

JULY 12, 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.

BE NOT DECEIVED!

The words we heard today from the Apostle Paul's Epistle regarding the Israelites apply to all of us. Like the Israelites and Greeks of the time of St. Paul, we also rely on our own human wisdom to the extent that we continue to ignore God and, to paraphrase St Paul, we ignore God's righteousness and, seeking our own righteousness, we do not submit to God's love.

To the extent that we ignore God, we rely on our own philosophies and, consequently, we form laws in order to force

everyone to love their neighbor. However, we still have a lot of turmoil around us as it is portrayed daily in the media, because we choose to ignore the two most important Commandments of our Savior: to love God and to love our neighbor. We have forgotten that the more we observe the teaching of our Lord, the more we know the love of God, since the observance of His laws is a source of joy, rather than a means of oppression.

It is in the nature of our human souls

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PRAYERS FOR PROTECTION AGAINST DEMONS – The prayers read just before one is baptized in the Orthodox Church are called "Prayers of Exorcism." As is true with nearly all prayers of the Church, our requests for our Savior's blessings are to be matched by our personal efforts to work with our Lord to acquire and maintain those blessings. Reading the "Prayer of Exorcism," we ask our Savior that *"Satan be crushed beneath the feet (of the one being baptized), giving (him or her) victory over him and his evil spirits."* However, there is an implication surrounding this request. It is implied that the baptismal candidate will make the pledge to *"Renounce Satan and all of his angels, and all of his works and all of his service and all of his pride."* We pledge to be co-workers with Christ God.

The text of one of the "Prayers of Exorcism" reads as follows: *"Lord of Sabaoth, God of Israel, Who heals every malady and infirmity, look upon Your servant and search him/her and root out every operation of the devil. Rebuke the unclean spirits and expel them. Purify the work of Your hands and, through Your trenchant energy, speedily crush Satan under his/her feet, giving him/her victory over the same and over his unclean spirits, so that, having obtained Your mercy, he/she may be worthy to partake of Your Holy Mysteries and may ascribe glory to You, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen."*

+FR. THEODORE



Τα λόγια που ακούσαμεν από την σημερινήν περικοπήν της Επιστολής του Απ. Παύλου σχετικά με τους Εβραίους ισχύει και για όλους μας. Όπως οι Εβραίοι και οι Έλληνες της εποχής του Αγίου Παύλου, και εμείς βασιζόμεθα στη δική μας ανθρώπινη σοφία στο βαθμό που συνεχίζουμε να αγνοούμε τον Θεό και, για να παραφράσουμε τον Άπ. Παύλο, αγνοούμε τη δικαιοσύνη του Θεού και, αναζητώντας τη δική μας δικαιοσύνη, δεν υποτάσσουμε στη δικαιοσύνη του Θεού.

Στο βαθμό που αγνοούμεν τον Θεό, στηριζόμεθα στις δικές μας φιλοσοφίες και, κατα επέκτασιν, σχηματίζουμεν νόμους με σκοπόν να πιέζουμεν τον καθέναν να αγαπά τον πλησίον του. Ομως, έχουμε ακόμα μεγάλη αναταραχή γύρω μας καθώς απεικονίζεται καθημερινά στα μέσα ενημέρωσως, διότι επιλέγουμεν να αγνοήσουμεν τους δύο πολύ σπουδαιούς νόμους του Σωτήρος μας: να αγαπάμε τον Θεόν και να αγαπάμε τον πλησίον μας. Εχομεν ξεχάσει ότι όσο περισσότερο διατηρούμε τη διδασκαλία του Κυρίου μας, τόσο περισσότερο γνωρίζουμε την αγάπη του Θεού, αφού η τήρησις των νόμων Του είναι πηγή ευφροσύνης και όχι μέσον καταπίεσως.

Είναι η φύσις της ψυχής να γνωρίζει την αγάπη. Αυτή η φύσις είναι από την θεϊκή εισπνοή της πνοής του Θεού όταν εδημιουργήθηκε ο Αδάμ. Επομένως, για να γνωρίζουμε τον Χριστόν είναι το ίδιο με το να γνωρίζουμεν την αγάπην του Θεού. Στην πραγματικότητα, η αγάπη δεν μπορεί να νομοθετηθεί -- προέρχεται από τον καθένα μας μέσω της ελεύθερης θελήσεώς μας.

+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

to know love. This nature comes the divine in-breathing of God when Adam was created. Therefore, to know Christ is to know the love of God - and there is no law that forbids us to express it in all of our affairs and with all people. In truth, love cannot be legislated; love has to come from within us as a matter of Free Will.

Each one of us is created to live the love of God for our own salvation, as well as for the salvation of all other people. A modern example of this fact is seen in the life-style of St. Paisios of Mt. Athos whom we commemorate today. It is a life-style of God's righteousness. Among many words of advice that he has given to our generation, we have these: *"People have not grasped the deeper meaning of life: they do not believe in life after death. All of their difficulties begin from this...[People] torment themselves by their own egotism. But, God loves all people and gave to each person whatever will be helpful for salvation, if properly taken advantage of. But people torment themselves, saying, 'Why am I like this and the other person is like that?' But, you have certain qualities that the other does not have...When a person is helped to believe in God and in Eternal Life, that is when one grasps the deeper meaning of life and repents and immediately consolation comes with the grace of God. And, this changes a person and dispels all inherited shortcomings. Many people who have repented and struggled against sin sincerely and humbly have received God's grace and even became saints, whom we honor today and ask for their prayers."* (Spiritual Awakening, Vol. II of the Counsels of St. Paisios: "The Deeper Meaning of Life").

Our own humanistic understanding of righteousness is subject to deceptions from demons. The demon entered the serpent to deceive Adam and Eve into thinking that they could become gods without God. Because we are deceived into thinking that there is no such thing as Eternal Life with Christ our God, we are tempted to act like gods. Yet, we are not gods; Jesus Christ is God. It is Jesus Who has authority over all other powers. St. John Chrysostom notes that Christ God teaches us to have faith in Him and to turn away from every deceit from evil powers. He states: *"For this reason God let [the demons] fall upon the herd of swine: in order that in the case of the bodies of irrational animals you may learn their wickedness and that they would have done to [a human] the things they did to the swine."* (Complete Works of St. John Chrysostom, pub. by Apple Books, pg. 7413).

It is our Savior, Jesus Christ, Who saves us both in this life and in the life beyond this one, granting us His Divine Wisdom in answer to our sincere prayers.

+FR. THEODORE

The church is “open” on a limited basis. IMPORTANT NOTE:

Dear parishioners,

Now that we've made phone calls for last three weeks we are now going to change our format to **holding reservations on a weekly basis for Sunday Church Attendance on a first call first serve basis.**

1. Each week please email our church at: pdsaintgeorge@gmail.com, or call the church at (760) 568-9901 or (760) 880-5869 Monday thru Friday and make your intent known that you want to attend church for the coming Sunday. If you call the church, leave a message if there is no answer. Whether using email or by phone call, provide names of any family members attending with you.

2. All rules still apply that you have read the guidelines and protocols and you understand them and will adhere to them. Remember that entrance for worship on Sunday is granted no later than 9:30 a.m.

3. Once reservations reach our capacity for that Sunday you can ask to be put on for the following Sunday.

4. Those who do not attend a particular Sunday's Liturgy may “attend” a live-streamed Liturgy offered by the many other parishes of our Archdiocese. Go to the website telecasts from our Archdiocese at: <https://www.goarch.org/live-broadcasts>.

We will try this format for the next few weeks and see how it goes. Thank you and God Bless.