



JANUARY 28, 2024

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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- Fr. Theodore Pantels, M.Div. Proistamenos (Pastor)
- Deacon Euthym Kontaxis, M.D., M.Div.

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—1 Timothy 4:9-15

Timothy, my son, the saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance. For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe. Command and teach these things. Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. Till I come, attend to the public reading of scripture, to preaching, to teaching. Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophetic utterance when the council of elders laid their hands upon you. Practice these duties, devote yourself to them, so that all may see your progress.

GOSPEL - St. Luke 19:1-10

At that time, Jesus entered Jericho and was

passing through. And there was a man named Zacchaeus; he was a chief collector, and rich. And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not, on account of the crowd, because he was small of stature. So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down; for I must stay at your house today." So he made haste and came down, and received him joyfully. And when they saw it they all murmured, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one of anything, I restore it fourfold." And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man came to seek and to save the lost."

ST. EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN - Today we commemorate St. Ephraim the Syrian. He lived in Edessa and confronted the false teachings of the Gnostics, who had been propagating their false teaching, according to which the world was created and ruled by a lesser divinity, and that Christ was an emissary of a remote supreme divine being, the knowledge (i.e., "gnosis") of whom enabled the redemption of the human spirit. St. Ephraim, wrote hymns, which set forth the true doctrines of Orthodoxy, refuting Gnostic falsehood, and praising the the Holy Martyrs. Somewhere around 370 A.D., a famine broke out and St. Ephraim immersed himself with love and mercy in caring for those suffering from the famine, as well as the sick and the elderly of his community. Saint Ephraim reposed in peace in the year 373.

### Liturgical Notes for Today

At the Entrance of the Gospel: 1) *“Savior, Your tomb was sealed by the Jews with a stone. Soldiers kept watch over Your sacred Body. Yet, You rose on the third day, giving life to the world. Wherefore the powers of heaven cried out to You, O Giver of Life, ‘Glory to Your Resurrection, O Christ; glory to Your Kingdom; Glory to Your dispensation Who alone is the Loving One.’”/Του λίθου σφραγισθέντος...*

2) *“With the rivers of your tears, you have made the barren desert fertile. Through sighs of sorrow from deep within you, your labors have borne fruit a hundredfold. By your miracles you have become a light, shining upon the world. O Ephraim the Syrian, our venerable Father, intercede to Christ our God to save our souls.”/Ταίς των δακρύων σου ροαίς...*

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

4) **Kontakion:** *““Your birth sanctified the Virgin’s womb and fittingly blessed the hands of Simeon. You have now come and saved us O Christ our God. In troubled times, as the only loving One, give peace to Your commonwealth and strength to those in civil authority, whom You love.””/Ο μήτραν παρθενικήν αγιάσας τῷ τόκῳ Σου...*

### BECOMING SPIRITUALLY SELF-FULFILLED IN CHRIST

The encounter between our Savior and Zacchaeus, about which we heard from the reading of today’s Gospel passage, shows us that God’s grace accomplishes whatever we cannot do by ourselves. There was no way that Zacchaeus, on his own, would change from being a greedy, cheating tax-collector into being a saint. This is because greed is fueled by one’s lack of faith and love. Faith in God and love for God are needed for us to be able to express God’s love to others, which, in turn, fulfills our own inner wellbeing. Inner wellbeing is tantamount to inner joy, which had become the general disposition of the early Christians, and which thereby drew others to embrace their faith in Christ.

Back in 2015, Elizabeth Renter posted a write-up in *U. S. News* with an analysis of the personal benefits of generosity. *“Generosity and compassion have been a focal point of research for decades, and studies have consistently shown that improved mood, better physical health and increased longevity are connected with giving, whether it is monetary donations or volunteer hours....The feel-good effects of giving begin in the brain. It is called ‘giver’s glow’...”* In essence, coming to know Christ, triggered the divine nature of Zacchaeus’ humanity, bringing about “glowing” joy in proclaiming his desire to give to the needy and repent from his wrongs. This divine nature is part of all of us as human beings, having been created in God’s image and likeness. Thus, in Christ, we find personal spiritual fulfillment through prayer and good deeds.

The Orthodox Church focuses on the salvation of each individual, just as Christ cared for Zacchaeus as a person. Unlike most of society, represented by those who criticized Jesus for becoming a guest of “a sinner,” our Church condemns sins, while still seeking the salvation of the sinner. +FR. THEODORE

Η συνάντησις μεταξύ του Σωτήρος μας και του Ζακχαίου, περί της οποίας ακούσαμε από την ανάγνωση της σημερινής Ευαγγελικής περικοπής, μας δείχνει ότι με την χάρη του Θεού μπορούμε να κάνουμε αυτό που δεν μπορούμε να κάνουμε μόνοι μας. Δεν υπήρχε τρόπος με τον οποίο ο Ζακχαίος, από μόνος του, θα άλλαζε σε άγιο από τον αμαρτωλόν που ήταν – πλεονέκτης και απατεώνας. Αυτό συμβαίνει επειδή η πλεονεξία τροφοδοτείται από την έλλειψη πίστεως και αγάπης. Χρειάζονται πίστη στο Θεό και αγάπη για τον Θεό για να μπορέσουμε να εκφράσουμε την αγάπη του Θεού σε άλλους και που, επομένως, εκπληρώνει τη δική μας εσωτερική ευημερία. Η εσωτερική ευημερία ισοδυναμεί με την εσωτερική χαρά, η οποία έγινε η γενική διάθεση των πρώτων Χριστιανών, ελκύνοντας τους άλλους της εποχής των να ασπασθούν την πίστη που είχαν στον Χριστό.

Το 2015, η Elizabeth Renter δημοσίευσε ένα άρθρο στο περιοδικό *U. S. News* με μία ανάλυση των προσωπικών οφελών της γενναιοδωρίας: «*Η γενναιοδωρία και η ευσπλαγχνία αποτελούν σπουδαία*

*Συνέχεια στην επόμενη σελίδα – – –>*

θέμματα έρευνας για δεκαετίες και οι μελέτες έχουν δείξει σταθερά ότι η βελτίωση της διάθεσως του ανθρώπου, η καλύτερευσις της σωματικής υγείας του και η γενική μακροζωία του συνδέονται με την γενναιοδωρίαν [που], είτε πρόκειται ο άνθρωπος να δωρίσει χρηματικές δωρεές είτε ώρες εθελοντισμού...ξεκινά «ρεύματα» στο εγκέφαλο που δηλώνονται ως κάτι που ονομάζεται: λάμψις του δωρητή...» Ουσιαστικά, η γνωριμία με τον Χριστό, εφώτισε την θεϊκή φύση της ανθρωπότητας του Ζακχαίου, έτσι ώστε να νοιώθει «λαμπερή» χαρά για να διακηρύξει την επιθυμία του να δώσει στους πτωχούς και να μετανοήσει για τα λάθη του. Αυτή η θεϊκή φύσις είναι μέρος όλων μας, καθώς μας εδημιούργησε ο Θεός καθ' ομοίωσίν Του. Γι' αυτό, εν Χριστώ, ευρίσκουμε την προσωπική μας ψυχική ολοκλήρωση διά μεσού της προσευχής και έργων αγάπης.

Η Ελληνο-Ορθόδοξη Εκκλησία ζητεί στην σωτηρία κάθε ανθρώπου προσωπικώς, όπως ο Χριστός εφρόντιζε για τον Ζακχαίο πρόσωπικώς. Σε αντίθεση με το μεγαλύτερο μέρος της κοινωνίας, που αντιπροσωπεύεται από εκείνους που εκαταδίκασαν τον Χριστό ότι έγινε φιλοξενούμενος ενός «αμαρτωλού», η Εκκλησία μας καταδικάζει τις αμαρτίες, ενώ αγαπά τον αμαρτωλό και εξακολουθεί να αναζητά τη σωτηρία του. +Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

### WEEKDAY CALENDAR

- Tuesday, January 30th.... THE HOLY THREE HIERARCHS  
(Sts. Basil the Great, John Chrysostom, and Gregory the Theologian)  
Orthros-8:30 a.m./ Divine Liturgy- 9:30 a.m. / Bible Study – 11:00 am.
- Wednesday, January 31st..Online Orthodox Christian Catechism class – 6:30 p.m.
- Friday, February 2nd....PRESENTATION OF CHRIST INTO THE TEMPLE  
Orthros-8:30 a.m./ Divine Liturgy- 9:30 a.m.
- Next Sunday, February 4th.....*Philoptochos/Sunday School service project in support of the San Francisco Metropolis Philoptochos' Kids-n-Cancer ministry.*

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **SUNDAY SCHOOL** – Today, our Sunday School begins a three-week service project, working with our St. George Philoptochos. The service project is in support toward the **San Francisco Philoptochos Metropolis' Kids-n-Cancer ministry**. This service project will continue on **Sunday, February 4th and Sunday, February 11th**. Lessons will be combined with the service project. To help us prepare for the success of our Philoptochos/Sunday School service project, please contact, **Fr. Ted** (760) 880-5869), **Mrs. Athena Snarskis** (219) 313-6940, or **Pres. Petula Pantels** (909)539-7542). See the enclosed flier.
- **PHILOPTOCHOS** – February is dedicated to a special service project in support of our **San Francisco Metropolis Philoptochos' Kids-n-Cancer ministry**. Also, Philoptochos has been working diligently in preparing the pastries for our up-coming Greek Festival. The baking schedule is as follows: **January 29th & 30th and February 1st & 2nd: Pastries / February 5th & 6th and February 8th & 9th: Baklava. Wednesdays will not be baking days. February 12th – February 16th: Packaging and preparations for the Festival**, which takes place from February 17th to the 18th. On a final note, please **save the date for the Philoptochos Membership Tea and Luncheon on March 9th**.
- **AHEPA** – AHEPA 528 is in full support of our Greek Festival. All members are asked to help out with set-up and take-down of Festival stations. In addition, AHEPA members are asked to also help at the Festival AHEPA booth on Saturday, February 17th and/or Sunday, February 18th. Today, our chapter president, **Wynn Storton** and our chapter member, **Ramsay Seikaly**, will be representing our AHEPA 528 at the **AHEPA District 20 Mid-Winter Conference** in Long Beach, California.



## **Support our Festival!**

**Our festival is just around the corner and, God willing, everyone will have a rewarding experience. We thank our parishioners and friends for your past support and want to take a moment to remind you of all the ways you can help this upcoming year.**



**Volunteering – Volunteers are welcome as of the 18<sup>th</sup> of December for cooking. Such support will be needed up until the festival in February. Please reach out to George or Stacy Argyros to get more information. In addition, assistance is appreciated during the week before the festival to help set up, during the festival and following the festival to assist with cleanup. If you've volunteered before and wish to continue, feel free to contact the past chairperson to again offer your assistance. If you'd like to volunteer for the first time or don't have contact information for the past chairperson, feel free to reach out to Jim Christopoulos at 760-902-8460 or at [goofy\\_328@yahoo.com](mailto:goofy_328@yahoo.com).**

**Sponsorships – Any person can pay for a sponsorship, whether it be to advertise your business or send a personal message. You may also ask friends and/or owners of businesses you frequent to buy a sponsorship, which will be posted on our parish Festival website. These not only provide financial support for the festival, but are a wonderful way to advertise businesses. Sponsorship do-nations can be sent to our parish office. For more information, please call our parish office at (760) 568-9901. Make checks payable to “St. George Greek Orthodox Church” and in the memo, write, “FESTIVAL DONATION.”**

**Donations – Unable to volunteer? Sponsorship not appropriate? Another option would be to provide a cash donation. Such a donation would help offset our many expenses.**

**The success of our festival depends on us all. We strive to simultaneously satisfy the needs of our guests as well as to share our hospitality and religion with them. Please help in any way you can. You may contact George Argyros or Father Ted for more information.**



## Volunteer for the 2024 Festival

### What Kind of Person Are You?

In this world there are four kinds of people: Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody. There was an important job to be done and Everybody was asked to do it. Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did.

Somebody got angry about it because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought Somebody would do it, but Nobody realized it wouldn't get done by Anybody. It ended up that not only was the job not done, but Everybody accused Somebody, and Nobody accepted the responsibility.

Moral: Everybody's job is Anybody's. Nobody can be Somebody unless they are willing to do Anybody's work.



If you haven't already, please sign up to volunteer for our festival. Complete and drop off this form to Jim Christopoulos or Father Ted. You may also contact Jim Christopoulos at 760-902-8460 or email [goofy\\_328@yahoo.com](mailto:goofy_328@yahoo.com). God bless!

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Check Availability: Saturday 2/17: \_\_\_ 9:45-3:00 \_\_\_ 2:45-8:00

Sunday 2/18: \_\_\_ 9:45-3:00 \_\_\_ 2:45-8:00

Set up (week before festival): \_\_\_

Clean up (day after festival): \_\_\_

