

JULY 10, 2016

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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THE LADDER



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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.

THE VALUE OF HUMAN LIFE

God is the very basis for the value of each person's life. We see this from today's readings from St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans and from the Gospel of St. Matthew. St. Paul emphasizes the great importance of God's love for us, given that He sent His Only-Begotten Son to save us from eternal destruction. St. Paul writes: *"God's love for us is manifest in that, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."* (Romans 5: 8). In St. Matthew's Gospel we read the words of Christ: *"If the grass of the field, which today exists and tomorrow is thrown into the*

the oven, is cared for by God, how much more will God care for you, O you of little faith!" (St. Matthew 6: 30).

Knowing that God loves each one of us, how is it that we subject ourselves to invisible enemies that seek to destroy us? The enemies about which we speak are: anger, violence, fear, hatred, anxiety. These invisible enemies conquer our hearts and souls due to our lack of faith.

The virtue of faith is closely related to our understanding that God loves us more than we can imagine. Yet, as long as we ignore God in our daily way of life, we remain ignorant regarding God's love

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THE GREAT COMMISSION – In the Gospel of St. Matthew (28: 19-20) we read that our Savior commanded the Apostles to go into all the world and preach the Gospel of Christ everywhere, baptizing all people in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. This is known as "The Great Commission." As the Apostolic Church, we are, by extension, obligated to continue the work of the Apostles – that is, to preach the Gospel of Christ to all people in the effort to baptize those who turn to Christ in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

From the Department of Outreach and Evangelism of our Holy Archdiocese we are asked to commit ourselves as a parish to this commandment of our Lord. *"If we believe that in Orthodoxy we have the fullness of the Truth, then we have the great responsibility – the Great Commission – to share it with all people. All aspects of the parish may be seen as being Apostolic and the Orthodox faithful are called to incorporate the Christian mission to all aspects of life. When Christ said, 'Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations...' He commissioned us to transform the parish into an agency of Christian outreach. The American culture offers us great opportunities to conduct successful parish renewal, outreach and evangelism."*

Let us inspire all people around us to follow Christ our God.



Ο Θεος είναι η ίδια η βάση για την αξία της ζωής του κάθε ανθρώπου. Το γνωρίζουμε αυτό από τις σημερινές περικοπές της Επιστολής του Απ. Παύλου προς τους Ρωμαίους και του Ευαγγελίου του Αγίου Ματθαίου. Ο Απ. Παύλος τονίζει την μεγάλη σημασία της αγάπης του Θεού για μας, δεδομένο ότι έστειλε τον Μονογενή Του Υιό για να μας σώσει από την αιώνια καταστροφή: <Συνιστήσι δε την εαυτού αγαπήν εις ημάς ο Θεός, ότι ετι αμαρτωλών οντων ημών Χριστός υπέρ ημών απεθανεν.> (Ρωμ. 5: 8). Στο εκ του Ματθαίου Ευαγγελίου διαβαζουμε τα λόγια του Χριστού: <Ει δε τον χορτόν του αγρού, σημερον οντα και αυριον εις κλιβανόν βαλλομενον, ο Θεός ουτως αμφιενυσιν, ου πολλοι μαλλον υμάς, ολιγοπιστοι;> (Ματθ. 6: 30).

Γνωρίζοντας ότι ο Θεός αγαπά τον καθεναν από εμάς, πώς είναι δυνατόν να υποβαλλουμε τους εαυτούς μας σε αυτούς τους αοράτους εχθρούς, οι οποίοι ζητούν την καταστροφήν μας; Οι εχθροί αυτοί είναι το αγχος, ο θυμός, ο φόβος, η στενοχωρία. Αυτοί οι αοράτοι εχθροί κερδίζουν την εισοδόν στις καρδιές μας, λόγω της ελλείψεως της πίστεως.

Η αρετή της πίστεως είναι στενά συνδεδεμένη με την αντιληψήν μας ότι ο Θεός μας αγαπά πέρα από την ικανότητά μας να κατανοήσουμε την απείρον αγάπην Του. Ωστόσο, εφ' όσον αγνοούμε τον Θεόν καθημερινώς, όχι μόνον είμαστε αγνοιοί όσον αφορά περί της αγάπης του Θεού, αλλά δημιουργούμε τις δικές μας δυσκολίες δια μέσου του εγωισμού μας. Για αυτόν τον λόγον, η λατρεία την οποίαν προσφέρουμε στον Χριστόν είναι απαραίτητη.
+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

and we wind up creating our own difficulties. It is for this reason that the worship that we offer to God is crucial. We tend to undervalue the importance of worship in our present society, likely because we do not understand what it means to actually worship God.

Worship is defined by Christ as *seeking first the Kingdom of God* (St. Matthew 6: 31). Christ also reminds us that *the Kingdom of God is within you.*" (St. Luke 17: 21). Worship, then, is a journey to find God within us, and, in so doing, we find our real selves—the persons God has planned us to become. The words of today's Epistle and Gospel readings teach us that the only reason for our existence is God's love. Therefore, all of our ambitions and fears are reflections of a part of us that does not respond to God's love, because we would rather trust in our own powers than in God. This preoccupation with ourselves leads us to fear people who are different and to want to hate those who get in our way.

It is time like no other in history for Americans to pray. Prayer for our nation begins with worship offered to Christ our God. Prayer and worship are part of an entire life-style. Worship is *spiritual energy*, involving a mentality for Orthodox Christians to do their part in terms of instilling in the hearts of all Americans the fact that, in the reality of God's love for us, Christ our God will give us the wisdom to debate the godless and win the battle of ideologies that are contrary to Christian truth.

All-in-all, we cannot bear to watch the news seeing so much violence in our cities and throughout the world. The value of human life has been greatly devalued, because people fail to see God's Image in the faces of their neighbors. The value of human life is expressed liturgically by St. Basil the Great: "[O God] *Your Son Himself, by Whom You also made the ages; Who being the brightness of Your glory and the nature of Your Person and upholding all things by the word of His power...Although He is God before all the ages, He appeared on earth and dwelled among us. He was incarnate of a Holy Virgin, taking on the form of a servant, becoming conformed to our lowliness so that He might make us conformable to the image of His glory.*" (The Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great). Christ gives value to each person by raising him or her to God's glory!

Let each person—every American and each Orthodox Christian—think along the lines of St. Basil's words as he or she steps out of the house every day, going out into the world. Let us enter the world every day knowing that God loves each of us, as well as every other person that we meet, more than the birds of the air and the lilies of the field.
+FR. THEODORE

PRAY FOR THE SICK: Yvonne and George Flessas, George Aeder, Adele Gallade, Kathy Ligeros, Bob Maverick, Rhonda Latkovic, Nicholas Kyriakou, Jean Chronis, George Megalonakis, George Nicholas (*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— Bless the Lord, O my soul, and everything within me, bless His holy name.

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

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

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

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

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— 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.

Refrain: "Soston imas, Yie Theou, O Anastas ek nekron, psallontas si alleluia."

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

Refrain: "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.

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 – This is the day the Lord made; let us greatly rejoice and be glad therein. Let heaven and earth praise Him, the seas and everything that moves in them.

Sunday Resurrection Hymn: *Ote katilthes pros ton thanaton (Tone 2).....(When You descended to the realm of death, You, as Life Immortal, rendered to Hades a mortal blow by Your all-radiant divinity. And when You, from the inner depths and the darkness below did raise the dead, all the hosts of heavens did proclaim and cry out: O Life-giving Christ and our God we give glory.)*

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...(O Protection of Christians unshamable, mediation with the Creator immovable, we sinners beg you, do not despise the voices of our prayers, but anticipate, since you are good, and swiftly come unto our aid as we cry out to you with faith: Hurry to intercession, and hasten to supplication, O Theotokos who defend now and ever those who honor you.)*

READINGS: Epistle – Romans 5: 1-10 / Gospel – St. Matthew 6: 22-33

Megalinarion: Axion Estin (page 52 in the Divine Liturgy Books)

Communion Hymn: Enite ton Kyrion..(page 64 in the Divine Liturgy Books)

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

Proverbs 4:23



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Coffee Hour: Melissa Hawkins and Mariya Dunkel

PHILOPTOCHOS – We need Coffee Hour Hostesses or Hosts for August 21 and for the month of September. See Linda Petalas. We have had 2 donations from our parishioners for the Bottled Water Project for the homeless, so we will be able to double our donation to Coachella Valley Rescue Mission this month. Thank you.

STEWARDSHIP – As we find ourselves in the middle of summer, we need to remind one and all that any extra Stewardship offering will be a great blessing for our St. George parish. Anyone who has not yet submitted a 2016 Stewardship Pledge Card *and* contributed to the financial needs of our parish toward fulfilling his or her pledge is fervently and prayerfully asked to do so at this time.

WISH LIST – As we find ourselves in the summer season, our thoughts begin to go toward preparations for the Fall and the needs of our parish for the future: donations will be a great blessing as we evaluate the following projects:

- 1) the Archdiocese Liturgy Books for our church pews;
- 2) replacement of lights under the dome with LED lights (reducing energy costs);
- 3) cleaning of flagstone floor inside the church;
- 4) cooling fans for the new storage container;
- 5) new flooring for the parish hall.

42th ANNIVERSARY OF THE TURKISH INVASION OF CYPRUS: MEMORIAL SERVICE – This Memorial Service is scheduled to take place at all parishes of our Metropolis on **Sunday, July 17, 2016** (the actual anniversary date of this event is July 20th) for the repose of the souls of our brothers and sisters who gave their lives defending the island during the invasion. At this time of year we are particularly mindful of those who died during the invasion and of the continuing occupation. However, this sad anniversary is also an opportunity to renew our hope for a lasting solution.

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

Tuesday, July 12th.....Bible Study -10:00 a.m.

Saturday, July 16th.....Vespers-5:00 p.m.

*The LADDER for June 2016
is sponsored by
Eve Meek*

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.