

DECEMBER 29, 2019

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

74-109 Larrea Street

Palm Desert, California 92260

Website: www.go-stgeorge.org

Email: pdsaintgeorge@gmail.com



THE LADDER

THE SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY

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.

GOD'S LOVE SURPASSES FEAR

In his Homily regarding today's Gospel passage (*Homily 7 in Nicene-Post Nicene Fathers, Vol. 10*), St. John Chrysostom suggests that Herod acted as one who was insane, because his actions made no sense. Why, when the wise men told him of the Star's significance, did Herod not have them followed in order to find the Christ Child and slay Him on the spot? Since Herod was tricked by the wise men, why did he take out his anger on the innocent children, rather than hunting down the wise men and bringing them to account?

St. John concluded that Herod was a madman. Why was Herod so panic-driven? Indeed, his tendency to be cruel was not consistent with the character of a man who obeyed God's Law and, for that reason, he committed many sins.

Guilt and paranoia are often closely related. As the Jewish people considered their enslavement under the Roman Empire to be punishment for their sins, by analogy, Herod must have awaited punishments from the Messiah for his sins. Thus, he showed no hesitation in calling the Jewish leaders

Continued on page 2

ST. JOSEPH THE BETROTHED

Saint Joseph (whose name means "one who increases") was the son of Jacob, and the son-in-law - and hence, as it were, the son - of Eli (who was also called Eliakim or Joachim), who was the father of Mary the Virgin (Matt. 1:16; Luke 3:23). He was of the tribe of Judah, of the family of David, an inhabitant of Nazareth, a carpenter by Trade. He was advanced in age when, by God's good will, he was betrothed to the Virgin, that he might minister to the great mystery of God's dispensation in the flesh by protecting her, providing for her, and being known as her husband so that she, being a virgin, would not suffer reproach when she was found to be with child. Joseph had been married before his betrothal to our Lady; they who are called Jesus' "brethren and sisters" (Matt. 13:55-56) are the children of Joseph by his first marriage. From Scripture, we know that Saint Joseph lived at least until the Twelfth year after the birth of Christ (Luke 2:41-52); according to the tradition of the Fathers, he reposed before the beginning of the public ministry of Christ.

– Taken from our Archdiocese website: www.goarch.org/



Στην ομιλία του σχετικώς με την σημερινή Ευαγγελικήν περικοπήν, ο Αγ. Ιωάννης ο Χρυσόστομος προτείνει ότι ο Ηρώδης ενήργησε ως ένας παράφρων, διότι οι πράξεις του δεν έχουν κανένα νόημα. Γιατί, όταν οι μάγοι εξήγησαν στον Ηρώδη την σημασίαν του Αστέρος, ο Ηρώδης δεν έστειλε ανθρώπους να τους ακολουθήσουν ώστε να βρουν τον Νεογέννητο Χριστόν και να Τον σκοτώσουν επιτόπου; Γιατί ο Ηρώδης, επειδή τον εξαπάτησαν οι μάγοι, έβγαλε το θυμό του στα άθωα παιδιά, αντί να καταδιώκει τους μάγους για να εκδικηθεί; Ο Αγ. Χρυσόστομος καταλήγει στο συμπέρασμα ότι ο Ηρώδης ήταν τρελλός. Γιατί να ήταν τόσο πανικόβλητος, όμως; Μάλιστα, η τάση του Ηρώδη προς σληρότητα δεν εταίριαζε με τον χαρακτήρα ενός ανθρώπου που θα υπάκουε στον Νόμον του Θεού, και, για αυτόν τον λόγον, ο Ηρώδης έκανε πολλές αμαρτίες.

Η ενοχή και η παράνοια πολλές φορές είναι σθενώς συνδεδεμένες. Οπως οι Ιουδαίοι εθεώρησαν την υποδούλωσίν των κάτω από την Ρωμαϊκήν Αυτοκρατορίαν ως τιμωρίαν για τις αμαρτίες των, αναλόγως, ο Ηρώδης θα περιμένε τιμωρίες από τον Μεσσίαν για τις αμαρτίες του.

Ομως, η αγάπη του Θεού ξεπερνά την οργήν Του – και, μάλιστα, η Κρίσις του Θεού είναι να ελεήσει τους αμαρτωλούς (Ψαλ. 50), και για αυτόν τον λόγον έστειλε τον Μονογενή Του Υιόν για να μας σώσει. Ο Σταυρός είναι η αγάπη του Θεού, διά Του Οποίου χαρίζεται σε εμάς την συγχώρηση αμαρτιών. Η Θεία Εξομολόγησις προκαλεί το έλεος του Θεού, αντί την τιμωρίαν Του.

+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

to his side to ascertain details of the Christ Child's birth. I suggest that they all shared a genuine fear of chastisement from the Messiah.

Among the Jewish elite, there was resistance to appeals for repentance made by both St. John the Baptist and our Lord. Our Lord would condemn them for their hypocrisy, earning Him rejection by Jewish authorities. Unwilling to accept God's message to repent of sins, they appeared to be at ease with Herod's tendency for cruelty, ironically intensifying their fear of God's Judgment.

Like the Pharisees, we find ourselves boasting about being "law-abiding citizens," but, yet, collectively we stand in judgment of hatred and self-centeredness, seen in today's numbers of shootings and abortions -- all in opposition to God's Law. I feel that many people reject Christ either because they cannot comprehend His love and therefore are unable to believe, or because they are fearful of our Savior's Judgment and they want to run away, pretending that there is no God and no hell and that any wrong deed can be justified based on "circumstances."

In my opinion, what so many people have failed to see is this: God's love surpasses His anger. God's Judgment is to show the mercy of Christ in the flesh; the Cross is God's love, through Which forgiveness is granted. God's Judgment is the opportunity to confess our sins here and now, thereby *mercifully* winning His forgiveness. Psalm 50 explains that God is justified "if" He passes sentence and would be vindicated "if" He condemns. Yet, in the same Psalm, we find that His justice is to "cast [us] not out of His presence...to not take away from [us] His Holy Spirit..." and "to free [us] from guilt." Christ God lovingly accepts our contrite hearts as ample sacrifice. Judging ourselves today releases us of our Lord's impeding Judgment later "tomorrow" on the Day of Judgment, at which time we would stand in judgment for having refused to repent – a judgment brought upon by ourselves.

I believe that faith in God's love is the anecdote to fear and it trumps despair. Holy Confession provokes God's *mercy*, rather than His punishment. Patience in God's Grace allows for renewed effort after every set-back. Let these thoughts carry us further along in our spiritual journey toward union with God in Christ as we begin the New Year. Christ is born! It is the divine judgment for us to be given This Gift of divine forgiveness. Glorify Him!

+FR. THEODORE

NEXT SUNDAY, JANUARY 5th, is the **Eve of Theophany**. We encourage all who have Holy Water Bottles to bring them for the **Service of the Blessing of the Waters**. Also, please note: The **Philoptochos Vasilopita** will also be held **next Sunday, January 5th!**

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; Sought out in all things with regard to His will.

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

Verse 3- Thanksgiving and majesty are His work, and His righteousness continues unto ages of ages.

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

Chanter(s): *Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.*

Refrain: *"Tes presvies tis Theotokou, Soter, soston"*

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. His seed shall be mighty on earth.

Refrain: *"Soston imas Ie Theou, O ek Parthenou tech-theis, psallontas si alleluia."*

Verse 2 - Glory and riches shall be in his house, and his righteousness continues unto ages of ages.

Refrain: *"Save us, O Son of God, Who was born of the Virgin; we sing to You, Alleluia."*

Verse 3 - For the upright, light springs up in darkness.

Refrain: *"Soston imas Ie Theou, O ek Parthenou tech-theis, psallontas si alleluia."*

ANTIPHON III- *The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand, until I make your enemies the footstool of Your feet." The Lord shall send forth the rod of Your power from Zion. With You is the beginning in the day of Your power, in the brightness of Your saints.*

Sunday Resurrection Hymn: *Efrenestho ta ourania (Tone 3)... (Let all things above in heaven rejoice and let all things below on earth be glad. With all the might and strength of His arm an eternal deed the Lord did perform. Beneath His feet He has trampled down death by death and First-Born of the dead has He become. From the womb of Hades has He delivered us, and to all the world has granted His great redeeming mercy.)*

Hymn for the Nativity: *Ee Ghenisis Sou Christe o Theos imon... (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: *Evangelizou Iosif, to Thavid ta thavmata... (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.)*

Axion Estin - page 52 in the Divine Liturgy books

Communion Hymn- *Enite (Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise Him in the highest.)*

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Coffee Hour: Anne Boukidis-Michas

PHILOPTOCHOS – We wish to THANK all the volunteers who assisted us at Coachella Valley Rescue Mission on Christmas Eve day to prepare the holiday meals for the homeless. What a joyous experience it was to help those in need!

ALTAR FLOWER BOUQUETS - The following are the Contributors and their Dedication for this Sunday's Altar Flower bouquets:

--**Mr. & Mrs. Frank Fakinos** - *"In loving memory of our son Donald Reynolds who was laid to rest on December 2, 2019, and our son-in-law Tom Bishow who passed away in the Spring of this year. Eternal rest!"*

Notice: All January Altar Flower requests are now due. See Tina in the Administration Office, or **Louise Dobbs Barringer**, Altar Flower Coordinator. Make checks out to St. George Church, and indicate in the Memo Column at the bottom of the check the date, and month of your Altar Flower display!

GREEK FESTIVAL-See enclosed form about the special Greek Festival ad book offer to our parish-ioners. Show your support by donating \$35.00 and your name will be listed in the ad book! Deadline Jan. 12th.

2020 CHURCH CALENDARS AVAILABLE -Visit our parish office in order to acquire a 2020 Calendar.

2020 GREEK FESTIVAL FLIERS--**"2020 Greek Festival Sponsorship/Ad Forms"** are available in our parish hall. Buying and/or selling **sponsorships and/or ads** for our **2020 St. George Greek Festival Program Book** will insure the success of our Festival.

PARISH BOOK STORE -Check out the many **new items** and **all reasonably priced.**

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

Wednesday, January 1st..... THE CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD

THE FEAST DAY OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT

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

Friday, January 3rd.....THE ROYAL HOURS FOR THEOPHANY – 9:00 a.m.

Saturday, January 4th.....SATURDAY BEFORE THEOPHANY- Divine Liturgy- 9:30 a.m.

*****Next Sunday, January 5th...EVE OF THEOPHANY: Orthros-8:00 a.m./Divine Liturgy-9:15 a.m.*****

EPISTLE: Gal. 1:11-19 --Brethren, I would have you know that the gospel which was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it; and I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother.

GOSPEL: Mt. 2:13-23 -- When the wise men departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there till I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." And he rose and took the child and his

mother by night, and departed to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt have I called my son." Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, was in a furious rage, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time which he had ascertained from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they were no more." But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." And he rose and took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaos reigned over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. And he went and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

SAINT GEORGE 2020 GREEK FESTIVAL SPONSORSHIP & AD PROGRAM

Event Dates: Sat. & Sun., February 22nd - 23rd, 2020

Terms: Cash/Check/Credit

Attached is my check in the sum of:

Date: _____ \$ _____

Sponsorship/Ad Choice: _____

Sponsorship/Ad Choices Available in 24th Annual Greek Festival Booklet:

Sponsorship Level: (includes full page (8.5 x 5.5) **color** ad in program booklet, company logo in Festival Ad Program, signage at festival admissions gate & Sponsorship listing on Festival Website)

Sponsor Level ----- \$ 1000

Advertising Choices: (includes black & white ad in program booklet)

Full Page (8.5 x 5.5) -- \$ 500 **Half Page (4.25 x 5.5) -- \$ 275**

Quarter Page or Business Card (2.125 x 5.5) -- \$150

Personal Name Listing w/ Message -- \$100

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City/State/Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email Address: _____

Authorized Signature: _____

Make checks payable to:
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P.O. Box 4755
Palm Desert, CA 92261
Phone: (760) 568-9901
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Fax: (760) 568-9492

Print personal ad below:

Absolute DEADLINE for Copy: January 20th, 2020
Electric submission of camera ready corporate logos
& names are accepted in most formats.



SUPPORT THE 2020 GREEK FESTIVAL

(with a \$35.00 Personal Ad)

Please review the "example" personal ad page from another Greek Orthodox Church Festival that we are planning for our festival ad book.

For a \$35.00 donation, your family/name will be published on the page. Make checks payable to Saint George Church, memo festival ad. Fill out an ad form with how you want your family/name to appear on the page.

Deadline: January 12th, 2020

Please see Rhonda Latkovic or Tina Veroulis with any questions.

Rev. Fr. Andrew & Pres. Karen Lesko
V. Rev. George & Elaine Manneh
The Fields Family
Kara Egger
Barbara Phebus
M & D Fields Bakery
The Gaskins Family
The Moulis Family
The Hadjis Family
The Hitte Family
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H...emecula Parkway, Ter
Billy...itar/Piano Lessons (323)

EXAMPLE

Best of the Festival

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