

APRIL 2019



Voice of St. George

**SAINT GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
OF THE DESERT**

74-109 LARREA ST., PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA



Inside this issue

“AND THE GRAVES WERE OPENED!”

At one time or another many may find ourselves identifying with St. Thomas who doubted the Resurrection of Christ, saying, “Unless I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe.” (St. John 20:25). In His love for both St. Thomas and all of humanity, our Risen Savior invited him to see for himself that He is alive, having risen from the dead. In his response, St. Thomas said, “My Lord and My God.” (St. John 20:28).

Too often the world around us distracts us from the details about God’s truth. We forget events in our lives when our Lord intervened to show us that His Resurrection is an actual fact. This apparently happened to St. Thomas. He must have forgotten that Christ raised Lazarus from the grave and reminded those

around Him at the time that He is the *Life and Resurrection*. (St. John 11:25).

With the resurrection of Lazarus, as with the resurrection of the widow’s son (St. Luke 7:11-17) and the raising of Jairus’ daughter (St. Mark 6: 40-43) from the dead, Christ’s followers understood that Christ is God, Who has the power to overcome death, not just for Himself, but for themselves and all of humanity, as well.

This is made abundantly evident at the moment of Jesus’ death upon the Cross, when “the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after the resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.” (St. Matthew 25: 52-53).

Upon meeting the Risen Christ, St. Thomas was assured that Christ is the One True God Who is the Author of life, including

his own life, as well as the lives of those to whom St. Thomas would share the news of Christ’s Resurrection. Like St. Thomas, all of the Apostles shared the joy of this Good News with gratitude. God has visited them in the flesh, conquering death with His death making this *our* victory, shown in the opening of the graves of those already dead. “That event [the opening of the graves] was to the early Church the vindication of God upon the truth and life of His Son, and the promise of Eternal Life to those who follow Christ in sincerity of faith and venture of deed.” (The Interpreter’s Bible, Vol. 7, pg. 609). St. John Chrysostom also noted, “For if for Lazarus to rise on the fourth day was a great thing, how much more for all those who had long ago fallen asleep, at once to appear alive, which was a sign of the future resurrection!” (Nicene & Post-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 10, On the Gospel of St. Matthew,

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"Homily 88," pg. 521).

This is the *Good News* for everyone in the world: Christ's Resurrection from the dead means that we are all given Eternal Life -- that, for every one of us, death has "lost its sting," as St. John Chrysostom would say. Indeed, we are grateful to God, Who has done all things to lead us to His Kingdom. Our gratitude is expressed as *joy* in sharing God's love. The *joy* is found in our comprehension that sharing God's love is a *privilege* and an *honor*. This is the essence of *Agape* love.

This "joyful gratitude" to God the Father was first expressed by Christ God Himself. At the Last Supper "[The Lord] thanks God the Father for the salvation that He Himself will grant to the world. This salvation is included in its entirety in this Mystery...the Holy Mystery called Thanksgiving [Eucharist]." (*The Heavenly Banquet*, by Fr. Emmanuel Hatzidakis, pg. 244). This is the basis of our union with Christ and with each other -- that we are grateful *to* God, as God is grateful *for* us -- for our personal salvation, as well as for the salvation of whole world. The Apostles and the early Christians would share God's *joyful* gratitude "*With Burning Hearts*" (to quote the title of Henri J.M. Nouwen's book pertaining to the Eucharistic life) and go on to establish the Christian Faith throughout the world.

The *joy* of the Resurrection of Christ is not the kind of joy that comes with a momentary "high" so common in our materialistic world. It is Divine Joy that is found in the fact that the life of each person in the world has priceless and eternal value because it has a purpose and a destiny: to be with the Risen Christ forever.

+FR. THEODORE

ENCYCLICAL FOR THE FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION 2019



Dearly Beloved,

"Today there come glad tidings of joy; it is the Feast of the Virgin. Things below are joined to things above. Adam is renewed, and Eve set free from her ancient sorrow."

These are the beginning phrases of one of the hymns for the great Feast of the Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos. In these few words, we receive the significance of the Feast. Heaven and Earth are united in the good news proclaimed by Gabriel to the Virgin Mary: she will give birth to the Savior, the Son of God. In this proclamation, Adam and Eve, on behalf of us all, can rejoice because through Jesus Christ, death is overturned. The effects of their sin - death and decay - are defeated in Mary's acceptance of the Angel's announcement to her. The story of salvation takes a new turn because of the proclamation that the Savior will be born of Mary. The Feast of the Annunciation is so important to our salvation that we interrupt our Lenten disciplines with a joyful celebration. This Feast is the embodiment of the Gospel, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have life eternal. For God sent His Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him." (John 3:16-17).

The incomprehensible mystery of the incarnation is presented to us in this Feast. As another hymn proclaims, "*God is come among men; He who cannot be contained is contained in a womb; the Timeless enters time...For God empties Himself, takes flesh, and is fashioned as a creature, when the angel tells the pure Virgin of her conception.*"

The Feast of the Annunciation is a herald of freedom and liberty from the tyranny of death and its oppression. It is no wonder that our Hellenic forebears chose this day to begin their struggle in 1821 against their Ottoman overlords. This Feast promises that the Messiah will proclaim

Continued on the next page ----->

ENCYCLICAL: THE ANNUNCIATION, Continued

liberty for all people. The Greek nation longed for that liberty and the Feast of the Annunciation inspired them to action. In the many Greek Independence Day celebrations that our parishes will hold to commemorate the events of 1821, we must remember that we are celebrating the universal causes of freedom, liberty and human dignity, and contrasting them to slavery, discrimination and repression. Yes, this will be a celebration of the most important day in Greek national history, but when the celebration is infused with our Orthodox understanding of human dignity, the celebration becomes one that all people, not just Hellenes, can appreciate and rejoice in.

The messages of liberty and human dignity still resonate and inspire us. Especially now when oppression and death still have their grip on our world. We are reminded of the violence, intolerance, and extremism occurring around us, whether in the horrendous events in New Zealand last week, the Middle East, or even in our own cities and land. The message of God's love for humanity, ultimately expressed in Jesus Christ, is a message of hope that we must strive to proclaim to all.

And so, we must sing to the world the words of the Apolytikion of the Feast of the Annunciation: *"Today is the crown of our salvation and the manifestation of the mystery that is from eternity."*

To those that celebrate their Feast Day, I wish all the blessings of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on this glorious Feast!

With Love in Christ,
++METROPOLITAN GERASIMOS,
Metropolitan of San Francisco

PARISH COUNCIL UPDATE

At the March 7th Parish Council meeting, the following discussions took place, with decisions made accordingly:

1. The members of the Parish Council want to meet together with the chairpersons of each major Festival station, along with the Festival general Festival chairman, George Argyros, in order to review this past year's St. George Festival. A time and place for the meeting will be determined, following feedback as pertaining to the availability of those who are called to participate in this meeting.
2. It was decided to pull funds from the J.P. Morgan stocks in order to cover the regular parish expenses throughout the year. This action is needed due to the shortfall in Festival income this year, which was due to the rains that came on Sunday during our Festival weekend.
3. It was suggested that an appeal be made to our parishioners asking if anyone wants to donate for the costs to clean and polish the Cross that is set atop our church dome. The estimated cost for this service is \$700.
4. It was decided to allow the Ladies of Philoptochos to sponsor this year's Palm Sunday Luncheon on Sunday, April 21st, since one of the major Philoptochos, the Easter Dinner, will not be held this year.
5. Plans will be drafted to begin renting the parish hall and the parish courtyard (either together, or separately) to the public for celebrations of birthdays, anniversaries, small weddings, confirmations, etc. Sample contracts for leasing our parish hall and property will be reviewed by our parish council members in order to craft a policy and lease agreements that work for our parish.
6. Fr. Ted reminded everyone about the Parish Lenten Symposium scheduled for April 6th.

CHURCH & WELLNESS

Escaping Evil Powers' "Bags of Tricks"

With the death and Resurrection of Christ, we are reborn with the grace of the Holy Spirit to be co-workers with our Lord. No longer are we destined to be apart from God; we now have the opportunity to always be with God starting from today and going into eternity. We are now armed with the power of the Cross of our Lord, which is at the same time the power over evil and the power of life itself, since, through the Cross, Christ conquered sin and death.

In the book entitled, *How Satan Deceives People* by Elder Cleopa (available on Kindle), we learn of the power of the Cross in giving wisdom to know the tricks of the devil and the need that we have to avoid his tricks. Accordingly, the following true story is shared, which is edited and paraphrased in the interests of space:

A certain Orthodox Christian monk prayed constantly for God to reveal to him the tricks of the devil so that he could be aware of these tricks and avoid falling prey to evil and destruction. After some years passed, an angel of the Lord visited this dedicated monk. The angel asked the monk to make the Sign of the Cross, which, as already noted, overcomes evil. By this he knew that he was being visited by an angel of God and not by a demon; for, a demon will not ask for the Sign of the Cross, which, as noted already, overcomes evil, but will flee far from It. After making the Sign of the Cross, the angel led him to a vision of demons in order to show him how demons think and to beware of their tricks. In this vision, the chief demon -- Satan -- was holding a counsel in order to hear from his demons how they trick people into destruction.

At first Satan was hearing a little demon explain that he would trick people into destruction by telling them that they are "good enough." Accordingly, they can go to church, fast and pray -- but *not too much*. After all, they are only human and they are not expected to "overdo" the practice of their religion. This would lead to practicing prayer and worship only "on occasion," al-

lowing them to have other matters of everyday life take on a greater priority. They eventually fell away and became consumed with such matters, distracted from prayer, and open to more and more temptations. Falling to temptations, while still assuming to be "good enough," causes destruction to relationships and lives, since "good enough" is never really *good enough*.

Another demon suggested that his method of destroying people was by convincing them that God and the devil do not even exist. As such, "good" and "evil" are only relative matters that need no forgiveness. One simply reaps what one sows in this life - "good deeds" are rewarded and "bad deeds" are punished. Period. "Good deeds," then, lead to pride and "bad deeds" lead to despair. Pride contributes to committing sin and destruction. Despair contributes to giving up on God, allowing demons to claim their souls. Pride and despair are the two best weapons to be used, especially when there is no hope in God.

Finally, another demon shared his method of destruction, which is more cunning and even worse than the previous methods. He allows people to believe in God. He even reminds them that God loves them no matter what. He even concedes that God will hold them accountable for the evil that they do if they do not repent. But, here's the twist: he keeps on telling them that they can repent *tomorrow*, not *today*. So they are duped into not repenting until the next day and the day after until, after many years, the evil that they have been committing without correcting themselves has become *a part of them*. Now, the demon owns them, because they are *addicted* to evil and their evil has become *their habit*. This, he reported, has been the best way to destroy people's lives.

The monk learned how important it is to avoid evil by always thanking Christ God for the Light of His Resurrection; the forgiveness of sins through Baptism and Confession -- and the opportunity to embrace the Holy Spirit through the Sign of the Cross. This thanksgiving to God in our daily lives is *the life of the Divine Liturgy*.

+FR. THEODORE

ST. JOHN CLIMACUS: INTRODUCING THE VERY SERIOUS SIDE OF GREAT LENT

Great Lent has two important "aspects." The one centers on the glories of Orthodoxy (the Sunday of Orthodoxy and the Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas). The other takes its cue from the Sunday of the Holy Cross, the Sunday on which everything becomes serious and more difficult, centering on sacrifice on the individual in the image of Christ.

Following the Sunday of the Holy Cross, there is the Sundays dedicated to St. John Climacus (St. John of the Ladder), and to St. Mary of Egypt. We find St. John living in the sixth or seventh centuries, growing spiritually while in the monasteries connected with St. Catherine's of Sinai. His writings have been gathered into a book under the title, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*.

It seems fitting to us that we remember the idea of the "Ladder" as a spiritual guide for believers who are serious in living a life-style of ascetic and sacrificial life in the Lord.

We can turn our thoughts to the Old Testament narrative about the "Ladder of Jacob" that is found in Genesis 28:12. Jacob dreamed that here was a ladder set up on earth, reaching up to heaven. In this vision, the angels of God were ascending and descending on this ladder. While this narrative is viewed as a prophesy of the Nativity of Christ from the most Holy Virgin Mary, it is also an image of saintly efforts that lead to heaven, as well as the spiritual pit-falls that lead back down the ladder, away from heaven.

The Ladder describes how to raise one's soul and body to God through acquisition of ascetic virtues. This seems strange to us in the Western culture. Every chapter in *The Ladder* speaks of "steps" along the way toward the Heavenly Kingdom. There are thirty "steps" on this "ladder," which correspond to the age of Christ at the time of His Baptism and the beginning of His historic ministry.

Indeed, *The Ladder* falls into three sections. The first seven "steps" concern the general virtues

necessary for spiritual life, while the next nineteen "steps" give instruction on overcoming vices and building virtues consistent with living a spiritual life in Christ.

The final four "steps" concern higher virtues toward which one who is dedicated to living such a life-style must aim. The final "rung" of this Ladder reaches toward the value of prayer and sums up the characteristics of sincere prayer -- stillness, supreme dispassion, and *Agape Love*, the most supreme virtue of all.

Originally, *The Ladder* was written for monks in St. John's monastery near St. Catherine's Monastery at Mt. Sinai. Those pursuing such a spiritual life are to strive toward a life-style that is *absorbed* into the life of the Anointed One. This effort leads to living in *the likeness of God*.

St. John's *The Ladder* gives a detailed explanation regarding how sinful men and women can progress further on the path to finding eternal life with the God-Man, Jesus Christ our Savior.

It is St. Mary of Egypt who *personifies* one who puts the "steps" of St. John's "Ladder" into living action.

The point to celebrating the Resurrection of Christ from the dead is for us to live a life-style that connects with Christ in His Resurrection and for which, by extension, we are, like the thief on the cross, "remembered in His Kingdom." It is a celebration that never ends, for it is *life in the Day of our Lord - the eighth day in which the sun never sets*.

For sure, there will come a time when we stand before the Maker and are told in essence: "Welcome good and faithful servant. You did your best to minister to your neighbor and fellow human being. Now, come and share in the Great Feast of the Lord prepared for all faithful people who share in His work."

--MATTHEW DAVIS

"SPIRITUAL THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH"

by
Deacon Euthym

"Prayer affords an experience of spiritual liberty of which most people are ignorant. The first sign of emancipation is a disinclination to impose one's will on others. The second--an inner release from the hold of others on one's self."
--Archimandrite Sophrony

Most of us initially see prayer as a task, something we are "supposed to do". Often, we will want to decompress by watching TV, reading a mindless magazine, gossip, play a game, drink....you get the idea, I want to do what I want to do. Essentially though we become prisoners of our search for relief and freedom. (just try turning the TV off when you've been watching for an hour or two!) This thought by Archmandrite Sophrony basically helps us to truly understand what prayer is designed to do...to liberate us and give us freedom. The two steps Fr. Sophrony mentions are: 1) a lack of desire to impose our will on others and, 2) a lack of concern about what others think about us. It is, in essence, *dispassion* toward the temporal concerns with humility, that leads us to true prayer and spiritual liberty. Rather than becoming slaves to the world, through prayer, we become free and unencumbered, having a positive approach to our life and we can follow the path toward holiness.

Certainly, these words are important for us today: *"A time is coming when men will go mad, and when they see someone who is not mad, they will attack him, saying, 'You are mad; you are not like us..."* --St. Anthony the Great

The reason why we attend Liturgy; need confession and spiritual guidance; why we unite in Holy Matrimony are that these Holy Mysteries help us to discern our spiritual status. St. Anthony warns us that, at some point, being a reason-endowed Christian will seem like madness to others who have fallen away from the Lord. Look around, it is happening now.

By staying immersed in the spiritual life of the

Church, we know who we are and where we stand. This is not a political or social commentary...it is strictly spiritual. This is where we need to take our stand, not with worldly conflicts, political discussions, social anxiety; but in our spiritual life and in what we believe in terms of our relationship with God.

Detach from the world (be in the world, but not of the world) and attach to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This is a daily conscious act and needs to be actively cultivated.

CANADIAN RADIO & TELEVISION NEWS HONORS J.J. RICHARDS

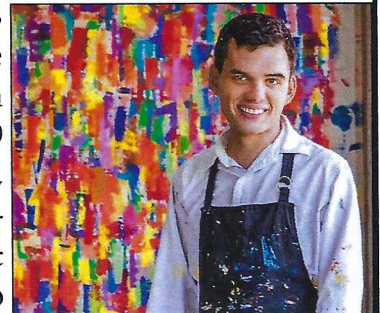
The Radio Television News Directors Foundation of Canada has announced the inaugural *J.J. Richards Scholarship*. The award is open to students registered full-time in their third or final year in a recognized journalism program in Canada. Candidates must submit a radio documentary between two and 30 minutes long, completed by the entrant and not a team. Judging criteria will be based on excellence in storytelling, originality and the quality of actualities and clips. The entry deadline is March 29.

J.J. Richards was a pioneer in the broadcasting industry, starting his career as a teenage disc-jockey in Brandon, MB before moving on to *CKUA* Edmonton, *CBC* and *CHUM* in Toronto, *CKDA* in Victoria, and *CFUN/QMFM* in Vancouver.

NICHOLAS KONTAXIS' ART IN LONDON

We are grateful to God that the art work of **Nicholas Kontaxis** was exhibited in **London, England**, as his work has reached **international recognition**. One of five artists, Nicholas was

selected from hundreds of others for the **Dorchecter Collection 45 Park Lane's 2019 Art Program**, entitled, *"Color Vision,"* highlighting optimism & innovation. The Solo Exhibition featured 43 stunning paintings.



Bright One
Exhibition by Nicholas Kontaxis

AHEPA NEWS



The next AHEPA meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 3rd 2019, 6:30pm at St. George Church. PLEASE RSVP, so there may be enough Pizza for those in attendance. We have 2 new members to initiate.

Scheduled events:

- May 19th AHEPA Sunday
- District Convention, June 7-9, 2019 Chandler AZ
- 2019 Supreme convention June 30- July 5 2019 at The Palmer House, in Chicago, Ill.

For those intending to go to the Chicago Convention, delegates must be in by May 1st this year. Please let us know.

Sunday, May 19, 2019 is AHEPA Sunday. There will be a Memorial Service for AHEPA brothers who have departed this life. In addition, scholarship awards from the AHEPA 528 Fr. T.P. Theophilos Memorial Scholarship Fund will be imparted to deserving college students from our St. George parish and AHEPA 528 members: <http://ahepa528.org/scholarship.htm>. **Applications for consideration for scholarship awards must be received by May 1st.**

To donate to this Scholarship Fund, please make sure to contact the AHEPA Chapter 528 website at: www.ahepa528.org/

Brothers, we need to focus our energies on our 2019 Membership initiative - INVITE 1! All of us have individuals in our family, or neighborhood who can become a member of our great fraternity. 2019 membership dues can be paid online at: ahepa528.org/membership.htm.

--WYNN STORTON,

Supreme Governor, AHEPA Western Region 8;
AHEPA 528 Chapter President

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS



On Saturday, March 23, 2019 our annual Sunday School Lenten excursion to Shield's Date Farm in Indio took place, where our students and their parents followed the exhibition showing the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. Sunday School superintendent, **Jim Christopoulos** guided the students through the exhibitions, adding inspiring explanations pertaining to the teachings of our Holy Orthodox Church. Fr. Ted also fielded questions that had been brought up during the luncheon at the Date Farm restaurant following the excursion.

The exhibit consists of stations showing events in the life of our Lord, with tablets available to read passages from the Bible explaining the particular event depicted.

Over the month of March, Sunday School classroom #1 was made to house the **St. George parish bookstore** and our newly founded "reading room." Classroom #1 now doubles as a Sunday School classroom on Sundays, and a book store/reading room on weekdays.

The next Sunday School event will be held on **Holy Friday, April 26, 2019**, when our students and their parents are invited to participate in the **Holy Friday Sunday School Retreat**, led by **Deacon Euthym**, beginning at **11:00 a.m.** (immediately following the Service of the Royal Hours).



To the left, Stephen Hawkins reads a passage from the Bible explaining an event in the life of Christ depicted on the excursion through Shield's Date Farm. To the right, Jim Christopoulos; seen at the far left is Alexandra Dymond.

ST. GEORGE GOLF TOURNAMENT

Saturday, May 4, 2019 will find St. George parishioners and friends from our general Southern California community teeing off for our annual **St. George Golf Tournament**.

The tournament will be held at **Desert Falls Country Club in Palm Desert**. Registration will be at **11:00 a.m.**, with the Shot-gun start set for 12 noon. Following the golf tournament, the tournament **Awards Dinner** will be held at our St. George Greek Orthodox parish hall at **6:00 p.m.**

Enclosed, please find a tournament registration form, which includes a separate section in which to make dinner reservations for those who will not be golfing, but who will be supporting this event with their presence at the Awards Dinner. This "combined" registration and reservation form indicates the details pertaining to each event, as well as to the entire day's activities.

Plan to join us on the golf course and/or at the Awards Dinner to support our St. George parish.

OUTREACH FOR THE HOMELESS

On **Tuesday, April 16th** (at Miles Park in **Indio**) and on **Thursday, April 18th** (at Sunrise Park in **Palm Springs**), St. George will again be helping to feed and clothe the homeless of our Coachella Valley community, partnering with the Street Life organization.

Many blessings to those who have already donated clothing, blankets and who helped make "hygiene kits." Donations of clothing are still being accepted. Place them in the "Street Life" bin in the parish hall.

For more information and to volunteer to distribute clothing and food to the homeless on these dates, please contact **Rhonda Latkovic** who is coordinating this effort.

CLEANING & POLISHING THE CROSS ATOP OUR CHURCH DOME

Many blessings to those who have contributed to the beautification of our church dome. Anonymous donations have been given, asking only in return that we pray for each of our parishioners (which includes those who have donated) as we continue through our Lenten Season.

At this point, the cross atop our dome has been cleaned, polished and treated with a sealant. It is hoped that the sealant will preserve the luster of the cross over the long term. Should the sealant hold up over the hot summer months, plans will proceed to clean and polish the entire church dome. Donations have been given by parishioners to pursue this effort.

ST. GEORGE PARISH HOSTS EISENHOWER PASTORAL SEMINAR

Through the offices of **Eisenhower Medical Center's Chaplaincy and Pastoral Services**, **Aadila Sabat-St. Clair** and **Chaplain Donald Craig** will speak to pastors and leaders of Coachella Valley parishes and synagogues on **Friday, May 10, 2019** at the parish hall of our **St. George Greek Orthodox Church**. **Fr. Ted** will serve as host pastor for this event.

The speakers will introduce to area pastors the operations of the Eisenhower Pastoral care and Chaplaincy program and explain how pastors throughout the community can best facilitate the spiritual needs of the patients from their respective congregations.

Through strong communication and cooperation among community pastors and the pastoral care and chaplaincy offices at Eisenhower Medical Center, a spiritual atmosphere will be created in which patients and their families can find comfort, hope and peace. Pastors, chaplains, and counselors can work together to provide in-patient care, as well as out-patient care for purposes of helping each other to help those who are in need of physical and spiritual healing.

PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS



February:

Outreach to the homeless continued following our Greek Festival, with donations of needed clothing, coats and blankets given out through the **Street Life Project**.

March:

--March 9 - Membership Luncheon, in the hall, 47 attendees, wonderful menu put together by the committee, with wine tasting and a drawing for door prizes as part of our luncheon event. (See enclosed photos.) We are still collecting your membership renewal. Send in your envelope to the office with your checks made out to Philoptochos and include on the memo line "membership dues."

--March 15 - we made packets of food to give to the homeless. They will be for the **Street Life** people and for those parishioners who would like to carry them in their car to give a person standing in need.

--We made diplas and sold them on Sunday, March 24. They were very popular.

April:

--Easter Bake sale will be on April 14 and 21 (Palm Sunday). Baking will be during the week of April 8. Come help to make cookies and package them.

--April 16 and 18 will be our Outreach nights to serve the homeless, working with **Street Life**. See **Rhonda Latkovic** for details.



Nearly 50 women parishioners of St. George gathered for the annual Philoptochos Membership Luncheon at our parish hall on Saturday, March 9, 2019.



The "Wine-tasting bar" at the Philoptochos Membership Luncheon. From left Jane Miksha, Linda Kallis and Lula Valissarkos.



The Philoptochos Membership Luncheon's "Welcome Committee" of Tina Veroulis (left) and Pauline Latkovic (right) gladly accepted 2019 Philoptochos Membership applications.



To the left, Emily Tcharos poses with Jane Miksha, who provided the wine-tasting treats at the Philoptochos Membership Luncheon on March 9th. Emily holds the raffle prize of a fine bottle of wine that she won.



Philoptochos Membership Luncheon menu items were placed on decorative platters by the event's "kitchen crew:" From left to right: Kalitsa Xitco, Pat Dalkas, and Rhonda Latkovic.

STEWARDSHIP REPORT FOR THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Our church is unique in that our membership consists of both full-time & part-time residents, with a high percentage of members belonging to two churches. Over the past 5 years our membership has stayed fairly flat at around 115-120 members. Stewardship has also remained fairly steady at \$115K-\$130K total pledges annually. Our average family annual pledge amount has been in the \$1000-\$1200 range also.

Our Stewardship Pledge goal for this year is \$125K, remaining the same as last year. As of today, March 31st, 2019 we have reached \$107K in pledges from 105 stewards for the year. We had 18 parishioners who had not yet pledged as of the beginning of the month, and after contacting them, only 7 have not yet renewed their pledge. Below is a three year recap of our total pledges, number of stewards, & average amount pledged, per comparable time frames.

YEAR	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2017</u>
Pledge	\$106,785	\$112,217	\$107,000
Pledges	105	95	87
Average	\$1017	\$1181	\$1229

Despite the generosity of our stewards, we are still not able to fully fund 100% of our annual expenses from stewardship alone. To offset this shortfall, as you all know, we execute both an annual Greek Festival and Golf Tournament to raise the additional funds needed. Approximately \$240K is needed annually to operate the church. This puts increased pressure on all church members, including the parish council members and event chairpersons, to volunteer and work to make the extra events a success. This should show to all of us, how much our stewardship sustaining support is truly needed and appreciated.

Later today, I have the opportunity to participate in a live on-line presentation and chat called "Stewardship Calling" organized by the Metropolis of San Francisco. Information and tools discussed will be the "Best Practices" of successful

churches across the country, which should provide us with needed information and strategies. The summary will be given to the parish council at the April meeting.

Please know that we are truly grateful to everyone for their support. Thank you.

--Report by:

RHONDA S. "EVANGELIA" LATKOVIC,
Stewardship Chairperson

ST. GEORGE PARISH LENTEN SYMPOSIUM

Please check out the flier enclosed in this issue of *The Voice of St. George*, which announces the particulars regarding our St. George Parish Lenten Symposium taking place on **Saturday, April 6, 2019** beginning at **10:00 a.m.**

The symposium is hosted by members of our St. George Bible Study group. Parishioners from St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church in Temecula; St. Prophet Elias Greek Orthodox Church in San Bernardino, and St. Raphael Antiochian Orthodox Church in Thousand Palms have been invited to join us, as their pastors will be serving to help make up a panel of clergy who will entertain questions and/or concerns raised by participants with regard to the teachings and worship of our Holy Orthodox Church.

Introductory remarks will be provided by **Deacon Euthym, Fr. Andrew Lesko** (St. Nicholas parish in Temecula) and **Fr. David Kruse** (St. Raphael parish in Thousand Palms) in the morning session. Following a brief "silent time" for personal reflections and a break for all to partake of a Lenten lunch, the afternoon will be given over to answering any questions and/or addressing any general spiritual concerns of participants with the goal of encouraging one another to "fight the good fight" that involves our Lenten discipline and the many aspects of our daily lives throughout the year.

SCHEDULE OF 2019 HOLY WEEK SERVICES**April 21st - April 28th.****Palm Sunday, April 21st**

Nymphios Service--6:00 p.m.

Holy Monday, April 22nd

Nymphios Service --6:00 p.m.

Holy Tuesday, April 23rd

Nymphios Service (Kassiani) --6:00 p.m.

Holy Wednesday, April 24th

Pre-Sanctified Divine Liturgy--9:00 a.m.

Holy Unction Service --6:00 p.m.

Holy Thursday, April 25th

Divine Liturgy --9:00 a.m.

Service of the 12 Gospels --6:00 p.m.

Holy Friday, April 26th

Royal Hours -- 9:00 a.m.

Sunday School Retreat --11:00 a.m.

Descent from the Cross (Apokathilosis)--12 noon

Epitaphio Service --7:00 p.m.

Holy Saturday, April 27th

Divine Liturgy --9:00 a.m.

Service of Paschal Preparation --11:00 p.m.

Sunday-The Resurrection from the dead of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ -April 28th

Service of the Anastasis -- 12:00 a.m.

Divine Liturgy --12:30 a.m.

Agape Vesper Service -- 4:00 p.m.

OUR "NEW-LOOK" PARISH BOOKSTORE

Our parish bookstore has been newly established in Classroom #1. This classroom serves both as a Sunday School classroom and parish bookstore.



Our parish bookstore now located in Classroom #1.

The bookstore is stocked with the latest arrivals of Orthodox books dealing with spiritual life and Lenten discipline. In addition, Holy Week books are now available.

Along with religious items such as hand censors, incense, charcoal, votive candle wicks, there is also a great selection of greeting cards which feature icons of our Lord and the Saints of our Church and which can be used for many occasions: sympathy; "get well"; name day...etc.

A rich inventory of icons is available. Icons vary in size from icons for posting on walls; icons for automobile dash boards; small icons for traveling.

Finally, our bookstore features special "resource books" which are volumes of Greek History and Classic tracts from ancient Greek philosophers, as well as the writings of our Church Saints (The Volumes of *Nicene & Post Nicene Fathers*).

ST. GEORGE MEMORIAL WALL & GARDEN--As announced in previous editions of *The Voice of St. George*, as well as at our Spring General Assembly Meeting, we are in process of the development and manufacture of a memorial wall & garden project for our Saint George Orthodox Church. The bid from W & E Baum has been approved for a 4 foot by 40 inch aged bronze wall that will hold 64 nameplates sized 2 1/2 in. by 10 in. (sizes are approximate) Individualized nameplates will memorialize those who have fallen asleep in the Lord.

Phase 1 of the memorial wall and garden project has been funded by an anonymous steward of our church and we are extremely grateful for their donation! This donation is for the bronze wall itself but not the nameplates. The aged bronze wall, manufactured by W & E Baum, will be mounted on the wall to the left side of the bell tower. A bench and flowers will be added to the beds surrounding and across from the wall for those who wish to meditate, reflect, and pray for their beloved who have passed. At this time, there are only 22 name-plate spaces left.

Phase 2 of the project will move to the right hand side wall of the bell tower. Details regarding Phase 2 will be presented in future editions of *The Voice of St. George*.

St. George Greek Orthodox Church of the Desert
74-109 Larrea St. / P.O. Box 4755
Palm Desert, California 92261
web: www.go-stgeorge.org/ email: pdsaintgeorge@gmail.com
Telephone: (760)568-9901 / FAX: 9760) 568-9492

APRIL 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Sunday Schedule Orthros-8:30 a.m. D. Liturgy-9:30 a.m. S.School-10:30 a.m.	1 Philoptochos Board Meeting- 11:00 a.m.	2 Bible Study- 10:00 a.m.	3 Pre-Sanctified Divine Liturgy- 6:00 p.m. AHEPA-6:30 pm	4 Choir-1:00 p.m.	5 Pre-Sanctified Divine Liturgy- 9:00 a.m. 4th Salutation Service -6:00 pm.	6 Parish Lenten Symposium 10:00 a.m.
7- St. John Climacus Ep.-Heb.6:13-20 Gos. St.Mark 9:17-31	8	9 Bible Study- 10:00 a.m.	10 Pre-Sanctified Divine Liturgy- 6:00 p.m.	11 Choir - 1:00 pm Parish Council- 2:30 p.m. Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete- 6:00 p.m.	12 Pre-Sanctified Divine Liturgy- 9:00 a.m. Akathist Hymn- 6:00 p.m.	13
14 St. Mary of Egypt Ep.-Heb.9:11-14 Gos.-St. Mark 10:32-45	15 Philoptochos General Members' Meeting-11:30 a.m	16 Bible Study- 10:00 a.m.	17 Pre-Sanctified Divine Liturgy- 6:00 p.m.	18 Choir- 1:00 p.m.	19 Pre-Sanctified Divine Liturgy- 9:00 a.m.	20-SATURDAY OF LAZARUS Orthros-8:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy- 9:30 a.m.
21 <u>PALM SUNDAY</u> Ep.-Phil. 4:4-9 Gos.-St. John 12: 1-8	22 <u>HOLY MONDAY</u> Nymphios Service-6:00 p.m.	23 <u>HOLY TUESDAY</u> Nymphios Service-6:00 pm	24 <u>HOLY WEDNESDAY</u> Pre-Sanctified Divine Liturgy- 9:00 a.m. Holy Unction- 6:00 p.m.	25 <u>HOLY THURSDAY</u> Divine Liturgy- 9:00 a.m. Service of the 12 Gospels-6:00 pm	26- <u>HOLY FRIDAY</u> <u>Holy Hours-9:00</u> <u>Sunday School</u> <u>Retreat-11:00am</u> <u>Descent from the</u> <u>Cross-12 pm</u> <u>Epitaphio-7:00pm</u>	27 <u>HOLY SATURDAY</u> Divine Liturgy- 9:00 p.m. Resurrection Canon - 11:00 p.m.
28 The Resurrection of our Savior, Jesus Christ Anastasis-12 a.m. Divine Liturgy- 12:30 a.m. Agape Vespers- 4:00 p.m.	29 ST. GEORGE THE MARTYR Orthros-8:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy- 9:30 a.m.	30	<u>MAY 1</u>	<u>MAY 2</u>	<u>MAY 3</u> THE LIFE- GIVING FONT Orthros-8:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy- 9:30 a.m.	<u>MAY 4</u> ST. GEORGE ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT At: Desert Falls Country Club: Registration-11 am. <u>Tee-off-12 noon</u> Tournament Dinner - 6:00 p.m.

ST. GEORGE

LENTEN PARISH SYMPOSIUM:

LIFE AFTER DEATH: "INQUIRE WITHIN"

SYMPOSIUM INCLUDING TOPICS RELATED TO
ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN SPIRITUAL LIFE & DISCIPLINE:

-THE NATURE & PRACTICE OF SACRAMENTAL LIFE IN EVERYDAY LIVING-

SATURDAY, APRIL 6, 2019

AT:

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA

10:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.

PROGRAM:

10:00 A.M. - WELCOME AND MORNING PRAYER

10:30 - 11:30 - SPEAKERS: DEACON EUTHYM KONTAXIS, (ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH, PALM DESERT), FR. DAVID KRUSE (ST. RAPHAEL ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH, THOUSAND PALMS) & FR. ANDREW LESKO (ST. NICHOLAS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH, TEMECULA)

11:30 - SUMMARY AND REFLECTION

12:00 P.M. - 1:00 P.M. - LUNCH

1:00 P.M. - 3:30 P.M. - SYMPOSIUM (QUESTIONS & ANSWERS)

3:30 P.M. - 4:00 P.M. - VESPERS

St. George Memorial Wall & Garden Name Plaque

INSTRUCTIONS:

Print this form and supply the information requested.

This form is to be used when making a Saint George Memorial Wall & Garden donation in honor of a deceased relative. For a donation of \$175.00, the name of the person or person(s), i.e. husband & wife, for whom the memorial donation is made will be placed on a 2 1/2 inch by 10 inch bronze plaque. Each plaque will be etched with the words "Memory Eternal" and with the deceased persons first & last name(s) only and mounted on the Memorial Wall & Garden bronze wall.

MEMORIAL DONATION IS MADE IN THE NAME OF:

(Print name(s) as you want on the plaque)

DATE OF DEATH: _____

DONATION IS FROM:

(Name of person making the donation)

*(Name & address of person(s) to whom acknowledgement is to be sent)

ADDRESS _____

CITY: _____

STATE: _____ **ZIP:** _____

PHONE: _____

SIGNATURE of person submitting form:

To make your donation, you can do one of the following:

- Fill out the form and either choose to drop off the form and payment to the church office or mail the form and payment to: Saint George Orthodox Church, P.O.Box 4755, Palm Desert, CA 92261. You may pay for your memorial donation by check or credit card.
- Check # _____
- Cash \$ _____
- Credit Card Info:

Type _____ Number _____

Expiration Date _____ CCV _____

Authorized Signature: _____

Example of Plaque:

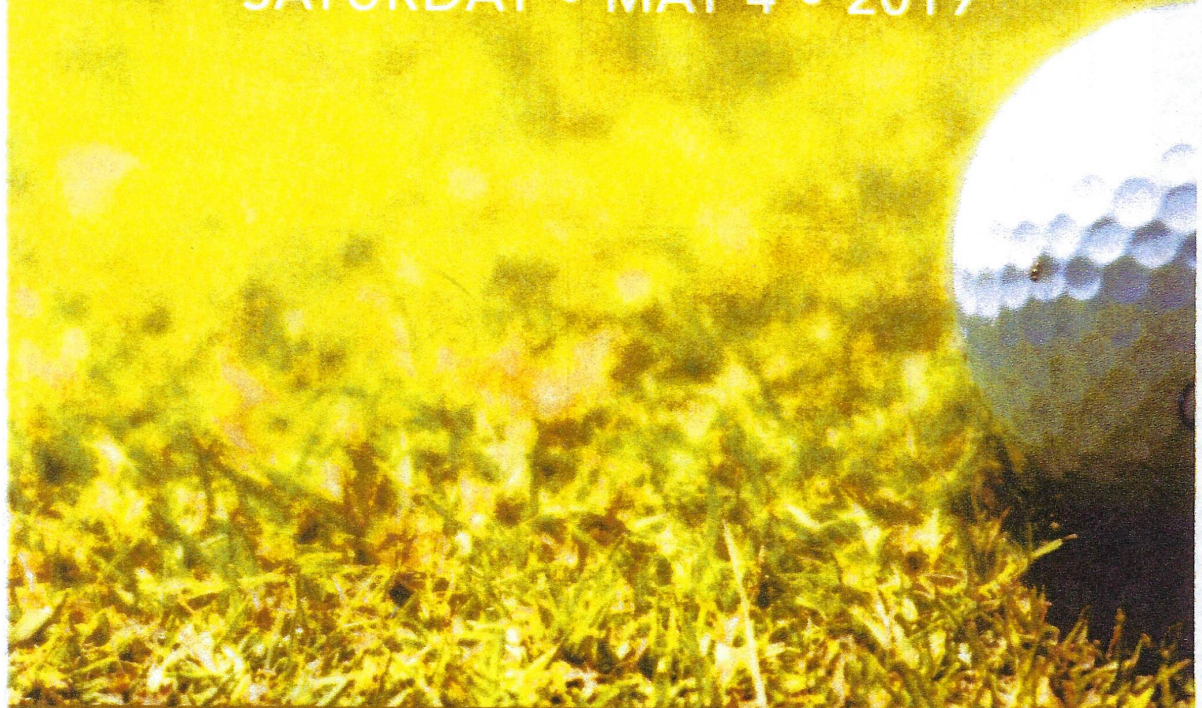
Memory Eternal
o (first & last name(s) of deceased) o

*Any questions, please contact Rhonda Latkovic at (760) 610-1598 or r.s.fleminglatkovic@gmail.com



ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

SATURDAY • MAY 4 • 2019



DESERT FALLS COUNTRY CLUB

111 DESERT FALLS PARKWAY • PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA

FOR INFO CALL: 760-568-9901

TOURNAMENT DETAILS

Date & Time
 Saturday, May 4, 2019
 11am Registration
 12 noon Shotgun Scramble Format

Entry Fee
 \$175 includes golf and dinner

Entry Deadline
 April 26, 2019

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS	
11 am	Registration & Raffle
12 noon	Shotgun Start / Scramble Format
5 pm	Social Hour / Appetizers St. George Greek Orthodox 74109 Larrea Street, Palm Desert, CA 92260
6 pm	Traditional Greek Dinner / Dance

Hole in One
 Sponsored by Unicars Honda



Payment
 Entry Fee due by April 26, 2019
 Pay by credit card or check.

Contact
 760.568.9901
 gargyros@verizon.net

EVENT REGISTRATION

Name _____

Company (Organization) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

INDEX

PLAYER NAME(S)

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

PAYMENT INFORMATION

Individual Player(s) _____ (# of players) x \$175 \$ _____

Tee Sponsorship (s) _____ (# of sponsorships) x \$100 \$ _____

Traditional Greek Dinner _____ (# of dinners) x \$35 \$ _____

Donation _____ \$ _____

Total Amount \$ _____

REGISTRATION AND PAYMENT

Registration deadline:
 Friday, April 26, 2019

Pay by credit card or make checks payable to:
 St. George Greek Orthodox Church

Send check and registration form to:
 PO Box 4755 Palm Desert, CA 92261