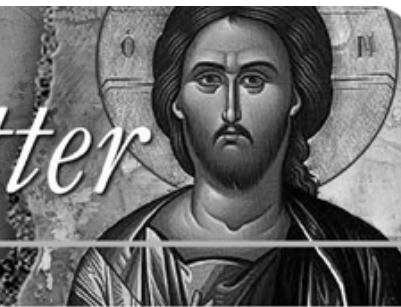


Mission Newsletter

The monthly communication of the Greek Orthodox Mission of South Orange County

March 2009 www.gomsoc.org email: info@gomsoc.org



Parish Council

REV. FR. ANDREW LESKO
Pastor

Irene Basdakis

Tina Bertok

E.J. Constantine

Steve Dafnis

Sam Konugres

Demetra Lewis

John Leon

Sally Myerhoffer

Michael Selberis

Reggie Sellas

Bob Stavrou



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF SAN FRANCISCO

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΦΡΑΓΚΙΣΚΟΥ

ENCYCLICAL FOR GREAT LENT 2009

To The Reverend Clergy, Monastics, Parish Councils, Philoptochos Societies, Choirs, Youth, and all the Faithful of the Holy Metropolis of San Francisco,

"Let us fast an acceptable fast that is pleasing to God."

Hymn of the Triodion for the First Day of Great Lent

Dearly Beloved,

With this prayer and admonition I greet you as we begin this period of fasting and Great Lent. The Church has named the first day of Lent "Pure/Clean Monday". It is expected that Lent gives us the opportunity for an inner catharsis in all things. Our thoughts, our feelings, our actions - all need cleansing having already polluted and stained our souls and our daily lives. It is the pastoral concern of the Church that we be given every opportunity, through prayer and fasting, for self-concentration and restraint, first, for the spiritual benefit of our souls and, second, for the benefit of all society which directly or indirectly we affect.

Great Lent is not simply a forty-day period in the calendar year which prepares us for the Great Feast of Pascha. Rather, it is a period which, if properly adhered to, could and should prepare us for personal inner renewal. Our Church knows the human psyche - our enthusiasm, our emotions, our passions. The Church recognizes that enthusiasm easily wanes and that feelings of remorse and repentance become nothing more than fleeting spiritual reflections. It is difficult for man to restrain his passions which persistently weaken his capacity for spiritual growth. This is what Christ had in mind when in speaking to His disciples said, "This generation will not pass but through the power of prayer and fasting." This is the true meaning of Lent.

Our Church offers us these two antidotes to the power of evil, with the belief that only through continuous and consistent prayer and fasting we can regain our inner spiritual qualities. It is these qualities which protect us from further failings and prevent evil from dominating our lives. Through prayer we are taught that the hand of God can guide us in our earthly journey. We are accountable to Him on how we live our lives. By fasting we are given the potential to conquer our desires, and weaknesses and the capacity for self-discipline. Even from a negative viewpoint, when we realize how little we fast and pray, there is much benefit and much to be learned. It is easy for us to use common excuses of our daily pressures at home and at work. But when will we cease using these rationalizations which in the final analysis are mistakes committed against our own spiritual welfare? There are no substitutes for prayer and fasting. Fasting is not simply a denial from certain foods. It is a response to the cravings of the flesh; it is our only opportunity to subordinate our weaknesses and passions to the will of God within us.

It is for this reason that I began this letter with the exhortation that "our fasting be pleasing to the Lord". Let us then focus our attention so that our fasting is acceptable in the eyes of God. Let this period of Great Lent renew within us the essence of our responsibility and task so that we may, with the help of God, attain the salvation of our souls.

With my warmest prayers for a most meaningful period of prayer and fasting, I greet you in the Lord and remain,

With Love in Christ,

✠GERASIMOS

Metropolitan of San Francisco



Our 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 David Derks at dderks1707@aol.com with any monthly newsletter items

Mission Newsletter

March 2009 www.gomsoc.org email: info@gomsoc.org

At-A-Glance: Upcoming Events

Saturday, March 7

Altar Boy Retreat

St. Nicholas Greek OC
Northridge

9501 Balboa Boulevard
Northridge, CA 91325

Sunday, March 15

God Parent

Sunday/Youth Sermon

10am – 12pm

JSerra High School

Ladies Auxiliary Meet and Greet

12pm – 1pm

JSerra High School

Sunday March 8

Sunday of Orthodoxy

Sunday, March 15

Godparent Sunday

Youth Sermon

Ladies Auxiliary

General Meeting

Sunday, March 22

Sunday of the Holy

Cross

Sunday, April 12

Palm Sunday

April 13-18

Holy Week

Friday, April 17

Youth Retreat

April 19

Holy Pascha – Easter (No Sunday School)

For more information
on upcoming events,
visit our official website
at www.gomsoc.org
and go to the Calendar
page.

Prime Timers offer active support, camaraderie at GOMSOC

Our senior group *Prime Timers* gathers informally at different restaurants on the first Thursday of every month to enjoy good food and great company. They also provide active support for church functions, such as coordinating Christmas parties and building stands to display icons of the iconostasis.



Donation of Icon

On January 25, the Prime Timers donated an icon of the Pantokrator (The Almighty) to the Mission at the General Assembly meeting. Fr. Andrew Lesko received the icon on behalf of the Mission. The group had commissioned the item from the monks of the Holy Transfiguration Monastery in

Brookline, Massachusetts, the 24" x 22" icon. The finished icon is beautifully rendered and mounted on wood. It will be displayed in the traditional location behind the altar.

Monthly Mixers

The next monthly meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 5 at the Greek Town Grill, located at 279 East 17th Street in Costa Mesa. Their phone number is (949) 515-2788. For more information, visit www.gomsoc.org and go to the Organizations page, or contact Danny Tonge at (949) 457-9524.

In the spotlight: Greek dance groups rise to occasion at FDF

Our two dance groups *Methorios*, comprised of our older dancers, and *Helidonia*, a group made up of our younger dancers had a very successful weekend at the recent FDF Competition in Ontario, CA.

Diakonia

FDF required all participating dance groups to serve their communities with diakonia, or community service. Supervised by Cathy Halfhill, the dance groups sent Christmas cards to our American troops serving abroad, and received recognition from the board at FDF. Under the supervision of Tina Bertok, the dance groups also performed their programs at the Silverado Assisted Living facility in San Juan Capistrano.

FDF

To prepare for the competition, the groups practiced their dance routines 2-3 times a week. *Methorios* worked hard to perfect their Thracian dancing, and added Island dancing to enhance

their program. This was a big step for the dance troupe, as they had to learn new intricate dance moves. New costumes were prepared to add authenticity. *Helidonia* also rose to the occasion and increased the difficulty and polish of their routines. The younger Primary Division was very competitive this year, and our dancers hung in there with great enthusiasm and skill.

Memorial Scholarship

The FDF Memorial Scholarships are given to outstanding individuals who are recommended by their parish priest. Each individual is awarded a US Savings Bonds in the amount of \$1000. This season, Constantina Konugres received the Cynthia Anderson Memorial Scholarship Award!

2010 Dance Season

We will be starting a new group of young dancers that will begin to dance after Pascha on a weekly basis, with the intention of participating in the exhibition group (Division III) at FDF 2010. For more information please contact Chrys Cutrone at (949)295-1256 or via email at chriscutrone@yahoo.com.

Second Annual Pan-Orthodox Hierarchical Divine Liturgy for the Sunday of Orthodoxy and Youth Rally

All junior high and senior high young people (grades 6 to 12) are invited to attend together with their parents on March 8, 2009 at St. Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Cathedral in Los Angeles.

The theme of the youth rally is "Being an Orthodox Christian today: Christians are not Born, They're Built!" During the youth rally in the Church, the parents and other adults will remain in the Church hall for a panel discussion with our four or five bishops. We encourage the youth and their parents to come for a glorious celebration of the holy Orthodox faith.

We ask each of our young people to bring an icon so that they may take part in the Sunday of Orthodoxy procession this year together with the clergy. A free luncheon will follow right after the Divine Liturgy in the Church hall for everyone in attendance. After lunch the youth will proceed to the Church for the Youth Rally to be led by Deacon Niko Bekris, Director of Youth and Family Ministries of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco.

For more information on this event, please contact Sophia Konugres at 949-678-3606 or via email at sophia.konugres@dawsondawsoninc.com. For an event flyer, visit www.gomsoc.org and go to the Announcements page.

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!"

2 Corinthians 5:17



Sunday School accepting new students



We welcome all children, preschool through high school, to join us every Sunday. Students will learn the Old and New Testament, understand the Divine Liturgy, and learn about the Feast Days through the guidance of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.

Mark Your Calendar for these important events:

- March 1: Godparent/Godchild Sunday
- March 8: Sunday of Orthodoxy, bring an icon to church for the procession
- March 15: Youth Sermon

For more information, contact Irene Travis at (949) 448-8946 or via email at travisclan@sbcglobal.net, or Ariana Sfakianakis at (714) 879-7758. You can also visit the religious education Web page at www.gomsoc.org/education.htm.

Greek School News

New students are being accepted for our wonderful Greek School program, which includes all age groups from preschool through high school. For more information contact Mia Domingot via email at mdomingot@cox.net or Kelly Parissis at (949) 249-3448.

Young Adult League YAL News

YAL ages (18-40) meet often for fellowship and activities. Meeting dates alternate between the 3rd Sunday and the 3rd Monday of each month. Join them at their monthly meeting and gathering. For more information contact Joanna Xipa at jxipa@yahoo.com. Our community thanks Sophia Kollias for her terrific job as YAL President from our community's inception.

Notes from the Choir

If you like to sing or would like to learn how to sing, consider joining the choir. It is an important and meaningful way to worship and participate in the ministry of the Church. For more information contact Sophia Konugres at (949) 678-3606 or via email at sophia.konugres@dawsondawsoninc.com

Ladies Auxiliary

We had a very successful luncheon and general meeting on February 8. We thank you all for participating! Our next general meeting is scheduled for March 15 after Liturgy in Room 222. Please plan on attending, as it's a great time to get involved in our very important Pascha preparations for our Mission.

For more information, contact Maria Madura at (949) 443-3665 or via email at mmadura3@cox.net



Adult Greek dance classes being offered

Adult fun Greek dance lessons for ages 17 and older are a four-week class designed for just beginners. Classes are fun, dynamic, at times challenging, very rewarding, and a great social opportunity. Upcoming

classes are currently scheduled for March 4, March 11 and March 18.

For more information, contact John Basdakos at 714-813-2158 or email him at john@msn4loans.com.

GOYA News

If you have a teenager at home (12-17 years old) we would like to welcome them into our GOYA. Contact Sophia Konugres (949) 678-3606 or sophia.konugres@dawsondawsoninc.com



The Lenten Season

As the Lenten season draws near, we will begin preparations for the most important feast day in Christian Orthodoxy. Early on Holy Friday morning, parishioners get together and decorate the Epitaphios (also known as the Tomb of Christ) with beautiful flowers, preparing it for the afternoon service of the Apokathlosis (when the priest takes the body of Christ down from the cross, wraps it in a white linen cloth and places it in the Altar).

To continue this church tradition, we are asking for donations of any amount, large or small, for the flowers that will adorn the Epitaphios. Envelopes for this project are available on Sunday in the Narthex. More information on this and Lenten events and services will be available on our website at www.gomsoc.org.

**Greek Orthodox Mission
of South Orange County**

P.O. Box 1214
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92693

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**METROPOLIS OF
SAN FRANCISCO**



Greek Orthodox Mission of South Orange County

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

Website: www.gomsoc.org

Sunday Liturgies

Orthros (Matins) 8:45 a.m.
Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

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, Mission Viejo (just north of Avery Pkwy)

Memorials

If you are planning a memorial service for a loved one, please call Fr. Andrew at (909) 224-5046 to arrange for your family's memorial. To sponsor a Coffee Hour on your memorial Sunday, please coordinate with Joanna Giangardella at (949) 492-2465 or via email at joannasonya@aol.com to sponsor a Coffee Hour.