

ANNIVERSARY OR OUR DEPARTED FOR THIS SUNDAY

<u>DAY</u>	<u>NAME OF THE DEPARTED</u>	<u>ANNIVERSARY</u>
9	Ferris (Frank) Abboud	54
10	Edward Daher	53
10	Dorothy Margaret Saba	23
10	George Cotlon	66
11	Zaher Halteh	5
12	Aftim Michael Nassar	32
12	William Zarifeh	13
13	Mamie Aziz	57
13	William Khoury	52
13	Daniel Naim Assaf	17
14	Edward Charles Saba	44

- **Please**, pray for the health of the following parishioners: Ellen, Robert, Alex, Sam, Elias, Nassar, Valentine, George, Nina, Sonia, George, Elizabeth, Beshara, Samer, Irene and Toni. If you have any names of people who need prayers, email them to father.
- **6 months memorial service for Yvette Abdallah offered by her husband Jalal Abdallah, her children and their families. May her memory be eternal.**

ETERNAL LIGHT

- **Feb 14:** In loving memory of **Nabih Al Haddad** from his family
In loving memory of **Nada Farah Kakish** from Farah & Abla Kakish
For the good health of **Nadia Younes** from her family
- **Feb 21:** For the good health of **Nadia Younes** from her family
- **Feb 23:** In loving memory of **Adel Younes** from his family
- **Mar 15:** In loving memory of **Yvonne Younes** from her family
- **Mar 21:** in loving memory of **Jeries and Nahil Irbib** from Nadim Irbib and family.
- **April 18:** in loving memory of **Yousef and Sumaya Musallam** from Nadim Irbib and family.
- **Memorials on Saturdays:** we can do memorials on Saturdays after or before Vespers. Please, consider doing your memorial for your loved one then specially if you are expecting 50 + people.
- **PLEDGE FORM 2021:** Please fill your pledge form if you have not done so as to allow us to budget for this year. **Please see attached form.**
- **Kindly Submit your Contribution through the Following Methods: Connect to the Church Website www.stgeorgeto.org Click on *Donate***
- **“e-transfer” info@stgeorgeantiochianchurch.org Account Name: St. George Church**
- **PayPal, or send your Cheque by Mail to: St. George Antiochian Church, 9116 Bayview Ave, Richmond Hill ON, L4B 3M9**
Good will come to those who are generous and lend freely, who conduct their affairs with justice. (Psalm 112:5)
- **Sunday Feruary 14th Teens SOYO meeting at 7 PM.**

- **Tuesday February 16th Engaged couples meeting 7:30 PM.**
- **If you are not receiving The Word magazine at your home address, please email your information to registrar@antiochian.org. You must be an Orthodox and a member of St. George Church.**
- ***Bible study will resume on Thursday January 14th with a session on the Orthodox Faith from 7-8, and the Gospel of John from 8-9:30.***
- ***House Blessing: Father is blessing homes. Please, don't email the office but Fr. George directly at frdahdouh@sbcglobal.net or call Father.***
- **Bookstore: New icons have just arrived in our bookstore. The Bookstore is located in the church's basement. Icons are great gifts for newborn, new home, your car or your children, and Christmas gifts. Please see Colette El-Hajj or Odette Boutros to see these new icons.**
- **Please, don't forget to send your sacrificial giving to your church of St. George via e-transfer, or you can still bring your envelope with you and place it in the box by the candles. Your sacrificial giving (financial donation/support) will keep our doors open.**
- **Canned Food Drive:** please bring non-perishable canned food to donate to the needy and place them in the box outside in the Narthex.
- **Online Sunday School has begun and is in full swing. You may still register your children at any time. For further assistance contact Amanda Qaqish at orthodoxchristianeducation@gmail.com.**
- **MASKS ARE STILL MANDATORY INSIDE THE CHURCH. NO EXCEPTIONS.**

DIVINE LITURGY VARIABLES ON SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2021
TONE 3 / EOTHINON 3; SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST &
SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW

VENERABLE AUXENTIOS THE PRIEST OF BITHYNIA; VENERABLE ABRAHAM AND MARON OF SYRIA; NEW-MARTYRS
NICHOLAS OF CORINTH AND GEORGE THE TAILOR OF MITYLENE;
VENERABLE CYRIL, EQUAL-TO-THE-APOSTLES AND ENLIGHTENER OF THE SLAVS

Deacon: For Metropolitan Paul, Archbishop John, and for their quick release from captivity and safe return, let us pray to the Lord.

الشماس: مِنْ أَجْلِ الْمَثْرُوبُولِيَّةِ بُولْسَ وَالْمِطْرَانِ يُوْحَنَّا
وَفَكَ أَسْرِهِمَا وَعَوْدَتِهِمَا سَالِمَيْنِ، إِلَى الرَّبِّ نَطْلُبُ.

• *During the Little Entrance, chant the Resurrectional Apolytikion. Then, the following:*

THE EISODIKON (ENTRANCE HYMN) OF ORDINARY SUNDAYS

Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ.
Save us, O Son of God, **Who art risen from the dead**; who sing to Thee. Alleluia.

هَلِّمُوا لِنَسْجُدَ وَنَرْكَعَ لِلْمَسِيحِ، مَلِكِنَا وَإِلَهِنَا. خَلَّصْنَا يَا ابْنَ
اللَّهِ، يَا مَنْ قَامَ مِنْ بَيْنِ الْأَمْوَاتِ، لِنُرْتَلَّ لَكَ. هَلْلُويَا.

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE THREE

Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad, for the Lord hath done a mighty act with His own arm. He hath trampled down death by death, and become the first-born from the dead. He hath delivered us from the depths of Hades, granting the world the Great Mercy.

لَتَفْرَحِ السَّمَاوِيَّاتُ وَ لَتَبْتَهِجِ الْأَرْضِيَّاتُ، لِأَنَّ الرَّبَّ صَنَعَ
عِزًّا بِسَاعِدِهِ، وَوَطِئَ الْمَوْتَ بِالْمَوْتِ، وَصَارَ بَكْرَ الْأَمْوَاتِ،
وَأُنْقَذَنَا مِنْ جَوْفِ الْجَحِيمِ، وَمَنَحَ الْعَالَمَ الرَّحْمَةَ الْعُظْمَى.

• *Now sing the apolytikion of the patron saint or feast of the temple.*

ORDINARY KONTAKION IN TONE TWO

O protection of Christians that cannot be put to shame, mediation unto the Creator most constant, O despise not the suppliant voices of those who have sinned; but be thou quick, O good one, to come unto our aid, who in faith cry unto thee: Hasten to intercession, and speed thou to make supplication, thou who dost ever protect, O Theotokos, them that honor thee.

يَا شَفِيعَةَ الْمَسِيحِيِّينَ الْغَيْرِ الْخَازِيَةِ، الْوَسِيطَةَ لَدَى
الْخَالِقِ غَيْرِ الْمَرْدُودَةِ، لَا تُعْرِضِي عَنْ أَصْوَاتِ طَلِبَاتِنَا
نَحْنُ الْخَطَاةَ، بَلْ تَدَارِكِينَا بِالْمَعُونَةِ بِمَا أَنَّكَ صَالِحَةٌ،
نَحْنُ الصَارِخِينَ إِلَيْكَ بِإِيمَانٍ: بَادِرِي إِلَى الشَّفَاعَةِ
وَأَسْرِعِي فِي الطَّلِبَةِ، يَا وَالِدَةَ الْإِلَهِ، الْمُتَشَفِّعَةَ دَائِمًا
بِمَكْرَمِيكَ.

THE EPISTLE (For the Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost)

Make your vows to the Lord our God and perform them.
God is known in Judah; His Name is great in Israel.

صَلُّوا وَأَوْفُوا الرَّبَّ إِلَهَنَا.
اللَّهُ مَعْرُوفٌ فِي أَرْضِ يَهُوذَا. إِسْمُهُ عَظِيمٌ فِي إِسْرَائِيلِ.

The Reading from the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians. (6:16-7:1)

Brethren, you are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will live in them and move among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Therefore, come out from them, and be separate from them," says the Lord, "and touch nothing unclean; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters," says the Lord Almighty. Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, and make holiness perfect in the fear of God.

فَصَلُّ مِنْ رِسَالَةِ الْقَدِيسِ بُولْسِ الرَّسُولِ الثَّانِيَةِ إِلَى أَهْلِ كورِنْثُوسِ.

يَا إِخْوَةَ، أَنْتُمْ هَيْكَلُ اللَّهِ الْحَيِّ، كَمَا قَالَ اللَّهُ "إِنِّي سَأَسْكُنُ فِيهِمْ، وَأَسِيرُ فِيهِمَا بَيْنَهُمْ، وَأَكُونُ لَهُمْ إِلَهًا وَهُمْ يَكُونُونَ لِي شَعْبًا فَلِذَلِكَ اخْرُجُوا مِنْ بَيْنِهِمْ وَاعْتَزِلُوا"، يَقُولُ الرَّبُّ، "وَلَا تَمَسُّوا نَجِسًا، فَأَقْبَلُكُمْ، وَأَكُونُ لَكُمْ أَبًا، وَتَكُونُونَ أَنْتُمْ لِي بَنِينَ وَبَنَاتٍ"، يَقُولُ الرَّبُّ الْقَدِيرُ. وَإِذْ لَنَا هَذِهِ الْمَوَاعِدُ، أَيُّهَا الْأَحِبَّاءُ، فَلْنُطَهِّرْ أَنْفُسَنَا مِنْ كُلِّ أَدْنَسِ الْجَسَدِ وَالرُّوحِ، وَنُكَمِّلِ الْقَدَاسَةَ بِمَخَافَةِ اللَّهِ.

THE GOSPEL (For the Seventeenth Sunday of Matthew)

The reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew. (15:21-28)

At that time, Jesus went to the district of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and cried, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely possessed by a demon." But He did not answer her one word. And His disciples came and begged Him, saying, "Send her away, for she is crying after us." He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But she came and knelt before Him, saying, "Lord, help me." And He answered, "It is not fair to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table." Then Jesus answered her, "O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire." And her daughter was healed instantly.

فَصَلُّ شَرِيفٌ مِنْ بَشَارَةِ الْقَدِيسِ مَتَّى الْإِنْجِيلِيِّ الْبَشِيرِ وَالتَّلْمِيزِ الطَّاهِرِ. (28-15:21)

فِي ذَلِكَ الزَّمَانِ، خَرَجَ يَسُوعُ إِلَى نَوَاحِي صُورَ وَصَيْدَا. وَإِذَا بِامْرَأَةٍ كَنْعَانِيَّةٍ قَدْ حَرَجَتْ مِنْ تِلْكَ التُّحُومِ وَصَرَخَتْ إِلَيْهِ قَائِلَةً: "إِرْحَمْنِي يَا رَبُّ! يَا ابْنَ دَاوُدَ، فَإِنَّ ابْنَتِي بِهَا شَيْطَانٌ يُعَذِّبُهَا جَدًّا." فَلَمْ يُجِبْهَا بِكَلِمَةٍ. فَذَنَّا تَلَامِيذُهُ وَسَأَلُوهُ قَائِلِينَ: "إِصْرِفْهَا فَإِنَّهَا تَصِيحُ فِي إِثْرِنَا." فَأَجَابَ وَقَالَ لَهُمْ: "لَمْ أُرْسَلْ إِلَّا إِلَى الْخِرَافِ الضَّالَّةِ مِنْ بَيْتِ إِسْرَائِيلِ." فَاتَّتْ وَسَجَدَتْ لَهُ قَائِلَةً: "أَغْنِنِي يَا رَبُّ." فَأَجَابَ قَائِلًا: "لَيْسَ حَسَنًا أَنْ يُؤَخَذَ خُبْزُ الْبَنِينَ وَيُلْقَى لِلْكِالِبِ." فَقَالَتْ: "نَعَمْ يَا رَبُّ، فَإِنَّ الْكِالِبَ أَيْضًا تَأْكُلُ مِنَ الْفَتَاتِ الَّتِي يَسْقُطُ مِنْ مَوَائِدِ أَرْبَابِهَا." حِينَئِذٍ أَجَابَ يَسُوعُ وَقَالَ لَهَا: "يَا امْرَأَةَ، عَظِيمٌ إِيمَانُكَ، فَلْيَكُنْ لَكَ كَمَا أَرَدْتَ." فَشَفِيَتْ ابْنَتُهَا مِنْ تِلْكَ السَّاعَةِ.

THE DISMISSAL

Priest: May He Who rose from the dead, Christ our true God, through the intercessions of His all-immaculate and all-blameless holy Mother; by the might of the Precious and Life-giving Cross; by the protection of the honorable Bodiless Powers of Heaven; at the supplication of the honorable, glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John; of the holy, glorious and all-laudable apostles; of our father among the saints, John Chrysostom, archbishop of Constantinople, whose Divine Liturgy we have now celebrated, of the holy, glorious and right-victorious Martyrs; of our venerable and God-bearing Fathers; *of Saint N., the patron and protector of this holy community*; of the holy and righteous ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna; of the Venerable Auxentios the priest of Bithynia; Venerable Abraham and Maron of Syria; New-martyrs Nicholas of Corinth and George the tailor of Mitylene; and Venerable Cyril, Equal-to-the-Apostles and enlightener of the Slavs, whose memory we celebrate today, and of all the saints: have mercy on us and save us, forasmuch as He is good and loveth mankind.

الكاهن: أَيُّهَا الْمَسِيحُ إِلَهُنَا الْحَقِيقِيُّ، يَا مَنْ قَامَ مِنْ بَيْنِ الْأَمْوَاتِ لِأَجْلِ خَلَاصِنَا، بِشَفَاعَاتِ أُمِّكَ الْقَدِيسَةِ الْكَلْبِيَّةِ الطَّهَارَةِ وَالْبَرِيئَةِ مِنْ كُلِّ عَيْبٍ؛ وَبِقُدْرَةِ الصَّلِيبِ الْكَرِيمِ الْمُخْبِي؛ وَبِطِلْبَاتِ الْقُوَاتِ السَّمَاوِيَّةِ الْمُكَرَّمَةِ الْعَادِمَةِ الْأَجْسَادِ؛ وَالنَّبِيِّ الْكَرِيمِ السَّابِقِ الْمَجِيدِ يُوْحَنَّا الْمَعْمَدَانِ؛ وَالْقَدِيسِينَ الْمُشْرَفِينَ الرُّسُلِ الْجَدِيرِينَ بِكُلِّ مَدِيحٍ؛ وَأَبِينَا الْجَلِيلِ فِي الْقَدِيسِينَ يُوْحَنَّا الذَّهَبِيِّ الْقَمِّ رَئِيسِ أَسَاقِفَةِ الْقِسْطَنْطِينِيَّةِ، كَاتِبِ هَذِهِ الْخِدْمَةِ الشَّرِيفَةِ؛ وَالْقَدِيسِينَ الْمَجِيدِينَ الشُّهَدَاءِ الْمُتَأَلِّقِينَ بِالظَّفَرِ؛ وَأَبَانَا الْأَبْرَارِ الْمُتَوَشِّحِينَ بِاللَّهِ؛ وَأَبَانَا الْأَبْرَارِ الْمُتَوَشِّحِينَ بِاللَّهِ؛ وَالْقَدِيسِ (ة) (فُلَانِ، فُلَانَةَ) شَفِيعِ (ة) وَحَامِي (ة) هَذِهِ الرَّعِيَّةِ الْمُقَدَّسَةِ؛ وَالْقَدِيسِينَ الصَّدِيقِينَ يُوَاكِمِمْ وَحَنَّةً جَدِّي الْمَسِيحِ إِلَهُهُ؛ الْبَارِ إِفْكْسَنْدِيوسَ كَاهِنِ بِيْرْتِنِيَا؛ الْبَارِ إِبْرَاهِيْمَ وَمَارُونَ النَّاسِكِ مِنْ سُوْرِيَا؛ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ الْجُدِّ نِيْقُولَاوُسَ الَّذِي مِنْ كُوْرِيْنْتُوسَ وَجَاوْرَجِيوسَ الْخِيَّاطِ؛ وَالْبَارِ كِيْرْلُسَ الْمُعَادِلِ الرُّسُلِ، الَّذِينَ نُقِيمُ تَذَكَارَهُمُ الْيَوْمَ، وَجَمِيعِ قَدِيسِيْكَ، اِرْحَمْنَا وَخَلِّصْنَا بِمَا أَنْتَ صَالِحٌ وَمُحِبٌّ لِلْبَشَرِ.

Priest: Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy upon us and save us.

الكاهن: بِصَلَوَاتِ آبَائِنَا الْقَدِيسِينَ، أَيُّهَا الرَّبُّ يَسُوْعُ الْمَسِيحُ إِلَهُنَا اِرْحَمْنَا وَخَلِّصْنَا.

Choir: Amen.

الجوق: آمين.

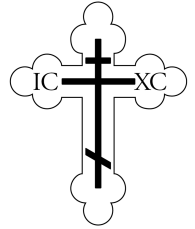
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St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church

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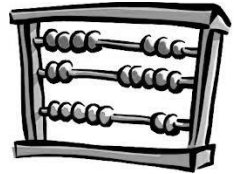
2021 ANNUAL DONATION PLEDGE FORM



“He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully...for God loves a cheerful giver.” 2 Corinthians 9:6-7

“Honour the Lord from your righteous labors, and offer Him the first fruits from the fruits of your righteousness.” Proverbs 3:9

St. George needs your help. The cost to operate and maintain our church is going up and your financial pledge allows us to budget effectively.



FAMILY INFORMATION (Please complete a separate form for each tax contributor)

Name: _____

Address: _____

TEL: _____

Email: _____

By providing my email address I agree to receive emails from St George Antiochian Orthodox Church. You can withdraw from such emails at any time.

Why Pledge?

- It is a way of offering thanks to God from the fruits of our labours
- So the church can manage a budget
- To be able to vote

In thanks for all the many blessings God has bestowed upon me, and my family, I pledge to make the below annual donation.

(A) Archdiocese dues:

(# of baptised household members ____ x \$35) (A) \$ _____

(B) Donation to St George Antiochian Orthodox Church:

Small weekly amounts make donations easier:

\$10 / week = \$520 annually; \$20 / week = \$1,040 annually;

\$50 / week = \$2,600 annually; \$100 / week = \$5,200 annually;

10% of your income or what you can afford as thanks to God (B) \$ _____

Total Annual Pledge (add (A) + (B)) (A + B) \$ _____

Your pledge can be paid through your church envelopes, in a single lump sum payment or in multiple payments. Cheques should be made payable to St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church.

We thank you for your generosity and may God bless you.

This form is for annual donations but covers multiple years, not just the current year. You may increase or decrease your pledge at any time by completing a new form or by contacting the church office.

Signed

Date

Frequently Asked Questions About Pledging

1) Do I get to vote at the annual parish meeting?

As per church constitution, only those who have completed a pledge form and fulfilled their pledge are eligible to vote at the annual parish meeting.

2) Why is St. George asking for pledges instead of just tray offerings?

Largely this is so that we can effectively plan and budget expenditures based on cash flows. Just like in your own household where you need to budget and time your expenses with your cash inflows to ensure you have money on hand, the church also needs to do the same to pay its bills. Pledges help us to do that.

3) Why do I have to commit to a dollar amount?

Knowing what each parishioner will pledge permits the creation of a proper budget.

4) Is there a minimum dollar amount I have to pledge?

No, there is no minimum. The church only asks that you give God a priority in your life. Remember that all you have is the result of God's blessings upon you. Giving back to God is a way of honouring Him and thanking Him for all of those blessings.

5) How often do I have to make payments towards my pledge?

The church will accept whatever frequency you can manage but the more often they are made the more cash flow the church has on hand to meet its regular expenses. Payments can be made through your church envelope, a single lump sum payment or multiple payments. The examples on the form show how even small weekly amounts can make pledging easier.

6) What if my circumstances change and I cannot financially fulfill my pledge?

That is okay. The church understands that circumstances change. No one will come to collect money from you although we may mail a general reminder notice regarding pledge payments. The church only asks that you give God a priority in your life.

7) Does this pledge cover this calendar year only?

No, while you are pledging an annual amount, this is a perpetual pledge that carries over year to year. That way you do not have to keep filling out this form each year.

8) What if I want to change my pledge amount?

You can increase or decrease your pledge amount by simply completing a new pledge form or by contacting the church office.

Only those who have completed a pledge form and fulfilled their pledge are eligible to vote at the annual parish meeting as required by our church constitution.

How Strangers and Foreigners Become God's Holy Temple: Homily for the Sunday of the Canaanite Woman in the Orthodox Church

[Fr. Philip LeMasters](#)



2 Corinthians 6:16-7:1; Matthew 15:21-28

It is easy to fall into the trap of looking only at the surface of the challenges that we face in life. Instead of getting to the heart of the matter, we often accept simplistic answers about ourselves, others, and even God. One of those false answers that Jesus Christ corrected was that only people of a certain ethnic and religious heritage were called to holiness and capable of finding salvation. That is another way of saying that He came to bring all peoples and nations into eternal life, for His Kingdom is radically different from the ways of the kingdoms of this world.

Today's epistle reading is from St. Paul's second letter to the Corinthians. As I hope you remember, that church was made up primarily of Gentile converts who had recently converted from paganism, and they faced great problems in turning away from their old habits to embrace a life pleasing to God. St. Paul, the former Pharisee, does something really shocking in today's reading. He addresses the Corinthians as "the temple of the living God." He tells them that, because they are in Christ, they have become God's people, His sons and daughters, and are to reject all corruption of body and spirit so that they will "make holiness perfect in the fear of God."

What is so surprising is that St. Paul sends them that message by quoting Old Testament passages that called the Jews to become holy by having nothing to do with the Gentiles, to be separate from them and their ways. And the Corinthian Christians were Gentiles. But because our Lord has fulfilled and extended the promises to Abraham to all who have faith in Him, those instructions now apply even to the very confused Gentile Christians of Corinth. The holiness to which St. Paul called them was not a matter of having nothing to do with people of different ethnic or national heritages. Instead, it is a calling to acquire the fruits of the Holy Spirit: "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness,

faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." (Gal. 5: 22-25)

In first-century Palestine, the Jews did not think such holiness was even a possibility for Gentiles, such as the Canaanite woman who called out "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely possessed by a demon." No one was surprised when Christ did not answer her at first, for who would have expected the Jewish Messiah to help a Gentile, especially a woman with a demon-possessed child? But the Lord was actually doing something quite surprising, for He challenged her to respond to the conventional wisdom of the Jews when He said "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." She knelt before him and cried "Lord, help me!" He then pressed her even harder by saying "It is not fair to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." Christ was stating clearly the common Jewish understanding of that time that Gentiles had no claim to the promises to Abraham.

Our Savior is obviously an excellent teacher, however, for these sharp words inspired her to utter a profound theological insight that had been forgotten by the Jews and was not known by the disciples. For she responded, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table." In other words, she saw the deep truth that God's promises to the Jews were always intended to bless the entire world, and now they are fulfilled in all who have faith in the Messiah. That is why the Lord then said to her, "O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire." And then the demon left her daughter.

Think about it for a moment. The Messiah of Israel praised the faith of a Gentile woman whose daughter was possessed by a demon. Could there be a more powerful sign that all people, including the hated foreigners, are also God's people? Could there be a more brilliant icon of how all nations are called to holiness than how the demon immediately left the girl when her mother showed such great faith? This is a sign of all humanity being delivered from corruption by the Savior Who came to heal, bless, and sanctify all who bear His image and likeness. Yes, that means even the Canaanites, the Corinthians, and people like you and me who probably are not of Hebrew descent. Race, ethnicity, nationality, and other merely human characteristics have nothing to do with whether someone shares by grace in the holiness of God. The healing of our souls is equally open to all through the God-Man Who has sanctified every dimension of our common humanity.

We must, however, do our part by actually living as God's holy temple, as His sons and daughters who "cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit." St. Paul's message to the Corinthians was not to congratulate them on having already achieved something, but instead to challenge them to live faithfully to their high calling. He does the same with us. Our identity as members of Christ's Body is nothing that we have earned, but purely a gift of grace which we must continue to receive with humility. If it were our achievement or possession, then perhaps we could look down upon others as though God's blessings were for us and not them. Instead, we are exactly like the Canaanite woman with no claim to anything before the Lord. We are as dependent upon His mercy as a foreign woman with a demon-possessed daughter begging on her knees and weeping as she cried out for help that no one else thought that she could possibly receive.

As we struggle to find healing for our souls and to grow in holiness, we must cultivate the bold persistence of that Canaanite woman. She refused to be denied, even though she knew that she was totally dependent upon the mercy of a Lord Who owed her nothing at all. We must also persist in humbling ourselves before Him as we separate ourselves from all that hinders us from sharing more fully in the life of Christ. We must refuse to be denied in our repentance, and that means taking steps that hit us where we live. If we watch shows or play video games that inflame our passions and put images, worries, and fears in our minds and then distract us when we pray, we should stop indulging in them. If the news or social media does something similar to us, we must carefully regulate our consumption of it or turn it off. If we put ourselves in social situations that tempt us to act, speak, or think in ways that we know are not pleasing to God, we should stay away from them. If we find our greatest joy in food, drink, or any bodily pleasure, we should fast and reorient our lives from self-centered desire to growing in love for our Lord and our families and neighbors.

If we have harbored hatred and self-righteous judgment toward anyone or any group of people, and especially if we gossip about them, we must soften our hearts through the Jesus Prayer and keep our mouths shut when we are tempted to spew venom. If our daily routine does not include falling on our knees in prayer before the Lord with the humble persistence of the Canaanite woman, that must become our very first priority in life. For God's holy temple must be a place of prayer, and as hard as it is to believe, by His grace we have become that temple. Now we must fulfill our calling "to perfect holiness in the fear of God" by cleansing ourselves from every form of corruption. That is how we will

take our place with Canaanites, Corinthians, and other strangers and foreigners in a Kingdom not of this world.