

JULY 26, 2020

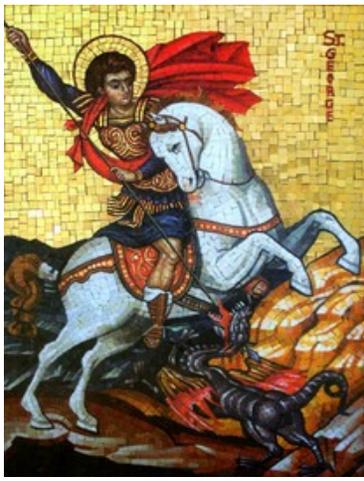
ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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THE LADDER

ST. PARASKEVI THE GREAT MARTYR

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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 UNSEEN WARFARE

The miracles of Christ are closely bound to the fervent faith of those who seek Him. This brings us to the topic of prayer. Specifically, we pray during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy: *“Master, guide the course of our life for our benefit according to the need of each of us. Travel with those who travel and heal the sick, O Physician of our souls and bodies.”* As we have said many times, the health of the body is closely connected to the health of the soul. At the same time, the pur-

pose of health for both the body and the soul is to glorify Christ our God. Our prayers then are to reflect this purpose of our lives, guided by faith.

The blind men of today’s Gospel passage said a prayer with faith. The prayer: *“Have mercy upon us, O Son of David.”* This is the “Lord, have mercy” that we chant at our Church Services. Christ asked them: *“Do you believe that I am able to do this?”* They then expressed their faith: *“Yes, Lord!”* (St. Matthew 9:27-28)

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ST. PARASKEVI – Today is the Feast Day of St. Paraskevi the Great Martyr. Her parents provided her with an excellent education. She was well versed in philosophy. However, her Christian upbringing made her wiser than the philosophers. When her parents passed away from this life, St. Paraskevi inherited a large sum of money, most of which she gave away to the poor; some of which she used to preach to the women of her community about the saving ministry of Christ our God. As more and more women rejected the state religion of Roman gods and converted to Christianity, the Roman Emperor, Antoninus Pius, became more and more irate with her. In time, he had her arrested. Frustrated in his efforts to re-convert St. Paraskevi back to the religion of their false gods, Antoninus eventually prepared a large cauldron of oil and tar, boiled the mixture and then had Paraskevi immersed in it. Miraculously she stood in it as if being refreshed rather than burned. Antoninus became infuriated and assumed that she was using witchery to keep the contents cooled. When he approached the cauldron, he was blinded by its hot steam. At this moment Antoninus pleaded for St. Paraskevi to help him and she responded to his request, thereby healing him. From this episode many converted to the Christian Faith and St. Paraskevi became the Patron Saint for people with visual ailments.

In 161 A.D. a plague broke out and Antoninus’ successor to the throne, Marcus Aurelius, took it as an omen that the gods were angry since many people had become Christians. He resumed the persecution of Christians and St. Paraskevi was eventually beheaded.



Τα θαύματα του Χριστού συνδέονται στενά με την ένθερμη πίστη αυτών που Τον αναζητούν. Αυτό μας φέρνει στο θέμα της προσευχής. Συγκεκριμένα, προσευχόμεθα κατά την εκτέλεση της Θείας Λειτουργίας: «*Δέσποτα, τα προκείμενα πάσιν ημίν εις αγαθόν εξομάλισσον, κατά την εκάστου ιδίαν χρείαν, τοις οδοιποροῦσι συνόδευσον, τους νοσούντας ίασαι, Ο Ιατρός των ψυχών και των σωμάτων ημών*». Όπως έχουμε πει πολλές φορές, η υγεία του σώματος συνδέεται στενά με την υγεία της ψυχής. Ταυτόχρονα, ο σκοπός της υγείας τόσο για το σώμα όσο και για την ψυχή είναι να δοξάσουμε τον Χριστό τον Θεόν. Οι προσευχές μας, λοιπόν, πρέπει να αντικατοπτρίζουν τον σκοπό της ζωής μας, που καθοδηγείται από την πίστη μας.

Οι τυφλοί της σημερινής Ευαγγελικής περικοπής έκαναν προσευχή με πίστη: «*Ελέησον ημάς, Υιέ Δαβίδ!*» Είναι, μάλιστα, το «*Κύριε, ελέησον*» που ψάλλουμε στις Εκκλησιαστικές μας ακολουθίες. Ο Χριστός τους ρώτησε: «*Πιστεύεται ότι δύνανται τούτο ποιήσαι;*» Στη συνέχεια εξέφρασαν την πίστη τους: «*Ναι, Κύριε!*» (Ματθ. 9: 27-28).

Κατά την εκτέλεση της Θείας Λειτουργίας γνωρίζουμε ότι ο Χριστός είναι «*ο Φωτισμός των ψυχών και των σωμάτων ημών*» και προσευχόμεθα για το Φως της γνώσεώς Του να λάμψει στις καρδιές μας για να επιδιώξουμε την «*πνευματικήν πολιτείαν*».

Ο αόρατος πόλεμος περιγράφεται ως η προσπάθεια απορρίψεως δαιμονικών σκέψεων, ζητώντας από τον Κύριο μας να εμφυτεύσει σε μας θεοκεντρικές σκέψεις δια μέσου της προσευχής: *Κύριε Ιησού Χριστέ, Υιέ Θεού, ελέησον με!*»
+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

In the course of the Divine Liturgy we are reminded that Christ is “*the Illumination of our souls and bodies,*” and we pray that the Light of His knowledge may shine in our hearts in order to “*perceive the message of the Gospel and [His] blessed Commandments, and thereby, putting aside our own selfish desires, we may seek a heavenly citizenship, doing and considering all those things that are well-pleasing to [our Lord].*” (*Prayer for the Reading of the Gospel; Divine Liturgy*).

Our prayer for illumination from Christ must be based on the our faith in Christ and our willingness to see and acknowledge our own imperfections. In addition, knowing that demons seek to deceive us through temptations, we turn to our Savior, asking for them to be expelled and for us to be enlightened. Turning to our Savior for such help requires constant effort, which the Saints have called “the invisible warfare” The “invisible warfare” is described as the effort of rejecting self-centered and demonic thoughts, by asking our Lord to implant in us God-centered thoughts through the prayer: “*Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.*”

Calling upon the Name of Jesus, as did the blind men of today’s Gospel, is the basis for prayer. The words of advice from St. Ignatius Brianchaninov come to mind: “*Among the mysterious, wonderful properties of the Name of Jesus is the property of expelling demons. This property was disclosed by the Lord Himself. He said of those who believe in Him, ‘in My name they shall cast out demons’ (Mark 16:17)...Let us not be afraid to practice the Prayer of Jesus either by winds or waves! By winds, I mean diabolic thoughts and imaginings. By waves, I mean the revolt of the passions aroused by thoughts and reveries. From the midst of the most furious storms in our lives, with perseverance, courage and resolve you too will cry out to the Lord Jesus Christ, and He will rebuke the winds and waves. And having learned from experience the omnipotence of Jesus, we will render to Him due adoration....*” (*On the Prayer of Jesus, by Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov of Russia, trans. by Father Lazarus, pg. 34*).

+FR. THEODORE

NOTE: Conforming to California State directives, our parish church is closed. The Divine Liturgy today will be celebrated behind closed doors by Fr. Ted and Deacon Euthym only. Follow the Divine Liturgy through live-streaming provided by various Archdiocese parishes at: <https://www.goarch.org/live-broadcasts>.

BIBLE STUDY–Tuesday, July 28, 2020 –10:00 a.m.

1. In the “search” link at the top of your computer type in: [https:// zoom.us/join](https://zoom.us/join).
2. Enter the **Meeting ID: 832 4167 9782**.
3. Then, enter the **Password: 898242**.
4. We will be studying the Gospel of St. Matthew 14:14-22. For those who do not want to use a computer, use a cell phone to call: **1-669-900-6833** . Enter the Meeting ID number: 832 4167 9782 and then enter the Password: 898242.



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— GALATIANS 3:23-29;4:1-5

Brethren, before faith came, we were confined under the law, kept under restraint until faith should be revealed. So that the law was our custodian until Christ came, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a custodian; for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no better than a slave, though he is the owner of all the estate; but he is under guardians and trustees until the date set by the father. So with us; when we were children, we were slaves to the elemental spirits of the universe. But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

GOSPEL—ST. MATTHEW 9:27-35

At that time, as Jesus passed on from there, two blind men followed him, crying aloud, "Have mercy on us, Son of David." When he entered the house, the blind men came to him; and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord." Then he touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith be it done to you." And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly charged them, "See that no one knows it." But they went away and spread his fame through all that district. As they were going away, behold, a dumb demoniac was brought to him. And when the demon had been cast out, the dumb man spoke; and the crowds marveled, saying, "Never was anything like this seen in Israel." But the Pharisees said, "He casts out demons by the prince of demons." And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people.

COMMUNIQUE FROM HIS EMINENCE, METROPOLITAN GERASIMOS

In His recent Encyclical regarding the recent conversion of Hagia Sophia into a mosque, His Eminence wrote: *“The recent actions of the Republic of Turkey to convert the historic Hagia Sophia [Greek Orthodox Church of the Holy Wisdom] into a mosque has drawn worldwide attention. While this political effort may be happening over 6,000 miles from the Metropolis of San Francisco and you may feel removed from its impact, it is incumbent upon each of us to become educated about this situation and appropriately protest this action and encourage the reversal of this decision...”*

HOW TO HELP

- **Pray!** We know the power of prayer is stronger than any physical attack. When you rise in the morning and before you go to bed in the evening, pray for the deliverance of Hagia Sophia from this fateful decision.
- **On Friday, July 24th, His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos asked us to pray the service of the Akathist to the Theotokos.** [Note: this service was conducted by Fr. Ted privately, due to Riverside County church closure directives] *“The Mother of God is our fortress and we implore her swift aid and help during this time of great need. At the conclusion of the service, please all join in singing the Kontakion ‘Τῆ ὑπερμάχῳ/To You Champion General, a hymn that was composed and first chanted as thanksgiving for the intercessions of the Theotokos in protecting Constantinople. There is no more relevant time than now to beseech her intercessions.”* ++ METROPOLITAN GERASIMOS
- **Write to your elected officials.** [[A sample letter is available in our parish office](#) that can be sent to our Congressman, Raul Ruiz, asking him to share in our voice of concern: The letter is to be sent to: Raul Ruiz; U.S. House of Representatives; Washington, D.C, 20515.]



The Ladies Philoptochos Society of St George

Cookbook

Hello to All! It's time to share those Special Secret Recipes

Please join St. George Ladies Philoptochos Society of St. George in helping to create our very own cookbook. Participation is easy...just send us your favorite recipes! All Greek and non-Greek recipes are welcome. And if your friends are "Great Cooks", we would love their recipes, also!

Our categories will be:

Appetizers - Breads
Soups & Salads. Vegetables
Entrees (Meat/Seafood/Vegetarian)
Desserts & Pastries
Greek Lenten Foods
Religious Offerings
Kids Recipes
This and That (our miscellaneous!)

We are very excited to have a cookbook as our new Philoptochos fundraiser. There are so many organizations and individuals in need that will benefit from the profits of the cookbook sales.

All recipes can be submitted by any of the following:

The church office

By mail: P. O. Box 4755, Palm Desert, CA. 92261

By email: pamzav@yahoo.com.

Please submit recipes by August 31, 2020.

If anyone would like to join our fun, food loving committee, please contact Pam Zaverdas.

Thank you!

The Ladies Philoptochos Society of St George Cookbook Committee

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