

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 7th:
Cross-Adoring Sunday
- March 25th:
The Annunciation of the Theotokos
- March 27th:
Lazarus Saturday

PARISH PRIEST'S MESSAGE:

THE "GOOD NEWS" OF MARCH 25TH

Beloved in the Lord,

As we continue our journey throughout Great Lent, we will, once again, reach one of the milestones on the Church Calendar. March 25th is known to Greek Orthodox Christians as the day Greece declared its independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1821. Yet, this theme of freedom was nothing new for this date. This was also the day God had declared humanity free from the tyranny of the devil. It was the day Orthodox Christians celebrate the Feast of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary.

In Greek, the word "annunciation" is «Ευαγγελισμός», which means "good news". We hear the "good news" of this great feast delivered by the Archangel Gabriel, together with the entire Gospel narrative of the feast, in the Gospel of Luke (1:24-38). The Archangel visits the Virgin Mary and says to her those eternal words: "Hail, O favoured one, the Lord is with you!" The Theotokos couldn't believe the words of the Angel—that she, a virgin, would give birth to a Son! The Angel told her the Holy Spirit would overshadow her and bless her, to which she replied, "I am the servant of the Lord, let it be as you have said." She acted in the same way all of us should act throughout our lives — obeying the Lord and His commandments.

The "Good News" of the Annunciation is the Lord did not forget His people. The "Good News" is all of us have the chance to accept His call—just like the Virgin Mary did that day—and live our lives as true children of God, being blessed by Him every day. The "Good News" is Christ Himself, being born in the flesh to save us and bring us back to Paradise.

As we celebrate this March 25th, let us remember our rescue from the bondage of the devil with Christ's coming to earth to live, die and resurrect from the dead for us.

May we all have a continued Blessed Great Lent!

Yours in Christ,
+ Fr. Konstantinos Pavlidis



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Want to Help this Holy Week?

If you are a young girl from 12-20 years of age and want to help our Church this Holy Week as a "Myrofora", e-mail us at stdemetriostoronto@gmail.com.

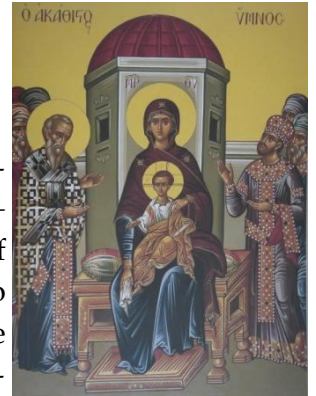
If you are a young boy and interested in becoming an Altar Boy for Holy Week, please see Fr. Konstantinos at the end of service! All of us at St. Demetrios Church thank you in advance for all your help! God bless!



REJOICE, O BRIDE EVER-VIRGIN!

WHAT'S THE AKATHIST HYMN?

The first 5 Fridays of Great Lent are marked with a very beloved service of the Orthodox faithful, dedicated to the Theotokos. The *Salutations of the Theotokos*, together with a supplicatory canon (i.e. a group of hymns that ask the Mother of God to pray for us), are incorporated to the Small Compline service (an evening service). If we wanted to get to know the Mother of God a little better, all we have to do is listen to the hymns of this service—it's like her biography, in "poem form".



This service is also called the "**Akathist Hymn**" (Ακάθιστος Ύμνος) because, when it was written (as thanks to God for keeping the City of Constantinople safe from the invaders), the people did not sit during the service.

This Canon speaks of the Mother of God as the "living and abundant fountain", our "Mother and Queen", and the "Virgin Bride of God". The climax of the service takes place when the Bishop or Priest comes and recites the "Salutations" (or Χαιρετισμοί) in front of the icon of the Theotokos (placed on the *soleas* of the Church). On the first 4 Fridays, each *stasis* (or section) is recited, while the entire Akathist Hymn is recited on the fifth Friday evening of Lent.

Each *stasis* has a particular theme. The first deals with the Annunciation of the Theotokos. The second one deals with the Birth of Christ, and the events surrounding His birth. The third deals with the New Creation and how we lift our minds to the Omnipresent God. The fourth deals with the Theotokos being our protector, and how we are unable to praise God sufficiently for the blessings He has given us.

No one knows who exactly wrote the Akathist, but one thing is for sure: it is a wonderful way to give honor to our Lord's Mother, who is our Mother, our Lady, our fervent intercessor before God.

The Services of the Salutations to the Theotokos and the Akathist Hymn are held on Friday evenings at our Church, from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.



Have a question?

E-mail us at

stdemetriostoronto@gmail.com

and see your question
in one of our upcoming
issues!

Q & A CORNER — FASTING PRACTICES

Q: In regards to fasting, wouldn't it be more sacrificial for someone to give up foods that they really loved such as candy rather than meat which they may not care for that much anyhow?

A: Fasting is something that is present from the early Church. While fasting practices have changed throughout the years, Orthodox Christians usually fast on Wednesdays (in remembrance of the betrayal of Christ), Fridays (in remembrance of His crucifixion and death) and during set times of the year (such as Great Lent, Christmas Lent, etc.).

We must remember that the purpose of fasting is not to "give up" things, nor to do something "sacrificial." The purpose of fasting is to learn *discipline*, to gain control of those things that are indeed within our control but that we so often allow to control us. In our culture especially, food dominates the lives of many people. We collect cookbooks, treat eating disorders, go on diets, take weight loss pills, and the list goes on. We **fast** in order to discipline ourselves. We fast in order to get a grip on our lives and to regain control of those things that have gotten out of control. Further, as we sing during the first week of Great Lent, "while fasting from food, let us also fast from our passions."

**“LET MY PRAYER RISE AS INCENSE BEFORE YOU...”:
ON THE LITURGY OF THE PRESANCTIFIED GIFTS**

Every Divine Liturgy is a joyous occasion, celebrating the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. This joyous atmosphere is somewhat subdued during Great Lent, which is a time of χαρμολύπη (“joyous sorrow”), when the faithful await the Lord’s Passion. The Church, therefore, has said not to celebrate the Divine Liturgy during the weeks of Great Lent. The only exceptions to celebrate the Liturgy during Great Lent are on Saturdays, Sundays and on the feastday of the Annunciation of the Theotokos (March 25th).



Having said that, the Church sees it as important for its faithful to participate in the Sacrament of Holy Communion as often as possible. With this in mind, the Church created a special service. The consecrated Body and Blood of Christ is kept from the Sunday Liturgy and is given to the people during an evening service. This service, called **the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts**, is performed together with the Vespers service, usually on Wednesday evenings. This service promotes the frequent receiving of Holy Communion to the faithful and continued strength throughout Great Lent, as the dismissal prayer says: “Enable us to fight the good fight, to accomplish the course of the Fast, to preserve inviolate the Faith ... to be accounted victors over sin ... and uncondemned, to attain and to adore Your Holy Resurrection... Amen.”



THE LENTEN JOURNEY ... WITH IECCLESIA!

Great Lent is here... and so is *iEcclesia* with its annual Lenten Special! This year, we feature...

THE LENTEN PRAYER OF ST. EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN

Our Podcasts...

- Friday, February 19th **Sloth and Idle Curiosity: The Lazy Meddler** (Fr. K. Tsiolas, Fr. E. Aravantinos, C. Economos)
- Friday, February 26th **Lust for Power and Idle Talk: The Greedy Babblers** (J. Kapsalis, L. Tsotsos)
- Friday, March 5th **Chastity and Humility: Why wait and be modest?** (Fr. B. Hladio, P. Rakopoulos)
- Friday, March 12th **Patience and Love: Becoming Like Christ** (T.B.A.)
- Friday, March 19th **“Yea, Lord and King”: An Ending to Remember** (Fr. J. Getcha, T. Prattas)
- Friday, March 26th **Great Lent and St. Ephraim: A Lasting Connection** (T.B.A.)
- Good Friday, April 2nd **Holy Week and St. Ephraim: “No Resurrection without Crucifixion”** (T.B.A.)

www.iecclesia.com



On Prayer...

“Let not one think, my fellow Christian, that only priests and monks need to pray with out ceasing and not laymen No, no; every Christian without exception ought to dwell always in prayer”

~ St. Gregory Palamas

“Let your prayer be completely simple. For both the publican and the prodigal son were reconciled to God by a single phrase.”

~ St. John Climacus (“The Ladder of Divine Ascent”)

“Make sure that you do not limit your prayer merely to a particular part of the day. Turn to prayer at any time.”

~ St. John Chrysostom

ΜΑΡΤΙΟΣ 2014
 ΤΕΤΑΡΤΗ 26 ΜΑΡΤΙΟΥ
 ΗΜΕΡΑ ΤΗΣ ΑΓΙΑΣ ΤΡΑΠΕΖΗΣ



*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.

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