



# THE CHAMPION

## CHRIST IS RISEN! TRULY HE IS RISEN!

### WANT TO BE INCLUDED IN NEXT THE NEWSLETTER?

Please share with us your milestones from newborns, baptisms to 25th-50th year wedding anniversaries.

email us: [championnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:championnewsletter@gmail.com)

### THE PASTOR'S MESSAGE:

#### Christ is Risen!

Dear to Christ the members of St. George Toronto,

I greet you with this proclamation: Christ is Risen, Truly He is Risen. Wishing all of you a blessed Pascha. Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemmann wrote:

"My belief in Christ does not come from the opportunity given to me to participate since earliest childhood in the paschal celebration. Rather, Pascha is made possible; that unique night fills with light and joy and such victorious power in the greeting "Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!" because my faith itself was born from the experience of the living Christ. How and when was it born? I don't know; I don't remember. I only know that every time I open the gospel and read about Christ, read his words, read his teaching, I consciously repeat, with all my heart and being, what was said by those who were sent to arrest Christ but who returned to the Pharisees without him: "No man ever spoke like this man" (Jn. 7:46).

**Therefore, I know that Christ's teaching is alive and that nothing on earth can be compared with it. And this teaching is about him, about eternal life, about victory over death, about a love that conquers and overcomes death. I know that in a life where everything seems so difficult and tiresome, the one constant that never changes and never leaves is this inner awareness that Christ is with me. "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to You" (Jn. 14:18).**

He does come and give the feeling of his presence through prayer, through a thrill of soul, through a joy so incomprehensible, yet so alive, through his mysterious, but again so confident, presence in church during services and sacraments. This living experience is continually growing, this knowledge, this awareness which becomes so evident that Christ is here and that his word has been fulfilled. Whoever loves Me, "I will love him and manifest myself to him"(Jn. 14:21). Whether I am in a crowd or alone, the certainty of his presence, power of his word, the joy of faith in him remain with me. This is the only answer and the only proof.

"Why do you seek the living among the dead? Why do you mourn the incorrupt amid corruption?" Therefore, all Christianity is repeatedly the experience of faith, as if the first time, through incarnation rites, words, music, and colours. The unbeliever may seem like a mirage; he hears only talks, he sees only incomprehensible ceremonies, and he understands them only outwardly. Believers, all of this radiates from within, and not as proof of his faith, but results, its life in the world, in the soul, in history. Therefore, the darkness and sadness of Holy Friday is for us something tangible, alive, contemporary; we can cry at the cross and experience everything that took place in that triumph of





evil, treachery, cowardice, and betrayal. We can contemplate the life-bearing tomb on Holy Saturday with excitement and hope. And therefore, every year, we can celebrate Easter, Pascha, the Resurrection.

Easter is not the remembrance of an event in the past. It is the actual encounter in happiness and joy, with him whom our hearts long ago knew and encountered as the life and light of all light. Easter night testifies that Christ is alive and with us and that we are alive with him. The entire celebration is certainly an invitation to look at the world, life and behold the dawning of the mystical day of the Kingdom of light. "Today the scent of Spring begins," sings the church, "and the new creation exults..." It rejoices in faith, love and hope.

This is the day of resurrection,  
 Let us be illumined by the feast,  
 Let us embrace each other,  
 Let us call "brothers" even those that hate us,  
 And forgive all by the resurrection,  
 And so let us cry: Christ is Risen from the dead,  
 Trampling down death by death,  
 And upon those in the tombs bestowing life.  
 Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!  
 In the Risen Lord,



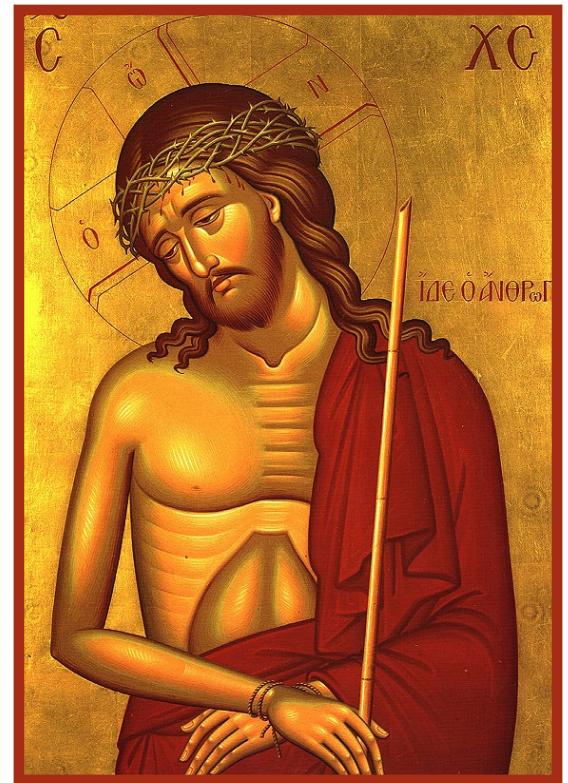
In Christ, Fr. George Dahdouh, Pastor

## THE HOME SCHOOL MINISTRY:

There is a rhythm, year after year, within the Orthodox Church. The movement of colorful seasons guide us through the Church calendar as we live these moments using all five of our senses. Thus, the most natural approach for Orthodox homeschooling parents, as they plan their upcoming year, would be to follow the Church cycle and make our Orthodox Faith the central part of the educational efforts. An Orthodox education is formational and may take a few years to get into a rhythm, however focusing on the following checklist will help to set the basic foundations for your "little home church, your family":

Do we:

- Go to Liturgy every Sunday?
- Go to Liturgy and other services during the week, whenever possible?
- Follow the fasts?
- Pray daily? Pray as a family?
- Celebrate Feast days and read the lives of the Saints?
- Practice almsgiving?
- Read the Bible and continue learning about the faith?
- Arrive on time for services?
- Pay attention and refrain from talking during services?
- Attend classes or retreats at church?
- Ask for forgiveness?
- Show kindness and patience to others even when tired or had a rough day?
- Give full attention to the person talking to me?
- Go to confession regularly?



*"Yet the family is recognized as the 'home church', and the task of the parents, is really a kind of lay priesthood."* — Sophie Koulomzin, Our Church and Our Children

*"The image of the adult Orthodox Christian is formed in the child's mind by what he sees and hears adults doing."*

— John Boojamra, Foundations for Christian Education

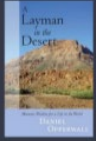


Zoom ID: 883 1753 0563

Passcode: yam

**7:00-8:00pm**

**Tuesday May 11**



Featuring Guest Speaker

## Dr. Daniel Opperwall

- Christ's call in these chaotic times
- St. John Cassian
- Inner transformation



## THE YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY:

Thank you to all those who joined our March Q&A session with Father George and guest speaker Father Christopher Rigden-Briscall, where we dove into a deep and enlightening discussion regarding life-changing repentance and St. Mary of Egypt..

Join them every **second Tuesday** of the month at **7:00 pm** for their Q&A with Father George, featuring a different guest speaker every month!

The next event will take place on **Tuesday, May 11, 2021**, featuring Dr. Daniel Opperwall. Register through our Eventbrite. We hope to see everyone there.

Join their Facebook and WhatsApp groups for all the latest information.



eventbrite



## CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to the following people who have been received into the orthodox church.



## THE SOCIETY OF ORTHODOX YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS (SOYO) TEENS 13-19:

St. George, Toronto Chapter

We are a dynamic group of Orthodox Christians that allow teens to grow spiritually with other Teen SOYO members. We will focus on Spiritual, Fundraising, and Fun Activities! Through all of our events, the teens will create a bond that will be unbreakable!

Upcoming events:

**May 8:** SOYO Movie Night (streamed over ZOOM) at **8:00 pm**

**May 22:** Games Night at **8:00 pm** (with surprise prize for first place winner!)

**May 29:** Talk with Abouna at **1:00 pm**

Join our Whatsapp group for direct communication for all our events.

Contact your Youth Advisors!

Angela Ghazal: 416.720.0308 Or Fady Freiga: 647.892.6136



## THE SUNDAY SCHOOL ANNOUNCEMENT:

### A letter from our St. George Sunday School, Orthodox Christian Education

I would like to start by saying Happy Mothers Day to all the mothers in our church community.

Mother's day, historically, was about honouring all women, not just mothers. Love, constancy, selflessness, courage, wisdom and spooky intuition are the same qualities women possess, but they are also the qualities of superheroes, and they can make a huge difference. Let's turn Mother's Day into a day when we honour all women who show motherly attributes.

**Lovely as it is, to be a mother on Mother's Day, I think there's a place for us to reclaim Mothering Sunday for all the women who 'mother' us beautifully — whether or not they ever gave birth.**

All those friends who support us with their love, understanding, wisdom, and a hug, when we need it the most.

I would like to congratulate all of our Sunday School Students for all of their hard work this year! It has not been easy, but our children are resilient and have been such a light during a challenging time.

We had planned some Lazarus Saturday activities and photos, but we have had to cancel due to the new government restrictions. Although we will not be able to be physically together in the church, we can still live-stream the liturgy and continue to pray together as always.

As we journey toward Holy Week and Pascha, a few Lenten Resources have become available that you may enjoy:

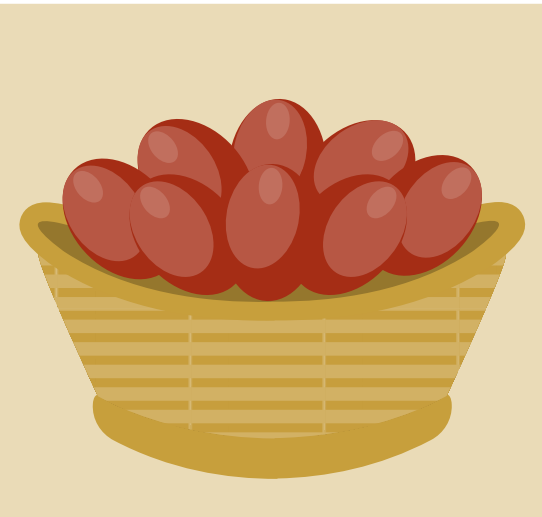
**For younger elementary students**, Orthodox Christian Network (OCN) is hosting a FREE Holy Week Crafts Group in partnership with Orthodox Pebbles. There will be a 30-minute virtual crafting activity for children every day of Holy Week at 3:30 pm EST. Registration is required, register [here](#).

**For older elementary students/teens**, a new graphic novel about the Harrowing of Hades. I recently sent a copy to my godson in 6th grade, and he gave it two thumbs up: [here](#).

**For all ages:** New release from "Music with Gigi": The Prayer of St. Ephraim (recorded by Kh. Gigi Shadid) [here](#).

We are starting to plan for next year. Anyone interested in teaching or helping with the Sunday School, please send an email and let us know [orthodoxchristianeducation@gmail.com](mailto:orthodoxchristianeducation@gmail.com).

Amanda Qaqish  
Sunday School Administrative Team  
Orthodox Christian Education



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