

JULY 9, 2017

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.

HOLY RELICS SPEAK TO US

"My heart's desire and prayer to God for them (the Israelites) is that they may be saved. I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but it is not enlightened. For, being ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness; For Christ is the end of the law, that every one who has faith may be justified." (Romans 10: 1-2). These words from today's passage from St. Paul underline the importance of our participation in the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

Interpretations of the Law are far inferior to the *experience* of the Holy Spirit, through prayer and the Sacraments.

Indeed, the role of the Holy Spirit is that of unifying us to Christ our God. Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos explains in his book, *The Person in the Orthodox Tradition*, that we have trouble comprehending the reality of our union with God through the Sacraments. Human

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ANDITHORON: THE "BLESSED BREAD" DURING THE DIVINE LITURGY-

We very often forget that there is a definite teaching about the distribution of the *Andithoron* that has spiritual importance.

The "Andithoron" is the bread which is distributed at the end of the Liturgy. It is of the same bread that was offered in prayer as a sacrifice for there to be Holy Communion. This offering has as its parallel the offering of Person of the Holy Theotokos to God in Her role of bringing His Only-Begotten Son into the world through the Holy Spirit. The Theotokos offered Herself to God so that we can have God offered to us as the very Body and Blood of our Savior. The offering of this bread represents the offering of the Theotokos for our salvation. The bread is called "*The Offering*." "*Prosforon*," is a Greek word taken from the verb, "*prosfero*:" "I offer."). Hence, partaking from the *Andithoron* is to receive the intercessions of the Most Holy Theotokos, which was requested by us in the words of the Dismissal Prayer of the Liturgy: "*Christ our God... through the intercessions of the Holy Theotokos (and all the Saints) have mercy on us and save us.*" With the *Andithoron* we are all called once again to offer time, treasure and talent – ourselves and one another – to Christ our God.

The *Andithoron* is given "*instead of the Gift*" (the true Gift being Holy Communion). It is especially given to those who for some reason were not prepared to partake of Holy Communion and it is a blessing for everyone attending the Divine Liturgy. +FR. THEODORE



<Ζηλον Θεου εχουσιν οι Ισραηλιτες, αλλα ου κατα επιγνωσιν, αγνοουντες την του Θεου δικαιοσυνην και την ιδιαν ζητουντες στησαι τη δικαιοσυνη του Θεου ουχ υπεταγησαν. Τελος γαρ νομου Χριστος εις δικαιοσυνην παντι τω πιστευοντι.> (Ρωμ.10:1-2). Τα λογια αυτα του Αγ. Παυλου υπογραμμιζουν την σπουδαιοτητα της συμμετοχης μας στα Αχραντα Μυστηρια. Οι εξηγησεις του Νομου εχουν πολυ κατωτερες αξιες απο την εμπειρια του Αγιου Πνευματος δια μεσων των Μυστηριων της Εκκλησιας.

Μαλιστα, το εργον του Αγιου Πνευματος ειναι να μας ενωσει με τον Χριστον. Ο Μητροπολιτης κ.κ. Ιεροθεος της Μητροπλεως Ναυπακτου εξηγει στο βιβλιο του, *Ο Ανθρωπος Κατα την Ιεραν Ορθοδοξον Παραδοσην* οτι ειναι δυσκολο να κατανοησουμε την παραγματικοτητα της ενωσεως μας με τον Θεον δια των Αχραντων Μυστηριων. Μαλιστα, η πραγματικοτης της ενωσεως του ανθρωπου με τον Θεον ειναι φανερον καθως ερχομεθα σε επαφην με τα λειψανα των Αγιων. Γραφει οτι μετα την αμαρτιαν του Αδαμ, ο ανθρωπος, ακομη ειχε (και εχει) τις δυναμεις να γινη αγιος...δηλαδη, να τελεσει θαυμαστα εργα με την βοηθειαν του Θεου. Η ανθρωπινη φυσις μας ειναι ηνωμενη με την φυσιν του Θεανθρωπου Χριστου. Με αλλα λογια, ο Χριστος εδωσε στην ανθρωπινη φυσιν την ικανοτητα να τελεσει εργα του Θεου. Δια της Θ. Κοινωνιας ενωνεται η ανθρωπινη φυσις με την θεικην φυσιν του Χριστου. Η Θ. Κοινωνια δεν ειναι μια στατικη πραξις, αλλα ειναι μια συνεχουσα ενεργιαν προς αγιασμον της ανθρωποτητος.

+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

logic keeps us from comprehending this reality; but, this reality is clearly evident in the fact that there exist the Holy Relics of Saints. The Relics tell us that human beings are destined to be united with God. Metropolitan Hierotheos writes that, after Adam and Eve sinned, we can still become Saints – that is, people who, with God’s help, work wonders for the salvation of others. Our nature is tied to Jesus Christ Who is fully God and fully Man. This means that, as God, Christ makes *human nature capable of Godly acts*. In other words, Christ sanctifies us! “*Through the mystery of the Divine Eucharist, man attains communion and union with Christ. In communion with Him, we fulfill the purpose of our existence.*” (pg. 245).

This “communion” (Holy Communion) is not static. It is energetic. Christ re-creates human nature. Beholding the Relics of the Saints, we see that God’s grace through the Sacraments continues to work in the bodies of the Saints even beyond the grave. For example, we still experience saintly fragrances – as in the case of St. Demetrios the Myrrh-streaming. The Relics still bear healing power – as in the case of St. Nectarios of Pentapolis, or St. Paraskevi the Great Martyr; they still remain incorrupt – in fact, the entire, bodies of St. Dionysios and St. Gerasimos have remained entirely incorrupt centuries after their departure from this life – this being with any mummification procedures. Hence, union with God is still evident in the very bones of the Saints, who lived ages before now. The power of God through our humanity is what causes the Church to discourage cremation.

Everything we have is a gift from God. Our inability to see God in our souls and in our own physical nature limits our God-given potential. Rather than responding to God’s Will for us in life, we chase after our own illusions, ignoring God. For example, we allow ambition to often deceive us into thinking that material objects can actually define us. Yet, our worth is of far more value than any object that the world can offer.

Overcoming the world is tantamount to overcoming the temptations that come from our fallen society and our own imperfections. This is the *heart and soul* of what is called the Orthodox spiritual way of life: allowing God to define us and to guide our thinking toward the reality of Eternal Life and away from the deceptions of our own fantasies. When we partake of Holy Communion we must ask sincerely for our Lord’s help in our efforts to overcome the temptations of the world in our desire to unite our lives to the Life-Giving Love of Christ our God – truly “*unto the forgiveness of sins and life everlasting.*”
+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, Tom Evans, 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: *"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 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 : *To fedron tis anastaseos kirygma [Tone 4]... (When the tidings of the Resurrection from the glorious angel was proclaimed unto the women disciples and our ancestral sentence also had been abolished, to the Apostles with boasting did they proclaim that death is vanquished ever more and Christ our God has Risen from the dead and granted to the world the Great Mercy.)*

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: *Prostasia ton Christianon...(O 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 defend now and ever those who honor you.)*

READINGS: *Epistle:-Romans 10: 1-10 / Gospel-St. Matthew 8:28-34; 9:1*

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: Coffee Hour Sponsors for July 9: Chris and Annette Laskaris - "We are celebrating our 50th Wedding Anniversary." Many blessings to Chris and Annette and many more years of happiness ahead.

PHILOPTOCHOS – Congratulations to our member Annette Laskaris and her husband Chris celebrating their 50th Wedding Anniversary. This month we will be donating to Coachella Valley Rescue Mission's Bottled Water Project. CVRM passes out bottles of water to the homeless in the hot summer months. If you would like to donate to this project, send us a check payable to Philoptochos and note on the memo line "Bottle Water Project". Any donation is much appreciated. We also continue to take donations for the Street Life Project to provide food for the homeless. We need Coffee Hour Sponsors for the month of September. See **Athena Snarskis** or **Linda Kallis**.

2018 ST. GEORGE GREEK FESTIVAL – The 2018 St. George Greek Festival will be held on Saturday and Sunday, February 17-18, 2018. We are pleased to announce that **George Argyros** will serve as the **Chairman** for this Festival. We look forward to everyone's participation as we begin planning the Festival throughout the remainder of the summer and in September.

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

Tuesday, July 11th.....Bible Study – 10:00 a.m.
Men's Bible Study- 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, July 15th.....Vespers – 5:00 p.m.

*"O Lord, You shall open my lips,
and my mouth will declare Your praise.
For if You desired sacrifice, I would give it;
You will not be pleased with whole burnt offerings.
A sacrifice to God is a broken spirit,
a broken and humbled heart God will not despise."*

– Psalm 50: 17-19

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.