

MAY 13, 2018

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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THE LADDER

SUNDAY OF THE BLIND MAN



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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.*

BEARING WITNESS: A MODEL

The blind man of today's Gospel passage showed that we all must be obedient to the Will of God. Through obedience we come to know the love of God. Obedience to God is the basis for repentance through which our sins are erased. Even though the man's blindness was not the result of his personal sins, his very malady was the result of general, sinful condition of human ignorance about God's love. This ignorance is the mud that spiritually blinds us, putting us in moral and ethical darkness. The very purpose for

the reading of the Holy Gospel as Church Services are performed is to open our spiritual eyes so that we can know that Christ is our Philanthropic God. Fr. Stephanos Anagnostopoulos, concerning the purpose for the Gospel readings, writes: *"If we want the light of God, we are obligated to perform the Commandments of the Gospel; to reject selfish desires; to participate in the Most Holy Sacraments - repentance, fasting, prayer, spiritual vigilance, struggles against temptations...all of these things have priority if we want the light of God."*

Continued on page 2

THE MOTHER OF GOD: THE MOTHER OF HUMANITY -- Mothers Day is a great opportunity for us to reflect on the life of humanity's Spiritual Mother, the Most Holy Theotokos (Mother of God). We can all benefit from the point of view of understanding how to be good parents (mothers *and* fathers) and how to honor our mothers and fathers, in fulfillment of the Commandment of God.

We should strive to acquire at least these four qualities of the Holy Theotokos:

- 1) Faith in God: *"My soul magnifies the Lord and My spirit has rejoiced in God My Savior."* (Luke 1:46)
- 2) Obedience to God: *"Let it be to Me according to Your word."* (Luke 1:38)
- 3) Patience: a) She was patient at the Nativity of our Lord (bringing Him to life in a manger); b) Her flight into Egypt at the time of Herod
- 4) Martyrdom: a) Enduring the sight of Her Son crucified on the Cross; b) as a Myrrh-bearer to fearlessly go to anoint Christ at the tomb.

The honor to Her given by the Church: Seeking Her intercessory prayers (Parklisis Service; Akathist Hymn); b) honoring Her with special observances (Nativity/Presentation/Annunciation/Dormition). Likewise let us honor our mothers (and fathers) by asking for their prayers for us and by praying for them.

+FR. THEODORE



Ο τυφλός άνθρωπος της σημερινής Ευαγγελικής περικοπής εδειξε ότι ο άνθρωπος πρέπει να είναι υπακούστος προς το θέλημα του Θεού. Δια της υπακοής γνωρίζουμε την αγάπη του Θεού. Η υπακοή στον Θεό είναι η βάση της μετανοίας, δια της οποίας διαγράφονται πολλές αμαρτίες. Παρόλο που η τυφλότητα του ανθρώπου δεν ήταν το αποτέλεσμα της προσωπικής του αμαρτίας, η ίδια η δεσμευσις του ήταν αποτέλεσμα μιας γενικής αμαρτωλής αγνοίας περί της αγάπης του Θεού. Αυτή η αγνοία είναι η λάσπη που τυφλώνει τον άνθρωπο και τον βάζει στο σκοτάδι. Ο σκοπός του αναγνώσματος των Ευαγγελικών περικοπών είναι να ανοιξομέν τα ψυχικά μας μάτια για να γνωρίσουμε ότι ο Χριστός είναι ο Φιλάνθρωπος Θεός. Ο Πατήρ Στεφάνος Στεφανόπουλος γράφει περί του σκοπού της Ευαγγελικής αναγνώσεως: <Αν θελούμεν το φως του Θεού, οφείλουμεν να εργαζόμεθα τις ευαγγελικές εντολές. Να αρνούμεθα το σαρκικό φρόνημα και την πονηρά επιθυμία. Να συμμετέχουμε στα πανάχραντα Μυστήρια. Η μετανοία, τα δάκρυα, η νηστεία, η εγκράτεια, η προσευχή, η αγρυπνία, ο πόλεμος κατά των παθών... όλα αυτά έχουν πρώτη θέση, αν θελομέν το φως της θεογνωσίας στην ψυχή μας να λαμβάνη. (Εμπρηρίες Προς την Θ. Λειτουργίαν, σελ. 148). Επίσης, ο Αγ. Νικοδήμος του Αγίου Ορους τονίζει: <Η αγνοία φέρνει σκοτάδι στον νουν και τον εμπόδιζει από την γνώση της αληθείας... πάνω από όλα χρειάζεται η προσευχή δια της οποίας το Άγιο Πνεύμα χύνει το Θείο Του Φως μέσα στις καρδιές μας... για να υπακοώμεθα στο Θέλημα του Θεού σε όλες τις υποθέσεις μας.> (Ο Αοράτος Πόλεμος, σελ. 90).

+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

(Experiences From the Divine Liturgy, pg. 148). St. Nicodemos of the Holy Mountains adds the following note in order to emphasize this point: "Willful ignorance (or negligence) brings darkness to one's mind and hampers its ability to know the Truth...Above all, prayer is needed through which the Holy Spirit pours His Light into our hearts and we become obedient to the Will of God in everything." (Unseen Warfare, pg. 90).

The very first thing that the blind man did when he encountered Christ was that he *obeyed* Him. The event in its totality is a spiritual lesson for all of humanity, through which we are to always give glory to God. In this Gospel passage, there were two encounters between the blind man and Christ - 1) when Christ our God put mud over the blind man's eyes and commanded him to wash in the Pool of Siloam, and, 2) in the temple after the healed blind man was thrown out of the synagogue and was praying, at which time he made it clear that he believed in Jesus Christ and worshiped Him. The time in between these two encounters with Christ, was a time of martyrdom -- *bearing witness* -- endured by the healed blind man.

We show obedience to our Lord by studying Holy Scripture and the teachings of the Church. Upon seeing God and knowing the Truth of His Saving Love, we will have to bear witness to the world - as did the healed blind man. In essence, *the man born blind now sees God so that we can see God, and bear witness so that others can see God.* Participating in the Sacramental Life of His Church is our act of *bearing witness* so that others can be witnesses, *seeing* His forgiveness and love.

The healed blind man gives us a model in this regard:

- 1) The man born blind told the truth about how Christ opened his eyes. Likewise, we share with others how Christ blesses us.
- 2) He endured repeated challenges to the truth of his report, yet never wavered. In our present age, we will also be subjected to such relentless inquiries regarding our personal faith.
- 3) He confessed the sinlessness of Christ and His divinity, saying, "We know that God does not hear the prayer of sinners..." We are therefore called to imitate Christ by avoiding sinful behaviors.
- 4) He tried to convert his accusers to become followers of Christ. We also can try to convert those who reject us for expressing our faith in Christ.
- 5) He patiently endured his rejection of the Pharisees (as well as his parents). Likewise, we are to follow Christ even though others may reject us.

+FR. THEODORE

PRAY FOR THE SICK: George Aeder, Adele Gallade, Erika Aguilar, Jim Alex, Chris Laskaris, J.J. Richards, Chris Panopoulos, Nicholas Kontaxis, Jean Chronis (*Many faithful on our Prayer List face chronic/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.

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

Verse 2—Say to God, "How fearful are Your works."

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

Verse 3—Let all the earth worship you and sing to You.

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

Chanter(s): Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

Refrain: "Tes presvies tis Theotokou, Soter, soston"

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

Verse 1—May God be gracious to us and bless us. May He cause His face to shine upon us.

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

Verse 2—May He cause His face to shine upon us, that we may know His way on earth, Your salvation among all Gentiles.

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

Verse 3—Let the peoples give thanks to You, O God; let all the people praise You.

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—Let God arise and let His enemies be scattered and let those who hate Him flee from before His face.

Hymn with the Entrance with the Holy Gospel: Christos Anesti... (Christ is Risen from the dead; by death trampling down death and, to those in the tombs, He has bestowed life.) [Hymn for the Resurrection of Christ from the dead]

En Ekklisias evlogheete ton Theon ek pighon Israel... o Anastas ek nekron

Sunday Hymn: *Ton synanarchon Logon Patri ke Pnevmati [Tone 5]... (Let us, the faithful, praise and worship the Word, coeternal with the Father and the Spirit, Who for our salvation was born of a Virgin for He willed to be lifted up bodily upon the Cross, to endure death and to raise the dead by His glorious Resurrection.)*

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 God that He may save our souls.)*

Sunday Kontakion Hymn: *Ei ke en tafo katilthes... (Through You, the deathless One, descended into the grave, You destroyed the power of Hades and, as Victor, You arose again, O Christ our God. You greeted the Myrrh-bearing Women, saying, 'Rejoice!' You did bestow peace upon Your Disciples and Resurrection upon the fallen.)*

READINGS: *Epistle: Acts 16: 16-34 / Gospel: St. John 9:1-38*

The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom is celebrated

Instead of "Axion Estin", *"O Angelos evoh-a Keharitomeni..." (The Angel cried aloud to the Lady filled with grace: Rejoice, O pure Virgin, again I say, Rejoice. Your Son has resurrected from the grave on the third day. Be illumined; be illumined, O New Jerusalem; for the glory of the Lord has risen over you. Dance now for joy, O Zion, and exult. And you be merry, O Pure Theotokos, at the arising of the One You bore.)*

Communion Hymn: *"Soma Christou..." (Receive the Body of Christ and taste Him, Who is the Fountain of Immortality. Alleluia.)*



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Coffee Hour: Kalitsa Xitco

PHILOPTOCHOS – Happy Mother's Day! Have an enjoyable day with your family and friends. Tomorrow we will have our last General Meeting of the season. We are meeting at **11:30 a.m. at Stuff Pizza at the Westfield Mall.** We will have lunch and a very short meeting. We next meet in September. Have a wonderful summer.

AHEPA SUNDAY - Next Sunday is **AHEPA Sunday.** Following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, the **Fr. T.P. Theophilos Memorial Scholarship** awards will be given to deserving college students from our parish community.

FR. TED TO BE AWAY THIS WEEK - Fr. Ted and Presvytera will be leaving immediately following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy today to visit their daughter in Charlotte, North Carolina. He and Presvytera will **return on Saturday, May 19th.** Please note: St. George parishioners are encouraged to participate in the celebration of the **Divine Liturgy for the Feast Day of the Ascension of our Lord on Thursday, May 17th at the St. Raphael Antiochian Orthodox Church in Thousand Palms, California.** For details as to times for Orthros and the Divine Liturgy, contact **Fr. David Kruse at: (760) 408-6116.**

SUNDAY SCHOOL - The last day of **Sunday School for this 2017-2018 School year is Sunday, May 20, 2018.** Students, along with their parents are to make every effort to participate in the special Church Services in celebration of Pentecost on Sunday May 27, 2018.

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

Fr. Ted and Presvytera Petula will be away from this afternoon until Saturday. Contact **Fr. David Kruse at (760) 408-6116** in the event of any pastoral emergency and attend Church Services at the **St. Raphael Antiochian Orthodox Church in Thousand Palms in celebration of the Ascension of our Lord on Thursday, May 17th.**

Tuesday, May 15th.....No Bible Study

Thursday, May 17th.....ASCENSION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR

Divine Liturgy at St. Raphael Antiochian Orthodox Church in
Thousand Palms, CA.

“For God so loved the world that He gave His Only-Begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have Life Everlasting.”
(St. John 16:3) +In memory of Fr. James Tavlarides

The 40-Day Memorial for Fr. James Tavlarides will be on Sunday, June 10, 2018

The Ladder for May 2018
is sponsored by:
The St. George Ladies Philoptochos Society

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.

2018 AHEPA SUNDAY



CHAPTER 528

AHEPA was founded on July 26, 1922 in response to the evils of bigotry and racism that emerged in early 20th century American society. They also assisted Greek immigrants to assimilate into mainstream society.

Today, AHEPA brings the ideals of ancient Greece, which includes philanthropy, education, civic responsibility, and family and individual excellence to the community. Although a majority of the membership is composed of Americans of Greek descent, application for AHEPA membership is open to anyone who believes in the mission of the organization.

2018 SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

Please go online ahepa528.org for scholarships or see a current AHEPAn or Fr. Ted at Church

SCHOLARSHIPS PRESENTED AFTER SERVICES

Applicant must be *active member or son/daughter of an *active member, in good standing, of AHEPA Chapter 528 and/or St. George Orthodox Church of the Desert steward.

**Please read scholarship for eligibility and be aware of all deadlines.*

Chapter 528 meetings every 2nd Wednesday of the month~6:30pm at St. George Church

Chapter President - Wynn Storton PDG --760.832.2825 Wynn@ahepa528.org;

Vice President - Nick Krespis

Secretary - Gus Kurupas; Treasurer - Harry Loukatos PCP ;

Spiritual Advisor - Fr. Ted Pantels ...Contact@ahepa528.org

SUNDAY MAY 20, 2018

MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR FALLEN BROTHERS:

2011— Fr. T. P. Theophilos, 2016—Steve Geotas, 2016—Stan Georgalakis,

2016—Steve N. Pisanos, 2017—Bob Maverick, 2017—George Tcharos

Fr. Theophilos Theophilos Memorial Scholarship Fund

Donations accepted at www.ahepa528.org, or mailed to: AHEPA 528 Scholarship fund PO Box 1735
Palm Desert, CA 92261-1735