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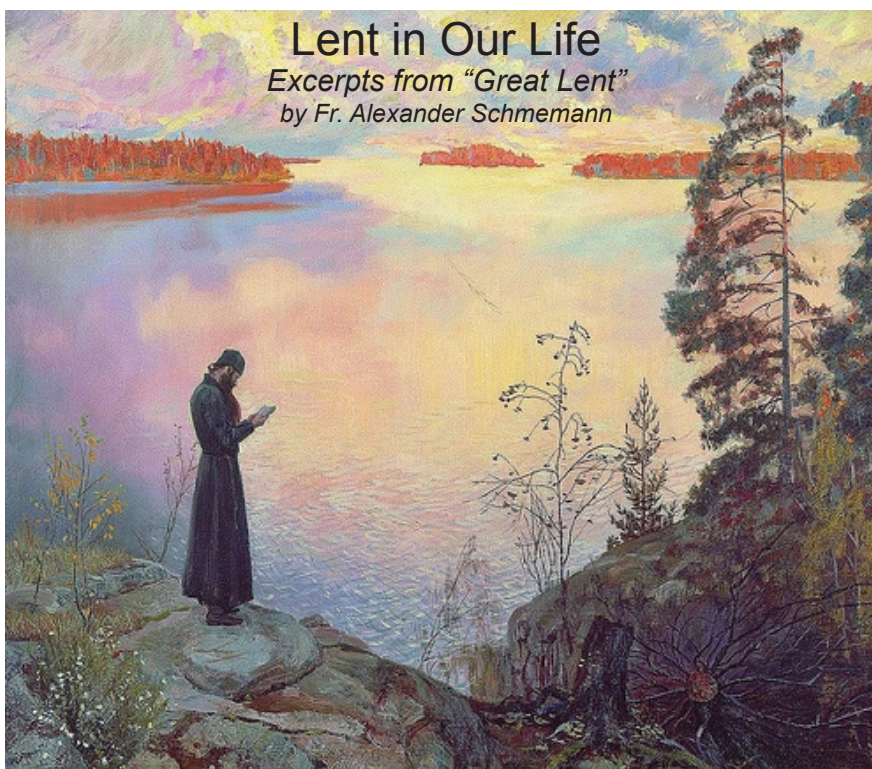
The Cathedral Messenger

A Publication of St. George Antiochian Orthodox Christian Cathedral

What could be the real impact of Lent on our existence? We live in an enormous urban, technological society which is pluralistic in its religious beliefs, secularistic in its world view, and in which we Orthodox constitute an insignificant minority. Lent is no longer “visible” as it was, let us say, in Russia or in Greece.

And since Lent is in no way reflected in the culture to which we belong, it is no wonder then that ours today is mainly a *negative* understanding of Lent—as a season when certain different things such as meat and fats, dancing and entertainment, are forbidden. The popular question, “What are you giving up for Lent?” is a good summary of that common negative approach.

It is always easier to reduce something spiritual to something formal rather than search for the spiritual behind the formal. We can say without any exaggeration that although Lent is still “observed,” it has lost much of its impact on our lives, has ceased to be that bath of repentance and renewal which is meant to be in the liturgical and spiritual teaching of the Church. But then, can we rediscover it, can we make it again a spiritual power in the daily



Lent in Our Life
Excerpts from “Great Lent”
by Fr. Alexander Schmemmann

reality of our existence? The answer to this question depends primarily, and I would say almost exclusively, on whether or not we are willing to *take Lent seriously*.

Quite recently, for example, we have seen the Roman Church first reduce fasting to a bare minimum and then practically dispose of it altogether. With just and righteous indignation,

we denounce such an “adjustment” as a betrayal of Christian tradition and as minimizing Christian faith. And indeed, it is the truth and the glory of Orthodoxy that it does not “adjust” itself to and compromise with the lower standards, that it does not make Christianity “easy.” It is the glory of *Orthodoxy*, but certainly *not* of us Orthodox people. How far we have come from an authentic understanding of fasting when we see it as a mere change of diet, as what is permitted and what is forbidden, and all that superficial hypocrisy!

Ultimately, to fast means only one thing: *to be hungry*—to go to the limit of that human condition which depends entirely on food and, being hungry, to discover that this dependency is not the whole truth about man, that hunger itself is first of all a

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

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spiritual state and that it is in its last reality *hunger for God*. In the early Church, fasting always meant total abstinence, a state of hunger, pushing the body to the extreme. It is here, however, that we discover also that fasting as a physical effort is totally meaningless without its spiritual counterpart: “. . . by fasting and *prayer*.” This means that without the corresponding spiritual effort, without feeding ourselves with Divine Reality, without discovering our total dependence on God and God alone, physical fasting would indeed be suicide.

Attending liturgical services, fasting, and even praying at regular intervals do not exhaust the lenten effort. Or rather, in order to be effective and meaningful, they need the support of our whole life. They need, in other terms, a “style of life”. In the past, in Orthodox countries, such support was given by society itself: it was that complex of customs, external changes, legislation, and public and private observances. During Lent, the whole society accepted a certain rhythm of life.

We are not living in an Orthodox society and no lenten “climate” can therefore be created on a social level. Lent or no Lent, the world around us and of which we are an integral part does not change.

In the Orthodox world view, the home and the family constitute the first and most important area of Christian life, of *application* of Christian principles to daily existence. Everyone will no doubt agree that the whole style of family existence has been radically altered by radio and television (*not to mention the Internet, smart phones, and social media! – ed.*). These media of “mass communication” permeate today our whole life. One does not have to “go out” in order to “be out.” The whole world is permanently here within my reach. If it is not television, it is music. Music has ceased to be something one listens to; it is fast becoming a kind of “background sound” for conversation, reading, writing, etc. In fact, this need for permanent music reveals the incapacity of modern man to enjoy silence. If the Christian of the past lived in great measure in a silent world, giving him ample opportunity for concentration and inner life, today’s Christian has to make a special effort to recover

that essential dimension of silence which alone can put us in contact with higher realities.

Thus the problem of radio and TV during Lent is not a marginal one but in many ways a matter of spiritual life or death. A first “custom” to be suggested, therefore, is that the use of TV and radio (*and digital media! – ed.*) be drastically reduced during Lent. What must be stopped during Lent is the “addiction” to TV—the transformation of man into a vegetable in an armchair, glued to the screen and passively accepting anything coming from it.

The silence created by the absence of the world’s noises made available by the media of mass communication is to be filled with positive content. If prayer feeds our soul, our intellect also needs its food for it is precisely the intellect of man which is being destroyed today by the ceaseless hammering of TV, radio, newspapers, pictorial magazines, etc. What we suggest then, in addition to the purely spiritual effort, is an intellectual effort. Suppose we plan our Lent? Suppose we make in advance a reasonable list of books to be read during Lent?

What the Church wants us to do during Lent is to seek the enrichment of our spiritual and intellectual inner world, to read and to meditate upon those things which are most likely to help us recover that inner world and its joy. Of that joy, of the true vocation of man, the one that is fulfilled inside and not outside, the “modern world” gives us no taste today; yet without it, without the understanding of Lent as a journey into the depth of our humanity, Lent loses its meaning.

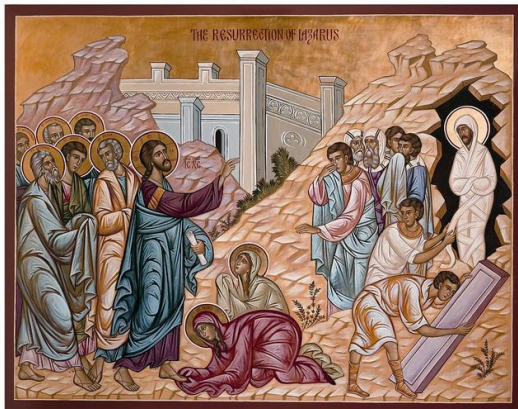
And thus if Lent is the recovery by man of his faith, it is also his recovery of life, of its divine meaning, of its sacred depth. It is by abstaining from food that we rediscover its sweetness and learn again how to receive it from God with joy and gratitude. It is by “slowing down” on music and entertainment, on conversation and superficial socializing, that we rediscover the ultimate value of human relationships, human work, human art. And we rediscover all this because very simply we *rediscover God Himself*—because we return to Him and in Him to all that which He gave us in His infinite love and mercy.



MEMORY ETERNAL

Dolores "Dode" Jabara, 3/4

GREAT FRIDAY VIGIL



All are more than **WELCOME**
to participate in the Holy Friday All Night Vigil!
A sign-up board is placed by the Chapel

Paschal Baskets



You are encouraged to bring a basket of your favorite desserts, meats and wines with you to the Paschal Liturgy. They are to be placed in the baptismal area and will be blessed at the conclusion of the Liturgy.

APRIL FASTING



There is an allowance for fish and wine on Palm Sunday, April 21. Fasting resumes during Holy Week with abstinence from all meats, dairy products, flesh fish, with allowance for wine after the Liturgy on Holy Saturday morning. Bright Week, April 28- May 4 is fast-free, and an Antiochian tradition allows for fast-free observance during the 40 days of Pascha.

NOW HIRING Youth Director

St. George Cathedral is actively soliciting applications for the position of full-time Youth Director. Interested parties please visit the link on our website at www.stgeorgecathedral.net

Holy Saturday & Pascha



**Apr 27 • 9:30a Vespertal Divine Liturgy
11:00p Rush Service & Orthros**

**Apr 28 • 12:00a Divine Liturgy
1:00p Agape Vespers**

Presanctified Pot Luck Suppers

We are planning to host St. Mary Church for the Pan Orthodox dinner on April 17th, construction permitting. Watch the bulletin for further confirmation.



ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN GRANTS

are available to the women of our Archdiocese who wish to continue their education in order to improve their circumstances and those of their families.

Please contact the Cathedral office for Grant Application and more information.

<http://standrewpns.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/AntiochianWomenFlyer.pdf>

All applications must be received by June 1, 2019

Youth You and Your Cell Phone



Results from a Teen SOYO Survey

By Fr. Paul O'Callaghan

Before discussion begins at every Teen SOYO meeting, we collect everyone's cell phones and place them in a basket. The assumption is that if the teens retained their phones, they would be looking at them rather than paying attention to the speaker.

Most of us older folks who are frequently around young adults and teenagers have noticed how glued to their phones they often are. Concerns and fears are often expressed that this is having a damaging effect on the minds and souls of young people. So I decided to survey our teens to see what kind of impact cell phone usage is having on them.

About 20 teens participated. Answers were given anonymously. Questions covered a variety of issues, concentrated on three main areas: the degree of attachment they have to their phones, the impact of cell phone use on relationships, and the use of phones for immoral purposes.

Attachment to the cell phone

The teens were questioned as to phone use first thing in the morning and late at night. Only a minority reported looking at their phones first thing in the morning, and a very small minority confessed to taking their phones to bed with them. Others said they put it on a night stand or just leave it wherever in the house. A majority agreed that they could easily go an entire day without phone usage. Only two stated that this would be impossible for them. A third of the teens agreed that they were addicted to their phones. Conclusion: most of our teens apparently do not feel the need to be on their phones 24/7.

Cell Phones and Relationships

Solid majorities reported that their phones don't divert them from face to face conversations with friends, and rejected the suggestion that they would rather text than talk. Although they agreed there are times where texting makes sense, the vast majority expressed a preference for actually talking to others.

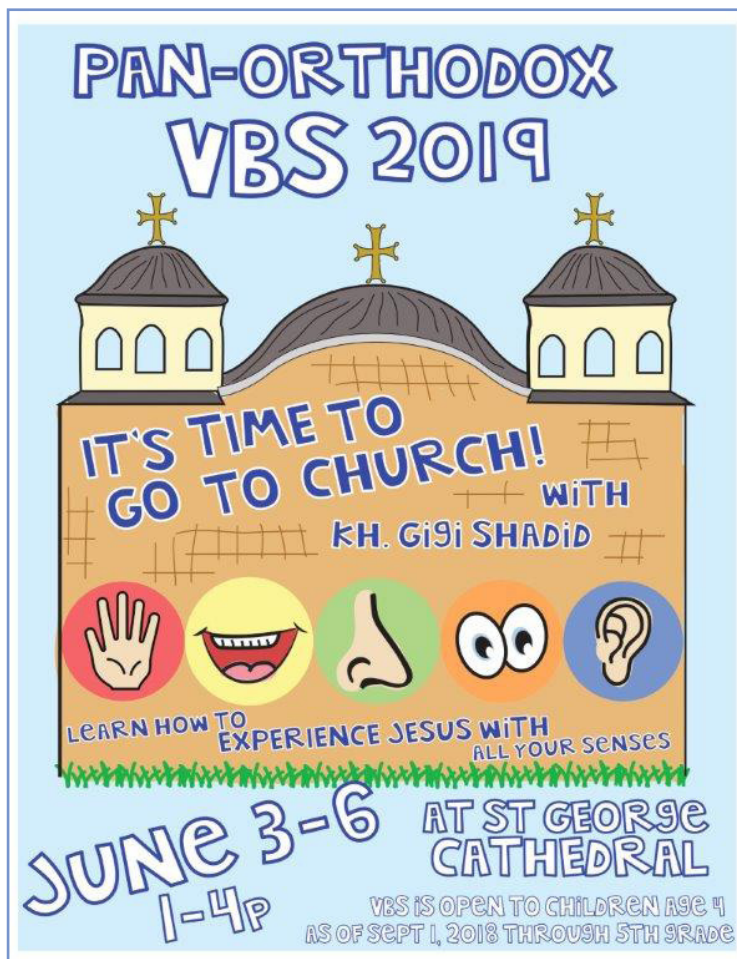
Immoral Usage

The vast majority of the teens said that they had never looked at sexual material on their phones; only three stated they had done so "rarely." Two thirds of them said they had rarely or never received or sent material on their phones that their parents would not approve of. A majority also reported not having received insulting or degrading material from others; most had not been bullied via cell phone.

Conclusion

Texting, music and videos, social media, photography were the most popular reported usages besides phone calls. Games, research, and emergency contact were also rated as frequent activities. Teens also frequently took selfies and posted them on social media; this is an indication of the exhibitionism that smart phone use can encourage.

Overall, our survey results were encouraging. Our teens seem sensible in their cell phone usage. Either they were not being honest, or we have a solid group of thoughtful and mature teens. I incline to the latter.



ST. GEORGE ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN'S
3RD ANNUAL
Spring Fiesta Dinner
SAVE THE DATE
THUR MAY 9, 6:00 - 9:00pm
 in the St. George Fellowship Hall
 7515 E 13TH ST • WICHITA, KS • 636-4676



FEATURING
BANDA HISPANICA
& PINATAS FOR THE KIDS
 Tickets will be sold at the door
 Adults \$12.00 • Children \$6.00 (10yrs and under)
 Contact Cindy Abdallah 648-9576 or Kelly Reinert 259-6235
 Proceeds to benefit: Christ The Savior Scholarships

CLASS OF 2019

Harper Amend
 Caleb Doom
 Chase Farha
 Joey Maksoud
 Rowen Mayo
 Jonathan Merawi
 Reema Moussa
 Riley Ruffin
 Corwin Spencer
 Josie Van Stipdonk
 Elisa Zakharia

Join US! May 5th
 to Honor Our Cathedral Graduates and for the
 presentation of the Kouri/Cohlma Scholarships

 **His Grace Bishop BASIL** 
 invites the children, teens and their families to
LAZARUS SATURDAY
OUTING AT THE CHANCERY
April 20 from 12:30p - 3:00p



THERE WILL BE NO PARKING AT THE CHANCERY. PLEASE PARK AT THE CATHEDRAL AND TAKE THE BUS TO THE CHANCERY.

Admission to the outing is a gift to the Treehouse. Please see the back for a list of suggested donation items.

SHOULD THERE BE INCLEMENT WEATHER, ACTIVITIES WILL TAKE PLACE AT THE CATHEDRAL FROM 12:00-2:00P

Contemplating Watchfulness and Prayer:

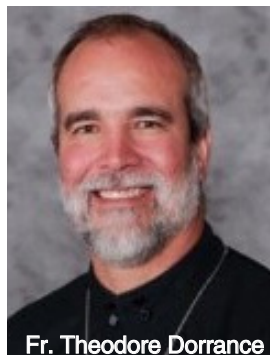
2019 Men's Lenten Retreat

By Jon de Jong, Coordinator

Despite record-low turnout, the 2019 Men's Retreat in Victoria turned out to be, by universal acclaim, one of the best yet. Father Theodore Dorrance, from the Greek Metropolis of Denver, joined us to present "The Disciplined Life."

One might have expected an explication of how to make the Fast more rigorous, increase the asceticism of one's life, etc.—but those expectations would have been disappointed. Father Theodore laid out two simple and interdependent prerequisites for us even to begin thinking of living a disciplined life: watchfulness and prayer. Working through the stages of sin as outlined by both Tito Colliander (primarily for lay people) and St. John of Damascus (primarily for monastics), we realized that sin is much more of a process or sliding scale than it is a bright line. Then he proceeded to show that, although we can do nothing about the provocative thoughts that appear around us urging us to sin, we have complete freedom of choice in whether and to what extent we engage with those thoughts. Watchfulness (to be differentiated from the in vogue trend of "mindfulness" or awareness of the present) is the spiritual science of cutting off our interaction with sin-provoking thoughts quickly, decisively, and as early in the process of sin as possible. Yet our ability to be watchful is heavily dependent on our willingness and ability to engage in prayer.

Simply defined, prayer is a closed dialogue between a human being and God—not just creation of an empty space waiting to be filled, as in many Eastern world religions, but creation of a space specifically intended for God to fill.



Fr. Theodore Dorrance
from the Greek Metropolis
of Denver

Thus, we can engage in prayer corporately (as in the Divine Liturgy and other services) or individually (as in our individual prayer rules or, at the apex, the Jesus Prayer). Because the evil one will do everything in his power to stop us from praying, we should not be surprised at the multitude of distractions—many of them good (how many of you have, immediately upon starting to pray, remembered something you had been trying to remember for a long time previously?). Such thoughts immediately begin to plague us the moment we begin even to contemplate praying; much like our approach to watchfulness, we are almost entirely helpless to stanch the flow of these thoughts, but we can choose whether or not to engage with them. No matter how profitable the distraction, the evil one wins the moment we shift our focus from the prayer to the distraction.

Just as a human relationship can't exist unless its participants engage in focused, closed dialogue with each other, a relationship between us and God is impossible unless we give ourselves over to that dialogue—and the evil one knows that. Over millennia, the saints have found that the Jesus Prayer, being simple, direct, and capable of embedding itself into our very being, affords us the opportunity to give ourselves over to this dialogue with God when we practice it regularly under the direction of our father-confessor. By giving ourselves over to this dialogue while actively cutting off with watchfulness the thoughts that would lead us to sin, we open the doors of our closed heart to God so that He can fill us and conform us fully to His very likeness and image. These may have been relatively simple words for us men to hear from Father Theodore, but they were timely, needed, and packed with a lifetime of challenges for us to put into practice.

Food for the Hungry



We urge you, during this season of prayer, self-discipline and fasting, to be very generous in your contribution to this campaign. As we practice the virtues which cleanse our souls, let us not forget or refrain from the "greatest of the virtues." As important as prayer and fasting are, they are of no avail to us if we fail to give to those in need.

If you would like to give, please make your check payable to **St. George Cathedral - earmark "FFHP"**

"When you see a poor person, remember the words of our Lord Jesus Christ by which He declared that it is He, Himself who is fed. For though that which appears be not Christ, yet in that person's form, it is Christ Himself who receives and begs."

--St. John Chrysostom,
"Homilies on Mathew" #78.

Community Corner

Community Support

by Traci Spencer

we'd love to have 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

SENIOR SERVICES

On Friday, March 1st, Twenty-two St. George volunteers met at Senior Services, 200 S. Walnut, and delivered Meals on Wheels for seniors in our community.



GUADALUPE CLINIC

On March 21st, four members of the Community Support Committee took a tour of the Guadalupe Clinic and the committee gave \$1,000 to the Guadalupe Clinic toward their Mental Health program; which helps provide people therapy for those who could otherwise not afford it.



WARMING SOUL'S CENTER

On Tuesday, March 5th, four St. George volunteers served the homeless at The Warming Souls Center, 841 N. Market. We served casseroles, texas toast, salad, and chocolate chip cookies.



LORD'S DINER

On Sunday, March 17th, seventeen St. George volunteers served the homeless in our community at the Broadway location. St. George serves the third Sunday of every month from 5:00-7:30. Please let Mikell Awwad know if you can serve at 250-3016.



What's Coming Up?

RAISE MY HEAD FOUNDATION

The Community Support Committee is giving \$1,000 to Raise My Head Foundation to help launch and market their cottage industry (soaps, candles, lotions, and t-shirts). Raise My Head Foundation is a recovery home for women who are survivors of abuse, exploitation, and/or trafficking. These women live together, provided a safe place to heal, and learn entrepreneurial skills by managing their cottage industry.

LORD'S DINER

On Sunday, April 21st. St. George volunteers will be serving the homeless in our community at the Broadway location from 5:00-7:30 p.m. Please let Mikell Awwad know if you can serve at 250-3016.

Next Meeting Tuesday, April 9th

12:00 noon in the Conference Room.

We would love to have you join us!!

We meet the 2nd Tuesday of every month at noon. Please consider sharing your gifts and talents with our community. Please contact Traci Spencer at 371-5599 if you would like to be involved.

The Cathedral Messenger

St. George Orthodox Christian Cathedral

7515 East 13th Street North

Wichita, KS 67206-1223

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