

The Spirit of St. George

St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church Phoenix, Arizona

Volume 9 Number 3

March 2002

OUR LENTEN DECISION . . .

A Message from Deacon Anthony

Decision or Compromise?

We have a decision to make this Lenten season. As the Hebrews had to choose whether they were going to side with God or with the golden statues at the foot of Mount Sinai,¹ so we must all – each and every one of us – make a decision this Lenten season. We must decide whether we are going to follow Christ or are we going to follow something else.

Before you answer, “Of course I will follow Christ,” and toss this article aside (with, perhaps, a sense of irritation at the audacity of your Deacon to even raise the issue), I ask you to pause and reflect on the question.

I ask you to think about Adam and Eve, who lived in God’s own garden. They walked on the grass where God set his own footsteps. They must have thought that they followed God, but they still disobeyed Him, ate from the Tree of Knowledge and were banished from Paradise.² Had it been any one of us in their place, we would have done no better. Indeed, if we think about it, we realize that we usually do no better each day of our life.

Think about Moses, the greatest of the Old Testament prophets. But Moses never reached the promised land because he followed his own vanity and anger: he struck the rock and proclaimed that it was he, Moses, and not God, who gave water to the Hebrews in the wilderness.³ Likewise, we seek to enter the promised land of Heaven, but are we better and more faithful servants than Moses? Or are we, in truth, worse?

Think about King Saul, King David and King Solomon. These men, pious and God-fearing, were so highly favored by God that they were without peer in the ancient world. In the end, however, each one decided to pursue his own desire and not the will of God, to their great regret and the weakening of their Kingdoms.⁴ Similarly, God has blessed each member of this parish with more earthly comforts, conveniences and riches than all three of these Kings together. Which will we decide to pursue with our lips, hands and feet in the coming forty days: our Heavenly Master? Or money, materials and “March Madness”?

So I ask again: Have we decided to truly follow Christ this Great Lent? Or are we resigned to compromise?

Make No Compromises

Mary, the Theotokos did not compromise: she decided to submit herself perfectly and completely to the will of God, even though she could have been stoned to death by those who refused to believe the truth of Christ’s incarnation.⁵

John, the Forerunner and Baptist, did not compromise: he decided to proclaim Christ, even though it meant he would die at an ax-man’s blade.⁶

Jesus, the Christ, our Lord and Savior, did not compromise: He decided not call upon rescuing armies of angels, but to ascend the Cross and die an excruciating and humiliating death for us, so that we could be united with Him in His Resurrection.⁷

We at St. George, by God’s mercy, are not being called die, but to live in our confession of Christ. In that life, and particularly during the forty days of Great Lent, we must make no compromises; we must DECIDE.

What it Means to Decide

The word “decide” comes from the Latin word *decidere*, which literally means “to cut off.”⁸ Julius Caesar knew what the word meant. When he battled a foreign land, he often crossed the Mediterranean Sea in ships. Once ashore, he ordered his men to torch the ships, which burned and sank. Defeat and retreat was no longer an option for the army. The only way to return home was to conquer.

They conquered.

So it is with following Christ, although Christ has already won the battle for us. Through His death and Resurrection, He has achieved an eternal victory; we are, so to speak, merely His errant soldiers returning home, wounded and marked by sin. Our battle is to follow his footsteps; our conquest is to occupy the territory that He has won at the cost of his own Blood. To ensure our victory with Christ, however, we must make decisions. “Lent is our declaration of war. Lent, then, is a time of Decision.”⁹ We must put to the torch the false road signs; we must raze the false paths; and we must not hesitate to cut away any spiritual snares that prevent us from returning home to God. We cannot walk two paths; we cannot serve to masters¹⁰; we cannot put our hand to the plow and look back.¹¹

We cannot compromise; we must burn our ships; we must *decide*.

The Forty Day Road Ahead

The Lenten Road is not easy. Satan will tempt each and every one of us, clergy and laity alike, just as he tempted Christ in the desert.¹²

Nevertheless, Christ, in his mercy, has armed us for the struggle:

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the equipment of the gospel of peace; besides all these, taking the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the flaming darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints. . . .¹³

If we are overcome, and we often are, Christ will be there to rescue us when we cry out to Him. But first, we must decide to undertake our share of the battle to return home to His Kingdom.

Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers and all Thy Saints, Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on us and save us. Amen.

■ Dn. Anthony

¹ Exodus 32:25-26

² Genesis 3:6-8, 22-24

³ Numbers 20:10-13; Deuteronomy 34:4-6

⁴ 1 Samuel 15: 20-29; 28: 15-19; 2 Samuel 11:4-16; 12:7-18; 1 Kings 11:9-13

⁵ Luke 1:26-38

⁶ Matthew 14:6-12

⁷ See e.g., Romans 3:25-26; 6:5

⁸ Webster’s New Universal Unabridged Dictionary at p. 516 (1996)

⁹ Rev. Fr. Theodore E. Ziton, Pastor, St. Nicholas Orthodox Church Montreal, Quebec, Canada, The Word Magazine, March 1959, Page 3-4.

¹⁰ Matthew 6:24

¹¹ Luke 9:62

¹² Luke 4:1-13

¹³ Ephesians 6:10-18 (emphasis added)

Bishop JOSEPH'S Visitations



- March 3** St. Peter the Apostle Church,
San Dimas CA
- March 10** Holy Cross Mission, Palmdale, CA
- March 16-19** St. Stephen Church – Cupertino, CA
- March 18** Great Lent Begins
- March 23-24** St. Athanasius Church, Goleta, CA
- March 30-31** St. Ignatius Mission, Twin Falls, ID

**Parish Council Meeting
Monday March 11th 7pm**

Newly Elected Officers are:

**David Ghiz – Pres. John Karadsheh – V-Pres.
Aziz Haddad – Secretary, Tresurer - Sandra
Hasbany –and Joseph Macoule Asst. Tres.**



Church Records

Baptisms:

Nora G. Sayegh January 19, 2002
Parents: George & Nessreen Sayegh

Elee John Eid February 20, 2002
Parents: John & Jon Darc Eid

Chrismation:

Jondarc Eid February 20, 2002

A Special Valentine's Day

Thank you to all who participated in the Bake Sale sponsored by the Kindergarten class on February 3, 2002. It would not have been possible to succeed in such an endeavor if not for the help of those who baked and graciously donated. Nor would we have succeeded had not so many people opened their hearts (and purses and wallets) to give! With your help we were able to raise \$250.00. Some of this money went to purchase sweet treats for our friends.

On February 10, 2002, ten little pairs of hands gathered and worked diligently to make eighty individual bags filled with treats and a special Valentine for each child at the Thomas J. Pappas School. Additionally, we were able to purchase paper, pencils, crayons, glue sticks, markers, nutritious snacks and medications for the school. In a great show of kindness, David and Melanie Ghiz purchased and donated \$200.00 in food coupons. On February 13, 2002, Katrina Bitar and I delivered these items to the school and met with the Outreach Coordinator.

To say that this is simply another elementary school is an injustice. We were overwhelmed to learn all that this institution provides for homeless children in Maricopa County. Aside from an approved elementary education, the children are assisted with their hygiene, clothing and nutritional needs. Each child is fed upon arrival to school and showered and clothed if necessary before beginning their studies. Two meals and two snacks are provided each day. Food boxes are prepared each month and sent to the families along with any other necessities they may require. The school celebrates each child's birthday individually and allows the child to select a toy from donations, and sponsors a group birthday party each month. The truly marvelous thing about the Pappas School is that it functions all through private donations and volunteer support.

The Day Katrina and I visited, we were able to tour the facility and see a kindergarten class in session. Strikingly,

the smiling faces remind one of our own kindergarten students-truly the only difference is circumstance. Though the school staff was grateful for all we were able to bring, we were thankful to have had the opportunity to witness what Our Lord Jesus Christ meant when he said, "Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me." (Matt. 25:40).

Again our unending love and thanks for all you did to help our young students realize their goal and be part of a meaningful lesson. Shannon David

~ The Ladies Corner ~

Ladies Auxiliary Meeting and Luncheon will be Thursday, March 14th at 11:30pm. Join the Ladies and bring your favorite Pot Luck dish to share. The Archdiocese designates March as Antiochian Women's Month. The women of our parish will be serving as ushers, readers and greeters. If you would like to join them in serving this month, just let Ed Naddour, our head usher know when you come to church on Sunday.

Raffle ticket winners were drawn at the ladies meeting in February. The beautiful large afghan was given to Abeer Khoury. Samar Haddad was awarded the lovely placemats and the baby blanket went to John Karadsheh (how appropriate). Congratulations to all the winners, and thanks to all who purchased tickets!



Each year the Ladies are asked to sponsor a fundraiser to benefit the Project Mexico Orphanage. This year we have decided to serve a spaghetti luncheon. The luncheon will be held on Sunday March 17th immediately following Divine Liturgy. Ticket prices will be \$5.00 for adults and \$3.00 for children. The menu will include spaghetti with your choice of two sauces, salad and fresh garlic bread. We need your support to help make a difference, so please mark your calendars now and plan to attend!

Mother Cassiana will be visiting St. George in April to hold a Pan Orthodox retreat. The Ladies have been asked to prepare coffee and snacks on Friday April 12th, as well as a Lenten lunch on Saturday April 13th. We will need all of the help we can get, so please see Jennie Sweilem if you can donate some time!

**Don't forget to stop by the counter in
the Narthex to pick up your Pledge
Envelopes.**



The weekly bulletin submissions for Holy Bread Offerings or any organization announcements will have a **new deadline of Thursday morning by 10:00am**. Anything faxed over or phoned in after the deadline will not be included that weeks bulletin. A reminder that all articles submitted for the monthly newsletter must be into the office by the 15th of the prior month to meet printing deadlines for The Spirit Newsletter. Please help us to keep these deadlines by submitting all materials ahead of time. Call the office if you have questions on e-mailing material over for submission.

Stewardship Pledged Members To-date February 21, 2002

Rev. Fr. & Mrs. Christopher Salamy V. Rev. Fr.& Mrs. Christo Christoff Deacon and Mrs. Anthony Blackwell Sub-Deacon and Mrs. Ron Abrahams Dr.and Mrs. Joseph Abdelnour Mr.and Mrs. Philip Abdoulah Ms. Jodi Abodeeely Ms. Nadine Aboud Mr.and Mrs. Joseph Abraham Mr.and Mrs. Wayne Abraham Mr.and Mrs. Dean Abraham Mr.and Mrs Michael Abukhader Ms. Chinnaz Ammari Mr.and Mrs. Abraham Assad Mr. William Assaly Ms. Jean Baxter Ms. Marian Beck Ms. Katrina Bitar Mr.and Mrs. James Bogues Ms. Rosalie Bousard Ms. Anna Bronnenkant Ms. Lynn Church Mr.and Mrs. Ralph Clair Mr.and Mrs. Jason Clark Ms. Annie Coury Mr.and Mrs. Pierre Dahlan Mr.and Mrs. James DeRienzo Mr.and Mrs. Anna Derrickson Mr.and Mrs. John Doumani Mr.and Mrs. Tomothy Doyle Mr.and Mrs. Richard Dungan Ms. Christine Elliott Mrs. Bernice Esahak Dr.and Mrs. Jim Farha Mr.and Mrs. Cornel Fitu Mr.and Mrs. Bruce Florence Mr.and Mrs. Robert Foster Mr.and Mrs. Raymond Freije Mr.and Mrs. Thomas Garrison Mr.and Mrs. Assad Gebran Mr.and Mrs. David Ghiz Mr.and Mrs. Lewis Ghiz Ms. Sally Ghiz Mr.and Mrs. Dan Gray	Ms. Fadiya Nassar Mrs. Doris Nasser Mr.and Mrs. Orlando Nassif Ms. Helena Habib Ms. Fannie Habib Mr. Kenneth Haddad Mr.and Mrs. Aziz Haddad Mr.and Mrs. Taysir Haddad Mr.and Mrs. Albert Haddy Mr.and Mrs. Larry Haddy Mr.and Mrs Fouad Hakimeh Mrs. Rhonda Hallal Mr.and Mrs. Samuel Hanna Ms. Nahla Harb Mr.and Mrs. Shafiq Hasou Mr.and Mrs. Shawn Hill Mr.and Mrs. George Homsey Mrs. Mae Homsey Mr.and Mrs. Adnan Horan Mr.and Mrs. Alan Horan Mr.and Mrs. W. Gary Hull Mr.and Mrs. Sammer Hweimel Mr.and Mrs. Adel Hweimel Mr.and Mrs. Buzz Iacovelli Mr.and Mrs. Eugene Kanaan Mrs. Mary Karadsheh Mr.and Mrs. John Karadsheh Mr.and Mrs. Tony Karraz Mr.and Mrs. Jack Khoury Mr. Victor Khoury Mr.and Mrs. Eddie Khoury Mr.and Mrs. Banyout Khoury Ms. Evelyn Kosobud Mr.and Mrs. Cornel Lengyel-Leahu Mr.and Mrs. Sami Lorenzo Mr.and Mrs. Elias Mousa Mr.and Mrs. Arthur Mabbett Ms. Joan Manning Ms. Heather Mcleod & Mr. Adam Labbe Mr.and Mrs. Elias Mousa Mr.and Mrs. Michael Musallam Mr.and Mrs. Yousef Mushahwar Mr.and Mrs. Edward Naddour Mrs. Linda Nahat	Mr.and Mrs. Edmund Nassar Mr.and Mrs. Richard Nichols Mr.and Mrs. Victor Postoy Ms. Athena Potter Ms Maram Quomsieh Mr.and Mrs. William Quomsieh Ms. Margaret Raymond Mr.and Mrs. Micheal Rideout Ms. Barbara Risk Mr.and Mrs. Richard Saba Mr.and Mrs. Ralph Saigh Mr.and Mrs. Kassab Saigh Mr.and Mrs. Mechael Salem Mr.and Mrs. Robert Salem Mr.and Mrs. James Saliba Mr.and Mrs. John Saliba Mr.and Mrs. Majed Sayegh Mr.and Mrs. Gus Sayegh Mr.and Mrs. Saliba Sayegh Mr.and Mrs. Jack Sayegh Mr.and Mrs. John Sayegh Mr.and Mrs. Abraham Sayegh Mr.and Mrs. Sam Sayegh Mr.and Mrs. Fred Shaheen Ms. Shirley Snage Fr. and Mrs. Anthony Sola Mrs. Teresa Sweilem Mr.and Mrs. Issa Sweilem Mrs. Nourhan Sweis Mr.and Mrs. Mike Taamneh Mr.and Mrs. Carl Tamuty Mr. Daniel Thomas Mrs. Neoma Tibshraeny Mrs. Yvonne Tibshraeny Mr.and Mrs. Raymond Toronto Mr. James Truscott Mr.and Mrs. Kathleen Wagner Mr.and Mrs. Larman Wilson Dr. Natalia Wilson Mr.and Mrs. Shaker Yacoub Mr. Micheal Ziton Mr.and Mrs. John Zurikat
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STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

As of January 31 st	Monthly Actual	Monthly Budgeted	YTD Actual	YTD Budgeted
Envelope/Pledges	\$ 21,989	\$ 15,000	\$ 21,989	\$ 15,000
Archdiocese Dues Income	\$ 2,906	\$ 1,385	\$ 2,906	\$ 1385

March 2002 ~ Ladies Month

	March 3	March 10	March 17	March 24	March 31
Epistle Reader	I Cor. 6:12-20 Becky Abrahams	I Cor. 8:8-9:2 Marion Saba	Romans 13:11-14:4 Tammy Belt Sherine David	Heb. 11:24-26, 32-40 Anna Bronnenkant	Heb. 1:10-2:3 Maram Quomsieh
Greeters	Mary Beth Saliba & Nadine Aboud	Jeanette Clair & Kathy Saliba	Kim & Alyssa Johnson	Samira & Sandie Khoury	Jennifer & Theresa Sweilem
Ushers	Maram Quomsieh Kim Johnson Evelyn Kosobud Jumana Hadeed Samira Khoury Bonnie Karraz	Eva Quomsieh Enaam Hweimel Nicole Doumani Sally Ghiz Margaret Raymond Jennifer Sweilem	Molly Abrahams Becky Abrahams Sarah Foster Manal Sayegh Sandie Dhoury Shirley Snage	Kathy Sayegh Heather McLeod Linda Haddad Tammy Belt Ruby Rideout Heather Sayegh	Carrie Sayegh Rose Marie Toronto Lorraine Florence Sherry Nichols Sherine David Theresa Gray
Altar Servers	Mathew Saliba Alex Saliba David Yates Joseph Sayegh Michael Aboud-Rihani	Simon Abrahams Drew Bronnenkant Chris Doumani Rick Khoury Rami Khoury	Philip Bolanos Jordan Gray Basil Dahlan Musa Sayegh Bryan Johnson	Andy Leahu Ronnie Sayegh Danny Sayegh Joseph Hasou Odeh Sayegh	Mathew Saliba Alex Saliba David Yates Joseph Sayegh Michael Aboud-Rihani
Hall Lock-up	Aziz Haddad	Issa Sweilem	Ralph Clair	Joyce Bogues	David Ghiz
Coffee Hour	St. George Bazaar	Farah & Nassar Families	Spaghetti Luncheon	Laila Sayegh	Eddie & Sandie Khoury

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Website: www.stgeorge-az.org

Office Hours 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. Monday thru Friday

The Rev. Fr. Christopher Salamy

(602) 765-6069

Church Services

Great Vespers Saturdays 5:00 p.m.

(check calendar for dates)

Sunday Orthros (Matins) 8:50 a.m.

Sunday Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Confession: Sundays 9:00-9:25 a.m.

or by appointment.

All articles for submission must be in to the office on the 15th of each month. If you do not have your article ready to hand in, it will not be included in that month's newsletter. Please call or send name and address changes to the church office.



Annunciation to the Theotokos
Divine Liturgy
Monday, March 25th 9 a.m.