

THE MESSENGER

ST. DEMETRIOS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH • RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 3,
ISSUE 10
JUNE 2012

MISSION STATEMENT

To bring all children, youth and young adults closer to Christ and His Church through religious education, fellowship and various other events on a parish and national level.

Καλό Καλοκαίρι!
Have a Great
Summer!

IN THIS ISSUE...

Graduation 2012	2
Prayer and Travel	2
A Re-Catechism Reflection	3
Preview the Article: Fishing with Jesus (by J. Kapsalis)	3
Remember...	4

THOUGHTS ON PENTECOST 2012

For those that might know the narrative (or were fans of the Toronto Maple Leafs when they made the playoffs years ago), we have heard of an extra-biblical figure, Nimrod. They say that he was the king who wanted to build a tower to heaven. This is the famous Tower of Babel. The pride of the people of Babel made them build this tower, because they thought they could get anything they wanted without having true communion with God. This is why God chose to do a miracle, showing His love: instead of seeing the people suffer eternally because of their sinful actions, He confused their tongues.

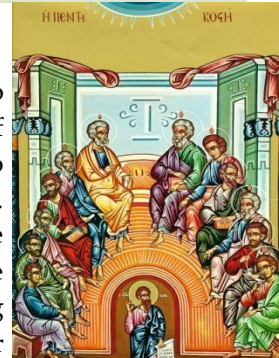
Fast-forward centuries later: Fifty days after **Pascha**, we celebrate an event that changed the world. **Pentecost** is the day where Holy Spirit descended to the Apostles. The message of Jesus Christ was not confined to a specific people, but was for all nations. The apostles received the Grace of the Holy Spirit to not only speak in different languages, but also to heal the sick, to raise the dead. This miracle of Pentecost was God showing His full reconciliation with the world. He forgave them – and will always forgives us – as long as we ask to be forgiven.

Some residents of Jerusalem marveled at this great miracle, while others began to attack the Christians with their words. “They are full of new wine,” they mocked, casting doubt in the minds and hearts of those whose eyes and hears had witnessed the truth.

The Tower of Babel was an image of rejection of God. This rejection of God did not cease at Pentecost. No matter what period of history it was, rejection usually was the precursor to persecution. Starting with St. Stephen the First Martyr and Archdeacon, we have countless **martyrs** who died for Christ, and **confessors** who suffered for Christ, from the persecutions of the first 3 centuries until today. However, it was not only those from outside the Church that hurt Her; the worst wounds came from within the Church by means of **heresy**. Heretics tried to distort the Truth of the Gospel. They made up their own “gospels”, “letters” and even “hymns”, like popular-selling novels or music singles, to get people to buy into their version of “truth” (which was nothing more than a lie).

For Christians, Pentecost is not only a celebration of the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles, but also a remembrance of our “personal Pentecost” that took place at our Chrismation (right after our baptism). When the priest said, “the seal of the Gift of the Holy Spirit,” it was the blessing of God coming upon us, so He may always be with us in our lives. It was also the sign that we become full members of the Church faithful and thus “are called to act as conscious witnesses to the Truth,” defending the Gospel in times of persecution.

Every day, Christians are rejected by those who are the *visible* enemies of God – those who through their words and actions go out of their way to persecute us and our beliefs (such as atheists and religious extremists). They act as those people who accused the Apostles of being full of “new wine” at Pentecost. Yet, Christians are also persecuted by a more cunning group: the *unseen* enemies of God. These sometimes include the “C-N-E” Christians (who say “I’m a good person...but I don’t need the Church”), family and friends, the media, internet bloggers...the list goes on. We hear of other groups being the victims of persecution and rejection in society, but no one speaks about the persecution of Christianity (which is becoming all too frequent these days). This persecution of Christianity can happen in countries far away from Canada, but it can also occur in our own backyard.



Graduation 2012

The Sunday School Program of our Church had another successful year come to a close. All the teachers enjoyed the great learning experience with the children, and everyone at the Sunday School wishes all the kids and their families a spiritually restful summer. Stay close to God, enjoy the summer rest and we will see you again, God willing, in September!



PRAYER AND TRAVEL

During the summer, people will be travelling to various destinations—both in Canada and around the world. Something that sometimes is forgotten is our commitment to praying to God as we do during the rest of the year. Here are three tips of how to include God in your vacation time this year.

1. Before leaving on vacation, ask God to bless your trip.

This can be done alone, but you can also ask other people (family and friends) to pray for your safe journey. Before your journey, you can read the following prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ, You traveled with the two disciples after the resurrection and set their hearts on fire with Your grace. Travel also with me and gladden my heart with Your presence. During my journey surround me with Your holy angels and keep me safe from seen and unseen dangers. Help me to see the beauty of creation and to comprehend the wonder of Your truth in all things. For You are the way, the truth and the life, and to You I give thanks, praise and glory, together with the Father who is from everlasting and with the All-Holy, Good and Life-Giving Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

2. During your trip, set aside time for prayer.

Some trips are very relaxing, while others can be going from one place to another every few hours. If in the car, you can pray as a family; if sitting on the beach or walking around, take a moment to thank God for all the blessings you've experienced throughout the trip. If you're close to an Orthodox Church, find out where and what time Church services start on Sunday and receive Holy Communion!

3. Pick a book of the Bible to read for the summer

I would personally read one of the Gospels (maybe *Mark* or *John*), but any book of the Bible would be a great way to connect with God every day during a trip. Questions that might come up could be answered by a Sunday School teacher or our Parish Priest!

Καλό Ταξίδι to everyone travelling this summer! Have a great trip, blessed by our Lord!

A RE-CATECHISM REFLECTION

This e-mail was received from a St. Demetrios G.O. Church parishioner and participant of our Re-Catechism sessions.



Dear Fr. Konstantinos and organizers of the Re-Catechism sessions,
As Re-Catechism has come to an end I write to thank Father Konstantinos and the Re-Catechism team for the wisdom and knowledge they shared with us. I also thank everyone for their warm welcome.

We discovered and experienced the beauty, the complexity, the mystery, and the richness of the world that God has created. We were encouraged to examine our hearts and minds to attain the fullness of our faith in a very real way when faced with all of life's complexities.

The topics were interesting and provided insight, understanding and sometimes humour in situations that we all live. Week after week we were encouraged to find out what the Will of God is for us in response to His love and respect for us, to the faith He has in us, to the hope He has placed in us.

It was a wonderful opportunity to grow and develop fellowship.

I am confident that I echo the voice of many who are eager and enthusiastic about next season's Re-Catechism at St. Demetrios Church.

In Christ's love,
A Sister in Christ

Preview the Article:

Fishing with Jesus (By John Kapsalis)

The mission of Jesus to preach, teach and heal which began in Galilee some 2,000 years ago is now the responsibility and the mission of the Church. As Orthodox Christians we often emphasize, and correctly so, that worship is at the heart of the Church. But worship without witness or *martyria* is dead. Our liturgical life, to be pleasing to God, must bring rebirth. We must become saturated in and nourished by Christ to the extent that we too, like those eager fishermen become compelled to go out into the world and expectantly proclaim the gospel, teach the world about Jesus, and participate in life-giving healing. Fr. Alexander Schmemmann once remarked, "Every Christian is called to be a missionary. Every Christian is sent. When we say 'One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church,' the term 'apostolic' means not only the continuity of the ministry, as so many people seem to think, but also the apostolicity, i.e. the missionary nature of the Church and of each of her members ... One cannot be saved without giving oneself to this mission. Everyone is a missionary."

~ Want to read the full article? Go to www.LivingOrthodoxy.com/page12.html.

Where the Good News Is!



LivingOrthodoxy



THOUGHTS ON PENTECOST (CON'T FROM PAGE 1)

This Pentecost, we should thank God for the blessing He has bestowed upon us – all the while being ready to defend His Truth, We should not only "talk the talk, but walk the walk". We should not only be Christians in name, but in action. So, we have to ask ourselves: If we were accused of being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict us? Although we might face persecution and rejection, as the early Christians did after Pentecost, we should find comfort and consolation (even joy) in the fact that God will never abandon us – just as He didn't abandon humanity after their rejection of Him at Babel. He loved them, He loves us, He will continue to love humanity. All we need to do is love Him back. We might be rejected by humanity because of what we believe; however, we will be accepted into the loving embrace of God in Heaven.

Turn our backs to sin, rejection and persecution, and accept His love to live eternally...or not. It's our choice.



St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church
Religious Education Newsletter

30 Thorncliffe Park Drive

Toronto, ON M4H 1H8

Tel: 416-425-2485

Fax: 416-425-2954

st.demetrios@greekcommunity.org

**WANT THIS NEWSLETTER IN
YOUR INBOX? E-MAIL US!**

STDEMETRIOS@

LIVINGORTHODOXY.COM

The third Greek Orthodox Church in Toronto, St. Demetrios Church was founded in 1962. Since then, our Church has been the spiritual home of thousands of Orthodox faithful from Toronto and vicinity. Our Church is a constituent member of the Greek Community of Toronto [www.greekcommunity.org] and under the spiritual jurisdiction of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Toronto (Canada) [www.gometropolis.org]. The Religious Education programs have been attended by many children, youth and young adults. Our tireless staff works to promote the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Parish Priest

Religious Education Director

Young Adult League Leaders

Parish Council President

Philoptochos President

Greek Bible Study

Re-Catechism

(English Orthodox

Discussion Group)

Rev. Fr. Konstantinos Pavlidis

Mr. Basile Polidoulis

Mrs. Vicki Vokas, Mr. Niko Sotiropoulos

Mr. Argyrios Haros

Mrs. Theodora Koutsoubou

Mr. Basile Polidoulis

Mrs. Fotini Kapsalis

Mr. John Kapsalis

Mr. Chrysostom Makropoulos

Mr. Tim Prattas



REMEMBER...



God never takes a vacation from loving you,
so don't take a vacation from loving Him!

Weekday Services: 8:30-10:30 a.m.

Sunday Services: 8:45-11:45 a.m.

www.LivingOrthodoxy.com