

# Holy Cross

# Crossroads



Beloved Members and Friends of Holy Cross,

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

August is the final month of the Church year. The two remaining great feast days are the Transfiguration of our Lord on Mt. Tabor (August 6<sup>th</sup>) and the Dormition of the Mother of God (August 15<sup>th</sup>). The first 14 days of the month are fast days, preparing us for the departure of the Mother of God from this life into the next. It is also a preparation for our departure from this life. In the life of the Virgin Mary, we see the greatest human example of humility, devotion, and love for God. We too aspire to commit ourselves and our whole lives (and one another) to Christ our God, as we so often pray in the Divine Liturgy. This is our great calling as Christians. We ascend the mountain (walk through the darkness of this world, often with difficulty and stumbling along the way) and we desire to reach the top of the mountain where we encounter Jesus Christ. We see Him not just as perfect man, but in the feast of the Transfiguration, we see Jesus. He truly is, Divine Light! The consuming fire of God's Love. The disciples, Peter, James, and John, were overwhelmed by the Light and were unable to gaze upon Christ. As they humbled themselves before the awesome divinity of God, they heard Christ speaking with both Moses and Elijah. Christ had come to fulfill the Law and the prophecies. Moses and Elijah represented this fulfillment and were desirous in their own life time to see the face of God. The time for God to reveal Himself to the world came and He brought Moses and Elijah there to witness this great revela-

# ORTHODOX MONASTERY OF THE TRANSFIGURATION

321 MONASTERY LANE \* ELLWOOD CITY, PA 16117

**Friday, August 6 - Feast of Holy Transfiguration**

*All services will be held outdoors. Reservations are not required.*

**9:30** Akathist, "Glory to God for All Things"

**10:00** Hierarchical Divine Liturgy and Blessing of Fruit

**12:00** Picnic Lunch

**2:00** Holy Unction Service (Anointing of the sick) with the singing of the Paraklesis Hymns to the Mother of God



*Gerontissa Theophano and the Sisters warmly welcome you to the Monastery's Summer Feast Days*

*All 3 will be held on Saturdays this year due to weekday construction.*

**Memorial Commemoration  
Come and Honor the Memory  
of**

**Gerontissa Taxiarchia**

**August 7<sup>th</sup> - Saturday**

**9:00 am:** Hours, Divine Liturgy, Memorial Service



**Nativity of the  
Theotokos  
Feast Day**

**September 10<sup>th</sup> - Friday**

**5:00 pm:** Vespers, Orthros

**September 11<sup>th</sup> - Saturday**

**9:00 am:** Hours, Divine Liturgy

*Please **RSVP** so that the Monastery has adequate hospitality:*

Email us: [info@NativityoftheTheotokosMonastery.org](mailto:info@NativityoftheTheotokosMonastery.org) OR Call us: (724) 352 - 3999

Browse our Online Gift Shop and place preliminary orders at our web site:

[www.NativityoftheTheotokosMonastery.org](http://www.NativityoftheTheotokosMonastery.org)

**We thank you for your love and support,  
the Sisters of the**

**Nativity of the Theotokos Greek Orthodox Monastery**

121 St. Elias Lane Saxonburg, PA 16056

# Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church

123 Gilkeson Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15228

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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, Economos**

**Fr. Daniel Korba, Presbyter**

**Dn. Frank Dickos, Deacon**

**Elias Diamond, Pastoral Assistant**

Nena Jovonovich, Secretary

Website: [holycrosspgh.org](http://holycrosspgh.org)

Office (412) 833-3355 FAX (412) 833-3357

Community Center Phone: (412) 854-6001

**Office Hours** Monday-Friday 9am-5pm

## Organizations & Committees

Church School	Jennifer Moorcroft	(412) 626-9143
Philoptochos	Thea Manos	
Philoptochos	Adrienne Dickos	(412) 833-4980
Membership		
Circle of Angels	Carol Halkias	(412) 276-5002
	Christine Peters	(724) 693-9290
Garden of Love	Stacie Metrose	(412) 833-5164
	Didra Kirschner	(412) 561-2892
Greek School	Dena Yamalis	(412) 343-8355
Junior Dance	Kristina Gzikowski	(412) 257-5015
Senior Dance	Georgia Yamalis	(412) 728-2259
Choir	Thespina Christulides	(412) 608-6418
First Steps	Denise Sokos	(412) 257-1610
JOY	Christine Chapas	(724) 986-2082
Young Professionals	Thespina Christulides	(412) 608-6418
GOYA	Denise Melis	(412) 341-9264
Golden Club	Cynthia Kostelnik	(412) 833-9423
	Rene Koett	(412) 831-3142
Bookstore	Mary Portellos	(724) 941-8699
House Committee	Konrad Mayr	(412) 877-7780
Building Comm.	John Conomos	(412) 831-7997
Sts. Mary & Martha	Adrienne Dickos	(412) 833-4980

## \*Services:

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

*\*See monthly calendar for all services.*

2021

## Parish Council

Dean Stambolis, President

Jordan Nicholas, Vice President

Nicholas Chakos, Financial Secretary

Jennifer Liokareas, Treasurer

Constance Zotis, Secretary

Dena Galie

John Hoenig

Frank Kalogeris

Rachel Kartofilis

Bob Kirschner

Deno Pappas

Christine Picard

Bill Poutous

George Sokos

Donna Staub

**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). Contact the church office for suggestions if you need a referral. 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.



tion. With God, nothing is impossible! It is our prayer that we too would desire to see the face of God. He is not far. We only need but enter into the chamber of our heart and invite Him there to be with us.

Let us make the most of the time by brothers and sisters and remember that there is a spiritual war for our very souls. The priorities that we set for our families and children must have a place for God. We must seek the opportunities to attend Church, visit our monasteries, study the Scriptures, and surround ourselves with like-minded friends who seek the Kingdom of God. We journey together, and with God's mercy and love, we will arrive at the Promise Land (the Kingdom of God). May the God of all wisdom and knowledge watch over and protect our children as they return to their schools and may we tirelessly seek out ways to serve and be closer to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

With love and prayers,  
Fr. Michael

St. Paisios of Mt. Athos would write letters to the Sisters of the Monastery of St. John the Theologian in Souroti, Greece. St. Paisios helped establish this monastery and at the end of his life was taken care of by the sisterhood. This is where St. Paisios died and is buried.

St. Paisios calls these writings "pumpkinseeds which I had roasted over the fire of temptations. Many times eating pumpkinseeds helps one forget his hunger until the time arrives for the well spread table."

*This excerpt is from a letter written in April of 1974.*

All evil begins from the mind, then it revolves solely around science and is completely alienated from God. That is why these people do not find their inner peace and balance. If, however, their mind were revolving around God, they would use science for the cultivation of their inner universe and the world's benefit, for then the mind would be sanctified.

External (worldly) education, unfortunately, invariably disfigures men and the beautiful nature (creation) of God as well, making the life of man unnatural with the stress and anguish that it constantly adds. It leads hundreds of people (even little children troubled with stress) to psychoanalysis and psychiatrists daily and continually builds psychiatric hospitals and trains psychiatrists – even though most of them neither believe in God nor accept the existence of the soul. How is it then possible for these people to help souls while they themselves are full of stress? How is it possible for a man to be truly comforted and consoled if he does not believe in God and in the true life after death, eternal life? When a man



conceives the deeper meaning of true life then all his stress and anguish departs, divine consolation appears and he is cured.

Those who give priority to the inner education of the soul but also use external schooling for their internal information are - when exerting themselves spiritually - quickly transformed. Henceforth, they are able to help many people positively, freeing them from the stress of hell and leading them into heavenly delight. It is possible that oftentimes these people of God have fewer diplomas, but nonetheless they are of more help, for they possess much Grace and not many documents (diplomas).

Greater grace is found within a small flower of God than a collection of fake paper flowers; so much so does the immaterial differ from the material.

Exoteric (external) people of worldly education are full of egoism and pride and resemble satellites that revolve in the air, giving one the impression that they are stars. If, however, you observe them carefully you will see their crooked steps and see that it is all a human sham.

Esoteric (internal) people, on account of their humility, are the true stars that move at dizzying speeds, but noiselessly and humbly, without any one understanding how they move even though they are immense planets. They hide in the depths of heaven and give men the impression that they are little oil lamps aflame with a humble light.

The humble resemble the nightingales that hide in valleys and spread delight to the souls of men with their sweet chirping, glorifying the Creator of the world night and day. The proud, however, act like certain prattling hens, which deafen the world with their cackling, as if their egg were as big as our planet.

We should not expect people who do not believe in God to have spiritual understanding. We should pray for God to forgive and enlighten them.

Neither should we tire ourselves of trying to persuade people with egoism and ill will to come to the knowledge of the truth (despite the fact that they say they are Christians), for within them the truth does not fit.

For inner kindness to come, it greatly helps if we put ourselves in the position of the other. Love, pain of heart, humility, gratitude towards God with unceasing doxology and the prayer of the heart for our neighbor will then come naturally. Moreover, our prayer becomes acceptable to God and comes to the aid of our fellowmen.

Pray that the Good God enlighten everyone and give us good repentance, which we all have need of (myself perhaps more than any one), so that death finds us in a good spiritual state and so that we might be restored to the heavenly Kingdom of God! May God give it!

*(Elder Paisios of Mt. Athos – Epistles, pg. 180-196)*

**The measure of a man:  
A reflection on the life of  
+Fr. George Livanos**

Sometimes we do not know the measure of a man, the depth of his faith, the spiritual wealth in his soul or the profundity of his love for God and others. I have known Father George Livanos for 32 years, but it wasn't until the last year of his life, through his struggle with terminal illness, that I realized what a treasure he is and will be to all of us. No doubt the illness drew out those qualities that he possessed and placed them front and center for thousands to see and appreciate. His love for his family, friends, the faithful of his parish and many more beyond his immediate circle of intimates took on flesh, not only thorough personal contacts, but through his outreach on the internet to thousands about his journey of faith. He bared his soul, holding nothing back of himself, and now, though his death, he has put an exclamation point on his life.



Father George gifted us with an incredible lesson on how Christians are to live and die—fearlessly, faithfully and in expectation of what is to come through faith in Christ. Most of the time we distract ourselves with the mundane occurrences and temporary pleasures of this life, finding in them an escape from the thought of our mortality. We weave our own web of delusion, deception and denial, looking to the here and now as though it will never end. BUT IT WILL!

Through his last year of life, Fr. George brought a realism to what awaits us all and how we must deal with it. Even to the last detail of his funeral, he etched a powerful and poignant image in our hearts of how we should approach death. The absence of embalming fluids and facial makeup allowed us to see in his face the stark reality and finality of death. It was both beautiful and sacred, especially as he lay there in his festive clerical vestments, holding the Gospel book and cross. In our minds' eye, we could see the door to paradise opening for him as the angels and saints led him to the heavenly altar where praise for the Lord he loved never ends. May we all be worthy to attain to such glory.

~Fr. John Chakos

*From Caring Bridge...*

It is with great emotion that I enter this last post about our beloved Fr. George. Sadness, loss, relief... but mostly, incredible gratitude. I'll be honest. I don't know how that is possible. It doesn't come from me but from our benevolent and loving God. It is pure Grace... and I'm grateful for that too!

It has been a long journey of illness but I think the really difficult part is yet to come. That's what my limited thoughts keep telling me. I know from years of ministry that the first year of loss is the most trying because one lives each milestone and memory of the calendar year with new and raw emotion. The birthdays and anniversaries and holidays that are so full of communal joy now have a gaping hole in them. But after having lived this unusual and holy past year, I see how limiting our thinking can be. Father George has passed from life to **Life Everlasting** and he lives! He lives among the righteous now (we all do pray) and therefore is not apart from us, inasmuch as we allow ourselves to be open to God and His heavenly kingdom. That Kingdom is not up in the clouds somewhere, but right here in our midst. For those who have eyes to see and ears to hear let it be so! Our family is comforted in this knowledge even though we long with aching hearts to hear his beautiful laughter and see his twinkling eyes again. In Greek we say "*Kali Antamosi*" which means: *May we have a good reunion or Until we meet again.*

May your Memory be Eternal, Father and Brother George the Priest, worthy of blessedness and everlasting memory!

To the many thousands of souls that have been lifting us in prayer and walking with us on this blessed journey, I have no words to adequately thank you. My husband taught me well that the best form of thanks is to pay it forward and care for those in need, so that is my commitment. Without baring my soul completely, this journey has opened my eyes and my heart to so many needs that surround us and I pray that God will make me worthy to follow through with His prompting. I would also like to encourage *you*, taking strength from the cards and letters that we have received in which you shared your story, to follow through with the faith that has been planted in your heart. The greatest joy that my husband could have is to know that he led you to Christ. The rest of the story is in your hands by the choices that you make each day to glorify God. This will be the most fitting way to honor his memory.

Finally, please don't forget us in your prayers going forward! We have no material needs but I am counting on those prayers! It is traditional that we do a 3 day, 9 day and 40 day memorial. The **40 days** will be on **Monday Aug 9** at St George Cemetery in Bridgeville. Please check the All Saints Church websit([www.allsaintschb.org](http://www.allsaintschb.org)) for specifics if you plan to attend, and otherwise we appreciate all who are able to offer prayers in their respective communities on that day. Blessings and peace ~ Pres. Dianne





## Honoring our Presvyteras on Presvytera Sunday

**Nina Paliouras**, recipient of the Holy Cross Philoptochos Philanthropy Award. Pictured with committee members Dena Yamalis, Elaine Sofis and Cynthia Henry.



Mt. Lebanon High School Philoptochos Philanthropy Award recipient, **Alaina Smith** with presenter, Elaine Sofis.



## Sacraments

### Baptisms

May 29 ~ *Theodore*, son of Gus and Shaylee (Capatolla) Mustakas.  
Godparent is Zachary Pateras.

June 12 ~ *Maria Victoria*, daughter of Thomas and Denissa  
(Petrescu) Visconti. Godparent is Mary Alkhoury El-abu.

### Marriages

June 9 ~ *Christopher Pfansteil* and *Tina Kaduck*.  
Koumbaro is Michael Gregory.

June 26 ~ *Mark Saunders* and *Sarah Kessler*.  
Koumbara is Sadie Stang.

*GOYANs grown up!*





**PHILOPTOCHOS - THE LARGEST US WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ORGANIZATION**  
**EMPIRE STATE BUILDING - A NEW YORK CITY LANDMARK**  
**DISNEY'S BELOVED CHARACTER - MICKEY MOUSE**  
**CONNIE CARAHALIS - PAST HOLY CROSS PHILOPTOCHOS PRESIDENT AND**  
**MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN**

**WE ARE ALL 90 YEARS OLD!!!**

Kalimera kai Adeo!

I have walked in the footsteps of hardworking philanthropic women who in addition to meeting Philoptochos commitments and the needy were Keystone donors toward the building of our Holy Cross Community Center.

As Philoptochos president I tried to continue their philanthropic legacy by introducing the very profitable Galleria Holiday Gift-wrap Program consisting of two shifts of Philoptochos ladies every day for a full month. All worth it!

Another memorable event introduced was the Twelve Table Calendar Lunch where all foods were donated and cooked by our Philoptochos ladies with two main course tables being Thanksgiving and Christmas. I chose Thanksgiving cooking ten turkeys with Greek stuffing and all the trimmings with helpers Cathy and Cynthia and the expert advice of Diocese President, Georgia Antonopoulos.

Our Holy Cross Philoptochos Choir ladies with Joan Lamprinakos cooked the Christmas ham.

The June Bride table displayed the beautiful Stefana and lambathas handmade by Eva Elderkin.

Our July picnic table ladies brought lovely baskets of herbs but no keftethes! Dear Frances Harris came to the rescue, and we made ten delicious pounds of keftethes!

The Easter table had home-made holiday bread and our baker, Jean Jani, made a lamb replica cake that we displayed.

The New Year's table displayed Ouzo and Tsourekia.

And so it went! Our parishioners loved this lunch for the small fee paid!

We also had sold-to-capacity fashion shows and lunches with Freda Cassoule's hot chicken salad recipe which we multiplied to 119 servings for grocery ingredients! Thank you, Freda!

With the introduction of our profitable and successful Autumn Food Fair and Joan Lamprinakos' YiaYia's Attic, we generated great support for our philanthropies. Philoptochos ladies and supermen diligently cooked, served and cleaned up. Thanks food line chairmen Elaine, Marica and Dena for tireless hours daily!

One Philoptochos superman donated his vacation using his engineering expertise to Doctors Without Borders by providing needed light for doctors to operate on children and adults in remote areas around the world. He also traveled to Guatemala and helped introduce dental health and fluoride treatments to children so they may live past age 35 as many of their young parents died of gum-related diseases. He and Father John Chakos launched the Now Health Clinic in Guatemala which Philoptochos supports. Thanks to our Holy Cross hero - Bob Kirschner.

As a Circle of Angels volunteer, I recall the joy our visits gave to our institutionalized and homebound parishioners. Carol and Christine continue this ministry with visits, holiday baskets, simple prayer books and holy oil.

Our younger Philoptochos ladies have held charity events such as teas and fashion shows with profitable silent auction tables which I took great pride to help fill by knocking on many vendor's doors for donations.

I feel blessed to be a part of my Holy Cross church family where I had the opportunity to watch your children grow. On Graduation Sunday I shared your pride!

We are grateful for the leadership of our past president Elaine and board. And axios to our newly elected officers and board members as they will make new footsteps for us to follow.

Adeo and Agape!  
With sisterly love,  
Connie Carahalís



*Elaine Sofis' Honorary Luncheon as outgoing Philoptochos President*



Χρόνια Πολλά! For of course this is the feast day of every Orthodox Christian not only in the present day, but also in the days which have passed and perhaps surprisingly in the days to come. For the Synaxarion declares that today we honor those known and unknown, who have been added to the choirs of the Saints and shall be added, from the time of Adam until the end of the world. When the Church says “All Saints,” it truly means all of the Saints who were, who are, and who are to come. But in a time where saintliness is almost a foreign term, either beyond our grasp or an antiquated and irrelevant expression, what does it mean to be a saint? And what does it mean for us?

We begin, as we often do, with the Greek. And not because we identify as Greek Orthodox, but because the Greek language carries a deeper more profound meaning than we often find in translation. And the Greek word for saint is “Άγιος.” You know that word. You’ve said it many times. But there is a play on words in the Greek that gives us some insight, even if it’s not a literal translation. For “Άγιος” can be re-written as “Α-γη-ος” or, if you will, the “un-earthly ones.” And this pun reveals some insight to us. To be a saint is to be somehow disconnected from this earth. And indeed this is a common theme in the experience of God’s people, from the Old Testament to the lives of the Saints up to the present day. In today’s Epistle, Paul speaks of those who were persecuted as those “of whom the world was not worthy.” That is perhaps reversed from what we might expect, for it does not say that the Saints were not worthy of the *world*, but that the world was not worthy of *them*. This also implies that although the world may have rejected them, it was they who had already rejected the world. In a last chapter of this same Epistle, Paul reiterates this theme and extends it to us by saying “For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come.” We may live here, but we don’t belong here. And again, we are called to be “in the world, but not of the world.” Jesus had no real place to call home; instead, His ministry was one of constant journeying from place to place, and He once remarked to those who would follow Him, that “Foxes have dens, and the birds in the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.”

But does this mean that if we have a house that we are no longer Christians? Of course not. But it *does* imply that we should not be complacent here. To be Christian is to be one who both embraces and rejects the world. We embrace it, because we love what God has cre-

ated, and recognize that He has intended us to be its stewards, its guardians. And yet, we live in exile, for the world is run by those who have other intentions. They live for themselves, for their own satisfaction and gratification. Having found success in life, they reject the notion of God or a higher purpose. And they entice the world to reject any other worldly, that is saintly in the sense previously described.

This affects us in insidious ways, perhaps no more obvious than in our attitude toward sexuality. Existing throughout history, but perhaps best codified by Sigmund Freud, is the notion that the most important driving force in humanity is psychosexual. It is the central reason for our health, happiness, and if you will, our very being. And if you consider it, so much of the world around us is colored by this notion. It is considered to be a-priori. And should come as no surprise that Freud was an atheist. How could he embrace God, if that implied there was something driving humanity that might be *more* important than sex?

Now this is not a diatribe about lifestyle choices. It is an examination of priority, and why Christians are so misunderstood. We reject the notion that sexual identity is the center of our lives; rather, not rejected outright, it just isn't what *defines* us. And we are perfectly happy to refuse it if it stands in the way of our journey towards God. And ironically this liberates us in ways desperately sought by those embracing lifestyles that focus on sexual experience and gratification.

And we feel the same way about the other priorities of the world: wealth, fame, and power. They are distractions, elevated in importance beyond their true measure of value. For what does it mean to have everything in the world? All the wealth, all the fame, all the power, all of it? To live by the standards of a Godless universe, it means nothing. The earth is a speck of dust in the outlying regions of a typical galaxy in the midst of billions of other galaxies, many far more impressive and spectacular than our own. The way of the world is hollow. The enticements of the world are petty. And so we have no real dwelling here on this earth. Except the one we are in right now.

My brothers and sisters, the world does not belong to us. Not because we are not worthy of it, or capable of taking it, but because *it* is not worthy of *us*. No matter the circumstances of our lives, we don't really belong here. We have outgrown the world, wandering in it in a journey towards what is more important: the pearl of great price, if you will. The path of all the Saints, the Un-Earthly ones, the Holy Ones, towards He who is truly, beautifully Holy. To Him be all Glory, now and forever. Amen.

~Deacon Frank Dickos

MONDAY, JULY 5, 2021

## **Living the Faith: Christian Marriage and the Role of Sexuality in the Life of the Orthodox Christian**

By His Grace Bishop THOMAS (Joseph) and Fr. David Hyatt

*"Let us pursue holiness, that we may be counted worthy to see Him and to attain the Kingdom of Heaven..."* +Homily 19, St. John Chrysostom

When we hear the term "sexual revolution" many think of the 1960s during which time there was a cultural liberalization of societal sexual norms. The monogamous marriage between one man and one woman was challenged by the increasing acceptance of pre-marital and extra-marital sexual activity. "Free Love" became the mantra through the 1960s, 70s and 80s until the rise of HIV AIDS provided a pause in the cultural imagination of what was a beneficial expression of one's sexual new found freedom.

In addition to the liberalization of societal sexual norms, the advent of widespread use of birth control, and the legalization of abortion with the U.S. Supreme Court decision on January 22, 1973, of the Roe v. Wade case, brought about a newly expanded detachment between sexual activity and childbirth. No longer was it to be expected that sexual relations between a man and a woman might very well bear the fruit of a child, further separating the means from the end. Now, the "end" of sexual activity could simply be the temporary enjoyment of physical pleasure without the previous constraints of marriage and the expectation of pregnancy.

As the effectiveness of birth control increased and sexual activity outside of marriage became increasingly permissible within society, the hope for free love without consequences came face to face with a growing number of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) including the deadly human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) that causes acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). Rather than rethinking our newly embraced sexual freedom as a society, we turned to a new public health campaign encouraging "Safe Sex." According to the Planned Parenthood document titled, *History of Sex Education in the U.S.*<sup>[1]</sup>, "In 1975, the World Health Organization (WHO) offered this definition of sexual health:

'Sexual health is the integration of the somatic, emotional, intellectual, and social aspects of sexual being, in ways that are positively enriching and that enhance personality, communication, and love. Fundamental to this concept are the right to sexual information and the right to pleasure.'"

The document further explains, "The concept of sexual health includes three basic elements:



1. a capacity to enjoy and control sexual and reproductive behavior in accordance with a social and personal ethic;
2. freedom from fear, shame, guilt, false beliefs, and other psychological factors inhibiting sexual response and impairing sexual relationship; and
3. freedom from organic disorders, diseases, and deficiencies that interfere with sexual and reproductive functions."

WHO's early definition is at the core of our understanding of sexual health today and is a departure from prevailing notions about sexual health — and sex education — that predominated in the 19th and 20th centuries. Until the 1960s and 1970s, the goals of social hygiene and moral purity activists eclipsed broader sexual health concerns in the public health arena. Their narrow goals were to prevent sexually transmitted infections, stamp out masturbation and prostitution, and limit sexual expression to marriage (Elia, 2009)."

Indeed, this description articulates well the desired change in societal sexual norms that activists began working for – "a departure from prevailing notions about sexual health" (i.e., sexual activity is good and fruitful only within a marriage of one man and one woman), and towards the "right to pleasure." Through efforts made in public education, public information campaigns, and the marketing of products offering "safe sex," much of the Western world has adopted this view of the purpose and role of human sexuality. This, however, is not the understanding of the Orthodox Church.

The Orthodox Church has always held together the sanctity and dignity of both the married and celibate life. Rather than seeking to liberate sexual activity from the relationship of a monogamous marriage for the purpose of maximizing the pursuit of physical pleasure, sexual relations are understood to be pure and fruitful only in the context of the sacramental marriage of one man and one woman for life. Outside of this sacramental relationship, sexual activity of all kinds is to be refrained from. To modern readers, this sounds like madness because they have accepted the notion that as physical animals, we all have the right to gratify our sexual desires in a consensual manner. Gratifying the flesh, however, is not the highest aim of the Christian, but rightly ordered, the flesh will serve the soul in its ascent to God – this includes the sexual dynamics of male and female. Saint Paul writes to the Romans, "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." (Romans 8:5-6)

*(continued next page)*

This, however, is not to imply that the sexual relations between a husband and wife are to be viewed as inherently sinful. Saint John Chrysostom writes, "Impurity does not originate in the union of their bodies, but in their thoughts and motives."<sup>[2]</sup> The Patristic understanding is that while earthly marriage and sexual relations for procreation were not a part of life in the Garden of Paradise, they are a merciful concession that God made to fallen mankind. Through this relationship the procreation of humanity is furthered, "Be fruitful and multiply";<sup>[3]</sup> aid and support is rendered for both husband and wife for the furtherance of their loving union and edification to avoid sexual immorality, "let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband";<sup>[4]</sup> and a living example of the mystical union of Christ and His Church is put on display for the world, "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church."<sup>[5]</sup> Marriage, and consequently all sexual relations between a husband and wife, should adhere to and keep as its aim a loving union with Christ which will surpass the veil of death and remain for eternity in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Because earthly marriage and sexual relations were not a part of the life of Adam and Eve in the Garden, the celibate life should be understood to be a blessing and not a curse. In fact, St. Paul writes that it is to be preferred if one has the gift for it. "But I say to the unmarried and to the widows: It is good for them if they remain even as I am..."<sup>[6]</sup> And, "I want you to be without care. He who is unmarried cares for the things of the Lord—how he may please the Lord. But he who is married cares about the things of the world—how he may please his wife."<sup>[7]</sup> The celibate life, however, is not to be devoid of relationship, but instead is free from the responsibilities of spouse and children. The monastic life is a particularly poignant expression of the celibate life – living as it were the life of the angels as well as the future life of the Kingdom where "...they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven."<sup>[8]</sup> The celibate life, whether monastic or lay, is an opportunity to more fully devote one's life to the pursuit of a loving union with God, and, like marriage, requires self-discipline, prayer and fasting, and the ascetic struggle to put off the works of the flesh and be clothed in righteousness.

This sobering and yet joyful boundary for human sexuality should be appropriately modeled and taught in our parishes, Orthodox schools and colleges, and in our homes. We must not give way to the cultural forces which seek to dilute our faith, deceive our minds, and ignite our passions. Saint John the Evangelist and Theologian warns us against allowing our affections to become enflamed for the ways of the world. He writes, "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world,

the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world."<sup>[9]</sup>

Brothers and Sisters, let us heed the instruction of our father among the saints, St. John Chrysostom who writes, "We must strive for self-control... St. Paul tells us to seek peace and the sanctification without which it is impossible to see the Lord. So whether we presently live in virginity, in our first marriage, or in our second, let us pursue holiness, that we may be counted worthy to see Him and to attain the Kingdom of Heaven, through the grace and love for mankind of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory, dominion, and honor, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen."<sup>[10]</sup>

### Additional Reading

- St. John Chrysostom, *On Marriage and Family Life*. Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1986
- Evdokimov, Paul, *The Sacrament of Love*. Yonkers, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985
- Meyendorff, John, *Marriage: An Orthodox Perspective*. Yonkers, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1975
- Trenham, Archpriest Josiah B, *Marriage and Virginity According to St. John Chrysostom*. Platinia, California: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 2013

[1] *History of Sex Education in the U.S.* (Planned Parenthood, Nov 2016) [https://www.plannedparenthood.org/uploads/filer\\_public/da/67/da67fd5d-631d-438a-85e8-a446d90fd1e3/20170209\\_sexed\\_d04\\_1.pdf](https://www.plannedparenthood.org/uploads/filer_public/da/67/da67fd5d-631d-438a-85e8-a446d90fd1e3/20170209_sexed_d04_1.pdf)

[2] St. John Chrysostom, *On Marriage and Family Life*, Homily 19 (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1986), 33.

[3] Genesis 1:28

[4] 1 Corinthians 7:2

[5] Ephesians 5:32

[6] 1 Corinthians 7:8

[7] 1 Corinthians 7:32-33

[8] Matthew 22:30

[9] 1 John 2:15-16

[10] *On Marriage and Family Life*, 42.

## SAVE THE DATE!

Our Holy Cross Golf Outing is back and better than ever!



**Monday, October 4th**  
**South Hills Country Club**  
Dinner and Silent Auction



Further Details to Follow

## **Sermon on Sunday of the Fathers of the First Council**

Last week I saw a show on PBS about Broadway musicals and they talked about the musical *Fiddler on the Roof* and its famous song ‘Tradition,’ and I ended up with this song stuck in my head, and if you don’t know the song, the hook is really just the word “tradition” repeated over and over and over again. And so naturally I got to thinking about this word, and what this word, this profound word means. To many of us today, “tradition” is a dusty word. It conjures images of days gone by, of musty books, of the attempt to throw ourselves back in time to a world long gone. As Americans, perhaps we are even more sensitive to this word, because America has excelled the word at invention, at innovation - in always seeking the new, this country has produced inventions as influential as the automobile, the airplane, and the internet. In a world like this, tradition can seem like a bad word, like a barrier that stands between us and the inventions of tomorrow.

Yet, we are not only Americans, we are Orthodox Christians, and as Orthodox Christians, tradition has a very significant meaning to us. It means the unbroken lineage of received grace which our Church holds, something it has received from an ongoing succession of believers from the time of Christ until now. Just as we pass the light during the Paschal vigil at midnight, so too has the continuation of Orthodox teaching passed through the Church from the time of Christ until the present day. This is the true meaning of tradition. Tradition for us does not mean something archaic. It means the continual presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church, from the time of Christ, through the outpouring of the Spirit during Pentecost, all the way until now and whatever ages are to come. This is the meaning of tradition for us, for that Holy Spirit continues to give light, no matter what stands outside of the walls of the Church, no matter what forces of history are at work. And this is exactly what we should be thinking about on this Sunday, a Sunday when we commemorate the Holy Father of the First Ecumenical council of the Church, the Council which gave us the basis for the Creed which we recite at every Liturgy.

Now when we hear “Fathers and the first ecumenical council,” we might get nervous because it might conjure to mind the unfortunately dusty view of tradition which our world has encouraged in us, especially when we find out that this first ecumenical council happened in the year 325. How could this be relevant to us? In fact, it is still extremely relevant and still speaks to us.

This first ecumenical council was convened because a certain man named Arius called himself a Christian, and yet, proclaimed a doctrine which held that Jesus Christ was less than God the Father, that he was not God incarnate, but rather, a created being. This doctrine which he taught did not fall on deaf ears, in fact, it was widely accepted. In fact, by some

estimates, at various points in the history of the early Byzantine Empire the number of the Arian Christians outnumbered Orthodox Christians like us, who understand and accept that Jesus Christ is God Himself incarnate. However, the Church Fathers who gathered at that council in Nicaea, made it a point to articulate the Orthodox view of who Christ is - the Incarnate Son of God, and in so doing they formulated what would become the basis for the Creed which we still recite at every Liturgy.

Today, we have many groups who follow teachings not dissimilar to Arius. For instance, Muslims hold the view that Jesus was a prophet, but not the incarnate son of God. Many modern Jews have come to accept Christ as a wise teacher, but not God Himself. Even many Protestant Christians whether explicitly or implicitly treat Christ as less than God Himself. Emblematic of this in this country is that Thomas Jefferson, one of the founding fathers, took a copy of the gospels and removed all the miracles and what he deemed to be supernatural events from it, leaving only what he deemed to be the more “believable” ethical teachings. Against modern challenges such as these, the example of the fathers of Nicaea should give us strength. They showed us what it means to be Orthodox, to stand strong in the faith of Christ’s divinity and godliness, and in giving us a creed, they gave us a basis to proclaim it to those who stray from the year 325 through the present day.

My brothers and sisters, this is what tradition means. It doesn’t mean perpetually casting ourselves backwards into some imagined perfect once upon a time. It means the living response to the presence of the Holy Spirit which dwells amongst us, that gives us the insight and the words to speak to the challenges which our world faces as it continues to spin forward.

Before the first ecumenical council of Nicaea in 325, the church had not declared a creed of belief, to bind believers together and solidify what the Orthodox doctrine was, but out of necessity to speak against the false teachings of Arius, the Holy Spirit, in living example of what Christ said when he told us that “when two or three are gathered in my name, I shall be amongst them,” moved those fathers to make a statement which would continue to be a cornerstone of our church to this day. And so, against all the many challenges and confusion of the modern age, an age in which technology strives for mastery over biology, an age in which we drown in information and yet are parched for knowledge, in age such as this, the proper understanding of tradition, not as the realm the old and irrelevant, but rather as the unbroken presence of the Holy Spirit in our Church, which unites the fathers of the first ecumenical council with modern saints such as Saint porphyrios, Saint Maria of Paris and Saint Paisios, this understanding of tradition, may be ultimately what saves us from the chaos of this age.

~Elias Diamond



# Festival Fun

You're never too young...

George Aspiotes has been at  
**EVERY** Holy Cross Festival!



too old...



too cool...



too ordained...



too educated.....



or

too Presidential

to help at the Festival!



**It takes a village!**







## GRADUATE SUNDAY AND GREEK SCHOOL RECOGNITION

**Top:**  
High School  
graduates with parents

**Center:**  
College and post grad

**Bottom:**  
College/post grad with  
parents






**Top:  
Greek School Awards**

**Center:  
GOYA Co-Presidents  
Christopher Jahn & Diana Chakos  
thanking Advisor Denise Melis**

**Bottom: Coffee Hour returns!!!**



# Holy Cross

SUN	MON	Tue
<i>1 Dormition fast</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>
	6:30pm Paraclesis	6:30pm Paraclesis
<i>8 Dormition fast</i>	<i>9 St. Herman of Alaska</i>	<i>10</i>
8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy	8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy  6:30pm Paraclesis	6:30pm Paraclesis
<i>15 Dormition of the Theotokos</i> 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy 	<i>16</i>  <i>NO Paraclesis</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>22</i> 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy	<i>23</i>  6:30pm Paraclesis	<i>24</i>
<i>29 Beheading of St. John the Baptist</i> 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy	<i>30</i>  6:30pm Paraclesis	<i>31</i>



# August 2021

Wed	THU	FRI	SAT
4	5 <i>Eve of Transfiguration</i>	6 <i>Holy Transfiguration</i>	7
6:30pm Paraclesis	4pm Vigil for Transfiguration: Vespers, Orthros, Divine Liturgy @ HC	10am Hierarchical Divine Liturgy at MONASTERY IN ELLWOOD CITY <i>*details p.2</i>	9am Hours, Liturgy and Memorial @ Monastery in Saxonburg for †Gerontissa Taxiarchia 5pm Vespers
11	12	13	14
6:30pm Paraclesis	6:30pm Paraclesis	6:30pm Paraclesis	Vespers & Engomia of the Theotokos 6:30pm Aliquippa 7pm Oakmont
18	19	20	21
			5pm Vespers
25	26	27 St. Phanourius 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy	28 St. Moses the Black
7pm Church School Teachers Meeting			Wedding/NO Vespers



*Coffee hours are back!*

*Call the church office  
to sponsor a Sunday!*



## *High School Graduates*

### ***Diana Chakos,***

daughter of Nicholas & Heidi Chakos, is graduating from Upper St. Clair High School and plans to take a gap year before going to Penn State.



### ***Christopher Conomos Jahn,***

son of Arne and Ponny Jahn, is graduating from Upper St. Clair High School and will be attending Elon University as an Isabella Cannon Leadership Fellow and probable International Business major.



### ***Chloe Elise Michael,***

daughter of Anastasia Rameas Michael and Richard Michael, is graduating from CAPA, the Creative and Performing Arts School nestled in the heart of Pittsburgh City's cultural District. She will be attending the University of Pittsburgh's Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts



and Sciences located in Oakland and plans to major in Chemistry with a minor in Psychology on a pre-med track focusing on Cardiothoracic surgery.

### ***Angelo John Moorcroft,***

son of Jennifer Moorcroft, is graduating from Keystone Oaks High School and will be working with the family business, Moorcroft Flooring Service.





***Costa Vasile Moore,***  
son of Monica & Frank Moore, is graduating  
from Canon McMillan High School  
and will be attending  
New York University (NYU) this fall.



***Nina Paliouras,***  
daughter of Costa and Vasso Paliouras,  
is graduating with honors from Mt. Lebanon  
High School and will be pursuing her  
Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD)  
from Duquesne University.



***Matthew Anthony Szymanowski,***  
son of Elena Avlon Szymanowski & Matt  
Szymanowski (grandson of parishioners Art &  
Christina Avlon and Genie & Tom Gooding),  
graduated from Bethel Park High School and  
plans to attend Robert Morris University,  
pursuing Business and Sports Management.

***Alexander Michael Tambouratzis,***  
son of Dr. Thomas and Sophia Tambouratzis,  
is graduating from Mt Lebanon High School  
and plans to further his education at  
Carnegie Mellon University,  
Tepper School of Business,  
to study Finance.





***Constantine Stephen Tripodes,***  
son of Maria and Nicholas Tripodes,  
will be graduating as a Valedictorian at  
Upper Saint Clair High School. He intends to  
study Business and Film at University of  
California Berkeley.



***Sarah Rose Zadrozny,***  
daughter of Frank and Chris Zadrozny,  
is graduating from Upper St Clair High  
School and intends to study International  
Business at Duquesne University.

### **Constantine Tripodes, Valedictorian at Upper Saint Clair High School**

Here we are. Ready to embark on our final journey as peers. These opening remarks are meant to inspire, but how do I inspire a class of 380 individuals who have already accomplished so much. I say our class's accomplishments stand alone as their own inspiration.

- *94% of our peers will be pursuing higher education at either a four year university or a Post-Secondary technical school*
- *We have three peers enlisting in the military*
- *Boys basketball and boys swimming won their WPIAL championships*
- *Boys & Girls Tennis, Girls Lacrosse, Boys Golf all won section titles*
- *We have 20+ peers playing collegiate sports*
- *We had 11 National Merit Finalists*
- *The Speech and Debate team won a National Championship*
- *Student Council was named a National Gold Council of Excellence*
- *FBLA had 5 national qualifiers*
- *Two students placed first in the High School Japanese Speech Contest*
- *Our Odyssey of the Mind team placed 1st at State Finals and is competing at the World Finals*
- *We had 4 peers successfully audition for the PMEA All State Ensembles.*



Our grade is a force to be reckoned with and this past year has shown that our drive and vision cannot be changed. If these numbers prove one thing it's that USC will not be the same without us and we will not be the same without USC. Every single one of us knows that our grades' absence will leave ripples through our school, but rest easy knowing that our accomplishments and leaders have inspired those forthcoming to live up to the Class of 2021. We have some of the best years of our lives to look forward to, but no matter how much you want your life to change, we must thank and remember our community for its once in a lifetime opportunities, teachers, administrators, coaches, activity sponsors, and peers. Moving forward, let your impact on our community act as a guiding light as you live 100% of your life.





## College Graduates

***Yianni Contis,***  
son of Sam and Voula Contis,  
graduated from  
Robert Morris University with a  
Bachelors of Science degree  
in Business Management,  
a Minor in Human Resources  
and a Certificate in  
Entrepreneurship and Innovation.  
Yianni has started his career with  
PNC Bank.



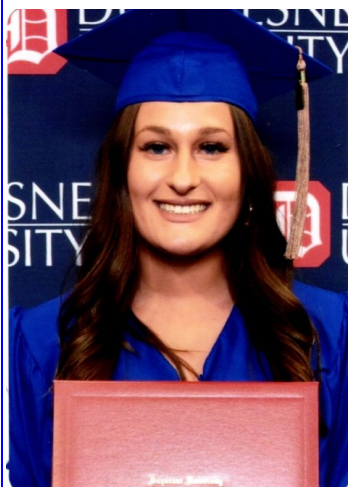
***Nicholas Kartsonas,***  
son of Tom and Kim Kartsonas,  
graduated from  
Ohio University  
with a bachelor's degree in  
Finance and Business Analytics.  
He is employed by PNC Bank.



***Yana Mitsos,***  
daughter of Bill and Marica Mitsos,  
graduated from the University of Kentucky  
with dual degrees in Psychology/Sociology  
with a minor in Criminology.  
She will pursue a Masters in  
Clinical Social Work with a  
Veterinary Social Work Certificate  
at the University of Tennessee- Knoxville.



***Abigail Zadrozny,***  
daughter of Frank and Chris Zadrozny,  
is graduating from Carnegie Mellon  
University's Heinz College earning a  
Masters of Science degree in Information  
Security Policy and Management.  
She plans to work in the public sector  
doing cyber security  
Governance Risk and Compliance.



***Sarah Marie Zervos,***  
daughter of Michael and Laura Zervos, is a  
graduate of Duquesne University with a BS  
BA, with a major in Finance with a Man-  
agement minor. Sarah will begin her career  
at Fort Pitt Capital Group in Pittsburgh at  
the end of June.

**Post Graduate / other**

***Katherine Joan Andrews,***  
daughter of Genia and Harry Andrews,  
has graduated from Hellenic College Holy Cross  
with a Certificate in Youth and Young Adult  
Leadership. Katherine has accepted a position  
starting this August at Holy Trinity  
Greek Orthodox Church in Dallas, Texas  
as the new youth director for the parish.



***Maria Chiarel,***  
graduated from Holy Cross School of  
Theology receiving a Certificate in Youth  
Ministry and is currently working as media  
staff for Crossroad Summer Institute.

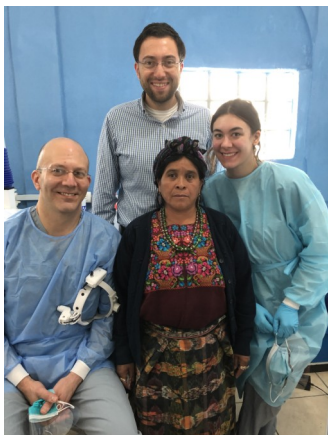


***Elias Diamond,***  
son of Margaret Diamond, has  
graduated from Holy Cross School of  
Theology with a  
MDiv degree.



***Marcus Galie,***  
son of Mark and Katina Galie, graduated from  
St. Francis University, School of Health Sciences,  
with a Doctor of Physical Therapy degree.  
Marcus was selected as an inductee to the National  
Physical Therapy Student Honor Society, a society  
established by the American Council of Academic  
Physical Therapy (ACAPT) to recognize current  
Doctor of Physical Therapy students who demonstrate  
excellence, integrity, and professionalism in areas of academic achievement,  
leadership and service. Marcus completed his final clinical rotation at West  
Penn Hospital and hopes to be able to obtain full-time employment at a Pitts-  
burgh hospital once he completes/passes his boards in July 2021.





***Maria Krakora,***

daughter of Steve and Rebekah Krakora, graduated from the University of Pittsburgh's Biomedical Masters Program. She is now working as a research coordinator at Children's Hospital with a focus on Youth Violence Prevention.

***Constantine Politis,***

son of Alexis and Mike Politis, graduated from The Juris Doctor program at the University of Richmond School of Law. Next, he will begin a Judicial Clerkship with the 12th Judicial Circuit of Virginia.



***Kassianna Politis,***

daughter of Alexis and Mike Politis, completed her Masters in Public Health Degree from Emory University. Now it is on to Medical School at the Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine.





**NEIGHBORHOOD  
RESILIENCE  
PROJECT**

## **Backpack Drive: Back to School Project**

Drive date: August 1 - August 15

Dear Holy Cross parishioners,

The Neighborhood Resilience Project is holding a backpack drive. 100 backpacks are needed. If you are interested, we are asking you to purchase 1 backpack (junior or large) & place the following items in the back pack:

- Sharpie pen (1 package—assorted colors)
- Highlighters (1 package)
- Erasers (3)
- Pencil sharpener (1)
- Pencils (1 package)
- Pencil pouch (1)
- Glue stick (1 package)
- Notebooks (5 subjects—spiral bound with 5 sections)
- 3 Folders
- Post-it Notes (1)

Please bring the backpacks to church during the first 15 days of August and place them in the vestibule. No food or clothing will be collected during this time. Thank you for all of your generosity and cooperation with this project.

~Kathy Pyros

**Attention GOLDEN CLUB:**  
**SAVE THE DATE**  
**Tuesday, September 21st**

*More details will be announced in the September Crossroads issue.*

# More Festival Fun

























There may be someone in the congregation thinking, "Those poor pigs! Do we have to hear about them drowning again?" And if it seems like it's been less than a year since we heard this passage, it's because we have. There's a similar account in Luke's gospel which we last read in late October. There is also an account in Mark's gospel, but that's not usually read on a Sunday. But there are several events in the Lord's life which are repeated in multiple gospels, and some of them are assigned to be read on Sundays, and this is one of them. As you might expect, there are differences between the accounts, some obvious and others more subtle, but the common themes across the versions still have great meaning for us, and so let's take the opportunity to revisit this passage and perhaps find something besides the image of a herd of swine drowning in the sea.

According to Matthew's account, this is still in Jesus' early ministry; in fact, it is in the time before Matthew's calling, which is not until the following chapter. We are a little after the Sermon on the Mount, and after some early healings. But just after this, Jesus started to draw a crowd of followers, and then, as if to escape this crowd, he got into a boat with the early disciples, and crossed the sea, where he calmed the storm and revealed something of His authority to those in the boat.

This is where Matthew begins today's account, arriving in the "country of the Gergesenes." It is interesting to note that Mark and Luke and even some earlier manuscripts of Matthew use Gadarenes and Gerasenes, and that while there were cities called Gadara and Gerasa, there was no city named Gergesa. It is also interesting to note that Gergesenes means "those who come from pilgrimage or flight." So which town was it? Did Jesus exorcise the demoniac in all three of these places and did more than one herd of swine drown in the sea? No, it was one place, but the answer does not depend on which one of those it was. Even if we go with the nonexistent town as written in Matthew the passage still makes sense to us, for Jesus, in leaving the semitic settlements across the sea, was indeed coming from a kind of pilgrimage into this land. And if we read Gadara and Gerasa instead, as it turns out, both these cities share common attributes. They were both part of a larger group of cities called the Decapolis, and yes, this is a Greek word meaning "Ten Cities." But what is notable about both these towns is that being cities in the Decapolis, they were outposts of Greek and Roman culture in an otherwise Jewish region. That in turn explains why there were swineherds there in the first place, because the



pig was considered unclean and wouldn't be raised by Jewish settlers.

So we see that even this early in His ministry, the Lord was revealing to us the universality of His message. This is particularly important when you consider his encounter with the pious Centurion whose slave Jesus healed earlier in this chapter in the town of Capernaum.

Another thing we see is the reality of demons. Too often we relegate the adverse powers to myth or superstition. In the case of the healing of the epileptic boy, we even dismiss them as a naive understanding of a medical condition. But there is no ambiguity here. The swine did not rush into the sea of their own accord.

Yet we also see the reluctance of the townspeople. Instead of gratitude at ridding them of a menace, they ask him to leave, partly out of fear, but partly out of convenience. They liked their lives as they were, and didn't want anyone interfering. And so, Jesus left.

And finally we bring some relevance into our own lives. Jesus has come to us, a people living in a world that doesn't understand Him; yet, He drives away a strong enemy who is a genuine threat to us. He defeats it so convincingly, that we marginalize its very existence. But it turns out the real threat is not the demons; rather, it is our own status quo that is the true enemy. We are too wrapped up in our own lives and goals to make any room for Him. He accepts us, but we reject Him. We are too self absorbed to be interested in anything He might offer us, so we ask Him to leave. And in His respect for our autonomy, that's what He does.

My brothers and sisters, how often do we hear people say, "If God loves me, he'll accept me for who I am." But we have it backwards. *He truly has accepted us, but we have rejected Him. We are too wrapped up in our own lives to ask Him to stay. We would rather live among the swine of our desires and passions than have Him drive them into the sea of His mercy. And if we don't choose Him now, in this life, why would we choose Him in the life to come? We would rather have wealth, or fame, or power, or the pleasures that life has to offer. We train our souls to want these things. That does not magically change once the soul has left the body.*

So do not be like the townspeople in this morning's Gospel. Do not ask the Lord to depart. Ask Him instead to stay. Drive away the worldly pleasures. Let them drown. Then you need have no fear of the demons, for they inhabit those pleasures and entice you to join them. Reject their offer, for it is seductive but devoid of lasting pleasure or joy. There is only One who can offer you that kind of joy, the Lord Jesus, and to Him be all Glory now and forever. Amen.





Vacation church school 2021 ~ Journey to the Promised Land

Vacation Church School  
Day One – Creation





# HOLY CROSS GREEK SCHOOL

REMINDER!!!

Registration on  
**Wednesday, September 15th**  
**at 4:15p.m.**

Holy Cross Greek School will begin its new academic year on Wednesday, September 15th at 4:15 p.m. Greek School meets every Wednesday from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. There will be classes for beginners in the Conversational Class and our traditional First thru Sixth Grades. The adult class meets on Wednesdays 5-6:30 p.m. Registration and first day of class is also on Wednesday, September 15 beginning at 5pm.

Bring your children to learn our language and enjoy a wonderful fellowship.

On Wednesday, September 15 there will be Student Registration for Greek School, a beginning of the year School blessing (Agiasmos), class assignment and book distribution.

For further information you may call Dena Yamalis at (412) 343-8355.



*Most Holy Theotokos save us!*

**First names for the commemoration during the**

## Paraclesis Services

**during the Dormition Fast, August 1-14.**

**For the health and salvation of the servants of God:**

[illegible]



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

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**SUNDAY,**  
**AUGUST 15**

**DORMITION**  
**OF THE**  
**THEOTOKOS**

**8:15am**  
**ORTHROS**

**9:30am**  
**DIVINE**  
**LITURGY**