

THE MESSENGER

ST. DEMETRIOS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH • RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 6
FEBRUARY 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.

A Blessed
Triodion to all!

Καλό και
Ευλογημένο
Τριώδιο!

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HUMILITY AND HYPOCRISY: TWO OPPOSITE PATHS TO PRAYER

“Let us not pray like the Pharisees, brothers and sisters”: With this hymn, our Church begins the *Triodion* season by focusing on the subject of prayer. It is something that is very important for all Christians, as this is the way we communicate with our Father in Heaven. Yet, in this discussion on prayer, Christ speaks to us of a subject that many don’t like to hear about: *Hypocrisy*. It is unfortunate, but true, that we live in a world where those who preach peace are the first who start wars; where the so-called “religious” are the first to condemn others, instead of embracing the lost as God’s creation; where we say we care for the poor, but we forget or condemn them. Yet, humility and hypocrisy are the things our Lord speaks about to in today’s parable, as we begin the *Triodion* and our walk towards Pascha.

The parable is well-known to us all: two men went up to the temple to pray. The first mentioned is the Pharisee. At that time, Pharisees were seen as “religious” and “pious” by their fellow citizens. While the Jews only had to fast one day during the year, Pharisees fasted twice a week. Yet, Christ mentions them in a different light in the parable.

The Pharisee begins his “prayer” with words that one would not expect from a person of God: “God, I thank you that I am not like other men: extortionists, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.” These words are filled with pseudo-piety that glorifies the self, rather than God.

The tax collector, on the other hand, was someone who was reviled by his countrymen. The fact these people had to collect taxes to give to the Romans was something the other Jews saw as treason. They were seen as “sinners” because of their outlook on life, seen by their fellow citizens as the first people who would be judged severely by God.

So, it was quite a surprise when Jesus continued the parable: “The tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but... said, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’”

The “prayer” of the Pharisee was self-glorification: it was a way for him to feel better about himself, justifying his attitude to God and – in a sense – completely ‘missing the mark’ on what true prayer is. And so, this “prayer” was filled with hypocrisy. In contrast, the tax collector’s prayer was filled with love for God. It was the prayer of a person who *acknowledged* himself as a sinner and who wanted to *repent*.

As our journey begins again towards the Passion and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, all are called to repentance, to forgive one another and to acknowledge that we are sinners in need of Christ’s help in our road to recovery and journey to the Kingdom. May we never fall into the temptation to pray as the Pharisee, always remembering to pray as the humble tax collector and realizing that our God is a God of love, who will have us in His embrace unto the ages of ages.

A Blessed Triodion to all!

HAVE A QUESTION?

E-MAIL US AT
STDEMETRIOSTORONTO@GMAILCOM

AND SEE YOUR
QUESTION IN ONE OF
OUR UPCOMING ISSUES!



Vasilopita 2012

At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, January 15th, our Church cut the traditional "Vasilopita" in honour of St. Basil the Great. Representatives of the different ministries of our Church were present and received a piece on behalf of their department.

A commemorative photo was taken when all received their pieces.

The pieces were cut in honour of (with the receiver of the piece in brackets):

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Christ (Fr. Konstantinos Pavlidis) 2. St. Demetrios (A. Haros, Church Council President) 3. The Poor (T. Koutsoubou, Philoptochos President) 4. Ecumenical Patriarchate
(Dr. P. Fountas, Archon Aktouarios) 5. Greek Community of Toronto (G. Nikolaou) 6. Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Toronto (Canada)
(Dr. N. Vozoris) 7. Chanters (A. Hadjigianni) 8. Mixed Choir (J. Floropoulos-Mpilalis) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Orpheas Choir 10. Altar Boys (N. Zourbanos) 11. Neokoroi (D. Bexis) 12. Sunday School (B. Polidoulis) 13. Youth Group (V. Vokas) 14. Greek Bible Study (K. Polidoulis) 15. Re-Catechism (J. Kapsalis) 16. Bookstore (D. Epaminondas) 17. Greek Education (T. Prattas) |
|---|---|

May our Lord Jesus Christ bless all the ministries of our Church, along with all the staff and volunteers who bring them to fruition.

We all hope and pray that 2012 will be filled with blessings for all parishioners of our Church!

About the Observance of the Vasilopita: This age old tradition commenced in the fourth century, when Saint Basil the Great, who was a bishop, wanted to distribute money to the poor in his Diocese. He wanted to preserve their dignity, so as not to look like charity, he commissioned some women to bake sweetened bread, in which he arranged to place gold coins. Thus the families in cutting the bread to nourish themselves, were pleasantly surprised to find the coins.

About St. Basil the Great: St. Basil was one of the greatest Fathers of the Christian Church and appeared on the spiritual horizon of the Orthodox Faith. He was Bishop of Caesarea, Cappadocia. He was born four years after the First Ecumenical Council held in the year 325 A.D. He is one of the three Cappadocian Fathers, along with the first person to establish an orphanage for little children and the first Christian hospital. His Feast Day is observed on January 1st. The Vasilopita is a beautiful tradition, and a custom which should not be neglected by Greek Orthodox Christians.



Representatives of the different ministries of St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church.

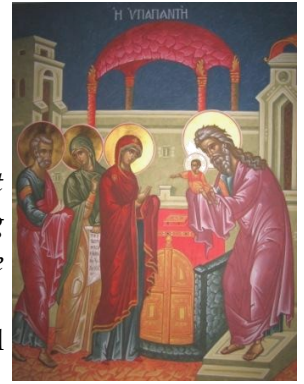
From left to right: K. Polidoulis, J. Kapsalis, G. Nikolaou, N. Zourbanos, Rev. Fr. K. Pavlidis, A. Haros, Dr. P. Fountas, J. Floropoulos-Mpilalis, T. Koutsoubou, V. Vokas, Dr. N. Vozoris, D. Bexis, T. Prattas, B. Polidoulis and D. Epaminondas.

PRAYER OF GREAT LENT (FROM THE GREAT COMPLINE SERVICE)

To those who hate us and wrong us, Lord, give pardon. To those who do good, do good. To our brethren and kinsfolk grant their requests that are for salvation and eternal life. Visit those in sickness and give them healing. Pilot those at sea. Journey with those who journey. Fight beside our Sovereign. Grant forgiveness of sins to those who serve us and have mercy on us. On those who have asked for our prayers, unworthy though we are, have mercy according to your great mercy. Remember, Lord, our fathers and brethren who have fallen asleep before us and give them rest where the light of your face shines. Remember, Lord, our brethren in captivity, and rescue them from every peril. Remember, Lord, those who make offerings and care for beauty in your holy churches and give them their requests which are for salvation and eternal life. Remember too, Lord, us your humble and unworthy servants, and guide us in the path of your commandments; at the prayers of your most pure Mother, our Lady, Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary, and all your Saints; for you are blessed to the ages of ages. Amen.



THE FEAST OF THE PRESENTATION OF OUR LORD - ONLINE!



The Presentation of our Lord in the Temple (also known as the "Meeting of the Lord") is a feast that can be traced back to about 450 AD in Jerusalem with the custom of Christians holding lighted candles during the Divine Liturgy of the feast. Learn more about this great feast of the Lord by clicking on the following links:

- **Mystagogy** (an Orthodox blog rich with information about the faith) has a special [page](#) on the feast
- The **Archdiocese of America** has a [Listen-Learn-Share Special](#) from the Archdiocese of America has the Biblical story, the hymns of the feast and *Iconograms* (Orthodox e-cards).
- The site [OrthodoxWiki](#) has an article dedicated to the feast of the Presentation
- [Information](#) about the feast can also be found on the site of *the Orthodox Church in America* (OCA.org).
- You can access a child-focused podcast from **Ancient Faith Radio** by clicking [here](#).
- Another podcast is available on the **Orthodox Christian Network** on "Godparents Sunday", a feast that is connected with the feast of the Presentation, by clicking [here](#).
- Finally, visit our Sunday School's website — [LivingOrthodoxy.com](#) — for information about the Feast!

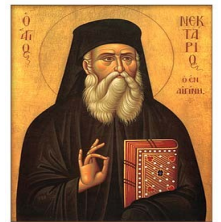
Where the
Good News Is!



LivingOrthodoxy

"ST. NEKTARIOS" ALTAR SERVERS

In an effort to extend ministry outside Sunday morning, the Altar Servers of St. Demetrios have organized a small group called the "St. Nektarios Altar Servers". St. Nektarios of Pentapolis was chosen as the Patron Saint for the Altar Servers of our Church because he is a perfect example one who served in the Altar (as a deacon, priest and bishop) with faithfulness and love for God and his fellow man. It is our prayer that our Altar Servers will learn from his example and grow in faith.



In the past, we have held meetings with our Altar Servers about matters relating to the Altar and their participation in the services. In a way to nurture friendships established in the Altar, we are organizing a social outing only for Altar Servers to a **Toronto Rock Lacrosse game on Friday, February 24th** beginning at 7:00 p.m. All parents and guardians who have kids in the Altar are asked to speak with the Altar Server Leaders, **Dr. Nicholas Vozoris** or **Tim Prattas**, and sign a permission form. Cost of the excursion is \$35.00 (for the tickets to the game). We ask all permission forms be in no later than **Sunday, February 12th**. If you have further questions, please e-mail us at stdemetriostoronto@gmail.com.

Fr. Konstantinos Pavlidis and the leaders of the "St. Nektarios Altar Servers" program would like to thank all Altar Servers for their dedication in attending the services, along with all parents, guardians and grandparents for encouraging frequent attendance in the Altar.

P.S. We are nearly finished completing a program for the young girls of our Parish. More information in the next issue!

WHAT DOES ST. SOPHRONIUS OF JERUSALEM SAY ABOUT... THE FEAST OF THE PRESENTATION?

The Mother of God, the most pure Virgin, carried the true light in her arms and brought him to those who lay in darkness. The true light has come, the light that enlightens every man who is born into this world. Let all of us, my brethren, be enlightened and made radiant by this light. Let all of us share in its splendor, and be so filled with it that no one remains in the darkness. Let us be shining ourselves as we go together to meet and to receive with the aged Simeon the light whose brilliance is eternal. Rejoicing with Simeon, let us sing a hymn of thanksgiving to God, the Father of the light, who sent the true light to dispel the darkness and to give us all a share in his splendor. Through Simeon's eyes we too have seen the salvation of God which he prepared for all the nations and revealed as the glory of the new Israel, which is ourselves.



(quoted from "The Preacher's Institute", <http://preachersinstitute.com/2010/01/28/sermon-on-the-presentation-y-st-sophronius-of-jerusalem>)



**St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church
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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

Rev. Fr. Konstantinos Pavlidis

Religious Education Director

Mr. Basile Polidoulis

Young Adult League Leaders

Mrs. Vicki Vokas, Mr. Niko Sotiropoulos

Parish Council President

Mr. Argyrios Haros

Philoptochos President

Mrs. Theodora Koutsoubou

Greek Bible Study

Mr. Basile Polidoulis

Re-Catechism

Mrs. Fotini Kapsalis

(English Orthodox

Mr. John Kapsalis

Discussion Group)

Mr. Chrysostom Makropoulos

Mr. Tim Prattas

RE-CATECHISM THE ORTHODOX FAMILY 6

Where?

St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church (30 Thorncliffe Park Dr.)

Learn about the Orthodox Family during our sessions:

Old game, new tricks:
Parenting in the 21st century
~ Tuesday, January 24th

Illness in the family:
Coping in difficult circumstances
~ Tuesday, February 7th

Keeping the balance:
The unity of Bioethics & Faith
~ Tuesday, February 21st

Obsession Control:
Dealing with Addictions
~ Tuesday, March 6th

Saintly Families:
Examples for parents & kids today
~ Tuesday, March 20th



*** Every Session begins at 7:00 p.m. ***

Come & Join Us!