DOWN the ROAD

CrossRoad Alumni Magazine
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Christina Rotas .....................................................3  
Gabby Christy .....................................................4  
Sophia Dimas .....................................................4  
Danielle Hillas ....................................................5  
Aalin Bellinger ....................................................6  
Anna Colis ..........................................................7  
Gregory Abdalah ..................................................8  
Mary Rebecca Harakas ...........................................9  
Dr. Michael Legaspi .............................................10  
Mike Tishel ..........................................................11  
Dr. Albert Rossi ..................................................12  
Dr. Ann Bezzerides .............................................15  
Faculty Updates ...................................................16  
Staff Updates .......................................................17

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**About Down the Road**

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Put simply: it has done so through the daily witness of the global Church community… yes, you and I. It is easy to simply imagine the decisions and activities of the “Church” as distanced from our lives. But nothing could be farther from the truth. In fact, we, all members of the Orthodox faith—past, present, and future—are the protectors and carriers of our collective Church. As each of us is called to take Christ’s Church with us, wherever we go, we must be active participants. As CrossRoad has allowed us to discover, we must bring to the world our own God-given gifts for the betterment and protection of the universal Church. Just as the light glimmered on the mosaics at Hosios Loukas during my first visit there, so too, we are called to reflect Christ’s light—the light that enlivens the spirit and essence of the collective Church—into the world. I depart with the words of St. Paul, who captures this reality so perfectly: “As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1 Pet. 4:10).
I get into the van at the airport feeling clueless
I hate to admit, but my “Battery of Faith” is feeling fuelless
Drop off the bags, quickly enter the service
What’s this I hear? The words of worship
The voices flow like angels from above
My heart begins to soar; it’s the voice of Love
The days begin to flow from good to best
This whole journey has opened my Faith as a treasure chest
It is as if I knew it was there at the bottom of the sea
All I needed was to discard the worldly things and find the real me
The self that God created to become like His Son
To complete theosis, to become One.
The only way to unleash this is easy to depict
Think of birds creating a nest stick by stick
The bird ends up on the birch
This is the way we find our way to the answer, the Church
We have to work at our Faith piece by piece
To fulfill the plan of God, to be Holy
It captures all senses, all of the five
We smell the incense as it carries our prayers to the sky
We touch the sign of our Cross to four positions
We see the icons as they serve as rehabilitation
We hear the chants as the saints join us in praise
We taste the Communion, the foundation of our Faith
CrossRoad provides us with the wisdom to grow
We have to hold onto this Faith and to all we meet - we will show
We are called to be Saints, it is God’s plan
We are called to love each other and help our fellow man
The Church, in her wisdom, provides all forms of care
Something we should all be grateful for, that God gave us the Faith to share
“I do not need religion to access God. I am a spiritual person but I am not religious. Religion is authoritative and controlling.” Do these statements sound familiar? I certainly know plenty of individuals who hold these convictions. Engaging this topic is difficult and requires some understanding of the nature of the Church, which is hierarchical. The most basic hierarchy is that of clergy (deacons, priests, bishops) and laity (you and me). This is where some people find fault with religion, as the hierarchy is perceived as the clergy ruling over the lowly laity.

What could the dictates of the Church Fathers, bishops, and priests possibly have to do with my connectedness to God, and what do they have to do with my vocation to serve my neighbor? Why is authority important? The Church Fathers have wonderful things to say on authority, but before we jump to their apologies, I would like to set the stage for this topic with a metaphor: “Wax on, Wax off.” For those who have not seen Karate Kid, Daniel (the protagonist) meets Mr. Miyagi while unsuccessfully repeating karate moves he found in a book. Mr. Miyagi agrees to teach Daniel karate, but instead gives a long list of seemingly meaningless chores to complete, like waxing a car. The plot unfolds, and Daniel understands that waxing cars for hours on end involved the same motion as blocking a punch. Thus, Daniel practiced essential skills used in karate for hours on end and (spoiler alert) won his match at the end of the film. Further, this training was much more effective than interpreting pictures in a book and practicing his understanding of the moves forty or fifty times a day.

Similarly, sometimes the rules of the Church can seem meaningless if you do not understand how they propel us to our end goal: salvation. Sure, you can just read the Bible, fast, pray and learn many important things, but like karate, if you do not have a good teacher you might misunderstand and make up your own interpretation that was not intended by the Gospel writers or Church Fathers. This is why commentaries from the Fathers of the Church and clarifications from spiritual fathers or mothers are imperative.

Think about it this way: Mr. Miyagi taught Daniel how to fight, but he also taught Daniel many lessons pertaining to life, namely, hard work and integrity. However, Mr. Miyagi was not born with this wisdom. He had a teacher that trained him to master the art, and in his old age he passed on the skills. Metropolitan Kallistos Ware points out that our teachers or spiritual guides are called “Geron” in Greek and “Starets” in Russian, which means “old man” in both languages.

We need elders and guides in our Church because without them we would fall into disarray. Statements like “religion is controlling” are simply a misunderstanding of the rules and practices the Church gives us. They are not in place so that the clergy can lord over the laity; they are in place to teach us the essential practices for a life in Christ. Sure, there are a lot of rules and practices, but this is the same in any study: medicine, karate, accounting, etc. Yet, it seems completely rational to struggle profusely in order to understand and practice these skills. Why not the same standard in the Church? The dictates of the Church Fathers are much like the strict dictates of karate masters. They provide opportunity to sacrifice a comfortable life for a life in Christ. Elder Aimilianos tells us that the only thing we can give God is our choice to sacrifice. Thus, we see how sacrificing our choice of food while fasting (one of those church rules) ultimately trains us to be able to sacrifice our life for our neighbor. Slowly, what we see as simple rules help us form a relationship with Christ and grow towards salvation.

Now we can see that the Church Fathers, the clergy, and spiritual elders are not so much lords over us but loving guides walking us along our path to salvation. So, if anyone asks why your church has so many rules, tell them “wax on, wax off.” In the end, it might help them win the fight.
From my childhood to the present, I have many times heard the question, “What is the Church?” and I have heard the definitive response, “the Church is the body of Christ.” But what does this mean? And what is the purpose of this Church?

St. Paul writes to the church in Corinth, “For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body...and have all been made to drink of one Spirit” (I Cor. 12:12-13). Through baptism and the Eucharist, we—the many members of the Orthodox Church—in some way become Christ’s one body. This is a mind-dazzling truth.

What is this body like?

St. Paul goes on to help us with a more concrete image. He likens the Church to a human body in which “the eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I have no need of you’; nor again the head to the feet, ‘I have no need of you’” (I Cor. 12:21). We see in our local churches how each person has a different role: whether preaching, teaching, cutting holy bread, pointing out flaws, or accepting others’ charity for their weaknesses. Even painful situations and the faults of our fellows in the Church can work toward mutual edification, confronting us with our sins and breaking open our hearts to deeper communion and love. This is one way of describing the Church: the interconnected community reaching back through the saints and apostles to Christ, in which each member has a unique role in the salvation of the whole as part of His body.

How else is the Church said to be the “body of Christ”? Well, what did Christ do with the body He assumed on earth? He used it to preach, work miracles, heal the sick, and above all, to “draw all peoples” (Jn. 17:32) to Himself by His suffering and death on the cross. This, then, is also the vocation of the Church. We see this fulfilled in the lives of many saints and martyrs dedicated to preaching, healing, praying for the world, and witnessing to Christ. St. Stephen the first martyr, for example, as he was being stoned knelt and cried out on behalf of his tormenters, “Lord, do not charge them with this sin” (Acts 7:60). While the Church, like Christ and His martyr St. Stephen, witnesses to truths that make the fallen world uncomfortable and even murderous, this is done in an attitude of love, motivated by love. After all, as human beings our nature collectively and personally is the image and likeness of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit Who “is love” (I Jn. 4:16). As Christ, the Logos, is the Image of God, so also the Church, as the body of Christ, is and is called to fulfill the divine image in a community of persons long-suffering in love for each other and the world.
As I am in my last semester of seminary, when I sat down to write this article, I initially anticipated reflecting on the theological teachings about what the Church is and what it should be. However, as I near the end of my schooling, I am realizing that the faith, as much as we try to study and analyze it, is truest when it is experienced. And so, I will not attempt to write about what the Church should be but I will reflect on my experience of the Church and what its reality is for me in my life.

I grew up very close to the church; I spent at least four afternoons a week there for various activities and services. I did homework in the church office and I knew almost everyone in the congregation by name. I grew up in my church. It was a place of familiarity and comfort; it was my second home.

In high school, I continued to attend Sunday school and youth group. These activities were rivaled by my other extracurriculars, but I always stayed connected to my parish. As every teenager does, I went through a few rough patches in high school and found myself continually turning to my parish youth group for guidance. The people in the church were my support system.

Now I attend seminary and while I have a strong community of Orthodox friends, I don’t really have a parish. I live a thousand miles from my childhood parish and I go to different churches on Sundays. My experience of “church” is different now in this transitional period of life but I find it is still rich in prayer and community, even if these two don’t always come together in the same building.

So what makes the Church? The consecrated building? The services? The community? If I have learned one thing in my years at seminary it is that there is hardly ever a simple answer for these kinds of questions. Based on my encounters (and also my study), I don’t think the Church is one of these entities and not the other. I have experienced “Church” to be a synthesis of the familiar sanctuary, the communal prayer, and the beautiful relationships. I know the Church to be a home, a place of support, and a place of healing, but not necessarily all in the same building under the same dome.

Where two or three are gathered in Christ’s name, He is present (Mt. 18:20). That is ultimately what makes the Church. The Church is a place and it is also a community of people but what makes it holy and indescribable is the mystical presence and activity of the Holy Spirit. People and buildings alone do not make the Church. The presence of God, uniting us all in His love, is what makes the Church a place of comfort, support, and healing.
As a kid, I used to love reading Mad Magazine, especially “Spy vs. Spy.” I was awed by something so ridiculously simple: two identical cartoons—except for their color—battling it out. What was it that amazed me? Was it the battle of good and evil? Was it the idea of yin and yang? Was it the balancing act? I have no idea…I was a little kid. So why am I talking about it? Today, we often create our own versions of “Spy vs. Spy.” We take two identical words—for our purposes we’ll look at the word “church”—and we mean two very different things.

On Sunday morning, I go to church. I go to a physical place built of brick and mortar, open a door, and step inside. There are lights, there is heat, there are icons, there is incense, a priest, chanters, a choir, an organ, etc. A service begins (or is in progress when I get there) and, after I’ve taken communion, it’s over and I have a donut and coffee and I go home to watch football. For many people in our society, this is their Sunday morning experience.

On Sunday morning, I go to The Church. I am called out from the world I live in and I move towards Christ. I enter into the Kingdom of Heaven and stand before the Throne of God. I am surrounded by all the choirs of Heaven, by the Saints, and all those who are dead yet alive in Christ. Together with everyone around me, we join with them and with one voice sing “Holy, Holy, Holy: Lord of Sabaoth!” My senses are overwhelmed with the beautiful sights, sounds and smells. Christ allows me to receive Him so that I may be transformed to go back out into the world I live in. For Orthodox Christians, this is what we do on Sunday morning.

We belong to two churches. We are all members of a parish, a community that comes together for bake sales and festivals and is comprised of like-minded individuals that share some level of commonality. Through our baptism, we become members of another church, The Church: a gathering of people together as the Body of Christ. A gathering of people that rely on each other and, by relying on each other, develop and strengthen their relationships with Christ. A gathering of people that meet for one purpose: to praise and glorify Him. Christ calls us to His table, offers Himself up, and feeds us to give us the strength to go out and do those things which we are called to do. We are blessed to know Christ so that we might share Christ with others.
Orthodox and non-Orthodox Christians view the Orthodox Church in different ways. To some, the Church is an authority figure or an organization that holds one accountable for one’s actions. To others, the Church is a collection of individuals with a vague belief in a higher power. While the Orthodox Church has a variety of roles and reputations, the Church has a singular, underlying element that makes it particularly unique when compared to other faiths, and that is the idea of Tradition.

Years ago, before I studied any literature related to the Church or theology, I was of the narrow-minded perspective that “tradition” meant annual events or family gatherings in which one participates each year. I could not fathom how “tradition” relates to the Church. What makes something a tradition? After much thought, I have come to the conclusion that changelessness is what makes something a tradition. Furthermore, changelessness also applies to the Orthodox Church, and is the underlying element of the faith. “Tradition” in the context of the Orthodox Church relates to the core aspects of Orthodoxy: its doctrines, Christ’s teachings, and the sacraments. These aspects of Orthodoxy have remained the same since Christ and, thus, are changeless. Although there are stylistic traditions such as iconographic style, biblical interpretations and musical styles that change over time, the Tradition of the Orthodox Church refers to the changeless dogmas and sacraments that are crucial to salvation. Ultimately, the Orthodox Church is the embodiment of Tradition and the source of the Orthodox faith based not only on its changeless doctrine and teachings, but its changeless effect on Christians’ way of thinking.

Orthodox thinking about the Church begins with the special relationship between God and the Church: just as God and the Church are one, Orthodox Christians and the Orthodox faith ought to be one. According to Timothy Ware’s *The Orthodox Church*, the bond between God and the Church signifies that there is only one Christ and thus, only one Body of Christ; schisms may happen from the Church, but not within the Church. Orthodoxy refers to the teachings of Christ, the Books of the Bible, and the decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, to encapsulate the entire system of doctrine, worship, art and spirituality as practiced over the ages. Thus, if the Orthodox Church implies Tradition that has occurred since Christ, Orthodox Christians are the guardians and heirs of Tradition in order to keep it alive. In regards to our former discussion of schisms from rather than within the Church, changelessness can only continue if Orthodox Christians are united to the faith, just as God and the Church are one. Individuals may fall away from the Church, but Orthodox Christians are an integral part of the continuation of the Orthodox faith, and as a result, are also within the Church.

The Orthodox Church is Tradition in which changelessness of doctrine and spirituality radiate through Orthodox Christians’ lives. Just as God and the Church are one, Orthodox Christians and the Orthodox faith are one. We are all heirs and guardians of Christ’s teachings, thus we must exhibit Orthodoxy through our thinking and decision-making in our daily lives.
A Reflection on the Church

What is the Church?

It is a simple, straightforward question, yet it always brings me up short. The problem is the little demanding word, “what.” When used in a direct question, it calls for a definition or a comprehensive description that somehow fits all that is essential into a tidy linguistic package. But the Church is not a thing, concept, or object that one can understand neatly from the outside. When Pilate stood before Jesus and asked, “What is truth?”, it was not a sign of his acuity that he dared to ask such a question; it was rather an indication of his failure to understand. The Truth, as it turns out, was right in front of him, but his interest in what- ever it was that he saw blinded him to reality.

This doesn’t mean we ought to get rid of definitions and descriptions when it comes to the Church. To act responsibly as stewards of our tradition, we need to discipline thought and speech by using the words that have been given to us. The Church, above all, is the Body of Christ, gathered to “one Lord,” called by “one Spirit,” joined to Him by “one faith, one baptism” (Eph. 4:4-6). We confess this as well when, in the language of the Creed, we profess belief in “one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.” In the Liturgy, the Priest prays for the Church in the language of the Psalms, asking the Lord to “save His people and bless His inheritance.” These words are not only beautiful; they are strong as well. They organize our spiritual imagination and order our minds and hearts correctly. Without them, our understanding of what the Church is would no doubt stray.

Yet, as important as language is, it cannot fully encompass the reality of the Church. Before becoming an Orthodox Christian, I had read many excellent and profound things by the Fathers and various Orthodox theologians. But these writings did not prepare me for my first Divine Liturgy. I remember a feeling of strangeness—both that the place was strange to me and that I was strange to it. Though I had attended Christian churches all my life, I began to realize that my preconceived idea—the little conceptual box in my mind labeled “what the Church is”—could not contain what I was experiencing. I did not need to place new content in my mental “Church” box; I needed to see past its inherent limitations.

Since those early days, I have come to see that the essential task is not to see the Church with greater precision and objectivity but rather to live in, with, and by the Church so that one sees everything else with new, illumined eyes. One may draw an analogy to marriage. A man does not get married in order to become an expert on marriage; rather, he does so in order to become the husband of a particular woman whom he loves. And in becoming her husband, he undertakes a transformation of his whole way of life. To him, marriage is no longer an abstraction; it is a personal condition, the underlying reality beneath the thousands of decisions and practical details that make up his life.

So it is with the Church. Those who are joined to the Church do not become experts about the Church; they become loving servants of God. Life in the Church transforms us in innumerable ways. Her prayers and blessings teach us that created things are not resources to be consumed but divine gifts to be received in gratitude. We come to see that time is not a measurable quantity of duration but a liturgical movement, a journey of fasts and feasts that bring us, in a spiritual spiral, toward our rest in God. The Church transforms space as well. It is only in the ordered, connected space of the Church that we see the trajectory of human life. The narthex marks our entry from the world; in the nave we join the heavenly hosts in worship; and from the sanctuary, as Andrew Louth says, the “divine love reaches out and enfolds creation in all its multiplicity, drawing it back into himself.”

For us as Orthodox Christians, then, the question of what the Church is may be the hardest to answer. Answers to other questions about the Church come more naturally. We know why it exists: to teach us the ways of God and to bring us into union with Him and one another. We certainly know where it is, and we see everyday how it reorders our loves and loyalties. Perhaps the most important word, though, is who. In asking who stands above, behind, and within the cosmos, we avoid the mistake of Pilate. We do not wonder what truth is; instead, we see Who it is that holds our life in His hands.
Closer Than Our Own Breath

Mike Tishel, CrossRoad Director

It’s hard to say exactly what the Church is. I certainly can’t provide a hard and fast definition for it. Of course, there are many images, attributes and aspects of it that we hear about in Scripture and the theology of our faith, but these just provide us with limited insights into what the Church is—nothing comprehensive. Yet, I can relay to you a bit about how I began to enter into the Church, and what happened when I did.

I had just finished my first year of high school. I felt like the whole year was an endless succession of failures. I did okay in school, but I was not good at making friends. I attended an enormous all-boys Catholic school, having come from a small Orthodox school with a graduating middle school class of four, yes, four people. I felt a great burden on my shoulders. Anything that I did was done by 25% of the class. I made up an entire quarter of my graduating class. But when I entered B.C. High, I felt like a goldfish in the Atlantic Ocean. I entered the arena of competitive sports, competitive academics, competitive everything…but most of all, competitive friend-making. I felt so pressured by those around me (mostly a perceived pressure) to conform to their way of life. In the process I tried to divest myself fighting for a new identity. In the midst of it all, my parents had arranged for me to take a summer trip to Kodiak, Alaska, with a friend from church who was in his early twenties.

We were going on an adventure into the Alaskan wilds, to fish, hike and visit the resting place of St. Herman of Alaska (+1837). We were to stay at an Orthodox academy for young (mostly troubled) men and participate in their everyday life for almost a month. It was in Alaska that I realized how adventurous and life-giving reality really is. It was there that I discovered the Church.

But Alaska was only the beginning. After that summer I transferred to a smaller high school where it was a bit easier to adjust, and I was able to find friends with whom I could develop real relationships. The desire to be admired never left me though, yet I started to discern a subtle nuance between the emotional “high” that comes with being admired and the deeper, quieter sense of meaning from seeking Truth. They both seemed like enjoyable paths and it was often difficult to decide which one to take (it still is actually!). It wasn’t until college that I felt a stronger pull towards the narrower path and realized how much I had been missing.

We don’t find the Church; the Church finds us. In the midst of our confusion, our pain, our identity crises, and temptations, we are given a taste of true life and of lasting joy. This choice is the Church. It is life in the Church. It took me a while to realize that the Church was more subtle and much closer to us than any of those things. In fact the Church is within us, if only we’d take a moment to try and discover It.

The first time I realized that the Church was within me, that it was a choice within me—a choice between life or death, between light or darkness—I was shocked by how blind I was to not be able to see it. Now that I see it, I’m shocked by how foolish I can be to not follow it. I have tasted of the Life that is available in the Church and yet I still choose to satisfy myself with imaginary pleasures, things that give me cheap happiness but then leave me lonely and empty inside. The Church is like a small seed inside of us. At first it’s almost impossible to see, but the more we water it by small things—prayer, Communion, reading the Scripture, loving our neighbor in simple ways—the more it grows into a great tree, big enough even for others to find rest under it.

My prayer for anyone who reads this is the same prayer that I have for myself: that we might be found by the Church, by Christ himself, and in being found that we might be taught what it means to live in the Church and for the Church to live in us. Only then will we find true joy, joy that grows greater and greater with age, and will last even beyond the biggest moment of our lives—when we pass through the gates of death.
For me, the word “Church” means people. The Church is Christ’s body on earth and we are that body. Just as we are living organisms, so the Church is a living and changing organism.

As I reflect on what the Church is for me, you are a significant piece in my heart of my “real” Church. Yes, I have the wonderful St. Vladimir’s community and yes, I have my children and lovely grandchildren. But, you are very dear and very enriching to my awareness of what “Church” means. And I don’t doubt that each of you is highly influenced by the memory of each other as you ponder, for yourselves, what the word Orthodox Church means.

We nourish and fortify each other by our vocation in Christ. Vocation, for me, means being uniquely the person I am called to be in Christ. “Doing” vocation follows “being” in vocation, that is, praying that I am the human being Christ calls me to be, with my limitations and talents, and living a faith-filled life. We also know that our faith flickers, sometimes strong and sometimes virtually absent, or so it seems. OK. Lord, have mercy. And, He does.

I have my vocation and each of you has your vocation. That doesn’t mean career, as in, teacher or accountant. No, you have a vocation, which means doing what Christ has you on the planet to do. You might be a student for a few years, a teacher for a few years and an accountant for a few years, all the while living out your vocation, precisely because you are doing what God wants you to be doing at any given season of your life. Therein resides peace, joy and deep happiness. That is the brilliantly fascinating insight that CrossRoad brings for you. The insight is that you are loved by God, and He has a pre-plan for you, a plan to do His work for others. And, He does give us all the voltage and all the power we need to live out our vocation. We know that our part is prayer, purity and love, pursuing these as best we can. We all fail and sin at our endeavors in prayer, purity and love. The Church, in her goodness, gives us repentance and confession to continue to live out our vocation.

Please know that each of you, although I don’t know most of your names, has a revered and cherished place in my inner sanctum. You live there, giving me new life, especially when I need it most. I also know that I have a revered and cherished place in your inner sanctum, simply because God had us spend time interacting together. That’s the way the “real” Church really is. We give to each other and we get from each other. Through CrossRoad we have learned to talk honestly and deeply to each other, thus giving each other strength and hope.

Ah, “strength and hope.” Most of you know that I do a 15-minute, bi-weekly podcast for an Orthodox Internet radio station, Ancient Faith Radio. The title of my little podcast is Becoming a Healing Presence. We are a healing presence to others when we give them “strength and hope.” All, all, all of our enormous influence on each other is from Christ. All good we do is from Christ.

For me, you are a healing presence by living in my heart, in my memory, in my awareness of you. Isn’t that what CrossRoad is all about? Isn’t CrossRoad all about providing an environment to help bring Christ closer to us, to help us become closer to each other? CrossRoad is all about making connections. You have made lifelong friends at CrossRoad, precisely because you found something dear and precious. You found Christ in each other, a deep and profound connection that is rare in our world. We all long to connect with others.

CrossRoad has empowered you to connect beautifully with a few dedicated Christians, and that is the “pearl of great price” because it is Christ in one person connecting with Christ in another person. Christ is all in all.
CrossRoad has been an incredible gift to all of us blessed to be involved. You alumni tell us that CrossRoad was transformative for your lives. It is transformative because over and over again we ask Christ to be the center of the program, to enter our hearts, transform our minds, and teach us His ways. But don’t forget that it’s also transformative for your staff, for your director, for the faculty who teach you, for the guest lecturers, for the OVM staff. We are humbled and blessed to be involved, and we find ourselves drawing nearer to Christ through the awesome responsibility of running the program itself.

What keeps surprising me is that CrossRoad is also increasingly transformative for another group of incredible people: the people who donate their own financial resources to keep the program going strong. It is a joy for people to be giving to CrossRoad, to see the impact it has had on you, and to be drawn closer to Christ themselves in the process.

We want CrossRoad to continue so that it’s around for your children, and possibly even your grandchildren! To do this, we need you to continue to be a part of CrossRoad. We want you to return for alumni retreats, to email us and visit campus when you can, and to keep us updated on the way your unique and ongoing vocation unfolds. We need you to share CrossRoad with others, so that they might join as a participant or supporter. And we need you to support us as well—in any amount, as much or as little as you are able. We wouldn’t ask you unless we believed it is a joy and blessing to do so. You are the reason CrossRoad exists; and indeed, you are also the ones who—in and through Christ—will make the future of CrossRoad possible.
Faculty Updates

Fr. Thomas Hopko
Faculty '09, '11-'12
“I continue to serve at the Orthodox Monastery of the Transfiguration in Ellwood City, PA, a monastery for women. I also continue recording podcasts for Ancient Faith Radio. A series of reflections on bishops and church organization and structure through the centuries is part of my regular podcast called ‘Speaking the Truth in Love’ in which I speak on a variety of issues. I am also recording detailed commentaries on the Divine Liturgy in my podcast called ‘Worship in Spirit and Truth.’ So far I’ve done 50 podcasts in this series and have only reached the Little Entrance.’”

Michael Legaspi
Faculty ‘11
“I continue to enjoy teaching and living at Phillips Academy in Andover, MA. Fortunately, I have also found time for small writing projects and speaking engagements. I’ve given lectures at several seminaries and universities in the past year on the topic of biblical studies—where it has been, and where it might be headed. Above all, though, I thank God for the health and well-being of my family (wife Abby and four children), who are all doing well.”

Fr. Luke Veronis
Speaker, Faculty '06
Fr. Luke A. Veronis serves as Director for the Missions Institute of Orthodox Christianity (www.MissionsInstitute.org) at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, where he also teaches classes in missiology at both Holy Cross and Hellenic College. The institute’s goal is to create inspiring, educational programs to enlighten the minds of Orthodox seminarians from around the country to the imperative command of missions and evangelism. He also pastors the Saints Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church in Webster, MA.

Dr. Demetrios Katos
Faculty '05, '07, '12
Dr. Katos is learning that one’s vocation continues to evolve as one reaches mid-life: he has been devoting the majority of his time to the administration of Hellenic College as dean of the faculty. He continues to teach but on a reduced basis, and his scholarship has been placed on the back burner while he answers the call to serve Christ and His Church in an administrative capacity.

Fr. Theodore Stylianopoulos
Faculty '06
Father Theodore Stylianopoulos marked a milestone at the end of October 2012 with his official retirement from continuous parish service after 47 years. In November he and Presvytera celebrated the occasion with a three-week vacation visiting family in Seattle, WA and also in Hawaii. Recently Fr. Theodore has completed a short book on the making of the New Testament which he hopes to publish. Greetings from Fr. Theodore and blessings to all CrossRoad friends!

Dr. Alkiviadis Calivas
Faculty '12
“Hello to the 2012 CrossRoad participants. I very much enjoyed being in your company last semester. Recently, I was pleased to teach a course at Holy Cross for a professor who was on sabbatical. In the next couple of months I expect to publish another volume of essays on liturgical themes. I pray that all is well with you and your families.”

COMING UP... FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER
TWO SEPARATE TRACKS FOR CROSSROAD ALUMNI RETREAT!

TRACK A: CrossRoad Alumni 2004-2007

Vocation in Transition: Life and Faith Decisions as a Twentysomething

Speakers: A Panel of Orthodox Professionals
Location: The Connors Center (Dover, MA) and Hellenic College Holy Cross

TRACK B: CrossRoad Alumni 2008-2012

Bridging the Gap Between Sunday and Monday: Life as Vocation, Life as Church

Guest Speaker: Fr. Calinic Berger
Location: The Walker Center (Newton, MA) and Hellenic College Holy Cross

For more information and to register for the retreat, visit the CrossRoad Alumni website at
www.crossroadalumni.hchc.edu
Anna Colis
'05, Staff '12, Assistant Director '12-'13
Anna Colis, CrossRoad alumna ('05) is going on her second year of serving as the CrossRoad Assistant Director. She has also been working for the OVM as a Development Intern this past year. She will be graduating from Holy Cross with an M.Div in May.

Timothy Curren
Staff '10
“After getting married at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, I took a year off from my studies to live with my wife Nijmeh in Germany. There I studied German and helped out at a nearby Serbian Orthodox monastery while Nijmeh worked as a physician to save up for her immigration application. I returned to Boston on my own this past September to complete the final year of my M.Div program at Holy Cross while we await Nijmeh’s immigrant visa. Hopefully she will be able come to Boston before graduation, and we will discuss our plans for the future with our bishop.”

Sarah Begley
Staff '08-'10
This past year has been quite busy for me and my husband, Fr. Philip Begley. This spring I finally finished my ThM thesis, in which I delve into theology of images common to both Eastern Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism. In May, Fr. Philip and I both graduated from Holy Cross, with a M.Div and ThM respectively. We were then assigned to St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church in South Glens Falls, New York, a delightful village (yes, a village!) in the foothills of the Adirondack Mountains, where we have been since August. Wishing all of you a blessed 2013!

Jon Resmini
'04, Staff '09-'10
“I am currently serving as the pastoral assistant at the Cathedral of the Annunciation in Atlanta, GA. Here I am primarily responsible for preaching, teaching, and serving at sacraments and services. In addition to this I teach religion courses at the Annunciation Day School here at the cathedral.”

Stella Hondros
Staff '08-'09
Stella Hondros is living in Atlanta, GA working for her home parish, the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral. She works full-time as part of the office staff and volunteers to serve in the youth ministries of the church and the Atlanta Metropolis. She thinks of and misses her CrossRoad family often!

Danielle Hillas
'05, Staff '12
“Although I am quite nostalgic for the Holy Cross Chapel, moving back to Utah has been a wonderful blessing. First, my sister Nicole got married on July 29th. Second, I started a Masters of Art in Teaching at Westminster College in Salt Lake, and my focus is at-risk youth (I am also playing lacrosse at Westminster). Finally, I teach eighth/ninth grade Sunday school and hike in my non-existent spare time.”

Eleftherios & Ellie Constantine
Staff '07-'09
Eleftherios and Ellie (Mellas) Constantine are living happily in Mobile, AL. Eleftherios is working as a pastoral assistant and youth director at the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church, and Ellie is working in an after-school program at a private school.

Nick Lionas
'05, Staff '12
“Over the past year I’ve been working hard on finishing up my schooling at Holy Cross; only one semester left! I have been traveling the country as the HCHC Ambassador Director. I have also begun doing a lot of work for Young Adult Ministries, which I hope to be a big part of in the future.”