

Young Adult Lenten Retreat Focuses on the Cross



The Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries held a Lenten Retreat on March 17 – 19, 2023 at Saint Nicholas Ranch and Retreat Center in Dunlap, California. Forty-five young adults attended this weekend of prayer, reflection and fellowship which focused on the theme “By the Power of Your Cross”, and coincided with the Third Sunday of Great Lent and the Elevation of the Holy Cross.

The guest speaker for the Retreat was Eva Konstantakos, Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries for the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. Eva offered this insightful commentary, “During the course of the Lenten Fast, and throughout the year in our daily lives, our spiritual strength can be diminished by the countless challenges, temptations, and frustrations we encounter.” She focused on how the Precious and Life-Giving Cross is a source of power on our journey along the path to salvation. Eva also discussed how the Cross is a sign of suffering and is the greatest symbol of salvation and a reminder of living a Christian life.

The retreat began on Friday evening with Paraklesis led by Rev. Father James Pappas from Saint George Greek Orthodox Church in Fresno. As this day was also the Feast of Saint Patrick, the group enjoyed vegan Irish Soda Bread and carried over the celebration of Saint Patrick’s Day into breakfast the next morning by

offering Lucky Charms cereal, in addition to the delicious meal prepared by the Ranch culinary staff.

On Saturday the young adults offering their time in service to the adjacent Monastery of the Theotokos the Life-Giving Spring, cleaning up vegetation and debris from the area surrounding the Cross that sits on a hill overlooking the Ranch. That evening was spent in relaxation at the lake which is nearly overflowing with water thanks to the abundance of rain this winter. A talent show, campfire and gazing upon the beautiful sunset completed the evening.

Liturgy on Sunday was prayed at the Monastery of the Theotokos the Life-Giving Spring, and the retreat participants also enjoyed the fellowship, hospitality, and serenity of the Monastery. It was a beautiful weekend and one that provided spiritual nourishment for these young adults on their journey through Great and Holy Lent.

Please visit the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries website for more information on future events and programs.

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