

AUGUST 16, 2020

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.

(RE)MOVING MOUNTAINS

I often think about St. Paul's visit to Arceopagos (Mars Hill), which is recorded in the Book of Acts (17:19). When he preached the Gospel to the people there, they ridiculed him. This indicates the status of the moral and spiritual life of society during that age. Christianity was ridiculed then. Christianity is ridiculed publically today, as well.

In today's passage from his First Epistle to the Corinthians, St. Paul advises us to

imitate him as we confront similar issues in our own age. With the suggestion that we imitate him, St. Paul challenges us to live like Saints. Therefore, we are asked to love God and our fellow human being – and even our enemies. It follows that we are to bless those who insult us or defame us as we try to live according to the teachings of our Orthodox Church.

It is significant that the Saints converted the world to worship Christ not because of their efforts to be accepted by

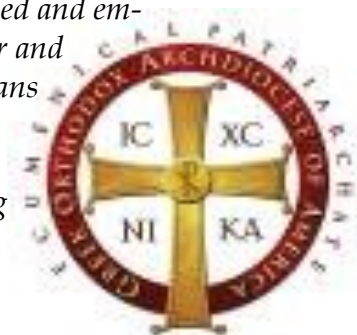
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THE MOST HOLY MOTHER OF GOD AND EVER-VIRGIN MARY

Yesterday was the great Feast Day of the Dormition of the Most Holy Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary. Holy Tradition dating from the Apostles themselves notes that the Apostles took up Her God-receiving body and brought it to a sepulcher, while the Angels from Heaven chanted with them -- hence, the Tradition of referring to Her as being more honorable than the Angels themselves. That the Apostles gathered to honor Her, initiated the Holy Tradition of the Church teaching that the Apostles themselves honored Her as their spiritual Mother and, by extension, She is the Mother of us all as the Church -- the Church being the Body of Christ. Her Icon stands behind the Altar Table as She presents Christ to us -- and, in turn, our mission as the Church is to present Christ to the world.

"Mary is our model in that She was the first person to receive Jesus Christ. As Mary bore Christ in Her womb physically, all Christians now have the privilege of bearing Christ within them spiritually. By God's grace and mercy we are purified and empowered to become like Him...Therefore, because of Her character and especially because of Her role in God's plan of salvation, Christians appropriately honor Mary as the first among Saints. The Archangel Gabriel initiated this honor in his address to Her: 'Rejoice, highly favored One, the Lord is with you; blessed are You among women. (Luke 1:28).'" (Orthodox Study Bible [NT Version], pg. 135).

+FR. THEODORE



Σκέπτομαι συχνά περί της επισκέψεως του Απ. Παύλου στον Αρεοπάγο (Πράξεις 17:19). Όταν εκήρυξε στους ανθρώπους εκεί, τον γελοιοποίησαν. Αυτό δείχνει την κατάσταση της ηθικής και πνευματικής ζωής εκείνης της εποχής. Ο Χριστιανισμός γελοιοποιήθηκε τότε. Ομοίως, ο Χριστιανισμός συχνά γελοιοποιείται δημόσια και σήμερα.

Στην σημερινήν περικοπή εκ της 1ης Επιστολής του προς τους Κορινθίους, μας συμβουλεύει ο Απ. Παύλος να τον μιμηθούμε καθώς αντιμετωπίζουμε παρόμοια ζητήματα στην δικήν μας εποχή. Με την πρόταση να τον μιμούμεθα, ο Απ. Παύλος μας προκαλεί να ζούμε σαν Άγιοι. Επομένως, ζητείται απο εμάς να αγαπάμε τον Θεό και τον πλησίον μας – και ακόμη να αγαπάμε τους εχθρούς μας. Κατά συνέπεια, πρέπει να ευλογούμε αυτούς που μας προσβάλλουν και μας δυσφημίζουν αφού κάνουμε προσπάθεια να διατηρήσουμε τις διατάξεις της Ορθόδοξης Εκκλησίας μας.

Είναι σημαντικό ότι οι Άγιοι μετέτρεψαν τον κόσμο να λατρεύουν τον Χριστό όχι λόγω των προσπαθειών των να γίνουν αποδεκτοί ως δημοφιλείς μορφές της κοινωνίας. Οι άνθρωποι έγιναν Χριστιανοί επειδή είδαν ζωντανά παραδείγματα της «εν Χριστώ» ζωής των αγίων. Εβίωσαν την Θεϊκήν αγάπη και την συγχώρεση των αμαρτιών.

Η θεραπεία που απαιτείται για τον εαυτό μας και για την κοινωνία μας γενικά σε αυτές τις δύσκολες ημέρες μας σήμερα απαιτεί τη μετάνοιά μας από τις αμαρτίες – κάτι που περιλαμβάνει την πίστη, την προσευχή και την νηστεία.
+ Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

others as popular figures of society. Instead, people converted to Christianity because they saw living examples of the Gospel message. Truly, example is the best teacher.

The Bible does not tell us to be popular or to be *accepted* by others. We are instead commanded to *accept* the other people around us with Christ-like love. In this regard, the Church *accepts* everyone; but, does not *accept sin*. The Church embraces everyone with the loving appeal for everyone to stop sinning instead of justifying sins. This is not popular. In this, St. Paul suffered as a “reject” from society. However, like all the Saints, in imitation of Christ on the Cross, he sought the forgiveness of all, and thus loved his enemies. An anonymous Orthodox monk once said: “*Even in the greatest sinner, the ‘Image of God’ is still present. What is important is to know how the ‘Image of God’ in me can meet the ‘Image of God’ in my ‘enemy.’*” (From *The Year of Grace of the Lord*, St. Vladimir Seminary Press.) As we imitate Christ, the grace of the Holy Spirit works in us. Fr. George Florosvsky explains, “*The purpose of personal worship is to disappear in one’s selfish personality and become a vehicle of the Spirit. Yet, it does not mean that one’s personality is destroyed; it is rather raised to a higher level through communion with the ‘perfect personality’ of God.*” (From “*Go Forth...*,” Vol. II, by Orthodox Information Associates).

The healing that we need for ourselves and for our society in general during these difficult times requires our “equal-opportunity” repentance, which, as our Lord said in today’s Gospel, involves faith, prayer and fasting. St. Seraphim explains: “*The true aim of our Christian life is to acquire the Holy Spirit of God. Prayer, fasting, watchfulness over our thoughts, and all other Christian acts do not alone constitute the aim of our Christian life, although they are indispensable means for reaching this aim...We must begin here by a right faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God...and, when the Spirit of God descends and overshadows [us]...the Spirit of God turns to joy all that He may touch.*” Thus, the “mountains” that obstruct our peace in the world are removed and the peace and joy of God’s Kingdom is found as we live our lives on earth.
+FR. THEODORE

NOTE: When unable to attend Church Services in person due to state regulations regarding the Coronavirus or personal illness, follow the Divine Liturgy through live-streaming provided by various Archdiocese parishes at: <https://www.goarch.org/live-broadcasts>.

BIBLE STUDY-Tuesday, August 18, 2020 -10:00 a.m.

Join Zoom Bible Study Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86878349877?pwd=OEVzOUdFR1VFVzd6bzhKbVI3cUoyUT09>

Meeting ID: 868 7834 9877

Passcode: 898242

Or, using your cell phone, call: 1 669 900 6833 and dial in the Meeting ID and Passcode numbers.

We will be studying the following passage: St. Matthew 18:23-35.



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 unto the ages of ages. Amen.”

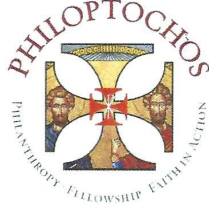
“Shine within our hearts, loving Master, the pure light of Your divine knowledge and open the eyes of our minds that we may comprehend the message of Your Gospel. Instill in us, also, reverence for Your blessed commandments, so that having conquered sinful desires, we may pursue a spiritual life, thinking 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”

<p>EPISTLE --1 Corinthians 4:9-16</p> <p>Brethren, God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute. To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are ill-clad and buffeted and homeless, and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we try to conciliate; we have become, and are now, as the refuse of the world, the off-scouring of all things. I do not write this to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. I urge you, then, be imitators of me.</p>	<p>GOSPEL -- St. Matthew 17:14-23</p> <p>At that time, a man came up to Him and kneeling before Him said, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and he suffers terribly; for often he falls into the fire, and often into the water. And I brought him to Your disciples, and they could not heal him." And Jesus answered, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him here to me." And Jesus rebuked him, and the demon came out of him, and the boy was cured instantly. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" He said to them, "Because of your little faith. For truly I say to you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move hence to yonder place,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you. But this kind never comes out except by prayer and fasting." As they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him, and He will be raised on the third day."</p>
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WEEKDAY CALENDAR

Monday - Friday, August 17th - 21st.....Philoptochos “Critical Food Drive” --10:00 a.m - 12:30 p.m.
(See enclosed flier)

Tuesday, August 18th.....Bible Study (“zoom” format)



LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY of ST. GEORGE **CRITICAL FOOD DRIVE - AUGUST 12th-SEPTEMBER 2nd**

The COVID-19 pandemic has severely impacted our local community since March. The critical need for non-perishable food continues. We have set a goal to donate **ONE TON of food** by this fall. So far, we have donated 902 pounds, so we are almost halfway there! More families than ever are out of work, unable to pay their mortgage or rent and are desperately trying to make ends meet. *Did you know 1 pound of non-perishable food like the items listed below feeds 4 meals?*

We are collecting food donations during **the month of AUGUST** at the church. You may bring your donations into the hall and place them in the designated area **between the hours of 10:00 AM-12:30 PM, Monday-Friday & on Sundays from 9:30 AM-11:00 AM.** If you are unable to shop for groceries, please consider a monetary donation that we will use to purchase food for our drive. (Please make your check out to Ladies Philoptochos-memo food drive.)

Below is the shopping list of the foods that are needed: (Smart & Final and the 99 Cent Store have competitive low prices!):

Rice
Beans
Spaghetti Sauce
Pasta
Cereal/Oatmeal
Canned Chili
Canned Tuna/Chicken
Canned Soup/Stew
Canned Fruit/Vegetables
Peanut Butter

Please make sure products are within expiration dates. NO GLASS containers. No cans larger than 15 1/2 oz.

Thanks For Your Support!