

JUBILEE 85TH ANNIVERSARY
THREE HIERARCHS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

SUNDAY WEEKLY BULLETIN August 24th 2014
V. Rev. Archimandrite Eugene N. Pappas

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
ELEVENTH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW



Icon of the Merciless Servant

St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 9:2-12

Prokeimenon. Mode 2. Psalm 117.14,18

The Lord is my strength and my song. Verse: The Lord has chastened me sorely.

BRETHREN, you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. This is my defense to those who would examine me. Do we not have the right to our food and drink? Do we not have the right to be accompanied by a wife, as the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living? Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard without eating any of its fruit? Who tends a flock without getting some of the milk? Do I say this on human authority? Does not the law say the same? For it is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain." Is it for oxen that God is concerned? Does he not speak entirely for our sake? It was written for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope and the thresher thresh in hope of a share in the crop. If we have sown spiritual good among you, is it too much if we reap your material benefits? If others share this rightful claim upon you, do not we still more? Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ.

Πρὸς Κορινθίους α' 9:2-12

Προκειμενον. Ἦχος β'. ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 117.14,18

Ἴσχύς μου καὶ ὑμνησίς μου ὁ Κύριος. Στίχ. Παιδεύων ἐπαίδευσέ με ὁ Κύριος.

Ἀδελφοί, ἡ σφραγίς τῆς ἐμῆς ἀποστολῆς ὑμεῖς ἐστε ἐν κυρίῳ. Ἡ ἐμὴ ἀπολογία τοῖς ἐμὲ ἀνακρίνουσιν αὕτη ἐστίν. Μὴ οὐκ ἔχομεν ἐξουσίαν φαγεῖν καὶ πιεῖν; Μὴ οὐκ ἔχομεν ἐξουσίαν ἀδελφὴν γυναῖκα περιάγειν, ὡς καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ ἀπόστολοι, καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ τοῦ κυρίου, καὶ Κηφᾶς; Ἡ μόνος ἐγὼ καὶ Βαρνάβας οὐκ ἔχομεν ἐξουσίαν τοῦ μὴ ἐργάζεσθαι; Τίς στρατεύεται ἰδίοις ὄψωνι οἰσίν; Τίς φυτεύει ἀμπελῶνα, καὶ ἐκ τοῦ καρποῦ αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἐσθίει; Ἡ τίς ποιμαίνει ποίμνην, καὶ ἐκ τοῦ γάλακτος τῆς ποιμνῆς οὐκ ἐσθίει; Μὴ κατὰ ἄνθρωπον ταῦτα λαλῶ; Ἡ οὐχὶ καὶ ὁ νόμος ταῦτα λέγει; Ἐν γὰρ τῷ Μωϋσέως νόμῳ γέγραπται, Οὐ φιμώσεις βοῦν ἀλοῶντα. Μὴ τῶν βοῶν μέλει τῷ θεῷ; Ἡ δι' ἡμᾶς πάντως λέγει; Δι' ἡμᾶς γὰρ ἐγράφη, ὅτι ἐπ' ἐλπίδι ὀφείλει ὁ ἀροτριῶν ἀροτριᾶν, καὶ ὁ ἀλοῶν τῆς ἐλπίδος αὐτοῦ μετέχειν ἐπ' ἐλπίδι. Εἰ ἡμεῖς ὑμῖν τὰ πνευματικὰ ἐσπείραμεν, μέγα εἰ ἡμεῖς ὑμῶν τὰ σαρκικὰ θερίσομεν; Εἰ ἄλλοι τῆς ἐξουσίας ὑμῶν μετέχουσιν, οὐ μᾶλλον ἡμεῖς; Ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐχρησάμεθα τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ ταύτῃ, ἀλλὰ πάντα στέγομεν, ἵνα μὴ ἐγκοπὴν τινα δώμεν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

11th Sunday of Matthew

The Gospel of Matthew 18:23-35

The Lord said this parable: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began the reckoning, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents; and as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him the lord of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. But that same servant, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat he said, 'Pay what you owe.' So his fellow servant fell down and besought him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' He refused and went and put him in prison till he should pay the debt. When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you besought me; and should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his lord delivered him to the jailors, till he should pay all his debt. So also my heavenly Father will do to everyone of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."

11th Sunday of Matthew

Κατὰ Ματθαῖον 18.23-35

Εἶπεν ὁ Κύριος τὴν παραβολὴν ταύτην· Ὁμοιωθὴ ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν ἀνθρώπῳ βασιλεῖ, ὃς ἠθέλησε συνᾶραι λόγον μετὰ τῶν δούλων αὐτοῦ. ἀρξαμένου δὲ αὐτοῦ συναίρειν προσηνέχθη αὐτῷ εἷς ὀφειλέτης μυρίων ταλάντων. μὴ ἔχοντος δὲ αὐτοῦ ἀποδοῦναι ἐκέλευσεν αὐτὸν ὁ κύριος αὐτοῦ πρᾶξαι καὶ τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ καὶ τὰ τέκνα καὶ πάντα ὅσα εἶχε, καὶ ἀποδοῦναι. πεσὼν οὖν ὁ δούλος προσεκύνη αὐτῷ λέγων· κ ὦριε, μακροθύμησον ἐπ' ἐμοὶ καὶ πάντα σοὶ ἀποδώσω. σπλαγχνισθεὶς δὲ ὁ κύριος τοῦ δούλου ἐκείνου ἀπέλυσεν αὐτὸν καὶ τὸ δάνειον ἀφήκεν αὐτῷ. ἐξελθὼν δὲ ὁ δούλος ἐκεῖνος εὗρεν ἕνα τῶν συνδούλων αὐτοῦ, ὃς ὀφείλεν αὐτῷ ἑκατὸν δηνάρια, καὶ κρατήσας αὐτὸν ἔπιγε λέγων· ἀπόδος μοι εἰ τι ὀφείλεις. πεσὼν οὖν ὁ σύνδουλος αὐτοῦ εἰς τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ παρεκάλει αὐτὸν λέγων· μακροθύμησον ἐπ' ἐμοὶ καὶ ἀποδώσω σοι. ὁ δὲ οὐκ ἤθελεν, ἀλλὰ ἀπελθὼν ἔβαλεν αὐτὸν εἰς φυλακὴν ἕως οὗ ἀποδῶ τὸ ὀφειλόμενον. ἰδόντες δὲ οἱ σύνδουλοι αὐτοῦ τὰ γενόμενα ἐλυπήθησαν σφόδρα, καὶ ἐλθόντες διεσάφησαν τῷ κυρίῳ ἐαυτῶν πάντα τὰ γενόμενα. τότε προσκαλεσάμενος αὐτὸν ὁ κύριος αὐτοῦ λέγει αὐτῷ· δούλε πονηρέ, πᾶσαν τὴν ὀφειλὴν ἐκείνην ἀφήκᾳ σοι, ἐπεὶ παρεκάλεσάς με. οὐκ ἔδει καὶ σὲ ἐλεῆσαι τὸν σύνδουλόν σου, ὡς καὶ ἐγὼ σε ἠλέησα; καὶ ὀργισθεὶς ὁ κύριος αὐτοῦ παρέδωκεν αὐτὸν τοῖς βασανισταῖς ἕως οὗ ἀποδῶ πᾶν τὸ ὀφειλόμενον αὐτῷ. Οὕτω καὶ ὁ πατήρ μου ὁ ἐπουράνιος ποιήσει ὑμῖν, ἐὰν μὴ ἀφήτε ἕκαστος τῷ ἀδελφῷ αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τῶν καρδιῶν ὑμῶν τὰ παραπτώματα αὐτῶν.

SERVICE THIS WEEK:

Liturgy Friday August 29th Commemoration of the Beheading of St. John the Baptist 9:00 – 10:00 A.M.

The infamous dance of Salome to a satanic rhythm, the demonic Herod Antipas who ordered the death of St. John in answer to a whim, and the severed head of the Baptist form a tableau etched in every Christian mind. It is a memory that needs no chronological reminder, but comes to the fore with the prodding of any atrocity committed against mankind, Christian or otherwise. Nevertheless, the senseless execution of this mighty servant of God is placed on the church calendar on August 29th to stir the awareness of Christians everywhere that mortality will never die because of saints such as John the Baptist.

The unbelievable wicked Salome came to a violent end which she could not have caused for her greatest enemy, let alone envision for herself. According to the church historian Nikephoros Kallistos in his book, Ecclesiastical History, it is said her end came in a frozen area well north of Palestine. As Salome was crossing a frozen lake, the seemingly solid waters, the eddy created by her sudden immersion brought the ice crashing about her neck, and a crushing piece of ice with an extremely sharp edge decapitated her. She went to the depths. "unknelled, uncoffined and unknown"

AGAPE COFFEE FELLOWSHIP : today is being hosted by Pamela and Kenneth Kelly and family in grateful thanksgiving.

TODAY: we are honored and pleased to bless the betrothal of Dina Kelly daughter of Kenneth and Pamela (VELLIOS) Kelly and Michael Fratangelo beloved son of Irene and Michael Fratangelo. May the Lord extend HIS benediction upon the betrothed and their kin. KALA STEPHANA!

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.

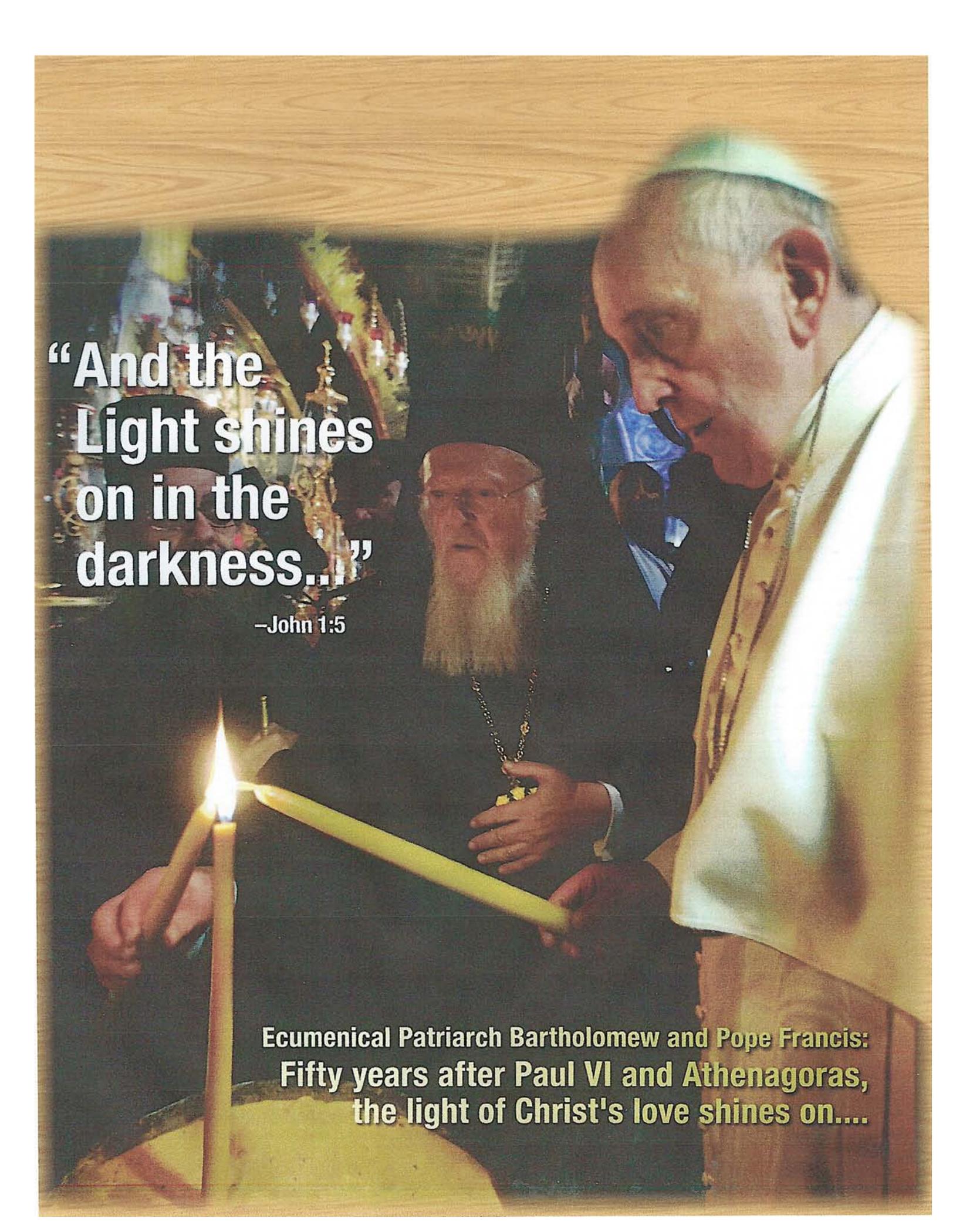
YOU MAY WISH TO HOST A COFFEE FELLOWSHIP ONE SUNDAY OVER THE SUMMER MONTHS IN GRATEFUL THANKSGIVING FOR PRAYERS ANSWERED, OR FOR MEMORIAL REMEMBRANCE OF A LOVED ONE. For a donation of (\$125. dollars) coffee, cookies, set up of tables, serving and clean up will be done by the church with proper recognition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

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.

ECCLESIAICAL NEW YEAR: is observed each year on SEPTEMBER FIRST (1ST) This date heralds the beginning of the cycle of ordinary daily readings from the scriptures for saints and holy days of obligation. The date is called 'THE INDICTUS' and from Byzantine Roman times it was the 'indicator' of the collection of taxes for the Empire and the commencement of civil and religious observances. So.... you see, you have another chance to make a 'resolution' to change our life's habits, the BAD ONES, of course.HAVE YOU PLACED AN ADVERTISEMENT IN THE ANNIVERSARY JOURNAL 2014!???? PLEASE DO SO AT YOUR EARLIEST CONVENIENCE AS WE CELEBRATE OUR 85TH , YEAR.

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.

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)

A photograph capturing a significant moment of ecumenical unity. Pope Francis, on the right, is dressed in his white papal attire and is lighting a long, yellow candle. He is looking down at the flame with a gentle expression. On the left, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, with his characteristic long white beard and dark vestments, holds a lit candle that is the source of the light. The background is dark, with some ornate religious decorations visible, creating a solemn and focused atmosphere. The lighting is primarily from the candles, casting a warm glow on the participants.

**“And the
Light shines
on in the
darkness...”**

—John 1:5

**Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and Pope Francis:
Fifty years after Paul VI and Athenagoras,
the light of Christ's love shines on....**



ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ

ΣΥΝΤΟΜΟΝ ΚΗΡΥΓΜΑ



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

Περίοδος Δ' - Ἔτος ΚΒ'
Φλώρινα - ἀριθμ. φύλλου 1172²

Συντάκτης (†) ἐπίσκοπος
Αύγουστίνος Ν. Καντιώτης

Ἡ θύρα

«Ἐγὼ εἶμι ἡ θύρα· δι' ἐμοῦ ἐάν τις εἰσέλθῃ, σωθήσεται, καὶ εἰσελεύσεται καὶ ἐξελεύσεται, καὶ νομὴν εὐρήσει» (Ἰω. 10,9)

Σήμερα, ἀγαπητοί μου, εἶνε ἑορτὴ καὶ πα-
νήγυρις μεγάλη. Ἐορτάζουν δύο θρη-
σκευτικὲς φυσιογνωμίες, δύο ἄγιοι, ποὺ ἡ
γλῶσσα τῆς Ἐκκλησίας τοὺς ἀνέβασε πολὺ
ψηλά, στὸ ἐπίπεδο τῶν **ἰσαποστόλων**. Σήμε-
ρα εἶνε ἡ μνήμη τῶν δύο ἀγίων θεοστέπτων
βασιλέων καὶ ἰσαποστόλων Κωνσταντίνου καὶ
τῆς σεβασμίας μητρὸς του Ἑλένης.

Σήμερα, κοντὰ στοὺς ἀγίους, ἑορτάζουν
καὶ ὅσοι καὶ ὅσες φέρουν τὰ ὠραῖα ὀνόματά
τους. Μικροὶ καὶ μεγάλοι, ἀπλοὶ ἄνθρωποι
τοῦ λαοῦ ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀξιωματοῦχοι καὶ κυβερ-
νῆται καὶ πρίγκιπες καὶ βασιλεῖς ἑορτάζουν
σήμερα. Δὲν εἶπα τίποτε. Σήμερα ἑορτάζει
ὀλόκληρος ὁ Ἑλληνικὸς λαός, ἑορτάζουν γε-
νεὲς γενεῶν. Λίγα ὀνόματα στὴν ἱστορία τοῦ
πολυπαθοῦς καὶ μαρτυρικοῦ ἔθνους μας ἡ-
λεκτρίζουν τόσο ὅσο **τὸ ὄνομα Κωνσταντί-
νος**. Τὸ ὄνομα αὐτὸ ἔφερε ὁ σημερινὸς ἄγι-
ος, ὁ **Κωνσταντῖνος Α΄ ὁ Μέγας** (†337), ὁ ἔν-
δοξος καὶ ἡρωικὸς ἰδρυτὴς τῆς Βυζαντινῆς
αὐτοκρατορίας, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὁ τελευταῖος μαρ-
τυρικὸς αὐτοκράτωρ τοῦ Βυζαντίου, ὁ **Κων-
σταντῖνος ΙΑ΄ ὁ Παλαιολόγος** (1405-1453). Ἔ-
τσι τὸ ὄνομα **Κωνσταντῖνος** ἔγινε σύμβολο,
συνδέθηκε μὲ τὶς παραδόσεις καὶ τοὺς θρύ-
λους τοῦ γένους μας, καὶ ἰδίως μὲ τὸ ὄραμα
τῆς βασιλίδος τῶν πόλεων, τῆς Κωνσταντι-
νουπόλεως. Γι' αὐτὸ ἡ σημερινὴ ἑορτὴ εἶνε
θρησκευτικὴ καὶ ἐθνικὴ.

Δὲν θὰ σᾶς διηγηθῶ τὸν βίον τῶν σημερι-
νῶν ἀγίων. Ἀντὶ ν' ἀνοίξω τὸ συναξάριο, τὴν
ἱστορία, καὶ νὰ σᾶς διηγηθῶ τὸν βίον τους, θὰ
μοῦ ἐπιτρέψετε νὰ ρίξουμε **ἓνα βλέμμα στὸ
σημερινὸ εὐαγγέλιο** καὶ μάλιστα στὸ τελευ-
ταῖο ῥητό. Τὸ τελευταῖο ῥητό τοῦ σημερινοῦ
εὐαγγελίου λέει: «Ἐγὼ εἶμι ἡ θύρα· δι' ἐμοῦ
ἐάν τις εἰσέλθῃ, σωθήσεται, καὶ εἰσελεύσεται

καὶ ἐξελεύσεται, καὶ νομὴν εὐρήσει» (Ἰω. 10,9). Τί
σημαίνουν τὰ λόγια αὐτὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ;

Γιὰ πρόβατα καὶ βοσκούς μιλάει τὸ εὐαγ-
γέλιο. Μᾶς λέει ὁ Κύριος παραβολικῶς, ὅτι ὅ-
πως τὰ ἄλογα πρόβατα ἀναπαύονται καὶ ἀ-
σφαλίζονται μέσα στὸ μαντρί, ἔτσι ὑπάρχει
καὶ μία ἄλλη **μάνδρα**, πνευματικὴ. Εἶνε ἡ **Ἐκ-
κλησία** του, στὴν ὁποία **ἀναπαύονται** καὶ **ἀ-
σφαλίζονται** τὰ λογικὰ πρόβατα, οἱ ἄνθρωποι,
ἐφ' ὅσον βεβαίως τὸ θέλουν. Ὅποιος δὲν θέ-
λει, εἶνε ἐλεύθερος νὰ μείνῃ ἔξω ἀπὸ τὴ μάν-
δρα. Τὰ λόγια αὐτὰ σημαίνουν, ὅτι ὁ κόσμος
χωρίζεται σὲ δύο παρατάξεις· στὴ μία εἶνε οἱ
ἐκτὸς τῆς μάνδρας, στὴν ἄλλη οἱ ἐντὸς τῆς
μάνδρας· οἱ μὲν βρίσκονται κοντὰ στὸ Χρι-
στό, οἱ ἄλλοι εἶνε μακριὰ ἀπὸ τὸ Χριστό.

Πῶς ζοῦν, ἀγαπητοί μου, **οἱ ἐκτὸς τῆς μάν-
δρας**, αὐτοὶ ποὺ μένουν μακριὰ ἀπὸ τὸ Χρι-
στό; Ὁ ἄνθρωπος ποὺ μένει ἔξω ἀπὸ τὴ μάν-
δρα τοῦ Χριστοῦ δὲν ἔχει ἀσφάλεια καὶ ἀνά-
παυσι. Καὶ πῶς νὰ ἔχη; Σᾶς ἐρωτῶ· μπορεῖ τὸ
πρόβατο τὴ νύχτα νὰ εἶνε ἀσφαλισμένο καὶ
ἀναπαυμένο ἔξω ἀπὸ τὸ μαντρί του; μπορεῖ
τὸ πουλὶ νὰ ζήσει καὶ νὰ πετάξῃ χωρὶς ἀτμο-
σφαιρικὸ ἀέρα; μπορεῖ τὸ λουλούδι ν' ἀντέξῃ
ἔξω ἀπ' τὴ γλάστρα; μπορεῖ τὸ ψάρι νὰ ζήσει
ἔξω ἀπ' τὴ θάλασσα; Ὅσο μπορεῖ τὸ ψάρι νὰ
ζήσει ἔξω ἀπ' τὴ θάλασσα καὶ τὸ λουλούδι ν'
ἀνθήσῃ ἔξω ἀπ' τὸ περιβόλι καὶ τὸ πουλὶ νὰ
πετάξῃ χωρὶς ἀέρα καὶ τὸ πρόβατο νὰ ζήσει
ἔξω ἀπ' τὸ μαντρί, ἄλλο τόσο μπορεῖ καὶ ὁ ἄν-
θρωπος νὰ ζήσει ἔξω ἀπ' τὸ μαντρί τοῦ Χρι-
στοῦ. Ὅ,τι εἶνε γιὰ τὸ σῶμα οἱ πνεύμονες καὶ
ἡ καρδιά –κι ἀκόμη παραπάνω–, αὐτὸ γιὰ τὸν
ἄνθρωπο εἶνε ὁ Χριστός. Δὲν μπορεῖς νὰ ζή-
σῃς χωρὶς Χριστό.

Λόγια εἶνε αὐτά; Ἀπόδειξις οἱ σύγχρονοι

ἄνθρωποι. Τί πέτυχαν μὲ τὰ γράμματα τὶς ἐπιστῆμες καὶ τὶς θεωρίες τους ἢ μὲ τὰ πλούτη τοὺς θησαυροὺς καὶ τὸν τεχνικὸ πολιτισμὸ τους; Ἐνα μεγάλο κενό! Μικροὶ καὶ μεγάλοι, ἀνεξαρτήτως ἰδεολογικῆς τοποθετήσεως, ἀπὸ βορρᾶ μέχρι νότου καὶ ἀπὸ δυσμῶν μέχρι ἀνατολῶν, ὅλοι οἱ ἄνθρωποι φέρουν ἐπάνω τους τὴν **ἀγωνία** καὶ τὸ **ἄγχος**. Ἡ σημερινὴ γενεὰ περισσότερο ἀπὸ κάθε ἄλλη μποροῦσε νὰ ζήσει εὐτυχισμένη· καὶ ὅμως ζῆ στιγμὲς δραματικῆς. Γιατί; Διότι ἔφυγε ὁ «ἀτμοσφαιρικὸς ἀέρας», ἔφυγε τὸ «ἄρωμα», ἔφυγε τὸ «ἔδαφος», ἔφυγε ἡ «ζωή». Δὲν βρίσκει ἀνάπαισι ὁ ἄνθρωπος, ἀγωνιᾷ, σπαρταρᾷ. Πάρτε τὸ ψάρι, βγάλτε το ἀπ' τὴ θάλασσα, βάλτε το πάνω σὲ μιὰ ἀμμουδιά –ἀς εἶνε καὶ χρυσιῆ–, αὐτὸ σπαρταράει. Ἄν εἶχε γλῶσσα, θὰ σοῦ ἔλεγε: Δός μου τὸ νερό, νὰ πέσω μέσ' στὴ θάλασσα, ν' ἀναπνεύσω, νὰ ζήσω. Ἔτσι καὶ ὁ ἄνθρωπος.

Ποῦ ζητάει σήμερα ὁ ἄνθρωπος τὴν ἀνάπαισι καὶ τὴν ἀσφάλεια; Χτυπάει πολλὲς πόρτες. Ρίξτε μιὰ ματιὰ στὴν κοινωνία, ἀπὸ τὶς καλύβες τῶν φτωχῶν μέχρι τὰ μέγαρα τῶν πλουσίων. Ὅλοι ζητοῦν ἀνάπαισι καὶ ἀσφάλεια στὰ χρήματα, στὶς ἀνέσεις, στὶς ἀπολαύσεις, στὶς γυναῖκες, στὶς διασκεδάσεις, στὰ σπὸρ καὶ τὸν ἀθλητισμὸ, στὶς ἐκδρομὲς καὶ τὸν τουρισμὸ, στὴ γνῶσι καὶ τὴν πολιτικὴ, σὲ ἐγκόσμια δηλαδὴ στηρίγματα. Ἡ πεῖρα τῆς ζωῆς λέει, ὅτι σὲ κανένα ἀπ' αὐτὰ δὲν βρίσκουν ἐκεῖνο ποὺ ζητοῦν. Διότι **χτυποῦν λάθος πόρτα!** Ποιὰ εἶνε ἡ ἀσφάλεια τοῦ σημερινοῦ ἀνθρώπου; Καμμία ἀσφάλεια. Ταραχὴ καὶ ἀνασφάλεια χαρακτηρίζει τὴ ζωὴ. Τὸ πρόβατο δὲν εἶνε ἀσφαλισμένο τὴ νύχτα ἔξω ἀπὸ τὸ μαντρί, κι ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἶνε ἀνασφαλῆς καὶ ἀνήσυχος ἔξω ἀπὸ τὴ Μάνδρα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, τὴν ἀγία αὐτὴ Ἐκκλησία. Ἐξω ἀπ' τὸ μαντρί τὸ πρόβατο τὸ τρώει ὁ λύκος· καὶ ἔξω ἀπὸ τὴν ἀγία Ὁρθοδοξία μας ὁ ἄνθρωπος θὰ πέση θῦμα ληστῶν, ἀπατεῶνων καὶ ἐκμεταλλευτῶν, ποὺ ζητοῦν νὰ τὸν παρασύρουν καὶ νὰ τὸν ρίξουν στὶς χαράδρες τῆς ἀπωλείας καὶ καταστροφῆς. Τὸ τέλος τοῦ κόσμου εἶνε ἐκεῖνο ποὺ εἶπε ὁ σοφὸς Σολομῶν: **«Ματαιότης ματαιότητων, τὰ πάντα ματαιότης»** (Ἐκκλ. 1,2).

* * *

Μὴ χτυπάτε, λοιπόν, ἄλλες πόρτες· αὐτὸ ποὺ ζητᾶτε δὲν ὑπάρχει ἐκεῖ. **«Ἐγὼ εἶμι ἡ θύρα»**, **φωνάζει ὁ Χριστός**. Μέσα στὴν ταλαιπωρία τοῦ κόσμου τούτου ἀκούγεται ἡ γλυκεῖα φωνὴ του· **«Ἐγὼ εἶμι ἡ θύρα»**, ἡ μόνη θύρα. **«Ἐγὼ εἶμι ἡ θύρα· δι' ἐμοῦ ἐάν τις εἰσέλθῃ,**

σωθήσεται, καὶ εἰσελεύσεται καὶ ἐξελεύσεται, καὶ νομὴν εὐρήσει» (ἔ.δ.). Ὡς λόγια ἀνεκτίμητα, ὡς λόγια ποὺ δὲν ὑπάρχει ζυγαριὰ νὰ τὰ ζυγίσῃ! Τὰ λόγια αὐτὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἔχουν βάθος καὶ πλάτος καὶ ὕψος ἐννοιῶν. Οἱ ἄλλες θύρες εἶνε ἀπατηλὲς παγίδες· ἡ θύρα τοῦ Χριστοῦ εἶνε ἀσφαλὲς καταφύγιο, εἶνε γαλήνιο λιμάνι. Στὶς ἄλλες θύρες οἱ ἄνθρωποι τὸ μόνο ποὺ βρίσκουν εἶνε πικρὰ **«κεράτια»** σὰν ἐκεῖνα ποὺ ἔτρωγε ὁ ἄσωτος προσπαθώντας νὰ κορέσῃ τὴν πεῖνα του (Λουκ. 15,16)· στὴν θύρα τοῦ Χριστοῦ ὁ ἄνθρωπος βρίσκει τὸ καθαρὸ φαγητὸ καὶ τὸ σωτήριο φάρμακο, βρίσκει τὸ ἄδολο γάλα ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν στερεὰ τροφή, τὸ ὕδωρ τὸ ζῶν, τὸν ἄρτο τῆς ζωῆς τὸν ἐπιούσιον, βρίσκει τὸν μόσχο τὸν σιτευτό.

«Ἐγὼ εἶμι ἡ θύρα». Ἐάν, ἀδελφοί μου, μακριὰ ἀπὸ τὸ Χριστὸ ὑπάρχη ἡ ἀγωνία, τὸ ἄγχος, ἡ πικρία καὶ ὁ θάνατος, κοντὰ στὸ Χριστὸ ὑπάρχει ἡ βεβαιότης, ἡ σιγουριά, ἡ ἀφοβία, ἡ εἰρήνη, ἡ ἡρεμία, ἡ ἀγαλλίασις ἡ πνευματικὴ, ὑπάρχει τὸ θέλημα τοῦ οὐρανοῦ. Λόγια εἶνε αὐτά; Πῶς θὰ μποροῦσα νὰ σᾶς τὸ περιγράψω; Θὰ ἤθελα νὰ ἔχω τὴ θεολογία τοῦ Χρυσοστόμου, τὴν ποίησι τοῦ Δάντη, τὰ χαρίσματα τῶν ῥητόρων, τὴ χάρι τῶν ζωγράφων, γιὰ νὰ παραστήσω μπροστά σας τὴ χαρὰ καὶ τὴν ἀγαλλίασι ποὺ βρίσκουν ὅσοι περνοῦν τὴν θύρα τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ εἰσέρχονται στὸ βασιλεῖο του. Μὲ ἓνα λόγο· βρίσκουν αὐτὸ ποὺ ζητοῦν καὶ διψοῦν οἱ καρδιὲς ὅλων μας, μικρῶν καὶ μεγάλων, βρίσκουν τὴ **σωτηρία**. Ὅποιος περνᾷ αὐτὴ τὴ θύρα καὶ γίνεται πρόβατο τῆς ποιμένης τοῦ Χριστοῦ, φθάνει στὸν οὐράνιο Πατέρα. Ἔτσι συνέβη καὶ μὲ τὸν Μέγα Κωνσταντῖνο· δέχθηκε τὴν κλησὶ καὶ πέρασε τὴν θύρα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ποὺ εἶνε ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ κόσμου, τὸ ἄλφα καὶ τὸ ὠμέγα, ὁ πνευματικὸς ἄξων γύρω ἀπὸ τὸν ὁποῖο στρέφονται οἱ αἰῶνες. Ὄνόματα ἄλλων, ποὺ θεωροῦνται μεγάλοι, σβήνουν καὶ λησμονοῦνται· τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Χριστοῦ θὰ ζῆ καὶ θὰ βασιλεύῃ εἰς αἰῶνας αἰῶνων **«καὶ τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἔσται τέλος»** (Λουκ. 1,33).

Ἀδελφοί μου, θὰ ἤθελα νὰ σᾶς μεταδώσω αὐτὸ ποὺ πιστεύω, αὐτὸ ποὺ γνωρίζω· ὅτι δὲν ὑπάρχει ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανὸν ἄλλο ὄνομα ποὺ μπορεῖ νὰ μᾶς σώσῃ, παρὰ μόνον **τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ**, ἐνώπιον τοῦ ὁποῖου **«πᾶν γόβῃ κάμψει ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων, καὶ πᾶσα γλῶσσα ἐξομολογήσεται ὅτι Κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός εἰς δόξαν Θεοῦ πατρὸς»** (Φιλ. 2,10-11)· ἀμήν.

(†) 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

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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

I Will Pay You

And so our sins become greater, and not only from this but also from the benefits and honor which we enjoy from them. If you want to learn how our sins against God are like ten thousand talents, or more in fact, and even much more, I will try to show you briefly. But I fear, lest to those who are inclined to wickedness and love continually to sin, I should appear to provide them with still greater security; or that I might drive the meeker sort to despair, and that they should repeat the despairing question of the disciples: "Who then can be saved?"

... But nevertheless I will continue on in the hope that I may make those who pay attention more secure and more amenable. For those who suffer an incurable disease and feel no pain are untouched by these words and do not change from their natural wickedness and inertia. And even if in the future they derive from my words greater occasion for contempt, that should be attributed not to this kind of argument but to

their own insensibility. What I will say ought to be able to arouse them if only they attend to it and let it prick their hearts.

And so it is necessary that I speak. In speaking of our sins, I will distinguish between those we commit against God and against other persons. I will set forth not each person's own but what are common. But then I will ask individuals to add their own sins according to an examination of their conscience. I will do this, having first set forth the good deeds of God to us. What then are God's good deeds? He created us from nothing; he made the whole visible world for us, the heaven, the sea, the earth, animals, plants and seeds.... He gave us a helpmate and set us over all the brute species, and He crowned us with glory and honor.

And yet after all this, when humanity turned out ungrateful toward its benefactor, He thought us worthy of an even greater gift - forgiveness.

St. John Chrysostom

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