



DECEMBER 17, 2023

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.

THE LADDER



PRAYER FOR READING HOLY SCRIPTURES

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— Colossians 3:4-11

Brethren, when Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience. In these you once walked, when you lived in them. But now put them all away; anger, wrath, malice, slander, and foul talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old nature with its practices and have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all, and in all.

GOSPEL— St. Luke 14:16-24

The Lord said this parable: "A man once gave a great banquet, and invited many; and at the time of the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for all is now ready.' But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I go out and see it; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I must go to examine them; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' So the servant came and reported this to his master. Then the householder in anger said to his servant, 'Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and maimed and blind and lame.' And the servant said, 'Sir, what you commanded has been done, and there is still room.' And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges, and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet. For many are called, but few are chosen.'"

THE PROPHET DANIEL AND THE THREE YOUTHS— Today we commemorate the Prophet Daniel and the Three Youths. In 599 B.C. they were led into captivity in Babylon by King Nabuchodonosor. This king forced everyone to worship the statue of himself. Daniel and the Three Youths refused to worship the king. Instead, they remained loyal in worship to our True God. Daniel was then cast into a den of lions, who miraculously were gentle to him. The Three Youths were cast into a fiery furnace, but were saved by an angel of the Lord.

Liturgical Notes for Today

At the Entrance of the Gospel: 1) **Entrance hymn:** 1) *"Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad, for the Lord, by His Mighty Arm, has reared a Dominion. He has conquered death by death, and become the firstborn of the dead. He has delivered us from the depths of Hades and has granted the world great mercy."/*

Ευφραινέσθω τα ουράνια...

2) *"By faith You justified the Forefathers and through them betrothed Yourself to the Church, taken from out of the Gentiles. The Saints boast in glory for, from their seed there exists a noble crop, it is She, Who without seed has given You birth. By their intercession, O Christ our God, save our souls."/*Εν πίστει τους Προπάτορας...

3) *"Since you are a deliverer of captives..."* [Hymn of St. George]/Ως των αιχμαλώτων ελευθερωτής...

4) **Kontakion:** *"Today the Virgin comes to the cave to ineffably give birth to the eternal Logos. Harkening to this, rejoice, O Universe, and with the angels and shepherds glorify Him, the God before all ages, Who willed to be held as a young child."/*Η Παρθένος σήμερα...

MEMORIAL – Today's Memorial Service is for the Eternal Rest and Salvation for the servants of God, **Konstantinos (Gus) Karris (4 yrs.)**, the beloved father of Emmy Karris and **Eleni (Helen) Karris (2 yrs)**, the beloved mother of Emmy Karris. Also, today's Memorial Service is for the Eternal Rest and Salvation for the servants of God, **Sophia Kayaloglou (1 yr.)**, the beloved sister-in-law of Emily Kayaloglou and **Eleni Kayaloglou (3 yrs.)**, also the beloved sister-in-law of Emily Kayaloglou. May our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ grant Eternal Rest and Salvation to **Konstantinos and Eleni Karris** and to **Sophia and Eleni Kayaloglou** and may He grant peace and comfort to Emmy Karris and Emily Kayaloglou and their families. **MAY THEIR MEMORIES BE ETERNAL!**

ACCEPTING AN INVITATION TO PARADISE

Today's passage from the Gospel of St. Luke parallels that from St. Matthew's Gospel. In both passages, our Savior's parable is about a certain man (or king) who gave a banquet and invited everyone. In both cases, those who were not in attendance at the banquet were not in attendance *by their own choice*. Those who made excuses so they could be excused from attending the banquet, as well as those who responded to their invitation to the banquet with violence, refused to attend simply because they did not want to prepare themselves properly and honor their benefactor.

The image in St. Matthew's Gospel of the wedding garment is the image of moral purity, such as we heard today from the passage of St. Paul's Epistle to the Colossians, where he urges us to put on ourselves an entirely new nature, which is from Christ. This new nature is a divine nature in us.

Unfortunately, people have come to condone many sins as being normal, since we are "only human," as the saying goes. As Orthodox, we accept the fact that we are all "only human" and, therefore, we do not condemn anyone. We seek the salvation of everyone, emphasizing the dignity that God gives us to repent by avoiding sin and sharing God's love. We condemn the sin, not the sinner. The Church follows the example of St. Paul. As we read his Epistle to the Colossians, we note that he does not condemn them. Instead, he urges them to put off immorality and put on a new nature, which is a nature in Christ. Let us do the same, and in this way, we will accept the invitation to His banquet in Paradise and we will certainly be welcomed.

+FR. THEODORE

Η σημερινή περικοπή εκ του Ευαγγελίου του κατά Λουκά παραλληλίζεται με την περικοπή εκ του Ευαγγελίου του κατά Ματθαίον. Και στις δύο περικοπές, η παραβολή του Σωτήρος μας αφορά έναν συγκεκριμένο άνδρα (ή βασιλιά) που ετοίμασε ένα πολύ σπουδαίο τραπέζι και εκάλεσε τους πάντες. Και στις δύο περιπτώσεις, όσοι δεν ευρέθηκαν στο τραπέζι, απουσίαζαν επειδή έκαναν την απόφασήν μόνι τους να μην παρευρεθούν. Εκείνοι που έκαναν τις δικαιολογίες, καθώς και εκείνοι που ανταποκρίθηκαν στην πρόσκλησή τους με κακούς τρόπους, αρνήθηκαν να παρευρεθούν απλώς και μόνο επειδή δεν ήθελαν να προετοιμασθούν σωστά και να τιμήσουν τον ευεργέτη τους.

Το σύμβολο του «χιτώνος του γάμου» στο Ευαγγέλιο κατά τον Αγ. Ματθαίον είναι και η εικόνα της ηθικής αγνότητας, όπως ακούσαμε σήμερα από το ανάγνωσμα της Επιστολής του Αγ. Παύλου προς τους Κολοσσαείς, που μας προτρέπει να βάλουμε στον εαυτό μας μία εντελώς νέα φύση, η οποία είναι η εν Χριστώ γύση. Αυτή η νέα φύση είναι μια θεϊκή φύση.

Δυστυχώς, οι άνθρωποι σήμερα θεωρούν ότι πολλές αμαρτίες είναι φυσιολογικές. Ως Ελληνο-Ορθόδοξοι, αποδεχόμεθα το γεγονός ότι όλοι μας έχουμε ανθρώπινα σφάλματα και, ως εκ τούτου, δεν καταδικάζουμε κανέναν. Επιδιώκουμε τη σωτηρία όλων, τονίζοντας την αξιοπρέπεια που μας δίνει ο Θεός για να μετανοήσουμε – να αποφεύγουμε την αμαρτία και να προσφέρουμε την αγάπη του Θεού σε όλους. Καταδικάζουμε την αμαρτία, όχι τον αμαρτωλό. Η Εκκλησία μας ακολουθεί το παράδειγμα του Αγ. Παύλου. Καθώς διαβάζουμε την προς Κολοσσαείς Επιστολή του, σημειώνουμε ότι δεν καταδίκασε τους Κολοσσαείς ως λαό. Αντίθετα, τους προτρέπει να αποβάλουν την ανηθικότητα και να φορέσουν μια νέα πνευματική φύση, που είναι η εν Χριστώ φύση. Ας κάνουμε όλοι το ίδιο. +Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

Tuesday, December 19th.....Bible Study- 10:00 a.m.

Wednesday, December 20thOnline Orthodox Christian Catechism class – 6:30 p.m.

Friday, December 22nd.....Royal Hours of the Nativity of our Lord – 9:00 a.m.

Saturday, December 23rd.....EVE OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD
Orthros-8:30 a.m./Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.

Next Sunday, December 24th.....SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD
Orthros-8:30 a.m./Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.

Monday, December 25th...THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST (Christmas)
Orthros-8:30 a.m./Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **PHILOPTOCHOS** – The **Philoptochos Holiday Bake Sale** is underway. Greek pastries are available for purchase today. The enclosed flyer indicates the pastries available and their prices.

ONLINE ORTHODOX CATECHISM CLASS - Wednesday, December 20th at 6:30 p.m. Please contact Fr. Ted at (760) 880-5869 to receive a “Zoom” link for the online class.

- **GREEK FESTIVAL** – Baking of pastitsio and moussaka begins tomorrow, December 18th.
- **PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS** – We offer prayers of gratitude to God for those who became candidates for membership to our Parish Council for 2024. Those who were elected to serve on the **Parish Council for 2024** are: **Nicholas Kaperonis, Tasia Richards, and Tina Veroulis**. Many thanks to the members of the **Election Committee: Annette Laskaris, Ana Storton, and Michael Hallinan**.

ANNOUNCEMENTS CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE – -->

ANNOUNCEMENTS, CONTINUED

- **ST. GEORGE BOOKSTORE** – Our **St. George Bookstore** has received many new items just in time for Christmas party gift swaps and/or last minute gift ideas for your special someone. We have set up a "**Christmas Shop**" in the **Church Hall**. Items include novelty aprons, Greek flag fleece blankets, pashmina shawls, orthodox jewelry, handmade soaps, ornaments, and much more. Another shipment is arriving by mid-week so if you don't see anything today check back in a few days or next Sunday. We take credit card, cash, or **checks payable to St. George Church -memo-bookstore**.

ST. GEORGE LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS
HOLIDAY BAKE SALE

Koulourakia—\$12.00 per 12 pieces

Paximathia —\$12.00 per 12 pieces

Kourembiethes —\$12.00 per 6 pieces

Melamakarona —\$12.00 per 6 pieces

Baklava— \$12.00 per 4 pieces

Combination Boxes available!

Thank you for supporting our Philoptochos Chapter!