

**JANUARY 14, 2018**

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

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# THE LADDER

SUNDAY AFTER THEOPHANY

## 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 GODPARENT'S OIL

St. Paul emphasizes: *"Each one of us has been given grace according to the measure of Christ...so that we all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God."* (Ephesians 4: 7-13). The blessing that Christ grants to each person is not given for the purpose of keeping it to ourselves. Instead, God's gifts are to be shared and used for the salvation of those around us.

The Holy Tradition of the Church in relation to the role of godparents is founded in part on the words of St. Paul.

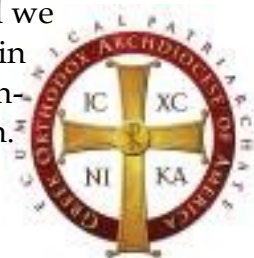
The blessings that Christ grants to are to be transmitted to one who is newly baptized through the godparent, who makes every effort to live in accordance with the teachings of the Church. The godparent, together with the parents, assumes the responsibility for the spiritual nourishment of the child. If it is an adult who is baptized, the godparent coaches him or her in living a spiritual way of life in line with the Holy Tradition of the Church. This responsibility is represented in the act of

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## REPENTANCE AND BAPTISM

In today's Gospel passage, we heard the words of our Lord, *"Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand."* (St. Matthew 4 :17). The word "repentance" means to change one's way of thinking – literally, in Greek: *"meta: change; enno-oh: I understand/ I mean"* (*"change the way I understand or mean things"*). But, its full meaning lies only in the context of our relationship with God. Hence, *repentance* involves a rejection of pride, evil, sin and all the powers of a world without God and an acceptance of Christ, Who is God. Repentance is, in sum, a *changed personality*...one that has nothing in common with the ways of the "old Adam and Eve," which we say make us "only human," but one that is in common with the "new Adam (Who is Christ)" and the "new Eve (Who is the Blessed Theotokos)," making us Saints of our Lord. Life with God begins with baptism, which is accomplished through the prayers of the Church.

Because we are weak, we become distracted from God's Will and we say and do things that are contrary to God's Law. Hence, we are in need of repeated repentance, time and again, which is accomplished through the "second" baptism, also known as Holy Confession. Christ our God has paved the way for us to participate in His Baptism by His Baptism in the Jordan, which is also the reality of His death and Resurrection. +FR. THEODORE



Ο Απ. Παυλος το τονιζει: <ενι εκαστω ημων εδοθη η χαρις κατα το μετρον της δωρεας του Χριστου...μεχρι καταντησωμεν οι παντες εις την ενοτητα της πιστεως και της επιγνωσεως του Υιου του Θεου.> (Εφ. 4:7-13). Η ευλογία την οποιαν χαριζει ο Χριστος στον καθεναν δεν διδεται με σκοπον να την κρατουμεν μονον για τον εαυτον μας. Μαλιστα, τα δωρα του Θεου ανηκουν στον Θεον και εχουν σκοπον να χρησιμοποιουνται για την σωτηριαν ολων γυρω μας.

Στα λογια αυτα του Απ. Παυλου στεκεται και η Ιερα Παραδοσις της Εκκλησιας σε σχεση με τον ρολο του αναδοχου. Οι ευλογιες τις οποιες ο Χριστος χαριζει στον καθεναν, μεταδιδονται στους νεοφωτιστους δια μεσου του ζωντανου Χριστιανικου παραδηγηματος του αναδοχου, ο οποιος κανει καθε προσπαθειαν να ζει συμφωνα με τις διδασκαλιες της Εκκλησιας. Ο αναδοχος αναλαμβανει την ευθυνην να συνεργαζεται παντοτε με τους γονεις για την ψυχικην αναθρεψιν του νηπιου. Εαν ειναι μεγαλος ο νεοφωτιστος, ο αναδοχος τον καθοδηγει κατα την πνευματικην ζωην συμφωνα με την Ιεραν Παραδοσην της Εκκλησιας. Αυτη η ευθυνη αντιπροσωπευεται δια της αλειψεως με το λαδι, το οποιο, μετα την ευχην του ιερεως γινεται <ελαιον αγαλλιασεως> και <χρισμα αφθαρσιας.>

Ο αναδοχος ειναι αντιπροσωπος του πιστου λαου της Εκκλησιας. Για αυτον τον λογον επιβαλεται να ειναι ο ιδιος βαπτισμενος κατα τις διαταξεις της Ορθοδοξου Εκκλησιας και, εαν ειναι εγγαμος, να ειχε γινη ο γαμος του δια της ευλογιες της Εκκλησιας.  
+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

anointing with oil, which, following the prayers said by the priest, becomes “the oil of eternal joy...the oil of immortality.” As the person representing the Church’s people, it is required that he or she be a baptized and chrismated Orthodox Christian and that, if married, the marriage took place according to the blessings of the Orthodox Church.

In that we live in a transient world, admittedly it is difficult to follow our godchildren when their parents are transferred to other locales due to employment needs. What godparents can do, however, is to stay in touch as best as possible with the parents and their godchildren and, try to provide an example of one living a life dedicated to Christ. We should make every effort to include our godchildren in the prayer lists that are given to the priest when we offer altar bread (“prosforo”) for the Divine Liturgy.

The anointing of the godchild with oil is an important part of the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. According to the theologian-monk Maximos Agioritis, author of the book, *The Guide Unto Salvation*, in which he explains the performances of the Holy Sacraments, “Oil was used in ancient times as a curative for wounds. Now, outside the Church of Christ, people are at risk to suffer wounds throughout their whole bodies and souls. Therefore, one who is being baptized unto Christ is covered with this oil for their entire well-being. As wrestlers of old would cover themselves with oil before a match so that they could not be easily grabbed by their opponents, so now, with God’s strength and the protection of the Church, the newly baptized are in the position of escaping the grasp of the common enemies of humanity, who are always pushing for faithlessness and sinful behavior.” (pg.61).

As Orthodox Christians, we have all been given this oil and, as Orthodox Christians, we in turn give this oil to others for their salvation. This oil represents our entire Christian life style, which is to be an inspiration for others throughout our world – in other words, to become Saints of our Lord. Fr. Alexander Schmemmann writes, “The fight of the new Adam against the old Adam is a long and painful one...The one true sadness [that we can note] is ‘that of not being a saint,’ and how often [we] the ‘moral’ Christians are precisely among those who never feel, never experience the sadness (of not being a saint), because their own ‘experience of salvation,’ the feeling of ‘being saved’ fills them with self-satisfaction [and thus] they cannot thirst and hunger for the total transformation and transfiguration of life which alone makes saints.” (For the Life of the World, pg.79). The godparent’s oil joins with the Gift of the Holy Spirit (the Chrismation Oil) to help each one of us become truly Saints of God in this present age.  
FR. THEODORE

**PRAY FOR THE SICK:** George Aeder, Adele Gallade, Constantine Papapetru, Erika Aguilar, Tom Evans, Jim Alex, Nicholas Kyriakou, Chris Laskaris, J.J. Richards, Spiro Canakis, Chris Panopoulos (*Many faithful on the 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:** In the exodus of Israel from Egypt, the house of Jacob from a foreign people. Judah became His sanctuary, and Israel His authority.

*Refrain—Through the prayers of the Theotokos, Savior, save us.*

**Verse 2:** The sea saw them and fled, the Jordan turned back.

*Refrain—Tes presveies tis Theotokou, Soter soston imas.*

**Verse 3:** What is it to you, O Sea, that you fled, and to you, O Jordan, that you turned back?

*Refrain—Through the prayers of the Theotokos, Savior, save us.*

Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit both now and ever and to the ages of ages. Amen

*Refrain - Through the prayers of the Theotokos, Savior, save us.*

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

**Verse 1:** I have loved, because the Lord shall hear the voice of my supplication. For He inclined His ear to me, and in my days I shall call upon Him.

*Refrain— Save us, O Son of God, who were baptized in the Jordan by John. we sing to You, Alleluia.*

**Verse 2:** The pains of death surrounded me; the dangers of Hades found me.

*Refrain— Soston imas, Yie Theou, O en Iordani ipo Ioannou vaptistheis, psallontas Yie, Allilouia.*

**Verse 3:** The Lord is merciful and righteous, and our God has mercy.

*Refrain— Save us, O Son of God, who were baptized in the Jordan by John. we sing to You, 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-** *Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endures forever. Let the house of Israel say that He is good, for His mercy endures forever. Let the house of Aaron say that He is good, for His mercy endures forever. Let all who fear the Lord say that He is good, for His mercy endures forever.*

**Sunday Resurrection Hymn**—*Katelisas to Stavro Sou ton thanaton [Tone 7]... (O Lord by Your sacred Cross You abolished death and granted unto the thief blessed paradise. The Myrrh-bearers ceased lamenting and turned to joy. The Apostles did preach the good news at Your command that You had risen from the dead, O Christ our God, bestowing Your mercy upon the world evermore.)*

**Hymn of the Holy Theophay:** *En Iordani vaptizomenou ... (As You were baptized in the Jordan, O Lord, then the worship of the Trinity became manifest, for the voice of the Father bore witness to You, naming You the Beloved Son; and the Spirit, in the form of a dove, confirmed the certainty of the word. O Christ God, who appeared and illumined the world, glory to You.)*

**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-** *Epephanis simeron... (You appeared today to us on earth, O Master, and Your light was signed on us who cry aloud to You and say with understanding, O Christ our God: You came and shone forth, O Light unapproachable.)*

**READINGS:** *Epistle—Ephesians 4: 7-13 / Gospel—St. Matthew 4: 12-17*

**Instead of Axion Estin, the following is sung:** *Meghalinon psychi mou... (O my soul, magnify the ever-virgin Maid who from the curse has redeemed us. O all spotless Bride, surpassing comprehension are the wonders of your childbirth, blessed Mother! Through you obtaining comprehensive salvation, we bring you a gift in striking up this worthy hymn of gratitude to You our Benefactress.)*

**Communion Hymn**—*Epefani ee chareis tou Theou, ee sotirios pasin anthropeis, allilouia. (The grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all. Allelouia)/ Enite ton Kyrion.*



**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Coffee Hour: Tasia Richards (in memorial for her Aunt Aspasia Soumalias)**

**MEMORIAL** - Today’s Memorial Service is for the Eternal Life and salvation for the servant of God, **Aspasia Soumalias (40 days)**, who fell asleep in the Lord in Athens, Greece, and is the beloved aunt of **Anastasia Richards**. May our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ grant Eternal Rest to **Aspasia Soumalias** and may He grant peace and comfort to **Anastasia Rishards** and her entire family. **MAY HER MEMORY BE ETERNAL!**

**STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY** -If you haven’t already turned in your 2018 Stewardship Pledge Card and, if you have it with you now, please place it in the offering tray today. If you did not bring your Stewardship Pledge Card with you, please take one and place it in the offering tray today so that it, along with the others, will be blessed by Fr. Ted. If you have already submitted your Pledge Card, it has already been placed in today’s tray for blessing.

**PHILOPTOCHOS** -Our General Meeting will be this Thursday, January 18 at 11:30 a.m. There will be a light lunch (donation \$5.00) and a guest speaker. Hope to see you. We need sponsors for Coffee Hour in January and February. See **Athena Snarskis** and **Pat Dalkas**. Check the bulletin board for the food preparation schedule this week. Come visit and help with the food.

**VOLUNTEER TABLE TO SIGN UP FOR FESTIVAL**- **Jim Christopoulos** will be available in the parish hall today so that everyone to sign up today as volunteers for our 2018 Greek Festival.

**PRAYER VIGIL FOR LIFE**—Since God is the Giver of Life, we pray that people choose not to have abortions, nor perform abortions, and for ways to nurture and raise all human beings who are given life from God at the time of conception. We also look forward to a time when all people comprehend that God, as the Giver of Life, is the only One to decide when life in this present world is to come to an end. To this end, the larger Christian community throughout our area will gather for prayer on Friday, January 19th. We are invited to join. Please see the flier that is posted in our parish hall.

**AHEPA**— AHEPA Chapter 528 meeting— Thursday, January 18, 2018— 6:30 p.m.

**WEEKDAY CALENDAR**

Monday, January 15th.....Festival Preparations tomorrow at 9:00 a.m. Please see Stacey Argyros and/ or Lula Valissarakos to help. We need everybody!

Tuesday, January 16th.....No Bible Study

Thursday, January 18th..... **ST. ATHANASIOS THE GREAT**  
Orthros-8:30 a.m. /Divine Liturgy -8:30 a.m.  
Philoptohos General Meeting - 11:30 a.m.  
Choir Practice - 1:00 p.m.  
AHEPA— 6:30 p.m.

Friday, January 19th.....Prayer Vigil For Life— 9:00 a.m. at Rancho Mirage

Saturday, January 20th.....**ST. EUTHYMIOS THE GREAT**  
Orthros-8:30 a.m/ Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m./ Vespers— 5:00 p.m.

**Fr. Ted will be away for the funeral services for his Aunt Pauline Booras, which will take place in Denver, Colorado from tomorrow, Monday, January 15th - Wednesday, January 17th.**

*The Ladder for January 2018  
is sponsored by:  
Matushka Gloria Lehman*

**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.**

# STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY

## STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY PROGRAM

The priest coordinates and leads the Stewardship Sunday Program, assisted by the Stewardship Committee and the Parish Council. The program would do well to include a personal testimony by a steward of the parish who speaks on the spiritual rewards of Stewardship giving. This type of message can prove to be very moving and inspirational. A podium is set on the solea for this purpose.

## COLLECTION OF STEWARDSHIP CARDS

After the Divine Liturgy is completed and the Stewardship speaker has completed his or her talk, the Stewardship Committee Chairman and the Parish Council President, each bearing an offering tray, lead the Parish Council to the solea.

The Priest is the first to place his Stewardship Commitment Card in the offering tray. Then the Priest will take the tray and hold it as each Parish Council member places his or her Stewardship Commitment Card in the tray. The Parish Council President and Stewardship Committee Chairman receive the trays from the Priest and proceed to pass the trays among the congregation assisted by other Council Members.

After the Stewardship Cards are collected, the Parish Council President and the Stewardship Committee Chairman return the trays to the Priest. They both remain on the Solea in front of the Altar.

The Priest faces the Altar Table and either reads alone or invites the congregation to read the Stewardship Offertory Prayer. (If the Priest wishes, he can print the prayer in the Sunday Bulletin so that the congregation can read it with him.)

The Priest returns the trays to the Parish Council President and Stewardship Committee Chairman, who place them in the church offering for processing.

## SUGGESTED OFFERTORY PRAYER

*Adapted from the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great*

*Priest:* Let us pray to the Lord.

*People:* Lord, have mercy.

*Priest [or People Together]:* O Lord our God, You created us and brought us into this life. You showed us the way to salvation and have granted us the revelation of the heavenly mysteries. Accept our Stewardship Offering as an acceptable sacrifice and in return send down upon us the grace of your Holy Spirit. Look down on us, O Lord, and accept our Stewardship Commitment as You accepted the gifts of Abel, the offerings of Noah, the burnt offerings of Abraham, the priestly sacrifices of Moses and Aaron and the peace offerings of Samuel. Accept also now, in your goodness, O Lord, these gifts from the hands of us sinners, making us worthy of the reward of the faithful and wise stewards on the fearful day of Your just judgment.

For You are the God of mercy, love and salvation and we glorify You, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

*People:* Amen.