



MISSION NEWSLETTER

Chairman's Message

Dear Friends,

This past Christmas season was truly a special time at our Mission. It began on December 12th with our Sunday School children performing their songs after church. On December 18th, our entire Mission family gathered for our Christmas party filled with children playing and adults getting to know each other better. Christmas Eve Liturgy was a wonderful evening with standing room only in the chapel. We are grateful to all those who helped celebrating the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ truly memorable.

As we began the new year, our Mission held its first Epiphany vespers in which all were blessed with holy water and were given holy water (ayiasmos) to drink and take home. We thank you for all your support in 2004 and look forward to your continuing commitment in 2005.

We were all deeply saddened to see the devastation in Southeast Asia caused by the earthquake and tsunami. A special tray was passed in church last Sunday and monies collected will be combined in one check from our Mission Church for the relief efforts. The International Orthodox Christian Charities has begun relief efforts with its partner Church World Service. If you would like to contribute to this effort, a donation form is on the back page of this newsletter.

As many of you know, our beloved Metropolitan Anthony passed away on Christmas Day. We were honored to have Father John represent our Mission at his funeral service held in Oakland on December 30th. In reading the Metropolitan's final official letter (encyclical), I was struck by a passage which read: "To truly complete anything is more than we can hope for in this life. All we can do is to lay a foundation, and trust that those who come after will build upon it with the same careful consideration, the same diligent industry, and the same loving purpose. It is not for us to determine what shall be built upon this foundation. That is left to the wisdom of future generations...carrying on the task that we have begun in ways that we cannot possibly imagine or foresee." I see beginning our new mission and seeing it through to a parish as laying a foundation; a church that our children can call their own. We are creating something that will endure and benefit Greek Orthodox Christians in South Orange County for generations to come.

Wishing you all a healthy and prosperous 2005.

In Christ,

Steering Committee:

FATHER JOHN KARIOTAKIS
Pastor

MICHAEL SELBERIS
Chairman

STEVE DAFNIS
Vice Chairman

JOE NOLLAR
Finance Chairman

IRENE BASDAKIS
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E.J. 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."

Sunday Liturgies: 10:00 a.m.

J Serra High School Chapel
26351 Junipero Serra Rd.
San Juan Capistrano

Telephone: (866)350-1933, **Website:** www.gomsoc.org, **Email:** info@gomsoc.org

Holy Theophany: January 6

The glorious aspect of Epiphany consists of two testimonies given to Jesus. There was John's testimony and there was the testimony of the Father and of the Spirit. The testimony of the Father was the voice that came from heaven and said: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased". The testimony of the Spirit was the descent of the dove: "The Spirit of God descending like a dove". This is Jesus's true baptism. The word spoken by the Father and the descent of the dove are more important than the baptism by water that John conferred on Jesus. The baptism by water was but an introduction to this divine manifestation. Only on the condition that we hear the voice of the Father and see the flight of the dove will the feast of Epiphany be a true Epiphany, the manifestation of Christ.

Ancient Greek Tradition calls Epiphany "The Feast of Lights-Ta Fota". This feast brings us, not only the grace of purification, but also the grace of illumination (in fact baptism itself is called "illumination"). The light of Christ at Christmas was but a star in the dark night; at Epiphany it appears to us as the rising sun; it will grow and, after the eclipse of Holy Friday, burst forth yet more splendid, on the morning of Pascha; and finally, at Pentecost, it will reach its full zenith. It is not only the divine light, manifested objectively in the person of Jesus Christ and in the Pentecostal flame that we are concerned with, it is also the inner light, for, without absolute faithfulness to this, spiritual life would be nothing but illusion and falsehood.

One could say that Epiphany – the first public manifestation of Jesus to men- corresponds in our inner life to the "first conversion". This must be understood as the first conscious meeting of the human soul with its Saviour, the moment we accept Jesus as Lord and friend, and at which we make the decision to follow Him. Pascha (both the death and the resurrection of our Lord) corresponds to a "second conversion" in which, confronted with the mystery of the cross, we discover what kind of death and what kind of new life this implies, and we consecrate ourselves more deeply to Jesus Christ, through a radical change in ourselves. Pentecost is the time of the "third conversion", which is the baptism and fire of the Spirit, the entry into a life of transforming union with God.

Please join the Greek Orthodox Mission of South Orange County for
Vasilopeta Sunday

January 16, 2005 immediately after Liturgy

A special tray will also be passed for St. Basil's Academy for Orphaned Children

We need several Vasilopetas baked for this special occasion. The following recipe may be helpful:

1 lb. Strong or all purpose flour	1 T grated lemon rind
1/2 t salt	1/2 c. milk, scalded
2 oz. Fresh yeast or 2 T dry yeast	3 eggs
1/2 c. unsalted butter	1 egg yolk beaten w/1 t. water
3/4 c. sugar	almond halves or sesame seeds
1 T grated orange rind	

Sift the flour and salt. Dissolve the yeast in 4 T tepid water (100°F). Add 1-2 T flour mix and let it stand 10 minutes to rise. Melt the butter and heat until very hot. Put the sugar and flavorings in a kneading basin. Pour in the scalded milk and stir with a spoon. Break in the eggs and add the yeast. With your fingers, crush the yolks and combine the eggs with the other ingredients. Gradually add the flour and knead lightly. Add the hot butter and fold it into the dough. Avoid overkneading. The dough should be warm, light and buttery. Cover and let the dough rise in a warm place until it is three times its previous bulk, 1 1/2 to 2 hours. Punch down the dough. Shape it into one large loaf and put a foil covered coin in the loaf. Cover and let rise until doubled in bulk, about 30 minutes. Brush the top with the egg yolk mixture and decorate with almond halves or sprinkle with sesame seeds. Bake in a 400°F oven for 20 minutes. Cool on a rack. To keep the bread moist, store covered with plastic wrap until used. Good Luck!

Source: Greek Pastries and Desserts, Vefa Alexiadou, 1991

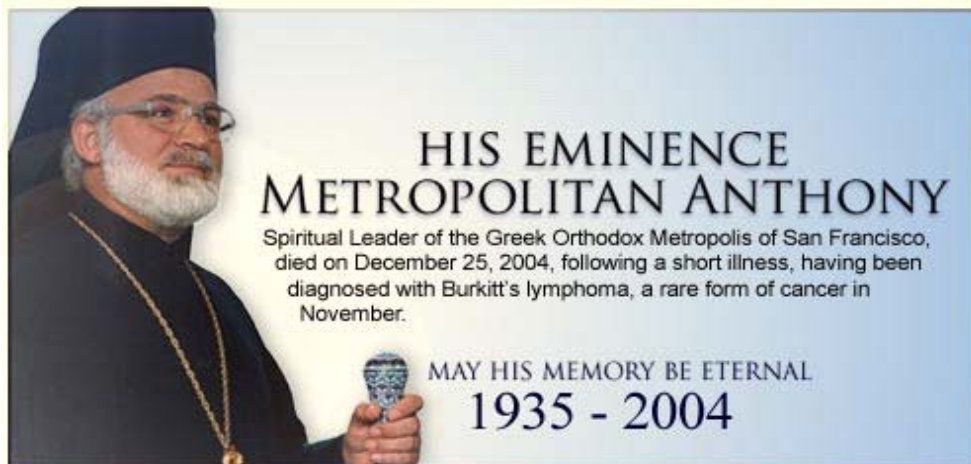
January 7

St. John the Holy Glorious Prophet, Baptist, & Forerunner



The Gospel Reading is from John 1:29-34

At that time, John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, for he was before me.' I myself did not know him; but for this I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel." And John bore witness, "I saw the Spirit descend as a dove from heaven, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him; but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."



Metropolitan Anthony emerged from humble and austere beginnings. He was born in the village of Avgeniki on the island of Crete, Greece, the third of six children, growing up during the brutally difficult years of the Nazi occupation. He was the first member of his family to leave the village, attending the ecclesiastical school of Chania, Crete, and ultimately graduating from the internationally renowned Halki Theological School of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople in 1960. After his ordination to the priesthood, he came to the United

States to pursue postgraduate studies and serve the Church in this country. Metropolitan Anthony was enthroned as the first bishop of the newly-created Diocese of San Francisco on June 7, 1979.

He served as the Bishop and later Metropolitan of San Francisco for over twenty-five years. During that time, he was responsible for a tremendous expansion of ministries and programs which included the founding of over twenty new parishes and missions. He was the founder of St. Nicholas Ranch, the Greek Orthodox conference and retreat center located in the Sierra Nevada foothills. He developed the annual Metropolis Folk Dance Festival into the largest exhibition of authentic Greek folk dance, costume, and music in the world. Together with the Metropolis Philoptochos, he created the Bishop Anthony Student Aid Endowment Fund, a multi-million dollar scholarship account providing funding for seminarians and students from the Metropolis to attend Hellenic College and Holy Cross School of Theology in Brookline, Massachusetts.

Metropolitan Anthony will be remembered for his enthusiasm, his vigor, and his prophetic vision for the Metropolis of San Francisco. He challenged us to be more than we believed we could be, to accomplish more than we ever thought possible, to dream great dreams and make them a reality. His presence and legacy among us will be felt for generations to come.

Growing our Church Family into 2005!

As we reflect on all our Mission parish has accomplished in 2004, we also are setting our goals for 2005. We plan on doing even more this year but, of course, we 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 and look forward to accomplishing even more in 2005. 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.

Announcements

House Blessings

Father John will be blessing homes on Wednesdays, January 12 and 26. Please contact Georgiann Ellis at (949)388-5850 (email dymondfire@cox.net) if you would like your home blessed.

Sunday School

The Sunday School Christmas Pageant was held on December 12, 2004; it was a joyous event. The children were very instrumental in making the Christmas pageant a success. They sang beautifully, played instruments, and even gave suggestions to make it run smoothly. I want to thank the teachers and the students for doing a great job on our First Annual Christmas Pageant.

And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him. (Luke 2:40) It is never too late to join our open and friendly Sunday School. It paves the way for our youth to learn about 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 60 students enrolled in Sunday school. We welcome all new students and visitors throughout the year. The Preschool through Kindergarten students will begin class after Holy Gospel. This will allow them to take part in the Divine Liturgy for a short time. The other grades will participate in the Divine Liturgy and begin class after Holy Communion. Please pick up your children from their classroom immediately after the dismissal of church. If you have any questions about Sunday School, please contact Irene Travis at (949) 448-8946 or by email at travisclan@sbcglobal.net.

GOYA

“Behold how good and pleasing it is when brothers dwell in unity.” (Psalm 133)

Attention all Orthodox Youth: GOMSOC's first GOYA meeting and activities are in the works for January 2005

GOYA is for all youth and young adults between 12 and 18 years of age. Join us as we explore our Orthodox Christianity while we worship and pray together, meet new people, serve our communities, and share our Orthodox faith with others. We plan on holding one weekday meeting per month and at least one activity per month. Our first meeting will be a "Meet & Greet," where we will explore activities for the year, and discuss our first topic, "Private & Corporate Prayer-How to Pray." All interested should email advisors, Anna-Nicole and Tina Kyritsis at ucdgriega2@aol.com, or tinaikee@aol.com, respectively. The first meeting date will be announced soon!

Donation Need

Our Mission has received approval to place three large storage cabinets at JSerra High School which will allow us to store our liturgical items at the school rather than transporting them each Sunday. We are seeking donations to cover the cost of the storage cabinets. If you are interested in donating, please contact Demetra Lewis at (949)661-1938.

Fellowship Hour Food Donations

We are always in need of food items for Fellowship Hour. Please contact Chrys Cutrone at (949)348-8010 or chryscutrone@yahoo.com if you would like to host/contribute items.

Greek Heritage Society Event

The Greek Heritage Society of Southern California is pleased to announce a very special evening with Professor Charles Moskos, a renowned sociologist and historian of Greek-American Society. He will be speaking on Saturday, January 29, 2005, at Loyola Marymount University. Dr. Moskos will speak on "Will There Be a Greek-America in 2050?" The cost is \$35 per person which includes dinner at the Ahmanson North, Malone Center. Reservations are required by January 25th. Please call Peter at (310)215-3130 or Antonia at (310)815-0122 for further information.

**Greek Orthodox Mission
of South Orange County**

P.O. Box 1214

San Juan Capistrano, CA 92693