

**JULY 31, 2016**

**ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT**

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# THE LADDER

**SUNDAY BEFORE THE TRANSFIGURATION OF CHRIST**

## **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.

## **TO LIVE IN HARMONY**

Today's passage from the Epistle of St. Paul has the following words: *"Let love be without hypocrisy; abhor what is evil and cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love; in honor giving preference to one another."* (Romans 12: 9-10). In other words, St. Paul emphasizes the blessing that we offer to the world when we glorify the True God Jesus Christ *together*, united with the love of God—love for one another and love for God.

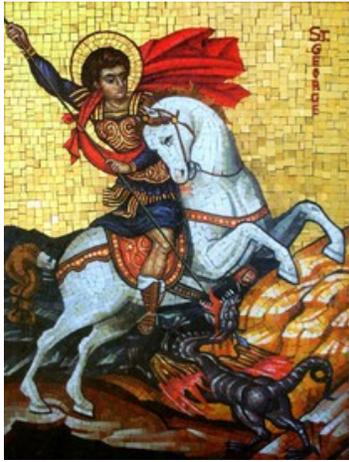
Our age is filled with much unrest according to daily news broadcasts. It is for us Christians a time for prayer as in no other time in our own life times. As we would pray individually, we also have the responsibility to pray all together as we participate in the Holy Sacraments. Our prayer is *"for the peace from above (and) for the peace of the whole world."* Yet, our prayer for peace in our lives and for peace in the world means that we are to seek peace in our hearts and souls. Fr. Emmanuel

*Continued on page 2*

## **WHY DO WE FAST DURING THE FIRST 15 DAYS OF AUGUST?**

A look at the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of America website shows a very good explanation. An excerpt of the article posted on that website follows:

*"In a close-knit family, word that its matriarch is on her deathbed brings normal life to a halt. Otherwise important things (parties, TV, luxuries, personal desires) become unimportant; life comes to revolve around the dying matriarch. It is the same with the Orthodox family; word that our matriarch is on her deathbed, could not (or at least should not) have any different effect than the one just mentioned. The Church, through the Paraklesis Service, gives us the opportunity to come to that deathbed and eulogize and entreat the woman who bore God, the vessel of our salvation and our chief advocate at His divine throne. And as, in the earthly family, daily routines and the indulgence in personal wants should come to a halt. Fasting, in its full sense (abstaining from food and desires) accomplishes this. Less time in leisure or other pursuits leaves more time for prayer and reflection on she who gave us Christ, and became the first and greatest Christian. In reflecting on her and her incomparable life, we see a model Christian life, embodying Christ's retort to the woman who stated that Mary was blessed because she bore Him: blessed rather are those who hear His word and keep it. Mary did this better than anyone." August 15th is the commemoration of the "Falling Asleep" (Dormition) of the Theotokos.*



Η σημερινή περικοπή από την Επιστολή του Απ. Παύλου έχει τις ακόλουθες λέξεις: <Η αγάπη ανυποκρίτως, αποστύγουντες το πονηρόν καλλωμένοι τῷ ἀγαθῷ, τὴ φιλαδελφία εἰς ἀλλήλους φιλοστοργοί, τὴ τιμὴ ἀλλήλους προηγούμενοι.> (Ρωμ. 12: 9–10). Με αυτά τα λόγια τονίζει ο Απ. Παύλος την ευλογία την οποία προσφέρουμε στον κόσμο όταν δοξάζουμε τον Ἀληθινὸν Θεὸν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν μαζί, ἠμῶμενοι με τὴν ἀγάπην τοῦ Θεοῦ – ὁ εἷς γιὰ τὸν ἄλλον καὶ ὅλους γιὰ τὸν Θεόν.

Ἡ ἐποχὴ μας εἶναι γεμάτη με πολὺ ἀνίσυχαν σύμφωνα με τὴν ἐφημερίαν εἰδήσεων ποὺ μεταδίδεται. Εἶναι γιὰ ἡμᾶς τοὺς Χριστιανοὺς ἐποχὴ τῆς προσευχῆς ὅσο ποτε ἄλλοτε στὶς δικές μας ἡμέρες. Ὅσο προσευχομεθα προσωπικῶς, τόσο ἔχουμεν ὑποχρεωσιν νὰ προσευχομεθα ὅλοι μαζί καθὼς μετεχούμεν στὰ Ἀχραντὰ Μυστήρια. Ἡ προσευχὴ μας εἶναι <ὑπὲρ τῆς ἀνωθεν εἰρήνης (καὶ) τῆς εἰρήνης τοῦ συμπαντος κόσμου...>. Ὁμῶς, ἡ προσευχὴ μας γιὰ εἰρήνη στὴν ζωὴν μας καὶ στὸν κόσμον σημαίνει ὅτι ἐπιδιώκουμεν εἰρήνη μεσὰ στὶς καρδιές μας καὶ στὶς ψυχές μας. Ὁ Πατὴρ Ἐμμανουὴλ Χατζιδάκης ἐγράψε: <Ἡ εἰρήνη τοῦ κόσμου ἐρχεται μόνον μετὰ τὴν ἐπιτεῦξιν τῆς εἰρήνης τῆς ψυχῆς μας...Ἡ ἀληθινὴ εἰρήνη δὲν μπορεῖ νὰ ἐπιβληθῆι σὲ ἄλλους, ὅπως ἡ Pax Romana.> (Τὸ Οὐρανίον Τραπεζί, σελ. 78).

Ἄς ἀποκτήσῃ ὁ καθένας τὴν Ὁρθόδοξὴ πνευματικὴν ζωὴν, ὥστε ἐν ἐνὶ στόματι, νὰ προσφέρουμεν πνευματικὸς θησαυροὺς γιὰ ὅλον τὸν κόσμον.

+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

Hatzidakis wrote: *“Peace in the world comes only with the development of peace in our souls...True peace does not come from other means, like Pax Romana.”* (The Heavenly Banquet, pg. 78).

According to Orthodox Christian Saints and theologians, inner peace is dependent upon our relationship with God, which, in turn affects our relationships with the people in our lives. The more we are at peace, the more others are at peace—and the more agitated we behave, the more anxious are those around us. It is basic human dynamics. Too often, people tell me that they say or do things so that “they can get it off their chest.” They do not realize that, while they “get things off their chest,” they feel better, but the damage that is often done is not over. Just because one person is at peace following their “out-burst,” the other person is not at peace—is not “over it.” The best way to “get things off our chest” is to pray, asking our Lord to give us wisdom and patience so that we can acquire His Divine peace. We remember: God is *“the God of steadfastness and encouragement.”*

There is a correlation between the sincerity of prayers offered and the depth of our spiritual maturity. To what would seem ridiculous by most according to today’s standards, there is a correlation between the sincerity of one’s prayers and his or her participation in the Holy Sacraments and his or her behavior with other people.

In his writings to young people, Fr. Alexander Elchaninov, advises: *“Pray in the morning and in the evening, even if you only recite one single prayer, even if it is only for one or two minutes; but try to achieve complete concentration to the words of the prayer and to purge your mind from all other preoccupations, attaining a certain warmth of heart—however feeble—a warmth actually felt in the region of the heart, for we pray primarily with the heart. Read whenever you can, but at any rate each day, one or two verses from the Gospels and, as you do, make an effort to apply what you read to your life, to your apprehension of the world around you; that is, make an effort to understand what you read as the living Word of God, addressed specifically to yourself...The chief mistake of our young people is their conviction that everything can be understood; that Christianity is a philosophical system which can be logically proved and expressed and that, in their present state (moral, religious, intellectual) they are capable of grasping every truth of the faith. They often stubbornly refuse to see that Christianity is a life. Instead of loving the truth and bowing down before it, they discuss, and enter into polemics.”* (The Diary of a Russian Priest, pg. 186).

Let each one of us acquire the Orthodox spiritual way of life so that “with one mouth,” we may offer spiritual treasures to the whole world.

+FR. THEODORE

**PRAY FOR THE SICK:** Yvonne and George Flessas, George Aeder, Adele Gallade, Kathy Ligeros, Bob Maverick, Nicholas Kyriakou, Jean Chronis, George Megalonakis, Robert Desnoyers, 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."*

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*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...)*

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*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.*

**Sunday Resurrection Hymn:** *To synanarchon Logon (Tone 5)... (Let us, the faithful, praise and worship the Word, coeternal with the Father and the Spirit, Who for our salvation was born of a Virgin for He willed to be lifted up bodily upon the Cross, to endure death and to raise the dead by His glorious Resurrection.)*

**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:** *Epi tou orous metemorphotheis... (Upon the mountain were You transfigured, and Your disciples beheld Your glory as far as they were able, O Christ our God; so that when they would see You crucified they might understand that Your Passion was deliberate, and declare to the world that in truth You are the Father's radiance.)*

**READINGS:** Epistle – Romans 12: 6-14/ Gospel – St. Matthew 9: 1-8

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

**Communion Hymn:** *Enite ton Kyrion... (Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise Him in the highest. Allelouia.)*

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

*Proverbs 4:23*



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**PHILOPTOCHOS** – We will be making a donation in August for the Book Bag Project sponsored by Coachella Valley Rescue Mission. Our donation will be used to buy book bags and school supplies for the children. If anyone is interested in making a donation for this project, see Linda Kallis. Our Coffee Hour Chairperson is Linda Petalas. Coffee Hour Hosts and Hostesses are needed on Sundays throughout September.

**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.

**NEEDS 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: new flooring for the parish hall.

- 1) new flooring for the parish hall.
- 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) Archdiocese Liturgy Books for our church pews

## WEEKDAY CALENDAR

Thursday, August 4th.....Paraklisis Service – 7:00 p.m.

Friday, August 5th.....Great Vespers – 7:00 p.m.

Saturday, August 6th.....THE TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST  
Orthros-8:30 a.m. / Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.

*“Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with all and He will dwell with them and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.’”*

(Revelation 21: 1-3)

*The LADDER for June 2016  
is sponsored by  
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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.