

FEBRAURY 25, 2018

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

**74-109 Larrea Street
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THE LADDER

SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY



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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.

ICONS AND TRUTH

The Saints of the 7th Ecumenical Council proclaimed the teachings of St. John of Damascus, who maintained that God, through His Incarnation, took upon Himself the form of Man in the Person of Christ – and, as a result, the Person of Christ can, in fact, be depicted. Through the Holy Icons the truth that God became Man so that man can be like God is preached. This truth is depicted in the lives of the Saints who lived “the life in Christ” throughout their lives.

Indeed, the biography of every Saint is a living explanation of the words of

Christ, which we heard in today’s Gospel reading: *“Truly, truly, I say unto you that from now on you shall see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”* (St. John 1:52). It is inside the Church where one finds Christ, the Mother of God, the Saints, the angels and the grace of the Holy Spirit...and this reality is depicted through the Holy Icons, which give a vision into heaven.

Holy Icons describe the life of Christ in history, as is written in Holy Scrip-

Continued on Page 2

THE SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY

For more than one hundred years the Church of Christ was troubled by the persecution of the Iconoclasts of way-ward belief, beginning in the reign of Leo the Isaurian (717-741) and ending in the reign of Theophilus (829-842). After Theophilus's death, his widow the Empress Theodora (celebrated Feb. 11), together with the Patriarch Methodius (June 14), firmly established Orthodoxy as the Faith of the people. St. Theodora had always venerated the icon of the Mother of God in the presence of the Patriarch Methodius and others who also venerated the icons. On many occasions, she openly proclaimed: *“If anyone does not offer relative worship to the holy icons, not adoring them as though they were gods, but venerating them out of love as images of the archetype, let them be known as teachers of falsehood.”*

With this, on the first Sunday of the Fast, the Empress Theodora and her son, Michael, the future Emperor, led a procession throughout the streets and lanes of the Imperial capital city and restored the holy icons in church temples and in the homes. This procession is replicated in today’s services. Today is known as the Sunday of Orthodoxy, because icons depict the full teaching of the Orthodox Christian Faith.



Οι Άγιοι Πατέρες της 7ης Οικουμενικής Σύνοδου εδογματίσαν αυτο που ειπε ο Άγιος Ιωάννης ο Δαμασκηνός ότι ο Θεός δια της θείας ενανθρωπήσεως Του επηρε επανω Του την ανθρωπινήν μορφήν. Και, για αυτον τον λογον, το προσωπο του Χριστου είναι στην πραγματικότητα περιγραφτο. Δια των ιερων εικονων κηρυττεται την αληθειαν ότι έγινε ο Θεός ανθρωπος για να γινή ο ανθρωπος ομοιος με τον Θεον. Αυτη η αληθεια φανερωνε-ται στα προσωπα των αγιων, οι οποιοι εξουσαν την <εν Χριστω ζων>.

Μάλιστα, ο βιος του καθε αγιου είναι ζωντανη εξήγησις του λογου του Χριστου, τον οποιον ακουσα-μεν κατα την αναγνωσιν της ση-μερινης Ευαγγελικης περικοπης: <Αμην, αμην λεγω υμιν, απ αρτι οψεσθε τον ουρανον ανεωγοτα, και τους αγγελους του Θεου ανα-βαινοντας και καταβαινοντας επι τον Υιον του ανθρωπου>. (Ιωαν. 1: 52). Μεσα στην Εκκλησιαν ευρι-σκουμεν τον Χριστον, την Θεοτο-κον, τους αγιους, τους αγγελους και την χαριν του Αγ. Πνευματος – και αυτη η πραγματικοτης παρι-στανεται δια μεσων των ιερων ει-κονων.

Οι εικονες της Εκκλησιας περιγρα-φουν την επιγειον ζων του Χριστου οπως γραφεται στην Αγι-αν Γραφήν. Περιγραφουν και την πνευματικην ζων των αγιων του Θεου και μας υπενθυμιζουν ότι ο καθε ανθρωπος είναι <εικονα του Θεου.> Για αυτον τον λογον εχει ο ανθρωπος την ικανοτητα να αναφερει υμνους και δοξολογιες προς δοξαν του Θεου. Μάλιστα, για αυτον τον λογον ο ανθρωπος εχει και την χαριν να επικοινων-ησει με τον Θεον δια μεσου της προσευχης.

+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

ture. They describe for us the way of life of God's saints. In addition, they remind us that every person that we see is the "image of God." Indeed, we must remember that we ourselves are "images of God." This is why we have the ability to offer hymns and praises to God and, through this ability, we have the grace to communicate with God through prayer.

Prayer does what King David wanted: it "creates a clean heart and a pure spirit." (Psalm 50). It makes for one "in whom there is no deceit." Having "no deceit" is crucial in terms of dealing with life's many challenges. Quite often, we cause our own stress precisely because we have deceived others, or we want to deceive others – and most tragically, we deceive ourselves.

A "clean heart and a pure spirit" within each of us is something for which we should earnestly pray. Like the Lord's Prayer, the Lenten Prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian addresses the heart of our relationship with God and with others: "Lord and Master of my life: take away from me the spirit of meddling, pride, and greed. Give me, instead, the spirit of patience, humility, prudence and love. Grant to me a vision of my own faults and that I not condemn my brother." Like St. Ephraim, we are all stung by the same "spirits:" pride, greed, idle talk. The anecdote to these qualities is found in the virtues of humility, patience and love. These are the virtues by which we can work with others, in unity with Christ our God. Resolutions to conflicts can be found when each judges one's self, accepting his or her responsibility with regard to any misunderstandings. This is one way in which prayer changes our world, bringing others to salvation in Christ. Prayer is the expression of our Baptism, allowing our Baptism in Christ to beget the Baptism of others. Faith in God and ability to pray go hand-in-hand.

The Nicene Creed is the expression of "what the Prophets beheld and the Apostles have taught" – as we heard today at the end of the Procession of the Holy Icons. "One of the basic purposes of Christ's incarnation was to reveal that God is a Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Christ revealed this to the Samaritan woman, [saying], 'God is Spirit and those who worship Him must worship in Spirit and truth.' This means that God the Father is worshiped in the Holy Spirit and in Christ, Who is Truth." (A Visual Catechism of the Orthodox Church, by Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos, pg. 83). The Holy Icons give a visual expression of the Gospel Truth, proclaiming our salvation in God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Who sanctifies each one of us.

+FR. THEODORE

PRAY FOR THE SICK: George Aeder, Adele Gallade, Erika Aguilar, Tom Evans, Jim Alex, Nicholas Kyriakou, Chris Laskaris, J.J. Richards, Spiro Canakis, Chris Panopoulos, Atlas Palos, Matthew Gray, Tasso Zambaras (Many of the faithful on our Prayer List face chronic or serious illness).

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

Verse 1— : The Lord reigns; He clothed Himself with majesty. The Lord clothed and girded Himself with power.

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

Verse 2— And He established the world, which shall not be moved. Who shall tell the mighty deeds of the Lord, who shall make all His praises heard?

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

Verse 3— Let those redeemed by the Lord say so, whom He redeemed from the hand of the enemy.

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— Let them give thanks to the Lord for His mercies and His wonders to the sons of men. Let them exalt Him in the assembly of the people and praise Him in the seat of the elders.

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

Verse 2 – The eyes of the Lord are on those who fear Him, on those who hope in His mercy.

Refrain: "Save us, O Son of God, Who is Risen from the dead, Alleluia."

Verse 3 – To hear the groaning of those bound, to set free the sons of the slain.

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 - *Let heaven and earth praise Him, the seas and everything that moves in them. This is the day the Lord made; let us greatly rejoice and be glad therein. O Lord my God, I shall give thanks to You forever.*

Sunday Resurrection Hymn: *Ton synanarchon Logon... [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 this Sunday: *Tin achranton Eekona Sou...(We venerate Your immaculate icon, O good Lord, and entreat You to forgive our offences, O Christ our God. By Your own choice you were pleased to ascend the Cross in the flesh, to deliver us, whom You created, from our slavery to the foe. Therefore we cry to You with gratitude: You have filled all things with joy, O our Savior, by coming to save the world.)*

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 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: *Ti Ypermacho...(O Champion General, I your City now ascribe to you triumphant anthems as the tokens of my gratitude, being rescued from the terrors, O Theotokos. Inasmuch as you have power unassailable, from all kinds of perils free me so that unto you I may cry aloud: Rejoice, O unwedded Bride.*

READINGS – EPISTLE: Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-40 / **GOSPEL:** St. John 1:43-51

THE DIVINE LITURGY OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT (See page 125 in our Divine Liturgy Books)



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Coffee Hour: Pat Dalkas and Athena Snarskis

PHILOPTOCHOS – We need Coffee Hour Sponsors and Hostesses for March 18 and 25 and for the month of April. Thank you for donating to the Coffee Hour. See **Athena Snarskis** or **Pat Dalkas**. **SAVE THE DATE: Saturday, March 10** is our Membership Lunch. **Susan Clark** is hosting the luncheon in her home. Thank you Susan. See the flier available in our parish hall. Please RSVP to **Linda Petalas** or **Pam Zaverdas**.

2018 FESTIVAL – **Left-over Festival items are now on sale for purchase by our parishioners.** Following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy today, **Tina Veroulis, Lula Valissarakos and Rhonda Latkovic** will be available during the coffee hour to assist those who want to purchase such items. On another note, we express a heartfelt thanks to all members of the parish and their friends for their unselfish volunteer work in preparing the Festival food and the long hours of work during last weekend’s Greek Festival. The 2018 St. George Greek Festival was a great success!

PAN-ORTHODOX VESPER SERVICE – Tonight at **St. Raphael Antiochian Orthodox Church** in Thousand Palms at **6:00 p.m.**

NICHOLAS KONTAXIS ART EXHIBIT - Mark March 17, 2018 on your calendars from now and plan to bring your relatives, friends and neighbors to a fabulous art show, exhibiting the paintings of **Nicholas Kontaxis**, at the Heather James Fine Art Studio at 45188 Portola Ave., Palm Desert. Details are posted in the flier that is available in our parish hall. (Those receiving email version of *The Ladder*, may view some of Nicholas’ art work by clicking online at: [https://www.nicholaskontaxis.com/.](https://www.nicholaskontaxis.com/))

MARCH 25th – **On Sunday, March 25, 2018**, there will be a **six month memorial service** for **Argyro Krespis**, the beloved mother of our Parish Council President, **Nick Krespis**. Nick Krespis and his family will be hosting a Lenten lunch immediately following the Divine Liturgy. As this day is also the **Feast Day of the Annunciation and Greek Independence Day**, the Philoptochos will be offering a special project to raise money for the needy in honor of our sister in the Lord, Argyro, who dedicated her life to provide needs for children’s hospitals in Greece. In honor of **Argyro Krespis**, it will be our honor to raise money for needy children in our local area.

SAVE THE DATE: The 2018 St. George Golf Tournament – Saturday, April 14, 2018.

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

- Tuesday, February 27th.....Bible Study – 10:00 a.m.
- Wednesday, February 28th.....Presanctified Divine Liturgy- 6:30 p.m.
- Thursday, March 1st.....Choir Practice-1:00 p.m.
- Friday, March 2nd.....Presanctified Divine Liturgy – 9:00 a.m.
2nd Salutations – 7:00 p.m.
- Saturday, March 3rd.....Vespers- 5:00 p.m.

The Ladder for February 2018 is sponsored by: Annette Lewis in loving memory of her beloved husband, Skip Lewis

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.

SERVICE OF THE PROCESSION OF THE HOLY ICONS

Following the conclusion of the Doxology, the altar boys and those participating in the Procession, with Icons, fans and candles, proceed in a counter-clockwise direction, stopping at four stations as the faithful chant: *"Your undefiled icon we venerate Lord, asking for forgiveness of all our faults, O Christ our God; for of Your own will You were pleased to ascend in the flesh upon the Cross to deliver those You created from the bondage of the foe. Wherefore, in thanksgiving we cry to You: You have filled all things with joy, O our Savior, now that You have come to save all the world."*

At the first station, the Deacon exclaims petitions praying for the health and salvation of all Orthodox Christians. The priest concludes with: *"For You are a merciful God Who loves mankind and to You do we give glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit now and forever and to the ages of ages."* The faithful then chant the above hymn again.

At the second station the Deacon exclaims petitions praying for the Eternal Life and blessed memory of our sacred forefathers and relatives. The priest concludes: **"For You are the Resurrection, the Life and the Repose..."** The faithful then chant the above hymn again.

At the third station the Deacon exclaims petitions praying for the safe-keeping of our Church clergy and lay leaders, parents, grandparents and relatives. The priest concludes with, *"For You are a merciful God Who loves mankind..."* The faithful then chant the above hymn again.

At the fourth station the Deacon exclaims petitions praying for the safe-keeping of our Church and our general community. As before, the priest concludes with, *"For You are a merciful God Who loves mankind..."*

The Priest then reads the Synodikon Statement, as the faithful follow along:


"As the Prophets beheld; as the Apostles have taught; as the Teachers have dogmatized; as the Universe has agreed; as grace has shown forth: As Truth was revealed; as falsehood has been dissolved; as wisdom has presented; as Christ awarded: Thus we declare; thus we assert; thus we preach Christ our True God, and honor His Saints in words; in writings; in thoughts; in sacrifices; in churches; in Holy Icons; on the one hand worshiping and reverencing Christ as God and Lord, and on the other, honoring them as true servants of the same Lord of all and offering them the proper veneration. This is the Faith of the Apostles; this is the Faith of the Fathers; This is the Faith of the Orthodox. This is the Faith which has established the universe. Furthermore, to these messengers of piety, with brotherly and fatherly love and reverence, in glory and honor of piety for which they fought, we praise and cry out: of all the defenders of Orthodoxy, pious kings, most holy Patriarchs, bishops, teachers, martyrs, confessors, Eternal be their memory." The faithful respond; Memory Eternal; Memory Eternal; Memory Eternal."

The Priest continues: *"We today, entreating God that we be instructed and strengthened by their exploits and struggles and teachings for piety unto death, and praying to become imitators of their Godly life unto the end, may we prove worthy of all these requests by the compassion and grace of Christ the Great and First Arch-Priest and our True God; through the intercessions of our Most Glorious Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, the God-like Angels and all the Saints, Amen."*

Then all the faithful chant: *"Who is so great a God as our God! You are the God Who works wonders." This stanza is repeated after each of the following verses: — "You have made known Your power to the nations." — "And I said: Now I began to understand; this is a change in the work of the right hand of the Most High." — "I remember the works of the Lord; for I will remember Your wonders from the beginning."*

Then, the faithful together read the Creed on page 42 of our Divine Liturgy Books.

The Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great begins.



*You are cordially invited
to attend the
St. George Philoptochos
Membership Luncheon
March 10, 2018*

11:30 a.m.

*At The Home of Susan Clark
38398 Red Cedar Drive,
Palm Desert, CA 92211*

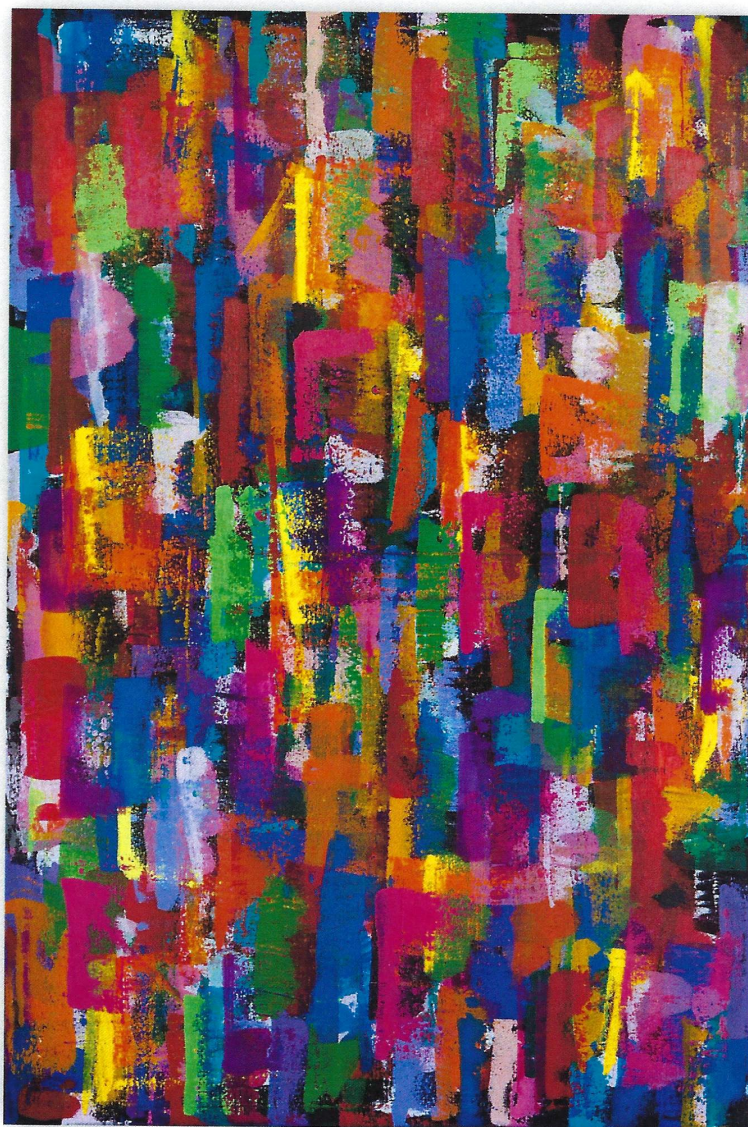
Please R.S.V.P. to

Pam Laverdas 847-814-0299 pamzav@yahoo.com

Linda Petalas 219-765-6979 jlpet@att.net

*Directions to Susan's Home: Go to
Sun City off of Washington St. to gate.
Turn left at the first street after passing
the gate.*

Susan's phone: 760-668-1329



NICHOLAS KONTAXIS

HEATHER JAMES
FINE ART

MARCH 17, 2018

4:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.

Check out Nicholas Kontaxis' Art work by clicking on this website: <https://www.nicholaskontaxis.com/>