

:: Why a Fast for Dormition? ::

By Reader Daniel Manzuk

Given the pervasive misunderstanding of the purpose of fasting itself, a refresher on its purpose is always a good idea. There is a perception that we should fast when we want something, as though the act of fasting somehow appeases God, and seeing us “suffer” gets Him to grant our request. Nothing can be further from the truth. **It is not our fasting that pleases God, it is the fruits of our fast (provided we fast in the proper mind set, and do not merely diet) that please Him.** We fast, not to get what we want, but to prepare ourselves to receive what God wants to give us. The purpose of fasting is to bring us more in line with another Mary, the sister of Lazarus, and away from their sister Martha, who in the famous passage was “anxious and troubled about many things.” Fasting is intended to bring us to the realization of “the one thing needful.” It is to help us put God first and our own desires second, if not last. ... Fasting turns us away from ourselves and toward God. In essence it helps us become like the Theotokos, an obedient servant of God, who heard His word and kept it better than anyone else has or could.

So why do we fast before Dormition? In a close-knit family, word that its matriarch is on her deathbed brings normal life to a halt. Otherwise important things (parties, TV, luxuries, personal desires) become unimportant; life comes to revolve around the dying matriarch. It is the same with the Orthodox family; word that our matriarch is on her deathbed, could not (or at least should not) have any different effect than the one just mentioned. The Church, through the Paraklesis Service, gives us the opportunity to come to that deathbed and eulogize and entreat the woman who bore God, the vessel of our salvation and our chief advocate at His divine throne. And as, in the earthly family, daily routines and the indulgence in personal wants should come to a halt. Fasting, in its full sense (abstaining from food and desires) accomplishes this. Less time in leisure or other pursuits leaves more time for prayer and reflection on she who gave us Christ, and became the first and greatest Christian. In reflecting on her and her incomparable life, we see a model Christian life, embodying Christ’s retort to the woman who stated that Mary was blessed because she bore Him: blessed rather are those who hear His word and keep it. Mary did this better than anyone. As Fr. Thomas Hopko has stated, she heard the word of God and kept it so well, that she of all women in history was chosen not only to hear His Word but give birth to it (Him). So while we fast in contemplation of her life, we are simultaneously preparing ourselves to live a life in imitation of her. That is the purpose of the Dormition Fast.

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, August 2, 2015

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

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

Epistle Reader: Mike Kasap

Holy Bread/Coffee Hour: George and Mona Kaleel

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

Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 8):

From the heights Thou didst descend, O compassionate One, and Thou didst submit to the three-day burial, that Thou might deliver us from passion; Thou art our life and our Resurrection, O Lord, 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.

Kontakion of the Transfiguration (Tone 7):

Thou wast transfigured on the mount, and Thy Disciples, in so far as they were able, beheld Thy glory, O Christ our God; so that, when they should see Thee crucified, they would remember that all Thy suffering was voluntary, and could declare to all the world that Thou art truly the effulgent Splendor of the Father.

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

The Epistle and Gospel Readings

Make vows to the Lord thy God and perform them.
In Judah God is known; His Name is great in Israel.

The Reading from the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians (3:9-17)

Brethren, we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building. According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and another man is building upon it. Let each man take care how he builds upon it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any one builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay or straw, each man's work will become manifest; for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work which any man has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire. Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew (14:22-34)

At that time, Jesus made the Disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He dismissed the crowds. And after He had dismissed the crowds, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. When evening came, He was there alone, but the Disciples' boat by this time was many furlongs distant from the land, beaten by the waves; for the wind was against them. And in the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea. But when the Disciples saw Jesus walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear. But immediately He spoke to them, saying, "Take heart, it is I; have no fear." And Peter answered Him, "Lord, if it is Thee, bid me come to Thee on the water." He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus; but when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Jesus immediately reached out His hand and caught him, saying to him, "O man of little faith, why did you doubt?" And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped Him, saying, "Truly, Thou art the Son of God." And when they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret.

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:

- **Wednesday, Aug. 5:** Vespers and Bible study, for the feast of the Transfiguration of our Lord, starting at 6pm.
- **Thursday, Aug. 6:** Divine Liturgy at Christ the Savior Orthodox Church in Rockford, 10am. See Fr. Andrew if you need directions.
- **Saturday, Aug. 8:** Paraklesis to the Theotokos, 6pm.
- **Next Sunday, Aug. 9:** Matins, 9am and Divine Liturgy, 10am. Holy Bread/ Coffee Hour: Kishler, Buss, and Anderson. Epistle Reader: Mark Kerasotes.

August 1 to 14 is a season dedicated to St. Mary, the Mother of God, the Dormition Fast. This is a season of fasting and prayer, in honor of St. Mary the Mother of God. Please avoid meat (if you are able), be generous with the poor, and attend some of our evening services! Most of our regular evening services will be replaced with the Paraklesis to the Theotokos, a beautiful service of prayer to the Mother of God for health and healing.

Our regular Wednesday evening prayer and Bible study group resumes this Wednesday at 6pm. All adults and teens are welcome! Do you have a topic or question you would like to discuss? Please see Fr. Andrew with any questions or suggestions.

Camp St. George in Cedar Rapids, IA, begins next week! Our kids will depart next Sunday, Aug. 9 after church, and return the following Saturday (Aug. 15). Please keep the camp, and its kids and counselors, in your prayers over the coming weeks.

Sermons and Feast Day videos are now online! On the front page of our website, you will now have access to videos of the sermons from here at St. George Church. Go to www.stgeorgeorthodox.org, scroll down to the bottom, and click on the video window to view the latest sermon. Also, if you place your cursor over "About our Parish," and click "Feast Days," you will be able to view a video of our entire Easter service. Thank you to Mark Kerasotes and Matthew McNatt for making this possible!
