

Beloved Members and Friends of Holy Cross,

## Christ is in our midst! HE is and shall always be!

"O God, my heart is ready my heart is ready." (Ps. 57:7)

Blessed is he, my brethren, who can say this to his Lord. Blessed is he whose heart is ready to follow the will of God. The preparedness of a person's heart lies in this: following the will of God with joy and being in no way distracted by one's own thoughts and desires. The repentant King David first followed his own sinful thoughts and desires and was like a ship tossed on a stormy sea. When, however, he realized that the storm would drown him, he turned to God with great repentance and tears, and put the ship of his life entirely into God's Hands. "My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready" he cries with great peace of soul, for King David knew that he has put his ship into the hands of the greatest Captain (Steersman).

The storm may still rage, the wind and waves may still assail us, but we do not fear, for we are sure that nothing can overturn our ship and that it will sail peacefully to a calm haven. A heart that is ready means a heart cleansed of pride and humbled before the majestic power and wisdom of God. A heart that is ready means a heart that is emptied of all worldly desires and is filled with aspirations towards God and love for God. A heart that is ready means a heart healed of all restlessness, cares and fears, and strengthened and encouraged by the presence of God's grace. *(St. Nicholas Velimirovic, Prologue Vol. IV, pg. 116)* 

# AUTUMN FOOD FAIR and YiaYia Joan's Treasures & Market HOLY CROSS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH **Community Center** 123 Gilkeson Road, Mt. Lebanon (across from the Galleria) Wednesday, October 6 & Thursday, October 7, 2021 11:30 am – 7 pm Featuring GREEK favorites including Moussaka, Tiropita, Spanakopita, Pastitsio, rice pudding, soups and much more! Bake Sale featuring delicious Greek pastries, pies, cakes, jams, candies, and a variety of breads. Inside seating...so come rain or shine! Elevator available!! NO PHONE OR ONLINE ORDERING

All proceeds benefit the philanthropic efforts of the Ladies Philoptochos Society.

Cash or Credit Cards accepted.

## Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church

123 Gilkeson Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15228

Crossroads, published monthly Volume 21 Issue 10

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.

\*Services:

Sundays:

Mondays:

Weekdays:

Saturdays:

8:15am Orthros

6:30pm Paraclesis

8:30am Orthros

Wednesdays: 7 pm Bible Study via Zoom

Vespers 5pm

9:30 am Divine Liturgy

9:30am Divine Liturgy

Fr. Michael Kallaur, Economos Fr. Daniel Korba, Presbyter Dn. Frank Dickos, Deacon Elias Diamond, Pastoral Assistant Nena Jovonovich, Secretary Website: holycrosspgh.org Office (412) 833-3355 FAX (412) 833-3357 Community Center Phone: (412) 854-6001 Office Hours Monday-Friday 9am-5pm

Jennifer Moorcroft Thea Manos	(412) 626-9143	*See monthly calendar for all services.
4.1.7 DY 1		
Adrienne Dickos	(412) 833-4980	2021
Carol Halkias	(412) 276-5002	<u>Parish Council</u>
Christine Peters	(724) 693-9290	Dean Stambolis, President
Stacie Metrose	(412) 833-5164	Jordan Nicholas, Vice President
Didra Kirschner	(412) 561-2892	Nicholas Chakos, Financial Secretary
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Georgia Yamalis	(412) 728-2259	Dena Galie
Thespina Christulides	(412)608-6418	John Hoenig
Denise Sokos	(412) 257-1610	Frank Kalogeris
Christine Chapas	(724) 986-2082	Rachel Kartofilis
Thespina Christulides	(412)608-6418	Bob Kirschner
Denise Melis	(412) 341-9264	Deno Pappas
Cynthia Kostelnik	(412) 833-9423	Christine Picard
Rene Koett	(412) 831-3142	Bill Poutous
Mary Portellos	(724) 941-8699	George Sokos
Konrad Mayr	(412) 877-7780	Donna Staub
John Conomos	(412) 831-7997	
Adrienne Dickos	(412) 833-4980	
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	Christine Peters Stacie Metrose Didra Kirschner Dena Yamalis Kristina Gzikowski Georgia Yamalis Thespina Christulides Denise Sokos Christine Chapas Thespina Christulides Denise Melis Cynthia Kostelnik Rene Koett Mary Portellos Konrad Mayr John Conomos Adrienne Dickos <b>tial information</b> er is available for p t no charge. Parisl er they choose to <b>varia</b> (Mercy Meal) suggestions if you nay bring your ow	Carol Halkias (412) 276-5002   Christine Peters (724) 693-9290   Stacie Metrose (412) 833-5164   Didra Kirschner (412) 561-2892   Dena Yamalis (412) 343-8355   Kristina Gzikowski (412) 257-5015   Georgia Yamalis (412) 728-2259   Thespina Christulides (412) 608-6418   Denise Sokos (412) 608-6418   Denise Melis (412) 608-6418   Denise Melis (412) 608-6418   Denise Melis (412) 341-9264   Cynthia Kostelnik (412) 833-9423   Rene Koett (412) 831-3142   Mary Portellos (724) 941-8699   Konrad Mayr (412) 877-7780   John Conomos (412) 831-7997

Our theme for the Church School this year is "**Return and Renewal**." We have experienced a period of isolation and separation during the last year and now we must resume and return to a more regular engagement of life. This, however, should not mean going back to the way things were before the pandemic. Hopefully, we have gained some new insight into what is important during this time of separation. Our priorities and our focus should be clearer and hopefully, our hearts are ready or are getting ready to be open to the will of God. God permits us to experience illness, suffering, separation, and even rejection in order to strengthen our faith and help us realign our priorities. "O God, my heart is ready my heart is ready." Ps. 57:7

Our community of Holy Cross is ready! We are ready to push forward in our ministries, in the many projects that effect the physical structure and appearance of our facilities, and in our liturgical life, the heart of all that we do. We need you! We need your presence and your talents to fulfill the work of the Lord. This begins with our ministries to the youth, especially our Church School, and goes all the way up to the most senior members of our community. There is much to be done and I pray that we all would be open to the will of God.

"O God, my heart is ready my heart is ready."

My brothers and sisters in Christ let us embrace the work of the Lord with joy and let us open our hearts to the will of God.

With love and prayers in Christ, Fr. Michael

### Priest Valery Zakharov – "Let us be open to the will of God"

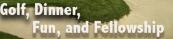
When the Pharisees met Christ, one of them asked, "Who is He?" "Son of Joseph," replied another. We like to believe that we know it all. We like to be confident and unshaken in our decisions and to be convincing to ourselves and others. But most of us are still too far from living in the spirit, even though we do accept into ourselves our Lord, the Creator of the world, both physical and spiritual. As we know from the Scripture, "knowledge puffs up while love builds up". We should not see the Scripture simply as a chronology of historical events connected to the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ, but rather as a message for the here and now. Surely, the worries of this life are keeping us from understanding the deep meaning of God's mysteries. It is as if we are sailing in an ocean. Our time is short, and the ocean is large and deep. Its boundless expanse challenges our imagination. Brave explorers, people like the Frenchman Jean-Yves Cousteau are diving deep into its depths to find out the mysteries that it is hiding. This takes him a lot of time, effort, and money. He is working very hard. Unlike him, we do not have to travel far or to go to such great lengths to find the ultimate treasure - the wisdom of our Lord. We just need to concentrate and be prepared to accept the word of God, and His wisdom will be revealed.

The Scripture tells us that we may be building our house on sand, and if so, it will be blown away by the wind or washed away by the waters. In the old times, houses used to be built on large rocks, one under every corner, and they stood for many years. Our relationship with God should rest on the solid rock of faith, not just on our knowledge of Him, however odd this might sound today. One may read a lot of good books filled with great wisdom, but there are still examples of people who renounce Christ after many years of teaching His word to others. Knowledge is not the way, but only a tool. We need to embrace God unquestioningly, put all our trust in Him, open up our hearts, and accept Him as a real person, as our partner in conversation, as Someone who loves and will never abandon or forget about us, and will always be by our side. We should seek to embrace God in our lives by accepting him artlessly and wholeheartedly like infants. How can we do it? How can we be infants at heart, but not in our thinking? How can we learn to trust God in our relationship with Him? How can we open up our hearts to Him? Finding the answers is difficult, but it is the only way to let God live in us. Knowledge helps, but it will not suffice for a relationship with the Lord. It takes the right attitude of the heart and the mind, which are visible to the Lord alone. So let us thank the Lord again for letting us partake in His sacraments.

O, Lord! Glory to You! O, Lord! Glory to You! O, Lord! Glory to You!

The 7th Annual Holy Cross Memorial Golf Outing

Monday October 4th 2021 South Hills Country Club



Register Now!

http://www.holycrosspgh.org

#### HOLY CROSS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

presents the 7th annual

# MEMORIAL GOLF OUTING

#### MONDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2021

South Hills Country Club 4305 Brownsville Road Pittsburgh, PA 15236

#### PRICING

\$175/golfer or \$700/foursome\*: Includes entry fee, green fee, lunch, and dinner

Dinner only, \$65/person

#### SCRAMBLE FORMAT

Skills prizes: Mens/Seniors/Wome

First place team prizes: Men/Women/Seniors/Mixed

#### ORDER OF EVENTS

11 AM-12 PM Registration & sit-down lunch

> 12:30 PM Shotgun start

5-6 PM Cocktail reception (cash bar)

> 6 PM Dinner/silent auction

Driving range (open all day)

For more information, please contact: Nick Gagianas, 724-312-1100 or Manny Politis, 412-759-4659

#### UNDERWRITER OPPORTUNITIES

\$300 / Website underwriter

\$500 / Beverage, skill prize, driving range, putting green, or printing underwriter

\$750 / Ice cream sundae bar underwriter

Sour your girt bag underwinter

en,000 / Lunch undermitter

\$1,250 / Co-dinner underwriter

\$1,500 / Golf cart underwriter

\$2,500 / Dinner underwriter

#### **PAYMENT & REGISTRATION**

To pay & register by mail, mail this form with payment to:

Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church Att. Golf Outing 123 Gilkeson Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15228

Make checks payable to: Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church Please mark "Golf Outing" in the memo line Golfer name/s:

Phone:

Email:

#### To register and pay online, please visit:

#### www.holycrosspgh.com

Follow the link near the bottom of the page labeled "7th Annual Golf Outing"

\*In case of inclement weather or unforeseen circumstances, golfers will be given a day pass for a future time.



# Walk for Missions 2021

## **Orthodox Brotherhood of Greater Pittsburgh**

Sponsored

### WALK FOR MISSIONS

will benefit current mission work in Guatemala

# Sunday, October 10

# Registration Noon – Walk Begins at 1 PM South Park Children's Playground Shelter

Located at the intersection of Corrigan Drive and Brownsville Road South Park Township, PA 15129

To learn more about the clinic visit: https://www.thewordfromguatemala.com/2017/12/09/new-video-update-on-clinic/ "He said to them: "Go into the world and proclaim the gospel to every creature."

-Mark 16:15

Funds raised will support the ongoing outreach of the Fr. Andrés Girón Orthodox Medical Clinic in the village of Aguacate, which ministers to the heath needs of the Mayan people in the area who have little or no access to affordable medical care.

# WALK FOR MISSIONS Walker's Pledge Form

SPONSOR	SPONSOR CONTACT INFO	PLEDGE AMOUNT	PAID AMOUNT	BALANC

Here's what to do:

- Raise pledges. MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: HOLY CROSS MISSION FUND
- Register on October 10 at South Park Children's Playground Pavilion at Noon.
- Bring your pledge forms and collected money.
- Collect pledge balances by October 29 and mail to:

Walk For Missions, C/O Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church, 123 Gilkeson Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15228 Lunch and light refreshments will be served following the Walk.

\*\*\* For more information or questions, contact Elias Diamond @ediamondhcpgh@gmail.com \*\*\*

I hereby waive and release any rights and claims for injury or damage that may occur to me during my participation in the Walk.

Signature\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Legal Guardian (if under 18)\_\_\_\_\_

# Holy Cross Agape Fund

As many at our parish know, the Holy Cross Agape Fund is a 'vehicle' for outreach and mission which helps many needs and people--some beyond our own Parish doors in the greater Pittsburgh area. Through many donations, from anonymous and gift donors, the Fund has been of countless benefit to many needs over the last 40 years.



The latest donation/contribution from the Agape Fund, approved by the appointed Outreach Committee, who vettes the organizations or needs for such donations, is The Light of Life Rescue Mission.

Through a matching donor program the donation from the Agape Fund of \$15000 will be matched dollar for dollar! (Total donation of \$30,000)

The Light of Life Rescue Mission Center has recently completed Phase

One of building and renovation of its new Center on the North Side of Pittsburgh for its ongoing programs helping men and women through their ongoing Recovery Programs, Housing, Job Training and Employment, as well as temporary Food and Shelter for the homeless and impoverished in our city. It is now launching its Phase 2 for renovation of the current Donation Center into space for its Long Term Program needs as well as offices for Administration. These longer term Programs, such as their Women and Children's Program to aid single women who have suffered from the effects of poverty, abusive relationships and homelessness, and The Men's Homelessness Program are just two of the ways they are making an impact.

The Agape Fund, and Outreach Committee thank the many loving benefators who have donated to the Fund to help in causes such as these near, and sometimes farther from our Parish, helping those who are our neighbors and our brethren.

Light of Life Rescue Mission has been in operation in Pittsburgh since 1952, helping bring healing and hope to men, women and families experiencing homelessness, poverty, and addiction, and transforming lives through the love of Christ.





### Sermon – Beheading of John the Forerunner August 29, 2021

There is a moment in Alice in Wonderland, where Alice inquires of the Cheshire Cat, "Would you please tell me which way I ought to go from here?" to which the cat replies: "That depends on where you want to get to". "I don't much care where", said Alice. "Then it doesn't matter which way you go", responds the cat. So much in life revolves around direction. There are so many ways we can go, and so many things that vie for our attention, that we are at constant risk of running aimlessly. Yet each of us has a compass that allows us to determine our life's direction, and that is our worldview. So as we prepare to begin a new ecclesiastical year this coming Wednesday, we pause to consider what that worldview is and how it affects our entire lives.

It is our worldview that establishes our priorities in life. It tells us which way to go and what to do precisely because it establishes the context of our ultimate goal. When we're planning a vacation, don't we first set the destination before we make the travel arrangements? And don't we avoid things along the way that work in opposition to our ultimate travel goal? Our lives should work in the same way. Yet many of us do not order our lives in accordance with the goal of reunion with God, with salvation. It is as though we do care where we want to go, but make no attempt to travel the road to get there, or worse, we walk the wrong way thinking we'll get to our destination anyway. We say that we wish to be good, but like Machiavelli, many of us would rather be powerful than good, successful rather than moral. After all, powerful people survive and prosper, while good people often suffer.

This is not something unique to modern man. Today we commemorate the beheading of John the Baptist. And Herod Antipas, who ordered both John's arrest and execution, preferred the power of his position to righteousness. It is easy to vilify Herod as a Godless tyrant but that is not an accurate assessment. According to this morning's Gospel, he often went to talk to John and had genuine reverence for this greatest of the prophets. The gospel also records that Herod lamented having sworn the oath that led to the infamous request for the head of John on a platter. But if Herod had kept his goal in mind, he never would have married Herodias, nor would he have arrested John, much less bound himself to a foolish oath and an unjust execution. He may have paid lip service to a Godly life, but his actions proved him unwilling to pay the price. His worldview was not in harmony with his life.

Contrast this with the Forerunner. His worldview was always in laser focus. His purpose was to bring people back to God. He was the

voice crying in the wilderness, preparing the way of the Lord. It was this focus that allowed him to recognize Jesus as soon as he saw Him, proclaiming "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world." And once Jesus began His ministry, it was this same focus that caused John to step back, saying "I must decrease, so that He might increase." John's worldview was so in harmony with his existence that he may even have thought it appropriate to be arrested and ultimately executed. He had accomplished his purpose in life, and was ready to take on his next task. As his apolytikion states, "therefore you strove for truth, proclaiming God even to those in Hades."

If we need another example, we should also consider Moses the Ethiopian, whose memory we celebrated yesterday. Although he had been both a wicked slave and a ruthless, murdering brigand, he repented and became a great ascetic during the fourth century. Two stories of this saint demonstrate the accord of his everyday actions with his worldview. Once, when there was an assembly to judge the fault of a certain brother, he took a basket that had a hole in it, and then he filled it with sand, and carried it on his shoulders. When the Fathers saw him coming they asked him what this meant. He answered, "My sins run out behind me, and I do not see them, and I am come this day to judge failings which are not mine." Moses could not bring himself to judge, because he never forgot that he himself would be judged. Secondly, when brigands attacked the community, he allowed himself to be slain, recalling both his earlier life and the words of the Gospel "He who lives by the sword shall die by the sword". Because of his worldview, he did not see this as unfair or even ironic, but rather just and proper. Although he knew his repentance was genuine, he placed his hope not in the honors of this life, but in his Lord, and in the life to come.

Brothers and sisters, how we look at the world is critical. And not just for us, but for rest of the world as well. We cannot count on anyone else to bring God into our everyday lives. We cannot expect that others will trade power, wealth, and influence, for virtue, mercy, and love. We are the ones who must shine forth and stand true. We are the ones who must be the example to a generation that is faithless and perverse, primarily because it has no direction. If it has a worldview at all, it is not focused on what happens after life. This reinforces that we must never lose sight of where we are going, and order all things in our lives in accordance with that worldview, that our purpose and destiny to be in harmony with God, and to be reunited with Him, and to Whom is due all honor and glory forever. Amen.

~Deacon Frank Dickos

Golden Club September outing at Steeping Tea Leaf Bistro



### **GOLDEN CLUB MEMBERS**

Step back in time as we visit the Duncan & Miller Glass Museum in Washington, PA, 15301 (525 Jefferson Avenue) on **Thursday, October 14.** Touring the museum presents a unique opportunity to explore an extensive collection of handmade glass, dating from the mid-1860's to 1955.

Travel arrangements TBD (carpool or van). We'll meet at the Church at 9:30am and head first to The Spring House for their lunch buffet (1531 Route 136; Washington, PA, 15301). Our tour of the glass museum will begin at 12:45pm, with entrance fee of \$5.00.

**Please RSVP** to Rene Koett, cell: 412-559-1721 or Cynthia Kostelnik, cell: 412-722-9512 by **no later than Friday**, **October 8.** Please remember to bring a mask. We hope you can join us!

New members are welcome to join our 50+ group. Dues are \$10/year.



#### GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

#### ARCHIEPISCOPAL ENCYCLICAL

Prot. No. 217/2021

#### Archiepiscopal Encyclical for the Exaltation of the Holy Cross

September 14, 2021

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

Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at the footstool of His feet, for He is holy. (Introit)

My Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Feast of the Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-giving Cross is a milestone in every liturgical year of the Church, a marker where we can measure our journey of faith. The  $\Upsilon\psi\omega\sigma\mu$  is a moment when we recall that our Lord Jesus Christ was raised up high upon a cross of death and shame, so that He could transform our sinfulness that leads to death, into the perfection of love and sacrifice that leads to eternal life.

As Orthodox Christians, we observe this feast of the Cross with both joy and with fasting. With joy, because we recall the miraculous discovery of the True Cross by Saint Helen. We fill our churches with fragrant basil herbs, to remind us of the life-giving power of the Cross, which was marked by this royal plant, and the sweet savor of our Lord's love for us.

This love of God for all people is why our Theological School and Seminary is named in honor of the Holy Cross. For our sacred  $\Sigma \chi o \lambda \eta$  in Brookline is the place where we instill the tradition of love and service that flows from the Cross on Golgotha, much as the Lord's Holy Blood ran down the rugged wood to make a river of compassion and mercy for the entire world.

Therefore, I exhort all the families of the Archdiocese to support our beloved School with prayer and every manner of sustenance. For we are all the beneficiaries of the training and education with which HCHC equips our clergy, so that they may preach and teach the great lesson of love that the Universal Exaltation embodies. May we always be so blessed to worship at the footstool of His feet, for He is holy!

With Paternal Blessings and Love in Christ,

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+ ELPIDOPHOROS Archbishop of America

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Sun	Mon	Tue
Coffee hours are l Call the church office to sponsor a Sunday!		
<i>3</i> 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy	4 Golf Outing	5
10 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy	11	12
WALK for MISSIONS	6:30pm Paraclesis	orererere S Orerererere
<i>17</i> 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy	18 Apostle &Evangelist Luke 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy 6:30pm Paraclesis	19
24 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy 31 8:15am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy	25 6:30pm Paraclesis	<ul><li>26 St. Demetrios</li><li>8:30am Orthros</li><li>9:30am Divine</li><li>Liturgy</li></ul>

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# October 2021

Wed	Тни	FRI	Sat
		1 Holy Protection 8:30am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy	2 5pm Vespers
6 Autumn G	7 Food Fair	8	9 St. James, Son of Alphaeus
4:15pm <i>Greek School</i> 7-8pm Bible Study	*****	YA (	L Conference 5pm Vespers
13 4:15pm Greek School	14 9:30am Golden Club	15	16 St. Longinus
Clergy Laity			5pm Vespers
20	21	22	23 St. James, Brother of the Lord
4:30pm G <b>reek School</b>			5pm Vespers
27	28	29	30
4:30pm G <b>reek School</b>			5pm Vespers

### Sermon September 12, 2021 ~ Elias Diamond

Imagine, if you will, that one day you are approached by a person, a person you have not spoken to for quite some time. You did everything for this person. You gave them food, you put clothing on their back, you taught them everything they knew, and, above all, you loved them, you loved them with every fiber of your being. Unfortunately, they did not quite return the many kindnesses you showed to them. At best, they would give you genuine thanks and love, but most of the time, they half-heartedly paid lip service to all you did for them, and at their worst, they would talk ill of you behind your back. Although you haven't heard from them in years, however, you now find yourself facing them, and they tell you they need your help. They are telling you they are sick, very, very sick, and somewhere inside you know that this sickness is one that they brought upon their own self through their poor choices. They need an organ transplant, and there is no one else they can turn to but you. Unfortunately, your blood type isn't a match for this person... but your only child, their blood is a match. So the question is, would you even tell your child this, knowing that they might offer their own life for this ungrateful, this unprofitable person, who has no one to blame but themself?

I think most of us would say no, wouldn't we? No matter how noble we think we might be, no matter how noble we would allow our child to be, as humans we instinctively might view this person's request as absurd. How could they have the audacity to ask for such a thing after what they had done? And yet, isn't this exactly what God has done for us? "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The immortal God, who had no need to ever touch death, gives His only-begotten Son over to death, so that humanity may be saved from the curse of death and sin which we have only brought upon ourselves. God sent His Son, not to condemn the world, but rather, so that it might be saved through Him. Which is why, I've heard it said, that true love is not shaped like a heart, but rather like a cross.

With such a great sacrifice as the one God has made for us, what can we ever do in return? The truth of the matter is, that we can never fully repay that debt, hence why it is referred to as the Grace of God. Yet, we must also recognize that the example of Christ's sacrifice is one we are called to emulate, in one way or another. The greatest saints of the Church show us what sacrifice looks like when it is taken to its extreme through the love of Christ. If you read the lives of the desert fathers, you will encounter many saints who slept in cramped desert cells, who lived off of bread and water, who had no possessions but the rags they called clothing, and all of this was so that no barriers could stand between them and the love of God. And yet for us, it might even be very difficult to resist that cheeseburger during Lent. One of the greatest examples of Biblical sacrifice, besides Christ's of course, is found in the pages of the Old Testament, that is, the story of Abraham and Isaac. Abraham in many ways prefigures Christ, for he too is asked to sacrifice his only son. Although God Himself gave Abraham and Sara a child in their old age, Abraham is asked by God later to take this son, so precious to him, and offer him as a sacrifice on the mountain. Of course, we come to understand that God's intention was never to have Abraham sacrifice his son. God only wanted to test the faith of His servant Abraham, and Abraham passed the test. This story takes up a singular chapter of the Bible, Genesis 22. And because of the brevity of this chapter, we have to step back and consider the gravity of what Abraham is being asked to do by God.

Abraham clearly was a man of faith who obeyed God in all things. However, he was also a man, and between the lines of the brief text that constitutes this Biblical story, we can imagine that Abraham too, being human, struggled to fulfill such a weighty sacrifice. In fact, the Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard wrote a book dedicated to considering what was going through Abraham's mind as he made that long journey to the mountain of sacrifice. He imagines the internal struggle of Abraham as a tug of war between the part of himself that wanted to obey God, and the part of himself that wanted to cast off God's commandments and follow his own desire. We all go through such internal struggles, even if they are not as on such a great scale as what Abraham went through. It might be as simple as telling ourselves on a Friday, "Well gee, I've had a really hard day at work. Guess I can have that cheeseburger," but nonetheless we all struggle between our human desires, and the God-given desire to sacrifice for the Lord as the Lord has sacrificed with us. Even if we have struggles and doubts and wrestle with ourselves to be obedient, we too, like Abraham, can persist in our faith and fulfill what the Lord desires of us.

Of course, all our sacrifices must be done from love, for Christ's ultimate sacrifice to us came out of love, and so too should our sacrifices for God be. In doing so, we create an unbroken circuit of love between ourselves and our creator, and in doing so, we find that sacrificing the things which we think we need actually leads us closer to who we truly are. Each of us in some sense is like an unshaped block of wood, yet within that unshaped wood lies an image and icon of God Himself. When we sacrifice, when we rid ourselves of what is unnecessary, we like a woodcarver, we began to whittle away at that block, and reveal again the likeness of the ancient beauty in which we have all been fashioned. So, this week, I would encourage all of us, to remember the words "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," and in remembering these words, I pray that we would all be encouraged to give up something more, no matter how small, so that we may bring ourselves closer to God, and in renouncing, that we may rejoice in the Lord.

#### Icons from museum exhibit in local procession

PITTSBURGH, PA - Orthodox Christian churches from the greater Pittsburgh area will use icons from the Wrestling With Angels museum exhibition in a local procession the first Saturday in October. After the successful icon procession held in March, additional congregations are joining for an icon procession and service of supplication starting at Station Square and ending at Mellon Square Park in Downtown.

The loan of these icons is made possible by Icons for America, a ministry that provides for the loan, transportation, and insurance of the forty-five icons in the Wrestling With Angels permanent collection. Each of the icons was painted by renowned iconographer Vladislav Andrejev, founder of the Prosopon School of Iconology and Iconography, or one of his master students.

On Saturday, October 2, 2021, at approximately Noon, area clergy and faithful will take up the icons from the meeting spot in Station Square and process across the Smithfield Street Bridge to 6th Avenue where a prayer service will be conducted by local clergy at Mellon Square Park. All are welcome to participate in the procession and attend the prayer service, which will have petitions for the peace of our cities and towns and for all those affected by the pandemic. For details visit the Wrestling

#### Pray for Pittsburgh Icon Procession & Service



Join us as we pray for the peace and health of our cities & towns!

- Saturday, October 2, 2021
- Station Square \* Pittsburgh

 Procession at Noon, meet at the corner of West Carson and Smithfield Streets

 Followed by a walk and service of intercession at Mellon Square, Downtown Pittsburgh

 Icons from the Prosopon School of Iconology and Iconography.

• For details, visit the website: wrestlingwithangels-icons.com

With Angels Icons website. (https://www.wrestlingwithangels-icons.com/calendarevents) Inquiries or requests for interviews can be directed to Fr. Michael Sochka, Icons for America Secretary (267.736.9454 or msochka@gmail.com) or to Mrs. Lynette Hull, Icons for America President (609.651.0807 or k2togusa@mac.com).

August 23, 2021

Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church 123 Gilkenson Road Pittsburgh, PA 15228



Neighborhood Resilience Project 2038 Bedford Avenue Pittsburgh, PA 15219 www.neighborhoodresilience.org

Dear Fr. Michael and Parishioners -

Thank you for generously conducting a Backpack Drive to donate to the Neighborhood Resilience Project.

Your generous donation helps continue the mission of the Neighborhood Resilience Project. Rooted in the Gospel and the teachings of the Orthodox Church, inspired by the Civil Rights Movement (American 1950's-1960's), the mission of the Neighborhood Resilience Project is to support the transformation of neighborhoods from Trauma Affected Communities to Resilient, Healing and Healthy Communities through Trauma Informed Community Development.

The Neighborhood Resilience Project is a tax exempt organization with the EIN of 83-2086038. We cannot complete this work without your support.

Thank you and Sincerely,

Rev. Paul T. Abernathy CEO Neighborhood Resilience Project

Jou all mean so you all mean so insideble much to us. Than's you so much l than's you support. yo all of your support. yo remain in our prayers.

# Dinner with Wine Pairings

Net proceeds to benefit IOCC's relief efforts in Beirut

Sunday, November 14 5:30 ~ 7:30 pm

HOSTED BY Khalil's II Restaurant 4757 Baum Blvd. Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Come enjoy a traditional family-style Middle Eastern feast with four wine pairings.

### Tickets: \$75 per person

Seating is limited RSVP by Nov. 6 to reserve your space!

Tickets & Sponsorships at:

iocc.org/pittsburgh

The fair-market value (FMV) for each ticket is \$35. Only the portion of the payment that exceeds the FMV is deductible as a charitable contribution.

International Orthodox Christian Charities

METROPOLIS OF PLTTSBURGH FAMILY MINISTRY COMMITTEE PRESENTS:

# A COUPLES RETREAT

# Renewed Day by Day:

Enlivening Our Marriage Committment

NOVEMBER 6, 2021 | 9:00 AM - 2:30 PM HOLY CROSS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH 123 GILKESON ROAD, PITTSBURGH, PA, 15228

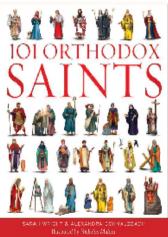
Our speaker, Fr. Alexander Goussetis, serves as the Director of the Center for Family Care of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese. He hosts the podcast on Ancient Faith Radio entitled Family Matters. The couples retreat will feature video clips, couples exercises, wisdom from Church saints on the purpose/goal of marriage – all in an interactive and joyful setting!



To Register, Go to: tinyurl.com/st2u8r92



# Holy Cross Orthodox Bookstore Featured Books of the Month



# 101 Orthodox Saints

Did you know there was a saint who used a dogsled for transportation? Or a saint who jumped from building to building during a siege to bring the Eucharist to his parishioners? Discover these stories and more in *101 Orthodox Saints*. Written for children and those with a childlike curiosity, this visual encyclopedia will enhance your family's understanding and celebration of the saints of the Church. Each page is filled with illustrations, icons, graphics, and fascinating facts about the martyrs, monks, and mothers who boldly lived out their Faith.

# A SACRED BEGINNING:

# <u>Nurturing Your Body, Mind, and</u> Soul during Baby's First Forty Days

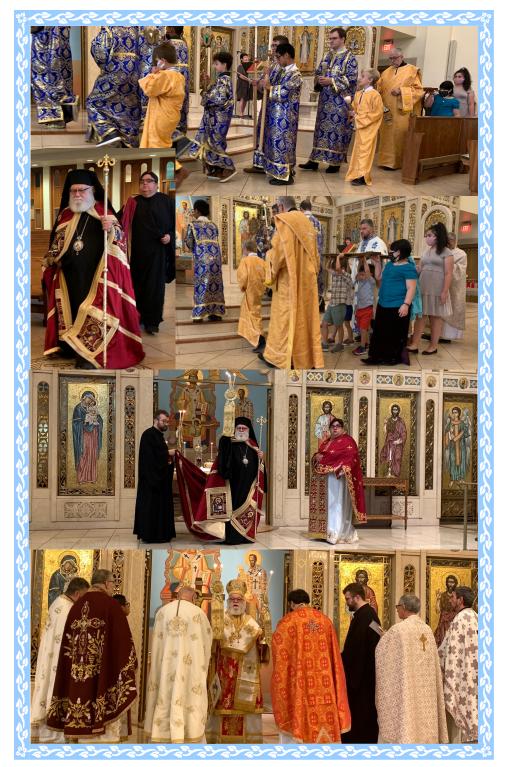
Traditionally, the Orthodox Church has appointed forty days of rest and seclusion after childbirth for mothers to recover from the rigors of birth and get to know their new babies. In the modern world, it can be difficult to understand how to use this time to the fullest in the way it was intended. The authors of *A Sacred Beginning* - a therapist and a family physician who are both mothers themselves - come to the rescue with a resource that addresses the spiritual, emotional, and physical aspects of a mother's recovery from birth, and embarkation on her new life, one postpartum day at a time. A SACRED Beginning

> NURTURING Your Body, Mind, & Soul DURING BABY'S FIRST FORTY DAYS

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Our Holy Cross Orthodox Bookstore is located in the carpeted area of the Community Center. Please be sure to stop by any Sunday following Divine Liturgy. We offer a great selection of Orthodox Greeting Cards and Books for all ages. For additional information, please contact Mary Portellos at 724-941-8699 or maryportellos@comcast.net









# HOLY CROSS – STEWARDSHIP SEPTEMBER 2021 REPORT TO PARISH COUNCIL

#### 2021 PLEDGE DRIVE -

YEAR	STATUS AS OF	# PLEDGES	TOTAL PLEDGED	AVERAGE
2020	As of Sep 15, 2020	362	\$464,316.44	<b>\$1,</b> 477. <b>48</b>
2020	As of Sep 21, 2020	Collected from pledged	\$347,077.25	
		(315) and unpledged (58)	\$20,421.89	
		Total Collected: 373	\$367,499.14	
2021	Pledges for 2021	279 (\$404,665)	\$492,901	\$1,422.98
	pledge drive as of	Including		
	Sep 21, 2021	unpledged(91):		
2021	As of Sep 21, 2021	Collected from pledged	\$308,500	
		(279) and unpledged	\$88,236	
		(91)	\$396,736	
		Total:353		
2020	Matching 2020 as of	Total contributions per	\$184,921	
	June 22, 2021	PDS from 159 families		

Notes:

- 1. 76% of pledges have been collected with 73% of the year completed.
- Pledges are still down almost \$39,000 and collected from pledged members is down \$38,000 compared to this time last year.
- Total money collected is up more than \$29,000 compared to this time last year with 20 fewer donations.
- Total unpledged donations is up more than \$67,000 contributing to the total pledged/unpledged donations being up by \$28,500 compared to last year.
- Approximately 63% of the budgeted goal of \$630,000 has been collected with 73% of the year completed compared to 58% last year.

## If you haven't submitted your pledge card or are unsure, you can call or email the church office at:

## holycrosspittsburgh@gmail.com

## A One Day Retreat:

# Finding our Healing Path: Putting the Past in the Past



When: Saturday, October 30, 2021~10AM to 4PM (lunch provided) Where: St. George Antiochian Orthodox Cathedral 3400 Dawson St~Pittsburgh~15213~Parking Provided To Register: https://www.sgcoakland.org/one-day-retreat-sign-up-oct-2021

Topic: Finding peace and resolution from past painful events can be elusive. We may, for a lifetime, feel like we are trying to find our way through a maze. The purpose of this retreat is to lay out a clear path to healing the unresolved so that the past can be put into the past. When this is achieved, we can engage the present and perceive the future without the disruptive influence of past unresolved events. There will be a combining of Orthodox Spirituality with recent knowledge gained and treatments discovered, that are faith friendly, from the field of Counseling Psychology.

Speaker: Fr. Joshua Makoul M.Div., M.S., LPC Fr. Joshua worked has been the Dean of the St. George Cathedral for 9 years and before that worked in the counseling field for 14 years. He has a Masters Degree in Counseling Psychology and is a Licensed Counselor in the state of Pennsylvania. He is also the author of "Healing Your Wounded Soul: Growing from Pain to Peace" (Ancient Faith Publishing, 2020).





**Return Service Requested** 





