

Today we remember the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise. It is the story of exile. It is OUR story. Adam and Eve enjoyed complete happiness and wholeness with and in God. They were spiritually and personally integrated. Everything was in balance in the pristine world of Creation – until they decided to listen to another voice, and choose to step away from God’s will. Interestingly, Genesis tells us that God’s first and only command was *to fast* – not to eat of the fruit of the tree. By doing so, our fore-parents upset the balance of Creation, introduced the power of evil, and therefore were cast out of the Garden of Eden. By doing so, they rejected their very nature as happy, fulfilled, and whole in God’s presence. ***They rejected who they were as human people.*** They began to live in a world of brokenness, off-centeredness, personal anxiety and despair. Soon Cain killed his brother Abel, and the spiral of exile began unbridled. We are the heirs of that exile. We share the propensity to choose AWAY from God. We ironically prefer to live off-center and spiritually disturbed. Sin is the greatest sign we have of that exile. Sin denies our very created nature as the image of Divine wholeness and life within us. Sin gradually destroys our spiritual life in ways deceptive and alluring. Soon we begin to listen to “other” voices, instead of the Divine Voice which speaks the Eternal Word. Forgiveness Sunday is about that self-exile and about the unlimited mercy of a forgiving God. We have the chance to return to that image (*theosis*), to restore genuine balance in our hearts and minds, to STOP living as broken in a fractured world. The Divine Lover beckons us to look deep within and identify that brokenness and to throw ourselves at the foot of the Cross – whose victim became like us so that we might become God. Use Great Lent to make that life and death journey. It is that important.

TODAY’S READER: MANOLI ANAGNOSTIADES

EPISTLE Romans 13:11-14; 14:1-4

Brethren, salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed; the night is far gone, the day is at hand. Let us then cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us conduct ourselves becomingly as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires. As for the man who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not for disputes over opinions. One believes he may eat anything, while the weak man eats only vegetables. Let not him who eats despise him who abstains, and let not him who abstains pass judgment on him who eats; for God has welcomed him. Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for God is able to make him stand.

GOSPEL Matthew 6:14-21

The Lord said, "If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." And when you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by men but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

MEMORIALS

A Memorial Service will be offered today for **Nicholas Economedes (40 Days)**, requested by the Anagnostiades and Economedes families; and for **George Hallas (1 Year)**, requested by his son Basilios, Daphne his daughter-in-law, and his grandchildren Theodoros, Michael, and Christina. May their memories be eternal!

40-DAY BLESSING

A 40-Day Blessing will be given to the child of God, **Andrew Michael**, son of Father George and Presvytera Areti Khitiri. May God grant him many blessed years!



A PRAYER FOR FORGIVENESS

O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, the Shepherd and Healer of our souls, Who takes away the sins of the world, Who forgave the two debtors, and did grant remission of her sins to the harlot: Do You, O Master, forgive the sins we have committed, whether voluntary or involuntary, known or unknown, whether by mistake or disobedience. There are times when we have lived our lives as though You did not exist. There are moments when we have been deaf to your call to love and chose, instead, to follow the evil one’s summons to selfishness. We have broken Your covenant with us in countless ways and therefore have strayed farther and farther from our true Center, from spiritual wholeness, and from our very selves. We choose to live in exile from you like the Prodigal Son — satisfying ourselves with the husks thrown our way by society, culture, and the deceptions of the city of man. We proclaim our love for You while holding others in contempt, yielding to anger, and giving our tongues over to gossip and destructive speech. We pride ourselves for our faith, while we are blind to the needs of your suffering children — the sick, the dying, the homeless and dispossessed. With unending cries we beg forgiveness from you for ourselves, while we hold onto resentment and refuse to forgive our brothers and sisters who have offended and hurt us. Son of God, have mercy on us! Forgive us these and all the transgressions we have committed. Forgive, as well, those things we *should* have done and said — but did not. Grant mercy to us for our sins against You, O Divine Lover of mankind, and for the sins we have committed against our brothers and sisters who bear your Holy Image in their hearts. As we begin the solemn days of the Great Fast, we beg you to heal us, O God, heal us! Make us whole again. Give us the courage to forgive one another as You have forgiven us. Grant that we may come to the end of the Fast with joy in Your Holy Resurrection and with the certain knowledge that we are loved, embraced, and lifted up by your great and unending mercy. Amen

PRAYER LIST: Antonia “Nitsa” Kempf, Connie Kanaris, Diana Lazar, George Markomanolakis, Argie Palaios, Katherine Panagakos, Priscilla Preuss, George Virvan, Sylvia Basdekas, George Speris, Mariah Smiley, Saxton, Doris Webb, the child Camille Feruzzi who is gravely ill, the child Heather Greene, Irene Pappas, Marty Levine, Lindsey Reijsoo, the child Ashley Lyvers, the child Alexis Ross, Thomas Jenkins, the child Joseph Saxon, Francine Bruggeman, Estrella Grandeia Ocampo, Artie Constantinides, Stephanie Skanderis, Michael Giatzis, John Morris, and Robert Shriver. **US ARMED FORCES:** (Col.) Fr. Alexander Webster, Rev. Fr. John Kalantzis, Lt. Nicholas Karnaze, Spc. Spiro Nino, John Xanthakos, Maj. Sydney Pennix, Colonel James Karas, and Gary Hogman (Iraq) and his wife Cindy.

DIVINE SERVICES FOR THE FIRST WEEK OF GREAT LENT

Monday, February 15: The Service of Great Compline 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, February 17: First Presanctified Liturgy 6:00 p.m.; Lenten Supper 7:00 p.m.; Presentation by Metropolitan Kallistos 8:00 p.m. (Please contact Church Office if you plan to attend—301-469-7990)

Friday, February 19: First Salutations to the Most Holy Theotokos 7:00 p.m.

Saturday, February 20: Third Saturday of Souls (THE CHALLENGE LITURGY) Orthros 8:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy 9:30 a.m. (The Challenge Liturgy is for all those with physical and intellectual disabilities and their families and friends. Everyone is welcome to join our brothers and sisters for worship and fellowship.)

Sunday, February 21: SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY Orthros 8:45 a.m, Divine Liturgy 10:00 A.M. **Pan-Orthodox Vespers at Saint Sophia’s Cathedral in Washington, DC at 5:30 p.m.** Join Orthodox believers from the entire Washington, DC metropolitan area, from every tradition and background, to worship at the beginning of Great Lent and to proclaim our faith and the spiritual power of the Holy Icons.



THE GREAT FAST BEGINS

Today we are invited to cleanse ourselves of evil through fasting and obedience to God. Let us purify our soul, let us purify our body. As we abstain from food, let us abstain from all passion and enjoy the virtues of the spirit...." From this point forward meat, dairy products, and oil are not permitted until Holy Pascha. Fish is permitted on March 25, the Feast of the Annunciation.

PASTORAL VISITATIONS

Please inform the Church Office 301-469-7990 (ext 300) of any loved ones who are hospitalized or “shut-ins,” so they may be visited and receive the grace of Holy Communion.

ORTHODOX INQUIRY

If you or anyone you may know are interested in embracing Holy Orthodoxy and being baptized or chrismated, please contact Fr. Dimitrios at 301-469-7990 or by email at FrAntokas@stgeorge.org

PARISH ACTIVITIES

SUNDAY SCHOOL We continue in our endeavors for outreach to all. As Father Luke Veronis, a missionary priest who has served with his family in Kenya and Albania, put it “The universe is my parish”. Our endeavors to raise money for the Bediani Orphanage were spoiled with the cancellation of the Family Luncheon. *For those of us who lost power in the snow storm and lived in darkness without heat it’s a small taste of misery*. During coffee hour **TODAY** we will have valentine gift baskets available for a good will donation. At that time the winners of the over-sized animal raffle will be announced. By God’s grace we may be able to raise a little money for the children of Bediani Orphanage.

LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS The Ladies Philoptochos Society wants you to become a member if you have not already joined us! Volunteer Circles are now forming to support the following ministries: Outreach, Spiritual Enrichment, Liturgical, Hospitality, & Special Projects. We could use your time and talents in the area of your choosing. Please contact Lia Kent for more information, kent_amalia@yahoo.com or 301-762-8976

LITERARY LUNCHEON **Saturday, Feb. 20, 2010,** “The former director of the CIA, the author whose “books will burn into your brain like no other”, the forty-something guy who attempted to play professional football and lived to tell about it, and the winner of a 2009 iParenting Media Award for best Children's Book will be speaking at the first St. George Literary Luncheon on Feb. 20th, 2010. Call Catherine Sarlis to reserve and purchase your tickets. Visit philologians.com for further info.”

QUILT-A-THON On **Saturday, February 27**, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., St. George will have a Quilt-A-Thon—a Lenten project that creates quilts for at-risk babies and small children in Washington, DC metropolitan area hospitals. You don’t need to know how to sew!! Fabric and supplies will be provided by the Ladies Philoptochos Society. For more information contact Adrienne Barris at 703-827-5757 or Stephanie Wilde at 301-983-0879. **JOIN US, PLEASE!**

PARISH CALENDARS ARE STIOLL AVAILABLE AND ARE NOT BEING MAILED THIS YEAR. Pick up one free of charge after Divine Liturgy during Fellowship.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO NOTE ON YOUR STEWARDSHIP CHECKS “STEWARDSHIP 2010”. If you have not submitted a 2010 pledge card, please do so as soon as possible. You need not give a check when submitting a pledge card.

ST. GEORGE BULLETIN

FEBRUARY 14, 2010

THE SUNDAY OF FORGIVENESS CHEESEFARE SUNDAY



THE EXPULSION OF ADAM AND EVE FROM PARADISE

THE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF SAINT GEORGE

7701 Bradley Blvd., Bethesda, Maryland 20817
Office 301-469-7990 + Fax 301-469-5945

www.stgeorge.org

Proistamenos: Rev. Fr. Dimitrios J. Antokas

Email: FrAntokas@stgeorge.org

Rev. Fr. George Khitiri

Email: FrGeorge@stgeorge.org

Rev. Fr. Nicholas Despotides, Emeritus