

# The Spirit of St. George

St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church  
4530 E. Gold Dust Ave., Phoenix, Arizona 85028-4221

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October 2003

## *A Message From Fr. Chris . . .*

There is a famous letter that circulates among major university administrators from a freshman in college to her parents. It says:

*Dear Mom and Dad,*

*I thought I should write before you receive the bill from the hospital so you will not be too alarmed. Let me say first that I did manage to escape with only minor burns and a few fractures when my dormitory burned to the ground last week. And having nowhere to live, I know you will understand why I am rooming with this very attractive and interesting student who so generously offered his quarters to me. While he is not exactly a communist (I'd call him more of a practicing Marxist) and is from one of the more rebellious and underdeveloped nations, I know that you won't be too bothered about these facts, remembering those perfectly splendid liberal views of yours on politics and human relations. Yet I must face the possibility that it may upset you to hear that by the time I come home for the holidays I will be married.*

*Love,  
Betsy*

*P.S. None of these things really happened. I did, however, get a D- in Political Science and wanted you to see that grade in the proper perspective!*

Must have been quite heart-pounding for the parents to have read this the first time! Can you imagine their relief to find out none of it was true? It's funny the length Betsy was willing to go to ease her parents' shock of her poor grades. She was willing to send her parents into momentary hysteria so that when they received the news of a bad grade they wouldn't be so upset with her.

The real question is why did Betsy feel the need to do this? Why was she so afraid of telling her parents that her grades weren't good? The answer is because she knows the value of education. She also knows that her parents know the value of education and would be quite upset with her if she was taking her education lightly.

The importance placed on education is not a novel ideal from the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Even from the times of the Lord Jesus Christ, education was placed on the highest level. The Apostle Paul states that God gave the leaders of the Church different gifts to educate and serve the faithful. **“And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”** (Eph. 4:11-13) The Apostle adamantly states that we should *all* attain to the knowledge

of the Son of God. How else does one acquire this knowledge other than through education?

You see, the first step in the life of a true Christian is to be reconciled with God; to turn away from our former lifestyle and return to God's household. It is only then that we can live a life of holiness. Simply, the first step is to be a “prodigal son.” Once we have left the pigpen (sin) behind and return to our loving Father, we must then be educated into the faith that He has prescribed for us. It's like learning the rules of the house. Thus the second step of transforming our lives is: Education. Once again, the divine Apostle makes this point vividly clear: **“I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”** (Rom. 12:1-2) By “renewal of your mind” he means that we should be educated in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, not in the gospel of the pigpen, so that His Word might *live* in us. Hear the blessed Paul: **“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.”** (Col.3:16) How does a word dwell in us? It dwells in us when we are so knowledgeable about that word that we can make it real through our actions.

Have you ever been so well taught the fundamentals of a sport or a card game or music that when it comes time to perform, you do so flawlessly? Think of Shaq. Doesn't he study the game of basketball so much that he completely dominates the competition? You can see how his knowledge of the sport is translated into superior play on the court. The same applies to reconciled Christians. Once we return to God we begin to be truly educated in the Gospel, *so that* we can turn our lives into lives of action.

It is not from the stance that, “we're Christians so we should read the Bible” that your priest tells you to study Scripture. We are encouraged to read and know Scripture in order to come to *the knowledge of the Son of God.* (Eph 4:13) This knowledge of the Lord is salvific to us. Once we begin to learn Christ and his commandments, we are soon able to translate them into action. Furthermore, we must know the teachings of our Orthodox faith. We must know the way that the Church interprets the Holy Scriptures. How often are we required to testify about the Lord before our friends and co-workers? How often are we stumped when someone challenges the practices and beliefs of our faith? And how often do our children ask us questions about God that we feel inadequately trained to answer?

Being educated in the Faith, however, requires a commitment and personal responsibility. We cannot be slothful in pursuing the knowledge of God and we can no longer pass the blame to any organization or individual for

our own laziness. This pursuit means that sometimes we must turn off the television and pick up the Bible. It also means that we must leave the coziness of our homes and journey to the Church and attend Bible studies, Orthodox classes and other spiritual seminars. We must read the writings of the Fathers of the Church, we must know the monastic tradition and we most definitely need to attend the Divine Liturgy which is first and foremost, didactic. The hymns of our services combined with the Epistle and Gospel readings and the homily are primarily for our instruction. In order for us to act as true Christians, we must first know who God is and what the required actions are! Before any reconciled Christian can go forward and act as God is calling us to, he must be educated in the Way. There is no way to get from reconciliation to action other than through education.

In closing, I ask each of you to ponder on these beautiful words of Proverbs 3:

**“Happy is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gets understanding. For the gain from it is better than gain from silver and its profit better than gold. She is more precious than jewels, and noting you desire can compare with her. Long life is in her right hand; in her left are riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her; those who hold her fast are called happy.”**

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Surrounded By A Cloud

St. James, the Less - October 23

**By Deacon Raphael**

This James is a brother of Jesus. He loved the ascetic life at an early age, joining the Nazarites. This sect took vows of virginity, abstained from wine and meat, and didn't cut their hair. He lived a righteous and God-pleasing life. Unlike his other brothers and sisters he was a follower of Jesus and was one of His seventy disciples. He is called St. James is less because James, brother of John, sons of thunder, and disciple of Jesus, is called St. James the Great.

One account tells that while Jesus was still a babe, Joseph gave his children their inheritance. His children refused to give Jesus any portion of it - except James who offered to give Jesus a portion of his land.

According to the writings of Eusibeus, St. James the Less was appointed the first hierarch of Jerusalem by the Apostles. I Corinthians 15:7 says Jesus appeared to His brother before His Apostles after His resurrection. He wrote the Epistle of James and the first Liturgy. The Liturgies of St. John Chrysosom and St. Basil the Great are shortened versions of his. He presided over a council in Jerusalem as reported in Acts 15.

He was loved by many, and so respected, one account says, that he was allowed to enter the Holy of Holies in the temple in Jerusalem. There he would sit and pray for hours. One of his nicknames was “Obli” or “Ophli” which means ‘he who is righteous above all.’ Indeed, many turned to Christ because of him.

St. James the Less was Bishop of Jerusalem for 30 years. He died a martyr. Though he had the respect of even the Scribes and Pharisees, eventually they plotted his death. During the Feast of Passover the high priest asked him to speak to the people from the top of the temple and denounce Christ or die. From there a Scribe, Pharisee, or Priest introduced him, “O most righteous one, we all have trust in you...” Apparently they thought they had him convinced to do their will. Instead he told the people that Jesus is the judge of the living and dead.

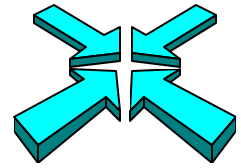
They pushed him off the temple, but he didn't die. He gathered his strength and got to his knees to pray for the forgiveness of his enemies. As he did so, Pharisees started stoning him. Someone from the crowd defended St. James by asking them, “Obli prays for you and you stone him?” Just then a Pharisee took a club to his head. He was buried near the Temple.

The righteous faith of St. James was seen in him from an early age. He understood the life and message of his brother, Jesus. Obviously his holy parents had an influence on him and he never, in his whole life, wavered in his faith. There is something to be said for the person, who like St. James, is raised in our Orthodox faith who holds on tight and is never prodigal and is always faithful. Pray for us St. James!

## Bishop JOSEPH's Visitations

October, 2003		
3 - 6	St. George Church, Pittsburgh, PA	Episcopal Visit
9 - 13	Virgin Mary Church, Montreal, Canada	Episcopal Visit
18 - 20	St. Andrew Church, Arlington, WA	Episcopal Visit
24 - 26	St. Michael Church, Van Nuys, CA	Western Region Delegates Meeting

# YOUTH CONNECTION



## Children Learn What They Live

If a child lives with criticism, she learns to condemn.

If a child lives with hostility, she learns to fight.

If a child lives with ridicule, she learns to be shy.

If a child lives with shame, she learns to feel guilty.

If a child lives with tolerance, she learns to be patient.

If a child lives with encouragement, she learns confidence.

If a child lives with praise, she learns to appreciate.

If a child lives with fairness, she learns justice.

If a child lives with security, she learns to have faith.

If a child lives with approval, she learns to like herself.

If a child lives with acceptance and friendship, she learns to find love

in the world.

Pathways- every Tuesday night @ 6:30 pm

TEEN BIBLE STUDY- EVERY WEDNESDAY NIGHT @ 6:30 pm

HOPE- EVERY THURSDAY @ 10AM

# The Cracked Pot - A MUST READ!

A Water Bearer in India had two large pots, each hung on each end of a pole, which he carried across his neck. One of the pots had a crack in it, and while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water at the end of the long walk from the stream to the master's house, the cracked pot arrived only half full. For a full two years this went on daily, with the bearer delivering only one and one half pots of water in his master's house.

The perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments, perfect to the end for which it was made. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it was able to accomplish only half of what it had been made to do. After two years of what it perceived to be a bitter failure, it spoke to the Water Bearer one day by the stream. "I am ashamed of myself, and I want to apologize to you." "Why?" asked the bearer. "What are you ashamed of?" "I have been able, for these past two years, to deliver only half my load because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your master's house. Because of my flaws, you have to do all of this work, and you don't get full value from your efforts," the pot said.

The Water Bearer felt sorry for the old cracked pot, and in his compassion he said, "As we return to the master's house, I want you to notice the beautiful flowers along the path." Indeed, as they went up the hill, the old cracked pot took notice of the sun warming the beautiful wild flowers on the side of the path, and this cheered it some. But at the end of the trail, it still felt bad because it had leaked out half its load, and so again it apologize to the bearer for its failure. The bearer said to the pot, "Did you notice that there were flowers only on your side of your path, but not on the other pot's side? That's because I have always known about your flaw, and I took advantage of it. I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back from the stream, you've watered them. For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate my master's table. Without you being just the way you are, he would not have this beauty to grace his house."

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## Live From The Classroom!

What an exciting past few weeks it has been for both of us in the pre-school class. We have a wonderful group of three and four year olds that total 15 in number. As you can imagine, with young ones, it is best to have a routine for them. So, when they arrive we start by coloring the lesson page, then we symbolize lighting our candles, we say the Lord's Prayer together, then we do a song and dance to prepare them for sitting quietly to hear the lesson. After the lesson is read, we follow up with a craft or skit to reinforce that lesson for the week. A closing prayer is said, before we turn them loose!

As teachers and parents ourselves, we can't express enough how important it is for the children to go over their Sunday school lessons during the week with parents in order to be prepared for the following week. In the following weeks a folder for each child will be prepared and sent home. What we are asking is that you review the lesson for the week and return the folder with the child each week.

Just a friendly reminder that class ends at 12 noon and the children need to be picked up by their parent or an older sibling. Occasionally we might run late, and if that is the case, please wait in the breezeway until the teachers open the door for dismissal. Because they are so young, they loose their concentration and want their Mommy and Daddy before we are finished.

Thank you for all you do, as parents, to assist us in making your child's classroom experience something they can take home with them!

Heather Sayegh

Liz Kalinichenko

Rachel Sheriff

Your Children's Pre-School Teachers

# October 2003

## Sunday October 5

<b>Epistle Reader</b>	II Cor. 6:1-10	Zubeida Horan
<b>Greeters</b>		Amanda Haddad & Zubeida Horan
<b>Ushers</b>		Zubeida Horan, Brian Johnson, Samantha Sahawneh, Amanda Haddad, Eleanor Bolanos
<b>Altar Servers</b>	Mathew Saliba, Chris Doumani, Michael Aboud-Rihani, Philip Bolanos, Rick Khoury, Andre Nelson, Gus Sahawneh	Aziz Haddad
<b>Hall Lock-up</b>		Mike & Helen Taamneh
<b>Coffee Hour</b>		Ray & Rose Marie Toronto
<b>Stewardship Table</b>		

## Sunday October 12

<b>Epistle Reader</b>	Titus 3:8-15	Tamara Karadsheh
<b>Greeters</b>		Tess Bronnenkant & Zubeida Horan
<b>Ushers</b>		Megan Doumani, Danielle Sayegh, Mariam Hasou, Amanda Sahawneh, Tess Bronnenkant
<b>Altar Servers</b>	Danny Sayegh, Alex Saliba, Nick Kalinichenko, Basil Dahlan, Ramy Khoury, Issa Sayegh, Butros Sayegh, Joseph Hasou	Ralph Clair
<b>Hall Lock-up</b>		Fr. Christo & Popadia Mary
<b>Coffee Hour</b>		Jim & Kathy Saliba
<b>Stewardship Table</b>		

## Sunday October 19

<b>Epistle Reader</b>	II Cor. 9:6-11	Rachel Abrahams
<b>Greeters</b>		Eleanor Bolanos & Megan Doumani
<b>Ushers</b>		Krystal Saigh, Tess Bronnenkant, Dalia Aboud-Rihani, Chris Doumani, Ronnie Sayegh
<b>Altar Servers</b>	Andy Leahu, Musa Sayegh, Odeh Sayegh, Brandon Fuja, James Sayegh, Abanoob Sayegh, Jared Blackwell	Heather Sayegh
<b>Hall Lock-up</b>		Richard & Marion Saba
<b>Coffee Hour</b>		Becky Abrahams & Stephanie Haddy
<b>Stewardship Table</b>		

## Sunday October 26

<b>Epistle Reader</b>	Timothy 2:1-10	Amanda Haddad
<b>Greeters</b>		Rachel Abrahams & Amanda Haddad
<b>Ushers</b>		Rachel Abrahams, Zubeida Horan, Danny Sayegh, Andy Leahu, Tamara Karadsheh
<b>Altar Servers</b>	Brian Johnson, Ronnie Sayegh, Joseph Sayegh, Alexander Thomas, Anthony Sahawneh, Freddie Dahdal	Dan Thomas
<b>Hall Lock-up</b>		Garo & Yulanda Harmanian
<b>Coffee Hour</b>		Sam Nassif
<b>Stewardship Table</b>		



For Even The Son Of Man Did Not Come To Be Served, But To Serve, And To Give His Life A Ransom For Many.” (Mark 10:45)

October Is Recognized As Youth Month  
Each year, our Youth take over the duties as  
Ushers, Epistle readers and Greeters.

Let's all be supportive of our Youth as they serve our Church community.

# October 2003

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
8:50 Matins 10am Divine Liturgy SSch 11:30am	Parish Council Mtg 7pm	PATH- WAYS / Bible Study 6:30pm	Teen Bible Study 6:30pm			
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
8:50 Matins 10am Divine Liturgy SSch 11:30am		PATH- WAYS / Bible Study 6:30pm	Teen Bible Study 6:30pm			Ladies Aux Mtg 11:30 Great Vespers 5 p.m. SOYO Mtg & Dinner
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
8:50 Matins 10am Divine Liturgy SSch 11:30am		PATH- WAYS / Bible Study 6:30pm	Teen Bible Study 6:30pm			IOCC Seminar 10-3pm Great Vespers 5 p.m.
					Wstrn Reg Delegates	
26	27	28	29	30	31	
8:50 Matins 10am Divine Liturgy SSch 11:30am		PATH- WAYS / Bible Study 6:30pm	Teen Bible Study 6:30pm		SOYO Trick- or- Treating for Canned Food	
Wstrn R...						

October is Designated as  
Youth Month

## Church Records

### Marriages

Troy & Kristie Romley Riester ~  
August 31, 2003

### Funerals

Dallal Dahdal ~ September 16, 2003



## Keeping it Real

by Deacon Anthony

### The Orthodox Church Takes A Stand On Same-Sex Marriages

*“And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, he is there; believe him not: For false Christ and false prophets shall rise, and shall show signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect. But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things.”*  
Mark 13:21-23.

Recently, the issue of same-sex marriage has become increasingly advanced by non-orthodox, “progressive theologians” who offer a variety of specious arguments to support sacramental same-sex marriage:

- While pro-gay theologians admit that both Old and New Testament Biblical texts specifically condemn homosexual behavior [Genesis 19:1-13 (Sodom and Gomorrah); Judges 19 (Gibeah); Leviticus 18:22, 20:13; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; and 1 Timothy 1:8-11], they nonetheless argue that the texts are “culturally bound.” They argue that, for example: God condemns a lack of hospitality, not homosexuality, in the Sodom/Gomorrah and Gibeah texts; the Levitical laws requiring proscribing homosexual behavior actually concerned fertility rituals; and the Apostle Paul did not condemn all homosexual behavior as an abomination, but only homosexual behavior between men and young boys.
- While acknowledging the explicit text of the Holy Scriptures, these theologians argue that the acceptability of a relationship – homosexual or heterosexual – depends on whether it is “just and loving,” not whether it is expressly blessed or proscribed by God in the Scriptures. Their argument is that a homosexual relationship “can be just as rich and responsible, as liberating and fulfilling, as a heterosexual marriage.” Thus, they reason, the Church should embrace and bless such homosexual partnerships as a Christian expression of sexuality.

## Your Trash...Our Treasure!

The Ladies Auxiliary will have a rummage sale in November. They will be looking for gently used furniture, clean clothing on hangers, toys, books, and any other household items that you no longer want. Please set aside usable items in GOOD, CLEAN CONDITION only! More information will be announced in the church bulletins following our next Ladies meeting. Contact Jennifer Saigh/602 595-2406 or Jennifer Sweilem/480 373-8123 for more info.



## Annual Orthodox Women's Retreat November 7<sup>th</sup> –8<sup>th</sup> !

Save the date for the Annual Women's Retreat scheduled for Friday evening and all day Saturday, November 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup>, at St. Haralambos Church in Peoria, AZ. Look for more information to be published in the Sunday Bulletins.



## Stewardship Financial Update

### Ending August 31, 2003

	Current Month Actual	Current Month Budget	YTD Actual	YTD Budget
Env/Pledge Receipts	\$17,924	\$18,083	\$116,033	\$144,667
Loose Plate/Candles	\$1,712	\$2,167	\$18,733	\$17,333
Archdiocese Dues Income	\$250	\$917	\$8,478	\$7,333
Other Income Revenue	\$5,202	\$9,083	\$56,668	\$72,667
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$25,088</b>	<b>\$30,250</b>	<b>\$199,912</b>	<b>\$242,000</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$30,641</b>	<b>\$29,063</b>	<b>\$207,419</b>	<b>\$232,501</b>
<b>Net Income Ending Aug 31, 2003</b>	<b>\$&lt;5,553&gt;</b>	<b>\$1,187</b>	<b>\$&lt;7,507&gt;</b>	<b>\$9,499</b>

- Like women and African-Americans, homosexuals have been oppressed and discriminated against. Likewise, gay people have been the victims of homophobia. Jesus embraced the oppressed and offered them justice. Thus, the argument proceeds, the Church should follow Christ's ministry of justice and celebrate homosexual unions.
- The heart of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is that God loves and accepts us just as we are. Thus, the Church must accept homosexuals as they are and bless their loving relationships with one another.

All of these arguments stem from a contemporary, secular view that the Holy Scriptures, Christ's teachings, and even Christ Himself, are limited by social norms and are “culturally bound.” By restricting the relevancy of

Christ to the ancient culture of the Roman-Judeo world, these arguments attempt to render Christ, as revealed through Scripture, as largely irrelevant to today's society. In place of the revealed Logos, proponents of these arguments seek to establish an alternate Christ and alternate Christianity that better suits the desires of modern society and morality.

Moreover, these arguments challenge – at a most fundamental level – the concept that God and His Logos are eternal, that His teachings and commands are everlasting and unchanging, and that the Scriptures are inspired by the Holy Spirit. Instead, supporters of these arguments seek to establish a religion of “cultural relativism,” i.e., the worship of a mutable god who can be changed by humankind to suit the needs and desires of the day. The argument wholly ignores the concept of Judgment based on immutable and timeless commands, but instead implies that there is no judgment because God's commands waver and dissipate through the lens of cultural and moral relativism.

The commands of God do not change because we may have personal beliefs that alternate commands are “just as rich and responsible, as liberating and fulfilling.” Further, God does not accept us “just as we are,” but only if we follow his commands in fear and faith and love. See e.g., Eccles. 12:13 (“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.”); Matt. 19:16-17 (“Now a man came up to Jesus and asked, “Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?” “Why do you ask me about what is good?” Jesus replied. “There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, obey the commandments.”); Luke 10:25-27 (“And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? How readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. And He said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.”).

God is our King and Master; His rules are not subject to debate or alteration. “Progressive” theologians essentially ignore the eternal, God-created prohibitions on homosexual, same-sex unions and other proscribed behavior and replace them with contemporary, human-created rules of behavior. An essential premise of these arguments is that humankind can unilaterally and justifiably replace God's rules whenever it is perceived that human rules are “just as good.” The Bible demonstrates repeatedly the error of such hubris. Compare Gen. 3:3 (“But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.”) with Gen. 3:6 (“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.”). See also e.g., Genesis 11:4 (“And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.”) and Gen. 11:8-9 (“So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth:

and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.”); 2 Samuel 6:6-7 (“And when they came to Nachon's threshing floor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God.”).

On August 27, the Standing Conference of the Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (“SCOBA”) issued a “SCOBA STATEMENT ON MORAL CRISIS IN OUR NATION” concerning same-sex unions in our Nation. It reads:

As members of the Standing Conference of the Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA), representing more than 5 million Orthodox Christians in the United States, Canada and Mexico, we are deeply concerned about recent developments regarding “same sex unions.” The Orthodox Christian teaching on marriage and sexuality, firmly grounded in Holy Scripture, 2000 years of church tradition, and canon law, holds that marriage consists in the conjugal union of a man and a woman, and that authentic marriage is blessed by God as a sacrament of the Church. Neither Scripture nor Holy Tradition blesses or sanctions such a union between persons of the same sex. Holy Scripture attests that God creates man and woman in His own image and likeness (Genesis 1:27-31), that those called to do so might enjoy a conjugal union that ideally leads to procreation. While not every marriage is blessed with the birth of children, every such union exists to create of a man and a woman a new reality of “one flesh.” This can only involve a relationship based on gender complementarity. “God made them male and female... So they are no longer two but one flesh” (Mark 10:6-8).

The union between a man and a woman in the Sacrament of Marriage reflects the union between Christ and His Church (Ephesians 5:21-33). As such, marriage is necessarily monogamous and heterosexual. Within this union, sexual relations between a husband and wife are to be cherished and protected as a sacred expression of their love that has been blessed by God. Such was God's plan for His human creatures from the very beginning. Today, however, this divine purpose is increasingly questioned, challenged or denied, even within some faith communities, as social and political pressures work to normalize, legalize and even sanctify same-sex unions.

The Orthodox Church cannot and will not bless same-sex unions. Whereas marriage between a man and a woman is a sacred institution ordained by God, homosexual union is not. Like adultery and fornication, homosexual acts are condemned by Scripture (Romans 1:24-27; 1 Corinthians 6:10; 1 Timothy 1:10). This being said, however, we must stress that persons with a homosexual orientation are to be cared for with the same mercy and love that is bestowed by our Lord Jesus Christ upon all of humanity. All persons are called by God to grow spiritually and morally toward holiness.

As heads of the Orthodox Churches in America and members of SCOBA, we speak with one voice in expressing our deep concern over recent developments. And we pray fervently that our nation will honor and preserve the traditional form of marriage as an enduring and committed union only between a man and a woman.

+Archbishop DEMETRIOS, Chairman  
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

+Metropolitan HERMAN  
Orthodox Church in America

+Metropolitan PHILIP, Vice Chairman  
Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of  
North America

+Archbishop NICOLAE  
Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America and  
Canada

+Metropolitan CHRISTOPHER, Secretary  
Serbian Orthodox Church in the USA and Canada

+Metropolitan JOSEPH  
Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Church

+Metropolitan NICHOLAS of Amissos,  
American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese in  
the USA

+Metropolitan CONSTANTINE  
Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the USA

+Bishop ILIA of Philomelion  
Albanian Orthodox Diocese of America

## St. George Church Hafli November 1, 2003

The Fellowship of St. John will be selling tickets for their Hafli 2003! Tickets will be on sale in the Fellowship Hall each Sunday after Liturgy – Adults: \$50.00 per person. Cocktails (cash bar) and Mezza start at 6:30 pm with Dinner at 8pm. We will have live Arabic Music and an American DJ. Tables will be reserved only when the entire table has purchased their tickets in advance. Each table will seat eight (8) people or four couples. Stop by the ticket table to purchase your tickets. Seating will be limited. Further details will follow.

**50-50 Raffle Tickets to be sold !**

## Congratulations Parish Life Conference 2003

Congratulations to St. George Church for the most successful Parish Life Conference ever!

As we all can attest – the Conference this past May was outstanding. The Western Region is still raving about it! Our efforts produced the most financially successful Conference our region has ever had. St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church's portion of the profits totaled over \$17,000. A Job Well Done!

Distribution of our profit monies are as follows:

- ❖ \$2,500.00 into the St. George Samaritan Fund. The Samaritan Fund is a discretionary fund used to help those in need.
- ❖ \$2,500.00 into the St. Lazarus Fund. The Lazarus Fund has been established to help any St. George Church family in need.
- ❖ The remaining \$12,000.00 plus will go into the general fund of the church.

## Wine & Hors d'oeuvres Reception To Benefit the Sisters Of St. Paisius Orthodox Monastery

All are welcome to join William and Suzanne Ypsilanti at their home ~ 308 W. McNair St., Chandler, AZ ~ on Saturday, October 18<sup>th</sup> from 6:00-8:00 pm. Please join together in Orthodox fellowship with those in our valley who would like to learn more about a coenobitic community of sisters following the basic precepts of the traditional monastic life. Please R.S.V.P. @ 480 219-2685. Black Tie Optional. For any of you that have been to the monastery, you know what a wonderful ministry these sisters provide, with open arms to all. Let's join together in an opportunity to help them for all the blessings they extend to their visitors.

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