

ST. GEORGE ANTIOCHIAN
ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL
3400 DAWSON STREET
PITTSBURGH, PA 15213-4314

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Dates to Remember

September 1, Saturday: Children's Ministry Open House Event

September 8, Saturday: The Nativity of the Theotokos

September 9, Sunday: Church School begins. Clean up and Declutter day at the cathedral

September 14, Friday: Feast of the Elevation of the Holy Cross
(Services Thursday evening)

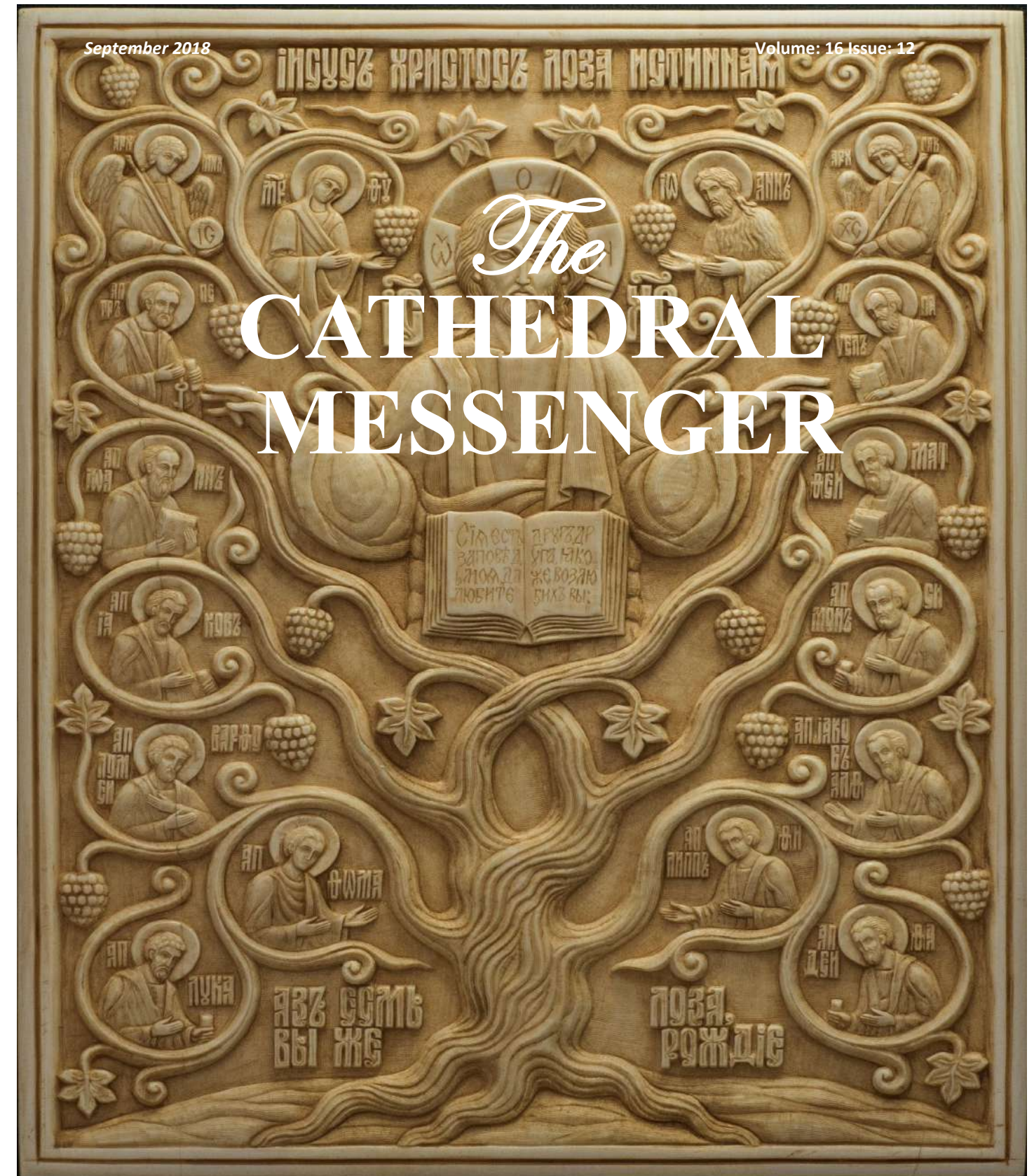
September 15, Saturday: 4:00;-9:00pm Diocesan Order of St. Ignatius Dinner

September 22, Saturday: 6:00pm St. George Men's Ministry Fellowship and Dinner

October 19, Friday: Family Night

November 9-11th, Friday-Sunday: Retreat with Maria Kratsios

December 14, Friday: L.A.M. and Antiochian Women Christmas Luncheon



SAINT GEORGE ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL

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Dependency: A Must Have for our Spiritual Life

By Father Joshua Makoul



Many of us struggle to grasp or understand how our relationship with Christ should be or what it should look like. We feel that we lack a direction or map to follow in our relationship with Christ. We at times feel that God is elusive or somehow hidden in the shadows of our life. For many, we sense His presence, but feel uncertain as to what direction in which to reach. On some level we know and want a closer relationship with God and want to feel closer to Him, but we often don't know where to start. We know He is "out there" but we may feel untethered from Him or disconnected in some way.

In the Gospel of John, at the Last Supper, Jesus tells us, "I am the vine and you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing". This is only one verse in this particular passage, but it is the one that sums up the whole passage and meaning of the passage. The imagery that emerges from this particular passage can help us with the issue of what our relationship with Christ should be like and what it should involve. When Jesus taught the disciples during His Incarnation, He was not only teaching them but us as well. His words carry across two thousand years to us today. They are timeless and eternal. This is one of the reasons why scripture reading is so important.

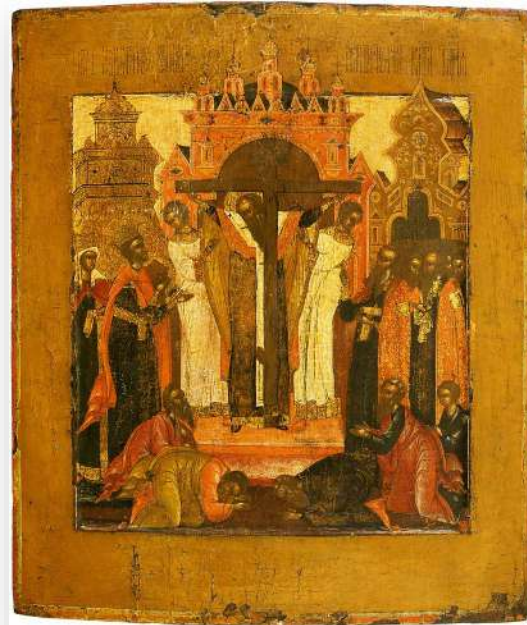
We should start with the very image that Jesus presents, the one of a vine and its branches. The vine can survive without its branches for new branches can always be grown, however the branches can never survive or thrive without the vine. Jesus, at the last supper, is inviting the disciples and indeed all of us into a very close and intimate relationship with Him. Jesus is telling us to emulate the relationship between the branches and the vine with Him. Ultimately, at the very core of this relationship, is the presence of dependency. This dependency cannot be detoured or avoided. Mere belief in or acknowledge of God is not enough. There must be dependency and a dependency that manifests itself and that is lived daily. It is this very dependency that forges and is the backbone of our relationship with Christ. The world ingrains in us the belief that dependency is a weakness, however dependency on Christ is the greatest strength. This dependency also has the added benefit of opening the doors of humility to us. Prayers born from humility are the most well received by God and the most pleasing to Him.

When we go to pray, the imagery of the vine and branches should motivate us to pray. If we believe in God we need to go a bit further and ask ourselves, am I dependent on Him? Or have I allowed the world and all my responsibilities to subtly make me believe I have to rely on myself? If we are not careful, the vine that we are attached to is not Christ, but rather the world. What a frightening and sobering realization indeed. If the latter, then we often will not keep our prayer times at home because we "just have too much to do". However, if the former, then no matter how busy we are, no matter what we have to do, nothing will keep us from that prayer time in which we dialogue and commune with Christ. We will hunger and thirst for prayer. All that the branch does and all that it seeks is in vain if the branch's connection with the vine weakens or breaks. So it is with us and Christ. We should also pray those words, "Lord, without you I am nothing and without you I can do nothing. As the branches can do nothing apart from the vine, so I can do nothing apart from you. Lord, abide in Me and I in you". We need to pray our dependency on Christ. Even if we don't feel it right away, pray those words, and that blessed dependency will follow.

This dependency however does not only draw us to prayer and serve as the main motivation for us to keep our prayer rule. It is also an awareness that we live with and that should be automatically woven into daily mindset, just as our need to breath is always present and accepted. It should also help deter us from sin. Sin, as well as being distracted by the world, can separate us from Christ. Living with a constant awareness of this dependency instills in us a healthy fear of sin. Why would I want to engage in something that will separate me from the one that nourishes my soul and gives me peace and stability? What should emerge from this is a fierce guarding of our connection with the vine. This unceasing desire to maintain connection and communion with the vine guides our very thought, motivation, word, and action. We can achieve a state where as soon as we encounter temptation, we immediately steer away from it due to fear of losing that connection with our vine who is Christ Himself. This dependency guides and steers us in our life. It also forges a bond between us and Christ. As long as we follow this, then how can God feel distant from us or us from Him?

Upcoming Feasts

Feast of the Elevation of the Holy Cross, September 14



The Elevation of the Cross, celebrated on the fourteenth of September, commemorates the finding of Christ's Cross by Saint Helen, the mother of the Emperor Constantine in the fourth century; and, after it was taken by the Persians, of its recovery by the Emperor Heraclius in the seventh century at which time it was "elevated" in the Church of the Resurrection in Jerusalem. From this latter event the "universal elevation" of the Cross was celebrated annually in all of the churches of the Christian Empire.

The day of the Elevation of the Cross became, as it were, the national holiday of the Eastern Christian Empire similar to the Fourth of July in the United States. The Cross, the official emblem of the Empire which was placed on all public buildings

and uniforms, was officially elevated on this day by the bishops and priests. They blessed the four directions of the universe with the Cross, while the faithful repeated the chanting of "Lord have mercy." This ritual is still done in the churches today after the solemn presentation and elevation of the Cross at the end of the Vigil service of the holy day following the Great Doxology of Matins.

The troparion of the feast which was, one might say, the "national anthem" sung on all public occasions in the Christian Empires of Byzantium and Russia, originally petitioned God to save the people, to grant victory in war and to preserve the empire "by the virtue of the Cross." Today the troparion, and all the hymns of the day, are "spiritualized" as the "adversaries" become the spiritually wicked and sinful including the devil and his armies, and "Orthodox Christians" replace the names of ruling officials of the Empire.

O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance. Grant victories to the Orthodox Christians over their adversaries; and by the virtue of Thy Cross, preserve Thy habitation (Troparion).

The Nativity of the Theotokos, September 8

In addition to the celebration of the Annunciation, there are three major feasts in the Church honoring Mary, the Theotokos. The first of these is the feast of her nativity which is kept on the eighth of September.

The record of the birth of Mary is not found in the Bible. The traditional account of the event is taken from the apocryphal writings which are not part of the New Testament scriptures. The traditional teaching which is celebrated in the hymns and verses of the festal liturgy is that Joachim and Anna were a pious Jewish couple who were among the small and faithful remnant, "the poor and the needy"—who were awaiting the promised messiah. The couple was old and childless. They prayed earnestly to the Lord for a child, since among the Jews barrenness was a sign of God's disfavor. In answer to their prayers, and as the reward of their unwavering fidelity to God, the elderly couple was blessed with the child who was destined, because of her own personal goodness and holiness, to become the Mother of the Messiah-Christ.



Your nativity, O Virgin, has proclaimed joy to the whole universe. The Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God, has shone from you, O Theotokos. By annulling the curse he bestowed a blessing. By destroying death he has granted us eternal life (Troparion).

By your nativity, O most pure virgin, Joachim and Anna are freed from barrenness; Adam and Eve from the corruption of death. And we, your people, freed from the guilt of sin, celebrate and sing to you: The barren woman gives birth to the Theotokos, the Nourisher of our Life (Kontakion).

The fact that there is no Biblical verification of the facts of Mary's birth is incidental to the meaning of the feast. Even if the actual background of the event as celebrated in the Church is questionable from an historical point of view, the divine meaning of it "for us men and for our salvation" is obvious. There had to be one born of human flesh and blood who would be spiritually capable of being the Mother of Christ, and she herself had to be born into the world of persons who were spiritually capable of being her parents.

The feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos, therefore, is a glorification of Mary's birth, of Mary herself and of her righteous parents. It is a celebration as well of the very first preparation of the salvation of the world. For the "Vessel of Light," the "Book of the Word of Life," the "Door to the Orient," the "Throne of Wisdom" is being prepared on earth by God Himself in the birth of the holy girl-child Mary.

Please Join Us For...

St. George Parish Community Night

Friday, October 19 at 6:00PM

Dinner will be served from 6:15 to 7:30PM

Seafood Pasta Dinner, sides, and dessert

There is no charge for this dinner

*There will be group Boardgames for the kids and adults after dinner.
Adults are free to just hang out in the hall after dinner and socialize if
they choose.*

Wednesday Evenings
Applied Orthodox Spirituality Class
St. George Cathedral

Spiritual Formation Series

Wednesdays at 7:30PM



This series is designed to help us assess if we are maturing and growing properly spiritually:

Did we start off on the right foot spiritually?

Are my motives healthy and correct?

Am I expending my spiritual focus in the right areas?

Am I becoming more spiritually mature or immature?

How do I create the clearest path possible between myself
and God?

Do I feel I lost something spiritually that I once had?

Learning to retrace our steps spiritually to get back on the
right path

3400 Dawson St, Pittsburgh, PA

St. George Events for 2018

August 26, Sunday: 4:00PM St. George Homeless Dinner

September 1, Saturday: 11AM-1PM Children's Ministry Event-Spiritual Lesson,
Pizza, and walk to Dave and Andy's for ice cream

September 7, Friday: 10:00AM-1:00PM Orthros and Mom's Ministry lunch
(childcare and food provided).

September 9, Sunday: 1:00PM Clean up and Declutter day at the church
(Lunch provided for the volunteers)

September 15, Saturday: 4:00-9:00PM Diocesan Order of St. Ignatius Dinner (To
Benefit building of new camp cabins at AV Camp and
Retired clergy fund)

September 22, Saturday: 6:00PM St. George Men's Ministry Fellowship and
Dinner

October 12, Friday: 10:00-1:00PM Orthros and Mom's Ministry Lunch (childcare
and food provided).

October 19, Friday: Parish Family Night 6:30PM (Dinner and Activities)

October 21, Sunday: 12:00PM Calendar Party (Antiochian Women)

November 2, Friday: 10:00-1:00PM Orthros and Mom's Ministry Lunch (childcare
and food provided).

November 9-11th, Friday-Sunday: Retreat with Maria Kratsios: "Dare I show myself
To God? Emotional Awareness as a Spiritual
Discipline and a Healing Way"

December 9, Sunday: 1:00-4:00PM L.A.M. and Antiochian Women Christmas
Luncheon at the Lamont

December 14, Friday: 10:00-1:00PM Orthros and Mom's Ministry Lunch (childcare
and lunch provided).

New to the Family.....



Dorothea Bossard DOB: July 3, 2017 Born to Joseph and Justine Bossard



Lucia Allison Catanese DOB April 29, 2018 Born to Nathan and Kristen Catanese



Dorothea with her siblings

September Calendar

Saturday	01:	Children's Ministry Event-Spiritual Lesson @ 11 AM – 1:00 PM, Pizza, and walk to Dave and Andy's for ice cream Great Vespers @ 5:00 PM
Sunday	02	SOYO Meeting
Monday	03	Society of St. George Meeting @ Noon
Wednesday	05	Vespers @ 7:00 PM
Friday	07	Orthros and Mom's Ministry lunch @ 10:00AM-1:00PM (childcare and food provided)
Saturday	08	Nativity of the Theotokos, Orthros @ 9:00 AM & Liturgy @ 10:00 AM Great Vespers @ 5:00 PM
Sunday	09	Church School Begins Clean-up and Declutter Day at the Church -starts @ 1:00 PM (Lunch will be provided for the volunteers.)
Monday	10	Parish Council Meeting @ 6:30 PM
Wednesday	12	Vespers @ 7:00 PM
Thursday	13	Vigil for Elevation of the Holy Cross Great Vespers @ 5:00 PM, Orthros @ 6:00 PM & Liturgy @ 7:00 PM
Saturday	15	Diocesan Order of St. Ignatios Dinner 4:00 PM –9:00 PM (To Benefit building of new camp cabins at AV Camp and, for Retired clergy fund)
Sunday	16	Antiochian Women Meeting
Wednesday	19	Vespers @ 7:00 PM
Friday	21	Orthros Service @ 10:00 AM
Saturday	22	St. George Men's Ministry Fellowship and Dinner @ 6:00 PM Great Vespers @ 5:00 PM
Wednesday	26	Vespers @ 7:00 PM
Friday	28	Orthros Service @ 10:00 AM
Saturday	29	Great Vespers @ 5:00 PM
Sunday	30	St. George Lighthouse Ministry Meeting

Departed Anniversary List

September 2, 2018: Yasmine Bazari-2015, Susan Davis-1959, James Thomas-1993, Zachary E. Hallow-1977, Minerva Namen-1987, John Abraham-1988, Michael Abraham-1961, Ayna Maryam Zahir-1993, Craig R. Stephens-1988, Phillip Nassar-2008, Mary Hazo-1965, Esper Bazy-1982, and Helen Farah-1979.

September 09, 2018: Donna Lehiy-2007, Ronald E. Degenkolb-2005, Abraham Albert-1956, George N. Abraham-1997, Joseph E. Lesoon-1976, Wallace Solomon-1996, Charles G. Thomas-2001, Maryann Esper-1993, John Bazari-1998, Elias J. Hakim-1964, Agnes ("Aggie") Khalil-2003, Lottie Haddad-1956, and Mariam Mashraky-2017.

September 16, 2018: Ayupe Hanna (Bitar)-1977, James Hanna-2000, Katherine Joseph-1978, Craig Stephens-1988, John David Skelton, Jr.-1998, Julia Esper-1999, Thomas A. Hakim, Sr.-2007, Mary Ayoub-2006, James Mahfood-1978, Michael M. Serafy-2013, Dan Robbins-2014, Selma Detmer-1964, Wasif Saba-2016, Albert Khalil Nahas-1976, Yassemine Khalil-2014, and Mary Hanna-1993.

September 23, 2018: Wasif D. Saba-2016, Olga Marie Solomon-1996, Martha Hanna-1978, Charles Charley-1980, Daniel Fraed-1972, Elias Hakim Jr.-2009, Susan Salem-1973, Sari A. Brooks-2004, Samuel Abraham-1966, Edward W. Liebert-2003, and Margaret Khorey-2017.

September 30, 2018: Abraham Esper-1989, Elizabeth S. Cory-1994, Elias Khalil-2007, Namy Farah-1965, Sadie Abraham-1977, William Salem-2014, Mary Ruth Zahir-2014, Sylvia Gilbert-1997, and Rose Roy-2000.

Antiochian Archdiocesan National Convention

Our Cathedral will be hosting the Antiochian Archdiocesan National Convention in the summer of 2021. This is an opportunity for our community to show our brothers and sisters in Christ throughout the country great hospitality and our great city of Pittsburgh.

To offer help or resources please see Fr. Joshua or Stephen Esper.