

JULY 23, 2017

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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# THE LADDER



## 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.

## FOR THOSE WHO ARE STRONG

*“Brethren, we who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves; let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to edify him. For Christ did not please himself...”* (Romans 15:1). With these words the Apostle Paul urges us to imitate Christ. As Christ did good deeds for others—even performing miracles—we are to do good deeds for those around us. This requires *self-sacrifice* and it is the main element of Christ-like love.

As we give careful study to today’s passage from the Gospel of St. Matthew, we learn the reason for which Christ healed people is so that He could draw all of us to Himself—that is, so that we can have faith in the fact that He loves us and for which we are thankful.

The Divine Liturgy is the *work of thanksgiving* to God. Our participation in the Sacraments obligates us to acquire the spirit of *Christ-like self-*  
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**ENCOURAGING OTHERS NOT TO SIN** - According to St. John Chrysostom, committing sins is a great tragedy for any human being and, at the same time, for all human beings. This is because sin separates us from God. In light of today’s Gospel passage through which we heard that Christ our God cast out a man’s demons, St. John offers the following thought:

*“[A greedy individual, for example, is one who has a sinful mentality, by which one willingly chooses to reject the Commandments of God, ‘Thou shall not steal’] And what of one who does steal? Who will be able to ever bind such a one? Are there not fears, threats and admonitions? Nay, all these bonds are burst asunder by the [greedy] or covetous...But, as to the demon, though it despises an individual, yet you see that it yielded to the command of Christ and quickly sprang out of the man’s body (Matthew 9: 32-33). But the sinner yields not to the His commandments...While [demons] overturn many houses and cause the name of God to be blasphemed and are a pest to the city and to the whole earth, they that are troubled by evil spirits deserve rather our pity and our tears... [But, remember Christ God Who told His Disciples], ‘Rejoice not because the demons are subject to you (Luke 10:20).’ He said this because...for those who seek to do what pleases God and that which is for the common good, it is not so much to free others of a demon as it is to rescue one from sin...for a demon cannot cast one out of the Kingdom of Heaven. [Christ casts it out, but saves the man.] Yet, sin does cast the man out [of the Kingdom]. To free a man from sin is of greater benefit.”* – Taken from *Functional & Dysfunctional Christianity* by Fr. Philotheos Faros, pages 36-41



<Αδελφοί οφειλομεν ημεις οι δυνατοι τα ασθενηματα των αδυνατων βασταζειν και μη εαυτοις αρεσκειν. Εκαστος ημων τω πλησιον αρεσκω εις το αγαθον προς οικοδομην και γαρ ο Χριστος ουχ εαυτω ηρεσεν...> (Ρωμ. 15: 1). Με αυτα τα λογια ο Απ. Παυλος μας προτρεπει να μιμουμεθα τον Χριστον. Οπως ο Χριστος εκανε καθε καλο για αλλους – ακομα και θαυματα – εμεις πρεπει να κανουμεν καλα εργα για ολους γυρω μας. Αυτο χρειαζεται αυτοθυσια και ειναι το κυριο στοιχειον της αγαπης <εν Χριστω.>

Οσο μελετουμεν την σημερινην περικοπην του κατα Ματθαιον Ευαγγελιου, καταλαβαινουμεν οτι ο λογος για τον οποιον ο Χριστος εθεραπευσε τους ανθρωπους ειναι να προσελκυσει ολην την ανθρωποτητα προς τον Εαυτον Του – δηλαδη, να εχουν πιστιν στην πραγματικοτητα οτι τους αγαπα και για αυτον τον λογον Τον ευχαριστουμεν.

Η Θ. Λειτουργια ειναι το *εργον* της ευχαριστιας μας προς τον Θεον. Η συμμετοχη μας στα Μυστηρια της Εκκλησιας μας υποχρεωνει να αποκτησουμε την *Χριστιανικην αυτοθυσιαν*. Υποτιθεται οτι αγαπαμε <αλληλους,...ινα εν ομονοια ομολογησωμεν> οτι ο Θεος ειναι Πατηρ, Υιος και Αγιον Πνευμα <ομοουσιον και αχωριστον.> Αυτη η πιστις εκφραζεται δια μεσου της αυτοθυσιας εν τη αγαπη του Χριστου προς οικοδομην του <αδυνατου>– δηλ., προς ενισχυσην του συνανθρωπου μας και προς σωτηριαν του. Ειναι <το σημαδι> του Χριστιανου, το οποιο ταιριαζει με τον Τιμιον Σταυρον.

+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

sacrifice. It is, therefore, assumed that we “love one another...so that we may with one mind confess” that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, “one in essence and undivided,” as we hear in the Liturgy. This faith of is expressed through *self-sacrifice, which is founded in Christ’s love* toward good to edify our neighbor – i.e., a sacrifice on our part to give strength to him or her unto salvation. It is the “trade-mark” of a Christian, which is likened to the image of the Holy Cross.

The Divine Liturgy is a life-style of *ascetic effort* offered in *thanksgiving*. The Greek work “*liturgia*” (“liturgy”) means *work*, in the sense of *ascetic effort*. The Divine Liturgy is also known as the *Holy Eucharist*. The Greek word “*eucharist*” comes from the word “*eucharisto*,” which means “I give thanks.” Thus, the Divine Liturgy is *work* in giving *thanks* to God in gratitude for God’s love. The prayers and hymns of the Liturgy imply a frame of mind by which our prayers come to life in action. What we pray for becomes that for which we work. For example, with the first petitions of the Liturgy we pray for peace; but, we are to be *peacemakers*. We pray for travelers; but, we are to be *hospitable*. We pray for the sick; but, we are to *offer caring help*, and so on. All of this is consistent with St. Paul’s admonition to “bear with the failings of the weak.” This is the core of *doing* God’s work and *being* God’s people. *Doing* and *being* are the *ascetic* elements of the Divine Liturgy, offered as a daily life-style in gratitude to God.

During the Divine Liturgy, following the Creed, the priest calls out to all: “Let us give thanks to the Lord.” The prayer that follows explains that we are thankful to God, “Who did not cease doing everything until [He] led us to heaven...[for] all things that we know and do not know...for this Liturgy which You are pleased to accept from our hands...,” Implied here is gratitude to God also for *each other*, since the Liturgy is offered from *our* hands. The “*offering*” is the ascetic aspect of the Liturgy; the “*our*” implies our thankfulness to God for the people around us; for, without God *and each other* we cannot be saved. The entire Bible tells us that we are not saved *alone*. This is why during the Liturgy we repeatedly hear the admonition for us to “commit ourselves and one another and our whole life to Christ our God,” as did the Holy Mother of God and the Saints, who serve as our prayer-companions and examples, thereby making us spiritually stronger so that we can strengthen others spiritually, as well. While each of us has a cross, we each also have a gift from within us to be offered for God’s glory.

Christian self-sacrifice is the force behind the gift of empathy, which is our ability to understand the needs of others. This is our *sacrifice*, which brings God’s comfort and peace, prompting us to praise Him: “A mercy of peace and a sacrifice of praise.” +FR. THEODORE

**PRAY FOR THE SICK:** George Aeder, Adele Gallade, Kathy Ligeros, Argyroula Krespis (Nick Krespis’ mother), Constantine Papapetru, Erika Aguilar, 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."*

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

**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 seek-ing 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 St. Phocas the Martyr:** *Ke tropon metohos ke thronon diathochos... (Becoming a partner with the Apostles in way of life and successor to their thrones, O God-inspired Saint, in the active life you found an entrance to contemplation. Hence you rightly expounded the word of truth, and you shed your blood in struggling for the faith, O Hieromartyr Phocas. Intercede with Christ our God, beseeching Him to save 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:** *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 15: 1-7 / Gospel- St. Matthew 9: 27-35

*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 Hosts:** Coffee Hour will be hosted by Mike and Debbie Vawter in memory of Debbie's mother Virginia Untiedt and Mike's parents Virginia and Howard Vawter.

**PHILOPTOCHOS** – We are looking for volunteers to sponsor or host Coffee Hour in September and October. See the calendar on the bulletin board or speak to Athena Snarskis. You still have time to donate to the Bottled Water Project for the homeless. Make your check out to Philoptochos and indicate on the memo line "Bottled Water Project".

**STEWARDSHIP** – As we come to the end of July, we take this opportunity to remind those who have not yet completed their **Stewardship Card for 2017** and contributed toward their 2017 parish obligation to do so at this time. Also, those who have fallen behind in their annual Stewardship contributions are asked to bring their Stewardship pledge for this year up to date.

## WEEKDAY CALENDAR

**ANNOUNCEMENT:** Fr. Ted has changed his vacation schedule. Instead of being away this week in Sacramento (July 23-29), he is instead opting to reserve time late in September/October to visit his daughter in Charlotte, North Carolina. As a result, the schedule for this week is:

Tuesday, July 25th.....Bible Study -10:00 a.m.

Wednesday, July 26th.....ST. PARASKEVI THE GREAT MARTYR

Orthros- 8:30 a.m.

Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.

Friday, July 28th.....Men’s Bible Study – 11:30 a.m. (1 Corinthians 1: 10-17)

[Please confirm with Fr. Ted ahead of time that you will attend]

Saturday, July 29th.....Vespers – 5:00 p.m.

*“Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.”*

– St. Matthew 9:35-38

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.