungry, thirsty, foreigners, naked, ill, and imprisoned. Moreover, the value and power of humility and repentance, of forgiveness and mercy were revealed to us as attitudes that the Church emphatically calls us to nurture in the period that opens up before us.

Holy and Great Lent is a welcome time of spiritual, inner and physical purification and discipline, which—as we just heard in the Gospel passage that was read—traverses through fasting, which should not be practiced "so that others may see," and through forgiveness of our brothers and sisters: "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you" (Mt. 6.14). After all, this is what we confess each day with the Lord's Prayer, when we say: "as we forgive the sins of our debtors" (Mt. 6.12).

Yesterday, on Cheesefare Saturday, the Church honored the memory of the saintly men and women who shone in ascetic life. Saints are not only models for the faithful in the good fight of life in Christ and according to Christ. They are also our fellow travelers, friends and supporters in the ascetic journey of fasting, repentance, and humility. We are not alone in our effort, but we have God, who encourages and blesses us, as well as the Saints and Martyrs, who stand beside us, and above all the First among the Saints and Mother of God, who intercedes for us all to the Lord. Sanctity is proof of the power of divine grace and the human synergy in the Church, which takes place through participation in the holy sacraments and fulfilment of the divine commandments. There is no "gratuitous piety" or "easy Christianity," just as there is no "wide gate" or "spacious way" that leads to the heavenly Kingdom (cf. Mt. 7.13–14).

The Church constantly reminds us that salvation is not an individual, but an ecclesiastical event, a common discipline. During the God-guarded Holy and Great Lent, what becomes apparent for the spiritual life of the faithful is the definitive meaning of participation in the life of the community—that is to say, in the Christian family and parish, or else in the monastic coenobium. We would like to highlight the function of the Christian family as a community of life for the experience of Great Lent’s spirituality. Our predecessor among the Saints, John Chrysostom, described the family as “a small Church.”¹ Indeed, it is in the family that occurs the rendering of our existence into that of the church; it is there that the sense of the social and communal character of human life and the life in Christ as well as the love, mutual respect and solidarity are developed; and it is there that the life and joy of cohabitation are experienced as a divine gift.

The joint endeavor to apply the ecclesiastical rule and ethos of fasting in the context of the family manifests the charismatic dimension of ascetic life and, more broadly, the conviction that whatever is true, honorable, and rightful in our life comes to us from above; that despite our own cooperation and contribution, in the end they transcend whatever is humanly achievable and accessible. After all, the communal aspect of life, the love for one another that does not seek its own, and the virtue of forgiveness, do not allow room for human rights-ism and complacency. An expression of such a spirit of “common freedom” and eucharistic asceticism is precisely the inseparable connection between fasting, charity, and participation in the parish and liturgical life of the Church. Living out this “Lenten spirit” within a Christian family leads us to the depth of truth in the ecclesiastical experience and constitutes the birthplace and source of Christian witness in our secularized contemporary world.

Brothers and children, pray that we may all travel with godly zeal along the way of Holy and Great Lent with fasting and repentance, in prayer and contrition, making peace within ourselves and with one another, sharing in life and showing ourselves to be “neighbors” to those in need through charitable works, forgiving one another and glorifying in all circumstances the God of mercy’s name, which is above the heavens, beseeching Him to deem us worthy of reaching Holy and Great Week with purified minds and of worshipping with joy and delight His splendid Resurrection.

Holy and Great Lent 2024

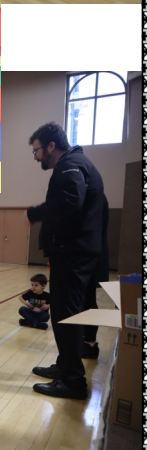
✠ **BARTHOLOMEW of Constantinople**

Fervent supplicant for all before God

To be read in churches on Cheesefare Sunday, March 17, 2024, immediately after the Holy Gospel.

¹ *Commentary on the Letter to the Ephesians 20, PG 62.143.*

JOY Retreat





JOY Retreat



Made possible with fantastic volunteers!







**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE
OF NORTH AMERICA**

Prot. no.: 112/2024

March 16, 2024

To my sons and daughters, the youth of this blessed Archdiocese,

It is my joy to address you on the occasion of the Orthodox Youth Day (March 16):

You are the blossoms of the Church, how delightful is the flower with its fragrant scent.

You are the dynamism of the Church, and how many dreams lie before you to become reality with your youthful capabilities.

You are in the age of zeal and vitality, so may you use your energies in the service of your souls, not just your bodies and minds.

You are the hope of the Church because you are its future, and how many great deeds have been achieved by individuals like you.

I dream of you as strong in grace and insightful in the matters of your lives.

I dream of you as brave in facing evil, and enthusiastic in supporting what is good.

I dream of you as rejectors of what is presented to you for imitation, and examining everything before adopting it.

“The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch” (Acts 11: 26)

I dream of you as distinguishing between the behaviors of a world that is not inspired by God, and the behaviors required by the Gospel.

I dream of you as humble and fruitful trees, and as upright as cypress trees, brave, fearing nothing, because through Christ you can overcome the world.

I dream of you being successful and excelling in your lives, so that your church will be proud of you, and the name of your Lord may be glorified wherever you go.

I dream of you seeking your salvation and placing Christ above everything else.

I dream of you as saints, for your calling is nothing less than this.

I encourage you to delve deeper into your faith and examine the validity of things presented today as if they are necessary or not.

I encourage you to find true and lasting joy in the embrace of your church and be assured that there is no joy or peace except in living in the sweet presence of your Christ.

I encourage you to experience the sweetness and power of living with Christ that makes the mountains dance.

I know how much evil awaits you,

And how many challenges you face,

And I also know, my beloved, that you need courage to be true Christians.

But I also know that your Christianity deserves this courage.

Or else the world is heading towards more slavery, despair, and coldness.

I encourage you to ignite your hearts with pure love and lit up the world around you and warm it.

You are the ones who will warm the world, or else woe to us all.

May God bless you and keep you,

With all my love, my prayers, and blessings.

Yours in Christ,



+SABA

Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of all North America

Saints Mary & Martha Women's Fellowship

The Holy Cross

Tuesday, April 23, 2023

The Sayings of Christ from the Cross

Speaker: His Eminence Metropolitan Savas of Pittsburgh

At the home of Stellani Coleman

105 Cedarbrook Ct., McMurray 15317

RSVP 724-255-6178

Tuesday, May 28, 2023

Modern Miracles of the Cross

Speaker: Fr. John Chakos

At the home of Mary Zotis

419 Longleaf Dr., Venetia 15367

RSVP 412-835-2381

Remember, all meetings run
from 7pm-9pm.

Pascha is May 5.



✝ ON
COMMUNITIES

ARE YOU FASTING? SHOW
ME YOUR FAST WITH YOUR
WORKS. WHICH WORKS?
IF YOU SEE SOMEONE WHO
IS POOR, SHOW HIM
MERCY. IF YOU SEE AN
ENEMY, RECONCILE WITH
HIM. IF YOU SEE A FRIEND
WHO IS BECOMING
SUCCESSFUL, DO NOT BE
JEALOUS OF HIM! LOVE
YOUR NEIGHBOR.

(St. John Chrysostram)



SAINTS RAPHAEL, NICHOLAS, & IRENE

CHAPEL FEAST DAY

DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH - ORCHHONT, PA

MONDAY May 6TH

6:00 P.M.

PASCHAL VESPERS

ARTOKLASIA

PROCESSION OF RELICS

PASCHAL ORTHROS

TUESDAY May 7TH

10:00 A.M.

PASCHAL DIVINE LITURGY





GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA
ARCHEPISCOPAL ENCYCLICAL

Prot. No. 64/2024

Archebiscopal Encyclical on Greek Independence Day

March 25, 2024

Unto the Most Reverend and Right Reverend Hierarchs, Pious Priests and Deacons, Monks and Nuns, Presidents and Members of the Parish Councils, Honorable Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Members of Leadership 100, Day and Afternoon Schools, Philoptochos Societies, Youth, Greek Orthodox Organizations, and entirety of the Christ

loving Plenitude of the Sacred Archdiocese of America:

Onward, children of Greece ... now is the fight for everything!

(The Persians, Aeschylus)

Beloved sisters and brothers in Christ,

The battle cry of the ancient Greeks as they charged the forces of Xerxes at Salamis, more than four hundred years before the gentle reply of the Virgin to the Archangel, is an inspiring testament to the resilience and courage of our People, our Genos. Although they were severely outnumbered, they never gave up their hope for their freedom and fought their way to victory. The same is true of the Immortal Heroes of 1821, whose memory we invoke on the Great Feast of the Annunciation, which is the most perfect story of humanity's aspiration for true and complete liberty.

Although tender was the answer to the mighty Gabriel, "Be it unto me according to you word," the response of the Virgin ac-

tually carries the same force and intensity of the Greeks who repelled the Persians, as well as their descendants who freed Greece from over four hundred years of Ottoman occupation. For truly, the salvation of the human race – initialized and empowered by the assent of the Theotokos to the Incarnation of God – is and has always been “the fight for everything.”

Human liberty – the ability to live our lives in a climate of opportunity and with freedom of choice – is always a struggle. The miracle of the Annunciation is that through a young girl, chosen by God, our ultimate freedom has been guaranteed in Christ. Whether repelling invaders, or expelling occupiers, the Greek People have always risen to the challenge. And with the faith of the Gospel, we behold our decisions to “fight for everything” under the aspect of eternity, *sub specie aeternitatis*. For the contest of the human spirit is not only against the oppressors of this world, but also, as the Apostle says: “against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12).

Therefore, beloved brethren in the Lord, let us magnify the Virgin Theotokos, who embodies with her mildness a strength worthy of her title as our “Champion Leader” (*Υπέρμαχος Στρατηγός*). *And let us give thanks to God for the courage of our ancestors – both those of the ancient world and those of 1821 – who gave of their lives in the fight for everything. Because of their sacrifices, we possess as a precious treasure the glory of Greece and the glory of our Holy Greek Orthodox Faith.*

Long live Greece!

With paternal love in Christ,

† ELPIDOPHOROS

Archbishop of America

REAL MEN ROLL SPANAKOPITA! OPA!



BECOME A MEMBER!

BECOME A MEMBER AT HOLY CROSS AND...

- GET ADDED TO OUR MAILING + EMAIL LIST SO YOU CAN STAY IN THE KNOW OF UPCOMING EVENTS
- JOIN ACTIVITIES AND COMMITTEES
- HAVE YOUR CHILDREN JOIN JOY & GOYA
- BE A PART OF HOLY CROSS TODAY!

HOW DO I JOIN?

Fill out a 2024 Stewardship card located in the narthex



GOLDEN CLUB

On Tuesday, April 16th, the Golden Club will travel to the Sewickley Heights History Center. This unique museum commemorates local history and the Pittsburgh industrialists who used this exclusive suburb as a summer getaway. Our visit begins in the Theater Room for a documentary. Exhibits include vintage attire, antique cars and artwork.

There is no admission fee; donations will be accepted. Following the visit, we will stop for lunch (TBA). Please RSVP to Cynthia Kostelnik (412.722.9512) or Rene Koett (412.559.1721) by April 10th. Carpooling transportation will be arranged. Meet @church 9:15am.

PASCHA BREAD MAKING!

Please save the date of Thursday, April 18, for Pascha Bread Making. Rolling and twisting in aluminum pans starts at 10am, bread egg washing about 11:30am, wrapping of bread at 2:15pm and selling of bread from 2:30-5pm. Lunch will be provided. ANY of your time is appreciated! The 1.5lb loaf of Pascha bread, \$12 a loaf, plain or with sesame seeds, will be sold on baking day, April 18, and on Sunday, April 21 after Divine Liturgy. Pascha bread will be sold on Palm Sunday, April 28, IF AVAILABLE. ~Elaine Sofis, esofis@comcast.net

Dr. Facaros office blessing





FIRST MONDAY OF EVERY MONTH

Monday, April 1

Paraklesis at Holy Cross
Pittsburgh at 6:30 pm

Basketball in the
Community Center gym
from 8 pm to 9:30 pm

Fellowship and food at
Primanti's in Mt. Lebanon
starting at 9:30 pm





Youth Health Kit Drive and Assembly *Youth Volunteers and Monetary Donations Needed!*

April 13, 2024 | 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM

HOLY CROSS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

123 Gilkeson Rd. (Mt. Lebanon), Pittsburgh, PA 15228

All Orthodox Youth Groups are asked to participate.
Students, please bring your volunteer forms for school credit.

**Our goal is to assemble several thousand health kits.
Donations are needed to purchase bulk health kit supplies.**

To donate, please make checks payable to "Holy Cross AGAPE Fund"
with "IOCC Health Kit Project" in the memo, and mail to
Nick Terezis, c/o IOCC, 306 Marberry Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15215

Please contact Ava Terezis at 614.569.2414
or AvaT.Orthodox@gmail.com
to coordinate your youth group attendance.



INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHARITIES

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church Bereavement Support Ministry 2024

Bereavement Support Group Sessions Finding Hope & Healing in the Grief Journey



Sessions in 2024:

*Mon, Oct 14

*Mon, July 1

*Mon, Dec 2

Meet our Bereavement Support Ministry Team!

Amy Armanious is our Bereavement Support Ministry Coordinator. She has been a registered nurse for several years and leads our Visitation Ministry too.

Anita Sinicrope Maier is a licensed, professional counselor with her own private practice. She is our group facilitator and comes with extensive experience in grief & loss, and group support. Arlene Metropolis is our Bereavement Liaison who has walked the grief journey in the loss of family members & friends. She brings her friendly smile, gift of hospitality, and spiritual listening. Maria Mason is our Bereavement Liaison who has been a registered nurse for many years and volunteers her time at a local hospice agency. She brings her nursing skills and gift of compassionate care to others in need. Tina Fiedler is our Bereavement Liaison who brings a calming presence to those experiencing grief. She reaches out through cards and words of comfort & encouragement in challenging times.

Meetings held quarterly*

6:30 p.m. Fellowship & Light Refreshments

7:00-8:00 p.m. Group Support, Learning & Conversation
Conference Room A/B

- Allow time and space for expression of grief & loss
 - Professional group facilitators
 - Bring a family member or friend
 - Questions are encouraged
 - No need to be present at every session
- Doesn't matter whether your loss is recent or many years
 - Safe, non-threatening sharing environment
 - No cost for sessions & written materials
- If you want to learn more... then come and receive spiritual care!

Our team leads by example through their Greek Orthodox faith tradition and personal experience. They help others learn to cope and live life as one grieves loss... lifting our hearts and prayers to God.

Come and share in Christian community as we remember our loved ones and share our life journey together. May you give yourself the gift of time and space for healing. To learn more about our Bereavement Support Ministry and offerings, contact our Visitation Ministry Coordinator Amy Armanious at visitation@holytrinitygogh.org

WONDERFULLY MADE DAY RETREAT



"IN HER EMBRACE"

NEW
DATE

SATURDAY, JUNE 8, 2024

10 AM TO 3 PM

OPEN TO THOSE KINDERGARTEN
THROUGH 35 YEARS OLD.

Wonderfully Made is a new ministry through the Metropolis of Pittsburgh's Y2AM Office for those friends with moderate to intensive needs. Our prayer is that this program can become a welcoming environment for participants with disabilities and their families, reminding them that they are wonderfully made in His Image!

ST. NICHOLAS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

220 N. Walnut St.

Youngstown, OH 44503

Questions? Contact Alyssa Kyritsis at
akyritsis@pittsburgh.goarch.org

WONDERFULLY MADE DAY RETREAT SCHEDULE



SATURDAY
JUNE 8, 2024

10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

11:00 am: Registration and Snack

11:30 am: Session 1 Rotation

12:15 pm: Session 2 Rotation


12:15 pm: Parent Session – Send one parent!

1:00 pm: Lunch

2:00 pm: Session 3 Rotation

2:00 pm: Repeat Parent Session – Send one parent!

2:45 pm: Group Photo, Wrap-Up and Closing Prayer



Metropolis of Pittsburgh
Summer Camp 2024

Week 1: June 16-22

2nd-4th Grade

Week 2: June 23-29

5th-7th Grade

Week 3: June 30-July 6

7th-9th Grade

Week 4: July 7-13

10th-12th Grade

Registration will open March 25, 2024!

More Information:

y2am.pittsburgh.goarch.org/summercamp



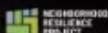
NEIGHBORHOOD
RESILIENCE
PROJECT

You are Invited to The Resilience Bowl



MAY 21, 2024 | ACRISURE STADIUM

A football themed fundraising event by the
Neighborhood Resilience Project



In collaboration with Troy and Theodora Polamalu, we are thrilled to announce details for **The Resilience Bowl**, our football themed fundraising event at Acrisure Stadium

Become a Sponsor

Ticket Sales

- Levels range from \$2,500 to \$50,000
- See the sponsorship packet [here](#)
- Email [Kristina Abernathy](#) with questions
- General attendee tickets are \$50
- VIP Reception tickets are \$300
- Tickets will open for sale in early March

Schedule of Events

5:00 PM: Guests Arrive

5:15 PM: Opening Ceremony

5:20 PM: Obstacle Course on Field Opens

6:45 PM: Obstacle Course Closes

7:00 PM: Celebrity Flag-Football Game Begins

7:45 PM: Award Ceremony

8:00 PM: End of the Night

Questions and Answers

What is the Resilience Bowl?

- The Resilience Bowl is a one-of-a-kind fundraising event. It will feature a celebrity flag-football game, on-field obstacle courses open to general attendees, and Troy Polamalu!
- A press release with more details [is available here](#).

When and Where is the Resilience Bowl?

- The Resilience Bowl is being held on May 21st, 2024 from 5:00 - 8:00 PM at Acrisure Stadium. Much of the event will take place directly on the field.

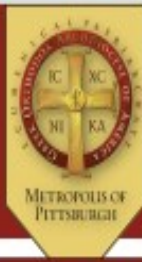
How Much are Tickets?

- General attendee tickets are \$50. They include a seat with a great view of the obstacle course and the celebrity flag football game, the opportunity to run the obstacle course (registration is first come first serve), and access to food vendors.
- Tickets to the VIP Reception are \$300. They include everything a general attendee ticket includes, plus a dinner at the PNC Champions Club, a chance for photos with celebrities, complimentary swag bags, an indoor space to view the game from in case of inclement weather, and more!

How Can I Sponsor the Resilience Bowl?

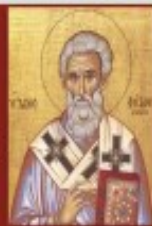
- [Click here](#) to view our Sponsorship Packet
- [Click here](#) to become a sponsor
- Email Presbyteria Kristina at kabernathy@neighborhoodresilience.org if you have questions!





A Good Word - Λόγον Αγαθόν

NEWSLETTER OF THE GREEK ORTHODOX
METROPOLIS OF PITTSBURGH



New Metropolis Center Construction Update

With the better weather and soil issues in the rearview mirror, progress has accelerated. We now have some of the first floor flat concrete work in place along with foundation walls rising. Here you can see the elevator area foundation walls beginning and interior basement footer forms. Here too are the piers that will support the dome of the chapel and the completion of the stairwell masonry.

In the coming two weeks, Kathy and I will be presenting at three more parishes to provide everyone the opportunity to support our dear church and encourage fellowship, ministry and worship for us, our kids and grandkids (we have 12 – pressure’s on!).



The Metropolis of Pittsburgh
Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptechos Society

2024 Daffodil Luncheon

HOSTED BY
HOLY TRINITY
OF AMBRIDGE

Saturday
April 6th
11:00 am

MARriott
PITTSBURGH AIRPORT
777 ATEN ROAD
CORAOPOLIS, PA 15108

For Luncheon Reservations visit
https://www.papgd.com/donate/hosted_baron_id=NDJKRNGH1HXWVW
or scan the QR code

For Sponsorships visit
https://www.papgd.com/donate/hosted_baron_id=2NXYEKSR5UAA
or scan the QR code

PLEASE RSVP
BY MARCH 25TH

Proceeds to benefit:
The Metropolis of Pittsburgh
Emergency Fund and Seminarian Scholarship Fund

As mentioned last month, for this Lenten Season, most parishioners around the Metropolis will receive a mailing that kicks off our public fundraising campaign. Look for it! Thereafter, you will see social media videos of ministry workers who will speak to the potential this new center brings us all.

AND as I always will, I ask that you seriously consider a pledge, or raising your pledge, or pre-paying your pledge so that we **AVOID ANY DEBT!** We will continue fundraising until we are there! Please help us so that this new home is only ever a blessing AND **NEVER A BURDEN** to our church. Please participate and be part of our community!

Archon Nick Lelas - New Metropolis Center Project Manager

METROPOLIS HAPPENINGS:

The Department of Greek Education for the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh presents

THE NINTH ANNUAL GREEK LANGUAGE FESTIVAL AND QUIZ BOWL

Saturday, April 13, 2024
St. Demetrios Church, Rocky River, OH 11am - 3pm

QUIZ • MUSIC • ACT • ART

Registration Deadline: March 30 2024
For more information and registration visit:

pittsburgh.goarch.org/greek-education
Maria Stamoolis: mstamoolis@verizon.net

METROPOLIS OF PITTSBURGH CAMP 2024

Week 1 (Grades 2-4): June 16-22
Week 2 (Grades 5-7): June 23-29
Week 3 (Grades 7-9): June 30-July 6
Week 4 (Grades 10-12): July 7-13

WELCOME BACK CAMPERS!

More information: youth.pittsburgh.goarch.org/summercamp

REGISTRATION OPENS MARCH 25TH AT 7PM

WEEKEND OF SERVICE

APRIL 20-21, 2024

THE OFFICE OF YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRIES ALONG WITH THE METROPOLIS LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY WANT TO ENCOURAGE ALL OUR PARISHES TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS YEAR'S ANNUAL WEEKEND OF SERVICE!

LED BY YOUTH, YOUNG ADULTS AND PHILOPTOCHOS CHAPTERS, ENTIRE PARISHES ARE ENCOURAGED TO COME TOGETHER AND DO SOMETHING TO SERVE OTHERS DURING THAT WEEKEND.

Questions? Contact Alyssa Kyritsis at akyritsis@pittsburgh.goarch.org or Joyce Spanakis at jspanakis@esa.com

His Eminence Metropolitan Savvas cordially invites you to celebrate the dedicated volunteers of our Holy and God-protected Metropolis of Pittsburgh at the

10TH ST. PHOTIOS AWARDS BANQUET

MAY 18 2024 • 4:00 PM
DOUBLETREE BY HILTON PITTSBURGH-CRANBERRY
910 Sheraton Drive, Mars, PA 15046

Tickets: \$95/adult, \$25/child (under 12)
Reservation & Sponsorship
Deadline: April 28

Mail reservations/sponsorships to:
St. Photios Awards Banquet
Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh
5201 Ellsworth Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15232
Please make checks payable to:
Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh

FOR ONLINE RESERVATION & SPONSORSHIP:
pittsburgh.goarch.org/st-photios-awards-banquet

Scan the QR code to make reservations

QR Code

Mail Refunds available after May 4

Banquet Co-Chairpersons:
Ani Johnson Ryan: 412 621 5529 | anjr@metropolisofpittsburgh.goarch.org
Marlene Stamos: 412 600 2818 | mstamos@metropolisofpittsburgh.goarch.org

NET PROCEEDS BENEFIT THE METROPOLIS' BENEVOLENCE FUND

pittsburgh.goarch.org | 412 621 5529 contact: help@pittsburgh.goarch.org



SUPPORT HIS EMINENCE AND OUR METROPOLIS MINISTRIES

It costs approximately \$1,000 per day to operate our Metropolis - including Metropolitan Savvas's Archpastoral visitations, preparations for summer camp and GOYA retreats, our vital registry, and more. Please consider sponsoring a day in the life of the Metropolis:

Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh, 5201 Ellsworth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15232

412-621-5529 (Main) 412-465-0460 (Camp) 412-621-8543 (Youth)

pittsburgh.goarch.org | info@pittsburgh.goarch.org



**HOLY CROSS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
123 GILKESON ROAD
PITTSBURGH, PA 15228**

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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