

DECEMBER 10, 2017

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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THE LADDER

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– 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.

SPIRITUAL ARMOR

The theme today is: "We must stand straight!" As we heard in the reading of today's Gospel of St. Luke, Christ healed the woman who was bent over so that she could stand straight. At the same time, we heard the words of St. Paul in his Epistle to the Ephesians, by which he asks us: "Stand, therefore, with the girdle of truth around your waste." (Ephesians 6:14).

The soldier must stand strong in his preparation for battle. His or her powers

involve not only physical muscles and abilities, but also the required tools. The waste joins the upper body with the legs so that we can stand up straight. The girdle supports the waste, making it stronger in order to endure the demands of battle, protecting the soldier from falling at any critical moment. The Apostle describes a Christian as one who is a soldier of Christ. The virtue of truth is the girdle that supports him or her in the spiritual life, so that he or she

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THE VALUE OF THE HUMAN BEING

Today's passage from St. Luke's Gospel reveals the great value that God places on each person's life. The bent-over woman was a single individual who was forced into a position in which she could not lift up her eyes to heaven and pray – one of the most common gestures for prayer. Yet, to illustrate how much her prayer was important to our Lord, it was necessary for Him to cure her so that she could stand up straight. Of course, this event is a paradigm showing the value that each individual has before God, as well as the value of one's prayers.

We read in *Volume 8 of the Interpreter's Bible*: "The worth of human life...a woman is more important than an ox, her bondage by demonic power more important than an ox's bondage by a rope, her eighteen years of infirmity more pitiable than an animal's tether for a few hours. Conscience spoke an instant demand and, through conscience, the voice of God: 'Ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound for, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?'" (pg. 243).

To avoid hypocrisy, it is necessary to understand that the purpose of worshipping God necessarily involves prayer for others. Certainly worship should never be reduced to a matter of seeking a personal advantage from God, while ignoring the need for God to also bless others.

+FR. THEODORE



Το θέμα σήμερα είναι: <Πρέπει να σταθούμε ορθώς!> Όπως ακούσαμε κατά το ανάγνωσμα του κατά Λουκάν Ευαγγελίου, ο Χριστός εθεράπευσε την σκυπτήν γυναικάν, ώστε να μπορεί να σταθεί ίσια. Ακούσαμε και τα λόγια του Απ. Παύλου στην Επιστολήν του προς τους Εφεσίους με τα οποία μας παρακαλεί: <Στητέ ουν περιζώσαμενοι την οσφύν υμών εν αληθεία> (Εφ. 6:14).

Ο στρατιώτης πρέπει να σταθεί δυνατός κατά την προετοιμασίαν του για τον αγώνα. Οι δυνάμεις του περιλαμβάνουν τις σωματικές του δυνάμεις και ικανότητες, καθώς και τα απαιτούμενα εργαλεία. Η οσφύς συνδέει το σώμα μας με τα πόδια μας, ώστε να σταθούμε ορθώς. Η ζώνη στερεώνει την οσφύν προς αυτόν τον σκοπό, ώστε να μην κλονίζεται ο στρατιώτης σε κρίσιμες στιγμές. Ο Αποστόλος περιγράφει τον Χριστιανόν ως στρατιώτη του Χριστού. Η αλήθεια είναι η ζώνη που μας στερεώνει στην πνευματικήν ζώνη, ώστε να μην πεσούμεν στην αμαρτίαν.

Η Ορθοδοξία είναι η αλήθεια που μας στερεώνει ψυχικώς. Για αυτό, η Εκκλησία δεν απορρίπτει οτι αποκαλύπτεται ως αλήθεια και γεγονός. Τονίζει, όμως, ότι η αλήθεια εκφράζεται στο Σύμβολον της Πίστεως. Εκφράζεται στην Αγία Γραφήν και στην Ιεράν Παραδοσίαν της Εκκλησίας. Αναγκη έχουμε να πιστευοῦμεν στην αλήθειαν. Η πίστις είναι η ασπίς μας που μας προστατεύει από τα βέλη του πονηρού.

Χρησιμοποιούμεν τα πνευματικά εργαλεία για να δοξάζομεν τον Θεόν και με την βοήθειαν του Θεού καθέ ημερα θα είναι ημερα ειρηνική, αγία και αναμαρτητή.
+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

does not fall into sin.

Holy Orthodoxy is the truth which supports us spiritually. This is why the Church does not reject whatever is proven to be true and factual. However, She also emphasizes that the truth is expressed in the Nicene Creed. The truth is expressed in Holy Scripture and the Holy Tradition of the Church. We need, therefore, to have *faith* in what is true. Faith is our shield which protects us from the darts of the demons. We use these spiritual tools to glorify God and with God's help, every day is a peaceful, holy and sinless day.

For every day to be "perfect, holy, and sinless," we need to be constantly aware of our emotions, motives, and temptations so that we can battle against those invisible factors that cause us to commit sin. We recognize sin from the consequences that it can produce (or has produced) in our lives. The consequences of sin, of course, are such that our lives are fraught with conflict and distress. Given these parameters, it would be wise to pray for our Lord to guide us through those invisible factors that lead to temptation so that we can find (and preserve) peace within us, as well as outside of us. For the Saints, prayer was never reduced to a simple "wish-list" of wants. Prayer was—and is—a *relationship* with God, with the awareness that Christ our God, the Theotokos and the Saints are sitting right beside us always wherever we are, and we converse with them as we would with any loved one.

Many Saints add that such prayer becomes habit-forming and they have experienced times when they became aware of a special spiritual phenomenon—aware that, as they are conversing with our Lord, they are also aware that the Holy Spirit is praying for them from within their souls. St. Hesychios shared his own experience with this: "*Our task is to always call upon our Lord Jesus Christ with a burning heart so that His Holy Name [itself] intercedes for us.*" (*Philokalia, Vol. 1, "On Watchfulness and Holiness,"* pg. 128).

Indeed, I believe that we can all recall moments when we felt God's touch in our lives seemingly coming out of nowhere. This is an example of the Holy Spirit praying from within us, inspiring us with thoughts of humility, peace, good deeds, and love. In this respect, people share their experience as a calling from God to perform a special ministry. We need to hold on to those moments as a special blessing and share the goodness of Christ our God and Savior with others every day.

+FR. THEODORE

PRAY FOR THE SICK: George Aeder, Adele Gallade, Constantine Papapetru, Erika Aguilar, Mary Mitsias, Tom Evans, Jim Alex, Nicholas Kyriakou, Chris Laskaris, J.J. Richards (*Many faithful on the Prayer List face chronic or serious illness*).

HYMNS FOR THIS SUNDAY'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, soson 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, soson 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: *"Soson 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: *"Soson imas Ie 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: *"Soson 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. Amin

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

ANTIPHON III- *This is the day the Lord made. Let us greatly rejoice and be glad therein.*

Sunday Resurrection Hymn – *Ote katilthes pros ton thanaton [Tone 2]...(When You descended to the realm of death, You as Life Immortal rendered to Hades a mortal blow by Your all-radiant divinity. And when You from internal depths and the darkness below did raise the dead all the hosts of heaven's powers did pro-claim and cry out: O Life-Giving Christ our God, we give glory.)*

Hymn for the Holy Martyrs – *Thee engratiahs ton pathohn...(When they had deadened burning impulses and movements of sinful passions by their self-control and virtue, then the Martyrs of Christ were given the divine grace of driving away the illnesses of the sick and working wonders, alive and after their death. Paradoxical miracle it is indeed, that naked bones should pour out cures abundantly. Glory be to our only God.)*

Hymn for St. George – *Os ton echmaloton eleftherotis...(Since you are a deliverer of captives and a defender of the poor; a physician for the sick and a noble attendant to kings, O Great among the Martyrs and Glorious George, intercede with Christ our God that He may save our souls.)*

Kontakion Hymn for this Sunday– *Ee Parthenos simeron...(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—Ephesians 6: 10-17 / Gospel—St. Luke 13: 10-17*

Axion Estin

Communion Hymn – *Enite ton Kyrion....(Praise the Lord...) page 64 in the Divine Liturgy books.*

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



ANNOUNCEMENTS

FALL GENERAL ASSEMBLY- Today, following the Divine Liturgy. To participate, Stewardship Commitments are to be up to date. **Coffee Hour sponsored by Philoptochos: Galaktobouriko** will be served!

PHILOPTOCHOS – Thank you for those who helped make bread and cookies for our Christmas Bake Sale. **You will be able to pick up your orders starting today and next Sunday.** We have the next 3 Sundays available for Coffee Hour sponsors. Please sign up on the Coffee Hour sheet on the bulletin board. See Pat Dalkas.

STEWARDSHIP – 2018 Stewardship packets can be picked up on Sunday, December 10th in the church hall. Any packets not picked up this week will be mailed.

STREET LIFE PROJECT – Christmas Street Life Project Homeless...another volunteer event is now planned for Tuesday, December 19th, 6:00-8:30 pm at Miles Avenue Park in Indio. If you would like to serve, please let us know. A sign-up sheet is posted on the bulletin board in the church hall. If you are unable to volunteer, please consider donating needed items to distribute to 200-250 homeless..... Bottled water, Chips & salsa, Cookies, Candy Canes, Toys for children under 13 years of age.

HOLIDAY BASKETS – Our Holiday Basket preparation & delivery for those on our shut-in list will be this coming Thursday, December 14th. Baskets will be prepared starting at **10:00 am** and then delivery of the baskets starting right after they are completed. We need volunteers for both assembly & delivery. We will be meeting in the church hall.

POINSETTIAS – The small Poinsettia plants set up in our narthex & church: donated by **Harry Loukatos**.

HELP MAKE OUR FESTIVAL A FINANCIAL SUCCESS – Along with time and talent, any financial contribution toward **underwriting the costs of the 2018 Festival** is a blessing. Please see the "2018 Festival Needs List," in our parish hall.

PARISH COUNCIL CANDIDACY FORMS – 2018 Parish Council Candidacy Forms are to be completed by all who want to be candidates for election to the Parish Council. To be a Parish Council candidate one must be baptized and chrismated as an Orthodox Christian and, if married, the marriage must already be blessed as an **Orthodox Christian Marriage**. In addition, one must be a *responsible* Stewardship member of St. George parish for at least one year prior to applying for candidacy. Candidates are to meet with **Fr. Ted** prior to the Parish Council Elections. Elections will be held next **Sunday, December 17th**.

MEN'S BIBLE STUDY and AHEPA MEETING – Both the Men's Bible Study Class and the December AHEPA Chapter Meeting are cancelled for this Wednesday, December 13th.

AHEPA – The AHEPA 528 Christmas Dinner is on Saturday, December 16 at Towne Center Café – 6 p.m.

READERS NEEDED – Contact **Jim Christopoulos** if interested in reading the Sunday Epistle passages.

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

Tuesday, December 12th.....ST. SPYRIDON THE WONDERWORKER

Orthros-8:30 am / Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.

Thursday, December 14th.....CHRISTMAS BASKETS ASSEMBLY & DELIVERY – 10:00 a.m.

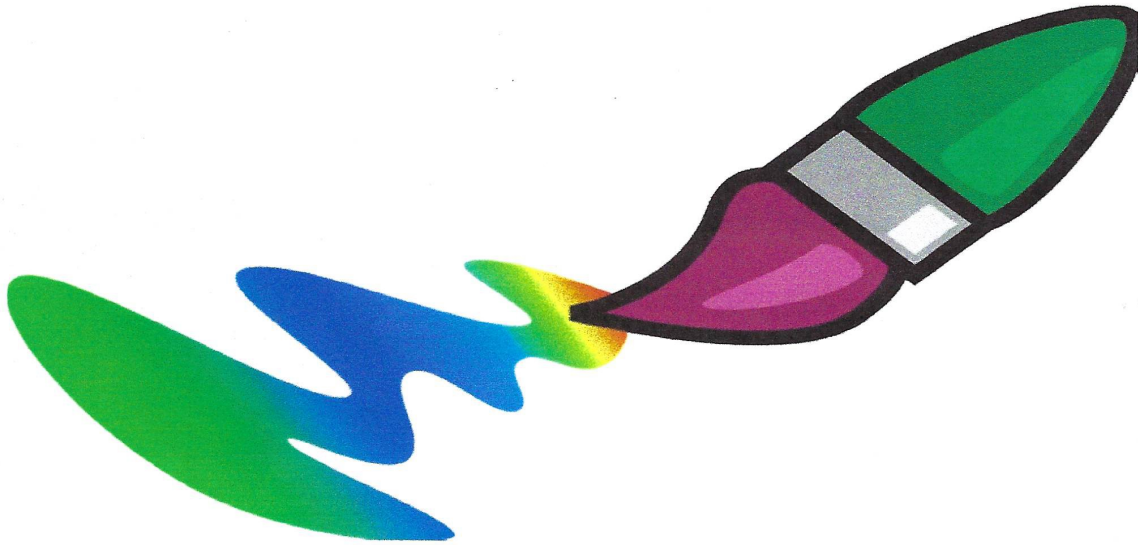
Choir Practice- 1:00 p.m.

Friday, December 15th...Coloring Book Session – 12 noon (See enclosed flier.)

Saturday, December 16th.....Vespers – 5:00 p.m. / AHEPA Christmas Dinner @ Towne Center – 6:00pm
(See enclosed flier.)

*The Ladder for December 2017
is sponsored by:
Rhonda & Nicholas Latkovic*

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.



ADULT COLORING SESSION & LUNCHEON

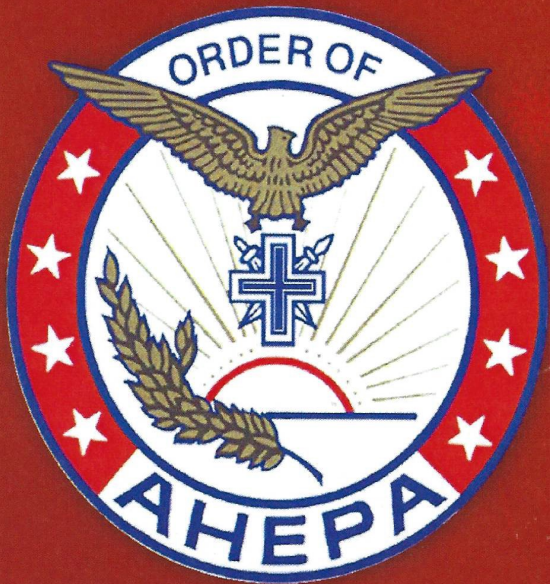
When: Friday, December 15th @ 12 PM-2 PM

Where: St. George Church Hall

RSVP: By Dec. 10th to Rhonda Latkovic

**We will have a Christmas Theme for our luncheon & coloring session!
Lunch will be served at 12:00 PM with coloring to follow. We will be
decorating sugar cookies for the Holidays for attendees to take home!
A \$5.00 minimum donation is requested. There will also be a raffle.
Coloring supplies provided. Please join us!**

**Please note-due to Greek Festival preparations there will be no Adult
Coloring Sessions in January & February.**



\$35.00

CHRISTMAS SUPPER

12/16/2017

6pm at

Town Center Café

44491 Town Center Way, Palm Desert, CA 92260

RSVP today

Ahepa528.org

Contact@ahempa528.org

CHAPTER 528