

JUBILEE 85th ANNIVERSARY THREE HIERARCHS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

SUNDAY WEEKLY BULLETIN January 10th, 2016 V. Rev. Archimandrite Eugene N. Pappas

SUNDAY AFTER THEOPHANY Icon of Saint Gregory of Nyssa -- January 10th

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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. Ἡχος α' .

ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 32.22,1

Γένοιτο, Κύριε, τὸ ἔλεός σου ἐφ' ἡμᾶς.

Στίχ. Άγαλλιᾶσθε δίκαιοι ἐν Κυρίω

Αδελφοί, ένὶ 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 ἐστιν εἰ μὴ ὅτι καὶ κατέβη πρῶτον εἰς τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς; Ὁ καταβάς, αὐτός ἐστιν καὶ ὁ ἀναβὰς ὑπεράνω πάντων τῶν οὐρανῶν, ἵνα πληρώση τὰ πάντα. Καὶ αὐτὸς ἔδωκεν το ὺς μὲν ἀποστόλους, τοὺς δ ὲ προφήτας, τοὺς δ ὲ εὐαγγελιστάς, τοὺς δ ὲ ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους, πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων, εἰς ἔργον διακονίας, εἰς οἰκοδομὴν τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ· μέχρι καταντήσωμεν οι πάντες εἰς τὴν ἐνότητα τῆς πίστεως καὶ τῆς ἐπιγνώσεως τοῦ υἰοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ, εἰς ἄνδρα τέλειον, εἰς μέτρον ἡλικίας τοῦ πληρώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

Sunday after Epiphany

The Gospel according to 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 Κατά Ματθαῖον 4:12-17

Τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ, ἀκούσας δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὅτι Ἰωάννης παρεδόθη, ἀνεχώρησεν εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν, καὶ καταλιπὼν τὴν Ναζαρὲτ ἐλθὼν κατῷκησεν εἰς Καπερναοὺμ τὴν παραθαλασσίαν ἐν ὁρίοις Ζαβουλὼν καὶ Νεφθαλείμ, ἵνα πληρωθῆ τὸ ῥηθὲν δι ὰ Ἡσαΐου τοῦ προφήτου λ έγοντος· γ ῆ Ζαβουλὼν κα ὶ γῆ Νεφθαλείμ, ὁδὸν θαλάσσης, π έραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου, Γαλιλαία τῶν ἐθνῶν, ὁ λαὸς ὁ καθήμενος ἐν σκότειεἶδε φῶς μέγα, καὶ τοῖς καθημένοις ἐν χώρα καὶ σκιᾳ θανάτουφῶς ἀνέτειλεν αὐτοῖς. ᾿Απὸ τότε ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς κηρύσσειν καὶ λέγειν· μετανοεῖτε· ἤγγικε γὰρ ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.

DEVOTIONS THIS WEEK:

Sunday ,January 10thFeast of Saint Gregory of Nyssa10:30A.M.Sunday ,January 10thPost Epiphany Water Blessing12:00P.M.Thursday January 14thEmmaus Lecture series on CONFESSION7:00P.M.

Fr. John Lardas at Saint Mary's Church 81st Ridge Blvd.

Sunday, January 17th & 18th Joint Observance of Saints Anthony and Athanasios 10:30 A.M.

AGAPE COFFEE HOUR FELLOWSHIP: today is hosted by the A.H.E.P.A. as part for their FUND RAISER LUNCHEON for the Saint Nicholas Shrine. Please join us and support the national endeavor project.

PARISH ELECTIONS RESULTS: We are pleased to announce the EXECUTIVE OFFICERS of the Parish Council for the year 2016.

President, GEORGE ANNIS, Executive V.P. JOHN EUGENIS, 1ST V.P. HARRY LAMBRAKIS,
2nd, V.P. GUS VELLIOS (Jr.) Secretary, MARIA LAMRIANAKOS FISHER, Treasurer, JULIA DEMAKAKOS,
Assistant Treasurer, JIMMY RAVANOS, Personnel Chair, CONNIE IOANNIDES.

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Anastasios Calakos, Anthony Kallinikos, Alexandra Diolis, Nicholas Paras, George Plevritis, Georgia Tsismenakis and Joanna Vassilas The OFFICIAL OATH of OFFICE will be conferred by His Eminence the Archbishop on THREE HIERARCHS VESPER EVE, January 29th, before the body of faithful in Church. AXIOI! AXIOI!

Best Wishes to those who serve the Lord in His Holy House with time, talent and treasure.

The Lord blesses those who love the beauty of his house

Our Thanks are also extended to the THREE ladies who served on the 2015-2016 ELECTIONS COMMITTEE with diligence and dignity.

Susan Jannance, Evanthea Karounos, Dina Theodosakis

CALENDARS 2016: The ecclesiastical and inspirational calendar of our THREE HIERARCHS PARISH is available to all upon request in the CHURCH OFFICE. Registered stewards of the parish are receiving their calendar in the mail with other greetings. The calendar is offered FREE upon request as a courtesy of the church. WHY NOT REGISTER NOW WITH YOUR PARISH TO ENJOY ALL THE PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERSHIP?

NEW YEAR'S EVE REVEILLON: Thanks to Boy Scout Troop #531 THE GOLDEN GREEKS and their Scoutmaster Mr. Dean Veroutis as wonderous celebration was shared by the crowd. Gratitude is expressed to MR. LOUIS VELLIOS the GRANDE BENEFACTOR of the TROOP who decorated the evening festivities beyond compare. Mr. Vellios has always come to the call in times of support for the important events of the Parish, PASCHA, AUGUST 15th VIRGIN MARY FEAST, THREE HIERARCHS FEAST, CHRISTMAS and NEW YEAR'S EVE. God bless him and all his kin!

PHILOPTOCHOS LADIES ANNUAL MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY: luncheon will be hosted MONDAY January 18th, at RUSSO'S on the BAY. Catering from 12:00 noon. A sumptuous luncheon, music, dancing, prizes galore will spotlight the ladies 'who lunch'..... HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!

A.H.E.PA. INVITATION: is extended to everyone in the Parish to attend a luncheon 'fund raiser for the WORLD TRADE CENTER SHRINE CHURCH of SAINT NICHOLAS today January 10th, directly after church services in WHITEHALL. AHEPA CHAPTER #200 CONEY ISLAND, is suggesting a \$10:00 (TEN DOLLAR) donation free will for the luncheon feast!

SENIOR CLUB LECTURE: titled **ARE YOU JULIAN OR GREGORIAN?** will be presented by Father Eugene on Wednesday, January 13th, at 1:30 P.M. (Whitehall). Bingo, coffee and sweets reception will follow. OPEN TO ALL. Join the 'SENIORS' which meet every WEDNESDAY afternoon AT 1:00 P.M. The programming is extensive and fun for all.

EMMAUS ADULT EDUCATIONS LECTURE SERIES: continues on Thursday evening at the Antiochian Orthodox Church of Saint Mary at 81st and Ridge Boulevard in Bay Ridge at 7:00 -8:00 PM on January 14th, by Fr. John Lardas. The theme of subject is CONFESSION IN ORTHODOXY. Try it you will like it.

RUSSIAN, **UKRAINIAN** AND **GEORGIAN** sisters and brothers in Orthodoxy. We wish you all Christmas blessings, and Epiphany joy as you celebrate JANUARY 6TH, and JANUARY 19TH on the Julian Calendar.

BOY SCOUT EAGLE AWARDS PROGRAM: Troop #531 'GOLDEN GREEKS' will honor four young men of our Parish who have achieved the highest rank of scouting studies: FRIDAY EVENING January 15th. 7:00 P.M. An OPEN RECEPTION will be hosted by the troop to all.

ACCOLADES of GRATITUDE: to the many parishioners whose good wishes for Christmas and the New Year made Father Eugene proud and happy. Father extends his blessing for a new year 2016 with peace and health to all. May the Prince of Peace, Our Lord Jesus embrace you all.

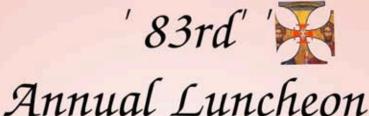
RADIO MINISTRY: Each Saturday at 1:15PM Fr. Eugene hosts and produces the radio broadcast MATTERS OF CONSCIENCE NOW IN ITS 16TH YEAR OF BROADCASTING LIVE ON WNYE 91.5 COSMOS FM, with listener telephone participation. Subjects of interest regarding Greek Orthodox theology, faith and practice, as well 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: + MARIA PAPAZAHARIAS

You're Invited! Three Hierarchs Ladies Philoptochos





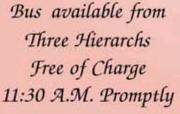














For Reservations call Marie Paizis (718) 338-1446 Effie Paraponiaris (718) 253-7219



Donation \$65.00





«Έγενόμην έν Πνεύματι έν τή Κυριακή ήμέρο καὶ ήκουσα φωνήν ὁπίσω μου μεγάλην ώς σάλπηγος» (An. 1,10)

Περίοδος Δ΄ - "Ετος ΑΓ" Φλώρινα - άριθμ. φύλλου 1924 Κυριακή μετά τὰ Φῶτα (Έφ. 4,7-13) 10 Τανουαρίου 2016 Συντάκτης (†) ἐπίσκοπος Αύγουστίνος Ν. Καντιώτης

Όλα γιὰ τὴ σωτηρία μας

«Καὶ αὐτὸς ἔδωκε τοὺς μὲν ἀποστόλους, τοὺς δὲ προφήτας, τοὺς δὲ εὐαγγελιστάς, τοὺς δὲ ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἀγίων…» (Εφ. 4,11)

Θὰ μιλήσω ἀπλὰ, ἀγαπητοί μου, ῶστε νὰ μὲ καταλάβουν ὅλοι, καὶ θὰ σᾶς παρακαλέσω νὰ κάνετε ὑπομονή. Ύπομονή, γιατί δυστυχῶς στὰ χρόνια μος ἡ φωνὴ τοῦ ἱεροκήρυκα, καὶ μάλιστα ἐκείνου ποὺ ἐλέγχει τὸ κακὸ ὅπου καὶ ᾶν τὸ συναντὰ, εἴτε στὶς καλύβες εἴτε στὰ ἀνάκτορα εῖτε στοὺς βασιλικοὺς θρόνους εἴτε καὶ σ' αὐτοὺς ἀκόμη τοὺς πατριαρχικοὺς θρόνους, ἡ φωνὴ αὐτὴ εἶνε δυσάρεστη. Σὲ λίγο, ὅπως προβλέπω, θὰ συμβῆ ἔνα ἀπὸ τὰ δυό· ἢ δὲν θὰ ὑπάρχουν κήρυκες νὰ κηρύξουν ἡ δὲν θὰ ὑπάρχουν ἀκροαταί ν' ἀκούσουν. Άλλὰ ἐδῶ ἐλπίζω ὅτι ὑπάρχουν αὐτιὰ γιὰ ν' ἀκούσουν τὸ λόγο τοῦ Θεοῦ. Μὲ τὴν ἐλπίδα αὐτὴ θὰ σᾶς πῶ λίγα λόγια.

Θέμα τής όμιλίας μας θὰ εἶνε ὁ ἀπόστολος. Ή περικοπή ποὺ ἀκούσαμε εἶνε ἔνα διαμάντι ἀπό τοὺς ἀμυθήτους θησαυροὺς ποὺ λέγονται Ἐπιστολὲς τοῦ ἀποστόλου Παύλου. Έχουν μερικοὶ μιὰ συνήθεια, νά 'χουν στὶς τσέπες τους τὴν λεγομένη Άγία Ἐπιστολύ ἀλλ' αὐτή δὲν ἔχει τόση ἀξία δση ἔχουν οἱ ἐπιστολὲς τοῦ Παύλου. "Όποιος τὶς διαβάζει καὶ τὶς νιώθει, ἀνεβαίνει μέχρι τὸν οὐρανό, γίνεται ἀετός.

Σήμερα, δταν ἄκουσα τὴν περικοπή, μοῦ φάνηκε δτι ὁ ἀπόστολος Παῦλος κρατάει μιὰ κιθάρα καὶ ψάλλει καὶ ἐγκωμόζει – ποιόν; Κάποιον ποὺ τὸν ἀγνοοῦμε καὶ δὲν τὸν ἀγαποῦμε δπως θὰ ἔπρεπε: καὶ αὐτὸς εἶνε ὁ Κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστός. Πῶς νὰ μὴ τὸν εὐγνωμονή ὁ Παῦλος; Αὐτὸς τὸν πῆρε –ποὺ ἦταν ἔνα σκουλήκι, ἔνα ἀκάθαρτο κουρέλι, ἀφοῦ τὰ χέρια του ἔσταζαν αἶμα –, τὸν ἔπλυνε μέσα στὸ πλυντήριό του, στὸν Νιαγάρα τῆς χάριτός του, στὰ ρέῖθρα τοῦ Ἰορδάνου, στὴν ἰερὰ κολυμβήθρα, καὶ τὸν ἔκανε παιδὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ, πρίγκιπα. Πῆρε ὁ Χριστὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπο ἀπὸ κάτω, ἀπὸ τὸ βόρβορο, καὶ τὸν ὕψωσε μέχρι τὸν οῦρα-

νό. Γι' αὐτὸ ὁ ἀπόστολος ψάλλει σήμερα τὸ μεγαλεῖο τοῦ Κυρίου καὶ λέει, ὅτι -ὁ καταβὰς- ὁ ἴδιος εἶνε καὶ -ὁ ἀναβάς-ῖφ-ἰῦ.

Ποῦ ἦταν ὁ Χριστός; Ώς Θεὸς ἦταν «ὑπερἀνω πάντων τῶν οὐρανῶν»(tá).

Γιά προσέξτε: δὲν λέει «είς τὸν οὐρανόν»: λέει δτι ἀνέβηκε «ύπεράνω πάντων τῶν ούρανῶν~ καὶ άλλοῦ πάλι λέει ὅτι ἔγινε «ὑψηλότερος τῶν οὐρανῶν»(Εφ.72). Γιατί ἀραγε μιλάει όχι γιὰ «ούρανὸ» άλλά γιὰ «ούρανούς»; "Εχει σημασία αὐτό. Έὰν ρωτήσετε ένα ἀστρονόμο, δὲν θὰ σᾶς μιλήση γιὰ «ούρανούς»: θὰ σᾶς πῆ «οὐρανός». Καὶ στὴ γλῶσσα τῆς ἀστρονομίας «ούρανὸς» είνε τὰ ἄστρα, ὁ ῆλιος, τὸ φεγγάρι, τὰ πλανητικὰ συστήματα, οἱ γαλαξίες. Αὐτὸς είνε ὁ ούρανὸς τῶν ἀστρονόμων. Άλλὰ ἡ ἀγία Γραφή μιλάει γιὰ «οῦρανούς». Υπάρχουν, λέει, τρείς ούρανοι ό ένας είνε ό νεφελοφόρος. ό δεύτερος είνε ό άστεροφόρος, καὶ ό τρίτος είνε ὁ ἀγγελοφόρος. Ὁ νεφελοφόρος, ὁ κατώτερος, είνε ή άτμοσφαιρικός άέρας, τὰ σύννεφα ποὺ σκεπάζουν τὴ γῆ. Πάνω ἀπὸ αὐτὸν είνε ὁ ἀστερόεις, ὁ ἀστεροφόρος οὐρανός, ποὺ ἔχει τὰ ἀστέρια. Καὶ παραπάνω κι ἀπὸ κεΐνον -ας λένε οἱ ἀπιστοι: ἐμεῖς πιστεύουμε- είνε ό **αγγελοφόρος** ούρανός, ο ούρανός τῶν ἀύλων πνευμάτων, ἐκεῖ ποὺ κατοικεῖ καὶ λάμπει ὁ Θεός! Έκεῖ ἔνας μόνο ἔφθασε: ὁ άπόστολος Παϋλος, που γράφει την έπιστολή. Αύτὸς λέει, ὅτι τὸν ἀξίωσε ὁ Θεὸς ν' ἀνεβῆ «ἔως τρίτου οὐρανοῦ» καὶ ν' ἀκούση «ἄρρητα ρήματα, ἄ ούκ έξὸν άνθρώπω λαλήσαι» (8 Kop. 1224).

Έκεϊ, στὸν τρίτο οῦρανό, λάμπει ἥλιος, ἀθάνατος ἥλιος, «φῶς μέγα» ὅπως λέει τὸ εὐαγγέλιοΝεί ιᾶ. Λάμπει ὅχι ἀπλῶς ἦλιος ἀλλὰ ἡ «Τριαήλιος Θεότης», Πατὴρ Υίὸς καὶ ἄγιον Πνεῦμα' τρεῖς ἥλιοι ἐνωμένοι, ποὺ φωτίζουν τὸν κόσμοι Ἐκεῖ λοιπὸν ἦταν ὁ Χριστὸς ὡς Θεός.

Καὶ ὅμως ἀπὸ τὰ ὕψη ἐκεῖνα κατέβηκε ἐδῶ

στή Γή. Πῶς νὰ τὸ περιγράψω; "Εχετε δεῖ ἀετό; 'Ως στρατιωτικὸς ἱερεὺς στὰ ψηλὰ βουνὰ τῶν Γρεβενῶν εἶδα κάποτε στὸν οὐρανὸ ἔνα στίγμα, μιὰ τελεία: ἦταν ἀετός, καὶ σιγὰ - σιγὰ διαγράφοντας κύκλους ἦρθε καὶ κάθισε μεγαλοπρεπῶς πάνω σ' ἔνα βράχο. Καὶ κάθισα καὶ σκεπτόμουν: ἔτσι καὶ ὁ Χριστός, ποὺ ἡ Άποκάλυψις τὸν ὀνομάζει ἀετὸ μεγαλοπτέρυγα βὶ λι 1214, κατέβηκε ἐδῶ στὴ Γή, σ' αὐτὴ τὴ σκόνη μέσα στὸ ἄπειρο: ἦρθε μέσα στὸ σπήλαιο.

Γιατί ήρθε; ποιός τον ἔφερε ἐδῶ κάτω; Μία λέξις· ἡ ἀγάπη! "Όλο τὸ μήνυμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὅλο τὸ Εὐαγγέλιο ἴσον ἀγάπη. "Ώ ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Χριστοῦ! Αὐτή τὸν κατέβασε ἀπὸ τὰ οὐράνια οτὴ Γῆ ἀνάμεσά μας· αὐτή τὸν ἔκανε νὰ μὴν ἡσυχάζη ἀλλὰ νὰ κηρύττη μέρα - νύχτα τὸ «Μετανοείτε» [Μπὶ ἐΠ]· αὐτή τὸν ἔφερε ἀπὸ τὴ Βηθλεὰμ καὶ τὸν Ἰορδάνη μέχρι τὸ Γολγοθᾶ, τὸ σταυρὸ καὶ τὸ θάνατο· αὐτή τέλος τὸν κατέβασε μέχρι τὸν ἄδη, ὅπου πάλεψε μὲ τὸ χάρο καὶ τὸ νίκησε. "Ετσι πῆρε τὸν ἄνθρωπο καὶ τὸν ὕψωσε. Μέχρι ποῦ τὸν ῦψωσε; μέχρι ἐκεῖ ποὺ εἴνε ὁ ἴδιος, μέχρι τὸν οὐρανό. "Αναλογισθῆτε ποῦ ἦταν, ποῦ κατέβηκε, καὶ ποῦ ἀνέβηκε.

Κι όταν πλέον ὡς ἄνθρωπος ἐγκατέλειψε τὸ φλούδι αὐτὸ τῆς Γῆς, δὲν ἄφησε τὸν κόσμο ἔτσι: ὡρισε κάποιον ἄλλον νὰ συνεχίζη τὸ ἔργο του. Έχει λοιπὸν διάδοχο. Κι ὅποιος δὲν ἀκούει τὸ διάδοχό του, δὲν ἀκούει τὸ Χριστό. Ποιός εἶνε ὁ διάδοχος τοῦ Χριστοῦ; Ἡ Ἐκκλησία. Αὐτὴ εἶνε τὸ θεῖο ἴδρυμα, ἡ βασιλεία του, τῆς ὁποίας «οὐκ ἔσται τέλος» (λακ 1,3 ἔμβ ππ. ἢ καὶ ποὺ μπροστά της ὅλοι οἱ ἀνθρώπινοι διεθνεῖς ὀργανισμοὶ εἶνε ἔνα πελώριο μηδενικό.

Στὴν Ἐκκλησία, τὸ θεῖο καθίδρυμα ποὺ ὁ Κύριος ἔχτισε μὲ τὸ τίμιο αἴμα του, ἔδωσε ὅλη τὴ δύναμι νὰ συνεχίζη τὸ ἔργο του. Τὴν ἐφωδίασε μὲ ὅλα τὰ μέσα, νὰ λειτουργῆ μὲ τάξι καὶ ἀρμονία. "Εταξε πρόσωπα νὰ διακονοῦν τὸ μεγάλο σκοπό. Ποιά εἴνε τὰ πρόσωπα αὐτά; Τὰ ἀναφέρει ὁ ἀπόστολος. «Καὶ αὐτός», λέει, ὁ Χριστός, γιὰ τὴ σωτηρία μας «ἔδωκε τοὺς μὲν ἀποστόλους, τοὺς δὲ προφήτας, τοὺς δὲ εὐαγγελιστάς, τοὺς δὲ ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἀγίων...» [5, 4,1].

- Πρῶτα εἶνε οἱ ἀπόστολοι· οἱ δώδεκα, ὁ στενὸς κύκλος, καὶ οἱ ἐβδομήκοντα, ὁ εὐρύτερος, ποὺ μὲ τὴ δύναμί του πέταξαν σ' Άνατολή καὶ Δύσι, γιὰ ν' ἀκουστῆ παντοῦ τὸ κήρυγμα.
- Εἶνε κατόπιν οἱ προφῆτες. Ὑπάρχει μία ἐσφαλμένη ἀντίληψις, ὅτι προφῆτες ἦταν μέχρι τὸ Χριστό μετὰ Χριστὸν δὲν ὑπάρχει προφήτης, λένε. "Όχι! τὸ διαψεύδει ὁ ἀπόστολος σήμερα ὁμιλεῖ γιὰ προφῆτες τῆς καινῆς δια-

θήκης. Τὸ προφητικὸ χάρισμα ὑπάρχει καὶ μετὰ Χριστόν. Ἀπόδειξις οἱ νεώτεροι προφῆτες, ὁ ἄγιος Κοσμᾶς ὁ Αἰτωλὸς καὶ ὁ Παπουλάκος. Πρὸ Χριστοῦ οἱ προφῆτες φώναζαν· "Ερχεται! Τὸν καιρὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἔλεγαν· "Ηλθε! Καὶ μετὰ Χριστὸν λένε· Οὰ ἔλθη πάλι ὁ Βασιλεύς, ἐνώπιον τοῦ ὁποίου «πᾶν γόνυ κάμψη ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων» (Φί 21). Οἱ προφῆτες τρόπον τινὰ ἀνεβαίνουν στὰ καμπαναριά, χτυποῦν τὸς καμπάνες καὶ φωνάζουν στὸν κόσμο· «Ξυπνᾶτε, ἀμαρτωλοί!».

 Ό Χριστὸς ἔδωσε ἀκόμη στὴν Ἐκκλησία του «εὐαγγελιστάς». Ποιοί είνε εὐαγγελισταί; Εἶνε αὐτοὶ ποὺ συνέγραψαν τὰ τέσσερα εὐαγγέλια, κ' ἐκεῖνοι ποὺ δὲν μένουν στάσιμοι σ' ἔνα μέρος ἀλλὰ περιοδεύουν καὶ κηρύττουν.

 Τέλος ἔδωσε, λέει, καὶ «τοὺς ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους» που διδάσκουν την άλήθεια καί τὸ θέλημα τοῦ Θεοῦ. Τί θὰ πῆ ποιμένας: "Όσοι είστε ἀπὸ χωριά, ἔχετε δεῖ Βοσκό· πῶς ἀγαπὰ καὶ φροντίζει τὰ πρόβατά του καὶ πῶς μόλις φανή λύκος τὰ προστατεύει καὶ τὰ ἀσφαλίζει στὸ μαντρί. Καὶ ἡ "Όρθόδοξος Έκκλησία τί είνε· τὸ μαντρί τοῦ Χριστοῦ. Πρόβατα εἶστε σεῖς. Τσοπάνηδες πρέπει νὰ εἵμαστε ἐμεῖς ποὺ φορέσαμε τὸ ῥάσο· καὶ πρέπει νὰ ἀγρυπνοῦμε για σας και να 'μαστε έτοιμοι να παλέψουμε μὲ τοὺς λύκους. Καὶ μαζεύτηκαν καὶ γυροφέρνουν πολλοί λύκοι, Άλλοίμονό μας ἄν ἀποκοιμηθούμε! θὰ εἴμαστε ἀνάξιοι νὰ λεγώμαστε ίερεϊς καὶ ἱεράρχες, θὰ εἵμαστε ἀνάξιοι νὰ φέρουμε τὴ στολὴ τοῦ ὀρθοδόξου κληρικοῦ.

Υπάρχουν τέτοιοι ποιμένες, έτοιμοι νὰ θυσιάσουν τὴ ζωή τους γιὰ τὸ ποίμνιο; Δὲν θέλω νὰ εἶμαι ἀπαισιόδοξος, ἀγαπητοί μου: θὰ τελειώσω μὲ ἐλπίδα. Ένα ἔθνος, ποὺ γέννησε ῆρωες καὶ μάρτυρες, δὲν ἐστεἰρευσε ἡ πηγή του, ὅχι. Ἡ πατρίδα μας εἶπε πολλὰ τραγούδια, δὲν εἶπε ὅμως ἀκόμη τὸ τελευταῖο της τραγούδι: θὰ τὸ πῆ κι αὐτὸ στὸν κόσμο αὐτὸν τῆς ραστώνης, τῆς κακοηθείας καὶ διαφθορᾶς. Υπάρχουν ποιμένες. Όχι αὐτοὶ ποὺ ζοῦν γιὰ τὴν Ἐκκλησία, ἀλλὰ ἐκεῖνοι ποὺ ζοῦν γιὰ τὴν Ἐκκλησία.

Νὰ παρακαλέσουμε τὸ Χριστό, ὅσοι εἶστε γονεῖς νὰ δώσετε στὴν Ἐκκλησία νέους Χρυσοστόμους, Βασιλείους καὶ Γρηγορίους. Γιατὶ στὸ ῥάσο καὶ στὴν Ἐκκλησία εἴνε ἡ ἐλπίδα. Νὰ μᾶς ἀξιώση ὁ Θεός, ὅλοι, στὰ χρόνια ποὺ ζοῦμε, παραπάνω ἀπ' ὅλα νὰ ἔχουμε τὴν πίστι τὴν ὀρθόδοξο, νὰ τὴ φυλάξουμε, καὶ νὰ ὑμνοῦμε ἡμέρα καὶ νύχτα Πατέρα Υἰὸν καὶ ἄγιον Πνεῦμα εἰς αἰῶνας αἰώνων ἀμήν.

(†) ἐπίσκοπος Αύγουστῖνος

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 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 2016 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

Longing for Heaven

All the saints loved the dangers that proved their confidence in God. They offered no defense to those who wished in whatever way to wound or kill them; nor did they weaken in the face of any painful context that involved them in martyrdom and heroic deeds, because they looked for their reward in the kingdom of heaven.

In that hope Abraham obeyed the command to sacrifice his son; Moses toiled through the fearful desert; Elijah led his harsh life of solitude; and all the prophets, clad in the rough skins of sheep or goats, spent their days in affliction and mortification. For that reward the evangelists suffered wounds for the Gospel's sake, and martyrs strove against the tortures to which tyrants condemned them. Indeed whoever is truly a rational being and an image of God, and whose kinship is with the sublime and heavenly, has no wish either to exist or to be raised from the dead in the company of those who will live again, unless he is to be praised by God as a good servant and thought worthy of some honors.

The same motive inspired David, who found in the deer's thirst an appropriate image of his own longing for God, and prayed that he might see the face of God, to enjoy his spiritual graciousness. Paul too prayed that when he had put off the flesh, like a heavy burdensome garment, he might depart and be with Christ. Both men certainly pictured in their minds that blessed and unchanging joy. But if there is no desire for the reward of heaven, then all else, as Ecclesiastes truly said, is "vanity of vanities."

St. Gregory of Nyssa

For more information on Eastern spirituality, visit

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