

JUNE 2022



Voice of St. George

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

74-109 LARREA ST., PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA



THE IMAGE OF PENTECOST



As much as Holy Icons are meant to be venerated by the faithful, they are meant to be “read” as expressions of Divine Truth. Two sources of interpretation are shared here. They are, *Icons and Saints of the Eastern Orthodox Church*, by Alfredo Tradigo, and *Behold the Beauty of the Lord: Praying With Icons*, by Henri J.M. Nouwen.

Tradigo explains: “...The Mother of God, present at the Ascension, is absent in icons of Pentecost up until the seventeenth century. Bishop Innocent writes: ‘How could She not be present at the moment of the Spirit’s arrival, She Who conceived and gave birth by means of the Spirit?’...The composition of the icon, with the apostles seated in a horseshoe arrangement, recalls the icon of Christ teaching in the synagogue...” Tradigo goes on to explain, “The Apostles represent the community of the faithful, open to the action of the Spirit...While the Apostles are enflamed from above by the Divine Light, the old, imprisoned world below (the cosmos) awaits liberation from the shadows of evil.” Tradigo notes that the figure depicted below the Apostles is the “Old King,” who is king of the cosmos. (pg. 151).

For Henri J. M. Nouwen, “The Pentecost icon draws us into the heart of the mystery of God’s Self-revelation. The way the Apostles

and evangelists are gathered together manifests the presence of the God-within. (pg. 93). Through the Holy Spirit, Christ is in our midst as an Apostolic community. Christ is also in the midst of each of our minds and souls. In this regard, Nouwen points out St. Paul’s words, “I am alive; yet it is no longer I, but Christ living in me.” (Galatians 2:20).

Following our personal baptism, the Gift of the Holy Spirit is poured upon us through the anointing of the Holy Myrrh (Holy Chrismation) -- our “personal Pentecost.” We live out our baptized and chrismated lives though living a life of virtues reflective of God’s love for all people. The Sacrament of Confession helps to strengthen our love for God.

Our “personal Pentecost” is indeed our participation in the full Sacramental life of the Church, through which the Holy Spirit descends upon us individually and collectively. Thus, our St. George parish today is to be the living image of Pentecost as we individually and collectively become examples of a way of life that draws others to the love of our Savior --i.e., to provide the world with the image of Pentecost and inspire those around us to also embrace the life of Christ.

+FR. THEODORE

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SPIRITUAL THOUGHTS by Deacon Euthym

“Christianity is a life rooted in Christ’s own. Its charge is not to live for self but to live for Christ; and its goal is not satisfaction but transformation. The Christian is called to become, to enter into a newness of life that is another’s – that is Christ’s. He is to discover the ‘self’ of his current existence, precisely so that he can work to change it into a life not defined by his will, but defined and made real by another – by God Himself....Bishop Irenei Steenberg

Christianity is not a religion, it is the ultimate way all people transform so that their will is aligned with the will of God, Who created us and loves us and calls us to be in relationship with Him. It is the path to transform from participation in the fallen world to participation in the kingdom of God. It is, ultimately, putting on the new person in Jesus Christ, the incarnate God, and putting off the old person who is adrift, separated from God. St Athanasios said, "*God became man so man can be like god*". We are called to participate in His divinity. Christianity is the lifeboat of all of humankind's existence. Let us jump in and invite others to do the same.

The husband and the wife should be like the hand and the eye. When the hand hurts, the eyes should be crying. And when the eyes cry, the hand should wipe away the tears." --St. John Chrysostom

While a contemporary approach to relationships focuses more on compatibility, practicality, and a "what's in it for me?" mentality, then marriage essentially has been reduced to a transactional relationship. We see how St John elevates marriage to its authentic position as a Holy Mystery. Ordained by God to assist in our salvation, marriage is a sacrament whereby a man and woman freely, out of love, become one in Christ for the purpose of glorifying God, and assisting one another and their children toward salvation. Everything else fades away. It is not for everyone and the basis for every marriage is truth. Christ said

"*I am the Truth, the Way and the Life*". For those unmarried, contemplate on these sayings in seeking relationships. For those married, maybe it is time to reset the relationship with the above in mind. It is not easy, but ultimately, it is the greatest reward and brings the greatest joy.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday, May 22nd was the last day of Sunday School for the 2021-2022 school year. It was truly a most successful Sunday School year, which saw a fun "pumpkin painting" fellowship; a wonderfully presented Christmas program; a well-crafted "Sunday of the Saints," (whereby our students presented mounted reports detailing the lives of their Patron Saints); the "greeting card" project in support of our Philoptochos' efforts to minister to the homeless, and a Lenten Retreat, (which featured a lesson in "prosforo baking").

We are grateful to God for the participation of our students in our Sunday School program this year, as well as for the efforts of our Sunday School staff and the parents of our students.

Going forward, we pray for a few more parents to become involved in helping with Sunday School classes, serving as "substitute teachers," which will allow for maintaining consistency in holding classes on Sundays. When one of our teachers is unavailable on a given Sunday (given unexpected needs), substitute teachers are a blessing.

In addition, improvements can be made in terms of our parents bringing students to Sunday School classes on a more consistent basis. Every effort is made to prepare valuable lessons for our students so that they can be equipped to meet the challenges of an increasingly complex world, without losing their souls. This should be a vital concern of everyone in our parish, especially our Sunday School students' parents.

In the fall, we will be looking for volunteers to commit to helping our Sunday School staff to create and maintain a truly rewarding program for the entire family.

PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS

Our final meeting before the summer vacation was held on Monday, May 9th at Shield's Date Garden restaurant. Twenty-three members were in attendance for the luncheon meeting. Attendees enjoyed dining *al fresco* under a canopy in a private section of the restaurant which provided the perfect opportunity to visit with one another. The meeting topics included an update to our chapter finances, & thanks to generous donations and several successful fundraising projects, our checking balance is at **\$31,785**. We announced a new local recipient of the Operation Classroom initiative, Gerald Ford Elementary School, to whom we made the first of two donations to fund their art classes for over 600 students! This summer we will be donating to the **Coachella Valley Rescue Mission's water project** and to **The Narrow Door's food bank** that helps local families with food insecurity. Our general members meetings will resume in September.

On Saturday May 21st volunteers from our St. George **Philoptochos, AHEPA, and Sunday School** packed food boxes at **The Narrow Door Food Bank** in Indio for local families with food insecurity. Using a work line process, 560 food boxes were prepared for distribution! The boxes were stacked onto 33 pallets to be distributed to families this month. We wish to thank all the volunteers who assisted with this worthwhile effort...**Chris Hays & his children, Colin, Liam, & Emma, Susan Segaar, Linda Bozigian, Athena Snarskis, Margarita Pagoulatos & her daughter Angela &**



To the left is a picture of our Philoptochos Ladies in action -- helping distribute food items to the hungry through the efforts of the Narrow Door organization. From Left to Right: Rhonda Latkovic, Philoptochos President; Susan Segaar, Linda Bozigian, and Athena Snarskis.



Pictured above: Representatives of our parish Philoptochos, AHEPA and our Sunday School organizations came together to help prepare deliveries of food for the homeless in Coachella Valley. Their efforts were in support of the Narrow Door organization, which is committed to help the hungry on a daily basis.

granddaughter **Melina, Loki Rodriguez, & Nick & Rhonda Latkovic.**

Sunday Coffee Hour Update: Memorial Weekend kicks off the summer season...our snowbirds have left, the weather is heating up, and activities are slowing down for the next three months through Labor Day Weekend.

We will be temporarily pausing our Sunday coffee hour for the months of June, July, & August unless a volunteer steps up & signs up to handle the coffee hour from start to finish on a specified date.

A sign-up calendar has been posted on the bulletin board in the church hall. If you are interested in volunteering for a particular Sunday, please sign the sheet.

In addition, for the summer months if a **memorial is wanted to be scheduled** please inform **Father Ted and/or Rhonda Latkovic** a minimum of two weeks in advance to the date requested so arrangements can be made. Parishioners are encouraged to prepare their own kolyva if possible.

AHEPA NEWS



Our AHEPA Chapter 528 celebrated "AHEPA Sunday" on May 22nd. The celebration included a celebration of the National AHEPA 100 year Anniversary and the awards from the AHEPA 528 Fr. T. P. Theophilos Memorial Scholarship Fund to our deserving college students. Pictured above are members of our AHEPA 528 Chapter.



This year, 2022, marks the Centennial Anniversary of AHEPA, which was celebrated by our local Chapter on May 22nd

with a grand total to date of approximately **\$45,000 in scholarship awards** distributed. The scholarship is funded by AHEPA 528 fundraisers, and, especially, by our St. George parishioners, who are dedicated to help our students on their journeys.

The summer months feature the National AHEPA Convention in Orlando, Florida from July 18th to July 22nd. AHEPA 528 meetings will resume on a **monthly** basis in September.



"AHEPA Sunday" featured the awarding of scholarships from the AHEPA 528 Fr. T. P. Theophilos Memorial Fund. The finalists for the Fr. T. P. Theophilos Memorial Scholarship Fund were: Simeon Seraphim, Jack Shannazarian, and Emmarie Shannazarian. From left-right: Wynn Storton, Chapter President; Simeon Seraphim, Jack Shannazarian, Emmarie Shannazarian; Nick Latkovic and Fr. Ted.

Sunday, May 22nd was our parish's "AHEPA Sunday." Following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, a reception was held in our parish hall to celebrate the day.

Scholarship awards from the **AHEPA 528 Fr. T.P. Theophilos Memorial Scholarship Fund** were presented to three of our local college students: **Simeon Seraphim, Jack Shannazarian and Emmarie Shannazarian.**

Since its inception in 2011, the AHEPA 528 Fr. T.P. Theophilos Memorial Scholarship has served to help college students from our community,

STEWARDSHIP --With plans for vacations and travel this summer, let us keep in mind some spiritual thoughts that are found in our Archdiocese Brochure, *Our Church; Our Spiritual Home*.

"...In the Church we live eternal life starting from now. We do not simply await the life to come, but we experience and enjoy it from the present. The Kingdom of God, according to the Fathers, is not life beyond the grave but communion with God..." - Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos

One Orthodox Christian author writes about the Ekklesia (the Church), *"This Ekklesia exists when... people unite and become a family, where people see one another as brothers and sisters with God as their common father, and try to share whatever they have and whatever they are, and be united in heart and soul"* (*Functional and Dysfunctional Christianity*, by Fr. P. Faros).

Continued on the next page ----->

STEWARDSHIP, Continued

"Church is not so much a place as it is what we are together. We are called to be the Body of Christ to witness to God in the world. When we truly become members of the Church, transfigured by our faith and worship, we become what the Church was intended to be."

Stewardship contributions from our St. George parishioners have been outstanding throughout

this first part of 2022. Prayers of thanksgiving are offered to all of our parishioners by the members of our St. George Stewardship Committee and the members of our Parish Council.

The "Thank You Card" below is offered in gratitude to the members of our St. George parish for giving from their hearts toward the work of our Savior in the world, bringing salvation to one and all.

NICHOLAS KONTAXIS **CATCH ME**



**JUNE 3RD OPENING NIGHT EVENT
5pm-8pm**



A SOLO EXHIBITION

UTA ARTIST SPACE · LOS ANGELES

utaartistspace.com nicholaskontaxis.com

NK

The poster above announces the art exhibit of **Nicholas Kontaxis'** paintings, "Catch Me," at UTA Artist Space in Los Angeles. The exhibit opens on Friday, June 3rd and continues throughout the month.

Arrangements have already been made for those who have indicated ahead of time that they would like to travel as a group to visit the exhibit on opening night, June 3rd. For those who cannot make the voyage to LA for the exhibit, they may join Fr. Ted in a Paraklisis Service for our Lord's blessings upon our beloved brother in Christ, Nicholas. In addition, parishioners can visit the exhibit throughout the month at their convenience.

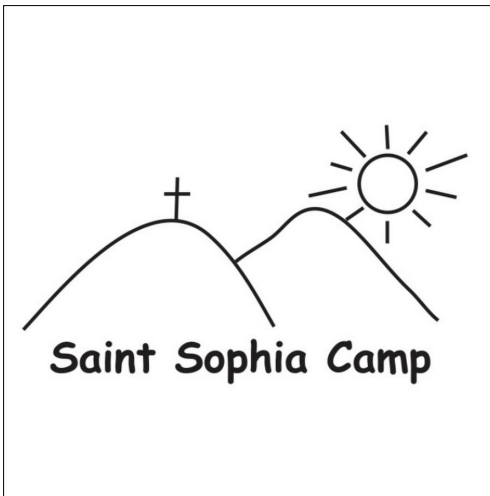


CONGRATULATIONS TO: CONSTANTINA KARALIS

On May 13, 2022, **Constantina Karalis**, daughter of **Bessie and Bill Karalis**, graduated from the **University of Southern California's Rossier School of Education**, having earned her **Master's of Art in Teaching Degree**. She now pursues her career in teaching and molding the lives of future leaders of our world. Congratulations, Constantina, and may our Lord and Savior always bless you!

WEEKDAY CHURCH SERVICES - JUNE 2022

- Thursday, June 2nd.....ASCENSION OF OUR LORD
Orthros-8:30 a.m./ Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.
- Saturday, June 11th.....SATURDAY OF SOULS (**Preceding Pentecost Sunday - June 12th**)
Orthros-8:30 a.m./Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.
- Monday, June 13th.....FEAST DAY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
Orthros - 8:30 a.m./Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.
- Wednesday, June 29th.....STS. PETER & PAUL
Orthros-8:30 a.m./Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.
- Thursday, June 30th.....THE HOLY APOSTLES
Orthros-8:30 a.m./Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.



ST. SOPHIA SUMMER CAMP

2022 Camp Registration is now open!

Week 1: July 25th - July 29th - Camp Cedar Lake in Big Bear Lake, CA. Week cost: \$565 (online)/ \$550 (check)

Week 2: August 2nd - August 7th -- Camp St. Nicholas in Frazer Park, CA . Week cost (\$665 online)/ \$650 (check)

Register online at: <https://www.saintsophiacamp.org/>