



MISSION NEWSLETTER

Pastor's Message

My dear parishioners and friends,

By the Grace of our merciful Lord we have entered a new Ecclesiastical year. The beginning of the Church year (Sept. 1st) opens a new Chapter for our young Parish. As you already know we are changing our location of community worship. Thanks to the tireless efforts of our Steering Committee, the Chapel and facility at J Serra High School is secured for our worship and social/educational needs. This is both a great blessing and challenge. It is evident that we are growing and our commitment is firm. We have taken the next step; a truly amazing and gratifying reality when one considers that we started regular Sunday Liturgies only six months ago.

But it is also time for us to re-establish our priorities and set our goals. Let us not lose sight of the fact that we are the Body of Christ. More than buildings, programs, social functions etc., the Body of Christ is comprised of people- believing souls who seek the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness in the way that our precious Orthodox Faith teaches and practices. All of God's children then who are willing to follow the Orthodox Way are welcome in our Community. Our love for and adherence to our Hellenic heritage and traditions should not and will not be a hurdle to any one seeking membership in His Body. We will, however, cherish, preserve and celebrate the Greek Orthodox tradition in the way that our parents and grandparents taught us.

I am looking forward to an exciting year. The seed has been sown, it has taken root and we are growing, not only in numbers I pray, but also more importantly in faith, each one of us. Our Sunday Church school classes are about to begin. The same is true for our Greek language and folk dance classes for our children. I plan to resume my Inquirers class (Catechism for Adults) upon my return from Greece. Incidentally, I forgot to tell you that I will be gone from the 6th of September for a month. I also plan to create the necessary conditions (time, space) so that I can meet you individually and minister to your spiritual needs. You are a blessed lot and I thank the Lord and His Eminence our Metropolitan Anthony for entrusting your first steps as a Parish to my unworthy hands. I feel privileged.

May the Grace of Lord Jesus Christ and the Love of God the Father and the Communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all.

In His Love
Fr. John

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

E.J. CONSTANTINE
Capital Formation and
Genesis Program Chair

DEMETRA LEWIS
Communications Chair

Sunday Liturgies

10:00 a.m.

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

**GREEK ORTHODOX
MISSION
OF SOUTH
ORANGE COUNTY**

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

(866)350-1933

Website: www.gomsoc.org

Email : info@gomsoc.org

Chairman's Update

As you know, our mission parish looks forward to a promising autumn in our new facility and the return of our children to Sunday School. I would like to mention a few highlights of the summer. On June 6th, the Steering Committee held an information session after church in which we presented our goals and objectives for our mission parish. We appreciated all who attended and offered their ideas and support. We certainly would like to have more events such as these so that all parishioners are well informed as to the direction the mission parish is going.

On June 19th, our mission parish celebrated its first birthday. Our One-Year Anniversary party was held at the home of Steve and Pam Dafnis where over 150 parishioners gathered and enjoyed Greek food, dance and fellowship. Even the children had fun playing in the bounce house and exploring the Dafnis' backyard. It was a great night to socialize with our members and have families connect.

We operated a gyro booth at San Clemente Fiesta on August 8th. With the help of over 40 volunteers, we served 550 gyros to the Fiesta party goers and made over \$2000 in profit. We also sold Greek pastries donated and made by the ladies of our mission church. More important than the revenue from this fundraiser are the bonds that were formed by all of us working together in fellowship, truly making this event a great success. A big thank you to all of you that volunteered your time and talents.

As you read in Father's article, he will be on vacation from September 12 through October 5th. As a substitute priest, we have arranged for Father Symion Poptelikan to celebrate Liturgy on September 12th and for Rev. Protopresbyter Theophilos P. Theophilos on September 19 and 26, and October 3rd. Father John will return on October 10th.

In acquiring the JSerra chapel, it is my hope that our worship and programs will be taken to the next level. We are in a facility that feels like a church with ample room to hold Sunday consistently and accommodate our fellowship and other youth program needs. Additionally, the church has leased an office space near JSerra in which Greek School will be held and ee

School consistently and accommodate our fellowship and youth program needs. Also, the church has leased an office space near JSerra to hold Greek School and give other groups in the church a place to meet. Father John will also have a place to meet privately with parishioners having special concerns.

Our mission parish is moving forward and growing. If you have any questions or concerns about the church, please feel free to share your thoughts with me or any member of the Steering Committee. We are growing a church family together!

In Christ,
Michael Selberis

ANNOUNCEMENTS

We are in the beginning stages of forming our Philoptochos Ladies' Society that will be the philanthropic arm of our mission. Stay tuned for further information on Philoptochos!

Recently, the Sam and Evgenia Kollias Family offered to donate their 1987 Jaguar XJS to our mission. We are very grateful to the Kollias family for making such a generous gift. The car will be offered to the highest bidder with all of the proceeds going to our mission. If you are interested in learning more about the car or in making an offer, please contact Steve Dafnis either by e-mail: sdafnis@cox.net or by telephone (949)364-5950. Final bids are due my midnight September 17, 2004.

Donations to the mission are tax-deductible. If you are interested in making a donation to the mission, please contact any of the steering committee members. You may also want to contact your tax advisor for the applicable tax deductions.

September 14

Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross

The Feast of the Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross is celebrated each year on September 14. The Feast commemorates the finding of the True Cross of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by Saint Helen, the mother of the Emperor Constantine.

In the twentieth year of his reign (326), the Emperor Constantine sent his mother Saint Helen to Jerusalem to venerate the holy places and to find the site of the Holy Sepulchre and of the Cross. Relying upon oral tradition of the faithful, Saint Helen found the precious Cross together with the crosses of the two thieves crucified with our Lord. However, Helen had no way of determining which was the Cross of Christ.

With the healing of a dying woman who touched one of the crosses, Patriarch Macarius of Jerusalem identified the True Cross of Christ. Saint Helen and her court venerated the Precious and Life-Giving Cross along with many others who came to see this great instrument of Redemption.

The Patriarch mounted the ambo (pulpit) and lifted the Cross with both hands so that all of the people gathered could see it.

The crowd responded with "Lord have mercy."

This became the occasion of the institution in all of the Churches of the Exaltation of the Precious Cross, not only in memory of the event of the finding of the Cross, but also to celebrate how an instrument of shame was used to overcome death and bring salvation and eternal life.



The Feast (a strict fast day) is an opportunity outside the observances of Holy Week to celebrate the full significance of the victory of the Cross over the powers of the world, and the triumph of the wisdom of God through the Cross over the wisdom of this world. This Feast also gives the Church an opportunity to relish the full glory of the Cross as a source of light, hope and victory for Christ's people. It is also a time to celebrate the universality of the work of redemption accomplished through the Cross: the entire universe is seen through the light of the Cross, the new Tree of Life which provides

nourishment for those who have been redeemed in Christ.

All those who are named Stavros and Stavroula, from the greek word for cross "stavro," celebrate their namedays on this

NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

If you are interested in having information or an event included in the mission's monthly newsletter, the deadline is the 15th of each month. Please telephone in your information to Demetra Lewis at 949-661-1938. You can also e-mail her at demelewis@cox.net or by fax 949-661-1952. We hope that you find this newsletter helpful in obtaining all the church information you need.

Orthodox Marriage Encounter Open to All Couples

An Orthodox Marriage Encounter will be held at the Doubletree Hotel in Del Mar, October 8 through 10 for any couples who want to enrich their Marriage. The weekend is designed to expand and deepen the joys a couple share together whether they've been married for a short time or for many years. The Weekend begins on Friday evening at 8 p.m. and ends Sunday at 5 p.m. For more information contact Alexandra and Mehran Aram at 760-758-4330 or register online at www.orthodoxmarriageencounter.org.

Fellowship Event October 3rd

On October 3, 2004, the Greek Heritage Society of Southern California and the Greek Orthodox Mission of South Orange County will together host a benefit screening of the award winning documentary "The Greeks of Southern California – Through the Century: The Pioneers 1900-1942". The film has been met with much acclaim and was recently awarded "Best Documentary" at the Thessaloniki International Film Festival.

The Greek Heritage Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and the documentation of the Greeks' contributions to the American society. They have been blessed to have had many successful screenings through our nation but it will be the first time shown in Orange County.

Following Sunday liturgy at JSerra High School, there will be a light luncheon prior to the screening. JSerra High School is located at 26351 Junipero Serra Road in San Juan Capistrano. Tickets are \$10 for adults and free for children. For more information, contact Irene Basdakis at 949-360-4447 or e-mail her at lawyerirene@hotmail.com.

Stewardship Update

Irene Basdakis-
Stewardship Chair

The Christian Stewardship Program

I would like to take this opportunity to review the basic ideas of our Christian Stewardship Program. The Christian teaching about Stewardship may seem to be a radical one. It is radical in the sense that it goes to the root of the management programs of life and its assets. In the world in which we live, the spirit of advertising always tempts us to please ourselves, to make life comfortable for ourselves as though to fulfill every selfish or personal desire were life's highest goal.

My fellow parishioners, before we can be free to practice Stewardship in the way the Lord teaches, the question of where our basic loyalty lies must first be answered – "does it lie with my personal enjoyment and my interests, or with God and his will?"

Christian Stewardship in the sense of giving of self is what the whole Gospel is about. That specific question, for example, of how many dollars or hours or talents you are going to give to your Church demands a prior question and answer.

How much of yourself are you willing to dedicate to Christ? The answer to that question alone determines how much you give to the Church. We ask you to reappraise your ability to increase your Stewardship Commitment to a level, which is your response for God's gifts to you.

When you consider your 2004 Christian Stewardship Commitment, we ask that you seriously consider: first, reviewing your level of commitment to an amount you feel is more responsive to God's gifts to you and second, if your current pledge is proportionately responsive to your gifts, then consider increasing in your 2004 commitment equal with God's blessing to you and your resources.

As a new mission, our entire operating budget is based on donations from the members. As we continue to grow we will need not only financial resources but volunteers to take on all the tasks and programs traditionally available at a Greek Orthodox Church. This is a big challenge but we know that it can be accomplished.

If I can answer any questions about how you can pledge to and/or become a registered member of the mission church, please contact me by phone at 949-360-4447 or by e-mail at lawyerirene@hotmail.com.

Sunday School News

I would like to take this opportunity to say how much I enjoyed teaching Preschool through 4th grade during the 2003/2004 school year. All of the children were wonderful and eager to learn. Forty Nine children registered from November 15, 2003 through May 2004. We had 28 children participate in our Sunday School graduation on June 6, 2004 and they received a Certificate of Acknowledgement for Completion of our Greek Orthodox Mission's Sunday School Program 2003/2004.

The first day of Sunday School is September 12th. This year we will have two rooms and five classes:

Preschool thru Kindergarten: Kurt and Irene Travis, teachers

First Grade: Stacy Gentry, teacher

Second Grade: Artemis Nicholas, teacher

Third and Fourth Grade: Mary Constantine, teacher

Fifth Grade and up: Michelle Selberis, teacher

The Preschool/Kindergarten students will begin class after the Holy Gospel. This allows the children to get used to going into church for a short time. The other grades will begin class after communion.

If you have any questions about our Sunday School Program, please call me at (949) 448-8946 or e-mail me at travisclan@sbcglobal.net. Also, I need parent volunteers to help out in the Preschool thru Kindergarten classroom. A sign up sheet will be available at the first day of Sunday School.

My goal for this year is to have the children learn about God and our Greek Orthodox faith. We will be using the books purchased from the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese Religious Education Department.

God Bless,
Irene Travis

SUNDAY READINGS FOR SEPTEMBER

Sept. 12	Gospel:	John 3:13-17
	Epistle:	St. Paul's Letter to Galatians 6:11-18
Sept. 19	Gospel:	Mark 8:34-38; 9:1
	Epistle:	St. Paul's Letter to Galatians 2:16-20
Sept. 26	Gospel:	John 19:25-27; 21:24-25
	Epistle:	St. John's First Universal Letter 4:12-19

Greek Dance

The Greek Dance Board of John Basdakis, Georgiann Ellis and Michelle Selberis will hold an information session on Sunday, September 19th after church. The first practice will be the following Sunday, September 26th, also after church. All children 6 years and older are welcome. No prior dance experience is required. Our goal is to teach traditional Greek dances for recreational and cultural enrichment. If you haven't already placed your child on the interest list, please do so by contacting John Basdakis at 714-813-2158 or e-mail john@msn4loans.com.

Greek School News

The Greek School Board, consisting of Mike Antzoulatos, Erini Redmond, Demetra Lewis, Kelly Parissis and Bob Stavrou, is busy getting ready for the start of Greek School the week of September 13th. We will offer four levels of classes tailored to a student's experience with the Greek language. Classes will be held on Mondays and Wednesdays. One class is 4 to 5:30 p.m. and the second class is 5:30 to 7 p.m. both days. Our classes will be held in an office leased by the church and located at 28570 Marguerite Parkway, suite 218, just north of Avery Parkway in Mission Viejo. Registration is \$25 and tuition is \$340 with \$10 sibling discount. Our teacher Anthi Katalanos has well over 20 years of Greek language teaching and does a wonderful job with our children. If you are interested in enrolling your child in Greek School, please call Kelly Parissis at (949)249-3448 or e-mail kelly@greekbaby.com.

Fellowship Hour Acknowledgments

On behalf of the Greek Orthodox Mission of South Orange County, I personally extend my gratitude and appreciation to everyone that has contributed to the success of the fellowship hour following the Sunday liturgies. Our fellowship coffee hour has been one of the factors in the development and success of our mission parish. The gatherings have allowed parish members to meet new members and to re-acquaint with former friends from other communities. The fellowship hour has been made possible with the

love,

Helen Alexander	David and Georgiann Ellis	Paul and Anna Henning	Joe Nollar
Mike & Kathi Antzoulatos	Stacy Gentry	Nick and Fran Karnazes	Kelly Parissis
John and Irene Basdakos	Vasillis Georgiou & Family	Anthi Katalanos	Bill and Helen Polis
Merci Biddle		Maria Katsiametis	Mariana Pomarleanu
Debi Christopoulos	Dena Giannikas	Harry, Linda & Sophia	Bill and Erini Redmond
Helen Colclasure	Peter Georgatson- Fotis & Sons Imports	Kollias	Connie Salamy
E.J. and Irene Constantine		Sam and Sophia Konugres	Georgia Selberis
Argie Cupples	Lela Giziotis	James and Demetra Lewis	Mike and Michelle Selberis
John and Chrys Cutrone	Argie Hanson	Ron and Maria Madura	Sofia Stellas
Sophia Dafnis	John and Melissa Harris	Penny Marutsos and The Aegean Café	Marian Siersbeck
Steve and Pam Dafnis	Stephanie Colby Hepler & Mother	John and Dena Nicholas	Olga Stavrou
David Derks		Nick Nickolin	Katerina Terry
Mia Domingot	Anna Hepler-Garofalou		Kurt and Irene Travis

generosity and support of the following contributors:

If If If If anyone's name has been inadvertently omitted, please let me know and accept my apology. Our church has been blessed to have all of you help make our fellowship hour possible during this first year of our mission parish. May God bless and keep you.

Marian Siersbeck, Hospitality Coordinator

Greek Orthodox Mission of South Orange County

P.O. Box 1214

San Juan Capistrano, CA 92693