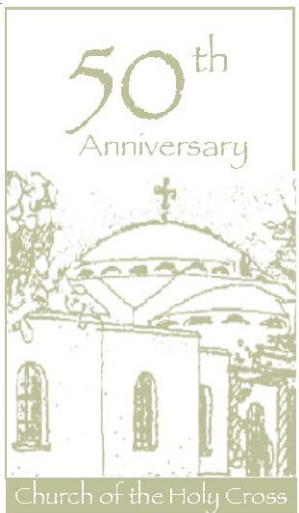


CROSS CURRENTS

Monthly Newsletter
FEBRUARY 2006



The Triodion and Great Lent

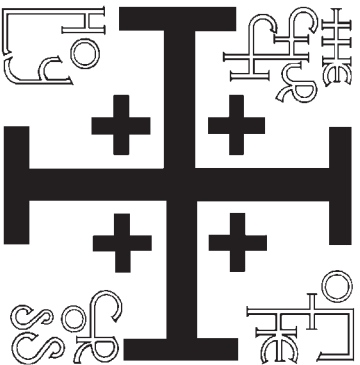
by *Father Peter Salmas, Pastor*



We have entered into the period of the Triodion, that time set aside for us by our holy Orthodox Church to prepare for the Great and Holy Lent. It is for us, as Orthodox Christians, a time of reconciliation and rebirth, our opportunity to begin anew the life that we embraced when we were baptized into the family of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

The Triodion begins with our Lord sharing with us the dramatic stories of the Publican and Pharisee, the Prodigal Son, and the Gospel which reminds us of the day of judgment for the kingdom that He has prepared for us. Each of these Gospel passages shares a common thread . . . how our ego prevents us from growing in the image of our Creator.

Saint Paul shares with us the sobering thought that we are Temples of the Holy Spirit, yet we respond in our daily actions as though we are temples built to house OUR own created image, not His. The period of the Triodion permits us the opportunity to reflect upon our strange wandering and disobedience and to make a new commitment



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Articles and ads for *Cross Currents* are due on the **15th** of the month prior to the month of desired publication.
(Please note this change.)

(continued from front cover)

between God and ourselves, returning our Lord to His temple and we, taking our rightful place as stewards and inheritors of His kingdom.

There is a prevailing thought that man does not need God, even the extreme that God does not exist at all. But the scriptural evidence is overwhelming that He does exist and that we can do nothing good upon the earth without His mercy, guidance and love. Our own faith, as passed down to us through Holy Tradition, reflects the Truth of Him Who we know to be the Triune God, revealed to us in the Person of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

How sobering it is that when we read the Gospel passages mentioned above, we can see ourselves as the Pharisee or the older brother; selfish, hypocritical, and arrogant, and at other times as the publican and the prodigal; humble, honest and repentant. Some of us may even

page 2 - *Cross Currents*

liken our actions to those of the Father, who awaits, with outstretched arms, the return of His child. Let us be honest with ourselves. Does our embrace of our fellow man include our true forgiveness? Does our hypocritical embrace include our recognition of our own sin toward our brother, our sister, our friend, our fellowman? Without such recognition, ours is but a false love and a useless embrace.

Whatever the case, our connection to the actions of those depicted in Christ's parables reveals the schizophrenic characteristics of our human condition. Though we speak of our desire to be embraced by our Creator, we willingly succumb to our egotistical weakness, our selfish need for keeping ourselves at the center, hence giving ourselves the power and worldly glory which we perhaps more enthusiastically seek.

Our world is in a constant battle with itself because we are consistently battling our very own demons over and over again. Our world reflects who we are and the result of our priorities and can only change when we change and accept Christ's love and guidance.

Metania means to literally change the direction of our minds and reverse our sinful goals and subsequent actions. The period of the Tridion and Great Lent is the time for our prayerful reflection, to change and look to God for His direction and forgiveness. May we take full advantage of the peace and solace that this great gift and blessing offers. May we commit to a greater participation in the beautiful and meaningful worship services offered throughout this unique period. May we place the salvation of our souls at the top of the list of our priorities. *Kali Sarakosti*. A good and holy Great Lent to all.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

by *Gary Brenner, Parish Council President*



On January 14, 2006 the Parish Council met in the Contos Library to elect officers for the New Year. **Jenny Cladis** had just completed two successful years as Parish Council President and was ready for a new Council member to succeed her. I, Gary Brenner was nominated and elected to lead the

Parish Council in the New Year, which also happens to be the 50th year of our Parish. I am honored and I am thrilled to accept the role. The shoes of Jenny Cladis will be hard to fill as well as those of all the presidents who have preceded me. We have been blessed at Holy Cross to have many extraordinary leaders and I pray fervently that I will continue the tradition with God's help and the support of our loyal parishioners.

Many of you know me and know a little of my background and the journey which brought me and my family to Holy Cross. I would like to share a small part of my life story for those of you who may not now me.

I was born in rural Georgia and attended the Methodist church where I was active in the youth programs. My parents were active in our church and I learned early in life that the church would always play a central role in my life. As a side note, my father who has a great sense of humor would occasionally introduce me to friends and associates as Gary "Olpoulos" his little Greek boy! I suppose he had a premonition that I would one day marry a beautiful Greek girl and embrace her traditions and her religion.

I married **Arleen Pasvanis** at Holy Cross on June 19, 1976 in a wedding officiated by Father George Stevenson and Father John Berris who was the priest at St. Nicholas in San Jose and who had been the priest at Arleen's parents wedding in Steubenville, OH. in 1946. Our reception was in the "garden" at our church which is where the current Sunday School class rooms and office are recently located.

We received the customary pre-marriage counseling and I committed at that time that I would have our future children baptized Greek Orthodox. After our two children **Ashley** and **Derek** were baptized we attended church regularly but I felt a certain "emptiness" by attending services while not participating in the Sacraments. In 1992, I began Catechism classes to prepare myself for Chrismation in the Orthodox faith. My chrismation was November 4, 1992, my sponsor and close friend was **George Milanos** and my "baptismal name" is Gerasimos.

Within one year of my chrismation I was serving on an ushering team and also serving as a parent advisor for JOY. I moved up the youth organizations with my children and served as advisor for Jr. GOYA

and GOYA until Derek graduated from high school last year. For the past 10 years I have served on the Youth Council as president and on the Parish Council as secretary. I consider these 10 years as my apprenticeship for the role, which I now assume.

I pray for your support and stewardship as we begin to celebrate the 50th year of our Parish. We will honor the memory of the pioneers of our Parish and celebrate the accomplishments of the past 50 years. We have much to be proud of and we have much to accomplish with God's blessing we will grow and prosper as stewards in God's vineyard.

I look forward to working with you and for you in this year of renewal and celebration.

STEWARDSHIP 2006

by Tanya W. Spirtos M.D.



“BEARING FRUIT: WITNESS AND SERVICE”

Together with the entire Parish Council, I extend thanks to the many parishioners who fulfilled their 2005 pledges in December and also to those who have submitted their pledge cards for 2006. Just as all of you at home keep track of the monthly budget and worry if the income is enough to cover the expenses, the Parish Council (especially its treasurer **Chris Canellos**) agonizes over the same issues facing our Church family. The pledges, as an indication of your commitment to help financially, are an item that all of us deeply appreciate in our planning and paying on behalf of the entire community. Just think: something as simple as you sending in a pledge card makes so many council members breathe and sleep easier!

This past year the average pledge was \$800 and so far in 2006 it is \$846. I remember, when we first joined, asking my husband “well, how much should we pledge?” and that simple question started a very long discussion on the meaning of Stewardship in all its facets of time, talent and treasure.

I challenged the Parish Council to answer another question: “why do you pledge what you pledge?” Here are several answers:

- As has been described on many occasions, Stewardship is a 3-legged stool. You can’t have one without the other and contributing of time, talent and fortune has been a significant part of my family’s commitment to God. A result of which is God’s gift of love, respect and personal growth for me and my family. Riches cannot replace this gift, a gift of God’s grace **Bob Nemchik**
- We pledge to maintain the church, the buildings and grounds. Not only for the Church’s beauty and sound structures but also to have a place to worship, teach our children and parish gatherings. We should not forget how close we come to God when we attend all services, Easter, Christmas and all Holy Days throughout the year. We are blessed with such good fortune. **Frank and Helen Valavanis**
- We pledge out of love for the Church that provides for the spiritual growth of my family and helps the needy by family-to-family sharing and other charities. In deciding what to pledge each year, we start by looking at our “fair share” or the budget divided by the number of families (about \$1,100 this year). Then we add extra to help compensate for those less able to pay. **Nick and Mary Peros**
- We give as much as we can to Churches, Orthodox Institutions and outside charities, but never less than the tithe called for in the Bible. Our pledge to Stewardship is our major contribution. **Jenny and John Cladis**
- Good question. It’s not one reason but a combination of instinct, knowing what’s morally right, allegiance to the Church, and need and want to help others in need— all based on Christian teachings. **Peter Bibbes**

I will continue to ask this question of others active in the Philoptochos, choir and religious education and plan to share their answers during

the next few months. Many thanks to all who are helping in stewardship efforts!

May the Lord bless all of us in countless ways this coming year, and may we recognize and appreciate those blessings!

STEWARDSHIP INVENTORY

Almost everyone has experienced the chore of “taking inventory”, commonly done in retail establishments each January, as a way to assess the assets and debts of an organization. How many of us, however, take a critical look at ourselves and honestly figure out the “assets and debts” of our daily lives? The beginning of a new year gives us a chance to summarize the previous year (whether in photo albums or Christmas letters or ledger sheets for the accountants) as well as a golden opportunity to plan better for this year.

So, take an inventory* of your own life in regard to stewardship. Just fifteen easy questions and only you and the Lord know the answers!

- Does God come first in my giving?
- Do I give Him what is left over or merely what I don’t need?
- Am I proud of what I am pledging?
- Would I be ashamed for others to know what I pledge?
- Do I believe God is proud of my pledge?
- Do I really make sacrifices for the Church?
- Do I make it difficult for someone to secure my pledge?
- Does the person who calls on me go away cheerful?
- Do I set aside in advance what I give?
- Am I worried about being asked to increase my pledge?
- Could I increase my pledge?
- Is my giving planned?
- Am I trying to do all that I can do?
- Am I making any effort to tithe my income?
- If I do not tithe, am I trying to give half a tithe?

**Published by Stewardship Ministry, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese*

Unfortunately, those of us who would benefit the most from reading my articles and answering this questionnaire are also the ones who glance at the subject and skip over the material. But that should not stop us from saying and writing the same things year after year any more than a business would skip an inventory because “we looked at it last year”. The Church calendar allows us ample opportunities to focus on, and hear again, scripture and readings year after year; each time we will hopefully see and understand a little more of the Divine Truth.

Best wishes to all of you as we begin our 50th year at Holy Cross and prepare to enter Great Lent.

50TH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL EDITION



MEMORY LANE 3 -- 50 YEARS AGO

by *Ella Stamates, 50th Anniversary Committee*



The first Divine Liturgy was celebrated on Sunday, September 14, 1956, the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, at the IOOF Hall in San Mateo. One of the first functions of the newly established parish was held on November 24, 1956—a dance at the newly opened Villa Hotel. The event was attended by over 800 people and was co-sponsored by the local AHEPA chapter.

In the first two years, the parish was supported by 50 families. Financial needs were met by annual membership dues of \$18 per family or \$12 per individual, plus church collections and social activities. During this time, church attendance averaged 45 people with over 60 children enrolled in religious classes. The Ladies Philoptochos Society was formed in the fall of 1956 with Mrs. James Saribalís as President.

When our first pastor, Father Stanley Marcantonis transferred to another parish, he was replaced, temporarily by Father H. Tselentes (3-57 to 8/57). In August, 1957, Father George Dellas (8-57 to 10-58) assumed pastoral duties. Father Dellas established a Greek language afternoon school in September, 1957. Also, a temporary church office was established at 220 East Third Avenue in San Mateo. Thus, the foundation was established for the church community.

CALLING ALL PHOTOS!

As part of Holy Cross 50th Anniversary celebrations, we would like to create a photo archive of the many moments, both large and small, that have taken place at our church. We would like to create a pictorial record of the baptisms, weddings, chrismations, and other sacraments that have taken place at our church. We would also like to see pictures of the many events that have taken place at our church :

- o festivals
- o fellowshipping dinners
- o New Year’s Eve parties
- o crab feeds
- o glendis

to name a few. We also want pictures from all of the organizations in the church :

- o Philoptochos (fashion shows, teas, meetings, swearing-ins),
- o the choir
- o the youth groups (Piece Meals, retreats, Disneyland trips, fund-raisers)
- o basketball/volleyball teams
- o dance groups
- o Youth Religious Education (Christmas programs, promotion/graduation)
- o Greek School
- o Acolytes
- o ORA
- o Mr. and Mrs./Filia

- o Young Couples
- o Drama
- o Youth Choir

and any other events.

If you have photos of any of these events or occasions that have taken place at our church, please send or bring them to the church office. We are asking that all photos be clearly labeled with a post-it note. The note should state the **people** in the photo and the **name of the event and/or organization** and the **date**. Please place pictures in a letter size envelope (9" x 12") to ensure that they will be returned to you. Please label the envelope **Holy Cross Photo Archive, 50th Anniversary** with RETURN: your name.

Please take the time to send these photos. They will be an invaluable part of our church's 50th Anniversary celebrations this year and for always.

REFLECTIONS

REFLECTIONS

SUNRISE, SON RISE

by *Chris Canellos, Parish Council*

I begin this month's column with good news that our Church was able to balance its budget for the first time in five years. According to preliminary figures, the Church raised \$785,000 from all sources in 2005 which covered our \$765,000 of expenses. Revenues rose 8.5% from \$723,000 in 2004 while expenses increased only 1% from the \$758,000 spent in 2004.

Stewardship revenue at \$474,000 was the main source. Activity income was up 20% to \$162,000 due to an excellent 2005 Belmont Greek Festival. Regular Sunday offerings, miscellaneous donations and income from our Preschool made up the remaining revenue.

Keeping total expenses virtually unchanged year-to-year was a great achievement considering that we absorbed the entire \$15,000 shortfall from our 2004 Archdiocese commitment in 2005, and made a \$20,000 principal payment on our mortgage. We reduced insurance costs and held utility costs unchanged in a year of rising unit costs.



As I review the expenses now, we have made all the cuts we can without affecting our current programs and services. We need to raise more than \$60,000 each month to operate our Church. Expenses for salaries, benefits, maintenance and utilities will rise in 2006. We must all raise our level of support to pay for this increase.

In 2005, Stewardship, Sunday Offerings and Special Donations totaled \$588,000 or 77% of our total \$765,000 in expense. Outside activities made up the rest. So, right now for every \$1000 of Church expenses, we only pay \$770 ourselves and expect outsiders, our guests at the Festival, Golf Tournament, Crab Feed and Pre-school to pay the rest. I believe we should not be so dependent on others to take care of our bills.

At a minimum, I would ask each parishioner family to increase their stewardship commitment by at least 5-10% this year and plan to do the same over the next four years after that. At a steady 10% increase, we could meet the anticipated annual rise in our annual expenses and gradually move toward taking care of all of our own bills without relying on others to take care of them. I hope you can join me in this New Year's resolution.

We were all saddened at the recent passing of John Sarantitis. When I look back on my first days at Holy Cross, I remember how warmly John and Vivi greeted my family. John was always there when we needed him. He would give the Church books their annual once-over and helped prepare financial information that we used to obtain the loan that allowed us to build the Community Center and class-

rooms. John was always interested in the progress of the Church and was frequently present at General Assemblies. His honesty and sense of humor will be sorely missed. May God grant rest to his soul and grant his family comfort in their time of loss.

Hail to the Chief! Congratulations, **Gary Brenner**, our new Parish Council President. Gary has worked tirelessly for Holy Cross, principally as Chair of our Youth Council, Secretary of the Parish Council and our preferred Master of Ceremonies for important events in the life of the Church. His selection in our 50th year is a positive step in the history of our community. I hope you will take a moment to congratulate him and his lovely wife Arleen, and offer your support for this exciting year ahead.

PARALLEL

by *Konstantine Salmas*



Jesus of Nazareth is called Jesus Christ by the blind man. Before anything happens between Jesus and the blind man, the man calls Jesus the Son of David. He recognizes Jesus as someone special. This is an example of faith and its echo is Abraham responding to God before God does anything for him. This is significant for understanding who God is. Saint Paul does not draw parallels between Christian faith and the Mosaic law practiced by the Jews. In fact, he says that anyone who claims to believe in Jesus as the Christ, is harming the work of Christ when they involve themselves with Jewish practice of the Mosaic Law. Paul skips over the Mosaic law because what the law anticipated in the sacrifices and festivals instituted by the Lord was a time when God would accomplish for real the removal of sin and death as things which keep man and the world from eternal participation in the life of God. The faith of the Church is in Jesus Christ because his presence changed the way a life with God is to be understood and lived. When the people who make up the Church do not accurately inform themselves of who we remember and why, then the memory of the community can be-

come distorted. This is very important because the memory of Christ at the center of all things is a memory of the future, of how things are, of who God is, and of our future when God's Kingdom comes in full.

NEWS & INFORMATION

PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS

by *Mary Peros, President*

Forget Dr. Phil and join Philoptochos!

Experts agree that if you volunteer to help others you are happier, healthier and live longer. Although the evidence is only anecdotal, we all do feel better when we are working together toward a common goal. There are times when our collective feet hurt, when our backs ache and when we feel we have organized THE VERY LAST fashion show. It is funny, though, that after a little while, our energy returns and we do really enjoy the next challenge.

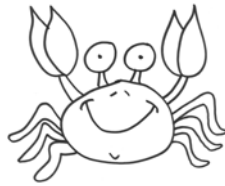
On January 28 the Philoptochos sponsored a tea to honor past presidents and welcome new members to join its ranks. Over 80 beautiful ladies attended, including seven past presidents, and we celebrated the past by presenting a perpetual plaque with the names of all our past presidents. We talked about the needs of our Church community at different times. When we did not have our Church buildings, the Philoptochos faced very different challenges. We also talked about the exciting challenges that lay ahead. Most of the afternoon, however, we spent enjoying a delicious luncheon prepared and served by the Board. We chatted with good friends and made new ones. A huge thank you is in order to **Eleni Metaxas** and **Erma Najjar** who chaired this event. And another thank you to **Vaso Kounalakis** for opening her home to us. It was a lovely afternoon.

As we move through January and into February we focus on membership for 2006. You may have received a flyer from the Philoptochos. Please take a moment and fill it in with whatever donation you can afford. Later this month, on February 26th, we will have our Kids 'N Cancer reception after Church. You will see teddy bears and blankets on display. Adopt a bear and we will give it along with the cuddly blanket to a child in a local pediatric unit of a hospital. Mark your calendars for March 19th when we will have our first Art Show and Cocktail Reception. Looking further ahead, on May 6th, we will once again have our fashion show. The menu, theme, and décor are all surprises. You will not be disappointed.

Let us all pray for a healthy and happy New Year as we celebrate our Church's Golden Anniversary.

CRAB FEED RECAP

Holy Cross's Crab Feed held earlier this month and was successful, fun and delicious. Besides a full complement of appetizers, crisp salad, pasta laden with butter and cheese, and crunchy garlic bread topped off with lots of marinated crab, the approximately 250 guests in attendance ate until full and satisfied.



Lucky parishioner, **Serge Loukianoff**, was the winner of the cash raffle. It was his daughter **Alisha**, who charmed him into buying the winning ticket. Way to go Alisha! Congratulations Serge!

Tony Monolakis and **Charles Gagas** chaired the Crab Feed. Others offering a helping hand were **Gary Brenner**, **George Milanos**, **Claire Sperow**, **Sonia Risting**, **Ella Stamates**, **Cathy Zamenes** and **Chris Canellos**. They saw to every detail that insured the evening's success. Nob Hill catered the event and offered their best in quality and service.

Finally, this was a wonderful opportunity for family and friends to gather in fellowship under our church community umbrella. This is just the first of many events that will be taking place during this year of

our 50th Anniversary. Please watch for further information as it becomes available and join us in a variety of celebrations.

THANK YOU FOR THE SHOES!

by *Claire Gagas, Orphanage Liaison*



During the month of November, we collected over 200 pairs of shoes for the children (and their nannies, too!) at the Hogar Rafael Ayau Orthodox Orphanage in Guatemala. I would like to extend a HUGE thank you to all of you who brought shoes (both gently used AND brand new pairs!), socks, and other goodies to the church so we could send them to the orphanage. Also, many thanks to those of you who made a donation. I used those funds to purchase brand new shoes and socks to add to the shipment. I also would like to thank the Ladies of the Philoptochos for graciously offering to pay for the shipping costs. What a huge help! Last but not least, I couldn't have completed the project without the help of my Mom, **Dee Sperow**, who picked up many bags and boxes of shoes from the church, and the help of my husband, **Charles**, who assisted me with packing and labeling all twelve boxes prior to shipment.

I'm happy to report that the boxes are on their way to the orphanage and soon the children will be enjoying their new shoes. Thank you again for opening your hearts to the little ones in Guatemala. God bless you all!

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THANK YOU

My family and I would like to thank all of you for your sympathy and thoughtfulness during our difficult time.

Vivi Sarantitis

MEETINGS & UPCOMING EVENTS



MEETINGS AND 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)

15th 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 **Thursdays** of the month, 7 PM – Felia (Oaks)

Wednesdays, 5 PM - Adult Greek School

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

Wednesdays, 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) [temporarily on hiatus]

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

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



**His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos
Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco
will be visiting on Forgiveness Sunday, March 5**

**Please join us for Orthros at 8:45 AM
and Divine Liturgy at 10:00 AM.
Choir Luncheon to follow (see page 18 for info)**

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**Announcing the
Sunday of Orthodoxy Great Vespers
Sunday, March 12 - 6:00 PM**

**Homilist
His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos
Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco**

**All Eastern Orthodox Jurisdictions will be in attendance
Reception to follow in The Oaks**

The Holy Cross Choir

invites you to our annual

Cheesefare Sunday Lunch

Sunday, March 5

In The Oaks Following Liturgy

Metropolitan Gerasimos plans to be with us!



Enjoy a Marvelous (and Cheesy) Macaronada!
 Super salad! Delicious Dessert! Music and Program!

Proceeds to benefit our Choir.
 Admission: \$15 Youth (6-10 years): \$6
 Maximum \$40 per family with youth
 Reservations / Information: Helen Valavanis (650) 573-5315
 or Mary Metropulos (650) 591-9898

For reservations, please mail check, payable to *Holy Cross Choir*, to Helen Valavanis, 881 Haddock St., Foster City, CA 94404. Paid tickets held at door with assigned seating. Tickets also sold at door with general seating.

Name _____

Phone _____ Address _____

How many adults or youth over 10? _____ X \$15 = \$ _____

How many youth ages 6-10? _____ X \$ 6 = \$ _____

How many children under 6 requiring seating? _____ FREE

Total amount of check: \$ _____

Please seat with _____

I am unable to attend the luncheon but wish to support the Choir. Please accept my donation: \$ _____. All donations are appreciated and will be acknowledged.

Thank you!



40th Annual

GOLF & TENNIS TOURNAMENT
Church of the Holy Cross

Mark your calendars!

MONDAY, JUNE 12, 2006

for the 40th Annual

***Church of the Holy Cross
Golf and Tennis Tournament***

Watch the mail for your invitation

Tennis - 8:15 AM - Noon

Golf - 12:30 -5:30 PM

(First time ever! Your choice! Scramble format or Play your ball. Prizes in both categories.

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PASTITSIO-MOUSAKA

AND SO MUCH MORE...

COME IN & SEE FOR YOURSELF

YOUTH CURRENTS

February 2006 edition

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

2 Peter 3:18



The 2006 St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival

by *Father Silviu Stanculescu*, Assistant Priest

Introduced in 1983, the Saint John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival provides Greek Orthodox teenagers the opportunity to write and talk about their faith.

All students of Holy Cross from Grades 10th to 12th are strongly encouraged to participate in this festival. Oratorical Festival is an excellent opportunity for our Orthodox youth to learn and to express our faith. Participants choose a topic within the main theme of this year, "The Festal Menaion." They will study and write about it, and make a speech in public. It is going to be a great experience for any participants. There are four different levels: Parish, District, Metropolis and Archdiocese National Level. The Parish Festival is organized by an Oratorical Chairperson and Committee appointed by the Parish Priest. A Parish Oratorical Festival takes place between January and March. Each Parish sends its finalists to a District Festival. The District Festivals are composed of parishes in specified areas of a Metropolis. District Festivals take place between March and April and the finalists advance to the Metropolis Festival. Each District Chairperson is appointed by the Metropolis Hierarchy. The Metropolis Festival takes place between April and May and includes the finalists from each District. The first place Junior and Senior Speakers of each Metropolis advance to the Archdiocesan Festival. The Metropolis Chairperson is appointed by the Metropolis Hierarchy. The Archdiocesan Festival takes place in

early June, and this year San Francisco will host the finalists from all over the country will meet for their presentations. In Archdiocese level, participants will receive college scholarships. Be a part of this wonderful festivity. For more information, guide and for finding resources of a topic, please contact your Religious Education teacher, **Father Silviu** or **Father Peter**.

Junior Division

1. “The ends of the earth rejoice at your Nativity, O Maiden Mary, Mother of God and Unwedded Bride.” Talk about the role of the Virgin Mary in the salvation of man. (September 8)
2. “Before your conception, O Pure Virgin, you were consecrated to God, and now after your birth you are offered as a gift to Him as a fulfillment of your parents’ promise.” Talk about the life of the Virgin Mary. (November 21)
3. On the Day of Theophany, we chant “All those who were baptized in Christ have put on Christ” (Gal. 3:27). Discuss the meaning of this phrase and the obligations it places upon us as Orthodox Christians (January 6).
4. At the Presentation of the Lord into the Temple, Simeon said, “Lord now let Your servant depart in peace...for my eyes have seen Your salvation...” Talk about the forty-day blessing of Jesus and how this tradition continues today. (February 2)
5. In the Troparion chanted on Pentecost, we hear, “Blessed are You our God, Who has revealed the fisherman as most wise...through them you drew the world into Your net.” Talk about the events that preceded and followed Pentecost.
6. In the Gospel reading on the Feast Day of the Dormition of the Theotokos, we hear, “Martha, Martha, you are worried about so many things, but just one thing is needed” (Luke 10:38-42). What did Jesus mean by this statement? (August 15)

Senior Division

1. The Exapostilarion of the Elevation of the Holy Cross proclaims, “The Cross is the Guardian of the whole earth...the beauty of the Church...the strength of Kings...the support of the faithful...the glory of angels and the wondrous of demons.” Talk about the power of the Life-Giving Cross. (September 14)
2. “And you, O Bethlehem...are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will govern my people Israel” (Matthew 2:6). What do the prophets of the Old Testament say about the Messiah? (December 25)
3. “I am the Lord’s servant, may it happen to me as you have said” (Luke 1:38). What does Mary’s response to the Archangel Gabriel mean to you as an Orthodox Christian? (March 25)
4. “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!” (John 12:13). Now that we are aware of the forthcoming events of Holy Week, how can we explain the Lord’s triumphant entry into Jerusalem and the sudden turn of events?
5. At the Ascension of Jesus, the angels were heard saying: “Why do you stand looking into Heaven? This Jesus will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven.” What do the Church Fathers teach us about the “Second Coming?”
6. “And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah...talking with Him” (Matthew 17:3). Discuss the significance of the appearance of Moses and Elijah at the Transfiguration of Jesus. (August 6)

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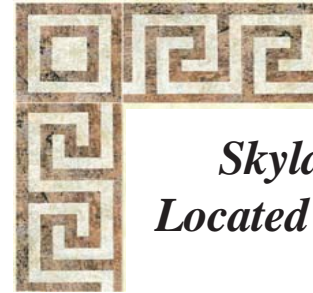
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UPCOMING SERVICES

subject to change - please check your Sunday Bulletins

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

Sunday, February 26 – 8:45 AM, Orthros; 10 AM, Divine Liturgy

Saturday, March 4 - Saturday of Souls; 9 AM, Divine Liturgy; 5:30 PM, Great Vespers

Sunday, March 5 - 8:45 AM, Orthros; 10 AM, Divine Liturgy (with His Eminence)

Monday, March 6 – 6:30 PM, Great Compline

Wednesday, March 8 – 6:30 PM, Ninth Hour; 7 PM, Presanctified Liturgy

Thursday, March 9 - 40 Martyrs, 9 AM, Divine Liturgy

Friday, March 10 – 8:30 AM, Ninth Hour; 9 AM, Presanctified Liturgy; 7 PM, Salutations

Saturday, March 11 – Saturday of Souls; 9 AM, Divine Liturgy; 5:30 PM, Great Vespers

Sunday, March 12 - 8:45 AM, Orthros; 10 AM, Divine Liturgy; Great Vespers, 6 PM (with His Eminence)

Monday, March 13 – 6:30 PM, Great Compline

Wednesday, March 15 – 6:30 PM, Ninth Hour; 7 PM, Presanctified Liturgy

Friday, March 17 – 8:30 AM, Ninth Hour; 9 AM, Presanctified Liturgy; 7 PM, Salutations

Saturday, March 18 – 5:30 PM, Great Vespers

Sunday, March 19 - 8:45 AM, Orthros; 10 AM, Divine Liturgy

Monday, March 20 – 6:30 PM, Great Compline

Wednesday, March 22 – 6:30 PM, Ninth Hour; 7 PM, Presanctified Liturgy

Friday, March 24 – 8:30 AM, Ninth Hour; 9 AM, Presanctified Liturgy; 7 PM, Salutations

Saturday, March 25 – Annunciation - 9 AM, Divine Liturgy; 5:30, PM, Great Vespers

Sunday, March 26 - 8:45 AM, Orthros; 10 AM, Divine Liturgy

Monday, March – 27 – 6:30 PM, Great Compline

Wednesday, March 29 – 6:30 PM, Ninth Hour; 7 PM, Presanctified Liturgy

Friday, March 31 – 8:30 AM, Ninth Hour; 9 AM, Presanctified Liturgy; 7 PM, Salutations

Saturday, April 1 – 5:30 PM, Great Vespers

Sunday, April 2 - 8:45 AM, Orthros; 10 AM, Divine Liturgy

Monday, April 3 – 6:30 PM, Great Compline

Wednesday, April 5 – 6:30 PM, Ninth Hour; 7 PM, Presanctified Liturgy

Friday, April 7 – 8:30 AM, Ninth Hour; 9 AM, Presanctified Liturgy; 7 PM, Akathist Hymn

Saturday, April 8 – 5:30 PM, Great Vespers

Sunday, April 9 - 8:45 AM, Orthros; 10 AM, Divine Liturgy

Monday, April 10 – 6:30 PM, Great Compline

Wednesday, April 12 – 6:30 PM, Ninth Hour; 7 PM, Presanctified Liturgy

Friday, April 14 – 8:30 AM, Ninth Hour; 9 AM, Presanctified Liturgy

Sunday, April 16 - 8:45 AM, Orthros; 10 AM, Divine Liturgy

Saturday, April 15 – Saturday of Lazarus; 9 AM, Divine Liturgy; 5:30 PM, Great Vespers

April 16-22 - HOLY WEEK - see schedules in your mail soon

Sunday, April 23 - Holy Pascha - 11 AM, Agape Vespers

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