

JANUARY 17, 2016

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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THE LADDER

ST. ANTHONY THE GREAT



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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.*

OUR SACRIFICE TO GOD

Sin is to the soul what leprosy is to the body. As Christ our God cured the ten lepers from their physical ailment, He heals our souls from spiritual ailments.

Sin is like a virus. As a virus enters our physical environment and ushers an entire array of maladies, in the same way sin enters our spiritual system to cause a multitude of spiritual anomalies. For example, a lack of faith in God gives rise to anxiety; gluttony comes to greed; falsehood leads to foolishness, and so

on. It is for this reason that many people suffer from depression. However, the real cure for depression is gratitude towards God.

As we study today's Gospel passage we note that the nine lepers who were cured by Christ not only did not approach our Lord to glorify Him as True God, but they became entirely lost. In as much as we may be lost as a society we are a depressed, despairing people, in general and, rather than turning to

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ST. ANTHONY THE GREAT – Saint Anthony began his ascetic life outside his village of Coma in Upper Egypt, studying the ways of the ascetics and holy men there, and perfecting himself in the virtues of each until he surpassed them all. Desiring to increase his labors, he departed into the desert, and finding an abandoned fortress in the mountain, he made his dwelling in it, training himself in extreme fasting, unceasing prayer, and fierce conflicts with the demons. Here he remained for about twenty years. Saint Athanasius the Great, who knew him personally and wrote his life, says that he came forth from that fortress "initiated in the mysteries and filled with the Spirit of God." Afterwards, because of the press of the faithful, who deprived him of his solitude, he was enlightened by God to journey with certain Bedouins, until he came to a mountain in the desert near the Red Sea, where he passed the remaining part of his life. Saint Athanasius says of him, "His countenance had a great and wonderful grace. This gift also he had from the Savior. For if he were present in a great company of monks, and any one who did not know him previously wished to see him, immediately coming forward, he passed by the rest and hurried to Anthony, as though attracted by his appearance; his serenity of his manner and the purity of his soul." So Passing his life, and becoming an example of virtue and a rule for monastics, he reposed on January 17 in the year 356, having lived altogether some 105 years.



Η αμαρτία είναι για την ψυχήν ο,τι είναι η λέπρα στο σώμα. Όπως ο Θεός μας ο Χριστός εθεραπέυε τους δεκα λεπρούς από την σωματική των ασθένειαν, ο Ιδιός θεραπεύει τις ψυχές μας από τις πνευματικές μας ασθένειες.

Η αμαρτία είναι σαν ένα μικροβίο. Όπως μπαινει το μικροβίο στο σύστημα του σώματος και προαγει ολοκληρες σωματικές ασθένειες, κατά τον ίδιο τρόπο η αμαρτία μπαινει στο σύστημα της ψυχής να προωθηση πνευματικές ανωμαλίες. Παραδειγματος χάριν, η απιστία προκαλει το αγχος, η λαίμαρχια φερνει την απληστία, το ψευδος οδηγει προς την ηλιθιοτητα, και ουτω καθεξής. Για αυτον τον λογον, πολλοι υποφερουν απο απελπηστία. Αλλα, η θεραπεία για την απελπισία είναι η ευγνωμοσύνη προς τον Θεον.

Καθως μελετουμεν την σημερινήν Ευαγγελικήν περικοπήν, γνωρίζομεν οτι οι εννεα λεπροι οι οποιοι εθεραπευθηκαν απο τον Χριστον οχι μονον δεν προσεγγισαν τον Χριστον για να Τον δοξασουν ως Αληθινος Θεος, αλλα ειχαν χαθη εντελως. Οσο είναι χαμενος ο άνθρωπος, ετσι είναι σε απογνώση, και, αντι να προσεγγιση τον Θεον δια της προσευχής και συμμετοχής στα Αχραντα Μυστηρια, ριχνει τον εαυτον του σε μεσα διαφυγής, τα οποια μπορούν να τον οδηγησουν ακομα σε κακο, προκαλωντας ακομα μεγαλυτερη απογνώση.

Ο ένας ο οποίος ευχαριστησε τον Χριστον τον Θεον για την θεραπείαν του και Τον εδοξασε είναι για όλους μας ένα καλο παραδειγμα της σωστής σχέσεως που πρέπει να εχουμεν με τον Κυριον, ωστε, να διατηρησουμεν ψυχικήν υγείαν που οδηγει στην αιωνιον ζωην.
+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

God through prayer and the Sacraments, people throw themselves into means of escape which actually lead to harm, thereby bringing on even more depression.

The one leper who did give thanks for his cure to Christ our God and who glorified Him is a good example for all of us of the proper relationship that we are to have with the Lord so that we can maintain the health of our souls, leading to Eternal Life.

We live in an age in which people deny the very existence of sin. Accordingly, one suffers supposedly from some level of emotional illness, or, in the tone of "political correctness," everything and anything is acceptable as long as it is legal. When Christians speak of sin, they are often criticized as being "old fashioned" and "out of touch" with reality. At the same time, perplexingly so, the issue of guilt is still very much a real one, in general. How do we deal with guilt, which can easily eat up the human soul, just as leprosy dissolves the human body?

The Church turns to the one leper who gave thanks to Christ as an illustration showing what we can do. Being a foreigner, this leper certainly was not concerned about popularity in displaying his gratitude to Christ, Who Himself was a controversial Person among the leading class of Pharisees. We, too, are to be as humble and unconcerned about the opinion of others, as long as we seek to please God. This leper *returned* to God. This is a sign of *repentance*. Our sense of "being O.K." is ultimately worthless, unless we are with God, Who "forgives us our trespasses *as* (meaning, "at the same time" and "just like") we forgive others their trespasses." The cured leper fell down at the feet of Jesus, glorifying Him as God, for the man's *faith* made him well, as our Lord said. Glorifying God goes hand-in-glove with "falling down" to worship Him with sincere faith. In all things we are to be humble by having total faith in God.

Whatever we have to offer God pales compared to what our Lord truly wants: "A sacrifice to God is a broken spirit, a broken and humbled heart God will not despise." (Psalm 50:19). "Genuine repentance (return to God) is characterized by such things as confession to God (verse 4-8); inward purity (verses 12-26); and inward humility (verses 17-21)." (Orthodox Study Bible, pg. 715). These are, in fact, actual *personality traits* that are to characterize every Christian's behavior and mannerisms.

+FR. THEODORE

PRAY FOR THE SICK: Yvonne and George Flessas, George Aeder, Adele Gallade, Kathy Ligeros, Aryroula Krespis (Nick Krespis' mother), Bob Maverick, John Kouletsis (Mary Mitsias' brother), Robert Fleming (Rhonda Latkovic's father), Debbie Vawter, Skip Lewis, Anne Boukidis-Michas, Gerasimos Mikelatos (Evangelia Canakis' cousin), Evangelia Melissaratos (Spiro Canakis' sister), Mary Fondas, Sherry Untievt (Debbie Vawter's sister) (*Many of the faithful on our Prayer List face chronic or serious illness*).

"I can do all things through Christ Who strengthens me." Phil. 4:13

HYMNS FOR THIS SUNDAY'S CELEBRATION OF THE DIVINE LITURGY

ANTIPHON I:

Verse 1 : Bless the Lord, O my soul, and everything within me, bless His holy name.

Response: "Tes presvies tis Theotokou, Soter, soston imas."

Verse 2: Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His rewards.

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

Verse 3: The Lord prepared His throne in heaven, and His Kingdom rules over all.

Response: "Tes presvies tis Theotokou, Soter, soston imas."

Chanter(s): "Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, both now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen".

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

ANTIPHON II:

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.

Response: "Soston imas Ie Theou, o Anastas ek nekron, psallontas si: Allilouia."

Verse 2: Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob; his hope is in the Lord his God.

Response: 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.

Response: "Soston imas Ie Theou, o Anastas ek nekron, psallontas si: Allilouia."

Chanter(s): "Doxa Patri ke Io, ke Ayio Pnevmati, ke nin ke ai ke is tous eonas ton eonon. Amin."

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

ANTIPHON III: Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endures forever. Let the house of Aaron say that He is good, for His mercy endures forever.

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 St. Anthony the Great: Ton ziloteen Eli-an...*(Imitating the manners of Elijah the Zealot, and following the straight paths of John the Baptist, O Father Anthony, you colonized the desert, and you supported the Empire by your prayers. Therefore intercede with Christ our God to save our souls.)*

Hymn to 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 for this Sunday: O mitran parthenikin aghi-ah-sas...*(You sanctified the virginal womb by Your birth, O Lord, and blessed the hands of Symeon fittingly, O Christ God; and even now You came and saved us. Now, give peace to our Nation in time of war, and empower our Leaders, so loved by You, the only one who loves humanity.)*

READINGS: Epistle- Hebrews 13:17-21/ Gospel- St. Luke 17: 12-19

Megalynarion (Hymn for the Theotokos): Axion Estin (Divine Liturgy Book, pg. 52)

Communion Hymn: Enite ton Kyrion (Divine Liturgy Book, pg. 64)

"Above all else,
guard your heart, for
it is the well-spring
of life" Proverbs 4:23



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ushers: Nick Kaperonis, Linda Kallis, Josie Desnoyers

Greeter: Linda Petalas

Coffee Hour Hostesses: George Megalonakis

ALTAR FLOWER BOUQUETS— Today’s Altar Flower Bouquets for God’s glory are donated by:

Angie Wysup - “In memory of my husband George!”

Mr. & Mrs. Bill & Angie Dyer— “Blessed are those who are pure in heart, for they shall see God.” (St. Matthew 5:8)”

Altar Flowers - 2016 Satisfied for the Year! Please check the Bulletin Board periodically for your upcoming date(s), and notify Louise Dobbs Barringer of your special requests, anniversary, memorial etc. to be recognized in the Ladder. Thank you!

PHILOPTOCHOS— The biggest event Philoptochos puts on each year was a success and that was Taverna Night! Our caterer George Argyros Catering and our live band The Greeks put us over the top. Our Co-Chairpersons **Carol Lyons and Susan Clarke** and the team did a terrific job. Thanks to all who attended the event. We need Coffee Hour Hostesses for February. See **Linda Petalas**. Our Knitting Project starts today, January 17. Knitters see **Rhonda Latkovic** after Church services in the Church Hall to get your patterns and yarns. If you haven't signed up yet to join the knitters, see **Rhonda**.

WE PRAY FOR THE ETERNAL SALVATION— The funeral service for our sister in Christ, **Zoe Balodimas**, will be held on **Tuesday, January 19, 2016 at 11:00 a.m.** The Ladies Philoptochos will prepare the “Memorial Luncheon” (*Makaria*) for her funeral. **MAY HER MEMORY BE ETERNAL!**

STEWARDSHIP— See the enclosed Stewardship page for the “Stewardship Prayer” which we be read today following the Divine Liturgy. If your Stewardship Card is not yet submitted, please bring the 2016 Stewardship Card that was mailed, or pick one up in the narthex today. Also, if you submitted a 2016 Stewardship Card, it will be placed in the “Stewardship tray” today to be blessed along with all the others. We will be having a “Stewardship Thankyou Luncheon” in March (date to be determined) sponsored by the Parish Council.

ARTHOKLASIA (THE “FIVE LOAVES”) can be sponsored for the health of family and friends during the celebration of special feast days. A \$50 donation to our parish is requested. Contact Eva Canakis for more information.

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

- Monday, January 18th.....ST. ATHANASIOS THE GREAT
Orthros-8:30 a.m. / Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.
- Wednesday, January 20th.....ST. EUTHYMIOS THE GREAT
Orthros-8:30 a.m. / Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.
- Thursday, January 21stChoir Practice-4:00 p.m.
- Saturday, January 23rd.....Note: No Vespers

*The Ladder for January 2016 is sponsored by:
Helena Christie in loving memory of Paula Kozlen*

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.

2016 ST. GEORGE GREEK FESTIVAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

2016 GREEK FESTIVAL— We need volunteers to sign up for the shifts at each booth. **DON'T WAIT TO BE ASKED. VOLUNTEER!** Philoptochos has volunteered their table in the Church Hall for a place to sign up. Please Sign-up Today! Minimum 5 hour shift requested per day on Saturday, February 27th and/or Saturday, February 28th. Receive 1 meal ticket for each shift. See **Linda Kallis or Tina Veroulis**. We need more happy hands this week to prepare food for the festival. We are making Tyropitas 1/2 day on Monday, January 18 starting at 9:00 a.m. and on Wednesday, January 20. We're making 40 trays (1920 pieces) and then we will switch to Spanakopita making 60 trays (2880 pieces) for the week. Stop by the Philoptochos table to sign up to volunteer for the Festival on February 27 and 28. Don't wait to be asked. **WE NEED YOU!**

FESTIVAL PROGRAM SPONSORS— Everyone is asked to make every effort to obtain at least one sponsorship for the 20th Annual Festival Program. Business “logos” are \$300. One-line greetings are \$150. See Presvytera Pantels **today** to pick up a “Festival Program Sponsorship Form.” The deadline for ads to be submitted is: **January 20, 2016**.

YIAYIA'S ATTIC— It's that time of year again! Yiayia's Attic is gathering treasures for the **Festival's Attic Booth**. Please start organizing your donations **now!** Call **Becky Allen** at (760) 699-5439 for details and/or questions.

DONATIONS FOR FESTIVAL NEEDS— Any donations of monies toward the purchase of needed festival supplies will be a great blessing and we will give special recognition to those who do contribute funds to help in making our festival purchases. Please contact our parish office for information on “Festival Needs.”

PREPARATION SCHEDULE— This week's festival preparations include: **tyropita and spanakopita**. Next week: **koulourakia**. Everyone's help is a precious gift from God. Please join us in the blessings of fellowship and support for our Holy Church.