

SEPTEMBER 15, 2019

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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THE LADDER

SUNDAY AFTER THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

TRUST IN GOD

Christ our Savior teaches us that we are to reject our own will and accept God's Will. Spiritual life is based on our effort forego our own will with regard to the Will of God.

Strong faith in Christ our God is required in our decision to follow Him, since He Himself is the One Who created us and He is also the One Who saves us. He loves us more than we love ourselves.

How do we know this? First, every hu-

man being prays because he or she is unable to overcome many of the difficulties that come about throughout this present life. It is said that even soldiers who may be unbelievers find themselves praying in the heat of battle. Second, millions of prayers in all of human history have been answered by Christ our God, Who continues to bring about miracles small and great. This would not happen if our God did not care for our needs. Many times, our prayers go unanswered because God knows better than we do about what

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THE BLESSING OF THE HOLY CROSS

The Cross of Christ is the ultimate reality. Upon the Cross Christ gave His wounds and His suffering, in order to "buy" - or "ransom" - the very will of human beings. Certainly, God has no need of Christ's Body and Blood; and most definitely the devil is never worthy of His Body and Blood. The sacrifice of Christ God upon the Cross, gave power to human nature and human will so that each person can be victorious "in Christ" over the devil and evil. Metropolitan Ierotheos of Nafpaktos writes: "We should understand that Christ, Who freed Adam from the devil and from death, gave the ability to each person, with His own power, to be victorious, within the limits of one's own personal life." (*The Major Feast Days of the Lord*, pg. 227).

The suffering and death of Christ on the Cross is a vivid image of the consequences of sin. The beatings and whippings that He endured represent what happens to our souls through sin. The *voluntary* acceptance of such bloody, painful suffering in forgiveness of our sin is an expression of the Divine Love for which we can only be humble. It is through this humility that the Divine Liturgy is celebrated as an act of our thanksgiving.

+FR. THEODORE



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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.

Μας διδάσκει ο Χριστός ότι πρέπει να απορρίψουμε το δικό μας θέλημα και να αποδεχώμεθα το Θέλημα του Θεού. Η πνευματική ζωή βασίζεται επάνω στον αγώνα που κάνουμε εναντίον στο δικό μας θέλημα σε σχέση με το Θέλημα του Θεού.

Η ισχυρή πίστις στον Χριστόν τον Θεόν απαιτείται την απόφασήν μας να Τον ακολουθήσουμε, αφού Αυτός είναι ο Ιδιος που μας εδημιούργησε και Εκείνος που μας σώζει. Μας αγαπά περισσότερο από ό,τι αγάπαμε εμείς οι ίδιοι τον εαυτόν μας.

Πως το ξέρουμε αυτό; Πρώτον, ο κάθε άνθρωπος προσεύχεται, επειδή είναι αδύνατος να ξεπεράσει πολλές δυσκολίες που του έρχονται κατά όλην την διάρκεια της παρουσίας ζωής. Λέγεται ότι ακόμη και στρατιώτες που, μερικοί είναι άπιστοι, προσεύχονται την ώρα της μάχης. Δεύτερον, εκατομμύρια προσευχές σε όλην την ανθρώπινη ιστορίαν έχουν απαντηθεί από τον Χριστόν, ο Οποίος συνεχίζει να κάνει θαύματα μικρά και μεγάλα. Αυτό δεν θα εσυνέβαινε εάν ο Θεός δεν ένοιαζε για τις ανάγκες μας. Πολλές φορές, οι προσευχές μας παραμένουν απάντητες, επειδή ο Θεός εξεύρει καλύτερα από εμάς αυτό που χρειαζόμεθα.

Μάλιστα, είναι περίεργο πράγμα που πιστεύει ο άνθρωπος ότι ο Χριστός μπορεί να τον σώσει από τεράστιες δυσκολίες της στιγμής (οι οποίες τις περισσότερες φορές εδημιουργήθηκαν από το δικό του θέλημα) αλλά δεν πιστεύει ότι ο Ιδιος ο Χριστός τον αγαπά μέχρι σημείον που θα τον διαφυλάξει από τέτοιες δυσκολίες από <το νύν και έως τούς αιώνας.>

+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

we need. Indeed, it is a curious thing that we believe that our Lord can deliver us from terrible troubles of a given moment (which most of the time are created by our own will) but we do not have faith that the Same Lord will continue to always guard us from such troubles from "now and unto the ages." Hence, we should come to the conclusion that God's Will is more important to us than our own. We must trust in God.

It is for our own good that Jesus asks us to deny our own will and to embrace His Will for us. Far from "laying back" and letting God do all the work for us, while we casually abandon our responsibilities in the expectation that God will handle them for us, God's Will involves demanding effort on our part so that we can actually be co-workers in bringing salvation to ourselves and others. God's Will requires from us faith, patience, struggle against temptations, sacrifice, and repentance of sins. In all of this, Christ our God will *help us* to become patient and strong against temptations and evil. Our Lord will guide us in making proper sacrifices of time and talent for His work to be done, and He will help us to gain the wisdom to repent of sins and acquire virtues.

Ultimately, God's Will is *love*. This is exactly why St. Paul tells us that "love never fails." (1 Corinthians 13:8). Love for God and neighbor is divine energy propelling the manifestation of all other virtues and every truly good deed. Love is energy emanating from within our souls. In the search for meaning in life, people seek to do things that are beneficial for others, knowing that by helping others, their lives become more important. Giving of ourselves as God has given (and continues to give) to us is that which gives our humanity its dignity. Truly, we cannot give of ourselves if we do not *deny* ourselves in favor of the needs of *another*. However, giving of ourselves *in the right way* requires that we do so with the love of our Savior, rather than with motives surrounding self-love and self-glory. Thus, we are to give by both denying ourselves *and* by following Christ. As a result, we must understand that we follow Christ to the Cross, the gateway to spiritual fulfillment and Eternal Life.

+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— O God, my God, hear me; why have You forsaken me? The words of my transgressions are far from my salvation.

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

Verse 2- O my God, I will cry out by day, but You will not hear me.

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

Verse 3- But You dwell among the saints, O praise of Israel.

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 : O God, why have You rejected us to the end? Remember Your congregation You acquired from the beginning.

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

Verse 2 - This Mount Zion, where You encamped.

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

Verse 3 - God is our King before the ages; He worked salvation in the midst of the earth.

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- *The Lord reigns; let the peoples be angry. The Lord is great in Zion, and He is exalted. Let them give thanks to Your great name.*

Sunday Resurrection Hymn: *To Fedron tis Anastaseos (Tone 4)... (When the tidings of the Resurrection from the glorious angel was 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 ever more and Christ our God has Risen from the dead and granted to the world the Great Mercy.)*

Hymn for the Holy Cross: *Soston Kyrie ton lah-ohn Sou... (Save, O Lord, Your people and bless Your inheritance, granting victory to the faithful over the enemy, and by Your Cross protecting Your commonwealth.)*

Hymn for St. George : *Os ton ehmaloton eleftherotis... (As the one who sets the captives free and the protector of the poor; as physician to the sick and the champion defender of kings, bearer of trophies are you, O Great Martyr George, intercede with Christ our God that He may save our souls.)*

Kontakion Hymn for this Sunday : *O Ipsotheis en to Stavro ekousee-ohs... (You who were lifted on the cross voluntarily, O Christ our God, bestow Your tender compassions upon Your new community to which You gave Your name. Cause our faithful emperors to be glad in Your power, granting them the victories against their adversaries. And for an ally, Lord, may they have You, peace as their armor, the trophy invincible.)*

Axion Estin

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



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Coffee Hour: Linda Bozigian

PHILOPTOCHOS - Philoptochos General Meeting-Monday, Sept. 16th, 11:30 AM. Please join us tomorrow for our first general members meeting after the summer break. **Movie Matinee Afternoon-Thursday, Sept. 19th, 2:30 PM**. Philoptochos is sponsoring a fun afternoon featuring a movie, "The Showman." We will be serving movie style refreshments & treats to all attendees.

FESTIVAL MEETING -- WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. See you there!

SUNDAY SCHOOL - Sunday School classes begin **next Sunday, September 22nd**. Those who have not yet registered are asked to see either Fr. Ted or Jim Christopoulos so that their registration forms can be completed. A special **Agiasmo Service** will be conducted following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy next Sunday so that we can all ask our Lord and Savior to impart His blessings to the staff, parents and children of our Sunday School program.

ALTAR FLOWER SEASON- OPEN! -- Please sign up now to sponsor **Altar Flowers** throughout our season of October 2019 - May 2020. Write your checks to: *St. George Greek Orthodox Church*. In the Memo Section, write: *Altar Flowers/(Sunday date for display)*. Credit cards are accepted; (see parish office). Also notify our **Altar Flower Coordinator, Louise Dobbs Barringer**, regarding the purpose for dedication the Altar Flower bouquets that are being sponsored -- ("in memory of ____"; "in celebration for ____"). Also, include the names of those being honored or memorialized. Altar Flower bouquets may be offered for memorials, anniversaries, birthdays, etc. The dedication will appear in *The Ladder* on the Sunday when one's Altar Flower bouquets are sponsored.

ADULT GREEK LANGUAGE CLASS – Those interested in forming a class under the direction of **Margarita Pagoulatos** are asked to inform our parish office or Fr. Ted **as to a time of their convenience** on either **Friday, September 20th or Saturday, September 21st** so that we can organize a meeting to determine the regular class schedule for this year.

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

Monday, September 16th.....Philoptochos General Members Meeting -11:30 a.m.

Tuesday, September 17th.....Bible Study - 10:00 a.m.

Wednesday, September 18th.....Festival Meeting- 7:00 p.m.

Thursday, September 19th.....Philoptochos Movie Themed Afternoon - 2:30 p.m.

EPISTLE—Galatians 2: 16-20

Brethren, you know that a man is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of the law, because by works of the law shall no one be justified. But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we ourselves were found to be sinners, is Christ then an agent of sin? Certainly not! But if I build up again those things which I tore down, then I prove myself a transgressor. For I through the law died to the law, that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

GOSPEL— John 8: 34-38; 9:1

The Lord said: "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? For what can a man give in return for his life? For whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power."