

DECEMBER 16, 2018

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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THE LADDER

SUNDAY OF THE HOLY FOREFATHERS

PUTTING SIN TO DEATH

The excuses that we give as reasons for not praying; for not participating in worship; for not choosing our words carefully and for not behaving properly, are based on the idea that we do not need to repent from such sins that are considered to be "only human."

In his Epistle to the Colossians, St. Paul lists sins which are to be put to death, as he puts it, through repentance and the resolve to not commit these sins again.

Sin darkens our true humanity, because "little sins" and sins "that are only human" multiply and grow becoming *grave* sins, from which arise major conflicts and even wars.

"Sins of thought" are: evil desires; jealousy; lustfulness; wrath and hatred. "Sins of deed" are: gossip, hate speech, abuse and falsehood.

For us to put to death these "only-human" sins, a total change of attitude towards God and our fellow

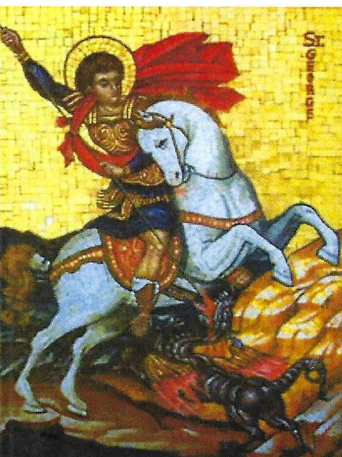
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SUNDAY OF THE HOLY FOREFATHERS

On the Sunday that occurs on or immediately after December 11th every year, we commemorate Christ's forefathers according to the flesh, both those that came before the Law, and those that lived after the giving of the Law.

Special commemoration is made of the Patriarch Abraham, to whom the promise was first given, when God said to him, "*In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed*" (Gen. 22:18). This promise was given some two thousand years before Christ, when Abraham was seventy-five years of age. God called him and commanded him to forsake his country, parents, and kinsmen, and to depart to the land of the Canaanites. When he arrived there, God told him, "*I will give this land to thy seed*" (Gen. 12:7); for this cause, that land was called the "*Promised Land*," which later became the country of the Hebrew people, and which is also called Palestine by the historians. There, after the passage of twenty-four years, Abraham received God's law concerning circumcision. When Abraham was 100 years old and his wife, Sarah was 90, they became the parents of Isaac. Having lived 175 years altogether, he reposed in peace, a venerable elder of many years.

--Taken from www.goarch.org



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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.

Οι δικαιολογίες που αναφέρουμε ως λόγους για τους οποίους δεν προσευχόμεθα...δεν εκκλησιαζόμεθα...δεν προσέχουμε τα λόγια μας και τις πράξεις μας, ριζώνονται στην γνώμη ότι δεν έχει ο άνθρωπος ανάγκη να μετανοήσει από <ανθρώπινες αμαρτίες.>

Στην επιστολήν του προς τους Κολασσαείς, ο Άγιος Παύλος αρραδιάζει αμαρτίες που πρέπει να <θανατώσουμε,> διά μέσων της μετανοίας και των προσπαθειών μας να μην ξανα-κάνουμε αυτές τις αμαρτίες. Οι αμαρτίες τις οποίες ανέφερε ο Άγιος Παύλος θεωρούνται, ίσως, ως <ανθρώπινες> αμαρτίες - δηλ., αμαρτίες τις οποίες όλοι πράττουν. Η αμαρτία, όμως, αμαυρώνει την αληθινή μας ανθρωπότητα, διότι οι <μικρές> και <ανθρώπινες> αμαρτίες, ακόμη, πολλαπλασιάζονται και γίνονται μεγάλες αμαρτίες, από τις οποίες έρχονται ολόκληρες διχόνοιες και πολέμους.

Είναι <αμαρτίες διαλογισμών> και <αμαρτίες πράξεων.> Οι <αμαρτίες διαλογισμών> είναι: η κακή επιθυμία, η ζήλια, η ακαθαρσία, ο θυμός, ο μίσος. Οι <αμαρτίες πράξεων> είναι: η κουτσομπολιά, η άσχημη συζήτησις, η κατάχρησις, το ψεύδος.

Για να θανατώσουμε αυτές τις αμαρτίες, είναι ανάγκη να αλλάξουμε την ολόκληρή μας στάση προς τον Θεόν και προς τον συνάνθρωπόν μας. Αυτό γίνεται διά μέσου πραγματικής μετανοίας, η οποία περιλαμβάνει μιά ασκητικήν ζωήν, η οποία επίσης περιλαμβάνει μελέτην της Αγίας Γραφής και τα γραπτά των Αγίων...την καθημερινήν προσευχήν και την υπακοήν προς τις συμβουλές των πνευματικών αρχηγών μας και τις διδασκαλίες της Εκκλησίας.

+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

human being is needed. This happens through sincere repentance, which includes spiritual effort and involves study of Holy Scripture and the writings of the Church's Saints, as well as daily prayer, and obedience to the advice of those who are spiritually mature (priests, parents, elders), as well as obedience to the overall teachings of the Church.

Responding to our Lord's invitation to participate in His Heavenly Banquet (the Divine Liturgy) is a matter of understanding that sin prevents us from the blessing of this Banquet, which is indeed life itself. If we do not want to fully participate in the Divine Liturgy, how do we expect to participate in the Eternal Banquet? Rejecting His Kingdom is a matter of selling our souls in exchange for temporary benefits - and, to the extreme - selling our souls to evil forces. How many times have people committed terrible crimes over earthly territory, or for "the family," or for personal aggrandizement?!

The excuses offered in our Lord's Parable from today's Gospel passage involve the following "reasons" for rejecting God: 1. The importance of property; 2. the importance of laws and "tools" for status and prosperity; 3. the importance of "the family."

1. "The piece of ground" is concern over possessions. The ground and the crops it yields are God's property, which will exist well after we leave this present life. as noted in the Parable of the rich man who wanted to build bigger barns.

2. "The five yoke of oxen" is concern over the law and our "tools of labor" that supposedly guarantee our social status and dreams of self-sufficiency -- the which give rise to various deceptive fantasies.

3. The "wife" is concern for "the family." By making "the family" more important than God, people lose spouses and children to the vices of this world.

Rejecting God in favor of these concerns turns us into idol-worshippers. In losing God, we lose our personal relationships and our moral compass. This is the spiritual death in this life to which sin leads us. In essence, as St. Paul suggests, either we allow sin to put *us* to death, or we put *sin* to death. Putting sin to death is done by working with Christ our God, Who is always inviting us to join Him at His Heavenly Banquet.

+FR. THEODORE

"You shall do no injustice in judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great." -- Leviticus 19: 15

"So whatever you wish that men would do for you, do so to them; for this is the law and the prophets." -- St. Matthew 7: 12

HYMNS FOR THIS SUNDAY'S CELEBRATION OF THE DIVINE LITURGY:

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."

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, Who 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. Amin

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

ANTIPHON III– *This is the day the Lord made; let us greatly rejoice and be glad therein*

Sunday Resurrection Hymn: To fedron tis anastaseos kirygama [Tone 4]...(When the tidings of the Resurrection from the glorious angel was proclaimed unto the women disciples and our ancestral sentence also had been abolished, to the Apostles with boasting did they proclaim that death is vanquished ever more and Christ our God has Risen from the dead and granted to the world the Great Mercy.)

Hymn for the Holy Forefathers: En pisti tous Propatores...(By faith You justified the Forefathers, having through them betrothed to yourself the Church that came out of the nations. The saints are boasting in glory; for the glorious fruit, the Virgin who without seed gave birth to You, is from their progeny. At their entreaties, O Christ our God, save our souls.)

Hymn for St. George: Os ton ehmaloton 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 for this Sunday: Ee Parthenos Simeron ...(On this day the Virgin Maid goes to the grotto to give birth to the pre-eternal Word in an ineffable manner. Dance for joy, all the inhabited earth, on hearing. Glorify along with Angels and with the shepherds Him who willed that He appear as a newborn Child, the pre -eternal God.)

READINGS: EPISTLE – Colossians 3:4-11 -- / **GOSPEL** – St. Luke 14: 16-24

Axion Estin, page 52 in our Divine Liturgy books

Communion Hymn: Enite ton Kyrion... (Praise the Lord...), page 64 in our Divine Liturgy books.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Coffee Hour: Mary Piggott

SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM- Today, following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.

PARISH ELECTIONS - Election Committee: Nancy Breighner, Alexandra Dymond, Pat Dalkas. Election for 2019 Parish Council members following the Christmas Program. Only members of the parish in good standing may vote.

PHILOPTOCHOS- Today is the last day of the Philoptochos Christmas Bake Sale. Our delicious bake goods have been made with the same tried and true church recipes, no changes have been made. Buy your bread and cookies today. We had a successful Christmas Party last Saturday with good food, live entertainment and door prizes solicited by **Rhonda Latkovic**. Last Wednesday we made the shut-in baskets filled with bread, cookies and our Christmas card along with personal products, adult coloring books and pencils for our home bound parishioners. They were delivered the same day. Thank you to all who came to help. **SAVE THE DATE!** Our **Taverna Night Dinner Dance** will be on **Saturday, January 12, 2019**.

ALTAR FLOWER BOUQUETS - Following is the Contributors and Dedication for Sunday, December 16th, 2018: **Both bouquets are dedicated by Mr. and Mrs. William Piggott; "For our love and dedication to all the wonderful parishioners of our church, St. George Greek Orthodox Church, may God bless you all!** We ask all January participants in providing Altar Flower Bouquets to please pay for their orders Now! If they should have any questions to see **Louise Dobbs Barringer**. Also, remember to make all checks out to **St. George Church**, and to enter the **month and date** of their contributions in the **memo column** of their check(s).

TOY DONATIONS FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN NEEDED -Please bring new, unwrapped toys to the church by **Monday, Dec. 17th** & place in our **donation box** or consider a **monetary donation** (cash or check) & we will purchase the toys which will be distributed at two StreetLifeProject events on **December 18th & 20th**.

STREETLIFE PROJECT CHRISTMAS FOR THE HOMELESS EVENTS- Please join us on **Tuesday, Dec. 18th, 6:00 pm** in **Indio** or **Thursday, Dec. 20th, 6:00 pm** in **Palm Springs** to distribute food and serve Christmas cookies, iced by our Adult Coloring Group, to the homeless. Please see **Rhonda Latkovic** today for information. Call or text (714) 875-4661 2019

STEWARDSHIP PACKETS AVAILABLE --We will distribute the 2019 Stewardship packets, including the new pledge cards after Divine Liturgy. Please see **Rhonda Latkovic** at the Stewardship table in the church hall.

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

Monday, December 17th.....ST. DIONYSIOS OF ZAKYNTHOS
Orthros-8:30 a.m. / Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.
Tuesday, December 18th.....Bible Study - 10:00 a.m.
Thursday, December 20th.....Choir Practice-1:00 p.m.
Saturday, December 22nd.....Sunday School Christmas Caroling - 10:30 a.m.

*The LADDER for December, 2018
is sponsored by
Rhonda & Nick Latkovic*

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 in order that you may easily take your children for a break, as needed. If necessary, we have a "crying room" in the vestibule for your use. God Bless.