

MARCH 22, 2020

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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# THE LADDER

THE VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS



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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.

## FORETASTE OF GOD'S KINGDOM

Many Saints remind us that there are two ways for us to “take up our cross.” One way is for us to humbly accept the consequences of the sins that come upon us from a world which is always distancing itself from God. The other way is to voluntarily accept the spiritual discipline of our Church. Indeed, many Saints did both -- that is, they accepted the consequences of their sins *and* they submitted themselves to dealing with the trials and tribulations of an imperfect world with faith and love in Christ.

Our spiritual warfare requires of us to

overcome our fears and to strengthen our faith. Thus, I like the words of Arch-Priest Nazari Polatiako, the Chancellor to The Holy Virgin Mary Russian Orthodox Church in Los Angeles: “The most frequent message of our Lord Jesus Christ to His disciples in the Holy Gospel is, ‘Do not be afraid.’ We have absolutely nothing to fear [if] we are all committed steadfastly to overcoming the vast limitations of life in the present world...We should acknowledge the absolute irony of this situation, in which our secular society encourages us to adopt a nearly monastic demeanor, according to

*Continued on page 2*

## PASTORAL NOTE

### FOLLOWING THE DIVINE LITURGY FROM HOME

Given the dictates of our civil authorities, we want to encourage our St. George parishioners to follow today’s celebration of the Divine Liturgy online via the Archdiocese link: <https://www.goarch.org/live-broadcasts>.

### TURN OFF THE 24-HOUR NEWS

People have reported to me that watching the news has caused them great anxiety and they have experienced physical stress. As a result, I am strongly suggesting to turn off the news. It is, indeed, vitally important to be informed. For this, a gander at a one hour or a half-hour news report in the morning and/or evening is good. Beyond that, it is recommended by many hospital chaplains that following the constant 24 hour news casts at this time serves to greatly increase anxiety and depression. Instead....

### CHECK OUT OUR ARCHDIOCESE WEBSITE:

[www.goarch.org](http://www.goarch.org). Our Archdiocese website has excellent material and audio/visual presentations that will further enlighten you with regard to our Orthodox Christian Faith. Check out our own parish website, also: [www.go-stgeorge.org](http://www.go-stgeorge.org). This would be time well spent.

+FR. THEODORE



Πολλοί Άγιοι μας υπενθυμίζουν ότι έχουμε δύο τρόπους για να «σηκώσουμε τον σταυρό μας». Ένας τρόπος είναι να αποδεχθούμε ταπεινώς τις συνέπειες της αμαρτίας που έρχονται επάνω μας από έναν κόσμο που ολο απομακρύνεται από τον Θεό. Ο άλλος τρόπος είναι να αποδεχθούμε εθελοντικώς τις πνευματικές οδηγίες της Εκκλησίας μας. Μάλιστα, πολλοί Άγιοι έκαναν και τα δύο - δηλαδή, αποδέχθηκαν τις συνέπειες των αμαρτιών των και υπέβαλαν τον εαυτόν τους στην αντιμετώπιση των δυσκολιών και των δοκιμασιών ενός ατελούς κόσμου με πίστη και αγάπη στον Χριστό.

Ο πνευματικός αγώνας μας προκαλεί να ξεπεράσουμε τους φόβους μας και να ενισχύσουμε την πίστη μας. Έτσι, μου αρέσουν τα λόγια του Αρχιμ. Nazari Polatiako, Πρωτοσύγκελλος της Ρωσικής Ορθόδοξης Εκκλησίας της Παναγίας στο Λος Άντζελες: «*Το πιο συνηθισμένο μήνυμα του Κυρίου μας Ιησού Χριστού στους μαθητές Του είναι: 'Μην ανησυχείτε.' Δεν έχουμε απολύτως τίποτα να φοβόμεθα [εαν] όλοι μας αφιερώσουμε τον εαυτό μας σταθερά στην υπερνίκηση των τεράστιων περιορισμών της ζωής στον σημερινό κόσμο... Πρέπει να αναγνωρίσουμε την απόλυτη ειρωνεία της καταστάσεώς μας, στην οποία η κοσμική μας κοινωνία μας ενθαρρύνει να υιοθετήσουμε μια σχεδόν μοναστική συμπεριφορά, σύμφωνα με την οποία καλούμεθα να περιορίσουμε τις κοινωνικές συγκεντρώσεις στο μηδέν και να προσπαθήσουμε να βρούμε ησυχία και ηρεμία για χάρη [βασικής επιβιώσεως.] Ως Χριστιανοί, όμως, γνωρίζουμε ότι πρέπει να υιοθετήσουμε αυτές τις οδηγίες έτσι ώστε να μπορέσουμε να βιώσουμε μια πρόγευση της Βασιλείας του Θεού.» (Ποιμαντικό Μήνυμα, 14 Μαρτίου 2020).*

*which we are called to limit social gatherings to nil and attempt to find quiet and stillness, merely for the sake of [basic survival]. As Christians, we already know that we should adopt these things precisely so that we can experience a foretaste of the Kingdom of God.*" ("Pastoral Message," March 14, 2020).

Many Saints of our Church have shared their own experience of "the foretaste of the Kingdom of God" after heeding the words of Christ, "*Whosoever wishes to follow Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow Me.*" It is clear that our Lord is speaking to His disciples after He spoke to them about His impending crucifixion, suggesting that following our Lord leads to His Cross. At the same time, Christ grants us Eternal Life in the Kingdom by way of His Resurrection from the dead by way of the Cross.

Christ does not force us to follow Him; it must be a matter of *our will*. "Denying ourselves" has nothing to do with abuse or self-hatred; it means that we control ourselves – our passions and self-will. People do, in fact, "deny themselves" when they are on a diet, avoiding certain foods. They "deny themselves" of comforts and pleasures when they submit to a schedule of physical exercise and training. As Orthodox Christians, we deny ourselves of fame, luxury, comfort and authority in favor of the glory of Christ.

To "take up our cross" means that we accept our responsibilities (our crosses), knowing that our Lord's Cross is also our cross through which His Will is done through us. Actually, then, *doing* the Will of our Lord is synonymous with following Him and following our Savior leads to a foretaste of the Kingdom of God.  
+FR. THEODORE

HYMNS TO CHANT FOR TODAY: (Soson kyrie ton lah-on Sou...) "Save, O Lord, Your people and bless Your inheritance, giving us victory over evil powers and protecting the Church of Your faithful by Your Holy Cross."

"We venerate Your Cross, O Master, and we glorify Your Holy Resurrection."

Hymn for St. George: "As the one who sets the captives free and the protector of the poor; as physician to the sick and champion defender of kings, bearer of trophies are you. O great martyr George, intercede with Christ our God that He may save our souls."

(Ti ypermacho...) "O Champion General, I your City now ascribe to you triumphant anthems as the tokens of my gratitude, being rescued from the terrors, O Theotokos. Inasmuch as you have power unassailable, from all kinds of perils free me so that unto you I may cry aloud: Rejoice, O unwedded Bride."



## 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 – Heb. 4:14-16; 5:1-6 – Brethren, since we have a high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. Because of this he is bound to offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people. And one does not take the honor upon himself, but he is called by God, just as Aaron was. So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to

him, "Thou art my Son, today I have begotten thee"; as he says also in another place, "Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek."

GOSPEL – Mark 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."

## ANNOUNCEMENTS & WEEKDAY CALENDAR

MEMORIAL -- Today's Memorial Service will not include koliva. We will pray for the Eternal Rest and Salvation of **Nicholas Makrianis (40 days)**, the beloved father of **Julie Makrianis** and **Peggy Makrianis**, and husband of **Grace Makrianis**. We will also pray for the Eternal Rest and Salvation of **Esther Di Vitto (8 years)**, the beloved mother of **Annette Laskaris**. May our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ grant Eternal Life and Salvation to **Nicholas Makrianis** and **Esther Di Vitto** and may He grant peace and comfort to **Julie Makrianis**, **Peggy Makrianis** and **Gace Makrianis**, as well as to **Annette Laskaris**.

Wednesday, March 25th.....ANNUNCIATION TO THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS

Friday, March 27th.....Pre-Sanctified Divine Liturgy

P.S.: Please feel free to call me to make special appointments to receive the Holy Body and Blood of Christ, Who is the Physician of our souls and bodies.