

DECEMBER 15, 2019

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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Palm Desert, California 92260

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THE LADDER

Mailing Address:

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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.

REJECTING THE INVITATION

The invitation to the Heavenly Banquet is the opportunity for us to have Eternal Life. Our participation in the Heavenly Banquet is on two levels: 1) in this present life, in the Divine Liturgy, and, 2) in the next life, in the Eternal Kingdom. In this life, the Heavenly Banquet is also a "spiritual clinic," preparing us for eternity with God.

Yet, *denial* of the fact that we are in need of God's guidance is one of the biggest obstacles to finding the path leading to this Banquet. At heart, the implication

in our Lord's Parable is that the rich man is an important figure (God), who loves His people so much that He prepares a banquet for them and invites them to it. The banquet is itself everlasting life.

The reason for which the invited guests rejected this invitation is that they were in denial of many realities. They were in denial that they needed God; they were in denial of the fact that the banquet was their opportunity to enjoy life to the fullest. Their denial was based on their perception

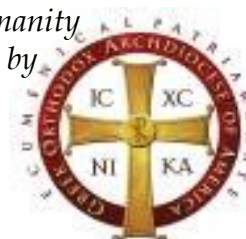
Continued on page 2

BREAD AND WINE

"A great Russian poet, though not a faithful believer, once said, 'Every time the priest celebrates the Divine Liturgy, he holds the whole world in his hands as if it were like an apple.' This is a reality, not simply a symbol. Our world sustains life. In accordance with the chemistry pertaining to the growth of things, bread is the 'soul-less' staff of life. Our very lives depend on bread. The 'soul-less' world becomes our alive bodies, our actual lives. If we are to consider something to be a mystery, this whole world is supported, first and foremost, as the result of this on-going transformation [from a simple wheat plant into a human life]. When we offer bread and wine and place them on the Holy Altar, not only do we place before us the image of our offering with the offering of Christ, which He made 2,000 years ago, but we place before us this offering as being the reality of the physical basis of our human lives, as it was even in the beginning..."

"God created the world and gave it to human beings so that they could eat and drink -- [survive, live and rejoice with gratitude]. The world is God's gift to humanity and it exists not for His own pleasure, but so that it can be transformed by us and become life itself, to be returned with thanksgiving as a gift to God... and only through Christ can the dark, pre-historical ocean become the living water of new life -- Holy Baptism."

- *The Mission of the Church in Today's World*, by Fr. Alexander Schmemmann, pgs. 250 & 251.



Η πρόσκλησίς μας για τον Επουρ-
άνιον Δείπνον (τον Μυστικόν Δεί-
πνον) του Κυρίου είναι η ευκαιρία
γιά να κληρονομήσουμε την Αι-
ώνιον Ζωήν. Ωστόσο, η άρνησις
της πραγματικότητος ότι χρειαζό-
μεθα τις ευλογίες του Θεού ως
καρποί της μετανοίας είναι ένα
από τα μεγαλύτερα εμπόδια επάνω
στον δρόμον που οδηγεί προς τον
Παράδεισον.

Η συμμετοχή μας στον Αγιον αυ-
τόν Δείπνον είναι σε δύο επίπεδα:
1) στην παρούσαν ζωήν, διά μέσου
της Θ. Λειτουργίας και, 2) στην
επόμενην ζωήν, στην Αιώνιον
Βασιλείαν του Χριστού. Σε αυτήν
την επίγειον ζωήν ο Μυστικός
Δείπνος είναι επίσης μία <πνευμα-
τική κλινική> προετοιμάζοντάς
μας για την αιωνιότητα με τον
Κύριον. Δυστυχώς, οι προσκεκ-
λησμένοι επισκέπτες προς τον
Δείπνον, σύμφωνα με την Παρα-
βολήν του Κυρίου απέρριψαν την
πρόσκλησίν των με βάση στην
γνώμην ότι τα υλικά και σωματικά
υπάρχοντά των είχαν μεγαλύτερη
αξίαν από την πρόσκλησην που
έλαβαν για να συμμετέχουν στον
Δείπνον του Κυρίου.

Αλλά, η χάρις του Μυστικού Δεί-
πνου είναι η συγχώρησις των αμα-
ρτιών μας. Η συγχώρησις από τον
Θεόν είναι ευκαιρίαν να ασπασ-
θούμε την ευχαριτημένην ζωήν
εν Χριστώ. Ο Σταυρός είναι η
πρόσκλησις μας διά του Οποίου
έχουμε την ευκαιρίαν να παρα-
δεχώμεθα, αντί να αρνούμεθα, την
πραγματικότηταν ότι έχουμε
αμαρτίες, και να μετανοήσουμε
τις αμαρτίες μας διά της αγάπης
του Χριστού.

+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

that their lands and oxen are all they needed in order to meet the
“demands” of the world in pleasing a “wife” - and, by extension,
raising a family. Ironically, these guests were also in denial of the
fact that their hopes and dreams were subject to the whims of
Roman taxation, which is why they were waiting for the Messiah
in the first place.

Being in denial gives rise to fantasies that offer fleeting comforts.
Fantasies are what keep our Coachella Valley casinos going. In-
deed, gamblers fantasize about winning the jackpot with only
the throw of the dice. The reality is that jackpots are never
enough to buy the love for which people crave and too often
jackpots are never enough to eventually avoid bankruptcy. Yet,
tell a gambler to stop gambling and he or she will probably insist
that they have no problems. The same is true with alcoholics and
addicts who live in denial that their lives are unmanageable.

Jackpots and material things do not define our value. However,
the invitation to the Heavenly Banquet is confirmation of our in-
herent value. Christ is the God Who finds us--you and me--
worthy enough to die for. In this, not only are our false ideas and
misbehaviors of the past forgotten, but Christ our God welcomes
us now as equals in dignity, gracing us with His divine energies
made evident through the miracles of many of our Saints -- men
and women of every race, age and nationality.

Forgiveness by God is the opportunity that we have to embrace a
meaningful life. The Cross is the opportunity to accept, rather
than to deny, our need for God's Wisdom and, with Christ's
love, to acquire lasting peace and happiness. The Cross is the in-
vitation to the Heavenly Banquet and the opportunity of a life
time.

+FR. THEODORE

EPISTLE: 2 Timothy 1:8-18 — Timothy, my son, do not be ashamed then of testifying
to our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel in the power
of God, who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not in virtue of our works but
in virtue of his own purpose and the grace which he gave us in Christ Jesus ages ago,
and now has manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abol-
ished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. For this
gospel I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, and therefore I suffer as
I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am sure that he
is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me. Follow the pattern of
the sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in
Christ Jesus; guard the truth that has been entrusted to you by the Holy Spirit who
dwells within us. You are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me, and
among them Phygelos and Hermogenes. May the Lord grant mercy to the household
of Onesiphoros, for he often refreshed me; he was not ashamed of my chains, but
when he arrived in Rome he searched for me eagerly and found me - may the Lord
grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that Day and you well know all the service
he rendered at Ephesos.

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, soston imas."***Verse 2-** Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His rewards.**Refrain:** *"Tes presvies tis Theotokou, Soter, soston imas."***Verse 3-** The Lord prepared His throne in heaven, and His Kingdom rules over all.**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"***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 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:** *"Soston imas Ie Theou, O Anastas ek nekron, psallontas si alleluia."***Doxa Patri ke Yio ke Aghio Pnevmati ke nin ke aei ke eis tous aonas ton aonon. Amin.** *"O Monogenis Yios ke Logos tou Theou..."***ANTIPHON III-** *This is the day the Lord made; let us greatly rejoice and be glad therein.***Sunday Resurrection Hymn:** *Tou lithou sfragisthentos (Tone 1)... (The stone that had been sealed before Your tomb by the Judeans and the soldiers guarding watch oe'r 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 did 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 Holy Forefathers:** *En pisti tous Propatores...(By faith You justified the Forefathers, having through them betrothed to yourself the Church that came out of the nations. The saints are boasting in glory; for the glorious fruit, the Virgin who without seed gave birth to You, is from their progeny. At their entreaties, O Christ our God, save our souls.)***Hymn for St. Eletherios:** *Iereh-ohn pothee-ree katakosmoumenos...(You were fully adorned with the sacred priestly robes. You were dripping with streams of your own martyric blood. In this state, you ran to Christ your Master, O blessed Saint Eleftherius, destroyer of Satan; you are wise. Therefore cease not interceding for us who loyally honor your blessed contest of martyrdom.)***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 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.)***Axion Estin -** page 52 in our Divine Liturgy books.**Communion Hymn-** *Enite ton Kyrion ...(Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise Him in the highest. Allelouia.)*

ANNOUNCEMENTS



MEMORIAL – Today's Memorial Service is for the Eternal Rest and Salvation for **Angeline Stambolos (13 years)**, beloved wife of deceased **Sam Stambolos**, mother of **Irene Stambolos, Angelo Stambolos** (deceased), and **Vera Manolakas**; grandmother **Stacy, Angela and Michael Manolakas and Shaon Stambolos**; great grandmother of **Anna Weber, Christina and Alexis McCaskill, Alexandra, Shaun and Courtney Manolakas**. May our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ grant Eternal Life to **Angeline Stambolos** and may He grant peace and comfort to her entire family. **MAY HER MEMORY BE ETERNAL!**

SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PAGEANT -- "**The Christmas Story**," will be held **today** in church directly following the Divine Liturgy. Guaranteed to be a joy for us all!

PHILOPTOCHOS – This is our second week of selling sweet bread, koulourakia, and jams. A table is set up in the hall for purchases. This is it for our holiday baked goods! Our thanks to all the volunteers that helped assemble and deliver the **Christmas baskets** to our shut-ins last Friday. God Bless you! If you have signed up to purchase a gift for one of the children at the **Safe House of the Desert**, please bring the gift to the church no later than this Wednesday, Dec. 18th. Thank you! Don't miss our special **Christmas movie matinee this Thursday, Dec. 19th from 2:30-4.30 PM**. We will be showing "**Christmas with the Karountzoses**" starring our own **Fanny Nicholas!** This is a free event and includes movie snacks & refreshments.

ALTAR FLOWER BOUQUETS -- Both bouquets are contributed by **Matushka Gloria Lehman** – *"In loving memory of my husband Fr. Charles Lehman, his parents, and also remembering My Dear Mother and Father; May they all rest in Eternal Peace!"*

– IMPORTANT NOTE: There are only two available requests for the purchase of Altar Flower bouquets next year; March 1, 2020, and May 31, 2020! Please don't miss out on an opportunity to remember, or to honor a loved one.

2020 GREEK FESTIVAL FLIERS--"**2020 Greek Festival Sponsorship/Ad Forms**" are available in our parish hall. Buying and/or selling **sponsorships and/or ads** for our **2020 St. George Greek Festival Program Book** will insure the success of our Festival.

PARISH BOOK STORE -- If you are in need of any last minute Christmas gift giving items, please visit our Parish bookstore today. Many new items are available all reasonably priced.

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

Tuesday, December 17th.....**ST. DIONYSIOS OF ZAKYNTHOS**

Orthros-8:30 a.m./Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m./Bible Study – 10:00 a.m.

Choir Practice- 1:00 p.m.

Thursday, December 19th.....Choir Practice- 1:00 p.m.

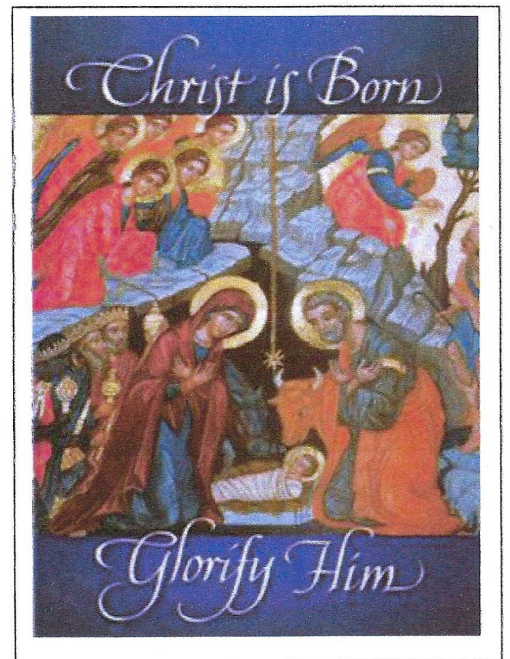
GOSPEL: Lk. 13:10-17 -- The Lord said this parable: "A man once gave a great banquet, and invited many; and at the time of the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for all is now ready.' But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I go out and see it; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I must go to examine them; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' So the servant came and reported this to his master. Then the householder in anger said to his servant, 'Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and maimed and blind and lame.' And the servant said, 'Sir, what you commanded has been done, and there is still room.' And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges, and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet. For many are called, but few are chosen.'"

SAINT GEORGE SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

2019



NARRATOR 1	<u>Stephen Hawkins</u>
NARRATOR 2	<u>Steven Banki</u>
NARRATOR 3	<u>Eli Peterson</u>
NARRATOR 4	<u>Mia Peterson</u>
MARY/THEOTOKOS	<u>Melina Hawkins</u>
ANGEL GABRIEL	<u>Eleni Castrale</u>
JOSEPH	<u>Max Dunkel</u>
INNKEEPER	<u>Angel Trapatsas</u>
ANGEL	<u>Natalie Cox</u>
SHEPHERD	<u>Mia Peterson</u>
WISE MAN 1	<u>Stevie Banki</u>
WISE MAN 2	<u>Eli Peterson</u>
WISE MAN 3	<u>Stephen Hawkins</u>
ANIMAL 1	<u>Christian Cox</u>
ANIMAL 2	<u>Harper Harrigan</u>
ANIMAL 3	<u>Eleni Hawkins</u>
ANIMAL 4	<u>Mrs. Melissa Hawkins</u>
SAINT GEORGE CHOIR	<u>Mrs. Annette Laskaris, Director and Members</u>
PROGRAM COORDINATORS.....	<u>Mrs. Athena Snarskis, Ms. Irene Stambolos</u>



CHRISTMAS CAROLS

O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM



O little town of Bethlehem!
How still we see thee lie;
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by.

Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light.
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.

SILENT NIGHT

Silent night, Holy night.
All is calm, all is bright.

Round young Virgin Mother and Child,
Holy infant so tender and mild.

Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.

AWAY IN THE MANGER



Away in the manger,
no crib for a bed.
The little Lord Jesus
laid down His sweet head.

The stars in the sky,
looked down where He lay.

The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING

Hark! the Herald Angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled."

Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With the angelic host proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem."

Hark! the Herald Angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"

WE THREE KINGS OF ORIENT ARE



We three kings of Orient are;
bearing gifts we traverse afar,

Field and fountain, moor and mountain,
following yonder star

O star of wonder, star of light,
Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to thy perfect light.

O COME ALL YE FAITHFUL

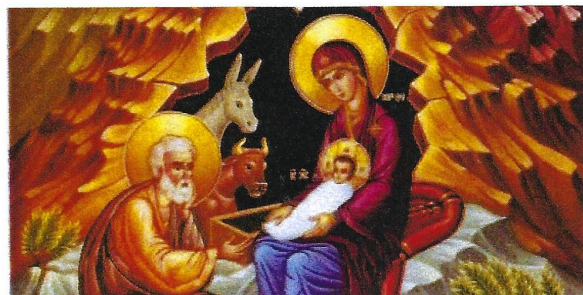
O come all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant.
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem.
Come and behold Him, born the King of
angels.

O come let us adore Him,
O come let us adore Him,
O come let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.

JOY TO THE WORLD

Joy to the world, thy Savior is come.
Let earth receive her King!
Let every heart prepare Him room,

And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven, and heaven and nature sing.



PHILOPTOCHOS
CHRISTMAS BAKE
SALE

*Christmas Bread - Vasilopita
Koulourakia*



Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

The Ladies of Philoptohos Society will be baking again this year the traditional Christmas bread, Vasilopita and Koulourakia that are delicious any time of day.

You may pick up bread and koulourakia Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday between the hours 9-2 or during the sale dates listed below.

PICK UP DATES:

Sunday, December 8, 2019 (following the conclusion of Church Services)

Sunday, December 15, 2019 (following the conclusion of Church Services)

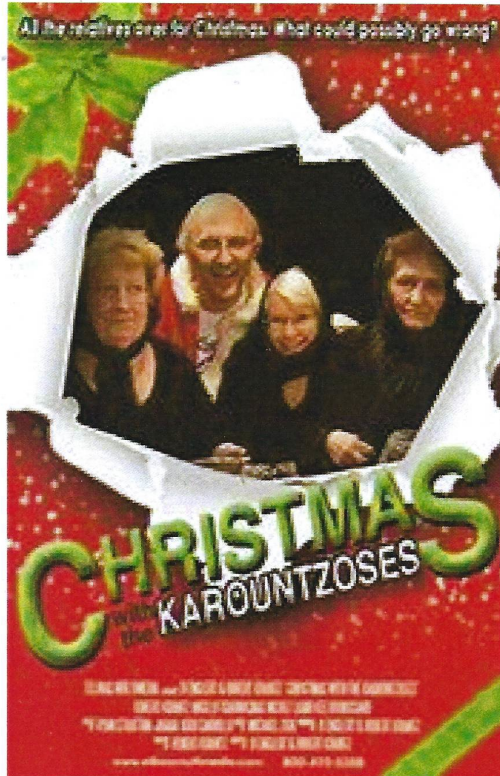
We thank you in advance for your continued support of Philoptohos



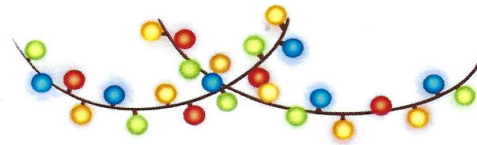
KOULOURAKIA	\$7.00 PER DOZEN
BREAD	\$12 PER LOAF

SAINT GEORGE LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS

ST. GEORGE CHURCH, 74109 LARREA ST, PALM DESERT, CA



MOVIE MATINEE



**THURSDAY,
DECEMBER 19, 2019**

2:30 – 4:30 P.M

ROBERT KRANTZ (Karountzos) is a Greek-American writer, actor, director and USC graduate.



All the Greek relatives over for Christmas!

What could possibly go wrong?

Please RSVP to Rhonda (714) 875-4661 or Athena (219) 313-9640