

ANNIVERSARY OR OUR DEPARTED FOR THIS SUNDAY

<u>DAY</u>	<u>NAME OF THE DEPARTED</u>	<u>ANNIVERSARY</u>
1	Peter Hauraney	57
1	Nina Kalinin	15
1	Eugenie Khoury	10
4	Charles Edward Saba	2
4	Moussa Dallan	30
6	Sadie Halal	55
6	Ketty Shaila	45
6	William Fahel	14
7	Joseph Kawar	31

ETERNAL LIGHT

- Apr 7 for the good health of Anthony Alchekh from his parents
- Apr 21 for the good health of John & Carla Bisharat and their daughter.
In loving memory of Yousef & Sumayya Musallam from their family
- Apr 28 for the good health of Issa Bisharat and family

- **Sunday, April 7 Ushers:** Nabil Samaan, William Besharat, William Kakish, Souheil El-Hajj
- **Sunday, April 14 Ushers:** Raja Shnoudeh, George Boutros, Richard Smith, Wail Haddad
- **Sunday, April 21 Ushers:** Ramzi Shnoudeh, Jalal Qaqish, Wisam Henn, Jean Dahdaly
- **Friday, April 26 Ushers:**
- **Sunday, April 28 Ushers:** Labib Chami, Colette El-Hajj, Ayoub Kakish, Maien Kakish
- **Adult Christian Education:** Roshan Carpenter is preparing some people for baptism every Sunday between 9:30 am to 10:15 am. If you are interested to learn more about our Faith, you can join him downstairs.
- **Services next week:** Monday Great Compline at 7 PM, Wednesday Presanctified at 7 PM, Thursday the life of St. Mary of Egypt at 6 PM, Friday Madaih at 7: 30 PM, Saturday retreat starting at 9 AM.
- Please, pray for the health of the following parishioners: Attiah, Ellen, Robert, Alex, Sam, Elias, Ezabel, Nassar, Adel and Valentine. If you have any names of people who need prayers, email them to father.
- If you are new to our parish or a visitor, please introduce yourself to one of the ushers and speak to Fr. George. We want to welcome you to our family of St. George. If you want to join our church, please speak to Father after Liturgy.
- **Donations for Lilies** and red flowers for Holy Friday and Pascha: Please, see George Ghaniem or William Besharat.
- **St. George Center:** Don't forget to book the center for all your events. Call Fouad Kodsi at 416/917-5457.
- **Graduates:** all high school and university graduates: please, give your names to Joanie Younes. Father would like to honor all our graduates one Sunday in June.
- **Pascha Celebration:** We will have a Pascha dinner offered at the centre on Sunday of Pascha after the Agapy Service. If you like to join us for the meal, please see Fouad Kodsi, or George Boutros.
- **Wine and Holy Bread Donations:** if you like to donate towards the wine or holy bread, please see the office. \$350 for Holy Bread, and \$300 for wine.
- **Lenten Luncheon:** Our Knights of St. George will be hosting a Lenten Luncheon every Sunday following Divine Liturgy. Please mark your calendar, **April 7 All Makali (Fried Vegetables), April 14 Foul Medemes.**
- **Mondays:** Father takes Mondays off unless there is an emergency of death or a dying person. Father will return your phone calls, emails, texts the next day. Thank you
- **Young Adults Retreat** with the topic: "Forming Authentic Relationships in a Fallen World", May 3rd-May 5th. Visit www.stgeorgeworcester.org
- **Parish Life Conference** will be at our church between July 4-7 of this year. We will have a table set up soon to register and buy souvenir journal ads. For more information please see Sana Besharat, Richard Smith, or Samantha Nassar.

- **Six months memorial for Elianor Wakileh** offered by her family, may her memory be eternal. The coffee hour today is offered in memory of Elianor Wakileh by her family.
- The committee for the camp Transfiguration wants to thank everyone for their support with the fundraising, the grant total of the fundraising is \$5584. Thank you for your generosity.
- The General Assembly of our parish will be on Sunday June 9th, at 7 PM.
- General church cleaning will be on Friday April 19th at 9 AM.
- At the directive of Metropolitan Joseph, the Feast of St. George will be celebrated on Monday of Bright week, April 29th, with Orthros at 9:30 AM followed by the Divine Liturgy.
- **Holy Land Pilgrimage** for our church will be May 8 to May 17 (9 days and 8 nights). Cost \$1250 USD plus flights. For more information and reservation please see or call Ramzi Shnoudeh 647/500-2081, or Maha Khashram 647/966-7749.
- **Bishop John Visit:** His Grace Bishop John Abdallah will be leading us in an all-day retreat on Saturday April 13th. He will be with us the whole weekend. We will have different activities for him with different organizations. More to come.
- **PRISON MINISTRY:** On Friday, April 19th, a small group from St. George will be going to Toronto South Detention Centre to hand out Easter packages to the over 1,300 inmates. This will be our 16th annual visit to this maximum-security prison. Those who are interested in participating in this blessed ministry, please contact Diane Younes at 416-464-5908. Financial donations would be greatly appreciated.

THE 24th ANNUAL ST. GEORGE GOLF TOURNAMENT

- Our Annual St. George Golf Tournament is on Tuesday, June 25, 2019 at **Emerald Hills Golf & Country Club, 14001 Warden Avenue (14001 Concession #5)**. Registration and Lunch at 11:30 am. Tee off time 1:00 pm, Dinner 6pm. The price for golfer including dinner is \$250. Our goal for the golf tournament this year is to raise \$100,000 so we need everyone's help to achieve that! If you choose to not play golf, we also offer dinner only, tickets for \$75. We need everyone's participation. A portion of the proceeds will be going to Autism Ontario (York Region Chapter).
Mark your calendar and reserve A.S.A.P. Please Fax or Email registration forms to aftim.nassar@gmail.com Aftim Nassar 416- 895-2767, Richard Smith 647-280-0883, John Younes 647-982-7645, Fax 416-743-6155 \ www.stgeorgeto.com

Bishop John Visit to our parish:

Wednesday April 10th:

- He arrives on Wednesday April 10th at 10:30 AM.
- Celebrating Pre-sanctified Wednesday 10th in the evening at 7 PM.
- Meeting with engaged couples and married couples after.

Thursday April 11th:

- Presiding over the Small Compline and the reading of the life of St. Mary at 6:00 PM
- Meeting and having dinner with parish council members and those who are interested to serve on the council.

Friday April 12th:

- Presiding over the 5th Akathist/Madaiah service, he will attend the Potluck first followed by Madaiah.
- He will speak to the people and answer questions.

Saturday April 13th:

- Retreat from 9 AM to 5 PM followed by Vespers.

Sunday April 14th:

- Divine Liturgy followed by meeting with the young adults. At the end of Liturgy, he will greet the Sunday school children and teachers.
- 6 PM: A Pan-Orthodox Vespers with local Orthodox clergy and faithful from Toronto.

Monday April 15th : Leaving Toronto

Confessing in the Presence of a Priest

Question: If we can make confession to God without the priest, then why do we have confession with a priest present?

In the early Church, confession was public; that is, one confessed one's sins in the presence of the entire faith community. When this became impractical, it was the priest who "stood in" for the community, as its presiding officer and as its witness to the penitent's repentance.

Further, while we can indeed confess directly to God—even a casual reading of the daily prayers reveals that we should do this—we often find that we need help and advice in overcoming the very things we have confessed.

We do not confess "to" the priest; rather, we confess to God "in the presence of" the priest who, as the prayer before Confession clearly states, is God's "witness" and who, having witnessed our confession of sins offers pastoral advice on how we can better our lives and overcome the very things we can confess. Just as one would not attempt to diagnose, much less cure, one's own physical ailments, so too one should not attempt to diagnose, much less cure, one's own spiritual ailments.

It is often the case that those who object to revealing their sins in the presence of a priest or to seek his advice have no qualms about revealing their sins to their neighbors, friends, psychiatrists, and so on, usually with the intention of obtaining advice—advice that is not necessarily godly or spiritually profitable, or even just plain "good," for that matter.

Many years ago, a woman cornered my wife at coffee hour and told her that she was having an affair. She asked my wife's advice.

My wife advised her that perhaps she should speak to me about this. The woman replied, "But he's a priest—I couldn't tell him that!" This is somewhat akin to the person who finds a huge lump on his or her body, goes to the doctor, and then asks the receptionist to diagnose it. No doubt the receptionist would

suggest that he or she have a seat and allow the doctor to look at it, only to find that the person with the huge lump replies, “But the lump’s much, much to big for me to show to the doctor!”

So, we confess in the presence of the priest to acknowledge that our sins, whether we wish to accept it or not, affect the entire faith community on the one hand, and that we cannot “heal ourselves” on the other. The priest is there to help us overcome those things for which we seek forgiveness, to give advice that a friend or neighbor might not be in a position to give, and to bear witness on behalf of the faith community, of which he is the spiritual father, that we have indeed repented and been forgiven by God.

QUESTION:

Can’t I go to God, who already knows what I’ve done, and confess?

ANSWER:

Yes, one can confess directly to God—but refusing to confess in the presence of a priest implies that one can also be one’s own spiritual physician. If this were so, then one wouldn’t find that one is generally confessing the same sin, over and over again—which not only implies that one is not making progress in overcoming one’s sin and also implies, perhaps, that one really doesn’t want help in overcoming one’s sins in the first place! [There are indeed those who commit certain sins, ask God’s forgiveness, feel that the slate is “clean,” and then plan the next occasion upon which the same sin can once again be committed. This is not “confession” in any sense, and this does not generate forgiveness, precisely because there is no desire to “repent,” or “change.”] On the spiritual level, one who refuses to seek spiritual advice from one’s father confessor is somewhat like the person who refuses to see a surgeon because he or she would rather perform his or her own brain surgery. While I suppose one could pull out a few knives and a can opener and attempt this, it is not likely that it will be a success!

QUESTION:

However, if someone has committed a sin they want nobody to know about except that person and God, then what’s the problem with confessing only to God since he is the only one who can forgive sins.

ANSWER:

By hiding what one has done, one commits another sin. Have you ever told a lie in order to get yourself out of a situation, only to find out that by telling the lie you are required to tell additional lies—and so on and so on and so on?

Consider this: One day, when our daughter was four years old, I was taking a mid-afternoon nap on the couch. She came running into the living room in an agitated state, demanding that I give her a Kleenex. [In

the past, she had always gotten her own Kleenex, so this was rather odd.] I told her to get her own Kleenex, as she had done so many times in the past, but she insisted I give one to her. I did. She ran up the steps to her bedroom and slammed the door shut. A few minutes later, she woke me up, asking for a piece of scotch tape. Again, this was odd behavior, since she knew where the tape was and never hesitated to get it herself. So, once again, I got up and gave her the tape. And, once again, she bolted up the steps and slammed her bedroom door.

Figuring that something was up—the silence was deafening! —I went up stairs, where I found the Kleenex taped to the wall, about two feet from the floor. I asked her what this was all about; “nothing” was her reply. Since in my opinion “nothing” usually means “something,” I removed the Kleenex that was taped to the wall, as she watched in absolute horror. There, under the Kleenex, was a crayon mark.” What’s this?” I asked. “Nothing,” she replied.

But it wasn’t “nothing.” She knew quite well that coloring on the walls was “something” that was clearly not acceptable. She “sinned” by doing that which she had been told was not permitted—coloring on the wall. And she tried to cover it up, hoping that I would not notice. Now, had she not asked for the Kleenex and tape, I probably would have never noticed her colorful “sin” in the first place, as I rarely, if ever, inspected the walls for crayon marks. But by trying to cover up the crayon marks in the hope that I wouldn’t notice them, she only made them more obvious, and committed a second sin in the process—one by which she tried to deceive me.

My point here is that when we refuse to confess what we have done, we commit a second sin—a sin of pride, by which we are unwilling to acknowledge what we have done to another person, often justifying this by thinking, “Well, I didn’t really hurt anyone.” We also sin by thinking that we are “pulling the wool over” God’s eyes, which we cannot do. He knows our hearts and He alone judge the sincerity of our repentance—and a key element in genuine repentance is acknowledging to God and to others that we are indeed sinners.

I assure you that there is no sin that would shock a priest out of his sensibilities; at the same time, should a priest in whose presence you choose to reveal even the most shocking sin in a spirit of true repentance reject you for doing so, consider it a blessing and find another confessor.

But I don’t know a priest who would shun one who genuinely repents and genuinely seeks the means by which even the most serious sin can be overcome and brought under control, and I know plenty of priests who would, in fact, applaud one who confesses openly, honestly, and with a true spirit of repentance.

A saint of the Church once opined that the angels in heaven dance for joy when a sinner repents; believe me, the priests on earth do the same thing!

So continue to ask God daily for forgiveness, but please do not overlook the need everyone has—including priests! —to seek guidance and direction in overcoming sin. And never forget that, if it true that God often heals the physically ill by guiding the hands of a surgeon, He also heals the spiritually ill by guiding the words and advice of a priest.

What is Sin?

Question

I have been having a discussion concerning what should be a basic question; however, the answer eludes us. One position, following the Wesleyan tradition, says that sin is a “willful transgression of the known will of God”, while another is more Calvinistic position is a “deviation from a standard of perfection.”

What is the Orthodox definition of sin?

Answer

In Greek—the language in which the New Testament was written—the word for “sin” is “amartia,” which literally means “to miss the mark.” For Christians, the “mark” for which we strive is to live in communion with God, basing our lives and actions on the life and actions of Jesus Christ; hence, when we “miss this mark” we sin.

The Church Fathers further acknowledge that sin is a personal power or force that has usurped the government of the world as created by God and has tainted creation after the Fall of Adam. Jesus Christ took on our nature and entered into the world in order to deliver mankind, through His death and resurrection, from this force and its consequences, the chief of which is death.

Orthodox Christians believe that sin may be voluntary or involuntary and conscious or unconscious and that sin is always personal in nature, leaving each person to account for what he or she has done or left undone.