

APRIL 4, 2021

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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THE LADDER

VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS



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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.

LIFE-STYLE OF THE HOLY CROSS

The Resurrection to Eternal Life is by way of the Cross of Christ our God. To follow Christ means that we “go the way of the Cross,” by humbly accepting our own personal crosses in life. The Cross of Christ is the forgiveness of sins. Therefore, each of us must both *avoid* committing sins and *repent* of sins if we are to find salvation. In this, there are many crosses that we carry, which add up to the same Cross that our Lord carried on up to Golgotha: the crosses of patience; the crosses of empathy; the crosses of endurance; the crosses of struggle against

temptations; the crosses that come with effort to do good deeds; the crosses that we carry to stand up in defense of our Faith, and, of course, the crosses of repentance itself. Unless we are willing to carry these crosses, which are all embodied in the Cross of Christ, it will be difficult to join our Lord in His Life-giving Resurrection.

His Cross is before us today for two reasons: 1) to remind us to continue to carry our crosses into the remainder of the Lenten Season and to not despair if we have lapsed or are growing weak in our resolve to follow Christ,

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SERVICE OF THE VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

Following Holy Communion today, the choir/chanters sing: “*Aghios o Theos, Aghios Ischyros, Aghios Athanatos, eleison imas.*” “*Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy upon us.*” as the officiant carries in procession the tray holding the Holy Cross, which is decorated with many flowers and/or basil plants. The procession continues around the interior of the church temple. When the procession arrives at the center of the church, in front of the Holy Altar, the officiant raises the tray with the Holy Cross high and exclaims: “*Wisdom! Let us attend!*” He then sets the Holy Cross on a table arranged for this service and censes the Holy Cross as he proceeds around the table and chants: “*Soson Kyrie ton laon Sou*” ... “*Save, O Lord, Your people and bless Your inheritance, granting victory to the faithful over adversaries and, by Your Cross, protecting Your commonwealth.*” This hymn is repeated twice by the choir/chanters.

Then, as the clergy venerate the Holy Cross, they chant: “*Ton Stavron Sou proskinoumen, Despota*” ... “*We venerate Your Cross, O Master, and we glorify Your Holy Resurrection.*” This hymn is also repeated twice by the choir/chanters. As the faithful offer spiritual veneration to the Holy Cross, the celebration of the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great is concluded.



Γιὰ τον καθέναν μας, η Ζωοποιὸν Ἀνάσταση του Χριστοῦ γίνεται μέσω του Σταυροῦ του Χριστοῦ. Το να ακολουθοῦμε τον Χριστό σημαίνει ὅτι δεχόμεθα ταπεινὰ τους δικούς μας «σταυρούς» στη ζωὴ μας. Ὁ Σταυρὸς του Χριστοῦ εἶναι η συγχώρεση των αμαρτιῶν. Ἐπομένως, ὁ καθένας πρέπει να αναλάβει τον ἴδιο σταυρὸ εἰάν αναζητᾷ τη σωτηρία. Οἱ σταυροὶ που σηκώνουμε ὅλοι ὁμοιάζουν με τον ἴδιο Σταυρὸ που ἐκράτησε ὁ Χριστὸς καθὼς ἐπῆγε προς το Γολγοθᾶ: εἶναι οἱ «σταυροὶ» της υπομονῆς, οἱ «σταυροὶ» της συμπάθειας · οἱ "σταυροὶ" της ἀντοχῆς · οἱ «σταυροὶ» του ἀγῶνος ἐναντίον στους πειρασμούς που μας καλοῦν σε συμφεροντα του «εγῶ,» και "οἱ σταυροὶ" που ἐρχονται με προσπάθεια να κάνουμε καλὲς πράξεις. Ἐὰν ἔχουμε και τους «σταυρούς» που ἀναλαμβάνουμε για να υπερασπισθοῦμε την Πίστη μας. Φυσικά, ἔχουμε τους «σταυρούς» της μετάνοιας. Ἀν δεν εἴμεθα πρόθυμοι να σηκώσουμε αὐτούς τους «σταυρούς,» που εἶναι ὅλοι ἐνσωματωμένοι στον Σταυρὸ του Χριστοῦ, θα ἔχουμε δυσκολίες να ἐνωθοῦμε με τον Σωτῆρα μας στην Ἀνάστασή Του.

Ὁ Σταυρὸς του Χριστοῦ τοποθετεῖται μπροστὰ μας σήμερα για δύο λόγους: 1) για να μας υπενθυμίσει ὅτι πρέπει να συνεχίσουμε να σηκώσουμε τους σταυρούς μας κατὰ την υπόλοιπη διάρκεια της Τεσσαρακοστῆς και να μην ἀπελιπζόμεθα εἰάν ἔχουμε πέσει ἢ εἰάν αισθανόμεθα πνευματικὴ ἀδυναμία, και, 2) ὁ Σταυρὸς του Χριστοῦ ἔχει θεϊκὴ δύναμη και αὐτὴ εἶναι ἡ δύναμη σήμερα που χρειαζόμεθα για να συνεχίσουμε ἐμᾶν ὅσον οδὸν προς την Αἰώνιον Ζωή.
+Ὁ ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

and, 2) it is the Cross of Christ that has divine power and it is this power in our lives today that we need to continue through life with joy as we anticipate the gift of Eternal Life.

Let us not misunderstand the words of our Lord summoning us to "deny ourselves." We are not talking about any kind of morbid self abuse, neglect, or "death wish." We are talking about denying our ego for the express purpose of glorifying God with our life-style. We cannot glorify God if we are, at the same time, trying to glorify ourselves. To follow Christ means that we glorify Christ. As L. Joseph Letendre suggests, when we say "no" to our self-centered desires, we can then say "yes" to God's Will. (See *When You Fast*, by L. Joseph Letendre, pgs. 59-64). Indeed, the more we give of ourselves for the glory of God and for the salvation of others, the more fulfillment we find in life.

St. John Chrysostom notes that the crosses that we may endure must be related to following Christ, rather than for other reasons. For example, the remorse that we might feel over our sins, must be remorse for having departed from Christ's way of life, rather than remorse over consequences -- "*It is possible to suffer,*" he says, "*yet not to follow Him, when one does not suffer for Him; for, robbers often suffer grievously,...*" They are remorseful for having been caught, which has nothing to do with carrying one's cross to follow Jesus. The crosses that we carry due to sin are strictly related to our efforts to repent of sins so as to acquire Christ-like virtues.

St. John continues, saying that the Cross of our Lord is a *shameful* death. Hence, the notion of shame is linked to the virtue of humility. If we are humble, we are not to be ashamed of giving glory to God. For the Christian, humility vs. pride. To gain the whole world is nothing more than to feed our pride, leading to the pursuit of personal luxury and authority over others. Gaining the world is related to dreams of *survival* in this life; while nurturing our souls is related to *Eternal Salvation*. St. John notes, "[Jesus says], 'Let him take up his cross,' thus setting forth the *reproachful* death -- not once or twice, but throughout life...to bear this death continually..." -- and to be continually aware of the end of this earthly life and the accountability that is to be given upon entering the next life. (See: *Nicene & Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series, Vol. 10, "Chrysostom: Homilies on the Gospel of St. Matthew," Homily 55, pgs. 338-342*).

+FR. THEODORE

BIBLE STUDY –Tuesday April 4, 2021 - 10:00 a.m.

Please note: This Bible Study class will take place in-person outside on the patio outside our parish hall and will not be presented in a "zoom format."

The passage that we will be studying is:

St. Mark 9:17-31



"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 - Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:1-6

Brethren, since we have a high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. Because of this he is bound to offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people. And one does not take the honor upon himself, but he is called by God, just as Aaron was. So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but

was appointed by him who said to him, "Thou art my Son, today I have begotten thee"; as he says also in another place, "Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek."

GOSPEL- Mark 8:34-38; 9:1

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."

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today.....Metropolis-Wide Sunday School Program - 12:30 p.m. ("Zoom" format. Surprise visitation from very special guests)

Also Today....Philoptochos Sponsored "Coffee Hour" - 2:00 p.m. ("Zoom" format. In the search window at the upper left corner of your computer screen, type <https://www.zoom.us/join>. Then type in the Meeting ID number: **864 9984 9746** . Finally, type in the Passcode: **459070**. See the flier that is emailed with today's Ladder.)

Monday, April 5th.....No parking in front of the church. Street work will be in progress. Use drive-way into our parking lot.

Tuesday, April 6th.....Bible Study - 10:00 a.m. (in-person; social distancing)

Wednesday, April 7th..Presanctified Divine Liturgy - 6:00 p.m.

Thursday, April 8th.....Parish Council- 2:30 p.m. (in-person; social distancing)

Friday, April 9th.....Presanctified Divine Liturgy - 9:00 a.m.

Salutation Service to the Ever-Virgin Mary (Fourth Stanza)- 6:00 p.m.

Many blessings to those who are offering their contributions and help as we continue to prepare for the remaining Lenten Church Services and the Holy Week Services.

NOTE: The **Annual Philoptochos Easter Bake Sale** begins now and continues until April 12th. Please see the flier that is emailed with today's Ladder.



Saint George Coffee Hour is Back!

**Join us on Sunday, April 4,
2021 at 2:00 PM (PST) via
ZOOM!**

This is a recurring meeting at 2:00 pm on the dates listed below. Use the same Meeting ID & Passcode for all.

Meeting ID #864 9984 9746 Passcode #459070

April 4th, 2021
May 9th, 2021
June 6th, 2021

*Coffee hour sponsored by Ladies Philoptochos



Easter BAKE SALE

Ladies Philoptochos Society, Chapter 4035



Koulourakia
\$8.00 per dozen
with or w/o sesame



Paximathia
\$8.00 per dozen



Easter Bread
\$15.00 per loaf with
or w/o dyed egg

Easter Bake Sale

Place order by calling Tina Veroulis at (406) 431-9516 or email [@tveroulis@aim.com](mailto:tveroulis@aim.com) from now till April 12th.

We have limited quantities of Easter bake sale items available, so please place your order ASAP! Red Easter Egg Dye packets are also available at \$2.00 per packet. Bake sale proceeds benefit Kids-n-Cancer Ministry.

1

ORDER

Place your order by April 12th via phone or email.

2

PAY

Mail or bring your check to Philoptochos at the church.

3

PICK-UP

Arrange pick-up date & time starting April 9th. Last day for pick-up is Sunday, April 25th.