

MAY 2020



Voice of St. George

SAINT GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
OF THE DESERT

74-109 LARREA ST., PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA



Inside this issue

“WHILE HE WAS BLESSING THEM...”

In his book, *The Twelve Major Feasts of Christ: Introduction to the Twelve Major Feasts and Orthodox Christology*, Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos draws us to a significant detail pertaining to the event of Christ's Ascension into Heaven.

The **Ascension of Christ** is celebrated in the Orthodox Church forty days after Easter (Pascha) every year. This year, **the Ascension falls on Thursday, May 28th.**

In the Gospel of St. Luke, we read the following: *“And He [Jesus] led them out as far as Bethany and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. Now, it came to pass, while He was blessing them, that He was parted from them and was carried up into Heaven. And they worshiped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy and were continually in the Temple praising and blessing God. Amen.”* (St. Luke 24: 50-52).

The theologians of the *Orthodox Study Bible* explain the significance of our Lord's Ascension: *“In the mystery of the Ascension, Christ brings human nature to the divine Kingdom. He reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit in His glorified body, revealing His glorified human nature -- indeed, human flesh -- to be worshiped by the whole angelic realm.”* With this understanding, the Church strongly discourages practice of desecrating the human body and the practice of cremation.

The blessing given by our Savior in His Resurrected Body carries divine energy to our frail bodies even now. While He healed souls and bodies through His physical presence in this world, He continues to touch our flesh and bones in the here and now and grants healing of soul and body through the Sacrament of Holy Communion - His very Body and Blood.

The power of God's blessing is foretold in the Old Testament. In Genesis (1: 28), when God created Adam and Eve, He blessed them. God then gave authority to the descendants of Adam and Eve to bless others: Isaac blessed Jacob and Jacob blessed Ephraim. Elijah gave his blessing to Elisha, as he was carried into Heaven on a fiery chariot. Isaac, Jacob, Elijah were given by God the authority to bless, meaning that their blessing imparted the Grace of God to those who were so blessed. To this day, then, the priest blesses the faithful and parents bless their children with prayer and faith in our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Being God Himself, Christ's blessing is not limited to life in this present world. With His Ascension into Heaven, the blessing that Christ gives carries power into life beyond this world and into

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-Stewardship;
-“Zoom” Coffee Hour

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eternity. This blessing is still being imparted by Christ our God as the Holy Spirit descends upon the Holy Sacraments when the priest makes the Sign of the Cross over the Sacramental elements of the bread and the wine (for Holy Communion); the water (for Baptism), the oil (for Unction), and the various other physical vessels which are to carry with them the energy of the Holy Spirit.

Metropolitan Hierotheos notes the significance of the words recorded in St. Luke's Gospel: "*While He was blessing them...*" (In Greek: "*en to eologheen Afton aftous...*" «εν τω ευλογειν Αυτου αυτους...» [24: 50]). Metropolitan Hierotheos observes that, blessing *as He ascends*, means that Christ will always continue to bless people with the energy of His divine love. The purpose of our Savior's blessing is to impart wisdom and strength so that we can observe His Commandments to love God and to love our neighbor. The act of blessing His Apostles as He ascends into Heaven, "*means that Christ, will always be with us, Himself giving the assurance of His words, 'Behold! I am with you always, even to the end of the age.'*" (pg. 316). Indeed, love never ends, as St. Paul eloquently has stated (1 Corinthians 13: 8).

The presence of Christ, imparted by His blessing upon those who follow Him, is a reality even today as we face the challenges of our modern world -- and, in particular, the present coronavirus, and any future crisis that may come upon us. Let us remain steadfast in our faith in Christ our God, Arisen from the dead.

+FR. THEODORE

PASCHAL ENCYCLICAL FROM HIS EMINENCE, ARCHBISHOP ELPIDOPHOROS



My Beloved Christians,

Νῦν πάντα πεπληρωται φωτός... Now all things are filled with light... (Paschal Canon, Ode 2)

In this time of darkness: through the most difficult Lent in memory, through a radical reduction of our lives and livelihood, through the threat of sickness on an unprecedented scale, and through the grievous loss of family, friends, and neighbors taken from us too soon, we have finally arrived at the dawn.

Like the Myrrh-Bearing Women, going to the Tomb λίαν πρωι, ὀρθρου βαθείος - "very early in the morning, in the deep of the dawn" - we are yet in the depths of a darkness from which we pray to be delivered. But we hold fast to the promise of this night:

Καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει, καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν.

And the light shines on in the darkness, never overcome by the darkness. (John 1:5)

Indeed, and in very truth, "Now all things are filled with light!" The Light of Christ, Who is Himself the Light of the world, can never be extinguished. It chases away the shadow of even the darkest soul, and it burns most brightly in the human heart, which with every beat sings praises to the Lord of Glory.

He fills the world with His Light, enlightening our souls through love, forgiveness, compassion and mercy. And if this year we cannot pass that light from candle to candle, we can still pass that same light from heart to heart. The holiest fire that burns without destroying is love, for our God is a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:29). Indeed, God loved the world so intensely that there was no suffering that He would not embrace in order to enfold us in His love. On His Precious and Life-Giving Cross, He showed us with one word

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ENCYCLICAL, ARCHBISHOP ELPIDOPHOROS,
Continued

that His Passover, His Pascha from death to life, would be the fulfillment for us all: Τετέλεστα! "It is accomplished!"

But now Christ is risen from the dead! Νῦν δὲ Χριστὸς ἐγήγερται ἐκ νεκρῶν! (I Cor. 15:20) He is the first-fruits of them that slept in death, and as Lord of both the living and the dead, He is the promise, the "Amen," of our future life in eternity.

Therefore, my beloved brothers and sisters, let us rejoice in the light of the Resurrection that shines across the Heavens, around the globe, and in our hearts. This dawn knows no horizon line; it shines even in the depths of hades.

Embrace the light with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. Share it with everyone in gratitude and gentleness. Recognize its power to transform you and transfigure the world. And know, by faith, that the shadows we experience today are fleeting, cast by the Light Who is come upon us to dispel every darkness, and to raise us up with Him to everlasting light and life!

Χριστὸς Ἀνέστη! Ἀληθῶς Ἀνέστη! Christ is Risen!
Truly He is Risen!

++ARCHBISHOP ELPIDOPHOROS,
Archbishop of America

**METROPOLIS CLERGY
MEETING REPORT**



The clergy of our Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco met with **His Eminence, Metropolitan Gerasimos** by way of a "Zoom Meeting" on **Friday, April 24th**. From this meeting, the following statement is given:

The Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of America will convene in a "Zoom Meeting" format in order to draft an **official statement** from the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops with regard to "opening our parishes." That statement may be forthcoming in a week or two. All Orthodox Christian clergy want to reo-

pen our churches/parishes, but it is decided that we need to make sure it's done with consistency, with the proper safety components and with the blessing of the Bishops of all Orthodox Christian Jurisdictions in America as One Church united.

CONCERNS OVER "LIVE-STREAMING" - Concerns were raised regarding the "habit-forming" possibilities of live-streaming Church Services - the "habit" being that of people becoming comfortable in *not* actually traveling to our parish church edifices in order to physically *participate* in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and the other important Church Services. The idea that *watching* the *performance* of Church Services online is "good enough" in terms of expressing and living the Orthodox Church is not consistent with Orthodox Holy Tradition and Spiritual Life. It was noted that His Eminence, Archbishop Elpidophoros is considering asking parishes to stop live-streaming services for about 2-3 months following the coronavirus crisis so that people will get back in the habit of physically participating in the Orthodox Christian life of worship.

CARES ACT & ST. GEORGE PARISH-All clergy are asked to follow up with their parish treasurers in the process of applying for the financial aid that is offered to small businesses and religious bodies by the Federal Government through the CARES Act. St. George is currently in the process of securing this financial aid through our bank, Wells Fargo. Unfortunately, many banks, including our bank, were not immediately up-to-date at the time when our initial request for this aid was made. However, the process is now moving forward.

STEWARDSHIP & THE CORONAVIRUS - Clergy were advised to work with parish Stewardship chairpersons and webmasters in order to install "PayPal" on their parish websites. This has been done. Currently, Stewardship donations, as well other financial gifts can be given through the "PayPal" button at our parish website: www.go-stgeorge.org.

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METROPOLIS CLERGY REPORT

“LIGHT A CANDLE”- The Metropolis Finance Committee encouraged the clergy to institute a “Light-the-Candle” prompt on our parish websites. With this, people can offer to the parishes a donation, asking their parish priest to light a candle for them when celebrating the Divine Church Services. Along with the donation and the lit candle the priest is to remember the names of parishioner families and loved ones in prayers for the health of the living and/or for the Eternal Rest of the departed.

PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS



PHILOSTRONG is the title of the new St. George Philoptochos monthly newsletter that is distributed to our chapter members. Here are highlights from *PhiloStrong's* very first edition issued for April 2020:

National Philoptochos COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE FUND DRIVE – All donations made through the Philoptochos national website; the Philoptochos Emergency Fund, or through the Philoptochos Facebook Fundraiser will be restricted to the COVID-19 Fund until further notice. Contributions can be sent to the local Philoptochos Chapter, or mailed to the National Office, 126 East 37th Street, New York, NY 10016.

MOVE FROM CRISIS TO CHRIST-LIKENESS What To Do During A Time Of Uncertainty:

BE HOPEFUL-Take time to assess what you know to be true and don't fantasize about what may or may not happen in the future.

REMEMBER GOD'S LOVE - God's unfailing, unconditional love endures forever and will sustain us regardless of what may be happening in the world.

BE PATIENT- Don't react to the uncertainties of the situation but act with compassion, kindness, and patience as a situation develops.

STAY CONNECTED - If you can't visit, take time to call your loved ones and neighbors to check on them and show you care for them.

PRAY - Seek out God through prayer and trust in His sovereignty. Pray for one another because Jesus Christ commanded us to do so. By praying for other we are imitating Christ.

HELP - When possible, help someone in need. Consider picking up groceries for a shut-in or making food for a family in need.

The May 2020 PhiloStrong newsletter is now being sent out in one single mailing to all St. George parishioners. The future editions of *PhiloStrong* will also be included in the monthly mailing of *The Voice of St. George*.

On **Tuesday, April 28th**, the **Philoptochos General Meeting** took place in a “Zoom” setting. The 2020 Philoptochos budget was passed and a most informative presentation was given by **Melissa Hawkins**, a counselor at the Betty Ford Center in Rancho Mirage. She spoke on issues associated with depression and isolation that is now commonly experienced during this coronavirus crisis.

All meetings in May will take place in the “Zoom” format. The next **Philoptochos General Meeting** will take place on **May 18th, also at 11:30 a.m. “Zoom” ID and Password** information is included the **May 2020 PhiloStrong** newsletter as part of this over-all mailing.

SUNDAY “ZOOM” COFFEE HOUR

Join us on Sundays for our “Sunday ‘Zoom’ Coffee Hour,” which is scheduled for every Sunday from 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. To join in, go to the following URL search: <https://zoom.us/join>.

See *the enclosed flier: “St. George Ladies Philoptochos Virtual Coffee Hour on Zoom”* for ID and Password numbers and please feel free to contact our parish office at (760) 568-9901 to ask for assistance in navigating the internet feature of Zoom.

HOLY WEEK 2020 AT ST. GEORGE

St. George parishioners followed Holy Week Services this year in a way that would never have been imagined in anyone's wildest dreams. Riverside County issued a strict "stay-at-home" order, outlawing any assembly of persons outside of one's home. Our St. George church was empty of faithful throughout Holy Week, including Pascha. Guardedly, permission was given to live-stream Church services with only the priest and up to two people of the same family to assist.



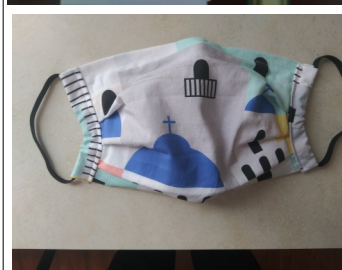
Holy Monday. The empty St. George church preparing for the Nymphios Service. The sunlight gracing the Icon of the Panagia behind the Altar, adds spiritual comfort to our tough worldly trials.



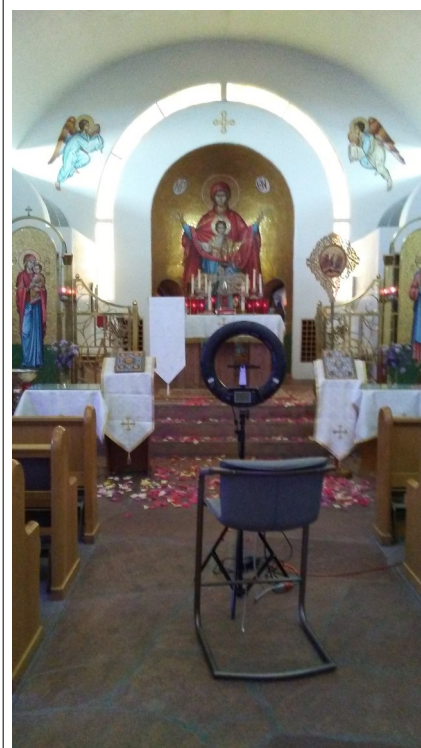
Holy Friday. The normally decorated Epitaphio, graced with an abundance of God's most beautiful flowers, was bare of such grace this year. Instead, the outpouring of "Kali Anastasi" via phone and emails, decorated our souls with expressions of love and prayer. Pictured here is the Epitaphio following the "Holy Friday Night Procession Around the Church" (only this year, the procession took place with the cloth Epitaphio Icon carried by Fr. Ted around the inside of the church). The few flowers at the top of the Epitaphio were picked from our parish courtyard.



Fr. Ted, Deacon Euthym, Presvytera and Deaconess Krisann sent out Paschal Greeting Cards to parishioners. Inside the Card, depicting the Icon of the Resurrection, were a letter expressing their collective well-wishes and "card-stock antitypes" of the Palm Sunday palm cross and an Epitaphio flower for each home. Following the Divine Liturgy on Holy Thursday, these "antitypes" were blessed with a special prayer for St. George parishioners.



We thank God for the efforts of Athena Snarskis for sewing coronavirus face masks for our parishioners in need. Pictured is the mask being worn by Fr. Ted, with the image of the church dome and cross. Athena is still sewing coronavirus masks given freely and with love to those in need.



Great and Holy Pascha and the Agape Services. The Holy Saturday Liturgy featured the gracing of the church with flowers, signifying the glory of Christ's Resurrection, with the hymn "Arise O God and judge the earth..." The Anastasi was live-streamed, with the assistance of Rhonda Latkovic, who posted the event on Facebook and Wynn Storton, who connected the Facebook feed with our parish website. Pictured is the camera apparatus for providing the live-stream telecasts for parishioners to follow along with our Church Services.

SPIRITUAL THOUGHTS

by
Deacon Euthym

"Yesterday I was crucified with Him; today I am glorified with Him. Yesterday I died with Him; today I am made alive with Him. Yesterday I was buried with Him; today I am raised up with Him. Let us offer to Him Who suffered and rose again for us...ourselves, the possession most precious to God and most proper. Let us become like Christ, since Christ became like us. Let us become Divine for His sake, since for us He became Man. He assumed the worse that He might give us the better. He became poor that, by His poverty, we might become rich. He accepted the form of a servant that we might win back our freedom. He came down that we might be lifted up. He was tempted that, through Him, we might conquer. He was dishonored that He might glorify us. He died that He might save us. He ascended that He might draw to Himself us, who were thrown down through the fall of sin. Let us give all, offer all, to Him Who gave Himself a Ransom and Reconciliation for us. We needed an Incarnate God, a God put to death, that we might live. We were put to death together with Him that we might be cleansed. We rose again with Him because we were put to death with Him. We were glorified with Him because we rose again with Him. A few drops of Blood recreate the whole of creation!" – **St. Gregory the Theologian, Easter Orations**

"No one should justify his irascibility by an ailment -- it comes from pride. 'The wrath of man,' according to the Apostle, 'Worketh not the righteousness of God.' (James 1:20)" – **Saint Ambrose of Optina**

We want our anger to be the result of past trauma, from illness, from some "ailment," but, according to St. Ambrose, it stems from the sin of pride. In the Presanctified Divine Liturgy and the Holy Tuesday Night's Bridegroom Service, we contrast the attitude of the Harlot who anointed Jesus' feet with that of Judas, His betrayer through one of the entrance hymns...*"Oh, the wretchedness of Judas! He watched as the harlot was kissing Your feet, all the while thinking about the kiss of betrayal. As she untied her braided hair, he was knotted up in anger, brining rancid wickedness instead of fragrant oil. For envy does not know where there is profit. Oh, the wretchedness of Judas! From*

this deliver our souls, O God!"

Pride results in the "tangling up in knots" of our soul with anger at every slight, every perceived injustice, actually everything that doesn't go our way...why? Because we have made ourselves our own "god." The Harlot recognizing her sinfulness, boldly kisses the feet of the Redeemer, metaphorically loosening the knotted hair of her soul (Confession) and kissing the feet of Jesus (Worship). Judas, who witnessed all the miracles and teachings of Christ, thought that Christ would come as a King and Judas would rule with Him. Instead, Christ came as a Suffering Servant out of love for all of us, our Soul-Saver, in humility. This is not what Judas had in mind for himself and he became angry and envious, upset even at the "waste" of expensive ointment, ignoring love, mercy, and forgiveness -- and he sought to improve his station through money and alignment with those (the Pharisees and leaders of Israelites) who had the same goal: ruling others on earth. His kiss in the Garden of Gethsemane began by *worshiping* himself over God...pride. Let us surgically remove this devastating sin which leads to many others: anger, envy, cruelty, dishonesty, lust and gluttony. Let us cut it out through honest confession and repentance and put Christ at the head of our existence. Let us get rid of worldly "mirrors" and look for our "image" in Christ Himself.

Christ is Risen! The crux of the Resurrection of Christ is His love for us...The motive of love, which comes from God, is a desire for the salvation of the other person...This love can be tough to handle; it does not always feel good; there is sacrifice involved and pain in a sense...

Discernment and judgment are two different things. Discernment is carefully choosing how to manifest our love for one another in the way that best helps them come closer to God. Judgment is condemnation and puts the one who judges on a "higher" ground than the one who is judged, leading to pride. Let us love in a way that leads others to God.

THE CHURCH AND WELLNESS

In the face of the current pandemic of the coronavirus, a common question that arises in conversations is: What does this illness mean? Is it punishment from God? For one thing, as Orthodox Christians, we know that God has no essential need to punish us or to *avenge* Himself. The “punishment” that we often feel is from the fact that we fall away from God, Who has created all things to be *good*. The tendency to go against God and His love took its beginning from Adam and Eve. Going against God is the cause of evil, which corrupts the goodness of God’s world. Hence, by sin death came into the world. In this, we speak of the collective sins of humanity, in general. Yet, we must repent of our personal sins by which we neglect the care of our souls and bodies.

Our Lord does not interfere with our Free Will. If we choose to find life with Christ our God, we will find salvation. This choice must be made every minute of every day through unceasing prayer asking for the wisdom of the Holy Spirit in the Name of our Savior Arisen from the dead.

Having said this, I believe it is valuable to share with you the thoughts of a contemporary Orthodox Christian theologian, **Jean-Claude Larchet**, which were first shared with all of us at our recent Metropolis of San Francisco Clergy Meeting (April 24th):

“St. Ephrem of Katounakis, referring to St. John Chrysostom said, ‘People in the world who do not have the possibility of going to church either on Saturday or Sunday can, at that time, make their souls an altar by saying the [Jesus Prayer], while making great prostrations. Patriarch Paul of Serbia, who did prostrations every day [while repeating the Jesus Prayer] until he was 91 years old, said, with the strength of his medical studies and his good health, that they were the best gymnastics people can do to stay in shape...”*

That Christ died for us, it is to overcome death and to allow us, at the end of time to rise again as He did Himself. But, His passion and agony on the Cross also

have another meaning, which we do not emphasize enough: by suffering and dying, He has abolished the power of suffering and death; He has granted us, if we unite ourselves to Him and thus receive the grace He has acquired for us, to no longer fear suffering and to improve ourselves spiritually through it, and to no longer fear death, but to put our hope in Eternal Life, so that we can say with St. Paul, ‘O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? (1 Corinthians 15:55).’ ...

*Our duty is to pray to God to stop this epidemic. But, for this to happen, everyone would have to turn to Him and ask Him for it. Otherwise, out of respect for their free choices, He will not impose His omnipotence on those who do not want to acknowledge Him and ask for His help. This is the reason why divine action has not manifested itself to stop the great epidemics of the past...[Also], Christ Himself did not perform collective healings, but always individual healings, and always, it must be emphasized, in connection with a spiritual goal and concomitant spiritual action (the forgiveness of sins) related to a person’s life and destiny. This gives me the opportunity to recall that, just as sickness can be spiritually turned to our advantage, the health preserved or regained is useless if we do not make good use of it. Likewise, one of the questions posed to us by the current epidemic is: **what have we done so far with our health, and what will we do with it if we survive?...**It is important to pray for ourselves, in order to obtain protection and healing, but also for our loved ones, and, more broadly, for all people, as do all the Saints who pray for the whole world, because, in their person, they feel solidarity with all...*

Every prayer is good, because it brings us closer to God and to our neighbor. One can address Christ, the Mother of God, and all the Saints, because, as St. Paisios the Athonite told me, ‘Every Saint can cure all illnesses and the Saints were not jealous of each other.’”

(Excerpts taken from “The Spiritual Origin, Nature and Meaning of the Current Pandemic: An Interview with Jean-Claude Larchet” by Jivko Panev, posted on April 8, 2020).

+FR. THEODORE

**The “Jesus Prayer” is: “O Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon me.”*

AHEPA NEWS



AHEPA Sunday will be observed on **Sunday, May 17, 2020**, at which time recipients of the **Fr. T. P. Theophilos Memorial Scholarship** awards will be announced. Due to the present situation brought upon us by the coronavirus, the announcement of Scholarship awards will be made following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy when it is live-streamed on May 17th and the awards themselves will be issued through the U.S. mail. **Donations to the AHEPA 528 Fr. T. P. Theophilos Memorial Scholarship Fund** are *always* needed and appreciated. To donate go to: www.ahepa528.org.

The following AHEPA Family events will be rescheduled (TBA) or have been cancelled due to the coronavirus outbreak:

- AHEPA Family District 20 Summer Conference
- AHEPA Family Western Regional Convention (June 18-20, 2020)
- National AHEPA Family Convention (July 19-26, 2020).

The National, Regional, District and local chapters are working to connect with AHEPA's regions and districts around the world to gain an understanding of the challenges communities and individuals are facing so we can serve them in the most effective manner possible. On a national scale, the AHEPA Family is working to help members of the greater Greek community procure financial aid through the Payroll Protection Program and other sources.

The May 2020 AHEPA 528 Chapter meeting will be announced in the up-coming issues of *The Ladder*. Of course, the meeting will take place in the "Zoom" format. ID and Password numbers will be listed.

ECUMENICAL COUNCILS & THE UNITY OF ORTHODOXY THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

From Apostolic times, the Church has always been, and will continue to be, the One Church throughout every part of the world at all times and for all people. The local parish is simply one small, but important, part of the One, Holy, Uni-

versal and Apostolic Church. Hence, Orthodox rituals, teachings and over-all individual parish life has always been, and will continue to be, *connected* to and *united* with the "world-wide" Orthodox Christian Church. No parish or individual is "an island unto itself."

This is made clear from the history, purposes and proclamations of the Ecumenical Councils of the Orthodox Church.

The Church often used the Sundays just prior to major feasts as a "stop-point" to make major proclamations concerning correct dogmas and teachings, as well as to issue Holy Canons ("Stated Norms" of proper Orthodox Christian worship and way of life). We can find spiritual strength during this time of coronavirus stress to learn more about the nature of our Orthodox teachings and beliefs. Especially now, just prior to the great feast of Pentecost, we can appreciate the efforts of the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council at Nicaea. We have the opportunity, as we approach Holy Pentecost (Sunday, June 7th this year), to honor them on Sunday, May 31st.

The First Council at Nicaea was convened by the Emperor Constantine to resolve doubts about the Person of Christ, the Only-Begotten Son of God. It was affirmed that the Son is equal to the Father and that the Father and the Son are equal in sanctity. Later, the Second Council at Constantinople proclaimed that the Holy Spirit is also equal to the Father and the Son -- One God in Three Persons.

The other Ecumenical Councils were convened by Roman/Byzantine Emperors in which proclamations were issued, asserting that Christ is Perfect Man and Perfect God. In all of these Councils, the Patriarchates of the Orthodox Church throughout the world were represented and united, participating equally. It is worth noting that the Patriarch of Rome (the "Pope") was also an equal player in all of this, actually playing a dominant role in the Restoration of the Holy Icons at the Seventh Ecumenical Council in 787 A.D.

--MATTHEW DAVIS



OUR GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE ANNOUNCES COVID-19 RELIEF PROGRAM

The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America announces the creation of the "Greek Orthodox Archdiocese COVID-19 Relief Fund" as an important part of its efforts to support those around the country who have been impacted by the current pandemic. One-time grants of up to \$2,500 will be made available to those who are facing extreme financial hardship as a result of COVID-19.

His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros had urged the creation of the Fund and commented: *"During this desperate time, we believe it is our responsibility to provide, in addition to our spiritual care, material support for our brothers and sisters who are facing unexpected financial hardship. We now have the ability to provide funding up to \$500,000, but I want to challenge everyone to help our Church raise an additional \$500,000, as we expect the consequences of the Pandemic to extend at least through the end of this year. We are committed to helping people*

in their daily lives, and are grateful to those who will join our cause."

Archbishop Elpidophoros named Bishop Apostolos of Medeia to lead a committee to approve applications for relief. Those facing an economic or financial hardship as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic, and in need of emergency help with expenses such as rent, mortgage, utilities, food, childcare, medical, funeral or other daily costs, may apply to the COVID-19 Relief Fund, which has been privately funded, through the GO-ARCH website <https://www.goarch.org/covid19relief>

Those who wish to contribute to the Fund may do so at www.goarch.org/covid19/donate.

Twitter <https://bit.ly/twittercovid19reliefvideo>

Facebook: <https://bit.ly/fb-covid19-video>

YouTube: <http://bit.ly/youtube-covid19-release-video>

PARISH CALENDAR FOR: **MAY 2020**

DUE TO THE CORONAVIRUS, THE ST. GEORGE PARISH CALENDAR BELOW IS ISSUED SO THAT PARISHIONERS CAN JOIN IN MEETINGS AND CHURCH SERVICES BY WAY OF CONNECTING ON THE ZOOM WEBSITE LINKS and FACEBOOK [on our St. George parish website: www.go-stgeorge.org]. Sunday Services will be *Live-streamed* on Facebook and our parish website.

All CHURCH SERVICES will be conducted BEHIND CLOSED DOORS ONLY. Please refer to the enclosed "METROPOLIS CLERGY MEETING REPORT" on page 3 of today's *Voice of St. George*.

THE TUESDAY BIBLE STUDY AND OTHER MEETINGS WILL NOT TAKE PLACE IN THE FORM OF PHYSICALLY GATHERING TOGETHER. Instead, "ZOOM" Meeting ID and Password Numbers will be provided weekly in *The Ladder* to join via the internet on Zoom. For assistance to join the Tuesday Bible Study, contact Fr. Ted at (760) 880-5869. For assistance to join Philoptochos General Meetings, contact Philoptochos President, Rhonda Latkovic...and for assistance in joining AHEPA Meetings (TBA), contact AHEPA 528 President, Wynn Storton.

Sunday, May 3rd.....*The Sunday of the Myrrh-bearing Women*. Orthros-8:30 a.m. / Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.
Epistle- Acts 6:17 / Gospel St. Mark 15:43- 16:8
"Zoom" Coffee Hour - 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Tuesday, May 5th....."Zoom" Bible Study - 10:00 a.m.

Sunday, May 10th.....*The Sunday of the Paralytic*. Orthros-8:30 a.m. / Divine Liturgy- 9:30 a.m.
Epistle- Acts 9:32-42 / Gospel- St. John 5: 1-15
"Zoom" Coffee Hour- 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Mother's Day

Tuesday, May 12th..... "Zoom" Bible Study - 10:00 a.m.

Wednesday May 13th.... MID-PENTECOST
Divine Liturgy - 9:00 a.m.

Sunday, May 17th..... *The Sunday of the Samaritan Woman*. Orthros-8:30 a.m. / Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.
Epistle - Acts 11:19-26,29-30 / St. John 4: 5-42
"Zoom" Coffee Hour - 11:30 a.m. -12:30 p.m.
AHEPA Sunday

Monday, May 18th....."Zoom" Philoptochos General Members Meeting - 11:30 a.m.

Tuesday, May 19th....."Zoom" Bible Study - 10:00 a.m.

Thursday, May 21st.....STS. CONSTANTINE & HELEN
Divine Liturgy - 9:00 a.m.

Sunday, May 24th.....*The Sunday of the Blind Man*. Orthros- 8:30 a.m. / Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.
Epistle - Acts 16: 16-34 / Gospel - St. John 9: 1-38
"Zoom" Coffee Hour -11:30 a.m./ 12:30 p.m.

Wednesday, May 27th...LEAVE-TAKING OF GREAT & HOLY PASCHA (End of Paschal Season)
Orthros & Divine Liturgy- (Time to be Announced)... (*Live-streamed*)

Thursday, May 28th.... THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST
Orthros - 8:30 a.m. / Divine Liturgy -9:30 a.m. (*Live-streamed*)

Sunday, May 31st.....*Saints of the First Ecumenical Council*. Orthros-8:30 a.m. / Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.
Epistle - Acts 20: 16-18; 28-36 / Gospel- St. John 17: 1-13

April 28, 2020

Saint George's Stewardship 2020 List
Thank you for supporting our church and its ministries.

Allen, Becky
Andros, Nick
Astmos, Spiro
Attalia, Philip "Ted"
Barringer, Louise-Dobbs
Barringer, William
Bozigian, Linda
Carkonen, Paul & Paulette
Castrale, Craig
Chiotis, Antony & Penny
Christopoulos, Dr. Jim & Gloria
Clark, Susan
Curreri, Jeffrey
Dalkas, Anthony & Patricia
Davis, Matthew & Christine
Delegans, Chris
Demetropoulos, Nicholas
Desjoyners, Josie
Diamond, Mari Lou
Dixson, Ann & Richard
Dunkel, Mariya
Dymond, Donald & Alexandra
Fakinos, Frank & Joan
Gallade, Adele & Hoffman, Ken
Gannon, Robert & Sandy
Georgea, Spera
Geotas, Despina
Halkidic, Anastasios & Penelope
Haveles, John
Hector, Tima & Nadia
Heinrich, Bess
Holm, Matthew
Kallis, Linda
Kaperonis, Nick
Karagianis, Lou & Penny
Kassotakis, Mary Ellen
Kayaloglou, John
Kontaxis, Dr. Euthym & Krisann
Kosturos, Paul & Dena
Krespis, Nick & Fotini
Kripner, Robert & Eva
Kundanis, Christina
Laskaris, Chris & Annette
Latkovic, Nick & Rhonda
Latkovic, Pauline
Lee, Bill & Mary

Lehman, Gloria
Lekas, Bill & Denise
Lewis, Annette
Lucas, Delphine & Brown, Steve
Lyons, Doug & Carol
Makrianis, Julie
Maletis, Chris & Kristi
Manesis, Dr. John & Bess
Mantes, E.G. & Mary Ann
Maverick, Tomasine
McEvoy, Peter & Stephanie
Meek, Eve
Nicholas, Fanny & George
Nicholau, George & Gaye
Pallis, Chris
Pappas, Dionisios & Louise
Petalas, John & Linda
Piggott, Bill & Mary
Pilafidis, Olympia
Pishue, Sam & Michele
Platis, Harry
Poulos, Billie
Pousen, D. J.
Prineas, Anna
Psaltis, Harry
Rassi, Abraham
Richards, Tasia
Sahpazis, Georgia
Sarikas, Kiriakos & Delores
Shaheen, Bernice
Spanos, George & Angie
Speliopoulos, Nick & Carol
Steele, Dr. Stephen & Lynann
Tatomir, John & Mary
Velis, George
Veroulis, Tina & Angelo
Xitco, John & Kalitsa
Young, Diane
Zaharia, Gabriella
Zambrano, Nelly
Zaverdas, Pam & Larry

Saint George Ladies Philoptochos **Virtual Coffee Hour on Zoom!**



Join us on Sunday, May 3rd @ 11:30 AM

To join go to <https://zoom.us/join> and type in the meeting ID and Password

ID: 885 0545 9492

PW: 172597

Rhonda Latkovic is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: St. George Philoptochos Virtual Coffee Hour Zoom Meeting

Time: This is a recurring meeting Meet anytime

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88505459492>

Meeting ID: 885 0545 9492

Password: 172597

One tap mobile

+16699006833,,88505459492#,,1#,172597# US (San Jose)

+12532158782,,88505459492#,,1#,172597# US (Tacoma)

Dial by your location

+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

+1 301 715 8592 US (Germantown)

Meeting ID: 885 0545 9492

Password: 172597

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88505459492>

PHILO STRONG NEWS

Saint George Ladies Philoptochos May News Update

PLEASE JOIN IN OUR NEXT ZOOM MEETING!

We have scheduled a Zoom General Members Meeting for:

Monday, May 18th, 2020 at 11:30 AM

Meeting ID: 845 2622 4059

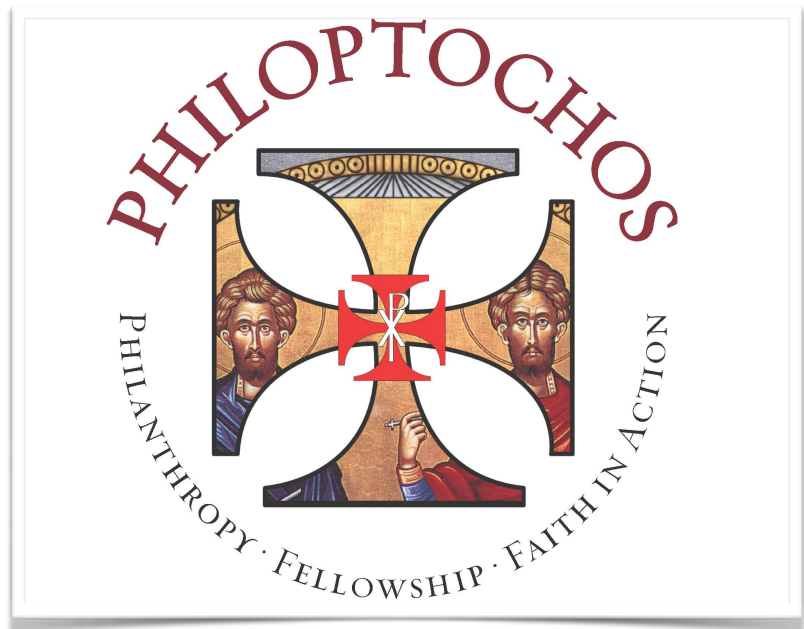
Password: 997801

Phone-In Number: 1-669-900-6833

Link: <https://us02web.200m.us/j/84526224059>

Membership Drive

We are currently at **57 members for 2020**, which is **18 less than last year**. The pandemic has negatively impacted our membership renewals. If you haven't yet renewed your membership, please, **we need you!** Contact Rhonda Latkovic or Linda Kallis



Covid-19: Coping With Isolation & Anxiety

By Wayne Lewis, published in Hopeful News, City of Hope

A pandemic has frayed the fabric of American life as entire cities stay home to flatten the curve of the novel coronavirus's spread. Ironically, some who have faced cancer already have experience with measures recently adopted across the U.S. - avoiding public places & engaging in social distancing out of worry about infection - as well as dealing with the accompanying feelings of isolation. Even so, this is a moment of heightened anxiety among many patients, survivors, and caregivers.

With these people in mind, Jeanelle Folbrecht, Ph.D., head of the Division of Psychology in City of Hope's Department of Supportive Care Medicine, shares a few ideas for now - and how not - to cope emotionally & psychologically with the outbreak of



**Xristos Anesti!
Alithos Anesti!**

Christ is Risen from the Dead, by death trampling down upon death, and to those in the tombs He has granted Life.

Homemade Medical Masks Available to Members

In last months newsletter, we announced that our own Athena Snarskis, was creating fabric masks for the community. She has made between 30-40 masks so far for us. We have delivered around 15 to members of the St. George community. If you are interested in receiving a mask, please **contact Athena at: Tel. (219) 313-6940 or email athna2@aol.com**



(COVID-19 cont. from page 1)

COVID-19.

DO: Stay connected to people.

Keeping people at a physical distance doesn't have to mean distancing yourself from people. Your outlet might be regular phone calls, texts or video chats with those who are important to you. Among children and young adults, online gaming is also a popular way to stay connected with others - this is the good type of screen time.

DO: Get up and move.

Exercise is an important stress reliever. In places where it's allowed, you might get outside, even take a walk - as long as you practice social distancing. If not, look for ways to stay active indoors or in the yard.

DO: Practice self-care.

It's difficult for many of us - especially parents & caregivers - to find the opportunity to care for ourselves. In the moment, this might be as simple as stopping, centering yourself & taking a deep breath. But it's also a good idea to set aside a little time for yourself. What to do with that time? Mindfulness meditation & yoga can help to bring down your overall stress. Reading a book, coloring, cooking or art projects can help. Importantly, self-care will look different for different people. "We have to recognize that everybody has individual needs & their own way of coping", she said. "It helps to find something in your day that in a small way acknowledges the things that are important to you in your life."

DO: Seize opportunities for humor & fun.

Living in the shadow of a pandemic can draw our thoughts to a lot of doom & gloom. So seek out a little bit of levity, whether it's an email of jokes with friends or family. Doing so can help counteract anxiety. "Coping is about creating moments for laughter & fun."

DO: Maintain - or establish - structure.

The exceptional circumstances surrounding the COVID-19

(COVID-19 cont. from page 2)

outbreak tend to throw the rhythms of our daily life off beat. One good way to respond is by maintaining some sort of a structure. This could be a set wake-up time or dinner time, a steady at home work schedule, or certain chunks of the day dedicated to teaching for parents pressed into service as educators. Structure helps us pass long days without the desolation of boredom, makes us feel more productive & imparts some sense of normalcy. “Keeping normalcy is important for all of us,” Folbrecht said. “Consistency provides a huge comfort for children, pets, and adults. It can be like a safety net.”

DO: Demonstrate gratitude.

“Expressing & receiving gratitude makes us all feel happier & a little less stressed,” Folbrecht said. “Gratitude helps us connect during difficult circumstances in a way that acknowledges our humanity & worth. We all need to know & feel that what we do is valuable & important. So find some way to share gratitude with another, maybe through a card, email, a meal dropped off on the porch, or other creative ways. You will make not just that person’s day, but yours as well.”

DO: If you need it, seek help from a professional.

With this unfamiliar & ubiquitous source of stress, it’s normal to feel anxious or depressed. So how do you tell if you or a loved one should seek help managing mental health?

“We will all feel irritable or might have troubles with sleep” during this stressful time, Folbrecht explained. But when worry & disappointment reach the point that all motivation is gone, we can’t get out of bed, we don’t exercise or try to relax, or we withdrawal from friends or family members, that is the time to reach out for help. “If you don’t have a counselor, call your physician if you have these symptoms to feel hopeless,” she said.

While many people are delaying certain aspects of health care - optical or dental appointments, elective surgery - now is not the time to put off coping. The help is out there. In fact, there is a COVID-19 boom in mental health counseling via phone or video chat.

Folbrecht said, “It’s OK to reach out for help - it actually demonstrates strength. It’s much easier to find help than you might think.”

DON’T: Develop bad habits.

Some ways to feel better in the moment can have undesirable consequences over the longer term. So resist the urge to overeat or to abuse alcohol or other substances. “I’m recommending that people keep an eye on what they’re consuming, not let it get out of control,” Folbrecht said.

DON’T: Binge on the news.

These days, nearly every headline or news segment concerns the Coronavirus pandemic in one way or another. Many of us feel the compulsion to remain plugged-in, but such wall-to-wall coverage can fuel anxiety. Consider tuning out from time-to-time. “This is going to be a long haul,” Folbrecht said. “Sometimes you have to limit your media exposure.”



You're not alone!

If you are facing an economic or financial hardship as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic and need emergency help meeting your rent or mortgage payment, utilities, food, childcare, medical, or other daily living costs, or the stress of the crisis has overwhelmed you and you would like a referral to a mental health counselor, please contact your local Philoptochos Chapter. We can assist you with the Social Service COVID-19 Emergency Assistance Application to the National Philoptochos organization and/or a mental health referral. All requests will be kept strictly confidential. Please contact Father Ted Pantels or Philoptochos President Rhonda Latkovic.

Self-Isolation Snacks: Baked Cinnamon & Cardamom Apple Chips

by hopeful.org

If you're looking for a healthy, crunchy, tasty snack recipe for you & your family to enjoy while at home together, look no further than these sweet & satisfying apple chips. We're always on the lookout for easy, low-cost ways to incorporate cancer-fighting ingredients into our everyday diets. After all, if you are going to be snacking throughout the day, why not choose healthy, homemade snacks, that also pack a cancer-fighting punch? City of Hope's baked apple chips are boosted with cinnamon & ground cardamom, for a tasty tumor-fighting triple threat!

Most of us have been told since childhood that "an apple a day keeps the doctor away", but studies by the National Institute of Health have begun to explore the science behind this old adage.

Apples are high in flavonoids & antioxidants, and an increase in the consumption of apples has been linked to an overall reduction in cancer, particularly lung cancer in women. Because they are baked instead of fried, apple chips already make a sensible snack. We can increase their cancer-fighting potential with the addition of two intensely flavorful spices: Cinnamon & cardamom.

Cinnamon has been used by the ancient Egyptians & the Chinese (and Greeks!) for thousands of years as an anti-inflammatory & antioxidant, both of which play a vital role in tissue repair. Multiple studies by the National Institute of Health also recognize cinnamon for playing an important role in inhibiting the spread of cancer cells, including breast, leukemia, ovarian, and lung cancer.

(Snacks cont. from page 4)

Ground cardamom, a common ingredient in Indian cuisine, has also been demonstrated to have antioxidant properties, and the spice has displayed an ability to fight cancer by encouraging healthy immune responses from your body.



RECIPE: BAKED CINNAMON & CARDAMOM APPLE CHIPS

Ingredients:

2 cups water

1/2 cup brown sugar

1 tsp. ground cinnamon

1 tsp. ground cardamom

Juice from 1 lemon

2 crisp apples such as “Pink Lady” or “Granny Smith”

Directions:

1. In a medium saucepan over medium heat, combine water, brown sugar, cinnamon, cardamom, and lemon juice. Remove from heat and set aside to cool.
2. Slice apples as thinly as possible, either by hand or using a mandolin or similar slicer, removing seeds as needed. Add apple slices to cooled syrup and allow to brine for at least two hours up to overnight.
3. Preheat oven to 200 degrees. Remove apple slices from brine, and pat dry with paper towels. Arrange the apple slices in a single layer on parchment paper-lined baking sheet(s). Bake for 60 minutes, then flip apple slices and bake for another 60-90 minutes, checking apple slices often for doneness. Allow to cool at room temperature. Apple slices will crisp as they cool.

2020 Philoptochos Membership List

(updated April 28th, 2020)

Thank you for supporting our philanthropy and outreach to those in need. Additional members, including associate and junior, are always welcome!

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