

SEPTEMBER 5, 2021

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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Palm Desert, California 92260

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# THE LADDER

**Mailing Address:**

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– 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.

**WHO OWES WHAT TO WHOM?**

The theme of forgiveness is addressed in the Parable of our Savior, which we heard as today’s Gospel passage was read. By analogy, the debt that was owed to the king is the deeds of repentance that are owed in return for sins committed. As the king forgave the servant who owed much, the servant is required to forgive the debt of the fellow servant.

We should consider the fact that the debt of the fellow servant is actually a debt that is owed to the king, since the “wicked” servant would have had to use what was owed to him to pay his debt to

the king, any way. Let us not forget that when we sin against people, we owe God. God wants us to “pay” for our sins by offering our love to God and the people against whom we have sinned.

The mentality of our Saints was such that those who sinned against them, owed an answer to God rather than to them personally. This is why, even when facing martyrdom, they prayed for and blessed their tormentors, following the example of our Savior, who proclaimed forgiveness from His Cross.

*Continued on Page 2*

**ST. ELIZABETH, THE MOTHER OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST** – Today we commemorate St. Elizabeth, the mother of the holy Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord, John. She was descended from the lineage of Aaron, and was the sister of St. Anna, the mother of the Most Holy Theotokos. Her husband was Zachariah, and the righteous spouses, “walking in all the commandments of the Lord” (Luke 1:6), suffered barrenness, which in those days was considered a punishment from God. When Elizabeth gave birth to a son, it was through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that she announced that his name was John, although no one in their family had this name.

When King Herod heard from the Magi about the birth of the Messiah, he decided to kill all the infants up to two years of age, hoping that the new-born Messiah would be among them. Herod knew about John’s unusual birth and he wanted to kill him, fearing that he was the foretold King of the Jews. But Elizabeth hid herself and the infant in the hills. Herod searched everywhere for John.

Zachariah was serving in the Temple when soldiers entered and tried in vain to learn from him the whereabouts of his son. Refusing to betray this information, Zachariah was murdered. Elizabeth protected St. John and he went on to dwell in the wilderness until he appeared to the nation of Israel.

– Taken from the Antiochian Orthodox Church website



Το θέμα της συγχωρήσεως αναφέρεται στην Παραβολή του Σωτήρος μας της σημερινής Ευαγγελικής περικοπής. Κατά αναλογία, το χρέος που εχρωστούσε στον βασιλέα είναι οι πράξεις μετάνοιας που οφείλονται σε αντάλλαγμα για αμαρτίες που έχουν διαπραχθεί. Καθώς ο βασιλέας εσυγχώρησε τον υπηρέτη που εχρωστούσε πολλά, ο υπηρέτης έπρεπε να συγχωρήσει το χρέος του συναδέλφου του.

Η αλήθεια είναι ότι το χρέος του συναδέλφου είναι στην πραγματικότητα ένα χρέος που οφείλεται στον βασιλέα, αφού ο «πονηρός» υπηρέτης θα έπρεπε να χρησιμοποιήσει όσα του οφειλόταν για να πληρώσει το χρέος του στον βασιλέα, εν πάση περιπτώση.

Ας μην ξεχάσουμε ότι όταν αμαρτάνουμε εναντίον των συνανθρώπων μας, το χρωστάμε στον Θεό. Ο Θεός θέλει να «πληρώσουμε» για τις αμαρτίες μας, με έργα αγάπης προς τον πλησίον μας, εναντίον του οποίου επραξάμεν την αμαρτίαν.

Η νοοτροπία των Αγίων μας ήταν τέτοια που εθεωρούσαν τις αμαρτίες των βασανιστών των ως χρέη προς τον Θεό, παρά ως χρέη προς τους ίδιους προσωπικά. Αυτός είναι ο λόγος για τον οποίο, ακόμη και όταν αντιμετώπισαν το μαρτύριο, προσευχήθηκαν και ευλόγησαν τους βασανιστάς των, ακολουθώντας το παράδειγμα του Σωτήρος μας, ο Οποίος εκήρυξε την συγχώρεση από τον Σταυρό Του.

Ας μάθουμε ότι οι τιμές που πληρώνουμε για τις αμαρτίες είναι μεγαλύτερες από τις τιμές που πληρώνουμε για να προσφέρουμε αγάπη στον Θεό και στον πλησίον μας.

+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

When we forget about our relationship with Christ our God, we can easily fall into the faulty mentality of the “wicked” servant of our Lord’s Parable, who owed much to the king, but who treated his fellow servant unmercifully. Indeed, there were many sins that were committed in the thoughts of the “wicked” servant, before he acted out his tangible sins of cruelty.

First, he committed the sin of pride. Pride causes us to think only about ourselves and to neglect God and neighbor. Pride is a subtle sin, which disguises itself as a form of “normalcy.” Yet, it draws us to consider ourselves to be more important than God and other people.

Second, because of his sin of pride, he committed the sin of ingratitude. Pride blinds us from being thankful for God’s love and mercy by showing love and mercy to those around us.

Third, the sin of ingratitude leads to the sin of greed. The “wicked” servant wanted things only for himself — at the expense of his neighbor. Greed is a sin by which we want to have things for ourselves so much so that we have no care for others.

Finally, with all of these sins harboring in the soul of the “wicked” servant (which *made* him wicked), he acted sinfully, which, in turn cost him dearly. It’s worth thinking about! The cost of sin is always greater than the cost of virtue and good deeds.

In today’s Epistle passage, St. Paul asks us to support the ministries of the Church; for, without the Church, the cost of lost souls and subsequent lost lives is huge, because without the spiritual foundations that the Church provides, we are all prey to many sins of ideas and thoughts, which translate into many sins of deed. Let us love Christ our God and let us love all people in the world; let us love our Church, and let us pursue Christ-like virtues.

+FR. THEODORE

**BIBLE STUDY** -- This year two Bible Study sessions will be offered, beginning on **Thursday, September 16th**. The session that has always been held on **Tuesday mornings at 10:00 a.m.** with **Fr. Ted** will continue as always. Another session will be held on **Thursday evenings at 6:30 p.m.** with **Deacon Euthym**. **Please note** that, due to complications with the "Zoom" link this past Tuesday, August 31st, we were not able to function on "Zoom." The **new "Zoom" link this Tuesday, Sept. 7th** is: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81329951397?pwd=NTJIK0ppVUc5R2ZtZzBFcTBWVTUvdz09>.

**SUNDAY SCHOOL** – **Sunday School begins Sunday, September 19th.**

All parents, grandparents and Godparents will be invited to a special meeting so that they can become familiar with the theme and curriculum for this new school year. Parental involvement is necessary for students to be prepared for their lessons. Registration forms will be available on Sunday, September 12th. Lessons will carry with them the theme of "the principle Christian virtues."



*“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 — 1 Corinthians 9:2-12

Brethren, you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. This is my defense to those who would examine me. Do we not have the right to our food and drink? Do we not have the right to be accompanied by a wife, as the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living? Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard without eating any of its fruit? Who tends a flock without getting some of the milk? Do I say this on human authority? Does not the law say the same? For it is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain." Is it for oxen that God is concerned? Does he not speak entirely for our sake? It was written for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope and the thresher thresh in hope of a share in the crop. If we have sown spiritual good among you, is it too much if we reap your material benefits? If others share this rightful claim upon you, do not we still more? Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ.

GOSPEL — St. Matthew 18:23-35

The Lord said this parable: "The kingdom of heaven may be

compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began the reckoning, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents; and as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him the lord of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. But that same servant, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat he said, 'Pay what you owe.' So his fellow servant fell down and besought him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' He refused and went and put him in prison till he should pay the debt. When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you besought me; and should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his lord delivered him to the jailors, till he should pay all his debt. So also my heavenly Father will do to everyone of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."

**WEEKDAY CALENDAR**

**MEMORIAL** — Today's Memorial Service is for the Eternal Salvation for the servant of God, **Vasilios Bountouvas (40 days)**, the beloved uncle of **Evonne Duque** and **Bobby Barsakas**. Included in our memorial prayers today are: **Anastasia Bountouvas**, the beloved aunt of **Evonne Duque** and **Bobby Barsakas**, as well as **Athanasios Barsakas**, the beloved father of **Evonne Duque** and **Bobby Barsakas**, and husband of **Kondylo Barsakas**.

**Today, following Church Services – Luncheon in memory and honor of the William George Barringer, who fell asleep in the Lord one year ago.**

Tuesday, September 7th.....Bible Study- 10:00 a.m./ Sunday School Staff meeting – 7:00 p.m.

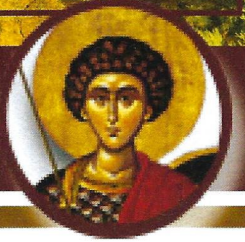
Wednesday, September 8th .... NATIVITY OF THE HOLY THEOTOKOS  
Orthros-8:30 a.m./Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.

Thursday, September 9th....Parish Council Meeting – 2:00 p.m.



# Saint George Greek Orthodox Church Golf Tournament

Saturday, September 25, 2021 | 12:30 PM Shotgun Start | Desert Willow Golf Resort



## ENTRY INFORMATION

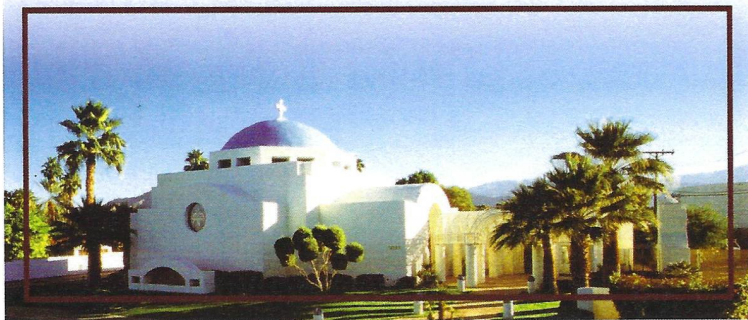
Saturday, September 25, 2021

- \$175 per player (includes Golf and Awards Dinner)
- 12:30 PM Shotgun Start at Desert Willow Golf Resort
- 5:00 PM Social Hour at St. George Greek Orthodox Church
- 6:00 PM Traditional Greek Dinner at St. George Greek Orthodox Church | Silent Auction and Live Music

## INDIVIDUALS AND SPONSORSHIPS

- Individual Player(s) \_\_\_ (# of Players) x \$175 \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Tee Sponsorship(s) \_\_\_ (# of Sponsorships) x \$100 \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Traditional Greek Dinner \_\_\_ (# of Dinners) x \$35 \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_



## EVENT REGISTRATION

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Company/Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

## PLAYER NAMES

1. \_\_\_\_\_ GHIN# \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_ GHIN# \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_ GHIN# \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_ GHIN# \_\_\_\_\_

## REGISTRATION AND PAYMENT

**REGISTRATION DEADLINE: SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2021**

Sign up online at [www.desertwillow.com/StGeorge](http://www.desertwillow.com/StGeorge)  
Make Checks Payable To:

“Saint George Greek Orthodox Church”

Send Checks and Registration Form to:

PO Box 4755 | Palm Desert, CA | 92261

Prot. No. 539

**† B A R T H O L O M E W**  
BY GOD'S MERCY ARCHBISHOP OF CONSTANTINOPLE-NEW ROME  
AND ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH  
TO THE PLENITUDE OF THE CHURCH  
GRACE, PEACE AND MERCY FROM THE MAKER OF ALL CREATION  
OUR LORD GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

Esteemed brethren and beloved children in the Lord,

The Feast of the Indiction, the solemn day of prayers for the natural environment, finds once again humanity confronted with intense weather conditions due to mounting climate change, with devastating floods and fires across the globe, as well as with the Coronavirus pandemic and its socioeconomic consequences.

The fact that the restrictive measures in transportation and the limits imposed on industrial production have resulted in a reduction of pollutants and emissions, offered an additional valuable lesson on global interconnection and on the interdependence of all dimensions of life. Moreover, it has been also revealed anew that the Ecumenical Patriarchate's ecological initiatives, which comprise an extension of the Church's theology and liturgical tradition, correspond with scientific findings and with experts' recommendations calling for multifaceted mobilization in order to protect the integrity of the natural environment.

We thus pray for the swift overcoming of the consequences of the health crisis and for the illumination from above of governments throughout the world, so that they do not return to or persist upon economism, to those principles of organization of the economic life, of production and consumption, of exhaustive exploitation of natural resources, principles that prevailed prior to the pandemic. Further, it is our genuine desire that the dissemination of pseudoscientific opinions concerning the purported dangers of the Covid-19 vaccines, the slander aimed toward specialists of the medical field, and the unfounded degradation of the seriousness of the disease, be terminated. Unfortunately, similar opinions are propagated in regard to climate change as well, its cause and its disastrous effects. The reality is entirely different, and must be faced with responsibility, collaboration, joint actions, and common vision.

Inactivity is inconceivable when in full knowledge of the shared great contemporary challenges of humanity. Indifference toward our suffering brethren and toward the destruction of the “very good” creation, is an offence against God and a violation of His commandments. Wherein exist respect toward creation and tangible love toward man, the “beloved of God,” therein God is present.

After the Holy and Great Council (Crete, 2016), the Ecumenical Patriarchate, in accordance to its spirit and decisions, appointed an official commission, comprised of theologians, to draft a document on the social implications of our faith and on the social mission and witness of the Orthodox Church in the contemporary world. This text, which was approved for publication by the Holy and Sacred Synod and is entitled *For the Life of the World: Toward a Social Ethos of the Orthodox Church*, states the following: “The Church encourages the faithful to be grateful for—and to accept—the findings of the sciences, even those that might occasionally oblige them to revise their understandings of the history and frame of cosmic reality. The desire for scientific knowledge flows from the same wellspring as faith’s longing to enter ever more deeply into the mystery of God” (§ 71).

The Holy Great Church of Christ emphatically highlights the indivisibility of the natural environment’s protection and the philanthropic care for one’s neighbor. Both an eco-friendly stance and the recognition of the sacredness of the human person are a “liturgy after the Liturgy,” vital dimensions of the Eucharistic actualization of the Church. The life of the Church is a manifest respect for creation, as well as the place and the way of experiencing the culture of personhood and of solidarity.

Most honorable brothers and cherished children,

Throughout this difficult period, it is an essential pastoral duty of the Church to undertake initiatives for the containment of the pandemic. And it is also a categorical ethical mandate to support global access to the immunization against the coronavirus, especially in poorer nations, in accordance with the words of our Lord, “Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me” (Matt. 25:40). We ought to love one another “as Christ has loved us” (Eph. 5:2) and to show ourselves as “priests” of creation, safeguarding and cultivating it with care and affection, and, offering in thanksgiving this exceedingly precious gift of God’s Grace unto the Creator of all.

In closing, we wholeheartedly wish unto all a blessed, healthful and fruitful new ecclesiastical year, and we call upon you, through the intercessions of the Theotokos Pammakaristos, the grace and mercy of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to Whom be the glory and the dominion unto the everlasting ages. Amen!

September 1, 2021

†**BARTHOLOMEW** of Constantinople  
Fervent supplicant of all before God