

:: Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev ::

On Prayer, Part XXVIII: "Forgive us our trespasses..."

Prayer is inextricably bound up with one's way of life. The reason for the difficulties one experiences in prayer lies in an incorrect, unspiritual, and non-evangelical life. We sense this especially when we say the "Our Father." Each petition of this prayer places us in front of a given reality, as if we were being judged – judged by our own conscience. And this prayer, if we pray from our soul and heart – if we really think about what is written here – should constantly force us to change our lives.

We say: "And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us," that is, we ask God to forgive us our debts, as we forgive those who are in debt to us. When we speak these words, we should ask ourselves: do we forgive our neighbors? Are we ready to place our own forgiveness by God in dependence on whether we forgive others? Isn't this too frightening? Isn't this too much responsibility?

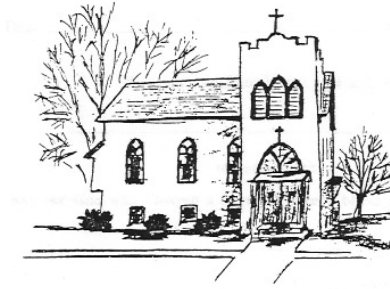
Experience shows that it isn't so difficult to forgive everyone, just as it isn't so difficult to love everyone – everyone, in an abstract sense. Many people say: I love people, I just can't come to terms with two or three people – my neighbors, my co-workers, my mother in law – but I love everyone else. Thus, the words ... reminds us of the couple of people that we can't forgive, whose debts we can't forgive. And this prayer teaches us that, as long as we don't forgive them, we can't hope that the Lord will forgive us.

Earthly life is give to us so that we would make peace with everyone. In life many knots are tied, and it is our task to manage to untie them while we still have time. Nothing is impossible for man. It can be very difficult to make peace with someone, to forgive someone, but if we don't find the strength for this, we can't count on God to forgive us. If we call God our Father and ourselves Christians, if we say "Hallowed be Thy Name" – that is, that the name of God should be holy, and the holiness of God's name should be manifest through our deeds – then how can we not forgive our debtors, those who have offended, insulted, or humiliated us?

Christian life is an ascetic struggle, and we should relate to it responsibly; we should earn the right to say the Lord's Prayer. And we earn this right through our good deeds. No single word – and, moreover, no word of prayer – should be in vain, empty, or unjustified. Behind every word there is a reality, and behind the words of the "Our Father" should stand our actions. If we say to God: "Thy will be done," that means that we should submit our will to His will, to God's will. And if we ask God: "And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us," this means that we should learn to forgive everyone we consider blameworthy, whom we consider to be in our debt.

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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December 7, 2014 – Twenty-Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

Matins (Morning Prayer), 9:00 AM :: Deacon's Typika service, 10:00 AM

Today's Holy Bread and Coffee Hour: Robert Abraham and family

Next Week: Nicholas and Anysia Medawar

Today we are pleased to welcome **Archdeacon Saed Rihani**, from St. George Church in Cicero
For this morning's service, please follow along on the handout "Deacon's Typika with Holy Communion." The following hymns should be inserted at the appropriate place:

Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 1):

The stone being sealed by the Jews, and Thy pure body guarded by the soldiers, Thou didst rise on the third day, O Savior, granting life to the world. Wherefore, the Heavenly powers acclaimed Thee, O Giver of Life, crying: Glory to Thy resurrection, O Christ! Glory to Thy kingdom! Glory to Thy gracious providence, O Thou only Lover of mankind.

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 for Advent (Tone 3):

Today the Virgin cometh to the cave to give birth in an ineffable manner to the Word before the ages. Rejoice, therefore, O universe, when thou hearest. And glorify with the angels shepherds Him who shall appear by His own will as a new babe, being God before the ages.

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

**Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us. Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous.
The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians (5:8-19)**

Brethren, walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is a shame even to speak of the things that they do in secret; but when anything is exposed by the light it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it is said, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light." Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart.

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke (13:10-17)

At that time, Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And there was a woman who had had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years; she was bent over and could not fully straighten herself. And when Jesus saw her, He called her and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your infirmity." And He laid His hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight, and she praised God. But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, said to the people, "There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day." Then the Lord answered him, "You hypocrite! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his ass from the manger, and lead it away to water it? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?" As Jesus said this, all His adversaries were put to shame; and all the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by Him.



St. Nicholas - Bishop of Myra

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, Dec. 10:** Evening Prayer and Bible Study, 6:00 pm. *This week, we will continue our discussion of the Christmas stories in Matthew's and Luke's Gospels. Thank you to all who came last week and contributed to a lively and edifying evening!*
- **Saturday, Dec. 13:** Vespers, 5:00 pm
- **Next Sunday, Dec. 14:** Matins, 9:00 AM; Sunday School, 9:15 AM (downstairs); Divine Liturgy, 10:00 AM

The Enthronement of Metropolitan Joseph

This morning at our Antiochian cathedral in Brooklyn, NY, the Archdiocese is blessed to host our Patriarch John X of Antioch, for the enthronement ceremony of Metropolitan Joseph. May God grant both of these godly leaders many, many years!

(Fr. Andrew is filling in at St. George Church in Cicero for Fr. Dahdal, who represents our deanery this morning in Brooklyn.)

The Ladies of St. George: Advent Project

At the Nov. 16 meeting, the members voted to give \$200 to Project Success, our local food pantry, as an Advent project. All ladies of the church are asked to give something towards this; see Dee Khoury if any questions. One check will be sent from the Ladies of St. George for the Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets, given to area families in need. **If you wish to donate, make your check payable to "Ladies of St. George," with "Advent Project" in the memo line.** Your support is appreciated!

The Season of Advent

Our Orthodox Advent began Nov. 15. The purpose of this season is to prepare our souls and bodies for the celebration of Christmas. As much as you are able, 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.

Coffee Hour Schedule

The Holy Bread and Coffee Hour schedule for 2015 is 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.**