

SEPTEMBER 29, 2019

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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# THE LADDER



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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.

## A FULFILLED LIFE

In his article, "How to Read the Bible," Metropolitan Kallistos Ware calls our attention to the *experience* of the Bible and points to the words of St. Tikhon of Russia, "*Christ Himself is speaking to me. Scripture is a direct, intimate dialogue between the Savior and myself -- Christ addressing me, and my heart responding.*" (Orthodox Study Bible, pg. 1764). We often reflect on our spiritual experiences as we remember times when Christ has enlightened us and blessed us in moments of Bible study, prayer and worship.

Experiencing God's blessings comes in a variety of forms unique to each individual. In the case of the Apostles and St. Paul, the love of God was experienced first-hand. In the case of most of the Saints, Christ's love was experienced in "less than first-hand" ways. Through study of the Bible, prayer and worship, we also experience our Lord's blessings as a reality. Indeed, the Holy Spirit is greatly involved in human lives at all times and in all places.

Such experiences give emphasis to our purpose in life. For us to fulfill our

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**ST. PAUL AND THE "GOLDEN RULE"** -- For St. Paul, blessing others by preaching the Good News of our Savior was more important than popularity or "creature-comforts." His ministry was for the benefit of *all* people for all times. Although he condemned sinful practices, as in 1 Corinthians, Chapters 5 and 6, he still was able to define the virtue of love in Chapter 13 and he applied this virtue to everyone around him, even to those who mistreated him: "*When we are cursed, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we answer with gentleness.*" (1 Corinthians 4:12). St. Paul held no grudges; he always showed love, knowing that our Savior's love conquers all evil--and with the love of God, he rose above every hardship: "*We are persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed.*" (2 Corinthians 4:9). His purpose in life was to bless others from his own blessings, giving flesh to the words of the Liturgy, "*Thine of Thine own...*" God's blessings to us are to be our blessings for God.

In all of this, the "Golden Rule" is made manifest as a life-style. "*The 'Golden Rule' is a minimum of Christian virtue, as it places man's desire for goodness as a basic standard of how to treat others. It is the first step on the path to the perfection of virtue...where God's mercy, rather than man's desire is the standard.*" (Orthodox Study Bible, pg. 1376).

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Στο άρθρο του, <Πως Πρέπει να Διαβάζουμε την Αγίαν Γραφήν,> ο Μητροπολίτης Κάλλιστος Ware μας υπενθυμίζει ότι η μελέτη της Αγίας Γραφής πρέπει να είναι για εμάς μιά <πνευματική εμπειρία,> σύμφωνα με τις σκέψεις του Αγίου Τίκωνα της Ρωσίας: <Ο Ιδιος ο Χριστός ομιλεί σε εμένα. Η Αγία Γραφή είναι μιά άμεση, οικεία επικοινωνία μεταξύ του Σωτήρος και του εαυτού μας.> (Orthodox Study Bible, σελ.1764).

Συχνά σκεπτόμεθα τις πνευματικές εμπειρίες μας καθώς θυμούμεθα ότι ο Χριστός μας εφώτισε και μας ευλόγησε σε στιγμές μελέτης της Αγίας Γραφής, προσευχής, η/και λατρείας. Τέτοιες εμπειρίες τονίζουν τον σκοπόν της ζωής μας. Γιό να εκπληρώσουμε τον σκοπόν μας, δεν θα αποφύγουμε τον πνευματικόν αγώνα. Ο πνευματικός αγώνας περιλαμβάνει την προσοχήν μας σχετικώς με τις σκέψεις και τις πράξεις μας. Το να είμεθα στις σκέψεις και στις πράξεις μας <εις όμοίωσιν> του Θεού είναι η εκπλήρωσις της φύσεώς μας, αφού ο άνθρωπος είναι πλασμένος <ως εικόνα> του Θεού.

Ο πνευματικός αγώνας βασίζεται στην αγάπην μας γιά τον Θεόν, γνωρίζοντας ότι <Η αγάπη είναι έκ Θεού.> (1 Ιωαν. 4:7). Προσφέροντας τον εαυτόν μας προς δόξαν του Θεού εκφράζουμε τον απόλυτον σκοπόν της ζωής μας – <εαυτούς καί άλλήλους καί πάσαν τήν ζωήν ήμων Χριστῷ τῷ Θεῷ παραθώμεθα.>

Μοιράζοντας την αγάπην του Θεού, οι σχέσεις μας παίρνουν θεϊκές ιδιότητες. Ας επιδιώκουμε τις <έν Χριστῷ> σχέσεις μεταξύ μας! +Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

purpose in life, we will never escape the need to engage in spiritual warfare. Spiritual warfare involves careful watch 'over our thoughts and deeds. When our thoughts are based on God's Word and our actions resemble God's mercy, we acquire the *likeness of God*, which is the genuine fulfillment of our nature, since we are created in the *image of God*.

It would seem as though St. Paul would define human life to be more than "a comfortable existence in the present." Instead, "an eternal presence of the human person before Christ" would be a more accurate understanding of his definition of human life. As Orthodox Christians, we strive to be in the presence of Christ now and into eternity. To be in the presence of Christ, however, is not just to please ourselves. Our presence with Christ in our midst is a matter of bringing others, as well, into the presence of our Lord.

For St. Paul, spiritual warfare involved dealing with his own inner weaknesses, as well as his outward circumstances of hardship. At the same time, he experienced the power of our Lord's love, through which he always had the ability to preach the Gospel. To the Corinthians he wrote, "We are...persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed --always carrying in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our body...For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God." (2 Corinthians 4: 8-9 & 16). Offering one's self for God's glory is indeed the ultimate fulfillment in life -- "...let us commit ourselves and one another and our whole life to Christ our God."

In sharing God's love, our relationships take on Divine qualities. "God is love (1 John 4:16), and is revealed as personal communion, in a person-to-person relationship...for, where two mortals meet, it is the Divinity of which one tastes. For, 'Where two or three are gathered in My Name, I am there among them' (Matt. 18:20).'" (The Way of the Fathers; Exploring the Patristic Mind, by Fr. John Chryssavgis, pg. 81).

Let us seek Christ-centered relationships with each other and our youth, as Sunday School now begins -- and let us teach by example.

+FR. THEODORE

**HYMNS FOR THIS SUNDAY'S CELEBRATION OF THE DIVINE LITURGY:****ANTIPHON I: "Tes presvies tis Theotokou..." (By the prayers of the Theotokos...)****Verse 1— Bless the Lord, O my soul, and everything within me, bless His holy name****Refrain: "Tes presvies tis Theotokou, Soter, soson imas."****Verse 2- Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His rewards.****Refrain: "Tes presvies tis Theotokou, Soter, soson imas."****Verse 3- The Lord prepared His throne in heaven, and His Kingdom rules over all.****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, soson"****ANTIPHON II: "Soson imas Ie Theou..." (Save us, O Son of God...)****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.****Refrain: "Soson imas Ie Theou, O Anastas ek nekron, psallontas si alleluia."****Verse 2 - Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob; his hope is in the Lord his God.****Refrain: "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.****Refrain: "Soson imas Ie Theou, O Anastas ek nekron, psallontas si alleluia."****Doxa Patri ke Yio ke Aghio Pnevmati ke nin ke aei ke eis tous aonas ton aonon. Amin. "O Monogenis Yios ke Logos tou Theou..."****ANTIPHON III- This is the day the Lord made; let us greatly rejoice and be glad therein.****Sunday Resurrection Hymn: Angelike dynameis (Tone 6)... (When the angelic powers appeared at Your tomb and those who guarded You became as though dead and standing by Your sepulcher was Mary seeking Your pure and sacred body. For, You did vanquish Hades and, uncorrupted by its touch, You came unto the Virgin Woman bestowing the gift of life, O You Who arose from the dead. Lord we give glory to You.)****Hymn for St. Kyriakos: Tis erheemou politis... (As a citizen of the desert and an angel incarnate and a wonder-worker you shone forth, O Kyriacos, our God-bearing father. Since you received the spiritual gifts by fasting and vigilance and prayer, you can cure those who are ailing and heal the souls of those who run to you with faith. Glory to Him who gave His might to you; glory to Him who placed a crown on you; glory to Him who operates through you, providing cures to all.)****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 : Prostasia ton Christianon... (O Protection of Christians that never fails, intercession with the Creator that never fails, we sinners beg you, do not ignore the voices of our prayers. O good Lady, we implore you, quickly come unto our aid, when we cry out to you with faith. Hurry to intercession, and hasten to supplication, O Theotokos who protect now and ever those who honor you.)****Axion Estin****Communion Hymn: Enite ton Kyrion ek ton ouranon. Enite Afton en tis ipsistees... (Praise the Lord from the heavens. Praise Him in the highest. Allelouia)**





Coffee Hour: George and Angie Spanos.

PHILOPTOCHOS-Our group will have freshly baked koulouria, paximathia, & fig jam available for sale after church services today!

ALTAR FLOWER SEASON- OPEN! -- Please sign up now to sponsor Altar Flower bouquets throughout our season of October 2019 - May 2020. Write your

checks to: St. George Greek Orthodox Church. In the Memo Section, write: Altar Flowers/(Sunday date for display). Credit cards are accepted; (see parish office). Also notify our Altar Flower Coordinator, Louise Dobbs Barringer, regarding the purpose for dedication the Altar Flower bouquets that are being sponsored -- ("in memory of \_\_\_\_"; "in celebration for \_\_\_\_"). Also, include the names of those being honored or memorialized. Altar Flower bouquets may be offered for memorials, anniversaries, birthdays, etc. The dedication will appear in The Ladder on the Sunday when the one's Altar Flower bouquets are sponsored. Check out our parish bulletin board and today's printed version of The Ladder.

PINK WALK-Sign up now to participate in the Annual Pink Walk, sponsored by the Desert Cancer Foundation. This is an annual fundraiser for the purpose of raising funds for cancer research and, in particular, breast cancer. The Pink Walk will take place on El Paseo on Saturday, October 12 and already many of our St. George parishioners have expressed an interest in participating. Let's all join together for this cause! Sign-up forms are available in our parish hall and they are included in the October Voice of St. George. Contact the Desert Cancer Foundation at 760-773-6532 for more information.

GREEK LANGUAGE CLASS – A class of instruction in the Modern Greek Language for adults is being formed. The first day of class is October 22, 2019...classes will be held every Tuesday from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. More details will be shared in the October Voice of St. George. Also, feel free to contact our parish office for more information and registration particulars.

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

Tuesday, October 1st.....Bible Study - 10:00 a.m.

Wednesday, October 2nd.....Parish Council -2:30 p.m.

Thursday, October 3rd.....Choir Practice -1:00 p.m.

<p>EPISTLE– 2 Corinthians 4:6-15</p> <p>Brethren, it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For while we live we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you. Since we have the same spirit of faith as he had who wrote, "I believed, and so I spoke," we too believed, and so we speak, knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into His presence. For it is</p>	<p>all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.</p> <hr/> <p>GOSPEL– St. Luke 6: 31-36</p> <p>The Lord said, "And as you wish that men would do to you, do so to them. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the selfish. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful."</p>
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