



ENCYCLICAL FOR GREAT LENT

As we embark on the journey of Great Lent, *it is good and edifying to pause and reflect* on the true significance of the spiritual endeavor that lies before us. The Church's hymnography is a trustworthy guide, reminding us of the full scope of our pilgrimage. Great Lent is a time of retreat to help us confirm our life to Christ. Holy Lent is designed to be a period of transformation for us – yes, a time of struggle, but a joyful struggle to become more Christ-like in all that we think, in all that we do, and in all that we say.

Let us keep the Fast not only refraining from food. All too often we focus almost exclusively on what we eat and do not eat. This is important, yet only part of our task. Saint Basil the Great wrote, "Fasting is the strength-training of the godly....It is clear that fasting would not only teach self-control in relation to all kinds of foods, but also how to entirely escape and get rid of covetousness, greed, and all kind of evil." (Sermon 2 On Fasting).

Let us keep the Fast...by becoming strangers to all bodily passions. A fundamental concept in understanding Orthodox Christian spiritual life is *passions*. These are natural things necessary for life that have mutated and taken control of our lives. We must eat in order to live, but when our life is dominated by food we succumb to the passion of gluttony. Money is a necessity, but when our life is centered on the acquisition of wealth, we are controlled by the passion of avarice. Humans need to love and be loved, but often times that love is deformed and we become slaves to the passion of lust. Lent is a time to practice self-control in order to tame the passions that enslaved us to unhealthy cravings

During this period, let us examine the essential values that guide us in our actions. Let us re-orient our lives so that they are guided by God and His love rather than passionate desires; let us desire nothing more fervently than God and His love. Great Lent is a time of liberation, when we free ourselves from the shackles of *things* and *desires*, pursuing single-mindedly a deeper union with God and a more authentic reflection of God's love. Lent is a time to rejoice that, through self-discipline, we have grown closer to God and have become a more perfect image of God's compassion, mercy and love. As such, regardless of the struggle, this is a time of joy and hope.

Liberating ourselves from the slavery to passions of the flesh frees us to love God. Without the distractions of the passions, we can be more attentive to our relationship with God. Without destructive passionate goals, our lives are free to be guided by Christ's command to love God and our neighbor. This is the true meaning of μετανοια (repentance): a reorientation of our lives. And so the Church instructs us that a *pure fast* includes attentiveness in prayer and works of mercy to the poor.

Let these simple insights guide us during the coming 40 days. Be aware not only of ourselves but of others. Let us be attentive in all aspects of our life not only to our own needs but to the needs of others. Let this be a time when we not only curtail that which impedes us but when we develop the things that make us more Christ-like.

With these few thoughts I invite you to embark joyfully on the journey of the Great and Holy Lent. Do not be burdened by the discipline, but be renewed by the opportunity to grow into deeper communion with God. The discipline is never easy, but the results will bring joy to you and those around you. May this be a time of profound spiritual joy for you, your community, your family, and your loved ones. Our hope is in the Lord who never fails!

With Love in Christ,
+ Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco

March

- 2nd: Salutations 7:30 pm
- 3rd: Lit. Sat Souls 9:30 am
- 6th: Prime Timers 12:30 pm
- 7th: Pre-Sanctified 7:30 pm
- 8th: AHEPA 7:30 pm
- 9th: GOYA Night 6:00 pm
- 9th: Salutations 7:30 pm
- 11th: Dance Team/GOYA Lunch
- 13th: Bible Study 7:15 pm
- 14th: Pre-Sanctified 7:30 pm
- 16th: Salutations 7:30 pm
- 21st: Pre-Sanctified 7:30 pm
- 23rd: Salutations 7:30 pm
- 25th: Annunciation Greek Ind. Day
(Bake-sale by Greek School)
- 28th: Pre-Sanctified 7:30 pm
- 30th: Akathist Hymn 7:30 pm
- 31st: Goya Hunger Strike

APRIL

- 4th: Pre-Sanctified 7:30 pm
- 5th: Philoptochos 7:15 pm
- 7th: Sat of Laz. Lit. 9:30 am
- *Youth Breakfast after Liturgy
- * Palm tying for Palm Sunday
- 8th: Palm Sunday Luncheon



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Prime Timers ~ March 6th: Prime Timers will meet at Peppinos at the corner of Marguerite & Vista del Lago at 12:30 pm on March 6th. All persons 50 and older are welcome.

AHEPA ~ March 8th: We will be having an AHEPA meeting on Thursday, March 8th at 7:30 p.m. Location to be announced. For more info, please contact Bob Stavrou at bstavrou@cox.net

Bible Study / Orthodoxy 101 ~ March 13: Please join us for discussion, coffee & dessert at 7:15 p.m. upstairs in the hall. We will be discussing themes from Holy Week and covering readings from Holy Saturday morning & evening. Please RSVP to Fr. Bill at frbill@gomsoc.org.

Philoptochos Meeting ~ April 5th: The Philoptochos/Ladies Auxiliary will meet on the 1st Thursday of April due to Holy Week. We usually meet on the 2nd Thursday of each month. Our next meeting is planned for Thursday evening, April 5th at 7:15 p.m., upstairs in the Church hall. Agenda: Holy Week, Decorating the Epitaphio, and other parish items. Please join us for snacks and fellowship. For more info, please contact Fran Karnazes at yiayiafran@yahoo.com or 949-633-0270.

Palm Sunday Luncheon ~ April 8th: Please join us for our Palm Sunday Luncheon in the Patio following the Divine Liturgy. Hosted by our Parish Council. For more info and to make reservations, please contact Ann in the office at office@gomsoc.org



Paralia - Greek Orthodox Mission of San Juan Capistrano, Division II
Folk Dance Festival, Feb. 18, 2012. Anaheim Hilton

MINISTRY CONTACTS

Parish Council: Reggie Sellas: rsellas@aol.com
Sunday School: Anna-Nicole: annaniole777@gmail.com
Greek School: Tessy: tetsyjoy7@gmail.com
GOYA: Sandy Rains: sandyrains1@gmail.com
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Altar Boys: Fr. Bill: frbill@gomsoc.org
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Prime Timer's: Danny Tonge: mdtonge@sbcglobal.net
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Apokries: Steve Dafnis: steved@quizglass.com
Festival: Sam Konugres: sam.konugres@sbcglobal.net
Parish Directory (2012): Sally: meyerhofer@cox.net

Youth Calendar - March

GOYA Fri. Night ~ Fri, March 9: GOYA & JR. GOYA - An evening of Lenten Cooking & Dinner. Everyone will get to make & cook Lenten food. The food will cook during the service. After we will eat the dinner we cooked. We need to plan our meal, so RSVP to Sandy: sandyrains1@gmail.com Goya 7 to 12th grade, Jr. Goya 4th to 6th grade.

Dance Team / GOYA & Jr. GOYA Lunch ~ Sun. March 11: Please join us for a lunch, fellowship, and a chance to watch our FDF Video at the home of Lia & Al Vardakostas-Gullien at 2:00 p.m. after Liturgy on Sunday March 11th. 28471 La Pradera, Laguna Niguel, CA 92677. Please RSVP to Lia so we can have lunch for everyone at lia1@cox.net. Goya: 7th to 12th grade, Jr. Goya 4th to 6th grade.

Hunger Strike ~ Sat 31 - Sun 1: Hunger Strike is a program developed by Carolyn Kouracos to connect the ancient Christian discipline of fasting, prayer, ministry and outreach to others. In our world of excess and privilege it's hard to believe 16,000 children die every day because of hunger. Most walk miles to attend church. Attending school is not a certainty and too many have not heard the Good News of Jesus Christ. We can Do something about it! Hunger Strike mobilizes our youth, enabling them to stand up for what is right and good and help change the world. For more info and to RSVP contact:

Lent & Holy Week

Readers Needed

We need people to read on Wednesday evenings and during holy Week. If you are interested, please contact Fr. Bill at the office or at frbill@gomsoc.org

2012 Stewardship Update

Annual Operating Budget	\$375,000.
Amount Pledged	\$ 76,190.
% of budget pledged	20%
Amount Received	\$ 27,295.
%of budget received	7%
2012 Stewards	51