Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Christ Is Risen! Christos Anesti!

I greet you in love and joy on this, the Feast of Feasts, the most Holy Day of Holy Days, the Resurrection of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

Our Lord Jesus Christ fulfills all that was written in the Old Testament, not only through His life and teachings, but also by Himself becoming the Suffering Servant of God, abandoned in perfect obedience unto death, as foretold by the great Prophet Isaiah.

As Light from Light, True God from True God, Christ rose from the darkness of death, and, with Him and through Him, all those who believed in Him and who longed for the promise of His coming. Heaven, once closed, is now open to all, attainable through faith, good works, a life of virtue, and God’s boundless love, mercy, and desire for the salvation of all mankind.

The celebration of Pascha is not simply the commemoration of a one-time, historical event. Rather, it is a continual revelation of the new and unending day of God’s Kingdom, present and alive in our community on the Holy Hill.

The ultimate sacrifice and victory of Jesus Christ is embodied in various ways in our students, who are preparing for lives of lay and ordained service in the Orthodox Church. Christ’s courage in the face of opposition and hostility gives them boldness in a world that values greed and possessions more than generosity. His humility inspires them in a world of isolated egos. Our students are the first line of defense against the forces of darkness and death, which seek to dissuade and distract us away from the Risen Christ, who alone is our Light, and the firm anchor of our hope.

Therefore, as we celebrate Great and Holy Pascha, and graduate a new generation of “spiritual warriors” for Christ, let us continue to offer our time, talents, and treasures toward building up our school and its programs, so even more young people may be inspired to come and receive the light of Christ at Hellenic College Holy Cross, and, through them, may it be imparted to all people.

We love you and pray for you, and ask for your continued prayers, especially for our newly ordained seminarians, that Almighty God will bless their ministry and work, and give them strength to be worthy witnesses to His Truth and obedient servants of His Will.

Christ is Risen! Christos Anesti!

In His Service,

Rev. Christopher T. Metropulos, DMin
President
CHRIST IS RISEN!

AXIOS!

Three seminarians receiving their Master of Divinity degrees this month have recently been ordained to the holy diaconate. To each we say, “Axios!”

LUCAS CHRISTENSEN was ordained by His Eminence Metropolitan Nicholas of Detroit on March 27 at St. Nicholas Church in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Reflecting on the experience, Deacon Lucas says, “The service was brilliant and timeless and overwhelming, commingling joy, fear, and—most poignantly—love.”

Also on March 27, CHRISTOPHER RETELAS was ordained at Annunciation Church in Sacramento, California, where his father, the Rev. James Retelas, serves as pastor. Deacon Chris says he will always hold dear to his heart the simple but memorable message conveyed to him by Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco, who officiated: “Stop being busy, stand still, and pray.”

SCOTT O’ROURKE was ordained on Palm Sunday, April 24, by Metropolitan Nicholas at Holy Trinity Cathedral in Toledo, Ohio. His wife, the former Jessica Tindle, graduated from Hellenic College in 2014 with high distinction. Deacon Patrick (as he is now known) found a great paraphrase of how it felt to be ordained in the words of a hymn from Holy Monday: “Behold, O my soul! The Master entrusts to you a talent. Receive the gift with fear...In your great mercy, O Savior, deem me...worthy of this joy.”

ALUMNA ACHIEVEMENT

DANIELLE XANTHOS, MDIV ’14

Danielle Xanthos is in the PsyD (Doctor of Psychology) program in Clinical Psychology at the University of Denver, with a specialization in military psychology. She chose this program because of the large and vibrant military population of Colorado, the proximity of the Orthodox community, and the overall quality of life in Denver. In addition to providing services to the general population, Danielle hopes to serve active duty members, as well as veterans and their families, within the Church, assisting clergy and communities in supporting these families through the unique experience of deployment and the transition home. She served on the CrossRoad staff in 2012, 2013, and 2015, and looks forward to doing so again this summer.
2016 CROSSROAD ALUMNI RETREAT

On Friday, April 15, 41 young adults gathered at Hellenic College Holy Cross (HCHC) for the CrossRoad Alumni Retreat. Students from across the country traveled to Brookline to reconnect with fellow “CrossRoadies,” to meet alumni from other years, deepen their relationship with Christ and the Church, and hear from guest speaker Dr. Peter Bouteneff.

The theme of this year’s retreat was, ”Music: Window to the Soul?” Retreat participants were encouraged to take a closer look at the power and influence of music on their lives as Orthodox Christians.

The alumni retreat drew participants from multiple CrossRoad groups. CrossRoad is a ten-day academic summer institute that prepares high school juniors and seniors to make big life decisions and connect with the Orthodox Christian theological and spiritual tradition. Hosted on the scenic Hellenic College Holy Cross campus overlooking the beautiful Boston skyline, participants experience daily worship, visit local parishes, tour Boston, and spend a day at the beach.

This year’s sessions will be held June 18-28 and July 5-15. For more information about the CrossRoad Summer Institute, visit www.crossroadinstitute.org or contact the staff at crossroad@hchc.edu.

OVM LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP

On Wednesday, April 6, Tim Tassopoulos, HCHC Trustee and Executive Vice President, Operations, at Chick-fil-A, returned to campus to offer another fantastic Leadership Workshop for students.

He was joined by Mark Moraitakis, Sr. Director of Hospitality and Service Design at Chick-fil-A. Tim and Mark offered phenomenal wisdom on time management, bringing together their perspective as Orthodox Christians with the best principles in leadership. The event was hosted by the Office of Vocation & Ministry, which trains, educates, and inspires young people to grow in their understanding and practice of Orthodox Christian vocation and authentic servant leadership.
CHRIST IS RISEN!
Holy Week and Pascha on the Holy Hill
CHRIST IS RISEN!

NIKOLETA MAIDOU
HELENIC COLLEGE STUDENT PROFILE

When Nikoleta Maidou of Greece graduates from Hellenic College this May, she will be celebrating not only an academic milestone but the fulfillment of a promise she made many years ago to herself and the doctors, nurses, and young patients at Children’s Hospital Boston.

Nikoleta’s journey to Boston began when she was just 12 years old. While vacationing with her family on the Greek island of Crete, she was hospitalized with a bout of pneumonia which ultimately revealed a life-threatening heart condition. Physicians at the hospital said they could not do anything for her, but luckily for Nikoleta world-renowned pediatric cardiologist and pathologist Dr. Stella Van Praagh, who had returned to her native Greece to do research, said her colleagues at Children’s Hospital Boston could help and immediately arranged for the necessary surgery.

“I will never forget my first impression of Children’s Hospital. There I was, so young, so far from home, speaking not much English, scared that I was going to die, but everyone was incredibly welcoming.” The complex surgery to repair her heart was successful and, after two months of initial recovery, Nikoleta was able to go home to Greece. However, she had to return to Children’s annually for the next decade for follow-up and additional surgery. Over the course of those visits, she came to see the hospital as her second home and her cardiologist, Dr. Jane Newburger, as a friend and mentor. “I promised myself that someday I would come back to help kids like me.”

And so she has. After a number of years in Athens, first getting a theatre degree with a focus on comedy (“It’s harder to make people laugh than cry”), then working at an unrewarding corporate job, Nikoleta found herself at a wedding in Boston, chatting with a member of the faculty at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, Hellenic College’s sister school, who persuaded her to apply for admission to the college. Despite misgivings about going back to school after so many years, Nikoleta realized that she could finally fulfill that long-ago promise to herself and volunteer at Children’s while pursuing a degree in human development, with the ultimate goal of counseling sick children professionally.

Nikoleta has now spent almost four years as a volunteer at Children’s, helping young patients and their families (some here from Greece with support from the Hellenic Cardiac Fund) cope with the physical and emotional stresses of surgery and recovery. No one knows better than she does what it feels like to be in their situation, and no one will be prouder to see Nikoleta receive her diploma than Dr. Newburger, who remains—literally as well as figuratively—close to her heart.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

This summer, Tanenbaum, the International Peacemakers in Action, is partnering with the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America for its sixth Peacemakers in Action Working Retreat from July 9 to July 15 in Stony Point, New York. Tanenbaum is inviting four to six Seminarian volunteers to join the Peacemakers at their retreat to support the week-long program. The Peacemakers will gather from all over the world for a week of collaborative trainings, community building and outreach. The Peacemakers will also focus on growing their Peacemakers in Action Network and exploring ways to collaborate with one another after the working retreats. If you want to learn more about this opportunity or apply to volunteer, please contact Michael McShane at mmcShane@tanenbaum.org or go https://tanenbaum.org/peacemakers-in-action-network/meet-the-peacemakers.
CHRISTOPHER KOLENTSAS
HOLY CROSS STUDENT PROFILE

As Chris Kolentsas prepares to receive his Master of Divinity degree from Holy Cross, he reflects on the things that brought him to this point. “For as long as I can remember, there has been within me the call to serve God and country.” So it’s not surprising that Chris hopes to become a military chaplain. However, arriving at this moment has not been easy.

Growing up in Brockton, Massachusetts, as the son of a Greek immigrant father and Sicilian-American mother, Chris did not attend church regularly and was not, as he puts it, a poster boy for Orthodox youth. He wasn’t baptized until he turned 19—in a kiddy pool just like the guy in the movie, “My Big Fat Greek Wedding.”

Chris greatly admired his father, who joined the US Army shortly after his arrival in America and served in Korea, and he wanted to follow in his footsteps. “My plan was to enter the Army after high school, but my father, my hero, advised me to go to college instead.” With a strong interest in physical fitness, Chris earned a bachelor’s degree in exercise physiology and a master’s in human strength and conditioning, then began working as a personal trainer. During those years, his pull toward the Church and the military never waned, and he took heart from the words of a priest who told him that there was no hurry, “because the call will always be there.” Yet Chris felt more and more that “doors to Holy Cross were opening,” and other people, even total strangers, were picking up on that feeling too. “Several people randomly came up to me—at the gym, in the supermarket—and asked me if I was a priest.”

Before long, Chris enrolled at Holy Cross as a seminarian. Every day, when classes are in session, he leaves his wife, Kristen, and their two little girls well before dawn and makes the hour-long drive from Brockton to HCHC. Arriving on campus at 5:30 am, he begins by working out in the gym (“The body and the spirit are inseparable”), then doing homework and going to Chapel before his first class. “My time here at Holy Cross has been extremely challenging, but my family and I have not wavered in our commitment to serve God. Now I look forward to answering that lifelong call and, God willing, becoming a priest and a US Army chaplain.”

NEW ALTAR ITEMS

On Bright Tuesday, new altar items were received into Holy Cross Chapel, and blessed by Rev. Fr. Christopher T. Metropulos. All of the items, imported from Greece, were 100% donated through the generosity of numerous Presidential Newsletter readers.

May Almighty God, who inspires and sees all good works and almsgiving, bless you!
CHRIST IS RISEN!

ARCHBISHOP IAKOVOS MEMORIAL SERVICE

A trisagion was offered for His Eminence Archbishop Iakovos at his graveside outside Holy Cross Chapel on Sunday, April 10, the eleventh anniversary of his passing.

Fr. Christopher made special note of the fact that Archbishop Iakovos declined to be laid to rest amid the powerful and famous in the First Cemetery of Athens, as was widely expected. Instead, he is known to have said, ”I want to be buried at my school, where the students can visit me and pray for me.”