

AUGUST 20, 2017

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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THE LADDER



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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 LAND OF THE FREE?

I am horrified at how low we have fallen in our county ethically and religiously! Hate has nothing to do with the values of Christianity, since the two cornerstones of Christianity are love for God and love for neighbor in the context of the life-giving Resurrection of Jesus Christ our God. The love of God for all people is the real essence—the “heart and soul” – of the Bible. Whoever has hate is not a Christian and it is for this reason that it is forbidden, particularly for an Orthodox Christian, to identify himself or herself with

any hate group. It is not allowed for him or her to identify himself or herself with an atheistic political party, such as Communism, since atheism does not agree with faith in God.

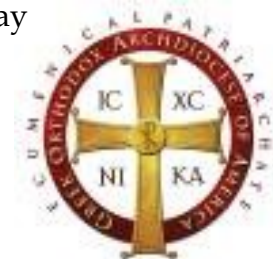
Obviously, the wicked servant of today’s Gospel passage was of the mentality that, regardless of the compassion shown to him by God, he continued to feel free to hate his neighbor. Listen to what St. John Chrysostom says about forgiveness: *“Jesus said: ‘Likewise will My Heavenly*
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THE MENTALITY OF FORGIVENESS – “The cure for anger, judgment, and resentment is forgiveness, pure and simple. No matter what terrible afflictions and unspeakable injustices have befallen us, we can be free of their negative effects on us through forgiveness.

I once asked a Romanian Orthodox priest named Fr. George Calciu about this. For twenty-one years he had been locked in Communist prisons, where he had endured the most unimaginable horrors ever perpetrated by human beings. And yet when I met him here in America, he was happy, joyful, like a child, totally free of any negative effects of this torture on his soul. He had found the secret of forgiveness. I asked him, “How can people overcome judgment?” He looked at me, almost with astonishment, and answered, “It’s simple. Just don’t judge!”

It’s truly simple. But we must keep in mind that we can’t do it on our own: We need God’s help to heal our fallen, wounded nature, to humble our pride. Therefore, as we pray for those who have hurt us, we should pray that God will *help* us to forgive, that He will soften our hard hearts, warm our cold hearts, and grant us a loving, merciful, and forgiving spirit.”

– Taken from Hieromonk Damascene, “Resentment & Forgiveness”; www.orthodoxinfo.com



Απορω πως εχουμεν κατανησει ηθικα και θρησκευτικα εδω στην χωραν μας! Δεν συγκρινεται ο μισος με τις αξιες του Χριστιανισμου, αφου οι δυο ακρογωνιαιοι λιθοι του Χριστιανισμου ειναι η αγαπη για τον Θεον και η αγαπη για τον πλησιον μας στο πλαισιο της Αναστασεως εκ νεκρων του Κυριου και Θεου ημων Ιησου Χριστου. Η αγαπη του Θεου για ολους τους ανθρωπους ειναι η πραγματικη ουσια της Αγιας Γραφης. Οποιος εχει μισος δεν ειναι Χριστιανος και για αυτον τον λογον απαγορευται ιδιαιτερα στον Ορθοδοξον Χριστιανον να ταυτισθη με οποιαδηποτε ομαδα μισους. Δεν επιτρεπεται να ταυτισθη με αθειστικο κομμα, οπως ειναι το Κομμουνιστικο κομμα, αφου ο αθεισμος δεν ταιριαζει με την πιστη μας στον Θεον.

Προφανως, ο κακος δουλος της σημερινης Ευαγγελικης περικοπης ηταν της νοοτορπιας που, ανεξαρτητα απο την συμπονια που του εδειξε ο Θεος, ακομη εξακουλουθουσε να αισθανεται ελευθερος να μισει τον πλησιον του. Ακουστε τι λεγει ο Αγιος Ιωαννης ο Χρυσοστομος για την συγχωρηση: <Ο Ιησους ειπε: ουτω ο Πατηρ Μου ο Επουρανιος ποιησει υμιν εαν μη αφητε εκαστος τω αδελφω αυτου απο των καρδιων υμων τα παρατωματα αυτων. Τιμωρουμεν τον εαυτον μας με το να μισουμεν τους αλλους ακομα εαν ωφελουμεν τον εαυτον μας, απο την αλλη πλευραν, με το να τους αγαπαμεν. Πανω απο ολα, θα κερδισουμεν την χαριν απο τον Θεου και εαν εχουμεν αμαρτιες ισες με χιλια ταλεντα θα ειναι ο Θεος συμπονετικος σε εμας και θα μας λυπηθη.> (Nicene-Post Nicene Fathers, Series 1, Vol. 10, σελ. 380).

+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

Father do unto you if you do not from your hearts forgive each of the sins of your brother.'...We punish ourselves by hating others, even as we benefit from them if we love them. Above all, we gain the favor of God, and if we have sins equal in number to ten thousand talents, God will be compassionate to us and have mercy." (Nicene-Post Nicene Fathers, Series 1, Vol 10., pg. 380).

Comparing the popular ideas of freedom to the teachings of our Orthodox Church, there exists a huge gap between these ideas and genuine Christian teachings. If we study the Bible and the lives of our Saints, we have to agree that the only freedom worth anything is the freedom to worship God. Nothing in the Bible suggests that we will be saved because we have our various other "freedoms." "Freedom of speech," for example, does not allow a Christian to lie; to slander; to speak hatred; to insult; to bear false witness. The Bible is clear about this. "Freedom to bear arms" is limited by the Orthodox Christian principle that the Holy Cross is "the only Weapon of peace." The "Freedom to pursue happiness," is greatly limited by the Christian virtue of "love thy neighbor." In short, Christians control and limit many "freedoms" in their prayer asking that God's Will be done. His Will is personified in the persons of Christ our God and the Theotokos and it is symbolized by the Cross. Self-control and sacrificial love are principles of Christianity that serve to place freedom more in the context of responsibility than in the context of "enjoyment."

Evaluating these principles against today's popular mentality, Christians need to examine themselves to see if they have not become like this "wicked servant" of today's Gospel passage, as people "grab each other by the throats" at various protest rallies. The story of the "wicked servant" is a short one: he was forgiven his massive debt and granted his freedom; as a free man, he turned against a fellow citizen and "grabbed him by the throat;" he then lost his freedom. All this because of his preoccupation with self interests. Consequently, his fellow countryman was simply an "object" that stood in his way.

Like many today, he "prayed," asking for mercy, but mercy means nothing unless one has God's wisdom: "Love prospers when fault is forgiven. A single word of correction does more to the wise than do a hundred lashes meted out on the backs of fools." (Proverbs 17: 9-10). From today's Gospel passage, as from the Lord's Prayer itself, we note that the purpose of forgiveness from God is solely for us to be like God by forgiving others and in this way to find salvation through love for neighbor. If it were impossible to forgive others, God would not have given to us even the ability to understand it as part of our nature.

+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—*Shout to God, all the earth. Sing now to His name; give glory to His praise. Give thanks to Him; praise His name.*

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

Verse 2—*In the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God.*

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

Verse 3—*His place was made in peace and His dwelling in Zion.*

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—*The Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things were said concerning you, O city of God.*

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

Verse 2 —*God established her forever. We pondered Your mercy, O God, in the midst of Your temple .*

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

Verse 3 —*The Most High sanctified His tabernacle.*

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. Amin

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

ANTIPHON III—*My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready; I will sing and give praise in my glory.*

Hymn for this Sunday: *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 the Dormition of the Theotokos: *En ti ghenisee tin parthenian...(In giving birth you retained your virginity, and in dormition you did not forsake the world, O Theotokos. You were translated unto life, being the Mother of Life. And thus by virtue of your intercessions you deliver our souls from death.)*

Hymn for St. George—*Os ton echmaloton eleftherotis...(Since you are a deliverer of captives and a defender of the poor; a physician for the sick and a noble attendant to kings, O Great among the Martyrs and Glorious George, intercede with Christ our God that He may save our souls.)*

Kontakion Hymn: *Tin en presvee-ahs akimiton Theoton...(The Theotokos, unsleeping in intercession and the immovable hope of protection, could not be retained by any tomb or death. For being Life's own Mother, she was transferred to life by Him who dwelt in the ever-virgin womb.)*

READINGS: *Epistle— 1 Corinthians 9: 2-12/ Gospel— St. Matthew 18: 23-35*

Axion Estin.

Communion Hymn— *Enite ton Kyrion ...Praise the Lord... pg. 63 in our Divine Liturgy books.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Coffee Hour: Presvytera Petula Pantels

MEMORIAL – Today’s Memorial Service is for the Eternal Rest and Salvation for the servant of God, **Andrew and Anastasia Demetropoulos (57 years)** the beloved parents of **Mr. Nicholas Demetropoulos**, and **Thomas, Victoria and Dorothy Demetropoulos**, his beloved brother and sisters. May our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ grant Eternal Rest and Salvation to **Andrew, Anastasi, Thomas, Victoria and Dorothy Demetropoulos** and may He grant peace and comfort to **Mr. Nicholas Demetropoulos**. **MAY THEIR MEMORIES BE ETERNAL!**

PHILOPTOCHOS – Mark the date for the first meeting of the season. The General Meeting will be on Monday, September 18 at 11:30 a.m. We will have a light lunch and then Pres. Petula will speak on the history of icons. After the speaker segment we will have a short meeting. Plan to come and get together for an enjoyable afternoon. The Board Meeting will be on Monday, September 11 at 11:00 a.m.

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:

Thursday, September 7th- Choir Practice – 1:00 p.m.

Sunday, September 10th – First Sunday of Choir following the summer break

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

Friday, September 15th – “Back After Summer Break” Coloring Session & Luncheon (See flier posted in the parish hall)

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

Tuesday, August 22nd..... Bible Study – 12:30 a.m.

Thursday, August 24th.....Parish Council – 1:00 p.m.

Friday, August 25th.....Men’s Bible Study – 11:30

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

“My son, do not envy evil men; neither desire to be with them; for their heart ponders a lie and their lips speak of sufferings...It is better to be wise having discernment than to have a large estate; war comes with the skill of a commander. But, help comes with the heart of a counselor. Wisdom and good thinking are in the gates of the wise; the wise do not turn away from the mouth of the Lord, but they deliberate with councils. Death happens to the uninstructed and one who has no discernment will die in sins.” – Proverbs 24: 1-2;5-8

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