

# The Spirit of St. George

St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church Phoenix, Arizona

Volume 9 Number 8

October 2002

## THE CHILDREN ARE OUR FUTURE

By Father Christopher Salamy

In the Antiochian Archdiocese, October is “Youth Month.” The entirety of the month is dedicated to serving and ministering to the young people in our families. They read the epistle during Divine Liturgy, pass the trays and bulletins, serve in the altar and sponsor the Fellowship Hour. It is a wonderful opportunity for our young people to begin their involvement in service to the Church. While October is designed to teach and minister to the youth, there is ample evidence that the real message speaks to adults and parents.

Quite often we hear the phrase, “The children are the future of our Church.” In some sense that is true: the children will lead our Church in the future. If you pay close attention, you will see that St. George is in very capable hands! However, in order for our young people to be fully prepared to lead the Church, the transmission of negative and sinful behavior cannot be passed on from generation to generation. It is our responsibility to pass on the lifestyle that God intended for us to live. Remember: Although our children are the leaders of tomorrow, they will only become what we make of them today. In celebration of “Youth Month” I have included a short passage from a book by an Orthodox nun entitled, Children in the Church Today. This short book by Sister Magdalen offers great insight into our roles as parents and teachers, while reminding us that the greatest-- in fact, only—way to teach our children the Christian life is to be actually living it ourselves!

“The aim of Christian parents and teachers, which they should always keep at least in the back of their minds, is: *to inspire in the children personal love for Christ and for the Mother of God*. If children grow up honoring Christ and the Theotokos as beloved persons, this love will establish their hearts in God, and even if they later go through doubts, or even leave the Church, at least they will not be against Christ in their hearts; this may even be enough for their salvation.

“The religious education of children is mainly brought about by example, and by the atmosphere of love and prayer at home. The child’s heart is touched; without explanations he acquires prayer as a natural activity, and without needing logical proofs he knows God’s presence.

“Love, prayer and example are more effective than words – indeed, it is these that give value to words – when leading children to God. Our work as parents or teachers of religion is often a hidden work, and it gives us experience of the ‘terrible’ aspect of human freedom: that no one can impose love for God on another person. We would not wish it otherwise; we wish to love God freely and we wish this for all mankind.”



### ~ Bishop JOSEPH’S Visitations ~

- Oct. 11-13** St. Michael Church, Las Vegas, NV Elevation of Fr. John Nicholas Ozone to Archpriest
- Oct. 20** St. James Mission, Anaheim, CA Patronal Feast Day
- Oct. 25-27** St. Paul Church, Seattle, WA Episcopal Visit and Ordination

# Surrounded By A Cloud

By Sub-Deacon Ron Abrahams

Venerable Romanos, the Melodist

There are two icons of deacons in our church. Each is easily seen as you stand at the base of the steps to the choir loft. On the South wall is an icon of St. Romanos. He is one of the greatest hymnographers and poets of the Orthodox Church.

He was born to Greek Jews in Emesa, now Homs, Syria in 496. At some point in time he went to Beirut where he served as a singer in the Church of the Holy Resurrection. During the reign of Anastatios he moved to Constantinople where he was ordained a Deacon and served in Hagia Sophia. There he introduced hymnography into the Byzantine Liturgy. This was a style of Syrian-Palestinian origin and is now known as the *kontakion*.

St. Romanos served tirelessly in the Liturgy. In spite of his energy and desires, he had no vocal talent or musical ear, but was nonetheless loved by Patriarch EUPHEMIUS for his many virtues and paid the same wage as those obviously more talented. This caused resentment by his peers and one day, at a pre-Christmas service, was pushed on the ambo by another jealous cleric where he was forced to sing by himself. He was disgraced in front of the Patriarch, Emperor, and the whole congregation.

That night he prayed before the icon of the Virgin at the Blachernae Church. He frequently prayed there, this time pouring out his grief to her. (This church preserved her veil, robe and part of her belt). Exhausted, he fell asleep. In a dream the Theotokos appeared to him holding a scroll. She told him to eat it, which he did. When he awoke he was inspired to spontaneously compose his first hymn.

That night he came to the church for the vigil before Christmas insisting he be permitted to sing on the ambo. That hymn was "Today the Virgin." All were exalted and the people started calling him Melodist.

St. Romanos' best known work is the Akathist Hymn to the Annunciation, sung on the fifth Saturday of Great Lent, but he composed over 1000 *Kontakions*.

It should be noted that we best know the *Kontakion* as a short hymn, but what we sing is only the prologue of its full *Kontakion*. At the height of its development in the 6<sup>th</sup> century it was a poetic sermon composed of 18 – 30 verses, each with a refrain united by an acrostic. Originally these songs were called psalms or odes, but in the 9<sup>th</sup> century people started calling them *Kontakions* for the shaft that the scrolls were rolled around, the 'kontas'.

St. Romanos' devotion to Christ in the church was the just cause of his miraculous, musical blessing. He is a reminder all things are possible through Christ.

## Worldly Success in Christian Life

### "Worldly Success: One Man's Meat Is Another Man's Poison."

(Part Two in a Six-Part Series)

In Part One, we concluded that "[w]hether we are multimillionaires or monks, we are all equally called to follow Christ and rise to the same Heavenly height...." But while we are commanded to pick up our respective crosses and follow the Lord, the type of cross that we carry, the manner in which we each must carry them, and the paths that we must respectively take, can be very different from one person to the next.

For a monk or nun, becoming a successful Christian typically means shedding oneself of the world so that one's entire focus and attention can be devoted to Christ. St. John Climacus (of the Ladder) exhorts that those who are called to the monastic life should strip themselves of worldly encumbrances in the same manner that an athlete strips down to run a race. To St. John, those who encumber themselves with family, friends, careers and other worldly concerns may still complete the race and receive their "crowns of glory," but they run the race in shackles.

Not everyone is called to carry the cross of monasticism. Indeed, most of us are called to run our race burdened with the very shackles that St. John admonishes us to avoid. We who live in the world, however, typically characterize these burdens as blessings: family, wealth, possessions, power, popularity. And contrary to St. John's advice, we actively seek to obtain them.

These different perspectives reveal a critical point concerning what it means to be a "successful" Christian. The path of the successful Christian monk is not the path of the successful Christian businessperson, spouse, student or other person living in the world. St. Maximus the Confessor recognized, while contrasting the monastic to the worldly life, that a layman's successes are a monk's failures, and vice versa:

The achievements of the worldly are failures for monks; and the achievements of monks are failures for the worldly. When the monk is exposed to what the world sees as success - wealth, fame, power, pleasure, good health and many children, he is destroyed. And when a worldly man finds himself in the state desired by monks - poverty, humility, weakness, self-restraint, mortification and suchlike, he considers it a disaster.

We who live in the world are all blessed to varying degrees with worldly success. Worldly success, and its enjoyment, is not an embarrassment to the successful

Christian. Such successes are gifts, freely given to us by God. But our possession of such gifts obligates us to use those gifts responsibly. As St. John Chrysostom explains, "Wealth is not forbidden if it be used for that which is necessary. For as I observed, wine is not a bad thing, but drunkenness is so. A covetous man is one thing, and a rich man is another thing."

More pointedly, Christ explains through the Parable of the Ten Talents that if we cannot be trusted with this world's wealth that is elusive, then we cannot be trusted with everlasting wealth. Therefore, our worldly success, to the extent that we are both blessed and burdened with it, should neither be shunned nor ignored nor "buried in the ground." Rather, we are expected to multiply the "talents" entrusted to us, and are charged to be good stewards of the things we have in this life, including the wealth, power and other consequences of worldly success granted to us by God. As St. John Chrysostom relates, "Fortune is not born with you, but is entrusted to you by God for a few days; therefore, distribute as a steward what is entrusted to you anywhere the entruster orders."

— Deacon Anthony

*Coming Next Month – Part Three: "Worldly Success: The Ministry of the Steward."*

Stewardship update

MONTH ENDING AUGUST 31, 2002	CURRENT MONTH ACTUAL	CURRENT MONTH BUDGET	YEAR TO DATE ACTUAL	YEAR TO DATE BUDGET
Env/Pledge Receipts	\$12,457	\$15,000	\$118,257	\$120,000
Archdiocese Dues Income	\$252	\$1,385	\$4,909	\$11,083
Total Revenues	\$24,589	\$30,927	\$218,758	\$247,417
Total Expenses	\$37,633	\$30,524	\$242,175	\$244,197

**Communion With Our Saints**

Orthodox Women's Retreat ~ October 18 & 19,  
 Ss. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church,  
 1614 E. Monte Vista Road, Phoenix

**Speaker: Rev. Fr. John Bethancourt**

Cost: will be \$20 to cover food cost, our speaker, and retreat materials. The schedule is as follows:

Friday: 4:30-5pm Registration  
 5:00 pm Vespers followed by refreshments  
 6:00 pm Presentation by Fr. John  
 Saturday 9am Orthros/Matins followed by the  
 Morning activities/Fr. John  
 12:30 pm Lunch  
 1:30 pm Afternoon activities/Fr. John  
 4:00 pm Conclusion & Great Vespers  
 R.S.V.P. To Peggy Robinson 480-834-7020

**Church Records**

Funerals

Ida Sickery Zakaib ~ August 24, 2002

**Ladies of St. George Church**



The next Ladies Auxiliary Meeting will be held at 10:00 am on Saturday October 5<sup>th</sup> in the church hall. It will be a brunch meeting so please bring a potluck item to share. We hope to see more ladies in attendance, who would not normally be able to make our Thursday meetings. We decided in our September meeting to postpone the elections for the offices of President and Vice President until this meeting, so please be sure to attend so we can elect new officers for the upcoming year. As for the offices of Secretary and Treasurer, it was decided that Joyce Bogues would serve as Secretary and Evelyn Kosobud would remain Treasurer.

We have also decided to continue to collect canned food for the Paradise Valley Emergency Food Bank in the Narthex year round. So far we have donated 511 pounds of canned food. Please remember to pick up a few extra items to donate when you do your grocery shopping.

If you have not signed up for our E-scrip program, you may still do so. Please see Jennifer Sweilem for a sign up form. Remember to ask family and friends to sign up to support St. George as well! Bashas has also rolled out a program to help local churches. If you shop at Bashas and would like to link your "Thank You" card to St. George's account, simply take this number (28294) to the cashier the next time you shop and ask them to sign you up. This is a one-time process so you will be permanently linked.

We would love to see as many new faces as possible so please plan to attend! Yours in Christ, Jennifer Sweilem, Ladies Auxiliary President

Olan Mills ~ We have scheduled a make up day for Monday, October 21<sup>st</sup> to photograph the last of our families for our directory. Please call Jennifer Sweilem (480) 373-8123 to set a time to have your portraits done. It is important to have as many families as possible to participate, so please schedule as soon as possible.

**St. George Church Annual Hafli  
 Is Coming! Saturday October 26<sup>th</sup>  
 St. George Fellowship Hall**

Tickets: Adults ~ \$60 Children under 12 ~ \$30

**Watch Sunday Bulletins for more info!**

For details, you may contact:  
 Ray & Rose Marie Toronto 480 614-9499  
 or Sandy Khoury 480 515-1423.

# YOUTH CONNECTION

## NOT THE WORDS, BUT THE “WORD”

As His servant, I stand. At His feet, I repent.  
In His service, I live. For our lives, He was sent.

In His words, I believe. For my God, I will live  
In His shadow, I walk. Of my life, I will give.

For my brothers, I care. To His mother, I pray.  
His commandments, I know. In His footsteps, I stay.

In His church is my body. In His hands is my soul.  
A taste of Heaven I crave. Eternal life is my goal.

In my words, I profess. I love Christ, I declare,  
But how much do I know? Do I show that I care?

My body's in church, but my mind's far away.  
In my heart, I believe. In my actions, I stray.

I say, “I love God,” but do I know Him well?  
What was that the priest said? What does scripture tell?

Who was John? Who was Matthew? And what did they write?  
What do Paul's letters say? Why keep Christ in my sight?

Why keep Christ anywhere but my hands and my feet?  
It is there He should live. It is where we should meet.

It's my friend I should love, not my house or my car.  
Not my needs and my wants, but my children's, by far.

Not my way, but my Lord's! This is what we must know.  
For no other reason than that God tells me so!

**“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.”**

**3 John 1:4**

## MESSAGE FROM MARK

"For the Son of Man came not to *be served*, but to *serve*, and to give His life as a ransom for many."

-Mark 10:45

*We need to follow the example that Christ set for us, and always ask other people these questions:*

*"How can I help? What can I do?"*

*Forget about me, what about you?!?"*

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### OCTOBER IS YOUTH MONTH!

A special token of support and love goes out to all the children of our church family. We love you and we pray that God blesses you with the desire and strength to remain on His path. May we together, parents and children, take advantage of every opportunity we are given to educate our children!

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### OCTOBER- IMPORTANT DATES TO KNOW:

- ❖ Youth Month- SOYO participates in Epistle Readings, Collections, and hosting Coffee Hour
- ❖ Sunday, 6th- Begin Nativity Program Rehearsals
- ❖ Sunday, 6th - SOYO Meeting
- ❖ Junior Choir Rehearsals - 6th & 27th
- ❖ Hospitalers\_- 13th & 27th
- ❖ Friday 11th- Monday 14th- Trip to Project Mexico
- ❖ Wednesday, 16th- Pathways
- ❖ Sunday, 20th – Special Olympics Awareness Day
- ❖ Thursday, 31st- Trick-or-Treating for Canned Food