

MARCH 27, 2016

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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THE LADDER

ST. GREGORY PALAMAS

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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.

TRUE FAITH & THE GRACE OF GOD

Hesychasm is a theological term used to underscore the fact that prayer is communication between our souls and God Almighty. That is, prayer is in reality an entirely spiritual effort. Since Christ our God brought fallen human nature into union with God, through prayer we can participate in the divine energies of God.

For us to comprehend such truth is of great importance, because many believe, as did many at the time of St. Gregory Palamas when the Council of Constan-

tinople was held in 1341, that God's grace was a "created thing," and not the uncreated power and energy of God. Angels are creatures of God, and, yet they are ministers for the salvation of humanity as we read in studying the Old Testament. But angels are not *the grace* of God, Who dwells within us as the Holy Spirit and works in guidance of our souls and minds as we desire to be with God.

In accordance with this desire and

continued on page 2

ST. GREGORY PALAMAS – Hesychasm is the term used to describe "inner prayer." Through inner, "soul-based" prayer, one communicates intimately with God our Creator, since His Only-Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, Who is True God Himself, brought our fallen human nature into unity with divine nature – deifying humanity in God. Hence, we are destined to be participants and co-workers with God's energies, as is evident from the occurrence of many miracles in the lives of Saints through their relationship with Christ. In this sense, the principle of inner prayer is fully integrated into the liturgical & sacramental life of the Orthodox Church, including the liturgical cycle of prayer leading to the Divine Liturgy. Christ's injunction in the Gospel of Matthew to "go into your closet to pray" to mean that one should withdraw inward, avoiding distractions. Worship involves sincere prayer from within each individual, shared *collectively* as members of God's Kingdom – i.e., the Divine Liturgy. The Jesus Prayer is a simple prayer to be said from within our soul: "*Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.*"

St. Gregory was present in Constantinople at the Council that was held in 1341 maintaining that divine grace is not created, but is the uncreated energies of God. Otherwise it would be impossible, if grace were created, for us to have genuine communion with the uncreated God.



Ο Ησυχασμος είναι θεολογικός ορος ο οποίος μεταχειρίζεται για να τονίσουμε ότι η προσευχή είναι επικοινωνία μεταξύ της ψυχής μας και τον παντοδύναμον Θεόν. Δηλαδή, η προσευχή είναι στην πραγματικότητα ένα εντελώς πνευματικό έργο. Επειδή ο Θεός μας ο Χριστός έφερε την πεσμένη ανθρώπινη φύση μας σε ενώση με τον Θεόν, μέσω της προσευχής μπορούμε να συμμετέχουμε με τις θείκες ενέργειες του Θεού.

Για να γνωρίσουμε αυτήν την αληθειαν είναι σημαντικό, διότι πολλοί πιστεύουν, όπως πολλοί έπιστευαν κατά την εποχήν του Αγίου Γρηγορίου Παλάμα όταν έγινε η Σύνοδος της Κωνσταντινούπολεως του έτους 1341, ότι η χάρις του Θεού είναι <δημιουργημα> του Θεού και όχι η ακτιστή δύναμις και ενέργεια Του. Οι άγγελοι, π. χ., είναι δημιουργήματα του Θεού, και, όμως, είναι υπούργοι για την σωτηριαν του ανθρώπου καθώς γνωρίζουμε από την μελέτην μας της Αγίας Γραφής. Αλλά, οι άγγελοι δεν είναι <χάρις> του Θεού, ο οποίος κατοικεί μέσα μας ως το Άγιο Πνεύμα και ενεργεί στην ψυχήν και στον νουν του καθενός που επιθυμεί να είναι με τον Θεόν.

Σύμφωνα με αυτήν την επιθυμιαν και τις σχετικές πνευματικές ασκήσεις, όλη η οντοτης του ανθρώπου μπορεί να μετατρέπεται σε μια λαμπερή εμφάνιση – και αυτό εικονίζεται στις εικόνες του καθέ αγίου με το φωτοστεφανο.

Καθώς ετοιμάζει ο ιερεύς τα Τιμία Δώρα για την Θεϊαν Λειτουργιαν εκφωνεί χαμηλωφώνως: <Σταυρωθέντος σου Χριστέ ανήρεθη η τυραννίς, επατήθη η δύναμις του εχθρου, ουτε γαρ άγγελος, ουτε άνθρωπος, αλλά αυτος ο Κυριος, εσωσας ημας.>+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

with the related spiritual efforts, the entire being of a person can be transformed into a brilliant countenance—a fact communicated through our Holy Icons by the halo drawn around the face of a depicted Saint.

The notion that God’s grace is a “creation,” in a manner like angels are “creations,” implies that God did not take on human flesh and gave it the dignity of having divine qualities. Prayer and worship, then, are not communications with God, but with a superiorly created “intermediary” for God. It is a denial of God’s humanity in the Person of Christ and humanity’s salvation through Christ, Who conquered death. Such denial leads to the question: why pray?

With the celebration of the Annunciation, Gabriel, a created being (an angel) announced the Incarnation of God. It is the Holy Spirit that entered the Ever-Virgin Mary to clothe God with her human flesh. It is the Holy Spirit that descends for us to partake of Holy Communion, so that God can enter us, as well. This is not something “created” by God; it is God Himself in us and among us—and His uncreated energies that make miracles happen are the same uncreated energies that enlighten us and bless us at all times.

What is of further concern as it relates to our life today is that this controversy addressed by St. Gregory Palamas at the Council of Constantinople in 1341 was brought about by people calling themselves Christians. The same thing is what we are experiencing today: people calling themselves Christians, yet holding beliefs and attitudes that are not at all part of the true, Apostolic Christian Faith. As preparations are being made for the convening of the Great and Holy Synod of the Orthodox Christian Church this July, 2016, we are called to learn about our “One, holy, catholic and Apostolic Church.” Rather than suggesting, for example, that Orthodox Christians should some day celebrate Easter like other Christians, let us inspire others to celebrate Easter with us, defending the decree of the First Ecumenical Council of all of Christianity. Only Christ our God is our Savior.

Let us be clear: our salvation does not rest on governments and world leaders. World leaders who are not seeking God’s Truth for the salvation of humanity will be of no help. Indeed, leaders of ISIS, who worship a false god believe in the destruction of humanity, based on their twisted logic. It is all the more critical that we not wander from the True Faith, knowing that our Faith dictates that all good things and every perfect gift comes from God.

+FR. THEODORE

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), Kenny Henderson, Mary Fondas, Maria Kellow, (Chris Laskaris’ daughter), Yiannis Koutroubis (brother of Kalitsa Xitco) (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, 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 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: *"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 heaven and earth praise Him; the seas and everything that moves in them.*

Sunday Resurrection Hymn: Hymn for St. George: *Ote katilthes pros ton thanaton [Tone 2]...(When You descended to the realm of death, You, as Life Immortal, rendered to Hades a mortal blow by Your all-radiant divinity. And when You, from the inner depths and the darkness below did raise the dead, all the hosts of heavens did proclaim and cry out: O Life-giving Christ and our God we give glory)*

Hymn for St. Gregory Palamas...Orthodoxias o Fostir...(Beacon of Orthodox belief, the strong support of the Church and her teacher inspired by God, you are the ornament of monks, the unassailable champion of theologians, O Gregory the Wonder-worker and the boast of Thessalonica, the messenger of grace. Forever earnestly entreat for the salvation of our souls.)

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: Ti ypermacho...(O Champion General, I your City now ascribe to you triumphant anthems as the tokens of my gratitude, being rescued from the terrors, O Theotokos. Inasmuch as you have power unassailable, from all kinds of perils free me so that unto you I may cry aloud: Rejoice, O unwedded Bride.)

READINGS: Epistle - Hebrews 1:10-14; 2:1-3 / Gospel - St. Mark 2: 1-12

Follow the Liturgy of St. Basil the Great. After the Great Entrance, turn to pg. 125 in our Liturgy books. After the prayer on pg. 125, turn back to pg. 38. After the Creed, turn to pg. 126 for the continuation of the Liturgy of St. Basil. The Lord's Prayer & Communion Prayers: pgs. 60-74.

Megalynarion: Epi si cheri ke charitomeni (pg. 135 in the Divine Liturgy books)

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

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

Proverbs 4:23



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ushers: Anna Prineas, Josie Desnoyers

Greeter: George Megalonakis

Coffee Hour Hostess: Georgia Sahpazis

MEMORIAL -today's Memorial Service is for the Eternal Rest and Salvation for **Gregory Michaels (4 years) and Loizos Michaels**, the beloved son and husband of **Eleni Michaels** and the beloved brother and father of **Stacey Argyros**. May our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ He grant peace and comfort to **Stacey Argyros** and the entire family of **Eleni Michaels**. **MAY THEIR MEMORIES BE ETERNAL!**

PHILOPTOCHOS – We collected \$200 from the tray we passed on March 13 for Autism - the National Philoptochos charity. Thank you for your support. Please place your orders for our Easter Bake Sale. The order forms are available at the coffee bar in the Church hall. The bake goods will be available for pick up on Sunday, April 17 and Sunday, April 24 (Palm Sunday). We need ladies to help us make Easter cookies on April 4, 5 and 6.

ALTAR FLOWER BOUQUETS – Altar Flowers Contributors for April: All April/May contributors please see the **Administration Office, or Louise Dobbs Barringer** to submit your checks, and your dedication request for The Ladder! Also, there are only 3 available spaces left to be filled on the Altar Flower List displayed on the Parish Hall Bulletin Board, please sign-up today (see dates shown below); Oct. 30th (1); Nov. 20th (2). **Notice** - Since the Orthodox Easter is later than usual our Florist may not be able to maintain the Easter Lillies through May 1stwe'er advised, however we are looking at other alternatives at this time! Thank you for your support.

OUTREACH COMING EVENTS: Please annotate your calendar today in support of St. George Church' activities:

MEN'S DAY RALLY - May 14th

BABY BOTTLE DRIVE - September. 18th thru October. 9th

VETERAN'S DAY - November 6th

AHEPA NIGHT – On Saturday, April 9, 2016, everyone is asked to join our **AHEPA membership for Vespers at our church, beginning at 5:00 p.m.** Following the Vesper Service, **husbands, wives and singles 21 and over** from our parish community will gather for **fellowship and dinner** at the **Desert Springs Marriott at around 6:00 p.m. It is a "No-Host" event** – everyone will be responsible for their own. More details to follow. Contact **Harry Loukatos** or **Wynn Storton** to make arrangements.

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

Tuesday, March 28th.....Bible Study – 10:00 a.m.

Wednesday, March 30rd.....Pre-Sanctified Divine Liturgy – 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, March 31st.....Choir Practice - 1:00 p.m.

Friday, April 1st..... Pre-Sanctified – 9:00 a.m.

Salutation Service (3rd Stanza) - 7:00 p.m.

Saturday, April 2nd.....Vespers – 5:00 p.m.

Note: Golf Tournament (May 6-7, 2016) Registration Forms are available in our parish hall.

*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.