



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, December 8, 2024

The Tenth Sunday of Luke

The Forefeast of the Conception of
the Most Holy Theotokos

Tone 7/Eothinon 2

8:45am - Matins, 10:00am - Divine Liturgy
Followed by Fellowship, Adult Education and
Sunday School

Coming Up at St. George:

- Monday, December 9 at 8:00am - Orthros, 9:00am - Liturgy for the Conception of the Theotokos
- Tuesday, December 10 at 11:30am - Christmas Party at the Bureau County Senior Center in Princeton
- Wednesday, December 11 at 6:30pm - Great Vespers for St. Spyridon
- Thursday, December 12 at 8:00am - Orthros and Liturgy for St. Spyridon
at St. Spyridon Orthodox Church in Palos Heights
- Friday, December 13 at 8:30am - Hours, 9:00am Liturgy for St. Herman of Alaska
- Saturday, December 14 at 5:30pm - Great Vespers
- Sunday, December 15 at 8:45am - Orthros, 10:00am - Divine Liturgy,
Followed by Fellowship and Parish Council Meeting
- Tuesday, December 17 at 6:00am - Hours, 6:30am - Liturgy for Daniel the Prophet
and Three Holy Youths
- Wednesday, December 18 at 6:30pm - Daily Vespers
- Thursday, December 19 at 8:30am - Hours, 9:00am - Liturgy
- Saturday, December 21 at 5:30pm - Great Vespers
- Sunday, December 22 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.

They who were with Mary came and brought with them ointments; and as they were at a loss how to achieve their desire, they saw that the stone had been rolled, and a divine young man removed all anxiety and trouble from their souls by saying, The Lord Jesus hath risen.

Wherefore they proclaimed to His Disciples, that they should hasten to Galilee and behold Him, risen from the dead; for He is the Lord, the Giver of life.

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:*

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

- *The Second Antiphon:*

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

- *The Third Antiphon and the Little Entrance:*

Resurrectional Apolytikion (Tone 7): Thou didst shatter death by Thy Cross, Thou didst open paradise to the thief; Thou didst turn the mourning of the ointment-bearing women into joy. And didst bid Thine Apostles proclaim warning, that Thou hast risen, O Christ, granting the world Great Mercy.

- *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:*

Repeat the Apolytikion of the Resurrection (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 Preparation of Christ's Nativity (Tone 3): Today the Virgin cometh to the cave to give birth in an ineffable manner to the Word before the ages. Rejoice, therefore, O universe, when thou hearest, and glorify with the angels and shepherds Him who shall appear by His own will as a new babe, being God before the ages.

- *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-Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

Clergy: Let us attend!

Reader: The Lord will give strength to His people. Ascribe to the Lord, O sons of God, ascribe to the Lord honor and glory.

Clergy: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians (2:14-22).

Clergy: Let us attend!

Reader: Brethren, Christ is our peace, Who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in His flesh the law of commandments and ordinances, that He might create in Himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the Cross, thereby bringing the hostility to an end. And He came and preached peace to you, who were far off, and peace to those who were near; for through Him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone, in Whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in Whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Clergy: Peace be to thee who readest.

Reader: And to thy spirit.

Chanter: It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to Thy name, O Most High! To declare Thy mercy in the morning, and Thy truth by night!

All: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

The Gospel for the Tenth Sunday of Luke

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke (13:10-17).

At that time, Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And there was a woman who had had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years; she was bent over and could not fully straighten herself. And when Jesus saw her, He called her and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your infirmity." And He laid His hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight, and she praised God. But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, said to the people, "There are six days on which work ought to be

done; come on those days and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day.” Then the Lord answered him, “You hypocrite! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his ass from the manger, and lead it away to water it? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?” As Jesus said this, all His adversaries were put to shame; and all the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by Him.

- *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 midst of the Nativity Fast 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>

Senior Share: In place of this week's Senior Share, we've been invited to join the Bureau County Senior Center for their Christmas Party on Tuesday, December 10 at 11:30am. There will be a catered lunch followed by entertainment by the Red Covered Bridge male quartet, desserts and socializing. Please see Mike of Ruth for more information. Also, there will be no Senior Share in Tuesday, December 24.

Bake Sale: Thank you to everyone who helped to make this year's bake sale possible! Especially the ladies who put so much time and talent into baking all our favorite goodies.

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!

Collection for Hall Township Food Pantry: Throughout the Nativity fast, we are collecting alms, financial donations, for the food pantry here in Spring Valley. You can place your contribution in the alms box at the back of the church.

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

December 10 – Ann (Bachio) Townsend, Cathy Cox

December 11 – Janna Greanias

December 12 – Mark Wiltse, Jay Kalman

**His Eminence
The Most Reverend
Metropolitan SABA**



**Archbishop of New York
and Metropolitan of
All North America**

**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE
OF NORTH AMERICA**

Prot. no.: 568/2024

“Nothing so arouses the soul, gives it wing, sets it free from the earth, releases it from the prison of the body, teaches it to love wisdom and to despise all the things of this life, as concordant melody and sacred song composed in rhythm.” +St. John Chrysostom (On Psalm 41)

Beloved Brother Hierarchs, Reverend Clergy, and Christ-Loving Faithful,

Every year we set aside the second Sunday of December to remember and pray for our faithful church musicians. With God’s help and inspiration, they are always praying for us by chanting the sacred hymns of our Church. On this day we, in turn, say thank you and pray for them.

The hymnography of our Orthodox faith is an expression of theology. One could never pick up an academic or dogmatic book about the faith his entire life, but could still become a theologian by simply listening to and internalizing the words of these hymns.

At the same time, the richness of our hymns becomes even richer when they are chanted and sung correctly and with beauty. It is not by chance that countless numbers of people over the centuries were first attracted to the faith by the beauty of our services.

On the Sunday of Musician Appreciation Day, we extend heartfelt thanks to Ms. Mareena Boosamra-Ball and all the members of our archdiocesan Department of Sacred Music for their commitment in supporting this sacred ministry. They continue to expend the possibilities for people to learn how to chant and sing praises to our Lord through various means. We are especially grateful that, for the first time this year, we have started our Antiochian Orthodox Online Ecclesiastical Music School that trains people in both Western and Byzantine Music, according to their preferences and interests. This, in addition to the various Sacred Music Institutes, and youth and parish workshops sponsored by the Department, helps us to further develop and train our current and future musicians.

We also gratefully honor all of our choir directors, singers and chanters, the vast majority of whom dedicate themselves to this sacred ministry for little or no compensation. For them, it is indeed a labor of love. Wishing you God’s every blessing, I remain,

Your Father in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "SABA". Below the signature is a small icon of a cross followed by the text "SABA".

Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of All North America

“The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch” (Acts 11: 26)

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The Holy Scriptures: Nourishment of the Faithful, Part Three

by His Eminence Metropolitan Saba (Isper)



Then what?

After revealing Himself as "the God of our Fathers," God began to reveal Himself through His attributes by practical application. The people He had chosen were ignorant and ungrateful: "Not because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples" (Deut 7:7). They were a stubborn people who understood only practical things with great difficulty: "For you are a stiff-necked people" (Deut 9:6). Is this not the reality of human beings even in our present day?

God first revealed to Moses that He is the Existing One: "I am who I am" "ehye 'ăšer 'ehye" in Hebrew (Exodus 3:14), and the journey effectively started. God became known through His action in nature: He became our God, the One Who takes care of us. He is the God Who made the Red Sea into dry land, Who fed us in the wilderness with manna, Who brought water out of the flinty rock, Who healed us from snake bites, etc. Thus, God appeared as the Master of nature.

Confrontations began with other tribes and nations. These conflicts were common in those ancient days, especially among nomadic peoples (we can recall the tribal invasions, the raids of the Bedouins). The land was still under various forms of colonization and occupation. Here, God appeared as the Master of history, but His program with His people was different. Although He is supremely powerful and mightier than all gods, He does not always grant victory to His tribe. When they win, He is the victor and the strongest, and when they lose, He has withdrawn from them His support yet remained the strongest. Why did God abandon us? This question recurs many times in the Old Testament. We still ask today why God left us in this or that ordeal. Why does He allow temptations? Why doesn't He stop evils from happening to us? Do we not often behave like the people of the Old Testament? Do we not act as though God is exclusively our God, as if we were His chosen people and other peoples are not of His creation, and are, at best, of a lower rank?

God's answer was, I am with you as long as you are faithful, but when you abandon My covenants, I leave you to what you have left Me for. They knew, then, that He is the sovereign God and that they must obey Him. His laws and commandments require moral change and spiritual transcendence.

It was time for humans to rise to the level of justice. God's law for them became to establish justice: "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" (Exodus 21:24). This was a qualitative leap for a society dominated by vengeance and disproportionate retaliation.

What does this God want next?

Justice is good, yet it is merely a step towards knowing God, but not in itself sufficient. Man must move from the letter to the spirit, from the laws to their goal, from the canons to their purpose, from the rituals to the heart of the Lord. He must move from the flesh to the soul. Mercy is more important than justice (see Matthew 9:13). Animal sacrifice is a symbol of the sacrifice of the heart: "Sacrifices to God are a broken spirit" (Psalm 50:17). Worship is not in

hymns, incense, and grand celebrations but in mercy, justice, and kindness. This God seeks hearts of flesh, not stone (read from the prophets, especially Isaiah and Joel).

However, the harshness of man drives him to resist spiritual transcendence. Hence, exile was a means of purification from worldly and eternal impurities. God allowed Nebuchadnezzar to destroy the ancient temple, thus mocking the people who tried to confine Him to it. In the exile in Babylon, they had spent a thousand years with this God, yet they still were unable to grasp that He is the one true God, not confined to any place – not even the temple of Jerusalem. They lamented: "By the rivers of Babylon... how shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?" (Psalm 136:1). Their concern was whether He would hear their song, as if they were far removed from Him. The shock of exile was severe yet purifying and cleansing. The Babylonian captivity created the faithful remnant who remained loyal to their God's teachings and aligned their lives with His commandments. From them would come the Virgin Mary, John the Baptist, and all who would accept Jesus Christ.

In light of this reading, we understand the holy scriptures and hear God's word directed to us personally. Such a reading recognizes that the holy scriptures are a religious book, not a history book, although they contain elements of history. They are not a book of science and secular knowledge, even if they mention information that may align or conflict with contemporary scholarship. They are not a book of human wisdom, although they used the wisdom of the time to educate and refine humanity. They are the journey of God with humanity – a personal journey and intimate companionship – culminating in His death on the cross for them and their salvation. They are a book where we encounter our God, get to know Him, and hear His word.

Shall we now begin to understand our Christian reading of the Holy Scriptures?

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>

