



JULY 21, 2024

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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THE LADDER



PRAYER FOR READING HOLY SCRIPTURES

“Shine within our hearts, loving Master, the pure light of Your divine knowledge and open the eyes of our minds that we may comprehend the message of Your Gospel. Instill in us, also, reverence for Your blessed commandments, so that having conquered sinful desires, we may pursue a spiritual life, thinking and doing all these things that are pleasing to You. For You are the Light of our souls and bodies and to You we give glory together with Your Father Who is without beginning and Your all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.”

EPISTLE—Romans 6:18 – 23

Brethren, having been set free from sin, you have become slaves of righteousness. I am speaking in human terms, because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you once yielded your members to impurity and to greater and greater iniquity, so now yield your members to righteousness for sanctification. When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. But then what return did you get from the things of which you are now ashamed? The end of those things is death. But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the return you get is sanctification and its end, eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

GOSPEL—St. Matthew 8:5 – 13

At that time, as Jesus entered Capernaum, a

centurion came forward to him, beseeching him and saying, “Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, in terrible distress.” And he said to him, “I will come and heal him.” But the centurion answered him, “Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, ‘Go,’ and he goes, and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes, and to my slave, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.” When Jesus heard him, he marveled, and said to those who followed him, “Truly, I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such faith. I tell you, many will come from east and west and sit at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.” And to the centurion Jesus said, “Go; be it done for you as you have believed.” And the servant was healed at that very moment.

PLEASE NOTE: Today we are celebrating the 50th Anniversary since Cyprus was invaded by Turkey. The plight of the Cypriot people has unfortunately still not been resolved. The link below will allow you to watch a 28 minute documentary filmed shortly after the invasion. It is a very powerful film. A noted producer/Director **Tony Frangakis** created the film. The executive producer was our own **Bishop Spyridon**; if at all possible, please view it before Liturgy tomorrow as we will be offering memorial prayers for those who gave their lives for the freedom of their country.

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=AaA-D2XXAp0&feature=shared>

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– Fr. Theodore Pantels, Proistamenos (Pastor)

– Deacon Euthym Kon-taxis, 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.

Liturgical Notes

At the Entrance with the Gospel: **1)** *“Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad, for the Lord by His Might, has created a Dominion. He has conquered death by death, and become the first-born of the dead. He has delivered us from the depths of Hades, and has granted the world great mercy.”* / Ευφρηνέσθω τα ουράνια...

2) *“Since You are a deliverer of captives and a protector of the poor; a physician for the sick; a noble attendant to kings, O Great among the martyrs and glorious George, intercede with Christ God that He may save our souls.”* / Ως των αιχμαλώτων ελευθεροτής...[Hymn for St. George]

3) Kontakion: *“Champion of Christians not put to shame, advocate before the Maker always steadfast, do not spurn sinners’ voices raised in prayer. In Your goodness respond to bring help to us who devoutly petition you. Hasten Your intercession and urgently make entreaty; for You unfailingly defend, Theotokos, those who honor You.”* / Προστασία των Χριστιανών...

MEMORIAL – Today’s Memorial Service is for the Eternal Rest and Salvation of the **victims of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974**. May our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ grant Eternal Rest and Salvation to the victims of this horrible invasion and may He grant peace and comfort to their families. **MAY THEIR MEMORIES BE ETERNAL!**

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

Tuesday, July 23rd.....Bible Study – 10:00 a.m.

Wednesday, July 24th...Orthodox Christian Catechism (online)- 6:30 p.m.

Friday, July 26th.....ST. PARASKEVI. Orthros-8:30 a.m./Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.

Saturday, July 27th.....ST. PANTELEIMON. Orthros-8:30 a.m./Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PHILOPTOCHOS – The Narrow Door Food Bank in Indio, CA is requesting our Philoptochos Chapter to assist them again to prepare food bags for food insecure families on **Saturday, August 17th starting at 8:45 AM to approximate finish at 11:00 AM.** Both men and women are needed. If interested in volunteering, please contact **Rhonda or Nick Latkovic (tel. (714) 875-4661)** A sign-up sheet is located on the bar area in the church hall. We can arrange for transportation for volunteers if needed.

SPIRITUAL THOUGHT – The Gospel passage today (St. Matthew 8: 5-13) is rich in meaning for us on several levels:

1. The Holy Spirit inspired the centurion to have faith in Christ God. Christ responded to the prayer of the centurion even though he was not a member of the “Chosen People.” As Christ loved him, we must love others regardless of nationality, status or circumstance.
2. The centurion’s faith in Christ caused him to experience great humility, which is noted in the fact that he approached Christ with faith, despite the fact that he risked rebuke from the powerful Pharisees, who were enemies of Christ. Standing up for Christ may not always be popular, but it is always a powerful force of healing and inspiration for others.
3. While the centurion approached Christ in the flesh, as Man, he confessed the divinity of Christ by confirming that, as God, His authority extends over space and time. Christ is God at every hour, at all times and in every place. There is no limit as to when or where we can pray.

+FR. THEODORE



**GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA
ARCHEPISCOPAL ENCYCLICAL**

Prot. No. 219/2024

Archebiscopal Encyclical on the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Invasion of Cyprus

July 20, 2024

To the Most Reverend and Right Reverend Hierarchs, Pious Priests and Deacons, Monks and Nuns, Presidents and Members of the Parish Councils, Honorable Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Members of Leadership 100, Day and Afternoon Schools, Philoptochos Societies, Youth, Greek Orthodox Organizations, and entirety of the Christ loving Plenitude of the Sacred Archdiocese of America:

*But let judgment roll down as water, and righteousness as an impassable torrent.
(Amos 5:24)*

My beloved brothers and sisters in Christ,

The Fiftieth Anniversary of the unjust and unnecessary invasion of the Island Nation of Cyprus by Türkiye is a sad and heartbreaking milestone in what has been too long a journey of injustice and diplomatic neglect by the World Powers. The mistakes and grim miscalculations of the past are long overdue for forgiveness, so that credible solutions can emerge with an air of possibility.

For half a century, we have been praying and working for the reunification of Cyprus, and for all its citizens to receive the just judgment of a peaceful and equitable settlement. In the intervening decades, global leadership has chosen to turn a blind eye to the suffering on both sides of the Green Line. Families have passed through generations without closure for their lost loved ones, whose earthly remains are still missing. Magnificent cultural heritage has been razed and looted, finding its way into global black art markets. And the utter lack of respect for sacred Churches is a reminder of medieval views of conquest that should no longer be applicable in a civilized world.

We, who are Greek Orthodox Christians, and who share spiritual, cultural, ethnic, linguistic and all manner of civilizational ties with Cyprus, cannot simply stand by and wait passively for a resolution to be found – especially when the world seems to be no longer looking for one. We shall continue to raise the issue “in season and out of season.” But this cannot be all that we do. We must implore the Lord of all to enlighten and rain down righteousness on the hearts of world leaders and bring Cyprus back to the forefront of international affairs without further delay.

In this spirit, on Sunday, July 21, all parish priests of the Sacred Archdiocese of America are encouraged to hold a special Memorial Service for the blessed repose of our Cypriot brethren who were lost so unjustly. They certainly merit our prayers as much as Cyprus deserves a peaceful and just settlement now! Fifty years is far too long, and anything more is unworthy of what has been forever lost!

With hope and faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,

† ELPIDOPHOROS

Archbishop of America