

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

*Part 6, 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.*

**11. Attend an adult education class.**

It's actually kind of crazy how uneducated many Orthodox people are in their own faith. I sometimes hear the excuse that that stuff is just for seminarians and clergy, that it's too intellectual, too far above the heads of the average parishioner, etc. But the very same people can give you detailed information about what the rules and records in the Super Bowl are, what their least favorite politician has done to wreck the country, and what the latest gossip is on various celebrities, all in remarkable detail. But when it comes to what will last into eternity, we are suddenly the dumbest people on the face of the earth.

Don't sell yourself short. You are probably pretty smart about many things. Why don't you use that same talent to get smart about your faith? It's also quite frankly true that most Protestants are far more educated about their Protestant faiths than Orthodox are about their own. Are we really supposed to believe that Protestants are just smarter? They're not. But they've developed a culture of education. A culture of education is not a uniquely Protestant thing. It's Orthodox, too. It's been part of our tradition for 2000 years. It's just that some of us have forgotten it. It's time to bring it back.

**12. Volunteer.**

Do something in your parish or in your community that benefits other people without giving you any kind of material gain. And do it without expecting recognition. Your recognition will come from God in His Kingdom. You don't need it from anyone else.

Not only will selfless volunteering help you be grateful for all that God has given to you, but it will set an example of what a Christian is for your kids and your friends, and it will also help you to be humble, something we know is necessary for entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven.

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

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*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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**February 8, 2015 – Sunday of the Prodigal Son**

**After-Feast of the Presentation of Christ**

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

**Today's Holy Bread and Coffee Hour:** Matthew and Nan McNatt

**Next Sunday:** Ron and Dottie Malooley

**Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 2):** When Thou didst submit Thyself unto death, O Thou deathless and immortal One, then Thou didst destroy hell with Thy Godly power. And when Thou didst raise the dead from beneath the earth, all the powers of Heaven did cry aloud unto Thee: O Christ, Thou giver of life, glory to Thee.

**Troparion of the Presentation (Tone 1):** Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos, full of grace, for from thee arose the Sun of justice, Christ our God, lighting those who are in darkness. Rejoice and be glad, O righteous elder, carrying in thine arms the Deliverer of our souls, who granteth us Resurrection.

**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 the Presentation (Tone 1):** Thou, O Christ God, who by Thy Birth, didst sanctify the Virgin's womb, and, as is meet, didst bless Simeon's arms, and didst also come to save us; preserve Thy fold in wars, and confirm them whom Thou didst love, for Thou alone art the Lover of mankind.

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](http://www.antiochian.org)

## Epistle and Gospel Readings

Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us. Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous.

### The Reading from the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians (6:12-20)

Brethren, all things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be enslaved by anything. Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food; but God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by His power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two shall become one flesh." But he who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with Him. Shun immorality. Every other sin which a man commits is outside the body; but the immoral man sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

### The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke (15:11-32)

The Lord spoke this parable: "There was a man who had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that falls to me.' And he divided his living between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took his journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in loose living. And when he had spent everything, a great famine arose in that country, and he began to be in want. So he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have fed on the pods that the swine ate; and no one gave him anything.

But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired servants."' And he arose and came to his father. But while he was yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and make merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to make merry.

Now his elder son was in the field; and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants and asked what this meant. And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him safe and sound.' But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, but he answered his father, 'Lo, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command; yet you never gave me a kid that I might make merry with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your living with harlots, you killed for him the fatted calf!' And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to make merry and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.'"

## Announcements and Upcoming Events

For a full calendar of events and services at St. George, see our website, [www.stgeorgeorthodox.org](http://www.stgeorgeorthodox.org).

### Upcoming Events and Services:

- **Home blessings** continue this week. See note below.
- **Wednesday, Feb. 11:** Evening Prayer and Bible Study. *We continue our series this week on the themes of Lent and Holy Week.*
- **Saturday, Feb. 14:** Vespers, 6:00 PM. *Please note the new time!*
- **Next Sunday, Feb. 15: Sunday of the Last Judgment.** Matins at 9 AM, Sunday school at 9:15, and Liturgy at 10 AM. *Next Sunday is also Meatfare Sunday, the last day to eat meat for those who are able to keep the fast.*
- **Also next Sunday:** February Parish Council meeting, after Liturgy.
- **Sunday, Feb. 22: Forgiveness Sunday.** *At the end of Liturgy, we will observe the traditional Orthodox Rite of Forgiveness, where we all take turns asking forgiveness of everyone else. This is a very important service, good for the soul and for our community!*

It has come to my attention that **Fr. Constantine Masood**, former pastor of our church, passed away a few weeks ago on January 16, near Boston. May his memory be eternal, and may God grant peace and consolation to his grieving family.

**Thank you to all who participated in our annual meeting.** If you did not make it, we have extra copies of the reports and handouts downstairs. If any questions, please ask Father or a council member.

**'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.**

**Teen SOYO Retreat.** On Saturday, March 14, Fr. Andrew will be leading a retreat for Orthodox teens on behalf of St. George Church in Cicero. The retreat will take place in northwestern Indiana. I will be talking to some of you individually, but all teens (13-19) are welcome to attend. Total cost is \$100, but see Father if that's a problem.

**Summer Conventions.** It seems early with snow still on the ground, but mark your calendars: Our **Diocesan Parish Life Conference** will be held in Grand Rapids, MI, June 24-28 this year, and the national Archdiocese Convention is July 20-28 in Boston.

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