



# Crossroads

The Monthly Newsletter of the Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross

---

11 Wilkins Station Road-Box 805-Medford, NJ 08055

Rectory Phone: 856-665-2491 - Fr. John's Cell Phone: 609-315-2894 - Email: [frjs@aol.com](mailto:frjs@aol.com)  
[www.holycrossmedford.org](http://www.holycrossmedford.org)

**MARCH, 2020**

## **On Discerning Divine Guidance: Four Criteria**

Fr. Lev Gillet

In an interview Fr. Lev said he often experienced divine guidance through the inward hearing of silent words: "Many times in my life when I have asked for guidance, asking for an answer in concrete terms, this has been given to me, in words: words innerly spoken, without a sound, but in a way which left me in no doubt about the superhuman origin of those answers. I have some criteria which allowed me to discriminate such words from other words, purely human words. He lists four criteria for discerning whether such experiences are in fact "divine" guidance.

**First**, it must be repeated.

**Second**, it must be spoken "in the style of God": "God speaks always in very short sentences, very short. He does not generally go further than five or six words. They are spoken in a way for which I can only find one adjective: FINAL. He doesn't leave the door open to any argument, contestation or question. I think these are the two characteristics: great brevity and the absoluteness of it."

Gillet expands on this, saying that there are other experiences that can be described as "infiltration by God," illustrated by the conversation that the risen Jesus has with two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35). "He follows them, listens to them, and hears them, and enters into their talk. This is not the way of speaking with authority, but the method of infiltration. He can enter us as ink can penetrate blotting paper."

The **third** way test to the experience is to ask others: "Ask four or five people who understand your problem to pray for a solution and to ask for guidance, and see whether the answers are convergent."

The **fourth** and "most definitive" criterion for evaluating the experience is to pay attention to the feelings and actions that the experience produces: "Does this guidance create in you sorrow, bitterness, hatred? Or does it create in you joy and love for God and other people? Judge the tree according to its fruit."

(from: Fr. John Jillions, *Divine Guidance: Lessons for Today from the World of Early Christianity*, pp. 268-269).

+

“Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn.”

Benjamin Franklin

### **UPCOMING EVENTS AND MEETINGS:**

**MONDAY-THURSDAY, MARCH 2-6:** *Canon of St Andrew of Crete* – 7 PM.  
**FRIDAY MARCH 7:** Confessions from 6:00-7:00. *Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts* – 7 PM.  
**FRIDAY-SATURDAY, MARCH 6-7:** Pirohi Sessions – 9AM  
**SUNDAY, MARCH 8:** St. Helena’s Guild / Inreach-Outreach Meetings, during coffee hour  
**SATURDAY, MARCH 14:** Church Hall Painting – 9 AM. / Community Luncheon  
**THURSDAY, MARCH 26:** Parish Council Meeting—7:00  
**FRIDAY, MARCH 27:** Youth Group  
**SATURDAY, MARCH 28** – *Healing Service with Archbishop Michael* – 4:00.  
**SUNDAY, MARCH 29:** *Hierarchical Divine Liturgy* – 9:30 / *Deanery Vespers* – 4:00

**CONFESSIONS:** Every parishioner and age-appropriate children are encouraged to come to the Sacrament of Holy Confession during Great Lent. Fr. John will be available for Confessions: before the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts (from 6:00-7:00); on Saturday evenings after Great Vespers (later in Great Lent time before Vespers will also be available); and before the Divine Liturgy (from 9:15-9:55); On Saturday March 21 (starting at 4:00) – a special session of explanation will be provided for our children before the Sacrament of Confession.

Preparatory materials will be available in hard copy and emailed out in advance.

**PARISH GROWTH PROJECT:** The first meeting of the “*Parish Growth Project*” will take place on **Sunday March 22**, following the Liturgy. All parishioners are invited to help us consider what is our “purpose” as a Christian community and how we can better fulfill that vision.

We would like to use as a guiding text in this process the “*Prayer for Our Community and For All Those Looking for Jesus Christ,*” which was formulated several years ago in a joint effort between members of our Parish Council and Fr. John. It is offered at every Divine Liturgy (the text is always at the bottom on page 2 in *Crossroads*).

In light of that “purpose” we will review suggestions made in the parish survey from several years ago, look at a study of growing Orthodox churches, and welcome your comments and suggestions.

Please let Fr. John or Phyllis Pritchard know of your interest.

**THINKING ABOUT PARTICIPATION: LET’S LEARN ABOUT THE CREED:** As we discuss ways of encouraging participation in the Divine Liturgy, some discussion has been raised about ways of “offering” the Creed. As we enter into that discussion, let’s discuss what the Creed means.

**Professor Ed Siecienski** will be leading 3 classes on the *Creed* – **Thursdays March 12, 19, and April 2** beginning at **7:30**.

**WOMAN2WOMAN: Monday, March 9:** Meeting at Diana Bisinger’s home (7:00-9:00 PM) / **Wednesday, March 18:** Ladies’ Luncheon at Franco’s (Marlton)

**“ACROSS THE AGES”** — our community’s efforts to learn from support and learn from each other has a variety of events planned. Here are the March activities: **Saturday, March 14:** Alice Paul: The Fight for Woman Suffrage (at Medford Leas @ 11:00) / **Sunday, March 22:** The Music of Frank Sinatra (at Medford Leas @ 2:30)

Please look at the listing on the bulletin board for more information.

**PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 20, 2020** prepared by Michelle Wash.

Father John commented on the Annual Parish Meeting, stating that some complicated issues were discussed regarding the church Budget, and he thanked Joe Brad for calmly and carefully answering everyone’s questions.

Council agreed to work diligently on the committees and new endeavors that were discussed at the Annual meeting – particularly, transparency with church finances, and growing the church community.

There was discussion about alternatives to a Sunday Annual Meeting. It was suggested that it would be helpful to offer a few pre-Annual meetings about the budget and open them up to anyone that wants to attend.

**Treasurer Report – Joe Brad – Current Bank Balances (as of 2/19/20)**

<b>General Fund:</b>	<b>\$3,188.49</b>	<b>Memorial Fund:</b>	<b>18,525.39</b>
<b>Capital Improvement:</b>	<b>4, 673.31</b>	<b>Food Coupon:</b>	<b>1, 262.49</b>
<b>Choir:</b>	<b>3,318.84</b>	<b>Supplemental:</b>	<b>93.19</b>
<b>Fund Raising:</b>	<b>340.94</b>	<b>Mortgage Balance:</b>	<b>37,944.12</b>

**Pioneer Investment Accounts (12/31/19):**

**Capital Improvement**      **\$20,658.97 /**      **Memorial:**      **\$30,988.20**

A motion was passed to transfer \$5000 from unrestricted Memorial funds to the General fund with the understanding as stated in the Standing Rules that this could be done “with the intent of repaying the money back in a timely manner.”

**Open actions on Agenda – Phyllis:**

The Council supported the establishment of a “**Parish Growth Project.**”

**Web Maintenance:** After many years of considerable involvement, Greg Sapnar is stepping down as web master and Facebook admin. Greg Gotowchikov will take on both responsibilities.

**eGiving:** Greg Gotowchikov reviewed the experiences of those who have been giving online and discussed the work of establishing a parish App.

**Education:** Ed Siecienski will teach three adult classes on the Creed Mar 12, 19, and Apr 2.

**Celebrations:** Fr John said Archbishop Michael will visit over the weekend of March 28-29. We will also sponsor the Deanery Vespers on that day.

He stated that this is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the autocephaly of the OCA. He explained its importance for our national Church and parish and suggested that it would be valuable for us to recognize it in some way. One event being considered for our Deanery will be special services that will include the relics of St. Herman. Ways of visualizing and affirming the declining status of our church mortgage (now at \$37,000.00) were discussed— perhaps a thermometer.

It was acknowledged that we need a better sound system in the basement – the possibility of using “Bluetooth” technology will be explored.

A parish credit card for small expenses will be pursued through our bank (WSFS).

The opportunities for offering services of prayer (Akathists) for our broader community as well as encouraging intercessory prayer among our parishioners and Council members were discussed.

Gary was grateful for the cards, letters, meal, and flowers offered upon the death of his mother, Betty. His family was amazed at how many people from our parish attended her funeral - without knowing her.

The Council, led by Phyllis and Gary, will take the initiative for painting the church basement on Saturday March 14..

The next meeting will be: **March 26, 2020 at 7pm.**

### **AMAZON SMILE:**

*AmazonSmile* is a simple and automatic way for you to support your favorite charitable organization every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to our parish. You can choose from over one million organizations to support.

#### **How do I shop at AmazonSmile?**

To shop at AmazonSmile simply go to smile.amazon.com from the web browser on your computer or mobile device. You may also want to add a bookmark to smile.amazon.com to make it even easier to return and start your shopping at AmazonSmile.

**Which products on AmazonSmile are eligible for charitable donations?**

Tens of millions of products on AmazonSmile are eligible for donations. You will see eligible products marked “Eligible for AmazonSmile donation” on their product detail pages.

**Can I use my existing Amazon.com account on AmazonSmile?**

Yes, you use the same account on Amazon.com and AmazonSmile. Your shopping cart, Wish List, wedding or baby registry, and other account settings are also the same.

**How do I select a charitable organization to support when shopping on AmazonSmile?**

On your first visit to AmazonSmile smile.amazon.com, search for and select “Church of the Holy Cross.” (link: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/22-3505878>) The selection will be remembered, and then every eligible purchase you make at smile.amazon.com will result in a donation.

**COFFEE HOUR:**

March 1: Diane V / March 8: Leslie Lane / March 15: Debbie Chong / March 22: Mary Stosuy  
March 29: Visit of Archbishop Michael

**CHURCH CALENDAR:**

**APRIL**

- |                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>Thursday, April 2:</b>   | <b>Ed Siecienski: The Creed – Final Class (7:30-9:00)</b>                         |
| <b>Saturday, April 4:</b>   | <b>St. Helena’s Guild’s Spring Bazaar</b>   |
| <b>Sunday, April 5:</b>     | <b>St. Mary of Egypt</b>  |
| <b>Monday, April 6:</b>     | <b>W2@ Meeting at the Skuby’s (7:00-9:00)</b>                                     |
| <b>Wednesday, April 8</b>   | <b>Across the Ages: Daffodil Daze Walks (at Medford Leas,<br/>@ 10:00)</b>        |
| <b>Sunday, April 12:</b>    | <b>Palm Sunday<br/>Inreach/Outreach Meeting</b>                                   |
| <b>Sunday, April 19:</b>    | <b>PASCHA</b>   |
| <b>Thursday, April 23:</b>  | <b>Ladies Luncheon at Norma’s (Cherry Hill)</b>                                   |
| <b>Friday, April 24:</b>    | <b>Youth Group</b>  |
| <b>Sunday, April 26:</b>    | <b>Divine Liturgy<br/>Across the Ages: Potluck Luncheon at Ted Coutumas’ home</b> |
| <b>Wednesday, April 29:</b> | <b>Healing Akathist – 7 PM</b>  |

**Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross – MARCH, 2020**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 <i>DIVINE LITURGY—10:00 Forgiveness Vespers</i>	2 <i>First Week of Great Lent Canon of St. Andrew — 7 PM</i>	3 <i>Canon of St. Andrew — 7 PM</i>	4 <i>Canon of St. Andrew — 7 PM</i>	5 <i>Canon of St. Andrew — 7 PM</i>	6 <i>Pirohi Session 9AM Confessions 6:00 Presanctified Liturgy — 7:00</i>	7 <i>Pirohi Session 9AM</i>
8 <i>DIVINE LITURGY – 10:00 St. Helena’s Guild Meeting Inreach/Outreach Meeting</i>	9 <i>W2W Meeting at Diana Bisinger’s (7:00-9:00)</i>	10	11	12 <i>Ed Siecienski on “The Creed” — First Class: 7:30</i>	13 <i>Confessions 6:00 Presanctified Liturgy — 7:00</i>	14 <i>Community Luncheon / Painting of basement—9 AM Great Vespers: 5</i>
15 <i>DIVINE LITURGY—10:00</i>	16	17	18 <i>Ladies Luncheon at Franco’s</i>	19 <i>Ed Siecienski on “The Creed” — Second Class: 7:30</i>	20 <i>Confessions 6:00 Presanctified Liturgy — 7:00</i>	21 <i>Confessions for children (4:00-5:00) Great Vespers: 5</i>
22 <i>DIVINE LITURGY -- 10:00 Church Growth Project Meeting</i>	23	24	25 <i>Confessions—6 PM Divine Liturgy for the Annunciation 7 PM</i>	26 <i>Parish Council Meeting — 7 PM</i>	27 <i>Youth Group Session</i>	28 <i>Healing Service with Archbishop Michael — 4:00</i>
29 <i>DIVINE LITURGY with Archbishop Michael –9:30 Deanery Vespers —4:00</i>	30	31	1 April <i>Confessions 6:00 Presanctified Liturgy — 7:00</i>	2 <i>Ed Siecienski on “The Creed” — Final Class: 7:30</i>	3	4 <i>Great Vespers: 5</i>

