

St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 6:11-18

Prokeimenon. Mode Plagal 2. Psalm 27.9,1

O Lord, save your people and bless your inheritance. Verse: To you, O Lord, I have cried, O my God.

BRETHREN, see with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that would compel you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. For even those who receive circumcision do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may glory in your flesh. But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. Peace and mercy be upon all who walk by this rule, upon the Israel of God. Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen.

Πρὸς Γαλάτας 6:11-18

Προκείμενον. ᾠχος πλ β'. ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 27.9,1

Σῶσον, Κύριε τὸν λαὸν σου καὶ εὐλόγησον τὴν κληρονομίαν σου. Στίχ. Πρὸς σέ, Κύριε, κεκράζομαι ὁ Θεός μου.

Ἀδελφοί, ἴδετε πηλίκους ὑμῶν γράμμασιν ἔγραψα τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ. Ὅσοι θέλουσιν εὐπροσωπῆσαι ἐν σαρκί, οὗτοι ἀναγκάζουσιν ὑμᾶς περιτέμενεσθαι, μόνον ἵνα μὴ τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ Χριστοῦ διώκωνται. Οὐδὲ γὰρ οἱ περιτετμημένοι αὐτοὶ νόμον φυλάσσουν, ἀλλὰ θέλουσιν ὑμᾶς περιτέμενεσθαι, ἵνα ἐν τῇ ὑμετέρα σαρκὶ καυχῶσιν. Ἐμοὶ δὲ μὴ γένοιτο καυχᾶσθαι εἰ μὴ ἐν τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ· δι' οὗ ἐμοὶ κόσμος ἐσταύρωται, καὶ γὰρ τῷ κόσμῳ. Ἐν γὰρ Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ οὔτε περιτομὴ τι ἰσχύει, οὔτε ἀκροβυστία, ἀλλὰ καινὴ κτίσις. Καὶ ὅσοι τῷ κανόνι τούτῳ στοιχήσουσιν, εἰρήνην ἐπ' αὐτούς, καὶ ἔλεος, καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰσραὴλ τοῦ θεοῦ. Τοῦ λοιποῦ, κόπους μοι μηδεὶς παρεχέτω· ἐγὼ γὰρ τὰ στίγματα τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματί μου βαστάζω. Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μετὰ τοῦ πνεύματος ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοί. Ἀμήν.

Sunday before Holy Cross

The Gospel of John 3:13-17

The Lord said, "No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him."

Sunday before Holy Cross

Κατὰ Ἰωάννην 3.13-17

Εἶπεν ὁ Κύριος· καὶ οὐδεὶς ἀναβέβηκεν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν εἰ μὴ ὁ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καταβάς, ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὁ ὢν ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ. καὶ καθὼς Μωϋσῆς ὑψώσε τὸν ὄφιν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ, οὕτως ὑψωθῆναι δεῖ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν μὴ ἀπόληται ἀλλ' ἔχη ζωὴν αἰώνιον. Οὕτω γὰρ ἠγάπησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν κόσμον, ὥστε τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ ἔδωκεν, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν μὴ ἀπόληται ἀλλ' ἔχη ζωὴν αἰώνιον. οὐ γὰρ ἀπέστειλεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἵνα κρίνῃ τὸν κόσμον, ἀλλ' ἵνα σωθῆ ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ

SERVICES THIS WEEK:	MONDAY , SEPTEMBER 08TH, NATIVITY of the THEOTOKOS LITURGY	9:30	A.M.
	TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 09TH SAINT JOACHIM AND SAINT ANNA	12:00	P.M.
	SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 13TH VESPER of HOLY CROSS, Bay Ridge	7:00	P.M.
	SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 14TH EXALTATION of HOLY CROSS	9:30 -10:30	A.M

VASILIKO/BASILIKO: donations of plantings for the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (September 14) may be made directly to the altar area. Basil cuttings will be distributed to the faithful on the SUNDAY OBSERVANCE of the FEAST, at the conclusion of Divine Liturgy.

AGAPE COFFEE HOUR FELLOWSHIP : is being hosted in blessed memory of + **ATHANASIOS VAZINTARIS**. MAY HIS MEMORY BE ETERNAL!

YOU MAY WISH TO HOST A COFFEE FELLOWSHIP ONE SUNDAY OVER THE SUMMER MONTHS IN GRATEFUL THANKSGIVING FOR PRAYERS ANSWERED, OR FOR MEMORIAL REMEMBRANCE OF A LOVED ONE. For a donation of (\$125. dollars) coffee, cookies, set up of tables, serving and clean up will be done by the church with proper recognition of the donor. We need donor volunteers for the months of JULY and AUGUST. How about you?

ASIA MINOR COMMEMORATION of the ‘KATASROPHE’ HOLOCAUST 1914-1923 is scheduled for our Parish on SUNDAY, September 21st. at 12:30 P.M. In light of the many terrorist activities throughout the world indicating the surge of Islamic intolerance, we are once again reminded that ‘WHAT GOES AROUND ...COMES AROUND’ Please plan to attend this annual memorial tribute to those who sacrificed for life , liberty, faith and culture. OUR presence is built on the foundation of their sacrifices.

GREEK SCHOOL REGISTRATIONS: are in order for the academic year 2014-2015. Please refer to the insert flyer for all the details. Give your child a head-start by being BI-LINGUAL at a early age. When they go to JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL they can subscribe for a third language facility, i.e. Spanish French, Chinese: beyond learning a foreign language, the students also learn about Their Hellenic Heritage, Culture, Tradition and Orthodox Christian Faith. Our faculty are licensed foreign language educators.

WELCOME BACK CHOIR! After a long summer hiatus on vacation, we are pleased to welcome back our organist Mrs. Katie Hambas and the dedicated members of our parish choir. We anticipate ‘wondrous’ sounds from the balcony of the church proper.

NEXT SUNDAY on the Feast of the Holy Cross (SEPTEMBER 14TH), is a most appropriate day to wear your baptismal cross or any cross as a public witnessing of your faith to others. WEAR YOUR CROSS AND BE PROUD OF IT!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW: PARISH ANNUAL DINNER DANCE, FRIDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 24th 8:00 P.M. in ROSEHALL. THIS IS OUR '85' ANNIVERSARY YEAR. HELP US CELEBRATE.

OFFICE RENOVATIONS COMMENCE: After early 60 years of use and occasional disregard, the business office and the pastoral study are being brought into the TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY with a total renovation of up to date equipment, machines, furniture and modern out-fitting. The cost of the project is estimated at \$55,000. (FIFTY-FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS) and will surely be an asset to the good functioning of our beloved PARISH.

We would be remiss if we did not acknowledge the ‘marathon’ efforts on behalf of this project by our Parish Council PRESIDENT MRS. JOANNA VASSILAS, and COUNCIL support, our ‘in-house’ ARCHITECT MR. HARRY ORTHOS and CONTRATOR – LUIS PINTO, special thanks to our ‘in house electrician’ and VICE PRESIDENT, MR. JOHN EVGENIS for his professional services.

A major benefactor for the project is MRS. NICOLITA THEOPHILUS who at the Feast of the Assumption (AUGUST 15th) submitted a personal donation of \$25,000. (TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS) towards the campaign. We are indeed grateful and need more support however much you may be able to offer. NO OFFERING IS REFUSED, HOW ABOUT YOU?

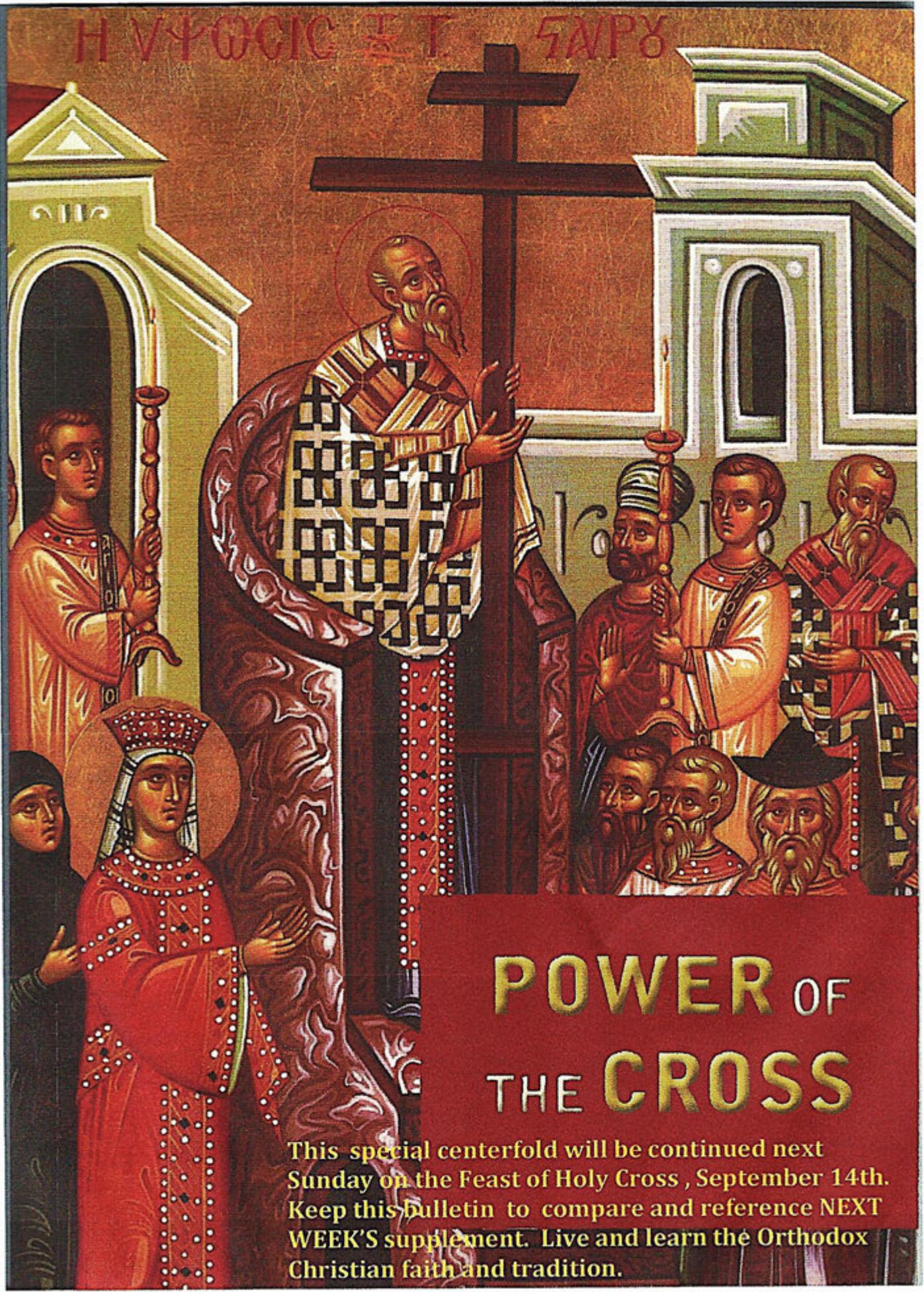
FLAGS RAISED: Thanks to the expertise efforts of the FIRE HOUSE East 12th Street ‘Firemen’, three large new flags representing the U.S.A., GREECE and CYPRUS were lifted to glory on FRIDAY, AUGUST 22nd. We are most grateful to the ‘fire fighters’ who with diligence professionally care for our safety and needs. GOD BLESS ALL THE MEN AT THE FIREHOUSE!

RADIO MINISTRY: Each Saturday at 1:15 PM Fr. Eugene hosts and produces the radio broadcast MATTERS OF CONSCIENCE NOW IN ITS 15TH YEAR OF BROADCASTING LIVE ON WNYE 91.5 COSMOS FM, with listener telephone participation. Subjects of interest regarding Greek Orthodox theology, faith and practice, as well as secular topics confronting the nation and the world are discussed. Tune in and join the dialogue by calling 718-204-8900. Check our live audio at [LIVESTREAMINGPLAYER](#). The website address. W.W.W.gaepis.org ([Click live audio](#))

MEMORIAL TODAY: + ATHANASIOS VAZINTARIS

MEMORIAL NEXT WEEK: + JAMES MAOUNIS + NICHOLAS MAOUNIS + STEVEN DELLAMONICA

Η Ύψους ἔτι Σταυρῶ



POWER OF THE CROSS

This special centerfold will be continued next Sunday on the Feast of Holy Cross, September 14th. Keep this bulletin to compare and reference NEXT WEEK'S supplement. Live and learn the Orthodox Christian faith and tradition.



ALPHA AND OMEGA ON THE CHI-RHO CROSS . This Fifth- century chi-rho cross includes the Greek letters Α (alpha) and Ω (Omega). Again, this symbolizes “God who is” the beginning and the end (Rev. 22:23).



ANKH CROSS . This symbol originated in ancient Egyptian culture. In the early days of Christianity the Coptic Christian churches in Egypt adopted the ankh cross as a Christian symbol. This cross is also known as the ‘Key of the Nile,’ “ looped tau cross, or the Ansate cross. (Ansate means “ with a handle” or “ shaped like a handle.”)



ANCHOR CROSS. The Christians adopted the ship’s anchor as a symbol because the anchor is the shape of the cross. The early Christians adopted it as their symbol for hope and dedication. They took the symbolic meaning from Hebrews 6:19: “ This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stead-fast , and which enters the Presence behind the veil.” (“ Behind the veil ” is a reference to heaven.)



CELTIC CROSS. The Celtic cross combines cross and circle. In the fifth century , St. Patrick found the Celtic cross in Ireland. He adopted it as a Christian cross. The circle around the arms of the cross represents the sun and eternity. The circle, a symbol of Irish Christianity, represents the union of heaven and earth.



COPTIC CROSS. This ancient Coptic cross is comprised of four equal arms that each end in three points. The points represent the Holy Trinity --- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The three points on each arm total twelve points, and these represent the Holy Apostles.



GOLGOTHA CROSS. The Golgotha cross is composed of a large Latin cross with two small crosses in the lower quadrants. The large cross represents the cross on which Jesus was crucified. The small crosses are for the two thieves who were crucified with Christ.



GREEK CROSS. The Greek cross was one of the early crosses from antiquity, and it has four arms of equal length. The Greek cross was adopted as a Christian symbol. The Red Cross Association adopted the Greek cross as its symbol.



JERUSALEM CROSS. The Jerusalem cross contains thirteen crosses. It has eight tau crosses, a cross in each quadrant, and the cross itself. The entire cross represents Christ and his Twelve Apostles. The small crosses represent the four Evangelists: Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John. Some report that the four crosses represent the four directions in which the word of Christ spread from Jerusalem. This cross is not to be confused with the Crusaders’ cross which is not constructed with the tau cross.



ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ

ΣΥΝΤΟΜΟΝ ΚΗΡΥΓΜΑ



«Έγενόμην ἐν Πνεύματι ἐν τῇ Κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ καὶ ἤκουσα φωνὴν ὀπίσω μου μεγάλην ὡς σάλπιγγος» (Ἀπ. 1,10)

Περίοδος Δ' - Ἔτος ΛΑ'
Φλώρινα - ἀριθμ. φύλλου 1837

Συντάκτης (†) ἐπίσκοπος
Αὐγουστίνος Ν. Καντιώτης

Τί εἶνε Ὁρθοδοξία (Β')

(ἐν Χριστῷ ἐλευθερία & ἀγιότης)

Μὲ τὴν εὐκαιρία τῆς μεγάλης ἑορτῆς τῆς Ὁρθοδοξίας εἶπαμε, ἀγαπητοί μου, ὅτι τὰ πρῶτα χαρακτηριστικά τῆς Ἐκκλησίας μας εἶνε ἡ ἱερὰ παράδοσις καὶ ἡ θεία εὐχαριστία. Συνεχίζουμε τώρα προσθέτοντας ἄλλα δύο.

3. ΕΝ ΧΡΙΣΤῷ ΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΙΑ. Ἡ Ὁρθοδοξία μας κρατεῖ τὸ κήρυγμα τῆς ἐλευθερίας, τὴν διακήρυξι τοῦ Χριστοῦ ποῦ λέει «*Εἴτις θέλει ὀπίσω μου ἐλθεῖν...*» (Ματθ. 16,24 βλ. καὶ Μάρκ. 8,34, Λουκ. 9,23). Μόνο ἡ Ὁρθοδοξία δὲν χρησιμοποίησε βία γιὰ νὰ ὑποτάξῃ ἀνθρώπους. Δὲν εἶπε σὰν τὸν πάπα, ποῦ ἐγίνε κοσμικὸς ἄρχοντας, θὰ πέσετε νὰ μὲ προσκυνήσετε, νὰ φιλήσετε τὴν παντούφλα μου. Οἱ ὀρθόδοξοι κληρικοὶ δίνουμε ἀπλῶς τὸ χέρι, ὁ πάπας δίνει τὴν παντούφλα του.

Ἡ Ἐκκλησία μας δὲν ἔχει παπικό, αὐταρχικό, ὑπερήφανο χαρακτήρα· δὲν ἔχει τὰ συνθήματα τῶν ἀρχόντων τῆς γῆς, δὲν λέει· Ἄν δὲ μ' ἀκούσης, θὰ σὲ ἀφορίσω, θὰ σὲ κάψω. Ἡ Ἐκκλησία μας ἔχει ἐλευθερία· ἔχει τὸ φιλελεύθερο καὶ δημοκρατικὸ ἢ ἐν ἐκκλησιαστικῇ γλώσσῃ τὸ **συνοδικόν**. Ἡ Ἐκκλησία μας δὲν δέχεται, ὅτι ὁ ἓνας ἔχει τὸ ἀλάθητο. Τὸ ἀλάθητο, τὸ νὰ μὴ σφάλῃ, οἱ παπικοὶ λένε ὅτι τὸ ἔχει μόνο ὁ πάπας· ὅ,τι πεῖ αὐτὸς εἶνε ἀλάθητο, δὲν σφάλει ποτέ. Ἀντίθετα ἐμεῖς λέμε, ὅτι τὸ ἀλάθητο δὲν τὸ ἔχει ἓνας, ἔστω κι ἂν εἶνε Βασίλειος, Χρυσόστομος, Ἀντώνιος· τὸ ἀλάθητο τὸ ἔχει ἡ Ἐκκλησία σὲ Συνόδους οἰκουμενικὲς ἢ τοπικὲς.

Καὶ ὄχι ἀπλῶς σὲ τοπικὲς καὶ οἰκουμενικὲς συνόδους. Γιατί μπορεῖ νὰ μαζευτοῦν καὶ χίλιοι ἀκόμη δεσποτάδες καὶ νὰ βγάλουν μία ἀπόφασι. Νομίζετε ὅτι ἀρκεῖ αὐτὸ γιὰ νὰ εἶνε αὐτὴ μία ἀγία Σύνοδος; Γιὰ νὰ ὀνομασθῇ μία σύνοδος οἰκουμενικὴ ἢ τοπικὴ, ἐκτὸς τοῦ ὅτι αὐτοὶ πρέπει προηγουμένως νὰ νηστεύουν καὶ νὰ παρακαλέσουν τὸ Θεὸ νὰ ἔλθῃ ἐπ' αὐτοὺς Πνεῦμα ἅγιο, χρειάζεται καὶ κάτι ἄλλο. Μπορεῖ νὰ γίνῃ καὶ σήμερα μία τοπικὴ σύνοδος,

νὰ μαζευτοῦν ὅλοι οἱ ὀρθόδοξοι· ἀλλὰ γιὰ νὰ εἶνε ἡ συνέλευσις τους ἀγία Σύνοδος καὶ ὄχι σύνοδος παρανομοῦντων, πρέπει, μόλις βγῆ καὶ ἀκουστῆ ἡ ἀπόφασις, ν' ἀναπαύσῃ τὸ λαὸ. Τί ὄρους ἔχει θέσει ἡ Ἐκκλησία μας! Ἐβγαλε λόγου χάριν ἡ σύνοδος μία ἀπόφασι; πρέπει ὅλο τὸ πλήρωμα, μικροὶ καὶ μεγάλοι, νὰ ποῦν «Μάλιστα, ἐδῶ εἶνε ἡ φωνὴ τοῦ Θεοῦ», νὰ ἐπιδοκιμάσουν δηλαδὴ αὐτὸ ποῦ ἀποφάσισε ἡ σύνοδος. Ἐὰν ὁ εὐσεβὴς λαὸς διαφωνήσῃ –δὲ μᾶς ἐνδιαφέρουν οἱ αἰρετικοὶ ποῦ διαφωνοῦν, ἐννοοῦμε τοὺς πιστοὺς, τοὺς μοναχοὺς, αὐτοὺς ποῦ πονοῦν τὴν Ἐκκλησία–, ἐὰν αὐτὸς ὁ λαὸς διαφωνήσῃ, τότε ξέρετε τί θὰ γίνῃ; Ἡ σύνοδος δὲν θὰ εἶνε ἀγία, ἀλλὰ θὰ ὀνομασθῇ **ληστρικὴ**. Καὶ ἔχουμε τέτοιες συνόδους στὴν ἐκκλησιαστικὴ ἱστορία. Ὡστε **κριτήριο πάνω ἀπ' ὅλα εἶνε ὁ λαός**, αὐτὸς εἶνε ὁ φύλακας τῆς Ὁρθοδοξίας.

Ἡ Ἐκκλησία μας ἔχει τὸ φιλελεύθερο καὶ συνοδικόν. Ἀπόδειξις αὐτοῦ εἶνε ὅτι στὶς **χειροτονίες** λαμβάνει μέρος ἀπαραιτήτως ὁ λαός. Ὑπάρχει κανόνας! Ἄλλο τώρα ὅτι πήραμε τοὺς κανόνες καὶ τοὺς θάψαμε. Οἱ κανόνες λένε· δὲν ἐπιτρέπεται διᾶκος ἢ παπᾶς ἢ δεσπότης νὰ χειροτονηθῇ νύχτα μὲ κλειστὲς πόρτες. Ὅχι, δὲν εἶνε ὑπόθεσις οἰκογενειακὴ, τεσσάρων - πέντε ἀνθρώπων. Θὰ χειροτονηθῇ Κυριακὴ ἢ μεγάλη ἑορτῆ, καὶ θὰ εἰδοποιηθῇ νὰ παρίσταται ὅλος ὁ λαὸς ποῦ θὰ τὸν ἔχη ποιμένα. Καὶ πρὶν τὴ χειροτονία ὁ προεστὴς θὰ ρωτήσῃ· –Εἶνε ἄξιος; Ἐὰν ἀπὸ τὸ ἐκκλησίασμα ἀκουστῆ φωνὴ «ἀνάξιος», τί λένε τὰ βιβλία, οἱ κανόνες; – ἄλλο τὸ τί γίνεται τώρα· ἡ Ὁρθοδοξία λέει· θὰ σταματήσῃ ἡ χειροτονία καὶ ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς ποῦ ἔχει συνειδήσι τῆς ἀποστολῆς του θὰ πῇ· –Ποιὸς φωνάζει; Ἐλα ἐδῶ, παιδί μου. Τί ἔχεις νὰ πῆς γιὰ τὸν χειροτονούμενο; –Ἐχω αὐτὰ κι αὐτά... –Πολὺ καλά. Ἀναβάλλεται ἡ χειροτονία γιὰ δύο μῆνες· δὲν χάθηκε ὁ κόσμος. Καὶ στὸ διάστημα αὐτὸ θ' ἀποδειχθῇ,

ἂν οἱ κατηγορίες ἀληθεύουν ἢ εἶνε συκοφαντία. Καὶ ἂν μὲν εἶνε συκοφαντία, οὐαὶ καὶ ἀλλοίμονο στὸν συκοφάντη. Ἄν ὅμως γίνουν ἀνακρίσεις, ἐξετασθοῦν μάρτυρες καὶ ἀποδειχθῆ ὅτι οἱ καταγγελίες ἀληθεύουν, τότε ἡ χειροτονία ματαιώνεται. Δυστυχῶς τώρα, ὄχι πέντε - δέκα, ἀλλὰ ὅλη ἡ Ἑλλάδα νὰ φωνάξῃ «ἀνάξιος», αὐτοὶ μὲ τὴ δύναμι πού διαθέτουν, μὲ βίαια μέσα, χειροτονοῦν τοὺς ἀναξίους. Σὰς λέω ὑπευθύνως· χειροτονίες πού γίνονται μὲ φωνὲς «ἀνάξιος», εἶνε ἀντικανονικές.

4. ΑΓΙΟΤΗΣ. Τὸ ἐπόμενο χαρακτηριστικὸ γνώρισμα τῆς Ὁρθοδοξίας ποῖο εἶνε; **Ὁ σκοπός, τὸ ἰδανικὸ** τῆς. Ὅλα ὅσα γίνονται στὴν Ἐκκλησία ποῖο σκοπὸ ἔχουν; γιατί ἀνάβουμε τὸ κερί ἢ τὸν πολυέλεο, γιατί διαβάζουμε τὸ Εὐαγγέλιο, γιατί κηρύττει ὁ ἱεροκήρυκας, γιατί γίνεται τὸ μυστήριον; Ἀπαντᾷ ὁ Παῦλος: «*πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων*» [Ἐφ. 4,12]. Τὸ ἰδανικὸ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, στὸ ὁποῖο κατατείνουν ὅλα, εἶνε ἡ ἀγιότης: «*ἅγιοι γίνεσθε*» [1 Πέτρ. 1,16 βλ. Ἀευτ. 20,7,26].

Τί θὰ πῆ ἀγιότης; Νά· ἕναν ἀγράμματο τσοπάνο πού βόσκει τὰ πρόβατά του καὶ μόλις ἀκούσῃ τὴν καμπάνα –εἶδα τέτοιους– σταματᾷ καὶ κάνει τὸ σταυρὸ του καὶ λέει «*Κύριε Ἰησοῦ Χριστέ, ἐλέησόν με*» καὶ τὰ μάτια του δακρύνουν, μοῦ ἔρχεται νὰ πέσω νὰ τὸν προσκυνήσω. Ἐνας τέτοιος, πού πιστεύει στὸ Θεό, ζυγίζει παραπάνω ἀπ' ὅλους τοὺς πολυγραμματισμένους καθηγητάδες καὶ θεολόγους, αὐτοὺς πού ξέρουν πολλά, μὰ δὲν ἔχουν μέσα τους οὔτε δράμι ἀπὸ τὴν πίστι αὐτή. Ἐνας τέτοιος ἀγράμματος πιστὸς στὸ Θεὸ εἶνε ἀνώτερος ἀπὸ δαύτους. Ἡ Ἐκκλησία μας παραπάνω ἀπ' ὅλα ἐκτιμᾷ τὴν ἀγιότητα. Εἶνε αὐτὸ πού λέει ὁ Παῦλος: «*Βλέπετε τὴν κλῆσιν ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι οὐ πολλοὶ σοφοὶ κατὰ σάρκα, οὐ πολλοὶ δυνατοί, οὐ πολλοὶ εὐγενεῖς*» δὲν εἶνε μεταξύ σας πολλοὶ σοφοί, πολλοὶ ἰσχυροὶ καὶ μεγάλοι. «*ἀλλὰ τὰ μωρὰ τοῦ κόσμου ἐξελέξατο ὁ Θεὸς ἵνα τοὺς σοφοὺς κατασχύνῃ*» «*ποῦ σοφός; ποῦ γραμματεὺς; ποῦ συζητητῆς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου;*» [1 Κορ. 1,26-27,20]. Ναι, αὐτοὺς πού ὁ κόσμος θεωρεῖ ἀνοήτους, αὐτοὺς ἐκτιμᾷ ἡ Ἐκκλησία μας.

Ἐνα δράμι ἀγιότης ζυγίζει περισσότερο ἀπὸ ἕνα τόννο ἀνθρωπίνης σοφίας. **Δῶστε μου λίγη ἀγιότητα** ἀπ' αὐτὴν πού εἶχαν οἱ πατέρες τῆς Ἐκκλησίας μας, καὶ νὰ σὰς χαρίσω τὰ διπλώματα καὶ τίς γλώσσες καὶ ὅλη τὴν ἐγκυκλοπαιδικὴ μόρφωσι πού ἔχουν σήμερα μερικοὶ ἀπὸ τοὺς ἱερεῖς καὶ τοὺς ἀρχιερεῖς μας. Ἡ ἀγιότης εἶνε παραπάνω· σ' αὐτὴν κατευθύνει κάθε προσπάθεια ἡ Ἐκκλησία μας.

Τί εἶνε ἀγιότης; Τὸ νὰ κόψῃ κανεὶς τὰ ἐλατ-

τώματά του. Ὁ ἅγιος, ἐνῶ αὐτὸς εἶνε ὁ μέγας ἥρωας, ὁ νικητῆς τῶν παθῶν καὶ θριαμβευτῆς, ἐμπαίζεται σήμερα. Ποιὸν νὰ ρωτήσουμε τί εἶνε ἀγιότης; Τὸ ἄνθος τῆς Ὁρθοδοξίας, τὸν ἅγιο Ἰσαὰκ τὸν Σῦρο. Ὅταν τὸν ρώτησαν τί εἶνε ἀγιότης, ἀπήντησε: **βάθος ταπεινώσεως.**

Ἐνα παράδειγμα. Κάποιος ἀσκητῆς εἶχε ἕνα ὑποτακτικὸ. Μιὰ μέρα αὐτὸς κατέβηκε στὸν κόσμο. Ὅταν τὸ βράδυ γύρισε στὸ κελλί ἦταν διανοητικὸς· δὲν ἐκτιμοῦσε πιά τὸ γέροντα. Τὸ κατάλαβε ἐκεῖνος καὶ λέει: –Τί ἔπαθες, παιδάκι μου; –Ξέρεις, γέροντα, τί σοῦ σέρνουν οἱ γλώσσες; –Τί, παιδί μου; –Σ' ἕνα σπίτι ἄκουσα ὅτι εἶσαι ὑπερήφανος. –Ναί, παιδί μου, εἶμαι. –Σὲ ἄλλο σπίτι σὲ κατηγοροῦν ὅτι εἶσαι πόρνος. –Ναί, παιδί μου, εἶμαι. –Ἄλλοι λένε πὼς εἶσαι κλέφτης. –Ναί, εἶμαι. –Ἄλλοι σὲ κατηγοροῦν ὅτι εἶσαι θυμώδης. –Ναί, παιδί μου, εἶμαι· παρακάλεῖ τὸ Θεὸ νὰ μ' ἐλεήσῃ. –Λένε ἀκόμα πὼς εἶσαι καὶ μοιχός. –Ναί, παιδί μου, εἶμαι. –Κάποιοι μοῦ εἶπαν, ὅτι εἶσαι αἰρετικὸς. –Τί, αἰρετικὸς; ὄχι, παιδί μου, αἰρετικὸς δὲν εἶμαι!... Ὅλα τὰ δέχτηκε ὁ ἀσκητῆς, γιατί ἦταν ἅγιος κ' εἶχε ταπεινώσῃ τὴν κατηγορία τοῦ αἰρετικοῦ δὲν τὴ δέχτηκε, γιατί ἦταν ὄντως ὀρθόδοξος. Σήμερα πάνε στὸν πνευματικὸ καὶ ζητοῦν νὰ δικαιωθοῦν. Ἐγὼ δὲν ἔκανα τίποτα! λένε. Μὰ ἡ Ὁρθοδοξία ἔχει λεπτὸ κόσκινο, ζυγαριὰ φαρμακείου. Ἄν μὰς κοσκινίσῃ ὁ ἄγγελος!...

Μὰ, ἀφοῦ δὲν ἦταν πόρνος, θὰ πῆτε, γιατί ἔλεγε πὼς εἶνε; Δὲν ἀμαρτάνεις μόνο μὲ τὸ κορμί· κ' ἕνα βλέμμα κ' ἕνα λογισμὸ νὰ δεχθῆς μέσα σου, πάει, τὴν ἔκανες τὴν καρδιά σου οἶκο ἀνοχῆς. «*Καρδίαν καθαρὰν κτίσον ἐν ἐμοί, ὁ Θεός...*» [Ψαλμ. 50,12]. Τὸ εἶπε ὁ Χριστὸς: Ὅποιος δὴ γυναῖκα μὲ βλέμμα φιλήδονο, ἀμάρτησε, «*ἐμοίχευσε αὐτὴν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ*» [Ματθ. 5,28]. Ἄν περάσῃς ἀπὸ ἕνα περιβόλι καὶ πῆς «Ἄχ νὰ τὰ ἔχα ἐγὼ αὐτά», ἐγίνες κλέφτης μὲ τὴ διάθεσι. Καὶ ἂν μέσα σου δεχθῆς γιὰ κάποιον λογισμὸ μίσους, ἔ τὸν σκότωσες: «*πᾶς ὁ μισῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ἀνθρωποκτόνος ἐστί*» [1 Ἰω. 3,15].

Ἀπὸ τίς εὐχὲς τῆς Ἐκκλησίας μας ὠραία εἶνε ἐκεῖνη τῆς Πεντηκοστῆς, πού γονατίζουμε καὶ λέμε: «*Σοὶ μόνῳ ἀμαρτάνομεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ σοὶ μόνῳ λατρεύομεν*» (Υ'). Εἴμαστε ἀμαρτωλοὶ, ἀλλ' **ὄχι ἀσεβεῖς καὶ αἰρετικοί.**

* * *

Αὐτὴ εἶνε ἡ Ὁρθοδοξία μας. Μερικὲς πτυχὲς σὰς ἔδειξα· ἱερά παράδοσις, μυστήριον θείας εὐχαριστίας, ἐν Χριστῷ ἐλευθερία, ἀγιότης. Δὲν τελειώσαμε ὅμως· θὰ συνεχίσουμε καὶ θὰ ὀλοκληρώσουμε σὺν Θεῷ τὸ βράδυ.

(†) **ἐπίσκοπος Αὐγουστῖνος**

The Lord gives us once again an opportunity to express our solidarity by becoming a supporting and registered member of the parish. We can only urge you to do so because your sustaining membership keeps this parish functioning and responding to the needs of all the faithful. Don't wait until some insignificant date on the calendar. Register with the Church Office **TODAY** and garner all the benefits of being a supporter of Christ's mission on earth.

FAMILY REGISTRATION FOR HUSBAND & WIFE: \$275 PER YEAR

SINGLE MEMBERSHIP: \$225 PER YEAR

SENIOR CITIZEN INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP: \$150 PER YEAR

SENIOR CITIZEN HUSBAND & WIFE MEMBERSHIP: \$200 PER YEAR

WE DO NEED YOUR HELP!

Registering with your local parish is not so much a duty or obligation as it is a **PRIVILEGE**. By registering and offering your annual stewardship, you become an integral member of the living body of Christ as a faith community. By virtue of your Baptism, Chrismation (Confirmation), and Holy Eucharist (Communion), you claim to be a follower of Christ, a witness for Christ, and a practitioner for Christ. May we ask you then to live up to these promises by making your 2014 commitment **TODAY!** The benefits you shall receive beyond grace include the satisfaction and knowledge that this Church and community thrives thanks to your outreach.

YOU ARE PART OF THE GREAT FRESCO OF FAITH

Nativity of the Theotokos

The time is always right to make a beginning of a way of life that will lead to salvation. ... Today a paradoxical book has been made ready on earth, which in an indescribable way can hold, not the imprint of words, but the living Word Himself ... But who is the new world, the mysterious paradise, the paradoxical book, the inspired Tabernacle and Ark of God, the truth sprung from the earth, the much extolled rod of Jesse? It is the Maiden who before and after childbearing is eternally virgin, whose birth from a barren mother we celebrate today ...

Why did she come from a barren womb? In order to put an end to her parents' sorrow, transform their disgrace, and prefigure that deliverance from the grief and curse of the Forefathers of the human race, which was to come about through her. She alone dwelt in the Holy of Holies, and she alone became the abode of the

Creator of the natural order, so how could nature dare profane the womb in which she rested, and from which she came forth? ...

Let us fear God, abstain from everything evil, return to Him through good works, and strive by self-control and prayer to wipe out the evil accretions within us, to change our inner thoughts for the better, and, according to the Prophet, to be in labor with the spirit of salvation and bring it to birth, having as our helper, through invoking her name, the Virgin who was today bestowed upon her parents through prayer and a manner of life pleasing to God. She transformed their sorrow, annulled the ancestral curse, and brought our first mother's pangs to an end, painlessly bearing Christ as a Virgin.

St. Gregory Palamas

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