

JULY 2, 2017

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

74-109 Larrea Street
Palm Desert, California 92260

Website: www.go-stgeorge.org

Email: pdsaintgeorge@gmail.com



THE LADDER

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 4755

Palm Desert, CA.92261

Tel: (760) 568-9901

or: (760) 880-5869

– 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.

THE MIRACLE OF THE EUCHARIST

The purpose of worship according to the Old Testament was to atone for the sins of the people. Atonement is the repudiation of sins with the payment of sacrifice for sins committed. For this reason, St. Paul wrote to the Hebrews, as we heard today, that only once a year the high priest would enter the "second" sanctuary, *"not without blood, which he offers for this own iniquities and those of the people."* The blood is the sacrifice so that atonement can be made.

The Divine Liturgy, while it received its general form from the worship of the Old Testament, still differs from this type of worship in that the "high priest" is not simply a human being, but the High Priest is God Himself, Jesus Christ. The Blood that is offered is His human Blood and Body. The Divine Liturgy is celebrated for the forgiveness of each person's sins and for his or her *sanctification*. The Precious Body and Blood of Christ our God opens the

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HOW TO READ THE BIBLE

"When reading Scripture, we are to listen in a spirit of **obedience**. The Orthodox Church believes in **divine inspiration** of the Bible. Scripture is a "letter" from God, where Christ Himself is speaking. The Scriptures are God's authoritative witness of Himself. They express the Word of God in our human language. Since God Himself is speaking to us in the Bible, our response is rightly one of obedience, of receptivity, and listening. As we read, we wait on the Spirit. But, while divinely inspired, the Bible is also **humanly expressed**...God does not abolish our individuality but enhances it. And so it is in the writing of inspired Scripture. The authors were not just a passive instrument, a dictation machine recording a message. Each writer of Scripture contributes his particular personal gifts. Alongside the divine aspect, there is also a human element in Scripture. We are to value both..."

"Our approach to the Bible is not only obedient but ecclesial...We read the Bible personally, but [also] as the members of a family, the family of the Orthodox Catholic Church. When reading Scripture, we say not "I" but "**We**." We read in communion with all the other members of the Body of Christ, in all parts of the world and in all generations of time. The decisive test and criterion for our understanding of what the Scripture means is the **mind of the Church**. The **Bible is the book of the Church**."

– Taken from "How to Read the Bible," by Met. Kallistos Ware



Ο σκοπος της λατρειας κατα την Παλαιαν Διαθηκην ηταν για την εξιλεωσιν για τις αμαρτιες του λαου. Η εξιλεωσις ειναι η αποκαταστασις των αμαρτιων με πληρωμη η θυσια για τις διαπραχθεισες αμαρτιες. Για αυτον τον λογον, ο Αγ. Παυλος εγραψε στους Εβραιους, καθως ακουσαμεν σημερα, οτι μια φορα του χρονου, ο αρχιερευς εμπαινε μεσα στην <δευτεραν> σκηνην, <ου χωρις αιματος, ο προσφερει υπερ εαυτου και του λαου αγνοηματων.> Το αιμα ειναι η θυσια για να γινη η εξιλεωσις.

Η Θ. Λειτουργια, ενω ελαβε μια γενικην μορφην απο την λατρειαν της Παλαιας Διαθηκης, εχει διαφορα απο αυτην την λατρειαν διοτι ο <αρχιερευς> δεν ειναι απλως ενας ανθρωπος, αλλα ο Αρχιερευς ειναι ο Ιδιος ο Θεος, ο Χριστος και το αιμα που προσφερεται ειναι δικο Του ανθρωπυνο Αιμα και Σωμα. Η Θ. Λειτουργια γινεται υπερ της συγχωρησεως των αμαρτιων ολων των ανθρωπων. Το Παναγιον Σωμα και Αιμα του Θεου μας Χριστου ανοιγει την πορτα για ολους μας να ευρισκομεθα στην Βασιλειαν του Θεου μαζι με αγαπη ο ενας για τον αλλον, και ολοι μαζι για τον Θεον. Ο Θεος ζητα απο εμας να συγχωρεσουμεν αλλους, ετσι ωστε να δειξουμεν την αγαπην του Θεου προς σωτηριαν αυτων.

Ο λογος της ευχης μας συνδεεται με τον Λογον του Χριστου και, κατα μυστηριον τροπον, υπαρχει η Θεια ενεργεια δια της οποιας γινονται τα θαυματα προς θεραπειαν του ανθρωπου και προς δοξαν του Θεου. Με αλλα λογια, η βουλη του Θεου συνδεεται με την θελησιν του ανθρωπου προς την σωτηριαν μας.
+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

the door for everyone to enter the Kingdom of God both on earth and in heaven. In this earthly life, the Kingdom is that of worship and prayer.

The prayer of the centurion for his servant in today's Gospel had the elements of faith and humility: "*I am not worthy,*" he said. But, he also said, "*say the word only.*" The Divine Liturgy is the work of God, as well as the work of the faithful, just like the miracle in today's Gospel was the work (through prayer) of the centurion and the work of Christ (through His divine Love). The centurion demonstrated the faith and the humility that characterize the prayers of the Liturgy. Our sacrifice of humility meets with Christ's sacrifice on the Cross. Our faith meets with the Love of Christ. Our faith includes a comprehension on our part that Christ's Love is evidence of the forgiveness of our sins. This is why Christ's Love is healing energy, which leads to our *sanctification*. Worship according to the Law is for atonement for sins. *Atonement* implies something that is static, however. Worship according to the New Testament is for *sanctification* through forgiveness in Christ and it is *on-going and energetic*, uniting us with God and with each other. Forgiveness of sins has power; it heals our bodies and souls, as well as our relationships. This is what we pray for in the words: "*Grant that with one voice and one heart we may glorify ...the honored and majestic Name of the Father; the Son and the Holy Spirit.*"

Although we are, as noted by the centurion, unworthy on our own, it is God Who deems us worthy of saving us. Knowing that God loves us is the basis of our faith. It follows that prayers offered in faith translate into divine energy, as in the case of the centurion's servant, who received benefit from Christ through the prayer of the centurion. But, healing is not an end in itself. The purpose of being healed is for us to be *sanctified* by Christ, as is said by the priest during the Liturgy, "*Lord Jesus Christ our God, hear us from Your holy dwelling place on high and...Come and sanctify us and let Your pure Body and precious Blood be given to us by Your mighty hand and, through us to all Your people.*" These words are based in part on those of St. Peter: "*[Christ] has given us His very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.*" (2 Peter 1:4).

Partaking of the divine nature – that is, Christ's divine properties-- is what the word *sanctification* means. Christ *sanctifies* us through His Body and Blood so that we can help others to be *sanctified* by Christ in the same way. This is one way in which the Orthodox doctrine of Holy Communion differs from that of other doctrines.

+FR. THEODORE

PRAY FOR THE SICK: George Aeder, Adele Gallade, Kathy Ligeros, Nicholas Kyriakou, Argyroula Krespis (Nick Krespis' mother), Constantine Papapetru, Erika Aguilar, Nicholas Coussoulis, Mary Mitsias, Nula Papapetru, Jim Alex, Jean Chronis-Kuhn (*Many faithful on our 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, soston imas."*

Verse 2—Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His rewards.

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

Verse 3—The Lord prepared His throne in heaven and His Kingdom rules over all.

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

Chanter(s): *Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.*

Refrain: *"Tes presvies tis Theotokou, Soter, soston"*

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

Doxa Patri ke Yio ke Aghio Pnevmati ke nin ke aei ke eis tous aonas ton aonon. Amin. *"O Monogenis Yios ke Logos tou Theou..."*

ANTIPHON III—This is the day the Lord made; let us greatly rejoice and be glad therein.

Sunday 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 Placement of the Garment of the Holy Theotokos at the Monastery of Blachernai: *Theotoke Aei-Parthene, ton anthropon ee skepi... (Ever-virgin Theotokos, the shelter of mankind, you have given to your City as a protective wall the clothing and garment that you wore on your immaculate body. By your seedless childbirth, they have remained incorrupt. For in you both nature and time are made novel. Therefore we implore you, grant peace to your commonwealth, and great mercy to our souls.)*

Hymn for St. George : *Os ton ehmaloton 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: *Perivolin pasi pistis aftharsias... (You have bestowed your sacred Garment, O Lady, to be a robe of incorruption, O pure one, for all the faithful, O divine protection of mankind; for with it you had arrayed your most pure sacred body. Now with longing we observe the feast of its bestowal, and in a loud voice we cry out with faith: Rejoice, O Virgin, the boast of Christians everywhere.)*

READINGS: *Epistle:-Hebrews 9: 1-7 / Gospel-St. Matthew 8: 5-13*

The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom is celebrated

Communion Hymn: *"Enite ton Kyron ek ton ouranon. Enite Afton en tis ipsisteis, Alleluia." (Praise the Lord from the heaven. Praise Him in the highest. Alleluia)*



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Coffee Hour: Debbie and Mike Vawter

-- **PHILOPTOCHOS** -- We need Coffee Hour Sponsors for the month of September. The dates available are Sept. 10, 17 and 24. See **Athena Snarskis** or **Linda Kallis**.

PARISH DATA BASE UPDATE -- We are looking forward to updating our parish data base. Please inform Fr. Ted of any parishioner who is not receiving *The Voice of St. George* newsletter each month (except the month of July) and/or the email version of the weekly parish bulletin, *The Ladder*. We look forward to updating our parish mailing list, as well as the parish email addresses. Those who have changed their phone numbers, if they so wish, may contact our parish office to give their new number.

COACHELLA VALLEY RESCUE MISSION -- 90 Days of Summer Project. Those who want to donate to help the Coachella Valley Rescue Mission provide food and water for the hungry and homeless, please see Fr. Ted for details.

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

Tuesday, July 4th.....AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE DAY -- Office closed. No Bible Study.

Saturday, July 8th.....Vespers -- 5:00 p.m.

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE DAY ENCYCLICAL

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Our annual commemoration of the 4th of July, Independence Day in the United States of America, provides us with an opportunity to reflect on the blessings of liberty and to express our gratitude to our forbearers for the freedom that has been advanced and sustained throughout the history of this country. We have and experience a multitude of social, political and economic freedoms because many sacrificed courageously to protect the highest ideals, others engaged in challenging debate and decisions over the shape of governance and society, and countless more have cherished freedom by respecting the rights and liberties of others.

We are truly blessed to live in a country where our freedom to live, to move, and to seek unlimited opportunities represent the tremendous benefits and potential of a free society. As Orthodox Christians we are also blessed to understand this freedom through our relationship with God and the liberty we have through Christ. In his letter to the Galatians, the Apostle Paul affirms this connection: *For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another* (5:13).

As people called to liberty, we see our freedom in this country as an opportunity for service. Our freedom is an opportunity to offer a witness of true and abundant life in Christ. In a free society we are able to go and share the good news of grace, salvation, and healing offered by God to all. We are truly free to give our resources and time to meet the genuine needs of others, using our liberty as an opportunity to serve one another. This is the blessing of liberty, and from the service we offer to one another more blessings will come through seeing lives transformed by the power of God's grace.

In your commemoration and fellowship on July 4th with your families and communities, I ask each of you to reflect on your liberty and how your freedom is an opportunity to care for and serve others. Consider ways you can offer service in the grace of God to your family members, coworkers, neighbors and others in need in your community. As people called to liberty who live in a free society, our service will lead to great and marvelous works for the honor and glory of God.

With paternal love in Him,

+HIS EMINENCE, ARCHBISHOP DEMETRIOS of America

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.