

# CROSS CURRENTS

Monthly Newsletter  
NOVEMBER / DECEMBER  
2005



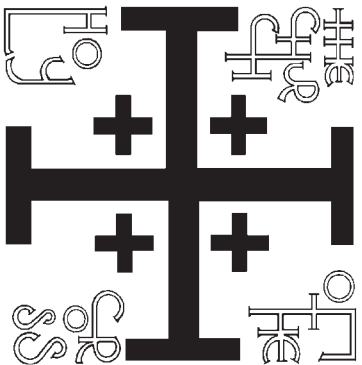
## THE GRACIOUS TIME

by *Father Peter Salmas, Pastor*

Over the years, our family has been fortunate to gather quite a Christmas library. We have over one hundred books by a myriad of authors, not including the Scriptural studies and writings of the Holy Fathers, that focus on the Birth of the Savior.

In looking through them as I do every year at this time, I came across a book from the Music Department of the San Mateo City Elementary Schools dated 1959, obviously from a time when we were more sensitive to the things of God than to the things of men.

The book is entitled *The Christmas Book of Legends and Stories*. Depending upon from what generation you are, you can perhaps imagine the number of stories and tales, poems and plays contained within its over 400 hundred pages. From the Old Testament Prophecies to the New Testament Gospels, from Shakespeare to Longfellow, from Milton and Tolstoy, to Austin, from Martin Luther to Chesterton, hundreds of writers have written literature, music, prose and poetry about that miraculous night in Bethlehem, about what Shakespeare calls “the gracious time”. Literally hundreds of years of creative expression were focused on the Birth of our Savior.



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The Monthly Newsletter of the Church of the Holy Cross  
900 Alameda / Belmont, CA 94002-1604  
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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.

*(continued from front cover)*

Both Presbytera and I began collecting these books and writings before we married. As the years progressed, it was not surprising to find that special publication, that new expression of the timeless truth to pass on to our then young children and our extended family. It was not so very many years ago that this “gracious time” would herald more than one new title whose pages reflected the joyful significance of the Birth of Jesus Christ. Alas, in recent years, much has changed. Very few new publications or authors line the shelves, or shelf, with the recounting of the star, the shepherds or the Magi from the East, and, sadly, the shepherds, the Magi and even the Holy Family are more often than not portrayed as bears or snow people. Something has happened. Sadly, this “gracious time,” a time when God, appropriately

conveyed, had a place in the hearts and minds of men throughout the world, has fewer to take notice and remember.

As Orthodox Christians, we are the stewards of a vast treasury of history and literature which reflects our heritage of faith. Is our heritage of faith to remain preserved on our bookshelves, to be brought out sentimentally once a year? Or are we who are among the minority who recount Christmas as a time to celebrate the Birth of the Savior of mankind, willing to live the significance of His Incarnation?

Allow me to end here with Shakespeare’s “the Gracious Time.” Hopefully and prayerfully, may it be so for many more years to come.

“Some say that ever ‘gainst that season comes  
Wherein our Saviour’s birth is celebrated,  
The bird of dawning singeth all night long:  
And then, they say, no spirit dare stir abroad;  
The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,  
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,  
So hallow’d and so gracious is the time.”

A holy, gracious, and blessed Christmas to you and yours, *Faithfully,*  
*Father Peter Salmas*

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

### LET’S KEEP CHRIST IN CHRISTMAS

by *Jenny Cladis, Parish Council President*

Thanksgiving will be over by the time you read this article. The Christmas tree will be up, Bing Crosby will be singing “White Christmas” (hopefully the word Christmas won’t be changed to “Holiday”), and we will be running around frantically trying to buy the best, the biggest, the most extravagant gifts of all, so that we won’t disappoint anyone.

The commercializing of Christmas is getting to be of mammoth proportions! There was a time when we would celebrate Halloween and Thanksgiving before embarking on the Christmas season. Now, we are scanning and depositing hundreds of Christmas catalogues into the round file months before Christmas. This year some of the decorations went up before October!

We Orthodox Christian are lamenting the conditions that are now prevalent in most parts of the country. They are not only taking Christ out of Christmas, but also out of our schools and public institutions! Why weren't we there to protest these movements? Where were we when the Crèches, with the baby Jesus held lovingly in his Mother Mary's arms, were removed from the schools? Where were we when they removed the Ten Commandments from city halls? Where were we when Madelyn O'Hare — one person with so much power — removed prayerful moments from our schools? Where were we when the Pledge of Allegiance was removed from our schools and all public games? In view of these changes in our society, we must be more diligent in strengthening our faith and that of our loved ones in our church, our homes and in our community.

Christmas is the celebration of the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, not about shopping sprees, over spending, and gluttony around the dinner table. We need to glorify God by attending worship services, giving our tithes to the church and alms to the poor. We need to give our gifts to the Lord, as did the Three Wise Men when the Christ child was born in a manger.

Enjoy a glorious, thankful, happy Christmas! Let us go forth into the New Year with renewed faith and joyful anticipation of celebrating the 50th Jubilee Anniversary of our Church of the Holy Cross.

**A reminder to send in your 2006 Stewardship cards if you haven't already -- they were due on December 4!!! If you've already returned your card -- THANK YOU!**

## STEWARDSHIP NEWS

### FIRST-FRUITS GIFTS - *Excerpts from OCA*



- o ***“Honor the Lord with your substance and with the first fruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine” (Proverbs 3:9-10)***

A first-fruits offering means that the gift is offered to the Lord at the beginning. The first 10 percent of our blessings belong to God, not the last 1 percent after we have indulged ourselves with the various luxuries that we have been convinced are necessities in today's society. And this gift must also be first in quality; the thought should not be “what is the minimum gift I can give that will have the least effect on my lifestyle?”

An offering that is truly a sacrifice must be felt by the one who offers it. It should not be easy, but should be a challenge to one's day-to-day life. As St. Paul tells us, “We are to be the living sacrifice” (Romans 12:1).

- o ***“The bread you do not use is the bread of the hungry. The garment hanging in your wardrobe is the garment of the person who is naked. The shoes you do not wear are the shoes of the one who is barefoot. The money you keep locked away is the money of the poor. The acts of charity you do not perform are the injustices you commit.”—Saint Basil the Great***

As the popular saying goes: If you were on trial for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?

## “BEARING FRUIT: WITNESS AND SERVICE”

by *Tanya W. Spirtos M.D., Stewardship Chair*



The school year is well underway, with mothers and fathers running in opposite directions juggling library visits with sports activities. Our mailboxes are stuffed with catalogues and Christmas carols provide the soundtrack of our hectic lives. Already the Holy Cross families planning to attend FDF in February are faxing hotel reservations forms and snatching up the few Southwest Airlines' seats left.

Yet, while barely winding down 2005, we are already looking ahead to a new and very special year as a family — the 50<sup>th</sup> year Church of the Holy Cross has existed on the peninsula. Most who tended this soil and built this vineyard have passed on, leaving a wonderful legacy to those who fill the pews, attend the classes, cheer on the youngsters, dance at the weddings, and greet old and new parishioners as brothers and sisters in His Church. Our predecessors expected that we strive to grow and prosper as a congregation, provide and dispense assistance to those in need, and support our Church members in crisis and turmoil, whether physical or spiritual.

Thus, our efforts in the vineyard of our Lord will focus in 2006 on “*bearing fruit*” through our “*witness*” as Orthodox Christians and through our “*service*” as dedicated stewards of His Church.

Eloquently stated in the OCA Stewardship Handbook: “To live as an Orthodox Christian means to love God and to trust Him. Our offerings to the Lord through the Church are a tangible gift from the tangible blessings that exist in our lives. If we love the Lord Jesus Christ, we show it by striving to live a Christian life, which includes prayer, fasting, almsgiving, repentance, participation in the sacraments, and regular proportional giving to provide the Church (the Body of Christ) with the means to perform His mission in this world. Christ says that if we give, it will be given back and the measure that we give is the measure that we will get. The apostle Paul reminds us that God is able to provide us with every blessing in abundance for every good

work. If we trust the Lord, and make sincere, generous offerings for ‘every good work’, God will not fail to provide us with the means to make the offering. But if we don’t trust Him, and we look at every offering as something being subtracted from our lives, even what we already have will fail us.”

Our greatest temptation in stewardship is to look at every tithe, every gift, and every offering as something we “lose” from our riches. In His words: “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven” (Matthew 6:19-20).

During this 50<sup>th</sup> year of our Church, take a closer look at your offerings (in time, talent and treasure) as an *investment* in your future. “Faithful and generous” is the goal in 2006 for each and every member of Church of the Holy Cross!

## MEMORY LANE -- 50 YEARS AGO

The Church of the Holy Cross is the first Greek Orthodox parish established on the Peninsula. On February 15, 1955, twelve San Mateo County residents met “for the sole purpose of organizing an association to promote greater interest in the social and fraternal welfare of the peoples of Hellenic extraction, and to strive for the betterment of the social, educational, and religious activities of the group.” The 12 were George Catomer, Sam Curusis, Gus Folas, Georgia Kanakaris, John Kanakaris, Nick Leonardos, Bill Mercuris, James Nicholas, John Pantages, John Tragoutsis, Zan Tragoutsis, and George Zafferis. On December 17 of the same year, the group formally applied for a state charter as the “Peninsula Hellenic-American Association, Incorporated.”

This was just the beginning. In the coming months, we will continue our trip down “Memory Lane” and revisit many more interesting facts about our community.



# SUNRISE, SON RISE - O Come All Ye Faithful

by *Chris Canellos,*  
*Parish Council*



As some of you know, I have had the privilege of working with many of our youngest Sunday School students and their teachers this fall. I am helping the children (Nursery School through Second Grade) learn some of our Church hymns and preparing them for our Christmas program, **Sunday, December 11**. I have never had so much fun, and I have learned a great deal from them. I also realize how important these years are in their development as Orthodox Christians, and how important Holy Cross is in their lives.

I hope you joined us in late October for their first performance in The Oaks, a fund-raiser for hurricane relief. Their enthusiasm, their brilliance and their voices filled the room, as if as many angels were singing these songs. The Lord once said that we should come to Him with the faith of a child – now I know what He meant! Right now, our children are so open to the ideas of our faith; they need the Church to be there for them. They need their Church friends to affirm that it's good to be Orthodox. They need to come to Church for the spiritual blessings it imparts and for the knowledge of the faith it provides.

These kids live in two worlds, as I also sadly learned, as I began to teach them the songs of Christmas. They must endure a secular world that no longer allows Christmas carols in our schools and even muzzles store clerks from wishing you a Merry Christmas. They wonder whether to profess their faith in the secular world, for fear of losing some of their friends. But when they are at Holy Cross, this is not a problem. At Church, it's okay to sing praises to God and share Christian fellowship with your peers. We surround them with God's love. And we pray that they will grow up under God's protection and hold on dearly to our beautiful faith.

To assure this generation of children and those who will follow will continue to experience all the blessings that God intends, each of us has to do our share to keep the Church of the Holy Cross strong. Let's look deeply into our hearts this year and be generous with our time, talent and treasure. There is a shortage of volunteers in several areas of the Church, including youth activities and our Choir. Everyone has a busy schedule, but can you take just a few hours out to help us? That's what a community is about! Each person offering their very best makes for a successful and vibrant parish.

A joyous Christmas! God bless us, everyone!

## WHAT'S WITH THAT???

by *Bob Nemchik,* Parish Council

This is going to be short, but something you might want to ponder. I am sure most of you have heard or read on the TV news, newspapers or the internet about the big flap concerning department stores and box stores doing away with wishing all a "Merry Christmas". What's with that?

I'm sure this was not done without a lot of meetings and forethought. Most people are really upset about this and are calling for boycotts of many of these same department stores and box stores. I am appalled by their actions but they probably unknowingly have spared us.

"Merry Christmas" to any retailer only means one thing -- they expect us to spend and spend for Christmas gifts. They readily admit their profits rely heavily on Christmas to impact their annual bottom line. This sort of reminds me that we rely on our Festival to bolster our Church's budget each and every year.

Christmas is so commercialized that it pains me to see the stores using this Holiest of Holy Feast days as an excuse to get us to spend our money on gifts. I sit around every year after people ask me, "What do you want for Christmas?" If you really searched hard, there is not too much you really need, since you have most of what you need : a home, plenty of food on the table, clothes on you back, a relatively safe environment and your family. It makes me wonder about the victims in

the earthquake zone of northern Pakistan, the hurricanes of the south-east United States, the genocide of Somalia and the Congo, and the war in Iraq, what they would ask for this Christmas?

My point is : we have so much we should consider doing more for our Church and all those in need — and they are many! Enjoy your family, those near and those far away. Count your blessings and thank the Lord for all you have!

To all the Commercial entities, I wish them “Happy Holidays” and to you I wish you all a Holy and Merry Christmas.

## ABOUT REAL ESTATE

by *Dimitri Melas*

**God help us if this is correct.**



Some economists, or so-called self-made economists, are predicting that the Bay Area is in line with the expected economic growth and therefore there is no real estate “bubble.” If that is correct, and the Bay Area continues to increase in population by astronomical percentages, there is a high probability of an astronomical inflation, devaluing our currency so that the typical 2 bedroom, 1 bathroom home in the Bay Area will reach close to, and quite possible, over \$1.5 million. Both of these are unwanted evils and none of the two is lesser than the other.

Local newspaper writers will write favoring the way to sell more papers, in some way manipulating the truth to make more profit, more money. Isn't all around us centered and based on money and how to make more, regardless of the truth? And now in the same papers, it is written that people do not believe half of what they read. What a shame for our communications media; we used to have the best.

I fully understand some of you who don't agree with me. That is your privilege, but my own research has shown that people with enough economics (plenty of money, wealthy people) are happier, more

enthusiastic about life, and have a tremendous advantage over the average family who is struggling to make ends meet.

The Real Estate market — I say the “bubble” exists and it is a matter of time before it bursts. I believe that it is getting closer and closer to bursting.

**Alan Greenspan**, on Sept. 26, made this statement : “Most home owners are in fairly good position to weather a shock if prices drop.” The writing on the wall is in his statement; the key word is “SHOCK”.

Here is another reason for the dramatic slow down of the Real Estate market. None of those predictors will indicate the converse and guarantee a continuance of the blooming home market. In fact, we are currently seeing a substantial slow-down in home sales. We are seeing a faster pace than slow, the home sales market is becoming more of a buyers' market.

Everything I have read and everyone I have spoken to says, “My research shows that this area is in line with it's economic growth, or, with the increase in family income, or the growing population and the shortage of houses,” etc.

It is absolutely untrue -- the biggest scam I see is the way all those “economists” use various disclaimers to cover their mistakes, and NOT a single one will guarantee it. Have we forgotten the late 1980's and early 1990's?

Here is another logical reason: When the ancient Greeks, the Romans and the Egyptians, were at the height of their cultures, none of them believed the end will come. “What goes up must and will come down.”

## Round Table Talk : Reverse Mortgages

***This is a topic which will require strong research of each individuals needs and wealth.*** Two very important aspects should be considered, (1) who is doing it, and (2) how will it be constructed. One thing is certain, at the end, the estate involved will have less net worth, and a good probability there will be no estate at all.

I will be happy to discuss this topic with any of our parishioners especially with some of our seniors who are so vulnerable to money predators.

In my last article, I mention negative amortization and the dangers it represents. In a nutshell, "Negative amortization" is exactly what it says, "NEGATIVE".

With all normal fixed-rate loans, other than the interest-only loans, every monthly payment the borrower makes, will subtract some of the principal, and in the course of 15, 20 or up to 40 years, the subject property will have a zero balance. The negative amortization loan does exactly the opposite, it adds principal to the balance.

Such loan is fixed for the first 3 to 5 years at a fraction of the real payment and then it defaults in to a variable rate loan at the current rate of that time. In a minimal case, it will double the monthly mortgage payment, and in some cases triple it. (More about ARM loans next time).

The difference between the actual rate and the teaser lower rate plus interests, is added to the balance, which is increasing every month. This type of loan is no different than the reverse-mortgage loan.

A good realtor will explain the pros and the cons to his clients. Isn't that what it is all about -- helping the client make the right and smart decision for their real estate investment, their American dream, whether is selling a property or buying a property, or borrowing on a property?

On a personal note, I like to inform our parishioners that I have been your Cantor since June of 1965, some 40 plus years, and without pay, and also have never accepted any gratuities for special services, nor do I intend to. It will be okay to let me be your Realtor, should you not have one to represent you. Dimitri can be reached at 474-3630 his direct office number or 619-2838 his cellular telephone. Both numbers have voice mail in his absence.

Thank you.

## HELP WANTED ORA



Need new energetic members to join our dynamic organization. Any age acceptable. Proof of age not required. Must be willing to have a good time, be cordial and well behaved. Meet monthly for catered lunch. Dues only \$10 per year. Hardship "Scholarship" available. For more details call VP **Virginia Coppock** 366-8988 or Theo **Peter** 327-1929.

## "ORA"cle NEWS

After years of meeting the first Tuesday of each month luncheon meeting we are going to expand our activities to the **THIRD Tuesday** as well. All members and their friends are invited to an informal fun activity outing in The Oaks, etc. from noon till 3 PM. Bring your toys, games, cards, crafts, walking shoes and whatever it takes to enjoy each others friendship and company while exercising our brains and bodies. We are currently on "hiatus" because of the holiday seasons. Check the *Sunday Bulletins* to find out when we resume. Any questions, call **Theo Peter** at 327-1429.

## PHILOPTOCHOS 2005-2006

The Philoptochos has a wonderful year planned. We are hosting our traditional events but have added some new ones. Here are a few of the highlights of our year.

- ❖ On **December 11**, we will have our traditional **Christmas Tea**, the proceeds of which go towards Family Sharing and our Benevolence Fund.
- ❖ On **January 8**, we celebrate the cutting of the **Vasilopeta** with a wonderful luncheon. This event supports St. Basil Academy in New York, which is a national commitment.

- ❖ On **January 28**, we honor our Past Presidents and look towards the future at a **Membership Tea**.
- ❖ **February** is **Kids 'n Cancer** month. We are asking members in the parish to “adopt” an Agape bear and blanket that we will take to a sick child in the hospital.
- ❖ A new event for the year is an **Art Show** on **March 18 and 19**. Cocktails and appetizers will be served as we browse fine art available for purchase.
- ❖ On **May 6**, we will have our **Fashion Show**, which funds our community service awards to deserving high school students. In keeping with the Golden Anniversary of our Church, the theme will be golden as well. Save the date, **May 6**, because you will not be disappointed. The fashions will be elegant, the décor alive with the golden theme and the food outstanding!

A new fellowship event is our **Book Club**. As Christian women we will choose a book to read and discuss monthly. We anticipate this to begin in **January**. It will be a chance to share our thoughts and our company. In keeping with the Diocesan focus of Women’s Health and Wellness and The Year of the Family, we at Holy Cross see this as an opportunity to support each other and hopefully see models in the Bible to help show us the way.

If any of these events seems interesting to you and you are not among the over 150 members of Philoptochos, please consider joining us. Look for our tri-fold flyer, fill it out, and send it in. You will make a difference in the lives of those in need. Over the years we have, for example, sent medicines to those without any, helped battered women, and raised money to support terminally ill children spend a week in a camp. Recently, we were honored to send \$5,000 to help the victims of Katrina. And, if the truth be told, we help each other in even more profound ways by building connections and friendships. Please join with us.




# Philoptochos Christmas Tea



**Sunday, December 11  
after Divine Liturgy**

Entrance by donation.  
Proceeds to benefit 2005 Christmas Family Sharing Program.

## Special Features :

-  **Philoptochos Charity Drawing**  
First Prize is \$500 cash; Five \$100 Prizes  
Tickets for Drawing will be available at Fellowship/Coffee Hour on Sundays.  
Winners need not be present.
-  **Greek pastries** - beautifully decorated for Christmas and suitable for Christmas giving.
-  **Proceeds from “Special Features”** to benefit Holy Cross Benevolence Fund and other Philoptochos Charities.

**Everyone is invited!**



# THREE HIERARCHS BOOKSTORE



The Holy Cross Three Hierarchs Bookstore is a good place to begin for many searches. Whether one is looking for a sound introduction to the Orthodox Faith or is seeking spiritual growth through the writings of the Fathers or the insights of contemporary writers, the shelves are well-stocked to assist you. We also try to offer a large selection of icons, cards, CD's, and other items suitable for gifts. Each month, we will bring to you suggestions to enhance your library and your faith and a few ideas to make shopping for special occasions have an Orthodox flavor. Should you have specific requests for a topic or a particular title or gift item, do not hesitate to ask anyone working in the bookstore when you are there. In the meantime, here are the “*staff picks*” for this month . . .

With the Fast of the Nativity upon us, gift-giving is perhaps high on the list of our thoughts. We are pleased to have in stock a variety of icon puzzles for our younger children. Icon puzzles of the Birth of Our Lord, of Christ and the Virgin Mary, and of many saints are on the shelves. There is also a good selection of children's books from which to choose. A favorite is *Nicholas Meets His Guardian Angel*, a delightful story about little Nicholas who decides one Saturday night not to go to church on Sunday with his family. As he sleeps, the Lord Jesus appears, walks down the aisle, and stares sorrowfully at the empty space where Nicholas should be. Nicholas is overwhelmed by the great love Jesus has for him. This story is a powerful yet gently conveyed teaching tool.

Orthodox tradition has its roots in many places. The small book entitled *From Saint Isaac the Syrian to Dostoyevsky* demonstrates this,

as the author, Archimandrite Vasileios, is the Abbot of Iveron Monastery on Mount Athos and yet writes of a comparison between the writings of Saint Isaac, a saint of the 7th Century and of the 19th Century writer Fyodor Dostoyevsky. “So whether you read St. Isaac or Dostoyevsky, you ultimately get the same message, the same grace, the same consolation.”

In *Towards Authentic Christian Spirituality*, the author, Metropolitan Emilianos Timiadis, “reflects upon basic themes of spirituality: Diakrisis (discernment), Incarnation, Koinonia, Askesis, Praxis and Martyria in order to call all Christians towards a life-giving spirituality that heals the brokenness of the world.” “Being incomplete, man yearns for completeness and fullness. Being divided in his innermost self, he seeks union . . . he longs for restoration, perfection, eternity. Each Christian is called to be God's servant, God's intimate collaborator. Each of us is sent by Christ to serve others. The Church is a worshipping community, participating in God's redeeming action in history” (page 116).

We look forward to seeing you in YOUR Holy Cross Three Hierarchs Bookstore.



## 2005 Baptisms

- May 7 - Nefeli Alexia, daughter of Anthony and Maria Tsangaropoulos; Chrysoula Dosiou, sponsor
- May 21 - Sophia, daughter of Jesse and Maria Geurse; Julia & Rich Kramer, sponsors
- June 4 - George, son of David and Semele Heller; Anastacia Stamates and Anne Halkedis, sponsors

- June 18 - June, daughter of Maa and Doa Wangphol; Nick and Mary Peros, sponsors
- June 25 - Efthalia, daughter of Theofilos and Marianne Bountouvas; Athena & Spiros Kabitsis, sponsors
- Aug 13 - Cleo, daughter of Douglas and Christina Ratkovic; Panagiota Linchner, sponsor
- Aug 27 - Justin, son of Matthew and Stephanie Philipopoulos; Dia & Frank Mariano, sponsors
- Sept 18 - Alexandra, daughter of Geoffrey and Detra Caldwell; Lee Violett, sponsor
- Sept 25 - Anthony, son of Gino and Anna Saccuman; Angelique Tarazi, sponsor
- Oct 29 - Johnathan, son of Willian and Sophie Makris; Niki and Bill Lianides, sponsors
- Oct 29 - Loukas, son of Thanos and Ingrid Triant; Nick Arvanitidis, sponsor
- Oct 29 - Ariana, daughter of Thanos and Ingrid Triant; Nick Arvanitidis and Athena Arvanitidis, sponsors
- Nov 5 - Kaitylyn, daughter of Steven and Kelly Koenig; Nikko Triggas, sponsor
- Nov 27 - Michael, son of Michael and Catherine Dacey; Amy Ambatielos, sponsor

### 2005 Weddings

- July 3 - Gerald Chapman, III and Dayn Hurley, Brian Ayers, sponsor
- June 4 - Nicholas Stavrakos and Monica Tellado; Steven Colyvas, sponsor
- July 10 - Daniel Kalamaras and Khara-Maria Salmas; George Postich, sponsor
- July 11 - Peter Sefakis and Nancy Treadwell; Michael Katsanevas, sponsor
- Aug 27 - Michael Malekos and Annemarie Molitor; James Garadis, sponsor

- Sept 10 - James Naylor and Amy Trevor; John Naylor, sponsor
- Oct 22 - Nick Costouros and Alexia Liviakis; Nick Sarles and Yvonne Koston Sarles, sponsors

### 2005 Funerals

- Loula Mitropoulos, who fell asleep in the Lord May 1
- Kenneth Bayne, who fell asleep in the Lord
- Vangie Kiramis, who fell asleep in the Lord June 5
- Frances Poulos, who fell asleep in the Lord June 16
- Clarence Gleason, who fell asleep in the Lord November 1

*Please let us know of any errors or omissions.*

## SEND US YOUR FAMILY EMAIL ADDRESS

To save money on printing and postage on *some* church mailings (like *Cross Currents*), 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 with this expense, please tell us the e-mail address where you receive *family* e-mail. These e-mailings will be infrequent but, in the long run, will save us a lot of money. We **will not give** your e-mail address to anyone else and will **only** use it for this church mailing purpose. Your e-mail address will not appear on these e-mailings (as we will “blind copy” you) and we will identify these with “Church Mailing” in the subject line.

If you can lend a hand, just e-mail your address to OFFICE@GOHOLYCROSS.ORG. Thank you!

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**YOUTH CURRENTS**

November / December 2005 edition

Grow in the Grace and knowledge  
of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.  
2 Peter 3:18



**OUR MISSION  
AS ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS**

*“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” Matthew 28:20.*

Every other Tuesday of the month, our Orthodox Christian Fellowship at Stanford meets. But on November 15, it was a different meeting because our discussion focused on the meaning of “mission.” Of course, if you tried to define the word “mission” from a Christian point of view, surely you would be surprised how many “faces” you will discover. Very easily, various definitions of “mission” will come to mind : as love toward your neighbor, “mission” as teaching others Orthodox Christian values, “mission” as constantly working toward salvation, “mission” as being a good steward in your community, and I am sure that by now you have some other meanings in your mind for Christian mission.

Our meeting at Stanford that evening was to experience what a team of young Orthodox Christians did last year as mission in Tanzania. Nino, one of the missionaries, was present at our meeting to share his experiences.

Tanzania is a country with over 30 million people where Islam and animism constitute the religions of half the population. Orthodox Christianity came to Tanzania in the 1960’s and is spreading rapidly in the Diocese of Bukoba. The Diocese’s mission efforts are focused on

increasing the number of communities and faithful, deepening the Orthodox Faith among the newly illumined, and expressing the Faith in good works. In 1983, the first Orthodox Tanzanian priest was ordained and today there are over 140 Orthodox communities.

This 2005 Tanzania Mission Team continued the work of past teaching teams by offering a young adults camp (ages 18-35) focused on Sunday School teacher-training for Orthodox Christians in the Diocese of Bukoba. The camp was in retreat format, offering basic catechetical instruction to hundreds of people who were eager to learn more about their Faith as Orthodox Christians. The Team worked in the village of Rubale the months of August and September.

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November 16 was the feast of Saint, Apostle and Evangelist Matthew, who preached the Gospel and died as a martyr in Africa. We offered our prayers and thanksgiving during the Divine Liturgy. Here are a few words about Saint Matthew, his life and his mission :

Any reference to Saint Matthew the Apostle, author of the first book of the New Testament, is made with such solemnity and reverence that speaking of him as a man seems almost sacrilegious, so close to the divine is he considered. But when Jesus came upon him, Matthew was a man who could scarcely be viewed with little but contempt by the human eye. The divine insight of Christ, however, saw in this man, who He beckoned to His service, that spark of greatness invisible to the rest of the world. It is doubtful that Matthew himself was aware of what lay dormant in him that was to place him in the forefront of Christianity.

Matthew was a native of Cana, the scene of the wedding feast at which Jesus performed his first miracle of changing the water to wine. He became a tax collector for the Roman government, a position that, like in all human history, was not endeared to the taxpayer, but which, in the time of Christ when the populace was taxed to excess, was deemed second in unpopularity only to the executioner. Jesus was traveling on the Mediterranean Damascus road when he came upon Matthew who was stationed there in his inglorious pursuit. Standing at a lake near the city of Capernaum, Matthew's gaze met the Lord's and Jesus spoke to him, uttering only two words: "Follow me."

Thus, in most unceremonious fashion did the divinity of Christ assert itself, and an overwhelmed Matthew took up the cause of Christ without any reply. He was no doubt so overcome with emotion at the majestic power of Jesus that he could not speak, but the communication between them was clear and Matthew felt a resurgence of the spirit within him and came to know the tranquility that emanates from God.

The service of Saint Matthew is familiar to all who call themselves Christian. His close association with Jesus tends to obscure the man who shed the ignominious role of tax collector to become the most intellectual of the Twelve Apostles chosen by the Lord. The mission of carrying the word of Christ to a people oppressed for centuries and suspicious of any newcomer was assumed by Saint Matthew with a determination that could not be denied. If Fifteenth Century civilization could laugh at Columbus who said the world was round, what did they say to Matthew fifteen hundred years earlier when he declared that Jesus was the Son of God? In simple terms, it wasn't easy. Matthew says it in Chapter 10:16 when he quotes Jesus as saying to his disciples: "Behold, I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves."

After the Crucifixion of Christ and His Resurrection, the inspiration of the Master was reaffirmed with renewed vigor at Pentecost when all the Apostles were enlightened by the Holy Spirit. Christianity owes parts of its existence to the will and courage of the Apostles who surmounted great obstacles of disbelief, superstition, distrust and open hostility in spreading the Gospel. There was no mass media, only the word of mouth and the weary foot travel from village to village.

Matthew's near divinity is augmented by the fact that a book of the New Testament bears his name. The Savior summoned him with but two words but for what ensued, there were not enough words in all the languages to describe. Matthew is precisely what is prefixed to his name — a saint.

Matthew preached the Gospel for many years after the death of Christ, traveling throughout the Holy Land and finally meeting a martyr's death at the hands of pagans in Ethiopia. His final verse is his epitaph. "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

Through the prayers of Saint Matthew, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen!

God bless, *Fr. Silviu*

## THE MEANING OF NOVEMBER NAMES

**Cosmas and Damian:** Saint Cosmas and his twin brother Saint Damian are early martyrs, and are referred to as the “Wonder workers.” According to Church history, Saints Cosmas and Damian were physicians and offered their service, freely to the needy. However, they were martyred during the persecution of Diocletian.

**Philip:** The Greek meaning of Philip is “a friend of horses.” Saint Philip is the fourth of the twelve apostles chosen by Jesus Christ. Philip was the only Apostle who had a Greek name and probably spoke Greek, since it was to him who certain Greeks came to request to be admitted to see Jesus. The Orthodox Church observes his feast on Nov. 14.

Again, the name Philip appears in the New Testament as Philip the Deacon. Philip was with Stephen and five others, all Greeks, who were chosen by the Apostles to administer the economic affairs of the Church in Jerusalem.

**Matthew:** From the Hebrew, this name expresses “gift of Jehovah.” Matthew is the revenue officer who then became one of the Twelve Apostles of Christ. He is credited with writing the first book of the New Testament. The Orthodox Church commemorates the feast of Saint Matthew the Evangelist on November 16.

**Aikaterine:** The name Aikaterine has its roots in the Greek word “katheros” which mean “pure.” Saint Aikaterine of Alexandria was member of a noble or royal family of Alexandria. Aikaterine was in her teens when she accepted Christ and was baptized. Shortly after her baptism, she had a vision of her mystical espousal with Christ. During a persecution, she was seized in Alexandria. At her trial, she converted fifty philosophers, the empress and two hundred members of the Guard. She was convicted, tortured on a spiked wheel and finally beheaded on November 25.

**Andreas:** The name Andreas in Greek means “strong, manly.” Saint Andreas the First-Called Apostle is the brother of Simon called Peter. Saint Andreas preached in Greece, areas of the Black Sea (Dobroudja, Romania) and at Byzantium (ancient name of Constantinople). Saint Andreas suffered martyrdom in Patras, Greece. The Orthodox Church commemorates the feast of Saint Apostle Andrew on November 30th.

## YOUTH COUNCIL NEWS

Those of us who are blessed with children understand that they are the future of our community and our church. That is why it’s crucial that you support our Youth Council and that you volunteer to help with one of our youth groups.

It is the work of the Youth Council to coordinate the events and activities that provide financial support for our youth groups. These groups engage in a wide range of activities, including folk dancing, athletics and youth clubs that perform community service. The youth groups serve as a venue for fellowship and friendship and allow our children to plan social events and outings that will strengthen their bonds with one another and create lifelong associations. Most importantly, these activities bring our children closer to our church and to God and are an extension of the church.

We have an exciting year planned for our young people, as well as the customary array of events that will allow families to meet and celebrate our youth, or support the youth groups. These include the always-popular Godparents Day, the Glendi and our annual New Year’s Party, a family-oriented way to spend time with friends, ring in the new year and help raise money for the Youth Council to continue its work for our children.

With all we hope to do, we need your help. Already, a number of parents are helping to teach Sunday school and we are grateful for their time and dedication.

We need more. We need parents to volunteer at every level and for every program - whether it’s advising a youth group or coaching a

basketball team. We need your support for events such as the Glendi and New Year's.

The money we raise does more than sponsor events for our children - we make an annual contribution to our Family Sharing Program, an event in which our young people are heavily involved and which teaches them the value of giving to those who do not have.

We are looking forward to an exciting year — for our children, for our church, for our future.

In fellowship,  
**Mark Simon**, Youth Council Chair

## THANK YOU!!!

We offer a special thank you to **Tom Minaidis** of Tom & Pete's Produce, Half Moon Bay, CA who donated pumpkins to the Church of the Holy Cross Youth Ministries for our Annual Evening of Pumpkin Carving! The decorated pumpkins were beautiful and demonstrated our children's creativity and artistry. The remaining pumpkins were offered for donations the Sunday after and helped raise funds for our Youth Ministries.



## MEETINGS & UPCOMING EVENTS



*Also, please check your Sunday Bulletins for the dates and times of all meetings in the Ecclesiastical New Year.*

**Weekdays**, 4:30-6:30 PM - Greek School (Classrooms and Fireside Room)

**26th** of the Month, 4 PM - Articles and ads due for *Cross Currents* and *Youth Currents* (church office)

**Mondays**, 7 PM - Studies in the Faith (Contos Library)

**Every other Monday**, 3:30 PM - Toddler Play Group (Gym)

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

First **Tuesday** of the month, 11 AM – ORA (Oaks)

First **Tuesday** of the month, 7 PM – Philoptochos Board (Classrooms)

Second **Tuesday** of the month, 7 PM – Felia (Oaks)

**Wednesdays**, 7:30 PM - Volleyball (Gym)

**Wednesdays**, 5 PM - Adult Greek School

**Wednesdays**, 4-5:30 PM - Greek Conversation Class

**Thursdays**, 7 PM - Evening Bible Study (Contos Library)

First **Thursdays** of the month, 6:30 PM - Technology Committee (Contos Library)

Second and Fourth **Tuesdays** of the month, 7 PM - HOPE, JOY, and Junior GOYA

Second **Tuesdays** (7 PM) and fourth **Sundays** (TBA) of the month - GOYA

Third **Tuesdays** of the month, Noon-3 PM - ORA gathering - for fun and games (The Oaks)

Third **Tuesdays** of the month, 7:30 PM – Parish Council (Contos Library)

*Please call the church office  
if we missed your organization's meeting.*

## SCHEDULING MEETINGS AT CHURCH

Every meeting, every use of the church facilities, every use of church equipment must be arranged for through the church office. The form “**FACILITIES RESERVATION REQUEST FOR CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS**” is available for this purpose. Organization leaders are asked to fill out ONE form for their regular meetings during the year. For example, Philoptochos would fill one out for their board meetings : “First Tuesdays of the month, September through June, 7:30 PM in the Contos Library”. Information for the other “events” of your organization (i.e., the Fashion Show, New Year’s Eve, etc.) must also be submitted on this form, one event per form.

There is a list of a dozen or so guidelines on the back of the “**FACILITIES**” form which must be followed so that the church facilities remain open and available for all parishioners. ***Principal among these rules is that*** no meeting of any kind may take place while a church service is occurring. Also, please remember, that since we do not have a night custodian, ALL meetings scheduled for the evenings, MUST be on the church calendar -- otherwise, we will not have the room(s) available or the door(s) open for your group.

The forms are available from the church office or at the “**DOWNLOADS**” link on our website; or contact the church office and we will send you one.

## KIDS NEEDED FOR CHRISTMAS PROGRAM REHEARSAL, DECEMBER 10

The BIG rehearsal for the Christmas Program will be **Saturday, December 10**, 10:00 AM, in The Oaks.

Parents, please bring your children (grades N-5) so they can rehearse their music onstage and participate in the beautiful Nativity Scene as an angel, shepherd, wise man, etc.

Contact **Irene Fotinos** EARLY to sign-up for a part, so that she can get you a wonderful costume.

## CHRISTMAS PROGRAM COMING DECEMBER 11

Jingle those bells, deck that hall, and come, all ye faithful! It’s the annual Holy Cross Community Christmas Program, **Sunday, December 11**, 6:00 PM, in The Oaks.

This year’s show will be another bell-ringer with performances by the Choir, Sunday School, Greek School and Drama Program, as we celebrate that silent and holy night when Christ was born in Bethlehem! Santa Claus is also comin’ to town!

Help us spread joy to the world by singing and playing your musical instruments in the sing-along! Contact jolly ol’ **Eva Canellos** for the music, 529-0180.

## FAMILY SHARING 2005

by **Brenda Visas**, *Family Sharing Chair*

Family Sharing is a program run by the Samaritan House, a non-profit organization in San Mateo. Families in need in San Mateo County register with the Samaritan House for help during the Holiday season. In turn, the Samaritan House finds organizations or families that are willing to adopt these families and provide them with food and gifts for Christmas.

Each year, Holy Cross adopts families. The goal of our efforts is simple, to provide families with needed items during the holiday season and a little bit extra (i.e., gifts that children normally wouldn’t receive). Needless to say, everyone’s help is appreciated and greatly needed.

Many organizations at Holy Cross contribute in special ways to Family Sharing. ORA collects flour, the choir collects pasta and Sunday School collects canned food. On Sundays during the month of December, members of our youth groups take special collections at the end of services that go toward the purchase of food certificates. And last but not least, the Philoptochos sponsors a Christmas Tea for the community, with the monies going toward the purchasing of additional food certificates.

All of our efforts come together on **Monday, December 19**, when we sort the produce, food items and gifts for the families. We will meet in the Gym at 10 AM. Monday evening we will gather together for a light Lenten dinner, at 6 PM. pack our cars, deliver the food and gifts to the families and return to the Church for dessert, coffee and the return of the family forms.

There are many opportunities to help before **December 19** by sharing your time, talents and treasury with the families we adopt:

- ❖ Adopt children from the Angel Tree (purchase a gift valued at \$25-35)
- ❖ Donate food items and money for food certificates
- ❖ Help sort and pack the food and gifts
- ❖ Collect and bring in sturdy paper bags (with handles) to pack the food
- ❖ Make phone calls to our recipient families
- ❖ Sign up to deliver food and gifts

### **FAMILY SHARING DELIVERY INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Enjoy Dinner!
2. Check in with Brenda to pick up your family envelopes. The envelope has the **family name** and a **map** to the house plus **food and gift certificates**.
3. Load your car with your family's gifts and food.
4. Don't forget the **TURKEY!**

5. At the family's house, verify that this is the family on the form and give them the food and gifts.
6. **PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE have the family sign the family form. You will bring this form back to the Church this evening.**
7. Leave the envelope with the family and make sure to explain the envelope has food and gift certificates inside.
8. You are finished! Please return to the Church to turn in the family forms and have dessert.

**Thank you!**

## VASILOPETA LUNCHEON

Join us **Sunday, January 8** in The Oaks. Celebrate the cutting of the Vasilopeta with the Holy Cross community and its organizations. A delicious chicken luncheon will be served. Save the date – immediately following Church.

## YOUTH CHOIR RETURNS

The time has come for all young people of our Holy Cross Community to become a part of our melodious Holy Cross St. Romanos Youth Choir. We will meet **Friday, January 27** at 3:45 PM in the church. Please call **Khara-Maria Kalamaras** at 278-6692 if you are interested.

## APOKREATIKO GLENDI & CRAB FEED DATES SET!

Mark your calendars for **Friday, February 3** for our Annual Crab Feed and **Saturday, March 4** for our Apokreatiko Glendi.

**SAVE THE DATE! PREPARE YOUR TOASTS!**

**NEW  
YEAR'S  
EVE  
PARTY!**

**2006!**



Make plans to be with your Holy Cross family  
at The Oaks as we welcome in  
the **NEW YEAR!**

Our evening will include a delicious catered dinner,  
a vasilopeta at every table,  
dancing to music by a live DJ,  
and midnight toast with champagne and sparkling cider.

Adults - \$55; Youth 16 & Under - \$25

**Saturday, December 31, 2005**

(please note correction to the service schedule)

- - - - 7:00 PM, Great Vespers - - - -

8:30 PM, hors d'oeuvres and cocktails;  
9:00 PM, dinner & dancing

Proceeds to benefit Holy Cross Youth Ministries.  
Reservation information soon!

## UPCOMING SERVICES

*subject to change - please check your Sunday Bulletins*

Sunday Services: **Orthros at 8:45 AM, Divine Liturgy at 10 AM**

**Sunday**, December 4 – Saint Barbara

Monday, December 5 – Saint Savas, 9 AM, Divine Liturgy

Tuesday, December 6 – Saint Nicholas, 9 AM Divine Liturgy

Friday, December 9 – Saint Anna, 9 AM, Divine Liturgy

Saturday, December 10 – 5:30 PM, Great Vespers

**Sunday**, December 11 – Sunday

Monday, December 12 – Saint Spyridon, 9 AM, Divine Liturgy

Thursday, December 15 – Saint Eleftherios, 9 AM, Divine Liturgy

Saturday, December 17 – Saint Dionysios, 9 AM, Divine Liturgy

Saturday, December 17 – 5:30 PM, Great Vespers

**Sunday**, December 18 – Sunday before Nativity

Saturday, December 24 – 7:00 PM, Christmas Vespers

**Sunday**, December 25 – Holy Nativity (Sunday Liturgy)

Tuesday, December 27 – Saint Stephen, 9 AM, Divine Liturgy

Saturday, December 31 – 7 PM, Great Vespers

**Sunday**, January 1 - Sunday - Circumcision of Christ / Saint Basil the  
Great

Thursday, January 5 - Eve of Holy Theophany - 8 AM, Hours; 9 AM,  
Vesperal Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil (Lesser Agiasmos)

Friday, January 6 - Holy Theophany - 8 AM, Orthros; 9 AM, Divine  
Liturgy (Greater Agiasmos)

Saturday, January 7 – John the Forerunner, 9 AM, Divine Liturgy; 5:30  
PM, Great Vespers

**Sunday**, January 8

Saturday, January 14 - 5:30 PM, Great Vespers

**Sunday**, January 15

Tuesday, January 17 – Saint Anthony, 9 AM, Divine Liturgy

Wednesday, January 18 – Saints Athanasios & Cyril, 9 AM, Divine  
Liturgy

Saturday, January 21 - 5:30 PM, Great Vespers

**Sunday**, January 22

Wednesday, January 25 – Saint Gregory the Theologian, 9 AM, Divine Liturgy

Saturday, January 28 - 5:30 PM, Great Vespers

**Sunday**, January 29

Monday, January 30 – Three Hierarchs, 9 AM, Divine Liturgy

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**Confession Schedule for Christmas Advent 2005**

**Monday / 12, 3-5 PM; Wednesday / 14, 5-7 PM;**

**Friday / 16, 3-5 PM and 7-9 PM;**

**Thursday / 22, 5-7 PM; Friday / 23, 7-9 PM**

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