

APRIL 18, 2021

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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THE LADDER

ST. MARY OF EGYPT



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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.

LENT IS OUR OPPORTUNITY

Two important “take-aways” from today’s Gospel passage are: 1) Christ our God went to His Cross *voluntarily*, because of His great love for all people in the world at all times and places, and, 2) Eternal Life in His Kingdom is a “reward” in the sense that it is also a *consequence* which occurs by actually living the Bible.

The fact that Jesus predicts His passion and crucifixion in Mark 10:32-33, indicates that His Death and Resurrection is an act of Divine Love. As such, it means that each one of us is of great value in

the eyes of God. We are worth the opportunity to live life with the joy of God’s many blessings, and we are worth the many “second chances” that we have to do things right by way of repentance. The Cross of Christ is the door through which those opportunities are given to us so that we can be with our Lord forever in His Kingdom.

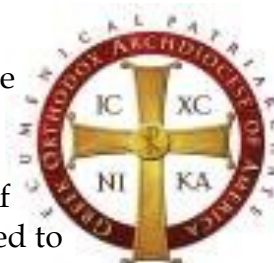
However, being with our Lord forever in His Kingdom is, in one sense, a reward that is given to those who, as St. Paul would say, “fight the good fight.” But, on a deeper level, it is a

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ST. MARY OF EGYPT -- The memory of this Saint is celebrated on April 1, where her life is recorded. Since the end of the holy Forty Days is drawing near, it has been appointed for this day also, so that if we think it hard to practice a little abstinence for forty days, we might be roused by her heroism. She fasted in the wilderness forty-seven years. We also note the great loving-kindness of God, and His readiness to receive the repentant.

Even in the Holy City she gave herself over to every kind of licentiousness and drew many into the depth of perdition. Desiring to go into the church on the day of the Exaltation of the Cross, time and again she perceived a certain invisible power preventing her entrance. Therefore, wounded in heart by this, she decided to change her way of life and reconcile herself to God by means of repentance. Invoking our Lady the Theotokos as her Protectress, she asked her to open the way for her to worship the Cross, and vowed that she would renounce the world.

She departed that same day from Jerusalem and passed over the Jordan. She went into the inner wilderness and for forty-seven years lived a most harsh manner of life, surpassing human strength and she prayed unceasingly to God. Toward the end of her life, she met a certain hermit named Zosimas, and she related to him her life from the beginning. --Taken from www.goarch.org



Από την σημερινή Ευαγγελική περικοπή γνωρίζουμε ότι: 1) Ο Χριστός εσταυρώθηκε εθελοντικά, λόγω της μεγάλης αγάπης Του για όλους τους ανθρώπους στον κόσμο ανά πάσα στιγμή και τόπους, και, 2) Η αιώνια ζωή στη Βασιλεία Του είναι «ανταμοιβή» με την έννοια ότι είναι επίσης *συνέπεια* της συν-εχους «εν Χριστώ ζωής» του καθενός.

Ο εθελοντικός Θάνατος και η Ανάσταση του Χριστού εκ νεκρών είναι ένδειξες της Θείας Αγάπης. Ως εκ τούτου, ο καθένας μας έχει μεγάλη αξία ενώπιον του Θεού. Ο καθένας από εμάς αξίζει για τις πολλές ευκαιρίες να μετανοήσει. Ο καθένας μας αξίζει την μεγάλη χαρά των πολλών ευλογιών του Θεού.

Όσον αφορά την αίσθηση ότι η σωτηρία μας είναι μιά «ανταμοιβή» της ενάρετης ζωής, ο Άγ. Ιωάννης Χρυσόστομος, στην 65η Ομιλία του *Περί Του Ευαγγέλιου του Αγίου Ματθαίου*, διδάξε ότι οι τιμές δεν απονέμονται μόνο με βάση στα επιτεύγματά μας, αλλά με βάση στο πως γινώμεθα κατά τον χαρακτήρα μας. Είναι η Χριστόψυχη προσωπικότης που μας οδηγεί σε μιά Αιώνια Ζωή με τον Χριστό.

Καθώς τιμούμεν την Αγ. Μαρία της Αιγύπτου σήμερα, τιμούμε τα πολλά της ασκητικά κατορθώματα. Οι Κυριακές της Τεσσαρακοστής μας έχουν υπενθύμισει ότι είμεθα «εικόνες» του Θεού, ο Οποίος έγινε άνθρωπος για τη σωτηρία του κόσμου. Από την ζωή της Αγ. Μαρίας, γνωρίζουμε ότι, διά της χάριτος του Αγίου Πνεύματος και με την δύναμη της ειλικρινής προσευχής, ο προορισμός μας είναι η Αιώνια Βασιλεία του Θεού.

+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

consequence that results from actually living a Christ-like life-style throughout our lives.

The “reward” aspect of salvation cannot be viewed in purely human terms. St. John Chrysostom, in Homily 65 of his *Sermons on the Gospel of St. Matthew*, explains: “[The sons of Zebedee] saw themselves honored above the rest and expected from that that they should obtain their request [to sit one at His right hand and the other at His left.” They obviously were more concerned about honors than they were about God or others. For us, Lent and Holy Week is our opportunity to renew our baptismal vows through which we pledged to join ourselves to Christ.

To be baptized in Christ and to partake of the cup from which He partakes is a life-style that is enlightened by the Holy Spirit. About this, St. John notes, “What therefore Christ says is this: ‘You shall die indeed for Me and shall be slain for the sake of the Gospel and shall be partakers with Me, as far as regards the passion. But, this is not sufficient to secure you the enjoyment of the first seat and to cause that you should occupy the first place. For, if any one else should come, together with the martyrdom, possessed of all the other parts of virtue far more fully than you, not because I love you now and prefer you to the rest, therefore shall I set aside him or her that is distinguished by good works and give the first honors to you?...’” (Nicene & Post Nicene Fathers, Vol. 10, pg. 399). Hence, honors are not bestowed on the basis of accomplishments alone, but on the basis of becoming persons with a Christ-like personhood that results in life with Christ God beginning now and lasting forever. Salvation itself is our place with Christ, beyond honors resembling human glory.

The Sundays of Great Lent have taken us from the reminder that we are the image of God Who took on our humanity for our salvation, to the knowledge of sincere, constant prayer, which unites us with the grace of the Holy Spirit. Two weeks ago, we sought the strength of the Holy Cross and we continue with our spiritual efforts, described by St. John of the Ladder, whom we honored last week. Indeed, in honoring St. Mary of Egypt today, we honor her life of repentance for her previous life of sin. We honor her ascetic efforts which went beyond the measure accomplished even by some of the Apostles themselves.
+FR. THEODORE

BIBLE STUDY –Tuesday April 20, 2021 - 10:00 a.m.

Please note: This Bible Study class will take place in-person outside on the patio outside our parish hall and will not be presented in a “zoom format.” The passage that we will be studying is: St. John 11:1-45

IN-PERSON WORSHIP - Over time a “master list” of *regular* church attendees has emerged, listing those who attend services on average at least once a month. As a result, “regular attendees” have no need to keep calling in advance to be placed on the list. However, people still need to be signed in upon arrival for purposes of contact tracing. Those who do not regularly attend services will still have to call to make reservations to attend services and respond appropriately to concerns regarding Covid-related issues.



"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 - Hebrews 9:11-14 --Brethren, when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

Gospel - St. Mark 10:32-45 --At that time, Jesus taking the twelve again, he began to tell them what was to happen to him, saying, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death, and deliver him to the Gentiles; and they will mock him, and spit upon him, and scourge him, and kill him; and after three days he will rise." And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came for-

ward to him, and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." And he said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?" And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory." But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" And they said to him, "We are able." And Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared." And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant of James and John. And Jesus called them to him and said to them, "You know that those who are supposed to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MEMORIAL - Today's Memorial Service is for the Eternal Life and Salvation for **the servant of God, Soultana Soumalias (40 days)**, the beloved mother of **Tasia Richards, Vasilios Soumalias, and Apostolos Soumalias**. May our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ grant Eternal Life and Salvation to **Soultana Soumalias** and my He grant peace and comfort to **Tasia Richards, Vasilios Soumalias, and Apostolos Soumalias**. MAY HER MEMORY BE ETERNAL!

Today...Metropolis-Wide Sunday School Program ("zoom" format) - 12:30 p.m. After Church services today, parishioners can pick up their **Philoptochos bake sale orders** after church this Sunday Apr. 18 & next Sunday Apr. 25. Visit the Philoptochos display set up outside the front doors.

Monday, April 19th.....Philoptochos General Members Meeting - 11:30 a.m.

Tuesday, April 20th.....Bible Study - 10:00 a.m.

Wednesday, April 21st.....Presanctified Divine Liturgy- 6:00 p.m.

Friday, April 23rd.....Presanctified Divine Liturgy- 9:00 a.m.

Saturday, April 24th.....SATURDAY OF LAZARUS - Orthros-8:30 a.m./Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.

PARKING -- At this point, the only entrance to our church on Sundays is through the front doors of our church edifice. At the same time, we are joyfully welcoming more and more parishioners back to our Sunday worship services. Thus, we ask those who are able to comfortably walk from the parking lot to our church entrance to park in our parish parking lot so that those who are less able to walk as far may park in front of our church, closer to the entrance for their convenience.