

Pastoral Message for Great and Holy Pascha 2015

*Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad, as is meet; and let the whole world, visible and invisible, feast; for Christ hath risen to everlasting joy.
(from the 1st Ode of the Paschal Canon)*

Christ is Risen! Truly, He is Risen!

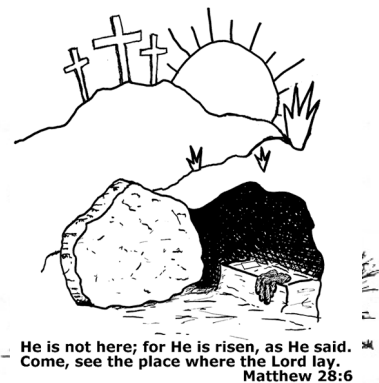
We greet you with great joy and love as we celebrate the Feast of the Holy Resurrection of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ. We are reminded by the hymn quoted above that the entire universe rejoices in this singular event which brings new life to all creation. Even the current state of violence and hatred which plagues this world is shattered to pieces by the Lord's descent into Hades and his resurrection from the dead. We ask all of the faithful to continue to pray for the two abducted bishops, Metropolitan Paul, and Archbishop Youhanna, and the victims of violence around the world, especially in Syria and in the entire region. The victory of our Lord Jesus Christ over the powers of death, and the hope of new life are indeed our only consolation during these troubled times. The triumph of this Paschal season strengthens our faith and renews our hope. Let us therefore rejoice with the heavens and celebrate with the entire universe on this, the Feast of feasts!

Praying that the Light of the Empty Tomb will bring us the joy and peace that can only come from above, I remain,

Yours in Christ,
+JOSEPH

Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of All North America
Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America

*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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Sunday, April 19, 2015 – Second Sunday of Pascha St. Thomas the Apostle

Matins: 9:00 AM :: Divine Liturgy: 10:00 AM

Today's Holy Bread and Coffee Hour: Richard and Betty Malooley

Epistle Reader: Matthew Rowan

Next Week's Holy Bread and Coffee Hour: Sadie Malooley / Leonard family

Troparion for St. Thomas Sunday (Tone 7): While the tomb was sealed, Thou didst shine forth from it, O Life. While the doors were closed, Thou didst come in to Thy Disciples, O Christ God, Resurrection of all, renewing in us through them an upright spirit, according to the greatness of Thy mercy.

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 of Pascha (Tone 8): Though Thou, O Deathless One, didst descend into the grave, Thou didst destroy the power of hell and as Victor Thou didst rise again, O Christ our God. Thou didst greet the ointment-bearing women, saying: "Rejoice!" Thou didst bestow peace upon Thy disciples and resurrection upon those that are fallen.

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

Epistle and Gospel Readings at the Divine Liturgy

Great is the Lord, and great is His power. Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good.

The Reading from the Acts of the Apostles (5:12-20)

In those days, many signs and wonders were done among the people by the hands of the Apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high honor. And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women, so that they even carried out the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and pallets, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed. But the high priest rose up and all who were with him, that is, the party of the Sadducees, and filled with jealousy they arrested the Apostles and put them in the common prison. But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out and said, "Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life."

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. John (20:19-31)

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the Disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the Disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you." And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other Disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in His side, I will not believe."

Eight days later, His Disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. The doors were shut, but Jesus came and stood among them, and said, "Peace be with you." Then He said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see My hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side; do not be faithless, but believing." Thomas answered Him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen Me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe." Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the Disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His Name.

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:

- **Sunday School** for children and teens will take place immediately after Holy Communion today.
- **This Wednesday, April 22:** We will celebrate the **Feast of St. George**, our church's patronal feast day, **at 6:00 pm**, with a Divine Liturgy. We are expecting several other Orthodox priests from the area to join us this evening. Please come honor our saint, and show our customary hospitality to our guests!

From Fr. Andrew and Kh. Patty: Blessed Pascha to all of you! We thank you for all the cards and generous gifts you have given to our family this holy season. Again, we are overwhelmed by your love and hospitality.

A note on the Lenten coin boxes: As a parish we gave to this charity of our Archdiocese \$690.00 in 2014. Congratulations! This was the best ever. This is our most important outreach charity we are asked to support. We need to match this amount once again and it is my hope you will too! Please look at the report in our most recent copy of the Word. We are now \$250.00 dollars short of this goal. Thank you to all who have given thus far those coins add up! **Please have this most important gift to the treasury by May 3rd.** Thank you so much - Christ is Risen!

Anysia Medawar, Treasurer

Please make checks to St. George church earmarked "Food For Hungry People"

Summer Conventions. 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.

Metropolitan Joseph on the March for Marriage. I've been receiving a steady stream of questions lately on the Orthodox Church's views on homosexuality and marriage. Metropolitan Joseph has written to all of our churches a wonderful letter (see insert) urging all of us to pray and participate in the March for Marriage, a "peaceful rally" to take place in Washington DC later this month, as our nation's Supreme Court considers several important cases. I doubt any of us will be able to go, but this is a good opportunity to hear from our Metropolitan as he clarifies the Orthodox Church's compassion for all people, yet our strong opposition to redefining "marriage" into something it is not.