

THE MESSENGER

ST. DEMETRIOS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH • RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

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**MISSION
STATEMENT**

To bring all children, youth and young adults closer to Christ and His Church through religious education, fellowship and various other events on a parish and national level.

ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΑΝΕΣΤΗ!

CHRIST IS RISEN!

PASCHAL THOUGHTS FROM ST. GREGORY THE THEOLOGIAN

It is the Day of the Resurrection! Let us then keep the Festival with splendour, and let us embrace one another. Let us say Brethren, even to those who hate us, "Let us forgive all offenses for the Resurrection's sake: let us give one another pardon."

Yesterday, I was crucified with Him; today I am glorified with Him. Yesterday, I died with Him; today I am made alive in Him. Yesterday, I was buried with Him, today I am raised up with Him.

Let us offer ourselves to Him who suffered and rose again for us. Let us become divine for His sake, since for us He became human.

He assumed the worst that He might give us the better. He became poor that by His poverty we might become rich. He accepted the form of a servant that we might win back our freedom. He came down that we might be lifted up. He was tempted that through Him we might conquer. He was dishonored that He might glorify us. He died that He might save us. He ascended that He might draw to Himself us, who were thrown down through the fall of sin.

Let us give all, offer all, to Him who gave Himself as a ransom and reconciliation for us. We needed an incarnate God, a God put to death, that we might live. We were put to death together with Him that we might be cleansed. We rose again with Him because we were put to death with Him. We were glorified with Him because we rose again with Him.

May we may all be one in Christ Jesus our Lord, to Whom be the glory and the might forever and ever. Amen.

~ One of the "Three Hierarchs", St. Gregory the Theologian is celebrated on January 25th.

Lenten Youth Retreat - Friday, April 6th

This year's Lenten Retreat was a great blessing. Children participated in a Pre-Sanctified Liturgy in English, as well as seminars and crafts, and everyone enjoyed an animated movie on the life of Jesus.

The staff of the Sunday School thank all of the parents and grandparents for bringing the children and making the day special for everyone.

The day wouldn't be possible without the help of the many volunteers, the Church Council and especially the Ladies Philoptochos, led by the tireless Mrs Theodora Koutsoumbou, who prepared the delicious Lenten meal. Of course, all the children were the ones that made the Retreat meaningful for all of us and a success yet again!



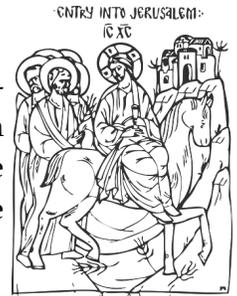
Celebrating "The Feast of Feasts" at St. Demetrios

This is the chosen and blessed Holy Day, the first of the Sabbaths, the Queen and Chief of Days, feast of all feasts and the festival among all the festivals, on which we the people bless Christ unto the ages!

~ 8th Katavasia of the Resurrection

Every year, thousands of faithful come to St. Demetrios Church to relive and commemorate the events of Holy Week, finally ending with the celebration of what St. Gregory the Theologian and St. John of Damascus call the "Feast of Feasts": *Great and Holy Pascha*. This year, our Church celebrated each day of Holy Week in a unique way, making this Pascha a memorable one, indeed.

On Palm Sunday, countless faithful came to the Church for Matins and the Divine Liturgy. At the end of the Liturgy, students and teachers of the Sunday School took part in a procession around the Church, holding palm branches (as the children did at the time of Christ). After reading the Prayer for the Palms, Fr. Konstantinos and many of the faithful took part in the Philoptochos Fish Dinner, held in the hall of our Church.



From Palm Sunday evening to Holy Tuesday evening, the services of the Bridegroom were held at our Church. On Holy Monday evening, His Eminence Metropolitan Archbishop SOTIRIOS visited our parish. Before the service, over 25 members of the St. Nektarios Altar Servers and St. Paraskevi Girls Group (two youth groups of our church) had a Lenten dinner with His Eminence. Thanks to Militsa Hatzidimitriou-Fiuza and Valerie Evans-Makropoulos for their help in preparing everything for



that evening! After dinner, His Eminence presided at the Bridegroom service and offered advice to all present about the remainder of Holy Week and how to approach the feast of the Resurrection of Christ.

On Holy Wednesday, our Church held three services: the last Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts of the year, the Sacrament of Holy Unction and the Matins of Holy Thursday (in commemoration of the Last Supper). Faithful came throughout the Matins to receive the blessing of the Holy Wednesday Unction, which is a Greek Orthodox tradition.

On Holy Thursday morning, Fr. Konstantinos celebrated the Divine Liturgy of the Last Supper. In this Liturgy, an extra "Lamb" is consecrated which is used for communing the sick (and used in other emergencies) throughout the entire year.

In the evening, the Service of the Holy Passion is held. During the service, twelve separate Gospel readings are recited which take us through the last hours of the life of Christ. After the Fifth Gospel reading, the Crucified Christ is processed throughout the Church. The *Orpheas Men's Choir* chanted the hymn "Σήμερον κρεμάται επι ξύλου", as is their tradition. Many faithful were present for this service, venerating the Cross of Christ during the latter part of the service.



Holy Friday is the most sombre day of the year, commemorating the death of Christ on the Cross. In the afternoon, the "Descent from the Cross" (or *Apokathelosis*) service took place, with people beginning to venerate the *Epitaphios*. The message for the afternoon was on [The Gift of Free Will](#). The *Myrofores* helped the thousands of faithful that passed by to venerate, along with the Altar Servers.



In the evening, the "Hymns of Praise" (or *Egkomia*) service was chanted by all the faithful. As is the practice every year, the *Epitaphios* was processed around the Church (on Thorncliffe Park Dr. and parts of Overlea Blvd.).

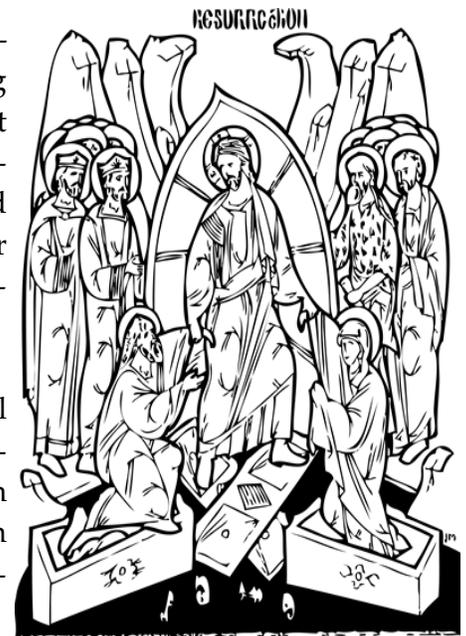


Flowers were given out at the end of the service as a blessing for the day.



On Holy Saturday morning, the "First Resurrection" (*Proti Anastasi*) Liturgy of St. Basil the Great was held, with numerous faithful receiving Holy Communion. In the evening, thousands of faithful were present at St. Demetrios Church to receive the light of the Resurrection and proclaim "Christ is Risen!" The hierarchical messages of Pascha were read by Fr. Konstantinos and Jordan Fiuza, one of the Readers of our Church. Many faithful stayed for the Paschal Divine Liturgy and received Holy Communion.

On the Sunday of Pascha, the *Agape Vespers* was held with a full church of a variety of ages. The Gospel of Pascha was read in the following languages: Greek, Latin and German by Fr. Konstantinos; in French and Spanish, by a visiting couple to our parish; and finally in English, by Dimitre Pavlidis. Our thanks to all the volunteers to proclaim to the Gospel!





**St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church
Religious Education Newsletter**

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The third Greek Orthodox Church in Toronto, St. Demetrios Church was founded in 1962. Since then, our Church has been the spiritual home of many Orthodox faithful from Toronto and vicinity. Our Church is a constituent member of the Greek Community of Toronto [www.greekcommunity.org] and under the spiritual jurisdiction of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Toronto (Canada) [www.gometropolis.org].

The Religious Education programs are attended by children, youth and young adults. Our tireless staff works to promote the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Parish Priest

Rev. Fr. Konstantinos Pavlidis

Parish Council President

Mr. A. Haros

Philoptochos President

Mrs. T. Koutsoubou

Religious Education Director

Mr. B. Polidoulis

Young Adult League Leaders

Mrs. V. Vokas, Mr. N. Sotiropoulos

Altar Servers Group

Dr. N. Vozoris, Mr. T. Prattas

St. Paraskevi Girls Group

Mrs. M. Hatzidemetriou-Fiuza,

Mrs. V. Evans-Makropoulos

Greek Bible Study

Mr. B. Polidoulis

Re-Catechism (English

Mrs. F. Kapsalis, Mr. J. Kapsalis,

Orthodox Discussion Group)

Mr. C. Makropoulos, Mr. T. Prattas

To celebrate all the efforts of the *Myrofores* and the Altar Servers during Holy Week, our Parish held a "Blessing of the Bread" (*Artoklasia*) service on the Sunday of the Myrrhbearers, April 29th. In all, there were over 30 *Myrofores* and 15 Altar Servers during Holy Week and Pascha. Our Church would like to thank all of them, together with the tireless efforts of our Parish Council, Ladies Philoptochos Society, Chanters, *Orpheas* Choir, Mixed Choir, Sunday School leaders and all the volunteers of our Parish. Thanks also to Mr. G. Manos, Mr. J. Kapsalis, Mrs. T. Bardouniotis, Mr. J. Zourbanos and Mrs. V. Evans-Makropoulos for the photographs that are found in this publication.

We hope that you will continue to celebrate the Resurrection of Christ throughout the forty days of Pascha, followed by the feast of the Ascension and Trinity Sunday (Pentecost). God bless!

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