



SAINT GEORGE

ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
EL PASO - TEXAS

His Eminence Metropolitan SABA

RT. Rev. Archimandrite Fadi Rabbat
Pastor

Rev. Dcn. Miguel 'Michael' Sifuentes
Deacon

“And the Disciples were first called Christians in Antioch”. Acts 11:26

Tel.: 915-584-9100

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“My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.” Mark 11:17

“The Church is a hospital, and not a courtroom for souls, she does not condemn on behalf of sins but grants remission of sins. – St. John Chrysostom

First Sunday of Great Lent (Sunday of Orthodoxy)

Venerable-martyr Eudokia of Heliopolis; Venerable Domnina of Syria;
Martyrs Markellos and Anthony of Pamphylia

SUNDAY MARCH 1, 2026

Tone 5 / Eothinon 5

****Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great****

Saturday Vespers Service: 5:00 PM

Sunday Service: Orthros (Matins) 9:30 AM, followed immediately by Divine Liturgy (10:30 AM)

Inquirers are encouraged to attend the Divine Liturgy

****THE PROCESSION OF THE HOLY ICONS will be observed immediately following Divine Liturgy****

Sunday Epistle Reader: Jameelie Dayoub

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE FIVE

Let us believers praise and worship the Word; coeternal with the Father and the Spirit, born of the Virgin for our salvation. For, He took pleasure in ascending the Cross in the flesh to suffer death; and to raise the dead by His glorious Resurrection.

APOLYTIKION OF THE FIRST SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT IN TONE TWO

Thy pure image do we venerate, O good One, asking forgiveness of our sins, O Christ our God; for by Thine own will Thou didst ascend the Cross in Thy body, to save Thy creatures from the bondage of the enemy. Wherefore, with thankfulness we cry aloud to thee: Thou hast verily filled all with joy, since Thou didst come, O our Savior, to save the world.

“And they were called Christians first in Antioch” (Acts 11:26)

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APOLYTIKION OF ST. GEORGE IN 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.

KONTAKION FOR SUNDAYS IN GREAT LENT (AND AKATHIST SATURDAY) IN TONE EIGHT

To thee, the Champion Leader, do I offer thanks of victory, O Theotokos, thou who hast delivered me from terror; but as thou that hast that power invincible, O Theotokos, thou alone can set me free: from all forms of danger free me and deliver me, that I may cry unto thee: Hail, O Bride without Bridegroom.

THE EPISTLE

(For the First Sunday of Great Lent)

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, the God of our fathers.

For Thou art just in all that Thou hast done for us.

The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews. (11:24-26, 32-40)

Brethren, by faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to share ill-treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of the Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he looked to the recompense of reward. And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Sampson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and all the prophets, who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, and turned to flight armies of the aliens. Women received their dead by resurrection, and others were tortured, not accepting their deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. And others suffered mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, they were slain with the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, being destitute, afflicted, tormented (of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, having obtained a witness through their faith, did not receive the promise, since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

THE GOSPEL

(For the First Sunday of Great Lent)

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. John. (1:43-51)

At that time, Jesus decided to go to Galilee. And He found Philip and said to him, "Follow Me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael, and said to him, "We have found Him of Whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" Nathanael said to Jesus, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." Nathanael answered Him, "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God! Thou art the King of Israel!" Jesus answered him, "Because I said to you, I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You shall see greater things than these." And Jesus said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."

THE SYNAXARION

On March 1 in the Holy Orthodox Church, we commemorate the Venerable-martyr Eudokia of Heliopolis; Venerable Domnina of Syria; and Martyrs Markellos and Anthony of Pamphylia.

On this same day, the First Sunday of the Fast, we make remembrance of the restoration of the holy and venerable Icons, which took place through the ever-memorable Sovereigns of Constantinople, Michael and his mother, Theodora, during the patriarchate of Saint Methodios the Confessor.

Verses

I rejoice, as I see them fittingly reverence
The icons formerly unfittingly banished.

This restoration was accomplished in the year 843. Theodora's husband was an iconoclast. After his death, Theodora venerated an icon of the Theotokos in front of Patriarch Methodios. The other faithful in the church did the same, venerating all the icons, considering them to be representations of their original elements, not idols. Theodora prayed to God to forgive her husband during the first week of Great Lent; and on the First Sunday of the Fast, she led the way in hanging up the icons to adorn the churches.

O invariant Icon of the Father, through the intercessions of Thy holy Confessors, have mercy on us.
Amen.

***** THE PROCESSION OF THE HOLY ICONS – SUNDAY, MARCH 1*****

The procession of the Holy Icons and the reading of the Synodicon will take place following “Blessed be the Name of the Lord” in the morning’s Divine Liturgy.

The clergy, bearing icons, now make a great entrance around the church. The altar servers carry the processional candles, the holy cross, and the fans. The Procession will go around the entire church, stopping in each of the four corners, as the choir sings the Apolytikion of the Sunday of Orthodoxy leading up to each stop. The clergy then offer a litany.

All parishioners who wish to participate in the processional are invited to bring their venerated icon from home.

ONLINE LITURGICAL GUIDE FOR CHURCH SERVICES

Being present, prayerful and present in the church community and in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy is key to being orthodox. Please click on the following link to access the liturgical services for Saturday Vespers, Sunday Orthros, Sunday Divine Liturgy, and special services:

<https://www.antiochian.org/liturgicday/4479>

Click on the SELECT DATE in the top calendar. The services will appear under the DAILY LITURGICAL TEXT on the right column. Click on the service you need. You can follow the service using your cell phone or print a copy for your use.

To use your cell phone to access the above information while in church, you can link to the church’s Wi-Fi Network. Information is posted at the entrance.

When using the red Service Book found in the church pews, the general services can be found on the following pages:

- **Vespers**, page 24 – 43 - **Orthros**, pages 44 – 80 - **Liturgy**, pages 91 - 127

HOLY BREAD IS OFFERED BY



Brahim and Layla Salloum for their health and the health of Nassim and Aida Salloum, and, Maher, Jeanette, Eliana and Amelia Deghlawi, and Fouzi and Monera Deghlawi.

OFFERING HOLY BREAD FOR LITURGY

Dear parishioners, offering Holy Bread to be used in the Liturgy is an Offering of oneself to God. If you plan to offer Holy Bread on a Sunday for your health and your loved ones, or in memory of a departed one, please indicate your offering on the sign-up board located in the Narthex (entrance) of the church or email Rev. Dcn. Michael by the prior Monday at deacon@stgeorge-elpaso.org to have it placed in the week's Church Bulletin. Rev. Dcn. Michael will then contact you to make the necessary arrangements for the Holy Bread. The usual cost for preparing the five loaves of bread is \$30. **The bulletin board for 2026 is now available in the Narthex if you would like to sign-up to offer Holy Bread for 2026 year.**

DONATIONS

Jamie Isaac for the health of Omar & Malik Thomas & family.

Ali Salameh.

Donation toward the St Raphael icon project for the health of the Jorge Nunez family.



HELPING OUR NEIGHBORS IN NEED

In conjunction with the archdiocese's The Food for Hungry People and Charitable Outreach Program, the **St. George Men's Society** in collaboration with **Teen SOYO** organized a Can Food Drive to benefit the Rescue Mission of El Paso. The men and teens delivered 402lbs of dry goods on Friday, February 20th.

Thank you all for your continued love and support for the needy in our community. May God keep you healthy, happy and safe.

PASCHA FOOD FOR HUNGRY PEOPLE & CHARITABLE OUTREACH PROGRAM

We are entering into our *Great Lenten Season* and are preparing for the **52nd Anniversary Food for Hungry People & Charitable Outreach Campaign 2026**.

For the 52nd year, our Archdiocese once again commences the Lenten **Food for Hungry People and Charitable Outreach Campaign**, a vital ministry that extends Christ's love to those in need. Through your generosity, countless families and individuals—both within our communities and throughout the world—receive nourishment, hope, and dignity.

Per, Robin Lynn Nicholas with FFHP, there are still experiencing many challenges within our families and our parishes. One thing that never changes, however, is the power of Great Lent to strengthen us through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Let us again embrace our Lenten struggles and demonstrate how strong we are in our faith.

Great Lent draws near! Let us renew our resolve to respond to the needs of those all around us and, in the process, renew our own faith.

Alms Boxes have been placed in the narthex (entrance lobby). The filled Alms Boxes can be submitted to Kyle Horon, Parish Council Treasurer. Checks can be made payable to St. George Church in any amount for it is a gift from the heart. In the purpose line indicate **'FFHP'**. The donation deadline is Sunday, April 19th. St. George will submit one check based on the collected donations and forward it to the Food for Hungry Program.

May God grant you a blessed Lenten Season!

Much Love and Appreciation for all you continually contribute to our Food for Hungry People & Charitable Outreach.

PLEDGE ENVELOPE BOXES FOR 2026

Dear parishioners, if you pledged in 2025, a box of pledge envelopes with your name is available for pick up at the church entrance after church on Sunday. If you did not receive a pledge envelope box, please contact Dr. Raed Aldouri, Parish Council Chair, at (915) 252-8815, or write your name on the sign-up list located at the church entrance on Sunday.

We encourage all parishioners and 'registered' inquirers to give from your heart what you can to support the ministries and maintenance of St. George church.

“Everything we possess--our time our talents, and our treasure (“money,” material possessions)--are gifts from God and, as such, they ultimately belong to Him. They are given to us by Him: we, in turn, are called to be good stewards of His gifts, as Saint Paul writes in 1 Corinthias 4:1-2, “a steward is a manager. Hence, a “Christian steward” wisely manages Gods gifts.” – replication to St. John Chrysostom concerning “our money is the Lord’s; however, we may have gathered it.”

LENT SERVICES SCHEDULE

The Lent services schedule is located on the last page of the church bulletin. The Holy Week and Pascha schedule will be provided at a later date.

A link to each Lent services is also provided so you can follow along during the week services.

GREAT LENT SPIRITUAL SERIES

Beloved in Christ,

As we embark upon the sacred journey of Holy and Great Lent, our Mother, the Church, calls each of us to enter more deeply into the mystery of repentance, prayer, fasting, and love.

This holy season is not only a time of abstinence, but also of renewal of the heart—of returning to the Father’s embrace, as the Prodigal Son once did, and rediscovering the beauty of God’s image within us. As St. John Chrysostom reminds us: “Repentance is the medicine which destroys sin; it is a heavenly gift, a grace beyond compare.”

In this spirit of reflection and growth, St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church of El Paso, in collaboration with St. Basil the Great Church of Kansas City, joyfully announces a series of Virtual Lenten Spiritual Meetings via Zoom to nurture our faith and strengthen our communion in Christ.

Each session will take place every Thursday at 7:00 PM Mountain Time during the five weeks of Holy and Great Lent, corresponding to the themes of the five Lenten Sundays.

Lenten Spiritual Series Schedule

First Week of Holy Lent

Thursday, February 26

Topic: “The Double Triumph of Orthodoxy: Sunday of Orthodoxy and the Sunday of Saint Gregory Palamas”

Speaker: Fr. Michel Najim

Second Week of Holy Lent

Thursday, March 4

Topic: “I’m the Prodigal Son: Time to Return to the Father .”

Speaker: Fr. Elias Boulos

Third Week of Holy Lent

Thursday, March 12

Topic: “The Tree of Life in the Midst of the Garden of Delights”

A reflection on the Holy Cross as central to the Christian Life.

Speaker: Fr. Charles Nicholas Baz

Fourth Week of Holy Lent

Thursday, March 19

Topic: “From Repentance to Salvation: The Ladder of St. John Climacus in the Light of the Holy Scripture”

Speaker: Fr. Kamal Al-Rahil.

Fifth Week of Holy Lent

Thursday, March 26

Topic: “Repentance in the Life of St. Mary of Egypt and its Echoes in the Book of Revelation”

Speaker: Fr. Damaskinos Issa

Let us use this blessed time to draw nearer to Christ through study, prayer, and mutual encouragement. As St. Isaac the Syrian beautifully teaches:

“Enter eagerly into the treasury within you, and you will see the things that are in heaven.”

Fr. Charles Nicholas Baz is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Catechumens Class on Prayer

Time: Mar 3, 2026 09:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85175097813?pwd=IpMaOZS9eHbJdfbDznySaAbMaIyFk6.1>

View meeting insights with Zoom AI Companion

<https://us06web.zoom.us/launch/edl?muid=8b1ca9f5-836b-4ac4-827d-2ce76bfd60b>

Meeting ID: 851 7509 7813

Passcode: 905498

NB: The same link will be used for all five sessions.

One tap mobile

+19292056099,,85175097813#,,,,*905498# US (New York)

+16469313860,,85175097813#,,,,*905498# US

Join instructions

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meetings/85175097813/invitations?signature=82byc3Le6jEEcS7a28IHFOHV11dAhxAnljAEMCsF4PY>

Join us.

May our Lenten journey be filled with grace, peace, and renewal in Christ.

With prayerful love in the Lord,

Fr. Fadi Rabbat

St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church – El Paso, TX

Fr. Elias Boulos

St. Basil the Great Antiochian Orthodox Church - Kansas City, KS



PROCESSION OF THE HOLY CROSS ROSES DONATIONS

If you would like to financially donate toward the red roses used to decorate the cross on the Sunday of the Veneration of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross on March 15 and for distribution to the parishioners after Divine Liturgy, please contact Dcn. Michael Sifuentes.



PRIEST'S PASCHA CANDLE

If you would like to financially donate toward the purchase of a Pascha candle that the priest uses for Rush Service prior to start of the Pascha Liturgy, please contact Dcn. Michael Sifuentes

SPECIAL NOTE TO ALTAR BOYS

Altar boys are required to be vested and prepared to receive Fr. Fadi's blessing by 10: 20 a.m. If you are attending Sunday School, Mrs. Ferris has arranged for altar servers to be released from class by 10:15 a.m. Any altar boy(s) who arrive after 10:30 a.m., will not be permitted to serve that Sunday. Reason for this request is that there should be no disrupting the sanctity of the Holy Altar once the Liturgy begins. Parents, we need your assistance in conveying this information to your children who are serving in the altar.

Also, when Fr. Fadi prepares to give his Homily on Sunday, altar boys are to exit the Altar and sit on the first pew in front of the Bishop's Chair. It is important for the altar boys to hear the Homily each Sunday. After conclusion of the Homily, altar boys may return to the Altar.

Thank you, altar boys for your assistance in this very important matter.

Rev. Dcn. Michael



ST. GEORGE LADIES SOCIETY MONTH FOR MARCH

Each year, the Antiochian Archdiocese's recognizes our ladies for love and dedication to the church with Ladies Month in March.

Here is the schedule for March:

Sunday, March 1, 2026

Epistle: Jameelie Dayoub

Refreshments: Jameelie Dayoub & Tammy Comerci

Sunday, March 8, 2026

Epistle: Maha Salloum

Refreshments: Maha Salloum, Layla Salloum, Nada Al-Hanna, Jeannette Deglawi, Oula Sara

Sunday, March 15, 2026

Epistle: Patricia Borschow

Refreshments: Sylvana Aldouri, Patricia Borschow, Hend Odeh, Doris Shaheen, Antoinette Shaghoury, Angelina Chaya

Sunday, March 22, 2026

Epistle: Jaclyn Ferris

Refreshments: Rowayda Haddad, Magdalene Perfilio, Zayna Heredia

Sunday, March 30, 2026

Epistle: Jamie Isaac

Refreshments: Annette Haddad, Jamie Isaac

COFFEE HOUR & FELLOWSHIP AFTER LITURGY



In our parish life, let us foster brotherly love by gathering after worship for coffee hour as a warm, sharing family; it is wonderful when, atop the coffee, there is a small bite to accompany the drink—so we have a simple, inviting table for all to enjoy. Please know you are not required to sponsor everything; even a partial contribution—whether a pot of coffee, a tray of treats, or a small snack from home—blesses our communal table, so that we can welcome one another as brothers and sisters in Christ.

If you are interested in contributing and/or sponsoring a Coffee Hour, please contact Vanessa Salloum at (915) 373-5550

SUNDAY SCHOOL



Every Sunday students should be present at 9:25 AM to be with Fr. Fadi for the opening prayers.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE ROSTER FOR SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2026 – 26 students

Pre-School (ages 3 and 4 years old)

Doris Shaheen

Ayana Artis, Laila Cass, Rafael Heredia & Edith Manjarrez

Grades Kinder/1st

Jehan Al-Hanna

Zyla Aldouri, Olivia Artis, Marylaine Del Corral, Ezme Ferris, Jack Horton, Elena Manjarrez & Leon Perfilio

Grades 2/3

Adriana Anzaldo

Georgia Comerci & Knight Joudi

Grades 4/5

Anne Thomas

John Baptist Del Corral, Andi Comerci. Kingston Joudi & Christina Sarah

Grades 6/7

James Shaheen Jr.

Dani Comerci & Caleb Crawford

Grades 8-12

Johnny Odeh

Majd Al Dayoub, Phoebe Del Corral, Stephanie Del Corral, Annabelle Horton, Melaina Horton, Nia Isaac, Amira Thomas & Malik Thomas

Sunday School Director:

Laila Ferris

Co-Director:

Anne Thomas

Special Projects:

Jaclyn Ferris

YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

In November 2024, the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese implemented 'The Youth Protection Policy' to prevent, identify, and respond to instances of child abuse that may occur on church premises or during church-related activities, such as all programs and activities within the purview of the church, including Sunday Church School programs, youth groups, sport activities, field trips, Diocese and Archdiocese events and all other events or activities in which youth are involved.

It is the mandate of the Archdiocese that all Diocese, parishes, departments and other entities under its auspices comply with the policy provisions. Therefore, the priest, deacon, altar servers (18 yrs and above), Parish Council members, Sunday School teachers and staff, choir directors and Youth Advisors/Volunteer Youth Workers, who will have more than incidental contact with youth in connection with the parish's ministries or programs are required to complete a background check every three (3) years and youth safety training once every calendar year. Therefore, parents who wish to be present at Sunday School with their children are also required to complete a background check.

Should you have any questions, you may contact Dr. Heidi Baines, the Youth Protection Coordinator, for our parish.



TEACHINGS FROM METROPOLITAN SABA

Dear parishioners and friends, you will periodically be receiving the **weekly teachings** by His Eminence Metropolitan Saba, in English and Arabic. When we receive them from the Archdiocese Office we'll send it under a separate church email.

HOMILY BY FR. FADI RABBAT

The homily given by Fr. Fadi on Sunday, February 22nd, is attached at the end of the church bulletin.

THE ADULT STUDY GROUP

Theodore first appears as the early companion and friend of Chrysostom, his fellow-townsmen, his equal in rank, and but two or three years his senior in age. Chrysostom and Theodore attended the lectures

of the Greek-speaking teacher of rhetoric Libanius, then at Antioch at the height of his fame. Chrysostom credits his friend with diligent study, but the luxurious life of polite Antioch seems to

have received an equal share of his attention. When Chrysostom himself had been converted to the

monastic life of Basil of Caesarea, he likewise converted Theodore. The three friends left Libanius and sought a retreat in the monastic school of Carterius and Diodorus, to which Basil was already attached.

Theodore's career was marked with many peaks and valleys during which, depending on the whims of the age, he either took on heroic proportions or was reviled. The sixth century witnessed an especially vicious

outbreak of hatred against Theodore. In an effort to make peace with the Monophysites under the

influence of the emperor Justinian I, the Second Council of Constantinople (553) condemned certain writings of Theodore. The council was criticized for reopening previously resolved issues and was strongly resisted in the West. However, it was eventually accepted, after which the name of Theodore disappeared almost entirely from western church literature. It was only in the nineteenth century that western writers began to recognize the importance of the great Antiochene as a theologian, expositor, and a precursor of later exegetical principles.

Read the full article in the attachment to the church bulletin.

In Christ,
Dr. Sandra Edwards, Master of Theological Studies (MTS).
Instructor, The Adult Study Group



ANTIOCHIAN
HOUSE of STUDIES

ANTIOCHIAN HOUSE OF STUDIES (AHOS)

AHOS enrollment is now opened for the academic year 2026-2027. For more information you can visit <https://ahos.edu/open-enrollment-2026-2027/> or refer to the attachment at the end of bulletin.

WHO CAN RECEIVE COMMUNION IN AN ORTHODOX CHURCH?

Only Orthodox Christians who prepared for Communion through confession, prayer, and fasting can go up to the chalice to receive the Holy Eucharist from the priest. When you approach the chalice and the Priest or Deacon say, 'The servant of God...', please say your first name or that of your saint.

All visitors are welcomed to worship with us; however, non-Orthodox Christians may not partake of the Holy Eucharist but rather wait till the Dismissal of the Divine Liturgy and partake of the blessed bread (called Antidoron in Greek) placed in front of the Solea.

CHURCH ETIQUETTE – THE DO'S AND DON'TS - MOST HELPFUL!

The web site below is a guide for how to show proper respect and reverence in church. This guide is also meant for personal reflection, not as a means of judging others. Keep in mind that there are different traditions even among the Orthodox faith. We come to church to pray and worship God above all else, and that should be our only focus.

<https://antiochianprodsa.blob.core.windows.net/websiteattachments/ChurchEtiquetteBooklet.pdf>

LIGHTING CANDLES IN FRONT OF THE ICONOSTASIS



It has been customary for parishioners in veneration to light candles and place them at the foot of the iconostasis. However, the Fire Department recently conducted their annual review of the church premises and asked that we refrain from hereon. The reason being that plastic candle containers can catch fire and cause the wood iconostasis to catch fire. We therefore ask parishioners to place lighted candles in the candle stands located in the Narthex (church entrance).

This being the case, it does provide the opportunity to donate towards the purchase of two traditional candle holders that can be placed in front of the iconostasis, one on the right and one on the left.

If you wish to make a monetary donation towards the candle holders in memory of a loved one(s) and/or the health of your family, please contact Fr. Fadi at (973) 780-0221. Please address your check to St. George Church, earmarked candle holders.

ST GEORGE CHURCH ICON PROJECT



From the Prayer behind the Ambon for the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom and written in Arabic on the archway above the iconostasis
"...sanctify those who love the beauty of Thy house."

Icons are representations of the Heavenly. They are expressions of Orthodox faith, teaching, and worship. The Orthodox Church uses icons to assist in worship. Icons are a 'window to heaven' and they help us to focus on divine things.

Fr. Fadi is overseeing the Icon Project to have icons written on the bare interior walls in the church. This project continues beautifying the Church for the glory of God. **If you wish to make a monetary donation towards the Icon Project in memory of a loved one(s) and/or the health of your family, please contact Fr. Fadi at (973) 780-0221.** Please address your check to St. George Church, earmarked

Icon Project Donation. A warm thank you to all who have donated toward the Icon Project. Based on your gifts from the heart there will be more icons to come.



PROJECT FOR THE HOLY RELIC OF ST. RAPHAEL, BISHOP OF BROOKLYN (1860-1915)

Fr. Fadi is overseeing a new project to have an altar placed in the right alcove in the church, in front of the icon of Ss. Peter and Paul, which will consist of a carved wood stand holding the written icon of St. Raphael of Brooklyn by Odisseas Bifsha, and inside of the icon his relic, removed from the old antimension, and on each side of the icon stand two candle stands so that his relic can be venerated by the faithful. The cost of this project is estimated at around \$8,000. Your gifts from the heart are graciously appreciated in support of the altar for St. Raphael of Brooklyn.

If you wish to make a monetary donation towards the Holy Relic of St. Raphael Project in memory of a loved one(s) and/or the health of your family, please contact Fr. Fadi at (973) 780-0221. Please address your check to St. George Church, earmarked St. Raphael Altar Project Donation.

2026 MEMBERSHIP PLEDGE (TITHING) TO ST. GEORGE ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

“Return to Me and I will return to you,” says the Lord Almighty....Return now in this,” says the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not open for you the floodgates of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it is overflowing.” – Malachi 3:8-10

We would like to remind you of the importance of giving. Our church relies on your financial support to continue to provide the ministries and maintenance of St. George church.

The minimum financial contribution of at least \$500.00 pledge per Baptized or Chrismated Orthodox person, ages 18 and older is required or \$1000 per family (or more from the gift of the heart). **You can either pay your pledge immediately, or make payments throughout the year, however, the final amount must be met by December 31st of each year.** **The met pledge makes you eligible to vote at the Annual General Assembly of Voting Members in January each year.** Please make checks payable to St. George Church in the donated amounts. In the purpose line indicate **Church Pledge**.

If you have financial difficulties, please see the priest for available options.

Thank you for your continued support in maintaining the church.



PRAYER FOR THE SICK

Please let us know if you are ill and/or hospitalized by contacting Fr. Fadi Rabbat. We too will add your name to the prayer list for Sunday's Divine Liturgy.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For Pastoral needs, emergencies, visitation to hospital, homes, and prayer/holy communion during the year, contact Fr. Fadi Rabbat directly and not through the Deacon. Fr. Fadi will not visit without permission extended to him from the sick person and/or their family.

Confessions are by appointment with Fr. Fadi Rabbat. PLEASE contact Fr. Fadi TWO days in advance to ensure his schedule is free.

Fr. Fadi Rabbat at:
Cell phone: 973.780.0221
Email: fadi.rabbat@icloud.com

Rev. Dcn. Michael Sifuentes at *Cell Phone:* (915)309-1511 *Email:* deacon@stgeorge-elpaso.org

CHURCH BULLETIN STAFF

The RT. Rev. Archimandrite Fadi Rabbat, Chief Editor
Rev. Dcn. Michael Sifuentes, Editor
Vanessa Salloum, Assistant Editor
Jameelie Dayoub, Web Site Poster

Please note the weekly church bulletin is always posted on the church web site page at:
<https://www.stgeorge-elpaso.org/>

Homily for Forgiveness Sunday: The Exile of Adam from Paradise
Fr. Fadi Rabbat – 2026

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, one God. Amen.

Beloved in Christ,

Today the Holy Church gathers us in love on Forgiveness Sunday, also called Cheesefare Sunday, the threshold of Great Lent, the sacred season of repentance and renewal.

Before we set out on this Lenten journey, the Church invites us to one of her most moving and beautiful services — the Service of Mutual Forgiveness.

Today after Divine Liturgy, we will stand face to face — brother to brother, sister to sister — and say with humility, “Forgive me a sinner” hearing in reply the life-giving words, “God forgives.” In that holy moment, the entire Gospel is lived. Pride falls away. The heart begins to heal. The way to Paradise opens before us once more.

From the beginning, the Church teaches us to see all human history through the divine arc of salvation: Creation, Fall, Promise, and through Christ, Restoration.

On this day, at the start of Great Lent, the Holy Fathers honor the anniversary of Adam’s exile from Paradise. They do so to show, by both teaching and example, how fasting and repentance bring great good to humanity, and how destructive gluttony and disobedience to God’s commands bring great harm. Gluttony led to Adam and Eve’s banishment because they disobeyed God by eating from the forbidden tree. The Church recalls this event to call us back to that ancient glory and happiness through fasting and obedience to God and His commandments.

Today’s hymns and icon show us Adam and Eve standing outside Eden’s gate, looking back with tears toward the lost garden — a scene of sorrow, but also one filled with hope.

Adam’s disobedience was not only his own failure; it became a wound that touched all creation.

When he laments, “Woe is me, what has become of me? I transgressed one commandment of my Lord,” we hear our own cry — the cry of every soul that has turned from light and felt the emptiness that follows.

Yet God did not abandon His creature. As Saint Gregory the Theologian reminds us, it was not wrath that moved God to act but compassion. Even His judgment was clothed with mercy.

The very first act after the Fall was mercy itself. God covered Adam and Eve with garments of skin and gave them a promise — that the Seed of the Woman would crush the serpent’s head.

This is what the Fathers call “forgiveness before forgetfulness”: God does not erase consequence, yet He opens the way of reconciliation.

Paradise, my beloved, is not merely a place once lost — it is “a state of communion with God”. When Adam was driven out, that distance became a call, not a sentence; an exile meant to awaken longing for the Father’s house.

Forgiveness Sunday invites us to share in that same journey: to face our own exile, to grieve what our sins have cost — peace, innocence, purity — and to begin the return. As Saint Ephraim the Syrian beautifully says, “The door of mercy is always open, but humility is the key that unlocks it.”

When we bow before one another and ask forgiveness, humility turns that key. Repentance — “metánoia” — is not simply sorrow or regret, but the transformation of the mind, the turning of our heart toward God.

Forgiveness is not secondary to repentance; it is its very heart. Saint John Climacus calls forgiveness “the resurrection of the soul.” To forgive is to rise from spiritual death.

Forgiveness is not weakness, beloved; it is divine strength.

Saint John Chrysostom reminds us, “Nothing makes us so like God as a readiness to forgive.”

When we forgive, we step into the likeness of Christ Himself, who from the Cross prayed, “Father, forgive them.” Saint Isaac the Syrian adds, “You will not find peace until you forgive from your heart.”

Tomorrow we begin the “Great Lent” but fasting without forgiveness is empty.

Saint Basil the Great warns, “Do not begin the fast with anger, lest you destroy what you are building.”

Forgiveness and fasting are two wings that lift the soul toward God — if one is missing, we cannot rise.

Fasting, dear sons and daughters, reveals a secret sweetness — the taste of heaven itself. It teaches us that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. It purifies the heart, clears the mind, and reminds us that we are travelers, not permanent citizens of this world. Our true nourishment is Christ Himself, the Bread of Life.

Blessed is the one, says Saint Isaac, who hungers for the heavenly food.

Through fasting, the body is humbled, but the soul is filled with light; through forgiveness, pride is emptied and love takes its place.

Of course, forgiveness is costly. It asks for the death of our self-importance. But when we forgive — even through pain — we share in the Cross of the Lord. We die to the old self and rise renewed. As Saint Seraphim of Sarov teaches, “Acquire the Spirit of peace, and thousands around you will be saved.” A single heart that forgives can sanctify a household, a parish, even a community.

For this reason, the Church gives us the prayer of Saint Ephraim the Syrian to carry throughout Lent — a guide, a mirror, a medicine:

“O Lord and Master of my life,
take from me the spirit of sloth, despair, lust of power, and idle talk.
But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience, and love to Thy servant.
Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own sins and not to judge my brother;
for Thou art blessed unto ages of ages.”

This single prayer teaches everything about Lent — repentance, humility, forgiveness, and the longing to return to communion with God.

Beloved, Forgiveness Sunday is not an ending, but a beginning — the joyful beginning of our salvation renewed. It is not a farewell to pleasure, but a return to Paradise.

Let us begin this Lent with humility, with hope, and with love — forgiving as Christ forgives us.

And when the bright morning of Pascha comes, may we find ourselves no longer exiled, but restored — radiant in the light of the Risen Lord.

To Jesus Christ, who forgives, restores, and renews the world by His Cross and Resurrection, be glory, honor, and worship, together with His eternal Father and the all-Holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen!

LENT SERVICES SCHEDULE 2026

SERVICE	DATE	TIME
Presanctified Divine Liturgy	Wednesday, Feb. 25 (1 st Wed. of Lent)	6:00 P.M.
Great Compline with the Great Canon of Repentance by St. Andrew of Crete	Thursday, Feb. 26 (1 st Thurs. of Lent)	6:00 P.M.
Little Compline with the Akathist Canon and first stasis of the Akathist Hymn	Friday, Feb. 27 (1 st Fri. of Lent)	6:00 P.M.
Sunday of Orthodoxy & Procession of Icons	Sunday, March. 1	Immediately following Divine Liturgy
Great Compline	Monday, March. 2 (2 nd Mon. of Lent)	6:00 P.M.
Presanctified Divine Liturgy	Wednesday, March. 4 (2 nd Wed. of Lent)	6:00 P.M.
Little Compline with the Akathist Canon and second stasis of the Akathist Hymn	Friday, March. 6 (2 nd Fri. of Lent)	6:00 P.M.
Great Compline	Monday, March. 9 (3 rd Mon. of Lent)	6:00 P.M.
Presanctified Divine Liturgy	Wednesday, March. 11 (3 rd Wed. of Lent)	6:00 P.M.
Little Compline with the Akathist Canon and third stasis of the Akathist Hymn	Friday, March. 13 (3 rd Fri. of Lent)	6:00 P.M.
Veneration of the Cross & Procession	Sunday, March.15	Immediately following Divine Liturgy
Great Compline	Monday, March 16 (4 th Mon. of Lent)	6:00 P.M.
Presanctified Divine Liturgy	Wednesday, March 18 (4 th Wed. of Lent)	6:00 P.M.
Little Compline with the Akathist Canon and fourth stasis of the Akathist Hymn	Friday, March 20 (4 th Fri. of Lent)	6:00 P.M.

Little Compline with the Full Great Canon of Repentance by St. Andrew of Crete and the life of St. Mary of Egypt.	Monday, March 23 (5 th Mon. of Lent)	5:00 P.M.
Great Vespers with Litia-Artokasia for the Annunciation to the Most-Holy Theotokos	Tuesday, March 24 (5 th Tue. of Lent)	6:00 P.M.
Festal Orthros & Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom for the Annunciation to the Most-Holy Theotokos	Wednesday, March. 25 (5 th Wed. of Lent)	9:30 A.M. Orthros & 10:30 A.M. Liturgy
Great Vespers for the leave-taking of the Annunciation	Wednesday, March. 25 (5 th Wed. of Lent)	6:00 P.M.
Little Compline with ALL Akathist (5 th Friday)	Friday, March. 27 (5 th Fri. of Lent)	6:00 P.M.
Great Compline	Monday, March. 30 (6 th Mon. of Lent)	6:00 P.M.
Presanctified Divine Liturgy	Wednesday, April 1 (6 th Wed. of Lent)	6:00 P.M.
Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom for St. Lazarus Saturday	Saturday, April 4	9:30 A.M. Orthros & 10:30 A.M. Liturgy
Great Vespers for Palm Sunday	Saturday, April 4	5:00 P.M.
Palm Sunday (Glorious Entrance of the Lord to Jerusalem)	Sunday, April 5	9:30 A.M. Orthros & 10:30 A.M. Liturgy

LENT SERVICES

For Great Compline, Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, and Friday Akathist services for the next five weeks, you'll want to key the following Antiochian Archdiocese link:

<https://www.antiochian.org/liturgicday>

The link will take you to the Liturgics page. Scroll down to the very bottom of the page for 'Seasonal Liturgy Resources.' The section provides several services; however, the specific services you'll want are the following:

1 - Great Compline on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday:

[Great Compline in Great Lent - Full Text \(PDF\)](#)

&

For the Great Canon of Repentance, you'll want to scroll to the top of the page and key Select Date. A calendar will appear and you'll enter the date needed. The information will appear on the right side of the page under Daily Liturgical Text. You key the field 'Great Canon of Repentance (PDF)'

2. - Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts on Wednesday evenings:

[Presanctified Divine Liturgy - Full Text \(PDF\)](#)

However, there are some changes to hymns, prayers and gospel readings for each Wednesday Presanctified Liturgy. For the specifics, you'll want to scroll to the top of the page and key Select Date. A calendar will appear and you'll enter the Wednesday date. The information for the keyed Wednesday will appear on the right side of the page under Daily Liturgical Text. You key the field 'Presanctified Divine Liturgy (PDF).

3. - Little Compline with the Akathist Canon and stasis of the Akathist Hymn on Friday evenings for the first four Akathist services:

[Little Compline with Akathist Hymn: Fridays 1-4 in Great Lent \(PDF\)](#)



GREAT LENT SPIRITUAL SERIES

— Weekly Reflections on the Journey to Pascha —

St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church of El Paso

in collaboration with

St. Basil the Great Church of Kansas City

Virtual Lenten Spiritual Meetings via Zoom

✝ Feb 26 – Fr. Michel Najim

*“The Double Triumph of Orthodoxy: Sunday of Orthodoxy
and the Sunday of Saint Gregory Palamas”*

✝ March 5 – Fr. Elias Boulos

“I’m the Prodigal Son: Time to Return to the Father”

✝ March 12 – Fr. Charles Nicholas Baz

“The Tree of Life in the Midst of the Garden of Delights”

✝ March 19 – Fr. Kamal Al-Rahil

*“From Repentance to Salvation: The Ladder of St. John Climacus
in the Light of the Holy Scripture”*

✝ March 26 – Fr. Damaskinos Issa *“Repentance in the Life of St. Mary
of Egypt and its Echoes in the Book of Revelation”*

— Join Us on This Sacred Journey —