

# PRESIDENTIAL NEWSLETTER

MAY/JUNE 2018 | Volume IV, Issue 5



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Have you ever wondered about the difference between the words 'commencement' and 'graduation'? At this time of year, both are in frequent use, often interchangeably. But there is a difference. 'Graduation' places the emphasis on the end of an academic experience, whereas 'commencement' points toward the future.

Here at HCHC, we have just celebrated our 76th Commencement, honoring the stellar achievements of our wonderful undergraduate and graduate students, but most importantly, looking forward to what they will do with the education they have received here.

In my words to them, as they sat before me in their caps and gowns, I stressed the vital importance—at every stage of life—of asking the right questions. Allow me to share with you some of what I told them:

"To live a life with and in Christ, we must be bold to ask ourselves the right questions so as to obtain the correct answers. Wrong questions produce wrong answers. The question "Who am I?" may be better said within us as "Who am I to become?"

"As you graduate today, I encourage you to be conscious of your choices in life. To be all that God has created you to be...Not to choose self-gratification and self-advancement over the acceptance of life's circumstances and gratitude for the gift of free will that allows us to make our own individual choices and live with them."

"Stay true to the person, the unique individual, whom God created you to be and He will never fail you, because His Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, will always be within you."

This issue is full of news and photos that will give you a vivid sense of all that has been happening lately on the Holy Hill, culminating with Commencement. I hope you will enjoy reading it, and I hope to see many of you during the Clergy-Laity Congress in Boston. We are planning a special day at HCHC for all delegates on July 3 and will share the details with you very soon!

With love in Christ,

*Fr. Christopher*

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

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## HCHC CELEBRATES ITS 76<sup>TH</sup> COMMENCEMENT



Hellenic College Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology conducted its 76th Commencement exercises on Saturday, May 19, 2018. Some 600 people filled the Pappas Gymnasium to witness the impressive ceremony. In addition to His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, Geron of America, these included His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios of Boston, His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco, His Eminence Metropolitan Savas of Pittsburgh, His Grace Bishop Andonios of Phasiane, all alumni of Holy Cross, and numerous members of HCHC's Board of Trustees.

Archbishop Demetrios offered the invocation, after which the Holy Cross St. Romanos the Melodist Byzantine Choir led the singing of both the Greek and American national anthems. Rev. Fr. Christopher Metropoulos, HCHC President, then delivered the salutation.

"This is a holy and proud day not only for our school," he said, "but most importantly, for Orthodoxy in America and our society. The young men and women receiving degrees and certificates today will go forward as new spiritual warriors for Christ and leaders in their chosen fields. They are members of the HCHC family and we want them to know that this will always be their home."

Greetings and congratulations were offered by Stratos Efthymiou, Consul General of Greece in Boston, and Jeanie Ranglas, First Vice President of the National Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society, who assured the graduates that the 25,000-member organization "will always be with you on your journey."

Valedictorians Theofanis J. Rauch, Hellenic College, and Jeremy E. Troy, Holy Cross, addressed their classmates with words of encouragement for the future and gratitude for the academic and spiritual education they received at HCHC. As Theofanis said, "We have received an education that has taught us about both our world and our Faith in a way that has organically combined the two." Jeremy also highlighted this synergy, saying that "an education at Holy Cross is all about three things: information, formation, and transformation."

Before the conferral of degrees upon the graduates of Hellenic College and Holy Cross, honorary doctorates were awarded to three individuals who have contributed greatly to the work of the Church. John P. Calamos, Sr., has been a generous benefactor to organizations such as Leadership 100, the Faith Foundation, and the National Hellenic Museum. Efstathios (Steve) G. Valiotis has generously supported his parish of Holy Cross and St. Michael's Home in New York, among many worthy causes in the United States and his native Greece, and has created employment opportunities for hundreds of people employed in his diverse businesses. Both Mr. Calamos and Mr. Valiotis received the honorary Doctor of Humanities degree from Hellenic College.

During this year's Commencement, one of our honorees made statements in his address concerning attitudes related to the Mother Church, which, however, were not in keeping with the spirit of the School. The views and opinions expressed in this case were his alone and do not reflect the beliefs, feelings, and teachings on campus. HCHC affirms her allegiance to the Mother Church of Constantinople, His All HOLINESS Patriarch BARTHOLOMEW, and the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Rev. Fr. Anthony Coniaris received the honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Holy Cross, his alma mater, for more than sixty years of devoted service to the Church as a priest, homilist, author, and publisher.

Before offering the closing benediction, His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios exhorted the new graduates to be courageous in spreading the Light of Christ and to remember that they will never be alone "because He is with you." He conveyed to them the blessing and love of His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, and promised to share with him the "vigor, hope, and dynamism" manifested by all at Hellenic College Holy Cross, which is a four-year college, school of theology, and seminary under the aegis of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.

See more photos on pages 4 and 5. Additional photos and video of HCHC's 76th Commencement exercises are available online at [www.hchc.edu/commencement](http://www.hchc.edu/commencement).



## HCHC HONORS 2018 ALUMNI OF THE YEAR

The HCHC Alumni Association honored two of its own as Alumni of the Year at a celebratory dinner on Thursday, May 17. Over the years since they graduated, Rev. Fr. Seraphim Dedes and Rev. Archdeacon Panteleimon Papadopoulos have faithfully served the Greek Orthodox Church in America in noteworthy ways and brought credit to their alma mater.



Fr. Seraphim received his Master of Divinity degree from Holy Cross in 2006, prior to which he was the Superior of St. Gregory Palamas Monastery in Ohio. He is widely known for his work in translating and transcribing Byzantine chant into English. He became the music director at St. Nektarios Greek Orthodox Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, in 2007. There he began meeting the challenge set by His Eminence Metropolitan Alexis of Atlanta to help liturgical music evolve to meet the needs of predominantly English-speaking Orthodox Christians in America. In 2012, with the blessing of His Eminence, Fr. Seraphim founded AGES Initiatives, Inc., a nonprofit enterprise which promotes and sustains the Church's music ministry through current and emerging technologies.

Archdeacon Panteleimon entered Holy Cross in 1998 and completed his Master of Divinity degree in 2001, graduating as Valedictorian. He was ordained to the diaconate in July of that year by His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, Geron of America, and began serving as deacon to His Eminence, which he continues to do to this day. Archdeacon Panteleimon has a great love for Byzantine music and, with the blessing

of His Eminence, helped establish the Archdiocesan School of Byzantine Music and the Archdiocesan Byzantine Choir, which has performed both nationally and internationally.

In his welcome to the audience, which included the 25th reunion class of 1993 and the tenth of 2008, HCHC President Rev. Fr. Christopher Metropoulos quoted from the speech delivered by Bishop (later Archbishop) Athenagoras Cavadas of blessed memory at the school's first graduation in 1942: "You will be, wherever you are, one with the school. The school will live within you. And you will never be separated from the school. As long as the school lives, you will be a part of its life."

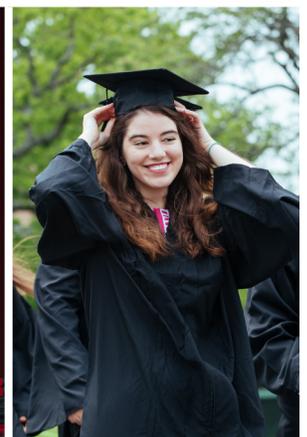




# COMMENCEMENT 2018

Scenes from Commencement Week on the Holy Hill

View video and browse additional photos at [www.hhc.edu/commencement](http://www.hhc.edu/commencement).





## COMMENCEMENT WEEKEND ORDINATIONS



Rarely, if ever, has the weekend of HCHC's Commencement included multiple ordinations in Holy Cross Chapel, but this year there were three. Two took place during the Archieratical Divine Liturgy on Saturday, May 19, prior to the Commencement exercises. His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, Geron of America, was the principal celebrant. Other hierarchs participating in the service were His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios of Boston, His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco, His Eminence Metropolitan Savas of Pittsburgh, and His Grace Bishop Andonios of Phasiane. The Chapel was overflowing with family, friends, students, and colleagues of the ordinands, who are among the most beloved and respected members of our community. Also present at the service was the new Consul General of Greece in Boston, Stratos Efthymiou.

First, Antonios Papathanasiou, HCHC Dean of Students and a graduate of both Hellenic College (BA 1998) and Holy Cross (MDiv 2017), was ordained to the holy diaconate. He descends from a long line of priests going back to 1750, including most recently his father, Rev. Fr. Athanasios of blessed memory. Present to witness the moving ceremony were his mother, Presvytera Chryssi, and his sister, Theodora, who traveled here from their home in Thessaloniki, Greece.

In his speech, Rev. Dn. Antonios expressed gratitude to everyone present and to those present in spirit--his many forefather priests and his own beloved father. "I am certain, beyond any doubt, that the blessed soul of my father is right now near me, shining with joy," he said. He concluded by saying, "May God bless this land, our homelands, our school, the local Metropolis of Boston, the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, and the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, where we, the local members of the diaspora, belong."

The second ordination that morning was of Rev. Dn. Michael Tishel, Assistant Director of the Office of Vocation & Ministry, Director of the CrossRoad Summer Institute, and Lecturer of Religious Studies at Hellenic College, to the holy priesthood. He too is the son of a priest, Very Rev. Fr. Patrick Tishel, who serves as rector of Holy Resurrection Orthodox Church in Allston, Massachusetts, and participated in the service.

In his address, Rev. Fr. Michael described himself as "a man whose heart is brimming with gratitude for a multitude of family and friends," especially his wife, Catherine, and children Zoe and Isaac, who "will be the beating heart of any ministry that God brings my way," and as someone who from childhood wanted to emulate his father. His final words of thanks were for Archbishop Demetrios: "Each time I hear your words, Your Eminence, I am spiritually and intellectually nourished...Thank you for your archpastoral kindness and hospitality."

On the following day, Rev. Dn. Antonios was ordained to the holy priesthood by His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco, who was HCHC Dean of Students when he was an undergraduate at Hellenic College and has remained a beloved mentor.

To Rev. Fr. Antonios and Rev. Fr. Michael, the entire HCHC community joyfully proclaims "AXIOI!"



## GREAT VESPERS AND STAVROPHORIA



Congratulations to our newest Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology graduates, who received their crosses during Great Vespers and Stavrophoria on Friday, May 18. Members of the class of 2018 are pictured here with His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, Geron of America, His Eminence Metropolitan Savas of Pittsburgh, His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco, His Eminence Metropolitan Nathanael of Chicago, and Rev. Fr. Christopher Metropulos, HCHC President.

The cross bestowed upon each graduate is rich with sacred symbolism. It depicts the eagle associated with the Apostle and Evangelist St. John the Theologian, patron saint of our School of Theology. The eagle holds open the Bible, with the first words of the Gospel according to St. John inscribed there: "In the beginning was the Word." The letters embossed on each arm of the cross are the first of each word in the school's name as rendered in Greek: Theological School [of the] Holy Cross.

## SAVVAS BOURNELIS WINS HELLENIC COLLEGE HUMANITIES PAPER PRIZE



Savvas Bournelis has just been named the inaugural winner of the Hellenic College Humanities Paper Prize, a new award given by the faculty of the Literature and History program. A Religious Studies major from Canton, Ohio, Savvas won the prize with his paper, "The Truth of the Sinking of the Lusitania," which argues that British and American agents engineered the sinking in 1918 to draw the United States into World War I. Dr. Demetrios Katos, Dean of Hellenic College, describes the paper as "full of eye-opening historical detail and heartbreaking insights into the machinations of man."

Asked how he chose the subject of his paper, Savvas says, "The controversial mysteriousness surrounding the subject caught my interest, which grew more and more during the research process. Being recognized as the first-ever recipient of the Humanities Paper Prize is a humbling and exciting honor."

# ANSWERING THE CALL: DR. VAN COOTS

The Hellenic College Holy Cross community had the pleasure and privilege of hearing Dr. Norvell Vandervall (Van) Coots in conversation with Rev. Fr. Christopher Metropulos, HCHC President, at the Maliotis Cultural Center on April 12. The program was part of the "Answering the Call" speaker series in which, as Fr. Christopher explains, "We invite Orthodox Christians who are doing extraordinary things to share their experiences with us."

Dr. Coots is President and CEO of both Holy Cross Health and the Maryland Region of Trinity Health, a national not-for-profit Catholic health system. Prior to joining Holy Cross Health in 2016, Dr. Coots retired from the United States Army as a Brigadier General. His final assignment was as Commanding General, Regional Health Command Europe, and as Command Surgeon for the US Army Europe and 7th Army, with his headquarters in Sembach, Germany. From 2012-2013, Dr. Coots was deployed to combat as the Surgeon General for US Forces in Afghanistan and Medical Advisor to the Commander of the International Security and Assistance Force Joint Command (NATO). Over the course of his long and distinguished military career, he served around the world and commanded at all levels, including company, clinic, hospital, and medical center. His numerous awards and decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal, the Defense Superior Service Medal, and the Legion of Honor medal, France's highest honor.

Asked what the greatest benefit of military service had been for him personally, Dr. Coots replied, "The opportunity for service to others, service above self. To see a need and meet that need." He remains deeply concerned about the mental as well as physical health of those who have served in the military, especially in combat. "No one goes to war and comes back the same person," he said. While in Afghanistan, "Every day and every night I said a prayer of thanksgiving that I had lived another day."

Of all the countries Dr. Coots visited while based in Germany, none had--and continues to have--a more profound impact on his life than Moldova. With a population of only five million, Moldova had



11,500 orphans institutionalized in 65 Soviet-era facilities when Dr. Coots first went there in 2008 as the leader of a medical team sent to immunize children against hepatitis. The team visited all 65 orphanages and planted the seeds of what became Project Moldova, which over the past decade has transformed the lives of thousands of children.

It has also transformed Dr. Coots. His first experiences among the orphans gave him "a renewed sense of self" and he has made it his "mission in life to change their lives." On being told that most Moldovans are Orthodox Christians, Dr. Coots began learning about their faith and visited a monastery where an elderly monk told him, "You need to be Orthodox." In a separate conversation, another monk told him the same thing. Dr. Coots was startled but intrigued. "My faith journey started when I was a child, always searching for the right fit." Gradually, he realized that he had found what he been looking for and became Orthodox, taking the name of Panteleimon, "the patron saint of doctors."

## HELLENIC COLLEGE HOLY CROSS

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