

Check out the store at Bolton area monastery

Is there such a thing as a new tradition?

Traditions have their start somewhere.

For 14 years, The Sisters of Saint Kosmas Aitolos Greek Orthodox Monastery near Bolton, have been inviting the community to their store, The Sisters Touch of Christmas. It has represented a perfect seasonal family outing to a magical store snuggled in Bolton's rolling hills.

An enchanting gateway and manicured driveway leads to a quaint building, the first on the left.

The doors open to a storybook store of old-world charm with stunning displays of floor to ceiling shelves, dazzlingly filled with one-of-a-kind handcrafted gifts and displays; a feast for the eyes. A first glance reveals that an exclusive store like this will never be seen in any mall, and visitors notice it's a typical Christmas bazaar.

Once inside, volunteer associates of the nuns, as well as, a jolly five foot snowman extend a welcome. Moms, dads, grandmas and grandpas can hardly hold back their anticipation of what's to come. Scented candles, joyful music and the thought of yummy treats beckons everyone onward.

The first of three rooms contains sparkling one-of-a-kind blown glass tree ornaments painstakingly hand-painted by the sisters themselves. There are dozens of themed ornaments representing the interests of every family member. Upon purchase, ornaments may be personalized by the sisters at no additional charge.

Strolling into the second room, patrons are enticed to the smells of the holiday season. The sisters are well known for their variety of authentic, traditional, gourmet Christmas cookies, fruit cakes, Christmas sweet bread and Greek baklava ? all beautifully packaged for any festive occasion. Dads may wish try out their seasoned oils made with 100 per cent olive oil, while Moms check out the beeswax products, creams, lip balms and fine artisan soaps made by the sisters themselves. Moms can get the dads to meet up with them again at the jewelry section for some helpful suggestions.

The warmth of the third room is brimming with ideas for accentuating the home's Christmas décor. Look over their linens, runners, illuminated decor, elegant centerpieces and candles. Find angel themes and their beautiful nativity scenes with artistically designed mangers and quality European imported figurines, and so much more.

All these reasonably priced gifts are presented in the reflection of the true meaning of Christmas. The monies raised by the sisters in their Christmas store help them in their initiatives to help others throughout the year. On the wall behind the register are plaques they have received from some of the many various service organizations they support.

People making a purchase will receive a ballot for a free weekly draw.

For timeless Christmas keepsakes, unique children's gifts, the very finest holiday items, tastiest recipes and an exclusive, unforgettable experience, the sisters invite everyone to start a new tradition.

The store is easy to find. The monastery is at 14155 Caledon King Townline (Mount Wolfe Road for thos coming from the north. The store will be open from Oct. 26 ro Dec. 24. The hours are from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays, 10 to 6 Saturdays, and 11 to 4 Sundays.



One of the displays to be seen in The Sisters Touch of Christmas.