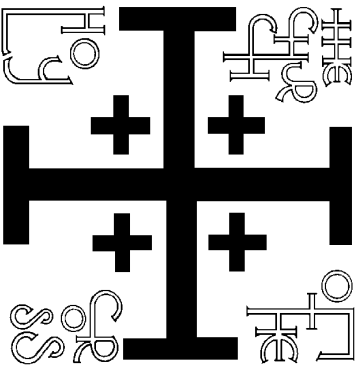
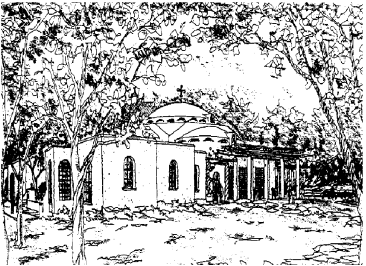


CROSS CURRENTS

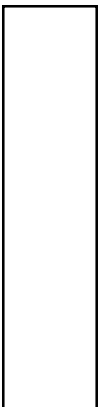
Monthly Newsletter
August 2003



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TIME VALUE

Cross Currents

The Monthly Newsletter of the Church of the Holy Cross
900 Alameda / Belmont, CA 94002-1604
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office@goholycross.org / http://www.goholycross.org

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Articles and ads for *Cross Currents* are due on the 26th of the month prior to the month of desired publication.

seeking the intercessions of the theotokos

by **Father Peter Salmas**, Pastor

The Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary is the first amongst saints in our Holy Orthodox Tradition. The month of August is dedicated to her and to her place in our salvation. The services of Great and Small Paraclesis are offered the first two weeks asking for her intercessory prayers on our behalf.

To God's birthgiver let us now run most earnestly, we sinner all and wretched ones, and fall prostrate in repentance, calling from the depths of our soul: Lady, come unto our aid, have compassion upon us; hasten for we are lost in a throng of transgressions; turn not your servants away with empty hands, for you alone do we have as our only hope. - excerpt from the Paraclesis

The practice of praying for others, or intercessory prayer, finds its origins in the Old Testament. The Lord Himself offered such prayers for the benefit of His disciples. I am often asked to pray for others, even as I ask others to pray for me. I am comforted by such requests for they confirm the strength and stability found within the community that is our spiritual family.

absolution. In the New Testament (Rom. 16:1) and the early Church, women also served as deaconesses (1 Tim. 3:8-13; see note on v. 11), but they never received this position through Holy Ordination and thus, never possessed a liturgical function in the early Church.

2. Lebanon (See Kings 5:6-14)

“So give the orders that cedars of Lebanon be cut for me.” (orders from Solomon as directed by the Lord)

“My men will haul them down from Lebanon to the sea, and I will float them in rafts by the sea to the place you specify.” (Hiram responds to Solomon’s request.) The lumber was floated on rafts from Lebanon to Palestine.

3. About 3,000! (See Acts 2:41)

“Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about 3,000 were added to their number.”

The second chapter of Acts tells about the Pentecost, the Greek name for the fourth of the annual feasts of the Jews, but also the 50th day after the Resurrection of our Lord. Pentecost Sunday marks the beginning (the “birthday”) of the Church. Peter delivers his great sermon here, explaining the phenomena and proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus, resulting in the great harvest of believers.

4. Noah (See Genesis 8:20)

“Then Noah built an altar to the Lord, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.”

With Noah’s offering (after the flood), God promised never to curse the ground again.

5. The Book of the Prophet Isaiah.

It is referred to 419 times in the New Testament. Most references are about the coming of Christ and every aspect of his glory and ministry: His incarnation, youth, manner, obedience, message, miracles, sufferings, rejection, shame, death, resurrection, and ascension.

- 1. Set aside a regular time. Unless you schedule it, you'll neglect it.
- 2. Before you start reading, pray that God grant you understanding.
- 3. Carefully think about what you are reading. The treasures of the Bible seldom lie like pebbles on the surface, you have to dig in just a little bit.
- 4. Try to understand what the author was saying to the first people who read the book or letter before you decide what it means for you.
- 5. Write down at least one truth or principle you can put into practice.
- 6. Don't get discouraged. Some parts of the Bible are more interesting than others, and some you may not understand. But there is enough that you can understand, and if you apply that much, it will change your life.
- 7. There are a number of Biblical commentaries written by the Church Fathers. Studying their words will further enhance your understanding of Holy Scripture. (Some of these commentaries are available in our Church Library or you may search the internet by going to our website and looking at the Related Links that will connect you with these commentaries of early Church writings.)

Keep in mind when reading the Holy Scriptures that, "The Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding." - Proverbs 2:6

triviA Answers

- 1. c. The first rank of the Holy Priesthood.

The rank of "Deacon" is the first ordination into the Holy Priesthood. "Deacon" literally means – "servant." Originally seven deacons were ordained to assist the apostles with the temporal affairs of the Church (Acts 6:1-7). This established office has continued in the Church. A deacon assists the bishop and priest, but cannot preside over the Eucharist, give blessings or pronounce

When illness affects a family member, whether it is a serious disease or just a cold, prayer should be one of the means employed for healing. In prayer, we acknowledge our need for God and His saving Grace, His healing power. The miracles of healing in the Old and New Testament are not fictional but convey real and profound examples of our Lord's love and power.

In Your good will, look on me all hymned Theotokos; and do you behold my body's grievous infirmity, and heal the cause of my souls sorrow. - excerpt from the Paracletis

This month I have found great comfort in praying for many in our community, knowing that, through these prayers our Lord is aware of our commitment to Him and the love we have for one another. Those for whom we pray have their names placed before the Mother of our Lord. Through her prayers to Him we are granted the guidance and strength to meet any challenge even unto death.

The fact that we can pray for our fellow brethren and ask the saints to intercede for us provides Orthodox Christians with an important connection to our Lord and God. It also shares the theological understanding of our spiritual connection to others in the Church Triumphant as well as within the ranks of the Church Militant.

Our commemoration and celebration of the Feast of the Koimisis or Falling Asleep of the Theotokos, offers to all the invaluable opportunity for spiritual growth and a rededication of our lives to our Lord. The Theotokos, first amongst Saints, is seen as having the first opportunity to speak with Him regarding our spiritual care. Out of her love for us, she is in constant prayer before her Son and our God.

It is most appropriate that our new Ecclesiastical Year be ushered in with our prayers to the Theotokos seeking her intercession on behalf of our Holy Cross Community. May she guide us to understand the privileged relationship with which we are blessed as the Body of Christ. May we also be guided to understand the responsibility which comes with this privilege. It is also appropriate that our Festival is scheduled at this time year, affording us yet another opportunity of building the "body of Christ". Working, celebrating, and praying together as a community can be very important expressions of our faith.

May the spiritual strength we gain as a community and the joy of this month's celebrations inspire us to greater service in His Holy Name.

O protection of Christians that can not be put to shame, mediation unto the Creator most constant: O despise not the suppliant voices of those who have sinned; but be quick, O Good One, to come unto our aid, who in faith cry unto you: Hasten to intercession, and speed to make supplication, you who does ever protect, O Theotokos, them that honor you. - excerpt from the Paraclesis

We BiD A fonD fAreWeLL

On Sunday, August 10 following the Divine Liturgy, our community gathered to say good-bye to **Father Simon** and **Presbytera Stephanie**. A fantastic luncheon and gift presentation was organized by Dr. **Tanya Spirtos**, **Jenny Cladis**, and **Helene Nemchik**, along with our Youth Council Chair, **Gary Brenner** who also served as our Master of Ceremonies. Many thanks to the above chairs and their assistants for a delicious meal and delightful afternoon.

As we bid farewell to Fr. Simon and Presbytera Stephanie, we can't help but look back at the many ways in which they have positively impacted our parish and our lives. Fr. Simon' dedication as a servant of God was obvious from the time he arrived in Belmont. He accepted a challenging and dynamic and enormous youth ministry with ease and determination. He quickly took charge of youth programs, and under the guidance of **Fr. Peter**, continued to build upon the strong foundation that had been laid. All of our youth and young adult programs continue to flourish because of his untiring efforts and guidance both in quality and quantity.

Fr. Simon and Presbytera Stephanie have truly bonded with our Holy Cross family, and we are most thankful to have had them with us for these last 2 years. They have formed long-lasting friendships with many parishio-



Youth Choir

The Youth Choir is looking for new or returning members. We meet the first three Thursdays of each month from 3:45-4:45, and sing with the adult choir monthly. Second-graders through high school are welcome. It is a fun group of kids and your participation will make this important ministry even more rewarding. For more information, call **Patty Kane** (650) 728-2021.

BiBLE triviA

(See if you can find these in the Bible before you look at the answers on page 18!)

1. What is a "Deacon"?
 - a. A Church software program.
 - b. The term used for people who serve at parish dinners.
 - c. The first rank of the Holy Priesthood.
 - d. The name of a retired football player.
2. What mountain range did the wood for Solomon's temple come from?
3. On the day of Pentecost, how many people were converted?
4. Who built the first altar?
5. What Old Testament book gets quoted in the New Testament more than any other Old Testament book?

WisDoM/refLeCtion

Reading the Holy Scriptures is one of the most necessary Christian practices for improving our relationship with God. Not only is it food for the soul, but it can help solve many of the problems facing our everyday life. Here are a few pointers on how to go about studying your Bible. It does take more than just opening the book to a chapter and verse and reading what's there, of course. But if you need a little guidance in this area, here are a few tips to help you get the most out of your study:

Youth groups

THE FIRST MEETINGS ARE **TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23!**

The first Youth Group meetings will be on **Tuesday, September 23**. We have two meetings in October, and the second meeting will be the annual Pumpkin Carving! We look forward to seeing everyone there. The advisors for the year are:

HOPE-	Irene Fotinos	349-1535	&
	Tina Cardaris	369-9629	
JOY-	Carole Angelis	592-2754	&
	Joanne Zongus	571-5852	
Jr. GOYA-	Kathy Roque-Albert	574-5518	&
	Tula Giesecker	652-4641	
GOYA-	Hope Callas	345-1672	&
	Gary Brenner	592-4755	

The Holy Cross Youth Groups Points System - The Points System applies to the GOYA Youth Group. A total of **500 points** must be accumulated by June 1st in order to be eligible for the End-of-the-Year Trips (i.e. Disneyland). Points may be earned in the following ways:

- 10 points for every meeting attended
- 100 points for 12 hours minimum worked at Belmont Greek Festival
- 100 points for working at the New Years Eve Dinner-Dance
- 100 points for working at the Godparents Luncheon
- 100 points for working at the Apokreatiko Glendi
- 25 points for helping to set up any of those events

Points can also be earned by doing community service at Holy Cross Church (community service must be approved by Dn. Athanasios **prior** to the time worked).

For every 100 points over the 500 point minimum, a GOYAn can earn \$25 off the total price of the trip (i.e. 600 points = \$25 discount, 700 points = \$50 discount, etc.). If you have any questions, please contact Dn. Athanasios at (650) 591-4447 or athanasios@goholycross.org.

ners, young and old. They have been a positive and wonderful influence on our young people. We hope they know how dear they are to us and how proud we are of them. As they leave us physically, they remain with us in many ways, as their positive impact on our parish will be felt long after they move, and more importantly, they will always have a large and lasting place in our hearts.

We will miss working, praying and laughing with Fr. Simon and Presbytera Stephanie. We will never their shy but loving approach in all they did, especially the fact that a quiet, shy, young man has now become a conversationalist of the first degree . . . oh, and he has been successful in growing a beard to the chagrin of a previous assistant.

Farewell, Fr. Simon and Stephanie! We love you, we pray for you, and we wish you God's abundant blessings as you begin your new ministry in Irvine.

A Bittersweet goodBYe

by *Fr. Simon Thomas, Assistant Priest*

Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented." And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him." The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel." - (Matt. 8:5-10)

When we as Orthodox Christians are baptized, as the prayer says, we are made "soldiers, newly enlisted for the Lord." As the parable above says, when we are given a command from the Lord, we must obey the command. As many of you are aware, I received a command from the Lord, represented by **Metropolitan Anthony of San Francisco**, to serve the parish and the people of Saint Paul's in Irvine. Although I am sad to leave behind so many friends here at Holy Cross, and so many memories, I will treasure those memories as **Presbytera Stephanie** and I make new ones in Irvine.

We may not agree with the decision, we may not like it, we may not even understand it, but we must accept it. There are many things in this

world we do not agree with, do not like, do not understand, but we must trust that this is all a part of God's plan. In my own life, there have been too many times that I thought I knew what was good, only to have God reveal to me the true meaning of GOOD. At times like this, it is important to remember Christ's prayer in Gethsemane, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will." We must trust in God's will, knowing it is for our own benefit.

So, I go. I, once again, put my life in the Lord's hands, trusting that it will be to His greater glory. I thank you all for your welcoming and loving embrace, knowing I will always have a home at Holy Cross. Likewise, all of you have a home in Irvine when you visit (Disneyland is 20 minutes away – hint, hint). And as we are all One Body in Christ, and we serve One Lord, we look to when we can all be together once again. "And thus, we shall always be with the Lord." (1 Thes. 4:17)

WeLCoMe DeACon AthAnAsios AnD DiAkoniSSA AnnA

With joy and gladness in our hearts we welcome to our community the Rev. **Deacon Athanasios Pieri** and his lovely **Diakonissa Anna**. Deacon Athanasios is originally from Cyprus having just graduated from Holy Cross School of Theology in Brookline, MA and was recently ordained to the Holy Deaconate by **His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios** of the Metropolis of Boston. Deacon Athanasios replaces **Father Simon Thomas** who was recently assigned as the assistant priest to **Father Stephen Tsihchlis** at Saint Paul's Church in Irvine, CA.

A special welcome will be offered at our Parish Feast Day Luncheon on **Sunday, September 14** following the Divine services commemorating the feast. *Axios!* May our Lord bless and keep our new Deacon and Diakonissa in good health.

A feW WorD's froM our neW DeACon

by *Deacon Athanasios Pieri*

As you have probably realized by now two new faces have arrived here at the parish of the Holy Cross. These new faces belong to my wife **Anna** and me **Dn. Athanasios**. We recently drove from Boston, MA and as of August

greek foLk DAnCing

Registration for the 2003-2004 year will close soon. In order to participate in the Holy Cross Dance Program, a child must be a baptized Orthodox Christian, participating actively in the Holy Cross Religious Education and Youth Group Programs, and his/her family must be a pledging member of the community. Practices are on **Tuesday** nights, beginning at 6:30 PM. For more information on practices, please contact the appropriate parent advisor:

Program Director – Dn. Athanasios (650) 591-4447

GROUP INSTRUCTOR(S)	AGE PARENT REPS	PHONE
ANGELOUDAKIA Sophie Callas Chrysann Zongus Nicole Zongus	5-7 Athia Giotinis Cathy Pereira	568-0281 631-9952
KAMARI MAS Nick Taptelis Ashley Brenner	8-10 Paulette Costantini Nicky Papadakis	591-4529 321-2225
ASTARAKIA Lea Papavasiliou Kristina Dimmitt Dean Angelis	11-13 Kathy Roque-Albert Anthie Mitropoulos	574-5518 571-8830
ZOIRI Valerie Paraskevas Victoria Najjar	14-16 Tula Giesecker Chris Hopkins	652-4641 367-7861
YPERIFANIA Perry Paraskevas	17-21 Carole Angelis Joanne Zongus	592-2754 571-5852

YOUTH CURRENTS

August 2003 edition

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

2 Peter 3:18



AthLetiCs

Practices will be starting in **October**, so please turn in your registration forms to the Church Office. For more information, please call the Holy Cross Athletic Director, Mr. **Frank Catomer** in the evenings at (650) 343-7191.

Youth kiCkoff

On **Sunday, September 21**, the Holy Cross Youth Council will host their annual Youth Kickoff at 5:00 PM. Dinner will include pizza, salad, and soda, and dessert. At the Kickoff, **Fr. Peter** will introduce **Deacon Athanasios Pieri**, the newly assigned assistant here at Holy Cross, as well as the Youth Ministry volunteers for the upcoming year. We will also hold the first Youth Group meetings of the year, at which, officers will be nominated for voting the next **Tuesday**. If you would like to help set up, please contact **Frank Catomer** in the evenings at (650) 343-7191.

ACoLYtes

There will be a mandatory Acolyte meeting **Saturday, September 6** after Great Vespers. If you are not able to attend this meeting please contact Dn. Athanasios at the number below. The schedule for the 2003-2004 year is available in the church office. If there are any questions about guidelines or expectations, call **Deacon Athanasios** at (650) 591-4447. The group assignments for the **Sundays** in September are as follows:

September 7 – Group A	September 14 – Group B
September 21 – Group C	September 28 – Group D



1st I have been assigned to your parish; so allow me to say a few words so that you can get to know me better.

I was born in Cyprus where I received my high school education and finished my military duty that all young men are required to complete. I came to the United States in January of 1992 to study Physical Education. At that time I wanted to follow in the steps of my father who is a physical education instructor, coach and high school principal. It was in Dallas, Texas that I met my wife Anna and at that time I took a break from school and worked for a few years managing restaurants. In the summer of 1998 Anna and I were talking about how I should finish my college degree and Father Anthony at Holy Trinity in Dallas who knew about my background suggested Hellenic College Holy Cross. I attended Hellenic College/Holy Cross, receiving my undergraduate degree of Religious Studies, May 2000 and Masters of Divinity degree, May 2003. During my studies at Hellenic College Holy Cross I worked at the parish of Saint Athanasios where I was very blessed to learn how a parish actually works. Of course, every parish has its

own unique mission functioning in the area in which it is located and according to the needs of the parish. At this time, very humbly, I am requesting your help in assisting me as I learn the mission and needs of Holy Cross.

After arriving here in Belmont, I realized that some parishioners may have been confused with my recent name change. Let me explain. My baptismal name is Constantine and during my ordination I asked to change my name to Athanasios. The reason that I changed my name was that I saw the grace and the protection of Saint Athanasios in my life. My parents and also both sets of my grandparents were married on January 18. The church celebrates the memory of Saint Athanasios on that day. My spiritual father in Cyprus was Athanasios, and it was he who first planted the seed of my faith in our church. Also, at the seminary I found a job at the church of Saint Athanasios. Therefore I believe very strongly that Saint Athanasios protects me so I decided to honor him by changing my name to Athanasios especially now that my new life is to begin as a clergyman.

Allow me also to confess my relationship with the Holy Cross. In Cyprus there is a very well known monastery, the Monastery of Stavrovouni, which is dedicated to the Holy Cross. When I was in Cyprus, very often I visited the monastery in order to meet with my spiritual father Athanasios. According to tradition, the monastery was founded by Saint Helen on her trip to Cyprus. She had carried the Holy Cross with her during her visit which she had found in Jerusalem. During her stay in Cyprus the Holy Cross was lost. They looked everywhere to find it but they were not able to. During the night they saw an unusual light on the mountain. Then they saw the light again for the next three continuous nights so they decided to go and see what it was. Imagine their amazement as they approached the mountain and saw the Holy Cross at the top of the mountain elevated above the earth about three feet. Saint Helen took this as a sign and decided to build a monastery there, leaving a portion of the Holy Cross and for this reason the mountain is called *Stavro* (Cross) *vouni* (mountain).

Miracles also take place in our lives today but we have to learn how to open our eyes to see them by allowing the Holy Spirit to dwell in us and to guide us.

As I said earlier, I came to the United States to study physical education. I admit that I enjoy sports because I used to play basketball and I still love to go walking and jogging today. Christianity and physical education have something in common both having to deal with athletics. It was the Apostle Paul who first made this comparison as both are striving for crowns of victory. The Christian athlete's goal of course is a much higher goal than

get ChurCh MAiL BY e-MAiL

To save money on printing and postage on SOME church mailings, we would like to e-mail such mailings to our parishioners instead of going the expensive, and old-fashioned paper, ink and envelope and stamp way. If you would like to help us save money, please send us your e-mail address at office@goholycross.org. These e-mailings will be infrequent but, in the long run, will save us a lot of money. We will identify these with "Church Mailing" in the subject line. Thank you for lending a hand!

hoeDoWn At the rAnCh senior CAMP 2003

September 15-19, 2003

Grab your boots and hats and come for an old-fashioned hoedown at St. Nicholas Ranch! At this year's senior camp, we will be learning square dancing and having a real barn dance in our historic (and newly renovated) barn, in addition to a host of other fun activities. Come for delicious meals, live entertainment, worship services, walking, ice-cream making, swimming, exercises, spiritual discussions, crafts, and much more!

We will also be leaving plenty of time for talking, relaxing, and watching the sunsets. So grab your partner (or your gang), hitch up your wagon, and head on out to the Ranch for a week of fun, relaxation, and spiritual rejuvenation!

To download a flyer and registration form for the retreat, visit our website at <http://www.stnicholasranch.org/GroupCamp.htm>. For more information about the retreat, send us an email at info@stnicholasranch.org, or call (559) 338-2103.

festIVAL VolunTeers

To all our Festival volunteers . . . THANK YOU VERY MUCH. Our Festival would not be the success that it is without your many hours . . . time, talent, and treasure. Our Festival showcases our Greek Heritage and beautiful Faith Tradition. Each year our needs increase yet our parish community responds through volunteers like you who make our Festival the best in the Bay Area. Whether it is singing or cooking, serving or cleaning up every aspect of our Festival is a reflection of your personal commitment of faith. We look forward to seeing all of you at the Festival Appreciation Dinner on **Thursday, September 4** at 6 PM. Come join in the celebration.

the VerY reVerenD Dr. LeonIDAs C. Contos grADuAte feLLoWshiP

Called by some “The Prince of Priests,” Father Leon was the beloved Pastor of the Church of the Holy Cross from 1979 to 1988. He came to us after serving as Dean of Saint Sophia Cathedral in Los Angeles, President of Hellenic College and Senior Editor of Saturday Review.

Among his most profound accomplishments, Father Leon translated liturgical texts which have become some of the most preeminent works of our Church, including *A New English Translation of the Psalms from the Septuagint*, *The Service of Matins*, *The Lenten Covenant*, *Holy Week and Easter* and the *Mikron Efhologion*. As a key founder and head of the Patriarch Athenagoras Institute in Berkeley, he brought Orthodox studies to the University of California.

In honor of his work as Priest, Scholar, Theologian, Author and Educator, roles executed with grace, dignity and a warm sense of humor, Holy Cross Philoptochos is offering the Very Reverend Dr. Leonidas C. Contos Graduate Fellowship to qualifying graduate students.

Criteria for consideration of an applicant are (1) the applicant or his family must have been an active member of the Church of the Holy Cross within the past five years, (2) the applicant must have a specific goal for post-graduate work, and (3) the applicant must be a practicing Greek Orthodox Christian.

Please contact the church office for an application.

that of the athlete who deals with sports, but the values we learn in one can help us in our lives towards the other. Let us not forget that through sports you can see the athlete’s true self and from there make him/her a true athlete for Christ. With my assignment at Holy Cross I would like to be involved with our youth but always with the direction of Father Peter. I would also like to work with all the different groups in order to develop good athletes for Christ. The secret is to learn our faith in order to glorify Him. This is especially important in our society that we are living in today where the Orthodox Church is a minority and the parents have all the questions about how their children will get married. The question is how important is our faith for us and how are we going to follow our faith? I also had many of these same questions before I got married. My wife Anna is a convert who converted to the Orthodox faith shortly before we were married. I had to explain our faith and at the same time to teach the faith to Anna. We were blessed in the fact that the church we were attending had classes both for premarital counseling and spirituality classes for those interested in learning about the Orthodox faith.

Our church is a church of a continuous tradition from generation to generation. The future of our church is the youth, but, at the same time, I can not forget the rest of the body of the church, the parents and grandparents who are members of the Body of Christ. It is this body who, by becoming Godparents, takes the pledge of that responsibility for the faith of their god-children and therefore future generations. So I am looking forward to serving you, so that together, with one voice, we can glorify Him here at Holy Cross and especially in His kingdom.

steWARDship - “the reAL test”

by *Tanya W. Spirtos, M.D., Parish Council and Stewardship Chair*

Do you ever stop to think that the “real test” of the individual is in the tiny day-to-day details of life rather than in the crisis situation or the “BIG” decisions that worry us the most? Could it be that our response or our persistence in the face of rejection or adversity during the mundane tasks of the day give us the opportunity to be less or more like Christ? Stewardship is not the “check” written once a year or the iconography contribution but the day-in and day-out giving of time and talent and treasure. Even when your help is refused or your efforts appear to be rebuffed by some good-meaning person on the Council (for example), don’t be discouraged and stop offering. Pulling back, declining to help, not doing your share of the work, limiting expo-

sure to others' negativity simply removes the possibility of actually being a steward of the Church. Those who make the greatest impact on our "family" at Holy Cross are those with the patience, good attitude, helping hands and humor to cushion the hard knocks of life. They are the ones who keep coming back to Festival prep when absolutely exhausted or who keep trying to balance the church budget during the lean summer months. And when you feel the sorriest for yourself because money is scarce and the boss is critical, remember that someone in our church has just lost their child or is facing cancer or really doesn't have money to pay for food—and thank God for what you have and you can do. Don't expect that life will get any easier than what you see around you. And remember that life is what you are doing while waiting for someday to get here.

steWARDship

by **Bob Nemchik**, Parish Council and Festival 2003 CoChair

Here we go again, another Festival! Seems like it was yesterday when we had our last Festival, but I guess I'm getting older and time seems to Jet by. As you probably know, from a "net" standpoint we had our best and most profitable Festival last year. Unfortunately though, we had fewer people in attendance. I don't know if you are aware of it but the Festival is making less and less of an impact on our yearly Budget. The budget is rising, like everything else in this world of ours and that has a limitation of the amount of help it is towards the budget.

As many of us have said previously, "we should not have to rely upon the festival to help take care of our budget." This should be taken care of by Stewardship for which we are commanded by scripture to give of our time, talent and wealth. It would be terrific if we could fund our annual budget with Stewardship and use Festival money to take care of unforeseen expenses, such as fallen trees, clog sewerage system, leaks in the roof, rising costs of insurance for Earthquake and Workmen's Compensation insurance, fixing the sound in the gym, front fencing and gating, air conditioning for The Oaks, etc. As a member of the Building and Grounds Committee this is only a part of our "Wish List." Why is it a Wish List? Simply we don't have the money to fund these project, so they are, it seems, eternally, on the back burner.

We all work very hard to make our Festival the success it is, but as it has been said on numerous occasions in previous *Cross Currents* articles, stewardship is like a 3-legged stool, which must be brought to balance. We are asked as Orthodox Christians to give of our Time, Talent and Treasure! Everything we have, and that includes our spouse, our children, our homes, the food on our table belongs to God. Everything we have is His! We are the caretakers of those gifts. That's all we are and when we die we give it over to someone else to take care of the gifts. It's not ours it's God's! So if you are not doing your share in all three of the areas of stewardship, then you are taking from God, the things that belong to Him.

Some may feel that being good stewards is very invasive upon our personal lives, after all isn't it more important to indulge ones self and have fun. Too many it is not a joy to go to church, it is more of drudgery or a place to be seen and socialize. I sometimes wonder if it is my own image I see or is it God's image I see when I go to church? We have a beautiful Church and we try to make it be all to everyone. The only constraints we have are just one thing and it says on the back of each dollar bill "In God We Trust." I sometimes wonder if people perceive this to be a question or a statement of fact, "In God We Trust?"

If you want a Church that caters to our young, and ourselves spiritually, then we must increase the amount of our Stewardship to reflect our concerns for the beauty and health of our Church. Remember, "In God We Trust"!

kiMMie Court uPDAtE

As of this date we, as a community, have raised just over \$100,000 for the purchase of the a five bedroom house at #8 Kimmie Court in Belmont. The agreed purchase price is \$780,000. Although a \$200,000 down payment is desirable we will be moving ahead with the money raised to date, financing the remainder \$680,000. This is a great opportunity for our church community and will greatly assist our needs as a parish. If you have any questions regarding the purchase and or would like to offer a donations for the down payment please do not hesitate to contact **Father Peter** at the Church office, **Tom Mavrakakis** at home 565-8909, or **Chris Canellos** at home 529-0180. A huge THANK YOU to each our parishioners who has given a gift of any size towards this purchase. Your donations of have enabled us to move forward in meeting our goal. May God bless us in our efforts.

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"I will meditate on Your commandments, and contemplate Your ways." -Ps. 119:15

THE PLACING OF THE VENERABLE SASH OF THE THEOTOKOS - August 31

The Placing of the Venerable Sash of the Most Holy Theotokos in the Church of Blachernae in Constantinople occurred during the reign of the emperor Arcadius (395-408). This holy relic was entrusted to the Apostle Thomas by the Mother of God Herself after Her Dormition, and was thereafter kept in Jerusalem by pious Christians.

After many years, during the reign of emperor Leo the Wise (886-911), a miracle took place – the healing of his spouse Zoa, suffering from an unclean spirit. The empress had a vision, that she would be healed of her infirmity when the Sash of the Mother of God would be placed upon her. The emperor turned with his petition to the Patriarch. The Patriarch removed the seal and opened the vessel in which the relict was kept: the Sash of the Mother of God appeared completely whole and undamaged by time. The Patriarch placed the Sash on the sick empress, and she immediately was freed from her infirmity. They served a solemn thanksgiving Paraclesis to the Most Holy Theotokos, and the venerable Sash they placed back into the vessel and resealed the seal.



If my people who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land. - 2 Chronicles 7:14

This well-known verse states God's requirements for blessing: humility, prayer, devotion and repentance.

With fervent prayer, sincere confession, frequent study of the Holy Scripture and of the Lives of the Saints, Christian hope in our soul is made firm and strengthened. - Elder Germanos the Cypriot - +1982

If we forget our brethren, then let us not wait for God to remember us. - St. John Chrysostom

The knowledge of correct dogmas does not suffice for our salvation, but an excellent life is also needed. - St. John Chrysostom

True faith involves doing all that you can and then letting God take care of the rest.

CALenDAr

subject to changes - please check your Sunday Bulletins

UPCOMING SERVICES

we return to regular Sunday service schedule on September 14

Friday, August 29 - Beheading of John the Baptist, Divine

Liturgy, 9 AM

Saturday, August 30 - no Great Vespers today

Sunday, August 31 – Sunday, Orthros, 8:15 AM; Divine Liturgy, 9:30 AM

Monday, September 1 - Ecclesiastical New Year, Divine Liturgy, 9 AM

Saturday, September 6 - Great Vespers, 5:30 PM

Sunday, September 7 – Sunday, Orthros, 8:15 AM; Divine Liturgy, 9:30 AM

Monday, September 8 - Nativity of the Theotokos, Divine Liturgy, 9 AM

Saturday, September 13 - Vespers of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, 5:30 PM

Sunday, September 14 - Exaltation of the Holy Cross, Orthros, 8:45 AM; Divine Liturgy, 10:00 AM

Thursday, September 18 - Saint Luke, Divine Liturgy, 9 AM

Saturday, September 20 - Great Vespers, 5:30 PM

Sunday, September 21 - Sunday, Orthros, 8:45 AM; Divine Liturgy, 10:00 AM

Saturday, September 27 - Great Vespers, 5:30 PM

Sunday, September 28 - Sunday, Orthros, 8:45 AM; Divine Liturgy, 10:00 AM

UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, August 30, **Sunday, August 31**, and Monday, September 1 - Belmont Greek Festival 2003

Thursday, September 4, Festival Appreciation

Friday, September 5 - Preschool Open House, 10-11:30 AM

Wednesday, September 10 - Greek School Registration, 4 PM

Sunday, September 14, Name Day Luncheon and Welcome to Deacon & Diakonnisa

Sunday, September 14, Religious Education Begins

Wednesday, September 17 - Greek School Begins, 4 PM

Sunday, September 21, 5 PM, Youth KICKOFF!

REGULAR MEETINGS

Tuesdays, 10:30 AM, Bible Study (Fireside Room)

Tuesday, September 9 - Philoptochos Board

Tuesday, September 16, 7:30 PM, Parish Council (Library)

Wednesdays, 7:30 PM, Choir (Loft)

Thursday, September 4 - Tech Committee (Library)