



MARCH 5, 2023

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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– Fr. Theodore Pantels, Proistamenos (Pastor)

– Deacon Euthym Kon-taxis, 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.

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—Hebrews 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."

Liturgical Notes for Today

At the Entrance of the Gospel: 1) **Entrance hymn:** "O faithful, let us sing a hymn of praise and worship to the Logos, Who is coeternal with the Father and the Spirit, Who was born of the Virgin for our salvation. Of His own will He went upon the Cross in the flesh, and suffered death to raise the dead, through His glorious Resurrection." / Τον Συνάναρχον Λόγον...

2) "O Christ, begging forgiveness of our sins, we venerate Your Pure Image, O Good One. Of Your own free will, You condescended to ascend upon the Cross in the flesh and deliver those You created from the bondage of the enemy. Wherefore, thankfully, we cry out, 'When You came to save the world, You filled all things with joy, O our Savior.'" / Τὴν ἀχραντὸν εἰκόνα Σου προσκυνούμεν...

3) "Since you are a deliverer of captives..." [Hymn of St. George] / Ως τῶν αἰχμαλώτων ελευθερωτῆς...

4) **Kontakion:** "To You, Theotokos, invincible Defender, having been delivered from peril, I, Your city, dedicate the victory festival as a thank offering. In Your irresistible might, keep me safe from all trials, that I may call our to You: 'Hail, Unwedded Bride.'" / Τῇ Υπερμάχῳ...

HONORING THE IMAGE

We begin the Lenten season every year by proclaiming our faith, especially in terms of illustrating the divine qualities and the ultimate purpose of our human lives. It is the capacity of the human soul to comprehend the truth of God's Word regarding the fact that we are made in the Image and Likeness of God. Being the Image of God, we are able to comprehend God's love, and, at the same time, we are able to share it, and to act like God in the way that God loves.

Hence, God's Only-Begotten Son, Jesus Christ is truly our Savior. Not only in Person of Christ do we see the Image of God in the flesh, but we see the divine nature of ourselves as personal images of God. St. Basil says it this way, "[God] taking flesh from the Holy Virgin...[was] born in the image of our lowly body, ...[that] He might change us to be the image of His glorious Body." This is the greatest honor, showing that each person has divine worth, no matter how lowly we may feel or perceive of ourselves.

The Holy Icons proclaim this sacred truth vividly. God became Man, so that we can become like God. The word "Man" here refers to every human being – man, woman, and child (born and pre-born). God received flesh from the Ever-Virgin Mary through the power of the Holy Spirit, Who continues to reveal God's Truth to us. This is why Her Icon oversees the Holy Altar from where we receive the Holy Spirit through the Sacraments, making your image and my image comformable to the divine glory. We can search for meaning in a hundred different places, but we will never find more meaning for our lives anywhere. Indeed, we were not created to suffer and dissolve into nothingness. We were created to live forever. This is what it means to be an Orthodox Christian! This is the Sunday of Orthodoxy!
+FR. THEODORE

Ξεκινάμε την περίοδο της Μ. Τεσσαρακοστής κάθε χρόνο διακηρύσσοντας την Πίστη μας, ιδίως όσον αφορά την απεικόνιση των θείων ιδιοτήτων και του απωτέρου σκοπού της ανθρώπινης ζωής μας. Είναι η ικανότητα της ανθρώπινης ψυχής να κατανοήσει την αλήθεια σχετικώς με τον Λόγο του Θεού ότι είμεθα φθιαγμένοι κατ' εικόνα και καθ' ομοίωσιν του Θεού. Όντας η Εικόνα του Θεού, ο καθένας είναι σε θέση να κατανοήσει την αγάπη του Θεού, και, ταυτοχρόνως, είμεθα όλοι σε θέση να τη μοιρασθούμε και να ενεργούμε την θεϊκή αγάπη.

Επομένως, ο Μονογενής Υιός του Θεού, ο Ιησούς Χριστός, είναι πραγματικά ο Σωτήρ ημών. Όχι μόνο στο Πρόσωπο του Χριστού βλέπουμε την Εικόνα του Θεού κατά σάρκα, αλλά βλέπουμε τη θεϊκή φύση του εαυτού μας ως προσωπικές εικόνες του Θεού. Ο Αγ. Βασίλειος το λέει έτσι: «[Ο Θεός] εκ Παρθένου Αγίας σαρκωθείς...μορφήν δούλου λαβών συμμόρφος τῷ σώματι της ταπεινώσεως ημών, ίνα ημᾶς συμμόρφους ποιήση της εικόνας της δόξης Αυτού». Αυτή είναι η μεγαλύτερη τιμή. Δείχνει ότι ο καθένας έχει θεϊκή αξία, ανεξαρτήτως από το πως αισθανόμεθα ή πως θεωρούμε τον εαυτό μας.

Οι Ιερές Εικόνες διακηρύσσουν έντονα αυτήν την αγίαν αλήθεια. Ο Θεός έγινε Άνθρωπος, για να

γίνουμε σαν τον Θεό. Η λέξη «Άνθρωπος» εδώ αναφέρεται σε κάθε άνδρα, γυναίκα και παιδί. Ο Θεός έλαβε σάρκα από την Θεοτόκο κατά την χάρην του Αγίου Πνεύματος, που συνεχίζει να μας αποκαλύπτει την Αλήθεια του Θεού. Γι' αυτό η Εικόνα Της επιβλέπει την Αγίαν Τράπεζα από όπου λαμβάνουμε το Άγιο Πνεύμα μέσω των Θείων Μυστηρίων, καθιστώντας την δική μου εικόνα και τη δική σας εικόνα προσαρμόσιμες στη θεία δόξα. Μπορούμε να αναζητήσουμε νόημα ζωής σε εκατό διαφορετικά μέρη, αλλά δεν θα ευρούμε ποτέ πουθενά κανένα σπουδαιότερο νόημα για τη ζωή μας. Πράγματι, δεν δημιουργηθήκαμε για να υποφέρουμε και να διαλυθούμε στο τίποτα. Δημιουργηθήκαμε για να ζούμε αιωνίως. Αυτό σημαίνει να είναι κανείς Χριστιανός Ορθόδοξος! Και σήμερα είναι η Κυριακή της Ορθοδοξίας!

+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

WEEKDAY CALENDAR

Tuesday, March 7th.....Bible Study – 10:00 a.m.

Wednesday, March 8th.....PRESANCTIFIED DIVINE LITURGY – 6:00 p.m.

Friday, March 10th.....PRESANCTIFIED DIVINE LITURGY – 9:00 a.m.
Salutation Service (Second Stanza) - 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, March 11th.....St. George Philoptochos Membership Event – “Hawaiian Luau”
at our parish hall – 11:30 a.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **“Agiasmo” (The Blessing of the Water Service)** – Following Church Services today, will serve coffee in our parish hall as always. The “first-of-the-month” Service of the Blessing of the Water (“Agiasmo”) will take place at 11:15. Everyone (along with our Sunday School students) is invited to return to the church for the Service. It will be a blessing to receive Holy Water and then bless your homes and your icons as we enter a new month of life in Christ and the Lenten Season.
- **SUNDAY SCHOOL** -- Today, our students will participate in the Blessing of the Waters Service (“Agiasmo”) along with their parents during their class time – and , next **Sunday, March 12th, Mrs. Mary Brown**, will be presenting The Passion of Christ Iconography.
- **SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR YOUTH FOR HELPING WITH OUR 2023 GREEK FESTIVAL** – **Eleni Castrale, Colin Hays, Liam Hays, Emma Hays, Harper and Jackson Harrigan**
- **PHILOPTOCHOS**- Our annual **Ladies Philoptochos Chapter Membership event** is planned for **Saturday, March 11, 2023 at 11:30 am in the church hall**. Our theme this year is “Membership & Aloha”. This event is **open to both men & women** in our community wishing to join our chapter for the 2023 year. If you plan on attending, the **RSVP deadline is Friday, March 3rd**. Please respond to **President Rhonda Latkovic** via phone, text, or email by the deadline. tel. (714) 875-4661 email: r.s.fleminglatkovic@gmail.com.
- **AHEPA** - Our AHEPA Chapter 528 is accepting student applications for the **AHEPA 528 Fr. T. P. Theophilos Memorial Scholarship**. **Applications are due by April 2nd**. Please see our AHEPA 528 website at ahepa528.org to download a copy of the application. Scholarships will be announced and delivered on May 21st - AHEPA Sunday.
- **PARISH LENTEN RETREAT** - Please circle the date: Saturday, March 18, 2023 in order to join us for our annual **St. George Parish Lenten Retreat**. **Fr. Steven Tsiichlis**, pastor of St. Paul Greek Orthodox Church and author of the pamphlet entitled “Worshiper’s Guide to the Divine Liturgy,” will be the speaker for this Retreat. Please see the enclosed flyer!

**St. George Greek Orthodox Church's
2023 Lenten Retreat**

Living the Liturgy

with

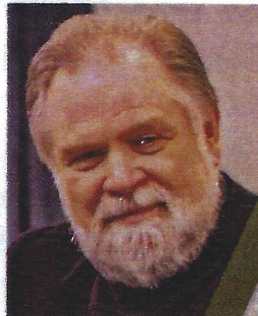
Father Steven Tsihlis

Pastor of St. Paul Greek Orthodox Church, Irvine, CA
Author of *A Worshiper's Guide to the Divine Liturgy*

Saturday, March 18

10:30 AM - 2:30 PM

Lenten Lunch Included



Session 1

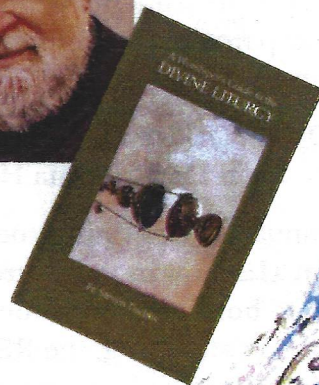
10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

"The Lord's Table: How Our
Participation in Liturgy Impacts
Our Lives"

Session 2

1:00 - 2:30 PM

"Living the Liturgy: Eating and Drinking
the Lord Jesus"



A freewill
donation of
\$10
is appreciated

To Register:

pdsaintgeorge@gmail.com | 760-568-9901

74-109 Larrea Street, Palm Desert, CA

BLESSING OF THE WATER (“AGIASMO”)

Why Does Church Bless Water?



Water is the fundamental element of life. All living things need water to live.

- In the beginning, God brought life from the water that covered the earth.
- Each of us had his beginning in the water of his mother’s womb.
- A human being’s body consists to a great extent of water. Every human being, animal, and plant on earth needs water to survive.

Water is the beginning of spiritual life, as well.

- In Genesis we read how God saved Noah and his family from the evil surrounding them by sending the Flood through which He destroyed the old world and from which He brought forth life once again.
- In Exodus we read how God saved the Chosen People by leading them through the Red Sea and drowning the Egyptians who pursued them.
- In the Gospel we read that St. John the Forerunner prepared the people for the coming of Christ by baptizing them in water.
- Jesus Christ Himself was baptized by immersion in the water of the Jordan River.
- Jesus likewise commanded that everyone who believed in the Apostles’ preaching be baptized. To this day we begin our life in the Church through water baptism.

Since the Church sanctifies every aspect of our life, it is only natural that through prayer she should sanctify water for us to be baptized in, as well as water to drink and to be blessed with.

When does the Church bless water?

There are **three kinds of blessing of water**:

- the blessing of water for ***the Mystery of Baptism***,
- the ***Great Sanctification (Megas Agiasmos)*** which is performed at the Feast of the Theophany,
- and ***the Lesser Sanctification (Mikros Agiasmos)*** which is performed throughout the year in the Church, in homes, businesses, fields, and gardens, to sanctify the daily activities of our lives.
- Holy Baptism is a whole subject unto itself. In this short article, we wish to talk about the Great and Lesser Agiasmos, and how we incorporate holy water into our daily lives.

What is the Great Agiasmos and how do we receive it?

The Great Agiasmos is the service of blessing water on the Feast of Christ's Baptism (Theophany) on 6 January Old Style (January 19th). We perform this service twice, once on the eve of the Feast and once on the Feast itself. We take the water blessed on January 5th to sanctify the homes of the faithful through sprinkling, and we drink the water blessed on January 6th after keeping a strict fast on January 5th. The Great Agiasmos is reserved in the Church, not normally in people's homes, and it should always be taken fasting. The Holy Canons prescribe that the Great Agiasmos water be given in lieu of Holy Communion, after fasting and confession, to those who are under a canonical epitimion (penance, "kanona") and therefore deprived of Holy Communion for a period of time; therefore obviously it is regarded as something very holy and possessed of spiritual power for the healing of soul and body.

What is the role of the Lesser Agiasmos?

The lesser Agiasmos can be performed and its sanctified water drunk throughout the year. This service may be performed in Church, at home, or at places of work, schools, government offices, farms, fishing boats...everywhere that the activities of life go on! The purpose of the ongoing celebration of the Lesser Water Blessing throughout the year is to sanctify ourselves and our daily activities for the sake of our spiritual and bodily health and salvation. There are various forms of the Lesser Agiasmos: the standard form which we do once a month in Church and perform often in homes and businesses, and the special forms for the beginning of the school year, the beginning of every good work, the beginning of a governmental or parish council term, etc.

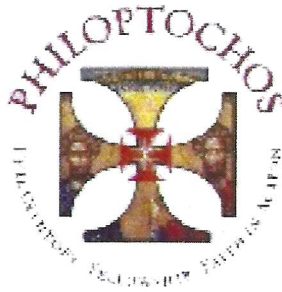
When should we invite the priest to perform the Lesser Agiasmos?

- On a regular basis, to our homes and businesses throughout the year, preferably once a month.
- When we are beginning something new, like starting a new business or moving into a new home.
- When there are troubles in the home: fighting, sickness, unfortunate events, etc.

What do we do with the blessed water of the Lesser Agiasmos?

- On the day we receive it in Church, we drink it after taking antidoron, and then we take it home and sprinkle our homes, cars, etc.
- Or, of course, the priest will sprinkle our home if he does the service in our house.
- Then we keep the Agiasmos in a clean, covered container with our icons and other holy things, and we take some every day before breakfast, after taking antidoron.

Let us begin these holy practices today, for the health and true spiritual happiness of our family members, and for greater peace, order, and holiness in our homes!



St. George

Ladies Philoptochos



MARCH OUTREACH PROJECT

We are collecting new **diapers and diaper wipes** during the month of March. Needed diaper sizes are 0-4. Donations benefit the Palm Desert Birth Choice of the Desert organization that helps unwed mothers and babies. Drop off in the church hall from March 5th-31st.



APRIL OUTREACH PROJECT

During the month of April, we are collecting **non-perishable food** to benefit families in need.

Wanted items are:

rice (1 or 2 lb. bags), cereal, mac-n-cheese, canned soup, canned fruit, canned vegetables, canned pasta, canned meats, peanut butter (12-16 oz. plastic), spaghetti, canned pasta sauce. Donations benefit the Narrow Door food bank in Indio. Drop off at the church from April 12nd-30th.