

MAY 8, 2016

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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THE LADDER

ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE; ST. JOHN THE THEOLOGIAN

Mailing Address:

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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.

HOLY COMMUNION

Today is the feast day of St. Thomas the Apostle and St. John the Theologian. With regard to St. Thomas, we understand that he expressed doubts about the Resurrection of Christ—but, the Risen Christ revealed Himself to him and he confessed: "You are my Lord and my God." This confession of faith became his own personal message to the world. He carried the Word of the Gospel all the way to India, where he preached the love of our Lord Jesus Christ to the Hindus. With regard to St. John, we heard his

Universal Epistle today: *"If we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not live according to the truth; but if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin."* With these words, our love for God, Whom we do not see, implies automatically that we love our fellow human being, whom we see in front of us.

The Divine Liturgy is the Sacrament through which we partake of the

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ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE AND ST. JOHN THE THEOLOGIAN—St. Thomas at first expressed his doubts about the Resurrection of Christ. However, eight days after he expressed this doubt, Thomas was with the other Disciples when our Lord appeared to them, calling Thomas to learn and know that He indeed is arisen from the dead. And Thomas, beholding and examining carefully the hands and side of the Master, cried out with faith, "My Lord and my God." Thus he clearly proclaimed the two natures - human and divine - of the God-man (Luke 24:36-49; John 20:19-29).

In the year 96 A.D., during the reign of Domitian, St. John the Apostle was taken in bonds to Rome, and he was cast into a vat filled to the brim with boiling oil. However, he came forth from the vat of boiling oil unharmed and he was subsequently exiled to the island of Patmos. It was on the island of Patmos where he wrote the Book of Revelation. After the death of the tyrannical Domitian, St. John returned to Ephesus and wrote his Gospel (after the other Evangelists had already written theirs). In addition, he wrote three Universal Epistles (a passage from which was read during today's Liturgy). In all, he lived ninety-five years and fell asleep in the Lord during the reign of Trajan in the year 100. He is called Theologian because he loftily expounded in his Gospel the theology of the inexpressible and eternal birth of the Son and Word of God the Father.



Σήμερα είναι η εορτή του Αγίου Θωμά του Αποστόλου και του Αγίου Ιωαννου του Θεολογου. Οσον αφορά στον Άγιον Θωμαν, γνωρίζουμε ότι εξέφρασε αμφιβολίες σχετικά με την Αναστασιν του Χριστου – αλλά ο Χριστος αποκάλυψε τον Ανησταμενον Εαυτον Του σε αυτον και ομολογησε: <Είσαι ο Κυριος μου και ο Θεος μου.> Αυτή η ομολογια έγινε το κηρυγμα του στον κοσμον. Κουβαλουσε αυτον τον Λογον του Ευαγγελιου μεχρι την Ινδιαν, οπου εκηρυξε την αγαπην του Χριστου προς τους Ινδουιστας. Οσον αφορά στον Άγιον Ιωαννην, ακουσαμεν την Καθολικην του Επιστολην σημερα: <Εαν ειπωμεν ότι κοινωνιαν εχομεν μετ' αυτου, και εν τω σκοτει περιπατωμεν, ψευδομεθα, και ου ποιουμεν την αληθειαν. Εαν δε εν τω φωτι περιπατωμεν, ως αυτος εστιν εν τω φωτι, κοινωνιαν εχομεν μετ' αλληλων, και το Αιμα Ιησου Χριστου του Υιου Αυτου καθαριζει ημας απο πασης αμαρτιας.> (1 Ιωαν. 1:7). Με άλλα λογια, η αγαπη μας για τον Θεον, Τον Οποιον δεν βλεπουμεν συνεπαγεται αυτοματα ότι αγαπαμεν τον συνανθρωπον μας, τον οποιον βλεπουμεν μπροστα μας.

Η Θ. Λειτουργια είναι το Μυστηριο δια μεσου του οποιου μπορούμε να μετεχομεν το Άγιο Σωμα και Αιμα του Θεου μας Ιησου Χριστου. Ονομαζεται <Θεια Κοινωνια> διότι αυτο το Μυστηριο ενώνει τον εναν με τον άλλον στην αγαπη του Θεου. Είναι ένας δεσμος, η οποια εκφραζεται απο εμας με λογια πνευματικης συμβουλης και με εργα αυτο-θυσιας χρονου και κοπου για το ψυχικο και σωματικο συμφερον του πλησιον, μαζί με τις θερμες προσευχες μας και με συγχωρησιν. Ας ειμεθα ενόρια αυτής της θεικης αγαπης.
+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

Holy Body and Blood of Jesus Christ our God. It is known as *Holy Communion*, because this Sacrament unites one person with another in the love of God. It is a bond which is expressed by us with words of spiritual care and with deeds of self-sacrifice of time and effort for the spiritual and physical benefit of our neighbor, along with our sincere prayers and our forgiveness. We must be a parish of Divine love.

The reality of *communion* with God and others which is “holy” (that is, *Holy Communion*) is expressed most clearly during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great...as the bread and wine is consecrated to become the very Body and Blood of Christ, the Consecration Prayer is read as follows: “*And as for us, partakers of the one Bread and the one Chalice, unite all to one another unto communion of the one Holy Spirit...*” On this point, St. John Damascene stated: “*It is an actual communion with Christ, because through it, we have communion with Christ and share in His flesh and His Divinity: yes, we have communion and are united with one another through it. For, since we partake of the one Bread, we become one body of Christ and one Blood, and members one of another, being of one body with Christ.*” (*Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*; Vol. IV.13, pg. 375). Giving more clarity to these thoughts expressed by St. John Damascene, Fr. Emmanuel Hatzidakis states: “*The Divine Eucharist unites us with Christ, but it also, rather because of it, unites us with each other.*” (*The Heavenly Banquet*, pg. 337).

Unfortunately, in many Orthodox Christian parishes, including ours, this unity is not always evident. Too often, we find clergy and laity alike who are more interested in “stirring the pot,” rather than finding positive solutions to the challenges that Orthodox Christians face as a community and as individuals. Too often, we find clergy and laity alike who argue against the moral and canonical teachings of the Church, insisting on the value of their own opinions, regardless of the spiritual direction provided by the Saints of the Church over the centuries. Disobedience and divisiveness are at odds with the commandment of our Lord that we love one another.

The Church is meant to be the Royal Priesthood of the faithful and clergy working with God to bring everyone to salvation. In essence, we are all priests to one another with God’s love, rather than “costumers” looking to be serviced by others. Like Christ our Lord, we are to serve one another, rather than to be served according to our personal desires. Holy Communion, according to the teachings of the Church, must be received only by those who are living as priests of the Royal Priesthood of Christ our living God, Who arose from the dead.

+FR. THEODORE

PRAY FOR THE SICK: Yvonne and George Flessas, George Aeder, Adele Gallade, Kathy Ligeros, Bob Maverick, Nicholas Kyriakou (*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. 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.

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

Hymn for St. Thomas Sunday: Esfraghismenou tou mnimatos...(O Life, You rose from the sepulcher, even though the tomb was secured with a seal, O Christ God. And though the doors had been bolted, You came to Your disciples, O Resurrection of all. Through them You renew a right spirit in us, according to Your great mercy.)

Hymn for St. John the Theologian: Apostole Christo to Theo...(O Apostle, the beloved of Christ God, hasten to deliver us, a people that has no excuse. He accepts you supplicating Him, for He condescended at the Supper to let you lean on Him. Entreat Him, O Theologian, that He scatter the persistent cloud of hostile nations, and pray for us, for peace and great mercy.)

Kontakion Hymn for this Sunday: 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 – 1 John 1: 1-7 / Gospel – St. John 20: 19-31

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

Proverbs 4:23



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ushers: Jim Christopoulos
Greeter: Josie Desnoyers
Coffee Hour Hostesses: The Ladies of Philoptochos

ALTAR FLOWER BOUQUETS – Sunday May 8, 2016 we have a special donation for Altar Flowers by Dr. & Mrs. Michael Long. It is Christina's mother Bella Sarres' 100th birthday (May 5, 1916)! The Altar Flowers are offered with this dedication: **"In honor of my mother, and in honor of Ashlely, David, and Alexander; "Yia Yia" HAPPY 100TH BIRTHDAY; MAY GOD WATCH OVER YOU ALWAYS!"**

Also, we have 50 Carnations for Mother's Day today. This order is from the **Parish Council** with great love and respect.

PHILOPTOCHOS – Happy Mother's Day to all our Mothers, Grandmothers and Pet Moms. We hope you have a wonderful day! We need Coffee Hour Hostesses for May 22 and 29 and for the month of June. See **Linda Petalas.** Our Board Meeting will be tomorrow, Monday, May 9 at 11:00 a.m. Our last General Meeting of the season will be on Monday, May 16 at 11:30 a.m. at The Old Spaghetti Factory. We will have a short meeting and then lunch. Lunch will be \$8.00. We hope you will join us.

MEN'S DAY RALLY – The Men's Day Rally this Saturday, May 14th is a wonderful opportunity for fathers, grandfathers, sons and grandsons to understand their God-given purpose in life. It is an opportunity to join in fellowship for the purpose of bringing glory to our Savior Jesus Christ. (See enclosed flier)

AHEPA – Meeting on Wednesday, May 11th at 6:30 p.m. AHEPA **Sunday, May 15th,** is at the same time the annual occasion at which the **Fr. T. P. Theophilos Memorial Scholarship** is awarded to our parish college students.

NATURAL CHURCH DEVELOPMENT SURVEY – We are still waiting for many church surveys to be returned that were passed out. We have received only 27 back out of 40 that were distributed. Please, if you haven't yet returned the survey to the office, please do so by May 13th. Thank you. – Rhonda Latkovic, NCD Survey Co-Chair.

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

- Monday, May 9th.....Philoptochos Board Meeting – 11:00 a.m.
- Tuesday, May 10th.....Bible Study – 10:00 a.m.
- Wednesday, May 11th.....AHEPA Meeting – 6:30 p.m.
- Thursday, May 12th.....Choir Practice-1:00 p.m. / Parish Council-6:30 p.m.
- Saturday, May 14th.....Men's Day Rally – 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Vespers – 5:00 p.m.

HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY

*The LADDER for May 2016
is sponsored by
Tillie Lockshire*

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.

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FR. THEODORE PANTELS, PASTOR

WWW.GO-STGEORGE.ORG



**CALLING ALL MEN 18 AND ABOVE,
FATHERS, GRANDFATHERS AND SONS**

Men's Day Rally

***Bring Out The
Godly Man In You***

Saturday: May 14, 2016

Location: Parish Hall

Hours: 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

**“ONCE YOU’RE RIGHT WITH GOD
YOU’RE RIGHT WITH THE WORLD”**

**SHARE WITH QUALIFIED THEOLOGIANs,
SPIRITUAL GUIDES AND HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS**

ALL CHRISTIANS WELCOME!

PLEASE COME, AND BRING A FRIEND! MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS NOW!

RSVP: RALLY CAPACITY – 100
CATERED SIT-DOWN LUNCH - \$10.00

PRESENTING KEYNOTE SPEAKER:
Mr. Blaine L. Mack WWII Veteran

This event is created and sponsored by OUTREACH.