



JULY 9, 2023

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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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.

THE LADDER



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—Romans 10:1-10

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but it is not enlightened. For, being ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. For Christ is the end of the law, that every one who has faith may be justified. Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on the law shall live by it. But the righteousness based on faith says, Do not say in your heart, "Who will ascend into heaven?" (that is, to bring Christ down) or "Who will descend into the abyss?" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart (that is, the word of faith which we preach); because, if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved.

GOSPEL— St. Matthew 8:28-34, 9:1

At that time, when Jesus came to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes, two demoniacs met him, coming out of the tombs, so fierce that no one would pass that way. And behold, they cried out, "What have you to do with us, O Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?" Now a herd of many swine was feeding at some distance from them. And the demons begged him, "If you cast us out, send us away into the herd of swine." And he said to them, "Go." So they came out and went into the swine; and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and perished in the waters. The herdsmen fled, and going into the city they told everything, and what had happened to the demoniacs. And behold, all the city came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw him, they begged him to leave their neighborhood. And getting into a boat he crossed over and came to his own city.

CHRIST IS THE LAW

Since Pentecost Sunday, the Sunday Gospel passages remind us of having faith in Christ our God and, through our faith, living in union with Him. Thus, we are called to follow our Lord in every aspect of our lives. Today's Gospel, however, narrates the rejection of Christ by the Gergesenes after He banished the demons from the demoniacs of their district. In fact, at their request, our Lord allowed them to enter the swine, which the Gergesenes were abusing for profit .

While even Pharisees might point out that the Gergesenes were transgressing the Law by dealing with swine, the Gergesenes' rejection of Christ made their unrighteousness equal to that of the Pharisees. In fact, rejecting Christ is the same as disobeying the Law. In today's passage from St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, we are reminded that people, being weak, are not able to follow the Law on a continuous basis. However, faith in Christ transforms us so that we follow the Law by following Christ, Who is the "heart-and-soul" of the Law which we take into our own hearts and souls.

Christ is the Image of God's awesome love for everyone. Sin is the transgression of our Lord's "Law of Love," and it is sin that separates us from Him. Christ does not reject us! He forgives our sins when we sincerely repent. At the same time, if we do not believe in sin, we cannot believe in God's forgiveness, and, by not repenting of sins, we delude ourselves into thinking that we are "okay just the way we are," without following God's Law – and still, there is so much unhappiness and anger all around. Rather than forgiving people, people too often hate other people. But, Christ God *is* the "Law of Love." Our way to inner peace and peace with others is to make every effort to follow Christ our God, Who *is* the Divine Law in living flesh. +FR. THEODORE

Από την Κυριακή της Πεντηκοστής, οι Ευαγγελικές περικοπές κάθε Κυριακή μας υπενθυμίζουν ότι πρέπει να έχουμε πίστη στον Χριστό και, μέσω της πίστεώς μας, να ζούμε ενωμένοι μαζί Του. Έτσι, καλούμεθα να ακολουθήσουμε τον Χριστό σε κάθε περίπτωση της ζωής μας. Η σημερινή Ευαγγελική περικοπή αφηγείται την απόρριψη του Χριστού από τους Γεργεσένους, ενώ ο Χριστός έδωσε τους δαίμονες από τους δαιμονισμένους της περιοχής των. Μάλιστα, σε συμφωνία με το αίτημά τους, ο Χριστός τους επέτρεψε να μπουν στους χοίρους, τους οποίους οι Γεργεσαίοι εχρησιμοποιούσαν άδικα για κέρδος.

Ενώ ακόμα οι Φαρισαίοι θα μπορούσαν να επισημάνουν ότι οι Γεργεσαίοι παραβίαζαν τον Νόμο σχετικά με την χρήση των με τους χοίρους, η απόρριψη του Χριστού έκανε την αδικία τους ίση με αυτή των Φαρισαίων. Στην πραγματικότητα, η απόρριψη του Χριστού είναι το ίδιο με το να μην υπακούει κανείς στον Νόμο. Η σημερινή περικοπή εκ της προς Ρωμαίους Επιστολής του Αγίου Παύλου, μας υπενθυμίζεται ότι οι άνθρωποι, όντας ανίκανοι, δεν μπορούν να τηρούν το Νόμο σε συνεχή βάση. Ωστόσο, η πίστη στον Χριστό μας μεταμορφώνει έτσι ώστε να ακολουθούμε τον Νόμο ακολουθώντας τον Χριστό, Ο Οποίος είναι η «καρδιά και η ψυχή» του Νόμου που παίρνουμε μέσα στις δικές μας καρδιές και ψυχές.

Ο Χριστός είναι η Εικόνα της μεγάλης αγάπης του Θεού για όλους. Η αμαρτία είναι η παράβαση του «Νόμου της Αγάπης» του Κυρίου μας, και είναι η αμαρτία που μας χωρίζει από Αυτόν. Ο Χριστός δεν μας απορρίπτει! Συγχωρεί τις αμαρτίες μας όταν μετανοούμε ειλικρινά. Εάν δεν πιστεύουμε στην αμαρτία, δεν μπορούμε να πιστέψουμε στη συγχώρεση του Θεού και, χωρίς να μετανοήσουμε για τις αμαρτίες, αυταπατούμε τους εαυτούς μας ότι είμεθα «καλοί όπως είμεθα», χωρίς να τηρούμε τον Νόμο του Θεού, ενώ υπάρχει ακόμα δυστυχία ολόγυρα. Αντί να συγχωρούν, οι άνθρωποι πολύ συχνά μισούν τους άλλους ανθρώπους. Όμως, ο Χριστός ο Θεός είναι ο «Νόμος της Αγάπης». Η πορεία μας προς την εσωτερική ειρήνη και την ειρήνη με τους άλλους είναι να καταβάλουμε κάθε προσπάθεια να ακολουθήσουμε τον Χριστό τον Θεό μας, ο Οποίος είναι ο Θεϊός Νόμος στη ζωντανή σάρκα. +Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

Liturgical Notes for Today

At the Entrance of the Gospel: 1) *"The Women disciples of the Lord heard from the angel the joyful news of the Resurrection and the repeal of the sentence imposed upon our forefathers. With pride they said to the Apostles, 'Death is vanquished! Christ our God is risen, bestowing upon the world His great mercy.'"*/Το φαιδρον...

2) *"Since You are a deliverer of captives..."* / Ως των αιχμαλώτων ελευθεροτής...[Hymn for St. George]

3) **Kontakion:** *"Champion of Christians not put to shame, advocate before the Maker always steadfast, do not spurn sinners' voices raised in prayer. In Your goodness respond to bring help to us who devoutly petition you. Hasten Your intercession and urgently make entreaty; for You unfailingly defend, Theotokos, those who honor You."*/Προστασια των Χριστιανων...

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Tuesday, July 11th.....Bible Study – 10:00 a.m.

Please note: Our Parish Council along with our Festival Chairman, George Argyros, have begun work for our **2024 Greek Festival** from now. **Save the date: February 17-18, 2024** and let's make the 2024 Greek Festival a huge success.

Also, **there will not** be a St. George Golf Tournament in the Spring of 2024 due to hot weather in May (following Holy Pascha) and our observance of Great and Holy Lent throughout April, as per Fr. Ted.

Reminder – Funeral Services for Nicholas Demetropoulos: July 16 (Trisagion) and Monday, July 17th.



REGISTRATION FOR ST. SOPHIA SUMMER CAMP IS NOW OPEN

Week #1: July 23rd - July 29th, 2023

Week #2: July 29th -August 5th, 2023

Payment Information

- Price if Paying By Check: \$600 per week, per camper.

LAST CHANCE TO REGISTER!

Please mail checks to:

Saint Sophia Cathedral
c/o Saint Sophia Camp
1324 S. Normandie Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90006

- Price if Paying Online: \$615 per week, per camper. Please make payment [here](#) .

Building Lifelong Memories through Faith, Fellowship and Fun

Saint Sophia Camp continues on, operating at Camp Seely in beautiful Crestline, California for a two week season every summer. The ministry of Saint Sophia Camp continues to have a positive impact on countless lives.

AHEPA Chapter 528 is offering Grants to help children of St George Orthodox Church of the Desert and AHEPA Chapter 528 attend camp. A letter of support requested by the child must be sent to contact@ahpepa528.org stating their request and what it means to them to have the opportunity. Families must be stewards of St. George Church or members of AHEPA Chapter 528. The amount is \$250.00 grant per child.

WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO WHEN WE PARTICIPATE IN THE DIVINE LITURGY

Beloved Brethren in Christ our God and Savior,

As I am preparing the “Master Calendar” for our parish for 2023-2024, I am planning to host a weekly discussion group about the meaning of the movements and prayers of the Divine Liturgy in terms of *living* the *life* of the Divine Liturgy, which is synonymous with living the Bible.

When we light candles, our souls are to be enlightened. With incense, our hearts are influenced with a sense of piety so that we can know peace. When we look at icons, we look into “windows of heaven,” to where our purpose in life is directed.

Over the next 12 weeks, I want to insert into our weekly *Ladder* the “things” about Church worship, taken from **Frederica Matthews-Green’s pamphlet, “12 Things I Wish I Had Known.”** Being a convert to the Orthodox Christian Faith herself, she offers new insights for all of us as we prepare for our upcoming **October “Divine Liturgy Discussion Groups,”** through which we can enlighten one another with love for God and for others as we join together in living the Orthodox Christian way of life.

May our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ always bless you.

Fr. Ted.

“...Here are twelve things I wish someone had explained to me the first time I visited an Orthodox Church.”

– Frederica Matthews-Green, “Before Your First Visit to an Orthodox Church: 12 Things I Wish I Had Known”

1

“A sense of holiness. If you are from a Protestant or non-liturgical tradition, you may feel overwhelmed the minute you walk in the door of an Orthodox Church. You will find yourself surrounded by a blaze of color in the priests’ vestments and the icons that adorn the walls. The pungent odor of incense will assault your nose, possibly making you sneeze. Rich, deeply moving but unfamiliar music will fill your ears.”

I will note that each parish has a particular “personality.” Standing, kneeling and bowing are personal expressions of prayer which makes worship alive, rather than “watching a performance.” Orthodox faithful are free to bow and make, the sign of the cross and sing with the chanters or the choir as the Spirit moves them. Everything, however, is to be an expression of personal prayer and piety, rather than a distraction to others.

Frederica Matthews-Green makes a brilliant observation regarding the lighting of candles; the colors, and the incense. “It is important to remember that none of this is an end itself. Everything we see, hear, smell, touch, taste, or do in the Orthodox Church has one purpose and one purpose only: to lead us closer to God. Since God created us with physical bodies and senses, we believe He desires us to use our bodies and senses to grow closer to Him.” +Fr. Ted