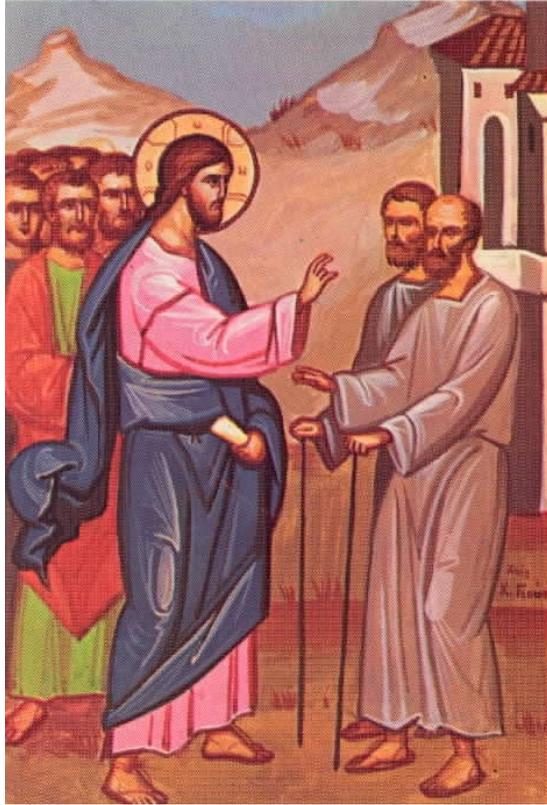


St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church
Lowell, Massachusetts



**SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
& SEVENTH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW**

JULY 23, 2017

ST. GEORGE ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

44 Bowers Street,
Phone: (978) 452-4816

Lowell, MA 01854
Fax: (978) 452-6041

Email: fatherfaris@comcast.net

Web: www.saintgeorgelowell.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/saintgeorgelowell

Rt. Rev. Fr. Leonard Faris, Pastor

WORSHIP SERVICE

Sunday: Matins (Orthros) Service 9:00 a.m.

Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Sunday School, Every other Sunday, 9:30 a.m. to 10:15 a.m.

Church Office Hours: Tuesday through Friday, 9:00 am to 1:00 pm

Divine Liturgy begins at 10:00 a.m. and we should not arrive late. When we do arrive late and the Epistle or Gospel is being read or the priest is preaching the sermon or the Great Entrance is taking place, please **REMAIN** in the Vestibule until it is finished before entering the Church. At the end of the Divine Liturgy please keep your conversation until the "Coffee Hour". **We should leave the Church in silence.**

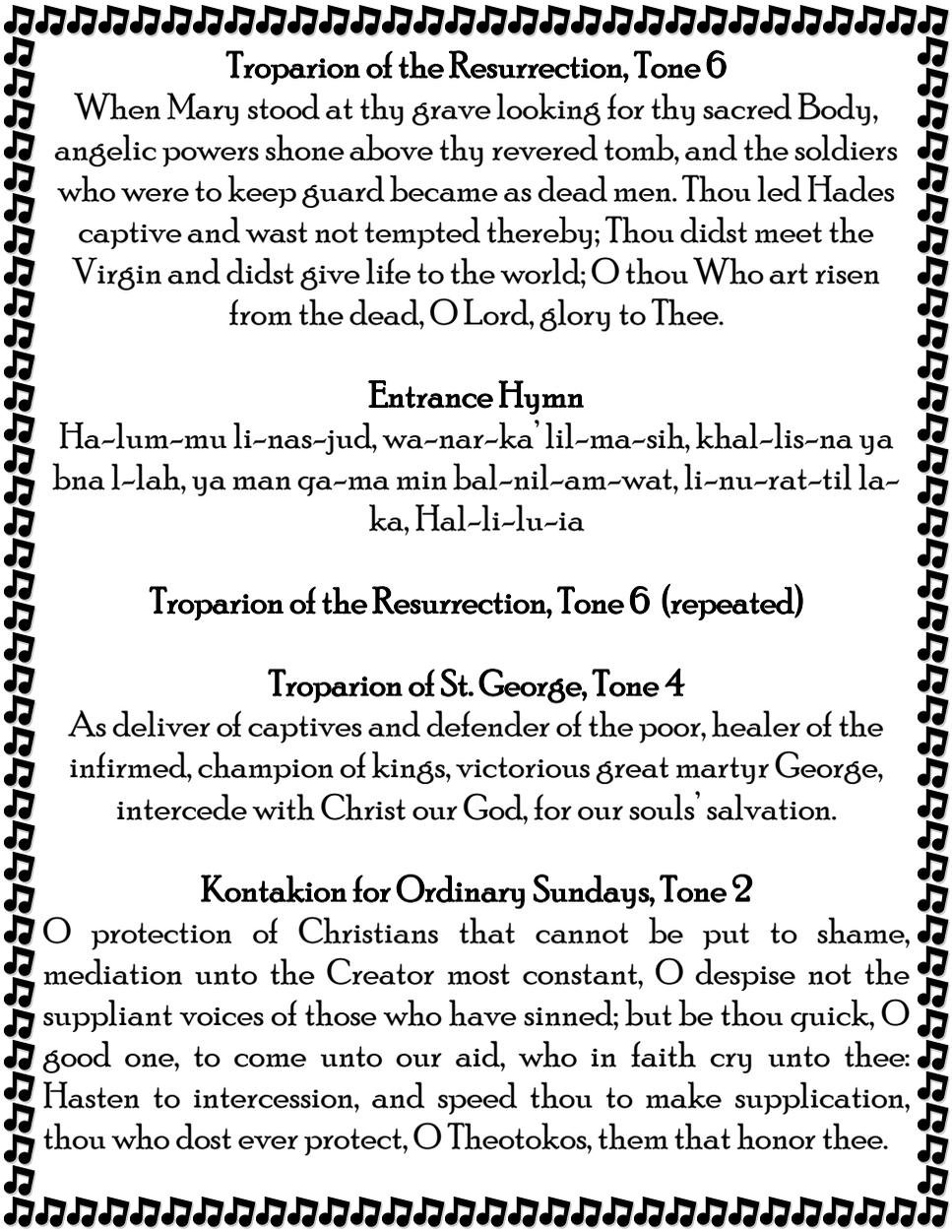
Important Notice: The reception of Holy Communion is limited to Orthodox Christians who have prepared themselves by prayer, fasting and recent Confession. Confessions are heard on Sunday mornings during the Matins Service or by special appointment. The Eucharistic Fast begins at midnight on Saturday and ends up with the receiving of Holy Communion. If you are on medication or a young child, you can have a light breakfast before coming to church. If you have any questions, please call Fr. Leonard.

*Thank you,
+ Father Leonard*

Prayer Requests and Bulletin News: All prayer requests and articles for the weekly bulletin must be submitted each week by **Noon, Tuesday:** emailed to Fr. Leonard at fatherfaris@comcast.net or call 978-452-4816, otherwise, the requests and articles will be published the following week.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

If anyone is in the hospital it is the duty of the family to inform the priest so that he can visit the patient. Also, if anyone is homebound and would like to receive Holy Communion, he/she or a family member should contact Fr. Leonard to make arrangements to bring the Sacrament to the shut-in. Fr. Leonard is always happy to bring the Sacraments to those in Hospitals, Nursing Homes or at home. Thank you and God bless!



Troparion of the Resurrection, Tone 6

When Mary stood at thy grave looking for thy sacred Body, angelic powers shone above thy revered tomb, and the soldiers who were to keep guard became as dead men. Thou led Hades captive and wast not tempted thereby; Thou didst meet the Virgin and didst give life to the world; O thou Who art risen from the dead, O Lord, glory to Thee.

Entrance Hymn

Ha-lum-mu li-nas-jud, wa-nar-ka' lil-ma-sih, khal-lis-na ya
bna l-lah, ya man qa-ma min bal-nil-am-wat, li-nu-rat-til la-
ka, Hal-li-lu-ia

Troparion of the Resurrection, Tone 6 (repeated)

Troparion of St. George, Tone 4

As deliver of captives and defender of the poor, healer of the infirmed, champion of kings, victorious great martyr George, intercede with Christ our God, for our souls' salvation.

Kontakion for Ordinary Sundays, Tone 2

O protection of Christians that cannot be put to shame, mediation unto the Creator most constant, O despise not the suppliant voices of those who have sinned; but be thou quick, O good one, to come unto our aid, who in faith cry unto thee: Hasten to intercession, and speed thou to make supplication, thou who dost ever protect, O Theotokos, them that honor thee.

Epistle: Paul 15:1-7

O Lord, save Thy people, and bless Thine inheritance.

Until Thee will I cry, O Lord my God.

The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans

Brethren, we who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves; let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to edify him. For Christ did not please himself; but, as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached thee fell on me." For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures, we might have hope. May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Welcome one another, therefore, as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

Gospel: Matthew 9:27-35

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew

At that time, as Jesus passed on from there, two blind men followed him, crying aloud: "Have mercy on us, Son of David." When He entered the house, the blind men came to Him; and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord." Then He touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith be it done to you." And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly charged them, "See that no one knows it." But they went away and spread His fame through all that district. As they were going away, behold, a dumb demoniac was brought to Him. And when the demon had been cast out, the dumb man spoke; and the crowds marveled, saying, "Never was anything like this seen in Israel." But the Pharisees said, "He casts out demons by the prince of demons." And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every infirmity.

Blindness

It is probably worth studying this topic at the start since it is what the passage is all about. Apparently, for some reason, blindness was fairly common in the days of Jesus. We do not know if the cases were all the same, whether they were blind from birth, or were blinded in some way. But to be blind then, as at any time, was a terrible handicap. The self-righteous leaders in the days of Jesus would have added to the problem by accusing such handicapped people of being sinners whom God had punished. And, it is true, that there are cases in the Bible where blindness was a punishment from God; but it is also true that that was not the automatic explanation for Christ.

Blindness also was symbolic of spiritual ignorance, just as sight was symbolic of understanding. When God announced judgment on the nation of Israel through the prophet Isaiah, part of the judgment was that they would not understand the truth and not believe the message. In a word, they would be frozen in their ignorance and unbelief. God said, "Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving. Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes, otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their hearts, and turn and be healed" (6:9-10).

Jesus used this same symbolism in some of His teachings. In John 9 Jesus healed the blind man, and found a good deal of opposition for it from the spiritual leadership. So Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind" (9:39). The Pharisees knew He was speaking about them, and so they said, "What?--are we blind too?" (v. 40). And He said, "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim that you see, your guilt remains".

In other words, some who have their physical sight are blind to the truth--they are spiritually blind. If they continue to refuse to believe, then like ancient Israel they would remain in their blindness. He has the authority to seal up their spiritual blindness as a judgment if they persist in it--let the blind remain blind still.

But there were those who were physically blind, and they wanted to see, and so they were healed by Jesus who gave them sight. Because faith was required of those who were blind and wanted to see, those blind people were interpreted by the evangelists to be symbolic or at least representative of those in the nation of Israel, spiritually blind and ignorant of the truth, who through faith received their "sight." In other words, these men might have been blind, but because of their faith they could see better than others.

Dear Parishioners and Friends:

As in prior years, we will participate in the Lowell Folk Festival which is scheduled for July 28-30, 2017. The Folk Festival is a great way to exhibit our ethnic pride by selling our natural home-made ethnic food to the Lowell community.

The Folk Festival is St. George's biggest fundraiser each year. Last year's Folk Festival expenses were approximately \$6,500. We welcome all donations from our parishioners and friends to defray these expenses. Our goal is to defray all expenses and make this a very successful event with a huge profit. Please help us to achieve this goal.

If you would like to donate this year, please make your check payable to St. George Church. Memo: Folk Festival Donation. We appreciate your support and dedication.

Thank you,
Folk Festival Committee

Please send your donations to:

Saint George Antiochian Church – Folk Festival Donation
Attention: Folk Festival
44 Bower St.
Lowell, MA 01854

We are in need of volunteers to work at our booth for all shifts:

Friday	July 28	4:30pm - 10:30pm
Saturday	July 29	10:00am - 2:00pm
		1:45pm - 6:00pm
		5:30pm - 10:30pm
Sunday	July 30	10:00am - 2:00pm
		1:45pm - 6:30pm

If you would like to volunteer, please contact the Folk Festival Committee members:

Ron Tayebi	rontayebi@yahoo.com
Andrew Saati	andrewsaati21@yahoo.com
Azar Louh	alouh33a@yahoo.com
Mack Louh	macklouh@yahoo.com
Chris Louh	dicethree@hotmail.com
Steven Louh	xostevenox26@hotmail.com



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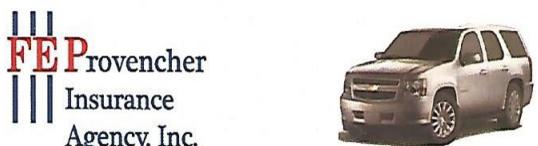
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