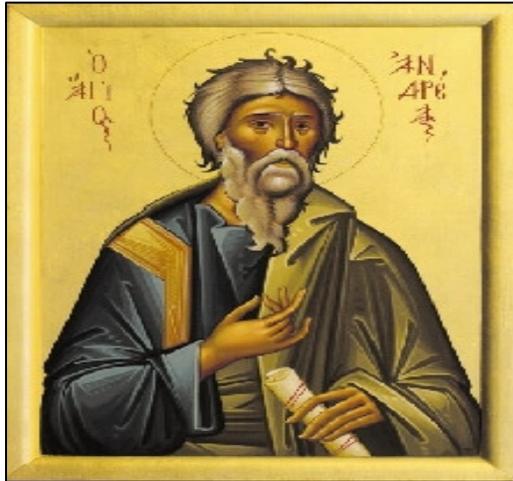




St. Catherine's Newsletter



St. Andrew :November 30th



Assumption Greek Orthodox Church

Volume 1, Issue 5

November 2008

Special points of interest:

- ☺ Special contribution from Marika Maggos
- ☺ People You Should Know
- ☺ Ask Father!
- ☺ Thanksgiving Prayer
- ☺ Kid's Corner
- ☺ Coloring, Jokes, Trivia!
- ☺ Thanksgiving Poem

Faith in a Faithless World

Can we encounter God in our contemporary pop culture? We are called not necessarily to love our culture, but to find God in it - in movies, technology, current events, etc.

This mission can sometimes be difficult in a society that seems to lack faith on so many levels. We as teenagers especially feel this spiritual void:

- 30 percent of teens believe that all religions are really praying to the same God, they are just using different names for God.
- In total, 83 percent of teens maintain that moral truth depends on the circumstances, and only 6 percent believe that moral truth is absolute.
- Just one-third of teens read the Bible each week outside of Church.
- Of those who call themselves Christians, 26 percent said they are absolutely committed and 57 percent said that they were 'moderately committed' to the Christian faith.

In a world where many teens feel disconnected from God, from religion, and from any kind of faith, we are blessed to be the inheritors of a very rich spiritual tradition. Our Orthodox Faith provides us tools to help fill those spiritual voids we feel today. In fact, our Faith even provides responses to the issues we face living as teens in today's world. This may come as a surprise for those of us who may not know much about the Faith. It can be confusing and overwhelming to think about getting involved in our Church - for many of us, it's something our parents have raised us in, but we don't know very much about it. Some of us may not even know what we really believe.



The good news is that God is loving and patient, and He's always there to receive us whenever we reach out to Him. He will meet us where we are, even if it's at square one, even when we're confused and full of doubt. So, as a new school year begins, let this be a new year for our faith. Let's all take a small step toward faith - toward investigating, learning, praying, and loving.

So, where can we start? Here are some practical ways that we can ramp up our faith and re-commit ourselves to Christ.

- Check out these books: A Tiny Step Away from Deepest Faith by Marjorie Corbman, God Speaks from the Cross by Fr. Anthony Coniaris, and The Way of a Pilgrim (all available at amazon.com)
- Take a look at some movies that will help you reflect on your faith: The Nativity Story (2006), Chronicles of Narnia (2005), The Passion of the Christ (2005), Amistad (1997), Ben Hur (1959).
- Talk to your parish priest about spirituality and confession and join your youth group or GOYA.
- Open up the Bible and start reading one chapter a week. Or, start following along with the daily readings prescribed by the Church. (www.goarch.org) You can get weekly emails with readings.
 - Make a point to attend one service outside of Sunday morning Liturgy (Vespers, Orthros, etc).
 - Listen to some of Switchfoot's music and examine the lyrics and their approach to religious faith.
 - Websites have information about our Orthodox Christian faith (www.goarch.org/en/ourfaith/) and resources about special feast days and celebrations in the Church (www.goarch.org/en/special/).

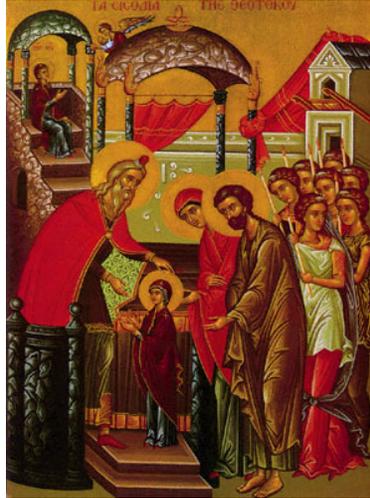
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The Entrance of the Theotokos By: Marika Maggos

This month we celebrate The Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple. We celebrate this on November 21st. When Anna found out she was having a child from the angel, she promised her child would be a gift to God and serve him for all the days of her life. Of course, Joachim and Anna kept their promise to God. Therefore, when Mary turned 3 years old, Joachim and Anna brought her to the temple. But they didn't just bring her to the temple, they made it more fun for little Mary. Instead, they gathered all the girls from the neighborhood and the girls formed a procession to the temple holding lit candles with Mary following behind. Mary was so thrilled and intrigued, that when she got to the temple she ran right to the High Priest Zacharias not once crying for her parents. Mary stayed in the

temple until she was about 15 years old. During her years there, Mary prayed to God and an angel would visit her and bring her food and something to drink. This feast day shows the Theotokos' dedication to God and readiness for her future.



Ask Father!

Dear Father Timothy, I was wondering why girls cannot serve in the altar in a Greek Orthodox Church?

- Sophia, 13

A: This is a question that is often asked by our young people and also older people as well. While it might provoke thought, anxiety, and confusion, the reasons are based and girded in tradition and also on the roles that God has ordained for man and women to exhibit here on earth. Tradition of the Church and Scripture are very important in the Orthodox faith. For Orthodox Christians, there are two important parts of the Church, the clergy and the laity. As in the living body, the mind cannot survive without the heart and other internal organs; the living Church cannot survive without the synergy between the clergy and the laity.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

NOVEMBER

- 24th : St. Catherine's Vesper Services 7:00 pm
 - 25th : Feast Day of St. Catherine
 - 29th : Sunday School Outing
- “A Christmas Carol” at Drury Lane Theater, Oak Brook Terrace - 11:30 am breakfast w/Santa 1 pm performance - Adults \$17.50 Children \$15.50 call The Church Office to make your reservations - Tickets are limited.



DECEMBER

- 6th : Decorating the Hall for the Holidays
- 14th : Sunday School Christmas Pageant
- 21st : Annual Christmas Concert Following the Divine Liturgy



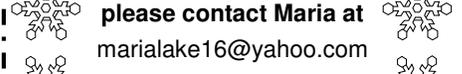
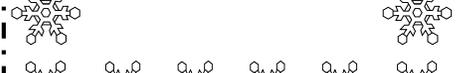

**WE
NEED
YOU**

**TO WRITE FOR THE
ST. CATHERINE'S
NEWSLETTER**

 If you are interested
 please contact Maria at
marialake16@yahoo.com






Ask Father continued...

Continued from page 2...

Priests and deacons were then ordained and taught the liturgical service so that cities and villages could hear The Word. Throughout the Divine Liturgy, the priests and deacons needed helpers, and so the natural development of Altar servers began. It was the hope that these altar servers would learn and desire to become deacons or priests as they matured in faith and became older. The clergy lead the Divine Liturgy, prepare the Sacraments, and deliver the teachings of Scripture. It is important to remember that the liturgical services have chanters and the choir who help in the celebration. Women are invited to participate and in fact frequently lead these activities. In Orthodoxy, the all-male priesthood is not based on the idea that women can't represent Jesus; if replication of the specifics of the Incarnation is the goal, only a first-century Jew could come near that. In Orthodoxy, it's not Jesus, but the **Father** whom those serving at the altar represent, and whatever else a woman can be (and, in Orthodoxy, she can be anything else: choir director, lector, teacher, head of the parish council) she cannot be a **Father** (no more than a man can ever be a **mother**). She can be a Mother, of

course, and so there is a recognized and honored role for the priest's wife, with a title Presbytera. God ordained that a man cannot conceive a child... is that unfair? By divine decision.... there is this difference. Ever since the beginning of early Byzantine tradition, women were generally not allowed to go behind the icon screen (iconostasion). There are exceptions, however, as in the case of nuns. However, this isn't a judgment against women or anything of that nature. It is simply that the sanctuary (which we call the Holy Altar) is a sacred area, and no one is allowed in there unless they have a specific reason to be there. Even layman, for that matter, are forbidden to enter there unless they have been told to do so. The priest only enters the sanctuary (Altar) when he is carrying out a liturgical function, or is making preparations to do so. Since in our tradition we do not have altar girls, there usually isn't a reason for a woman to enter into the altar. As I mentioned earlier, we need to understand that there are two different and equally important parts of the Church, the clergy and the laity. The laity involves all the other people of the Christian community. The function and importance of the laity have greatly in-



creased over the years. The choir and chanting of the Worship Service is an integral part of the Liturgy. The Church board and various committees keep the Church alive with important decisions on the direction and financial support of the Church. The Sunday School system is important for teaching children about the life of the Church. And women play an active and increasingly expanding role in all of these activities. So, serving the Church and Christ does not happen just behind the Holy Altar.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

We Give Thanks



Our Father in Heaven,

We give thanks for the pleasure
Of gathering together for this
occasion.

We give thanks for this food
Prepared by loving hands.

We give thanks for life,
The freedom to enjoy it all
And all other blessings.

As we partake of this food,
We pray for health and strength
To carry on and try to live as You
would have us.

This we ask in the name of Christ,
Our Heavenly Father.

---Harry Jewell

'Twas the Night...

'Twas the night of Thanksgiving,
but I just couldn't sleep...

I tried counting backwards,
I tried counting sheep.

The leftovers beckoned...the dark meat and white,
but I fought the temptation with all of my might.

Tossing and turning with anticipation,
the thought of a snack became infatuation.

So, I raced to the kitchen, flung open the door
and gazed at the fridge, full of goodies galore.

I gobbled up turkey and buttered potatoes,
stuffing with gravy, green beans and tomatoes.

I felt myself swelling so plump and so round,
till all of a sudden, I rose off the ground.

I crashed through the ceiling, floating into the sky
with a mouthful of pudding and a handful of pie

But, I managed to yell as I soared past the trees...
Happy eating to all -- pass the cranberries, please.

—Anonymous

People You Should Know: Mr. and Mrs. Maniatis

There are many important people around our church that you may not know. Mr. and Mrs. Maniatis a dynamic teaching duo (who also happen to be husband and wife) have been teaching Sunday school at Assumption for over 30 years. They teach the fifth and sixth grades. I had asked them to write a little something explaining their class and welcoming their new students. "Through play acting the student of the fifth and sixth grades get to know the people of the Old Testament. They randomly pick the name of God, Eve, Serpent, Noah, Cain,

etc. and speak their words in the plays we have composed. In this manner, they learn and remember names and events. The discussions that take place after each play reinforces the "moral of the story". We are also using the books "God Calls Us" and "Lives of the Saints and Major Feast Days". The students are both lively and inquisitive and are learning to relate the Old and New Testament stories to their everyday lives at home, in school, and with friends. We thoroughly enjoy teaching and learning with our students."

-ML

Assumption Greek
Orthodox Church

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DIVINE LITURGY SCHEDULE
Orthos: 8:30 AM
Divine Liturgy: 10:00 AM
Sunday School Liturgy: 9:30 AM

Spiritual Advisor: Very Rev.
Timothy Bakakos

Editor: Maria Lakerdas

Contributor: Marika Maggos



MAIL TO:

Do **YOU** want to write for the
St. Catherine's Newsletter?

Send in an article, poem, or short story to have it featured in the newsletter! Email it to Maria Lakerdas at marialake16@yahoo.com

Want to join the Newsletter Team?

We're looking for good writers, organized and fun people to help out with the church's children's newsletter! If you are interested and would like more information contact Maria Lakerdas (email above).

KID'S CORNER

TRIVIA (answers on bottom)

1. Where did the first U.S. harvest feast of Thanksgiving take place?
2. In what year did the first U.S Thanksgiving take place?

Why did the turkey
cross the road?

COLOR ME!



Dear Lord, we thank You for all the nice things You give us to enjoy. We thank You for our parents and our brothers and sisters, for our homes, for our daily food, for Your loving care every moment of our life. Amen.