

MARCH 21, 2021

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

SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY



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.

IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

The Saints of the 7th Ecumenical Council proclaimed the teachings of St. John of Damascus, who maintained that God, through His Incarnation, took upon Himself the form of Man in the Person of Christ—and, as a result, the Person of Christ can, in fact, be depicted. Through the Holy Icons the truth that God became Man so that man can be like God is preached. This truth is depicted in the lives of the Saints who lived “the life in Christ” throughout their lives, thereby verifying Christ’s words: *“Truly, truly, I say unto you that from now on you shall see*

heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.” (St. John 1:52).

It is inside the Church where one finds Christ, the Mother of God, the Saints, the angels and the grace of the Holy Spirit...and this reality is depicted through the Holy Icons, which give a vision into heaven. Holy Icons describe the life of Christ in history, as is written in Holy Scripture. They describe for us the way of life of God’s saints. In addition, they remind us that every person that we see is the “image of God.”

Continued on Page 2

SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY

For more than one hundred years the Church of Christ was troubled by the persecution of the Iconoclasts of evil belief, beginning in the reign of Leo the Isaurian (717-741) and ending in the reign of Theophilus (829-842). After Theophilus's death, his widow the Empress Theodora (celebrated Feb. 11), together with the Patriarch Methodius (June 14), established Orthodoxy anew. This ever-memorable Queen venerated the icon of the Mother of God in the presence of the Patriarch Methodius and the other confessors and righteous men, and openly cried out these holy words: *“If any do not offer relative worship to the holy icons, not adoring them as though they were gods, but venerating them out of love as images of the archetype, let them be set apart from us.”* Then with common prayer and fasting during the whole first week of the Forty-day Fast, she asked God's forgiveness for her husband. After this, on the first Sunday of the Fast, she and her son, Michael the Emperor, made a procession with all the clergy and people and restored the holy icons, and again adorned the Church of Christ with them.

– Taken from www.goarch.org



Οι Άγιοι της 7ης Οικουμενικής Συνόδου διακήρυξαν τις διδασκαλίες του Αγίου Ιωάννου της Δαμασκού, ο οποίος εδίδασκε ότι ο Θεός, μέσω της ενσάρκωσής Του, ανέλαβε τη μορφή του ανθρώπου - και, ως αποτέλεσμα, το πρόσωπο του Χριστού μπορεί, στην πραγματικότητα, να απεικονισθεί. Μέσω των Αγίων Εικόνων η αλήθεια κηρύσσεται ότι ο Θεός έγινε Άνθρωπος έτσι ώστε ο άνθρωπος να μπορεί να είναι όπως ο Θεός. Αυτή η αλήθεια απεικονίζεται στις ζωές των Αγίων που έζησαν «την εν Χριστώ Ζωή,» επαληθεύοντας έτσι τα λόγια του Χριστού: «*Αληθώς, λέγω: από του νυν θέλετε ιδεί τον ουρανόν ανεγωγμένον, και τους αγγέλους του Θεού αναβαίνοντας και καταβαίνοντας επί τον Υιόν του ανθρώπου.*» (Ιωαν. 1:52).

Είναι στην Εκκλησία όπου βρίσκονται ο Χριστός, η Θεοτόκος, οι Άγιοι, οι άγγελοι και η χάρις του Αγίου Πνεύματος ... και αυτή η πραγματικότητας απεικονίζεται μέσω των Αγίων Εικόνων, που προσφέρουν ένα όραμα της επουρανίου ζωής. Περιγράφουν τη ζωή του Χριστού καθώς εξούσε στην ανθρωπινή ιστορία, όπως γράφεται στην Αγία Γραφή. Επιπλέον, οι εικόνες μας θυμίζουν ότι κάθε άτομο που βλέπουμε είναι μια «εικόνα του Θεού».

Ο Χριστός είναι η τέλεια εικόνα του Θεού ως Άνθρωπος. Είναι ο «Θεάνθρωπος.» Είναι ο «Νέος Αδάμ», αφού ο παλιός Αδάμ δια μέσου της αμαρτίας, έβλαψε την οντότητα του ως εικόνα του Θεού. Οι εικόνες απεικονίζουν την αλήθειαν ότι ο άνθρωπος ο ίδιος είναι «εικόνα του Θεού».

+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

The Holy Icons depict our reality as individuals and as a community. This reality is written in the Bible, and depicted in Christ; the Holy Mother of God; in each of the Saints, and in each one of us. The message of the Holy Icons can be summed up in this way:

1. We are created in the image of God.
2. Christ is the Perfect Image of God as Man (while He is Perfect God). He is the “New Adam,” since the old Adam had the image of God within him tarnished by sins. Christ is in the image of us; we are in the image of Christ our True God Whose flesh is from the Holy Theotokos.
3. The Saints of our Church are depicted as people who have taken upon themselves God’s image and who serve as examples of repentance for us in our effort to restore the image of God in us.

Icons are vehicles for prayer, because they serve to help us focus on the Person of our Savior and His many blessings that have been experienced by our Saints. As vehicles for prayer, we honor the Holy Icons just as we honor the Gospel and the Holy Cross.

Prayer is the living expression of our Baptism, allowing our Baptism in Christ to inspire others to join Christ through participation of the Holy Sacraments. Faith in God and ability to pray go hand-in-hand. The Nicene Creed is the expression of “*what the Prophets beheld and the Apostles have taught*” – as we heard today at the end of the Procession of the Holy Icons. “*One of the basic purposes of Christ’s incarnation was to reveal that God is a Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Christ revealed this to the Samaritan woman, [saying], ‘God is Spirit and those who worship Him must worship in Spirit and truth.’ This means that God the Father is worshiped in the Holy Spirit and in Christ, Who is Truth.*” (A Visual Catechism of the Orthodox Church, by Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos, pg. 83). The Holy Icons give a visual expression of the Gospel Truth, proclaiming our salvation in God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Who sanctifies each one of us.

+FR. THEODORE

BIBLE STUDY –Tuesday March 23, 2021 - 10:00 a.m.

Please note: This Bible Study class will take place in-person outside on the patio outside our parish hall and will not be presented in a “zoom format.”

The passage that we will be studying is:

St. Mark 2:1-12

NOTE: When unable to attend Church Services in person due to state regulations regarding the Coronavirus or personal illness, follow the Divine Liturgy through live-streaming provided by various Archdiocese parishes at: <https://www.goarch.org/live-broadcasts>.



“Shine within our hearts, loving Master, the pure light of Your divine knowledge and open the eyes of our minds that we may comprehend the message of Your Gospel. Instill in us, also, reverence for Your blessed commandments, so that having conquered sinful desires, we may pursue a spiritual life, thinking and doing all these things that are pleasing to You. For You are the Light of our souls and bodies and to You we give glory together with Your Father Who is without beginning and Your all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen”

EPISTLE— Heb. 11:24-26, 32-40

Brethren, by faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to share ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered abuse suffered for the Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he looked to the reward. And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets—who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, received promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign enemies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated — of whom the world was not worthy — wandering over deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive

what was promised, since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

GOSPEL— St. John 1: 43-51

At that time, Jesus decided to go to Galilee. And he found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael, and he said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" Nathanael said to him, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." Nathanael answered him, "Rabbi, you are the son of God! You are the King of Israel!" Jesus answered him, "Because I said to you, I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You shall see greater things than these." And he said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Today.....Metropolis-Wide Sunday School Program (via “Zoom”) - 12:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, March 23rd.....Bible Study (in-person/social distancing) - 10:00 a.m.
- Wednesday, March 24th.....Great Vespers - 6:00 p.m. (Annunciation of the Holy Theotokos)
- Thursday, March 25th.....ANNUNCIATION OF THE HOLY THEOTOKOS
Orthros-8:30 a.m./ Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m./Doxology-10:30 a.m.
- Friday, March 26th.....Pre-Sanctified Divine Liturgy - 9:00 a.m.
Salutations to the Ever-Virgin Mary (2nd Stanza) - 6:00 p.m.

BOOK SALE FOLLOWING THE CELEBRATION OF THE DIVINE LITURGY TODAY

Liturgical Books for Lent and Holy Week:

1. **Holy Week Books** (Narthex Press) - \$25. 15 copies left
2. **Akathist Hymn** (Narthex Press) -\$20. 25 copies pre-ordered and now sold out. New orders will be taken today for speedy delivery.

Popular Books for Great Lent

1. **Great Lent** (Fr. Alexander Schmemmann) -\$20. 5 copies left
2. **Our Thoughts Determine our Lives** (Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnika)- \$25. 5 copies left