

# CROSS CURRENTS

Church Newsletter  
April 2009



## HOME IS WHERE LEARNING BEGINS

by *Father Peter Salmas, Pastor*

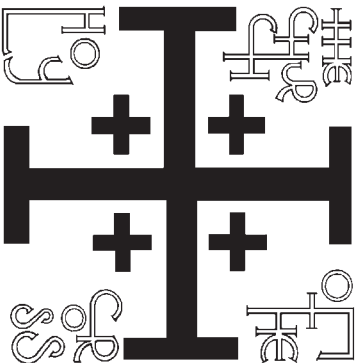


At our last Parish General Assembly, a few comments were made that have repeated themselves in my mind over the last several weeks. One regarded tithing and white noise, another focused on community building events and the third centered on assessing the religious learning of our children. All three are questions worthy of discussion.

### White Noise

To understand tithing is to understand God's instruction to us. If these words have become "white noise" then we need to re-evaluate our understanding of God's instruction to us so that we no longer find ourselves in conflict with His word. The world in which we live makes this difficult at best since most everything around us negates God's message on almost every level.

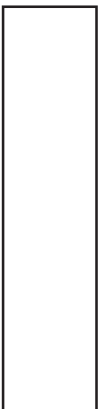
However, giving a portion of our material blessings back to God is both an Old and New Testament acknowledgment of God's influence in our lives. Let us, for the moment, put aside the dollar amount and try to understand that giving back to God is a requirement...if we accept Him as our God and Savior. Every relationship has requirements. No requirements, no relationship.



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### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Belmont Greek Festival .....	5	Janitor's Closet .....	7
Reflections .....	9	Youth & Parents .....	12
News & Information .....	19	Church Services .....	22
Events & Meetings .....	23		

The words of our Lord as He hung upon the Cross ring true. "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34) If His words are "white noise" then our hearts have been hardened and our relationship with God is in crisis.

## Community Building Events

Our parish offers, weekly, a multitude of programs and monthly events whose primary focus is to build our Orthodox Christian family, our community. In essence, every gathering and event builds community. But our first commitment should be to gather in the Divine Liturgy each Sunday. It is from this fellowship that all other parish activities emanate. Because we are the Body of Christ, His Church, it is pivotal that we understand that the offering of service, the participation in all activities, the gathering for any and all community ministries, begins in participation in the Divine Liturgy.

In the Divine Liturgy the priest intones the following words: "having prayed for the unity of the faith and the communion of the Holy Spirit, let us commend ourselves and one another, and our whole life to Christ our God." The sooner we understand our calling as individuals and the importance of our calling as a community the sooner we will become participants and not spectators.

## Assessing Learning

As regards the "assessment" of the education of our young people, there is no question that it is important to assess the spiritual growth of those to whom we will pass on the traditions of our Holy Orthodox Faith. However, this is a measurement of the understanding of how nearly we resemble Our Lord, how much we are aware of growing in His image and likeness. As such, this data is not necessarily reflected in an objective evaluation. Is it even realistic to approach our assessment from an academic perspective? Our children grow and mature over a long period of time, as we all do.

Our Director of Religious Education and other very able educators in attendance at the assembly shared their thoughts on programs available throughout the academic year that give good indications as to how our children implement their religious instruction. The weekly youth group gatherings, annual Youth retreats, and Saint John Oratorical Festival, held every spring during Great Lent, are a few examples. Our Hope/JOY, Jr. High and High School students participate in weekly discussions on challenging subjects and participate in critical thinking of the Gospel message. This is in addition to the exemplary efforts of our teachers on a weekly basis.

My thoughts lead me to the one place, often mentioned both in this column and elsewhere, where this process first begins...the home. The Church community does support, nurture and enhance the initial learning but, with some exception of course, the path of faith begins in our homes. The Church is always available to build from the desire of the parents to teach our children but parental guidance and instruction is critical to this learning and maturation process. It is the message as lived in our homes that is an essential source for learning and understanding the message of Christ's Gospel and the tradition of our Orthodox heritage.

In closing, I ask that we come to know, really know, both the programs and events and the foundation from which we offer opportunities to gather here at Holy Cross. Surely, in order to grow in the stature of our Lord Jesus Christ, our gathering for worship is the critical starting point for any meaningful discussion. The Lord says to His disciples, "Do this in remembrance of me," when offering them His Body and Blood. Let us remember that we can only receive Him into our lives when we first commit,

totally, to His Word and His Will. I hope and pray my thoughts spark lively and productive discussion and invite you to always feel free to include me in the discussion.

*Kalo Pascha! Kali Anastasi!*

## THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

by *Father Panagioti Sotiras, Assistant Priest*



Happiness is a very important goal for us as human beings. One of the most famous phrases in the Declaration of Independence is that all people have been given from God the right to “life, liberty and the pursuit of **happiness**”. According to this statement, it is our God-given right to find happiness. However, the Declaration of Independence stops there. It doesn’t tell us how or where to find this happiness, only that we should be free to find it.

To begin our pursuit of happiness, we should determine what it means. According to Merriam-Webster, happiness is a state of well-being or contentment; a pleasurable or satisfying experience. For the most part, I think most of us would agree with those definitions. However, just like the phrase in the Declaration of Independence, the dictionary does not give us specifics on how we obtain happiness.

The pursuit of happiness is just as important today as it was in 1776, and just as important to teenagers as it is to adults. Teenagers base their decisions in life on what will make them happy. Shopping, having a nice car, TV shows, movies, dating, having sex, being popular, making parents happy, winning, doing drugs, drinking, being the best and having a hobby are examples of where and how teenagers obtain happiness. Do all these things really provide happiness? Is there just one path to happiness? Are there different paths to happiness for each person? As a teenager, you are being told by many different people how to find happiness. Friends, parents, coaches, family members, media, and celebrities are some examples of people in your life who may be telling you how to find happiness. Who’s right?

I invite you to include one other Person in considering your happiness—God. Maybe you already do—if so, great! If not, I encourage you to try! Why should you? Because God wants us to be happy! God created us to be happy, to be in a state of well-being and contentment, to have pleasurable and satisfying experiences. Sometimes, we forget these things or maybe we never realized that God wants us to be happy. I assure you, your happiness is essential for God.

How do we know that God wants us to be happy? One way to answer that question is to understand what God’s original plan was for all human beings. In the beginning of the Bible, we discover that when God created the first humans, he put them in Paradise. In Paradise, there was no drama, pain, gossip, pressure, verbal or physical abuse, confusion, depression, suffering, or death. The first humans were created to be happy and to enjoy Paradise. They lived a care-free and trouble-free life! Their only responsibility was to take care of the place God put them in and to have a relationship with God. Taking care of Paradise wasn’t work for them like we understand work. It’s kind of like when we love practicing a sport, playing the guitar, dancing, etc. When we do what we love, even though we’re putting forth effort, we enjoy it and the time flies (usually). So, this was the original intention of God. God never wanted us to experience pain, drama, confusion, hurt, suffering or death. Those things were never part of God’s plan.

God wants us to be happy. That was God’s original desire and it still is. Never forget that as you try and search for happiness in your daily life. The main challenge for you will be, not to make the same mistake that the first humans made, a mistake that would forever change God’s original plan. Next month, we’ll look at what this mistake was.

## BELMONT GREEK FESTIVAL 2009

The Belmont Greek Festival 2009 will soon be upon us. The Parish Council has already embarked upon the initial preparations for the Festival and I am pleased to announce that **Gary Brenner** and **Mark Simon** have accepted the position of Festival 2009 Co-Chairmen. Gary has served for several years on the Festival steering committee in charge of the outside food booths

and also managing the lamb booth during the festival. In addition, Gary also helped in the kitchen with the baking of the main dishes which starts at 4:00 am each morning of the Festival. Mark has served in various capacities over the years in the kitchen helping with the preparation of the beef souvlaki and the chickens.

Assisting Gary and Mark this year will be the steering committee which oversees the various aspects of the Festival. This year's Festival Steering Committee includes: Entertainment (**Chris Canellos**), Procurement (**Jim Smith**), Cooking Operations (**Tanya Spirtos Eleftheriades**), Marketing (**David Iuppa**), Facilities (**Bob Nemchik**), Food Booths (tbd - recently vacated by Gary Brenner) and Vendors & Booths (tbd).

I would like to take a final opportunity to thank once again the team of **Bob Nemchik** and **Peter Bibbes** who co-chaired the Festival for the last six years.

Please look for future Festival articles in the *Cross Currents* from Gary and Mark.

## ONWARD AND UPWARD TO FESTIVAL 2009

by *Ella Stamates*

I always look at the Festival as a great social event with Holy Cross parishioners as gracious Hosts. It is, after all, the biggest event we have during the year and Greeks are known for their *philotemi* (hospitality and warm welcome). It is more than a fund raiser, which in itself, is extremely important to the community as it supports our church programs. It is a 3 day special event offered to our guests with excellent quality food and entertainment which cannot be found elsewhere. It is an extraordinary time in our community and takes extraordinary effort to make it so successful. It is the talent of our organizers and cooks and their committees which provide the excellence in which we take so much pride. It is their willingness to commit themselves and their talents to the whole of the event. WILL YOU OFFER YOUR TIME AND TALENT? PLEASE DO!!! You may call our chairs **Gary Brenner** at (650) 592-4755 or **Mark Simon** at (650) 367-6568 or **Ella Stamates** (Volunteer Committee) at (650) 369-9825. We'll talk soon.

## From the JANITORS CLOSET

by *Tyke Stamates, Facilities Manager*



Well it's March, WOW! I started full time on the first. It is good to be back and working again. The sad thing is I had to let **Alvaro** go due to budget restraints. He knew this would happen when I returned to work. Alvaro has done an outstanding job helping **Diego** in keeping the buildings and grounds in tip top shape while I was gone. In the future he will be called to help with special projects or with the Festival if he is available.

It will take a week or so to get in the swing of things and get to know what has changed and what hasn't. I would like to remind everyone about SAFETY and SECURITY.

Apparently we have become a little careless in our responsibilities.

- ❖ PLEASE LOCK ALL DOORS WHEN LEAVING THE PREMISES.
- ❖ PLEASE WATCH OUR CHILDREN. MAKE SURE THEY ARE SAFE AND SECURE.
- ❖ PLEASE QUESTION ANYONE ON OUR PREMISES THAT SHOULD NOT BE THERE, and ask them to leave. If you feel you cannot do this find someone who can or call the police.

**REMEMBER THIS IS YOUR HOME AWAY FROM HOME AND WE MUST AND SHOULD PROTECT IT.**

Since I started here I've always heard, "you know Tyke, do it like last year." Well when we keep doing things like the year before, **Nothing Changes**, and we do not progress we regress.

We develop a lazy attitude; we have no new vision, no enthusiasm and worst of all no interest from our Parishioners. After all “it’s always the same thing, nothing new and exciting so why should I attend or volunteer. Please don’t tell me, “If it’s working don’t change it,” because it isn’t working.

A great philosopher once said, “THERE IS DANGER IN RECKLESS CHANGE BUT A GREATER DANGER IN NO CHANGE AT ALL.”

How do we change, how do we inspire new ideas? The answer is COMMITTEE!

Not e-mails, not by phone, not texting but face-to-face committee meetings.

Committees are the basis of getting things done. The committee allows **more people to get involved** and to **expand the support base**. Committees are the best way to create new ideas and delegate responsibility.

Committees have:

- ❖ LEADERSHIP - The ability to guide, direct, or influence people.
- ❖ VISION - The ability to see or imagine a concept and to anticipate future events.
- ❖ COMMUNICATION - Talking face-to-face. Exchanging Ideas.
- ❖ ENTHUSIASM - Something that arouses a consuming interest in all involved.

I know we have committees but maybe we need to educate the committee members and get back to basics, Leadership, Vision, Communication, Enthusiasm and **more parishioners involved**.

The effective committee is the work unit of our Parish.

## REFLECTIONS REFLECTIONS

### SPRAWL

by *Konstantine Salmas*



Faith is an intense thing. There are so many things happening in the realm of a person’s faith. I think of Central Park in Manhattan. The trees are as numerous as the people walking through and around the park. Central Park is a thorough fare from the east to the west side of Manhattan, is large enough to have several ponds, to house a museum, a zoo, to have beautification projects with different directors. Faith in Christ causes a unique relationship to the world.

We know this from Saint Paul, who talks about the veil to God that is lifted when we pursue the Lord. And then the metaphor is there, upon us. The metaphor has been trumpeted, dragged, vexed, but here it is, amidst all the voices, like a rabbit in a field, like a field of rabbits spread in groups over the field. Once the veil is lifted then we are called to a faith that should be as large as Central Park in Manhattan and as thick as the trees that almost act as walls around Golden Gate Park. Faith that is that sprawled out and that big and that long, that people can walk over. That’s the kind of faith were called to, a large faith that can house all the things we have going on in life.

I imagine this faith is there with people today, but this is an inward entity that is growing in the sight of the Lord. Faith as sprawling as Central Park, as big as Golden Gate Park.

**REFLECTIONS ON I.V.** will return next month.

# OUR INHERITANCE

by **Ross Ritterman**, *Young Adult Ministry member*



As a “young adult” who, by God’s grace, is fortunate enough to be a member of this wonderful parish, I’ve borne witness to the truly amazing amount of resources and opportunities available to us. As a person whose routine is to wake up every morning, go to work and spend time in an office interacting with my peers, pay attention to corporate trends and economic activity (which isn’t exactly going to put a smile on many faces) and, in my case, talk on the phone with customers (who aren’t always so happy to hear your voice) all day there are many opportunities to get caught up in the world. From the oft quoted John 15:19 - we are called to not be of the world (Greek: *Agios* or Holy) despite being **in** the world. Some of us go to school, some have to juggle both work and school. Some of us have families of our own! How do we take time off from those aspects of our life to focus on Christ?

As **Fr. Peter** mentioned in the opening article of last month’s *Cross Currents*, “The many weekday services not only help us to slow down our busy schedule but feed our souls and bodies with necessary nourishment.” Nothing could be more true or more needed. I like my job (don’t get me wrong) but I get absolutely excited for these weeknight services - they are not only beautiful but allow me the much needed chance to reconnect with God, our community and be an even more frequent reminder of our ultimate goal as Christians. If we are fasting then where do we then seek our nourishment? Connecting with Church more frequently is that nourishment. What good is the fast without the spiritual, prayer and liturgical life to go with it?

As a young adult in the world, it is never easy - we know of the pressures that come at us from all angles so needless to say this journey is not an easy one. At the same time we have been blessed with so much here at Holy Cross: a new Priest whose previous position was as the Youth Director of the Metropolis, and, of course, a burgeoning group of Young Adults all of whom are extremely motivated to have fun, help out and give our heart and soul to this parish. Immediately following Holy Communion the priest exclaims “Oh God, save your people and bless your inheritance.” We also

hear that in the Apolytikion of the Holy Cross - which we hear nearly every Sunday. What is meant by inheritance? Well - we, the community, are that Inheritance. We are, of course, sharing in what was the previous generation’s inheritance - but we also believe that, regardless of whether you’re on the Parish Council, on a committee or the clergy, we all share a role in what that inheritance looks like. What will this generation’s Young Adults contribute to this parish? What kind of framework can we create for future Young Adults? Might this framework be a model for other parishes, God willing? Are we but a group of Orthodox that happens to be united through being of similar age? or are we also a ministry of this Parish and Archdiocese that should be very much shaping its future? Undoubtedly the latter. You no doubt see Young Adults participating in many of our other ministries here at Holy Cross - Religious Education, the Choir, working in the Three Hierarchs Bookstore and GOYA for instance.

So what are we doing help strengthen God’s inheritance?

When you left us last we were fresh off an evening of discussion followed by laser tag as **Katie** told you in last month’s article. A few weeks later we came together on Cheesefare Saturday in The Oaks to discuss fasting - how should we fast? what must accompany fasting? what should we reflect on during Lent? **Fr. Pete** left us with some insightful readings: St. Basil’s sermon on fasting and an article called “The True Nature of Fasting” written by Bishop Kallistos and Mother Mary. The rest of the night was spent playing games like Apples to Apples, Catchphrase and some of us doing our best to become the next American Idol as we sang into an electronic microphone hooked up to a video game system. Our most recent meeting was the second Friday of Lent following the Salutations to the Theotokos which was spent planning a service project to benefit **His Eminence Metropolitan Tarasios**’s Metropolis of Buenos Aires and South America. Some good ideas were kicked around and the project will be announced soon so stay tuned!

The Lenten fast cannot be accomplished by oneself - we need prayer, guidance and of course we need one another. Make sure other Young Adults you know are aware of the great things we are doing here. We are seeking to grow through faith and fellowship - and create a model whereby we can shepherd God’s inheritance. We have a great time doing it.

Please join us at our next meeting! Helping to lead our organization is the always enthusiastic **Xandra Nemchik** who can be contacted at (650) 921-4091 or [ChoXan1@aol.com](mailto:ChoXan1@aol.com). Note that we're now meeting Friday nights following Salutations and Pot Luck during Great Lent.

## YOUTH & PARENTS

### "JUST BE YOURSELF"

by *Rev. Deacon Niko Bekris,*  
*Metropolis Youth Director*



This summer, a movie sequel is coming out that many youth in our country are looking forward to, called "Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen." The reason young people are looking forward to it is because almost everybody saw the first movie, "Transformers," either in theaters or on DVD. If you haven't seen the first one, you might ask why was it so popular? Well, aside from having really cool action scenes, great special effects, and transforming robots, it also had a teenage love story, which seems to make any summer movie successful these days.

A teenage love story- one that took place between a nerdy high schooler named Sam who had just bought his first car with his dad, and Mikaela, an attractive, popular classmate, whose affection Sam tries to win. In one of the first scenes in the movie, Sam drives his new car to a park where some "cool kids" are hanging out, including Mikaela, with a guy who doesn't respect her. After she wants to leave the park and walk home, Sam offers to give her a ride, hoping to impress her with his new car.

If you came to any of my high school workshops at FDF this year (or if you're a member of GOYA at Annunciation Cathedral in San Francisco), you'll remember that I showed this scene when talking about relationships, because I thought it made a great point: guys and girls in high school try to present images of themselves to others around them, often so they can impress each other. I believe that in one sense, this is something

very natural- when you're young and you like someone, you want them to like you back, and you make an effort to impress them. On the other hand, sometimes when we want someone to like us, we may try to act like a different person, because that's what we think the other person wants to see. We want to be anyone other than ourselves, and often we might do things that are really not us.

To switch gears for a moment, there is a story in the Bible about two young people named Isaac and Rebecca (Genesis 24). It's about a young woman, Rebecca, who was faithful, respectful, and beautiful, and about a servant who travels a long distance to find a wife for his master's son (because in those days, marriages were arranged). He stops with his camels at a well, where Rebecca, who had come to draw water for her family, gives the servant and his animals water first. When the servant realizes that this young woman had thought of others before herself, he informs Rebecca and her family that he has asked God to help him find a wife for his master's son. Hearing that the servant had asked God to help him find someone, Rebecca, out of her faith, says good-bye to her family and leaves with the servant. When they arrived at his master Abraham's camp, Abraham's son Isaac came out to greet Rebecca and the servant. The Scripture says that Isaac was very handsome as well as faithful, and the two fell in love and were married thereafter.

Of course, this story was meant for a specific time and context, but it still holds a powerful message for us today: both Isaac and Rebecca left finding their significant other in God's hands, and neither of these people needed to be anyone else other than who God had made them to be. It is for this reason that I want to share with you guys something that I believe we should know when it comes to relationships: **God does not want you to be anyone else other than who He made you to be.** He has made you who you are for a reason, and in His image and likeness, and that makes who you are holy and special. He calls us to develop our relationships with friends, family members, and even in our dating relationships, but at the same time to grow as people and stay true to who we are. If we base a relationship around someone we're not, that relationship will not work. I know it's hard to do at times, but the more we grow as people ourselves, the more we get to know ourselves as God has made us, the better a relationship with someone else will be. In other words, just be yourself.

## THURSDAY NIGHTS AT HOLY CROSS - A NEW ROUTINE

by *Phil Louridas, B.L.A.S.T. leader*



Thursday: the fifth day of the week. More commonly known as “the day before Friday,” but sometimes referred to by actuaries and school disciplinarians as the “the day after Wednesday”. Most of us underestimate the value of Thursday but it demands more attention. *Seinfeld*, for instance, aired on Thursdays, as did *ER*. Today we watch *The Office*, or *Ugly Betty*, leading many to believe that Thursday is and always was the best night for television. But wait, there’s more. Thursday needs to be abbreviated with a special subscript, ‘h,’ unlike any other day of the week thereby making it unique in pocket planners and refrigerator calendars. All of these things make Thursday pretty cool. Come to think of it, if I started a band I might name it Thursday but I can’t play the guitar and cats cry when I sing. So let’s move right along.

Thursdays are also special because BLAST meets at 7:00 PM every week at Holy Cross. I think the greatest thing about this group is that it meets every week. There’s something powerful and important about “same time, same place.” People are habitual and enjoy routines; after all, routines are comforting.

We easily fall into routines at home, at school and at work. I get my coffee every day at eight and then grab an espresso at two. My father read the newspaper as soon as he got home from work, now I like to listen to the last three innings of the baseball game. Every Sunday we go to Divine Liturgy and try to spend time with family and friends. It’s amazing how we never think about the consistency of these events with any special emphasis, yet we always realize when they are missed.

Our lives become routine, but this does not determine that our lives lack meaning or excitement. Rather, it is the routines we choose that dictate these things. At BLAST we come together on a regular basis to build up a

positive routine. This is a routine that will lead to friendships within the Church that will last for years to come.

There is something dynamic about BLAST, friendships are forming, fellowship is growing and the youth are excited. Thursday nights are full of laughter, discussion and potato chip eating. (Plenty of noise and tons of crumbs – sorry **Tyke**) All of this makes BLAST different in a very tangible way from other youth groups in the Bay Area. Some youth groups devolve into monthly or biweekly meetings due to infrequent attendance or a lack of advisors. At Holy Cross, this is not the case. Thanks to the leadership of **Nicki, Louis, Fr. Pete** and **Pres. Angie**, we know that BLAST is much more.

This is still plenty of opportunity for BLAST to grow in numbers and to expand their presence in the church. Please come by and join. You know where we are. Same time, same place. Aren’t Thursday’s pretty cool?

## B.L.A.S.T. - REAL TALK

by *Lia Farantos, High School senior  
and B.L.A.S.T. member*



Hello again Holy Cross Community! As you know I talked briefly last month about our Thursday Night BLAST group. This time, I would like to explain in more detail the core goal of the program. Just as the name states, the goal of BLAST is to help us build our lives around spiritual truths. The way we do this is through our weekly discussions, and each week is a new lesson. As I’ve said before, the topics we discuss are modern issues, and we try and relate them to our lives as Orthodox Christians. For example, our most recent topic was about anger. As we do with most of our discussions, we split up into smaller groups with a leader in order to have a more personalized talk. As we began, we were asked what makes us angry. As you probably guessed, the responses came flooding in. As the talk proceeded, we really dissected what it meant to be angry, and we discussed ways to overcome anger, such as by putting ourselves in the other person’s shoes. In conclu-

sion, we agreed that anger is not good when it overcomes us, when it is directed at people rather than sin and when it dehumanizes the other person.

Another memorable discussion was one I was even curious about. The discussion was about what it really means to be Orthodox. In this discussion we talked about what sets our beliefs apart from others and what our belief system was all about. Among other things we discussed how our Orthodox faith has stayed so consistent for so long. Also, we looked at how the Creed defines who we are as Orthodox.

As you can see, our discussions are meaningful, informative, and a good learning experience. If you ever feel the need to be part of a sincere talk, then come to BLAST on Thursday nights.

## LENTEN RETREAT HIGHLIGHTS THAT ALL ARE ICONS OF CHRIST

On March 27-29, ten members from BLAST, comprised of middle school and high school students, participated in a weekend Lenten Retreat meant to strengthen relationships with each other and with God. Held at the beautiful Marin Headlands Retreat Center, the retreat consisted of faith-building discussions and group activities. The discussion focused on who we are and the battle we all face in staying true to our identity. Participants learned that they are icons of Christ in this world, which is why the priest censures the people in the congregation. Ultimately, they learned that happiness comes from being true to their identity.

The teens also played “Capture the Flag” and football on the beach. In the afternoon, they spent 45 minutes contemplating on their own the lessons of the day. We ended the afternoon with Great Vespers, followed by dinner and a hike up a hill to catch the sunset. We finished the day with a board game tournament and Orthodox Jeopardy. The group left Sunday morning and returned to Holy Cross for the Divine Liturgy. Those who attended had a great experience with some saying that they wished the retreat was longer.

The retreat was led by **Konstantine Salmas** and **Fr. Pete Sotiras**. BLAST advisors and leaders, **Nicki Davis**, **Louis Busta**, **Phil** and



**Laila Louridas**, and **Presvytera Angie** assisted and were very instrumental for the successful weekend. **Fr. Peter Salmas** was the spiritual leader of the retreat, sharing his insights during the discussions and offering Confession to those who were interested.

For those who attended, and for those who didn't, we look forward to seeing you all next year!

## FDF 2009

by **Kathy Roque-Albert**, *Dance Program Director*

We would like to congratulate all of our Greek dancers, parents and friends who represented Holy Cross Church at the Greek Orthodox Folk Dance Festival held on February 12-15 in Ontario, California.

We are proud to announce that our young dance group, *Dynami*, won the Founders Award in the Advanced Primary category for dance. *Dynami* is directed by **Andreas Najjar**. We are also very proud of *Epitithia*, directed by **Maria Farantos & Lia Farantos** and *Enomenoi*, directed by **Peter Kalafatis** for their wonderful performances.



↑ Epithia



↑ Enomenoi



↑ Dynami

We also thank **Father Peter** and **Presvytera Nikki** along with **Father Pete** and **Presvytera Angie** for their endless support and guidance.

*Congratulations Dancers!*

## NEWS & INFORMATION

### SPOTLIGHT

Congrats to **John Anagnostou**, co-owner of the Fox Theaters, who received a Diamond Award, given by the Peninsula Arts Council in recognition of individuals and organizations for their achievements and contributions to the arts in San Mateo County.

Congratulations to **Ted Laliotis** who was conferred the Elios Cultural Achievement Award during February's Diocesan Folk Dance Festival in Ontario.

### THANK YOU ADOBE!

Over the years, many technology firms and individuals have made donations of products and services to our Church. We've received free computers, free software, and deep discounts on products and services.

Most recently, Adobe Systems has provided us a substantial package of software at over 90% off retail pricing. This software will replace the obsolete tools we now use and permit our office to function more efficiently than ever.

Thank you Adobe for your substantial donation.

# CHOIR NOTES : LUNCHEON THANK YOU'S AND HOLY WEEK MUSIC

by *Eva Canellos, Choir*

Well, another wonderful Choir Pasta Lunch is history, and it was truly an amazing meal! It was so great, in fact, that I would go out on a limb and say it was the best luncheon by ANY Greek Orthodox Church Choir in the entire Belmont area!

**Thomy Iuppa** outdid her extremely talented self by cooking the cheesiest, most delicious cheese and spinach lasagna EVER, along with her delicious salads, garlic bread and fantastic appetizers. There was plenty of great food, and everyone happily devoured it!

On top of that, our official Choir Pastry Chef **Leslie Cardiasmenos** came through with an incredible lemon meringue cheesecake that melted in your mouth and was simply scrumptious!

We are very grateful to the “Choir Club” –the wonderful parishioners who support our lunch each year with their attendance or donations, or both! Your support means a great deal to us in a couple of ways.



↑ Choir Lunch leaders Thomy Iuppa, Steve Cardiasmenos, Dave Iuppa, Leslie Cardiasmenos and Loula Anaston.

First, you make us feel good when you support us. When you come to our lunch, it’s like you’re giving the choir a big hug and saying, “Hey, we forgive you for those clunker notes, and I barely noticed those strange sounding chords!”

Second, your support makes it easier for us to attend the annual Church Music Conferences, where we learn more about church music, proper singing, and yes, cutting down on clunker notes and other unseemly sounds.

Many thanks to **Loula Anaston**, our Luncheon Chairwoman for the umpteenth year, and to **Steve Cardiasmenos**, our fearless Choir Director and Trivia Quiz Host. We are also deeply appreciative to the parishioners who helped in the kitchen, especially Super **Dave Iuppa**, who worked tirelessly and was able to leap tall pasta pans in a single bound.

It was fun singing “There’s No Business Like Choir Business,” with special lyrics by Steve Cardiasmenos. (“Where else can you find a seat reserved for you, on Sunday mornings and Easter too; with the **Fathers Peter**, not just one but TWO!”)

Now that the lunch is over, we know that Holy Week and Easter are but a few beats away. The holiest time of the year also features some of the most beautiful church music.

Holy Thursday involves a mournful and moving hymn as Father Peter carries the cross around the church: “He who suspended the earth amid the waters is suspended on the tree.” On Good Friday, the entire congregation sings along on the Lamentations before the tomb of Christ: “Christ, the life, You were laid in a tomb, and the ranks of angels were amazed as they glorified Your condescension.” On Holy Saturday at the Resurrection Service, the entire church joyously cries out: “Christ is risen from the dead, by death trampling upon death and to those within the tombs, bestowing life!”

As a choir member, I enjoy singing to the glory of God at all times, but during Holy Week, I am so moved by God’s boundless and wondrous love for us, I feel especially blessed to offer a humble gift of song.

## SERVICES

*subject to change* - please check your Sunday Bulletins

**Sunday Services are 8:30 AM, Orthros, 10:00 AM, Divine Liturgy;**  
**Saturday Vespers are at 5:30 PM**

Saturday, May 2 – 5:30 PM, Great Vespers

**Sunday, May 3** – Sunday of Holy Myrrhbearers – 8:30 AM, Orthros;  
10 AM, Divine Liturgy

Tuesday, May 5 – Saint Irene – 9 AM, Divine Liturgy

Friday, May 8 – Saint John – 9 AM, Divine Liturgy

Saturday, May 9 – *No Great Vespers today*

**Sunday, May 10** – Sunday of the Paralytic – 8:30 AM, Orthros; 10  
AM, Divine Liturgy

Wednesday, May 13 – Midpentecost – 9 AM, Divine Liturgy

Saturday, May 16 – 5:30 PM, Great Vespers

**Sunday, May 17** – Sunday of Samaritan Woman – 8:30 AM, Orthros;  
10 AM, Divine Liturgy

Thursday, May 21 – Constantine & Helen – 9 AM, Divine Liturgy

Saturday, May 23 – 5:30 PM, Great Vespers

**Sunday, May 24** – Sunday of the Blind Man – 8:30 AM, Orthros; 10  
AM, Divine Liturgy

Thursday, May 28 – Ascension – 9 AM, Divine Liturgy

Saturday, May 30 – 5:30 PM, Great Vespers

**Sunday, May 31** – Sunday of Fathers of the 1<sup>st</sup> Ecumenical Council –  
8:30 AM, Orthros; 10 AM, Divine Liturgy



## EVENTS & MEETINGS

Please check your Sunday Bulletins for the dates and times of all meetings.

first Tuesdays of the month - 11 AM, ORA

first Tuesdays of the month - 7 PM, Philoptochos Board

first Wednesdays of the month - 7 PM, Youth Council

second Monday of the month - 7:30 PM, Executive Council

third Tuesdays of the month - 7:30 PM, Parish Council

third Fridays of the month - service at the Samaritan House Kitchen

Tuesdays, 10:00 AM, Bible Study

Tuesdays, 6:00 PM, Hope/JOY

first three Wednesdays of the month, 7:30 PM, Choir

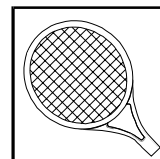
Thursdays, 7 PM, Studies in the Faith

Thursdays, 7 PM, BLAST

first Thursdays of the month, Daughters of Penelope

Saturdays - following Great Vespers, Young Adult Ministry

Dance - please check with your Directors



### SAVE THE DATE!

**Monday, June 8, 2009**



The 43rd Annual

Church of the Holy Cross

## **Golf and Tennis Tournament**

Golf, Tennis, Cocktails and Dinner  
Great Prizes, Food and Beverages

**GOLF FORMAT**

7:45 a.m. (Medal Play)

12:15 p.m. (Scramble)

**TENNIS ROUND ROBIN**

8:15 a.m. to Noon

*Watch the mail for your invitation!*