



DIRECT ARCHDIOCESAN
DISTRICT

JUBILEE 85TH ANNIVERSARY

THREE HIERARCHS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

SUNDAY WEEKLY BULLETIN March 23rd, 2014

V. Rev. Archimandrite Eugene N. Pappas

THIRD SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST SUNDAY OF THE HOLY CROSS



Icon of the Holy Cross

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St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:1-6

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, since we have a high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. Because of this he is bound to offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people. And one does not take the honor upon himself, but he is called by God, just as Aaron was. So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, "Thou art my Son, today I have begotten thee"; as he says also in another place, "Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek."

Πρὸς Ἑβραίους 4:14-16; 5:1-6

Προκείμενον. Ἦχος πλ β´. ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 27.9,1

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

Ἀδελφοί, ἔχοντες οὖν ἀρχιερέα μέγαν, διεληλυθότα τοὺς οὐρανοὺς, Ἰησοῦν τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, κρατῶμεν τῆς ὁμολογίας. Οὐ γὰρ ἔχομεν ἀρχιερέα μὴ δυνάμενον συμπαθεῖσαι ταῖς ἀσθενείαις ἡμῶν, πεπειραμένον δὲ κατὰ πάντα καθ' ὁμοιότητα, χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας. Προσερχώμεθα οὖν μετὰ παρηγορίας τῷ θρόνῳ τῆς χάριτος, ἵνα λάβωμεν ἔλεον, καὶ χάριν εὐρωμεν εἰς εὐκαιρὸν βοήθειαν. Πᾶς γὰρ ἀρχιερεὺς, ἐξ ἀνθρώπων λαμβανόμενος, ὑπὲρ ἀνθρώπων καθίσταται τὰ πρὸς τὸν θεόν, ἵνα προσφέρῃ δῶρά τε καὶ θυσίας ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτιῶν· μετριοπαθεῖν δυνάμενος τοῖς ἀγνοοῦσιν καὶ πλανωμένοις, ἐπεὶ καὶ αὐτὸς περικείται ἀσθένειαν· καὶ διὰ ταύτην ὀφείλει, καθὼς περὶ τοῦ λαοῦ, οὕτως καὶ περὶ ἑαυτοῦ, προσφέρειν ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτιῶν. Καὶ οὐχ ἑαυτῶ τις λαμβάνει τὴν τιμὴν, ἀλλὰ καλούμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, καθάπερ καὶ Ἀαρών. Οὕτως καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς οὐχ ἑαυτὸν ἐδόξασεν γεννηθῆναι ἀρχιερέα, ἀλλ' ὁ λαλήσας πρὸς αὐτόν, Υἱός μου εἶ σύ, ἐγὼ σήμερον γεγέννηκά σε. Καθὼς καὶ ἐν ἑτέρῳ λέγει, Σὺ ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισεδέκ.

Sunday of the Holy Cross

The Gospel of Mark 8:34-38; 9:1

The Lord said: "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? For what can a man give in return for his life? For whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power."

Sunday of the Holy Cross

Κατὰ Μάρκον 8.34-38, 9.1

Εἶπεν ὁ Κύριος· Εἴ τις θέλει ὀπίσω μου ἐλθεῖν, ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν καὶ ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἀκολουθείτω μοι. ὃς γὰρ ἂν θέλῃ τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ σῶσαι, ἀπολέσει αὐτήν· ὃς δ' ἂν ἀπολέσῃ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ψυχὴν ἕνεκεν ἐμοῦ καὶ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, οὗτος σώσει αὐτήν. τί γὰρ ὠφελήσει ἄνθρωπον ἐὰν κερδήσῃ τὸν κόσμον ὅλον, καὶ ζημιωθῇ τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ; ἢ τί δώσει ἄνθρωπος ἀντάλλαγμα τῆς ψυχῆς αὐτοῦ; ὃς γὰρ ἐὰν ἐπαισχυθῇ με καὶ τοὺς ἐμοὺς λόγους ἐν τῇ γενεᾷ ταύτῃ τῇ μοιχαλίδι καὶ ἁμαρτωλῷ, καὶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐπαισχυθήσεται αὐτὸν ὅταν ἔλθῃ ἐν τῇ δόξῃ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ μετὰ τῶν ἀγγέλων τῶν ἁγίων. Καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι εἰσὶ τινες τῶν ὧδε ἐστηκότων, οἵτινες οὐ μὴ γεύσονται θανάτου ἕως ἂν ἴδωσι τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐληλυθυῖαν ἐν δυνάμει.

SERVICES THIS WEEK: .

Sunday,	March 23 rd ,	STAVRO-PROSKYNISIS (Veneration of Holy Cross)	12:00 P.M.
Tuesday,	March 25 th ,	Annunciation (EVANGELISMOS) Liturgy	9:30 A.M.
Wednesday	March 26 th ,	MORNING Pre-Sanctified Liturgy	9:30 A.M.
Friday,	March 28 th ,	FOURTH STANZA Salutations To Blessed Virgin Mary	7:00 P.M.
Sunday,	March 30 th ,	Greek Independence Day PARADE N.Y.C.	1:00 P.M.

COFFEE FELLOWSHIP: is being hosted and served by the parents and teachers of the GREEK SCHOOL in festivity of "Independence Day; ZHTO H ELLADA!

TODAY: This is the half way mark on the journey to Holy Week. The Cross erected on the solea is a spiritual signal to those who are observing the Lenten Fast to continue and persevere and to those who have NOT started the journey to PASCHA... to begin TODAY. The relic of the Holy Cross will process during the Liturgy affording the 'Shadow' of the true cross to heal the faithful spiritually, emotionally and physically. Kneel and accept the benediction with Trust in GOD!

CHURCHINGS: 'ALEXANDRIA FRANCES' new born daughter of Edward and Christina (Papavasiliou) FASTAIA.
'ASWAD PRIMUS' new born son of Aswad and Akeila PRIMUS.
NA MAS ZESOUN! We look forward to their BAPTISM in CHRIST!

CONGRATULATIONS and SALUTATIONS to the Honorees at the 2014 Brooklyn, Borough Hall HELLENIC HERITAGE AWARDS CEREMONY which will be hosted by the Borough President on Wednesday evening 6:00 P.M. March 26th. Four members from our Parish community are being cited with distinction as HELLENES of RENOWN in BROOKLYN: DENNIS and STEVE VOORDERIS, JOANNA VASSILAS, JIMMY KOKOTAS. More details are listed on the insert flyer. AX IOI! AXIOI! AXIOI!

TOMORROW March 24TH AT 7:00 P.M. The Coney Island Chapter Of A.H.E.P.A. will host a GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY DINNER-DANCE, at WHITEHALL, open FREE to all Parish members. The festive evening will highlight the ANNUNCIATION (EVANGELISMOS) FEAST of the Archangel Gabriel announcing to the Blessed Virgin Mary the conception by the Holy Spirit of the Messiah Christ child. The occasion also heralds the Greek struggle for freedom and independence from the 450 years of Ottoman TURKISH enslavement and oppression. ZHTO H ELLADA! ZHTO TO ETHNOS! Please join us for the FREE DINNER and festivity of folk music and traditional national dances.

GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY PARADE: this year will be held on Sunday afternoon, March 30th, on FIFTH AVENUE (60TH Street to 80th Street) New York City starting at 1:30 P.M. It will be televised on New York Network W.P.I.X. Channel (LIVE). Buses will depart from Three Hierarchs Church at 12:30 P.M. for the parade route with a return trip at 4:00 P.M. If you wish to be on one of the buses (FREE RESERVED SEATING) please communicate with the Church Office TODAY! The PRESIDENTIAL GUARD ELITE 'EVZONES' from the Greek Republic will open the parade with GRAND MARSHALL US SENATOR CHARLES SCHUMER (our neighborhood friend) leading the contingents from over 150 Hellenic groups in Metropolitan New York. BE THERE! BE PROUD! However, you must wear blue and white colors of ethnic identity.

LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY each Sunday is collecting your donations for the GOOD FRIDAY EPITAPHION 'FLOWERS'. please support this effort each week as a commemoration of the death and burial of the LORD. The ladies will be standing by the clergy at the distribution of ANTIDORON. Be prepared to GIVE. NO ANNOUNCEMENT WILL BE MADE!

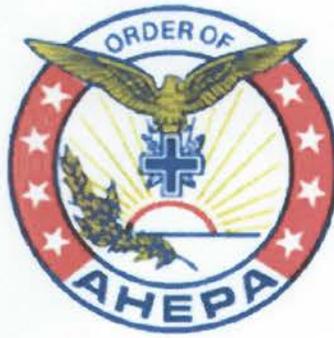
BUS SEATS : A: available FREE < reserve your seats through the church office for the bus to Brooklyn Borough Hall event Wednesday, March 26th departing at 5:00 P.M. and returning at 9:P.M.

B: available FREE < reserve your seats for the bus to the GREEK PARADE, on Fifth Avenue, Sunday, March 30th. Bus will depart at 12:30 PM and return to Church by 5:00 P.M. Reserve your place now.

ARTOKLASIA for the Feast of the Annunciation (Evangelismos) is suggested. Please communicate with the Church Office if you are hosting an Artoklasia for the Holy Feast and Independence Day celebration. Chronia Polla to every EVANGELOS and EVANGELIA! YPSOMATA are offered to those presenting the ARTOKLASIA

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: + PETER KOKIS



A. H. E. P. A.

Coney Island Chapter #200
hosts the
Greek Independence Eve Party

March 24th 2014
White-Hall

Three Hierarch Church
1724 Avenue P
Brooklyn, New York

7:30 -11 :00 P.M.

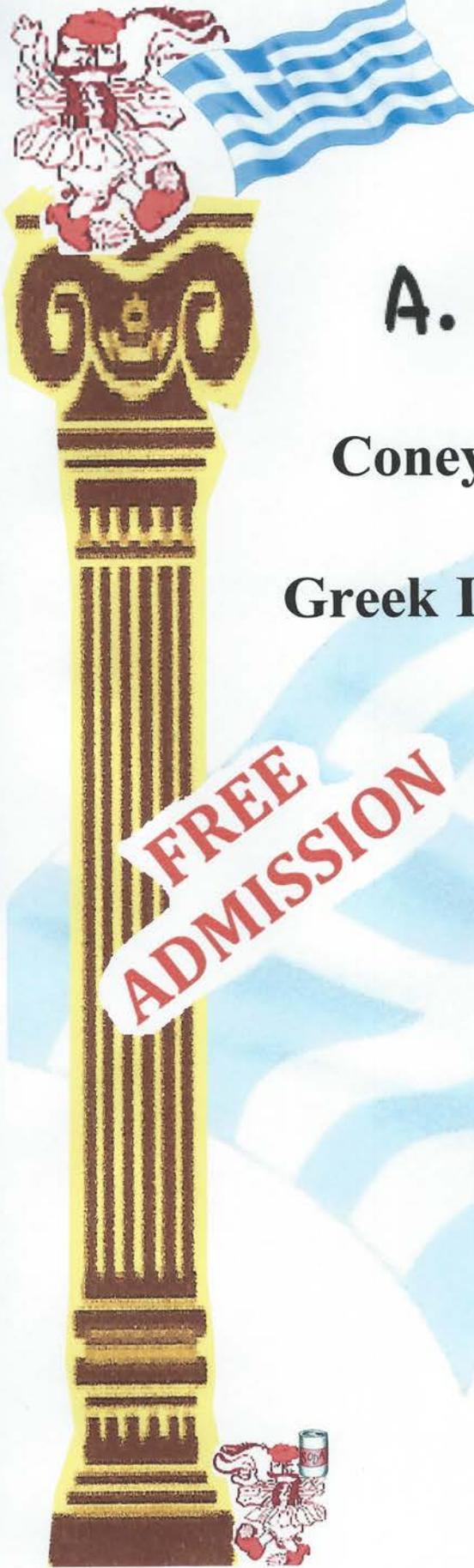
Live Music

Full Buffet Dinner

Wine, Soda & Coffee
Raffles & Prizes

OPEN FREE
TO ALL!

FREE
ADMISSION



GREEK HERITAGE CELEBRATION

"Ελάτε Να Γιορτασουμε Μαζί!"



BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT ERIC ADAMS

with the

HELLENIC COMMUNITY OF BROOKLYN

Cordially invite you and a guest to a

GREEK HERITAGE CELEBRATION

in honor of

Stelene Argyriou

Joanna Vassilas

Antonia Bregianos

John Vorvolakos

Anthony Grigos

Steven Vourderis

Nick Karkas

Jimmy Kokotas

Dennis Vourderis

Dimitrios Mallas

Peter Yatrakis

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26, 2014 AT 6:00 PM

Courtroom

Brooklyn Borough Hall

209 Joralemon Street



RSVP by March 24th to 718-802-4042

www.brooklyn-usa.org



ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ

ΣΥΝΤΟΜΟΝ ΚΗΡΥΓΜΑ



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

Περίοδος Δ' - Ἔτος ΛΑ'
Φλώρινα - ἀριθμ. φύλλου 1840

Κυρ. Γ' Νηστ. Σταυρ/σεως (Ἐβρ. 4,14 - 5,6)
23 Μαρτίου 2014 πρωί

Συντάκτης (†) ἐπίσκοπος
Αύγουστίνος Ν. Καντιώτης

«Κρατῶμεν τῆς ὁμολογίας» (Ἐβρ. 4,14)

Σήμερα, ἀγαπητοί μου, βρισκόμαστε στὴ μέση τῆς Τεσσαρακοστῆς. Μεγάλῃ ἑορτῇ, Τρίτῃ Κυριακῇ Νηστειῶν-τῆς Σταυροπροσκυνήσεως.

Ὅσα λέγονται (ἀπολυτικίο, ὕμνοι, τροπάρια, ἀπόστολος, εὐαγγέλιο), ὅλα διδάσκουν **μεγάλα μαθήματα**. Ὅποιος ἔχει αὐτὶ μυστικὸ ἀκούει, ὅποιος ἔχει μάτια βλέπει, ὅποιος ἔχει καρδιὰ αἰσθάνεται, καὶ ὅποιος ἔχει γλῶσσα ψάλλει: «*Τὸν σταυρόν σου προσκυνοῦμεν, Δέσποτα, καὶ τὴν ἀγίαν σου ἀνάστασιν δοξάζομεν*» (ἰνὴ τροπ.)

Ὅκεανὸς τὰ διδάγματα. Ἄπ' ὅλα αὐτὰ ἂς ἐξετάσουμε μία μόνο λέξι τοῦ σημερινοῦ ἀποστόλου, τὴ λέξι «ὁμολογία». «Κρατῶμεν», λέει, «τῆς ὁμολογίας» (Ἐβρ. 4,14). Τί σημαίνει «ὁμολογία»;

Ἐπάρχει ὁμολογία στὴ γλῶσσα τοῦ κόσμου, καὶ ὁμολογία στὴ γλῶσσα τοῦ Θεοῦ.

Ὅμολογία στὴ γλῶσσα τοῦ κόσμου. Ὅπως τώρα τελευταῖα ἀκούγεται γιὰ τὰ δάνεια ποὺ κάνει τὸ κράτος, εἶνε γνωστὸ τί σημαίνει ὁμολογία καὶ ὁμολογιόυχοι. Τὸ κράτος, ὁποιοδῆποτε κράτος, ὅταν βρεθῆ στὴν ἀνάγκη, στρέφεται στοὺς πολῖτες του καὶ λέει: Ζητῶ τὰ χρήματά σας. Καὶ ὑπόσχεται τόκους, κληρώσεις, λαχνούς. Κι ὁ λαουτζίκος δίνει ἐμπιστοσύνη, ἀνοίγει τὸ κομπόδεμά του καὶ ἐμπιστεύεται τὶς οἰκονομίες του στὸ κράτος. Καὶ τὸ κράτος; Δίνει ἓνα χαρτί, μία ὁμολογία, πάνω στὴν ὁποία γράφει ἓνα νούμερο. Εἶνε δύσκολο νὰ γράψῃ ἓνα νούμερο; Κατόπιν ὅμως ὅταν ἔρχεται ἡ ὥρα νὰ ἐξοφλήσῃ, -δὲν κάνω καμμία πολιτικὴ αὐτὴ τὴν ὥρα, ὁμιλῶ γενικὰ γιὰ ὅλα σχεδὸν τὰ κράτη-, τὸ ψυχρὸ κράτος, ἀφοῦ καταβροχθίσῃ τὰ ἑκατομμύρια τοῦ λαοῦ, κλείνει τὶς θυρίδες τῶν τραπεζῶν καὶ ἀρνεῖται νὰ δώσῃ ὅ,τιδῆποτε ἢ δίνει ψίχουλα. Ἔτσι οἱ ὁμολογίες καταντοῦν κουρελόχαρτα: γιὰ νὰ ἐπαληθεύσῃ πάλι ὁ λόγος τῆς Γραφῆς «*Μὴ πεποιθήσατε ἐπ' ἄρχοντας, ἐπὶ υἱοὺς ἀνθρώπων, οἷς οὐκ ἔστι σωτηρία*» (Ψαλμ. 145,3).

Ἄλλὰ ἡ ὁμολογία ποὺ δίνει ὁ Θεός! Θὰ θε-

λήσετε ἄραγε σήμερα νὰ πάρετε μιὰ ὁμολογία; σήμερα, ἑορτῇ, θὰ βγῆτε ἀπὸ τὴν ἐκκλησία παίρνοντας μιὰ τέτοια ὁμολογία; ὁμολογία ποὺ τὴν ὑπογράφει ὄχι ὁ ἄλφα ἢ βῆτα κυβερνήτης κράτους ἀλλ' ὁμολογία ποὺ ὑπογράφει μὲ τὸ αἷμα του - ποιός; «ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν βασιλευόντων καὶ κύριος τῶν κυριευόντων» (Ἄ' Τιμ. 6,15)! Καταλαβαίνετε αὐτὰ ποὺ σὰς λέω; Δὲν ἀνέβηκα ἐδῶ γιὰ νὰ περάσῃ ἡ ὥρα ἢ νὰ σὰς ψυχαγωγῶ; ἦρθα νὰ διαμαρτυρηθῶ, γιὰτὶ ἀμελεῖτε καὶ ἀδιαφορεῖτε γιὰ τὰ μεγάλα καὶ αἰώνια.

Ἀδελφοί, «κρατῶμεν τῆς ὁμολογίας». Ἡ «ὁμολογία», γιὰ τὴν ὁποία ὁμιλεῖ ὁ ἀπόστολος, τί εἶνε; **Ἐκ μέρους μὲν τοῦ Θεοῦ** εἶνε βεβαίωσις, ἀσφαλῆς βεβαίωσις, πῶς **ὄ,τι ὑπόσχεται θὰ μᾶς τὸ δῶσῃ**. Ὑπόσχεται π.χ. «*Οὐ μὴ σὲ ἀνῶ οὐδ' οὐ μὴ σὲ ἐγκαταλίπω*» παιδί μου, δὲν θὰ σ' ἐγκαταλείψω ποτέ. Ὅμολογία - ὑπόσχεσι τοῦ Θεοῦ εἶνε τὸ «*Πλούσιοι ἐπτώχευσαν καὶ ἐπέινασαν, οἱ δὲ ἐκζητοῦντες τὸν Κύριον οὐκ ἐλαττωθήσονται παντὸς ἀγαθοῦ*» (Ψαλμ. 33,11). Ὅμολογία - ὑπόσχεσι τοῦ Θεοῦ εἶνε τὸ «*Δανεῖζει Θεῶ ὁ ἐλεῶν πτωχόν*» (Παρ. 19,17). Ὅμολογία - ὑπόσχεσι ἐκ μέρους τοῦ Θεοῦ εἶνε ἡ βεβαίωσις ὅτι ὁ φιλόανθρωπος Θεὸς «δὲν παίρνει πίσω τὸ λόγο του», ὅπως ἔλεγε ὁ γερο - Κολοκοτρώνης. Οἱ ἄνθρωποι καὶ τὰ κράτη ἀνακαλοῦν τὶς ὑποσχέσεις τους, ὁ Θεὸς ὄχι. «*Πᾶς ὃς ἂν ὁμολογήσῃ ἐν ἐμοὶ ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ἀνθρώπων, καὶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὁμολογήσῃ ἐν αὐτῷ ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ἀγγέλων τοῦ Θεοῦ*» ἐάν, παιδί μου, λέει, μὲ ὁμολογήσῃς ἐμπρὸς στοὺς ἀνθρώπους, θὰ σὲ ὁμολογήσῃ καὶ ἐγὼ ἐνώπιον τῶν ἁγίων ἀγγέλων (Λουκ. 12,8).

Ὅμολογία δὲ ἐκ μέρους τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τί εἶνε; Ὅπως τὸ παιδάκι ἔχει ἐμπιστοσύνη τυφλῇ στὴ μάνα του, γιὰτὶ ξέρει ὅτι ποτέ αὐτὴ δὲν θὰ τοῦ δώσῃ κάτι ἐπιβλαβές, ἔτσι ὁ Χριστιανὸς ἐμπιστεύεται τὸν ἑαυτό του ἀπολύτως στὰ χέρια τοῦ Θεοῦ. Ὅμολογία θὰ πῆ ὁλόκληρος ὁ ἄνθρωπος νὰ παραδοθῇ στὸ Θεό ὁ νοῦς νὰ πῆ

«Κύριε, δέχομαι ὅ,τι διδάσκεις», ἡ καρδιά νὰ πῆ «Κύριε, σ' ἀγαπῶ», ἡ θέλησι νὰ πῆ «Κύριε, ὑποτάσσομαι στὸ θέλημά σου», καὶ ἡ γλῶσσα νὰ ψάλλῃ «*Αἶνει, ἡ ψυχὴ μου, τὸν Κύριον*» (Ψαλμ. 145,1). Ὁμολογία λοιπὸν ἴσον **πίστις**, καὶ ὁμολογῶ ἴσον **πιστεύω**. Αὐτὸ ἐννοοῦμε καὶ στὸ *Πιστεύω* ὅταν λέμε «*Ὁμολογῶ ἐν βάπτισμα εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν*» (Ἰωάν. 1:10). Ἐπιστῶ ἰδιαιτέρως τὴν προσοχὴν στὸ ὅτι ὁμολογία εἶνε ἡ **πίστις ἢ ὁρθόδοξος**.

Δύο σημεῖα τονίζει σήμερα ὁ ἀπόστολος. Τὸ ἓνα εἶνε σκοτεινόν, τὸ ἄλλο φωτεινόν· τὸ ἓνα ὁμολογία θλιβερὴ, τὸ ἄλλο ὁμολογία φωτεινὴ.

Ἡ θλιβερὴ ὁμολογία εἶνε, ὅτι ὅλοι ἀνεξαιρέτως, ἀπὸ τὸν Ἀδὰμ καὶ τὴν Εὐὰ μέχρι σήμερα καὶ μέχρι συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος, ὅλα τὰ πλήθη τῶν ἀνθρώπων πλὴν ἑνός, γιὰ τὸν ὁποῖο κάνει λόγο σήμερα ὁ ἀπόστολος (βλ. Ἐβρ. 2,11-18), **ὅλοι διατελοῦμε ὑπὸ τὸ κράτος τῆς ἁμαρτίας**. Μερικοὶ ἐπιπόλοιοι λένε· Ἐγὼ δὲν εἶμαι ἁμαρτωλός· τί ἔκανα; δὲν σκότωσα, δὲν ἔκλεψα, δὲν ἀτίμασα... Λοιπόν; εἶσαι ἐν τάξει; Ἐὰν τὸ λὲς αὐτό, δὲν κατάλαβες γρῦ ἀπὸ τὸ Εὐαγγέλιο. Τὸ καράβι πνίγεται βέβαια ὅταν πέσῃ πάνω σ' ἓνα βράχο, ἀλλὰ πνίγεται κι ὅταν στὰ ὕφαλά του ἀνοίξῃ μιὰ μικρὴ τρύπα. Ὁ ἄνθρωπος δὲν πνίγεται μόνο σὲ βάθος ἑκατὸ ἢ χίλια μέτρα· πνίγεται καὶ σὲ μιὰ πιθαμὴ κάτω ἀπ' τὸ νερό. Ὁ ἄνθρωπος πεθαίνει ὄχι μόνο ἀπὸ μιὰ μεγάλη ἀσθένεια ἀλλὰ κι ἀπὸ ἓνα μικρόβιο. Τί σημαίνουν ταῦτα; ὅτι φτάνει ἓνα μικρόβιο ἁμαρτίας νὰ μᾶς καταστήσῃ ἁμαρτωλούς.

Εἴμαστε λοιπὸν ἁμαρτωλοί. Καὶ μόνο ἁμαρτωλοί; **εἴμαστε καὶ ἔνοχοι**. Ἐνοχοὶ στὴ συνείδησί μας, ἔνοχοι ἀπέναντι στοὺς ἄλλους τοὺς ὁποίους ἀδικοῦμε, ἔνοχοι προπαντὸς ἐμπρὸς στὸν ἅγιο Θεό· γι' αὐτὸ ὁ Δαυὶδ, ἐκ μέρους ὄλης τῆς ἁμαρτωλῆς ἀνθρωπότητος, θρηνεῖ καὶ λέει ἐκεῖνο τὸ ἄφθαστο «*Σοὶ μόνῳ ἤμαρτον καὶ τὸ πονηρὸν ἐνώπιόν σου ἐποίησα*» (Ψαλμ. 50,6).

Καὶ ὁ ἔνοχος προκαλεῖ τὴν **ὀργὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ**. Δὲν εἶνε παιχνίδι, εἶνε κάτι τρομερό· «*φοβερόν τὸ ἐμπεσεῖν εἰς χεῖρας Θεοῦ ζῶντος*» (Ἐβρ. 10,31). Ὁ Θεὸς μπορεῖ νὰ χρησιμοποίησῃ ποικίλα μέσα γιὰ τιμωρία· «*ἡ θάλασσα ἡ μεγάλη καὶ εὐρύχωρος*» (Ψαλμ. 103,25) εἶνε ἔτοιμη νὰ μᾶς καλύψῃ τοὺς ἀσεβεῖς μὲ τὰ κύματά της, ἡ γῆ εἶνε ἔτοιμη νὰ μᾶς καταπιῇ τοὺς βλάστητους καὶ ἀχάριστους.

Αὐτὴ εἶνε ἡ θλιβερὴ διαπίστωσις, εἴμαστε ἁμαρτωλοὶ καὶ ἔνοχοι· ἀλλ' ὑπάρχει καὶ τὸ **φωτεινὸ σημεῖο**. Τὰ κακά, ποὺ εἶνε ἔτοιμα νὰ πέσουν στὰ κεφάλια μας, ἀποτρέπονται καὶ τὸ μαῦρο σύννεφο τῆς μελαγχολίας καὶ ἀπελπισίας διαλύεται – ποῦ, ἀδελφοί μου; Ἄς δοξάσουμε τὸ Θεό. Νὰ ὁμολογήσουμε ὅτι εἴμαστε

ἁμαρτωλοὶ – τὸ ἓνα· ἀλλὰ συγχρόνως νὰ ὁμολογήσουμε τὸ ἄλλο, ὅτι **ὑπάρχει ἰατρός**, ὁ Κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστός· ὑπάρχει ἀσθένεια, ἀλλ' ὑπάρχει καὶ φάρμακο, τὸ τίμιο αἷμα του. Naί, ἀδελφοί. Ὅσο δύσκολο εἶνε νὰ τὸ ἐννοήσῃ ὁ ἄνθρωπος, τόσο ὅμως εἶνε βέβαιο καὶ ἀληθινόν, ὅτι στὸ φρικτὸ Γολγοθᾶ ὁ Υἱὸς τῆς Θεοτόκου προσέφερε τὸν ἑαυτό του ὑψίστη θυσία, «*ὑπὲρ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου ζωῆς καὶ σωτηρίας*» (βλ. Ἰωάν. 1:29).

Ὅσο πολλὰ καὶ μεγάλα κι ἂν εἶνε τὰ ἁμαρτήματά σας, μὴ φοβηθῆτε. Φτάνει μιὰ σταγόνα - ἓνα ἠλεκτρόνιο ἀπὸ τὸ αἷμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ γιὰ νὰ σβήσουν ὅλα. «*Τὸ αἷμα Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ...καθαρίζει ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης ἁμαρτίας*» (1:7). Αὐτὸ λέει σήμερα ὁ ἀπόστολος. Ἐνῶ μᾶς φοβίζει γιὰ τὶς ἁμαρτίες μας, δημιουργεῖ μέσα μας τὴν **ἐλπίδα γιὰ τὴν «αἰώνιαν λύτρωσιν»** (Ἐβρ. 9,12), ὅτι διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ὑπάρχει λύτρωσις. Ἄς φωνάζουν οἱ ἄπιστοι, ἄς λυσοῦν τὰ σκυλιὰ τοῦ ἄδου· κανεὶς δὲν θὰ μπορέσῃ νὰ κλονίσῃ τὸ θρόνο τοῦ Χριστοῦ. Ὁ δὲ θρόνος τοῦ Χριστοῦ μας εἶνε ὁ **τίμιος σταυρός**. Ἀπὸ ἐκεῖ ὁ Βασιλεὺς τοῦ κόσμου ρίχνει τὸ βλέμμα ἐπάνω στὴν ἁμαρτωλὴ ἀνθρωπότητα καὶ τὸ αἷμα του λυτρώνει καὶ σῶζει τὸν κόσμον. Naί, ἀγαπητοί μου, ἡ ὁμολογία· ἡ θλιβερὴ ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡ φωτεινὴ.

Ἐνας διδάσκαλος τῆς Ἐκκλησίας μας λέει, ὅτι ἂν κάποιος γλιστρώντας κατρακυλᾷ στὴν ἄβυσσο, καὶ πιάσῃ τὸ σκοινὶ ποῦ τοῦ ρίχνουν, σῶζεται. Naί, ἀδελφοί μου, ἄβυσσος εἶνε ὁ κόσμος, ἡ ἀνθρώπινη καρδιά, τὰ πάθη· «*ἄβυσσος ἄβυσσον ἐπικαλεῖται εἰς φωνὴν τῶν καταρακτῶν σου*» (Ψαλμ. 41,8). Ἀλλὰ ὁ Χριστὸς μᾶς ἔρριξε σκοινί. **Ἄς ἀρπάξουμε τὸ σκοινὶ τῆς σωτηρίας** ποῦ κρεμάει ἀπὸ πάνω μας ὁ Σωτῆρας τοῦ κόσμου. Ἄς πιάσουμε σφιχτὰ αὐτὸ τὸ σκοινί· «*κρατῶμεν τῆς ὁμολογίας*»! Δὲν ὑπάρχει στὸν κόσμον ἄλλο ὄνομα ἰκανὸ νὰ μᾶς σώσῃ παρά μόνο ὁ Χριστὸς (βλ. Πράξ. 4,12). «*Κρατῶμεν τῆς ὁμολογίας*», ἄς κρατοῦμε τὴν πίστι, ὅπως κρατᾷ τὸ σκοινὶ ἐκεῖνος ποῦ δὲν θέλει νὰ γλιστρήσῃ στὴν ἄβυσσο.

Τὸ σκοινὶ αὐτό, ἀδελφοί μου, ποῦ ἦταν ἀσύντριπτο, γιὰ τὴν ἀπιστία καὶ τὰ σκάνδαλά μας ἔχει καταντήσῃ σήμερα λεπτὴ κλωστή. **Ἀπὸ μιὰ κλωστή κρέμεται ὁ κόσμος**. Ἡ πίστι ἔχει ἀδυνατίσει. Κι ὁ διάβολος ζητᾷ νὰ κόψῃ μὲ ψαλίδια τὴ χρυσοῦ κλωστή, ποῦ εἶνε ἡ **Ὁρθοδοξία** μας. Ἄς κρατήσουμε καλά. Μακάριος ὁποῖος σήμερα κρατᾷ τὴν κλωστή, αὐτὴ τὴν ἄγκυρα. «*Κρατῶμεν τῆς ὁμολογίας*»! γιὰ νὰ φθάσουμε στὸν οὐρανόν, κ' ἐκεῖ νὰ δοξάζουμε Πατέρα Υἱόν καὶ ἅγιον Πνεῦμα εἰς αἰῶνας αἰώνων· ἀμήν.

(†) **ἐπίσκοπος Αὐγουστίνος**

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 Cross and Discipleship

From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer greatly from the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed and on the third day be raised. Then Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, "God forbid, Lord! No such thing shall ever happen to you." He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle to me. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do."

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me."

For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? Or what can one give in exchange for his life? For the Son of Man will come with his angels in his Father's glory, and then he will repay everyone according to his conduct. Amen, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

Matthew 16: 21-28

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