

:: Lenten Message 2015 ::
Patriarch John X of Antioch

Brethren, Pastors of the Holy Church of Antioch; Beloved children in all dioceses in this apostolic see; Brethren and dearest spiritual children, whose strength and anticipation in God, strengthen ours;

Entering this redemptive period which leads us to the Cross (of Christ) and the dawn of His and thus our resurrection, these days bring to us the anticipation to Jesus and His divine consolation for His beloved humans; for whom He descended from His highest, incarnated in the Virgin, submitting Himself to the human law, willingly walking the path of the Cross, in order to rise from the dead, becoming the first fruit for our resurrection from our earthly misery and tribulation.

Jesus chose the path of the Cross, and drank from the chalice of death to simply tell us that the tribulation of our times will not overshadow our hope for light, and that hardship cannot eclipse the brightness of resurrection.

Entering this redemptive period of the Great Lent, we have bid farewell to brothers, fathers and mothers, who were taken away by sudden or forced death, but we anticipate to meet them in Christ's light.

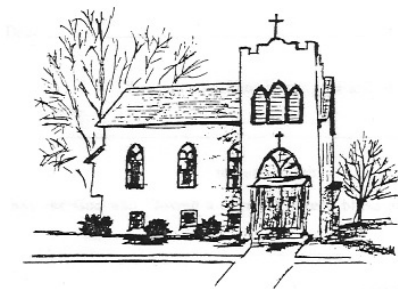
We receive these days while our brothers and sisters, amongst whom are bishops, priests, monks, nuns and beloved children, are abducted and suffer the cruelty of this world. "We shall not celebrate without them. We did and shall spare no endeavour to ensure their safe return."

Brethren! Despite their severity, these times reinforce the spirit of consolation, growing our sense of empathy. Lent is based on love, reinforced by almsgiving and completed with the leaven of purity and chastity. Fasting and almsgiving are inseparable.

Fasting, mercy, almsgiving, purity and care for the neighbours and the needy are paths to the doorway to the Godly mercy and thus acquiring God as a friend. A Church Father, Peter Chrysologus (the golden-worded) effectively described the pillars of fasting: *"Brethren, Fasting does not germinate unless watered by mercy. When mercy dries up, fasting suffers drought, for mercy is to fasting what spring is to earth; as the smooth breeze that help buds flourish into flowers, mercy grows the seeds of fasting to become blossoming flowers. Love is to fasting what oil is to a lantern; oil feeds the lantern; similarly, love feeds fasting and enkindles it. Almsgiving is to fasting what the sun is to the day. The sunshine illumines the day, scattering darkness. This is how almsgiving sanctifies the sanctuary of fasting with the light of love."*

(Continued next week)

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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March 15, 2015 – Third Sunday of Lent

Veneration of the Precious Cross

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

Today's Holy Bread and Coffee Hour: George and Lynette Forsa

Epistle: Christina Kapetaneas

Next Sunday's Holy Bread and Coffee Hour: Mike Kasap

Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 7): Thou didst shatter death by Thy Cross, Thou didst open paradise to the thief; Thou didst turn the sadness of the ointment-bearing women into joy. And didst bid Thine Apostles proclaim a warning, that Thou hast risen O Christ, granting to the world the great mercy.

Troparion of the Holy Cross (Tone 1): O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance, granting to Thy people victory over all their enemies, and by the power of Thy Cross preserving Thy commonwealth.

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 for Lent (Tone 8): To thee, the Champion Leader, I thy servant ascribe thank-offerings of victory: for thou hast delivered me from terrors, O Theotokos; but as thou hast that power which is invincible, from all dangers set me free that I may cry out unto thee: ‘Hail, O Bride without Bridegroom!’

The Epistle and Gospel Readings for the Sunday of the Holy Cross

O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance.
To Thee, O Lord, have I cried, O my God.

The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews (4:14-5:6)

Brethren, since we have a High Priest, Who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but One Who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. Because of this he is bound to offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people. And one does not take the honor upon himself, but he is called by God, just as Aaron was. So also Christ did not exalt Himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by Him Who said to Him, “Thou art My Son, today I have begotten Thee”; as He says also in another place, “Thou art a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek.”

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Mark (8:34-9:1)

The Lord said, “If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for My sake and the Gospel’s will save it. For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? For what can a man give in return for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.” And Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Kingdom of God come with power.”

Announcements and Upcoming Events

For a full calendar of events and services at St. George, see our website, www.stgeorgeorthodox.org or take a print-out from the table downstairs.

Upcoming Events and Services:

- **Today:** Procession and veneration of the Holy Cross, at the end of the Liturgy
- **Today:** Children’s Sunday School, immediately after communion. *The children will come back upstairs to carry their own hand-made crosses in our Holy Cross procession.*
- **Today:** Monthly Parish Council meeting, after coffee hour
- **Wednesday, March 18:** Presanctified Liturgy, 6pm
- **Friday, March 20:** Fourth Akathist to the Theotokos, 6pm
- **Saturday, March 21:** Vespers, 6pm
- **Next Sunday, March 22: St. John of the Ladder.** Matins at 9am, Liturgy at 10am

We offer our sincerest condolences to the Kaleel family upon the passing of our dear friend Marion Kaleel. May her memory be eternal and may God grant her peace and rest with all the saints.

Coffee Hour assistance: It has come to my attention that often only one or two people are left after coffee hour to clean up the tables and the kitchen. Let us ALL do our best to assist each week with clean-up by bussing your own table space, cleaning up around the hall, or helping in the kitchen. Our coffee hours are quite good, but let us all do our best to help!

Do you have questions about how to use your smartphone? There are actually many Christian and Orthodox apps and programs you can download and use: daily prayers, saints, Bible readings, and more. Nicole Wiltse has graciously offered to lead a class for us, free of charge, on the evening of Friday, March 27. We will have our Lenten Akathist service at 6pm, followed by the class downstairs. Please see Nicole or Father Andrew to register.

February Finances

Income: \$4978.00

Expenses: \$7016.18

Ending Balance: \$13,011.12

Please feel free to speak with our treasurer Anyisia Medamar if you have any questions.