

APRIL 2021



# Voice of St. George

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

**74-109 LARREA ST., PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA**



## “LORD, IF YOU HAD BEEN HERE...”

April 24, 2021 is the Saturday of Lazarus for Orthodox Christians. The basis for this commemoration is the passage from the Gospel of St. John 11:1-45, which is the appointed Gospel reading for the day. In this passage we see both the human anguish over God’s sense of “timing” as compared to ours, as well as the power of faith in our God Jesus Christ.

From the Gospel accounts we know that Jesus was near Jericho when He had received a message sent by Lazarus’ sisters, Martha and Mary, that Lazarus was stricken with illness. “The sisters sent to Him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom you love is sick.” (St. John 11:3). When Jesus got this message, He did not start out to see Lazarus immediately. In fact, He waited two days.

His delay did not go unnoticed by Martha and Mary. They said their prayers – they sent their

message to Him, expecting Him to respond immediately. It must have appeared, however, that His response was cold. Rather than rushing to heal Lazarus, Jesus wanted the world to know that He is the Life and Resurrection: “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified.” (St. John 1:4).

“If You had been here...” (St. John 11:21). This is a reflection of our common human weakness. In our own experience, we may often ask in anguish, “God where are You? Are You here? If only You were here, I would be O.K.; life would be good; problems would be solved; pain would be cured.” Yet, the truth is that God is always “here.”

What we expect is not always in measure of what God wants to give and His “timing” has an eternal dimension to it, as opposed to our temporary, limited dimension.

The pain and suffering that led to Lazarus’ physical death are the very pains and sufferings that lead everyone to the grave, as well. Christ’s “timing” is the “eternal now,” which is revealed to us in His Resurrection from the dead. All of the pain and suffering that Lazarus endured drifted into the past as nothingness when he came back to life and walked out of his grave in obedience to the command of God: “Lazarus, come forth!”

Our Lord’s question to Martha and Mary – and to each of us, for that matter – is: “Do you have faith?” Prayer anchored in our faith in God brings us into the presence of Christ Himself.

We are “here” with Him and He is “here” with us. This presence of Christ at each present moment in our lives brings many blessings: our pains are soothed; our doubts are

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**-Dcn. Euthym Kontaxis, M.D.**

erased; our trials turn into opportunities; our weaknesses become strengths. Death turns into Life. His presence “now” overwhelms anything before. His presence is the “Eternal Now.”

+FR. THEODORE

### METROPOLIS OF SAN FRANCISCO CLERGY-LAITY CONFERENCE



*“There is still time for endurance, time for patience, time for healing, time for change.” -Saint Basil the Great*

Beloved in the Lord,

The clergy and lay leaders of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco will have the opportunity to gather virtually for the 2021 Metropolis Clergy-Laity Assembly utilizing the Zoom platform. This annual meeting provides a forum for the leadership of all our communities to deliberate on important matters for our Metropolis and engage in dialogue and fellowship to enrich our common ministry. **The Assembly will begin promptly at 1:00 p.m. PDT on Friday, April 16, and will conclude at 2:30 p.m. on Saturday, April 17, 2021.**

This year’s Assembly will focus on the topic: *Moving Beyond the Pandemic and Returning to Worship*, featuring guest speaker **Rev. Father Barnabas Powell**. His insightful, informative and practical presentation will focus on how to re-engage our faithful in parish life following the challenges of this past year. There will also be the annual review of the Metropolis finances and the presentation and approval of the 2021 Metropolis Budget.

Online registration is now open and we are requesting **full representation** from each of our parishes. Registration is complimentary for all our parish delegates as this will be a virtual event.

Please review the agenda. (Clergy and delegates: register online today. **Your timely response is requested by Monday, April 5, 2021.** Please plan your schedules accordingly so that you may fully participate in this Assembly and benefit from the valuable presentations and information that will be offered.)

Beseeking the Lord that He may continue to bless you with His grace, peace and love, always protecting you with His Mighty hand, I remain,

With Love in Christ,

+ **GERASIMOS**

Metropolitan of San Francisco

### ST. GEORGE BOOK STORE

**Icon Give-Away:** Before leaving our parish to be with her family in New Jersey, **Matushka Gloria Lehman** donated a number of icons for our parishioners to have for their homes. These icons are “on display” in our parish hall and are available to all. If so inclined, a donation of any amount is acceptable.

**New Books: Holy Week Service Books published by Narthex Press** (15 copies available). **Akathist Hymn Books**, also by Narthex Press (25 available). Note: Church Service books published by Narthex Press will be used as we conduct our Church Services. In general, feel free to visit our parish book store any time at your convenience.



A sample of the icons that are available in our parish hall for our “Icon Give-away.”



Newly arrived “icon/cross” bracelets are now available in our Book Store.

### SUNDAY SCHOOL “KINDNESS COUNTS”

Over 300 Sunday School students from throughout our Holy Metropolis have participated in the Metropolis-Wide Sunday School Program, *Lenten Journey to Great and Holy Pascha*. The Metropolis staff, led by our Metropolis Youth Ministry Pastor, **Fr. Gary Kyriakos**, has produced an excellent and truly informative program for our students of all ages. Our own St. George students are participating in this program and they have learned much.

As part of the program, students are asked to give  
*Continued on the next page ----->*

*SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS, Continued*

kindness to those around them by either doing one act of kindness each day throughout Lent (40 acts of kindness) or giving one item of need each day throughout Lent (clothing, books, educational games, etc.) **Those who would like to donate to this Metropolis-Wide program will truly encourage our Metropolis staff, as well as the students to continue their most valuable ministry.**

**SPIRITUAL THOUGHTS**

by

**Deacon Euthym**

*The evil one is unable to harm anyone forcibly, against his/her will. Only those who voluntarily give the upper hand to the devil become subject to his power....*Abbot Nikon Vorobiev

This is great to remember. We do have the ability to withstand the attacks of the evil one. We are not forced to sin, nor can we be harmed by the devil, or subject to the evil one's power if we make positive choices toward God's will. If we have this reassurance, we need to take it to heart, and when we hit the storms of our life, the assaults of temptation, or the doubt that sometimes overcomes us, let us have the reassurance to move forward to the higher calling of our Lord.

*It is better to pray with good will for our neighbor, rather than to denounce him for every sin.*  
... St. Mark the Ascetic

Why not wish the best for others? Is it too much to ask to chose love over jealousy? Or to choose mercy over judgement? We see what happens with envy (Cain and Abel) and with judgement of others (think of the Pharisees) when we read the Scripture. Who do we want to identify with? Let us ask ourselves, then, since we always choose the side of good when we read the Scriptures: *"Why don't we choose the good in our life? Why do we let envy and judgment cloud our attitudes and thinking when we can choose the good?"* Pride is the culprit. Let us lay aside our pride, our egos, our own selfishness and think every day about who we want to be like in Scripture; what choices bring us closer to God; who is the Source of all love, mercy and understanding.

*We must not have a single negative thought when we receive the Lord. If we receive the Lord while at the same time breeding hateful thoughts toward a neighbor, we are receiving Him not unto our salvation but unto judgment. And so, my children, let every one of you examine your soul and approach the holy chalice...Elder Thaddeus*

We are focused on acquiring wisdom in the Scripture readings during Great Lent, particularly in the Proverbs. Holy Wisdom is to use of our minds to carry out what God puts in our hearts. Elder Thaddeus reminds us that the self examination of our soul is essential before receiving Christ at the Chalice. Isn't that the case all the time? We need to be vigilant with our thoughts and actions so as not to demean, judge, or demand from anyone.

**PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS**

The next Philoptochos "**Zoom**" **Coffee Hour** will be held on **Sunday, May 9, 2021 at 2:00 p.m.** -- after Pascha. To join, type: <https://www.zoom.us/join> **in the search tab in the upper left corner of your computer screen. Then, type ID Number: 864 9984 9746.** Then type in the Passcode Number: **459070.**

The **April 2021 Philoptochos General Members Meeting** is scheduled for **Monday, April 19th at 11:30 a.m.** It will be an "in-person" meeting, following all **CDC Covid-19 safety rules.**

**Food for the Poor:**

Our Philoptochos assembled "food-kits" to be given to those in need. Each kit contains foods -- protein, fruit, soup, cereal, toiletries, etc. The kits will be given to help the hungry locally, as Philoptochos continues to partner with organizations such as "The Narrow Door." Some kits will be available at our parish hall to help those who seek help directly from our parish. Our Philoptochos has donated **5,300 pounds of food** to assist with families in need throughout our valley since the beginning of the pandemic.

Enclosed, please find the flier giving details for the **Annual Philoptochos Easter Bake Sale.**

*Continued on the next page ----->*



*PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS, Continued*

Orders will be taken until April 12th. Koulourakia and paximathia are \$8.00 per dozen, and Easter Bread -- with or without an Easter egg -- is \$15.00 per loaf.



Pictured from left to right, are **Margarita Pagoulatos, Susan Segaar, Stanley Segaar** and **Rhonda Latkovic**, working to put together "food-kits" to be given to those in need.

**PALM DESERT CITY COUNCIL OFFICIALLY  
DECLARES MARCH 25th AS "CELEBRATING  
THE 200 YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF GREEK  
INDEPENDENCE"**

On March 25, 2021, the Palm Desert City Council declared March 25th as **"Celebrating the 200 Year Anniversary of Greek Independence Day in Palm Desert."** Fr. Ted gave the following remarks:

*"Honorable Mayor Kathleen Kelly and members of the Palm Desert City Council,*

*We at St. George of the Desert Greek Orthodox Church truly appreciate the recognition of Greece's 200 years of Independence given us by the city of Palm Desert. This honor from the Palm Desert City Council is an inspiration for all of us to cherish the gift of freedom. God created us with free will so that we can express love -- and God loves us all. Under the banner of freedom, we join in the efforts of our civic leaders to love all people at all times; for, we are all created to be loved by God equally and to love one another equally, while at the same time, honoring the unique gifts and talents of every individual.*

*With God's grace, we will always commit ourselves to safe-guarding the gift of freedom in our country and in our city, especially in light of our gratitude for the*

*honor given us today by officially recognizing the 200 year anniversary of Greek Independence."*

+FR. THEODORE



The Proclamation declaring March 25, 2021 as "Celebrating 200 Years of Greek Independence" in Palm Desert, California is available in our parish office for review.

**NEEDS FOR HOLY WEEK SERVICES**

Listed below are needs as we prepare for this year's Holy Week Services (April 25, 2021 - May 2, 2021). Donations are welcome for sponsoring the cost of materials for the Church Services:

1. Palms for Palm Sunday
2. Flowers for Icons and Epitaphio
3. Rose Water for Holy Friday Services
4. Q-tips and oil for Holy Wednesday Unction Services
5. Polishing candle holders and censers
6. Clean white sheet for "Apokathilosis"
7. Decoration of the Epitaphio (limited participation; social distance required)
8. Easter eggs
9. Decoration of Icons (Bridegroom, Crucifixion, Resurrection icons)
10. Ushering
11. Reading and versing of Psalms and Scripture passages during Church services.
12. Carrying the Epitaphio
13. Preparing Holy Friday & Easter Candles

*Continued on the next page ----->*

*NEEDS FOR HOLY WEEK SERVICES, Continued*

14. Prosforo

15. Sacramental Wine

16. Setting up the Altar Coverings

This is a tentative list. As more needs may arise, we will continue to seek assistance and support from our parishioners. Due to Covid, however, this list may be edited to meet any remaining or increasing safety needs.

**GREAT LENT AND PREPARING FOR THE EASTER CELEBRATION**

To Orthodox Christians, there is one reality: Pascha, the Resurrection from the dead of Christ. We know that there is a difference in the "timing" of the Easter celebrations offered by the Orthodox Christians and the Roman Catholics, together with the Protestants. This is because the Orthodox celebrate Christ's Resurrection based on the "timing" formula issued at the First Ecumenical Council in 325 A.D., according to which Easter is always to be celebrated on the first Sunday following the Spring equinox and after the commemoration of the Jewish Passover. In addition, the full moon (representing the fullness of time) is also to be considered. With this formula, all Orthodox Christians everywhere celebrate the Resurrection of Christ on the same Sunday, regardless of the type of calendar that is used in dating common affairs -- ancient or modern; "Julian" or "Gregorian." Celebrating Christ's Resurrection on the same Sunday world-wide connects Orthodox Christians not only with one another in the present era, but with forefathers from the past, making it truly a universal celebration at the same time always.

Easter is the key to our faith, and everything that leads us to the celebration of Christ's Resurrection is key to our religious life. Some of the major Feast Days of our Lord are centered around the date of Easter every year: His Ascension; Pentecost Sunday, and the Sunday of All Saints. Because Easter is considered a "moving" Feast Day (i.e., the date "moves" from year to year due to the observance of the "formula"), Ascension, Pentecost and the Sunday of All Saints are also considered to be "moving" Feast Days.

With the Sunday of All Saints, the "Easter Season" draws to an end. Liturgically, the Paschal Season lasts for 50 days. Following the celebration of our Lord's Resurrection on May 2, 2021, we will observe the Feast Day of St. George on Monday, May 3rd, followed by the Feast of the "Life-Giving Spring," honoring the Theotokos, on Friday, May 7th. The Ascension of our Lord will be observed on June 10th; Pentecost Sunday is June 20th, and the Sunday of All Saints is June 27th.

March and April this year are dedicated to Great Lent, and May and June will be dedicated the post-Easter liturgical season of our Church.

--Contributed in part by MATTHEW DAVIS

**AHEPA 528 FR. T.P. THEOPHILOS MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP**

April is the time for college students to start their **application process** for receiving the annual AHEPA 528 Fr. T. P. Theophilos Scholarship. The Application forms and instructions are online at [www.ahepa528.org/](http://www.ahepa528.org/) and are due on May 1st. The **April AHEPA 528 meeting** is scheduled for **Wednesday, April 14, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.** ("Zoom" format).

## CALENDAR OF HOLY CHURCH SERVICES - APRIL 2021

- Sunday, April 4th.....**Veneration of the Holy Cross**- Orthros-8:30 a.m./ Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.
- Wednesday, April 7th...**Presanctified Divine Liturgy** - 6:00 p.m.
- Friday, April 9th.....**Presanctified Divine Liturgy**-9:00 a.m./ **Salutations** (4th Stanza)-6:00 p.m.
- Sunday, April 11th.....**St. John of the Ladder**- Orthros-8:30 a.m./ Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.
- Wednesday, April 14th...**Presanctified Divine Liturgy**-6:00 p.m.
- Friday, April 16th.....**Presanctified Divine liturgy**- 9:00 a.m. / **Akathist Hymn**-6:00 p.m.
- Sunday, April 18th.....**St. Mary of Egypt** - Orthros-8:30 a.m./Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.
- Wednesday, April 21st....**Presanctified Divine Liturgy**-6:00 p.m.
- Friday, April 23rd.....**Presanctified Divine Liturgy**-9:00 a.m.
- Saturday, April 24th.....**Saturday of Lazarus**- Orthros-8:30 a.m./Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.
- Sunday, April 25th.....**Palm Sunday** (Blessing of the Palms) - Orthros-8:30 a.m.  
Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m. / Bridegroom Service -6:00 p.m.
- Monday, April 26th.....**HOLY MONDAY** - Bridegroom Service-6:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, April 27th.....**HOLY TUESDAY** - Bridegroom Service-6:00 p.m.
- Wednesday, April 28th...**HOLY WEDNESDAY** - **Presanctified Divine Liturgy**- 9:00 a.m.  
**Holy Unction** -6:00 p.m.
- Thursday, April 29th..... **HOLY THURSDAY** - **Divine Liturgy**- 9:00 a.m.  
**Service of the 12 Gospels (Crucifixion of our Lord)**-6:00 p.m.
- Friday, April 30th.....**HOLY FRIDAY** - **Royal Hours**-9:00 a.m.  
**Descent from the Cross ("Apokathilosis")**- 12:00 noon  
**Lamentation Service (Epitahio)** -6:00 p.m.
- Saturday, May 1st.....**HOLY SATURDAY** -**Divine Liturgy** -9:00 a.m. a.m.  
**Odes of the Resurrection of Christ** -11:00 p.m.
- Sunday, May 2nd....**GREAT & HOLY PASCHA** - **Resurrection Service** -12:00 midnight  
**Divine Liturgy**-12:30 a.m.  
**Agape Vesper Service** - 1:00 p.m.
- Monday, May 3rd....**ST. GEORGE THE GREAT MARTYR**-**Orthros**-8:30 a.m.  
**Divine Liturgy**-9:30 a.m.

# Easter BAKE SALE

Ladies Philoptochos Society, Chapter 4035



**Koulourakia**  
\$8.00 per dozen  
with or w/o sesame



**Paximathia**  
\$8.00 per dozen



**Easter Bread**  
\$15.00 per loaf with  
or w/o dyed egg

## Easter Bake Sale

Place order by calling Tina Veroulis at (406) 431-9516 or email [tveroulis@aim.com](mailto:tveroulis@aim.com) from now till April 12th.

We have limited quantities of Easter bake sale items available, so please place your order ASAP! Red Easter Egg Dye packets are also available at \$2.00 per packet. Bake sale proceeds benefit Kids-n-Cancer Ministry.

1

### ORDER

Place your order by April 12th via phone or email.

2

### PAY

Mail or bring your check to Philoptochos at the church.

3

### PICK-UP

Arrange pick-up date & time starting April 9th. Last day for pick-up is Sunday, April 25th.





# ***Saint George Coffee Hour is Back!***

**Join us on Sunday, April 4,  
2021 at 2:00 PM (PST) via  
ZOOM!**

This is a recurring meeting at 2:00 pm on the dates listed below. Use the same Meeting ID & Passcode for all.

**Meeting ID #864 9984 9746 Passcode #459070**

April 4th, 2021  
May 9th, 2021  
June 6th, 2021

\*Coffee hour sponsored by Ladies Philoptochos

