

**:: Pastoral Message for the Feast of The Nativity of the Theotokos ::**

Metropolitan JOSEPH

September 8, 2015

*“The joy of the whole world hath shone forth to us from the two righteous ones, Joachim and Anna, the all-extolled Virgin, who because of her surpassing purity became a living temple of God, and alone is known as truly Theotokos. Wherefore, by her intercessions, O Christ God, send forth safety to the world, and to our souls the Great Mercy.” (The Aposticha for the Nativity of the Theotokos in Tone 4)*

We greet you with love and joy on this Feast of the Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos. The Aposticha from the Vespers of the feast which is quoted above transmits to us the essence of this feast. We are first joyful for the birth of Mary, since the birth of a child is a great gift granted by God. Our joy is magnified because she is granted to her parents Joachim and Anna in their later years, thereby overturning the laws of nature. Our final and greatest joy comes from the knowledge that she has been chosen by God to be the mother of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ, “a living temple of God”, and that she “alone is known as truly Theotokos”. We ask her to continue to intercede for our salvation and for peace to come to all of those around the world who are suffering so greatly.

The great joy of this feast marks the first major feast of the Holy Orthodox Church in this Ecclesiastical New Year which began on September 1<sup>st</sup>. We convey our most heartfelt love to you as we celebrate this joyous feast and we ask our gracious Lord to bless you and to grant that we will all be lifted up to new spiritual heights.

Yours in Christ,

+Joseph

Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of All North America

*Any announcements for the Sunday bulletin? Please submit by Friday each week to Fr. Andrew. If you do not receive the bulletin by email and would like to, let Father know.*



**St. George Orthodox Church  
of Spring Valley**

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**Sunday, September 6, 2015**

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

**Epistle Reader:** Matthew McNatt

**Holy Bread/Coffee Hour:** Miller and Kerasotes

**Next Week's Holy Bread/Coffee Hour:** Kerry and Leona Kelly

**Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 5):**

Let us believers praise and worship the Word; coeternal with the Father and the Spirit, born of the Virgin for our salvation. For, He took pleasure in ascending the Cross in the flesh to suffer death; and to raise the dead by His glorious Resurrection.

**Troparion for the Archangel Michael (Tone 4):**

Supreme Commander of the Hosts of the Heavens, we, the unworthy, importune and beseech thee that by thy supplications thou encircle us in the shelter of the wings of thine immaterial glory, guarding us who now fall down and cry to thee with fervor: Deliver us from dangers of all kinds, as the great Marshal of the heavenly hosts on high.

**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 Nativity of the Mother of God (Tone 4):**

By thy holy nativity, O pure one, Joachim and Anna were delivered from the reproach of barrenness; and Adam and Eve were delivered from the corruption of death; thy people do celebrate it, having been saved from the stain of iniquity, crying unto thee: The barren doth give birth to the Theotokos, who nourisheth our life.

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

Thou, O Lord, wilt keep and preserve us. Save me, O Lord, for the godly man has failed.

### **The Reading from the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians (1:21-2:4)**

Brethren, it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has commissioned us; He has put his seal upon us and given us His Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee. But I call God to witness against me—it was to spare you that I refrained from coming to Corinth. Not that we lord it over your faith; we work with you for your joy, for you stand firm in your faith. For I made up my mind not to make you another painful visit. For if I cause you pain, who is there to make me glad but the one whom I have pained? And I wrote as I did, so that when I came I might not suffer pain from those who should have made me rejoice, for I felt sure of all of you, that my joy would be the joy of you all. For I wrote you out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you.

### **The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew (22:2-14)**

The Lord spoke this parable: “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a marriage feast for his son, and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the marriage feast; but they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, Behold, I have made ready my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves are killed, and everything is ready; come to the marriage feast.’ But they made light of it and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore to the thoroughfares, and invite to the marriage feast as many as you find.’ And those servants went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good; so the wedding hall was filled with guests. But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment; and he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.’ For many are called, but few are chosen.”

**"IF ONE STUDIES A GREAT DEAL IN ORDER TO ACQUIRE KNOWLEDGE AND TO TEACH OTHERS, WITHOUT LIVING THE THINGS HE TEACHES, HE DOES NO MORE THAN FILL HIS HEAD WITH HOT AIR. AT MOST, HE WILL MANAGE TO ASCEND TO THE MOON USING MACHINES. THE GOAL OF THE CHRISTIAN IS TO RISE TO GOD WITHOUT MACHINES." -- ELDER PAISIOS THE ATHONITE**

## 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:

- **Wednesday, Sept. 9: Nativity of the Mother of God.** Divine Liturgy at 6pm
- **Saturday, Sept. 12:** Vespers, 6pm
- **Next Sunday, Sept. 13: Exaltation of the Holy Cross.** Matins, 9am and Divine Liturgy, 10am. Holy Bread and Coffee Hour: Kelly; Epistle Reader:

**Our sincerest condolences go to the Kerasotes family** this week, at the passing of Mark's father, Stephen. Stephen Kerasotes, 86, of Springfield, passed away this past Tuesday evening. Fr. Andrew participated in the funeral Friday morning at St. Anthony Hellenic Orthodox Church in Springfield. May his memory be eternal!

**Pan-Orthodox Youth Gathering** for high school and college students: Tuesday, Sept. 15, the Assembly of Orthodox Bishops will meet in Chicago, and would like to meet with the youth of our area that evening. This is a wonderful opportunity to meet with all of our American Orthodox bishops at the same time! The youth event begins at 6pm at the Serbian Orthodox Cathedral in Chicago (5701 N. Redwood Dr.). Please let Fr. Andrew know if you are interested.

**Coffee Hour clean-up:** Please note that coffee hour clean-up each Sunday in general should be overseen by the family offering it. However, all of us are encouraged to do our part to bus our own tables and help as we are able. What we should not have is the same few ladies cleaning up every week. Thank you!

**Building project:** The parish council is beginning discussions on the possibility of expanding our current building to accommodate our growing families and increasing attendance. More information will be made available in the coming weeks. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to talk with Father Andrew or with our building exploratory committee, Mark Kerasotes, Mike Kasap, and Matt Rowan.

**Church attendance and timeliness.** Keeping in mind the future of our community and our common spiritual life, let us all work to be more faithful with our church attendance. Sunday worship, with the hearing of the Word of God and receiving His holy body and blood is the most important thing we can possibly do all week! Make Sunday worship *the number one priority* each week for yourself and your family. And let us show the Lord we love Him and honor Him by coming to church and coming *on time* for our 10:00 Divine Liturgy!

**Sunday school** for children and teens will resume mid-September. We will keep you posted!