

THE ST. GEORGE Grapevine

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St. George Orthodox Cathedral • Charleston, WV



The Unity of the Faith: A Sermon for the Sunday of Orthodoxy

By Hieromonk Gabriel of Holy Cross Hermitage
Wayne, WV

We are gathered here together on the first Sunday of Great Lent to celebrate the Triumph of Orthodoxy. This feast was originally established to commemorate the victory of the venerated icons over the iconoclasts, but more generally we also commemorate on this day the victory of the true Orthodox faith over all the heresies that have challenged it throughout history.

There is an interesting fact which we easily overlook about this feast: the original Triumph of Orthodoxy, the triumph of the veneration of icons, was not only a victory in a battle waged within the Church, but also within society and the entire Byzantine Empire at large. You see, when the final victory of the holy icons occurred, the Seventh Ecumenical Council was long over, the bishops had already decreed that the icons are a holy and necessary part of our faith. It was rather the iconoclast emperors who had continued to resist; therefore the Triumph of Orthodoxy was not only a theological triumph, but also a political triumph.

I mention this fact because it stands in such sharp contrast to our own world today: we have come to assume that our Christianity is, by and large, a strictly private affair. We do not generally think of our faith as something appropriate to bring openly into public life. And we especially become nervous at any mention of theology or dogma around those who do not share our faith: this subject seems just too contentious, too divisive, and also rather unnecessary and perhaps a bit embarrassing. We have come to believe that society is better off without such things, that we will all get along much better if we simply leave those things in the

privacy of our own homes and churches.

Such a view of religion and society, the “separation of church and state,” is a quite recent phenomenon and totally unique in human history. It would take too much time to get into the political, philosophical and historical causes behind this idea, but suffice it to say that it is almost universally believed today by everyone, Christians and atheists alike.

But is it true? Despite the great syncretist goal on which America was founded—E Pluribus Unum, “Out of the Many, One”—we now watch as our country daily grows ever more divided by class, race, culture, and ideology. Our national discourse is plummeting—indeed, has plummeted—into an abyss of vitriol, hostility, bitterness and resentment. Meanwhile, our schools are no longer safe places to send our children; divorce and abortion have become ever-present facts of life; depression and anxiety are the norm; and modern life has become so meaningless, so unbearably empty, that drug overdose is now the leading cause of death in Americans under fifty. Religion in general and Christ in particular have all but vanished from public life all across the world; yet the dream and promise of a peaceful and enlightened secular society, grounded in shared ideals of humanism, is nowhere to be found. Certainly this has not been for lack of effort; indeed, the history of the past several centuries reads like a catalog of failed attempts to create such a society.

But the reality is that this society does not and cannot possibly exist. Christ said: “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.” How can we think to create a good and healthy society that does not follow the Way, is not founded on the Truth, and does

not seek to bring Life to all its people? For as St. Paul writes: “other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (I Cor. 3:11).

So what am I saying, that we ought to unify society by forcibly creating a theocracy, at the edge of the sword? Of course not. But what I am saying is that we must, above all else, unify our own hearts. We cannot continue to divide our lives into career, family, politics, entertainment, and over there in one small corner our Christianity. Our faith is not something to take out and look at for an hour on Sunday mornings, and then put back away again safely for another week. Such a faith is no faith. It is only a lifeless idol; it cannot save us, and it cannot save those around us.

And the world today desperately needs our Holy Orthodox Faith. It is the pearl of great price, worth far more than all the treasures in all the world put together. It is only Christ and His Holy Church that can heal the spiritual sickness and existential pain that we see all around us every day. But the plain fact is that the people around us, in all likelihood, have precisely one chance of ever finding the Church: through us. Through the witness of our daily lives. As someone once said: Christians should live in such a way that, if Christ had not been raised from the dead, their lives would be absurd.

Of course, we must use discernment. We cannot force our faith on others, we cannot bring healing to those around us by relying upon arguments and contentions and debates. There will probably be times when we are called upon to preach the faith directly, but most of our lives are actually a preparation for such times. Most of the time, we are called simply to be Christians in every place and at every moment of our lives, without exception. And that means to begin and end

Cont. on page 2



Sermon
Cont. from page 1

every day with prayer. It means to pray as much as possible throughout the day, and to pray openly with the sign of the Cross before and after meals, whether at home or in public. It means not to watch anything that you would be ashamed to watch with your children or your priest. It means to seriously keep each one of the fasts. It means to attend church as often as you can. It means to go regularly to confession, repenting sincerely of all the things in your life that keep you from God. It means to never, ever say an unkind word about anyone, whether openly or behind their back. It means to always put everyone before yourself. It means to make real, meaningful sacrifices for those in need, especially strangers and the poor. It means to forgive everyone for everything, all the time and no matter what. It means to never judge another human being for anything whatsoever. It means to thank God sincerely for every single thing in your life, even the things that are the most unpleasant, confusing and painful. It means to trust God totally, and to obey Him completely. In short, it means to die to everything in this world, to take up whatever crosses God may send you, and to follow Him.


Perhaps you might think that this sounds a bit unrealistic, suitable maybe for monks but beyond what God expects of people living ordinary lives in the world. If so, then I suggest a very simple and purely scientific experiment: just try it. Try this Lent to remember Christ


all the time, to really love Christ with every thought and word and action. Try really keeping the fast. Try going without impure and frivolous entertainment. Try praying like it really, really matters. Try giving up things that you want for the sake of those around you. Try being the kindest to the people that you like the least. Try to really live as though all the pleasure and honor and possessions and prestige that this life can offer mean absolutely nothing in comparison with eternity. Try living like you could die tonight. And then see—even if you don’t do a very good job of it—whether your life doesn’t become better. See whether your life doesn’t become fuller and not emptier, richer and not poorer, more joyful and not more dull. I’m not saying that it will be easy. But I promise you that it will be worth it.


Because God, Who is our loving Father, never gives a single commandment that is not solely for the sake of our own eternal joy and happiness. He really does know better than we do what is good for us; but we must discover this fact for ourselves, in actual experience in our own lives. We must be willing to take the risk of believing God. But despite our fears, every sacrifice we make to God is never, ever something that we lose. He always gives back the gift a thousandfold, and we always find ourselves infinitely richer and not at all poorer for having made the sacrifice. After all, God does not need Lent. We do. And so do all the people around

us, because as St. Seraphim of Sarov said: “Acquire the Spirit of Peace, and a thousand souls around you will be saved.”

And once we begin to live in this way, once the Holy Spirit begins His work of transformation and deification in our hearts, then and only then we will be able to speak to others of the holy truth of our faith. Because then and only then will anyone have a reason to listen. The world will never know Christ if we never speak openly of Him; but if the world does not see Christ in us, if it does not meet Christ in us, then in all our talk they will know us for what we truly are: Pharisees and hypocrites. But though they will know us, they will not know Christ. How sad it is, how shameful it is, that so many living in the world today have known only these two types of Christians: those who are silent about their faith, and those who are hypocrites.

Let us then sincerely repent of these two great sins. Let us learn with the help of God to become true Orthodox Christians. Let us pray fervently to the Lord, and let us all strive to acquire the Holy Spirit in every aspect of our lives during this Lenten fast, so that not only we but a thousand souls around us will be able to experience together the supreme and incomparable joy of the Lord’s Pascha, both now and in the eternal kingdom which is to come. May God grant us this, through the intercessions of the Most Holy Theotokos and of all the saints. Amen. 

 **THE ST. GEORGE Grapevine**
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Kids Corner Q & A
Q. What does Passover mean?
A. Just before Jesus died, he had a Passover meal with his disciples. “Passover” is the special celebration Jews hold every year to remember when the Israelites left Egypt and started their trip to the Promised Land. Moses had told Pharaoh that because he wouldn’t let the Jews go, all the first born boys would die. But God told the Jews to put the blood of a lamb over the door and on the sides of the door so the angel of death would see the blood and pass over them and spare the Jewish children. Today, Jews still celebrate Passover. Christians celebrate the Lord’s Supper (Holy Communion) rather than Passover.
Key verse: (God said to the Israelites) “Celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread, for it will remind you that I brought your forces out of the land of Egypt on this very day. This festival will be a permanent regulation for you, to be kept from generation to generation.” Exodus:12:17
Note to Parents: The Christian celebration of Communion comes from Jesus’ celebration of Passover. Just before Jesus died, He had a Passover meal with His disciples. As they ate bread and wine, He told them that the bread was His body that would be broken for them and the wine was His blood that would be shed for them. Jesus is our lamb that was killed; because of His blood, we can have eternal life.
801 Questions Kids Ask About God (with answers from the Bible) 



St. George Choir

Congratulations to the new officers of the St. George Choir: President, Anne Marie Haddy; Vice-President, Loretta Haddy; Secretary, Christine Bsharah; Treasurer, Gladys Howard.



Symbolism of the Easter Egg



In the early Christian Church, it was customary to bless and give colored eggs to the people gathered together for the Resurrection Services. This traditional custom is still practiced in the Eastern Orthodox Church today.

At the conclusion of the Holy Easter Divine Liturgy in the Orthodox Church, colored, boiled eggs are blessed and distributed by the priest to the congregation. Thus, everyone receives a personal gift and blessing of the Feast.

The worshippers then go about greeting one another in a very jubilant manner and crack the eggs by hitting them one upon the other. Upon the cracking of one of the eggs, the beautiful ancient Orthodox greeting: "Christ Is Risen!" Is said by the one whose egg was cracked, then the other replies: "Truly He Is Risen!"

The cracking of the egg means the seal of the tomb is broken and Christ is Risen! The blessing and eating of eggs at Easter is symbolic of breaking fast since eggs are forbidden food during Lent.

No egg of the Feast should remain unbroken to symbolize emphatically that Christ has truly conquered Death and is Risen, thereby granting New Life to all believing Christians.

Woman Of The Bible: Susanna, follower of Jesus-

This woman was one of a group of women who had been healed by Jesus of evil spirits and ailments, traveled with the group of disciples and Jesus and ministered to them, using their own means; she was probably among those who stayed with the disciples after the Ascension of Jesus, awaiting the coming of the Holy Spirit.

(Matthew 27:55-56; Mark 15:40-41; Luke 8:2-3; 23:49,55-56; 24:1-11; 22-24. Acts 1:14).

Antiochian Women (Ladies Guild)

Hope the new year finds all the ladies of St. George eager to participate in the Ladies Guild. Our new officers for 2018 are: President, Teresa Abou-Assaly; Vice-President, Athena Howard; Secretary, Kaye Risk; Treasurer, Beverly Howard; Chaplain, Kh. Eva Scott; Corresponding Secretary, Pat Elias; and Parliamentarian, Maryann Skaff.

Our first meeting in January was well attended but we need all the ladies to take an active part in the Guild's activities. We are looking for new and exciting ideas for socials and projects. Please contact one of the officers with your suggestions and if you would like to volunteer. March is women's month, and the ladies will be participating during the Liturgy by passing the collection tray, reading the Epistle, and ushering the communion lines. Any lady interested in participating, please contact Gladys Howard.

St. George's Day is set for Sunday, April 22, and the annual dinner on October 14. Volunteers are needed for both projects, especially for set up the day before.

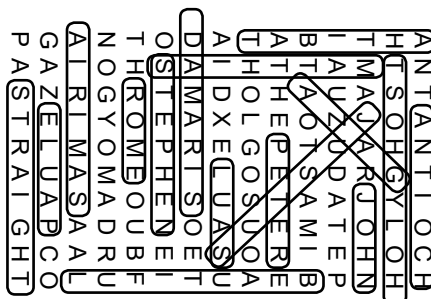
The meeting in March will be on March 5 at 7:30 pm after the Compline service. The April meeting will be the week after Holy Week; on April 9 at 7 PM.

Please come out and support our new officers. We will also be celebrating our 60th anniversary this year so watch the bulletin for details. Anyone interested in working on the committee for the anniversary please let the president know.

Senior Fellowship

Senior Fellowship will take a break during old man winter's visit but will meet again in May. Watch the bulletin for details. Stay warm, Seniors!

Word search Answers



Congregation Meeting Results

Congratulations to the newly elected Parish Council members for 2018: John Asseff, Ray Browne, Brian Chapman, Makhoul Ghareeb, Loretta Haddy, Beverly Howard, Michael Jarrouj, Philip Michael II, and P. Alex Skaff II. The continuing members on the Council are: Bruce Cassis, David Cassis, Louis Cassis, Nicholas Cassis, George Damous, Andre Haikal, Diana Shdeed, Doug Skaff, Sr., M.G. Skaff. The 2018 officers are: Chairman, Loretta Haddy; Vice-Chairman, Michael Jarrouj; Secretary, Louis Cassis; and Treasurer, Doug Skaff, Sr.

Jim Lowen and M. G. Skaff were elected by acclamation to the St. George Foundation for a 4-year term. Bruce Cassis was elected to fill the open position on the Foundation which will expire in January 2019.

There were 104 parishioners in attendance. We thank the teens for the lunch they provided. Under new business, two new amendments were introduced but will be voted on at the next congregation meeting. The first amendment presented was that all pledge commitments must be paid in full by Dec. 31st. The second amendment stated that all pledge cards for the upcoming year be completed by Dec. 31st. This allows time to prepare the budget by the Feb. meeting having all commitments completed by the end of the year.

Spinach Pies-Yum

Ladies Guild will be taking orders for spinach pies for Lent on Sunday, March 4 and 11, and pies will be available for pickup on Sunday, March 18.

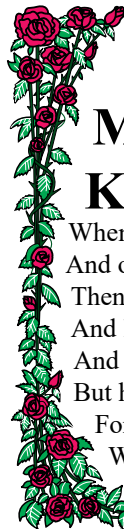
St. George's Day Luncheon

Sun. April 22, 2018



Immediately following the Divine Liturgy

St. George Conference Center Ballroom



Happy Mother's Day! Remember all Mothers on May 13. Mothers Never Die, They Just Keep House in the Sky

When we are children, we are happy and gay,
 And our MOTHER is young and she laughs as we play.
 Then we grow up, she teaches us truth
 And lays life's foundation in the days of our youth.
 And then it is time for us to leave home
 But her teachings go with us wherever we roam.
 For all that she taught us and all that we did
 When we were so often just a "bad little kid".
 We will often remember and then realize
 That MOTHERS are SPECIAL and WONDERFULLY WISE.
 And as she grows older, we look back with love
 Knowing that Mothers are Gifts From Above.
 And when she goes home to receive her reward
 She will dwell in GOD'S KINGDOM and "KEEP HOUSE FOR THE LORD",
 Where she'll light up the stars that shine thru the nite
 And keep all the moonbeams sparkling bright. ✝

St. George Cathedral Foundation News Renewal

This time of the year always invokes "renewal". After a long winter, the earth awakens to its self again promising long months of light and energy. And this renewal continues as we journey through the Lenten season to the finish line known as Pascha, a renewal of our spirit and faith through the risen Lord.

It is this renewal that embodies our St. George Foundation as we journey on to higher goals and achievements for our church and its parishioners. Our goal is the perpetuity of St. George Cathedral, period. Your chosen Board members meet monthly with the mission of discussing the various ideas that will insure this Foundation continues on its journey of insuring that our church and its members thrive in worship of the faith now and into the future. It is in this spirit and our love of Orthodoxy here at St. George Cathedral that our goals will always be achieved and met in keeping our church renewing for many generations to come. ✝



Church School News

By Layla Michael

This time every year our Church School students are very busy preparing for the Creative Arts Festival. We strongly recommend that parents please support their children by bringing them to Church School regularly. The students are learning a tremendous amount for this event and we don't want them to miss out on something.

The theme for this year's 2018 festival is "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers." Acts 2:42



Our children will again participate in the Creative Festivals, with five different entries to choose from. Please encourage your children to participate in this impor-

tant event. There was an art workshop held at the end of January, but please know that Ms. Pam is always available to help anyone that would like to do an art entry, just let us know.

We are excited because this year's festival will be at the Antiochian Village and many of our students are very familiar with the Village and we hope to have a great attendance as well this year for our Cathedral. For more information about the Creative Arts Festival go to www.antiochian.org/festivals/cf.

Lastly, an exciting event for the students during the Lenten season is celebrating Lazarus Saturday, on March 31st. Breakfast will follow Liturgy, and

there will also be fun activities in the gym to end the morning. There will be arts and crafts, an Easter egg hunt, candle making and there will be Palms so the children can make Crosses for Palm Sunday. We hope to see everyone in attendance! The end of the year party will be held in conjunction with the annual church picnic on June 10, 2018, at Coonskin Park.

If anyone would be interested in helping with our church school, please contact me. Lmichael1978@yahoo.com



Parish Life Conference

The Eastern Dioceses' Parish Life Conference will be held June 27-July 1, 2018, at the Antiochian Village. At the conference, a celebration will be held honoring Bishop Thomas' 30th anniversary of his ordination to the Diaconate. Everyone is welcome. Visit the PLC Facebook page for details.



Traditional Easter Greetings

- Christ Is Risen - Truly He Is Risen
- Al Maseeh Qam - Ha'an Qam (Arabic)
- Christos Anesti - Alithos Anesti (Greek)
- Christos Voskrese - Vo Istinu Voskrese (Slavonic)

CALENDAR

Weekly Schedule

Check the weekly bulletin for updates, changes or cancellations.

Wednesday, 6:30 pm - Daily Vespers, Family Night & Book Club (*Schedule changes during Lent*)

Thurs.: 7:00 pm - Choir Rehearsal

Sat.: 5:00 pm - Great Vespers/Confessions

Sun.: 9:45 am Church School; 9:30 am Matins; 10:30 am Divine Liturgy

March

- 2: 6:30 pm Little Compline with Akathist
- 3: 9:00 am Memorial Wheat Preparation Class
- 4: 12:30 pm Teen SOYO Meeting after Divine Liturgy
- 5: 6:30 pm Great Compline Service; 7:30 pm Ladies Guild Meeting
- 6: 7:00 pm Parish Council Meeting
- 7: 6:30 pm Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts, Lenten Pot Luck
- 9: 6:30 pm Little Compline with Akathist
- 12: 6:30 pm Great Compline Service
- 14: 6:30 pm Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts, Lenten Pot Luck
- 15: 10:00 am Spinach Pies Preparation
- 16: 10:00 am Spinach Pies Preparation; 6:30 pm Little Compline with Akathist
- 17: 10:30 am Lenten Retreat
- 18: 12:30 pm Basketball Challenge: Teens vs. Adults; 12:30 pm Spinach Pies Pickup

March 2018

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

April 2018

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

May 2018

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

- 19: 6:30 pm Great Compline Service
- 21: 6:30 pm Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete
- 22: 6:30 pm Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts, Lenten Pot Luck
- 23: 6:30 pm Little Compline with Akathist
- 24: 9:30 am Manna Meal Preparation
- 26: 6:30 pm Great Compline Service
- 27: 6:30 pm Foundation Board Meeting; 7:00 pm Fellowship of St. George Meeting
- 28: 6:30 pm Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts, Lenten Pot Luck
- 30: 6:30 pm Little Compline with Cannon of St. Lazarus
- 31: Saturday of St. Lazarus - 10:00 am Divine Liturgy, Breakfast

April

- 1: Palm Sunday - 6:30 pm Bridegroom Service
- 2: 6:30 pm Bridegroom Service
- 3: 6:30 pm Bridegroom Service
- 4: 6:30 pm Holy Unction
- 5: 6:30 am Vespereal Divine Liturgy, Breakfast; 7:00 pm Twelve Holy Passion Gospels

- 6: Holy Friday - 10:00 am Royal Hours; 3:30 pm Un-nailing Vespers; 7:00 pm Lamentations of Burial Service
- 7: 10:00 am Vespereal Divine Liturgy; 10:00 pm Matins; 11:00 pm Resurrection Divine Liturgy
- 8: Holy Pascha - 12:00 pm Agape Service
- 9: 7:00 pm Ladies Guild Meeting
- 10: 7:00 pm Parish Council Meeting
- 18: 6:30 pm Daily Vespers, Family Night & Book Club (*resumes*)
- 22: 12:30 pm St. George's Day Luncheon after Divine Liturgy
- 24: 6:30 pm Foundation Board Meeting; 7:00 pm Fellowship of St. George Meeting
- 28: 9:30 am Manna Meal Preparation

May

- 1: 7:00 pm Parish Council Meeting
- 7: 7:00 pm Ladies Guild Meeting
- 22: 7:00 pm Foundation Board Meeting
- 26: 9:30 am Manna Meal Preparation
- 29: 7:00 pm Fellowship of St. George Meeting





Decoration Day

-Author Unknown

We called it Decoration Day
 when I was just a kid,
 And up 'til now, I never knew
 exactly why we did.
 I always thought that it referred
 to stripes that soldiers earned,
 Or stars and bars for officers, but that's
 not what I learned.
 I googled it to double-check and found
 out I was wrong,
 The "decorations" were for graves and
 have been all along.
 For each serviceman who fought and lost
 his life in sacrifice,
 Just a marker on his resting place would
 simply not suffice.
 So as a tribute and remembrance, with a
 flag or a bouquet,
 We should beautify a soldier's grave on
 Decoration Day.
 No matter what you call it, when our flag
 is flown half-mast,
 Take a moment for reflection on our
 soldiers who have passed.



Search-A-Word

People and Places From The Book Of Acts

A	N	T	A	N	T	I	O	C	H
H	T	S	O	H	G	Y	L	O	H
T	M	A	J	A	R	J	O	H	N
I	A	U	Z	U	D	A	T	E	P
B	T	A	O	T	S	A	M	I	B
A	T	H	E	P	E	T	E	R	E
T	H	O	L	G	O	S	U	O	A
A	I	D	X	E	L	U	A	S	U
D	A	M	A	R	I	S	O	E	T
O	S	T	E	P	H	E	N	E	I
T	H	R	O	M	E	O	U	B	F
N	O	G	Y	O	M	A	D	R	U
A	I	R	I	M	A	S	A	A	L
G	A	Z	E	L	U	A	P	C	O
P	A	S	T	R	A	I	G	H	T

- MATTHIAS (ACTS 1:26)
- JUSTUS (ACTS 1:23)
- PETER
- JOHN
- SAUL
- DAMARIS. (ACTS 17:34)
- RHODA (ACTS 12:13-17)
- HOLY GHOST
- BEAUTIFUL (ACTS 3:2)
- STEPHEN (ACTS 7:59-60)
- SAMIRIA (ACTS 8:5)
- GAZA (ACTS 8:26)
- STRAIGHT (ACTS 9:11)
- TABITHA (ACTS 9:41)
- ANTIOCH (ACTS 11:26)
- ROME
- PAUL

Deadline for the next Grapevine issue - June, July, August. 2018 is May 15, 2018. Place articles in box outside Church office or email ritakee@aol.com

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