



St. George Orthodox Church
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THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Published weekly in the interest of the parishioners and friends
of Saint George Orthodox Church, Buffalo, NY
a parish of the Diocese of New York and New Jersey
and The Orthodox Church in America

ST. GEORGE ORTHODOX CHURCH

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7th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 6. Afterfeast of the Transfiguration. St. Emilian the Confessor, Bishop of Cyzikus (813-820). Ven. Gregory the Iconographer, of the Kiev Caves (Near Caves—12th c.). Translation of the Relics of Ven. Zosimas and Sabbatius of Solovétsky Monastery (1566). St. Myron, Bishop of Crete (ca. 350). Martyrs Eleutherius and Leonidas of Constantinople, and many infants martyred with them. Ven. Gregory of Sinai (and Mt. Athos—14th c.). The “TOLGA” Icon of the Mother of God (1314).

EPISTLE:
Romans 15:1-7

Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

GOSPEL:
Matthew 9:27-35

GLORY TO JESUS CHRIST! GLORY FOREVER!

****FLOWERS FOR THIS WEEK****

In front of the Icon of Our Lord, In front of the Icon of The Theotokos,
and on the Center Icon Table are donated by St. George Church

Altar Candles are offered by Anthony DelNuovo in Loving Memory
of Thy Departed Servants of his family. May their memory be eternal.

TODAY’S WEEKLY MESSENGER IS SPONSORED BY:
ST. GEORGE ORTHODOX CHURCH

WELCOME TO ST. GEORGE ORTHODOX CHURCH

We welcome all of you to the Divine Liturgy this morning, especially those who are visiting with us here at St. George Orthodox Church. Everyone is invited to the Parish Fellowship Hall following the Divine Liturgy for Christian Fellowship. It is our prayer that your experience this morning was spiritually uplifting and you will return very soon to pray with our parish family. In the Orthodox Church, we do not practice open Communion. However we do invite everyone to come and participate in the Divine Liturgy. Hence only those Orthodox Christians who have properly prepared themselves through prayer and fasting may receive Holy Communion. May the Lord bless you with many years of good health and happiness.

THE SCHEDULE OF WEEKLY SERVICES and ACTIVITIES

SUNDAY AUGUST 22, 2021

The Hours – **9:10 AM** Divine Liturgy– **9:30 AM**

Coffee Hour Fellowship in Parish Fellowship Hall following Divine Liturgy!

Coffee Hour Host: Paul and Joan Shosho Coffee Hour Donation:

SATURDAY AUGUST 28, 2021

The Eve of The Feast of The Beheading of St. John the Baptist

Great Vespers with Litiya—4:00 PM

SUNDAY AUGUST 29, 2021 (Strict Fast Day)

The Feast of The Beheading of St. John the Baptist

The Hours – 9:10 AM Divine Liturgy– 9:30 AM

Coffee Hour Fellowship in Parish Fellowship Hall following Divine Liturgy!

Organizational Meeting during Coffee Hour (Calendar for Liturgical Year 2021-2022)

Coffee Hour Host: Mat. Fran Vansuch Coffee Hour Donation:

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HYMNS FOR THE DIVINE LITURGY

TROPAR FOR THE RESURRECTION, TONE 8

Thou didst descend from on high, O Merciful One! Thou didst accept the three day burial to free us from our sufferings!// O Lord, our Life and Resurrection, glory to Thee!

TROPAR FOR THE FEAST OF THE DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS- Tone 1

In giving birth you preserved your virginity, / In falling asleep you did not forsake the world, O Theotokos. / You were translated to life, O Mother of Life, / And by your prayers, you deliver our souls from death.

TROPAR FOR THE HOLY MARTYR AGATHONICUS - Tone 4

Thy holy martyr Agathonicus and his companions, O Lord, through their sufferings have received incorruptible crowns from Thee, our God. For having Thy strength, they laid low their adversaries, and shattered the powerless boldness of demons.// Through their intercession, save our souls!

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Kontakion for The Resurrection – Tone 8

By rising from the tomb, Thou didst raise the dead and resurrect Adam. Eve exults in Thy Resurrection,// and the world celebrates Thy rising from the dead, O greatly Merciful One!

Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Kontakion for Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos – Tone 2

Neither the tomb, nor death could hold the Theotokos, / Who is constant in prayer and our firm hope in her intercessions. / For being the Mother of Life, / She was translated to life by the One who dwelt in her virginal womb.

PROKEMEINON Tone 8

Pray and make your vows / before the Lord, our God!

v. In Judah God is known; His Name is great in Israel.

THE SECOND PROKEMEINON Tone 3

My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

ALLELUIA VERSES

Come, let us rejoice in the Lord! Let us make a joyful noise to God our Savior!

Let us come before His face with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to Him with songs of praise!

Arise, O Lord, into Thy rest, Thou and the Ark of Thy sanctification!

EPISTLE LESSONS

1 Corinthians 3:9-17

GOSPEL LESSONS

Matthew 14:22-34

THE HYMN TO THE THEOTOKOS*{Feast of Dormition}*

(Instead of "It is truly meet...", we sing:)

The Angels, as they looked upon the Dormition of the Virgin, were struck with wonder, seeing how the Virgin went up from earth to heaven. The limits of nature are overcome in you, O Pure Virgin: for birthgiving remains virginal, and life is united to death; a virgin after childbearing and alive after death, you ever save your inheritance, O Theotokos.

COMMUNION HYMN

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! I will receive the cup of salvation and

EPISTLE LESSON FOR TODAY

1 Corinthians 3:9-17

BRETHREN:

For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building.

According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.

If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.

If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.

GOSPEL LESSON FOR TODAY

Matthew 14:22-34

Let us Attend!

Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away.

And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there.

But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary. Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea.

And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid."

And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!"

And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God."

When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret.

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MAY GOD CONTINUE TO BLESS YOU AND GUIDE YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT AND PRAYERS!

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ST. GEORGE ORTHODOX CHURCH EDUCATION CORNER

THE FEAST OF THE DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS

August 15

The feast of the **Dormition** or **Falling-asleep of the Theotokos** is celebrated on the fifteenth of August, preceded by a two-week fast. This feast, which is also sometimes called the **Assumption**, commemorates the death, resurrection and glorification of Christ’s mother. It proclaims that Mary has been “assumed” by God into the heavenly kingdom of Christ in the fullness of her spiritual and bodily existence.

As with the nativity of the Virgin and the feast of her entrance to the temple, there are no biblical or historical sources for this feast. The Tradition of the Church is that Mary died as all people die, not “voluntarily” as her Son, but by the necessity of her mortal human nature which is indivisibly bound up with the corruption of this world.

The Orthodox Church teaches that Mary is without personal sins. In the Gospel of the feast, however, in the liturgical services and in the Dormition icon, the Church proclaims as well that Mary truly needed to be saved by Christ as all human persons are saved from the trials, sufferings and death of this world; and that having truly died, she was raised up by her Son as the **Mother of Life** and participates already in the eternal life of paradise which is prepared and promised to all who “**hear the word of God and keep it.**” (*Luke 11:27-28*)

In giving birth, you preserved your virginity. In failing asleep you did not forsake the world, O Theotokos. You were translated to life, O Mother of Life, and by your prayers, you deliver our souls from death. (Troparion)

Neither the tomb, nor death, could hold the Theotokos, who is constant in prayer and our firm hope in her intercessions. For being the Mother of Life, she was translated to life, by the One who dwelt in her virginal womb. (Kontakion)

The services of the feast repeat the main theme, that the Mother of Life has “passed over into the heavenly joy, into the divine gladness and unending delight” of the Kingdom of her Son. (Vesper verse) The Old Testament readings, as well as the gospel readings for the Vigil and the Divine Liturgy, are exactly the same as those for the feast of the Virgin’s nativity and her entrance into the Temple. Thus, at the Vigil we again hear Mary say: **“My soul magnifies the Lord and my Spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.”** (*Luke 1:47*) At the Divine Liturgy we hear the letter to the Philippians where St. Paul speaks of the self-emptying of Christ who condescends to human servitude and ignoble death in order to be “highly exalted” by God his Father. (*Philippians 2:5-11*) And once again we hear in the Gospel that Mary’s blessedness belongs to all who **“hear the word of God and keep it.”** (*Luke 11:27-28*)

Thus, the feast of the **Dormition of the Theotokos** is the celebration of the fact that all men are “highly exalted” in the blessedness of the victorious Christ, and that this high exaltation has already been accomplished in Mary the Theotokos. The feast of the Dormition is the sign, the guarantee, and the celebration that Mary’s fate is, the destiny of all those of “low estate” whose souls magnify the Lord, whose spirits rejoice in God the Saviour, whose lives are totally dedicated to hearing and keeping the Word of God which is given to men in Mary’s child, the Saviour and Redeemer of the world.

Finally it must be stressed that, in all of the feasts of the Virgin Mother of God in the Church, the Orthodox Christians celebrate facts of their own lives in Christ and the Holy Spirit. What happens to Mary happens to all who imitate her holy life of humility, obedience, and love. With her all people will be “blessed” to be “more honorable than the cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the seraphim” if they follow her example. All will have Christ born in them by the Holy Spirit. All will become temples of the living God. All will share in the eternal life of His Kingdom who live the life that Mary lived.

In this sense everything that is praised and glorified in Mary is a sign of what is offered to all persons in the life of the Church. It is for this reason that Mary, with

the divine child Jesus within her, is call in the Orthodox Tradition the **Image of the Church**. For the assembly of the saved is those in whom Christ dwells.

It is the custom in some churches to bless flowers on the feast of the Dormition of the Holy Theotokos.

THE HOLY MARTYR AGATHONICUS AND HIS COMPANIONS

August 22

The Martyrs Agathonicus, Zoticus, Theoprepus, Acindynus, Severian, Zeno and others accepted death for Christ during the reign of the emperor Maximian (284-305).

The Martyr Agathonicus was descended from the illustrious lineage of the Hypasians, and he lived at Nicomedia. Well versed in Holy Scripture, he converted many pagans to Christ, including the most eminent member of the Senate (its "princeps" or leader). Comitatus Eutolmianus was sent to the Pontine (lower Black Sea) region, where he crucified the followers of the Christian Zoticus, who had refused to offer sacrifice to idols. He took Zoticus with him.

In Nicomedia, Eutolmianus arrested the Martyr Agathonicus (together with the princeps), and also Theoprepus, Acindynus and Severian. After tortures, Eutolmianus ordered that the martyrs be taken to Thrace for trial by the emperor.

But along the way, in the vicinity of Potama, the Martyrs Zoticus, Theoprepus and Acindynus were unable to proceed further behind the chariot of the governor because of wounds received during torture. Therefore, they were put to death. The Martyr Severian was put to death at Chalcedon, and the Martyr Agathonicus together with others was beheaded with the sword by order of the emperor, in Selymbria.

The relics of the Martyr Agathonicus were in a church named for him at Constantinople, and were seen in the year 1200 by the Russian pilgrim Anthony. And in the fourteenth century Philotheus, the archbishop of Selymbria, devoted an encomium to the Martyr Agathonicus.

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

Jesus Walking on the Water

Matthew 14:22-34

**From The Explanation of the Gospel of St. Matthew
by Blessed Theophylact, Archbishop of Ochrid and Bulgaria**

22. And straightway Jesus constrained His disciples to get into a boat, and to go before Him unto the other side, while He sent the multitudes away.

By saying constrained, Matthew suggests how inseparable the disciples were from Jesus, for they wanted to be with Him at all times. He sends the multitudes away, not wishing to draw them after Him lest He appear to vaunt in His powers.

23-24. And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up onto a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, He was there alone. But the boat was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.

He went up on the mountain to show that we should pray in an undistracted manner; everything He did was for our sake as He Himself had no need of prayer. He prayed on into the evening, teaching us not to cease praying after a short time, and also to pray especially at night, for it is very quiet then. He permits the disciples to be caught in a storm, so that they might learn to endure trials bravely and know His power. The boat was out in the very middle of the sea so that their fear would be greater.

25-27. And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Take courage; it is I; be not afraid.

He did not appear immediately to them to calm the storm, but at the fourth watch, [that is, as the night was coming to its end], teaching us not to ask for a swift solution to our misfortunes but to endure them bravely. The night was divided into four parts by soldiers who stood guard in shifts, each "watch" lasting three hours. So then, sometime after the ninth hour of the night, the Lord appeared to them as God, walking on the water. But they thought it was a phantom, so extraordinary and strange was the sight. For they did not recognize Him by figure, because it was night and because of fear. He first strengthens their resolve by saying: "It is I Who can do all things; take courage."

28. And Peter answered Him and said, Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water.

As Peter had the most fervent love for Christ, he desires immediately, before the others, to be near Him. For he believes not only that Jesus Himself walks on the water, but that He will grant this to

him as well. Peter did not say, "Bid me to walk," but rather to come unto Thee. The former would have been ostentation; the latter is love for Christ.

29-30. And He said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the boat, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the mighty wind, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, Lord, save me.

The Lord laid the sea down beneath Peter's feet, revealing His power. See how Peter prevailed over that which was greater, the sea, but was afraid of the lesser peril, the wind; such is the weakness of human nature. And it was as soon as he became afraid that he began to sink. When his faith weakened, then he went down. The Lord did this so that Peter would not become puffed up, and to console the other disciples who perhaps envied him. Whereupon Christ also showed how much greater He was than Peter.

31-33. And immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, of what didst thou doubt? And when they were come into the boat, the wind ceased. Then they that were in the boat came and worshipped Him, saying, Of a truth Thou art the Son of God.

Showing that the cause of his sinking was not the wind but faintheartedness, Christ does not rebuke the wind, but the fainthearted Peter. This is why He raised him up and set him on the water, but allowed the wind to blow. Peter did not doubt in everything, but in part. Inasmuch as he was afraid, he showed lack of faith; but by crying out, Lord, save me, he was healed of his unbelief. This is why he hears the words, O thou of little faith, and not "O thou of no faith." Those in the boat were also delivered from fear, for the wind ceased. And then indeed, recognizing Jesus by these things, they confessed His divinity. For it is not an attribute of man to walk on the sea, but of God, as David says, In the sea are Thy byways, and Thy paths in many waters [Ps. 76:19]. The spiritual meaning of the miracle is this: the boat is the earth; the waves, man's life troubled by evil spirits; the night, ignorance. In the fourth watch, that is, at the end of the ages, Christ appeared. The first watch was the covenant with Abraham; the second, the law of Moses; the third, the prophets; and the fourth, the coming of Christ. For He saved those who were drowning when He came and was with us so that we might know and worship Him as God. See also how Peter's later denial, return, and repentance were prefigured by what happened to him here on the sea. Just as there he says boldly, "I will not deny Thee", so here he says, Bid me come unto Thee on the water. And just as then he was permitted to deny, so now he was permitted to sink. Here the Lord gives His hand to him and does not let Him drown, and there, by Peter's repentance, Christ drew him out of the abyss of denial.

34-36. And when they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret. And when the men of that place had knowledge of Him, they sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto Him all that were diseased; and besought Him that they might only touch the hem of His garment: and as many as touched were made perfectly whole.

Jesus stayed for some time in Gennesaret, and the people recognized Him not only by sight but by the signs which He worked, and they showed fervent faith. So much so that they even desired to touch the hem of His garment, and indeed, when they did so, they were healed. You also, O reader,

touch the edge of Christ's garment, which is the end of His sojourning in the flesh. For if you believe that He ascended, you will be saved. The garment means His flesh, and its hem, the end of His life on earth.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE. 1 Cor.16:14

YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND. Matt. 22:37

YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF. Matt. 22:39

LOVE YOUR ENEMIES AND PRAY FOR THOSE WHO PERSECUTE YOU. Matt. 5:44

LOVE IS PATIENT, LOVE IS KIND, LOVE DOES NOT ENVY, LOVE DOES NOT BOAST, LOVE IS NOT PROUD, LOVE IS NOT SELFISH, LOVE IS NOT PROVOKED. 1Cor. 13:4

LOVE BEARS ALL THINGS, LOVE ALWAYS HAS FAITH, LOVE ALWAYS HAS HOPE, LOVE ENDURES ALL THINGS. LOVE NEVER FAILS! 1Cor. 13:7,8