

# ENCYCLICAL

## The Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross

*To the Most Reverend Hierarchs, the Reverend Priests and Deacons, the Monks and Nuns, the Presidents and Members of the Parish Councils of the Greek Orthodox Communities, the Distinguished Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Day, Afternoon, and Church Schools, the Philoptochos Sisterhoods, the Youth, the Hellenic Organizations, and the entire Greek Orthodox Family in America*

### Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

On this Feast of the Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross, we commemorate the finding of the holy Cross of our Lord by Saint Helen when she visited Jerusalem in the year 326 to venerate holy places related to the life, ministry, Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ. Confirmed as the Precious Cross by healing a dying woman who touched it, the Cross was venerated by Saint Helen and by all present, proclaiming "Lord have mercy" as Patriarch Makarios lifted it up for all to see. This glorious and blessed event led to the institution of the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross and our annual celebration of its power of redemption and as a symbol of reconciliation through Christ.

The response of the faithful to the finding of the Cross and its elevation by the Patriarch was filled with joy and thanksgiving to God; and while we fast on this day in recognition of the sacrifice made by our Lord on the Cross, it is a day and a celebration that offers a witness to the world of the power of God's love for us. We lift up the Cross because while it was used as an instrument of torture and indignity, it brought honor and glory to God. It was used as a means of ending life, but it became entrance to eternity. It was used as a violent weapon, but for believers it became a weapon of true peace. The Cross, a symbol of suffering and defeat, through Christ it became a symbol of hope and victory. Instead of death, our Lord through the Cross brought us life and abundance of life.

On this feast, the elevation of the Cross is a beautiful and mighty witness of the Gospel of truth and love. It is a testimony of the power of God's grace and of the salvation that is offered to all through faith in Christ. This feast is also a call to each of us to look to the Cross and to turn the eyes of our soul towards the Cross and to lift it up for others to see. We lift up the Cross of Christ when we are not hesitant or afraid to identify ourselves as Orthodox Christians in any context or environment. We lift up the Cross when our homes and families become a dwelling of Christ. We lift up the Cross for all to see the power of faith and grace when we live in the way of the Cross, that is when we sacrifice for the will of God and the needs of others, when we live in love and humility, and our lives constantly show the way to Christ.

As we commemorate this Feast and reflect on the witness of the Cross, it is also our annual tradition to offer our prayers and support for our beloved Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology. In lifting the Cross and offering a witness of the Gospel, our Schole of the Holy Cross has a vital role in the life of the Church and our Holy Archdiocese. At this sacred institution those who have taken up the Cross of our Lord and followed His call to the Holy Priesthood and ministry receive the guidance

## Ground Blessing Ceremony for St. Nicholas Set for Oct. 18

NEW YORK – A ground blessing ceremony for the St. Nicholas National Shrine at the World Trade Center is set for noon, Saturday Oct. 18.

The ceremony will include a combined prayer service of blessing of the site (agiasmos), a doxology (a service of thanksgiving) and a memorial service for the victims of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

The small Church of St. Nicholas, established in 1916, was obliterated on Sept. 11, 2001 when the South Tower fell.

The new St. Nicholas National Shrine will be rebuilt only a short distance away at 130 Liberty Street, overlooking the 9/11 Memorial.

Archbishop Demetrios will preside with the participation of the Archdiocese Holy Eparchial Synod.

Attendees will include dignitaries and city officials, New York and New Jersey state officials, chaplains and interfaith representatives, family members of victims of 9/11, representatives of Archdiocese institutions and organizations and many faithful Orthodox Christians.

## HCHC Pres. Fr. Triantafilou to Retire

BROOKLINE, Mass. – HCHC President Fr. Nicholas C. Triantafilou announced at the Board of Trustees Executive Committee meeting on Sept. 13 of his plans to retire at the end of his third five-year term on June 30, 2015.

Archbishop Demetrios, who chaired the meeting, said that Fr. Triantafilou's retirement was for reasons of health. His Eminence accepted his decision with "profound regret." The Archbishop expressed his gratefulness to Fr. Triantafilou for all that he has done during his 15-year tenure as president of Hellenic College Holy Cross, the longest tenure of any president of the institution, and in particular for his faithful ministry, tireless efforts, and exceptional Christ-centered leadership.

Trustees lauded Fr. Nick for his out-

standing presidential accomplishments, his empathetic and collaborative managerial style, the establishment of several centers and institutes, his pastoral interaction with students, and significant fundraising. The trustees promised to work with the president to ensure a smooth transition as he completes his final year.

The Archbishop, as Board of Trustees chairman and in accordance with Hellenic College Holy Cross Bylaws and governing practices, immediately announced the formation of a presidential search committee.

Fr. Nicholas C. Triantafilou has served as HCHC president since 2000. Several events and activities will be scheduled throughout the academic year to honor Fr. Nicholas' enormous contribution to Hellenic College Holy Cross.

## CLERGY UPDATE

### Ordinations to the Diaconate

*Strosnider, Polycarp (Eric)* – Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta, Annunciation of the Theotokos Monastery, Reddick, Fla. 03/25/12

*Triant, Daniel* – Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco, Annunciation Church, Modesto, Calif. 08/03/14

*Zaharis, Zacharias (Harry)* – Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos, St. Nectarios Church, Palatine, Ill. 08/24/14

### Assignments

*Dn. Polycarp Strosnider* – St. George Cathedral, Greenville, S.C. 07/01/12

*Fr. Jon Boukis* – Assumption Church, Louisville, Ky 08/01/14

*Dn. Daniel Triant* – St. Demetrios Church, Seattle 08/04/14

*Fr. Theodore Toppes* – St. Gregory the Theologian Church, Mansfield, Mass. 08/15/14

*Fr. Thomas Alatzakis* – Assumption Church, East Moline, Ill. 09/01/14

*Fr. Sotirios Malamis* – Ascension of Our Lord Church, Lincolnshire, Ill. 09/01/14

*Fr. Manuel Burdusi* – St. Theodore Church, Lanham, Md. 09/15/14

*V. Rev. Fr. Nektarios Cottros* – Sts. Peter & Paul Church, Frederick, Md. 09/15/14

*Fr. Demetrios Sean Govostes* – Sts.

Mary Magdalene and Markella Church, Darlington, Md. 09/15/14

*Fr. Panagiotis Lekkas* – St. Demetrios Church, Upper Darby, Pa. 09/15/14

*Fr. Peter Papanikolaou* – Dormition of the Virgin Mary Church, Winchester, Va. 09/15/14

*Fr. Peter Zougras* – St. John the Theologian Cathedral, Tenafly, NJ 09/15/14

*Fr. George Dokos* – St. Mary's Church, Minneapolis 10/01/14

### Offikia

*Fr. Mark A. Leondis* – Office of Protopresbyter, bestowed by Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta 02/21/14

### Retired Clergy

*Rev. Fr. Charles Joanides* – 09/01/14

### Medical Leave

*Fr. James Gordon* – 08/17/14

### Suspensions

*Fr. George P. Savas* – 07/22/14

### Returned to status of Layman

*V. Rev. Fr. Constantine Mersinas* – 07/15/14

### New Communities

*St. Mark Church*, Belleview, Fla. – Metropolitan of Atlanta 08/19/14

### Change of Address

To submit a change of address:

Contact Soula Podaras

at 212.774.0235

e-mail: [spodaras@goarch.org](mailto:spodaras@goarch.org)

fax: 212.774.0239.

Or regular mail to:

Orthodox Observer,

8 E. 79th St., New York, NY 10075-0192

Be sure to include old address, new address and name of parish.

### Questions about submitting news and photos:

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# ENCYCLICAL

## The New Ecclesiastical Year

*To the Most Reverend Hierarchs, the Reverend Priests and Deacons, the Monks and Nuns, the Presidents and Members of the Parish Councils of the Greek Orthodox Communities, the Distinguished Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Day, Afternoon, and Church Schools, the Philoptochos Sisterhoods, the Youth, the Hellenic Organizations, and the entire Greek Orthodox Family in America*

### Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we commemorate this Feast of the Indiction, the beginning of the new ecclesiastical year, we ask our great and merciful God to "bless the crown of this year which His goodness has allowed us to begin" (Hymn of Orthros). It is His goodness and grace that has brought us to the beginning of one more ecclesiastical year and to another blessed cycle of the feasts and observances of our Holy Orthodox Faith. In anticipation of the marvelous and wonderful things our Lord will accomplish in our lives, parishes, and families, we look forward to the blessings that will come through our worship, prayer, and service.

This time of year is also the beginning of the academic year when our children, youth, and young adults return to school. In addition, it is the time in association with the new Church year and the academic year that our religious, Greek education, and day school programs begin in parishes throughout our Holy Archdiocese. These ministries are vital in teaching and nurturing our spiritual and cultural heritage among our youth, but they are also essential to the well-being of the Orthodox Christian family.

With our continued emphasis on the theme of our recent Clergy-Laity Congress, "The Orthodox Christian Family: A Dwelling of Christ and a Witness of His Gospel," we begin this ecclesiastical year reflecting on the priority of strengthening families through the educational ministries of our parishes. It is also a time to focus on the important role of Christian education in the home.

In our sacred work of teaching, we must affirm that education in the parish and in the home involve a collaborative and committed effort on the part of clergy, teachers and parents. In addition to offering knowledge about our faith and Hellenic culture or teaching basic academic disciplines, programs in the parish should emphasize the identity of the Orthodox Christian family and offer resources that guide families in staying connected to God and the Church. Through worship, prayer, reflection, and teaching in the home, families should reinforce the guidance received through the educational ministries of the parish, nurturing family members in the faith and becoming a kat'oikon ekklesia – the Church in the home (Romans 16:5, Colossians 4:15).

The Orthodox Christian family that is strengthened and guided by the educational ministry of the parish becomes a dwelling of Christ and a witness of the Gospel. The members of the family are connected to God and to the primary mission of the Church. Children and youth are nurtured in the faith. They connect the values, ideals, and treasures of their cultural heritage to life today as an Orthodox family. And the family receives the wisdom and spiritual guidance needed to seek the potential of each member, to mature in Christ, to serve others, and to bring honor and glory to God.

As we reflect on the beginning of the