



OCTOBER 2023

VOICE OF ST. GEORGE

**SAINT GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT
74-109 LARREA ST.,
PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA**



INTRODUCING THE SAINTS TO OUR CHILDREN

Inside this Issue

On **October 20th** every year we celebrate the memory of **St. Gerasimos of Cephalonia**. Specifically, it is on this day that we commemorate the translation of his holy relics. (His dormition is celebrated on August 16th.) St. Gerasimos is the patron Saint of our beloved **Metropolitan Gerasimos** of San Francisco and our parish is honored to have a shine area dedicated to St. Gerasimos in our church narthex, at which parishioners may venerate the sacred relics of St. Gerasimos and the icon which depicts him. To this day, his sacred body, which gave way to physical death in 1579, has not decomposed and remains at the monastery in Omala, which he established at Cephalonia.

St. Gerasimos was born in 1509 in Peloponnesus. He was born into a wealthy family as a descendent of a very influential family in the Byzantine Era, known as the Notaras Family. By reading the Bible to him and by setting for him the example of Christ-like love in their own lives, his parents, Demetrios and Kale, raised him to devote his life to the glory of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

As a young man, he made the decision to give up his wealth and his ties to the politically influential powers of the Notaras Family. He chose to go to Mt. Athos as a monk so that he could

join himself to Christ through prayer and spiritual discipline. In Christ, he was given the power to heal ailments and chase away demons.

His divine, Christ-like way of life influenced the many people throughout the district -- so much so, that a young man by the name of Draganigos Sigouros, who was born in 1547, turned to St. Gerasimos for spiritual direction and was subsequently baptized by him into the Orthodox Christian Faith. Draganigos went on to follow the example of his Godfather, St. Gerasimos, and, upon his ordination as bishop, he took on the name, Dionysios and is known to us today as **St. Dionysios of Zakynthos**.

St. Gerasimos, like all of our Saints, serves as an example of how one person can help save the lives and souls of the people around him or her, as well as those of generations into the future. Indeed, the world launches ailments against us and demons seek to destroy. However, like all the Saints, St. Gerasimos shows us tangibly that, if we are with Christ, nothing can be against us.

Through Sunday School and with the support of our parents and grandparents, our children can learn to have our saints as their best friends in the world. +FR.THEODORE

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SPIRITUAL THOUGHTS

by
Deacon Euthym

"If you want to conquer vainglory, love not praise, nor honor, nor fine clothes, nor precedence, nor favor; but on the contrary, cherish occasions when you are reprimanded and dishonored, when false charges are brought against you – and reproach yourself for being more sinful than any sinner..." Venerable Ephraim the Syrian

Wow, can we lean into the idea that when we not only accept, but "cherish," those moments in life when we are falsely blamed, reprimanded, "dissed", or insulted, we conquer pride. It is in these moments when we see our true selves, when the false accusation, in some way, has a truth. When we are reprimanded without cause, we actually see the need to be reprimanded for a past sin. When we are dishonored, we see a time when we were not honorable. In this way, we correct ourselves as "sinners among sinners;" but, through Christ, Who was the Innocent accused par-excellence, accepting it for our salvation, we become victors over vainglory and pride.

"When the words we speak and our conversations are measured, and we don't idle-talk, and, if we say the prayer out loud, holding on to it tightly so it doesn't escape from our mouth for even a second, then we will see the difference in our soul..." Gerondissa Makrina

The idea of every breath praising the Lord, every heartbeat glorifying Him, is a product of intentionality... to put God first in our hearts and to have Him as our first love. In this way, our life becomes a living prayer. Let us slow down, if but for a few minutes, to experience this. The words we say, the actions we take, the quality of our prayers will deepen and give us the kind of peace that is beyond the temporary trappings of this world, is eternal and completely fulfilling. This peace only comes from a deep relationship with Christ, as St Paul said, "Not I, but Christ in me."

"Seek God, and not where God lives..." Abba Sisoos

Often we seek a specific outcome and not a specific relationship in prayer. We want heaven, but reject God. We want peace and harmony but forget that it is the Holy Spirit that gives us peace. We want healthy relationships, but reject the perfect relationship that Christ offers us. We need to seek God and establish our relationship with Him, then paradise awaits. When we try to make our own paradise apart from God, we have no hope for peace and harmony. **"Seek Ye first the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness, and all things shall be added unto you"** (Mathew 6:33).

"What can we conclude from all that has been said? Come to know yourself, your weakness and sinfulness; do not judge anyone, do not justify yourself, but humble yourself, and in due time the Lord will then uplift you...." Abbot Nikon Vorobiev

In due time the Lord will uplift you. Our humble prayers are answered in time, not our time, but God's perfect time. The key is honestly looking at ourselves with humility. When we expose our true selves to God's grace with humility and love, His grace heals and uplifts. Let us try to take heed to our weaknesses and instead of judging or blaming, own them, ask for forgiveness and wait patiently for His mercy.

"God loves us very much; He has us in mind in each and every moment and He protects us. We should know this and not be afraid of anything..." Elder Porphyrios

..."**Not be afraid of anything**", if God is for us who can be against us? How beautiful that the Elder reminds us that God is constantly thinking of us, protecting us and loving us. When we think this way, our fears melt away, nothing can intimidate us, our thoughts and anxieties are relieved and we live with a singular purpose, to respond to God's love. This is truly the **ONLY** purpose in life...to glorify God.

"Attachment to the temporary life, to one's own health, leads to many deviations from God's
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SPIRITUAL THOUGHTS, Continued

commandments, to the indulgence of the flesh, to breaking the fasts, to evading the conscientious fulfillment of the duties connected with our service, to despondency, impatience, irritability..." Righteous John, Wonderworker of Kronstadt

Interesting take, focusing on the self vs the other and attachment to the world vs the kingdom of God eventually leads to sadness, impatience and a lack of peace. So when we find ourselves out of sorts, let us look carefully at our lives and our attachments. Are we following the faith, is God our priority? The more we check on our souls and make adjustments on a daily, if not hourly basis, the closer to Christ we find ourselves and the more peace we have in our heart.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Our Sunday School season is well under way. Let us all offer prayers for God to help us to inspire our children to seek a personal relationship with Christ our God. Let us come together for our **October Family Sunday School class on Sunday, October 22, with "Harvest Patio Party"** being an opportunity to learn about our Orthodox Faith in an atmosphere of fellowship.

We offer prayers of thanks for **Eleni Castrale**, who, along with a friend from Sacred Heart School, joined with **Liam Hayes** and **Colin Hayes** in preparing hygiene kits for distribution to the homeless in our area.



Sunday School students and staff working with Philoptochos for the distribution of hygiene kits for the poor.

Understanding God's love is not seen in the faces of Christian Saints, whom we honor as Orthodox Christians. The goal of Bible study and catechism is not simply to learn verses and historical facts. The goal is to live according to the Bible and learn how the Saints lived the Bible!

As baptized members of our Orthodox Faith, we are called upon to put the teachings of our Lord into practice. Our Saints provide examples for us to follow in doing this by way of their own lifestyles and their influence in the development of our worship services. If we invest ourselves in understanding the meaning of our Orthodox Christian worship services, we will understand the "mind" of the Church, which will, in turn, help maintain sanity in our minds.

Our children need to come to Sunday School on a regular basis so that they can become the Saints of tomorrow's Church.

PHILOPTOCHOS

The **Philoptochos General Meeting** planned for Monday, Sept. 25th was cancelled. We have **re-scheduled our October meeting to Monday, the 23rd**, to allow time for our "snowbird" members to return to the desert.

The "**Paint El Paseo Pink Walk**" is coming up on **Saturday, October 14th at 8:00 AM**. Registration is a \$ 35.00 donation and includes a walk t-shirt. We will have a table set-up to take registrations for the walk over the next two Sundays. See enclosed flyer

OCTOBER SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

Our Adult Bible Study sessions originally scheduled for every Wednesday evenings beginning on October 11th is to be rescheduled.

Those who are unable to attend our Tuesday morning Adult Bible Study and are interested in joining an evening or weekend Adult Bible Study are asked to send their email addresses to our parish office at pdsaintgeorge@gmail.com, so that a Zoom link can be provided for those who cannot join in-person sessions. In sending an email address to our parish office, please indicate a

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OCTOBER SPIRITUAL RENEWAL, *Continued*

preference as to day and evening time that would be most convenient. Those who would like to attend an evening or weekend Bible Study in person, please inform Fr. Ted.

Re-imagine Orthodoxy has been rescheduled to begin in November, when more of our “snow birds” have returned and our parishioners have more time to register for the online, “Zoom” at pdsgsaintgeorge@gmail.com so that you can receive presentations. To register, email our parish office a link to join. There will be three sessions, one session per month.

Session 1: Understanding the Nicene Creed, the Christian Faith based on the Holy Bible.

Session 2: Holy Tradition and the Orthodox Christian Mentality.

Session 3: Ministries of the Orthodox Church today.

Based on those who register, a consensus regarding dates and times for these sessions will help determine the schedule to be followed.

“BELLS ACROSS AMERICA”

On **Sunday, September 17th**, our parish was honored to host the annual “ringing of the bells” in observance of the Signing of the U.S. Constitution – this being the **236th observance**. We are most grateful to the members of local chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution for choosing our parish for this honor.

Our church bell rang at 1:00 p.m. as bells across America also rang at the same time – 4:00 p.m. Eastern Time; 3:00 p.m. Central Time; 2:00 p.m. Mountain Time, and 1:00 p.m. our time.

Among our honored guests were **Her Honor, Kathleen Kelly, Mayor of Palm Desert**, and **Palm Desert City Council member, Jan Harnik**, along with the local Cahuilla chapter of the **Daughters of the American Revolution Regent, Alice Barnhart**.

Special prayers of thanks are offered to **Rhonda Latkovic** for making the arrangements for hosting this event and **Pete Snarskis** for ringing the

bell in our church tower throughout the observance and for setting up the podium for the official declaration of the event to be read by Her Honor, Mayor Kathleen Kelly.



Pictured above (left to right): Palm Desert Council Woman, Jan Harnik, Philoptochos President, Rhonda Latkovic, Palm Desert Mayor, the Honorable Kathleen Kelly.



Pictured above (left to right): Daughters of the American Revolution, Cahuilla Chapter Regent, Alice Barnhart, Philoptochos President, Rhonda Latkovic, The Palm Desert Mayor, the Honorable Kathleen Kelly, delivering the Proclamation in commemoration of the Signing of the U.S. Constitution.



Above, representing our St. George Parish Council, serving as the “bell ringer” for the “Bells Across America” observance of the Signing of the U. S. Constitution: Peter Snarskis

BELLS ACROSS AMERICA, Continued



St. George parishioners and representatives of the Palm Desert community gathered at our parish to observe the annual Daughters of the American Revolution observance of the Signing in the U.S. Constitution on September 17th.

AHEPA

The AHEPA 528 Fall fundraiser, “Dinner Night Out,” held on Saturday, September 30th, was a great success. Many thanks to **Maria and Bill Rellos, Ana and Wynn Storton, Nicholas Latkovic and Matthew Holm** for their efforts in organizing, preparing, and providing a wonderful Greek-style dinner, featuring delicious “yemista,” along with keftethakia and all the trimmings.

We join in congratulating **Matthew Holm** for being honored as the **AHEPAN of the Year for AHEPA District 20**. This honor was announced at the AHEPA National Convention in Las Vegas this past August.

The **October AHEPA 528 meeting** will be held at our parish hall on **Tuesday, October 10th at 6:00 p.m.**



Pictured above from left to right: Wynn Storton, AHEPA 528 Chapter President, Matthew Holm, recipient of this year’s AHEPA District 20 “AHEPAN of The Year” Award, Nicholas Latkovic, and Bill Rellos



Above, Fr. Ted (right) and AHEPA 528 Chapter President, Wynn Storton (left) opened the “Dinner Night Out” event with prayer and expressions of thanks to Maria Rellos and her team for providing the evening’s delicious dinner.



Pictured above: Bill and Maria Rellos, Co-chairs and hosts of our AHEPA 528 “Dinner Night Out” on Saturday, September 30th.



Above, Wynn Storton (left) looked on as Matthew Holm (right) addressed the “Dinner Night Out” guests show-casing the AHEPA 528 Fr.T.P. Theophilos Memorial Scholarship Awards.



Above, Emmarie Shannazarian addressed AHEPA “Dinner Night Out” guests, offering thanks to our AHEPA 528 chapter for awarding her the Fr. T.P. Theophilos Memorial Scholarship this past May.

2024 GREEK FESTIVAL

The first Festival meeting for the season was held at our parish hall on Monday, September 25th. We need **helpers** for our festival. Those who want to help are asked to contact the **General Chairman of our 2024 Greek Festival, George Argyros**, or contact our parish office at (760) 568-9901.

The next Festival meeting is scheduled for **Monday, November 6th at 4:00 p.m.** We need parishioners to offer help in areas of set-up, operations of Festival stations, and clean up!

CHANTING, SINGING & READING -- Those who want to personally participate in our worship-ministries by chanting, singing in the choir, reading Scriptural passages, or ushering may volunteer by **contacting Fr. Ted and identifying the particular worship-ministry of interest.** Fr. Ted will then direct them to the appropriate chairperson or leader who schedules practices or lessons for the requested ministries. Participation in our worship-ministries helps to better understand our Holy Church services.

METROPOLIS OF SAN FRANCISCO GALA

The Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco celebrates over 100 years of ministry on the west coast with a magnificent black-tie Gala held at the **Westin St. Francis on Union Square**, 335 Powell Street, San Francisco, CA on **Saturday, October 28, 2023.** The Gala honors its fourteen ministries, the extraordinary leadership of the Hierarchs who have served the Metropolis over the past century, and the presentation of the **2023 Theofanis Economidis Award to His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco.** For information on tickets, sponsorships and donations, please visit: www.sanfran.goarch.org/Gala.

While this event conflicts with our parish Fall Retreat, our support for His Eminence, Metropolitan Gerasimos can be expressed through prayer/congratulatory messages via email at: Metropolis@sanfran.goarch.org. Information as to how to send donations to our Metropolis ministries can be accessed at: www.sanfran.goarch.org/Gala.

ST. GEORGE PARISH CALENDAR – OCTOBER 2023

SUNDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE – Orthros-8:30 a.m./Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.

PLEASE NOTE: **Wednesday evening Bible Studies** originally scheduled to begin on Wednesday, October 4/11 will be rescheduled pending feedback regarding a more available day and time per week. Originally scheduled **Re-imagine Orthodoxy** sessions are planned to be rescheduled to begin in November.

Tuesday, October 3rd – Bible Study -10:00 a.m./ Holy Water Service – 11:15 a.m.

Tuesday, October 10th – Bible Study – 10:00 a.m./ AHEPA 528 meeting – 6:00 p.m.

Saturday, October 14th -“Paint El Paseo Pink Walk” fundraiser for cancer research—8:00 p.m.

Sunday, October 15th – “Bring a Friend to Church” Sunday.”

Tuesday, October 17th – Bible Study – 10:00 a.m.

Friday, October 20th-ST. GERASIMOS of CEPHALONIA-Orthros-8:30 a.m./Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.

Sunday, October 22nd- Sunday School “Harvest Patio Party” - Special lesson and project.

Monday, October 23rd – ST. JAMES THE APOSTLE – Orthros, 8:30 a.m./Divine Liturgy, 9:30 a.m.
Philoptochos General Members Meeting - 11:30 a.m.

Tuesday, October 24th – Bible Study – 10:00 a.m.

Thursday, October 26th-ST. DEMETRIOS the MARTYR-Orthros-8:30 a.m./Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.

Saturday, October 28th – St. George Parish Fall Spiritual Retreat – 10:00 a.m.-2:30 p.m.



Pictured above are our **beautiful new Gold Altar Coverings**. Those who would like to donate toward the cost of these beautiful new Altar Coverings in prayer for the health of family members and/or in memory of family members or friends, please see Fr. Ted.



PAINT EL PASEO PINK!

The 17th Annual "Paint El Paseo Pink" Breast Cancer Awareness Walk & Fundraiser will take place on Saturday, October 14, 2023.

Join our Saint George Team!

Our Philoptochos has participated in the annual Desert Cancer Foundation Pink Walk every year since 2018 and donated thousands of dollars towards cancer care for local residents

Registration Fee: \$35

The "Paint El Paseo Pink Walk" is coming up on Saturday, October 14th at 8:00 AM. Registration is a \$ 35.00 donation and includes a walk tee-shirt. We will have a table set-up to take registrations for the walk over the next two Sundays.



**“THE
THEOTOKOS,
THE MOTHER
OF THE LIGHT”**



Father Josiah Trenham is the Pastor of St. Andrew Antiochian Orthodox Church, Riverside, California and he is the founder and director of Patristic Nectar Publications.

**ST. GEORGE
FALL SPIRITUAL RETREAT
Saturday, October 28, 2023
Father Josiah Trenham, Guest Speaker
10:00 a.m.—2:30 p.m.
St. George Greek Orthodox Church
74-109 Larrea Street
Palm Desert, California 92260
At will donation: \$15.00 (Lunch included)**

R.S.V. P. to: St. George Fall Spiritual Retreat:
St. George Greek Orthodox Church
74-109 Larrea St.

Palm Desert, California 92260

Telephone; (760) 568-9901/ email: pdsaintgeorge@gmail.com

Or, contact Fr. Theodore Pantels, pastor, St. George Greek Orthodox Church:
Telephone: (760) 880-5869