



MAY 21, 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

SUNDAY OF THE BLIND MAN; STS. CONSTANTINE & HELEN



EPISTLE— Acts 26:1, 12-20

In those days, King Agrippa said to Paul, "You have permission to speak for yourself." Then Paul stretched out his hand and made his defense: "I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. At midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining round me and those who journeyed with me. And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It hurts you to kick against the goads.' And I said, 'Who are you, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. But rise and stand upon your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you to serve and bear witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, delivering you from the people and from the Gentiles - to whom I send you to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.' Wherefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but declared first to those at Damascus, then at Jerusalem and throughout all the country of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God and perform deeds worthy of their repentance."

GOSPEL—St. John 9: 1-38

At that time, as Jesus passed by, he saw a man blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him. We must work the

works of him who sent me, while it is day; night comes, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." As he said this, he spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle and anointed the man's eyes with the clay, saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar, said, "Is not this the man who used to sit and beg?" Some said, "It is he"; others said, "No, but he is like him." He said, "I am the man." They said to him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" He answered, "The man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash'; so I went and washed and received my sight." They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know." They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. The Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, "He put clay on my eyes and I washed, and I see." Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" There was a division among them. So they again said to the blind man, "What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet." The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight, and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" His parents answered, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but how he now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age, he

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GOSPEL PASSAGE, Continued

will speak for himself." So, for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and said to him, "Give God the praise; we know that this man is a sinner." He answered, "Whether he is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I know, that though I was blind, now I see." They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" He answered them, "I have told you already and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you too want to become his disciples?" And they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." The man answered, "Why, this is a marvel! You do not know where

he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." They answered him, "You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?" And they cast him out. Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, "Do you believe in the Son of man?" He answered, "And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?" Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and it is he who speaks to you." He said, "Lord, I believe": and he worshiped him.

Liturgical Notes for Today

At the Entrance of the Gospel: 1) **Entrance hymn:** "Christ is risen from the dead..." /Χριστός Ανέστη...

As the Gospel is raised: "In the congregations bless God, the Lord Who springs out of Israel. Save us, O Son of God Who rose from the dead, as we sing to You, Alleluia." /Εν Εκκλησίαις ευλογείτε...

2) "O faithful, let us sing a hymn of praise and worship to the Logos, Who is co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit, Who was born of the Virgin for our salvation. Of His own Will, He went upon the Cross in the flesh and suffered death to raise the dead, through His glorious Resurrection." /Τον Συνάναρχον Λόγον...

3) "He beheld the image of Your Cross in the heavens, and as Paul, he too did not receive the call from men. Your Apostle among the kings placed the care of the Royal City in Your hands. Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O, only loving Lord, keep it ever in peace." /Του Σταυρού Σου τον τύπον..., (St. Constantine)

4) "Since you are a deliverer of captives..." [Hymn of St. George] /Ως των αιχμαλώτων ελευθερωτής...

5) **Kontakion:** "Though You went down into the tomb, You destroyed Hades' power, and You rose the victor, Christ God. To the myrrh-bearing women, saying 'Hail!' and granting peace to Your disciples, You are He Who raises up the fallen," /Ει και εν τάφω...

SEEING THE LIGHT OF OUR LORD'S GOSPEL

Last Sunday – the Sunday of the Samaritan Woman – one of the themes of the Gospel passage was that of "water washing away our sins" and "quenching our thirst for God's love." This Sunday, being the Sunday of the Blind Man, one major theme is that of being able to see – or being illumined. Being able to "see" reveals the truth about God's world and our place in it.

One of the prayers that was read over us when we were baptized begins with these words: "Open the eyes of [Your servants's] understanding, that the light of Your Gospel may enlighten (him/her)." The Gospel is a vital part of the Holy Tradition of Apostolic Christianity, which is embodied in our Orthodox Faith through the Holy Spirit. Thus, Holy Baptism is our enlightenment in God's Love and Wisdom. Holy Confession, known as our "second baptism," is also our enlightenment in God's Love and Wisdom. Living according to God's Love and Wisdom leads us to improving our soul's ability to discern good from evil.

Every day we stand on the line between our own "wisdom," reflective of our own will, and God's Wisdom, which is God's Will. On the basis of whichever *wisdom* we are prone to follow, we make choices, which eventually lead us and others toward God, or away from God. Unfortunately, we face strong temptations to order our lives according to the "wisdom" of this fallen world, and is often reflected as our own personal wisdom. The world's wisdom seems based on technology and politics. God's Wisdom is based on love that is not self-centered, but rejoices when our souls are in a close relationship with the love of God.

+FR. THEODORE

Την περασμένη Κυριακή – την Κυριακή της Σαμαρειτιδος – ένα από τα θέματα της περικοπής του Ευαγγελίου ήταν αυτό περι του «νερου που ξεπλένει τις αμαρτίες μας» και που «ξεδιψά την διψαν μας για την αγάπη του Θεού». Αυτή την Κυριακή, που είναι η Κυριακή του Τυφλού, έχουμε ως ενα σημαντικό θέμα αυτο που είναι «ο φωτισμος του ανθρωπου.» Με το να «βλέπουμε» έχουμε την χαρη αποκαλύπτουμε την αλήθεια περι της κτισεως του Θεού και τη θέση μας στην κτισην Του.

Στο Μυστήριο του Αγίου Βαπτίσματος, μια από τις προσευχές που εδίαβασε ο ιερευσ για μας ξεκινά με αυτά τα λόγια: «*Διανοιξον [του δουλου Σου] τους οφθαλμους της διανοιας εις το αυγασαι εν (αυτω/αυτη) τον φωτισμον του Ευαγγελιου Σου.*» Το Ευαγγέλιο είναι ταυτοχρόνως η Ιερά Παράδοση του Αποστολικού Χριστιανισμού, που ενσωματώνεται στην Ελληνο-ορθόδοξη Πίστη μας δια του Αγίου Πνεύματος. Έτσι, το Άγιο Βάπτισμα είναι ο διαφωτισμός μας όσον αφορά την Αγάπη και τη Σοφία του Θεού. Η Εξομολόγησις, την οποία γνωρίζομεν ως το «δεύτερο βάπτισμά μας», είναι επίσης ο διαφωτισμός μας σχετικά με την Αγάπη και τη Σοφία του Θεού, μέσω της οποίας αποκτούμε τη χάρη του Θεού για να οξύνουμε την ικανότητα της ψυχής μας για να διακρίνει το ο,τι είναι καλό από το ο,τι είναι κακό.

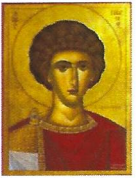
Κάθε ημέρα στεκόμεθα στη γραμμή μεταξύ της δικής μας «σοφίας», αντανακλώντας το δικό μας θέλημα, και της Σοφίας του Θεού, που είναι το Θέλημα του Θεού. Σύμφωνα με τη βάση της οποιασδήποτε *σοφίας* που είναι είμεθα επιρρεπείς να ακολουθήσουμε, κάνουμε επιλογές, οι οποίες τελικά οδηγούν τόσο εμάς όσο και τους άλλους ή προς τον Θεό, ή μακριά από τον Θεό. Δυστυχώς, αντιμετωπίζομε ισχυρούς πειρασμούς να διατάξομε τη ζωή μας σύμφωνα με τη «σοφία» αυτού του πεσμένου κόσμου και που συχνά αντικατοπτρίζεται ως η προσωπική μας σοφία. Η σοφία του κόσμου φαίνεται να βασιζεται στην τεχνολογία και «στα πολιτικά» της εποχής μας. Η Σοφία του Θεού βασιζεται στην αγάπη που χαιρείται στο Θέλημα του Θεου και οταν οι ψυχές μας ευρίσκονται σε στενή σχέση με την αγάπη του Θεού. +Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Fr. Ted will be away this week from this afternoon until this Saturday, May 27, 2023 in order to attend his grandson's high school graduation in Sacramento, California. **Fr. Simeon Poptelecan** will substitute for Fr. Ted for the celebration of the **Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Ascension of our Lord on Thursday, May 25th**. In the event of emergency, contact **Fr. David Kruse** at St. Raphael Antiochian Orthodox Church in Thousand Palms, CA. (760-408-6116).
- Thursday, May 25th THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST
Orthros-8:30 a.m./Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.
- **FESTIVAL FEEDBACK LETTER** – Enclosed, please find a copy of a letter sent out earlier this week to all of our parishioners, requesting their **feedback regarding decisions to be made about the nature of our parish Greek Festivals for next year and the years to come**. Parishioners may offer more than a one-time response to this request. However, the **deadline for receiving all responses is June 15th**. Unreceived responses will be considered as a “**no**” for helping with another Greek Festival. Responses are received via email at: pdsaintgeorge@gmail.com. Those who do not have email, may respond by writing a note and bringing it to Church Services for our Parish Council to have it on file by Sunday, June 11th.



ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
HOLY METROPOLIS OF SAN FRANCISCO
PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA



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May 16, 2023

Beloved Parishioners of St. George Greek Orthodox Church, Palm Desert, California:

Christ is Risen!

The Parish Council is struggling to determine whether or not to plan for a Greek Festival for 2024 along the same format which was used to plan the festival of this past year, 2023, given the average age of the handful of people that come out every year to work for the success of the festival, along with the high costs for set-up, take-down, and labor. Considering this reality, as well as the fact that only 1/3 of our stewards work the festival, participation has decreased since our last festival, we question the sustainability of having Festivals into the future.

We believe, if we have a festival next year it will be successful, however, we also believe the festival can not be sustained because only a small percentage of the stewards work the festival. Therefore, unless we see a multi-year commitment (in the survey below) from our stewards, we are inclined to abandon the festival and immediately look at other avenues of fundraising that would involve the community at large.

The Parish Council would like the feedback from all of our parishioners in terms of the commitment that each one is willing to make toward next year and future years' festivals. If you have any ideas on other means of fundraising please include your ideas. Please email your thoughts, along the lines of the survey below, addressing them to: pdsaintgeorge@gmail.com. **We need to have your comments by Wednesday, June 15, 2023** so that a final decision on this matter can be reached. A non-response will be understood as meaning that you are not interested in helping for future festivals.

Praying that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Arisen from the dead, will grant to you all of His many and great blessings, now and always, we remain,

Chris Maletis,
Parish Council President

Fr. Theodore Pantels,
Parish Priest

FESTIVAL PARTICIPATION SURVEY

- 1) Are you willing to work during the weekend of next year's festival and future festivals in the years to come? In what way would you like to help? How many shifts would you like to work?
- 2) Are you willing to work for the preparation of next year's festival and future festivals in the years to come? In what way would you like to help? How much time would you like to give in helping to make preparations for the festival throughout the weeks leading up to the weekend of the festival?