

# PRESIDENTIAL NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2016 | Volume II, Issue 10



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Christ is Born! Glorify Him! Χριστὸς γεννᾶται,  
δοξάσατε!

It is with great joy that I greet you this month on the Feast of the Saving Nativity in the Flesh of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

"The very Word of God from God emptied Himself in an indescribable way, came down from on high to the lowest state of man's nature, and indissolubly linked it with Himself, and in humbling Himself and becoming poor like us, He raised on high the things below, or rather, He gathered both things into one, mingling humanity with divinity, and by so doing He taught everyone that *humility* is the road which leads upwards." (Homily 58, St. Gregory Palamas, 5).

Perhaps the greatest surprise in human history is that Israel's Messiah came not as an earthly prince or king, as anticipated and expected, but as The Suffering Servant, with "no beauty, no majesty to catch our eyes, no grace to attract us to him...despised, shunned by all." (Isaiah 53: 2)

It is my prayer that each of us imitate the example of humility manifest in the Incarnation of Our Lord and Savior by becoming evermore respectful and caring to one another, embracing and forgiving those who wrong us and appreciating all that we have been given, embodying more fully the ideals of servitude and stewardship.

As you read the most current news of our school, I ask for your continued prayers for our administration, faculty, staff, and students, as we strive to grow the Orthodox Christian Faith throughout North America, and serve you and your family for generations.

May God grant each of you a joyous Nativity Feast and a safe and healthy civil new year!

Christ is Born! Glorify Him! Χριστὸς γεννᾶται, δοξάσατε!

In Christ,

**Rev. Fr. Christopher T. Metropoulos, DMin**  
President

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

**2** Missions Week 2016

**3** Veterans Day Observance

**4** Byzantine Music Festival

**5** Faculty News

**5** Trustee News

**6** Hellenic Student Profile

**7** Holy Cross Student Profile

**7** Student Life

**8** Engagement Gathering

**THANK YOU**  
for your support on  
**#GIVINGTUESDAY**

[www.hchc.edu/donate](http://www.hchc.edu/donate)



HOLY CROSS  
BOOKSTORE

**NATIVITY SALE**

Books ★ Icons ★ Gifts

(800) 245-0599  
[holycrossbookstore.com](http://holycrossbookstore.com)

## MISSIONS WEEK | HCHC Welcomes Missionary Nathan Hoppe



The Missions Institute of Orthodox Christianity at HCHC, in conjunction with the Holy Cross student Missions Committee, hosted its annual Missions Week in early November. These eagerly anticipated weeks always center around visiting missionaries and others engaged in missions and evangelism who speak in classes, interact with students informally, and deliver the annual Missions Lecture, sponsored by the Endowment Fund for Orthodox Missions (EFOM). They also deliver short sermons at Vespers while the service is sung in different languages. This year students heard parts of Vespers in Spanish, Swahili, Albanian, Portuguese, Indonesian, Slavonic, Arabic, Turkish, and French.

Rev. Fr. Luke Veronis, founding director of the Missions Institute and an adjunct instructor at both Hellenic College and Holy Cross, says that participating in Missions Week "has really blessed and inspired our students, and challenged them to see missions in new ways and understand the central role that missions and evangelism must play in their journey of faith."

Alexander Limberatos, who heads the Missions Committee, affirms the value of the experience for students: "This year's Missions Week really rekindled the zeal for missions for me... really inspired not only myself but others to support our missionaries and consider serving Christ cross-culturally."

This year's visitor, Nathan Hoppe, has the distinction of being the longest-serving Orthodox missionary from the United States, with 18 years in Albania. He is also the son of missionaries and a 1998 graduate of Holy Cross. Nathan spent the first 15 years of his life in the jungles of Colombia, where his parents were Wycliffe Bible translators working to translate the Bible for an indigenous tribe with no written language. As a young adult back in the United States, he was drawn to Orthodoxy but hesitated to convert because he was certain he wanted to become a cross-cultural missionary like his parents and did not think that was a path he could follow

in the Orthodox Church. Once convinced otherwise, he and his wife became Orthodox Christians and raised three MKs—missionary kids—of their own, mostly in Albania, where Nathan has taught at the Resurrection of Christ Theological Academy and overseen university and children's ministries. The family is now in Chicago for a year of fundraising and personal renewal.

Asked what he considers to be home after such a peripatetic existence, Nathan echoes a sentiment common to many missionaries and their children: "You know you're an MK when Heaven is the only place that feels like home."

***"I will go wherever I can do the most good."***



Hellenic College sophomore Bailey (Despina) Thabit returned to campus on the first day of Missions Week with a particularly keen interest in meeting Nathan Hoppe because she had just spent ten days in Albania on a very special mission trip. Organized by the Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC), the trip was intended for American priests' wives who would teach and go on retreat with their Albanian counterparts, but Bailey was—to her amazement and delight—invited to join the group. "I was the only one not married to a priest, didn't know anyone, and had only been outside the US once before."

Soon enough, though, Bailey was participating fully in every element of the mission. "Each of us had to give two thirty-minute presentations. My topics were 'Christ as a Source of Life for Me' and 'The Christian Virtues that Bring Inner Peace'—things I think about a lot." She was greatly moved by the stories of the Albanian women who had grown up under communism, unable to worship openly, yet keeping Christ in their hearts. The group visited sites associated with Archbishop Anastasios, who—true to his name—led the resurrection of the Orthodox Church in Albania. Meeting His Eminence was an unforgettable experience for Bailey: "You could feel the holy presence."

Bailey is already planning to return to Albania next year with Fr. Luke's summer class on "The Missiology of Archbishop Anastasios" and hopes to become a missionary after graduation. As much as she loves Albania, he knows that she will not necessarily have to go abroad to serve the Church. "There is a need right here in this country. I will go wherever I can do the most good."

## HCHC OBSERVES VETERANS DAY



Hellenic College Holy Cross annually marks Veterans Day with prayer and grateful reflection on the sacrifices made by so many for our country. In this year's message to the community, HCHC's President, Rev. Fr. Christopher T. Metropulos, DMin said, "Our minds and hearts turn to the millions of courageous men and women who serve and have served in the United States military...especially the Orthodox faithful."

Our President also quoted the words of Rev. Fr. Christopher Foustoukos (MDiv 1988), Proistamenos of St. Vasilius Church in Peabody, MA, who served in the US Air Force as a Missile Combat Crew Commander before coming to Holy Cross: "On this Veterans Day we must remember that just because soldiers come home unscratched on the surface does not mean that they are not cut inside...Try to understand what they are going through and stay with them in their hardships. Don't rush to heal them—listen to them."

On the eve of Veterans Day, for the first time, a Trisagion was offered at the great cross outside the Administration Building by Rev. Fr. Nicholas Belcher, Dean of Students and a graduate of the famed military college The Citadel. Students, staff, and faculty joined in singing "May their memory be eternal" and placing American flags at the base of the cross after the service.

This expanded observance of the holiday was the idea of Holy Cross student Elle Pappas, whose grandfather was awarded the Purple Heart for valor in World War II. "I have four service members in my family," Elle said, "and in my hometown [Tarpon Springs, FL] everyone gives \$10 a year and a veteran delivers a huge American flag to each house to display—not just on Veterans Day, but also on Presidents Day, Memorial Day, and the Fourth of July."

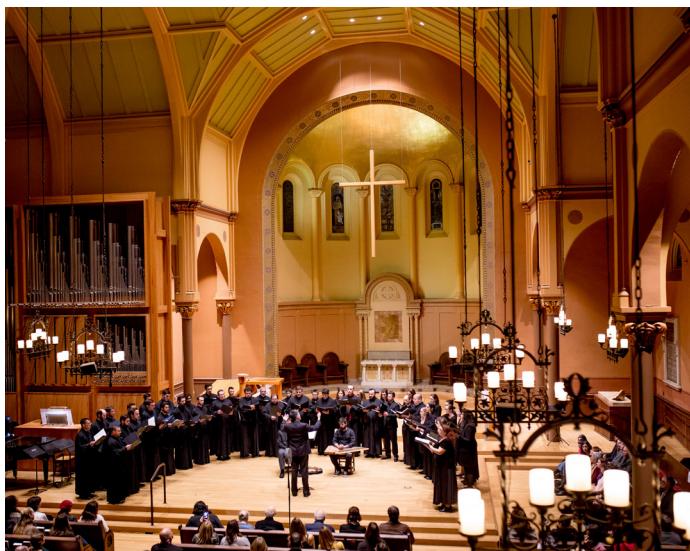
Although Elle will be graduating from the MTS program next May, HCHC will surely carry on the wonderful tradition she created in years to come.



In honor of Veterans Day, the HCHC community participated in Operation Gratitude's Letters for Our Troops initiative. Forty-five students, clergy, and children of students took the time to write notes of thanks to service members overseas.

**To learn more about Operation Gratitude, please visit [www.operationgratitude.com](http://www.operationgratitude.com).**

## AN EVENING ROOTED IN FAITH AND BEAUTY



On November 12, the Boston Byzantine Music Festival returned to the First Church in Cambridge, MA, for a stirring evening of music featuring three religious and musical traditions. The theme of the fourth BBMF, which included a symposium on November 11 and several workshops on November 12, was paraliturgical music, meaning music written on sacred themes but performed outside formal worship. The concert, *Sacred Voices, Sacred Traditions*, illustrated the range of paraliturgical music by showcasing three great musical traditions—Eastern and Western Christianity and Judaism—and highlighted shared features among them, including the importance of the Psalms and the prominence of female composers.

The program began with a performance of Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs by Holy Cross St. Romanos the Melodist Byzantine Choir, directed by the festival's artistic director, Grammenos Karanos, and joined by distinguished cantors Nektarios Antoniou, Spyridon Antonopoulos, Apostolos Combatsis, Nick Giannoukakis, Demetrios Kehagias, Vasileios Lioutas, and Georgios Theodoridis. The choir closed the concert with chants, laments, and festive songs. Dr. Karanos commented that he "was especially moved by the response of the great number of HCHC graduates and protopsaltae who traveled from across the US to sing with the choir."

The Boston Byzantine Music Festival is sponsored by the Mary Jaharis Center for Byzantine Art and Culture with the New York Life Center for the Study of Hellenism in Pontus and Asia Minor, both at Hellenic College Holy Cross.

Read more about the festival at [www.hchc.edu](http://www.hchc.edu).

*One of the HCHC graduates who sang in this year's festival was Irene Koulianatos, who received her Master of Theological Studies (MTS) degree from Holy Cross in May, as well as a Certificate in Byzantine Music. She is now back on campus as an adjunct instructor and assistant to Dr. Karanos, who describes her as "an inspiring role model and mentor for female students of Byzantine music" and says she "performed a fabulous solo" at the concert. Here is more about Irene in her own words:*



"I became interested in Byzantine music when I was about 19 years old. Back home in Tarpon Springs, Florida, my cousin Fr. Demetre Mott [MDiv 2015] wanted to start a Byzantine choir and invited a group of parishioners to chant alongside him at the *analogion* on Sundays. He also began teaching us how to read Byzantine notation. My learning of Byzantine music continued here at HCHC under the guidance and instruction of Dr. Karanos, but I would not be where I am today if it wasn't for my cousin first introducing this ministry to me."

The festival this year was extra-special because we got to explore and learn the paraliturgical dimension of Byzantine music. One of the many blessings in being a part of the Boston Byzantine Music Festival is being exposed to new types of music. While discussing selections for the concert with Dr. Karanos, he suggested we add a lullaby, since it fit the paraliturgical theme of the concert. He also suggested that I sing it solo. The lullaby tells the story of a mother asking the Theotokos and St. Marina to help put her baby to sleep. I enjoyed singing this song very much and hope that I can use it to lull my children to sleep one day!"

## FR. CLAPSIS SPEAKS AT OCAMPR CONFERENCE

Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Clapsis, Archbishop Iakovos Professor of Orthodox Theology at Holy Cross, offered the theological perspective on pain and suffering at a plenary session of the recent OCAMPR conference at HCHC. The essence of his talk, titled "Suffering in God's Beloved Creation," was that "...human beings become authentic icons of God as they respond to and participate in the suffering of others through active compassion and love that has its origins in God."

A graduate of both Hellenic College and Holy Cross, Fr. Clapsis has taught at Holy Cross since 1985, specializing in dogmatic theology and also teaching courses that relate Orthodox

theology to modern sensibilities. He is a prolific author of books and articles, some of which have been translated into French, German, Russian, and Italian, as well as Greek. He is currently writing a book on the universal presence of the Holy Spirit.

Fr. Clapsis has long been involved in the U.S. National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches, serving in multiple influential roles, and has participated in Orthodox dialogues with the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Roman Catholic Church.

[Read more about the conference at www.hchc.edu.](http://www.hchc.edu)

## REV. DR. EUGEN PENTIUC DELIVERS KEYNOTE ADDRESS AT MULTIFAITH CONFERENCE

On September 15, Rev. Dr. Eugen J. Pentiuc, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at HCHC and Professor of Old Testament and Hebrew at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, delivered a keynote address at the Paradosis Center for Theology and Scripture. The Center is hosted by John Brown University in Siloam Springs, AR and annually brings together biblical and patristic scholars from Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and evangelical backgrounds for meaningful theological

exchanges centered on Scripture. The theme of this year's conference was "Engaging the Book of Acts, Engaging One Another: Catholics, Orthodox, and Evangelicals."

Fr. Pentiuc's address focused on "Retranslating Acts 2: An Orthodox View on Xenolalia and Glossolalia." Using patristic and liturgical texts, Fr. Pentiuc dealt with Lukan and Pauline views on *xenolalia* (Acts 2) and *glossolalia* (1 Cor 12; 14). Fr. Pentiuc

argued for a new look at the language miracle as crisscrossing the areas of "speaking" and "hearing." In his engaging talk, he defined miracles in the Bible as an intricate blend of divine intervention and human receptivity.

Other speakers at the conference included Robert Wilken, Andrew Louth, Brian Daley, Matthew Levering, John Behr, Hans Boersma, and Marcus Plested.

## HCHC Trustee To Be Inducted into Arkansas Business Hall of Fame



Longtime member of our Board of Trustees and generous benefactor Gus M. Vratsinas, Chairman of Bailey Construction and Consulting, LLC, will be inducted early next year into the Arkansas Business Hall of Fame. The Hall of Fame was established by the Sam M. Walton College of Business at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville to recognize Arkansans who have been successful business leaders and to honor their outstanding accomplishments. The Hellenic College Holy Cross community extends its warmest congratulations to Mr. Vratsinas on this richly deserved accolade.

# MARKELA HATZAKIS

## MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP MAJOR



Watching sophomore Markela Hatzakis walk to class with her fellow students, you would never guess that for many years she could hardly walk at all due to a rare and very painful condition. And her ready smile and animated manner belie the fact that the pain is constant, even now. That is because Markela's life is and has always been centered on her unwavering trust in God and her belief that anything can be borne with faith.

Her late parents, Rev. Fr. Michael Hatzelis and Presvytera Helene, instilled that faith in Markela and her two sisters, along with a love of learning. When Markela graduated from high school at just 16, she joined her older sister at the University of Alabama in Huntsville, initially as a full-time student. However, financial considerations prompted a change to part-time status so that she could also earn money. Combining studies with working as a reservations agent for Delta was challenging ("especially on 9/11..."), but nothing

compared to the sudden, mysterious deterioration of her health about halfway through college.

"I had severe pain and muscle spasms. It took almost a year before any specialist took me seriously and diagnosed reflex sympathetic dystrophy. At first none of the treatments worked and I kept getting worse, until it was almost impossible to walk." With intensive physical therapy over the next couple of years, she went from a wheelchair to a walker, then a cane.

Markela did not expect to complete her education after that long an interval, especially with such serious health issues. However, she found meaningful activity doing whatever needed doing at her church, Holy Cross-SS. Constantine and Helen in Huntsville. "I pitched in at the office, did the bulletin and event publicity, made prosforo—whatever needed doing. Keeping busy helped take my mind off the pain, and I loved Fr. Kevin [Millsaps, MDiv 2007]."

It was Fr. Kevin who urged her to go back to school—at Hellenic College. "He was pushing me for a while and was a major force behind my coming here." Even with his support, Markela was not a shoo-in for admission, having been out of school for so long. To prepare herself, she took classes at a local community college, got straight As, and last fall entered Hellenic, where she loves learning new things, especially Byzantine chant, in small classes. "There's such a huge contrast to a place like the University of Alabama in how much you can interact with professors—it's amazing!" And her professors in turn love having her as a student. Rev. Dr. Demetrios Tonias, who has Markela in his Introduction to Orthodoxy course, says, "She brings a mature perspective that enriches the classroom experience for everyone."

### THE VALUE OF ART

For almost a decade, Albert Qose has been teaching painting at Hellenic College. His courses give students not only technical skill and a new avenue for personal expression but, he believes, another benefit as well:

*"When they get involved in art, they start observing the world around them more deeply."*



# LUKAS BUHLER

## HOLY CROSS FIRST-YEAR SEMINARIAN



The Swiss are known to love long walks in rugged terrain, but Lukas Buhler is one of the few who have walked from Switzerland to Jerusalem—a distance of 4,000 miles. “I really wanted to do a pilgrimage and walk all the way from Zurich to Jerusalem,” he recalls. On the way, he stopped in Thessaloniki and then stayed on Mt. Athos

for three weeks, an experience recommended to him by his Roman Catholic uncle. Lukas was raised as a Protestant but felt drawn to Orthodoxy, a pull that increased as he walked through Greece and on toward Istanbul.

Although he had walked that far alone, Lukas wanted his longtime American girlfriend, Anna, to share the rest of the journey with him. The two had met as teenagers while volunteering on a Mercy Ship sailing from Europe to West Africa, so Anna was no stranger to rough but meaningful travel. The young couple walked together from Istanbul to Jerusalem, arriving in 2009, by which time they were clearly committed to becoming Orthodox. Living in Jerusalem for six

months, they often visited monasteries and were catechized. Ultimately, they were baptized, with Palestinian Orthodox Christians from Bethlehem as their godparents. A local bishop offered to marry them the next day, but they chose to marry in the US, so their families could more easily join them. “The wedding was permeated with grace,” marvels Lukas.

Two years ago, after living in Maine and Pennsylvania for four years, Lukas and Anna came to Boston with their little boy, Alexander. Lukas had twelve years of experience as a software engineer and could have worked anywhere, but chose to join a Boston asset management firm, with a higher purpose in mind. “I had visited all the main Orthodox seminaries and felt that Holy Cross was the best place for us. I liked the strong intellectual component and having access to the other member schools of the BTI [Boston Theological Institute] was a pretty big factor, but it really was a decision of the heart. I knew immediately.”

While Anna thrives in her practice as a midwife, Lukas is combining his full-time studies toward the Master of Divinity degree with a half-time position as a software engineer. “It’s really hard sometimes, combining the two, but I don’t care—this is a dream come true.”

## Student Life at HCHC

HCHC students have a wide range of interests beyond the purely academic which they enjoy pursuing with like-minded individuals. All of the groups that have formed over the past year or so welcome students from both Hellenic College and Holy Cross, so undergrads and grad students get to know each other informally while exploring areas of common interest. Here are a few examples:

**THE INKLINGS** love creative writing of all kinds and meet once or twice a month to read and critique each other's work. Like the original Inklings, which included such luminaries as C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien and gathered at a famous pub near Oxford University, our budding writers hold their meetings at an atmospheric Scottish restaurant close to campus.

**THE PAN-SLAVIC SOCIETY** celebrates the diversity of Slavic cultural expression through monthly activities such as Russian tea parties, movie nights, and visits to church festivals. The Society also sponsors a weekly Church Slavonic reading group. Although some of the members come from Slavic backgrounds, most do not, yet are keen to learn about other Orthodox cultures.

**THE SYNAXIS PATRISTIC BOOK CLUB** meets every Wednesday evening for fellowship and discussion of a patristic text. The participants' aim is to see how the Fathers can guide them as future pastors, theologians, and interpreters of Scripture. Lately the group has been reading St. John Chrysostom's homilies on marriage and family life.

**THE DAILY BREAD** is not a club as such, but a newsletter written and produced by a team of talented students dedicated to keeping readers informed and entertained through the art of the written word. Regular features include Current Events, Community Calendar, Spiritual Life, Your Next Netflix Pick, and the Ask Yiaiyia advice column. Despite the name, the newsletter is emailed monthly to the entire HCHC community and will soon transition to a print format.

## PRESIDENTIAL ENGAGEMENT GATHERING

# HCHC PRESIDENT VISITS BALTIMORE CATHEDRAL



Over the weekend of October 22-23, Baltimore's Cathedral of the Annunciation warmly welcomed a group of visitors from HCHC, led by our President, Rev. Fr. Christopher T. Metropoulos. V. Rev. Archimandrite Constantine (Dean) Moralis, Proistamenos of the Cathedral and a graduate of both Hellenic College and Holy Cross (1991 and 1994, respectively), invited Fr. Christopher to celebrate Vespers with him on Saturday and Orthros and the Divine Liturgy on Sunday. HCHC students, under the direction of Dr. Grammenos Karanos, chanted for all of the services. Fr. Christopher gave a compelling homily on the importance of HCHC as the only institution of its kind in the Western Hemisphere. The parish hosted a wonderful dinner on Saturday evening, from which all proceeds were generously donated to HCHC, and the Annunciation Philoptochos prepared an equally delightful lunch following Sunday services. On behalf of the entire HCHC community, Fr. Christopher thanked Fr. Moralis and everyone at the Cathedral for their support and generosity.

## Archbishop Demetrios Visits HCHC | November 16-17, 2016



### HELLENIC COLLEGE HOLY CROSS

50 Goddard Avenue, Brookline, MA 02445

Phone: 617.731.3500 Fax: 617.850.1460 Web: [www.hchc.edu](http://www.hchc.edu)

 [www.facebook.com/HellenicCollegeHolyCross](http://www.facebook.com/HellenicCollegeHolyCross)

 [www.instagram.com/HellenicCollegeHolyCross](http://www.instagram.com/HellenicCollegeHolyCross)

 [www.youtube.com/HCHCmedia](http://www.youtube.com/HCHCmedia)

[holycrossbookstore.com](http://holycrossbookstore.com)

