

:: Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev ::

On Prayer, Part XVIII: The Battle with Extraneous Thoughts

One of the main obstacles to attentive prayer is the appearance of extraneous thoughts. St. John of Kronstadt, the great ascetic of the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries, describes in his diaries how, during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, at the most crucial and sacred moments, before his mind's eye would appear an apple pie or some other reward that he might be given. And with bitter regret he suggests how such extraneous images and thoughts can destroy a prayerful state. If such happened with the saints, then there is nothing surprising if it happens to us, too. To protect ourselves from extraneous thoughts and images, we have to learn, as did the ancient Fathers of the Church, "to guard our minds."

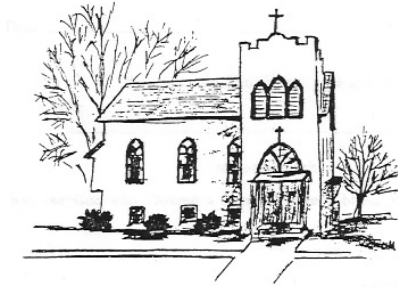
In the ascetic writers of the Ancient Church there was a detailed development of how outside thoughts gradually penetrate a person. The first stage of this process is called an "article," that is, the sudden appearance of a thought. This thought is still completely alien to one, but appears somewhere on the horizon; its penetration inside us begins when we begin to pay attention to it, enter into conversation with it, examine and analyze it. Then begins what the Church Fathers call "combination," when man's mind as it were merges with the thought. Finally, the thought turns into a passion and embraces the whole person, and then both prayer and the spiritual life are forgotten.

For this not to happen, it is very important to cut off extraneous thoughts at their first appearance not allowing them to penetrate deeply into the soul, heart, and mind. Learning to do this requires a lot of work on oneself. One cannot but be distracted at prayer, if one does not learn to fight with extraneous thoughts.

One of the diseases of modern man is that he is unable to control the work of his own brain. His brain is autonomous, and thoughts come and go spontaneously. Modern man as a rule does not follow what is going on in his mind. But to learn true prayer, one has to follow one's thoughts and to expel ruthlessly those that do not correspond to a prayerful disposition. Short prayers help in overcoming distractions and extraneous thoughts: "Lord, have mercy," "God, be merciful to me, a sinner," and others, which do not require a special focus on the words, but incline one to the birth of feelings and the movement of the heart. With the help of such prayers, one can learn to pray attentively and to focus on prayer.

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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October 5, 2014 – Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

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

Today's Holy Bread: Medawar and Sanders families

Next Week: Olga and Gary Farral

HOLY MARTYR CHARITINA OF AMISOS; JOHN, BISHOP OF EUCHAÏTA; EUDOKIMOS OF
VATOPEDI MONASTERY ON ATHOS; UNCOVERING OF THE RELICS OF PETER, ALEXIS, JONAH,
PHILIP AND HERMOGENES, METROPOLITANS OF MOSCOW

Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 8):

O Compassionate One, Thou didst descend from the heights; Thou didst submit to the three-day burial, that Thou might deliver us from passion. Thou art our life and our resurrection, O Lord: Glory to Thee!

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.

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.

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

Scripture Readings

Make your vows to the Lord our God and perform them.
God is known in Judah; His Name is great in Israel.

The Reading from the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians (6:16-7:1)

Brethren, we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will live in them and move among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Therefore come out from them, and be separate from them," says the Lord, "and touch nothing unclean; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, and make holiness perfect in the fear of God.

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke (6:31-36)

The Lord said: "As you wish that men would do to you, do so to them. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He is kind to the ungrateful and the selfish. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful."



Announcements and Upcoming Events

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

***** Fr. Andrew and family will be out of town Friday, Oct. 10 through Friday, Oct. 17. If any pastoral emergencies arise, please call my cell phone and I'll be happy to make arrangements with other clergy if necessary. *****

Upcoming events and services:

- **Wednesday, October 8:** Evening Prayers and Bible Study, beginning at 6:00 PM. *This week, we will study the Ten Commandments. Come with your questions!*
- **NO VESPERS on Saturday, Oct. 11.**
- **Next Sunday, Oct. 12:** Archdeacon Saed Rihani from St. George Church in Cicero will be here, for Deacon's Typika with Communion at 10:00 AM. Please make every effort to come and support him.
- **NO BIBLE STUDY on Wednesday, Oct. 15.**

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).

Luncheon at Nativity of our Lord Church

The Nativity of Our Lord Catholic Church in Spring Valley is hosting a luncheon in the parish hall, 510 Richard Mautino Dr., **Thursday, October 16, from 11AM to 1PM**. Tickets are \$8.00 each.

Income and Expenses for August 2014

Income: \$4707.00 Expenses: \$4984.05

Please continue to give faithfully for the glory of God and the future of St. George Church!