



MISSION NEWSLETTER

"Year of the Family" to be Observed in 2005 by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios has announced that 2005 will be observed as the "Year of the Family." This national campaign, which will include programs, activities, and resources for all levels of the Church in America, was officially launched at the 37th Biennial Clergy-Laity Congress held in New York City, July 25-30, 2004.

In announcing the "Year of the Family," Archbishop Demetrios stated, "Through this special emphasis on the family, our goal is both to affirm the importance of the family as a blessed gift of God and to address the specific needs of families as they try to live in a very challenging culture and world. As Orthodox Christians we know that each and every family needs to be connected to the Church, a place where true relationships with God and one another are nurtured and sustained. Thus, through this program we will be working to bring more aspects of our faith into the home and to bring more families into the Church."

The theme for the "Year of the Family" will be "Family as Church," a program that follows the biblical phrase used by the Apostle Paul, *kat'oikon ecclesia*, "the church in the home" (Romans 16:5, Colossians 4:15). In explaining the significance of the theme, Rev. Father Constantine Sitaras, coordinator of the Archdiocesan Center for Family Care, stated, "We know the early Christians met in homes for worship, teaching, and fellowship. This undoubtedly formed a unique connection between Church and Family. We hope to renew this relationship by showing families that the Church and its attributes are essential to the well-being of the family."

To assist this effort, resources for use in the home and the parish are being prepared and distributed. One resource is a table prayer guide that encourages families to pray together. Another is a brochure on establishing a home

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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."

2005 Year of the Family (continued)

iconastasion, a place for regular family and personal prayer. Parishes will receive resources for planning and conducting a monthly parish family night. Further, regional retreats and one-day family conferences will be held throughout the year to provide additional support and training. To distribute these and other resources, an extensive “Year of the Family” web site has been established at <http://www.familyaschurch.org>. Currently, the site includes introductory material for the “Year of the Family,” and more resources will be added as they are produced or made available.

The “Year of the Family” is the first initiative of the Archdiocese toward the establishment of a national center for family care. This major effort was announced by Archbishop Demetrios at the 2002 Congress in Los Angeles. Following the Congress, the Archbishop appointed a Roundtable on the Family consisting of clergy, marriage and family specialists, physicians, and other professionals. The Roundtable has met regularly over the past two years to plan and implement this national campaign.

For more information on the “Year of the Family” visit the web site at <http://www.familyaschurch.org> or contact the Center for Family Care at 845-424-8175 or by email at familycare@goarch.org.

GODPARENTING

The sponsor “anadochos” is a very important person in the baptismal service and in the life of the baptized Christian. In the early Church, the majority of persons entering the Church were adults. This means that they were able to make their own profession of faith, to reject evil and sin, and personally commit themselves to Christ. In infant baptism, which otherwise has much to commend it, this is not possible. The parents make the decision to baptize their child, thus bringing the child in to the life of redemption.

It is the Godparent, however, who rejects the devil, accepts Christ, and who makes the profession of faith on behalf of the child. It is a mistake for Godparents to think of their role as a merely social one. It is primarily religious and spiritual. The task of the Godparent does not consist simply in buying a cross and some new clothing, and participating in the service of baptism (saying the words mentioned above, anointing the child with the oil, receiving the child from the font, processing around the font, bringing the child to its first Holy Communion). All these things are merely the beginning of the responsibilities of the sponsor. For with these acts, the sponsor assumes a lifelong commitment to care for the spiritual aspects of the life of his or her Godchild.

This means several things. First, to see it, together with the parents, that the child is taught the necessary things for the living of the Christian life. This includes attendance at Church, religious education classes, and most importantly, frequent participation in the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

Godparents should also have close personal ties with their Godchildren. They should visit with them regularly, in person or by any of the many forms of communication available to us. They should remember their Godchildren on their name days, birthdays and other holidays. All this should be accompanied by loving counsel and concern in reference to the various stages of their lives with a view to the Christian formation of the Godchild. In later years, during their teens, a Godparent who has done these things during childhood years, may prove to be the only one who can influence a young person during those trying and difficult times. Finally the Godparent should include his or her Godchild in daily prayers.

February 2

The Presentation of our Lord and Saviour in the Temple



The Reading is from Luke 2:22-40

At that time, the parents brought the child Jesus up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord") and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons." Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Symeon, and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And inspired by the Spirit he came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the law, he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, "Lord, now let your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people

Israel." And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him; and Symeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is spoken against (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher; she was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years from her virginity, and as a widow till she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. And coming up at that very hour she gave thanks to God, and spoke of him to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. And when they had performed everything according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

Please join us for
Godparent/Godchild Sunday
February 6, 2005



Godchildren should attend liturgy and take communion with Godparents
10 a.m.

Growing our Church Family into 2005!

We are pleased to report that we ended 2004 with 92 pledged families and collected over \$54,000 in pledged amounts. As we reflect on all our Mission parish accomplished in 2004, we also are setting our goals for 2005 and need your help.

In his second epistle to the Corinthians St. Paul advises: "he who sows sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he who sows bountifully shall reap also bountifully"(II Corinthians 9:6). These Spirit filled words of St. Paul present the challenge which lies ahead very clearly. We are a new Orthodox Christian Community in south Orange County. It requires strong faith and serious commitment to undertake such an endeavor.

Christian Stewardship is a very simple concept and reality. Next to our Lord's Grace and love for us it is one of the most important elements of our ministry. We cannot operate unless our faith and commitment are translated into giving. We believe in Christ and in your love for Him and His work. We trust that you will not simply respond but that you will take the initiative when it comes to expressing your love for our spiritual and cultural family through giving.

Whether you are re-pledging for a second year or for the first time, we thank you very much for your support. Please feel free to use the pledge card below. Just fill out your information and mail it to Greek Orthodox Mission of South Orange County, P.O. Box 1214, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92693.

If you have any questions about Stewardship, please contact Irene Basdakis, Stewardship Chairman at (949)360-4447.

Announcements

Catechism Classes and Conference Schedule

Father John will hold a Catechism session on Wednesday, February 2nd at 7:10 p.m. Those interested in discussing and learning more about our Orthodox faith are welcome to attend. On Wednesday, February 9th, also at 7:10 p.m., Father John will meet individually with parishioners who would like time to speak with him privately. Please call the church line at (866)350-1933 to make an appointment. The Catechism class and the conferences are held at the church's office space located at 28570 Marguerite Parkway, Suite 217 in Mission Viejo (just north of the Avery/Marguerite intersection.)

Sunday School

Is It Too Late to Join the GOMSOC Sunday School? It is never too late to add value to a child's life. Our Greek Orthodox Mission will provide ethics and knowledge of our Greek Orthodox beliefs, such as, knowing Christ, understanding the Divine Liturgy, and applying our beliefs in every day life as a Greek Orthodox Christian. We have nine teachers and 61 students enrolled in Sunday school. The Preschool through Kindergarten students begin class after Holy Gospel. The other grades will participate in the Divine Liturgy and begin class after Holy Communion. We welcome new students and visitors throughout the year. If you have any questions, please contact Irene Travis at (949) 448-8946 or by email at travis-clan@sbccglobal.net.

Donation Thank You

Our Mission would like to thank the John and Melissa Harris Family for their generous donation of a new Holy Communion set. Also, thank you to the Angelos and Fotini Theodossis Family and Bravo Burgers for underwriting our new church calendar. If you haven't received a calendar, please pick one up after church near the candle stand.

Fellowship Hour- by Chrys Cutrone

It has been wonderful to see how many of you enjoy fellowship after church liturgy. It is a great time to get together with friends so that we can continue to discuss what was said during church services and share the current events of our week with others. The fellowship would not be possible if it were not for all of you who have contributed your time and efforts. Whether you were a cook or a host for that hour your efforts are much appreciated. Just to mention a few current contributors and give thanks to them personally, thank you to: EJ Constantine, Ron Madura, Kurt Travis, Irene Basdakis, Deme Lewis, Irene Constantine, Kelly Parrisis, Popi Stavroulakis, Nick and Helen Polis, Jimmy and Penny Marutsos, Bill and Irini Redmond, Mike and Michelle Selberis, Steve Dafnis, Sam and Sophia Konugres,, Georgia Selberis, Arica Dadjou and others that I have not mentioned. And please if I have overlooked you come and let me know or if you'd like to help them also come and let me know.

Thank you to Dr. Nick Yphantides for his lecture on his book "My Big Fat Greek Diet." The lecture was well attended and afterwards there was time for questions and people even got a signed book autographed by Dr. Nick. A special thanks to Irene Basdakis and John Cutrone

We are so grateful to Dena Nicholas for providing the prosphero every Sunday and her strong devotion to our church. Thanks to the Church Choir for sponsoring fellowship on January 20th. We are currently looking for a few cooks, for food donations for the last three Sundays in February and team members to help during the fellowship. Please contact me at chryscutrone@yahoo.com or at (949)295-1256 if you are interested in helping.

Greek Dance

We currently have 23 children divided into two groups. Our directors John Basdakis and Soula Petinos are having a great time teaching our children Greek dance. Classes meet after church on Sundays. We will be taking a field trip to the Greek Folk Dance Festival to be held in Ontario on February 17 through 20. Anyone interested in going should contact Michelle Selberis at (949)354-5866.

Greek School

The Greek School is excited to announce that it will sponsor the Mission's 2nd Annual Greek Independence Day Celebration on Saturday, March 19, 2005. The dinner and program will start at 6 p.m. and will be held at the San Clemente Community Center. Greek school students are busy learning their poems and patriotic songs. We look forward to hosting the entire parish at this event. Proceeds will benefit Greek School programs. For event and ticket information, call Kelly Parissis (949)249-3448 or Demetra Lewis (949)661-1938.

**Greek Orthodox Mission
of South Orange County**

P.O. Box 1214

San Juan Capistrano, CA 92693

Sunday Liturgies:

10:00 a.m.

J Serra 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 (the sign says Sycamore Commons). Proceed to the north end of the property (signs are posted).

Telephone: (866)350-1933

Website: www.gomsoc.org

Email: info@gomsoc.org