

HCHC launches 'The Catechist' certificate program



With the blessing of His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America and the approval of the Holy Eparchial Synod of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, Hellenic College Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology is pleased to announce the launch of The Catechist: The Art of Listening and Teaching, a new Certificate Program in Orthodox Catechism beginning in the 2026-2027 academic year.

The vision for The Catechist program was conceived by His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros, together with the Most Reverend Members of the Holy Eparchial Synod, in response to the growing pastoral need to prepare qualified lay catechists to assist the clergy in the Church's apostolic ministry of teaching. That vision was subsequently developed and given academic form by the faculty of Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology under the leadership of its Dean, the Rev. Dr. Eugen J. Pentiuc. The program will be directed by Dr. James C. Skedros, Associate Dean of Holy Cross Greek Orthodox of Theology.

Designed for lay leaders, parish educators, ministry volunteers, clergy spouses, recent converts, and all Orthodox Christians called to the ministry of teaching, the year-long certificate program combines rigorous theological formation with practical catechetical training. Through five instructional modules, participants will engage in asynchronous online lectures, assigned readings, and weekly live seminars while exploring Sacred Scripture, Holy Tradition, the Nicene Creed, the sacramental and liturgical life of the Church, Orthodox spirituality, moral theology, and catechetical pedagogy. Those pursuing certification will also complete a supervised parish practicum and capstone assessment under the guidance and blessing of their parish priest.

The program is offered in two tracks: a Certification Track for those preparing to serve as commissioned parish catechists and an Enrichment Track for individuals seeking theological formation for personal growth and parish ministry without certification requirements. Courses begin with Module I on Sept. 8, followed by four additional six-week modules throughout the academic year, culminating in the final capstone assessment in June 2027.

His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America welcomed the establishment of the program, stating: “The ministry of catechesis has always stood at the heart of the Church’s apostolic mission. Through this important initiative, Holy Cross offers faithful Orthodox Christians an opportunity to deepen their theological formation and prepare for a ministry that is both educational and pastoral. Well-formed catechists will strengthen our parishes by accompanying seekers and believers alike into the fullness of life in Christ. I pray that this program will bear abundant spiritual fruit throughout our Archdiocese.”

Fr. Michael Lambakis, Interim President of Hellenic College Holy Cross, emphasized the significance of the new initiative for the School’s mission: “The Catechist exemplifies the enduring commitment of Hellenic College Holy Cross to serve the Church through excellence in theological education. By extending our academic resources beyond the classroom and into parish life, we are preparing dedicated Orthodox Christians to become effective collaborators in the Church’s ministry of evangelization and formation. This program reflects both our heritage and our vision for the future of Orthodox theological education.”

Dean Fr. Pentiuc added: “I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the esteemed faculty of Holy Cross for their enthusiastic embrace of this initiative and their generous willingness to contribute their scholarship, pastoral wisdom, and teaching experience to this program. The Catechist is truly a collaborative

endeavor, born from our shared commitment to serve the Church through theological education.”

Through The Catechist, Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology renews its historic mission of serving the Church by preparing faithful Orthodox Christians to proclaim the Gospel, transmit the Orthodox faith with theological depth and pastoral sensitivity, and strengthen parish communities throughout the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America and beyond.

For more information about The Catechist: The Art of Listening and Teaching, including admissions requirements and program details, please visit the Hellenic College Holy Cross [website](#).

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