

MARCH 6, 2016

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

**74-109 Larrea Street
Palm Desert, California 92260**

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THE LADDER

JUDGMENT SUNDAY



Mailing Address:

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Tel: (760) 568-9901

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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.

EACH PERSON'S GREAT WORTH

There are two key themes that emerge from today's Gospel passage: 1) the very face of our Lord Jesus Christ is manifested in the face of every one of our fellow human beings, and, 2) the spiritual way of life—that is, the "life in Christ"—is the basis for every good deed.

Pagans never believed (and to a large extent, many non-Christian groups still do not believe) in performing truly philanthropic works. For example, Plato said that "it would be better for the poor man who is no longer able to work due to

illness to just die." The Roman philosopher Plautus once said, "We do harm to the beggar by giving him food and drink, because, not only do we waste what we offer to him, but we extend the time of his misery." Indeed, those who do not love God's Only-Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, have trouble justifying true philanthropy, according to which our fellow human being is fed *spiritually*, as well as *physically*. When one is given spiritual help, his or her physical needs are more easily met.

No other god has ever said (nor says)

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"WHY WAS I BORN?" - It's a question that I hear young people ask quite often, especially after they have faced disappointments and overwhelming challenges in life. It's a question which betrays depression or despair.

The answer is simple: *God wants it that way!* Period. To paraphrase a prayer from the Sacrament of Holy Unction, "God did not create us to be tormented by the devil, but He came and He saved us." In doing so, our Lord reminds us of the great worth that each of us has in the eyes of God.

Fr. Anthony Coniaris expresses our purpose in his book, *Introducing the Orthodox Church*: "Our response to God's gracious act of salvation, therefore, is a constant doxology of thanksgiving and praise. God said to Abraham, 'I will bless thee... and thou shalt be a blessing.' (Gen. 12:2). We are blessed to bless. We are forgiven to forgive. We are loved to love. We return that love through obedience. We are saved to help others find salvation. We are comforted to comfort. We are served to serve. Christ confesses us before His Father in heaven as His very own so that we may confess Him among men in the world. He daily loads us with blessings that we may use them to glorify and serve Him proportionately, loving, generously, wisely, gladly and humbly." (pg.214).

+FR. THEODORE

"I can do all things through Christ Who strengthens me."



Δυο σημαντικα θεματα παρουσιαζονται στην σημερινη Ευαγγελικη περικοπη: 1) το ιδιο προσωπο του Κυριου ημων Ιησου Χριστου εμφανιζεται στο προσωπο του οποιουδηποτε συνανθρωπου μας, και, 2) η πνευματικη ζωη – δηλ., η ζωη <εν Χριστω> – ειναι η βασις για καθε καλο εργο.

Οι ειδωλολατρες δεν επιστευαν (και κατα καποιον βαθμον οι σημερινοι ειδωλολατρες ακομα δεν πιστευουν) σε φιλανθρωπικα εργα οπως πρεπει. Ο Πλατωνας, π.χ., ειπε οτι <ενας πτωχος που δεν ηταν πλεον σε θεση να εργασθει λογω ασθειας, καλυτερα να πεθανει.> Και ο Ρωμαιος φιλοσοφος, ο Πλαυτος, ειπε: <ο ανθρωπος κανει κακο στον ζητιανον δινοντας σε αυτον φαγητο και ποτο, γιατι χανει ο,τι προσφερνει και παρατεινει την δυστυχειαν του.> Μαλιστα, οσοι δεν αγαπουν τον Μονογενη Υιον του Θεου, τον Ιησουν Χριστον, εχουν δυσκολια να δικαιολογησουν την αληθινη φιλανθρωπια κατα την οποια τροφοδοτειται ο συνανθρωπος ψυχικως και σωματικως, διοτι οταν ο ανθρωπος εχει ψυχικη βοηθεια, ικανοποιουνται πιο ευκολα και οι σωματικες αναγκες.

Κανενας <θεος> εχει πει (η λεγει) οτι το δικο του προσωπο εμφανιζεται στο προσωπο του πλησιον μας. Αυτο αποδεικνυει οτι ο Χριστος ειναι ο Αληθινος Θεος και ειναι ενα φενομενο που εκατεστησε σαφες στα προσωπα των Αγιων, οπως ο Μωυσης, του οποιου προσωπο ελαμπε μετα απο την επικοινωνια του με τον Θεον. (Εξοδος 34:29-25).

Καθως πλησιαζονται οι ημερες της Μ. Τεσσαρακοστης, ας δωσουμε προσοχη στην ψυχικη μας καταστασι, ωστε να δοξασουμε τον Θεον με αγαθες πραξεις.
+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

that his face is to be found in the face of our neighbor. This proves that Christ is True God and this phenomenon is made clear in the faces of the Saints, such as Moses, whose face glowed after conversing with God. (See Exodus 34: 29-35).

The issue of God's Judgment is presented in this Gospel passage. God's Judgment is not a vindictive, "get-even" kind of judgment as if God needs to feel good again after being wronged. It is not Judgment to give "closure" to God. As the theologians of the *Orthodox Study Bible* write, "The standard of judgment is uncalculated mercy toward others. The works produced by faith are emphasized, for saving faith always produces righteous works." (pg. 1319).

Our love for Christ our God must be expressed *also* as fervent love for our fellow human being. This is the basis for all growing and fulfilling relationships, regardless of whether we are talking about the relationships between husbands and wives; parents and children; employers and employees; teachers and students. Each person has great worth in the eyes of God.

Our Lord reminds us that the Kingdom of Heaven has been prepared for us from the foundation of the world. In this, we understand that we are not simple biological creatures of God, but we are children of God – inheritors of everything that is of God. This Gospel passage explains the great dignity of each person who enters the world: 1) he or she is a special *inheritor* of God's Kingdom – a son or daughter of God. 2) Christ our God is within us, giving us dignity as royal heirs to His Kingdom. As such, we are to act as God acts; as God blesses us, we, in turn, bless others. When we fail to act as God acts, we commit sin – and the consequence of this is that we devalue our truly human dignity. This is why St. Paul cautions us through today's Epistle passage, saying, "When you thus sin against the brethren and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ." (1 Corinthians 8:12).

As the days of Great Lent draw near, let us pay attention to the condition of our souls so that we can glorify God with truly good deeds.

+FR. THEODORE

"We know that an idol is nothing in the world and there is no other God but one...the Father, of Whom are all things and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom are all things and through Whom we live."

(1 Corinthians 8:4-6)

PRAY FOR THE SICK: Yvonne and George Flessas, George Aeder, Adele Gallade, Kathy Ligeros, Aryroula Krespis (Nick Krespis' mother), Bob Maverick, Gerasimos Mikelatos, Evangelia Melissaratos, Gerasimos Canakis, Kathy Canakis & Peter Canakis (Eva and Spiro Canakis family members), Chris Laskaris, Mary Fondas (*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— Bless the Lord, O my soul, and everything within me, bless His holy name.

Refrain: "Tes presvies tis Theotokou, soter, soson 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, soson 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: "Soson 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: "Soson imas Ie 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, We arose from the dead, we sing to You, Alleluia."

Verse 3 – The Lord shall reign forever; your God, O Zion, to all generations.

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

Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

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 heaven and earth praise Him; the seas and everything that moves in them

Sunday Resurrection Hymn: Katelisas to Stavro [Tone 7]...(O Lord by Your sacred Cross You abolished death and granted unto the thief blessed paradise. The Myrrh-bearers ceased lamenting and turned to joy. The Apostles did preach the good news at Your command that You had risen from the dead, O Christ our God, bestowing Your mercy upon the world evermore.)

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 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: Otan eltheis o Theos epi tis ghees...(When You come down to the earth, O God, in Your glory, all things will cower trembling, and a river of fire will draw before Your Judgment Seat; the books shall be opened up, and public knowledge will things hidden be. Rescue me, then, I pray, from unquenchable fire, and count me worthy to stand at Your right hand, O You, the most righteous Judge.)

READINGS: Epistle – 1 Corinthians 6: 8-13; 9:1-2 / Gospel – St. Matthew 25: 31-46

Megalynarion: Axion Estin (pg. 52 in the Divine Liturgy books)

Communion Hymn: Enite ton Kyrion (pg. 64 in the Divine Liturgy books)

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

Monday, March 7th.....Philoptochos Board Meeting – 11:00 a.m.

Tuesday, March 8th.....Bible Study-10:00 a.m.

Wednesday, March 9th...AHEPA Meeting – 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, March 10th....Choir Practice-1:00 p.m.

Friday, March 11th.....Coloring Book Project-12 noon (Weekday Calendar is continued on next page)

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

Proverbs 4:23

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Ushers: Jim Christopoulos, Tasia Richards, Tim Hector

Greeter: Mariya Dunkel

Stewardship Sunday – Coffee & Refreshments sponsored by the Parish Council

Altar Flower Bouquets offered today by:

– Nicolas & Rhonda Latkovic - In honor of Pauline Latkovic, and in memory of Patricia Fleming, Rhonda's mother.

–Dr. & Mrs. Jim Christopoulos, Stephanie and Peter - "Embrace God's love."

Notice: Available dates to request Altar Flowers 2016: October 30th (2), November 6th (1), November 20th (2), December 4th (2). Please visit the Parish Hall Bulletin Board today, or see Louise Dobbs Barringer with your request.

MEMORIAL – Today's Memorial Service is for the Eternal Rest and Salvation of the servants of God, **Zoe Balodimas (40 days)**, a beloved member of our parish and the St. George Ladies Philoptochos Society. Also, today's Memorial Service is for the Eternal Rest and Salvation of the servants of God, **Ada and Paschalis Savvides**, the beloved parents of **Diana Savvides**. **ETERNAL BE THEIR MEMORIES!**

PHILOPTOCHOS – Thank you again to the members who helped prepare for the Festival since early January and also those who helped at the Festival this past Saturday and Sunday. Our next Board Meeting will be this Monday, March 7 at 11:00 a.m. in the Church hall. Don't forget the Membership Lunch on Saturday, March 12 at 12:00 p.m. at Kalitsa Xitco's home. Please RSVP to Carol Lyons or Linda Kallis in the Church hall today after Church services. We need Coffee Hour Hosts or Hostesses for March 27 and for the month of April. Please see **Linda Petalas**. **Pastries that were not sold at last week's Greek Festival are now for sale in our parish hall at half price.**

ST. GEORGE GREETERS – Your warm smiles, and the loving way by which you handled our guests during the 20th Annual Festival and church tours was a great blessing! From the faces of the people on our tours I could see nothing but expressions of love and joy, which is the way that we should strive to carry ourselves so that others will see God in us: "You did it"! I think, all the people that visited our parish grounds departed filled with delicious Greek food, fun, and folly. Moreover they were filled with the Holy Spirit! May God continue to bless you. – Louise Dobbs Barringer, Team Leader

YIAYIA'S ATTIC – My profound thanks and gratitude to each of you who made the effort and took the time to support **Yiayia's Attic** with your many contributions. Because of you, we were able to enrich the church's coffers by approximately \$2,200. Thank You! – "Yiayia" Becky Allen

DONATIONS FOR EPITAPHIO FLOWERS – to donate funds, send check to parish office by April 15th, payable to "St. George Greek Orthodox Church." Write in the memo: "Epitaphio Flowers."

COLORING BOOK PROJECT – Friday, March 11, 2016 at 12 noon. St. Patrick's Day theme. See flier.

ST. GEORGE GOLF TOURNAMENT – May 6-7, 2016 at Desert Willow. **Registration forms are available in the parish hall. Registration for May 6th: \$125. Registration for May 7th: \$175** (correction of the notice in the March 2016 *The Voice of St. George*)

WEEKDAY CALENDAR.....continued from previous page

Saturday, March 12th.....SATURDAY OF SOULS

Orthros-8:30 a.m. /Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.

Philoptochos Membership Lunch – 12 noon

Vespers – 5:00 p.m.

****PLEASE NOTE:: SPRING GENERAL ASSEMBLY-Sunday, March 20, 2016** (correction of the notice printed in the March 2016 *The Voice of St. George*)

*The LADDER for March, 2016
is sponsored by*

Matushka Gloria Lehman

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.