

OCTOBER 11, 2020

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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THE LADDER

SUNDAY OF THE 7th ECUMENICAL COUNCIL

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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.*

PRESERVING THE "GOOD SOIL"

Some souls are like good soil. Other souls are like a hard stone. Still other souls are being choked by the "thorny" cares of the world. The Word is Christ our God, Who, at the same time, is the "enfleshment" of the Bible. Also, the Church is collectively referred to as "The Body of Christ". As members of the Church, we are the ones who must do all we can to plant the seeds of faith in the souls of our children and others.

In reality, however, we preach and teach God's Will to the people around

us -- young and old alike. However, preaching and teaching are words. Unless we offer living examples of God's love for our children to see, the words they hear will not make sense. Then they become confused and frustrated. Their souls' "good soil" begins to erode with anxiety.

Vivid examples are required, which also serve as living sermons. We can no longer talk about forgiveness. Forgiveness needs to become a visible reality. We can no longer talk about self-

Continued on Page 2

SUNDAY OF THE SEVENTH ECUMENICAL COUNCIL

On the Sunday that falls on or immediately after the eleventh of this month, we chant the Service to the 350 holy Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, who gathered in Nicaea in 787 under the holy Patriarch Tarasius and during the reign of the Empress Irene, to refute the Iconoclast heresy, which had received imperial support beginning with the Edict issued in 726 by Emperor Leo the Isaurian.

Iconoclasm was the movement led by those who sought to take down Holy Icons from the churches and force people to destroy the Icons that they had in their homes. They believed that Icons were a form of idolatry. Many of the holy Fathers who condemned Iconoclasm at this holy Council later died as Confessors and Martyrs for the holy Icons during the second assault of Iconoclasm in the ninth century, especially during the reigns of Emperors Leo the Armenian and Theophilus.

St. Luke the Evangelist is noted for having drawn an Icon of the Holy Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary. Thus, this Council upheld Apostolic Tradition. The presence of the Holy Icons in our churches and our homes expresses our faith, as Orthodox Christians, that Jesus Christ, the Only-Begotten Son of the Living God -- "True God of True God" -- was Incarnated by the Virgin Mary and the Holy Spirit and became Man for our salvation.



Μερικές ψυχές είναι σαν το καλό χρώμα. Άλλες ψυχές είναι σαν μιά σκληρή πέτρα. Άλλες ψυχές πνίγονται από τις «ακανθώδεις» φροντίδες του κόσμου. Ο Λόγος είναι ο Χριστός ο Θεός μας, ο Οποίος, ταυτόχρονα, είναι η «ενσάρκωση» της Αγίας Γραφής. Επίσης, η Εκκλησία αναφέρεται συλλογικά ως «Το Σώμα του Χριστού». Ως μέλη της Εκκλησίας, οι γονείς είναι αυτοί οι οποίοι που θα κάνουν τα πάντα για να φυτέψουν τους σπόρους της πίστεως στις ψυχές των παιδιών μας.

Στην πραγματικότητα, όμως, κηρύττουμε και διδάσκουμε το θέλημα του Θεού σε όλους γύρω μας - στους νέους και στους ηλικιωμένους. Ωστόσο, το κήρυγμα και η διδασκαλία είναι μόνον λόγια. Όσο δεν προσφέρουμε ζωντανά παραδείγματα της αγάπης του Θεού για να τα δουν τα παιδιά μας με τα μάτια τους, τα λόγια που ακούνε δεν θα έχουν νόημα. Γίνονται μπερδεμένοι και απογοητευμένοι. Οι εύθραυστες ψυχές τους, δημιουργημένες με «καλό χρώμα» σκληραίνονται και αναζητούν τα κοσμικά αγαθά.

Απαιτούνται ζωντανά παραδείγματα, τα οποία γίνονται επίσης ζωντανά κηρύγματα. Δεν μπορούμε πλέον να ομιλούμε για συγχώρεση. Πρέπει να πραγματοποιήσουμε την συγχώρεση. Δεν μπορούμε πλέον να ομιλούμε για το αυτοέλεγχο. Πρέπει να ασκήσουμε πραγματικά την έλεγξη του εαυτού μας. Δεν φθάνει πλέον να ομιλούμε για προσευχή. Πρέπει να προσευχηθούμε στην πραγματικότητα. Αυτός είναι ο μόνος τρόπος που έχουμε για να «μαλακώσουμε» τις ψυχές που σκληραίνονται σαν πέτρες και πνίγονται από κοσμικές ανησυχίες.
+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

control. We need to actually control ourselves. It is no longer enough to talk about prayer. We must really pray. This is the only way we have to "soften" the souls that have been harden into stone and are now choked with worldly cares.

As individual families who are part of God's larger Family (i.e., the Church) we are each called to be examples of Christ's love so that our youth can learn by seeing the Orthodox Christian life-style "up close" in action -- but, especially with the spirit of humility. St. John Chrysostom states, "...One's own virtue is not enough for salvation, but the virtue of those for whom we are responsible is also required." (On Marriage & Family Life, trans. by Catherine Roth and David Anderson, pg. 72)

Chrysostom's words inspire all of us to do our part to maintain the fresh, "good soil" of our children's souls:

"Even at their age they are exposed to all sorts of folly and bad examples from popular entertainments. Our children need remedies for all these things! We are so concerned with our children's schooling; if only we were equally zealous in bringing them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord!...Give them a pattern to imitate; from their earliest years, let us teach them to study the Bible...Let us raise our children in such a way that they can face any trouble, and not be surprised when difficulties come; let us bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord...When we teach our children to be good, to be gentle, to be forgiving (all these are attributes of God), to be generous, to love their fellow men, to regard this present age as nothing, we instill virtue in their souls and reveal the image of God within them." (On Marriage & Family Life, pgs. 67 & 71).

Indeed, children are born with "good soil" in their souls. Helping them preserve such "good soil" will translate into the recovery of any lost "good soil" in our own souls. Therefore, let us not be hardened and choked by worldly desires and weak faith. Let us commit ourselves to always be learning about the spiritual Tradition of our Church so as to express tangibly the life-saving love of our Savior.

+FR. THEODORE

BIBLE STUDY-Tuesday, September 29, 2020 -10:00 a.m.

Join Zoom Bible Study Meeting by clicking on the following

link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86247146688?pwd=UVpsZmx0cHNtaFhrd3QzZVo2ek42QT09>

Meeting ID: **862 4714 6688**

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. Luke 5:17-26.

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>.



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 - Titus 3:8-15

Titus, my son, the saying is sure. I desire you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to apply themselves to good deeds; these are excellent and profitable to men. But avoid stupid controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels over the law, for they are unprofitable and futile. As for a man who is factious, after admonishing him once or twice, have nothing more to do with him, knowing that such a person is perverted and sinful; he is self-condemned. When I send Artemas or Tychicos to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. Do your best to speed Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way; see that they lack nothing. And let our people learn to apply themselves to good deeds, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not to be unfruitful. All who are with me send greeting to you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen.

GOSPEL - St. Luke 8:5-15

The Lord said this parable: "A sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell along the path, and was trodden under foot, and the birds of the air devoured it. And

some fell on the rock; and as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns grew with it and choked it. And some fell into good soil and grew, and yielded a hundredfold." And when his disciples asked him what this parable meant, he said, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God; but for others they are in parables, so that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand. Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, that they may not believe and be saved. And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy; but these have no root, they believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. And as for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bring forth fruit with patience." As he said these things, he cried out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

MEMORIAL – Today’s Memorial Service is for the Eternal Rest and Salvation for the servant of God, **Mary Fondas**, who fell asleep in the Lord this past week and who served as a dedicated member of our St. George Philoptochos. Also, Today’s Memorial Service is for the Eternal Rest and Salvation for the servant of God, **Nicoletta Koutsothanasis (6 months)**, the beloved mother of **Soula Wildt**, mother-in-law of **Rick Wildt** and grandmother of **Tristan and Naya Wildt**. May our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ grant Eternal Rest and Salvation to **Mary Fondas** and **Nicoletta Koutsothanasis** and may He grant peace and comfort to the members of our St. George Philoptochos, the **Fondas Family**, and to **Soula and Rick Wildt** and family. **MAY THEIR MEMORIES BE ETERNAL!**

Today.....Sunday School via “zoom” - 11:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon

Monday, October 12th.....Philoptochos Board Meeting – 11:30 a.m.

Tuesday, October 13th.....Bible Study - 10:00 a.m. – “zoom” format

Wednesday, October 14th...AHEPA – 6:30 p.m. via “zoom” format.