



Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church

August 27, 2017; 12th Sunday of Matthew

Homily on the Feast of the Beheading of St John, the Glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord

“Today is a little Great Friday, a second Great Friday. For today the greatest man among those born of women, John, the Holy Forerunner and Baptiser of the Lord, is murdered. On Great Friday, people murdered God, crucified God. On today’s holy great feast, people murdered the greatest of all men. It is not I who chose to use the expression “the greatest.” What are my praises of the great and glorious Forerunner of the Lord, whom the Lord praised more than anyone among men, more than any of the apostles, the Angels, the Prophets, the Righteous Ones, the Sages? For the Lord declared of him: *Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist...* (Matthew 11: 11). In all Creation, there exists no greater praise. This is why today is a little Great Friday. Consider: senseless people murder the greatest of the righteous. Is he getting in their way? Yes, he gets between the perverse King Herod and the dissolute Herodias. God’s Truth, God’s immutable Truth gets in the way of the lawless, gets in the way of poor sinners, gets in the way of everyone stupefied by the various passions. Consider: do not Christ’s opponents even today still shout “Crucify Him, Crucify Him!?” Even today, do not those who oppose Christ still demand the head of Jesus of Nazareth? They call for His head, not to mention calling for the head of John the Baptist. What is this? Could it be that this world has become a madhouse? People do not want God, they do not want the greatest Righteous One in the whole world. Whom do you want? Whom would you prefer? Whom would you set in Christ’s stead? With whom would you replace St. John the Baptist? With yourselves?! O moth! O, tiny mortal insects! Yes, when people become maddened by pride, when out of egotistical pride they lose their reason, they have no need of God, they have no need of God’s Truth. They declare themselves to be gods. They present their petty, shallow, false likeness of truth as the great and salvific Truth. They declare their shallow, earthly, perishable images of truth to be the greatest of truths: they posit that we do not need Christ’s Truth, that we do not want God’s Truth. Yes, people blind in intellect and spirit do not see, and do not want to see, that man, true man, cannot manage without God. Why? Because this world is full of Herods, full of Pharisees. Herods demand the head of John the Baptist, Herods demand the heads of all of the righteous of the world, and Pharisees, the lying scribes, lying sophists of this world, demand the death of Christ, the Incarnate God. Today, in glorifying that great and glorious first Apostle, first Martyr, first Evangelist, Precursor to all true Christians of all time, we bow down before his joyous suffering for Christ’s Truth and His Holy Gospel, before him as Apostle and Martyr. Consider, that for already 2,000 years, the One who allowed the lawless king to behead him, has been working countless miracles in the earthly realm, living in it alongside the Lord Jesus Christ. For 2,000 years he has been ceaselessly working miracles for all those who turn to him in prayer.” (St. Justin Popovich)



EPISTLE READING : St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians **6:10-17**

Brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand, therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the equipment of the gospel of peace; besides all these, taking the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the flaming darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

GOSPEL READING : The Gospel According to **Matthew 19:16-26**

At that time, a young man came up to Jesus, kneeling and saying, "Good Teacher, what good deed must I do, to have eternal life?" And he said to him, "Why do you call me good? One there is who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments." He said to him, "Which?" And Jesus said, "You shall not kill, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother, and You shall love your neighbor as yourself." The young man said to him, "All these I have observed; what do I still lack?" Jesus said to him, "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions. And Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly, I say to you, it will be hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." When the disciples heard this they were greatly astonished, saying, "Who then can be saved?" But Jesus looked at them and said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."



ANNOUNCEMENTS

August 27, 2017



Parishioner statements have been mailed. Please contact Lia Economou, Office Manager, if you did not receive your statement or have any questions: liaecon@comcast.net. We thank all parishioners for their stewardship payments and donations made throughout the year.

Contact Ron Baldinger, Stewardship Chair, with your stewardship and pledge questions: ron.baldinger@gmail.com. Help us receive over 100 pledges for 2017!



Thank you to everyone who came to our Parish Picnic yesterday! It was another successful event and fun was had by all. A special thank you to our Stewardship Committee for planning this annual event: Ron Baldinger (Stewardship Chair), Kristina Ayoub, Mina Baldinger, Julie Burke, Lia Economou, Christy Liscandro, and Nick Spyros.



PAREA (Our Company of Friends) – God willing, we will be gathering again around our PAREA's table on **Tuesday, September 5th at Mimi's Cafe**. Have a blessed and safe summer! Marina (703-349-1842)



SUNDAY SCHOOL registration forms must be **returned to the church by September 17th**. The form can be found in our weekly parish email. Following the Divine Liturgy on September 17th, we will have a meet and greet session to collect forms and offer class details. **Classes begin September 24th**. This year we will offer additional classes including “Biblical Greek” and “Learn Greek through Orthodox Faith.” Questions: Contact Ergini B. Martnishn, Sunday School Program Coordinator, ergini@aol.com.

ORTHODOX BOOK CLUB – Orthodox Book Club will resume its meetings in September.

GOYA – GOYA activities will resume in September. We thank all former GOYA Officers for their accomplishments and look forward to working with the new Officers.



Get ready for Fall!
Get involved in our church!
It will change your life.

What is your calling? What are your talents? Our church needs you!

Youth Groups

GOYA, Hope and Joy

Schools

Greek School, Sunday School

Committees, Groups and Ministries

AHEPA, Choir, Greek Dance Troupe, Newsletter, Orthodox Book Club,
PAREA, Philoptochos, Prosfora, Stewardship Committee, Website

Weekday Liturgical Schedule for August and September, 2017

- Aug. 29** Beheading of St. John the Baptist (strict fast); 8:15 AM, Orthros; 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy
- Sept. 1** Beginning of the Ecclesiastical Year; 8:15 AM, Orthros; 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy
- Sept. 8** Nativity of the Theotokos; 8:15 AM, Orthros; 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy
- Sept. 14** Universal Elevation of the Holy Cross (Strict Fast); 8:15 AM, Orthros; 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy
- Sept. 16** St. Euphemia; 8:45 AM, Orthros; 10:00 AM, Divine Liturgy

2017 Stewardship Pledge (ALL PLEDGES JANUARY- DECEMBER 2017)
HOLY APOSTLES GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

In faith, prayer and sacrifice, my family and I wish to share in the support and work of the Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church. We would like to pledge:

\$_____ for the year 2017 (through December 2017)

You may pay via cash, check or online using PayPal

☐ Annually ☐ Semi-annually ☐ Quarterly ☐ Monthly ☐ Weekly

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Your pledge is **strictly confidential**.

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