

SEPTEMBER 13, 2020

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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THE LADDER

SUNDAY BEFORE THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

Mailing Address:

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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 PRESENCE OF CHRIST

In front of the Sign of the Holy Cross, Whose Exaltation we will celebrate tomorrow, we hear St. Paul explain the difference between circumcision according to the Law and crucifixion according to the love of Christ. (Gal. 6.11-18). St. Paul speaks of his personal "crucifixion" of the Lord, which unites him with the actual crucifixion of our Lord on Golgotha, "*I bear the marks of the Lord Jesus in the body...*" (Gal. 6.17). At the same time, the "wounds" that St. Paul has on his body, are the "wounds"

that Christ Himself suffers for each of us from the time He was crucified.

While circumcision was a sacrifice to God offered by obedience to the Law, the crucifixion is, on God's part, God's sacrifice of love for our eternal salvation and, on our part, our own sacrifice to God out of gratitude so as to draw all people to His love.

Consequently, we nail our sins to the Cross of Christ. The Cross inspires us to be humble, while also giving us His Divine power toward repentance.

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THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS - TOMORROW, SEPTEMBER 14th

The Feast is an opportunity outside of the observances of Holy Week to celebrate the full significance of the victory of the Cross over the powers of the world, and the triumph of the wisdom of God through the Cross over the wisdom of this world. This Feast also gives the Church an opportunity to relish the full glory of the Cross as a source of light, hope and victory for Christ's people. It is also a time to celebrate the universality of the work of redemption accomplished through the Cross: the entire universe is seen through the light of the Cross, the new Tree of Life which provides nourishment for those who have been redeemed in Christ.

The icon of the Feast of the Precious Cross tells the story of the finding of the Cross and of its Exaltation. Patriarch Macarius stands in the pulpit elevating the Cross for all to see and venerate. On each side of the Patriarch are deacons holding candles. The elevated Cross is surrounded and venerated by many clergy and lay people, including Saint Helen, the mother of Emperor Constantine.

In the background of the icon is a domed structure that represents the Church of the Resurrection in Jerusalem. This church was one of the churches constructed and dedicated by Emperor Constantine on the holy sites of Jerusalem.

--Taken from Greek Orthodox Archdiocese (www.goarch.org)



Μπροστά στο Σημείον του Τιμίου Σταυρού, του Οποίου την Υψωση θα εορτάσουμε αύριο, ακούμε τον Άγιο Παύλο να εξηγεί τη διαφορά μεταξύ της περιτομής σύμφωνα με το Νόμο και της σταυρώσεως σύμφωνα με την αγάπη του Χριστού. (Γαλ. 6:11-18). Ο Άγιος Παύλος ομιλεί για την προσωπική του «σταύρωση» για τον Κύριο, που τον ενώνει με την πραγματική σταύρωση του Κυρίου μας στην Γολγκαθα, «*Εγὼ γὰρ τὰ στίγματα του Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ εν τῷ σώματι μου βαστάζω.*» (Γαλ. 6: 17). Ταυτοχρόνως, οι «πληγές» του Αγίου Παύλου στο σώμα του, είναι οι «πληγές» που υπέστη για τον καθέναν μας ο Ἰδιος ο Χριστός από την ώρα που εσταυρώθηκε.

Ενώ η περιτομή ήταν μία θυσία για τον Θεό που προσφέρθηκε από υπακοή στο Νόμο, η σταύρωση είναι, από τη μία πλευρά, η θυσία του Θεού με αγάπη για την αιώνιαν σωτηρία μας και, από την άλλη, η δική μας θυσία στον Θεό από ευγνωμοσύνη και να προσελκύονται όλοι οι άνθρωποι προς την αγάπη Του.

Κατά συνέπεια, καρφώνουμε τις αμαρτίες μας επάνω στον Σταυρό του Χριστού. Ο Σταυρός μας εμπνέει να είμαστε ταπεινοί, ενώ μας δίνει τη δύναμή Του προς μετανοίαν.

Ο Θεός μας αγαπά τόσο πολύ που μας υιοθέτησε μέσω του Τιμίου Σταυρού του Μονογενή Του Υιού, δίνοντάς μας τις θεϊκές δυνάμεις για να κάνουμε την αγάπη μία ζωντανή πραγματικότητα στη ζωή μας, καθώς και στη ζωή των άλλων - όχι μόνο «λόγια» ή «συναίσθηματα.» Πράγματι, πρέπει να είμεθα ευγνώμονες για την αγάπη του Θεού με όλη μας την ψυχή.
+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

God loves us so much that He has adopted us through the Holy and Life-giving Cross of His Only Begotten Son, giving us the divine powers to make love a living reality in our lives as well as in the lives of others - not just with "words," or "emotions." Indeed, we should be thankful for the love of God with all our soul.

Today's Gospel passage makes us clearly understand that Christ our God entered our lives, not so that we can be condemned, but so that He can save us. Like Christ, we too are called to love one another as God loves us.

From St. Paul we are given a glimpse of Apostolic Christianity, which is synonymous with Orthodox Christianity. St. Paul's words of "boasting in the Cross of our Lord, Jesus Christ" (Galatians 6:14), is revealing, in that the Christians of his time were accustomed to "using" the Sign of the Cross to bless others and the gifts around them as an expression of thanks to God for the very presence of the people and gifts that are given. To this day, Orthodox Christians continue to make the Sign of the Cross to bring the living presence of Christ in our midst. The note found in *The Orthodox Study Bible [NT]* helps us to understand what is meant by "boasting" in the Cross: "How does one boast...in the cross? Throughout the history of the Church, Christians have preached the Cross, displayed the Cross in their homes and altars, venerated the Cross in the Liturgy and signed themselves with the Cross in worship of the Holy Trinity and during times of temptation." (pg. 435).

The Holy Cross of our Savior, the Exaltation of Which is commemorated on September 14th, carries with It the *presence of Christ*. When we venerate the Holy Cross, as well as when we bless ourselves and others with the Sign of the Cross, Christ is present with us.

+FR. THEODORE

BIBLE STUDY-Tuesday, September 15, 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: 1 Corinthians 2: 16-20.

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”

<p>EPISTLE - Galatians 6: 11-18</p> <p>Brethren, see with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that would compel you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. For even those who receive circumcision do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may glory in your flesh. But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. Peace and mercy be upon all who walk by this rule, upon the Israel of God. Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen.</p>	<p>GOSPEL - St. John 3: 13-17</p> <p>The Lord said, "No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.</p>
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SUNDAY SCHOOL BEGINS ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27th (11:30 a.m.- 12:00 p.m.). Classes will be conducted in the “zoom format.”

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

Monday, September 14th.....EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS
 Philoptochos Board Meeting - 11:00 a.m.

Tuesday, September 15th.....Bible Study - 10:00 a.m.