

**:: St. Valentine, the Priest of Rome ::**

*Commemorated by the Roman Church on Feb. 14, and by the Orthodox Church on July 6*

Now a commercialized holiday celebrating modern courtship and romance, the ancient Christian origins of Saint Valentine's Day are largely forgotten. The actual Orthodox liturgical Feast Days of *Valentinos* commemorate two Early Christian saints, Saint Valentine the Presbyter of Rome (July 6) and Hieromartyr Valentine the Bishop of Intermna, Italy (July 30). Although the historical records for these two saints are not complete, and what we do know about their lives has often been subjected to considerable confusion, their martyrdoms are well known to us. Because of their refusal to renounce their faith in Christ, both Valentines were imprisoned, tortured, and executed around 270, during the persecution of Christians under the Roman Emperor, Claudius II. ...

According to the most common narrative, Presbyter Valentine, a priest in Rome, drew the ire of Emperor Claudius by ignoring the imperial ban against allowing men who had not fulfilled their military obligations to the Empire to marry. Remaining loyal to his moral commitment and beliefs as a Christian priest, Valentine refused to compromise the sanctity of marriage to the will of the state. In defiance of imperial edict, Valentine continued to unite and bless Christian couples, which were legally barred from marrying. This association with young Christian beloveds became the muse over several centuries for an increasingly fictionalized, romantic expropriation and reconstruction of Saint Valentine in the West, one that has led to the modern Saint Valentine's Day. ...

For Orthodox Christians, Saint Valentine's Day is most fully understood as a celebration of romantic love and of God's love. Indeed, Valentine was willing to sacrifice his life not for *Eros* but in order to sanctify and make whole the union of young couples through the blessing of God's love. Demonstrating our love for God and reaching our fulfillment in Christ through our relationships with our spouses, families, and communities, is a way of life that is at the heart of Orthodoxy. By living a life in emulation of Christ, Saint Valentine shared this fundamental truth of Orthodox Christianity with the world, one that is more beautiful and lasts longer than flowers and cards—it is eternal.

*Dr. Alexandros K. Kyrou is Professor of History at Salem State University*

*Do you have an announcement for our bulletin? Please call or email Fr. Andrew no later than Friday  
each week for anything to be included in Sunday's bulletin*



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

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**Sunday, February 14, 2016**  
**Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost**  
**Matins: 9:00 AM :: Divine Liturgy: 10:00 AM**

**Epistle Reader:** Mark Kerasotes

**Holy Bread/Coffee Hour:** Ron and Dottie Malooley

**Next Sunday's Coffee Hour:** Matthew and Nan McNatt

**Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 4):** Having learned the joyful message of the Resurrection from the angel, the women disciples of the Lord cast from them their parental condemnation. And proudly broke the news to the Disciples, saying: "Death hath been spoiled! Christ God is risen, granting the world great 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 for Ordinary Sundays (Tone 2):** O protection of Christians that cannot be put to shame, mediation unto the Creator most constant, O despise not the suppliant voices of those who have sinned; but be thou quick, O good one, to come unto our aid, who in faith cry unto thee: Hasten to intercession, and speed thou to make supplication, thou who dost ever protect, O Theotokos, them that honor thee.

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)

## THE EPISTLE

For the Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

Make your vows to the Lord our God and perform them.

God is known in Judah; His Name is great in Israel.

### **The Reading from the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians (6:16-7:1)**

Brethren, you are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will live in them and move among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Therefore, come out from them, and be separate from them," says the Lord, "and touch nothing unclean; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters," says the Lord Almighty. Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, and make holiness perfect in the fear of God.

## THE GOSPEL

For the Seventeenth Sunday of Matthew

### **The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew (15:21-28)**

At that time, Jesus went to the district of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and cried, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely possessed by a demon." But He did not answer her one word. And His disciples came and begged Him, saying, "Send her away, for she is crying after us." He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But she came and knelt before Him, saying, "Lord, help me." And He answered, "It is not fair to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table." Then Jesus answered her, "O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire." And her daughter was healed instantly.

**"ORTHODOXY IS A FREEDOM-LOVING, DEMOCRATIC FAITH IT IS AT ITS BEST IN OUR FREE AMERICA. OUR PEOPLE ARE PART AND PARCEL OF AMERICA, GLADLY GIVING THEIR TREASURE AND THE BLOOD OF THEIR SONS TO SAFEGUARD ITS FREE INSTITUTIONS WHICH ARE THE REFLECTION OF THE FREEDOM THEY FIND IN THEIR FAITH. IF THE BEST OF BYZANTIUM HAS SURVIVED, IT IS IN THE UNITED STATES, AND IF THERE IS AN ORTHODOX POLITICAL IDEAL, IT IS ENSHRINED IN THE CONSTITUTION AND THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE."**

**(METROPOLITAN ANTHONY BASHIR, 1957)**

### **Birthdays this Week:**

William Rowan, Feb. 19

*Are we forgetting anyone? Please let Fr. Andrew know.*

## 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).*

This week's events and services:

- **Today:** Children's Sunday school downstairs, immediately after Holy Communion.
- **Saturday, Feb. 20:** Vespers, 6:00 pm.
- **Next Sunday, Feb. 21: Sunday of the Pharisee and Publican.** Matins, 9am and Divine Liturgy, 10am. Epistle Reader: Kenneth Wiltse. Holy Bread and Coffee Hour: McNatt.
- **Tuesday, Feb. 23: Service of Healing,** "Akathist to Jesus Christ, Light to those in Darkness," 7pm. *This will be offered as our contribution to the "Prayers for the Valley" series of services. We will have guests from other local churches this evening, so please come and show your characteristic hospitality!*

Looking ahead:

- **Monday, March 14:** First day of Great Lent
- **Sunday, April 24:** Palm Sunday
- **Sunday, May 1:** Holy Pascha

**This week marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passing of Metropolitan Anthony Bashir.** Our bishop has asked all of our churches to offer the memorial prayers for him today. May his memory be eternal!

**Khouria Patty** gave birth this past Tuesday to our sixth child, **Joseph Andrew Kishler.** Many thanks to all of you for your calls, messages, and especially to those of you who brought us meals. You are a blessing to us, and we appreciate your kindness and love! Please keep mom and baby in your prayers.

**House blessings** continue! Please contact Fr. Andrew to set up a date and time to have your home and/or workplace blessed with the Theophany Holy Water. *Please know it is not necessary to invite Fr. Andrew's entire family, or to provide a meal. All you need to have ready is a place to pray in front of an icon, and a list of living and departed for Fr. Andrew to remember in prayer.* Talk to Father if you have any additional questions.