

PRESIDENTIAL NEWSLETTER

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Christ is Risen! Χριστός ἀνέστη!

What other proclamation in human history has conveyed such a powerful message in so few words and been greeted with such joy? None! Like all of you, I am filled with joy this Bright Week as I look back on our common journey through Lent and the solemnity of Holy Week, culminating in the moment when Orthodox churches everywhere were illuminated with the message of the glorious Resurrection and the glow of countless candles.

In this issue you will read about some of our amazing students, alumni, faculty, and staff, all of whom embrace and advance our Orthodox Faith and the Hellenic intellectual legacy, each in his or her own unique way. You will also read about some of the noteworthy events that have taken place on our campus over the last month. I encourage you to check our online calendar regularly (www.hchc.edu/about/calendar) and see what's coming up at HCHC. Most of the things you will see listed—lectures, workshops, summer courses—are open to the public. We would love to have you learn with us and, of course, worship with us at any of the services that are also listed on the calendar.

With love in the Risen Christ,



Rev. Fr. Christopher T. Metropoulos, DMin
President

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HCHC STUDENTS PRESENT PAPERS AT ANNUAL PATRISTICS CONFERENCE

The fourteenth annual Archbishop Iakovos Graduate Student Conference in Patristic Studies took place at HCHC March 1-3. Sponsored by the Stephen and Catherine Pappas Patristic Institute of Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, the conference hosted doctoral, post-doctoral, and master's-level students from many academic institutions and several countries, including Greece and Romania. They presented and discussed 31 papers about the lives and writing of the Church Fathers. Among the participants were a current Holy Cross MDiv candidate, Philip Halikias, and four Holy Cross graduates: Christopher Helali (MTS), Jordan Parro (MDiv), Sarah Jenks Roumas (ThM, MTS), and Nicholas Roumas (MDiv).

Reflecting on the conference, Dr. Bruce Beck, Director of the Pappas Patristic Institute, said, "This conference continues to serve a vital function for graduate students who are preparing to be professors in the field of patristics and early Christianity, giving them the opportunity to share their work in a collegial setting and to develop relationships, many of which will last a lifetime. For some from non-Orthodox backgrounds, the conference also serves to give them an experience of Orthodox worship and the hospitality of our student body. Lastly, the papers that are presented provide inspiring resources for our own students who attend the sessions as time allows."



Nick and Sarah Roumas met as graduate students at Holy Cross, from which both graduated in 2016. Now married, they are pursuing doctorates in theology, Nick at Marquette University in Wisconsin, and Sarah at Notre Dame in Indiana. The schools are about a three-hour drive apart—not ideal for a young couple starting married life, but the Roumases take it in stride and Sarah points out that "once we finish our coursework and start writing our dissertations, we'll be able to spend more time together."

The Roumases returned to the Holy Hill in March for the annual Archbishop Iakovos Graduate Student Conference in Patristic Studies, at which both presented papers. Sarah's topic was "Sacrament and Sign in the Liturgy of Theodore of Mopsuestia" and Nick's was "The Image of Milk in Odes of Solomon 19." They enjoyed meeting and hearing other young scholars, as well as reconnecting with old friends and former professors.

While at Holy Cross, Nick and Sarah sang with the St. Romanos the Melodist Byzantine Choir and earned Certificates in Byzantine Music. The Certificate program prepares students to perform all musical parts of the daily liturgical cycle and sacraments of the Orthodox Church. Currently, Nick serves as protopsaltis at his church in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, while Sarah is protopsaltria at her church in South Bend, Indiana. Nick not only chants but also composes. The Archdiocesan School of Byzantine Music recently published *The Musical Ark*, a collection of Nick's English-language psaltic compositions. The book is available at Holy Cross Bookstore (www.holycrossbookstore.com). "There will be future work of this kind," he says, "and in addition to musical composition, I'm turning my attention to liturgical translation as well."

TUESDAY NIGHT ON THE HOLY HILL: OUR MISSION IN MICROCOSM

Nothing better illustrates the broad spectrum of courses offered at Holy Cross than this semester's Tuesday night class schedule. More than fifty students actively participate in four very different classes every Tuesday evening in the Skouras Classroom Building.



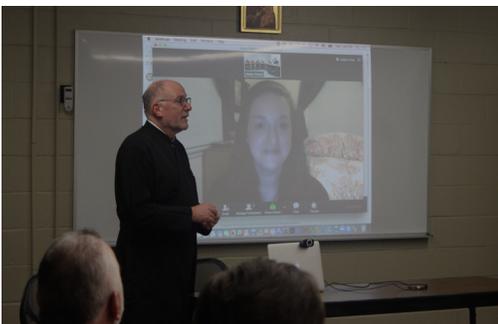
First, there is "**The Mother of God in Orthodox Theology**," a graduate seminar exclusively devoted to understanding the Theotokos as portrayed through patristic and Byzantine sermons, ecclesiastical poetry/hymnology, liturgy, and iconography. The course is taught by the V. Rev. Dr. Maximos Conostas, Senior Research Scholar at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology.



At the same time, just one room over, Rev. Fr. Luke A. Veronis, Director of the Missions Institute of Orthodoxy Christianity, is teaching "**The Missiology of Archbishop Anastasios**." The first part of the course takes place in the classroom and studies in depth the life, missiology, and writings of the individual many consider to be the greatest contemporary Orthodox missionary. At the end of the semester, the class continues with a 12-day mission outreach and pilgrimage to Albania, where students will have the opportunity not only to meet the missionaries and leaders of the Church of Albania, but also witness firsthand its resurrection.



Down the hall, "**Jews, Christians and Muslims Interacting**," the first interreligious course ever offered at Holy Cross, is being team-taught by Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Clapsis, Archbishop Iakovos Professor of Orthodox Theology at Holy Cross, Rabbi Or Rose, Director of the Center for Global Judaism at Hebrew College, and Imam Taymullah Abdur-Rahman, Islamic Society of Boston. Funded by a grant from the Association of Theological Schools, this course is designed to bring Jewish, Christian, and Muslim students together so they may interact and engage in fundamental theological topics considered important to establishing relationships between them. Engagement and interaction are stressed to the point that all students are invited to dine together before each class begins.



Finally, just up the hall, Rev. Dr. Anton C. Vrame, Director of the Department of Religious Education of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, leads the class "**Orthodox Ethos**." This course explores Orthodox Christian ethos (phronema), which is understood as not just the external forms of Orthodoxy such as vestments, icons, etc., but Orthodoxy's inner spirit and way of life. A primary goal of this course is for students to connect the Church's phronema with their own life's work and vocational goals. The year-long course is required for all first-year students in the Master of Divinity program and invites practitioners, clergy, and others to present their own personal experiences within the Orthodox Church.

As different as these four courses are, all of them advance the school's primary mission, which is "the formation and the education of the person within the life of an Orthodox Christian community." As Dr. James Skedros, Dean of Holy Cross, notes, "Tuesdays evenings during the 2018 spring semester are a mosaic of the educational and formational offerings of Holy Cross. The four courses, the faculty who teach them, and the students who are enrolled in them reflect the diversity of our institution and the Church."

STUDENTS VOLUNTEER WITH PROJECT MEXICO

For the fourth year in a row, a group of students from Hellenic College and Holy Cross spent their March spring break at St. Innocent Orphanage in Rosarito, Mexico, on a mission trip organized by the Missions Institute of Orthodox Christianity. The Institute is headed by Rev. Fr. Luke Veronis, who also teaches both undergraduates and graduate students at HCHC. The annual Project Mexico trip is a wonderful opportunity for students "to use their spring break in a positive way that helps others," says Fr. Luke.



Project Mexico is a nonprofit organization that builds homes for the poor and provides shelter and education for young boys at the orphanage. Last year's team from HCHC spent much of their time helping to construct a house, while this year's team primarily worked with the boys at the orphanage under the guidance of Rev. Fr. Nicholas Andruchow, St. Innocent's Chaplain and Associate Director. Here's what some of the participants had to say about their mission trip:

COLIN BARBERG, Hellenic College

Project Mexico was an incredible experience! One of the many things that struck me was seeing firsthand how destitute many people are. This was a reminder of how fortunate I am. The boys in the orphanage are extremely blessed to live in such a special community, centered on the Orthodox Faith. Also, for me, living without cellular reception for a week was a great time to zone in and reconnect with the real world. My wish is for everyone to experience this extraordinary place!

DANIELLE SHAHIN, Hellenic College

I really enjoyed getting to serve with both people from my home parish in Houston and new friends I've made at Hellenic. I think our groups bonded very well, which allowed us to support each other all week through various trials, and celebrate our final accomplishment of building a chicken coop. We got to spend a lot of time with the boys at the orphanage. We all struggled with communicating in Spanish, but we were able to bond with them over the universal language of sports and food. All in all, the experience allowed me to grow in previous relationships and make new ones. I am so thankful for the experience, and look forward to the next time I get to serve in Mexico.

HANS VOMEND, Holy Cross

I'm very interested in missionary work and have been on mission trips before, so Fr. Luke asked me to be the leader of the group. It's absolutely amazing to see how those children love the Orthodox Faith and the joy they show in every part of their lives, whether they're going to classes, going to services, or just playing. Fr. Nick is an inspiration to those boys and also to anyone who gets to spend time with him, as we were so fortunate to do.



ADMISSIONS ON TOUR

The HCHC Office of Admissions has been very busy lately, meeting with prospective students not only on campus but on the road in the US and Greece last month during spring break. Rev. Fr. Christopher Metropulos, HCHC's President, explains that, while all are welcome to visit HCHC and experience in person all of the elements that make our school unique, "we also like to take the school and its message on the road and engage with our young people in their home parishes."



Rev. Fr. Gregory Floor, Director of Admissions, and nine students representing both Hellenic College and Holy Cross visited 14 Orthodox parishes—not only GOA but also OCA and Antiochian—in eastern Pennsylvania and New Jersey from March 9-18. Fr. Greg reports that the tour was a great success. "We were blessed to offer youth ministry and talk about our beloved school to over 150 high school students and over 1000 parishioners in the span of ten days. Our talented team of students offered information sessions, musical interludes, and expressed their love for Christ and the one-of-a-kind community that is found at HCHC. They encouraged anyone interested to come see for themselves what makes our school so special and to consider applying."

Concurrently with the domestic Spring Break Tour, Vanessa Constantinidis, Associate Director of Admissions, was in

Athens and Thessaloniki, Greece, on an equally successful tour. Traveling with Vanessa was Marc Taney, Director of Women's Basketball and Head Coach at Newbury College, with which HCHC has recently formed a partnership for Division III athletics. "We visited eight schools and met with over 90 students, 20 college counselors and advisors, and various individuals looking to collaborate with HCHC in the future," Vanessa says. "Everyone was very interested to hear about all the new academic and extracurricular opportunities at HCHC."

As Fr. Christopher has said, "International students are a great asset to our community, as they enrich both the academic and social experience for the entire student body with their diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. We actively recruit students from all over the globe, but we naturally have a special connection to Greece."

MEET DESPINA PETRIDES HELLENIC COLLEGE CLASS OF 2018



When Despina was looking at colleges, her family encouraged her to think seriously about Hellenic College. Both her father, Fr. Theodore, and her brother, Fr. Alexey, had earned their Master of Divinity degrees at Holy Cross, so they were knowledgeable and enthusiastic about HCHC. Despina

herself had recently had a wonderful time on our campus with the Office of Vocation & Ministry's summer CrossRoad program. However, she ultimately decided not to apply to Hellenic.

"I made some great friends at CrossRoad and liked the whole atmosphere of the school, but for college I really wanted to focus on music," she explains. Despina had studied piano and voice for years and was hoping for a musical career. "So I went to Albright College in Reading, Pennsylvania, not far from my home in Stroudsburg, as a Music Industry Studies major. I loved it there. But then I heard about the Semester of Faith option at Hellenic and thought that would be a great way to experience the school short-term."

Despina arrived on the Holy Hill for her Semester of Faith fully expecting to return to Albright. She never went back. "I just could not leave. This was where I belonged. This school really feels like home to me." Despina is a Human Development major who has found several ways to pursue music at HCHC, as well as another keen interest, teaching young children. In her sophomore year, she began teaching music at the Theophany School, an Orthodox Christian preschool and kindergarten. Now she is doing her required senior practicum at Theophany, at the end of which she will be certified to teach in Massachusetts. She has also taken courses in Byzantine chant and sung with HCHC's St. Romanos the Melodist Byzantine Choir through most of her time at Hellenic.

Of the many factors that persuaded Despina to complete her BA at Hellenic, she mentions two things as being especially important to her. "The classes—the small size and the quality of the teaching make the academic experience very rewarding. Number one for me, though, is the Chapel. Not only because of the services, which are always special, but as a place where I can go on my own and pray or just feel uplifted by the beauty around me."

MEET NICHOLAS (NIKO) BIRBILIS HOLY CROSS CLASS OF 2018



Seven years ago, Niko Birbilis had a sudden change of heart that changed the course of his life. After graduating from high school in his home town of Moorestown, New Jersey, he was planning to study physics in college. "I was set on it and had a great interest in physics," he recalls. With an equally strong interest in and talent for music—he plays five instruments—Niko also wanted to study music seriously and had even thought about becoming a professional musician.

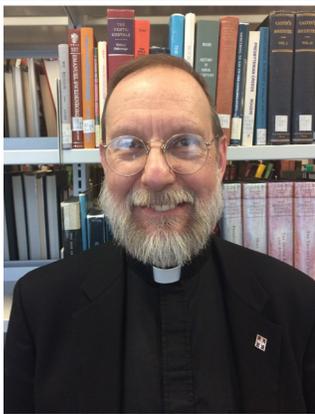
Then "at the very last minute," Niko found himself considering a radically different path. He had been actively involved in his church all his life, "from altar boy to GOYA and anything else I could get my hands on." He had also attended the Metropolis of New Jersey's summer camp from the age of thirteen, where he got to know some students from Hellenic College Holy Cross. "Something from that experience stuck with me and didn't go away," he says.

To his own surprise and his family's, Niko applied to Hellenic College and entered the Religious Studies A program, which prepares male undergraduate students of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America for future service in the Church. Those who, like Niko, enroll at Holy Cross after graduating from Hellenic can complete the Master of Divinity degree in three years, rather than the customary four.

The life of a seminarian is highly focused and at times intense, but Niko has managed to pack an amazing number of other activities, both academic and extracurricular, into his seven years on the Holy Hill. He has, for example, participated in mission trips to Albania, Indonesia, and Kenya. "Before coming here," he says, "I had no conception of missionary work, but it became a hugely important thing to me." He is also earning a Certificate in Byzantine Music while working toward his MDiv and elected to write a master's thesis, which few seminarians do, on sacred architecture.

As he prepares to graduate from Holy Cross next month and begin working for the Orthodox Christian Mission Center in St. Augustine, Florida, Niko is grateful for "the relationships I've formed here. A couple of people have become like brothers to me."

FACULTY PROFILE: THE VERY REVEREND EDWARD HUGHES



For the past decade, Fr. Hughes has served HCHC as Adjunct Instructor of Antiochian Studies, directing the Antiochian seminarian program at Holy Cross and teaching beginning, intermediate, and advanced Arabic. Competence in the language is required of any seminarian intent on serving the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese as a priest, but a good many other

students have also chosen to learn Arabic. As a seminarian, James Hargrave is studying liturgics and Arabic with Fr. Hughes and says, "Fr. Ed is a fascinating and engaging professor, but I learn the most from observing his pastoral approach to everyone whose paths cross with his."

Growing up Lutheran, Fr. Hughes knew little about Orthodoxy until he went to college and began studying Near Eastern culture and archaeology. "I took Hebrew,

Aramaic, Greek, and Arabic," he says. "We were encouraged to spend a month on a dig, but also traveled around Syria, Jordan, and Israel. When I went to Greece and Istanbul, I saw the Orthodox in their native habitat, so to speak, and developed a real interest in Orthodoxy." Back in the States, he began attending an Orthodox church, eventually became Orthodox, and ultimately was ordained as a priest. Since 1989, Fr. Hughes has served the parish of St. George Antiochian Church in Lawrence, Massachusetts. He is the spiritual advisor to the Diocese of Worcester and New England Antiochian Women, Dean of the New England Deanery, Vicar General of the Western Rite Commission, and Chair of the Antiochian Archdiocese's Department of Liturgics and Translations.

Fr. Hughes has familial as well as professional ties to HCHC. His daughter Sarah earned two degrees from Holy Cross: the Master of Theological Studies in 2009 and the Master of Theology in 2012. While studying for the latter, Sarah met her future husband, Philip Begley, who was in the Master of Divinity program. The Begleys are now in Franklin, Tennessee, where Fr. Philip serves as Senior Priest at St. Ignatius Orthodox Church.

DR. DOVA DELIVERS LECTURE MARKING GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY



On March 22, Dr. Stamatia (Mata) Dova, Professor of Classics and Modern Greek Studies at Hellenic College, delivered the annual HCHC lecture in honor of Greek Independence Day. An audience of students, faculty, and staff heard the thought-provoking talk, entitled "The Poetics of Homecoming: Hellenism and the 1896 Olympics."

Dr. Dova discussed the significance of March 25, Greek Independence Day, as the opening day of the first Olympiad in modern times, sharing the results of her extensive research and presenting archival photographs. As she stated at the

beginning of the lecture, "The symbolism of an opening ceremony on March 25th could not have been deeper: the 1896 Athens Olympic Games epitomized an ideology of validation and revival for both Hellenism and world athletics; they also exemplified the reinstated bond between ancient and modern Greece, a topic of considerable debate." Dr. Dova invited the audience to examine in depth the language used in several poems, both ancient and modern, including the "Olympic Hymn"—sung to this day at every opening ceremony—as they relate to Greek ideals and identity.

Dr. Dova will be presenting her research at two conferences this summer, the first of which will take place at Olympia, Greece, in July under the co-sponsorship of the International Olympic Academy and the Center for Hellenic Studies. The Center is affiliated with Harvard University, where Dr. Dova earned her doctorate in 2001.

SUMMER ENRICHMENT AT HCHC

Hellenic College Holy Cross is offering a variety of summer programs this year, with something for everyone, from teenagers to mature scholars. Here is what will be happening on the Holy Hill:

Summer Courses / May 22-June 19

Undergraduate level:

- The Philosophy of Evil
- World War II: State, Society, and Ideology

Graduate level:

- Prayer in the New Testament and Early Christianity

Kallinikeion Institute / May 22-June 19

An intensive Modern Greek language program with beginning and intermediate courses

Diaconate Program / June 24-July 1

An educational and formational initiative of the Holy Eparchial Synod of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America and Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology for individuals interested in serving the GOA as deacons

Pappas Patristic Institute / June 25-29

A unique opportunity to study and discuss classic Patristic texts through small-group study and faculty lectures

Training Laborers for the Lord / June 25-29

A five-day program in which Orthodox Christians of all jurisdictions can deepen both their knowledge of the Faith and their spiritual lives

- Introduction to Orthodox Spirituality
- Reading Scripture through the Church Year

CrossRoad Summer Institute / June 16-26 and July 2-12 at HCHC, July 21-31 in Chicago

A ten-day academic institute that prepares high school juniors and seniors to make important life decisions and connect with the Orthodox Christian theological and spiritual tradition

Contact HCHC Registrar Jay Ostrosky at 617-850-1261 or jostrosky@hchc.edu for more information on course content and how to register.

HELLENIC COLLEGE HOLY CROSS

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