

ST. DEMETRIOS

Volume XXXV, No 03

Saco, Maine

MARCH 2024

We are now in the

“Triodion”

This is the three sections of Pre-lent, Great Lent & Holy Week.

This is the most “challenging”, yet most beneficial time of the year.

We are asked to exert ourselves spiritually & with the flesh as no other time.

We are asked to give the full “Tithe of Time” (40 days of Lent) to The Lord.

We are to confront ourselves, our weaknesses, our passions, if we do, we will experience the joy of the Resurrection.

We have to Crucify ourselves, our weaknesses and our passions, in order to be raised to the new Life, the new eternal Life. The old man has to die for the new man to live.

We begin with **Sunday of Forgiveness** (Mar 17).

Remember, *to ask for FORGIVENESS is easy.... compared to FORGIVING anyone who has sinned/hurt you!*

THANK YOU!!

GYRO

Sunday, MARCH 10, 2024, 11:30am to 12:30pm
(Meatfare Sunday Αποκριατική Κυριακή)

COST: \$5.00!!

(All surplus funds will be given to the St. Demetrios Janitorial Fund)

TO EVERYONE... Offering the GYRO is our way of saying thank you... ***THANK YOU for your INCREDIBLE SUPPORT IN 2023.*** We appreciate and value EVERYONE AT ST. DEMETRIOS. BLESSINGS FOR 2024.

This is not a fundraiser,
it is for our community only.

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The Triodion

(Recap/Review - Continued for March)

2. March 3: The Prodigal (Luke 15:11-32)

This Sunday teaches us about our need to “return” from exile - being away from God. This parable shows us the mercy of the Father who with joy and open arms receives his son. We are encouraged to examine ourselves, to confront our sin and “come home.”

The week that follows is called Meat Week (Kreatini) as **it is the last week we eat meats**. In the villages of Greece this was the traditional week to slaughter the family pig and the leftovers were smoked to be eaten after Pascha. The normal rule of fasting is applied to this week, on Wednesday and Friday.

Saturday of this week is the first Saturday of Souls (Mar 9) where those who have fallen asleep in the hope of resurrection and eternal life are remembered. We bring kollyva to the church with a list of baptismal names. We commend to God all those who have departed before us, who are awaiting the Last Judgment.

3. March 10: Judgment (Meat-fare) Sunday (Matt 25:31-46)

This Sunday emphasizes the Last Judgment. Our spiritual life cannot be separated from our actions. God Who is all Fair will “judge” us according to our life. We are reminded of our individual responsibility to love. We stop eating meats on Monday morning, but we can eat eggs, cheese (all dairy) & all sea food/fish. It is the week of Paradise, where Adam & Eve were caretakers and lived in peace with all the animals. *That is how we are to live with every human being around us! **We are our brother's keeper!***

4. March 17: Forgiveness (Cheese-Fare) Sunday (Matt 6:14-21)

Forgiveness Vespers. We do the Service of FORGIVENESS @ the end of The Liturgy!

We cannot begin Great Lent without Forgiveness & Repentance.

This Sunday emphasizes forgiveness and how we must forgive others if God is to forgive us so we can break the chains of sinful tendency which we inherit from the Adam and Eve. This is the last day before.... the Lenten fast begins on the following morning: no meat, dairy or fish are to be eaten.

5. March 18: Clean Monday Great Lent Begins

Great Lent begins with this day of “cleansing”. The ancient custom is to fast as strictly as Holy Week.

Both the services & readings are about the failures of Israel to remain faithful and how God consistently pursued His people to try to redirect them towards Heaven.

6. March 24: Sunday of Orthodoxy

This is the first Sunday in Lent. It is the day of the “Icon Procession” to celebrate the restoration of Icons after about 150 years of persecutions against those who had & defended all Iconography! Imagine that! The Spiritual meaning is simple: If our Lord Jesus is real, if all the Righteous in the Scriptures are real, if all the Apostles and saints are real, then we can depict them & the events around them!

Great Lent is the ultimate preparation for the *real event* of the Lord’s Entrance into Jerusalem, His betrayal, Death and Resurrection.

7. March 31: Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas

St. Gregory lived in the 1,300s AD, it was he who re-affirmed the Christian teaching that the presence of God (grace) is *the (real) presence of God!* Does this sound silly? Sure does, but the strange belief had crept in that we are too sinful for God to come among us. As if Christ never took flesh and lived with us. When we pray, worship, etc., we are with our Lord, we are not just sending “texts & emails” we are speaking directly....

Prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian:

O Lord and Master of my Life!

Take from me the spirit of sloth, despair, lust of power and idle talk.

Rather grant to me your servant the spirit of chastity, humility, patience and love.

Yes, Lord and King. Grant me to see my own sins, and not to condemn my brother.

For You are blessed unto the ages of ages. *Amen.*

The Word Became Flesh.
Instruction on the Day of the Annunciation
of the Most Holy Theotokos
March 25

Today is revealed the mystery that is from all eternity.
The Son of God becomes the Son of man...
Now God becomes man, that He may make Adam God.
Stichera at Lauds, Tone 2

The holy Church remembers and celebrates today the wondrous mystery unfathomable to mortal minds: the incarnation of the Creator of the ages and worlds—the Son of God—Who becomes Man. The uncontainable God is contained in the pure womb of the godly maiden, the fleshless is made flesh, the unoriginate is conceived, the unapproachable is become approachable, the Word takes on flesh, the infinitely great becomes small, and the limitless finds boundaries; God is comingled with people and is not ashamed to call them brethren (Heb. 2:11).

Thus, the mystery hidden from the ages, and from the beginning unknown to the angels, the Son of God is now revealed. He gives us what is incomparably better—illumination, renewal, and deification.

“Let creation be glad, let all of nature jubilantly celebrate; that is, as the entire human race is vouchsafed such honor from God, so also is all creation, heaven and earth, seeing God in His measureless goodness come down to creatures.”

O mystery incomprehensible, joyful and exalting every spiritually understanding soul, but at the same time, an awesome mystery! Because the reason for such condescension is our sins. Only the all-good, most wise and almighty God was able to devise such an extreme means of saving perished man, to thus lower Himself in order to heal us of our pride and all manner of sins by His example, and teach us humility, obedience, and every virtue. It is a mystery, I say, that is greatly joyful and exalts the soul!

How honored we all are, brothers and sisters, by the incarnation of the Son of God from the Most Pure Virgin; how glorified, gladdened, and consoled! God is with us: He has become our Intercessor, Redeemer, and Savior; the Mother of God has become our Mother by grace, our Intercessor, Defender, and Protection. Imagine what would have happened to people if the Son of God had not condescended so wondrously, so beneficently to us sinners, who are truly at enmity with God! How poor mankind would be, how pitiful, joyless, and inconsolable with its innumerable calamities!

And now, what constant consolation for the faithful and repentant there is in the Son of God! He is the hope, purification, illumination and salvation of all repentant sinners. He is the protection of the offended, the consolation of all who sorrow, the encouragement of the despondent, rest for those who labor and are heavy laden, the reward for those laboring ascetically, light for the darkened, strength for the infirm, a helper in good works, a co-struggler in spiritual battles, the comfort of all the righteous, and eternal life for all who believe in Him. He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, saith the Lord (Jn. 11:25).

Thus, what does the incarnation of the Son of God require of us? Unhesitating, sincere, unhypocritical and firm repentance of all our sins, the correction of our hearts, and a righteous, holy life. Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy (Lev. 19: Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty (2 Cor. 6:17-18)).

The Lord Jesus Christ requires of us holiness and righteousness. In the Lord's Prayer itself, the Lord teaches us first of all to pray that we might live according to God's will and not our own: "Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Lk. 11:2-4; Mt. 6:9-10).

Thus, this is the indispensable obligation that the incarnation of the Son of God places upon us, brothers and sisters: to live righteously and holily, reverently and honestly, and to depart from all sin, all unrighteousness and impurity.

St. John of Kronstadt

Translation by Nun Cornelia (Rees), Pravoslavie.ru

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Habitation of Holiness - BY ST. NEKTARIOS

The Privilege of Loving and Worshipping God

"Come, therefore, my brothers and sisters in the Lord, let us worship the Lord God in a saintly and righteous manner. Let us imitate the example of the good and devout Mary [of Bethany], and let us offer to God our love and worship. Instead of precious myrrh, let us offer up to God good and righteous works and actions. Instead of some foreign hospitality, let us gather and take care of our brothers and sisters. Keep in mind that our loving Lord is not only pleased with every good deed we do for our brother, but also accepts such kindness as good deeds done directly unto Him. He then considers Himself indebted to offer in return His abundant grace to such benefactors, and to say to them: **'Verily I say unto you, insofar as ye did it to one of the least of these My brethren, ye did it to Me'** [Matt. 25:40]."

Notes (March 2024)

Who would like to decorate the Tomb of Christ?

We are in need of people to take over & manage the flowers for decorations for Lent & Holy Week.

Paul Macdowell and Cristina Popescu, are more than willing to share information, give feedback & help as much as needed to have new people take over the ongoing decoration that makes Lent so special in our Community.

(This includes to be guided how to place orders, quantities, coordinate work crews, pick up & deliver, etc.)

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COMMUNITY RETREAT

Sat/Sun, April 20-21: to be held at (our) camp, St. Methodios, Contoocook, NH.

Everyone is invited. We will have Liturgy at the chapel Sunday morning.

Cost to be announced soon, but it up to us to give what we can, *confidentially*.

Please see/speak with Lisa Tompkins.

Ph 207-286-6526 or email: lisatompk@gmail.com

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Fasting Notes:

Meatfare (Judgement) Sunday – March 10, LAST day we partake of meats.

Cheesefare Week – Mar 11-17, We partake of dairy, fish, etc. everyday.

Cheesefare (Forgiveness) Sunday – Mar 17, Last day of dairy....

Clean Monday & during Lent – Mar. 18, Lent begins.... NO meats, dairy, fish, olive oil & wine (on weekdays). On weekends we partake of olive oil (oo) & wine.

The Annunciation – Mar 25, We have olive oil (oo), wine & fish.

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March 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Great Lent begins Monday March 18. Pascha is Sunday May 5. Sunday of Orthodoxy is March 24. <i>Please remember to bring an Icon - we will have a LIMITED Procession!</i>					1 (NO fast)	2
3 Sun. of Prodigal	4	5	6 (fast)	7	8 (fast)	9 8:30am Liturgy Sat. of Souls Ψυχосαβατον How to make Arto!
10 Sun. of the Judgement APO-KREAS (Meat-fare) Gyro! <i>(Last day of Meats)</i>	11	12	13 (fast only from meats) 6:00pm How is our Community administered?	14 6:00pm Ch. Council	15 (fast only from meats)	16 8:30am Liturgy Sat. of Souls Ψυχосαβατον Confession after Liturgy
17 Sun. of Forgiveness w/ Forgiveness Vespers <i>(Last day of Dairy)</i>	18 (fast) Great Lent begins! 6:00pm Gt Compline w/ Canon of Repentance - prt a.	19 (fast) 6:00pm Gt Compline w/ Canon of Repentance - prt b.	20 (fast) 8:30am Gt Compline w/ Canon of Repentance prt c. 5:30pm Presanctified Lit. w/ pot luck supper	21 (fast) 6:00pm Gt Compline w/ Canon of Repentance prt d.	22 (fast) 6:00pm Salutations - Χαιρετισμοι α!	23 (fast) 8:30am Liturgy Sat. of Souls Ψυχосαβατον
24 Sun. of Orthodoxy w/ Icon Procession 31 Sun. of St. Gregory Palamas	25 (o oil/wine/fish) 8:30am LITURGY The Annunciation Ευαγγελισμος	26 (oo/wine)	27 (fast) 5:30pm Presanctified Lit. w/ pot luck supper	28 (fast)	29 (fast) 6:00pm Salutations - Χαιρετισμοι β!	30 (fast)

Notes continued for March 2024

How is our St Demetrios Community administered?

Wed. Mar 13 @ 6:00pm

We invite **everyone** to join us for sandwiches & a presentation/discussion on the practical aspects of managing our Community – “soup to nuts”.

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Confession.

On **Saturday March 16**, after Liturgy, Fr Basil.... Possibly – 15 min. confessions after Liturgy, stay tuned & check with the office.

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Making ARTO!

Sat. Mar 9, after Liturgy: With Mihaela. *Interested?*

Please see Mihaela or call office.

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Bookstore

We have so many new children's books, and many other new titles.

In addition to our icons & other religious items.

WHEAT for Koliva is also available.

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Weather!

In case of inclement – bad – weather, ALWAYS contact/confirm appointments & other events & the church!

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2024 SAMP (SUPPORT A MISSION PRIEST (thru the OCMC))

We only do this the month of January; however, this year we extended it to February. We are now able to send \$600 (all months were sponsored) to the OCMC as a donation for Orthodox Priests who serve in indigenous areas.

As soon as they send a bio of our sponsored Priest, it will appear in the newsletter. Thank you all for becoming and being a SAMP sponsor.

Notes continued for March 2024

ETERNAL VIGIL LIGHT is available for 2024, cost \$200. It is for the entire year of 2024, and lit at every service. Please include the family or individual name. Make your check payable to St. Demetrios, ear-marked Vigil Light.

Please make sure to see Stephanie so that she can prepare/put the name on the light. If you are mailing your request, put "Attn: Stephanie" on the envelope. Thank you.

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CANISTERS. Just a reminder to take one of the Canisters (located at the Candle Stand), and fill it with quarters. Bring the filled canister to the office when ready. Thank you for your offering.

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BAKING on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Please see Vanja Somerville or any of the ladies to ask about helping. Also please know we usually gather Tuesdays and Thursdays at 9:00am. Leave your email at (saintfotini@gmail.com) so that you can be included on all the updates or cancellations with the baking. When there is Liturgy, baking starts after that.

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ST. DEMETRIOS PHILANTHROPIC FUND. If you would like to help, please make your check to **St. Demetrios Philanthropic Fund.** Give your check to Stephanie or Fr. Basil.

(If you mail it, put: "ATTN: Stephanie" on the envelope.)

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THANK YOU from...

OCMC, \$111.20 collected from the Agape Canisters, located at the Narthex.

OCMC, \$600, Sponsors for the Support A Mission Priest Program, we support a Priest that is willing to go to indigenous areas.

SACO FOOD PANTRY, thanking us for the many staple items we donated. It was that extra boost they needed and appreciated.

KEEP THE FAITH !

Sin, God's Intent, Endure

It's hard for you. But is this an accident without cause? Lift up your head a little and remember that there is the Lord, Who takes paternal care of you and never lets His eyes drop from you. If sorrow has overtaken you, it's not otherwise than with His consent and will. It's none other than He Who sent it to you. He knows quite precisely what, to whom, when, and how to send it; and when He sends it, He does so for the good of the one to whom it's sent. So, look around—and you'll see God's good intentions toward you in the afflictions that have overtaken you. The Lord either wants to wash away some sin, or to lead you away from a sinful deed, or to cover up a greater sorrow with a smaller one, or to give you an occasion for patience and for demonstrating faithfulness to the Lord, so as to show forth the glory of His mercy upon you later. It is, of course, one of these that relates to you. Seek out what it is precisely, and apply it to your wound like a plaster, and you'll assuage its burning heat. If, however, you don't clearly see precisely what God wanted to give you through the sorrow that has overwhelmed you, raise up in your heart the general, non-speculative belief that everything that comes from the Lord is for our good, and give a shove to your disturbed soul: this is what is pleasing to God. Endure!

St. Theophan the Recluse, *"On the Spiritual Life"*

* * * *

In the end times a man will be saved by love, humbleness and kindness. Kindness will open the gates of Heaven; humbleness will lead him into Heaven; a man, whose heart is filled with love, will see God.

St. Gabriel of Georgia

Monthly Financial Report. 2/10/2024

(Operating Budget 2024)

Mortgage Balance: \$99,909

STEWARDSHIP & FINANCIAL UPDATE as of January 31, 2024

Total Stewards: 64

Total Stewardship Received: \$19,652

<u>Month</u>	<u>Income (\$)</u>	<u>Expenses (\$)</u>	<u>Operating account (\$)</u>
January	\$22,632	\$21,277	\$1,355

We ended January in the **Black \$1,355!** {Compare to 2023: -\$906}.

Our income is down by \$1,000 (compared to *LAST YEAR*).

Our Expenses are down by \$3,000 (compared to *LAST YEAR*).

Compare: Year to date:

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>
Total Income:	\$23,692	\$22,632
Total Expenses:	\$24,598	\$21,277

Let our giving reflect our faith!

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We are not going to enter Paradise by chance. It requires struggle, hardships, and enduring mockery, insults, and slaps. It takes everything. We should never ask, Why? We should say, This is what God allowed. Not one hair on my head falls without the will of God.

Gerondissa Makrina (Vassopoulou), Words of the Heart, p368

Thank you Sponsors for making our St. Demetrios Newsletter possible!



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Divine Liturgy by 10:00 AM

Summer hours start May 15:

Orthros 8:45 AM, Divine Liturgy by 9:30 AM

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FAX: (207) 283-4641

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Hear me your father, O children, and do thereafter, that ye may be safe.
For the Lord hath given the father honor over the children, and hath confirmed
the authority of the mother over the sons.

*Whoever honors his father makes an atonement for his sins:
And he that honors his mother is as one that lays up treasure.*

(Sirach 3:1-4)

Saint Demetrios

Greek Orthodox Church

186 Bradley Street

Saco, ME 04072

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