

SEPTEMBER 20, 2020

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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Palm Desert, California 92260

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THE LADDER

SUNDAY AFTER THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

Mailing Address:

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Tel: (760) 568-9901
or: (760) 880-5869

– 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.

NO LAW WITHOUT CHRIST

"For I have died unto the Law so that I might live with God. I have been crucified with Christ. I no longer live, but Christ lives in me." With these words, St. Paul tells us that the Law does not save us. Christ is our Savior. If we acquire the mind of our Savior, we will automatically keep the Law in the spirit of God's love. On the other hand, if we do not follow Christ who is the Incarnation of Divine Love, our efforts to follow the Law are nonsense. Only by dedicating ourselves to Christ our God can we ex-

press God's Love. Without Divine Love, trying to keep the Law becomes a game of hypocrisy, as was evident in the lives of the Pharisees.

Hypocrisy not only deceives others and creates mistrust, but harms the very essence of our souls. Consequently, we begin to be deceived and, therefore, we can not see how we can maintain our personal mental and emotional health as well as our good relationships with our fellow human beings.

Hypocrisy seriously hampers our

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ST. BASIL'S PRAYER FOR ALLOWING TO CHRIST LIVE IN US

God, Lord of hosts and Maker of all creation, who in Your great compassion and mercy sent down Your Only-Begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, for the redemption of mankind and by His precious Cross destroyed the record of our sins, triumphing over the source and power of darkness: O Lord and Lover of mankind, accept also the thanksgiving and fervent prayers of us sinners. Deliver us from every dark and harmful transgression and from all the visible and invisible enemies that seek to destroy us. Nail our flesh to the fear of You, and do not incline our hearts to deceitful words or thoughts, but wound our souls with love for You, that always looking to You, guided by Your light, and seeing You, the eternal and ineffable Light, we may give You unceasing praise and thanksgiving: to the Father without beginning, with Your Only-Begotten Son and Your all-holy, good and life-giving Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

– This prayer is read during the Service of the Royal Hours
– Taken from the Archdiocese website: www.goarch.org



«Εγώ γάρ διά νόμου νόμω απέθανον
 ίνα Θεώ ζήσω. Χριστώ συνεσταύρωμαι,
 ζω δε ουκέτι εγώ, ζη δε εν εμοί
 Χριστός.» Με αυτά τα λόγια, ο Άπ.
 Παύλος μας λέει ότι ο Νόμος δεν
 μας σώζει. Ο Χριστός είναι ο
 Σωτήρας μας. Εάν αποκτήσουμε
 τον νου του Σωτήρος μας, θα
 τηρήσουμε αυτομάτως τον Νόμο
 με το πνεύμα της αγάπης του Θεού.
 Εάν λοιπόν, δεν ακολουθούμε τον
 Χριστό που είναι η Ενσάρκωση της
 Θείας Αγάπης, οι προσπάθειές μας
 να ακολουθήσουμε τον Νόμο είναι
 μια ανοησία. Από την άλλη
 πλευρά, η αφιέρωση των ψυχών
 μας στον Χριστό εκπληρώνει τον
 Νόμο της Αγάπης του Θεού. Χωρίς
 Θεία Αγάπη, η τήρησις του Νόμου
 γίνεται ένα παιχνίδι υποκρισίας,
 όπως ήταν τόσο εμφανές στις ζωές
 των Φαρισαίων.

Η υποκρισία όχι μόνο ξεγελάει
 τους άλλους και δημιουργεί δυσ-
 πιστία, αλλά βλάπτει την ίδια την
 ουσία των ψυχών μας. Ως εκ
 τούτου, αρχίζουμε να ξεγελαζό-
 μεθα και δεν μπορούμε να δούμε
 πώς μπορούμε να διατηρήσουμε
 την προσωπική μας πνευματική
 και συναισθηματική υγεία, καθώς
 και τις καλές σχέσεις μας με τους
 συνανθρώπους μας.

Η υποκρισία εμποδίζει τη
 μετάνοια. Το έλεος του Θεού
 χορηγείται για τον συγκεκριμένο
 σκοπό να μας δώσει χρόνο για
 μετάνοια. Χωρίς μετάνοια, δεν
 μπορούμε να επωφεληθούμε από
 το έλεος του Θεού. Για να επωφελ-
 ηθούμε από το έλεος του Θεού,
 πρέπει να είμεθα ταπεινοί ενώ-
 πιον του Θεού και να αγαπάμε τον
 Θεό και τον πλησιον. Η ταπεινό-
 της διαλύει το πνεύμα της υπο-
 κρισίας.

+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

efforts to repent from our sins. God's mercy is granted for the specific purpose of giving us time for repentance. Period. Without repentance, we cannot benefit from God's mercy. For us to benefit from God's mercy, we need to be humble before God and to love God and neighbor. Humility before God dissolves the spirit of hypocrisy; it cures the wounds of our sins and destructive habits, and it repairs relationships.

What could we possibly give in exchange for our souls? This question is posed to each one of us by our Lord Himself by way of today's Gospel passage. Taking from the collective writings of our Church's Saints, we would be wise to remind ourselves of the fact that we will leave this present life only to stand before the awesome Judgment Seat of Christ. With this in mind, we should clearly evaluate our priorities in life in the here and now in terms of our relationships; our motives and aspirations.

If we love Christ, we will be ashamed of our resentments, anger, hatred, greed – and, yes, our hypocrisy. If we want to avoid sins and seek Christ's virtues, we will *not* be ashamed of confessing our sins and repenting from them; we will *not* be concerned about worldly fame and glory. Instead, we will accept the *aloneness* that comes from a personal relationship with our Savior and which makes our relationships with others sincere, with a view to "accepting" others in God's love. This is not easy, because we are all broken victims of our own sins and the sins of others. However, for us to grow in the Wisdom of God, we need to be *less* ashamed of turning to Christ and *more* ashamed of our pride, which makes us blind to our shortcomings.

We live in times when our faith in Christ will be tested. Philosophies, ideals, and religious teachings of many kinds all may sound good. But, without Christ in our midst, they are dry words, devoid of divine love, and no different than the dry, soulless words of legality promoted by the Pharisees of Jesus' time, as well as by the "Pharisees" of our own time.

+FR. THEODORE

BIBLE STUDY–Tuesday, September 22, 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: 2 Corinthians 6:1-10.

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 2:16-20</p> <p>Brethren, you know that a man is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of the law, because by works of the law shall no one be justified. But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we ourselves were found to be sinners, is Christ then an agent of sin? Certainly not! But if I build up again those things which I tore down, then I prove myself a transgressor. For I through the law died to the law, that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.</p>	<p>GOSPEL - St. Mark. 8:34-38; 9:1</p> <p>The Lord said: "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? For what can a man give in return for his life? For whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power."</p>
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SUNDAY SCHOOL BEGINS NEXT SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27th (11:30 a.m.- 12:00 p.m.). Classes will be conducted in the “zoom format.” Contact Dr. Jim Christopoulos, our Sunday School Supervisor for information regarding registration and class “zoom links.”

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

Monday, September 21st.....Philoptochos General Members Meeting - 11:30 a.m. (This meeting will be repeated in the “zoom” format at 6:30 p.m.)

Tuesday, September 22nd.....Bible Study- 10:00 - 10:45 a.m.