

JANUARY 24, 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.*

PRAYER: 3 IMPORTANT THINGS

There are three themes that can be noted from today's Epistle and Gospel passages: the themes of 1) sin; 2) prayer, and 3) glory to God.

In his First Epistle to Timothy, St. Paul explained that he considered himself to be a sinner. In fact, he said that he was a sinner... "of whom I am the chief." (1 Timothy 1:15). Indeed, he was an accomplice to the murder of the first Christian martyr, St. Stephen, and his intimidating persecution against Christians led him to feel as though he was an awful

sinner. The bright light of our Resurrected Christ revealed to him the truth of Christ's love. Christ's light revealed the darkness of his soul, while, at the same time, it blinded him physically. When his sight was restored by Ananias (Acts 9: 3-19), his soul was also enlightened and he was pulled out from the darkness of a lost conscience. Like the blind man of today's Gospel passage, once his sight was restored, he became a follower of Christ and glorified His Name.

Sin is an attitude; a thought; a word,

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ST. PAUL CONFESSES HIS SINS – In his First Epistle to Timothy, St. Paul provides an example showing how to confess sins. At the same time, he provides the example of hope in our Savior's forgiveness. In 1 Timothy 1:13, he expresses a deep sorrow for his ignorance and unbelief, implying that, in themselves, they offer no excuse for committing sins. In fact, it is because of these two qualities that he became a "chief" sinner, committing sins of blasphemy, insolence and hatred, through which he persecuted those who followed Christ.

For St. Paul, there were no excuses for his sins. In his life of repentance, he would always give thanks to our Lord for making him worthy and able to perform His ministry. Even though he was "the chief among sinners," he was grateful for the opportunity to experience the love and faith which are founded in the Person of Christ. The faith, love, mercy and longsuffering that St. Paul received from Jesus became the very blessings that St. Paul shared with those around him as "a pattern to those who were going to believe on [Christ] for everlasting life." (1 Timothy 1:16)

St. Paul serves as an example for all of us so that we may never be in despair of our salvation. "Throughout the Old and New Testaments and Church History, the greatest sinners have often become the most notable saints (Moses, Rahab, David, Photini – the woman at the well, Matthew, Paul, St. Mary of Egypt)." Orthodox Study Bible, pg. 1633)

+FR. THEODORE



Στην Πρώτη του Επιστολή προς τον Τιμόθεο, ο Αγ. Παύλος εξήγησε ότι εθεωρούσε τον εαυτό του αμαρτωλό. Στην πραγματικότητα, είπε ότι ήταν αμαρτωλός ... «*ὡν πρότος εἰμι ἐγώ,*» όπως το έγραψε ο ίδιος. (1 Τιμόθεο 1:15). Πράγματι, ήταν συνεργός στη δολοφονία του Πρωτομάρτυρος, Αγ. Στεφάνου, και η εκφοβιστική του δίωξη εναντίον των Χριστιανών τον έκανε να αισθάνεται σαν να ήταν ο πιο φοβερός αμαρτωλός.

Το έντονο φως του Αναστημένου Χριστού έδωσε στον Αγ. Παύλο να γνωρίσει την αλήθεια περί της Θεϊκής αγάπης και, ταυτοχρόνως, εγνώρησε το σκοτάδι στην ψυχή του. Όπως ο τυφλός της σημερινής Ευαγγελικής περικοπής, μόλις αποκαταστάθηκε το φως του, ο Αγ. Παύλος έγινε συνεργάτης με τον Χριστό και εδόξαζε το Όνομά Του με έναν τρόπο ζωής ευχαριστίας.

Η αμαρτία είναι μιά στάση, μιά σκέψη, μιά λέξη, ή/ και μιά πράξη που είναι αντίθετη με την τήρηση των εντολών του Κυρίου μας, ο Οποίος μας αγαπά. Η αμαρτία συνδέεται με το σκοτάδι, γιατί κρύβει τη δόξα του Σωτήρος μας. Τελικά, η αμαρτία σκουραίνει τη συνείδησή μας, έτσι ώστε, αντί να είναι κάτι που πρέπει να αποφεύσουμε, είναι κάτι που δικαιολογείται.

Με το να ευχαριστήσουμε τον Θεό για τη φώτιση της Θεϊκής Αγάπης και της Σοφίας Του γίνεται ταυτοχρόνως μιά προσευχή για ολόκληρη την κοινότητα στην οποία ζούμε. Κατά βάθος, αυτό εννοείται καθώς ακούμε την λειτουργική αίτηση: «*Τα καλά και συμφέροντα ταις ψυχαιῖς ἡμῶν και εἰρήνην τῷ κόσμῳ, παρά του Κυρίου αιτησώμεθα.*»
+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

and/or a deed that is contrary to observing Commandments of our Lord, Who loves us. Sin is associated with darkness, because it conceals the glory of our Savior. Ultimately, sin darkens our conscience and weakens it, so that, rather than being something to be avoided, it becomes something to be justified. As a result, the lines that help us know the difference between right and wrong are distorted, and it seems that everything we say or do is “relative” to our feelings in the face of some given situation. Such is a form of spiritual blindness.

Spiritual blindness due to sin leads to the same thing as physical blindness. Aimlessness grabs a hold on us, due to lack of proper vision. We are lost; we stumble around; we hurt ourselves and others. In the effort to find solutions to pain and illness, we find ourselves praying for the gift of spiritual insight and enlightenment. By analogy, such was the case of the blind man of today’s Gospel.

Enlightenment from our Lord is a three-fold gift: 1) we pray and thus acquire God’s Love and Wisdom; 2) we find ways to resist temptation and avoid sin, whereby we become like the saints, and, 3) we inspire others to love God and to change the atmosphere of a community, drawing others to openly worship and glorify God. Indeed, Christ knows what we need even before we pray. By praying, however, we enter into the mind of Christ and we come to understand the great love and mercy that we acquire through our relationship with Him. We can then truly share this love and mercy with those around us.

Once St. Paul and the blind man of today’s Gospel could “see” they were moved to glorify our Savior with a life-style of thanksgiving. By giving thanks to our Savior, we glorify Him at the same time, which brings peace to our souls and for the entire community in which we live. This is the deeper meaning behind the words that we hear during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, with this supplication: “*For all things that are good and beneficial for our souls and for peace in the whole world, let us ask the Lord.*”

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BIBLE STUDY: Tuesday, January 26, 2021 - 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 19:1-10.](#)

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>.



“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: 1 Timothy 1:15-17

Timothy, my son, the saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. And I am the foremost of sinners; but I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display His perfect patience for an example to those who were to believe in Him for eternal life. To the King of Ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory to the ages of ages. Amen.

GOSPEL: St. Luke 18:35-43

At that time, as Jesus drew near to Jericho, a blind man was

sitting by the roadside begging; and hearing a multitude going by, he inquired what this meant. They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by." And he cried, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" And those who were in front rebuked him, telling him to be silent; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" And Jesus stopped, and commanded him to be brought to him; and when he came near, he asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, let me receive my sight." And Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight and followed him, glorifying God; and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today.....Sunday School – 11:30 a.m. (“zoom” format)

Tuesday, January 26th.....Bible Study – 10:00 a.m.

– *Next Sunday, January 31st....STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY* -Everyone is asked to offer their **2021 St. George Stewardship Pledge Cards** to be blessed during the special prayer service following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.

– *In two weeks, February 7th:* -*Philoptochos Virtual Coffee Hour*
 -*AHEPA Virtual Super Bowl Party*

LIV SUPER BOWL

AHEPA 528 4th ANNUAL \$10 POOL SQUARES SUPER BOWL PARTY

FUN FOR EVERYONE
We will have Zoom start at 3:30 pm
Payment arrangements can be made via check, etc. by sending email to: contact@ahepa528.org

Livestream and ZOOM after each Quarter to announce winner! Donate online, AHEPA528.ORG

ALL PROCEEDS FROM THE EVENT WILL GO TO SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM
Please make any checks to AHEPA Chapter 528 or donate online

Scholarship awards benefit members of Saint George Church and the AHEPA 528 Family

AHEPA CHAPTER 528
SCHOLARSHIP FUND
42-215 WASHINGTON ST. A-154
PALM DESERT, CA 92211

SUPER BOWL FEB 7th 2021

Each block costs \$10 and multiple blocks can be purchased.

Please visit Ahepa528.org
For login information or email: contact@ahepa528.org

zoom Video Conferencing

facebook LIVESTREAM

WYNN@AHEPA528.ORG
760.832.2825

Saint George Coffee Hour is Back!

Join us on the first Sunday of each month beginning Sunday, February 7, 2021 at 1:00 PM (PST) via ZOOM!

This is a recurring meeting on the first Sunday of every month. Same time, Meeting ID and Passcode for all Zoom meetings.

Meeting ID # 864 9984 9746 Passcode # 45970

February 7th, 2021
March 4th, 2021
April 4th, 2021
May 2nd, 2021
June 6th 2021

*Coffee hour sponsored by Ladies Philoptochos