



# The Trophy-Bearer

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<http://www.stgeorgesouthgate.org/>

## Before All Ages

Rev. Fr. Anthony Cook



Last time we talked about Jesus as the only-begotten Son of God, and ended with the question implied in that statement: when, exactly, was He begotten?

This is a strange question to ask, considering we have repeated time and again the truth that the Son of God is timeless and eternal - but it is a question that was asked with great insistence in the earliest centuries of Christian history, and most especially at the beginning of the fourth century.

This is not the time to delve deeply into what is known as the Arian controversy - it is enough here to say that there was a movement that took the term "begotten" very literally, without admitting what must be admitted, that the literal meaning of a word cannot apply in all its particular, and especially temporal, implications to the infinite and uncontainable God Who has revealed Himself to us. The phrase of the Creed we are discussing today was included for the express purpose of correcting and guarding against that error.

The text is brief: "Begotten of the Father before all ages." It reads as a clarification of the prior phrase: "the only-begotten Son of God," and emphasizes the point that this begetting is not one that can be understood in terms of normal human experience - specifically, time doesn't come into the equation.

The Creed's affirmation here is not a new idea - it is the extension of the Church's unbroken confidence from the beginning that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is Himself truly and fully God. This is how the Lord speaks of Himself in the Gospels, most clearly in the Gospel of John, as in chapter 17, when He speaks of the glory He had with the Father before the universe was made, and in chapter 8 when He offends the religious authorities by saying that, "Before Abraham was, I AM.

This phrase, then, "begotten of the Father before all ages," qualifies and re-defines the idea of begetting to emphasize the timelessness of the Son, with two words, "before" and "ages" doing the heavy lifting. We will look at both these words in detail.

The word "before"  $\pi\rho\omicron$ , in Greek, is a common preposition in the language. Its primary meaning is spatial - in front of, like a shield that you hold in front of you, or a man standing in front of a house, but it is frequently used to speak of time, in which case it means not in front of, but prior to - before, as in, I washed my hands before I ate, or, we talked about God the Father before we talked about God the Son, but that doesn't mean that God the Father existed before God the Son, just that we talked about Him first.

The word "ages," now, is a translation of the Greek word  $\alpha\iota\omicron\nu$ , which means simply, a period of existence, a particular space of time, and usually, a long one. It is often applied not only to a space of time, but to what exists within that space of time, so that the word may be used interchangeably with the words "world" and "universe," insofar as they describe this time and place in which we live. We see this sort of thing in English usage all the time. Think of Charles Dickens: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times" by which he means, of course, that that particular time and place and set of circumstances were significant and dramatic and worth talking about - which is his way of justifying what is a very long book.

## REGULAR SCHEDULE

### Sunday

8:50 am – Orthros (Greek)  
10 am – Div. Liturgy (bilingual)

### Saturday

5 pm – Great Vespers (English)  
*Holy Confession by appointment*

*Please see included calendar for other meetings  
& weekday services, and for any variations to  
this regular schedule.*

## COMMUNITY UPDATES

### Funerals

**December 9, 2017**

Bobbie Christy

**December 19, 2017**

Antigoni Tsirkas

**December 22, 2017**

Philip Kaltsas

**December 23, 2017**

Marco Castaneda

### Chrismations

**December 17, 2017**

Daniel Lima

*If you have announcements about births,  
baptisms, weddings, engagements, or other news  
that you would like for us to include in the  
Community Updates above, please call or email  
the Church Office.*

# SAINT GEORGE

## GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

16300 Dix-Toledo Highway  
Southgate, MI 48195

Office: (734) 283-8820

Fax: (734) 283-8866

Office Hours: 9-5 Mon-Fri

Website: [www.stgeorgesouthgate.org](http://www.stgeorgesouthgate.org)

*Outside of office hours, parishioners may leave a voicemail for Fr. Anthony or the office. In case of emergency, they may call Fr. Anthony directly on his cell. Please leave a message if Father does not answer, and he will return your call shortly.*

### Clergy

Fr. Anthony Cook

Presiding Priest

Email: [franthonyc@mac.com](mailto:franthonyc@mac.com)

Cell: (734) 716-2268

### Office Staff

Susan Solo

Administrative Assistant

Email: [stgeorgesouthgate@gmail.com](mailto:stgeorgesouthgate@gmail.com)

Lisa Campbell

Bookkeeper

Email: [stgeorgebkkpr@gmail.com](mailto:stgeorgebkkpr@gmail.com)

### 2018 Parish Council

Nicholas Minton

John Kontos

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The point is, αἰών, or age, is the word that you use in Greek when you're talking about time and everything that happens in time. Modern English, with the benefit of Einstein's understanding of the universe, uses the term "space-time" to refer to space and time as existing in a single continuum, but αἰών, although it is a very old word, has always communicated a surprisingly similar concept.

In putting these two words together, "Before all Ages," the Creed communicates something that neither word alone could convey. The "before" word, πρὸ, can have either a spatial meaning or a temporal meaning - the "age" word, αἰών, can refer to either time or to space - but used together, they speak of a reality that transcends both time and space. There can't be any time "before" time; there can't be any space "in front of" space itself. Nor can there be time before space, or space before time, and thus the very idea of a "Land before Time" is utter nonsense (with apologies to Little Foot and his friends). But, by bringing the two words together, the Creed uses the words of the finite universe to describe the infinite reality that transcends the limits of the universe, using the terms of time and space to affirm a reality that is governed and defined by neither time nor space, being infinitely greater than both. And thus, just because we say that the Son of God is begotten of the Father does not, in fact, require that there was a time when there was no Son, nor that there was a time when He was begotten - because His begetting precedes time itself, and is not bound by the normal constraints of time and space. Even human language and logic are insufficient to describe Him - since the Son of God is timeless, together with the Father, the only way we can speak of His Being outside of Time is to use the term Time, and immediately to negate it. Thus, we say that He is time-LESS, or OUTSIDE of time, or BEFORE the AGES, to affirm that time, which universally applies to everything that exists in the "normal" manner of existing, does not apply to Him.

The central point here is not what we know, but what we admit we do not know. The words of the Creed here are words of humility and caution, words that avoid any particular theory or perspective on the nature of the universe in favor of something far more important. The word "age" describes the realm of being in which we exist - and the Creed uses it to emphasize that whatever we are by nature, the Son of God is infinitely greater, absolutely other. We are creatures of the ages - of the periods of time - of time and space. He is not. We are limited - He is not. We begin and end - He does not. We experience time chronologically - He does not. As the Lord says by the Prophet Isaiah, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

Thus the Church, in words of deepest humility, affirms with absolute confidence a truth beyond our comprehension. She does not presume to know the exact nature of the universe, of space and time, nor does She dare to speculate on the the questions of science, whether there is a single age or many ages, a single universe or a multiverse. But nonetheless, in broad strokes, She affirms that all that we know and experience is temporal, contingent, dependent, caused - and that the Son of God, together with the Father is timeless, perfect, eternal, un-caused. There is an absolute boundary between God and us, and the Church, in using the word αἰών, age, has chosen the largest word available, affirming that we are creatures of the ages - and God is the Creator of the Ages, entirely beyond our knowledge and understanding.

Precisely because this truth transcends our understanding, the Creed does not stop with this affirmation, but repeats the point in different words, to ensure that in every way possible it affirms that the Son of God is truly and fully God, perfect and eternal. So next time, we will consider what it means that He is Light of Light, true God of true God.

*The above is the fourteenth installment of our new Adult Education Program, updated weekly at <http://theruleoffaith.typepad.com>. Comments/questions are welcome, by email or via a comment on the website.*

# St. George Calendar of Events • JANUARY & FEBRUARY 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><b>21 ✠</b></p> <p>Maximos the Confessor Martyr Neophytos Epistle: 1 Timothy 4:9-15 Gospel: Luke 19:1-10</p> <p>Orthros/Liturgy (8:50 &amp; 10 am) Vasiloptia Luncheon</p>	<p><b>22</b></p> <p>Timothy the Apostle of the 70 Martyr Anastasios the Persian Epistle: 2 Timothy 1:3-8 Gospel: Matthew 10:32-33; 37-38; 19:27-30</p>	<p><b>23</b></p> <p>The Holy Hieromartyr Clement, Bishop of Ankyra Epistle: Philippians 3:20-21; 4:1-3 Gospel: Mark 2:23-28; 3:1-5</p> <p>Greek School (5:30-7:30 pm) Deaconess/Executive (7 &amp; 8 pm)</p>	<p><b>24</b></p> <p>Xenia, Deaconess of Rome Hieromartyr Babylas Epistle: Galatians 5:22-26; 6:1-2 Gospel: Mark 12:28-37</p>	<p><b>25</b></p> <p>Gregory the Theologian, Archbishop of Constantinople Epistle: Hebrews 7:26-28; 8:1-2 Gospel: John 10:9-16</p>	<p><b>26</b></p> <p>Xenophon &amp; his Companions Symeon the Elder Epistle: 2 Peter 1:1-10 Gospel: Mark 13:1-8</p> <p>Marriage/Parenting Retreat (6:00-8:30 pm)</p>	<p><b>27 ◆</b></p> <p>Peter the Righteous of Egypt Epistle: Hebrews 7:26-28; 8:1-2 Gospel: John 10:9-16</p> <p>Marriage/Parenting Retreat (9:00 am-3:30 pm) No Vespers</p>
<p><b>28 ✠ Tridion Begins Today</b></p> <p>Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee Epistle: 2 Timothy 3:10-15 Gospel: Luke 18:10-14</p> <p>Orthros/Liturgy (8:50 &amp; 10 am) FOCUS Detroit Food Prep at Coffee Hour JOY Game Night (5:00-8:00 pm)</p>	<p><b>29</b></p> <p>Removal of the Relics of Ignatius the God-bearer Epistle: Hebrews 10:32-38 Gospel: Mark 9:33-41</p>	<p><b>30</b></p> <p>Synaxis of The Three Hierarchs: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, &amp; John Chrysostom Epistle: Hebrews 13:7-16 Gospel: Matthew 5:14-19</p> <p>Greek School (5:30-7:30 pm)</p>	<p><b>31</b></p> <p>Cyrus &amp; John the Ummenararies Martyrs Theodote, Theoctiste &amp; Eudoxia Epistle: 1 Corinthians 12:27-31; 13:1-8 Gospel: Matthew 10:1, 5-8</p>	<p><b>1 FEBRUARY</b></p> <p>Forefast of the Presentation Tryphone the Martyr Epistle: Romans 8:28-39 Gospel: Luke 10:19-21</p>	<p><b>2 ✠ Presentation of Our Lord</b></p> <p>Gabriel the New Martyr Epistle: Hebrews 7:17-17 Gospel: Luke 2:22-40</p> <p>Orthros/Liturgy (9 &amp; 10 am) Ladies of Lydia Valentine's Bingo (7-9 pm)</p>	<p><b>3 ◆</b></p> <p>Symeon &amp; Anna the Propheteess Sannation, John, &amp; Nicholas Epistle: Hebrews 9:11-14 Gospel: Luke 2:25-38</p> <p>Great Vespers (5 pm) GOYA/Young Adult Game Night (6:00-10:00 pm)</p>
<p><b>4 ✠</b></p> <p>Sunday of the Prodigal Son Nicholas the Confessor Epistle: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 Gospel: Luke 15:11-32</p> <p>Orthros/Liturgy (8:50 &amp; 10 am) Godparent Sunday Superbowl Party (4:30 pm)</p>	<p><b>5</b></p> <p>Agatha the Martyr Polyektos, Pat. Constan. Epistle: 1 John 2:18-29; 3:1-8 Gospel: Mark 11:1-11</p>	<p><b>6</b></p> <p>Photios, Pat. Constantinople Bucolos, Bishop of Smyrna Epistle: Hebrews 7:26-28; 8:1-2 Gospel: John 10:9-16</p> <p>Greek School (5:30-7:30 pm)</p>	<p><b>7</b></p> <p>Parthenios, Bp. of Lampskos Luke the Righteous Epistle: 1 John 3:21-24; 4:1-11 Gospel: Mark 14:43-72; 15:1</p> <p>Philoptochos (7:00 pm)</p>	<p><b>8</b></p> <p>Theodore the General Zachariah the Prophet Epistle: Ephesians 2:4-10 Gospel: Matthew 10:16-22</p>	<p><b>9 ☯</b></p> <p>Leavetaking of Presentation Niciphoros of Antioch Epistle: 2 John 1:1-13 Gospel: Mark 15:20, 22, 25, 33-41</p>	<p><b>10 ✠ ◆ Sat. of Souls</b></p> <p>Haralambos the Martyr Anastasios, Pat. of Jerusalem Epistle: 2 Timothy 2:1-10 Gospel: John 15:17-27; 16:1-2</p> <p>Orthros/Liturgy (9 &amp; 10 am) Great Vespers (5 pm) Apokreatiko (7:00-11:00 pm)</p>
<p><b>11 ✠</b></p> <p>Judgment Sunday Vlassos, Martyr of Sebaste Epistle: 1 Corinthians 8:8-13; 9:1-2 Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46</p> <p>Orthros/Liturgy (8:50 &amp; 10 am)</p>	<p><b>12 Cheesefare</b></p> <p>Meletios, Abp. of Antioch Antonius, Abp. of Constan. Epistle: 3 John 1:1-15 Gospel: Luke 19:29-40; 22:7-39</p>	<p><b>13 Cheesefare</b></p> <p>Martinianos the Righteous Aquila &amp; Priscilla the Apostles Epistle: Jude 1:1-10 Gospel: Luke 22:39-42; 45-71; 23:1</p> <p>Greek School (5:30-7:30 pm)</p>	<p><b>14 Cheesefare</b></p> <p>Aurentius of the Mountain Cyril, Enlightener of the Slavs Joel 3:12-21 Joel 2:12-26</p>	<p><b>15 Cheesefare</b></p> <p>Onesimus of the 70 Anthimus the Elder of Chios Epistle: Philemon 1:1-25 Gospel: Luke 23:1-31, 33, 44-56</p> <p>Senior's Luncheon (Noon) Sunday School Teachers (6:00 pm) Parish Council (7:00 pm)</p>	<p><b>16 Cheesefare</b></p> <p>Pamphilos &amp; Companions Flavianos, Pat. Constantinople Zachariah 8:7-17 Zachariah 8:19-23</p>	<p><b>17 ✠ ◆ Sat. of Souls Cheesefare</b></p> <p>Mariame, sister of Philip Epistle: 2 Timothy 2:1-10 Gospel: Luke 20:46-47; 21:1-4</p> <p>Orthros/Liturgy (9 &amp; 10 am) Great Vespers (5 pm)</p>
<p><b>18 ✠ ◆ Cheesefare</b></p> <p>Forgiveness Sunday Leo, Pope of Rome Epistle: Romans 13:11-14; 14:1-4 Gospel: Matthew 6:14-21</p> <p>Orthros/Liturgy (8:50 &amp; 10 am) Sunday School Dodgeball Forgiveness Vespers (5:00 pm)</p>	<p><b>19</b></p> <p>Lent Begins Philemon, Archpriest of the 70 Isaiah 1:1-20; Genesis 1:1-3 Proverbs 1:1-20</p>	<p><b>20</b></p> <p>Leo, Bishop of Catania Agathon, Pope of Rome Isaiah 1:19-23; Genesis 1:14-23 Proverbs 1:20-33</p> <p>Greek School (5:30-7:30 pm)</p>	<p><b>21 ✠</b></p> <p>Timothy the Righteous Isaiah 2:3-11; Genesis 1:24-23 Proverbs 2:1-22</p> <p>Presanctified Liturgy (6:00 pm)</p>	<p><b>22</b></p> <p>Relics of Martyrs in Ingenios Thaddeus and Bradaeus Isaiah 2:11-21; Genesis 2:4-19 Proverbs 3:1-18</p>	<p><b>23 ✠</b></p> <p>Symeon the Elder Epistle: 2 Peter 1:1-10 Gospel: Mark 13:1-8</p> <p>Salutations to the Theotokos (6:00 pm)</p>	<p><b>24 ☯ ✠ ◆ Sat. of Souls</b></p> <p>Saturday of the Souls Epistle: 2 Corinthians 4:6-15 Gospel: Matthew 11:2-15</p> <p>Orthros/Liturgy (9 &amp; 10 am) Great Vespers (5 pm)</p>

• Shaded days denote a fast day. ✠ denotes a Liturgy ◆ Great Vespers/Compline ✧ Akathist/Paraklesis ✠ Presanctified Liturgy ☯ fish/wine/oil allowed ☯ wine/oil allowed





ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH  
GRECIAN CENTER

16300 DIX-TOLEDO ROAD - SOUTHGATE, MI 48193

# APOKREATIKO CARNEVALE

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2018**

GREEK & AMERICAN MUSIC BY DJ JOHN PAPADONTAS  
PHOTO BOOTH

DOORS OPEN 7:00 PM / DINNER 7:30 PM

PREMIUM BUFFET / OPEN BAR

ADULTS - \$30 YOUNG ADULTS 12-20 - \$15

CHILDREN 11 & UNDER - FREE

**COSTUMES ENCOURAGED**

FOR TICKETS CALL THE CHURCH OFFICE \* 734-283-8820

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