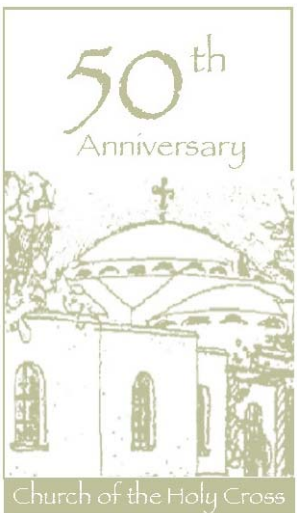


CROSS CURRENTS

Monthly Newsletter
JANUARY 2006



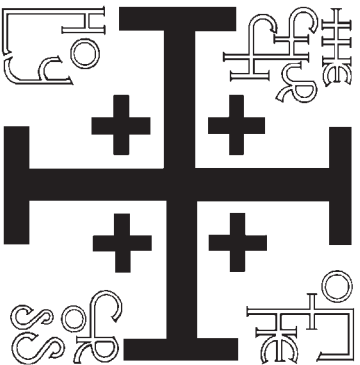
Our Family and our Relationship with God

by *Father Peter Salmas, Pastor*

GK Chesterton, in writing his thoughts and critique regarding Charles Dickens' *The Old Curiosity Shop*, began his article with the following on the soul.

"Nothing is important except the fate of the soul; and literature is only redeemed from an utter triviality, surpassing that of naughts and crosses, by the fact that it describes not the world around us or the things on the retina of the eye or the enormous irrelevancy of encyclopedias, but some condition to which the human spirit can come."

With 2005 ending and a new year beginning, each of us will, with some pause, take inventory of our lives in relation to our goals and objectives. "Oh, if only I could do that again, I would do it differently." "If only I could have another opportunity, I would do it better."



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CROSS CURRENTS

The Monthly Newsletter of the Church of the Holy Cross
900 Alameda / Belmont, CA 94002-1604
(650) 591-4447 / fax (650) 508-9846
office@goholycross.org / http://www.goholycross.org

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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)

We, as Orthodox Christians, are indeed fortunate to have many opportunities to begin anew to right the wrongs, to have the often critical “second chance” and get back on the right path. That we should have a second go of things, is a refrain that may spring from many lips, and, fortunately, we, as Orthodox Christians, are able to rethink, repent, and begin anew.

Resolutions that outline a new plan for personal and worldly stability often neglect the more weighty matters of spiritual growth and Christian mentoring. We take for granted our relationship with God because many of us, and I draw upon my conversations with many, think that God’s love and concern is a given and He will understand ‘because I believe in Him, He is my Lord and Savior’. Yet we all know

that a relationship that is marked by an occasional talk and perfunctory action bears no fruit and offers little if any solace when needed.

I submit to you that our lives need a more focused approach to living the kind of life that is in keeping with our Lord’s teaching. Simply acknowledging the presence of God in our lives is of little value when we spend all of our time securing our present and future but only in the material and immediate emotional sense.

Our children learn from us...and pick up both our good and bad attitudes, actions, and habits. Take a moment to observe your children and you will learn many things about yourself that you mistakenly thought you had outgrown. The opportunity to reform and reshape our focus is not easy and requires our commitment and time, but the opportunity should not be ignored.

I am always dismayed and terribly disappointed when Greek Orthodox families find other things to do on Sunday mornings. When we take Sunday, the Lord’s Day, and turn it into a day of sports we are teaching our children that the worship of God is not as important as the worship of man and what we can achieve by ourselves. It is the “fall of Adam” repackaged. Make 2006 a year where your time with family begins with the joining together in communal prayer and an active participation in the Divine Liturgy on a weekly basis. Encourage regular participation in the Religious Education classes offered weekly following Holy Communion. Be prepared to receive Holy Communion with your family at least twice per month if not weekly. The early Christians, the Apostolic Christians as described to us by Saint Paul, received daily when they met in homes. We have pulled away and neglected this most important aspect of our spiritual growth. And if we have not been to Holy Confession in recent memory then we should make time to contemplate and offer our confession as we embark on this renewed spiritual journey.

Yes, the early years of a child’s life are very important and a time when many opportunities to develop skills and talents are available to us. Yet, somehow we have developed this thought that the things of God will take care of themselves and so we must focus on the things of man. We do our children and grandchildren such a disservice

when we encourage their physical and intellectual development but neglect the weightier matters of the soul.

GK Chesterton in his concluding remarks on Charles Dickens also says the following that is noteworthy for our time :

“There is, going along side by side with that puritan movement in modern times, a very dangerous pagan movement as well. There is a very real danger, particularly among the luxurious classes in America—of becoming absolutely heartless and riotous in their indulgence in the pleasures of life.”

We indulge ourselves and our children much too much. A return to a more sane and insightful approach to our daily existence is in order and begins in the home. It is in the home that the lessons and instructions that come from our Lord and His church are put into play and encouraged.

This year has been designated the “Year of the Family.” As we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Holy Cross as a parish community let us also embrace this designation and place our families firmly on the road that leads to Christ. A restructuring of our daily schedule to include the commemoration of the saints and feast days will help in placing Christ at our center and the life of the church as our lifestyle.

May this new year be filled with good health, spiritual growth, and mark the full practice of our faith in Christ Jesus our Lord. *Chronia Polla.*

FROM THE PRESIDENT

by *Jenny Cladis, Parish Council President*

I wish you a Happy New Year and pray 2006 will be a fruitful and glorious year for all Orthodox Christians!

At this time I want to thank **Father Peter, Father Silviu**, Council members and fellow parishioners for their love and support during

my presidency on the Parish Council. It’s time to pass the baton to a new president, but I will continue to be part of the Council and support the new board with as much enthusiasm as before.

I would like to mention some of the major things that happened these past two years. Phase 1 of the church’s Iconography has been completed, our Rectory which houses Father Peter and his family has been purchased and renovated, Father Silviu joined us to serve as Father Peter’s assistant. (What a blessing it was that **Presbytera Irina** presented their son **Tibi** with a beautiful sister named **Maria**!) Our new **Metropolitan Gerasimos**, was enthroned. The Technical Committee made significant progress: a new server was added that connects all of our computers. A caterer was selected to handle our major activities in The Oaks and the Gym. And our Labor Day Festivals have continued to be very successful, thanks to the dedication of our talented and devoted parishioners.

As we go forward, we will continue our planning for the Holy Cross Grammar School. We must implement the new school construction that was voted on several years ago.

One of the most important challenges facing us is to finance our operating expenses through our Stewardship Program. We pray we will all recognize this need and increase our giving of tithe, talent and treasure. We must not have to rely on our Festivals, crab feeds, golf tournaments, etc. to meet our financial obligations. Proceeds from such additional activities should be used for special needs of the church and outreach programs.

It is very important for our entire community — as well as the parents — to support all of the youth activities. Don’t forget that the students of today will be our church leaders of tomorrow.

2006 will be an exciting year for us as we celebrate our 50th anniversary! Many activities have been put on the calendar. Shortly, you will be receiving a list of our planned activities with a magnetic backing so that you can attach it to your refrigerator door.

In closing, I again thank all of you who have helped make the past two years a wonderful and productive experience for me!

As Tiny Tim once said, “God Bless us everyone”.

STEWARDSHIP 2006

“Bearing Fruit: Witness and Service”

by Tanya W. Spirtos M.D.

Throughout 2006, we are asked to keep in mind the above campaign pledge in terms of our individual stewardship as Orthodox Christians. Yet these very simple words, familiar to even the youngest students in religious education classes, have a world of meaning behind them.



Start with the phrase “bearing fruit”: throughout the Bible there are references to the importance of fruit-bearing vines, the diligence required in their care, and the punishment and disgrace of a barren fig tree. Scripture likens us to the fruit:

I am the vine, you are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing... Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples
John 15:5,8

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.
Galatians 5:22,23

These nine traits, governing our thoughts and day-to-day activities, would show the world through our actions that we are dedicated followers of Christ. And that is exactly what “witness” (both a noun and a verb) means:

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!

Witness: n. *one who can give a firsthand account of something seen, heard, or experienced; one who is called on to testify before a court or signs one's name to a document for the purpose of attesting to its authenticity; one who publicly affirms religious faith*

Witness: v. *to provide or serve as evidence of; to testify*

Even a young child understands that “actions speak louder than words”; being a “witness” to your beliefs by reflecting love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control shows the world who we believe in better than corner soapboxes or newsletter articles or crucifixes worn around our necks.

And the second part of our pledge is “service” – the giving of our time and our talent and our treasure as we care for the world, community, church, and families entrusted to our “temporary custody” or stewardship during our relatively short sojourn on this earth.

During 2006, when we feel stretched and stressed and wanting control, may we remember that God, because of His gift to us of freewill, gives us control over ourselves.

50TH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL EDITION



The years 1955 and 1956 mark the beginnings of the Church of the Holy Cross Community. 50 years have passed and the small group of people that began our parish has grown to over 700 families. It is time to celebrate and commemorate these memorable years. Some wonderful and fun events are being planned and it is the hope of all the committees that a great majority of parishioners will participate. Save the following dates:

* **SPIRITUAL RETREAT** - March 31, April 1 and 2

Chairs: **Johanna Manley** and **Emmy Denton**

Taking place during Great Lent, programs for adults and children will enhance the study of Orthodox Christianity and individual spiritual growth.

* **“AT THE HOP” 50’s NIGHT** - Saturday, May 20

Chairs: **Kathy Albert** and **Irene Fotinos**

Step back to the decade of the 50’s for a Sock Hop to include hamburgers, French fries, other trimmings and more. Dance the night away to 50’s music and entertainment in our hall. Bring the whole family plus the yia-yias and pa-pous whose memories reach back to that era.

* **50th GALA** - Friday, December 29

Chairs: **Don** and **Kathy Craighead** and

Gary and **Arleen Brenner**

At the Westin Hotel in Burlingame

This evening to remember will include a special dinner and program culminating the 50th year of memorable events as well as looking forward to the future. More information will follow as plans develop.

Another specially planned project is a **PICTORIAL ALBUM**. Olan Mills Photographers will be taking complimentary pictures of all parish families to be placed in a commemorative album that will include a parish directory, pictures of church organizations and events, historical information and ads. Families participating will receive a copy of the album. A charge will occur when additional pictures are ordered. Ten years has past since our last pictorial album; so, the time is appropriate for another one. Dates and times will be available by the early spring to sign-up for pictures.

Other activities and events include a fund raising campaign to further church projects of interest to parishioners and honoring the founders as well as individuals who contribute greatly to the fabric of the church community. Look for up-dates in each *Cross Currents* and ways to become involved. Everyone is welcome to get involved.

MEMORY LANE 2 -- 50 YEARS AGO

The Church of the Holy Cross is the first Greek Orthodox parish established on the Peninsula. In June of 1955, Sunday School was established with 28 children enrolled. Teaching facilities at the Shoreview Methodist Church in San Mateo were arranged.

On January 25, 1956, Bishop Demetrios, head of the Western States Diocese of the Greek Orthodox Church, accompanied by priests from surrounding parishes, addressed the first general assembly held at the IOOF Hall in San Mateo. 110 people attended this meeting at which a formal petition was prepared and sent to the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese in New York requesting a religious charter.

Archbishop Michael formally recognized “The Greek Orthodox Church of San Mateo County” as a parish of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America on March 13, 1956. Bishop Demetrios assigned Father Stanley Marcantonis (September 1956 - March 1957) as the first pastor. The use of the IOOF Hall was obtained for church services and Sunday School activities. The first Divine Liturgy was celebrated on Sunday, September 14, 1956, the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, at the IOOF Hall.

Watch for this column on succeeding months as the development of the Holy Cross Church Community continues to unfold.

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 fellowship 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 : Resolutions for 2006

by *Chris Canellos, Parish Council*

Happy 2006! How are those resolutions coming? Did I see you in the gym yesterday? I hope your New Year's plans will include a generous commitment of your time and treasure to our Church in our 50th anniversary year. Watch *Cross Currents* for information on many of the fun events we have planned all year long.

A 50th anniversary is always a special occasion. Whether it is 50 years of marriage, a 50th birthday or the marking of 50 years of service by an important organization, it is a milestone worth celebrating. We gather together, look at old pictures and take some new ones, share our memories and make new plans, and we party!! And we bring gifts to show our love and gratitude. And did I say "party"?

So what kind of gift should each of us bring to this party? What does a 50 year old Church need anyway? As any reader of this column already knows, an additional classroom building would be at the top of my list. More classrooms are needed to accommodate our ever-growing religious education (Sunday School) and Greek language programs and the elementary school program we hope to begin this fall with our inaugural Kindergarten class.

A permanent endowment gift is always welcome. These funds would be forever invested and never spent. The annual income from such a gift would help the Church continue to fund its important mission well beyond its 100th anniversary.

I don't know a single 50 year-old building that couldn't use a facelift. And our Church is no exception. A little paint here, a little

deferred maintenance there. Perhaps you see something that needs to be done and would like to sponsor it. If so, please give Fr. Peter a call.

All gifts are welcome and will be acknowledged promptly. Depending on your level of gift, the Church will provide you a “thank you” gift in return, such as tickets to some of the 50th anniversary events.

Shortly, you will receive more information on the Holy Cross 50th Anniversary gift program. I hope you will read it carefully and respond generously!

Fore!! Plans are already underway for our 40th annual Golf and Tennis Tournament to be held **June 12, 2006** at the Peninsula Golf and Country Club in San Mateo. Anyone who has played in this tournament will tell you all about the great food, the prizes and all the fun that is had by all. The tournament is also an important revenue source for the Church, often raising in excess of \$20,000 per year.

We are looking for new players this year. Lots of them! If you play golf or tennis (who doesn't?), you should tell your boss right now that you need to take **Monday, June 12**, off! (And maybe leave work a little early a few evenings before that so you can practice your swing.) Bring a friend (better yet, a whole foursome) to the tournament. This includes the ladies as well! I guarantee that you will have a great time! We greet you with prizes and a great lunch. Then, you will tee it up on the newly renovated Peninsula course where if you are really lucky and score a hole-in-one, you could win a new car. Tennis players will enjoy a nice morning round on the Peninsula courts. Everyone will have plenty to eat and drink during their respective competitions. And then we come home to Holy Cross for a delicious dinner and cheer the winners. It's never too early to reserve your place, so call me at 529-0180 or the Church office for reservations. (And if you can't play, perhaps you can donate a prize or a cash gift.)



It's going to be a special year in 2006, full of all kinds of surprises and wonderful opportunities for your family right here at Holy Cross. I hope to see you at all the big events. I wish you and yours the very best in '06!

WHAT'S WITH THAT?

by *Bob Nemchik, Parish Council*

From time to time, I would like to make a comment or two on events that jump out at me.

While reading the Daily Study that **Father Peter** sends out, he made the comment that we should support our Christmas-time Family Sharing Program and that there was the usual need for drivers to take the food and toys to our “adopted” families. He went on to say that we would be doing our annual delivering, after we have our “delicious Lenten meal.”

Our family has been attending this church since Father Peter and his family came to Belmont from the Honolulu parish. I cannot remember when Father Peter ever made an announcement that involved food where he did not say it was going to be anything but delicious! Can you? It started me thinking, and, truly, whatever food we have at Church is delicious. Considering the amount of hunger in the world, we are blessed not only with good everyday food, but ladies of our church who can cook and make even grassy weeds taste delicious. There are only three foods I do not enjoy and those would be kidney, turnips and hot oatmeal. I'm saying this because I'm willing to bet our fantastic cooks could make these items taste delicious, too.

The point of this article is two-fold : (1) We have fantastic cooks at our Church, and a *San Francisco Chronicle* food critic has said our Festival has the best tasting food in the Bay Area. I'm sure it would extend beyond the Bay Area but that person probably has not been to other Festivals. (2) The Gospel relates that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ told Judas “the poor will always be with us.”

Having said that, there are numerous Gospels that teach us it is Christ-like to take care of the poor and downtrodden for the sake of our

own salvation. To that end, every Christmas, we, as a Church, adopt a number of San Mateo County families who could use a hand. Over the years, there have been many heart-warming stories that have been related after we make our Christmas deliveries : from greeting newborn babies just home from the hospital, to walking in on a family who had just suffered the great loss of their mother and were holding a Rosary Service for her in the apartment. Our visit could not have come at a more needed time. All races, nationalities and creeds have been the benefactors of our deliveries. We are always welcomed and thanked for caring.

I need to take another shot at the commercialism of Christmas! Everyone knows about “Black Friday”, the shop-‘til-you-drop day. Stores open at midnight and some close at midnight. On that day, retailers in North America made \$4.8 billion. That’s right -- that was with a “B” for “Billions”. The retailers said their expectations were off by 1%. So, you do the math! For the whole Christmas Season (whoops, sorry, I said the “C “ word; I should have said the “Holiday Season”), they’re expecting to rake in \$440 billion.

It occurred to me (and I hope to you too) that with that kind of money, we sure could put a big dent in world hunger, poverty and take care of many of the world’s health problems. Perhaps we can put the “C” back into Christmas and Christmas into every day of the year . . . for He is with us always, unlike Santa Claus, who comes but once a year. Think about it and let Christ come into your life and your heart.

SELL OR BUY

by *Konstantine Salmas*

The Kingdom of Heaven parables explain what is involved in righteousness before God. They explain what is happening during the situation of a person’s life when God becomes a desired reference point. Matthew 13 lists several of these parables in a row. The first parable is the parable of the Sower. After this parable, Christ lays out several explanations of the kingdom of heaven. We will look at one: “The Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man

found and hid, and for joy of it goes and sells all he has and buys that field.” The man is paying attention to something else and then he finds the treasure. Whatever the circumstances are that have determined his situation, when he encounters the treasure, he is impacted. The treasure causes a stir and presents him with a situation. The parable implies that a person cannot have the found treasure and the things he already has. Circumstance calls for an extreme decision in order to keep the treasure. “For joy of it, he goes and sells all he has and buys that field.” He really wants the treasure and, with joy, he sells what he has so



he can buy the field that houses the treasure. This parable definitely shows the kingdom of heaven to be something of such great value that a person wants to give up other things in order to have it. The kingdom, the treasure, causes the ramifications of this treasure on the man’s life to show themselves. The faith of the man had to be demonstrated in order to possess the treasure and the action was something he did with joy. The movement was extreme — he sold all he had so he could have the treasure — but he wanted to do it.

The effect of the kingdom of heaven on a person is dramatic. The Divine Liturgy is a display of the kingdom of heaven because, in his desire for the kingdom of heaven, Christ is constantly acting in a way that is drastic in relation to the rest of society, but also drastic in a way that mirrors acts of righteous men over the course of Scripture. He moves towards the kingdom and there, at the cross, the kingdom waits.

The Christian cross is meant to be a sign of the power of God’s kingdom. The life of Christ is a display of this power, but a power displayed most perfectly by his humility to the Father. The kingdom of

heaven parables put forth that what is involved in righteousness before God is a drastic move on our part out of joy. We don't have to sell all we have, but the action of the man should be an indication to us that God means business when it comes to the seriousness of salvation in Jesus Christ, the seriousness of this Christian message.

NEWS & INFORMATION

STEVE CARDIASMENOS TO RECEIVE AXION AWARD

This year, our choir director, **Steve Cardiasmenos**, is the winner of the prestigious "Axion Award," which is the highest honor bestowed by the Hellenic American Professional Society. This award honors outstanding persons of Hellenic ancestry who have demonstrated leadership, have made a significant achievement in a professional field, and have made a contribution to the Hellenic community or to society in general.

Steve received this award because of his outstanding contributions to the field of music. He composes, conducts, sings, chants, teaches and plays numerous musical instruments. He has played woodwind instruments since he was five years old and completed his first composition at the age of fifteen. Since then, his musical compositions and arrangements number well over 500! Steve also



started conducting at the age of fifteen. In the 1970's he served as Assistant Director, under Perecles Phillips, of the Ascension Liturgical Choir in Oakland. He has been the Choir Director at Holy Cross since 1985, and has conducted large religious and secular choral groups and orchestras.

We are truly privileged to hear his brilliant compositions in our church, such as his version of **The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom**, **The Presanctified Liturgy**, "Praise the Lord" for combined adult and youth choirs, "The Rich are Destitute" in English and Greek, "Lord I Cry Unto You", "Jesus is the Resurrection", "Unto the Lord do I Lift up my Soul", "Cherubic Hymn" in English, "Holy God", "Christ is Risen", "Theos Kirios", and "Evlogimenos O Erhomenos".

Steve received many awards for his musical accomplishments. His Greek Orthodox awards include the "Saint Romanos the Melodist Medallion," which is the Archdiocese's and the National Forum's highest musical honor; the "Patriarch Athenagoras Distinguished Service Medallion," and the "Saint John the Damascene and Saint Kosmas the Melodist Award." For his secular music contributions, he has received a special composition award, each year for the past 13 years, from the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP). These awards were given to Steve in honor of his compositions in choral music, pop music and jazz.

Steve's contributions to the wider community are well known to many of us. He was the Assistant Conductor of the Masterworks Chorale and Orchestra, a 180-voice chorale and professional orchestra based in San Mateo. The Masterworks Chorale regularly performed throughout the Bay Area and made many guest appearances with major symphony orchestras in the Bay Area and at leading musical festivals at Carnegie Hall and on European and Far Eastern tours. It has been described as "one of the finest large choruses in the nation". He presently sings tenor in *Sine Nomine*, a 30-voice choral group based in San Mateo, and he continues to perform regularly in musical groups, playing woodwind instruments, piano and organ. Furthermore, Steve is very active in the musical programs of the local public schools. He has written special compositions for the bands and orchestras of the San

Carlos and Belmont schools. His most recent contribution was to the Belmont public school's "Save the Music" fundraiser project. For this program he composed a very beautiful and rousing choral piece named "Save the Music". Our Belmont church choir joined choral groups from many local schools and church choirs to sing this song. Steve conducted the combined groups of 100+ singers at the fundraiser, which was held in Redwood Shores on October 3 of 2004. The fundraiser was very successful, netting over \$350,000. As a result the grade-school musical programs in the Belmont schools were restored!

Steve has been blessed with a wonderful family, his wife, **Leslie**, and their two children, **Andrew** and **Kristen**. They are all talented musicians!

The awards luncheon will be held on Greek Letters Day, **Sunday, February 12**, in The Oaks following the Liturgy. Let's all be there to honor Steve!

INSIDE THE HOLY CROSS THREE HIERARCHS BOOKSTORE

**"Conversations with Children—
Communicating our Faith"**
by **Sister Magdalen**

This is a book from which every parent, grandparent, future parent, youth leader, aunt, uncle, or teacher of any sort will benefit. It is a manual which will do much to enlighten and instruct anyone who is ever in conversation with children. The author states, "I have seen, however, that many practical dilemmas arise because parents need reminding to sort out their priorities. I have also seen that if parents are motivated by sound principles, whatever they do is all the better for that. Getting back to basics does a



lot to heal any harm already done by parental mistakes. All educators can benefit from principles even if these do not lay out solutions for every case." Also, "those who speak most effectively are those whose life reflects what they teach, and I ask those who read this book to pray for themselves . . . to 'do and to teach' . . . with enlightenment from on high."

Sister Magdalen's first book was "Children in the Church." This new book will surely prove an effective tool towards a more educated, more actively Orthodox generation of children.

FAMILY SHARING PROGRAM RECAP

by **Brenda Visas**, 2005 Chair

Thank you for another successful year of the Family Sharing Program. Holy Cross adopted 50 families, which included 131 children. All children received at least two substantial gifts, the family received a turkey, a box of staples (rice, flour, sugar, pasta, etc.), a bag of perishables (vegetables, fruit, etc.) and \$90 in grocery gift cards to carry them into the new year or provide necessities that we had not. I would like to acknowledge the church office for their clerical support; **Ted Giouzelis** of **Nob Hill Catering** for providing the produce; **Zan, Mike and Mark Tragoutsis** of **Trag's Market**, **Mr. and Mrs. Pete Boubare**, and **Mr. and Mrs. Harry Mitsamas** for providing the turkeys; **Stratos Kamenis** of **Rainbow Pizza** for contributing a portion of the pizza for the delivery night dinner; **Mrs. Kathy Polychroniou** for making her infamous clam chowder (with or without shrimp) for the delivery night dinner; **Mrs. Geri Mayers** for contributing last minute toys (which kept us out of the shopping mall!); **ORA**, **Philoptochos**, the Parish Council, and the Youth Council for their monetary donations; **Mr. Ted Theodore** for organizing and printing the maps for delivery night; **Ms. Anastacia Stamates** for her guidance; **Mr. Tyke Stamates** for setup, hauling, cleaning, and all the other stuff too numerous to mention; and, last, but not least, all of the families who donated the toys and the

volunteers who delivered them. It was a pleasure to work with so many considerate people.

2005 CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

by *Anastacia Stamates, Director of Youth Religious Education*



This year's Christmas Program was a delight to all those who attended. As in years past, it ushers in the Christmas season. The Holy Cross Choir performed two songs, including an original composition by **Steve Cardiasmenos**, their director. The Sunday School students, grades Preschool through 5th grade, performed traditional Christmas carols under the guidance of **Khara-Maria Kalamaras**. The students rehearsed these carols for many weeks with Mrs. Kalamaras, **Chris Canellos**, and their teachers not only to prepare for the performance but to learn the meaning of Christmas through the carols. The Greek School was also a joy, sharing the traditions of Christmas in Greece through their performance. As usual, the Christmas play was a highlight. Many of our young people shared their dramatic and comedic talents to remind us why we celebrate Christmas. This led to the Nativity, acted out by many of our children who became the shepherds, angels, wise men, and Holy Family. The traditional carol sing-along was highlighted by young several parishioners who brought their musical instruments to serenade us as we sang. The evening ended with a visit from Saint Nicholas himself to the wonder of all.

Many people need to be thanked for all of their hard work: **Eva Canellos** for everything, **Helene Nemchik** for directing the play, **Irene Fotinos** for putting together the Nativity scene, Khara-Maria Kalamaras and Chris Canellos for teaching our Sunday School students the Christmas carols, the Greek School for bringing our traditions home, Steve Cardiasmenos, **Anita Mottola** and the Holy Cross Choir for their beautiful sounds, Santa Claus for making a very special visit, and to all those behind the scenes.

"ORA"cle NEWS

Help Wanted for 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.



RELIGIOUS DAILY STUDY BY EMAIL!

So many of us spend a lot of time on our computers for shopping, e-mails and work. Now, you can receive a daily dose of inspiration over e-mail with a religious daily study. **Father Peter** puts together a Daily Study on the Saints and Scriptures that he sends out on e-mail every day. If you would like to receive inspirational messages regularly to begin your day, please send your e-mail address to him at frpeter@goholycross.org.

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!

CHRISTMAS CARD GREETINGS

We missed including some names in this year’s Community Christmas Card. We list them here with our wishes for a wonderful, healthy and prosperous new year!

Mrs. Georgia Diamond
George & Thelma Giannakaras

Mr. & Mrs. Takis & Frosso Hanoumis, Joanna & John
The Iuppa Family
Pat Lagiss

James R. Maneatis
Tom and Beverly Maneatis

Litsa & Kia Melas

Nick, Mary, Jim & Lia Peros
Nick & Harriet Siacotos and Family

SPOTLIGHT

Thank you to **Tom Minaidis** of Tom & Pete’s Produce of Half Moon Bay who donated Christmas trees to the church in December! Tom has, for fifteen years, graciously made it possible for our Holy Cross family to gather around a tall, robust, beautiful tree during the Nativity season.



The helpful and creative hands and willing heart of **Rita Zahrioudakis** have adorned our Christmas tree with majestic ornaments and other decorations -- “How lovely are your branches!” Thank you, Rita.

MEETINGS & UPCOMING EVENTS



PHILOPTOCHOS TEA

The Ladies of the Philoptochos of the Church of the Holy Cross cordially invite you to join us for a very special tea in celebration of our Church’s 50th Anniversary as we honor our past presidents and welcome new members to our Philoptochos.

Date & time : **Saturday, January 28**, 11:00– 2:30

Place : At the lovely home of **Tony and Vaso Kounalakis**
2350 Alameda de Las Pulgas, Redwood City

We welcome you to bring a guest. Light lunch will be served. Please reply to **Erma Najjar** at 593-2747 (or ermanajjar@aol.com) or **Eleni Metaxas** at 573-1815 (or emetaxas@zbi.com).

CRAB FEED, GODPARENTS’ & APOKREATIKO GLENDI DATES SET!

Mark your calendars for

- ❖ **Friday, February 3** for our Annual Crab Feed
- ❖ **Sunday, February 5** for our Godparents’ Sunday
- ❖ **Saturday, February 25** (please note corrected date) for our Apokreatiko Glendi.



7:30 PM - Dinner

Meal prepared by Nob Hill Catering
 salad - makaronada - garlic bread
 dessert - wine & refreshments

\$45 adults - \$25 children 12 & under

For reservations, use forms available on Sunday or
 e-mail office@goholycross.org or call Ella at 650-369-9825

Pearls Before Swine*



* apologies to Stephan Pastis

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

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) [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.*

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.

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YOUTH CURRENTS

January 2006 edition

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

2 Peter 3:18



A FEW THOUGHTS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! I trust everyone had a great Christmas together with the whole family and friends as it is the Christmas tradition. As we enter the 2006 there is one event that we should pay attention to and also to be proud of. It is the 50th Anniversary of the Church of the Holy Cross. And you may want to know that here at Holy Cross we prepare ourselves accordingly to this great event in the life of our community and family. There is a committee that's working hard to put together all the events for 2006 and all is culminating with the Golden Gala Ball on **December 29**. So probably during this 2006 year you may be asked to support, help and participate in those events in order to make this 50th Anniversary a really "golden" one.

Since this edition of *Cross Currents* will be available for you during the post-feast of Theophany, I thought that this would be a good subject to talk about. *Theophany*, is the manifestation, the showing forth of God in His Fullness! Christ's baptism in the Jordan is a manifestation of God to the world for two reasons. First, it is the beginning of our Lord's public ministry. Secondly, Epiphany is the manifestation of God because it was at the baptism of Jesus that all three Persons of the Holy Trinity appeared together for the first time. The Father's voice testified from on high to the divine Sonship of Jesus. The Son accepted His Father's testimony, and the Holy Spirit was seen descending from the Father in the form of a dove and resting upon the Son (Matt. 3:16).

God — Father, Son and Holy Spirit — plays an important role in the life and worship of the Orthodox Christian. We are baptized in the name of the Trinity; we are forgiven in the name of the Trinity; we are married in the name of the Trinity; every liturgy begins with the name of the Trinity. The doctrine of the Trinity was not dropped from heaven by God. In fact, the word Trinity is never even mentioned in the Scriptures. It came from the way the early Christians experienced God. It was an experience before it ever became a doctrine. The doctrine was an intellectual expression of what the early Christians found to be compellingly real in their own lives.

There are people who will say, "The Trinity -- that's a little too complicated for me. I want a simple God, a God I can understand." Well, we shall never be able to understand God completely. This is the reason we cannot understand the Trinity. This is not to say, however, that we cannot express the Trinity in a way that is simple to understand. The Trinity means that I believe in God the Father Who made me, God the Son Who saves me, God the Holy Spirit Who lives in me. God the Father: for us in love eternally! God the Son: with us in grace, historically, but also eternally! God the Holy Spirit: in us in power, experientially, historically, and eternally! God the Father: God above me. God the Son: God beside me. God the Holy Spirit: God within me and within the Church.

Throughout history many analogies have been used to try to help us understand how God can be three Persons, yet one God. None of these analogies is perfect, yet each helps cast some light on the mystery. For example, water has three forms: solid (ice), liquid (water), and vapor (steam), yet its chemical composition does not change; it remains one. The sun is composed of heat, gas, and a gigantic mass of matter; yet it is one. These analogies are but weak human efforts to try to understand the infinite God. Immanuel Kant said once that there are limitations to our finite minds and that with these limitations we can *contemplate* but not *engulf* things that are infinite. When we come into the presence of God, we do not understand; rather, we bow in awe and cover our eyes, for His brilliance is so great as to be blinding.

I will end this article with this prayer addressed to the Holy Trinity :

*My hope is in the Father;
My refuge is in the Son;
My shelter is in the Holy Spirit;
Holy Trinity, glory to You.*

May our good and loving God help us to meet with each and everyone of you during the events planned to honor the 50th Anniversary!

*Kali Hronia! Hronia Pola!
Father Silviu Stanculescu, Assistant Priest*

UPCOMING YOUTH EVENTS

God Parents Sunday on **February 5**, and *Glendi* on **February 25**, are the next events that our Youth Council will organize at the beginning of this year. Because it is an anniversary year all the events will have something special to remember the 50th year of our existence as a community. And I take this opportunity to invite all of you to attend these events, supporting in this way the younger generation of our 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.

FOLK DANCE PROGRAM

by *Kathy Roque-Albert, Dance Program Director*

We have lots of exciting things happening in our Dance Program!

I am pleased to announce that we have five dance groups this year. Our newest and youngest group the “Athenakia” are directed by **Athena Kabitsis**. Also our groups “Angeloudakia” directed by **Chrysann Zongus** and **Andreas Najjar**, “Kamari Mas” directed by **Eleni Hopkins**, **Alexa Makreas** and **Stephanie Giesecker**, “Epitihia” directed by **Dean Angelis**, **Effie Zaharioudakis** and **Christina Dimmit** and “Enomeni” directed by **Vicky Najjar** and **Nicole Tsardoulis** are all preparing for the annual Folk Dance Festival. This year’s Folk Dance Festival will be held in San Diego, California.

All of the dance groups have been working hard on fundraising this year to assist with the costs of our workshops and costumes. We have held car washes, bake sales, sold Christmas wreaths, sponsored the coffee hour and sung Christmas carols. All of these fundraisers have been a wonderful bonding experience for our dancers and we would like to thank everyone for their support in these fundraising events.

Our next performance for our dance groups will be at our Godparents’ Luncheon to be held on **Sunday, February 5**. Please be sure to bring your Godparents, Grandparents and all of your family members to this memorable occasion.

Happy New Year!

SHARING OUR BLESSINGS

The Receiving Home Christmas Party was once again a great success, and a very moving experience. Close to 30 kids from infants to 17 years of age were present with their foster families for their annual outpouring of love and concern for these “wards of the court” and foster children of San Mateo County.

The Philoptochos, GOYA and Jr. GOYA teamed up to provide Christmas sweets and refreshments. The evening's other highlight was Christmas Tree Decorating -- we had nine trees for the nine families to take home and a surprise visit or from the North Pole.

Sonia Risting along with **Mary Peros** and **Helene Nemchik** worked with **Father Silviu** and **Gary Brenner** to organize this annual event. They were even able to have Santa take time out of his busy schedule to drop by and pass out the presents.

Father Peter took the teenagers and their sponsors into the church and shared a few words about the architecture and iconography of the Greek Orthodox Church. He also answered many questions regarding the recent mosaics and church history

It was a beautiful evening and we look forward to Christmas 2006 and the opportunity to share our blessings with those less fortunate.

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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**

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 – 8:45 AM, Orthros; 10 AM, Divine Liturgy

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

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

Sunday, January 29 – 8:45 AM, Orthros; 10 AM, Divine Liturgy

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

Thursday, February 2 – Presentation of the Lord - 8 AM, Matins; 9 AM, Divine Liturgy

Saturday, February 4 – 5:30 PM, Great Vespers

Sunday, February 5 – 8:45 AM, Orthros; 10 AM, Divine Liturgy

Monday, February 6 – Saint Photios - 8 AM, Matins; 9 AM, Divine Liturgy

Friday, February 10 – Saint Haralambos - 8 AM, Matins; 9 AM, Divine Liturgy

Saturday, February 11 – 5:30 PM, Great Vespers

Sunday, February 12 – 8:45 AM, Orthros; 10 AM, Divine Liturgy

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

Sunday, February 19 – 8:45 AM, Orthros; 10 AM, Divine Liturgy

Saturday, February 25 – 5:30 PM, Great Vespers

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

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