

MAY 20 , 2018

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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# THE LADDER

THE HOLY FATHERS OF THE FIRST ECUMENICAL COUNCIL

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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.

## THE WORLD & CHRISTIANS

In honor of the Saints of the First Ecumenical Council (whom we commemorate today), we call to mind the pastoral prayer spoken by Christ, which we heard during today's Gospel reading: "Keep in Your Name those whom You gave to Me so that they be one, as we are one..." (St. John 17:11). Christ our God prayed for all those who would be His followers in every age—that is, for those who would follow the Word of the Bible and the teaching of His Church from generation to generation following the age of His Holy Apostles.

Through His prayer, Christ expressed His desire that we faithful be preserved in unity with Him and in unity among ourselves. This desire of our Lord is heard during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy: "Asking for the unity of the faith and the communion of the Holy Spirit, let us pray..."

The Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council fought valiantly against the false teaching of the early Christian heretic, Arius, who preached that Christ is not God, but is a special and divinely inspired "child" of God. Even in our age today many embrace

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**THE FIRST ECUMENICAL COUNCIL** -- The life of the Church in the earlier Byzantine period is dominated the seven general councils, the First Ecumenical Council being held in Nicaea in 325 AD, when the Bishops of the Church (Successors of the Holy Apostles) gathered to proclaim the True Christian Faith. These councils fulfilled a double task. First, they clarified and articulated the visible organization of the Church, crystallizing the position of the five great Patriarchates (The bishops of Rome, Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria and Jerusalem were given the title: "Patriarchs"). Second, the councils defined the Church's teaching upon the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith—the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation of Christ. All Christians agree in regarding these things as "mysteries" which lie beyond human understanding and language. The bishops, when they drew up definitions at the councils, did not imagine that they had explained the mystery; they merely sought to exclude certain false ways of speaking and thinking about it. To prevent people from deviating into error and heresy, they simply drew a fence around the mystery. God has become Man, has been crucified, and has risen from the dead, thereby delivering humanity from the bondage of sin and death. This is the central message of the Christian Faith, and it is this message of redemption that the councils were concerned to safeguard.

*Taken from The Orthodox Church, by Metropolitan Kallistos Ware*



Προς τιμην των Αγίων Πατερων της Πρωτης Οικουμενικης Συνοδου (τους οποιους μνημονευουμεν σημερα) ενθυμουμεθα την αρχιερτικην προσευχην του Κυριου την οποιαν ακουσαμεν κατα την σημερινην Ευαγγελικην αναγνωσιν: <Πατερ Αγιε, τηρησον αυτους εν τω ονοματι Σου ω δεδωκας Μοι ινα ωσιν εν καθως ημεις...> (Ιωαν. 17:11). Ο Χριστος, επροσευχηθηκε για ολους τους οπαδους Του οι οποιοι μετα την Αναληψιν Του τηρουν τον Λογον της Αγιας Γραφης και την διδασκαλιαν της Εκκλησιας απο γενεαν σε γενεαν.

Δια της προσευχης Του, ο Χριστος εκφρασε την επιθυμιαν Του να μενουμεν ολοι οι πιστοι ενωμενοι μαζι Του και μεταξυ μας στην Αγιαν Εκκλησιαν Του. Η επιθυμια του Κυριου ακουεται κατα την τελτην της Θ. Λειτουργιας: <Την ενοτητα της πιστεως και την κοινωνιαν του Αγιου Πνευματος αιτησαμενοι...>

Οι Παteres της Πρωτης Οικουμενικης Συνοδου επολεμησαν δυναμικα την αιρεσιν του Αρειου, ο οποιος εκηρυττον οτι ο Χριστος δεν ειναι ο Θεος μας, αλλα ειναι ενα εξερετικο και θεοπνευστο <παιδι> του Θεου. Υπαρχουν πολλοι που ασπαζονται ενα τετοιο και ομοιο δογμα στην δικην μας εποχην. Για αυτον τον λογον – και επιδη υπαρχουν πολλες τετοιες αιρετικες διδασκαλιες, <το Πιστευω> ακουεται κατα την εκτελεσην των Ιερων Ακολουθιων της Εκκλησιας οπως το εγραψαν οι Παteres της Πρωτης Οικουμενικης Συνοδου. Ειναι και εκφρασις της Πιστεως της Ορθοδοξου Εκκλησιας και προσευχη προς δοξαν Θεου.  
+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

such false teachings. For this reason and because there are many other false teachings throughout our world, the Nicene Creed is heard during the performance of Orthodox Church Services as framed by the Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council for the purpose of preserving the truth of the Apostolic Faith. The Creed is both the expression of Faith of Orthodox Christianity and it is at the same time a prayer offered to the glory of God.

The early Christians, from the time of the Holy Apostles, understood that the Holy Spirit sanctifies the waters of baptism and the bread and wine of Holy Communion, changing them into the very Body and Blood of our God and Savior Jesus Christ. As a result, the Sacramental Life of the Church is understood to be an entire human lifestyle guided by the Holy Spirit, making up the on-going Church's mission in the world.

When speaking about the word "world," the word is used in one of two contexts: 1) everything that is not of God; things that distract us from contemplation of God; 2) the people that are born into this life, created by God - humanity itself; the majesty of God's creation of nature and the universe.

We note that our Lord prayed, "O Father...I ask for them, not for the world, but for them who You gave to Me, that they are Yours and Mine are always Thine and Thine are Mine and I am glorified in them." (St. John 17: 9-10). He does not "pray for the world," because the word "world," in this context, means "everything that is not of God." This includes the evil deeds that exist in our society, as well as the false teachings of our time. Against such things we are to defend our Faith and counter the logic and beliefs of today's false teachings in the hope of converting others to the Apostolic Faith.

Indeed, we understand the word "world" in yet another sense - that being, the whole of God's creation, as well as the totality of humanity living throughout history. For our own salvation, as well as for that of the world (in this context), we cannot do God's work if we do not learn our Church's teachings. Let us begin by learning the meaning of the Divine Liturgy, which is the living expression of our participation in the work of God for the salvation of the world. Let us make the prayers of the Divine Liturgy, among which is the Nicene-Creed itself, vital components of a world-view that serves to inspire others, transforming everything around us into the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, beginning in our homes, neighborhoods and communities.

+FR. THEODORE

**PRAY FOR THE SICK:** George Aeder, Adele Gallade, Erika Aguilar, Jim Alex, Chris Laskaris, J.J. Richards, Chris Panopoulos, Nicholas Kontaxis, Jean Chronis (*Many faithful on our Prayer List face chronic/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—**Oh, clap your hands, all you nations. Shout to God with the voice of rejoicing.

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

**Verse 2—**For the Lord Most High is fearsome, a great King over all the earth.

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

**Verse 3—**He subdued the peoples under us and the nations under our feet

**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, soson"*

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**ANTIPHON II:** *"Soson imas Ie Theou..." (Save us, O Son of God...)*

**Verse 1—**Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in His holy mountain.

**Refrain:** *"Soson imas Ie Theou, O en doxi aneliftheis af imon eis tous ouranous, psallontas si alleluia."*

**Verse 2 —**God is known in her palaces when He helps her.

**Refrain:** *"Save us, O Son of God, Who ascended from us in glory into the heavens, we sing to You, Alleluia."*

**Verse 3 —**For behold, the kings assembled; they came together.

**Refrain:** *"Soson imas Ie Theou, O en doxi aneliftheis af imon eis tous ouranous, 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..."*

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**ANTIPHON III—**Hear this, all you nations; give ear, all you inhabitants of the world. I will incline my ear to a parable; I will open my riddle on the harp.

**HYMN FOR THE ASCENSION:** *Aneliftheis en doxi Christe o Theos... (You ascended in glory, O Christ our God, after You filled the Disciples with joy, by promising to send them the Holy Spirit, and You blessed them and established their faith, that You are the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world.)*

**Sunday Hymn :** *Angelike 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 the Holy Fathers ...** *Yper-theh-doxasmenos iparcheis... (Supremely blessed are You, O Christ our God. You established the holy Fathers upon the earth as beacons, and through them You have guided us all to the true Faith, O greatly merciful One, glory be to You.)*

**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 God that He may save our souls.)*

**Sunday Kontakion Hymn:** *Tin iper imon plyrhasas... (When You had fulfilled the dispensation for our sake, and united things on earth with the things in heaven, You were taken up thither in glory, O Christ our God, going not away from any place, but continuing inseparable, and to them that love You crying out: "I am with you, and there is, therefore, none against you.")*

**READINGS:** *Epistle:-Acts 20: 16-18; 28-36 / Gospel: St. John 17: 1-13*

*The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom is celebrated*

**Communion Hymn:** *"Enite ton Kyrion..." (Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise Him in the highest.)*



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Coffee Hour: AHEPA Chapter 528 -- in celebration of AHEPA Sunday**

**MEMORIAL** - Today's Memorial Service is for the Eternal Rest and Salvation for the members of our AHEPA Chapter 528 who have departed this present life:

2011 - Fr. Theophilos, 2016 - Steve Geotas, 2016 - Stan Georgalakis, 2016 - Steve N. Pisanos, 2017 - George Tcharos, 2017 - Robert Maverick, 2018 - Thomas Evans. Also, today's Memorial Service is for the Eternal Rest and Salvation of the servant of God, **Genevieve Thomas (40 days)**. May our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ grant Eternal Rest to these beloved servants of God and grant comfort and peace to their families. **MAY THEIR MEMORIES BE ETERNAL!**

**PHILOPTOCHOS** – We had a record turn out of **24 members** at our last General Meeting this past Monday at Stuff Pizza. We ate, visited with everyone and we had a short meeting. We will start our meetings again in September. Would you like to sponsor a Coffee Hour this summer? See **Pat Dalkas**.

**AHEPA SUNDAY** - Next Sunday is **AHEPA Sunday**. Following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, the **Fr. T.P. Theophilos Memorial Scholarship** awards will be given to deserving college students from our parish community. Many thanks to AHEPA 528 for the carnations that they distributed to our St. George ladies last Sunday in honor of Mothers Day.

**SUNDAY SCHOOL** - The "End-of-the-Year" ceremonies for **Sunday School this year is scheduled for Sunday, June 3, 2018**.

**ST. SOPHIA SUMMER CAMP** - The two sessions for this year's youth **St. Sophia Summer Camp program** are: Session 1: July 22-July 28; Session 2: July 28-August 4, 2018. Fliers are available in our parish hall. **Registration forms are online at: [www.SaintSophiaCamp.org](http://www.SaintSophiaCamp.org)**.

## WEEKDAY CALENDAR

Monday, May 21st.....STS. CONSTANTINE AND HELEN  
Orthros-8:30 a.m.  
Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.

Tuesday, May 22nd.....Bible Study - 10:00 a.m.

Saturday, May 26th.....SATURDAY OF SOULS  
Orthros-8:30 a.m.  
Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.  
Vespers - 5:00 p.m.

Next Sunday -May 27th.....**Pentecost Sunday**  
Orthros- 8:15 a.m.  
Divine Liturgy-9:15 a.m.  
Kneeling Service for Pentecost- 10:15 a.m.

*The Ladder for May 2018  
is sponsored by:  
The St. George Ladies Philoptochos Society*

**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.**