

SAINT GEORGE ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL

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Life Changes: Our Stepping Stones to the Kingdom of God



By Fr. Joshua Makoul



It is often said that when there is much change occurring in our lives, it helps to have something that stays the same. In fact, it is our nature to look for that one area of our life that is unchanged during times of great change. It comforts us and gives us a sense of predictability. Yet, cliché sayings about change abound. We often hear, "change is good", don't be afraid of change", and "change helps us grow". Certainly, all these sayings can be true. However, sometimes too much change happens in too short a period of time. When this occurs, change happens faster than we can process it. This leads to us feeling overwhelmed, stressed, and out of control. It can also lead to us feeling numb. When we feel numb as a result of change, it means our ability to process has become overwhelmed and we kind of just shutdown. It can also mean that we are suppressing painful emotions such as grief. To not feel that emotion, we shut down all emotion. We don't often associate grief with

> change, but with all change there is loss in some form. Where there is loss, there is some grief. When we accept this

and let out that emotion, it is amazing how quickly we can feel alive again, and not numb, as our whole being is brought back online. Remember, loss comes in all shapes, form, and sizes. There is often a bigger meaning to the supposedly smaller things in life.

I personally do not like change. This is likely a product of my upbringing. However, when I have held myself to not avoid it, go through it, and come out on the other side, I am usually glad that I did so. The aversion to much to change in a short period of time is universal, however the aversion to any amount of change is often tied to our life experiences. Yet sometimes it is just our temperament. Nevertheless, for all of us and with all change, there needs to be eventual acceptance of a change. Acceptance means we come to terms with it and engage our postchange life. When we have not accepted change, we keep trying to live as though the change never occurred. This can be in the form of behaviors or expectations that lead to us always feeling like the loss is re-occurring, because we keep



looking for and engaging a life that is no longer there.

Part of acceptance is engaging that new, post-change life. This is hard. However, it cannot be detoured. If we do not move to acceptance, we can become left in the past, which then exacerbates the feeling of loss. Each time we try and engage the life that was, it is as though we re-experience the change and loss all over again. So, we should not ever feel guilty for engaging our post-change life. No one expects us to stay tied and loyal to our past, except ourselves. Moving along with change and reaching the place of acceptance, means we are cooperating with God's plan for us. Our time in this world is indeed a journey to the Kingdom of God. We can fall out temporarily, whether it is due to discouragement or weariness, however we will need to get back up and start moving again. Becoming stuck in any part of our earthly life is not going to help us when we have to make the big letting go and go beyond the veil so to speak; what we might call "the change of changes". This is why Fr. Thomas Hopko said, "Our life is a practice in dying, in letting go, in letting go of our lives". Accepting change is to take the great plunge. We may feel like we are free-falling for a bit, but we will land on firm ground and adjust. We just need to trust the process.

So, we see there is a dying in these life experiences of change. Something that used to exist, no longer exists. We are then challenged to let go and move to the next reality. Indeed, there is a death and resurrection that exists with all change. We have to let go of something permanently and eventually embrace a new reality. When we successfully do this, we

are no longer the same person we were before. It does not mean that

our personality has changed. However, some aspect of ourselves has changed when we arrive at the place of acceptance. So, in the place of acceptance there is a resurrection that occurs. We are a new person. Perhaps one that has a little more experience in letting go of our life in this world. In all likelihood, we also have become more resilient and wiser. Life changes give us the opportunity to practice the process of death and resurrection to gain experience for our final death and resurrection. We need to be willing participants in this. Resisting change and holding on too tightly now, will lead to greater struggle later when we need it the most during the great transition from this world to the next.

Finally, remember, in this earthly life of great change, we have our God and our spiritual life that is constant and never changing. God does not change and He is ever present. Our prayer life will be our prayer life. The content may change slightly, but prayer will always be prayer. Our church family will always be there; with all of its imperfections of course, and that is okay. The scriptures are not going to change. The services are not going to change. None of these things will change, and so they should not, for the Kingdom of God will never change. This is an encouraging thought. So, this one aspect of our lives that will never change, is precisely what we need to guide upon in this ever-changing world. Embrace the journey, keep moving, and make sure to not get left behind in the past. Yes, there might need to be expeditions to the past to get healing or resolution if needed, but we must catch back up with the present and the life God has given us. The arrival point of the Kingdom of God will be in our present moment at that time. It will not be in our past, pre-change life.



The Demolition Derby!

We've waited for decades. Several plans were created but none came to fruition. St. George Cathedral has dreamed of expanding for our church school, meeting rooms and parking. But one piece of property held up our plans.



they all had a chance to strike at the house with a hardy blow.

The following week, the big and real bulldozers arrived in the lot—and soon the houses will be ripped down. The first step in our expansion will be completed!



FINALLY St. George Cathedral was able to own multiple properties adjacent to our church building so that we can expand. But we needed to raise a little extra funds to tear the houses down. That's what the DEMOLITION DERBY did! And we all had fun as well. Parishioners who gave at a higher level were eligible to get a hard hat and safety goggles along with their own sledgehammer or shovel and begin demolishing the houses before the heavy equipment arrived.

On May 21, parishioners took to the parking lot following coffee hour and the DEMOLITION DERBY began.

Our donors began to whack first, but everybody wanted to have a swing at the houses (mostly Gus' house) (lol). Everyone was enthusiastic from our senior parishioners to teens to our tiniest toddler,



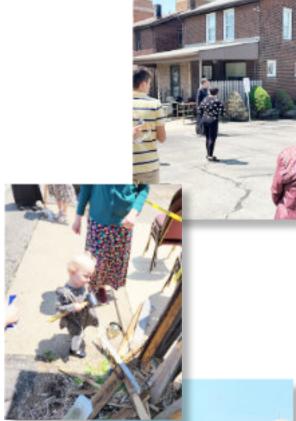














ST. GEORGE STEWARDSHIP 2023

Please Support...

What **we** do and what **we** are about

Worship

~Liturgical Services

~Preaching

~Singing and Chanting

~All who Serve and are Present

~Sacraments

Faith

~Our ministries as Faith in Action

~Christian Education and Retreats

~Our location serving as a

healthy place where Inquirers

and Seekers can find God

~Being beacons of the Light of

Christ as outreach to the Larger World

Family

~Our Fellowship and Relationships

~Keeping our St. George Community Safe, Loving, and Welcoming

~Social events and Community Meals

~Maintaining the physical structure of our Spiritual Home

~Beautifying, Expanding, and Preserving the Dignity of our Spiritual Home

~Providing support to members through various means and for various struggles

~Being a safe-haven for our souls in a Challenging World

Society of St. George's Palm Sunday Bake Sale



Parish Picnic





Did you know that there are Orthodox Christians trying to practice their faith in prison? Or that there are non-Orthodox prisoners who are ready to repent of their crimes and embrace the fullness of Orthodoxy?

Who Will Minister to Them?

Session 1: The Rev Fr. Stephen
Powley and The Very Rev. Fr. John
Kowalczyk, OCPM Co-Directors of
Training and Spiritual Care

Session 2: Nicholas Petrogeorge,
OCPM Executive Director and
Mark Santana, OCPM Church

Programs Director

Event Sponsored by St. George Men's Ministry



Saturday, August 26, 2023

Session 1: 10:00-11:00 AM Session 2: 12:30-2:30 PM (Light Lunch provided)

St. George Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church 3400 Dawson St. Pittsburgh, PA 15213



REGISTER HERE

or online at tinyurl.com/ocpmevent2023 WWW.THEOCPM.ORG



Departed Anniversary List

MAY 2023

May 7, 2023: Tamer Esper- 1956, Charles Salem- 1959, Archpriest Fr. Samuel David- 1999, Irene Riston Williams- 1991, Lawrence D. David- 2014, Susan F. George- 2004, Jouhaina Dayoub- 2016, Susan Namey- 2017, Rose Elias- 1971, Baby Meghan Elizabeth Bish- 2004.

May 14, 2023: Naman Nassar- 1984, Robert M. Essay- 1986, Salem Green- 2015, Albert Bryan- 1979, William G. Joseph- 2004, Roujina K. Ilyas- 2009, Faiad Labad- 2013, Rade Vukas- 1991, Ethel Albert- 1994, Ronald Shaheen- 2011, Emily (Labebe) Bazari- 1979, Dolores M. Neuman- 1987.

May 21, 2023: Rose Abraham- 1981, Catherine Salem- 1970, Mike Mansour- 1962, Fedwa Esper- 1984, Haseeb Esper- 1992, Sophia Nakles- 2008, Antony Thomas- 1961, George Abraham- 1960, Bolomia H. Asa- 1959, Philip Roy, Sr.- 1997, Khouria Joanne Abdalah- 2008, Kathryn John (Burte)- 2018.

May 28, 2023: John Solomon- 1974, Michael Roy- 1986, Fred Shehab- 1988, Agnes Ayoub- 1969, William Abraham- 1959, Anna Zacker- 1963, John Solomon Boseres- 1967, Celima Tamer- 1972, Sarah Jane Deep- 2010, Murshed M. George- 1975, Albert C. Hazeme, Sr.- 1978, Harry J. Khalil, Sr.- 2011, Sylvia Kelley- 2017, Samuel Brown- 1963, Stella Davis- 2001.

JUNE 2023

June 4, 2023: Elias Salim- 1965, Albert Davis- 1970, Sara Ellis- 1990, David Saba- 1955, Jean Joseph- 1977, Helen Hakim- 2003. Jacob Mike Jacob- 1960, Charles A. Hadad- 1990, John Labash- 1992, Sara Esper- 1971, Sara A. Corey- 1991, Samuel Cardone- 2017, Michael Davis- 1957, Abraham Abraham- 1982, Mary Zacour- 1989, Albert Nassar- 1994.

June 11, 2023: Elizabeth Tony- 1963, Louis John- 1965, Nancy Moosa Smith- 1975, Edward David Haddad- 1997, Julia Abraham- 2008, Gail Lesoon- 2016, Freda Begandy- 2004, John Aber- 1962, Louis Salem, Jr.- 1981, Agnes George- 2001, Tamara Robinson Fivehouse- 2013.

June 18, 2023: Albert Khoury- 1967, John Lesoon- 1955, Edna Apitsch Hakim- 1981, George Chammas- 2003, Mary Betris- 2010, Isabelle Albert- 2010, Nazeba Shaheen- 1985.

June 25, 2023: John Shamber- 1977, Michael N. Jacob- 1995, Martha Davis- 1959, Anna George- 1960, Samuel Thomas- 1969, Albert C. George, Sr.- 1970, George Khoury- 2011, Margaret Cardone- 1987, Mary Nassar- 1997, Mike Jacob- 1964, John H. Salem, Sr.- 1973, Sophie Ward Anderson- 1984.



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Dates To Remember

Saturday, August 26 - Prison Ministry

Thursdays (10:30AM to 1:30PM) - Counsel, Confession, and Candle Sessions at St. George

Please visit our website calendar or download our events bulletin, The Cathedral, for more details.