The alarm goes off, we hit the snooze. Thirty minutes later we actually roll out of bed and stumble into class. Our days are chaotic, and after we grab a quick bite to eat, study for a few hours, and chat with friends, we climb into bed for our measly six hours of sleep (give or take) and repeat the cycle.

This picture is all too familiar to me, and I wish that I could say I was even this productive on a daily basis. Entering college as a CrossRoad alumna, I had every intention of “sanctifying my time”—but what does that even mean? Merriam Webster’s Online Dictionary states that to sanctify is “to set apart to a sacred purpose or to religious use; to free from sin.” The thing that probably scares me the most is that it wasn’t until I sat here, writing this article the day it is due, that I realized how little I sanctify my time. I think that realization hit me today in the Emergency Room.

College was glorious, until the lovely person I call my roommate gave me strep throat. After a long night of coughing and waking up to drink hot tea, I decided to drive myself to the hospital and nip this in the bud. Four hours and three painful shots later, I was sitting in my car at a stop sign sobbing. I had spent the entire day listening to children cry and watching people older and much sicker than I fill out confusing insurance paperwork. As I leaned against a cold and uncomfortable armrest and started to fall asleep on my hand, my name was shouted from the front desk. All I could think was “finally.” It is only at that moment that I realized how foolish I had been. Yes, four hours in a hospital waiting room is a long time, and I was miserable, but to be perfectly honest, I doubt that I would have made that time productive if I hadn’t been in the emergency room. I had four solid hours on my hands to pray, and I didn’t.

Four solid hours to talk to the person next to me, to learn their story and see Christ in them, and I didn’t. Four solid hours that I could have read Holy Scripture, and I didn’t. I was too caught up thinking about my own pain and about the paper and studying I had waiting for me at home. I had forgotten the words of Christ Himself, “Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself” (Matthew 6:34), and I was so caught up with everything going on in my life. The most important moment in our life is right now, this very second. I had forgotten that.

As I sit in my dorm with my soup and my cough drops, I look back on my day and realize a little fearfully that it resembles almost my entire fall semester. It’s amazing that it took a hospital visit and writing this article to realize how much I have let slip through my fingers. The point is not to make time for God in our busy schedules, but rather to make our busy schedules all about God. I cannot dwell on the four lost hours in the hospital, but I can only hope to sanctify the rest of my days, and to see the bigger picture that is Jesus Christ.
Another turning point, a fork stuck in the road
Time grabs you by the wrist, directs you where to go…
It’s something unpredictable, but in the end it’s right.
I hope you had the time of your life.

Remember these Green Day lyrics? Their sentimental break-up tune Time of Your Life came out in 1997 when I was in high school and immediately became a hit. It seemed like it was the theme song for every high school prom and graduation that year.

What does it mean to “have the time of your life”? When I started college at the University of Texas, lots of people told me: “Enjoy your college days; this will be the time of your life!” While I indeed had a wonderful experience at UT, I’m not really sure it was “the time of my life.” Maybe the period deserving of that title is my childhood, when all it took to make me happy was a sunny day in the park. Then again, maybe it was high school, but what about that summer I traveled Europe? How does one know exactly when “the time of your life” is?

Leo Tolstoy wrote a short story called Three Questions, in which a king searches for the best answer to three questions: What is the most important time? Who is the most important person? What is the most important pursuit?

The only answer that made sense came from a wise old hermit: “There is only one time that is important— Now! It is the most important time because it is the only time over which we have any power. The most necessary person is the one you are with, for no one knows whether he will ever have dealings with any one else; and the most important pursuit is to do him good, because for that purpose alone was man sent into this life!”

This Tolstoy story was used by a dear priest I know to describe “mindfulness” – simply being aware of the present moment, the person right in front of you, the task at hand. Because we’re fallen beings, we tend to dwell either in the past (“When I was dat-

Time of Your Life
MARY LONG: CROSSROAD DIRECTOR

This is why in the Church we talk about sanctifying time - making each moment holy, or rather, recognizing and responding to Christ in each moment. Prayer, Liturgy, the Sacraments, and all other components of the Church center around this truth.

From this perspective, it makes little sense to look back on some past event or period of life in an overly nostalgic way, or to measure certain periods as better than others. Every moment should be lived fully for the glory of our Lord.

It is my hope that we all come to fully realize what St. Paul proclaimed about the most important time: “Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation!” (2 Cor. 6:2).

Truly, the time is your life is this very moment!
I would like to extend those words—‘This do in remembrance of me’—to all my daily actions that Thou didst make and that we ourselves make. ~Fr. Lev Gillet, In Thy Presence

In general, we tend to speak of time in the possessive: we either have time or we don't. In addition, when feeling we lack time, we attempt to create it. How many of us have thought, “I need to make up some time,” or “I saved time today.” To be sure, time management is a good skill to acquire, especially for students. Yet Fr. Lev Gillet's words draw our attention to different views of time.

When overloaded with work, I struggle to know where to begin. The many tasks ahead, be it term-papers for school or projects at work, seem overwhelming. When I posed this dilemma to a trusted elder, I received a response that first seemed unhelpful, but has since borne fruit: “Begin where you are.” So the question is, where are we?

Though simple, the profound nature of the answer should not be lost: with each breath we are in God’s presence. For this reason, each daily action is an opportunity to grow closer to Christ. As Fr. Lev states so eloquently,

So that Thou mayest become present in every part of my life, or rather, so that I may discern Thy Presence in it more clearly, I shall first of all unite myself to Thee in all the most ordinary, most everyday actions.

Often, I fall into the trap of thinking that the Christian life must be coupled with visible supernatural events; if I don’t experience visions or the miraculous, there must be something wrong! But this denies that God creates every moment for union with Him, thus turning the ordinary to extraordinary, the mundane into life everlasting. Each moment is to be transformed in this way.

Do I have two ten-page papers? Let me pray and begin researching the first.
Do I have 3 meetings to attend? Let me see God’s presence in those whom I encounter.
Do I have a ten-minute walk across campus? Let me sing praises to God on the way.

All tasks to which I am entrusted are fulfilled in remembrance of God.
As I write this, Vassilios, Nico and I are eagerly awaiting the arrival of our second child. [Editor’s note: the Bezzerides family welcomed Peter Stavros on December 11, 2008.] It never ceases to amaze me how all-consuming being a parent is—especially as I think about the months ahead of being woken every 2–3 hours every night to take a half-hour to feed a precious little soul. What precious time to sanctify, even amidst the exhaustion!

Many of you know that in September 2007 we hosted a CrossRoad Weekend for parents. You may have also seen a mailing that came to your parents before Christmas regarding you, your vocation, holy decisions, and their role in all this as parents. This is all part of our love for you, and our hope that your unique and ongoing response to Christ’s call will be a blessing to your whole family… that your presence within your family will be Christ-like, that your family time will be itself sanctified.

This is not easy: our families often see the worst of us. It takes all the fruit of the Spirit—peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, self-control—to preserve even the healthiest of families. One of your parents came up to me at the CrossRoad Parents’ Weekend and said, “Will you please remind our children that they need to forgive us?” And so, as you read this issue and think of all the ways you are challenged to sanctify time, I ask you not to forget your most immediate “neighbors”—your family members. Forgive them, ask for their forgiveness, and pray.

Since 2004, the Office of Vocation & Ministry has stated in its promotional material that “CrossRoad is an exciting summer vocation exploration program designed to help students discern their life callings and match their God-given gifts with the needs of the world.” After five years, we have been blessed to learn how CrossRoad alumni are sharing their gifts with the world by way of volunteerism, mission trips, and parish youth ministry, just to name a few. It is our hope that CrossRoad has prepared you well to recognize how you can share your gifts with others.

I pray that as we start 2009, we will all be blessed with many opportunities to share our gifts with more people. Thankfully, through your participation in CrossRoad and your sharing of this program with your peers, this summer we will once again offer two sessions of CrossRoad for high school juniors and seniors from around the country and Canada.

This past year, the OVM has been blessed with many donors consisting of alumni, parents, and faithful from the greater Orthodox community who see our mission “to train, educate, and inspire the future leaders of the Church” as necessary for the Church. We are humbled by this support and continue to strive to be exemplary stewards of these gifts.
A Word From Dr. Albert Rossi
CrossRoad Lecturer 2004-2008

I read a sentence recently that jumped off the page at me. It said, “God’s telltale signature is abundance.” The context was the full net of fish the Apostles caught at Jesus’ directive. The scene was Galilee after the Resurrection. When the Apostles began hauling in the abundant fish they said, “It is the Lord.”

When I think back on my times at CrossRoad my memory is filled with an abundance of warmth, nourishment and glow. As I look forward to my time with the alumni this March my anticipation is marked by an abundance of sheer joy. Our theme will revolve around Freedom and Boundaries. We will explore the implications of the new freedoms and challenges which college and young adult life provide. How do we make holy decisions? We will exchange insights and share experiences. For me, that’s as good as it gets. That’s abundance in full measure. That’s one telltale signature of the Lord, namely, your presence in my life. I hope to see you then.

With prayer and love,
Dr. R

A Word From Fr. Nicholas Triantafilou
CrossRoad Chaplain, 2004-2008
President, Hellenic College/Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology

Languages! Greek, English, Arabic, Romanian, Albanian, Swahili, Serbian and Spanish in the Chapel at our beloved Holy Cross Seminary and Hellenic College—these languages are used in offering praise to Almighty God. The languages, as important as they are, are means of expression. The essence of praise and of prayer is the spirit of each pilgrim. When each pilgrim has her or his spirit open to the inspiration of God and to His inaudible yet real presence, then praise of God and prayer to our Loving Father become viable, comforting and salvific. The combination of languages and dependent spirits cause the issue of time to take on the fullest of meanings. Minutes and hours evaporate into experiences of holiness. We welcome all to come to our Chapel and School to participate in this mystical transformation of time into holy experience.

“The essence of praise and of prayer is the spirit of each pilgrim.”
In one of my classes, His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios recently commented that in some areas of England people ask, “How goes the enemy?” instead of asking what time it is. It’s interesting to refer to time as “the enemy.” It seems so natural that people are scared of time, especially in our own youth-obsessed culture.

Fast-forward three weeks, and the deadline for this very essay for the CrossRoad newsletter passed. I tried to avoid Mary Long for fear of telling her that I had not yet finished my piece. I hate missing deadlines, and I had no idea where the past three weeks had gone. Certainly, the enemy seemed to be getting to me.

I hid in my friend’s apartment, thinking less of what to write and more of how to avoid walking past OVM for the rest of the day. For some reason, he and I began to talk about this very topic - our understanding of time. The Orthodox understanding of time is not linear, but rather cyclical. Think of the Church cycles: yearly, weekly and monthly. This is even expressed in our architecture. Traditional Orthodox churches have a dome at the top. This represents the heavens and God, and circular time. However, the lines throughout the rest of the church - the walls, columns, pews and even tiled floors - represent chronological, linear time; that’s the way we experience it. The place where the roundness of the dome meets the straight lines of the walls and columns is always at the icon of the Panagia - more spacious than the heavens.

It seems that time the enemy had not gotten to me. Even though, as any college student facing deadlines, any mother of a young child or athlete in the final moments of a tournament game can attest, we can’t stop the passing of time. However, we are not supposed to be scared of it. God created the universe and the passing of time that goes along with it. It’s not necessarily the enemy. The way we experience it now is not the way God experiences it. It isn’t the way the saints and our departed loved ones experience it.

Accepting this reality certainly negates time as the enemy and, rather, teaches us of the sureness of God’s creation.

Right Where He Wants You

GREG ABDALAH: CR STAFF 2007

Whenever I come to a point of transition in my life – graduation, moving, etc. – I start to freak out a month or two before. I get very anxious and jittery; I argue with the people I’m closest with; I overreact to things people say, but only after overanalyzing every word of a conversation, the tone of the other person’s voice and their mannerisms. One year before going back to college, I even broke out into hives for three weeks! This is what I consider to be my “normal” reaction. These anxieties, which I try my best to keep hidden, were brought out and worsened over the past year. I was under a lot of stress at school, not getting enough sleep and I just kept it all in and got more and more bitter. To further complicate things, my mother’s battle with cancer took a bad turn and she began to decline quickly. I was constantly worried about things at home but also all of my responsibilities at school, and I was unable to handle it alone.

I was talking about this all in confession one day and mentioned that I kept it all inside because I thought I should be able to handle it. The priest said something to me that I will never forget. He looked me in the eye and said, “That’s just stupid.” I agreed with him, so we came up with a plan which involved me talking about things – including having breakfast with someone every Friday morning. At first I was skeptical, but in time I started to look forward to those Friday chats. Nearly every week, my breakfast companion would say the same thing to me: “God has you right where He wants you.” I didn’t believe him at first; or I should say it made me angry at first. If God had me right where He wanted me, why was all this stuff going on? As I looked back on my life to that point, I realized that everything had happened for a reason, guiding me to that moment. Having no other choice, I eventually started to believe him and still find comfort in that.

I share this with you because I hope it helps. We each deal with transitional periods in our own way, but I am willing to bet that we all worry about what will happen next. So, I challenge you: Why worry about what will happen tomorrow? God has you right where He wants you.

“Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself”, (Matthew 6:34).
No occupation either, but something given
And taken, in a lifetime’s death in love,
Ardour and selflessness and self-surrender.
For most of us, there is only the unattended Moment, the moment in and out of time,
The distraction fit, lost in a shaft of sunlight,
The wild thyme unseen, or the winter lightning Or the waterfall, or music heard so deeply
That it is not heard at all, but you are the music
While the music lasts. These are only hints and guesses,
Hints followed by guesses; and the rest
Is prayer, observance, discipline, thought and action.
The hint half guessed, the gift half understood, is
Incarnation.
Here the impossible union
Of spheres of evidence is actual,
Here the past and future
Are conquered, and reconciled,
Where action were otherwise movement
Of that which is only moved
And has in it no source of movement—
Driven by daemonic, chthonic
Powers. And right action is freedom
From past and future also.
For most of us, this is the aim
Never here to be realized;
Who are only undefeated
Because we have gone on trying;
We, content at the last
If our temporal reversion nourish
(Not too far from the yew-tree)
The life of significant soil.

A Day Without Evening
MARY BETH DANCKAERT
CR STAFF 2006

Trying to explain time is a tricky thing. What constitutes a second, a minute, a day, a year, really? Past, present, future; what do those words mean anyway? Time as we know it seems to be a limit to our existence, but it does not have to be, because we can be eternally with God if we so choose. Explaining time is tricky because as humans in this life we experience both our limitedness and, by God’s grace, our lack of limitedness when we cling to Him. For example, sometimes time seems to move very quickly and sometimes it seems to move very slowly; I would argue that when time seems to move very quickly and we are peacefully aware of what is happening we are being good and faithful servants and we are close to Christ. When we cling closely to Christ we are in an eternal present, a present that encompasses both the past and the future. How can this be? With Christ we are free, so we are not limited by time ticking by; and yet, can we even imagine a day without evening? I think we can.

I hope that the following passage from T.S. Eliot’s Four Quartets will be as compelling for each of you as it is for me; for me, the passage demonstrates in a clear manner (in large part because it is poetry) the sanctification of time.

Men’s curiosity searches past and future
And clings to that dimension.
But to apprehend
The point of intersection of the timeless
With time, is an occupation for the saint—

A Gift from the Father of Lights
MICAH HIRSCHY
CR STAFF 2004-2006

“Every good thing and all perfect gifts are from above, coming down from the Father of lights” (James 1:17).

For many young adults, life often seems to be lived between two poles: we find ourselves either bored or overwhelmed. Overwhelmed with school work, ath-

eletic activities, social and family obligations, and, for those with deadlines, the dreaded need for sleep. But when we are not running from one activity or obligation to another, we are bored, wondering what we can do to “kill” time.

I believe that in the movement between these two extremes lies the root to so much of what plagues young adults. Being so overwhelmed and then having time that is not filled with activity, we seek rest from the craziness and escape from the boredom. In today’s world this “escape” has taken on destructive and spiritually damaging dimensions. On many college campuses students spend their free time binge-drinking or going to parties and clubs. Pornography and pharmaceutical abuse has become epidemic among young single professionals. The times at our homes or in dorm rooms when we find ourselves saying, “I have nothing to do,” we immediately reach for the remote or the mouse.

What is the solution to this tragic situation? To find hope and healing for this contemporary illness we must adopt an ancient remedy: The Divine Liturgy. The Liturgy is the model for our lives because it implies order, discipline, and attention on Christ. It also teaches us how to see and live the life we were given. We are called to adopt a Eucharistic approach to our lives, the people who surround us, the world we live in, and especially the time we are given.

“The Liturgy is the model for our lives because it implies order, discipline, and attention on Christ.”

What this means is that we realize that our lives, our family and friends, our talents, and our time are not our own but have been freely given to us by the Father of lights. It is not enough simply to be grateful and occasionally let Him know that we appreciate what He has done. Our gratitude must (Continued...)
lead us to an offering. When someone we love gives us a gift, we want to give a gift to that person, not just because we are grateful but to express our love in tangible action. So how do we offer a gift to the One who has everything? We take what He has given us, and we use it for His honor and glory. If your friend is a gift, treat him with love and respect; if your talent is a gift, do not grow proud - it came from above; if your body is a gift, do not disdain or destroy it; and if your free time is a gift, use it for prayer, healthy fellowship, and sacred reading.

With thanksgiving there is no place for boredom, and from time used to find peace instead of escape, we will discover true rest.

A Season for All Things
Presvytera
Ourania Chatzis:
CR Staff 2004–2005

God gives me all that I need each day and He knows what that is. When we are young and we see the world before us, we tend to think about the future, and many times we fantasize about being somewhere else doing something else. This begs the question: what do we seek for our life? Do we seek pleasure in all things? Without us realizing it, our delusions often rob us from experiencing the unique journey that each of us takes, even when the journey includes difficulties. "To everything there is a season...a time to weep and a time to laugh" (Eccl. 3:1,4). Without a crossroad, how do we reach a new place? Should the struggle be taken away or should it be embraced? As Christians, the Cross is in front of us and we must decide what to do with it. When it becomes too difficult, here is how we begin to realize our weakness as humans and truly how much we need God.

It wasn’t until my mother became ill last spring that I began to see the value of living each day for what it is. “This is the day which the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it” (Ps 118:24). The time that is afforded to us is a gift, and I cherish this gift of life and each moment that I have each day. When my mother became ill so suddenly, my heart hurt and I began to think about the continuous outpouring of love she showed to us her family. I am so grateful for her example, and though she is unable to do the things that she used to, she still shows her love for us in simple ways that we don’t take for granted. By her example and sacrifice, I am seeing how God takes a terrible situation and reveals His glory through it. We are blessed as a family to be able to care for our mother in this way. There is not a day that passes that I don’t see the miracle of life before my eyes. My children are a constant reminder of such miracles. I don’t think about what tomorrow has nor do I wish to.

“What a relief it is to know that we are not the ones in control. We must respond to Grace of course, but ultimately it is that Grace through Christ that moves us forward. The truly (Continued...)
advanced Christian is the one who trusts in God's mercy wholly and not in himself. Two, the path of the Orthodox spiritual life is not dependent upon one's own will. Those who do not submit completely to the guidance of the Church in the spiritual life will ultimately fall into delusion.

Third, the spiritual life is cyclical; one has interchanging moments of Grace and the absence of Grace. The intensity of such cycles alters based on one's spiritual strength and individual need. There is no formula, for it is a mystery of God's providence. This is a difficult subject to comprehend, and any attempt at explanation would undoubtedly become a gross simplification. Ultimately, however, the lesson here is that there will be times when one vividly feels the presence of God and other times when one does not; we cannot base our spiritual life on how we feel, though. In reality, God is always near, and in His divine wisdom, He at times makes Himself known and at other times does not. The point, then, is not to constantly attempt to figure out why we are where we are, but to simply do, to forge ahead with the ascetic and Sacramental life at all times.

Of course, many other points could be drawn out, but what do even these have to do with sanctifying time? This lifestyle, this cycle, is lived every second of one's life. We can expect moments of Grace and moments of the feeling of abandonment. We know that struggles will come. However, by following the guidance of the Church, through one's Spiritual Father, through asceticism, and through the Mysteries, we can know—whether we feel it or not—that Christ is with us. When St. Anthony lay beaten by the demons on the floor of his cave, almost lifeless, he asked where Christ was, and Christ responded, “Anthony, I am always with you.” Our time is already sanctified; we have only to realize it and to live it.

[Note: To read about Elder Sophrony, see We Shall See Him as He Is: The Spiritual Autobiography of Elder Sophrony by Archimandrite Sophrony Sakharov (St. Herman Press, 2006). To read about his spiritual father, St. Silouan the Athonite, see St. Silouan the Athonite by Archimandrite Sophrony Sakharov (St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1999). Finally, to read about St. Anthony the Great, read his life by St. Athanasius, available online here: http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2811.htm.]

**GETTING CENTERED**

**THANASI PANTAZELOS:**
**CR STAFF 2007-2008**

I remember in business school that one of my professors, the owner of several successful companies, offered a piece of his “million dollar” advice to a full classroom. He told us that in order to be successful, we should plan out every minute of every day, from the critical meetings to the shortest of phone calls. He did mention the potential occurrence of variables in schedules but preached structure with occasional flexibility to help us to maximize our output. I have thought about this advice to this very day, and as much merit as it has, I often think about the consequences of having lives that are increasingly focused on productivity.

Every day we wake up and proceed to go to school and work while daydreaming about vacations, nights out with friends and family, and various social events. But in reality, these moments we look forward to the most represent a very small percentage of our lives. When we then think about life in this way, we may start to neglect the seemingly mundane moments which make up the biggest portion of our lives. We keep desk calendars, palm pilots, blackberries, and organizers to ensure that we keep track of our already jam-packed schedules. Everything is planned down to the minute. The emphasis for many of us then becomes the tasks at hand and in their completion, they start to resemble small victories which offer short lived feelings of relief, but only till the next task needs to be completed.

“When each new day resembles the one before we have only to look to Christ and the saints of our church as our inspiration for the coming day.”

Although this has become a part of the experience of the culture we live in, this is not all there is to this life. When each new day resembles the one before we have only to look to Christ and the saints of our church as our inspiration for the coming day. We look to Christ as our ultimate role model who, in every moment of His earthly existence, understood the necessity of being in direct communication with God the Father. In every second of His ministry, Jesus sought to do the will of His Father and in doing this, the material world and time itself was sanctified by His very presence. As members of His holy church, we must always remember that Christ is the center of life itself and when we seek to know Him within the confines of space and time, we can then move towards living eternally in love with our Creator.
Updates from the Homefront

(Left) In August 2008, Dn. Nicholas Belcher (CR Director 2006–2008) began his position as the Dean of Students at Hellenic College/Holy Cross School of Theology. Congratulations! Although the OVM is sad that he is no longer involved with our office in a full-time capacity, we have the privilege of collaborating frequently with his office as we serve Hellenic College students.

(Above) Dino Pappas (CR Staff 2006) recently began his position as the new Director of Youth & Young Adult Ministries for the Metropolis of Boston. Congratulations!

(Below) The OVM welcomes Daniel Belonick as our newest full-time staff member. Dan comes to us as a recent graduate of St. Vladimir’s Seminary and will also be serving as the Assistant Director of CrossRoad.

(Above) Ann Bezzerides (OVM Director, CR Director 2004–2005) and her husband Vassilios welcomed their second son, Peter Stavros Bezzerides, on December 11, 2008. Congratulations!

(Above) Congratulations to Paul Truebenbach (CR Staff 2008) on his marriage to Lavinia Suciu on August 17, 2008. May God grant you many years!
Fr. Alexander Rentel (CR Professor July 2008), the Assistant Professor of Canon Law and Byzantine Studies at St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Seminary, continues to teach classes at the seminary. He assisted in the celebration of an All-night Vigil for the feast of St. Nicholas (just under 5 hours) and was a delegate to the OCA’s All-American Council, during which time Metropolitan Jonah was elected. Finally, he continues working on preparing his dissertation for publication, as well as a handbook for liturgics, and numerous other articles.

Dr. James Skedros’s (CR Professor 2004, 2008) academic and professional activities continue to center around the history and development of Christianity in the first three centuries and especially in the Byzantine Empire. He wrote four entries for the Cambridge Dictionary of Christianity, one of which was on the Orthodox Church of Greece. He visited the “windy city” twice in 2008, once to speak at Ss. Peter and Paul church and more recently to deliver a paper at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion on the two healing saints Kosmas and Damian. Dr. Skedros published an article on the lives of the saints in a book of collected articles by various “younger” Orthodox theologians. The book is entitled Thinking through Faith (St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2008) and contains some articles that CrossRoaders might be interested in reading.

Fr. Theodore Stylianopoulos (CR Professor 2004, 2006, 2008) completed his last official year at Holy Cross, retiring on September 1, 2008, but nevertheless continues to keep office hours, teach one course, and counsel students. In the spring he wrote an article on the Bible in the Orthodox Church for an Orthodox Encyclopaedia, published by Cambridge University Press at the end of 2008. During the summer he gave a course on Orthodox Spirituality to adults being trained to become Deacons in the Orthodox Church. Fr. Ted enjoys time with his four grandchildren, and he and Presvytera Faye expect their fifth. Blessings to all. The Elder Prophyrios used to say, “When we are connected to Christ, there are no distances between us.”

Fr. Luke Veronis (CR Professor 2006) has been working as the Development Director for the Endowment Fund for Orthodox Missions (EFOM), for which he is trying to raise $1.5 million to help establish a Missions Institute of Orthodox Christianity at Holy Cross School of Theology. EFOM is hoping to begin this Missions Institute in 2009. Fr. Luke continues teaching as an adjunct instructor at Holy Cross / Hellenic College, instructing a course on “World Religions and Missions” this past semester. He also pastors the Ss. Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church in Webster, MA, where he continues to lead a “turn-around” Church – taking a community declining in membership, and turning it into a more stable and vibrant Church.

Fr. Thomas Hopko (CR Professor 2008) currently resides in Ellwood City, PA, and has a regular podcast series on Ancient Faith Radio called Speaking the Truth in Love (www.ancientfaithradio.com). Most episodes cover doctrinal, liturgical and biblical subjects, or theological issues. He did a series of talks on the relationship between Orthodox Christians and the societies in which they live, beginning with the Early Church and moving through history to today. These talks dealt with church-state relations and Christian involvement in political and social life. When at home, Fr. Hopko serves at the Orthodox Monastery of the Transfiguration, a monastery for women founded by Mother Abbess Alexandra (Princess Ileana of Romania). He holds the title of Dean Emeritus from St. Vladimir’s Seminary and is now in his 46th year of priestly service.

Dr. Demetrios Katos (CR Professor 2005, 2007) is enjoying a year-long sabbatical research as a Henry Luce III Fellow in Theology for 2008–2009. This award is one of the premier fellowships for theological scholarship and will result in a book entitled Palladius of Helenopolis: An Origenist and His Tradition in the Fifth Century. The book will show how Palladius’ accounts of St. John Chrysostom and early monasticism have influenced our understanding of the early church and its spiritual traditions for nearly 1600 years. Dr. Katos is also busy with his new Orthodox Christian Network (www.myocn.com) podcast series, “Worship in Spirit and Truth,” which offers mini-lectures on theological themes related to weekly Sunday morning worship.

The OVM will host the annual St. Photios the Great Faith & Learning Symposium on February 28, 2009. If you are in the Boston area, please come and participate. Check out our website www.vocations.hchc.edu for more information.

The CrossRoad Alumni Retreat will take place the weekend of March 20–22, 2009 in the Boston area. If you haven’t registered already, please do so by going to the CrossRoad website and downloading the forms: www.crossroad.hchc.edu. Look forward to seeing you there!

The dates have been set for CrossRoad 2009: Session 1 will run June 20–30, and Session 2 will run July 7–17. Please spread the word to any potential CR participants! The deadline for application is March 1, 2009.

The OVM will host an Orthodox Scholars’ Consultation June 3–4, 2009, on the campus of Holy Cross. Orthodox scholars will present on the theme of “Orthodoxy & The University.”

Here are a couple of exciting opportunities we’d like to share with you!

The Fund for Theological Education (FTE) is an organization advocating for excellence and diversity in Christian ministry and theological scholarship. The work of FTE supports the next generation of leaders among pastors and scholars, and provides fellowships and a network of support to gifted young people from all denominations and racial/ethnic backgrounds—encouraging those with gifts for leadership to consider vocations in ministry and teaching and nurturing them in their exploration and study.

Over the past 50 years, FTE has awarded nearly 6,000 fellowships; recipients include some of today's leading pastors, scholars and teachers, serving churches, theological schools and communities nationwide.

Opportunities with FTE:

1. Undergraduate Fellowships: for young leaders exploring ministry
   Financial Award: $2,000
   Deadline for nominations: February 1, 2009
   For more information, visit www.thefund.org.

2. Congregational Fellowships: for students entering seminary
   Financial Award: $2,000 to $5,000 (matching support provided by student’s congregation)
   Deadline: April 1, 2009
   For more information, visit www.thefund.org.
Asimina Boutzoukas
CR Alum 2008

As a first-year college student I feel that I am in a very crucial time in my life. I recently graduated from high school and moved 5 hours from home. Currently I am studying to go on to graduate school while trying to decide exactly what I want to spend the rest of my life doing. As I contemplate on this pivotal point between my past and my future I find that the most important time is not what happened in the past, nor what lies ahead, but what is happening right at this very moment. This not only pertains to my life academically and socially, but also spiritually, for as I am told in the Gospel of Matthew, “Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself” (Matt. 6:34).

“It is important to allocate time each and every day to reflect on how focused I am on my faith and what I can do to improve.”

Over the past few years I’ve begun to understand the definition and the importance of “sanctification of time.” The literal definition of this Orthodox Christian value is to make time holy or to set apart time for a specific spiritual purpose. In my fast-paced life, like those of most Americans, it is important to allocate time each and every day to reflect on how focused I am on my faith and what I can do to improve. When I was at CrossRoad in June 2008, Dr. Rossi spoke to us about the significance of taking reflection time each day: 10, 15, or 20 minutes- to sit by ourselves away from worldly distractions. This is a pure example of sanctification of time.

By implementing such an action into our hectic, stressful, fast-moving everyday lives, we remember exactly what Christ teaches us. It is our chance to stop and reflect what it is that we are doing right now, at this very moment, to ensure that we maintain a healthy spiritual relationship with our Lord. As we are told in the Gospel, do not focus on the future; focus on what you are doing now and how you can progress spiritually. Just as Dr. Rossi challenged me, I now challenge you to find this opportunity to focus on the present and the importance of sanctifying the time that you have right now, today, at this very moment. For as we are reminded in Psalms, “I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you. Many are the woes of the wicked, but the Lord’s unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts in him” (Ps. 32:8,10).

Anna Colis:
CR Alum 2005

“College is the best time of your life- make the most of it” – words I’m sure we all have or will receive on the embarking of this phase of life. When these words of wisdom were passed down to me, they were followed with the added phrases, “Get involved with campus activities so you can better your resume; get good grades so you can get into a good grad school,” etc. The world views college as a time to build a resume so that we can either go out and get good jobs and make lots of money or go to grad school in order to get an even better job which will make us more money. Focusing on all these material successes will get us far in the world but where will it take us in our spiritual growth?

Time is a gift given to us by God, and as with all of our God-given gifts, we must strive to utilize this gift to the best of our abilities in a manner that is pleasing to Him. Since time is from God, we must be focused on giving it right back to Him. If we are not giving God substantial personal and private time in our day, how can we expect to accomplish anything? Our time spent in prayer and developing a relationship with God will enhance our time spent doing all other things. While “making the most of our time in college,” what if instead of focusing all our efforts on the specific tasks we need to get done in a certain amount of time, we focus on how we are going to use that time to best glorify God, showing Christ’s love to all those around us, giving every moment up to Him? If we just let go of the concept of time and give it up to God, we may find ourselves less stressed and accomplishing much more. Christ knows what we need to accomplish and if we trust Him, He will give us the strength to complete it all.

“This life is temporary; Christ died and rose for us giving us the gift of eternal life with Him. Our time on earth should be focused on preparing for our eternal life, the life where time will have no more meaning. Here on earth our souls have to be nurtured. The extremely formational years we have in college are indeed special and must be taken advantage of. Instead of focusing on how these years are going to prepare us for a life in the world, let us give up this time to God so He can shape us into a people of a greater kingdom, His kingdom.”

Making The Most Of It
Within in a blink of an eye, life can change forever, and we can lose everything. On the night of September 24, 2006, my life was shattered and I was left not knowing where to go, what to do, and what to believe in.

On that night, my life was complete. I had my family and our love in the palm of my hand, yet I could not grasp that harmony and keep it; I could not control the actions of a drunk driver who took away the beauty of life in my family. At the precious age of twenty one, my brother Evangelos lost life and didn’t have the chance to take one last breath of air. I fell hard and deep and lost all hope. My brother, a beautiful, intelligent, considerate, and loving young man was a devout Orthodox Christian who only did what was right in life. My family worked hard and lived the way our faith told us; yet why did God allow a selfish drunk driver to take my brother’s innocent life?

That question had haunted me day in and day out as I lost all faith and couldn’t push myself to make the sign of the cross or pray for over a year. That all changed on June 21, 2008. That day I went to CrossRoad and met some of the most remarkable people who helped revive my beliefs. I stood amongst teens from all around the United States, feeling nervous, scared, and completely out of place. I admit that I broke a rule the first night and called home. I wanted to run away from a place in which I felt I had no place, and I felt guilty to be there because at the start of that week I had no faith. So then why did I vow to “take the challenge”?

I came to CrossRoad to find the faith I once had and to find answers to the questions that flowed through my mind. I didn’t find any answers, because in reality no one knows why tragedy strikes the innocent. However, in those ten days I built the strength to open a door in my heart and allow God back into my life. Through conversations with strangers turned into best friends, my spirits were raised as I built bonds with friends that would transform my views on life.

Through those ten days we cried, we laughed, we sang, we learned, and we lived the vision that God had granted us. Today, as I flip though my CrossRoad journal I can close my eyes and reminisce over all the beauty that filled my soul throughout those ten days.

Within those days we learned from Fr. Hopko, Dr. Skedros, Dr. Rossi, Fr. Veronis, and Dn. Nick, but most importantly from each other. We are not alone as we struggle over our faith; we must work together and never give up— the reality is that we could die tomorrow. We follow God’s path and look for faith not through knowledge, but with our hearts. We will at times fall or feel powerless, but we must get back up because we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.

At Cross Road we all learned that life is precious and time is sacred, but the present is what we must live by. In life, we cannot grasp onto those we love and we will never know why things happen. We cannot control what path our life will take, but we can control who we are.

“Your are a light unto the world... Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:7).
to can work within our time on this earth to become one with our Lord. Additionally, we recognize the presence of Christ in time through memory or remembrance, the one aspect of humanity that bridges the past and the present. In ancient times, memory was more than just a cognitive process; it was a far deeper and more meaningful experience. To remember meant to relive. Thus, an ancient person who engaged in corporate remembering (such as a story about a past event told by a professional storyteller) brought the person or event remembered into the present in a very concrete, tangible way. The Orthodox Church has understood this, and has taught the sanctification of time through memory for its entire existence. A good example is the feasts, during which the Church community gathers in one place and remembers. The hymns of the Church also point to this reality, using the present tense. We sing, “Today hangs on the tree” as opposed to “Two thousand years ago, He hung on the tree” on Holy Thursday evening. By remembering, we span generations and unite the past event (which occurred once) with the present reality. We become, in essence, present at the actual event. So, when we celebrate a feast such as the Nativity, by gathering together and composing the Church, we bring that event which happened once into our midst. We are actually present at the manger; we hear the hymn of the angels; we are caught up into the mystery of God’s economy by remembering. Thus, when Christ said to His Disciples, “Do this in remembrance of Me,” he was not referring to a simple reflection; he was referring to this type of transcending memory that exists in the Church. It is therefore through this memory, that we can now use time again to grow in the likeness of God. Thus we, the world, and time itself are sanctified by the presence of God.

**Live in the Now!**

**JASON ONEIDA: CR ALUM 2006**

“I’m sorry, but I’m just too busy right now.” How many times can we recall saying or hearing another say a similar phrase? In our lives of constant hurry between college and jobs we often offer such excuses for not tending to other tasks and responsibilities. Because these activities require the largest and most regular commitment of time for adults, they tend to take the greatest precedence in a person’s life. Consequently, when other things seem to get in the way of major time commitments, these other things are swept aside as less important—something that can be done when more time is available. Generally this practice can be considered good time management; however, it can become dangerous when our worldly concerns overtake our spiritual life, causing it to consistently be put on the backburner. In this manner, spiritual growth is stunted as we live in the future—always looking to address the next issue of great concern.

Jesus emphasizes the need for us to spend time with Him in the parable of a man who invites many to a banquet (Luke 14:16-24). After completing preparations for a great feast, the host sends his servant to retrieve those who were invited to attend the festivities. Soon after the servant’s departure, he returns with news that the guests could not come since they were busy tending to their oxen, land, or spouses. So the host of the feast instead fills his house with any man that could be found on the streets, saying, “None of those men who were invited shall taste my supper” (Lk. 14:24). Similarly, we will not taste the kingdom of heaven if we deny spending time with the Lord. Falling into a habit of routinely denying the invitation to spend time with God prevents us from building a relationship with Him that leads to salvation. As Orthodox Christians we must understand that worldly concerns, though certainly not irrelevant, provide poor excuses for neglecting to commune with the Lord through prayer and reading of the scriptures. Doing these things is the way in which we accept God’s invitation, allowing Him to enter and transform our lives. When we open ourselves to the Lord’s word through scriptures and prayer also allow the Holy Spirit into our hearts. The Spirit transfigures our lives so that each moment is sanctified by God’s presence. Let us stop living in the future, always considering what work we need to do, because “sufficient for the day is its own trouble” (Matt. 6:34). Instead, let us put our spiritual lives in a prominent position and strive to do what we can for salvation today!

“When we open ourselves to the Lord’s word, we also allow the Holy Spirit into our hearts.”

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1. See Anthony Bloom’s Beginning to Pray (Paulist Press, Langdon, 1970.) pp. 55-78
John Maletis, CrossRoad Alum 2004, recently had an article published in Theandros, an independent online journal of Orthodox Christian theology and philosophy. In the article, John, a senior at University of Glasgow, explores creation and evolution from an Orthodox Christian perspective, laying out a “thought experiment” which reconciles science and scripture. Below is an excerpt from the introduction of his article. For the full-length article, visit http://www.theandros.com/protozoe.html.

Of all creatures which God created, it’s without a doubt humans were created superior to all other creatures. However, it is a fact that the whole world continues to evolve just as it did at the birth of its creation. Given that the Orthodox Church does not interpret Scripture literally but contextually, it’s with some exegetical liberty that theologians of old and new continue to “draw water from the same well” as our whole world continues to evolve, whether physically, culturally, socially, or intellectually. Theology and science need not be mutually exclusive, as some still claim today from all walks of life—hopefully we’ve moved passed the Scope’s Trial mentality of 1920’s America! With careful discernment of each category it is possible to come to a synthesis where words like “Darwin,” “Garden of Eden,” The Origin of Species and the book of Genesis are not diametrically opposed. I’ve attempted to do just that while at the same time trying not to diminish either side in order to come to some common ground.

(Excerpt from Let There Be Light: An Orthodox Christian Theory of Human Evolution for the 21st Century by John Maletis)

As Orthodox Christians, we sometimes ask ourselves, how do we find time for God? It often feels like we are being pulled in so many ways that we are unable to, as the Psalmist writes, “Be still and know that I am God” (Ps 45:10). At each moment a new task is set before us, becoming yet another obstacle on the path to God. How, then, do we find time for God? The very question that we are asking is the problem. You may ask, what do you mean? Is not making God present in our lives the end to which we are striving? Indeed it is, but it is also more than that. The proper question for us to be asking is more profound. How do we make God not only part of our lives, but the very core of our existence?

In the Gospel according to Luke, a familiar passage can be found in the story of Mary and Martha. Martha was “anxious and troubled about many things” (Lk. 10:41), preparing things for Jesus as He taught. However, her sister Mary sat at the Lord’s feet listening to His words. Taking the time to sit at Christ’s feet, being still, and knowing that He is God, is far more than a task on a check list. It is the “one thing needful,” “the good part, which shall not be taken away from [us]” (Lk. 10:42). How often do we give the “good part” away without a second thought?

If we have decided to cherish the “one thing needful,” what do we do? We pray. Prayer is our opportunity to sit at the feet of the Lord. It does not involve merely fitting prayer time into our lives; rather we must build our lives around this time. In her wisdom the Church has given us all the tools we need. The richness and beauty of our services are not simply for us to enjoy. They are our opportunities to sit at the Lord’s feet, and for Him to speak to us.

“Prayer is our opportunity to sit at the feet of our Lord.”

Many of us are ignorant of the complexity and vastness of our services. The Church offers us as much as we are able to handle. Daily we have prayers designated at various times. Vespers, Compline, Midnight Office, Matins, and the Hours are all there for our spiritual growth. Therefore we no longer ask how to start. Instead, we ask where to begin. The answer is found in our hearts. We should always remember that the quantity of prayers is not as important as how earnestly we pray them. We ought to tell ourselves that prayer is our priority. With this mentality we will begin to see a change in our outlook on prayer. Prayer will become our lives and our actions will reflect this. It is never too late to begin. I leave you with a story from the lives of the desert fathers.

Abba Moses asked Abba Sylvanus, “Can a person lay a new foundation every day?” The old man replied, “If you work hard, you can lay a new foundation every moment.”

Let us pray that Christ be laid as our foundation.
Taking a serious look at my vocation as an Orthodox Christian made me realize the potential of what I could be, using the time God has given me to do things for Him. Now, I am trying to look at what I do and ask myself, is this pleasing to God? If I can truly answer yes to that question, then I know my time, or rather the time He has given me, is not being wasted.

I have found that when I am productive in school work and my other responsibilities as a student, I am also given time to cultivate relationships and preach the Gospel, both through words and actions. Though it may seem difficult, focusing the time we have on God produces a life that is fruitful and beneficial to us and those around us. How are you spending your time?

By learning in an Orthodox Christian environment, we at seminary not only learn a lot about our faith; we learn how to live out our faith completely. Our actual way of life is transformed so we can take what we learned from seminary and apply it to our daily lives even when we are finished school. By making our time on Earth acceptable to God, we can then enjoy the same holiness in His Kingdom with Him.

This applies to all of us. No matter where we are in life, if we are in college or seminary, learning a trade, or have been called to the monastic life, marriage, or have just graduated from high school, we must strive to be holy, just like God. God is love, so by the same virtue, we must be loving; God is compassionate, so we too must be compassionate to others; God is the Pantokrator - the controller of all things - and so we respect God by having self-control over ourselves. When we do this, those around us will come to recognize the God who dwells within. As St. Serafim of Sarov says to us, “Acquire the Spirit of Peace, and thousands of souls around you will be saved.”

In the Parable of the Ten Virgins found in Matthew 25:1-13, five of the virgins chose not to be prepared. (continued...)
They did not fill their lamps with the oil of wisdom. The five wise virgins, however, filled their lamps with oil, and so were prepared for the Banquet of the King (a symbol of God’s Kingdom). And so we too must be like these five wise virgins who sanctified their time on Earth awaiting the coming of the King. We must be prepared for the future life by sanctifying our time here and now.

Lessons From The Elder
YEOXYIA CHRISTOFORIDES
CR ALUM 2007

I sat in front of my computer for hours, trying to think of something worthwhile to write about. Nothing that came to mind seemed good enough, I racked my brain determined to find some dazzling theological analysis. As the weeks passed, I wrote and rewrote my thoughts on the sanctification of time. One day as I was wasting precious time on Facebook (a huge distraction for many of us students), I remembered that a friend had wanted me to read an article by Elder Paisios.

In these reflections, the Elder speaks about the importance of being positive at all times. He talks about our minds as machines that produce what we allow them to. To summarize his analogy, if our machines are made to create bullets, then no matter what material it is fed, clay or dirt, even gold, our machines will create bullets. If, however, we rebuild the machine to make chalices, no matter the integrity of the given material, it will make chalices. Bullets are used for one thing — destruction. In my understanding of the Elder, our mentalities are the machines, and the materials they are fed are the influences of the outside world. In other words, if our mentalities have been shaped destructively, no matter what “materials” we are given, they will produce something destructive and negative. Then it hit me; my mind was broken. The whole time I was trying to write this piece, my mind was destructive and negative. Even though I was given gold, I was still producing bullets, golden perhaps, but bullets no less. The Elder says that if your mind is not focused on the positive, it is prey to the devil. In my pride to produce something “brilliant,” I fell prey to the devil who, by filling my mind with negativity and frustration, distracted me from being productive and positive. In the end, I didn't come up with profound theology, but I realized a simple truth: without a clear mind to keep oneself productive, one dances in the devil's backyard.

To make one's time Godly seems to me only possible when the mind is set on being positive and productive. It sounds so simple, but I've found that in order to maintain a positive mentality, discipline is needed. And that, at least for me, is very challenging. Negativity is addictive in many ways. I often get trapped in thinking that my academics and extracurriculars are pointless because they are not theological or ecclesiastical. After reading the Elder I have realized that this is a failure on my part because I have chosen to focus my work around me, and my academics, not around Him who has given me the opportunity. With Christ in you, your activities should be in His honor and He will sanctify them for you. By humbly offering our everyday life to God through prayer, praise and works He will give us the strength (grace) we need to continue. But the first steps need to be made by us.

So, in the end, it was my mind that was broken, and still probably is, but with the grace of God I'm trying to rebuild it and to fix it so it puts out only good, pure and Godly thoughts.
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the lives of others
Teenagers who change lives are changed
Teenagers whose