

**MAY 21, 2017**

**ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT**

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

**Website: [www.go-stgeorge.org](http://www.go-stgeorge.org)**

**Email: [pdsaintgeorge@gmail.com](mailto:pdsaintgeorge@gmail.com)**

# THE LADDER

*SUNDAY OF THE BLIND MAN; STS. CONSTANTINE & HELEN*

**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.*

**OUT OF THE DARKNESS**

The hymn that we hear today during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy calls us to commemorate the Paschal Season as the season in which we think seriously about the Sacrament of Holy Baptism as being the Sacrament of enlightenment.

We celebrated the Feast of Easter (Pascha) with our lighted Easter candles as the priest exclaimed, "Come, receive the Light...". Today, which is the final Sunday of the Paschal Season, we complete this liturgical season with the

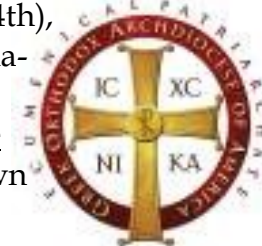
hymn, "Illumine, O Illumine, New Jerusalem..." as we celebrate the Divine Liturgy. Thus, we commemorate the reality that the Feast of Easter (Pascha) is a Feast of enlightenment. This is why the ancient Christians baptized catechumens via the Sacrament of Holy Baptism especially during this season of the 40 days after our Lord arose from the dead.

The Blind Man of today's Gospel passage received his "light" when Christ our True God placed mud  
*Continued on page 2*

**STS. CONSTANTINE AND HELEN** - St. Helen was the mother of St. Constantine the Great, and was born at Drepanum (Helenopolis) in Asia Minor.

Acclaimed as emperor by the army at Eboracum (a territory in Britain) after his father's death in 306 AD, Constantine won in a series of civil wars against the emperors to become sole ruler of both west and east by 324 AD.

After St. Constantine became the sole ruler of the Western Roman Empire, he issued the Edict of Milan in 313 which guaranteed religious tolerance for Christians. St. Helen, who was a Christian, may have influenced him in this decision. In 323 he extended the provisions of the Edict of Milan to the Eastern half of the Empire. After three hundred years of persecution, Christians could finally practice their faith without fear. St. Constantine deeply revered the victorious power of the Cross of the Lord, and wanted to find the actual Cross upon which our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified. He sent his mother, Helen, to Jerusalem, providing her with a letter to St. Macarius, Patriarch of Jerusalem. With her discovery of the Life-Creating Cross (celebrated on Sept. 14th), a miracle took place - a grievously sick woman, beneath the shadow of the Holy Cross, was healed instantly. Constantine renamed the city, Byzantium (his chosen capitol) Constantinople after himself. The later Eastern Empire would come to be known as the Byzantine Empire.



Τον υμνον τον οποιον ακουμεν κατα την τελετην της Θ. Λειτουργιας σημερα μας καλει να μνημονευσουμεν την Πασχαλινην εποχην ως εποχην κατα την οποιαν μελετουμεν το Μυστηριον του Αγιου Βαπτισματος, ως Μυστηριον φωτισμου.

Εορτασαμεν την εορτην του Πασχα με τα αναμενα Πασχιλινα κερια μας καθως εκφωνησε ο ιερευς: <Δευτε λαβετε φως...>. Σημερα, η οποια ειναι η τελευταια Κυριακη της Πασχαλινης εποχης, τελειωνουμεν αυτην την Εκκλησιαστικην εποχην με τον υμνον <Φωτιζου, Φωτιζου η Νεα Ιερουσαλημ...> κατα την τελετην της Θ. Λειτουργιας. Μνημονευσουμεν την πραγματικοτητα οτι η Εορτη του Πασχα ειναι εποχη φωτισμου. Για αυτον τον λογον, οι αρχαιοι Χριστιανοι εβαπτιζαν τους κατηχουμενους δια της τελετης του Μυστηριου του Αγιου Βαπτισματος κατα τουτην την εποχην.

Ο Τυφλος της σημερινης Ευαγγελικης περικοπης ελαβε το φως του οταν ο Θεανθρωπος Χριστος εβαλε πηλον στα τυφλα ματια του και του ειπε να τα πλυνει στην κολυμβηθραν του Σηλωαμ. Μαλιστα, ο Τυφλος, δια της υπακοης, εκανε οπως ο Χριστος διεταξε και αμεσως ανεβλεπε. Ο πηλος ειναι η ακαθαρσια της αμαρτιας. Η κολυμβηθρα του Σηλωαμ ειναι η κολυμβηθρα του Βαπτισματος μεσα στην οποιαν πλυνουμεθα ψυχικως απο τις αμαρτιες μας, οι οποιες αμαρτιες μας τυφλωνουν απο πνευματικην και ηθικην αποψιν. Ο Χριστος ειναι Εκεινος ο Οποιος ανοιγει τα ψυχικα και εσωτερικα ματια μας για να γνωρισουμεν την αληθειαν περι της αγαπης του Θεου.

+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

over his blind eyes and told him to wash them in the Pool of Siloam. The Blind Man, in obedience, did as Christ directed and, immediately, he was able to see. The mud is the filth of sin. The Pool of Siloam is the Baptismal Font in which we are cleansed spiritually of our sins; for, sins blind us spiritually and ethically. Christ is the One Who opens our inner, spiritual eyes so that we can know the truth about God's love.

The Sacrament of Baptism begins with one choosing to renounce sin. But, "renouncing sin" is not a one-time act; it is a life-time effort. As Fr. Alexander Schmemmann states, "No one can be Christ's until he has first faced evil and then become ready to fight it." (*Sacraments and Orthodoxy*, pg. 86). We renounce Satan and *all* of his "pomp;" *all* of his power. Satan and idolatry go together. Idolizing money, power, luxuries and the like prompt people to many temptations. The fight against temptations is an on-going, daily fight that takes place in our minds and souls and which can only be won through the power of Christ our God. Praying for this Divine power is a conscious choice. It is the choice that we make at Baptism – we renounce sin *and* we join Christ.

We join Christ by being washed from the Original Sin, which could be understood as the *state of humanity's common sins*, which came into being from the time of Adam and Eve. This "common sin of humanity" is what blinds us from the Truth of God. So many people are blinded by the propaganda of today's political world; by many falsehoods promoted by worldly philosophies and fads. Atheism and relativism are blinding us to the teachings of the Bible and new norms, which are in conflict with Christian morality, seem popular.

Joining Christ is a matter of renouncing today's norms and taking on the mentality of Christ regarding our own personal value and that of others around us. This point is emphasized best in the words of Fr. Alexander Schmemmann: "The world then truly becomes the Sacrament of Christ's presence, the growth of the Kingdom and of life eternal. For Christ, 'being raised from the dead, dies no more; death has no more dominion over Him.' Baptism then is the death of our selfishness and self-sufficiency and it is the 'likeness of Christ's death,' because Christ's death is the ultimate self-surrender. And, as Christ's death 'trampled down death,' because in it the ultimate meaning and strength of life were revealed, so also does our dying with Him (i.e., the death of our self-centered mentality filled with temptations to commit sins), unite us with the new life in God." (*Sacraments and Orthodoxy*, pg. 91).

+FR. THEODORE

**PRAY FOR THE SICK:** George Aeder, Adele Gallade, Kathy Ligeros, Nicholas Kyriakou, Argyroula Krespis (Nick Krespis' mother), Constantine Papapetru, Erika Aguilar, Nicholas Coussoulis, Mary Mitsias, Nula Papapetru, Jim Alex, Tillie Lockshire (*Many faithful on our 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—Shout to God all the earth. Sing now to His Name; give glory to His praise.

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

Verse 2—Say to God, "How fearful are Your works; in the greatness of Your power Your enemies will lie to You.

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

Verse 3—Let all the earth worship you and sing to You; let them sing to Your Name.

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

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

*Refrain: "Tes presvies tis Theotokou, Soter, soston"*

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

Verse 1—May God be gracious to us and bless us; may He cause His face to shine upon us.

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

Verse 2—That we may know His way on earth, Your salvation among all Gentiles.

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

Verse 3—Let the peoples give thanks to You O God; let all the peoples praise You. May God bless us, and let all the ends of the earth be in fear of Him.

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

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**ANTIPHON III—Let God arise and let His enemies be scattered and let those who hate Him flee from before His face.**

*Hymn with the Entrance with the Holy Gospel: Christos Anesti... (Christ is Risen from the dead; by death trampling down death and, to those in the tombs, He has bestowed life.) [Hymn for the Resurrection of Christ from the dead]*

*En Ekklesias eologheete ton Theon ek pighon Israel...o Anastas ek nekron*

**Sunday Hymn:** *Ton synanarchon Logon Patri ke Pnevmati [Tone 5]... (Let us, the faithful, praise and worship the Word, coeternal with the Father and the Spirit, Who for our salvation was born of a Virgin for He willed to be lifted up bodily upon the Cross, to endure death and to raise the dead by His glorious Resurrection.)*

**Hymn for Sts. Constantine and Helen:** *Tou Stavrou Sou ton typon... (Your Apostle among Rulers, St. Constantine, who once beheld in the sky the image of Your Cross and who, like Paul, received his calling not from man, once entrusted the Ruling City into Your hand. We entreat You to restore it in peace forever, at the intercession of the Theotokos, O Lord, Who loves all humanity.)*

**Hymn for St. George:** *Os ton ehmaloton 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 God that He may save our souls.)*

**Sunday Kontakion Hymn:** *Ei ke en tafo katilthes... (Through You, the deathless One, descended into the grave, You destroyed the power of Hades and, as Victor, You arose again, O Christ our God. You greeted the Myrrh-bearing Women, saying, 'Rejoice!' You did bestow peace upon Your Disciples and Resurrection upon the fallen.)*

**READINGS:** Epistle: Acts 26: 1, 12-20 / Gospel: St. John 9:1-38

*The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom is celebrated*

**Instead of "Axion Estin",** *"O Angelos evoh-a Keharitomeni..." (The Angel cried aloud to the Lady filled with grace: Rejoice, O pure Virgin, again I say, Rejoice. Your Son has resurrected from the grave on the third day. Be illumined; be illumined, O New Jerusalem; for the glory of the Lord has risen over you. Dance now for joy, O Zion, and exult. And you be merry, O Pure Theotokos, at the arising of the One You bore.)*

**Communion Hymn:** *"Soma Christou..." (Receive the Body of Christ and taste Him, Who is the Fountain of Immortality. Alleluia.)*



**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**AHEPA Chapter 528 invites everyone to join in today's luncheon in celebration of AHEPA Sunday!** Adults, \$15/ Children, \$10.

**MEMORIAL** – Today's Memorial Service is for the Eternal Life and Salvation for the servants of God, **Fr. T.P. Theophilos, Steve Geotas, Stan Georgalakis, Steve Pisanos, George Tcharos and Bob Maverick**, beloved members of AHEPA Chapter 528. May our Risen Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ grant to them Eternal Rest and may He grant peace and comfort to their families and to all of our beloved parishioners and AHEPA members. **MAY THEIR MEMORIES BE ETERNAL!**

**PHILOPTOCHOS** – Coffee Hour Sponsors are needed for July. If interested see Linda Kallis or Athena Snarkis our new Coffee Hour Coordinator. As parishioners start traveling for the summer, have a good Memorial Day weekend and safe vacations.

**ALTAR FLOWER BOUQUETS** – This Sunday's Altar Flower Bouquets that grace our Holy Altar to God's glory were sponsored by:

**Mr. Spiro Astmos: "In memory of my loving wife, Christante Astmos, and my dear son, Steve Astmos. Eternal Rest!"**

**Mr. & Mrs. Time Hector: "In loving memory to all our loved ones who have passed before us. Eternal be their memory!"**

**ORTHODOX CEMETERY PLOTS** – The deadline for purchasing cemetery plots at impressive discount rates at Desert Memorial Park in Cathedral City has been extended. **The new deadline is: June 7, 2017.** It is projected that paces will be completely sold by then. Please see the enclosed flier explaining the details for purchasing these Orthodox cemetery plots.

**WEEKDAY SERVICES**

Tuesday, May 23rd.....Bible Study -10:00 a.m. / Men's Bible Study – 6:30 p.m. (St. John 9: 1-38)

Wednesday, May 24th.....Vespers- 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, May 25th.....ASCENSION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST  
Orthros-8:30 a.m. / Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.

*"Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor and evil speech be put away from you, with all effort. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you. Therefore, be imitators of God and walk in love as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us as an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling fragrance. (Ephesians 4:31-5:2)"*

*The Ladder for the month of May 2017 is donated by Tillie Lockshire*

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.

# **Desert Memorial Park**

## **Orthodox Cemetery Plots**

**31-705 Da Vall Drive**

**Cathedral City, Ca 92234**

**760-328-3316**

- Plots are \$1585 per plot**
- For an additional \$100 and 30% down you can have 18 months to pay off your plot.**
- All contracts are individual and must be purchased at Desert Memorial by JUNE 7<sup>th</sup> to be grouped together in the Orthodox section.**
- The Orthodox section will be blessed as an Orthodox Cemetery as Holy Ground.**
- When contacting Desert Memorial speak with Stephanie or John and ask for the Orthodox section**



## GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

8-10 East 79th St. New York, NY 10075-0106 \* Tel: (212) 570-3530 Fax: (212) 774-0237

website: [www.goarch.org](http://www.goarch.org) - Email: [communications@goarch.org](mailto:communications@goarch.org)

### Protocol 55/17

May 21, 2017  
AHEPA Sunday

To the Most Reverend Hierarchs, the Reverend Priests and Deacons, the Monks and Nuns, the Presidents and Members of the Parish Councils of the Greek Orthodox Communities, the Distinguished Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Day, Afternoon, and Church Schools, the Philoptochos Sisterhoods, the Youth, the Hellenic Organizations, and the entire Greek Orthodox Family in America

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Christ is Risen! Χριστός Ἀνέστη!

The joy and light of Pascha continue to fill our hearts as we proclaim to the world that our Lord is Risen, our hope is renewed, and the victory of life is ours through the grace of God. This glorious transfiguration from death to life that we celebrate is affirmed in the commemoration of this Sunday after Pascha as the Sunday of the Blind Man. Today we read from the Gospel of John about a man who was blind from birth. In His great compassion, Christ healed the man revealing the power of the grace of God and leading to our Lord's acclamation, *I am the light of the world*. (John 8:12) This miraculous event guides us to affirm the calling of Christ to be the light of the world, to have compassion for the needs of others and to give honor and glory to God for the marvelous works that are done in His name.

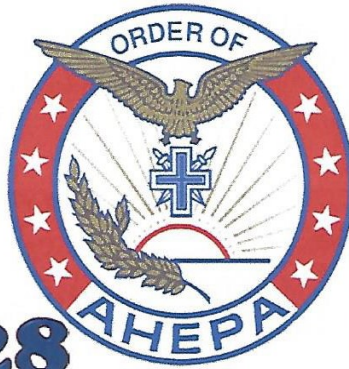
For almost a century this has been the focus of the members of the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association. Today we honor this legacy of compassion and service by observing AHEPA Sunday and offering our gratitude to the members of the AHEPA family. Throughout our Holy Archdiocese, these faithful servants of God are leaders in their parishes, in the institutions and organizations of the Church, and in using the strength and mission of AHEPA to meet vital needs around the world. Through social services, educational programs and scholarships, medical and philanthropic services, and advocacy, the members of AHEPA bring light to many who need hope, compassion to many in need, and give honor and glory to God through their witness of faith in Him.

I ask all of our parishes to observe this day as AHEPA Sunday and to recognize the members of AHEPA. May we continue to offer our prayers and support for the faithful service of AHEPA, and in the light of the Resurrection, may we serve in compassion, rejoice in the power of God's abundant grace, and give Him honor and glory for the great works that are done.

With paternal love in our Risen Lord,

†DEMETRIOS  
Archbishop of America

# AHEPA SUNDAY CHAPTER 528



# 2017

AHEPA was founded on July 26, 1922 in response to the evils of bigotry and racism that emerged in early 20th century American society. It also helped Greek immigrants assimilate into society.

Today, AHEPA brings the ideals of ancient Greece, which includes philanthropy, education, civic responsibility, and family and individual excellence to the community.

Although a majority of the membership is composed of Americans of Greek descent, application for membership is open to anyone who believes in the mission of the organization.



## FATHER THEODORE PANTELS

Your spiritual leadership and untiring energy have been both remarkable and a challenge for us! In all due respect, you've set the bar and we will follow! **WE THANK YOU** for your absolute support and steadfast blessings to our cause as the AHEPA CHAPTER #528 of Palm Desert, CA. We would like to continue our support by making a pledge to continue expanding our membership and to make a positive witness to our community.

This year we changed one scholarship to the George Tcharos Memorial Scholarship  
We lost a great man this year that was a positive role model throughout all aspects of his life in Church, Marriage, Father, Scoutmaster and Ahepan. His values of education and helping children was a priceless opportunity to furnish their minds and enrich the quality of their lives.

*Chapter 528 meetings every 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday  
of the month~6:30pm at St. George Church*

*Chapter President - Wynn Storton  
760.832.2825 Wynn@ahepa528.org  
Vice President - Nick Krespis  
Secretary - Gus Kurupas  
Treasurer - Harry Loukatos PCP  
Spiritual Advisor - Fr. Ted Pantels*

*Contact@ahepa528.org*

**Fr. Theophilos Theophilos  
Memorial Scholarship Fund**  
Donations accepted at  
[www.ahepa528.org](http://www.ahepa528.org)  
or mailed to:  
**AHEPA 528 Scholarship fund  
PO Box 1735  
Palm Desert, CA 92261-1735**

## Announcing the 2017 Fr. Theophilos Memorial Scholarship finalists:

**Stephanie Christopoulos** (18) a life-long member of Saint George is attending the highly innovative FIDM-Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising in Los Angeles, California. Stephanie is majoring in the exciting, new field of Social Media Marketing and is finishing her first year, on the Honor Roll with a 3.82 GPA. She's likely to become a pioneer in the cutting-edge technology of tomorrow.



Stephanie, when home from school is often heard as an epistle reader, during the liturgy. She has accomplished an impressive list of charity work with the (NCL) National Charity League performed throughout the entire valley, benefiting children and the less fortunate logging over 300 hours of service. We look forward to Stephanie's potential mix of social philanthropy and social media in her future career in the music/entertainment industry.

**Cani Karalis** (17) is graduating La Quinta High School with Honors and is the recipient of the 2017 Coachella Valley Alumnae Panhellenic scholarship. Cani is a LQHS Senior Scholar and has maintained a weighted 4.0 GPA for the entire 4 years and is graduating with an impressive 3.85 unweighted/4.29 weighted GPA due to a wide array of Honors classes.



In addition to her academic success, Cani is an accomplished Ballet dancer and shares her love of dance, by teaching elementary children the art of ballet. Cani was accepted at several universities and has decided to attend UC Santa Barbara, in the Fall. She will be pursuing a Bachelor's Degree towards teaching Middle School, and a Master's degree to specialize in Mathematics or Science. Cani will be a wonderful and inspiring teacher.

**Christian Kontaxis** (17) is this year's Valedictorian of Palm Desert High School Class of 2017. He is graduating #1st of 520 seniors in his class, with an outstanding 5.2 weighted GPA.



Christian's accomplishments include earning the AP Scholar with Distinction award, for Scoring 4 or higher on 6 AP Exams and passing all 9 AP Exams. Christian is the recipient of the National Merit Commended Scholar award, and earned the Superior Honor Roll award for a (5.0 GPA) all 4 years, 9<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> grade. Most impressively, Christian is the recipient of the PDHS Excellence Award for ranking 1<sup>st</sup> in his class, all four grades 9th-12th.

In addition, to Christian's academic achievements he is a nationally ranked U.S. Tennis player, with an impressive winning at the USTA National Open Consolation, and was the winner of the Grand Prix Masters. He is an accomplished classical Pianist and trained

Byzantine Chanter proficient in Byzantine Notation, Liturgical Greek, the 8 tones and 54 Prosomia Hymns. Christian will be attending the prestigious Stanford University. His academic plans include pursuing a Major in Neurological Sciences towards a Medical Degree.

**Katrina Storton** (18) graduated last week from Santa Barbara City College with a 3.97 GPA earning three separate Associates Degrees. Katrina achieved a 4.0 in her Major, Film & Media Studies. She also earned degrees in Liberal Arts - Arts and Humanities with a (4.0) and Behavior and Social Science (3.82). She earned the SBCC President's Honor List all four semesters, and is a member of the Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society. She was awarded the Osher Foundation/Krause Scholarship (16) for academic excellence, in addition to earning 5 other scholarships from AHEPA District 20 (16), National Daughters of Penelope (16), AHEPA Journey to Greece (17), and the Chapter 528 Fr. Theophilos, St George (16) and Pericles (15) Scholarships.



Katrina will be transferring to UCSB (University of California Santa Barbara) for an interdisciplinary degree in Film and Media Studies/Museology, followed by a Master's of Fine Arts (MFA) in Film Curation. Her career goal is to be a Film Curator/ Museum Director/Exhibitor at the Smithsonian in Washington D.C. or the Academy of the Arts Museum in Los Angeles.

**Thank you to all who applied for the Fr. Theophilos Scholarship**

**We are very proud of each of these young students and the example they set for others. AHEPA 528 is pleased to play a part in their education and their future. THANK YOU**