



DECEMBER 3, 2023

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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Palm Desert, California 92260

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- Pastor, Fr. Theodore
Pantels, M.Div.
- Deacon Euthym
Kontaxis, M.D., M.Div.

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.

THE LADDER



PRAYER FOR READING HOLY SCRIPTURES

"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 -Ephesians 5:8-19

Brethren, walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is a shame even to speak of the things that they do in secret; but when anything is exposed by the light it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it is said, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light." Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart.

GOSPEL—St. Luke 18:35-43

At that time, as Jesus drew near to Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging; and hearing a multitude going by, he inquired what this meant. They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by." And he cried, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" And those who were in front rebuked him, telling him to be silent; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" And Jesus stopped, and commanded him to be brought to him; and when he came near, he asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, let me receive my sight." And Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight and followed him, glorifying God; and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.

Liturgical Notes for Today

At the Entrance of the Gospel: 1) Entrance hymn: "O Savior Your tomb was sealed by the Jews with a stone; soldiers kept watch over Your sacred Body. Yet, You rose on the third day, giving life to the world. Wherefore, the powers of heaven cried out to You, O Giver of Life, 'Glory to Your Resurrection, O Christ; glory to Your Kingdom; glory to Your dispensation, Who alone are the Loving One.' / Του λίθου σφραγισθέντος...

2) "Since you are a deliverer of captives..." [Hymn of St. George]/ Ως των αιχμαλώτων ελευθερωτής...

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### Liturgical Notes for Today, continued

3) **Kontakion:** "Today the Virgin comes to the cave to ineffably give birth to the eternal Logos. Harkening to this, rejoice, O Universe, and with the angels and shepherds glorify Him, the God before all ages, Who willed to be held as a young child." / Η Παρθένος σήμερα...

#### FREE WILL

As news about the arrival of robots into our world is reported, a new heresy of our time has arisen. Wiring and circuitry in robots is often compared to organs and neurons in the body. If robots can be programmed to act like humans without having human free will, then the question is posed as to whether human free will even exists? Our Saints, however, have demonstrated that humans do have free will; for, the exercise of their free will indicates that, indeed, the soul can be the ruler of the body. The voluntary will to fast; to pray; to give of one's self out of care for others (sacrificial love) is all proof that we are created with free will, which is a beautiful quality of the soul.

Today's Epistle and Gospel passages illustrate the power of our human free will. In his Epistle to the Ephesians, St. Paul implies that it is in the power of our free will to *open our eyes* and come out of the darkness and to *choose* whether to be drunk with wine, or to take into ourselves the Holy Spirit. In the Gospel today, we find a man who willingly prayed to Christ our God for mercy. Biology does not have an easy answer for the fact that, when told to "be quiet" by others, the blind man *willingly* all the more shouted, "Have mercy on me, O Son of David." On the basis of his faith, he willingly prayed for healing and our Savior responded, "Your faith has made you well."

Any idea that humans do not have a free will is a deception from the devil so that we fall into the error of believing that we are not responsible for how we think and what we do. Accordingly, evil is the fault of something or someone else, and therefore it is a mistake to believe in such things as *sin* or *virtue*. Let us not be duped into believing that we are just "god-like" machines in the flesh. Such a notion is of the anti-Christ...the very corruption of the reality of God in the flesh, Who is Christ. To say that we have no free will is to ignore the fact that human willpower, coupled with God's grace, is what lies behind miracles. By all means, let us welcome Christ our God into our lives starting from now! +FR. THEODORE

Καθώς μεταδίδονται νέα για την δημιουργία των ρομπότ στον κόσμο μας, μια νέα αίρεση της εποχής μας έχει εμφανισθεί μπροστά μας. Τα καλώδια και τα συστήματα στα ρομπότ συχνά συγκρίνονται με όργανα και νευρώνες του σώματός μας. Εάν τα ρομπότ μπορούν να προγραμματισθούν να ενεργούν σαν άνθρωποι χωρίς να έχουν *το αυτεξούσιον* (δηλ. την ανθρώπινη ελεύθερη βούληση), τότε τίθεται το ερώτημα εάν ακόμη υπάρχει *το αυτεξούσιον* του ανθρώπου (δηλ. την ανθρώπινη ελεύθερη βούληση)! Οι Άγιοι μας, ωστόσο, έχουν αποδείξει ότι οι άνθρωποι έχουν ελεύθερη βούληση, γιατί η άσκηση της ελεύθερης βουλήσεώς των μας δείχνει ότι, πράγματι, η ψυχή μπορεί να κυβερνήσει το σώμα. Η εθελοντική θέληση για να νηστεύσουμε, για να προσευχηθούμε; για να προσφέρουμε κάτι από τον εαυτό μας από φροντίδα για άλλους (η θυσιαστική αγάπη) – είναι όλα αποδείξεις ότι έχουμε δημιουργηθεί με ελεύθερη βούληση, που είναι η ιδιότητα της ψυχής.

Οι σημερινές περικοπές της Επιστολής και του Ευαγγελίου δείχνουν τη δύναμη της ανθρώπινης ελεύθερης βουλήσεώς μας. Στην προς Εφεσίους Επιστολή του, ο Άγιος Παύλος υπονοεί ότι είναι στη δύναμη της ελεύθερης βουλήσεώς μας να *ανοίξουμε τα μάτια* μας και να βγούμε από το σκοτάδι και να επιλέξουμε αν θα μεθύσουμε με κρασί ή εάν θα πάρουμε μέσα μας το Άγιο Πνεύμα. Στο Ευαγγέλιο σήμερα, ευρίσκουμε έναν άνθρωπο που προσευχήθηκε πρόθυμα στον Χριστό για το Θείο έλεος. Η βιολογία δεν έχει μια εύκολη απάντηση για το γεγονός ότι, όταν του είπαν οι άλλοι να «σιωπήσει,» ο τυφλός πρόθυμα εφώνασε όλο και περισσότερο «*Ελέησόν με, Υιέ του Δαβίδ*». Με βάση της πίστεώς του, επροσευχήθηκε πρόθυμα να θεραπευθεί και ο Χριστός του είπε: «*Η πίστις σου σε έκανε καλά*».

Συνέχεια στην επόμενη σελίδα-- -->

Η ιδέα ότι οι άνθρωποι δεν έχουν ελεύθερη βούληση (το αυτεξούσιον) είναι μια εξαπάτηση από τον διάβολο, ώστε να πέσουμε στο λάθος να πιστέψουμε ότι δεν είμαστε υπεύθυνοι για το πώς σκεφτόμεθα και για το τι κάνουμε. Σύμφωνα με μια τέτοια αίρεση, το κακό δεν γίνεται από εμάς, αλλά συμβαίνει από κάτι άλλο ή από κάποιον άλλον, και επομένως είναι λάθος να πιστεύουμε σε κάτι πράγματα όπως η αμαρτία ή η αρετή. Οι δαίμονες θέλουν να μας εξαπατήσουν ώστε να πιστεύουμε ότι είμαστε απλώς «θεόμορφες» μηχανές στην σάρκα. Μια τέτοια αντίληψη είναι για τον αντί-Χριστό...ακριβώς μία μεγάλη διαφθορά από την πραγματικότητα του εν σαρκί Θεού, ο Οποίος είναι ο Χριστός. Το να πούμε ότι δεν έχουμε ελεύθερη βούληση σημαίνει ότι αγνοούμε το γεγονός ότι η ανθρώπινη θέληση, σε συνδυασμό με τη χάρη του Θεού, δημιουργεί θαύματα. Ας μην ξεγελιόμαστε! Με κάθε τρόπο, ας φέρουμε τον Χριστό στη ζωή μας από τώρα! +Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

**MEMORIAL** – Today’s Memorial Service is for the Eternal Rest and Salvation for the servants of God, **William Piggott (3 yrs.)**, the beloved husband of Mary Piggott, **Fotios Tartas (83 yrs.)**, the beloved father of Mary Piggott, **Malamo Tartas (56 yrs.)**, the beloved mother of Mary Piggott, and **Theophilos Tartas (9 yrs.)**, the beloved brother of Mary Piggott. May our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ grant Eternal Rest and Salvation to **William Piggott, Fotios Tartas, Malamo Tartas, and Theophilos Tartas** and may He grant peace and comfort to Mary Piggott and family. MAY THEIR MEMORIES BE ETERNAL!

### WEEKDAY CALENDAR

Tuesday, December 5th.....Bible Study – 10:00 a.m.

Wednesday, December 6th.....ST. NICHOLAS THE WONDERWORKER

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

Online Orthodox Catechism Class – 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, December 9th.....Philoptochos Christmas Luncheon – 11:00 a.m.

*Next Sunday, December 10th.....Sunday School Christmas Program/ Parish Council elections*

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **SUNDAY SCHOOL** – Regular Sunday School classes continue today, with added attention to our annual Sunday School Christmas Program, which will be presented **next Sunday, December 10, 2023**, the theme of which is “Living Icons of the Nativity.” See the enclosed flyer. Our Sunday School is selling **stocking stuffers** from \$1.00-\$20.00. Check out the display situated in front of the bookstore.
- **ONLINE ORTHODOX CATECHISM CLASS** - Wednesday, December 6th at 6:30 p.m. Please contact Fr. Ted at (760) 880-5869 to receive a “Zoom” link for the online class.
- **PHILOPTOCHOS** – The **Philoptochos Holiday Bake Sale** is underway. Greek pastries are available for purchase today and tomorrow (November 27th). The enclosed flyer indicates the pastries available and their prices. Also enclosed is the “Philoptochos Christmas Party” flyer. **Tomorrow is the deadline for making reservations!**
- **PARISH COUNCIL CANDIDACY FORMS** -The deadline for “Parish Council Candidacy Forms” to be completed and returned to our office is tomorrow, December 4th. Parish Council membership requires baptism and marriage (if married) according to the Rites of the Greek Orthodox Church; membership of the parish for at least one year; frequent participation in the Sacramental life of the Orthodox Church, and compliance with the Archdiocese Youth Safety Program by completing the youth training course and official background check.

ANNOUNCEMENTS CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE – -->

*ANNOUNCEMENTS, Continued*

- **PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS** – Elections for 2024 Parish Council will be held **next Sunday, December 10th**, following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. Special thanks to this year's Election Committee: **Annette Laskaris, Ana Storton, and Michael Hallinan**.

***ST. GEORGE LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS  
HOLIDAY BAKE SALE***

***Koulourakia—\$12.00 per 12 pieces***

***Paximathia —\$12.00 per 12 pieces***

***Kourembiethes —\$12.00 per 6 pieces***

***Melamakarona —\$12.00 per 6 pieces***

***Baklava— \$12.00 per 4 pieces***

***Combination Boxes available!***

**Pick-up dates: Today and Monday, November 20th & 27th**

***Thank you for supporting our Philoptochos Chapter!***



# ***Philoptochos Christmas Party***

**Dec. 9th 11:00 am**

**Sun City Clubhouse**

**38180 Del Webb Blvd, Palm Desert**

*Please Join Us! Bring a Friend!*

**-RSVP by December 4th-**

Luncheon Price \$60.00 per person includes:

Buffet luncheon with Tri-tip steak & baked fish, salad, potatoes, rice pilaf, seasonal vegetables & bread plus a special dessert. Coffee, iced tea, & water included. Cash Bar. \*Vegetarian meal option is available.

***Cash Bar! Music! Hostess Gift! Raffle!***

\*\*\*\*\*  
I am attending: (Name) \_\_\_\_\_

I am bringing a guest: (Name) \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*  
Total Number Attending: \_\_\_\_\_

Payment Type: Cash \_\_\_\_\_ Check \_\_\_\_\_ CC \_\_\_\_\_

Total Payment Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

I prefer a: \*Vegetarian Meal (circle)

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## Sunday School Families and Parishioners!

Below is "The Nativity Hymn" we will all sing together at the end of our program "**ICONS OF THE NATIVITY**" on **Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023.**

We have included a **BEAUTIFUL RECORDING** from our Deaconess Krisann Kontaxis for you to learn and practice together!

Many Blessings!

Fr. Ted Pantels, Presb. Petula Pantels  
& Mrs. Athena Snarskis



## Thy Nativity Hymn

Thy Nativity, O Christ our God,  
Has shine the light of knowledge upon the world,  
For thereby, they that worship the stars,  
Were instructed by a star, to worship Thee, the Sun of righteousness,  
And to know Thee, the Day-Spring from on high,  
O Lord Glory be to Thee!



# CHRISTMAS POT-LUCK

EVERYONE IS WELCOME – PLEASE RSVP

This will be a pot-luck dinner, please bring your favorite dish feeds12, please email or call so we do not duplicate dishes, beverages and bar provided by AHEPA Chapter 528.

**Tuesday 12/12/2023**

**6:00 pm at**

**St George Church**

• 74109 Larrea, Palm Desert CA 92260

**RSVP by 12/05/2023**

**Ahepa528.org**

**Contact@ahempa528.org**

*Wynn @ 760.832.2825 mobile/text  
or leave message with Fr Ted*

*Please bring a wrapped gift  
(no more than \$15 value)  
for a fun gift exchange game.*

**CHAPTER 528**