

OCTOBER 2, 2016

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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THE LADDER

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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.

MERCY IS GOD'S JUSTICE

One of the hymns of our Church has these words: *"Who is so great a god as is our God?..."* In his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, St. Paul describes the essence of the Life in Christ: *"It is God Who said for light to shine out of darkness and Who shone the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the Person of Jesus Christ."* (2 Corinthians 4:6).

Indeed, Jesus Christ is the God of love, Who grants to all of us the ability to have the same wisdom as His own—and Who, at the same time, is the Crea-

tor of all things: One God in Three Persons. This Divine Wisdom is called "the Light of Christ," as we hear during the celebration of the Pre-Sanctified Divine Liturgy.

God grants us the Divine Wisdom so that we can be like God as we live in this present life. Yet, who is this God Who surpasses the dignity and power of all the false-gods of human history? This is the God Who loves all people: those who love Him and those who are His enemies. This is the only *merciful* God. God's *mercy* is, at the same,

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STS. JUSTINA AND CYPRIAN THE MARTYRS

Saint Justina who was from Damascus, lived in virginity for the sake of Christ. Saint Cyprian, on the other hand, was from Antioch, living as a conniving magician. He began his livelihood as an initiate of magic and worshipper of the demons.

A certain foolish young man who had been smitten with Justina's beauty hired Cyprian to draw her to love him by virtue of Cyprian's magic spells. Cyprian had employed every demonic device he knew, and had failed, being repulsed by the power of Christ Whom Justina invoked. In a fit of "madness" over his failures, Cyprian mimicked Justina's prayers by making the "Sign of the Cross" himself. At once he understood the weakness of the demons and came to know the truth.

Now, delivered from demonic delusion, he came to Christ and burned all his books of magic, was baptized, and, according to some sources, became a deacon (possibly even a priest) of the Church.

Not long after this, the Count of Damascus arrested Christians in the vicinity, including Cyprian and Justina. After enduring many torments at his hands, both were sent to Diocletian in Nicomedia, where they were beheaded about the year 304 A.D.



Στην Δευτερην Επιστολην του προς τους Κορινθιους, ο Απ. Παυλος περιγραφει την ουσιαν της <εν Χριστω> ζωης: <Ο Θεος ο ειπων εκ σκοτους φως λαμψαι, ος ελαμψεν εν ταις καρδιαις ημων προς φωτισμον της γνωσεως της δοξης του Θεου εν προσωπω Ιησου Χριστου.> (2 Κορ. 4: 6). Μαλιστα ο Ιησους Χριστος ειναι ο Θεος της αγαπης, ο Οποιος χαριζει στον ανθρωπον την ικανοτητα να εχει την ιδια σοφιαν οπως εχει ο Τρισυποστατος Δημιουργος του συμπαντος. Αυτη η θεικη σοφια λεγεται <το Φως Χριστου>, οπως ακουμεν στην τελτην της Προηγιασμενης Θειας Λειτουργιας.

Ο Θεος χαριζει την θεικην σοφιαν σε εμας ωστε να ειμεθα σαν τον Θεον καθως ζουμεν σε αυτην την επιγειον ζωην. Και ποιος ειναι Αυτος ο Θεος ο Οποιος ξεπερνα κατα την αξιοπρεπειαν και δυναμιν ολους τους αλλους ψευτο-θεους της ανθρωπινης ιστοριας; Ειναι Εκεινος ο Οποιος αγαπα ολους; και αυτους που Τον αγαπαν, και αυτους που ειναι οι εχθροι Του. Ειναι Εκεινος ο Οποιος ειναι *οικτιρμων*. Το ελεος του Θεου ειναι, ταυτοχρονω, η δικαιοσυνη του Θεου! Ας ειναι το ανθρωπινο ειδος δικαιοσυνης το ιδιο οπως ειναι η δικαιοσυνη του Θεου. Απο την αποψιν της Θεικης σοφιας και αγαπης, τα λογια του Κυριου απο την σημερινην Ευαγγελικην περικοπην γινονται ολο και πιο σαφες: <Γινεσθε ουν οικτιρμονες, καθως και ο Πατηρ υμων οικτιρμων εστι.> (Λουκ. 6:36).

Ο αορατος αγωνας του καθε Χριστιανου αποτελειται απο την καθημερινην προσπαθειαν να θυμηθει την δικη του αξιοπρεπειαν και εκεινην του συνανθρωπου του απο την αποψιν της αιωνιου αγαπης του Θεου.

+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

God's justice! Our own justice and righteousness must also be according to the *mercy of God*. From this point of view—the point of view of God's mercy and love—the words of our Lord found in today's Gospel reading are all the more clear: "*Be merciful as your Father is merciful!*" (St. Luke 6: 36).

Mercy is the expression of respect for human dignity. God defines human dignity, and we are to share that same point of view in our dealings with each other—that is, to be merciful in the same way in which Christ our God is merciful towards us. Our mercy is to be extended to everyone around us, especially to children and to those yet to be born. Our Lord warns us all to care for children: "*Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in Heaven their angels always see the face of My Father Who is in Heaven.*" (Matthew 18: 10). The right to life includes helping parents to raise their children to experience God's love, giving them the religious education and practical resources to give of themselves for God's glory and for the salvation of others. At the same time, practices of euthanasia, physician-assisted suicide, capitol punishment, and abortion, are totally contrary to the Will of God. The stance of the Church is this: *my rights – even my right to pray – do not supersede your right to live, nor that of anyone else!*

Mercy includes a life of prayer, which becomes action to God's glory. Prayer begets Christ-like love and, while loving our enemies may seem illogical to us humans, it is perfectly in step with the mind of God. Humanity has historically shown itself to be at odds with God's Will, thereby making us "enemies" of God. Yet, God still loves us, allowing us to repent of our sins and to be restored to our original dignity. In return, the least we can do is to actually pray for our "enemies," so that they can be enlightened to love God and to help us reconcile with them.

The Christian spiritual way of life (also known as the "invisible warfare,") consists of our every-day efforts to remember our own true dignity, as well as that of our neighbor, from the point of view of God's eternal love. To love our enemies, requires us to view ourselves from God's perspective.

Human dignity—or, rather the dignity of "God-within-us"—is based on God's love being embodied in our own being and expressed from within us. The candles that we light upon entering our church temple, representing each of our baptismal candles, express the Light of Christ that we are to carry within us as Christ is in our midst.

+FR. THEODORE

PRAY FOR THE SICK: Yvonne Flessas, George Aeder, Adele Gallade, Kathy Ligeros, Nicholas Kyriakou, Jack Clark, Jean Chronis, 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."

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: Angeliki dynameis [Tone 6]... ((When the angelic powers appeared at Your tomb and those who guarded You became as though dead and standing by Your sepulcher was Mary seeking Your pure and sacred body. For, You did vanquish Hades and, uncorrupted by its touch, You came unto the Virgin Woman bestowing the gift of life, O You Who arose from the dead. Lord we give glory 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 – 2 Corinthians 4: 6-15 / Gospel – St. Luke 6:31-36

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: Linda and John Petalas

Reader: Matushka Gloria Lehman

PHILOPTOCHOS – We need coffee makers for Coffee Hour for a month of Sunday. We need volunteers for November and December. If you are interested, please see Tillie Lockshire. She will train you. Tomorrow, Monday, October 3 at 11:00 a.m. we have our Board Meeting. On Monday, October 10 at 11:30 a.m. we will have our General Meeting.

ALTAR FLOWER BOUQUETS – We thank the following for their gift of Altar Flowers today:

"To the Glory of God, and to the Adornment of His Altar we share this gift!" This dedication is from **Annette Lewis, Rhonda Latkovic, Debbie and Michael Vawter, and Josie Desnoyers.**

BABY BOTTLE CAMPAIGN – Today we commence with our first of two segments of St. Georges' Annual **Baby Bottles Campaign**, and we complete this campaign next **Sunday, October 9th**. Please welcome our guests today **Attorney John and Mrs. Barbara Jimenez** from **Birth Choice of the Desert** in La Quinta, CA: Their theme is **"Birth Choice of the Desert Wants to Save God's Babies, WILL YOU HELP?"** After the Divine Liturgy today, we will proceed to the Parish Hall for a presentation by John and Barbara and they will be available to answer any questions. On the tables there will be a set-up of little baby bottles with a small paper of instructions rolled up inside to be filled out with your name etc., and your generous tax deductible donation(s), which may be in the form of cash or by check. Checks are to be made payable to: **"Birth Choice of the Desert."** Later, an acknowledgement of gratitude will follow with your name in "The Voice".

GREEK FESTIVAL – Today: St. Nectarios parish in Covina, California- until 10:00 p.m.

CHOIR – The choir will return next Sunday, October 9. Please continue to sing with us. We are in need of new members. If you like to sing, please join us! Choir practice is every other Thursday at 1:00 p.m. **Our first practice is on Thursday, October 6th.** Contact our choir director, Annette Laskaris, for more information.

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

Monday, October 3rd.....Philoptochos Board Meeting - 11:00 a.m.

Tuesday, October 4th.....Bible Study - 10:00 a.m.

Thursday, October 6th.....Choir Practice - 1:00 p.m.

Saturday, October 8th.....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.