CROSSROADS

Sunday's Scriptures:

Epistle:

Ephesians 5:9-19

Gospel:

John 1:35-51

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Shop Rite Cards

Thank you to everyone in the parish who continue to purchase the Shop Rite cards every week. If you already do your grocery shopping at Shop Rite, please consider purchasing a card or two. They are available from **Larry Skvir** every Sunday.

Come and See

by Fr. Thomas Hopko

[*Note: In this reflection Fr. Hopko is focusing on the beginning of Advent, the feast of St. Philip (on November 14) and his encounter with Jesus captured in Philip's words about Jesus: "Come and See."*

On Sunday, we'll hear this Gospel story again, but we'll be interested in how these words, "Come and See," were initially experienced by the Apostle Andrew – known as the "first-called," whose feast will be on Monday, November 30.

*It should also be noted that while the Orthodox Church does not traditionally use the term Advent for the Christmas fast, the word, however, is a perfectly good one, belonging to the common tradition of the Church in the West. It simply means "**Coming**."*]

The Christmas-Epiphany season in the Orthodox Church begins with a forty-day fasting period which starts on the feast of "the holy and all-praised apostle Philip." For this reason Christmas lent is sometimes called "the fast of Philip."' Although the coincidence of the feast of the apostle Philip and the beginning of the Christmas fast is accidental, humanly speaking, the eyes of faith may see in it a certain providence of God.

According to St John's gospel, Philip is one of the first of the apostles to be called by Jesus. On the day after the calling of Andrew and another of St John the Baptist's disciples, who, since he is not named, is probably the apostle John himself, Philip is called by the Lord. Like Andrew who went and called his brother Simon Peter, Philip goes and calls his friend Nathanael. The story is told in the gospel in this way:

The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. And He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael, and said to him, "We have found Him of

whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "***Come and see.***" Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." Nathanael answered Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" Jesus answered him, "Because I said to you, I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You shall see greater things than these." And He said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." (Jn 1 :43-51)

The story is typical of St John's gospel. The people first encounter the man "Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." They meet Him as a man, the one "of whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote." Then they go further. What they come to see is that this man is not merely the promised prophet and teacher; He is the Anointed, the Christ, the Messiah, the King of Israel. He is the Son of God. Indeed, He is God Himself in human form.

The pattern in St John's gospel is always the same. We see it in the narratives of the paralytic at the pool, the Samaritan woman at the well, the boy born blind, the encounter of Martha and Mary with Jesus at the tomb of Lazarus. The sequence of events is identical. It is a necessary sequence, not only historically, but spiritually and mystically.

We must first come to see Jesus the man. We must come to know Him as a concrete human being, a Jew, a rabbi, a prophet. We must meet Him as Mary's child, the carpenter's son, the Nazarene. Then, in this encounter, when our eyes are open and our hearts are pure, we can come to see "greater things." We can come to know Him not simply as a teacher, but the Teacher; not simply as a prophet, but the Prophet. We can come to know Him not merely as a son of man, but as the Son of man foretold by the prophet Daniel. We can come to see Him not simply as a son of God, but as the Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages. We can come to recognize Him as God's Word in human flesh, as God's Image in human form. And finally, we can come to see Him as God Himself; not the Father but the Father's Son, divine with the Father's own divinity, sent into the world for its salvation.

The first step on the way of the Winter Pascha is the encounter with the man Jesus. We are invited with Philip and the disciples, to "come and see." If we want to come and want to see, we will. Like the first disciples, we will see "greater things" than we ever expected. We will see "heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." We will see Jesus as our Master, and will cry to Him: "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" And we will come to know Him for who and what He really is. But first we must come. For if we do not come, we will never see.

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Let us praise **Andrew,** the divine preacher, / the namesake of courage, / the first-called of the Savior's disciples / and the kinsman of Peter. / As he once called to his brother, now he cries out to us: / "Come, for we have found Him whom the world desires!"

December, 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 *Choir Rehearsal* *7:00-9:00*	2	3 AA Meeting - 6 PM	4	5 *Community Luncheon - 9 AM* *Baptism of Sophia Caruso- 2:00* Great Vespers 5 PM
6 Divine Liturgy 10:00 St. Nicholas Program	7	8	9 *Inreach Meeting* *7 PM*	10 AA Meeting - 6 PM	11	12 Great Vespers 5 PM
13 Divine Liturgy 10:00	14 *Caring for the Beauty – 7 PM*	15 *Choir Rehearsal* *7:00-9:00*	*16* *Development Committee Meeting* *7 PM on ZOOM*	17 AA Meeting - 6 PM Cookie Exchange 7 PM	18	19 Divine Liturgy - 9 AM *Great Vespers* *5 PM*
20 Divine Liturgy 10:00 *Caroling at the end of the Liturgy*	21 *Parish Council Meeting on ZOOM* *7 PM*	22	23 *Vesperal Liturgy for Christmas Eve -* *7 PM*	24 *Complines & Matins for Christmas -* *4 PM* AA Meeting - 6 PM	25 *Christmas Liturgy* *10:00 AM*	26 Great Vespers 5 PM
27 Divine Liturgy 10:00 *Caroling at the end of the Liturgy*	28	29 *Choir Rehearsal* *7:00-9:00*	30	31 AA Meeting - 6 PM	1	2 *Community Luncheon - 9 AM* Great Vespers 5 PM
3 Divine Liturgy 10:00	4	5 *Vespers with the Blessing of Water* *7 PM*	6 *Divine Liturgy and Ordination of Dn John Carpenter to the Priesthood* *9:30 AM*	7 AA Meeting - 6 PM	11	12 Great Vespers 5 PM

On Hailey's Shower



Glory to Jesus Christ!

I would like to thank everyone who helped prepare for and who attended Hailey's shower on Nov. 21. The decorations were wonderful! The food was delicious! The presents were *much* more than we had expected. I know they will get Hailey off to a great start with her new baby. Most of all, my hope is that she felt the love of God and the support of our community. I cannot possibly express my gratitude sufficiently in these words. On behalf of Hailey, Julia, and the baby, we are extremely appreciative.



MEDFORD POLICE HOLIDAY PARTY

Deadline Sunday, December 6

Each year, the Medford Township Police Department hosts a holiday party for local families who could use a little extra assistance during the holiday season. The event includes food, entertainment, and gifts for the children, all in hopes of making their holiday season a little brighter!

The Department is currently collecting new, unwrapped toys. Fr. John is a participant in the Medford Clergy Chaplains and we would like to participate in supporting this event as we did last year.

A collection box is located in our vestibule which will be picked up by the Police Department.

GRATEFUL GREETINGS

CARDS for TROOPS

Send a card of thanks to
Deployed Soldiers Overseas,
New Recruits, and **Veterans**

★★★★★★★★★

Please write a greeting card
(or create your own) for our heroes
this holiday season to thank them
for their service to our country.

Submit written cards to Ann Marie
(*no envelopes/ no blanks please!)
by **Sunday, November 29th**

BE PART OF OUR
2026
PARISH CHRISTMAS CARD!

Your names and donation can be left at the church office or sent to:

Scott Sorrentino
sorrentino71@gmail.com
(856) 430-0562

Deadline: December 6, 2026

All proceeds will given to the Community Luncheon in Mt. Holly for the purchase of additional meat products.

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Parish Christmas Card 2026 Please print clearly

Name(s): _____

Phone: _____

Donation: _____

Providence House Christmas Collection has begun!
Deadline is Sunday, December 13

Catholic Charities
DIOCESE OF TRENTON

Holiday Wish List

Providence House Domestic Violence Services

GIFTS FOR CHILDREN

- Art supplies & craft kits
- Bluey
- Board/card games
- CoComelon
- Disney & Pixar characters & movies
- Dress-up
- Fisher Price
- Hello Kitty
- Hot Wheels cars & tracksets
- Kinetic Sand
- KPop Demon Hunters
- Labubu
- L.O.L. Surprise!
- Leapfrog
- LEGO & DUPLO sets
- Little People
- Marvel & DC Universe characters & movies (*Spiderman, Black Panther, Wonder Woman, Batman*)
- Mega Bloks
- Melissa & Doug Toys
- Minecraft games & toys
- Monster High Dolls
- My Little Pony
- Paw Patrol
- Peppa Pig
- Pajamas (*all sizes*)
- Play kitchen accessories
- Play-Doh
- Playskool
- Pokemon
- Remote controlled helicopters & cars
- Sesame Street
- Science & space kits
- Scooters
- Squishmallows
- Star Wars
- Thomas the Tank Engine
- Tonka trucks
- Transformers
- Video games (*nonviolent only*) for PlayStation, Xbox, Nintendo





GIFTS CARDS

- Bath & Body Works
- Dunkin Donuts
- Kohl's
- Starbucks
- Target
- Walmart
- Wawa



GIFTS FOR TEENS

- Smart phone accessories (*cases, chargers, headphones*)
- Bluetooth speakers
- Drones
- Funko Pop!
- Hair accessories
- Hair Styling Tools (*hair dryer, curling iron, flat iron*)
- Instant cameras
- Jewelry
- Journals
- Make-up & perfume
- Pajamas & slippers
- Room décor
- Scarves & belts
- Sports equipment
- Sports team apparel
- Sweatshirts & Hoodies
- Video games (*nonviolent only*) for PlayStation, Xbox, Nintendo





GIFTS FOR MOMS

- Adult coloring books
- Bath & body gift sets
- Candles
- Fuzzy socks
- Hair accessories
- Hair Styling Tools *(hair dryer, curling iron, flat iron)*
- Home décor
- Journals
- Kitchen items (*dishes, small appliances, etc.*)
- Make-up (*all shades*)
- Pajamas & robes
- Perfume
- Plush slippers
- Purses, wallets & wristlets
- Throw blankets
- Towels
- Waterbottles & Travel Mugs *(Stanley, YETI, Owala)*
- Yoga mats/exercise equipment



Donations for the holidays must be unwrapped and NEW.

Donations can be dropped off at our Counseling Center, 595 Rancocas Rd, Westampton, NJ 08060, Monday to Thursday from 9AM to 4PM and Friday from 9AM to 3PM. Questions? Contact Barbara J. Katz at **856-824-0599 x8622** or **bkatz@cctrenton.org.**

To make a monetary gift scan the QR code

Please drop off donations no later than WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9 to allow enough time to distribute to our clients.

CatholicCharitiesTrenton.org



Parent Pages
The Mystery of Joy

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd was born from the joy of the children in their encounter with God and lives in being nourished by this joy. It has also been observed that children of the same developmental stage even though belonging to different cultural backgrounds, respond to certain elements of the Christian message in the same way. Over time through being with children in a specially prepared environment called an atrium, observing and listening to their responses, scriptural and liturgical themes developed that most resonated with children's religious needs according to their age levels. Thus the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd divests itself of any strictly scholastic character, so as to become an experience of life, an education in faith, and a celebration of the encounter with the Father, in listening to Jesus, the one Teacher, and in obedience to the Holy Spirit.

Children recognize The Good Shepherd

The 3-6 year old child is particularly capable of receiving and enjoying the most essential elements of our faith-the announcement of God's love especially experienced through Jesus, the Good Shepherd, who died and is risen.Materials on the life of Jesus Christ and His teachings help to make the mystery of God concrete for the child. The heart of the catechesis for children under six revolves around the Parable of the Good Shepherd. Jesus announces that He is the Good Shepherd who calls each one by name. The sheep listen to the voice of the Shepherd and follow him.

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BEAUTIFUL Cemetery Plots



Dear Parishioners,

Holy Cross is offering 12 graves for sale at Park View Cemetery at Kirby's Mill in Medford.

- **$600 per grave, with a limited purchase of two. Each grave allows for one interment right.**
- **A second interment right can be acquired within the same grave from Park View directly at a cost determined by Park View and their price list at the time of acquisition.**
- **Interment fees – opening and closing at the time of burial – are not included in the purchase and will be the responsibility of the grave buyer.**

Please see Michelle or send an email to mwash5760@icloud.com.

Please note that your interest in this opportunity must be confirmed with the submission of your $600 check.

Some Ways to Support our Parish

Here are some ways that this can be done:

1) **Cash** (If an annual record of this donation is desired then it should be put in an envelope with your name on it, so that a record can be kept and a receipt eventually will be prepared and available).

2) **Monthly Envelopes** can be sent to your home (see Fr. John if you would like to donate this way).

3) **A Check** can be made out to the church and given in the donation basket or left in the church office.

4) **Having a check sent directly from your bank account to the church** (in the same way that bills can be paid on your computer through your bank).

Address the check to:

Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross
Box 805
Medford, NJ 08055

5) **Using our online app, tithe.ly** – Please note that there is a 3% processing fee - this can be added to the donation or it will be subtracted from the donation):

1) You can use the **QR Code** at our website: https://holycrossmedford.org/

2) Go to: https://tithe.ly/give_new/www/#/tithely/give-one-time/1197928

3) TEXT the word, **"Give" to: 1-833-854-9049**

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SHOP RITE COUPONS

Cards are available in denominations of $100, $50, $25, and $20.

Shop-Rite sells the cards in bulk to us at a 5% discount. The gift cards are available from **Larry Skvir** every Sunday at coffee hour. If you regularly shop at Shop-Rite and don't already use the gift cards, please consider purchasing them in 2026.