



MISSION NEWSLETTER

From the Heart of Fr. Costas

My Dearest Ones:

Spiritually, we find ourselves before Holy Week. The Church, in its wisdom, focuses our attention to the last days of our Savior on earth. Seventy-five committed individuals in our small but dynamic Mission, and hopefully others I do not know about, have seriously pledged to follow Christ much more closely during Holy Week. They are fasting, praying and attending more services than any other time in the past. They are beginning to feel the power, inspiration and rewards that derive from having a closer relationship with Christ and walking with Him.

It is not too late for the rest of you to catch this spiritual train and follow Jesus' footsteps during the most painful days of His earthly life. He must have felt extremely lonely and forgotten then. Its time for us to share His last thoughts, experiences, and above all, the depth of His suffering. We must crucify our own passions, weaknesses and sins in general, so that we may ALL be resurrected with Him into a NEW LIFE away from sin, hatred, pride, indifference and deeds of darkness.

As we get closer to Pascha our Good Fight is intensified. The Evil One is making all kinds of desperate attacks in order to wound us one way or another. He wants to convince us that what we are doing is not worthwhile, and

we are wasting our time. He will try to distract you, create problems for you or suggest excuses for you not to come to church, go to confession, pray, etc. But don't listen to him.

Listen to Christ, who is by far more powerful and merciful. His love for each and every one of us is tremendous. He wants to save us and He never gives up. People who carry no crosses in life are people without purpose and without real goals. So pick up your cross, what ever that cross may be, and follow Christ to Golgotha and the Resurrection. A double feeling of "Harmolype" - "Happiness and Sadness" - permeate all of Holy Week. In fact the first services of Holy Week, the Bridegroom Services, have a happy atmosphere because they are dealing with the preparation of a Heavenly Wedding and its Great Banquet. Holy Week is a time of reflection, repentance but also joyful anticipation.

This can be the most meaningful Holy Week you ever experienced, but this can only happen through your devoted efforts to be present and spiritually involved. If you do this, trust me, **YOU SHALL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.**

In His Great Love,
the happiest priest,

Fr. Costa

Steering & Operations

Committees:

REV. DR. COSTAS
CONSTANTINOU
Pastor

STEVE DAFNIS*
Chairman

IRENE BASDAKIS
Vice Chairperson
Operations

EJ CONSTANTINE*
Capital Formation and
Genesis Program Chair

GEORGIANN ELLIS
Treasurer

ANDREW KERATZIDES

MICHAEL SELBERIS*

REGGIE SELLAS

EMMANUEL SFAKIANAKIS

*Executive Committee Member

Mission Statement

"To establish a Greek Orthodox Church in South Orange County which follows, preserves and continues our timeless religious beliefs and traditions and emphasizes our Hellenic heritage, customs and values."

Please email r.henning1@juno.com with any monthly newsletter in-put suggestions by the last week of the month preceding publication.

Have the Bones of Jesus Been Found?

When the media tells us it discovered something “new” about Christ, it is best to take the information with an entire box of salt. Looking for ratings and promoting sensationalism, Hollywood is a very poor source of information about religion. The Discovery Channel recently aired a program, directed by an Israeli-born director Simcha Jacobovici, and produced by Hollywood director James Cameron, (from the film “Titanic”) about the “discovery” of the family tomb of Christ. They claim to have found the bones of Christ and his family members.

This is not a recent discovery. The tomb was found in 1980, nearly thirty years ago, and was thoroughly investigated by archeologists at the time, scientists who would have certainly linked it to Jesus if there was any real evidence to support such a claim. The names in the tomb, extremely common in first century Palestine, were similar to some found in the New Testament. They tried to make the case that this had to be the family tomb of Jesus because of the odds against so many of the same names in the New Testament also being found in this one tomb. (But think how many Georges, Marias, Constantines, Nicholases, Elenis, Panagiotises, etc. are found in any Greek community). The appearance of common names together in one tomb is hardly proof that this was the family tomb of Jesus, yet this is the only “evidence” they have. Even the statistical odds they provided were flawed, given the widespread use of those names. Among other things, the program really strains credulity when it claims that the tomb also contained the bones of Mary Magdalene, when in fact the name listed is “Mariamene e Mara,” far too dissimilar from “Mary Magdalene” to be her.

Far more important are a few other details. (1) Their tomb was four miles south of Jerusalem. We know that Christ was buried very quickly on a Friday afternoon because the Sabbath was about to begin at sunset. They would not have had the time to carry the body to a tomb four miles outside the city and bury him before sunset if he

(2) Their tomb had a large square stone wedged into the entrance of the tomb to close it. We know, on the other hand, that Jesus’ tomb had a large round stone blocking the entrance and that the stone had to be rolled away to enter the tomb. (3) The tomb for Jesus’ burial was provided by Joseph of Arimathea, a wealthy man. Jesus’ family was too poor to provide a tomb hewn out of solid rock, which was quite expensive. (4) Jesus’ family was from Galilee, not Jerusalem. If his family did have an ancestral tomb it would have been located in Galilee, about 100 miles north of Jerusalem.

But the Resurrection of Christ can be neither proven nor disproved by historical or scientific means. The greatest evidence of the Resurrection of Christ is the existence of the Church. Prior to the Resurrection, Jesus’ followers—frankly—were rather dense, inept, faithless and cowardly. But after the Resurrection they suddenly behaved like lions. They left their homes and relatives, traveled to the ends of the earth, and endured unimaginable hardships, imprisonments, beatings, deprivations. All but one died a painful death as a martyr. Why? What did they preach? One central message: Jesus Christ is the Messiah and Lord. He died but he rose from the dead, granting us all the possibility of eternal life. The apostolic preaching was important because they were eye-witnesses of the Resurrection.

Some people say that there was

no resurrection. After the death of Christ his disciples simply decided to carry on without him and preach his message. He “rose in their hearts.” But this ignores the historical fact that the most important message the apostles preached was the Resurrection of Christ. They lived and died preaching the Resurrection, not “God loves you” or “Love your neighbor,” which are not messages unique to Christianity and are certainly not messages for which one would be put to death. The first Christians went to their deaths willingly, even enthusiastically and joyfully, because they had seen Christ alive again, touched him, talked to him, ate with him and laughed with him. They experienced the reality of the Resurrection, and having experienced it could never deny it. For whom would any of us go to such extreme lengths, leave everything dear to us, suffer great hardships, and then endure a death by torture...for a lie? But it was not one, five, or even twelve people who did this, but hundreds. Christ had hundreds of followers who saw him alive after the Resurrection, not just the Twelve. Were they all deluded? Of course not. Their lives and deaths remain the greatest witness to the Truth there could ever be.

Let us all be present at Holy Week services as we join them, to witness and proclaim along with them the eternal and undeniable message of the Christian faith: **Christ is Risen!**

Presvytera Eugenia Constantinou

READERS NEEDED FOR EASTER DAY AGAPE SERVICE AT 12:00 NOON.

At this service we read the Gospel in as many languages as possible (John 20:19-25, in three parts about two verses each time). If you would be willing to read the Gospel in one of the languages below, or in another language, please see Fr. Costas. It is a beautiful service. Everyone should attend.

Homeric Greek
Classical Greek
English
American Sign Language
French
German

Announcements

Sunday School News

There will be Sunday School Retreat on Great and Holy Friday, April 6th, from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm. All children are encouraged to attend and parents are encouraged to come and help out with Pascha preparations and attend services. A Lenten luncheon will be served. Please contact Ariana Sfakianakis for questions or to sign up. Food donations are appreciated as is also parent volunteers. Please see Ariana after the Divine Liturgy or call her at (714) 879-7758. Thank you so much!

2007 Pledge Cards

A friendly reminder: If you have not filled out a pledge card for 2007, please do so. We need everyone's support and input to be able to plan our budget. Keep in mind that now that we have a full time priest our expenses have doubled. Every family and individual is a valued and important member of our parish, but in order to be counted as a member you need to fill out a pledge card. Next month's Newsletter will include the names of all the pledge members. We would be proud and grateful to include your name there! Please support our Mission.

Philoptochos News

Questions, comments or concerns? Philoptochos has a box upstairs in the Fellowship Room that you can use to relay any questions you have. Please be sure to leave your name and phone number so someone can contact you with a response or action. **Palm Sunday Luncheon and Bake Sale.** Philoptochos is sponsoring a Luncheon and Bake Sale on Palm Sunday. They would appreciate help in this community event. Anyone interested in helping should contact Irene Constantine at (949) 218-0882. We could use several bakers! **Red Egg Dye.** Tint for the dyeing of Pascha eggs will be available for purchase through the Philoptochos after the Divine Liturgy. **Dues.** Philoptochos kindly requests that all members send in their dues for this year as soon as possible. **Membership Tea.** The Membership Tea, previously scheduled for this Spring, has been moved to October. Please watch for further details. **Coffee Corner.** Philoptochos asks that each of the following groups take charge of the Coffee Hour after the Divine Liturgy:

1st Sunday: Sunday School | 2nd Sunday: Philoptochos | 3rd Sunday: Seniors Group | 4th Sunday: Parish Council | 5th Sunday: Choir or Dance

If you would like to volunteer to sponsor Coffee Hour within the group you may represent, please contact the following people or Sally Meyerhofer at (949) 388-7816 or at meyerhofer@cox.net..

Sunday School: Ariana Sfakianakis at (714) 879-7758 or asfakianakis@adelphia.net; Philoptochos: Irene Constantine at (949) 218-0882 or ireneconstantine@yahoo.com; Prime Timers: Danny Tonge at (949) 457-9524 or at mdtonge@sbcglobal.com; Parish Council: Steve Dafnis at (949) 347-9572 or sdafnis@cox.net; Choir and Dance: Robert Henning at (949) 459-6375 or r.henning1@juno.com and Tina Bertok at (949) 481-8385 or tinabertok@cox.net.

Greek Dance Group News

A mandatory Greek Dance Group Parent's Meeting has been scheduled for April 15th after the Divine Liturgy. Please make plans to attend.

Thanks for Greek Independence Day

A big THANK YOU to the Greek School Board and the teachers Mrs. Anthi Katalanos and Popie Stavroulakis for a wonderful program as well as Dance Instructors Cathi Halfhill (Dance Director) and Yeoryia Selberis (Junior Dance Director) and both dance groups for performing for us. An additional thank you to all volunteers who helped in this event.

Church Office Updates

Cell Phone. Fr. Costas' cell phone number is (949) 365-6339. Do not hesitate to call him. Father would prefer that you not leave messages on the office 800 number because it seems that we are still not receiving all of the messages. Please call him directly. **Regular Day Off.** Monday is now Fr. Costas' day off. Please refrain from calling him on that day, unless it is an emergency.

Post-Pascha Fellowship Picnic

Please reserve the date of Saturday, April 21st as GOMSOC will be having a Post-Pascha Fellowship Picnic. Details are being finalized and will be announced soon. This will be great chance to socialize and get to know each other better. Children are enthusiastically welcomed!

Committee to Name our Mission Parish

A committee is now being formed to create the selection process for the naming of our Mission Parish. Those persons interested in serving on the committee can email GOMSOC at info@gomsoc.org or speak directly with Fr. Costas.

Greek Orthodox Mission
of South Orange County
P.O. Box 1214
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92693

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
MISSION VIEJO, CA
PERMIT NO. 1324



METROPOLIS OF
SAN FRANCISCO

Sunday Liturgies:

Orthros and Bible Study	9:00 a.m.
Liturgy	10:00 a.m.

JSerra High School Chapel
26351 Junipero Serra Rd.
San Juan Capistrano

Directions: From I-5 take the Junipero Serra Road exit. Go west on Junipero Serra Road. Just past the Shell gas station on your right, make a right into the next driveway. Proceed to the north end of the property (signs are posted).

Office and Greek School: 28570 Marguerite Parkway #223
(just north of Avery Pkwy)
Mission Viejo

Telephone: (866)350-1933; Father Costas Cell Phone (949)365-6339

Website: www.gomsoc.org

Email: info@gomsoc.org