

MARCH 31, 2019

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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THE LADDER

SUNDAY OF THE VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

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.*

TAKE UP THE CROSS OF CHRIST

"We have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." (Hebrews 4:15-16).

According to the Holy Tradition of our Saints, the "throne" that is mentioned in this passage from St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews is "the throne of grace," where our Ascended Savior sits at the right hand of the Father – a "throne" from where Christ our God grants mer-

cy "and grace in time of need." (Orthodox Study Bible, pg. 1658). Yet, in the context of today's veneration of the Holy Cross, we might say that our Lord's Cross is also a "throne" from where He proclaims the forgiveness of sins.

Forgiveness is an expression of love that involves the virtues of *understanding and empathy* and, in order to empathize and understand another person's concerns, it is necessary for one to "step out of one's self" and "step into the world" of the other person. Hence, the virtue

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SERVICE OF THE VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

As the choir sings the hymn: "Holy God" for the Great Doxology, the priest, holding the decorated tray with the Holy Cross, processes around the church to the solea, to a table especially set upon which the tray with the Holy Cross is to be set. The priest circles the table three times before placing the Holy Cross on the table. After which, he says: "**Wisdom! Arise!**"

The priest then censes around the table, singing with the choir the following hymn **three times**: "**Soson Kyrie ton Iaon Sou...**(Save, O Lord, Your people and bless Your inheritance, granting victory to Your faithful over every evil and, by Your Holy Cross, protecting Your great order.")

The priest and deacon then make prostrations (making the Sign of the Cross). They make prostrations each of the three times that they, together with the choir, sing the following hymn: "**Ton Stavron Sou proskinoumen...**"("We venerate Your Cross, O Master, and we glorify Your Holy Resurrection.")

After this, the priest and deacon assume their positions to begin the celebration of the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great.

Following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, the priest blesses the faithful with Holy Cross, while hymns for the veneration of the Holy Cross are chanted by the chanters.



Σύμφωρα με την Ιεράν Παράδοση των Αγίων, ο <Θρόνος> που αναφέρεται στην σημερινήν περικοπήν εκ της προς Εβραίους Επιστολής του Αγ. Παύλου είναι <ο Θρόνος της χάριτος> όπου ο Αναληφθής Σωτήρ μας κάθεται στο δεξί χέρι του Πατρός Του. (*Orthodox Study Bible*, σελ. 1658). Στο πλαίσιο, όμως, της σημερινής εορτής της Σταυροπροσυνήσεως, ο Σταυρός του Κυρίου είναι, έτσι να λέμε, ο <Θρόνος> από όπου χαρίζει ο Χριστός την συγχώρησιν των αμαρτιών μας.

Επομένως, η συγχώρησις είναι μιά έκφρασις αγάπης και περιλαμβάνει τις αρετές της κατανοήσεως και της συμπαθείας, και, προκειμένου να κατανοήσουμε τις ανάγκες ενός άλλου ανθρώπου, είναι απαραίτητο να <βγούμεν από τον εαυτόν μας> και να <μπούμεν στον κόσμον> του συνανθρώπου μας. Λοιπόν, η αρετή της ταπεινώσεως είναι πάντα απαραίτητη, επίσης.

Ο Χριστός ο Θεός μας απέθανε επάνω στον Τ. Σταυρόν Του και έτσι χαρίζει σε όλους μας την δυνατότητα να αναστηθούμε μαζί Του σε ζωήν αιώνιον.

Κατά κάποιον τρόπον, λοιπόν, ο Σταυρός είναι ένας <θρόνος> στον Οποίον μπορούμεν να προσεγγίσουμεν με θάρρος, γνωρίζοντας ότι οι ζωές μας εμπλέκονται με την Ζωήν Του Κυρίου. Γνωρίζοντας αυτό, ας ακούσει ο καθένας προσεχτικώς τα λόγια του Κυρίου: <Ὅστις θέλει ὀπίσω Μου ἀκολουθεῖν ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτόν καί ἀράτω τὸν σταυρόν αὐτοῦ καί ἀκολουθείτω Μοι.> (Μαρκ. 8: 34)

+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

of *humility* is also always needed - a virtue that is *defined* in the Person of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

St. Paul reminds us that "Christ passed through the heavens," meaning that He is God Who Ascended into the heavens after taking on human flesh, suffering, dying on the Cross, and resurrecting from the dead. Having taken human flesh and physically dying on the Cross, we know that our Savior has experienced our fallen human condition to the fullest. Therefore, Christ is God Who truly empathizes (i.e., placing Himself *in* our suffering) and understands fully (sympathizes — "co-suffers" in) our struggle against evil. As much as Christ has become like us, we are called to be like Christ. If we are to be like Christ, we are to do as Christ does with regard to those around us. In this respect, we become people *in the likeness of God*.

To be *like God* means to "take up our cross." On this note, we are counseled by Fr. Alexander Schmemmann: "We cannot take up our cross and follow Christ unless we have His Cross which He took up in order to save us. It is His Cross that gives not only meaning but also power to others." (*Great Lent*, pg. 76). In essence, then, God's Cross is *our* cross, and our cross is *God's* Cross, which gives clear meaning to His words, "Abide in Me and I in you...for without Me you can do nothing." (St. John 15: 4 & 5).

Given this relationship, it is understandable to view the Holy Cross of our Savior as the "throne" of God to which we must "come boldly" (to quote St. Paul's words). We come before this "throne," the Cross of Christ our God, with boldness, knowing that our life is entangled with His life. Knowing this, we can more easily "deny ourselves" and these words of our Lord can be heard with care by each of us: "Whosoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself and pick up his cross and follow Me." (St. Mark 8:34).

This is not a small thing. It is a call for us to find comfort in the Cross of our Lord by finding our Lord's strength — not our own ego-based, so-called "strength." For, truly, without God we can do nothing. Putting aside our ego can sound harsh. In his "Homily 55" *On the Gospel of St. Matthew*, St. John Chrysostom does not mince words. "If any man will come after Me..." [meaning] 'I do not force...it is one's choice [to do so. But, if you do make this choice, remember...] 'Let [one] renounce himself... [meaning] let one have nothing to do with himself, but give one's self up to all dangers and conflicts as though another were suffering it all... Let him renounce himself unto death,...taking up his cross, setting forth even a reproachful death, and that not once, nor twice, but throughout all life...' and follow Me...' [meaning] that it is possible for one to suffer, yet not to follow Him, when one does not suffer for Him (for so robbers often suffer grievously and violators of tombs, and sorcerers)... [But, suffer] for Christ, or rather for our own sakes...that we may gain both lives." [i.e., our lives on earth and our lives in the Kingdom of God]. (*Nicene & Post-Nicene Fathers, 1st Series, Vol. 10, pgs. 339-341*).

+FR. THEODORE

HYMNS FOR THIS SUNDAY'S CELEBRATION OF THE DIVINE LITURGY

ANTIPHON I:

Verse 1: O Lord, the light of Your face was stamped upon us. You gave a sign to those who fear You, so they may flee from the face of the bow.

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

Verse 2: You ascended on high, You led captivity captive; You received gifts for mankind.

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

Verse 3: You have given an inheritance to those who fear Your name, O Lord.

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: All the ends of the earth saw the salvation of our God. Let us enter into His tabernacles; let us worship at the place where His feet stood.

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

Verse 2: God is our King before the ages; He worked salvation in the midst of the earth.

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

Verse 3: Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth.

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: *Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at the footstool of His feet. O Lord, save Your people, and bless Your inheritance. And shepherd them, and raise them up forever.*

Resurrection Hymn: *Efrenestho ta ourania [Tone 3]... (Let the Heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad, for the Lord has shown strength with His protective arm: by death He has trampled upon death and has become the Firstborn of the dead; He has delivered us from the depths of Hades, and has granted to the world His Great Mercy.)*

Hymn for the Veneration of the Holy Cross: *Soston Kyrie ton la-ohn Sou... (Save, O Lord, Your people and bless Your inheritance, granting victory to the faithful over the enemy, and by Your Cross protecting Your commonwealth.)*

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 Ypermacho... (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.)*

Instead of "Aghios o Theos;" "Holy God, Holy Mighty..." - the following is sung: *Ton Stavron Sou proskinounnen Dhespota, ke tin aghian Sou Anastasin dhoxazomen... (We venerate Your Cross, O Master, and we glorify Your Holy Resurrection.)*

READINGS: Epistle - Hebrews - 4: 14-16; 5: 1-6 / Gospel - St. Mark 8: 34-38; 9:1

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

SPRING GENERAL ASSEMBLY - Today - following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. Participation is open to all who have turned in their **2019 Stewardship Pledge Card** and who have begun making contributions toward their Pledge.

PHILOPTOCHOS - Take the **\$20 for 20 Days Lenten Challenge.** See flyer. Make your check for \$20.00 \$20.00 payable to Philoptochos and on the memo line write St. Nicolas Shrine. Give your check to **Tina Veroulis.** **SAVE THE DATES:** Week of April 8- Easter baking, April 15- General Meeting with Elections for your new Board and April 16 and 18 Outreach Program serving two locations (see Rhonda Latkovic). This is Membership month; please pay your dues and make your check out to Philoptochos and give your check to Tina.

SPECIAL TRAY COLLECTION TODAY- A special tray will be passed today, asking for contributions to support our Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Theological Seminary in Boston, Massachusetts

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

- Ms. Doris Elmo - "For the love of family; and to all who have proceeded me, may there be Eternal Rest!"*
- Mrs. Emily Tcharos - "My dear husband George: We may be far apart, but you are always in my thoughts, may your memory be ever Eternal!"*
- Mrs. Rhonda Latkovic - "In loving memory of Georgianne Latkovic, Nick's sister."*

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 online at: www.ahepa528.org, along with more information.

COFFEE HOUR – Please do not throw away the new plates that are being used for our coffee hour. Place them at the coffee bar near the kitchen entrance. Many thanks for your cooperation.

FESTIVAL REVIEW MEETING - A meeting for Festival booth and set-up chairpersons (only), along with members of our Parish Council will be held **tomorrow evening** with **George Argyros** at **Towne Center Café** at **6:00 p.m.**

ST.GEORGE PARISH LENTEN SYMPOSIUM - April 6, 2019. See enclosed flier.

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

Tuesday, April 2nd.....Bible Study - 10:00 a.m.

Wednesday, April 3rd.....Pre-Sanctified Divine Liturgy- 6:00 p.m.
AHEPA Meeting - 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, April 4th.....Choir Practice - 1:00 p.m.

Friday, April 5th.....Pre-Sanctified Divine Liturgy - 9:00 a.m.
Salutation Service (4th Stanza) - 6:00 p.m.

Saturday, April 6th.....Parish Lenten Symposium – 10:00 a.m.

*The Ladder for March 2019 is lovingly sponsored by: Emily Tcharos
In memory of her beloved husband,
George Tcharos*

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.

ST. GEORGE
LENTEN PARISH SYMPOSIUM:

LIFE AFTER DEATH: "INQUIRE WITHIN"

SYMPOSIUM INCLUDING TOPICS RELATED TO
ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN SPIRITUAL LIFE & DISCIPLINE:

-THE NATURE & PRACTICE OF SACRAMENTAL LIFE IN
EVERYDAY LIVING-

SATURDAY, APRIL 6, 2019

AT:

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX
CHURCH PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA

10:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.

PROGRAM:

10:00 A.M. - WELCOME AND MORNING PRAYER

10:30 - 11:30 - SPEAKERS: DEACON EUTHYM KONTAXIS, (ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH, PALM DESERT), FR. DAVID KRUSE (ST. RAPHAEL ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH, THOUSAND PALMS) & FR. ANDREW LESKO (ST. NICHOLAS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH, TEMECULA)

11:30 - SUMMARY AND REFLECTION

12:00 P.M. - 1:00 P.M. - LUNCH

1:00 P.M. - 3:30 P.M. - SYMPOSIUM (QUESTIONS & ANSWERS)

3:30 P.M. - 4:00 P.M. - VESPERS