



12th Sunday of Matthew

Calendar and Announcements

Calendar:

- The following services will be prayed with clergy, servers, and chanters, with limited availability for parishioners to attend (up to 25 parishioners). Please see the Announcements for more information about how to sign up to attend a service:
 - Thursday 8/27 – Akathist, 6pm
 - Saturday 8/29 – Orthros and Liturgy, 9:30am
 - Saturday 8/29 – Vespers, 5pm
 - Sunday 8/30 – Orthros and Liturgy, 9:30am
 - Tuesday 9/1 – Orthros and Liturgy, 9:30am (Feast of the Indiction)
- The above services will be livestreamed via St. George's [website](#) and [official Facebook page](#). In addition, links to the texts will be included on the home page of the parish website above the livestream video for those who would like to follow along.
- Dn. Joseph is leading Akathist on Tuesday evenings via Skype. To participate, please email Dn. Joseph at dnjosephclark@gmail.com to receive the link.

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.

Announcements:

- If you would like to attend one of the services listed above, please sign up via Sign Up Genius ([August services](#) and [September services](#)) reserving the number of slots for family members attending so we can ensure we do not exceed capacity for social distancing purposes. (For example, if there are 3 household members attending, reserve 3 slots.) Please remember that those who are elderly, have pre-existing conditions, or currently are not feeling well are asked to remain home. Additionally, those children who are too young to keep a mask on are asked to remain home.
- Communion will be offered by appointment after each service. To set up a time to receive communion, please sign up via the [Sign Up Genius](#). Please reserve only one slot per household unit. Your time will be confirmed via email from the church office. 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.
- If you would like to have a candle lit at the church, please email the church office at office@saintgeorgeupperdarby.org. Candle donations can be made via PayPal.
- Based on Metropolitan JOSEPH'S latest directive (6/8/2020), we will begin to carefully consider

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.

which in-person gatherings to resume. For the time being, all non-liturgical events remain online or cancelled as we consider all necessary factors. Please stay tuned for additional information.

- The Ministry Team is organizing small group (less than 10 people) Typika services that meet in local parks. If interested in attending, please contact Ed Donahue at Edjdonahue@gmail.com.
- Several members of the ministry team are 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](#).
- All communication about services and other updates during this time will be sent via parish email from Fr. Joel (or the office) or posted on the [website](#) or [official church Facebook page](#). All questions can be directed to the office (office@saintgeorgeupperdarby.org).

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](#).

The West

In Western Europe, during the terribly devastating Thirty Years War (1618–1648), fought mostly in Germany between Roman Catholics and Protestants, about one third of the population of the German principalities was decimated. This war started to convince many people that creedal, “revealed” religion had to be rejected—or at least its adherents had to learn not to use force in trying to spread their faith. This realization eventually contributed much to the rise and popularity of Deism, beginning with the work of Lord Herbert (1583–1648) in England. This decidedly non-creedal, generic form of natural religion played an important role in the formation of the United States of America in the following century.

Germany also saw the rise of Pietism, a kind of heartfelt Protestant spirituality and practice that arose at least partly in reaction to the so-called Lutheran Scholasticism that developed after the initial dramatic rise of Lutheranism in the previous century. A Lutheran pastor in Frankfurt, Philip Jakob Spener (1635–1705), is considered to be the founder of the Pietistic Movement. He began holding devotional meetings twice weekly in his home, centered in prayer and Bible study. In 1675 he published his landmark *Pia Desideria* (*Pious Considerations*), in which he urged intensified study of the Bible on the part of the laity, greater encouragement of the laity to grow in faith and love and to exercise their spiritual gifts, and a revival of preaching emphasizing practical edification of the faithful rather than discourses on finer theological points. He and his close associate August Hermann Francke (1663–1727) helped to found the University of Halle in 1694 for the training of ministers along Pietist lines.

While Pietism subtly and Deism more dramatically began minimizing doctrinal differences among the various Christian groups during the 17th century, sharply delineated creedal religion still held sway in

most of Europe and in the Spanish, Portuguese, French, and English colonies in the New World. In the thirteen colonies along the Atlantic seaboard that would become the U.S.A., Puritan Calvinist theocracy prevailed at first in Massachusetts, Congregationalism in Connecticut and New Hampshire, the Dutch Reformed Church in New York, Presbyterianism in New Jersey, Swedish Lutheranism in Delaware, Roman Catholicism in Maryland, and Anglicanism in Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia.

Full religious toleration prevailed first in the colonies of Rhode Island and Pennsylvania—both of which were founded on this basis during the 17th century. Rhode Island was established in 1635 by Roger Williams (1603–1683), who championed the right of every person to worship God “according to the dictates of his own conscience.” The colony of Pennsylvania (*Penn’s Woods*) was founded in 1682 by William Penn (1644–1718), a follower of the English mystic George Fox (1624–1691), the founder of Quakerism (officially, the Society of Friends); Pennsylvania is still known as the Quaker State. Fox emphasized experiencing through silent meditation the “Inner Light of Christ” within one’s soul.

In England, the publication of the King James Bible in 1611 was an epochal event in the history of the English Bible. In 1646 the Puritan Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658) led a coup d’état against King Charles I, who was executed in 1649. Cromwell established a kind of military dictatorship in England that lasted until the restoration of the monarchy in 1660. The heavily Calvinistic *Westminster Confession*, endorsed by the Scottish Parliament in 1647 and the British Parliament a year later, became the law of the land, until 1660.

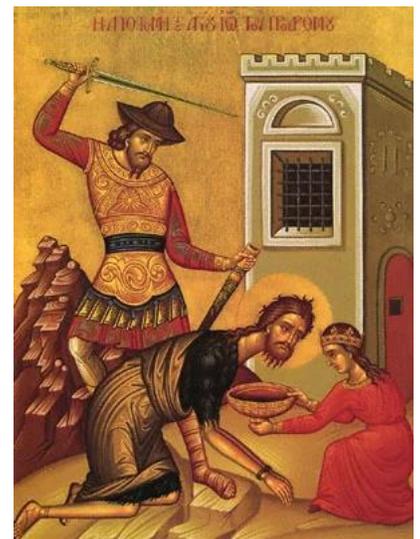
In France, the Roman Catholic Church was troubled by Jansenism, a rigorist (i.e., moralistic and legalistic) movement based on the anti-Pelagian writings of Saint Augustine—especially his emphasis on the irresistible grace of God given only to the elect. The important French theologian and mathematician Blaise Pascal (1623–1662) was its most famous convert.

One of Jansenism’s most powerful opponents was Saint Vincent de Paul (c. 1580–1660). He co-founded along with Saint Louise de Marillac the Sisters of Charity, the first women’s religious order without confinement to convents devoted to the care of the sick and the poor. Vincent was partly inspired by Saint Francis de Sales (1567–1622), Bishop of Geneva from 1602, who wrote *Introduction to the Devout Life*, a famous book of spiritual guidance for laypeople living in the midst of worldly distractions.

Beheading of the Holy and Glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John

The Beheading of the Prophet, Forerunner of the Lord, John the Baptist: The Evangelists Matthew (Mt.14:1-12) and Mark (Mark 6:14-29) provide accounts about the martyric end of John the Baptist in the year 32 after the Birth of Christ.

Following the Baptism of the Lord, Saint John the Baptist was locked up in prison by Herod Antipas, the Tetrarch (ruler of one fourth of the Holy Land) and governor of Galilee. (After the death of king Herod the Great, the Romans divided the territory of Palestine into four parts, and put a governor in charge of each part. Herod Antipas received Galilee from the emperor Augustus).



The prophet of God John openly denounced Herod for having left his lawful wife, the daughter of the Arabian king Aretas, and then instead cohabiting with Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip (Luke 3:19-20). On his birthday, Herod made a feast for dignitaries, the elders and a thousand chief citizens. Salome, the daughter of Herod, danced before the guests and charmed Herod. In gratitude to the girl, he swore to give her whatever she would ask, up to half his kingdom.

The vile girl on the advice of her wicked mother Herodias asked that she be given the head of John the Baptist on a platter. Herod became apprehensive, for he feared the wrath of God for the murder of a prophet, whom earlier he had heeded. He also feared the people, who loved the holy Forerunner. But because of the guests and his careless oath, he gave orders to cut off the head of Saint John and to give it to Salome.

According to Tradition, the mouth of the dead preacher of repentance once more opened and proclaimed: "Herod, you should not have the wife of your brother Philip." Salome took the platter with the head of Saint John and gave it to her mother. The frenzied Herodias repeatedly stabbed the tongue of the prophet with a needle and buried his holy head in a unclean place. But the pious Joanna, wife of Herod's steward Chuza, buried the head of John the Baptist in an earthen vessel on the Mount of Olives, where Herod had a parcel of land. (The Uncovering of the Venerable Head is celebrated February 24). The holy body of John the Baptist was taken that night by his disciples and buried at Sebastia, there where the wicked deed had been done.

After the murder of Saint John the Baptist, Herod continued to govern for a certain time. Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea, later sent Jesus Christ to him, Whom he mocked (Luke 23:7-12).

The judgment of God came upon Herod, Herodias and Salome, even during their earthly life. Salome, crossing the River Sikoris in winter, fell through the ice. The ice gave way in such a way that her body was in the water, but her head was trapped above the ice. It was similar to how she once had danced with her feet upon the ground, but now she flailed helplessly in the icy water. Thus she was trapped until that time when the sharp ice cut through her neck.

Her corpse was not found, but they brought the head to Herod and Herodias, as once they had brought them the head of Saint John the Baptist. The Arab king Aretas, in revenge for the disrespect shown his daughter, made war against Herod. The defeated Herod suffered the wrath of the Roman emperor

Caius Caligua (37-41) and was exiled with Herodias first to Gaul, and then to Spain.

Kontakion of Beheading of the Forerunner

The glorious beheading of the Forerunner was a certain divine dispensation, that the coming of the Savior might also be preached to those in Hades. Let Herodias lament, then, that she demanded a wicked murder; for she loved not the Law of God, nor eternal life, but one false and fleeting.

The Beheading of Saint John the Baptist, a Feast day established by the Church, is also a strict fast day because of the grief of Christians at the violent death of the saint. In some Orthodox cultures pious people will not eat food from a flat plate, use a knife, or eat food that is round in shape on this day.