

THE MESSENGER

ST. DEMETRIOS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH • RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

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MISSION STATEMENT

To bring all children, youth and young adults closer to Christ and His Church through religious education, fellowship and various other events on a parish and national level.

Prayer for Married Couples

Merciful God, we ask You to always remind us that marriage is holy, and that we must keep it so. Grant us Your grace that we may continue in faithfulness and love. Increase in us the spirit of mutual understanding and trust, that no quarrel or strife may come between us. Grant us Your blessings, that we may stand before You and all people as an ideal family. Finally, by Your mercy, account us worthy of everlasting life. For You are our sanctification, and to You we ascribe glory: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and forevermore. Amen.

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JACOB'S LADDER

BY JOHN KAPSALIS

There is a wonderful story in the Bible about Jacob, who is one of the heroes of the Old Testament. The Bible says that one night, "Jacob dreamed he saw a stairway reaching from earth up to heaven, and angels were going up and coming down on it" (Genesis 28:10-16). It sounds like a pretty amazing dream to have. But here's the interesting part. Jacob didn't make up the dream in his sleep. God gave the dream to him.

Imagine you had such a dream.

What if you saw an extra long ladder that went from your bedroom all the way up to the sky and up to heaven, right to the throne of God? And imagine, furthermore, that as you looked at this ladder it began to be filled with endless streams of angels who would be racing up and down the ladder.

That's the type of dream Jacob had. But there was more to his dream than just angels going up and down a ladder. God gave Jacob the dream for a reason. God had a message for him.

The Bible says that while Jacob was having his dream, God spoke to him and made him a promise. God's promise was that he would bless Jacob and what's more, God told Jacob that he would be with him and protect him and never leave him. That's an incredible promise.

And here's the best part. To prove his love for him, when Jacob was having his dream, watching the angels go up and down the ladder, God wasn't at the top of the ladder waiting for Jacob. The Bible tells us that God was "standing right beside Jacob." God wasn't far away. God was at the bottom of the ladder, right where Jacob was. God was with him all along.

Isn't that a beautiful dream?

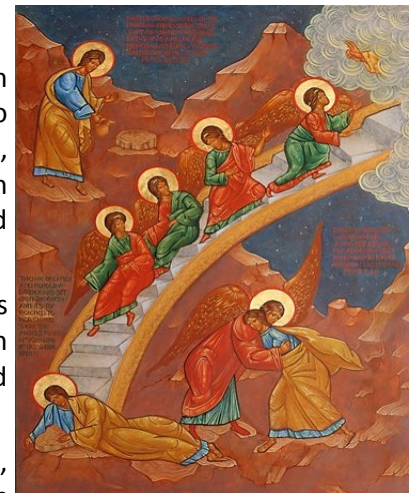
Many times we think that God is far away from us, way up in heaven, indifferent to our everyday lives, but that's not true. God is always right here with us. We can count on him to help us and protect us, and that is God's promise to each of us.

Sure, God doesn't necessarily give us dreams like Jacob's anymore to prove his love, but he gives us something infinitely better: Jesus.

Jesus is God's promise to us, just like he was with Jacob in his dream. Except the good news is that Jesus doesn't exist in our dreams, he's real and he's always by our side.

Elder Porphyrios says that "Jesus constantly has us in his thoughts and he protect us. This is why we must believe in him and not be afraid of anything."

God already gave us his promise to always be with us. I hope we promise to always stay close to God too. And when we do, Jesus will one day lead us up the ladder straight to heaven.



A Woman Dedicated to God: St. Philothei of Athens

The city of Athens is known for its many famous citizens: philosophers such as Aristotle and Socrates; leaders such as Pericles and Xenophon; and New Testament figures like St. Paul and St. Dionysios the Areopagite. During the fifteenth century, a woman lived in the city who would bring the love of God and hope for many citizens at the time: **St. Philothei of Athens**.

Saint Philothei (whose name literally means “friend of God”, φίλη του Θεού) was born in Athens in 1522 to an illustrious and pious family with the name “Revoula”. At very young age, she was married to a cruel man, who battered and abused her. While this took place, Revoula prayed to God to bring her husband to his senses. When he died three years later, she took up the monastic life and established a female monastery dedicated to St. Andrew the Apostle. It is here she took the name “Philothei”. During her time as the Abbess, she became a true mother to many women who also suffered abuse.

When four women ran away from their Turkish masters (as they were being forced to renounce their faith), they sought refuge at the Monastery. The Turkish masters showed their anger by arriving at the convent and dragged St. Philothei by force out of the church, and beat her cruelly. By God’s grace, many Christians gathered and saved her from certain death.

Later on in her life, she was seized by the Turks, beaten mercilessly and left for dead. The sisters of the monastery found her, cared for her and wept as she fell asleep in the Lord in the year 1589.

Together with Sts. Paul, Ierotheos and Dionysios the Areopagite, she is considered a Patron Saint of the city of Athens. She is also the Patron Saint both of battered women and the National Philoptochos Society of our Metropolis.

St. Philothei Made a Difference! You Can Too!

- ◆ St. Philothei took care of those who could not take care of themselves. Women and children who were being taken advantage of went to her, and she took care of them. In our society, there are so many places that we have that take care of our sisters in Christ. We should try our best to support these places with our prayers and any other way we can. Through our efforts, we can make a person’s life so much better.
- ◆ St. Philothei was such a great influence on the people around her, she became one of the Patron Saints of Athens, as well as the Patron Saint of our Philoptochos and of all battered women. We can be a great example when we learn about our Faith (*Orthodoxia*), as well as living our Faith for the betterment of humanity (*Orthopraxia*). St. Philothei did... and now she is glorified in Heaven. We can follow her steps, grow in Faith and be closer to God.

St. Philothei, intercede for us! Αγ. Φιλοθέη, πρόσβευε υπέρ ημών!

ALTAR SERVERS & GIRLS GROUP

VISITING THE HELLENIC HOME

The two youth ministries of our Church (**St. Nektarios Altar Servers** and **St. Paraskevi Girls Group**) are organizing a joint event on **Saturday, February 23rd, 2013** from **3:00 to 6:00 p.m.** at the **Hellenic Home for the Aged – Scarborough** (2411 Lawrence Avenue).

The program of events for the day is as follows:

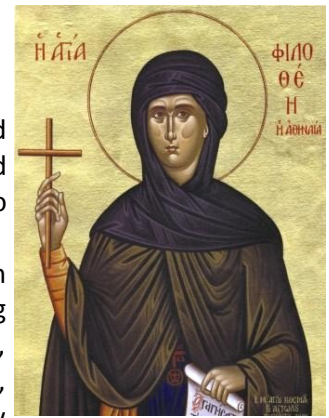
3:00 p.m. Supplication Service at Sts. Kyrillos and Methodios Chapel

4:00 p.m. Visiting the Seniors of the Hellenic Home for the Aged

5:45 p.m. Dinner at Pizza Hut (592 Ellesmere Rd, corner of Ellesmere and Birchmount)

If you have any questions, please contact us at stdemetrios@livingorthodoxy.com or call the Church Office at 416-425-2485 and speak with Tim Prattas.

This is a great way to give back to our community! We hope to see you there!



Parish Life at a Glance - January 2013



Above: Re-Catechism is a great ministry of our Church. With parishioners of all ages, it has been growing since it began in 2009. The photo is from our first session (January 15th). For more information on upcoming sessions, see the back page of our newsletter!



Left: On January 6th, hundreds of people packed our Church to celebrate the Feast of Theophany. The picture above is a shot of the congregation, while below is our Parish Priest, Fr. Konstantinos Pavlidis, with Fr. Konstantinos Kakabelakis, in the midst of the Great Agiasmos Service.

If you have pictures from Parish Events, please e-mail us!

A List of Who to Pray For this Month..



For more info on our Parish,
visit our website at:



www.
Livingorthodoxy
.com



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Religious Education Newsletter**

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The third Greek Orthodox Church in Toronto, St. Demetrios Church was founded in 1962. Since then, our Church has been the spiritual home of thousands of Orthodox faithful from Toronto and vicinity. Our Church is a constituent member of the Greek Community of Toronto [www.greekcommunity.org] and under the spiritual jurisdiction of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Toronto (Canada) [www.gometropolis.org].

The Religious Education programs have been attended by many children, youth and young adults. Our tireless staff works to promote the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Parish Priest
Religious Education Director
Young Adult League Leaders

Parish Council President
Philotochos President
Greek Bible Study
Re-Catechism
*(English Orthodox
Discussion Group)*

Rev. Fr. Konstantinos Pavlidis
Mr. Basile Polidoulis
Mrs. Vicki Vokas, Mr. Niko Sotiropoulos

Mr. Argyrios Haros
Mrs. Zoe Veroutis
Mr. Basile Polidoulis
Mrs. Fotini Kapsalis
Mr. John Kapsalis
Mr. Chrysostom Makropoulos
Mr. Tim Prattas

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StDemetrios@LivingOrthodoxy.com

St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church
Re-Catechism Lecture Series Presents...

Finding Jesus Christ In the Old Testament

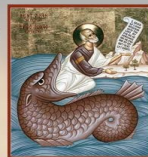


Remaining Sessions Include....



Seeing God: Moses and the 10 Commandments
Tuesday, February 12th (TBA)

Preaching Repentance: The Story of Jonah
Tuesday, February 26th (F. Kapsalis, Ph.D.)



Dreams, Visions and God's Judgment: Daniel
Tuesday, March 5th (C. Makropoulos)

A God-Crowned King and Prophet: David
Tuesday, March 19th (Fr. K. Pavlidis)



Praising God in Hymns: Wisdom Literature
Tuesday, April 2nd (TBA)

Describing the Suffering Servant: Isaiah
Tuesday, April 16th (T. Prattas, M.Div.)



Compline: 6:45 p.m. + Session: 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Want to learn more about Re-Catechism?

Email: stdemetrios@livingorthodoxy.com

URL: www.LivingOrthodoxy.com

Twitter: @stdemetriostoronto

FB Page: St. Demetrios Toronto is my Church!

