

# down the road

CROSSROAD ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

Volume II 2007

## LEARNING OUR CALLING FROM THE FIRST-CALLED

Micah Hirschy  
CrossRoad Staff 04-06

If we understand vocations as calling, then it is only fitting to look at those who were first called, the Apostles. Looking at the lives of the Apostles we cannot help but to stand in awe. They were the friends of Christ, the torches that spread the living flames of the Gospel throughout the nations. They healed the sick, raised the dead, and, with few exceptions, died as martyrs. We must ask ourselves, how did they enter onto this noble path, how were they called to become Apostles?

The answer to this question is found in the Holy and first-called Apostle Andrew. He approached Christ and the Lord responded to Him by saying with His humble simplicity, “come and see.”



*...when we live this life in Christ, we will begin to see Him, to recognize His presence in our life.*

The same Lord who said to the Apostle, “come and see,” is calling us to do likewise. You might ask, “How can I come and see? I am not Andrew; the Lord is not standing before me. Where am I to go and what is there to see?” The answer, my dear friends, is simple. When Christ said “come,” he was telling the Apostles to walk with Him, to listen to His word, to speak with Him.

We walk to Him when we approach Holy Communion, we listen to His word through the sacred scripture, and we speak to Him through prayer. And when we live this life in Christ, we will begin to see Him, to recognize His presence in our life.

If we become dejected because we think that we are living the Life in Christ but still do not see Christ in our life, have hope. Remember, even the great Apostles didn’t recognize who Christ was all at once (read the Gospel of St. Mark). But if we persevere, if we truly strive to be disciples of Christ, we, too, will understand the words of the Psalmist, “taste and see that the Lord is good.”

## WHAT’S INSIDE

ANN BEZZERIDES . . . . . 2  
NICHOLAS BELCHER. . . . . 3

### *CrossRoad Staff*

PRESBYTERA OURANIA CHATZIS . . . . . 4  
STEPHANIE SKEDROS . . . . . 4  
ELENIE POULOS . . . . . 5  
MARY BETH DANCKAERT . . . . . 5  
MARY LONG . . . . . 6  
FR. STAVROS CHATZIS . . . . . 6

### *CrossRoad Alumni*

UPDATE FROM THE HOMEFRONT . . . . . 8  
JOHN MALETIS . . . . . 9  
JASON ONEIDA . . . . . 10  
NIKOLIA RALLIS . . . . . 10  
ARIANNA RANAHOSSEINI . . . . . 11  
ANNA KYRITSIS . . . . . 12  
SOPHIA BAMBALIS . . . . . 13  
NICHOLAS LIONAS . . . . . 13

### *CrossRoad Professors and Friends*

VERONICA STAVILA . . . . . 7  
DR. ALBERT ROSSI . . . . . 12  
DR. DEMETRIOS KATOS . . . . . 14  
DR. JAMES SKEDROS . . . . . 14  
DR. THEODORE STYLIANOPOULOS 14  
FR. EUGEN PENTIUC . . . . . 15  
FR. LUKE VERONIS . . . . . 15  
DATES FOR THE COMING YEAR . . . 15

*Message from Fr. Nicholas Triantafilou*  
back page



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Ann Bezzerides  
Director  
Office of Vocation and Ministry

Dear CrossRoaders,

People are suffering. Listen to people around you, read the news, become aware of the suffering that goes on globally. I don't write this to depress you—please read on, for ultimately the realization of suffering is our herald of hope—hope for you, our CrossRoadies, for your lives, your vocation.

Suffering is real—it comes in many physical and emotional forms—and it is all around us. Take the issue of hunger in children. We have a good friend who works in Haiti with kids who sniff paint thinner—not to get high, but to dull their hunger. Right here in Boston, my husband, as a doctor, writes prescriptions not only for medicine but also for food, so that parents can feed their children the food they need. My sister, as a school social worker, deals with the emotional hunger caused by a multitude of societal and family issues.

Keeping ourselves attuned to the suffering of others is fundamental to knowing our vocation—our unique and ongoing way of being in the world that is our response to Christ's call to love God with our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and our neighbor as our self. As we come closer to Christ, we are drawn to see the world as He sees it. And we know from the Gospels that Christ sees real suffering. Our Lord works to alleviate this suffering. Indeed, through the Cross He took human suffering upon Himself so that joy could come into the world.

The Saints of our Church also live this way. St. John Chrysostom in his preaching clearly feels the suffering of those around him, and strives to lead his Church to remedy the suffering caused by sin. To read his teaching today is to see that St. John

suffers for man; he feels his agony, he shares the tragedy of man's situation. At the same time he is ecstatic with the human potential. The sight of human beings sets in movement all his spiritual faculties. Here is a sheer and all-consuming passion for the human being, a total commitment to people... (Archbishop Demetrios, *A Call to Faith*, p. 37)

We are called to this same profound commitment to people—to our neighbor.

How has God created you? What do you love doing? What are your favorite classes? How can you use the talents God has given you (they are not yours, they are His) to serve your neighbor? "As each has received a gift, employ it for one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace" (I Peter 4:7). There are so many ways in which people are suffering and therefore so many ways to serve. When we ignore this, we are passing Christ on the road.

Find your way. And in your unique way, offer healing to those who suffer. We need never have a true "crisis of vocation" if we remember that we are called to live the Gospel. Let us, who heard the message of CrossRoad, be Orthodox Christians who see the reality of the suffering in our world and respond with a Christ-like commitment to people. How will we ever have the strength or vision to do this? We cling to Christ, our immortal King and our God, and let Him be our vision and our strength. May this be our vocational prayer: that we let Christ guide us down the road.

With love in the Lord,  
Ann

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Down the Road is a production of the CrossRoad program.  
It seeks to be a forum for sharing the continual theological, spiritual, and vocational learning of the CrossRoad alumni and staff.



Nicholas Belcher  
CrossRoad Director

*For lo through the Cross, joy has come into all of the world. (Troparion from the Paschal Hours)*

The CrossRoad staff is always on the lookout for great books that can help us understand the vocational challenges posed by our contemporary society. One of the most interesting books we have read recently is *Generation Me: Why Today's Young Americans are More Confident, Assertive, Entitled – and More Miserable Than Ever Before*. Written by Jean Twenge, an associate professor of psychology at San Diego State University, the book is based on data from 12 different studies on generational differences. As you can gather from the title, Twenge's research finds two seemingly contradictory results: young Americans have a high degree of self-esteem, but they are "more miserable than ever before." To explain this interesting dichotomy, she argues:

Generation Me's expectations are highly optimistic: they expect to go to college, to make lots of money, and perhaps even to be famous. Yet this generation enters a world in which college admissions are increasingly competitive, good jobs are hard to find, and basic necessities like housing and health care have skyrocketed in price. This is a time of soaring expectations and crushing realities. (p. 2)

From where do we get these "soaring expectations" of money and fame? *Generation Me* presents a considerable amount of evidence that our contemporary society—parents, teachers, politicians, entertainers, sports heroes, etc.—has raised us to be self-focused and has grossly inflated our expectations. Not only do we "enjoy unprecedented freedom to pursue what makes us happy" (p. 5), we are told as children: "You can be anything. Just be yourself. Always follow your dreams" (p. 212). So, Twenge concludes, young Americans are "more miserable than ever before" because these lofty dreams of our youth are met with the "crushing realities" of an adult world that is increasingly competitive.

*Generation Me's* depiction of our society's self-focus and its impact on youth is very convincing; yet the problem we face as young adults is more than simply a matter of "soaring expectations and crushing realities"—it is a warped view of vocation.

## THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

As we learn at CrossRoad, vocation is our unique and ongoing response to Christ's call to love God with all of our mind, heart, soul, and strength, and our neighbor as our self. While this Orthodox Christian perspective of vocation focuses on God and our neighbor, the one fueling the "soaring expectations" of "Generation Me" is focused on the self—making lots of money and being famous. In other words, young Americans are not "more miserable than ever before" because they are not getting what they want out of life, but rather because their focus is on worldly happiness.

As Christians, we should know that the happiness offered by the world is temporary. We know that true joy comes only with loving God and those around us. We can all remember the toy box full of discarded, old Christmas presents that we just had to have, and we can all remember times of joy where we took the time to share with a needy neighbor. Similarly, if we pursue our vocation only considering what we think will make us happy, we are bound to be disappointed, even if we attain all of our goals. If we strive to put God's will and our neighbor's needs ahead of our own, we will find joy, even in the midst of disappointments and setbacks.

All of the Apostles led lives of loving self-sacrifice, traveling to the ends of the known world preaching the Gospel, and all but Saint John the Evangelist met a martyr's death. The Apostle Paul writes of himself and his fellow Apostles, "we have become, and are now, as the refuse of the world, the offs-scouring of all things" (1 Corinthians 4:13). Hardly sounds like the life young Americans are expecting, does it? Yet the Apostle writes from prison to the Philippians, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice" (Philippians 4:4).

What does this say about the "pursuit of happiness?" From what I read in *Generation Me*, young Americans are "more miserable than ever before" because the happiness they are pursuing is one of self-focused, worldly success that is ultimately either unfulfilling or unattainable. Part of the challenge we face as young American Orthodox Christians is to be aware of the culture we live in and how much it affects our attitudes and behavior. We must continuously remind ourselves that the only happiness we should pursue comes from living our vocation to put God and our neighbor ahead of our own selfish desires. Doing so is easier said than done; it is truly the way of the Cross. Although walking the CrossRoad is difficult, it is ultimately the only real way for us to know true joy, true peace, and true fulfillment.

down the road

## A LITTLE MIRACLE

Presbytera Ourania Chatzis  
CrossRoad Staff 04-05

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23)*

When I think back to the past year, one of the experiences that I am grateful to share with you is the story about the small miracle in my life. About a year ago, about one month after the birth of Anna, I began to develop a thumb/wrist syndrome characterized by inflammation and pain every time I used my hands. Upon realizing that the pain was worsening and carrying my baby was becoming more and more difficult, I wasn't sure what to do. Here I was, wintertime, in a new city without any family nearby and in the process of searching for a physician in an already overpopulated region where most physicians' practices were booked. I finally saw a physiotherapist and began treatment in January. After three and a half weeks of ultrasound, interferential treatment (electrical stimulation of muscle and nerve tissue), and wearing splints, my condition had not improved at all. The physiotherapist recommended seeing a physician and resting my hands. I wondered if he was serious about resting my hands. How could he possibly expect a full-time mom to rest her hands?

In February I did see a physician and tried a series of hot/cold treatments along with anti-inflammatory medication for a few weeks. Unfortunately, there was no relief in sight and my struggle was becoming more and more difficult. In the midst of it all, I began to reflect on our theology; through prayer and spiritual support, I realized that God was calling me to be joyful, faithful, and spiritually strong throughout my difficulty.

I also began to feel more compassion for those who suffered chronically from pain and was able to relate better to the sick. Lent was approaching. I contemplated the Cross, and felt closer to Christ. This comforted me.

Eventually, I did try the corticosteroid injections, but to no avail, so I put my efforts into being grateful, praying, fasting, and accepting God's will. This was a struggle, but God comforted me through the support of my spiritual father, family, and a good friend who led me to a hand specialist. The specialist saw me on Holy Wednesday. He recommended injecting my right wrist "in the right spot" with corticosteroid. He told me that in three to four days the inflammation would be significantly reduced and my hand would feel much better. He thought it best to wait a few days before injecting my left hand just in case it didn't work.

*I contemplated the Cross,  
and felt closer to Christ.  
This comforted me.*



That evening, Fr. Stavros applied Holy Unction on both hands and wrists. By Holy Saturday evening, I remember standing in Church for the Resurrection service and feeling much less pain in both hands. On Pascha Sunday, it was amazing – both of my hands were completely healed! Glory to God for His everlasting love and mercy on all humanity!

## TEACHABLE MOMENTS

Stephanie Skedros  
CrossRoad Development Coordinator

As parents of three children, my husband and I have been blessed with several teachable moments. We try our best each and every day to help our daughters become the people they were created to be and hopefully emulate the amazing role models we meet annually at CrossRoad!

With this determination, at times, comes resistance. Teachable moment number 100,343,245 came as my daughter Francesca asked my husband, "Dad, why do we have to go to church every week?" In a very calm demeanor, daddy explained, "we go to church to pray and be with other people in our community." Francesca responded, "we pray and are with other people at our house, too!" Preparing for a dialogue that was simply not going to end with blanket approval, my husband said, "we also go to church to receive Communion." Francesca looked at her dad very seriously and asked, "Can't you just get the recipe for Communion?" This led to a good chuckle and a challenge to explain the importance of being an active communicant of the Church. Our discussion then led to the opportunity each week to celebrate Easter with our family as we attended liturgy together. Francesca was satisfied and I was once again reminded of our weekly need for preparation to celebrate Pascha—the Resurrection of our Lord.

*Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old he will not depart from it.*  
Proverbs 22:6

Elenie Poulos  
CrossRoad Staff 04



In all of our efforts to “be” the Church as Christ intended, our most difficult task at hand is keeping our eyes fixed on the larger picture. I ask us as teenagers, college students, and young adults, what pair of glasses are we wearing? How do we see our current situations in relation to where we’ve been, and where we want to be?

The dean of our seminary once told me, “You’ll find exactly what you’re looking for.” In our world, in our homes, and in our families, if we are looking for the evil one and all his influences, we’ll find them. Similarly, if we are looking for Christ and His victories on earth, we’ll find those, too. The martyrs were empowered to keep their eyes on Christ. We can strive to see only Him and go forward with courage in the same way, remembering that, as the Desert Fathers teach, “a slow, steady drip can hallow out a rock.”

## RAINY DAY RELIEF

Mary Beth Danckaert  
CrossRoad Staff 04

This semester, as many of you in the CrossRoad family know, I began my first year of graduate studies. One dreary Friday morning I found myself struggling to get ready on time to go to a service in the chapel on campus. I was absolutely exhausted. I’d been doing all kinds of things that week: everything from chanting at hierarchical services to studying for midterms and going to classes to arranging and attending various meetings. I’m sure at some point in your busy life you’ve had that end-of-the-week tired feeling too, right? You’re working hard all week, probably too busy to notice just how hard you’re working, at least as many things as have gone right have gone wrong, and by the time Friday rolls around you realize that you’re running on empty, right?

Well, on this particular morning, the situation reminded me of Christ’s words to Peter in the Garden of Gethsemane. After Peter had not been able to watch with Christ for even one hour, Christ said to him: “What? Could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, so that you do not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matthew 26: 40-41). “So,” I thought, “the flesh is weak. My flesh is weak. I’m tired, and it’s raining outside so I’d rather just go back to sleep. Even if I go to church now I’m going to be late.” Perhaps my spirit was not so willing. But, somehow, the words of the scripture simultaneously pricked my conscience and comforted me so I managed to get going.



As I began my uphill walk to the chapel, a schoolmate ran past me, because by this time the bell that signals the beginning of the chapel service was ringing, and he yelled back: “we have to run!” I just kept walking; I was too tired to run. Much to my surprise, a car drove up and stopped in front of me. One of our professors leaned over from the driver’s seat and opened the passenger-side door. I jumped in and said good morning and he said: “Good morning! I like to drive students right up to the door of the chapel if I see them in the morning.” I was grateful. It was a small thing; I could have finished my walk to the chapel just fine, gotten there a little late, and enjoyed the service, but because of the helping hand of one of our professors I got to chapel early and found myself refreshed and strengthened by this unexpected act of Grace. I was reminded that God knows my struggles and my weaknesses and is compassionate. If we do the best we can, despite our shortcomings, God will provide for us.

Mary Long  
CrossRoad Staff 04-05

Abba Lot went to see Abba Joseph and said to him, “Abba, as far as I can, I say my little office, I fast a little, I pray and meditate, I live in peace and as far as I can, I purify my thoughts. What else can I do?” Then the old man stood up and stretched his hands toward heaven. His fingers became like ten lamps of fire and he said to him, “If you will, you can become all flame.” (*The Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, translated by Benedicta Ward, p.103)

**I** think about this story of desert wisdom a lot these days. I wonder, is it really possible to become fire? To stand in the presence of the burning bush like Moses and encounter God (Exodus 3)? To stand before the Holy of Holies like Isaiah and let the live coal touch my mouth (Isaiah 6)? To experience a “burning heart” like Luke and Cleopas when they encountered Christ on the Emmaus Road (Luke 24)?

Many of us have felt God’s flame before, and maybe our hearts have even felt warmth. But for me, most of the time, instead of removing my shoes in the presence of God’s consuming fire and keeping quiet long enough to hear His voice, I prefer to stay “comfortably numb,” as Pink Floyd put it, standing a safe distance away from the heat. And the fire, the experience of a warm heart that has encountered Christ, fades into a memory as I grudgingly sit in rush-hour traffic after a long day at work.

In our time, it is so easy to be mediocre in our desire for God—yes, even in ministry this is a very real temptation!— to keep God at a distance, to compartmentalize and rationalize why He’s not my *everything*. After all, His fire is *hot*. Moving closer to it means going deeper, facing His reality, letting all the superficial stuff be burned off, and seeing myself as I really am... and that is scary. But God invites me— and all of us— to come. “Our God is a consuming fire!” wrote the author of Hebrews with conviction. How can I continue to live a “comfortably numb” life when the Creator of heaven and earth calls me to come? Like Moses and Isaiah, I must answer, “Here I am, Lord.”



Fr. Stavros Chatzis  
CrossRoad Staff 04-05

**T**his past year, one of the problems that I have come to recognize is a lack of love among the Church’s members. That is, there appears to be a minimal attempt to put into practice the love that God calls us all to have and to share with one another. Instead of being selfless and giving towards one another — for this is what true love is — I often witness the presence of tension and conflict among people. This inevitably leads to the breaking of relationships, the building of grudges, and perpetual sin. When this happens, people fail to recognize the value and worth of other human beings. They stop talking to one another and ignore each other in church. As their priest, I have confronted lay people in a loving and non-judgemental manner about the long-term danger that this poses to their spiritual lives. Strangely, the usual response is to project the blame onto someone else.

*To love our neighbor means to be our brother’s keeper, to ask him for forgiveness...*

This has been one of my pastoral struggles because the pain and betrayal that someone may have experienced from another church member is difficult to overcome. This becomes the case whenever we fall into Satan’s trap of hating our neighbor. Yet if we give ourselves wholeheartedly to Christ and His emphasis on Leviticus 19:18 where it states, “you shall love your neighbour as yourself,” then any obstacle impinging upon a relationship can and should be overcome. To love our neighbour means to be our brother’s keeper, to ask him for forgiveness, to give oneself to him when he is in need of help, and to put into practice the love that God showed us by willingly accepting the punishment of death on the Cross so that we may be liberated from sin, death and corruption.

When Jesus was on the Cross He did not ask God the Father to strike down with vengeance the Roman soldiers and the Jews responsible for His crucifixion. On the contrary, He asked God to forgive them, “for they do not know what they do” (Luke 23:34). Therefore, if we observe carefully what Jesus taught and did for us, then we will immediately realize that, on the horizontal level, our call as Christians is to imitate Him. That is, our call is to love one another as Christ loves us. This is the great challenge for us all, because our fallen nature inclines us to focus on ourselves and not on God, let alone each other. However, if we give ourselves to Christ’s way as opposed to our way, then we will be transformed with renewed hearts, forgiveness, and true love for one another. Then we will be able to approach the Holy Chalice, “with the fear of God, faith, and love.”

**H**ave you ever wished for CrossRoad to happen every month or every week? Wouldn't it be nice for speakers to come to your house every week or for CrossRoad friends to live next door and go out for pizza every Wednesday? Well, I am not sure if Dr. Albert Rossi or Nick Belcher can visit your home every week, but you can meet your friends *on campus* every week and look for speakers and priests in the area for spiritual guidance. Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF) is a way to discover God's way in campus life and to have fellowship with like-minded young people.

Katie Magergo CR 04 says of her OCF group at the University of Colorado, Boulder, "Each week I am overcome by a feeling that in uniting as an OCF, we share a bond that transcends the craziness of college life, simplifying life again and giving me the strength to begin the week. OCF has become my college family, and I couldn't imagine college without them!"

John Maletis CR 04, a sophomore at Duke University, says, "Our OCF here at Duke has grown from a mere five members last year to more than 15 this year (thanks a lot to our hard-working chaplain John Stonestreet) and every week for our meetings there's usually someone new who is interested in our group. It's been a lot of fun seeing both the national OCF and the local chapter grow. May it bear much fruit in the future!"

OCF is a pan-Orthodox effort where groups of student meet for services, Bible studies, social service projects, or pizza nights and bowling. There are over 230 OCF chapters in America and Canada. If you go to [www.ocf.net](http://www.ocf.net), you can find the OCF at your college or university. If your school does not have an OCF, please let us know and we will be happy to assist you in starting one.

*OCF is a way to discover God's way in campus life and to have fellowship with like-minded young people.*

Do you have any plans for your spring break? Real Break is an amazing service trip where on your spring break or reading week you can serve Christ in an orphanage, on a construction site, or in a homeless shelter. Real Break locations include Guatemala, El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, and many others. Do you want to join hundreds of your fellow Orthodox Christian college students for three days of fun, fellowship, prayer, and learning?

The OCF North American Office organizes the College Conference, where more than 300 students meet every year for three days between Christmas and New Year's. The conference is held this year at the Antiochian Village in Bolivar, PA, and at St. Nicholas Ranch in Dunlap, CA. You can find out more information or register for either of these programs at [www.ocf.net](http://www.ocf.net).

Finally, don't forget that you can continue the good vocation exploration you started at CrossRoad by having your OCF apply for a vocation grant. You CrossRoadies can lead your OCF in applying for up to \$5,000 to run a vocation retreat or project on your very own college campus.

Please feel free to contact us for any questions or suggestions at 800-919-1623 or at [info@ocf.net](mailto:info@ocf.net).

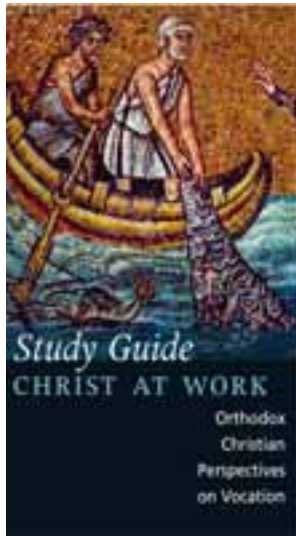
You can make Christ's presence visible on campuses and within us!



down the road

## Michelle Torski (CR 05)

Michelle served as our intern this past summer in the office. As a continuation of a school project, she wrote a great study guide to *Christ at Work: Orthodox Christian Perspectives on Vocation*. You should have all received a copy by now! Let us know if you would like additional copies to use with your youth group or OCF.



## Micah Hirschy (CR Staff 04-06)

Micah will graduate May 2007 with a Master of Divinity from Holy Cross. You all know how much Micah has meant to CrossRoad. We will miss him dearly.

## Andrew Pavlakos (CR 05)

Andrew has our many thanks for coming up with the name for this CrossRoad Alumni newsletter, "Down the Road." We love it! May this newsletter be a place where we share learning as we journey down the road.

## Elenie Poulos (CR Staff 04)

Elenie also graduated from Holy Cross with a Master of Divinity in May. She is now Director of Youth & Young Adult Ministries at Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Norfolk, VA. "I love most that my job gives me the opportunity to worship during the weekday liturgies. I don't have to "call off" work because it's my job to be there praying. What a rich blessing!"



## Mary Long (CR Staff 04-05)

Mary graduated from Holy Cross with a Master of Divinity in May and is now the Resource Coordinator for the Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese. "What I love most about my job? Integrating my knowledge of theology with contemporary youth issues to provide resources that can help youth workers in their ministry. I get to translate theology into practical ideas that often address other areas including psychology, sociology, pop culture, and world news etc. Fun stuff!" Mary would love to hear from CrossRoadies about their own experiences. It's helpful for her ministry as she strives to make resources relevant for youth workers today. You can contact her at [MaryLong@goarch.org](mailto:MaryLong@goarch.org).

## Something in the water....

CrossRoad babies Nicholas Bezzerides and Anna Chatzis (who were both in their mothers wombs during CrossRoad 05) look like they could be brother and sister!



## Lilly Endowment Inc.

In June we received the fantastic news that our 30-page proposal to the Lilly Endowment Inc. was accepted. Our office, the Office of Vocation and Ministry (which runs CrossRoad) received a sustainability grant to continue our work from 2008 to 2010. Hurray! But we still have to raise \$500,000 in matching funds. To help us continue the CrossRoad program, Mr. and Mrs. Colis, parents of Anna Colis CR 05 have enthusiastically agreed to lead the CrossRoad Parents Fund! We are so thankful!

Many thanks to Georgia Bellas for the copy editing of the articles, and to Peggy Giovane for the layout!

## KEEPING AN OPEN MIND

John Maletis CR 04  
Holy Trinity, Portland, Oregon  
Duke University

When I pray Our Lord's prayer, I always remember to pray "thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" with great attentiveness. We all say the words many times and know it by heart, but do we take it to heart? Upon entering college my freshman year, I had little idea what kinds of opportunities lay before me. After participating in CrossRoad 2004 I thought I had a pretty good grip on what I wanted to be. I was set to run cross country and track in college after doing it for all of high school but little did I know how things can change and how I have had to be open to changes in my own life. However, the ironic thing I've learned about vocational discernment is sometimes it can get us into a rut where we think we know exactly what we're going to be—and how to go about becoming that—yet in reality we really do not have a very good idea.

We have hints and interests that tend to make us more open to certain careers and lifestyles but as for knowing how we're going to go through the process, we really don't have any hints.

Entering college as a freshman, I was struck by the incredible range of opportunities—there are so many paths to choose from. I'm not strictly speaking about career paths but paths of study, paths of activities, paths of social avenues, and all of these paths are part of our education as Orthodox Christians at any college campus here in North America, whether it's Hellenic College, Stanford University, or Portland Community College. It is up to us to discern which paths are for our benefit and those which will hinder us in our pursuit to allow His will to be done in us. Let us not limit ourselves to certain self-set paths before we even step foot onto campus. The fact that we really don't know what we will be should force us to keep an open mind during college, especially in the first few semesters. If we branch out and try new things and end up failing, we have actually succeeded because we have learned something new about ourselves—we are a step closer to discerning our vocation. If we happen to branch out and try something new and end up finding it interesting and fruitful, then we have also gone a step closer to realizing our vocation. The only failure lies in our inability to branch out.

*Entering college as a freshman, I was struck by the incredible range of opportunities...*



Let us not hinder our vocational journey by tricking ourselves into thinking that just because we have gone through CrossRoad that our search is over and it's time to get to business. In today's world the undergraduate major is a very small indicator of what one will be and it's the total experience of our undergraduate experience—both our failures and successes—that will help us to determine what we should be. It's not our will that be done, but His. Remember to keep an open mind in college, whether you are just entering your freshman year or are already in the midst of your undergraduate experience. Let our open and discerning minds be God's compass for our lives by trying new things and "testing the waters" to discover if it is His will that is being done or not. Also, every time you pray Our Lord's Prayer, pause when you pray "Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" and remember that in college you're at a CrossRoad in your life. If you allow His will to be done and not your own, then God will make it apparent to you what you should be, and the best way to go about this is by keeping an open mind and realizing that change can happen right around the corner for the better. We must keep our minds open to this change because it could be just what God has in store for us. CrossRoad has given us the tools for discernment, now let's put them to use!

down the road

## NOTHING TO FEAR

Jason Oneida CR '06  
Prophet Elias, Salt Lake City, Utah  
University of Utah

CrossRoad has been one of the greatest experiences of my lifetime and even though I remember being up at Boston, it all seems like a dream. The love and fellowship that I experienced during the program was unlike anything I have found elsewhere, save for my home. I suppose that's one reason that I have found adjusting to college life at a large university to be difficult. After seeing my friends from high school leave Utah for college and having to leave my new friends from CrossRoad, I felt pretty lonely. When I got off to a rocky start in my classes, I began to doubt my abilities and whether I was following the right path in my life. I began to forget the meaning of faith—trusting in God.



In the gospel of Matthew, Jesus teaches us about having faith. We are often concerned with how we can pass a test in school, what clothes we should wear, and what we will eat during the day. However, we often forget, me especially, these powerful words that Jesus offers in his sermon on the mount: "...seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these shall be added to you" (Matthew 7:33). All we have to do is focus our lives on God and he will take care of the details. God wants us to live and live abundantly. He will always care for us if we seek after Him, so there is no reason to be fearful. Thus, when we worry excessively about things or doubt ourselves, we are really showing weakness in faith.

I had forgotten this important teaching of Christ, as well as the emphasis it has in the slogan of CrossRoad—Orthodox youth take the challenge. After realizing that I had become doubtful and worrisome, I was blessed to remember this powerful example. I wanted to share this lesson that I have been learning the hard way because I know how easy it can be to get too busy and suddenly overwhelmed. Trusting in God and remembering the good examples that we have in Orthodox friends are two great things that we can keep in mind to help us stay on track in life. Let's all remember to put the important things first in our lives because there's always plenty of room for the smaller stuff.

## WITHOUT WORDS

Nikolia Rallis CR 04  
St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church, Des Plaines, IL  
Northwestern University

What does that mean, Christ is the fulfillment of the Law? There are 613 laws, why do you only follow the first ten? Why do you get to eat pork but have to fast?" asks my culturally Jewish but atheist friend. Nearly exasperated with his questions, I try to patiently answer them, just as I've been doing for the past three years, while counting the minutes to the end of the train ride. Most of the time, we have an unspoken agreement that we will not speak about religion. It's my fault that I can't explain these things sufficiently. Why can't God give me words to fix him? Why won't he use his intelligence to see that he's not a creation of his own mind but part of a much bigger plan?

God's answers come as quickly as my questions do. It's just my job to witness to him through my lifestyle. If he asks me questions, I ask God to give me the wisdom to answer them. St. Paul tells us to "Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching" (2 Timothy 4:2). Longsuffering – haven't mastered that one yet. I'm annoyed, impatient, and confused: I want him to see the Truth – NOW. How can I expect to be taken seriously if I am so angered by the questions that I can't get the answers out?

"But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless" (Titus 3:9). By arguing with him, I'm making myself upset. In the end, it's not my job to "fix" him; it's just my job to pray to God to soften his heart to accept His Truth. And so I have, every day for a year. Sometimes I weep for him, truly concerned for his well-being, asking God to please open his heart. And today on the train, although far from converting, he actually listens.



*God's answers come as quickly  
as my questions do.*

## FINDING TIME FOR SCRIPTURE

Arianna Ranahosseini CR 06  
Saint Catherine, Greenwood Village, CO

*Truths about God and man expand our horizons and enliven our spirit. Yet we know from experience that it takes a certain discipline, especially as we have become a visual generation, to turn to the Bible and other good books to be enriched by them on a regular basis. (Fr. Ted Stylianopoulos, Bread for Life)*

**F**inding time to read the Bible is a challenge we face in our busy lives. We go to school, work, check our MySpace and Facebook. We have sports, clubs, and other activities, then we check our emails, apply to college, search scholarships, study, work on homework, maybe look for a job, and check our MySpace and Facebook again. With any spare time we might watch a little TV. By the time we go to bed we're exhausted. If we decide to pick up the Bible and read a few passages, if even for just a few minutes, we're usually distracted and ready to fall asleep!



I recently began to receive the daily Scripture readings via email along with the lives of the saints from the [www.goarch.org](http://www.goarch.org) Web site (just click on the Online Chapel). It only takes about five minutes and it comes straight to your email. It couldn't be any easier to make reading the Bible a part of our day, every day.

Also, I purchased "The Planner," an Orthodox daily calendar and resource guide published by the Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries in the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese. The Planner is \$12.95 and includes Orthodox Christian contacts and resources, feast days, the moveable ecclesiastical dates, morning prayers, evening prayers, the Creed, fasting guidelines, and Biblical quotes. Each day in The Planner provides the daily Scripture readings and the saints commemorated on that day, along with the symbol of the Cross for fasting and strict fast days.

There isn't quite enough room to write homework assignments, but it is great for keeping track of our spiritual progress, feast days, appointments, and of course our fellow CrossRoadies' birthdays!

Reading the Scripture is so incredibly essential for our spiritual growth. However, it seems to be something we tend to put off or happen to forget. These helpful resources serve as reminders to us. We must choose to open our Bible or our email, so that we may open our heart to Christ. "The Scriptures were not given to us for this only, that we may have them in books, but that we might engrave them in our hearts." (Saint John Chrysostom)

*Finding time to read the Bible  
is a challenge.....*



## THE HIGH SEAS OF LIFE

Anna Kyritsis CR '05  
Sts. Constantine and Helen, Cheyenne, WY  
Boston University

*"We are on the high seas of life. Sometimes there are storms and at other times calm. God's grace however, never leaves us." (Gheronda Amphilochios)*



I heard this quote one Monday evening at OCF and it hit me how truthfully it expressed my life, especially since starting college. I always knew there would be many high and low points in life, but I did not realize how many I would experience during my first time living on my own, very far away from home. In moving almost 2,000 miles from Wyoming to go to school in Boston, a lot changed but one thing that remained constant was the fact that God was always with me. No matter what I had to face, if I only called upon God, He was there to comfort me through His grace.

This past summer, I had the idea that I would not miss home very much at all because I was so excited to get to Boston, and therefore did not really need to come home for Thanksgiving. I knew it would be easier to stay around here instead of getting on a plane bound for Wyoming. That's true, but what I did not realize was how much I would miss my family and friends if I did not see them until the end of the semester. As the fall semester progressed I began to miss the people I left behind in Wyoming more than I thought I would. As Thanksgiving break drew nearer, the desire to be with my family grew stronger but I was not too troubled because I had faith that God would be there and help me through it. In the end it worked out better than I could have ever imagined. I was able to spend the vacation with a fellow CrossRoadie and his family, and I had an absolutely wonderful time relaxing, eating turkey, and going to church with them!

I know from experience, and from what we learned at CrossRoad, that no matter where my next adventure takes me, God and His loving grace will be there guiding me. I have especially seen this through the love and friendship of my CrossRoadies. I feel extremely blessed to have friends that I can always rely on, and especially lucky that so many other CrossRoadies go to school near me in Boston! I would not be who I am today without the program and the friendships that were made two summers ago. I love you all and thank you, and above all thank God!

## A WORD FROM DR. ROSSI

Dr. Albert Rossi  
CrossRoad Lecturer 04-06



My time with all of you at CrossRoad left an indelible impression on me. One thought I've been pondering is, "What is purity, really?" Well, purity is so much more than saying "No" to sensual attractions. Every Sunday we sing at the Divine Liturgy, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." Purity is about my heart, what I really want, what I am fired-up about. So, purity means having a burning desire for our Lord Jesus Christ. Purity means living my life, as best I can, in a manner to accept His love for me. Purity means treating others as who they really are and who they can become, namely as God's chosen children.



*I know that I will struggle.....*

## WILL WE FOLLOW GOD'S AGENDA?

Sophia Bambalis CR 06  
Annunciation, Winston-Salem, NC

**W**hile I was unpacking my suitcase from CrossRoad, I came across an American Eagle bag I had obtained during a shopping trip to Faneuil Hall. The statement on the bag caught my eye: It said, "live **your** life." Like many of my fellow '06 CrossRoadies, I can see college and independence on the visible horizon, and I cannot wait to live my life by my own schedule.

Even though I am excited to embark on this independent stage of life, I know that I will struggle with following my own self-serving agenda versus God's agenda (especially on Sundays when I will have the free will to sleep in). Last year as I watched over 500 graduates receive their high school diplomas, I heard the name of a member of my church announced. When he was walking down the aisle with his diploma in hand, he reverently did the sign of the cross in front of at least 1,000 people in the coliseum.

As many of us 06 CrossRoadies receive our diplomas this spring and take our first steps towards a more independent stage of life, let us all remember the blessings that God has granted us, and let us all keep in touch so that we can help each other follow **God's** agenda.

## WE ALL FALL DOWN....

Nicholas Lionas CR 05  
St. John, Sterling Heights, MI  
Michigan State University

*"If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."  
(1 John 1:9)*

**A**s a college student at Michigan State University, I realize how important it is to know and understand what it means to be an Orthodox Christian. The verse above reminds me that confession of sins is a big part of an Orthodox way of life. This has never been as apparent to me as it has been during my three semesters of college. Living in a world of temptation and lack of morals at MSU, it is difficult to always live exactly the way God commands us to live. Through this struggle, however, I have learned the greatness and importance of Jesus coming to earth, dying for our sins, and rising again.

As we are all sinners, we all screw up often, no matter how big or small. Jesus tells us to turn to him and our sins will be forgiven. God is faithful and just. Because God is just, although we deserve to die for our sins and suffer for them, we do not. Instead, Jesus died so that we do not have to. As is read by the priest whenever we celebrate the liturgy of St. Basil, "He gave himself a ransom to Death, whereby we were held, sold into bondage under sin. And having descended into Hell through the Cross, that he might fill all things with himself, he loosed the pains of death, and rose from the dead on the third day, making a way for all flesh through the Resurrection from the dead..."

When we sin we feel far away from God. I thank God that I really cannot imagine or fathom the true weight of sin, which Jesus took upon himself when he was on the Cross. When he rose again, he trampled death and raised us to life as well. Now we are dead to sin and alive in Christ. He gave us life. Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and unto those in the tombs bestowing life!

What are we going to do with this life? If I were given a million dollars, would I bury it in a tin can? His gift is so much greater than any material gift and because of that gift, we are called to be examples to those around us even if we are rebuked and persecuted.

When we live like Christians, it is obvious to those around us. There is a joy in our hearts that glows and people, although they do not always show it, want to have that joy as well. As a college student, through repentance I continue to grow in Christ. The Christian life is not an easy life to live, but it brings joy to my heart, and without the Lord I would be a hopeless, lonely kid. Praise the Lord Almighty.

down the road

## Dr. Demetrios Katos CR Professor 05

Dr. Katos has written an article entitled “Humility as the Harbinger of Imageless Prayer in the Lausiatic History,” which reassesses the role of images in prayer according to the desert ascetic tradition of the fourth century. It will appear in *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly*. He has also written an essay entitled “The Foundations of Noetic Prayer,” which will appear in *Thinking Through Faith*, a volume of collected essays that explores the value of contemporary academic scholarship for the Orthodox Church and to be published by St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press in 2007. He is currently reworking a conference paper, “Evagrius of Pontus on Providence and the Utility of Evil,” for publication. He argues that Evagrius’ views on providence and evil have had a tremendous influence on current spiritual practices and teachings, despite their questionable theological foundations. He was also invited to participate in an academic symposium that discussed the place of the Theotokos in Christian theology. It was entitled “Highly Favored: A Symposium on Mary Across Christian Traditions,” and co-sponsored by St. Anselm College (Roman Catholic) and Gordon College (Evangelical Protestant). This was the first time Orthodox scholars were invited to participate in this annual symposium event. Finally, but most importantly, his wife, daughter, and he welcomed their new son, Stephen (Stylianos), into their family!

## Dr. James Skedros CR Professor 04

Dr. Skedros continues to teach classes on Byzantine History and Church History at Holy Cross. He has written an essay “Reading the Lives of the Saints,” which will appear in *Thinking Through Faith*, a volume of collected essays that explores the value of contemporary academic scholarship for the Orthodox Church and to be published by St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press in 2007. A recently delivered paper, “The Suffering of Martyrdom in the Patristic Age,” will be published as part of the proceedings of the Pappas Patristic Institute’s 2006 annual conference. He delivered the 2006 St. Demetrios Day Lecture at the Patriarch Athenagoras Orthodox Institute in Berkeley, CA, speaking on the topic “The Da Vinci Code, Gospel of Judas, and the Early Church: Who is Telling the Truth?” Not getting enough of California, he recently spoke at a Philoptochos gathering at St. Nicholas Ranch in Dunlap, CA, in the beautiful Sierra-Nevada foothills. Dr. Skedros has also been offering adult education classes and Bible Study at his home parish of St. Demetrios in Weston, MA.

## Fr. Ted Stylianopoulos CR Professor 04, 06

Fr. Stylianopoulos continues his weekend parish duties in New Hampshire and his teaching duties in New Testament at Holy Cross. In September 2005 he attended a conference in Rome at which he delivered a paper on “Holy Scripture and Christian Unity,” soon to be published in the *Greek Orthodox Theological Review*. In October he participated in a conference on “Spirituality and Violence.” Three of his articles appeared in print in 2006: “Vocation According to St. Paul” published in *Christ at Work: Orthodox Christian Perspectives on Vocation*; “Suffering in St. Paul” in *Only the Light Remains: Papers in Honor of George C. Pilitsis*; and “Holy Scripture, Interpretation, and Spiritual Cognition in St. Simeon the New Theologian” in *Orthodox and Wesleyan Scriptural Understanding and Practice*.

Fr. Ted also published several shorter pieces in various journals and newspapers on modern issues such as “The Da Vinci Code” and “The Gospel of Judas.” His greatest joy, however, has been the birth of his second (Anna Claire) and third (Matthew) grandchildren since summer 2005.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### OFFICE OF VOCATION AND MINISTRY

#### Fr. Eugen Pentiu CR Professor 05

Fr. Pentiu continues to teach classes on Old Testament and Hebrew at Hellenic College and Holy Cross. He wrote a couple of articles. One, entitled “Renewed by Blood’: Sheol’s Quest in 2 Baruch 56:6,” a revised version of a paper presented at a 2006 meeting of the Pappas Patristic Institute, will be published along with other papers in a volume produced by Baker Academic Press. Another article, “The Word *œalmā* in Isaiah 7:14: A New Etymology,” will appear in a Festschrift volume in memory of Marcel Beaudry (a French biblical archaeologist who taught at Ecole biblique in Jerusalem) to be published by Peter Lang Press (2007). Related to the theme of vocation, Fr. Eugen addressed a group of Orthodox youth as guest speaker of “Footlamps Workshop Series” held at St. Mary Church in Pawtucket, CT (Nov 11, 2006). The title of his talk was “To Be or to Have, this is the Question: Humanity’s Destiny according to the Scriptures.”



#### Fr. Luke Veronis CR Professor 06

Fr. Veronis has been pastoring the Sts. Constantine and Helen Church in Webster, MA, where a turnaround has occurred in the past two years. From a struggling parish of around 40 regular attending members, the Church has grown to a regular attendance of 115. In addition to this, he continues teaching courses related to missions at both Holy Cross School of Theology and St. Vladimir’s Seminary. Fr. Luke has traveled to 15 churches this past year, leading retreats or giving talks related to Albania and missions. Fr. Luke is also in the process of raising one million dollars for a special endowment fund for Orthodox missions, which will help to promote the spirit of missions throughout our country.

#### **Faith & Learning Symposium**

February 2-3, 2007  
[www.vocations.hchc.edu](http://www.vocations.hchc.edu)

All CR alumni are invited to join Boston-area OCF students for a retreat on the vocation of a college student with Fr. Peter Gilquist, 11am to 4pm, Saturday, February 3, 2007.

#### **Participation in PTEV Conference**

February 8-10, 2007  
[www.ptev.org](http://www.ptev.org)

#### **CrossRoad 2007**

June 22-July 2, 2007  
Please contact us to have a DVD sent to a current high school junior or senior you know!

#### **CrossRoad Fund**

The Office of Vocation and Ministry has received a \$500,000 matching sustainability grant from the Lilly Endowment Inc. The CrossRoad Parents Fund provides an opportunity for families to partner with the Lilly Endowment and Hellenic College to continue CrossRoad for years to come. Donations may be made out to Hellenic College CrossRoad Fund and mailed to the Office of Vocation and Ministry.

#### **Contact Information**

CrossRoad is a program sponsored by:  
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Visit us online at  
[www.crossroad.hchc.edu](http://www.crossroad.hchc.edu)

A WORD FROM  
FR. NICHOLAS C. TRIANTAFILOU

CROSSROAD CHAPLAIN 05-06, PRESIDENT OF HELLENIC COLLEGE/HOLY CROSS

It is a wonderful and edifying experience to be an eyewitness of our CrossRoad Program. The CrossRoad team all pray, study, and plan together on a regular basis to provide an insightful, visionary, creative, and comfortable program for each summer's CrossRoad happening. We celebrate their effectiveness and their zeal.

We, the privileged eyewitnesses, double our celebration as we follow the journey of each CrossRoad participant from the time of application through the last days of presence on campus and into the realm of the exciting unfolding years ahead. Each CrossRoad participant, each CrossRoad staff member is a special shining stone in the mosaic of this most important theological study of vocations. We, the eyewitnesses, observe the stones coming into proper place. We follow the expansion of each participant's horizons. We are humbled by the integrity each CrossRoad person exercises, while we are, at the same time, exalted by the moral and ethical high standard each one of you sets.

Our CrossRoad Program is extremely successful. For this, we praise God and thank all of you. We know well that the success is due to the personhood of each participant and to the faithfulness, Christian love, compassion, and empathy each CrossRoad member personifies. St. Paul admonishes his spiritual son, Timothy, with the following words:

*Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. (1 Timothy 4:12)*

Each of you CrossRoad staff members and CrossRoad participants is indeed an example to all of us. Your word is faithful, your conduct is exemplary, your love engaging, your spirit wholesome, your faith vibrant, and your purity is a blessing before God.

Our Hellenic College and Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology is a better place because of the presence of all of you. For this, we thank you while we praise God for the inspiration He gives to you.