

:: “Christ’s Ascension is also our Ascension” ::
By Metropolitan Ephrem of Tripoli in Lebanon

On this day we celebrate the Ascension of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ from earth to heaven in his glorified body. You have heard about the event of the Ascension from the Evangelist Luke and from the Acts of the Apostles, which Luke also wrote. In Luke, the event is tied to the Resurrection, while in the Acts of the Apostles it comes forty days after the feast of the Resurrection!

In Luke, Christ appears to the disciples risen from the dead after a discussion of how his body is of flesh and blood, but this body that is risen from the dead is separated from them. He leaves the earth after fulfilling his dispensation of salvation. He goes to heaven, upwards, and the disciples return to Jerusalem, as the Gospel says, with great joy. After that, they began to meet in the temple, praising and glorifying the Lord.

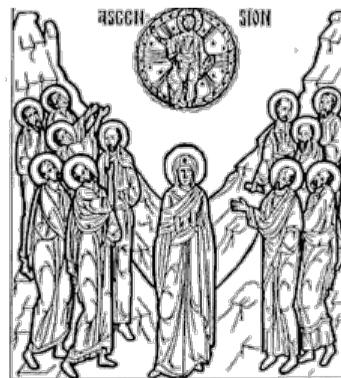
What is the purpose of this feast and what is its meaning? Why all this salvific dispensation? The Lord achieved in himself what he wants us to achieve in ourselves. The Fathers say that Christ’s ascension to heaven is also our ascension to heaven. In his letter to the Philippians, the Apostle Paul clearly says that our true homeland is in heaven with Jesus Christ, who is glorified unto the ages. Our life on this earth is a passing prelude to true, eternal life.

This is the meaning of the Feast of the Ascension. We are called to grow toward the true homeland, which is heaven, that is the Kingdom! Here we live by the Holy Spirit, whom the Church considers to be the pledge of eternal life. This is the meaning of the monastic life.

Why did the monastic life arise? Because the monk always gazes toward his true homeland, to this angelic kingdom which awaits him while he is on earth. He suffers, but he also rejoices that the Spirit of God is within him, the Holy Spirit. He rejoices in having received this pledge from now on. As the Holy Fathers say, we now live in our heavenly homeland. We taste this country ahead of time. We have a foretaste and we wait patiently to go where the Lord Jesus went in glory and sat at the right hand of the Father. And we will live with him forever, amen.

from 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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Sunday, May 24, 2015 – Sunday after the Ascension **Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council (325 AD)**

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

Epistle Reader: David Anderson

Next Week’s Holy Bread/Coffee Hour: Kishler, Buss and Anderson

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 the Ascension (Tone 4): Thou hast ascended in glory, O Christ our God, and gladdened Thy Disciples with the promise of the Holy Spirit, having become confident of the blessing. Verily, Thou art the Son of God, and Deliverer of the world.

Troparion of the Holy Fathers (Tone 8): Thou, O Christ, art our God of exceeding praise Who didst establish our holy Fathers as luminous stars upon earth, and through them didst guide us unto the true Faith, O most merciful One, glory to Thee.

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

Epistle and Gospel Readings

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, the God of our Fathers. For Thou art just in all Thou hast done.

The Reading from the Acts of the Apostles (20:16-18, 28-36)

In those days, Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he might not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hastening to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost. And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders of the church. And when they came to him, he said to them: "Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God which he obtained with the blood of his own Son. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish everyone with tears. And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities, and to those who were with me. In all things I have shown you that by so toiling one must help the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" And when he had spoken thus, he knelt down and prayed with them all.

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. John (17:1-13)

At that time, Jesus lifted up His eyes to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Thy Son that the Son may glorify Thee, since Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom Thou hast given Him. And this is eternal life, that they know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent. I glorified Thee on earth, having accomplished the work which Thou gavest Me to do; and now, Father, glorify Thou Me in Thy own presence with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was made.

I have manifested Thy Name to the men whom Thou gavest Me out of the world; Thine they were, and Thou gavest them to Me, and they have kept Thy word. Now they know that everything that Thou hast given Me is from Thee; for I have given them the words which Thou gavest Me, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from Thee; and they have believed that Thou didst send Me. I am praying for them; I am not praying for the world but for those whom Thou hast given Me, for they are Thine; all Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine, and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to Thee.

Holy Father, keep them in Thy Name, which Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, even as We are one. While I was with them, I kept them in Thy Name, which Thou have given Me; I have guarded them, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to Thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves."

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.
- **Memorial Day, Monday, May 25:** Prayers at St. George Cemetery, 10am
- **Wednesday, May 27:** Evening Prayers and Bible Study, 6pm
- **Saturday, May 30:** Vespers, 6pm
- **Next Sunday, May 31: The Feast of Pentecost.** Holy Bread/Coffee Hour: Kishler/Buss/Anderson; Epistle Reader: Matthew McNatt

A special thank you to Mark and Janet Kerasotes for their generous donation of a new smart TV to our church. We are still figuring out how it works, and working out some of the bugs, but in the weeks to come, it will be a valuable resource for presentations, Bible studies, etc.

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. **If you are planning to go to Grand Rapids next month, please make sure you have made your hotel reservations! See Fr. Andrew or Ron Malooley if you have any questions.**

As mentioned last week, we set a new record with this year's Food for Hungry People donations: over \$1300, a phenomenal amount for a church of our size! It was Metropolitan PHILIP of blessed memory who once referred to us as "the mouse that roars," and I'm grateful we continue to live up to that title! Thank you for your generosity!

Congratulations to our 2015 graduates:

- **Daya Desai** (granddaughter of Richard and Bette Malooley), from Dryfoos High School in Florida
- **Georgia Kapetaneas** (daughter of Leo and Christina), as valedictorian of her Eighth Grade class at Holy Family Catholic School in Oglesby
- **Devin Soldati** (grandson of Richard and Bette Malooley), from Eighth Grade at Peru Catholic School

Anyone else graduating in 2015? Please get the information to Fr. Andrew for inclusion in next week's bulletin.