

DECEMBER 18, 2016

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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Palm Desert, California 92260

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THE LADDER

THE SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 4755

Palm Desert, CA.92261

Tel: (760) 568-9901

or: (760) 880-5869

– Fr. Theodore Pantels,
Proistamenos (Pastor)

– Deacon Euthym Kontaxis,
M.D.

Holy Communion Order

1. Please remain standing while following the directions of our ushers.
2. Ladies, kindly remove lipstick before receiving.
3. When receiving Holy Communion, make the Sign of the Cross, state your name (baptismal name), and naturally receive as if being fed.
4. Non-Orthodox Christians may not receive Holy Communion, but they may receive the Holy Bread at the end of the service.
5. All Orthodox Christians must be spiritually prepared to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Please see the priest if you have any questions.

OF THE LINEAGE OF DAVID

The Holy Scriptures verify that Joseph is a descendent of King David. (St. Matthew 1:20). In this way, Jesus is of the genealogy of King David. In the person of David we understand that the Incarnate God, our Lord Jesus Christ, has both a prophetic quality and a kingly authority, making Him the “Son of Man” and our Savior. Jesus Christ is the Messiah. For, Christ fulfills the role represented by David as prophet and king. Christ God fulfills the Old Testament.

In the person of David is represented the sinner, on the one hand, and the repentant, on the other. The history of humanity shows that human beings are sinners. However, Christ Who is both God and Man, opened the road toward repentance. As King of all, Christ has the authority to open this road of repentance; as Prophet, He enlightens us regarding Eternal Life.

As we study Psalm 50 (written by King David), we encounter David the sinner, broken by his sorrow regarding his sins – adultery and murder.

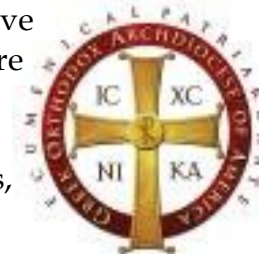
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THE SUNDAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS (THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST)

On the Sunday that occurs on or immediately after the eighteenth of this month, we celebrate all those who from ages past have been well-pleasing to God, beginning from Adam even unto Joseph the Betrothed of the Most Holy Theotokos, according to genealogy, as the Evangelist Luke hath recorded historically (Luke 3:23-38); we also commemorate the Prophets and Prophetesses, and especially the Prophet Daniel and the Holy Three Children. The genealogy of Christ, the Son of God, as recorded in the Gospel of St. Matthew (1: 1-25) is read aloud during the Reading of the Holy Gospel during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy

TODAY’S SAINT – ST. SEBASTIAN

St. Sebastian was from the city of Milan and was a member of the Senate as well as a zealot for the Faith of Christ. He had converted many to the knowledge of God. When Diocletian and Maximian began a Persecution against the Christians, Saint Sebastian was arrested and pierced with sharp arrows, and the bones of his body were shattered with clubs; and being cut into pieces, he gave up his spirit to God in the year 288. Together with him there were others also who died while enduring various tortures. Their names are Marcellinus and Mark the brethren, Tranquillinus their father, Nicostratus and his spouse Zoe, Tiburtius, Claudius, Castulus, and Castor. (See www.goarch.org)



Η Αγία Γραφή επιβεβαιώνει ότι ο Ιωσήφ είναι απογονός του Δαβίδ (Ματθ. 1:20). Έτσι, ο Ιησούς είναι της γενεαλογίας του Δαβίδ. Στο πρόσωπο του Δαβίδ αναγνωρίζομεν ότι ο ενσαρκωμένος Θεός, ο Κύριος μας, ο Ιησούς Χριστός έχει τόσο την προφητικήν ποιότητα και την βασιλικήν εξουσίαν να είναι <Υίος του ανθρώπου> και ο Σωτήρας μας. Είναι ο Μεσσίας. Εκπληρώνει ο Χριστός τον ρόλον του Δαβίδ, ο οποίος είναι προφήτης και βασιλέας. Αυτός ο ρόλος είναι η εκπλήρωσις της Παλαιας Διαθήκης.

Στο πρόσωπο του Δαβίδ αντιπροσωπεύεται ο αμαρτωλός, από την μιαν πλευράν, και ο μετανοήμενος άνθρωπος, από την άλλην. Η ιστορία της ανθρωπότητος δείχνει ότι ο άνθρωπος είναι αμαρτωλός. Όμως, ο Θεάνθρωπος Χριστός ανοίξει την οδόν προς την μετανοίαν. Ως Βασιλεύς των όλων, ο Χριστός έχει την εξουσίαν να ανοίξει αυτήν την οδόν. Ως Προφήτης φωτίζει την ανθρωπότηταν περί της αιωνίου ζωής.

Όσο μελετούμεν τον 50ον Ψαλμόν, συναντάμεν έναν αμαρτωλόν Δαβίδ, <σπασμένος> από την θλίψην περί των αμαρτιών του – της μοιχείας και του φόνου. Επίσης συναντάμεν τον μετανοήμενον Δαβίδ. Από τον Δαβίδ καταλαβαίνουμεν ότι η μετανοία περιλαμβάνει την χάριν του Αγίου Πνεύματος (το Όποιο παντοτε αποκάλυπτει το Πρόσωπον του Χριστού) και την ανθρωπινήν ψυχήν (αυτό το θεικό στοιχείο της υπαρξέως μας)... <Το Πνεύμα Σου το Άγιο μην αντανέλης από εμού.> (Ψαλ. 50: 11) > και <Πνεύμα συντετριμμένον και καρδίαν συντετριμμένην ο Θεός ουκ εξουδενώσει> (Ψαλ. 50: 17).
+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

David), we encounter David the sinner, broken by his sorrow regarding his sins—adultery and murder. At the same time, we encounter the repentant David. From David we understand that repentance includes the grace of the Holy Spirit (Who constantly reveals to us the Person of Christ) and also the human soul (that divine element of our existence). The words of Psalm 50 which point to this are in David's prayer, *"Take not Your Holy Spirit from me."* (Psalm 50: 11) and *"A contrite spirit and a broken heart, O God, You will not despise."* (Psalm 50: 17).

As True God, Christ speaks to us in the recesses of our souls for the purpose of helping us to become more divine than human. As "divine" creatures, we are partakers with God's energies, making us replicas of God—being sacrificial in our love as is God; being merciful as is God and being forgiving as is God. Eternal Life consists of partaking of God's ever-giving energies for all things that are good, as God is good.

The angel announced to the shepherds *"...I bring you great news of great joy..."* No longer are we victims of evil, for Christ has vanquished evil and we can, also, provided we remain with Christ through Whom we receive the Holy Spirit and Who alone heals our "contrite spirit and our broken hearts." This is why, among the prayers said prior to the beginning of the Divine Liturgy, the priest remembers the words of the Holy Angels when they appeared to the shepherds tending their flock at the time of the birth of the Christ Child: *"Glory to God in the highest and on earth, peace and goodwill among all."* These words are said before the beginning of the Divine Liturgy, when the following is intoned, *"Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages."* Hence, the "Joy to the world" is *"The Kingdom of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit."*

Indeed, heaven and earth are united through the Incarnation God. Our Heavenly Father has not overlooked the sinner (represented by David), but has set repentance (shown by David) as the way of salvation. As we prepare to partake of Holy Communion, we hear the priest read the Prayer of Forgiveness following the Sacrament of Holy Confession: *"O Lord, You do not desire the death of a sinner, but rather that one should turn from wickedness and live,"* quoting the words of Christ Himself, *"For, sins shall be forgiven seventy times seven."*

+FR. THEODORE

PRAY FOR THE SICK: Yvonne Flessas, George Aeder, Adele Gal-lade, Kathy Ligeros, Nicholas Kyriakou, Erika Aguilar (Ana and Wynn Storton's daughter) (*Many of the faithful on our Prayer List face chronic or serious illness*).

HYMNS AND READINGS FOR TODAY'S CELEBRATION OF THE DIVINE LITURGY

ANTIPHON I: *"Tes presvies tis Theotokou..." (By the prayers of the Theotokos...)*

Verse 1— Bless the Lord, O my soul, and everything within me, bless His Holy Name.

Refrain: *"Tes presvies tis Theotokou, soter, soston imas."*

Verse 2—: Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His rewards.

Refrain: *"By the prayers of the Theotokos, Savior, save us."*

Verse 3—: The Lord prepared His throne in heaven and His Kingdom rules over all.

Refrain: *"Tes presvies tis Theotokou, soter, soston imas."*

Chanter(s): *Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.*

Refrain: *"By the prayers of the Theotokos, Savior, save us."*

ANTIPHON II: *"Soston imas Ie Theou..." (Save us, O Son of God...)*

Verse 1— Praise the Lord, O my soul! I shall praise the Lord while I live; I shall sing to my God as long as I exist.

Refrain: *"Soston imas, Yie Theou, O Anastas ek nekron, psallontas si alleluia."*

Verse 2— Blessed is He whose help is the God of Jacob; his hope is in the Lord his God.

Refrain: *"Save us, O Son of God, Who arose from the dead, we sing to You, Alleluia."*

Verse 3— The Lord shall reign forever; your God, O Zion, to all generations.

Refrain: *"Soston imas Ie Theou, O Anastas ek nekron, psallontas si alleluia."*

Doxa Patri ke Io ke Aghio Pnevmati ke nin ke aei ke eis tous eonas ton eonon.

People: *"O Monogenis Ios ke Logos tou Theou..." (O Only-Begotten Son and Word of God...)*

HYMNS FOR THE ENTRANCE WITH THE HOLY GOSPEL: ANTIPHON III— *This is the day the Lord made; let us greatly rejoice and be glad therein. Let heaven and earth praise Him the seas and everything that moves in them.*

Sunday Resurrection Hymn: *Tou lithou sfraghismenos [Tone 1]...(The stone that had been sealed before Your tomb by the Judeans and the soldiers guarding did watch over Your pure and sacred Body, O Savior, the third day You arose and unto all the world did You give life, whereby all the heavenly powers proclaim that You are the Giver of Life. Glory unto our Resurrected Christ; glory unto Your Kingdom; glory to Your dispensation, O You alone Who loves all.)*

Hymn for the Sunday Before Christmas: *Megala ta tis pisteos...(Magnificent are Faith's accomplishments! The three holy Youths exultingly stood in the fountain of fire as if beside the still waters of rest. And Daniel the Prophet was shown to be a shepherd of lions. At their entreaty, O Christ God, save our souls.)*

Hymn for St. George: *Os ton ehmaloton eleftherotis...(As the one who sets the captives free and the protector of the poor; as physician to the sick and the champion defender of kings, bearer of trophies are you, O Great Martyr George, intercede with Christ our God that He may save our souls.)*

Kontakion Hymn: *Ee Parthenos symeron...(On this day the Virgin Maid goes to the grotto to give birth to the pre-eternal Word in an ineffable manner. Dance for joy, all the inhabited earth, on hearing. Glorify along with Angels and with the shepherds Him who willed that He appear as a newborn Child, the pre-eternal God.)*

READINGS: Epistle - Hebrews 11: 9-10; 32-40 / Gospel - St. Matthew 1: 1-25

Megalynarion: Axion Estin ...(See page 52 in our Divine Liturgy Books)

Communion Hymn: Enite ton Kyrion... Praise the Lord from the heavens...(See page 64 in our Divine Liturgy Books)



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Coffee Hour: Emily Tcharos

PHILPOPTOCHOS—Our Christmas Bake Sale ends today, December 18. Pick up your breads and cookies at the Bake Sale table in the hall. Our **Christmas Luncheon** last Saturday was so much fun. We had 46 members and guests who enjoyed the lunch and the entertainment. Thank you to Co-Chairs Rhonda Latkovic, Linda Bozigian, Debbie Vawter, Carol Lyons and Tina Veroulis. **Our Christmas Baskets** were made and delivered this past week to our shut-ins. Thank you to everyone who volunteered for this project. We need **Coffee Hour Hostesses for the month of January**. See Linda Petalas. Don't forget **Taverna Night. It will be on Saturday, January 7, 2017**. We are selling reservations today at the Philoptochos table. See flier.

ALTAR FLOWER BOUQUETS—Dedication: *"In honor and with sincere love for my Dear Mother 'Lucille Bell' who passed away October 12,2016. May she rest in Peace."* — **Daughter and Son-in-law Eloise & Fred Sanders of Carson, CA.**

GREEK FESTIVAL ON FACE BOOK— All parishioners of St. George who use Face Book are asked to place announcements for our 2017 Greek Festival on Face Book and to allow people to "like" their message so that information about our Greek Festival can spread to others in our vicinity and beyond. Please contact Ana Storton and/or Jim Christopoulos for more information about advertising our Festival on Face Book.

FUNERAL PLOTS / ORTHODOX SECTION— In a joint effort, Fr. Ted and Fr. David Kruse of the St. Raphael Antiochian Orthodox parish in Thousand Palms, California are looking into establishing an Orthodox Church Section at Desert Memorial Park Cemetery at the corner of Ramon and DeVall in Cathedral City. The first step in the process is to determine how much interest there is among the Orthodox Christian faithful in the Coachella Valley (Greek Orthodox, Antiochian Orthodox, Serbian Orthodox, Romanian Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, etc). We have the opportunity for burial plots to be purchased together in one area and then bless the ground making it an Orthodox area. We were given a price of **\$1585.00** per plot. Please let Fr. Ted know if you are interested so that he can work with Fr. David in making the appropriate arrangements.

PARISH COUNCIL— The following were elected last Sunday to serve as members of the 2017 Parish Council (listed in alphabetical order): **Becky Allen, Spiro Astmos, Tony Dalkas, Lula Valissarakos.**

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

Tuesday, December 20th.....Bible Study – 10:00 a.m.

Thursday, December 22nd.....Choir Practice – 1:00 p.m.

Friday, December 23rd.....ROYAL HOURS FOR THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST – 9:30 a.m.

Saturday, December 24th.....EVE OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST

Orthros-8:30 a.m. /Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m./Sunday School Christmas Caroling
Vespers – 5:00 p.m.

Next Sunday, December 25th.....THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

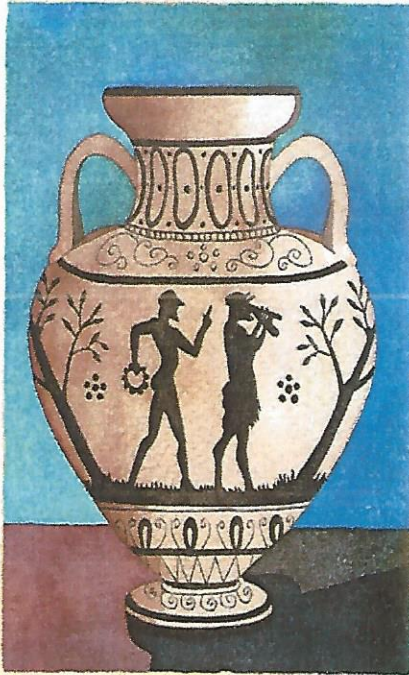
Orthros – 8:30 a.m. / Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

Note: Fr. Ted and Presvytera Petula will be visiting their children and grandchildren in Sacramento, California from Monday, December 26th to Saturday morning, December 31st. Fr. Ted will be celebrating the Divine Liturgy as always on Christmas Day (next Sunday, December 25) and on New Year's Day (the following Sunday, January 1, 2017).

*The December 2016 Ladder
is sponsored by
Linda Kallis*

We encourage all of our parents to sit in the church with their entire family as they participate in the beauty and mysteries of the Divine Liturgy. For those with young children, feel free to sit near an aisle so that you may easily take your children for a break, as needed. If necessary, we have a "crying room" in the narthex for your use. God Bless.

ST. GEORGE PHILOPTOCHOS



INVITES YOU TO ATTEND
TAVERNA NIGHT
JANUARY 7, 2017

AT 6 P.M.

\$40.00 PER PERSON

GREEK DINNER

MUSIC & DANCING

PAID RESERVATIONS MUST BE MADE

IN ADVANCE BY JANUARY 1, 2017

TAKEN AT THE PHILOPTOCHOS TABLE

**NO UNPAID RESERVATIONS AT DOOR
OR MAIL THE FORM BELOW TO: ST. GEORGE**

PHILOPTOCHOS, P.O. BOX 4755, PALM DESERT, CA 92261

AND NOTE TAVERNA NIGHT

NAME: _____

NUMBER OF PERSONS ATTENDING: _____

AMOUNT ENCLOSED _____

PHONE # _____