

SEPTEMBER 6, 2020

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.

DO WE BETRAY CHRIST?

In his First Epistle to the Corinthians, which we heard today, St. Paul asks those who love Christ to also: "Kiss one another with a holy kiss." (1 Corinthians 16:20). Yet, as we say the prayers in preparation for Holy Communion, we pledge: "...I will not speak of Your Mysteries to Your enemies, nor will I give You a kiss as did Judas..."

The one "kiss" is an expression of love for Christ and for our fellow human being. The other is an expression of be-

trayal. The difference between the two wells forth from within our souls. The one is based on the virtues of faith, courage and hope: "...Watch, stand firm in the faith; have courage. Let everything of yours be with love." (1 Corinthians 16:13). The other is born from fear and self-centeredness.

Let us take note how St. Paul draws our attention to how he himself is comforted by the presence of his co-workers, providing the opportunity for us to comprehend the value of our

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TAKING CARE OF THE LORD'S VINEYARD

Being placed in the vineyard of our Lord is the gift of life itself. It is by God's mercy that we are alive and the salvation of our souls is, likewise, a gift of God's mercy. Our Eternal Life is based on our faith in Christ our God, the "Householder of the vineyard."

Understanding our relationship with our Lord on this matter is aided by a few words from *The Orthodox Study Bible*.

"For Orthodox Christians, faith is living, dynamic, continuous – never static or merely point-in-time. Faith is not something a Christian exercises only at one critical moment, expecting it to cover all the rest of his life. True faith is not just a decision; it's a way of life. Thus the Orthodox Christian sees salvation in at least three aspects: a) I have been saved, being joined to Christ in Holy Baptism; b) I am being saved, growing in Christ through the Sacramental life of the Church; and, c) I will be saved, by the mercy of God at the Last Judgment..."

"'Faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead' (Jam. 2:17)."

..."Through God's mercy, we are justified by faith and empowered by God for good works or deeds of righteousness that bring glory to Him..." (pg. 1527).

With God's help and mercy, we can do good deeds in His vineyard and find salvation. +FR. THEODORE



Στην πρώτη του επιστολή προς τους Κορινθίους που ακούσαμε σήμερα, ο Άγιος Παύλος ζητά από εκείνους που αγαπούν τον Χριστό: «*Ασπάσασθε αλλήλους εν φίληματι αγίω.*» (1 Κορ. 16:20). Ωστόσο, όπως λέμε προσευχές προς προετοιμασία για την Θεία Κοινωνία, δεσμευόμαστε «...*Ου μη γαρ τοις εχθροίς σου το Μυστήριον είπω, ου φίλημα σοι δώσω καθάπερ ο Ιούδας...*»

Το ένα "φίλημα" είναι έκφραση της αγάπης για τον Χριστό και για τον συνάνθρωπό μας. Το άλλο είναι έκφραση προδοσίας. Η διαφορά μεταξύ των δύο πηγάζεται από μέσα στις ψυχές μας. Το ένα βασίζεται στις αρετές της πίστεως, του θάρρους και της ελπίδας: «*Γρηγορείτε, στήκετε εν τη πίστει, ανδρίζεσθε, κραταιούσθε· πάντα υμών εν αγάπη γενέσθω*» (1 Κορ. 16:14). Το άλλο γεννιέται από φόβο και εγωκεντρισμό.

Ας σημειώσουμε το ότι ο Άγιος Παύλος εφιστά την προσοχή μας στο πώς ανακουφίσθηκε ο ίδιος από την παρουσία των συναδέλφων του, δίνοντάς μας να κατανοήσουμε τη σημασία των προσευχών ημών για άλλους και της «εν Χριστώ» παρουσίας μας στη ζωή των συνανθρώπων μας.

Επίσης, Ο Άγιος Παύλος μας παρηγορεί με το ρητό του «*μαραν αθά!*» (1 Κορ. 16: 22). Πράγματι, ο Χριστός είναι μαζί μας κάθε στιγμή. Ας μην ξεχάσουμε αυτήν την πραγματικότητα ποτέ, ώστε να μην εισέλθουμε στον πειρασμό να Τον προδώσουμε.

Ας προσευχηθούμε για την ενίσχυση της πίστεώς μας και για την αγάπη, ώστε να κληρονομήσουμε την Αιώνιον Ζωή.
+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

prayers for others and our Christ-like presence in the lives of our fellow human beings.

Also, St. Paul comforts us with his adage: “*Our Lord, Come!*” [*Maranatha*] (1 Corinthians 16:22). Truly, Christ is with us at every moment. Let us never forget this reality so that we do not enter into the temptation to betray Him.

In today’s Gospel passage, our Lord, by way of His parable, spoke about the betrayal of the wicked servants of the vineyard. Let us rightly assume that these servants enjoyed all of the benefits of the vineyard in which they served. They ate and drank from the fruits of this vineyard, just as we benefit from the many blessings that God grants to us through the Church (God’s Kingdom on earth). These blessings are conveyed by means of the very earth that God created.

Indeed, our Lord’s vineyard is a Kingdom comprised of *both* the world of the present -- the “*here and now,*” and the Eternal Life of His Heavenly realm -- the “*forever and unto the ages of ages.*” Loving our Lord *now*, will lead to our Eternal presence in His Heavenly vineyard *forever*. Betraying our Lord *now*, is a matter of abusing and rejecting the people and the very creation that surrounds us, thereby rendering our attitudes and behaviors as a betrayal against ourselves for which we are eternally accountable.

We should be truly fear our potential to betray our Lord, because this potential is very much a part of our fallen personality. It is why we lie; it is why we cheat. In fact, let us assume that this is the *fear* that we have when we find ourselves before Christ our God. Have we betrayed Him? Do we betray Him? For this reason St. Paul urges us to be watchful over ourselves. Judas betrayed our Lord because greed was interwoven into his mentality -- greed being founded in large part by deceptions and a lack of faith. St. Peter “betrayed” our Lord by way of denying Him three times. His betrayal was based on fear.

Thus, if we want to love our Savior and those around us, let us pray for increased faith, courage and love so that we can show ourselves to be faithful stewards of our Lord’s vineyard and inherit His blessings unto eternity.

+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>.



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 16:13-24

Brethren, be watchful, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love. Now, brethren, you know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints; I urge you to be subject to such men and to every fellow worker and laborer. I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicos, because they have made up for your absence; for they refreshed my spirit as well as yours. Give recognition to such men. The churches of Asia send greetings. Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in their house, send you hearty greetings in the Lord. All the brethren send greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss. I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. If any one has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed. Our Lord, come! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

GOSPEL - St. Matthew 21:33-42

The Lord said this parable, "There was a householder who planted a vineyard, and set a hedge around it, and dug a wine press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to tenants, and went into another country. When the season of fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants, to get his fruit; and the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first; and they did the same to them. Afterward he sent his son to them, saying 'They will respect my son.' But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.' And they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" They said to him, "He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons." Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the scriptures: 'The very stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner; this was the Lord's doing, and it was marvelous in our eyes?'"

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

MEMORIAL -- Today's Memorial Service is for the Eternal Rest and salvation for the soul of the servant of God, **Fr. Peter Laskaris**, the beloved brother of **Chris Laskaris**. May our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ grant Eternal Rest to **Fr. Peter Laskaris** and may He grant peace and comfort to his sister-in-law and brother, **Annette and Chris Laskaris**. **MAY HIS MEMORY BE ETERNAL!**

Tuesday, September 8th.....NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS

Wednesday, September 9th- Thursday, September 10th.....Fr. Ted will "attend" the **Archdiocese Clergy-Laity Congress**, which will be held in the "zoom format."