

APRIL 5, 2020

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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THE LADDER

ST. MARY OF EGYPT

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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.

NOW AND FOREVER

In the person of St. Mary of Egypt we see a vision of a person's union with God. Her repentance for the sins she committed consisted of a life-time of prayer and self-control. Her faith in the love of Christ and His promise for forgiveness propelled her to seek the mercy of Christ with all her heart and soul. We commemorate St. Mary today so that the Church can remind us that the virtues of faith, prayer and fasting lead us to a lifestyle in which we control our passions for pleasure and our self-centered desires.

In his Epistle to the Hebrews (9:11-14), St. Paul teaches us through this question: "...How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" In other words, through His sacrifice on the Cross, (by His Blood) Christ cleanses us from "dead works" (i.e., sins). The Apolytikion Hymn for St. Mary of Egypt teaches us that her whole life is an example which verifies the truth of St. Paul's words. That is, she showed us that the soul has greater powers than

Continued on page 2

ST. MARY OF EGYPT— St. Mary of Egypt began her life as a young woman who followed the passions of the body, running away from her parents at age twelve for Alexandria. There she lived as a harlot for seventeen years, refusing money from the men that she copulated with, instead living by begging and spinning flax.

One day, however, she met a group of young men heading toward the sea to sail to Jerusalem for the veneration of the Holy Cross. Mary went along for the ride, seducing the men as they traveled for the fun of it. But when the group reached Jerusalem and actually went towards the church, Mary was prohibited from entering by an unseen force. After three such attempts, she remained outside on the church patio, where she looked up and saw an icon of the Theotokos. She began to weep and prayed with all her might that the Theotokos might allow her to see the True Cross; afterwards, she promised, she would renounce her worldly desires and go wherever the Theotokos may lead her.

After this heart-felt conversion at the doors of the church, she fled into the desert to live as an ascetic. After 47 years of temptation she overcame her faults and weaknesses and was led by the Theotokos in all things.

--Taken in part from www.orthodoxwiki.org/



Στο πρόσωπο της Αγίας Μαρίας της Αιγίπτου βλέπουμε ένα όραμα της ενώσεως μεταξύ ανθρώπου και Θεού. Η μετάνοιά της για τις αμαρτίες της συνίστατο σε μία ζωή προσευχής και αυτοελέγχου. Η πίστη της στην αγάπη του Χριστού την ώθησαν να αναζητά συνεχώς το έλεος του Χριστού από τα βάθη της καρδιάς και της ψυχής της. Καθώς μνημονεύουμε την Αγίαν Μαρριαν, γνωρίζουμε ότι οι αρετές της πίστεως και της προσευχής οδηγούν σε μία ζωή στην οποία ελέγχουμε τις σαρκικές ορέξεις μας και τις εγωκεντρικές επιθυμίες μας.

Στην Επιστολήν του Προς τους Έβραίους (9:11-14), ο Άγιος Παύλος μας διδάσκει ότι δια της θυσίας Του επάνω στον Σταυρόν -- δια του αιματός Του -- ο Χριστός καθαρίζει την ψυχήν μας από νεκρά έργα (δηλ., αμαρτίες). Το Απολυτίκιον της Αγίας Μαρίας μας διδάσκει ότι η ολόκληρη ζωή της είναι παράδειγμα που διαπιστώνει τα λόγια του Απ. Παύλου. Δηλαδή, έδειξε η Αγία ότι η ψυχή έχει ανώτερες δυνάμεις από το σώμα. Επομένως, ας μην περαχαϊδευόμεν το σώμα που χάνεται στην γη, αλλά ας δώσουμε προσοχή στην ψυχήν που είναι αθάνατη.

Όταν, λοιπόν, οι ψυχές μας ενισχύονται δια της χάριτος του Αγίου Πνεύματος (δια της προσευχής και λατρείας), τα σώματά μας αποκτούν θεϊκές δυνάμεις ως προοίμιο της Αναστάσεώς μας εν Χριστώ. Με αυτή τη σκέψη, προετοιμαζόμεθα όχι να εορτάσουμε την Ανάσταση μόνον με επιφανειακό τρόπο, αλλά να ζήσουμε την Ανάσταση του Χριστού ως μία πραγματική, αιώνια εμπειρία.
+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

the body. Thus, let us not pamper the body, which is eventually lost in the earth, but let us pay attention to the soul, which is immortal.

When our souls are strengthened by the Holy Spirit (through prayer and worship), our physical nature takes on divine qualities as a prelude to the Resurrection of Christ. The life of St. Mary of Egypt provides the meaning of the liturgical words following the words of glory that we always give to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, "*now and ever and unto the ages of ages.*"

By the word "now," Orthodox Christians mean much more than simple survival in the present moment, because coping with life's challenges has much to do with our *world-view*. Although the "now" of this present world is but a temporary state, the way this present moment is lived has a definite impact on our future. If we are living for the glory of Christ our God, then every "now" is to be an image of the "eternal now" unto the "ages of ages." Spiritual life is a matter of living in Christ's "eternal now" in the present moment, as well as in the next "present moment," and so on.

St. Mary's desire for repentance and the forgiveness of Christ pushed her into the desert as a single act, in a moment, which she continued to live from one day to the next -- each day being a day of prayer like the day before-- one day at a time for 47 years.

St. Mary of Egypt reminds us that our "now" with the struggle against the Coronavirus is a temporary state, which-- if we want -- we can transform into a heavenly life like St. Mary of Egypt transformed the life-less desert into the Kingdom of God where she now dwells forever and unto the ages of ages.

+FR. THEODORE

The Synod of Metropolitans of our Holy Archdiocese has asked that we add the following petitions to our prayers:

- 1) *"For our deliverance from all affliction, wrath, danger and distress and from the peril of the coronavirus against us, let us pray to the Lord."*
- 2) *"For our brethren, those who lead the fight against the coronavirus, the doctors; the medical workers and the scientists, let us pray to the Lord."*

We can also use the following prayer as we pray in our homes:

"We pray, O Lord, for the protection of our parish; our city and every city and land from wrath, famine pestilence, earthquake, flood, fire, sword, invasion, civil strife, protection from the coronavirus and accidental death. That You, as our good God, may be merciful, gracious and favorable to us by protecting us from all danger and sickness and that You deliver us from Your just chastisement and have mercy on us."



“Blessed is He Who comes in the Name of the Lord. Blessed are You at Your throne of the glory of Your Kingdom, seated above the Cherubic angels, now and forever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.”

“Shine within our hearts, loving Master, the pure light of Your divine knowledge and open the eyes of our minds that we may comprehend the message of Your Gospel. Instill in us, also, reverence for Your blessed commandments, so that having conquered sinful desires, we may pursue a spiritual life, thinking and doing all these things that are pleasing to You. For You are the Light of our souls and bodies and to You we give glory together with Your Father Who is without beginning and Your all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen”

EPISTLE: Heb. 9:11-14

Brethren, when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

GOSPEL: Mk. 10:32-45

At that time, Jesus taking the twelve again, he began to tell them what was to happen to him, saying, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death, and deliver him to the Gentiles; and they will mock him, and spit upon him, and scourge him, and kill him; and after three days he will rise." And James and John, the sons

of Zebedee, came forward to him, and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." And he said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?" And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory." But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" And they said to him, "We are able." And Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared." And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant of James and John. And Jesus called them to him and said to them, "You know that those who are supposed to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

ANNOUNCEMENTS & WEEKDAY CALENDAR

The church is closed. Deacon Euthym and I will be serving Church services behind closed doors. Follow some of the website telecasts from our Archdiocese at: <https://www.goarch.org/live-broadcasts>.

Tuesday, April 7th.....Bible Study -10:00 a.m. (via Zoom): ID Number - **319-036-456**)

Wednesday, April 8th...Pre-Sanctified Divine Liturgy (behind closed doors) Facebook view: 6:00 p.m.

Friday, April 10th.....Pre-Sanctified Divine Liturgy (behind closed doors) Facebook view: 6:00 p.m.

Saturday, April 11th.....SATURDAY OF LAZARUS (Divine Liturgy behind closed doors) -TBA

P.S.: **Video telecasts of our St. George church services are available by contacting our parish website: www.go-stgoerge.org (through Facebook link).**



Follow these steps to create an account:

1. Click this link <https://zoom.us/signup> or go to www.Zoom.com and click "Sign up, It's Free"
2. Type in your email address (it does not need to be a work email address), or sign in with your Google or Facebook account.

Follow these steps to join a meeting:

1. Log on to Zoom
2. In the upper right hand corner of the screen there will be an option to Join a Meeting. If you can't find that, click this link <https://us04web.zoom.us/join>
3. It'll ask you to type in a Meeting ID or a Personal Link Name. Once we get the event calendar together. we will send everyone the Meeting ID's for each event.
4. It may ask you to
5. Once you join a meeting, you may be asked to "Join With Computer Audio*" and either "Join With Video" or "Join Without Video". There should be a box that says "Automatically Join audio by computer when joining a meeting."

*For the audio setting, there should be a box at the bottom which says "Automatically join audio by computer when joining meeting". Check that box so your audio always connects and so the message doesn't appear anymore.

For additional help check out these Zoom videos here: <https://zoom.us/resources>