

**DIVINE LITURGY VARIABLES ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2023  
TONE 7 / EOTHINON 2; TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST  
& NINTH SUNDAY OF LUKE**

THE HOLY PROPHET OBADIAH; MARTYR BARLAAM OF ANTIOCH;  
MARTYR AZI THE WONDERWORKER OF ISAURIA IN ASIA MINOR AND 150 SOLDIERS WITH HIM

- *During the Little Entrance, chant the Resurrectional Apolytikion. The Eisodikon (Entrance Hymn) is "O come, let us worship... save us, O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead..." After the Little Entrance, chant these hymns in the following order:*

<p align="center"><b>RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE SEVEN</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>أبوليتيكيون القيامة باللحن السابع</b></p>
<p>Thou didst shatter death by Thy Cross, Thou didst open paradise to the thief; Thou didst turn the sadness of the ointment-bearing women into joy. And didst bid Thine Apostles proclaim a warning, that Thou hast risen O Christ, granting to the world the Great Mercy.</p>	<p>حَطَمْتَ بِصَلَابِكَ الْمَوْتَ، وَفَتَحْتَ لِلصَّ الْفِرْدَوْسَ، وَحَوَّلْتَ نَوْحَ حَامِلَاتِ الطَّيِّبِ، وَأَمَرْتَ رُسُلَكَ أَنْ يَكْرَزُوا، بِأَنَّكَ قَدْ قُمْتَ أَيُّهَا الْمَسِيحُ الْإِلَهُ، مَانِحاً الْعَالَمَ الرَّحْمَةَ الْعُظْمَى.</p>
<p>• <i>Now sing the apolytikion of the patron saint or feast of the temple.</i></p>	
<p align="center"><b>KONTAKION OF THE ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS IN TONE FOUR (*Thou Who wast raised up*)</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>قِنْدَاقٍ لِعِيدِ دُخُولِ السَّيِّدَةِ بِاللْحَنِ الرَّابِعِ</b></p>
<p>The sacred treasury of God's holy glory, * the greatly precious bridal chamber and Virgin, * the Savior's most pure temple, free of stain and undefiled, * into the House of the Lord * on this day is brought forward * and bringeth with herself the grace * of the Most Divine Spirit; * her do God's Angels hymn with songs of praise, * for she is truly the heavenly tabernacle.</p>	<p>الْيَوْمَ الْهَيْكَلُ الَّذِي لِلْمُخْلِصِ، الْكُلِّيُّ النَّقَاءِ، الْعَدْرَاءُ الْخِذْرُ ذُو الثَّمَنِ الْجَزِيلِ، وَهِيَ الْكَنْزُ الطَّاهِرُ لِمَجْدِ الْإِلَهِ، إِذْ تَدْخُلُ بَيْتَ الرَّبِّ، تُدْخِلُ نِعْمَةَ الرُّوحِ الْإِلَهِيِّ مَعَهَا. فَلْتَسَبِّحْهَا مَلَائِكَةُ اللَّهِ، لِأَنَّهَا الْمِظْلَةُ السَّمَاوِيَّةَ.</p>
<p align="center"><b>THE EPISTLE (For the Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost)</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>الرسالة (للأحد الرابع والعشرين بعد العنصرة)</b></p>
<p><i>The Lord will give strength to His people. Ascribe to the Lord, O sons of God, ascribe to the Lord honor and glory.</i></p> <p align="center"><b>The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians. (2:14-22)</b></p> <p>Brethren, Christ is our peace, Who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in His flesh the law of commandments and ordinances, that He might create in Himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us</p>	<p>الرَّبُّ يُعْطِي قُوَّةً لَشَعْبِهِ. قَدِّمُوا لِلرَّبِّ يَا أَبْنَاءَ اللَّهِ. فَصَلِّ مِنْ رِسَالَةِ الْقَدِّيسِ بُولْسِ الرَّسُولِ إِلَى أَفَسُسَ. (٢: ١٤-٢٢) يَا إِخْوَةَ، إِنَّ الْمَسِيحَ هُوَ سَلَامُنَا، هُوَ جَعَلَ الْإِثْنَيْنِ وَاحِداً، وَنَقَضَ فِي جَسَدِهِ حَائِطَ السِّيَاحِ الْحَاجِزِ، أَيِ الْعَدَاوَةِ. وَأَبْطَلَ نَامُوسَ الْوَصَايَا فِي فِرَائِضِهِ، لِيَخْلُقَ</p>

<p>both to God in one body through the Cross, thereby bringing the hostility to an end. And He came and preached peace to you, who were far off, and peace to those who were near; for through Him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone, in Whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in Whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.</p>	<p>الإِثْنَيْنِ فِي نَفْسِهِ إِنْسَانًا وَاحِدًا جَدِيدًا بِإِجْرَائِهِ السَّلَامِ. وَيُصَالِحُ كِلَيْهِمَا فِي جَسَدٍ وَاحِدٍ مَعَ اللَّهِ فِي الصَّلِيبِ، بِقَتْلِهِ الْعَدَاوَةَ فِي نَفْسِهِ. فَجَاءَ وَبَشَّرَكُمْ بِالسَّلَامِ، الْبَعِيدِينَ مِنْكُمْ وَالْقَرِيبِينَ. لِأَنَّ بِهِ لَنَا كَلِينًا التَّوَصَّلَ إِلَى الْآبِ فِي رُوحٍ وَاحِدٍ. فَلَسْتُمْ غُرَبَاءَ بَعْدُ وَنَزَلَاءَ، بَلْ مُوَاطِنُو الْقَدِيسِينَ وَأَهْلُ بَيْتِ اللَّهِ. وَقَدْ بُنِيَتْ عَلَى أَسَاسِ الرُّسُلِ، وَالْأَنْبِيَاءِ، وَحَجَرِ الزَّوَايَةِ هُوَ يَسُوعُ الْمَسِيحُ نَفْسُهُ الَّذِي بِهِ يُنْسَقُ الْبُنْيَانُ كُلُّهُ، فَيَنْمُو هَيْكَلًا مُقَدَّسًا فِي الرَّبِّ، وَفِيهِ أَنْتُمْ أَيْضًا تُبْنَوْنَ مَعًا مَسْكَنًا لِلَّهِ فِي الرُّوحِ.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>THE GOSPEL</b> (For the Ninth Sunday of Luke)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">الإِنْجِيلِ (لِلْأَحَدِ التَّاسِعِ مِنْ لُوقَا)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke. (12:16-21)</b></p> <p>The Lord spoke this parable: “The land of a rich man brought forth plentifully; and he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’ And he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns, and build larger ones; and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, be merry.’ But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.” As He said this, Jesus called out, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">فَصَلِّ شَرِيفٌ مِنْ بَشَارَةِ الْقَدِيسِ لُوقَا الْإِنْجِيلِيِّ النَّبَشِيرِ وَالتَّلْمِيزِ الطَّاهِرِ. (١٢:١٦-٢١)</p> <p>قَالَ الرَّبُّ هَذَا الْمَثَلُ: إِنْسَانٌ غَنِيٌّ أَخَصَبَتْ أَرْضُهُ. فَفَكَّرَ فِي نَفْسِهِ قَائِلًا "مَاذَا أَصْنَعُ؟ فَإِنَّهُ لَيْسَ لِي مَوْضِعٌ أَخْزَنُ فِيهِ أَثْمَارِي." ثُمَّ قَالَ، "أَصْنَعُ هَذَا: أَهْدِمُ أَهْرَائِي وَأَبْنِي أَكْبَرَ مِنْهَا، وَأَجْمَعُ هُنَاكَ كُلَّ غَلَّاتِي وَخَيْرَاتِي. وَأَقُولُ لِنَفْسِي، يَا نَفْسُ إِنَّ لَكَ خَيْرَاتٍ كَثِيرَةً فَاسْتَرِحِي وَكُلِي وَاشْرَبِي وَأَفْرَحِي." فَقَالَ لَهُ اللَّهُ: "يَا جَاهِلُ! فِي هَذِهِ اللَّيْلَةِ تُطَلَّبُ نَفْسُكَ مِنْكَ. فَهَذِهِ الَّتِي أَعَدَدْتَهَا لِمَنْ تَكُونُ؟" فَهَكَذَا مَنْ يَدَّخِرُ لِنَفْسِهِ وَلَا يَسْتَعْنِي بِاللَّهِ. وَلَمَّا قَالَ هَذَا نَادَى: مَنْ لَهُ أُذُنَانِ لِلسَّمْعِ، فَلْيَسْمَعْ.</p>
<p>• <i>The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom continues as usual.</i></p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>THE DISMISSAL</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">الختم</p>
<p><b>Priest:</b> 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</p>	<p><b>الكاهن:</b> أَيُّهَا الْمَسِيحُ إِلَهُنَا الْحَقِيقِي، يَا مَنْ قَامَ مِنْ بَيْنِ الْأَمْوَاتِ، بِشَفَاعَاتِ أُمِّكَ الْكَلِيَّةِ الطَّهَارَةِ وَالْبَرِيَّةِ مِنْ كُلِّ عَيْبٍ؛ وَبِقُدْرَةِ الصَّلِيبِ الْكَرِيمِ الْمُحْيِي؛</p>

<p>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; <i>of Saint N., the patron and protector of this holy community</i>; of the holy and righteous ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna; <b>of the Holy Prophet Obadiah; the Martyr Barlaam of Antioch; and the Martyr Azi the wonderworker of Isauria in Asia Minor and 150 soldiers with him</b>, 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.</p>	<p>وَبَطْبَاتِ الْقَوَاتِ السَّمَاوِيَّةِ الْمُكْرَمَةِ الْعَادِمَةِ الْأَجْسَادِ؛ وَالنَّبِيِّ الْكَرِيمِ السَّابِقِ الْمَجِيدِ يُوْحَنَّا الْمَعْمَدَانَ؛ وَالْقَدِيسِينَ الْمُشْرَفِينَ الرَّسُلِ الْجَدِيرِينَ بِكُلِّ مَدِيحٍ؛ وَأَبِينَا الْجَلِيلِ فِي الْقَدِيسِينَ يُوْحَنَّا الذَّهَبِيِّ الْقَمِّ رَئِيسِ أَسَاقِفَةِ الْقُسْطَنْطِينِيَّةِ، كَاتِبِ هَذِهِ الْخِدْمَةِ الشَّرِيفَةِ، وَالْقَدِيسِينَ الْمَجِيدِينَ الشُّهَدَاءِ الْمُتَأَلِّقِينَ بِالظَّفَرِ؛ وَأَبَائِنَا الْأَبْرَارِ الْمُتَوَشِّحِينَ بِاللَّهِ؛ وَالْقَدِيسِ (رَءِيسِ) (فُلَانِ، فُلَانَةَ) شَفِيعِ (رَءِيسِ) وَحَامِي (رَءِيسِ) هَذِهِ الرَّعِيَّةِ الْمُقَدَّسَةِ؛ وَالْقَدِيسِينَ الصِّدِّيقِينَ جَدِّي الْمَسِيحِ الْإِلَهِيِّ، يُوَاكِمِ وَحَنَّةً؛ وَالنَّبِيِّ عُوْبَدِيَا؛ وَالشَّهِيدِ بَرْلَعَامِ الْأَنْطَاكِيِّ؛ وَالشَّهِيدِ عَزِيزِ الْعَجَائِبِيِّ وَرُفَقَائِهِ الْجُنْدِ الْمِئَةِ وَالْخَمْسِينَ، الَّذِينَ نُقِيمُ تَذَكَارَهُمُ الْيَوْمَ، وَجَمِيعِ قَدِيسِيكَ، إِزْحَمْنَا وَخَلِّصْنَا بِمَا أَنْتَ صَالِحٌ وَمُحِبٌّ لِلْبَشَرِ.</p>
<p><b>Priest:</b> Through the prayers of our holy fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy upon us and save us.</p>	<p>الكَاهِنُ: بِصَلَوَاتِ آبَائِنَا الْقَدِيسِينَ، أَيُّهَا الرَّبُّ يَسُوعُ الْمَسِيحُ الْهُنَا، اِرْحَمْنَا وَخَلِّصْنَا.</p>
<p><b>Choir:</b> Amen.</p>	<p>الجوقة: آمين.</p>
<p><b>These texts have been prepared by the Department of Liturgics of the Antiochian Archdiocese</b> Portions of the Archdiocesan Service Texts include texts from <i>The Menaion, The Great Horologion, The Pentecostarion, The Octoechos, The Triodion-Holy Week</i>, and <i>The Psalter of the Seventy</i>, which are Copyright © Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Brookline, Massachusetts, and are used with permission. All rights reserved. These works may not be further reproduced, beyond printing out a single copy for personal non-commercial use, without the prior written authorization of Holy Transfiguration Monastery.</p>	

ANNIVERSARY OR OUR DEPARTED FOR THIS SUNDAY

<u>DAY</u>	<u>NAME OF THE DEPARTED</u>	<u>ANNIVERSARY</u>
14	Rita Qaqish	8
14	Hanneh Khalilieh	12
14	Jeries Barghout	21
15	Fred Basil	39
17	Yacoub Kakish	6
17	Doris Jabra	54
17	Ghattas Aziz	49
17	Nabil El-Hashwa	20
18	Issa Qaqish	25
19	Abdallah Petro	42
19	Elaine Nammari	14

- **Please**, pray for the health of the following parishioners: Ellen, Robert, Alex, Sam, Elias, Nassar, George, Nina, Sonia, George, Beshara, Irene, Nadia, Christine, Toni, George, Helena, Rami and Maien.

ETERNAL LIGHT

- **Nov 19:** In loving memory of **Azizeh Qaqish** from Wafa Alchekh and family.
- **Nov 19:** In praise and thanks to the lord for the life of **Albert Gorab**. May his memory be eternal.
- **Nov 26:** In loving memory of **Isabelle Younes** from her family.
- **Dec 3:** In loving memory of **Yvonne Younes** from her family.

CHURCH OFFICE

- **Anyone wishing to church a child, removal of crowns, have a memorial service, or would like Fr. George to give communion or visit their loved sick ones, should contact the church office ahead of time (905) 731-7210. In case of emergency, call Fr. Georges Mokbel (416) 725-2888**

**FALAFEL LUNCHEON**

- **On Sunday, Nov 19, 2023** following Divine Liturgy, **St. George Men Society** will be hosting a **Falafel Sandwiches Lunch** in the church basement. Please come downstairs and enjoy a hearty Falafel sandwiches with your family and friends. Please mark your calendar for the following dates, **Saturday, Nov. 25 and Sunday Nov 26 at St. George Centre** (Falafel sandwiches), **Sunday Dec 3** (Falafel sandwiches), **Sunday Dec 10** (Foul), **Sunday Dec 17**(Falafel sandwiches).

## Humanitarian Projects

- **SHOEBOXES FOR OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD**– over 100 shoeboxes were filled by our community and were dropped off this week. These Christmas gifts will be delivered to needy children around the world.

**PACKING OF BLESSING BAGS - NOVEMBER 30** – loot bag packing day. A team will be at the church by 1pm to set up. Setup takes several hours, so we hope to begin our packing by 4ish. Please join us after school/work (or if you are available in the afternoon, we also welcome your help to set up.)

**PRISON MINISTRY ANGEL TREE PROGRAM** - Angels will be available to sponsor, God willing by the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of November. Will continue to keep you posted once I receive them.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us

Michelle Alexopoulos 416-831-3813; [m.alexopoulos@utoronto.ca](mailto:m.alexopoulos@utoronto.ca);

Joanie Younes 416-402-7424; [joanieunis@hotmail.com](mailto:joanieunis@hotmail.com)

## SUNDAY-SCHOOL REGISTRATION 2023-2024

- **Please see the attached QR code for registration.**

## MAINTAINING SILENCE DURING THE SERVICE

- **The congregation is expected to actively participate in worship. However, God's house is a place for reverence and worship, not loud and idle conversations (between each other or on cell phones). Please, turn off cell phones and any other devices when you are attending the Liturgy. If you have a situation that requires you to speak to other parishioners, please do that quietly outside the church or downstairs in the basement.**

## TEEN SOYO

- Congratulations to our newly elected TEEN SOYO Board Members...

President: Peter Mokbel

VP: Peter Novratidis

Treasurer: Helena Mokbel

Secretary: Michael Ishac

Social Media: Dima Alzidan

Coordinators: Lucas El Bouri, Mark Moussa and Paul Petro Youth Advisors: Angela Ghazal and Fadi Freiga

If you are interested in joining our Teen SOYO group please contact our Youth Advisors.

Note: members must be between the ages of 13-19 years old.

Angela Ghazal: 416-720-0308

Fadi Freiga: 647-829-6136

### **BLESSING OF HOMES**

- Father Georges is visiting our parishioners and blessing their homes. If you like to have your home blessed, please call Fr. Georges 416-725-2888 or email the office [info@stgeorgeantiochianchurch.org](mailto:info@stgeorgeantiochianchurch.org) with your name and address. Father prefers that those who live in apartment's building to arrange for few apartments to be blessed together.

### **FIRE ROUTE, HANDICAPPED PARKING, AND PARKING LINES**

- Please make sure not to park on the side of the church or in front of the Fire hydrant, for this is a fire route. Also ensure not to park in the spots designated for handicapped parking. Anyone who parks and does not show a handicap permit on the window will be tagged.

- **Kindly Submit your Contribution through the Following Methods: Connect to the Church Website [www.stgeorgeto.org](http://www.stgeorgeto.org) Click on *Donate***

- **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)



# Help Give Bags of Blessings!!

- ❖ Our Church is again making “**Blessing Bags**” for people in need. The bags will be distributed during this Christmas season through St. John the Compassionate Mission.
- ❖ Each bag will contain: Toiletries, Socks, Hats & Gloves, and an extra Christmas treat/gift. Samples of the bags are shown below.



**This small gesture will make someone's Christmas a little brighter and remind them of God's love!!**

Jesus teaches us that ***It is more blessed to give than to receive.*** This year the mission has indicated the need is far greater than normal. To help we are aiming to make: *150 bags for men, 75 for women & 180 for children.* Please help us make this year's goal and give generously.

Donations can be made to the Church. Please write on the cheque, or note on the online donation, that the funds are for **Blessing Bags**.

**For more information, or to get involved in packing/distributing, please contact:**  
Joanie Younes ([joanieunis@hotmail.com](mailto:joanieunis@hotmail.com)) or Michelle Alexopoulos ([m.alexopoulos@utoronto.ca](mailto:m.alexopoulos@utoronto.ca))



## الروحانية الأورثوذكسية وصوم الميلاد

المتروبوليت سابا (اسبر)

يروى القديس بورفيروس الرائي (+١٩٩١)، في معرض رواية أحداث من حياته، خبرته كأب روحي مع سرّ الاعتراف. ذهب القديس بورفيروس إلى جبل آثوس هرباً وكان في الرابعة عشر من عمره. عاش هناك مع أخوين بالجسد ناسكين. اضطرّ مرضه الناسكين إلى إرساله خارج الجبل المقدّس للتداوي والاستشفاء. في قريته، وبعد تماثله للشفاء رسمه مطران الأبرشيّة كاهناً، وأعطاه الإذن بتقبّل اعتراف المؤمنين، وكان لما يزل في الثانية والعشرين من عمره، ولا يعرف سوى التوجيه والإرشاد الروحي الخاصّ بالنسك.

يقول عن تلك الخبرة إنّهُ اعتاد أن يضع كتاب القديس نيقوديموس الأثوسي إلى جانبه. يفصّل هذا الكتاب، استناداً إلى ظروف القرون ١٦ و ١٧، الخطايا واحدة واحدة، ويضع قوانين توبة وتأديب لكل خطيئة. تبدو قوانين الكتاب شديدة القساوة للإنسان المعاصر.

أمانة القديس بورفيروس لإيمانه ولما تعلّمه في المنسك جعلته يفتح الكتاب بعد كلّ اعتراف، ليعطي المعترف القانون الذي يتطابق وخطيئته: ثلاثمائة مطانية كبيرة يومياً وصوم لمدة أسابيع أو شهور وما شابه. لكنّه اكتشف بعد فترة أنّ هذه القوانين تفوق طاقة المؤمنين، وأنهم لا يتحمّلون تأديباً بهذه الشدّة، ممّا يدفعهم إلى اليأس من التخلّص من خطاياهم، واليأس بدوره يعيدهم إلى خطيئتهم ثانية.

اكتشافه هذا جعله يغلق الكتاب ويضعه في المكتبة، ويبدأ بسؤال المعترف عن عدد المطانيات التي يستطيع القيام بها، واستعداده للصوم وما شابه من قوانين تأديبية. وتالياً يعطيه القانون الذي باستطاعته القيام به.

يعلّمنا مثال القديس بورفيرْيوس أنّ ثمة تمييز بين التعليم الروحيّ في الكنيسة وبين تطبيق هذا التعليم. ثمة تدرّج في نمو المؤمن حتّى يبلغ إلى المستوى المنشود. تساعد الكنيسة المؤمنين وترافقهم في رحلتهم الروحيّة، وتدرّجهم شخصياً في مراقبي الحياة المسيحيّة. يستقي الراعي أو الأب الروحيّ من الخبرة الروحيّة الحيّة، لا من النصوص فقط، كـيفيّة رعاية الإنسان روحياً، أخذاً بعين الاعتبار مقدرته واستعداده وظروفه.

يرافق الأب المعرّف المؤمنين في رحلة نموهم الروحي، معطياً إياهم ما يناسب نموهم وتقدمهم. الوصفة الروحيّة العامّة هي الإنجيل، أمّا كـيفيّة تطبيق الإنجيل وعيشه فأمر يعود إلى خبرة الأب الروحي من جهة، ومقدرة وظرف ووضعيّة المؤمن من جهة ثانية. هذا توجّه أساسيّ في الإرشاد الروحيّ بحسب المنهج الأرثوذكسي.

ورد في كتاب بستان الرهبان، أنّ شابّاً من عائلة ثريّة طلب التّرهّب في أحد الأديرة في صحراء مصر. كان رهبان ذلك الدير ينامون على الأرض، جرياً على عادة الشعب آنذاك. أعطى الرئيس الراهب الجديد بركة إسناد رأسه إلى مخدّة في أثناء النوم. فشكا بعض الإخوة ممّا اعتبروه تمييزاً، فأجابهم الرئيس أنتم كنتم تنامون على الأرض في بيوتكم، وعندما أتيتم إلى الدير لم تتغيّر طريقة نومكم كثيراً. أمّا ذاك فكان ينام على سرير وفرّاش من ريش النعام، فمن منكم قدّم في رهبنته تضحية أكبر؟

تعلمنا هذه الحادثة، وتراثنا الروحي مليء بأمثالها، أهمية التعاطي مع كل شخص بحسب قدرته وظروفه وإمكاناته، بغية نقله إلى مستوى أرفع وأسمى. يقول بولس الرسول. "لما كنت طفلاً، كطفل كنت أتكلم وكطفل كنت أدرك وكطفل كنت أفكر، ولما صرت رجلاً، تركت ما هو للطفل" (١كو ١١/١٣).

"الحرف يقتل والروح يحيي"، على ما يعلمنا الرسول نفسه. لكن تحطي الحرف وبلوغ الروح يحتاج إلى خبرة روحية عميقة، وإلى تواضع عظيم يمكن الراعي من الانفتاح على خبرة المتقدمين روحياً والاستفادة منها. غالباً ما يخفي العناد والمغالاة هوى خفياً يدعو الآباء الروحيين "البرّ الذاتي" أو "المجد الباطل". وكثيراً ما شهدت الكنيسة سقوطاً عظيماً لمن كانوا شديدي القسوة في إرشاد المؤمنين إلى درجة خانقة وزمّية. يعلمنا التراث الروحي الأرثوذكسي أن نكون قساة على أنفسنا ورؤوفين بالآخرين وراحمين إياهم ومرافقين لهم.

أسوق هذا الكلام بسبب اعتبار بعض الآباء الكهنة الامتناع عن الزيت أحد أركان صوم الميلاد الرئيسية. إنّ قواعد صوم الميلاد بحسب الكنيسة الأرثوذكسية هي:

عدم الامتناع عن الطعام والشراب حتى الظهر. والسماح بتناول السمك والمأكولات البحرية حتى الثاني عشر من كانون الأوّل، الذي يصادف عيد القديس سبيريدون العجائبي. والتوقف عن تناول الأسماك وما شابهها بعد ذلك التاريخ، لأنّ العيد بدأ يقترب، وتالياً فالمؤمنون يكتفون استعدادهم له بمزيد من النسك.

أما الامتناع عن الزيت فهو صوم رهبانيّ مبارك لمن يريده ببركة أبيه الروحي، ولكنّه ليس إلزاميّاً. يستند البعض في الصوم عن الزيت إلى ما ورد في كتاب السواعي الكبير. وجواب الكنيسة أنّ التأثير بممارسات الرهبان قد عمّ مع نموّ الحركة الرهبانيّة واسترشاد المؤمنين عند الآباء الرهبان وتمثّلهم بممارساتهم. وكتبتنا الليتورجية صيغت تحت هذا التأثير الرهباني. هذا لم تمنعه الكنيسة، لكنّها لم تجعله ملزماً للجميع. لذلك تبقى ممارسات نسكيّة كهذه وغيرها إضافيّة ومرهونة باستعداد المؤمن لعيش نسك أكبر، وهذا يتمّ، بحسب تراثنا الروحي، بالحصول على بركة خاصّة من الأب الروحي الذي يجب أن يكون عارفاً بإمكانات من يسترشده عنده وبحالته الروحيّة. الانتباه إلى ما يُسمّى في تراثنا "شيطان الهمة الزائدة" أكثر من ضروري.

على الأب الروحي مرافقة أولاده الروحيين مرافقةً تنميهم وتطوّرهم روحياً، لا مرافقةً تُلزمهم بممارسات تفوق طاقتهم، وتؤدي بهم إلى اليأس والإقلاع عن العيش الذي يقودهم إلى خلاص نفوسهم.

الترتيبات الموجودة في طقوسنا الكنسيّة تهدف إلى مساعدة المؤمنين كي يعيشوا الحدث الخلاصي الذي يعيّدون له، وتالياً كي ينموا في القامة الروحيّة والنقاوة والقداسة، لا لتكون عبئاً إضافيّاً عليهم. لنذكر كلمة الربّ يسوع: "ليس الإنسان للسبت، بل السبت للإنسان."

## **The Orthodox Spirit and the Nativity Fast**

*By Metropolitan Saba (Isper)*

Saint Porphyrios of Kafsokalyvia (also known as Saint Porphyrios the Seer, +1991) recounts, in the context of narrating events from his life, his experience as a spiritual father with the sacrament of confession. He was a mere fourteen years old when he fled to Mount Athos. There, he lived in the company of two hermits who were brothers according to the flesh. His illness compelled these hermits to send him down from the sacred mountain in search of medical treatment and recovery. Upon returning to his village and regaining his health, the metropolitan of the archdiocese ordained him a priest and granted him the blessing to be a father confessor, all while he was a young man of just twenty-two years, and he only knew the spiritual direction of ascetic monastic life.

In reflecting on that experience, he mentioned that he kept the book of Saint Nicodemus of Athos by his side. This book, rooted in the realities of the 16th and 17th centuries, meticulously cataloged sins one by one and established rules for repentance and discipline for each sin. The canons contained within this book may seem excessively stringent to the modern person.

Saint Porphyrios' unwavering commitment to his faith and his monastic education compelled him to consult this book after every confession. He would assign penitents a regimen that corresponded to their particular sin: three hundred prostrations daily, weeks or months of fasting, and so forth. However, he soon realized that these rules exceeded the capacities of the faithful and did not contribute to their spiritual growth. On the contrary, they led to a sense of despair regarding the possibility of overcoming their sins, and this despair often caused them to return to their sins.

He thus made the decision to close the book and place it on the shelf. Instead, he began to inquire of the penitents regarding the number of prostrations they could reasonably perform and the duration of fasting they could sustain, providing them with an obedience tailored to their abilities.

The example of Saint Porphyrios teaches us the distinction between the spiritual teachings of the Church and their practical application. Spiritual growth is a gradual process in which believers ascend toward their desired spiritual state. The Church's role is to provide personal support and guidance to individuals on their spiritual

journeys, helping them climb the ladder of salvation. Pastors or spiritual fathers draw from living spiritual experiences, not just static texts, to offer spiritual care that considers the individual's capacity, readiness, and circumstances.

Father confessors accompany the faithful on their spiritual path and tailor their guidance to the unique needs of their spiritual children, focusing on what is most beneficial for their growth in Christ. The Gospel serves as a general spiritual guideline, but the specific application and embodiment of the Gospel's teachings depend on the spiritual father's experience and the individual believer's abilities, circumstances, and state of being. This principle forms the foundation of Orthodox spiritual guidance.

A story from *The Garden of Monks (The Paradise of the Desert Fathers)* illustrates this concept. It tells of a young man from a wealthy family who sought monastic life in an Egyptian desert monastery. The monks of the monastery slept on the ground, following the customs of their time. However, the abbot granted the young man the privilege of using a pillow while sleeping. Some of the other monks saw this as special treatment and complained. The abbot responded by saying, "My sons, you used to sleep on the ground in your homes, and when you came to the monastery, your sleeping conditions did not change much. But he used to sleep on a bed with a pillow of ostrich feathers. Whose monastic sacrifice is greater?"

This incident, along with countless others in our spiritual heritage, emphasizes the importance of tailoring guidance to each person's abilities, circumstances, and potential to help them progress to higher levels of spiritual growth. As the Apostle Paul says, "When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things" (1 Cor. 13:11).

"The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" (2 Cor. 3:6) yet going beyond the letter and reaching the Spirit requires deep spiritual experience and profound humility, which enables pastors to be receptive to the experiences of those more spiritually advanced and benefit from them. Often, stubbornness and excessive rigor are rooted in hidden passions such as self-righteousness or vainglory. History has witnessed the downfall of many who, in their strictness, stifled and overwhelmed those under their guidance.

Our Orthodox spiritual heritage teaches us to be rigorous in self-discipline while being compassionate and merciful towards others. This message is especially

relevant since some priests considering abstinence from oil as a central aspect of the Nativity Fast. The Nativity Fast in the Orthodox Church is observed as follows:

- Abstention from food and drink until noon is not required.
- Fish and seafood are allowed until December 12, which coincides with the feast of Saint Spyridon the Wonderworker.
- The strictness of fasting increases as Christmas approaches.

Abstaining from oil is a monastic tradition blessed for those who desire it, with the blessing of their spiritual father, but it is not obligatory. Some individuals justify abstaining from oil based on references in the Great Horologion. The Church's response is that the influence of monastic practices became more widespread with the growth of the monastic movement and the guidance provided by monastic fathers. Our liturgical books were formulated under this monastic influence. The Church does not prohibit these practices, but it does not impose them on everyone. Thus, such practices remain optional and contingent upon the willingness of the believer to live a more ascetic life, guided by a spiritual father who understands their potential and spiritual condition. It is crucial to be aware of the potential pitfalls associated with what our heritage refers to as the "devil of excessive zeal."

The spiritual father's role is to accompany his spiritual children, nurturing their spiritual growth and development, rather than burdening them with practices that exceed their capacity and lead to despair, ultimately causing them to abandon the Christian path leading to salvation. The arrangements within our Church order (the Typikon) are designed to help believers engage with and experience the salvific events they commemorate. These arrangements aim to facilitate spiritual growth, purity, and holiness rather than serve as additional burdens. In the words of Jesus, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27).



**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2023**  
**How Our Archdiocese Serves Us: Liturgics**  
From the Department of Communications

*Thanks be to God, the Antiochian Archdiocese has 36 departments and organizations – and their committees – comprised of dedicated clergy and laity who serve at the parish, diocesan and Archdiocesan levels.*

*But perhaps we don't know enough about Homeschooling, Lay Ministry, Sacred Music, Conventions and Conference Planning, Capital Improvement, and more, and how each of them work to strengthen the body of Christ.*

*The Department of Communications is pleased to present a new series: "How Our Archdiocese Serves Us." We'll get to meet and know the people who comprise these groups, their current functions and future plans, their successes, and how we can get involved.*

**Department of Liturgics**

Interview with Archpriest Thomas Zain, Chairman

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**Webpages for the Department**

[Liturgics webpage](#)

[Service books](#)

[Online Liturgical Guide](#)

Deacon Peter Samore

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**Tell us a bit about your personal history with the Archdiocese.**

I was born in Grand Rapids, Mich. and raised as a son of this archdiocese, having been baptized by the late, great Protosyngellos Ellis Khouri of blessed memory. I was reared in the



faith by Archpriest George Alberts, my childhood priest at St. Nicholas Church in Grand Rapids. I was active in Teen SOYO and SOYO/Fellowship of St. John the Divine on the local and “regional” levels (as it was known in those days). I also attended the Antiochian Village Camp as a camper during its first years.



After graduating Michigan State University with degrees in Russian language and marketing, I worked for one year before heading off to St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Seminary. During that time, I met my future Khourieh, Claudia, while serving my current parish of St. Nicholas Cathedral in Brooklyn as a seminarian. I also studied at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology for one year, followed by one year of post-graduate studies at the St. John of

Damascus Institute of Theology in Balamand, Lebanon. Learning different traditions and backgrounds at these institutions would prove to be invaluable for my current work in Liturgics and in the Department of Inter-Orthodox and Inter-faith Relations which I also chair.

Following seminary and my marriage in 1994, I was ordained a deacon by Metropolitan Philip and a priest by Bishop Basil, and assigned as pastor of St. Mary Church in Wilkes-Barre, Penn. In 1997, I was transferred to St. Nicholas Cathedral in Brooklyn to serve as dean and to begin helping in the Archdiocese Headquarters in Englewood, N.J. on a part-time basis. I started as the secretary for Bishop Antoun and worked on some projects for Metropolitan Philip. In 2012, I was appointed as Vicar General after Archimandrite Elias Bitar retired from active ministry. I was appointed chairman of Liturgics in 2014 by Metropolitan Joseph.

**Why is your department so important to the parishes, clergy and laity of the Archdiocese?**

As Orthodox Christians, our primary function is to worship God. Everything we do individually and collectively stems from that. Liturgics ensures that our parishes – clergy and laity – can worship according to the rich Tradition of Orthodoxy, following the practices of our historic Patriarchate of Antioch.



Our divine services contain the theology of the Church. When we worship, we come to know God in Trinity, the Theotokos and Ever-virgin Mary, and all the saints who have been revealed to us throughout history and to the present day. When we worship, we commune with all of them. There is a saying in liturgical theology, “*Lex orandi, lex credendi,*” that is, “what we pray is what we believe.” Our rich hymns and worship express this reality more than any theological book we can read.



The department provides the materials and resources to guide our parishes in worship every Sunday and throughout the year. They get all the readings and texts – oftentimes accompanied by matching music – in the divine services that Liturgics produces on a constant basis. For example, the Divine Liturgy Variables (hymns and readings of the day) go straight into your parish’s bulletin.

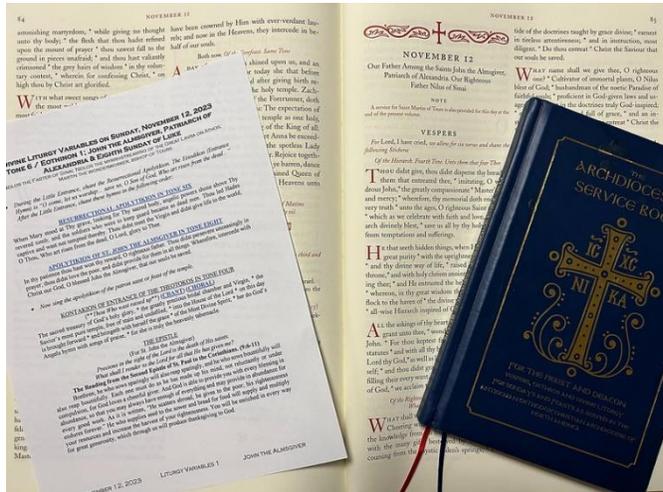
**How has your department evolved since its inception to present day? Have you added new technologies and programs over the years?**

Decades ago, under Metropolitan Antony Bashir of thrice-blessed memory, Liturgics was one of the first departments created in our Archdiocese. It has been responsible for the publication of service books both for the clergy and for the laity. The Archdiocese still sells some of the first Orthodox service books in the English language, like the ones produced by [Ms. Isabel Haggood](#) in 1905 and [Fr. Seraphim Nassar](#) in 1938. While these “old” books are no longer in use liturgically, they serve as important reference books linking us with our Archdiocese’s history in the new world.

In 2014, Liturgics debuted the Online Liturgical Guide (OLG). This webpage provides all of the liturgical texts for our churches that they use for weekends, great feasts, patron saints days, Great Lent, the Dormition Fast (including Paraklesis), and much more. The faithful can download these texts before coming to church, either printing them or putting them on their tablets, so they can follow along.



As the OLG adds more services in English, it adds more bilingual services (English and Arabic) to accommodate the number of immigrants arriving on our shores. Plus, since the OLG is online, archdioceses throughout our Patriarchate use these liturgical texts. Liturgics receives emails from parishes in Australia and Great Britain.



In the past two years, the department produced the fourth edition of [The Liturgikon](#), the first edition of [The Archdiocesan Service Book](#), and the long-awaited second edition of [A Pocket Prayer Book for Orthodox Christians](#) – which is already being reprinted after selling out in record time! These publications have corrected longstanding errors, guided our clergy to offer the divine services according to Antiochian tradition under the direction of our Metropolitan, standardized the

Archdiocese’s English translation of the Divine Liturgy, and given our faithful more prayers to beseech God’s help.

**How many people are working in your department or organization, and what are their roles?**

Deacon Peter Samore coordinates most of the work for the department and directs the OLG. He produces the English services with help from a review team consisting of Fr. Patrick O’Grady, Dr. Sam Cohlma and me. Deacon Peter also oversees the team that produces and reviews the bilingual services: Kh. Ramia Issa, Fr. Elie and Kh. Rouba Estephan, and Mr. Chadi Karam. They type Arabic and fix grammatical errors.

Fr. Raphael Daly and Fr. Peter Cox typeset all the service books which Fr. Jeremy Davis and, ultimately, His Eminence Metropolitan Saba thoroughly review before publication. They ensure the Archdiocese’s standardized translations are consistent throughout current and future publications. Fr. Samer Youssef and Dn. John Dibs submitted their work on the forthcoming bilingual pew liturgy book which we will adopt for use in the Archdiocese.



Liturgics has a great partnership with the Department of Sacred Music. The chairwoman, Mrs. Mareena Boosamara Ball, ensures that new music compositions use the same standardized translations. So does Mr. Christopher Holwey, who tirelessly typesets music for the divine services that our department produces. Links to the PDF music files are embedded in all the liturgical texts so choirs and chanters can find them easily.

This large collaboration reduces confusion and errors, improving worship in our churches where our clergy and faithful can focus on encountering God.

### **What are your department's primary objectives and vision for the next two years?**

Final preparations are being made for a new divine liturgy book for the pew in English-only and English-Arabic formats. The department has also begun typesetting the fourth edition of *The Services of Great and Holy Week and Pascha*. This book will correct errors and inconsistencies, and use the stronger translation of hymnography from The Holy Transfiguration Monastery of Brookline, Mass. This will form the basis of new music for Holy Week. Work has also begun on a new edition of *The Divine and Holy Gospel Book*. Typesetting and reviewing are laborious, and printing could take up to eight months for hardcover books. So please pray for us and give us your patience as many of the older books we need to reprint were never typeset on a computer!



### **Tell us about a recent success story.**

Thanks be to God, as our parishes use the wealth of divine services available at the OLG, they are inspired to offer more divine services. The department knows more and more of our churches celebrate weekday Orthros and Vespers and, as resources and time allow, we intend to provide additional weekday

services to meet those ever-increasing needs. We have started by offering Vespers every Wednesday night. It is a tremendous blessing when parishes ask Liturgics for more and more services.

### **How has your department been meaningful to you personally and improved your life in Christ?**

Of all the “hats” I wear in the Archdiocese, this is the one that gives me the most joy as I have always loved liturgics and liturgizing. I still remember buying my first Nasser “five pounder” at a parish life conference when I was about 12 years old and, subsequently,

trying to purchase every liturgical book I could find! As such, learning and praying the beautiful services of the Church kept me close to God through my teenage and college years and, ultimately, led me to answer the call to serve Christ and His Church as my priestly vocation.

**How do people get involved in the work of your department? What kinds of expertise do you need from them?**

Most of all, we need people to help with typesetting and graphic design for our future service books. We were blessed for many years to have Fr. John Winfrey work in the department until his untimely and sudden death a few years ago. He was a professional typesetter with a unique expertise in typesetting liturgical books. Since that time, we have been blessed to have Fr. Raphael Daly pick up where he left off and now Fr. Peter Cox. However, to keep up with the demand for new books, we need more help in this area. People can contact Deacon Peter or me if they would like to offer their services and alert us to other liturgical needs in the churches.