

**AUGUST 13, 2017**

**ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT**

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# THE LADDER



## 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.

## THE LITURGY NEVER ENDS

There are a number of themes that are presented to us today, due to our preparation for the Feast of the Dormition of the Mother of God, on the one hand, and today's Gospel passage, on the other: 1) love for others; 2) faith in God; 3) humility and 4) hope. We will honor the Holy Mother of God during the Feast of Her Dormition on Tuesday, August 15th. Through Her intercessions, we see the virtue of love for other people, in general. The virtue of *love* obligates us to pray for the salvation of other people.

From today's Gospel, we note that a boy's father pleaded with Christ for Him to heal his son. In this case, we see also that *faith* is a major component of our prayer: "*If you have faith as much as a mustard seed...*" (St. Matthew 17:20). On top of this, from today's Gospel passage we come to know the great respect shown to Christ our Lord by the boy's father: "*A man approached Him, falling to his knees, and saying...*" (St. Matthew 17:14). The term "falling to his knees" indicates that the father had

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## THE WORD "THEOTOKOS"

The Orthodox Church holds two dogmas concerning the Virgin Mary. They are:

1) She is *Ever-Virgin*. The ever-virginity of the Virgin Mary is confirmed by the proper understanding of the Greek word, translated into English as "until." That Joseph did not know Her *until* She gave birth to Her first-born Son means that She was *never* known by any man, "*until the end of time.*" That She is Virgin is noted by Joseph who wanted to put Her away privately when he found that She was with Child. He wanted to "put Her away" because he considered Her pregnancy to be due to another man. The angel of the Lord, however, confirmed that such was not the case. Finally, if there were brothers and sisters, Mary would not have been at the Cross of Jesus by Herself, necessitating our Lord to ask one of His Disciples to take Her into his home as his mother.

2) The Virgin Mary is known as "Theotokos," translated as "Mother of God." She is the Mother of God because we read in Scripture that "*God sent forth His Son, made of a woman.*" (Galatians 4:4). Christ is the Son of God, born from the Ever-Virgin Mary. Since He is God, His mother is the "Mother of God," - i.e. "Theotokos." The Prophet Isaiah prophesied, "*A virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call His Name Immanuel, which is to say, "God is with us."* Thus, Christ is "God being with us," making His Mother, the Mother of God – "Theotokos."



Τρία θέματα αναφέρονται σημε-  
ρα δια μεσών, από την μια πλευ-  
ραν, της προετοιμασίας μας για  
την Εορτή της Παναγίας, και  
από την άλλη, της σημερινής  
Ευαγγελικής περικοπής: 1) περι  
αγάπης, 2) περι πίστεως, και 3)  
περι ταπεινοφροσύνης και ελπι-  
δος. Θα τιμήσουμε την Θεοτοκόν  
κατά την εορτή της Κοιμήσεως  
Αυτής την Τρίτη, 15 Αυγούστου.  
Δια της μεσιτείας Αυτής, φανερω-  
νεται η αγάπη προς άλλους αν-  
θρώπους, γενικώς. Η αγάπη μας  
υποχρεώνει να προσευχωμεθα  
υπερ της σωτηρίας των συναν-  
θρώπων μας.

Από το αναγνώσμα της σημερι-  
νης Ευαγγελικής περικοπής, εγ-  
νωρισάμεν πως ένας πατέρας  
επαρεκάλησε τον Χριστόν για να  
θεραπεύσει τον υιόν του. Στην πε-  
ριπτώσιν αυτήν εγνωρισάμεν επι-  
σης, ότι η πίστις μας είναι απα-  
ραιτητό στοιχείον της προσευχής:  
<εάν εχητε πίστιν ως κόκκον σιν-  
απιδίου, ερειπετε τὸ ὄρει τούτῳ,  
μεταβηθὶ ἐντευθεν...> (Ματθ. 17:  
20). Ἀκομῆ, ἀπο τὴν σημερινὴν  
περικοπὴν τοῦ Ἁγίου Ευαγγελίου  
γνωρίζομεν τὸν σεβασμὸν πρὸς  
τὸν Χριστόν που εἶχε ὁ πατέρας  
τοῦ υἱοῦ: <προσηλθὲν αὐτῷ αν-  
θρώπος γονυπετῶν αὐτὸν καὶ λεγ-  
ὼν...> (Ματθ. 17:14). Ἡ λέξις  
<γονυπετῶν> δεικνύει ὅτι ὁ πατέ-  
ρας εἶχε πολὺ σεβασμὸν γιὰ τὸν  
Θεάνθρωπον Χριστόν, ὅπως πρε-  
πεὶ νὰ ἐχοῦμεν ἐμεῖς.

Συνολικὰ, ἡ αγάπη εἶναι ἡ ἀρχὴ  
τῆς προσευχῆς. Ἡ πίστις εἶναι ἡ  
δύναμις τῆς προσευχῆς – καὶ ὁ  
φοβὸς Θεοῦ εἶναι ἡ ταπεινοφρο-  
σύνη μας ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ. Ἡ  
ἀρχὴ τῆς ταπεινοφροσύνης εἶναι  
ἡ ἀναγνώρισις μας ὅτι ἡ μὴ  
ἐλπίδα μας στεκεται στὴν αγάπην  
τοῦ Θεοῦ.

+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

great respect for Christ our God. In the same way, we are to respect our Lord in humility. In sum, *love* is the beginning of prayer; *faith* is the strength for prayer – and *fear of God* is humility. The beginning of humility is the acknowledgement that our only hope is the love of God.

From humility come love for God and love for neighbor. This is the mentality behind Orthodox worship – and worship is the expression of an entire life-style. Humility reminds one of his or her own weaknesses so that he or she places every hope in Christ. Through humility we place our hope in God and we participate in the Divine Liturgy as a community, sharing our common hope: “We entrust to You, loving Master, our whole life and hope. We ask, pray and entreat: make us worthy to partake of Your Heavenly and awesome Mysteries...with a pure conscience; for the forgiveness of transgressions; communion of the Holy Spirit, confidence (faith) in You...” This prayer is said during the Divine Liturgy prior to the Lord’s Prayer, which is itself a “blueprint” for a righteous life before God.

The Lord’s Prayer implies that we are to have *faith* that God gives us our “daily bread;” that God forgives us our trespasses (as we forgive others) and that He helps us avoid and overcome temptations and evil. Such is the *righteous life* lived with *faith*. St. Paul points out in today’s Epistle passage: “The righteous live from faith to faith.” (Romans 1:17). On the one hand, the term, “faith as much as a mustard seed” refers to our own personal level of faith. Even if we have but little faith, we should know that God’s power and love will carry us. On the other hand, the ministry of our Lord’s Church reached the far ends of the earth, having taken Her beginnings from only the small “mustard seed” of the twelve Apostles.

I like the words of Henri Nouwen in his book, *With Burning Hearts*: “It is not just the Eucharist, but the Eucharistic life that makes the difference...it is like yeast, like a mustard seed [our Lord’s words from today’s Gospel reading], it is what keeps faith, hope and love in a world that is constantly on the brink of self-destruction. The Eucharist is... the same event, revealing that life is stronger than death and love stronger than fear.” (pg. 92). When we say that the Divine Liturgy never ends, it means that we put into action the prayers and hymns of the Liturgy, with faith in the fact that life truly is stronger than death and that love is always stronger than fear.

+FR. THEODORE

**PRAY FOR THE SICK:** George Aeder, Adele Gallade, Kathy Ligeros, Argyroula Krespis (Nick Krespis’ mother), Constantine Papapetru, Erika Aguilar, Mary Mitsias, Nula Papapetru, Tom Evans, Jim Alex, Jean Chronis-Kuhn, Joanne George (*Many 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—**Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in His holy mountain.

**Refrain:** "Tes presvies tis Theotokou, Soter, soson imas."

**Verse 2—**He who prepares mountains in His strength, who is girded with power. You clothe Yourself with thanksgiving and majesty. Who cover Yourself with light as with a garment.

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

**Verse 3—** The mountains shall greatly rejoice at the presence of the Lord.

**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."

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**ANTIPHON II:** "Soson imas Ie Theou..." (Save us, O Son of God...)

**Verse 1—**His foundations are in the holy mountains. The Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.

**Refrain:** "Soson imas Ie Theou, O en to orhee to Thavor metamorfotheis, psallontas si alleluia."

**Verse 2 —**Glorious things were said concerning you, O city of God.

**Refrain:** "Save us, O Son of God, Who was Transfigured in glory on Mt. Tabor, we sing to You, Alleluia."

**Verse 3 —**A man will say, "Mother Zion," and a man was born in her; for the Most High Himself founded it.

**Refrain:** "Soson imas Ie Theou, O en to orhee to Thavor metamorfotheis, psallontas si alleluia."

**Doxa Patri ke Io ke Aghio Pnevmati ke nin ke aei ke eis tous eonas ton eonon. Amin**

**People:** "O Monogenis Ios ke Logos tou Theou..." (O Only-Begotten Son and Word of God...)

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**ANTIPHON III—** O Lord, I will sing of Your mercies forever; I will proclaim Your truth with my mouth from generation to generation. **Instead of "Dhefte proskinisoumen..." (We bow down...):** **Oti para Si peghee zoeis...** (For with You is the fountain of life; O Lord, in Your light we shall see light. Save us, O Son of God, risen from the dead.) — — — **Hymn for this Sunday: Tou lithou sfraghisthentos [Tone 1]...** (The stone that had been sealed before Your tomb by the Judeans and the soldiers guarding did watch over Your pure and sacred Body, O Savior, the third day You arose and unto all the world did You give life, whereby all the heavenly powers proclaim that You are the Giver of Life. Glory unto our Resurrected Christ; glory unto Your Kingdom; glory to Your dispensation, O You alone Who loves all.)

**Hymn for the Transfiguration:** Metemorfotheis en to orhee... (You were transfigured upon the mountain, O Christ our God, showing to Your disciples Your glory as much as they could bear. Do also in us, sinners though we may be, shine Your everlasting light, by the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Giver of light. Glory to You.)

**Hymn for St. George—** pg. 110 in our Divine Liturgy books.

**Kontakion Hymn:** Epi tou orous metemorfortheis... (On the mountain You were transfigured, O Christ our God, and Your disciples saw as much of Your glory as they could behold, that when they should see You crucified, they would know that You suffered by Your own will and would proclaim to all the world that You truly are the splendor of the Father.)

**READINGS:** Epistle— 1 Corinthians 4: 9-16/ Gospel— St. Matthew 17: 14-23

**Instead of "Axion Estin":** O tokos Sou afthoros ... (You gave birth without stain for it was God incarnate in the flesh Who came forth from Your womb. He was seen on earth and conversed with men. Wherefore, O Mother of God, we all exalt You.)

**Communion Hymn—** Enite ton Kyrion ...Praise the Lord... pg. 63 in our Divine Liturgy books. **NOTE:** After Holy Communion: "Metemorfotheis en to orhee..."



**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Coffee Hour: Tasia and J.J. Richards**

**PHILOPTOCHOS** – We need Coffee Hour sponsors or hosts for September 17 and 24. See Athena Snarskis. Mark your calendar for our Board Meeting on Monday, September 11 at 11:00 a.m. The General Meeting will be on Monday, September 18 at 11:30 a.m. A light lunch will be served and we plan to have a speaker segment. You don't want to miss it. Memberships are always open. If you would like to join or renew, see Linda Kallis.

**BOOKSTORE NEW ARRIVALS!**-Available now, "Orthodoxy & Heterodoxy-Finding the Way to Christ in a Complicated Religious Landscape" by Fr. Andrew Stephen Damick; "Our Thoughts Determine Our Lives-The Life & Teachings of Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica" by St.Herman of Alaska Brotherhood; "The Heavenly Banquet-Understanding the Divine Liturgy" by Fr. Emmanuel Hatzidakis; and our most popular books have been restocked.

**PLANNING AHEAD** – Looking ahead to next month, there are a few dates that are noteworthy:

Monday, September 11th – Festival Meeting – planning for the 2018 Greek Festival

Friday, September 15th – “Back After Summer Break” Coloring Session & Luncheon (See enclosed flier)

**WEEKDAY CALENDAR**

Monday, August 14th..... Great Vespers – 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, August 15th.....THE DORMITION OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS  
Orthros-8:30 a.m.

Divine Liturgy- 9:30 a.m.

Bible Study – 11:00 a.m.

Friday, August 18th.....Men’s Bible Study – 11:30

Bible Study Passages:  
1 Corinthians 9:2-12  
St. Matthew 18: 23-35

Saturday, August 19th.....Vespers – 5:00 p.m.

*“For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own free will, begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints – and this, not as we expected, but first they gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God. ..Now as you excel in everything – in faith, in utterance, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in your love for us – see that you excel in this gracious work also.”*

**-2 Corinthians 8: 1-5 & 7**

**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.**



# Adult Coloring

**Back after summer  
break! Coloring  
Session & Luncheon**

September 15, 2017  
12-2 pm

St. George Church hall

**RSVP by 9/9/17**

Please join us for our next adult coloring session on Friday, Sept. 15th at noon in our church hall.

Lunch begins at noon with coloring to follow.

\$5.00 minimum donation requested for lunch. Proceeds will be donated to the church.

Coloring pencils and coloring book sheets will be provided.

**RAFFLE PRIZES!**

RSVP to Rhonda Latkovic by 9/9/17