

FEBRUARY 14, 2021

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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THE LADDER

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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.*

FAITH & HUMILITY

In his 52nd Homily on the Gospel of St. Matthew, St. John Chrysostom goes into great detail explaining that humility and faith play major roles in terms of making our prayer to Christ truly *prayerful*. He notes that the faith of the Canaanite Woman was made all the more evident through her humility.

This passage is one of the Gospel passages read during the Sacrament of Holy Unction, as we are called upon to 1) have faith as we pray; 2) be persistent in prayer, and, 3) to know that prayer is powerful when we pray for others.

As the Sacrament of Holy Unction is performed, it is the entire Body of the Church that offers prayers for the world. This Gospel passage is unique, because it is revealed that our Lord tests our faith, as He did with the Canaanite Woman. When our prayer seems unanswered, we are to remain humble before our Lord; to have faith as we pray, and show patience in Christ.

Indeed, our faith has been tested as we have navigated the trials and tribulations of this last year.

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ST. CYRIL: EQUAL TO THE APOSTLES -- Today we commemorate Saint Cyril, who was born in Thessaloniki in the early 9th century to pious parents. His family was one of only a few Byzantines in Thessaloniki at that time since it was largely populated by Slavs. Growing up, Cyril learned the Slavonic language, which later in life would serve him and the Church at large. He continued his education in Constantinople with his brother Methodios (see May 11th)

The two brothers were approached in 850 by St. Photios the Great (see February 6th) to lead a diplomatic mission to the Khazars, the people who inhabited the western shore of the Caspian Sea. At this time the brothers utilized their childhood Slavonic education to develop a written alphabet for the Slavonic language, which to this time had never existed. This alphabet became known as the *Glagolitic Alphabet*. On their own instigation, the brothers began translating the Gospels and liturgical service books into Slavonic.

Cyril and Methodios were later called upon for a mission, this time to travel to Moravia to spread the Christian faith to King Rostislav (see May 11th) and his people. The brothers departed in 862, bringing with them their Slavonic alphabet and service books. The Russian Orthodox Church especially owes it to honor St. Cyril (today) together with his brother, Methodius (in May).

-- Taken in large part from: www.goarch.org



Στην 52η Ομιλία του περί του Ευαγγελίου του Αγίου Ματθαίου, ο Άγιος Ιωάννης ο Χρυσόστομος εξηγεί με μεγάλη λεπτομέρεια ότι η ταπεινοφροσύνη και η πίστις διαδραματίζουν σημαντικούς ρόλους για να κάνουν την προσευχή μας προς τον Χριστό *πραγματική* προσευχή. Σημειώνει ότι η πίστις της Χαναναϊκής γυναίκος έγινε ακόμη πιο εμφανής μέσω της ταπεινότητός της.

Αυτή η Ευαγγελική περικοπή είναι μια που αναγινώσκεται κατά την εκτέλεση του Μυστηρίου του Ευχελαίου, καθώς η Εκκλησία μας παρακαλεί, 1) να έχουμε πίστη όταν προσευχόμεθα 2) να είμεθα επίμονοι στην προσευχή και, 3) να γνωρίζουμε ότι η προσευχή είναι ισχυρή όταν προσευχόμεθα για άλλους ανθρώπους, που και αυτο είναι και ο ρόλος της Εκκλησίας.

Αυτή η περικοπή του Ευαγγελίου είναι η μοναδική σε σχέση με τις άλλες που αναγινώσκονται κατά την εκτέλεση του Μυστηρίου της Ευχελαίου, επειδή αποκαλύπτεται ότι ο Χριστός δοκιμάζει την πίστη μας, όπως έκανε με την Χαναναϊκή γυναίκα. Τονίζει ότι πρέπει να παραμένουμε ταπεινοί ενώπιον του Κυρίου μας και να έχουμε πίστη όταν προσευχόμεθα.

Ενώ η αμαρτία μας κάνει ανάξιοι για τις ευλογίες του Θεού, η πίστη αποκαθιστά την αξία μας ενώπιον του Θεού. Στο πρόσωπο της Χαναναίας βλέπουμε τη δύναμη της μεσολαβητικής προσευχής - ειδικά τη δύναμη της προσευχής που κάνουν οι γονείς για τα παιδιά τους. Καθώς οι γονείς προσεύχονται για τα παιδιά τους, η Εκκλησία προσεύχεται για όλους μας καθώς είμεθα όλοι πραγματικά τέκνα του Θεού.

+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

Because of the Canaanite Woman, we should never believe that we are worthless. Had the Woman accepted that she was as worthless as a dog and therefore gave up in her effort to pray, she would have never realized that her faith was enough to restore her human dignity. Our Lord did not, nor ever will, consider any person to be worthless, and, therefore, we cannot view ourselves or others as being worthless. St. John says that Christ used her in order to inspire others: "*Christ denied granting her prayer, that He might exhibit her high self-command.*" (*Nicene & Post-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 10, pg. 322). Let us think that our Lord uses us in similar ways us to bring others to salvation.

The reality of sin, however, is another matter. The Canaanite Woman was a sinner tainted by a society where sin was normal. We can assume, being a Canaanite, that she had sinned in many ways: 1) she probably did not observe the Sabbath properly; 2) she probably had worshiped other gods; 3) she probably harbored feelings of jealousy for others whose children did not suffer as did her daughter. I would guess that she was guilty of other sins, as well. To the point: we need to avoid sin, because it makes us inhuman, as well as sub-human, and less dignified than even dogs.

While sin makes us unworthy of God's blessings, faith restores our worth before God. Faith guides us to repentance. It was faith that allowed the Canaanite Women to be humble to endure a moment of "rejection" and to rely on her faith. This is the kind of faith we need for us to have courage to open our eyes to our imperfections and to participate in the Sacrament of Holy Confession so that we can restore health for our own souls, as well as for the souls of others.

Finally, in the Canaanite Woman we see the power of *intercessory* prayer (i.e., prayer for others) -- especially the power of prayer made by parents for their children. As parents pray for their children, the Church prays for all of us in that we are all truly God's children.

+FR. THEODORE

BIBLE STUDY –Tuesday February 16, 2020 - 10:00 a.m.

Join the Zoom Bible Study Meeting by clicking on the following link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86578988907?pwd=cFBoaDg3b25hdTU1L3o1NDV2ay83dz09>

Meeting ID: **865 7898 8907**

Passcode: **919868**

Or, using your cell phone, call: 1 699 900 6833 and dial in the Meeting ID and Passcode numbers. We will be studying the following passages: [St. Luke 18:10-14](#)

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>.



“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 - 2 Cor. 6:16-18; 7:1

Brethren, you are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will live in them and move among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore come out from them, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch nothing unclean; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, and make holiness perfect in the fear of God.

GOSPEL - St. Matthew 15:21-28

At that time, Jesus went to the district of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and cried, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely possessed by a demon." But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him, saying, "Send her away, for she is crying after us." He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." And he answered, "It is not fair to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table." Then Jesus answered her, "O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire." And her daughter was healed instantly.

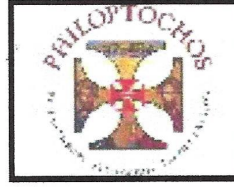
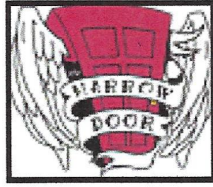
ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today,Sunday School -- 11:30 a.m. (“Zoom” format)

Monday, February 15th.....Philoptochos General Members Meeting -- 11:30 a.m.

Tuesday, February 16th.....Bible Study - 10:00 a.m. (“Zoom” format)

Next Sunday, February 21st.....Metropolis-Wide Sunday School Program - 12:30-1:30 p.m. (“Zoom” format)
St. George Philoptochos “Feeding the Hungry Food Drive” -- See enclosed flier.



FEEDING THE HUNGRY **FOOD DRIVE**

sponsored by St. George Ladies Philoptochos
donations to be given to The Narrow Door Food Bank

Please bring your non-perishable food donations to the church hall from 9:30 am - 2:00 pm Monday thru Friday the week of February 21-28, 2021 or on Sunday from 9:30 am - 11:30 am.

List of needed items:

2 lb. Packaged Spaghetti
15-24 oz. Canned Spaghetti Sauce
15-28 oz. Canned Crushed Tomatoes
15-29 oz. Canned Mixed Vegetables
14 oz. Boxed Mac & Cheese
15-40 oz. Plastic Jar Peanut Butter
5-20 oz. Canned Tuna 4-Pack
14-28 oz. Boxed Instant Potatoes
14-15 oz. Canned Chicken Broth
14-15 oz. Canned Soup
Asst. Sizes Cereal
Asst. Sizes Powdered or Boxed Milk

****Please no glass containers and no opened packages**

Thank you for your support!