

OCTOBER 2017



Voice of St. George

SAINT GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
OF THE DESERT

74-109 LARREA ST., PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA



Inside this issue

HOLY CONFESSION: THE REALITY CHECK

Guilt hurts! Some people try to avoid feeling guilty by trying to deny the existence of sin. This lies behind their ideals of "situational ethics," where "right" and "wrong" are greatly defined by the situation, while one's spiritual life is not in question.

The truth is, however, that guilt is still a reality for many people, most of whom view themselves as responsible individuals.

In this regard, there are two types of guilt: *real* guilt and *unreal* guilt. Real guilt is felt when we actually *do* something wrong such as disrespecting our parents; stealing from others; intentionally causing physical and emotional harm to others; blasphemy against God; adultery. Unreal guilt is based on the work of demons. For example, feeling guilty for expectations that are truly out of our control, such as, "I should have been able to

make everyone happy;" or, "I should have been more successful." Both of these assumptions are unrealistic. The truth is that even our Lord and Savior did not *make* the Pharisees happy; the Saints did not *make* their mad-man emperors happy. So, making everyone happy is an unrealistic ideal in many ways. In addition, feeling guilty for not being successful is based on an illusion, as well. Who defines "success?" What about unforeseen events such as a hurricane that wipes out everything? Feeling guilty for not being all-powerful and all-knowing is caused by deceptions brought about by demons who want to destroy us.

Ignorance is sinful when it is a matter of choice rather than a matter of one's human limitations. Failure to study the Bible; to learn the teachings of the Church; to pray for God's Wisdom are all sins. The

inability to defend against criminals, for example, is most often a matter of one's limitations in physical strength and/or formal training.

In the Sacrament of Holy Confession the priest is *required* to be the image of the Prodigal Son's father, who represents our Heavenly Father. If anything, the Church is the "House of repentance," and the "Hospital for the soul." St. John Chrysostom portrays the priest as the "spiritual physician," who applies the necessary medicine in the proper dosage. In every way, he is to portray the Heavenly Physician, our Lord, Jesus Christ. A physician for the body, is to determine the nature of one's physical illness; in the same way the priest, who is the physician for the soul, is to help determine the nature of one's sin.

Determining the nature of

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sin includes understanding the *causes* of sin. Prevention is always good medicine. Through the Sacrament of Holy Confession we can often learn the *causes* for our sins. St. Gregory of Nyssa explains that anger, for example, which is the root of many sins committed in word and deed, is caused by many false assumptions that we make. St. Gregory suggests that the cure for anger is to turn our thoughts onto the soul, which, by nature, is superior to our emotions as the "house" of God's Wisdom. This point is supported by many counselors today who practice cognitive therapy, noting that our emotions are triggered by perceptions, not necessarily by reality. Too often our perceptions are really *deceptions*. For example, people often *feel* insulted when there was no intent to insult anyone. In Chicago, a fan rooting for the Cubs will be perceived as "insulting" a White Sox fan. The resulting anger is based on the *perception* that this fan is a "personal" *enemy*. In other words, we are summoned to *evaluate ourselves* in the context of *reality*. (*On the Soul and the Resurrection*, "The Emotions," pgs. 49-60).

Without the divine Wisdom that is given to us through prayer and worship offered to Christ our God, we are prone to leap to ridiculous conclusions. For example, too often young people, feeling guilt over sins, will say, "My life is over!" Really? Why were the lives of thousands of Saints who once sinned, not "over," but they lived on by virtue of their repentance and the forgiveness from Christ our God? Another common expression often heard in relation to sin is: "I'm a failure!" Well, welcome to the club! We are all failures in many ways, because there is no one who is perfect, except Jesus. However, humility before Christ our God, based on our love for Him is the means to repentance as experienced by many "failures" such as St. Peter who denied Christ three times. As St. Peter repented of his denial of Christ by asserting his love for Christ three times, we too are given paths to repentance. Indeed, Holy Confession is a good place to get a "reality check."

The Church requires us to have *faith* in the Lord's promise that we will be forgiven seventy times

seventy (and that we are to also forgive others as many times). This is the message of the Cross. The words spoken by Christ our God reveal the truth of things: "*Forgive them, Father, for they do not what they do.*" Forgiveness is a reality, not just an idea. God is truly a forgiving God. But "knowing what we do" is a matter that speaks about repentance. We can only know what we are to *do* when we actually *turn to Christ our God*.

This brings us to a life of prayer and participation in the Sacramental life of the Church. This is a matter of our free-will choice. Not making this choice is the cause of many distorted credos, ideals and sins. This choice is to be one that is truly sincere – prayer and worship are to be important matters in our effort to deal with guilt. Metropolitan Anthony Bloom writes, "*We can approach God only if we do so with a sense of coming to judgment...Every time we come near God, it is either life or death. It is life if we come to Him in the right spirit and are renewed by Him. It is death if we come to God without the spirit of worship and a contrite heart.*" (*Living Prayer*, pgs. 10-11).

Finally, we must be clear that sins are *our* words and actions which conflict with the love of Christ our God. Our sins are not those of *others*. Meanness shown to us by others is *their* sin, for which *they* must repent. However, what we may have said or done to provoke their meanness is *our* sin. As we already have noted, this always involves a daily routine of prayer and a devoted effort to lovingly understand the fact that we are not perfect *and neither is the other person*. So, as much as we are in need of forgiveness, *the other person is in need of our forgiveness, as well*. It is for this reason that we are called to share in the humility and love of Christ our God, whereby we can find divine peace in our souls.

Truly, time runs out on us like a thief in the night. The Orthodox Funeral Service tells us: "*What ordeal does the soul endure when it parts from the body! ...Therefore, brethren, let us ponder on how brief is the span of our life.*"

+FR. THEODORE

AHEPA NEWS



Wednesday, October 11th is the date for the next AHEPA Chapter 528 meeting. We will meet at **Stuff Pizza** on the patio where we will have our meeting starting at **6 pm**. This is a no host event. Stuff Pizza is located **at the Westfield Mall, 72840 Highway 111 Ste. V465, Palm Desert, CA 92260**.

On October 14th there will be a leadership seminar from 1:00 -5:00 p.m., followed by a dinner at St. Sophia Cathedral. At least 6 National AHEPA officers will be in attendance, including **Supreme President, Carl Hollister**. With this seminar, we will outline current and future goals for AHEPA and we will have a forum to actively discuss current topics with the leaders of the organization. For more information, go to: <http://ahepadistrict20.org/event.htm>.

On November 19th we will be having our Thanksgiving Luncheon, with support from the Ladies Philoptochos of our parish. Please see the enclosed flier and RSVP as soon as possible. Adults are \$15.00 and children under 12 are free. The deadline for reservations is Sunday, November 12, 2017. All proceeds go to the **Fr. Theophilos Theophilos Memorial Scholarship Fund**.

We are proud of our Scholarship program and we will be making application forms for 2018 available as soon as possible. Donations to this program are always appreciated, since this is the major project of our Chapter benefitting the stewards of St. George, as well as our AHEPA members' families. For more information, go to <https://ahepa528.org/scholarship.htm>. In addition, donations can be mailed to:

AHEPA528 Scholarship Fund
P.O. BOX 1735
Palm Desert, California 92261-1735

Always in Christ,
– WYNN STORTON,
AHEPA Chapter 528 President

PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS



September

At our Board Meeting on **September 11**, **Pat Dalkas** was appointed a Board position by the President, **Linda Kallis**. She will be on the committee sharing kitchen duties with **Lula Valissarakos** for our Bake Sales and Memorials. We also passed a motion to send \$1,000 to IOCC for hurricane relief for both Harvey and Irma.

The General Meeting on September 18 was memorable with our guest speaker Presvytera Petula presenting a History of Icons. Historically, icons were started between 60 and 80 A.D. The icons portraits and scenes were painted as described in the Bible. She explained the paint method in the early years. Presvytera had a beautiful display of icons and a picture showing the order of placing icons in the Church. You can see the display in the Church Hall. Our light lunch was made and served by Pat Dalkas and Lula Valissarakos. We were planning on making a donation for lunch, however Father Ted and Presvytera Petula make a donation for the whole meal and asked us to "pay it forward" by donating to one of our charities or projects. We collected **\$230 including hurricane relief**.

We have been assigned a new Adopt a Student by the Metropolis Philoptochos. His name is **Devon Latzen** and if you want to know more about him, see his picture and bio on the bulletin board. Supporting Devon helps him defray some of his schools costs. Our last student **Spencer Ramos** graduated in May with his Master's and was ordained by the Metropolitan soon after. Our 2017-2018 phone directories are now available. Come to our General Meeting on October 9 to get a new one.

October

Our next Board Meeting will be on Monday, October 2 at 11:00 a.m. Our next General Meeting will be on Monday, October 9 at 11:30 a.m.

November

We are planning on supporting Ahepa's Thanks-
Continued on the next page - - - ->

PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS, continued

giving Dinner on November 19 by helping to sell reservations as we did last year. Save the date on your calendar.

We will soon have a calendar on the bulletin board posting our meeting dates, baking schedules for the Christmas Bake Sale and for the Festival and other events.

– LINDA KALLIS,
Philoptochos President



Pictured to the left is Presvytera Petula Pantels who spoke about the Holy Icons and iconography at the Philoptochos General Members' Meeting on September 18, 2017

INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX

CHRISTIAN CHARITIES (I.O.C.C.) -Over the past few weeks appeals have been issued to send financial aid to support the efforts of the International Orthodox Christian Charities in serving the needs of those suffering the devastation from Hurricanes Harvey and Irma. Some have asked to learn more about IOCC. The IOCC arranged, through partners **Church World Service (CWS)** and **Good 360**, for two truckloads of hygiene kits, clean-up buckets, food, and baby products to the Houston area. The CWS truck arrived on 9/4 at St. Basil the Great Greek Orthodox Church containing 200 clean-up buckets and 6,000 hygiene kits. In Florida, where flooding and power outages remain problems, IOCC has been in touch with all the Orthodox parishes statewide, and staff is working to organize responses in the Naples, Jacksonville, Miami, and Keys areas. IOCC facilitated a local food and water distribution at St. Katherine Greek Orthodox Church in Naples, Florida.

Pray for those affected by the storm and for the IOCC as they support people in tremendous need. Also, contribute a financial gift to IOCC's Hurricanes Harvey & Irma Response Fund.

STEWARDSHIP

We wish to thank everyone for their feedback regarding last month's "Voice" article pertaining to the setting of a stewardship minimum for our parish. Many stewards contacted both Father Ted and me with their questions and viewpoints regarding this topic and for this we are very grateful. **Considering different viewpoints is essential to understanding the various aspects of an issue or topic, and improves the overall decision and outcome for all.** Stewardship members will be able to cast a vote regarding the setting of a stewardship minimum at the November General Assembly.

Two common feedback issues we have received are:

1. What about parishioners who are on a set monthly budget/income & the inability to increase their pledge? What does a minimum mean for them? What changes?

2. Do the majority of Greek Orthodox churches across the United States and/or Southern California have a set stewardship minimum for their parish? What is their minimum?

Answers to the feedback questions:

A-1: We understand that there will be some stewards that are on a fixed income and are unable to raise their stewardship pledge to a \$600 minimum. We want those stewards to know that they will still be considered stewards in good standing in the "sacramental life" of the church. The \$600 minimum requirement applies to having voting rights at a General Assembly and the right to rent the church hall for weddings, baptisms, parties, etc. at the lower member rental rate. Those under the \$600 minimum will lose voting rights and reduced rental rates, unless the priest, Fr. Ted, grants a waiver of hardship, which is allowed by the Archdiocese By-Laws, in which case they will have full membership rights like everyone else.

A-2: We checked with the National Stewardship Chairperson, Father James Kordaris, and found

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STEWARDSHIP UPDATE, continued

out that the majority of Greek Orthodox Churches do not have a minimum for the most part. He said that some larger churches in major metropolitan areas of the country are the ones with set minimum levels. In addition, ten Greek Orthodox parishes in Southern California were contacted and only one out of the ten has a stewardship minimum. That particular church is set at \$1,200 annually. Fr. Kordaris mentioned our unique situation being a "snowbird" parish with a large majority of members that support multiple churches. Some "snowbirds" consider St. George as their "secondary" parish, but the reality is that the expenses associated with this parish are just as real for this parish as it is for their "primary" parish.

So what does this all mean?: It's important to understand that the members of our church on both sides of the argument of setting up a minimum stewardship level, love our church and want to see it grow and be successful now and in the future. We have this in common. Shall we look at it from another viewpoint?

Let's determine what our average annual stewardship pledge is. We have 113 total stewardship members with the highest dollar pledge at \$10,000 and the lowest dollar pledge at \$100. To determine the "average" for our parish, let's subtract the top three dollar pledges & the bottom three dollar pledges from the stewardship annual pledge dollar total, then divide that total by 107 (113-6). Our average pledge is \$962. This seems to be a really high average and it is. Thanks be to God! So, a \$600 stewardship minimum is much lower than our current average giving level.

Based on this fact, maybe we don't need a by-law after all? However, let's compare our current stewardship total dollars to what it takes to operate the church on a monthly & annual basis. An "average" of \$20,000 per month for all church operating expenses totals \$240,000 per year. At our current pledge level, we are only contributing through stewardship one half of what takes to operate our church. Without the festival, everyone would have to DOUBLE their stewardship pledge

to be able to operate our church! Did you realize this fact? So, everyone doubling their annual stewardship pledge is not a very realistic goal, right? The problem, is not with the amount we are giving; it has to do with growing our membership! And our current members participate by volunteering in our largest fundraiser, our annual Greek Festival!

How do we grow membership? Most urgently, we must all reach out to each other with pastoral love, understanding and tolerance. We cannot allow any disagreements to drive a member away from our parish. Unfortunately, we all know that this has happened in the past. Let's not allow this to happen in the future! Lastly, we must reach out to our family members and friends who are not attending church on a regular basis. Let's extend an invitation now. If they say no, keep asking. Let's invite those who are non-orthodox as well. If every steward in our church were able to bring just one person to our church in the next couple of months, imagine our potential. Over 100 potential new members. Now that would be an effective Stewardship program!

—RHONDA LATKOVIC,
Stewardship Chairperson

ST. GEORGE BOOK STORE

Recent additions to our parish book store include the following:

Orthodoxy & Heterodoxy, by Andrew Steven Damik

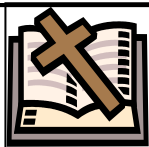
The Heavenly Banquet, by Fr. Emmanuel Hatzidakis

Our Thoughts Determine our Lives: Elder Thaddeus of Vitoonica

More charcoal and incense & prayer bracelets have arrived since last month.

Come and visit our St. George Bookstore whenever possible!

SUNDAY SCHOOL MESSAGE OUR PARISH SUNDAY SCHOOL



Schedule of Events

Our Sunday school classes began two weeks ago and will continue through the beginning of June. The yearly calendar will be sent out to the parents of our Sunday school children shortly. Some highlights include:

-October 15th, Pumpkin painting - Our children are invited to stay after church to paint pumpkins for Halloween. This activity was a hit last year (parents participated also)! We will have pizza and drinks available.

....December 10th, Christmas program - Immediately after church we will have our annual Christmas program.

....December 24th, Christmas caroling - After church services, we will visit 3 parishioners to sing Christmas carols and then go to Town Center Café for lunch.

....January 14th (date tentative), Lunch and a movie - Join the Sunday school group for some nourishing food and an inspiring movie.

....March 18th (date tentative), Stations of the Cross - Everyone will visit the Stations of the Cross at Shield's Date Garden, with lunch served at their café.

....June 3rd, End of Year Activity - certificates presented after church, followed by lunch and fun (specifics to be determined)

We are looking forward to a fantastic year. Our curriculum is focused on the Seven Sacraments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the lives of the Saints.

As a final thought, please appreciate the reasons why our younger students (ages 6 and below) attend church:

...."to pray"

...."to do stuff for God"

...."to go to Sunday school"

...."to do arts and crafts" and

...."to have fun"

Do you attend for some of the same reasons?

- JIM CHRISTOPOULOS,

Sunday School Superintendent

GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETINGS



At this time of year there will be two General Assembly Meetings for our St. George parish.

The **first General Assembly** is this **Sunday, October 1, 2017**. The two agenda items include upgrading our parish courtyard by installing a concrete patio area and installing a new tile floor in our parish hall.

The **second General Assembly** is scheduled for **November 2017**. This will be the regular **Fall General Assembly Meeting** with agenda items consistent with every Fall General Assembly Meeting of our parish. Included, however, in the agenda will be the approval of proposed parish by-law amendments. As always, only Stewardship members for 2017 may vote. Among the issues that are addressed in the proposed changes:

- 1. Parish Council members: total of 9 (instead of 11)
- 2. Stewardship- Minimum: \$600 per year. Application for "Hardship" to be submitted in confidence to the priest on a yearly basis.
- 3. Endowment Fund: Considered a Parish Council committee. But, will always report to the General Assembly.
- 4. All Parish Committees are to meet at least 3 times year.
- 5. Hiring of all personnel requires compliance with labor laws, harassment codes, and tax form requirements.
- 6. Limit of \$250 for any church purchase without authorization from Parish Council.

The exact date for the Fall General Assembly in November will be determined based on the schedule of any upgrade/construction needs of our parish.

2018 GREEK FESTIVAL



The first Festival meeting in preparation for the **2018 Festival on February 16–17, 2017** was held at our parish hall on Monday, September 11th. **George Argyros**, chairman of the 2018 Festival, shared this year's cooking schedule and noted areas where volunteer help will be needed: food preparations, equipment set-up, and take-down after the festival.

1. The cooking schedule. Cooking in preparation for our 2018 Festival will begin on Monday, January 8, 2018 preparing dolmathes. Preparing tyropites will begin on **January 15th**.
2. Areas where help will be needed in terms of publicity include the following: flier distribution to local chambers of commerce, country clubs; senior centers; college of the desert; social media. Donations for food and set-up items will be great blessings for our parish.
3. Volunteers are also needed during the weekdays leading up to the Festival to help with preparations. Those who cannot volunteer to work as needed may donate the monies needed to hire workers. "Donate-a-Shift" is an option for those who cannot physically do the work required. This will help greatly in reducing costs for hired help. For information as to how much a shift costs, contact George Argyros, the 2018 Festival Chairman, or Fr. Ted.

The next Festival meeting will be held at our parish hall on Monday, October 2nd at 7:00 p.m.

Advertising and promotion for the 2018 Festival will soon see the creation of the final drafts of fliers indicating the specifics of our Festival so that, as we near the end of the month and get into November, official publicity efforts can begin. As always, those who can help spread the word about our Festival are asked to do so. Also, kindly inform our Festival Chairman, George Argyros, of your availability to help for our Festival.

PARISH COUNCIL NOTES



At the latest Parish Council meeting, held on Tuesday, September 19, 2017, it was decided that a special General Assembly will be called for the purpose of seeking funds to upgrade the parish hall by installing a new flooring surface and to upgrade the parish courtyard by creating a concrete surface to accommodate food preparations during the course of our annual parish Greek festivals and various other parish fellowship events.

Regarding the upgrade for the courtyard, while this "surface" according to the letter issued by the County Health Department may be a "tarp," the option to construct a concrete surface complies best with safety concerns. The dimensions of this concrete surface covers the length of the courtyard from the annex to the wall separating our property from the apartments. The depth is to be 18 feet. The Parish Council has more than three bids for this project and has selected the bid from the Champion Construction company for \$16,611 and seeks approval for funds to be spent on this project of no more than \$18,000, allowing for unforeseen adjustments as required.

With regard to the upgrade for the parish hall, The new tile surface will include the installation of tile "squares" of 24 inches by 24 inches. After considering more than three bids for this project, the Parish Council has selected the Carpet Empire company for this project, with their bid of \$26,738, which includes free base board and free extra tiles to be used to replace tiles damaged over time for any reason. The Council seeks approval for funds no more than \$30,000 to allow for unforeseen adjustments as required.

The sum of \$48,000 sought for these two projects to be completed by November 2017 is to be taken from the St. George Wells Fargo Savings Account, which is now at \$144,000. However, the Parish Council has plans to raise the money spent on these projects to replenish the Wells

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PARISH COUNCIL NOTES, continued

Fargo Savings Account. A “thermometer” will be placed in our parish hall showing the amount raised through donations and various fundraising efforts as the goals of \$18,000 and \$30,000 respectively are reached.

Subject to approval from the General Assembly, designated contributions in memory of loved ones who have departed this life or in honor of living family members are most welcome. Please include a letter giving the names of those memorialized and/or honored with your donation and write either “courtyard project” or “parish hall project” in the memo section of your check.

BABY BOTTLE CAMPAIGN

Our St. George parish annual **Baby Bottle Campaign** will be held from **Sunday, October 8th to Sunday, October 15th** this year.

Baby bottles will be placed on the tables in our parish hall with instructions about donations to the **Birth Choice of the Desert** ministry in our Coachella Valley. This ministry is dedicated to helping expectant mothers and fathers welcome the birth of their pre-born child. It is a ministry which serves to counsel expectant parents in their calling to give life to their child and nurture him or her, rather than to opt for abortion.

This ministry is consistent with the teachings of our Orthodox Christian Faith, according to which human life is a gift from God and it is given at the time of conception. In addition, human life is to be nurtured and defended even unto old age until natural death occurs. God gives us our lives in order to glorify Him and He so loves every human being in the world that He gave His Only-Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, for his or her salvation.

Supporting Birth Choice of the Desert at this time tells the world that human life is precious at every age, and we belong to God.

+FR. THEODORE

ALTAR FLOWER BOUQUETS

I am pleased to announce that the Altar Flower Program was blessed with a wonderful gift from our beloved **Mr. Nick Demetropoulos**, who pledged to sponsor the entire Altar Flower Season from October, 2017 through May, 2018. We received his check for a total of **\$2,140.00** in August, 2017, and we are truly grateful to God for his loving kindness! Mr. Demetropoulos’ dedicated his gift to the memory of his family “may rest be eternal” to all! As Scripture says, “*Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!*” (2 COR. 9:15).

Be advised that the 2018 Altar Flower Program will resume in October, 2018, and continue with its regularly scheduled contributions and donations/dedications until May, 2019. The process will remain with the same procedure of participants signing the “Altar Flower Request Sheet” which, as always, will be posted on the Parish Hall Bulletin Board.

We encourage your cheerful donations, and giving to the Homeless Project, Baby Bottle Drive, Hurricane Harvey Victims, , Floridians, and others affected by Hurricane Irma which are all tax deductible items.

Thank you, and to God be all the Glory, Honor, and the Praise!

– LOUISE DOBBS BARRINGER
Altar flower Coordinator

GREEK FESTIVALS IN OCTOBER

St. Nectarios-Covina: Sept 29-Oct. 1, 2017

Address: 20340 E. Covina Blvd., Covina, CA.

Website: www.saintnectariosshrine.org

admission: \$2.00

St. Sophia-Los Angeles: Oct. 6-8, 2017

Address: Pico and Normandie in Los Angeles

Website: www.stsophia.org

admission: \$5.00

St. Nicholas-Temecula: Oct. 14-15, 2017

Address: Old Town Temecula Civic Center

Website: www.TemeculaGreekFest.com

admission: \$2.00

– Fliers for each Greek Festival listed above are available in our parish hall.

ENDOWMENT FUND REPORT

The Saint George of the Desert Endowment Fund grew from \$316,001.60 at month end July, 2017 to \$317,608.03 at the month end August, 2017.

Our current Asset Allocation follows the Fund's by-laws as shown below:

A. Domestic Equities.....	\$164,363.80.....	52%
B. Domestic Fixed Income ...	\$127,347.97	40%
C. International Equities.....	\$ 23,538.80.....	7%
D. Cash & Equivalents.....	\$ 2,357.46.....	1%
Total.....	\$317,608.03.....	100%

We began 2017 with a balance of \$288,807.91. The Endowment Fund has shown us that patient investing will get us to our goal of +\$500,000 so we can utilize the funds if necessary and voted upon. At current rates, not sustainable but as an example, we can reach \$500,000 in less than 5 years. We are currently seeing 11.7% annual returns. Performance against benchmarks will be revealed at the quarter-end report.

We also have on deposit 28 United Health Group shares as a stewardship deposit with a current value of \$5,124.56 which can be used at any time as an offering to the church with proper authorization of the Parish Council. Current Stock price is \$193.03/share with a 1.54% Dividend. This is included as our account's total value and is not considered part of the Endowment Fund. I would like to recommend we sell these shares and invest in an Income fund to preserve capital and reduce risk - or cash out if needed. This is also the recommendation of our fund manager, Michele Moore. I welcome feedback.

Parishioners are always welcome to donate by check to the Endowment Fund through the St George Parish Office with St George of the Desert Endowment Fund written on the Memo Line of the check. Remember the Church in your estate planning. To date, \$925 has been donated to the fund.

If you have any questions, thoughts, concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out.

—NICHOLAS A. LATKOVIC,
Endowment Fund Chairman

ST. DEMETRIOS AND THE ARMY

Every year, the memory of St. Demetrios is celebrated by our Church on **October 26th**. The truth is that there were many soldiers who were martyred for the Lord. One of these, and the one dearest to Matthew Davis, is St. Demetrios, the Patron Saint of Thessaloniki.

When we look at icons of St. Demetrios or St. George, we see one thing that makes them different from the appearance of others. Unlike most Saints, who have beards, both of these Saints are depicted as clean shaven. This is because, in the Roman Army, soldiers had no beards.

St. Demetrios had served with such distinction in the Roman Army that he was selected by the Emperor Diocletian to defend the region of the Empire around the region of present-day Thessalonika. In the course of events, after hearing about the life and ministry of Christ our God, he searched out the meaning of the Gospels from members of the Christian community that had been planted there by St. Paul.

In his conversion to Christianity, he decided to leave the army, which caused the ire of the pagan Roman governor. Part of his confession included his knowledge that Christ loves all people and that murder is against the Commandments of God. In the end, he was slain for confessing that Christ is the only True God.

The question of soldiers becoming Saints was raised as early as the 4th Century and was taken up by St. Basil the Great in his 13th Canon: *"Our fathers did not consider killings committed in the course of wars to be classifiable as murders at all, on the score, it seems to me, of allowing a pardon to men fighting in defense of sobriety and piety. Perhaps, though, it might be advisable to refuse them communion for three years, on the ground that their hands are not clean."* The Orthodox theologian, Fr. John McGuckin, of the Orthodox Church in America, writes, *"The reasons Basil gives for suggesting that killing in time of*

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ST. DEMETRIOS AND THE ARMY, continued

hostilities could be distinguished from voluntary murder pure and simple (for which the canonical penalty was a lifelong ban from admission to the churches and from the sacraments) is set out as the defense of sobriety and piety. This is code language for the defense of Christian borders from the ravages of pagan marauders. The difficulty Basil had to deal with was not war on the large-scale, but local tribal insurgents who were mounting attacks on Roman border towns, with extensive acts of rape. In such circumstances Basil has little patience for those who feel they cannot fight because of religious scruples. His sentiment is more that a passive non-involvement betrays the Christian family (especially its weaker members who cannot defend themselves but need others to help them) to the ravages of men without heart or conscience to restrain them.

The implication of his argument, then, is that the only fighting that Christians ought ever to accept, in order to defend the honor and safety of the weak, will be in-

herently a limited response, mainly because the honor and tradition of the Christian faith in the hearts and minds of pious and sober warriors will restrict the bloodshed to a necessary minimum." (www.oca.org.)

Since the Greek Revolutionary War and the war against Communism in Russia involving the "White Army," the Church has offered Holy Communion to all Orthodox soldiers, without imposing a period of penance, and this continues to be the practice today.

What St. Basil's Canon offers, however, is that Orthodox Christians should consider any act hastening the death of a human being as a grave tragedy and worthy of sorrow - something that can be lost in the midst of the "routine" violence portrayed daily on T.V., in video games, and on movie screens.

+FR. THEODORE WITH SIGNIFICANT
CONTRIBUTION FROM MATTHEW DAVIS



ADULT COLORING SESSION & LUNCHEON

When: Friday, OCTOBER 20th @ noon-2pm

Where: St. George Church Hall

RSVP: By OCTOBER 15th to Rhonda Latkovic

We will have a Fall Theme for our luncheon & coloring session! Lunch will be served at 12:00 PM with coloring to follow. A \$5.00 minimum donation is requested. There will also be a raffle. Coloring supplies provided.

Please join us!

Christmas Bread-Vasilopita Koulourakia



Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

The Ladies of Philoptohos Society will be baking again this year the traditional Christmas bread, Vasilopita and Koulourakia that are delicious any time of day.

Orders with your contribution should be made no later than **November 27, 2017**. Please place the completed order in an envelope marked "PHILOPTOHOS" in the basket on the Coffee Bar in the Church Hall or give to Lula Valis-sarakos, Pat Dalkas or Tina Veroulis in the office. If you have any questions, please call Lula at 760 200-8501 or Pat at 760-574-1531

PICK UP DATES:

Sunday, December 10, 2017 (following the conclusion of Church Services)

Sunday, December 17, 2017 (following the conclusion of Church Services)

We thank you in advance for your continued support of Philoptohos



NAME _____

PHONE _____

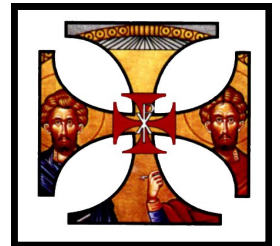
<u>ITEM</u>	<u>QUANTITY</u>	<u>UNIT PRICE</u>	<u>AMOUNT (\$)</u>
Koulourakia	_____	\$ 6.00	_____
Christmas Bread	_____	\$10.00	_____
Vasilopita Bread with Coin	_____	\$10.00	_____
<u>Make checks payable to Philoptochos</u>		Total Amount	\$ _____



**SUNDAY, 12:00 P.M.
NOVEMBER 19th**



**ST. GEORGE GREEK
ORTHODOX CHURCH Hall**



74-109 LARREA PALM DESERT, CA

Tickets can be purchased from Philoptochos or AHEPA 528

**All proceeds go to
Fr. Theophilos Theophilos Memorial Scholarship Fund.**

Donations accepted at www.ahepa528.org or mailed to:

AHEPA 528 Scholarship fund

PO Box 1735 Palm Desert, CA 92261-1735

contact@ahpea528.org

Please make any checks to AHEPA Chapter 528 or pay online. Scholarship awards benefit members of Saint George Church and the AHEPA 528 Family

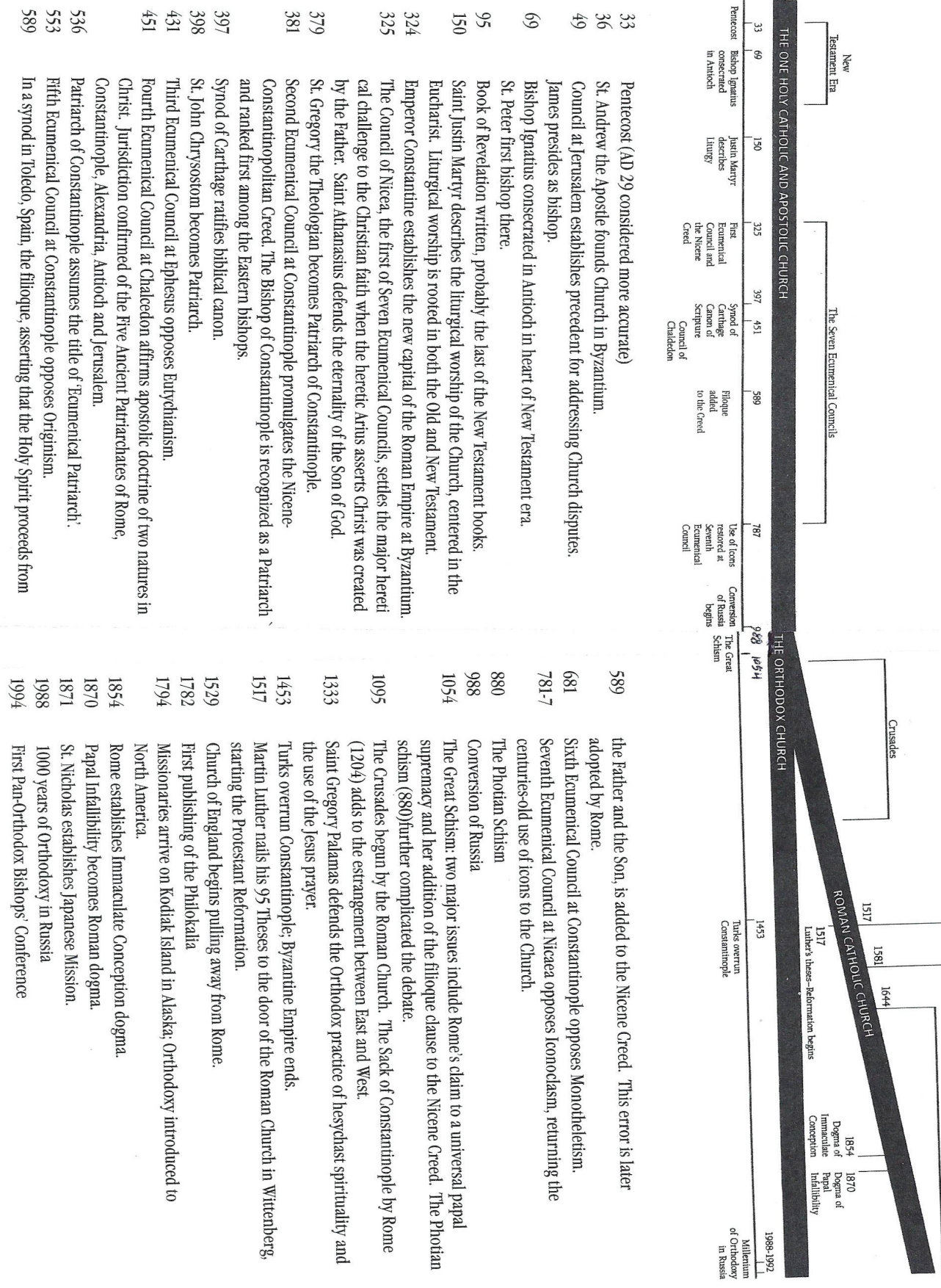
Deadline for Reservations: Sunday, November 12, 2017

Thank You for your Continued Support!

A Time Line of Church History

From Pentecost to Present

Major Historical Events of the Eastern Orthodox Church
 Compiled By Fr. Thomas Fitzgerald, Th.D.



- 33 Pentecost (AD 29 considered more accurate)
- 36 St. Andrew the Apostle founds Church in Byzantium.
- 49 Council at Jerusalem establishes precedent for addressing Church disputes. James presides as bishop.
- 69 Bishop Ignatius consecrated in Antioch in heart of New Testament era. St. Peter first bishop there.
- 95 Book of Revelation written, probably the last of the New Testament books.
- 150 Saint Justin Martyr describes the liturgical worship of the Church, centered in the Eucharist. Liturgical worship is rooted in both the Old and New Testament.
- 324 Emperor Constantine establishes the new capital of the Roman Empire at Byzantium.
- 325 The Council of Nicea, the first of Seven Ecumenical Councils, settles the major heretical challenge to the Christian faith when the heretic Arius asserts Christ was created by the father. Saint Athanasius defends the eternality of the Son of God.
- 379 St. Gregory the Theologian becomes Patriarch of Constantinople.
- 381 Second Ecumenical Council at Constantinople promulgates the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. The Bishop of Constantinople is recognized as a Patriarch and ranked first among the Eastern bishops.
- 397 Synod of Carthage ratifies biblical canon.
- 398 St. John Chrysostom becomes Patriarch.
- 431 Third Ecumenical Council at Ephesus opposes Eutychianism.
- 451 Fourth Ecumenical Council at Chalcedon affirms apostolic doctrine of two natures in Christ. Jurisdiction confirmed of the Five Ancient Patriarchates of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem.
- 536 Patriarch of Constantinople assumes the title of 'Ecumenical Patriarch'.
- 553 Fifth Ecumenical Council at Constantinople opposes Originism.
- 589 In a synod in Toledo, Spain, the filioque, asserting that the Holy Spirit proceeds from

- 589 the Father and the Son, is added to the Nicene Creed. This error is later adopted by Rome.
- 681 Sixth Ecumenical Council at Constantinople opposes Monothelism.
- 781-7 Seventh Ecumenical Council at Nicaea opposes Iconoclasm, returning the centuries-old use of icons to the Church.
- 880 The Photian Schism
- 988 Conversion of Russia
- 1054 The Great Schism: two major issues include Rome's claim to a universal papal supremacy and her addition of the filioque clause to the Nicene Creed. The Photian schism (880) further complicated the debate.
- 1095 The Crusades begun by the Roman Church. The Sack of Constantinople by Rome (1204) adds to the estrangement between East and West.
- 1333 Saint Gregory Palamas defends the Orthodox practice of hesychast spirituality and the use of the Jesus prayer.
- 1453 Turks overrun Constantinople; Byzantine Empire ends.
- 1517 Martin Luther nails his 95 Theses to the door of the Roman Church in Wittenberg, starting the Protestant Reformation.
- 1529 Church of England begins pulling away from Rome.
- 1782 First publishing of the Philokalia
- 1794 Missionaries arrive on Kodiak Island in Alaska; Orthodoxy introduced to North America.
- 1854 Rome establishes Immaculate Conception dogma.
- 1870 Papal Infallibility becomes Roman dogma.
- 1871 St. Nicholas establishes Japanese Mission.
- 1988 1000 years of Orthodoxy in Russia
- 1994 First Pan-Orthodox Bishops' Conference

St. George Greek Orthodox Church of the Desert
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Palm Desert, California 92261
web: www.go-stgeorge.org/ email: pdsaintgeorge@gmail.com
Telephone: (760)568-9901 / FAX: 9760) 568-9492

Schedule of Sunday Services: Orthros-8:30 a.m.
Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.
Sunday School-10:30 a.m.

OCTOBER 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1-2nd Sunday of Luke Ep.-2 Cor. 16: 16-7:1 Gos.-St. Luke 6:31-36 GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING	2 Philoptochos Board Meeting 11:00 a.m. Festival Meeting- 7:00 p.m.	3 No Bible Study.	4 Men's Bible Study- 2:00 pm.	5 Choir Practice- 1:00 pm	6	7 Vespers-5:00 p.m.
8-3rd Sunday of Luke Ep.-2 Cor. 9:6-11 Gos.-St. Luke 7:11-16 Baby Bottle Program begins	9 Philoptochos General Members Meeting- 11:30 a.m.	10 Bible Study- 10:00 a.m.	11 Men's Bible Study- 2:00 p.m. AHEPA Meeting- 6:30 p.m.	12 Parish Council—6:30 p.m.	13	14 Vespers-5:00 p.m.
15-7th Ecumenical Council Ep.-Titus 3:8-15 Gos.-St. Luke 8:5-15 Baby Bottle Program ends	16	17 Bible Study- 10:00 a.m.	18-ST. LUKE THE EVANGELIST Orthros-8:30 a.m. D. Liturgy-9:30 a.m. Men's Bible Study- 2:00 p.m.	19 Choir Practice- 1:00 p.m.	20 ST. GERASIMOS Orthros-8:30 a.m. D. Liturgy-9:30 a.m. Coloring Book Session- 12 noon	21 No Vespers
22-6th Sunday of Luke Ep.-Gal. 1:11-19 Gos.-St. Luke 8:26-39	23-ST. JAMES THE APOSTLE Orthros-8:30 a.m. D. Liturgy-9:30 a.m.	24 Bible Study- 10:00 a.m.	25 Men's Bible Study- 2:00 p.m.	26-ST. DEMETRIOS THE MARYR Orthros-8:30 a.m. D. Liturgy-9:30 a.m.	27	28 Vespers-5:00 p.m.
29-7th Sunday of Luke Ep.-Gal. 2:16-20 Gos.-St. Luke 8:41-56	30	31 Bible Study- 10:00 a.m.	<u>November 1</u> STS.COSMAS AND DAMIAN Orthros-8:30 a.m. D. Liturgy-9:30 a.m. Men's Bible Study- 2:00 p.m.	<u>November 2</u> Choir Practice- 1:00 p.m.	<u>November 3</u>	<u>November 4</u>