

JUNE 26, 2016

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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THE LADDER

ALL SAINTS SUNDAY

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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 TRUE GOD IS JESUS CHRIST

The Saints about whom St. Paul wrote in his Epistle to the Hebrews (a passage from which we heard today) are the Saints of the Old Testament who were given to the People of God so that they could be guided back from idolatry and give worship to the True God.

Thus, as we celebrate all of the Saints throughout the world (those “known” and “unknown” [whom only God knows]), we celebrate the “Spirit of Truth”, Who is the Holy Spirit – “Who spoke through the prophets” (according to

the Nicene Creed. From the very first Saints of the Old Testament, up to the Saints of the Church in our time, the Truth has never changed: Jesus Christ is God. He is the fulfillment of the work and ministries of the prophets.

Let us always be very careful! Idolatry creates dangerous ideologies. Going back even 60 years ago, the Christian theologian, Edmond La B. Cherboneir wrote: “*The Psalmist writes: ‘Their idols are gold and silver, the work of men’s hands...They that make them are like unto them’ (Psalm 115)...That even a false god*”

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“UPON THIS ROCK I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH” - In answer to St. Peter’s confession, “*You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God,*” Our Lord responded, “*...I say unto you, you are Peter and upon this rock I will build My church.*” (St. Matthew 16: 16-18). The early Christians never considered that St. Peter (the man) was “the rock.” Rather, the “rock” is the truth that was proclaimed by St. Peter: i.e., that Christ is indeed the Son of the Living God, Who is our Savior. This truth is the foundation of the Church and it is this interpretation of our Lord’s words that is upheld by both St. Peter and St. Paul. Historically, at the time when St. Peter wrote his Second Universal Epistle, Gnostics were opposing the Church of Christ. Gnostics were philosophers who taught that people should shun the material world and embrace the spiritual world. But, they were not Christians. It is the Church that St. Peter defends, not himself, when he writes, “*For we (the community of the Apostles) did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.*” (2 Peter 1:16 in reference to St. Matthew 17:1-9). Like St. Peter, St. Paul refused to boast about himself: “*For we (the community of the Apostles) do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves are your bondservants for Jesus’ sake...We have this treasure in our earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.*” (2 Corinthians 4: 5 & 7). +FR. THEODORE



Οι αγιοι περι των οποιων εγραψε ο Απ. Παυλος στην Επιστολην του προς τους Εβραιους (την περικοπην της οποιας ακουσαμεν σημερα) ειναι οι Αγιοι της Παλαιας Διαθηκης, οι οποιοι εδοθησαν στον Λαον του Θεου για να καθοδηγησουν τον Λαον πισω απο την ειδωλολατρια και να λατρευουν τον Αληθινον Θεον.

Επομενως, καθως εορταζουμεν ολους τους Αγιους του κοσμου (και τους <γνωστους> και τους <αγνωστους>, τους οποιους μονον ο Θεος εξευρει), εορταζουμεν το <Πνευμα της Αληθειας>, το οποιο ειναι το Αγιο Πνευμα το <λαλησαν δια των προφητων> (συμφωνα με το <Πιστευω>). Απο τους πρωτους Αγιους της Παλαιας Διαθηκης μεχρι τους Αγιους της Εκκλησιας σημερα, η αληθεια δεν εχει αλλαξη ποτε: ο Ιησους Χριστος ειναι ο Θεος και η Εκπληρωσις των εργαων και των κηρυγματων των προφητων.

Ας ειμεθα προσεκτικοι! Η ειδωλολατρια σχηματιζει επικινδυνες ιδεολογιες. Πριν ακομη εξηντα χρονια εγραψε ο Χριστιανος θεολογος, Edmond La B. Cherbonier: <Ο ψαλμωδος γραφει: τα ειδωλα τους ειναι ασημι και χρυσο, αυτοι που τους κανουν τους μοιαζουν. (Ψαλ. 115). Οτι ακομη ο ψευτοθεος του ανθρωπου ειναι ο φυλακας της συνειδησις του ειναι ομορφο εικονογραφημενο απο τον Κομμουνισμον... (και) απο τον φοβερο ψευτοθεον που εσχηματισε τον Ναζιστικον χαρακτηρα.> ("Idolatry": A Handbook of Christian Theology, by Halverson and Choan, pg. 177).

Λοιπον, ας δοξαζουμεν παντοτε τον Χριστον και ας αφησουμεν Αυτον να ειναι ο Φυλακας της συνειδησις μας, ετσι ωστε να κανουμεν καθε καλο και ευχαρηστο <Υπερ της ειρηνης του συμπαντος κοσμου.> +Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

is the keeper of man's conscience is beautifully illustrated by Communism... (and) the fearsome false-god which fashioned the character of Nazism." ("Idolatry"; A Handbook of Christian Theology, by Halverson and Choan, pg. 177).

It is a matter of life and salvation that we continuously glorify Christ our God, because He is the Keeper of our conscience so that we do all things that are good and well pleasing "for the peace of the whole world" (as we pray during the Divine Liturgy).

Our Lord in today's Gospel passage reminds us that we can have nothing to be more important than His Love. If we do make someone, or something, more important than Christ, we become co-dependent upon that person or thing. Our happiness *depends* on *their* happiness (or *its* existence). This plays out in front of our eyes on a miserable scale. Some people place their "family" above God. This means that, while God may even be a glimmering picture in their way of thinking, *family* comes first—even to the ridiculous extreme of justifying crime in the name of "providing for one's family." Some people place events as being more important than God. This means that, when their team wins (be it a "political party", or a sports team), celebration goes on to extremes that are both harmful and insulting; when their team loses, anger and even violence takes over. This *dependency* on things we cannot control gives way to stress, manifested in the constant need for even further *dependency* on drugs or alcohol. *Dependency* on our own "self" betrays us due to the reality that we are, in fact, weak and prone to deceptions ranging from false ideologies to grandiose self-images.

Let us *truly depend* on Christ our God. Such dependence is the very definition of humility. My experience as an ordained Orthodox Christian priest has proven to me time and again that every time a person turns to Jesus Christ, his or her quality of life is always for the good. People find peace; they find purpose; they find the Wisdom of God by which they can discern good from evil and follow a path that leads to a fulfilled, productive life. I have seen this from people who were terminally ill; from people held in prison; from people grieving loss. Every time they turn to Christ, they find comfort and strength in time of trial, tribulation and temptation. People have conquered, with God's help, their addictions; their hatreds; their despair. At the same time, they have found inner peace and tear-filled joy through the victories, be they ever so small at first, though they become huge over a lifetime. It's a living experience for me by which I know that the Holy Spirit is at work daily in the lives of God's people, if they choose to accept the True God and reject the false gods. Indeed, the Holy Spirit is at work, through which Saints are made in every age.

+FR. THEODORE

PRAY FOR THE SICK: Yvonne and George Flessas, George Aeder, Adele Gallade, Kathy Ligeros, Bob Maverick, Rhonda Latkovic, Nicholas Kyriakou, Jean Chronis, Panagiota Chronis (Jean Chronis' mother) (*Many of the 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."*

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, Yie 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 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. Let heaven and earth praise Him, the seas and everything that moves in them.*

Sunday Resurrection Hymn: *Ex ipsous katilthes [Tone 8]...(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 All Saints Sunday: *Ton en olo to kosmo Martyron sou...(Your Church is arrayed in the holy blood of Your Martyrs who witnessed throughout the world, as though in purple and fine linen. Through them she cries to You, Christ our God, "Send down to Your people Your tender love, grant peace from above to Your commonwealth, and to our souls Your great mercy.")*

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: *Os aparchas tis physeos, to phytourroh tis ktiseos...(O Planter of creation, Lord, to You does the entire world bring as an offering the God-bearing martyr Saints, as being nature's first fruits. At their earnest entreaties, keep Your Church in a state of profoundest peace, through the Theotokos, O Lord abundantly merciful.)*

READINGS: Epistle – Hebrews 11: 33-40; 12: 1-2/ Gospel – St. Matthew 10: 32-33; 37-38; 19: 27-30

Megalinarion: Axion Estin

Communion Hymn: *Aghaliasthe dhikeh-ee en Kyrio tis efthesi prepey enesis... (Rejoice greatly in the Lord, O righteous ones; praise is fitting for the upright. Alleluia)*

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

Proverbs 4:23



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Coffee Hour: Josie Desnoyers and George Megalonalis

PHILOPTOCHOS – We need Coffee Hour Hostesses or Hosts for the month of August. See Linda Petalas. Thank you for volunteering and for your support.

STEWARDSHIP – As we approach the summer months, we need to remind one and all that any extra Stewardship offering will be a great blessing for our St. George parish. Anyone who has not yet submitted a 2016 Stewardship Pledge Card *and* contributed to the financial needs of our parish by virtue of fulfilling his or her pledge is fervently and prayerfully asked to do so at this time.

WISH 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) the Archdiocese Liturgy Books; 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.

BIBLES, LITURGY BOOKS & HYMNALS OF OUR CHURCH– Participation in worship requires that we use the Liturgy Books, hymnals and Bibles that are in our church pews. Please turn to these books, and refer to the weekly *Ladder*, in order to follow the entire celebration of the Divine Liturgy and participate fully. Sunday Scripture passages are posted in the *Ladder*; feel free to open your Bibles located in the church pews and follow along as the passages are read. Hymns are to be sung by the congregation (together with the choir); hymnals are available in the church pews. Please study the hymnals in order to familiarize yourself with the various types of our Church’s Sunday, seasonal and festal hymns. As we look forward to ordering the new Divine Liturgy Books from our Holy Archdiocese, the Bibles and hymnals already in place will help everyone participate more fully in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.

FEATURING GREEK HEROES - George Retelas, a Greek American from Northern California discovered his late grandfather's Navy journal containing memories and photos of his time in the South Pacific. The stories were inspiring and he was able to locate eleven for an oral history documentary. It is the hope of George Retelas to share the film for future generations as the entire movie is told in the words of those who actually were involved in these missions. These amazing airmen recount their naval aviation tours off Guadalcanal Island and USS Hornet (CV-12). The documentary film entitled, *Eleven*, is scheduled to be shown at the Palm Springs film festival on July 2nd.

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

Tuesday, June 27th.....Bible Study – 10:00 a.m.
 Wednesday, June 29th.....STS PETER & PAUL
 Orthros-8:30 a.m./Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.
 Thursday, June 30th.....THE HOLY APOSTLES
 Orthros-8:30 a.m./Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.
 Friday, July 1st.....STS. COSMAS & DAMIAN
 Orthros-8:30 a.m./Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.
 Saturday July 2nd.....Vespers – 5:00 p.m.

*The LADDER for June 2016
 is sponsored by
 Mr. & Mrs. William G. Barringer
 in celebration of their
 21st Wedding Anniversary*

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.