

31/10/2022

His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros Homily at the Great Vespers



Your Eminence, beloved Brother in Christ Metropolitan Savas,

Dear Fathers and Brethren in the Lord,

Beloved Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

What a joy to be sharing your Centenary Celebratory weekend in this marvelous Parish of Warren, and just a few days after the Feastday of your Patron Saint, the Holy Great-Martyr and Myrrh-Streamer Demetrios of Thessaloniki. Just as I said at the Centennial Clergy Laity Congress this past July, these centennial celebrations demonstrate that we are not one hundred years old, but one hundred years young!

I say, “young,” because the Prophet Isaiah speaks in his vision of God’s future blessings through His restoration of the world – something akin to the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:

Ἔσται γὰρ ὁ νέος ἑκατὸν ἑτῶν...

For the young man shall be one hundred years old...[*]

Truly marvelous to call someone one hundred years old, “young!”

That is precisely how I hope you will see yourselves as a Church community. You are “one hundred years young;” you are only at the very beginning of your ministry and mission as the Greek Orthodox Church of Warren, Ohio.

In saying this, we acknowledge with honor the accomplishments of your parents, grandparents and even great-grandparents, all who came before you and brought you to this moment in time. As Shakespeare says, “What’s past is prologue.” [†] What has come before is a reflection of what is to be. The past is our mirror by which to review our actions and prepare for even greater deeds in the future. As our Lord Jesus Christ promised:

Amen, amen, I say to you, those who believe in me – the deeds that I accomplish –

they shall also do them and even greater ones, because I am going to My Father. [‡]

Therefore, we must consider: what miracles are yet to be done here at Saint Demetrios? What new and exciting possibilities await you in your journey of faith and ministry of love?

Remember that this Anniversary celebration is commencing with Vespers, which is actually the beginning of tomorrow. What a wonderful image to keep in your minds. You are not so much celebrating a milestone that you have passed, but a *καιρός* of commencement.

It is incumbent upon each and every one of us to take stock of where we are, how we got here, but then ... make a profound commitment to the future. This is not as easy as it sounds.

We often live our lives mulling over the past – whether in regret or in contentment, or worrying about the future. But this is a sure way to miss the present moment.

Rather, we are called to live in the present, the time of the Lord, what we call *καιρός*, which is something different from a mere chronological reckoning. And the Lord Christ advises us:

Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry for itself. Each day has enough adversity of its own. [§]

Therefore, my dear Christians of this wonderful parish of Saint Demetrios:

Our preparations for the future are not to be filled with anxiety, but with energy and with vitality, based in gratitude for those who came before us. And as we engage our present with love, compassion, forgiveness, mercy, then our future will be imbued with these same characteristics. In the present we mold the future. And if we doubt ourselves, we need only to look to the past and we will recognize in ourselves the same values that have brought us to this Centennial Celebration. Let us keep being the reflection of those who have come before, and go “from glory to glory.” [**]

You have made such great strides here in Warren, and you shall make many, many more. “Your youth shall be renewed as the eagle’s,”[††] as we read in the Psalm at the beginning of this Vespers. You are truly one hundred years young!

Through the intercessions of the Great-Martyr and Myrrh-Bearer Demetrios, who is your Protector and Celestial Patron, may you always be blessed and enjoy every manner of grace.

Amen.

Photo: Michael Stephen Studios

[*] Isaiah 65:20.

[†] John 14:12.

[‡] Isaiah 65:20.

[\$] Matthew 6:34.

[**] II Corinthian 3:18.

[††] Psalm 102:5 (LXX).

goarch.org