



THE ST. GEORGE Grapevine

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St. George Orthodox Cathedral • Charleston, WV



Orthodox Christian Witness In Our Contemporary Circumstances - Part 1

By His Grace Bp. Thomas

I would like to speak about the important and urgent topic of Orthodox Christian witness. In doing so, I hope to address two important constituencies-1) those who consider themselves Orthodox Christians but are essentially unchurched; and 2) those who would follow Christ if they recognized Him in our midst.

Before I speak about these two groups, let me first address the word "witness" in the Christian context. The holy Gospels are full of references to the term. We know, for instance, that Christ commanded His disciples to preach the Gospel to all the nations, to evangelize all peoples. Further, in Luke 21, Christ tells us that even in persecution; our trials will be made a witness (*martyrion*). We also know that Protestants and Catholics have made Christian witness a core element in their identity and their work in the world. For Orthodox Christians, this hasn't happened. There are historical reasons that this has not occurred in our Orthodox churches. However, there are also theological reasons for this as well. For the next few moments, I would like to explore some of these theological reasons with you.

For Protestants and Catholics, Christian witness is primarily the transmission of information to those who do not know Christ. This transmission comes in the form of tracts, catechisms, sermons, and logical arguments intended to sway the intellect to a particular point of view. In the West, especially since the Reformation and its loss of the ascetical tradition, faith has been treated as an act of the mind. To be a Christian, in much of the West, is simply to mentally assent to a certain catalogue of dogmas and doctrinal positions; no further action is required.

While the Orthodox Church has its dogmas and teachings from the Ecumenical Councils, and believing them is of utmost importance, logical proofs or systematic argumentation are not the methods in which we choose to engage those seeking Christ. As Saint John Chrysostom notes, the church is a hospital for the soul. The sickness is rooted in the *nous*, that faculty of the heart which, when functioning properly, governs the intellect and guides it. The goal of the Christian life is not simply to fill the intellect with facts, but to reorient the *nous*, which has become twisted and deformed by the Fall. Protestants and Catholics adopted a scholastic method which sought intellectual arguments proving God's existence. Scholastic theology tried to understand logically the Revelation of God and conform to philosophical methodology. In the Orthodox Church, as expressed by the Holy Fathers, faith is God revealing Himself to man. We accept faith by hearing it, not so that we can understand it rationally, but so that we can cleanse our hearts, attain to faith by *theoria* and experience the Revelation of God. This is an important distinction that must not be overlooked. One attempts to impart knowledge while the other offers healing. Protestants and Catholics do not have a "therapeutic treatment" tradition. They suppose that believing in God, intellectually, constitutes salvation. Yet salvation is not a matter of intellectual acceptance of truth. According to Metropolitan Hierotheos, "The three disciples of Christ (Peter, James and John) beheld the glory of Christ on Mount Tabor; they heard at once the voice of the Father, 'This is My beloved Son,' and saw the coming of the Holy Spirit in a cloud, for the cloud is

Cont. on page 5



Happy 20th
Birthday, Grapevine.

Thank you to all who contribute articles and to all our readers.

Happy new year as the church begins a new liturgical calendar year. ✝

Guidelines for the Nativity Feast (November 15-December 24)

The Nativity Fast (Philip's Fast) is one of the four Canonical Fasting Seasons in the Church year. This is a joyous fast in anticipation of the Nativity of Christ. That is the reason it is less strict than other fasting periods. The feast is divided into two periods. The 1st period is November 15th through December 19th when the traditional fasting discipline (no meat, dairy, fish, wine, and oil) is observed. There is dispensation given for wine and oil on Tuesdays and Thursday's. Similarly, fish, wine, and oil are permitted on Saturdays and Sunday's. The 2nd period is December 20th through December 24th when the traditional fasting discipline (no meat, dairy, fish, wine and oil) is observed. There is no dispensation given for wine and oil only on Saturday and Sunday during this period. ✝

By Mail or Online

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Do We Truly Love God?

By Subdeacon George M. Damous

“Love the Lord Thy God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, (and with all our strength); and Love Thy neighbor as thyself.” This is the greatest of commandments which Our Lord Jesus Christ instructed us. But do we truly believe this and do we truly try to live by these commandments. Jesus’ command tells us exactly how to love. Love is an action word which means we can not only know about love or think about love or say we understand love but we must be totally involved and interact in this love he describes. Not only love God but each other, God’s own creation, mankind.

It is very difficult to love if we do not believe. Some say I love God and I just cannot love people (for whatever reason). If this is so then we do not love God. Then we attempt to justify this by saying I do not like the way people behave or talk, etc. Do we really think God approves of many of our actions? Remember we are sinners. Yet He loves us, and forgives us (if we are repentant). So He expects the same of us if we truly love Him. If our loved ones do things we disapprove or things we just do not like, do we abandon them? Of course not, unless you are without love in your heart.

We must love God and to do this we must worship Him and obey His Law. Love is sacrifice, not convenience. Remember, God showed us the greatest act of Love, the ultimate Sacrifice, the crucifixion of His Son and His Resurrection. In this manner God revealed to us His Pure



and unconditional Love for us His creation. What do we sacrifice in return to demonstrate our love to God? Remember, love is not just a thought or feeling, but an action.

If we believe we love God and follow his commandments then we must be careful we do not fall into prelest. The term prelest is a Russian word which has come into English usage for lack of a precise equivalent, although it is often translated as “spiritual delusion,” “spiritual deception,” or “illusion.”

Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov states that spiritual deception is the wounding of human nature by falsehood. Spiritual deception is the state of all men without exception, and it has been made possible by the fall of our original parents. All of us are subject to spiritual deception. Awareness of this fact is the greatest protection against it. Likewise, the greatest spiritual deception of all is to consider oneself free from it. We are all deceived, all deluded; we all find ourselves in a condition of falsehood; we all need to be liberated by the Truth. The Truth is our Lord Jesus Christ (John 8:32-14:6).

The means whereby the fallen angel brought ruin upon the human race was falsehood (Gen. 3:13). For this reason did the Lord call the devil “a liar, and the father of lies... a murderer from the beginning” (John 8:44). We see that the Lord closely associated the notion of falsehood with the notion of murder; for the latter is the inevitable consequence of the former. The words “from the beginning” indicate that from the very start the devil has used falsehood as a weapon in murdering men, for the ruination of men. The beginning of evil is in the false thought. He that is not faithful to Christ’s teaching, who follows his own will and knowledge, will submit to the enemy, and will pass from a state of self-deception into a state of demonic deception, will lose the remnant of his freedom, and in the end he will become totally enslaved to the devil. The more advanced a man is in holiness, the deeper

is his awareness of his own sinfulness. Conversely, the less refined a man is, the weaker is his awareness of his own sinfulness.

The information provided by our fathers of the Church in explaining prelest helps us to see the potential arrogance we have in ourselves. This arrogance occurs when we do not notice our sinfulness.

Negativity also breeds delusions and worse it only breeds more negativity. When a person continually speaks negatively about the Church or others it only brings on more negativity and the positive is clouded and goes unseen. Therefore spiritual delusion. If we want to truly love God then we must choose to do so. When a person says they cannot lose weight it is because they choose not to in that they prefer to eat poorly more than they want to eat in a healthy way. So we choose whether we want to love and respect others. Love and respect is not earned, it is a God given blessing. For we are all God’s creatures.

There was an elderly man who was dying in a village and they called for one of the elders in the village to come pray, but he was unavailable. Instead a close friend who the family knew and loved was asked to say a prayer instead. The next day the man died. Many family members criticized the elder for not coming, but the close friend rebuked the family members for this and explained: “I have not visited my friend in a long time and in this I am ashamed. God blessed me and prevented me from living with this regret by allowing me to come in the last hour not just to visit my friend but to also pray for him at his side and in this I thank God and praise Him.” Positive! Yes?

Come to Church with your family and pray with the heavenly hosts to worship and glorify the Lord. Know God by doing this. 



**Remember our
veterans on
Nov. 11.**



*“A child is known by his doings
whether his work be pure or right.”*

—Proverbs 20:11



THE ST. GEORGE Grapevine

St. George Orthodox Cathedral
P.O. Box 2044
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A parish of the Antiochian Orthodox
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Pastor: Fr. Christopher Eid
Editor: Maryann Skaff
Design: Rita Damous Kee

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or email ritakee@aol.com.

<http://www.stgeorgecharleston.org/>

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every three months and is mailed during the
first week of the month.



Church School News

By Layla Michael

"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.

"Matthew 19:14

Welcome back to a new Ecclesial Year of Church School and Liturgical Services. It is that time of the year that we ask you to help us bring your children to Church School for Christian Education. Children are a gift from God and the Lord requires of us all, parents, clergy and teachers to provide them with this knowledge of the word of God. The doors of Church School are open free of charge, but we need the parents' help to bring their children to Church, and to Church School. We, clergy and teachers of St. George Cathedral, work to bring forth to your children the Christian education that the Lord asked us to give to them and that they deserve. Church School has many fun and educational activities planned in their program. Our first day of Church School is scheduled for September 11, 2016 after communion. If you have not registered yet, please see me and do so on September 11.

On Sunday, Sept 18th, we will have the exaltation of the cross procession therefore, all teachers and students will stay in

the church after communion in order to be part of the procession.

Important dates to remember throughout the year are as follows:

First Day of Church School: Sept. 11, 2016

Open House: Sept. 25, 2016

Halloween Party: Oct. 30, 2016

Godparents Sunday: Nov. 13, 2016

St. Nick Patron Saint of Children: Dec. 5, 2016 Evening Liturgy

Christmas Rehearsal: Dec. 17, 2016

Christmas Program: Dec. 18, 2016

Lazarus Saturday: April 8, 2017

Symphony Sunday: June 4, 2017

Church School end of year party in conjunction with the St. George annual picnic: June 11, 2017

***Sept. 11, 2016: Confession for High School, Middle School, Teachers and Families after Church School

***Oct. 2, 2016: Confession for 2nd grade-5th grade, Teachers, and Families after Church School



"Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not."

-Proverbs 8:33

Grandparents' Rap

Everyone has heard who's best by far.
The real truth is that they All are stars.
For where would we, the grandchildren be,
If God did not create Jiddi Adam and Sitti Eve.
From our parents' true love, we did evolve,
But thanks to grandparents, our world revolves.
Who gives us extra-special treats,
Candy, money, and praise that can't be beat.
Whose kibbee tastes better than our mother's.
And whose friendship is second to our father's.
Who babysits for our working parents,
Whose patience and love is always present.
Who attends our recital, lessons and games,
Then praises each of us for our fame.
Who tells us to go to church and Sunday School,
And reminds all children to follow the Golden Rule.
Today we honor those very special parents.
Those awesome, "sweet dudes", that are in our presence.
To all Sitties and Jiddies everywhere, we thank you and love you,
And may God keep you in His care.

Sept. 11 is Grandparents' Sunday so honor them with love and kindness.

-The Editor



Senior Fellowship

Summer is coming to a close and autumn leaves have begun to fall. Due to unforeseen circumstances we will not have another get-together until Tuesday, Nov. 15 at 5:30 p.m.

We will have dinner and bingo night. Watch the bulletin to fill out the form that lets us know how many are coming that evening. A donation of \$5.00 per person covers expenses for the dinners we prepare.

Mark your calendars now and we will see you in November. ✝

Reminder to parents and athletes of St. George Cathedral:

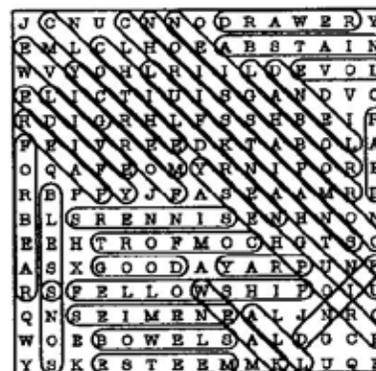
The bylaws of the Charleston Church Recreation Association (CCRA) requires regular church attendance at the church the athlete plays for 90 days prior to the athlete's participation in the first league game, so be sure to have your child attend liturgy, and Church School regularly to participate in church athletics. ✝



"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

-Proverbs 22:6

Answers to Word Search





Antiochian Women (Ladies Guild)

The lazy days of summer have come to an end and the brisk autumn days are around the corner. We had our first "back to work" meeting in August. We are now preparing for our annual dinner scheduled for October 9. Cabbage rolls have been made, and grape leaves, kibbee and baklawa will be made in the coming

weeks. Watch the bulletin for dates and times to assist in the preparation. Anyone interested in volunteering to work the day of the dinner, please contact Mary Dooley or Diana Shdeed. There is something for everyone to do from teens to seniors.

The Antiochian women would like to thank the Shums 'Il Bir and all who

helped in the preparation and serving of the Flood Relief Spaghetti Benefit lunch and dinner on August 18. And, we especially want to thank everyone who donated to the flood relief for our neighbors affected by the devastating floods in June. The two groups worked very hard to raise \$16,000.00 for the flood relief.

We invite all women, 18 and over, to attend our meetings the first Monday of each month at 7PM. September's meeting will be on September 12. Sub-deacon George Damous opens each meeting with a short inspirational message then our business meeting begins. You will be amazed at all the good works our ladies guild does throughout the year. See you in September. ✝



St. George Orthodox Cathedral

Annual Dinner

October 9, 2016

12 noon - 6 p.m.

St. George Conference Center
Corner Court & Lee Streets
Charleston, WV
304-346-0106

Menu:

- Kibbee - Ground Meat & Wheat
- Yabrah - Cabbage Rolls
- Loobia Bunadoora - Green Beans in Tomato Sauce • Rooz 'B Sharyeea - Buttered Rice with Orzo
- Salata - Salad with Oil & Lemon Dressing • Baklawa Dessert - Multi-layered Fillo & Nuts
- Pita Bread • Coffee / Ice Tea

Donation \$15.00

Carry-out Orders
Ethnic Groceries (Lower Level)
Diners are invited
to tour the sanctuary.

Kids Corner Q & A

Q: Why do we go to Church if God is everywhere?

A: In the Bible, God tells us to join other Christians and worship Him. We should spend time alone, praying and reading His Word. But it is also very important to get together with others who follow Christ. We can encourage and strengthen each other. We can pray for each other. We can learn from each other. We can sing and praise God together. We can serve and help each other. All of this can happen in church. Church is also a place where Christians of all ages and types can come together—babies, grandparents, children, poor, wealthy, brown, black, white, American, Asian, African, weak, strong, and so on. Something very special happens when God's family gets together.





Teen SOYO Elects New Officers

Congratulations to the new officers for 2016-2017: President, Isaac Abdalla; Vice-President/Historian, Joseph Michael; Secretary, Caroline Cassis; Treasurer, Kaitlin Nester; Chaplain, Ben Tappe; and Sargent-at-Arms/Parliamentarian, John Asseff. October is Youth Month, so please support our teens in all their projects, especially donating to the Special Olympics Sports Camp held at

the Village. The teens will pass the tray and read the Epistle during the month of October. Please encourage your teens to attend teen SOYO meetings, Church School classes and Divine Liturgy regularly to learn more about our faith and working together. The teens are the future leaders of St. George so encourage them to participate . ✝



Cont. from page 1 Orthodox Christian

the presence of the Holy Spirit, as Saint Gregory Palamas says. Thus the Disciples of Christ acquired the knowledge of the Triune God in *theoria* (vision of God) and by revelation. It was revealed to them that God is one essence in three hypostases.” Further, Orthodoxy doesn’t attempt to load down the unchurched with everything all at once. Looking again to the Transfiguration, we remember that Christ revealed His glory to his disciples “as far as they could bear”. If He had revealed to them the fullness of His glory, they wouldn’t have been able to survive it.

This dichotomy between the head and the heart as well as the divergent paths of Eastern and Western spirituality is most clearly seen in 19th century Orthodox literature in the writings of Fyodor Dostoevsky. In his writings, Dostoevsky warns against man’s continuous attempts to usurp God’s power and place in the universe. Professor Seraphim Foltz, an Orthodox convert himself, writes, “Like Ivan, the Inquisitor turns against Christ, even though he knows that Christ is divine—that he is what Dostoevsky called the “God-man”. The Inquisitor, and Ivan with him, choose not the “God-man” or divine humanity—humanity as it is humbly and unselfishly joined in mystical union with God—but rather the “Man-god,” humanity usurping the role of God, and redesigning in Promethean fashion not only nature and society, but its own nature as well. “The kiss burns in his heart, but the old man holds to his former idea” (p. 262). Thus, the young man Ivan, like the old Inquisitor, is divided between heart and mind, and in the end both choose the latter over the former. It is this triumph of thoughts and ideas over the heart that is the downfall of all Dostoevsky’s tragic characters: Raskolnikov’s utilitarian plan to kill a wretched old pawnbroker and put the stolen money to better use; the “demonic” outcomes of the student revolutionaries (who often sound like modern terrorist operatives) who are driven by their ideas and ideologies; and Ivan’s atheistic insistence that without God, “everything is permitted,” and that leads him later in the novel to a kind of insanity or “brain fever.”

I suspect this is why our Orthodox parishes have never adopted evangelization programs that feature slick marketing and entertainment as enticements to faith. Ultimately, *metanoia* and conversion of the heart belong to God and Him alone. ✝

Word Search: Helping Others: Who, How, & Why

ABSTAIN	LEND	PRAY	SINNERS
ALL	LOVE	PROPHECY	SONS
BEAR	MERCY	REAP	UNTHANKFUL
BLESS	NEIGHBOR	REWARD	WEAK

- BOWELS
- CHILDREN
- CHRISTIANS
- CLOTHE
- COMFORT
- COMPASSION
- EDIFY
- ENEMIES
- ESTEEM
- EVIL
- FELLOWSHIP
- FORBEAR
- FORGIVE
- GIVE
- GOOD
- KIND
- LABOR





CALENDAR

Weekly Schedule

Check the weekly bulletin for updates, changes or cancellations.

- Mon. - Fri.:** 12:30 P.M. Sixth Hour
- Wed.:** 6:30 p.m. Vespers /Family Night
- Thurs.:** 7:30 p.m. Choir Rehearsal:
- Sat.:** 5:00 p.m. Great Vespers/confession
- Sun.:** 9:30 a.m. Matins; 10:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy; After Communion - Church School; 6:30 p.m. Bible Study



September

- 6: 7:30 pm Parish Council Meeting
- 7: 6:30 pm Evening Liturgy - Nativity of the Theotokos
- 11: Church School Begins
- 12: 7:00 pm Ladies Guild
- 13: 6:30 pm Evening Liturgy - Elevation of the Holy Cross
- 20: 6:30 pm Foundation Board Meeting
- 24: 9:30 am Manna Meal prep

SEPTEMBER 2016						
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	

OCTOBER 2016						
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					

NOVEMBER 2016						
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			

October

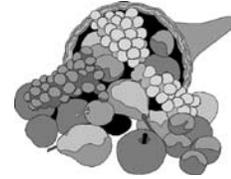


- 3: 7:00 pm Ladies Guild
- 4: 7:30 pm Parish Council Meeting
- 9: 12:00 - 6 pm Annual Dinner
- 18: 6:30 pm Foundation Board Meeting
- 29: 9:30 am Manna Meal prep
- 30: 2:00 pm Church School Halloween Party

November



- 1: 7:30 pm Parish Council Meeting
- 6: 7:00 pm Golden Parishioners Dinner
- 7: 7:00 pm Ladies Guild
- 15: Nativity Fast Begins; 6:30 pm Foundation Board Meeting
- 26: 9:30 am Manna Meal prep



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Deadline for the next Grapevine issue
Dec. 2016-Jan. Feb. 2017, is Nov. 15, 2016. Place articles in box outside Church office or email ritakee@aol.com

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P.O. Box 2044
Charleston, WV 25327
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