Living the Orthodox Faith

“For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead also.” – James 2:26

From the desk of Fr. Timothy

Probably one of the most common resolutions we make this time of year is: “I’m going to exercise more this year!” Exercise is one of those things that we all know we should do, and probably even want to do. We don’t really need our doctors to tell us that, if we want to be healthy, we need to exercise more – we know it already.

But imagine – what if, instead of actually exercising, we just thought about exercising? What if, instead of going to the gym, we just said, “I believe in exercise, being fit is a very important part of my life. Exercise is just who I am!” It’s all probably true enough, but if we only ever think about getting fit and never actually go to the gym, it doesn’t actually do any good. It’s like saying that I’m a marathon runner because I think about marathons all the time – I might know a lot about marathons, but I wouldn’t make it a mile if I actually tried to run one.

On a practical level, this is just common sense – we’re more than just a disembodied mind that “thinks” about things, we are physical beings. Our bodies and our minds are inextricably linked, and they don’t work separate from each other. What we think is reflected in what we do, and what we do is reflected in how we think. It’s just how we are.

But sometimes we try to separate thinking and doing when it comes to Church. How often do we apply to the Church those very same lines from above: “I believe in God, being a Christian is very important to me. The Church is just who I am!” If true, this is as it should be – but if we say these things and think these things – however sincerely – and never actually go to Church, then our Christianity is worth about as much as an unused gym membership. No matter what we may think, if we don’t make our Faith a priority in our lives, then our Christianity will never be more than surface level, even in our minds.

For belief and knowledge to be ingrained, they must be backed up by action. This applies universally to our spiritual lives, not just to Church attendance. The shortest and least attentive prayer is worth a thousand books about prayer. Real fasting is better than any amount of talking about fasting, and a single penny given in true love for one’s neighbor is worth a thousand millionaires talking about the merits of charitable giving. True love is something that we do, not think, and true belief is reflected by our actions.

So as we celebrate the New Year, and make our regular resolutions, think about adding one of the following “spiritual” resolutions to your list:

1) Attend Church every Sunday. If something conflicts, excuse yourself from the other thing, and not from the Church. (I can provide excuse letters, if you like).
2) Go to Confession (this is a great way to start the year, and with Lent on the horizon it’s a good way to prepare for that, as well).

Father Timothy’s message continued on page 2...
Father Timothy’s message continued...

3) Pray daily. If something conflicts, don’t sacrifice your prayer time.
4) Fast – but with supervision. (This applies to prayer, too. Just like exercise, doing too much or too little can rob you of the benefit. Talk to your spiritual father).
5) When you have a question about some aspect of the Faith, ask!

By all means exercise, eat better, spend more time with family – but don’t forget to make your spiritual health a reality. Our health is not something we should take for granted, our spiritual health even less than our physical health. If thinking were enough for salvation and life, then Christ wouldn’t have been born in the flesh. So in the light of Christmas and looking forward to the New Year, may God bless us all and help us to make our Faith something we live. Christ is Born! Glorify Him!
Fr. Timothy

ALTAR VIGIL CANDLES
12/11 - In Memory of, John Nichols departed 25 years, by Gabriella Economous. May His Memory Be Eternal

PHILOPTOCHOS CORNER

The ladies of Philoptochos wish our Saint Demetrios family a joyous and blessed New Year.

We look forward to 2020 as we continue our philanthropic work for our church and community.

Happy Year!
Joni Porchia
President

Prosforon & Fellowship Schedule

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>P: Pres. Peggy Bistolarides</th>
<th>F: Mark &amp; Koula Legner</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 5</td>
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<td>Jan. 12</td>
<td>P: Kathy Huber</td>
<td>F: Taylor &amp; Jeremy Blohm</td>
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<td>Jan. 19</td>
<td>P: Linda Hubbell</td>
<td>F: Bessie &amp; Kevin Bone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 26</td>
<td>P: Janice Kato</td>
<td>F: Vaia &amp; Shawn Clifford</td>
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Many thanks to all the women who prepare the Prosforon each week. It is truly an important offering for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. If you are unable to prepare Prosforon for your scheduled Sunday, please contact the church office.

DAUGHTERS OF PENEOLOPE
The Daughter’s Christmas party & meeting was held on Friday, Dec. 6th. Many thanks to Peggy Nemode who opened her home to the group and prepared the wonderful main course. An enjoyable time was had by all.

As is the Daughter’s custom, during the Christmas season, selecting organizations that need help was the first order of business. It was decided donate to First Choice (an organization that helps the handicapped live on their own) and Music to Minors an organization that teaches music to disadvantaged students. Additionally, the Daughters picked up the remaining names off the giving tree and bought them all gifts. Much thanks again to Peggy Nemode who did all the shopping, wrapping and delivering the gifts to church. We wish everyone a HAPPY & HEALTHY 2020!!!
HOUSE BLESSINGS

Traditionally, at the feast of our Lord’s Theophany on January 6th, we bless water which is used to sanctify the homes of all the faithful. In bringing the blessed water to our homes, and sprinkling it in each room, we rid our house of any evil influence, and rededicate it to God in a special way. As we were once renewed by the waters of our own baptism into Christ, so too our home, and our entire lives, are re-dedicated and renewed unto Christ our God each year at this time. Please contact the church office at 989-793-8822 if you would like your home blessed this year.

You can also fill out the following information and submit it to the Church office, or you fill it out online at www.stdemetrios.mi.goarch.org/house-blessings.

Name: ___________________________ Phone #: ______________________

Address: ___________________________ Email: ______________________

________________________________________

Date desired: _________________________ Time of day: ________________

House Blessing FAQ

1. Who should be present?
   Answer: As many family members as possible. We are blessing both the house itself and the people who live in it, as an extension and reflection of the Church.

2. What do I need to have ready?
   Answer: An icon on a table near your icon corner, or in the kitchen/dining room and names of the living (at least those who live in the house, often also other relatives). Optional: Candle/ incense with the icon, a bunch of fresh basil, and a bowl of water.

3. Do I need to deep-clean the house?
   Answer: Whatever makes you comfortable.

4. Do I need to feed the priest?
   Answer: No, but Fr. Timothy would be very happy to sit with you and the family for a little while after the blessing. House Blessings are a good time to catch up with the priest.

4. My house was blessed last year, do I need to do it again?
   Answer: It’s up to you! It’s traditional to do it every year, as a renewal of the dedication of our homes as "little churches," but there's no expiration date on the blessing.

Other questions? Call or email Fr. Timothy at 989-793-8822 or frtimothycook@gmail.com.

Blessed Feast and Happy New Year!
St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church
2020 Stewardship Commitment Form

"Teach us to number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom."
Psalm 90:12

A TIME FOR EVERY PURPOSE UNDER HEAVEN

Please bring this form to the Church or mail it to the Church Office at 4970 Mackinaw Rd., Saginaw, MI 48603

Name: ____________________________________________

Street Address: ________________________________ City: ______________ State: __ Zip Code: ___________

Individual or Family Spouse (if applicable) Children (if applicable)

Name: ________________________ ________________________ Names

Home Tel: ________________________ ________________________ Age:

Mobile Tel: ________________________ ________________________

Work Tel: ________________________ ________________________ Age:

Email: ________________________ ________________________

Occupation: ________________________ ________________________ Age:

(Last, current)

In gratitude for God’s blessings, I/we pledge to contribute for Christ’s work at St. Demetrios Church for 2020.

$ _______ weekly $ _______ monthly $ _______ quarterly $ _______ semi-annually $ _______ annually

Our goal as a parish family is to raise our stewardship by $20/month for the 2020 calendar year. However, stewardship is a spiritual discipline that should be discussed with your spiritual father.

Please indicate areas of expertise or interest where you would like to serve:

(Individuals should provide a check mark and families provide "H" for husband, "W" for wife and "C" for children)

ADMINISTRATION __ Audit Committee
__ Election Committee
__ Office help

BUILDING & GROUNDS __ Property Maintenance
__ Garden & Landscape
__ Iconography / Beautification

COMMUNICATIONS __ Computer / Technical

EDUCATION __ Adult Education

LITURGICAL __ Baking Prophora
__ Music Ministries
__ Sanctuary & Altar Care

MINISTRIES __ Coffee Hour

___ Newsletter / Publications
__ Website / Email
__ Education
__ Adult Education
__ Liturgical
__ Baking Prophora
__ Music Ministries
__ Sanctuary & Altar Care
__ Ministries
__ Coffee Hour
__ Family Ministry
__ Hospitality / Welcome Ministry
__ Visitation (Sick / Shut-ins)
__ Outreach
__ Youth
__ Church School Teacher
__ Church School Administration
__ GOYA Advisor
__ Other

I/we would like to receive notifications from St. Demetrios by: ___ email ___ paper mail

You can also submit your stewardship card and your contributions online at www.stdemetrios.mi.goarch.org/stewardship

CONFIDENTIAL: For Authorized Parish Personnel Only
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Saint Demetrios Calendar of Events • January 2020
When you support the Friends of the Metropolis campaign, you are part of a greater outreach that proclaims with one universal voice that God is truly our hope and our rock of salvation. Because of your devotion to the Friends program, ministries and programs are implemented on a Metropolis-wide basis which strengthen and enhance our faith and our joint ministry of service. I would like to invite you to join forces with the faithful throughout the Metropolis of Detroit in support of the ministries which are part of the Office of the Metropolitan.

Thanking you for your kind and generous response,

I remain, with paternal blessings and prayers,

+NIKOLAOS
Metropolitan of Detroit

MORE INFO AT:
WWW.DETROIT.GOARCH.ORG/FRIENDS