

Holy Cross Catholic Church Newsletter

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Parish Priest: Fr. Andrew M. Verdote, OFM



March 2019

Year 22 — No. 3

SATURDAY VIGIL MASSES (For Sunday)

- 4:00 pm Polish: *Every 1st Saturday of the month*
4:00 pm Spanish: *Every 2nd Saturday of the month*
6:30 pm English (Family/Children)

SUNDAY HOLY MASSES

- 8:00 am English
9:30 am Greek
10:30 am English
12:00 nn French: *Every 1st Sunday of the month*
12:00 nn Tagalog: *Every 2nd Sunday of the month*
12:00 nn Indian: *Every 3rd Sunday of the month*
12:00 nn Sinhala: *Every 4th Sunday of the month*
5:30 pm English - 6.30 pm on 31 March

WEEKDAY MASSES

- 7:30 am Monday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday - English
7:30 am Tuesday - Greek
St. Anthony Devotion
8.00 am Wednesday - English
6:30 pm Every day - English

NORTH CYPRUS

- 12:00 nn St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Kyrenia
Every Sunday - English
7:00 pm Famagusta - *Every Sunday English*

Dear Parishioners,

Having lived for several years where Jesus was born, grew up, worked, died, resurrected from the dead and ascended to Heaven is an unforgettable experience. To be in the land sacred to the great monotheistic religions is indeed a precious gift and a reward of faith. The Holy Land has been and continues to be a place of tension and struggle. The holy ground is soaked in blood. That includes the blood of many Christian martyrs. Our Lord Jesus Christ himself shed his blood there.

The Christian experience of the Holy Places is an uplifting journey of faith. Visiting the sites of the Gospel story, from the joyful mystery of the Annunciation in Ein Karem outside Jerusalem to the Ascension of Our Lord on the Mount of Olives takes a pilgrim to a most intense communion with the divine.

However, at the extreme there are many people who are afflicted with the "Jerusalem Syndrome" when they arrive in the Holy City. It is a well-documented phenomenon that there are foreign visitors who suffer psychotic delusions that they are figures from the Bible, from Jesus Christ to the prophet of the End of Days. Israel's Health Ministry records around 50 cases a year where tourists' delusions are so strong that the police or mental health professionals are forced to intervene. The city's hospitals expect fresh cases as tourists flock to Jerusalem on Easter weekends and doctors prepare the now-familiar routines of alerting foreign embassies that one of their citizens may believe that he is John the Baptist or King Solomon.

Due to the faith formation received in our parishes, this should not affect any of our pilgrims this month. We have all received a healthy spirituality based on our union with Christ in our Eucharistic celebrations. We know our sins, are honest about our weaknesses and allow ourselves to be healed and guided by the Holy Spirit.

Pilgrimages are a good opportunity to learn more about our faith. One must work hard though to increase in charity and rely on grace to acquire selfless love. Certainly, when one is ready to walk with Jesus in the Holy Land as in the pilgrimage we are embarking on this March, one can become an enthusiastic believer. Giving up one's love for this passing world and the self, the 'I,' are real challenges. Let us cultivate the interior desire to make Him greater than the 'I'. The desire for true holiness is a good sign on the pilgrimage of life with its falls and rising to new life in Christ. Pax et bonum! *Fr. Andrew M. Verdote, ofm*

Confessions

Monday to Saturday at 5:20 pm and upon request; during Saturday and Sunday Masses

Pope Francis Intention for March 2019

Recognition of the Right of Christian Communities:

That Christian communities, especially those who are persecuted, feel that they are close to Christ and have their rights respected.

Teach me, O Lord, to do Your will, for you are my God.

MARCH CALENDAR

Wednesday 13 March

Ash Wednesday



Monday 19 March

St Joseph, Solemnity



Monday 26 March

The Annunciation of the Lord Solemnity



CELEBRATIONS

ASH WEDNESDAY

Even the darkest moments of the liturgy are filled with joy. And Ash Wednesday, the beginning of the Lent fast, is a day of happiness, a Christian feast. It cannot be otherwise, as it forms part of the great Easter cycle. (Thomas Merton)

ST JOSEPH, THE HUSBAND OF MARY

The 19th March is the feast of St Joseph. He was husband to Mary and guardian of the Child Jesus. He has become the patron of Christ's universal Church. He is the ideal family man, whose sole aim in life was to provide for the family God had entrusted to his care. His example can help us look beyond the quest of buying, having and acquiring. He makes us realise that true joy and happiness come in possessing God's love. He did not shrink his obligations but faced them with manly courage as seen on the journey with Mary to Bethlehem. He was refused a safe haven where Mary could give birth with dignity. We can only imagine with what anxiety and trepidation he must have worked and improvised to prepare the stable or shelter where Mary could comfortably deliver her child. Then again because of Herod's viciousness, he was obliged to leave with a very young child and young mother for a far distant place. He became a stranger in a strange place and probably like all migrants searched desperately for work in order to feed his family. Throughout these difficulties there was not a murmur from Joseph, we can imagine him communing with God, placing his trust in Him. Joseph's silence was eloquent and teaches us that to enter into a relationship with God we must lessen the hustle and bustle and the constant bombardment of noise: otherwise it is impossible to hear the voice of God. St Joseph teaches through his silence as well as through his example.

Sr. Adeline

ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD

The Annunciation to Mary inaugurates "the fullness of time", the time of the fulfilment of God's promises and preparations. Mary was invited to conceive him in whom the "whole fullness of deity" would dwell "bodily". The divine response to her question, "How can this be, since I know not man?", was given by the power of the Spirit: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you." (CCC 484).

HOLY CROSS COMMUNITY

LENT 2019 PREPARATION

ASH WEDNESDAY (13 March): Mass at 7:30 am and 6:30 pm.

WEEKDAYS (Monday-Thursday) at 5:30 pm: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament with the Evening Prayer (Vespers)

THE WAY OF THE CROSS: Every Friday at 6:00 pm, before the Mass. For those who cannot come on Friday, **every Sunday right after the 10:30 Mass.**

PARISH RECOLLECTION AND PENITENTIAL DAY: It will be held on **Sunday 24 March from 12 noon till 3:00 pm.** Sacramental confessions will take place immediately after the meditation.

LENTEN PILGRIMAGE: Monday 1 April, to the monastery of Machairas [See details, p. 3]

Sunday Readings

8 th Sunday of OT	9 th Sunday of OT	1 st Sunday of Lent	2 nd Sunday of Lent	3 rd Sunday of Lent
Ecc. 27: 4-7	Kgs. 08: 41-43	Dt.26: 4-10	Gen.15:5-12,17-18	Ex.03:1-8b, 13-15
Ps. 91: 2-16	Ps. 116:1-2	Ps. 90:1-5	Ps. 26:1-14	Ps. 102:1-11
1 Cor. 15: 54-58	Gal. 1:1-2,6-10	Rom. 10:8-13	Phil. 03:17-4:1	1Cor.10:1-6, 10-12
Lk. 6: 39-45	Lk. 7:1-10	Lk. 4:1-13	Lk. 9:28b-36	Lk. 13:1-9

Teach me, O Lord, to do Your will, for you are my God.

PARISH NEWS

FEAST OF ST JOSEPH

The Sisters of St Joseph will celebrate their Patron Saint on **Tuesday 19 March**. Mass will be celebrated at 6:30 pm. Refreshments will be offered by the Sisters afterwards.

The Social Centre will celebrate the feast of St Joseph on **Sunday 17 March** at 2.30 pm. The various groups will organise some entertainment after which refreshments will be served. Everyone is welcome.
Sr. Adeline

WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

PLEASE NOTE: The Women World Day of Prayer is **postponed from Friday 1 March to Friday 8 March**. The service will be at the same time, 10.00 a.m. in the same place, the Maronite Church, Our Lady of Graces.
Sr. Adeline

BACK TO SUMMER TIME!!!



ON SUNDAY NIGHT 31 MARCH WE MOVE OUR CLOCKS 1 HOUR FORWARD!!!

Starting on that very day (31 March) we will return to celebrating the Sunday evening Mass at 6.30 pm.

LEGION OF MARY



The Legionaries will be celebrating their Annual Renewal of Vows to the Blessed Mother (ACIES) on Sunday 24 March 2019 at St Catherine Church in Limassol.

ST FRANCIS TABLE



The Holy Cross Parish serves lunch every Sunday from 12.00 noon to 1.30 pm for less fortunate and jobless people. Food and drink donations are welcome from parishioners, as well as monetary contributions. Please put the latter in the St Anthony Poor Box at the back of the church. We thank you for your generosity.

Fr. Verdote OFM

HOLY CROSS LENTEN PILGRIMAGE MONDAY 1 APRIL 2019



On **Monday 1 April** our Parish is organising its Lenten Pilgrimage to the Monastery of Machairas. Those who wish to participate must register on the list in the sacristy (first name, family name, phone number). The registration fee is 12 Euros per person (half price for children). The deadline for registration is **Sunday 24 March 2019**. The fee is due upon registration. Participants should be at the old Cyta, by the roundabout at 8.15 am. Departure will be at 8.30 am sharp.



MOVIE NIGHT

Friday 1 March

St Francis Hall
7.15 pm

*Ignatius of Loyola
Soldier, Sinner and
Saint.*

HOLY CROSS PARISH COUNCIL NEWS & MESSAGES

The Holy Cross Parish Council met on Saturday 16 February 2019 in St Francis Hall. The following decisions were made:

- 1) The Holy Cross Lenten Pilgrimage will be to the Machairas Monastery, on Monday 1 April 2019, a public holiday in Cyprus (see box above for details). It will be an opportunity to enter deeper with faith, into the conversion and trust the Lord calls us to have, in preparation for Easter. It will include prayer, preaching, an opportunity for confession, picnic lunch to share, a visit to the Monastery and return at Holy Cross at 6.30pm.
- 2) The Way of the Cross drama will take place on Good Friday in the Friary garden, at 3.00 pm, with songs, meditation and prayer, at every station.
- 3) The Holy Cross Parish Lunch will take place on Sunday 26 May 2019 in the Friary Gardens. Every parishioner is invited to share the lunch, to join in the presentations, dances and songs, in a spirit of love and unity among us.
- 4) The plan for the Holy Cross Movie Nights has been discussed and movies have been chosen for the next few months, with the movie on the life of Ignatius of Loyola (which for technical reasons was not screened last month) on the first Friday of March 2019, in St Francis Hall, after the evening mass. Everyone is invited.

More information about the Holy Cross Annual Plan of the Parish Council for 2019 will be communicated in various ways in due course.

Finally, through the Holy Cross website, a gift will be made to all parishioners, a book to download entitled *Journey through Lent* to guide us through this blessed season before Easter.

We always pray for you, for our Parish, our priests and religious, our families and children and for the work of the Parish Council. As we enter Lent, we pray, Lord, that You fill us with Your Holy Spirit, help us to experience Your presence and power and witness Your mercy and strength to perform miracles in our lives and in the world in which we live today!

Akis Hjiiossif, Chairman of the Parish Council – email: holcrossparishcouncil@yahoo.com

Teach me, O Lord, to do Your will, for you are my God.

POPE FRANCIS CATECHESIS

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Let us continue our catechesis on the Lord's Prayer. The Gospel of Matthew places the text of the Lord's Prayer strategically at the centre of the Sermon on the Mount (cf. 6:9-13). Let us observe the scene: Jesus goes up the hill by the lake, and sits down; he has his most intimate disciples circled around him, and then a large crowd of anonymous faces. It is this heterogeneous assembly that receives the consignment of the 'Our Father' for the first time. The location is highly significant; because in this lengthy teaching, which falls under the title of 'Sermon on the Mount' (cf. Mt 5:1- 7:27), Jesus summarises the fundamental aspects of his message. The beginning is the Beatitudes [.....]. Jesus crowns with happiness a series of categories of people who in his time but also in ours! were not highly regarded. Blessed are the poor, the meek, the merciful, people humble of heart... This is the revolution of the Gospel.[...] All people are capable of love, the peacemakers who until now ended up at the margins of history, are instead the builders of the Kingdom of God. [...] The Law does not need to be abolished but needs a new interpretation that leads it back to its original meaning. If a person has a good heart, predisposed to love, then he understands that love has no boundaries: one can love one's spouse, one's friend, and even one's enemy with a wholly new perspective. Jesus says: "But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" (Mt 5:44-45).

Here is the great secret underlying the whole Sermon on the Mount: be children of your Father who is in heaven. These chapters of the Gospel of Matthew seem to be a moral discourse; they seem to evoke an ethic so demanding as to appear unfeasible, and instead we discover that they are above all a theological discourse. A Christian is not one who is committed to being better than others: he

knows he is a sinner like everyone. A Christian is simply a person who [...] invokes God with the name of 'Father', to allow himself to be renewed by His power and to reflect a ray of His goodness for this world so thirsty for good, thus awaiting good news. This is how Jesus introduces the teaching of the 'Our Father' prayer. He does so by distancing himself from two groups of his time. First and foremost, hypocrites: "you must not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by men" (Mt 6:5). [...] And how often do we see the scandal of those people who go to church every day, and then live by hating others or speaking ill of people. If you go to church, live as a child, as a brother or sister, and be a true witness, not a counter-witness. Christian prayer, however, has no other credible witness than one's own conscience, where one weaves a most intense dialogue with the Father: "when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret" (6:6)

Then Jesus distances himself from the prayer of pagans: "do not heap up empty phrases; for they think that they will be heard for their many words" (6:7). Here perhaps Jesus is alluding to that '*captatio benevolentiae*' that was the necessary introduction to many ancient prayers: a long series of praises to the divinity. When the Prophet Elijah challenged the priests of Baal, they shouted, danced, and asked for many things, so that their god would listen to them. But Elijah instead remained silent and the Lord revealed Himself to him. Pagans think that one prays by speaking, speaking, speaking, speaking. I also think of many Christians who pray by "talking to God like parrots". No! One prays from the heart, from within. You instead –Jesus says– when you pray, address God as a child to his father, who knows the things that are needed before he even asks him for them (cf. Mt 6:8). The 'Our Father' could also be a silent prayer: it is essentially enough to place yourself under God's gaze, to remember His Fatherly love. *[Adapted]*

You can receive the Parish Newsletter electronically.

Send an email to Monique
moniqueburston@yahoo.com

Notices, Contributions, etc. for Parish Newsletter

Please send your notices and other contributions for the next newsletter to Monique (moniqueburston@yahoo.com), to Irfan (zaricirfan@gmail.com) or to the Parish priest (holycross@cytanet.com.cy), or leave them in an envelope in the Church Library.

Coffee Morning in the Library

20 March 2019
10.00-12.00

For more information call Rosemarie (99216007) or Monique (99795207).

Teach me, O Lord, to do Your will, for you are my God.