

My beloved parishioners,

It is with great joy I see many of you coming back to our church on Sundays, and our children gathering for our Greek School in a safe and social distancing way! Times are still challenging for everyone. However, if we have the basics and have each other, we should say “glory to God”/ Δόξα τω Θεώ! Our usual October activities have been curtailed, but thanks to the positive spirit of our Parish Council, Philoptochos and all our volunteers, we will have a **drive-through food event on October 24th** (see flyer in events)!

October is also the month we celebrate the Great Martyr **St. Demetrios**, **St. Luke** the Evangelist and **St. Thomas** the Apostle. Besides saying “Chronia Polla” to those named after these saints, we should all take a moment and contemplate their contributions to our faith. **St. Demetrios**, a commander of 1,000 Roman troops and the Duke of Thessaly at the young age of 22, did not hesitate to confess Christ in front of his general (and future emperor) Galerius Maximinian. As a result, he gave up honors, riches and glory in this life, to receive instead the painful death of a martyr. **St. Thomas** was also martyred for having converted to Christ the entire family of the King of India. Before preaching in India, he preached in Persia and Media. But most of all, by doubting the Resurrection of Christ, St. Thomas became an example of how faith should work. And that is through the heart and not through the mind. Finally, **St. Luke**, a student of St. Paul, wrote his 24-chapter gospel in Alexandria of Egypt, only 15 years after the Lord’s Ascension. His gospel emphasizes the social work of Christ. He preached in Greece, Italy, France, and Dalmatia, finally receiving the death of a martyr when he was 80 years old!

The lives of martyrs are an inspiration to us all. This is especially true in times of tribulation, such as the times we are living now. The spiritual and physical strength of the martyrs during their own torments and sacrifice for Christ did not come automatically. It was the result of faith, prayer and the Grace of God. Martyrs are oftentimes compared to athletes trying to win a trophy. We all know that the best athletes are the ones who train longer and work harder. In a similar fashion, the best athletes for Christ, are also called to train longer in prayer, fasting, confession and work harder in good deeds before they claim their own trophy, the Kingdom of Heaven. May we all have their blessings and prayers and may we all be also victors over this pandemic and any other temptations we may have to endure in our lifetime.

With Love in Christ, Your Parish Priest,
Fr. Gregory