

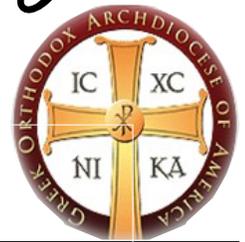
NOVEMBER 2019



# Voice of St. George

SAINT GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH  
OF THE DESERT

74-109 LARREA ST., PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA



Inside this issue

## DOES THE DIVINE LITURGY CHANGE US?

The joke goes like this:

A mother went to wake up her son, saying, "Come on! You are going to be late for church." He answered, "I don't want to go! I don't like them and they don't like me!" She insisted, "But, you're the priest!" ... Indeed, a joke can make a kernel of truth seem ridiculous.

The Divine Liturgy is celebrated every Sunday and during the week days in commemoration of events in the life of our Savior and in remembrance of the Saints. Yet, we still find ourselves in the same old place spiritually, harboring resentments and even hatred, still being unhappy and stressed out. Children have grown up seeing their parents going to Sunday services every week, and then coming home to argue and insult each other all the while. Why should they go to church? Do they see any change in

the behavior of the adults in their lives? Is there any more peace in their homes? Do they see examples of forgiveness and repentance? Are they hearing our prayers, or just our complaints? Yes, it's easy to focus on the parents, but we clergy are not immune to our own failures to acquire peace, or find forgiveness (or grant forgiveness). We, too, are not immune to the spirit of ingratitude.

It is time for all of us to embrace the spirit of repentance by embracing Christ our God, Who is the One Who offers us the Divine Liturgy as the Chief Celebrant and, Who at the same time is the One Who is the Sacrifice for our salvation. It's His party for us to "taste and see" the reality of God's Kingdom within us and among us.

We are precious in the sight of our Lord and Savior. The Divine Liturgy tells us so, quoting the

words of St. John the Evangelist, as the Holy Gifts are about to be consecrated, "God so loved the world that He gave His Only-Begotten Son so that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have life everlasting." Failure to really believe these words and to accept the fact that God so greatly values each one of us stands in the way of our ability to *experience* the Divine Liturgy as the Kingdom of God on earth and to live accordingly.

Remember St. Paul? He explained to everyone how he was "caught up in the Third Heaven, whether in the body or out of the body," (he did not know), and He saw the glory of God's Kingdom, about which he felt it to be unlawful to speak. This *experience* changed his life dramatically. We seem to be missing this experience, which helps to explain why we might not be changing for the better.

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Let us all begin anew with our spiritual lives. We can do this if we comprehend the truth that the Divine Liturgy itself gives meaning to our lives. Meaning is itself a *present* reality, having nothing to do with yesterday or tomorrow. *"This is the day the Lord has made,"* is intoned as the Entrance with the Gospel takes place. St. Paul says that *today* is the day of salvation. Indeed, Christ God has allowed us to be well enough physically to enter His Heavenly Banquet *today*.

The celebration of the Divine Liturgy is a lifestyle that is lived day by day. Today is the only opportunity we have to make the prayers of the Divine Liturgy a part of our subconscious mind - a rhythm of thinking that guides our choices that have to do with the rest of our life. What is *meaningful today* is the opportunity that we have to *experience -- to taste and see --* that Christ is our God.

Nicholas Cabasilas tells us that the celebration of the Divine Liturgy is an opportunity to express our inner conviction about our lives in this world as we proclaim the Creed of our Orthodox Faith. *"This wisdom is not known to the world (that is, to the world-wise), who conceive of nothing greater or higher than the knowledge of material things...Let us stand firm on this profession of faith, lest we should be thrown off balance by the persuasive arguments of unbelievers. 'Let us stand in fear;' for the danger to those who allow in their minds any doubt or hesitation concerning matters of faith, is very great...Let our offerings to God proceed as is proper...And what is proper? The faithful reply, 'Not only do we make our offerings in peace; it is peace that we offer as a gift and a second sacrifice'...For when the soul is untroubled by passion, there is nothing to hinder it from being filled with mercy."* (Commentary on the Divine Liturgy, pg. 68).

While the world pursues "happiness," those who follow our Lord pursue His peace and mercy, sharing them with others *today* and we constantly change for the better, *living the Liturgy*.

+FR. THEODORE

## JOSEPH THE HESYCHAST, OUR NEW SAINT



The faithful of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America glorify God as they receive with great joy the news from Mount Athos and our spiritual father, **His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew**, who announced the forthcoming canonization of four Athonite fathers: **Elders Ieronymos of Simonopetra, Daniel Katounakiotis, Joseph the Hesychast and Ephraim Katounakiotis**.

**The First Monastic Synaxis of the Archdiocese of America** that convened at the **Holy Monastery of Saint Nektarios, Roscoe, NY.**, on Sept. 21-22 dedicated the next monastic meeting under the theme: *"The spiritual heritage of Geron Joseph the Hesychast and his contribution to Orthodox Monasticism in America."* **The second Synaxis** will take place Oct. 9-11, 2020 at the **Holy Monastery of the Life Giving Spring, the Mother of God, in Fresno, California**.

**His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America**, commenting on the forthcoming canonization of **Elder Joseph**, the Hesychast, said:

*"We are grateful to our Patriarch and spiritual father because he proved once again that he knows how to listen to the feelings of his flock. We are especially blessed in America because the founder of monasticism here, Elder Ephraim, made sure that he would bring us the sacred skull of Elder Joseph, who is also his spiritual father. I look forward to the time when I will visit Arizona and venerate this relic, and it would be the relic of a saint of our Church in America."*

## CHURCH & WELLNESS

### Children, Confession and Forgiveness

When should children be encouraged to participate in this Holy Confession? **Dr. John Boojamra** researched studies of child development, which included the findings of Lawrence Kohlberg. Boojamra explains: *“Kohlberg’s six stages (of moral development in children) correspond to three levels which he defines in terms of the child’s relations to community - 1) pre-conventional, 2) conventional and 3) post-conventional. [It is at level 2 - conventional] that the first major mental/moral revolution in the life of the human person seems to occur sometime around the age of 7 years, proverbial ‘age of reason,’ when we expect, not without some justification, that the child will be able to judge right from wrong and will be able to share in the Sacrament of Confession.”* (Foundations For Christian Education, pg.136).

He notes that the family is the primary place where children can learn about this Sacrament, given the life-style and examples set by family members. *“The child’s primary world, both psychologically and spiritually, is the family...The family is not a hurdle to be overcome on the way to salvation, not a barrier to the Kingdom, but the very matrix of that salvation and the locus of that Kingdom.”* (pg. 69). Finally, he adds the findings of **Samuel Natale**, published in his paper, “Family Therapist: An Emerging Role for Ministry,” *“Recently psychological thinking, especially in the field of systems theory, confirms what common sense has told us all along: the family is the institution primarily responsible for the development of its members, particularly in their formative years.”* (pg. 76).

As to “techniques” pertaining to how children can learn about participating in the Sacrament, **Fr. Anthony Coniaris**, in his classic book, *Making God Real in the Orthodox Christian Home*, offers this suggestion: *“Orthodox Christian parents can create an atmosphere at home where prayers for forgiveness are offered daily. During family prayer time, children should be encouraged to confess their sins.* He notes that Holy Confession is not solely a matter of confessing sins, but primarily a matter of repenting of sins. *“[St. John Chrysostom] pointed out five ways of repentance. First, the acknowledgment of*

*our sins; secondly, the forgiveness of the sins of our neighbor; thirdly, through prayer; fourthly, through almsgiving and fifthly, through humility.’ These five points of repentance should be emphasized to our children.”* (pg. 93). With this in mind, Coniaris recommends: *“[Our return to God is God’s Will]...It is for this reason that the Church offers us the Sacrament of Confession. Orthodox parents should discuss this Sacrament with their children and prepare them to come to it with them.”* (pg. 119).

Asking children to think of the Ten Commandments as they apply to themselves in the context of “doing to others as you would have them do unto you,” helps them to comprehend the importance of our Lord’s Commandments as “guidelines of love.” Doing so also helps parents to prepare themselves for this all-important opportunity to find renewal of the soul.

The 10 Commandments List, Short Form:

1. You shall have no other gods before Me.
2. You shall not make idols.
3. Do not use God’s Name with disrespect.
4. Remember the Lord’s Day, to keep it holy.
5. Honor your father and your mother.
6. You shall not murder. (Harm no one.)
7. Do not commit adultery. (Marriage is sacred.)
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not bear false witness. (Do not lie.)
10. You shall not covet. (Do not be jealous)

Keep in mind that Holy Confession is not only a listing of sins committed. If we are to work toward repentance, we must seek spiritual counsel in order to sincerely understand the factors that work in us that prompt us to sin. Is it resentment? Ingratitude? Neglect? Depression? Lack of faith? Feelings of greed or lust? Misperceptions or errant beliefs? Step 1 is to identify any of these factors; step 2 is seeking ways to overcome these factors through Bible study, spiritual reading, spiritual and, if needed, emotional counseling and, above all, prayer and worship.

Children who can read and study, think and speak are ready for the spiritual life that comes through the Sacrament of Holy Confession.

+FR. THEODORE

## PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS



The season has arrived and many of our snowbirds are arriving back to the desert! Welcome!

Our October General Members Meeting was held on Monday, Oct. 14th. We had 30 members present. Highlights of our meeting included an update on our Initiatives: Homeless Outreach through Oct. 22nd with **1102 meals provided year-to-date**; Anti-Human Trafficking update with announcement of final preparation of **35 toiletry kits** for at risk children located at **Safe House of the Desert & "Giving Tree"** outreach for the holiday. (See Photograph on page 5) The **Philoptochos Christmas Party** will be held **Saturday, Dec. 7th** at the **Palm Valley Country Club**, start time **11:30 am**, with music, a raffle, and hostess gift. The RSVP Christmas Party flier is available in the church hall. We are taking reservations now and will have a table set up with volunteers after church service beginning November 3rd.

In addition, at our meeting we had a special speaker, **Nelly Zambrano**, Social Worker with CPS, who spoke about the importance of planning for your needs in case of a health crisis. Nelly holds two Master's degrees, the most recent from Cal State/San Bernardino campus in Social Work. She discussed the need for an Advance Directive for your health care along with offering resources available to assist with care in the event of a health crisis. We were blessed to have one of our newest members in attendance, Dr. **Anna Kayaloglou**, who was able to answer questions from the meeting attendees citing her experiences as a doctor.

The Philoptochos bank balance continues to be healthy at \$9813.99 as of Oct. 11, 2019. Thanks to a small group of members who met twice to bake koulourakia and paximathia, plus a member who made homemade jams, we have had increased income for the Sept. & Oct. periods.

Finally we had a great team of ladies plus Father Ted, participate in the "Paint El Paseo Pink

Walk" sponsored by our next door neighbors, The Desert Cancer Foundation. The event supports local cancer patients with financial assistance for their healthcare. This year was the largest ever attendance for the walk with over 2000 people! (See Photograph on page 5). Thank you "TEAM SAINT GEORGE"!

Our **November General Members Meeting** will be held on **Monday, Nov. 11th at 11:30 AM** in the church hall. Our guest speaker will be **Norma Vasquez**, with Safe House of the Desert.

The next "Movie Matinee" event will be held on **Thursday, Nov. 21st from 6:00-8:00 PM**. We are screening the movie in the early evening, anticipating a greater turnout for this movie. Our movie is "Faith, Hope, & Love", that has leading characters who are Greek! This is a faith based romantic comedy with no swearing, drugs, or violence. This movie is appropriate for the entire family! Please be sure to **RSVP by Nov. 17th** if you plan on attending. (See Flier).

If you are **interested in having a memorial** or sponsoring a **coffee hour** for a Sunday in December or January, you are encouraged to contact **Pat Dalkas** or **Rhonda Latkovic** as soon as possible as dates are almost filled.

*"No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted."*

--RHONDA LATKOVIC,  
Philoptochos President

### ST. RAPHAEL FEAST DAY

We are all invited to participate in the Divine Liturgy at the **St. Raphael Antiochian Orthodox Church in Thousand Palms on Saturday, November 2, 2019** for the celebration of the parish Feast Day.

Orthros begins at 9:00 a.m., followed by the celebration of the Divine Liturgy at 10:00 a.m.

Everyone is also invited to attend the Feast Day reception afterwards.

*PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS, Continued from page 4*



Philoptochos Ladies participated in the "Paint El Paseo Pink Walk" sponsored by the Desert Cancer Foundation on Saturday, October 5, 2019. Back row (left to right): Gabrielle Zaharia, Susan Clark, Linda Petalas, Debbie Pausen, Linda Bozigian, Bernice Shaheen. Front row (left to right): Olympia Pilafidis-Fick, Rhonda Latkovic and Athena Snarskis.



Ladies of Philoptochos had prepared toiletry kits for victims of human trafficking: (left to right): Athena Snarskis, Pauline Latkovic, Christina Kundanis, Susan Clark, Rhonda Latkovic, Emily Tcharos.

**ST. GEORGE BOOK STORE UPDATE**

Our church bookstore has received many new items, thanks to the generosity of one of our parishioners!



Please take a few minutes to browse through the bookstore after church services. We offer a wide selection of books, icons, and smaller religious items. One of our newest items are stained glass night lights.

These and many other items would make wonderful holiday gifts for friends and family!

Thank you for your support!

**MEMORIAL WALL EXPANSION**



We are in the process of expanding our original Memorial Wall by adding two side panels that will each hold 30 nameplates (60 total). The overall effect, once completed, will be a triptych design on the wall.

In order to fully fund this expansion, we are asking for a donation of \$225.00 for each new nameplate order. Each nameplate will be identical in design to the original nameplates with the words "Memory Eternal" above the name of the deceased loved one you wish to honor. Total letter capacity on each nameplate is 28 letters. (see order form)

We hope to have the new additions installed by January 2020. If you are considering adding a nameplate to the wall, please place your order by November 15th to ensure timely delivery as the plates are each handcrafted in bronze and can take up to 10-12 weeks for completion.

Please see Rhonda Latkovic with any questions.

## ST. GEORGE ENDOWMENT FUND

**The Saint George of the Desert Endowment Fund value is \$362,597.01 as of the month ending Quarter 3, September 2019.**

The fund's value increased in July following the markets from \$358,696.56 end of June to \$362,597.01 end of September or a \$4550.56 increase in value. The Fund increased from January's, 2019 value of \$320,200.50 to a 13.9% increase in value or +\$44,719.73. Fees for the current year at 2% are \$2,573.22. Growth percentage includes fees but does not include inflation to date.

Please be aware markets are volatile and change in value quickly and past results are no guarantee of future results. For that reason, the committee continues to search for moderate risk funds, through our advisor at The Resource Group which meet the criteria stated in the St. George of the Desert Greek Orthodox Church By-Laws. An example of this is the recent move from the Large Cap Higher Fee Fund SELCX to a S&P 500 Index Fund SSPIX low fee fund. We've seen a lot of good news in last couple months filtered into equity markets.

**MONETARY POLICY.** These changes are at the top of list:

- The Fed has cut rates twice
- ECB restarted QE
- Fed is expanding its balance sheet again by \$60 billion
- Other central banks deciding to ease monetary policy
- Fiscal stimulus - most notable is India with corporate tax cuts

**TRADE.** Despite the noise, we're moving in the right direction with trade. A verbal agreement to stop escalation was announced couple weeks ago. A deal hasn't been signed yet - it should come next week.

**BREXIT & INTERNATIONAL MARKETS.** We're seeing progress on an orderly Brexit of some kind. Whether orderly or no-deal (orderly

being our inclination), hopefully this chapter can be put behind us by the New Year. Brexit has created some interest in European assets. Some Euro-stock markets, particularly Germany, and the UK are trading quite well. Sterling has also taken off. This should help with the reallocation of money toward international markets as we've seen meaningful uptrends since July. Japan and Europe are outperforming and a Brexit resolution is an important catalyst for that rotation and why we continue to be constructive on Europe in particular as well as Japan. Technically, Japan looks better. Fundamentally, it has more upside and is more levered to global growth bottoming which we think will occur at some point early next year.

**US MARKET VALUATIONS.** The US continues to trade with the S&P 500 capped around near current levels. This is not a negative sign - it is the result of US markets being more fully valued. We're seeing high-multiple, expensive areas sell off pretty meaningfully. On one hand, selling off is good because it's indicative of an increasingly rational market which should eventually yield good opportunities. On the other hand, this space is crowded and expensive with deteriorating fundamentals. Several leaders of companies within the software space are discussing a pushout of deals and reduced billings - nothing dramatic, but that's how it starts. Moreover, corporations are cutting back on capital expenditures. Eventually we see this turning into good a buying opportunity - we're not there yet though.

**INTERNATIONAL MARKETS.** We continue to like international markets relative to US markets. They're cheaper and we separate from this US dollar based growth rotation. Our expectation is that US assets should gain steam as we start to see relative performance pick up.

Keep in mind our By-Laws restrict electronic access to our account by the committee, hence the delayed results which depend on mailed statements. Please direct any questions to me at [n.m.latkovic@gmail.com](mailto:n.m.latkovic@gmail.com) or 760-455-9727.

— NICHOLAS M. LATKOVIC,  
Endowment Fund Chairman

## STEWARDSHIP REPORT FOR NOVEMBER 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 116-120 members. Currently we have 4 new stewards this year and we have the potential to gain another 6-7 stewards who have not yet pledged. Stewardship has also remained fairly steady at \$115K-\$130K total pledges annually. Our average family annual pledge amount has been in the \$1000-\$1100 range which is a higher average than most parishes. This year our steward average is \$1070.

We set our Stewardship Pledge goal for this year at \$125,000, remaining the same as last year. *As of November 1st, 2019 we have reached \$129,439 in pledges from 121 stewards (families) for the year, slightly exceeding our goal.* The unpaid stewardship pledge balance is currently \$21,750.

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 of approximately \$125,000, as you all know, we execute both an annual Greek Festival and Golf Tournament to raise the additional funds needed. This should show to all of us, how much our stewardship sustaining annual and monthly support is truly needed and appreciated.

Our big projects this year; the Icon and Memorial Wall Projects, are fully funded from additional donations and are not part of the stewardship totals mentioned above.

It's pretty obvious that the only way to increase our stewardship is by either gaining additional members or asking our current members to give more. We have created a Step-By-Step Stewardship guide that offers suggestions on how it can be done. The steps are noted in the enclosed attachment. Please review the chart on proportional annual giving that is based on income and percentage of income to your stewardship. Find

where you currently fall in the chart and strive to "move to the right", increasing your pledge, with the ultimate goal to "tithe" or give 10% of your income. If every steward family gave an additional \$175 per year, we would be at the \$150,000 pledge level for our parish! This is very achievable!

Soon the 2020 Stewardship Program will begin. The theme is "A Time for Every Purpose Under Heaven", with a focus on the stewardship of "Time". At the first Christmas when Jesus was born, there was no room at the inn. And today, we still have no room for Jesus. We crowd Him out with so many things. The devil captures us, not by preventing encounters with God, but by whispering in our ear that we are "just too busy right now. We'll get to that soon, but not right now." But most often, we don't. Just as we budget our financial resources to reflect our priorities, including our church and stewardship, we can re-set our allocation of time. Let's focus on living each day anticipating the opportunities that God places in our path to ensure our time is well-spent.

Please know that we are truly grateful to everyone for their support this year and always. Thank you. (See insert: "Your Stewardship: 'Step by Step'.")

Report by Rhonda S. "Evangelia" Latkovic.

### ON BEING A HOSPITAL PATIENT

Fr. Ted attended the **Annual Eisenhower Medical Center Chaplains' Dinner** on October 26th, which provided the occasion to observe the 45th Anniversary of Priesthood for **Fr. Donald Craig** (ordained Nov. 10, 1974). Fr. Ted's remarks honoring Fr. Craig were: "Keep on Keeping On."

Fr. Craig has been the backbone of the Eisenhower  
*Continued on the next page - - - - >*



Fr. Ted with Fr. Anthony Ibegbunam (St. Louis Roman Catholic Church) and Fr. Donald Craig, founder of Chaplain Services at Eisenhower.

*CHAPLAINCY AT EISENHOWER, Continued*

er Chaplaincy program over the past ten years (and more).

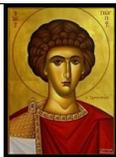
The chaplains as a group agree that patients are to be encouraged to make their religious affiliation known at admissions. With this, the chaplaincy office will, in our case, contact either Fr. Ted or Deacon Euthym regarding the spiritual needs of Orthodox Christian patients. However, they can contact us only if you give them your consent.

As Orthodox Christians, we are to receive Holy Communion and/or Holy Unction exclusively from a priest of our Orthodox Christian Church. Politely explain this to any of the hospital's chaplains. Fasting is not required by our Church for those suffering illness.

**Finally, especially for the home-bound and those facing long-term hospitalization, rehabilitation, or hospice, our St. George Ladies of Philotochos is providing Prayer Shawls.**

**PARISH COUNCIL**

The Parish Council met on October 2, 2019. Topics discussed:



--The Parish Council is sending out "**Festival Sponsorship and Ad Forms**" to parishioners with the request that everyone begins from now to garner sponsorships and ads from friends and from the businesses that they patronize. November is a very good month to procure sponsorships and ads for our **2020 Festival Program Book** *before* the Christmas and New Year travels and celebrations with families and friends set in.

--Clergy, Sunday School teachers, and parents of our students are fully cooperative with the Archdiocese Youth Protection program.

--Policies and procedures are being reviewed for renting our parish hall and/or courtyard to non-members. Caterers have shown an interest in providing any needed. Fr. Ted explained that the Archdiocese will not allow us to rent our facilities for non-Orthodox Christian religious ceremonies of any kind.

--The Parish Council is waiting for bids from two security surveillance camera companies and is preparing to make a final decision in the very near future.

--The date for the **Fall General Assembly** was confirmed: **Sunday, November 17, 2019**, following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.

--All proposed purchases for **Sunday School supplies were approved** by the Parish Council.

**AHEPA NEWS**

The October AHEPA Chapter 528 meeting was a dinner meeting with the wives of our Chapter members included. It was held at the Olive Garden Restaurant in Palm Desert at Highway 111 on Friday, October 11, 2019. Agenda topics included:

-- Ordering T-shirts for sale at the upcoming Greek Festival on February 22-23rd.

-- Preparing for the annual **Veterans Day Celebration** at our St. George parish on **Sunday, November 10th.**

-- Communicating to our parishioners that all are invited to the annual **AHEPA Chapter 528 Thanksgiving Luncheon at Towne Center Café on Sunday, November 24th.**

--Continued support is being offered for the "**WIN for WYNN**" effort to sponsor a **service dog for Veterans of the Armed Forces** suffering from wounds and handicaps received during their service to our country.

--The next AHEPA Chapter 528 meeting will be held at **Fantasy Springs on Friday, November 15th at 6:30 p.m. with fellowship for AHEPA member families.**

--Reminder...**Annual AHEPA 528 Super Bowl Party will be at St. George parish hall on Sunday, February 2, 2020.**

--There is a continued effort to remind parishioners of the **AHEPA 528 Fr. T. P. Theophilos Scholarship Fund.** Contact the AHEPA 528 website: [www.ahepa528.org/](http://www.ahepa528.org/)

## SPIRITUAL THOUGHTS OF THE MONTH

by  
Deacon Euthym

*"The very sin that each person thinks is so bad in his neighbor is the one that accuses himself, the accuser."* St. Joseph of Optina

Hold on here... I would never be like so and so who did \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank). St. Joseph reminds us that whatever we think is so horrible in others is what we are convicted of ... (if not in action, then in our hearts). *"Thee without sin, cast the first stone,"* Christ said to those who would stone the woman accused of adultery as he wrote their names in the dirt ( indicating who had slept with her). Maybe, just maybe we need to slow down our judgements and step up our forgiveness. Lets remind ourselves that our guardian angels protect us from the evil one and keep us on track, let us not lose their protection by separating ourselves through sin and judgment of others.

*"Let none of us lose our boldness, nor neglect our duties, nor be afraid of the difficulties of spiritual struggle. For we have God as a helper, who strengthens us in the difficult path of virtue..."* St Nektarios of Aegina

Often we get discouraged and are not bold before God. We behave like prisoners or slaves rather than God's children. God always wants the best for us and we, as His children, should approach Him as such -- respectfully but with boldness. Without fear, knowing His will for us is geared toward our eternal salvation. St. Nektarios also reminds us that virtue is a struggle, not easy. So don't dwell on the past -- if we have repented, our sins are forgiven. Don't have visions of the future and fantasies...these will lead to sin and laziness. Be present to God...now! *Today!* He will take your hand and lead you in the direction that is best for your soul. How many times have I had the same argument with my wife....hundreds...why? In bringing up past hurts, and focusing on the other's weaknesses we refuse to acknowledge our own, and all that is left is our pride... "Your not good enough for (the

great) me" is the, not so subtle, message we send. Or maybe, "your sin was worse than mine," somehow indicating we are better. Imagine if we forgive before we are even asked to forgive, to ignore the button pushes, the rehashing of past sins (confessed) and but listen rather and discern, that what we say has consequences and all of our speech and thought should glorify and edify the Lord Jesus.

*"A place does not save you. There is no place where you can flee from yourself."* St. Nikon of Optina

You can run, but you can't hide...God sees all, we bring ourselves wherever we go, so to think a new start will change things is unwise. We bring all of our baggage with us. So changing places or locations or circumstances should be a product of God's will and not a panacea to "cure" us of our ills. Rather we should focus on working on our salvation wherever our circumstances find us. If we find ourselves weak or struggling with something that may impede our relationship with God, running away does not help, rather face it head on. Confess and seek spiritual counsel. Let us immerse ourselves into the Sacramental life of the Church. Then, when we resolve this sin or weakness we can pray for God's will in order to discern where He wants us to go to glorify Him. Places should have a purpose other than change for change's sake, or frustration, or running away from a problem. The purpose of a place is to glorify God. So, if we bring our separation from God in sin anywhere, it remains. Let us look inside so that we don't need to flee from ourselves. Let us allow God to transform us wherever we are and then go where He wants us to go.

### ST. GEORGE COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS CARD

Enclosed, please find the "St. George Community Christmas Card Participation Form--Christmas Blessings." The form is self-explanatory. To be included in this year's Christmas Card, note that the deadline for returning this form is November 25, 2019.

## ST. CATHERINE THE GREAT MARTYR OF ALEXANDRIA



In the Roman World, there were ways to gain a great education. Actually, both pagans and Christians studied similar things. Everyone studied texts and stories from Attic Greek. Most everyone studied about things like philosophy, the Trojan War, and other things that made one well educated in the Greek and Roman World. However, the results of this study varied from person to person. Even Greek bishops studied these topics, yet some were Christians, and others, like Julian the Apostate (a nephew of Constantine), remained stuck in paganism.

St. Catherine is celebrated on November 25, although Slavic and other churches celebrate her on November 24. Catherine was one of those who was raised with Greek education. She studied many Greek subjects, and she told her parents that she would only marry some man who surpassed her in knowledge and wisdom. Catherine's mother was a secret Christian who had a spiritual father. Her mother sent Catherine to her father confessor to learn more about Jesus Christ and the Christian faith. Catherine learned the wisdom about the Lord Jesus Christ, and prayed for wisdom. Seeing an icon of the Virgin Mary and the Lord, she saw that the Lord did not look kindly upon Catherine, admonishing her that she was not baptized in Christ, nor had she received the Holy Spirit. She turned to the Lord, and her spiritual father blessed her and baptized her into Christ and into His Church. This was, however, a major time of persecution against the Christians.

Now, the Lord looked tenderly on her and even gave her a ring -a wonderful gift given from the Church's heavenly Bridegroom. But, now the pagan world struck back. Catherine was the daughter of the governor of Alexandria, Egypt by the name of Constans. The Emperor or, Maximinus, proclaimed himself a "Caesar." (He was known as Galerius under Diocletian, the last powerful pagan Emperor of the Empire.) Catherine was not only well educated, but beautiful, as well.

The new emperor asked a group of 50 most learned men to debate Catherine in order to sway her to the pagan ways. So, the contest began.

The pagans did not get the better of the young Christian. She could show that the very Greek thinkers were in need of redemption from sin. Also, the pagan world is full of contradictions and wrong thinking. For example, the gods were on both sides of the Trojan War, and they were clearly opposed to one another. There was no way that the pagan gods could win ethical and moral arguments. There was no way for pagan ways of thought to answer the basic needs of redemption and the meaning of life. When the pagans argued against Catherine, they found themselves on the losing side and many of them converted to Christ.

The demise of Catherine resulted from the attempts of Galerius to entice and entrap this daughter of the governor of Alexandria. She was tempted with marriage and power, but these things did not sway her. However, Catherine had managed to sway many at court to accept Jesus Christ - and this pressured the emperor to put her to the test. This success of a Christian debater made the martyrdom of Catherine a reality. While the wheel and other tortures were threatened, she was beheaded by the end of 305 A.D.

One of the unique things about Catherine is that she became a model for the sanctity and holiness of women who were not married. One of the Church's hymns gives us a very good idea of the sanctity of this Saint: *"Let us praise the all-lauded bride of Christ, the godly Catherine, the guardian of Sinai and its defense, who is also our support and helper; for, with the Holy Spirit's power she silenced brilliantly the clever among the godless, and, being crowned as a martyr, she now asks great mercy for us all."*

St. Catherine is the great patron Saint of the Sinai Monastery, but she stands as a faithful advocate of Christ and the ways that we can sacrifice of ourselves and follow Him.

--MATTHEW DAVIS

### SUNDAY SCHOOL NOTES



On Sunday, October 20, 2019, the parents, children and staff gathered for the Pumpkin Painting Fellowship Event that has become an annual parish tradition. The Sunday School students paint religious symbols or sayings onto their pumpkins as a “beginning of the year” activity.

Many thanks to the parents who helped in this student fellowship event. Special gratitude is expressed to **Dr. Jim Christopoulos** and his daughter, **Stephanie Christopoulos**, for setting up for the activity on Saturday, October 19th. With this activity, the students enjoyed a pizza luncheon.

Sunday School students have been studying passages from the Bible, as well as the power of prayer.

The November and December 2019 calendars show the following:

– November 3rd - Sunday School classes will be held as usual.

– November 10th - Sunday School classes will be abridged so that the students can attend the annual St. George parish **Veteran’s Day celebration**.

-- November 17th - Sunday School class time will be shortened due to the commencement of the parish Fall General Assembly.

--December 1st & 8th- Rehearsals for Christmas Program.

--December 15th- Annual St. George Sunday School Christmas Program following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.

As always, our Sunday School parents and students plan to sing Christmas carols to cheer our elderly and infirm parishioners who are not always able to attend Church Services. Details to follow.

Sunday School parents, teachers and students filled our parish hall with joy during our annual Sunday School Pumpkin Painting



Nelly Zambrano (left) & Melissa Hawkins (right) with their students.



Pictured with their Sunday School students - from left to right: Emily Karaloglou, Nicole Castrale, Craig Castrale.



Maryia Dunkel poses with our youngest Sunday School student, participating in our Pumpkin Painting Project.



Helping with the Pumpkin Painting Project was Suzanne Cox at the table with students.

## 2020 GREEK FESTIVAL



Enclosed, please find the **“2020 St. Greek Festival Sponsorship and Ad Form.”** It is possible for the upcoming Festival Program book, featuring sponsorship and ad donors to generate \$15,000-\$20,000 toward the net profit of the Festival. Of course, this possibility depends on the effort that each of us puts into acquiring sponsorships and ads from now. If each St. George parishioner offers or procures at least one sponsorship and/or ad for our program book, the results will be phenomenal.

At the last Festival meeting, it was suggested that station chairpersons calculate ahead of time the amounts of supplies that they need from the annex in order to allow an equitable distribution of supplies for all the stations. This will contribute to a smoother-running set-up of individual Festival stations; a more efficient accounting of supplies needed over the entire Festival time frame, and it will help in keeping the flow of the Festival running smoothly throughout the Festival weekend.

As always, **volunteers are needed to help prepare the Festival menu items.** Cooking and baking begins on **January 8, 2020**. Everyone is asked to arrive at our parish hall by 9:00 a.m. The complete cooking and baking schedule will appear in upcoming publications of *The Ladder* and *The Voice of St. George*, and will also be posted on the bulletin board in our parish hall.

A Festival Meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, November 6, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.** at our parish hall. A list of station chairpersons will be presented and everyone is encouraged to contact the chairperson of the station at which they plan to volunteer their time and efforts to indicate the day(s) and time(s) that they can work.

## ST. NECTARIOS FEAST DAY

Divine Liturgy in celebration for the **Feast of St. Nectarios** on **Saturday, November 9, 2019** will not take place here at St. George.

Instead, we are all asked to participate in the **Hierarchical Divine Liturgy** celebrated by His **Emminence, Metropolitan Gerasimos** at the **St. Nectarios Greek Orthodox Church in Covina, California.**

Orthros begins at 9:00 a.m; the Divine Liturgy begins at 10:00 a.m. Reception to follow.

## ADULT GREEK CLASS

Congratulations to **Margarita Pagoulatos** and her staff, as well as to the students themselves, for a successful beginning of our “Survival Greek” class for adults wanting to learn modern Greek. Classes meet **every Tuesday from 6:00-7:30 p.m.** It is still not too late to register!

## PHILOPTOCHOS MOVIE MATINEE EVENT

Please see the insert to the November 2019 *Voice of St. George* newsletter and plan to join in the fellowship surrounding the viewing of the movie *Faith, Hope and Love*, scheduled for **Thursday, November 21, 2019 from 6:00 p.m.–8:00 p.m.** **R.S.V.P. by Sunday, November 17th.**

## THE FALL 2019 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Our parish **Fall 2019 General Assembly** will take place following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy on **Sunday, November 17, 2019**. To participate, **one’s 2019 Stewardship Pledge must be up to date.** A special mailing will be sent out in a few days, giving needed information pertinent to the meeting’s proceedings.

## VETERANS DAY

Our annual parish **Veterans Day Program** will take place immediately following the Divine Liturgy on **Sunday, November 10, 2019**. Our speaker for the day will be **Pete Peterson**. As always, we will hear the hymns of the various branches of our Armed Forces and the National Anthems of America and Greece.

**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/](http://www.go-stgeorge.org/) email:**  
**[pdsaintgeorge@gmail.com](mailto:pdsaintgeorge@gmail.com)**  
**Telephone: (760)568-9901 / FAX: 9760) 568-9492**

# NOVEMBER 2019

| Sun  | Mon  | Tue   | Wed                           | Thu  | Fri  | Sat   |
|--|--|---|-------------------------------|--|--|---|
| <b>Sunday Schedule:</b><br>Orthros-8:30 a.m.<br>D.Liturgy-9:30 am.<br><b>Sunday School-10:30 a.m.</b>                        |  |   |                               |  | 1<br>STS. COSMAS & DAMIAN<br>Orthros-8:30 am.<br>D. Liturgy-9:30 am        | 2<br>ST. RAPHAEL<br>Orthros-9:00 am.<br>D.Liturgy-10:00 am<br><b>at St. Raphael Antiochian Orthodox Church in Thousand Palms,</b> |
| <b>3- 5th Sunday of St. Luke</b><br><b>Ep.-Gal.1:11-19</b><br><b>Gos.-Lk 16:19-31</b>  | 4<br>Philoptochos Board Meeting-11:30 a.m.                                     | 5 - Bible Study-10:00 am.<br>Parish Council-3:30 p.m.<br>Adult Greek School-6:00 pm | 6<br>Festival Meeting 7:00 pm | 7<br>Choir Practice-1:00 pm.   | 8<br>ARCHANGELS MICHAEL & GABRIEL<br>Orthros-8:30 am<br>D. Liturgy-9:30 am | 9<br>ST. NECTARIOS<br>Orthros-9:00 am<br>D. Liturgy-10:00 am<br><b>At St. Nectarios Greek Orthodox Church in Covina, CA</b>       |
| <b>10- 8th Sunday of St. Luke</b><br><b>Ep.-Gal. 2:16-20</b><br><b>Gos.-Lk 10:25-37</b><br><b>Veterans Day Program</b>       | 11<br>Philoptochos General Members Meeting-11:30 a.m.                          | 12<br>Bible Study-10:00 a.m.<br>Adult Greek School-6:00 pm                          | 13                            | 14<br>Choir Practice-1:00 p.m.   | 15<br>AHEPA Meeting at Fantasy Springs-6:30 pm.                            | 16  |
| <b>17-9th Sunday of St. Luke</b><br><b>Ep.-Gal. 6:11-18</b><br><b>Gos-Lk 12:16-21</b><br><b>General Assembly</b>             | 18   | 19<br>Bible Study-10:00 am<br>Adult Greek School-6:00 pm                            | 20                            | 21-ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS<br>Orthros-8:30 am<br>D.Liturgy-9:30 am<br>Choir Practice-1:00 pm | 22   | 23<br>Light the Path Metropolis Event at St. Paul's Church in Irvine- 11:00 a.m.  |
| <b>24- 13th Sunday of St. Luke</b><br><b>Ep.-Eph.2:4-10</b><br><b>Gos.-Lk 18:18-27</b><br><b>AHEPA Thanksgiving Luncheon</b> | 25<br>ST. CATHERINE THE GREAT MARTYR<br>Orthros-8:30 am.<br>D. Liturgy-9:30 am | 26<br>Bible Study-10:00 am<br>Adult Greek School- 6:00 pm                           | 27                            | 28<br>THANKSGIVING DAY   | 29   | 30<br>ST. ANDREW THE APOSTLE<br>Orthros-8:30 am<br>D. Liturgy-9:30 am   |
|  |  |   |                               |  |  |   |

# YOUR STEWARDSHIP STEP-BY-STEP

## Step 1. Monthly Giving

*Monthly giving actually makes a positive difference to keep up with a parish's expenses and cash flow.*

## Step 2. Proportional Giving

*How much should we give?*

*As Orthodox Christians we believe that everything we have belongs to God. As custodians of the time, the skills and talents, and the financial treasures we have been given, we will be held accountable before Christ as to how we used them for His Glory. Take the treasure self-assessment and challenge yourself to increase the percentage of your annual income that you returned to our beloved church and its ministries.*

## **How to Stay in Step with Your Stewardship?**

***Using the chart below, where are you in your percentage giving? Can you move over to the right? Can you round up?***

Proportional Annual Stewardship Giving

| Annual Income | 0.5%      | 1%        | 2%        | 3%        | 5%          | 10% (tithe) |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| \$20,000.00   | \$100.00  | \$200.00  | \$400.00  | \$600.00  | \$1000.00   | \$2000.00   |
| \$30,000.00   | \$150.00  | \$300.00  | \$600.00  | \$900.00  | \$1500.00   | \$3000.00   |
| \$40,000.00   | \$200.00  | \$400.00  | \$800.00  | \$1200.00 | \$2000.00   | \$4000.00   |
| \$50,000.00   | \$250.00  | \$500.00  | \$1000.00 | \$1500.00 | \$2500.00   | \$5000.00   |
| \$60,000.00   | \$300.00  | \$600.00  | \$1200.00 | \$1800.00 | \$3000.00   | \$6000.00   |
| \$70,000.00   | \$350.00  | \$700.00  | \$1400.00 | \$2100.00 | \$3500.00   | \$7000.00   |
| \$80,000.00   | \$400.00  | \$800.00  | \$1600.00 | \$2400.00 | \$4000.00   | \$8000.00   |
| \$90,000.00   | \$450.00  | \$900.00  | \$1800.00 | \$2700.00 | \$4500.00   | \$9000.00   |
| \$100,000.00  | \$500.00  | \$1000.00 | \$2000.00 | \$3000.00 | \$5000.00   | \$10,000.00 |
| \$120,000.00  | \$600.00  | \$1200.00 | \$2400.00 | \$3600.00 | \$6000.00   | \$12,000.00 |
| \$150,000.00  | \$750.00  | \$1500.00 | \$3000.00 | \$4500.00 | \$7500.00   | \$15,000.00 |
| \$200,000.00  | \$1000.00 | \$2000.00 | \$4000.00 | \$6000.00 | \$10,000.00 | \$20,000.00 |
| \$250,000.00  | \$1250.00 | \$2500.00 | \$5000.00 | \$7500.00 | \$12,500.00 | \$25,000.00 |

# SAINT GEORGE 2020 GREEK FESTIVAL SPONSORSHIP & AD PROGRAM

Event Dates: Sat. & Sun., February 22nd - 23rd, 2020

Terms: Cash/Check/Credit      Attached is my check in the sum of:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsorship/Ad Choice: \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsorship/Ad Choices Available in 24th Annual Greek Festival Booklet:

**Sponsorship Level:** (includes full page (8.5 x 5.5) **color** ad in program booklet, company logo in Festival Ad Program, signage at festival admissions gate & Sponsorship listing on Festival Website)

**Sponsor Level ----- \$ 1000**

**Advertising Choices:** (includes black & white ad in program booklet)

**Full Page (8.5 x 5.5) -- \$ 500      Half Page (4.25 x 5.5) -- \$ 275**

**Quarter Page or Business Card (2.125 x 5.5) -- \$150**

**Personal Name Listing w/ Message -- \$100**

Business Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Authorized Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to:  
St. George Orthodox Church  
P.O. Box 4755  
Palm Desert, CA 92261  
Phone: (760) 568-9901  
Email: [2016stgeorgegreekfest@gmail.com](mailto:2016stgeorgegreekfest@gmail.com)  
Fax: (760) 568-9492

Print personal ad below:

**Absolute DEADLINE for Copy: January 20th, 2020**  
Electric submission of camera ready corporate logos  
& names are accepted in most formats.

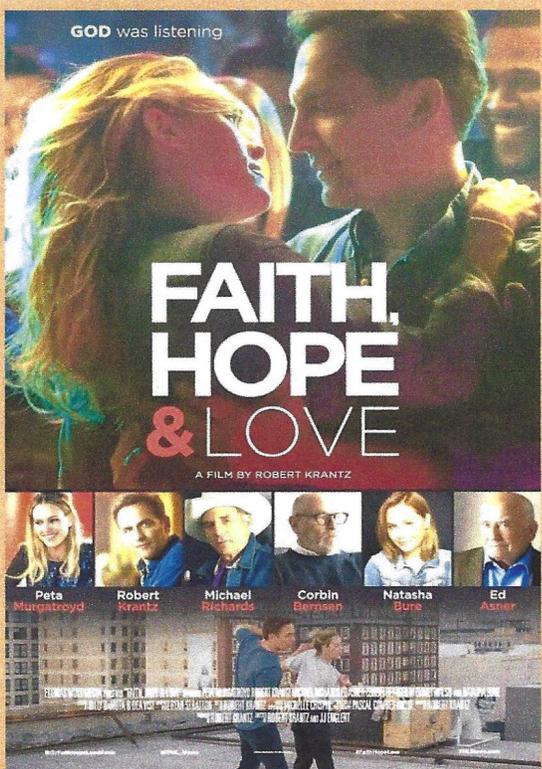


# SAINT GEORGE LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS

SAINT GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH, 74109 LARREA ST, PALM DESERT, CA

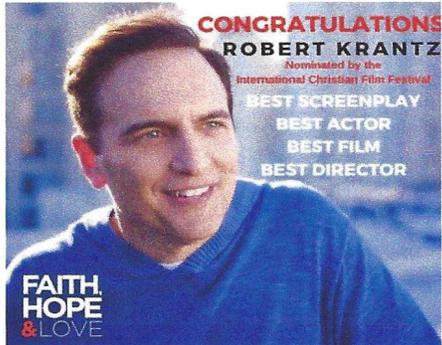
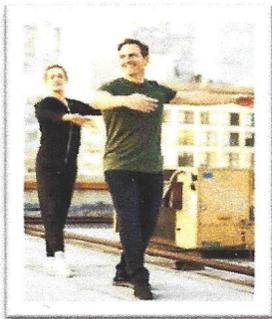
## MOVIE NIGHT

NEW TIME!



"A Christian message about trusting God to direct your path" - Movieguide

"A heartwarming, romantic comedy about two vulnerable, lost souls who have each suffered deep losses and have their guards up, as a result. When they enter a dance contest, and become partners, they begin to discover new perspectives on life, love and faith." 97% audience score- Rotten Tomatoes



**THURSDAY,**  
**NOVEMBER 21<sup>ST</sup>, 2019**  
**6:00– 8:00 P.M**

**ROBERT KRANTZ**  
(Haralambos Karountzos)  
Is a Greek-American Writer, Actor, Director, USC graduate and an International Christian Film Festival Award recipient.

PLEASE RSVP BY SUNDAY, NOV. 17<sup>TH</sup>

POPCORN - SNACKS - REFRESHMENTS

Rhonda (714) 875-4661 or Athena (219) 313-6940

# Philoptochos Annual Christmas Luncheon

Saturday, December 7th, 2019 at 11:30 AM



**Palm Valley Country Club**  
**39205 Palm Valley Dr.**  
**Palm Desert, CA 92211**

**R.S.V.P. by Friday, November 29th, 2019**

Music  
Cash Bar

Family and Friends are invited!  
\*\*\*\*\*

Raffle  
Prizes

**\$37.00 per person** for the pre-fixe menu, no substitutions.

Choice of: circle your choice below \*all meals include unlimited soft drinks, coffee, iced or hot tea, water, house salad, mashed potatoes, seasonal vegetable, & chocolate mousse cake & ice cream dessert.

1. Chicken Marsala; mushroom sauce & fresh herbs
2. Roast Pork Tenderloin; shallot & cranberry sauce
3. Almond Crusted Sole; sun dried tomato & caper sauce
4. Pasta Tortellini; Alfredo sauce & parmesan cheese
5. Vegan

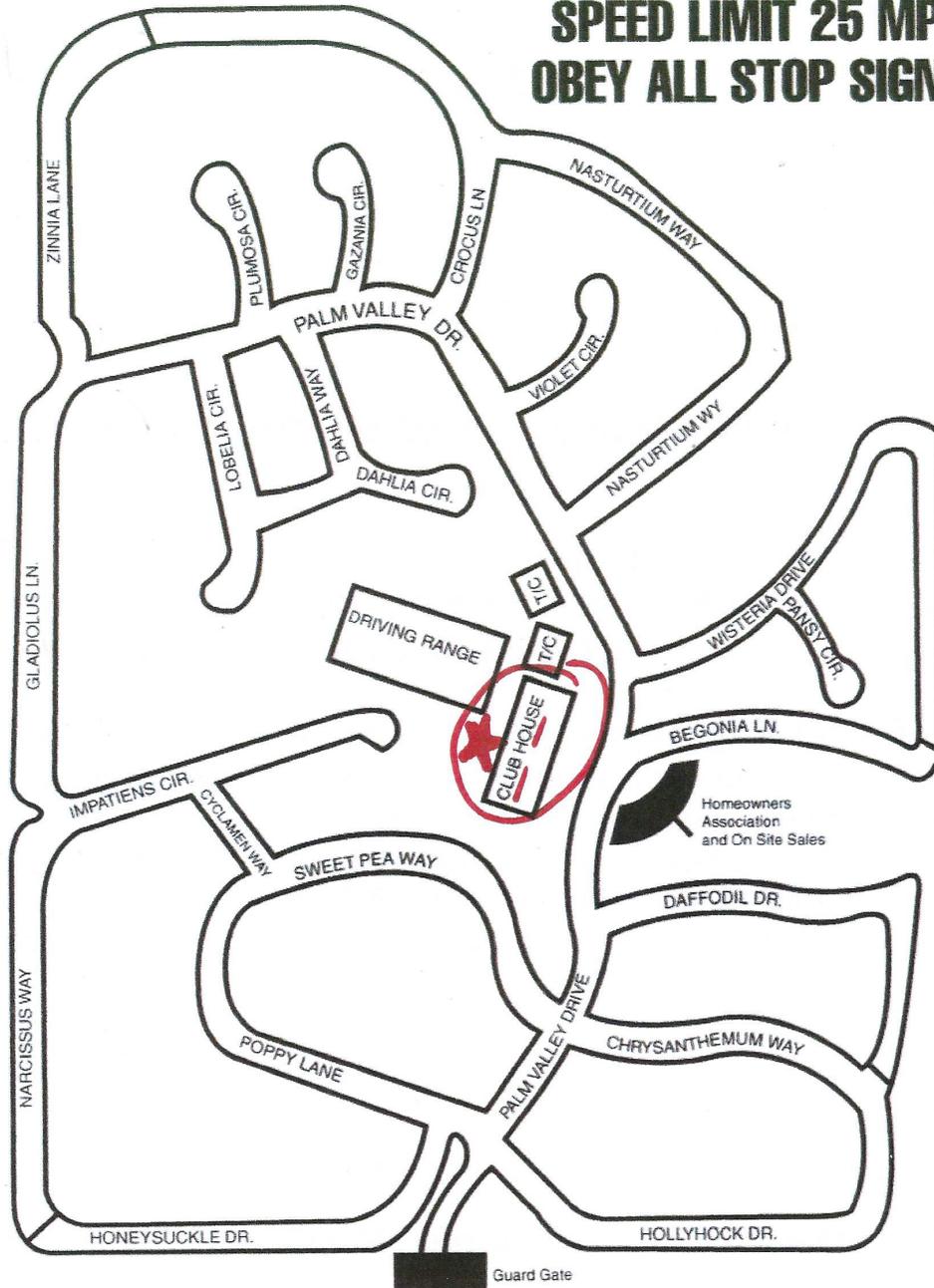
Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Number Attending \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Paid Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_ cash or check payable to Philoptochos

PALM VALLEY COUNTRY CLUB  
39205 Palm Valley Drive  
Palm Desert, CA 92211  
tel. (760) 345-2737

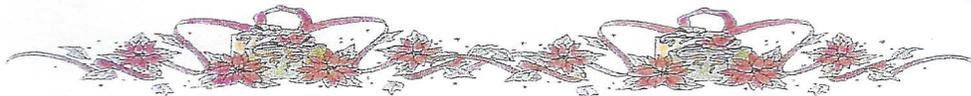
**SPEED LIMIT 25 MPH  
OBEY ALL STOP SIGNS**



↑  
Cook  
↓

← Country Club Drive →

↑  
Washington  
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Dear Parishioners,

Once again, our community of St. George Greek Orthodox Church of The Desert will be preparing a Parish Christmas Card. We are certain that all of you will want to participate in this very popular and meaningful Christmas Blessing.

Please join the many families of our parish in expressing Christmas Greetings to fellow members and friends by completing this form. A donation of \$20.00 should be enclosed along with this form and made payable to St. George Greek Orthodox Church of the Desert. You can mail it to P.O. Box 4755, Palm Desert, CA 92261.

Please print your name, as you would like it to appear on the card on the line below. (Please Print)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Deadline: **November 25, 2019**



St. George Greek Orthodox Church of the Desert

Contact our parish office – 760-568-9901

74109 Larrea Street-Post Office Box 4755

Palm Desert, CA 92261

St. George Greek Orthodox Church is a 501(c) 3 Exempt Organization

CHRISTMAS BLESSING

