

AUGUST 21, 2016

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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THE LADDER

SUNDAY AFTER THE DORMITION OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS

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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.*

OBEDIENCE

Obedience! This word is disappearing from our vocabulary, because the meaning of this word is vanishing from within our souls. Our ambitions pose some of the biggest barriers in this regard. It is truly "normal" to have the spirit of self-confidence and self-esteem within our souls, such that obedience to any authority, including even that of parents, is considered to be a certain personality flaw. Yet, obedience is itself the cornerstone of a life with God. It is

the great indicator of the sincere love of one person for another. It is something which ideally reveals itself in the relationships between husbands and wives; between parents and children—and between true Christians and God's commandments, which are found in the Bible. As evidence of love, obedience is best seen when parents, for example, "obey" the cries of their children in order to meet their basic needs for growth and survival.

Continued on page 2

THE APOSTLE ST. THADDEUS – The Apostle Thaddaeus was from Edessa. When he came to Jerusalem, he became a disciple of Christ, and after His Ascension he returned to Edessa. There he catechized and baptized King Abgar, who was one of the first kings in history to have been converted to the Christian Faith. Having continued his preaching throughout Mesopotamia, St. Thaddeus ended his life in martyrdom. We honor his memory today.

His full identity is somewhat obscure. Though some call him one of the Twelve, whom Matthew calls "*Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus*" (Matt. 10:3), the ancient historian Eusebius says that he is one of the Seventy: "*After [Christ's] Resurrection from the dead, and His ascent into Heaven, Thomas, one of the twelve Apostles, inspired by God, sent Thaddaeus, one of the seventy disciples of Christ, to Edessa as a preacher and evangelist of Christ's teaching*" (Eccl. Hist. 1: 13).

Tradition has also identified him as Jude, also known as Judas Thaddaeus, who was one of the Twelve Apostles of Jesus. He is also variously known as Jude of James, Jude Thaddaeus, Judas Thaddaeus or Lebbaeus, as noted above in reference to St. Matthew's Gospel. The Church accepts his name, Thaddeus, as his "official" name for the purpose of clearly honoring him as one of the early Church's great Saints and Apostles.



Υπακοη! Αυτη η λεξις εξαφανιζε-
ται απο το λεξιλογιον, διοτι η εν-
νοια της λεξεως εξαφανιζεται απο
τις ψυχες μας. Η φιλοδοξίες μας
μας εμποδιζουν. Στην πραγματικο-
τητα, είναι <νορμαλ> να εχουμεν
το πνευμα της αυτοπεποιθησεως
στις ψυχες μας, ετσι ωστε να θεω-
ρουμεν την υπακοη σε οποιαδη-
ποτε αρχη, ακομη και σε γονεις, ως
ενα ελαττωμα της προσωπικοτητος
μας. Ομως, η υπακοη είναι η ιδια
ακρογωνιαιος λιθος μιας ζωης <εν
Θεω.> Είναι μια μεγαλη ενδειξις
αγαπης του ενος για τον αλλον.
Είναι κατι το οποιο ιδανικως απο-
καλυπτεται στις σχεσεις μεταξυ
συζηγων, μεταξυ γονεων και παι-
διων, μεταξυ των πιστων και των
εντολων του Θεου καθως ευρισκο-
νται στην Αγιαν Γραφην. Η υπα-
κοη ως ενδειξις αγαπης φαινεται
καλυτερα, π.χ., οταν οι γονεις
<υπακουουν> τα κλαματα των
παιδιων και ικανοποιουν τις αναγ-
κες των.

Εαν θελει κανεις να αποκτησει
ψυχικην ειρηνην, χρειαζεται να
ενισχυσει την πιστιν του στον Θεο.
Ο Αγιος Νικοδημος εγραψε: <Η ψυ-
σις μας εχει πολυ συνηθισει να
ευχαριστησει τον εαυτον της.
Ομως, η ζωη μας πληρουται σε
καλυτερο βαθμο οταν θελουμεν να
ευχαριστησουμε τον Θεον. Για
αυτον τον λογον, η επιθυμια να
ευχαριστησουμε τον Θεον ση-
μαινει οτι πραγματικα θελουμεν
να εκτελεσουμε το θελημα του
Θεου κατα τον τροπον που θελει
Αυτος, και οταν το θελει Αυτος.>
(Ο Αορατος Αγων, σελ. 95).

Μαλιστα, ο Χριστος διαταξε τον
Αγ. Πετρον να περπατησει πανω
στο νερο να Τον συναντησει. Ο
Ιδιος ο Χριστος διαταζει ολους
μας να Τον συναντησουμεν μεσα
απο διαφορες συνθηκες μας.
+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

Those who sincerely want to acquire peace of soul need to constantly be praying to have strong faith in God. Through faith in God, we become more comfortable with the demands in life that require us to *faithfully* do God's Will. St. Nicodemus wrote the following: "*Our nature has very much become accustomed to pleasing itself. However, our life is best fulfilled when we desire to please God. For this reason, our desire to please God means that we truly want to do God's Will in the way that He wants it done and when He wants it done.*" (Unseen Warfare, pg. 95).

To better understand the magnitude of our relationship with God through the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, it is important to understand that the Divine Liturgy is itself a "Thanksgiving to God" - the Eucharist. The word "Eucharist" is English for the Greek word, *eucharisto* (ef-haristo). It is a *verb* (action), which is a combination of two Greek words: *eu* (ef), meaning "well" and "*harhis*" (haris), meaning "grace." Literally, the word *eucharisto* means to "impart *well* grace (or "good grace") to another." In other words, to *please* another. Hence, the Divine Liturgy - the Eucharist - is a life of *pleasing* God.

To please God, or anyone else, for that matter, requires a great degree of *obedience* - *obedience* to our boss; *obedience* to our customers; *obedience* to loved ones; *obedience* to the Church. In essence, the virtue of *obedience* became a major issue in the life of St. Peter, as seen in today's Gospel passage. At the most fundamental level, Christ's invitation to St. Peter to walk on water became also a commandment. Our Lord used St. Peter to preach to all of His Disciples about the necessity of having strong faith. While St. Peter demonstrated obedience, he did so with weak faith in Christ. Not only did Christ want St. Peter to walk on water, He wanted him to walk through the storm and over the waves!

How many storms and how many waves will we have to walk through in life? How many tasks will we face which will seem to be as impossible as it is to walk on water? Obedience requires that we accept everything in the spirit of God asking us to allow Him to use us for some higher purposes. And, while accepting this is as difficult as is the concept of "walking on water," it is the path of all the great men and women of the Bible and even of our mundane human history.

Ironically, while this mentality of obedience, has crafted many Saints, as well as even the most common every day heroes, who dare to raise a family, help the youth or care for the elderly, it is the very mentality which is still massively undervalued by our present day society - and it is even scoffed at as being "crazy."

+FR. THEODORE

PRAY FOR THE SICK: Yvonne Flessas, George Aeder, Adele Gallade, Kathy Ligeros, Nicholas Kyriakou, Jean Chronis, George Nicholas (Many of the faithful on our Prayer List face chronic or serious illness).

ANTIPHON I: "Tes presvies tis Theotokou..." (By the prayers of the Theotokos...)

Verse 1— Shout to God, all the earth. Sing now to His name; give glory to His praise.

Refrain: "Tes presvies tis Theotokou, soter, soston imas."

Verse 2—: Give thanks to Him; praise His name.

Refrain: "By the prayers of the Theotokos, Savior, save us."

Verse 3— : In the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God. His place was made in peace and His dwelling in Zion.

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— The Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.

Refrain: "Soston imas, Yie Theou, O Anastas ek nekron, psallontas si alleluia."

Verse 2 - Glorious things were said concerning you, O city of God. God established her forever. We pondered Your mercy, O God, in the midst of Your temple.

Refrain: "Save us, O Son of God, Who Arose from the dead, we sing to You, Alleluia."

Verse 3 - The Most High sanctified His tabernacle.

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.

People: "O Monogenis Ios ke Logos tou Theou..." (O Only-Begotten Son and Word of God...)

HYMNS FOR THE ENTRANCE WITH THE HOLY GOSPEL: ANTIPHON III— *This is the day the Lord made; let us greatly rejoice and be glad therein.*

Sunday Resurrection Hymn: Ex ipsous katilthes [Tone 8]... (From on high did You descend, O merciful Lord, for us did You endure, three days in the tomb that we may be, released from passions in this world, You Who are our resurrection and our life. Glory unto You O Lord.)

Hymn for the Dormition of the Mother of God... En ti ghenisee tis parthenias... (In giving birth you retained your virginity, and in dormition you did not forsake the world, O Theotokos. You were translated unto life, being the Mother of Life. And thus by virtue of your intercessions you deliver our souls from death.)

Hymn for St. George: Os ton ehmaloton eleftherotis... (As the one who sets the captives free and the protector of the poor; as physician to the sick and the champion defender of kings, bearer of trophies are you, O Great Martyr George, intercede with Christ our God that He may save our souls.)

Kontakion Hymn: Tin en presvee-ehs akimiton Theotoke... (The Theotokos, unsleeping in intercession and the immovable hope of protection, could not be retained by any tomb or death. For being Life's own Mother, she was transferred to life by Him who dwelt in the ever-virgin womb.)

READINGS: Epistle - 1 Corinthians 3: 9-17/ Gospel - St. Matthew 14: 22-34

Megalinarion: Axion Estin (page 52 in the Divine Liturgy Books)

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

"Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the well-spring of life"

Proverbs 4:23



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Coffee Hour: Christina Kundanis

PHILOPTOCHOS – The Knitting Project - Part 2 is starting next month. If you are interested in joining the team but are rusty on your skills: not to worry. We will have an instruction class for knitting and crocheting. See Rhonda Latkovic or Linda Kallis. Thank you for volunteering for Coffee Hour in September. We will next need volunteers for October. See Linda Petalas. The Metropolis is having a Thyranioxia (Opening of the Doors) for the new Alex and Fay Spanos Faith and Heritage Center at the St. Nicholas Ranch and Retreat Center on Thursday, September 12, 2016. If you are interested in attending, call 415-753-3075 to RSVP by September 1, 2016.

PREPARING THE 2016-2017 ST. GEORGE MASTER CALENDAR – Please contact Fr. Ted over the next two weeks in order to submit proposed dates for events or celebrations to be presented for approval by the Parish Council and placed on the 2016-2017 parish Master Calendar.

STEWARDSHIP: A WAY OF LIFE A young man had taken his girlfriend to a high-priced restaurant. As the young couple looked over the menu the young woman scanned the prices of the entrees, and then turning to the young man she asked, “How much do you love me?” Continuing to scan the menu, the young man replied, “Probably more than the corned beef, but not as much as the broiled lobster.” As Orthodox Christians, we are called to a new way of seeing things – a new way of life. Our stewardship is obedience to the greatest commandment to “love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.” We are called to bring others to commit their lives to Jesus Christ in such a way that leads to the joy of knowing Him personally and profoundly. As Orthodox Christians, we see the world as God’s gift, as a sacrament of God’s presence and a means of communion with Him. And so we are able to offer the world back to God in thanksgiving as we say in every Divine Liturgy “Thine own of Thine own we offer to thee...”

– Taken from Greek Orthodox Archdiocese Stewardship Brochure

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

Tuesday, August 23rd.....Bible Study-10:00 a.m.

Saturday, August 27th.....No Vespers

The LADDER for August 2016 is sponsored by Annette Lewis in memory of: Skip Lewis (6 months), Teddy Ekonomos (3 years) and Paula Kozlen (1 year)

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.