

JULY 3, 2016

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

**74-109 Larrea Street
Palm Desert, California 92260**

Website: www.go-stgeorge.org

Email: pdsaintgeorge@gmail.com

THE LADDER



Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 4755

Palm Desert, CA.92261

Tel: (760) 568-9901

or: (760) 880-5869

– 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 APOLOGY OF POPE FRANCIS

From today's Gospel passage, we heard that our Lord called His Apostles to become "fishers of men" – that is, to bring humanity to repentance, meaning that people depart from the road that leads to sin and return to the road that leads toward God. Indeed, as successors of the Holy Apostles, the preaching of the Church has always been (and still is) to repent from false teachings and sinful behaviors. The call for repentance, however, has been mis-stated by many political and religious analysts of today's world and many suggest that

either repentance from sins is not necessary, given our atmosphere of "complete freedom," or that the idea of repentance implies some sense of hatred against people who do fall into sin.

Given this world-wide mentality, it was reported that the Pope of Rome, Francis, issued an "apology" last week on behalf of his Church for "marginalizing" gays and women. Of course, what Pope Francis actually said, compared to what the media reported that he said may be two dif-

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STEWARDSHIP

"Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the Good News of the Kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When He saw the crowds, He had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field.'"

– St. Matthew 9: 35-38

"Punctuality and faithful attendance at church impresses upon children the importance of God and of our Orthodox Christian value system... A little girl noticed that after the collection was taken in a certain church, the ushers brought it up to the altar. She whispered to her mother, 'Mommy, how do they get the money to go up to Heaven?'

The mother replied, 'The church doesn't send the money to Heaven, but it uses it to bring Heaven down to us.'

This mother could not have given a better answer. For, the purpose of the Church is to get God's Heaven into each of us.

'The Kingdom of God is within you.', said Jesus."

– Fr. Anthony Coniaris



Σήμερα ακουσαμεν κατα το αναγνωσµα του Αγίου Ευαγγελιου οτι ο Χριστος εκαλεσε τους Μαθητας Του για να ειναί <αλιεις των ανθρωπων> – δηλαδη, να φερουν ολους τους ανθρωπους προς την μετανοιαν: να αφησουν τον δροµον της αµαρτιας και να επιστρεψουν στον δροµον πηγαινωντας προς τον Θεον. Και, µαλιστα, ως διαδοχοι των Αποστολων, το κηρυγµα της Εκκλησιας παντοτε ηταν (και ειναί) οτι πρεπει να µετανοησουμεν απο ψευτικες διδασκαλιες και αµαρτωλες πραξεις. Το καλεσµα να µετανοησουμεν εχει τροµερα παρερµηνευθει απο πολλους πολιτικους και θρησκευτικους στοχαστες σηµερα και υποδηλωνουν η οτι η µετανοια απο αµαρτιες δεν χρειαζεται σε ατµοσφαιρα της <πληρους ελευθεριας,> η οτι η ιδεα της µετανοιας εννοει οτι υπαρχει καπιο ειδος µισους εναντιον ανθρωπων, οι οποιοι πεφτουν στην αµαρτιαν.

Δεδοµενη αυτην την παγκοσµια νοοτροπια, δηλωνεται οτι ο Παπας της Ρωµης, κκ. Francis, εξητησε συγγνωµη εκ µερους της Εκκλησιας του για την <περιθωριοποιηση> των οµοφυλοφιλων και των γυναικων. Οµως, αλλο ειναί οι αµαρτιες οι οποιοι σχετιζονται µε οµοφυλοφιλικες πραξεις, οι οποιες, ειναί αµαρτιες οπως οι πραξεις της μοιχειας, πορνογραφιας, πορνειας, κ.τ.λ., αλλο ειναί η καταδικασις του ανθρωπου ο οποιος παλευει µε πειρασµους και τα παθη που τον ενοχλουν και σχηµατιζουν τον πνευµατικον αγωναν για οποιον θελει να ακολουθησει τον Θεον. Αλλο ειναί η ασεβεια και κακοποιησις εναντιον των γυναικων που η Εκκλησια παντοτε πρεπει να καταδικαζει– και αλλο οι εκτρωσις που γινονται εν ονοµατι των δικαιοµατων των γυναικων. Το
 συνεχεια στην σελιδα 3 ———>

ferent things. If he meant to say that individual Christians should apologize for showing hatred or for using hate-speech regarding homosexuals or women –or anybody, for that matter– we must all agree. If, however, the Pope is apologizing for the Church’s stance regarding homosexual behaviors and the issue of women’s rights vs. the right to life, he is calling into question Christian morality. It is one thing to note that behaviors related to homosexual acts are sins, as are behaviors related to adultery, fornication, pornography, prostitution, pre-marital sex, etc. Indeed, these are all sins. On the other hand, we must never condemn any human being, knowing that he or she is loved by Christ our God. Each person is destined to “fight the good fight” against temptations and passions according to his or her own strength and with the grace of God. Regarding women, it is one thing to disrespect women in any way, which the Church must always condemn as sinful. Yet, abortions committed in the name of women’s rights is also a matter of grave sin – and there can be no “apology” for this teaching.

The “apology” from Pope Francis, therefore, as reported in the news, appears to be vague and causes great confusion. Extending the sentiments spun by the press to a logical conclusion, I suppose that eventually, we may all have to apologize for the Ten Commandments!

Indeed, we all must “apologize” for individual sins, but if the moral teachings of the Church are themselves considered to be “sins” for which we must “apologize,” then we are missing the whole point of Christian life. Repentance from sins is key to the Christian life-style. The way of repentance, in turn, requires *spiritual warfare*. A simple apology lacks the essence of the prayer of the Divine Liturgy for the reading of the Gospel: “*Merciful Master, cause the pure light of Your divine knowledge to shine in our hearts and open the eyes of our minds to perceive the message of Your Gospel; ...so that, trampling down our fleshly desires, we may seek a heavenly citizenship, considering and doing those things that are well pleasing to You.*” This prayer is directed for us to judge ourselves, not others. *Spiritual warfare* is a warfare against the temptations or passions within our own souls, in keeping with the teachings of the Church. It is not a warfare against other people. One’s participation in the Holy Sacraments depends on his or her efforts to maintain the dignity of the Church’s teachings in one’s own daily way of life.

The Pope needs to talk about *spiritual warfare*, without “apology,” and we all need to join in such a conversation. While the truth is that we all sin (“*Whoever is without sin, cast the first stone.*”), without *spiritual warfare*, we lose our moral compass. Let us not apologize for identifying sins and encouraging the *spiritual warfare* within the soul of each individual in the fight to do “those things that are well pleasing to God.”

+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 (“*Prayer for the Sick*” includes those with chronic or serious illness.)

<συγγνωμη> του Παπα στερειται απο την προκλησιν να μετανοησει ο καθενας απο τις αμαρτιες – αμαρτιες του μισους και τις αμαρτιες του <εγω> και της ασελγειας . Στερειται απο την ουσιαν της προσευχης της Θειας Λειτουργιας: <Ελλαμψον εν ταις καρδιαις ημων, Δεσποτα Κυριε, το της Σης θεογνωσιας ακηρατον φως και τους της διανοιας ημων διανοιξον οφθαλμους εις την των ευαγγελικων Σου κηρυγματων κατανοησιν. Ενθεσ ημιν και τον των μακαριων Σου εντολων φοβον, ινα τας σαρκικας επιθυμιας καταπατησαντες, πνευματικην πολιτειαν μετελθωμεν, παντα προς ευαρεστησιν Σου φρονουντες και πραττοντες.> +Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

HYMNS FOR THIS SUNDAY'S CELEBRATION OF THE DIVINE LITURGY:

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: Tou lithou sfraghisthendos (Tone 1)...page 94 in the Divine Liturgy Books.

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 2: 10-16 / Gospel – St. Matthew 4: 18-23

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: Linda Bozigian

PHILOPTOCHOS – This month we will be donating to Coachella Valley Rescue Mission for their Bottled Water Project. This is the program where CVRM will be delivering water to the homeless. Also, we will be donating to the Visiting Nurses' Association who provide fans to the shut-ins who don't have air conditioning. If you would like to donate to one of the charities we support, please see Linda Kallis. We need Coffee Hour Hostesses or Hosts for the Coffee Hour for the month of August. See Linda Petales.

STEWARDSHIP – As we approach the summer months, 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 by virtue of 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

Fr. Ted will be attending the Archdiocese Clergy-Laity Conference in Nashville, Tennessee from tomorrow, July 4 – Thursday evening, July 7, 2016. Please contact Fr. David Kruse of the St. Raphael Antiochian Orthodox Church in Thousand Palms in case of emergency. Phone: (760) 408-6116.

Tuesday, July 5th.....Bible Study – 10:00 a.m. (Matushka Gloria Lehman)

Saturday, July 9th.....Vespers – 5:00 p.m.

SAFETY: Given the atmosphere of violence in our society, following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, I want to advise all of our parishioners to avoid being alone when leaving parish property. It is best for at least two or three to be together when working at our parish and/or when going to our parking lot to leave.

*The LADDER for July 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.