

St. George Greek Orthodox Church of the Desert

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THE LADDER, Sunday, August 3, 2008

Fr. Theodore Pantels, Proistamenos (Pastor), Deacon Euthym Kontaxis, M.D.

Fr. James Tavlarides, Emeritus, Fr. T.P. Theophilos, Emeritus

"LET US LOVE ONE ANOTHER THAT WITH ONE MIND WE MAY CONFESS"

Through his Epistle to the Romans, the reading from which we heard during today's celebration of the Divine Liturgy, St. Paul tells us most clearly that Christians must accept the fact that some have many spiritual abilities and others have few spiritual abilities. Each person has the sacred responsibility to help his or her neighbor for the benefit of that neighbor, in particular, and for the benefit of the entire community, in general. A Christian is not to be concerned only with himself or herself. God asks each of us to show patience toward our fellow human being, because God is "The God of patience and compassion". In this way we will, indeed, with one common and strong voice give glory to our God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God certainly wants each person to be accepting of his or her neighbor, just as Christ has accepted everyone of us.

During the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, we hear the exclamation made by the priest: "Let us love one another that with one mind we may confess." At that moment each person confesses to the other in a low voice: "Christ is in our midst. He was; He is and always will be." In other words, since we confess that Christ is with us, we have the responsibility to be like Christ in every way. Christ accepts our individual weaknesses and He helps us so that we can become stronger spiritually, as well as physically; we are required to do the same for our neighbor: to accept his or her weaknesses and to constantly try to help him or her to gain more spiritual strength. For this reason, it is a sin to put others down through unloving criticism and condemnation. We are required to do whatever is in our power to enlighten anyone who has doubts; to encourage anyone who has hesitations; to give good advice with love to anyone struggling through tribulations. The salvation of each of us is based on our efforts to save our neighbor.

In his Epistle to the Romans, St. Paul is specifically addressing Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians, knowing that they have cultural differences. He exhorts them to be mutually accepting toward each other, just as both Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians are equally accepted by Christ for the glory of God.

In today's Gospel reading, we hear of two blind men, who were cured by our Lord and they received their sight. He did not consider the one man to be "better" than the other in any way, even though, aside from their blindness, they probably did have their differences: different height; different opinions; different interests; different abilities. Maybe one had more wealth than the other. Yet, our Lord cured them both equally. He cures us all equally, if we turn to Him.

In every human relationship, we find people who are different from us: in marriage; in business; in worship. Nowhere more intensely is this reality played out than in the home. Brothers and sisters must accept each other's differences, because Christ loves them all. Parents must accept the differences in their children's abilities and talents, because Christ accepts them, also. Children must accept their parents -- must honor them -- and husbands and wives must accept each other's differences, because Christ brought them together and loves them both.

When we say to one another during the Divine Liturgy, "Christ is in our midst", let's mean it. Rather than being quick to judge, criticize or condemn others, let us be quick to communicate with others and understand them, precisely so that we can pray for them, since, indeed, CHRIST IS IN OUR MIDST!

+FR. THEODORE

FEAST

The Holy Fathers, Sts. Isaacios, Dalmatos and Faustos

HYMNS (during and after the Entrance with the Gospel)

Angelike Dynameis... (The Angelic Powers were before Your tomb, the guards became as dead and Mary stood in the sepulcher seeking your Sacred Body. You despoiled Hades, for you were not tempted by it; you came to the Virgin to give Life. O Lord, You Who rose from the dead, glory to You.) [Sunday Resurrection Hymn]

Os ton ehmaloton eleftherotis... (Since You are a deliverer of captives and a defender of the poor, a physician for the sick, a noble attendant to the kings, O Great among the Martyrs and Glorious George: Intercede with Christ our God that He may save our souls.) [Hymn for St. George]

Epi tou orous metemorphosis... (You were transfigured upon the mount, O Christ our God, and Your disciples, in so far as they could bear, beheld Your glory. Thus, when they see You crucified, they may understand Your voluntary passion, and proclaim to the world that You are truly the effulgence of the Father.) [Sunday Kontakion Hymn in preparation of the Feast of the Transfiguration of our Lord]

READINGS: EPISTLE -- Romans 15:1-7; pg. 1657 in the GOOD NEWS BIBLE

GOSPEL -- St. Matthew 9:27-35; pgs 1435-6 in the GOOD NEWS BIBLE

F.O.S. QUESTION FOR THIS SUNDAY

Question: What is the "Antiminsio", or "Antimins"?

Answer: This is a linen cloth with a sketch-icon of the entombment of Christ on its surface. As we read in our Divine Liturgy Books, "Symbolically, it represents the tomb of Christ and the tomb of the Holy Martyrs upon whose graves the Liturgy was celebrated in the early Church. Today, the relics of the Saints are placed inside the Altar Table, since not all church edifices are built upon the graves of the Saints. According to Fr. Nicon Patrinos, in his book, *A Dictionary of Greek Orthodoxy*: "The 'Antiminsion' is a consecrated liturgical implement on which the Eucharist can be celebrated in places where there is no consecrated altar...The practice has prevailed for the Eucharist to be celebrated on an antiminsion whether the altar is consecrated or not." (pg.31)

+FR. THEODORE

ORTHODOXCIRCLE

ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY PORTAL

www.orthodoxcircle.com

The ORTHODOX CIRCLE is a new online community portal designed for Orthodox Christians. It provides easy to use tools for friends and family to stay connected with each other and their parishes, ministries and organization. It's also a great way to make new friends with other Orthodox Christians around the world.

-- How to join - For privacy and security reasons, Orthodox Circle is an invite-only portal and not open to general Internet traffic. Those interested in joining are asked to go online and fill out our membership request at: www.orthodoxcircle.com/.

-- Launched on Sunday of Orthodoxy, March 12, 2006, Orthodox Circle offers Orthodox Christians from every jurisdiction a place to gather online for fellowship, love and unity that makes us "the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church."

PRAY FOR THE SICK: Adele Gallade, Dimitra Rosier, Vasiliki Kourletas, Nicholas Kontaxis

Anastasia Pantels, Aspasia Petsas

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Everyone is invited to our parish hall for fellowship. The "fellowship hour" is for all of us to enjoy each other's ideas and thoughts as members of our community. **NO ONE IS OBLIGATED** to discuss their personal spiritual matters (such that need to be addressed through the Sacrament of Holy Confession) with any of our clergy during the fellowship hour. However, if anyone *does* wish to discuss spiritual or personal matters with any of our clergy, we ask that **they be the ones to approach the clergy** and any of our clergy will be most happy to speak with them and to help arrange for a time for Holy Confession. In addition, appointments can be made by calling our priests or the church office: (760) 568-9901.

Monday, August 4th.....Paraklisis - 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, August 6th.....THE TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR
Orthros - 8:00 a.m.
Divine Liturgy - 9:00 a.m.

Thursday, August 7th.....Fr. Ted will be visiting our young campers at St. Sophia Camp.

Friday, August 8th.....Paraklisis - 7:00 p.m.

Be Someone's Shoebox Hero

NEW SHOES FOR KIDS

KDI KARES announces it's "2008 Children's New Shoe Drive", benefitting the Coachella Valley Rescue Mission. Give an underprivileged child the best footing to start the New School Year! Requesting Children's sizes: Preschool (sizes 5-10) - Youth (sizes 10 and a half - 4 and a half). Donations will be accepted at our church through Saturday, August 23rd. See the fliers regarding this effort in our parish hall.

As is always the case, the summer months are difficult for our parish. Last year's (2007) financial situation of our parish was very similar to this year's. A detailed Income and Expense report is available to our parish members in good standing upon request.

If you are not current in your Stewardship offering for this year, it would be most appreciated if you would give to our parish at this time, according to your means. Any special donation would be most appreciated, as well.