



# MISSION NEWS-

## FROM THE HEART OF FATHER COSTAS

My dearest ones,

Presvytera Eugenia, Christopher and I are delighted to be here with you and play hopefully a significant role in your spiritual lives and those of your (grand) children.

September is one of the most important months for our Church, because the new ecclesiastical year begins, full of famous saints' feast days. It's also the time when Sunday School, Greek School and Bible class begin.

I welcome all of you and yours for an exciting year, full of learning and spiritual and social activities, and getting to know one another. Nowadays, all values are disappearing fast. People who seem to be important, great and popular, often prove to be fake, immoral, empty, and people of darkness, without any good content. They are completely taken over by their passions and headed toward the abyss of destruction, thus polluting our society with their filthy acts.

At the same time, many of our youths in this country and elsewhere, are also headed toward self-destruction by indulging themselves in drugs, alcohol, sex and other sinful and self-destructive pursuits. Very few are those who constantly walk forward with strong faith, high goals, certainty, optimism and hope for a better tomorrow. Our saints are the exact opposite to the many: they were extremely ethical, brave and spiritual giants. These holy people are the ones to teach us, inspire us and enthuse us with their Christian lives, their God-like deeds and their clean thoughts.

Only within the Gospel, explained by the Fathers of the Church can be found the absolute truth which satisfies our spiritual hunger, quenches our thirst and strengthens the wings of our souls, because it contains the words of The Truth, who is Christ our Lord.

Please, make it a priority to get closer to the Lord and His Church this year by being present at all church activities. I was enthused to read your Mission Statement about our ethnic traditions and cultural goals and I fully agree with you. Together we shall work against the spiritual and cultural erosion which threatens to destroy everything holy and respectable, and go forward and upwards in every level to reach excellence and perfection.

I am looking forward to the beautiful times we will have together in this new page of our community's history. Let this be the beginning of a golden chapter which we will write together, with the help and grace of God.

With much enthusiasm,

### Steering & Operations Committees:

REV. DR. COSTAS CONSTANTINOU  
Pastor

STEVE DAFNIS\*  
Chairman

IRENE BASDAKIS  
Vice Chairperson  
Operations

EJ CONSTANTINE\*  
Capital Formation and  
Genesis Program Chair

DEMETRA LEWIS\*  
Stewardship Chair

JOE NOLLAR  
Finance Chairman

CHRYSOULA CUTRONE  
Events Chair

GEORGIANN ELLIS  
Treasurer

MICHAEL SELBERIS\*  
Member

RON MADURA  
Member

\*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

## Chairman's Message

September 1, 2006 marks a new chapter in the growth of our very young mission. On this date, Fr. Costas Constati-nou will officially begin his service with our mission. This occasion will mark our initial life with a full-time priest.

For those of you that were not with us at the inception of our mission, here is a brief history. Approximately, three years ago we began our mission with bimonthly Saturday services in Aliso Viejo. Because of the shortage of priests in the area, St. Katherine's Father Michael Coury and Fr. Fred Fotion alternatively held these services. At this time, it was unknown how much interest existed for the establishment of a new church in South Orange County. These services were well attended and soon thereafter our mission was very blessed to have been assigned Fr. John Kario-takis from St. Spyridon. Fr. John's commitment to serve our mission on a part time basis coupled with our limited funds made for a beautiful match. We could not have planned it any better.

Over the last several months, the Steering Committee contemplated the need for a full time priest and also the need for a permanent facility. Since doing both simultaneously was not economically feasible, we decided that the pres-ence and services of a full time priest would help us leverage the growth of our community more so than a facility. The issue became how could our small mission expect to get assigned a full time priest while there exists a current shortage of priests in the area. Please note to date that the Long Beach and Pasadena churches are without permanent priests. Additionally, both San Diego churches are experiencing retirement from their priests.

Even with all the referenced priest shortages, the Metropolis has blessed our mission by assigning Fr. Costas as our mission's full time priest. Fr. Costas has informed the Steering Committee that he intends to meet each and every one of us at the mission. Soon everyone will have the opportunity to meet and get to know Fr. Costas.

For a brief background, Fr. Costas was born in Cyprus. He is married to Presvytera Eugenia (Jeannie) and they have a 15 year old son, Christopher. Fr. Costas was ordained in 1979 and has served in various parishes including St. Demetrios in Camarillo, St. Spyridon in San Diego, St. Demetrios in NY and the last two years at the mission parish of St. Andrew the Apostle in San Luis Obispo. Fr. Costas is a Doctor of Theology, having received a Ph.D with high honors from the Aristotelian University of Thessalonike. Presvytera Jeannie is a San Diego native. She is currently working on her dissertation towards a Doctorate in Theology at the University of San Diego.

As we gain Fr. Costas and Presvytera Eugenia, we are sadly losing Father John. We thank Fr. John for his spiritual guidance, love, support and commitment he has given to our mission and to each and every one of us. Father John's essence has allowed the mission to grow to where we are today. He will be greatly missed and will always be a part of our family.

On Sunday, September 3, please join me in welcoming Fr. Costa and his family to our mission. This is a very excit-

## Angels, Angels, Angels

During Fr. Theophilos' recent pastoral visit on 20 August, his sermon was about angels. This sermon serves as inspira-tion for the following. The Angelic Ranks are divided into three Hierarchies: highest, middle, and lowest.

**The Highest Hierarchy includes: The Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones.**

The six-winged SERAPHIM (Flaming, Fiery) (Is 6:12) stand closest of all to the Most Holy Trinity. They blaze with love for God and kindle such love in others; the many-eyed CHERUBIM (outpouring of wisdom, enlightenment) (Gen 3:24) stand before the Lord after the Seraphim. They are radiant with the light of knowledge of God, and knowledge of the mysteries of God. Through them wisdom is poured forth, and people's minds are enlightened so they may know God and behold His glory; the THRONES (Col 1:16) stand after the Cherubim, mysteriously and incomprehensibly bearing God through the grace given them for their service. They are ministers of God's justice, giving to tribunals, kings, etc. the capacity for righteous judgment.

(Continued on page 3)

## September 14 - The Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross



Saint Helen, mother of Saint Constantine the Great, when she was already advanced in years, undertook, in her great piety, the hardships of a journey to Jerusalem in search of the Cross, about the year 325. A temple to Aphrodite had raised up by the Emperor Hadrian on Golgotha, to defile and cover to oblivion the place where the saving Passion had been suffered. The venerable Helen had the statue of Aphrodite destroyed, and the earth removed, revealing the Tomb of our Lord, and three crosses. Of these, it was believed that one must be that of our Lord, the other of the two thieves crucified with Him; but Saint Helen was at a loss which one might be the Wood of our salvation. At the inspiration of Saint Macarius, Archbishop of Jerusalem, a lady of Jerusalem, who was already at the point of death from a certain disease, was brought to touch the crosses, and as soon as she came near to the Cross of our Lord, she was made perfectly whole. Consequently the precious Cross was lifted on high by Archbishop Macarius of Jerusalem; as he stood on the ambo, and when the people beheld it, they cried out, "Lord have mercy." It should be noted that after its discovery, a portion of the venerable Cross was taken to Constantinople as a blessing. The rest was left in Jerusalem in the magnificent church built by Saint Helen, until the year 614. At that time the Persians plundered Palestine and took the Cross to their own country (See Jan 22, Saint Anastasius the Persian). Later, in the year 628, Emperor Heraclius set out on a military campaign, retrieved the Cross, and after bringing it to Con-

(Angels, Angels, Angels Continued from page 2)

### **The Middle Hierarchy consists of three Ranks: Dominions, Powers, and Authorities.**

**DOMINIONS** (Col 1:16) hold dominion over the angels subject to them. They instruct the earthly authorities, established by God, to rule wisely, and to govern their lands well. The Dominions teach us to subdue sinful impulses, to subject the flesh to the spirit, to master our will, and to conquer temptation; **POWERS** (1 Pet 3:22) fulfill the will of God without hesitation. They work great miracles and give the grace of wonderworking and clairvoyance to Saints pleasing to God. The Powers assist people in fulfilling obedience. They also encourage them to be patient, and give them spiritual strength and fortitude; **AUTHORITIES** (1 Pet 3:22, Col 1:16) have authority over the devil. They protect people from demonic temptations, and prevent demons from harming people as they would wish. They also uphold ascetics and guard them, helping people in the struggle with evil thoughts.

### **The Lowest Hierarchy includes: Principalities, Archangels, and Angels.**

**PRINCIPALITIES** (Col 1:16) have command over the lower angels, instructing them in the fulfilling of God's commands. They watch over the world and protect lands, nations and peoples. Principalities instruct people to render proper honor to those in authority, as befits their station. They teach those in authority to use their position, not for personal glory and gain, but to honor God, and to spread work of Him, for the benefit of those under them; **ARCHANGELS** (1 Thess 4:16) are messengers of great and wondrous tidings. They reveal prophecies and the mysteries of the faith. They enlighten people to know and understand the will of God, they spread faith in God among the people, illuminating their minds with the light of the Holy Gospel; **ANGELS** (1 Pet 3:22) are the lowest rank of the heavenly hierarchy, and closest to the people. They reveal prophecies and the mysteries of God and His intentions, guiding people to virtuous and holy life. They support those who remain steadfast, and they raise up the fallen. They never abandon us and they are always prepared to help us, if we desire it.

Although all the Ranks of the Heavenly Powers are called angels, each has its own name and position by virtue of their service. The Lord reveals His will to the highest ranks of angels, and they in turn inform the others.

Courtesy of Fr. Simon Thomas, St. Barbara's Greek Orthodox Church, Santa Barbara, California

## A SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF FR. COSTAS

Rev. Dr. Costas Constantinou was born in 1948 on the island of Cyprus, in the village of Anarita, district of Paphos, the oldest of four children. His father, Christos, was a policeman, and his mother, Sophia tended the home. For as long as he could remember, Costas wanted to be a priest. His grandmother, Athena, was a strong influence on him in this direction. When Costas was 17 years old the family immigrated to Toronto, Canada where Costas finished high school. He then attended Hellenic College and graduated magna cum laude as a quadruple major in Greek Studies, American Literature, Byzantine History, and Pre-Theology. He then continued to pursue graduate studies at the Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki, receiving his degree in 1973 with high honors. Costas returned to Toronto, where he worked as an accountant for the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, and served as the Youth Director for the Diocese of Canada while awaiting ordination. His brother, Tryfon, was living in Quebec City at the time, and Costas decided to join him there and pursue doctoral studies. He taught himself French and enrolled in Université Laval where he studied Patristics and Christology. He completed his coursework and much of his research but did not complete his dissertation at that time.

While a Ph.D. student at Laval, he met Eugenia Scarvelis of San Diego and they were married on July 15, 1979. He was ordained to the diaconate by then-Bishop Anthony on December 2, 1979 at the church of St. Barbara in Santa Barbara, and to the priesthood one week later on December 9<sup>th</sup> at St. Spyridon Church in San Diego. He was immediately assigned to serve as the assistant priest, at the Annunciation Church, in Sacramento, California.

In March 1981, Bishop Anthony assigned Fr. Costas to the parish of St. Demetrios in Camarillo, where he served for six years. In February of 1987 he was assigned to the parish of St. Spyridon in San Diego, which he served for five and a half years. He had come to regret not completing the Ph.D. which he had begun at Laval. Then Bishop Methodios invited him to finish his studies in the Boston area near the libraries he needed for the task, especially Harvard University and Hellenic College/Holy Cross. Fr. Costas and Presvytera decided to move to Massachusetts with their son, Christopher, who had been born the year earlier in San Diego. Fr. Costas served the parish of Dormition of the Virgin Mary, in Somerville, Massachusetts, on the border of Cambridge, Massachusetts, for eight years. While there he became a Doctor of Theology, receiving his Ph.D. with high honors from the Aristoteleion University of Thessalonike, after successfully defending thesis: "Life and Work of Theodore, Bishop of Mopsuestia". Soon after, he was assigned by the Archdiocese to serve as the pastor of St. Demetrios parish in Merrick, New York.

In 2002, the family decided to return to San Diego, where Fr. Costas entered a chaplaincy program and worked with drug addicts, the homeless and hospice patients. He also taught at the University of San Diego. In September of 2003, Metropolitan Anthony assigned Father Costas to the mission parish of St. Andrew the Apostle in San Luis Obispo. There he almost quadrupled membership from 19 to over 70 families and bought a new Church, five times larger than the one which had been built by the parishioners. He then spearheaded a fundraiser, raising over a hundred thousand dollars for the new Church in a very short time.

During his priestly career, Father Costas has also served as a member of the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees for Hellenic College/Holy Cross, and also as a member of the Archdiocesan Missions Committee and the Archdiocese Charter Committee. He has also been active in Greek education, heading the Greek Education Commission for the Diocese of Boston and serving as the Chair of Greek Education for the Diocese of San Francisco. He has also been the representative of Boston Diocese to the Archdiocese Presbyter's Council and President of San Diego Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood Association.

Support your Mission Parish! There is so much that needs to be done and willing, helping hands are needed. Please look into your heart and see if there isn't something that you can do to help carry



## **Orthodox Marriage Encounter Weekend**

*November 3-5, 2006*

St. Nicholas Ranch and Retreat Center, near Fresno, CA

*Orthodox Marriage Encounter offers a weekend experience designed to give married couples the opportunity to learn a technique of loving communication that they can use for the rest of their lives. It's a chance for couples to look deeply into their relationship with each other and with God. It's a time for them to share their feelings, hopes and dreams with each other.*

*The emphasis of the Marriage Encounter weekend is on the communication between husband and wife. The weekend provides an environment for couples to spend time together, away from the distractions and tensions of everyday life, while encouraging them to focus on each other and their relationship.*

*It's not a retreat, marriage clinic, group sensitivity, or a substitute for counseling. It's a unique approach aimed at revitalizing Marriage.*

*This is a time for you and your spouse to be alone together, to rediscover each other and together focus on your relationship for an entire weekend. Every marriage deserves this kind of attention!*

For further information please call Fr. John ♥ Elaine Alexandres 661-945-1212 or Fr. Jim ♥ Donna Pappas 559-454-1243 or visit our website at [www.orthodoxmarriageencounter.org](http://www.orthodoxmarriageencounter.org)

# Appreciation Luncheon in Honor of Fr. John and to Welcome Fr. Costas

**Date: Sunday, September 24, 2006**

**Time: After Liturgy**

**Location: El Adobe Restaurant  
31891 Camino Capistrano, SJC**

**\$25 per adult**

**\$12.50 for children 5-10 years**

**Children under 5 Free**

**RSVP at church, by phone or e-mail no later than  
September 18, 2006**

**Sally Meyerhofer at 949-388-7816 or Meyerhofer@cox.net**

**Checks are to be mailed to:**

**Sally Meyerhofer**

**109 Via Presa**

**San Clemente, CA 92672**

## **Announcements**

### **Sunday School News**

Here we are at the beginning of a new ecclesiastical year and the start of a new Sunday School session. The Sunday School staff and Co-Directors Ariana Sfakianakis and Michelle Selberis are looking forward to this year and the opportunity to teach the Word of God to our future congregants. Registration for this year's Sunday School session began on 3 September. Registration will continue on the next two Sundays, 10 and 17 September. Be sure to enroll your young students right away. There will be a Sunday School meeting for teachers and staff on September 10th to organize and distribute books to teachers.

### **Philoptochos News**

The Philoptochos is always glad to welcome new members. If you are interested in joining or would like more information, please contact Chrys Cutrone at (949) 295-1256. Please watch for information in the Weekly Bulletins on Sundays regarding the October meeting, date and time to be announced.

### **GOMSOC Treasurer News**

Our very fine GOMSOC Treasurer, Georgia Ann Ellis is happy to provide the following information with regard to recent fund-raising efforts:

**Annual Parish Fundraiser:** The June 3rd Dinner at the home of Angelo and Fotini Theodossis was enormously successful thanks to the generosity of our hosts and all those that attended. Almost \$28,000 was raised as a result of this wonderful event!

**First Annual GOMSOC Golf Tournament:** On July 31st this fun event included a day on the links at the Mirabella Country Club and a Dinner. The Tournament's gross revenue was \$11,465. After deducting the cost of the Tournament (\$5,507), we realized a net profit of about \$6,000. Our appreciation to Kurt Travis and John Leon who organized the event and those who attended. About 48 were in the Tournament with an additional 15 or so attending the Dinner.

### **Matins Services**

Matins Services (Orthros) start immediately beginning the first Sunday of September at 9:00 am. Presvytera Eugenia will teach Byzantine Music to those who are interested. Knowledge of the Greek language is not necessary, but it will help. You will be given tape cassettes to learn quickly. Do not miss this beautiful worship opportunity.

### **Bible Class**

Bible Class will be held every Wenesday night from 7-8:00 pm. We will begin with the Gospel of St. John, explained by St. John Chrysostom. Place: where Greek school is held.

### **Fr. Costas' Tentative Office Hours**

Until further notice, Fr. Costas' office hours will be Monday and Wednesday from 4:00-7:00 pm and Tuesday and Thursday from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. The office will be housed temporarily where the Greek school meets. Fr. Costas will be available every Sunday from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm. Volunteer secretaries for the above hours will be greatly appreciated. These hours are when you can be certain to find Fr. Costas in the office, except in case of emergency. During other hours, he will be visiting your homes and businesses, and visiting hospitals and convalescent homes, etc. Please give him the names and locations of those of your relatives who are shut-ins, or in the hospital. Also let him know if you would like him to come by and visit your home or business.

### **Friday Off/Contact Information**

Friday is Fr. Costas' day off. Please refrain from calling him on that day unless it is an emergency. Fr. Costas' cell phone number is (949) 365-6339. This will be the main number until we have a permanent office phone number.

### **Office Furnishings Needed**

The following office furnishings are needed. If you can provide funds for or donate any of these items, please make that fact know to Steve Dafnis, any Steering Committee member or Fr. Costas: (1) computer, (1) computer table, (1) desk chair, and (1) printer/fax machine.

**Greek Orthodox Mission  
of South Orange County**

P.O. Box 1214

San Juan Capistrano, CA 92693

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**METROPOLIS OF  
SAN FRANCISCO**

**Sunday Liturgies:**

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

**Telephone:** (866)350-1933

**Website:** [www.gomsoc.org](http://www.gomsoc.org)

**Email:** [info@gomsoc.org](mailto:info@gomsoc.org)