

**JULY 4, 2021**

**ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT**

**74-109 Larrea Street  
Palm Desert, California 92260**

**Website: [www.go-stgeorge.org](http://www.go-stgeorge.org)**

**Email: [pdsaintgeorge@gmail.com](mailto:pdsaintgeorge@gmail.com)**

# THE LADDER



## **Mailing Address:**

**P.O. Box 4755**

**Palm Desert, CA.92261**

**Tel: (760) 568-9901**

**or: (760) 880-5869**

**– 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.

## **THE VOICE OF CHRIST WITHIN US**

As we heard with today's reading of the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, Christ our Savior called the Apostles: "Follow Me and I shall make you fishermen of men." (St. Matthew 4:19). The Gospel says, "They immediately left behind their nets and their father and followed Him." (St. Matthew 4:22).

It is significant that the Apostles immediately left their jobs and their families and they followed Him. The Orthodox theologian, D. Tziavaras, in his book entitled, *Spiritual Seeds*, wrote: "The Lord did not promise these humble and poor fishermen of

*Galilee that they would be economically well off, or that they would be given high honors and positions, but He did promise them that they would be fishermen of men."* (pg. 138).

Christ did not call only the Apostles to follow Him, but He called all the people of His time to follow Him and He calls all people of every age to follow Him – and, specifically, He calls us today to follow Him.

The inner voice of our conscience is made to harmonize with the calling of Christ our Savior. St. Paul wrote to the Romans, saying: "Gentiles, who  
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**THE VOICE OF CONSCIENCE** – The Apostle Paul in his epistle to the Romans explains in some detail how moral law works in man. The Apostle reproaches those who know the written Law of God but willfully violate it. He contrasts them with the pagans who *not having a written Law, naturally observe the prescriptions of the Law. By this they show that the process of the Law is written in their hearts which is witnessed by their conscience and thoughts, which either punish or justify one another* (Rom. 1:14-15). According to St. Paul, on the forthcoming Judgment Day God will judge men not only according to their faith, but also according to their conscience. Thus even the pagans (who have never heard of the Gospel) may be saved if their conscience will witness to God their righteous life.

*Guard your heart more than anything you treasure, for it is the source of life* (Proverbs 4:23). With these words the Holy Scripture calls us to preserve our moral cleanliness. St. Maximos the Confessor gives this advice: "Do not treat your conscience with contempt, for it always advises you to do what is best. It sets before you the will of God and the angels; it frees you from the secret defilements of the heart; and when you depart this life it grants you the gift of intimacy with God."

– Taken from: <https://orthochristian.com/134304.html>



Όπως ακούσαμε με τη σημερινή ανάγνωση του Αγίου Ευαγγελίου κατά τον Άγιον Ματθαίον, ο Χριστός εκάλεσε τους Αποστόλους: «Δεῦτε ὀπίσω μου, καὶ ποιήσω ὑμᾶς ἀλιεῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων.» (Ματθ. 4:19). Το Ευαγγέλιο λέει, «οἱ δὲ εὐθέως ἀφέντες τὸ πλοῖον καὶ τὸν πατέρα αὐτῶν ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῷ.» (Ματθ. 4:22).

Σημειώνουμε ὅτι οἱ Ἀπόστολοι ἐγκατέλειψαν ἀμέσως τὶς δουλειές τους καὶ τὶς οικογένειές τους καὶ Τὸν ἀκολούθησαν. Σὲ αὐτὸ, ὁ θεολόγος, Δ. Τζιαβάρας, στὸ βιβλίο του με τίτλο *Οἱ Πνευματικοὶ Σπύροι*, ἔγραψε: «Ὁ Κύριος δὲν ὑπόσχεσε σὲ αὐτοὺς τοὺς ταπεινοὺς καὶ φτωχοὺς παράδες τῆς Γαλιλαίας ὅτι θὰ ἦταν οικονομικὰ ἐπόροι, ἢ ὅτι θὰ τους δοθοῦν υψηλές τιμές καὶ θέσεις, ἀλλὰ τους ὑποσχέθηκε ὅτι θὰ ἦταν παράδες ἀνδρῶν.» (σελ. 138).

Ὁ Χριστὸς δὲν ἐκάλεσε μόνο τους Ἀποστόλους νὰ Τὸν ἀκολουθήσουν, ἀλλὰ ἐκάλεσε ὅλους τους ἀνθρώπους τῆς ἐποχῆς Του νὰ Τὸν ἀκολουθήσουν καὶ καλεῖ ὅλους τους ἀνθρώπους κάθε ἐποχῆς νὰ Τὸν ἀκολουθήσουν καὶ, συγκεκριμένα, μας καλεῖ καὶ σήμερα νὰ Τὸν ἀκολουθήσουμε.

Ἡ ἐσωτερικὴ φωνὴ τῆς συνειδήσεώς μας δημιουργήθηκε γιὰ νὰ ἐναρμονισθεῖ με τὴν φωνὴν τοῦ Χριστοῦ. Ὁ Ἅγιος Παῦλος ἔγραψε στους Ρωμαίους, λέγοντας: «*Ἐθνη τὰ μὴ νόμον ἔχοντα...οἵτινες ἐνδείκνυνται τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου γραπτὸν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν, συμμαρτυροῦσης αὐτῶν τῆς συνειδήσεως...*» Ἀς παρακαλέσουμε τὸν Χριστὸν νὰ μας διαφωτίσει ὥστε νὰ πράξουμε τὰ ἔργα Του πρὸς σωτηρίαν τῶν συνανθρώπων μας.

+Ὁ ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

*have not the law,...show that what the law requires is written in their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness...*" (Romans 2: 12-16). From the Gospel reading we heard that, after Christ called His Apostles to follow Him: "*He went throughout Galilee...preaching the Gospel and healing every manner of disease and sickness.*" (St. Matthew 4:23).

Healing and health are directly related to our relationship with Christ. All people are created to hear the voice of His Law, which comes from within their hearts. Indeed, God has a way to give everyone the knowledge of the Gospel. Following our Savior enlightens us to "*put aside all worldly care,*" and "*to do all things that are well pleasing to God,*" in accordance to the prayers of our Divine Liturgy. In this way, our thoughts are spiritually healthy and we find self-worth, while offering respect and care for others.

Our Lord doesn't call us specifically or necessarily to abandon our jobs and our families. He does ask us to follow Him every day and abandon our lusts and our temptations. He calls us to abandon evil; to abandon greed, pride, and hypocrisy – and to work for Him. He calls us to teach our children and others the Word of God and the teachings of the Church.

Let us begin by teaching our children about the need to listen to God's voice in their conscience, which guides them in making their decisions, leading to a peaceful and rewarding life through personal prayer and participation in the Holy Sacraments. In doing so, we must set the example of having Divine peace *in our hearts* as individuals and *working for peace* in Christ's love as His peacemakers.

In this way, we become co-workers with our Savior, as we pray for "*peace in the whole world; for the stability of God's Holy Churches, and for the union of all*" and for health and salvation for ourselves and for others around us, especially as we now celebrate our country's Independence Day.

+FR. THEODORE

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO EVE MEEK** – Everyone is invited to join in celebrating **Eve Meek's 90th birthday** this **Sunday, July 4, 2021** following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. Our parish hall is already decorated for a "combined" celebration of Eve Meek's birthday and the Independence Day of America. A light luncheon will be served in celebration of July 4th and Eve's birthday.

Eve has been a long-standing member of our dynamic Philoptochos Chapter and she served with great dedication as a member of our Parish Council. She also served as the very first chairperson in the formative years during the establishment of our St. George Endowment Fund.

Bring your birthday cards and greeting messages so that they can be shared with those in attendance.



*"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— Romans 2:10-16

Brethren, glory and honor and peace for every one who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality. All who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified. When Gentiles who have not the law do by nature what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness and their conflicting thoughts accuse or perhaps excuse them on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.

GOSPEL— St. Matthew 4:18-23

At that time, as Jesus walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." Immediately they left their nets and followed him. And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left their boat and their father, and followed him. And he went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

PLEASE NOTE: Fr. Ted received the blessings of His Eminence, Metropolitan Gerasimos, to be away from the parish from **Monday, July 5 2021 to Friday, July 9, 2021** and from **Monday, July 12 to Saturday, July 16, 2021**. However, he will be available for phone calls, catechism lessons, and "Zoom" meetings. **Call him as needed at (760) 880-5869**. Emergencies will be covered by **Fr. Andrew Lesko**, pastor of the **St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church in Temecula (909) 224-5046**. **Fr. Ted will be available** for pastoral visitations and Church Services, including the celebration of the Divine Liturgy here at St. George throughout the **weekend of July 10-11, 2021**.

Tuesday, July 6th.....BIBLE STUDY – Passage: Gospel of St. Matthew 6:22-33 (via "Zoom") - 10:00 a.m.  
Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83654895089?pwd=RDhkdjZWRDBhZmYyZCsyYWUwdU9lZz09>

You may also join by entering: <https://zoom.us/join> in your computer search engine at the top left corner of your screen and then enter the Meeting ID: 836 5489 5089 & Passcode: 247288 when prompted. You may also call in by cell phone at: 1 669 900 6833 and enter the herein noted Meeting ID number and Passcode.



Prot. No. 172/2021

## Archiepiscopal Encyclical on the Fourth of July

July 4, 2021

Unto the Most Reverend and Right Reverend Hierarchs, Pious Priests and Deacons, the Monks and Nuns, Presidents and Members of Parish Councils, Honorable Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Members of Leadership 100, the Day and Afternoon Schools, Philoptochos Societies, the Youth, Greek Orthodox Organizations, and the entirety of the Christ-named Plenitude of the Holy Archdiocese of America.

My Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

«Αἰνεῖτε τὸν Κύριον πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, ἐπαινεσατε Αὐτὸν πάντες οἱ λαοί!» (Ψαλμός 116:1)

*"Praise the Lord, all Nations; laud Him, all peoples!"* (Psalm 116:1, LXX)

As we gather with family and friends to celebrate our National holiday of the Fourth of July, let us all pause to give thanks for our American democracy. Like every form of governing the πόλις, it will always be less than perfect, for the human beings who conduct the affairs of state and the rule of law are imperfect as well. But let us rejoice that what we have witnessed in our land – from coast to coast – is a willingness to confront the injustices of past and present, and to find common ground to address them. This is the genius of a democracy. This is the genius of a people seeking a "more perfect union." This is the genius of America.

Our national blessings do not come without responsibilities. We have a civic vocation to participate in public life, regardless of our personal political views. The Church has its own moral and ethical ground, but we recognize the civil rights of others to disagree with us. Grateful for the religious freedom guaranteed by the Bill of Rights, we must make our case in a spirit of love and acceptance of others, even those whose opinions – minority or majority – strike us as wrong. There must be the same rights for all Americans, or there is no safety of rights for any American.

Beloved Faithful, we are so very blessed to live in this 'land of the free and home of the brave,' which has been defended by the sacrifice of so many. We Orthodox Christians are relatively few in America, but we should have an outside influence – for justice, for equality – to speak for the voiceless and advocate for the downtrodden. This is our way of giving back and of giving thanks. Together, let us help to make of our Nation a place that does, indeed, praise the Lord in word and deed. Thus, all citizens shall be happy and blessed; for, as it says in the Psalms: *"Blessed are the people who know jubilation"* (Psalm 88:15, LXX).

A happy Fourth of July to all!

With paternal love in Christ Jesus,

† ELPIDOPHOROS,

Archbishop of America

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## Service of Thanksgiving on American Independence Day

Priest: Blessed is our God always, now and ever and to the ages of ages.

People: Amen.

People: Glory be to You who showed the light. Glory in the highest to God. His peace is on earth, His good pleasure in mankind. We praise You, we bless You, we worship You, we glorify You, we give thanks to You for Your great glory. Accept our supplication, You who sit at the right hand of the Father, and have mercy on us. Every day I will bless You, and Your name will I praise to eternity, and to the ages of ages. Vouchsafe, O Lord, this day, that we be kept without sin. Blessed are You, O Lord, the God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is Your name to the ages. Amen. Let Your mercy be on us, O Lord, as we have set our hope on You. Blessed are You, O Lord. Teach me Your statutes. Continue Your mercy to those who know You.

People: Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. (3x)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen. Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.

Deacon: Have mercy on us, O God according to Your great mercy, in Your great goodness we pray You, hear us and have mercy.

People: Lord, have mercy. (3x)

Deacon: For peace in the whole world, the stability of God's Holy Churches and for the oneness of all, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy. (3x)

Deacon: Further we pray for all devout and Orthodox Christians.

People: Lord, have mercy. (3x)

Deacon: Again we pray for our Archbishop Gerasimos and all our brothers and sisters in Christ.

People: Lord, have mercy. (3x)

Deacon: Again we pray for our blessed country on its' 245<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the President, all civil authorities and for the armed forces, that the Lord God will assist them and guide them in every good thing.

People: Lord, have mercy. (3x)

Deacon: Again we pray for the blessed memory and eternal rest of all those who served this country and for the forgiveness of their every sin.

People: Eternal be their memory. (3x)

Deacon: Further we pray that this holy Church, this city and this parish, and every city and land will be kept safe against every violence, pestilence, famine, earthquake,

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tornado, flood and fire; against the sword, enemy invasion and civil war. That our good and loving God will be merciful and gracious and open to our entreaties, to fend off every assault and evil that is stirring against us, and to deliver us from His impeding righteous chastisement and be merciful on us.

People: Lord, have mercy. (3x)

Deacon: Again we pray that the Lord our God will hear the voice of our prayer and have mercy on us.

People: Lord, have mercy. (3x)

Priest: Hear us, O God our Redeemer, the Hope of all the ends of the earth, remember those who sail the seas and those who travel, be gracious and show mercy, O Master, upon our sins and have mercy on us. For You are a merciful and loving God and to You we ascribe glory, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and forever, and to the ages of ages. People: Amen.

Priest: Let us Pray to the Lord: O Lord, our God, You hold together the universe by Your power, and by Your Divine and Almighty Will You govern the universe; You created from one blood all the nations that inhabit the face of the earth, and have assigned to each its boundaries; You have conferred special blessings on this our country the United States of America, and helped it develop into the foremost nation of the world, a champion of freedom and democracy; a haven for the oppressed and a refuge for those who look for the opportunity to live in dignity. You have kept the United States of America free for 245 years by Your Divine Grace, and You have preserved and saved it through many wars and upheavals. Do You, Yourself, All-Holy Master, accept the prayers of thanksgiving for the liberation and birth of our nation on the Fourth of July from us who in faith fervently pray to You. Heavenly God give rest to the souls of our fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters who have nobly fought and gloriously died for its freedom. Make us all not only worthy of this freedom, but make us aware of the responsibilities that flow therefrom, preserve us in peace and concord, and guide us unto every good work that is pleasing to You. Give steadfastness to every civil authority and power in the great nation of ours and make them well-disposed towards the God-given rights of all Your people. For You are the Prince of Peace and the Savior of our souls, and to You we ascribe glory, to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Priest: May Christ our true God who rose from the dead, through the intercessions of His most pure and holy Mother; of the holy, glorious and praiseworthy Apostles; of the holy and righteous ancestors Joachim and Anna and of all the saints, have mercy on and save us, for He is good and loves mankind.

Priest: Through the prayers of our holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ, our God, have mercy on us and save us.

People: Amen.