

DECEMBER 17, 2017

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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# THE LADDER

SUNDAY OF THE HOLY FOREFATHERS

## 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.

## YOU ARE INVITED!

The Divine Liturgy is the Mystical Supper to which everyone is invited. St. Paul writes that *“Christ is all in all.”* (Colossians 3:11). Indeed, Christ is the Only God for all people. His love requires us to honor every person in the world, since, as our Heavenly Father, He Himself does not show preference between Greek or Jew, male or female, slave or free man. All are invited.

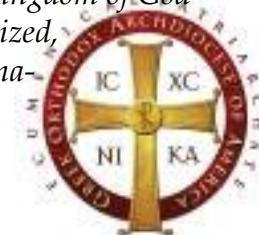
Everyone is equal. Inequality is found in the thinking that people have as indi-

viduals. Thus, excuses for our absence from this heavenly banquet largely are found in three areas of concern: 1) security (which is represented by money or lands), 2) pride (which is represented by the self-righteous observance of the Law—the “five oxen”), and 3) desires for worldly pleasures (represented by the co-habitation with a wife, who satisfies the sensual pleasures and appetites). Such excuses arise from fantasies, which wither away either  
*Continued on page 2*

**“CHRIST IS ALL IN ALL.” (Colossians 3:11)** – St. Maximos the Confessor deals with this passage from St. Paul’s Epistle to the Colossians by noting that Christ is the True God. He explains how Greek philosophy and paganism led to divisions among people, as did also the Pharisees who themselves could not follow the Law and fell into hypocrisy. St. Maximos explains that we are all one people as God’s children, noting St. Paul’s reference, that, in Christ’s love, there is neither male nor female; neither Greek nor Jew; neither slave nor free.

God is Divine. Yet, through the Holy Spirit, God took on human flesh from a woman without action from a man, making Her the New Eve and Himself the New Adam, granting Eternal Life to all people in every age and place. We are all thus divine while clothed with flesh in accordance to the invitation of God to join Him in His Kingdom as greater than the angels. *“[In Christ, neither is there] fortuitous division of the same nature which leads to one person despising another, although both are by nature of an equal dignity, and which encourages people to dominate others tyrannically, thus violating the divine image in every human being. But, ‘Christ is all in all’ (Col. 3:11,) in spirit fashioning the unoriginated Kingdom of God by means of that which lies beyond nature...The Kingdom is characterized, as we have shown, by humility and gentleness of heart. It is the combination of these two qualities that constitutes the perfection of the person created according to Christ. (“Treatise on the Lord’s Prayer”)*

+FR. THEODORE



Η Θεία Λειτουργία είναι ο Μυστικός Δείπνος στον οποίον όλοι προσκαλούνται. Ο Αποστόλος Παύλος γράφει ότι <τα πάντα και εν πασι Χριστός.> (Κολ. 3:11). Μαλιστα, ο Χριστός είναι ο Μόνος Θεός για όλους τους ανθρώπους και η αγάπη του Χριστού επιβάλλει σε εμάς να τιμήσουμε τον κάθε άνθρωπο του κόσμου, μια που ο Χριστός ο Ιδιός δεν δείχνει προτίμηση ούτε στους Ελληνες ούτε στους Εβραίους – ούτε στους άνδρες ούτε στις γυναίκες... και ούτε στον δούλο ούτε στον ιδιοκτήτην του δούλου.

Μαλιστα, όλοι είναι ίσοι. Η ανισότητα ευρίσκεται στις διανοητικές ιδέες που έχει ο καθένας. Οι δικαιολογίες μας για την απουσίαν από αυτό το ουρανό τραπέζι ευρίσκονται σε τρία μέρη: 1) στον ποθόν για ασφάλειαν από θλιψεις (που αντιπροσωπεύονται από το χρήμα και τα γήινα στρεμματα), 2) την υπερηφάνεια (που αντιπροσωπεύεται από την αυτοεπιβεβαιωτή τηρησιν του νομού), και 3) την επιθυμίαν για την κοσμική απολαύσιν (που ανιπροσωπεύεται από την συζυγίαν με γυναίκαν). Αυτές οι δικαιολογίες προέρχονται από φαντασίες, οι οποίες εξάφνιζονται είτε με το περας του χρόνου είτε όταν τις αφήνουμε πίσω καθώς αναχωρούμεν από αυτήν την παρούσαν ζώην.

Η Θεία Λειτουργία είναι η πραγματικότης που δεν τελειώνει ποτέ, διότι είναι η Βασιλεία του Θεού. Είναι η αιώνια ζώη, η οποία περιγράφεται από τα λόγια του Κυρίου ημών Ιησού Χριστού ως εξής: είναι ζώη στην οποίαν ο Χριστός κατοικεί μέσα μας και ανάμεσα μας και εμείς κατοικούμεν <εν Χριστώ> δια της χάριτος του Αγίου Πνεύματος, <Τα πάντα εν πασι Χριστός.> +Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

with the passage of time or after being left behind as we depart from this present life.

The Divine Liturgy is the reality that never ends, because, it is the “Kingdom of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit...,” which is described by the very words of our Lord Jesus Christ in the following way: it is a life in which Christ dwells in each of us, as well as among all of us, and we live in Christ through the grace of the Holy Spirit – *Christ is all in all.*

The lord of the banquet in the parable simply sought other people to take the place of those giving excuses. That is, those who offered excuses were left out: “...None of those who were invited will taste of my banquet.” (St. Luke 14: 24).

Let us understand, however, according to our Church, there are valid excuses, such as those dealing with limitations due to illness or travel. Yet, if we look into our souls, we might have to admit that most of our excuses regarding worship, prayer and participation in the Sacramental life are not valid, especially in light of the treasure that is to be gained. Behind our excuses stands the matter of our personal, individual *will*, or desire. To paraphrase St. Evagorios the Solitary, “Is it your will to embrace the Christian way of life and seek out the blessings that follow? If so, abandon the anxieties that come from worldly affairs and the principalities and powers that lie behind them. Free yourself from such attachments...” (“Treatise on the Ascetic Life and Stillness,” *Philokalia*, Vol. 1, pg.31).

This is not easy. On our part, it takes a decisive will to strive for such a spiritual stature, whereby we are free, unhindered, to accept the invitations that God gives to us – invitations to do good deeds; invitations to inspire others for God’s glory (not our own); invitations to impart *by example* the Gospel teachings to those in need and to the youth...all of which fall under the greater invitation to meet the necessary spiritual requirements to participate in the Lord’s Banquet, such as a clear conscience, which is represented in our prayers as “the proper garment” to wear to this Banquet.

The liturgical words of the priest, saying, “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you,” are said so that our will and desire for God may be strengthened so that, in turn, we can “lift up our hearts” and “Give thanks unto the Lord,” for having been invited to His Heavenly Banquet - the Divine Liturgy. It is an invitation to an entire way of life centered upon love for Christ our True God, Whose rewards render most excuses as meaningless.

+FR. THEODORE

**PRAY FOR THE SICK:** George Aeder, Adele Gallade, Constantine Papapetru, Erika Aguilar, Mary Mitsias, Tom Evans, Jim Alex, Nicholas Kyriakou, Chris Laskaris, J.J. Richards (*Many faithful on the Prayer List face chronic or serious illness*).

**HYMNS FOR THIS SUNDAY'S CELEBRATION OF THE DIVINE LITURGY:**

**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."*

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**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, 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:** *"Soson 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. Amin**

**People:** *"O Monogenis Ios ke Logos tou Theou..." (O Only-Begotten Son and Word of God...)*

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**ANTIPHON III-** *This is the day the Lord made. Let us greatly rejoice and be glad therein.*

**Sunday Resurrection Hymn** – *Efrenestho ta ourania [Tone 3]...(Let the Heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad, for the Lord has shown strength with His protective arm: by death He has trampled upon death and has become the Firstborn of the dead; He has delivered us from the depths of Hades, and has granted to the world His Great Mercy.)*

**Hymn for the Holy Forefathers** -*En pisti tous Propatorahs...(By faith You justified the Forefathers having through them betrothed to Yourself the Church that came out of the nations. The saints are boasting in glory; for the glorious fruit, the Virgin Who without seed gave birth to You, is from their progeny. At their entreaties, O Christ our God, save our souls.)*

**Hymn for St. George** – *Os ton echmaloton eleftherotis...(Since you are a deliverer of captives and a defender of the poor; a physician for the sick and a noble attendant to kings, O Great among the Martyrs and Glorious George, intercede with Christ our God that He may save our souls.)*

**Kontakion Hymn for this Sunday**- *Ee Parthenos simeron...(On this day the Virgin Maid goes to the grotto to give birth to the pre-eternal Word in an ineffable manner. Dance for joy, all the inhabited earth, on hearing. Glorify along with Angels and with the shepherds Him who willed that He appear as a newborn Child, the pre-eternal God.)*

**READINGS:** *Epistle – Colossians 3: 4-11 / Gospel – St. Luke 14: 16-24*

*Axion Estin*

**Communion Hymn** – *Enite ton Kyrion...(Praise the Lord...) page 64 in the Divine Liturgy books.*

*"Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the well-spring of life"*  
*Proverbs 4:23*



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Coffee Hour: Philoptochos

**CHRISTMAS PROGRAM**— Please enjoy our Sunday School Christmas Program, which will be presented in our church, following the Divine Liturgy, before the distribution of the Antidoron.

**ELECTIONS** - Parish Council Elections take place today in the parish hall. **Nancy Breighner, Emily Tcharos** and **John Petalas** are serving as members of the **Election Committee**. Only Stewardship members of the parish may vote. **Three candidates** are to be voted to fill **three** positions for the 2018 Parish Council. Vote for **only three** of the five candidates. **Do not vote for more than three, otherwise the ballot cannot be counted.** The candidates for this election are (in alphabetical order): **Paul Carkonen, Rhonda Latkovic, Chris Maletis, Tasia Richards, Michael Vawter.**

**PHILOPTOCHOS** - Today is the last day for the **Philoptochos Christmas Bake Sale**. Pick up your order today in the church hall. We made Christmas Baskets this past week and delivered them to our home bound parishioners. They received our bread and cookies with **Lula Valissarakos** heading this part of the project. **Rhonda Latkovic** was over-all Chairperson filling the baskets with baked goods, hygiene products, our Christmas Card and an ornament. Thank you to our volunteers for making the baskets and delivering them. The parishioners enjoyed them very much. Are you in town Dec. 24 and 31? Would you consider being a sponsor for our Coffee Hour? See **Pat Dalkas**.

**STREET LIFE PROJECT** - There will be a short meeting after church today for those interested in volunteering for the Tuesday evening Street Life event in Indio. For those interested in car-pooling to Miles Avenue Park, be at the church by 5:15 p.m. on Tuesday, December 19th. Please see **Rhonda Latkovic** for more details.

**2018 GREEK FESTIVAL** - **Note: Festival preparations begin on Monday, January 8th.** Please see **Stacey Argyros** or **Lula Valissarakos** for more information. Festival fliers are available and ready to be delivered to friends, neighbors and businesses. Next Festival Meeting: Monday, January 8th at 7:00 p.m.

**2018 FEATURE TO THE VOICE OF ST. GEORGE** – Beginning January 2018, the *Voice of St. George* will feature guidelines for examining the condition of our souls based on the Ten Commandments. It is hoped that this will help in terms of reviewing and improving our daily way of life and for participation in the Sacrament of Holy Confession as needed.

## WEEKDAY CALENDAR

Tuesday, December 19th.....STREET LIFE PROJECT at Miles Park in Indio - 5:00 p.m.  
Friday, December 22nd.....ROYAL HOURS OF CHRISTMAS (The Nativity of Christ) - 9:00 a.m.  
Saturday, December 23rd.....THE FOREFEAST OF CHRISTMAS (The Nativity of Christ)  
Orthros-8:30 a.m. / Divine Liturgy- 9:30 a.m.

*Sunday, December 24th.....SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST*  
*Orthros-8:30 a.m. / Divine Liturgy- 9:30 a.m.*

Sunday School Christmas caroling – following the Divine Liturgy

**Monday, December 25th... ..THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST OUR GOD AND SAVIOR**  
**Orthros-8:30 a.m. / Divine Liturgy- 9:30 a.m.**

*The Ladder for December 2017*  
*is sponsored by:*  
*Rhonda & Nicholas Latkovic*

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.