

APRIL 7, 2019

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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THE LADDER

ST. JOHN CLIMACUS

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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.

LIVING THE BIBLE

There are three “themes” of today’s Gospel passage that help to define a life-style of one who wants to follow Christ our God: 1) the “theme” of faith (belief); 2) the “theme” of Christ’s identity as True God; 3) the “theme” of prayer and fasting.

1. *“I believe; help my unbelief!”* This prayer was uttered by the father whose boy was possessed by a “dumb spirit.”
2. *“You deaf and dumb spirit, I command you: come out of him and never enter*

him again.” With these words, our Savior both strengthened the father’s faith *and* proved that He is indeed God, Who has authority over even the demons.

3) *“This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer and fasting.”* Prayer and fasting go together. Prayer begins with the acknowledgment that Christ is True God. Prayer is addressed to Christ, as in the case of the young boy’s father. As our faith is strengthened through prayer, we are more able to *fast*. This is the life-style of the Bible.

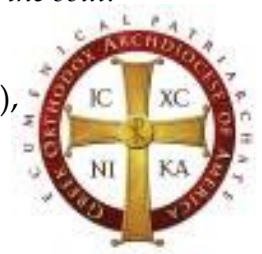
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DEFINITION OF REPENTANCE: BY ST. JOHN CLIMACUS

“Repentance is:

1. *the renewal of baptism.*
2. *the contract with God for a second chance in life.*
3. *the ‘buyer’ of humility*
4. *the constant self-discipline of bodily luxury.*
5. *the self-acceptance of responsibility for wrongs.*
6. *the daughter of hope and the weapon against despair.*
7. *the reconciliation with the Lord by doing His Will contrary to one’s errors.*
8. *the cleansing of one’s conscience.*
9. *the voluntary endurance of consequences.*
10. *the willingness to give one’s self over to spiritual discipline.*
11. *the controlling force of one’s appetite and greed.*
12. *the sharpening of awareness of motives and passions within the soul.”*

– “Step 5 of the 30 Steps on the ‘Ladder to Heaven;’ *Ladder of Divine Ascent*, by St. John Climacus (a.k.a., St. John of the Ladder), pg. 98



Υπάρχουν τρία <θέματα> από το σημερινό ανάγνωσμα του Ευαγγελίου που μας βοηθούν να καθορίσουμε τον τρόπον ζωής για τον άνθρωπον που θέλει να ακολουθήσει τον Χριστόν: 1) το θέμα περί πίστεως, 2) το θέμα ότι ο Χριστός είναι ο Θεός, και, 3) το θέμα περί <προσευχής και νηστείας.>

1. <Πιστεύω. Βοήθει μοι τῇ ἀπιστίᾳ!> Είναι η προσευχή του Πατέρα που είχε τον υιόν που υπέφερε από το <πνεύμα ἄλαλον καὶ κωφόν.>
2. <Τὸ πνεύμα ἄλαλον καὶ κωφόν! Ἐγὼ σοὶ ἐπιτάσσω. Ἐξελθε ἐξ αὐτοῦ...> Με αυτά τα λόγια, ο Χριστός ενδυναμωσε την πίστην του Πατέρα του παιδιού και ἔδειξε ότι εἶναι ο Αληθινός Θεός, ο Οποῖος ἔχει εξουσίαν ἐπάνω στους δαίμονες ἀκόμη.
3. <Τοῦτο τὸ γένος ἐν οὐδενί δύναται νά ἐξέλθειν εἰ μὴ ἐν προσευχῇ καὶ νηστείᾳ.> Η προσευχή και η νηστεία πηγαίνουν μαζί. Η προσευχή γίνεται ὅταν αναγνωρίζουμε στην πραγματικότητα ὅτι ο Χριστός εἶναι ο Θεός. Η προσευχή ἀπεθύνεται στον Χριστόν, ὅπως ἔγινε στην περίπτωση του πατέρα του παιδιού. Καθώς ενδυναμώνεται η πίστις μας, μπορούμε πιό εύκολα να νηστεύουμεν.

Η προσευχή και η νηστεία εἶναι οἱ <ακρογωνιαῖοι λίθοι> της Ἱεράς Αποστολικῆς Παραδόσεως που σχετίζονται με την πνευματικήν ζωὴν ὅπως διατηρεῖται στην Ὀρθόδοξη Εκκλησίαν. Εἶναι <η ζωὴ> της Αγίας Γραφῆς.
+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

Today we commemorate St. John Climacus who is the author of the book, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, in which he outlines spiritual “steps” for living the Bible and being with God on a daily basis. People might ask: **Why does the Church officially commemorate a Saint who wrote a book about spiritual life when we already have the Bible?** The answer is found in the fact that the people of the Church, particularly the Saints, have preserved the Holy Tradition of the Apostles to this day by *living* the Bible. St. John Climacus, like the other Saints of our Church, inherited this Holy Tradition of the Apostles and lived it. There is no doubt that the Apostles were *living* the Bible as they preached. “The message of the Good News is this:...[It is] a message of salvation with special emphasis on the death and resurrection of Christ [which] is grounded on the unity of the Apostolic testimony by Peter, John, James, Paul and other privileged witnesses to the primary events of revelation.” (*Apostolic Gospel*, by Fr. Theodore Stylianopoulos, pg. 17). We call to mind, then, that the Church is founded by our Savior and is comprised of those who follow the Apostolic way of living the Bible, which is, in fact, the only way to *interpret* the Bible, as Dr. Ellen Flesseman-van-Leer reminds us: “The moment [Scripture] is used and becomes alive it is always interpreted Scripture.” (*Bible, Church, Tradition*, by Georges Florovsky, pg. 80). Outside of the Church, therefore, interpretation of the Bible is open to many heresies and inaccuracies.

Prayer and fasting comprise the cornerstones for *living* the Bible. Through prayer we converse with Christ God; by fasting we put His teachings into practice by acquiring virtues such as obedience, patience, and charity, to name a few. Fasting in its broader meaning is a renunciation of the secular world, which, in turn, allows for more sincere prayer. In a concise manner, this is described by St. John Climacus as follows: “A man who renounces the world through hope for reward is like a millstone that always ‘dawdles.’ But he who withdraws from the world out of love for God has obtained fire at the very onset and, like fire set to fuel, it soon kindles a larger fire.” (*The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, “On the Renunciation of the World,” “Step 1”). As for prayer, St. John ties renunciation of the secular world to “standing in the presence of God,” saying, “A servant of the Lord is one who in body stands before men, but in mind knocks at heaven with prayer.” (“Step 4” of *The Ladder*, “On Obedience”).

Let us go forth throughout the remainder of Lent to *live* the Bible by crucifying our “selfish self” (that is, by “fasting”) for God’s glory and praying for spiritual benefits for ourselves and for others.

+FR. THEODORE

HYMNS FOR THIS SUNDAY'S CELEBRATION OF THE DIVINE LITURGY

ANTIPHON I:

Verse 1: Bless the Lord, O my soul, and everything within me, bless His holy name.

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

Verse 2: Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His rewards.

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

Verse 3: The Lord prepared His throne in heaven, and His Kingdom rules over all.

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

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

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

ANTIPHON II:

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.

Response: "Soston imas Ie Theou, o Anastas ek nekron, psallontas si: Allilouia."

Verse 2: Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob; his hope is in the Lord his God.

Response: 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.

Response: "Soston imas Ie Theou, o Anastas ek nekron, psallontas si: Allilouia."

Chanter(s): "Doxa Patri ke Io, ke Ayio Pnevmati, ke nin ke ai ke is 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.*

Resurrection Hymn: To Fedron tis Anastaseos kirygma [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 St. John Climacus: Tes ton dhakriohn sou rhoh-es... (With the rivers of your tears you made the barren desert bloom; and with your sighs from deep within, you made your labors bear their fruits a hundredfold; and you became a star, illuminating the world by your miracles, O John, our devout father. Intercede with Christ our God, for the salvation of our souls.)

Hymn for St. George: Os ton ehmaloton eleftherotis... (As the one who sets the captives free and the protector of the poor; as physician to the sick and the champion defender of kings, bearer of trophies are you, O Great Martyr George, intercede with Christ our God that He may save our souls.)

Kontakion Hymn for this Sunday: Ti Ypermachos... (O Champion General, I your City now ascribe to you triumphant anthems as the tokens of my gratitude, being rescued from the terrors, O Theotokos. Inasmuch as you have power unassailable, from all kinds of perils free me so that unto you I may cry aloud: Rejoice, O unwedded Bride.)

READINGS: Epistle - Hebrews - 6: 13-20 / Gospel - St. Mark 9: 17-31

The Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great (pgs. 125-143 in our Divine Liturgy Book)

Megalynarion (Hymn to the Theotokos): Epi Si Cherhee ke Charitomeni... (Divine Liturgy Book, Pg. 135)

Communion Hymn: Enite ton Kyrion (Divine Liturgy Book, pg. 64)



ANNOUNCEMENTS

PHILOPTOCHOS - Our Easter baking starts tomorrow. Monday - Wednesday we will be making bread. We need help in wrapping; call Tina for time. Thursday- Friday we will be making cookies. We need lots of hands for making and packaging. We will be selling our baked goods on Sunday, April 14 and Sunday, April 21 (Palm Sunday). No orders will be taken. Our General Meeting will be on Monday, April 15 at 11:30 a.m. There will be lunch for a donation of \$7.00 and then we will start the meeting and have elections. Our Outreach Project will be on Tuesday, April 16 and Thursday, April 18. Contact Rhonda Latkovic for further information. Philoptochos will be making the Palm Sunday Lunch. Reservations need to be made. We will take reservations today at the Philoptochos table. Lunch will be \$15.00 per person. See Athena Snarksis.

ALTAR FLOWER BOUQUETS - *The following is the Contribution, and Dedications for Sunday, March 31, 1019:*

--Tina, Angelo Veroulis and Family: "It's not how much we give but how much love we put into giving. Thank you Lord for your bountiful blessings"

--Debra Pousen - "In memory of my parents, and brother; Waltraut (mother) Thomas (father), and Robert (brother), May their rest be Eternal!"

AHEPA SCHOLARSHIP - Applications for the **Fr. T. P. Theophilos Memorial Scholarship** are now available in our parish hall. The **deadline for receiving these applications is May 1st** and the scholarship will be **awarded on AHEPA Sunday, May 18**. Applications are also available in our parish hall and online at: www.ahepa528.org, along with more information.

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

Tuesday, April 9th.....Bible Study - 10:00 a.m.

Wednesday, April 10th.....Pre-Sanctified Divine Liturgy- 6:00 p.m.

Thursday, April 11th.....Choir Practice - 1:00 p.m.

Friday, April 12th.....Pre-Sanctified Divine Liturgy - 9:00 a.m.
Akathist Hymn- 6:00 p.m.

"This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek." -- Hebrews 6:19-20

*The Ladder for April 2019 is lovingly 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. God Bless.



LADIES OF PHILOPTOCHOS OF ST GEORGE

PALM DAY LUNCHEON

APRIL 21, 2019

Dear Parishioners

This year, The Ladies of Philoptochos of St. George Greek Orthodox Church of the Desert will hold the annual Palm Sunday Luncheon. We are certain that all of you will want to participate in this meaningful holiday celebration.

The cost for the luncheon will be \$15.00 per person. The funds after expenses will be shared equally between the church and philoptochos. We would appreciate your support. Please enclose your payment with this form made out to St. George Church. You can mail it to P.O. Box 4755, Palm Desert, CA 92261 or give it to the office. The deadline is April 14, 2017.

Please print your name on the line below.

NAME _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

NUMBER ATTENDING _____ AMOUNT _____ CHECK _____ CASH _____