

THE SPIRIT OF ST. GEORGE

NEWSLETTER

OF ST. GEORGE ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

The Spirit of St. George

Monthly except July/August

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April 2009



*St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church
A Parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America
& of the Diocese of Los Angeles and the West
4530 E. Gold Dust Avenue
Phoenix, Arizona 85028-4221*

Peace with God

*A Sermon on the Glorious Resurrection
In The Harvest of Sermons
Damascus, Syria, 1984 - pages 51-59*

"The apostle Paul said: "Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," (Romans 5:1) "who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification" (Romans 4:25).

Jesus Christ bowed his holy head on the cross and submitted his pure spirit into the hands of his heavenly father and died. He died: the one who gave life to the dead by his divine power, healed the sick, made the lepers clean, strengthened the knees of the disabled, opened the eyes of the blind, guided the lost to the straight path, brought sinners to repentance. What was written by the prophet Isaiah was fulfilled when he said: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me for he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim release to the prisoners, recovery of sight to the blind and freedom to the oppressed" (Luke 4:18, Isaiah 61:1). He died: the one whom the crowds

followed coming from everywhere to listen to his heavenly teachings, "for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes" (Matthew 7:29). In his Sermon on the Mount he said to them: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven . . . blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God" (Matthew 5:3,9).

He was not content with this but he set forth the golden rule for how humanity is to behave with fellow humanity saying: "In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets" (Matthew 7:12).

When a person is freed from his selfishness, loves the Lord with all of his heart and all of his will and loves his neighbor as himself, he will be able to fulfill this commandment of the Lord and attain Christian perfection by fulfilling the commandment of the Lord that says: "Love your enemies and pray for

those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:44,45). The heavenly father, "proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). This is sacrificial love that does not make demands for itself but what is for others. A love that breaks down hateful racial barriers and destroys sectarian divisions among humanity and teaches people mutual fraternity: "For God so loved the World that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life" (John 3:16).

The death of Christ on the cross was necessary for the salvation of humanity, as mentioned in the Nicene Creed where it says: "Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary, Mother of God. And he became man, and was crucified

(Continued on page 2)

for us under Pontius Pilate, and He suffered, died and was buried and the third day He rose." The apostle Paul says on this matter: "who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification" (Romans 4:25).

The Lord Christ in his death was a substitute: He died instead of humanity and his death was necessary to redeem humanity from the justice of God and to reconcile between his justice and his mercy. This was done intentionally, by his own will and the will of his heavenly father. While he was the incarnate God innocent of sin, infallible, he took the place of sinful humanity and bore the suffering willingly instead of them.

He died on the cross to make peace with our heavenly father according to what the apostle Paul says: "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (II Corinthians 5:21) and "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us" (Galatians 3:13). The apostle Peter said: "He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed" (I Peter 2:24).

Jesus could have freed himself from the hand of his enemies the Jews and the Romans. But, it had been determined that he would drink from the cup of death to save humanity. As he said, the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to sacrifice himself for the redemption of many. Yes, Christ

died and the last act of the tragedy of Golgotha was finished that Friday afternoon when he submitted his spirit into the hands of his heavenly father and was pierced in the side by a spear and blood and water flowed from him. His enemies were completely sure of his death. With permission from Pilate the governor, Joseph of Aramathia and Nicodemus came and took his pure body down from the cross and anointed it with incense and perfume and wrapped it with linen. They buried it in a new tomb carved from stone. A large stone was placed at the door of the tomb. By the order of Pilate, answering the request of the Jewish Chief Priests, the tomb was sealed with the seals of the Roman authority. Soldiers were placed to guard it because after his enemies killed him physically they remembered that he said: "After three days I will rise again . . . so they went with the guard and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone" (Matthew 27:63,66).

Yes, Christ died on the cross and was buried in the new tomb. He died: the one who made a whip from cords and drove out the money changers and the pigeon sellers from the temple of the Lord. The



Jews said to him: "What verse do you show us that you do this?" and Jesus answered saying to them: "'Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.' The Jews then said, 'This temple has been under construction for forty-six years and will you raise it up in three days?' But he was speaking of the temple of his body. After he arose from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken" (John 2:18-22).

On Sunday at dawn, the women came to the tomb to anoint the body according to the tradition followed when they found the large stone had been rolled away from its door. They found the shroud was put in order not pointing to hurriedness, haste, fear or alarm. They saw an angel inside the tomb who said to them: "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look there is the place they laid him" (Mark 16:6).

The redeemer rose from the dead and went out of the tomb in spite of the presence of the large stone at its door. His dazzling, divine light shone around the whole place then the angel came and rolled away the large stone from the door of the tomb so the women and the disciples could see the empty tomb. An earthquake so frightened the guards that they fell on their faces and became as if they were dead. They went to the city and informed their masters that Christ had risen. But the Jewish chief priests hardened their hearts and lost the golden opportunity to repent and

return to God and believe in Jesus the awaited Messiah. They bribed the guards to close their mouths with silver so their tongues were silenced and didn't speak the truth: He who is silent with the truth is a dumb Satan (an Arabic expression). So they changed into false witnesses. Pity them on the day of judgment.

Let us examine our hands and feet. Have our hands done the deeds of goodness and godliness? Have our feet walked on the way of righteousness and integrity?

The truth of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus is as clear as the midday sun. Can we block the light of the sun with a sieve? Christ is risen, truly risen! What the prophet David said was fulfilled on his tongue: "For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, nor did his flesh experience corruption" (Psalm 16:10, Acts 2:27,31). Yes, Christ rose from the dead and appeared to the disciples often and in many places. At one of those times he appeared to more than 500 of them. They saw him with their eyes, touched him with their hands, heard him with their ears, ate and drank with him and he ate and drank with them.

On the day of his resurrection he appeared to Mary Magdalene, the women, Peter and to the two disciples who were traveling to Emmaus. On the evening of that day the disciples were gathering in the Upper Room afraid of the Jews and

they locked themselves in and made sure the doors were well locked. Their hearts were anxious and restless; their souls were upset and afraid. Jesus appeared in their midst and said to them: "Peace be with you" (John 20:19) lest they would think that he was a ghost. He presented his hands to them and showed them his feet and the mark of the spear in his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Their joy increased with his expression of peace. He meant every word of it.

This peace is the best thing the Lord Christ left for his followers. It is the tranquility of heart, a restful conscience, a hope that does not fail and a joyful hope. No matter if the storms are strong and violent, the black clouds are heavy or the thunderbolts are frightening and fearful, we fly in the atmosphere of the Spirit and our souls are content for the care of God includes us and his vigilant eye looks out for us.

His divine promise gives peace to our hearts. He said: "Even the hairs of your head are all counted" (Matthew 10:30). The basis of the peace is reconciliation with God that was the utmost goal of the incarnation of the redeemer. Heavens declared this expression of peace when the angel Gabriel brought the good news to the virgin Mary concerning the pregnancy with Jesus. The angels also sang the song of peace on the day of the redeemer's birth saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!" (Luke 2:14). Before his suffering the Lord comforted his

disturbed disciples with expressions of peace saying: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives" (John 14:27). Now after his resurrection he gave peace to his disciples so their hearts rejoiced because they saw the Lord.

We are truly in need today, oh beloved, of the peace of Christ our Lord: the peace built on the foundation of his glorious resurrection from the dead. This is because the resurrection is the lasting guarantee of the promises the Lord gave to the world. His resurrection enlightened the way of life for us and proved for us the truth of his divine promise that he announced by saying: "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die" (John 11:25,26). Just as there are three types of death --moral death, natural death and eternal death--so there are three types of life in Christ--moral life, natural life and eternal life. Christ through his resurrection from the dead granted we who have been buried with him by baptism into death to be raised with him and walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4). As the apostle Paul made clear for us; this life is a moral life, a life of virtue, purity, righteousness and holiness: "But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Philippians 3:20). With Christ we are victorious over natural death and with him we have the right to say, "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your

sting?" (I Corinthians 15:55, Hosea 13:14) The resurrection of Christ from the dead abolished the power of death and granted humanity overcoming and victory by filling our hearts with a hope that does not fail, proving that natural death is not the end of our life. There is life after death and we by natural death are transported from transitory, fleeting life to immortal, everlasting life and from suffering and misery to happiness and bliss. On this matter the apostle Paul says: "If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died" (I Corinthians 15:19,20).

The first fruits that were presented to the Lord are considered as a promise of a coming harvest of good quality. The resurrection of Christ shows us what our risen bodies will be like by the power of Christ on the last day as the apostle Paul says: "He will transform the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory" (Philippians 3:21, I John 3:2). This is like the form of his body when he transfigured on the mount before three of his disciples, which was the form of his body after his resurrection from the dead.

After his resurrection Christ has not died again and will never die. Rather, he is alive forever and gives life to the dead through the mediation of his holy church that is his sacramental body and is alive in him. His effect on the world over the ages proves that he is living as he promised to be--with us unto the end of the age. His church is fixed

on the rock of faith in him and the gates of hell will not stand against it. Its foundation will not be shaken however cruel the ages are against it.

Christ is with every believer and had promised saying, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them" (Matthew 18:20) The disciples of the Lord know there is no resurrection without death and no glorious crown without the crown of thorns. Therefore, when they accept the crucified Christ as their personal savior they crucify themselves with him to live not for themselves but for Christ who lives in them, as the apostle Paul says. If they are dead in sin like Saul of Tarsus they will be granted life in Christ and they will become chosen vessels like the apostle Paul. Most of the saints in heaven were sinners and blind; they had eyes but they did not see. But, when they believed in Christ the Savior of the world, the scales that were covering their eyes fell away. Their eyes were opened and they saw the light of Christ risen from the dead and believed in him so they were granted the grace of justification and sanctification, renewal and adoption. They became the children of God by grace and inheritors of his heavenly kingdom.

Let us also rise with Christ, Oh beloved, to see him clearly saying, "Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself" (Luke 24:39). He is the Savior who loved us and he was afflicted with these wounds for our sake, so what have we presented to him?

Let us examine our hands and feet. Have our hands done the deeds of

goodness and godliness? Have our feet walked on the way of righteousness and integrity?

Let us listen well and we will hear the Lord saying to us: "Peace be with you" and our hearts will be filled with love for God and for neighbors and we will be at peace with God, ourselves and neighbors.

When the hour comes to leave this vain existence our souls will be calm and our longings will be inflamed toward Christ like the apostle Paul who said: "My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better" (Philippians 1:22-24) and it is no wonder that the Lord promised his disciples saying: "I go and prepare a place for you . . . so that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:3).

May the Lord God make us all worthy to celebrate this holy resurrection feast with joy and happiness. When the time of our departing to him comes and we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we will fear no evil because he is with us enlightening the abyss for us with his light. So we will rest in peace because our eyes have seen his salvation like Simeon the Elder. When the hour the Lord spoke about comes, all those who are in the tombs will hear his voice and those who did the works of righteousness will go out to the resurrection of life while those who did evil works to the resurrection of judgment. May the Lord make us worthy to rise in the resurrection of life to reign with him forever so we will celebrate the feast of the resurrection whose joy will never end. By his grace. Amen.

2009 Parish Life Conference

Diocese of Los Angeles and the West



Be mindful, O Lord,
of those who bear fruit
and do good works
in thy holy Churches,
and who remember
the poor.

The Anaphoras of Ss. Basil the Great and John Chrysostom

Hosted by St. Stephen Antiochian Orthodox Church

Keynote Speaker: FR. THOMAS HOPKO

Dean Emeritus of St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY.

Author of The Orthodox Faith, Speaking the Truth in Love and many other publications.

Conference Activities include Daily Bible Study,
Teen Community Service Outing, Kid's Adventure Club, and a Creative Arts Festival.

Please save the date and plan to attend.

May 20 - 24, 2009

Santa Clara Marriott

www.plc2009.org

Buy "Early Bird" ticket books by April 15 and save \$20.
Conference guestroom rate \$109/night only till April 27

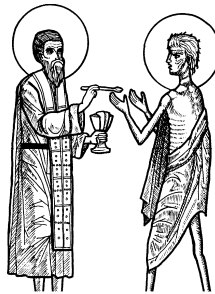
2009 LENTEN VESPERS SERVICES

Sponsored by the Arizona Council of Eastern Orthodox Churches

All Vespers Services Begin at 6:00 PM

The Fifth Sunday of Lent

April 5, 2009



**St. John Romanian Orthodox Church,
3749 W. Behrend Drive, Glendale, AZ**

*Please join our Brothers & Sisters at the host parishes
for these Sunday Evening Lenten Vespers Services*

Church Records

Baptisms:

Matthew James Abukhader ~ 2-28-09

Parents: Michael & Sandy Abukhader

Andrew George Salman ~ 3-8-09

Parents: George & Nataly Salman

Aleena George Salman ~ 3-8-09

Parents: George & Nataly Salman

Funerals:

James John George ~ 2-13-09

Louise Lorenzo ~ 3-21-09



Bishop *JOSEPH'S* Visitations

April 3, 2009

Camp St. Nicholas, Frazier Park, CA
Southern California Antiochian Women's Retreat

April 4-5, 2009

St. Michael Church, Las Vegas, NV
Fifth Sunday of Great Lent - St. Mary of Egypt

April 12, 2009

St. Nicholas Cathedral, Los Angeles, CA
Palm Sunday

GREAT AND HOLY WEEK

Great and Holy Monday (April 13, 2009)

St. Michael Church, Van Nuys, CA
Holy Tuesday Bridegroom Orthros

Great and Holy Tuesday (April 14, 2009)

St. Matthew Church, Torrance, CA
Holy Wednesday Bridegroom Orthros

Great and Holy Wednesday (April 15, 2009)

St. Luke Church, Garden Grove, CA
Holy Unction Service

Great and Holy Thursday (April 16, 2009)

St. John the Theologian Church, San Juan Capistrano, CA
Passion Gospel Service

Great and Holy Friday (April 17, 2009)

St. Nicholas Cathedral, Los Angeles, CA
Lamentation Service

GREAT AND HOLY PASCHA (April 19, 2009)

St. Paul Church, Lynwood, WA
Paschal Hierarchical Divine Liturgy

St. Andrew Church, Arlington, WA
Agape Vespers

April 22, 2009

St. Nicholas Cathedral, Los Angeles, CA
Annual Bright Wednesday Hierarchical Divine Liturgy

April 24-26, 2009

St. George Church, Phoenix, AZ
60th Anniversary and Patronal Feast Day

Save the Date

Join the celebrations



Saint George 60th Anniversary & Father Christopher Salamy's 10th Anniversary to the Priesthood

Banquet - April 25, 2009

Fairmont Scottsdale

Brunch - April 26, 2009

St. George Fellowship Hall

Proceeds from the brunch will be donated to Fr. Christopher's
charity of choice

Banquet	\$20.000
Program	\$ 5.000
Sunday Brunch	\$ 5.000
Table of ten plus full page in program	\$ 1.500
Full page in program	\$ 1.000
1/2 page in program	\$ 500
1/4 page in program	\$ 250
In Memory of	\$ 100

Available sponsorships

Be part of the History of Saint George. Please contact:

Richard or Marion Saba (480) 991-0663

St. George Louisiana Gulf Coast Mission Trip June 7-14

Build Something **Big** this Summer...



Last summer, parishioners of St. George had the blessing of traveling to Louisiana to help rebuild homes as a part of the Hurricane Relief Effort sponsored by IOCC and Habitat for Humanity.



The opportunity is here again... Will YOU be a part of it?

BE A VOLUNTEER... Reserve a volunteer spot volunteer by going to the following website: (must be 16 or older)

https://www.iocc.org/giving/giving_volunteergulf8-06.aspx

SUPPORT OUR VOLUNTEERS... Each volunteer is asked to contribute **\$500** to cover project costs. Help support a volunteer by donating!

PRAY... Keep the members of the St. George Mission Team in your prayers before and during the trip as well as the efforts of IOCC in serving our brothers and sisters in Christ who are in need.

APPLICATION and CONTRIBUTION DEADLINE:

Thursday, MAY 7th

Contact Katherine Baine for applications or more information:

Church: 602-953-1921 **Cell:** 602-910-7700

Email: Katherine@stgeorgeaz.org



April 2009 Servers

Sunday April 5

Epistle Reader	Luvenia Sayegh
Greeters	John & Niki Doumani
Ushers	Zubeida Horan, Natascha Karadsheh, Nikki Doumani, Elias Mousa, Louis Hasbany, James Saliba
Altar Servers	Jared Blackwell, Caleb Blackwell, Jay Banna, Ray Banna, Layne Larsen, Gergey Mousa, Brandon Horan
Hall Lock-up	Hanna Saigh
Coffee Hour	Open

Sunday April 12

Epistle Reader	Amanda Sahawneh, Lama Hana-Mousa
Greeters	Bill & Valerie Wier
Ushers	Megan Doumani, Mary Karadsheh, Nesrine Ziton, David Ghiz, Spiro Doku, Tony Karraz
Altar Servers	Chris Doumani, Andrew Stokich, Chase McBride, Christopher Stokich, Mark Markor, Sayeed Sweis
Hall Lock-up	Alisa Jones
Coffee Hour	Open

Saturday/Sunday April 18/19 Rush Service 11pm Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom Midnight

Epistle Reader	Rod Sayegh, Giana Sayegh
Greeters	Buzz & Rima Iacovelli
Ushers	Luvenia Sayegh, Krystal Saigh, Amanda Sahawneh, Sam Nassif, Richard Nichols, Mike Ziton
Altar Servers	Christopher & Andrew Stokich, Freddy Dahdal, Mark Markor
Hall Lock-up	Eugene Kanaan
Coffee Hour	Open

Sunday April 26

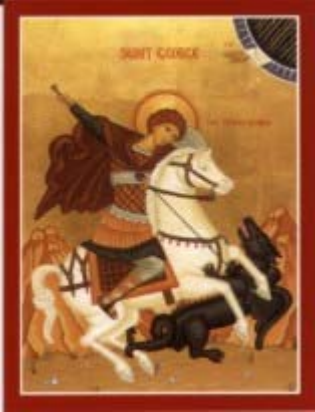
Epistle Reader	Michael Haddad, Aboud Jadelrab
Greeters	Elias & Lama Hana-Mousa
Ushers	Lauren Sayegh, Miriam Hasou, Hanna Saigh, Eugene Kanaan, Richard Saba, Ray Toronto
Altar Servers	Jared Blackwell, Caleb Blackwell, Jay Banna, Ray Banna, Layne Larsen, Gergey Mousa, Brandon Horan
Hall Lock-up	John Karadsheh
Coffee Hour	Father Christopher Salamy's 10th Anniversary Brunch

April 2009 Calendar

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 5pm- Pot Luck Dinner Bible Bowl SOYO Officer Mtg	2 Ladies Lunch/ Mtg 11am Parish Council Mtg 6:30pm	3 Akathist 6:30pm Teen Bible Study	4 Club Christina Great Vespers 5pm
5 Orthros 8:50am Divine Liturgy 10am Sun School 11am	6	7 Andre House 2:30pm PATHWAYS & Bible Study 6:30pm	8 Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 5pm- Pot Luck Dinner Bible Bowl	9	10 SOYO Meeting Canon of Lazarus 6:30pm	11 Divine Liturgy 10am Lazarus Sat Retreat Great Vespers 4pm
12 Palm Sunday Orthros 8:50am Div Lit 10am Teen SOYO Falafel Sale Bridegroom Matins 6:30pm	13 <i>Holy Week</i> > <i>Bridegroom Matins 6:30pm</i>	14 >>>>>>>>> <i>Bridegroom Matins 6:30pm</i>	15 >>>>>>>>> <i>Holy Unction 6:30pm</i>	16 >>>>>>>>> <i>Vesperal Liturgy 9am & washing of feet</i> <i>12 Passion Gospels 6:30pm</i>	17 >>>>>>>>> Great & Holy Friday Royal Hours 9am Vespers 3pm Lamentations 6:30pm	18 <i>Vesperal Divine Lit. 10am</i> <i>Rush Srv 11pm</i> <i>Paschal Divine Lit. of St. John Chrysostom midnight</i>
19 Agape Services @ noon followed by Egg Hunt for the children	20 Andre House 2:30pm <i>Bright Week>>>></i>	21 No Bible Study or Pathways <i>Bright Week>>>></i>	22 <i>Bright Week>>>></i>	23 <i>Patronal Feast Day Divine Liturgy for St. George 10am</i> <i>Bright Week>>>></i>	24 <i>FEAST DAY</i> <i>Bright Week>>>></i>	25 Great Vespers 5pm <i>St. George 60th Anniversary @ Fairmont Scottsdale</i> <i>Bright Week>>>></i>
26 Orthros 8:50am <i>Hierarchical Divine Liturgy 10am & Luncheon with Bishop JOSEPH</i>	27	28 Chant Class 5:30pm Bible Study 6:30pm PATHWAYS 6:30pm	29 Teen Bible Study 6:30pm	30		

St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church

4530 E. Gold Dust Ave. Phoenix, AZ 85028



THE SPIRIT OF ST. GEORGE

Visit our website: www.stgeorgeaz.org

Church Services

Saturday Great Vespers	5:00 pm
Sun. Matins	8:50 am
Sun. Divine Liturgy	10:00 am
Sunday School	After Communion
Evening Feast Days	6:30 pm

Office: (602) 953-1921 Fax: (602) 953-2460

E-mail: abouna@stgeorgeaz.org

Office Hours 9:00 am – 5:00 pm Tuesday – Friday

The Rev. Fr. Christopher Salmay (602) 765-6069

Just a reminder ... Confessions are heard on Saturday evenings before Great Vespers, or anytime, by making an appointment with Fr. Christopher.

Parishioners are encouraged to submit articles for consideration.

Please note the deadline for submitting articles for approval is the 10th of the month before the actual issue date.