Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we welcome the advent of spring and continue our spiritual journey of renewal in Great Lent, we on the Holy Hill are actively engaged in transformation, not only of our campus, but of our hearts and minds toward Christ and service in His ministry.

During Spring Break, a record number of students traveled to such places as Mexico, Kenya, Guatemala, Turkey, Israel, Palestine, Thessaloniki, and New Orleans in joyful fulfillment of bringing the Gospel to all people. Photos and personal stories from these trips can be viewed both in this newsletter edition and online. We thank everyone who donated monies to make these missions possible, and we encourage your continued support.

On campus this past month, we welcomed His Eminence Geron Archbishop Demetrios, who led us in spiritual reflection on Clean Monday and further enriched our understanding of the forthcoming Holy and Great Council, at which our students will assist.

We continue to work diligently toward the construction of a new student center and anticipate breaking ground on the Feast of the Elevation of the Cross this September 14th. We thank wholeheartedly all who have come forward with initial donations to bring us closer to our goal.

Hellenic College Holy Cross is growing. We welcome all those who have already accepted places in what will be one of our largest incoming classes this fall. Glory to God! Space is still available, and we welcome all inquiries and your participation in assisting our active recruitment of the future of our Faith.

We love you, and pray for you at every service in Holy Cross Chapel. May God strengthen us all through his grace and love so that we may profit from Great Lent, and be worthy to celebrate Holy Pascha, both on earth and for life everlasting!

In Christ,

Rev. Christopher T. Metropulos, DMin
President
Clean Monday Retreat

Like all in the HCHC community who had the privilege of hearing Archbishop Demetrios speak in Holy Cross Chapel on Clean Monday, Fr. Luke Veronis, Adjunct Instructor of Missiology and Director of the Missions Institute of Orthodox Christianity, was moved to make careful note of His Eminence’s wise and edifying recommendations for Great Lent. Here they are, as distilled by Fr. Luke:

TEN SUGGESTIONS FOR GREAT LENT

1. Meditate throughout the forty days of Lent and reflect on how God has acted throughout history, how God has been active in His plan of salvation. Adam and Eve fell away from God and fell out of the Garden of Eden, but God has been active in bringing humanity back ever since. Of course, the culmination of God’s actions was through His crucifixion and resurrection, which we prepare to experience and celebrate at the end of our forty-day fast. So take time to reflect on God’s divine actions throughout history.

2. Take fasting seriously. Fasting is not simply a physical self-discipline, but has deep theological connections. It’s not by chance that Adam and Eve did NOT fast in the Garden of Eden, and thus were sent out. Yet our patriarchs Moses and Elijah DID FAST and when they fasted they encountered God. Jesus also fasted for 40 days before He began His public ministry. Fasting is a tool which we use to prepare ourselves to meet God. So let’s take our fasting seriously, and prepare ourselves to encounter God.

3. Great Lent is a time to pray. Yet many of us pray the same way we prayed when we were 10 or 15 years old. For many of us, our prayer life has stayed undeveloped. Let’s take the time during Lent to improve and enhance our prayer life – pray the prayers of the Great Fathers of the Church, or pray the Psalms. Let’s grow in our prayer life!

4. Sometimes we don’t take sin seriously. Yet throughout Scripture, the gravity of sin is taken seriously. In the Old Testament, there are four different kinds of sin: sin as a weakness, sin as a distortion, sin as a rebellion, and sin as an error. Throughout Scripture sin is a very serious issue. If we believe in God becoming human and willingly being crucified on the cross for the sins of the world, then we must understand the seriousness of sin. Let’s reflect on how sin has control in our lives, and how it has distorted the divine image within each of us.

5. Along with reflecting on sin, we are called to reflect upon repentance. And repentance must be taken seriously. This is a dominant theme throughout Great Lent. Of course God is ready to forgive us for our sins, but God’s forgiveness is connected to our repentance. Sincere repentance opens up our hearts to God’s forgiveness. Remember, Jesus began His public ministry by saying, “Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand.” Authentic repentance implies a radical change of mind and soul. During Lent, we need to be repenting, and radically changing the direction of our lives.

6. Lent is a time to reflect and read Holy Scripture. How close are we with the Bible? How well do we know the Bible? It is unthinkable for us as Christians not to think constantly about the Word of God. Lent is a time that calls us back to reflecting on Holy Scripture. Take the time to read the Bible every day.

7. Of course, the greatest focus of Lent should be on Jesus Christ Himself! Sometimes we can get fixated on fasting, on saying prayers, on going to Church, on our sins, on all the ritual of this holy season, yet in the midst of all we do, we forget about Jesus Christ Himself. Lent is above all else a time to draw closer to Christ! And we have the ultimate possibility for union with Christ through Holy Communion. The paradox of fasting is lifted through the act of eating His Body and His Blood. Isn’t it interesting that during the season of the Fast, the perfect communion with God is through eating.

8. Lent is also an opportunity to cultivate our human relationships in more authentic ways. The Lenten hymns emphasize the necessity of loving our neighbor and forging and restoring loving relationships with others, especially with the needy. Reach out to others during this holy season with acts of generous love.

9. Another central component of Great Lent is almsgiving. No Christian is exempt from giving alms. Everyone is called to give what they can to help others in need. Giving of alms is as central to Lent as is fasting and praying.

10. Ultimately, our Lenten season is supposed to be a time of transformative experience. This season is supposed to change us, to form us more and more into the likeness of Christ. All that we do throughout Lent should lead us into deeper communion with God, and into a transfiguration into His likeness!

Memory Eternal!

Our HCHC community is deeply saddened by the passing of Fr. George Nicholas Economos, who fell asleep in the Lord at the age of 93 on February 25, surrounded by family at his home in Boston, very close to our campus.

A native of Ohio, descended from thirteen generations of Orthodox priests, he began his studies for the priesthood in Pomfret, CT, the original location of Holy Cross. When the Seminary moved to Brookline, MA, he was part of the first class to graduate from this campus in 1947.

May his memory be eternal!
“There are so many blessings surrounding you every day. Enjoy them; rejoice in them all. The Heavens above are always blue for those who can turn the eyes of their soul towards them. And the nights for those who believe in God will be adorned with silver rays.”


The fourteen Autocephalous Orthodox Churches will gather at the Orthodox Academy on Crete June 16-27, 2016, for the long-anticipated Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church, which has been in the planning stages for several decades and will mark the first time that the heads and representative bishops of all the Autocephalous Orthodox Churches will come together for such a Council. His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew has wisely guided the recent planning phase and will chair the meetings on Crete.

On March 8 HCHC students and faculty heard Rev. Dr. Thomas FitzGerald, Professor of Church History and Historical Theology, and Dr. Lewis Patsavos, Professor of Canon Law Emeritus, discuss the historical and canonical aspects of the Council. On March 29 Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Clapsis, Archbishop Iakovos Professor of Orthodox Theology and Professor of Dogmatics, and Dr. Timothy Patitsas, Assistant Professor of Ethics, spoke about two of the six documents to be presented. On March 31 His Eminence Geron Archbishop Demetrios shared with the entire HCHC community his reflections on the long planning process and his hopes for the June gathering: “The world changes by the hour, but we pray for the Council’s success and ask you all to pray for us.”

Holy Cross student Sarah Jenks, who received the MTS in 2014, the Certificate in Byzantine Music in 2015, and expects the ThM in 2016, with the thesis “Chanting the Word: Biblical Exegesis in the Hymnography of St. John of Damascus,” will continue her studies in Greek hymnography in its liturgical context at Notre Dame next fall. Sarah will be a PhD candidate in Theology at Notre Dame in the Liturgical Studies department, with a Notebaert Fellowship. We congratulate Sarah for this wonderful achievement!
SPRING BREAK 2016

This year, 32 HCHC students traveled around the world on a variety of short-term mission trips during Spring Break. Here are some of their favorite memories from Kenya, Project Mexico, and OCF Real Break Thessaloniki.

1. Archbishop Makarios of Kenya and seminarians from Nairobi join HCHC students Niko Birbilis, Theophani Damianakis, Nicholas Manuel, Dean Franck, and Maria Linderman outside of church on the Sunday of Orthodoxy.

2. The Project Mexico team, accompanied by a few orphans, nail chicken wire onto the house as the third step in the building process. The entire group must work together in order to be successful.

3. Nicholas Manuel poses with a Turkana boy at the third village (in the bush) in Kenya.

4. Members of the 2016 OCF Real Break Thessaloniki group pose outside of ΦΑΡΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΚΟΣΜΟΥ (Lighthouse of the World).

5. Elektra Burnett and Moriah Moody at the beach after the second work day at Project Mexico.

6. Kristen Karavantos-Love holds one of the four children for whom the Project Mexico house was being built.

PHOTO CAPTIONS

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