"LET US BEGIN THE FAST WITH JOY!"

Ithough some may associate Great Lent with suffering and sacrifice, our Church gently reminds us that the 40-day Fast which precedes our Lord's Resurrection is actually a time for us to experience a great spiritual joy. The Church's service book for Lent – the Triodion – calls this period the "spiritual spring which blossoms with the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." For us to "harvest" these fruits, however, it is necessary for us to master two vital disciplines: PRAYER and FASTING.

St. John Chrysostom writes that prayer and fasting are like "two wings that carry a person to the heights of God." They are the means for us to become mentally, physically and spiritually prepared to encounter the Lord in an intimate way. Prayer and fasting help us to become closer to God. The more time we spend in prayer, the less time we have to become consumed with the sins and temptations that are constantly placed before us. Fasting shows our willingness to cast aside the pleasures of the world, abstaining from wrong-doing as well as food.

While urging us to embrace these admirable virtues during the Lenten season, the Church reminds us of the emphasis that Christ Himself placed on prayer and fasting. There were countless times during His earthly ministry that Jesus became deeply immersed in practicing these disciplines. Indeed, when His disciples questioned why they were unable to cast out demons from a possessed young man, Christ pointed out to them that only through prayer and fasting could they ever receive the ability to do this!

The Orthodox Weekly Bulletin Vestal, Cliffwood, New Jersey Litho in U.S.A.

WELCOME VISITORS AND GUESTS

Please take a moment to fill out a Visitor Card. We invite you to join us for coffee hour in the Fellowship Hall following the Liturgy.

RECEIVING COMMUNION

Only those Orthodox Christians who have prepared themselves may approach the chalice for Holy Communion. Everyone is welcome to partake of the Holy Bread after the Liturgy.

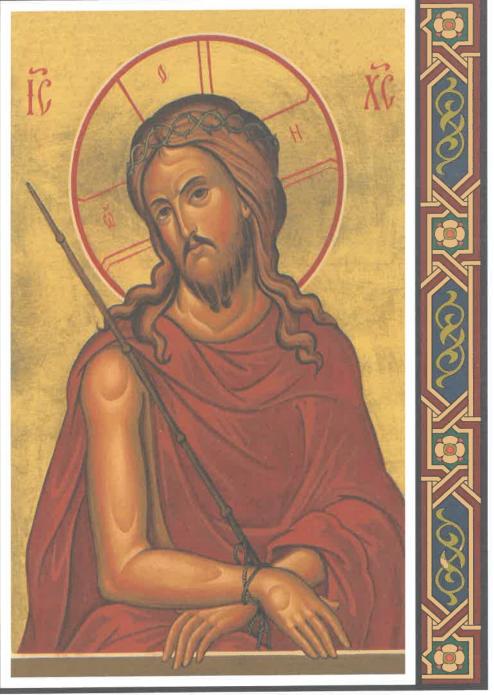
HOLY OBLATION BREAD AND MEMORIAL WHEAT

If you are offering Holy Bread, please pick up your portion on top of the chanter stand at the end of Liturgy.

If you are offering Memorial Wheat, please provide (300) 3oz Dixie cups. Please notify the Church Office by end-of-day Tuesday.

BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS ARE DUE TUESDAY END-OF-DAY.





March 17, 2024

ST. GEORGE ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH

5311 Mercer, Houston, Texas 77005 www.stgeorgehouston.com

Church Office admin@stgeorgehouston.com 713-665-5252 p

713-583-8833 *f* V. Rev. James Shadid *Pastor* **fishadid@gmail.com** 316-209-3605 *c*

Rev. Mark Makarios *Assistant* mark.makarios@stots.edu 508-685-3498 *c* Chris Al-Dehneh *Youth Director* chrisaldehneh@gmail.com 915-539-6901 *c*

<u>HOLY OBLATION & MEMORIAL</u> is offered in memory of His Eminence Metropolitan PHILIP (10 years)

<u>HOLY OBLATION & MEMORIAL</u> is offered in memory of ProtoDeacon George Moubayed (40 days) and for the health of Nabil, Maria, Ibrahim, Joann, Shadi, Zeina Moubayed & Rima Zananiri by the Moubayed Family.

HOLY OBLATION is offered in memory of Vera Bateh (13 days), Jameel (41 years) & Nabeeha (27years) Kawaja by Akram & Violet Baba and family.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES (All services will be held in the Parish Hall.)	
Sunday (3/17)	5:00p Forgiveness Vespers
Monday (3/18)	6:00p Great Compline
Tuesday (3/19)	6:00p Great Compline
Wednesday (3/20)	6:30p Presanctified Liturgy/Lenten Potluck Dinner
Thursday (3/21)	6:00p Great Compline
Friday (3/22)	6:30p Akathist to the Theotokos
Saturday (3/23)	6:00p Great Vespers
Sunday (3/24)	8:45a Orthros 10:00a Divine Liturgy/Sunday of Orthodoxy Icon Procession 6:00p Great Vespers for Annunciation at AGOC

EVENTS

<u>BIBLE STUDY</u>: Tuesday mornings at 10:00a. studying the Gospel of John. **STUDY OF THE LITURGY**: With Fr. Mark on Thursday mornings at 10am.

BOOK STUDY: The Lord of Spirits (available in bookstore) Mondays at 6:30p.

ASK ABOUNA will meditate on Orthodox Spirituality during Lent.

THE GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP: will resume meeting once a month, the last Sunday of every month after Ask Abouna at 12:30 PM in the Library.

<u>ST. GEORGE 50 + BUS TRIP</u>: will be visiting the St. Paraskevi Monastery Thursday, 4/18. To reserve your seat please call Faika Zaid (713-213-3211). Bus leaves St. George @ 10:00 AM. Nice fellowship trip during lent.

ANNUAL MOTHER'S DAY CELEBRATIONS: St. George Ladies Altar society is hosting the annual Mother's Day celebration on Saturday, May 11th at 12pm at the church hall. Tickets are \$50 and \$75. For reservation, please contact Yolla Jabbour at 281-468-2219.

L.A.S. PASCHA COOKIES SALE: Please scan the QR Code to the right to preorder. Cookies pickup April 14 & 21. Spinach & Zattar pickup after March 24.

LENTEN PSALTER GROUP: If you are interested in participating in daily Psalter readings (from your own home) during Great Lent 3/18-4/28/24, please contact Joan Katrib at imagatwork@mac.com. For more information & to sign up. This is a simple & wonderful way to become familiar with the Psalms & to pray as a community.

A PILGRIMAGE TO ANCIENT GREECE WITH FR. GEORGE DAHDOUH: August 29 – September 9. For more information, pick up a flyer from the church or check out the info in the Monday email.

FELLOWSHIP ACTIVITY CENTER

Phase 1 of the FAC/ project is moving forward, and our fundraising deadlines are fast approaching. Please help us reach our Phase 1 goal of \$6.5 million by making and fulfilling your FAC contribution today! Pledges and donations can be made on the St. George/FAC website or by scanning the QR code.



STEWARDSHIP



<u>2024 PLEDGE STEWARDSHIP "NEW BEGINNINGS"</u>: Our 2024 Pledge Campaign is now open, please prayerfully commit to your home of St. George. Please scan the QR code to the left to submit your 2024 Pledge Commitment.

In an effort to simplify the pledging process, a new system (Tithe.ly) has been implemented.

To donate, give towards your 2024 pledge or to set up recurring payments, scan QR code to the right.



YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT EVENTS

NO CHURCH SCHOOL: Church school will resume TODAY.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL (SAVE THE DATE): Vacation Bible School is back at Saint George. Save the date for June 17-21.

ST. SOPHIA MOMS GROUP MEETING: The next St. Sophia Moms Group meeting is on Friday 3/22, 9:30-11:30 am. RSVP stsophiamoms@gmail.com

HOUSTON OCF MEETING: Tuesday, 3/19 at Saint George starting with Compline at 6p. **HOUSTON COLLEGE YES DAY:** Calling all college students! YES (Youth Equipped to Serve) is coming to the Houston area on 3/30 from 9:30a to 4:30p for a College YES Day full of outreach and fellowship. For more info and to register, you can find all of the details on the flyer in our weekly email.

FORGIVENESS SUNDAY (CHEESE FARE)

- I. The Antiphons and Little Entrance as in the service book.
- II. After the Little Entrance, the following are chanted:
- -The Troparion of the Resurrection in tone 8:

 From the heights Thou didst descend, O compassionate One, and Thou didst submit to the three-day burial, that Thou might deliver us from passion; Thou art our life and our Resurrection, O Lord, glory to Thee.
- -The Troparion of St. George in tone 4:

 As deliverer of captives, and defender of the poor, healer of the infirm champion of kings, victorious Great Martyr George, intercede with Christ our God, for our souls' salvation.
- -The Kontakion for Forgiveness Sunday in tone 6:

 O Thou Who guidest to wisdom, and givest understanding and intelligence, the Instructor of the ignorant, and Helper of the poor, strengthen my heart and grant it

understanding, O Master. Give me word, O Word of the Father; for behold, I shall not refrain my lips from crying to Thee, O merciful One, have mercy upon me who am fallen.

The Epistle

Make your vows unto the Lord and perform them. God is known in Judah; His name is great in Israel. The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans (13:11-14:4)

Brethren, salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed; the night is far gone, the day is at hand. Let us then cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us conduct ourselves becomingly as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires. As for the man who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not for disputes over opinions. One believes he may eat anything, while the weak man eats only vegetables. Let not him who eats despise him who abstains, and let him who abstains pass judgment on him who eats; for God has welcomed him. Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Master is able to make him stand.

The Epistle in Arabic

صلُّوا وأَوفُوا الرَّبَّ إلهَنا.

الله معروف في أرضِ يهوذا. إسْمُهُ عَظيمٌ في إسرائيل

(13:11-14:4) فصلٌ من رسالة القديس بولسَ الرسولِ إلى أهلِ رومية

يا إخوةُ إِنَّ خلاصَنا الآنَ أقرَبُ مِمَّا كانَ حينَ آمَنًا * قد تَنَاهى الليلُ واقتَرَبَ النَّهارُ فَلنَدَعْ عنَّا أعمالَ الظُلمَةِ ونَلْبَسَ أسلِحَةَ النُّوْرِ * لِنَسلُكُنَّ سُلُوكاً لائِقاً كما في النَّهارِ لا بالقُصُوفِ والسّكْرِ ولا بالمَضَاجِعِ والعَهَرِ ولا بالخِصَامِ والحَسَدِ * بل البَسُوا الرَّبَ يسوعَ المسيحِ ولا تَهتَمُوا بأجسَادِكُم لقَضاءِ شَهَواتِها * مَنْ كانَ ضَعِيفاً في الإيمانِ فاتَّخِذوهُ بغيرِ مُبَاحَثَةٍ في الآراءِ * مِنَ الناسِ مَنْ يعتَقِدُ أَنَّ لهُ أَن يَأْكُلُ كُلُّ شيءٍ . أمَّا الضَّعِيفُ فيَأكُلُ بُقُولاً * فلا يَرْدَرِ الذي يأكُلُ مَنْ لا يأكُلُ ولا يَدِنْ الذي لا يأكُلُ مَنْ يأكُلُ فإن يَلْكُلُ مَنْ اللهَ قدِ اتَّخَذَهُ * مَنْ أنتَ يا مَن تَدِينُ عَبداً أَجْنَبياً. إِنَّهُ لِمَولاهُ يَتُبُتُ أُو يَسفُّطُ. لكِنَّهُ سَيَثَبُتُ لأَنَّ اللهَ قادِرٌ على أن يُتَبِّتَهُ *

The Gospel

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew (6:14-21)

The Lord said to His Disciples: If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. And when you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by men but by your Father Who is in secret; and your Father Who sees in secret will reward you. Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

The Gospel in Arabic

*(6:14-21)*فصلٌ شريفٌ من بشارةِ القديسِ متى الإنجيليّ البشيرِ والتلميذِ الطاهرِ

قالَ الربُ إِن غَفَرتُم للناسِ زَلِاتِهِم يَغفِرُ لكم أبوكُم السَّماوي أيضاً * وإن لم تَغفِروا للناسِ زلاَّتِهِم فاَبوكم أيضاً لا يَغفِرُ لكم زلاَّتِكُم * ومتى صُمتُم فلا تكونُوا مُعَبِّسِينَ كالمُراءين. فإنَّهُم يُنَكِّرُونَ وجُوههُم ليَظهروا للناسِ صائِمينَ. الحقَّ أقولُ لكُم إنَّهُم قد أَخَذوا أَجْرَهُم * أما أنتَ فإذا صُمتَ فادهَن رأسَكَ واغسِلْ وَجهَكَ لئلاَّ تَظهَرَ للنَّاسِ صائِماً بل لأبيكَ الذي في الخِفْيَةِ. وأبوكَ الذي يرَى في الخِفْيةِ يُجازيكَ علانيةً * لا تَكْنِزُوا لكُم كُنُوزاً على الأرضِ حيثُ يُفسِدُ السُّوسُ والآكِلَةُ وينقِبُ السَّارِقُونَ ويسرِقُونَ * لكن اكنزُوا لكُم كنوزاً في السَّماءِ حيثُ لا يُفسِدُ سوسٌ ولا آكِلةٌ ولا يَنْقُبُ السَّارِقُونَ ولا يَسرِقُونَ * لأَنَّهُ حيثُ تَكُونُ كُنوزُكُم هناكَ تَكُونُ قُلُوبُكُم *

