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# W<sup>the</sup>onderworker

Saint George Orthodox Church

Third Quarter, 2013

## From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

As we enter the summer months and think about vacations, hot weather and relaxing on the beach or the golf course, I thought I would share with you the following meditation on summer and the spiritual life, written by the dean of St. Mary's Cathedral in Minneapolis, Minn., Father Andrew Morbey:

**Summertime, and the living is easy / Fish are jumping, and the cotton is high....  
One of these mornings, you're gonna rise up singing / You're gonna spread your wings  
and take the sky**

- Ira Gershwin, from *Porgy and Bess* (1935)

Glory to Jesus Christ!

In the stories from the Desert Fathers there is one in which Abba Anthony defends some young monks who are just fooling around together from the puritanical judgment of some visiting ascetics. He compares the ascetic life to the string of a bow and arrow. If a bow is kept tightly strung it loses its 'sprising' and is useless. Relaxing the bow when not in use ensures that the 'sprising' is there when it is needed.

We don't need to make any apology for relaxation, even if our Orthodox faith has an ascetic imperative and celebrates ascetic achievement as an ideal Christian life. Following Abba Anthony, St John Climacus writes in The Ladder of Divine Ascent: *there is a time for struggle, and a time for safe relaxation.*

Safe relaxation, in spiritual terms, is relaxation that is grounded in the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control and perhaps above all, gratitude. From a grateful heart springs a song of thanks.

May our summertime and our holiday time be just such an opportunity to 'rise up singing' to the Lord!

Will our recreation be that kind of relaxation that will sustain the 'sprising' of our spiritual life?

Fr Andrew

It is my hope that we can all heed Father Andrew's advice. Certainly, everyone needs to "get away from it all" once in a while. May we do so in a way that leaves us not only physically, but also spiritually refreshed!

In Christ,



## Sin

**Sin**, according to the scriptures is “lawlessness” and “wrongdoing.” (1 John 3:4, 5:17) To do wrong and to be unrighteous is to sin. In the Greek language the word **sin** originally meant “missing the mark,” that is, moving in the wrong direction, toward the wrong aims and goals. It means choosing and going in the way of death, and not the way of life.

There are many scriptural expressions for sin, all of which presuppose a primordial rightness and goodness. The word **fall** indicates a movement down and away from an original high and lofty state. The word **stain** reveals that there was once an original purity that has been defiled. The word **transgression** means a movement against that which is primarily right. The words **estrangement** and **alienation** indicate that one was first “at home,” living in a sound and wholesome condition. The word **deviation** means that one has gone off his original way.

There are no words for sin which do not reveal in their very utterance that sin is an unnatural state of man, a condition brought about by the destruction, distortion and loss of something good which was originally present. Every sin and wickedness exists only because man’s being and life are naturally positive and good. Every evil and sin act only as “parasites” on that which is primarily perfect and whole. Thus, in the Orthodox tradition, sin is not considered to be a normal and natural part of human being and life. To be human and to be a sinner is contradictory. Rather, to be truly human is to be righteous, pure, truthful and good.

Spiritual life, in this sense, consists of only one thing: not to sin. Not to sin is to be like God and His Son Jesus Christ. It is the goal of human life.

Everyone who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. You know that Christ appeared to take away sins, and in Him there is no sin. No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has either seen Him nor known Him. Little children, let no one deceive you. He who does right is righteous, as He is righteous. He who commits sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. No one born of God commits sin; for God’s nature abides in him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God. By this it may be seen who are children of God, and who are children of the devil; whoever does not do right is not of God, nor he who does not love his brother. (1 John 3:4-10)

Not to sin is the goal of human life. But in fact all people do sin. It is for this reason that the possibility to be freed from sin and to overcome sin comes through the saving work of Christ, who forgives the sins of the world.

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. My little children, I am writing this to you so that you may not sin; but if any one does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the expiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world....by this we may be sure that we are in Him: he who says he abides in Him ought to walk in the same way in which He walked. (1 John 1:8-2:6)

from *The Orthodox Faith*,  
by Fr. Thomas Hopko

## Mëkati

**Mëkati**, sipas shkrimeve, është “**paligjshmëri**” dhe “**paudhësi**” (1 Joani 3:4, 5:17). Të bësh paudhësi dhe të bësh padrejtësi do të thotë të mëkatosh. Në greqisht, fjala **mëkat** në kuptimin original kishte kuptimin e “mos-qëllimit në shenjë”, domethënë të shkoje në drejtimin e gabuar, drejt qëllimeve dhe synimeve të gabuara. Do të thotë të zgjedhësh dhe të shkosh në rrugën e vdekjes dhe jo në atë të jetës.

Ka shumë shprehje në shkrimet për mëkatin, gjithsecila prej tyre presupozon një drejtësi dhe mirësi fillestare. Fjala **rënie** tregon lëvizjen poshtë dhe larg nga një gjendje fillestare të lartë dhe të ngritur. Fjala **njollë** zbulon se ishte në fillim një pastërti fillestare që u ndy më vonë. Fjala **shkelje** do të thotë një lëvizje kundër asaj që ishte në fillim e drejtë. Fjala **faj** zbulon pafajësinë e parë. Fjalët **tjetërsim** dhe **largim**, ndarje tregojnë se në fillim ishim “në shtëpi” duke jetuar në një gjendje të shëndoshë dhe të plotë. Fjala **shmangje** do të thotë se ka ndodhur largimi nga rruga e parë.

Nuk ka fjalë për mëkatin që të mos zbulojnë në vetë fjalën se mëkati është një gjendje jonatyrale e njeriut, një gjendje e sjellë nga shkatërrimi, shtrëmbërimi dhe humbja e diçkaje të mirë që fillimisht ishte e pranishme. Çdo mëkat dhe dobësi ekziston vetëm ngaqë jeta dhe qenia e njeriut janë natyralisht pozitive dhe të mira. Çdo e keqe dhe mëkat vepron vetëm si “parazitë” në atë që fillimisht ishte e përsosur dhe e shëndetshme. Kështu, në traditën orthodhokse, mëkati nuk konsiderohet të jetë normal dhe pjesë natyrale e qenies dhe jetës njerëzore. Të jesh njerëzor dhe të jesh një mëkatar është kontradiktore. Më saktë, të jesh me të vërtetë njerëzor duhet të jesh i drejtë, i pastër, i vërtetë dhe i mirë.

Jeta shpirtërore, në këtë kuptim, përbëhet vetëm nga një gjë: të mos mëkatosh. Të mos mëkatosh do të thotë të jesh i ngjashëm me Perëndinë dhe Birin e Tij Jisu Krisht. Ky është qëllimi i jetës njerëzore.

Kush bën mëkat, bën edhe shkelje të ligjit; dhe mëkati është shkelje e ligjit. Dhe ju e dini se Ai u shfaq për të hequr mëkatet tona; dhe në të nuk ka mëkat. Kush qëndron në të nuk mëkaton; kush mëkaton nuk e ka parë dhe as nuk e ka njohur. Djema, kurrkush mos ju mashtroftë: ai që zbaton drejtësinë është i drejtë, ashtu sikur është i drejtë Ai. Kush kryen mëkat është nga djalli, sepse djalli mëkaton nga fillimi; prandaj është shfaqur Biri i Perëndisë: për të shkatërruar veprat e djallit. Kush lindi nga Perëndia nuk kryen mëkat, sepse fara e Perëndisë qëndron në të dhe nuk mund të mëkatojë, sepse lindi nga Perëndia. Prej kësaj njihen bijtë e Perëndisë dhe bijtë e djallit; kushdo që nuk praktikon drejtësinë nuk është nga Perëndia, dhe i tillë nuk është as ai që nuk do vëllanë e vet (1 Joani 3:4-10).

Të mos mëkatosh është qëllimi i jetës njerëzore. Por, në fakt, të gjithë njerëzit mëkatojnë. Për këtë arsye është (ekziston) mundësia për t’u çliuar nga mëkati dhe për ta mundur atë që vjen nëpërmjet veprës shpëtimtare të Krishtit, i cili fal fajet e botës. Është për këtë arsye që mundësia për t’u çliuar nga mëkati dhe për ta mundur atë vjen nëpërmjet veprës shpëtimtare të Krishtit, i cili fal fajet e botës.

Po të themi se jemi pa mëkat, gënjejmë vetveten dhe e vërteta nuk është në ne. Po t’i rrëfejme mëkatet tona, Ai është besnik dhe i drejtë që të na falë mëkatet dhe të na pastrojë nga çdo paudhësi. Po të themi se s’kemi mëkatuar, e bëjmë atë gënjeshtar dhe fjala e tij nuk është në ne. Djema të mi, ju shkruaj këto gjëra që të mos mëkatoni; dhe në qoftë se ndokush mëkatoi, kemi një mbrojtës te Ati, Jisu Krishtin të drejtin. Ai është shlyesi për mëkatet tona; dhe jo vetëm për tonat, por edhe për ata të të gjithë botës. . . Nga kjo e njohim se jemi në të. Ai që thotë se qëndron në të, duhet të ecë edhe vetë, sikurse ka ecur Ai (1 Joani 1:8-2:2-6).

nga *Besimi Ortodoks (The Orthodox Faith)*  
i At Thomas Hopko

## Coming Events

### July

- 19: St. Seraphim of Sarov
- 20: Holy Prophet Elijah (Elia)
- 27: Great Martyr Panteleimon (Pandeli)
- 28: General Parish Meeting

### August

- 1: Procession of the Holy Cross  
Dormition Fast begins
- 6: Transfiguration of our Lord  
10:00 a.m. — Divine Liturgy  
and Blessing of Fruit
- 9: Saint Herman of Alaska
- 15: Dormition (Falling Asleep) of the Virgin  
Mary
- 24: Holy Martyr Kozma of Berat
- 29: Beheading of Saint John the Baptist  
10:00 a.m. — Divine Liturgy

### September

- 1: Church New Year  
10:00 a.m. — Divine Liturgy
- 8: Nativity of the Virgin Mary  
Beginning of Church School  
10:00 a.m. — Divine Liturgy
- 14: Elevation of the Holy Cross  
10:00 a.m. — Divine Liturgy
- 23: Conception of St. John the Baptist
- 26: St. John the Theologian
- 27/ Archdiocesan Assembly
- 28: St. Nicholas Church, New York, NY

## Looking ahead...

- October 6: FORCC Scholarship Banquet
- October 19: Teuta Bazaar
- March 3, 2014: Great Lent begins
- April 20, 2014: Pascha and Western Easter



## Bible Study

On September 4<sup>th</sup>, the Wednesday-evening **Bible Study Group** will resume its regular meetings.

As in the past, Akathist Hymn "Glory to God for all things" will be celebrated in Church at 6:30 p.m. Then, at 7:00 p.m., **Bible Study** will be held in the Church Hall, lasting until about 8:30 p.m. The discussions are lively and interesting and are not strictly limited to the scripture text, but can go wherever the interest of the group directs.

This year, the group will begin reading the **Gospel according to Saint John**.

The Bible Study group is open to anyone with an interest in the Bible and the Orthodox Faith.

Please join us!

## Congratulations to our Graduates!

The following is a list of our young adults who recently graduated from high school, college, or graduate school. We extend our continued best wishes to them for continued success!

### *High School*

- **Luiza Tollkuci** – graduated from Newtown High School.
- **Kellie Hurd** – graduated from Trinity Catholic High School (Stamford)

### *College/Graduate School*

- **Chris Adams** – in December 2012, received his Master's Degree in Actuarial Science at the University of Connecticut.
- **Rebecca Chadwick** – Graduated from the University of Bridgeport with a MS in Education.
- **Steve Csernica** – Received his PhD in Chemical Engineering from Lehigh University (Pennsylvania).
- **Emily Cryan** – Graduated from St. Michael's College (Vermont) with BA in History and English, and a minor in Classics.
- **Julia Garfalo** – Graduated from Boston University with a degree in Architecture.
- **Sarah O'Brien** – Received her Master of Science from the School of Education at the University of Bridgeport.

## General Parish Meeting to be held

On Sunday, July 28<sup>th</sup>, the **General Meeting** of our parish membership will be held in the Church Hall following the Divine Liturgy.

There are a number of important items to be discussed at the meeting.

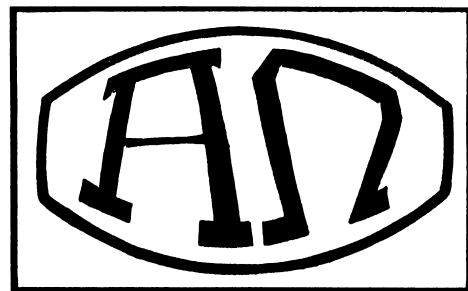
Please be sure to attend and participate!

## Bequest and donation received

Saint George Church recently received a \$10,000 bequest from the estate of **Vangel Marko**, late husband of **Elsie Marko**.

Also, the **Nancy Yapo** and the entire family of the late **Andrew Yapo** has donated "Forever Candles" to adorn the Altar Table as well as the tall candle holders at either end of the iconostasis.

We thank both families for their generosity to the church and ask that God will keep His departed servants, **Vangel** and **Andrew** in Eternal Memory!



## Coffee Hour Sign-up Poster

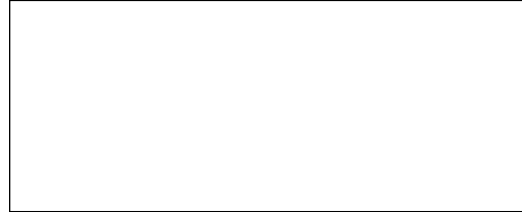
Hanging on the bulletin board in the Church Hall again this year is a poster where people can sign up to host **Coffee Hour** on Sunday mornings.

This is a way for us all to see if there are available Sundays and to plan ahead for any special occasions we might want to share with our Parish family: birthdays, namedays, memorials, etc.

Be sure to take a look at it and put your name down to host in the near future.

Saint George Orthodox Church  
5490 Main Street  
Trumbull, Connecticut 06611-2932

FORWARD AND ADDRESS CORRECTION



*The Wonderworker*

*The Wonderworker*  
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