

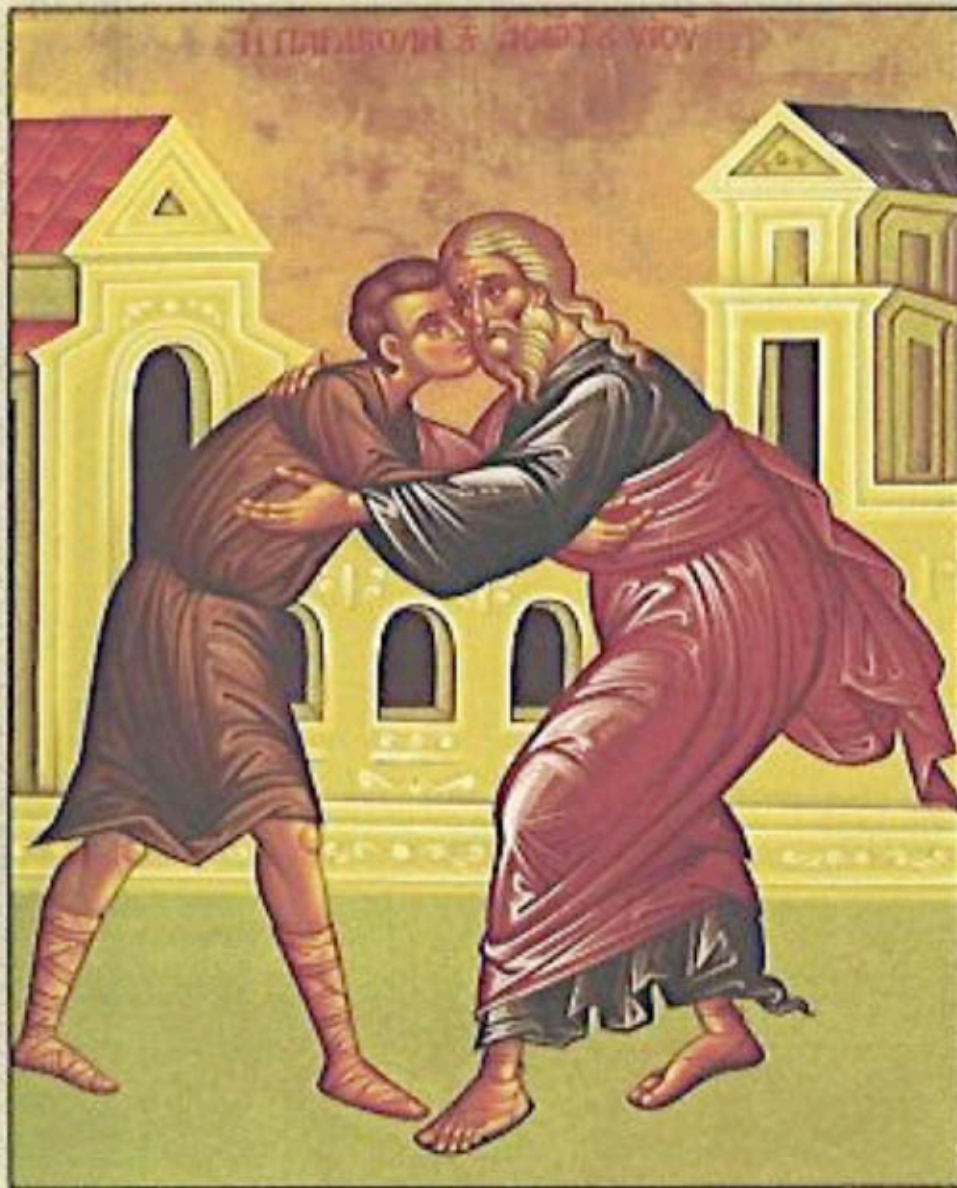


DIRECT ARCHDIOCESAN
DISTRICT

THREE HIERARCHS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

SUNDAY WEEKLY BULLETIN February 28th, 2016
V. Rev. Archimandrite Eugene N. Pappas

SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON



Icon of the Prodigal Son

St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 6:12-20 Prokeimenon. Mode 1. Psalm 32.22,1 Let your mercy, O Lord, be upon us.

Verse: Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous.

Brethren, "all things are lawful for me," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be enslaved by anything. "Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food" -- and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two shall become one flesh." But he who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Shun immorality. Every other sin which a man commits is outside the body; but the immoral man sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body and in your spirit which belong to God.

Πρὸς Κορινθίους α' 6:12-20 Προκείμενον. Ἦχος α'. ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 32.22,1 Γένοιτο, Κύριε, τὸ ἐλεός σου ἐφ' ἡμᾶς.

Στίχ. Αγαλλιᾶσθε δίκαιοι ἐν Κυρίῳ

Ἀδελφοί, πάντα μοι ἔξεστιν, ἀλλ' οὐ πάντα συμφέρει· πάντα μοι ἔξεστιν, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐγὼ ἐξουσιασθήσομαι ὑπὸ τινος. Τὰ βρώματα τῆ κοιλία, καὶ ἡ κοιλία τοῖς βρώμασιν· ὁ δὲ θεὸς καὶ τὸν κύριον ἠγειρεν καὶ ἡμᾶς ἐξεγερεῖ διὰ τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ. Οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν μέλη Χριστοῦ ἐστίν; Ἄρα οὖν τὰ μέλη τοῦ Χριστοῦ ποιῶσιν πόρνης μέλη; Μὴ γένοιτο. Οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι ὁ κολλώμενος τῆ πόρνη ἐν σῶμά ἐστιν; Ἔσονται γάρ, φησὶν, οἱ δύο εἰς σάρκα μίαν. Ὁ δὲ κολλώμενος τῷ κυρίῳ ἐν πνευμά ἐστιν. Φεύγετε τὴν πορνείαν. Πᾶν ἁμάρτημα ὃ ἐὰν ποιῆσῃ ἄνθρωπος ἐκτὸς τοῦ σώματος ἐστίν· ὁ δὲ πορνεύων εἰς τὸ ἴδιον σῶμα ἁμαρτάνει. Ἦ οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι τὸ σῶμα ὑμῶν ναὸς τοῦ ἐν ὑμῖν ἁγίου πνεύματος ἐστίν, οὗ ἔχετε ἀπὸ θεοῦ; Καὶ οὐκ ἐστὲ ἐαυτῶν, ἠγοράσθητε γὰρ τιμῆς· δοξάσατε δὴ τὸν θεὸν ἐν τῷ σώματι ὑμῶν, καὶ ἐν τῷ πνεύματι ὑμῶν, ἅτινά ἐστιν τοῦ θεοῦ.

Sunday of the Prodigal Son The Gospel according to Luke 15:11-32

The Lord said this parable: "There was a man who had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that falls to me.' And he divided his living between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took his journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in loose living. And when he had spent everything, a great famine arose in that country, and he began to be in want. So he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have fed on the pods that the swine ate; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired servants.' And he arose and came to his father. But while he was yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and make merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to make merry. Now his elder son was in the field; and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants and asked what this meant. And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him safe and sound.' But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, but he answered his father, 'Lo, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command; yet you never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your living with harlots, you killed for him the fatted calf!' And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to make merry and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.'"

Sunday of the Prodigal Son Κατὰ Λουκᾶν 15:11-32

Εἶπεν ὁ Κύριος τὴν παραβολὴν ταύτην· Ἄνθρωπός τις εἶχε δύο υἱούς, καὶ εἶπεν ὁ νεώτερος αὐτῶν τῷ πατρί· πάτερ, δός μοι τὸ ἐπιβάλλον μέρος τῆς οὐσίας. καὶ διέδωκεν αὐτοῖς τὸν βίον. καὶ μετ' οὐ πολλὰς ἡμέρας συναγαγὼν ἅπαντα ὁ νεώτερος υἱὸς ἀπεδήμησεν εἰς χώραν μακρὰν, καὶ ἐκεῖ διεσκόρπισε τὴν οὐσίαν αὐτοῦ ζῶν ἀσώτως. δαπανήσαντος δὲ αὐτοῦ πάντα ἐγένετο λιμὸς ἰσχυρὸς κατὰ τὴν χώραν ἐκείνην, καὶ αὐτὸς ἤρξατο ὑστερεῖσθαι. καὶ πορευθεὶς ἐκολλήθη ἐνὶ τῶν πολιτῶν τῆς χώρας ἐκείνης, καὶ ἐπεμψεν αὐτὸν εἰς τοὺς ἀγρούς αὐτοῦ βόσκειν χοίρους. καὶ ἐπεθύμει γεμίσει τὴν κοιλίαν αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τῶν κερατίων ὧν ἤσθιον οἱ χοῖροι, καὶ οὐδεὶς ἐδίδου αὐτῷ. εἰς ἑαυτὸν δὲ ἐλθὼν εἶπε· πόσοι μισθοὶ τοῦ πατρὸς μου περισσεύουσιν ἄρτων, ἐγὼ δὲ λιμῷ ἀπόλλυμαι! ἀναστὰς πορεύσομαι πρὸς τὸν πατέρα μου καὶ ἐρῶ αὐτῷ· πάτερ, ἡμαρτον εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ ἐνώπιόν σου. οὐκέτι εἰμὶ ἄξιος κληθῆναι υἱὸς σου· ποιήσόν με ὡς ἓνα τῶν μισθίων σου. καὶ ἀναστὰς ἦλθε πρὸς τὸν πατέρα αὐτοῦ. ἔτι δὲ αὐτοῦ μακρὰν ἀπέχοντος εἶδεν αὐτὸν ὁ πατήρ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐπλαγχθῆσθε, καὶ δραμῶν ἐπέπεσεν ἐπὶ τὸν τράχηλον αὐτοῦ καὶ κατεφίλησεν αὐτόν. εἶπε δὲ αὐτῷ ὁ υἱός· πάτερ, ἡμαρτον εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ ἐνώπιόν σου, καὶ οὐκέτι εἰμὶ ἄξιος κληθῆναι υἱὸς σου. εἶπε δὲ ὁ πατήρ πρὸς τοὺς δούλους αὐτοῦ· ἐξενέγκατε τὴν στολὴν τὴν πρώτην καὶ ἐνδύσατε αὐτόν, καὶ δότε δακτύλιον εἰς τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ καὶ ὑποδήματα εἰς τοὺς πόδας, καὶ ἐνέγκαντες τὸν μόσχον τὸν σιτευτὸν θύσατε, καὶ φαγόντες εὐφρανθῶμεν, ὅτι οὗτος ὁ υἱὸς μου νεκρὸς ἦν καὶ ἀνέζησε, καὶ ἀπολωλὼς ἦν καὶ εὗρέθη. καὶ ἤρξαντο εὐφραίνεσθαι. Ἦν δὲ ὁ υἱὸς αὐτοῦ ὁ πρεσβύτερος ἐν ἀγρῷ· καὶ ὡς ἐρχόμενος ἤγγισε τῇ οἰκίᾳ, ἤκουσε συμφωνίας καὶ χορῶν, καὶ προσκαλεσάμενος ἓνα τῶν παιδῶν ἐπυνθάνετο τί εἶη ταῦτα. ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτῷ ὅτι ὁ ἀδελφός σου ἦκει καὶ ἔθυσεν ὁ πατήρ σου τὸν μόσχον τὸν σιτευτόν, ὅτι ὑγιαίνοντα αὐτὸν ἀπέλαβεν. ὠργίσθη δὲ καὶ οὐκ ἤθελεν εἰσελθεῖν. ὁ οὖν πατήρ αὐτοῦ ἐξελεθὼν παρεκάλει αὐτόν. ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπε τῷ πατρί· ἰδοὺ τὸσαῦτα ἔτη δουλεύω σοι καὶ οὐδέποτε ἐντολήν σου παρήλθον, καὶ ἐμοὶ οὐδέποτε ἔδωκας ἔριπον ἓνα μετὰ τῶν φίλων μου εὐφρανθῶ· ὅτε δὲ ὁ υἱὸς σου οὗτος, ὁ καταφαγὼν σου τὸν βίον μετὰ πορνῶν, ἦλθεν, ἔθυσας αὐτῷ τὸν μόσχον τὸν σιτευτόν. ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· τέκνον, σὺ πάντοτε μετ' ἐμοῦ εἶ, καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐμὰ σὰ ἐστίν· εὐφρανθῆναι δὲ καὶ χαρῆναι ἔδει, ὅτι ὁ ἀδελφός σου οὗτος νεκρὸς ἦν καὶ ἀνέζησε, καὶ ἀπολωλὼς ἦν καὶ εὗρέθη.

SERVICES THIS WEEK:	Sunday , February 28th ,	GOSPEL OF THE PRODIGAL SON LITURGY	10:30 A.M.
	Monday, February 29th,	L E A P Y E A R D A Y	12:00 P.M.
	Tuesday, March 01st,	AGIASMOS (Holy Water Blessing)	11:00 A.M.
	Thursday, March 03rd,	TSIKNOPEMPTI OBSERVANCE	All Day
	Saturday, March 05th,	FIRST PSYCHOSABBATON	9:00 A.M- 11:00 A.M.
	Sunday, March 06th,	APOKREES – CARNIVALE LITURGY	10:30 A.M.

AGAPE COFFEE Hour Fellowship: is being hosted by the Ladies Philoptochos Society In WhiteHall. Join us after Divine Liturgy for refreshments.

ADULT EDUCATION: Emmaus Lecture Series continues with the MARRIAGE SACRAMENT in ORTHODOXY on Thursday evening, March 10th, HOLY CROSS PARISH 8401 Ridge Boulevard, Brooklyn, WITH HOMILIST Fr. Michael Elias of the Antiochian Archdiocese of America. Refreshments will be served at 8:00 P.M. Everyone is welcome!

TSIKNOPEMPTI EVENT: The traditional farewell to meat products is celebrated on the last Thursday before HOLY LENT. This year's festivity by HELLENIC PUBLIC RADIO (COSMOS FM.) is at Terrace on the Park, Thursday, March 03rd. at 7:00 P.M. Dining, dancing, live orchestra of Greek music, Prizes and more.... – Tickets are \$100. (one hundred dollars each). All proceeds go to the support of HELLENIC PUBLIC RADIO.

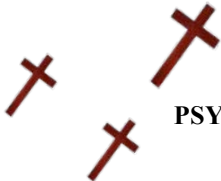
BISHOP'S VISITATION: We are please to receive His Grace + DEMETRIOS Bishop Of Mokissos (Auxiliary to the Metropolis of Chicago, who will preach the homily on SUNDAY, March 6th. His Grace is a most welcomed guest who has made many appearances on a pastoral level to our parish. POLLA TA ETI DESPOTA AGIE!

MR. MRS. MS. CLUB: After a two month respite due to the inclement weather of January and February, will host heir MARCH 8th. Tuesday night pizza party AT 7:00 P.M in WhiteHall. Everyone is cordially invited to share the fun and join the 'club '. There is NO CHARGE to attend the event. For further details contact SYLVIA VELLIOS (718) 763 –7077.



SENIOR CLUB NEWS: Please take note of the 'Seniors' programming for the month of March. There's plenty to do and share. Come down any Wednesday afternoon from 1:00 – 5:00 P.M. And H A V E F U N !

DAUGHTERS of PENELOPE : Chapter #33 DEMETRA, will host a BINGO NIGHT on Monday, March 07th, in WHITEHALL at 7:00 P.M. refreshments, prizes with a donation of \$10.00 for the FIRST CARD and \$1.00/xx for additional cards. OPEN TO ALL ... FUN TIME FOR YOU!



PSYCHOSABBATA (Saturday of All Souls) Three Saturdays March 05th, 12th and 19th- 9:00 – 11:00 A.M

BOY SCOUT TROOP PASTA LUNCHEON – Sunday MARCH 13th, (support the troop) 12:00P.M.

LENT COMMENCES (TESSARRAKOSTI) – Monday MARCH 14th



A.H.E.P.A. Chapter #200 Coney Island Hosts FREE the SARAKOSTINANO DINNER, (LENTEN FOODS ONLY) Monday March 14th **FREEEVERYONE IS INVITED** Congratulations and best wishes Jimmy Kokotas ,President.

U.P.K. REGISTRATION is NOW GOING ON at THREE HIERARCHS SCHOOL for children born in 2012. This is accredited U.P.K. of the Department of Education of the City of New York. IT IS TUITION FREE. All 4 year olds born in 2012 are eligible to attend full day classes from 8:00 A.M. to 3☺) P.M. with snacks and Lunch provided by the CITYFREE. Call the administration at (347) 729 – 0446 Ms. Eugenia the Principal , or Ms. Georgia the Secretary for full details. don't miss this opportunity to give your child a 'HEAD START' in formal education through UNIVERSAL PRE – KINDERGARTEN. CALL NOW!

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)

MEMORIALS TODAY: + ALEXANDER GORBUNOV + KOZLOV FAMILY
MEMORIALS NEXT WEEK: +CHRYSOULA (Chryssie) COSTANTAKOS +INESSA VLADYSIK

Hellenic Public Radio-Cosmos FM on WNYE 91.5
&
The Hellenic-American Chamber of Commerce
Invites you

"Tsiknopempti" 2016 – Apokriatiko Xefantoma
For all its members, volunteers, producers and audience!
Thursday, March 3rd - 7:00 p.m.
@
Terrace on the Park

Traditional Tsiknopempti Feast...Live Greek Music...with Grigaris
Maninakis & the Mikrokosmos Ensemble

Ticket price: \$ 100.00
For more info & RSVP:
718-204-8900 or cosmosfm@cosmosfm.org



Masks are optional



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THREE HIERARCHS PARISH SENIOR CLUB NEWSLETTER MARCH 2016



Wednesday March 02nd,

Regular Meeting
B I N G O
Coffee and sweets
1:00 P.M.

Wednesday March 09th,



CLOCKS GO FORWARD!
WE ALL GAIN AN HOUR ON SUNDAY
Lecture on Daylight Saving Time – WHY?
B I N G O ... if we have time.
Coffee and sweets if there's time
Has anyone ' - got - ' the time?
1:00 P.M.



Wednesday, March 16th,



Saint Patrick's Day Party
Wearing of the GREEN'
Irish folklore, Shamrocks,
leprechauns, and pots o 'gold.
IRISH SODABREAD, jellies, jams,
fruits and ' NUTS ".... and we have plenty
of " them."
B I N G O
Coffee and refreshments and IRISH TEA.
1:00 P.M.

Wednesday March 23rd,



EVANGELISMOS (Annunciation)
Greek Independence Day Feast
Hellenic sweets and treats for the
holiday, with Folk Greek Dance.
B I N G O and coffee and sweets
1:00 P.M.



Wednesday March 30th,



APRIL FOOL'S DAY PARTY
Jokes and pranks for all.
LENTEN LUNCHEON HOSTED
B I N G O
LENTEN SWEETS and COFFEE
1:00 P.M.



SPECIAL PLANS: are in order for the club to visit
SHEEPSHEAD BAY UNITED ARTISTS to see
Big Fat Greek Wedding #2
afternoon matinee showing
Wednesday, APRIL 6th,to be announced!

BLESSED LENTEN SEASON TO ALL!

HELEN PAVLIDES



PRESIDENT



ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ

ΣΥΝΤΟΜΟΝ ΚΗΡΥΓΜΑ



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

Περίοδος Δ' - Έτος ΑΓ' Φλώρινα - ἀριθμ. φύλλου 1930	Κυριακή τοῦ Ἀσώτου 28 Φεβρουαρίου 2016 ἑσπ.	Συντάκτης (†) ἐπίσκοπος Αύγουστίνος Ν. Καντιώτης
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Οἱ δικαιολογίες τῆς ἀπιστίας

Ἡ ἀπιστία, ἀγαπητοί μου, δὲν ἔχει νὰ δώσῃ κάτι θετικό· εἶνε μόνο ἀρνησις. Βλέπει τὸ οἰκοδόμημα τοῦ Χριστιανισμοῦ κι ἀπὸ σατανική λύσσα θέλει νὰ τὸ γκρεμίσῃ, νὰ γίνῃ νεκροθάφτης ἐνὸς ψυχικοῦ πολιτισμοῦ. Ζηλεύει τὴ δόξα τοῦ Ἡροστράτου ἐκείνου, ποὺ πυρπόλησε τὸ ναὸ τῆς Ἀρτέμιδος στὴν Ἐφεσο. Καὶ μπορεῖ μὲν ν' ἀποτυγχάνουν οἱ προσπάθειες τῶν ἀνθρώπων τῆς ἀπιστίας, φαίνεται ὅμως ἡ ἐγκληματικὴ πρόθεσί τους ν' ἀφαιρέσουν ἀπὸ τὰ στήθη τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τὸ πολυτιμότερο στοιχεῖο τῆς ζωῆς του, τὴν πίστι στὸ Χριστό. Χωρὶς νὰ προσφέρουν τίποτα, **ζητοῦν ν' ἀφαιρέσουν τὸ πᾶν, ὅ,τι ὁμορφαίνει τὴν ἀνθρώπινη ζωὴ.** Ὁ Ντοστογιέφσκυ γράφει γι' αὐτούς: «Ἐκεῖνοι ποὺ προτείνουν τὸ μηδὲν εἶνε οἱ λεκέδες τῆς σκέψεως, οἱ ἐχθροὶ τῆς προσωπικότητος, οἱ ἐχθροὶ τῆς ἐλευθερίας».

Οἱ ἀπιστοὶ δὲν δίνουν τίποτα. Ἀπὸ τὸ στόμα καὶ τὰ βιβλία τους ἀκούγεται «Δὲν ὑπάρχει Θεός, ψυχὴ, μεταφυσικὸς κόσμος». Ἀλλὰ τότε τί ὑπάρχει; Δὲν λένε τίποτα. Τὸ δὲ χειρότερο ποῖο εἶνε· τοὺς ζητοῦμε ν' ἀποδείξουν αὐτὸ τὸ «Δὲν ὑπάρχει» καὶ δὲν τὸ κάνουν, γιατί **δὲν ἔχουν ἐπιχειρήματα**· ἢ, ἂν ἀπαντήσουν κάτι, εἶνε τόσο ἀνόητο ὥστε θυμίζει τὸ ψαλμικὸ «*Ἐῖπεν ἄφρων ἐν καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ· Οὐκ ἔστι Θεός*» (Ψαλμ. 115). Ζητοῦν νὰ ξερριζώσουν τὸ καρποφόρο δέντρο τοῦ Χριστιανισμοῦ, ἀλλὰ στὴ θέσι του δὲν ἔχουν νὰ φυτέψουν οὔτε ἓνα δεντράκι.

Οἱ ἀπιστοὶ δὲν δημιουργοῦν κάτι νέο· τὸ μόνο ποὺ κάνουν εἶνε νὰ επικρίνουν, νὰ βρίσκουν τρωτὰ δῆθεν στὸν Χριστιανισμό. **Δὲν πιστεύουμε**, λένε, ὅ,τι διδάσκει ἡ Θρησκεία, διότι πρῶτον δὲν τὰ βλέπουμε, δεῦτερον δὲν τὰ ἐννοοῦμε, καὶ τρίτον δὲν εἴμαστε εὐπιστες γριουῦλες ἀλλὰ ἐπιστήμονες. Ἔτσι ζητοῦν νὰ δικαιολογήσουν τὴ στάσι τους. Ἄς ἐξετάσουμε λοιπὸν σύντομα αὐτὲς τὶς δικαιολογίες τῆς ἀπιστίας.

Α'. «Δὲν τὰ πιστεύουμε, διότι δὲν τὰ βλέπου-

με», λένε. Ἀλλὰ, κύριοι, ὅ,τι διδάσκει ἡ θρησκεία μας δὲν εἶνε κάτι ὑλικό, ὥστε νὰ μπορούμε νὰ τὸ γνωρίσουμε μὲ τὶς αἰσθήσεις· ἀνάγεται στὴν πνευματικὴ σφαῖρα, καὶ ὁ πνευματικὸς κόσμος προσεγγίζεται μόνο μὲ τὸ κατάλληλο ὄργανο. Ὅπως δὲν μπορεῖ κανεὶς νὰ ταξιδέψῃ στὴ θάλασσα χρησιμοποιώντας ἀντὶ γιὰ ἀτμόπλοιο ἓνα αὐτοκίνητο, ἔτσι καὶ γιὰ νὰ γνωρίσῃ τὸν πνευματικὸν κόσμον τῆς Θρησκείας **ἀπαιτοῦνται τὰ κατάλληλα ὄργανα.**

Ἐκτὸς αὐτοῦ, ἂν θέσουμε ὡς κανὸνα τὸ «παραδέχομαι μόνο ὅ,τι βλέπω», τότε **ὁ κύκλος τῶν γνώσεων περιορίζεται πολὺ.** Ὅπως παρατήρησε ὁ Σενέκας, τὸ μεγαλύτερο μέρος τῶν γνώσεών μας στηρίζεται πάνω στὴν πίστι· δίνοντας πίστι στοὺς ἄλλους ἐπαυξάνουμε τὶς γνώσεις μας. Δὲν εἶδαμε τὸν ποταμὸ Μισσισιππὴ, τὸν καταρράκτη Νιαγάρα, τὰ Ἰμαλία ὄρη, τὴν Ἀμερικὴ, τὴν Αὐστραλία, τὸ Βόρειο καὶ τὸ Νότιο Πόλο· παραδεχόμεστε ὅμως, δηλαδὴ πιστεύουμε, ὅτι ὑπάρχουν, γιατί ἄλλοι μᾶς ἔδωσαν σχετικὲς πληροφορίες. Δὲν παρευρεθήκαμε στὶς μάχες τοῦ Μαραθῶνος, τῶν Θερμοπυλῶν, τῶν Πλαταιῶν, ἀλλὰ ἔχουμε ἐμπιστοσύνη στὸν Ἡρόδοτο ποὺ τὶς περιγράφει. Δὲν ἀκούσαμε μὲ τ' αὐτιά μας τὸν Σωκράτη, ἐμπιστευόμεστε ὅμως ὅσα ἔγραψαν γι' αὐτὸν οἱ μαθηταὶ του Πλάτων καὶ Ξενοφῶν.

Παντοῦ χρειάζεται ἡ πίστι! Χωρὶς αὐτὴν θὰ νεκρωθοῦν ἡ κοινωνικὴ ζωὴ, τὰ σχολεῖα, τὰ δικαστήρια, τὰ πάντα. Ὁ δικαστὴς δικάζει πιστεύοντας στὶς καταθέσεις τῶν μαρτύρων, ὁ μαθητὴς μορφώνεται πιστεύοντας στοὺς δασκάλους καὶ στὰ βιβλία, ὁ ἀσθενὴς θεραπεύεται πιστεύοντας στὸν φαρμακοποιό. Ὅλοι βαδίζουν μὲ τὴν πίστι. Αὐτοὶ λοιπὸν ποὺ παντοῦ χρησιμοποιοῦν τὴν πίστι, θὰ τὴν ἀποκλείσουν ἀπὸ τὴν Θρησκεία;

Μὲ τὴ λογικὴ «Δὲν τὰ βλέπουμε, ἄρα εἶνε ἀνύπαρκτα» ἀνύπαρκτος δὲν θὰ ἦταν μόνο ὁ πνευματικὸς κόσμος τῆς Θρησκείας ἀλλὰ **καὶ μεγάλο μέρος τοῦ φυσικοῦ ὑλικοῦ κόσμου.**

Παράδειγμα τὰ ἄστρα· οἱ ἀστρονόμοι λίγα βλέπουν μὲ γυμνὸ μάτι, λίγο περισσότερα βλέπουν μὲ τὸ τηλεσκόπιο, ἀλλὰ τὰ πιὸ πολλὰ δὲν μποροῦν νὰ τὰ δοῦν μὲ τὰ μέσα ποὺ διαθέτουν, χωρὶς ἐν τούτοις νὰ ἀρνοῦνται τὴν ὑπαρξί τους. Ἄν λοιπὸν γι' αὐτὸ τὸν ὑλικό, ἀπτό καὶ ὄρατο κόσμον δὲν ἔχη ἰσχὺ τὸ «παραδέχομαι μόνο ὅ,τι βλέπω», πῶς ἔχουν τὴν ἀξίωσι αὐτὸ νὰ ἐφαρμοσθῆ στὸν πνευματικὸ ἄορατο κόσμον;

«Ἐν τάξει», συμφωνοῦν, δὲν τὰ βλέπουμε, μὰ τοῦλάχιστον νὰ τὰ ἐννοοῦμε· ὅσα ὅμως λέει ἡ Θρησκεία εἶνε τόσο ἀκατανόητα!». Δηλαδή

Β'. «Δὲν πιστεύουμε ὄχι πλέον διότι δὲν τὰ βλέπουμε, ἀλλὰ διότι **δὲν τὰ ἐννοοῦμε**», λένε. Εἶνε ὅμως εἰς θέσιν ἡ ἀνθρώπινη διάνοια, ὅσο δυνατὴ κι ἂν εἶνε, νὰ τὰ ἐννοήσῃ ὅλα; Ὅχι ἀσφαλῶς, ἀπαντᾷ ἡ φιλοσοφία· διότι αὐτὴ εἶνε πεπερασμένη, ἐνῶ τὸ Θεῖον εἶνε ἀπειρο. Ἡ διάνοια καὶ τοῦ μεγαλυτέρου φιλοσόφου κάπου σταματᾷ· μπροστά του ἀπλώνεται ἡ χώρα τοῦ ὑπερφυσικοῦ, τοῦ ἀκαταλήπτου. Καὶ ὁμολογεῖ μὲν τὴν ἀδυναμία του νὰ κατανοήσῃ τὸ μυστηριώδες, δὲν ἰσχυρίζεται ὅμως ὅτι εἶνε ἀνύπαρκτο. **Κάθε τι ἀκατανόητο δὲν εἶνε καὶ ἀνύπαρκτο.**

Πεπερασμένη ὄντως ἡ διάνοια τοῦ ἀνθρώπου· **εἶνε δυνατόν σὲ ἓνα ποτήρι νὰ χωρέσῃ ὁ ὠκεανός;** Αὐτὸ διδάχθηκε ὁ ἱερός Αὐγουστίνος ἀπὸ ἓνα παιδί, ποὺ προσπαθοῦσε στὴν ἀμμουδιὰ νὰ ἀδειάσῃ τὴ θάλασσα μέσα σὲ ἓνα μικρὸ λάκκο. —Ματαιοπονεῖς, παιδί μου, τοῦ εἶπε ὁ Αὐγουστίνος. —Κ' ἐσὺ ὅμως ματαιοπονεῖς, τοῦ ἀπήντησε τὸ παιδί (ποὺ ἦταν ἄγγελος), ἂν νομίζης ὅτι στὴ διάνοιά σου μπορεῖ νὰ χωρέσῃ τὸ μυστήριον τῆς ἁγίας Τριάδος.

Ὁ Χριστιανισμὸς ἔχει στὴ διδασκαλία του μυστηριώδη πράγματα. Ἀλλὰ μήπως τὸ μυστηριώδες ὑπάρχει μόνο στὴ Θρησκεία; **τὸ μυστηριώδες ὑπάρχει παντοῦ,** καὶ στὸν ὑλικὸ ἀκόμη κόσμον. Στὸ ἐρώτημα, τί εἶνε φῶς; ὁ Οὐλπιανὸς γράφει· «Τὸ φῶς ... παραμένει μέσα στὴ φύσι τὸ πιὸ μυστηριώδες καὶ τὸ πιὸ ἄγνωστο φαινόμενο». Τί εἶνε φύσις; Ὁ Γκαϊτε λέει· «Ἡ φύσις κρύβει πάντοτε μέσα της κάτι προβληματικὸ, στὸ ὁποῖο ἡ ἀνθρώπινη διάνοια ἀδυνατεῖ νὰ εἰσδύσῃ· τὸ μυστήριον, καὶ μέρα μεσημέρι ἀκόμη, εἶνε παντοῦ». Καὶ ὁ Φίχτε λέει· «Ὅ,τι δὲν μποροῦμε νὰ κατανοήσουμε οὔτε νὰ ἐξηγήσουμε, τὸ ὀνομάζουμε φύσις». Τί εἶνε ζωὴ; Ὁ Μπουρμπίστερ λέει· «Τί εἶνε ἡ ζωὴ, τί εἶνε ζωικὴ δύναμις, δὲν τὸ γνωρίζουμε, ὅπως δὲν θὰ γνωρίζαμε ἀκόμη νὰ ποῦμε καὶ τί εἶνε γενικὰ κάθε δύναμις». Τί εἶνε ἔλξις; Ὁ Νεύτων εἶπε· «Τοὺς νόμους τῆς παγκοσμίου ἔλξεως τοὺς γνωρίζω, ἀλλ' ἐάν μὲ ρωτήσετε τί εἶνε ἔλξις, δὲν ἔχω νὰ δώσω ἀπάντησι».

Καὶ ὁ ἀστρονόμος Τζέημς Τζήνς εἶπε· «Μόνο τοὺς νόμους ποὺ διέπουν τὶς μεταβολὲς τῶν ὄντων μποροῦμε νὰ γνωρίσουμε, ὄχι ὅμως καὶ τὴν πραγματικὴ οὐσία τῶν ὄντων».

Τὸ μυστήριον ὑπάρχει ὄχι μόνο στὰ μέγιστα δημιουργήματα ἀλλὰ **καὶ στὰ ἐλάχιστα.** Ἐνας Βέλγος ἐπιστήμονας, ὁ Μωρίς Μάιτερλινκ, ἀφοῦ μελέτησε χρόνια τὴ μέλισσα, ἔβγαλε ἓνα σπουδαῖο βιβλίον στὸν πρόλογο τοῦ ὁποίου γράφει· «Ὅσο ἀσχολεῖται κανεὶς μὲ τὶς μέλισσες, τόσο διδάσκεται νὰ ἀγνοῇ τὰ βάθη τῆς πραγματικῆς τους ὑπάρξεως».

Ἄνθρωπε, τὴ μέλισσα δὲν μπορεῖς νὰ κατανοήσῃς, καὶ ζητᾷς νὰ κατανοήσῃς τὸ Θεό, νὰ ἐξιχνιάσῃς τὰ μυστήρια τῆς Θρησκείας; **Πόσο ἀνόητος καὶ ὑπερήφανος εἶσαι!**

Γ'. Καὶ λοιπὸν προβάλλει τώρα τὴν τελευταία του δικαιολογία ὁ ἄπιστος· «Μοῦ ζητᾷτε νὰ εἶμαι εὐπιστος σὰν μιὰ γριουλά καὶ σὰν ἓνας χωρικός· μὰ εἶμαι ἐγγράμματος, ἐπιστήμονας, θέλω νὰ ἐρευνῶ· ἐσεῖς ἔχετε ὡς δόγμα τὸ «πίστευε καὶ μὴ ἐρεῦνα»».

Ὅχι, κύριε· τὸ «πίστευε καὶ μὴ ἐρεῦνα» δὲν εἶνε ἀρχὴ τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας, οὔτε ὑπάρχει στὴν ἁγία Γραφή. Στὴ Γραφὴ ὑπάρχει κάτι ἄλλο· «**Ἐρευνᾶτε τὰς Γραφάς,**» εἶπε ὁ Χριστός (Mt 5,39). Καὶ κάλεσε τὸν δύσπιστον Θωμᾶ νὰ τὸν ψηλαφήσῃ. Καὶ μέχρι σήμερα καλεῖ ὁποῖον ἔχει ἀμφιβολίας νὰ μελετήσῃ βαθύτερα τὴ Θρησκεία του, καὶ θὰ πεισθῆ γιὰ τὴν ἀλήθειά της. Ἀρκεῖ νὰ μελετήσῃ καὶ νὰ ἐρευνήσῃ χωρὶς προκατάληψι, ν' ἀκούσῃ ἀμερόληπτα καὶ τὶς δύο πλευρὲς.

Ἐσὺ λοιπὸν, ποὺ διάβασες τὰ συγγράμματα τῶν ἀθῶνων ὑλιστῶν, **ἐρευνήσε τώρα καὶ τὴν ἄλλη πλευρά.** Ἀγόρασε τὴν Καινὴ καὶ τὴν Παλαιὰ Διαθήκη καὶ μελέτησέ τις μέχρι τέλους. Καὶ γιὰ τὶς ἀπορίες, ποὺ θὰ σοῦ γεννηθοῦν, ζήτησε τὰ συγγράμματα τῶν πατέρων τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, καθὼς καὶ ἀπολογητικὰ ἔργα νεωτέρων συγγραφέων, ὅπως τοῦ Ἰωάννου Σκαλτσούνη, τοῦ Ἰγνατίου Μοσχάκη, τοῦ Γρηγορίου Παπαμιχαήλ, τοῦ Παναγιώτη Τρεμπέλα. Μετὰ ἀπὸ μία ὠλοκληρωμένη μελέτη θὰ δῆς ὅτι ἐκεῖνη ποὺ βγαίνει ἠττημένη εἶνε ὄχι ἡ Χριστιανικὴ πίστι ἀλλὰ ἡ ἀπιστία.

Φίλε ἀναγνώστα, μὴν ἀκούς τί λένε οἱ ἄπιστοι γιὰ νὰ δικαιολογήσουν τὴ στάσι τους. Ἄφησέ τους. Ἐσὺ **προχώρησε μὲ τὴν πίστι,** καὶ ἔτσι θὰ ἐπιτύχῃς τοὺς ὑψηλοὺς σκοποὺς τῆς ζωῆς. Θὰ νικήσῃς, γιὰτὶ μόνο ὅσοι πιστεύουν, αὐτοὶ νικοῦν καὶ θριαμβοῦν.

(†) 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

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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 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

Imitating the Prodigal

Do not lose heart, O soul, do not grieve; pronounce not over yourself a final judgment for the multitude of your sins; do not commit yourself to fire; do not say: The Lord has cast me from his face. Such words are not pleasing to God. Can it be that he who has fallen cannot get up? Can it be that he who has turned away cannot turn back again? Do you not hear how kind the Father is to a prodigal?

Do not be ashamed to turn back and say boldly: I will arise and go to my Father. Arise and go! He will accept you and will not reproach you, but rather rejoice at your return. He awaits you; just do not be ashamed and do not hide from the face of God as did Adam.

It was for your sake that Christ was crucified; so will he cast you aside? He knows

who oppresses us. He knows that we have no other help but him alone. Christ knows that man is miserable. Do not give yourself up to despair and apathy, assuming that you have been prepared for the fire. Christ derives no consolation from thrusting us into the fire; He gains nothing if He sends us into the abyss to be tormented.

Imitate the prodigal son: leave the city that starves you. Come and beseech him and you shall behold the glory of God. Your face shall be enlightened and you will rejoice in the sweetness of paradise. Glory to the Lord and Lover of mankind who saves us!

St. Ephrem the Syrian

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