

**JANUARY 9, 2022**

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

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

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# THE LADDER

SUNDAY AFTER THEOPHANY



## Mailing Address:

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Tel: (760) 568-9901

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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.

## A NEW PERSONALITY

By way of His Baptism, Christ took on to Himself the sins of humanity and, in this way, He opened for us the door to repentance.

Regarding the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, Nicholas Cabasilas wrote: "These therefore are the effects of Baptism: to set free from sins; to reconcile the person to God; to unite the person with God and to open the eyes that souls might perceive the divine ray--in sum, to prepare for the life to come." (*The Life in Christ*, pg. 101).

Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos and St. Vlasios wrote: "Christ was baptized so that He could obey the Law and bring His Grace into the Water, to all of creation, and to humanity. By this, He gave to each of us the ability to acquire the Grace of adoption -- which is an Epiphany in one's personal life. This manifestation of God acquaints one with the knowledge of God as an existential fact, which is why it leads us to salvation." (*Major Feast Days of the Orthodox Church*, pg. 124). This is not just "phil-  
*Continued on page 2*

## CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

We all know the story of Jesus feeding the five thousand in the wilderness --- there was no food, except for five loaves and two fish - not much when you consider 5000 men. But Jesus blessed the loaves, multiplied them and used them to feed the 5000. Jesus used what was given to Him to perform a beautiful miracle. In offering even five loaves and two fish, we offer what we have - however great or small our gift. If we do this prayerfully and in humility, God will take our gifts and multiply them in order to feed His people.

In the Divine Liturgy, the bishop prays that the Lord will visit and confirm the vineyard which is the parish, the local Body of Christ, which the Lord planted with His own right hand (Ps 79:15-16). He Provides so that we may bear fruit. Saint John Chrysostom emphasized Christ's continual presence with us -- the True Vine that is always connected to the branches, giving them life. Christ shows His great love for us by "remaining continually with those who shall bring forth fruit; for it is needful to enjoy His aid and so to bear fruit." St. John Chrysostom says in his "Homily 77" *On the Gospel of Saint Matthew*, "Christ, in His great love for us, has joined Himself to us and offers us all that we need to bear good fruit that will lead us and others to salvation." (Taken from [www.goarch.org](http://www.goarch.org))



Με το Βάπτισμά Του, ο Χριστός ανέλαβε πάνω Του τις αμαρτίες της ανθρωπότητας και, με αυτόν τον τρόπο, μας άνοιξε την πόρτα της μετάνοιας.

Ο Μητροπολίτης Ναυπάκτου και Αγίου Βλασίου, κ.κ. Ιερόθεος έγραψε: «Ο Χριστός εβαπτίστηκε για να υλακούσει στο Νόμο και να φέρει τη Χάρη Του στο νερό, σε όλη την κτίση και στην ανθρωπότητα. Έτσι, έδωσε στον καθένα μας τη δυνατότητα να αποκτήσει την Χάρη της υιοθεσίας -- δηλ., τα Θεοφάνεια στην προσωπική του ζωή. Αυτή η φανέρωση του Θεού συνιστά την Θεογνωσία, την γνώση του Θεού, και επιδή η Θεογνωσία είναι υπαρξιακό γεγονός, για αυτό και αυτή προξένει την σωτηρίαν. (Οι Δεσποτικές Εορτές, σελ. 124). Αυτό δεν είναι απλώς «φιλοσοφία». Είναι η πραγματικότητα.

Το Μυστήριο του Βαπτίσματος είναι η εν Χριστώ γέννησή μας. Φυσικά, γεννιόμεθα μόνο μία φορά. Η Θεία Εξομολόγησις είναι η εν Χριστώ θεραπεία μας λόγω των μαχών μας με την αμαρτία. Και τα δύο αυτά Μυστήρια δημιουργούν μέσα μας έναν «νέο άνθρωπο». Αυτός ο «νέος άνθρωπος» είναι στην πραγματικότητα μια νέα προσωπικότητα, μια νέα ιδιοσυγκρασία, με ένα νέο σύνολο αξιών και μια ανανεωμένη ικανότητα να είναι ο άνθρωπος υπομονετικός, συγχωρητικός, εμποτισμένος με τη Σοφία του Θεού.

Η αναδημιουργία της ανθρωπότητας δια της Ενσαρκώσεως και του Βαπτίσματος του Κυρίου μας Ιησού Χριστού είναι στην πραγματικότητα γεγονός που έχει εκδηλωθεί στη ζωή πολλών αμαρτωλών που έγιναν Άγιοι.  
+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

sophy;" it is *reality*. The fact that God gave us a soul makes it a reality for each of us. It means that we are much more than something that "evolved" from a flawed, or mutated nature. We gain nothing by trying to justify our spiritual weaknesses as natural, "*because we are only human.*"

The Sacrament of Baptism is our birth in Christ. Of course, we are born only once. Holy Confession is our healing in Christ as the result of our battles with sin. Both of these Sacraments create in us a "new self." This new self is actually a new personality; a new temperament, with a new set of values and a renewed ability to be patient, forgiving, imbued with Wisdom of God. Such a change in our personhood requires prayer and effort, because part of our old self has with it old habits. As a new self emerges with Christ in our lives, we seek to build new habits. To quote Nicholas Cabasilas again: "*It is only with difficulty and intense effort that we can break long-standing habits and introduce what is real in place of that which is merely apparent, and what is good in place of that which is merely pleasant.*" (pg. 171)

The re-creation of humanity by virtue of the Incarnation and Baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ is a reality that has been manifested in the lives of many sinners who became Saints. Armed with their renewed personhood in the image of Christ and with the grace of the Holy Spirit, the Saints allowed themselves to be joined with God's powers, giving them great joy. Despite the trials and tribulations of the world around them, they radiated the joy that is a gift of love. It is joy in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Let us also seek such divine joy.

+FR. THEODORE

**VASILOPITA** -- Our **Philoptochos Annual Vasilopita** will take place in our parish hall following the Divine Liturgy **today**. Please support our St. George Philoptochos Annual Vasilopita Celebration. Nationally, Philoptochos offers major donations in support of the St. Basil's Academy through which children in need are provided with good education for their future.

**HOUSE BLESSINGS** -- Fr. Ted will be glad to bless the homes of our St. George parishioners throughout the month of January. He wants to observe Covid precautions. To make arrangements, call Fr. Ted at (760) 880-5869, or (760) 568-9901.

**AHEPA** -- The **AHEPA District 20 Mid-Winter Conference** will be hosted by our parish's Chapter 528 on **Saturday, January 22nd**. Proceeds will help the **AHEPA 528 Fr. T. P. Theophilos Memorial Scholarship Fund**. Donations toward this Fund can be made online at: [www.ahepa528.org](http://www.ahepa528.org).

**OATH OF OFFICE** -- The Oath of Office for the Parish Council members for 2022 has been postponed for later this month, due to the recent uptick in Covid cases.



## PRAYER FOR READING HOLY SCRIPTURES

*"Shine within our hearts, loving Master, the pure light of Your divine knowledge and open the eyes of our minds that we may comprehend the message of Your Gospel. Instill in us, also, reverence for Your blessed commandments, so that having conquered sinful desires, we may pursue a spiritual life, thinking and doing all these things that are pleasing to You. For You are the Light of our souls and bodies and to You we give glory together with Your Father Who is without beginning and Your all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen"*

EPISTLE - Colossians 3:4-11

Brethren, when Christ who Brethren, when Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience. In these you once walked, when you lived in them. But now put them all away; anger, wrath, malice, slander, and foul talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old nature with its practices and have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all, and in all.

GOSPEL - St. Luke 17:12-19

At that time, as Jesus entered a village, He was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance and lifted up their voices and said: "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." When He saw them He said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went they were cleansed. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus's feet, giving Him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. Then said Jesus: "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" And He said to him: "Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well."

## WEEKDAY CALENDAR

**MEMORIAL** -- Today's Memorial Service is for the Eternal Rest and Salvation for the servant of God, **William David Bird, Jr.** (who was chrismated as an Orthodox Christian with the name **Vasilios**), and who was the beloved husband of **Denise Bird Lekas** and loving father to **Deanna Nicole Bird**. It is his **25 year Memorial**. May our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ grant Eternal Life and Salvation to **William David Bird, Jr.**, and may He grant peace and comfort to **Denise Bird Lekas** and **Deanna Nicole Bird** and the entire family. **MAY HIS MEMORY BE ETERNAL!**

Tuesday, January 11th.....Bible Study - 10:00 a.m. Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83371776876?pwd=UnEzUTRybjkwT2FraW1LSWhiYk9Bdz09>

Parish Council - 2:00 p.m.

AHEPA- 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday, January 12th....Bible Study - 6:30 p.m. Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86111452564>

**SUNDAY SCHOOL** --Please circle the following dates on your calendars:

- 1) **Sunday, January 16, 2022 (next Sunday) -NAME DAY SAINTS FAIR...**A display of each student's Baptismal Saint report during coffee hour.
- 2) **Sunday, January 30, 2022 - Godparent's Sunday...**Godparents are invited to worship together with their Godchildren and also attend Sunday School classes.

**THREE HIERARCHS SUNDAY AND GREEK FOLK DANCE LESSONS** -- **Sunday, January 30th, in tribute to the Three Holy Hierarchs** (Basil the Great, John Chrysostom & Gregory the Theologian), registration will be held for **Greek Folk Dance lessons** with **Angeliki Pagoulatos**. Children and adults are encouraged to join. Dates and times for the lessons will be decided in the near future. In addition, during coffee hour, we look forward to some classical Greek poetry read by one or two of our parishioners.





**ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH**  
**HOLY METROPOLIS OF SAN FRANCISCO**  
PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA



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***Welcome!***

**Bring a Friend Sunday**

Thank you for worshipping with us today. We represent the Eastern Orthodox Christian Church throughout the world, and we are a parish associated with the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. This Orthodox doctrine is One Church, One Lord, One Faith, One Creed, and One Baptism. God has truly blessed us with different nationalities and converts joining and becoming one with our parish family. We invite all Christian Denominations to come to visit and to worship with us. In accordance with the Orthodox doctrine, other denominations cannot fully participate in the partaking of Holy Communion (until one converts to Orthodoxy). However, you may receive the blessed bread (Antidoron) from the priest at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy. You are also invited to join us for coffee hour in our hall after the service.

If you would like to know more about our church, or have additional questions, or are in need of prayer, do not hesitate to contact our Priest, Father Theodore Pantels at (760) 568-9901 or (760) 880-5869.

Thank you again for your participation today!