

It is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth.

Lamentations 3:27.

Let no one despise your youth.

1 Timothy 4:12

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In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Our holy Mother Church teaches us and nourishes us spiritual children with the food of eternal life, even the flesh and blood of the Son of God Who loved us and gave Himself for us. All of us are children of God and little brethren of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Father adopted us in the Son through holy Baptism and constantly feeds us with the good things of Jerusalem, His sweet divine Grace. As those born again from the baptismal font and who live in Christ, we know the sweetness of spiritual youth, learning and growing. Even though our bodies grow old with age, our hearts and minds within

become ever young in renewed faith, hope, and love. Truly in the holy Orthodox Church, in the company with the Mother of God and all the saints, we are ever growing, ever young.

Our discussion here is about youth. The Church's youth! Your sons and daughters who will one day "sooner than you realize! Become parents of yet another generation, God granting continuance to the race of men. But talk about our youth is meaningless unless we ourselves are also under the magnifying glass. So what can we learn, just as our youth are learning? It is easy to forget that the passage through adolescence for the child-becoming-adult is not only a challenge for the child, since he has never done it before; but it is also a challenge for the parents as well, for the same reason they, too, have not

yet done this, at least for this child, ever before. What challenges do youth have before them? In addition to all the usual things; namely, learning how to make adult decisions, governing their bodily appetites and impulses, and discerning between good and evil, there are special problems today: social websites which project an inflated sense of self-importance, texting and talking on cell phones at all times, the ever-present electronic screen (TV, computer, smart phone) instead of the living human face, worldly philosophy about sex, drugs, sports, romance, fashion, even superficial religious pietism. What a welter of confusion our young people are exposed to! What can parents do? What can the Church do? A lot! Most importantly, when our young people leave home for college, or work, and so on, frequently they face temptations to lose restraint. Many times they stop going to church and have moral falls, sometimes of a very grievous nature. The reason for this is that we parents have failed to prepare them for life. Parents can be too severe and place their maturing children in a pressure cooker atmosphere. They count the days until they get out of it! There is also the problem of parental laxity; in the name of love, the parents can utterly fail to offer their children much needed guidance and active, loving involvement with their challenging problems. In this latter case, the parent mistakes love for license! Children want to know the boundaries; the issue is how to guide them respectfully and lovingly in identifying those boundaries. My talk is chiefly concerned with these problems and the answers we can take to heart to deal with them.

First of all, you parents and your young people are not alone. You are in the Church, just as your children are. The Church offers a living atmosphere of godly, patient love, through the other faithful who are friends with much wisdom, as well as the spiritual father himself, the pastor-priest. Nothing is sweeter to young people than a community to which they belong, and a trusted spiritual father whom they call their own. It is true that all young people must of necessity learn to suffer like a Christian, bearing their crosses, just like all believers. But the encouragement of the holy Church provides the right climate for this cross-bearing which actually saves them. Everyone bears crosses; but in Christ, those crosses become transfiguring and a way to life. So, on the way with the cross, you parents can learn (if you are truly forever young) how to work with God in the salvation of your maturing children.

Remember, adolescent human persons are at the stage of human development in which they must face the question: who am I? Identity issues are everything for a young person! This explains why the young man or woman experiments so much with his or her physical appearance, hair, face, clothing, and so on. As parents, we are wise to allow our youth to have room to experiment, and to provide a loving perspective for them in a climate of basic respect. We may like or dislike what they try on: weird clothes, dyed hair, certain odd kinds of facial make-up, and so on. Is it worth a battle of wills as to whether your young son or daughter is going off to school with purple dye in his hair or strange looking bangles on her wrist? As loving and patient parents, it is better to help our youth to see consequences which issue from certain courses of action they may be wanting to undertake. It was said about Archbishop Christodoulos, of blessed memory, the predecessor to the current presiding hierarch of the Church of Greece, that he welcomed back so many alienated youth by getting across the message, God does not care about your earrings; there is a place in the Church for you. He was voted the most popular man in Greece, just before he passed from this life. God Himself lets all of us experience consequences in the natural order of things. So it should be with our children: guidance with choices, not power struggles with a show-down! We parents should control our own anxieties and fears and not transfer them on to our children. Give them a little credit; the adolescent has a firm sense of fairness. If you can let him see the issues, he will usually make a good choice. Where choices are very serious, we plan ahead and help them by giving them information. For that, our young people need to benefit from a dialogue of love. Dialogue, not monologue. Remember, you have been preaching to your sons and daughters for 15 years or so! Now, listen to them! If you listen carefully, you will notice what is really going on inside. To listen effectively, you must arrange for activities with your youth which THEY enjoy, so that you can hear them open up to you. I know one father in the Pacific Northwest who wanted to listen to his son, but nothing worked. For example, after coming home from work, he said to his son, so how are you doing? The young man said, I don't know. (You may laugh from experience, since this is so common a response among young people!) Then, he thought, my son loves the snow; I will take him for a day of skiing with me. The young man and his dad went skiing and later on during that day, actually on the way home, the son poured out his heart with all of his burdens. His father listened carefully and loved him; he said very little he only communicated by his love that he cared. The son made the right choice in the problems which beset him; the father's wisdom had been there for years. He only needed to feel his dad's love! Parents, do not be afraid of your child's questions! Some questions may be hard for you, even embarrassing. But if you do not take them seriously, who will?

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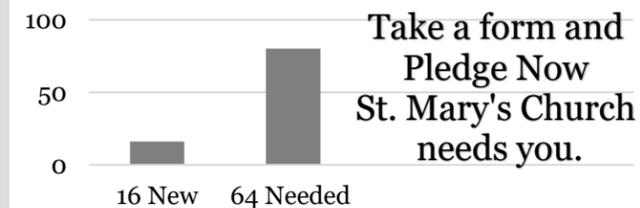
Do you want your sons and daughters to learn about sexuality from the streets? Do you want your youth to face life's heavy challenges without preparation? Listen, the time when your young people will be ready to learn varies greatly, from one person to another. You must be always ready, keeping a loving hand on the pulse of their young and precious lives. Remember, let young people experience consequences, not punishments. If your daughter gets in trouble with credit-card debt, make sure she pays it back. Don't you do it yourself! If your son gets a speeding ticket, make sure he takes the responsibility of dealing with the penalty! In this way, you allow them to truly feel adult responsibilities and you work yourself out of a job. Do you want to still be a parent of an irresponsible man when he hits 30? Parents need to be far more concerned with what their children are suffering than how they are behaving. If you know your sons and daughters at a deeper level, you will be less anxious about their behavior. And, in return, your children will feel your trust and love, and will desire to live up to your noble ideals. There are times when the consequence of a planned course of action could be lifechanging and irreversible. If such a state of affairs is impending, bring your priest and other trusted advisors into your son's or daughter life to help you to orient the adolescent to the dangers lying ahead. For example, many young people unwisely choose to get tattoos and piercings of body parts. These are disfigurements of the body and are contrary to our Orthodox faith which teaches us to treat the body in a sacred manner. It can be very difficult, if not impossible, to reverse a tattoo, and the piercing of certain body parts, like the tongue, introduce infection and cause chronic physical illness. Parents are under an obligation to teach these truths to their children before they face this and other similar temptations. To summarize this point, try to find yourself saying in any discussion with youth, What do you think about? This invites collegial discussion and lends importance to their point of view. Adolescents are very sensitive about being rejected. Avoid saying things like, What a dumb idea! or, You need to. These statements diminish or even take away power from youth. That is a recipe for a loss of respect the biggest element of a young person's self aspect. Try to keep the power in their hands, while you subtly and lovingly guide and model the good path.

Nowadays, young people lack a deep sense of connection with nature, the environment, and beauty, especially of quiet and solitude. Their lives, and ours, are so noisy. Try to provide for wholesome times together as a family in the beauty of nature and with no electronic noise. When you are together as a family, do not think only of what you like to do, but think of the developmental needs of your adolescent children. You are not done raising them yet. What and whom does your child love? What does he find humorous? What does she find troubling? It is true that troubled behavior is almost always a NORMAL process of dealing with an ABNORMAL circumstance. What pain and suffering is confronting your son or daughter? Focus on the deep stuff; forget and overlook the little stuff. Too often parents fight harsh battles with their children over things which do not matter, while they are completely ignorant of the huge issues which caused the bad behavior in the first place.

How can parents expect their children to honor them, according to the holy commandment of Moses, if the parents do not do their part the greater part of raising them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Our children must learn to bear burdens, to suffer, to work, to experience the beauty and the crosses of life with strength of character. As parents, we can greatly help them on the way, or we can trip them up. If you have painted yourself into a corner with your maturing children, be a Christian and admit it. Language like this never hurt a parent-child relationship, dear daughter (name!), I am sorry. Children love their parents and need them far longer than we are aware of. Make these later years of their childhood sweet and rewarding. We can conclude with an invocation to the holy martyr Demetrios, who lived only a short time and suffered martyrdom while still a beardless youth. How fresh his holy memory is! Through his holy intercessions, may all our youths be saved, along with us!

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SUNDAY NOVEMBER 3RD, 2019

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A Reminder to all Parishioners to register with our ushers in order to offer the Holy Bread every Sunday. The Schedule for the whole year is outside in the hall. **The Fee for this service is \$50. Reserve your week in advance, sign up sheet at the entrance.**

COLLECTIONS

26 Oct-2019: \$ 850

If you wish to become a member, the Annual Membership Dues is a minimum \$600 annually or preauthorized \$50 per month. For more info please see father Elias Ayoub, Jose Maalouf (Council Member), or Massoud Kamel (Church Accountant).

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ELEVATOR QUOTES ARE BEING REQUESTED AT THE MOMENT.
VISITING PARISH MEMBERS WILL BE STARTING SOON.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

BIBLE COMPETITION – PART 2

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 16, 2019 AT 7:00 PM In the church the competition will cover the period of Christmas. Reading: John 1: 1- 13, Matthew: 1 and 2 Luke: 1 and 2

If you like to be a contestant, call Helen Nigme at: (416) 550-7405

PLEASE NOTE: ONLY 6 CONTESTANTS ARE NEEDED.

All are encouraged to attend, there will be questions and games for the audience as well. Read the bible and come prepared to join us for a fun and informative evening.

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