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The Cathedral Messenger

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My BIG FAT Lebanese Wedding Orthodox Marriages in the Roaring Twenties



Zakia Bayouth in 1923

The vast majority of Wichita's early Lebanese immigrants were young, single men. They arrived on the Kansas prairies willing to work hard, living hand to mouth with the aspiration of someday owning a small retail shop. Their American dream was simple: to earn a better living than they could hope for in Syria.

But when it came time to start a family, they faced a dilemma. Wichita had few young Syrian women of marriageable age, so these budding entrepreneurs often relied on arranged marriages with girls "back home" in Lebanon.

Marriages were usually negotiated by the parents. According to family lore, Saleema Bayouth, an early matriarch of the St. George community, arranged the marriage of her 26-year-old son Ellis. In 1920 Ellis had opened his own grocery on West Douglas. Two years later, in his mother's opinion, it was time for him to settle down.

Arranged marriages began with letters between the family elders. The



Ellis Bayouth in 1924

prospective couple might exchange photographs. If both agreed to wed, plans proceeded despite the fact that they had never met.

Ellis Bayouth's future bride, Zakia Bayouth, was a distant cousin living in Jedaidat Mar'jayoun. Born in 1900, she was still a child when the boy Ellis, his parents, and three sisters departed for America in 1904.

Once the marriage had been arranged, Zakia boarded a ship to New York in 1922. The American Bayouths probably furnished the fare. An uncle met her and escorted her by train to Wichita.

In a 1923 letter, Ellis's niece Idell Razook describes the much-anticipated arrival of the bride-to-be:

Miss Bayouth arrived [in Wichita] December 4 with Mr. Khalil Bayouth. They were met by all of the folks on Monday morning at 5:00. I bet they were rejoicing over her arrival, don't you think so? I know I would.... She has black hair and black eyes. Face large and round enough to look handsome. Her neck is round and long.

Weddings brought together the Lebanese immigrants who were scattered far and wide across the Plains. No one wanted to miss the big celebration. As Idell explains,

The girl had no sooner arrived than everyone was there from all over Oklahoma and Kansas.... Everyone was self-invited, for Uncle Ellis had no



continues next page

Dean, V. Rev. Paul O'Callaghan • St. George Orthodox Christian Cathedral

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time to make any invitation cards as time was rushed so, and also the wedding.

The ladies of St. George stepped in to help the Bayouth family prepare last-minute Lebanese hospitality. As wedding gifts, Mr. Ayesh and Mr. Taylor each donated a sheep for the dinner preparations.

Saturday night December 9, 1922, the ladies joyfully entertained the men folk and all the rest with "kibba," having begun at 2:00 in the morning preparing it. The big dinner was prepared on two stoves and no one hardly slept that night.

Six days after Zakia's arrival, the "greatest wedding that was ever performed in the history of America" took place at the new St. George Church. Idell's account continues:

The bride and Uncle were taken in N.F. Farha's new sedan to church. Pretty nice wasn't it? And Uncle was dressed in dark blue serge, while auntie was in pure white from head to toe, and decorations were red, white and green.

They were married Dec. 10 at 12:00 at the Syrian church, where they remained two whole hours, Fr. Ellis El-Khoury performing the ceremony. The church could not hold all, as Americans as well as



Syrians attended. After the wedding ceremony everyone retired for the "feast," including all good things to eat.

As was tradition in those days, the reception took place in the family home. Friends and relatives served as cooks and waiters.

A crowd was there larger than tongue can express in words or figures. The dancing was performed in the front room, dining room, and basement. Not a soul was happier than grandma and grandpa [Jacob and Saleema Bayouth]. They were at the center of all attractions.

They advanced and danced [the dubke] and sung to their hearts' content.

Postscript: Zakia Bayouth bore 11 children over the next 18 years. The children, who were raised with the help of Sitti Saleema, worked in the family grocery business. Zakia actively participated in women's activities at St. George, cooking the rice every year for the Big Dinner.

By the time her devoted husband passed away in 1947, arranged marriages were already a thing of the past. A widow for 43 years, Zakia never remarried – a testimony to the lasting bonds such marriages often created.

Special thanks to Robert and Lindy Bayouth for their assistance with this article.



O Thou Who didst sanctify water when Thou didst consent to be baptized in the Jordan, . . . make us worthy to be filled with Thy sanctification, by the receiving of this water and its sprinkling. Let it be to us, O Lord, for health of soul and body. — from the Service of the Great Sanctification of Water on Theophany



Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

His Eminence
The Most Reverend
Metropolitan JOSEPH



Archbishop of New York and
Metropolitan of
All North America

**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE
OF NORTH AMERICA**

Nativity 2017

Today doth Bethléhem receive Him Who sitteth with the Father forever. Today the angels glorify, as worthy of God, the babe that is born, shouting: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth be peace, and goodwill among men.

Beloved in Christ,

With great joy I greet you at the dawn of this bright and glorious feast of the Sun of Justice, Christ our God, making the cave a heaven and the manger a noble place!

May He Who deigned to be born in the cave and rest in a manger take up His abode in us. Let us join our voices with the angelic choirs and glorify God, beseeching Him to bring peace, justice, and reconciliation to our troubled world.

Praying that these holy days of the feast will be joyous and grace-filled, and that God will grant you peace, health, and length of days, I remain,

Yours in the service of Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Metropolitan Joseph". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

+JOSEPH

Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of all North America

"The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (Acts 11: 26)

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MEMORY ETERNAL

Sandra Everett, of Iowa, 12/14
mother of Kelly Reinert

Don't
Forget!

St George Orthodox Cathedral
2017 Annual Parish Meeting
to be held Sunday, January 28th, 2018
immediately following Divine Liturgy

2018 PLEDGE STATUS

So far, 160 pledge cards for 2018 have been turned in for a total amount of \$583,186. The total pledges received for 2017 were 203 in the amount of \$642,069. Please complete your 2018 pledges. If you need a pledge card, contact the office or pick up one at the bengari. Thank you.

2018 PLEDGE PAYMENTS

If you would like the convenience of not writing checks, you may have your pledge payments automatically withdrawn from your account on the 15th of each month. Contact Steve Buxton in the office for more details.

Teen SOYO at the Alley



Sunday, January 7
5:00-7:00p

\$20 per person includes Go-Karts, Escape Room and Pizza. RSVP to Grace by Jan. 3

JANUARY FASTING



January 3 and 31 are fast free. Otherwise, the traditional fasting (from meat, poultry, fish, eggs and dairy products) is observed on Wednesdays and Fridays.

MABROOK! BLESSINGS!

BIRTH

Eloise Sophia Malone, 12/28
Leo Parke Fernandez, 11/21

CHRISMATIONS

Samuel Victor Salloum was chrismated 12/12

BAPTISMS

Benae Michael Phillips 12/26
Sephora Bsirat Tewelds, 12/24

MANY YEARS!

Join us - January 7th for Godparent's Dinner



immediately
following
Divine Liturgy

\$7.00
Adult
\$5.00
Children

WINTER CONTINUING CATECHESIS

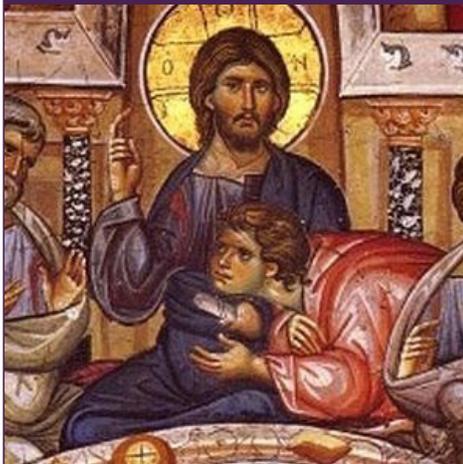
SEASONS OF FAITH: PREPARING FOR THE LENTEN JOURNEY

- January 10 The Rhythm of Orthodoxy: Cycles of Fasting and Feasting – Athanasius Sherry
- January 17 Preparing for the Fast – the Lenten Preseason — Fr Paul
- January 24 The Lenten Journey: Following the Sign posts of Great Lent – Basiliki Sherry
- January 31 The Sunday Saints of Great Lent – Dn. David
- February 7 Lenten Triumph: Orthodoxy Sunday and the Veneration of the Cross – Fr. Joshua

Wednesday evenings following
Daily Vespers at 7:15.

The Eighth Annual Eighth Day Symposium

STRANGERS & SOCIETY :
Cultivating Friendship in a Fractured Age



Speakers include

Dr. Peter Kanelos - President of St. John's College

Ken Meyers - of Mars Hill Audio

Joseph Pearce and others will also be presenting.

Save the date now!

WHEN January 25-27, 2018

WHERE St George Orthodox Christian Cathedral

REGISTER www.eighthdayinstitute.org

Eighth Annual Eighth Day Symposium
“Cultivating Friendship in a Fractured Age”
by Erin Doom

Friendship has long been a significant focus of philosophical reflection. It was actually a quite popular topic among both the ancient Greeks and Romans and the early Christians. Aristotle and Cicero laid the groundwork for further development by early Christian leaders such as St. Gregory the Theologian and St. Augustine of Hippo. Friendship continued to be a focus of reflection throughout the Middle Ages, most notably in the work of St. Aelred of Rievaulx and St. Thomas Aquinas.

But what about friendship in the twenty-first century? Apart from a handful of books, including Fr. Paul's Feast of Friendship, the subject of friendship is almost completely neglected as a serious subject of reflection. But more important than its scholarly neglect is the unfortunate tendency for it to be trivialized by social media and sexualized by our culture, especially Hollywood.

In an age that is so deeply connected electronically – and supposedly socially – our relationships seem to be more fractured and disconnected than ever. Genuine friendships are thus desperately needed. Indeed, we need to recover a Christian perspective on friendship. And we need to relearn the art of cultivating deep friendships.

I hope you will join us for the 8th annual Eighth Day Symposium on January 25-27 as we reflect on this timely topic of “Cultivating Friendship in a Fractured Age.”

In addition to presentations by our very own **Fr. Paul** and **Joshua Sturgill**, other presenters include:

- **Ken Myers**, host and producer of Mars Hill Audio: “Liberalism and the Trivializing of Friendship” and “Social Media and the Commodification of Friendship”
- **Peter Kanelos**, president of St. John's College: “Fragments & Fractals: Friendship & Theosis” and a “St. John's Style Seminar on Friendship in Jorge Luis Borges”
- **Joseph Pearce**, editor of St. Austin Review: “The Role of Friendship in the Creation of Narnia and Middle-Earth” and “Friendship & Creativity in ‘Leaf by Niggle’”

And as usual, we'll have a welcome reception at Eighth Day Books on Thursday evening (25th), the annual festal banquet on Friday evening to celebrate the life of St. Basil the Great (26th), and an open house at Eighth Day Books and Eighth Day Institute on Saturday evening (27th).

Registration is available at eighthdayevents.org/symposium-2018

Enter StGeorge88 in the discount code for a 30% discount offered exclusively to St George parishioners. Or do consider signing up as a monthly Eighth Day Patron for \$35/month and attend free.

Youth
St. Nicholas Day Festival



Teen SOYO Caroling



Christmas Food Baskets



COMMUNITY SUPPORT

BY TRACI SPENCER

wē'd lovē to havē you join us!

"for I was hungry and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me" — Matthew 25: 35-36

COMPLETED PROJECTS

34th Annual Food for Friends Christmas Food Baskets

Many THANKS to all who participated in this year's Food Basket project!! On December 16th, we celebrated our 34th year for this project where more volunteers than ever before packaged and delivered more than 10,500 lbs of food and gifts to 100 needy families in the Wichita area. Along with the groceries, parishioners purchased gifts bought especially for the children of the families. Special thanks to Denise Johnston and Joy Farha with Ray Sales, who organized the 10,500 lbs of groceries, and to all the men and women who each year tape the boxes, set up the food, plot addresses on the map, and organize the gifts. We also want to thank Pratt Industry for donating the 400 boxes, and to Orange Theory for donating \$1,000 to this project. Many lives are touched by this project and we thank everyone for helping make a difference!



**Next Meeting Tuesday January 9th
12:00 NOON IN THE YOUTH CONFERENCE ROOM.
We would love to have you join us!!**



The Lord's Diner

On Sunday, December 17th, St George volunteers helped serve hot meals to the homeless in our community. Please mark your calendars for the third Sunday of every month to help serve at The Lord's Diner. Please let Pat Milburn know if you can help with this wonderful ministry at 265-1380.

WHAT'S COMING UP ???

2018 Agencies that we will support:

- Center for Hope
- Royal Family Kids
- Center for Combating Human Trafficking
- The Treehouse
- Lord's Diner
- VA Hospital- HUD population
- Cash for Classrooms
- Senior Services
- Family Promise (Homeless families)
- Children First
- Looking Glass
- Kansas Food Bank
- Guadalupe Clinic
- Project Access

Community Awareness Fair

Our 3rd annual Community Awareness Fair will be Sunday, January 21st following Liturgy. Our church family will get to learn about the fourteen agencies that St. George is supporting in 2018 and how they can help!! Plan to attend and be entered to win a Bradley Fair gift card.

Kansas Food Bank

On Monday, January 22nd, from 1:30-3:30 at the Kansas Food Bank, 1919 E. Douglas, St. George volunteers will help fill bags of food for backpacks that will be given to school aged children in need to take home so they will have food over the weekend. Please let Jane Evans know if you can help with this worthy cause at 636-2519.

The Lord's Diner

On Sunday, January 21st, St George volunteers will be serving the homeless in our community. Please let Pat Milburn at 265-1380 if you can help! We serve the 3rd Sunday of every month.

The Cathedral Messenger

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In the case of freezing rain, icing, or heavy snow, Daily Vespers, weekday Liturgies, meetings, and activities may be cancelled. If possible, an e-mail notification will be sent out by the Cathedral Office. In cases of uncertainty, please contact the Cathedral Office or Fr. Paul or Fr. Joshua's cell phone number.



Time to Update

To: St. George Parish

In order to best keep in synch and in communication with **YOU** regarding notices, updates or anything relating to parish announcements, we ask that you please keep **US** up to date of any changes - as in a new home address, home/mobile phone numbers, or any email address edits.

Please email:
gina@stgeorgecathedral.net or call
the Cathedral office - 636-4676.

Thank you.

