

Clean Monday (Kathara Deftera)

The Greek Orthodox Easter will be celebrated early this year (the 8th of April). So it was that the community assembled once again at the Mermikides Community Centre on Monday the 19th of February to celebrate the beginning of Lent.



More than fifty parishioners came to celebrate Clean Monday. A lunch with a difference. On the menu we had shellfish, halva, peppers and tomatoes, cucumbers, celery and cabbage, radishes and Kohlrabi (*Brassica oleracea*). Father Vissarion prepared Laganas and for dessert, the ladies of the community prepared fruit salad and mahalebi (mahalep), jelly and semolina.



Clean Monday is celebrated 7 weeks before Easter and it symbolises purity and innocence. Christians begin fasting to prepare for the biggest day in the Orthodox calendar, the Resurrection of Jesus, Easter.



In Cyprus and Greece, especially in the old days, Kathara Deftera was celebrated in the fields and threshing floors. This tradition continues even today in the villages. It's a day of fun and

song, and the Margate community did not hold back. They sang Greek and Cypriot songs with gusto, enthusiasm and meraki!



Kathara Deftera proved very special for the community this year. They left laughing and joking and humming tunes that they sung to. Many of them expressed the wish that we all gather together again next year, continue our ethnic and cultural traditions.

Report and Photos: Michael Papadopoulos