

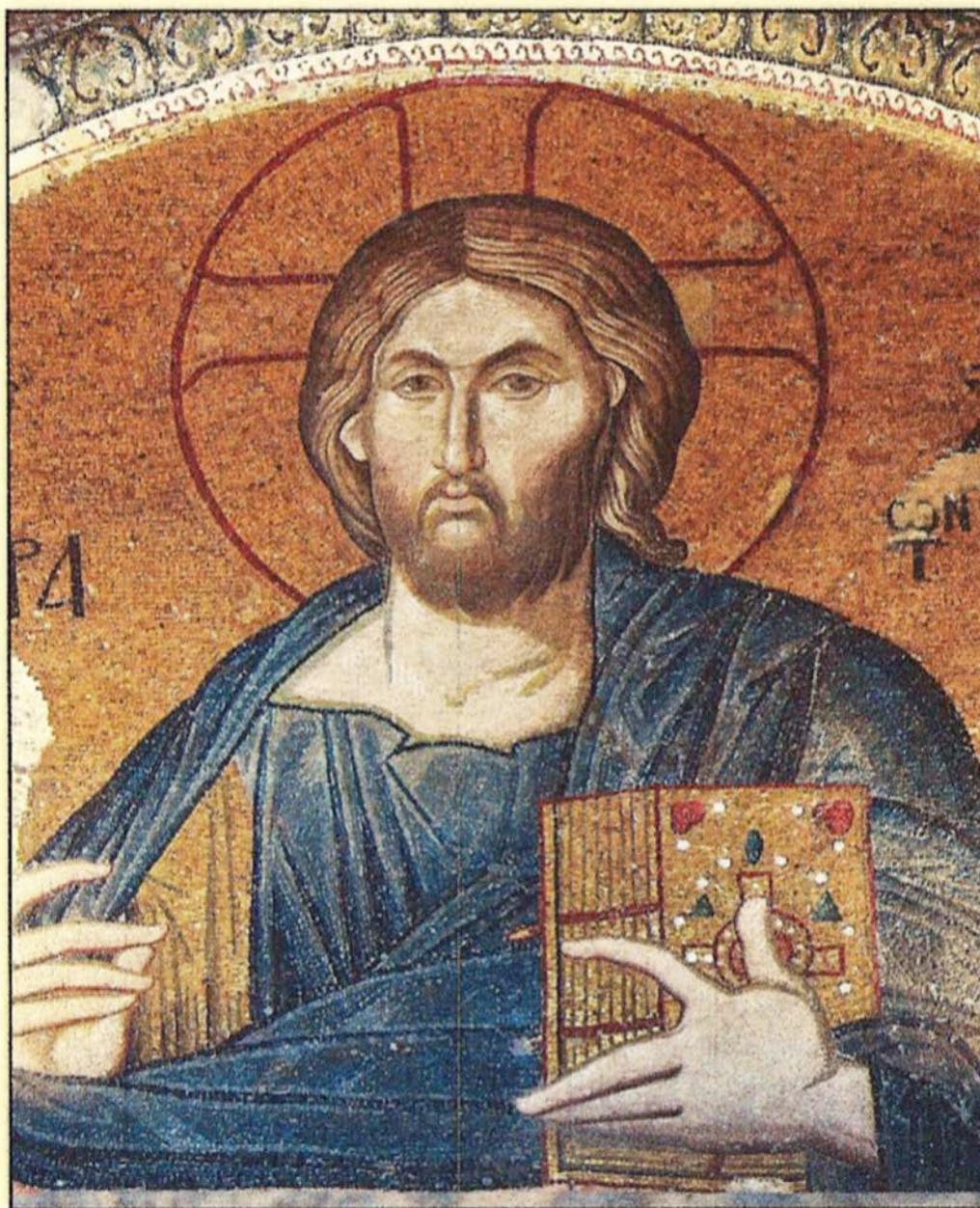


DIRECT ARCHDIOCESAN
DISTRICT

THREE HIERARCHS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

SUNDAY WEEKLY BULLETIN January 12th, 2014
V. Rev. Archimandrite Eugene N. Pappas

SUNDAY AFTER THEOPHANY



Icon of Christ Pantocrator

St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 4:7-13

Prokeimenon. Mode 1. Psalm 32.22,1

Let your mercy, O Lord, be upon us. Verse: Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous.

BRETHREN, grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it is said, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." (in saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is he who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) 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.

Πρὸς Ἐφεσίους 4:7-13

Προκείμενον. Ἦχος α΄. ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 32.22,1

Γένοιτο, Κύριε, τὸ ἔλεός σου ἐφ' ἡμᾶς. Στίχ. Ἀγαλλιᾶσθε δίκαιοι ἐν Κυρίῳ

Ἀδελφοί, ἐνὶ ἐκάστῳ ἡμῶν ἐδόθη ἡ χάρις κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τῆς δωρεᾶς τοῦ Χριστοῦ. Διὸ λέγει, Ἀναβὰς εἰς ὕψος ἠχμαλώτευσεν αἰχμαλωσίαν, καὶ ἔδωκεν δόματα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις. Τὸ δέ, Ἀνέβη, τί ἐστὶν εἰ μὴ ὅτι καὶ κατέβη πρῶτον εἰς τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς; Ὁ καταβάς, αὐτὸς ἐστὶν καὶ ὁ ἀναβάς ὑπεράνω πάντων τῶν οὐρανῶν, ἵνα πληρώσῃ τὰ πάντα. Καὶ αὐτὸς ἔδωκεν τοὺς μὲν ἀποστόλους, τοὺς δὲ προφήτας, τοὺς δὲ εὐαγγελιστάς, τοὺς δὲ ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους, πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων, εἰς ἔργον διακονίας, εἰς οἰκοδομὴν τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ· μέχρι καταστήσωμεν οἱ πάντες εἰς τὴν ἐνότητα τῆς πίστεως καὶ τῆς ἐπιγνώσεως τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ, εἰς ἄνδρα τέλειον, εἰς μέτρον ἡλικίας τοῦ πληρώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

Sunday after Epiphany

The Gospel of Matthew 4:12-17

At that time, Jesus heard that John had been arrested, He withdrew into Galilee; and leaving Nazareth He went and dwelt in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, toward the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned." From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Sunday after Epiphany

Κατὰ Ματθαῖον 4.12-17

Τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ, ἀκούσας δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὅτι Ἰωάννης παρεδόθη, ἀνεχώρησεν εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν, καὶ καταλιπὼν τὴν Ναζαρέτ ἐλθὼν κατώκησεν εἰς Καπερναοὺμ τὴν παραθαλασσίαν ἐν ὁρίοις Ζαβουλῶν καὶ Νεφθαλείμ, ἵνα πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ Ἡσαΐου τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος· γῆ Ζαβουλῶν καὶ γῆ Νεφθαλείμ, ὁδὸν θαλάσσης, πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου, Γαλιλαία τῶν ἐθνῶν, ὁ λαὸς ὁ καθήμενος ἐν σκότεινῷ εἶδε φῶς μέγα, καὶ τοῖς καθημένοις ἐν χώρα καὶ σκιᾷ θανάτου φῶς ἀνέτειλεν αὐτοῖς. Ἀπὸ τότε ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς κηρῦσσειν καὶ λέγειν· μετανοεῖτε· ἤγγικε γὰρ ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.

COFFEE HOUR: Fellowship is being hosted by the Konstandakis family in Memory of 'APHRODITE PALEOLOGOS'. May her Memory be eternal.

Brooklyn/Staten Island COMBINED Philoptochos Ladies Society Luncheon will be hosted at RUSSO on the BAY CATERERS on Martin Luther King Day – MONDAY, JANUARY 20th, 2014 at 12:00 noon. Tickets are \$65.00 with all proceeds earmarked for the HELLENIC RELIEF FUND IN GREECE. Please note FREE BUS TRANSPORTATION (FREE! FREE!) FROM THE CHURCH TO RUSSO'S AND RETURN TRIP IS AVAILABLE!!! You must however reserve your seat from TODAY..... Don't wait or you will be left out in the cold.

Philoptochos ladies society WILL meet tomorrow evening, MONDAY January 13th, 2014 at 7:30 P.M. in WHITEHALL. The Three Hierarchs Philoptochos Chapter has assumed the hosting of the 'COMBINED LUNCHEON' and we need everyone's support in this earnest endeavor.

Congratulations are in order for MRS. CONSTANTINA SKOUFIS who last Sunday received the coveted Three Hierarchs Parish CERTIFICATE of APPRECIATION for her unsolicited outreach, support and service to our church. AXIA! AXIA! AXIA! Blessed are they who anonymously serve the Church.

Father Eugene will be on vacation for NEXT SUNDAY – JANUARY 19th. He will be back serving the Parish on the following Sunday, January 26th. His journey will take him to Spain and Portugal.

TAKE NOTE: In the absence of Father Eugene who is vacationing next week, the feast days of SAINT ANTHONY – January 17th, FRIDAY and SAINT ATHANASIOS – January 18th. SATURDAY will be transferred for observance on SUNDAY the 19th. Chronia Polla to all who are celebrating their patron saint name-day! Likewise the Feast of Saint Gregory the Theologian will be observed on SUNDAY the 26th of January.

THREE HIERARCHS HELLENIC HERITAGE AWARD: this year will be bestowed upon the Supreme President of the ORDER of A.H.E.P.A., Archon Anthony Kouzounis. The presentation will be part of the official ceremonies on the Great Vesper celebration, Wednesday January 29th, at 7:00 P.M. Please mark your calendar to be present for the festivities. An open-house reception will follow the Great Vesper and Divine Liturgy.

EMMAUS LECTURE ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM: continues this month on Thursday, January 23rd. 7:00 P.M. at Saint Mary Antiochian Orthodox Church (81st Street and Ridge Boulevard) Brooklyn. The theme will be PERSONAL and COMMUNIAL PRAYER: MONOLOGUE OR DIALOGUE. In essence, the question of whether or not God speaks back to you in prayer... WELL, does HE? The guest speaker will be V. Rev. Fr. Thomas Zain, Chancellor of the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese in America. This program is FREE to all.

2014 STEWARDSHIP: commenced on January 1st. Please put the parish as one of your top and first response priorities and register with the church office your membership as a faithful steward of Christ's church militant! You made it to 2014! Give praise to the Lord and show your appreciation for life by supporting the ministry of the parish. THREE HIERARCHS NEEDS YOU, YES YOU!

PARKING LOT PERMITS; Will be renewable from JANUARY 01ST 2014. Please be prepared to submit your annual stewardship (DUES) in early January to receive the NEW PARKING PERMIT, for 2014. Towing of illegally parked vehicles or trespassers will be in effect as the signs read clearly. PLEASE OBLIGE WITH SECURING A CHURCH PERMIT!

Father Eugene our beloved Pastor wishes to acknowledge with much gratitude the many expressions of loving kindness extended to him from the PARISH COUNCIL, the RUSSIAN and UKRAINIAN COMMUNITIES, parish clubs and organizations and a myriad of parishioners, during the holiday season. Your cards are posted on the bulletin board for display and reflection.

RADIO MINISTRY: Each Saturday at 1:15 PM Fr. Eugene hosts and produces the radio broadcast MATTERS OF CONSCIENCE NOW IN ITS 14TH 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:

+ CONSTANTINE BAKAKOS



January 17

Saint Anthony the Great

The Synod of Nicaea, convened by the Emperor Constantine in A.D. 325, was attended by the most important leaders of Christianity from all corners of the Roman Empire.

Among the issues discussed was the highly controversial doctrine of the Alexandrian priest Arius, who questioned the divinity of Jesus Christ. Among those who spoke in opposition to the Arian heresy was the saintly monk Anthony. His eloquent defense of the Orthodox belief in Christ as true God earned him the title of St. Anthony the Great. His humble parentage, early orphanage and illiteracy dictated that St. Anthony be lost in the crowds of Egypt, there to live and die in complete obscurity.

Ascetics had appeared years before he came upon the scene, but when a knowledgeable Orthodox Christian is asked whom he considers to be the dean of the ascetics, the name of St. Anthony is most apt to be mentioned.

Anthony was born of extremely humble parents in the year A.D. 251 in Coma in middle Egypt. He received no education and when he was orphaned at eighteen he had not yet learned to read and write.

Anthony then sold his meager belongings, gave the money to the poor, and went into the Egyptian desert.

There he met a group of monks who took him into their care.

Following a period of many years of self-denial, he acquired a scholarly intimacy with the Scriptures. As a result, his counsel was sought by both monks and laymen.

When the Synod of Nicaea was convened, Anthony was seventy-four years old and was recognized as a man whose wisdom commanded respect. His eloquent defense of the Orthodox doctrine concerning the person of Jesus Christ was instrumental in weakening the position of Arianism.

He attracted hundreds of monks to asceticism. Anthony's inspired leadership led to the creation of monasticism. The monastic rules of St. Anthony, the "patriarch" of monastic life have served as the basis for countless monasteries.

St. Anthony lived to the age of 105. He died in his desert retreat in A.D. 356.

January 18

Saint Athanasios

Saint Athanasios for all his greatness remains one of the most tragic figures of the early Christian era. Of small stature and boundless vigor, Athanasios rose to prominence in the hierarchy, yet remained at heart an unworldly and unyielding monk.

He was in and out of favor with the emperors.

Born in Alexandria, Egypt, in A.D. 297, his brilliance was shown in his sermons *Against the Arians*, which had been condemned in 318 by a local synod. According to Arius, an elderly priest of Alexandria, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were three separate essences or substances, which is contrary to Orthodox teaching. The spread of Arianism prompted Emperor Constantine to convene the First Ecumenical Synod in Nicaea (A.D. 325), where Athanasios brilliantly opposed the false doctrine of Arius.

The Synod of Nicaea was not enough to put an end to the heresy; Arius would not comply with its decisions and thus fled to Palestine.

At the age of thirty Athanasios was made bishop of Alexandria. Although Arius assured the

emperor that he accepted the Creed of Nicaea, the suspicious Athanasios defied the imperial order for Arius' reinstatement. For this he was banished, taking refuge in Treves, France. The same year his enemies conspired to have him again banished by a synod in Antioch. Athanasios, traveled to Rome to plead his case before Pope Julius I.

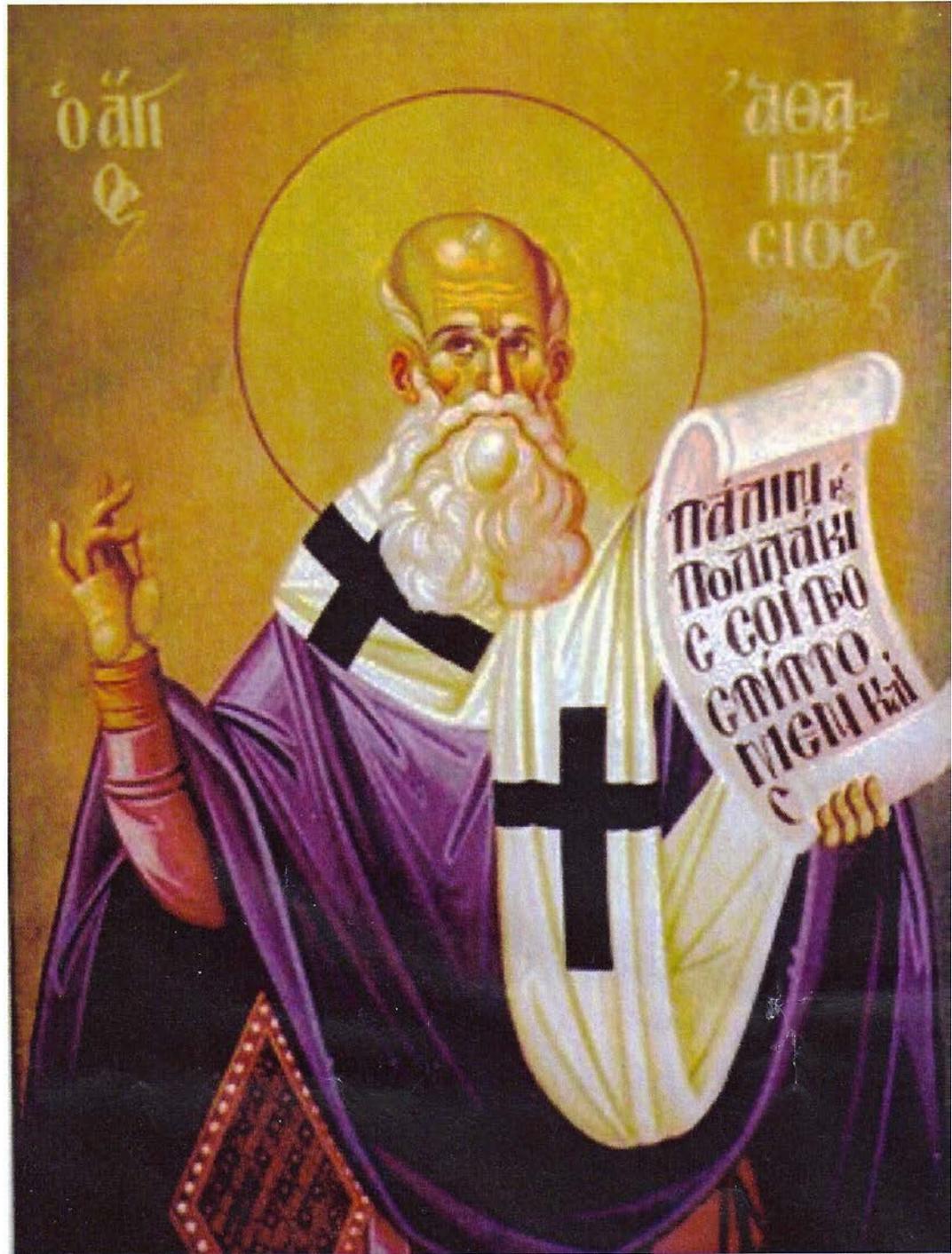
Once again his enemies sprang into action and at a council in Milan in 355, Athanasios was deposed. Thus, after ten years of fruitful rule, he took refuge with the monks of the Egyptian desert.

In 361 Athanasios was again restored as Bishop of Alexandria and immediately resumed his struggle against Arianism.

Peace had hardly arrived when another storm came in the form of the regeneration of paganism under the Emperor Julian the Apostate. In the autumn of 363, Athanasios was again put to flight.

Greatly admired by the Orthodox and hated by the heretics he so adamantly opposed, his theological doctrine is clear and uncomplicated in the strictest Orthodox tradition.

He died 2 May 373.





ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ

ΣΥΝΤΟΜΟΝ ΚΗΡΥΓΜΑ



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

Περίοδος Δ' - Ἔτος ΚΑ'
Φλώρινα - ἀριθμ. φύλλου 1034²

Κυριακὴ μετὰ τὰ Φῶτα (Μαθ. 4,12-17)
12 Ἰανουαρίου 2014 (2004)

Συντάκτης (†) ἐπίσκοπος
Αὐγουστίνος Ν. Καντιώτης

Τὸ σωτήριο φάρμακο

«Μετανοεῖτε· ἤγγικε γὰρ ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν» (Μαθ. 4,17)

Θέτω, ἀγαπητοί μου, τὸ ἐρώτημα: **Πῶς πάει σήμερα ὁ κόσμος;**

Ὑστερα ἀπὸ τὶς συμφορὰς καὶ τὰ δεινὰ δύο παγκοσμίων πολέμων, θὰ περίμενε κανεὶς ὅτι ἡ ἀνθρωπότης ἔχει πλέον σωφρονισθῆ καὶ ἡ εἰρήνη εἶνε πλέον σταθερά. Ἀλλὰ δυστυχῶς **τὰ παθήματα δὲν ἔγιναν μαθήματα.** Ὅπως εἶπε κάποιος πολιτικὸς καὶ φιλόσοφος, ἀπ' ὅλα τὰ ζῶα ἐκεῖνο ποὺ δυσκολώτερα διδάσκεται εἶνε ὁ ἄνθρωπος. Περίεργο, καὶ ὅμως ἀληθινό. Τὸ γαϊδουράκι, ἂν γλιστρήσῃ καὶ πέσῃ σ' ἓνα λάκκο, στὸ ἐξῆς σημαδεύει τὸ μέρος καὶ ἂν ξαναπεράσῃ δὲν πέφτει πλέον. Προσέχει. Τὸ πάθημα τοῦ γίνεται μάθημα. Ἡ ἀνθρωπότης ὅμως, μὲ ὅλα τὰ σχολεῖα καὶ τὰ πανεπιστήμιά της, μὲ τοὺς πυραύλους καὶ τὰ ἄλλα ἐπιτεύγματά της, εἶνε χειρότερη ἀπὸ τὸ ζῶο αὐτό. Γλίστρησε καὶ ἔπεσε μία φορά στὸ λάκκο, στὸν πρῶτο παγκόσμιο πόλεμο, καὶ γέμισε ὁ λάκκος ἀπὸ αἷματα καὶ κόκκαλα. Δὲν πέρασαν 20 - 30 χρόνια καὶ προτοῦ νὰ ἐπουλωθοῦν τὰ τραύματά της ἡ ἀνθρωπότης πέφτει πάλι στὸ λάκκο, στὸν δεῦτερο παγκόσμιο πόλεμο, μὲ νέα θύματα. Ἀλλ' οὔτε αὐτὸ τὴν σωφρόνισε. Καὶ σήμερα πάλι ὅλα τὰ ἔθνη, ἐνῶ μιλοῦν περὶ εἰρήνης, ἐτοιμάζονται γιὰ πόλεμο. Ὅπως εἶπε ὁ ἅγιος Κοσμάς ὁ Αἰτωλός, ἡ εἰρήνη τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος κρέμεται ἀπὸ μιὰ τρίχα ἀλόγου. Μπορεῖ νὰ γίνῃ τρίτος παγκόσμιος πόλεμος, ὁ ὁποῖος στὴν Ἀποκάλυψι ὀνομάζεται «*Ἀρμαγεδών*» (Ἀπ. 16:16).

Ποῖος φταίει; Ἐμένα ρωτᾶτε ποῖος φταίει; Πολλοὶ λένε, ὅτι **φταίει ἡ Ἐκκλησία, φταίει ὁ χριστιανισμός.** Γιατὶ ὑποσχέθηκε νὰ φέρῃ εἰρήνη στὸν κόσμο καὶ εὐχεται διαρκῶς «*ὑπὲρ τῆς εἰρήνης τοῦ σύμπαντος κόσμου*» (θ. Λετ.), καὶ ὅμως δὲν κατώρθωσε νὰ καταργήσῃ τοὺς πο-

λέμους. Ὁ χριστιανισμὸς ἀπέτυχε, λένε, νὰ ἐγκαθιδρύσῃ τὸ βασίλειο τῆς εἰρήνης.

Τί θ' ἀπαντήσουμε σ' αὐτοὺς τοὺς ἀθέους καὶ ἀπίστους; Ἐὰν ἀπαντήσουμε μὲ ἓνα παράδειγμα. Ἐὰν ἓνας ἄρρωστος κινδυνεύῃ καὶ ὁ γιατρός τοῦ δῖνῃ φάρμακο, ἀλλ' αὐτὸς δὲν θέλῃ νὰ τὸ πάρῃ, καὶ πεθάνῃ, σὰς ἐρωτῶ, ποῖος φταίει; Φταίει ὁ γιατρός; Φταίει ὁ ἀσθενὴς ἀσφαλῶς. Κάτι παρόμοιο συμβαίνει κ' ἐδῶ. Ὑπάρχει ὁ γιατρός, ὑπάρχει καὶ τὸ φάρμακο. **Ἀλλὰ ὁ ἀσθενὴς δὲν δέχεται τὸ φάρμακο.**

Ἄσθενὴς εἶνε ἡ ἀνθρωπότης, ὁ κόσμος ὅλος. Ἄσθενεῖ πνευματικῶς, ἠθικῶς, κοινωνικῶς, ἀπὸ πάσης ἀπόψεως. Στὸ προσκέφαλο τῆς ἀσθενοῦς ἀνθρωπότητος μαζεύτηκαν πολλοὶ «γιατροί»: φιλόσοφοι, διπλωμάτες, πολιτικοί, στρατηγοί, κοινωνιολόγοι, οἰκονομολόγοι, διάφοροι ἐπιστήμονες. Εἶνε οἱ **κοσμοδιορθωταί,** ποὺ ὑπόσχονται, ὅτι θὰ δώσουν τέλος στὰ δεινὰ καὶ θὰ ἔρθῃ εἰρήνη στὴν ἀνθρωπότητα. Τί κατώρθωσαν ὅμως; Ἀπέτυχαν· ἡ ἱστορία τὸ ὁμολογεῖ. Τὰ φάρμακά τους εἶνε σὰν τὶς ἀσπιρίνες. Παίρνεις μιὰ ἀσπιρίνη καὶ νομίζεις ὅτι θεραπεύθηκες. Πέφτει πράγματι ὁ πυρετός, ἀλλὰ προσωρινῶς. Μετὰ ἀπὸ λίγο ἐπανέρχεται. Διότι τὸ κακὸ εἶνε βαθύτερο μέσα στὸν ἀνθρώπινο ὄργανισμὸ.

Ἐὰν ὁ κόσμος μπορούσε νὰ σωθῆ μὲ ὅλους αὐτοὺς, –προσέξτε τί θὰ πῶ– δὲν θὰ κατέβαινε ὁ Θεὸς ἀπὸ τὸν οὐρανὸ! Δὲν διορθώνεται ὁ κόσμος μὲ τὶς δικές του δυνάμεις. Γι' αὐτὸ χρειάστηκε νὰ κλῖνῃ οὐρανοῦς καὶ νὰ κατέβῃ ἐδῶ κάτω ὁ Υἱὸς τῆς Παρθένου, γιὰ νὰ προσφέρῃ τὰ φάρμακά του. Ἐνας εἶνε ὁ Σωτήρας τοῦ κόσμου, ὁ **ιατρός τῶν ψυχῶν καὶ τῶν σωμάτων, ὁ Κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστός.** Καὶ ποῖο εἶνε τὸ **φάρμακό** του; Ὡ ἀγαπητοί μου, δὲν ὁμιλῶ γιὰ νὰ κάνω ἐπίδειξι ρήτορειάς –

πού δεν υπάρχει σ' έμένα· όμιλῶ διὰ πίστεως. Συνιστώ σὲ όλους καὶ πρῶτα στὸν έαυτό μου ένα φάρμακο. Προσφέρεται δωρεάν, καὶ εἶνε δοκιμασμένο, άποτελεσματικό, σωτήριο. Μὴν τὸ περιφρονήσετε. Λέγεται – μία λέξι. Ὡ Θεέ μου, άνοιξε τὶς καρδιές όλων τῶν Χριστιανῶν νὰ νιώσουν αὐτὸ πού θὰ πῶ. Τὸ φάρμακο, άγαπητοί μου, εἶνε μία λέξις πού υπάρχει στὸ σημερινὸ εὐαγγέλιο, καὶ έκανα όλον αὐτὸ τὸν έλιγμό γιὰ νὰ φθάσω στὸ σημεῖο αὐτό. Τὸ σωτήριο φάρμακο εἶνε τὸ «**Μετανοεῖτε**» (Matθ.4,17), ἢ **μετάνοια**.

* * *

● **Τί εἶνε ἡ μετάνοια;** Εἶνε τὸ «*γνώθι σαυτὸν*» τῶν αρχαίων Ἑλλήνων προγόνων μας. Ἄλλὰ καὶ κάτι παραπάνω ἀπὸ τὸ «*γνώθι σαυτὸν*». Δὲν εἶνε άπλῶς διάγνωσις· εἶνε ἡ **θεραπεία**.

● Εἶνε ἡ **μεταβολή, ἡ άλλαγή, ἡ στροφή**. Μοῦ έλεγε ένας πλοίαρχος τῆς πατρίδος μου· «Κινδυνεύσαμε κάποτε νὰ πέσουμε σὲ ένα βράχο, όπου μᾶς έσπρωχναν τὰ κύματα. Τρόμος καὶ φόβος, Παναγία σῶσε μας! Τότε ζήτησα τὴ βοήθεια τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ έκανα στροφή 180 μοιρῶν». Ξέρετε τί θὰ πῆ νὰ πάρη τὸ σκάφος στροφή 180 μοιρῶν; Εἶνε ἡ δυσκολώτερη στροφή. Ὡτσι λοιπὸν κ' έμεῖς ὡς άτομα, ὡς οικογένειες, ὡς ανθρωπότης, νὰ κάνουμε τὴ μεγάλη στροφή, γιὰ νὰ προληφθῆ τὸ ναυάγιο. Αὐτὸ σημαίνει· άλλαγή τῶν σκέψεών μας, τῶν αἰσθημάτων μας, τῶν ενεργειῶν μας.

● Ἡ μετάνοια εἶνε **έπανάστασι**, ἢ πιὸ μεγάλη έπανάστασι. Ἐναντίον τίνος; Τῶν άλλων; Ὁχι. Ἐναντίον τοῦ μεγαλυτέρου έχθροῦ, τοῦ ὑπ' αριθμὸν ένα έχθροῦ τῆς ανθρωπότητος. Καὶ ποιός εἶν' αὐτός; Ἐδῶ διαφωνοῦμε μὲ όλους, διαφωνεῖ τὸ Εὐαγγέλιο. Ὁ ὑπ' αριθμὸν ένα έχθρὸς εἶνε ὁ έαυτός μας! εἶνε τὰ πάθη, οἱ κακίες, οἱ άμαρτίες μας· εἶνε ἡ πονηρὴ καὶ διεστραμμένη φύσις μας. Οἱ πρόγονοί μας έλεγαν· «*φύσιν (πονηρὰν) μεταβαλεῖν οὐ ράδιον*». Ὁ Σωκράτης μπορούμε νὰ ποῦμε σήκωσε τὰ χέρια· Δὲν μπορῶ, εἶπε, νὰ μεταβάλω τὸν ανθρωπο. Ξέρεις τί δύσκολο εἶνε; Εἶνε σὰ νὰ πῆς τῆς γάτας ν' άλλάξη καὶ νὰ μὴν τρώη ποντίκια· σὰ νὰ πῆς στὸ λύκο νὰ μὴν τρώη άρνιά· σὰ νὰ πῆς στὴν άλεποῦ νὰ μὴν τρώη ὄρνιθες· σὰ νὰ πῆς στὴν τίγρι νὰ μὴν τρώη αντιλόπες. Αὐτὸ εἶνε άλλαγή τῆς φύσεως. Αὐτὸ δὲν τὸ κατάρθωσε κανένας, παρὰ μόνο ὁ Κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστός.

● Μετάνοια εἶνε τὸ **θαῦμα**, τὸ μεγαλύτερο θαῦμα. Χθὲς φιλάργυρος, νὰ μὴ δίνη οὔτε νερὸ στὸν άγγελό του – σήμερα έλεήμων. Χθὲς άσωτος, διεφθαρμένος, πόρνος, μοιχός, άκόλαστος – σήμερα έγκρατὴς καὶ άσκητὴς τοῦ Ἁ-

γίου Ὁρους. Χθὲς άδικος – σήμερα δίκαιος. Χθὲς θυμώδης καὶ ὀργίλος – σήμερα πρᾶος καὶ γαλήνιος. Χθὲς λύκος – σήμερα άρνί. Χθὲς κοράκι – σήμερα περιστέρι. Χθὲς ληστής – σήμερα «*Μνήσθητί μου, Κύριε, όταν έλθης ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ σου*» (Luc.23,42). Χθὲς άμαρτωλός – σήμερα άγιος.

* * *

Τέτοια, ὀλοκληρωτικὴ μεταβολή, έσωτερικὴ μεταβολή, πού χαρίζει ὁ Χριστός μας, **έχουμε ανάγκη** ὅλοι. Νὰ μετανοήσουμε γιὰ ὅ,τι έχουμε πράξει. Καὶ δὲν υπάρχει ανθρωπος, εἶτε μικρὸς εἶτε μεγάλος, εἶτε λαϊκός εἶτε κληρικός, εἶτε δεσπότης καὶ πατριάρχης εἶτε βασιλεὺς καὶ πρόεδρος δημοκρατίας, εἶτε ὅ,τι θέλετε, πού δὲν έχει ὑποπέσει σὲ άμαρτία. Λέει ὁ ἱερὸς Χρυσόστομος, ὅτι πρέπει νὰ κλαῦσουμε γιὰ τὸ παρελθόν μας, νὰ χύσουμε τόσα δάκρυα ὅσο εἶνε τὸ νερὸ τῆς κολυμβήθρας μας, γιὰ νὰ πλύνουμε τὶς άμαρτίες μας. Ποῦ ὅμως τὰ δάκρυα αὐτά; Κλαῖμε γιὰ έπίγεια, αλλά δάκρυα μετανοίας πού; Αὐτὰ λάμπουν καὶ άκτινοβολοῦν σὰν διαμάντια.

«**Μετανοεῖτε**», λέει ὁ Χριστός· αὐτὴ εἶνε ἡ οὐσία τοῦ εὐαγγελίου. Μετανοεῖτε, μικροὶ - μεγάλοι, Ἄνατολή καὶ Δύσι, άσπροι - μαῦροι, κίτρινοι - κόκκινοι, καπιταλισταὶ καὶ προλετάριοι, πλούσιοι καὶ φτωχοί, άγράμματοι καὶ έπιστήμονες, φιλόσοφοι καὶ διπλωμάτες, πολιτικοὶ καὶ στρατιωτικοί.

Ἄπὸ ὄω κ' έμπρὸς ὄχι ὅ,τι θέλει ἡ σάρκα, τὰ πάθη, ὁ διάβολος, αλλά **ὅ,τι θέλει ὁ Χριστός**. Νὰ παύση, δηλαδὴ, ἡ σατανοκρατία καὶ νὰ έρθη ἡ Χριστοκρατία· ὅ,τι θέλει ὁ Χριστός. Ὁ Χριστός ὄχι μόνο στὰ χεῖλη αλλά καὶ στὴν καρδιά. Χριστὸς στὰ άτομα, στὴν οικογένεια, στὰ σχολεῖα, στὰ δικαστήρια, στὸ έμπόριο, στὶς τράπεζες, στὰ βουνά, στὶς θάλασσες, παντοῦ. Ὁ Χριστός εἶνε τὸ Ἄλφα καὶ τὸ Ὠμέγα, ἡ αρχὴ καὶ τὸ τέλος, ἡ ρίζα τῆς ανθρωπότητος, τὸ άστρο, τὸ φῶς, ἡ άλήθεια.

«**Ὁπου εἶνε ὁ Χριστός, εἶνε ἡ άλήθεια, ἡ έλευθερία, ἡ άγάπη, ἡ εἰρήνη, ὁ παράδεισος· ὅπου λείπει ὁ Χριστός, εἶνε τὸ ψεῦδος, ἡ σκλαβιά, τὸ μῖσος, ὁ πόλεμος, ἡ κόλασις**».

Χριστέ! βοήθησέ μας νὰ σὲ κατανοήσουμε. Ἄντρες - γυναῖκες - παιδιά, μικροὶ - μεγάλοι, ὅλοι ν' άκούσουμε τὸ εὐαγγέλιό σου. Κι ὅταν μετανοήσουμε καὶ αλλάξουμε, τότε ἡ γῆ αὐτὴ θὰ γίνη **παράδεισος**. Κ' έκεῖ στὸν παράδεισο ὅλοι μαζί, μία ψυχὴ - ένας λαός, θὰ ὑμνοῦμε Πατέρα Υἱὸν καὶ άγιον Πνεῦμα εἰς αἰῶνας αἰῶνων· άμήν.

(†) **έπίσκοπος 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

The True Light of Revelation to the Gentiles

The Evangelist commemorates in this passage [today's Gospel] the prophet's words: "Beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light." In what darkness? Certainly in the profound error of ignorance. What great light did they see? The light concerning which it is written: "He was the true light that illumines everyone who comes into this world." This was the light about which the just man Simeon in the Gospel declared, "A light of revelation to the Gentiles and a glory for your people Israel." That light had arisen according to what David had announced, saying a light has arisen in the darkness to the upright of heart." Also, Isaiah demonstrated that light about to come for the enlightenment of the

Church when he said, "Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you." Concerning that light also Daniel noted, "It reveals the profound and hidden things, knowing those things which are in darkness and the light is with it," that is, the Son with the Father, for even as the Father is light, so too is the Son light. And David also speaks in the psalm: "In your light shall we see light," for the Father is seen in the Son, as the Lord tells us in the Gospel: "Who sees me, sees the Father." From the true light, indeed, the true light proceeded, and from the invisible the visible. "He is the image of the invisible God," as the apostle notes.

St. Chromatius

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