

:: 14 New Year's Resolutions for Orthodox Christians ::

Part 2, by Fr. Andrew Stephen Damick

Around this time of year, many people start thinking about ways they can change for the better. While New Year's resolutions are not particularly a feature of the Orthodox faith, change certainly is, and resolving to change based on times and seasons is certainly part of our liturgical tradition. So adapting the cultural custom of New Year's resolutions to become a better Orthodox Christian seems perfectly fine to me. Anyway, here are some suggestions for Orthodox Christians resolving to change for the better in the New Year, things every Orthodox Christian can do.

3. Tithe. Nothing says you're serious like giving 10% of your income to something. Giving 10% to God sounds crazy to a lot of people, but the reality is that it's actually totally normal for many Christians—even for generations. Orthodox people in the US aren't used to tithing (10%) or even giving some other percentage, mainly because many of their forebears across the sea gave to their churches just by paying their taxes. That doesn't work anywhere in the English-speaking Orthodox world. Your taxes do not go to support your church. (I know of one church where a parishioner was shocked to discover that the electric company would turn off the electricity if the church didn't pay its bill. Who would do that to a church?) ...

Meanwhile, you are probably spending a lot more just on cable TV. Or Internet access. Or your smartphone. Or eating out. Or coffee. Or a lot of other things.

But the most important thing about pledging and tithing is not about meeting parish budgets or supporting your priest like the hardworking, educated man he is. It's about worship. Your heart is where your treasure is (Matt. 6:21). Where's your treasure? Follow the money, find the heart.

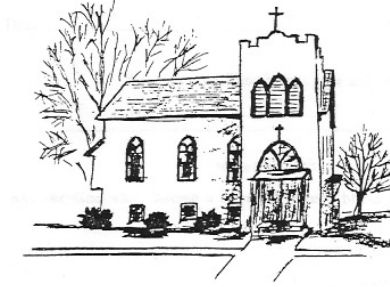
If you're not up for 10% yet, then try 8%. Or 6%. Or whatever. But go on record, and get disciplined about giving. Don't give until it hurts, but until it actually feels good.

4. Pray at home. Even if all you do is say the "Our Father" when you wake up (saying it three times a day is the most ancient known prayer rule), you will notice a change in how you think and feel about your faith. It will become more present for you and will define you more.

Oh, and, parents? It will have a huge impact on your kids. Watching parents pray at home and (in time) joining them in that prayer is one of the biggest contributions that kids can receive toward their long-term spiritual viability. ...

~ Read the entire article at <http://blogs.ancientfaith.com/roadsfromemmaus>

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.



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January 11, 2015 – The Sunday after Theophany

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

Today's Holy Bread and Coffee Hour: Beverly Malooley and family

Next Sunday: OPEN

Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 6): When Mary stood at Thy grave, looking for Thy sacred body, angelic powers shone above Thy revered tomb; and the soldiers who were to keep guard became as dead men. Thou led Hades captive and wast not tempted thereby. Thou didst meet the Virgin and didst give life to the world, O Thou, Who art risen from the dead, O Lord, glory to Thee.

Troparion of Theophany (Tone 1): When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized in the Jordan, worship of the Trinity wast made manifest; for the voice of the Father bore witness to Thee, calling Thee His beloved Son. And the Spirit in the form of a dove confirmed the truth of His word. O Christ our God, Who hath appeared and enlightened the world, glory to Thee.

Troparion of St. Theodosius (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 hundredfold. Accordingly, thou hast become a star for the universe, sparkling with miracles. Therefore, O righteous Father Theodosios, 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 of Theophany (Tone 4): Today Thou hast appeared to the universe, O Lord, and Thy light hath been shed upon us, who praise Thee with knowledge, saying, Thou hast come and appeared, O unapproachable Light.

Epistle and Gospel Readings at the Divine Liturgy

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saint.

What shall we render to the Lord for all that He hath rendered unto us?

The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews (13:7-16)

Brethren, remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the Word of God; consider the outcome of their life, and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings; for it is well that the heart be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited their adherents. We have an altar from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat. For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp. So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through His own blood. Therefore, let us go forth to Him outside the camp and bear the abuse He endured. For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city, which is to come. Through Him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge His Name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

The reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew (4:12-17)

At that time, when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee; and leaving Nazareth he went and dwelt in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulon and Naphtali, so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: “The land of Zebulon and the land of Naphtali, toward the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned.” From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

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:

- **Home blessings** continue this week. See note below.
- **No Vespers this Saturday.** *Father Andrew will be representing our church at a dinner with Metropolitan Joseph in Palos Heights.*
- **Next Sunday, Jan. 18:** January Parish Council meeting
- **Sunday, Jan. 25:** St. George Church Annual Meeting and Sausage Breakfast. *Please mark your calendars! All members of our church should make every effort to attend.*
- **Sunday, Feb. 1:** The Lenten Triodion begins!
- **Monday, Feb. 2:** Divine Liturgy at 10:00 AM for the Feast of the Presentation

From Fr. Andrew and Kh. Patty: A big THANK YOU for all of your Christmas cards, greetings and generous gifts! We are blessed to be a part of the St. George community. May God grant all of you his abundant blessings in the new year!

If you did not get your Holy Water last week, it is still available. You may come forward after the service with a container to take some of the water home with you. (If you did not bring a container, we have a few extras.) What do we do with Holy Water? You can drink it, you can sprinkle it on your plants, you can use it at any time to anoint your forehead with the sign of the Cross. Think of it as a blessing from God and an extension of our prayers, and you can use it to bless yourself or anything in your home. If you need to dispose of old Holy Water, pour it on your plants or flowers.

Tis the season for home blessings: The Orthodox Church recommends that each home be blessed by a priest with prayer and Holy Water each year. It will be my great joy to visit all of you, spend time with your families, and bless your homes with the blessing of the Jordan River. Nothing elaborate is required on your part, and even a meal is not necessary. **Please make contact with Father at your convenience and arrange for a date and time.**

Raffle Tickets

Our friend Sally Favia of Apple Vacations has graciously donated to our church a trip for 2, three nights all-inclusive vacation at the Iberostar Paraiso Del Mar in Riviera Maya, Mexico. George Forsa is overseeing the sale of raffle tickets for \$10 each. **Most of them have been sold, but we have about 45 more. Please see George if you are willing to sell any of these additional tickets on behalf of the church.** The trip may be taken anytime between May 1 and Oct. 5, 2015, and we are asking all the tickets are sold by January 15 and the drawing will take place at our annual meeting, January 25.