

DECEMBER 23, 2018

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

74-109 Larrea Street

Palm Desert, California 92260

Website: www.go-stgeorge.org

Email: stgeorgepd@aol.com

THE LADDER

SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 4755

Palm Desert, CA.92261

Tel: (760) 568-9901

or: (760) 880-5869

– Fr. Theodore Pantels,

Proistamenos (Pastor)

– Deacon Euthym Kontaxis,

M.D.

Holy Communion Order

1. Please remain standing while following the directions of our ushers.
2. Ladies, kindly remove lipstick before receiving.
3. When receiving Holy Communion, make the Sign of the Cross, state your name (baptismal name), and naturally receive as if being fed.
4. Non-Orthodox Christians may not receive Holy Communion, but they may receive the Holy Bread at the end of the service.
5. All Orthodox Christians must be spiritually prepared to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Please see the priest if you have any questions.

ADOPTED BY GOD

With the Incarnation of Christ our God, the humanity is saved from sin and death. With the presence of Christ in the world, every person in all places receive the Grace of the Holy Spirit, through Whom every individual has at his or her disposal the power of prayer from which miracles occur to the glory of God. In addition, each individual is enlightened with the Wisdom of Almighty God and, in turn, he or she is in the position to be like God in terms of making works of

divine love a reality.

Prior to the Incarnation of Christ, only chosen personalities – the Prophets of the Old Testament – had the power to perform miracles and to share God's Wisdom and Love with others. After the Incarnation of Christ, *everyone* in all places and at all times are, through prayer, given these gifts by the Holy Spirit.

With the Incarnation of Christ, *all* people are now able to take upon

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THE MISSION OF CHRIST IN OUR WORLD

Metropolitan Kallistos Ware, in his book, *The Orthodox Church*, writes the following:

“The Incarnation is an act of God's *philanthropia*, of His loving-kindness toward humankind. Several eastern writers, looking at the Incarnation from this point of view, have argued that even if humans had never fallen, God in His love for humanity would still have become human: the Incarnation must be seen as part of the eternal purpose of God, and not simply as an answer to the fall. Such was the view of Maximus the Confessor and of Isaac the Syrian; such has also been the view of certain western writers, most notably Duns Scotus (1265-1308).

“But because the human race fell, the Incarnation is not only an act of love, but an act of salvation. Jesus Christ, by uniting humankind and God in His own person, re-opened for us humans the path to *union* with God.” (pg. 225).

+FR. THEODORE



Με την Ενσάρκωση του Θεού μας Χριστού, η ανθρωπότης σώζεται από την αμαρτιάν και τον θάνατον. Με την παρουσίαν του Χριστού στον κόσμον, όλοι οι άνθρωποι σε όλα τα μέρη λαμβάνουν την χάριν του Αγίου Πνεύματος διά μέσου του Οποίου όλοι έχουν στην διάθεσίν των την δύναμην της προσευχής από την οποίαν γίνονται θαύματα προς δόξαν του Θεού. Επίσης, φωτίζεται ο οποιοσδήποτε άνθρωπος με την σοφίαν του Παντοδυνάμου και, συνεπώς, είναι σε θέση να *παρομοιασθεί* με τον Θεόν κατά τις ικανότητές Του να πραγματοποιήσει έργα Θεϊκής αγάπης.

Πριν την Γέννησιν του Χριστού, μόνον επιλεγμένοι άνθρωποι – οι Προφήτες της Παλαιάς Διαθήκης – είχαν την δύναμην να κάνουν θαύματα και να μοιρασθούν την σοφίαν και την αγάπην του Θεού με άλλους. Μετά την Γέννησιν του Χριστού, όλοι οι άνθρωποι σε όλα τα μέρη και ανά πάσα στιγμή δίδονται από το Άγιο Πνεύμα, διά μέσου της προσευχής, αυτά τα θεία χαρίσματα. Δηλαδή, ο άνθρωπος, μετά την Ενσάρκωση του Χριστού μπορεί με την χάριν του Αγίου Πνεύματος να *θεοποιηθεί* – κάτι που, πριν την Γέννησιν του Χριστού, δεν ήταν δυνατόν στον άνθρωπον.

Οι ηθικές και πνευματικές διδασκαλίες της Εκκλησίας βασίζονται στην πίστην ότι ο Θεός, διά μέσου της Ενσαρκώσεώς Του, υιοθέτησε τον άνθρωπον. Δεν είμεθα πλέον <πλάσματα> του Θεού – είμεθα τέκνα του Θεού προικισμένοι με Θεϊκές δυνάμεις.
+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

themselves the powers of God's love (that is, *to become deified*), "by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the communion of the Holy Spirit," as we hear during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. We are no longer simply created beings, but we are *children of God* -- inheritors of God's divine love and energy.

It is in our participation in the Holy Sacraments that this inheritance of the divine love and energies of God can be visibly seen. Let us keep in mind that the Holy Sacraments themselves are actually a style of life consistent with the *meaning* of the Sacramental prayers. It is in this regard that the very countenances of individuals so often change, becoming those of a divine radiance, which is often visibly seen.

For example, when speaking about the Sacrament of Holy Confession, the saintly Elder Paisios, noted: "When one confesses his or her sins in a heart-felt, sincere manner, everything from the past disappears. New sources of nourishment are opened...the Grace of God comes upon them and people change completely. Anxiety, uneasiness, anger are gone and gentleness and peace appear. This is noticeable, even in one's external features - so much so, that I tell some people to take "before" and "after" pictures surrounding their experience in Holy Confession so that even they can be convinced of their great change for the better, since in their faces one sees their inner spiritual nature." (The Power of Confession; Anthology of Teachings From Sts. Porphyrios and Paisios, for the Paper, Paraskinion, Greek Edition, pg. 31).

This "glow" is the Light of God within us - that part of our being that is of Christ, Who, being God, took our human flesh from the Ever-Virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit. In turn, living our lives to glorify God brings our flesh more and more in touch with God's Divinity. This is what Orthodox Christian Saints call *deification*. This Christmas, then, is our opportunity to start imitating Christ and His Saints, becoming ever more *human...in God's divinity*.

+FR. THEODORE

"The angel said to them, 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, Who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: you will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger.' Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest and on earth, peace and goodwill toward all.'"

--St. Luke 2: 11-14

HYMNS FOR THIS SUNDAY'S CELEBRATION OF THE DIVINE LITURGY:

ANTIPHON I: "Tes presvies tis Theotokou..." (By the prayers of the Theotokos...)

Verse 1— Bless the Lord O my soul and everything within me; Bless His Holy Name.

Refrain: "Tes presvies tis Theotokou, Soter, soson imas."

Verse 2- Bless the Lord O my soul and forget not all His rewards.

Refrain: "By the prayers of the Theotokos, Savior, save us."

Verse 3— The Lord prepared His throne in heaven and His Kingdom rules over all.

Refrain: "Tes presvies tis Theotokou, Soter, soson imas."

Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit now and forever and to the ages of ages.

Refrain: "By the prayers of the Theotokos, Savior, save us."

ANTIPHON II: "Soson imas Ie Theou..." (Save us, O Son of God...)

Verse 1- Praise the Lord O my soul! I shall praise the Lord while I live; I shall sing to my God as long as I exist.

Refrain: "Soson imas Ie Theou, O Anastas ek nekron, psallontas si alleluia."

Verse 2 -Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob; his hope is in the Lord his God.

Refrain: "Save us, O Son of God, Who arose from the dead, we sing to You, Alleluia."

Verse 3 - The Lord shall reign forever; your God O Zion, to all generations.

Refrain: "Soson imas Ie Theou, O Anastas ek nekron, psallontas si alleluia."

Doxa Patri ke Io ke Aghio Pnevmati ke nin ke aei ke eis tous eonas ton eonon. Amin

People: "O Monogenis Ios ke Logos tou Theou..." (O Only-Begotten Son and Word of God...)

ANTIPHON III-- This is the day the Lord made; let us greatly rejoice and be glad therein

Sunday Resurrection Hymn: Ton synanarchon Logon [Tone 5]...(Let us, the faithful, praise and worship the Word, coeternal with the Father and the Spirit, Who for our salvation was born of a Virgin for He willed to be lifted up bodily upon the Cross, to endure death and to raise the dead by His glorious Resurrection.)

Hymn for the Eve of the Nativity: Etimazou Vithlehem... (O Bethlehem, prepare, Eden is opened to all. And be ready Ephrata, for the Tree of life has in the grotto blossomed forth from the Virgin. Indeed, Her womb is shown to be spiritually a paradise in which is found the God-planted Tree. And if we eat from it, we shall live, and shall not die as did Adam of old. Christ is born so that He might raise up the formerly fallen image.)

Hymn for the Holy Fathers: Meghala ta tis pisteos katorthoh-mata... (Magnificent are Faith's accomplishments! The Three Holy Youths exultingly stood in the fountain of fire as if beside the still waters of rest. And Daniel the Prophet was shown to be a shepherd of lions. At their entreaty, O Christ God, save our souls.)

Hymn for St. George: Os ton ehmaloton eleftherotis... (As the one who sets the captives free and the protector of the poor; as physician to the sick and the champion defender of Kings, bearer of trophies are you O Great Martyr George. Intercede with Christ our God that He may save our souls.)

Kontakion Hymn for this Sunday: Ee Parthenos Simeron ... (On this day the Virgin Maid goes to the grotto to give birth to the pre-eternal Word in an ineffable manner. Dance for joy, all the inhabited earth, on hearing. Glorify along with Angels and with the shepherds Him who willed that He appear as a newborn Child, the pre-eternal God.)

READINGS: EPISTLE -- Hebrews 11: 9-10; 32-40 / GOSPEL - St. Matthew 1: 1-25

Axion Estin, page 52 in our Divine Liturgy books

ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Coffee Hour: Louise Dobbs Barringer**

PHILOPTOCHOS-Philoptochos wishes you and your family a blessed Christmas. We had a successful Christmas Bake Sale again this year. Thank you for your support. Coming up next for Philoptochos in our Taverna Night Dinner Dance on January 12, 2019. Please see the attached flyer. We are selling reservations today at the Philoptochos table. We welcome all parishioners and guests. Reserve a table for your group.

ALTAR FLOWER BOUQUETS --MERRY CHRISTMAS! The most beautiful poinsettias that grace our Altar for God's glory are lovingly offered by:

-Ms. Josie Desnoyer: "In memory of Frank Barboza; May his memory be Eternal!"

-Mr. & Mrs. William G. Barringer: "Jesus is the reason for the season 'Merry Christmas' to all, and a very "Happy New Year"!!

All contributors for Altar Flower Bouquets are asked to check the Bulletin Board in the Parish Hall as a reminder of the dates that they have agreed to contribute Altar Flowers for January and February, and if they have not done so we ask that they please submit their checks as soon as possible.

2019 STEWARDSHIP PACKETS - Today is the 2019 Stewardship Packets Final Sunday of Distribution. Packets are available in the church hall. See **Rhonda Latkovic**. Any that are not picked up today will be mailed out. Also, we can accept your **2019 stewardship payment prior to the end of the year** if you choose to pay now.

PARISH BOOK STORE --Our popular Icon Christmas ornaments are available today only and are \$4.00 each. Proceeds benefit the Philoptochos.

STREETLIFE PROJECT -- We would like to thank all the volunteers who helped out at the two Street-LifeProject Christmas events for the homeless last week in Indio & Palm Springs. Pictures will be shared in the January Voice.

GREEK FESTIVAL - It is very important for all of us to begin securing sponsorships and ads for our 2019 Greek Festival. The "Sponsorship & Ad Form" will be included in our *Ladder* over the next few weeks. **The deadline for submitting sponsorships and ads for our 2019 Festival is: January 15, 2019**, to allow time for printing our Festival program.

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

Monday, December 24th.....EVE OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST OUR GOD & SAVIOR
Royal Hours-8:30 a.m. / Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.
Sunday School Christmas Caroling Outing- 10:45 a.m.

Tuesday, December 25th.....THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST OUR GOD & SAVIOR
Orthros-8:30 a.m. / Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.

Thursday, December 27th.....ST. STEPHEN THE FIRST MARTYR & ARCHDEACON
Orthros-8:30 a.m. / Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.
Choir Practice - 1:00 p.m.

*The LADDER for December, 2018
is sponsored by
Rhonda & Nick Latkovic*

We encourage all of our parents to sit in the church with their entire family as they participate in the beauty and mysteries of the Divine Liturgy. For those with young children, feel free to sit near an aisle in order that you may easily take your children for a break, as needed. If necessary, we have a "crying room" in the vestibule for your use. God Bless.

SAINT GEORGE 2019 GREEK FESTIVAL SPONSORSHIP & AD PROGRAM

Event Dates: Sat. & Sun., February 16th - 17th, 2019

Terms: Cash/Check/Credit

Attached is my check in the sum of:

Date: _____ \$ _____

Sponsorship/Ad Choice: _____

Sponsorship/Ad Choices Available:

Sponsorship Levels: (includes full color ad on outside back of Festival Program, Sponsorship listing on Festival Website, festival admission tickets, & goody bag)

Gold Sponsor Level - Corporate logo with name ----- \$ 1000

Silver Sponsor Level - Corporate logo with name ----- \$ 500

Advertising Choices: (includes black & white ad inside Festival Program, listing on Festival Website)

Corporate - Corporate logo with name ----- \$ 300

Personal - 2-line message with name ----- \$ 150

Business Name: _____

Contact Name: _____

Address: _____

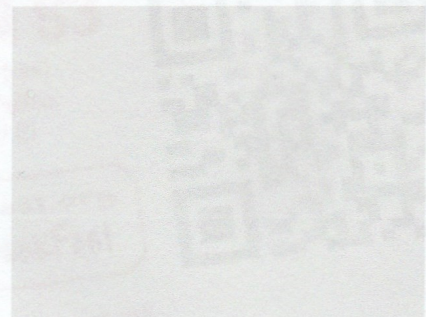
City/State/Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email Address: _____

Authorized Signature: _____

Make checks payable to:
St. George Greek Orthodox Church
P.O. Box 4755
Palm Desert, CA 92261
Phone: (760) 568-9901
Email: pdsaintgeorge@gmail.com
Fax: (760) 568-9492

Print personal ad below:



Absolute DEADLINE for Copy: January 20th, 2019

Electric submission of camera ready corporate logos & names are accepted in most formats.

**ST. GEORGE PHILOPTOCHOS INVITES YOU
TO ATTEND OUR**

TAVERNA NIGHT DINNER DANCE

SATURDAY, JANUARY 12, 2019 AT 5:00 P.M.

AT THE CHURCH HALL WITH LIVE MUSIC

\$45.00 PER PERSON

Reservations must be paid in advance by Sunday, January 6, 2019 at the Philoptochos table OR mail your check to the office. Check is payable to St. George Philoptochos and note on check Taverna Night. (Tickets not paid by January 6th will be \$50.00 per person.)

NO RESERVATIONS TAKEN AT DOOR

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Number attending: _____ Amt. enclosed: _____