

OCTOBER 16, 2016

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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# THE LADDER

THE HOLY SAINTS OF THE SEVENTH ECUMENICAL COUNCIL

**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.

**AT ISSUE: OUR FREE WILL**

Throughout the course of the Ecclesiastical Year, we commemorate the great Saints, who participated in the proceedings of the Ecumenical Councils. We commemorate them today, as well. We commemorate these Saints, because they imparted to us the True Faith, as it appears in the Holy Gospel.

As such, today's passage from St. Luke's Gospel is read for the purpose of reminding us to be careful not to be deceived by some false teachings. In-

deed, it is for this reason that the Church has set before us the passage from St. Paul's Epistle to Titus, through which we heard: "Avoid stupid controversies, genealogies, dissensions and quarrels over the law, for they are unprofitable and futile." (Titus 3:9).

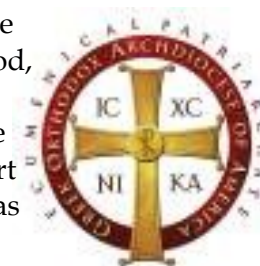
The Gospel of our Lord is "the seed." In other words, it is the Divine and pure Truth of Life. For us to know this Truth, it is necessary for each of us to have a pure soul, so that we would not be distracted by worldly *continued on page 2*

**THE BASIS OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS** – During the Divine Liturgy, prior to the Lord's Prayer, and in preparation to partake of Holy Communion, we hear the priest intone: "The mercy of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ be with all of you." With these words, he blesses the faithful. The words, "Our Great God and Savior Jesus Christ" comprise an ancient Christian phrase to emphasize that Christ is God as One of the Holy Trinity. This was to counter the pagan notion that "gods" acted on the basis of human-like emotions (anger, pleasure, retribution, etc.), as opposed to the Divine virtue of *great mercy*.

As we read in the *Orthodox Study Bible*, "Christians are good not merely out of obedience to the law, or harmony with nature, or in order to gain immortal bliss of the soul. Rather, they are in righteous anticipation of the age to come, the 'eschaton', the age of the fullness of creation in the Incarnate Son of God. Grace is the uncreated energy of God, the gift of the Holy Spirit, through which God gives His gifts to man in tender mercy and good will. It is a formative power, the rule of life of the eschaton, requiring our determined participation. To belong to God is to become like God. To be ransomed, or 'owned,' by God is not simply legal and static, but means to live in solidarity with Him: a blessed, victorious struggle." (pg. 1648).

God's mercy is expressed through the gift of God's Divine Grace in the Holy Spirit, whereby we are not subject to the whims of some false god, but we are partakers with God's energy, and we participate in God's love, through which we are able to love as beings created in the Image and Likeness of God. Christians, therefore are good, because it is a part of their very personhood (having God within their souls) rather than as a simple obligation to law or nature.

FR. THEODORE



Κατα την διαρκειαν του Εκκλησιαστικου ετους, μνημονευουμεν τους Αγιους οι οποιοι ελαβαν μερος στις Οικουμενικες Συνοδους, οπως και σημερα. Μνημονευουμεν αυτους τους Αγιους, διοτι εμετεδωσαν σε εμας την αληθινην πιστιν οπως παρουσιαζεται στο Αγιο Ευαγγελιο.

Επομενως, η σημερινη περικοπη του κατα Λουκαν Ευαγγελιου αναγινωσκειται με σκοπον να προσεξουμεν να μην πλανουμεθα δια μεσου καμιας ψευτικης διδασκαλιας. Μαλιστα, και για αυτον τον λογον εθεσε η Εκκλησια μας την περικοπην απο την Επιστολην του Αγιου Παυλου προς τον Τιτον, κατα την οποιαν ακουσαμεν τα λογια του: <Μωρας δε ζητησεις και γενεαλογιας και εριν και μαχας νομικας περιμιστασο, εισιν γαρ ανωφελεις και ματαιοι.> (Τιτ. 3-9).

Το Ευαγγελιο ομιλει για <τον σπορον>. Δηλαδη, <ο σπορος> ειναι η θεικη και ασπιλη αληθεια της ζωης. Για να γνωρισουμεν αυτην την αληθειαν ειναι αναγκη να εχει ο καθενας μας μια ασπιλην ψυχην, ωστε να μην επηρεαζεται δια μεσων των κοσμικων ενδιαφεροντων και των διδακαλων των ψευτικων ιδεολογιων. Στην μεσην ολων των συγχυσεων των ανθρωπων της καθε εποχης και τοπου, υπαρχει <ο Πονηρος>, ο οποιος ειναι ο διαβολος – ο οποιος, <αιρει τον λογον απο της καρδιας αυτων, ινα μην πιστευσαντες σωθωσιν.> (Λουκ. 8: 10).

Στο <Πατερ Ημων> προσευχωμεθα: <και ρυσαι ημας απο του πονηρου.> Ο <πονηρος> ειναι εκεινος που διαστρεφει την αληθειαν και ζητα την καταστροφην μας με σκοπον να μην δοξαζεται το Ονομα του Πατρος και του Υιου και του Αγιου Πνευματος.  
+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

cares and teachers of false ideologies. In the midst of all of the confusion among people in every time and place is the devil, who “comes and takes away the Word from their hearts so that they may not be saved.” (St. Luke 8:10).

In the Lord’s Prayer, we pray, “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” In Greek, however, the word “evil” is one which gives a deeper, broader meaning to the work of the devil. The actual word in Greek is: “Poniros” (pronounced: *poh-nee-rhohs*). This word means: “crafty”, “deceitful.” Hence, evil is based on deception of the Truth. It is the devil who twists and spins the Truth so that the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit cannot be glorified by us.

Our Lord spoke in parables in order to give people the opportunity to learn about the Truth of God’s love in terms that can be easily comprehended, given the limits of human capacity. This parable is offered in the simple agrarian terms of farming so that people can see how “good seed” can fail to bring its fruit. Those who do not *want* to understand the deeper meaning of the parable are those who prefer to remain blind to the Truth of God’s love. They *choose* to not see. As a result, whatever they hear, they cannot properly understand. But, the Disciples were the ones who *wanted* to know the deeper meaning of God’s teaching. In response, our Lord explained in detail the meaning of this parable. A major element that leads to our salvation is our Free Will. God does not *make* anyone do anything! While God’s love is available to all people, we, as individuals can only offer love back to God by *wanting* to do so. St. John Chrysostom noted that our Lord does not force people to love Him against their Free Will, saying, “*To do so would be of no advantage to them.*” This Gospel passage counters the “Doctrine of Predestination”, which John Calvin had preached in the 16th Century.

Certainly, if Christ our God does not *make* us do His Will, no one else can *make* people do God’s Will. What we can do is offer the love of Christ our God to them in ways that they may be able to understand (like parables). But, it is up to them to accept this love. Certainly, we are not magicians. However, we can serve as guides toward salvation in Christ. We are obligated to pray for God to enlighten us so that we can find ways to inspire our loved ones and others; we can pray for them to realize in some way on their own that they need God. We can teach the Truth by words and by example. In this way, we will honor the Saints of the Ecumenical Councils and inspire others to freely choose to follow God.

+FR. THEODORE

**PRAY FOR THE SICK:** Yvonne Flessas, George Aeder, Adele Gallade, Kathy Ligeros, Nicholas Kyriakou, Mary Ganakis, Erika Aguilar (Ana and Wynn Storton’s 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— 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. Let heaven and earth praise Him the seas and everything that moves in them.

**Sunday Resurrection Hymn:** Ex ipsous katilthes [Tone 8]... (O Lord by Your Sacred Cross You abolished death and granted unto the thief 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 the Saints of the Ecumenical Council:** Yper-de-thoxasmenos... (Supremely blessed are You, O Christ our God. You established the holy Fathers upon the earth as beacons, and through them You have guided us all to the true Faith, O greatly merciful One, glory be to You.)

**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... (A 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 defends at all times those who honor You.)

**READINGS:** Epistle - Titus 3: 8-15 / Gospel - St. Luke 8: 5-15

**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**

**Coffee Hour: In memory of Steve (Efstathios) Michaels  
Greeter: Louise Dobbs Barringer**

**MEMORIAL** – Today’s Memorial Service is for the Eternal Rest and Salvation for the servant of God, **Steve (Efstathios) Michaels (40 days)**, the beloved son of **Eleni Michaels**, and brother of **Stacey Argyos** and **Michael Michaels**. May our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ grant Eternal Life to the servant of God, **Steve (Efstathios) Michaels** and may He grant peace and comfort to his entire family. **MAY HIS MEMORY BE ETERNAL!**

**PHILOPTOCHOS** – Come one, come all to the AHEPA and Philoptochos Thanksgiving Luncheon on Saturday, November 12 at 1:00 p.m. Today, we start selling tickets at the Philoptochos table (located in front of the book store). All proceeds go to the Fr. Theophilos Memorial Scholarship Fund. Adults: \$15.00 and children under 12: \$7.00. Thank you for volunteering to host a Coffee Hour in October and November. We now need hostesses in December. See Linda Petalas.

**ALTAR FLOWER BOUQUETS** – Today’s Altar Flower Bouquets gracing our Holy Altar have been donated by: **Diane Young, Bess Heinrich and Stephanie & Peter McElvoy.**

**BABY BOTTLE CAMPAIGN** – Enclosed, please find the list of donors to date toward this year’s Baby Bottle Campaign. We thank God for their kind generosity. Total donations: \$1,000.

**GREEK FESTIVAL** – Today – St. Nicholas Church – Temecula – until 7:00 p.m.

**CHOIR PRACTICE** – Choir practice is on Thursday, October 20th. If interested in joining our choir, contact our choir director, **Annette Laskaris.**

**PET BLESSING EVENT** – Our annual St. George **Pet Blessing Event** will take place on **Saturday, October 22, 2016** here in our parish courtyard. **Gates open at 9:00 a.m.** and the **Blessing Service begins at 9:30 a.m.** several special guests and organizations are attending. Raffle and Greek food and pastries will be available for purchase. See the enclosed flier for details and information.

**THANKSGIVING LUNCHEON** – Through the combined efforts of our parish **AHEPA and Philoptochos chapters**, a **Thanksgiving luncheon** will be offered at our parish hall on **Saturday, November 12, 2016 at 1:00 p.m.** Proceeds will benefit the **AHEPA Chapter 528 Fr. T.P. Theophilos Memorial Scholarship Fund**. Deadline for reservations: **Sunday, November 6, 2016.** Please see the enclosed flier for more information.

**WEEKDAY CALENDAR**

Tuesday, October 18th.....ST. LUKE THE EVANGELIST  
Orthros-8:30 a.m./ Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.  
Bible Study - 10:00 a.m.

Thursday, October 20th.....ST. GERASIMOS OF CEPHALLONIA  
Orthros-8:30 a.m./ Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.

Saturday, October 22nd.....ST. GEORGE PET BLESSING EVENT – 9:00 a.m.  
Vespers - 5:00 p.m.

*The October 2016 Ladder  
is sponsored by  
Rhonda & Nicholas Latkovic  
in memory of  
Patricia Fleming (Rhonda Latkovic's mother)*

**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.**

## LIST OF BABY BOTTLE CAMPAIGN DONORS

Thank you all for your generous gifts, with your giving we were blessed with a total of \$1000.00!  
May God bless and keep you for standing up for Life, and for Our Lord Jesus Christ!

Mrs. Tilly Lockshire

Mr. Donald Dymond

Ms. Alice Pulos

Mary Zachariadou

Deacon Euthym Kontaxis & family

Fr. Theodore & Bertha Pantels

Mr. & Mrs. Nick Latkovic

Mrs. Annette Lewis

Mrs. Eve Meeks

Matushka Gloria Lehman

Mr. & Mrs. Mike Vawter

Ms. Katy Amoz

Ms. Chrystal Maganas

Ms. Diane Young

Mr. & Mrs. Bill Barringer

Mrs. Doris Elmo

Mrs. Bess Heinrick

Ms. Deb Pousen

Mr. & Mrs. Bill Piggott

In Christ,

Louise Dobbs Barringer,  
Outreach Chairperson