

DECEMBER 30, 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 AFTER 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.

PRAYER AND VIGILANCE

To the extent that we study the workings of King Herod we come to understand two great spiritual illnesses from which many sins spring: 1) egotism, and, 2) lack of faith. Unfortunately, according to today's logic, these illnesses are considered to be symptoms of spiritual health. This is why, little-by-little, the human conscience is eroding generally with regard to the sanctity of life. Not far from the thinking of Herod stands the thinking of many who prefer the right to choose whether or not to destroy the life

of a fetus over his or her right to live.

However, the voice of the Church is to be heard differently. The Orthodox theologian, John Beck, wrote, "*The feasts of the Church include not only the birth of the Virgin Mary, John the Baptist and Jesus, but also their conception.*" (*Sacred Gift of Life*, pg. 152).

The "mind" of the Church is not inclined towards condemnation of people and punishment of those who violate laws, as much as it ponders ways to bring people to *repentance*.

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THE PSALMS OF KING DAVID

On this Sunday After the Nativity of Christ our God, we commemorate St. Joseph, the Betrothed to the Ever-Virgin Mary; King David, and St. James, the Brother of our Lord. Inasmuch as King David is commemorated on this day, (along with St. Joseph and St. James) we turn our attention to his personality and his Psalms recorded in the Old Testament.

"David, the great Prophet after Moses, sprang from the tribe of Judah. He was the son of Jesse, and was born in Bethlehem (which is called the City of David), in the year 1085 before Christ...The sacred history has recorded not only the grace of the Spirit that dwelt in him from his youth, his heroic exploits in war, and his great piety towards God, but also his transgressions and failings as a man. Yet his repentance was greater than his transgressions, and his love for God was fervent and exemplary...

"His melodious Psalter is the foundation of all the services of the Church; there is not one service that is not filled with Psalms and psalmic verses.

It was the means whereby old Israel praised God, and it was used by the Apostles and the Lord Himself. It is so imbued with the spirit of prayer that the monastic fathers of all ages have used it as their trainer and teacher for their inner life of converse with God."

--Taken from www.goarch.org



Όσο μελετούμεν τις πράξεις του Ηρώδη γνωρίζομεν δύο μεγάλες ψυχικές αρρώστιες από τις οποίες πηγάζονται πολλές αμαρτίες: 1) ο εγωϊσμός, και, 2) η ολιγοπιστία. Δυστυχώς, κατά την σημερινήν λογικήν, αυτές οι αρρώστιες θεωρούνται ως συμπτώματα ψυχικής υγείας. Γιά αυτόν τον λόγον, σβήνεται σιγά-σιγά η ανθρώπινη συνείδησις, γενικώς, σχετικώς με το θέμα περί της αγιότητος της ζωής. Όχι μακρυνά απο τους λογισμούς του Ηρώδη στέκονται οι λογισμοί εκείνων που προτιμούν το δικαίωμα να διαλέγουν εάν θα σβήσουν – ναι η όχι – την ζωήν του εμβρύου. Άλλά η φωνή της Εκκλησίας μας ακούεται αλλιώς. Ο Ορθόδοξος θεολόγος, Ιωάννης Μπεκ, έγραψε, <Οι εορτές της Εκκλησίας περιλαμβάνουν όχι μόνον την γέννηση της Θεοτόκου, τον Ιωάννην τον Βαπτιστή και τον Ιησούν, αλλά και την σύλληψιν των> (Το Άγιο Δώρον της Ζωής, σελ. 152).

Ο <νους> της Εκκλησίας δεν κλίνεται προς κατηγορίες και τιμωρίες αυτών που παραβιάζουν τους νόμους, όσο μελετά τρόπους να φέρνει ανθρώπους προς την μετάνοιαν. Όσο συζητούμεν το θέμα της βρεφοκτοκνίας, τόσο πρέπει να αναφέρουμεν την υποχρέωσήν μας να ανατρέφουμεν τα παιδιά μας σύμφωνα με τις διδασκαλίες της Εκκλησίας. Οπωσδήποτε, τα παιδιά χρειάζονται εμπειρίες από τους γονείς και συγγενείς των της <εν Χριστώ> ζωής για να καταλάβουν, π.χ., την πραγματικήν μετάνοιαν και την συγχώρησιν.

Γιά να μετανοήσει κανείς χρειάζεται να σβήσει τον εγωϊσμόν, και να ενδυναμώσει την πίστην του στον Θεόν διά της προσευχής και της προσοχής.

+ Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

Certainly, as we discuss the issue of infanticide, we are obligated in the spirit of repentance, to also discuss our collective responsibilities to nourish and raise our children according to the teachings of our Orthodox Christian Church. Most certainly, our children need to experience the “Life in Christ” from parents and relatives in order to understand, for example, genuine, sincere repentance and forgiveness. Such experiences reinforce their Sunday School lessons.

Indeed, such experiences come from the awareness in our souls of the virtues that lead to union with God in contrast to the sins that lead us away from God. We can begin by comprehending the meaning of the first words of the Communion Prayer that we read during the Divine Liturgy: “I believe and confess, O Lord, that You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God Who came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the first...” In these few words we confess our belief in two important realities: 1) Christ is God Who is our Savior, and, 2) We are sinners--in fact, because of sin, we are like the Publican who was so humble that he could not even lift up his eyes to heaven. In essence, Christ is God and we are humble! We know that we are doomed to misery without Christ. The awareness of this reality stands in complete opposition to that of King Herod, who had no such awareness. Instead, he wanted to be god and he was a man of great pride, whose soul was darkened by jealousy and hate.

Unfortunately, there seems to be a lot of jealousy and hate in our world today which lead to all kinds of sin: from abortions to murders; from insults to violence; from passions to vile forms of abuse.

We can see, then, that repentance is serious business! It involves prayer such as the Communion Prayer, or the Jesus Prayer (“Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.”). Through prayer we remember our place in relationship to God. Repentance also involves vigilance so that we do not become distracted from our efforts to pray. Prayer and vigilance come together to help us from becoming like Herod and in order to be like our Lord. Being like our Lord makes us givers and defenders of life; peacemakers and (yes) even miracle-workers.

+FR. THEODORE

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HOUSE BLESSINGS - Following the celebration of **Theophany on Sunday, January 6, 2019**, parishioners may schedule a House Blessing Prayer Service with Fr. Ted. House Blessing Services with hymns from the Theophany celebration take place through the end of January. To schedule a House Blessing Prayer Service at a time when all or most of the family members will be in attendance, contact Fr. Ted at either (760) 568-9901 or (760) 880-5869.

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

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

Verse 1—: I will give thanks to You, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will tell of all Your wondrous things.

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

Verse 2- In the council of the upright and in the assembly. Great are the works of the Lord.

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

Verse 3— Sought out in all things with regard to His will. Thanksgiving and majesty are His work, and His righteousness continues unto ages of ages.

Refrain: "Tes presvies tis Theotokou, Soter, soston 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: *"Soston imas Ie Theou..." (Save us, O Son of God...)*

Verse 1- Blessed is the man who fears the Lord; he will delight exceedingly in His commandments.

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

Verse 2 - His seed shall be mighty on earth; the generation of the upright shall be blessed. Glory and riches shall be in his house, and his righteousness continues unto ages of ages.

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

Verse 3 - For the upright, light springs up in darkness, for he is merciful, compassionate, and righteous.

Refrain: "Soston 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-- : *The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand, until I make your enemies the footstool of Your feet."*

Sunday Resurrection Hymn: *Angelike dynameis [Tone 6]...(When the angelic powers appeared at Your tomb and those who guarded You became as though dead and standing by Your sepulcher was Mary seeking Your pure and sacred body. For, You did vanquish Hades and, uncorrupted by its touch, You came unto the Virgin Woman bestowing the gift of life, O You Who arose from the dead. Lord we give glory to You.)*

Hymn for the Sunday After the Nativity: *Ee Ghenisis Sou Christe... (Your nativity, O Christ our God, has caused the light of knowledge to rise upon the world. For therein the worshippers of the stars were by a star instructed to worship You, the Sun of Righteousness, and to know You as Orient from on high. Glory to You, O Lord.)*

Hymn for St. Joseph the Betrothed: *Evangelizou Iosif... (Annunciate the miracles to David the ancestor of God, O Joseph. You saw the Virgin pregnant. You glorified with the shepherds. You worshipped with the Magi. And you were warned by an Angel. Entreat Christ God to 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 gives birth to the Super-essential. To the Unapproachable, earth is providing the grotto. Angels sing and with the shepherds offer up glory. Following a star the Magi are still proceeding. He was born for our salvation, a newborn Child, the pre-eternal God.)*

READINGS: EPISTLE -- Galatians 1: 11-19/ GOSPEL - St. Matthew 2: 13-23

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Coffee Hour: Anne Boukidis-Michas

PHILOPTOCHOS-Taverna Night is almost here. See flyer. Make your paid reservations today at the Philoptochos table. We're having a live band (much requested by our attendees) and great food. Reserve a table! Reservation deadline is January 6. Our Christmas Bake Sale was a success. All the bread and cookies have been sold. Thanks to all our parishioners who purchased our bake goods. Don't forget to mark your calendars for food preparations for the Festival starting January 7.

ALTAR FLOWER BOUQUETS - The Altar Flower Bouquets offered to God's glory this Sunday were offered by:

Ms. Alexandra Dymond: *"Glory to God in the highest, Peace and good will to all, 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.

GREEK FESTIVAL - The time for final preparations for our **2019 Greek Festival** has arrived. It is vital, therefore, for everyone to make plans to attend the **Festival Meeting on January 2, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. at our parish hall**. It is also 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.

STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY - Stewardship Sunday is scheduled for **Sunday, January 20th**. 2019 Stewardship Pledge Cards will be made available to all members of our St. George Palm Desert Parish for 2019. Stewardship is a matter of supporting the ministry of our Church through participation in the Holy Sacraments and through sharing God's bountiful blessings for the salvation of others.

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

Tuesday, January 1st.....THE CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD and Also
THE FEAST DAY OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT
Orthros-8:30 a.m. / Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.

Wednesday, January 2nd..... Greek Festival Meeting - 7:00 p.m.

Thursday, January 3rd..... Choir Practice - 1:00 p.m.

Saturday, January 5th..... EVE OF THEOPHANY
Royal Hours - 8:30 a.m. / Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.
Great Blessing of the Waters - 10:45 a.m.
(Strict Fasting Day)

Sunday, January 6th.....**HOLY THEOPHANY**
Orthros -8:15 a.m./ Divine Liturgy - 9:15 a.m.
Great Blessing of the Waters - 10:15 a.m.
Vasilopita Celebration-10:45 a.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: _____

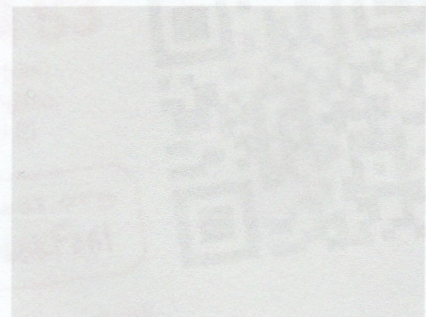
City/State/Zip: _____

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: _____