

OCTOBER 1, 2017

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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# THE LADDER

ST. ROMANOS THE MELODIST, PATRON SAINT OF CHANTERS & CHOIRS

## Mailing Address:

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– Fr. Theodore Pantels,  
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– 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.

## WHO IS CRAZY?

*"Brethren, you are the temple of the living God as God said, 'I will dwell in them...'"* (1 Corinthians 6:16). St. Gregory of Nyssa, in his Homily *On the Soul and the Resurrection*, reminds us that the soul is the divine element of our being and, through the soul, we know the voice of God (pgs. 46-60). In other words, God dwells in our souls and, as St. Paul says, we are "temples" of God.

Sins are thoughts, words and deeds that do not comply with God's Law. As a re-

sult, they damage our human souls. The damages to the soul make our soul unclean and our unclean soul takes on evil desires, which become bad habits. In the end, the entire life of a person can be gravely harmed.

There is a relationship between the soul and the mind such that a clean soul influences the mind to a point where one has the ability to discern truth from falsehood and can discern good from evil. The unclean

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## ST. ROMANOS THE MELODIST

As we read from the website of our Holy Archdiocese, *"Saint Romanos flourished during the reign of Anastasius (491-518). He was from Emesa of Syria, and apparently was born of Jewish parents, for a hymn written in his honour in Greek says he was "of Hebrew stock," and it has furthermore been noted that he uses many Semitic idioms in his writings. He was baptized an Orthodox Christian, and at some time became a deacon in the Church of Beirut. He was the first composer of the **Kontakia**, the foremost of which is that of the feast of Christ's Nativity, "On this day the Virgin ...". In composing many of his **Kontakia**, Saint Romanos was inspired by the hymns of Saint Ephraim of Syria."*

Further research indicates that St. Romanos continued writing hymns for worship during the reign of Emperor Justinian who reigned between 527-65 A.D., and who was himself a hymn-writer; this would make him a contemporary of another famous Byzantine hymnographer, known as Anastasios.

Hymns that are chanted or sung during the worship services of our Church are required to contain words that accurately describe the virtues and the life-style of a Saint and the events of Christ our God as written in the Scriptures.

+FR. THEODORE



<Αδελφοί, υμείς εστε ναός Θεού ζώντος καθώς ειπεν ο Θεός οτι ενοικησω εν αυτοις...> (1 Κορ. 6). Ο Άγιος Γρηγόριος Νύσσης, στην Ομιλιαν του *Περι της Ψυχης και της Αναστασεως*, μας υπενθυμιζει οτι η ψυχη είναι το θειον στοιχειον της οντοτητος μας και, δια μεσου της ψυχης γνωριζομεν την φωνην του Θεου. (σελ.49-60). Με αλλα λογια, λοιπον, ο Θεός κατοικει μεσα στις ψυχες μας και, οπως λεγει ο Αποστολος Παυλος ειμεθα <ναός Θεου.>

Αμαρτιες είναι σκεψεις, λογια και πραξεις που δεν ταιριαζουν με τον Νομον του Θεου. Συνεπως, ζημιωνουν τις ψυχες των ανθρωπων. Αυτες <οι ζημιες> κανουν την ψυχη ακαθαρτη και η ακαθαρτη ψυχη παιρνει επανω της τις κακες επιθυμιες που γινονται κακες συνηθειες. Στο τελος, ζημιωνεται και η ολοκληρη ζωη του ανθρωπου.

Υπαρχει σχεσις μεταξυ της ψυχης και του νου, ετσι ωστε η καθαρη ψυχη επηρεαζει τον νουν σε σημειον που εχει ο ανθρωπος την ικανοτητα να κανει διακρισην μεταξυ αληθειας και ψευδους και διακρινει το καλο απο το κακο. Η ακαθαρτη ψυχη αμβλυνει τον νουν, ετσι ωστε να μην εχει τις δυναμεις να γνωρισει τα συμφεροντα της ψυχης και να αποφυγει καποτε την καταστροφην.

Η εκλογη να καθαρισουμεν τις ψυχες μας απο κοσμικες ακαθαρσιες και να γνωρισουμεν το θελημα του Θεου για εμας είναι στο δικο μας χερι να <καταπατησουμεν πασας τας σαρκικας επιθυμιες> (οπως προσευχομεθα κατα την τελετην της Θ. Λειτουργιας) και να επιδιωκουμεν ολα που μας ενωνουν με τον Θεον. +Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

soul dulls the mind so that it has no ability to comprehend the things that are beneficial to the soul in order to avoid catastrophe. The choice to cleanse our souls from worldly filth and for us to know the Will of God in our lives is in our own hands to “conquer sinful desires” and pursue everything that unites us to God, making us holy people.

Holiness comes from our love for Christ and for our neighbor. Both St. Paul and St. John the Evangelist, as examples, speak about the Divine Love of Christ—St. Paul defines love as “not seeking its own will; being patient, kind...enduring all things; hoping all things” (2 Corinthians 13) and St. John reminds us that “God is love,” (1 John 4:8), with the understanding that the entire self-sacrificing and obedient ministry of Christ for our salvation is the living description of love.

Given the definitions and descriptions of love that we read in the Bible, we realize that either Christian love is the true, *normal* dimension of human life as the *ideal*, and that we are generally *abnormal* in terms of our present-day relationships with God and people, or Christian love is *abnormal* compared to present-day behaviors, which, commonly are deemed to be *normal*. The imperative of Christ God that we even love our enemies is *abnormal* by today’s standards. Yet, from the point of view of the holiness evidenced in the life-style of our Saints, it is a *normal* trait. St. Dionysios, for example, “loved his enemy” by forgiving the man who murdered his brother. St. Nectarios, “loved his enemies” by praying for them. St. Paraskevi “loved her enemy” by healing the eyes of the man who had thrown her into a vat of boiling oil. For the Saints, loving the enemy is *normal*.

The struggle for Christians today — and particularly for Orthodox Christians who seek to live as did the Apostles — is to strive to live a holy life-style with the fear of being labeled “abnormal” or crazy. An extreme example of a holy life-style in recent times is that of an Orthodox Christian, named John. Dionysios Makris wrote his biography with the title, *Crazy John*. Makris shows this man not to be crazy, but holy.

The abnormality that should be feared is that which is rooted in hatred, anger, depression, addiction and the like, because these things make us truly less than human. Loving our enemy is a superhuman, divine quality that is attained only through love and faith in God. We must humbly keep in mind that, because we are almost constantly prone to disobeying our Lord’s teachings, we can unwittingly become enemies of Christ our God. But Christ from the Cross promises to always forgive us if only we repent. As our Lord loves us despite the fact that we sometimes act like *His* enemies, we must also love *our* “enemies.” Let us pray and work for their return to God — and to us as our friends in Christ.

+FR. THEODORE

**PRAY FOR THE SICK:**George Aeder, Adele Gallade, Constantine Papapetru, Erika Aguilar, Mary Mitsias, Nula Papapetru, Tom Evans, Jim Alex, Jean Chronis-Kuhn, Chris Laskaris, Taki Tavlarides (Fr. James Tavlarides’ son) (*Many faithful on 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."*

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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 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 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**— *Katelisas to Stavro Sou ton thanaton [Tone 7]...(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 evermore.)*

**Hymn for St. Romanos the Melodist**— *En Si Pater akrivohs...(In you, O Father, is preserved undistorted what was made in the image of God; for taking up the cross, you followed Christ and by example taught, that we should overlook the flesh, since it passes away, and instead look after the soul, since it is immortal. And therefore, O devout Romanos, your spirit rejoices with the angels.)*

**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**— *Prostasia ton Christianon...(A Protection of Christians unshamable; meditation 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 16: 16-7:1 / Gospel— St. Luke 6: 31-36*

**Axion Estin.**

**Communion Hymn**— *Enite ton Kyrion. See page 64 in our Divine Liturgy books*



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Coffee Hour Sponsor: Penny Chiotis**

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY- Today is the day for our Special General Assembly Meeting.** This special General Assembly meeting is called in order to present the plans to upgrade our parish courtyard before our Festival (February 16-17, 2018) and to upgrade our parish hall by installing new flooring. Participation in this General Assembly requires one to be a Stewardship member of our parish.

**PHILOPTOCHOS** – Our next Board Meeting will be tomorrow Monday, October 2 at 11:00 a.m. Our next General Meeting will be on Monday, October 9 at 11:30 a.m. If you are a member in good standing and don't have the new phone directory, pick one up at this General Meeting. We are looking for Coffee Hour sponsors or hostesses for October and November. See **Athena Snarskis** or **Linda Petalas**.

**FESTIVAL MEETING** – Take note that **tomorrow** is the next Festival meeting: Monday, October 2, 2017 at 7:00 p.m.

**BABY BOTTLE CAMPAIGN** – Next **Sunday, October 8th**, we will commence with our annual St. Georges' Annual Baby Bottles Campaign. The campaign will end **next Sunday, October 15th**. Baby Bottles with instructions will be on the tables in the parish hall. Donations will be sent to **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?** Checks are to be made payable to: "Birth Choice of the Desert."

**ALTAR FLOWER BOUQUETS** – Today is the first Sunday for the new season of our Altar Flower Bouquet. Again, we thank God for the gracious donation by **Nicholas Demetropoulos**, who donated for our Altar Flower Bouquets for the entire season. He dedicated his gift to the memory of his family "may rest be eternal" to all! As Scripture says: "Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!" (2 Corinthians 9:15).

**PHILOPTOCHOS CHRISTMAS BAKE SALE ORDER FORMS** – **Now** available in our parish hall at the coffer bar.

## WEEKDAY CALENDAR

Monday, October 2, 2017.....Festival Meeting – 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, October 3, 2017.....No Bible Study

Wednesday, October 4, 2017.....Men's Bible Study – 2:00 p.m. (St. Luke 6: 31-36)

Thursday, October 5, 2017.....Choir Practice-1:00 p.m.

Saturday, October 7, 2017.....Vespers – 5:00 p.m

**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.**