



CROSS CURRENTS

Church Newsletter
November/December 2010

CHRISTMAS - A MIRACULOUS TRUTH

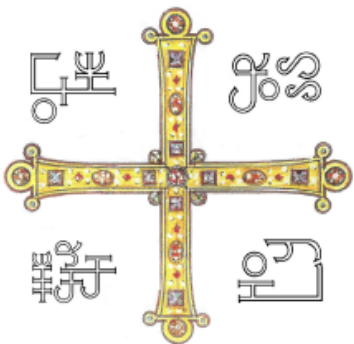
by *Father Peter Salmas, Pastor*



The Feast of the Nativity of Christ is the celebration of the Birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ. At one time, this was an obvious statement and fact! Unfortunately, in our world today, it is no longer the case. The truth be told, although all Christians may say they believe that Christ is the Messiah, the Savior of the world, many Christians have strayed from this path of truth. As Orthodox Christians, we know that the Holy Fathers of our Church have clarified that He is not only the Savior of the World but that He comes to us as God Incarnate.

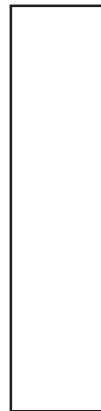
It is for this reason that Orthodox Theology often refers to the Birth of Christ as the Incarnation. Saint Athanasius, a Church Father of the 3rd and 4th century, wrote extensively on our Lord's Incarnation and its implications for mankind. CS Lewis, in an introduction to a translation on Athanasius and his writing on The Incarnation, states the following:

"We are proud that our own country has more than once stood against the world. (Saint) Athanasius did the same. He stood for the Trinitarian doctrine, 'whole and undefiled,' when it looked as if all the civilized world was slipping back from Christianity into the religion of Arius—into one of those 'sensible' synthetic religions which are so strongly recommended today and which, then as now, included among their devotees many highly cultivated clergymen. It



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is his glory that he did not move with the times; it is his reward that he now remains when those times, as all times do, have moved away.”

We live in dangerous and treacherous times, especially regarding religious teaching and what we claim to believe. Christmas is not just a celebration of a child, even as special as the Christ child. Christmas is the celebration of God becoming man as part of His continued plan for our salvation.

CS Lewis continues: *“When I first opened his De Incarnatione, I soon discovered by a very simple test that I was reading a masterpiece . . . Every page I read confirmed this impression. His approach to the Miracles is badly needed today, for it is the final answer to those who object to them as ‘arbitrary and meaningless violations of the laws of Nature’”*

How often we have heard from the media at large as well as from supposed Christian teachers that the birth of the Savior Jesus Christ is only a story. The Star, the Shepherds, the Wise Men, all symbolic, all part of a great story. Our Orthodox Church teaches otherwise and for good reason. Because of saintly men like Saint Athanasius the Great and other Fathers of the Church we have an authentic witness. They were not men easily swayed for their very lives were at stake, unlike today.

CS Lewis confirms for us, modern man, an authentic certainty in the writings of old: *“They are here shown to be rather the re-telling in capital letters of the same message which Nature writes in her crabbed cursive hand; the very operations one would expect of Him who was so full of life that when He wished to die He had to ‘borrow death from others.’ The whole book, indeed, is a picture of the Tree of Life—a sappy and golden book, full of buoyancy and confidence. We cannot, I admit, appropriate all its confidence today. We cannot point to the high virtue of Christian living and the gay, almost mocking courage of Christian martyrdom, as a proof of our doctrines with quite that assurance which Athanasius takes as a matter of course. But whoever may be to blame for that it is not Athanasius.”*

Hence, Christmas is not a myth and more than just a birth. It is about God revealing Himself to us, it is about God being involved in our lives to the extent that our lives are changed . . . forever.

It is my prayer that each of us allows Him, through His Incarnation, to change our lives to be lives lived in Him . . . forever.

A joyous Christmas to all.

PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS INFORMATION WE ALL NEED TO KNOW

Each and every baptized Orthodox Christian must make some effort of active commitment to his or her Church. Some serve by participating in the Choir; some do so by joining the Philoptochos Ladies Society; others assist whenever the Parish sponsors a community activity; and others participate in the life of the Church by serving as members of the Parish Council.

YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS

Being a member of the Parish Council is truly a responsible task that must be served by an individual committed to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The role of a Parish Council member is a holy and spiritual one. In assisting in the administrative responsibilities of the Church, a Parish Council member acknowledges the importance of strengthening the earthly ministry through God's Church. Being a member of the Parish Council should not be for social reasons or status in the Community; but rather an act of humility and conviction to Christ our Lord.

In accordance with the 2005 Regulations of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, all candidates wishing to serve on the Parish Council must attend a PARISH COUNCIL SEMINAR organized by the current Parish Council and under the guidance of the Parish Priest. The purpose of the Seminar is to prepare candidates for the Parish Council, as well as making them aware of the sacred responsibilities expected of a Council member.

This year's PARISH COUNCIL SEMINAR has been scheduled for **Thursday, December 2** at 7:30 PM in the Contos Library) but ALL potential Parish Council members, INCLUDING THOSE SEEKING RE-ELECTION, MUST ATTEND.

In order to be placed on the ballot, one must complete the PETITION FOR CANDIDACY form and return it to the Church Office before **Thursday, December 2**, at 7:30 PM. If a petition has not been turned in by the ascribed date and time, the person will be ineligible to run for the Parish Council. These forms will be available in the Narthex in November, and online (see the link on the home page). Elections are **Sunday, December 5** following Liturgy.

2010 PIECEMEAL

by *Christina Stamatakis*

The Holy Cross Piecemeal is a beautiful event. For me, I loved seeing the family and friends all gathered together in The Oaks for this event. It truly makes Holy Cross feel like a family. The Piecemeal is special to me, as it was the first event I attended at Holy Cross (one year ago). And I remember feeling then, as I feel now, how wonderful and welcoming the Holy Cross Community is.

Of course, the food was amazingly delicious and the variety unbelievable. The decorations and table settings really set the festive mood! I believe this event is unique to Holy Cross and a treasure of a tradition. It reminded me how thankful I am to have found the Holy Cross community.

YOUNG ADULT FALL FIESTA!

by *Christina Stamatakis*

...and what a FIESTA it was! From the food, fellowship and friends, I definitely had a wonderful time. With delicious quesadillas, toppings, and Mexican pastries, a feast was had by all! After dinner, lively games ensued with classics like Apples-to-Apples, musical chairs, Pin-the-Tail-on-the-Donkey, and even a piñata (when was the last time you ran after some flying candy?! A heated two games of Celebrity (a variation of charades) were played, with each team bringing their A-game. With close to 20 young adults from Holy Cross and the surrounding Bay Area communities, the Fall Fiesta was a super fun event bringing together people in faith and fellowship and a wonderful way to hang out with friends. I'm already looking forward to the next time!

GREEK SCHOOL NEWS

Greek School students and teachers are off to a running start for what is sure to be a productive and enjoyable school year.

The mission of the Greek school is to provide education and instruction of the Greek language, culture, and heritage; to enhance bi-cultural and bilingual awareness; and to promote the moral and ethical values of the Greek Orthodox families.

Greek school has programs for both children and adults. The programs for children offer instruction at various degrees of exposure to the Greek language, ranging from Greek as second language to Greek as mother tongue. The adult classes are offered at the beginner, intermediate and advanced levels. This year, the school is offering an additional certification preparation class for graduates seeking to pass the Level III test.

| | | | |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------|---------------------------|
| Athena Program: | Mon/Tues | 4:30-6:30 | |
| Phevos Program: | Wed | 4:30-6:30 | |
| Koraes Program: | Thurs/Fri | 4:30-6:30 | |
| Certification Prep: | Fri | 4:30-6:30 | |
| Adult Classes: | Tues | 5:00-6:30 | Advanced |
| | Tues | 7:00-8:30 | Intermediate |
| | Thurs | 5:00-7:00 | Intermediate/ Advanced |

For detailed information about Greek school please look at our web site: <http://belmontgreeksschool.com/>

On October 27, 28 and 29, the students and teachers of Holy Cross Greek School took a trip back in time to celebrate the 2,500 year anniversary of the Battle of Marathon, by participating in their own version of the 28th Classic Marathon.

The Holy Cross Greek School wishes you a Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year!!!



On October 27, 27 and 29, the students and teachers of Holy Cross Greek School took a trip back in time to celebrate the 2,500 year anniversary of the Battle of Marathon, by participating in their own version of the 28th Classic Marathon.



PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS

The 2010-2011 year has been declared the “Year of the Family” in the Metropolis of San Francisco. We are asked by Metropolis Gerasimos to commit ourselves more fully to our family, the Orthodox Church, and to express our love to one another as well as those “far & beyond the confines of our individual households & our parishes”. First and foremost, we can accomplish this through “Family Prayer”. Then working in Christ’s name to raise funds through the works of our beloved Philoptochos.

The following are a few of the commitments that Philoptochos supports; Family to Family Sharing, Kids n’ Cancer, Cardiac Fund, Social Welfare/ Emergency Fund.

Our activities planned are:

- Nov. 28, Dec. 5, 12, 19 - Christmas Items Boutique
- Nov. 21-Dec. 19 - Holiday Baking Sale
- Dec. 4 - Holiday Brunch to benefit Student Aid Endowment Fund
- Dec. 12 – Christmas Tea & Charity drawing – in our Hall
- Dec. 16- Receiving Home Event
- Jan. 9 – Vasilopeta Luncheon – in Oaks
- Jan. 29 - General Meeting with Special Speaker
- Feb. 27 – Kids n’ Cancer Reception in the Oaks
- Mar.–April – Easter events & bake sale
- May 14 - Fashion Show
- June 19 - Father’s Day Reception

These are our yearly events & we hope you will, again, support them. Please talk to any of our board members or myself (Dee at 588-0739) & let us know in which area you would like to help. We Need You!

As our National President **Aphrodite Skeadas** recently stated “Philoptochos women renew their faith & their relationship with the Lord by exercising their commitment to serve those in need”.

Help us accomplish this goal!

Thank you, *The Philoptochos Board+*

OUR THREE HIERARCHS BOOKSTORE

All too often we take for granted the gifts that are so very easily accessible! Those of us who “work” in the bookstore, are often amazed when someone walks in, stands in surprised admiration and says, “I had no idea this was here!” Now is the season to discover your newly remodeled Holy Cross Three Hierarchs Bookstore. Books, icons, CD’s, ornaments and other Orthodox gifts are plentiful. Are you hoping to find a gift for the children on your Christmas giving list? or perhaps the icon of the patron Saint of a family member? or a gift for that individual for whom you can find absolutely “nothing” at the mall? Do come by. Those who enter, rarely leave without feeling good about having stopped to shop! If shopping after Divine Services is not convenient, please feel free to call the church office to make arrangements to have the bookstore opened at a time that is good for you.

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. . . With the Christmas Season very near, we encourage you to begin gift-giving by selecting from our Holy Cross Bookstore books, icons, candles, CD’s and other Orthodox items. We are very pleased to inform you that a new shipment of crosses from Gerochristo Jewelers in Athens will be available for purchase continuing **TODAY!**

UPCOMING EVENTS

Dec. 12 **ANNUAL PHILOPTOCHOS CHRISTMAS TEA** - Save the date and save a table to decorate! Once again we invite you to share your Christmas spirit with our parish and decorate a table in your own unique way for all of us to enjoy at our tea. If you catch the creative bug, reserve a table by calling **Theodora Kounalakis** at 594-9585. The number of tables is limited. Last year we all had a marvelous time looking at the beautiful decorations in the Main Hall after Liturgy. Save the date and save a table!

Dec. 12 **CHRISTMAS PROGRAM**, 6:30 PM [please note change in time] — Mark your calendars for our annual Holy Cross Christmas Program featuring musical and theatrical celebrations of the birth of Christ! Sunday School students should attend one rehearsal on **Saturday, December 11**, 10 AM. For more information, contact **Eva Canellos**, cecanellos@aol.com, or 529-0180.

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Dec. 31 **NEW YEARS EVE** **DINNER DANCE**

promises to be tasty, musical, elegant, and convenient for families who wish to attend. Why would you want to be anywhere else at midnight? Before December 15, adults are \$40, youth 16 and under are \$15, and college students are \$30. On December 16, prices are \$55 for all adults, including college students, and twenty for youth 16 and under. RSVP to 650 483-2995, KonstantineS@goholycross.org, or click on the New Year's Eve banner to send an email containing your RSVP.

MEETINGS

Please check the Sunday Bulletin for the dates/times of all meetings.

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
third Tuesdays of the month - 7:30 PM, Parish Council
second and fourth Tuesdays of the month - Hope/Joy
Tuesdays - Bible Study, 10 AM - Contos Library or Fireside
Tuesdays - Dance
first three Wednesdays - Choir
Wednesdays - Studies in the Faith, 7 PM - Contos Library
Thursdays - BLAST
third Fridays of the month - service at the Samaritan House Kitchen

SERVICES & HOLIDAY EVENTS

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

Saturday, December 4 – 8:00 AM, Orthros; 9 AM, Divine Liturgy - Saint Barbara; 5:30 PM, Great Vespers

Friday, December 3 – 6:00 PM Christmas Tree Decorating (The Oaks)

Saturday, December 4 – Saint Barbara – 8 AM, Matins; 9 AM, Divine Liturgy

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

Sunday, December 5 – Saint Savas - 8:45 AM, Orthros; 10 AM, Divine Liturgy; *following Liturgy until 1 PM, Parish Council Elections (The Oaks)*

Sunday, December 5 – 7:00 PM, Great Vespers at Saint Nicholas Church in San Jose

Monday, December 6 – Saint Nicholas - 8:45 AM, Orthros; 10 AM, Divine Liturgy

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

Sunday, December 12 – Saint Spyridon – 8:45 AM, Orthros; 10 AM, Divine Liturgy *following Liturgy, Philoptochos Christmas Tea (Fellowship Hall); 6:30 PM, Christmas Program and Nativity Play (The Oaks)*

Wednesday, December 15 – Saint Eleftherios – 8 AM, Matins; 9 AM, Divine Liturgy

Thursday, December 16 – Receiving Home Christmas Party (The Oaks)

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

Sunday, December 19 – Sunday before the Nativity – 8:45 AM, Orthros; 10 AM, Divine Liturgy

Monday, December 20 - 6 PM, Family Sharing Program Distribution Night (The Oaks)

Friday, December 24 – 8 AM, Office of Great Hours; 9 AM, Vespers Liturgy of Saint Basil

Friday, December 24 – Christmas Services – 8 PM, Orthros; 9 PM, Divine Liturgy

Saturday, December 25 – 10 AM, Christmas Divine Liturgy

Saturday, December 25 – *No Great Vespers*

Sunday, December 26 – Sunday following the Nativity – 8:45 AM, Orthros; 10 AM, Divine Liturgy

Monday, December 27 – Saint Stephen – 8:45 AM, Orthros; 10 AM, Divine Liturgy

Friday, December 31 – Saint Basil the Great – 6 PM, Orthros; 7 PM, Divine Liturgy; *following Liturgy, New Year's Dinner-Dance (Fellowship Hall)*

Confession Schedule for Christmas Advent 2010

Friday, Dec. 10 - 3-5 PM; Wednesday, Dec. 15 - 3-5 PM

ETC.

THANK YOU

My sincere thanks to my fellow parishioners for the get well cards and good wishes I received as the result of my accident.

Love, Mary Zongus

AND THANK YOU

Tom Minaidis of *Tom and Pete's Produce* in Half Moon Bay for donating pumpkins and Christmas trees to the church.

FAMILY SHARING PROGRAM

You can participate in this year's Family Sharing Program by choosing a child's name on the tree located in the Fellowship Hall lobby, making a monetary donation, volunteering to deliver gifts on **December 20**, or by helping to assemble food and gifts on **December 19** and/or **20**.

*Please contact Anastacia Stamates at
650-868-2569, or
email anastaciams@yahoo.com*

HOUSE BLESSINGS

Each year, after the celebration of Epiphany (**January 6**), it is the Orthodox tradition to bless our homes with the Holy Water of Epiphany. Please fill out the form and return it to the Church Office if you would like to have Father bless your home. **You will receive a call to confirm that Father is coming.**

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Use this slip, the form that's available with the Sunday Bulletin, or transfer this info to a separate sheet of paper, and submit it to the Church Office in January. **Yes**, I would like to have Father bless our home :

DAY : (a weekday after Jan. 6) : January _____, 2011

TIME : _____ AM / PM (between 10 AM & 5 PM)

Name : _____

Phone (s) : _____

Address : _____

Directions from church (please indicate cross-streets / draw a simple map if you think that would help) :

CRAB FEED

Saturday January 22



SAVE THE DATE