



## 13<sup>th</sup> 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:
  - Saturday 9/5 – Vespers, 5pm
  - Sunday 9/6 – Orthros and Liturgy, 9:30am
  - Monday 9/7 – Great Vespers, 6:30pm
  - Tuesday 9/8 – Orthros and Liturgy, 9:30am
- 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](mailto:dnjosephclark@gmail.com) to receive the link.
- Bible study on the Gospel of John: Wednesday 9/2, 6:30pm
  - Join the meeting:  
<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/75171452841?pwd=L29OOTNHafJhRVpvYmVIRDBCvXpndz09>
  - Meeting ID: 751 7145 2841; Password: 0zbpui

#### **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](#) 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

**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.**

[office@saintgeorgeupperdarby.org](mailto: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 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](mailto: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](mailto: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 Greek Church**

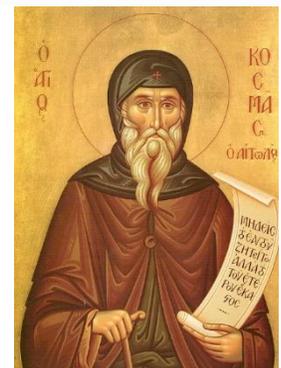
Life under the Islamic Turks continued to be very difficult for the Christians living in the Ottoman Empire. Although some Serbs managed to emigrate to Austria and Hungary where they were allowed to have their own dioceses, this was the darkest hour for those Christians who remained under Turkish control.

Yet this was also a time of renewed hope, as seen in the lives of three very remarkable saints who lived in Greece.

### **Saint Cosmas Aitolos**

Plus Saint Cosmas Aitolos (1714–1779) has been called Equal-to-the-Apostles, Apostle to the Poor, and Father of the Greek Nation. From a family of poor weavers, and basically self-taught, he lived as a monk on Mount Athos for seventeen years. Then he felt compelled by God to leave the Holy Mountain in order to rally the discouraged Greeks and Albanians suffering now for three hundred years under Turkish oppression, and to strengthen them in their Orthodox Faith.

Receiving the blessing of Patriarch Sophronios II of Constantinople to do this, Saint Cosmas undertook three apostolic journeys as an itinerant preacher



throughout central and northern Greece, the Greek Islands, Epiros, and Albania. Sometimes he would be followed by hundreds, even thousands, of villagers.

His life and preaching were marked by great humility. Once he said to the people, “Not only am I not worthy to teach you, but I am not even worthy to kiss your feet, for each of you is worth more than the entire world.” He was not a worker of miracles in the physical realm, but through his love, humility, and exhortation, many broken relationships were miraculously healed.

He instigated the founding of over 200 schools by urging the elders in the various towns and villages to get one started. His promotion of Christian education significantly raised the educational level of all of Greece, which helped sustain the strength of the Orthodox Faith, and helped lay the groundwork for the overthrow of the Turkish yoke in Greece in the 1820s.

Typically he would come into a town or village and say to the gathered crowds, “So, my children, to safeguard your Faith, and the freedom of your homeland, take care to establish without fail a Greek school in which your children will learn all that you are ignorant of.” And again, “My beloved children in Christ, bravely and fearlessly preserve our Holy Faith and the language of our Fathers, because both of these characterize our most beloved homeland, and without them our nation is destroyed. Don’t be discouraged, my brethren; Divine Providence will one day send heavenly salvation to gladden your hearts and eliminate this dreadful state in which we find ourselves.” He prophesied correctly (at least for central and southern Greece) that “freedom will come in the third generation. Your grandchildren will see it.”

Saint Cosmas was highly respected by many of the Turkish people living in Greece, but he was perceived as a political threat by some of the authorities. Executed by the Turks in Berat, Albania, in 1779, he is one of the hundreds of “New Martyrs” for Christ who died at the hands of the Ottomans.

### **The Nativity of our Most Holy Lady the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary**

The Most Holy Virgin Mary was born at a time when people had reached such a degree of moral decay that it seemed altogether impossible to restore them. People often said that God must come into the world to restore faith and not permit the ruin of mankind.

The Son of God chose to take on human nature for the salvation of mankind, and chose as His Mother the All-Pure Virgin Mary, who alone was worthy to give birth to the Source of purity and holiness.

The Nativity of Our Most Holy Lady Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary is celebrated by the Church as a day of universal joy. Within the context of the Old and the New Testaments, the Most Blessed Virgin Mary was born on this radiant day, having been chosen before the ages by Divine Providence to bring about the Mystery of the Incarnation of the Word of God. She is revealed as the Mother of the Savior of the World, Our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Most Holy Virgin Mary was born in the small city of Galilee, Nazareth. Her parents were Righteous Joachim of the tribe of the Prophet-King David, and



Anna from the tribe of the First Priest Aaron. The couple was without child, since Saint Anna was barren.

Having reached old age, Joachim and Anna did not lose hope in God's mercy. They had strong faith that for God everything is possible, and that He would be able to overcome the barrenness of Anna even in her old age, as He had once overcame the barrenness of Sarah, spouse of the Patriarch Abraham. Saints Joachim and Anna vowed to dedicate the child which the Lord might give them, to the service of God in the Temple.

Childlessness was considered among the Hebrew nation as a Divine punishment for sin, and therefore the righteous Saints Joachim and Anna had to endure abuse from their own countrymen. On one of the feasts at the Temple in Jerusalem the elderly Joachim brought his sacrifice to offer to God, but the High Priest would not accept it, considering him to be unworthy since he was childless.

Saint Joachim in deep grief went into the wilderness, and there he prayed with tears to the Lord for a child. Saint Anna wept bitterly when she learned what had happened at the Jerusalem Temple. Never once did she complain against the Lord, but rather she prayed to ask God's mercy on her family.

The Lord fulfilled her petitions when the pious couple had attained to extreme old age and prepared themselves by virtuous life for a sublime calling: to be the parents of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, the future Mother of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Archangel Gabriel brought Joachim and Anna the joyous message that their prayers were heard by God, and of them would be born a most blessed daughter Mary, through Whom would come the Salvation of all the World.

The Most Holy Virgin Mary surpassed in purity and virtue not only all mankind, but also the angels. She was manifest as the living Temple of God, so the Church sings in its festal hymns: "the East Gate... bringing Christ into the world for the salvation of our souls" (2nd Stikhera on "Lord, I Have Cried", Tone 6).

### *Apolytikion of Nativity of the Theotokos*

*Your birth, O Theotokos, brought joy to the whole world, for from you dawned the sun of righteousness, Christ our God. Freeing us from the curse, He gave us His blessings. Abolishing death, He granted us eternal life.*

The Nativity of the Theotokos marks the change of the times when the great and comforting promises of God for the salvation of the human race from slavery to the devil are about to be fulfilled. This event has brought to earth the grace of the Kingdom of God, a Kingdom of Truth, piety, virtue and everlasting life. The Theotokos is revealed to all of us by grace as a merciful Intercessor and Mother, to Whom we have recourse with filial devotion.