

NOVEMBER 21, 2021

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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THE LADDER

PRESENTATION OF THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD INTO THE TEMPLE

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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.

THE LIVING TEMPLE OF GOD

Today we commemorate the event of the Presentation of the Ever-Virgin Mary into the Temple. The Kontakion Hymn of our Church that is chanted today is itself a sermon. *“Today, the most pure temple of the Savior, the precious bridal chamber and Virgin, the sacred treasure of God, enters the house of the Lord, brining the grace of the Divine Spirit. The Angels of God praise her. She is the heavenly tabernacle.”*

In dissecting the words of this hymn, we understand that the Mother of God is Herself the “pure temple of the Savior.” She is the “sacred treasure of God, Who enters the house of the Lord (i.e., the

the physical temple in which the Chosen People worshiped God). Her purity of soul is the fruit of Her humility, which is found in the meaning of Her words, when the Angel Gabriel announced that She would be the Vessel through which the Savior would be brought into the world. *“For the Lord has regarded the lowly estate of His maidservant.”* (St. Luke 1:48). On this point, St. John Maximovitch wrote that the Holy Mother of God sets before us the power of humility through love for God. *“The more pure and perfect one is, the more one notices his or her*
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THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD – People wonder why Orthodox Christians honor the Holy Mother of God so much through worship and in prayer. After all, some say, there is relatively little mention of Her in the Gospels.

The answer is found in Her role as Intercessor for the salvation of humanity as seen in Her intercession on behalf of the family gathered at the Wedding in Cana of Galilee. Knowing that Her Son is God in the flesh, She turned to Him, requesting that He help them since the wine used to symbolize the joy of the family had failed. Jesus, in honor of Her, turned the water into wine, thereby blessing the Sacrament of Marriage through which humanity is to experience first-hand, on a daily basis, the love of God.

Orthodox honor given to the Holy Mother of God is not based on this incident as something of the past, although it serves as the “template” of Her ministry to the world throughout the ages. The honor given to Her is based on the *living experience* of millions of people throughout the ages who have *lived* through events related to the blessings received from Her intercessions for the salvation of God’s people. This living experience is, in fact, Apostolic Tradition. +FR. THEODORE



Σήμερα εορτάζουμε τα Εισόδια της Παναγίας. Το Κοντάκιο της Εκκλησίας μας που ψάλλεται σήμερα είναι από μόνο του ένα κήρυγμα. «Ο καθαρώτατος ναός του Σωτήρος, η πολυτίμητος παστὰς καὶ Παρθένος, τὸ ιερὸν θησαύρισμα τῆς δόξης του Θεοῦ, σήμερον εἰσάγεται, ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ Κυρίου, τὴν χάριν συνεισάγουσα, τὴν ἐν Πνεύματι Θεῷ ἡν ἀνυμνοῦσιν Ἄγγελοι Θεοῦ· Ἀὐτὴ ὑπάρχει σκηνὴ ἐπουράνιος.»

Αναλύοντας τα λόγια αυτού του ὕμνου, καταλαβαίνουμε ὅτι ἡ Μητέρα του Θεοῦ εἶναι ἡ Ἰδια ὁ «καθαρός ναός του Σωτήρος». Εἶναι ὁ «ιερός θησαυρός του Θεοῦ», που εἰσέρχεται στον οἶκο του Κυρίου (δηλαδή στον φυσικό ναό στον ὁποῖο οἱ Ἰσραηλίτες ἐλάτρευαν τὸν Θεό). Ἡ καθαρότητα τῆς ψυχῆς Τῆς εἶναι ὁ καρπὸς τῆς ταπεινότητάς Τῆς, που εὐρίσκεται στο νόημα τῶν λόγων Τῆς, ὅταν ὁ Ἄρχαγγελος Γαβριὴλ ἀνακοίνωσε ὅτι Ἀυτὴ θα ἦταν τὸ Σκεῦος μέσω του ὁποῖου θα ἐρχόταν ὁ Σωτὴρ του κόσμου. (Ἅγιος Λουκάς 1:48) Σε αὐτὸ τὸ σημεῖο, ὁ Ἅγιος Ἰωάννης Μαξιμόβιτς ἔγραψε ὅτι ἡ Παναγία μας θέτει μπροστὰ μας τὴ δύναμη τῆς ταπεινοφροσύνης δια μέσου τῆς ἀγάπης γιὰ τὸν Θεό. «Ὅσο πιο ἀγνός καὶ τέλειος εἶναι κάποιος, τόσο περισσότερο παρατηρεῖ τις ἀτέλειές του καὶ ἐπομένως θεωρεῖ τὸν εαυτὸ του πιο ἀνάξιο». (Ἡ Ὁρθόδοξη Προσκύνησις Πρὸς τὴν Θεοτόκον, σελ. 701). Ἀνάξιος, ναὶ. Ἀχριστος, ὄχι, γιατί ἐπιτρέπουμε στον Θεό νὰ χρησιμοποιοῦσὶ σωστὰ τὴ ζωὴ μας γιὰ τὴ σωτηρία τῶν ἄλλων, σύμφωνα με τὸ παράδειγμα τῆς Παναγίας. Χωρὶς ταπεινοφροσύνη, ἡ εὐχαριστία δὲν προσφέρεται σωστὰ. Με τὴν σωστὴ εὐχαριστία, *υπηρετοῦμε* πραγματικὰ τὸν Θεό καὶ τὸν πλησίον μας. +Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

imperfections and therefore considers himself or herself more unworthy." (The Orthodox Veneration of the Mother of God, Kindle Edition, pg. 701). Unworthy, yes; worthless, no, because we allow God to put our lives into proper use for the salvation of others, as in the example of the Holy Mother of God.

The feeling of unworthiness that comes upon us as we consider the many blessings that God has granted us sparks our desire to express thanksgiving. Without humility, thanksgiving is not properly offered. With thanksgiving, we actually *serve* God and our neighbor, making the offering of thanks much more than a simple social gesture.

Truly, the Holy Spirit descended upon the Holy Mother of God and, with Her entrance into the temple, She was found "bringing the grace of the Holy Spirit" into the temple. As the Holy Spirit came upon the Holy Mother of God, the Holy Spirit enters into us through Holy Communion so that we, too, can become heavenly tabernacles, bringing the blessing of our Church into which we enter out into the world in which we live.

Thanksgiving is in fact the Divine Liturgy, as expressed in these words: "I believe, Lord, and confess, that You are truly the Christ, the Son of the Living God, Who came into the world to save sinners of whom I am the greatest. I also believe that this is truly Your spotless Body, and that this is truly Your precious Blood. Wherefore, I pray You: have mercy on me and forgive my offenses...and account me worthy to share without judgment in Your pure Mysteries for the remission of sins and for everlasting life." These words, upon analysis, paraphrase the sentiments of the Holy Mother of God, Who became the living Temple of the Most High. We, too, partake of Holy Communion -- Her Son's Body and Blood -- with a view that we too desire to become living temples of the Most High, doing all things according to His Word.

+FR. THEODORE

PATRIARCHAL DIRECTIVE -- As per the recent Encyclical from His Holiness, Patriarch Bartholomew, the Sunday closest to October 17/18 every year will be dedicated as "Feast of the Holy Physicians."

BOOK STORE: Please see our special display of books of poetry by our beloved **Dr. John Manesis**. May his memory be eternal! His books of poems are displayed in our parish hall. Among his last works is ***Please Remember Us***, with poems dedicated to the honor of Greek Immigrants to the United States. His other books are equally inspiring.



"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 9:1-7

Brethren, the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly sanctuary. For a tent was prepared, the outer one, in which were the lamp stand and the table and the bread of the Presence; it is called the Holy Place. Behind the second curtain stood a tent called the Holy of Holies, having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, which contained a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail. These preparations having thus been made, the priests go continually into the outer tent, performing their ritual duties; but into the second only the high priest goes, and he but once a year, and not without taking blood which he offers for himself and for the errors of the people.

GOSPEL— St. Luke 10:38-42; 11:27-28

At that time, Jesus entered a village; and a woman called Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving; and she went to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve you alone? Tell her then to help me." But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her." As he said this, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, "Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that you sucked!" But he said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

MEMORIAL -- Today's Memorial Service is for the Eternal Life and Salvation for the servants of God **Mary Chakos (3 years); John Andros (13 years), and Christina J. Chakos (8 years)**, the beloved mother, father and aunt of **Nicholas Andros**. May our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ grant Eternal Life and Salvation to **Mary Chakos, John Andros, and Christina J. Chakos** and may He grant peace and comfort to **Nicholas Chakos**. **MAY THEIR MEMORIES BE ETERNAL!**

Today.....Following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, the **Fall General Assembly** will take place in our parish hall. Please make sure that 2021 Stewardship commitments for our parish are up to date in order to be able to participate fully in the proceedings.

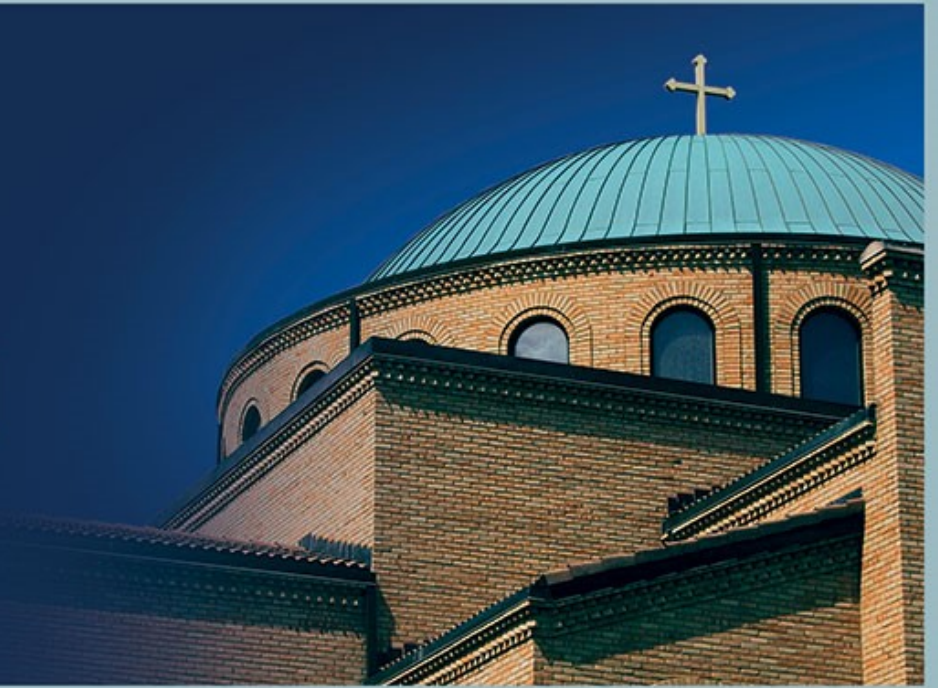
SUPPORT OUR AHEPA THANKSGIVING RAFFLE TODAY! \$5 tickets are available for a chance to win a **\$100 Gift Certificate at Albertsons** for a **Thanksgiving Dinner** able to serve 8-10 guests. Proceeds will go to the **AHEPA 528 Fr. T.P. Theophilos Memorial Scholarship Fund**.

PLEASE NOTE: Fr. Ted has been summoned for **JURY DUTY** for this week! Please call Fr. Ted or the church office before coming to see the priest, or make an appointment, calling (760) 568-9901 or (760) 880-5869.

No Bible Study meetings this week.

Thursday, November 25th....**ST. CATHERINE THE GREAT MARTYR**
Orthros-8:30 a.m. / Divine Liturgy- 9:30 a.m.
Thanksgiving Day! Many blessings to all!

Our Church Our Spiritual Home



CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

We are stewards of the Gospel and the stewards of our parish. We see our church, not as it is, but as it could be. We offer our treasure and ourselves sacrificially, so that, as members of the Body of Christ, we may reach our full potential in Him.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Yesterday --Saturday, November 20th -- our Sunday School "Santa's Helpers" project was a huge success! Gifts for the children at St. Innocent Orthodox Orphanage (Project Mexico) were bought through the donations and efforts of our Sunday School. The hero of the day was **Angel Kayaloglou**, who participated in this event with inspiring enthusiasm. We thank God also for the efforts of **Ana Storton** for organizing this event, along with **Athena Snarskis** -- and, without his **Presvytera**, Fr. Ted was lost at Target where the shopping for the gifts took place. Also thanks be to God for the donations from **Rhonda and Nick Latkovic, the Philoptochos and our AHEPA Chapter 528.**