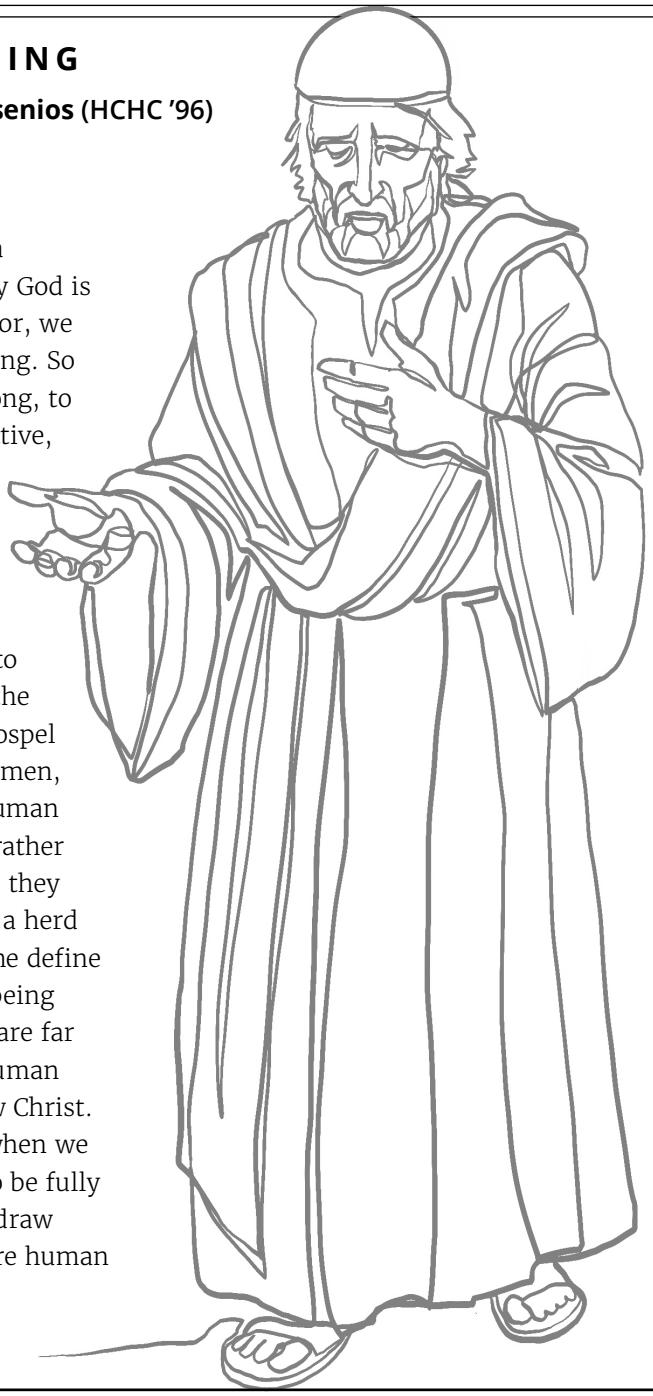
DIAKONIA

A National Ministry of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

REFLECTIONS FROM TODAY'S READING

Matthew 8:28-34; 9:1 | **Fr. George Parsenios** (HCHC '96)

"I'm Only Human ..."



I'm only human. We all say this when we make a mistake, and it's not a terrible thing to say. Only God is perfect, and if we torture ourselves for every error, we might easily become neurotic and full of self-loathing. So it's not a terrible thing, when we do something wrong, to say, "Hey, I'm only human." From another perspective, though, the phrase presents some problems. If we think that being human means being weak and always falling into error, then we diminish and misunderstand our humanity. Jesus Christ, after all, united human nature with God. For those who have faith in Christ, to be human no longer means to be frail and helpless, but to strive for holiness and the perfection to which we have been called. Today's Gospel reading helps us to see this. The demon-possessed men, prior to meeting Jesus, are not living like regular human beings. They don't even live with other people but rather spend their time among the tombs of the dead. And they are possessed by demons who later desire to live in a herd of swine. Corpses, tombs, demons, and beastly swine define these men until they are joined to Jesus Christ. By being caught up in wickedness and weakness, these men are far less human, not more human. They only become human after they rise above all of this confusion and follow Christ. The same is true for us. It is not when we sin nor when we make mistakes that we experience what it means to be fully human, but rather when we rise above our sin and draw closer to God. Indeed, we only begin to become more human when we strive to become more godly.

Fr. George Parsenios *is Professor of New Testament at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology.* ***www.hchc.edu***

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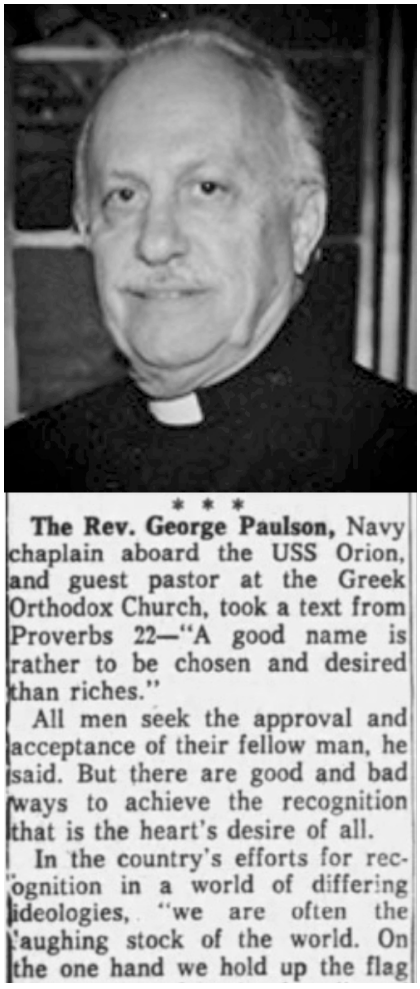
FROM THE ORIGINAL GREEK: Presbyter/ Priest (Πρεσβύτερος)

What does "Presbyter" or "Priest" mean?

Fr. George Parsenios (HCHC '96)

Many people claim that the word "priest" appears nowhere in the Bible as a title for Christian clergy. This assumption is wrong. The English term "priest" developed historically from the Greek word ***πρεσβύτερος/ presbyteros***, which means "elder" (plural ***presbyteroi***). An elder was a respected leader in Judaism, so Christians adopted the Greek word ***presbyteros*** for their leaders. The letters of Paul, for example, call for ***presbyteroi*** "in every town" (Titus 1:5) who should focus on preaching and teaching (1 Timothy 5:17). The Epistle of James explains that the ***presbyteroi*** anoint the sick with the sacrament of Unction (5:13-15). In keeping with this scriptural language, certain Protestants call their leaders "elders" because they believe this word is more biblical than "priest." But "priest" and "elder" are the same thing. "Elder" is a translation of ***presbyteros***, and "priest" derives from its transliteration into the Latin alphabet. ***Πρεσβύτερος*** appeared in transliteration first as presbyter and later as prester. English adopted this contracted form as ***prēost***, which through normal sound changes has now become the word "priest." We are, therefore, completely faithful to the terminology of the New Testament when we call our Orthodox clergy either "priest" or "presbyter" in English.



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The Rev. George Paulson, Navy chaplain aboard the USS Orion, and guest pastor at the Greek Orthodox Church, took a text from Proverbs 22—"A good name is rather to be chosen and desired than riches."

All men seek the approval and acceptance of their fellow man, he said. But there are good and bad ways to achieve the recognition that is the heart's desire of all.

In the country's efforts for recognition in a world of differing ideologies, "we are often the laughing stock of the world. On the one hand we hold up the flag

THIS WEEK'S LOOK AT CHURCH HISTORY

Orthodox Military Chaplains

Ben Malian, MTS

In 1943, Fr. Vladimir Borichevsky, who later served as Dean of St. Tikhon's Seminary, became the first Orthodox Christian military chaplain in the U.S. Armed Forces. He was soon joined by three other priests, who served in this capacity until World War II concluded in 1945.

In 1952, Archbishop Michael appointed Fr. George Paulson to serve as the first military chaplain from the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America. Fr. Paulson offered twenty-eight years of active service to the U.S. Navy, retiring with the rank of Captain. By the time of his priestly retirement in 2004, he was also responsible for the construction of three parish churches in North Carolina, Maine, and Virginia.

According to the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops, there are currently forty-one Orthodox priests serving as active duty and reserve chaplains in the U.S. Armed Forces, in addition to thirteen retired priest-chaplains. As always, but especially this 4th of July, ***"For our country, the president, all those in public service, and for our armed forces everywhere, let us pray to the Lord!"***

Fr. Paulson's address to the graduates of Granby High School, Norfolk Ledger-Star, 1/21/1957.

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THE DIVINE LITURGY:

An Overview Part I

Fr. Thomas FitzGerald, ThD

The Divine Liturgy may be divided into two major parts: the Liturgy of the Catechumens and the Liturgy of the Faithful, which are preceded by the Service of Preparation. Although there are many symbolic interpretations of the Divine Liturgy, the most fundamental meaning is found in the actions and prayers.

The Service of Preparation

Prior to the beginning of the Liturgy, the priest prepares himself with prayer and then proceeds to vest himself. The vestments express his priestly ministry as well as his office. Next, the priest goes to the Preparation Table which is on the left side of the Altar Table in the Sanctuary. There, he prepares the offering of bread and wine for the Liturgy. Ideally, the leavened loaves of bread, and the wine from which the offering is taken, are prepared by members of the congregation. The elements are presented to the priest before the service, together with the names of those persons, living and dead, who are to be remembered during the Divine Liturgy. The offering symbolically represents the entire Church gathered about Christ, the Lamb of God.

The Liturgy of The Catechumens

The Divine Liturgy begins with the solemn declaration: "Blessed be the Kingdom of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit now and forever more." With these words we are reminded that in the Divine Liturgy the Church becomes a real manifestation of God's Kingdom on earth. Since the first part of the Liturgy was designed originally for the Catechumens, those being schooled in the faith, it has a very instructive quality. We gather as Christians who share a common faith in the Holy Trinity. We sing and pray as a people united in Christ, who are not bound by time, space, or social barriers.

The Small Entrance is the central action of the first part of the Liturgy. A procession takes place in which the priest carries the Book of Gospels from the sanctuary into the nave. The procession directs our attention to the Scripture and to the presence of Christ in the Gospel. The entrance leads to the Epistle lesson and the Gospel reading.

At this point the Liturgy of the Faithful begins, which will be explained on page 3 of next week's DIAKONIA.

MAKE THE LITURGY REAL IN YOUR LIFE

By preparing your heart, bringing names for remembrance, and listening attentively to God's Word, you become an active participant in the worship of Jesus Christ and His Church.

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Just For Kids!
(...and the young at heart)

WORD SEARCH
Fruits of the Spirit

Seek and find the Fruits of the Spirit as we grow closer to Christ! As Orthodox Christians, the Holy Spirit helps us live with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. As you complete this word search, remember that these holy virtues are gifts from God that shine through us when we pray, worship, and follow Jesus each day!

J	P	M	X	P	I	Q	O	F	T	Y	L	F	O	K
J	O	Y	G	P	W	F	X	B	T	E	D	R	N	X
S	Y	E	V	E	U	C	V	Y	Z	C	A	R	L	M
E	Z	X	Z	Q	N	X	E	M	M	P	C	P	X	G
L	D	X	M	F	R	T	J	L	V	R	U	L	S	O
F	R	Z	D	S	M	E	L	Y	L	I	G	M	P	O
C	R	A	N	U	F	G	L	E	X	O	V	V	E	D
O	P	A	T	I	E	N	C	E	N	V	D	I	A	N
N	F	A	I	T	H	F	U	L	N	E	S	S	C	E
T	S	U	E	N	I	L	O	V	E	Q	S	S	E	S
R	Y	P	I	V	O	D	S	C	A	G	F	S	B	S
O	B	A	D	D	K	A	K	M	T	O	U	Y	Q	F
L	D	B	M	N	K	I	N	D	N	E	S	S	Y	P
D	O	Y	V	C	P	D	Y	B	J	S	B	H	V	Y
D	C	C	C	H	U	I	Y	D	X	M	Y	Q	Z	U

FIND THESE WORDS:

- LOVE
- JOY
- PEACE
- PATIENCE
- KINDNESS
- GOODNESS
- FAITHFULNESS
- GENTLENESS
- SELFCONTROL

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