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Voice of St. George

SAINT GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
OF THE DESERT

74-109 LARREA ST., PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA



Inside this issue

CROWN THEM WITH GLORY & HONOR

They say, "Love is in the air," because Valentine's day is around the corner on February 14th.

But, the "love in the air" remains in the air if it is not love in Christ. This brings us to the wedding crowns that are placed on the heads of the man and woman who are married according to the Rites of our Orthodox Christian Church. Why? Because these are the crowns that tell us all about marital love.

While men and women exchange rings as a token of their promise to love one another, it is Christ God who gives them their crowns of glory and honor. Christ is the One Who gives the love and the man and woman have the honor of giving glory to our Lord through their love.

Fr. Alexander Schmemmann in his book, *For the Life of the World*, offers a detailed explanation of

the meaning of the wedding crowns. "First, it is the glory and honor of man as king of creation: 'Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue and have dominion...' (Gen.1:25). Each family is indeed a kingdom, a little church, and therefore a sacrament of and a way to the Kingdom...Second, the glory and honor is that of the martyr's crown. For the way to the Kingdom is a martyria -- bearing witness to Christ...Third, the meaning of the crowns [is that] they are crowns of the Kingdom.. 'Receive their crowns into Your Kingdom,' says the priest ... and this means: make this marriage a growth in that perfected love of which God alone is the end and fullness." (pgs. 89-91).

God created Adam and Eve to be king and queen of creation. In this context, Adam, in referring to Eve, said, "This is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh..." In other words, she is his equal in the

sense that she completes him -- and he completes her. Their "kingship" and "queenship" are inadequate by themselves, but, combined with God's love, together, they take on their proper power.

The wedding crowns are tied together with a ribbon indicating their completion of each other and, consequently, we pray that our Lord not allow anyone to put asunder what God has joined together. This means that no one, including the couple themselves, is to work to separate their union in marriage. To the contrary every effort is to be made to preserve the marriage by parents, in-laws, family, relatives, and clergy.

The purpose of premarital counseling is to lay out the foundations for preserving marriages. Understanding the meaning of the wedding crowns helps. They are the physical signs of the Church's

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prayers that the man and woman united in marriage are joined together *"in oneness of mind..."* We also pray that *"they may have children for the continuation of the human race...and that, as they pursue their livelihood, they may be blessed with abundant good things, "so that they may have to give to those in need.*

In Orthodox marriage, the bride is always the woman and the groom is always the man, because the continuation of the human race is through the union of man and woman. In this union, man and woman have the honor of giving glory to God in serving as His *co-workers* in bringing life into the world. Even in childlessness, the honor of providing the very image of the continuation of the human race through man and woman in itself gives glory to God.

Giving of ourselves in love for God is consistent with the spirit of Christian martyrdom. It is *the way of the Cross...taking up our cross and following our Savior.* Such love is always a matter of *giving* rather than *taking*. The "kingship" and "queenship" of the bride and groom are described by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Ephesians, as "Christ and the Church." Christ *gives* to us and we *give* to Christ by *giving* to each other... and there is always honor in *giving* glory to God. It is, in essence, "life in God's Kingdom." Metropolitan Kallistos Ware would say, "[The wedding crowns] are also crowns of martyrdom, since every true marriage involves self-sacrifice on both sides." (*The Orthodox Church*, pg. 295). The honor of giving glory to God is the honor and glory embodied in the Orthodox Christian wedding crowns.

+FR. THEODORE

METROPOLIS OF SAN FRANCISCO CLERGY-LAITY ASSEMBLY



The guiding theme for this year's Metropolitan of San Francisco Clergy-Laity Assembly is:

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen." –Matthew 28: 19 - 20

This year the clergy and lay leaders of the Metropolitan of San Francisco will have the opportunity to come together at the 2019 Metropolitan Clergy-Laity Assembly to be held March 4 - 5, 2019 at Saint Nicholas Ranch and Retreat Center in Dunlap, California. This annual gathering provides a forum for the leadership of all our communities to deliberate on important matters for our Metropolitan and engage in dialogue and fellowship to enrich our common ministry. The Assembly will begin promptly at 1:00 p.m. on Monday, March 4, and will conclude at 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 5, 2019.

This year's Assembly will focus on Missions and Evangelism with the theme, *The Great Commission in the Parish*. The guest speaker will be Rev. Father Evan Armatas from Saint Spyridon Church in Loveland, CO. He is a dynamic clergyman and speaker who will share with us his insights into parish growth, outreach, and ministry development.

The Assembly will also feature interactive workshops, other informative presentations, the annual review of the Metropolitan finances, and the presentation and approval of the 2019 Metropolitan Budget.

For more information, contact our parish office, or call Fr. Ted at (760) 880-5869.

2019 GREEK FESTIVAL



It is "Festival time." The next two weeks are critical to the success of this year's Greek Festival. Volunteers are needed in order to contain expenses. Volunteers are asked to stay committed to the hours for which they sign up to help. To volunteer to help for this year's Festival, contact **Jim Christopoulos**.

Now is prime time to distribute Festival fliers and encourage friends to attend our Festival. We need volunteers to help with preparations for the Festival throughout the next two weeks. The schedule is as follows:

-The week of February 3rd: preparation of baklava and other pastries.

-The week of February 10th, leading up to the Festival on the weekend of the 16th-17th, set-up of food preparation areas; the dinner line; the parking lot, with lighting and the stage for the band, as well as vendor spaces.

-Donations for Yiayia's Attic are being accepted at our parish. Please contact Yiayia's Attic chairman, **Chris Delegans**, for more information and details. Donations are to be in good condition, cleaned and/or polished.

Opportunities for sponsorship are still available. However, the Festival program folders have already been printed. Anyone who wants to sponsor any portion of our Festival will receive a certificate of thanks from our parish.

Our last Festival meeting for this year will be held on **Wednesday, February 6, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.** This will certainly be a very important meeting. Everyone is asked to attend.

In gratitude, everyone is also invited to enjoy the annual **Festival Volunteer Dinner on Monday, February 18th at 6:00 p.m.** Keep in mind, this year, with Great Lent beginning in March, the Festival Volunteer Dinner will feature a delicious non-fasting, meat-loving menu.

SPIRITUAL THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

by Deacon Euthym

If the whole of your life has passed smoothly and without care, weep for yourself. For both the Gospel and human experience assert with one voice that no one has, without great sufferings and trials, left behind him any great work on earth or been glorified in heaven. If your earthly road has been bathed in sweat and tears for the attaining of righteousness and truth, rejoice and be glad, for your reward will indeed be great in heaven. Never entertain the foolish thought that God has forsaken you. God knows exactly how much you can bear, and measures your sufferings and trials accordingly. *"When men know,"* says St. Nil Sorsky, *"how much weight a horse can carry, or a donkey or a camel, and load them according to their strength; when a potter knows how long to leave the clay in the kiln for it to be neither shattered nor under-cooked, how could God not know how much temptation a soul can bear to make it ready and fitted for the Kingdom of Heaven?"* Prologue from Ochrid

St. Paul warned about participating in "stupid, senseless controversies" and in today's thought we are encouraged that the Kingdom cannot be attained without struggle. Both speak to seeking that which is eternal and not focus on the temporary. God doesn't cause struggles and suffering, they are a product of a fallen world, but God respects mankind's freedom. We are not compelled to obey and follow, we are inspired to use our free will to choose Christ, which leads to eternal joy and peace and salvation. Our struggles are part of the collective rebellion against God which leads to death and destruction...the fallen world. Unfortunately our vision is not "big picture", we usually want to "win" silly arguments to stroke our ego, avoid any struggle, envy those who have the "easy life", and live falsely pretending we have no sin and everything is "ok". We will never receive more than we can handle and all we struggle with is leading to our salvation. In Romans we read, *"...all things work together for good, for those who love God and keep His*

Continued on the next page----->

THOUGHT OF THE MONTH, Continued

His commandments." ALL THINGS...we cannot discern clearly that a trial or blessing in our life will lead to our salvation or the salvation of others, so be patient and wait on the Lord, and count it all to good God is ever present in our life and will never abandon us.

ST. GEORGE MEMORIAL WALL & GARDEN

Previously announced, we are in process of the development and manufacture of a memorial wall & garden project for our Saint George Orthodox Church. The bid from W & E Baum has been approved for a 4 foot by 40 inch aged bronze wall that will hold 64 nameplates sized 2 1/2 in. by 10 in. (sizes are approximate) Individualized nameplates will memorialize those who have fallen asleep in the Lord.

Phase 1 of the memorial wall and garden project has been funded by an anonymous steward of our church and we are extremely grateful for their donation! This donation is for the bronze wall itself but not the nameplates. The aged bronze wall, to be manufactured by W & E Baum, will be mounted on the wall to the left side of the bell tower. A bench and flowers will be added to the beds surrounding and across from the wall to enhance the aesthetics and to give a peaceful surrounding for those who wish to meditate, reflect, and pray for their beloved who have passed.

Phase 2 of the project will move to the right hand side wall of the bell tower. Plans are to increase the height of the wall to 6 ft., matching the height of the left wall, to accommodate up to two additional bronze memorial walls, and to add a fountain and benches in the area. We are in the process of final edit for our Saint George Memorial Wall & Garden. Once the final proof is complete, W & E Baum will manufacture the wall with delivery time expected to be 8-10 weeks. We are hoping to have installation finished by the beginning of the 2019 Lenten Season.

If you are interested in being one of the first pa-

rishioners to commemorate a loved one who has passed, and have their name placed on the wall during the 2019 Lenten season, please review and complete the instruction form included in the Voice. Deadline for the initial offering is February 20th, 2019. See Rhonda Latkovic, Deacon Euthym, or Father Ted if you have any questions.

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Those elected to serve another three -year term as members of Parish Council are:

Linda Kallis, Nick Kaperonis ,Tina Veroulis

In addition, we congratulate the newly elected 2019 Parish Council officers:

Chris Maletis.....President
Tony Dalkas.....Vice-President
Nick Kaperonis.....Treasurer
Tina Veroulis.....Secretary/Assistant Treasurer

At the January Parish Council meeting, the following was decided:

1. The Desert Cancer Foundation had asked for a renewal of their rental agreement. They asked for a 3 year contract and to remain in the same rate as the previous contract. Paul Carkonen asked the board to consider the renters request since they have spent a large sum fixing the heating and cooling system. The members voted to give them a 3 year contract with no increase.
2. January 20 will be Stewardship Sunday. All the donation cards will be placed in a tray and Father Ted will bless them. Stewardship Chairperson, Rhonda Latkovic, will share thoughts with the congregation on that day.
3. The upgrade for our parish is on schedule. The new sliding doors which lead from the parish hall to the courtyard will be installed very soon.
4. It was voted to increase the pay given to our cleaning personnel, Maria Set and (when necessary, her husband) to \$15 per hour, which is to be mandated by Federal wage guidelines.

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PARISH COUNCIL, Continued

5. Job descriptions for cleaning crews working both during Festival season and during the "off-season" are to be drafted and approved at subsequent Parish Council meetings.

6. Full attention is given at this time to making preparations for the 2019 Greek Festival, as the parish complies with current health and fire codes and with requirements set by our parish insurance.

7. Our parish insurance carrier is now Church West Mutual.

8. It was reported to the Parish Council that the new church carpet was installed.

PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS

We started preparing food for the Festival on January 7 in helping the Co-Chairs Stacy Argyros and Lula Valissarakos. Check your schedule and plan to help.

Our Taverna Night Dinner Dance took place on Saturday, January 12. We had 62 reservations. Food was provided by Fat Greek Catering. Our menu started with appetizers of Dolmathes with Tzatziki, homemade Pita with Hummus and Orzo with feta and vegetables. The entrée was a Greek salad, Lemon Chicken, homemade Pork Gyro with Tzatziki, Orzo and Hummas with Pita. Desert consisted of mini Kataifi and Flogeres and Coffee. The live band music was provided by The Greeks. We had a larger dance floor this year affording more dance space. Quite a few of our guests participated in dancing much to the delight of the audience. We had a Fifty/Fifty drawing towards the end of the evening and the Silent Auction winners were announced. Silent Auctions donors were:

--Cherise Everett, Nick and Rhonda Latkovic, John and Linda Petalas, Georgia Saphazis, The Lights at Indio Golf Course and Salon Gregory Hair Salon/Mary Carter.

--Co-Chairs Linda Petalas and Linda Kallis thank the following members and spouses who helped make Taverna Night a success. It took many

hands and hours to produce this event.

--Reservations: Athena Snarskis and Tina Veroulis.

--Purchasing of non food items: Pat Dalkas and Tina Veroulis.

--Friday Set Up: Linda Bozigian, Pat Dalkas, Linda Kallis, Gloria Lehman, Doug and Carol Lyons, Rhonda Latkovic, Pres. Petula Pantels, Peter and Athena Snarskis and Tina Veroulis.

--Decorations: Linda Bozigian and Rhonda Latkovic.

--Check in and Ticket Sales: Rhonda Latkovic and Athena Snarskis

--Bar Drink Purchasing: Doug Lyons and Bar Tending: Doug Lyons and Peter Snarskis

--Procuring the Caterer, Band and California Alcohol License: Linda Kallis. Please see photos.

On Friday, January 25 we had our General Meeting. Our guest speaker was Dr. Euthym Kontaxis. He spoke about being healthy and gave us some tips. On medical health Euthym recommended:

-Be careful of your prescriptions interacting with over the counter medicines and supplements.

-Everyone in the desert seems dehydrated. Drink plenty of water.

-Keep a list of you current medicines with you at all times.

-The number one cause of illness is worry. Don't worry.

Spiritual health tips:

-Go to confession.

-Take communion.

-Read the Bible- the Lord is speaking to us.

-If someone says something bad to you, turn around and say something nice to someone else. Turn the negative into a positive for you health.

February

We continue to prepare food for the Festival.

Help the Co-Chairs. We will have a General Meeting on Monday, February 25 at 11:30 a.m.

Continued on the next page ----->

PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS, Continued

March

In March, our General Meeting will be replaced by our Membership Lunch most likely to be on Saturday, March 9. Details will be forthcoming.

April

At our April General Meeting, we will have elections for Board members. It's important that you attend.

--LINDA KALLIS,
Philoptochos Chapter President



Above: Silent Auction items for Taverna Night were arranged in beautiful fashion.



Above: (left to right) Tina Veroulis, Mrs. Varellas, Linda Bozigian and Lula Valissarakos join in a traditional Greek dance.

Middle: Mary Piggott enjoys another traditional Greek dance.

Below: The two-member band, *The Greeks*, performed throughout the evening.



Pictured above; (left to right) Doug Lyons, Peter Snarskis and John Petalas served the beverages that helped make Taverna Night another successful event.



Pictured above: Deacon Euthym delivered a most informative and uplifting talk at the Philoptochos General Members' meeting on January 25th. He spoke on concerns related to both physical and spiritual health and well-being.

AHEPA NEWS



Next meeting Scheduled Tuesday February 5th 2019 at Andy's #4 Indio CA. **Address:** 83699 Indio Blvd, Indio, CA 92201.

Super Bowl Party on Sunday, February 3rd at St. George parish hall, 2pm start. Please plan to be there, bring favorite dish, lets have a great time! Call for questions please.

The 2019 AHEPA regional banquet hosted by our chapter 528 in long Beach CA was a great success as we brought AHEPA members from all over the nation and Canada to enjoy the California winter. Our Very own **Jeffery Curreri** entertained the dinner crowd with his tremendous voice and charisma working through the room.

We are most grateful to our brothers and sisters of the Long Beach Chapters of AHEPA 342 and the Daughters of Penelope "Minos Chapter" 159 for hosting the mid-winter conference Saturday before the banquet important giving our AHEPA family to learn from each other to benefit our Churches and communities that we service.

Scheduled events:

--**Super Bowl Party on Sunday, February 3rd at St. George parish hall, 2pm start.**
\$20 Event Donation and you get, 1 Square in the Football Pool, Refreshments, Live Game, Cash Prizes. \$10.00 donation will buy you a square in the super bowl pool and can be purchased online at <https://ahepa528.org> and the watch on Facebook live at each quarter to see results. <https://www.facebook.com/AHEPA528/>

-- We will be supporting the St. George 23rd annual Greek Festival February 16 -17, 2019
 -- March 25th, Greek Independence Day! May have event at Church March 24th
 -- District Convention, June 7-9, 2019 Chandler AZ
 -- 2019 Supreme convention June 30- July 5 2019 at Palmer House, in Chicago, Ill.

If you attend to go to Chicago Convention, Delegates must me in by May 1st this year. Please let

us know. My wife and I plan on attending, as supreme Governor, I do not count against the chapter as our chapter gets 2 Delegates and alternates if needed.

Sunday, May 19, 2019 is AHEPA Sunday. There will be a Memorial Service for AHEPA brothers who have departed this life. In addition, scholarship awards given from the AHEPA 528 Fr. T.P. Theophilos Memorial Scholarship Fund will be imparted to deserving college students from our St. George parish and AHEPA 528 members. <https://ahepa528.org/scholarship.htm>



Applications for consideration for scholarship awards must be received by May 1st To donate to this Scholarship Fund, please contact the website for AHEPA Chapter: ahepa528.org/. **Please RSVP, Please Invite 1!**

—WYNN STORTON,
 Supreme Governor,
 Western Region 8,
 AHEPA Chapter 528
 President

Pictured above: AHEPA 528 brother Jeffery Curreri led in entertaining AHEPA and Daughters of Penelope guests from throughout our nation who gathered in Long Beach, California on Saturday, January 19, 2019 for the AHEPA Family Western Regional Banquet.

Pictured below: Western Regional Supreme Governor and AHEPA 528 Chapter President, Wynn Storton (host of the Western Regional Banquet) addresses guests, with AHEPA 528 Past-President, Harry Loukatos at his side.

THE CHURCH AND WELLNESS

The Virtue of Discernment

How can we make good decisions in our lives? We are constantly faced with the task of making decisions, such as these: What career should I choose? Who should I marry? What is the appropriate discipline for children? Some of our decisions involve our estate planning concerns; matters pertaining to medical care and leaving our inheritance to children and grandchildren. We are pressed to make decisions daily, even if they only involve setting the priority for performing our daily chores.

Decision-making has always played a vital part in the lives of our Church's Saints. From their living examples, we learn that making soul-saving and beneficial decisions in life requires the virtue of discernment, because without it, we are lost in illusions, misconceptions and assumptions. We are also defenseless against the temptations of the devil. It is wise to be careful in making plans in life so that we can plan according to realities and with humility before God, rather than according to illusions. We must also be careful not to react to actions or words on the basis of our assumptions and misconceptions. Finally, we need to avoid falling into sin as a result of temptations.

St. John the Apostle wrote: *"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God: because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this, you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God."* (1 John 4: 1-3). Accordingly, ideas and thoughts that ignore the Wisdom of God, lead people to making unwise decisions. Along these lines, the words of Staretz Silouan ring out: *"It is good at all times and in all things to ask God for understanding of what to do or say, and in what manner."* (*The Monk of Mt. Athos*, by Archimandrite Sophrony, pg. 51).

St. Theophan the Recluse reminds us that our decisions in life are related to our level of commitment to spiritual struggle for God's Will. Watchfulness over our thoughts, which St. Theophan

calls "sobriety" is a necessary factor in the effort to have proper discernment to make good decisions: *"[Those committed to 'fighting the good fight'] should keep watchful guard over two things in particular: sobriety and discernment. The first is directed within, the second outward. With sobriety we observe movements which come out of the heart itself; with discernment we foresee movements which are about to be roused in it under the impulse of external influences...Especially, do not let your actions be prejudiced by emotion and desire..."* (*The Art of Prayer*, pg. 129).

Indeed, discernment is never "old fashioned." In his article, "Discernment: Making Inspired Choices," Joe Paprocki notes: *"Discernment is a time-honored practice in the Christian tradition...God often speaks to us through the wisdom of others. Seek out the wisdom of at least one and perhaps several people you feel have the gift of wisdom and ask for advice. (For Orthodox Christians, this includes clergy, parents, family, Godparents)...Invite God into your decision-making process. Start with what you know [and] Let God speak to you ...Pay attention closely to the ways that God is speaking to you. What are the kinds of thoughts, feelings that you have (especially love, joy and peace, or lack thereof)...What Scripture story or saint's life comes to mind that might enlighten your decision? Know that God Has a plan for you...Pray to do God's Will [and] discernment is ongoing. Prayerfully evaluate your decision: if the [outcomes] are good, then it is a good indication that your decision is good. [If not, then, repent, correcting your course.] ... Trust that the Holy Spirit is with you to guide you."* See: www.loyolapress.com/our-catholic-faith/.

***"The abodes of wisdom are more to be chosen than gold, and the abodes of discernment are more to be chosen than silver."* (Proverbs 16: 12)
+ FR. THEODORE**

HOW PERSONAL CRISES CHALLENGES US AS WE SEEK GOD

When we think about the early Apostles and their adventures, we find that there were worries about finding the right path and seeking the right direction for the early preachers of the Gospel. For the Apostles, it was the worry about persecution of the faith. Most Apostles sacrificed their lives to preach Christ. For many of us in the world, there are other worries and concerns.

Some passages from Scripture during this time express these concerns. In the Epistle reading of the Prodigal Son (2 Corinthians 4: 7-15), St. Paul tells us that our gift of the Holy Spirit has limitations: *"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed, always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For while we live we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So that death is at work in us, but life for you."* The Apostles worried about persecution; my worries are a bit different.

For my own case, I worry about my own health impacting my ability to explain the Church and the Gospel. I have suffered much pain and many medical problems that affect my life. A terrible accident almost ended my life; but, it has after-effects that may limit my ability to live well enough to help the Church. I have been told scary things by doctors. Only time will tell if my health allows me to function well.

I know that, while doctors worked to restore me to health and serve the Church, that one great element in my life was provided through prayer. I explain also that so much of the needed prayer to restore me to service came from priests and leaders that were greater than myself, although my own prayer were added on to those of others: Metropolitan Anthony; Fr. Thomas Paris, and others who were present at the funeral of my

Presvytera Linda. There were many priest who were there who prayed for me. All I know is that their prayers for me were answered and I am grateful for them. Healing prayers were offered for me by the Metropolitan. All these prayers made a big difference, giving me the chance to praise God and help my Church.

So, I try to live up to my efforts in helping the Church. In coming weeks and days, I may have other opportunities to express the teachings of our Church. So we see that the life of our body parallels the challenges of the preachers and Apostles. I hope I will be successful in some way. Some books that I want to offer to our parish may be a path to help many of us. If I can be of assistance, I will definitely help. I definitely have things to share and provoke thought.

Since use of some books may be of limited time for me, I think that many people of the Church may profit from these. We do not take books to the next world, but many of you can profit by using some of the Greek books dealing with ancient history. Some others are more modern texts on the history of the Greek people. They have material on various phases of Greek civilization. I pray that they will be of good use to many. Fr. Ted and other clergymen will be able to assist in using these in a library-like manner.

That way, books that were once of use to me may be of use to you. Aside from Fr. Ted and Deacon Euthym, I may be able to explain these texts myself.

--MATTHEW DAVIS

CHOIR NOTES

Following the Greek Festival, the members of our parish choir will be practicing every Thursday at 1:00 p.m. in preparation for the Liturgies for Sunday of Orthodoxy (March 17th) the Sunday preceding the Annunciation (March 24th) and the Sunday of the Veneration of the Holy Cross (March 31st). We look forward to parishioners joining the choir. To join, contact our parish choir director, **Annette Laskaris** during any Sunday coffee hour.

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE UNBORN

On Friday, January 20, 2019 more than twenty men and women, from various nationalities, Churches and Faiths gathered near the Planned Parenthood Facility on San Jacinto in Rancho Mirage, California to pray for the unborn, and the Right to Life. This event was held on the 46th anniversary of the Supreme Court decision on January 22, 1973, allowing taxation to fund abortions nation-wide. As such, January 20th this year was a National Day for this event as Christians, and other supporters from all over the United States, rallied together in prayer. This event is sponsored by **The Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church**, in Palm Desert, California. Moreover, it is a community program for all to participate no matter what belief, church, faith and/or denomination (both Clergy, and Layman alike), are invited to participate.

The purpose of this national event is to stand in support of the Right To Life for the Unborn who have no voice to speak for themselves! God's Sixth Commandment is that "You shall not Murder", and Abortions lie in that category! The Prayers that were repeated were from "In the Palm of His Hand" (prayers to end abortion), by Frank Pavone, also The Rosary "Hail Mary", to include the following prayer "The Holy Spirit Giver of Life:

"We worship You, O Holy Spirit, and we rejoice in You. We Know that no matter how strong the forces of death may be, we can still find in You the endless source of Life. Renew that life in each of us, and make us worthy apostles of the Culture of Life in Our day! Amen."

There were many participants who brought their Rosaries, some with prayer books; one lady was on her knees the whole time looking up, and in sincere prayer; it was a heartfelt experience. Additionally, many vehicles with passers-by on the street, gave thumbs-up in support of our mission, a couple of on-lookers actually stopped, parked their cars, and got out to inquire as to what we

were supporting, they seemed very interested and asked for brochures, and any other literature that we had available.

It was a very beautiful day for this event; blue skies, little clouds, a wonderful light breeze, lots of birds flying about we could feel God's presence, and His saying, "Well done my good and faithful servants!

May God bless us, and keep us in His care,
--LOUISE DOBBS BARRINGER,
Liaison



Above: Delegates from various Christian congregations in our vicinity gathered to pray for people to stop committing abortions on the National Day of Prayer, which coincided with the anniversary of the Supreme Court decision, Roe v. Wade. Our St. George parish liaison, Louise Dobbs Barringer, is pictured at the far right—second from the right.

Below is a picture of other delegates who gathered for prayer for people to no longer commit abortions, displaying their sign: "Abortion is forever. Get the facts first."



STEWARDSHIP: IS IT: \$TEWARDSHIP, OR:.... S+EWARDSHIP?

When most of us hear the word “stewardship”, we automatically think of it spelled with a dollar sign for the letter S, a symbol for giving money to the church. It can also be linked to giving one’s time and talent. But in the end, for most of us, stewardship means, “I have to give some of my money so we can operate the church.”

However, we should learn to spell the word “stewardship,” with the symbol of a cross for the letter T. The cross dramatically signifies both our identity as disciples of Christ and our calling to a life of sacrificial giving directed towards God, others, and creation.

Stewardship is based upon Holy Scripture, first in the Old Testament, where the ancient Hebrews based their very existence upon what God had first done for them. They considered the land upon which they lived as a precious gift from God and not the result of their own hard work or virtue. This meant that all products of their livelihood belonged to God. Thus, the biblical “tithe” or 10%, meant that the first and best portion of assets were to be returned to God for support of the temple, the ordained ministers, and various human needs. The rest, or 90%, was to be used, not as each person desired, but rather according to the will of God through each persons family, home, and vocation and to seek righteousness in all relationships, including protecting, supporting, and advocating for the poor, the oppressed, and weakest members of society.

In the New Testament, Jesus Christ himself, affirmed these stewardship beliefs by his many teachings, actions and ultimately His voluntary suffering and death on the cross. Christ sets the true standard of Christian stewardship by which we can measure ourselves. And no surprise, we will never measure up to Him, but that doesn’t mean we shouldn’t try.

In the Orthodox Church, we are all called to be a disciple of Christ. This involves conversion and of our heart and mind toward Christ and a con-

scious and deliberate commitment to follow the Lord, no matter what the cost. True Christian stewardship springs very naturally from such faith and obedience, since it recognizes God as the origin of life, the giver of salvation, and the source of all blessings which in turn increases our readiness to use these gifts to show our love for God and those around us. We should recognize that the day will come when we will no longer be able to serve God here on earth so, serve now, do now.

In a culture that encourages us to focus on ourselves, Christ challenges us to re-orient our priorities according to the Kingdom of God. The antidote to greed and selfishness is repentance and conversion toward Christian stewardship as a new way of living and giving. Remember “All things are possible to the one who believes in Christ.”

We thank you for your “S+ewardship” commitment for this year.

--adapted from a sermon by Fr. Harry Papas

May God bless you always.

--RHONDA LATKOVIC,
Stewardship Chairperson

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

The remainder of the 2018-2019 Sunday School schedule holds many learning activities for our students.

We have the following Sundays marked for no Sunday school:

- ◆ February 10th and 17th (week before Festival and the Sunday of the Festival)
- ◆ March 10th (Forgiveness Sunday);
- ◆ April 28th (Easter), May 26th (Memorial Day Weekend)
- ◆ Our last day of classes will be May 19th.

We have the following activities on the calendar for the rest of the year:

Continued on the next page ----->

SUNDAY SCHOOL, Continued

1. March 17th - Sunday of Orthodoxy - Icon Procession
2. March 23rd (Saturday) - Life of Jesus and Lunch - Shield's Date Gardens

3. June 2nd (Sunday) - End of Year activities
 - Presentation of staff and students in church
 - Lunch to celebrate the end of the Sunday School year.

St. George Greek Orthodox Church of the Desert

74-109 Larrea St. / P.O. Box 4755

Palm Desert, California 92261

web: www.go-stgeorge.org/ email: pdsaintgeorge@gmail.com

Telephone: (760)568-9901 / FAX: 9760) 568-9492

FEBRUARY 2019

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|---|--|--|-------------------------------------|----------------|---|
| Sunday Schedule Orthros-8:30 a.m. D. Liturgy-9:30 a.m. Sunday School-10:30 a.m. | NOTE: Sunday, February 17th: Orthros-8:00 a.m. D.Liturgy-9:00am No Sun. School | | | | 1 | 2-PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE Orthros-8:30 a.m. D. Liturgy-9:30 a.m. |
| 3 16th Sunday of St. Matthew Ep.-2 Cor.6:1-10 Gos.-St. Matthew 25:14-30 | 4 | 5 Bible Study- 10:00 a.m. AHEPA Meeting at Andy's #4- 6:30 p.m. | 6-ST. PHOTIOS Orthros-8:30am D.Liturgy-9:30 Festival Meeting-7:00 pm | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 10-Sunday of the Canaanite Woman (St.Haralambos) Ep.-2 Tim.2:1-10 Gos.-St. Matthew 15:21-28 | 11 | 12 2019 GREEK FESTIVAL SET-UP & FINAL PREPARATIONS | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 GREEK FESTIVAL 11:00 am.-8:00 pm |
| 17-Publican and the Pharisee Ep.-2 Tim.3:10-15 Gos.-St. Luke 18: 10-14 GREEK FESTIVAL 11:00 am-8:00 p.m. | 18 GREEK FESTIVAL Pick-up Festival Volunteer Dinner-6:00 p.m. | 19 GREEK FESTIVAL Pick-up Bible Study- 10:00 a.m. | 20 | 21 Choir Practice-1:00 pm | 22 | 23 |
| 24-Prodigal Son Ep.-2 Cor.4:6-15 Gos.-St. Luke 15:11-32 | 25 Philoptochos General Members' Meeting-11:30 am. | 26 Bible Study- 10:00 a.m. | 27 | 28 | <u>MARCH 1</u> | <u>MARCH 2</u> SATURDAY OF SOULS Orthros-8:30 a.m. D. Liturgy-9:30 a.m. |

THE PRESENTATION OF CHRIST INTO THE TEMPLE AND THE RIGHT TO LIFE

The Presentation of Christ into the Temple is an opportunity to pray for enlightenment from the Holy Spirit regarding this concern. Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos, in his book, *The Major Feast Days*, reminds us that this Feast Day is a reminder of our personal union with Christ our True God. As our Savior is presented into the Temple, so too is every human being presented to God. Through the Holy Spirit, the life of Christ in human history is intertwined with each of our lives in the present and into the future. His death and Resurrection is at the same time our death and resurrection to Eternal Life with Him. Hence, the Orthodox Church has set forth the "Service of the Forty-Day Blessing for New-born Children."



Metropolitan Hierotheos tells us that there are three reasons for this Prayer Service: 1) The mother is blessed (and, by extension, the father). In particular, we pray for the healing of her body and for continued physical and spiritual strength to nurture the child in order to "grow in wisdom and grace," in the likeness of Christ. (St. Luke 2:40). 2) We acknowledge that every human being who comes into the world is from God. As such, we offer prayers of thanksgiving for the birth of a child, knowing that God loves the newborn child and has a purpose for its life in the world. 3) As we are presented to Christ in the temple upon our birth, Christ presents Himself to us, as well, and invites us to join Him in His Baptism and the celebration of His victory over death through the Sacraments of His Church.

Upon the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, the Bible notes the words of the Righteous Symeon who received Him in his arms at that time. "[He] is destined for the fall and resurrection of many." (St. Luke 2:34). To this, St. Maximos the Confessor writes, "[The fall of many] refers to the fall of the passions and evil thoughts of the faithful; the resurrection refers to the resurrection of the virtues of every thought that enjoins God's bless-

ing." (*Philokalia*, Vol. 2, "The Second Century of Love, pg. 148).

In light of the mentality of our Church, which is expressed in this Feast Day celebration, we are pressed to respond to reports indicating that some politicians are promoting the practice of abortion, even favoring the killing of the unborn just before birth. It is time, then, to remind ourselves of the Commandment of God: "Thou shall not kill."

Implied in the advocacy of abortion or even physician-assisted suicide is that we are beginning to devalue the precious gift of human life. Hence, if human life is meaningless at the stage of conception and birth, perhaps human life is meaningless at the stage of old age or illness. The issue of rights sadly seem to be more important than the issues of love and the responsibilities that we have toward God and other people. For this reason, Orthodox Christians who are proponents of abortion and the "rights" to choose for death need to understand that, in their advocacy, they are in danger of betraying their Faith. If anything, we need to advocate for the best way to support parents in caring for their children and for the best quality of care in all types of child care facilities. Let us pray that we be made worthy to welcome children into our lives as Christ did when He called His Disciples to bring them to Him for His blessing. On the other hand, in cases of old age or illness, let us be careful enough to know that every moment of life is precious from the point of view of preparing the soul for God.

The celebration of our Savior's Incarnation, Baptism and Presentation into the Temple (February 2nd) calls all of us to stand up in prayer, asking our Savior to enlighten everyone in order to stop *encouraging* the practices of abortion and physician-assisted suicide (and suicide in general). Let us remind one another that life is a gift from God and, therefore, we are called upon to respect our lives as belonging to God, rather than being deceived into "playing God."

+FR. THEODORE

Volunteer for the Festival

February 16th & 17th 2019

What Kind of Person Are You?

In this world there are four kinds of people: Everybody, Somebody, Anybody and Nobody. There was an important job to be done and Everybody was asked to do it. Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did.

Somebody got angry about it because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought Somebody would do it, but Nobody realized it wouldn't get done by Anybody. It ended up that not only was the job not done, but Everybody accused Somebody, and Nobody accepted the responsibility.

Moral: Everybody's job is Anybody's. Nobody can be Somebody unless they are willing to do Anybody's work.



Please sign up to volunteer in the church hall after liturgy on any Sunday. You may also complete the information on the back and leave it with Jim Christopoulos or Father Ted. Finally, you may email or call Jim at goofy_328@yahoo.com (note “_” between goofy and 328) or 760-902-8460. God bless!

For those of you who are unable to volunteer, but want to help support the festival, you may want to consider “sponsoring” a shift. For a donation of \$60, you can sponsor a paid worker. If interested, please see Jim or Father Ted.



Festival Volunteer Form

Friday & Saturday, February 16th & 17th 2019

»Name: _____

»Phone Number: _____ »Email Address: _____

»Availability (Please check all that apply):

Set Up Prior to Festival _____

Saturday 2/16: _____ 10:30-3:30 _____ 3:15-8:15

Sunday 2/17: _____ 10:30-3:30 _____ 3:15-8:15

Tear Down Following Festival _____

»Please check off all areas that you would like to volunteer (we will try to place you in one of these areas, if possible).

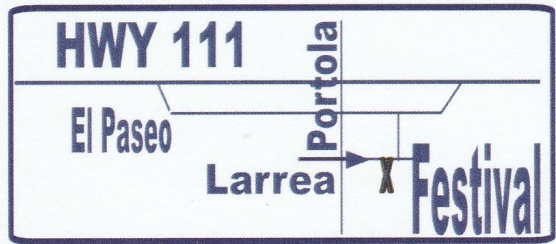
| Area | Chairperson(s) | Check if Interested |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| Set-up/Tear down | Doug Lyons | |
| Front Gate | Lou & Penny Karagianis | |
| Back Gate | Jim Christopoulos | |
| Greek Store | Rhonda Latkovic | |
| Kafenio | Tbd | |
| Kids Area | Melissa Hawkins | |
| Loukoumathes | Krisann Kontaxis | |
| Bars | Nick Krespis | |
| Dinner Line | Tasia Richards | |
| Gyros | George Argyros & John Petalas | |
| Cooking | George Argyros & John Petalas | |
| Appetizers | Jim Christopoulos | |
| Yiayia's Attic | Chris Deleganis | |
| Accounting/\$ Run | Nick Kaperonis | |
| Kitchen/Food Run | George & Stacy Argyros | |
| Pastries | Lula Valissarakos | |
| Parking Lot Carts | Jim Christopoulos | |



- GYROS - GREEK LAMB - BAKLAVA - LOUKOUMADES -
 - GREEK CHICKEN - MOUSAKA - SPANAKOPITA - DOLMADE - PASTICHIO - SOULVAKI - BAKLAVA - DOLMADES - GYROS
 - GREEK CHICKEN - MOUSAKA - SPANAKOPITA - DOLMADE - PASTICHIO - GYROS - GREEK LAMB - BAKLAVA - DOLMADES
 - GYROS - GREEK LAMB - BAKLAVA - LOUKOUMADES -



AUTHENTIC GREEK FOOD
 HEAVENLY PASTRIES
 GREEK FOLK DANCERS
 OUZO • RETSINA • METAXA
 ART & SOUVENIRS
 RELIGIOUS ITEMS
 CHURCH TOURS
 KIDZ ZONE
 FUN FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY



EL PASEO COURTESY CARTS available for festival attendee pick up & drop off. Route along El Paseo from San Pablo to Portola & church festival entrance.
ADDITIONAL PARKING AVAILABLE at Washington Charter School, and Hope Luthern Church & Spiritual Center.
SHUTTLE SERVICE PROVIDED.



We are pleased to provide assistance to anyone requesting it. If you need help, please ask.

Saint George
 Greek Orthodox Church
Proudly presents the
23ND ANNUAL
GREEK
FESTIVAL

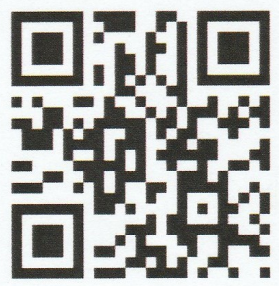
in Palm Desert, CA
Saturday & Sunday
February 16th & 17th 2019
11am to 8pm
 on the Church Grounds
 74-109 Larrea, Palm Desert, CA
(760) 568-9901

Experience Authentic Greek Food
Devour Heavenly Pastries
Dance to live Greek music, and
Be Greek for a Day!

ADMISSION \$3

(Children 12 & under free)
 Active Duty Military, Police,
 Fire & EMT Free w/ ID

www.PDGreekFest.org
 PDGreekFest





AHEPA 528 2nd ANNUAL

SUPER BOWL PARTY



FUN FOR EVERYONE

We will have doors open at 2pm.

Game starts at 3:30 pm

Saint George Greek Orthodox Church

74109 Larrea St Palm Desert, CA 92261

\$20 Donation requested

Refreshments and fun provided!



<https://www.facebook.com/AHEPA528/>

Livestream after each Quarter to announce winner!

\$10 pool squares available

Donate online, AHEPA528.ORG

ALL PROCEEDS FROM THE EVENT WILL GO TO SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Please make any checks to AHEPA Chapter 528 or donate online

Scholarship awards benefit members of

Saint George Church and the AHEPA 528 Family

SUPER BOWL
FEB 3rd 2019

\$20 DONATION

and you get

- 1 Square in the Football Pool
- Refreshments
- Appetizers
- Live Game
- Cash Prizes

\$10 pool square*

**After first donation*

**REFRESHMENTS
AND FUN
PROVIDED!**



**PLEASE SEE BROTHERS
WYNN STORTON,
HARRY LOUKATOS OR
NICK KRESPIS
FOR FURTHER DETAILS**

CONTACT@AHEPA528.ORG

760.832.2825

SAVE THE DATE!

ST. GEORGE

LENTEN PARISH SYMPOSIUM:

“INQUIRE WITHIN”

SYMPOSIUM INCLUDING TOPICS RELATED TO
ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN SPIRITUAL LIFE & DISCIPLINE:

-- THE NATURE & PRACTICE OF THE
HOLY SACRAMENTS IN DAILY LIVES

SATURDAY, APRIL 6, 2019

AT:

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA

10:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.

MORE DETAILS & INFORMATION TO FOLLOW IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS.

St. George Memorial Wall & Garden Name Plaque

INSTRUCTIONS:

Print this form and supply the information requested.

This form is to be used when making a Saint George Memorial Wall & Garden donation in honor of a deceased relative. For a donation of \$175.00, the name of the person or person(s), i.e. husband & wife, for whom the memorial donation is made will be placed on a 2 1/2 inch by 10 inch bronze plaque. Each plaque will be etched with the words "Memory Eternal" and with the deceased persons first & last name(s) only and mounted on the Memorial Wall & Garden bronze wall.

MEMORIAL DONATION IS MADE IN THE NAME OF:

(Print name(s) as you want on the plaque)

DATE OF DEATH: _____

DONATION IS FROM:

(Name of person making the donation)

*(Name & address of person(s) to whom acknowledgement is to be sent)

ADDRESS _____

CITY: _____

STATE: _____ **ZIP:** _____

PHONE: _____

SIGNATURE of person submitting form:

To make your donation, you can do one of the following:

- Fill out the form and either choose to drop off the form and payment to the church office or mail the form and payment to: Saint George Orthodox Church, P.O.Box 4755, Palm Desert, CA 92261. You may pay for your memorial donation by check or credit card.
- Check # _____
- Cash \$ _____
- Credit Card Info:

Type _____ Number _____

Expiration Date _____ CCV _____

Authorized Signature: _____

Example of Plaque:

Memory Eternal
o *(first & last name(s) of deceased)* o

*Any questions, please contact Rhonda Latkovic at (760) 610-1598 or r.s.fleminglatkovic@gmail.com