Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Visit any campus in September and you will see signs that a new academic year is beginning. We delight in seeing those same signs here on our magnificent Holy Hill, but for us as faithful Orthodox Christians, September marks an even more important beginning—that of the ecclesiastical year—and it includes the Feast of the Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross, for which our sacred school was named eighty years ago.

We were blessed to have His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, Geron of America, with us for Great Vespers on the eve of the Feast and for Divine Liturgy the next morning. Let us always be prayerfully mindful of the message so beautifully conveyed in the hymn that was chanted on the eve of the Feast:

_Today the Cross of the Lord comes out, and the faithful receive it with longing, and they obtain healings of soul and body and of every infirmity. Let us kiss it with joy and with fear: with fear, for we are unworthy because of sin, and with joy, because of the salvation which Christ the Lord grants us, since He was nailed to the Cross, and He has great mercy._

As you read in the following pages about all that has been happening lately in our vibrant academic and spiritual community, I hope that you will feel a renewed sense of pride in this unique school, your school. Whether or not you are part of its past—as a student, a donor, or in some other role—we want you to be part of its future. Let us hear from you, partner with us by giving of your time, talent, and treasure, and remember us in your prayers as we always remember you in ours.

May God bless you and give us all strength and courage to do great things together for His Glory.

With love in Christ,

Rev. Fr. Christopher T. Metropulos, DMin
President
At Hellenic College Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, as at many institutions of higher learning, Convocation is a solemn yet celebratory annual ceremony at which faculty, administrators, and staff formally welcome new and returning students to campus for an academic year of learning and growth. However, in keeping with our school’s sacred mission to prepare students for service to the Church as well as to society, HCHC’s Convocation reminds them of the need to grow both intellectually and spiritually. As Rev. Fr. Christopher Metropulos, HCHC President, said in his opening remarks, “It’s not just about our actions and accomplishments, but about what we believe, what we have in our hearts.”

At this year’s Convocation, held on September 7 at the Maliotis Cultural Center on campus, those present had the great blessing of hearing an inspiring keynote address by Rev. Dn. Gary Alexander, HCHC’s Director of Strategic Initiatives and Planning, on the importance of humility in all aspects of our lives. Dn. Gary’s academic and professional achievements epitomize what it means to be an Orthodox Christian devoted to serving both the Church and society with passionate commitment and, yes, humility. An alumnus of Holy Cross who earned his Master of Divinity degree with highest distinction in 2015 and also holds a law degree from Suffolk University, he is a nationally recognized expert on public administration and healthcare. His innovative reforms as Secretary of Health and Human Services in Rhode Island and Pennsylvania have won him widespread media attention and the role of trusted advisor to elected officials at all levels of government.
I want to offer my thoughts to you today about an issue that is near to my heart—something that I have to work at constantly, and that you might also think about making the core of your life—living a life of humility. After spending close to 17 years working at the highest levels of government, my life has been tested in many ways—none more, though, than testing my humility or lack thereof. Now, working with governors, members of Congress, and presidential candidates can sound glamorous, and even exhilarating. On many levels it is; but there is no more glorious life than to be chosen as a disciple of Jesus—whether you are a doctor, lawyer, song artist, architect or, by God’s providence, a priest. It is clear to me, and I hope that if it hasn’t become clear to you it will, that the only way to true discipleship is by knowing who you are and having the right relationship with our God.

Throughout Scripture and especially the Gospels, humility—establishing that right relationship with God—is front and center. One of the more intriguing passages comes to us from the Gospel of Matthew (15:21-28). As Jesus and his apostles journeyed throughout northern Israel, the Gentile cities of Tyre and Sidon, a Canaanite woman from that region approached them crying: “Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely possessed by a demon.” Even though Jesus heard her, he did not say a word to her. St. John Chrysostom in his Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew tells us that He did not answer her because He knew the great treasure that His grace would reveal from within her soul. His silence wasn’t to ignore her, but so that she would persevere and through persistence build humility which would “reveal the treasure laid up in her”—that of manifesting the light of Christ in her to know her relationship with God.

She most likely kept persisting until she was heard. For that reason, the apostles, probably annoyed at her, approached Jesus and begged him, saying, “Send her away, for she is crying after us.” Jesus then answered the woman saying, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” But the woman was persistent. She continued to seek out Jesus and finally knelt before Him saying, “Lord, help me.” Even though the text doesn’t elaborate, we can imagine that, just like in other encounters Jesus had with those who were suffering, He was moved with pity and compassion for her plea.

Jesus finally answered her using imagery that most would perceive as derogatory: “It is not fair to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.” This was a refashioning of His earlier statement to her that He had come only for the children of Israel. But it also sent a genial signal to her that He was open to her plea. The woman quickly comprehended what He meant and with confidence and humility she responded directly, saying, “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.”

As Chrysostom seems to indicate, the Canaanite woman’s experience with Christ was a process that led her to comprehending her place under the children of Israel. She did not feel slighted but felt that the Lord had provided her with an opportunity. Chrysostom says that Jesus delayed His response to her so that she would have to earn her virtue of humility, teach all of us a lesson on how to obtain this virtue. Once earned, she merited a spot with the children of Israel. Her persistence, faith, and humility showed Jesus that she deserved the gift she requested. Jesus provided her with a great tribute when He responded to her by saying, “O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire.” And her daughter was healed instantly.” Perseverance and persistence built humility in her which, as Chrysostom said, revealed the treasure laid up in her—that of truly knowing her relationship with God.

What does a story like this mean for our humility? It shows us that we are far from the faith and humility of the Canaanite woman, especially if this is the bar. How do we begin to address our own lack of humility? Our very first step should be to open our hearts and offer a simple prayer to the Holy Spirit, the giver of life: O Holy Spirit, giver of life, make me humble so that I may be made worthy to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

But, how do we become humble to actually live the life of Christ to the best of our ability? If we want to follow His footsteps, we will need to fully comprehend and embrace His core values and actually wear His persona. His life must become our life and His Spirit must seep into every nook and cranny of our existence—we must want to truly become Christ-like.
The arrival of new students at the end of August is always exciting for them and for the entire Hellenic College Holy Cross community. As Rev. Fr. Christopher Metropulos, HCHC President, observed, “The beginning of the academic year brings with it great anticipation for new friendships, rekindling bonds, fresh hope, goals, opportunities, and excitement for all across our campus.” He also promised “to spend even more time with all of our students—whether in fellowship, prayer, fun, or in the classroom.”

Orientation for new students began on August 23, move-in day, when they and their families were welcomed by the President and the Deans—all of them graduates of Hellenic College and/or Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology. As Dr. Demetrios Katos, Dean of Hellenic College, said, “This is a very small school, but it has a huge mission: to provide a great education in the context of faith that will prepare you for a life of service.” Dr. James Skedros, Dean of Holy Cross, spoke of HCHC as a place where “hands and head meet the heart, where one comes to meet Christ.”

The next few days were packed with activities on and off campus such as tours, discussions, meetings and meals with faculty and leaders of student organizations, an excursion to the Museum of Russian Icons, and the ever-popular Boston “T” Party—a fun exploration of the city by T, the country’s oldest public transit system. Of course, every day began and ended with worship in Holy Cross Chapel. After the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, orientation ended with a splash—a lot of splashes, actually—at Father Christopher’s Waterpark Extravaganza on the lawn, which included water-themed games and activities, a bountiful barbeque, and an ice cream truck dispensing free treats for all.
CONVERSATION WITH JONATHAN JACKSON
TV AND MUSIC STAR APPEARS AT HCHC

Jonathan Jackson, star of the hit series “Nashville” and winner of five Emmy awards for his long-running role on “General Hospital,” drew a capacity crowd to the Maliotis Cultural Center at Hellenic College Holy Cross on Sunday afternoon, September 9, for a memorable two-part event. Members of the HCHC community and the general public, some of whom came from out of state, were fascinated to hear our special guest converse onstage with Rev. Fr. Christopher Metropulos, HCHC President, about his conversion to Orthodoxy and his multifaceted career. The conversation was the latest in a series of Presidential Encounters themed “Answering the Call” in which, as Fr. Christopher explained, “We invite the best and the brightest of our faith who are doing extraordinary things in their lives to share their experiences with us.”

Guided by questions from Fr. Christopher and, at the end, by audience members, Mr. Jackson spoke eloquently about the challenge of leading a Christian life and raising his three children in what he described as “the spiritually difficult environment of the entertainment industry.” His conversion was “a long journey” aided by years of studying Christian history, deep reading of the Church Fathers, and a life-altering stay on Mount Athos, to which he recently returned with his young sons. “Being there was so profound…I had read a lot about it—and actually listened to streaming of chant from the Holy Mountain in my dressing room at “General Hospital”—but what struck me the most when I went there and met the monks was the joy on their faces.”

After the conversation with Fr. Christopher, Mr. Jackson performed a set of his own songs that showcased the incredible range of his voice and his writing and brought the crowd to its feet in a standing ovation.
THE MONTH IN PICTURES
A new year begins on the Holy Hill
FOTINI DORRANCE: Volunteered in the Holy Land

When Hellenic College junior Fotini Dorrance went to the Holy Land in July with three friends from her church, she thought she had a pretty good idea of what to expect. Two of those friends had been there before and her father, Rev. Fr. Theodore Dorrance (MDiv 1990) had been three times. However, the reality turned out to be more intense in every way than she could have imagined. “The conflict between Israelis and Palestinians is so real and overwhelming when you’re there. I tried to stay as neutral as possible and remember that God made us all, but sometimes it was hard.”

The friends’ primary destination was Bethany, a West Bank town not far from Jerusalem, where a small group of nuns under the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission opened a school for Orthodox girls on Lazarus Sunday, 1937, a short distance from the Tomb of Lazarus. Eighty years later, the school has several hundred students, of whom many are Muslim and some are orphans. All of the girls study English and Russian in addition to Arabic. Fotini and her friends painted the girls’ dorm, got to know the boarding students who have no homes to go to in the summer, and joined the nuns in daily prayers. They also visited many important Christian pilgrimage sites. “Wherever we went, we were left with such a sense of peace,” Fotini recalls.

That sense of peace was shattered when she and one of her friends wanted to go to Nablus. “We were challenged at a checkpoint by Israeli soldiers with machine guns and grilled about why we wanted to go. We told them we were Christians and wanted to visit Jacob’s Well and the church of St. Fotini, as well as Joseph’s Tomb. They let us go, but warned us that we would not be protected by the army there. Nablus was terrifying. The walls of that beautiful church were full of bullet holes. I was so scared and prayed harder than I ever have. We chanted the Paraklesis with gunfire in the background. But I’m so glad we went—it strengthened my faith and my admiration for the Christians there who endure so much in the name of Christ.”

NIKOLAS KOULOURIS: Learned the Hotel Business in Greece

As a Management and Leadership major, Hellenic College junior Nikolas Koulouris is eager to learn as much as he can, in and outside the classroom, about international business. When he heard last year about paid summer internships offered by the Libra Group, a family-owned company with Greek roots and diverse business interests all over the world, he applied for an internship in the company’s hospitality division and was thrilled to be assigned to work for Aria Hotels, Libra’s growing collection of boutique hotels and villas in Greece.

The internship began on June 9 with a week of group orientation for the fifty students chosen—from a field of thousands—at Libra headquarters in New York City. “It was amazing,” he recalls. “I really loved being with so many focused and motivated young
If Sebastian Mot had decided to take a well-earned summer break after earning his Master of Divinity degree from Holy Cross in May, no one would have questioned that decision. However, Sebastian had questions of his own—about how the Orthodox Church functions in countries where Christians are a small and often persecuted minority. So he flew to Bali, a predominantly Hindu island in Indonesia, and traveled through treacherous mountain territory to Singaraja, the old Dutch colonial capital in the northern part of the island. The mention of Bali may conjure up images of luxurious resorts, “but the northern part is poor and you can really see the Hindu presence,” Sebastian says.

After two weeks in Singaraja, Sebastian and his friends went to Yogyakarta on the island of Java to visit Fr. Lazarus Hatmaji (MDiv 1990). The population of Java, like most of Indonesia, is almost entirely Muslim. “It became apparent that Christians are much more persecuted there. Fr. Lazarus is seen as part of the community there, so the people protect him. But we went about an hour north of Yogyakarta and met a priest who had been dragged out of his church and beaten in front of the police and told that he couldn’t do services there anymore. So he holds services in his home. It definitely strengthened my faith to meet him.”

Before returning home, Sebastian went on his own to Kyoto, Japan. “The city is so beautiful and timeless, and it also has Holy Annunciation Cathedral, a Russian church built in 1903, during the lifetime of St. Nicholas of Japan. It was really great to attend services there. Not a lot of the parishioners spoke English, but they and Fr. John, the priest there, were very welcoming. I’m so glad I went to Kyoto—and Indonesia before that. It was an eye-opening trip.”

Not long after Nikolas was awarded his internship, Hellenic College Holy Cross hosted Nicholas Logothetis, member of the Libra Group’s executive board and co-founder and chairman of the nonprofit organization Concordia, for a Presidential Encounter at which he described the internship program as “our pride and joy.” His brother George, Libra’s Chairman and CEO, came to campus in May to receive an honorary Doctor of Humanities degree. Both warmly encouraged our students to apply for internships in the future.

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Nikolas expected to spend the next six weeks at Aria’s operations office in Athens, an invaluable opportunity “to get behind the scenes and see how they ran things.” But after two weeks there, he was sent to the island of Santorini, where Aria has several properties. “That was a big and totally amazing surprise,” he says. “They wanted me to get hands-on experience, so I interned there as an assistant manager doing things like welcoming guests and arranging transportation. It was very busy but I loved every second.”

After a final two weeks back in Athens, Nikolas returned to the US with a new perspective on Greece. “We hear so much about the bad things, the economic crisis and so on, but we don’t hear enough about the good. I was just blown away by the hospitality of the country. There was never a time when I felt like an outsider. A special part of my heart is still there.”

SEBASTIAN MOT: Witnessed the Presence of Orthodoxy in Asia

His destination was St. Thomas House, an Orthodox school and orphanage founded and run by Fr. Stephanos Boik Nino, where Sebastian joined several other HCHC students. “We taught there and had up to thirty students at a time, ranging in age from five years old to young adults. Besides the kids who live there, people come from all over. I really like Church history and loved teaching it so much that sometimes I lost track of time and an hour turned into two.”

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On September 13, the eve of the school’s feast day, the HCHC community gathered in Holy Cross Chapel for Great Vespers, presided over by His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, Geron of America. His Eminence presented the school cross to each second-year seminarian and gave his blessing to each senior seminarian to wear the exorasson. This moving ceremony, known as Stavroforia and Rassoforia, has taken place every year for eighty years, since the school’s founding in 1937, and is unique among American Orthodox seminaries. New students at both Hellenic College and Holy Cross were also presented to His Eminence so that he could bestow his blessing upon each of them.

The entire HCHC community gathered once again the next morning for an Archieratical Divine Liturgy with His Eminence to celebrate the Feast of the Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross.
Hellenic College is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Tone Svetelj as full-time Lecturer of Philosophy and Religious Studies for the 2017-2018 academic year. Since joining the Hellenic faculty in 2012 as a part-time instructor of philosophy, Dr. Svetelj has impressed his colleagues and students with his ability to teach complex subjects with clarity and contagious enthusiasm. In making the announcement, Dr. Demetrios Katos, Dean of Hellenic College, said, “Many of us on the faculty have come to appreciate Tone’s dedication to our students and to their academic progress. He is a great teacher who has taught our students how to be more reflective, how to think more analytically about one’s life and purpose.”

A native of Slovenia who speaks six languages and reads two more, Dr. Sveltelj earned degrees in philosophy from prestigious institutions in Italy before receiving a doctorate in philosophy from Boston College. He has published extensively in academic journals and taught at Boston College, Merrimack College, and Bay Path University.

In his new full-time role, Dr. Svetelj will continue to teach the core course, “Philosophy of the Person,” taken by all Hellenic College sophomores, and additional core and elective courses in Religious Studies. He will also assume a key role in coordinating Hellenic College’s First-Year Academic Studies Program, designed to help students make a successful transition from high school to college.

Dr. Svetelj looks forward eagerly to assuming a larger role in the life of Hellenic College. He says, “To be a witness of students’ growth and transformation is for me an experience of new hope and love… I see our world as a big classroom where everyone has something important to say. In my heart, I am convinced that other traditions, cultures, and religions can teach me in my tradition how to become a better human. This idea inspires my intellectual and spiritual journey, and shows me new horizons of God’s omnipresence.”

**PROFESSOR STAMATIA DOVA NAMED DIRECTOR OF HCHC GREK STUDIES PROGRAM**

Professor Stamatia Dova has been named the director of the Greek Studies program at Hellenic College Holy Cross. An expert in classical studies and applied linguistics who holds a doctorate from Harvard University, she brings to her new position a distinguished reputation as an instructor of Modern Greek. “Professor Dova is a master of her craft,” says Dr. Demetrios Katos, Dean of Hellenic College. “I’ve observed her teaching firsthand and the energy in her classroom is palpable.”

Professor Dova’s appointment underscores HCHC’s commitment to excellence in Modern Greek language education, a central element of the curriculum in both the College and the School of Theology. The program disseminates the richness of Modern Hellenism among undergraduate students and equips graduate students with skills essential for the pastoral and administrative dimensions of ordained ministry in the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

Thanks to Professor Dova’s inspired efforts, HCHC has hosted the Kallinikeion Institute—the only intensive Modern Greek language summer program in the United States—for over a decade. The month-long Kallinikeion courses, offered at the beginning and intermediate levels, provide more than a hundred hours of instruction and three college-level credits each in Modern Greek.

Professor Dova succeeds Dr. Aristotle Michopoulos, longtime professor of Greek Studies and director of the program since 1985, who will be on sabbatical leave this academic year. Dean Katos praises Dr. Michopoulos for “his ardent advocacy of Hellenism and Modern Greek language instruction on our campus” and for being “so supportive of Professor Dova’s transition to her new role.”
INTRODUCING THE NEW HCHC CAMPUS STORE

Holy Cross Bookstore has just undergone such a dramatic transformation that it has a whole new look, many new offerings, and a new name—the HCHC Campus Store. Thanks to our multitalented and tireless Buildings and Grounds team, the entire project was completed in record time with no need for outside contractors. The store now has greatly improved flow, two entrances, a centralized sales desk, and café-style seating, as well as a changing room for trying on clothing.

The store has a new manager too: Nikoleta Maidou, who graduated from Hellenic College in 2016 with a BA in Human Development. Nikoleta brings to the job firsthand knowledge of HCHC, solid retail experience, a strong work ethic, and a megawatt smile that makes every visitor to the store feel warmly welcomed. She has collaborated closely with longtime Plant Manager Howard Thomas and his crew on every detail of the renovation to make sure that the result would be both functionally and aesthetically pleasing. “I love this school,” says Nikoleta, “and I love being able to come back as the manager of a store that’s such a central part of the campus experience for the HCHC community and for visitors.”

Among the store’s new offerings are clergy vestments and robes from the Panagiotis A. Theodoropoulos Company of Athens, Greece, which has been producing such garments of the highest quality for more than a century. The company’s tailors have been in the store to show samples of their exquisite fabrics, take measurements, and draw up orders. Clerical shirts from R.J. Toomey are also available in a variety of colors and styles. An expanded range of ecclesiastical items such as vessels for Holy Communion and censers can be found in stock or may be ordered. Beautiful children’s clothes suitable for baptisms have been imported from Greece, along with towels and other necessities. The store has long been known for its fine selection of icons, but now has exclusive US rights to sell the products of Athens-based Iconotekhniki, the largest producer of high-quality Byzantine icons in the world. Of course, the store continues to offer an excellent selection of books from many publishers, including Holy Cross Orthodox Press, St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, and St. Tikhon’s Monastery Press.

Visit the Campus Store Monday through Friday from 9am-4:30pm, or online 24 hours a day at holycrossbookstore.com. Questions? Knowledgeable staff can be reached at 617-850-1230.

HCHC PRESIDENT ENGAGES WITH ALUMNI ONLINE

More than 1700 alumni and friends of Hellenic College Holy Cross joined Rev. Fr. Christopher Metropulos, HCHC President, online at midday on August 30 to learn about the many programs and events that made for a very busy summer on campus and are taking place this fall. Fr. Christopher shared updates about everything from dormitory and campus store renovations to partnerships with Regis College and Newbury College that will expand our students’ academic and athletic opportunities. He then responded to questions and comments submitted by viewers, such as “What kind of students are attracted to Hellenic College Holy Cross?” Fr. Christopher replied, “Our students have a burning desire to serve Christ. They are very dedicated to learning how best to fulfill that mission in their individual vocations.”