

AUGUST 30, 2020

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.*

SPIRITUAL DISPASSION

On the matter of “spiritual dispassion,” St. Peter of Damascus wrote: “*if someone were to become dispassionate without the Holy Spirit, he would really be, not dispassionate, but in a state of insensitivity.*” (*Philokalia*, St. Nicodemos of the Holy Mountain, Apple Books). The Orthodox Christian ascetic meaning of the words “spiritual dispassion” is that of having a mentality in which one “detaches” himself or herself from self-centered, worldly concerns, such as

glory, luxury, greed, lust, etc., and, instead places his or her thoughts on heavenly concerns, such as love for God; love for neighbor; a life-style according to God’s Commandments; the zeal to combat temptations, etc.

When Jesus told the young man of today’s Gospel passage to “*sell all of his possessions,*” He was inviting him to become “spiritually dispassionate,” according to the understanding that is used by our Saints. But, it is not enough for us to give up all of our

Continued on Page 2

TO SAVE THE PLANET, OR TO SAVE OUR SOULS? – It is possible to do good things for the *wrong* reasons. “Wrong reasons” do not glorify God. We cannot speak about the “future of humanity” without reminding everyone that the *future* is not endless life on this planet, but life with God in Eternity. The planet itself will go away when Christ God returns in glory to judge the earth.

As Orthodox Christians the focus must remain on saving our souls. *This is the right reason for doing the right things.* If we forget to sincerely be grateful to our Lord for “*every good and perfect gift,*” we forget to be humble and give God glory. It is *impossible* to “protect the environment,” without first giving thanks to God for all that we have. The only way we can offer gratitude to God is through worship, prayer, and the practice of our Lord’s presence in every facet of our lives, whereby we show Christ’s love to those around us. In this way we help toward the salvation of souls, and, *for this reason,* God will help us to “save the planet” enough to allow us time for repentance. While God wants us to be good stewards of His creation, our only hope is in His Only-Begotten Son.

The call to “protect the planet” must be accompanied with a call to worship our Savior, whereby we are reminded of the sanctify of human life from conception to natural death. The purpose of life on this planet is to love God and our neighbor! Let us all pray for the end of the violence that some seem to justify and for the wisdom of God so that we can participate in God’s *Divine Will* that all should have Eternal Life. +FR. THEODORE



Σε σχέση με το ζήτημα της «πνευματικής απαθείας,» ο Άγιος Πέτρος του Δαμασκού έγραψε: «*Αν ο άνθρωπος γινόταν απαθής χωρίς το Άγιο Πνεύμα, θα ήταν όντως όχι, χωρίς κοσμικά πάθη, αλλά σε κατάσταση αναισθησίας.*» (Αγ. Νικόδημος Αγ. Ορους, «Φιλοκαλία», Apple Books). Το Ορθόδοξο ασκητικό νόημα των λέξεων «πνευματική απάθεια» σημαίνει μία νοοτροπία κατά την οποία ο άνθρωπος «αποσιπάται» από εγωκεντρικούς και κοσμικούς προβληματισμούς, όπως η φήμη, η πολυτέλεια, η πλεονεξία, η λαγνεία κ.λ.π. – και, αντί αυτού, βάζει τις σκέψεις του σε επουράνια ζητήματα, όπως η αγάπη για τον Θεό, η αγάπη για τον πλησίον, η ζωή σύμφωνα με τις εντολές του Θεού, το ζήλον να σταθεί ενάντια στους πειρασμούς κ.λ.π.

Όταν ο Ιησούς είπε στον νεαρό της σημερινής Ευαγγελικής περικοπής να «*πουλήσει όλα τα υπάρχοντά του,*» τον προσκάλεσε να γίνει «*απαθής,*» σύμφωνα με την κατανόηση της λέξεως που χρησιμοποιούν οι Άγιοι μας. Αλλά, δεν αρκεί να εγκαταλείψουμε όλα τα υπάρχοντά μας εάν δεν το κάνουμε ώστε να μπορέσουμε να ακολουθήσουμε τον Χριστόν – και, ακολουθώντας τον Χριστόν, μπορούμε συνεχώς να προσφέρουμε τις «εν Χριστώ» ενέργειές μας για να βοηθήσουμε τους φτωχούς.

Υπάρχουν πολλά είδη φτώχειας, όπως η πνευματική και συναισθηματική φτώχεια. Δεν θα μπορέσουμε να βοηθήσουμε τους «φτωχούς» εάν συνέχεια ανησυχούμε υπερβολικά για εγωκεντρικά και κοσμικά ζητήματα, αντί για τα ζητήματα που σχετίζονται με το θέλημα του Θεού.
+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

possessions if we do not do so in order to follow Christ – and, by following Christ, we will continuously be able to offer our Christ-like energies to help the poor.

There are many forms of poverty, such as spiritual and emotional poverty. We will not be able to help the “poor” if we are always overly concerned about self-centered and worldly matters, instead of those matters that are related to the Will of God.

St. Peter of Damascus is the author of two Orthodox spiritual writings that appear in *The Philokalia*, which is an anthology of the spiritual writings of many Orthodox Christian ascetic Saints. Book One is entitled, *A Treasury of Divine Knowledge*; Book Two is entitled *Twenty-four Discourses*. These two books occupy more pages in the entire body of *The Philokalia* than any other books, except, perhaps those written by St. Maximos the Confessor.

Regarding “spiritual dispassion” and love for God, St. Peter states: “*One who has attained dispassion becomes impassible out of perfect love for God...[In this way, one is unshaken] by all that happens by God's providence: some things are sent to keep us from self-elation, and others to keep us from despair...St John the Theologian says, 'God is love; and whoever dwells in love dwells in God' (1 John 4:16). It is astonishing that this chief of all the virtues is a natural virtue. Thus, in the Law, it is given first place: 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might' (Deut. 6:5)...In short, every work rightly done is done out of love for God and for one's neighbor.*” (*Philokalia*, Apple Books).

“Spiritual dispassion” translates into sincere, whole-hearted love for God. Daily contemplation of God’s love for us instills in us the spirit of genuine humility before Him and before those whom we love, putting into perspective the things that are really important in our lives. “Spiritual dispassion” is the mother of many virtues, such as patience, forbearance, courtesy, and care-giving. These Christ-centered virtues lead to a fulfilling life for us all “*now and forever and to the ages of ages.*”

+FR.THEODORE

NOTE: When unable to attend Church Services in person due to state regulations regarding the Coronavirus or personal illness, follow the Divine Liturgy through live-streaming provided by various Archdiocese parishes at: <https://www.goarch.org/live-broadcasts>.

BIBLE STUDY-Tuesday, September 1, 2020 -10:00 a.m.

Join Zoom Bible Study Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86878349877?pwd=OEVzOUdFR1VFVzd6bzhKbVl3cUoyUT09>

Meeting ID: 868 7834 9877

Passcode: 898242

Or, using your cell phone, call: 1 669 900 6833 and dial in the Meeting ID and Passcode numbers.

We will be studying the following passage: St. Matthew 21: 33-42.



PRAYERS FOR READING HOLY SCRIPTURES

“Blessed is He Who comes in the Name of the Lord. Blessed are You at Your throne of the glory of Your Kingdom, seated above the Cherubic angels, now and forever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.”

“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 Corinthians 15:1-11

Brethren, I would remind you in what terms I preached to you the gospel, which you received, in which you stand, by which you are saved, if you hold it fast - unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God which is with me. Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

GOSPEL - St. Matthew 19:16-26

At that time, a young man came up to Jesus, kneeling and saying, "Good Teacher, what good deed must I do, to have eternal life?" And he said to him, "Why do you call me good? One there is who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments." He said to him, "Which?" And Jesus said, "You shall not kill, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother, and You shall love your neighbor as yourself." The young man said to him, "All these I have observed; what do I still lack?" Jesus said to him, "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions. And Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly, I say to you, it will be hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." When the disciples heard this they were greatly astonished, saying, "Who then can be saved?" But Jesus looked at them and said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

Monday -Wednesday, August 31-September 2- Philoptochos "Critical Food Drive" 10:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Tuesday, September 1st - Bible Study - 10:00 a.m. ("Zoom" format)



The Ladies Philoptochos Society of St George

Cookbook

Hello to All! It's time to share those Special Secret Recipes

Please join St. George Ladies Philoptochos Society of St. George in helping to create our very own cookbook. Participation is easy...just send us your favorite recipes! All Greek and non-Greek recipes are welcome. And if your friends are "Great Cooks", we would love their recipes, also!

Our categories will be:

Appetizers - Breads

Soups & Salads. Vegetables

Entrees (Meat/Seafood/Vegetarian)

Desserts & Pastries

Greek Lenten Foods

Religious Offerings

Kids Recipes

This and That (our miscellaneous!)

We are very excited to have a cookbook as our new Philoptochos fundraiser. There are so many organizations and individuals in need that will benefit from the profits of the cookbook sales.

All recipes can be submitted by any of the following:

The church office

By mail: P. O. Box 4755, Palm Desert, CA. 92261

By email: pamzav@yahoo.com.

WE WOULD LOVE YOUR DELICIOUS RECIPES AT YOUR EARLIEST CONVENIENCE

SUBMITT BY SEPTEMBER 14

Thank you!

The Ladies Philoptochos Society of St George Cookbook Committee

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