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The Cathedral Messenger

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THE POWER OF THE RESURRECTION IN OUR LIVES

by the Rev. Fr. Calinic Berger

According to St Athanasius the Great, the surest proof of the Resurrection of Christ was the fearlessness of the martyrs in the face of death. "Men, women and even children," he tells us, "mock death as a tyrant... who has been deposed by the legitimate king."

Even before their deaths, obviously, the martyrs were Christians completely transformed by the Risen Christ. Indeed, their peaceful acceptance of death with confidence in the will of God and a spirit of forgiveness could not be explained away by any sort of fanaticism. Such would come to nothing under the threat of imminent death. Rather, they showed the world that Christians lived with a power and energy that not even death itself could dispel. It was transcendent and manifestly divine. Those who saw it, wanted it. Thus it was that their witness amazed the civilized world and converted entire nations to the Gospel.

Indeed, the lives of the martyrs reveal that they knew the Risen Christ personally, to the extent that He visited them, spoke with them, and even allayed their sufferings for His sake. We see this already with the Protomartyr Stephen (Acts 7). Perhaps we can only imagine such a relationship, but we should certainly strive for it. Without such, there is no Christianity. Christianity alone preaches the Resurrection, because Christianity alone knows the Risen Christ, who is Himself the Resurrection:



"I am the Resurrection and the Life" (John 11:25).

Faith in the Resurrection of Christ is therefore the foundation of all Christian living. It is the governing

paradigm with which we should understand the world and the challenges, difficulties and crosses in our own lives. For this reason, St Seraphim greeted all with "Christ is Risen!" all year long. But such faith requires our effort. "Whoever makes the Resurrection the object of his study," says St Isaac the Syrian, "acquires disdain for every suggestion of honor and bodily ease... his mind becomes bold and he acquires a heart that is always strong and courageous in every fear and danger of impending death... with undoubting confidence he casts his care upon the Lord. If he meets afflictions, he is confident that they will procure a crown for him. He patiently endures them all with joy, exultation and gladness, since he knows that it is God Himself Who has provided these afflictions because of the profit gained from them."

Let us all, brothers and sisters, not take this great gift of God – the glorious Resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ – for granted! Rather, let us make every effort to prepare to attend and to celebrate it on Holy Pascha, thanking and praising God with all our hearts. More so, having done so, let us truly live by its power and proclaim to the world, in both deed and word, Christ is Risen!!

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

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His Eminence
The Most Reverend
Metropolitan JOSEPH



Archbishop of New York and
Metropolitan of
All North America

ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE
OF NORTH AMERICA

Great and Holy Pascha 2021

O Thy divine and beloved and most sweet voice! Thou hast promised that Thou wouldst be with us unto the end of the world, O Christ; and we faithful rejoice, having this as an anchor of hope.

Ninth Ode of the Paschal Canon

Reverend Clergy, Esteemed Parish Council Members, and beloved faithful:

CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED, HE IS RISEN!

Pascha is the joyful revelation that nothing can separate us from the love of God. Although the world and the devil, sin and death, threw everything they had against Christ, God is still with us. His resurrection gives us boldness to face every difficulty with unflinching trust in God.

During this past year, we have needed this "anchor of hope," as the winds and waves of crisis have beat against the ship of the Church. We still do. Let us rejoice that, in a world of uncertainty, Pascha's promise is sure and true!

Praying that Paschal joy will blaze forth in your hearts, I remain,

Yours in the Risen Lord,

+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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His Eminence
The Most Reverend
Metropolitan JOSEPH

The Right Reverend
Bishop BASIL



Archbishop of New York and
Metropolitan of
All North America

Diocese of Wichita and
Mid-America

**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE
OF NORTH AMERICA**

P A S C H A 2 0 2 1

Beloved and Christ-loving Clergy, Monastics and Laity of the Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America:

I embrace and greet you with a holy kiss in the Name of the Resurrected Theanthropos Jesus Christ, and, together with you and Orthodox Christians throughout the world, I joyfully proclaim that Christ is risen! Χριστὸς ἀνέστη! المسيح قام! Христос Воскресе! Hristos a înviat!

On this radiant Feast of feasts I counsel you, my dearly beloved spiritual children, with these timeless words from our Father among the Saints, Ambrose the Bishop of Milan who himself peacefully fell asleep in Christ at dawn on Pascha in the year 397:

What use is there to celebrate Holy Pascha (which means “a passing over”) for those who observe it only externally? What benefit do they receive if they themselves do not pass over and partake of the Paschal Lamb? They deserve every pity and the Church prays for them that our Lord Jesus Christ, our eternal Pascha, set them on the right path and bring them to their senses. And so I too implore you, brethren, to celebrate Pascha in a manner worthy of its significance. Let us sinners celebrate it by passing over from a sinful life to a virtuous one; let those who think of themselves as perfectly righteous celebrate it by passing over from their degree of righteousness to a still higher degree, from piety to greater piety, from perfection to perfection, so that none would remain without passing over to something better, and from that to something far better, ‘forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before’ (*Philip. 3:13*). Celebrating Pascha in this manner, we will remain true Christians, observing our Pascha in a worthy fashion. May the One responsible for the present Feast, and Who Himself lives and reigns in endless time for ever and ever, help us through His grace.

Wishing you and your families a glorious Paschal season and assuring you of my continued love, prayers and blessings, I remain

In the Risen Christ,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Bishop Basil".

+ B A S I L

Bishop of Wichita and Mid-America

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

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Welcome !



*Ryan & Rachel Mohrmann
Aiden, Erika, Elliana, Audrey*

The Mohrmanns have transferred from St. Luke Orthodox Church, in Erie, CO to St. George Cathedral

Farewell Friends



Kevin & Jennifer Lanergan

The Lanergans have relocated to West Virginia




CLASS OF 2021

Ceridwyn Nicole Alleman
Rhys Ashton
Hannah Doom
Kiarra Farha
Mark Hourani
Marc Jamail
Celine Khalife
Alex Mandanis
Caitlin Mattar
Iain Moufarrij
Noah Moufarrij
David Spencer
Serena Zakharia

Join US! May 16th
with a **dessert buffet and video**
to Honor Our Cathedral Graduates and for the
presentation of the Kouri/Cohlmiia Scholarships

MAY FASTING



Fasting with abstinence from all meats, dairy products, flesh fish, with allowance for wine after the Liturgy on Holy Saturday morning. Bright Week, MAY 2 — MAY 8 is fast-free, and an Antiochian tradition allows for fast-free observance during the 40 days of Pascha.

St. George First Quarter 2021 Treasury Report

MAR-21 Year to Date Actual		MAR-20 Year to Date Actual	
Revenues	\$ 157,685	Revenues	\$ 204,015
Operating Expenses	195,223	Operating Expenses	202,789
Excess (Deficit)	\$ (37,539)	Excess (Deficit)	\$ 1,226

Mother's Day – Earthly and Heavenly

By “mother” we mean a woman who becomes pregnant and gives birth. One who before was barren has been given a divine gift. The womb has been planted with seed, and this ground has risen with new life. A new, unique, and distinct person lives inside the woman, awaiting emergence into this world.

The Church's day of birth prayer refers to the newborn as the “fruit of this vine.” A child has been delivered to the world. We call this toil “labor.” This sacrificial work is the crux of motherhood. In the ancient Jewish world (and even in most places until recently), giving birth held great risk and peril in the possible death of the mother. In giving new life, she risks the sacrifice of her own. That pain of labor and even death is the price extracted for the Fall of Eve.

The quintessential biblical picture of this martyrdom of motherhood is Rachel. Rachel was the favorite of Jacob (Israel). Though she was barren, she ultimately became the mother of Joseph and Benjamin, the last two of the twelve sons of Jacob (Israel). Many of us remember the story of Joseph who was sold for twenty pieces of silver by Judah, and ends up become royalty in Egypt. We are less familiar with the story of Benjamin.

It is during Benjamin's delivery that his mother Rachel dies. In her demise during labor she names her son, *Benoni*, which means “son of my sorrow”. Rachel's body is not buried in the family burial plot which would have been traditional for a Jewish family, but rather is buried in Ephratha, the ancient name for Bethlehem. Jacob (Israel) alters the name *Benoni* to *Benjamin*, meaning “son of the right hand” (Genesis 35:16-20).

This would be little more than a tragic story of an ancient heroic mother, if not for the prophecy of Jeremiah. While the people of Israel (the descendants of the twelve sons of Jacob) are in pain in Babylonian captivity awaiting to be delivered, to be “born again” into the land promised by God the Father; they “cry out” like a woman in childbirth.

Thus says the LORD, a voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children. She refuses to be comforted by her children because they are not.

— Jeremiah 31:15

We learn in Jeremiah's prophecy that the people of Israel, not only remembered Rachel, the bride of Israel, and the mother of the children of Israel, but they viewed her as an ongoing type of matriarchal presence in Ephratha that laments and intercedes to God for her children who were in captivity. In the Jewish rabbinic tradition, we have these words,



“Jacob foresaw that the exiles would pass on from thence, therefore he buried her so that she might pray mercy for them.”

— Genesis Rabbah 82:10

“Down through the centuries, Jews, Christians, and Muslims have come to the traditional site of Rachel's tomb near the city of Bethlehem as a holy place of prayer. In the 20th century, we even have records of Jews visiting Rachel's tomb to light candles and ask for her prayers.” (Jesus and the Jewish Roots of Mary by Brant Pitre).

Rachel is the symbol for all of Israel for the suffering mother. Her connection is not only found among the prophet Jeremiah and the psalms (132:6) but is found in the New Testament in Matthew 2:16-21 when Herod slaughters the innocent firstborn males of Israel, and Rachel, though buried in Ephratha, is made present “weeping for her children.”

Rachel, the bride of Israel, the birth-giver to Joseph (who is a type of Jesus), is the birth-giver of “the son of sorrow” who becomes the “son of the right hand.” Though passed from this life, she weeps for all of her children away from her. She makes intercession when her children are threatened with captivity or death. In the same way that King David was born in Ephratha and re-opened the messianic lineage of Israel, so Jesus, son of David again re-opens the messianic lineage of Israel. This is prophesied by Micah, “*Ephratha...out of you shall come forth to me the One to be ruler of Israel...*” (Micah 5:1). It is Rachel's lamentation and weeping for her children that escort Mary and the Christ child out of Ephratha to escape into Egypt, the same land to which Joseph escaped from death. From the grave, Rachel's ancient cry is a message to this faithfully Jewish Mary.

Rachel is the prefigurement of Mary, the bride, the birth-giver of Jesus who is “a man of sorrow” (Isaiah 53:3- “the suffering servant”). Mary is both the new Eve and the new Rachel. What was defiled in Eden and buried in Ephratha, has been made pure in Bethlehem and risen to heaven at the right hand of God the Father with her Son.

But the labor pains of Mary, the Theotokos, were at Golgatha. Here is where she cries out and laments the pain of motherhood. Here is where she speaks the unspeakable, that her Son promised by the angel Gabriel as the Son of God, would be a “man of sorrows” and “acquainted with grief.”

Christ's own words speak directly to this connection from Eve to Rachel to Mary, the mother of our LORD (John 16:21-22). The image of the Day of the LORD being a time of great suffering like

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

LORD'S DINER

On Sunday, April 18th, St. George volunteers served the homeless in our community from 5:00-7:30 p.m. Thank you for your heart for feeding the homeless in our community. Join us the third Sunday of every month to serve at The Lord's Diner. Please call Mikell Awwad at 250-3016 if you are able to serve.

What's Coming Up ?

THE TREEHOUSE

The Community Support team is giving a check of \$900 to the Treehouse for 60 cans of formula and will help sort clothing at a later date. Plan to volunteer when this project is scheduled.

REAL MEN, REAL HEROS

The Community Support team is giving a check of \$1,000 to Real Men, Real Heroes toward their mentoring program for African American male youth in our community.

- Next Meeting -
Our next meeting will be
TUESDAY, MAY 11TH, NOON
in the St. George fellowship hall so mask up
and join us in this worthwhile ministry of
making a difference in our community.



Mother's Day ... continued

a pregnant woman in labor runs from the Old Testament to the Cross to the Last Day described in John's Revelation as a woman clothed in the sun. (Isaiah 13:6-9; Zephaniah 1:14,15,18; Joel 2:30,31; Matt. 24:4-8, 29; I Thess. 5:2,3; Rev. 6:15).

And like Eve and Rachel, Mary becomes a type of mother for all of God's people, the mother of the resurrected living, and the mother of the children of the New Israel. Mary who is the first Christian who accepts Jesus inside of her, is also an image of the Church, the Theo-tokos, the one who bears God.

The *Theotokos*, the mother of God, is not a title made up by the Church later on. It is in the Bible where we read that Mary is "the mother of my Lord" (Luke 1:43). In the same way that John the Baptizer recognizes Christ even in the womb and becomes the prophetic voice that prepares the way for the Son of God; so Elizabeth recognizes Mary's role and becomes the prophetic voice that prepares the way for the mother of God.

The Church is the bride of God, the bearer of the Son of God, the mother of all of God's children, the queen mother of the King of Heaven, the ark who has the WORD of God contained inside her incorruptible chamber, the third temple, the one who must bear the weight of the cross at Christ's feet knowing her pain is a lament, a sword that pierces her soul (Luke 2:34-35), that carries the promise of life to the world. And like Rachel, she makes intercession on behalf of her children of which the Holy Apostle John becomes her first adopted child.

For those of you who have been uneasy that Mary, the Theo-tokos, is called queen of heaven, or ark, or incorruptible, or makes intercession ("saves us", "rescue us")—these are not "Roman Catholic" inventions—these are Jewish images. Know that these poetic images of veneration and intercession by a "Holy Mother" are deeply Hebrew and thoroughly Biblical in Old and New Testaments long before Roman Catholicism was an entity. While these traditions do remain alive in Roman Catholicism, Protestant Christianity has largely lost its mother.

On this Mother's Day, be not grateful only for your earthly mother that risked her life to give you birth, and wept for you when you were away from her, and continued to intercede for you throughout your life—but give thanks to "the mother of my Lord" (Luke 1:43). She is the one woman that "all generations shall call blessed among women" (Luke 1:28, 46-55). Christmas, the Feast of the Nativity is a time when many Christians especially recall Mary's prophetic canticle, *The Magnificat*.

During this feast, Orthodox Christians sing beyond the notes of "Little Town of Bethlehem"; we chant the ancient tones of "O House of Ephratha". When we sing of Mary, we assume Rachel. The holy mothers of Ephratha are mothers who suffer for love. Mary holds Christ and cares for Him. She weeps for Christ. She cares for Christ's offspring, the "little Christs" called Christians. She intercedes for God's people as a holy mother in heaven at the right hand by her Son. And we on earth light candles and by intercessory prayer ask for prayers not only among those on earth but also those in heaven. Death does not separate us from the love of God. Neither does it separate us from the love of His mother.

Syriac Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East

Eight Years Since the Kidnapping of the Bishops of Aleppo

Beloved Brethren and Spiritual Children

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

On April 22, 2013, same as today, our brothers the Bishops of Aleppo, Metropolitans Paul Yazigi and John Ibrahim, were kidnapped. To this day, their case, a real picture rather than a glimpse of the tragedy lived by the people of this East, remains the scar left by lies in the cheek of truth. Indeed, truth has been slaughtered by deception.

Today we remember these two brothers and fathers, whose kidnapping represents the strangest of cases that have ever violated the essence of humanity. It seems that, in our world, humans could mean to some people a most trivial object of trade. We remember today our two brothers and fathers who were kidnapped while returning from a humanitarian mission. We recall those two brothers and fathers who have always been a symbol of the Christian presence in the East. Many voices still like to applaud the importance of this presence, but the truth is much different.

We remember all this with a broken heart that has not been mended by time and a period of eight years, nor will be. We set this issue before the local and international public opinion. We bring it forth to remind everyone that we have been knocking on every door from diplomatic to security, to political, social, and other paths. Until this moment, there is no result in this regard.

As Christians, we are called today to work in unison despite confessional differences. We are called to clean the sedimentary conflicts and remain together while yearning for Christian unity. This kidnapping is the greatest evidence that what unites us before Christ is greater than the sediments of history that separate us. This kidnapping is evidence that, as Christians, we share a common destiny in this East. We also share this destiny with anyone who seeks God's mercy



His Holiness Mor Ignatius Aphrem II



Arch Bishop Youhanna

Metropolitan Paul Yazigi

and sets God as Lord of life and Lord of the resurrection, not putting themselves in His place.

Faced with all this dimming and the fact that the kidnapers neither announced their identity nor their purposes and facing the insufficient efforts of secret intelligence on this issue, we confirm our former statement once more. As Eastern Christians, we are implanted and rooted in this East as long as there is blood in our veins. We lean on God alone and put on our hope in the Lord of Resurrection. We are here because we lean on the Lord of the Resurrection, who has been with us for two thousand years. We trust and believe that He will be with us forever.

Beloved spiritual children and brothers, we place in your hands this joint statement, hoping that it will be read in the holy churches next Sunday, which is Palm Sunday when we shall welcome the King of Glory who comes into the most holy place of our souls to be risen in and resurrect with Him his beloved humankind.

May God be with you and with us all, as we stand on the threshold of the Holy Passion of Christ that is, nonetheless, mixed with the joy of the Resurrection. We wish that this joy fills your souls so that we all cry out:

"Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death and to those in the tombs He gave life."

Damascus, April 22, 2021

His Holiness Mor Ignatius Aphrem II, Patriarch of Antioch and All the East and Supreme Head of the Universal Syriac Orthodox Church

His Beatitude John X Patriarch of Antioch and All the East of the Greek Orthodox Church



His Beatitude John X

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Save the date!

In keeping with Covid protocols and to maintain the health and safety of our guests and parishioners, this year's Mediterranean Festival will be a one day only event on Saturday, May 15 from 11 am to 7 pm. It will be DRIVE-THRU/CAR-RYOUT ONLY. (No indoor dining) There will be two plated options available and one dessert sampler. Our Mediterranean Marketplace WILL be open for shopping. Follow us on Facebook for updates about our food, shopping, charity, pre-order, and more!

