

St. Demetrius Orthodox Church

Our Constant Need Growing in the Grace of God!

By Bishop Maximos

The subject of God's grace is so pleasant to our ears that the hymn "Amazing Grace" has virtually become an American folk tune. All of us know we are in continual need of the grace of God. But what is this grace, and how can it be made real to us? Grace is the very life of God given to us freely. Grace is the saving and transforming energy of God the Father, which is made available for us through the work of Jesus the Lord, and which is communicated to us by the Holy Spirit through His Church.

Jesus Christ came to restore the grace to our lives which was lost because of sin that we might experience His presence and his holiness. God's Holy Spirit communicates this grace to each of us individually. Through this work of the Holy Spirit in us, not only do we experience deification or communion with God, we are also energized or strengthened by His grace. We bear and produce the fruit of that saintly life of which Saint Paul speaks to the Galatians when he says: "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23).

This fruit of the Spirit is diametrically opposed to the works of the flesh, which are fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing and the like. "Of which I tell you beforehand." Saint Paul says, "that those who practice such things will not inherit the Kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:21).

On the contrary, "those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (Galatians 5:24). "If we live in the Spirit." Saint Paul continues, "let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not become self-conceited, provoking one another, envying one another" (Galatians 5:25-26).

Pressing On

Living the life of grace, living by the Spirit of God Who communicates to us this life, causes us to become committed Christians who live according to Christ's will, life and example. Through God's grace we begin to live in harmony both with the Lord and with one another. This is why it is so imperative that we are part of a vibrant Orthodox Christian Church which itself is constantly growing in the grace of Christ and the knowledge of Christ.

When we think of knowledge, we usually think of an intellectual activity or experience. We "know" things when we are able to possess them intellectually, to put them under the control of our minds. We know through perceptions, concepts and ideas.

This kind of empirical knowledge is important. It is an important aspect of the Christian faith. Such knowledge is communicated through Christian preaching, through the proclamation of the Gospel and through the various education programs of the church.

However, empirical knowledge by itself is not adequate. It cannot be complete without the other kind of knowledge we find in the Gospel, a knowledge which goes far beyond the realm of our intellect. This is a knowledge in which we "know God" as being "known by God" (Galatians 4:9). This knowledge is an experiential knowledge.

The Church fathers spoke about such experiential knowledge which transcends the intellectual knowledge of concepts and ideas. It is a knowledge which comes through participation in the life of God, the experience of God Himself as God offers Himself to us through communion and union with Him.

This is the kind of spiritual knowledge that was experienced by the godly fathers of the Church. It is an experience in which God's reality touches, changes, transforms and transfigures our lives to make them more in conformity with His glorious life.

Continued on page 2

Continued from page 1

Our Constant Need

Personal Knowledge of Christ

It is obvious that this knowledge and this experience is a personalized one, insofar as it is gained in the context of the Christian community and Church. It is a distinctive incommunicable experience given to each Christian on a personal, one-to-one basis as well.

Some people misunderstand Orthodox Christianity at this point, saying that it does not provide the personalized experience of God, the "personal relationship with Christ" spoken about by evangelical Christians.

On the contrary, our corporate life and experience of God, of His Christ (the Anointed One) and His Holy Spirit (the unction) is the basis for our individualized and personalized experience and life in God. For as Christians we are personally anointed with the same unction that anoints Christ, that is to say, the Holy Spirit. Thus, we become a unique, personalized presence of Christ in this fallen world. This life of God, to which we were destined through our creation, and to which we are restored through the saving and deifying work of Christ, is given to us in the Holy Spirit through the sacramental life of the Church. This grace begins with our Christian baptism, a baptism "in water and the Spirit," that incorporates us into the Church, the inaugurated Kingdom of God.

Will be continued next

Relay For Life - August 6 & 7 Luminaries due July 4th!

This is St. Demetrius' 9th year participating in the American Cancer Society's 24 hour Relay For Life. Relay packets are available at the candle stand. *What can you do? We need walkers!* Just an hour or two of your time would be appreciated. *Show up for the event!* Food - Monica Dellas will be organizing this area. *Purchase a luminary*, \$ 10 each, in honor or in memory of a friend or loved one who has found the battle again cancer! (Luminaries are due Sunday, July 4th to be in the Program Book). *Make a contribution.* Please make checks payable to the **American Cancer Society**. There will be a Panikhida at the site (same site as last year) on Friday night at 8:30 pm.

There will be a Relay For Life potluck coffee hour fund raiser on **Sunday, June 6th** following Liturgy.

**Relay For
Life
August 6 & 7
Cascades
Falls Park**

St. Demetrius Web Site - Reaching Out

In just a few short years, our St. Demetrius Web Site, www.stdemetrius.com, has had quite an increase in people visiting us. Over the past few months we have seen on average, about 900 "hits" per month. We don't know exactly who is logging on to the site, but we do know that it is a helpful tool for parishioners, Orthodox visitors or people seeking information about the faith.

Regular members look on the site for updates in church services, schedules and events as well as viewing recent photos. Visitors can find the times for Liturgies and Special Feast Day observances. Everyone can find helpful links to other sites, such as Ancient Faith Radio, that will keep us informed and help us to grow in our faith. Father Dusan's message is posted as well, bringing Orthodoxy to everyone.

We would like to thank all those who volunteer their time and talent to keep this site up to date for us. Seeing the number of "hits" or visitors to the site helps us realize that this work is well worth the effort. We're reaching out to the community in ways unseen. Remember to visit us at www.stdemetrius.com.

Bible Questions

The answers to last months questions:

1. How old was David when he was named King of Israel? **30 years**
2. David, in battle, defeated Hadadezer and captured how many horsemen and foot soldiers? **1700 horsemen—20,000 foot soldiers**
3. Who was the beautiful woman David saw bathing from his roof? **Bathsheba**
4. Absalom was riding on a mule and got something caught in a tree. What got caught? **His hair**
5. Who said "we have no portion in David, nor any share in the son of Jesse. Every man to his tent, O Israel." **Sheba the son of Bichri**

The followings answers may be found in the **Book of Kings:**

1. Who was Adonijah the son of?
2. Who did King Solomon ask to kill his brother Adonijah?
3. What was the name of Naboth's wife?
4. Ahab wanted to trade or buy land from Naboth—what was growing on the land?
5. What was in the Ark of the covenant?

St. Demetrius family honors high school, college graduates

The St. Demetrius parish family is proud to have several members graduating from high school and college this spring. The parish family wishes the best of luck to our outstanding graduates:

- **Faye Christoff.** Faye is graduating from Western High School in Jackson. Her future plans include attending school in North Carolina. Faye is the daughter of Mark & Julie Christoff and the granddaughter of Geri Christoff.
- **Elizabeth Devine.** Elizabeth graduated from the residential college: James Madison College at Michigan State University in International Relations and Political Economy.
- **Kristal Georgopoulos.** Kristal is graduating from Jackson High School. Her future plans include attending Jackson Community College. Kristal is the daughter of Bill & Gina Georgopoulos.
- **Cali Wesolowski.** Cali is graduating from Northwest High School. Her future plans include attending Jackson Community College. Cali is the daughter of Leanne Christoff and the granddaughter of Geri Christoff.

Congratulations graduates as you begin your next journey!

This newsletter is sponsored by **Milan Koprivica** in **honor of all high school/college graduates!**

May God Grant Them Many Years!

Congratulations to **Jean Dennerll** and **George Econ** on your retirement from Jackson Community College!

May God Grant You Many Happy and Healthy Years of Retirement!

St. Demetrius Orthodox Church

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Please remember in your prayers

For Good Health

Van Christoff

Jack Anderson

Winnie Wangler

Michael Wangler

Kalliopi Anastasiadis

Pavlos Anastasiadis

Mary Lazaroff

Elaine Kleiner

Helen Tannis

Phil Lazaroff

Milan Koprivica

John Stamcos

Herb Foor

Patty Canales-Baker

Ted Backos

Departed

Deno Demos

Ted Chames

Ellen Koprivica

Samantha Cipolla

Mike Egnatuk

Archbishop Job

Stella Stamatakis

Norman Kirchis

Elaine Overley

Marge Lester

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