



Veneration of the Holy Cross (Third Sunday of Lent)
[Reader Service Text](#)

Calendar and Announcements

Church services and events:

- Based on Metropolitan JOSEPH'S latest encyclical (dated 3/17/2020), all non-liturgical events are **cancelled**.
- The following services will be prayed, with clergy, servers, and chanters **only**. Please do not come to the church building for these services:
 - Akathist – Friday 3/20
 - Sunday Orthros and Liturgy – Sunday 3/22
 - Vespers Liturgy for Annunciation – Wednesday 3/25
 - Akathist – Friday 3/27
- Copies of reader services, streaming information, and other resources can be found on the Archdiocese website:
<https://www.antiochian.org/dashboard?name=COVID-19>.

Confession, communion, and access to the church:

- The church building will remain open for people to offer individual prayers and light candles on weekdays between 10am-12pm and 4pm-6pm, beginning Monday 3/23.
- If you would like to receive communion from the reserve, please make an appointment through the church office (office@saintgeorgeupperdarby.org).

For those who are sick or in need:

- If you are sick, please contact the church office so Fr. Joel can visit and provide communion.
- Several members of the ministry team will be contacting parishioners to identify any special needs and to ensure our church family is taken care of during this time. If you or someone you know has a particular need during this time, please contact the church office so we can coordinate with the ministry team.

General notes:

- If you are able to still tithe / contribute to the church during this time, please consider giving online via PayPal on the church's website.
- While we are connected to many Orthodox communities across the country and around the globe, please remember that we are following the guidance of our Archbishop and Bishop, and will be making decisions within this guidance that is specific to the needs of our parish community.
- All communication about services and other updates during this time will be sent via parish email from Fr. Joel (or the office) and posted on the website. Please continue to monitor your email and the website for any updates. All questions can be directed to the office (office@saintgeorgeupperdarby.org).

Troparion of St. George

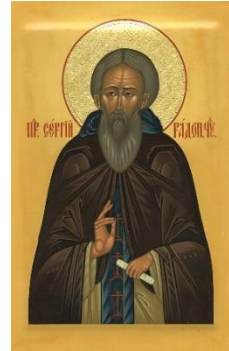
O liberator and deliverer of captives, helper of the poor and needy, a healing physician of the sick, a contender for kings,
O great among Martyrs, the victory-clad George; intercede with Christ our God for the salvation of our souls.

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.

Saint Sergios of Radonezh (con’t)

In 1354 word came from the hesychastic Patriarch Philotheos Kokkinos of Constantinople that the community should become organized as a cenobitic (communal) monastery. As the Russian Church was still part of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in the 14th century, Saint Sergius felt obliged to agree to this change, which was also urged upon him by Saint Alexis, Metropolitan of Moscow (r. 1353–1378).



Over the years the monastery continued to grow. Eventually it became recognized as the center of Russian monasticism. And as would happen many times as monastics formed communities further and further into the wilderness to the north and east, settlers came to live around the monastery, and a sizable town developed.

Saint Sergius became so well known as a holy, humble man of God that he was often consulted by Saint Alexis, Metropolitan of Moscow and other prominent leaders of the country. One of these, Saint Dimitri Donskoi, Grand Prince of Moscow (r. 1360–1389), rebuilt the walls of Moscow in defiance of the Tatar overlords. When the Tatars, in response, amassed a huge military force to march towards Moscow, Dimitri rallied nearly all the Russian princes to join him in raising a large number of warriors to defend their lands.

At the moment of final decision, Grand Prince Dimitri consulted Saint Sergius, who advised him to advance towards the Tatars, to meet them in battle across the Don River in the Tatars’ heartland in the open steppes. The forces met at the Battle of Kulikovo Pole, on September 8, 1380.

Miraculously, the outnumbered Russian forces prevailed. This victory marked the beginning of the end of the Tatar overlordship, even though the Russians had to continue paying tribute to them until 1480.

Wisdom of the Holy Fathers

"Virtues are formed by prayer.
Prayer preserves temperance.
Prayer suppresses anger. Prayer
prevents emotions of pride and envy.
Prayer draws into the soul the Holy
Spirit, and raises man to Heaven."

~ Ephrem the Syrian

The legacy of Saint Sergius to Russia and the Orthodox Church is immeasurable. His direct disciples founded nearly thirty monastic centers in northern Russia around which lands were settled and developed. Between 1400 and 1600, some 250 monasteries were established either through the direct or indirect inspiration of Saint Sergius. The mystical spiritual life of the Russian Church, as well as the interrelation between the Church and the socio-political life of the Russian nation in later times, were rooted in the person and work of the illustrious and exceptionally beloved Saint Sergius of Radonezh.