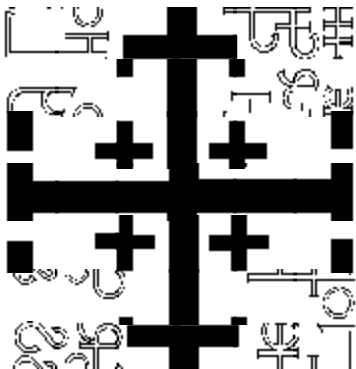


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CROSS CURRENTS

Monthly Newsletter
MARCH 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.*

VICTORIOUS BEINGS

by Father Peter G. Salmas, Pastor

A few Sundays ago, I had the opportunity (rare indeed) to attend an OYAA Basketball game and cheer for one of our Adult teams who faced off against a team from Saint Nicholas, San Jose. I thought that since I was visiting few parishioners in the hospital, I might be able to attend a game before heading for home to be with my family for the evening. The game was scheduled for 5:30 PM but did not start until almost 6:00 PM.

Our team was excited . . . and nervous. We had six players who showed, the Saint Nicholas team had at least 12-15 . . . and they were all, to a man, first or second year college students. Our team, on the other hand, was made up of players who were all just shy of 30, contemplating how they were going to play an hour on a regulation court with one player to sub against an army of reservists. Despite their slightly more advanced age, to all of us in the stands, they looked strong, determined, at the height of



their game. We were cautiously optimistic.

Saint Paul speaks about the challenge of athletic competition in his second letter to Timothy. He says :

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. (2 Tim. 2:3-5)

We have grown accustomed to competition, seemingly inherent in our work, school, sports, politics; we also seem to be competing against ourselves too much of the time with so much to do and so little time to accomplish all that we set out to do in a day, a week, a month, a year, a lifetime. It is said that time flies when you are having fun. As we get older, time just flies and competition becomes more of a challenge.

As the game neared completion I realized that the entire game had been played without incident, not even an argument. Saint Nicholas maintained a ten-point lead throughout until the last few minutes of the fourth period. Seven points. Five points. Three points. Tied score. Alas, fatigue won out. We lost by three. An impressive and valiant effort marked the outcome, and I was very pleased and proud to call them the team from Holy Cross. Someone said awhile back it is not whether you win or lose, it is how you play the game. Our team played very well. Their opponent also played well, and all who witnessed the competition left feeling good about the experience.

During Great Lent, we also are challenged to a competition. NO, it is not the fasting, although it is difficult, and it is not prayer or attending services, although disciplined attendance and participation in the many additional penitential services is truly challenging. Our struggle is to win the battle against evil and temptation, day by day, minute by minute. In addition, more often than not, it is not the big temptations that are the most challenging, as they are very obviously “temptations.” It is those little ones, those “little” ones that creep insidiously into our conversations, into our actions, into our minds.

On March 10 of each year we commemorate the forty holy martyrs of Sebastia. They were Roman soldiers who were Christians and who, because of their faith in Jesus Christ, received the glorious crown of martyrdom. The hymn at the Vespers service movingly and solemnly lists each of these holy men by name. As I chanted the hymn this year I was struck by the emotion that welled up within me as I chanted their names. How glorious and wonderful that the Church, after these many centuries, should not only recount their faith, their disciplined commitment, their sacrifice, but also commemorate them by their given names.

I believe the Lord knows each of us in the same way, by name, aware of our actions, our words, our thoughts, shared and veiled. He knows our commitment to life, to goals, to pursuits of happiness, to faith . . . in Him.

The Forty Holy Martyrs of Sebastia were disciplined soldiers, well trained in their chosen career. Like them we also have our commitments. Their discipline as soldiers prepared them for their greatest battle, a battle calling upon not brain nor brawn but faith in the Lord. Our disciplines as athletes, business men and women,

students, teachers, priests, parents, mentors, friends, as Christian men and women of all walks of life, prepare us for each increasing challenge. May each of our endeavors and interests prepare us for the greater challenges that will call upon our faith.

The game I attended showed me more than a team working together for an illusive crown of victory on the basketball court. And although they were saddened by their loss, this time, they are now more prepared for their next challenger. The testing of our faith and the challenge of living it prepares us for the next challenger. Temptation has many names, its downfall only One Almighty Power. As we chant each Monday in the Service of the Great Compline, “Lord of Powers, be with us.” May the crown of victory that we must ultimately seek as Christians be the one given by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. *Kali Sarakosti.*

FROM THE PRESIDENT

by *Nick Peros, Parish Council President*

Special General Assembly Approves Iconography!

It was a very close vote: 67 for and 63 against. As ballots were being counted I couldn't help thinking about the close Presidential election just a few months ago. Now, this country is moving forward with and supporting a new President of the United States. Similarly, we at Holy Cross will proceed forward with Iconography notwithstanding the closeness of the vote.

Being at the General Assembly made me very proud to be a member of this Parish. About 30 parishioners total rose to speak, for and against the project, in approximately equal numbers. Every segment of our Parish expressed an opinion – young and old, immigrant and convert, businessperson and teacher. What impressed me was how articulately each person spoke and how respectfully opposing views were presented.

Some questioned whether the Church structure could bear the additional weight. The inset image, from the original building plans for the Church, shows that mosaic icons were planned from the very beginning. The existing structure was designed for mosaics.

Some spoke of priorities. Should we pay off the mortgage first? Should the new school building project, just approved in the Fall General Assembly, precede Iconography? Shouldn't additional parking be provided first? Few, however, spoke in total opposition to the proposition of expanding Iconography in our Church. My sense is that the issue of priorities needs further study. We need to develop a timeline covering Iconography and buildings during the next month or two.

As a person who grew up in Holy Trinity in San Francisco, I remember hearing **Father Anthony** speak repeatedly of his vision of adding mosaic icons to the Church. I never detected even a hint of doubt in his voice. He knew donors would come forward and they have. He knew it would take time and the project is still in progress. I share Father Anthony's confidence and patience with respect to our Iconography project. I expect that we'll start Phase 1 this year and pick up Phases 2 and 3 in

the future.

Both the Building and Iconography Committees have presented visions without encumbrances – neither committee sought permission for a mortgage. They have created opportunities for donors rather than financial obligations we all must bear. I commend their approach.

In the early 1990s we renovated the kitchen and constructed The Oaks, Administration Building, and Amphitheater. About 30% of us made pledges and donations. Today, by General Assembly action, we now have before us more choices, more opportunities to give, more chances to improve the experience of being part of our community. I expect that the building and Iconography projects will inspire a majority of families to donate over the next few years.

Donors can participate in either or both of the projects and I am happy to report that this process has begun. As of this writing, donations are as follows:

<u>Program</u>	<u>Estimated Budget</u>	<u>Funds Pledged to Date</u>
Building Program	\$2.5 M	\$450 k (18%)
Iconography, Phase 1	\$1.0M	\$225 k (22%)

As to how we should proceed and how fast, I ask you to cast your vote with your pledge. Personally, my family has committed to supporting the Building and Iconography projects equally. Join us in pledging this Lent to at least one of these programs. Borrowing from former President **Peter Economus**, let's work "oli mas mazi" (all of us together).

THE STEWARDSHIP OF THE HOLY 40 MARTYRS OF SEBASTEIA - MARCH 9

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.

When studying the lives of the saints, we see that there are times that, rather than learning about a saintly individual, we see a group of people who are recognized as being sanctified. Christian Orthodox Stewardship is not only rooted in the individual commitment, but also in the participation of the community as a whole, i.e. the parish!

In each parish we usually see a small number of stewards who seem to be doing most of the work. While those stewards are to be commended for their time and dedication, we must realize that we as a community are not meeting our full potential. We learn an important lesson from the writing of Aesop: "A farmer who had a quarrelsome family, after having tried in vain to reconcile them by words, thought he

might more readily prevail by an example. So he called his sons and told them to lay a bundle of sticks before him. Then having tied them together, he told the boys, one after another, to pick it up and break it. They all tried, but tried in vain. Then, untying the bundle, he gave them the sticks to break one by one. This they did with the greatest ease. Then said the father: 'Thus, my sons, as long as you remain united, you are a match for all your enemies; but differ and separate, and you are undone'."

The martyrdom of the Holy 40 Martyrs of Sebasteia is a powerful lesson in Christian faith, perseverance, sacrifice, and friendship. The story of this martyrdom begins in the early part of the 4th century when the persecution of Christians was still active. There were 40 soldiers of the Roman army who possessed sincere faith in Jesus Christ. When it was realized that they would not deny their belief in the Lord, they were brought to trial before their commander who threatened to have them discharged from the military dishonorably. One of the soldiers responded: "**Do not take only our military status, but also our bodies; nothing is dearer or of greater honor to us than Christ our God.**" Following a number of failed attempts to torture them, they were finally stripped, tied, and thrown into a lake. It happened to be wintertime and the temperature was extremely cold. To tempt the soldiers to deny Christ, the torturers lit fires near the lake to entice them to deny Christ. One soldier actually did come out of the water and headed for the fire, but before he could get there, he died. During the night, a light from heaven came down and heated the lake and warmed these Christian witnesses. At the same time, thirty-nine crowns were sent from heaven and rested upon each of them. One of the soldiers torturing them saw this and, moved by this event, confessed the Christ as Lord and Savior and joined the others in the lake. A fortieth crown appeared and descended upon him at that very moment. In the morning, the commander was furious when he learned of the events and ordered that their legs be broken and they be thrown back into the lake. On the third day following their drowning, the martyrs appeared to the local bishop and told him to search beneath the water and recover their relics. In the middle of the night, the bishop, along with his priests, went to the lake where they found the relics glowing in the water and, gathering them together, they gave them a proper burial.

The process of our salvation is achieved by proclaiming Jesus Christ as Savior and by doing the will of God the Father. Our Christian Orthodox Stewardship is experienced in this manner; our actions must support our words of faith in Christ our Lord and Savior. This is what the Holy 40 Martyrs of Sebasteia understood and we, too, are called, not just as individuals, but as the entire assembly of believers, i.e., the Church, to give our **Time, Talents and Treasure** so that: ". . . **we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.**" (Hebrews 12:1-2).

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 continues during Lent).

INTERCESSORY PRAYER

by Jeff Baxter

Coming from a Protestant background, I must admit to a barely Monday evening level of competency in the Orthodox faith, though I am working to remedy the situation. As I continue to learn, I thought that I would contrast an area where my more Protestant upbringing seems to be at odds with the Orthodox beliefs. The area I have chosen is intercessory prayer.

Webster's Dictionary defines intercede as follows: "To act between parties with a view to reconcile differences or beg or plead in behalf of another; to mediate." Far from being unclear on the topic, the Bible strongly endorses intercessory prayer. James admonishes us to "pray for one another" (James 5:16), and Paul told the Colossians that he prayed unceasingly on their behalf (Colossians 1:9). Both Protestants and Orthodox Christians believe strongly in praying with and for one another, as any believer of the Bible naturally would. However, while most Protestants believe that we should only petition the living to intercede on our behalf, Orthodox Christianity would include all Believers, regardless of their corporeal status.

We can, with some amount of effort, usually command the attention of the living, but what about the dead? Can those who have passed on oversee the foibles of this world, much less participate? I am confident that many excellent and scholarly works have been written about the afterlife, and what transpires upon our leaving our earthly bodies: unfortunately, I have not read any of them. While this may deter a lesser man, I must press on if I am to finish this assignment, and I apologize beforehand for the sloppy theology that may result. Near the end of the parable of Lazarus the beggar (Luke 16:20), Abraham, with the now deceased Lazarus, carries on a conversation with "the rich man" who has died and is now tormented in Hades. From the afterlife, the rich man begs Abraham to send Lazarus to warn his brothers of their impending fate, should they not repent. Abraham replies that if they did not listen to the prophets, neither would they listen to Lazarus. Apart from the theology of Heaven and Hell, the parable indicates a certain cognizance on the part of the dead. Abraham, Lazarus, and the rich man all see what is happening on the earth, and react to it, discussing the

fate and actions of the living. Similarly, Jesus, when on the cross, told the repentant criminal crucified next to him that he would "be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43), indicating that he would be with Our Lord upon his death, and would be cognizant of this fact.

So, if I have not committed too many heresies to this point, the dead in Christ do dwell with Him, observing what happens on the earth and interacting with each other. If this is the case, why could they not offer prayers on our behalf! From a most basic standpoint, if we prayed and learned from a loved one on the earth, why should their death stop us from continuing the relationship we had established in life? If the prayer of a righteous man availeth much (James 5:16), why not ask the righteous Saints to pray on our behalf. While in my own life it will never totally supplant prayer directed at Christ, I can, quite frankly, use all the prayer support I can get. Even apart from the Saints, I like the continuity of praying with those whom God may have taken from us before we were really ready to let go. Finally, as I learn more of the Orthodox Faith, I am more than positive that I will find quite a number of Saints that I would like rooting for me; and I'm pretty sure none of them will let a little thing like death get in their way.

YOUTH CURRENTS *March 2001 Edition*

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

2 Peter 3:18



Obedience

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. He that has my commandments, and keeps them, it is he that loves me. He that loves me not, keeps not my words" (John: 14: 15,21,24).

Obedience, as defined by Webster's Dictionary is: "submission to command . . ." – a rather foreign concept in our American culture besides "obey your thirst." The irony though is that by definition, an Orthodox Christian is by nature an obedient creature, obedient to the Lord, obedient to His Commandments, and obedient to His way of life, that is, the Orthodox way of life. Yet, sadly, we need only look to gatherings/activities of our youth and to the assemblies of our parents to realize that the characteristic of obedience is sometimes far removed from our nature, created in the likeness of God, opting instead for an "I know best," "I need not listen," "you can't make me," "I don't agree even though this is what our Tradition teaches or dictates."

Working with our youth, meeting with our youth advisors that work for and with our youth, teaching in study classes, preaching sermons, sitting in General Assemblies, meeting with parents and their children in the home or in the office, it is

evident that we need to get back to the basics! So, I humbly offer a short history that leads us back to the “first steps” of our spiritual life.

In the beginning... God created man and woman and placed them in paradise to live as stewards of His Creation. The only command of God, “You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it.” What did Adam and Eve do? They ate of the fruit, hid from God when He went looking for them, passed the blame, and NEVER repented!

Time passed, and covenants were reestablished with others – Abraham, Moses, and David – and yet the covenant was compromised by the disobedience of their descendants or their people along the way. Prophets served the Lord and His people by calling them back into relations, into communion with God. Yet, even with countless initiates by God, the people remained, by and large, disobedient.

Then came Jesus, the Word made flesh. Scripture speaks little of the childhood of the Lord, however St. Luke writes, “And he went down with them [Mary & Joseph], and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them” (Luke 2:51). This obedience to His earthly parents was a mirror of His obedience to His Heavenly Father. St. Paul writes, “He was obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross” (Philippians 2.8). The Apostle, when writing to the Romans, also says, “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous” (5.19). In other words, through His obedience we were reconciled with God once and for all and possess the ability to dwell with Him again in Paradise.

This process begins by being “baptized into Christ” and “putting on Christ.” With simple reference to the noted verses from Scripture, we should then be obedient to our parents and to our Heavenly Father, and in turn be righteous. This obedience is the beginning of the spiritual life.

Sure obedience is challenging. But can’t we look back and see where disobedience has led us from the beginning of Creation? Can’t we see that it only leads to isolation from our community and God?

What to do then – be obedient to our parents and God! Granted, we should be obedient to their word because they lead us by example of what it is the God-like. If this is not the case, not with God, but the example of our parents, youth advisors, Religious Educators, coaches, instructors, directors, priests, then the virtue of obedience cannot and will not be taught. You’d be like a plant that cannot grow and bear fruit as the soil in which it is planted isn’t suitable for it to flourish!

Yet, when you have the examples before you, instead of saying “I know best” realize that others do know better than you. Instead of saying “I need not listen,” realize you should listen for your own well-being. Instead of saying “You can’t make me,” just do it! Instead of being so bold as to say, “I don’t agree even though this is our Tradition,” don’t pit yourself against the Church and her efforts to move you toward salvation. For these are the first steps in your spiritual life.

Helpful Hints for Parents on Obedience

- The priest dutifully repeats to the children: “Honor your father and mother . . .” While at home the parents mock him and undermine his work. The child will come to the final conclusion: “Since my father doesn’t recognize any of the commandments of God that the priest talks about, there is no reason for me to listen to the priest when he teaches us about the fifth commandment.” *Bishop Irenaeus*
- Obedience is not so much a question of commanding and obeying as of leading and following. *Bishop Chrysostomos*
- Parents must begin training their children from the age of infancy. *Bishop Irenaeus*
- It is necessary that in the gaze of the parents there should be not only love, which is so natural, but also the faith that in their arms there is something more than a simple child. The parents must have the hope that He who gave them this treasure under their watch as a vessel of grace might furnish them also with sufficient means to preserve him. *St. Theophan the Recluse*
- In families where a spirit of disrespect for the laws of God and man prevails, where not authority is recognized, or where divine or human laws are only invoked to defend one’s own advantage, children cannot be taught obedience. Whoever wants their children to obey them must themselves respect every proper authority and just law. These authorities are God, the Church, and the State. *Bishop Irenaeus*
- A child left to himself becomes untamable and self-willed. Therefore, parents must strictly watch this sprout of the soul’s activity. *St. Theophan the Recluse*
- The upbringing in the home is the root and foundation of everything that follows. One who is well brought up and directed at home will not so easily be knocked off the straight path by a wrong teaching in school. *St. Theophan the Recluse*
- Finally, never forget to invoke the blessing of God on your work in bringing up your children. Only then will your labor, struggles and concern be crowned with success. With God’s help, your children will learn obedience. *Bishop Irenaeus*

Helpful Hints for Children on Obedience

- Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which the Lord your God gives you. *God*
- In obedience you will find humility, strength, joy, patience, and forbearance. From it, contrition is born and love blossoms. It aids the good [son/daughter] in keeping all of the divine commandments the whole of his [or her] life. *Abba Moses*
- One must dedicate oneself to God, for in this alone is salvation. *St. Theophan the Recluse*.
- And so young person! Do you desire to preserve the purity and innocence of childhood, or the vow of Christian life without reproach? With as much strength and good sense as you have, refrain from amusements, from disorderly reading of tempting books, and from daydreams. *St. Theophan the Recluse*
- Whatever the father or mother says must be done without delay. *Bishop Irenaius*
- Because your parents are your great benefactors, you should render them due gratitude. Remember the pains and labors they undertook for your upbringing, and be thankful to them for it. *St. Tikon of Zadonsk*
- Avoid offending them with any crude word, but speak to them and reply with every courtesy, that they may know that you love and respect them. *St. Tikon of Zadonsk*
- If they punish you for something, and you know that you are genuinely at fault for it, acknowledge your fault with humility and endure the punishment with meekness. *St. Tikon of Zadonsk*

Parental Relationships

Taken from the recently compiled and published: American Youth in the 1990's (George H. Gallup International Institute)

Most teens get on well with their parents, but are twice as likely to get along better with their mothers than their fathers.

A majority of teens (52%) in 1992 said they got on very well with their parents. An additionally 44% believed that they got on fairly well. Only 4% of the teens reported their relations with their parents were so strained that they believed they did not get on well with them at all.

Teens were twice as likely to say that they get on better with their mothers (52%) than to believe that relationships with their fathers were smoother (26%). One teen in five (21%) was fortunate enough to report that he got on equally well with both his father and mother.

Opinions by teens that their parents are too strict with them have been increasing slowly but surely over the past several years. In 1985, 29% said their parents were too strict. By 1987, the proportion of teens complaining about overly strict parents rose to 34%, and by 1992, to 38%. Parents are about right in their amount of strictness according to 37% of teens, while 24% say they may be too lenient.

10 Expectations For Our Youth at the Church

Having recently met with both the Youth & Young Adult Council, and the Religious Educators of our parish and having witnessed on too many occasions issues of disrespect for teachers, advisors, instructors, parents, and peers, I think it appropriate that we establish a few expectations for you, the youthful members of our parish. This is not an ongoing problem, but a problem that does surface from time to time that we should address so that we may best function here at the Church – using our time wisely, enjoying one another's company, and growing in the Grace and Knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Below you will find a few of my thoughts on the matter.

1. Your attire should be appropriate and conservative when you come to the Church. You are not “going out on the town” or modeling the latest fashions! You are coming to the Church for Christian fellowship. If you are going to dance or play basketball, then wear clothes that best facilitate these activities. If you are attending Divine Services then girls should be in a dress, knee length skirt, or appropriate pants suit while boys should be in slacks, a dress shirt and tie (if the shirt is collared).
2. You should treat the Church for what it is, the House of God, to which you belong. Therefore, let's watch the trash, the damage to the buildings, chairs, and tables... Unfortunately, when we disrespect and damage our facilities, it's money and time that we waste that could be going toward much more valuable investments... YOU!
3. Realize that your instructors, coaches, teachers, and directors are here because they care about you and want to see you advance in whatever ministry they are involved. They are not paid, but offer their time and talent to the glory of God for you. Respect them. Listen to them. And, thank them.
4. Follow the Christian example of your priests, advisors, teachers, coaches, and directors. They attend services regularly, dress appropriately, treat you, your friends, and families with respect, don't use profanity, and offer their time and talent to the Church. What great examples for you to follow or at the very least to show respect to.

5. If you find yourself in your religious education class, then pay attention and learn. The lessons you are learning make you a model Christian and a model citizen. Sure, you don't need to have been good in "Sunday School" to get into college or get a good job, but you sure need to have learned what it means to be a Christian to get into the Kingdom of Heaven.
6. If an adult or youth worker disciplines you, don't talk back, argue or try to save face, bear it without complaint. Chances are you really did do something wrong and your behavior is affecting the dynamics of the group.
7. Treat your peers with respect. Yes, we are all unique in character and look. But why disrespect another who is created in the likeness of God? Do they deserve any less love, support, words of encouragement, or care than you? Oh, and Jesus did give us that command to "love one another."
8. When you misbehave expect there to be repercussions. Even if you are use to getting away with all sorts of things at home, in school or with your friends, please realize this is the Church and those attitudes, words, and acts will not be tolerated. Of course, our concern is for your growth, but it is also for the other few hundred youth at the Church, not to mention their families. So, with limited time, realize that Christian behavior is expected at ALL times. If you must be continuously reminded of this, you will be asked not to participate in our youth ministry programs until a meeting has been scheduled with your parents and the behavior is corrected. I would also expect a letter of apology to be presented to your youth advisor/teacher/coach.
9. Keep your youth workers in your prayers. They have been selected to serve in these capacities by the Church and need your support in their efforts. The happiness or unhappiness of the whole body is dependent upon the head so pray for them that their group may prosper!
10. Know with certainty that as you are to your parents and youth workers, so will your children be to you, according to the words of Christ, "And with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you" (Matthew 7:2).

10 Expectations for the Parents of our Youth at the Church

My guess is that as parents, you probably read the "10 Expectations" above with a smirk on your face with the thought, "Good for them. Our kids need clear expectations and should act like Christians at the Church." Well, parents your not of the hook either! Might I suggest:

1. If you want your kids to mature into good Christians, set the example – attend services (not just Sundays), pray in the home, and make God a priority throughout the week, regardless of the Season. We can tell them until we are blue in the face, "this is what you need to do" but if they don't see it practiced by you, our words are lost, and so is their faith.
2. If you can be ready for work and get your kids ready for school five days a week by eight, how hard is it to get to be in the Church by 10AM?
3. Whatever made soccer, basketball, baseball, or another sport more important than being in Church? What happened to being an athlete for Christ? Talk to your coaches and leagues and remind them that Sundays are for the family and for God.
4. Don't drop your kids off at Church or take them to their religious ed. classes and then hang out outside. All this communicates to your children is that Church isn't that important after all.
5. Fast on Wednesdays and Fridays and be ready to receive Communion on Sunday. The Sacraments are for everyone, not just children. That goes for Confession too!
6. Offer your time and talent in the ministries of the Church. At the very least, support the ministries in which your children participate. With so many children in the various ministries, we need additional parents to take on leadership or support rolls.
7. Don't expect the youth advisors or priests to raise your children for you. Yes, it takes a Church to raise a child," but with only 45 minutes in their classes on Sunday and an hour or two every other week for their youth groups, how much can we do? It has to start with you!
8. Participation is not a right, but a responsibility. You are a baptized steward of Christ who is to share your time, talent, and treasure with your community to the best of your ability. Don't underestimate your need to participate and to contribute and don't underestimate the value of your participation and your contribution.
9. Encourage your children to participate in the life of the Church and to take advantage of the opportunities presented in their discussions about the faith. And, if they are not attending their religious education classes whose to blame if they don't learn and live their faith.
10. Take your responsibilities as a Christian parent seriously. St. John Chrysostom warns, "Parents who neglect to bring up their children as Christians, are most heinous murders of children."

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).

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 Peloponnesos, 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>

Holy Cross Basketball

by Frank Catomer

The Junior Varsity Basketball season is now officially in the books. This past weekend, (March 3rd and 4th) featured the year end tournament. It was very exciting, especially the final day on Sunday. As has been previously mentioned in other articles, there were five Holy Cross Teams who participated in the OYAA Basketball League this year. There were two girls teams and three boys teams, with 60 participants in all. We had a very successful season, especially with the younger teams divisions.

The Girls C team which covers ages 7 through 10, completed a perfect 10 and 0 season by winning both the league and the tournament in their division. It was only three years ago that we fielded a team in this division for the first time. They saved their best game, the championship game, which they won going away. The kids were all very excited, as you would expect.

The Boys C Team which covers the same ages, 7 through 10, completed their second consecutive undefeated season, at 10 and 0, by winning the league and the tournament in their division. In fact, they have not lost a game since the Championship game in 1999.

The Boys B Team which covers ages 11 and 12, finished first in their division during the regular season with a 6 and 2 record. They lost the Championship game in the tournament to a very good Ascension Team. They had a stretch where they won 7 consecutive games, including the first playoff game.

The Girls A Team had a very exciting season. Although they lost in the first round of the tournament, they were very competitive during the entire season. They played the eventual Champion St. Nicholas very close during a regular season game, losing by a single point. All of their games were very close. They had a very young team this season. They could be really strong next year.

The Boys A Team also played very competitively this season. They also lost a first round tournament game. They were in a very strong division. There were some very good teams, from top to bottom. They held their own, even in their losses.

Focusing away from the wins and losses, I would like to congratulate all of the coaches who contributed their time to help guide our kids through the season. We are very fortunate to have the quality of people that we have participating to help make our basketball program as successful as it can be. The following people are to be congratulated for the efforts:

Tom Mavrakakis - the Coach of the Boys C Team

George Mitropoulos and **Alesia Panagiotides** - Coaches for the Girls C Team

Chris Chidester - Coach for the Boys A Team

Kati and **Natasha Loukianoff** - Coaches for the Girls A Team

I would also like to thank all of the parents for contributing their time to drop off their kids during the long pre season, and season, for the weekly practices, and for attending all of the regular season and playoff games.

We are very fortunate to have such a great Church Community, full of wonderful people, adults and kids alike. I have received a tremendous benefit personally from the Basketball Program. It has given me the opportunity to get to know so many people. And the kids who have participated, to be able to walk around Church on Sunday and know all of them on a first name basis, makes all of the time put in seem very short, and definitely very rewarding. I would finally like to say thank you to all of the kids who picked up a basketball this past season for making this a very memorable and enjoyable season, packed with all of the excitement and enthusiasm that could ever be asked for. Hope to see you all again next year, same time, same place.

March Youth Calendar

2 Youth Choir Practice, 4-5PM

3 – 4 OYAA Youth Basketball Playoffs (GO TEAMS)

9 Youth Choir Practice, 4-5PM

9-11 Jr. GOYA/GOYA Retreat in Santa Barbara

13 HOPE, JOY, Jr. GOYA, & GOYA meet at the Church, 7:30PM

16 Youth Choir Practice, 4-5PM

16-18 Parish Spiritual Odyssey (children encouraged to attend with their families)

23 Youth Choir Practice, 4-5PM

27 JOY, Jr. GOYA, & GOYA Groups meet at the Church, 7:30PM

Other important dates for your calendar:

April 1 - Parish Oratorical Festival

..... 13 – Great & Holy Friday Retreat

****Please remember we are in the Lenten Season and therefore celebrate, as a community, a number of additional services throughout the Fast. Please check the Catechist or a Church calendar for a schedule of services.*

GOYA / Jr. GOYA Retreat

This year, instead of holding our annual retreat at the Marin Headlands, we will be traveling, along with **Fr. Jon Magoulias** and the Annunciation youth groups from Modesto, to Santa Barbara to be hosted by **Fr. Constantine Zozos** and the Church of St. Barbara! Again, under the guidance of clergy and our respective youth advisors, we have a wonderful retreat planned in a most beautiful setting!

As we make our final preparations, parents of junior high school or high school youth are asked to complete the registration\liability waiver that was recently sent home for by March 7 as registration materials will not be accepted after this date. The cost of the retreat is \$90.00 per child, however, our Youth & Young Adult Council has offset the cost to \$50.00 per child (scholarships are also available).

If you are interested in assisting with the retreat and/or serving as a driver/chaperone for this weekend, contact **Fr. Christopher**, 591.4447 or frchris@goholycross.org.

<p>March 25, 2001</p> <p>St. John Climacus</p> <p>10-10:45 AM, Sunday School</p>	<p>26</p> <p>7 PM, Great Compline</p> <p>1-5 PM, ND (Gym) following Compline, Studies Class (Library)</p>	<p>27</p> <p>10:30 AM, Bible Study (Fireside)</p> <p>6:30-7:30 PM, Ta Delphinia (Gym)</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>29</p> <p>6-8 PM, Bball (Gym)</p> <p>8:30 PM, Ad Bball (Gym)</p> <p>Crab Feed set-up</p>	<p>30</p> <p>9 AM, Presanctified Liturgy</p> <p>7 PM, Akathist Hymn</p> <p>7:30 AM - 2 PM, CND use parking lot</p> <p>4-5 PM, Youth Choir (Loft)</p> <p>6-7 PM, Bball (Gym)</p> <p>Crab Feed set-up</p> <p>Following Akathist Hymn, Young Adult Retreat (Headlands)</p>	<p>31</p> <p>5:30 PM, Great Vespers</p> <p>Young Adult Retreat (Headlands)</p> <p>Crab Feed</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>Following Liturgy, Parish Oratorical Festival (Oaks)</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>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>no Studies classes tonight</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>following Liturgy, ORA flatware wrapping for Palm Sunday</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 following Liturgy, Youth activities (Gym)</p> <p>Palm Sunday Lunch Set-Up (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>Palm Sunday Lunch (Gym)</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>
<p>15</p> <p>Great and Holy Pascha</p> <p>11 AM, Agape Services</p> <p>Youth Choir sings</p> <p>Easter Picnic and Egg Hunt</p> <p>no Sunday School</p>	<p>16</p> <p>Bright Week</p> <p>office closed</p> <p>No Fasting all week</p>	<p>17</p> <p>10:30 Bible Study Fireside</p> <p>7:30 PM, Parish Council (Library)</p>	<p>18</p> <p>4:30 PM, Grk Schl (Classrooms)</p>	<p>19</p> <p>8:30 PM, Ad Bball (Gym)</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Life-Giving Spring</p> <p>9 AM, Divine Liturgy</p> <p>no Youth Choir</p>	<p>21</p> <p>5:30 PM, Great Vespers</p>
<p>22</p> <p>Sunday</p> <p>Following Liturgy, Spring General Assembly (Oaks)</p> <p>Taste of the Town (SF)</p> <p>OYAA</p>	<p>23</p> <p>Saint George</p> <p>9 AM, Divine Liturgy</p> <p>Fashion Show set-up (Gym/Oaks)</p>	<p>24</p> <p>10:30 AM, Bible Study (Fireside)</p> <p>7:30 PM, JOY (rms N-2), Jr. GOYA (rms 3&4), GOYA (Fireside)</p> <p>Fashion Show set-up (Gym/Oaks)</p>	<p>24</p> <p>4:30 PM, Grk Schl (Classrooms)</p> <p>Fashion Show set-up (Gym/Oaks)</p>	<p>26</p> <p>Fashion Show set-up (Gym/Oaks)</p> <p>8:30 PM, Ad Bball (Gym)</p>	<p>27</p> <p>no Youth Choir</p> <p>Fashion Show set-up (Gym/Oaks)</p>	<p>28</p> <p>5:30 PM, Great Vespers</p> <p>Fashion Show (Gym/Oaks)</p>