

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!

- **SEPTEMBER 12TH:**
Registration— Day 1
- **SEPTEMBER 14TH:**
Feast of the Holy Cross
- **SEPTEMBER 19TH:**
Registration—Day 2
- **SEPTEMBER 26TH:**
First Day of Religious Education Classes

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PARISH PRIEST'S MESSAGE —“LOSING TO WIN”

Beloved in the Lord.

Be it in sports, work or life in general, many of us have grown up with two polar opposites: “the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat”. Since society adores winners, we want to be winners at any cost. We are ready to justify almost any kind of behaviour, as long as it leads to winning. Lying, cheating, knifing others in the back to climb to the top have all become ways of life for many people who will stop at nothing in order to win.

Yet, the words of Jesus in today’s Gospel lesson makes us take a second look at this saying: “Whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it.”

“Winning is everything!” we say. “Not so!” says Jesus. Winning is not everything. Sometimes winning even turns out to be losing and losing turns out to be winning.

Jesus’ own life is a great example of this. He was abandoned by His disciples. He was mocked, whipped and sentenced to a brutal and bloody death on the Cross. Yet, for God, losing is winning. God raised Jesus from the tomb to the highest place in the universe, giving Him a Name that is above every Name. His greatest loss is our greatest gain. But there would have been no resurrection without the cross, no glory without suffering, no winning without losing. That is what life is all about, said Jesus. “Whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will gain it.”

Losing is everything when it involves losing yourself to God, losing yourself in His love, losing yourself in service to Him, merging your will with His. This kind of losing is winning, indeed.

Jesus says about losing in John 12:24-25: “Truly, truly I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone. But, if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.” The grain that falls into the ground dies; but from its death comes a new plant. The result is new life and new fruit.

Our Lord Jesus Christ never promised us resurrection without crucifixion, a crown of glory without a cross, a new self without death of the old self. In essence, Jesus shows us we must lose ourselves in service to Him in order to win in this life and eternally.

I pray this Sunday School year is filled with blessings for all of our students, parents and teachers. May God bless you always and may the Cross of Christ guide you always to eternal life!

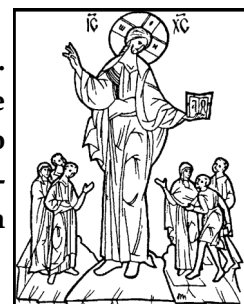
Yours in Christ,

+ Fr. Konstantinos Pavlidis

WELCOME BACK, EVERYONE!

The Parish Priests and the Religious Education team at St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church would like to welcome you back once again to Sunday School! Please remember to come no later than 10:20 a.m. on Sunday morning, as students will participate in the Divine Liturgy, hear the sermon and then go for the weekly lesson.

Καλή Σχολική Χρονιά! Have a great Sunday School Year!



HAPPY NEW YEAR!

BY JOHN KAPSALIS



We usually think of January as the month that stands for change, hope and a fresh start at life. But did you know that, for the church, the beginning of the year starts in September? This is the time that, just like with the month of January, we can decide to make a change with our life. We can begin to do things differently, better than before. Now, I'm not talking about trying to exercise more and go on some fancy diet, or even about trying to get more stuff. No, what I think September gives us a chance to do is to look at how we spend our time and try instead to focus more on God. Of course, you might think that maybe our "new year's" resolution should be that we'll read the Bible, go to Church every Sunday and pray more regularly. And you'd be right. These are all good, but like the majority of New Year's resolutions I'm afraid that they'll last only a few weeks. Let me explain why.

Christians are not those who dress themselves up to look and act religious by simply following a list of do's and don'ts. No. Our goal as Christians is to become like Christ and be united to God. And we do this when we let the presence of Christ live in us through daily intimate prayer; when we not only read our Bible but study it and try to understand how God's word is asking us to live; and when we come to church on Sunday, not because we have to but because we want to be with God so badly that we want to receive Him inside our hearts through Holy Communion.

I believe when we start living this close to Jesus Christ, then our Christianity will become courageous and transforming, contagious and liberating. Because in the end, the goal of our prayer and fasting, of our morality and compassion, and even of our worship is to follow the way of Christ and imitate him in everything we do: "Anyone who claims to be intimate with God ought to live the same kind of life Jesus lived" (1 John 2:6 MSG).

You see, all our spiritual exercises and disciplines are means by which we come to know Jesus Christ. We become intimately acquainted with Jesus by imitating and sharing in his experiences, and by living life as he lived it. St. Augustine describes the Christian life this way: "He is a Christian who shows mercy to all...who sympathizes with the sorrowful and feels the grief of another as his own...whose door is never closed to anyone, whose table is shared by every poor person...who serves God day and night, who meditates upon and considers his precepts ceaselessly... whose conscience is faithful and pure, whose thought is directed to God and whose hope is in Christ."

I know what you're thinking. It's not easy to live this way. Then again, Jesus told us that His way is hard. But the good news is that it is not impossible. Jesus promised us the Holy Spirit who will help us live the way we ought to. And with some effort on our part we can live the way Christ lived. This is how the apostle Peter puts it: "Make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love" (2 Peter 1:5-7 NIV).

So if we want to live like Christ, then we can't live sheltered lives, hanging around Church with blank stares. Each Sunday the Church celebrates the amazing news of God sharing himself with us. We need to do no less. We too need to share ourselves with God and with each other. Being a Christian is a way of life. Actually, it is life itself. It is about living life in such a way that those who come into contact with us cannot remain the same or indifferent. Is this the impact you have in the world? If not, then pray and fast that you may know how wonderful our God truly is. "He has showed you, O Man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8 NIV). Let's make every effort to imitate Christ and live the wonderful life He has prepared for us here and now, because the Kingdom of God is within us.

About the Author...

John Kapsalis is a Homiletic Speaker at our Church. He is a graduate of Holy Cross Orthodox School of Theology and is a Professor of New Testament Studies at the Toronto Orthodox Theological Academy.



This Month, We Celebrate... The Exaltation of the Holy Cross

ἈΠΟΛΥΤΙΚΙΟΝ ΤΗΣ ΦΕΣΤΗΣ

Lord, save Your people and bless Your inheritance.
Grant victory to the faithful over the enemy and protect Your commonwealth by the might of Your Cross.

PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENT — MESSAGE OF HIS ALL HOLINESS ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW I

Beloved Children in Lord,

Our ever-memorable predecessor, the late Patriarch Demetrios, who possessed a deep awareness of the gravity of the environmental crisis, as well as of the responsibility of the Church to directly and effectively confront the crisis, issued the first official encyclical dealing with the protection of the natural environment more than two decades ago. Through this encyclical, the Mother Church officially established the date of September 1st, - the beginning of the ecclesiastical year - as a day of prayer for the protection of the environment, declaring it to the plenitude of the Church throughout the length and breadth of the world.



At that time, our Church insightfully emphasized the significance of the eucharistic and ascetic ethos of our tradition, that manifests our most important and most crucial unique contribution toward the proper and universal struggle for the protection of the natural environment as a Divine Creation and shared inheritance. Today, in the midst of an unprecedented financial crisis, humanity is facing many and diverse trials. But this trial is related not only to our individual hardships; this trial affects every aspect of human society, especially our behavior and perception of the surrounding world and the way we rank our values and priorities.

It is important to note that the current grievous financial crisis may spark the much-reported and absolutely essential shift to environmentally viable development; i.e., to a standard of economic and social policy whose priority will be the environment, and not unbridled financial gain. Let us all consider as an example what may happen to countries that are suffering today on account of the financial crisis and poverty, such as Greece, which at the same time have exceptional natural riches: unique ecosystems, rare fauna and flora and natural resources, exquisite landscapes, abundant sunlight and wind. If ecosystems deteriorate and disappear, natural sources become depleted, and landscapes suffer destruction, and climate change produces unpredictable weather conditions, on what basis will the financial future of these countries and the planet as a whole depend?

We hold, therefore, that there is a dire need in our day for a combination of societal sanctions and political initiatives, such that there is a powerful change in direction, to a path of viable and sustainable environmental development.

For our Orthodox Church, the protection of the environment, as a divine and very good creation, embodies a great responsibility for every human person, regardless of material or financial benefits. The direct correlation of the God-given duty and mandate, to work and preserve, with every aspect of contemporary life constitutes the only way to a harmonious co-existence with each and every element of creation, and the entirety of the natural world in general.

Therefore, we call upon all of you, beloved brethren and children in the Lord, to take part in the titanic and righteous battle to alleviate the environmental crisis, and to prevent the even worse results that derive from its consequences. Let us motivate ourselves to harmonize our personal and collective life and attitudes with the needs of nature's ecosystems, so that every kind of fauna and flora in the world and in the universe may live and thrive and be preserved.

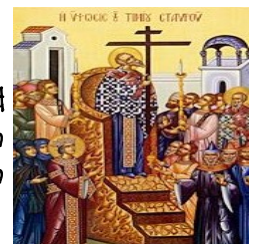
Your beloved brother in Christ and fervent supplicant before God,

+ BARTHOLOMEW OF CONSTANTINOPLE



ABOUT THE FEAST

On September 14th, the Church calls to mind the love of Christ—He loved us so much, He sacrificed Himself on the Cross to bring humanity back to Paradise. We also remember both how St. Helen found the Holy Cross in Jerusalem and how Emperor Heraclius recovered the Cross in 628 AD from the Persians. The feast is marked with a strict fast and a procession of the Holy Crosss.





St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church
Religious Education Newsletter

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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. 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, Kassiani Logotheti

Gr. 3 Class Teachers

Vicky Nikolaos, Vasilis Papagiannis

Gr. 4-5 Class Teachers

Elena Qirjazi, Marina Derpanis

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

ΛΪΒΕΤΕ ΦΆΡΕΤΕ ΤΪΤΟ Ε΢ΤΙ ΤΌ ΣΩΜΑ ΜΪΣ ΠΙΕΤΕ Ε΢ ΑΝΤΪ ΠΆΝΤΕ΢ ΤΪΤΟ Ε΢ΤΙ ΤΌ ΑΙΜΑ ΜΪΣ

Re-Catechism 3

THE DIVINE LITURGY: UNITING GOD AND HIS PEOPLE

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, September 21st, 2010

It's Time: The Pre-Liturgy Preparation

Tuesday, October 5th, 2010

Blessed is the Kingdom: The Liturgy of the Word

Tuesday, October 19th, 2010

Putting aside the cares of Life: The Liturgy of the Faithful

Tuesday, November 2nd, 2010

The Heart of the Liturgy: The Holy Anaphora

Tuesday, November 16th, 2010

With Awe, Faith and Love, Draw Near: The Communion

Tuesday, November 30th, 2010

Ask Us: Liturgy Q and A

Come and Join Us!

"Free Babysitting offered at each session"

For more information, e-mail us at

stdemetriostoronto@gmail.com