

CROSS CURRENTS

Monthly Newsletter
FEBRUARY 2001



Church of the Holy Cross
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*Articles and ads for the APRIL 2001 Cross Currents
are due on Wednesday, March 28.*

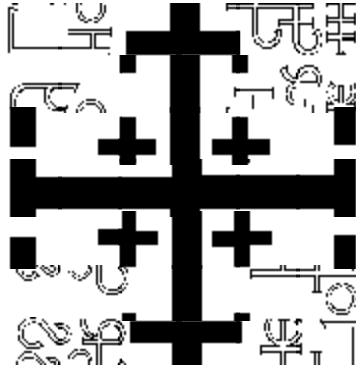
TRUSTING IN GOD

by *Father Peter G. Salmas, Pastor*

"How lovely is thy dwelling place, O Lord of hosts...blessed are those who dwell in thy house, ever singing thy praise!" (Psalms 84:1,4)

On October 18, 1997, we, as a community, embarked upon a most ambitious and spiritually uplifting chapter of our history as an Orthodox Christian family here in the San Francisco Peninsula. On that Sunday, we commemorated the memory of Saint Luke the Evangelist, the first Christian iconographer. It was also our fall General Assembly. I asked our community to join me in this most important work, knowing that it would be a difficult and at times trying endeavor, yet one that would be blessed by our Lord and guided, in a very real and personal manner, by His holy saints.

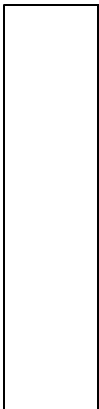
We gathered to meet and to discuss...at the General Assembly, at future Town Hall Meetings, in Studies in the Faith classes, coffee hours, Bible studies, and



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various meetings, the purpose, tradition, concept, style, desire, and need for fulfilling the iconographic tradition in our Church of the Holy Cross.

The topic of iconography for our church has been controversial as well as uplifting, difficult as well as fulfilling, sacred and sublime, mundane yet holy, for in all the discussions that have taken place strong emotions have been at work. Religious as well as secular sentiments have been aired. I believe that the Lord has guided us through each of these stages and brought us to this present time, a time that has offered proponents and opponents alike the opportunity to speak and be heard.

On Sunday, February 11 of this year on the feast of Saint Theodora the Empress, our parish voted to move forward and begin our iconography project. Both the start and finish of this decision-making process has been embraced by the guidance and inspiration of two important saints of our Church. Saint Luke and Saint Theodora mark a beginning and end, a start and culmination, as the Psalmist says, *“Blessed are the men whose strength is in Thee...they go from strength to strength.”* (Psalm 84:5-7) It is significant that this process began with the commemoration of the first Christian iconographer and now culminates with the commemoration of a humble yet valiant defender of our iconographic tradition who is also remembered on the Sunday of Orthodoxy.

I feel very secure in the decision that we, as a community, have made. However, our challenge has just begun. Raising the necessary funds for mosaic icons and building a needed educational center will require each of us as responsible stewards of this vibrant and spiritually strong community to step forward and offer from our material blessings.

Whether we are in a position to commission a major portion or a few tiles, we can all feel a part of this historic time. To date we have received \$300,000 toward the building of the educational center. Of the \$165,000 pledged towards iconography, a little over \$25,000 has been received. You have all received the brochure describing the iconography project and the cost of each icon. In a few weeks you will receive a similar brochure describing the scope and cost of the new center. It is my desire and hope to accomplish both within the next 5 years, in time to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of our parish. It is also my hope and prayer that within this period of time a true relic of our Lord’s Cross will be placed in our Church, further strengthening and inspiring us in our work as Orthodox stewards.

This past Sunday, two palms were pledged commemorating the baptism of twin brothers. Portions of the inscription from the Book of Revelation have also been pledged. The siblings of one family pledged even a single letter. In addition, Saints Nicholas, Nectarios, Constantine and Helen and the Prophet Isaiah have also been pledged and in part fulfilled. A pledge towards the icon of Saint John of San Francisco has also been offered. The faithful hearts behind each of these offers is humbling indeed for no such offering is without its sacrifice.

A garden is made complete by the individual flowers which comprise its whole. Each flower and plant is an integral part of this whole, each petal, an integral part of each plant. So it is with us, as a Christian community, a Christian family. From the rich soil of each of our lives, I pray that our individual and family gifts will come forth to complete these projects dedicated to the glory of God. *“No good thing*

does the Lord withhold from those who walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man who trusts in thee!” (Psalms 84:11b-12)

FROM THE PRESIDENT

by *Nicholas Peros, Parish Council President*

Record Stewardship in 2000!

Thank you for your tremendous support of our Stewardship Program in 2000. With your help we:

- Received a record \$444,200 in donations,
- Balanced our operating budget for 2000, and
- Covered 63% of the total budget with Stewardship donations alone.

We should all feel good about these achievements and the programs and charities they support.

Bob Nemchik and the Stewardship Committee deserve our special thanks. Their leadership and hard work inspired us all.

Planning for the Future

During meetings at the beginning of the year, **Tanya Spirtos, Gary Brenner, Chris Canellos, Father Peter,** and I brainstormed sets of short- and long-term goals for the Church of the Holy Cross.

Many of the goals require ratification by the Parish, some by General Assembly. Many require clarification and perhaps a champion.

Below is a “short list” of the goals for this year and for the next five years. Dream with us. Tell us what inspires you and what doesn’t. Tell us what you think we need, what we can do without, and what we’ve missed.

Please send me your comments and I’ll summarize your feedback in my report at the **April 22** General Assembly. (nickperos@kennedyjenks.com).

Short Term Goals (this year)

| <u>Description</u> | <u>Target Date</u> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Health Insurance for full time employees | 4/22/01 (General Assembly) |
| Hall Management: investigate & fix | 4/22/01 Report |
| | 6/30/01 Implement |
| Hall Property Replacement Program: place settings, kitchen infrastructure, tables, chairs. | 4/22/01 |
| Energy Conservation: Investigate & act. | 4/22/01 Report |
| Investigate feasibility of expanded pension system . . | 10/21/01 Report |
| Internet Email Program: 150-200 Parishioners receiving almost all Church Mailings | |

by email vs. Snail-mail 1/26/01 100 Names to start
 4/22/01 At Goal
 Ushering meeting before Lent 2/22/01
 Finance Committee – meet to evaluate
 & act onstock holdings; move money
 to higher interest bearing accounts 1/30/01

Long Term Goals (within next 5 years)

| <u>Description</u> | <u>Intermediate Goals</u> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| School buildings. | · Develop more detailed plans in 2001 · Raise \$2.5 million to build |
| Icons | General Assembly Approval 2/11/01 |
| Increasing participation of Parishioners in the life of the Parish | Develop Vision Statement: how will we know when we are there? |
| Active Welcoming Committee . . . | Develop Vision Statement: how will we know when we are there? |
| Regular Community Center Programs - music events, lectures, health clinics, <i>etc.</i> | · Community Outreach Committee formed 1/2001 · 3 or 4 “non-food events” this year |
| Senior Citizens’ programs | Develop Vision Statement: how will we know when we are there? |
| Shuttles | Clarify need, develop schedule |

Preschool at Full Enrollment!

On January 19, I received a phone call from an excited **Carlene Scheidtman**, our preschool director. Her message was “The preschool is full!”

The Holy Cross Preschool was founded in 1996 and enrollment has grown steadily. The school has run profitably every year. With 16 older students in the Monday-Wednesday-Friday program and 16 students in the Tuesday-Thursday program, our facilities are now at capacity.

Quality teaching, a quality program, and satisfied parents have combined to cause our preschool to grow notwithstanding competition from the many fine preschools in the area.

There were questions when the Holy Cross Preschool was started including:

- Is there a need?
- Would we be able to compete with established, local, and excellent

schools?

- Would we be at least moderately profitable?

We now know that the answer to all of these questions is “yes.”

There are suggestions in the community that we consider starting a K-5 elementary school here at Holy Cross. These same questions apply. Based on our success with the preschool, I believe strongly that we *need* to move forward with plans. Let’s work together to make an elementary school a reality.

p.s. You may remember that part of your donations for the 40th Anniversary of Holy Cross provided the seed money for the Preschool.

2001 : A SPIRITUAL ODYSSEY

Join us for our second annual symposium on Orthodoxy, **Friday, March 16 – Sunday, March 18**. This year’s theme is “The Veneration of the Holy Cross”. Featured speakers include: **Very Rev. Dr. Joachim Cotsonis**, the Director of the Archbishop Iakovos Library at Hellenic College & Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology; **Dr. John Klentos**, Assistant Professor of Eastern Orthodox Studies at the Graduate Theological Union and Assistant Director of the Patriarch Athenagoras Orthodox Institute, in Berkeley; and, **Mr. George Parsenios**, a Ph.D. candidate in New Testament Studies at Yale University.

Our schedule of events (subject to change) is as follows :

Friday, March 16

- 7:00 PM Salutations to the Theotokos
- 8:30 PM Lenten Potluck & “Our Odyssey,” Rev. Fr. Peter Salmas

Saturday, March 17

- 11:00 AM “The Icon of Extreme Humility & the Themes of Lenten Lamentations,” Rev. Dr. Joachim Cotsonis
- 12:15 PM Break & bookstore
- 12:45 PM “The Cross as Sacrament”, Dr. John Klentos
- 2:00 PM Break, light meal, & bookstore
- 3:00 PM “The Cross of Christ”, Mr. George Parsenios
- 4:15 PM Break
- 4:30 PM “The Cross of Christians”, Mr. George Parsenios
- 6:00 PM Service of Great Vespers

Sunday, March 18

- 8:45 AM Matins
- 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy
- 12:30 PM Lenten Luncheon (\$10 - proceeds benefit HC/HC),
“A Ministry on the Hill,” Rev. Dr. Joachim Cotsonis.

All are encouraged to attend. For more information or to RSVP, please contact the Church of the Holy Cross Office at 650-591-4447, office@goholycross.org or visit our Spiritual Odyssey Web Site : www.goholycross.org/home/spiritualodyssey.html. A donation of \$25 is requested for the weekend's events.

THE STEWARDSHIP OF ST. HARALAMPOS THE HIEROMARTYR - FEBRUARY 10

This is part of a continuing series on Stewardship sent to us by the Archdiocese' Stewardship Ministry office. Additional articles may be found at their website - www.goarch.org.

"You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. The hardworking farmer must be first to partake of the crops. Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things..." (2Timothy 2:1-7)

In the early Church, the term "**martyr**" was originally used when characterizing the Apostles as witnesses of Christ's life and resurrection [Acts 1:8, 22]. Due to the persecutions that the early Christians endured, however, the term was applied to those who gave their lives for the Christian Orthodox Faith. In Greek, the word martyrs (*martu-*) means, "witness" and, the verb form, martyred, means to "bear witness" or "give evidence."

Though martyrdom was not a constant experience for the early Church, it was a possibility with which the early Christians had to reckon. It was the consummate act of faith for as the Lord said: "**Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends**" (John 15:13). Before actually being executed, however, the martyr usually endured extreme physical and moral sufferings.

One of the saints recorded to have endured the greatest suffering of any martyr was the presbyter, Haralampos. As a second century priest in Magnesia, Asia Minor, he served his people with great faith and love. His reputation as a man of God had spread throughout the area and many people came to the Faith through his preaching the Good News of Jesus Christ. During a period of extreme persecution, Haralampos did not hide, but openly and boldly preached the Christian Orthodox Faith! When Haralampos was finally arrested for having the courage to preach the

Gospel, his persecutors devised a plan of persecution for everyone to witness. Although he was tortured repeatedly, he never denounced his faith in Jesus Christ. For several months this persecution went on and not once did Haralampos weaken in his faith. Forced to suffer extreme pain and degradation, Haralampos continued to preach and many miracles and conversions took place among the people. When the soldiers thrashed the skin from his body Haralampos said: "**Thank you, my brethren, for scraping off the old body and renewing my soul for new and eternal life.**" In the final moments of his life, moments before he was to be beheaded, Haralampos lifted his hands to heaven and prayed for all humankind: "**Lord, You know that men are flesh and blood; forgive them their sins and pour out Your blessing on all.**" Following this prayer the saint gave up his soul to God and died without the sword being laid to his neck.

The Holy Spirit filled the martyrs and inspired them. Although we may not experience persecution in our day and age, we, too, are called to follow the blessed example of the martyrs. Having partaken in the Holy Mysteries of the Church through Holy Baptism and Holy Chrismation, we are obligated to follow the example of the saints and strengthen our Church for the ages to come. As stewards of our precious Christian Orthodox Faith, our support to our local parish strengthens the ability of our Church in America to preserve the Faith of the Apostles, Martyrs, and Fathers of the Church. Let us joyously be witnesses of the Faith by offering our **Time, Talents, and Treasure** to the glory of God.

FROM STUDIES IN THE FAITH

*This past fall, **Father Peter & Father Christopher** offered the Studies in the Faith course, "A Survey of the Orthodox Church." At the conclusion of the class, each participant was asked to prepare a short reflection on some aspect of the Orthodox Church - from her theology to their unique participation. The papers and presentations were excellent! Over the next few months, excerpts from their presentations will be included in Cross Currents for our edification as a parish. May their words inspire us in our own spiritual pursuits and allow us to realize the benefit of learning more about our faith through our active participation in our study classes (the next series of classes beginning the first week of Lent).*

THE "IDIOTS GUIDE" TO PRACTICING ORTHODOXY DAILY

by *Peter Kolotouros*

It seems everywhere we look nowadays; people are interested in "getting connected" to the information age. They purchase cell phones, pagers, computers and PDA's to make their lives simpler. They spend endless hours-learning protocols, learning com-

puter languages, and studying what's new and what's not. This is all done in an effort to perfect their ability to utilize these marvelous silicon based creations. A whole industry has been created to assist them learn "how to". It is entitled the "Idiots Guide to Windows, Excel, Word, etc". The list of titles is endless. The series success is due to the books ability to simply and concisely teach its readers the most important core concepts. So often, we, as Orthodox Christians, in our busy, hectic day to day existence, forget the treasure of faith we have before us and the power it has to help us through the day. Therefore, in the spirit of the "Idiots Guide", I have decided to write my final on how we can practice Orthodoxy daily.

I have broken it down into three areas: Patience · Humility · Prayer

If we are able to remember and practice these three things every day, in my experience, one is better able to not only practice, but "experience" Orthodoxy. We strive to be more "Christlike". When we consider the three areas, let us use Christ and his life as the example.

Patience-One must be patient not only in reaching their own goals but with others. When is the last time we became upset while driving on the freeway? Have we do we listen to others? Are we quick to judge?

Humility-We must not only humble ourselves before God but before our fellow man. The absence of humility leads to arrogance. Arrogance is expressed in the absence of concern for our brothers. It becomes all about me, which takes away from the glory of God.

Prayer-Why are there only certain times we pray? God asks us to pray "unceasingly". Through prayer we humble ourselves before God and ask forgiveness. In this way we cleanse our minds and are better able to put into perspective those things that are truly important.

OUR VISIT TO SAINT NICHOLAS SCHOOL

by *Chris Canellos*

(This is the first in a series of occasional articles on the possibility of opening a parochial elementary school here at Holy Cross.)

It's a sunny Friday morning in Southern California, just before President's Day weekend. Everywhere you look, enthusiastic children are smiling and playing and learning in a loving Orthodox Christian environment. Is this the Pasadena Folk Dance Festival? Not exactly. We missed the 210 Freeway exit off the 5 and ended up instead in Northridge at the St. Nicholas School on the campus of the St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church.

After a quick check-in at the principal's office, **Eva, Christian** and I made our way to **Mrs. Pallad's** fifth grade classroom, where we were greeted by eighteen of the brightest and most energetic and attentive young people we have ever met. The youngsters embraced Christian and had all kinds of questions for us, ranging from Eva's experience as a reporter in Palm Springs to my acquaintance with **Tiger Woods**.

We were a pleasant break in their rigorous academic day. One of the girls said they were studying algebraic equations. As a proud math major, I had to inquire as to how many students liked algebra, and about half responded affirmatively. Like it or otherwise, Mrs. Pallad will have many more algebra lessons for her class and some geometry as well. Her fifth graders will learn the basics of circles, ellipses, parabolas, hyperbolas, triangles and squares. As I recall, these were concepts we did not learn until seventh or eighth grade in the public schools.

Mrs. Pallad's science class this year involves physics. They just completed an interesting unit on gears; the kids were totally enthralled to learn how their bicycles operated. Next up, Newton's laws (Sir Isaac, not Fig) where orbital motion is a classic application of the ellipse they met in math class. Yes, we are still in fifth grade.

Reading is an important part of the curriculum. Mrs. Pallad's students read a 150-page book once every two weeks and write book reports, twenty over the course of a year. Additional compositions, focusing on current events, are also required.

Enrichment opportunities abound!! Children receive an hour each of music and art instruction weekly. The fifth graders take a field trip to Sacramento each year to visit their state government officials. They also visited the Los Angeles Times offices to see how a newspaper is published. The students are also immersed in the wealth of local museums and theater. And practicing what they have learned, the children are continuously involved in putting on plays and musicals for their community. Eva and I witnessed such a spectacle a few years ago when the entire school put together a fantastic salute to the newly appointed **Archbishop Spyridon**. The program reviewed major events in his life, including his days as a high school football player, complete with the singing of his high school alma mater.

Greek language instruction is offered two to three days per week. The fifth graders conjugate verbs and recently enjoyed viewing the movie "Lion King" entirely in Greek.

The Orthodox religion is also taught two to three days per week. A newly ordained deacon is taking the students through a comprehensive study of the parables this year.

Mornings begin with a general assembly; the pledge of allegiance is recited followed by the Lord's Prayer; a patriotic hymn is sung. The major feasts of the Church are celebrated with the entire school participating in Divine Liturgy. A fifty voice children's choir sings the responses and a rotating team of acolytes serve at the altar. Each Friday afternoon, a Vesper service and a brief presentation by one of the

priests conclude a busy week.

Not only does learning happen here. You are impressed with the loving family setting of this school. It is the same environment we are used to for our kids on Sunday mornings--only the St. Nicholas children benefit from it every day of the week.

And as you would expect, St. Nicholas School is one of the most highly respected schools in the San Fernando Valley, teaching 380 students from pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. The proof is in the many Presidential Awards for Excellence given to eighth graders and the consistently high rankings of St. Nicholas students in private high school entrance examinations. So far ahead of the public schools, Mrs. Pallad confesses one problem. It's often hard to find reading texts for the early grades that are academically challenging enough for the St. Nicholas students.

We found the 210 Freeway and made our way to Pasadena with these thoughts. St. Nicholas School demonstrates that a superior elementary and middle school program can be built in a Greek Orthodox faith based setting, where clergy, parents, teachers and students work together with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. I believe that with a proper facility, the dedication of all our families to this important cause and an outstanding, young, motivated Orthodox faculty already in our parish, our Holy Cross children will soon share the fantastic experience of learning their lessons of faith as well as the 3R's right here on our Church grounds.

A VISIT FROM MOTHER IVONNE

by *Claire Sperow*

On January 27, our parish warmly welcomed **Mother Ivonne** from the Hogar Rafael Ayau Orthodox Orphanage in Guatemala. We were blessed with the opportunity to pray with her during vespers and also to hear her speak after services.

As we enjoyed dinner, Mother Ivonne shared with us the many slides and stories about this special orphanage. The Hogar (which means "home" in Spanish), is home to 150 abandoned and battered children, aged newborn to twelve years old. These children, who arrive with many physical illnesses as well as emotional troubles, are all baptized into the Orthodox faith soon after arriving. "Love transforms!", Mother Ivonne told us. The love these children receive from attending daily church services (along with partaking Holy Communion frequently), along with the love they receive from the 5 nuns who take care of them, heals not only their bodies, but their souls as well. I have personally seen this transformation during the three visits

I have made to the Hogar within this past year as a missionary. Mother Ivonne let us know that teaching the children that God loves them helps them to realize that there is someone who cares. In addition, the missionaries who come and visit become pen pals (I am to many children, and it is such a joy!), which is also very healing for the children. These little ones begin to trust adults and the children begin to give and receive love.

Mother Ivonne also expressed her concern for the future of these precious children. There is an adoption agency working with the orphanage to be sure that these children are adopted and given a bright future. During my stay at the Hogar this past July, Mother Ivonne shared with us the story of three siblings who wrote a letter to Jesus asking Him to bring them parents. It was such a touching story! These children are still awaiting parents. In addition, one of my Godchildren, **Eliseo**, has 3 brothers, and I have just found out that these 4 children are in need of parents, also. There are many, many children who are waiting patiently for parents. The wait is difficult, especially since the children see their friends being adopted and they are left behind to wait. Please, if you or someone you know is interested in adopting, please let me know. I also have some joyful news!

One of my Goddaughters from the Hogar, Raquel, will be adopted by the **Chechopoulos Family** here at Holy Cross. It's truly a miracle! Please pray that she will be with us very soon!

I know everyone who attended the presentation felt the love Mother Ivonne has for the children. I'd like to thank all of you who have graciously supported the orphanage in the past, with either prayers, donations or shoes. If you have not yet had the opportunity to help, now is an excellent time. I just received word that many packages of food, diapers, and other necessary items which have been sent to the orphanage within the past month have been stolen by the cargo company. The nuns are now relying on donations from the United States in order to purchase the needed items in Guatemala. If you would like to help in the midst of this crisis, you may send your check, payable to *Holy Cross* with the word "orphanage" in the notes section, to the church office. In addition, please look out for a special parish wide opportunity to help the orphanage this Lenten Season. Thank you in advance for your help!

Furthermore, I would like to thank both **Fr. Peter** and **Fr. Chris** for their support of this special mission. I'd also like to thank **Theodora Kounalakis** for baking the delicious pastitso, and **George, Linda, Eleni, Ani, Aris** (and **George's Mom**, too!) **Chechopoulos**, along with my Mom, **Demetra Sperow**, for all of their help to make the dinner a success! If you have any questions about the orphanage, please feel free to contact me. I wish you many blessings this Lenten Season!

THE SUNDAY COFFEE HOUR

Philoptochos would like to thank those who have hosted Coffee Hours in the past and encourage continued sponsorship by those who have not had the opportunity.

The weekly Coffee Hours are for everyone's enjoyment, offering an important time for fellowship and discussion. Its continued success depends on large measure on families in the parish to sponsor them on various Sundays throughout the year.

Philoptochos Board members enjoy sharing this responsibility as they too have **PERSONALLY** donated the coffee cake, cookies, fruit, etc, for each Sunday for up to 100 people! Yes it is quite a financial commitment, but one well worth the effort.

Each Sunday, two members of the Board are responsible to prepare The Oaks for Coffee Hour. They arrive early before Liturgy to set out the table cloths, put out cups, napkins, juice, etc. and make the coffee. They also stay after everyone has left to clean..

Because we have only 17 members on the Board, each of us has the responsibility every 6 weeks or so. In addition, we also commit a great deal of time and effort to sponsoring Vasilopeta, Christmas Tea, Fashion Show and other fund-raising activities.

It would be wonderful if all the parishioners who enjoy the Coffee Hours would become a sponsor - a great way to celebrate a nameday, birthday or any other special day.

And remember, there will always be Philoptochos Board Members to help you.

Sign up **THIS Sunday** or call **Fran Bibbes** at 593-2828 to reserve your Sunday. Thank you for your support and remember that **ALL** proceeds go to the various charities of Philoptochos.

PHILOPTOCHOS MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

"Philoptochos" literally means "friend of the poor." Membership is open to all women over eighteen years of age, whether she can be an active member or a supporting member in this dynamic and growing organization. Philoptochos invites YOUR membership. The membership renewal calendar is **January to December 31** of each year. Your donation to Holy Cross Philoptochos must include at least \$14.50 for SF

Diocese Philoptochos and national dues. The amount of your Holy Cross Philoptochos membership donation is your decision. Please join us! Make new friends and strengthen relationships with old friends.

*My 2001 Membership Pledge - After thought and prayer, enclosed is my Philoptochos membership contribution for the year **January 1, 2001 to December 31, 2001**. For each paid member, \$14.50 is designated for the National and SF Diocesan Philoptochos, and the remainder is allocated for local philanthropic projects through Holy Cross.*

*Please include your name, address and pledge (made to **Philoptochos**) and send to Philoptochos membership chair, **Roxanne Koston** / 3836 Harvest Drive / Redwood City, CA 94061*

HOLY CROSS OUTREACH

The servers at the Samaritan Kitchen for **February** were: **Fro Sclavos**, and **Edie Christoforidis**. We serve the third Friday of the month. There is no food prep involved. Join us by calling **Vivi Sarantitis** at 697-3739.

Thanks to the ladies who participated at the Samaritan House Kitchen Food Preparation in **February**: **Fran Bibbes**, **Yvonne Gavros** and **Helen Valavanis**.

The next preparation dates are **March 14 & 20** (the second Wednesday and third Tuesday of each month). Please join us if you can. Interested parishioners should call **Edie Christoforidis** at 345-8981.

SPOTLIGHT

Congratulations to senior **Errol Thodos** whose win helped give Hillsdale to the PAL-Ocean Division crown. Errol teched his San Mateo High opponent, 19-4. (If you don't know what "teched" means, get off the mat.)

Congrats to Mercy High junior striker **Vanessa Craighead** who scored the game's only goal to lead her team over Pinewood Academy, and who scored two goals in a 4-0 win over Notre Dame (San Jose) that put Mercy in first place in the Private School Athletic League.

Congrats to Burlingame senior striker and high school soccer legend **Nick Kounalakis** who fulfilled every athlete's fantasy of scoring the winning goal with only a few seconds remaining. Nick, who had been laid up for a month due to a sprained ankle, entered the 1-1 game with 15 seconds left, and accomplished that task with a header off a throw-in past the Leland goalie. The win pushed Burlingame into the CCS-II semifinals.

February 2001 Youth Currents

*Grow in the Grace and knowledge
of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

2 Peter 3:18



Athletics

by *Frank Catomer*

The basketball season for the Junior Varsity is approaching the half way point. All five teams are performing very well. Our young boys and girls C teams are both undefeated and playing extremely well. We ended up with 60 players, and the five teams, as previously mentioned participating this season.

There are still plenty of games left, including the playoffs in the first week of March, to watch and support our Youth. It would be great to see more attendance at our games. It would really add to the excitement level that already exists.

I want to congratulate the coaches for doing a fine job with their teams to date. **Natasha** and **Kati Loukianoff** have done a very fine job with the Girls A Team. It is, for the most part, a very young team. They are both very enthusiastic and have a lot of positive energy to share with their girls. As usual, **Chris Chidester**, is doing a great job with the Boys A team. At playoff time, they will be a force to be reckoned with. Chris is also helping me with the Boys B Team, a team that is going to surprise everyone in the Playoffs. We have yet to have a full compliment of players for any game, but the improvement is obvious. **Tom Mavrakakis** is doing a terrific job with the Boys C Team. They are undefeated and playing very unselfish basketball. The Boys C Team has not lost a game since the Championship game in 1999. **Alesia Panagiotides** is helping me with the Girls C Team, along with **George Mitropoulos**. Alesia has been very helpful at practice, making them more productive. George has been kind of my right hand, over the last couple of years, with coaching and general support to the program that does not get as much attention. But, he is always there when needed. We have a great group of coaches who have done a great job of working with our Youth. We are very fortunate.

I sure want everyone to take notice of what our Athletic Program represents. We want all of our kids to participate, no matter how skilled. I hope that it is a fun experience for all who participate, including the parents. I will keep everyone apprised as to how our Teams are doing, as the season reaches a conclusion.

Hope to see you at one, or more, of our games. You can contact me at 343-7191, in the evenings to get the future schedule of games, including the playoffs, or to inquire about your child's participation in the fall of 2001.

What Does the Youth Choir Sing Anyway?

The Holy Cross Youth Choir takes an active role in worship services during Great Lent, Holy Week and Easter. The group sings on the first and third Sundays of Lent during Liturgy and also during the special services following Liturgy. On the first Sunday of Lent, there is a service commemorating the restoration of icons to the Church, and the Youth Choir sings a special hymn several times, "Your Pure and Holy Image," which says that we honor Christ's pure and holy image and we ask His forgiveness of all our faults, as He went up on the cross "to deliver (His) creation from Satan's servitude." On the third Sunday of Lent, we commemorate the Holy Cross, and so we sing "We Venerate Your Cross" and our Church Hymn, "Save, O Lord, Your People," several times. On all Sundays in Lent, we also sing "To You, O Champion," a special hymn dedicated to the Mother of God, the Virgin Mary.

The Youth Choir is also preparing to sing the entire Liturgy on **Lazarus Saturday**. On this day, we remember when Christ raised His friend Lazarus from the dead. The following day, **Palm Sunday**, the group will sing with the Adult Choir during Liturgy, including special hymns that recall Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem, riding on a donkey. On **Lazarus Saturday** and **Palm Sunday**, the special hymns repeat a key phrase over and over, the same phrase that the children shouted when Jesus rode into Jerusalem, "Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord."

Following Liturgy on **Palm Sunday**, the Youth Choir will sing "O Pure Virgin," another special hymn honoring the Virgin Mary as "the mistress of creation" and "height transcending heaven above," and proclaiming over and over, "Rejoice, O Unwedded Bride!" Finally, the Youth Choir will sing during the Vespers of Love on Easter Sunday. On Easter, we will sing several special hymns, but none more glorious than our Church's triumphant "Christ Is Risen," or "Christos Anesti," which proclaims that Christ has trampled death and risen from the dead.

As you can see, the Youth Choir members learn a great deal about our faith while learning to sing these fantastic hymns! They also learn that our faith is very rich in its gorgeous music!

The Youth Choir is for all young people in third grade or above who love to sing. We rehearse on **Fridays** at 4-5 PM. We welcome more singers in this fun and talented group. If you want to join, have your parent contact **Eva Canellos**, 341-9080, or **Khara Salmas**, 345-6830.

Lazarus Saturday Service Geared for Youth

Be sure to set aside **Saturday, April 7**, Lazarus Saturday, for Liturgy at 9:00 AM, with the Youth Choir singing in the loft and with the annual folding of palms immediately after the service.

On Lazarus Saturday, we remember that Christ raised His friend Lazarus from the dead, even though he had been in the tomb for four days. We also remember the children of Jerusalem who waved palms as symbols of victory and shouted praises to the Lord as He rode on a donkey into the Holy City on Palm Sunday.

Following Liturgy, the young people of our parish, their families and other parishioners will gather to fold palm fronds into crosses to be blessed and distributed to the parishioners on Palm Sunday. Many hands are needed, so bring your family and friends and join us! No experience needed; we'll train you! A light breakfast will be provided for all.

Come to Portland for Swimming, Music and Fun!

A pool party, campfires and trips to Camp Angelos and the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry are just some of the activities planned for young people attending the Diocese Church Music Conference, **June 28-July 1**, in Portland. The youth will also form a Youth Choir and sing hymns for Sunday Liturgy along with a large Adult Choir.

The young people attending the Conference will explore the acres of woods, a soccer field, fishing holes, picnic spots, a railway caboose and more at rustic and beautiful Camp Angelos. In addition, they'll head to the Science and Industry Museum which will feature a blockbuster event, "Theme Park," which will give guests a behind the scenes peek at the physics and engineering of popular theme park rides including a special look at Universal Studio's "Islands of Adventure!" The spectacular OMNI-MAX theater will present virtual expeditions through snowboarding exploits, skysurfing air swoops and big-wave surfing! But bring a towel, because you'll also go to a "real" pool party with "real" water in a "real" pool!

Registration forms will be available soon. All young people ages 7-17 are invited! For more information, call **Eva Canellos**, 341-9080.

Graduating Seniors!

Applications for the Philoptochos Church and Community Service Awards are available in the Church Office (M – F, 9 AM – 5 PM). Deadline is **April 11**. Any questions please call **Christine Hopkins** at 367-7861 or **Dee Sperow** at 588-0739. Best of luck to all of you.

Ionian Village

Last month, **Fr. Christopher, Presbyteria Krissy, Anastacia Stamates**, with five of our high school students, offered an informative presentation on Ionian Village to members of our Senior GOYAn families. Unfortunately, due to weather and finals, it was a small group in attendance. However, even with the small numbers it seems that we are getting together quite a group together to attend this summer's program in Greece (It looks like we will have an even larger group in attendance than last year)!

In the months ahead, more information will be offered about this Archdiocesan Ministry and Village located on the northwest coast of the Peloponessos, about 45 miles west of the city of Patras. Please speak with Fr. Christopher if you would like more information about the program and our plans for this Summer (travel, fundraising...)! Also, visit the Ionian Village website: <http://www.ionianvillage.org>

The 2001 Saint John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival

*Holy Cross Youth Grades 7-12. We want to hear from you on **April 1!** Now is the time for you to start preparing your talk on this year's theme, "The Liturgical Year". Learn more about your faith and your Orthodox tradition and get ready to share it with others. If you have any questions, please contact Ms. **Sophia Kalamaras**, the Holy Cross Oratorical Festival Chair, 610.9624 / skalamar@seq.org*

Junior Division (grades 7-9) ***Length of Oratory: 3-4 minutes

1. Icons have been an important part of the life of the Church for centuries and something that we, as Orthodox Christians, take for granted. Speak on the life of Saint John of Damascus and his fight against the iconoclasts.
2. Although he died before icons were finally allowed back into the Church, Saint Theodore the Studite's efforts were not in vain. Speak on the life of Saint Theodore and his crusade for the restoration of icons.

3. Saint Basil the Great lived one of the more exciting lives among the Fathers of the Church. Speak about the Divine Liturgy that bears his name.
4. When Saint John Chrysostom delivered a sermon on one of the readings from the bible, he always tried to offer a moral message to his congregation. Choose one of Saint John's sermons and discuss the moral message contained in it.
5. Some 1,400 years ago, a simple monk by the name of Saint John Climacus, abbot of the famous monastery of Saint Catherine's in the Sinai desert, wrote an important book known as "The Ladder of Divine Ascent." Choose one or two chapters of the book and discuss how what Saint John writes can influence your life.
6. Saint Romanos Melodos wrote hymns for most of the major feast days of the Church. Speak about Saint Romanos and his contribution to Orthodox hymnology.

Senior Division (grades 10-12) *Length of Oratory 4-5 minutes**

1. The Church, led by Saint Athanasios the Great, rejected the teachings of Arianism. Speak about the life of Saint Athanasios and his fight against this heretical doctrine.
2. The spiritual life which monks or nuns live is a direct result of the writings of Saint Gregory Palamas. Speak on the life of Saint Gregory and his writings on spirituality.
3. All of Christianity acknowledges the important role of Mary, the mother of Jesus. Speak about Saint Cyril of Alexandria and his defense of the term "Theotokos" at the Third Ecumenical Council.
4. For the first three hundred years of the Church's history, it was illegal for Christians to practice their faith. Speak about the life of Saint Justin the Martyr and his defense of Christianity.
5. At the Council of Florence (1438-1439), hundreds of bishops, including the Pope of Rome and the Patriarch of Constantinople, gathered together to discuss the differences which separated the two Churches. Speak about Saint Mark of Ephesus at the Council of Florence.
6. In one of his most famous books, Saint John Chrysostom describes the characteristics necessary for a priest to be effective. Speak about Saint John's treatise on the priesthood.

Information for Speakers

You must be in good standing with the Church to participate (i.e., attend Church, Youth Religious Education).

Speech topics must be chosen from this official list.

The Speech given at the parish level must be the same speech given at the district, diocese and national festivals (without substantial changes).

Parish Finalists will take part in the District Festival to be held at Holy Cross (the winners from this event will advance to the Diocese Festival at Saint Nicholas Ranch, & the 1st place winners will advance to the National Festival).

Youth Calendar

Feb 26 - Clean Monday, Lent begins, Compline 7 PM

27 - Youth Groups meet @ the Church, 7:30 PM

28 - Pre-Sanctified Liturgy, 7 PM

March 9 – 11 - GOYA/Jr. GOYA Lenten Retreat in SANTA BARBARA!

April 1 - Holy Cross Oratorical Festival (following Liturgy)

July 26 – August 13 – Byzantine Venture @ Ionian Village

Please contact **Fr. Christopher** or our Youth Advisors for more information about any of these activities.

Most American Teens Believe in a Judgment Day

Taken from *Youthviews*, December 2000

Many also believe good people will go to heaven, regardless of whether or not they believe in God. Eight in ten teens (81 percent) agree that there will be a day when God judges whether they go to heaven or hell. This figure includes 88 percent of Protestant teens and 81 percent of Catholic teens. It also includes 89 percent of teens who attended religious services last week and interestingly, 74 percent of teens who did not.

Close to half of teens (48 percent) agree with the statement that if they are a good person they will go to heaven whether or not they believe in God. Here the differences among religious groups begin to really show. For example, only 37 percent of Protestant teens believe heaven is for all good people regardless of beliefs, but 63 percent of Catholics do. Only one-third of those who attended religious services last week (34 percent) hold the belief that all good people go to heaven regardless of belief in God, compared with 61 percent of those who did not attend.

More than four in ten teens (44 percent) agree that religions have unnecessary rules and responsibilities. Protestants and Catholics are fairly close here (39 percent of Protestants and 44 percent of Catholics see some unnecessary aspects to their religion). Among teens that attended religious services last week, 39 percent see some unnecessary rules and responsibilities in their religion. (Forty-nine percent of those who did not attend services have this view as well; however, some of those are people who do not have an "organized" religion whose rules and responsibilities

they might be expected to follow.)

Nearly four in ten teens (39 percent) say there are a lot of things taught in their religion that they don't really believe. This figure includes 30 percent of Protestants and 46 percent of Catholics. It included only 27 percent of those who attended services, but half of those who did not (49 percent).

Boys appear to be more cynical about religious expectations than girls. For example, they are less likely than girls to believe in the concept of a Judgement Day (79 percent of boys; 84 percent of girls). They are more likely than girls to agree that religions have unnecessary rules and responsibilities (47 percent of boys versus 41 percent of girls). And they are more likely to disbelieve a lot of things their religion has taught them (42 percent of boys, versus 35 percent of girls).

Your Lenten Journey

by *Bill Callas*

In shape? Ready to go on an Odyssey that will involve your mind, body and soul like never before? Up for the challenge to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ”? Then prepare yourself for the Lenten journey.

Lent is not just a time for abstaining from certain types of foods and cutting back on radio and TV. It is not just a time for stopping harmful and hurtful thoughts, words and deeds. It is not just a period of time that cuts into our “routine”. It is, however, a period of time to get us out of our routine.

It is a time for us to wash away the excesses of our life and turn to Him. He is the only one who can save our life, and has saved our life through his death and resurrection. A holy act that paid the ransom for our sins in blood, His. It is a time to seek Him with pure and loving hearts, through increased church attendance, frequent participation in the Holy Sacraments, increased spiritual readings and the doing of good works.

All these will bring us closer to Him as we prepare to meet our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ on Easter Sunday with a heart full and overwhelmed by His Grace and love for us. No one who trusts in Him will go away from his table empty.

May you have a blessed, Spirit filled Lenten journey.

FDF 2001

by *Victoria Najarr*

The month of February is filled with holidays- Valentines Day, Groundhog Day and Presidents Day. Perhaps the most important “holiday” of the year, to many Greek-Americans happens to fall on Presidents Day Weekend - FDF, which will be held in Pasadena this year. The Folk Dance Festival, which was started by **Bishop An-**

thony, many years ago, is a chance for the western region Greek dance groups to unite and share their love for dance. Although FDF is a dancing competition, much of our time spent there is visiting old friends, making new ones, listening to Greek music and speaking Greek.

The competition consists of 2 rounds: Semi-Final and Final Rounds. Each round may be from the same or different region of Greece, as long as the dances within each round are the same. Semi-Final Round is a ten-minute suite, which is performed on Friday after the religious workshops. Final Round is a twelve-minute suite, performed on Saturday, which counts for the majority of the judges' score. Sunday morning church services always include several priests and bishops formal over the area. Sunday night, after a weekend full of fun, the Awards Banquet marks the end of the weekend.

At our church, the dance groups have been preparing for FDF since November. With some groups practicing up to three times a week, we have improved greatly since we started; earlier this year and all dance groups at Holy Cross are ready to show off their dancing skills. At FDF this year, we are going there to have fun, be proud of our performances on stage and represent our parish as Orthodox Christians. Good luck to all of the dance groups participating this year!

Godparents

by *Vanessa Craighead*

Who are godparents? Godparents are people that are like spiritual parents in a way; they are there for your personal and spiritual needs. Godparents are extremely important in living an orthodox life; they are your spiritual guides that take you on a path down an orthodox trail. Being baptized into orthodoxy is an honor, and your godparents bring that honor alive by keeping you under their wing. Godparents are a special part of people's lives; they are parents that God has sent to us to direct us through our faith. Together with the parents, the godparents are responsible for the spiritual growth of the child. When you become a godparent, you become the spiritual and religious mentor of your godchild for the duration of both or your lives. The task of godparents doesn't simply consist in buying a cross and some new clothing, and participating in the service of baptism. All of these things are merrily the beginning of the responsibilities of the sponsor. Being a godparent consists of the following responsibilities; to sure the child is taught the necessary thing for living a Christian life. This includes their attendance at church, religious education classes, and, most importantly, frequent participation in the Sacramento of Holy Communion. It is also said that godparents should include their godchildren in their daily prayers, In hopes that the child will grow up to be a good Orthodox Christian.

Greek Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross

MARCH / APRIL 2001

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| <p>March 11, 2001</p> <p>St. Gregory of Palamas</p> <p>OYAA</p> | <p>12</p> <p>7 PM, Great Compline</p> <p>1-5 PM, ND (Gym)</p> <p>following Compline, Studies Class (Library)</p> | <p>13</p> <p>10:30 AM, Bible Study (Fireside)</p> <p>8:30-1:30 PM, Serra Retreat (Oaks)</p> <p>3:30-6 PM, IHM (Gym)</p> <p>7:30 PM, JOY (rms N-2), Jr. GOYA (rms 3&4), GOYA (Fireside)</p> | <p>14</p> <p>7 PM, Presanctified Liturgy</p> <p>3-5 PM, ND (Gym)</p> <p>4:30 Grk Schl (Classrooms)</p> <p>6-7 PM, Bball (Gym)</p> <p>following services, Studies Class (Library)</p> <p>following services, Choir (Loft)</p> | <p>15</p> <p>7 PM, Teachers' Spiritual Institute (Library)</p> <p>3:30-6 PM, IHM (Gym)</p> <p>6-8 PM, Bball (Gym)</p> <p>8:30 PM, Ad Bball (Gym)</p> | <p>16</p> <p>9 AM, Presanctified Liturgy</p> <p>7 PM, Salutations</p> <p>4-5 PM, Youth Choir (Loft)</p> <p>6-7 PM, Bball (Gym)</p> <p>SPIRITUAL ODYSSEY</p> | <p>17</p> <p>5:30 PM, Great Vespers</p> <p>SPIRITUAL ODYSSEY</p> |
| <p>18</p> <p>Sunday of the Holy Cross</p> <p>10-10:45 AM, Sunday School</p> <p>Youth Choir sings</p> <p>SPIRITUAL ODYSSEY</p> | <p>19</p> <p>7 PM, Great Compline</p> <p>1-5 PM, ND (Gym)</p> <p>following Compline, Studies Class (Library)</p> | <p>20</p> <p>10:30 Bible Study Fireside</p> <p>6:30 – 8 PM, Girls HS Bball (Gym)</p> <p>7:30 PM, Parish Council (Lib)</p> <p>First Day of Spring</p> | <p>21</p> <p>7 PM, Presanctified Liturgy</p> <p>3-5 PM, ND (Gym)</p> <p>4:30 PM, Grk Schl (Classrooms)</p> <p>6-7 PM, Bball (Gym)</p> <p>following services, Studies Class (Library)</p> <p>following services, Choir (Loft)</p> | <p>22</p> <p>6-8 PM, Bball (Gym)</p> <p>8:30 PM, Ad Bball (Gym)</p> | <p>23</p> <p>9 AM, Presanctified Liturgy</p> <p>7 PM, Salutations</p> <p>4-5 PM, Youth Choir (Loft)</p> <p>6-7 PM, Bball (Gym)</p> | <p>24</p> <p>5:30 PM, Great Vespers</p> <p>10-Noon, GS Program Rehearsal (Gym)</p> |
| <p>25</p> <p>St. John Climacus</p> <p>10-10:45 AM, Sunday School</p> <p>Following Liturgy, Greek School Program (Gym)</p> <p>OYAA TENT</p> | <p>26</p> <p>7 PM, Great Compline</p> <p>1-5 PM, ND (Gym)</p> <p>following Compline, Studies Class (Library)</p> | <p>27</p> <p>10:30 AM, Bible Study (Fireside)</p> <p>7:30 PM, JOY (rms N-2), Jr. GOYA (rms 3&4), GOYA (Fireside), Parents Discussion Group (Library)</p> | <p>28</p> <p>7 PM, Presanctified Liturgy</p> <p>3-5 PM, ND (Gym)</p> <p>4:30 PM Grk Schl (Classrooms)</p> <p>6-7 PM, Bball (Gym)</p> <p>following services, Studies Class (Library)</p> | <p>29</p> <p>6-8 PM, Bball (Gym)</p> <p>8:30 PM, Ad Bball (Gym)</p> <p>Crab Feed set-up (Gym/Oaks)</p> | <p>30</p> <p>9 AM, Presanctified Liturgy</p> <p>7 PM, Akathist Hymn</p> <p>7:30-2 PM, CND use park lot</p> <p>4-5 PM, Youth Choir (Loft)</p> <p>6-7 PM, Bball (Gym)</p> <p>Crab Feed set-up (Gym/Oaks)</p> <p>Young Adult retreat (Headlands)</p> | <p>31</p> <p>5:30 PM, Great Vespers</p> <p>Crab Feed (Gym/Oaks)</p> <p>Young Adult retreat (Headlands)</p> |
| <p>April 1, 2001</p> <p>St. Mary of Egypt</p> <p>Young Adult retreat (Headlands)</p> <p>Crab Feed clean-up</p> <p>Parish Oratorical Festival</p> <p>No OYAA</p> | <p>2</p> <p>7 PM, Great Compline</p> <p>following Compline, Studies Class (Library)</p> | <p>3</p> <p>10:30 AM, Bible Study (Fireside)</p> <p>11 AM, ORA (Oaks)</p> <p>6:30-8 PM, Girls HS Bball (Gym)</p> <p>7 PM, Philop Board (Library)</p> | <p>4</p> <p>7 PM, Presanctified Liturgy</p> <p>6-7 PM, Bball (Gym)</p> <p>4:30 Grk Schl (Classrooms)</p> <p>7-8 PM, AHEPA (rms N-2)</p> <p>following services, Studies Class (Library)</p> | <p>5</p> <p>6-8 PM, Bball (Gym)</p> <p>8:30 PM, Ad Bball (Gym)</p> | <p>6</p> <p>9 AM, Presanctified Liturgy</p> <p>4-5 PM, Youth Choir (Loft)</p> <p>6-8 PM, Bball (Gym)</p> | <p>7</p> <p>Saturday of Lazarus</p> <p>9 AM, Divine Liturgy</p> <p>5:30 PM, Great Vespers</p> <p>Youth Choir sings</p> <p>Youth Activities (Gym)</p> |
| <p>8</p> <p>PALM SUNDAY</p> <p>9 AM, Divine Liturgy</p> <p>no Sunday School</p> <p>Youth Choir sings</p> <p>Following Liturgy, Palm Sunday Lunch (Gym)</p> <p>No OYAA</p> | <p>9</p> <p>HOLY MONDAY</p> <p>7 PM, Service of the Bridegroom</p> | <p>10</p> <p>HOLY TUESDAY</p> <p>7 PM, Service of the Bridegroom</p> <p>no youth groups</p> | <p>11</p> <p>HOLY WEDNESDAY</p> <p>6 AM, Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts (special early Liturgy for workers)</p> <p>3 PM, Sacrament of the Holy Oil</p> <p>7 PM, Sacrament of the Holy Oil</p> <p>no GS</p> | <p>12</p> <p>HOLY THURSDAY</p> <p>9 AM, Liturgy of Saint Basil</p> <p>7 PM, Service of the Holy Passion</p> <p>no Ad Bball</p> | <p>13</p> <p>GOOD FRIDAY</p> <p>9 AM, Vigil of the Royal Hours</p> <p>3 PM, Vespers - Descent from the Cross</p> <p>7 PM, Service of the Lamentations</p> <p>all day, Youth Retreat (classrooms)</p> <p>2:15 PM, Youth Choir (rm 3-4)</p> | <p>14</p> <p>HOLY SATURDAY</p> <p>9 AM, Divine Liturgy</p> <p>11 PM, Resurrection Matins</p> <p>Midnight reception (Oaks)</p> |