

MARCH 13, 2016

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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THE LADDER

FORGIVENESS SUNDAY

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.

FORGIVENESS & SPIRITUAL LIFE

Forgiveness does not exist without Christ. That means that we need to commit our entire lives to Christ—to have Christ in our thoughts and in our minds every day at every moment. We are speaking, of course, about the spiritual life of any Christian believer. The spiritual life is a life of prayer and participation in the Sacramental Life of the Church. The virtue of genuine forgiveness is found in the framework of this kind of a mentality.

Indeed, it is possible to *overlook* some of

the wrongs that people do—and it is possible for us to ask others to *overlook* our own mistakes. Yet, *forgiveness* is much more than simply overlooking certain wrongs.

Forgiveness is the expression of Christ's sacrificial love which we acquire through living a spiritual life, knowing that the consequences of a life of virtue and/or a life of sin have eternal consequences.

We speak, then, about forgiveness from God Himself. Adam and Eve

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FORGIVENESS OF SINS AND REPENTANCE – “Repentance is [the] way of self-discovery: “*Open to me the gate of repentance.*” (Compline Service). Repentance (a.k.a. *Metanoia*) is the gate-way to oneself, to one's fellowman, and to heaven. It leads inwards, but it also leads outwards by leading inwards. The world ceases to rotate round the self and begins to gravitate towards the other - the divine and the human other. Sin has the opposite effect. It blocks the way both inwards and outwards. To repent and to confess is to break out of this restriction, “*to accept with joy,*” in Isaak the Syrian's words, “the humility and humiliation of nature,” to transcend and to recover oneself... The world thereupon ceases to rotate around “me” and begins to gravitate towards the other, centering on God. Then, everyone and everything no longer exist for myself but for the glory of God, in the joy of the Resurrection... Repentance is a way of life, and as such a way of transfiguration, in which man's heart and mind continuously receive illumination by the Holy Spirit. It is a continuous pathway, at least in this life, a perennial striving, an all-embracing motion and not merely an occasional emotion. Repentance is ultimately a gift of the Holy Spirit who transforms the heart of the human person, and not a fruit of individual effort or anguish.” (taken from: www.goarch./ourfaith)



Η συγχωρησις δεν υπαρχει χωρις τον Χριστον. Αυτο εννοει οτι ο ανθρωπος χρειαζεται να παραδωσει την ζωην του ολοκληρην στον Χριστον—να εχει τον Χριστον στις σκεψεις του, στην ψυχην του καθε ημερα—καθε στιγμη. Ομιλουμεν, δηλαδη, για την πνευματικην ζωην του καθε πιστου — ζωην προσευχης και συμμετοχης στα Αχραντα Μυστηρια της Εκκλησιας. Μεσα στα πλαισια μιας τετοιας πνευματικης νοοτροπιας ευρισκεται η αρετη της πραγματικης συγχωρησεως. Μαλιστα, ειναι δυνατον να παραβλεψουμεν τις παραβασεις των αλλων — και ειναι δυνατον να ζητησουμεν αλλους να παραβλεψουν τα δικα μας λαθη. Ωστοσο, η συγχωρησις ειναι κατι πολυ περισσοτερο απο απλως να παραβλεψουμεν μερικες παραβασεις.

Η συγχωρησις ειναι εκφρασις της εν Χριστω θυσιαστικης αγαπης την οποιαν κερδιζουμεν μεσω της πνευματικης ζωης, γνωριζοντας οτι οι συνεπιες της εναρετης ζωης η/και της αμαρτωλης ζωης εκτεινονται στην αιωνιοτητα. Γνωριζουμεν την συγχωρησιν απο τον Ιδιον τον Θεον. Ο Αδαμ και η Ευα εθελοντικως ανελαβαν επανω τους μια εξουσιαν ως <θεοι,> και επεριφρονησαν τον <εν τοις ουρανοις> Πατρεραν των. Αλλα ο Θεος δεν επαρεβλεψε απλως την αμαρτιαν αυτην, διοτι, δια μεσου της αμαρτιας υπαρχει θανατος. Για αυτο, εστειλε τον Υιον Του τον Μονογενη για να μας ελευθερωσει απο την σκλαβιαν του θανατου.

Κατα τον ιδιον τροπον, πρεπει και εμεις να σωσουμεν τις ψυχες αυτων οι οποιοι περιφρονουν εμας — οχι μονον να παραβλεψουμεν τις ανομιες των, αλλα να θυσιασθουμεν για να τους σωσουμεν.
+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

took upon themselves the authority of playing “gods,” and they insulted their “Father in Heaven.” But, God did not simply *overlook* this sin, because, through sin there is death. This is why He sent His Only-Begotten Son to rescue us from the slavery of death.

In the same way, we are supposed to save the souls of those who offend us not only by overlooking their faults, but by sacrificing of ourselves for their salvation. This is the real meaning and purpose of forgiveness.

Our sacrifice of pride is best offered through the Sacrament of Holy Confession. The goal of Holy Confession is to encounter Christ. It is an opportunity to see ourselves as God see us, keeping in mind that God loves us and “*has not ceased doing everything until leading us to heaven and granting us His Kingdom to come,*” as we hear during the Divine Liturgy. Given this, who are we to judge anyone else instead of granting others forgiveness, which itself is the expression of great love? This is why St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians: “*Who are you to judge the servant of another man’s master?*” (Romans 14:13). Holy Confession is not the “Sacrament of Condemnation;” it is the Sacrament of Forgiveness and Repentance that come through God’s great love. Being with God overpowers our hurts and resentments, which are petty when compared to the majesty of God’s greatness.

Through Holy Confession we invite Christ our God into our lives, which in itself is God’s forgiveness. Yet, it all depends on us making an important decision. Henri J.M. Nouwen writes: “[Jesus’] *presence is heart-warming. His gentleness and kindness are deeply moving. His message is very challenging. But do we invite him into our home? Do we want him to come to know us behind the walls of our most intimate life? Do we want to introduce him to all the people we live with? Do we want him to see us in our everyday lives?*” (*With Burning Hearts*, pg. 70).

Holy Confession and Holy Communion are the heavenly treasures, through which we are granted the forgiveness of sins. Receiving the heavenly treasures of God brings to us the necessary earthly means to live in order to bless others. For example, by seeking heavenly treasures, many Saints have been recipients and the givers of beautiful miracles which money cannot buy. The truth of our Lord’s words is manifested; “*Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth...but, lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.*” (St. Matthew 6: 19-21).

+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 family members), Chris Laskaris, Kenny Henderson, Mary Fondas (*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, soson 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, soson 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: *"Soson 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: *"Soson imas Ie 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, We arose from the dead, we sing to You, Alleluia."*

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

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

Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

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 – *Let heaven and earth praise Him; the seas and everything that moves in them*

Sunday Resurrection Hymn: *Ex ipsous katilthes [Tone 7]...(O Lord by Your Sacred Cross You abolished death and granted unto the theif blessed paradise. The Myrrh-bearers ceased lamenting and turned to joy. The Apostles did preach the Good News at Your command that You had risen from the dead, O Christ our God, bestowing Your mercy upon the world for evermore.)*

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 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: *Tis sofias odigeh....(O Guide of wisdom; Provider of prudence; disciplinarian of fools and defender of the poor, fortify and discipline my heart, O Master. You give me a Word, O Word of the Father. For, behold, I will not hinder my lips from crying out to You: O Merciful Lord, have mercy on me who has fallen.)*

READINGS: Epistle – Romans 13: 11-14; 14: 1-4 / Gospel – St. Matthew 6: 14-21

Megalynarion: Axion Estin (pg. 52 in the Divine Liturgy books)

Communion Hymn: Enite ton Kyrion (pg. 64 in the Divine Liturgy books)

ST. GEORGE GOLF TOURNAMENT – May 6 and 7, 2016 at Desert Willow in Palm Desert. Registration Forms are available in the parish hall. (Join us!)

MEN'S DAY RALLY – May 14, 2016 at St. George parish. See the Men's Day Rally fliers in our parish hall. (Save the Date!)

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

Proverbs 4:23

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Ushers: Nick Kaperonis
Greeter: Malissa Hawkins
Coffee Hour Hostess: Tommie Maverick

A SPECIAL THANK YOU – To all who prayed and sent cards for Skip and who donated to St. George in his memory. Your prayers were truly appreciated. “I feel truly blessed by all your heart-felt love and prayers.” - Annette Lewis.

PHILOPTOCHOS – We are passing a tray today to support Autism – a National Philoptochos Charity. We appreciate your support. We need Coffee Hour Hostesses for **April 17 and for the month of **May**. Please see **Linda Petalas**. If you were unable to attend our Membership Lunch on Saturday and you would like to become a member of Philoptochos, see **Carol Lyons**, Membership Chairperson or **Linda Kallis**.**

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STEWARDSHIP REQUIREMENT – Stewardship Pledge Reminder-General Assembly By-Laws state that in order to attend the upcoming March meeting a parishioner must be a pledged steward and be in good standing for the current year. For 2016, we have just 78 pledged stewards on record thus far, so there are many parishioners that have not yet completed a pledge form for this year! Forms are available in the church hall or see a Parish Council or Stewardship Committee member. Next Sunday: Spring General Assembly following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.

SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY – Next Sunday, March 13th, Sunday of Orthodoxy Vespers will take place at our St. George church at 6:00 p.m. We look forward to welcoming parishioners from neighboring Orthodox Christian parishes: St. Raphael Antiochian Orthodox Church in Thousand Palms and Archangels Michael and Gabriel Romanian Orthodox Church in Palm Springs. Fr. David Kruse from St. Raphael will be the speaker.

AHEPA NIGHT – On Saturday, April 9, 2016, everyone is asked to join our AHEPA membership for Vespers at our church, beginning at 5:00 p.m. Following the Vesper Service, husbands, wives and singles 21 and over from our parish community will gather for fellowship and dinner at the Desert Springs Marriott at around 6:00 p.m. It is a “No-Host” event – everyone will be responsible for their own. More details to follow. Contact Harry Loukatos or Wynn Storton so that arrangements can be made.

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

Monday, March 14th.....GREAT LENT BEGINS. Compline Service-6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, March 15th.....Bible Study-10:00 a.m.

Wednesday, March 16th.....Pre-Sanctified Divine Liturgy – 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, March 17th.....Choir Practice – 1:00 p.m.

Friday, March 18th..... Pre-Sanctified Divine Liturgy – 9:00 a.m.

Salutation Service (1st Stanza) - 7:00 p.m.

Saturday, March 19th.....SATURDAY OF SOULS

Orthros-8:30 a.m. / Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.

Vespers-5:00 p.m.

Next Sunday, March 20th... ..SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY (Procession with the Holy Icons-9:15a.m.)

General Assembly Meeting

Pan-Orthodox Vesper Service – 6:00 p.m.

*The LADDER for March, 2016
is sponsored by*

Matushka Gloria Lehman

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.