

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America

The Diocese of Eagle River and the Northwest

Antiochian Orthodox Church of the Annunciation

كنيسة البشارة الأرثوذكسية الأنطاكية

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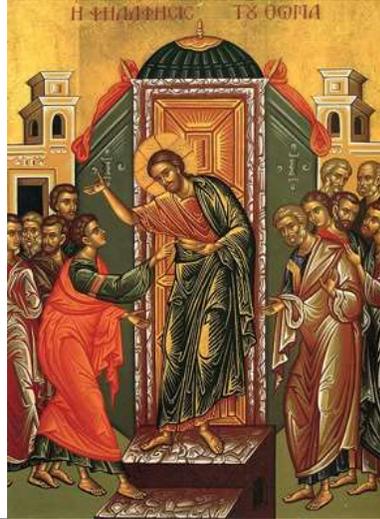
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Sunday April 23rd, 2017

Christ is Risen. Indeed He is Risen

المسيح قام حقا قام



أحد القديس توما الرسول (الأحد الجديد)

عيد القديس الشهيد جاورجيوس اللابس الظفر

Sunday of St. Thomas the Apostle (New Sunday)

Great-Martyr George the Trophy-Bearer

المسيح قام! حقاً قام!

CHRIST is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!

الموت بالموت، ووهب الحياة للذين في القبور! المسيح قام من بين الأموات، ووطىء

**Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the
tombs bestowing life!**

Changes in the Liturgy

تغييرات في القداس

First Antiphon

Shout with joy to God, all the earth. Sing to His name; give glory to His praises.

Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior save us!

Say to God: "How awesome are thy works." Let all the earth worship Thee, and sing to Thee. Let it sing a song to Thy Name, O Most High.

Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior save us!

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior save us!

الانتيفونة الأولى

هللوا لله يا جميع الأرض، رتلوا لاسمِهِ أعطوا مجداً لتسبحتِهِ.

بشفاعاتِ والدَةِ الإلهِ يا مخلصُ خلصنا!

قولوا لله ما أرهبَ أعمالك، كلُّ مَنْ في الأرضِ يسجدونَ لك ويرتلونَ لاسمِكَ أيها العلي.

بشفاعاتِ والدَةِ الإلهِ يا مخلصُ خلصنا!

المجدُ للآبِ والإبنِ والروحِ القدسِ الآنِ وكلِّ أوانٍ وإلى دهرِ الداهرينِ آمين.

بشفاعاتِ والدَةِ الإلهِ يا مخلصُ خلصنا!

Second Antiphon

May God have mercy upon us, and bless us, and may He cause His face to shine upon us, and have mercy on us.

Save us, O Son of God, who art risen from the dead, who sing to thee, Alleluia!

That thy way may be known upon earth, thy salvation among all nations. Let the peoples give thanks to Thee, O God; let all the peoples give thanks to Thee.

الانتيفونا الثانية

ليترأف الله علينا وبياركنا، وليضئ بوجهه علينا ويرحمنا.

خلصنا يا ابن الله يا من قام من بين الأموات لترتل لك هللويا!

لثُعرف في الأرض طريقك وفي جميع الأمم خلاصك.

خلصنا يا ابن الله يا من قام من بين الأموات لترتل لك هللويا!

تعترف لك الشعوب يا الله تعترف لك.

خلصنا يا ابن الله يا من قام من بين الأموات لترتل لك هللويا!

المجدُ للآبِ والإبنِ والروحِ القدسِ، الآنِ وكلِّ أوانٍ وإلى دهرِ الداهرينِ، آمين.

... يا كلمةَ اللهِ الابنِ الوحيدِ

Save us, O Son of God, who art risen from the dead, who sing to thee, Alleluia!

May God bless us, and may all the ends of the earth fear Him.

Save us, O Son of God, who art risen from the dead, who sing to thee, Alleluia!

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

O only-begotten Son, etc.

Third Antiphon

Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered, and let those who hate Him flee from his face.

Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs, bestowing life!

As smoke vanishes, let them vanish; as wax melteth before the fire.

Christ is risen, etc.

So let the sinners perish at the presence of God, but let the righteous rejoice.

Christ is risen, etc.

This is the day which the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad therein.

Christ is risen, etc.

الانتيفونا الثالثة

ليقم الله ويتبدد جميع أعدائه ويهرب مبغضوه من أمام وجهه.

المسيح قام من بين الأموات، ووطئ الموت بالموت، ووهب الحياة للذين في القبور!

كما يباد الدخان يبادون وكما يذوب الشمع من أمام وجه النار.

...المسيح قام من بين الأموات

كذلك تهلك الخطاة من أمام وجه الله والصدّيقون يفرحون ويتهللون أمام الله ويتنعمون بالسرور.

...المسيح قام من بين الأموات

هذا هو اليوم الذي صنعه الرب لنفرح ونتهلل به.

...المسيح قام من بين الأموات

الايصوديكون (بالحن الثاني)

في المجامع باركوا الله، الربّ من ينابيع إسرائيل. خلصنا يا ابن الله، يا مَنْ قام من بين الأموات، لنرتل لك هلوليا!

Entrance Hymn (Tone Two)

In the gathering places, bless ye God the Lord from the springs of Israel. Save us O Son of God, Who art Risen from the dead, who sing unto thee: Alleluia!

طروبارية الفصح (باللحن الخامس)

المسيح قام من بين الأموات، ووطئ الموت بالموت، ووهب الحياة للذين في القبور!

Paschal Troparion (Tone Five)

Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs, bestowing life! (3x)

طروبارية لأحد القديس توما (باللحن السابع)

إذ كَانَ الْقَبْرُ مَخْتوماً أَشْرَقَتْ مِنْهُ أَيُّهَا النُّورُ. وَلَمَّا كَانَتْ الْأَبْوَابُ مَغْلَقَةً وَافِيَتْ التَّلَامِيذَ أَيُّهَا الْمَسِيحُ الْإِلَهُ قِيَامَةً الْكُلِّ. وَجَدَدْتَ لَنَا بِهِمْ رُوحاً مُسْتَقِيماً بِحَسَبِ عَظِيمِ رَحْمَتِكَ.

Troparion of the Sunday of St. Thomas (Tone Seven)

While the tomb was sealed, Thou didst shine forth from it, O Light. While the doors were closed, Thou didst come in to Thy Disciples, O Christ God, Resurrection of all, renewing in us through them an upright spirit, according to the greatness of Thy mercy.

طروبارية القديس جاورجيوس (باللحن الرابع)

بِمَا أَنَّكَ لِلْمَأْسُورِينَ مُحَرَّرٌ وَمُعْتَقٌ، وَلِلْفُقَرَاءِ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ عَاضِدٌ وَنَاصِرٌ وَلِلْمَرْضَى طَبِيبٌ وَشَافٍ، وَعَنْ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مُكَافِحٌ وَمُحَارِبٌ. أَيُّهَا الْعَظِيمُ فِي الشُّهَدَاءِ جَاورْجِيُوسُ اللَّابِسُ الظَّفَرَ تَسْتَفِعْ إِلَى الْمَسِيحِ الْإِلَهُ فِي خَلَاصِ نُفُوسِنَا.

Troparion of St. George (Tone Four)

Since thou art a liberator and deliverer of captives, a help and support of the poor and needy, a healing physician of the sick, a contender and fighter for kings, O great among Martyrs, the victory-clad George; intercede with Christ God for the salvation of our souls.

القنطاق (باللحن الثامن)

ولئن كنت نزلت إلى قبرٍ يا مَنْ لا يموت. إلا أنك حطمت قوَّة الجحيم وقُمت غالباً أيها المسيح الإله. وللنسوة الحاملات الطيب قلت افرحن ولرُسُلك وهبت السلام. يا مانح الواقعين القيام.

Kontakion of Pascha (Tone Eight)

O Immortal One, when Thou didst descend into the tomb, Thou didst destroy the power of Hades; and Thou didst rise victorious, O Christ God. Thou hast said to the ointment bearing women:

Rejoice! And Thou gavest peace to Thy Disciples, O Bestower of Resurrection to those who had fallen.

الرسالة للقدّيس جاورجيوس

Epistle for St. George

The righteous shall rejoice in the Lord.

Hear my voice, O God.

The Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. (12:1-11).

In those days, Herod the king laid violent hands upon some who belonged to the church. He killed James the brother of John with the sword; and when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. This was during the days of Unleavened Bread. And when he had seized him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending after the Passover to bring him out to the people. So Peter was kept in prison; but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the Church. The very night when Herod was about to bring him out, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries before the door were guarding the prison; and behold, an angel of the Lord appeared, and a light shone in the cell; and he struck Peter on the side and woke him, saying, "Get up quickly." And the chains fell off his hands. And the angel said to him, "Wrap your mantle around you and follow me." And he went out and followed him; he did not know that what was done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a

بفرح الصديق بالرب.

استمع يا الله لصوتي.

فصل من أعمال الرسل القديسين.

في ذلك الزمان ألقى هيرودس الملك الأيادي على قوم من الكنيسة لئسيهم، وقتل يعقوب أبا يوحنا بالسيف، ولما رأى أن ذلك يرضي اليهود عاد فقبض على بطرس أيضاً (وكانت أيام الفطير)، فلما أمسكه جعله في السجن واسلمه إلى أربعة أرباع من الجند ليحرسوه وفي عزمه أن يقدمه إلى الشعب بعد الفصح، فكان بطرس محبوساً في السجن وكانت الكنيسة تصلي إلى الله من أجله بلا انقطاع، ولما أزمع هيرودس أن يقدمه كان بطرس في تلك الليلة نائماً بين جنديين مقيداً بسلسلتين. وكان الحراس أمام الأبواب يحفظون السجن، وإذا ملاك الرب قد وقف به ونور قد اشرق في البيت. فضرب جنب بطرس وابقظه قائلاً قم سريعاً. فسقطت السلسلتان من يديه، وقال له الملاك تمنطق واشدد نعليك. ففعل كذلك. ثم قال له البس ثوبك واتبعني، فخرج يتبعه وهو لا يعلم أن ما فعله الملاك كان حقاً بل كان يظن أنه يرى رؤيا، فلما جازا المحرس الأول والثاني انتهيا إلى باب الحديد الذي يؤدي إلى المدينة فانفتح لهما من ذاته. فخرجا وتقدما زقاقاً واحداً وللوقت فارقه الملاك، فرجع بطرس إلى نفسه وقال الآن علمت يقيناً أن الرب أرسل ملاكه وانقذني من يد هيرودس ومن كل ما تربصه بي شعب اليهود.

vision. When they had passed the first and the second guard, they came to the iron gate leading into the city. It opened to them of its own accord, and they went out and passed on through one street; and immediately the angel left him. And Peter came to himself, and said, "Now I am sure that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting."

الأنجيل لأحد القديس توما

Gospel of the Sunday of St. Thomas

The Reading is from the Holy Gospel according to St. John (20:19-31).

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and place my finger

فصل شريف من بشارة القديس يوحنا الإنجيلي البشير، التلميذ (20:19-31) الطاهر.

لما كانت عشية ذلك اليوم وهو أول الأسبوع والأبواب مغلقة حيث كان التلاميذ مجتمعين خوفاً من اليهود جاء يسوع ووقف في الوسط وقال لهم السلام لكم* فلما قال هذا أراهم يديه وجنبه. ففرح التلاميذ حين أبصروا الرب* وقال لهم ثانية السلام لكم كما أرسلني الأب كذلك أنا أرسلكم* ولما قال هذا نفخ فيهم وقال لهم خذوا الروح القدس* من غفرتم خطاياهم تغفر لهم ومن أمسكتم خطاياهم أمسكت* أما توما أحد الاثني عشر الذي يقال له التوأم فلم يكن معهم حين جاء يسوع* فقال له التلاميذ الآخرون إننا قد رأينا الرب. فقال لهم إن لم أعين أنظر المسامير في يديه وأضع يدي في جنبه لا أؤمن* وبعد ثمانية أيام كان تلاميذه أيضاً داخلاً وتوما معهم فأتى يسوع والأبواب مغلقة ووقف في الوسط وقال السلام لكم* ثم قال لتوما هات إصبعك إلى هنا وعاین يدي وهات يدك وضعها في جنبه ولا تكن غير مؤمن بل مؤمناً* أجاب توما وقال له ربي والهي* قال له يسوع لأنك رأيتني آمنت. طوبى للذين لم يروا وأمنوا* وآيات أخر كثيرة صنع يسوع أمام تلاميذه لم تكتب في هذا الكتاب. وأما هذه فقد كتبت لتؤمنوا بأن يسوع هو المسيح ابن الله. ولكي تكون لكم إذا آمنتم حياة باسمه.

in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in his side, I will not believe." Eight days later, his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. The doors were shut, but Jesus came and stood among them, and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side; do not be faithless but believing." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe." Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.

التعظيم لوالدة الإله (بالحن الأول)

أيتها المصباح الساطع الضياء، وأُمُّ الإله والشرف الذي لا قياس له، الأرفع من الخلائق جميعها، بالتسابيح نعظمك.

Megalynarion (Tone One)

O most radiant lamp, the Theotokos, the immeasurable honor, which is more exalted than all creatures, with praises do we magnify thee.

الكينونيكون

امدحي يا أورشليم للرب, سبحي الهك يا صهيون. هلوليا!

Koinonikon (Communion Hymn)

Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem; praise thy God, O Zion. Alleluia!

وبدلا من "قد نظرنا", نرتل "المسيح قام" (مرة واحدة)

Instead of "We have seen the true light", we sing "Christ is Risen" (Once)



❖ Church Announcements

- 1) **A big Thank you:** to the choir, chanters, altar servers, church decorators, and those who helped organize and assist to make our Pascha/Easter a great celebration.
- 2) **Happy Name Day:** **To all those called by the name George.**
- 3) **Konafi Sunday:** **The ladies will sell Konafi on Sunday April 30th. Please, support them.**
- 4) **Graduates:** **Please send to Father the names of all those graduating High School and University this year so we can honor them one Sunday.**
- 5) **Sunday School will resume this Saturday at 4:30 PM.**
- 6) **Vacation Bible School:** **Father would like to have VBS done during the summer for our kids at our church, please see Father if you like to help.**
- 7) **Food for Hungry People Boxes:** **Please, bring back your sacrificial offering for the poor. Please, don't bring coins, convert them into bills. Write on the envelope for the poor.**
- 8) **Home Blessing/visitation:** **Father will continue visit families and blessing homes, please see Father or call him at 403/993-7945.**

- 9) **The Lionheart:** Father wants to form a second group of men to study the Lionheart, please see Lou Salloum to signup.
- 10) **Camp St. Innocent:** If you are interested to apply as a **volunteer, counselor, or camper** at Camp St. Innocent please see Father or visit www.campstinnocent.org
- 11) **Don't forget to visit:** www.ancientfaith.com www.myocf.net www.journeytoorthodoxy.com, www.myocn.net, www.patristicnector.org, visit on "You Tube" **Be the Bee for teachings on the Orthodox Church.**
- 12) **Giving back to God:** Our church depends on your generous giving back to God for all His blessings in your life. **Please, give generously and regularly and God will bless you back a 100 times.** **Give a percentage of your income**. Make a commitment to increase your giving for 2017. Write your name on the envelope for a receipt.
- 13) **PLC:** **The Parish Life Conference for the Diocese of Los Angeles and the West will on July 5th-9th hosted by St. Michael Church, Van Nuys, California. It will be held at Los Angeles Airport Marriott call (310) 641-5700.**

The Archdiocese Convention: The 2017 Archdiocese Convention will be in Miami from July 23rd-30th. Visit <http://www.ac2017miami.org/>

14) **Blessing of Homes:** will be resumed after Pascha.

15) **Let us make a commitment not to miss church this year.**

Our Encounter with the Risen Christ

And the power behind the resurrection

The main reason Christianity spread so rapidly following the Resurrection of Christ, was the power behind the resurrection. The truth of Christ's resurrection empowered believers to joyfully embrace martyrdom, knowing that they would be joined in eternal bliss with their resurrected Saviour.

Although their martyrdom would involve both mental and physical anguish, they were almost joyful in their willingness to go to their deaths, rather than betray their faith. Not the kind of thing one would do just to be part of some “religion”. Many contemporaries observed that these Christians were facing their martyr’s death as though they were about to be married. They were not grim faced, but shown a certain light in their countenance, embracing, as they did, their crown of martyrdom.

When Saint Polycarp was sentenced by the proconsul, he responded by asking why they were delaying his death by burning. These believers were rejoicing as they faced their immanent death, for their knowledge of the bodily resurrection of Christ, was proof enough to have giving them an invincible courage as they faced certain death. Grand Duchess Elizabeth and Nun Barbara were said to have been singing hymns, after having been thrown into the well, by the Bolsheviks, as they prepared for eternal life with Christ.

Early Christian apologists cited hundreds of eyewitnesses, many of whom willfully and resolutely endured prolonged torture and death rather than repudiate their testimony. Their willingness to suffer death, ruled out deception on their part. According to the historical record most Christians could have ended their suffering simply by renouncing the faith. Instead, most opted to endure the suffering and proclaim Christ’s resurrection unto death.

What makes the earliest Christian martyrs remarkable is that they knew whether or not what they were professing was true. They either saw Jesus Christ alive-and-well after His death or they did not. If it was all just a lie, why would so many Christians perpetuate a myth, given their circumstances? Why would they all knowingly cling to such an unprofitable lie in the face of persecution, imprisonment, torture, and death?

Immediately following Christ’s crucifixion, His followers hid in fear for their lives. Yet following Christ’s resurrection they boldly proclaimed the resurrection despite intensifying persecution. Only a true resurrection could have accounted for a sudden change that would lead believers to give up everything, including their lives, to preach Christ’s resurrection.

One skeptic, Paul, was of his own admission a violent persecutor of the early Church. Yet after an encounter with the resurrected Christ, Paul underwent an immediate and drastic change from a vicious persecutor of the Church to one of its most prolific and selfless defenders. Following his encounter with the Risen Christ, Paul suffered impoverishment, persecution, imprisonment, beatings, and finally execution for his steadfast commitment to Christ’s resurrection.

الشك والإيمان

اليوم، في غمرة القيامة، نتذكّر لقاء السيّد مع توما. بعد أن ظهر يسوع للتلاميذ في اليوم الأول من الأسبوع - ولم يكن توما معهم - ظهر في اليوم الثامن، أي في مثل هذا اليوم، وكان توما مع التلاميذ ولكنه شكّ في حقيقة القيامة. توما وجه يمثّل الكثيرين منّا، ولعله يمثّل الكلّ، وكان الإيمان والشكّ مترافقان في الحياة. ضدّ الإيمان جحود كائن أو إلحاد. الشكّ يصعد من شهواتنا إلينا ويجعلنا غير مؤمنين، غير مقبلين إلى المسيح إقبالاً كلياً. أن يكون الإنسان مؤمناً هو أن يعتبر الله مأمناً. في الإنسانيّة حالات اضطراب، كلّ منّا يفتش عن مأمّن. ما دام الإنسان يخشى الموت فهو يصطنع قوّات أمن تحفظه من الموت المداهم، ولكنّ الموت الكبير هو الموت الروحيّ، هو موت النفس بالخطيئة في سيئاتها وهي تحاول النهوض ولا تنهض، فتسقط يوماً بعد يوم، وتجدد العزم على المضيّ مع السيّد، ولكنها لا تمضي فتتخلف عن مسابرة يسوع. النفس تسلّم ذاتها للسيّد ولكنّ العاصفة تهبّ فيها، وهي تسمع النوء فتغرق. إنّهُ جهد يوميّ، جهاد مضمّن، دائم، أن نكون دائماً شاخصين إلى يسوع بحيث لا يتجاوزنا هوى، وبحيث لا نعود إلى الوراء بعد أن وضعنا يدينا على المحراث. توما كان صورة عن كلّ منّا، وقيّمته في تاريخ الخلاص أنّ شكّه ثبتّ قيامة المسيح، ثبتّ إيماننا بهذه القيامة. وشكّه يضطرنا إلى الرجوع إلى القيامة إذ لا مهرب لنا من خطيئتنا إلّا إلى وجه السيّد المضيء. مهما قمنا بمحاولات لننهض فلن نستطيع شيئاً، لا نستطيع إلّا أن نسلمّ النفس إلى يسوع بصورة كاملة. عندئذ فقط نبرنا هو ويدخل إلى النفس ويطهرها من ويلاتها ويرفعها من كبوتها. المسيح يجلس في قاع النفس، يمتدّ في النفس البشريّة، وإذا أخذ مكانه فلا يبقى مكان لآخر. وعندئذ نحن في النور ونحن متغلبون على الشوك. هذا ما تؤكّده لنا الكنيسة في الصلاة: نرتّل في صلاة السحر: «إنّ التلاميذ لما كانوا مشكّكين، وافى المخلص إلى حيث كانوا مجتمعين بعد ثمانية أيّام وأعطاهم سلاماً، وهتف بتوما: هلمّ أيّها الرسول فتشّ الكفّين اللتين تُقبّتا بالمسامير. فيا لمستطرف عدم تصديق توما إذ أقبل بقلوب المؤمنين إلى المعرفة وهتف بخوف: ربّي وإلهي ... يا له من عجب معجز لأنّ عدم الإيمان صار تأكيداً للإيمان لأنّ توما قال: إن لم أبصر فلا أصدّق. فلما فتشّ الجنب نطق بلاهوت المتجسّد الذي هو ابن الله، وعرف أنّه تألمّ بالبشرة، وهتف كارراً بالإله الناهض، وصرخ بنعمة جهيرة ربّي وإلهي المجد لك». تقول لنا الكنيسة: نحن نؤمن بسبب شكّ توما ونؤمن بسبب عودته. هذا هو الأمر المهمّ وبسببه نحن نعيش. نعيش لأنّ واحداً قام وتالياً فنحن سنقوم معه. نحن قائلون الآن من الخطيئة ومن الفساد، قائلون بالحرّيّة في اليقين وفي الحبّ. هذه هي القيامة. نحن قائلون ونعلم أنّنا غالبون للخطيئة، للاضطراب، للفساد، للعزلة، نحن قائلون لأنّ جسد الربّ ودمه ينخرسان فينا بالمناولة المقدّسة. جسدا المائت يُبعث حيّاً لأنّ جسد الله إذا وُضع فينا لا يفنى. نحن نقوم لأنّنا نتناول جسد الربّ ودمه، وإذا وُضعت جثّتنا في القبر فجسد الربّ الذي كان غذاءنا لا يفنى. جسد الربّ الذي فينا هو يبعثنا من القبر، وبسببنا يقوم العالم بأسره لأنّنا نحن في العالم خميرة تخمّر العجين كلّهُ. فما أظرف عدم تصديق توما إذ أقبل بقلوب المؤمنين إلى المعرفة وهتف بخوف: ربّي وإلهي... لأنّ عدم الإيمان صار تأكيداً للإيمان.

جاور جيوس مطران جبيل والبترون وما يليهما (جبل لبنان)

Greatmartyr, Victory-bearer and Wonderworker George

Commemorated on [April 23](#)

Troparion & Kontakion

The Holy Great Martyr George the Victory-Bearer, was a native of Cappadocia (a district in Asia Minor), and he grew up in a deeply believing Christian family. His father was martyred for Christ when George was still a child. His mother, owning lands in Palestine, moved there with her son and raised him in strict piety.

When he became a man, Saint George entered into the service of the Roman army. He was handsome, brave and valiant in battle, and he came to the notice of the emperor Diocletian (284-305) and joined the imperial guard with the rank of comites, or military commander.

The pagan emperor, who did much for the restoration of Roman might, was clearly concerned with the danger presented to pagan civilization by the triumph of the Crucified Savior, and intensified his persecution against the Christians in the final years of his reign. Following the advice of the Senate at Nicomedia, Diocletian gave all his governors full freedom in their court proceedings against Christians, and he promised them his full support.

Saint George, when he heard the decision of the emperor, distributed all his wealth to the poor, freed his servants, and then appeared in the Senate. The brave soldier of Christ spoke out openly against the emperor's designs. He confessed himself a Christian, and appealed to all to acknowledge Christ: "I am a servant of Christ, my God, and trusting in Him, I have come among you voluntarily, to bear witness concerning the Truth."

"What is Truth?" one of the dignitaries asked, echoing the question of Pontius Pilate. The saint replied, "Christ Himself, Whom you persecuted, is Truth."

Stunned by the bold speech of the valiant warrior, the emperor, who had loved and promoted George, attempted to persuade him not to throw away his youth and glory and honors, but rather to offer sacrifice to the gods as was the Roman custom. The confessor replied, "Nothing in this inconstant life can weaken my resolve to serve God."

Then by order of the enraged emperor the armed guards began to push Saint George out of the assembly hall with their spears, and they then led him off to prison. But the deadly steel became soft and it bent, just as the spears touched the saint's body, and it caused him no harm. In prison they put the martyr's feet in stocks and placed a heavy stone on his chest.

The next day at the interrogation, powerless but firm of spirit, Saint George again answered the emperor, "You will grow tired of tormenting me sooner than I will tire of being tormented by you." Then Diocletian gave orders to subject Saint George to some very intense tortures. They tied the Great Martyr to a wheel, beneath which were boards pierced with sharp pieces of iron. As the wheel turned, the sharp edges slashed the saint's naked body.

At first the sufferer loudly cried out to the Lord, but soon he quieted down, and did not utter even a single groan. Diocletian decided that the tortured one was already dead, and he gave orders to remove the battered body from the wheel, and then went to a pagan temple to offer thanks.

At this very moment it got dark, thunder boomed, and a voice was heard: "Fear not, George, for I am with you." Then a wondrous light shone, and at the wheel an angel of the Lord appeared in the form of a radiant youth. He placed his hand upon the martyr, saying to him, "Rejoice!" Saint George stood up healed.

When the soldiers led him to the pagan temple where the emperor was, the emperor could not believe his own eyes and he thought that he saw before him some other man or even a ghost. In confusion and in terror the pagans looked Saint George over carefully, and they became convinced that a miracle had occurred. Many then came to believe in the Life-Creating God of the Christians.

Two illustrious officials, Saints Anatolius and Proton, who were secretly Christians, openly confessed Christ. Immediately, without a trial, they were beheaded with the sword by order of the emperor. Also present in the pagan temple was Empress Alexandra, the wife of Diocletian, and she also knew the truth. She was on the point of glorifying Christ, but one of the servants of the emperor took her and led her off to the palace.

The emperor became even more furious. He had not lost all hope of influencing Saint George, so he gave him over to new and fiercesome torments. After throwing him into a deep pit, they covered it over with lime. Three days later they dug him out, but found him cheerful and unharmed. They shod the saint in iron sandals with red-hot nails, and then drove him back to the prison with whips. In the morning, when they led him back to the interrogation, cheerful and with healed feet, the emperor asked if he liked his shoes. The saint said that the sandals had been just his size. Then they beat him with ox thongs until pieces of his flesh came off and his blood soaked the ground, but the brave sufferer, strengthened by the power of God, remained unyielding.

The emperor concluded that the saint was being helped by magic, so he summoned the sorcerer Athanasius to deprive the saint of his miraculous powers, or else poison him. The sorcerer gave Saint George two goblets containing drugs. One of them would have quieted him, and the other would kill him. The drugs had no effect, and the saint continued to denounce the pagan superstitions and glorify God as before.

When the emperor asked what sort of power was helping him, Saint George said, "Do not imagine that it is any human learning which keeps me from being harmed by these torments. I am saved only by calling upon Christ and His Power. Whoever believes in Him has no regard for tortures and is able to do the things that Christ did" (John 14:12). Diocletian asked what sort of things Christ had done. The Martyr replied, "He gave sight to the blind, cleansed the lepers, healed the lame, gave hearing to the deaf, cast out demons, and raised the dead."

Knowing that they had never been able to resurrect the dead through sorcery, nor by any of the gods known to him, and wanting to test the saint, the emperor commanded him to raise up a dead person before his eyes. The saint retorted, "You wish to tempt me, but my God will work this sign for the salvation of the people who shall see the power of Christ."

When they led Saint George down to the graveyard, he cried out, "O Lord! Show to those here present, that You are the only God in all the world. Let them know You as the Almighty Lord." Then the earth quaked, a grave opened, the dead one emerged from it alive. Having seen with their own eyes the Power of Christ, the people wept and glorified the true God.

The sorcerer Athanasius, falling down at the feet of Saint George, confessed Christ as the All-Powerful God and asked forgiveness for his sins, committed in ignorance. The obdurate emperor in his impiety thought otherwise. In a rage, he commanded both Athanasius and the man raised from the dead to be beheaded, and he had Saint George again locked up in prison.

The people, weighed down with their infirmities, began to visit the prison and they there received healing and help from the saint. A certain farmer named Glycerius, whose ox had collapsed, also visited him. The saint consoled him and assured him that God would restore his ox to life. When he saw the ox alive, the farmer began to glorify the God of the Christians throughout all the city. By order of the emperor, Saint Glycerius was arrested and beheaded.

The exploits and the miracles of the Great Martyr George had increased the number of the Christians, therefore Diocletian made a final attempt to compel the saint to offer sacrifice to the idols. They set up a court at the pagan temple of Apollo. On the final night the holy martyr prayed fervently, and as he slept, he saw the Lord, Who raised him up with His hand, and embraced him. The Savior placed a crown on Saint George's head and said, "Fear not, but have courage, and you will soon come to Me and receive what has been prepared for you."

In the morning, the emperor offered to make Saint George his co-administrator, second only to himself. The holy martyr with a feigned willingness answered, "Caesar, you should have shown me this mercy from the very beginning, instead of torturing me. Let us go now to the temple and see the gods you worship."

Diocletian believed that the martyr was accepting his offer, and he followed him to the pagan temple with his retinue and all the people. Everyone was certain that Saint George would offer sacrifice to the gods. The saint went up to the idol, made the Sign of the Cross and addressed it as if it were alive: "Are you the one who wants to receive from me sacrifice befitting God?"

The demon inhabiting the idol cried out, "I am not a god and none of those like me is a god, either. The only God is He Whom you preach. We are fallen angels, and we deceive people because we are jealous."

Saint George cried out, "How dare you remain here, when I, the servant of the true God, have entered?" Then noises and wailing were heard from the idols, and they fell to the ground and were shattered.

There was general confusion. In a frenzy, pagan priests and many of the crowd seized the holy martyr, tied him up, and began to beat him. They also called for his immediate execution.

The holy empress Alexandra tried to reach him. Pushing her way through the crowd, she cried out, "O God of George, help me, for You Alone are All-Powerful." At the feet of the Great Martyr the holy empress confessed Christ, Who had humiliated the idols and those who worshipped them.

Diocletian immediately pronounced the death sentence on the Great Martyr George and the holy Empress Alexandra, who followed Saint George to execution without resisting. Along the way she felt faint and slumped against a wall. There she surrendered her soul to God.

Saint George gave thanks to God and prayed that he would also end his life in a worthy manner. At the place of execution the saint prayed that the Lord would forgive the torturers who acted in ignorance, and that He would lead them to the knowledge of Truth. Calmly and bravely, the holy Great Martyr George bent his neck beneath the sword, receiving the crown of martyrdom on April 23, 303.

The pagan era was coming to an end, and Christianity was about to triumph. Within ten years, Saint Constantine (May 21) would issue the Edict of Milan, granting religious freedom to Christians.

Of the many miracles worked by the holy Great Martyr George, the most famous are depicted in iconography. In the saint's native city of Beirut were many idol-worshippers. Outside the city, near Mount Lebanon, was a large lake, inhabited by an enormous dragon-like serpent. Coming out of the lake, it devoured people, and there was nothing anyone could do, since the breath from its nostrils poisoned the very air.

On the advice of the demons inhabiting the idols, the local ruler came to a decision. Each day the people would draw lots to feed their own children to the serpent, and he promised to sacrifice his only daughter when his turn came. That time did come, and the ruler dressed her in her finest attire, then sent her off to the lake. The girl wept bitterly, awaiting her death. Unexpectedly for her, Saint George rode up on his horse with spear in hand. The girl implored him not to leave her, lest she perish.

The saint signed himself with the Sign of the Cross. He rushed at the serpent saying, “In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” Saint George pierced the throat of the serpent with his spear and trampled it with his horse. Then he told the girl to bind the serpent with her sash, and lead it into the city like a dog on a leash.

The people fled in terror, but the saint halted them with the words: “Don’t be afraid, but trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and believe in Him, since it is He Who sent me to save you.” Then the saint killed the serpent with a sword, and the people burned it outside the city. Twenty-five thousand men, not counting women and children, were then baptized. Later, a church was built and dedicated to the Most Holy Theotokos and the Great Martyr George.

Saint George went on to become a talented officer and to amaze the world by his military exploits. He died before he was thirty years old. He is known as Victory Bearer, not only for his military achievements, but for successfully enduring martyrdom. As we know, the martyrs are commemorated in the dismissal at the end of Church services as “the holy, right victorious martyr....”

Saint George was the patron saint and protector of several of the great builders of the Russian state. Saint Vladimir’s son, Yaroslav the Wise (in holy Baptism George), advanced the veneration of the saint in the Russian Church. He built the city of Yuriev [i.e., “of Yurii.” “Yurii” is the diminutive of “George”, as “Ivan” is of “John”], he also founded the Yuriev monastery at Novgorod, and he built a church of Saint George the Victory Bearer at Kiev.

The day of the consecration of Saint George’s Church in Kiev, November 26, 1051 by Saint Hilarion, Metropolitan of Kiev and All Rus, has entered into the liturgical treasury of the Church as a special church feastday. Yuriev Day is beloved by the Russian people as an “autumn Feast of Saint George.”

The name of Saint George was also borne by the founder of Moscow, Yurii Dolgoruky (+ 1157), who was the builder of many churches dedicated to Saint George, and the builder of the city of Yuriev-Polsk. In the year 1238 the heroic fight of the Russian nation against the Mongol Horde was led by the Great Prince Yurii (George) Vsevolodovich of Vladimir (February 4), who fell at the Battle at the Sita River. His memory, like that of Igor the Brave, and defender of his land, was celebrated in Russian spiritual poems and ballads.

The first Great Prince of Moscow, when Moscow had become the center of the Russian Land, was Yurii Danilovich (+ 1325), the son of Saint Daniel of Moscow, and grandson of Saint Alexander Nevsky. From that time Saint George the Victory Bearer, depicted as a horseman slaying the serpent, appeared on Moscow’s coat of arms, and became an emblem of the Russian state. This has strengthened Russia’s connections with Christian nations, and especially with Iberia (Georgia, the Land of Saint George).

