

APRIL 26, 2020

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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THE LADDER

THE SUNDAY OF ST. THOMAS



Mailing Address:

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Tel: (760) 568-9901

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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.

TO THOSE WHO HAVE NOT SEEN

Today's passage from St. John's Gospel provides three messages that are important for us as Orthodox Christians.

First, there is the love of Christ, which He showed to St. Thomas—for, rather than rejecting him for his unbelief and doubt, our Lord drew him to Himself and granted him to know the truth that He did in fact arise from the dead. This is significant, because we come to know that our Lord does not condemn a person who has doubts, but He manifests

Himself to anyone who desires to know Him. St. John Chrysostom makes this comment in reference to our Lord's appearance to St. Thomas: "Consider the lovingkindness of the Lord, how for the sake of a single soul He showed Himself with His wounds, and appears in order to save even the one." (Chrysostom, John. *The Complete Works of John Chrysostom*. Apple Books.)

Second, we come to understand from the words of St. Thomas that Christ

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ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE

Thomas, who was not then present with the others, did not believe their testimony concerning Christ's Resurrection, but said in a decisive manner, "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe." However, after eight days, that is, on this day, when the disciples were again gathered together and Thomas was with them, the Lord Jesus came while the doors were shut. Standing in their midst, He said, "Peace be unto you"; then He said to Thomas, "Bring hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and bring hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side: and be not unbelieving, but believing."

And Thomas, beholding and examining carefully the hands and side of the Master, cried out with faith, "My Lord and my God." In this way, he clearly proclaimed the two natures - human and divine - of Christ our God (Luke 24:36-49; John 20:19-29).

This day is called *Antipascha* (meaning "in the stead of Pascha," not "in opposition to Pascha") because with this day, the first Sunday after Pascha, the Church consecrates every Sunday of the year to the commemoration of Pascha, that is, the Resurrection of Christ our God.



Υπάρχουν τρία μηνύματα από την σημερινήν περικοπή εκ του κατά Ιωάννου Ευαγγελίου που είναι σημαντικά για εμάς ως Ορθόδοξοι Χριστιανοί.

Πρώτον, υπάρχει η αγάπη του Χριστού, την οποία έδειξε στον Άγιο Θωμά - γιατί, αντί να τον απορρίψει για την απιστία και την αμφιβολία του, ο Κύριος μας τον έσυρε στον Εαυτόν του και τον εφώτισε με την αλήθεια της πραγματικότητας ότι αναστήθηκε από τον τάφο. Αυτό είναι σημαντικό, επειδή γνωρίζουμε ότι ο Θεός μας ο Χριστός δεν καταδικάζει κανέναν που έχει αμφιβολίες, αλλά ο Ιδιος εκδηλώνεται σε όποιον θέλει να Τον γνωρίσει.

Δεύτερον, καταλαβαίνουμε από τα λόγια του Αγίου Θωμά ότι ο Χριστός είναι και τέλειος άνθρωπος και τέλειος Θεός: «Ο Κύριος μου και ο Θεός Μου». (Αγ. Ιωάν. 20:28). Ο Χριστός είναι ο Θεός κατα σάρκα, ο Οποίος είναι ο Σωτήρ μας και ο Οποίος χαρίζει την Θεϊαν και Απειρον Αγάπη Του στον κάθε άνθρωπο του κόσμου ξεχωριστά.

Τρίτον, στο Ευαγγέλιό του, ο Άγιος Ιωάννης γράφει ότι ο Χριστός, που αναστήθηκε από τον τάφο, «εχειροτόνησε» τους Αποστόλους, δίνοντας τους την εξουσία να συγχωρούν αμαρτίες. Αυτή είναι η βάση για τα Ιερά Μυστήρια της Ιεροσύνης και της Εξομολογήσεως.

Με την Κυριακή του Αγίου Θωμά, οι πιστοί Χριστιανοί της Αποστολικής εποχής διέταξαν ότι κάθε Κυριακή είναι η ημέρα καθ' όλη τη διάρκεια του έτους που εορτάζουμε την Ανάσταση του Χριστού. Είναι η «ογδόη μέρα», η ημέρα που δεν τελειώνει ποτέ -- είναι η Αιώνια Ζωή. +Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

is both Perfect Man and Perfect God: "You are My Lord and My God." (St. John 20:28). Christ is God our Savior in the flesh, and His Divine and Eternal Love is granted to everyone in the world individually.

Third, in the Gospel of St. John, Christ, having arisen from the dead, "ordained" the Apostles, giving them the authority to forgive sins. This is the basis for the Holy Sacraments of the Priesthood and Confession.

With the Sunday of St. Thomas, the faithful Christians of the Apostolic era ordered that every Sunday is the day throughout the year on which we celebrate the Resurrection from the dead of Christ our Savior. It is the "eighth day," the day which never ends. Every day is "The Day" with the Risen Christ as partakers of His Eternal Life.

Following St. Thomas' confession, "My Lord and My God", Jesus' words are a blessing for each of us, as He said: "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet believe" (St. John 20:29). I recall the thoughts shared back in 1999 by Archbishop Dimitri, Archbishop of Dallas and the South serving the Orthodox Church in America: "People sometimes lament the fact that they did not live in Apostolic times when it would have been possible to see for themselves and talk face to face with the Incarnate Lord...Yet, a primary emphasis here is that the historical period in which one exists makes no difference as far as one's relationship to Christ is concerned and his or her ability to know the Truth and live by faith. We have 'received the Heavenly Spirit' and we are blessed with the examples, testimonies and presence of countless saints who have gone before us. We are literally living, right now, if you will, in Apostolic times. So it seems as though we are missing the mark if we begin to demand from God, or from ourselves, objective, factual knowledge in terms of 'proof', before we come to faith...Without this faith no amount of knowledge or evidence will suffice." (The Dawn, publication of the Diocese of the South; Orthodox Church in America, April, 1999).

+FR. THEODORE

METROPOLIS CLERGY MEETING REPORT

The clergy of our Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco met with His Eminence, Metropolitan Gerasimos through a "Zoom Meeting" on **Friday, April 24th**. From this meeting, the following statement is given:

The Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of America will convene in a "Zoom Meeting" format in order to draft an **official statement** from the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops with regard to "opening our parishes." That statement may be forthcoming in a week or two. All Orthodox Christian clergy want to reopen our churches/parishes, but it is decided that we need to make sure it's done with consistency, with the proper safety components and with the blessing of the Bishops of all Orthodox Christian Jurisdictions in America as One Church united.



PRAYERS FOR READING HOLY SCRIPTURES

"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

"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- Acts 5:12-20

In those days, many signs and wonders were done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high honor. And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women, so that they even carried out the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and pallets, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed. But the high priest rose up and all who were with him, that is, the party of the Sadducees, and filled with jealousy they arrested the apostles and put them in the common prison. But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out and said, "Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life."

GOSPEL - Jn. 20:19-31

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them: "Peace be with you." When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His

side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you." And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them: "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him: "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them: "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in His side, I will not believe." Eight days later, His disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. The doors were shut, but Jesus came and stood among them, and said: "Peace be with you." Then He said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side; do not be faithless, but believing." Thomas answered Him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to Him: "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe." Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

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>.

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

"ZOOM" COFFEE HOUR AFTER CHURCH SERVICES TODAY – 11:30 a.m. See enclosed flier for Zoom Meeting information and be sure to join us! (<https://us02.web.zoom.us/j/81064636813>)

BIBLE STUDY-Tuesday, April 28th -10:00 a.m. (Contact Fr. Ted 760-880-5869 on Monday, April 27th for Zoom Meeting details or complications - Meeting ID : 319-036-456 Meeting ID : 319-036-456)

PHILOPTOCHOS – Tuesday, April 28th- 11:30 a.m. Philoptochos General Members Meeting (Call Rhonda Latkovic, Philoptochos President, or Fr. Ted on Monday, April 27th if you need Zoom Meeting ID numbers)

AHEPA- Applications for the AHEPA 528 Fr. T. P. Theophilos Memorial Scholarship are due. Call Wynn Storton, AHEPA 528 President, regarding any questions related to the Scholarship Application process during the coronavirus.

Saint George Ladies Philoptochos **Virtual Coffee Hour on Zoom!**



Join us on Sunday, April 26th @ 11:30 AM

To join go to <https://zoom.us/join> and type in the meeting ID and Password

ID: 810 6463 6813

PW: 749527

Rhonda Latkovic is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Philoptochos Coffee Hour Zoom Meeting

Time: Apr 26, 2020 11:30 AM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81064636813>

Meeting ID: 810 6463 6813

Password: 749527

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