

APRIL 3, 2022

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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THE LADDER

ST. JOHN OF 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.

HAVING THE LONGING FOR GOD

Metropolitan Anthony Bloom, in his book, *Living Prayer*, writes the following: *"In our struggle for prayer the emotions are almost irrelevant; what we must bring to God is a complete, firm determination to be faithful to Him and strive that God should live in us. We must remember that the fruits of prayer are not this or that emotional state, but a deep change in the whole of our personality..."* (*Living Prayer*, pg. 62).

Our attention today is turned to St. John of the Ladder, who writes in his book, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, the spiritual

steps toward salvation in Christ our God. Of his "30 Steps," toward God's Kingdom on earth, let us look at his "Step 5," in which he describes basic "mind-sets" related to examining our souls. We are to always renew our baptism through the confession and repentance of sins; for, Christ has honored us with the gift of repentance through which we have a "second chance" in life. In this, he reminds us of the virtue of self-control - spiritual discipline against foolish and dangerous extravagances in seeking worldly
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ST. JOHN OF THE LADDER

The memory of this Saint is celebrated on March 30, where his biography may be found. He is celebrated today because his book, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, is a sure guide to the ascetic life, written by a great man of prayer experienced in all forms of the monastic polity; it teaches the seeker after salvation how to lay a sound foundation for his struggles, how to detect and war against each of the passions, how to avoid the snares laid by the demons, and how to rise from the rudimental virtues to the heights of Godlike love and humility. It is held in such high esteem that it is universally read in its entirety in monasteries during the Great Fast.

Taken from www.goarch.org

Proverbs - The wise fear and turn from evil, but those who do not have discernment persuade themselves to mingle with those who are lawless. (Proverbs 14: 16)



Ο Μητροπολίτης κ.κ. Αντώνιος Bloom, στο βιβλίο του, *Η Ζωντανή Προσευχή*, γράφει τα εξής: «Στον αγώνα μας για προσευχή τα συναισθήματα είναι σχεδόν άσχετα. Αυτό που πρέπει να φέρουμε στον Θεό είναι μια πλήρης, σταθερή αποφασιστικότητα να είμεθα πιστοί σε Αυτόν και να αγωνιζόμεθα ώστε ο Θεός να ζει μέσα μας. Πρέπει να θυμόμεθα ότι οι καρποί της προσευχής δεν είναι αυτή ή η άλλη συναισθηματική κατάσταση, αλλά μια βαθιά αλλαγή στο σύνολο της προσωπικότητός μας...» (σελ. 62).

Η προσοχή μας σήμερα είναι στραμμένη στον Άγ. Ιωάννη της Κλίμακος, ο οποίος έδιδε ότι η πνευματική ζωή είναι θέμα οικοδομήσεως «βημάτων» Χριστιανικών αρετών, οι οποίες είναι οι ίδιες αλληλένδετες. Περιγράφει βασικές «νοοτροπίες» που σχετίζονται με την πνευματική εξέταση της ψυχής μας. Πρέπει πάντοτε να ανανεώνουμε το βάπτισμά μας μέσω της εξομολογήσεως και της μετάνοιας των αμαρτιών. Ο Χριστός μας έδωσε την τιμή να μετανοήσουμε και να γνωρίσουμε την απέραντη αγάπη Του. Σε αυτό, ο Άγ. Ιωάννης μας υπενθυμίζει την αρετή του αυτοελέγχου και την πνευματική πειθαρχία ενάντια σε ανόητες και επικίνδυνες υπερβολές στην αναζήτηση των κοσμικών υλικών. Στο πλαίσιο της πίστεώς μας στον Θεό, μπορούμε να έχουμε ελπίδα και πίστη στον εαυτό μας - ότι, με τη βοήθεια του Θεού, μπορούμε πάντοτε να προσευχόμεθα στον Κύριό μας, ζητώντας συγχώρεση, όπως συγχωρούμε αυτούς που μας επροσέβαλαν. Με αυτόν τον τρόπο, συμπυκνώνουμε μαζί Του και βρίσκουμε καθοδήγηση για να κάνουμε το Θέλημα του Κυρίου μας, βρίσκοντας έτσι ειρήνη στις ψυχές μας.
+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

wealth and glory. He speaks of the value of personally accepting responsibility for wrongs, while having hope in our Lord's love and mercy and not giving in to despair. In the context of our hope and faith in God, we can have hope and faith in ourselves - that, with God's help, we can always pray to our Lord, seeking forgiveness, as we forgive those who have offended us. In this way, we reconcile ourselves with Him and we find guidance to do our Lord's Will, thereby finding peace in our souls.

Metropolitan Anthony Bloom notes: *"It is not enough to aim at the victory of the good will against the evil one; the evil one, that is the longings of our [imperfect, weak] fallen nature, must absolutely, though gradually, be transformed into a longing and a craving for God."* (pg. 63).

It is among family, friends, and co-workers that our "Christian personality" must shine. We must be aware that we live in a secular world, which conflicts with our spiritual efforts in many ways. Fr. Alexander Schmemmann once noted: *"[Out of necessity, let us at least give great attention to the home]. In the Orthodox world view, the home and the family constitute the first and most important area of Christian life, of application of Christian principles to daily existence."* (Great Lent, pg. 100).

+FR. THEODORE

WELCOME TO FR. PHILIP ZYMARIS, ThD, professor of liturgics at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology. We are grateful to God for bringing us Fr. Philip who was the speaker for our St. George Parish Lenten Retreat on Saturday, April 2nd.

CHANTERS, READERS & ALTAR SERVERS - There will be a brief meeting in the church today with chanters, readers and Altar servers as we begin to organize for the remaining Lenten Services and the upcoming Holy Week Services.

PHILOPTOCHOS - Luminary Candles-the Philoptochos will have a table set up after church to sell **Luminary Candles for Holy Friday**. (see flier). Also, we are announcing our Philoptochos Lenten Food Sale-- the Philoptochos is selling several Lenten food items including gigantes, dolmas, & halva. The Philoptochos **Easter Bake Sale** will begin **April 10th** offering bread, koulourakia, paximathia, kourembiethes, melamakarona, baklava, & karidopita.

SUNDAY SCHOOL RETREAT - Our **Sunday School Lenten Retreat** will take place on **Friday, April 15th, at our St. George church, beginning at 10:00 a.m.** All of the children of our parish are most welcome to join in the activities of this educational experience, through which they will learn about Great Lent and our Holy Orthodox Christian way of life. Many thanks to our Sunday School teachers, **Athena Snarskis, Melissa Hawkins and Ana Storton** for all their devoted efforts for the spiritual education of our children.

PRAYER FOR READING HOLY SCRIPTURES



"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 6:13-20

Brethren, when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore to himself, saying, "Surely I will bless you and multiply you." And thus Abraham, having patiently endured, obtained the promise. Men indeed swear by a greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he interposed with an oath, so that through two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible that God should prove false, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to seize the hope set before us. We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner shrine behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

GOSPEL - St. Mark 9:17-31

At that time, a man came to Jesus kneeling and saying: "Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a dumb spirit; and wherever it seizes him it dashes him down; and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid; and I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able." And he answered them, "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you?

How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me." And they brought the boy to him; and when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. And Jesus asked his father, "How long has he had this?" And he said, "From childhood. And it has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if you can do anything, have pity on us and help us." And Jesus said to him, "If you can! All things are possible to him who believes." Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!" And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You dumb and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again." And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse; so that most of them said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" And he said to them, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer and fasting." They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And he would not have any one know it; for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of man will be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him; and when he is killed, after three days he will rise."

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

Tuesday, April 5th.....Bible Study 10:00 a.m. (Zoom not available)

Wednesday, April 6th...Presanctified Divine Liturgy - 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, April 7th.....Parish Council - 2:00 p.m.

Friday, April 8th.....Presanctified Divine Liturgy - 9:00 a.m.
Akathist Hymn- 6:30 p.m.

ST. GEORGE GOLF TOURNAMENT - Our **St. George Golf Tournament** will be held on **Saturday, April 30, 2022 at the Desert Willow Golf Resort in Palm Desert**. Enclosed is the registration and reservation form. We ask everyone to help make this event successful by having golfers register for the tournament and making reservations for the awards dinner which will follow. We are in need of silent auction items. Please contact **Fr. Ted** to arrange for delivery of silent auction items to the church office.