



# DIAKONIA

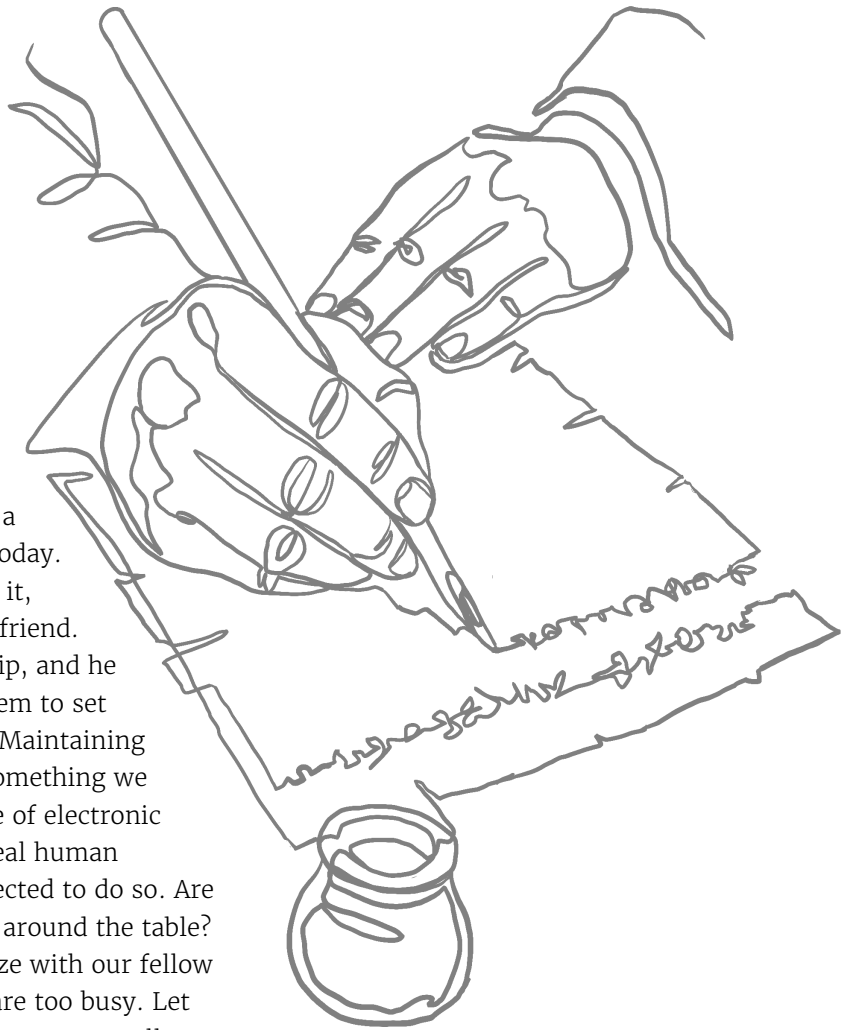
*A National Ministry of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America*

REFLECTIONS FROM TODAY'S READING | *Galatians 6:11-18*

Fr. George Parsenios (HCHC '96)

## *"I am writing with my own hand"*

In ancient times, scribes did the work of our modern laser printers. They handwrote documents in a legible, elegant script, each letter having a uniform shape and size. In today's epistle reading, St. Paul shows that he relied on scribes to write his epistles when he says, "See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand" (Gal. 6:11). He dictated most of the letter to a scribe but then penned just a few words with his "own hand" and in "large letters" because he couldn't produce the elegant script of a trained scribe. But if the scribe produced a more legible document, why would St. Paul disrupt this by inserting his own handwriting? He was making a personal connection. We often do the same thing today. After printing out a professional letter and signing it, we might add a brief note at the bottom to a close friend. St. Paul and the Galatians shared a long relationship, and he appealed to that close relationship while urging them to set aside their heretical ways and return to true faith. Maintaining such a personal connection in communication is something we must remember. In an increasingly impersonal age of electronic devices, nothing is more important than making real human connections. We are often too busy or too disconnected to do so. Are families too busy to eat meals together and to talk around the table? Then, they are too busy. Are we too busy to socialize with our fellow parishioners after Church each Sunday? Then, we are too busy. Let us imitate St. Paul by rearranging our lives to be more personally and more intentionally invested in all our relationships.



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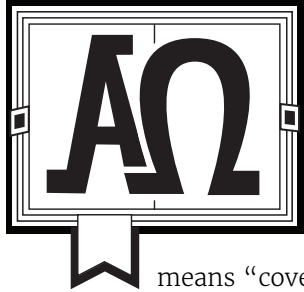
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## FROM THE ORIGINAL GREEK: *Apokalypsis* (Ἀποκάλυψις) What does “Revelation” mean?

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The Greek word ἀποκάλυψις/*apokalypsis* is rendered in English either as “revelation” or “apocalypse;” it is derived from two Greek words: *apo*, which means “from” or “out of,” and *kalypsis*, which means “cover” or “veil.” If a *kalypsis* is a veil, then an *apo-kalypsis* is “an unveiling” or a “revelation.” The last book of the Bible is called the Book of Revelation because its opening words are: “the revelation (*apokalypsis*) of Jesus Christ...” (Rev. 1:1). Because the Book of Revelation is centered on the future

plans of God, the word “apocalyptic” is understood in popular thinking to refer exclusively to what God will do in the future, and the word often implies something terrifying and awful. But *apokalypsis* does not inherently carry such a negative sense in the Bible or in Christian theology more generally. Everything that God has done in Jesus Christ is said to be done “by revelation” (*apokalypsis*) according to St. Paul (Galatians 1:11-12). The sure promises of God in Scripture's closing book, the Book of Revelation, are not just revealed by Jesus Christ but are a revelation (*apokalypsis*) of the divine person and character of the Risen Lord.



*Holy Cross Chapel. Ben Malian.*

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### THIS WEEK'S LOOK AT CHURCH HISTORY

## Holy Cross Orthodox School of Theology

*Ben Malian, MTS-Holy Cross 2026*

Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology opened its doors on the Clark Estate in Pomfret, CT, in the Fall of 1937, welcoming an inaugural class of fifteen students. The brainchild of Archbishop Athenagoras, Holy Cross began as a two-year institution intended to train future American-born priests, who would then be sent to finish their theological education at schools in Athens, Thessaloniki, or Halki.

Unlike previous attempts to establish a Greek Orthodox seminary in the U.S., Holy Cross succeeded despite some significant early setbacks. It was relocated to its present-day home in Brookline, MA, in 1947 and, by 1956, had become a fully accredited degree-granting institution. Following the ambitious vision of Archbishop Iakovos to create a Greek Orthodox institution on the model of Brandeis University, Holy Cross and St. Basil's Teachers College were merged in 1968 to form Hellenic College Holy Cross.

Currently experiencing a renewed growth in enrollment, this joint institution continues to educate the clerical and lay leaders who serve the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America and other Orthodox communities throughout the world.

**SEPTEMBER 14:**

## The Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross

In the year 326, Saint Helen, the faithful mother of Saint Constantine the Great, traveled to Jerusalem to find the places of Christ's suffering, death, and Resurrection. Over the years, many of these sacred sites had been hidden. Emperor Hadrian had built a pagan temple over Golgotha in an attempt to erase the memory of Christ's Passion.

Guided by the faith and tradition of the local Christians, Saint Helen ordered the temple destroyed and the ground excavated. There, workers uncovered the Holy Sepulcher and three crosses. One was the Cross on which Christ had been crucified, while the other two belonged to the thieves crucified beside Him. The challenge was determining which Cross was the Lord's.

Saint Macarius, the Archbishop of Jerusalem, brought forward a woman who was gravely ill. As she touched each cross, nothing happened until she came in contact with the True Cross of Christ. Immediately, she was healed. Through this miracle, God revealed the True Cross of salvation. Joyfully, Patriarch Macarius lifted the Precious Cross high for all the people to see. This moment is the origin of the Feast of the Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross, celebrated on September 14.

The feast reminds us that the Cross, once a symbol of shame and death, became through Christ the source of victory, hope, and eternal life. It is the new Tree of Life, revealing God's love for the world and the triumph of light over darkness. As Orthodox Christians, we honor the Cross not only as a sacred relic, but as the sign of our salvation and the path that leads us to Christ.

The icon of the Feast of the Precious Cross tells the story of the finding of the Cross and of its Exaltation. Patriarch Macarius is standing in the pulpit elevating the Cross for all to see and venerate. On each side of the Patriarch are deacons holding candles. The elevated Cross is surrounded and venerated by many clergy and lay people, including Saint Helen, the mother of Emperor Constantine. In the background of the icon is a domed structure that represents the Church of the Resurrection in Jerusalem. This church was one of the churches constructed and dedicated by Emperor Constantine on the holy sites of Jerusalem.



### FAITH IN ACTION

Today, make the Sign of the Cross slowly and prayerfully, thanking Christ for transforming the Cross from a symbol of suffering into a source of hope, salvation, and new life.



MAZE

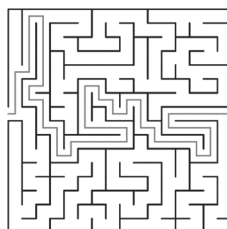
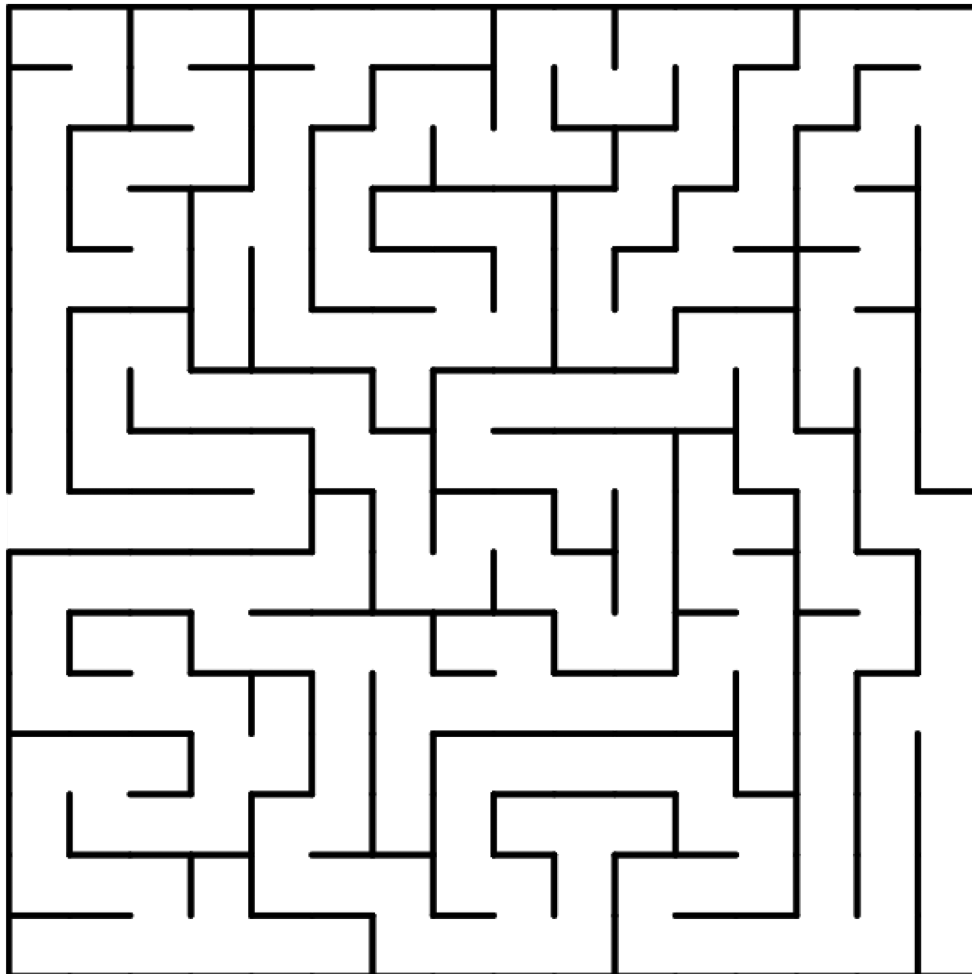
# Exaltation of the Holy Cross

The Feast of the Elevation of the Holy Cross is celebrated tomorrow, September 14! On this day, we remember two things:

St. Helen finding the true Cross of Christ and many years later, its recovery by the Emperor Heraclius after it was stolen from the Christians. At church, the priest lifts, or "elevates," the Cross for everyone to see, mimicking what was done after the Holy Cross was recovered. Now that you know how special this day is, can you help St. Helen find the Cross again?

**Just For Kids!**

*(...and the young at heart)*



ANSWER: