

**JULY 28, 2019**

**ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT**

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# THE LADDER



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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.

## GIVING 110% EFFORT

St. John Chrysostom provides an intense analysis with regard to today's passage from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans. To the core, he says that St. Paul exhorts us to not *simply* do a particular good deed, but to do the good "better than good" and to do that which is good despite the evils that come upon us.

In his homily *On the Epistle to the Romans*, "Homily 21," he says, "[St. Paul admonishes us] to be *'fervent in spirit (Rom. 12:11), because he does not say for us to only give, but to "give abundantly."* He does

*not say to care for the benefit of our fellow human being, but to 'care with diligence.'* He does not say to simply show mercy, but to *"be merciful with cheer,'* not to simply honor one another, but *'to prefer one another,'* and not only to love one another, but *'to love the other person without withholding anything for self'...*You are a Disciple of Him Who wanted the salvation even of those who crucified Him and, Who, while upon the Cross, said, 'Forgive them, Father, for they know not what they do.'" (Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 11, pg. 503).

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**THE PRAYER OF FORGIVENESS** - We often unknowingly commit sins by not doing our best to express love toward God and others. Hence, the prayers of the Church asking forgiveness of a penitent include forgiveness of sins *"known and unknown, and of thought, word and deed."* The Prayer of Forgiveness read by the priest during the Sacrament of Holy Confession is not simple "magic." The words carry the grace of the Holy Spirit *upon* the person who seeks forgiveness of sins. This grace offers healing of the soul. They are read by the priest, because the priest is directly responsible to answer to God for the sins that are confessed to him. This fact is symbolized by the stole that the priest is given by the Church community -- that is, the bishop and the parishioners. In essence, Holy Confession presents the opportunity to understand our God-given abilities and to define the balance between doing our best versus the limitations in which these demands *can* be met.

The Prayer reminds us that God forgave those who went on to become Saints, like the Prophets David and Manasse - and, therefore, gives assurance that the penitent is to be forgiven, as well. We are reminded in the Prayer that our Lord *"has no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but that one turns from wickedness to life,"* giving assurance of the precious "second chances" that our Lord always grants, thereby giving hope and chasing away despair.

+FR. THEODORE



Ο Άγιος Ιωάννης ο Χρυσόστομος παρέχει έντονη ανάλυση περί της σημερινής περικοπής εκ της Επιστολής του Αποστόλου Παύλου προς τους Ρωμαίους. Στην ουσίαν, λέγει ότι ο Άγιος Παύλος μας προτρέπει να κάνουμε το ο,τι καλό που κάνουμε <καλύτερο από το καλό> και να κάνουμε το καλό παρά τις πονηρίες που μας ενοχλούν. Στην Ομιλία 21:Περί της Επιστολής Προς τους Ρωμαίους, λέγει: <[Ο Απόστολος Παύλος μας προτρέπει] να είμεθα ένθερμες στο πνεύμα. (Ρωμ. 12:11), διότι δεν λέγει να δώσουμε μόνον, αλλά, να δώσουμε άφθονα. Δεν λέγει να δείξουμε προσοχή για το συμφέρον του συνανθρώπου μας μόνον, αλλά, να τον προσέχουμε με επιμέλειαν. Δεν λέγει να δείξουμε έλεος μόνον, αλλά, να ελεήσουμε με ευθυμίαν, ούτε να τιμήσουμε, αλλά, να προτιμήσουμε ο ένας τον άλλον και ούτε απλώς να αγαπήσουμε αλλήλους, αλλά, να αγαπήσουμε τον άλλον χωρίς να παρακρατήσουμε κανέναν συμφέρον... Είσαι μαθητής Εκείνου που ηθέλησε την σωτηρίαν ακόμη και εκείνων που Τον εσταύρωσαν και, που επάνω στον Σταυρόν είπε: Πάτερ, άφες αυτοίς, ού γάρ οίδασι τί ποιούσι. (Λκ. 23:34).>

Με αυτά τα λόγια ο Αγ. Χρυσόστομος περιγράφει μίαν ολόκληρη νοοτροπία αφιερωμένης αγάπης, διά μέσου της οποίας καταβάλλουμε μεγαλύτερες προσπάθειες από ο,τι είναι βολικό. Μας υπενθυμίζει την παραβολήν των Δέκα Παρθένων, λέγοντας, <Ακόμη οι ανόητες παρθένες είχαν μαζί τους ελαιόλαδο – όμως, όχι αρκετό, και για αυτόν τον λόγον εκλείσθησαν έξω από όλα.> (Ομιλία 21).

+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

These words from St. Chrysostom describe a frame of mind which can best be described in modern terms of “giving a 110% effort,” which is heard by athletes from their coaches and by soldiers from their sergeants. Chrysostom is quick to remind us of what is at stake, noting the Parable of the Ten Virgins. The foolish virgins did take oil, but not enough. “Even the virgins had oil; still, since they had not enough, they were cast out from everything.” (Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, pg. 502).

We have to be careful, however, about the word “enough.” In fact, we do have our limitations and, therefore, doing “enough” needs to be defined against the abilities that God has given us versus some of the daunting demands at hand. Spiritual direction is vital in this regard. Dr. Henry Cloud gives this advice, “Find people who care about you; who have similar values. Who are relational, nonjudgmental, but still direct and honest with you.” (The Secret Things of God, pg. 101). The parish priest, parents, grandparents and Godparents are commanded by God to be those kind of people who are supposed to give spiritual direction. Their entire life is God’s calling requiring them to give 110% of themselves. Above all, let us turn to the Holy Bible which is the fountain of spiritual direction. In addition, the very lives of our Saints – as well as their writings – give spiritual lessons about the Bible passages, which are a great source of wisdom in learning about the balance between knowing our limitations and giving our 110% effort and energy.

In sum, St. Paul is talking about doing our very best in life, giving 110% of our caring love to God and others. St. John the Evangelist tells us that God is love (1 John 4:8). This is why the virtue of love is the only true reality among humans according to St. Dionysios the Areopagite. He heartily maintained that, in our lives, the virtue of love brings all good things into their respective existence. “Love is the only reality and love is self-realization through self-sacrifice.” (C.E. Rolt-footnote: St. Dionysios the Areopagite: The Divine Names & Mystical Theology, trans. by C.E. Rolt, page 89). The divine energy of love is most evident upon the Cross of our Savior, where death is given death and humanity is given life. Thus, Christ’s teaching that we must lose our life to save our life is actually the way of the Cross – that, giving of ourselves creates our God-given existence.

+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: Ton synanarchon Logon (Tone 5)... (Let us, the faithful, praise and worship the Word, coeternal with the Father and the Spirit, Who for our salvation was born of a Virgin for He willed to be lifted up bodily upon the Cross, to endure death and to raise the dead by His glorious Resurrection.)****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 metemorphotheis... (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 12: 6-14/ Gospel: St. Matthew 9: 1-8****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: Debbie Pausen

**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 30th.....Bible Study - 10:00 a.m.

Thursday, August 1st.....Paraklisis - 6:00 p.m.

Friday, August 2nd.....Paraklisis - 6:00 p.m.

**Epistle Reading: Romans 12:6-14**

Brethren, having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; he who teaches, in his teaching; he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who contributes, in liberality; he who gives aid, with zeal; he who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with brotherly affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the Spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints, practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.

**Gospel Reading: St. Matthew 9:1-8**

At that time, getting into a boat Jesus crossed over and came to his own city. And behold, they brought to him a paralytic, lying on his bed; and when Jesus saw their faith he said to the paralytic, "Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven." And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, "This man is blaspheming." But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say 'Rise and walk?' But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins," he then said to the paralytic—"Rise, take up your bed and go home." And he rose and went home. When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men.

**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.**