

JUNE 2020



Voice of St. George

**SAINT GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
OF THE DESERT**

74-109 LARREA ST., PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA



Inside this issue

THE BAPTISMAL NAME

Sunday, June 14th this year, is **All-Saints** Sunday. On this Sunday, We commemorate all the Saints, especially the Saints that are known only to Christ our God, whose sainthood is beyond human knowledge. Though they are unknown to us, Christ *knows their names*.

There are two New Testament figures that stand out in my mind who are nameless: the thief on the cross and the rich man who neglected the poor man Lazarus. They were nameless, because their way of life was not to be remembered by God (or by anyone), as they would inspire only a sinful mentality. The difference is this: the thief on the cross was nameless, due to his sins, but, at the last minute, he repented and he is *remembered* in our Savior's Everlasting Kingdom. The rich man of our Lord's Parable "The Rich Man and Lazarus" never

repented and remains *forgotten and nameless*.

Our name does two things: 1) it gives us our identity as individuals so that others can relate to us. This is a gift of God's love. Innate within our souls is the need and desire to relate with one another by name so that personal love can be conveyed, and, 2) our name helps in describing our purpose in life -- i.e., to emulate our Patron Saint.

Names had meaning according to the Bible. The name "John" was given to the Baptist (although he would have been named to identify with his father, Zacharias, God wanted the name "John," which means "God is gracious," according to many Hebrew understandings. Accordingly, "Peter" means "Rock," as it was given to him by our Lord to instruct us that St. Peter's confession that Christ is the Son of the Living, True

God, is the "rock of our Faith." Finally, for our purposes, "Adam" means "earth," and "Eve" means "breath of life." (Check it out on Google.)

In God's infinite love, He allows us to call Him by Name: *Jesus Christ*. Our Lord identified Himself with those around Him by listening to their words and He identified them by speaking His words to each of them. Human beings are given a name as a token of Divine Love and as a means to impart God's Love to others, and it is God's love that gives life.

For Orthodox Christians especially, *meaningful* life begins with Holy Baptism, at which time, those who are baptized are given their "baptismal name." Our "baptismal name" is one that we are called to live up to in terms of following the example of the Saint after whom we are named, or

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Note: Please read carefully the section, "Church & Wellness" regarding procedures and protocols for in-person church attendance.

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after an aspect of Christ's earthly ministry (ex.: Theophania, Anastasis, etc.). Our baptismal name indicates to ourselves and others our personal identification with Christ and/or our Patron Saint. We are to "take on" the virtues of the Saints whose names we bear following our Baptism. Ultimately, like the Saints themselves, we "take on" for ourselves all the virtues that lead to salvation which are given by Christ our God.

Our name is meant to connect us with Christ, Who knows us by name. As God allows us to know Him *by name*, God knows each of us *by name*, unless we choose to be apart from God, in which case, our name is no longer remembered -- we live in the land of the forgotten, like the rich man spoken of earlier. To the extent that we forget the Name of our God, Jesus Christ, we are in danger of being forgotten. I suggest this is one of the biggest reasons for avoiding the sin of using the Name of God in vain.

Our Lord knows our *personhood* as unique individuals from the moment of our conception. As Almighty God is *Person*, we, too, are created to be *persons*. As God allows us to know Him *by name*, God knows and remembers each of us *by name*.

+FR. THEODORE

**SUNDAY OF THE HOLY FATHERS:
HOMILY OF HIS EMINENCE,
ARCHBISHOP ELPIDOPHOROS**



Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Today we find ourselves in between two great centers of our Faith, Jerusalem and Nicaea. Jerusalem, because following the Ascension of Lord, we are waiting with the Disciples in the Jerusalem of the heart, awaiting the promise of the Father, until we are clothed with power from on high.

And we look to Nicaea, the See of the First Ecumenical Council and indeed the Seventh Ecumenical Council. But today belongs to the 318 Fathers of the First Council, the Synod that gave unto us the Creed, the Symbol of our Faith.

Like the 318 kinsman of the Prophet Abraham who fought with him to free his nephew, Lot, the 318 Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council fought to liberate our Faith from the errors that denied the truth of the Holy Trinity.

Today, in our celebration of the Feasts, we stand between these two great Cities of God: Jerusalem and Nicaea. They point to one another in a loving exchange of faith and hope.

Jerusalem has a special significance, for it is the place - the Τόπος of Pilgrimage. It is the place where the experience of the Lord Jesus Christ's ministry, and the miracles of His Cross, Resurrection, and visible Ascension into Heaven were self-evident to His Disciples. They were αὐτόπται, the eyewitnesses of the Word, as well as His servants. The realities of the Gospel that they experienced and lived were enshrined in their living memory, and we are the inheritors of this memory, not only through the Scripture, but through the ἄγραφα - the unwritten tradition of the Church.

But this precious memory of the Eyewitnesses of the Lord was not always kept pure and unalloyed. As the generations marched on, there emerged those who challenged the Church's experience of Christ. The Beloved Disciple John says of such as these: "*They went forth from us, but they were not of us; for if they were of us, they would have abided with us, but [they went forth] in order to show that all of them were not of us.*"

Even at this very early stage of the Church's development in history, before the passing of the last Apostle, it is very clear that there were those who emerged from the Church with alternative doctrines that were adopted by many. But these doctrines were not based in the experience of our Lord Jesus Christ; only in conceptions and speculation about Him. They were not based in the message that the Father gave to His Son, which He then gave to His Disciples. This direct and inspired teaching to the Disciples forms the basis for the realization of the truth of who our Lord

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ARCHBISHOP'S SERMON, *Continued*

Jesus Christ really is, and all pure belief derives from this experiential realization.

That is why what commenced in Jerusalem did not stop there.

The Lord said about His Disciples: *"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you, and you shall be witnesses to Me both in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."* This was to be the Day of Pentecost, that is coming to us next Sunday. And from that first Pentecost to the present day, the Church has preserved the pure Faith of Christ intact.

That is why we celebrate the great city of Nicaea on this Sunday. Nearly three-hundred years after the Descent of the Holy Spirit on that first Pentecost Sunday, that same power of the Holy Spirit was manifest at the First Ecumenical Council. The Fathers of the Church, convened by Saint Constantine himself in Nicaea, came together to confirm the Church's experience of the Living God, which is the same as the experience of the Disciples who were the eyewitnesses of the Lord.

Therefore, my beloved Christians, let us rejoice and be glad in the blessed 318 Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council, who codified the Symbol of our Faith - later augmented at the Second Ecumenical Council in Constantinople. At every Divine Liturgy we affirm our faith in Christ, the faith of the Church when we say: *"Πιστεύω - I believe!"*

Through the past few months, this affirmation has been tested, but like gold from the furnace, we will come out of this pandemic with a more refined and pure understanding, based more on a living experience than habit.

Through the prayers of the 318 Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea, may we always hold to the true faith that shone forth from Jerusalem, and may we share this faith to uttermost part of the earth. Amen.

SPIRITUAL THOUGHTS

by
Deacon Euthym

"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner. One may pray standing, sitting or lying. Those who are strong in health and physique pray standing and sitting. The weak can pray even lying, because in this prayer it is not the effort of the body that is paramount, but the effort of the spirit. The body should be given a position that allows the spirit full freedom to act properly." St. Ignatius (Brianchaninov)

One of the obstacles to prayer is that we often feel we have to do it perfectly. St Ignatius reminds us that the physical method of personal prayer is irrelevant, it is the effort of the spirit that counts. When we pray freely, when our minds and hearts are not distracted, focused on God only, we can ascend spiritually in prayer and encounter our Creator fully. In today's Gospel Christ reveals His divinity. In our prayers we fully encounter God, uniting ourselves with the divine. What greater goal can there be in life? Let us no longer look at prayer as an obligation or a burden, rather as a door to the greatest encounter we can ever have. Many seek peak experience climbing mountains, imagining going into space, competing athletically, learning difficult subjects, creating...but there is nothing greater than uniting ourselves with the living God.

"If you do not have the strength to engage in long prayers, then raise up your heart to God in short sighs of prayer." Metropolitan Gregory (Postnikov) of St. Petersburg

I love this reminder to pray no matter the degree. Literally, a brief sigh directed at God can work wonders, miracles and can be life changing. As the father of the epileptic son said to Jesus...**"I believe, help my unbelief"**. We all are ridden with doubt and insecurity especially over that which we cannot see...the spiritual realm, the future, the thoughts of others...these obsessions are mind numbing and soul numbing. We cannot experience the spiritual realm with worldly senses. We

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SPIRITUAL THOUGHTS, Continued

cannot know the future or control it. Finally we are not privy to the motive or thoughts of others. We should be completely detached from the opinions of others, the thoughts of others or the judgements of others. It is God we should be concerned about at all times and in every hour. This allows us to love others without attachment or strings. It allows us to experience today and give no worry about tomorrow. Finally it gives us the peace from above that is transcendent. Let us practice reaching out to God, even with a short meaningful sigh if that is all we can muster, so that He can hear our pleas and direct us in His ways.

"There is nothing better than peace in Christ, for it brings victory over all the evil spirits on earth and in the air. When peace dwells in a man's heart it enables him to contemplate the grace of the Holy Spirit from within. He who dwells in peace collects spiritual gifts as it were with a scoop, and he sheds the light of knowledge on others. All our thoughts, all our desires, all our efforts, and all our actions should make us say constantly with the Church: "O Lord, give us peace!" When a man lives in peace, God reveals mysteries to him.."- St. Seraphim of Sarov

Who doesn't want peace? Ultimately all of us in one way or another. But not all seek the peace that come from Christ. We want temporary peace which requires little effort and gives us quick comfort. Whether it is through worldly comforts, music, nature, drugs, mediums, sports, food, entertainment...well you get the idea, we seek peace but do not discern the peace in Christ from the temporary peace of this world. The devil can't wait for us to be comforted by worldly means, so that we put off or even ignore the spiritual permanent peace that comes from Christ. We must be careful that our peace is authentic and comes from our relationship with Jesus Christ. This allows us to open our hearts to the grace of the Holy Spirit which, according to St Seraphim, opens us to collect spiritual gifts ("as if we had a scoop"). These gifts allow us to

relate to others authentically without pretense and offer them the same peace. Pray for peace...As we say as the first petitions to God in the Liturgy, "In peace let us pray to the Lord" and "For the peace from above, and the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord." The peace from God opens the door for all other spiritual achievements and settles our souls so we can know God's will. Let us take the advice of St. Seraphim and seek it and avoid cheap substitutes. Finally the hallmark of peace in Christ is humility.

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

It has been a great joy for us to reconnect with our children these past few Sundays on our ZOOM meetings. We really miss our students, families and parishioners as active participants in the spiritual, liturgical and social life at our parish. At the same time, God's love is manifested in our continued efforts of personal prayer and in the moments that we communicate on "Zoom!" God is always with us!

As part of our curriculum this year our students and their families participated as a group in our Sunday School Lesson focused on the Sacrament of Holy Confession with Fr Ted and Deacon Euthym. Fr. Ted discussed "Children & Holy Confession at Sunday's ZOOM meeting on **MAY 31st, 2020 from 11:00- 11:30 am.**

The Sunday School year ends on **Sunday, June 7th** (Pentecost). We thank God for the inspiring and dedicated efforts of our Sunday School staff (Jim Christopoulos, Athena Snarskis, Melissa Hawkins, and Deacon Euthym) and the parents of our Sunday School students.

STS. PETER & PAUL: GREATEST OF THE APOSTLE MARTYRS

It's noteworthy that the martyrdoms of Sts. **Peter and Paul** are commemorated together on **June 29th** every year, while the martyrdoms of **all the Apostles collectively** are commemorated the very next day, on **June 30th**. It would seem that even the Emperor Nero considered Peter and

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SAINTS PETER & PAUL, *Continued*

Paul to be the chief among the Apostles, since it is not too illogical to think that, by killing both of them almost in a single stroke, he could completely snuff out the Gospel message. His hatred of Christianity was made most manifest when he martyred St. Photini (the Samaritan Woman) in a cruel manner after she converted his own daughter, Domnina, to Christ.

The personalities of Sts. Peter and Paul illustrate the Orthodox Christian maxim: *"Unity in Diversity."* St. Peter is a totally different type of person than St. Paul. Yet, they were united in faith and love for Christ.

As for their differences, St. Peter was a simple fisherman; St. Paul was a well-educated expert in the Law. St. Peter seemed to focus his ministry to the Jewish People, while St. Paul became known as the "Apostle to the Gentiles." A Gentile was one who was not of Jewish ancestry, and, therefore not among the Chosen People. Gentiles were idol worshipers, such as the Greeks and Romans who worshiped "humanistic" gods like Zeus, Apollo, Jupiter, etc. St. Peter's efforts turned toward the Gentiles only after he was inspired to minister to the Roman Centurion Cornelius. (Acts 10: 1-22). Characteristic of the difference between Sts. Peter and Paul is their approach to preaching the Gospel: St. Peter stressed how Christ is the fulfillment of Prophecy, because his audience was mostly of Jewish citizens who were aware of the Prophets. St. Paul stressed that Christ is the Only True God, the "Unknown God" of the Greek. Finally, St. Peter is known for the miracles that Christ performed through him.

Both St. Peter and St. Paul are known for their sins. St. Peter denied Christ three times; St. Paul persecuted Christians and was an accomplice at the martyrdom of St. Stephen. Both received forgiveness for their sins – St. Peter from his in-person confession of love for Christ; St. Paul from a blinding heavenly vision. Both were manifestly guided by the Holy Spirit in tangible ways. Indeed, both were passionate in their love for Christ and in their preaching for God's glory.

Peter and Paul are different, but similar in many ways. At the same time, issues of what Christians can and cannot do were settled in a Council of the Apostles, which is recounted in Acts 11. This Council concluded by saying, *"Then, God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to Life."* (Acts 11:18).

As united as were Sts. Peter and Paul in their ministry for Christ, all the Apostles were united, and soon the Christian Church became ever more the Church of the Gentiles. Truly, we see that Peter and Paul were leaders of the same Church – the Apostolic Church.

Sts. Peter and Paul were united in martyrdom. Paul found Peter preaching the Gospel in Rome after finding himself in Rome as an escape from the Jewish population that turned against him. Both Peter and Paul fell victim to the first great persecution of Christians, which took place under Nero. They were both martyred in Rome. St. Peter became known as the first bishop of Rome. St. Paul became one of the most prominent authors of New Testament Scriptures.

Sts. Peter and Paul were both Apostles and martyrs of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. They are known as the Chief Leaders of the Apostles. Let us consider Sts. Peter and Paul to be our leaders and great preachers, as well – MATTHEW DAVIS

PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS



The highlight of Philoptochos philanthropy efforts in May was the food drive for Coachella Valley residents suffering from hunger, known as the *"Critical Food Drive."*

We thank God for the various Philoptochos members and St. George parishioners for supporting this most important *"Critical Food Drive."* **Our food drive was very successful. Around 10 parishioners donated food or checks. Total pounds of food donated were 480 lbs. Wow! Thank you for your support for this worthy project.** Given the increased need, we should consider repeating the food drive during

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PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS, Continued

the month of June. Starting this now as our parishioners return for church services, will aid in getting more participation.

See the June 2020 edition of *Philo-Strong* – the monthly Philoptochos newsletter for our parish, with the monthly *The Voice of St. George*.

Although regular Philoptochos meetings normally are not held through the summer months, our Chapter will continue philanthropic works on local, Metropolis and National levels.

It is reported that the National Philoptochos Convention will be held in a “Zoom” format this summer. More details are to be given soon.



Philoptochos “Critical Food Drive,” June 1, 2020: Sorting out food donations for the poor are (left-right): Margarita Pagoulatos, Rhonda Latkovic and Nick Latkovic.

AHEPA NEWS

Congratulations to the recipients of this year’s **AHEPA 528 Fr. T. P. Theophilos Memorial Scholarship** awards:

Eve Kolytiris received the **St. George Award**, in the amount of **\$1,000**; **Cani Karalis** received the **George Tcharos Educational Award**, in the amount of **\$750**; **Symeon Seraphim** received the **Pericles Educational Award** in the amount of **\$500**; **Zoe Kolytiris** received the **Penelope Educational Award** in the amount of **\$500**. Many blessings to the recipients of this year’s **AHEPA 528 Fr. T. P. Theophilos Memorial Scholarship Awards**.



Please see the special insert in this **June 2020 Voice of St. George**, praising the fine college students from our St. George community who received the awards from this year’s Fr. T. P. Theophilos Memorial Scholarship. In addition, everyone is asked to support as best as they can the **AHEPA 528 Fr. T. P. Theophilos Memorial Scholarship Fund**. Go to www.ahepa528.org.

This year the annual AHEPA 528 Memorial service was held following the Divine Liturgy, which was live-streamed. This year’s Memorial service, included the names of our Chapter 528 brothers for whom we pray for Eternal Life: **Fr. T. P. Theophilos, Steve Geotas, Stan Georgalakis, Steve N. Pinanos, George Tcharos, Robert Maverick, Thomas Evans, and J.J. Richards**. May their memories be eternal!

AHEPA meetings will resume in September. However, everyone is encouraged to continue supporting the many local, district and national charitable causes which are described on both our local Chapter AHEPA 528 website: www.ahepa525.org, or the national website: www.ahepa.org.

CHURCH & WELLNESS

Dear Reverend Fathers and Deacons:...

As we move along the process toward the opening of our Churches, the Metropolis has provided you and your Parish Leadership with the “Readiness Guide” to prepare your Churches to re-engage your faithful. The Guide is also on our Covid-19 resource page.

Please be reminded that you and your Parish Council President must affirm that your parish is in all respects ready to welcome the limited number of Faithful into your church. All necessary mask, hand sanitizers and other items must be on hand not ordered for a future date. The form is to be submitted to your Vicar who will submit it to me.

His Eminence appointed a Liturgical Committee to review the celebration of sacraments in light of the reopening of our parishes. It has gone

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CHURCH & WELLNESS, Continued

through a review process which included the Vicars and His Eminence.

With respect to the celebrations of **Baptisms and Weddings, they are to be postponed** until the full reopening of the Churches and customary joyful receptions may be held. In the event that a Baptism or Wedding cannot be postponed, the Priest must communicate the reasons for the sacrament and receive approval from the Metropolitan through the Chancellor. These sacraments will have limitations reflective of current health department and Metropolis directives.

In the Risen Lord,
+THE VERY REV. ARCHIMANDRITE,
JOHN E. CONSTANTINE,
Acting Chancellor, Metropolis of San Francisco
.....

**PARISH GUIDELINES UPON RE-ASSEMBLY
FOR PUBLIC WORSHIP**

Welcome back to worship in our beautiful St. George church. As you attend there will be some changes that we have to observe due to the Covid-19 guides issued by our Metropolis, State and local authorities. We are doing everything in our power to make you feel safe while attending services. If there is anything we can do better, we are always open to suggestions. Here are some things that will be different and ask your cooperation with these changes as we gather in our beautiful church.

1. We ask that if you are feeling ill for any reason not to attend services and please refrain from hugging, kissing, or handshaking as we greet one another. This is for everyone's safety, hopefully in the not so distant future, this will change.
2. There will be only 1 way into the church and out of the church which will be the front entrance. The parking lot will be open, but the back gates will remain locked. We encourage our younger parishioners to park in the back lot and our senior parishioners to use the lot

to the west of the church and street parking on Sundays for a shorter walk. *Please park your cars with social distancing in mind.*

3. At the front entrance before entering church (The Narthex) we will have hand sanitizer that will need to be used and masks will need to be worn prior to entering. We will also be recording the names of all who attend and some questions will be asked regarding your health. We are doing this for your safety and guidelines that we must follow.
4. Upon entering the Narthex, please maintain Social Distancing guidelines 6 feet apart.
5. There will be no candles and no kissing of icons. Just bow to pay respect .
6. We will enter the church through the side doors once in church. Seating will be limited to 25% of our capacity which is 33-45 people. Ushers will seat you in pews that are not roped off. There is blue tape on front of pew to guide you to where you should sit. Some pews will accommodate 3, others 2 or 1. Families will be allowed to sit together.
7. Once the Liturgy starts we encourage all to remain in till the end. If you have to leave to go to the restroom, please respect any one's space that you might have to go by and maintain 6 feet of space for Social Distancing. We encourage 1-2 persons at a time in the restrooms maintaining Social distancing guidelines, which is 6 feet.
8. For Holy Communion please follow the direction of the ushers and maintain 6 feet of Social Distancing. We have the floors marked to help.
9. Once the Liturgy ends, we will not be passing a tray but will have a couple trays in Narthex for your use.
10. Dismissal will be towards the side aisles, and then down the center and out the front of the church. Please do not gather in the narthex or go into the hall unless needing to use the

Continued on the next page ----->

CHURCH & WELLNESS, Continued

restrooms. There will be no coffee hour.

11. The church will always be cleaned and disinfected prior to all services.

PROTOCOLS FOR RETURN TO WORSHIP

1. Due to limitations for total occupancy on the basis of social distancing, we need to maintain 25% of our church capacity which amounts to 33-45 parishioners for capacity.

RESERVATIONS: Therefore, we will be making phone calls to take reservations. Once we reach our limit of 33-45 people, we will stop taking reservations for that Sunday. If we need another Liturgy during the week, we will again start taking reservations by making phone calls from where we left off. Phone calls will be made on a quasi-alphabetical order, taking into consideration family attendance, while also providing "fair-treatment" to individuals. This will give an opportunity to all who want to attend Liturgy. If you weren't called, please do not show up thinking that we will let you in. Only those on the list will be able to attend. Also, you need to familiarize yourself with the Guidelines and Protocols and adhere to them.

2. Be on time! In order to protect those who have entered the church for Divine Liturgy from visitors, or any other non-parish individuals, the doors will be closed at the start of the Divine Liturgy (9:30 a.m.). Those who come late may have to wait until the next Divine Liturgy is scheduled in order to attend that Sacrament. Church doors will be managed only by Parish Council members and/or ushers.

3. It is important to follow the guidelines given by our Parish Council members and ushers. Anyone who does not follow the directions of the Parish Council members and ushers jeopardizes church access to everyone else.

4. As you approach the entrance of the church, you may indicate to the persons at the table, or Presvytera Pantels, how many candles you want

lit and the names of persons you want prayers for to be read in the Altar.

5. Church offerings for candles and/or stewardship are to be given in the form of a check if you are able to, which will be placed in a box at the entrance of the church.

6. Congregational singing is fully encouraged, since there will be no choir.

7. Please follow the ushering directions for receiving Holy Communion. These directions will be explained just prior to the exclamation: *"With the fear of God; with faith and with love, draw near."*

8. Antidoron (bread) will be available only at the end of the Divine Liturgy and distributed by Fr. Ted.

9. All requests for Holy Water; Holy Unction and/or Holy Confession can only be granted by way of making a personal appointment with Fr. Ted -- (760) 880-5869.

10. If you feel unable to attend the Divine Liturgy, we understand your concern and respect them. However, keep in contact with Fr. Ted or Deacon Euthym. It is important that we keep you in our prayers whenever we celebrate the Divine Liturgy.

11. By accepting your invitation to attend church services, you are acknowledging you have read and understand the Guidelines and Protocols and will abide by them. Thank you.

CYSTIC FIBROSIS FOUNDATION

Cystic Fibrosis is a life-threatening disorder that damages the lungs and digestive system. It is a condition whereby the cells that produce mucus, sweat and digestive juices are adversely affected. As a result, passageways needed for us to be able to breath and digest food become increasingly more damaged over time, resulting in death.

A dear parishioner of our St. George parish recently died from Cystic Fibrosis. **Her name is Anastasia Rellos, the daughter of Maria and Bill Rellos.** She carried within her the peace and
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CYSTIC FIBROSIS FOUNDATION, Continued

divine love of our Savior, always radiating love. Certainly, her faith and love gave inspiration to her parents, who have committed themselves to the work of our Church. As many may know, Maria and Bill donate the produce that is needed for our annual Greek Festival to be a success.

We have the opportunity to offer our love to Maria and Bill, providing for them spiritual and emotional support as they honor their daughter Anastasia by supporting the efforts to find increasingly better treatments for patients suffering from Cystic Fibrosis and, eventually finding a

cure.

A donation of any amount in memory of Anastasia Rellos to the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation of the San Diego Chapter will be a great blessing. The contact information for offering such a donation is as follows:

The Cystic Fibrosis foundation

of the San Diego chapter:

Michelle Gilmore

858-452-2873

Email address is:

Mgilmore@cff.org

Mariarellos@yahoo.com

Billrellos@hotmail.com

PARISH CALENDAR FOR: JUNE 2020

In accordance with CDC guidelines, we have sent our official "Welcome Back To Worship at our St. George Church" letter to all parishioners, stating the guidelines to be followed by each parishioner for participating in our Holy worship services. (See the "Church & Wellness" Section of our *Voice*). We encourage each one to "police themselves" so that we can maintain our status to remain open for all other parishioners throughout this stage of development in managing the current Covid-19 crisis.

Sunday, June 7th....PENTECOST SUNDAY

Orthros-8:30a.m./ Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m./ Kneeling Service to follow.

Monday, June 8th...THE FEAST OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (No Liturgy. Sanitization of the church from Sunday's worship is needed)

Sunday, June 14th...ALL-SAINTS SUNDAY

Orthros-8:30 a.m./ Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.

Sunday, June 21st....2nd SUNDAY OF ST. MATTHEW

Orthros-8:30 a.m./ Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.

Sunday, June 28th...3rd SUNDAY OF ST. MATTHEW

Orthros-8:30 a.m./ Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.

Monday, June 29th...STS. PETER & PAUL (No Liturgy. Sanitization of the church from Sunday's worship is needed)

Tuesday, June 30th...THE SYNAXIS OF THE HOLY APOSTLES

Orthros-8:30 a.m. / Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.

SCHEDULING OF MID-WEEK SERVICES: Throughout June 2020, celebrations of the Divine Liturgy may be scheduled for the middle of the week in order to accommodate parishioners who could not attend the previous Sunday Liturgy. Any mid-week Divine Liturgies scheduled are only for those who could not attend a Sunday Service due to social distancing requirements. Mid-week Liturgies will be scheduled week-to-week and announced in *The Ladder*. As is the case for Sunday worship, the same applies for any mid-week services: *The names of attendees must appear on the parish "List of Attendees" before entering the church.* See the section entitled, "Church and Wellness." Only those who have been contacted through Presvytera Petula Pantels or Athena Snarskis are added to this "List of Attendees." No one is entitled to take it upon themselves independently to invite or encourage others to attend.

PHILO STRONG

Saint George Ladies Philoptochos June Newsletter

No Zoom General Members Meetings for June, July, & August!

Philoptochos General Meeting schedule will resume in September :

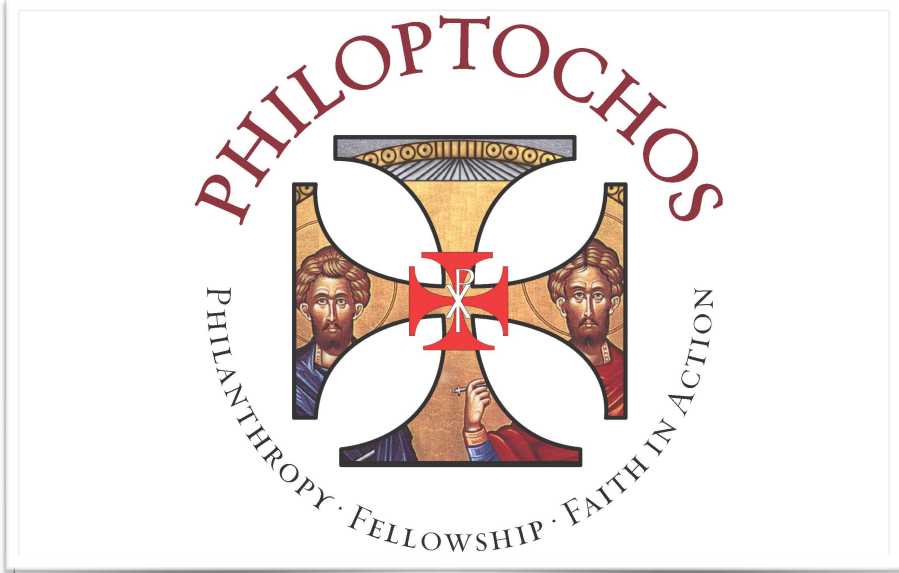
Monday, September 21st, 2020

at 11:30 AM

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This is the third installment of our "Philo Strong" newsletter. We will be temporarily stopping publication during the summer months and will resume in August/September.

Wishing everyone a great summer vacation!



Practicing Patience

By Rev. Father Nicholas Mueller, Ass't Priest, Oakland, CA

We're all waiting. We're waiting for this threat to pass. As Orthodox Christians we know that all the trials of life are under God's care - - and that there is a purpose behind our endurance in trials. As Saint Paul writes to the Corinthians, **"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 made visible in our bodies."** (II Corinthians 4:8-10) Our endurance bears witness to our neighbors, our coworkers, our friends, and our enemies about the Truth of our Faith. Our faith is made complete by our endurance. (James 1:4; James 2:14) Yes throughout our lives, perhaps more particularly now, we find ourselves contending with the disquiet within us. Perhaps we are



THANK YOU. They are two words that have the power to make a difference.

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Calling all Philoptochos stewards and friends of Philoptochos across the nation! Gratitude is the simplest, most powerful way to acknowledge another person’s value and humanity. Take the time to write thank you notes to “heroes”; healthcare personnel, grocery staff, building managers, and delivery workers.

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Please Pray for the following Philoptochos and Saint George Members.

For Health, Healing & Salvation:

Eve Meek; Spiro Canakis; the family of Vera Hellman (sister of Tim & Nadia Hector).

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(Practicing Patience Cont. from Page 1)

asking ourselves, like the Psalmist, **“Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me?”** (Psalm 42:11)

The disquiet that many of us are experiencing now may be because, for the first time, we are experiencing quiet. Our schedules have been quieted, the streets are a little less busy, and work, activities, school are all less pressing. We aren’t doing the things we did, including those things which often contribute to our sense of identity. We often introduce ourselves through our profession or by what we do so that we can be known, and because our professions or vocations often determine the terms of how we relate to those around us. Our success and proficiency in these fields not only reinforce our self-conception, but give us a sense of self-worth. But what we do in our daily routines can also distract us from aspects of ourselves that require attention. As the busyness of our daily lives decrease, we are being invited to remember ourselves, and how we relate to Christ.

In this process of recovering a memory of who we are underneath our professions and activities, patience is important. As the Catholic theologian Henri Nouwen writes, *“The word patience means the willingness to stay where we are and live the situation out to the full in the belief that something hidden there will manifest itself to us.”*

This is the invitation of this time: to understand what is manifested in this disquiet and to come to a better understanding of one another as family members, coworkers, and communities and set ourselves to a more firm and urgent purpose in life. *“This lesson of patience is not something God does to torture us, but is something He does to bring us back into line with our humanity.”* (Fr. Stephen Freeman, “The Slow Work of Grace”.)

Although we may not know the timeline, we know that this period and the threat of pandemic will pass. In the meantime, let us make the most of the time we have been given, however challenging it may be, to joyfully examine our hearts and our lives. If we do so honestly and courageously we will push forward on our journey towards completion in Christ.



Meet Melissa Hawkins, Our April Philoptochos Zoom Meeting Special Guest Presenter ! She is a Philoptochos member of our Saint George chapter. Melissa has a B.S in Child Development with a minor in Psychology; an M.S in Counseling with a Specialization in Marriage and Family Therapy and is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. She currently is employed at the Betty Ford Center.

Melissa spoke to our group about managing mental health, anxiety, and depression during the shelter in place directions due to the Coronavirus pandemic. The following is a summary of her presentation.

1. Avoid Excessive Watching of the News

a. Try to limit how much news you are watching and your exposure time to social media. Although it is important to be informed as to what is happening in our community, sometimes too much exposure to news reports either on the television or social media can increase one's anxiety and or depression,

2. Complete Gratitude Exercises

a. Gratitude has been shown to improve physical and psychological health.

b. Increase mental strength and resiliency.

c. Reduce aggression and increase empathy.

d. Complete a gratitude journal- Everyday write down 3-5 things you are grateful for to help you focus on the positive aspects of your life and what you appreciate about your life.

e. Make a gratitude jar- Everyday write down 3-5 things on small strips of paper and put in an empty jar and then on days where you feel more anxious or depressed, take the slips of paper out of the jar and read them to help you focus on the positive things in your life.

f. Complete a gratitude letter/text/email/phone call- Reach out to someone you are grateful for and let them know that you appreciate them. This can help you focus on the positive aspects of your life and decrease any negative feelings you may be experiencing.

3. Practice Grounding

a. When feeling anxious, sit in a comfortable position with both feet flat on the floor and arms and hands rested at your side and activate your 5 senses. Notice what you hear, taste, smell and see. You can also practice tension and release exercises for example, where you tense up your

(Melissa Cont. from Page 3)

hands and hold the tension for 5-10 seconds and then release. In times of feeling anxious, activating your senses, practicing grounding and engaging in the physical activity of activating and releasing tension can help refocus your mind in that moment, away from the anxiety you are feeling.

4. Establish a Routine to Your Day and Maintain it as Much as Possible

- a. Get up at the same time everyday and go to sleep at the same time as much as possible.
- b. Get dressed and maintain your personal self-care. This is very important in managing feelings of depression specifically.
- c. Try to establish a routine for your day that you follow to try and have some structure to your day. This can help with feelings of productivity which can help manage feelings of depression specifically.

5. Practice Meditation

a. To help manage both anxiety and depression, take some time to sit quietly, close your eyes and engage in deep breathing and develop a mantra that you can repeat to yourself that promotes kindness and compassion toward yourself and others. For example, the mantra might be “May I be healthy, May I be strong, May I be at peace” and try repeating this three times either out loud or in your mind. It can also be helpful to play some relaxing music in the background while you meditate to help your mind and body relax as well. If possible, I recommend listening to music that is either instrumental and or incorporates nature sounds to help create a more relaxing environment for your meditation practice. If able, try to practice the meditation exercise for at least 2 minutes.

6. For additional mental health support, access local counseling resources

- a. All Desert Wellness Centers
 - i. alldesertwellness.org
 - ii. (760) 797-5151
- b. Desert Marriage and Family Counseling
 - i. desertmarriagefamily.com
 - ii. (760) 777-7720

***Please note that mental health counseling services are also available through the National Philoptochos Society. Contact Rhonda Latkovic or visit the National Philoptochos website.**

National Philoptochos Responds to the COVID-19 Crisis

In addition to \$50,000 donated to **Feeding America** and **Meals on Wheels America** a COVID-19 Drive was established to provide funding for social service requests resulting from the economic crisis. The drive has received overwhelming support from Philoptochos metropolises, chapters, and stewards. To date \$93,515 has been contributed to the drive. One-third of these funds reflect convention sponsorship, which the sponsors quickly agreed to transfer to the COVID-19 Emergency Drive. Thanks go to Arlene Siavelis Kehl, Chair of the 2020 Convention Sponsorship Committee, for contacting the sponsors and securing the transfer of these funds.

National Philoptochos Director of Social Services, Paulette Geanacopoulos immediately streamlined the social services application to facilitate a faster approval of requests. Mental health resources were posted on the website to provide support and assistance for individuals struggling with anxiety. A plea went out over all Philoptochos platforms to support the drive in order to enable Philoptochos to assist Orthodox individuals and families financially impacted by the crisis.

Our chapter informed our members of this assistance in our April and May newsletters. Referrals for either financial or mental health assistance will be kept strictly confidential. If you are in need of assistance, please contact Frt. Ted Pantels or Chapter President Rhonda Latkovic. ***You're not alone!***

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As we near the month of June, COVID-19 regulations are being lifted by the state, county, and local authorities. Our church will be reopening soon, with some restrictions in place to protect our members. We ask that all adhere to these new rules for the health and well-being of all our Saint George brothers and sisters in Christ.

2020 Philoptochos Membership List

(updated May 26, 2020)

Thank you for supporting our philanthropy and outreach to those in need. Additional members, including associate and junior, are always welcome! New Memorial Memberships now available. (see page 7)

Becky Allen	Melissa Hawkins	Presvytera Petula Pantels
Nick Andros (Assoc.)	Bess Heinrich	Father Ted Pantels (Assoc.)
Stacy Argyros	Ken Hoffman (Assoc.)	Linda Petalas
Terry Ayanopolis	Linda Kallis	Olympia Pilafidis
Kay Bell	Penny Karagianis	Debbie Pousen
Ann Boukidis-Michas	Mary Ellen Kassotakis	Anna Prineas
Linda Bozigian	Eva Kripner	Jeannie Ranglas
Nancy Breighner	Christine Kundanis	Victoria Reed
Paulette Carkonen	Annette Laskaris	Tasia Richards
Nicole Castrale	Elaine Latkovic	Bernice Shaheen
Eleni Castrale (Junior)	Pauline Latkovic	Athena Snarskis
Penny Chiotis	Nick Latkovic (Assoc.)	Carol Speliopoulos
Susan Clark	Rhonda Latkovic	Irene Stambolos
Pat Dalkas	Mary Lee	Ginnie Stocker
Josie Desjoyners	Gloria Lehman	Mary Tatomir
Ann Dixson	Annette Lewis	Emily Tcharos
Louise Dobbs-Barringer	Debbie Loukatos	Tina Veroulis
Alexandra Dymond	Carol Lyons	Angie Wysup
Joan Fakinos	Bess Manesis	Kalitsa Xitco
Adele Gallade	Tomasine Maverick	Diane Young
Athena Harrigan	Eve Meek	Nelly Zambrano
Eleni Hawkins Junior	Margarita Pagoulatos	Gabriella Zaharia
Melina Hawkins (Junior)		Pam Zaverdas

PHILOPTOCHOS MEANS "LOVE FOR THE POOR"



**St. George Greek Orthodox Church
Philoptochos**

MEMBERSHIP FORM



2020 Philoptochos Membership
(\$45 minimum) *incl. men or children



2020 Memorial Membership
(\$30 minimum)

FULL NAME:

Last First M.I.

ADDRESS:

Street Address Apartment / Unit #

City State Zip

HOME PHONE:

CELL PHONE: _____

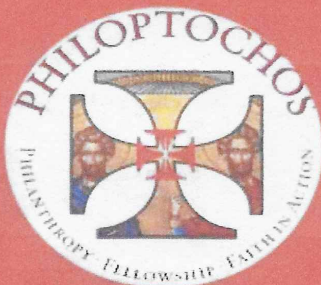
EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

✓ St. George Philoptochos Membership Donation. Select Amount below:
_____ \$15.00 _____ \$30.00 _____ \$50.00 _____ \$70.00 _____ other \$ _____

✓ National \$15.00 & Metropolis \$15 Per Capita Required \$ 30.00

2020 TOTAL STEWARDSHIP \$ _____

2020 PHILOPTOCHOS MEMBERSHIP DRIVE




Your continued generosity allows Philoptochos to provide financial assistance and outreach to those in need. We invite you to **renew your membership** or **become a new member** as we endeavor to do our philanthropic work. Join us as we strive to fulfill the words of Christ:

**"...whatever you did for one of these, the least of my brethren, you did for me."
~ Matthew 25:30**

The first **\$30.00** of your stewardship is sent to our National and Metropolis Philoptochos to support regional, national and international philanthropy. **THANK YOU!**

AHEPA SUNDAY CHAPTER 528



2020

Founded December 17, 2003

Christ is Risen! Χριστὸς Ἀνέστη!

AHEPA was founded on July 26, 1922 in response to the evils of bigotry and racism that emerged in early 20th century American society. It also helped Greek immigrants assimilate into society.

Today, AHEPA brings the ideals of ancient Greece, which includes philanthropy, education, civic responsibility, and family and individual excellence to the community.

Although a majority of the membership is composed of Americans of Greek descent, application for membership is open to anyone who believes in the mission of the organization.

We would like to continue our support by making a pledge to continue expanding our membership and to make a positive witness to our community.

AHEPA continues to monitor COVID-19 developments with concern and out of an abundance of caution for the community. The health, well-being, and safety of the community is our top priority.

AHEPA Chapter 528 will be holding ZOOM meeting June 10th, 2020.


Email or call if you wish to join in on the fellowship

ahepa528.org

Chapter 528 President Wynn Storton PSG

760.832.2825 / Wynn@ahepa528.org

Announcing the 2020 Fr. Theophilos Memorial Scholarship finalists:



Eve Kolytiris (age 18) a graduating Senior at Rancho Mirage High School. Eve is an exemplary, high achieving student who has been accepted to the University of San Diego and will begin in the Fall. Eve is majoring in Real Estate and Environmental Studies and plans for a career in Real Estate Development, focusing on sustainability. She is graduating with a long list of accomplishments including: a 4.3 GPA, Distinguished Scholar Honor Roll (all 4 Years), Principal's Honor Roll (all 4 Years), Athletic Scholar, and CIF Tennis Champion. In addition, to her academic commitment Eve has demonstrated incredible skills as a star Varsity tennis player, on the Rancho Mirage High School Varsity tennis team. Eve also serves as Parliamentarian on the Rancho Mirage High School Associated Student Body and as the Chair to the RMHS Culture & Diversity club.

Eve has participated in Musical Theatre University for the last four years, singing, dancing, and performing in several major musicals. Additionally, Eve gives back to our desert community, serving in the National Charity League, working as a Ball Kid to the Tennis Professionals for the annual BNP Open Tennis Tournament, and volunteering at Eisenhower Medical Center's ER, coordinating a program to provide toys for the pediatric patients, and has delivered over a 1000 toys in total.

We are proud to present Eve Kolytiris with the St George Award, in the amount of \$1000.00.

Cani Karalis (age 20), is no stranger to the AHEPA scholarships program. Cani has earned several awards over the last 4 years including the AHEPA District 20, AHEPA National Award, The AHEPA Daughters of Penelope Scholarship, and the AHEPA Journey to Greece including a study abroad attending the Webster University in Athens. Most notably, Cani received a top scholarship from the Pan-Hellenic Scholarship Organization, in Chicago last year.



Cani is a Junior, with Senior standing at the University California at Santa Barbara pursuing a (BA) bachelor's degree in Classics, with an emphasis in Greek and Roman Culture.

Additionally, Constantina is planning graduate studies, to obtain a Master's in Education and a California Teaching Credential. Her goal is to become a Middle School History teacher and she plans to return here to teach, in her adopted hometown of Palm Desert.

Constantina's work ethic and dedication to her studies has continued to be extraordinary, with 2 years on the UCSB College of Letters and Science, Dean's Honor List. Constantina serves as a student spokesperson for the Classics Dept at UCSB and she recently furthered her studies, in Rome, Italy. Constantina is also involved in the UCSB Classic club on campus, and between her studies and her love of dance and is involved in the SBK Latin Dance club and the SBK Performing Latin dance team, on campus.

We are proud to present Constantina Kolytiris with the George Tcharos Educational Award, in the amount of \$750.00 towards completing her studies.

Symeon Seraphim (age 17) along with his parents moved here from Cyrus two years ago. They have become active members of the St George family and his father has many years of AHEPA membership spanning decades. Symeon attends Palm Springs High School and will be graduating with Honors, as a recipient of the Principal's Honor List each semester. Symeon has impressively completed 4 years of California High School requirements, in only 2 years. Symeon will be attending Cal State University San Bernardino, pursuing a bachelor's degree in Music Performance. Although he was offered full scholarships to attend The University of Portland and the University of Redlands, he is choosing to attend CAL State San Bernardino to continue his studies under Ms. Esther Cho, professor of Music and director of the CSUSB ensemble. Symeon has future plans, to pursue a career as a World Class Cello, soloist.



Symeon excels in musical talent of the highest caliber and has been performing with the Cal State San Bernardino Cello Ensemble in addition to his responsibilities as an active member of both the Palm Springs High School Orchestra and the Orchestra String Quartet. Symeon is now an Assistant Principal Cellist at CSUSB and next summer, he is scheduled to perform at the prestigious, Carnegie Hall in New York City.

We are proud to present Symeon Seraphim, the Pericles Educational award, in the amount of \$500.00.

Zoe Kolytiris 18) is a lifelong member of the St George Family. She will be graduating from Rancho Mirage High School and attending the Point Loma Nazarene University in San Diego, to pursue a bachelor's degree in Business and Communications, with future career goals in Real Estate entrepreneurship.



Zoe has been an exceptional student balancing her studies, athletic pursuits, extracurricular activities, and a talent for Journalism. Zoe serves as the Palm Springs High School Journalism Assistant Editor, and recently received the Journalism II award.

In addition to her dedication to her studies, Zoe is the Captain of Rancho Mirage High School Varsity Tennis Team. She has earned the Captains and Coaches Awards, her Junior and Senior year. Zoe has been an active member of the Musical Theatre University, singing and dancing in several productions each year. Zoe excels in citizenship, community service, and philanthropy and has volunteered her hours with the prestigious National Charity League for four years serving in the leadership position of Historian.

We are proud to present Zoe Kolytiris, the Penelope Educational award, in the amount of \$500.00

Please help our students receive educational support.
Fr. Theophilos Theophilos Memorial Scholarship Fund
Donations accepted at
www.ahepa528.org
or mailed to: **AHEPA 528 Scholarship fund**