

CROSSROADS

Sunday's Scriptures:

Epistle:

Galatians 2:16-20

Gospel:

Mark 8:34-9:1

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.

Homily for the Sunday after the Feast of the Elevation of the Holy Cross:

Delivered Last Sunday

September 20, 2026

by Archbishop Michael

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, today, on this Sunday after the Elevation of the Holy Cross, the Holy Church places before us the radical, uncompromising call of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the Gospel of Saint Mark, we hear those words that pierce through the comfort of our worldly lives: "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." (Mark 8:34).

Last Sunday at the Vespers of your patronal Feast, we beheld the Cross elevated and placed in the center of the temple, decorated with flowers and sweetened with incense. But today, the Gospel reminds us that the Cross is not merely an object of external veneration; it is an internal reality that must be lived. To follow the crucified Christ, we must climb upon the cross with Him.

What does it mean to deny oneself? In our modern culture, we are told to express ourselves, to indulge ourselves, and to worship the ego. But the Holy Fathers teach us that self-denial is the unlocking of our true captivity. Saint John Chrysostom writes: "He does not say 'let him be disciplined,' but 'let him deny himself,' as if he had nothing in common with himself, but gave himself up to all dangers and conflicts." To deny oneself is to look at our fallen, sinful passions – our pride, our anger, our lust, our selfishness – and say, "You do not own me anymore." It is to surrender our own will to the perfect will of God.

And what is this Cross we are told to take up? The Cross is not simply the ordinary hardships of human life. The Cross is the daily struggle for holiness. It is the effort to love those who hate us, to pray for those who persecute us, to fast when our bodies clamor for indulgence, and to stand in prayer when our minds demand rest. Saint Isaac the Syrian beautifully notes: "The Cross is the gate of mysteries. Enter through this gate, and you will find the path that leads to life."

The Lord presents us with a striking paradox: "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it." (Mark 8:35). The Fathers tell us that if we try to preserve our earthly comfort, our passions, and our pride, we lose our eternal soul. But if we crucify the old man, we find our true self, created in the image and likeness of God. As Saint Ignatius Brianchaninov counsels: "The bearing of the cross is the true imitation of Christ. Without the cross, there is no Christianity."

Let us listen to an inspiring account from the lives of the modern saints that illustrates this absolute surrender. There was a young novice in a monastery who struggled immensely with bitterness toward another brother who had deeply insulted him. Try as he might, he could not find peace, and his heart was consumed with anger. He went to his Elder, crying out, "Father, I cannot bear this cross! I cannot forgive him!" The Elder did not scold him. Instead, he took the novice into the chapel, knelt before the icon of the Crucifixion, and said, "Look at Him. He was spat upon, mocked, and pierced. Yet He said, 'Father, forgive them.' My son, you are trying to carry your cross by your own strength, and that is why it is crushing you. Give the cross to Christ, and let Him carry you." The novice wept, fell to his knees, and forgave his brother. At that moment, his heart was filled with an unearthly joy. The cross of bitterness had become the resurrection of peace.

Beloved in Christ, the Gospel ends with a glorious promise: "Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power." (Mark 9:1). When we take up our cross, we do not walk toward a graveyard; we walk toward the Empty Tomb. The power of the Kingdom is made manifest in us right now when we allow the Holy Spirit to crucify our selfishness and resurrect love within our hearts.

Let us not shrink back from our personal crosses. Whether your cross is an illness, a difficult family situation, poverty, or the internal warfare against a stubborn sin, take it up with courage. Look to Christ, look to the cloud of witnesses – the Holy Fathers and Martyrs who have paved the way – and follow Him into life eternal.

By the power of the precious and life-creating Cross, and through the prayers of all our holy Fathers and Mothers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.

Fantasy Auction News

**The Fantasy Auction will be held
Saturday, Oct 3rd from 12-4 pm
in our Fellowship Hall.**

Vespers will be served at 5pm.

Join us for FUNdraising, food, fellowship, and worship!

- #1) **Tickets are on sale for \$20 this Sunday, Sept 27 in the Fellowship Hall.**
See Carol Ann Curry and Barbara Mosser. Please bring your family and friends!
The admission includes a lunch buffet and desserts. Advance ticket sales will help us better plan for food. **Tickets will also be available at the door.**
- #2) **Please bring all donations to the Fellowship Hall this Sunday, Sept 27** and give them to Leslie Lane, Leigh-Ann Stoddart-Best, Carol Ann Curry, or Barbara Mosser.
At drop off, please attach a filled out donation form describing your donation, its retail value, and how you wish your name to appear in the Program booklet. If you wish to receive credit on your Annual Donation Statement, please include your actual cost and envelope number.
- #3) **Please sign-up to bring food items by Sept 27th:**
– see sheet on Fellowship Hall bulletin board.
- #4) **Volunteers are needed to clean up and reset the Fellowship Hall:**
– see sign-up sheet at Auction table.

New this year!

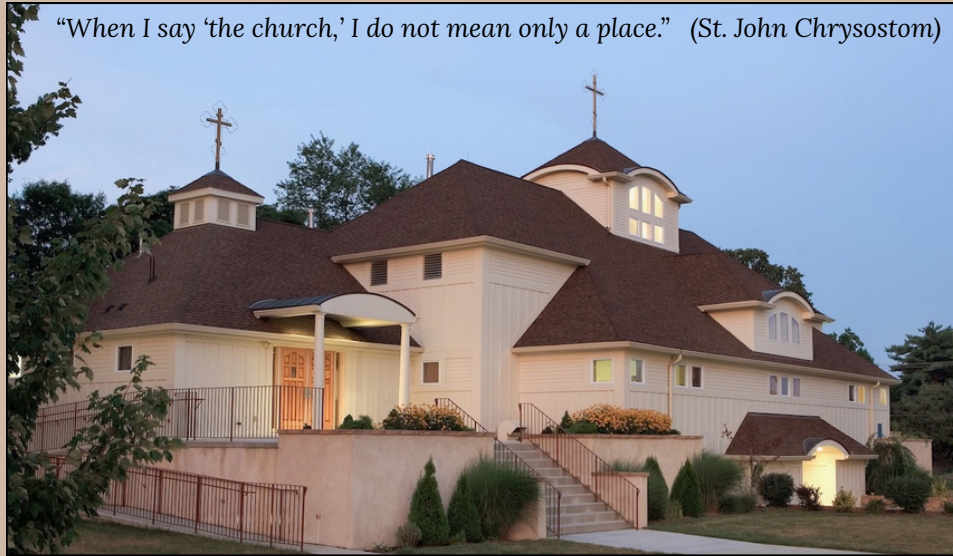
- #5) **If you are unable to attend the Auction but would like to bid on the program items, we are offering bidding by proxy.**
Please stop by the Auction table to fill out a bidder's form, OR email Leslie Lane at: glane5@verizon.net to receive electronic copies of both the Auction Program and a bidder's form which you can use to submit your bids.

Thank you!

Caring for the Beauty of God's House: How Holy Beauty Heals

A Retreat with **Dr. Mary Farag**
Associate Professor of Early Christian Studies
Princeton Theological Seminary

"When I say 'the church,' I do not mean only a place." (St. John Chrysostom)



Welcome 9:30 AM
First Presentation 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Lunch 12:00 – 1:00 PM
Break Out Groups 1:00 – 2:00 PM
Final Session 2:00 – 3:00 PM
Great Vespers 4:00 PM

Saturday, October 24, 2026

**Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross
11 Wilkins Station Rd.
Medford, NJ**

Registration: holycrossmedford@gmail.com
Deadline: Monday, October 19

This FREE retreat is sponsored by St. Helena's Guild



The Greater Philadelphia Committee of IOCC invites you to the
15TH ANNUAL BANQUET TO BENEFIT IOCC

Sunday, October 25, 2026

3:30pm Hors d'Oeuvres & Silent Auction • 5:00pm Dinner & Program

Adelphia Restaurant, Pan Athenian Grand Ballroom

1750 Clements Bridge Rd., Deptford, NJ 08096

Come and learn about IOCC's programs around the world and how your support makes a difference in places like Ethiopia, Greece, the Holy Land, Ukraine, and the US.

For tickets and sponsorships, contact your parish rep or visit:

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iocc.org/philadelphia

Or make checks out to IOCC (**Memo: Philadelphia chapter**) and mail to IOCC | 110 West Road, Suite 360 | Baltimore, MD 21204

Tickets: \$85 per person

The following sponsorship opportunities are available:

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|--|--|
| ☐ Grand Benefactor (\$5,000+) – 10 total reserved seats | ☐ Sponsor (\$500+) – 4 total reserved seats |
| ☐ Great Benefactor (\$2,500+) – 8 total reserved seats | ☐ Friend (\$250+) – 2 total reserved seats |
| ☐ Benefactor (\$1,000+) – 6 total reserved seats | |

Sponsorships received by Oct. 16 will be recognized in the program.

Contact **Judy Clyde** for tickets and more information:

(856) 278-6156 / judyclyde108@comcast.net



CATECHESIS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD REGISTRATION FORM 2026-2027

Level 1 Atrium, 3-6 & Level 2 Atrium, 6-9

Child's Name: _____

Birth Date: _____

Age: _____

Parent's Name: _____

Parent's Name: _____

Contact Information:

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

Is your child potty-trained?

Comments: _____

Can your child read?

Comments: _____

Additional notes or information we should know: _____

Please contact Phyllis with any questions or concerns at phyllis.pritchard@gmail.com or 609-315-1258



Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross

The Good Shepherd, Age 3-6

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.

The True Vine Ages 6-9



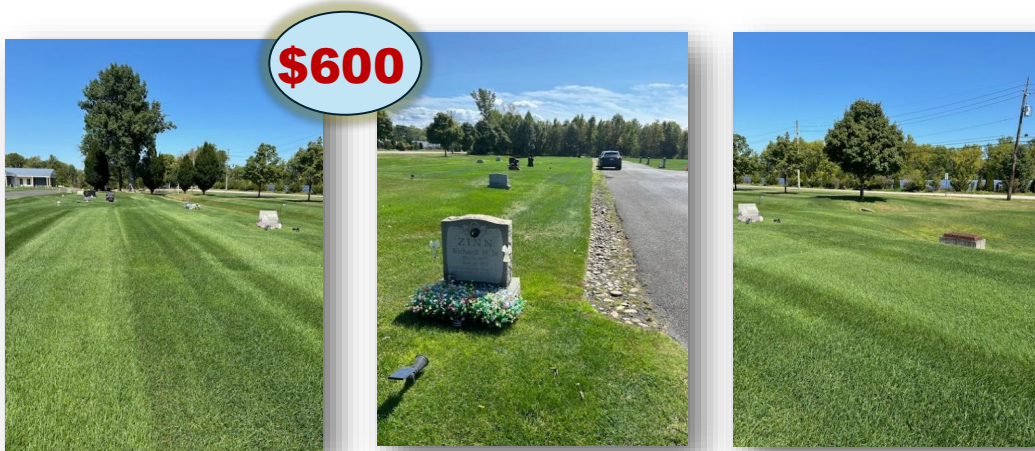
The elementary-age child is captured by the image of the True Vine. “I am the vine, you are the branches, whoever remains in me, and I in him, will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing.” The proclamation responds to the deep need of these children to better know his or her relationship with God, family, friends, and the larger community. Moral parables offer a model for comparing their behavior with that of the Pharisee, the Tax Collector, or the Good Samaritan. The elementary children see the parts of the Liturgy—the Liturgy of the Word, the Preparation of the Gifts, the Eucharistic Prayer, and the Communion—as one unified prayer made of many smaller prayers. Children prepare for the celebration of the Eucharist through a series of communion meditations focusing on the relationship with Jesus. Preparation with illustrations and prayers is also part of Level 2, which helps to deepen their love and understanding of the Eucharist.

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) is a Montessori Method of Christian Education, adapted for use by Orthodox Christians for the spiritual formation and education of children ages 3-12. Its foundation is the twin pillars of the Holy Scriptures and the Divine Liturgy. CGS offers the child a hands-on, experiential lesson that leads him or her into a deeper relationship with Christ. **The Atrium** is a specially designed and prepared environment that facilitates the child’s spiritual life and education, filled with materials that aid the child in acquiring the knowledge of the Orthodox Faith and a life of prayer

To register your children or learn more about Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, contact Phyllis Pritchard at

Email: phyllis.pritchard@gmail.com or call (609) 315-1258

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/#/tithe/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 use the gift cards, please consider purchasing them in 2026.