

AUGUST 23, 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.

THE SACRAMENT OF FORGIVENESS

Our Lord's parable which we heard from the reading of today's Gospel passage is a clear message to all: the forgiveness of sins is the main door through which we can enter the Kingdom of Heaven. There is no other sacrifice to God that we can offer except to seek our own forgiveness and to forgive others around us. By not forgiving others, we are lost.

The Sign of the Holy Cross in Its fullness is the forgiveness from God for all

of our sins. This is the sacrifice of God upon the Cross. In contemplating today's Gospel passage, our sacrifice to God is our forgiveness of those who wound us by the sins they commit.

By way of the Lord's Prayer - the "Our Father" - we pray that we are able to forgive others, so that God will forgive us: "*And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.*"

St. John Chrysostom said, "[God] requires from us that we condemn ourselves

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FORGIVENESS AND WORSHIP -- Places of worship have had to close their doors at times due to the fear of the Coronavirus. But we should fear the Judgment of our Lord that is awaiting us if we continue to resist forgiveness! The hatred that we see around us is the fruit of refusing to seek forgiveness from God and to forgive one another. Resentments have flowed across our country, taking with them the peace of mind and sanity of nearly everyone of every race, creed, gender, age and ethnic origin.

St. Paul would remind us of our Lord's words: "*First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.*" (St. Matthew 5:24). He would add: "*Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For whoever eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's Body. This is why many are weak and sick among you and many sleep.*" (1 Corinthians 11:28-30). The meaning of the words "unworthy manner" refers to one's attitudes and life-style -- i.e., "*Coming to [Christ] with hidden immorality, disunity, doctrinal heresy, or disorder, failing to see the gifts of God as Holy Things for holy people.*" (Orthodox Study [NT], pg. 394).

As we grow to old age, weakness and illness overtake all of us; but, our spiritual weakness and illness of soul as the result of holding grudges will follow us into eternity.

+FR. THEODORE



Η παραβολή του Κυρίου μας που ακούσαμε από το σημερινό ανάγνωσμα του Ευαγγελίου είναι ένα σαφές μήνυμα σε όλους: η συγχώρεση των αμαρτιών είναι η κύρια είσοδος από την οποία μπαίνουμε στη Βασιλεία του Θεού. Δεν υπάρχει καμία θυσία στον Θεό που μπορούμε να προσφέρουμε εκτός από το να ζητήσουμε συγχώρηση για τις δικές μας αμαρτίες και να συγχωρήσουμε τους άλλους γύρω μας. Χωρίς να συγχωρούμε άλλους, είμεθα χαμένοι.

Το Σημείον του Σταυρού στην πληρότητα Του είναι η συγχώρησης από τον Θεόν για όλες τις αμαρτίες μας. Αυτή είναι η θυσία του Θεού επάνω στον Σταυρόν. Στην μέλετη της σημερινής Ευγγελικής περικοπής, η δική μας θυσία προς τον Θεόν είναι η συγχώρηση που χραιζομεν εμείς σε άλλους που μας πληγώνουν από τις αμαρτίες που διαπράττουν.

Μέσω της προσευχής - «Το Πάτηρ Υμών» - προσευχόμεθα για να μπορούμε πάντοτε να συγχωρούμε τους άλλους, ώστε ο Θεός να μας συγχωρήσει: «και άφες ημίν τα οφειλήματα ημών ως και εμείς αφίεμεν τοις οφειλέταις ημών.»

Ο Αγ. Ιωάννης ο Χρυσόστομος λέγει: «[Ο Θεός] απαιτεί από εμάς να καταδικάζουμε τους εαυτούς μας για τις αμαρτίες μας και να συγχωρούμε τους άλλους για τις αμαρτίες τους. Το πρώτο είναι για χάρη του άλλου. Γιατί όποιος γνωρίζει τις δικές του αμαρτίες είναι πιο επιεικής σε σχέση με τον συνάνθρωπό του και όχι απλώς για να τον συγχωρήσει με τα χείλη μονον, αλλά από την καρδιά.» (Nicene-Post Nicene Fathers, Τομ. 10, σελ. 380).
+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

for our sins and forgive the sins of others. The former is for the benefit of the latter. For, whoever considers one's own sins is more indulgent of the sins of his or her fellow human being and does not forgive others with only their lips, but with their heart." (Nicene-Post Nicene Fathers, Vol 10. "Homily 61 On the Gospel of St. Matthew," pg. 380).

We can best begin to forgive others their sins by praying for them. By praying for them, our Lord inspires us to be more willing to forgive their sins, as prayer also inspires us to seek forgiveness of our sins, as well. Fr. Meletios Webber notes that praying for the forgiveness of others, helps avoid resentments and grudges that serve to haunt us: *"Resentments, in particular, are like tiny sparks of fire that can, in the end, become a seething mass of destructive emotions...The most common and effective way to get rid of resentments is to pray for those very people against whom we hold grudges."* (Steps of Transformation, pgs. 136-137).

Holy Confession is the "Sacrament of Forgiveness." The saintly spiritual elder, Fr. Porphyrios, concluding a visit by someone who was not one of his spiritual children, began to prepare for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. The visitor asked Fr. Porphyrios if he could partake of Holy Communion. Fr. Porphyrios, taking on the role of his spiritual father, asked him one simple question in the spirit of Holy Confession: *"Do you have hatred against anyone?"* Upon answering "No," Fr. Porphyrios invited him to partake of the Sacrament. (Anthology of Spiritual Advice, Elder Porphyrios of Kavsokalivito [Gr. ed., pub.: Metamorphosis of the Savior Press], pg. 354).

Indeed, the Lord does not ask us to perform miracles, nor even to sacrifice limb or life. All that is asked is for us to *acquire a vision of our own sins*; to seek forgiveness for them, and to grant forgiveness of the sins of others.

+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 25, 2020 -10:00 a.m.

Join Zoom Bible Study Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86878349877?pwd=OEVzOUdFR1VFVzd6bzhKbVl3cUoyUT09>

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 19: 16-26.



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”

EPISTLE --1 Corinthians 9:2-12

Brethren, you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. This is my defense to those who would examine me. Do we not have the right to our food and drink? Do we not have the right to be accompanied by a wife, as the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living? Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard without eating any of its fruit? Who tends a flock without getting some of the milk? Do I say this on human authority? Does not the law say the same? For it is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain." Is it for oxen that God is concerned? Does he not speak entirely for our sake? It was written for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope and the thresher thresh in hope of a share in the crop. If we have sown spiritual good among you, is it too much if we reap your material benefits? If others share this rightful claim upon you, do not we still more? Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ.

GOSPEL - St. Matthew 18:23-35

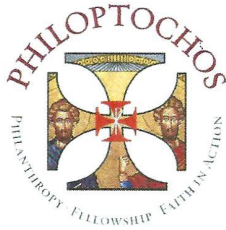
The Lord said this parable: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began the reckoning, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents; and as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him the lord of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. But that same servant, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat he said, 'Pay what you owe.' So his fellow servant fell down and besought him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' He refused and went and put him in prison till he should pay the debt. When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you besought me; and should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his lord delivered him to the jailors, till he should pay all his debt. So also my heavenly Father will do to everyone of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

Monday - Friday, August 24th - 28th.....Philoptochos "Critical Food Drive"--10:00 a.m - 12:30 p.m.
(See enclosed flier)

Tuesday, August 25th.....Bible Study ("zoom" format) - 10:00 a.m.

Saturday, August 29th.....BEHEADING OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST
Orthros-8:30 a.m./ Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m. (strict fasting day)



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!