



Volume 28, Number 12
December 2019

The Cathedral Messenger

A Publication of St. George Antiochian Orthodox Christian Cathedral

A Wonderful Gathering 2019 Women's Retreat with Nicole Roccas, Speaker and author of *Time and Despondency*



— **Nicole Roccas, speaker**

"I LOVED spending the weekend with these lovely ladies at the Midwest Orthodox Women's Retreat in Topeka, KS! We explored some of the themes in my first book, #TimeandDespondency, through talks, writing exercises, group discussions, and even some improv games (nothing teaches you to stay in the present like improv!). What a blast ❤️"

Throughout the weekend I kept thinking about what a unique and well-conceived event this was--a regional retreat for women from a number of different churches. This seems like a great way to foster meaningful connections between parishes and jurisdictions. We need to do more events like this in North America!"

— **Carol Farrow**

"It's a great way to connect with other Orthodox women and learn some of the differences between our parishes (like how they sang the prayer before our meal). It's also a way to learn how to integrate our faith into daily life. Nichole Roccas, as well as audience members, offered ideas and inspirations that I am already implementing (like reading a Psalm a day and remembering God in the present). There were concepts that were discussed that were new to me (like eternal time (mind blown!) and how prayers aren't only for the living and how your prayers may help those who have reposed). Overall I enjoyed the experience and feel like it was helpful for my spiritual growth."

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

7515 East Thirteenth Street • Wichita, KS 67206-1223 • (316) 636-4676 • <http://www.stgeorgecathedral.net>



MEMORY ETERNAL

Kh. Anastasia Farha, 11/2
wife of Fr. Isaac of Hillsboro, KS

Harry Clay Stater, 11/2
father of John Stater

Larry Stater, 11/14
brother of John Stater

Bishop Basil Endowment

Honor Bishop BASIL on his name day, the Feast of St. Basil the Great, January 1, with a gift to the Endowment Fund that bears his name for establishing and maintaining missions within the Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America. See one of our Mission Support Team Members at the table in the hallway starting November 4th through the end of the month. Make checks payable to "St George Cathedral and earmark "Bishop Basil Endowment", and take this opportunity to honor Bishop BASIL.



Continues

**Wednesday evenings Dec 4,11,18
at 7:15p**

**A series focused on the
uniqueness of Orthodoxy**

DECEMBER FASTING



The Nativity Fast is observed through December 24th. From Nativity through January 4 there is no fasting.

MABROOK! BLESSINGS!

baptism

Sophia Ivete Farha, 11/2
daughter of Nathan and Vanessa

marriage

Trent and Samantha Frantz, 11/2
Blake Meier and Ariam Gebremichael, 11/10

chrismations

Robert (Gregory) and Jenny (Macrina) Wall, 11/16

MANY YEARS!

2020 STEWARDSHIP SUNDAYS

Please remember to complete your pledge card for 2020 and bring it to the Cathedral on **Sunday, December 1.**

Nativity Services

TUESDAY

December, 24

9:30a *Royal Hours*

4:00p *Vespers*

Liturgy

WEDNESDAY

December, 25

8:00a *Orthros*

9:30a *Divine*

Liturgy



Theophany Home Blessings

If you would like Fr. Paul or Fr. Jeremiah to come bless your home during the Theophany season, please email Gina at gina@stgeorgecathedral.net or call the Cathedral Office 636-4676

by Thursday, December 26th

Love of God, Love of Wife

A moment with Elder Makarios on Mount Athos



A priest posed a “hypothetical” question to the Elder regarding how a married man should discern a calling to the diaconate. The Elder responded: “First, it must be the desire of the man. Second, it must have his wife’s blessing.” A layman then had an opportunity to ask the Elder how we can love God and told him that he has great difficulty causing his mind to enter his heart. He smiled and told him: “All of that is technical stuff. Ignore it. We make all of this too complicated. We need simplicity. Do you love your wife? Then you can love God. Love is everything. So much so that nothing done out of love can be sinful.”

“I was in the world some time ago with an older married priest friend of mine, and I noticed that he was walking along holding his wife’s hand gently and tenderly and naturally. I told him that if he treated God in that same fashion that he would certainly see paradise. This is what we need.”

On another topic, Elder Makarios deplored the world’s fascination with guilt-feelings and called this a great passion: “One of the greatest passions we have is our tendency to blame ourselves and feel guilt.”



ST IGNATIUS SUNDAY is December 22nd. On this day members of the Order are reminded that ours is a ministry of faith, love and sacrificial giving. All are invited to become part of this important ministry. We ask you to join us. Bishop BASIL will be inducting new members on this day. Members are asked to wear their crosses to church and help host at coffee hour. For more information call Gayle Malone 253-0970 or Joan Farha 806-9640.

The Funniest Man in the Room

The Orthodox Christian should be the funniest man in the room. He should have all the best stories. He should have the most joyous and largest heart. He should be the most giving. He should be the one that, when he walks into the room, he lights the room up and everybody is attracted to him — that should be us. If it’s in the workplace, or if it’s in the grocery store, or if you’re just visiting your in-law’s house and they happen to be Protestants. When you come, you should light the place up. That’s what we’re supposed to be. Because we should, because we have all the joy – we have Pascha. We have Pascha, you know, we have that. That’s what they need, and that’s what they want. So, when they see us, then they will ask us the question that St. Paul said they should ask us “What is the reason for the joy that you have in you?” And then we can tell them about the Orthodox Church. Priest Job Watts

Special Thanks

Dear Sisters and Brothers of St George,

Gary and I and our family wanted to thank you for your love and compassion during the time of our son Samuel's passing.

Although this loss, at times, has been almost unbearable, the support from our church family has been amazingly comforting.

Thank you for the outpouring of sympathy, kindness and sharing of thoughts and prayers.

We thank God, for his strength and healing power and for giving you to us. Our heartfelt gratitude for your affection has helped to fill our broken hearts with love.

*Sincerely,
Gary & Paula Weber
and Family*

A Crisis of Piety

By Fr. Paul O'Callaghan

During the process of our recent facility renovation, I had to empty and restock my bookshelves. In doing so, I came across a book entitled "The Crisis of Piety" written by evangelical theologian Donald Bloesch. My volume was the 1988 reprint of the book, originally published in 1968. I had purchased it around that time.

In leafing through it, I remembered that his thesis was pointedly on target back then, and I realized how much more so now. His argument was simple: piety is disappearing in the way modern American Christians approach God. Surprisingly for an evangelical, back then Bloesch wrote, "What is needed today is a renewal of devotion to the living Savior, Jesus Christ...It will take the form of a deepening concern for prayer and meditation. It will also manifest itself in an awakened interest in the sacraments, particularly the Blessed Sacrament of Holy Communion."

What is piety? In the Christian sense, we could describe it as heartfelt devotion, a reverent affection for God, holy people, and holy things. It is a deep humility before God and all that is associated with Him, yet at the same time a burning love for Him and supreme confidence in Him. It is characterized by profound faith born out of intimacy with God, but never a casual over-familiarity, never without reverence. It exists in the tension between two poles: a palpable sense of the nearness of God and the spiritual world, and the recognition of the danger of the loss of God. I would venture to say that many of us may have observed it markedly in our grandparents, but it is not so often observed among ourselves.

What has changed? Where has that piety, once so characteristic of Orthodox Christians, gone? I'm going to suggest that there are several biases in the modern American (or Western) cultural mindset that actively work to undermine genuine piety, leading to its gradual disappearance among us.

First, the informational bias. I was shocked to learn a number of years ago that there were parishioners who would drop off their children for Church School and return later to pick them up. Neither they or their children attended Divine Services. Even today, parents will show up with their children barely in time to get them into the communion line, so they can go off to Church School. "Why would parents do such a thing?", I wondered.

Obviously the worship of God, the reverent reception of Holy Communion, and prayerful devotion are not the priorities. What is? Religious information. Getting the right information about God, the Faith, and the Church is the priority, not the living practice of the Faith. Educa-



tion is seen as the all-encompassing value both in the secular and religious realms.

Why is this so? Because that's what modern society programs us to believe. We live in "The Information Age." Having the right information is all-important in every field of human endeavor.

Who pays any attention to the cultivation of the soul? When the informational bias rules, it doesn't even happen in church. The result? The death of piety. Our children grow up with a modicum of religious information, but without a deep personal relationship with God and a humble reverence for all that is holy, never mind a love for the Church and her ways.

Second, pragmatism, or the technological bias. Once one has the right information, what is to be done with it? Apply it. Science is the search for the understanding of how things work, which then gives birth to technology: the application of that knowledge to work for us. The right information will lead to effective technology, then, in religion as much as the secular realm. Thus Christians will attend churches, chase preachers, read books, and follow fads that promise to offer the technology to find a fulfilling life, have a more satisfying marriage, raise children right, and find financial success. It's all about *what church will do for me*. The assumption is that a church should offer the right technology for a better life because it has the right information on hand.

Nothing is more characteristic of the American mindset than *pragmatism*. The one question that drives *pragmatism* is "what will work?". Americans have little use for purely theoretical knowledge. They relentlessly search for ways to apply knowledge practically toward desired improvements. This (often unconscious) bias drives American religion as much as it does anything else. People will say "I need a church that will feed me." Translated, that means, "I want a church that will supply me the information that I can apply to make my life better." They are looking for religious technology. What is this but *pure pragmatism*? What is missing in it? Piety. An utter lack of piety. The death of piety.

Piety looks to God reverently with an entirely different question: what does God require of me? How may I honor Him? The *technological bias* has gradually and subtly transformed most of American Christianity from being God-

A Crisis of Piety ... continued

tered to being man-centered. In the process, piety has nearly died.

Lastly, the pleasure principle, or the *entertainment bias*. Now we approach the final frontier of the modern American mentality: the expectation of pleasure. Everywhere we turn in this society, we find pleasure being promoted. Whether it's a mattress, a pillow, spaghetti sauce, an automobile, or a movie channel, it promises you increased comfort and pleasure. And so we've been programmed accordingly. Do you think that religion is an exception to this rule?

Consider the grind of the workday followed by after hour entertainment. You come home from work, plop down in front of the TV, watch the game, turn on your favorite music, surf the net, or do whatever most pleases you. Of course, in many cases such things can only be enjoyed after diapers are changed, children's homework has been completed, the dishes have been washed, and the laundry done. But at the end of the day, there is the expectation that the evening should include a modicum of pleasure and entertainment, even if we don't always get it. Do you ever wonder how people spent their evenings prior to the advent of electricity?

Free time, then, is time for pleasure and entertainment. Doesn't church occupy space within our free time? Shouldn't it also be pleasurable and entertaining? If not, why would you attend? It might start to seem like work. It's supposed to make ME *feel* good. Otherwise, why bother? Hence we have seen evangelical churches give themselves over to entertainment-based services promoting pleasure and comfort all across the board. Some people find this offensive; to others it feels exactly right.

Again, what do we find here? An utter lack of piety. Not only a man-centered approach to religion, but the reign of the Imperial Self. It's all about ME and making me feel good (i.e., pleasure).

Let us not fall under the illusion that none of this affects us Orthodox Christians. As I mentioned above, it may be unconscious, but these attitudes influence us and drive us. They are the reason many people cannot relate to Orthodoxy, or try to fit it into the mode of popular American religion. The reason? A loss of piety.

Donald Bloesch was right half a century ago. There is a crisis of piety in American religion. Let us not succumb to it, but strive to rectify it in ourselves and in our parish life.

Mindfulness & The Ancient Faith: Orthodoxy as a Healing Path



Professional counselor and member of St. George Parish, Scott Spradlin, will present on the Orthodox view of spiritual healing and the practices of watchfulness, comparing and contrasting it with modern mindfulness practices. He will also invite discussion on the role of faith in mental health and neurobiology.

Date: Saturday, December 7th
 Time: 1 PM - 4 PM
 Location: Haus of Clarity
 650 N. Carriage Park, #135
 Next to Thai Tradition
 Cost: \$10.00 for sacks and handouts
 Please RSVP: 316.927.3010



DYNAMIC™ MARRIAGE COURSE


Fr Aaron & Kh Gwen Warwick are once again offering the Dynamic Marriage course at St Mary.

The 9-week interactive course begins: Sunday, February 9, 2020, and will meet each Sunday at St Mary (344 S Martinson) at 6:00 pm.

Couples who are interested may contact Fr Aaron (fraaron@stmarywichita.org) or Gwen (bigsmile9@yahoo.com) to register or to learn more details about the course. The cost for all materials is \$135/couple. If you have financial concerns, please contact Fr Aaron as arrangements can often be made to help.

If you want to hear from people who have taken the course to learn more about it, the Warwicks will be happy to provide you with the names of some of the couples who have taken the class from St George who have offered to share their experience with others.

JOIN US FOR AN EVENING OF FUN & CELEBRATION!



St. Nicholas Celebration

Thursday December 5th

Schedule

5:30 Great Vespers
6:15 Lenten Pasta Dinner
6:45 Crafts & Games with Mr. Erik
7:30 Story & Visit from St. Nicholas

PLEASE BRING NEW/GENTLY USED COATS, HAT, GLOVES, & SCARVES TO BE DONATED TO THE TREEHOUSE

2020 WINTER CAMP
St. Raphael

WHO: 7TH GRADE - SENIORS IN HIGH SCHOOL

COST: \$140 CAMPER \$100 ADVISOR

ADVISOR APPLICATION IS DIFFERENT! ADVISORS ARE AT LEAST 18 AND AT LEAST A FRESHMAN IN COLLEGE

FRIDAY, JAN. 17 - MONDAY, JAN. 20




REGISTER ONLINE: WWW.2020WAMP.EVENTBRITE.COM

REGISTRATION OPENS NOVEMBER 18TH AT 12:00 PM (NOON) CENTRAL

WITH **FR. NICHOLAS BELCHER**

Contact Ben for more info

Let's Go Caroling

Teen SOYO Caroling & Lock-In

Friday, Dec. 13 - Saturday, Dec. 14

Please meet at the Cathedral by 4:45pm on Friday. The lock-in concludes with the Christmas Food Baskets Project on Saturday morning.

We will be sleeping in the Youth Center - Please bring sleeping bags, pillows & toiletries.



Teen SOYO Nativity Card

If you would like to have your name printed on the Nativity Card that is sent out each year, please visit the Teen SOYO table during coffee hour or call the Cathedral office Monday - Friday. Donations received will go towards scholarships for Winter Camp and the Ski Retreat.

The teens of St. George would like to extend a thank you to each and every one of you for your continued support of the Cathedral's youth ministries and wish you a blessed Nativity season.

SKI RETREAT

ST GEORGE CATHEDRAL presents The 2020 SKI RETREAT at WINTER PARK

*TOTAL COST:
\$675 FOR CATHEDRAL TEENS & OCF MEMBERS
\$700 FOR CATHEDRAL ADULTS
\$725 FOR NON-CATHEDRAL SKIERS

*DEPART: FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 14 AT 9:00P
*RETURN: TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 18 AT 6:00A

Questions? Contact Ben at 617.6965

Reserve Your Spot TODAY!




Community Support

by Traci Spencer

we'd love to have you join us!

"for I was hungry and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me" — Matthew 25: 35-36

Completed Projects

DUI Victims Center of Kansas - Red Ribbon Project

On Thursday, November 14th, St. George volunteers wrote the names of DUI victims on red ribbons in their memory; which was tied on police officer's antennae on 11/22 to remember them throughout the holiday season. In addition, Community Support donated \$500 towards food to honor the sacrificial service of local police officers.



Cook Up A Storm

On Saturday, November 16th, St. George volunteers made two batches of casseroles and cookies for the homeless men and women in our community.



Next Meeting Tuesday, December 10th

12:00 noon in the Conference Room.

We would love to have you join us!!

We usually meet the 2nd Tuesday of every month at noon. Please contact Traci Spencer at 371-5599 if you would like to be involved.

The Lord's Diner

On Sunday, November 17th, St. George volunteers served the homeless in our community at the Broadway location from 5:00-7:30 p.m. Thank you for your heart for feeding the homeless! Join us the third Sunday of every month to serve together. Please call Mikell Awwad at 250-3016 if you are able to serve.

Warming Souls Center

On Thursday, November 21st, St. George volunteers served homeless men and women in our community at The Warming Soul's Center.



What's Coming Up?

The Lord's Diner

On Sunday, December 12th, St. George volunteers will be serving the homeless in our community at the Broadway location from 5:00-7:30. Please let Mikell Awwad know if you can serve at 250-3016.

Food for Friends - Christmas Food Baskets

This is our 36th year of giving Christmas food baskets to the needy. We will once again be adopting 100 Wichita families who are in need. Please donate to this project. Money collected is used to buy over 10,500 pounds of food given to the families. Donations, made payable to "St. George" can be sent to the Cathedral office. Volunteers will pack and deliver groceries beginning at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, December 14th, in the gym. We need everyone's help!! Plan to bring the entire family to participate in this fun and worthwhile event.

Gifts for the Children

Along with groceries given to the 100 families, we will also be delivering gifts for the children. If you would like to adopt a family by purchasing 1 gift per child in that family, you can sign up during coffee hour. Gifts will need to be brought to the church by Sunday, December 8th. For more information, contact Debbi Elkouri 634-2525.

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Wichita, KS 67206-1223
www.stgeorgecathedral.net

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The Tenth Annual Eighth Day Symposium

THE SYMPOSIUM FOR I AM HOLY : THE COMMAND TO BE LIKE GOD



Speakers

Dr. David Fagerberg

His area of study is liturgical theology – its definition and methodology – and how the Church's *lex orandi* (law of prayer) is the foundation for her *lex credendi* (law of belief).

Fr. Stephen Freeman

Fr. Stephen Freeman is an archpriest in the Orthodox Church in America and serves as pastor of St. Anne Orthodox Church in Oak Ridge, TN.

Dr. Jessica Hooten Wilson

Author of three books: She has spoken at venues across the world from high schools and universities to churches and embassies on topics ranging from the nature of suffering to the joy of poetry.

Save the date now!

WHEN JAN 22, 2020 at 7pm - JAN 25, 2020

WHERE St George Orthodox Christian Church

REGISTER www.eighthdayinstitute.org



CHRIST THE SAVIOR CHRISTMAS CONCERT

All are welcome on Friday, December 6th at 6:30p
to hear the sweet and lovely voices of the school children singing
Christmas carols as well as their talents on their instruments.

