

JANUARY 10, 2016

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

**74-109 Larrea Street
Palm Desert, California 92260**

Website: www.go-stgeorge.org

Email: pdsaintgeorge@gmail.com

THE LADDER

SUNDAY AFTER THEOPHANY; St. Gregory of Nyssa

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.*

HEAVEN ON EARTH

From the very beginning God created us *"in His Image and Likeness."* (Genesis 1:26). In addition, *"He breathed in his [Adam's] face the breath of life."* (Genesis 2:7). Because of sin, the "Image" and the "Likeness" of God, according to which we were created, was damaged and, consequently, all of creation became damaged. We say this, because God wanted us to exercise authority over all the earth. Therefore, since humanity became damaged, everything done by

this "damaged" humanity brings harm to creation itself. Even to this day, many people speak about our collective responsibility towards our planet's environment.

While Christ our God is without sin, He took upon Himself our sins and weaknesses so that He could "re-create" us in the "Image and Likeness" of God. We note that God is One God in Three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Indeed, our destiny is to be co-work-

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ST. GREGORY OF NYSSA – Saint Gregory, the younger brother of Basil the Great, illustrious in speech and a zealot for the Orthodox Faith, was born in 331. His brother Basil was encouraged by their elder sister Macrina to prefer the service of God to a secular career. Saint Gregory was moved in a similar way by his godly mother Emily. Yet, he began serving the Lord in a "lukewarm" manner, sometimes being negligent in his duties of overseeing the affairs of the Church. Letters sent to him by St. Basil (which are still in existence) express St. Basil's concerns for his younger brother.

In answer to St. Basil's prayers, the Holy Forty Martyrs appeared to St. Gregory in a vision, threatening him and reproaching him for his slothfulness. After this he repented and became very diligent in the service of God. As a result, St. Gregory staunchly defended the Orthodox Faith against heresies. Because of his Orthodoxy, he was exiled in 374 by Valens, who was a heretic emperor. After the death of Valens in 378, Gregory was recalled to his throne by the Orthodox Emperor Gratian. He attended the Local Council of Antioch, which sent him to visit the churches of Arabia and Palestine, which had been defiled and ravaged by Arianism. He attended the Second Ecumenical Council, which was assembled in Constantinople in 381. Having lived some sixty years, authoring many remarkable writings, he reposed about the year 395.



Απο την αρχην ο Θεος μας επλασσε <κατα εικονα και καθ ομοιωσιν ημων.> (Γεν. 1:26). Επισης, <ενεφυσησεν εις τους μυκτηρας αυτου πνοην ζωης.> (Γεν. 2:7). Δια της αμαρτιας η <εικονα> και η <ομοιωσις> του Θεου, κατα τις οποιες εδημιουργηκε ο ανθρωπος εξημιωθηκαν, και, συνεπως, ολη η κτισις εξημιωθηκε, διοτι ο Θεος ηθελε τον ανθρωπον να εξουσιαση επι πασης της γης. Επιδη, ομως, ο ανθρωπος <εξημιωθηκε>, ολα τα οποια εκανε ο ανθρωπος εφεραν ζημια στην κτισιν. Ακοκη σημερα ομιλουν πολλοι περι της ανθρωπινης ευθυνης σε σχεση με τον πλανητην μας.

Ενω ο Χριστος ο Θεος μας ειναι αναμαρτητος, ανελαβε επανω Του την αμαρτιαν και την αδυναμιαν του ανθρωπου, ωστε να <ξαναδημιουργηση> τον ανθρωπον <κατα εικονα και καθ ομοιωσιν> του Θεου. Ας σημειωσουμε οτι ο Θεος ειναι Ενας Θεος, τρισυποστατος: Πατηρ, Υιος και Αγιο Πνευμα. Μαλιστα, ο προορισμος του ανθρωπου ειναι να συνεργαζεται με τον Θεον – δηλαδη, να δημιουργησει αγαθα μεσα για να πραγματοποιηθουν αγαθα εργα της αγαπης (οπως εκανε ο Χριστος θαυματα για την αιωνιον ζωην του καθενος) και με σκοπο να δοξασθει το Παναγιο Ονομα του Θεου, το οποιο γινεται με την χαριν του Αγιου Πνευματος.

Για αυτον τον λογον, οταν εβαπτησθηκε ο Χριστος ο Θεος στον Ιορδανην ποταμον η Αγια Τριαδα αποκαλυφθηκε στην ανθρωποτητα: <Το Πνευμα ως περιστερην καταβαινον επι Αυτον. Και φωνη εγενετο εκ των ουρανων: Συ ει ο Υιος Μου ο Αγαπητος, εν ω ηυδοκησα.> (Μαρκ. 1:11).

+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

with God—that is, to create the proper means in order to bring about good deeds of love (as Christ performed even miracles for the Eternal Life of each person) and with the purpose of glorifying the Most Holy Name of God, by the Grace of the Holy Spirit.

It is for this reason that, when Christ our God was baptized in the River Jordan, the Holy Trinity was revealed to all of humanity: “*The Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a Dove and a Voice from Heaven was heard: ‘This is My Beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.’*” (St. Mark 1: 10-11). In Christ, humanity and material creation are all God’s Kingdom—“on earth as it is in heaven.”

In the Nicene Creed we confess that God is the Creator of all things, both visible and invisible, meaning that the invisible Kingdom of God and the visible creation of God do, indeed, belong to God. But, while they were initially created as “separate” worlds, the mission accomplished by Christ our God entering our visible world is the *union* of the invisible, eternal Kingdom of Heaven with the created world. Heaven appears upon earth and earth is sanctified to be part of Heaven. This is the culmination of God’s creative work and Divine Plan. While the “end” of the visible world is a future reality, details of which are still a mystery to be revealed beyond our present life.

Heaven and earth are united in the Person of Christ, Who appeared in our form, so that we can be re-formed into God’s Image. This is the very purpose of our participation in the Holy Sacraments. We, are to bring Heaven into our everyday lives and in the lives of those around us; for, the Divine Liturgy begins with: “*Blessed be the Kingdom of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.*”

In the Old Testament, we note that God created us. In the Gospels, it is God Who takes on our created nature in order to forgive us and re-create us in a way that we can take on the Divine power of love which characterizes His nature. Every day in our present life is yet one more great opportunity to be with God. We can only be grateful for this opportunity every day.

+FR. THEODORE

We are grateful to God for the generosity of our St. George parishioners in giving to the Outreach “**Baby Bottle**” Drive for **Birth Choice of the Desert**. The total amount collected is **\$2,099!**

PRAY FOR THE SICK: Yvonne and George Flessas, George Aeder, Adele Gallade, Kathy Ligeros, Aryroula Krespis (Nick Krespis’ mother), Bob Maverick, John Kouletsis (Mary Mitsias’ brother), Robert Fleming (Rhonda Latkovic’s father), Debbie Vawter, Skip Lewis, Anne Boukidis-Michas, Mary Fondas (*Many of the faithful on our Prayer List face chronic or serious illness*).

“*I can do all things through Christ Who strengthens me.*” Phil. 4:13

HYMNS FOR THIS SUNDAY'S CELEBRATION OF THE DIVINE LITURGY

ANTIPHON I:

Verse 1: In the exodus of Israel from Egypt, the house of Jacob from a foreign people

Response: "Tes presvies tis Theotokou, Soter, soson imas."

Verse 2: Judah became His sanctuary, and Israel His authority.

Response: "By the prayers of the Theotokos, Savior, O save us."

Verse 3: The sea saw them and fled, the Jordan turned back.

Response: "Tes presvies tis Theotokou, Soter, soson imas."

Verse 4: What is it to you, O Sea, that you fled, and to you, O Jordan, that you turned back?

Response: "By the prayers of the Theotokos, Savior, O save us."

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

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

ANTIPHON II:

Verse 1: I have loved, because the Lord Shall hear the voice of my supplication.

Response: "Soson imas Ie Theou, o Anastas ek nekron, psallontas si: Allilouia."

Verse 2: For He inclined His ear to me, and in my days I shall call upon Him.

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

Verse 3: The pains of death surrounded me; The dangers of Hades found me; I found affliction and grief.

Response: "Soson imas Ie Theou, o Anastas ek nekron, psallontas si: Allilouia."

Verse 4: The Lord is merciful and righteous, and our God has mercy.

Response: "Save us, O Son of God, Who arose from the dead, we sing to You: Alleluis."

Chanter(s): "Doxa Patri ke Io, ke Ayio Pnevmati, ke nin ke ai ke is tous eonas ton eonon. Amin."

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

ANTIPHON III: Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endures forever. Let the house of Aaron say that He is good, for His mercy endures forever.

Resurrection Hymn: Katelisas to Stavro Sou [Tone 7]... ("O Lord by Your Sacred Cross You abolished death, and granted unto the thief blessed paradise. The Myrrh bearers ceased lamenting and turned to joy. The Apostles did preach the Good News at Your command, that You had risen from the dead O Christ our God, bestowing Your mercy upon the world evermore.")

Hymn for the Sunday After Theophany: En Iordani Vaptizomenou sou Kyrie... (As You were baptized in the Jordan, O Lord, then the worship of the Trinity became manifest, for the voice of the Father bore witness to You, naming You the Beloved Son; and the Spirit, in the form of a dove, confirmed the certainty of the word. O Christ God, who appeared and illumined the world, glory to You.")

Hymn to 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 for this Sunday: Epefanis simeron... (You appeared today to us on earth, O Master, and Your light was signed on us who cry aloud to You and say with understanding, O Christ our God: You came and shone forth, O Light unapproachable.")

READINGS: Epistle- Ephesians 4: 7-13 / St. Matthew 4: 12-17

Megalynarion (Hymn for the Theotokos): Axion Estin (Divine Liturgy Book, pg. 52)

Communion Hymn: Enite ton Kyrion (Divine Liturgy Book, pg. 64)

"Above all else,
guard your heart, for
it is the well-spring
of life" Proverbs 4:23



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ushers: Tasia Richards, Anna Prineas, John Petalas

Greeter: Melissa Hawkins

Coffee Hour Hostesses: Presvytera Petula Pantels

PHILOPTOCHOS—Our Christmas Bake Sale was a success! We want to thank our **Chairperson Lula Valissarakos** and the volunteers that worked in the kitchen making bread and cookies. We also want to thank **Susan Clark and Linda Petalas** for taking the orders and handling distribution of the bake goods along with Tina Veroulis keeping track of the orders and monies. We need Coffee Hour Hostesses for the month of February. Please see **Linda Petalas**.

We have a new program to help those in need. It's called The Knitting Project. We will provide caps/bands and blankets for cancer patients at The City of Hope. **Rhonda Latkovic** is heading this project and we have already had a donation to cover the cost of materials to start. **WE NEED KNITTERS!** If you knit, would you volunteer? You will be provided with the materials and patterns. Please contact **Rhonda Latkovic or Linda Kallis**.

2016 GREEK FESTIVAL— The Festival is coming! **Tomorrow, Monday, January 11 at 9:00 a.m.** we start food prepping. We need many hands this week for making 8,000 dolmathes. Check the bulletin board to find out what else will be scheduled to be made weekly.

We need volunteers to sign up for the shifts at each booth. **DON'T WAIT TO BE ASKED. VOLUNTEER!** Philoptochos has volunteered their table in the Church Hall for a place to sign up. Please Sign-up Today! Minimum 5 hour shift requested per day on Saturday, February 27th and/or Saturday, February 28th. Receive 1 meal ticket for each shift. See **Linda Kallis or Tina Veroulis**. Thank you.

FESTIVAL PROGRAM ADS—Everyone is asked to make every effort to obtain at least one ad for the 20th Annual Festival Program. Business “logos” are \$300. One-line greetings are \$150. See Presvytera Pantels **today** to pick up a “Festival Program Ad Form.” The deadline for ads to be submitted is: **January 18, 2016.**

YIAYIA’S ATTIC—It’s that time of year again! Yiayia’s Attic is gathering treasures for the **Festival’s Attic Booth**. Please start organizing your donations now! Call **Becky Allen at (760) 699-5439** for details and/or questions.

COLORING BOOK MEETING—The session will take place on Friday, January 15th @ noon. Lunch will be "Mardi Gras" themed! \$5 donation includes lunch & raffle ticket.

WE PRAY FOR THE ETERNAL SALVATION—for the servant of God, **Mrs. Zoe Balodimos**, who passed away to our Lord and Savior on Wednesday, January 6, 2016. The Ladies Philoptochos will prepare the “Memorial Luncheon” (*Makararia*) for her funeral, which is scheduled for Tuesday, January 19, 2016. Zoe Balodimos was a founding member of our parish and our St. George Philoptochos Chapter. **MAY HER MEMORY BE ETERNAL!**

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

- Monday, January 11th.....Festival Cooking and Preparations Begin- 9:00 a.m. (dolmathes)
- Tuesday, January 12th.....Bible Study-10:00 a.m.
- Thursday, January 14th.....Choir Practice-4:00 p.m. / Parish Council Meeting - 6:30 p.m.
- Saturday, January 16th.....No Vespers

*The Ladder for January 2016 is sponsored by:
Helena Christie in loving memory of
Paula Kozlen*

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.