



MISSION NEWSLETTER

PASTOR'S MESSAGE:

ONE YEAR LATER

My dear brothers and sisters in the Lord:

The end of the month of February marked a very important milestone in my priestly life and in the life of our Greek Orthodox Mission in South Orange County. It was February the 29th 2004, Sunday of Orthodoxy, when, by the providence of God and the blessing of his Eminence Metropolitan Anthony of blessed memory, I celebrated my first Divine Liturgy at the Mission as your first assigned priest..

During these twelve months I had the privilege of becoming your friend and pastor. I saw you grow and I grew with you. Christ came in our midst every Sunday through the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist, we praised Him in unison led by a newly born choir and our children were taught the tenets of the Faith by a very dedicated Sunday School staff. Some even wore Altar robes for the first time. Babies were baptized and adults were catechized and received in the Orthodox Church through the Sacrament of Holy Chrism. We even had the Sacrament of marriage celebrated for one of our young couples. Folk dance and language classes relevant to our heritage were established. I had the opportunity to minister to many of you through personal meetings and many homes were blessed during the Epiphany season.

What was only a noble idea and a dream a few months before became a reality by God's Grace and by your precious faith in Him and His Church. We have laid the foundation and we have set the mode. We are still infants but the prospect of growth is so attractive and challenging. I pray that the Lord will bless the labor of our hands.

March the 14th is Clean Monday, the beginning of Great Lent in preparation for Holy Week and Pascha (May 1st). This is a season (Tessarakosti) of repentance and forgiveness aided by the great virtue of fasting. We are required to fast from all meats and animal products as well as fish from Clean Monday to Pascha (Easter). The consumption of fish is permitted on March the 25th (Annunciation) and Palm Sunday. Some believe that this is impossible; others are concerned about special medical conditions and so on.

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Steering Committee:

FATHER JOHN KARIOTAKIS
Pastor

MICHAEL SELBERIS
Chairman

STEVE DAFNIS
Vice Chairman

JOE NOLLAR
Finance Chairman

IRENE BASDAKIS
Stewardship Chair

CHRYSOULA CUTRONE
Events Chair

EJ. CONSTANTINE
Capital Formation and
Genesis Program Chair

DEMETRA LEWIS
Communications Chair

GEORGIANN ELLIS
Treasurer

RON MADURA
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.”

Pastor's Message (cont'd)

Brothers and sisters my advice for you is to keep the fast to the best of your ability. Approach the fast as a life changing experience in which our spirit is in control over our material needs and habits. Do not reduce this true virtue to a mere formalistic and legalistic formula. Rather employ it to practice patience, self-control, humility, repentance, forgiveness and love.

Finally, on behalf of all of us at the Mission, I express our gratitude to the All Merciful Lord for His Providence in the appointment of His Eminence our new Metropolitan Bishop Gerasimos. You will read more about our new Metropolitan in other parts of this newsletter. I join all of you in welcoming His Eminence and I proclaim with you: AXIOS

May we all have a blessed and rewarding Great Lent. KALI SARAKOSTI.

In Christ the Lord,
Fr. John

Chairman's Update

Dear Friends,

I hope and pray that this newsletter finds you and your loved ones in good health and doing well. The new year has gotten off to a great and successful start. In the coming weeks begins our wonderful journey towards Christ's Resurrection we know and cherish as Great Lent and Holy Week.

Our steering committee is hard at work preparing to provide our parish with a great number of Lenten and Holy Week services this year. I hope that all of you have the opportunity to experience Christ's love for us by attending as many of these services as possible

Anyone attending recent Sunday Liturgies cannot help but notice that the chapel is filling to capacity on a regular basis. While this is a great blessing, we also recognize that it will not be long before we outgrow our current facilities. To address this issue, our steering committee has begun looking into other options to insure that we continue to meet our growing needs. We will keep you posted as progress is made.

While we have achieved a great deal of very early success in what is a lifelong commitment, I wish to remind everyone that we are still a mission parish and literally still in our infancy. We have been able to provide many of the services of an established parish, but still do not have a full time priest or a full time facility. Our near term focus will require that we address these issues.

With Great Lent upon us, I ask that you please look for ways that you can offer your time and talents and become greater involved in our parish life. If you have any questions, concerns, or wish to volunteer your services, please feel free to share your thoughts with me or any member of the Steering Committee. Remember, we are growing a church family together!

In Christ,
Michael Selberis

March 25

Annunciation to the Theotokos



The Reading is from Luke 1:24-38

In those days, Elizabeth the wife of Zacharias conceived and for five months she hid herself, saying, "Thus the Lord had done to me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men."

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Hail, O favored one, the Lord is with you! But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end."

And Mary said to the angel, "How shall this be, since I have no husband?" And the angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, your kinswoman Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible." And Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Enthronement of the new Metropolitan Gerasimos to take place on Saturday, April 2, 2005 in San Francisco



On February 22, 2005, His Eminence GERASIMOS, formerly Bishop of Krateia, was elected as Metropolitan of San Francisco by the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate which was assembled in Constantinople.

Metropolitan Gerasimos was born on August 2, 1945, in Kalamata Greece. He graduated with a Masters of Divinity degree from Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, Massachusetts, with high distinction in 1976. On December 16, 1979, he was ordained to the diaconate by His Grace Bishop Anthimos, and appointed Archdeacon to Archbishop Iakovos, a position he held until 1996. During that time and afterward, he served as Dean of Students, Director of the Office of Student Life, and Director of the Office of Admissions and Records at Hellenic College and Holy Cross School of Theology. Metropolitan Gerasimos received his Ph.D. in counseling psychology from Boston College in 1993. In 2002, he was elected Bishop of Krateia by the Patriarchate of Constantinople. He was ordained to the priesthood on February 2, 2002, by His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios, and to the episcopacy on February 9, 2002, by His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, with His Eminence Archbishop Iakovos and twelve other hierarchs concelebrating. After this, he was appointed Chief Secretary of the Holy Eparchial Synod of the Archdiocese. His Eminence's Enthronement will take place on Saturday, April 2, 2005 in San Francisco.

UPCOMING SERVICES AND HOLY DAYS

With Great Lent beginning on Monday, March 14th, several additional services will be held at the Chapel:

Salutations to the Virgin Mary (Heretismi): held on Friday evenings during Great Lent, begin Friday, March 18th at 7 p.m. Salutations will continue on April 1st and April 15th. Please note no Salutations on April 8th due to Chapel unavailability or March 25th because it is the Annunciation and we will be having morning liturgy that day.

Saturday of the Souls (Psihosavato): March 19th Liturgy at 10 a.m. The faithful bring kolyva and lists of names of friends and family members who have reposed in the faith. The names will be read by Father John during the Memorial Service (see enclosed form to submit names).

Sunday of Orthodoxy: March 20th: immediately following liturgy, a special procession of icons carried by the Sunday School children commemorating the return of icons to the Greek Orthodox Church will be held.

Annunciation to the Theotokos: Friday, March 25th Divine Liturgy at 10 a.m.

Sunday of the Holy Cross: Sunday, April 3rd: parishioners will receive a flower following a commemoration of the cross

We are planning services for every day during Holy Week. Several services during Holy Week will be held in the large center room at JSerra High School so that a larger congregation can be accommodated. A special Holy Week pamphlet will be included in the April Mission Newsletter detailing these services.

GOYA UPDATE

By Tina and Anna Nicole Kyrtisis, Advisors

Greetings in the Lord GOYA members! We were very excited to meet with all of you at our very first GOMSOC GOYA meeting! Considering our first gathering was mainly constructed of getting to know one another and electing officers, at our next meeting, we would like to carry on with our first topic of discussion: *Private & Corporate Prayer-How to Pray*. We will also begin a discussion on preparing ourselves for Great Lent. Don't forget to bring your personalized prayer journals to the next meeting, March 11, 2005 at 7pm. We look forward to seeing you and please don't hesitate to email us any questions you might have.

Congratulations to the new 2005 GOMSOC GOYA officers:

President: Nicholas Dadjou
Vice-President: Meredith Meyerhofer
Secretary: Yeoryia Selberis
Treasurer: Alex Dadjou
Historian: Meredith Meyerhofer
Sargeant at Arms: Nicholas Pantelides

If you missed the first meeting, don't worry! Join us for the March meeting. GOYA is open to all youths ages 12-18. For more information, please contact us at ucdgreega2@aol.com, or tinaikee@aol.com.

Announcements

Conference Schedule

On Wednesday, March 9th 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 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.)

Flower Donations Needed

We are currently seeking monetary donations or donation of flowers to cover the flowers necessary to decorate icons during Holy Week, the epitafio, carnations to pass out on Sunday of the Cross and Lilies for the Resurrection Service. This is a nice way to commemorate a deceased loved one or honor a special relative/person. Please contact Michelle Selberis at (949) 364-5866 or Georgiann Ellis at (949)388-5850, if you would like to help out.

Seamstress/Tailor Assistance

The altar boy robes recently donated to the Mission need to be mended and/or repaired. Anyone who can sew and would be willing to work on the robes should call Georgiann Ellis at (949)388-5850.

Sunday School

On March 20th, the Sunday of Orthodoxy, each Sunday School student should bring an icon from home. We will then have a procession in the church carrying the icons immediately after Liturgy. As a reminder, the preschool through kindergarten children begin class after Holy Gospel. The other grades will participate in the Divine Liturgy and begin class after Holy Communion.

Donation Thank Yous

We would like to thank the Bill and Erini Redmond Family for helping to cover the cost of the cabinets recently placed at JSerra High School to store our liturgical items. The donation was greatly appreciated.

Greek Dance and Greek School

The Greek School children are busy learning their patriotic poems and songs in preparation for the Greek Independence Day Celebration on March 19th- see enclosed event flier for details. Our Greek dance groups are also practicing to perform an exhibition at this event. We look forward to hosting the entire parish at this event. Proceeds will benefit Greek School programs.

Sunday Bulletins

Thank you to Robert Henning who has volunteered to organize and publish the Mission's Sunday Bulletin twice a month. Our Sunday Bulletin will help parishioners stay informed in between newsletters. If you have any information you would like to include in the Sunday Bulletin, call Robert Henning at (949)459-6375 or email him at r.henning1@juno.com.

Do we have your current e-mail address?

Although we try to avoid last minute changes of scheduled church services or activities, they sometimes do occur. E-mail is the most cost-effective way of quickly notifying parishioners of those changes. If you would like to receive e-mail updates and notifications from the Mission or to update an already provided address, please e-mail Robert Henning at r.henning1@juno.com and let him know your current e-mail address. E-mail addresses are confidential and not passed along to anyone else. Thank you!

**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