Sunday after
The Exaltation of the Holy Cross

Icon of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross
**Saint George Greek Orthodox Church**

Address: 16300 Dix-Toledo Road, Southgate, MI 48195  
Office phone: 734-283-8820  
Office fax: 734-283-8866  
Email address: stgeorgesouthgate@gmail.com  
Websites: www.stgeorgesouthgate.org / www.thegreciancenter.com  
Clergy: Fr. Anthony Cook – Proistamenos  
Direct phone: 734-716-2268  
Email: franthonyc@mac.com

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**Sunday, September 20, 2020**

**Service Materials**

For your health and safety, we are presently unable to have service books in the pews. For those who would like to follow along with the services, there are two options.

1) You may bring your own book to follow along with the Liturgy. Most of the variable items can be found in this bulletin, including the Typika & Beatitudes sung before the Small Entrance.

2) You can access all the service texts on your smart phone. There will be a sign with QR codes providing the links to the morning’s services as you enter the Church, or you can find everything directly at agesinitiatives.com. At present, you will need to access the Orthros, the Liturgy, and the Liturgy - Variable Parts. The Orthros covers the service prior to 10 am, and the other two files cover the service after 10 am.

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**Τυπικά**  
**Ψαλμὸς ΡΒ’ (102).**

Εὐλόγει, ἡ ψυχή μου, τὸν Κύριον, καί, πάντα τὰ ἐντός μου, τὸ ὄνομα τὸ ἄγιον αὐτοῦ. Εὐλόγει, ἡ ψυχή μου, τὸν Κύριον, καὶ μὴ ἐπιλανθάνου πάσας τὰς ἀνταποδόσεις αὐτοῦ. Τὸν εὐιλατεύοντα πάσας τὰς ἀνομίας σου, τὸν ἰώμενον πάσας τὰς νόσους σου. Τὸν λυτρούμενον ἐκ φθορᾶς τὴν ζωήν σου, τὸν στεφανοῦντά σε ἐν ἐλέει καὶ οἰκτιρμοῖς. Τὸν ἐμπιπλῶντα ἐν ἀγαθοῖς τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν σου, ἀνακαινισθήσεται ὡς ἀετοῦ ἡ νεότης σου. Ποιῶν ἐλεημοσύνας ὁ Κύριος καὶ κρῖμα πᾶσι τοῖς ἁμαρτούντες. Έγνωρισε τὰς ὁδοὺς αὐτοῦ τῷ Μωϋσὶ, τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἰσραήλ τὰ θελήματα αὐτοῦ. Οἰκτίρμων καὶ ἐλεήμον ὁ Κύριος, μακρόθυμος καὶ πολυέλεος· οὐκ εἰς τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν ἐποίησεν, οὐδὲ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα μηνιεῖ. Οὐ κατὰ τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν ἐποίησεν ἡμῖν, ὅτι κατὰ τὸ ὕψος τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἐκραταίωσε Κύριος τὸ ἔλεος αὐτοῦ ἐκ φθορᾶς τῆς γῆς ἀνταπέδωκεν ἡμῖν, ὅτι κατὰ τὸ ὕψος τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἐκραταίωσε Κύριος τὸ ἔλεος αὐτοῦ ἐκ φθορᾶς τῆς γῆς ἀνταπέδωκεν ἡμῖν, ὅτι κατὰ τὸ ὕψος τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἐκραταίωσε Κύριος τὸ ἔλεος αὐτοῦ ἐκ φθορᾶς τῆς γῆς ἀνταπέδωκεν ἡμῖν.

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**Typika**  
**Psalm 102 (103).**

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and everything within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His rewards: who is merciful to all your transgressions, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from corruption, who crowns you with mercy and compassion, who satisfies your desire with good things; and your youth is renewed like the eagle's. The Lord shows mercies and judgment to all who are wronged. He made known His ways to Moses, the things He willed to the sons of Israel. The Lord is compassionate and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. He will not become angry to the end, nor will He be wrathful forever; He did not deal with us according to our sins, nor reward us according to our transgressions; for according to the height of heaven from earth,
so the Lord reigns in mercy over those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west, so He removes our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him, for He knows how He formed us; He remembers we are dust. As for man, his days are like grass, as a flower of the field, so he flourishes; for the wind passes through it, and it shall not remain; and it shall no longer know its place. But the mercy of the Lord is from age to age upon those who fear Him, and His righteousness upon children's children, to such as keep His covenant and remember His commandments, to do them. The Lord prepared His throne in heaven, and His Kingdom rules over all. Bless the Lord, all you His angels, mighty in strength, who do His word, so as to hear the voice of His words. Bless the Lord, all you His hosts, His ministers who do His will; bless the Lord, all His works, in all places of His dominion; bless the Lord, O my soul.

**Psalm 145 (146).**

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

Praise the Lord, O my soul. I shall praise the Lord while I live; I shall sing to my God as long as I exist. Do not trust in rulers and in the sons of men, in whom there is no salvation. His breath shall go out of him, and he shall return to his earth; on that day all his thoughts shall perish. Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob; his hope is in the Lord his God, who made heaven and earth, the sea and everything in them, who keeps truth forever, who executes justice for the wronged, who provides food for the hungry. The Lord frees those bound. The Lord restores those broken down. The Lord gives wisdom to the blind. The Lord loves the righteous. The Lord keeps watch over resident aliens. He shall adopt the orphan and the widow, but He shall destroy the way of sinners. The Lord shall reign forever: your God, O Zion, to all generations.
Καὶ νῦν καὶ ἀεί, καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰώνας τῶν αἰώνων. Αμήν.

Ὁ Μονογενὴς Υἱὸς καὶ Λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἀθάνατος ὑπάρχων καὶ καταδεξάμενος διὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν σαρκωθῆναι ἐκ τῆς ἁγίας Θεοτόκου καὶ ἀειπαρθένου Μαρίας, ἀτρέπτως ἐνανθρωπήσας, σταυρωθείς τε, Χριστὲ ὁ Θεός, θανάτῳ θάνατον πατήσας, εἰς ὄν τῆς Ἁγίας Τριάδος, συνδοξαζόμενος τῷ Πατρὶ καὶ τῷ Ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι, σώσον ἡμᾶς.

ΟΙ ΜΑΚΑΡΙΣΜΟΙ

Ἦχος πλ. βʹ.

Ἐν τῇ Βασιλείᾳ σου μνήσθητι ἡμῶν Κύριε, ὅταν ἔλθῃς ἐν τῇ Βασιλείᾳ σου. Μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστιν ἡ Βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.

Μακάριοι οἱ πενθοῦντες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ παρακληθήσονται.

Μακάριοι οἱ πρᾳεῖς, ὅτι αὐτοὶ κληρονομήσουσι τὴν γῆν.

Μακάριοι οἱ πεινῶντες καὶ διψῶντες τὴν δικαιοσύνην, ὅτι αὐτοὶ χορτασθήσονται.

Αναστάσιμα.

Μακάριοι οἱ ἐλεήμονες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ ἑλεηθήσονται.

Μνήσθητί μου, ὁ Θεὸς ὁ Σωτὴρ μου, ὅταν ἔλθῃς ἐν τῇ Βασιλείᾳ σου, καὶ σῶσόν με, ὡς μόνος φιλάνθρωπος.

Μακάριοι οἱ καθαροὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ, ὅτι αὐτοὶ τὸν Θεὸν ὄψονται.

Διὰ ξύλου, τὸν Ἀδὰμ ἀπατηθέντα, διὰ ξύλου Σταυροῦ πάλιν ἔσωσας, Ληστὴν βοῶντα· Μνήσθητί μου, Κύριε, ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ σου.

Both now and ever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Only begotten Son and Logos of God, being immortal, You condescended for our salvation to take flesh from the holy Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary and, without change, became man. Christ, our God, You were crucified and conquered death by death. Being one of the Holy Trinity, glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit: Save us.

THE BEATITUDES

Mode Pl. 2

In Your kingdom. Remember us, O Lord, when You come in Your kingdom. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Resurrectional.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Like the robber I entreat You, O my Savior, * when You come in Your kingdom, remember me, * O Lord, and save me, O only God who loves mankind.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Through a tree was Adam tricked, but You saved him * through a tree, and You saved the robber as well * who cried to You, Lord: In Your kingdom remember me.

The remaining hymns of the Beatitudes may be found at https://www.agesinitiatives.com/dcs/public/dcs/dcs.html.

If you browse to Sunday's date, you will be able to see the option of "Liturgy - Variable Parts." If you click on this, you will see the variable hymns and readings for the day.
Resurrectional Apolytikion.

Mode pl. 2.

When the angelic powers appeared at Your grave, the soldiers guarding it feared and became as dead. And standing by the sepulcher was Mary who was seeking Your immaculate body. You devastated Hades, not afflicted by it. You went to meet the virgin, and granted eternal life. You resurrected from the dead. O Lord, glory to You.

Apolytikion. For the Cross.

Mode 1.

Save, O Lord, Your people and bless Your inheritance, granting victory to the faithful over the enemy, and by Your Cross protecting Your commonwealth.

For the Saints.


Your Martyrs, O Lord, were worthily awarded by You * the crowns of incorruption, in that they contested for You our immortal God. * Since they possessed Your power, they defeated the tyrants, * dashing the demons' powerless displays of defiance. * O Christ God, at their fervent entreaties, save our souls.

Apolytikion of the Church

Liberator of captives, defender of the poor, physician of the sick and champion of kings, O trophy-bearer Great Martyr George, intercede with Christ God that our souls be saved.

Kontakion.

Mode 4. Automelon.

You who were lifted on the cross voluntarily, O Christ our God, bestow Your tender compassions upon Your new community to which You gave Your name. Cause our faithful emperors to be glad in Your power, granting them the victories against their adversaries. And for an ally, Lord, may they have You, peace as their armor, the trophy invincible.

Epistle Reading

Prokeimenon: O Lord, save Your people, and
Bless Your inheritance. To You, O Lord, I cry; O my God.

The reading is from Paul’s Letter to the Galatians.

Brethren, you know that a man is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of the law, because by works of the law shall no one be justified. But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we ourselves were found to be sinners, is Christ then an agent of sin? Certainly not! But if I build up again those things which I tore down, then I prove myself a transgressor. For I through the law died to the law, that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Gospel Reading

Mark 8:34-38; 9:1 (Div. Lit. Bk. 151)

The Lord said: "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will save it. For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? For what can a man give in return for his life? For whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power."

Ecclesiastical Feast

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<th>Sunday</th>
<th>Monday</th>
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<td><strong>September 20 - 26</strong></td>
<td><strong>September 27 - Oct. 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>October 4 - 10</strong></td>
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<td>20 <strong>Sunday after Holy Cross</strong></td>
<td>27 <strong>1st Sunday of Luke</strong></td>
<td>4 <strong>2nd Sunday of Luke</strong></td>
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<td>Galatians 2:16-20</td>
<td>2 Corinthians 6:1-10</td>
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<td>21 <strong>Apodosis of the Elevation</strong></td>
<td>28 <strong>Chariton the Confessor</strong></td>
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<td>22 <strong>Phocas, Bishop of Sinope</strong></td>
<td>29 <strong>Kyriakos of Palestine</strong></td>
<td>6 <strong>Thomas the Apostle</strong></td>
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<td>Galatians 5:11-21</td>
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<td>23 <strong>Conception of John the Baptist</strong></td>
<td>30 <strong>Gregory, Bishop of Armenia</strong></td>
<td>7 <strong>Sergius &amp; Bacchus of Syra</strong></td>
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<td>24 <strong>Thekla the Equal-to-the-Apostles</strong></td>
<td>2 <strong>Cyprian and Justina</strong></td>
<td>9 <strong>James the son of Alphaeus</strong></td>
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<td>2 Timothy 3:10-15</td>
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<td>1 Corinthians 4:9-16</td>
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<td>Parish Council (7 pm)</td>
<td><strong>25 Euphrosyne of Alexandria</strong></td>
<td><strong>26 Falling Asleep of St John the Theologian</strong></td>
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<td>Acts 17:16-34</td>
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<td>3 <strong>Dionysios the Areopagite</strong></td>
<td>10 <strong>Eulampios &amp; Eulamia</strong></td>
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- Fast Days Shaded ✠ Liturgy ❖ Other Service ◄ fish/wine/oil allowed ◄ wine/oil allowed
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<tr>
<th>Sunday</th>
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<tr>
<td>October 11 - 17</td>
<td>October 18 - 24</td>
<td>October 25 - 31</td>
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<td>Titus 3:8-15</td>
<td>Colossians 4:5-11,14-18</td>
<td>Galatians 1:11-19</td>
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<td>12 Symeon the New Theologian</td>
<td>19 Joel the Prophet</td>
<td>26 Great Earthquake Constantinople</td>
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<td>Philippians 1:1-7</td>
<td>Acts 2:14-21</td>
<td>2 Timothy 2:1-10</td>
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<td>13 Carpos, Papylos, Agathodoros, &amp; Agathoniki, Benjamin the Deacon</td>
<td>20 Artemios of Antioch</td>
<td>27 Nestor of Thessaloniki</td>
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<td>Philippians 1:8-14; Luke 8:1-3</td>
<td>2 Timothy 2:1-10</td>
<td>Colossians 1:1-3,7-11</td>
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<td>Greek School Begins</td>
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<td>14 Nazarios, Gervasios, Protasios, &amp; Celsius, Kosmas the Hagiopolite</td>
<td>21 Hilarion the Great</td>
<td>28 OXI Day</td>
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<td>Philippians 1:12-20</td>
<td>2 Corinthians 9:6-11</td>
<td>Holy Protection of the Theotokos</td>
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<td>29 Anastasia of Rome</td>
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<td>Luke 9:7-11</td>
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<td>Colossians 1:24-29; 2:1</td>
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<td>16 Longinos the Centurion</td>
<td>22 Averkios of Hierapolis</td>
<td>30 Cleopas of the 70</td>
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<td>17 Hosea the Prophet</td>
<td>23 James the Apostle</td>
<td>31 Stachys of the 70</td>
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<td>Romans 9:18-33</td>
<td>Galatians 1:11-19</td>
<td>Romans 16:1-16</td>
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<td>Vespers (5 pm)</td>
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- Fast Days Shaded
- Liturgy
- Other Service
- fish/wine/oil allowed
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Wisdom from the Church Fathers

"We must always remember that the Lord sees us wrestling with the Enemy, and so we must never be afraid. Even should all hell fall upon us, we must be brave."
- St. Silouan the Athonite

Church Cycle and Saints

September 20 - Eustathius the Great Martyr, his wife and two children

The holy Martyr Eustathius before his baptism was an illustrious Roman general named Placidas in the days of the Emperor Trajan. While hunting in the country one day, he was converted to the Faith of Christ through the apparition of an uncommonly majestic stag, between whose antlers he saw the Cross of Christ, and through which the Lord spoke to him with a human voice. Upon returning home, he learned that his wife Tatiana had also had a vision in which she was instructed to become a Christian. They sought out the Bishop of the Christians and were baptized, Placidas receiving the name Eustathius, and Tatiana the name Theopiste; their two sons were baptized Agapius and Theopistus. The family was then subjected to such trials as Job endured. Their servants died, all their goods were stolen, and on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem they were scattered abroad, each not even knowing if the others were still alive. By the providence of God, they were united again after many years, and returned to Rome in glory. Nevertheless, when they refused to sacrifice to the idols—a public sacrifice from which no Roman general could be absent—the Emperor Hadrian, who had succeeded Trajan, had them put into a large bronze device in the shape of a bull, which was heated with fire until they died. When their holy bodies were removed, they were found to be without harm. They suffered martyrdom about the year 126.

September 21 - Apodosis of the Elevation of the Venerable and Life-Giving Cross

Saint Helen, the mother of Saint Constantine the Great, when she was already advanced in years, undertook, in her great piety, the hardships of a journey to Jerusalem in search of the cross, about the year 325. A temple to Aphrodite had been raised up by the Emperor Hadrian upon Golgotha, to defile and cover with oblivion the place where the saving Passion had been suffered. The venerable Helen had the statue of Aphrodite destroyed, and the earth removed, revealing the Tomb of our Lord, and three crosses. Of these, it was believed that one must be that of our Lord, the other two of the thieves crucified with Him; but Saint Helen was at a loss which one might be the Wood of our salvation. At the inspiration of Saint Macarius, Archbishop of Jerusalem, a lady of Jerusalem, who was already at the point of death from a certain disease, was brought to touch the crosses, and as soon as she came near to the Cross of our Lord, she was made perfectly whole. Consequently, the precious Cross was lifted on high by Archbishop Macarius of Jerusalem; as he stood on the ambo, and when the people beheld it, they cried out, "Lord have mercy." It should be noted that after its discovery, a portion of the venerable Cross was taken to Constantinople as a blessing. The rest was left in Jerusalem in the magnificent church built by Saint Helen, until the year 614. At that time, the Persians plundered Palestine and took the Cross to their own country (see Jan. 22, Saint Anastasius the Persian). Late, in the year 628, Emperor Heraclius set out on a military campaign, retrieved the Cross, and after bringing it to Constantinople, himself escorted it back to Jerusalem, where he restored it to its place.

September 21 - Jonah the Prophet

The Prophet Jonah, the son of Amathi, of the town of Geth-hopher (IV Kings 14:25), was of the tribe of Zabulon; he prophesied during the years 838-810 before Christ. God commanded him to go to Nineveh, the great city of the Assyrians, and to proclaim that its destruction was nigh at hand because of the sins of its people. But he, as a Prophet who knew the great compassion of God, feared that at his preaching the
Ninevites would repent; that God, accepting their repentance in His love for man, would not fulfill Jonah's threats; and that he would be branded a false prophet. So he disobeyed the divine command, and boarded a ship and departed elsewhere. Yet, the sudden and fearful sea-storm and the revelation of Jonah's disobedience caused the sailors to cast him into the sea. A great sea-monster appeared straightway by divine providence, and swallowed him up. For three days and nights he was found in its belly and he prayed, saying the words, "I cried aloud in my affliction unto the Lord my God..." (Jonah 2:3, the Sixth ode of the Holy Psalter). The sea-monster then vomited him up on dry land and he again heard God's command. Wherefore, he went and preached, saying, "In three days, Nineveh shall be destroyed." The people became terrified and all repented. The great, the small, babes at the breast, and even the irrational beasts themselves fasted, and thus, having found mercy from God, they were spared His wrath. Jonah's book of prophecy is divided into four chapters, and is placed fifth in order among the twelve minor Prophets. His three-day sojourn in the sea-monster's belly is an image of our Saviour's three-day burial and His life-bringing Resurrection (Matt. 12:39-40). His name means "dove."

September 23 - The Conception of St. John the Baptist

This came to pass fifteen months before the birth of Christ, after the vision of the Angel that Zacharias, the father of the Forerunner, saw in the Temple while he executed the priest's office in the order of his course during the feast of the Tabernacles, as tradition bears witness. In this vision, the Archangel Gabriel appeared to Zacharias and said to him, "Thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John" (Luke 1:13). Knowing that Elizabeth was barren, and that both he and she were elderly, Zacharias did not believe what the Angel told him, although he had before him the example of Abraham and Sarah, of Hannah, mother of the Prophet Samuel, and of other barren women in Israel who gave birth by the power of God. Hence, he was condemned by the Archangel to remain speechless until the fulfilment of these words in their season, which also came to pass (Luke 1:7-24).

September 24 - Thecla the Protomartyr & Equal to the Apostles

This saint was from the city of Iconium. When she was eighteen years of age, she was instructed in the Faith of Christ and the hope of the resurrection by the Apostle Paul, whom also she followed, forsaking her betrothed and espousing a life of virginity for the sake of the Heavenly Bridegroom. Having preached Christ in various cities and suffered many things, she reposed in Seleucia of Cilicia at the age of 90.

Prayer List

Please remember in your prayers the following: Anastasia & family, Pavel & his family, Angela Matt, Fotini Kollias, Ioan, Phyllis Hionis, Peter, Kyriaki and family, Gus & Maria Grias, Marianthi Pappas, Virginia Sikavitsas, Lillian Constantakakis, Nick, Bobbie, & Aleko Tsahsiris, Bobbie Cotton, Vicki Anastasiou, Foula Kotsou, Penelope Kakaris, Koula Stathis, Ari Gaitanis, Marina Kandrevas, Garefo Kollias

If you would like the Church to pray for you, please contact the Church office to add your name, or the names of your loved ones, to the Prayer List.

It is important to care for the elderly and those whose immune systems are compromised for other reasons among us - ensuring that they have all that they need, and that we check in with them frequently, must be our highest responsibility in this time. Please be attentive to those in the parish who have smaller families or whose families live farther away. Please be proactive to care for them yourselves, and to inform Fr. Anthony or the Church office so that we can add our efforts to yours.
### Announcements

#### Church Etiquette

We ask that the doors of the Narthex be closed and no one enters the Church during the following portions of the service: Epistle, Gospel, Sermon, Great Entrance, Creed, Consecration, and Lord’s Prayer. Please be respectful of the prayer and attention of those who are in the Church as you enter.

When it is time for Holy Communion, please remain in your pews until the members of the Parish Council come to your pew to usher you forward by row. In this way, we can ensure that our approaching of the Sacred Mysteries will be accomplished in an appropriate and orderly manner.

Due to the ongoing COVID issue, the Metropolis of Detroit has limited how many Faithful can be present for each service. We are maintaining a sign-up sheet on the Church website for each service, so those who wish to reserve a spot can do so. Please sign up at the link below, or call the Church office to reserve your spot.

**Sunday Service Signup Link for Sept. 20**

https://giving.parishsoft.com/App/Form/cdc1d3f8-d839-4453-9b31-9fc44e7946de

#### In Memory of Andrew Pappas

Today we celebrate the Trisagion Service on behalf of Andrew Pappas, who fell asleep in the Lord 9 years ago. May his memory be eternal!

#### Fall General Assembly

We will have our Fall General Assembly next Sunday, Sept. 27, after the Church service in the Church. More information is in the Trophy-Bearer sent via email and through regular mail to your homes.

#### Appointments

Whenever possible, appointments will be held via phone or video-conference. You may make an appointment by contacting Fr. Anthony by email (franthonyc@mac.com) or phone (734.716.2268).

#### Online Giving

We have set up an option for online donations from either a credit card or directly from your bank account on the home page of the Church website. That said - we know that these same uncertainties face all of us. Please do not feel an obligation to support the Church if your regular income has been disrupted - we all have a primary responsibility to care for those whom God has entrusted to our care. But if you are still working, either as an essential employee, or from home, please consider giving some additional support to the Church in this time. And if you have your regular Sunday offering envelopes set aside from the last several weeks, please consider sending those to the Church in the mail.

On a related note - if you, or anyone you know, are facing challenges at this time, whether financial or practical, please do not hesitate to contact Fr. Anthony. There are several volunteers from the parish ready and waiting to lend a hand should one be needed.

#### Subscriptions

In this time of lockdown, we have limited ways of keeping in touch with all of you. If you know of anyone who is not on the Listserv list, please provide their email address to Susan or Fr. Anthony, or urge them to do so. If you use Facebook, please like and begin to follow our parish page (https://www.facebook.com/StGeorgeGOCSouthgate/). You can also befriend Fr. Anthony on Facebook, if you wish, to keep touch with him more easily through this time (https://www.facebook.com/franthonyc). Finally, we urge you all to subscribe to our Youtube channel, so that you may receive notifications every time we begin a Live Stream. The channel may be found at https://www.youtube.com/c/franthonyc-stgeorgesouthgate.
Whatever Their Size, Carry Them

“Whoever loses his life for my sake and the Gospel’s will save it.” One who knew the meaning of Jesus’ words so well was Flannery O’Connor, the distinguished Catholic novelist who died in 1964 at the age of 39. From the age of 25 she lived with the knowledge she had a terminal disease, Lupus, – not to mention her sufferings from bone disintegration, shingles, anemia, and a tumor. Yet it was during fourteen years of sickness and suffering that she produced her greatest works of literary art. Her strong faith enabled her to say: “I have never been anywhere but sick. In a sense sickness is a place, more instructive than a long trip to Europe. Sickness before death is a very appropriate thing and I think those who don’t have it miss one of God’s mercies ...”

Those are strong words! How could a young woman call sickness one of God’s mercies? Yet Jesus’ words in the Gospel are just as strong: “If a man wishes to come after me, he must deny his very self, take up his cross, and follow in my steps.”

In some way Flannery O’Connor was able to accept the cross of her sickness and follow in the Lord’s footsteps. But she didn’t do it with a nice sweet smile on her face. She did it with strong courage and conviction. She realized that her own sickness was the very thing that helped her to look at life around her with the eyes of faith; and to translate that life into literary pages that would win her international fame as a writer. Each one of us is called upon to carry a cross in our life at some time. For some it may be the cross of emotional or spiritual suffering, rather than physical suffering. Sometimes there are big crosses, sometimes small. Whatever their size, Jesus calls upon us to carry them.