

# THE MESSENGER

ST. DEMETRIOS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH • RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

**VOLUME 3, ISSUE 1**

**SEPTEMBER 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!**

**EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS**

September 14th

**SUNDAY SCHOOL REGISTRATIONS**

September 18th

**1ST SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON & ALTAR SERVER MEETING**

September 25th

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**SUNDAY BEFORE THE EXALTATION—  
10TH ANNIVERSARY OF 9/11**

Of all of God’s creation, we hear that humanity was created “very good”, “very beautiful”. Humanity was in the image of God, striving to become like Him by grace (that is, to become saints, to become holy). This was not to be from the beginning, however, as humanity disobeyed God’s commandments. This disobedience did not occur once or twice or three times; rather, it occurred (and continues to occur) many times throughout the history of humanity. The disobedience to God’s commands is also known as *sin*. Sometimes, the effects of sin are felt by merely the individual or by a select few; other times, they are felt by thousands, by millions, or even the entire human race. This type of event we remember today, as humanity commemorates the 10 year anniversary of 9/11, calling to our minds the nearly-3,000 people killed and the over-6,000 injured. The day of this travesty began just as any other: the sun up, people walking to work, the first day of school for the kids in New York City. Conspiracy theories and political rhetoric aside, it was a day that was filled with sorrow, with fear, with confusion. We even remember the loss of one of our own Churches during the attack – St. Nicholas Church, the only place of worship that was lost during the attacks in New York. More importantly, we remember the heroism, self-sacrifice and compassion of those people who offered their lives for the safety and well-being of others on that day and the millions that were displaced during flights that day – with even one of our Churches in Halifax, St. George Greek Orthodox Church, opening its doors for people because there was nowhere for them to stay.



*St. Nicholas Church, which was destroyed on 9/11*

With this backdrop of 9/11, the Church today prepares Orthodox Christians for one of its great feasts: the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (celebrated on September 14<sup>th</sup>). This feast remembers not only the historical events of finding the Cross of Christ during the 4<sup>th</sup> century by St. Helen the Equal-to-the-Apostles and the recovery of the Cross by Byzantine Emperor Heraclius from the Persians during the 7<sup>th</sup> century (after they had stolen it). This feast also shows the importance of the Holy Cross for all Orthodox Christians –how a symbol of hatred and death can turn into a symbol of life and peace –how, when Christ died on the Cross and then resurrected from the dead, joy spread throughout the world and the devil was defeated by the Lord, opening the door to Paradise for all.

In the midst of all our pain and suffering, in the midst of disasters such as 9/11, we remember the love of God and how He cares for us. God loves us, so He gives us His word which is truth and then says, “you have a mind and wisdom, go and do what is right.”

*~ Continued on page 2 (“On the 10th Anniversary of 9/11”)*

**SUNDAY SCHOOL IS BACK!!!**

On September 25th, St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church Sunday School begins another year of teaching our children and youth our rich Orthodox Faith! We hope that you and your entire family will come for another year of growing in Faith, making new friends and strengthening our relationship with Jesus Christ! Agiasmos service starts at 10:20 a.m., followed by the first Sunday School lesson. Come and join us!



**On the 10th Anniversary of 9/11 (Continued from page 1)**

In the midst of all our pain and suffering, in the midst of disasters such as 9/11, many ask why this happened and there are many reasons. One reason that everyone seems to forget is that wonderful gift of God: *free will*. In our lives, we are free to act as we want; yet, we must live with the consequences of our actions. God is not a cruel taskmaster. He is Love Personified and He cares for us. God loves us, so He gives us His word which is truth and then says, "you have a mind and wisdom", so go and do what is right. Some choose the path of life and love, while others choose the path of death and destruction.

True love can be seen in the father who sacrifices his son for the safety of someone else. **John 3:16**, a verse in today's Gospel reading, says it best about God: *"For God so loved the world that He sent His only-begotten Son so that whoever believes in Him might not perish but have eternal life!"*

His promise is everlasting life in Paradise (and Paradise is not a place, but a relationship with God forever). When we show love – like those first responders and others who helped on 9/11, like the teacher who takes time out of his/her schedule to help that disadvantaged child, like the parent who will stay up and help their child with something as simple as math or something as hard as relationship advice, like the doctor or priest who will take the time to care for their patient and spiritual child, respectively, in order for them to be healthy, and list goes on – *when we show love*, we become little-c "christs", we become an example of holiness, to our neighbour. We become what we were destined to be: saints. When we do not practice what we preach, when we decide to judge and swear and gossip and hate (and the list goes on) – *when we decide not to be like Jesus would be*, then we reject eternal life. That is not what God wants. God does not want to condemn (in fact, every person condemns themselves with their actions and their apostasy, their walking away, from God). What does God want? *"For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."* (John 3:17)

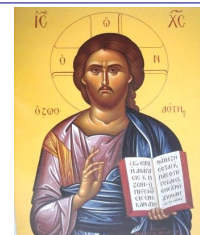
We are saved at baptism, we continue to be saved throughout our lives and we will be saved at the Second and Glorious Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is never too late for people to ask for the Lord to come into their hearts and dwell within them. Our lives are gifts from God –and we never know when we will be taken from this life to meet our Lord. Christians always were said to be vigilant of this fact and to realize that, in a single moment, all things can change. It started ten years ago at 8:46 a.m., when the first tower was hit, for thousands of our American brothers and sisters. It continues in places like Egypt, Syria, Somalia, and countless other countries across the globe – certain people who, through their hate for God's creation, destroy that which is "very good" and "very beautiful". Yet, in the words of His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America, "From the smoldering ruins of that horrific day, may the Lord give us *glory instead of ashes* (Isaiah 61:3) so that all people may find solace, peace and recollection ... and know the *peace of God which surpasses all understanding* (Philip. 4:7) comes only from our Lord Jesus Christ."

As we celebrate the feast and honour the glory of the Holy Cross as "the glory of the Church, the believer's firm support, the glory of angels and the defeat of the demons", may we be given strength in this fact – the truth that the Lord has crushed death with His death and given eternal life to all who choose to embrace it – and pray today that the memories of those taken from us 10 years ago today (and all who have passed away) may be eternal! Amen.

**PRAYER AT HOME BEFORE SUNDAY SCHOOL**

O Lord our God, Who has honoured humanity with Your own image, Who has taught the most wise are they who obey Your teaching, Who made the fishermen most wise: open the heart and mind of me, Your servant, that I might receive understanding of Your holy commandments which shall be taught to me at Sunday School, for the glory of Your Holy Name and so I may understand Your good and perfect Will. Deliver me from every hostile enemy. Help me to grow in Orthodoxy and Your Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Faith, and in all uprightness and purity all the days of my life, so that I might advance in wisdom, and in the fulfillment of Your commandments. Bless my family, classmates, teacher and my Parish Priest so that we may glorify Your most Holy Name together and become sons and daughters of Your Kingdom to come. For You are the God of Mercy, gracious in strength and perfect love, and to You do I send up Glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

**LEADER OF THE FAITH  
OMNIPRESENT AND ALL-POWERFUL  
REDEEMER AND SAVIOUR  
DOOR TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD**





*All Boys and Young Men who Attend  
St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church  
and are Interested in Serving as Altar Boys  
are Invited to this Ecclesiastical Year's first*

# ALTAR SERVER MEETING

*Where - Downstairs Hall of St. Demetrios Church*

*Date - Sunday, September 25th, 2011*

*Time - After Divine Liturgy*

*(12:10 to 1:00 p.m.)*

*\*Lunch will be provided\**

## NEW ALTAR SERVERS WELCOME!

*For More Information, Contact us at  
[StDemetriosToronto@gmail.com](mailto:StDemetriosToronto@gmail.com)*

*"Serve the Lord with Awe and Rejoice!" (Psalm 2:11)*



### WHAT DOES JESUS SAY... ABOUT SALVATION?

"No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."

~ John 3:13-17

\*\* This is the Gospel of the Sunday Before the Exaltation of the Holy Cross





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

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YOUR INBOX? E-MAIL US!**

**[STDEMETRIOS.TORONTO](mailto:STDEMETRIOS.TORONTO)**

**[@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. Our Church is a constituent member of the Greek Community of Toronto [[www.greekcommunity.org](http://www.greekcommunity.org)] and under the spiritual jurisdiction of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Toronto (Canada) [[www.gocanada.org](http://www.gocanada.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

Religious Education Director

Young Adult League Leaders

Parish Council President

Philoptochos President

Greek Bible Study

Re-Catechism

(English Orthodox

Discussion Group)

Rev. Fr. Konstantinos Pavlidis

Mr. Basile Polidoulis

Mrs. Vicki Vokas, Mr. Niko Sotiropoulos

Mr. Argyrios Haros

Mrs. Theodora Koutsoubou

Mr. Basile Polidoulis

Mrs. Fotini Kapsalis

Mr. John Kapsalis

Mr. Chrysostom Makropoulos

Mr. Tim Prattas

# Re-Catechism 5 The Orthodox Family



## WHERE?

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

## THE SESSIONS

**Tuesday, September 20th, 2011**

**Tuesday, October 4th, 2011**

**Tuesday, October 18th, 2011**

**Tuesday, November 1st, 2011**

**Tuesday, November 15th, 2011**

**Tuesday, November 29th, 2011**

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

*For better or worse?": Marriage Today*

*A great decision: Adoption or Abortion?*

*Mars and Venus: Communication*

*Individuals and their place in the Church:*

*Singles, Divorcees and Widows*

*Lady Gaga in a Christian House:*

*Secularism in the Orthodox Family*

*Your Spiritual Family: Worshipping together (Divine Liturgy)*

## COME AND JOIN US!

*For more information, e-mail us at ...*

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