

FEBRUARY 4, 2018

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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THE LADDER

THE PRODIGAL SON

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 JOY OF THE DIVINE LITURGY

The Parable of the Prodigal Son provides us with visions of:

- 1) Sin and Repentance
- 2) God's Love and Forgiveness
- 3) The Divine Liturgy, the "Kingdom of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit."
- 4) Pride

When the Prodigal Son asked for his inheritance from his father, it was tantamount to wishing that his father was dead. It was his "declaration of independence" from his father, much like we are tempted to be free and indepen-

dependent from God. It was the same temptation that led to the fall of Adam and Eve. It makes up much of today's thinking suggesting that the Bible and God's Church are "old fashioned" and irrelevant. With this temptation and the sin that follows from it, one is divorced from the grace of God's love, which is the source of true wisdom. Thus, we are pulled away from "our senses" (i.e. God's wisdom), and we are left only with a mentality dictating that the only goal in life is to seek personal pleasures. In leaving his father,
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NOTES ABOUT THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON AS VIEWED IN THE TRADITION OF THE SAINTS OF OUR CHURCH

1. The Prodigal Son's request for his portion of goods indicates Man receiving his free will and his rational mind from God. As Adam did in Eden, the younger son uses these possessions to rebel against his father. The far away country represents life in exile from God.
2. The "feeding swine" could rightly be called "Jewish Skid Row." The Prodigal Son could not have sunk any lower.
3. The Prodigal Son "came to himself." A person immersed in sin is living outside his true self (Romans 7:17-20). The Prodigal realizes his hopeless condition. The bread symbolizes Christ, Who is known through the Scriptures and the Eucharist.
4. The father ran to the Prodigal. This self-humiliation for the sake of the lost indicates the way in which our Heavenly Father, through Christ's sacrifice, actively seeks those who go astray.
5. The robe signifies baptism (righteousness); the ring is family identity (life in the Church) and the sandals refer to walking according to the Gospel (Source: *Orthodox Study Bible*, pg. 1397)



Η παραβολή του Ασωτού Υιού μας παρέχει τυπούς:

- 1) Της αμαρτίας και μετανοίας
- 2) Της αγάπης και συγχωρησεως του Θεου.
- 3) Της Θ. Λειτουργίας, η οποία είναι επίσης <η Βασιλεία του Πατρός και του Υιού και του Αγίου Πνεύματος.>
- 4) Του εγωισμού.

Όταν ο Ασωτός εξήτησε την κληρονομία του από τον πατέρα του ισόδυναμωσε με την επιθυμία του για τον θάνατο του πατέρα του. Αντιπροσωπεύει τους πειρασμούς μας να εμείς ανεξάρτητοι από τον Θεό με σκοπό την αναζητησμένη προσωπικών απολαύσεων. Με το <επανερχεται στον εαυτό του> συνειδητοποιήσε ο Ασωτός ότι δεν έκανε καλά και ήθελε να μετανοήσει.

Όπως ο πατέρας στην παραβολή του Ασωτού, ο Επουράνιος Πατέρας μας αγαπά και συγχωρεί τις αμαρτίες μας. Δια μέσου της συγχωρησεως, ο Ιδιός ο Θεός είναι <χαρούμενος> διότι η μετανοία είναι η οδός πίσω στην Βασιλείαν Του, όπως το είπε ο Χριστός ο Θεός ότι υπάρχει χαρά στον ουρανό για έναν αμαρτωλό που μετανοεί (Λκ. 15:7). Είναι η χαρά που ο Θεός μοιράζεται μαζί μας και μπορούμε να βιώσουμε αυτή την χαρά μόνο όταν συγχωρούμε τον συνάνθρωπό μας. Αυτή η χαρά χαρακτηρίζει την εκτέλεση της Θ. Λειτουργίας.

Ο αδελφός του Ασωτού δεν είχε τέτοια χαρά για την επιστροφή του ασώτου αδελφού του. Η απουσία αυτής της χαράς είναι καρπός του εγωισμού – και με αυτό εμείς για παντοτε εξώ από την <βασιλείαν> του πατέρα του.
+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

Who represents our Heavenly Father, the Prodigal Son became truly lost. He created his reality by ignoring his conscience regarding good and evil. The “coming to his senses” was the realization that all was not well. The Prodigal’s own words bear witness to this: “*I perish here with hunger.*” The realization of his predicament prompts his humility: “*I am not worthy to be called your son.*” His humility is an expression of his wounded relationship with his father, who he knows is good. Without the knowledge of his father’s goodness, rather than humility, he could have felt despair, whereby his words might have been, “*I am not worthy to live.*” Faith in God is pivotal in terms of repentance and repentance is the beginning of inner joy.

Like the father depicted in the Parable, our Heavenly Father loves us and forgives us our sins. Granting forgiveness is the cause of great joy for our Lord, who reminded us that there is joy in heaven over even one sinner who repents (St. Luke 15:7). This joy is the Divine joy that God shares with us and can only be experienced when we forgive another person. Absence of this joy from within our hearts puts our salvation in jeopardy. God implanted the capacities of love and forgiveness in our souls when He created us and we know this because our Lord does not ask us to do anything that we are incapable of doing. Through love and forgiveness we become like God as having been created in His image and likeness.

The banquet given by the father for the return of his way-ward son is the image of the Divine Liturgy and the Kingdom of Heaven. The Divine Liturgy is known as the Heavenly Banquet, given by God with joy for our salvation. This is the cause of our *thanksgiving to God*. It is the joy of the Divine Liturgy.

The absence of joy for forgiveness is indicated in the Parable by the refusal of the Prodigal’s brother to enter into the banquet given by his father for the return of his way-ward brother. His entire justification for not sharing in the joy over his brother’s return was based on what he felt was owed to him. The Prodigal’s brother exemplifies pride. Pride comes from thoughts about ourselves and for ourselves, having nothing to do with God. Such thoughts are called *temptations*. Almost unconsciously, then, we feel *deserving* of favors, without even working at acquiring Christ-like virtues through which good things happen. Much anger arises from feeling “cheated” out of what we think we deserve - mostly based on deceptions springing from not “having our senses.” The anger of the Prodigal’s brother was expressed in terms of disobedience to his father and the absence of joy for his brother’s return. As a result, he remained outside of the banquet - a vision of remaining forever outside God’s Kingdom.

+FR. THEODORE

PRAY FOR THE SICK: George Aeder, Adele Gallade, Erika Aguilar, Tom Evans, Jim Alex, Nicholas Kyriakou, Chris Laskaris, J.J. Richards, Spiro Canakis, Chris Panopoulos, Deno Mastarakos, Atlas Palos, Matthew Gray, Tasso Zambaras (*many 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—My heart overflowed with a good word. I tell my works to the King. My tongue is the pen of a swift-writing scribe.

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

Verse 2—Grace was poured out on Your lips.

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

Verse 3— Therefore God blessed You forever.

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— Gird Your sword upon Your thigh, O Mighty One, in Your splendor and Your beauty.

Refrain: *"Soston imas Ie Theou, O en angales tou dhikaiou Symeon Vastachtheis, psallontas si alleluia."*

Verse 2 —And stretch Your bow, and grant prosperity, and reign because of truth, gentleness, and righteousness, and Your right hand shall guide You wondrously.

Refrain: *"Save us, O Son of God Who was held in the arms of Righteous Symeon, we sing to You, Alleluia."*

Verse 3 — Your arrows are sharp, O Mighty One (The peoples shall fall under You), in the heart of the King's enemies. Your royal scepter is a scepter of uprightness.

Refrain: *"Soston imas Ie Theou, O en angales tou dhikaiou Symeon Vastachtheis, 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— Listen, O daughter, behold and incline your ear, and forget your people and your father's house. The rich among the people shall entreat your favor. I will remember your name, generation to generation.

Sunday Resurrection Hymn — 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 Presentation of Christ — Hherry ke haritomeni Theotoke...(Lady full of grace, rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos, for Christ our God, the Sun of righteousness has risen from you and He illumined those in darkness. And you, righteous Elder, be glad in heart, receiving in your embraces the One who liberates our souls and bestows on us the Resurrection.)

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 for this Sunday—O mitran parthenikin aghiasas...(You sanctified the virginal womb by Your birth, O Lord, and blessed the hands of Symeon fittingly, O Christ God; and even now You came and saved us. Now, give peace to our Nation in time of war, and empower our Leaders, so loved by You, the only one who loves humanity.)

READINGS: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 / Gospel— St. Luke 15: 11-32



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Coffee Hour: Philoptochos Bake Sale Fundraiser for the purchase of an AED machine and to observe "GO RED FOR WOMEN" Day.

PHILOPTOCHOS - GO RED FOR WOMEN. We hope you are wearing red today. We are taking a group picture in the hall to send to Metropolis to show our support. See Rhonda. Don't forget it's our Bake Sale today with our members making their favorite desserts to sell. Buy one for your Super Bowl Party. We need Hostesses or Sponsors for our Coffee Hour in March. We are planning to have Lenten snacks. See **Athena Snarskis** or **Pat Dalkas** to get Lenten recipes.

2018 FESTIVAL – Our annual Greek Festival is only two weeks away! In our parish hall, please find the 2018 Volunteer for the Festival Forms. See **Jim Christopoulos** in the parish hall today to sign up as a volunteer for this year's St. George Greek Festival. Also, in our parish hall, please find **Festival fliers to be distributed throughout the community.** Finally, plan to attend our **final Festival meeting for the year tomorrow evening at 7:00 p.m.**

AHEPA - Super Bowl Party today, February 4, 2018 at 3:00 p.m. We look forward to fellowship in enjoying the Super Bowl. During "half-time," a review of AHEPA upcoming plans and projects will be provided to those in attendance. A donation of \$20 would be most generous in order to cover the costs of pizza and refreshments and to offer some support for the AHEPA Fr. T. P. Theophilos Memorial Scholarship Fund. See our "Super Bowl flier" in our parish hall.

YIAYIA'S ATTIC –It's that time of year again! Yiayia's Attic is gathering treasures for the Festival's "Yiayia's Attic" Booth. Please start organizing your donations now! Call **Becky Allen** at (760) 699-5439 for details and/or questions. Items may be brought to our parish at any time.

NICHOLAS KONTAXIS ART EXHIBIT - Mark March 17, 2018 on your calendars from now and plan to bring your relatives, friends and neighbors to a fabulous art show, exhibiting the paintings of **Nicholas Kontaxis**, at the Heather James Fine Art Studio at 45188 Portola Ave., Palm Desert. Details are posted on the bulletin board in the parish hall.

LEMONS NEEDED - We need lemons for the Festival. Contact Lula Valissarakos to make arrangements to donate lemons needed for the appetizers.

SAVE THE DATE - Saturday, April 14th is the date set for our annual St. George Golf Tournament.

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

- Monday, February 5th.....Festival Preparations continue - 9:00 a.m.
Festival Meeting - 7:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, February 6th..... Bible Study - 11:00 a.m.
- Thursday, February 8th..... Choir Practice - 1:00 p.m.
Parish Council - 2:30 p.m.
- Saturday, February 10th.....SATURDAY OF SOULS (St. Haralambos)
Orthros-8:30 a.m. / Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.
Vespers- 5:00 p.m.

The Ladder for February 2018 is sponsored by: Annette Lewis in loving memory of her beloved husband, Skip Lewis

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.