

**MARCH 20, 2016**

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

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# THE LADDER

SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY



## 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.

## WINDOWS TO LOOK INTO HEAVEN

In the 8th and 9th centuries there existed a tremendous struggle between “iconoclasts” and “icon-lovers”. The “iconoclasts” were those who tried to remove icons from all churches and from all the houses of the faithful, because they mistakenly believed that iconography was work going against God’s 2nd Commandment. They also believed that it is impossible for one to depict Christ, Who is God and God is indescribable.

However, the Saints of the 7th Ecumen-

ical Council acknowledged the analysis presented by St. John of Damascus: that God, through His Incarnation took upon Himself the form of Man in the Person of Christ—and the Person of Christ can, in fact, be depicted. Through the Holy Icons the truth that God became Man so that man can be like God is preached. This truth is depicted in the lives of the Saints who lived “the life in Christ” throughout their lives. Indeed, the biography of every Saint is a living explanation of the words of Christ, which

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## THE FIRST SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT

The first Sunday of Great Lent originally commemorated the Prophets such as Moses, Aaron, and Samuel. The Liturgy's alleluia verses and scripture readings appointed for the Sunday of Orthodoxy reflect this older usage. The Epistle reading is a completion of Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-12:2. The yet-to-be-baptized catechumens of the early church heard the Epistle about the Old Testament men who lived by their faith in a promise whose fulfillment they did not see. After the righteous of the Old Testament are mentioned, the Epistle says: *And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.* The Gospel lesson is John 1:43-51, and it ends with an explanation of the something better of the Epistle: *"You will see greater things than these." And He said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."* The catechumens of the early church, and the faithful preparing for Pascha today, are told that, with faith, they will see the inauguration of the new age, the fulfillment of all promises, and the manifestation of the Kingdom, through the Incarnation, in the Church.



Κατα τον 8ο αιώνα και τον 9ο αιώνα, υπήρχε τρομερός αγώνας μεταξύ των <εικονομαχών> και των <εικονοφίλων>. Οι <εικονομαχοί> ήσαν αυτοί οι οποίοι επροσέβαθησαν να βγάλουν τις εικόνες από όλους τους ναούς και ακόμη από όλα τα σπίτια των πιστών, διότι επιστεύαν, κατά λάθος, ότι η εικονογραφία είναι έργο εναντίον της 2ας Εντολής του Θεού. Επιστεύαν επίσης ότι είναι αδύνατον να εικονίζει κανείς την μορφή του Χριστού, ο οποίος είναι Θεός και ως Θεός είναι απεριγραπτός.

Όμως, οι Άγιοι Πατέρες της 7ης Οικουμενικής Σύνοδου αναγνώρισαν την αναλύση την οποία προσέφερε ο Άγιος Ιωάννης ο Δαμασκηνός: ο Θεός δια της θείας ενανθρωπήσεως Του έλαβε ανθρώπινη μορφή στο πρόσωπο του Ιησού Χριστού. Το πρόσωπο του Χριστού είναι στην πραγματικότητα περιγραπτό. Δια των ιερών εικόνων κηρύττεται την αληθείαν ότι έγινε ο Θεός άνθρωπος για να γίνη ο άνθρωπος όπως είναι ο Θεός και αυτή η αληθεία φανεώνεται στα πρόσωπα των αγίων, οι οποίοι έζουσαν την <εν Χριστώ ζωήν>. Μαλιστα, ο βίος του κάθε αγίου είναι ζωντανή εξήγησις του λόγου του Χριστού, τον οποίον ακουσαμεν κατά την αναγνώσιν της σημερινής Ευαγγελικής περικοπής: <Αμήν, αμήν λέγω υμίν, απαρτίψθε τον ουρανόν ανεώγοτα, και τους αγγέλους του Θεού αναβαίνοντας και καταβαίνοντας επί τον Υιόν του ανθρώπου>. (Ιωάν. 1:52). Μέσα στην Εκκλησίαν εύρισκουμεν τον Χριστόν, την Θεοτόκον, τους αγίους, τους αγγέλους και την χάριν του Αγ. Πνεύματος – και αυτή η πραγματικότητα παρίσταναται δια μέσου των ιερών εικόνων.

+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

we heard in today's Gospel reading: "Truly, truly, I say unto you that from now on you shall see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." (St. John 1:52). It is inside the Church where one finds Christ, the Mother of God, the Saints, the angels and the grace of the Holy Spirit...and this reality is depicted through the Holy Icons, which give a vision into heaven.

Icons represent a statement of fact: God became Man to save all of humanity, both in terms of bringing human beings to the God's Eternal Kingdom, but also in terms of transforming human nature in the here and now. Bishop Nicolae of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas writes: "The icon is a window toward the Absolute that reveals to us the transfigured world, the world of those who partake in divine grace and bring us this transfiguration, which is holiness. The representation of saints in icons, following the representation of the Savior, is justified by the Incarnation of the Word of God...But the icon is based not only on the Incarnation of the Son of God but also on His Resurrection. Without Christ's Resurrection the icon would not be a representation of transfigured life, but only a commemorative painting. This means that the icon brings God among us while it also raises us to the understanding of our life as participants in the life of God." ("Journey to Pascha: 'Sunday of Orthodoxy-The First Sunday of Lent,'" IOCC publication, pg. 2). Participation in the life of God is, indeed, eternal life.

Even though the 7th Ecumenical Council in 787 A.D. decreed that Icons are to be used in prayer and worship – venerated as statements of faith, but not worshiped as idols – it was not until 843 A.D. when the Empress, St. Theodora once and for all ended any controversy about the use of icons, affirming the decree of the 7th Ecumenical Council with a public display of Icons through the streets of Constantinople on the first Sunday of Great Lent. Every year, on the first Sunday of Lent, such as today, we commemorate this event as the "Sunday of Orthodoxy" with the Procession of Icons.

The Icon is a statement of our Faith in Christ our God. The question in our own time is whether we compromise our beliefs in the face of popular opinions or fight for God's Truth. There is no room for apathy or indifference. It is time to reach out and bring others to Church and we can use our icons both as tools for prayer and as tools for instruction, which bring people to Christ through Baptism, Chrismation and the Holy Eucharist, where "heaven is opened", as Christ said.

+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, Maria Kellow (Chris Laskaris' daughter) (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—** The Lord reigns; He clothed Himself with majesty. The Lord clothed and girded Himself with power.

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

**Verse 2—** And He established the world, which shall not be moved.

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

**Verse 3—** Who shall tell the mighty deeds of the Lord, Who shall make all His praises heard? Let those redeemed by the Lord say so, Whom He redeemed from the hand of the enemy.

**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—** Let them give thanks to the Lord for His mercies and His wonders to the sons of men.

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

**Verse 2 -** Let them exalt Him in the assembly of the people and praise Him in the seat of the elders. The eyes of the Lord are on those who fear Him, on those who hope in His mercy.

**Refrain:** *"Save us, O Son of God, We arose from the dead, we sing to You, Alleluia."*

**Verse 3 -** To hear the groaning of those bound, to set free the sons of the slain.

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

**Sunday Resurrection Hymn:** *Tou lithou sfaghisthendos (Tone 1)...(The stone that had been sealed before Your tomb by the Judeans and the soldier guarding did watch oe'r Your pure and sacred Body, O Savior, the third day You arose. And unto all the world did You give life whereby all the heavenly powers di proclaim that you are the Giver of Life. Glory unto our Resurrected Christ; glory unto Your Kingdom; glory to Your dispensation, O You alone Who loves all.)*

**Hymn for The Sunday of Orthodoxy:** *Tin achrandon eikona Sou... (We venerate Your immaculate icon, O good Lord, and entreat You to forgive our offences, O Christ our God. By Your own choice you were pleased to ascend the Cross in the flesh, to deliver us, whom You created, from our slavery to the foe. Therefore we cry to You with gratitude: You have filled all things with joy, O our Savior, by coming to save the world.)*

**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:** *Ti ypermachos... (O Champion General, I your City now ascribe to you \* triumphant anthems as the tokens of my gratitude, \* being rescued from the terrors, O Theotokos. \* Inasmuch as you have power unassailable, \* from all kinds of perils free me so that unto you \* I may cry aloud: \* Rejoice, O unwedded Bride. )*

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

*Follow the Liturgy of St. Basil the Great. After the Great Entrance, turn to pg. 125 in our Liturgy books. After the prayer on pg. 125, turn back to pg. 38. After the Creed, turn to pg. 126 for the continuation of the Liturgy of St. Basil. The Lord's Prayer & Communion Prayers: pgs. 60-74.*

**Megalynarion:** *Epi si cheri ke charitomeni (pg. 135 in the Divine Liturgy books)*

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

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

*Proverbs 4:23*



**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Ushers: Jim Christopoulos, John Petalas**

**Greeter: Josie Desnoyers**

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY TODAY** – To participate in today’s General Assembly meeting a parishioner must be a pledged steward and be in good standing for the current year.

**Altar Flower Bouquets:** Today’s Altar Flower Bouquets gracing our Holy Altar Gates were donated by: **Mr. & Mrs. Wynn Storton & family:** “Let us give thanks to the Lord!” (The Divine Liturgy)

**Mr. George Megalonakis and family wish “Joy, blessings, peace, and love to All!”**

**Notice:** Between the months of October and December 2016 there are only four available Altar Flower spaces! They are: **October 30th (1); November 20th (2); December 4th (1)** Visit the **Bulletin Board in the Parish Hall today, sign-up** and make your requests for Anniversaries, birthdays, memorials, or any other special dedication(s). If you wish, you may share a purchase with another parishioner! Adorn God's Altar with thanksgiving, and praise and be blessed! See **Louise Dobbs Barringer**

**OUTREACH COMING EVENTS:** Please annotate your calendar today in support of St. George Church' activities:

**MEN'S DAY RALLY - May 14th**

**BABY BOTTLE DRIVE - September. 18th thru October. 9th**

**VETERAN'S DAY - November 6th**

**PHILOPTOCHOS** – We had a wonderful turn out for the Membership Lunch on March 12. We had 50 women attend at the home of **Kalitsa Xitco**. Thank you Kalitsa for sharing your home with us and for making the salads and desserts. A big thank you goes to our **Membership Chairperson Carol Lyons** for registering the members along with help from **Gloria Lehman**. Carol also made deserts. If you haven't renewed your membership yet, see **Carol Lyons or Linda Kallis**. Our annual Easter Bake Sale is coming up and orders will be taken in March for pick up in April. See our flyer.

**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** to make arrangements.

**FINAL SALE!** We have reduced the prices of our leftover inventory from the festival including liquor, beer, soft drinks, grocery store items, pastries, frozen food, tees, caps, & bags. Don't miss out on the great savings! Items are displayed in the church hall for purchase.

**WEEKDAY CALENDAR**

Tuesday, March 22nd.....Bible Study – 10:00 a.m.

Wednesday, March 23rd.....Pre-Sanctified Divine Liturgy – 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, March 24th.....Great Vespers – 6:30 p.m.

Friday, March 25th.....ANNUNCIATION OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS

Orthros-8:30 a.m. /Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m. /Salutation Service (2nd Stanza) - 7:00 p.m.

Saturday, March 26th.....Vespers – 5:00 p.m.

*Note: Golf Tournament (May6-7, 2016) Registration Forms are available in our parish hall.*

*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.**