



VOICE OF ST. GEORGE

**SAINT GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT
74-109 LARREA ST.,
PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA**



THE POWER OF THE HOLY CROSS

Inside this Issue

During the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, we mystically join with Christ in His journey to the Cross. The bread and the wine are brought to the Holy Altar as Christ Himself voluntarily went to the Cross to offer His Body and Blood for the forgiveness of sins.

Certainly, the offering of the Body and Blood of Christ upon the Cross is in fulfillment of our Lord's words to Adam and Eve – that upon breaking His Commandment they would surely die. Christ died for us and offered Himself as the "Immortal Medicine," being the anecdote against our eternal death, which is the consequence of sin, if left unforgiven and unrepented.

The Cross is the Altar upon which His Body was broken and His Blood was shed for our forgiveness. This is consistent with our Lord's words, "Forgive them, for they know not what they do." This is why the celebrant at the Divine Liturgy makes the Sign of the Cross in the air with the Paten, upon which lies the bread, which will become the Body of Christ and the Chalice, within which is the wine, which will become the Blood of Christ. The bread and the wine become the Body and Blood of our Savior Jesus Christ through the descent of the Holy Spirit.

As we understand the deep meaning of the Holy Cross, we can no longer

consider It as a simple ornament.

Since the Body and Blood of Christ were given to us through the Cross, the Cross is known as the *Weapon of Peace*; for, indeed, the opposite of peace is destruction, anxiety and torment due to sin. The Cross is the Weapon that chases away temptations and defeats the powers of evil.

The Cross not only radiates the divine power of our Savior, but It serves to strengthen our efforts to do God's work, showing love for family, friends and neighbors. Showing love is effort. It is a matter of taking on responsibility and being accountable. Being responsible and accountable to God and others is also a matter of carrying our personal cross – the cross of self-sacrifice. In this regard, the Cross is also the *sign* of repentance.

The hymns of our Church on the **Feast Day of the Universal Elevation of the Holy Cross on Saturday, September 14th** remind us that the Cross is voluntarily given to us by our Lord in order to protect us against forces set to destroy our souls. Let us turn to the Holy Cross with the motive of allowing our Lord to strengthen our faith and to help us avoid temptations and ensuing evils. Indeed, **repentance** *is* the cross that we can carry into God's Kingdom.
+FR. THEODORE

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Flyers: Sock-Tober; "Bells Across America"; Pink Walk

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PATRIARCHAL ENCYCLICAL

TO THE PLENITUDE OF THE CHURCH: GRACE, PEACE AND MERCY FROM THE MAKER OF ALL CREATION OUR LORD GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

Most reverend brother Hierarchs and beloved children in the Lord,

Thirty-five whole years have lapsed since the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate established September 1st, the Feast of the Indiction and opening of the ecclesiastical year, as a Day of Prayers for the Protection of the Natural Environment. This blessed initiative had a great resonance and borne bountiful fruit. The multidimensional ecological activities of the Holy Great Church of Christ today center around the phenomenon of climate change—or rather, the climate crisis—which has caused a “planetary state of emergency.”

We appreciate the contribution of the environmental movements, the international agreements for the environment, the related engagement on the part of scientists with this problem, the contribution of environmental education, the ecological sensitivity and mobilization of countless people and especially representatives of the younger generation. However, we insist that what is needed is an axiological “Copernican turn,” a radical change of mentality globally, a substantial revision of the relationship between humankind and nature. Otherwise, we will continue to treat the catastrophic consequences of the ecological crisis, while leaving intact and active the roots of the problem.

The environmental threat is a dimension of the extended crisis in contemporary civilization. In this sense, confronting the problem cannot be successful on the basis of the principles of the same civilization, of the rationale behind it, which created it in the first place. We have repeatedly expressed our conviction that churches and religions can contribute significantly to a vital spiritual and evaluative conversion for the sake of the future of humanity and the planet. Genuine religious faith dissolves the arrogance

and titanism of humankind, inasmuch as it constitutes the embankment of its transformation into a “man-god,” who abolishes all standards, boundaries, and values, while declaring himself “the measure of all things” and instrumentalizing both his fellow human beings and nature for the satisfaction of his unquenchable needs and arbitrary pursuits.

The centuries-long experience teaches us that, without an “Archimedean” spiritual and evaluative support, humanity cannot avoid the risks of a nihilistic² “anthropologism.” This is the legacy of the classical spirit, as articulated by Plato through the principle that “God is the measure of all things for us” (Laws 716c). This understanding of humanity and its responsibility through its relationship with God is expressed through the Christian teaching about the creation of Adam “in the image of God” and “according to His likeness,” as well as about the assumption of human nature by the incarnate pre-eternal Word of God for our salvation and the renewal of all creation. The Christian faith recognizes the supreme value of humanity and creation alike. In this spirit, then, respect for the sacredness of the human person and the protection of the integrity of the “very good” creation are inseparable. Faith in the God of wisdom and love inspires and supports the creative forces of humankind, strengthening it in the face of challenges and trials, even when overcoming these appears humanly impossible.

We have struggled and still strive for an inter-Orthodox and inter-Christian collaboration for the protection of humanity and creation, as well as for the introduction of this subject in interfaith dialogue and common actions of religions. Moreover, we particularly emphasize the need to understand that the contemporary ecological crisis impacts first and foremost the poorer inhabitants on earth. In the document of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, entitled “For the Life of the World: Toward a Social Ethos of the Orthodox Church,” this topic is underlined emphatically along with the essential concern of the Church in light of the consequences of climate change: “We must

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PATRIARCHAL ENCYCLICAL, Continued

understand that serving our neighbor and preserving the natural environment are intimately and inseparably connected. There is a close and indissoluble bond between our care of creation and our service to the body of Christ, just as there is between the economic conditions of the poor and the ecological conditions of the planet. Scientists tell us that those most egregiously harmed by the current ecological crisis will continue to be those who have the least. This means that the issue of climate change is also an issue of social welfare and social justice." (Paragraph 76)

In conclusion, we wish you, most honorable brothers and most beloved children, a new ecclesiastical year full of divine blessings and productivity, invoking upon you all, through the intercession of Panagia Pammakaristos, whose wondrous and miraculous icon we honor and celebrate on this day and humbly venerate, the life-giving grace and boundless mercy of the Creator of all and God of wondrous things.

September 1, 2024

† **Bartholomew of Constantinople**

Fervent supplicant for all before God.

SPIRITUAL THOUGHTS

by

REV. DEACON EUTHYM

"For it was not in the power of John to give the Spirit, as those who were baptized by him show when they say, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Spirit. (Acts 19:2) In truth, Christ needed not baptism, neither his nor any other; but rather baptism needed the power of Christ." ...St John Chrysostom

The Trinity was revealed at Christ's baptism by John. Christ our God took human flesh at the Incarnation in order to save us. This begins with Holy Baptism. At Christ's baptism in the Jordan the waters reversed their flow. The name Jordan River is from the greek..."Iordanis"...which is the combination of the names of the two streams that form it...Ior and Dan (representing Adam and Eve) and the Jordan itself representing all of hu-

manity. The Jordan empties into the Dead Sea, in which no life exists. This represents the state of man after the fall. Death was inevitable. When Christ came, He "reversed" the flow of the Jordan, man now has the opportunity to return to Paradise...the path to inevitable death has been turned around by Christ Himself, who took our flesh and entered into death itself in order to resurrect and bring us with Him. Let us "put on Christ," as the hymn reminds us, and live according to His love and mercy.

I realized that we all worry about ourselves too much and that only he who leaves everything to the will of God can feel truly joyous, light, and peaceful." Elder Thaddeus

The self becomes our god and then we have stress and heaviness. When we remove the self, and rely only on God's will, we feel joy and peace, beyond comprehension. So if we find ourselves troubled, stressed, upset, let us inquire if we are relying only on ourselves, with such questions: "Have I forgotten to seek God's will and only exercise my own? By even looking at it, we allow God to enter and clean the "inside of the cup". Self-will is the Pharisaical effort to clean the "outside of the cup". God's will is focused on cleaning the "inside of the cup" as mentioned in the Gospel. This is the inner peace we seek and desire and, as long as we abide in Christ, will be with us through eternity.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Click the following: [Be the Bee - Complete Series - YouTube](#). This will link you with our Archdiocese religious videos on Church-related topics as part of a weekly home-study "quality time" experience. **Sunday School registration will be held on Sunday, September 22nd.**

Fr. Ted asks that this year's Sunday School theme will be "**Honor Thy Father and Thy Mother.**" The words from Proverbs 22:6 serve as a corollary to this theme: "*Train up your child in the way he should go; even when he is old, he will not depart from it.*"

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SUNDAY SCHOOL, *Continued*

We plan to involve our Sunday School students in a once-a-month service project to which parents are invited to join. More details will be provided as the Sunday School registration date draws near.

PHILOPTOCHOS



Philoptochos members prepared pastries for the National Philoptochos Convention from June 30th-July 4th 2024.



St. George parishioners joined our Philoptochos leadership to help in the efforts of the Narrow Door Food Bank in feeding the needy on August 24, 2024.

In June, members of our St. George Philoptochos came together to bake 1,000 koulourakia for the Metropolis Philoptochos' hospitality efforts at the National Philoptochos Convention held in San Diego, California from June 30th-July 4th. On **Saturday, August 24th**, members of our parish joined in the St. George Philoptochos effort to box food for the needy at the **Narrow Door Food Bank** in Indio, California.

Along with this effort, our Philoptochos is repeat-

ing the successful "**NO-SEW Blanket Outreach Project**" from last year to benefit two non-profits: **The SafeHouse of the Desert** and **Birth Choice of the Desert**. Our goal is to make a total of forty blankets that will be donated to benefit the children being assisted at each agency. No sewing involved! Please see **President Rhonda Latkovic** if you wish to help.

Our St. George Philoptochos' popular "**Sock-Tober Outreach Project**" will be starting in September and we will be collecting socks to benefit the homeless and those being housed in shelters at the **Coachella Valley Rescue Mission**. Collection bins will be set up in the hall for NEW socks to be deposited by gender. We can also accept your monetary donation and do the sock shopping for you. Please support this worthwhile project. See enclosed flyer.

Save the date of **October 19th** and plan to participate in the annual "**Paint El Paseo Pink**" Walk for cancer research. See the enclosed flyer.

BELLS ACROSS AMERICA

We are honored to invite our St. George parishioners and members of the community at large to join us in hosting the local **Daughters of the American Revolution** in celebration of the 237th anniversary of the signing of the United States Constitution with the annual "Bells Across America" tribute on **Tuesday, September 17, 2024 at 12:45 p.m.** Refreshments and light snacks will be served following the bell ringing from our parish bell tower. See the enclosed flyer.

AHEPA

The National AHEPA Family Convention this year was held in **Larnaca, Cyprus from July 21 to July 27, 2024**. The entire AHEPA Family confirmed its support for the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople, welcoming **His Eminence, Archbishop Elpidophoros of America**, as well as hierarchs representing the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

On **Sunday, July 14, 2024**, our AHEPA Chapter 528 hosted a very successful "**Hot Dog Luncheon**" to gather support for research in finding a cure

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AHEPA, Continued

for **Cystic Fibrosis**. Special thanks to all who supported this important luncheon.

On **Tuesday, September 10, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.**, members of our **local AHEPA Chapter** will return from summer break **to meet at our parish hall**, as the **2024-2025 season begins anew**.

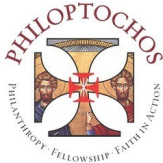
PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Cashless Giving & Clover- Our St. George Parish Council has discussed ways to encourage financial donations through the use of credit cards. The plan is to have Clover "Point-of-Sale" machines available in our parish hall, bookstore and parish office in order to facilitate transactions regarding stewardship, candle-lighting, bookstore purchases, and parish events. We look forward to the successful implementation of this plan over time, as we prepare to develop ways of giv-

ing via our website.

Sound System – Currently, the Parish Council is entertaining bids and estimates with a view to install a new, upgraded **sound system** for our church for the purpose of enhancing our parish worship. So far, initial estimates for the installation of a new sound system are in the thousands of dollars. Unfortunately replacing certain components is not an option due to the age of the current sound system. That is why we will be replacing the entire sound system, giving us more options with regard to the use of the system, while at the same time limiting the need to replace parts in the future.

It will be a blessing for the faithful who are in attendance for worship, as well as for those who would like to donate toward the cost of this important improvement for our church.

**"SOCK-TOBER"****DONATION EVENT for the HOMELESS
September 15th-October 15th**

- o Did you know that the number 1 needed clothing item for a homeless person is a pair of socks?
- o Please help the St. George Ladies Philoptochos provide new socks to Coachella Valley Rescue Mission for the in-program residents & homeless population in the east valley.
- o Deposit socks in the bins provided that are located in the church hall. Monetary donations can be made & we will do the shopping if you are not able.
- o Men's, women's, & children's socks are needed in Casual styles. Please note that: **ONLY NEW SOCKS WILL BE ACCEPTED!**

Thank you!

Η ΠΑΝΚΟΣΜΙΟΣ ΥΨΩΣΙΣ ΤΟΥ ΤΙΜΙΟΥ ΣΤΑΥΡΟΥ

Ο Σταυρός όχι μόνο εκπέμπει τη θεία δύναμη του Σωτήρος μας, αλλά μας βοηθά να ενισχύσουμε τις προσπάθειές μας να κάνουμε το έργο του Θεού, δείχνοντας αγάπη για την οικογένειά μας, τους φίλους μας και τους συνανθρώπους μας. Η αγάπη είναι κόπος. Είναι θέμα ευθύνης και υπευθυνότητας. Η ευθύνη είναι ένας προσωπικός σταυρός - ο σταυρός της αυτοθυσίας μας προς δόξαν του Θεού και προς την σωτηριάν των άλλων. Ο Σταυρός είναι το *σημείον* της μετανοίας.

Οι ύμνοι της Εκκλησίας μας κατά την εορτή της **Παγκόσμιας Υψώσεως του Τιμίου Σταυρού το Σάββατο, 14 Σεπτεμβρίου** μας θυμίζουν ότι ο Σταυρός χαρίζεται σε εμάς οικειοθελώς από τον Χριστό για να μας προστατέψει από δυνάμεις που θέλουν να καταστρέψουν τις ψυχές μας. Ας στρέψουμε την προσοχή μας προς τον Τιμίο Σταυρό με σκοπό να επιτρέψουμε στον Χριστό να ενισχύσει την πίστη μας και να μας βοηθήσει να αποφύγουμε τους πειρασμούς και το κάθε κακό. Μάλιστα, **η μετάνοια *είναι*** ο σταυρός που παίρνουμε μαζί μας εις την Βασιλείαν του Θεού!
+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

PARISH CALENDAR – SEPTEMBER 2024

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

Sunday, September 1st – ECCLESIASTICAL NEW YEAR.

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

Tuesday, September 3rd-Bible Study-10:00 a.m.

Wednesday, September 4th- Orthodox Christian Catechism (online)-6:30 p.m.

Sunday, September 8th- NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS

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

Tuesday, September 10th- Bible Study-10:00 a.m.

Wednesday, September 11th- Orthodox Christian Catechism (online)-6:30 p.m.

Thursday, September 12th- Parish Council Meeting – 2:00 p.m.

Friday, September 13th – Great Vespers – 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, September 14th – THE UNIVERSAL ELEVATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

Orthros-8:30 a.m./Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m. (strict fasting day)

Monday, September 16th – Philoptochos General Meeting – 11:30 a.m.

Tuesday, September 17th – Bible Study-10:00 a.m./ The Daughters of the American Revolution “Bell Ringing” Tribute, hosted by our St. George parish – 12:45 p.m.

Wednesday, September 18th- Orthodox Christian Catechism (online) - 6:30 p.m.

Sunday, September 22nd – Sunday School Registration following the Divine Liturgy

Tuesday, September 24th – Bible Study-10:00 a.m.

Wednesday, September 25th – Orthodox Christian Catechism (online) - 6:30 p.m.

Bells Across America Event!



*You're invited to help us celebrate the 237th anniversary of the signing of the Constitution!
Please join us at the annual "Bells Across America" bell ringing event to kick off
Constitution Week
Tuesday, September 17th, 12:45 PM!*

Short program will commence at 12:45 PM with the bell ringing to follow at 1:00 PM. Refreshments and light snacks will be served after the bell ringing!

Location:

*St. George Greek Orthodox Church
74109 Larrea St.
Palm Desert, CA*



Bell Tower

18th ANNUAL

Paint EL PASEO
PINK

PRESENTED BY DESERT CANCER FOUNDATION

Saturday, October 19th

Pre-race program 7:30 AM-Race begins 8:00 AM

Please join our Saint George Team to support cancer care treatment through Desert Cancer Foundation's annual "**Pink Walk**" and celebrate our **7th year** of participation!

NEW THIS YEAR:

Register to walk for as little as a \$ 5.00 donation!

Registration is \$40.00 if you want a new *tee shirt.

Registration closes Oct. 8th, 2024.

*(Event Tee shirts will be distributed Wed.10/16-Fri.10/18 from 10:00 AM-6:00 PM-this year you must pick up your own tee at the Hotel Paseo)

Register directly via the Desert Cancer Foundation website by clicking on the pink **#PEPP** box in the upper left hand corner, then click on the pink box "Join a Team" and select Saint George, then enter your personal information & submit.

For those needing help signing up, please see Rhonda or Athena.