

JUNE 5, 2016

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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THE LADDER

SUNDAY OF THE BLIND MAN

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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.

SIN, SICKNESS & DIVINE WISDOM

“Who sinned: this man or his parents, for him to have been born blind?” (St. John 9:2). This is the question that underscores the common thinking that sickness is a punishment for our sins. In reality, sickness is the result of the fall of humanity from the time when Adam and Eve disobeyed God’s Commandment. At any rate, sickness is one obvious result of sinful actions, such as drug and alcohol abuse. Also, there are such things as negligent actions and general indifference for our personal health and other such

things – sins, nevertheless.

Without regard to the things related to sins, the view of the Orthodox Church is that sickness is mainly an opportunity which is offered by God in order to glorify His Holy Name. Still, even if there are many sins, repentance creates cures for sickness. For, repentance cures the soul and the body.

Aside from general and personal sins, sickness is given by God in order to bring salvation to others, as in the case

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THE CONVERSION OF A JAILER – Today’s passage from the Book of Acts (Acts 16: 16-34) tells us a great deal about suffering and love for others. St. Paul and Silas, through prayer, released the soothsayer girl of a demon, by which it was thought that her craft was part of St. Paul’s ministry. This is a part of the Sacrament of Baptism, whereby prayers of exorcism are read for the baptismal candidate.

As a result of this event, St. Paul and Silas were cast into prison and they were assigned a very strict guard in the person of a very committed jailer. When an angel of the Lord released St. Paul and Silas of their bonds and freed them from the jail, the jailer wanted to slay himself for apparently failing to do his duty. Rather than “taking off” after being freed from their bonds, St. Paul and Silas remained in the prison with the jailer, concerned about saving his life and turning him into a follower of Christ. They showed a genuine love for “their enemy.” In so doing, the jailer became a Christian and his whole household accepted Christ as their God and Savior. Indeed, this is an example of the genuine Christian way of life and the proper attitude towards the gift of freedom. It is one thing to be free to do what one wants; it is another thing to be free to do God’s work. +FR. THEODORE



<Τις ημαρτεν, ουτος η οι γονεις του, ινα τυφλος γεννηθη;> Αυτη η ερωτησις υπογραμμιζει την κοινη αντιληψιν οτι η ασθeneια ειναι τιμωρια για τις αμαρτιες μας. Στην πραγματικοτητα, η ασθeneια ειναι το αποτελεσμα της πωσης της ανθρωποτητας απο την στιγμη που ο Αδαμ και η Εβα επαρεκουσαν την εντολην του Θεου. Επιπλεον, η ασθeneια ειναι ενα αμεσο αποτελεσμα των αμαρτωλων δρασεων, οπως τα ναρκωτικα και ο εθισμος στο αλκοολ. Επισης, υπαρχουν και αμελειες πραξεις και γενικη αδιαφορια για την προσωπικην υγειαν μας, κ.τ.λ. – αμαρτιες εν παση περιπτωσει.

Χωρις να λαμβανονται υποψεις περι των παραγοντων που σχετιζονται με τις αμαρτιες, η προοπτικη της Ορθοδοξιας ειναι οτι η ασθeneια ειναι κυριως μια ευκαιρια το οποιο προσφereται απο τον Θεον για να δοξασουμεν το Παναγιο Ονομα Του. Ακομα και εαν υπαρχουν πολλες προσωπικες αμαρτιεςη μετανοια δημιουργει θεραπειες για τις ασθeneies. Η μετανοια θεραπευει την ψυχην και το σωμα.

Εκτος απο τις γενικες και προσωπικες αμαρτιες, η ασθeneια διδεται απο τον Θεον για να φερει σωτηριαν σε αλλους, οπως στην περιπτωσιν του Τυφλου, τον οποιον μνημονευουμεν σημερα. Η περιπτωσις του Τυφλου παρεχει την ευκαιριαν να δοξασθη ο Θεος μας Χριστος. Παραλληλα με την καταστασιν του Τυφλου ειναι τα λογια του Αγ. Παυλου: <εδοθη μοι σκολοψ τη σαρκι, αγγελος σαταν, ινα με κολαφιζη ινα μη υπεραιρωμαι. Υπερ τουτου τρις τον Κυριον παρεκαλεσα ινα αποστη απο εμου. Και ειρηκε μοι: αρκει σοι η χαρις Μου, η γαρ δυναμις Μου εν ασθeneια τελειουται.> (2 Κορ. 12: 7-9)
+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

of the Blind Man, whom we commemorate today. The circumstance of the Blind Man offers the opportunity for Christ our God to be glorified. Parallel to the circumstance of the Blind Man are the words of St. Paul: *"I have been given a thorn in the flesh, a messenger from Satan, so as to buffet me so that I not be puffed up. About this, I asked the Lord three times to take this away from me. And He answered me: My grace is sufficient for you, for, My strength is made perfect in your weakness."* (2 Corinthians 12: 7-9).

Let us keep in mind that Christ our God rejects the notion that the Blind Man was born blind as a form of punishment. At the same time, The Blind Man symbolizes all of humanity. Christ is the Light of the World, which is why we call those who are baptized: "The newly illumined." With baptism, the Holy Spirit becomes a part of our lives, both as a result of the blessing of the waters for baptism: *"Do You Yourself, O Loving King, be present now also through the descent of Your Holy Spirit and hallow this water"* (Orthodox Prayer Book, N.M. Vaporis, pg. 59) - and through the Sacrament of Holy Chrismation, which is imparted following the ascent of the newly baptized out of the baptismal water...and which is the personal "Pentecost" of the newly baptized.

This illumination is itself the Wisdom of God. God's Wisdom guides our motives in all that we do. The Wisdom of God is what we thirst for in our day and age, in which lines of "right" and "wrong" are too often blurred under the guise of popular opinion which is not very much associated with God's Commandments. The Bible tells us that we are to *work* for God, *receive* His blessings and *voluntarily, lovingly* share them with others, in accordance to our ability. In addition, are to cherish the value of human life; we talk about "lives that matter," but our voice that "lives of the pre-born matter" is weak. Finally, we can see that prayer is too often offered for strength *after* a tragedy, and not as often for God's Wisdom and illumination *before* we act. In other words, *we need to pray all the time.*

One of the prayers that our Church spells out our motive for doing our work each day: *"Almighty God, our Help and Refuge, Fountain of Wisdom and Tower of strength, Who knows that I can do nothing without Your guidance and help; assist me, I pray, and direct me to divine wisdom and power, that I may accomplish my tasks and whatever I may undertake to do, faithfully and diligently, according to Your Will, so that it may be beneficial to myself and others and to the glory of Your Holy Name."* (A Pocket Prayer Book for Orthodox Christians, Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese, pg. 17). Giving God glory in all things is something we are all called to do, regardless of our age or health; regardless of the many obstacles that come our way. Let us do as did the Blind Man: give glory to God!

+FR. THEODORE

PRAY FOR THE SICK: Yvonne and George Flessas, George Aeder, Adele Gallade, Kathy Ligeros, Bob Maverick, Rhonda Latkovic, Nicholas Kyriakou, Jean Chronis, Tina Veroulis (*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— 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—: Say to God, "How fearful are Your works; in the greatness of Your power Your enemies will lie to You."

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

Verse 3— Let all the earth worship You and sing to You; let them sing to Your name.

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— May God be gracious to us, and bless us; may He cause His face to shine upon us.

Refrain: *"Soston imas Ie Theou, O anastas ek nekron, psallontas si alleluia."*

Verse 2 – That we may know His way on the earth, Your salvation among all the Gentiles. Let the peoples give thanks to You, O God; let all the peoples praise You.

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

Verse 3 – May God bless us, and let all the ends of the earth be in fear of Him.

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— *Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered, and let those who hate Him flee from before His face. This is the day the Lord made; let us greatly rejoice and be glad therein.*

Seasonal Resurrection Hymn: *Christos Anesti...(Christ is risen from the dead, by death trampling down upon death and unto those in the tombs, bestowing life.)*

Sunday Resurrection Hymn: *Ton synanarchon Logon [Tone 5]...(Let us, the faithful, praise and worship the Word, coeternal with the Father and the Spirit, Who for our salvation was born of a Virgin for He willed to be lifted up bodily upon the Cross, to endure death and to raise the dead by His glorious Resurrection.)*

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: *Ei ke en tafo katilthes...(Though You went down into the tomb, O Immortal One, yet You brought down the dominion of Hades; and You rose as the victor, O Christ our God; and You called out "Rejoice" to the Myrrh-bearing women, and gave peace to Your Apostles, O Lord who to the fallen grant resurrection.)*

READINGS: Epistle – Acts 16: 16-34 / Gospel – St. John 9: 1-38

Instead of "Axion Estin," the following hymn: *O Angelos evoh-a...(The Angel cried aloud to the Lady full of grace: Rejoice, O pure Virgin; and again I say Rejoice. Your Son has resurrected from the grave on the third day. Be illumined be illumined, O New Jerusalem; for the glory of the Lord has arisen over you. Dance now for joy, O Zion, and exult. And you be merry, O pure Theotokos, at the arising of the One you bore.)*

Communion Hymn: *Soma Christou...(Receive the Body of Christ; taste from the immortal fount.)*



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ushers: Jim Christopoulos, Nick Krespis
Greeter: Melissa Hawkins
Coffee Hour Hosts: Debbie Pausen

PHILOPTOCHOS – Thank you for supporting Mochas for Missions. We will be collecting **through June 19** from the specially marked cups on the hall tables. Volunteers needed to host our Coffee Hour. We need hostesses or hosts for **June 19 and June 26**. Also check your calendars for July and August. See **Linda Petalas**. Become a member of Philoptochos! See **Annette Lewis** or **Linda Kallis** for a membership envelope.

SUNDAY SCHOOL – Sunday School “End-of-the-Year” ceremonies will be held following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy **today**. As always, our Sunday School “End-of-the-Year” ceremonies are educational and most enjoyable.

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.

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

Tuesday, June 7th.....Bible Study-10:00 a.m.

Wednesday, June 8th.....Vespers – 6:30 p.m.
AHEPA Chapter 528 Meeting – 6:30 p.m. (Placed To Be Determined)

Thursday, June 9th.....THE ASENSION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR
Orthros-8:30 a.m. / Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.
Parish Council – 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, June 11th..... Vespers-5:00 p.m.

“Being assembled together with them, Jesus commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, ‘which’, He said, ‘you have received from Me; for, John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

Acts 1:3-5

*The LADDER for June 2016
is sponsored by
Louise Dobbs Barringer*

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.