

JULY 21, 2019

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.

DOES GOD PUNISH SINNERS?

God does not punish sinners as they live out their lives in this earthly life. However, we do confess that final judgment will take place at the time of the Second Parousia of our Savior in His glory and He will “*judge the living and the dead,*” in accordance to our Creed.

God calls us to repentance in many ways, often by allowing us to suffer the punishment that comes as the result of sin. However, we note that, throughout the course of our Savior’s ministry to humanity, He does not pass judgment, but

calls sinners to repentance. This is His continued ministry through His Holy Church.

The work of healing souls is accomplished through the expulsion of demons, as in the case of today’s Gospel passage, or by the sometimes arduous work of repentance, which requires spiritual and emotional (and often physical) efforts to adopt the “mentality of righteousness” set forth by God’s Law. Christ Himself personifies and fulfills the Law in that He is the Divine Lawgiver, Whom even the

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OVERTHROWING THE POWERS OF EVIL--When our Lord approached the Gergesene demoniacs, even the demons in them recognized Jesus as the Son of God. The theologians of the *Orthodox Study Bible* point out for us the following: “...*Jesus seeks man’s salvation. But, His presence torments [the demons of the two Gergesenes] and expels them. [The demons] are surprised that their power is being terminated before the time of the last judgment. Thus, even before His Resurrection Jesus rescues people from the devil’s control. Jesus does not yield to their request, but sends them out by His own will: though malice and deceitfulness of the demons is great, they can do nothing unless He permits them. Even the demoniacs enjoyed God’s providential care. And the demons’ entering into the swine...is a sign of the reality of the healing of the demoniacs...It shows us the incomparable value of human beings, whose salvation is worth every sacrifice.*” (See: *Orthodox Study Bible [New Testament]*, pg. 25).

St. John Chrysostom exhorts all of us, noting that, while there are those who are gifted by our Lord to cast out demons (as were the Apostles), at least all of us are able to try to rescue people from sin: “...*It is not so much to free others of a demon as it is to rescue one from sin...for a demon cannot cast one out of the Kingdom of Heaven. [Christ casts it out, but saves the person.] Yet, sin does cast [the person out of the Kingdom].*”

– Taken from *Functional & Dysfunctional Christianity* by
Fr. Philotheos Faros, pages 36-41



Ο Θεός δεν τιμωρεί αμαρτωλούς καθώς ζουν σε αυτήν την επίγειον ζωήν. Μάλιστα, ομολογούμεν ότι κατά την Δευτέρα Παρουσίαν του Χριστού, ο Χριστός θα <κρίνη ζώντας και νεκρούς,> σύμφωνα με το Σύμβολον της Πίστεως μας.

Ο Θεός μας καλεί σε μετάνοιαν με πολλούς τρόπους, τις περισσότερες φορές μας αφήνει να υποφέρουμε τιμωρίες ως συνέπειες των αμαρτιών μας. Ομως, σημειώνουμε ότι κατά την διάρκειαν της διακονίας του Σωτήρος μας προς την ανθρωπότητα, δεν εκαταδίκασε τον αμαρτωλόν, αλλά τον εκάλησε σε μετάνοιαν. Από αυτήν την άποψην, το έργο του Κυρίου συνεχίζεται μέσω της Εκκλησίας Του.

Το θείον έργο προς θεραπείαν των ψυχών εκτελείται διά της εκδίωξεως των δαιμόνων, όπως ακούσαμεν από την ανάγνωσιν της σημερινής Ευαγγελικής περικοπής, ... ή, διά έργων της μετανοίας, που απαιτεί πνευματικές και συναισθηματικές (και ακόμη σωματικές) αγώνες για να υιοθετήσουμε την <νοοτροπίαν θείας δικαιοσύνης> που ορίζεται από το Θείο Νόμο, του οποίου προσωποείται και εκπληρώνεται στο Πρόσωπον του Χριστού. Αυτός είναι επίσης ο Θεός Νομοθέτης, τον Οποίον ακόμη οι δαίμονες ανεγνώρισαν, καθώς έκραξαν, <Τί ἡμῖν καὶ σοῦ, Ἰησοῦ Υἱέ τοῦ Θεοῦ; Ἥλθεσ ἄδε βασανίσαι ἡμᾶς> (Ματθ. 8:29).

Καθώς εφαρμόζουμεν καθημερινώς την <ἐν Χριστῷ Ζωήν> με την χάριν του Αγίου Πνεύματος, εκπληρώνουμεν την δικαιοσύνην του Νόμου, που υπάρχει για την διατήρησιν του δώρου του Θεού, το οποίο είναι η υγεία του σώματος και της ψυχῆς προς κληρονομίαν της αιωνίου ζωῆς.

+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

demons recognize, as they asked, "Have you come to torment us before the time?" (St. Matthew 8:29). Demons have condemned themselves to punishment due to their constant rebellion against God, and by extension, against humanity. In fact, the Commandments of God exist because God, Who created us and Who loves us more than we love ourselves, seeks our true health and our salvation. God's Law is meant to help us to avoid the influence of demons. The Lord is above "feeling" deprived in some way due to our failings and actually has no need to "get even" for our sins.

Indeed, Christ is God. The ultimate purpose of God's Law is to know Jesus Christ, Who grants us health of soul and body leading us to Eternal Life. In his book, *The Mind of the Orthodox Church*, Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos writes, "When we say that God's Law heals a person, it means that when one is cured, then in fact the Law is transcended. The Law ceases to be external, the person ceases to struggle to apply it and it becomes internal, one's natural state. In the state of the vision of God a person has personal communion with God and does not need to be reminded by any Law." (pg. 178).

Such communion with God involves the Divine Liturgy. Through Holy Communion we are given the only two opportunities in life that really matter: 1) to experience God's loving forgiveness and, 2) to then express our Christ-like love to others, living according to God's righteous. Experiencing purification from the toxins of evil by way of demons and sins and with the medicine of Christ's Body and Blood gives way to an illumined soul with the Divine Wisdom to express the life of the Gospel. Experiencing and expressing our Lord's blessings in the grace of the Holy Spirit amounts to the development of an almost God-like personality possessed with God's loving energies, which then are continuously received and then given out (i.e., experienced and expressed) by young and old; male and female, regardless of nationality or race.

+FR. THEODORE

"Here's a thought: If the Son of God answered the "prayer" of demons (allowing them to enter into the herd of swine), He will most certainly answer your prayers, for whom He gave His life on the Cross?"

— Anonymous

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: *To fedron tis anastaseos kirygma (Tone 4)... (When the tidings of the resurrection from the glorious angel were proclaimed unto the women disciples and our ancestral sentence also had been abolished, to the Apostles with boasting did they proclaim that death is vanquished forever more and Christ our God has risen from the dead and granted to the world His great mercy.)*

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: *Prostasia ton Christianon... (O Protection of Christians that never falls, intercession with the Creator that never fails, we sinners beg you, do not ignore the voices of our prayers. O good Lady, we implore you, quickly come unto our aid, when we cry out to you with faith. Hurry to intercession, and hasten to supplication, O Theotokos who protect now and ever those who honor you.)*

READINGS: Epistle: Romans 10: 1-10 / Gospel: St. Matthew 8: 24-36; 9:1

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: Gabriela Zaharia – Memorial

MEMORIAL - Today’s memorials are a 6 month memorial for **Constantin Zaharia**, husband of **Gabriela Zaharia** and a 7 year memorial for **Ioan Stefiuk**, father of Gabriela Zaharia. Also, we pray for the Eternal Life and Salvation for those who fell during the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974.

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.

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

Tuesday, July 23rd.....Bible Study - 10:00 a.m.

Friday, July 26th.....ST. PARASKEVI THE GREAT MARTYR
Orthros-8:30 a.m.
Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.

Epistle Reading: 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 Reading: 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.

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.