

FEBRUARY 2022



Voice of St. George

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

74-109 LARREA ST., PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA



THE BLESSING GIVEN TO ST. SIMEON IN THE TEMPLE

Inside this issue

On February 2nd every year we celebrate the Feast Day of the Presentation of Christ into the Temple.

When St. Simeon received the Christ Child upon His Presentation to the Temple, he said, "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace according to Your word; for, my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of Your people, Israel." (St. Luke 2: 29-32). These words are heard during the Vesper Services, which are held on eves prior to the celebration of the Divine Liturgy on Sundays and in commemoration of a Feast Day of our Church throughout the week.

Significantly, St. Simeon thanked God for "letting him depart in peace," rather than to suggest that he be simply "let to die." As followers of Christ, our departure from this life is not

"death," but a transformation from life in this present world to life in Christ's Kingdom. We live in this present life with anticipation of "the Resurrection of the dead and life in the age to come," as is professed in the Creed. Furthermore, as we strive to share in St. Simeon's love for God, we allow the "Light of Christ," to enlighten all people of every generation, race and nationality to the knowledge of our Lord's Eternal Love.

In commemoration of the Presentation of Christ into the Temple, we dedicate our children to Christ by presenting them to the Church on their 40th day of life. Let us continue to give thanks to our Savior for giving us and our children the gift of life.

+FR. THEODORE

**SPIRITUAL THOUGHTS
by
Deacon Euthym**

"There is nothing better than peace in Christ, for it brings victory over all the

evil spirits on earth and in the air. When peace dwells in a man's heart it enables him to contemplate the grace of the Holy Spirit from within. He who dwells in peace collects spiritual gifts as it were with a scoop, and he sheds the light of knowledge on others. All our thoughts, all our desires, all our efforts, and all our actions should make us say constantly with the Church: "O Lord, give us peace!" When a man lives in peace, God reveals mysteries to him.."- St. Seraphim of Sarov.

We seek peace in so many unusual and unproductive ways. Passive entertainment, physical distractions...eating, drinking, drugs, self absorbed rituals and cultic pursuits. I am not going into specifics so as not to judge, but each of us recognizes this behavior in ourselves. These are false and temporal comforts that are

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fleeting and lead to less peace and more anxiety and agitation. The peace we seek is from the Holy Spirit. It is obtained only through repentance and confession and immersion into the sacramental life of the church. Everything else falls short. Therefore when we humble ourselves and repent we naturally lean on our faith for peace and trust in the Holy Spirit. Symeon and Anna who greeted Christ at the Temple, shared one common quality....patience. They humbly waited decades to see Christ. Can we put aside earthly cares for a few minutes so we too can encounter Christ?

"Gifts of Grace are given only to those who work for them by constantly guarding their souls..." +Elder Thaddeus

Often we think Grace is passive or contemplative. It is not, Gifts of Grace are acquired by actively fighting the devil through spiritual warfare and guarding ourselves against the attacks he delivers to us. It is actively acquired..."**the Kingdom of Heaven is take by force**". Today we celebrate the Presentation of the Lord to the Temple. Where the Holy Symeon holds him and utters the beautiful sentiment...."**Now let your servant depart in peace...**". The fulfillment of Symeon's life work, which was to behold the coming of Christ in the flesh, which he discerned through translating the Hebrew Scriptures into what we know as the Septuagint (in Ancient Greek, meaning the seventy) particularly the prophecy of Isaiah which foretells the coming of Christ. Let us actively invite Christ into our lives so that we may guard our souls and receive the gifts of Grace which we then use to glorify God.

**Archiepiscopal Encyclical
on the Feast of St. Photios,
Patriarch of Constantinople**



*"Their sound has gone forth unto all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." --
Psalm 18:4, LXX*

This year – the Centennial year of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America – we pause to

remember those who came before us, and honor the legacy of the pioneers of our Church in America. It seems only fitting, that on this Feast of the great and holy Patriarch Photios, we make special mention of the brave and stalwart πρωτοπόροι, whose voices brought the Faith of the Orthodox Christian Church to these shores. Thus, under the ever-memorable Archbishop Iakovos, our first National Shrine was established in St. Augustine, Florida, named for the great Patriarch – whose missionary endeavors are legendary – as a place of memory of those courageous souls.

The legacy of these early immigrants, who were the first waves of the Diaspora from Greece, Asia Minor and Cyprus, is visible in every community across our Sacred Archdiocese. Many parishes have established local archives and other methods of historical preservation, to cherish the stories and adventures of these often-unintentional missionaries. With their hopes and dreams for a new start and a better life in America, they also brought their deeply held religious values and beliefs. Wherever they settled – from the mountains of Wyoming to the shores Oregon, from the Great Lakes to the greatest of cities – they founded churches and community centers, where faith, language, and culture would be cherished and taught.

Our Saint Photios Greek Orthodox National Shrine is a visible symbol of the aspirations and the legacy of our forebears. And they are the spiritual ancestors to all of us – Greek and non-Greek alike – because they were the vessels in whom the seeds of our Archdiocese traversed land and sea to plant the Greek Orthodox Faith and traditions in the new world.

And so, in this One Hundredth Anniversary year of our Church in America – an Eparchy of the same Mother Church of Constantinople that the Holy Patriarch Photios led over one thousand years ago – let us honor the legacy of our foremothers and forefathers. Let us honor them in every parish across this great land, and by
Continued on the next page ----->

ARCHBISHOP'S ENCYCLICAL, *Continued*

sustaining the mission of our institution which honors their memory, the Saint Photios National Shrine, where the sound of their voices echoes unto eternity.

With paternal love in the Lord Jesus Christ,
† ELPIDOPHOROS
Archbishop of America

ST. GEORGE PARISH LENTEN RETREAT

Plan on joining us for our **St. George Parish Retreat on Saturday, April 2, 2022**. The theme is: *"The Divine Liturgy: The Experience of Human Flourishing,"* presented by **Fr. Philip Zymaris, ThD**, assistant professor of Liturgics at Holy Cross Seminary. The full-day retreat will feature a Lenten luncheon prepared by our **St. George Ladies of Philoptochos**, for which a modest \$20 donation is requested. **Church tours will also be offered!** Please see the enclosed flier.

COFFEE HOUR'S NEW FEATURE

Fr. Ted will be available every Sunday following the Divine Liturgy at a special table in our parish hall, reserved as *The Orthodox Question & Answer Table*. Anyone and everyone -- especially our visitors, new members, and those considering conversion to our Holy Greek Orthodox Faith -- is invited to join Fr. Ted to ask a question and/or join in a discussion about topics related to our Divine Liturgy and our Church teachings.

GODPARENT SUNDAY

Special thanks to our Sunday School staff members, **Athena Snarskis** and **Ana Storton**, for presenting the Godparent Sunday lessons to our students and their respective Godparents on **Sunday, January 30, 2022**. The program that followed included brief remarks from Athena and Ana reminding us of the importance of helping our children to know their Greek Orthodox Faith and supporting our on-going Sunday School program, "Kindness Counts." See the delicious "Godparent Celebration Cake" offered by our Philoptochos members in commemoration of Godparent Sunday.



To the left is a picture of the celebration cake offered by our St. George Philoptochos in observance of "Godparent Sunday."

PHILOPTOCHOS

Thirty members of our St. George Philoptochos Chapter gathered for their General Members Meeting on **Monday, January 31, 2022**. The speaker for the day was **Brigit Phillips**, Outreach Coordinator for **Safe House of the Desert**, which is a ministry dedicated to housing and helping victims of human trafficking, in particular. Safe House of the Desert also has an outreach program to find homeless youth who are in crisis and to provide immediate assistance for them. Our Philoptochos Chapter is dedicated to offering needed material support for this important ministry.



Sunday, February 6th, was "St. George Wear Red Day," in order to draw awareness to the American Heart Association's "Go Red for Women" campaign throughout the month of February.

Also, note: The **Annual Philoptochos Membership Luncheon** will be held on **Saturday, February 19, 2022** at our parish hall on **Saturday, February 19, 2022** at **11:30 a.m.** R.S.V.P. by February 14, 2022, by contacting our Philoptochos Chapter President, **Rhonda Latkovic**.



Philoptochos President, Rhonda Latkovic (at the podium) introduced Brigit Phillips, Outreach Coordinator for Safe House of the Desert, who spoke about issues involving homeless youth and human trafficking.

GREEK FOLK DANCE LESSONS

Sign-ups for **Greek Folk Dance lessons** with our instructor **Angeliki Pagoulatos** began on Sunday, January 30th and will continue through the next two weeks in our parish hall following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. Feel free to also contact our parish office at (760) 568-9901 to sign-up and for more information.

CHURCH & WELLNESS:

Orthodox Worship and God's Wisdom

The very tone of the Divine Liturgy is that exemplified by the Publican. Like the Publican, we acknowledge that we are imperfect as a result of thoughts, motives, words and actions that have nothing to do with giving glory to God. We pray for forgiveness and Divine mercy throughout our Church Services. We are called to remember that forgiveness is God's Divine mercy! There is no joy otherwise. Through the Publican we are taught that the only way to deal with guilt is to repent and to seek forgiveness. While confronting our short-comings may sound "gloomy," turning to God for forgiveness is a joy. This is why we say that the Divine Liturgy is celebrated, not simply "performed."

With the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee on February 13th the pre-Lenten season of the Triodion begins. With this, we are reminded that the tone of Orthodox worship, in general, is nicely compared to the thoughts of St. Theophan "the Recluse" expressed as the spirit of the Publican. *"We are watchful over two things: sobriety and discernment. The first is directed within, the second, outward. With sobriety, we observe movements which themselves come out from our hearts (yearnings, temptations, etc.). With discernment, we foresee movements which are about to be roused under the impulse of outward influences. The rule for sobriety is:...stand at the door of your heart and watch carefully everything that enters or goes out from there. Especially do not let acts be prejudiced by emotion and desire, for evil comes thence."* (*The Art of Prayer*, pg. 129).

Worship and prayer are always a matter of having our focus on God and on God's Will for all to

be saved. While the "prayer-mentality" of the Pharisee leads to delusion and deception, the "prayer-mentality" of the Publican leads to truth and wisdom.

+FR. THEODORE

AHEPA NEWS



On Saturday, **January 22, 2022**, our AHEPA Chapter 528 hosted the AHEPA District 20 Mid-Winter Conference. We were honored by **His Grace, Bishop Spyridon of Amastris**, Who led us in the Opening Prayer. In addition, we were inspired by His Keynote address in which He reminded us of the history of the AHEPA Family in its loving relationship with our Greek Orthodox Church, being people of strong faith in our Lord and Savior. His words serve to encourage us to continue in offering our love to the Church and to let our faith in Christ our God guide us unto every good deed.

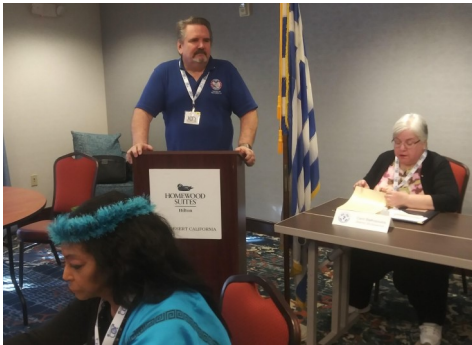
AHEPA Family delegates to the Mid-Winter Conference included: AHEPA District 20 Governor, **D.L. Pete Marudas**; Daughters of Penelope District 20 Governor, **Carol Stathopoulos**; Daughters of Penelope Grand President, Zone 4, **Robbie Jackson**, and AHEPA Supreme Governor, Region 8, **Alexander Mallas**.

Highlights of the Conference included frequent expressions of gratitude to our Chapter 528 President, **Wynn Storton**, for organizing the wonderful Mid-Winter Conference here in Palm Desert, as well as producing a fantastic [District 20 Mid-Winter Conference Program Ad Book](#) and serving the vast communication needs of the AHEPA Chapters throughout District 20. In addition, we congratulate brother AHEPA 528 Chapter member, **Nicholas Latkovic**, who was named "AHEPAN of the Year" at this Conference.



His Grace, Bishop Spyridon of Amastris led the Opening Prayer for AHEPA District 20 Mid-Winter Conference in Palm Desert on January 22, 2022.

AHEPA NEWS, Continued



Above: AHEPA Chapter 528 President, Wynn Storton welcomed AHEPA District 20 delegates to the Homewood Suites in Palm Desert, where this year's Mid-Winter Conference was held. Pictured to the right is Daughters of Penelope District 20 Governor, Carol Stathopoulos.

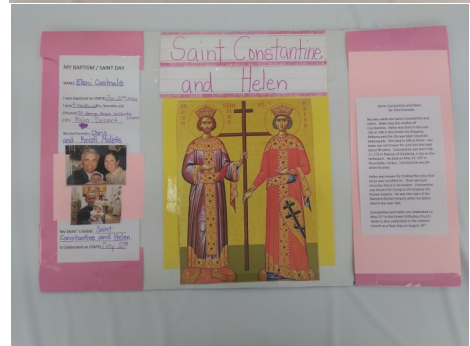
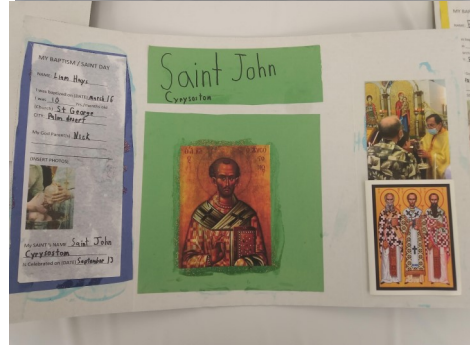
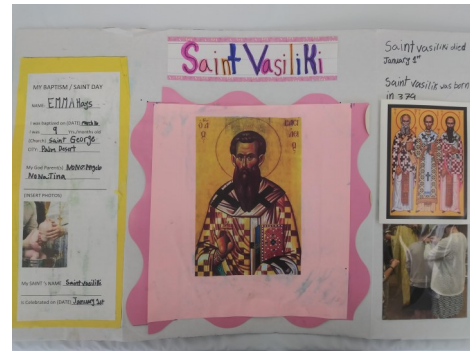


Above: AHEPA District Governor, D.L. Pete Marudas, (at the left) presented the plaque naming our AHEPA 528 brother, Nicholas Latkovic (at the right), "AHEPAN of the Year."

SUNDAY SCHOOL
NAME DAY SAINTS FAIR

On Sunday, January 16, 2022, our Sunday School students presented their reports about their "Name Day" Saints. Presentations that are included in this issue of *The Voice of St. George* feature the Three Holy Hierarchs, who are the Name Day Saints for **Emma Hays**, **Colin Hays**, and **Liam Hays**. Emma's Saint is St. Basil the Great. Colin's Saint is St. Gregory the Theologian, and Liam's Saint is St. John Chrysostom.

As we celebrate the Three Holy Hierarchs, we cannot forget St. Helen (the mother of St. Constantine the Great), who is known as "Equal to the Apostles." **Eleni Castrale's** Name Day Saint is St. Helen.



From top to bottom: St. Basil the Great (Women named after St. Basil are known as "Vasiliki."), St. Gregory the Theologian, St. John Chrysostom, and Sts. Constantine and Helen.

GREEK FOLK DANCE LESSONS

Sign-ups for **Greek Folk Dance lessons** with our instructor **Angeliki Pagoulatos** began on Sunday, January 30th and will continue through the next two weeks in our parish hall following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. Feel free to also contact our parish office at (760) 568-9901 to sign-up and for more information.



St George Greek Orthodox Church has been selected as the Winner for the 2022 Best of Palm Desert Awards in the category of Places of Worship by the Palm Desert Program Award Committee. Let us always give thanks to God for the opportunity to serve our community according to the Holy Greek Orthodox Faith.

WEEKDAY CALENDAR - FEBRUARY 2022

SCHEDULE OF SUNDAY SERVICES: Orthros-8:30 a.m./Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m./Sunday School-10:30 a.m.

Sunday, Feb. 6: St. Photius of Constantinople (Sunday of the Canaanite Woman); Sunday, Feb. 13: Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee (Triodion Begins); Sunday, Feb. 20: The Prodigal Son; Sunday, Feb. 27: Judgment Sunday (Meatfare Sunday)

Bible Study Sessions throughout February are scheduled as follows: Tuesday mornings at 10:00 a.m., in-person and on Zoom (Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82779591017?pwd=VGNYSUZpb1E3NlA1QlozRUc4SzBxZz09>) and Wednesday evenings at 6:30 p.m., in-person and on Zoom (Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86111452564>)

Wednesday, February 2nd..PRESENTATION OF OUR LORD IN THE TEMPLE: Orthros-8:30 a.m./ Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.

Tuesday, February 8th.....AHEPA Meeting - 6:00 p.m. (Bible Study); 6:30 p.m. (meeting). Meeting will be in-person and on Zoom (Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3058156277?pwd=N3UwTndOOUVJTlZlWXRqSDBtK0ZxUT09>)

Thursday, February 10th....ST. HARALAMBOS

Orthros-8:30 a.m./Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.
Parish Council Meeting-2:00 p.m.

Sunday, February 13th.....Annual AHEPA Super Bowl Party at our parish hall - 3:00 p.m.

Saturday, February 19th...Annual Philoptochos Membership Luncheon at our parish hall - 11:30 a.m.

Saturday, February 26th....SATURDAY OF SOULS

Orthros-8:00 a.m./Divine Liturgy -9:00 a.m.



**ST. GEORGE GREEK
ORTHODOX CHURCH
PARISH LENTEN RETREAT
SATURDAY & SUNDAY,**

74-109 LARREA STREET, PALM DESERT, CA

SATURDAY, APRIL 2ND - 10:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.

(ST. GEORGE PARISH HALL)

SUNDAY, APRIL 3RD - ORTHROS - 8:30 A.M. / DIVINE LITURGY - 9:30 A.M.

SPEAKER:

FR. PHILIP ZYMARIS, THD

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF LITURGICS

**HOLY CROSS GREEK ORTHODOX
THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL**

CHURCH TOURS

Sat. April 2, 2022

12:30 p.m.- 1:15 p.m.

4:00 - 4:30 p.m.

"THE DIVINE LITURGY: THE EXPERIENCE OF HUMAN FLOURISHING"

- **"THE MEANING BEHIND THE LITURGICAL MOVEMENTS"**
- **"BECOMING CITIZENS OF THE KINGDOM: THE PRAYERS, HYMNOLOGY, ARCHITECTURE AND ICONOGRAPHY THAT FORM US."**

...REGISTRATION: \$20 (INCLUDES LUNCH)

NAME _____

CELL PHONE _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

R.S.V.P BY: FRIDAY, MARCH 25, 2022

CHECKS PAYABLE TO: ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH. IN MEMO, WRITE: "PARISH RETREAT."