

JUNE 13, 2021

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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THE LADDER

SUNDAY OF THE HOLY FATHERS

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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.*

ORTHODOX WATCHFULNESS

“Watchfulness” is the theme for today. St. Paul exhorts us, saying, *“Be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears.”* (Acts 20:28). In today’s Gospel, we heard the prayer of our Savior, saying, *“Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.”* (St. John 17:11). As our Lord watches over us, we are exhorted to watchfully keep alert of our thoughts about His Love.

In the Holy Tradition of the Orthodox Church, spiritual alertness, which is called *watchfulness* is a matter of being focused on God’s Love so as to be one

with God and with one another. It goes beyond modern “mindfulness” exercises in a profound way. As opposed to making ourselves objectively aware of our lives “in the moment,” Orthodox watchfulness is the effort of making ourselves aware of God’s love, in order to respond with love for God and for others, thereby giving us peace .

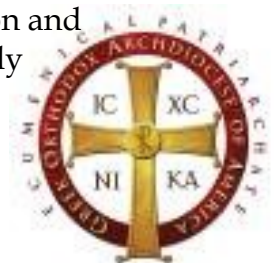
The Cherubic Hymn, chanted and sung during the Divine Liturgy is itself a statement about the importance and meaning of *watchfulness*. We are invited to join ourselves with the heavenly choir of angels in

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THE FIRST ECUMENICAL COUNCIL

Persecution of Christians ceased during the fourth century, but heresies arose within the Church itself. Arius, a priest of Alexandria, was a man of immense pride and ambition. In denying the divine nature of Jesus Christ and His equality with God the Father, Arius falsely taught that the Savior is not consubstantial with the Father, but is only a created being.

In the Nicene Creed, the holy Fathers -- the Saints whom we commemorate today -- confirmed the Apostolic teachings about Christ’s divine nature. The heresy of Arius was repudiated as an error of prideful human reason. In addition to proclaiming that Christ is True God, the Council also issued Twelve Canons (i.e., “regulations”) pertaining to church administration and discipline and decided how the date for the celebration of Holy Pascha would be observed. Accordingly, Holy Pascha would not be celebrated by Christians on the same day with the Jewish Passover, but on the first Sunday after the first full moon of the vernal equinox.



«Η αγρυπνία» είναι το θέμα σήμερα. Ο Άγ. Παύλος μας προτρέπει, λέγοντας, «*Προσέχετε ουν εαυτοίς και παντί τω ποιμνίῳ εν ω υμᾶς τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ Ἅγιον ἔθετο επισκόπους, ποιμαίνειν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν του Κυρίου και Θεοῦ.*» (Πράξ. 20:28). Από το Ευαγγέλιο σήμερα, ακούσαμε την προσευχή του Σωτήρος μας, λέγοντας: «*Πάτερ Ἄγιε, τήρησον αυτοὺς εν τῷ ονόματι Σου οὺς δέδωκάς μοι, ἵνα ὡσιν εν καθὼς ημεῖς.*» (Ἄγ. Ιωάν. 17:11) Καθὼς ο Κύριος μας προσέχει, πρέπει να δώσουμε προσοχή στον Κύριο, ἔχοντας τις σκέψεις μας επικεντρωμένες στην Ἀγάπη Του με προσοχή.

Στην Ἱερά Παράδοση της Ορθόδοξης Ἐκκλησίας, η αγρυπνία ἦταν πάντοτε μια ἀπὸ τις πὸ σημαντικές πνευματικές ἀρετές, η οποία υπερβαίνει τις σύγχρονες ασκήσεις «προσεχτικής σκέψεως» με ἓναν βαθὺ τρόπο. Σε ἀντίθεση με το να γνωρίζουμε τα πράγματα γύρω μας με ἀντικειμενικό, χαλαρωτικό τρόπο, η Ορθόδοξη αγρυπνία είναι η ψυχική, συναισθηματική προσπάθεια να γνωρίσουμε την ἀγάπη του Θεοῦ. Ἀυτὴ η γνώσις μας επιτρέπει να ἀνταποκριθούμε με ἀγάπη πρὸς τον Θεὸ, η οποία ἀγάπη ἐπιφέρει ἐσωτερικὴ εἰρήνη.

Ο Χερουβικός Ὑμνος, που ψάλλεται κατὰ τὴ Θεῖα Λειτουργία είναι μια δήλωσις σχετικά με τὸ νόημα της αγρυπνίας. Προσκαλούμεθα να ἐνωθούμε με τὴν οὐράνια χορωδία ἀγγέλων και διακηρῶσσουμε ὅτι «*πάσαν τὴν βιοτικὴν ἀποθώμεθα μέριμναν...ὡς τὸν Βασιλέα τῶν ὄλων ὑποδεξόμενοι...*» Η ἐσωτερικὴ προσοχὴ της καταστάσεως της ψυχῆς μας (η *αγρυπνία*) είναι τὸ κλειδί πρὸς τὴν σωτηρίαν μας διὰ της ἀγάπης του Θεοῦ και της ἀγάπης μας γιὰ τοὺς συνανθρώπους μας.
+ Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

giving glory to God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. To do so, we proclaim that we “set aside all worldly cares,” so that we can “receive the King of all.” Thus, we strive to become more aware of our relationship with Christ our God, leading to genuine inner peace, as opposed to a simple “stress reduction.”

Orthodox Christian Saints - the “Fathers of the Church,” whom we commemorate today - stressed that *watchfulness* is a matter of constant inner prayer of the soul. However, the effort to praise our Lord constantly as do the angels in heaven is met with distractions about “worldly cares.” Stated in today’s language, “distractions” are actually *anxieties* -- that is, worry and concern over personal issues, many of which are linked with fantasies of fame and fortune; popularity and promotion; survival and contentment. The battle between our focus on God’s love and the anxieties related to our worldly future is an ongoing battle within our souls, not just a periodic exercise that is scheduled into our otherwise busy routines. For Orthodox Christians, “watchfulness” is understood to be “*agrypnia*” (*αγρυπνία* - meaning “*sleepless alertness*”).

Being aware of what distracts us and why is actually key to our sanity. Recovering alcoholics often say that a key to sobriety is *the awareness* of what “triggers” us. Being alert (i.e., *being watchful*), according to St. Paul, is key to salvation, because being one with God and with one another, as our Savior so prayed, leads to our fulfilling relationships as we do God’s work, “*for the peace of the whole world,*” (“*ὡπὲρ τῆς εἰρήνης του σύμπαντος κόσμου...*”).

+FR. THEODORE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Tuesday, June 15th....Bible Study (Acts 2:1-11)

Our St. George parish joins our Holy Metropolis of San Francisco in the effort **help our college students and young adults stay connected to the Church**. Thousands of our Orthodox youth graduate from High School and go away to schools across our country. While blessed with unprecedented educational opportunities, at the same time, many face difficult challenges in the environment of the college campus and its surrounding community. The **Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco** wants to help maintain their connection to the Church! We ask parents of college students to complete the [Online Form](#), or connect online to: www.gosfyouth.org. Every effort will be made for an Orthodox Priest near your student's college or work place to connect with your loved one.

Metropolis of San Francisco Summer Camp--Youth ages 8 - 18 can enjoy **virtual Summer Camp** with daily worship, cabin talks, arts and crafts, evening activities, and more! The program will be held **July 19 - 30, 2021, on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays - 10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., and Monday and Wednesday evenings - 6:30 p.m.-8:00 p.m.** Register online at www.gosfyouth.org.



"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 --Acts 20:16-18, 28-36

In those days, Paul had decided to sail past Ephesos, so that he might not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hastening to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost. And from Miletos he sent to Ephesos and called to him the elders of the church. And when they came to him, he said to them: "Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God which he obtained with the blood of his own Son. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears. And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities, and to those who were with me. In all things I have shown you that by so toiling one must help the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, 'it is more blessed to give than to receive.' " And when he had spoken thus, he knelt down and prayed with them all.

GOSPEL - St. John 17:1-13

At that time, Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him power over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work which you gave me to do; and now, Father, you glorify me in your own presence with the glory which I had with you before the world was made. I have manifested your name to the men whom you gave me out of the world; yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you; for I have given them the words which you gave me, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you did send me. I am praying for them; I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are mine; all mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me; I have guarded them, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to you; and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves."