

**AUGUST 7, 2016**

**ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT**

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# THE LADDER

*SUNDAY AFTER THE TRANSFIGURATION OF CHRIST*

## Mailing Address:

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or: (760) 880-5869

– 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.

## IDEAL MARRIAGE

*“And grant that with one mouth and one heart to glorify and praise the majestic and most honorable Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit...”* This exclamation from the Divine Liturgy is based on the words of St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans (15: 5). He asked the Christians of his time to have a common mentality of the Christian way of life so that they can glorify God with brotherly love and with love for God.

This “in Christ” brotherly love is the

“mark” of the Ecclesiastical life of Christians. However, this love about which we speak is the love which characterizes the very personality of Christ our Savior.

The love of Christ is not expressed simply by human feelings based on our emotions, or by lofty romantic words and idealistic euphemisms. Rather, it is expressed by Christian virtues: patience, self-sacrifice for the spiritual benefit of our neighbor, care

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## TODAY’S GOSPEL READING – TWO MIRACLES OF OUR LORD –

Today’s Gospel passage is one of the Bible passages that confirms the proper understanding of the identity of Jesus Christ as being fully God in the flesh. The personality of God is clearly comprehended by all who know Christ.

First, the prophesy of Isaiah is fulfilled by our Lord: *“God renders judgment and will render it. He will come and save us. Then the eyes of the blind will be opened and the ears of the deaf shall hear.”* (Is. 35: 4-5). This relates to today’s Gospel passage in which Jesus opened the eyes of the blind men. Second, the title “Son of Man,” used by the blind men, confess Christ’s full humanity and His role as the True Messiah. Third, the accusation made by the Pharisees that Jesus *“casts out demons by the ruler of demons”* (St. Matthew 9: 34), reveals that Christ is truly God, since God has authority over demons. The claim by the Pharisees that Jesus’ power is *“by the ruler of demons”* is preposterous, since demons have no control over themselves. It is characteristic of evil (the work of demons) to have no “control,” since it is by nature chaotic and the opposite of “good order.” Blindness (especially spiritual blindness), leprosy, death, etc., are the symptoms and the reality of lack of “good order” in terms of mental and physical health. Mental and physical health is a matter of maintaining, or restoring, the “good order,” established by God, through which life thrives and ultimately never ends. Finally, Christ does not condemn; *His judgment is His compassion.* +FR. THEODORE



<Και δως ημιν εν ενι στοματι και μιαν καρδιαν δοξαζειν και ανυμνειν το παντιμον και μεγαλοπρεπες ονομα Σου του Πατρος και του Υιου και του Αγιου Πνευματος.>

Αυτη η εκφωνησις της Θ. Λειτουργιας βασιζεται στα λογια τα οποια ακουσαμεν σημερα απο την Επιστολην του Απ. Παυλου προς τους Ρωμαιους. Επαρεκαλησε τους Χριστιανους της εποχης του να εχουν την κοινην νοοτροπιαν της <εν Χριστω ζωης>, ετσι ωστε να δοξαζουν τον Θεον με αδελφικη αγαπη αναμεταξυ των και με αγαπη για τον Θεον.

Η <προς αλληλους> αγαπη ειναι το <σημαδι> της Χριστιανικης Εκκλησιαστικης ζωης. Αλλα η αγαπη περι της οποιας ομιλουμεν ειναι η αγαπη η οποια χαρακτηριζει το προσωπον του Σωτηρος μας Χριστου. Η αγαπη του Χριστου δεν εκφραζεται με ανθρωπινα συναισθηματα και με υπερβολικα λογια. Εκφραζεται με αρετες: υπομονη, αυτοθυσια προς τα πνευματικα συμφεροντα του πλησιον, επιμελεια για την ψυχικην ειρηνην του συναδελφου μας, φιλανθρωπικα εργα, κ.τ.λ.

Αυτη η <εν Χριστω> αγαπη αφορει σε ολες τις σχεσεις μας – τις ενορικες σχεσεις και τις οικογενειακες σχεσεις μας. Στο Αγιο Μυστηριον του Γαμου ακουμεν τα λογια του Απ. Παυλου απο την Επιστολην του προς τους Εφεσιους, δια των οποιων περιγραφει τον ρολον του γαμβρου ως αντανακλασις της αγαπης του Χριστου για τον κοσμον: δηλ. να θυσιαζεται τον εαυτον του προς την αιωνιον σωτηριαν της νυμφης του. Ας ειναι η ενορια μας και η καθε οικογενεια της ενοριας μας γεματες με τετοια Χριστιανικη αγαπη ωστε να δοξασουμεν τον Θεον <εν ενι στοματι>. +Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

for the spiritual peace of our fellow human being, philanthropic deeds, etc.

This Christ-like love applies to all of our relationships – relationships with our fellow parishioners, as well as relationships with the members of our family. In the Sacrament of Holy Marriage we hear the words of St. Paul in his Epistle to the Ephesians as he describes the role of the husband as being the reflection of Christ's love for all His people: that is, to sacrifice himself for the eternal salvation of his wife. Seeking the salvation of the people in our lives, beginning with our family and parish, brings everyone to praise God with "one mouth and one heart."

The "breakdown" of the traditional Christian family values has had a most challenging impact on the life of the Church, and, by extension (of course) on the life of the world at large. The Greek word for marriage is "ο γαμος," pronounced: *o ghah-mos*. The word "gamete" is related to this word – gametes being the reproductive cells of a man and a woman. Hence, the meaning of *marriage* from the Greek Orthodox point of view is the union between one man and one woman. This is why the Orthodox Church cannot bless same-sex unions. Such unions nullify the very concept of Holy Marriage as God intended in the roles of man and woman for the continuance of the human race. And while we do not judge or condemn those who believe otherwise, we can only ask that others respect our religion.

At the same time, Holy Marriage involves more than the act of reproduction. It involves Christ Himself, Who is the Creator. Through this Sacrament, humans become co-creators with Christ our God, as the Holy Spirit, the Giver of Life, descends upon the bride and groom so that they can know the love of Christ. Ideal marriage is a life with Christ, Who is the ultimate "One Voice" in the heart of every human being, which unites *all* human beings.

The Sacrament of Marriage is a way of life leading to the Eternal Light of Christ, which overwhelms one with great joy – so much so, that one can only express what St. Peter said on Mt. Tabor, at the time of our Lord's Transfiguration: "*Let us build altars!*" (St. Matthew 17: 4). These words of St. Peter define worship as something that emanates from our hearts and takes place in our thoughts every minute, bringing to mind the words of the Divine Liturgy, even as we interact with people in our daily affairs. It is one reason why Orthodox Christians from earliest times created "home altars" and icon/devotional tables in their homes.

+FR. THEODORE

**PRAY FOR THE SICK:** Yvonne Flessas, George Aeder, Adele Gallade, Kathy Ligeros, Bob Maverick, Nicholas Kyriakou, Jean Chronis, Robert Desnoyers, 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—** Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in His holy mountain. He who prepares mountains in His strength, who is girded with power.

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

**Verse 2—** You cover Yourself with light as with a garment.

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

**Verse 3—** The mountains shall greatly rejoice at the presence of the Lord.

**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—** His foundations are in the holy mountains. 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.

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

**Verse 3—** A man will say, "Mother Zion," and a man was born in her; for the Most High Himself founded it.

**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...)

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**HYMNS FOR THE ENTRANCE WITH THE HOLY GOSPEL: ANTIPHON III—** O Lord, I will sing of Your mercies forever; I will proclaim Your truth with my mouth from generation to generation.

**Sunday Resurrection 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 Transfiguration of our Lord:** Metemorphotheis en to orei Christe o Theos... (You were transfigured upon the mountain, O Christ our God, showing to Your disciples Your glory as much as they could bear. Do also in us, sinners though we may be, shine Your everlasting light, by the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Giver of light. Glory to You.)

**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:** Epi tou orous metemorphotheis... (Upon the mountain were You transfigured, and Your disciples beheld Your glory as far as they were able, O Christ our God; so that when they would see You crucified they might understand that Your Passion was deliberate, and declare to the world that in truth You are the Father's radiance.)

**READINGS:** Epistle – Romans 15: 1-7/ Gospel – St. Matthew 9: 27-35

**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: Matushka Gloria Lehman**

**PHILOPTOCHOS** – We need volunteers for the Coffee Hour for the month of September. See Linda Petalas. This month we will making a donation to Coachella Valley Rescue Mission for the Book Bag Project for children returning to school in September.

**STEWARDSHIP UPDATE** – Can you believe how quickly time has gone this year and it's August already? To recap our stewardship at this point, I am disappointed to tell you we are behind in dollars pledged TY versus LY. Our 2016 goal is \$135,000. As of the end of July, we have 103 stewards. This year we have received \$69,200 in pledges versus last year \$87,650 for the time period ending July 31, 2016. There are a few families that have not yet turned in a pledge card for the year. Please, if you are one who hasn't pledged, do so today. If there is a reason why you haven't pledged and you would like to share it with us so it can be addressed, please do so. St. George needs your support!

– **Rhonda Latkovic, Stewardship Chairperson.**

(Email: [r.s.fleminglatkovic@gmail.com](mailto:r.s.fleminglatkovic@gmail.com) or Call or Text: [714-875-4661](tel:714-875-4661)).

**NEEDS LIST** – As we find ourselves in the summer season, our thoughts begin to go toward preparations for the Fall and the **needs** of our parish for the future: donations will be a great blessing as we evaluate the following projects:

- 1) new flooring for the parish hall.
- 2) replacement of lights under the dome with LED lights (reducing energy costs);
- 3) cleaning of flagstone floor inside the church;
- 4) cooling fans for the new storage container;
- 5) Archdiocese Liturgy Books for our church pews

**LAST WEEK’S MEMORIAL FOR GEORGE FLESSAS** – The memorial reception last Sunday in prayer for the Eternal Rest of our brother in Christ, **George Flessas**, was lovingly coordinated by **Annette Lewis**. She wishes to express her gratitude to the following parishioners who helped her in this effort: **Mike and Debbie Vawter, Eve Meek, Stacey Argyros and Debbie Pausen.**

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION ENCLOSED** – Please take a moment over a cup of coffee and read the two inserts to today’s *Ladder*: “California Measure SB-128: Why Not Physician-Assisted Suicide” and “Orthodox Christians, Non-Orthodox Christians and the World Around Us.” The first enclosure has to do with our responsibility to “vote the Bible;” the second, has to do with one of many information pieces which was distributed at the Archdiocese Clergy-Laity Conference regarding the proceedings of the recent Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Christian Church. This report deals with our relationships with Christians of various denominations.

**WEEKDAY CALENDAR**

- Monday, August 8th.....Paraklisis Service – 7:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, August 9th.....Bible Study – 10:00 a.m.
- Wednesday, August 10th.....Paraklisis Service – 7:00 p.m.
- Friday, August 12th.....Paraklisis Service – 7:00 p.m.
- Saturday, August 13th.....Vespers– 5:00 p.m.

*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.**