

SEPTEMBER 2019



Voice of St. George

SAINT GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
OF THE DESERT

74-109 LARREA ST., PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA



Inside this issue

HOLY CONFESSION: THE WAY OF THE CROSS

It is interesting how the devil works: when we are tempted, the devil goads us into thinking that we actually *deserve* to neglect God and serve ourselves, or at least *excuse* ourselves for neglecting God. But, as soon as we fall into sin, the devil is the first one to accuse us and make us feel shame for what we have done, even to the point to which we are so ashamed that we are duped into thinking that even God is ashamed of us and, therefore, we will never be worthy of receiving forgiveness.

Sin is itself evil and sin begets further evil. However, God is good and all that God does is good, including the creation of humanity, which is even created in His Image and Likeness. Evil, therefore, is not created by God, but is a "happening" formed by the misuse of free will, which makes human beings responsible for sins and subsequent evils.

"Evil is nothing more than the withdrawal of good," according to St. John of Damascus (*An Exact Exposition of Faith: Chapter 4—"Concerning the Devil and Demons"*). Fr. Stanley Harakas, in his book, *Toward Transfigured Life*, notes that sin and evil are synonyms: *"The personal or individual dimension of evil is frequently characterized as sin."* (pg. 77).

Yet, it is God's goodness that dissolves sin and evil. Therefore, only God can forgive sins. (Luke 5:17-26). This is Christ's work on the Cross. On the Cross, His preaching about forgiveness (given in the Lord's Prayer) took on an eternal reality, evidenced by the forgiveness of the thief. Because of the Cross, Christ God gave the authority to forgive sins to human beings, gifting them with more of His Divine qualities than had been given to Adam.

We are prone to act like

Adam and Eve if we do not turn to Christ. After they fell to the devil's temptations, they felt shame before God. In *The Orthodox Study Bible*, we read the following: *"Adam and Eve now had fallen and tried to hide from God. Fallen man now has a fallen will; thus, he has a tendency to run away from God."* (pg. 8). Adam and Eve tried this "running away from God," because they were ashamed. They knew that they were naked—naked not only physically, but spiritually, as well.

Doing evil identifies us as being evil, which distorts our very nature. As such, the horror of what we become as the consequence of sin and evil de-values our human worth, which is manifested as shame. Being thrown out of Paradise is indeed a shameful thing, tending to define us as unworthy creatures, ashamed of talking about our sins with someone else, like a priest or a

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Inserts:
Pink Walk; Memorial Wall

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The only way to deal with sin and evil is to *be sorry* for the words and actions that are not only sinful in themselves, but which lead to sins in other ways. It is *sorrow* over our sins that leads to repentance. The *shame* that we might feel has been taken up by our Savior upon the Cross.

To understand, however, how Holy Confession is actually the *way of the Cross*, we might bring to mind that our Savior *voluntarily* opted to dissolve our guilt and shame upon the Cross. Indeed, crucifixion upon the Cross was a shameful death. It is not only our shame that is evaporated on the Cross of our Savior; it is the evil that is connected to the sense of shame. *"By enduring the shame of the Cross, Christ wiped away our shame and saved us...Therefore, repentance as a means of healing and salvation is linked inseparably to the way of the Lord, and this is the way that willingly accepts shame."* *The Hidden Man of the Heart*, by Archimandrite Zacharias, pg. 51). On the Cross, our Lord assumes our shame, making it go away and affirms our faith that He will, with our cooperation, *"make the wicked become good,"* as St. Basil the Great says, (*St. Basil's Liturgy*). Our Savior deems us *worthy* of repentance, which, in itself is a validation of our *self-worth*.

Confession and repentance happen on two levels: 1) every minute of every day we judge ourselves and blame ourselves for our forgetfulness of God, constantly returning to our Savior through constant prayer, and 2) we confess our sins to Christ before a priest (if not one's parish priest), who is charged with taking upon himself the burden of one's sins in guiding one back to Christ, as the "voice" of His Church. Both are one and the same...*the way of the Cross*.

+FR. THEODORE

CHURCH & WELLNESS

Stop the Anger

Anger and hatred have reached fever pitch in our country, which ironically was founded on religious freedom, with the belief that all people are created by God and that God loves us all equally. Instead, we have, as a country, allowed anger to pervert our blessings as "one nation under God." The only way, then, to get rid of the anger and hate is to repent and return to God.

If we truly want to replace the anger and hate with love and compassion, we actually do have to repent and turn our lives over to our True God, Jesus Christ. Throughout the thousands of years since the beginnings of the Apostolic Church, Orthodox Christian Saints have experienced the fact that only through the love of Christ on the Cross can we find the ways to find love instead of hate – peace instead of anger.

No greater display of anger and hate on the part of people can be seen than that of Christ hanging on the Cross. Yet, Christ love us and forgive us.

St. Gregory of Nyssa notes, *"The impulse of desire has been led by misjudgment concerning the good...The seed of anger has not been tempered into (the virtue) of courage, but has armed us for battle with our own kind...The emotions are neither virtuous nor wicked in themselves, since they are impulses of the soul which lie in the power of the users to serve good or otherwise."* (*On the Soul and the Resurrection*, {ans. By Catherine Roth, pgs. 59-60). God implanted the emotion of anger in us for the purpose of overcoming the evil that affects our inner souls. With anger, then, we reject temptation; with anger we reject the hatred that lurks within us. It is with the power of the emotion of anger that we *force* ourselves to overcome evil thoughts and temptations and to seek and find God. That this nature is innate in us is seen in all the cultures of the world, as we learn from non-Orthodox students of culture, such as Don Miguel Ruiz, who, in his popular, best-selling book, *The Four Agreements*, notes the importance of being a "warrior" over our inner self, who,
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STOP THE ANGER, Continued

always, with inner *force* pushes out evil thoughts and temptations [which he calls *parasites*] and funnels in good thoughts and loving motives.

Anger and hatred are not evils that “just happen” to us, caused by factors outside of our being. From the Orthodox point of view, it is our personal responsibility before Christ our God to use the “gift” of anger to *destroy* the anger that seethes within us and, rather than attacking others, attack the fallen nature of our own souls, using its force to strengthen our effort to love.

St. John Cassian counsels us about the vice of anger in his letter to Bishop Kastor, entitled “*On the Eight Vices*.” I have taken the liberty to extend this section of *The Voice* beyond the normal “one-page” limit, so that I can share excerpts of his commentary on “The Vice of Anger,” as can be found in *The Philokalia*, Vol. 1, pgs. 82-86. +FR. THEODORE

ON ANGER

We must, with God’s help, eradicate the poison of the demon of anger from the depths of our souls. So long as he dwells in our hearts and blinds the eyes of the heart with his somber disorders, we can neither discriminate what is for our good, nor achieve spiritual knowledge, nor fulfil our good intentions, nor participate in the true life, divine light; for it is written, “For my eye is troubled because of anger.” (Ps. 6:7). Nor will there be a share in divine wisdom even though we are deemed to be wise by all other people, for it is written, “Anger lodges in the bosom of fools.” (Eccles. 7:9)...

Our incensive power can be used in a way that is according to nature only when turned against our own impassioned or self-indulgent thoughts. This is what the Prophet teaches us when he says, “Be angry and do not sin.” (Ps. 4:4) - that is, when malicious thoughts enter your heart, expel them with anger, and then turn to compunction and repentance as if your soul were resting in a bed of stillness.

St. Paul agrees with this when he cites the passage and then adds: “Do not let the sun go down upon your anger, and do not make room for the devil.” (Eph. 4:26-27)...If we take Paul’s saying literally, it does not permit us to keep our anger even until sunset. What

then shall we say about those, who, because of the harshness and fury of their impassioned state, not only maintain their anger until the setting of this day’s sun, but prolong it for many days?...They are unaware that we must avoid anger not only in what we do, but also in our thoughts; [otherwise] we are deprived of the Holy Spirit.

It is for this reason that the Lord commands us to leave our offering before the altar and be reconciled with our brother (see Matthew 5:23-24)...

Self-reform and peace are not achieved through the patience which others show us, but through our own long-suffering toward our neighbor...[Even] those seeking perfect gentleness must make every effort to avoid anger not only towards other people, but also towards animals and even inanimate objects.

I can remember, when I lived in the desert, I became angry with the rushes because they were either too thick or too thin; or with a piece of wood, when I wished to cut it quickly and could not; or with a flint, when I was in a hurry to light a fire and the spark would not come. So all-embracing was my anger that it was around even against inanimate objects.

If then we wish to receive the Lord’s blessing we should restrain not only the outward expression of anger, but also angry thoughts. More beneficial than controlling our tongue in a moment of anger and refraining from angry words is purifying our heart from rancor and not harboring malicious thoughts against our brethren...When we have dug out the root of anger of our heart, we will no longer act with hatred or envy. “Whoever hates his brother is a murderer.” (1 John 3:15), for he kills him with the hatred in his mind...The Lord Himself teaches us to put aside all anger when He says, “Whoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of judgment.” (Matt. 5:22). The Lord’s intention is that we should remove the root of anger, its spark, so to speak, in whatever way we can, and not keep even a single pretext for anger in our hearts. Otherwise, we will be stirred to anger initially for what appears to be a good reason and then find that our incensive power is totally out of control...

Finally, we should always bear in mind our ignorance of the time of our death, keeping ourselves from anger and recognizing that neither self-restraint nor the renunciation of all material things, nor fasting and vigils, are of any benefit if we are found guilty at the last judgment because we are the slaves of anger and hatred.

ENCYCLICAL FOR THE NEW ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR



My spiritual children in the Lord,

Thirty years ago, the Ecumenical Patriarchate issued an appeal to Orthodox Christians, urging prayer and care for God's creation. Since 1989, each year on September 1st, at the inspiration of His All-Holiness Demetrios, the Ecumenical Patriarchate has opened the liturgical year with prayers for all God's creation. Since 1992, at the exhortation of His All-Holiness Bartholomew, all Orthodox Churches have implemented the same tradition.

Over the years, the World Council of Churches has heeded this call, while more recently the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion have also embraced this tradition. Today, countless parishes and faithful adopt the same practice in their communities and lives. Therefore, in all corners of the planet, we have perceived glimpses of the polluted creation that we are called to redeem and the new creation that we are called to promote.

All of these initiatives are positive signs of awakening, but much more remains to be accomplished. Moreover, the Orthodox Church has drawn on its liturgical, patristic and spiritual treasures to develop a sensitive and profound theology of creation, emphasizing the Eucharistic and ascetic dimension of creation care, while highlighting the role of human beings as priests of creation.

In many ways, the encyclical of 1989 proved genuinely prophetic. What the world has witnessed in terms of climate change and global warming has only deteriorated and become exacerbated; the predictions of scientists were accurate, albeit restrained. At the same time, as Orthodox Christians, we must admit our failure to integrate our theology with our practice. Now those problems have intensified, while the challenge requires a more urgent response by the Church.

Our response, however, is fraught with difficulties and barriers because we are captive to a men-

talinity of consumption and greed that is fundamentally foreign to Orthodox Christianity and contradictory to the spirit of communion and generosity. Instead, we are called to participate in the "cosmic liturgy" of creation (St. Maximus the Confessor), where "everything that breathes praises the Lord" (Psalm 150:1), where "the heavens and the hills, the trees and the animals exalt the name of God" (cf. Psalm 148:4-13), and where every drop of water and grain of sand offer glory and gratitude for the presence of the Creator.

Of course, we all recognize that we can no longer desecrate God's creation, whose origin and destiny are inseparably identified with ourselves. What we refuse to do is take the next step that is required of us as priests of creation, which entails consecrating creation to the Creator. *Avoiding desecration* is only a partial response to the ecological crisis; accepting and *advocating consecration* is the fulfillment of our divine mandate to "serve and preserve the earth" (Gen. 1:15). Such a sanctification and offering to God of "His own of His own, on behalf of all and for the sake of all" (From the Divine Liturgy) also unleashes the transformative potential and restorative capacity of all creation for healing and wholeness. However, in order to heal the earth, we must purify our hearts and transform our habits. Every act of defilement on the body of creation is ultimately contempt for the Body of Christ. Whereas when we demonstrate respectful consideration for the earth's natural resources, then we can also begin to discern the perspective of the kingdom "on earth as in heaven" (From the Lord's Prayer).

As Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew has written: "Climate change affects everyone. Unless we take radical and immediate measures to reduce emissions stemming from unsustainable excesses in the demands of our lifestyle, the impact will be both immediate and alarming." Therefore, each parish and every individual should seek out ways of practicing prayer and care for God's creation by applying the fundamental principles of

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THE NEW ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR, Continued

Scripture, theology and tradition with regard to our relationship with the natural environment by considering changes in our attitudes and habits with regard to food and travel, by reducing consumption of fossil fuels and choosing alternative sources of energy with regard to lighting and heating, as well as by raising and promoting awareness with regard to the divine gifts of water and air.

Every parish and community is invited and encouraged to open a fruitful dialogue on this challenge of our generation.

With paternal love in Christ,
++ARCHBISHOP ELPIDOPHOROS,
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

AHEPA NEWS

It's been a tough year! Fr. Ted asks that you join him in prayers for a full recovery for me and Nick Krespis, as we are both in chemotherapy treatment throughout the end of 2019. In addition, we pray for our brothers who are struggling with illnesses of many kinds.

Meeting Scheduled for September 4, 2019...please plan to be there. Bring dues for 2019-2020. We need you to help our Chapter now more than ever! Please let us know what you may be able to help with on list of Chapter events below or come up with another great new Idea! Invite a friend or family member to join, **get involved with HELLENISM!**

CHAPTER MEETING AGENDA

- Call meeting to order
- Opening prayer
- Minutes of previous meeting
- Treasurer's report
- New business
- Membership - President's theme this year for AHEPA is: "Membership"

UPCOMING OVER-ALL AHEPA EVENTS:

- 100-year anniversary in 2022
- Online membership
- Mid-Winter Conference- January 18 - St.

Sophia LA

- District Convention WRDC Seattle, WA
- Greek Festival
- Shirts/booth sales

UPCOMING LOCAL AHEPA SCHEDULE:

1. November 10th, Veterans Day
2. November 17th, Thanksgiving, Town Center Café \$25/12
3. December 11th, Christmas party: Location? \$35/\$20
4. February 2nd, 2020. Super Bowl Sunday. Football Squares, potluck
5. May 17th, 2020. Ahepan of year, membership Like to see a good fundraiser for scholarships.

MEETINGS 1st Wednesday of every month
At St. George Church, Palm Desert
--WYNN STORTON,
AHEPA 528 President

PARISH COUNCIL NOTES

With the grace of God, we have found our way through another summer, with high temperatures and equally high expenses related to the day-to-day costs of maintaining our parish facilities. Anyone who can be asked to complete their 2019 parish Stewardship Pledge sooner than later so that expenses throughout September can be met.

By way of an anonymous donation, a door-length window has been placed in the door leading to the parish book store. This creates visibility to our book store items, hopefully inspiring many to enter and check out books and religious items available in our book store. Hopefully, our Sunday School room doors can be outfitted with door-length windows to allow parishioners to view the Sunday School displays created by our Sunday School students.

The **September Parish Council** meeting will be held on **Thursday, September 12, 2019 at 2:00 p.m.** to review needs related to the preparations for our 2020 Greek Festival. At the same time, the Parish Council will consider proposals related to the rental of our parish hall to the general public.

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PARISH COUNCIL, Continued

A parish "Master Calendar" will be posted on the parish bulletin board for parishioners to plan around events already scheduled.

Finally, discussion will be entertained with regard to the newly received Archdiocese Policies for the Protection of Youth and Children, along with the feasibilities of installing surveillance cameras for the protection of parish property.

GOD LOVES BABIES

Abortion is not a modern invention. It, and infanticide (the killing of a baby after birth), were very common in the ancient pagan societies. Life was seen by many as cheap and expendable. And then change came beginning in the 300's A.D. Society's beliefs about abortion and infanticide started changing. And the laws were changed, too. Both abortion and infanticide were outlawed. Sure, some still took place -- not everyone obeys the law! But the numbers went down. Many, many more babies got a chance at life...Our Orthodox Church taught against all that killing, struggled against it, and once our Church brought the Roman Empire to Christ, the laws were changed. Thank God for our spiritual ancestors!...

Because our beliefs are strong and clear, this leads to several obligations for Orthodox believers --

First -- We should strongly uphold our beliefs and make sure all of our people are aware of them. And make sure the world knows what we believe. That includes doing all we can to change the laws, just as our Church successfully did 1700 years ago.

Second -- We need to help women in tough pregnancy situations to choose life instead of death. We need to give them moral support, friendship, financial help.

Third -- We need to help the children after birth as well...food, clothing, money. Whatever is needed. And we should strive to have adoption seen as a good option.

Fourth -- We need to help and support women

who have had abortions, stressing to them that there is forgiveness from God. As St. Cyril of Jerusalem wrote: "*Add up your sins and they are smaller than God's mercy.*" God forgives...and so we must also forgive. And we as parishes, and through ZOE for Life!, must do all we can to help women who have had abortions realize that they can find forgiveness from God and peace and joy in that forgiveness.

Sometimes it seems the world is getting darker and darker. So we, followers of the light of the world, Jesus Christ, must shine more brightly. Like a candle in a dark room, drawing people to the light of God.

God used our Orthodox Church long ago to change the world concerning abortion and infanticide. But things don't stay the same...and now the world needs changing all over again! May God help us to be the world changers one more time. And to save the babies.

+FR. ANDREW MARMON,

St. Matthew Orthodox Church, ZOE for Life!

Endorsed by the Assembly of Canonical

Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America

On the local level, working with our parish Philoptochos Chapter, we plan to renew our "baby bottle program" with Birth Choice of the Desert this year. More details will follow in next month's *Voice of St. George*.

CHOIR

Choir practice in preparation for the **September 8th** return of our Choir from summer break will be held at **1:00 p.m.** at our church on Thursday, **September 5th**. Choir practices are held every Thursday at 1:00 p.m., unless otherwise noted by our Choir Director.

Everyone who wants to participate in singing with the choir is welcome. Contact our Choir Director, **Annette Laskaris** to join! All that is required is the desire to praise our Lord with love.

PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS



Our fall season is beginning and with it our first General Members Meeting after the summer break is scheduled for Monday, September 16th at 11:30 AM in the church hall. We hope to see everyone who is back in attendance. We will be serving a light lunch prior to the start of the meeting.

During the summer, we have updated the Membership Directory, had it printed, and it will be available for distribution at our first meeting.

We are pleased to report that our Chapter is now 74 members strong! Your membership dues/donations have a huge positive impact for many charities at the international, national, regional, and local levels. In fact, we have listed the charitable organizations and projects that we have adopted and are contributing too in the revised Philoptochos directory. A large poster listing that information has been printed and placed in the church hall for all to review. Our organization is truly blessed to be able to provide the services and donations that we do and we are grateful to all our members, donors, and supporters! Saint George is truly making an impact!

On August 27th & 29th, we fed 200 homeless in conjunction with the Street Life Project organization and our Homeless Outreach Initiative in both Indio and Palm Springs. In addition to food, clothing and supplies were also distributed. We would like to thank all the volunteers that gave their precious time, talent, and treasure to ensure this effort was a success. Volunteers performed meal prep, bagging and boxing of food containers, delivery & distribution. They include; Linda Bozigian, Pat Dalkas, Nick Kaperonis, Christine Kundanis, Rhonda Latkovic, Margarita Pagoulatos, Presvytera Petula Pantels, Father Ted Pantels, Linda Petalas, Anastasia Peterson, Deb Pousen, Alice Pulos, Irene Stambolos, & Emily Tcharos. *****Year-to-date our Saint George Philoptochos chapter has served 915 meals to the homeless in our area! Additionally, we have provided 200 emergency meal & hygiene kits**

along with over 30 large bags and boxes of donated clothing!***

We have been exploring information concerning our Anti-Human Trafficking Initiative over the summer, and a group of Philoptochos board members and team volunteers along with Father Ted and Presvytera Petula, attended a meeting at the United Way of the Desert offices in Palm Desert to learn about our valley's labor and sex trafficking problems and challenges. We will be educating our members in the upcoming months on ways we can assist victims of trafficking. Safe House of the Desert is a local organization that assists victims one-on-one. There is also a local coalition that helps to educate, advocate, and legislate with the many issues involved in helping to solve the exploitation of minors through human trafficking. It is a very complicated issue. More to follow.

Please save the date of Saturday, October 12th to join us in the Paint El Paseo Pink Walk sponsored by our next door tenant Desert Cancer Foundation. A \$25.00 donation registers you for the walk and you will be provided a tee shirt to wear during the walk. Proceeds are used to support cancer patients in our local area needing financial assistance to cover the cost of treatments, counseling, transportation, etc. We hope you will join the Saint George Team for this event.

If you haven't yet joined Philoptochos for the 2019 year that runs to March 2020, we hope you will consider doing so. Membership is \$45.00 annually. Please join even if you are unable to attend meetings. Just your membership is a way for you to make a difference to someone in need. And your donation is tax deductible. If you are interested in joining, please contact any Philoptochos board member.

"No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted."

--RHONDA LATKOVIC,
Philoptochos President

FALLING ASLEEP OF THE APOSTLE JOHN THE EVANGELIST

So, who was the Apostle John? He is one of the Sons of Zebedee and Salome. He was called by Jesus and left his fishing nets to become a much bigger fisherman for the greatest Faith of all time. He was beloved by Christ. With Sts. Peter and James, he was present at the raising of Jairus' daughter and, most importantly, at the Lord's Transfiguration. Here, the spiritual reality about Christ was revealed. He stayed with the Lord and the Mother of Christ at the Cross and he guarded Her for the rest of Her life.

What were his writings? He was the author of the final and "spiritual Gospel." Here, he reveals Christ to be the Incarnation of God's Word. His Gospel proclaims, "*In Him was life and the life was the light of man...*" (John 1:4). He was also the author to the "Catholic Epistles" that bear his name. Furthermore, it is believed that he was the author of the Book of Revelation. This is a work of prophecy, but it is a difficult book that is not read at Liturgy. This was written at Patmos where John was ultimately exiled.

The Emperor Nerva released all the captives of Domitian who had been held for martyrdom and John was then able to resume his work in Asia Minor -- at Ephesus, preaching the Gospel. St. John's connection with Patmos made him famous to Eastern Orthodox Christians.

St. John's Gospel made the teaching of the Trinity clear. Christ and the Father are equal in Godliness and Spirit. Also, the Holy Spirit *proceeds* from the Father. Yet, this is eternal. Son and Spirit are not created in any way.

The Gospel of St. John makes clear the love that is shown in the Son being *begotten* by the Father, but also in the *procession* of the Holy Spirit from the Father. John makes it clear that the reality of God as Trinity is involved with the Love that is shown by the reality of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Catholic Letters of St. John show the same love and caring in the Trinity:

"See what love the Father has given us, that we

should be called children of God; and so we are. Beloved, we are God's children now..."

(First Catholic Epistle 3:1-2)

St. John lived a long life and his Gospel was the last Gospel writing about the Lord. It is believed that he lived to about one hundred years. His Gospel builds on the other Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) and makes the Divinity of Christ clear.

So what we see is that John the Apostle and Evangelist proclaimed Christ as the real Word of God. Yet, he also shows that this supernatural Love of the Trinity is the reality of the Christian life and love for all people. This love of all Christians for the Lord is the real model for Christian love for all of humanity.

Let us follow in this love and make St. John and Christ's love a reality for us all! We celebrate the Feast Day of St. John the Evangelist on **September 26th** every year.

--MATTHEW DAVIS

CHURCH HALL RENTAL --We are now renting out our Hall to bring income in for the Church treasury. We plan to rent our Hall for:

Business Meetings	Non-Profits
Birthdays	Anniversaries
Baptisms	Weddings

Our Hall Rental Team consists of Becky Allen and Linda Kallis. We have done a lot of research and have had discussions to get this new project up and running. There are many logistics and variables to be considered and we have our contracts ready. See our ad on our website courtesy of Wynn Storton. We are looking for 3 volunteers to be our Event Coordinators who will alternately (as their schedules allow) open the Hall, meet with the caterers, see everything is set up properly, talk to the clients and will be available at the end of the event to see clean up has been done and the Church Hall is locked up. Please contact us if you are interested in being on our Hall Rental Team.

--LINDA KALLIS,
Events Director

SPIRITUAL THOUGHTS OF THE MONTH

By Deacon Euthym

"The Most Holy Mother of God prays for us ceaselessly. She is always visiting us. Whenever we turn to her in our heart, she is there. After the Lord, she is the greatest protection for mankind. How many churches there are in the world that are dedicated to the Most Holy Mother of God! How many healing springs where people are cured of their ailments have sprung up in places where the Most Holy Theotokos appeared and blessed those springs to heal both the sick and the healthy! She is constantly, by our side, and all too often we forget her." + Elder Thaddeus, Homily on the Dormition of the Theotokos delivered August 15/28

The elder reminds us of the power of her intercessions on our behalf with her Son, our Lord and God, Jesus Christ. We often forget to beseech her, to honor her as the greatest of Saints and the one who God chose to take flesh from. Her humility is the fertile ground from which miracles bloom. Let us cultivate our souls in a similar manner through prayer and humility so that we also may bear spiritual fruit and ask for her intercessions daily.

Value highly, and always preserve Christian meekness and kindness, mutual peace and love, crushing by every possible means the impulses of self-love, malice, irritability, and disturbance. -- Righteous John, Wonderworker of Kronstadt

St John refers to self-love, malice, irritability and disturbance of the soul as impulses...it is not who we are, who we were created to be and not the image and likeness of God. These are impulses, simple as that. As St John says, we must "crush" them. In other words do not give them a chance to take root in our soul. Rather, we are to cultivate and preserve those qualities that are from God and which we admire in others. Meekness, kindness, peace and love, all are wonderfully attractive to us when we see it in others, and characteristics that we strive for but often fall short of. Why? Because we do not want to discipline

ourselves to crush the impulses that come our way. This is the hour by hour, day by day decision we have to make, and then if we are able to combat these impulses, become victorious in our Christian walk.

Thus, my brother, if you love peace of heart, strive to enter it by the door of humility, for no other door but humility leads therein. --Unseen Warfare

For us to have true peace we have to be humble. It is our ego that keeps us anxious, agitated, angry, distrustful, etc. with humility our circumstances don't dictate our peace. It is from within, unrelated to circumstances and only comes from God. The Peace of the Comforter, the Holy Spirit cannot exist when our ego and pride block the door to our heart. Let us unlock that door and open it by seeking the priority of putting God first in our lives and avoiding the trap of self love. When we realize that God is sovereign in our life and we exist by Him and for Him, we cannot help but be humble. The world tells us to be self centered, If we put God first, then we start to see others in a different context and love rules the day and our hearts have peace.

STEWARDSHIP

There has not been any change in the number of stewards since last months report. We are still at 119 families pledging \$125,065 for 2019. This represents a net gain of 5 stewards and \$5,365 over last years results. Outstanding pledge amounts yet to be received total \$33,293. We are grateful for your prompt donations and thank all who have already paid their pledge in full and those who are staying current with their pledge donations. Your contributions are vital to the operations of our church. The semi-annual donation statements are ready to be mailed out to all stewards. You can expect to receive them during the first week of September. Please review your statements and notify the office if you see any errors so that we can make any corrections needed. Thank you for your support!

GREEK FESTIVAL



September is traditionally the month in which we begin preparations for our annual Greek Festival. Our 2020 St. George Greek Festival will be held on the weekend of February 22-23.

There are at least three ways to help toward the success of our Festival for 2020:

1. Participate in the monthly planning meetings and volunteer to help in the preparations leading up to the dates of the Festival, as well as helping on the weekend of the Festival.
2. Sponsoring the cost of various Festival items and areas of need.
3. Publicizing the Festival event on Facebook; promoting and selling ads for the Festival program booklet, as well as circulating Festival fliers.

Join us for our first Festival meeting, which will be held on **Monday, September 9th at 7:00 p.m.** at our parish hall.

WE WANT TO INSTALL SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS

Given the "atmosphere" of our society, we want to join other parishes in the effort to maintain the safety of our parishioners and our parish property.

The cost for installing surveillance cameras on our property is about \$800. We are looking for donations toward this effort in order to defray the cost.

Anyone who wants to donate for the installation of our parish surveillance cameras may contribute any amount toward this end. Make out your check to "St. George Greek Orthodox Church," and post in the memo section: Surveillance Cameras.

We are grateful in advance for the support of our parishioners in this effort.

ARCHDIOCESE – YOUTH AND CHILDREN SAFETY PROCEDURES

NOTE TO PARENTS: Sunday School begins this month...**Please do not drop off your child for Church Services or for Sunday School without also attending Church Services yourselves.** It is expected that you are available to monitor your children's activities while they are in our parish facilities so that you can be present with them if there is any personal need. **It is expected that, when Sunday School classes are dismissed and the coffee hour concludes, your children will be taken home by you, the parents.** We cannot arrange for "after hours" custody of your children.

In addition, for times when your child or children need to use restroom facilities, we ask that you accompany them. **For parents "going solo" and who have a child of the opposite sex, we invite you to accompany your child to the "single-use" ("unisex") bathroom at the end of the hall leading to the choir room.** Also, children are to be accompanied by parents for their play time in the courtyard.

Your child's safety and the safety of the other children are of critical, life-saving importance to them and to all of us who care for them. Please cooperate!

OUR YOUTH MINISTERS --As the new Ecclesiastical Year begin, we want to express our gratitude to God for the help that is offered by our parish youth:

ALTAR: Altar Boys-Steve Banki, Jr. (son of Steve and Nelly Banki), Makar Morrison, (son of Olga Prykhodzka), Richard, Nicholas, Theophilos and Christopher Torres (sons of Richard & Alexandra Torres and great-grandchildren of Fr. Theophilos).

USHERING: Eleni Castrale (daughter of Craig and Nicole Castrale), Melina Hawkins (daughter of Stephen and Melissa Hawkins).

CHOIR: Children are invited to sing with the choir on Sundays. Contact Annette Laskaris, our choir director.

STREET LIFE PROJECT

Approximately 200 meals were prepared by the Ladies of our Philoptochos for distribution to the homeless on August 27, 2019 (in Indio) and August 29, 2019 (in Palm Springs). Along with food, our St. George parish helped to distribute clothing, shoes and blankets to the homeless. Since January 2019, our St. George outreach team has fed nearly **1,000 homeless** (915 to be exact)!



STREET LIFE PROJECT — St. George volunteers helped distribute meals to the homeless in Indio on Tuesday, August 27th: (Left to right)-Pres. Petula Pantels, Margarita Pagoulatos, Debbie Pausen, Rhonda Latkovic, and the members of the Street Life Project Team.

ALTAR FLOWERS

The 2019 thru 2020 **Altar Flower Program** will **commence in October**, and will continue through May, of 2020. We pray that you will continue to support our program as you have so diligently done through the years. Posting of the Altar Flower Schedules will begin soon, whereby you may select your desired dates(s) for important and special times regarding you and your family such as: anniversaries, birthdays, name days, graduations, and memorials, or whatever is near and dear to your heart(s).

Please begin to concentrate on exactly what dates are special to you, and sign up as soon as the sign-up sheets are available, and are posted on the Bulletin Board in the Parish Hall.

More reminders to come!

Thank you, and may God truly bless you,
— LOUISE DOBBS BARRINGER,
Altar Flower Coordinator

GREEK SCHOOL /GREEK DANCE GROUP

Greek School classes are being offered this year for both children and adults with the participation and inspiration of **Margarita Pagoulatos** and **Irene Stambolas**, who are willing to share their teaching skills with our parish. Those who are interested in signing up their children, of themselves, please contact our parish office at (760) 568-9901 or (760) 880-5869 to register and for more details, or email: pdsaintgeorge@gmail.com.

In addition, lessons in Greek Folk Dance are also being offered this year. As with Greek School classes, please contact our parish office via the telephone numbers and email address listed above. Classes are to be organized for instructions to begin in October.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday School begins on Sunday, September 22, 2019. Registration packets have been sent out to the homes of our students. (Registration packets are also available at our parish office.)

Students are strongly encouraged to bring their parents to church at 9:30 a.m, with the beginning of the Divine Liturgy.

Sunday School classes are held on Sundays following Holy Communion and continue until 11:30 a.m. Parents are asked to wait for the children to be dismissed. This will allow teachers ample class time for their lessons. Parents are asked to help their children throughout each week at home with follow-up Sunday School class work.

We are also adding new Sunday School supplies for this year. Those who want to help in providing these supplies can contribute to our Sunday School fund by contacting our Sunday School administrator, **Jim Christopoulos**. A list of such supplies is included as follows:

- Crayola Crayons, 24 in a box (Boxes)
- Crayola Twistable crayons, 24 in a package(s)
- Colored pencils, boxes
- Washable markers, packages
- Watercolor paint sets

Continued on the next page ----->

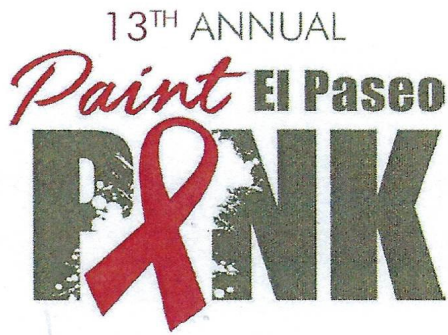
SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPPLIES NEEDED, Continued

- Student scissors (blunt and regular)
- Glue sticks
- Elmer's Glue, individual
- Scotch tape
- 2 staplers, staples
- 2 staple removers
- Bulletin board push pins

- Bulletin board borders and letters
- Command strips for posters
- Expo Dry Erase Markers and Erasers
- Colored construction paper; heavy weight, various colors and sizes (12x18 and 24x18)
- Copy paper, 8.5x11, Ream 500
- File folders, 200
- File hanging folders, 100
- Clorox disinfecting wipes

SEPTEMBER 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1-Ecclesiastical New Year	2 LABOR DAY	3 Bible Study-10:00 a.m.	4 AHEPA Meeting-6:30 pm	5 Choir Practice-1:00 pm	6	7
8-Nativity of the Holy Theotokos & Sunday Before the Exaltation of the Holy Cross	9 - Philoptochos Board Mtg-11:30 am. Festival Meeting-7:00 pm.	10 Bible Study-10:00 a.m.	11	12 Choir Practice-1:00 pm Parish Council-2:00 pm.	13 Great Vespers-	14 EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS Orthros-8:30 a.m. D. Liturgy-9:30 a.m. (Strict Fasting Day)
15-Sunday After the Exaltation of the Holy Cross	16 Philoptochos General Meeting-11:30 am	17 Bible Study-10:00 a.m.	18	19-Choir <u>Practice-1:00 pm</u> Philoptochos Movie Themed Afternoon 2:30 p.m.	20	21
22- 1st Sunday of St. Luke Sunday School Begins!	23	24 Bible Study-10:00 a.m.	25	26 ST. JOHN THE THEOLOGIAN Orthros-8:30 a.m D.Liturgy-9:30am Choir Practice-1:00 pm	27	28
29-2nd Sunday of St. Luke	30					



SIGN UP FORM

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12 • 2019

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

First Name:

Last Name:

Street Address:

City: State: Zip:

Sex: M F

Phone:

E-mail:

Team Name: **SAINT GEORGE**

I am raising pledges. My goal is:

I am a breast cancer survivor.

PARTICIPATION TYPE (Per Entry)

Early Registration Fee \$25 - by October 10
(includes T-shirt) \$

On-Site Registration Fee \$30 - after October 10
(includes T-shirt) \$

I'd like to buy an additional T-shirt \$25 each \$

I'd like to make a donation \$

TOTAL AMOUNT \$

T-Shirt Size: (Select size for each registered participant.)

S M L XL XXL XXXL

PAYMENT INFORMATION

Cash Credit Card Check
(Make check payable to Desert Cancer Foundation.)

Select One: Amex Visa MasterCard Discover

Credit Card Number:

Expiration Date: / /

For registrations with credit card authorization,
fax to: Desert Cancer Foundation at 760-773-6532.

Mail your completed registration form and payment to:
Desert Cancer Foundation
74091 Larrea St.
Palm Desert, CA 92260.

Signature: _____

Parent/guardian signature if participant under age 18

WAIVER AND RELEASE

I know that the 13th Annual Paint El Paseo Pink event on Saturday, October 12, 2019, is a potentially hazardous activity and I hereby assume full and complete responsibility for any injury or accident which may occur during my participation in this event or while on the premises of this event, and I hereby release and hold harmless and covenant not to file suit against Desert Cancer Foundation, the City of Palm Desert, its officers, officials, agents, employees and volunteers, any Walk sponsors and their agents and employees, and all other persons or entities associated with this event (the Releasees) from any loss, liability or claims I may have arising out of my participation in this event, including personal injury or damage suffered by me or others, whether same be caused by falls, contact with participants, conditions of the course, negligence of the Releasees or otherwise. Participant shall cause all walkers participating in Promotion to hold harmless and release Owner and Taubman Company LLC as Managing Agent from any and all claims and liability growing or arising out of the Promotion or their presence at the Center in connection with the Promotion. I hereby grant permission to Desert Cancer Foundation and its authorized agents to use my name, photographs, videotapes, motion pictures in connection with this event, including recording any other record of my participation in this event for any purpose.



STEP UP FOR CANCER AWARENESS!

Saint George Memorial Wall - PHASE 2

RE: Memorial Wall & Garden Name Plaque

INSTRUCTIONS:

This form is to be used when making a Saint George Memorial Wall & Garden donation in honor of a deceased family member. For a donation of \$225.00, the name of the person 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 person's first & last name only and mounted on the Memorial Wall & Garden bronze wall. (25 letters maximum).

MEMORIAL DONATION IS MADE IN THE NAME OF: (Print name(s) as you want on the plaque-25 letters maximum)

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:(OVER)

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**