

SEPTEMBER 2022



# Voice of St. George

SAINT GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH  
OF THE DESERT

74-109 LARREA ST., PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA



## FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD

In his classic book, *For the Life of the World*, Fr. Alexander Schmemmann brings to our attention two basic world views; 1) the Orthodox Christian world view, and, 2) the secular world view.

The Orthodox Christian world view sees everything, including ourselves, as belonging to God. The secular world view, which was first embraced by Adam and Eve - and which led to their loss of Paradise -- sees everything as belonging to one's self, that is, to the generalized "me," as popularized in today's society.

It is through our wholehearted participation in the prayers; the hymns, and the elements of the Divine Liturgy that we can comprehend the Orthodox Christian world view, through which we see our own lives; the lives of others and everything in the world as the property of God. In gratitude to God, we offer everything to God's glory by using everything for good deeds; we commit our lives and the lives of our love-ones to inspire others to love God. In short, for Orthodox Christians, the world is to be *offered* to God by us as co-workers with God. For those embracing the secular world view, the world is to be *consumed* by us for our survival and for our glory.

Many of our Saints have spoken about the two trees that stand before us in our lives. The one Tree is the Cross of our

Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ, upon which He gave His Body and Blood for our Eternal Salvation. In gratitude, we *offer* our own sweat and blood to bring forth the fruits of the world – the wheat and the fruit of the vine – in the form of bread and wine so that we can join in God's divine energies in order to make the world God's Paradise. This is the Tree that we will venerate on **September 14th**, when we celebrate Its great **Exaltation** before the whole world. The other tree is the tree that was set before Adam and Eve – the tree from which they *took* from God in order to *have* its fruit for themselves. Hence, the Orthodox world view is one of *giving*; the secular world view is one of *taking*.

As Orthodox Christians, we do not participate in the Divine Liturgy in order to *take* Communion, or *get something* from the service. We participate in order to *give* ourselves for God and to *offer* God's Wisdom and Love to the people around us, beginning with our children. It is with this mentality that we baptize our children and raise them to know the teachings of our Holy Church – ultimately, so that they can be *offered* to God.

You see, then, how understanding the Divine Liturgy helps us to understand the whole life of the Church in touching every aspect of our lives.

+FR. THEODORE

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REFLECTION FOR THE FEAST OF  
THE INDICTION, 2022

By

His Eminence, Metropolitan Gerasimos  
of San Francisco

Beloved in the Lord,

The Feast of Indiction is upon us; the beginning of a new Ecclesiastical Year. The Liturgical cycle begins anew and our parishes reinvigorate their ministries as the summer comes to a close. But what does that mean for an Orthodox Christian? How can we prepare ourselves for the new Ecclesiastical Year and how can we set ourselves on the proper path that lies ahead?

In the secular world, we hear about New Year's Resolutions. Leading up to December 31 there are advertisements to influence our decisions with regard to health, weight loss, travel, personal relationships, jobs and family. But we do not have to wait four more months for this process, for our new Ecclesiastical Year celebration is upon us which gives us the opportunity to take a closer look at our spiritual lives and how we can make this year different, better, more impactful and more meaningful.

In the Book of Ecclesiastes we read, *"To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die . . . a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones . . . a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace."* (Ecclesiastes 3:1 - 8)

With the new Ecclesiastical Year upon us, now is the time to make positive changes for your life. Now is the time to make resolutions that will enrich your spiritual life this new Ecclesiastical Year. Resolve to devoting more time in daily prayer. We are always in such a hurry, but consider dedicating a few precious moments at the beginning of your day to give thanks to God before you rush off into the world. Resolve to

regularly attend Divine Services. Sunday morning seems like a great time sleep in, catch up on some reading, or even do laundry or yard work. But, when you think about the sacrifice the Lord made on the Cross, can we not offer a few hours from our day to join in prayer and partake of the Holy Sacraments?

As we have emerged from the pandemic, this is also the time to re-commit to attending Divine Services. Livestream served its purpose, but nothing can replace being in church, partaking of the sacraments, and worshipping as an Orthodox Christian family. Start this new ecclesiastical year on the right path and return to regular church attendance.

Our personal relationships come with their challenges, too. It is time to let go of the past, come to our loved ones, our fellow parishioners, our coworkers and friends, with forgiveness in our hearts and reconcile. This is a directive from the Lord in the Gospel of Matthew where He says, *" . . . if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."* (Matthew 6:15) What a beautiful example we will set for others to come together, cast aside differences and unite as brothers and sisters in the Lord, as we begin our spiritual journey through a new Ecclesiastical year.

We are living in a society that will also face many challenges in the coming year. At a time when there should be peace, we are surrounded by war. Stones are being cast between neighbors, countries and world leaders. They should be an example for us in their behavior, but rather they have become an example of what not to do and how not to act. We offer the following petitions at the beginning of each Divine Liturgy, *"For the peace of the whole world, for the stability of the holy churches of God, and for the unity of all; for our country, for the president, and for all in public service; for this city, and for every city and*

*Continued on the next page --->*

*REFLECTION FOR THE INDICATION, Continued*

land, and for the faithful who live in them, let us pray to the Lord." These are not just words on a page that you hear that every time you come to Church. They are fervent prayers that we should be offering with all our heart at each service, with a resounding, "Lord, have mercy - Kyrie Eleison" as our response. Let our lips offer these words with sincerity of heart, beseeching the Lord's watchful care on our world and His peace for the protection of all.

The Feast of Indiction also marks the Day of the Protection of Our Environment, as designated by His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew who states, *"If human beings were to treat one another's personal property the way they treat the natural environment, we would view that behavior as anti-social and illegal. We would expect legal sanctions and even compensation. When will we learn that to commit a crime against the natural world is also a sin?"* Let us then resolve to reduce our carbon footprint by recycling, conserving water, going paperless and eating locally produced and organic foods. God gave the world to us and we must protect and preserve it for future generations.

My beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord, the time is now if we are to embrace the start of this new Ecclesiastical year as Orthodox Christians and prepare ourselves for the journey ahead. What a blessing it is that, as our year begins, we can begin our lives in Christ with a renewed spirit and a reaffirmed commitment as individuals, families, and our parish communities to glorify Him from Whom all blessings flow.

May the Lord guide your steps throughout this new Ecclesiastical Year, and may His abiding love, grace and mercy be granted to you and to your loved ones always! God bless you!

**SPIRITUAL THOUGHTS**

by  
Deacon Euthym

*"It is more convincing to teach through actions than through words..."* Venerable Nilus

Stating the obvious, but how many times does our hypocrisy come through in our daily lives? Especially in the clergy (me included). We preach, then we don't act as we should. We tell our children not to do something...lower your screen time, don't drink, answer when spoken to...but then we increase our own screen time, drink too much, or ignore them when they speak to us. We rant about politics, gossip and criticize others then castigate others who have different opinions or gossip about us. "Woe unto you hypocrites" was not put into the gospel for the pharisees (they did not read it, maybe a few heard it)...it was written for us, first the believers, but specifically the clergy. That being said, let us be thoughtful as to how we behave, what we do, how we model for others, our children, people at work, our spouses. When we talk the talk, let us walk the walk.

*"Our life depends on the kind of thoughts we nurture. If our thoughts are peaceful, calm, meek, and kind, then that is what our life is like. If our attention is turned to the circumstances in which we live, we are drawn into a whirlpool of thoughts and can have neither peace nor tranquility..."* Elder Thaddeus

The idea that we can be "drawn into" a whirlpool of thoughts is very relatable, especially in today's world where we are assaulted on multiple fronts. Christ calls to us in today's Gospel, to come to Him who are heavy laden to find rest. It is in Christ-centered thought that we find peace, it is in the grace of the Holy Spirit that we experience true peace. The Elder is encouraging us to seek peaceful thoughts and to nurture them, this comes from seeking Christ in all things.

## CALENDAR OF UPCOMING PARISH EVENTS

### AHEPA NEWS

The next **Chapter meeting** will be **September 14th, with Bible Study at 6:00 p.m. followed by the meeting at 6:30 p.m.**

At the direction of our **Supreme President Jimmy Kokotas**, and the Supreme Lodge, the 2022 AHEPA 100th Anniversary Banquet will be held in Los Angeles, CA September 17. It is very important to have EVERY chapter attend this historic event. WE are honoring 2 spectacular individuals and some special recognitions will be made as well, to honored guests, **California Lt. Governor, Eleni Kounalakis** and the **Very Reverend Fr. John Bakas**.

Reservations and payment can be made to <https://ahepadistrict20.square.site>. Please contact **Brent Noyes** at: 818.640.1879, or [Troy4SC@aol.com](mailto:Troy4SC@aol.com) or [ahepa@ahepa.org](mailto:ahepa@ahepa.org) for more information. Checks can be mailed to; payable to AHEPA District 20 c/o Brent Noyes at 2163 Lenore drive, Glendale CA 91206.

### SUNDAY SCHOOL

Many thanks to the parents and Sunday School students who attended our "Sunday School Renewal with Open Arms" introductory meeting for the school year, 2022-2023 on Sunday, August 21, 2022 following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.

Sunday School classes begin on Sunday, September 25th, with a luncheon for the parents and the students, as class sessions feature educational and exiting activities. Parents are invited to a special session featuring issues related to making God real in our Orthodox homes.

One of the themes of our Sunday School lessons is "Gifts of the Spirit." A glance at our Sunday School bulletin board posted in our parish hall will explain that the Gifts of the Spirit are: patience, kindness, charity, love, knowledge, wisdom.

## PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS

If you are interested in participating in this years "**PAINT EL PASEO PINK WALK**", please see Rhonda Latkovic after church for a sign-up form. The walk will be on Saturday, October 8th, 2022 and will start at 8:00 AM. A donation of \$35 payable to Ladies Philoptochos covers the registration fee and includes a special event tee shirt!

Attention all Philoptochos Members – our first General Members Meeting for the back half of the year has been revised to **Monday, October 3rd, 2022 at 11:30 p.m at our church hall.**

### 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.

### 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.

### ST. GEORGE PARISH FALL 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**. Eve Tibbs received her PhD from Fuller Theological Seminary and she is the affiliate assistant professor of theology at Fuller Theological Seminary. She just 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!

She will present two topics: **"Why Do We Worship The Way We Do?"** and **"Understanding the Great Feasts Through Icons and Hymns."**

More details, along with posters, will be presented in the very near future, as well as throughout the month of October. Invite friends!

### CHOIR & CHANT CHOIR

As the New Ecclesiastical Year begins over the next two **Sundays, September 18th and 25th**, we are in the process of organizing a schedule for our parish choir and for our newly forming *chant choir*.

Those who want to sing in the choir are asked to contact our Choir Director, **Annette Laskaris** at **(760) 200- 3213**. Choir members are asked to commit to rehearsals as scheduled by our choir director. Those who want to join our newly forming *chant choir* are asked to contact **Deaconess Krisann Kontaxis** at **(760) 221-8928**. Chanters are asked to join with Krisann to learn our Orthodox Christian chanting discipline on a twice-a-month basis.

### WEEKDAY CHURCH SERVICES - SEPTEMBER 2022

Thursday, September 8th .....NATIVITY OF THE MOST BLESSED THEOTOKOS  
Orthros- 8:30 a.m. / Divine Liturgy- 9:30 a.m.

Tuesday, September 13th.....GREAT VESPERS - 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, September 14th.....EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS (strict fasting day)  
Orthros-8:30 a.m./ Divine Liturgy - 9:30 a.m.

Monday, September 26th.....FALLING ASLEEP OF ST. JOHN THE THEOLOGIAN  
Orthros-8:30 a.m./ Divine Liturgy -9:30 a.m.