

OCTOBER 2022



# Voice of St. George

SAINT GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH  
OF THE DESERT

74-109 LARREA ST., PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA



## “MERCY TRIUMPHS OVER JUDGMENT!”

On the 23rd of October every year we commemorate **St. James the Apostle**. St. James was the first bishop of Jerusalem and is the author of the Epistle of St. James that is found in the New Testament. There are many Biblical scholars who consider his Epistle to be the very first New Testament book, since it dates back to the time of the first Christian martyr, St. Stephen - about whom we read in the Book of Acts (7:1-60),

It seems that more than anything else in the world, everyone needs to stop for a moment and etch the words of St. James regarding the “law of love” deep into their minds and hearts.

*“If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scriptures, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself,’ you do well; but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, is guilty of all... For He Who said, ‘Do not commit adultery,’ also said, ‘Do not murder.’ Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.” (St. James 2:8-13).*

I wonder what St. James would say today in our world where the masses are trying to deal with issues of discrimination and equality.

I suppose that, being the first bishop of Jerusalem, he would remind us that we are never to condemn any person. However, we are to condemn the sins that we do. Each person has the DNA of our Creator -- being in His Image. God loves each of us that we are given the Gift of Forgiveness and Eternal Life through His Cross and Resurrection.

It is the sin that is condemned. However, forgiveness and repentance are offered on an “equal-opportunity” basis. At the same time let us note that nowhere is it said that one sin is less serious than another. One sin that goes without repentance can easily become a habit that leads to greater sins.

Unfortunately, people have forgotten the words of St. James. On the one hand, some feel justified in condemning or marginalizing others for their sins. On the other hand, some teach that sin does not even exist anymore under the guise of love. Teaching against evil and sin - and in favor of God’s Law of love (i.e., patience, repentance and self-control) seems irrelevant in our times. Our Church’s moral teachings are being seri-

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**-Fr. Theodore Pantels, Pastor--**  
**-Dcn. Euthym Kontaxis, M.D.**

ously challenged. As Orthodox Christians, however, we judge ourselves with regard to the sins we commit, seeking God's mercy through repentance and love for others. In seeking God's mercy for ourselves, we seek God's mercy for others, as well. At the same time, we can never justify sin and evil as "okay and normal." It is with the love of God that we caution ourselves and others to follow our Lord's Commandment to love. When we abandon God, we fall away from love and mercy. This in itself is a sin.

Like the other Apostles, St. James committed the sin of abandoning Christ at His Cross. But, also he repented and offered his life for Christ, standing up for the Law of Love against those who preferred the "law of self."

+FR. THEODORE

## SPIRITUAL THOUGHTS

by

Deacon Euthym

*"Take care to distinguish between your thoughts, as the Fathers teach. Stop and look, decide which ones are good and which ones are bad. Then, disassociate from any that you find to be bad, believe nothing they tell you, do not believe for an instant that they are a part of who you are. This is of the utmost importance, because if we accept bad thoughts, then they will stay with us and make us believe that they are actually a part of us." --Elder Sergei of Vanves*

What a great teaching...**Stop and look** at your thoughts. So important not to allow thoughts to fester and grow. Root out the ones that are not from God immediately. The bad thoughts tend to stick around if we don't stop and analyze them and push them out, then they begin to normalize in our minds, pretty soon we lose our ability to discern the good from the bad. Clear your mind, seek that which God would have us contemplate, seek wisdom not information and seek God's will not our own... *"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report;*

*if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."* (Philippians 4:8).

*"Apt silence bridles anger; moderation in food bridles mindless desire; and the single-phrased Jesus Prayer bridles unruly thought."* --Ilias the Presbyter

This is such a simple and great teaching. If we have anger issues, silence or moderate speech is the prescription. To curb worldly and physical urges, fast. Finally to control negative thoughts, say the Jesus Prayer. These are areas we all struggle in, and require spiritual prescriptions to control them. Let us then run and confess our struggles then implant these beautiful ideas and see the results. John the Baptist is often remembered throughout the year. He lived simply, but he was austere and controlled his anger. He had his thoughts on Christ, sharing the Good News of His incarnation. Let us imitate St John in our daily lives, glorifying God with everything we do.

*"But when God dwells in a man, then the demons and passions are driven out, and the man becomes a temple of God, rifled with sanctification, filled with illumination, purity and grace. Blessed is he who sees the Lord in the innermost treasury of his heart as in a mirror."* --Venerables Barsanuphius the Great and John the Prophet

Today's Gospel tells of the temptation of Christ by the devil in the wilderness. Despite being God incarnate, the second person of the Trinity who created all things including the angels, Christ did not engage in fruitless dialogue with the Evil one. Rather, He responded to the one, who is the source of misinformation and deceit in a singular fashion.... He quoted scripture. For every temptation Christ warded it off with the word of God. He is the Word, who took flesh and used His Word, Himself, to respond to the temptations of this world. We too must learn and study and immerse ourselves in scripture so that we have answers for every given temptation.

## SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday, September 25th marked the beginning of our new Sunday School year. The first lesson dealt with God, our Creator and Heavenly Father. We also talked about having the awareness of the presence of God in our everyday life. The students wrote inspiring messages of love and hope to be included with the health kits for the homeless, which is a project of our Ladies Philoptochos Chapter.



Emily Kayaloglou, pictured to the left, was one of the parents who helped in making our first Sunday of Sunday School for this year a success. Also pictured are the many health kits in which the students enclosed spiritual notes of encouragement for the recipients of the health kit.

Sunday School classes will be held one Sunday per month for a full hour. Lunch will be served for both the students and their parents. Parents and any parishioners can join in the "Adult Discussion Group," which meets on "Sunday School Sundays." The next Sunday School "super-class session" will be on **Sunday, October 16th.**

## PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS

Our Philoptochos August clothing drive was a success! On September 13th, 2022 Philoptochos associate member **Nicholas Latkovic** delivered a car full of donated clothing from our St. George parishioners to Coachella Valley Rescue Mission in Indio, CA. Thank you to everyone who donated to this project!

Our next **Philoptochos General Members Meeting** will be held on **Monday, October 3, 2022** beginning at **11:30 AM** in the church hall. Please join us for our first meeting of the new Ecclesiastical year.

Save the date!...Our **annual Christmas Party** is planned for **Saturday, December 10th, 2022.** Venue is the **club house at Sun City, Palm Desert.**

**PAINT EL PASEO PINK" - Saturday, October 8, 2022!** If you are interested in participating in this year's "PAINT EL PASEO PINK WALK", please see **Rhonda Latkovic** after church for a sign-up form – the **deadline is Monday, October 3rd.** The pre-walk ceremony is at 7:30 a.m. and the walk will start at 8:00 a.m.. Through this event, funds are raised to help cure breast cancer. A donation of \$35 payable to Ladies Philoptochos covers the registration fee and includes a special event tee shirt! See attached flier.

## BRING-A-FRIEND-TO-CHURCH SUNDAY

**Sunday, October 16th** is our Fall "Bring-a-Friend-to-Church" Sunday. All parishioners of St. George are asked to invite a friend to join us for worship in our beautiful St. George Church temple. We look forward to introducing our visitors to our congregation during our special coffee hour held in their honor. See attached flier.

## ST. GEORGE PARISH FALL SPIRITUAL RETREAT

Please reserve Saturday, November 12, 2022 to join fellow St. George parishioners for a special spiritual event -- our St. George Parish Fall Retreat. The theme for our Fall Parish Retreat is: "Understanding the Divine Liturgy." It promises to be a special day to learn more about the meaning of our Divine Liturgy as we live out our daily lives. The day will begin at 10:00 a.m. and conclude at 3:00 p.m., with a superb lunch being served for all in attendance....**Our speaker for our Fall Retreat is Eve Tibbs.** Registration is \$10.00 per person.

**Eve Tibbs** received her PhD from Fuller Theological Seminary and she is the affiliate assistant professor of theology at Fuller Theological Seminary. She recently authored a most educational book about our Greek Orthodox Faith, entitled, *A Basic Guide to Eastern Orthodox Theology*. Copies of her book will be available in our parish book store. In addition, Eve Tibbs is the director of our Metropolis of San Francisco Christian Education Ministry. It is truly our honor to host her for this spiritual event in our parish! See the attached flier.

**SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING**

All parishioners are invited to a special luncheon and General Meeting on Sunday, October 2, 2022 following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. The agenda includes reports from the Archdiocese Clergy-Laity Congress; the National Philoptochos Convention; the Consecration of the Archdiocese National Shrine of St. Nicholas in New York, and a general overview of needs for our parish ministries going into the New Ecclesiastical Year. This is an important meeting, since it will help us embark on areas in which our St. George parishioners can participate in the growth of our parish. We invite all of our parishioners to bring suggestions regarding ways to improve our ministries.

**CONGRATULATIONS TO DR. STEPHEN STEELE**

Congratulations to **Dr. Stephen Steele** who has been honored to participate in the **5th Conference of the Ecumenical Patriarchate's Conference for Pastoral Health Care**, which will take place in Rhodes, Greece from **October 5th to October 9th, 2022**.

The theme of the Conference is **"Ministering to Mankind Today, We Care for the Mankind of Tomorrow."** Dr. Steel's role will be to offer insights on the topic of **"War, Stress, Trauma in the Military and of Refugees."**

Dr. Steel will be among the speakers and moderators of this important Conference.

**2023 GREEK FESTIVAL**

Festival Chairman, George Argyros, held the first meeting to plan for our **2023 St. George Greek**

**Festival**, which will take place at our parish on **February 18-19, 2023**, on Monday, September 26, 2022. Festival fliers will be passed out at the "Paint El Paseo Pink" walk for the cure of breast cancer, which will take place on El Paseo on Saturday, October 8th. Parishioners who plan to participate in this years walk for cancer cure are invited to share our 2023 Greek Festival fliers with fellow participants in this event.

The next **2023 Greek Festival meeting** will be at our parish hall on **Monday, November 7, 2022**.

**SPECIAL PAN-ORTHODOX DIVINE LITURGY Sunday, November 6, 2022**

Our St. George parish is honored to have been asked to support the efforts of the **Sts. Michael and Gabriel Romanian Orthodox Parish in Palm Springs** in building their new church structure.

Particularly, they need a parish hall to hold their major fundraiser for their new church building fund, since they are currently using their own parish hall for Sunday worship. We have been asked to offer our help in this regard so that they can have their fundraiser as part of their annual Feast Day celebration, which takes place on November 8th every year.

As a result, the Sts. Michael and Gabriel Romanian Orthodox parishioners from Palm Springs will be joining us for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy on **Sunday, November 6, 2022**. Their fundraiser will be held in our St. George parish hall.

Let us welcome our brother Orthodox Christian faithful and may our Orthodox Christian Faith flourish throughout our local community!

**MID-WEEK FEAST DAYS – OCTOBER 2022**

- Thursday, October 20th.....ST. GERASIMOS  
Orthros-8:30 a.m./Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.
- Wednesday, October 26th.....ST. DEMETRIOS THE GREAT MARTYR  
Orthros-8:30 a.m./Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS OCTOBER 2022**

Bible Study Group meets every Tuesday throughout October 2022 at 10:00 a.m.

“Sock-tober” Event – October 2nd -23rd (See enclosed flier)

Monday, October 3rd.....Philoptochos General Members Meeting – 11:30 a.m.

Saturday, October 8th.....“Paint El Paseo Pink” Walk for cancer cure – 8:00 a.m.

Tuesday, October 11th.....AHEPA Meeting – 6:00 a.m. (also on Zoom)

Sunday, October 16th.....Bring-a-Friend-to-Church-Sunday

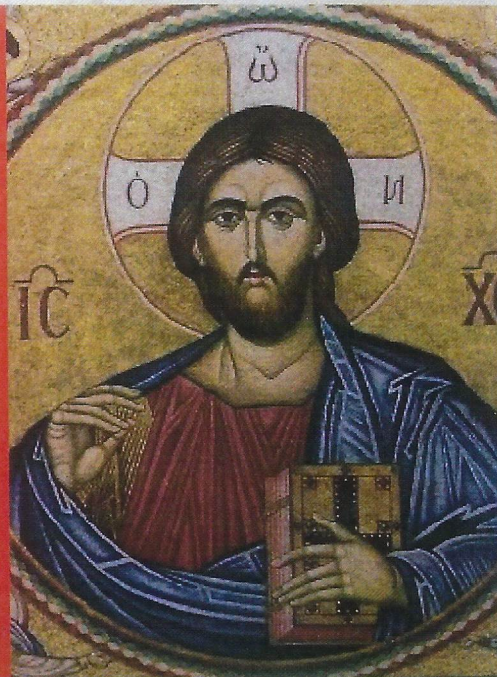
“Super Sunday” Sunday School Class and Adult Discussion Group- 11:00 a.m. -12 noon

**Bring A  
Friend  
Sunday**

*You're Invited!*

October 16, 2022  
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy  
10:30 AM Social Hour & Meet-n-Greet

St. George Greek Orthodox Church of the  
Desert  
74109 Larrea St., Palm Desert, CA 92260



# Sign-Up Today!

16<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL

*Paint* El Paseo


**PINK**

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2022

PRESENTING  
PINK DIAMOND  
SPONSOR



EISENHOWER HEALTH  
CURCI CANCER CENTER

  
DESERT CANCER  
FOUNDATION  
We Pay for Cancer Care.

Register Today!

[PaintElPaseoPink.org](http://PaintElPaseoPink.org)

**MAKE CHECK TO PHILOTOCHOS**

\$35.<sup>00</sup> donation!

ST GEORGE SUNDAY SCHOOL

# FAMILY SUNDAYS

**SAVE THE DATES**

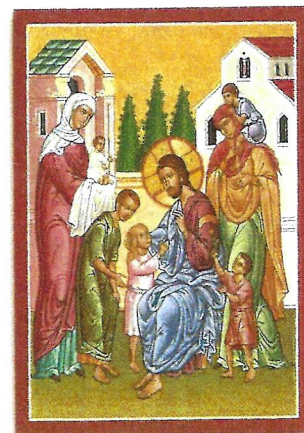
**September 25<sup>th</sup> – Sunday School begin!**

**October 16<sup>th</sup> – Bring a friend Sunday & Pumpkin painting!**

**November 20<sup>th</sup> – Thanksgiving event**

**December 11<sup>th</sup> – Christmas event**

- Immediately after receiving Holy Communion proceed to classrooms for a one-hour session to include religious education, activities and lunch for all students and their families.
- This also includes Special Service Projects with guidance from our Philoptochos.
- In addition to these Family Sundays, a Sunday School lesson will be mailed each week for the purpose of growing in God's love together as a family.



**PLEASE RSVP to:**

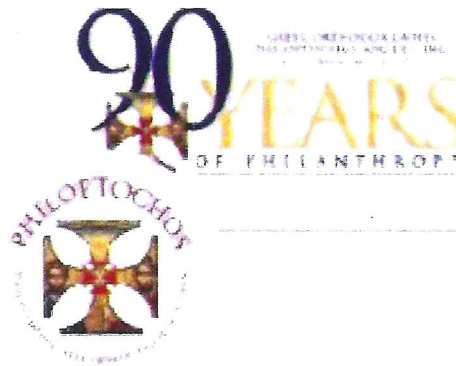
Fr. Ted Pantels

[frt.j.pantels@gmail.com](mailto:frt.j.pantels@gmail.com) or (760) 880-5869

Presbytera Petula Pantels [limonatahugo@gmail.com](mailto:limonatahugo@gmail.com) or (909) 539-7542

Mrs. Athena Snarskis

[athna2@aol.com](mailto:athna2@aol.com) or (219) 313-6940



## **“SOCK-TOBER”**

DONATION EVENT for the HOMELESS  
October 2nd-23rd

- o Did you know that the number 1 needed clothing item for a homeless person is a pair of socks?
- o Please help the St. George Ladies Philoptochos provide new socks to Coachella Valley Rescue Mission for the in-program residents & homeless population in the east valley.
- o Deposit new socks in the bins provided that are located in the church hall. Monetary donations can be made & we will do the shopping if you are not able.
- o Both women & mens socks are needed in Casual or Dress styles. Please donate only new socks!



# St. George Greek Orthodox Church Fall Parish Retreat

Saturday, November 12, 2022

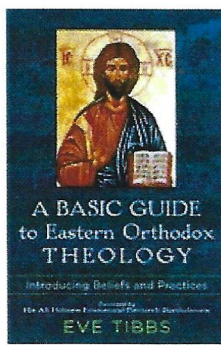
10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (Luncheon included\*)

OUR THEME FOR THE YEAR:  
UNDERSTANDING THE DIVINE LITURGY

**Our Speaker is Dr. Eve Tibbs**

**Dr. Tibbs is the celebrated author of the newly published book, *A Basic Guide to Eastern Orthodox Theology*.**

Copies of Dr. Eve Tibbs' book will be available in our parish book store. In addition, Dr. Tibbs is the affiliate assistant professor of theology at Fuller Theological Seminary, and the director of our Metropolis of San Francisco Christian Education Ministry.



**The Topics for the day:**

- 1) "Why Do We Worship the Way We Do?"
- 2) "Understanding the Great Feasts Through Icons and Hymns"

**Dr. Tibbs' presentations are fast-moving, interactive, visually interesting, and accessible!**

St. George Greek Orthodox Church, 74-109 Larrea Street, Palm Desert, California 92260  
Phone: (760) 568-9901

\*Registration: \$10.00 payable to St. George Greek Orthodox Church