



Volume 30, Number 3  
**MARCH 2021**

# The Cathedral Messenger

*A Publication of St. George Antiochian Orthodox Christian Cathedral*

## KEEP CALM AND CARRY ON

By Fr. Paul O'Callaghan

"Keep Calm and Carry On was a motivational poster produced by the British government in 1939 in preparation for World War II. The poster was intended to raise the morale of the British public, threatened with widely predicted mass air attacks on major cities" (Wikipedia). In recent decades, that saying has morphed into a variety of memes, one of the most popular being "Keep Calm and Have a Cupcake" or "Stop, Keep Calm, and Have a Cupcake."

The basic idea is simple. There are times when we need to pause, take a break from stressors, and re-center ourselves. Doing so will enable us to carry on with the duties and responsibilities we face in a peaceful and focused frame of mind.

We are living through a period when tensions and anxieties are running high. None of us has lived through a pandemic before. The experience of shut-downs, lockdowns, closing of schools, businesses, churches and social gatherings has had a profound effect on many – not to mention the debilitation and

death brought on by the illness itself. Emotional disturbances are peaking among adults and children to an extent not previously seen in recent times.

On top of the distress caused by the pandemic, social unrest has been exploding throughout the country. Rioting and looting has been taking place in cities at a level not seen since the 1960's. The storming of the Capitol was truly unprecedented. Contention among the political parties and between the Right and Left in general is pervasive and heretofore irresolvable. It seems that the American social fabric itself may be unraveling. Conspiracy theories abound, and "cancel culture" reflects a troubling cultural meanness that seems to be spreading everywhere. It is truly disturbing to note how frequently online discussions of the most mundane matters – raising daisies, for example – degenerate into vitriol, personal attacks, viciousness and threats.

All of the above has one net effect – increased and pervasive anxiety. Is there a way to opt out of the

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**Dean, V. Rev. Paul O'Callaghan • St. George Orthodox Christian Cathedral**

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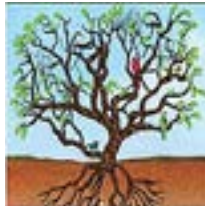


## MEMORY ETERNAL

Brenda Farha, 2/16

## March is Antiochian Women's Month

Nurturing the Seeds of Orthodoxy Across North America



### Antiochian Women Prayer

O Christ our God, we are all pledged to serve Thee with our whole being. Help us to continue to work for Thee through our Church without seeking praise, without seeking personal gain, without judging others, without a feeling that we have worked hard enough and now must allow ourselves rest. Give us strength to do what is right and help us to go on striving and to remember that activities are not the main thing in life. The most important thing is to have our hearts directed and attuned to Thee. Amen.

## Food for the Hungry



We urge you, during this season of prayer, self-discipline and fasting, to be very generous in your contribution to this campaign. As we practice the virtues which cleanse our souls, let us not forget or refrain from the "greatest of the virtues." As important as prayer and fasting are, they are of no avail to us if we fail to give to those in need.

"When you see a poor person, remember the words of our Lord Jesus Christ by which He declared that it is He, Himself who is fed. For though that which appears be not Christ, yet in that person's form, it is Christ Himself who receives and begs."

--St. John Chrysostom, "Homilies on Mathew" #78.

If you would like to give, please make your check payable to **St. George Cathedral - earmark "FFHP"**

## MARCH FASTING



The Great Fast begins March 15 during which we abstain from all meats, dairy products, and flesh fish. Fish is allowed following the Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Annunciation on March 25.

## Lenten Services This Year

Metropolitan Joseph has instructed parishes to provide the full cycle of Lenten services this year. Because of the ongoing coronavirus threat, however, and the particularities of this year's calendar, please take note of the following.

- In the ceremony of mutual forgiveness at Forgiveness Vespers, clergy and laity are to cross their arms on their chests and offer slight bows to each other with **NO PHYSICAL CONTACT**.
- Great Compline/Great Canon on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday of Pure Week will be served in the Cathedral for maximum social distancing. Prostrations can be made in the aisles. Masks may be removed while making prostrations if needed.
- Attendance patterns will determine whether the weekly Great Compline services will be held in the Cathedral or chapel.
- The Feast of the Annunciation takes place on Thursday, March 25. Vespers of the Feast, preceded by Great Vespers on Wednesday, March 24. There will be no Presanctified Liturgy that week.
- There will be no Pot-luck Suppers following the Presanctified Liturgies this Lent.
- The tradition is to fast all day if receiving Holy Communion at an evening Liturgy. If that is not possible, a light Lenten lunch can be taken with no food or drink thereafter until after receiving Communion.



## KEEP CALM AND CARRY ON - continued

anxiety, calm down, refocus, and carry on? The Church has a prescription. It is called Great Lent.

We miss the point of Great Lent when we approach it in a primarily dietary fashion – “Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle” (Colossians 2:21) – certain foods. We step back from eating indulgently to simple provision for bodily needs as a means to refocus our attention on what really matters: our relationship with God. An increased concentration on prayer and attendance at Lenten Services serves the same purpose. So does reducing television, secular music, and other forms of entertainment. This

year, perhaps the most important form of fasting will be from social media. Preoccupation with other people’s appearances, doings, and opinions often stimulates passions such as anger, envy, and greed, not to mention anxiety.

“Keep calm and carry on.” In order to get to that calm, we need to step back from anxiety-producing factors to the greatest extent possible. Great Lent affords us a bit of a “time out” from things that clutter our minds and disturb our souls. Let us embrace the Fast in order to refocus on our relationship with God and carry on with our pursuit of what really matters – the salvation of our souls.



IN DEFENSE  
OF CHRISTIANS

**Washington, DC– In Defense of Christians (IDC)**, the nation’s leading advocacy organization for Christians and religious minorities in the Middle East, calls on Turkish authorities to immediately drop all charges against Father Aho Bilecen.

Father Aho is a Syriac Orthodox priest in Tur Abdin (southeast Turkey), falsely charged by Turkish authorities with assisting a terror organization, for giving bread and water to unknown individuals who appeared unannounced and hungry at the monastery’s front door in 2018. Turkish authorities claim the unknown individuals were associated with the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) in some unconfirmed capacity.

According to Father Aho, “I give food to everyone who comes to my door, whomever they may be, in the spirit of Christian charity.” Father Aho unequivocally denies knowing the identities of the individuals.

Trial has been postponed three times in less than one year, due to the government’s inability to offer evidence. Trial is currently docketed for April 2021, and will be closed to the press and all other observers. This creates the strong appearance that Turkish authorities are attempting to manufacture a case that otherwise has no merit.

As a monk, Father Aho chose a life of service and worldly poverty. As a Good Samaritan, his door was open to help those in need. The facts present a strong indication that Fr. Aho’s prosecution is a consequence of his Christian faith in practice.

“IDC calls on Turkish authorities to immediately drop all charges against Father Aho,” said IDC President Toufic Baaklini.

*The Cathedral  
Messenger*

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