

AUGUST 4, 2019

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

74-109 Larrea Street

Palm Desert, California 92260

Website: www.go-stgeorge.org

Email: pdsaintgeorge@gmail.com

THE LADDER

SUNDAY BEFORE THE TRANSFIGURATION OF CHRIST

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 4755

Palm Desert, CA.92261

Tel: (760) 568-9901

or: (760) 880-5869

– 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.

“LET US BUILD ALTARS!”

Today’s Gospel passage is one of the Bible passages that confirms the proper understanding of Jesus’ identity of being the true Messiah. This identity is one of a loving Physician, in which His compassion is His judgment, constantly calling us to join Him in the Divine Kingdom. Healing and forgiveness are one and the same. Today’s Gospel, gives us three signs indicating that Christ is truly the Messiah.

First, the prophesy of Isaiah is fulfilled by our Lord: *“God renders judgment and*

will render it. He will come and save us. Then the eyes of the blind will be opened and the ears of the deaf shall hear.” (Is. 35: 4-5). Indeed, Jesus opened the eyes of the blind men.

Second, the title “Son of Man,” used by the blind men, confesses Christ’s full humanity, the True Messiah Who saves us from death by death.

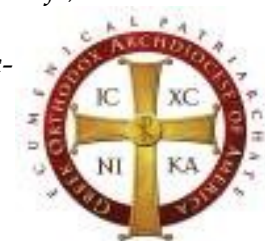
Third, the accusation made by the Pharisees that Jesus *“casts out demons by the ruler of demons”* (St. Matthew 9: 34), reveals that Christ is truly God,

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MAKING THE EFFORT TO PRAY TO OUR LORD DAILY

If “mindfulness” is a good thing, according to our modern way of thinking, *Prayer* is a better thing, as is evident in the lives of the Saints, because prayer connects us with Jesus Christ the Son of God. As such, prayer is the “vehicle” through which we find God’s love within us so that we can express God’s love outwardly to others. Prayer to Christ our God is, in fact, the “one voice” by which we “glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Romans 15:16)

Fr. Alexander Elchaninov once gave this advice: *“Pray in the morning and in the evening, even if you only recite one single prayer, even if it is only for one or two minutes; but try to achieve complete concentration to the words of the prayer and to purge your mind from all other preoccupations, attaining a certain warmth of heart – however feeble – a warmth actually felt in the region of the heart, for we pray primarily with the heart. Read whenever you can, but at any rate each day, one or two verses from the Gospels and, as you do, make an effort to apply what you read to your life, to your apprehension of the world around you; that is, make an effort to understand what you read as the living Word of God, addressed specifically to yourself.”* (Diary of a Russian Priest, pg. 186).



Η σημερινή Ευαγγελική περικοπή επιβεβαιώνει την σωστή κατανόηση περί της ταυτότητας του Ιησού ως ο Μεσσίας. Αυτή η ταυτότης είναι ενός Ιατρού που αγαπά. Το αποτέλεσμα είναι ότι η συμπόνια του Χριστού είναι και η κρίσις Του, που μας καλεί συνεχώς να ενωθούμε μαζί Του στην Θεία Βασιλείαν. Παρατηρούμεν από το σημερινό ανάγνωσμα του κατά Ματθαίον Ευαγγελίου τρία <σημεία> που δείχνουν ότι ο Χριστός είναι στην πραγματικότητα ο Μεσσίας.

Πρώτον, η προφητεία του Ησαΐα εκπληρώνεται από τον Κύριον. Ο Προφήτης Ησαΐας είπε ότι ο Θεός κρίνει και η κρίσις Του είναι ότι θα έλθει για να μας σώσει. Και τότε, θα ανοίξουν τα μάτια των τυφλών και θα ακούσουν τα αυτιά των κουφών (Ησαΐας 35: 4-5). Αυτό σχετίζεται με την σημερινή περικοπή του Ευαγγελίου καθώς γνωρίζουμε ότι ο Ιησούς άνοιξε τα μάτια των τυφλών.

Δεύτερον, ο τίτλος, <Υιός του ανθρώπου> που χρησιμοποιείται από τους τυφλούς δείχνει την πλήρη ανθρωπία του Χριστού και τον ρόλο Του ως Μεσσίας.

Τρίτον, η κατηγορία από τους Φαρισαίους ότι ο Ιησούς <εκτοξεύει τους δαίμονες διά του αρχόντου των δαιμόνων.> (Ματθ. 9:34), αποκαλύπτει ότι ο Χριστός είναι στην πραγματικότητα ο Θεός, αφού μόνον ο Θεός έχει εξουσίαν πάνω στους δαίμονες.

Οτι ο Χριστός είναι ο Θεός που μας αγαπά μας υποχρεώνει πάντοτε να Τον αγαπάμεν και να <αγαπήσουμε αλλήλους>, όπως εκφωνείται κατά την εκτέλεση της Θ. Λειτουργίας και να δοξάσουμε τον Θεον <έν ένι στόματι και μιᾷ καρδίᾳ>.

+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

since God has authority over demons. The claim by the Pharisees that Jesus' power is "by the ruler of demons" is preposterous, since demons have no control over themselves. Only God has authority over all things, including the demons.

Today's Gospel passage once again illustrates that the relationship God has with us is defined as prayer. Christ our God is ever present among us and His voice dwells in us as the voice of our conscience, prompting us to call Him our Savior. In this regard, it is our nature to seek the Lord, asking Him with faith to heal us and save us, as did the blind men. Prayer is a continuous dialogue between us in our minds and God in our conscience. It is from here that we must, like the blind men, confess our faith to Christ that He "is able to do this" -- *this* being the healing of our souls and bodies. Our faith is based on our humility. This message is given by our Lord by commanding that the blind men tell no one of this miracle, because it was not for them to be prideful about their faith.

Pride does not go with faith. Faith requires humble sincerity. God's voice through our conscience tells us if we are praying sincerely and praying for the right things. While it is said that our "conscience is our guide," it is in our conscience that the seeds of contemplative prayer are to be found, as we become aware, with Christ at our side, of our motives leading us to plans for the future, as well as the reasoning which has led to our sins of the past.

Prayer to our Savior must be done properly. St. Maximus the Confessor reminds us: "Scripture says, 'You ask but you do not receive, because you ask wrongly.' (Jas. 4:3)." (Philokalia, Vol 2, pg. 238). At the event of the Transfiguration (celebrated on August 6th), St. Peter defined prayer and worship as a sacrifice of ourselves crying out, "Let us build altars!" (St. Matthew 17: 4). In fact, altars are used to give sacrifice to God. "A sacrifice to God is a contrite heart; a contrite spirit and humble heart God will not despise," says King David in Psalm 50. Our sacrifice of sincerity and humility is met at our altar here in church with the humility of God in the Person of our Savior Jesus Christ, forming our bond through Holy Communion. As families, we use our "home altars" in the daily sacrifice of ourselves in spiritual warfare through which we reject temptations and evil thoughts and follow the Lord's voice from within us, so that we can always be His faithful servants.

+FR. THEODORE

HYMNS FOR THIS SUNDAY'S CELEBRATION OF THE DIVINE LITURGY:

ANTIPHON I: *"Tes presvies tis Theotokou..." (By the prayers of the Theotokos...)*

Verse 1—Bless the Lord, O my soul, and everything within me, bless His holy name.

Refrain: *"Tes presvies tis Theotokou, Soter, soston imas."*

Verse 2—Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His rewards.

Refrain: *"Tes presvies tis Theotokou, Soter, soston imas."*

Verse 3—The Lord prepared His throne in heaven, and His Kingdom rules over all.

Refrain: *"By the prayers of the Theotokos, Savior, save us."*

Chanter(s): Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

Refrain: *"Tes presvies tis Theotokou, Soter, soston"*

ANTIPHON II: *"Soston imas Ie Theou..." (Save us, O Son of God...)*

Verse 1—Praise the Lord, O my soul! I shall praise the Lord while I live; I shall sing to my God as long as I exist.

Refrain: *"Soston imas Ie Theou, O Anastas ek nekron, psallontas si alleluia."*

Verse 2—Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob; his hope is in the Lord his God.

Refrain: *"Save us, O Son of God, Who Arose from the dead; we sing to You, Alleluia."*

Verse 3—The Lord shall reign forever; your God, O Zion, to all generations.

Refrain: *"Soston imas Ie Theou, O Anastas ek nekron, psallontas si alleluia."*

Doxa Patri ke Yio ke Aghio Pnevmati ke nin ke aei ke eis tous aonas ton aonon. Amin. *"O Monogenis Yios ke Logos tou Theou..."*

ANTIPHON III— *This is the day the Lord made; let us greatly rejoice and be glad therein.*

Sunday Resurrection Hymn: Angelike dynameis (Tone 6)... *(When the Angelic powers appeared at Your tomb and those who guarded You became as though dead and standing by Your sepulcher was Mary seeking Your Pure and Sacred Body for You did vanquish Hades and uncorrupted by its touch, You came unto the Virgin Woman bestowing the gift of Life. O You, Who arose from the dead, O Lord, we give glory to You.)*

Hymn for St. George : Os ton ehmaloton eleftherotis... *(Since you are a deliverer of captives and a defender of the poor; a physician for the sick and a noble attendant to kings, O Great among the Martyrs and Glorious George, intercede to Christ our God that He will save our souls.)*

Kontakion Hymn for this Sunday : Epi tou oh-rhoos metemorphotois... *(On the mountain You were transfigured, O Christ our God, and Your disciples saw as much of Your glory as they could hold, that when they should see You crucified, they would know that You suffered by Your own will and would proclaim to all the world that You truly are the splendor of the Father.)*

READINGS: Epistle: Romans 15: 1-7 / Gospel: St. Matthew 9: 27-35

Axion Estin is chanted/sung

Communion Hymn : Enite ton Kyrion ek ton ouranon; enite Afton en tis ipsistis. Allelouia *(Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise Him in the highest. Alleluia.)*

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Coffee Hour: Anonymous

PHILOPTOCHOS - We need coffee hour hostesses during August & September. Please see the calendar posted on the bulletin board and sign-up today.

STEWARDSHIP - Those who can bring their Stewardship obligation to our parish up to date for 2019 are urged to please do so now during these summer months.

NAMES FOR PARAKLISIS SERVICES - Please submit names of friends and relatives to Fr. Ted so that they can be read during the Paraklisis Services throughout this week.

STREET LIFE PROJECT - Mark your calendars for **Tuesday, August 27th and Thursday, August 29th** so that you can help out in our ministry with the Street Life Project in feeding the homeless. The work that is needed is to help prepare the meals, so that they can be served from **6:00-7:30 p.m. at Miles Park in Indio (August 27th) and Sunrise Park in Palm Springs (August 29th)**. Please contact **Rhonda Latkovic** for more information and sign up on the "Homeless Outreach Volunteer Sign-up Form" on our parish bulletin board.

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

Monday, August 5th..... Great Vespers - 6:00 p.m.

Tuesday, August 6th.....**TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD**
Orthros-8:30 a.m. / Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.
Bible Study-11:00 a.m.

Wednesday, August 7th.....Paraklisis - 6:00 p.m.

Friday, August 9th.....Paraklisis - 6:00 p.m.

Epistle Reading: Romans 15: 1-7

Brethren, we who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves; let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to edify him. For Christ did not please himself; but, as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached thee fell on me." For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Welcome one another, therefore, as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

Gospel Reading: St. Matthew 9:27-35

At that time, as Jesus passed on from there, two blind men followed him, crying aloud, "Have mercy on us, Son of David." When he entered the house, the blind men came to him; and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord." Then he touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith be it done to you." And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly charged them, "See that no one knows it." But they went away and spread his fame through all that district. As they were going away, behold, a dumb demoniac was brought to him. And when the demon had been cast out, the dumb man spoke; and the crowds marveled, saying, "Never was anything like this seen in Israel." But the Pharisees said, "He casts out demons by the prince of demons." And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people.

We encourage all of our parents to sit in the church with their entire family as they participate in the beauty and mysteries of the Divine Liturgy. For those with young children, feel free to sit near an aisle in order that you may easily take your children for a break, as needed. If necessary, we have a "crying room" in the vestibule for your use. God Bless.