

# 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 !

- March 28th:

*Palm Sunday*

- April 2nd:

*Good Friday*

*(Our Annual Youth Retreat)*

- April 4th:

*Great and Holy Pascha*

## PARISH PRIEST'S MESSAGE:

**“COME, RECEIVE THE LIGHT!”**

Beloved in the Lord,

As we approach Holy Week and the celebration of the glorious Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, we once again are called to experience all the life-giving events of Holy Week. The One who was good had been overwhelmed, defeated and buried in a tomb. Yet, in the darkest hour of man's history, God caused light to shine. Christ rose from the dead and thus defeated death. It had to be this way, because only God could defeat darkness.



In our world today, so many people are looking for that light which Christ gives. There is a thirst for spiritual fulfillment. Although there is disillusionment, there is the Light of the Resurrected Christ to tell us that God works through these moments in our lives to bring us His peace, His love, His miracles.

With Pascha only a few days away, let us remember that the Light of Christ is a light “that can never be overtaken by night”! Let us remember His Light is one that gives illumination to the entire world, from the beginning of time until His Second, Glorious coming. As we receive the Light this Pascha, let us remember He has given us His Light to illumine us. Let us not only receive this light—the Light of Knowledge, which illumines every person coming into the world—during the services of Holy Week and Pascha, but every single day of the year.

All of us at St. Demetrios Church — Fr. Triantafillos Porfiris, the Parish Council, the Philoptochos, Youth Group, Religious Education Department, Altar Boys, Chanters, Choirs, the volunteers and myself — wish you and your families a Blessed Pascha!  
**Καλή Ανάσταση!**

Yours in Christ,

+ *Fr. Konstantinos Parlidis*

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## Youth Retreat 2010—What is Our Offering?

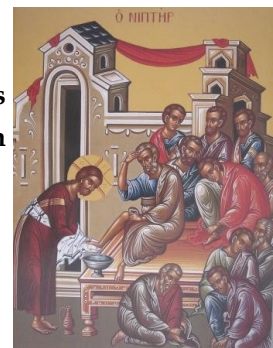
Last year, over 420 children, youth, young adults and parents attended. So, pre-Register for our annual Good Friday Youth Retreat today! E-mail us the names of the participants at

[stdemetriostoronto@gmail.com](mailto:stdemetriostoronto@gmail.com)

Go to our Facebook event,

**“Good Friday 2010 Retreat”**

to receive a full schedule of events for our Retreat. God bless!



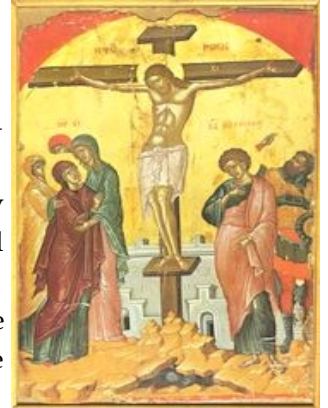
## ENGAGING THE SENSES

### THINGS YOU'LL SEE DURING HOLY WEEK

Holy Week is a unique time in the Orthodox Christian calendar. A lot of things we see and hear are different from regular worship. Here are just some of these things:

**Palm Leaves (Palm Sunday):** Palm leaves are given to everyone at Church on Palm Sunday morning. They remind us of the Triumphal Entry of the Lord and how people placed palm leaves on the ground as the Lord rode into Jerusalem on a donkey.

**The "Bridegroom" (Nymphios) Icon:** This icon is kissed (or, *venerated*) during the "Bridegroom" services. It reminds us that Jesus is the "Bridegroom" of the Church and He sacrificed Himself and died for His "Bride", the Church.



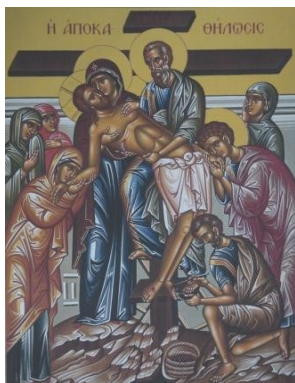
**The Purple Bows:** Purple is a colour of *sorrow* (πένθος); therefore, we put them around the Church to remind us that this week is different from the others of the year — that is, this week we will be sorrowful because Jesus will die for us.

**The Crucified Lord (Holy Thursday):** After the fifth Gospel, the Priest will carry the large Cross found behind the Holy Altar Table, mimicking Christ carrying His Cross to Golgotha. We remember Christ's sacrifice on the Cross and how He died so that we may live eternally in Paradise.

**The "Epitaphio", the "kouvouklion" and Flowers (Good Friday):** On Holy Friday, we decorate a big ornamented bier, called the **kouvouklion**, which symbolizes the tomb of Christ. During the Good Friday afternoon service, we place an icon inside, called the **Epitaphio**. Both the kouvouklion and the Epitaphio are carried in the evening around the Church, symbolizing the funeral of Christ. **Flowers** are given to the faithful as a blessing from the service.

**The Candles:** On Holy Saturday evening, we all light our candles as we chant the hymn, "Come receive the light from the Light that can never be overtaken by night, and glorify Christ, who is Risen from the dead." We remember that Christ is the Light of the world and He has conquered death with His death.

**The Red Eggs:** Red eggs are given out at the end of the Pascha and Agape services. They remind us of a miracle that was done by St. Mary Magdalene: when she met Tiberius, she said "Christ is Risen!" He did not believe her and she said, "if my eggs turn red, my words are true". As they both saw the eggs, they were red. We remember this miracle, along with Christ's Resurrection, when we receive red eggs at the end of the service.



**Have a question?**

E-mail us at

[stdemetriotoronto@gmail.com](mailto:stdemetriotoronto@gmail.com)

and see your question  
in one of our upcoming  
issues!

### Q & A CORNER — THE "HYMNS OF PRAISE" (ΕΓΚΩΜΙΑ)

**Q:** When I go to Church on Good Friday evening, I know we stand and chant these similar-sounding hymns in the middle of the service. What are they?

**A:** These hymns are called the Εγκώμια, or Hymns of Praise. They are divided into three parts. All 300 hymns have as a common theme the topic of **joyful sorrow**, a theme throughout Holy Week. All creation grieves as they think of the death of its Savior. "Life, how can you perish, or how dwell in a tomb? Yet the royal hall of Death you now bring to nought, and from Hades' realm you raise the dead again" is the first chant of the Εγκώμια (the translation of the well-known "Η Ζωή εν Τάφω"). We also glorify our Lord for giving us life with His death and Resurrection: "It is right indeed we should magnify the one who grants life, you, that stretched your hands wide upon the Cross, broke and smashed the might and power of the foe."

All 300 hymns are chanted only in Monasteries. In parishes, only a selection of hymns are chanted by the clergy and laity. For the "Hymns of Praise" in Greek and English, go to [www.gocanada.org/greatlent/hymns\\_of\\_praise.pdf](http://www.gocanada.org/greatlent/hymns_of_praise.pdf).

# OUR JOURNEY THROUGHOUT HOLY WEEK

All throughout Holy Week, Orthodox Christians experience the saving Passion, Death and Resurrection of our Saviour. Here are just “the highlights” in the Holy Week journey:

**On Palm Sunday**, we celebrate *Jesus’ Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem*. People laid down palm leaves, saying “Hosanna in the Highest!” (*Hosanna* means “Lord, save us!”). He was hailed as a King—only to be betrayed.

**On Holy Monday**, we remember *Joseph from the Old Testament* (his story is found in Genesis 30-50). His patience with his brothers is a perfect example for us as Christians. We also remember *the fig tree which had no fruit*. We should always watch out to not be a “barren fig tree”, but a tree filled with good fruit of the Holy Spirit (love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control—*cf. Gal. 5:22-23*).



**On Holy Tuesday**, we remember *the Parable of the Ten Virgins* that Christ taught us. We are taught to always be vigilant and watchful, never to be careless spiritually, and to await the coming of the Bridegroom—Jesus Christ.

**On Holy Wednesday**, we remember *the Sinful Woman* who came and asked forgiveness from Jesus. There is no sin that is ever “too great” to ask forgiveness for. God accepts every person into His embrace—He only wants us to ask. At the same time, He commands us to not judge others, or else we will fall into judgment.

**On Holy Thursday**, we remember *the Last and Mystical Supper*—the first-ever “Holy Communion” with Jesus and His disciples. Jesus gave us His Body and Blood “for the forgiveness of sins” and eternal life. We also remember *Jesus’ washing of the disciples’ feet, praying in the Garden of Gethsemane and being arrested by Judas and the authorities*.

**On Good Friday**, we remember *the Crucifixion of Christ, His death and all the events that took place at that time*. This is the “Extreme Humility” of Jesus: although He was God, He humbled Himself to take the form of a servant (being completely human—except, He didn’t sin) and dying as a common criminal on the Cross. We ask Christ to “remember us in His Kingdom”, as the Good Thief did on the Cross. We pray that we have humility of our Lord.

**On Holy Saturday**, we remember *the Descent of our Lord into Hades*, and await to celebrate His Resurrection.

**On Pascha Sunday**, we remember *the Resurrection of our Saviour (Holy Pascha)* in which humanity is no longer under the tyranny of the devil, but celebrates eternal life given by Jesus Christ to all who believe in Him.

**May “the Light that can never be overtaken by night” guide you always in your journey to the Kingdom of God! Καλή Ανάσταση!**

## A SACRAMENT OF HEALING: WHAT IS HOLY UNCTION?

Every Sacrament has its roots in the Word of God, the Bible. We find the roots of the Sacrament of Holy Unction in the Epistle of James: “**Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the Elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the Name of the Lord.**” (*James 5:14*)



In the past, this Sacrament was done in the context of the Divine Liturgy; today, however, it is done as a separate service. This Sacrament can be conducted on any day of the year. However, the Church has ordained for this Sacrament to be done *every Holy Wednesday*.

In this service, 7 Epistle readings, 7 Gospel readings, and 7 Prayers are read. This is because this Sacrament used to take place over a seven-day period (and *not* that it was done by seven priests, as some people say).

At the service’s completion, all the faithful come and receive the blessing of the Holy Oil, being anointed by the Priest or Bishop, “for healing of soul and body.” This Sacrament does *not* replace Holy Confession, but it is a great way for all to get prepared for Holy Communion on Holy Pascha.





St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church  
Religious Education Newsletter

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**WANT THIS NEWSLETTER  
IN YOUR INBOX? E-MAIL US!**  
[stdemetriostoronto@gmail.com](mailto: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.

- |                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Parish Priests               | Rev. Fr. Konstantine Pavlidis<br>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   |
| Gr. 3 Class Teachers         | Vicky Nikolaos, Vasilis Papagiannis                              |
| Gr. 4-5 Class Teachers       | Elena Qirjazi  |
| Gr. 6-7 Class Teachers       | Georgia Panagiotopoulos-Grivogiannis,<br>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 PASCHA

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**Celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord  
at Re-Catechism!**

## Where?

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

## Who?

Everyone is Welcome!

## When?

Every other Tuesday at 7 p.m.

## The Sessions

Tuesday, April 20th, 2010

The Resurrection of Christ in the New Testament

Tuesday, May 4th, 2010

Trampling Down Death

Tuesday, May 18th, 2010

Life: Both Here and Eternal



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*"Free Babysitting offered at each session"*

For more information, e-mail us at  
[stdemetriostoronto@gmail.com](mailto:stdemetriostoronto@gmail.com)  
or go to our website at  
[www.re-catechism.com](http://www.re-catechism.com)