



MARCH 2024

VOICE OF ST. GEORGE

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



THE MIND OF THE CHURCH

On **Sunday, March 24th**, we will celebrate the **Sunday of Orthodoxy**. A controversy that raged for about 120 years was put to rest at the 7th Ecumenical Council in 787 A.D. when, through the Grace of the Holy Spirit, the Church with “one mouth and one heart” upheld the use of Holy Icons for the purpose of prayer and worship. In upholding the use of Icons, the Church confirmed Her doctrine that Christ is True God, Who was incarnated for our salvation and, as Man, He physically died on the Cross for the forgiveness of our sins, and as God, He physically arose from the dead, making a way for all of humanity to find eternal salvation in God’s Kingdom. Although the 7th Ecumenical Council decreed that the use of Holy Icons for prayer and worship was vital in the strengthening of our relationship with Christ our God, it was Empress Theodora, who in 842 A.D., officially celebrated the restoration of Holy Icons with a city-wide procession of Icons from the Holy Church of Blachernae, which ended at the Great Church of Hagia Sophia.

In the mind of the Church, Christ God is the *uncreated Image of God*. Human beings are the *created Images of God*. Through the Holy Sacraments, Christ’s divine-human nature fuses with our physical-spiritual beings – we abide in Christ and Christ abides in us.

This has implications in the moral life of Orthodox faithful as expressed in our Church’s canon law. Our own flesh and blood, along with the entire created world belong to God, as do our souls are the “breath of God” within us. Hence, such notions as “It’s my body and I’ll do what I want,” does not jive with the “mind” of the Church.

The message of the Holy Icons is that each of us is the property of God. Our Church’s proclamations and decisions come through the Grace of the Holy Spirit and the deliberations of the bishops of the Church in full unity. The teachings of the Church are not issued to “please the masses.” They are issued with care for the salvation of souls.

Going forward, let us consult the Holy Scriptures and the writings of our Saints, upon which the use of Holy Icons is based. Let us seek from our clergy and theologians guidance which is based on the Sacred Tradition of the Apostles. Let us *not* follow the fads, fashions or ideals of a world that exalts “self” over God. Let us be careful with our thoughts, our motives and our lives!
+FR. THEODORE

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Inserts: “Saturday of Souls Form;”

St. George Parish Lenten Retreat on April 6th.

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SPIRITUAL THOUGHTS – GREAT LENT

With **Great Lent beginning on Monday, March 18th, the following thoughts from Fr. Thomas Hopko, helps us in our spiritual preparations.**

“Let Us Begin with Joy”

Joy is at the heart of everything in the Christian life and *Great Lent* is no exception. The hymns and verses of the church services call Christians to begin with rejoicing.

*“Let us enter the Fast with joy, O faithful.
Let us not be sad.
Let us cleanse our faces with the waters of
dispassion, blessing and exalting Christ for-
ever.*

*Let us begin the Fast with joy.
Let us give ourselves to spiritual efforts.
Let us cleanse our souls.
Let us cleanse our flesh.*

*Let us fast from passions as we fast from
foods, taking pleasure in the good works
of the Spirit and accomplishing them
in love that we all may be made worthy
to see the Passion of Christ our God and
His Holy Pascha, rejoicing with spiritu-
al joy.”*

(Forgiveness Sunday Vespers)

Jesus commands all those who fast to be joyful. He condemns sadness and grief, especially the outward appearance of fasting before men. He orders His people to hide their sorrow and to cover their sadness over sin. He directs them to hide their acts of penitence, to keep their mortifications secret, to appear shining and bright to the world.

“And when you fast, do not look dismal like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by men but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

(Mt. 6:16-18)

Sadness for Christians is a sin to be repented of – not a virtue to be cultivated. Blessed mourning

over the tragedies of this fallen world is necessary. Those who mourn over evil are promised comfort by the Lord. And godly grief over sins for the sake of leading us to conversion and repentance is essential. The Apostle Paul refers to this in his second letter to the Corinthians.

“...For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation and brings no regret, but worldly grief produces death.”

(Cor. 7:9-10).

In the Lenten season the Christian struggles to put aside all “worldly grief” and to embrace the “godly grief” which St. John Climacus calls the “blessed joy-grief of holy compunction,” which inspires “spiritual laughter in the soul,” since “God does not ask or desire that a person should mourn from sorrow of heart, but rather that out of love for Him one should rejoice with spiritual joy.” ...

These lessons from the saints are the teachings of the Church herself from her services for the lenten spring.

– Taken from *Lenten Spring*, by Thomas Hopko

SUNDAY SCHOOL

We encourage our Sunday School students to participate in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy with their parents and to follow lessons that are available from either **Mrs. Athena Snarskis** or **Pres. Petula**. Going forward, **special Sunday School classes** and events are being planned for **next Sunday, March 10th** and **Sunday, March 24th (Sunday of Orthodoxy)**. Parents and students are asked to bring their icons for the procession on Sunday of Orthodoxy.

ST. GEORGE PARISH LENTEN RETREAT

St. George Parish Lenten Retreat on Saturday, April 6, 2024. Fr. Steven Tschlis, pastor of St. Paul’s Greek Orthodox Church in Irvine, California will return for “Part 2” of our Lenten Retreat Series, “Living the Liturgy.” His presentations at last year’s “Part 1” of the Series was truly inspiring.

A **free-will donation** is appreciated. **R.S.V.P to Fr. Ted by Sunday, March 31st.** See enclosed flier.

PHILOPTOCHOS

—**Paint & Sip: March 3rd** ...Following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, **Part One of March's "Paint-n-Sip" Activity** was to be presented. **Part 2 of this month's "Paint-n-Sip Activity** will be presented on **Sunday, March 24th**. March's "Paint-n-Sip" is an opportunity to learn about the art of iconography with the guidance from **Louka and Mary Brown**. With prayer and proper technique, participants will create their own icons. See enclosed flier.

—**Membership Tea & Luncheon**...The annual **Philoptochos Membership Tea and Luncheon** will be held at our parish hall next **Saturday, March 9th at 11:30 a.m.** To learn more details, **R.S.V.P. to Rhonda Latkovic**. **The deadline is extended to Monday, March 4th.**

AHEPA

Many thanks to the AHEPA 528 members who helped with the AHEPA Booth at our St. George Greek Festival. Many blessings to **Wynn and Ana Storton** for all of their dedicated efforts in organizing the items that were offered for sale this year. The "AHEPA Booth" was a great success!

The March **AHEPA 528 meeting** will be on **Tuesday, March 12th at 6:30 p.m.** at our parish hall.

GREEK FESTIVAL

Complications arose with regard to printing the pictures from this year's Greek Festival at this time. Look for a special "**Greek Festival**" **publication** in the near future, featuring pictures, reviews and/or preliminary reports.

In general, it was a most successful Greek Festival. Many thanks to Festival Chairman, **George Argyros** and his core team of parishioners who, from January, worked on a near-daily basis for the success of our Festival: **John Petalas, Pete Snarskis, Nick Latkovic, Elias Doubaratzis, Mark George, Stacey Argyros, Tina Veroulis, Jim Christopoulos, Stanley Segaar, and Jeffery Bischoff**.

We also express sincere gratitude to our Parish Council President, **Chris Maletis**, whose guidance in coordination with our Festival core com-

mittee, helped tremendously.

We also thank God for those who chaired the various Festival stations (aside from the intensive kitchen duties of set-up and cooking, which were handled by "core committee members"): **Julia Hays** (childrens' corner), **Debora Pousen** and **Pam Zaverdas** (Yiayia's Attic), **Tasia Richards** and **Nick Krespis** (Greek wines and liquors), **Margarita Pagoulatos, Emmy Karris** and **Andrew Constatinidis** (Greek Coffee), **Rhonda Latkovic** and **Tina Veroulis** (Greek Groceries and items in support of City of Hope), **Chris Maletis** and **Ed Maletis** (dinner line), **Athena Snarskis** (St. George Bookstore), **Deacon Euthym** and **Krisann** (Loukoumades), **Matthew Holm** and **Irene Stambolos** (Church Tours), **Lou** and **Penny Karagianis** (front gate), **Eve-Marie Gandrillon** and **Carol Speliopoulos** (back gate), **Vincent Gandrillon** and **Louka** (shuttle carts), **Rena Iakovides, Joan Fakinos, and Gloria & Stephanie Christopoulos** (pastry booths), **Carol Lyons** and **Mary Piggott** (pastry storage), **Chrysanthe Mehas** and **Katrina Bischoff** (pastry take out). We are grateful for all who worked with Festival Chairman, **George Argyros**; the core committee, and the Festival station chairpersons for Festival's success.

We also express our sincere appreciation to **Demetrios** and **Mariana Koromilas** for their efforts in helping with set-up and take-down of our Festival stations, as well as assisting with various clean-up chores.

All who attended the Church Tours were inspired by the presentations of **Fr. Ted** and **Deacon Euthym**. A significant number of participants showed sincere interest in learning more about Greek Orthodox Christianity and, entertained the idea of embracing our Orthodox Faith.

The **Festival Appreciation Dinner** on Monday, February 19th was a great tribute to all who helped. Guests were honored by **His Grace, Bishop Spyridon**, who spoke eloquently in sharing His sincere thanks to God for our St. George parishioners who came together for the resounding success of this year's Festival.

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GREEK FESTIVAL, *Continued*

It was announced that this year, **gross** proceeds from our Festival were **significantly more** than last year's gross proceeds. Final figures will be presented at our parish General Assembly Meeting on **Sunday, March 31st**.

ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CATECHISM

The next Catechism Class will be on **Wednesday, March 13th at 6:30 p.m.**, discussing Fr. Alexander Schmemmann's book, *Great Lent* (available at our bookstore). With Great Lent, discussion will be held about setting a new day and time for our weekly Online Orthodox Catechism Class. To join the class on March 13th, email Fr. Ted for a zoom link.

SPRING GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Our **Spring St. George Parish General Assembly** will be held on **Sunday, March 31, 2024**, following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy.

H ΝΟΟΤΡΟΠΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑΣ

Την **Κυριακή 24 Μαρτίου** θα εορτάσουμε την **Κυριακή της Ορθοδοξίας**. Ο αγώνας υπέρ της χρήσεως των Αγίων Εικόνων συνεχούσε για περίπου 120 χρόνια. Όμως, έφθασε σε λύση κατά την 7η Οικουμενική Σύνοδο το 787, όταν, διά μέσου της Χάρτιος του Αγίου Πνεύματος, η Εκκλησία "*εν ενί στόματι και μία καρδία*" επιβεβαίωσε την χρήση των Αγίων Εικόνων για προσευχή και για την θεία λατρεία. Υποστηρίζοντας την χρήση των Εικόνων, η Εκκλησία, επιβεβαίωσε επίσης την διδασκαλία Της ότι ο Χριστός είναι Αληθινός Θεός, ο Οποίος ενσαρκώθηκε για την ημετέραν σωτηρίαν και, ως Άνθρωπος, απέθανε εν σώματι επάνω στον Σταυρό για τη συγχώρεση των αμαρτιών μας, και ως Θεός, εν σώματι ανεστήθηκε εκ των νεκρών, ανοίγωντας τον δρόμο για όλη την ανθρωπότητα να έχει την αιώνιον σωτηρίαν στην Βασιλείαν Του. Αν και η 7η Οικουμενική Σύνοδος εδικήρυξε ότι η χρήση των Αγίων Εικόνων για προσευχή και για την θεία λατρεία παίζει μεγάλο ρόλο για ενίσχυση της σχέσεώς μας με τον Χριστό, ήταν η αυτοκράτειρα Θεοδώρα, που κατά το έτος 842 εόρτασε επίσημα την

αναστήλωση των Αγίων Εικόνων με δημόσια «εκδήλωση», καθώς ο λαός επερνούσε με τις Εικόνες από όλη την πόλη αρχίζοντας από τον Ιερό Ναό Βλαχερνών μέχρι που έφθασε στον μεγάλο ναό της Αγίας Σοφίας.

Σύμφωνα με την νοοτροπία της Εκκλησίας, ο Χριστός είναι η *άκτιστη* Εικόνα του Θεού. Ο άνθρωπος είναι ο *δημιουργημένος* Εικόνα του Θεού. Διά μέσων των Αγίων Μυστηρίων, η θεανθρώπινη φύσις του Χριστού ενώνεται με τη δική μας ανθρώπινη φύση – σώμα και ψυχή. Ζει ο Χριστός εν ημίν και εμείς ζούμε εν Χριστώ.

Δηλαδή, ανήκουμε στον Θεο. Η σάρκα μας και όλη η υλική δημιουργία ανήκουν στον Θεό, όπως και οι ψυχές μας που είναι η «πινοή του Θεού» μέσα μας. Ως εκ τούτου, η ιδέα που ακούεται μερικές φορές όπως, «είναι η δική μου ζωή και θα κάνω ό,τι θέλω», δεν ταιριάζει με τη νοοτροπία της Εκκλησίας.

Μάλιστα, η νοοτροπία της Εκκλησίας επηρεάζει τον ολόκληρο ηθικό νόμο της Εκκλησίας, ο οποίος εκφράζεται δια μέσων των ιερών κανόνων της. Από τις Αγίες Εικόνες γνωρίζομεν ότι οι διακηρύξεις και οι εκφράσεις της Εκκλησίας μας προέρχονται από την Χάρη του Αγίου Πνεύματος και τις συνομιλίες των επισκόπων της Εκκλησίας, οι οποίοι είναι ενωμένοι εν πνεύματι. Οι διδασκαλίες της Εκκλησίας δεν διακηρύσσονται για να «ευαρεστήσουν τον κόσμο». Διακηρύσσονται για την σωτηρία των ψυχών μας.

Εν τέλει, ας συμβουλευθούμε από τις Αγίες Γραφές και τα συγγράμματα των Αγίων μας, επάνω στα οποία βασίζεται η χρήση των Αγίων Εικόνων. Ας αναζητήσουμε καθοδήγηση από τους κληρικούς και θεολόγους που βασίζεται στην Ιερά Παράδοση των Αποστόλων. Ας μην ακολουθήσουμε ποτέ τις κοσμικές μόδες, φιλοσοφίες, ή και τις διδασκαλίες ενός κόσμου που εξυψώνει τον «εαυτό» του ανθρώπου έναντι της αγάπης του Θεού. Ας προσέχουμε τις σκέψεις μας, τη νοοτροπία μας και τους τρόπους με τους οποίους ζούμε καθημερινώς!

+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

PARISH CALENDAR- MARCH 2024

Monday, March 4th – Wednesday, March 6th...Fr. Ted will be attending the Metropolis of San Francisco Clergy-Laity Assembly at St. Nicholas Ranch. **No Bible Study on March 5th & no Online Orthodox Christian Catechism Class on March 6th.**

Saturday, March 9th.....SATURDAY OF SOULS

Orthros-8:00 a.m./Divine Liturgy-9:00 a.m. (NOTE early start times)
Philoptochos Tea and Membership Luncheon – 11:30 a.m.

Tuesday, March 12th.....Bible Study -10:00 a.m.

Wednesday, March 13th...Online Orthodox Christian Catechism Class- 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, March 16th.....SATURDAY OF SOULS

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

Sunday, March 17th.....Forgiveness Sunday

Monday, March 18th.....FIRST DAY OF GREAT LENT – Lenten Orthros Service - 9:00 a.m.

Tuesday, March 19th.....Bible Study -10:00 a.m.

Wednesday, March 20th....PRESANCTIFIED DIVINE LITURGY -6:00 p.m.

Friday, March 22nd.....PRESANCTIFIED DIVINE LITURGY – 9:00 a.m.

FIRST SALUTATIONS TO THE VIRGIN MARY – 6:00 p.m.

Saturday, March 23rd..... SATURDAY OF SOULS

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

Sunday, March 24th.....SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY (Procession with the Holy Icons). Following the Divine Liturgy: Part 2 of the Philoptochos “Paint-n-Sip” project.
Great Vespers for the Annunciation – 6:00 p.m.

Monday, March 25th..... THE GREAT FEAST DAY OF THE ANNUNCIATION

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

Tuesday, March 26th..... Bible Study -10:00 a.m.

Wednesday, March 27th..... PRESANCTIFIED DIVINE LITURGY -6:00 p.m.

Friday, March 29th.....PRESANCTIFIED DIVINE LITURGY – 9:00 a.m.

SECOND SALUTATION TO THE VIRGIN MARY – 6:00 p.m.

Sunday, March 31st.....Spring General Assembly Meeting following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy

Tuesday, April 2nd.....Bible Study – 10:00 a.m.

Wednesday, April 3rd.....PRESANCTIFIED DIVINE LITURGY – 6:00 p.m.

Friday, April 5th.....PRESANCTIFIED DIVINE LITURGY -9:00 a.m.

THIRD SALUTATIONS TO THE VIRGIN MARY – 6:00 p.m.

Saturday, April 6th.....ST. GEORGE PARISH LENTEN RETREAT – 10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

St. George
Greek Orthodox Church's
2024 Lenten Retreat

Living the Liturgy

with

Father Steven Tsichlis

Pastor of St. Paul Greek Orthodox Church, Irvine, CA
Author of *A Worshiper's Guide to the Divine Liturgy*

Saturday, April 6, 2024

10:30 AM – 2:30 PM

Lenten Lunch Included

Session 1

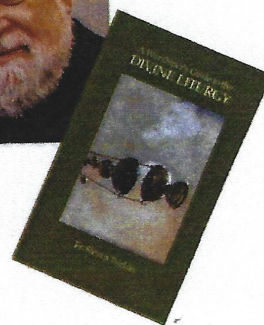
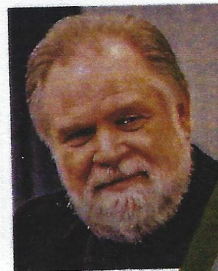
10:30 AM – 12:00 PM

Liturgy of the Word

Session 2

1:00 PM – 2:30 PM

Liturgy of the Eucharist



A freewill
donation of
\$10
is appreciated

To Register:

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