

AUGUST 2021



# Voice of St. George

SAINT GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH  
OF THE DESERT

74-109 LARREA ST., PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA



## IS THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD WEeping?

Vladimir Lossky notes in his book, *Mystical Theology of the Orthodox Church*, that the Mother of God is the Mother of the Church. She is the Mother of all the Saints. Without Her, there would be no Saints.

Rather recently, Orthodox Icons of the Mother of God have been found showing Her to be weeping, like the Iveron Icon of the Mother of God in Hawaii in 2008, or the weeping Icon of the Mother of God in Athens a year ago. So, why is She weeping?

I believe that She is weeping because She sees Her children suffering, despite the saving ministry of Her Son and our God. Life in Christ is meant to be a life of love, forgiveness and joy and, yet, people in the world today appear to be so unloving, unforgiving and weeping.

Few people seem to actually take *responsibility* for the *choices* that they make. The "blame game" creates

a spirit of irresponsibility. Eventually, *indifference* grows within us, when blaming God or the world doesn't work. Yet, *indifference* is itself a *sin*.

In his book, *Whatever Became of Sin?*, Dr. Karl Menninger suggested that the greatest of sins in our age is the *sin of indifference*, or, as he put it: "*acedia*." Orthodox Christian Saints have written volumes about the perils of "*acedia*," or «ακηδεια» [in Greek]. It is the sin of indifference toward the salvation of one's own soul, as well as for the salvation of the souls of others.

Personal responsibility for sin is exemplified in the words of St. Paul, who confessed: "I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate to do that, is what I do." (Romans 7:15).

Like St. Paul, and like all of our Saints, we need to look at our own behavior. For example, our Savior

has commanded us to love one another. Yet, it is no one else's fault if we choose to hold grudges, thereby being indifferent to God's Commandment to love. The blame then is ours, for which *we* must take *responsibility* for any of our perceptions or deceptions, which affect our feelings. When love grows cold, *indifference* toward one another and toward God seeps in, and *indifference* to sin develops. Hence, be believe that we are okay and others are bad.

We do not talk much about our sins. We see ourselves as victims, "justifying" misbehavior, as an illness, or as an action against some form of injustice. If it is a crime, punishment is the remedy; if it is a disorder, therapy is the remedy. But, *confession, repentance* and *forgiveness* of sins is the remedy for us all, and it seems to be losing popularity to an incredible de-

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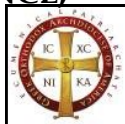
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gree.

Perhaps, this is why the Holy Mother of God is weeping. Let us mark Her Feast Day this weekend with our personal repentance of sin to bring Her joy, as there is "*joy in heaven over one sinner who repents.*" (St. Luke 15:7).

+FR. THEODORE

### THE DORMITION FAST: HIS EMINENCE, METROPOLITAN GERASIMOS



Brothers and sisters in the Lord,

We begin the season of *Dekapentavgousto*, the fifteen days of August when we prepare for the commemoration of the Falling Asleep of the Virgin Mary. It is our two-week period of fasting and prayer. During these two weeks, our parishes will offer the Service of Supplication, the Paraklesis, to the Theotokos. As we know, in the service we call out to the Mother of God and ask for her continual protection over us, to shelter us from the dangers that we face in life. We ask for her help, with the assuredness that she will help us. We believe that she continually intercedes for us to her Son, and our Lord and Savior.

In this blessed season, we must honor and celebrate the intercessions of the Theotokos over this past year. She heard our cries for help and protection during the pandemic. When we felt anxious, she offered comfort and support, because we are assured of her maternal love for us.

Now that we can see the end of the pandemic, we must turn to her once again, as our guide and "directress," as one of the many icons of her is named. In this particular icon, the Theotokos is holding Christ in one hand, and with the other she points us to Him. When we participate in the *Paraklesis Service of our parishes, we must ask her to guide us to her Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, whom we meet in the Church, in the Divine Services, in the Divine Liturgy, and in the Holy Eucharist.*

In the month of August, our parishes will be preparing themselves for the new ecclesiastical year. They will be encouraging you to return to ser-

vices, to participate in the programs and ministries they offer. As I have said before, we have all been away from our parishes for too long because of the pandemic. Now is the time to return. This is especially true for our young people, our children. On-line programs for them do not have the long-lasting effects that we desire for them to grow in Christ. They need their peers, their friends and the interaction with faithful adults who can nurture them in faith. Church participation should be as natural for them as participating in all the other activities of their lives. So, I encourage you to participate in the life of your parish to the fullest extent possible.

During these early days of August, we also commemorate the Feast of the Transfiguration of Christ on August 6. The Feast is forty days before the Feast of the Holy Cross on September 14, making a direct connection between the manifestation of the glory of Christ and His Passion (see Andreas Andreopoulos, *Metamorphosis: The Transfiguration in Byzantine Theology and Iconography*, 2005). In the Transfiguration, Christ reveals Himself fully to Peter, James, and John. In that moment, He radiates the brightest light, so bright that these disciples could not bear to look at it. This is the only time in the Gospels that Christ's face radiates so brightly. Saint Gregory the Theologian writes, "*He was bright as the lightning of the mountain and became more luminous than the sun, initiating us into the mystery of the future*" (Oration 3.19, *On the Son*). With that the disciples begin to realize that Jesus Christ is the Lord God Almighty. This Feast offers a glimpse of our future, of the fullest possibility of human existence, our being in a glorified body, in a world of light and glory. The Feast of the Transfiguration is one of our greatest feast days in the Church and one that I hope you will observe by attending the Divine Liturgy that day in your parish.

May all those who celebrate their Feast on August 6, as well as those on August 15, be abundantly blessed by the Lord. Hronia Polla!

++METROPOLITAN GERASIMOS,  
Holy Metropolis of San Francisco

## THE CURRENT MINISTRIES OF THE ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN STANDING FOR THE RIGHT TO WORSHIP CHRIST OUR GOD AND FOR THE DIGNITY OF HUMAN LIFE

### Concern for the Right to Worship Christ

His Eminence, Archbishop Elpidophoros has been standing up for the right of Orthodox Christians to visit and worship in the Orthodox Church of Hagia Sophia in Turkey, which was taken over by the Turkish government and converted into a mosque. In support of our Archbishop the Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate have pledged their support for the future of our Patriarchate.



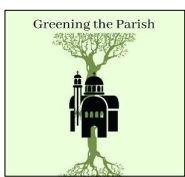
-- At Top: Orthodox Church of Hagia Sophia.  
--At bottom: Archbishop Elpidophoros

The United Nations took up the cause championed by His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophos and UNESCO submitted a request to the Turkish government to overturn this decision.

Unfortunately, Turkey's foreign ministry on Saturday, July 24th, rejected the request by UNESCO. Turkey dismissed the request as being "biased and political" and said Ankara was "astonished" by the move.

### Concern for the Environment

His All-Holiness, our Ecumenical Patriarch, **Bartholomew** has persistently proclaimed the primacy of spiritual values in determining **environmental ethics and action**. To this end, he has spoken in global organizations and addressed religious assemblies, while encouraging Orthodox Christians throughout the world to care for God's creation.



In 2008, the Ecumenical Patriarch was named one of *Time Magazine's* 100 Most Influential People in the world for "defining environmentalism as a

spiritual responsibility."

### Concern for Mental Health

The Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in America established a ministry for mental health. For those who so desire, a "mental health survey" would be helpful in setting goals for this new ministry. For details as to how to participate and support this important Orthodox

Christian ministry, visit the Orthodox Mental Health website at [www.assemblyofbishops.org/mentalhealth](http://www.assemblyofbishops.org/mentalhealth).

### Concern for Human Life in the Womb

On Saturday, July 17, the **St. John the Forerunner Orthodox Pro-Life Society** held a prayer service for general repentance of the sin of abortion near the abortion clinic at 14 Dekalb Avenue in Brooklyn. The prayer service was led by **His Eminence Archbishop Michael of New York and New Jersey** (Orthodox Church in America). He firmly reminded us that science, which is normally independent from Holy Scripture and the Saints, still shows us that human life begins at conception.



His Eminence, Archbishop Michael of the OCA leads a prayer service drawing attention to the sin of abortion.

### Concern for Those in Prison



His Eminence, Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco requested that the parishes of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco observe Orthodox Prison Ministry Sunday, on

*Continued on the next page ----->*



*Orthodox Ministries for Worship & Human Life, cont.*

**Sunday, July 25th.** He noted that this ministry is vital to those who are incarcerated and is a way for us, as Orthodox Christians, to share God's love, mercy and compassion with these men and women who are in need of our prayers. Those who want to participate in supporting this important ministry may send contributions and inquiry to: **"Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry (OCPM), 276 5th Avenue, Suite 704-3183, New York, New York 10001.**

### THE VIRGIN MARY: HER GLORY & IMPORTANCE

The first fifteen days in August every year is dedicated to the honor of the **Most Holy Ever-Virgin Mary, the Mother of God.** In this, the question arises: "What is so basic about the Virgin Mary?"

Orthodox Christians honor Her for being the Chief of all Saints. In fact, without Her, there would be no Saints. She is the New Eve, the Mother of humanity. Clothing God with Her own flesh, as She bore Christ within Her, She brought Him physically into the world. Now, we take upon ourselves Her role of bearing Christ within us through Holy Communion so that we can also bring Him into the world.

Her sacrifice for humanity included protecting Her Son from Herod by fleeing to the distant land of Egypt and watching the crucifixion of Her Son on the Cross, bearing the pain within Her, without anger or bitterness. At the Cross, She endured the humiliation of Her Son -- our God. So many mothers have lived this great aspect of motherly dedication for another life. Mothers, like the Mother of our God, know how to put love into action.

To this day, She advocates for all families, seeking their joy in Christ. Indeed, She is our Advocate, Who, as in the case of those being married in Cana of Galilee, pleads to Her Son for every blessing to be bestowed on every family in the world, if only we seek Her intercession, asking that, from the water that is crucial for our survival, we receive more than survival, but "wine"

"that maketh glad the heart of man."

Apostolic Tradition regards the Ever-Virgin Mary as the Mother of the Church. Having become the Mother for St. John the Evangelist (by command of Christ crucified), She became the Mother for all the Apostles, and, by extension, the Mother of all Saints and, furthermore, the Mother of the Church. Being the Mother of the Holy Apostles, She too received the power of the Holy Spirit, as is depicted in many Icons of Pentecost.

We can pray to the Ever-Virgin Mary as the leader of our Faith. She leads us to renewed faith and She will be a leader to us in perfecting our love for Christ and for our belief in Her Son and our Savior.

--MATTHEW DAVIS

### PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS



Save the date: **Monday morning, August 16th** to volunteer to join our Philoptochos in helping those in need at the **Coachella Valley Rescue Mission.**

San Francisco Metropolis plans for a Fall Spiritual Conference on **Saturday, September 18th, 2021.** This special virtual conference provides a wonderful opportunity for all our Philoptochos sisters to hear about our Metropolis ministries and activities. Everyone is asked to please save the date: Saturday, September 18th.



### AHEPA NEWS



The 99<sup>th</sup> AHEPA Family Supreme Convention in Athens last month, held several high-profile events to honor excellence in public service and humanitarianism.

**President Sakellaropoulou** reflected on AHEPA's near 100-year history. "During all this time, it has grown astoundingly, becoming a role model, both within American society and beyond, with remarkable community service through inspirational projects, while never forgetting the motherland."

## SPIRITUAL THOUGHTS by Deacon Euthym

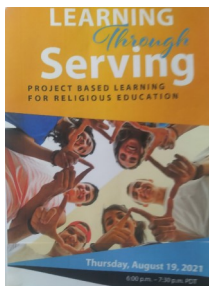
*"It is worth noticing that, after acquiring spiritual understanding, the defects and faults of one's neighbor begin to seem very slight and insignificant, as redeemed by the Savior and easily cured by repentance" ...+ St. Ignatius Brianchaninov*

What a beautiful description of one who is close to God. The sins of others seem small and insignificant, because the holy person is aware of God's power to forgive. The worldly mind sees sin as insurmountable. The authentic spiritual mind, is Christ centered (for the general idea of spirituality is corrupted in modern, new age thinking), and sees sin as easily cured and not something insurmountable through repentance and God's abundant mercy. One who himself is carnal and comes from that point of view, sees other people's sins as huge or perceives sin in others where there isn't any. Let us also pursue spiritual understanding, so we do not judge others, but encourage them to repent, minimizing their sins and exhorting them to the higher calling of the Lord.

*"Do you know what a great gift it is that God gave us the right to speak to Him every hour and moment, wherever we are? He always listens to us. This is the greatest honor we have. For this reason we must love God."...~ Elder Porphyrios*

"Pray without ceasing" ... St Paul reminds us, but what we forget is that God is listening without ceasing. He is there for us at all times, without fatigue, without distractions, He hears us with no agenda except to insure our salvation in relationship with Him in paradise. We often refer to the Holy Spirit as "Wonderful Counselor", "Comforter", the "Spirit of Truth"...what more do we want out of someone who we share our feelings and fears and desires with? Comfort, truth, counsel, ...God offers this and more along with His sacrificial love. Let us reach out to Him throughout our day, simply asking for His guidance and reassurance, knowing He is ready and waiting to listen.

## SUNDAY SCHOOL & RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



The Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco is pleased to announce a Zoom workshop for clergy, religious educators, Sunday School teachers, parents, and anyone interested in the implementation of the **Project Based on Learning for Religious Education**. The presenter for this program is **Dr. Drew Baker**, Educational Specialist serving the Sts. Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church in Richmond, Virginia. For more information and to register for this webinar, contact via email **Fr. Christopher Retelas** at [frchris@stjohnanaheim.org](mailto:frchris@stjohnanaheim.org), or visit our Metropolis website: [www.sanfran.goarch.org](http://www.sanfran.goarch.org). Registration deadline is: **August 13th**.

## ST. GEORGE GOLF TOURNAMENT

The **St. George Golf Tournament** is scheduled to be held at **Desert Willow Golf Resort** in Palm Desert on **Saturday, September 25th**. The **St. George Golf Tournament Registration Forms** are available in our parish hall and upon request. Forms are also being mailed out, and people are already forming four-somes to participate. Silent auction items are being gathered for the awards dinner -- we need everyone's help to gather enough quality items for our guests.

Enclosed, please find a copy of the **St. George Golf Tournament Registration Form**. Note that the Registration Form has three main sections: 1) Information pertaining to the fee for the tournament (\$175 includes the awards dinner), as well as the times for tee-off and the awards dinner (Traditional Greek Dinner at St. George); 2) The Event Registration, with space provided to include player names and GHIN#; and, 3) Individual & Sponsorships: Tee Sponsors/ donation and a space to make a reservation for the Traditional Greek Dinner ( \$35 for those who will not be golfing, but who will join everyone for the dinner).

**DIVINE LITURGY BOOKS**

We pray that all of our parishioners are enjoying time with family and friends during this summer season and we look forward to seeing everyone back together as we enter the months of September and October.

The new Divine Liturgy books for our church pews have been ordered. This edition is currently in the process of being published. As soon as we receive them, we will place them, along with Bibles, in our church pews so that everyone can more easily follow along with the Divine Liturgy.

**CHURCH MAINTENANCE**

We thank God for the efforts of **Peter Snarskis** in coordinating the upgrade of our parish Air Conditioning system in order to maintain our parish's inside temperatures to a comfortable and healthy standard during the remainder of the summer season. In addition, professional church cleaning will be cleaning our church and parish hall on Wednesday afternoons/early evenings. Finally, estimates are being reviewed for our church/parish hall tile restoration and carpet cleaning.

**PARISH CALENDAR - AUGUST 2021**

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

Monday, August 2nd.....Paraklisis – 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, August 3rd.....Bible Study– 10:00 a.m. **In-person at our parish hall and via “Zoom” at: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86498724291?pwd=aVVFuUdIcHhqR2FwSXdBdGx6c3hYdz09> .**  
Meeting ID: 864 9872 4291 / Passcode: 821010...One tap mobile: +16699006833 ...Note: You may also join by entering: <https://zoom.us/join> in your computer search engine at the top left corner of your screen and then enter the Meeting ID: **864 9872 4291** & Passcode: **821010** when prompted. You may also call in by cell phone at: 1 669 900 6833 and enter the herein noted Meeting ID number and Passcode.

Wednesday, August 4th....Paraklisis - 10:00 a.m. [Morning Service]

Thursday, August 5th.....Great Vespers – 6:30 p.m.

Friday, August 6th.....TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD  
Orthros-8:30 a.m./Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m./ Paraklisis – 6:30 p.m.

Monday, August 9th..... Paraklisis - 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, August 10th..... Bible Study -10:00 a.m. (See Zoom instructions for the Bible Study program on August 3rd)

Wednesday, August 11th.. Paraklisis - 10:00 a.m. (Note: This will be a morning service.)

Friday, August 13th..... Paraklisis - 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, August 14th..... Great Vespers - 5:00 p.m. (Sunday, August 15th is the Dormition of the Holy Theotokos.)

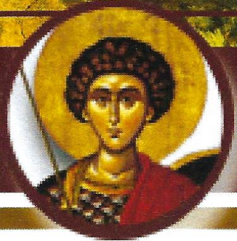
Saturday, August 28th..... Great Vespers - 6:30 p.m. (Sunday, August 29th is The Beheading of St. John the Baptist, which is a fasting day.)





# Saint George Greek Orthodox Church Golf Tournament

Saturday, September 25, 2021 | 12:30 PM Shotgun Start | Desert Willow Golf Resort



## ENTRY INFORMATION

Saturday, September 25, 2021

- \$175 per player (includes Golf and Awards Dinner)
- 12:30 PM Shotgun Start at Desert Willow Golf Resort
- 5:00 PM Social Hour at St. George Greek Orthodox Church
- 6:00 PM Traditional Greek Dinner at St. George Greek Orthodox Church | Silent Auction and Live Music

## INDIVIDUALS AND SPONSORSHIPS

- Individual Player(s) \_\_\_ (# of Players) x \$175 \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Tee Sponsorship(s) \_\_\_ (# of Sponsorships) x \$100 \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Traditional Greek Dinner \_\_\_ (# of Dinners) x \$35 \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## EVENT REGISTRATION

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Company/Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

## PLAYER NAMES

1. \_\_\_\_\_ GHIN# \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_ GHIN# \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_ GHIN# \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_ GHIN# \_\_\_\_\_

## REGISTRATION AND PAYMENT

**REGISTRATION DEADLINE: SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2021**

Sign up online at [www.desertwillow.com/StGeorge](http://www.desertwillow.com/StGeorge)  
Make Checks Payable To:

“Saint George Greek Orthodox Church”  
Send Checks and Registration Form to:  
PO Box 4755 | Palm Desert, CA | 92261

