



St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church
 Weekly Newsletter
 Sunday, November 15, 2020

We Want to Hear from You!

We are preparing to place the order for 2021 offering envelopes. Please complete this brief, two question survey to help us place an accurate order for envelopes:
<https://forms.gle/GFtcMcqjxj6Ldo2PfA>.

Features

St. George was featured on OCF's Instagram, with a post shared by Katerina Vassil, one of St. George's college students from Temple OCF. [Check it out here!](#)

Upcoming Meetings

- Icon Committee – Thursday 11/12 at 7pm
Office will send Zoom link
- Choir Practice - Tuesday 11/17 at 7pm
Contact [Matt Gordon](#) for link

Upcoming Events

- Eastern Dioceses Fall Retreat
November 12-15
See Antiochian.org for more information

Philly OCF

- Regular Meeting - Monday 11/16, 8pm
[Zoom link](#)
Mtg ID #835 2215 9264
Password: Fellowship
- Bible study - Tuesday 11/24, 11am
[Zoom link](#)
Mtg ID #880 5713 0161
Password: Scripture

8th Sunday of Luke

Ephesians 2:4-10

Luke 10:25-37

- The following services will be held in the church and streamed on the [website](#):
 - **Thursday 11/10** – 3rd Hour, 9:30am
 - **Saturday 11/14** – Vespers, 5pm
 - **Sunday 11/15** – Orthros and Liturgy, 9:30am
 - **Tuesday 11/17** – Matins, 9:30am
- To attend one of the services listed above at the church, please sign up via Sign Up Genius ([November services](#)). When doing so, please keep in mind the following:
 - reserve the number of slots for family members attending (For example, if there are 3 household members attending, reserve 3 slots.)
 - those who are elderly, have pre-existing conditions, or currently are not feeling well are asked to remain home.
 - children who are too young to keep a mask on are asked to remain home.
- To set up a time to receive communion, please sign up via the [Sign Up Genius](#). Please reserve only one slot per household unit. Prior to arriving at the church for communion, please say the [Morning Prayers](#) and the [Prayers of Preparation before Communion](#).
- Confession is also being scheduled by appointment. To set up an appointment, please email the church office and provide a few dates/times you are available. The office will email you to confirm your appointment time.

Troparion of St. George

O liberator and deliverer of captives, helper of the poor and needy, a healing physician of the sick, a contender for kings, O great among Martyrs, the victory-clad George; intercede with Christ our God for the salvation of our souls.

If you attend a service, you must wear a mask/face covering out of care for ourselves, our brothers and sisters in Christ, and our neighbors.

Adopt-a-College Student

We are currently gauging interest from both our college students and parishioners in the Adopt-a-College Student program. If you would like to pray for a student or support them in some other way or if you are a student who would like to be paired with a family, please contact the church office at office@saintgeorgeupperdarby.org to be put on the list.

St. Katherine Women's Group

The Antiochian Women of the East cordially invite all Antiochian Women to join our Fall Retreat and Meeting on November 14, from 11:00am - 1:30pm with Mother Gabriella of the Holy Dormition Monastery as our special guest. [Click here to register!](#)

2020 Holiday Drive

St. George's will once again be supporting People's Emergency Center (PEC) in Philadelphia through our holiday gift drive. Due to COVID-19, PEC is requesting that all donations be mailed to the center, so we will not be collecting items at the church. To donate, [you may visit PEC's website to view the wishlists.](#) Alternatively, you may also make a donation to St. George's online or via cash/check (with the note "PEC holiday drive") no later than December 6th and we will direct it to the holiday drive.

2020 Thanksgiving Boxes

St. George's is now collecting donations for Thanksgiving boxes to be donated to PEC. To donate, please make a donation on the church's website or via cash check (with the note "Thanksgiving boxes") no later November 19 so we can deliver the boxes on November 24.

12 Baskets

If you would like to participate in the 12 Baskets ministry, please contact the [church office](#) to sign up.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

The 2020-21 Sunday School year will begin on Sunday, November 8, and all students will be studying the 12 Great Feasts of the church. Classes will rotate through an activity each week, and everything will be done remotely. The schedule for November is listed below. Parents will be receiving additional information from the church office later this week.

To register your child(ren) and to ensure we have updated contact information for parents, please fill out this brief form:
<https://forms.gle/HmNku2Fa2TpPm6Jz6>

Feast: Entrance of the Theotokos (11/21)

November 15

- Elementary school: Class (via Zoom)
- Middle school: At home resources
- High school: Ask Abouna

November 22

- Elementary school: Ask Abouna
- Middle school: Class (via Zoom)
- High school: At home resources

November 29

No Sunday School

Guidelines for the Nativity Fast

November 15 - December 24

The Nativity 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 fast 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 Thursdays. Similarly, fish, wine, and oil are permitted on Saturdays and Sundays. The 2nd period is December 20th through 24th when the traditional fasting discipline (no meat, dairy, fish, wine, and oil) is observed. There is dispensation given for wine and oil only on Saturday and Sunday during this period. Here are the guidelines:

Meat	Dairy	Fish	Wine	Oil
beef, chicken, pork, turkey, elk, veal, lamb, deer, rabbit, buffalo, and so forth	milk, eggs, cheese, butter, yogurt, cream, and so forth	fish with a backbone (not including shrimp, octopus, shellfish, squid, or other seafood.	(some include all types of alcohol in this category)	(some include all types of oil in this category)
Abstain.	Abstain.	Permitted only on Saturdays and Sundays before December 20. (some permit fish Tuesdays and Thursdays also)	Permitted only on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays, & Sundays before December 20.	Permitted only on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays, & Sundays before December 20.

Abstinence includes refraining from the food and drink mentioned above, as well as from smoking. The Eucharistic Fast means abstaining from at least the previous midnight for communing at a morning Liturgy.

The Purpose of Fasting

The purpose of fasting is to focus on the things that are above, the Kingdom of God. It is a means of putting on virtue in reality, here and now. Through it we are freed from dependence on worldly things. We fast faithfully and in secret, not judging others, and not holding ourselves up as an example.

- Fasting in itself is not a means of pleasing God. Fasting is not a punishment for our sins. Nor is fasting a means of suffering and pain to be undertaken as some kind of atonement. Christ already redeemed us on His Cross. Salvation is a gift from God that is not bought by our hunger or thirst.
- We fast to be delivered from carnal passions so that God's gift of Salvation may bear fruit in us.
- We fast and turn our eyes toward God in His Holy Church. Fasting and prayer go together.

- Fasting is not irrelevant. Fasting is not obsolete, and it is not something for someone else. Fasting is from God, for us, right here and right now.
- Most of all, we should not devour each other. We ask God to "set a watch and keep the door of our lips."

Do Not Fast

- between December 25 and January 5 (even on Wednesdays and Fridays);
- if you are pregnant or nursing a newborn;
- during serious illness;
- without prayer;
- without alms-giving;
- according to your own will without guidance from your spiritual father.



Church History

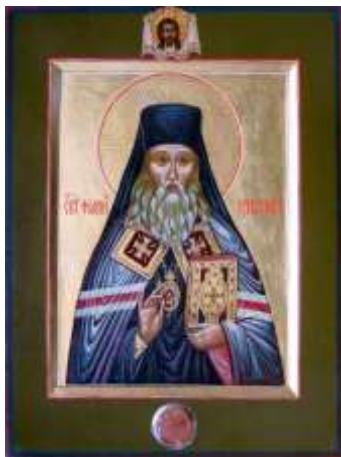
This week we continue a series on the Essentials of Faith. The hope is that we can all learn and be edified, and come to a “knowledge of the Truth” (1 Tim. 2:4), and to witness to the things of faith that were “delivered to the saints” (Jud. 1:3) in the Church, which is the “pillar and ground of Truth”. (1 Tim. 3:15) May God bless the labor. These lessons are taken from Fr. Thomas Hopko’s series The Orthodox Faith.

Russia: Spiritual Renewal - Other leading figures

Within this movement of spiritual renewal were two bishop-monks who were especially noteworthy teachers of the ascetic life and the practice of the Jesus Prayer: Saint Ignaty Brianchaninov (1807–1867) and Saint Theophan the Recluse (1815–1894). Saint Ignaty is most well remembered for writing the famous *Arena: An Offering to Contemporary Monasticism*. He intended this work to be his last words to monks everywhere, but much of it is relevant for laypeople. In it he faithfully transmits the teachings of the Holy Fathers. As he says in his foreword to the work, “The teaching I offer is taken entirely from the sacred teaching of the holy Fathers of the Orthodox Church.” He draws especially upon Saint John of the Ladder, Saint Isaac the Syrian, and Saints Barsanuphius and John. He includes quotations from ascetic writers of every century, including his own—men such as Saint Seraphim of Sarov and Elder Leonid of Optina.



Like Saint Ignaty and Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk, Saint Theophan the Recluse also retired from active episcopal service to devote himself more entirely to prayer, contemplation, and writing letters and books. He wrote many works on the spiritual life, including *The Path to Salvation*, and *The Spiritual Life and How to be Attuned to It* which consists of a series of letters written to a young woman in the world who was one of his spiritual daughters. His greatest contribution was making a complete translation of the *Philokalia* into contemporary Russian.



Two other extremely popular spiritual writings in circulation in Russia in the latter half of the 19th century were *The Way of the Pilgrim* and *The Pilgrim Continues His Way*. They are a series of travel narratives written by an anonymous pilgrim who wandered across Russia, practicing the Jesus Prayer, which he first learned from a staretz. He then amplified his understanding through reading the *Philokalia*. He was advised to repeat the Jesus Prayer thousands of times a day.

The two leading Russian theologians of the 19th century were the great churchman Saint Philaret (Drozdev), Metropolitan of Moscow (r. 1821–1867) and the layman Alexei Khomiakov (1804–1860). In 1840 Saint Philaret oversaw a reform of seminary education at the Moscow Academy, with all subjects

now to be taught in Russian instead of Latin, and with more emphasis on Patristics. As mentioned above, his active support made possible the very significant Patristic publishing efforts led by Elder Makary of Optina and Ivan Kireevsky. He was a key figure in the beginning of the “return to the Fathers” in mid-19th century Russia, and the turning away from the Latin Scholasticism which had strongly influenced Russian theological education ever since Peter Moghila founded the Kiev Academy in the early 17th century.

Khomiakov’s writings—such as the famous essay “The Church is One”—were not originally published in Russia due to government censorship. Considered to be one of the most original and creative of modern theologians, Khomiakov was among the first to “discover” the traditional Patristic patterns of Orthodox theology and spiritual life. He encouraged Orthodox thinkers to break away from the “Western captivity” of scholastic theology and to meet the intellectual and spiritual world of the West with a sound knowledge and experience of the genuine Orthodox Tradition.



Besides Dostoevsky, another very important Russian novelist of the nineteenth century, who also wove profound spiritual themes into his novels and short stories, was Leo Tolstoy (1828–1910). His majestic *War and Peace*, about Napoleon’s invasion of Russia in 1812, is considered by some to be the greatest novel ever written. However, in his later years, in actively pursuing his burning interest in social reform, and in reaction to what he perceived as dry formalism in the Orthodox Church, he became convinced that the moral precepts given by Christ in the Sermon on the Mount, and working towards establishing a just society based upon brotherly love, were the essence of the Gospel, rather than Christ’s Incarnation, Crucifixion, Resurrection, and Second Coming. He was excommunicated by the Russian Church in 1901 for his rejection of the authentic Christian teaching—as seen, for example, in his own edited revision of the New Testament.

Wisdom of the Holy Fathers

How should one pray? There is no need at all to make long discourses; it is enough to stretch out one's hands and say, "Lord, as you will, and as you know, have mercy." And if the conflict grows fiercer say, "Lord, help!" He knows very well what we need and he shows us his mercy.

+ St. Macarius the Great

In addition to Kireevsky, Khomiakov, Dostoevsky, and Tolstoy, several other Russian religious thinkers/philosophers, such as Vladimir Soloviev (1853–1900), Nikolai Fedorov (1829–1903), and the brothers Sergei Troubetskoy (d. 1905) and Evgeny Troubetskoy (d. 1920), made important contributions to the intellectual and spiritual life of the nation. While attempting to create a distinctly Russian form of philosophy, incorporating certain elements from Russian Orthodoxy, these thinkers remained essentially Western-oriented in their basic approach. Still, they helped many of their fellow Russian intellectuals—especially among the Russian émigré community who fled to the West in the wake of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917—to return to their Orthodox roots.