

The Messenger

ST. DEMETRIOS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

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.

DATES TO REMEMBER!

- February 2nd:
Presentation of our Lord in the Temple
- February 15th:
Clean Monday (Beginning of Great Lent)
- February 21st:
Sunday of Orthodoxy (First Sunday of Lent)

PARISH PRIEST'S MESSAGE: A BLESSED GREAT LENT TO ALL!

Beloved in the Lord,

The Triodion period began with the "Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee" last month. It continues with the beginning of Great Lent on Clean Monday, February 15th. This period of the liturgical calendar gives us the opportunity to better know all of God's creation — especially the spiritual realities we come to meet during this time. What are these spiritual realities? They are the Triune God, the world of the Saints, the Church, the truths of the Gospel. We live joy, peace, repentance, confession and prayer, leading us all to the ultimate experience in life — worshipping God and receiving Holy Communion.



Unfortunately, this spiritual reality is non-existent and unknown for many people. These people are like the blind who can not see reality, or like prisoners who can only see the four walls of their cell. Yet, man wants to be informed, to learn, to always know what is going on around them. It is heartbreaking that many people do not show the same interest in finding out about the spiritual realities of this world than they do with things of the secular world.

This is why Great Lent is such a wonderful opportunity. It is the "annual festival" of the Church, in which people can visit and participate—growing every day in Faith, living the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, ascending to the Kingdom.

Inside this issue:

All of us at St. Demetrios Church wish you and yours a Blessed Great Lent!

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Rev. Fr. Konstantinos Pavlidis

Parish Priest

Go Fast and 3
Change the World!

ABOUT "CLEAN MONDAY"

Re-Catechism 2: 4
Our Sacramental Life

Clean Monday is the first full day of fasting. It is a custom of certain monasteries and people to fast from everything (except water) for the first 3 days of Great Lent, to commune during the first Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts (celebrated on the First Wednesday of Lent). It is important to note that fasting for each person is determined by their spiritual father. Fasting and our participation in the services are ways for us to get closer to God.

To find out more about Great Lent, Holy Week and the Pentecostarion Period, go to ...

www.gocanada.org/greatlent

BIBLICAL ADMONITIONS FOR GREAT LENT

The Lord said: Take heed that you not be deceived. For many, will come in my name saying, I am he, and, the time has drawn near. Therefore do not go after them. But when you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified, for these things must come to pass first, but the end will not come immediately. Then he said to them: Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences, and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven. But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist. You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will send some of you to your death. And you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But not a hair of your head shall be lost. In your patience you will possess your souls. But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. Then let those in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near. And He spoke to them a parable: Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. So you, likewise, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near. Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things are fulfilled. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away. But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighted down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.

~ Gospel of Clean Monday (Luke 21:8-36)

Have a question?

E-mail us at

stdemetriostoronto@gmail.com

and see your question in one of our upcoming issues!



www.ec-patr.org / www.patriarchate.org

The official websites of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. In both Greek and English, all information on the Patriarchate is available online!

www.ecclesia.gr

The official website of the Autocephalous Church of Greece. A website that is completely in Greek, it has a lot of information including a live, 24-hour radio program from Greece.

www.gocanada.org

The official website of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Toronto (Canada), it includes various sections for Great Lent, Christmas, liturgical texts, live broadcast of services and much more!

www.goarch.org

The official website of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. Includes a lot of information such as: Calendar of Saints, online services, articles on the Faith, various videos on the Church and much more!

Orthodoxy...



GO FAST AND CHANGE THE WORLD.!

Admit it; no one likes to fast—especially not for a week and definitely not for forty days. Anything past a day or two and we begin to develop headaches, our energy levels get sapped right down to nothing, and we begin to get insatiable cravings for food, even food we normally don't like. We'll take anything; just give us something other than beans and vegetables. And yet, as awful as it may feel at times, fasting does so much more than just trim our waistline.

St. Nectarios of Aegina declared that prayer and fasting “serve as means of self-study, of discernment of our true moral state, of an accurate estimation of our sins and of knowledge of their true character.” In other words, fasting humbles us by revealing our true nature. Fasting reminds us that we've probably been acting like Christians for all the wrong reasons. Fasting exposes the frailty of our lives and our dependence on God. And fasting opens our eyes to the misery that most of the world suffers night after night as they go to bed hungry.

So it is not a question then of 'if' we should fast, but 'how.' John Chrysostom wisely wrote that we must abstain not only from food but from sins: “The fast should be kept not by the mouth alone but also by the eye, the ear, the feet, the hands and all the members of the body.” And that's not always easy to do. The good news, though, is even a little effort can go a long way. Each of us should strive to fast as much as our strength allows.

Unfortunately, sometimes we like to impose our idea of religious discipline on everyone. It is an age-old problem. Yet our Church has always had, in her teachings and tradition, a more gentle approach of encouragement according to the strength of each of us. But fast we must, otherwise how can we expect to control our more sinister appetites or our judgment of others if we cannot hold on to a simple fast? The Church always challenges us, like an athlete, to push the boundaries of our prayer, discipline, and commitment to God, but it does so with a spirit of understanding for our broken condition in the world.

So let us all try to fast a little more this Lenten season. Not only will we discover God's will for our lives, but we will also learn that only Christ can satisfy—we need His flesh and blood to live. We are spiritual anorexics without Christ. So if you want to see a difference in your own life and maybe even start to make a difference in the lives of those around you, it is time to go fast and see the world change.

*~ Excerpt from article by John Kapsalis originally published in Orthodoxy Today.org
John is a Catechist at our Church. He teaches at the Toronto Orthodox Theological Academy.*

Online!

www.oca.org

The official site of the Orthodox Church in America. It contains a lot of information on the Orthodox Faith, the Saints and much more!

www.orthodoxwiki.org

An amazing website, *OrthodoxWiki* is “a free-content encyclopedia and information center for Orthodox Christianity” with about 3,144 articles.

www.ancientfaith.com

An Orthodox online radio station, which is a part of Conciliar Media Ministries, under the auspices of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America. It has a variety of podcasts for people to download, discussing a variety of topics.

www.iEcclesia.com

Established by Fr. Demetrios Koumarellas and Tim Prattas, *iEcclesia* is the official podcast of the Department of Internet Ministries of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Toronto (Canada).

Until now, *iEcclesia* has aired 61 programs on a variety of issues including: InVitro Fertilization, death and dying, “giagiologies” and the Church, and much more.



St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church
Religious Education Newsletter

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**WANT THIS NEWSLETTER
IN YOUR INBOX? E-MAIL US!**
stdemetriostoronto@gmail.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. It is one of the four Churches of the Greek Community of Toronto. 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.

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| Parish Priests | Rev. Fr. Konstantine Pavlidis
Rev. Fr. Triantafillos Porfiris |
| Religious Education Director | Basile Polidoulis |
| Religious Education Advisor | Komissa Polidoulis |
| Homiletic Speakers | John Kapsalis, Tim Prattas |
| 5-and-Under Class Teachers | Linda Hudson, Georgia Vlahos, Patty Tsiolis |
| JK-SK Class Teachers | Despina Epaminondas, Chrysoula Kapogiannis |
| Gr. 1 Class Teachers | Kathe Bouzios, Eleni Skandalakis |
| Gr. 2 Class Teacher | Maria Douvis, Jenny Economou |
| Gr. 3 Class Teachers | Vicky Nikolaos, Vasilis Papagiannis |
| Gr. 4-5 Class Teachers | Elena Qirjazi |
| Gr. 6-7 Class Teachers | Georgia Panagiotopoulos-Grivogiannis,
Eftila Qirjazi |
| Gr. 8-9 Class Teachers | Kiki Zourbanos, Fotini Kapsalis |
| Gr. 10-12 Class Teacher | Chrysostom Makropoulos |
| Young Adult League Leaders | Vicki Vokas, Niko Sotiropoulos |

RE-CATECHISM

Our Sacramental Life



Where?

*St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church
(30 Thorncliffe Park Drive, Toronto, 416-425-2485)*

Who?

Everyone is Welcome!

When?

Every two weeks on Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m.

The Sessions

- Tuesday, January 26th, 2010**
A New Beginning: Baptism and Chrismation
- Tuesday, February 9th, 2010**
The Sacraments of Love: Marriage and Priesthood
- Tuesday, February 23rd, 2010**
Finding Healing in Suffering: Holy Unction
- Tuesday, March 9th, 2010**
Feeling New Again: Repentance and Confession
- Tuesday, March 23rd, 2010**
The Medicine of Immortality: Holy Communion

"Free Babysitting offered at each session"

For more information, e-mail us at

stdemetriostoronto@gmail.com

