

ALTAR FLOWERS

The Altar flowers are offered today in loving memory of George and Philomena Mandes, by Georgia Geldes and Mary Ann Yannicos and families.

A PRAYER BY ST. PETER OF DAMASKOS FROM THE PHILOKALIA

"I became as a beast before Thee; yet I am continually with Thee" (Psalms 73:22 - 23). If Thy desire is that I should be at rest in Thy knowledge, I shall not refuse. If it is that I should experience temptation so as to learn humility, again I am with Thee. Of myself, there is absolutely nothing I can do. For without Thee I would not have come into existence from non-existence; without Thee I cannot live or be saved. Do what Thou wilt to Thy creature; for I believe that, being good, Thou bestowest blessings on me, even if I do not recognize that they are for my benefit. Nor am I worthy to know, nor do I claim to understand, so as to be at rest: this might not be to my profit. I do not dare to ask for relief in any of my battles, even if I am weak and utterly exhausted: for I do not know what is good for me. "Thou knowest all things" (John 21:17); act according to Thy knowledge. Only do not let me go astray, whatever happens; whether I want it or not, save me, though, again, only if it accords with Thy will. I, then, have nothing: before Thee I am as one that is dead; I commit my soul into Thy pure hands, in this age and in the age to be. Thou art able to do all things; Thou knowest all things; Thou desirest every kind of goodness for all men and ever longest for my salvation. This is clear from the many blessings that in Thy grace Thou hast bestowed and always bestowest on us, visible and invisible, known to us and unknown; and from that gift of Thyself to us, O Son and Logos of God, which is beyond our understanding. Yet who am I that I should dare to speak to Thee of these things, Thou searcher of hearts? I speak of them in order to make known to myself and to my enemies that I take refuge in Thee, the harbor of my salvation. For I know by Thy grace that "Thou art my God" (Psalms 31:14). I do not dare to say many things, but only wish to set before Thee an intellect that is inactive, deaf and dumb. It is not myself but Thy grace that accomplishes all things. For, knowing that I am always full of evil, I do not attribute such things to my own goodness; and because of this I fall down as a servant before Thee, for Thou hast found me worthy of repentance, and "I am Thy servant, and the son of Thy handmaid" (Psalms 116:16). But do not allow me, my Lord Jesus Christ, my God, to do, say or think anything contrary to Thy will: the sins I have already committed are enough. But in whatever way Thou desirest have mercy on me. I have sinned: have mercy on me as Thou knowest. I believe, Lord, that Thou hearest this my pitiable cry, "Help Thou my unbelief", (Mark 9:24) Thou who has granted me, not only to be, but also to be a Christian. "It is a great thing," St. John of Karpathos has said, "for me to be called a monk and a Christian." As Thou has said, Lord, to one of Thy servants, "It is no light thing for you to be called by My name" (Isaiah 49:6). This is more to me than all the kingdoms of heaven or of earth. Let me always be called by Thy most sweet name. O Master, full of compassion, I give thanks to Thee.

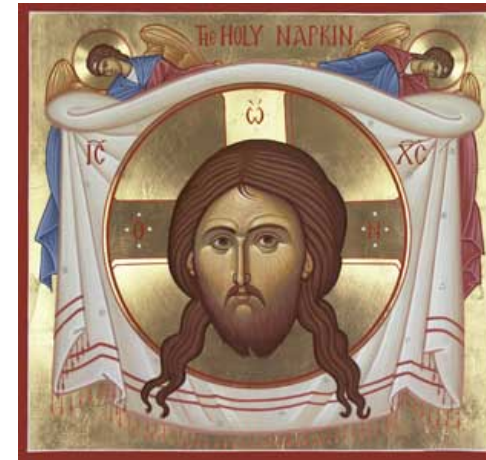
A REMINDER

When you make your stewardship offerings by check, PLEASE REMEMBER TO WRITE ON THE MEMO LINE "2010 STEWARDSHIP." Checks are coming in without ANY identification or with "Donation" written on them. Please assist our financial staff by indicating that your offering is TOWARDS STEWARDSHIP — otherwise the offerings will be placed in the general fund rather than under your stewardship pledge. Many thanks!

ST. GEORGE BULLETIN

13TH SUNDAY OF ST. MATTHEW
ST. AGATHONIKOS AND COMPANIONS

AUGUST 22, 2010



Today's Gospel relates the parable of the Master and those he sent to the vineyard to harvest the fruit. Ultimately is it a story of *rejection*. Those whom the landlord sent to receive what was rightly his, were killed—including his own son. Apart from the parable's reference to the Lord Jesus, it also raises the issue of the rejection of the Christian Gospel in the society in which we live. The truth in which we believe and which we witness, is often mocked, rejected, and simply dismissed. Slowly but surely, society would have us believe that faith is ultimately meaningless, that living Christian morality is out-dated, and that shaping our lives after something that is unseen is folly at best. Even churches are lured and co-opted into adopting convenient cultural norms that are, at their root, in contradiction to Holy Tradition. We must hold fast to what has been given to us. We must risk rejection in the name of those values which are ultimate and do not change because of a current whim. Christ endured that kind of rejection. His disciples cannot do otherwise.

Resurrectional Apolytikion

When the women Disciples of the Lord had learned from the Angel the joyful message of the Resurrection and had rejected the ancestral decision, they cried aloud to the Apostles triumphantly: Death has been despoiled, Christ God has risen, granting His great mercy to the world.

Seasonal Kontakion

O Protection of Christians that cannot be put to shame, mediation unto the creator most constant: O despise not the voices of those who have sinned; but be quick, O good one, to come unto our aid, who in faith cry unto thee: Hasten to intercession and speed thou to make supplication, O thou who dost ever protect, O Theotokos, them that honor thee.

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EPISTLE First Letter to the Corinthians 16:13-24

BRETHREN, be watchful, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love. Now, brethren, you know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints; I urge you to be subject to such men and to every fellow worker and laborer. I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicos, because they have made up for your absence; for they refreshed my spirit as well as yours. Give recognition to such men. The churches of Asia send greetings. Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in their house, send you hearty greetings in the Lord. All the brethren send greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss. I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. If any one has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed. Our Lord, come! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

GOSPEL Matthew 21:33-42

The Lord said this parable, "There was a householder who planted a vineyard, and set a hedge around it, and dug a wine press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to tenants, and went into another country. When the season of fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants, to get his fruit; and the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first; and they did the same to them. Afterward he sent his son to them, saying 'They will respect my son.' But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.' And they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" They said to him, "He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons." Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the scriptures: 'The very stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner; this was the Lord's doing, and it was marvelous in our eyes?'"



FEAST OF THE GREAT MARTYR ST. PHANOURIOS

Friday of this week, **August 27**, is the Feast of St. Phanourios the Great Martyr. Orthros will be sung at 8:30 a.m. and Divine Liturgy, followed by the Blessing of the Phanouropita, will be at 9:30 a.m.

LOOKING AHEAD: Wednesday, September is the observance of **The Indiction** (The Beginning of the Ecclesiastical Year) Orthros at 8:30 a.m. and Divine Liturgy at 9:30 a.m.

40 DAY BLESSINGS

A 40-Day Blessing will be given today to **Sophia Elayna**, daughter of Alki and Jon Meyer; to **Andreas Demetri**, son of Alex and Paula Stiliotopoulos; and **Christos James**, son of Demetri and Allison Lambropoulos. God grant them many years!

MEMORIAL

A Memorial Services will be offered for **Sou-sanna (16 Years) and Fanouri (52 Years) Fanourakis**, requested by Eva Poulos and Evelyn Varoutsos, their daughters, Harry their grandson, and Gloria and Susanna, their granddaughters. May their memories be eternal!



IMAGES THAT HARM...

There is an unseen assault taking place all over America, and it affects our Orthodox spiritual life. Consider these facts: 66 percent of U.S. homes report having 3 or more televisions.; the number of hours a day that the television is on in the home is 6 hours 47 minutes; while the number of minutes a week that parents spend in meaningful conversation with their children is 3.5 minutes, the number of minutes a week that children watch television is 1,680 minutes; the number of violent acts seen by children by age 18 is 200,000 and the number of murders seen by children on television by the time they finish elementary school is 8,000; nearly 60 percent of television content is dedicated to crime, war, disaster, and human tragedy. The Holy Fathers taught that various *logismoi*, or sensory impressions *can directly impact the soul in negative ways by the thoughts they produce*. They can influence behavior. They can shape attitudes that are contrary to healthy spiritual growth and living. In an unconscious way, they can slowly but steadily thwart the progress of the soul in its quest to be one with God, to become His image, to live intimately in His presence. The images that we take into our senses, especially the visual ones, can harm our spiritual life. St. Maximus the Confessor teaches that *"When the heart associates with evil and sordid thoughts, it loses its communion with God."* St. Dorotheos of Gaza echoes this when he writes: *"A single evil thought can turn a man away from God when it is taken in and adhered to."* It is clear that among the Holy Fathers, the soul is most

impressionable not only by what the mind consciously perceives, but by the hidden and insidious images that assault it from a variety of sources. The fact is that contemporary physical and psychological medicine have done approximately 4,000 studies to date and reached the same conclusion: increasingly television and its associated media are having a negative affect on out intellectual, social, and personal development — particularly among our children. For Orthodox believers, the greatest alarm is that it can negatively impact our relationship with God. What are we to do? The Holy Fathers provide the solution in one word: *nepsis (watchfulness)*. St. Thalassios advises: *"Seal your senses with stillness and sit in judgment upon the thoughts that attack your heart."* Simply put, we must guard our hearts/soul from those images and impressions that can harm them. We must eliminate them as best we can. We need to change our behavior so that *positive, fruitful, and spiritually appropriate images/ideas can enter our senses and build us up*. Orthodox adults and particularly children should limit the amount of television they watch and the kind of programs available. Read a spiritual book instead. Spend time as a family doing something positive *together*. Spend more time in prayer and reading Sacred Scripture. The heart and soul need protection, especially these days, in this society. They need guarding from conscious and unconscious influences. Remember the words of St. Gregory of Sinai: *"When these thoughts come, call to our Lord Jesus, often and patiently, and they will retreat; for they cannot bear the warmth of heart produced by prayer, and they flee as if scorched by fire."*

PRAYER LIST: Antonia "Nitsa" Kempf, Connie Kanaris, Diana Lazar, George Markomanolakis, Argie Palaios, Katherine Panagakos, Priscilla Preuss, George Virvan, Sylvia Basdekas, George Speris, Mariah Smiley, Doris Webb, the child Camille Feruzzi who is gravely ill, the child Heather Greene, Irene Pappas, Marty Levine, Lindsey Reijsoo, the child Ashley Lyvers, the child Alexis Ross, Joseph Papadakis, the child Joseph Saxon, Francine Bruggeman, Estrella Grandea Ocampo, Stephanie Skanderis, Georgia Haldas, Eric Ricasa, William Coulopoulos, Milton Kayafas, Mary Agis, and Robert Shriver. **US ARMED FORCES:** (Col.) Fr. Alexander Webster, Rev. Fr. John Kalantzis, Lt. Nicholas Karnaze, Spc. Spiro Nino, John Xanthakos, Colonel James Karas, and Gary Hogman (Iraq) and his wife Cindy, 2nd Lt. Phillip Natsios and PFC Brett Hughes.