



Established 1918

St. George Orthodox Church

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*Metropolitan SABA, Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America
Rt. Rev. Archimandrite Jeremy, Archiepiscopal Vicar Diocese of Toledo and the Midwest*

Fr. Jeremy Finzel, Pastor



Sunday, November 24, 2024

After-Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos

Tone 5/Eothinon 11

8:45am - Matins, 10:00am - Divine Liturgy

Followed by Fellowship, Adult Education and Sunday School

Coming Up at St. George:

Monday, November 25 at 6:00am - Hours, 6:30am - Liturgy

Tuesday, November 26 from 1-3pm - Senior Share

Saturday, November 30 at 5:30pm - Deacon's Vespers

Sunday, December 1 at 8:45am - Orthros, 10:00am - Deacon's Typika, followed by Fellowship

Monday, December 2 from 9:00am-Noon - Ladies Baking Baklava and Baklava

Tuesday, December 3 from 9:00am-Noon - Ladies Baking Baklava and Baklava

Friday, December 6 from 9:00am-Noon - Setting Up for the Bake Sale

Saturday, December 7 from 9:00am-Noon - Bake Sale

and at 5:30pm - Great Vespers

Sunday, December 8 at 8:45am - Orthros, 10:00am - Divine Liturgy

Followed by Fellowship, Adult Education and Sunday School

Services available on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/@St.GeorgeSpringValleyOrthodox>

Please follow along in the booklet for Divine Liturgy

- *The Glory hymns at the end of Matins:*

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

When Thou didst show Thyself to the Disciples after Thy Resurrection, O Savior, Thou didst appoint Simon to shepherd the sheep, for the renewal of love, asking him to tend the flock.

And Thou didst say to him, If thou lovest Me, O Peter, feed My lambs, feed My sheep. But he at once inquired concerning the other Disciple, showing his exceeding love. Wherefore, by the intercession of both, O Christ, keep Thy flock from corrupting wolves.

Both Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Thou hast transcended all blessings, O Virgin Theotokos! For Hades hath been spoiled by Him who was incarnate of thee. Yea, Adam was recalled, the curse was abolished. Eve was delivered and death was caused to die, and we were made to live again. Wherefore, with praise we cry: Blessed art Thou, O Christ our God, who hast thus shown Thy pleasure. Glory to Thee!

- *The Liturgy continues with the Great Doxology, Page 2.*

- *The Troparion after the Great Doxology:*

Having risen again from the tomb, and having burst asunder the bonds of Hades, Thou didst unbind the condemnation of death, O Lord, redeeming all men from the snares of the enemy. And having revealed Thyself to Thine Apostles, Thou didst send them forth to proclaim Thee. And through them Thou hast granted Thy peace unto the universe, O Thou who alone art merciful!

- *The Liturgy continues with the Opening Prayers, Page 3.*

- *The First Antiphon:*

Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised: in the city of our God and in His holy mountain. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God.

Refrain: Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us.

God is known in her palaces for a refuge. As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God. *(repeat refrain)*

Glory... Both now... *(repeat refrain)*

- *The Second Antiphon:*

The Most High hath sanctified His tabernacle. Holiness and majesty are in His sanctuary.

Refrain: Save us, O Son of God, Who didst rise again from the dead; as we sing unto Thee. Alleluia.

This is the gate of the Lord, the righteous shall enter in thereat. *(repeat refrain)*

Holy is Thy temple, and wonderful in righteousness. *(repeat refrain)*

Glory... Both now... O, only begotten Son and Word of God...

- *The Third Antiphon and the Little Entrance:*

Even the rich among the people shall entreat thy favor. The King's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold. Virgins shall be brought to the King after her: her companions shall be brought unto Thee.

Apolytikion of the Entrance of the Theotokos (Tone 4): Today the Virgin is the foreshadowing of the pleasure of God, and the beginning of the preaching of the salvation of mankind. Thou

hast appeared in the Temple of God openly and hast gone before, preaching Christ to all. Let us shout with one thrilling voice, saying, Rejoice, O Thou who art the fulfillment of the Creator's dispensation.

- *The Entrance Hymn:*

O come, let us worship and fall down before Christ, our King and God. Save us, O Son of God, Who didst rise again from the dead, we who sing unto Thee: Alleluia!

- *Hymns of the day, following the Little Entrance:*

Resurrectional Apolytikion (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.

Repeat the Apolytikion of the Entrance of the Theotokos (*from above*)

Troparion for 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 of the Entrance of the Theotokos (Tone 4): The sacred treasury of God's holy glory, the greatly precious bridal chamber and Virgin, the Savior's most pure temple, free of stain and undefiled, into the House of the Lord on this day is brought forward and bringeth with herself the grace of the Most Divine Spirit; her do God's Angels hymn with songs of praise, for she is truly the heavenly tabernacle.

- *The Trisagion Hymn:*

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal One: Have mercy on us! (three times)

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Holy Immortal One: Have mercy upon us!

Louder! Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal One: Have mercy upon us!

The Epistle for the Twenty-Second Sunday after Pentecost

Clergy: Let us attend!

Reader: Thou, O Lord, shalt preserve us and keep us from this generation. Save me, O Lord, for the godly man hath disappeared.

Clergy: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians (6:11-18).

Clergy: Let us attend!

Reader: Brethren, see with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that would compel you to be circumcised and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. For even those who receive circumcision do not themselves keep the Law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may glory in your flesh. But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world. For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. Peace and mercy

be upon all, who walk by this rule, upon the Israel of God. Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen.

Clergy: Peace be to thee who readest.

Reader: And to thy spirit.

Chanter: I will sing of Thy mercies, O Lord forever; with my mouth I will proclaim Thy truth from generation to generation. Thou hast said: Mercy will be established forever, and my truth will be prepared in the heavens.

All: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

The Gospel for the Thirteenth Sunday of Luke

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke (18:18-27).

At that time, a man came testing Jesus and asking, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery. Do not kill. Do not steal. Do not bear false witness. Honor your father and mother.'" And the man said, "All these I have observed from my youth." And when Jesus heard it, he said to him, "One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." But when the man heard this he became sad, for he was very rich. Jesus, seeing him sad, said, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." Those who heard it said, "Then who can be saved?" Jesus said, "What is impossible with men is possible with God."

- *The Liturgy continues with the Homily, Page 12.*

The Litany of the Catechumens:

Priest: Pray to the Lord, ye catechumens.

People: Lord, have mercy. *(repeat after each petition)*

Let us, the faithful, pray for the catechumens, that the Lord will have mercy on them.

That He will teach them the word of truth.

That He will reveal to them the gospel of righteousness.

That He will unite them in His holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

Save them; have mercy on them; help them; and keep them, O God, by Thy grace.

Priest: Bow your heads unto the Lord, ye catechumens.

People: To Thee, O Lord.

Priest: *(Quietly)* O Lord our God, who dwellest on high and regardest the humble, who hast sent forth as the salvation of the race of men thine only-begotten Son and God, our Lord Jesus Christ; Look down upon thy servants the catechumens, who have bowed their necks before Thee; make them worthy in due season of the laver of regeneration, the forgiveness of sins and the robe of incorruption. Unite them to Thy holy, catholic and apostolic Church, and number them with Thine elect flock. *(Louder)* That with us they may glorify Thine all-honorable and majestic name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

People: Amen.

Priest: As many as are catechumens, depart. Depart, catechumens. As many as are catechumens, depart. Let none of the catechumens remain.

The First Litany of the Faithful:

Priest: As many as are of the faithful, again and again in peace, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy. (*Very slowly while the Priest prays quietly.*)

Priest: Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and keep us, O God, by Thy grace.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: Wisdom!

Priest: For unto Thee are due all glory, honor and worship to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

People: Amen.

The Second Litany of the Faithful:

Priest: Again and again in peace, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy. (*Very slowly while the Priest prays quietly.*)

Priest: Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and keep us, O God, by Thy grace.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: Wisdom!

Priest: That guarded always by Thy might we may ascribe glory unto Thee to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

People: Amen.

- *The Cherubic Hymn:*

Let us who represent the Cherubim mystically, as we sing with them the thrice-holy hymn to the life-giving Trinity, the thrice-holy chant intoning. All cares terrestrial, now lay aside. We raise on high the King of All.

- *The Liturgy continues with the Great Entrance, Page 12.*

Information & Announcements

The Nativity Fast: We are in the Nativity Fast from November 15th until the Feast of Nativity on December 25th. We have the Archdiocese guidelines for fasting posted downstairs, but please consult with Fr. Jeremy if you have questions about approaching the fast. Please be mindful of the fasting guidelines when bringing food to coffee hour. For guidelines, articles and all kinds of information about the Nativity Fast, check out the archdiocese's website here: <https://www.antiochian.org/dashboard?name=The%20Nativity%20Fast>

Annual Bake Sale: It's that time again! The Ladies are gearing up for our annual bake sale on December 7th. We will not be baking this week, Happy Thanksgiving! But we'll still gladly accept financial contributions to help offset the cost of ingredients and supplies. Please see Ruth or Allyson for more information.

Christmas Road Game: There is a Christmas Road board game available for sale for \$25 each from the church, which Metropolitan +Saba has encouraged us to consider. Please see Fr. Jeremy or Kh. Jordan with any questions!

Parish Council Representatives

Elected & Appointed Members

Wayne Sanders, *Chair*
Mark Kerasotes, *Vice-Chair & Order of St. Ignatius*
Melanie Thompson, *Treasurer*
Rdr. Michael Baum, *Secretary & Ecclesiarch*
Sbdn. David Anderson, *Sunday School*

Organization Representatives

Genie Sanders, *Chanters/Choir*
Allyson Scandale, *Antiochian Women*
Maxwell Colby, *Young Adults*
Robert Abraham, *Facilities*

Birthdays & Anniversaries

November 27 – Pratik & Melissa Desai (Anniversary)
November 30 – Mavick Malooley

The Holy Scriptures: Nourishment of the Faithful, Part One

by His Eminence Metropolitan Saba (Isper)



The name of the holy scriptures is derived from the Greek word “Biblia,” which literally means “books.” This term passed into most languages, and it was called the “Bible” in languages of European origin.

The faithful regard the holy scriptures as God’s personal message to them, devoting themselves to reading them daily, and meditating on their verses and their impact on their lives. Thus, the holy scriptures contribute to their growth in their life in Christ, refining them morally and spiritually. The holy scriptures are an indispensable nourishment for the faithful, irreplaceable by any other book, no matter how divine or important.

Getting to Know the Holy Scriptures

The holy scriptures comprise a considerable number of books, not just one book as the reader might think at first glance. Even in their composition, they differ from each other as they form a library containing several works. This library contains seventy-three books, divided into two parts: the Old Testament and the New Testament.

The Old Testament comprises forty-six books (although there are differences in Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant editions) divided into four sections: the books of the Law (Torah), history, prophecy, and wisdom.

The New Testament consists of twenty-seven books, beginning with the Gospel in its four narratives (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John), followed by the Acts of the Apostles, then the fourteen Pauline epistles, the general epistles, and ending with the Book of Revelation by John the Evangelist.

These books cover various and extensive topics, spanning a period from Abraham, the first among the faithful (around 1800 B.C.) to the end of the first century A.D., when the last book of the New Testament was completed.

The multiple themes of these books are presented in a variety of literary styles. There are long tales, short stories, epics, poems, proverbs, and hymns. Moreover, many writers contributed to their composition. Additionally, the Holy Scriptures were not written in one language but in

three languages: Hebrew, the language of most Old Testament texts; Aramaic used for some of its texts; and Greek, used for all the books of the New Testament. The Orthodox Church considers the Old Testament translation into Greek known as the Septuagint (from the second century B.C.) as a divinely inspired and authoritative reference.

The first book of the holy scriptures deals with the beginning of the world and the origin of life: "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen 1:1), and the last book ends with a call anticipating Christ's second coming: "Surely, I am coming quickly. Come, Lord Jesus!" (Rev 22:20).

This book tells of the beginning and the end of the universe.

Many have considered the Bible a history book, because it recounts God's revelation throughout the history of a people called the Hebrews. Others saw it as a book of science, because it tells stories of the creation of the world and includes wisdom containing much of the science of the time. Those who consider it a philosophical book are not few in number, either, as it contains a particular view on life, God, pain, and death.

The Orthodox Spirit and the Nativity Fast

by His Eminence Metropolitan Saba (Ispere)



Saint Porphyrios of Kafsokalyvia (also known as Saint Porphyrios the Seer, +1991) recounts, in the context of narrating events from his life, his experience as a spiritual father with the sacrament of confession. He was a mere fourteen years old when he fled to Mount Athos. There, he lived in the company of two hermits who were brothers according to the flesh. His illness compelled these hermits to send him down from the sacred mountain in search of medical treatment and recovery. Upon returning to his village and regaining his health, the metropolitan of the archdiocese ordained him a priest and granted him the blessing to be a father confessor, all while he was a young man of just twenty-two years, and he only knew the spiritual direction of ascetic monastic life.

In reflecting on that experience, he mentioned that he kept the book of Saint Nicodemus of Athos by his side. This book, rooted in the realities of the 16th and 17th centuries, meticulously cataloged sins one by one and established rules for repentance and discipline for each sin. The canons contained within this book may seem excessively stringent to the modern person.

Saint Porphyrios' unwavering commitment to his faith and his monastic education compelled him to consult this book after every confession. He would assign penitents a regimen that corresponded to their particular sin: three hundred prostrations daily, weeks or months of fasting, and so forth. However, he soon realized that these rules exceeded the capacities of the faithful and did not contribute to their spiritual growth. On the contrary, they led to a sense of despair regarding the possibility of overcoming their sins, and this despair often caused them to return to their sins.

He thus made the decision to close the book and place it on the shelf. Instead, he began to inquire of the penitents regarding the number of prostrations they could reasonably perform and the duration of fasting they could sustain, providing them with an obedience tailored to their abilities.

The example of Saint Porphyrios teaches us the distinction between the spiritual teachings of the Church and their practical application. Spiritual growth is a gradual process in which believers ascend toward their desired spiritual state. The Church's role is to provide personal support and guidance to individuals on their spiritual journeys, helping them climb the ladder of salvation. Pastors or spiritual fathers draw from living spiritual experiences, not just static texts, to offer spiritual care that considers the individual's capacity, readiness, and circumstances.

Father confessors accompany the faithful on their spiritual path and tailor their guidance to the unique needs of their spiritual children, focusing on what is most beneficial for their growth in Christ. The Gospel serves as a general spiritual guideline, but the specific application and embodiment of the Gospel's teachings depend on the spiritual father's experience and the individual believer's abilities, circumstances, and state of being. This principle forms the foundation of Orthodox spiritual guidance.

A story from *The Garden of Monks (The Paradise of the Desert Fathers)* illustrates this concept. It tells of a young man from a wealthy family who sought monastic life in an Egyptian desert monastery. The monks of the monastery slept on the ground, following the customs of their time. However, the abbot granted the young man the privilege of using a pillow while sleeping. Some of the other monks saw this as special treatment and complained. The abbot responded by saying, "My sons, you used to sleep on the ground in your homes, and when you came to the monastery, your sleeping conditions did not change much. But he used to sleep on a bed with a pillow of ostrich feathers. Whose monastic sacrifice is greater?"

This incident, along with countless others in our spiritual heritage, emphasizes the importance of tailoring guidance to each person's abilities, circumstances, and potential to help them progress to higher levels of spiritual growth. As the Apostle Paul says, "When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things" (1 Cor. 13:11).

"The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" (2 Cor. 3:6) yet going beyond the letter and reaching the Spirit requires deep spiritual experience and profound humility, which enables pastors to be receptive to the experiences of those more spiritually advanced and benefit from them. Often, stubbornness and excessive rigor are rooted in hidden passions such as self-righteousness or vainglory. History has witnessed the downfall of many who, in their strictness, stifled and overwhelmed those under their guidance.

Our Orthodox spiritual heritage teaches us to be rigorous in self-discipline while being compassionate and merciful towards others. This message is especially relevant since some priests considering abstinence from oil as a central aspect of the Nativity Fast. The Nativity Fast

in the Orthodox Church is observed as follows:

- Abstention from food and drink until noon is not required.
- Fish and seafood are allowed until December 12, which coincides with the feast of Saint Spyridon the Wonderworker.
- The strictness of fasting increases as Christmas approaches.

Abstaining from oil is a monastic tradition blessed for those who desire it, with the blessing of their spiritual father, but it is not obligatory. Some individuals justify abstaining from oil based on references in the Great Horologion. The Church's response is that the influence of monastic practices became more widespread with the growth of the monastic movement and the guidance provided by monastic fathers. Our liturgical books were formulated under this monastic influence. The Church does not prohibit these practices, but it does not impose them on everyone. Thus, such practices remain optional and contingent upon the willingness of the believer to live a more ascetic life, guided by a spiritual father who understands their potential and spiritual condition. It is crucial to be aware of the potential pitfalls associated with what our heritage refers to as the "devil of excessive zeal."

The spiritual father's role is to accompany his spiritual children, nurturing their spiritual growth and development, rather than burdening them with practices that exceed their capacity and lead to despair, ultimately causing them to abandon the Christian path leading to salvation. The arrangements within our Church order (the Typikon) are designed to help believers engage with and experience the salvific events they commemorate. These arrangements aim to facilitate spiritual growth, purity, and holiness rather than serve as additional burdens. In the words of Jesus, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27).

His Eminence, the Most Reverend Saba Isper is the Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America. His Beatitude Patriarch John X of Antioch and All the East and the Holy Synod of Antioch elected His Eminence to lead the Archdiocese during its extraordinary session on Feb. 23, 2023, in Balamand, Lebanon.

His Eminence will lead and oversee the Archdiocese's parishes, missions, departments, institutions and organizations in the United States and Canada from the headquarters in Englewood, New Jersey. The auxiliary bishops aid him in his administration across the continent.

For more information on His Eminence and his teachings, please visit

<https://www.antiochian.org/dashboard?name=MetSaba>

