

:: Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev ::

On Prayer, Part XXIII: Our Father, who art in Heaven

The “Our Father” prayer is of special significance, because Jesus Christ Himself gave it to us. It begins with the words: “Our Father, who art in the heavens.” This prayer is comprehensive in character: in it is concentrated, as it were, everything that man needs both for earthly life and for the salvation of his soul. The Lord gave it to us so that we would know what we should pray for and what to ask of God.

The first words of this prayer, “Our Father, who art in the heavens,” reveal to us that God is not some distant or abstract being, not some notional good foundation, but our Father. Today very many people, in response to the question of whether they believe in God, reply in the affirmative; but if you ask them how they imagine God and what they think of Him, they respond something like this: “Well, God is good, it is something luminous, some kind of positive energy.” That is, they treat God like some kind of abstraction, as something impersonal.

When we begin our prayer with the words “Our Father,” then we are immediately appealing to the personal, living God, to God as Father – to the Father about whom Christ spoke in the parable of the prodigal son. Many people remember the subject of this parable from the Gospel according to Luke. The son decided to leave his father, not waiting for his death. He received the inheritance due to him, went to a far country, and there squandered his inheritance. When he had reached the final limit of poverty and exhaustion, he decided to return to his father. He said to himself: *I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants* (Luke 15:18-19). And when he was still far off, his father ran to meet him, throwing himself on his neck. The son was not even able to say his prepared words, because the father immediately gave him a ring, the sign of filial dignity, and clothed him in his former clothes – that is, he completely restored him to a son’s dignity. This is precisely the way God treats us. We are not hirelings, but sons of God, and the Lord treats us like His children. Therefore our attitude towards God should be characterized by devotion and noble, filial love.

When we pronounce “Our Father,” this means that we are not praying in isolation, as individuals, each one of which has his own Father, but as members of a single human family, a single Church, a single Body of Christ. In other words, by calling God our Father, we thereby imply that all other people are our brethren. Moreover, when Christ teaches us in prayer to turn to God as “Our Father,” He places Himself as it were on the same level with us. St. Symeon the New Theologian said that through faith in Christ we become Christ’s brethren, because we share with Him a common Father: our Heavenly Father.

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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November 2, 2014 – Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost

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

Today’s Holy Bread: Matt and Ollie Rowan

Next Week: Kh. Katherine Buss, David Anderson, and the Kishlers

Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 4):

Having learned the joyful message of the Resurrection from the angel the women disciples of the Lord cast from them their parental condemnation. And proudly broke the news to the Disciples, saying: death hath been spoiled; Christ God is risen, granting the world great mercy.

Troparion for the Persian Martyrs (Tone 2):

Blessed is the earth that drank your blood, O prizewinners of the Lord, and holy are the tabernacles that received your spirits; for in the stadium ye triumphed over the enemy, and ye proclaimed Christ with boldness. Beseech Him, we pray, since He is good, 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.

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

O Lord, how magnified are Thy works. In wisdom hast Thou made them all.
Bless the Lord, O my soul!

The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians (2:16-20)

Brethren, you know that a man is not justified by works of the Law but through faith in Jesus Christ. Even we have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of the Law, because by works of the Law shall no one be justified. But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we ourselves were found to be sinners, is Christ then an agent of sin? Certainly not! But if I build up again those things which I tore down, then I prove myself a transgressor. For I through the Law died to the Law, that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ Who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me.

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke. (16:19-31)

The Lord said, "There was a rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, full of sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table; moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried; and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes, and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus in his bosom. And he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy upon me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.' And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.' But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' He said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.'"

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, Nov. 5:** Evening Prayer and Bible Study, 6:00 PM
- **Saturday, Nov. 8:** Vespers, 5:00 PM
- **Next Sunday, Nov. 9:** Matins, 9:00 AM; Sunday School, 9:15 AM (downstairs); Divine Liturgy, 10:00 AM

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!

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). **Also know that you are welcome to submit names and prayer requests to Fr. Andrew at any time for inclusion in the Liturgy.**

The Season of Advent

Our Orthodox Advent season is a fasting season to prepare our souls and bodies for the celebration of Christmas. Advent begins 40 days before Christmas, on November 15. Please do not neglect the traditional disciplines of fasting (at least from meat), prayer (a good time to begin attending our Wednesday or Saturday night services!) and almsgiving. All coffee hour food during that time should be meatless. Please see Fr. Andrew if you have any questions about this.

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.