

APRIL 3, 2016

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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THE LADDER

THE VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS



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– Fr. Theodore Pantels,

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M.D.

Holy Communion Order

1. Please remain standing while following the directions of our ushers.
2. Ladies, kindly remove lipstick before receiving.
3. When receiving Holy Communion, make the Sign of the Cross, state your name (baptismal name), and naturally receive as if being fed.
4. Non-Orthodox Christians may not receive Holy Communion, but they may receive the Holy Bread at the end of the service.
5. All Orthodox Christians must be spiritually prepared to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Please see the priest if you have any questions.

THE CROSS, SUFFERING & LIFE

"In his famous eleventh Feuerbach-Thesis, Marx proclaimed: 'The philosophers have only interpreted the world, but it is necessary to change it.' This famous dictum however is faulty for at least three reasons: (a) It is not possible for us as human beings to change the whole world, but only to change certain aspects of and situations within rather small regions of the world. (b) It is not really necessary to change certain aspects of and situations within the world, but to improve them, because whenever we change something we can also make things worse rather than to improve them. c) It is not possible to improve

certain aspects of and situations within the world without interpretation, understanding and knowing those aspects and situations." (Existenz: International Journal in Philosophy, Religion, Politics and the Arts [www.bu.edu/paideia], Vol. 4, No. 2: "Human Suffering as a Challenge for the Meaning of Life," by Ulrich Diehl).

Without the Cross of Christ our God, these observations have merit. With the Cross in our midst, St. Paul counters these and other such observations: *"Do not throw away your confidence"*
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SERVICE OF THE VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

As the choir sings the hymn: "Holy God" for the Great Doxology, the priest, holding the decorated tray with the Holy Cross, processes around the church to the solea, to a table especially set upon which the tray with the Holy Cross is to be set. The priest circles the table three times before placing the Holy Cross on the table. After which, he says:

"Wisdom! Arise!"

The priest then censes around the table, singing with the choir the following hymn **three times**: "Soson Kyrie ton laon Sou... (Save, O Lord, Your people and bless Your inheritance, granting victory to Your faithful over every evil and, by Your Holy Cross, protecting Your great order.")

The priest and deacon then make prostrations (making the Sign of the Cross). They make prostrations each of the **three times** that they, together with the choir, sing the following hymn: "Ton Stavron Sou proskinoumen.." ("We venerate Your Cross, O Master, and we glorify Your Holy Resurrection.")

After this, the priest and deacon assume their positions to begin the celebration of the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great. Following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, the priest blesses the faithful with Holy Cross, while hymns for the veneration of the Holy Cross are chanted by the chanters.



Ο Χριστός είναι ο Αληθινός Θεός, ο Οποίος υποφέρει *μαζί* μας και *για* εμάς, διότι δια μέσου της αμαρτίας, η ταλαιπωρία και ο πόνος εισήλθε στον κόσμο μας – και, επειδή, είμεθα αδύνατοι και αμαρτανούμεν, ολος ο κόσμος εξακολουθεί να υποφέρει κακό. Είμεθα συγχρονως και δραστές και θυμάτα. Πολύ συχνά προκαλούμεν τον δικόν μας πόνο. Πολύ συχνά *πολλαπλασιαζούμεν* τους πόνους μας, οι οποίοι *έρχονται* από τον φθαρτόν κόσμον, λόγω της υπερηφάνειας. Αλλά, ο Σταυρός μας θυμίζει ότι ο Θεός είναι *μαζί* μας, εστώ και μόνο *επλιζόμεν* να είμεθα *εμείς* με τον Θεόν. Η υπεριφάνεια και ο φοβός είναι οι αρχές πολλών αμαρτιών. Δεδομένου ότι οι δυναμικές συνεπειές της υπερηφάνειας και του φόβου ενεργούν εναντίον μας δραματικά, ο λόγος του Κυρίου γίνεται πιο σαφής: *<Ὅς γὰρ ἀν θέλη τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ σῶσαι, ἀπολεσῆ αὐτὴν, ὅς δὲ ἀν ἀπολεσῆ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ψυχὴν ἐνεκεν ἐμοῦ καὶ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, οὗτος σῶσει αὐτὴν>*. (Μαρκ. 8: 34).

Ένας αλκοολικός μου είπε κάποτε ότι *επέτυχε* την νηφαλιότητά του όταν *εκατάλαβε* ότι το αλκοόλ είναι στην *πραγματικότητα* ένα δηλητήριο. Αλλά, *εβρίκει* τα λογικά του όταν *εφόρεσε* τον βαπτιστικόν του σταυρόν. Αντί να *πινίγει* τους φόβους του μέσα σε *μπουκαλί* αλκοόλ, *εσταύρωσε* τους φόβους του στην *αγάπη* του Χριστού. Αντί να *ψαχνίει* στο *μπουκαλί* για *<θάρρος>* *εβρίκει* την *αξιοπρέπεια* του στην *Αναστάσι*ν του Χριστού.

Στον Σταυρόν, το Σώμα και το Αίμα του Θεού μας Χριστού *ανακατεύεται* με το δικό μας σώμα και αίμα, καθιστώντας μας *κοινωνοί* της Αναστάσεως Του. Για αυτόν τον λόγον *προσκυνούμεν* τον Σταυρόν. +Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

dence" (Hebrews 10: 34), "since we have a high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." (Hebrews 4: 14-15). In Christ, suffering is itself a ministry, because that is how God ministers to us every day—God condescends; God endures; God sacrifices because God truly loves us. As proof of God's love, we have before us the Holy Cross. Ancient and modern philosophers say many things about suffering, but they do not put the Cross in front of them.

Christ is True God Who suffers *with* us and *for* us, because, through sin, suffering entered our world—and, because we are still weak and we sin, the whole world continues to suffer. We are at the same time both perpetrators and victims. Too often, we bring suffering upon ourselves through pride; too often, we compound the suffering that comes upon us, sometimes out of nowhere, due to fear and lack of faith. But, the Cross of Christ our God is the reminder that God is with us, if only we choose to be with God. Pride and fear are the roots of many sins.

Given these dynamics of pride and fear, the words of our Lord become more clear: "Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it and whoever loses his life for My sake and the Gospel's will save it." (St. Mark 8: 34).

I often remember a middle-aged Greek man who I would visit as a seminarian as part of my field work in pastoral education in my theological training (when I, too, was young). He had suffered from some form of liver disease due to years of alcohol abuse. Yet, he managed to organize a group of Alcoholics Anonymous. He had stopped drinking altogether, realizing that a bottle of rum was no more than a bottle of "Drano." But, stopping was not his key to sanity. In and of itself, stopping the drinking was only a path to sobriety. Sobriety came when he saw in his imagination the sign of the "skull and cross-bones," as he put it, when looking at a bottle. Sanity came when he wore the Cross of Christ on his neck when he was baptized. His fears evaporated; his pride gave way to divine wisdom. Life, with all of its joys and pains, had a mission. God gave him his life — a life that goes on into eternity, because, while Christ God suffered on the Cross, His Body and Blood became mingled with our own, making us partakers in the Resurrection from the dead. Our only fear, then, is that we would ever neglect such a great gift.

+FR. THEODORE

PRAY FOR THE SICK: Yvonne and George Flessas, George Aeder, Adele Gallade, Kathy Ligeros, Aryroula Krespis (Nick Krespis' mother), Bob Maverick, Gerasimos Mikelatos, Evangelia Melissaratos, Gerasimos Canakis, Kathy Canakis & Peter Canakis (Eva and Spiro Canakis relatives), Kenny Henderson, Mary Fondas, Maria Kellow, (Chris Laskaris' daughter), Yiannis Koutroubis (Kalitsa Xitco's brother) (*Many of the faithful on our Prayer List face chronic or serious illness*).

ANTIPHON I: "Tes presvies tis Theotokou..." (By the prayers of the Theotokos...)

Verse 1—O Lord, the light of Your face was stamped upon us. You gave a sign to those Who fear You, so they may flee from the face of the bow.

Refrain: "Tes presvies tis Theotokou, soter, soston imas."

Verse 2—You ascended on high, You led captivity captive; You received gifts for mankind, Truly for the disobedient, so they may dwell there. The Lord God is blessed.

Refrain: "By the prayers of the Theotokos, Savior, save us."

Verse 3— You give an inheritance to those Who fear Your name.

Refrain: "Tes presvies tis Theotokou, soter, soston imas."

Chanter(s): *Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.*

Refrain: "By the prayers of the Theotokos, Savior, save us."

ANTIPHON II: "Soston imas Ie Theou..." (Save us, O Son of God...)

Verse 1— All the ends of the earth saw the salvation of our God. Let us enter into His tabernacles; let us worship at the place where His feet stood.

Refrain: "Soston imas Ie Theou, O anastas ek nekron, psallontas si alleluia."

Verse 2— But God is our King before the ages; He worked salvation in the midst of the earth.

Refrain: "Save us, O Son of God, We arose from the dead, we sing to You, Alleluia."

Verse 3— Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth.

Refrain: "Soston imas Ie Theou, O anastas ek nekron, psallontas si alleluia."

Doxa Patri ke Io ke Aghio Pnevmati ke nin ke aei ke eis tous eonas ton eonon.

People: "O Monogenis Ios ke Logos tou Theou..." (O Only-Begotten Son and Word of God...)

HYMNS FOR THE ENTRANCE WITH THE HOLY GOSPEL: ANTIPHON III— Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at the footstool of His footstool of His feet. O God, save Your people, and bless Your inheritance.

Sunday Resurrection Hymn: Hymn for St. George: Efrene sto ta ourania [Tone 3]...(Let all things above in heaven rejoice and let all things below on earth be glad. With all the might and strength of His arm an eternal deed the Lord did perform. Beneath His feet He has trampled down death by death and First Born of the dead has He become. From the womb of Hades has He delivered us and to all the world has granted His great redeeming mercy.)

Hymn for the Holy Cross: Soston Kyrie ton laon Sou... (Save, O Lord, Your people and bless Your inheritance, granting victory to the faithful over every evil, and by Your Cross protecting Your great order.)

Os ton ehmaloton eleftherotis...(As the one who sets the captives free and the protector of the poor; as physician to the sick and champion defender of kings, bearer of trophies are you. O great martyr George, intercede with Christ our God that He may save our souls.)

Kontakion Hymn for this Sunday: Ti ypermacho...(O Champion General, I your City now ascribe to you triumphant anthems as the tokens of my gratitude, being rescued from the terrors, O Theotokos. Inasmuch as you have power unassailable, from all kinds of perils free me so that unto you I may cry aloud: Rejoice, O unwedded Bride.)

NOTE: Instead of "Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us," we will sing:
"We venerate Your Cross, O Master, and we worship Your Holy Resurrection."

READINGS: Epistle - Hebrews 1:10-14; 2:1-3 / Gospel - St. Mark 2: 1-12

Follow the Liturgy of St. Basil the Great. After the Great Entrance, turn to pg. 125 in our Liturgy books. After the prayer on pg. 125, turn back to pg. 38. After the Creed, turn to pg. 126 for the continuation of the Liturgy of St. Basil. The Lord's Prayer & Communion Prayers: pgs. 60-74.

Communion Hymn: Esymiothi ef imas to fos tou prosopou Sou (Lord, the light of Your Face has been placed upon us.)

"Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the well-spring of life"

Proverbs 4:23

