

THE MESSENGER

ST. DEMETRIOS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH • RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 4,
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JANUARY 2013

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 of St. Philaret of Moscow

Lord, I know not what to ask of You.
You alone know what my true needs are.
You love me more than I myself know how to love.
Help me to see my real needs which may be hidden from me.
I dare not ask for either a cross or a consolation.
I can only wait upon You; my heart is open to You.
Visit and help me in Your steadfast love.
Strike me and heal me; cast me down and raise me up.
I worship in silence Your holy will.
I offer myself to You as a living sacrifice.
I put all my trust in You.
I have no other desire than to fulfill Your will.
Teach me to pray. Pray Yourself in me.
Amen.

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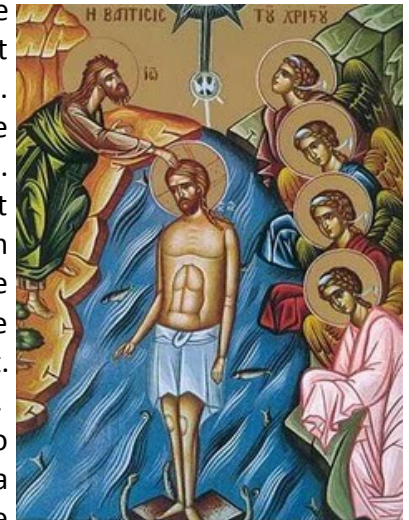
“TODAY YOU HAVE APPEARED TO THE INHABITED WORLD” THOUGHTS ON THEOPHANY 2013

Every January 6th, the Orthodox Church celebrates one of the Great Feasts of the Lord: *Theophany* or *Epiphany*. By some, this feast is merely associated with the event of the Lord's baptism in the Jordan by St. John the Baptist. Others equate it with the receiving of Holy Water (or *Agiasmos*), while others still speak of the tradition of “diving for the Cross”, done throughout the Orthodox world (especially in Greece). Yet, this feast is about so much more than this.

The historical event of the baptism of Jesus Christ by St. John the Baptist is found in Matthew 3:13-17, Mark 1:9-11 and Luke 3:21-22 (whereas the Gospel of John refers to it indirectly through St. John the Baptist's narrative). This event is well-known: Jesus appears at the Jordan, where John preached. Upon seeing Him, St. John wanted to stop it from happening, saying that he should be baptized by Jesus. Yet, the baptism occurred at the command of Christ. This fact alone shows that Christ was greater than John. The Baptist was a servant of the Master—Jesus Christ. St. John came to prepare the world for the Messiah.

Yet, the greatness of this day is not limited to Christ merely revealing Himself. More so, it was a day that the *Holy Trinity* was revealed to all. The Son of God was baptized. The Holy Spirit was present, coming in the form of a dove and resting on Christ. The Father's voice was heard to all from the Heavens: “This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

The Holy Trinity was manifested on that day—hence the name *Theophany* (Θεοφάνεια). There is One God: “one in essence and undivided”, as the hymn of the Divine Liturgy states. All three Persons of the Trinity are equal in honour and worship, although each Person of the Trinity has personal (hypostatic) attributes: The Father is unbegotten, *Above* us and the Foundation of all being; the Son is begotten of the Father, *With* us through His incarnation; and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, *In* us and all creation, Filling all things and the Giver of Life. Theophany shows us that God reveals Himself to the world and sanctifies all creation.



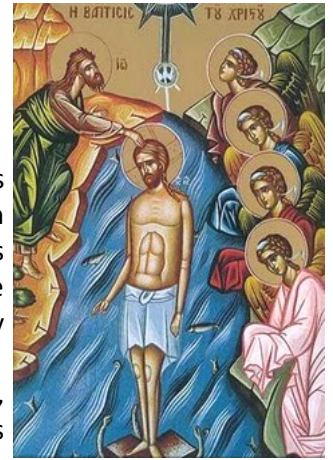
► Continued on page 3

Ευλογημένα το Νέο Έτος 2013!
Happy New Year 2013!

God bless the Clergy, Chanters,
Church Council, Philoptochos,
Altar Servers and all everyone
who helped during Christmas
Services at our Parish!

"Today the waters are sanctified": On Theophany

Excerpts of a sermon on the Feast by St. John Maximovitch (+1966)



Today the nature of the waters is sanctified. Today the Son of God is baptized in the waters of the Jordan, having no need Himself of cleansing, but in order to cleanse the sinful human race from defilement. Now the heavens open and the voice of God the Father is heard: This is My beloved Son. The Holy Spirit descends upon the Savior of the world, Who stands in the Jordan, thereby confirming that this indeed is He Who is the incarnate Son of God. The Holy Trinity is clearly made manifest and is revealed to mankind.

The waters of the Jordan are sanctified, and together with them all the waters of creation, the very nature of water. Water is given power to cleanse not only the body, but also man's whole soul, and to regenerate the whole man unto a new life through Baptism.

The waters are sanctified and through them the whole world, in preparation for renewal and regeneration for God's eternal Kingdom which is to come.

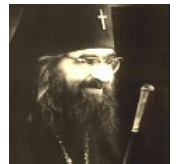
Every year on this day the glory of God is revealed, renewing and confirming what was accomplished at Christ's Baptism. Again the heavens are opened; again the Holy Spirit descends. We do not see this with our bodily eyes, but we sense its power. At the rite of blessing, the waters which are thereby sanctified are transformed; they become incorruptible and retain their freshness for many years. Whence do the waters acquire this property? It is the action of the Holy Spirit.

Those who with faith drink these waters and anoint themselves with them receive relief and healing from spiritual and bodily infirmities. Homes are sanctified by these waters, the power of demons is expelled, God's blessing is brought down upon all that is sprinkled with these waters. Through the sanctifying of the waters God's blessing is again imparted to the whole world, cleansing it from the sins we have committed and guarding it from the machinations of the devil.

Today the Holy Spirit, descending upon the waters when the Cross of Christ is immersed into them, descends upon all of nature. Only in man He cannot enter without his will.

Let us open our hearts and souls to receive Him and with faith cry from the depths of our souls: "Great are You, O Lord, and marvelous are your works, and there is no word which suffices to hymn Your wonders!"

~ St. John Maximovitch was Archbishop of Shanghai and San Francisco, serving widely the Church from China to France and then the United States. Countless miracles have been attributed to St. John, both when he was alive and after his repose.



HOUSE BLESSINGS THIS MONTH!

After the Feast of Theophany (celebrated on January 6th), it is traditional to have homes blessed with Holy Water.

If you would like our Parish Priest to visit and bless your home in the New Year, please contact Fr. Pavlidis by calling 416-425-2485 or by e-mail (Subject: Agiasmos 2013) at st.demetrios@greekcommunity.org

FOLLOW US ON TWITTER!



You can get alerts for upcoming services, events and more by following our Church on Twitter!

Subscribe by going to [@StDemetriosTO!](https://twitter.com/StDemetriosTO)

Christmas Festivities at our Parish



To see more pictures of events
at our Parish, visit our website at:



[www.
LivingOrthodoxy
.com](http://www.LivingOrthodoxy.com)

Thoughts on Theophany 2013 (continued from page 1)

From the Early Church to today, many heretics have tried to create different beliefs about the Trinity. Yet, they fail to preach the Truth of the Church, expressed in the Bible (Old and New Testaments) and the Holy Tradition of the Church. It is of vital importance that we all know—to the best of our abilities—Who God is and to not fall into heresy (that is, believing something about God that is false). If we do this, we live the true meaning of Theophany: God manifesting Himself in our lives—and we accepting Him as the only One who is Holy by His very nature.

May we all have a blessed New Year and a spiritually fulfilling Theophany! Χρόνια Πολλά!



**St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church
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
Philoptochos 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. Zoi Veroutis
Mr. Basile Polidoulis
Mrs. Fotini Kapsalis
Mr. John Kapsalis
Mr. Chrysostom Makropoulos
Mr. Tim Prattas

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

FINDING JESUS CHRIST IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

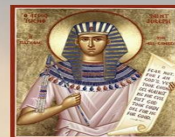


SESSIONS INCLUDE...



In the Beginning: Genesis

Tuesday, January 15th (T. Prattas, M.Div.)



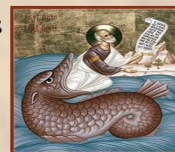
Jealousy and Forgiveness: The Story of Joseph

Tuesday, January 29th (J. Kapsalis, M.Th.)



Seeing God: Moses and the 10 Commandments

Tuesday, February 12th (TBA)



Preaching Repentance: The Story of Jonah

Tuesday, February 26th (F. Kapsalis, Ph.D.)



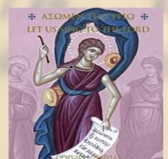
Dreams, Visions and God's Judgment: Daniel

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.)

Want to learn more about Re-Catechism?

Email: stdemetrios@livingorthodoxy.com

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