

FEBRUARY 14, 2016

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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THE LADDER

SUNDAY OF THE CANAANITE WOMAN

Mailing Address:

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– Fr. Theodore Pantels,

Proistamenos (Pastor)

– Deacon Euthym Kontaxis,
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.

PERSISTENT PRAYER

Today's Gospel passage is one of the seven Gospel passages that are read during the performance of the Sacrament of Holy Unction. It underlines the strong relationship that exists between sincere prayer and the healing grace of our God and Savior Christ. It underlines the fact that, through faith, we have the honor of being co-workers of God. The daughter of the Canaanite Woman was healed through the faith and prayer of her mother, as well as through the Divine energies of the Lord. With regard to faith in God's love and power, Christ our Savior said:

"Truly, truly, I say unto you...if you have faith...you will say to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea', and it shall be done." (St. Matthew 21:21).

As Christ asked for sincere faith of the Canaanite Woman, He asks sincere and strong faith from us. Through faith the Saints of our Church accomplished great miracles to the glory of God and for the salvation of people. It is for this reason that the Church forbids Her people from participating in superstition. We are to place our faith in God, not in luck.

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THE CANAANITE WOMAN AND THE POWER OF PRAYER

Community prayer (worship) and personal prayer both are important and have their place in our lives. There may be a faulty notion behind personal prayer, which is that personal prayer is for one's own self and individual salvation. A better understanding of "personal prayer" from an Orthodox point of view is that one prays alone *for* others – which, then, inevitably leads into worship and community prayer. In his book, *The Orthodox Church*, Metropolitan Kallistos Ware writes: "[For Orthodox Christians many prayers written for personal use are] taken directly from the service books employed in public worship, so that even when alone we are still praying with the Church, using the words that are also being spoken in countless parish churches and monasteries." To quote Georges Florovsky: "Personal prayer is possible only in the context of the community. Nobody is a Christian by himself, but only as a member of the body. Even in solitude, 'in the chamber', a Christian prays as a member of the redeemed community of the Church. And it is in the Church that one learns devotional practice." (G. Florovsky: "Prayer: and Corporate and Private", pg. 303 [ref.: Metropolitan Kallistos Ware] +FR. THEODORE

"I can do all things through Christ Who strengthens me." Phil. 4:13



Η σημερινή Ευαγγελική περικοπή είναι μια από τις επτά Ευαγγελικές περικοπές οι οποίες αναγιγνώσκονται κατά την τελετή του Μυστηρίου του Αγίου Ευχελαίου. Υπογραμμίζει την στενή σχέση μεταξύ της θερμής προσευχής και της θεραπευτικής χάριτος του Θεού και Σωτήρος μας Χριστού. Υπογραμμίζει την πραγματικότητα ότι δια της πίστεως μας έχουμε την μεγάλην τιμήν να είμεθα συνεργάτοι του Θεού. Η κόρη της Χαναναίας εθεραπεύθηκε δια της πίστεως και της προσευχής της μητρος αυτής και της θείκης ενεργείας του Κυρίου. Περι πίστεως στην αγαπην και στην δύναμιν του Θεού, ο Σωτήρας μας Χριστός ειπέ: <αμην, αμην λεγω υμιν, εαν εχητε πιστιν...καν τω ορει τουτω ειπητε, αρθητι και βληθητι εις την θαλασσαν, γενησεται.> (Ματθ. 21:21).

Οπως εξητησε ο Χριστος την θερμην πιστιν απο την Χαναναϊαν, ζητα απο ολους μας θερμη και ισχυρην πιστιν. Δια της πίστεως, οι Άγιοι της Εκκλησίας μας εκατόρθωσαν μεγαλα θαυματα προς δοξαν του Θεου και προς σωτηριαν των ανθρωπων. Για αυτον τον λογον η Εκκλησια μας απαγορευει τους πιστους ποτε να συμμετασχουν σε πραξεις και σκευεις δεισιδαιμονιας. Πιστευομεν στον Θεον, οχι στην τυχην.

Η πιστις είναι καρπος του Αγίου Πνευματος. Ας προσευχωμεθα να ενδυναμωση ο Κυριος την πιστιν μας προπαντως αφου ζουμεν σε εποχην ολιγοπιστεως – και ας εχουμεν υπ οψιν οτι οι προσευχες μας ενδυναμωνονται δια της συμμετοχης μας στα Αγια Μυστηρια της Εκκλησίας. Ας ψαλλουμεν το <Κυριε ελεησον> καθως τελουνται οι θειες ακολουθιες της Εκκλησίας μας ολοψυχως οπως το ειπε με πιστι η Χαναναϊα.

+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

Faith is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. We pray for our Lord to strengthen our faith, especially since we live in an era in which people have little faith. However, let us have in mind that our prayers are strengthened through our participation in the Holy Sacraments. We need to say, “Lord, have mercy”, as our Divine Church Services are performed.

Many by today’s standards would be critical of the Canaanite’s humility: “*Even the dogs eat from the crumbs that fall from their masters’ tables.*” Humility is perceived to be a weakness today. Yet, it is our humility before God, which makes our prayer a great power. We need to comprehend the great love of Christ our God in the face of this “strange” woman whose life-style was that of any pagan. She was truly an “outsider” among God’s Chosen People. Jesus implied that she was of no more value than a dog, being inferior to the people of Israel. History records the Canaanites as enemies of the Hebrew Nation—1) militarily, they are the people who fought Joshua and their love for war is recorded in the Book of Judges; 2) The Canaanites followed a pagan religion, which led them to treacherous acts of debauchery. Men and women gave themselves over to orgies in honor of Baalim and Baalot, their goddesses of the earth.

The Canaanite Woman’s faith in Christ God, allowed her to be humble before Him. However, her *persistence* in prayer is what Jesus also recognized in her. He both praised her and He answered her prayer—a prayer for her daughter’s well-being, which also meant her own well-being.

Faith in God puts us in touch with God, Who then allows us to participate in His love and in His awesome powers. It is this faith that makes us “the temple of the living God” (2 Corinthians 6:16), as we heard from today’s Epistle reading. In other words, we are to avoid doing and saying things that do not please God, touching “nothing unclean” (2 Corinthians 6:18). Let us be in touch with God, since we are, indeed, “temples of the Holy Spirit.”

+FR. THEODORE

PRAY FOR THE SICK: Yvonne and George Flessas, George Aeder, Adele Gallade, Kathy Ligeros, Aryroula Krespis (Nick Krespis’ mother), Bob Maverick, Skip Lewis, Gerasimos Mikelatos, Evangelia Melissaratos, Gerasimos Canakis, Kathy Canakis & Peter Canakis (Eva and Spiro Canakis family members), Chris Laskaris, Mary Fondas (*Many of the faithful on our Prayer List face chronic or serious illness*).

HYMNS FOR THIS SUNDAY'S CELEBRATION OF THE DIVINE LITURGY

ANTIPHON I:

Verse 1: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and everything within me, bless His holy name."

Response: "Tes presvies tis Theotokou, Soter, soston imas."

Verse 2: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His rewards."

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

Verse 3: "The Lord prepared His throne in heaven, and His Kingdom rules over all."

Response: "Tes presvies tis Theotokou, Soter, soston imas."

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

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

ANTIPHON II:

Verse 1: "Praise the Lord, O my soul! I shall praise the Lord while I live; I shall sing to my God as long as I exist.

Response: "Soston imas Ie Theou, o Anastas ek nekron, psallontas si: Allilouia."

Verse 2: "Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob; his hope is in the Lord his God."

Response: Save us, O Son of God, Who arose from the dead, we sing to You: Alleluia.

Verse 3: "The Lord shall reign forever; your God, O Zion, to all generations."

Response: "Soston imas Ie Theou, o Anastas ek nekron, psallontas si: Allilouia."

Chanter(s): "Doxa Patri ke Io, ke Ayio Pnevmati, ke nin ke ai ke is tous eonas ton eonon. Amen."

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

ANTIPHON III: *This is the day the Lord made; let us greatly rejoice and be glad therein.*

Resurrection Hymn: *To fedron tis anastaseos (Tone 4)...(When the tidings of the Resurrection from the glorious angel was proclaimed unto the Women Disciples and our ancestral sentence also had been abolished to the Apostles with boasting did they proclaim that death is vanquished ever more and Christ our God has risen from the dead and granted to the world great mercy.)*

Hymn for St. George: *Os ton ehmaloton eleftherotis... ("As the one who sets the captives free and the protector of the poor; as physician to the sick and the 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: *Prostasia ton Christianon...(A Protection of Christians unshamable, Intercessor to our Holy Maker unwavering; reject not the prayerful cries of those who are in sin. Instead, come to us, for You are good; Your loving help bring to us who are crying in faith to You: Hasten to intercede and speed now to supplicate, as a Protection for all time, Theotokos, for those who honor you.)*

READINGS: EPISTLE—2 Corinthians 6:16-18; 7:1 GOSPEL— St. Matthew 15:21-28

Megalynarion (Hymn to the Theotokos): Axion Estin... (Divine Liturgy Book, Pg. 51)

Communion Hymn: Enite ton Kyrion (Divine Liturgy Book, pg. 64)

"Above all else,
guard your heart, for
it is the well-spring
of life" Proverbs 4:23



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Usher: Linda Kallis, Nick Kaperonis

Greeter: Josie Desnoyers

Coffee Hour: Annette Lewis and Eve Meek in honor and memory of Paula Kozlen

CHRISMATION – Today during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, the Sacrament of Holy Chrismation will be bestowed upon the servant of God, **Debbie Ciro**s, who will embrace the Orthodox Christian Faith.

MEMORIAL – Today’s Memorial Service is for the Eternal Rest and Salvation for the servants of God, **Paula Kozlen (6 months)** and **Malia Georgalakis (3 months)**. We pray for the Eternal Rest and Salvation for both **Malia Georgalakis** and **Paula Kozlen** and for peace and comfort to their families and friends. **MAY THEIR MEMORIES BE ETERNAL!**

PHILOPTOCHOS – We need Coffee Hour Hostesses for March 13 and March 27. Please see **Linda Petalas**. Thank you to all who participated in the Go Red Campaign last Sunday by wearing RED. We even had some of our Gentleman also participating. Our next General Meeting will be on Thursday, February 18, 2016 in the Church hall. A light lunch will be served and a \$5.00 donation is requested. Our Membership Lunch will be on Saturday, March 12, 2016. We will be sending out invitations and membership envelopes soon.

FESTIVAL FLIERS – 2016 Greek Festival Fliers are in the parish hall, ready to be taken by everyone for distribution to businesses and visitor centers throughout the Coachella Valley!

YIAYIA’S ATTIC – It’s that time of year again! Yiayia’s Attic is gathering treasures for the Festival’s Attic Booth. Please start organizing your donations now! Call **Becky Allen** at (760) 699-5439 for details and/or questions. Items may be brought to our parish at any time.

DONATIONS FOR FESTIVAL NEEDS – Any donations of monies toward the purchase of needed festival supplies will be a great blessing and we will give special recognition to those who do contribute funds to help in making our festival purchases. Please contact our parish office for information on “Festival Needs.”

PREPARATION SCHEDULE – This week’s festival preparations include: *baklava*. Everyone’s help is a precious gift from God. Please join us in the blessings of fellowship and support for our Holy Church.

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

Monday, February 15th.....Festival Preparations continue – 9:00 a.m.
(baklava)

Tuesday, February 16th.....Bible Study – 10:00 a.m.

Wednesday, February 17th.....ST. THEODORE OF TYRE
Orthros-8:30 a.m./Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.

Saturday, February 20th.....Vespers-5:00 p.m.

*The Ladder for February 2016 is sponsored by:
Emily & George Tcharos*

We encourage all of our parents to sit in the church with their entire family as they participate in the beauty and mysteries of the Divine Liturgy. For those with young children, feel free to sit near an aisle so that you may easily take your children for a break, as needed. If necessary, we have a “crying room” in the narthex for your use. God Bless.