



CROSS CURRENTS

Church Newsletter
Lent 2010

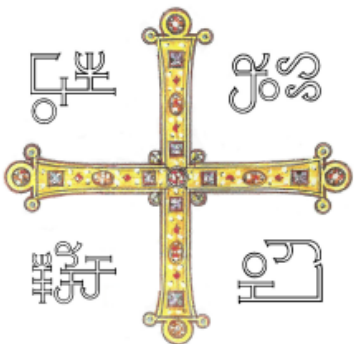
OUR EXECUTIVE COUNCIL FOR 2010

Earlier this year, the Parish Council met for election of officers. **Father Peter Salmas** officiated at this meeting and the following Council members were elected.

President: Jim Smith. Jim has been a Holy Cross parishioner since 1988, having come from the Transfiguration Greek Orthodox Church in Mason City, Iowa. He is married to **Maria Eugenia** and they have 2 children, **Ana Elena** and **Elias**. They are joined by Jim's brother **Art**, who is also an active parishioner at Holy Cross.

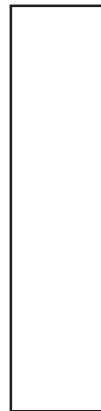


Vice President: Tanya Spirtos, M.D. She is married to **Elias Eleftheriades** and has two children, **Mike** and **Alex Spirtos**, who are juniors at the University of Chicago. She has been a member of Holy Cross since the christening of her children in 1990, and has been a member of the Council and stewardship chair since 1999.



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BELMONT CA 94002-1604



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The Monthly Newsletter of the Church of the Holy Cross
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Secretary: Gary Brenner. Gary is a long time member of Holy Cross as well as serving as President, Vice-President of the Parish Council and has been involved in other Holy Cross committees. Gary is married to **Arleen** and has 2 grown children, **Ashley** and **Derek**.



Treasurer. Chris Canellos. Chris is also a long-time member of the Parish Council and has served as Treasurer for many years with a couple of breaks, one of them as president of the Council. He is married to **Eva** and they have a 8 year-old son, **Christian**.



We take this opportunity to thank **Jenny Cladis** who has been on the Executive Council as President and Secretary. She continues on the Council having served with love and dedication since 1995.



REFLECTIONS REFLECTIONS

THE BODY ON THE CROSS

by *Konstantine Salmas*



The body on the cross has been repeated so many times. The body on the cross. His body on the cross has been repeated over the centuries. Paintings of his body hang above European altars, hangs on the walls of museums in every city, on the walls of homes. The repetition dulls us to His significance. We don't mean for this to happen. The value is unrecognized because He is not a one hundred foot Transformer. The body on the cross becomes a pose of the body like the many poses that fight for our attention, is the original pose that moved people, and now is the near forgotten pose.

His body on the cross does not smack us hard at all. Not nearly as hard as **Roger Federer, Andy Murray, Pete Sampras, Serena Williams** hitting a tennis racket hitting a ball. Or as hard as the colors of Ms. Williams' outfits hit our eyes through the television screens. Pink. Green. Bright Blue. Metallic. But then I have to listen to her thank Jehovah whenever she wins. Her family is Jehovah Witness and this does not sit well with me. She is winning Grand Slam titles and carrying the banner of some fringe pseudo-Biblical group. The accuracy and quality of her tennis should not have people read into the accuracy and quality of her religion. On the other hand, people should not read into quality of Orthodoxy based on what might be the low quality of our Christian life.

A memory. I don't really want to let go of *that* past, even though the only thing it provides for me is a reminder about how people who talk about things are at more of a disadvantage than people who are actually doing things. I would much rather be the athlete, then the commentator. The critic is in a weakened position because they are subject to the people who are in action. The commentators were discussing how **Maria Sharapova** is going to beat Williams. She is up by a set and three breaks. I don't think anyone really remembers that match or that the critic's were

undone serve by serve, point by point, set by set, until Serena Williams was smiling, until neither player had to return to the baseline to await or make a serve. I don't watch any sports with as much intensity since that match. I am still too impressed by the comeback. People might not, but I do remember and this always smacks me when I begin to criticize the actions of other people or spend too much time reading what somebody has to say about something.

Good thing we don't rely on critics to tell us the value of Jesus Christ on the cross. The historical event speaks for itself. We can't talk it up. The significance of the action is determined by God, not by **Bud Collins**, **Mary Carillo**, **Stuart Scott**, a Rolling Stone, a *Men's Health* writer, or text from an acquaintance.

Like my attachment to the 2004 Australian Open Final, the shred or fragment is most likely going to be the piece of memory or the slit of experience that ties you in a deeper/stronger/more emotional way to the body on the cross and the body and blood on the altar in the church.

FROM THE JANITOR'S CLOSET

by *Tyke Stamates*

Last month I closed the door to the closet and couldn't get out, so I decided to take a nap. I finally woke up refreshed and ready to get back to work. But first I needed to get out of the closet.

I yelled and knocked on the door. Finally, **Diego** heard me and opened the door. He looked at me funny and said, "Why are you in the closet?" I got locked in, I replied. He again looked at me



funny and said, "Why didn't you open the door? It wasn't locked." I returned his look and told him that I was taking a walk and that we would talk later. I needed time to think of a good excuse.

I walked to the front of the church on the Alameda. I was looking at the shrubs and realized what a mess everything was. I thought to myself, "How long was I asleep?"

And then I realized, this mess had become a skotoma. Sometimes when you look at things (eye sores), you get used to seeing them and don't pay attention to them, they become part of the everyday scenery. They become a "SKOTOMA".

Now, I was glad I fell asleep. By getting a good rest, I could see things from a different perspective.

I called **Jim Stephanos**. "Jim, do you have a solution for our SKOTOMA problem?" He answered, "I'm glad you asked, it so happens I do".

Jim and **Peter Bibbes** got together and came up with a plan to BEAUTIFY the front of our church. The Parish Council approved the plan. Drawings and renderings can be seen in the Narthex every Sunday (and in the middle pages of this *Cross Currents*).

The plan is good and we have volunteers to help, but first we need MONEY. Before I return to the closet, I am donating \$500 towards BEAUTIFYING the front of our church. PLEASE JOIN ME and HELP US BEAUTIFY the FRONT OF OUR CHURCH. We can't complete this project till we have \$11,000. I believe we are approximately 30% there.

Time for another nap, but before I return to the closet, I leave you with this thought from by John W. : "**Make all you can, save all you can, give all you can.**"

YOUTH & PARENTS

WHAT DO I DO WHEN I FREAK OUT AND GET ANXIOUS?

by *Fr. Pete Sotiras, Assistant Priest*



I am constantly amazed and impressed with how much teenagers can accomplish. The amount of time you put into homework, sports and other extra-curricular things is unbelievable. On top of all this, you have a social life and hobbies you try to maintain. It's quite impressive.

What I do know is that when you all put your mind to something, the sky is the limit. I also know though that such achievement can cause stress, anxiety and worry. No matter how much we all try to be cool, we all have something we worry about. The question is, do you believe that stress and worry is normal and will always be with you? The answer is no and the One who says so is God.

In the Gospel of Luke, chapter 12 verses 22-31, Jesus tells His disciples not to be anxious and worry about the most important things in life (food, clothing, drink, etc.). If Jesus is saying not to worry about the things in life that our essential to our survival, I'm pretty sure He would tell the teenagers of Holy Cross Belmont, not to worry about school, friends, parents, etc. By saying this, that doesn't mean Jesus is saying don't do your homework or don't make time for your parents. What Jesus is saying is not to freak out and stress because stress and freaking out doesn't help at all! It's not normal! As Orthodox Christians, it's not part of our spiritual DNA.

Anxiety, stress and freaking out will always be emotions that will try and overcome you in your life, not just now, but in the future. Jesus tells us though that they don't have to overcome us; they don't have to be part of our life. He doesn't want us to be people who freak out and worry. He

wants us to be confident and strong and able to deal with the challenges of life. Jesus' promise to us is that we can keep anxiety and stress out of our lives. But how?

Jesus tells us that we can stop worrying and freaking out by seeking the Kingdom of God (Luke 12:31). How do we seek His Kingdom? We seek His Kingdom by communicating with God through prayer and reading the Bible. We also seek the Kingdom by fasting, helping those in need, and by going to Church and receiving the sacraments of the Church (Communion, Confession, etc.). Basically, the only way we can keep stress and anxiety out of our lives is if we have God in our lives. There are many outlets that society offers you to cope with stress and anxiety—entertainment, sports, exercise, alcohol, drugs, sex, etc. However, the only true successful outlet is Jesus Christ.

Unfortunately, many times we think that our faith only has a reward for us at the end our life. We often forget thought we can receive rewards now through our faith, at this moment. That's what it means when Jesus says, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 10:7). He is saying that if you believe in God, God will bless you now and after this life.

So, the next time you find yourself starting to get anxious, freak out or worry about school, your friends, your parents or whatever, go to God. Go to God in prayer and tell Him, "Jesus, you said that we shouldn't worry or freak out as long as we seek Your kingdom. I'm starting to freak out. Help me and give me the strength to deal with this situation so I don't have anxiety." If you include God in your life, anxiety and worry will leave your life.

THE HABITS OF YOUTH

by *Khara-Maria Kalamaras, Religious Education Director*

Lent is a time filled with an abundance of opportunities to make community and God our first priority. Habits for our life are set in youth. As educators and parents, let's commit to making our children's habits pleasing to God.

Dr. Maria Khoury from Taybeh, Palestine, began the Lenten season for us with many moments of inspirational words throughout the entire

weekend, while **Dr. George Parsenios** from Princeton Theological Seminary motivated us through Mid Lent to continue with zeal and love. Now we are blessed with many activities with leaders from our own Church of the Holy Cross.

This weekend is our Youth Lenten Retreat for our Middle School and High School children (please contact **Fr. Pete** to sign-up). On Saturday of Lazarus our youth choir will be chanting the responses for the Divine Liturgy and then our youth, families and community will enjoy brunch and work together to fold the 1000 palm crosses needed for Palm Sunday. Finally, Our Holy Friday Retreat on April 2nd is an appropriate place for our young people to be on such a Holy day. (please sign up in advance so that we can provide enough food and supplies for all).

Bring your family to one evening Lenten service each week so that together you may grow in faith as a family and as a community.

As parents and educators we should be encouraging our children to be a part of all of these activities, not just one or two, so that their roots can be as Christians living in this world, but not of this world, with joy and love.

LENTEN MISSION PROJECT

Please join our parish in collecting coins for the Hogar Rafael Ayau Orthodox Orphanage in Guatemala and the Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC). The funds will be used to help the nuns in Guatemala build a new orphanage in the mountains (with fresh air!) for 70 beautiful children. Adoptions are no longer taking place, so the nuns really need our help! All students in our Religious Education program have received mission coin boxes to fill, and additional coin boxes will be available during coffee hour for those parishioners who wish to help. Filled coin boxes will be collected on Palm Sunday. Thank you for your love and generosity, especially during this time of Great Lent. For more information, please contact **Claire Gagas**. Also, please check the orphanage's website at www.hogarrafaelayau.org for the latest updates!

THREE-PEAT FOR OUR A-TEAM!

Oakland - Our Girls A team defeated Oakland in the OYAA Finals in typical Holy Cross-style. The combination of our defense, aggressive guard play, and powerful inside contributions from all the girls on the team resulted in another Holy Cross victory for this team that has been so able coached the last several years by **George Boubalos**. We hope to see him on the high school level as his daughter, **Adriana**, moves into high school!!!

NEWS

THREE HIERARCHS BOOKSTORE NEWS

Our Holy Cross Three Hierarchs Bookstore is happily filled with Orthodox browsers and buyers. Now is the time to purchase your service books for the Great Lent...Lenten Liturgies, The Akathist Hymn and CD, and the Services for Holy Week and Pascha. Each of these books is in Greek and in English and is an essential companion for participation in the Holy Services of Great Lent, Holy Week and Pascha. The treasury of hymnology which our Orthodox Church offers to the faithful is a great gift to us as we pursue our lives as Orthodox Christians. Our shelves are also well-stocked with books which are carefully selected to make available the best of what is published in Orthodox literature.

All who were fortunate to have heard one of the several presentations offered by **Dr. Maria Khoury** were impressed by her well-articulated yet simply presented experiences of life in the Holy Land. Many were able to purchase her books, each of which expresses both to our children and to those who hopefully read to our children, an aspect of the life of our Orthodox Church. We will remain well stocked with each of the Christina titles authored by Dr. Khoury, and we look forward to sharing with you the insights which led her to the writing and publishing of her works.

We are also very pleased to offer the new line of children's books, both in Greek and in English, from Potamitis Publishing. Soon to arrive are bilingual coloring books of fifteen saints from each month of the year. The art work and text of these publications is outstanding. Please do make time to become familiar with this and all books, with the icons, CD's and other gift items available.

LOVE TO KNIT OR CROCHET?

The ladies of Philoptochos would like to restart regular gatherings to knit and crochet hats, scarves and blankets for those in need. Completed items will be distributed to the homeless, nursing facilities, cancer care and visitation to the elderly. The first gathering will take place on **Saturday, March 20**, at 1:00 PM at the home of **Ella Stamates**. Please join us in this endeavor by calling to express your interest in joining us at 369-9825.

SERVICES

subject to change - please check your Sunday Bulletins

Sunday Services are (regular schedule) 8:30 AM, Orthros, 10:00 AM, Divine Liturgy; (summer schedule) 8:15 AM, Orthros, 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy; Saturday Vespers are at 5:30 PM

Monday, March 8 - 7 PM, Great Compline

Tuesday, March 9 – 8:30 AM, Ninth Hour; 9 AM, Presanctified Liturgy – 40 Martyrs

Wednesday, March 10 - 6:00 PM, Presanctified Liturgy

Friday, March 12 – 8:30 AM, Presanctified Liturgy

Friday, March 12 - 7 PM, Salutations

Saturday, March 13 – 5:30 PM, Great Vespers

Sunday, March 14 – 8:30 AM, Orthros; 10 AM, Divine Liturgy - Sunday of John Climacus

Monday, March 15 - 7 PM, Great Compline

Wednesday, March 17 - 6:00 PM, Presanctified Liturgy

Friday, March 19 – 8:30 AM, Presanctified Liturgy

Friday, March 19 - 7 PM, Akathist Hymn

Saturday, March 20 – 5:30 PM, Great Vespers

Sunday, March 21 – 8:30 AM, Orthros; 10 AM, Divine Liturgy - Sunday of Saint Mary of Egypt

Monday, March 22 - 7 PM, Great Compline

Tuesday, March 23 – 7 PM, Salutations to the Holy Cross

Wednesday, March 24 – Great Vespers at Annunciation Cathedral, SF

Thursday, March 25 – 9 AM, Divine Liturgy – The Annunciation

Friday, March 26 – no services

Saturday, March 27 - 9:00 AM, Divine Liturgy - The Raising of Lazarus

Saturday, March 27 – 5:30 PM, Great Vespers

Sunday, March 28 – 8:30 AM, Orthros; 10 AM, Divine Liturgy - Palm Sunday

Sunday, March 28 – 7 PM - The Service of the Bridegroom

Monday, March 29 – 7 PM - Great and Holy Monday - The Service of the Bridegroom

Tuesday, March 30 – 7 PM - Great and Holy Tuesday - The Service of the Bridegroom

Wednesday, March 31 – 6:30 AM - Great and Holy Wednesday - Liturgy for Workers

Wednesday, March 31 – 3 PM - The Sacrament of Holy Oil

Wednesday, March 31 – 7 PM - The Sacrament of Holy Oil

Thursday, April 1 – 9 AM - Great and Holy Thursday - Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great

Thursday, April 1 – 7 PM - The Service of the Holy Passion

Friday, April 2 – 9 AM – Holy Friday - The Vigil of the Royal Hours

Friday, April 2 – 3 PM - Vespers of the Descent from the Cross

Friday, April 2 – 7 PM - The Service of the Lamentations

Saturday, April 3 – 9 AM - Great and Holy Saturday - Divine Liturgy

Saturday, April 3 – 11 PM - Resurrection Matins, the Paschal Liturgy

Sunday, April 4 – 11:30 AM - Easter Sunday / Vespers of the Resurrection, “Agape”

Friday, April 9 – 9 AM, Divine Liturgy – Life-Giving Spring

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

MEETINGS & EVENTS

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

Weekdays - Preschool

Weekdays - Greek School

Mondays - 10 AM, Bible Study

Mondays - 7-8 PM, College Night

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

first Tuesdays of the month - 11 AM, ORA

first Tuesdays of the month - 7 PM, Philoptochos Board

second & fourth Tuesdays - evenings, Hope/JOY

second Tuesday of the month - 7:00 PM, Youth Council

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

Wednesdays, 7 PM - Studies in the Faith

First three Wednesdays of the month - Choir

Thursdays - 7-8:30 PM in The Oaks - BLAST

first Thursdays of the month, Daughters of Penelope

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

every other Saturday, after Vespers - Young Professionals



STEWARDSHIP 2010

Thank you to those

who have submitted their 2010 pledge cards!

If you haven't yet, please return your pledge cards to the church office as soon as possible to help us with financial planning for this year.

SPRING GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The following is the proposed agenda for the next General Assembly meeting. Join us on **Sunday, March 14** immediately following Divine Services. All active members of the Church of the Holy Cross are encouraged to attend. The minutes from the previous Assembly will be available in the Narthex.

- I. Call to order & Opening prayer
- II. Selection of GA chair
- III. Approval of minutes of previous meeting
- IV. Pastor's report - Fr. Peter
- V. President's report - Jim Smith
- VI. Treasurer's report - Chris Canellos
- VII. Committee Reports
 - A. Festival - Gary Brenner / Mark Simon
 - B. Stewardship - Tanya Spirtos
 - C. Building and Grounds - Peter Bibbes
 - D. Technology Committee - Nick Peros
 - E. Preschool - Tom Mavrakakis
- IIIX. Parish Organization Reports
 - A. Philoptochos - Mary Peros
 - B. Religious Education - Khara-Maria Kalamaras
 - C. Youth Council & Young Adults - Mark Simon
 - D. Benevolence - Mary Pappas
 - E. Outreach - Virginia Coppock
 - F. Greek School - Theodora Kounalakis / Kleon Skourtis
- IX. New Business
 - A. 2010 Nominations Committee
 - B. Clergy-Laity Meeting
- X. For the Good of the Order
- XI. Adjournment & Closing prayer

25th OF MARCH 1821

**GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY AND THE
ANNUNCIATION OF THE HOLY THEOTOKOS**

Holy Cross Greek School invites you to celebrate this special day

Sunday, March 21

Immediately following Divine Liturgy

Lenten Luncheon - Program

Adults \$25, Children \$15

Family (Parents with two or more children) \$70.00

For more information, please call Cathy Pereira at (650) 631-9952 or Tonia Spyridi at (650) 941-2845. Tables of 10 will receive assigned seating. Reservations are made in order of payment and form received. Please indicate

:

Name, Phone Number(s), Number of Adults in your party; Number of Children in your party, if you'd like the Special Family Rate (see above), and how much you have enclosed (checks made out to GREEK SCHOOL). Also, if you are coordinating a table of 10, please also list all 10 names.

and send to : *Cathy Pereira / 9 Willow Lane / Belmont, CA 94002*

**ANNUAL
ANASTASI
RECEPTION**

Join us in The Oaks following Midnight services on **Saturday, April 3** for our annual reception.

EASTER AGAPE PICNIC AND EGG HUNT

Join us on the Church grounds following Agape Services (11:30 AM) on **Sunday, April 4** for our annual Easter Picnic. Bring your favorite dish to add to the community table ... or better yet, bring your barbeque and cook your favorite dish right there!

The day will include an Easter Egg hunt, children's games, music, a raffle, whole lamb roasted on the spit, and a wonderful pot-luck picnic prepared by all and for all. Tables and chairs will be provided. There is no admission charge but donations are welcome.

For details & menu contributions, call **David Iuppa** at 408-702-8389.

SPOTLIGHT

Parishioner **Gail O'Brian** (**Vicki Demakas's** daughter) was a recipient of the 2009 Jefferson Awards for outstanding community service. The Jefferson Awards are a prestigious national recognition system honoring community and public service In America. Gail was awarded this honor because of her tireless efforts for the past seven years in organizing a gift-giving program for the South of Market Chlldcare Center in San Francisco. Each year Gail undertakes the lead role in raising donations for over 100 children of homeless and low-income families at the center. Gail's selfless generosity to help children in need, makes her a worthy recipient of the award. Congratulations Gail!

THANK YOU CROSS CURRENTS SPONSOR!



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Taramosalata, Trahana, Anchovies Greek Olive
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BEAUTIFICATION PROJECT *by Peter Bibbes, Building & Grounds Committee*



↑ Views depicting the front as-is



↑ and what it would look like with wall and railing together

sample wall styles and colors →

Please send your contribution to the Church Office enclosed in an envelope marked “Wall/Railing Beautification Project” or to **Peter Bibbes**, 3800 Kingridge Dr, San Mateo, CA 94403. If our goal of \$11,000 is not reached, any monies or checks will be returned to the sender.

The Building & Grounds Committee of the Parish Council has developed and is proposing a beautification plan to enhance the appearance of the Church front along Alameda as well improve security. The proposed plan consists of adding a modular retaining wall, tapered from a 3-foot height at the Safeway driveway to 6 inches at the Church driveway entrance, with a standard 4-foot high wrought iron railing set just behind the wall. The estimated cost of the project is \$11,000 which covers the cost of the wall modular interlocking blocks, the wrought railing and their installation.

To fund the project the Committee is asking for contributions, hopefully generous ones, from our Parish members. Please consider making a generous contribution to this project, as we cannot fund it from the Operating Fund. We need your support to make it a reality.

