

:: Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev ::
On Prayer, Part XVII: Compunction and Tears

I would like to say a few words about the spiritual and emotional condition that people experience in prayer. Let us recall the well-known verses of Lermontov:

In a trying minute of life / If sadness o'erfills the heart,
One miraculous invocation / By rote, without cease I recite.
There is a beneficent will / In the music of living words,
And there breathes in them / An unknown, sacred delight.
And the soul will release its burden, / Doubt is far away
And it's easy to trust, and to cry, / And I feel so light, so light...

In these beautiful, simple words of the great poet is described what happens to many people during prayer. One recites the words of prayer, perhaps familiar to one from childhood, and suddenly one feels a kind of enlightenment, lightening, and tears. In church language this condition is called compunction. It is a condition that is sometimes given one during prayer, when one feels the presence of God more than usual. It is a spiritual state, when the grace of God touches the heart directly.

Recall the passage from Ivan Bunin's autobiographical book, *The Life of Arsenyev*, in which Bunin describes his teenage years and how, while still a schoolboy, he attended divine services in the parish church of the Lord's Elevation. He describes the beginning of the All-Night Vigil, in the shadows of the church, where there are very few people:

"How it all moves me! I am still a boy, an adolescent, but then, I was born endowed with the sense of all this, and during the past years I have so many times passed through that expectation, that tense silence preceding the service, so many times heard those exclamations and the 'amen' that unflinching follows them and drowns them out, divining beforehand every word of the service, now gives a double response to everything, intensified by its expectation. ... Wonderful light-prayers are recited, giving vent to our sorrowful awareness of our earthly weakness, our helplessness, and our eagerness to be led along the path of God." And Bunin writes that he was able to visit many Western churches where there were organs, that he went into Gothic cathedrals, but he "never wept in those cathedrals as I did in the tiny church of the Elevation of the Cross on those dark lonely evenings."

It's not just great poets and writers that can describe the grace-filled effects that visiting a church is necessarily bound up with. Everyone can experience it. It is very important that our soul be open to such feelings, so that, coming into church, we be ready to receive the grace of God to the extent to which it is given to us. If a grace-filled state does not come to us and we are not overcome by compunction, we should not worry. This means that our soul is not ripe for compunction. But minutes of such enlightenment are a sign that our prayer is not barren. They testify to the fact that God responds to our prayers and that the grace of God touches our hearts.

Source: www.pravmir.com

*Any announcements for the Sunday bulletin? Please submit by Wednesday each week to Fr. Andrew, by email or phone.
If you are not on the church's email list and would like to be, please let Fr. Andrew know.*



St. George Orthodox Church of Spring Valley

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September 28, 2014 – Chariton the Confessor, Abbot of Palestine

Matins (Morning Prayer), 9:00 AM :: Divine Liturgy, 10:00 AM

Today's Holy Bread: Mark Kerasotes, Bill and Mary Miller

Next Week: The Medawar and Sanders families

Today at the end of the Liturgy, at the request of Sayedna ANTHONY, we will offer Memorial Prayers for Metropolitan PHILIP at the sixth month of his passing. May his memory be eternal!

Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 7):

Thou didst shatter death by Thy Cross, Thou didst open paradise to the thief; Thou didst turn the mourning of the ointment-bearing women into joy. And didst bid Thine Apostles proclaim a warning, that Thou hast risen O Christ, granting to the world the great mercy.

Troparion of St. Chariton the Confessor (Tone 8):

The barren wilderness thou didst make fertile with the streams of thy tears; and by thy deep sighing thou hast given fruit through thy struggles a hundred-fold. Accordingly, thou hast become a star for the universe, sparkling with miracles. Therefore, O righteous Father Chariton, intercede with Christ God to save our souls.

Troparion of St. George the Great Martyr (Tone 4):

Since thou art a liberator and deliverer of captives, a help and succour of the poor and needy, a healing physician of the sick, a contender and fighter for kings, O great among martyrs, the victory-clad George: Intercede with Christ God for the salvation of our souls.

St. George is a parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese
The Most Reverend Metropolitan JOSEPH
The Right Reverend Bishop ANTHONY, Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest
www.antiochian.org

Kontakion to the Theotokos (Tone 2):

O undisputed intercessor of Christians, the mediatrix unrejected by the Creator, turn not away from the voice of our petitions, though we be sinners. Come to us with aid in time, who cry to thee in faith, with assistance, for thou art good. Hasten to us with intercessions, O Theotokos, who dost ever intercede for those who honor thee.

Scripture Readings

Ascribe to the Lord, O sons of God, ascribe to the Lord honor and glory.

The Reading from the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians (6:1-10)

Brethren, working together with Him, then, we entreat you not to accept the grace of God in vain. For He says, "At the acceptable time I have listened to you, and helped you on the day of salvation." Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. We put no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, tumults, labors, watching, hunger; by purity, knowledge, forbearance, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke (5:1-11)

At that time, Jesus was standing by the lake of Gennesaret. And He saw two boats by the lake; but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, Jesus asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the people from the boat. And when Jesus had finished speaking, He said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at Thy word I will let down the nets." And when they had done this, they enclosed a great shoal of fish; and as their nets were breaking, they beckoned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the catch of fish, which they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; henceforth you will be catching men." And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed Him.

Announcements and Upcoming Events

For a full calendar of events and services at St. George, see our website, www.stgeorgeorthodox.org.

Upcoming events and services:

- **Wednesday, October 1:** Evening Prayers and Bible Study, beginning at 6:00 PM. *This week, we will continue our study of the book of Exodus. Come with your questions!*
- **Saturday, Oct. 4:** Vespers at 5:00 PM
- **Next Sunday, Oct. 5:** Matins in the Church at 9:00 AM; Church school downstairs at 9:15 AM; Divine Liturgy at 10:00 AM.

Last Week's Fish Fry

A special thank you to the Malooley family for sponsoring last week's fish fry, and to everyone else who brought food, cleaned up, or assisted in any way!

Children and Youth

St. George's **Church school program** will continue every Sunday through the fall and winter. We will continue our lessons on each Sunday's Gospel to open our children's minds and hearts to the readings of Holy Scripture during Liturgy. Please see Khouria Patty if you have any questions. Thank you to Patrice Nimee and Kh. Patty for agreeing to lead this ministry!

Bake Sale

The ladies have scheduled our annual Church bake sale for **Saturday, October 25, from 10AM to noon**. This is our biggest fund-raiser of the year, and all of our ladies (and men too!) are encouraged to help out. Dee Khoury and Dottie Malooley have prepared a revised handout with a list of all meetings and baking events; please see either of them with any additional questions.

Coffee Hour Schedule

The new Holy Bread and Coffee Hour schedule for 2015 is available downstairs. Please look over the names already listed on it and sign up for any additional weeks as your family desires. Signing up for a week entails a donation for the Holy Bread, and providing the food for coffee hour. On your week, please also make sure you provide Father with an updated list of family prayer requests (living and deceased).

Pastoral Needs

Fr. Andrew will be available before and after most of our services and church events for confession, prayers for healing, traveling blessings, etc. Also feel free to call, email, or text to request an appointment or a pastoral visit.
