

# THE MESSENGER

ST. DEMETRIOS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH • RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 7  
MARCH 2011

## 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

Clean Monday

MARCH 13TH

March Break –  
No Sunday School

MARCH 27TH

No Sunday School

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## CATECHETICAL HOMILY FOR HOLY & GREAT LENT

+ BARTHOLOMEW

BY GOD'S MERCY ARCHBISHOP OF CONSTANTINOPLE-NEW ROME AND ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH

TO THE PLENITUDE OF THE CHURCH

GRACE AND PEACE FROM OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST

WITH OUR PRAYER, BLESSING AND FORGIVENESS

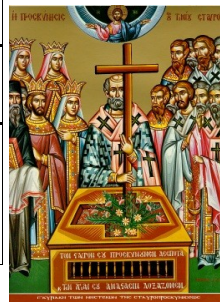
"The arena of the virtues has opened; those who desire to compete may enter, girding themselves with the good struggle of fasting." (Triodion, Cheesefare Sunday) Or, better, the arena has always remained open, from the time that the All-Merciful Lord of Glory deemed it worthy to assume our nature. Since then, through His Church, he invites every person to participate in the boundless gifts of the grace of the Holy Spirit, particularly during this blessed period of Holy and Great Lent.

Beloved children in the Lord, the boundless goodness of our God, who is truly worshipped in the Trinity, created the human race solely out of love in order to render us human beings – to the degree that is possible for human nature – sharers and participants of the grandeur of His sacred glory. This is the exclusive purpose of life at all times. Indeed, in order to achieve this purpose, the holy and inspired tradition of the Orthodox Church comes to our support, instructing, interpreting and including the entire spectrum of the spiritual life by means of various struggles, with which the faithful must always advance courageously.

Through the holy Sacrament of Baptism, each Christian received the grace of the Holy Spirit. If we begin to love God with all our heart, then this grace transmits to us in an incomprehensible way the wealth of its benefits. Whoever wishes to retain this experience of grace should strive with great joy to renounce from the soul the benefits of the present age in order to acquire the hidden wealth of true life. To the same degree that the soul advances in this spiritual struggle, the sacred gift of divine grace reveals the Lord's goodness concealed in the depth of the soul in order to become the sure guide in the manifold spiritual struggle. (St. Diadochus of Photike, Century 77)

This spiritual struggle is ongoing for every faithful. Therefore, it requires us to start anew each day, each moment. "The time has come for the beginning of spiritual struggle, the victory of demons, the armor of virtue, the conduct of angels, the boldness before God." (Lauds, Cheesefare Sunday) Great Lent precisely resembles a constant beginning of spiritual regeneration and renewal. This is why the hymnographer of the Triodion correctly orientates us toward its proper content, stating that bodily fasting by renouncing certain foods cannot result in remedy and is even despised by God as false, unless it is accompanied by purity that results from renouncing the spiritual passions (Lauds, Wednesday of Cheesefare Week).

(Continued on page 3)



## PRAYER FOR GREAT LENT

O Lord and Master of my life! Grant me not the spirit of sloth, idle curiosity, love of power and useless chatter. But grant to me, your servant, the spirit of chastity, humility, patience and love. Yea, O Lord and King! Grant me to see my own faults and not to judge my brother or sister. For You are blessed to the ages of ages. Amen.

## FUNDRAISING DINNER A GREAT SUCCESS!

On Sunday, February 20th, the Sunday School of our Church held its "Fundraising Dinner", with funds raised going to help the needs of our parish. In total, over 300 people attended and \$25,000 was raised for our Church, with about \$10,000 of that money being donations from the function's attendees! Thanks to all the parishioners of our Church and members of the Greek Associations in Toronto who came out in support of our Fundraising Dinner.



*The Consul General of Greece receiving an award of appreciation at the Fundraising Dinner. From left: Fr. K. Pavlidis, Parish Priest; Fr. T. Porfiris; Mr. B. Polidoulis, Sunday School Director; His Grace Bishop Christoforos of Andida; the Hon. D. Azemopoulos, Consul General of Greece in Toronto; Mr. M. Mouratidis, GCT Board Member.*

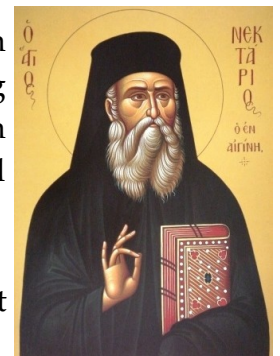
A special thanks to...

- The Hon. Dimitris Azemopoulos, Consul General of Greece in Toronto, who honoured us by being our Keynote Speaker
- His Grace Bishop Christoforos of Andida, for supporting our event
- Fr. K. Pavlidis and Fr. T. Porfiris, the Priests of our Parish, for their spiritual guidance,
- Mr. Dimitris Kritikos, for donating and cooking the dinner
- Serano Bakery, for their donation of the sweets
- Flipper's Banquet Hall, for their assistance with our event
- Our tireless Sunday School teachers and members of the Philoptochos Society, for making homemade sweets, hors d'oeuvres and coffee, along with setting up, serving and cleaning up
- Mr. Bill Papagiannis and his team of Sunday School teachers and volunteers, for supervising the children with their "Movie Night"
- Mr. Basile Polidoulis, Mrs. Komissa Polidoulis, Mr. Chrysostom Makropoulos and the Sunday School Executive, who organized this event

Once again, thank you all very much!

## ALTAR SERVERS MEETING—FEBRUARY 27TH, 2011

On Sunday, February 27th, our Church held its first "Altar Servers Meeting", with 17 Altar Boys in attendance! This meeting served as a forum to bring new young men to serve as Altar Servers for our Church and establish some new goals, such as participating in the divine services and charity work. Soon, a Girls Group will be formed for all the girls and young women of our Parish.

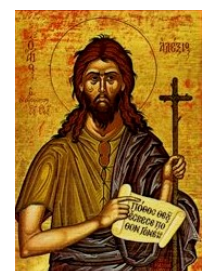


If you are interested in participating in either one of these groups, e-mail us at [stdemetriostoronto@gmail.com](mailto:stdemetriostoronto@gmail.com)!

This Month, We Celebrate...  
St. Alexios the "Man of God"

The 411...

Feastday	March 17th
Lived	380-440 A.D.
Type of Saint	Monastic





*(continued from page 1)*

Of course, focusing the intellect on the work of knowing God, in order to return it from passionate dispersion, comprises a toilsome and time-consuming labor. However, it is necessary and definitive for our spiritual wellbeing and social life. The way of virtue appears difficult and extremely unpleasant to those who undertake the journey; yet, not because it is actually like this, but because human nature has become accustomed to the ease of pleasure. For those who have succeeded in reaching the middle of this journey, in fact it appears pleasant and effortless (St. Diadochus of Photike, Century 93).

Frequently, those who cannot understand the great mystery of this piety consider the Orthodox ascetic tradition as negative and as leading to deprivation of creativity, of original initiative, of enjoyment in life's pleasure. Nothing could be further from the truth. All that was created by God was created "very good" and offered to us in order to delight in and enjoy in order for us to give continual glory to our Benefactor. The commandments of God guide us and inform us in the proper use of these divine gifts, so that our body, mind and soul, together with all the material gifts, may be truly joyful and beneficial for our life. On the contrary, the arrogant, independent and contemptuous use of material gifts offered to us by the Creator result in entirely different goals to God's expectations, leading us to depression, anxiety and misfortune, even though appearing to satisfy human pride momentarily.

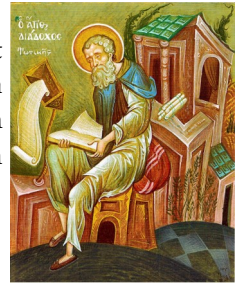
Our Savior, who is truly divine and truly human, who is incomprehensibly known to the humble and those capable of receiving His uncreated grace, the Lord of glory and Lord of history, who directs our soul and mind, who contains the universe in His divine providence – from the smallest particle of His creation to the most inconceivable aspect of our world, is eternally the Way, the Truth, and the Life. (John 14.6) Just as the hypostatic source of Life could not possibly be held by death, which was crushed through His resurrection, so too there could not possibly be any positive human life without participation in the life-creating Body of the Risen Christ, the Orthodox Church, and the inspired Holy Tradition. In brief, the Lord reigns forever, while the ideas of the proud are proved false. Or, as St. Diadochus so wonderfully says: "There is nothing poorer than a mind endeavoring to philosophize about God without God."

Beloved children in the Lord, upon entering the arena of Holy and Great Lent, we paternally exhort you not to be afraid or lazy in assuming the most important task of your life, namely the spiritual arena of work. Instead, be courageous and strong, so that you may purify your souls and bodies of all sin in order to reach the Kingdom of God, which is granted already from this life to those who seek it with sincerity and with all their soul. May the grace of God and His boundless mercy be with you all.

Holy and Great Lent 2011

+ **BARTHOLOMEW OF CONSTANTINOPLE**

*Fervent supplicant to God for all*



*St. Diadochus of Photiki*

## Webpages of the Month: [lent.goarch.org](http://lent.goarch.org)

[www.gocanada.org/greatlent](http://www.gocanada.org/greatlent)

As Great Lent approaches, learning about the services and feasts of Great Lent and Holy Week are just a click away! The webpages are parts of the websites of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America and Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Toronto (Canada), respectively. You can even send an iconogram to your friends' e-mails, listen to services and hymns of the period and shop online on "Orthodox Marketplace"!



### **ABOUT HIS LIFE...**

Born in Rome, St. Alexios was raised in a royal household. As his parents saw he was very close to the Lord and would possibly become a monastic, they arranged a marriage for him to a young woman of the area. He had chosen, however, to serve God as a monastic and left his family to become a monk in a Syrian monastery. Eighteen years later, he returned to his home and served as a spiritual counsellor for people of his town. His relics have been found in the Great Lavra Monastery of Mount Athos since 1398.



**St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church**  
**Religious Education Newsletter**

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**[@GMAIL.COM](mailto:STDEMETRIOS.TORONTO@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. Konstantinos 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

Kassiani Logotheti

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 4

## Praying Together: The Divine Services

### Where?

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

### When?

*Every other Tuesday at 7:00 p.m.*

### The Sessions

**Tuesday, January 25th, 2011**

*Holy Water Everywhere: Agiasmos & House Blessings*

**Tuesday, February 8th, 2011**

*Peace and Health: Artoklasia & St. Phanourios Blessings*

**Tuesday, February 22nd, 2011**

*May their memory be eternal: Funerals, Memorials & Trisagia*

**Tuesday, March 8th, 2011**

*Singing God's Praises in the morning: Matins & Hours Services*

**Tuesday, March 22nd, 2011**

*An Evening Sacrifice: Vespers & Compline Services*

**Tuesday, April 5th, 2011**

*Ask Us: Services Q and A*

**All Are Welcome! Come and Join Us!**

*"Free Babysitting offered at each session"*

*For more information, e-mail us at*

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