

SAINTS PETER AND PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH
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BULLETIN OF APRIL 22, 2007

CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!

SUNDAY/APRIL 22nd

3rd Sunday of Pascha (Tone 2); the Holy Myrrh-bearing Women with Joseph and Nicodemus

9:10a.m. 3rd and 6th Hours
9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy; Coffee Hour
7:00p.m. Vespers

MONDAY/APRIL 23rd

Great-Martyr & Victory-Bearer George

9:10a.m. 3rd and 6th Hours
9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy

WEDNESDAY/APRIL 25th

7:00p.m. Compline with Akathist to the Life-Giving Tomb of Christ

SATURDAY/APRIL 28th

9:30a.m. Akathist; Confession
5:30p.m. Vigil; Confession

SUNDAY/APRIL 29th

4th Sunday of Pascha: The Paralytic (Tone 3); St. Basil of Ostrog

9:10a.m. 3rd and 6th Hours
9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy; Coffee Hour
Church School & Question/Answer Period

Fasting Days

Wednesday, April 25th (fish, wine & oil allowed)
Friday, April 27th (wine & oil allowed)



A Hymn to the Great-Martyr George

St. George, on a tall horse,
Saved the maiden from the dragon.
On his lance was the sign of the Cross:
The holy weapon, invincible,
With this weapon he slew the dragon, and
returned the maiden alive and well to her father.
With his goodness he indebted God Himself:
with a wreath of glory God repaid him.

St. George, with a hero's heart, distributed all his
wealth to the poor, and rejected the honor and
glory of the world
For the sake of the name of Christ the Victor.
Sufferings he embraced, and to sufferings
consented.
His body was crushed for the sake of his soul's
salvation.
With his goodness he indebted God Himself;
with a wreath of glory God repaid him.

George the Saint and Victory-bearer
Walks even now with a cruciform spear. Justice
he defends, injustice he punishes.
Whoever invokes him with faith and tears,
Whoever prays to him with a repentant soul –
To his aid flies George the Saint.
With his goodness George indebted God
Himself;
With a wreath of glory God repaid him.

The Paschal Season of the 50 Days

- The hymn "Christ is risen" is sung or said at the beginning and ending of all services and prayers.
- There is no kneeling or making of prostrations either in our homes or at church services until the divine Pentecost (May 27th).
- Wednesday and Fridays remain fasting days, but wine and oil are permitted.
- The prayer "O Heavenly King..." is omitted until Pentecost.
- The scriptural cycle for this paschal period is the Acts of the Apostles and the Gospel of John.
- Orthodox Christians greet each other for the 40 days until Ascension Thursday with the expression: "Christ is Risen!" and the response, "Indeed he is Risen!"

The Mysteries of Confession & Communion

Are especially prepared to be received in the four lenten seasons but are not meant to be restricted only to the lents. We do well to frequently participate in the Holy Mysteries. If for some reason, you did not receive Confession and Communion, in this past lent you may do so now in the paschal season. Need some help? Speak with Father James.

Offerings for the Week of April 22nd

Olive Oil – in memory of Emilia; in memory of Joan; in memory of Michael; for the health of Georgia (namesday); for safe journey and protection of Maria.

Wine – in honor of St. George; for the health of Edward (birthday).

Flowers – in memory of Loretta Dunaenko.

The Parish Website: www.ssppoc.org

Has posted the liturgical calendar for the entire year of church services, as well as dates of parish council meetings, church school classes and adult study classes. If there are any necessary changes to the schedule – because of weather, illness or some other reason, these changes are posted on the web.

The Parish Synodicon

April 22, 1986 Julia Andrews
April 22, 1997 Olga Verkon
April 22, 1999 Anna Tacak
April 23, 1959 Vladimir Hnatuk
April 23, 2003 Peter Hnatuk
April 25, 1970 Vera Welenteychik
April 28, 1983 Joseph Onuschak
April 28, 2001 Margaret Gustich
April 29, 1949 Joseph Bulat
April 29, 1964 Infant Bodyl



Namesday Greetings

Holy Myrrh-Bearers/Sunday, Apr. 22nd: Susan Gorbatak, Teresa (Ioanna) Filippini
St. George/Apr. 23rd: Laurentiu and Liliana Popa;
Georgia Economu;
St. Alexandra/Apr. 23rd: Alexandria Long and Alexandra Erkman; Many Blessed Years!

Sympathy and Prayers

Are expressed to Richard Nevitt, on the repose of his sister, Loretta Nevitt (+Apr. 14th). May the Lord give her eternal rest.

12th Annual Church Run – Sat. June 2nd

Last year our parish joined other local parishes in this Run. Reserve the date more information will be forth-coming.

Memorial Service

For Anna Tacak (+ Apr. 22, 1999), Apr. 27th, Friday at 6:30p.m.

Parish Council Meeting

May 10th, Thursday at 7:00p.m.

Deacon Paul Sokol

The Holy Synod of Bishops at their Spring Meeting has honored Deacon Paul by elevation to the rank of Protodeacon. The rector, parish council and parishioners congratulate Deacon Paul and express "Axios" (He is worthy!). The occasion upon which the award will be bestowed is yet to be determined.



ASK FATHER...

Q

"As a priest, I am concerned that increasing lay involvement in the work of the Orthodox Church might disempower the clergy. Is this a valid concern?"

Answer:

I don't think you should be worried about increasing lay involvement in the Church. Unfortunately many people think that the clergy, especially the bishops and the priests, conduct the "real business" of the Church and are the only active members while the laity are merely spectators. However, when we look at our Orthodox theology we see a very different model of church life, one based on the sharing of the mutual gifts, talents, and abilities of both clergy and laity. The Church is not comprised of the clergy alone or the laity alone, but both clergy and laity working together for the building up of the Body of Christ.

One of the basic descriptions of the Church is that it is a "council." Sometimes we use the Russian word *sobornost*, which means "a unity of persons within the organic fellowship of the Church, each person maintaining his personal freedom and integrity." The notion of conciliarity or *sobornost* stems from the ancient understanding of the Church as being the Body of Christ, with each member having its own function and yet being under the headship of Christ.

According to the Orthodox tradition, the bishop maintains the unity of the Church while at the same time encouraging those under his care to live out their baptismal calling to fully live according to the gospel of love.

People obey the authority of the bishop since he is the symbol of unity in the Church, and is tasked with rightly teaching the gospel and proclaiming the truth of Christ to the

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world. The bishop's authority is not to be lorded over people but is ultimately for the building up of the Body of Christ, each member fully living out his or her call, all helping and assisting one another for the glory of God and the Church. The bishop cannot make decisions by himself, nor can the laity make decisions without consulting the bishops. Both the bishops and laity work together. Within conciliarity there is room for debate, discussion, and common decision-making.

There is a basic equality among the people of God. This does not mean that the Church is a democracy where one group or party with the majority of

votes wins or loses. There is no place for winners and losers in the Church. The Church maintains a hierarchical structure—bishop, priest, and people—in order to maintain peace and order in the church body. However, we shouldn't think that power and authority "trickle down" from the clergy to the laity, but that the only source of power and authority in the Church is Christ Himself, who is a model of love, humility, and sacrifice.

Thus the Church is a community of the baptized persons who work together to build up the Body of Christ one person at a time through the exercising of the variety of gifts and charisms that are distributed to each by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The Body only exists because it is Christ's Body and is held together by a continual outpouring of love.

Therefore, if both the clergy and laity are truly seeking to live according to the will of God, even among a fallen humanity full of human sinfulness and arrogance, there must be an expression of love based on the example of Christ Himself. Jesus gave us the supreme example of love through His Passion and crucifixion on the cross, giving up His life for others. His life was an example of loving and serving others, not imposing power and authority over His disciples or anyone else in His life. Thus, clergy are not called to have power and authority over the laity, nor are the laity called to increase their power or authority over and against the clergy. Rather, all are called to work together for the common good of all members of the Church. +

A SARACEN'S CONVERSION

Many years later, when Syria was conquered by the Saracens, in the town of Ramel in the Church of Saint George this miracle occurred:

A certain well-known Saracen, accompanied by others of his own race, entered the church during the service and, seeing the icon of Saint George and a priest standing before the icon and venerating it and offering prayers to the Saint, said to his friends in the Saracen tongue:

"Do you see what that madman is doing? Praying to a board. Bring me a bow and arrow and I will shoot through that board."

A bow was brought at once. Then, standing behind all the people, the Saracen drew the bow and shot an arrow at the icon of the Great Martyr. However, the arrow did not fly towards the icon but went straight up, and as it fell it pierced the hand of that Saracen and seriously wounded him. The Saracen at once went home, feeling violent pain in his hand. The pain grew worse and worse. The Saracen's hand developed a running sore and became very swollen, so that the Saracen groaned with agony.

This Saracen had some Christian slaves at home. Calling them he said:

"I was in the church of your God, St. George, and wanted to shoot his icon. But I shot the arrow from the bow so unluckily that as it fell the arrow wounded me badly in the hand and now here I am dying from the unbearable pain."

The slaves said to him:

"What do you think? Did you do well to dare to offer such an insult to the icon of the holy Martyr?"

The Saracen replied:

"Has this icon such power as to be able to make me ill?"

The slaves answered him:

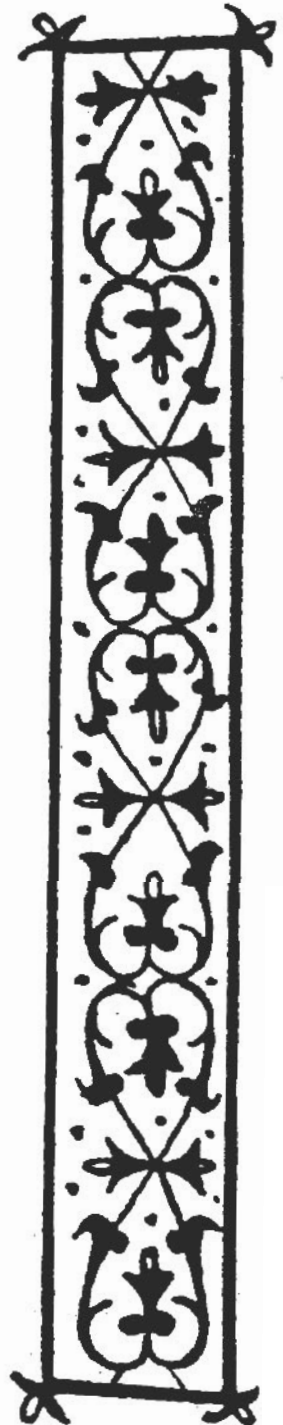
"We are unlearned in books and therefore we do not know what to answer you. But call our priest and he will tell you what you ask."

The Saracen took the advice of his slaves and, calling the priest, said to him:

"I want to know what power that board or picture that you were worshiping has."

The priest replied:

"I was not worshiping the board but my God, the Creator of the universe. Through the image of Saint George, the Great



Martyr, depicted on wood, I was asking him to be my intercessor before God."

The Saracen asked him:

"Who is George then if he is not your God?"

The priest answered:

"Saint George is not our God, but only the servant of Our Lord Jesus Christ. He was a man like us in every way. He bore many tortures from the heathens who tried to force him to deny Christ; but having courageously withstood them and having become a confessor of Christ's Name, he received from God the gift of working signs and miracles. We Christians hold him in deep veneration and we honour his icon and look at it as if at the Saint himself and worship and kiss it. And you do the same, for when people dear to your heart, your parents or brothers, die, you look at their clothes, weep and kiss them, picturing to yourself in these clothes the very people who have died. In exactly the same way we venerate the icons of the Saints, not as gods (God forbid!) but as representations of the servants of God who even work miracles through their icons. You yourself, who had the audacity to shoot an arrow at the icon of the holy Martyr, have had an opportunity of ascertaining his power for the instruction and edification of others."

Having listened attentively to this, the Saracen said:

"But what must I do now? You see that my hand has swollen enormously; I am suffering unbearably and am nearing death."

The priest said to him:

"If you want to live and be healed, order the icon of Saint George, the Great Martyr, to be brought here, put it over your bed, set a lamp before it and keep it alight all night. In the morning anoint the sick hand with the oil from the lamp, believing firmly that you will be healed—and you will recover."

The Saracen at once asked the priest to bring him the icon of St. George and receiving it with joy he did as the priest had instructed him. In the morning he anointed his hand with the oil from the lamp, and at once the pain in his hand ceased and his hand became well.

Astonished and struck by this miracle, the Saracen asked the priest whether there was anything written in his books about Saint George.

The priest brought him the story of the life and suffering of the Saint and began to read it to the Saracen. The Saracen listened attentively to the reading, holding all the time the icon

of the Martyr. Then turning to the Saint represented on the icon as to a living person he cried with tears:

“O Saint George! Thou wast young, but wise; I am old, old, but foolish. Thou, while still in the years of thy youth didst please God, whereas I have lived till old age and do not yet know the true God! Pray for me to thy God that He may grant that I too may be His slave!”

Then, falling at the feet of the priest, the Saracen asked him to give him holy baptism. The priest at first would not agree to that, for he was afraid of the Saracens. But seeing his faith and not having the strength to refuse his requests, he baptized him at night, unknown to the Saracens.

When morning came, the newly baptized Saracen went out of his house and, standing in the centre of the city in the sight of all, began with great zeal loudly to preach Christ as the true God, and he cursed the faith of the Saracens. At once a crowd of Saracens surrounded him. Filled with rage, they rushed at him like wild beasts and with their swords cut him into small pieces.

In this way that Saracen in so short a time fought the good fight of confession for Christ and received the martyr's crown by the prayers of Saint George, the Great Martyr.



DISMISSAL HYMN, FOURTH TONE

Liberator of captives, defender of the poor, physician of the sick and champion of kings, O trophy-bearer, Great Martyr George, intercede with Christ God that our souls be saved.

KONTAKION, FOURTH TONE

Cultivated by God, thou hast proved a most honoured cultivator* of piety, and thou hast gathered for thyself sheaves of virtues; for having sown in tears, thou reapest in joy, and having suffered with blood, thou hast received Christ. And by thine intercessions, O Saint George, thou grantest unto all forgiveness of sins.

*Cultivator: or, *Farmer*. The name *George* means Farmer.