

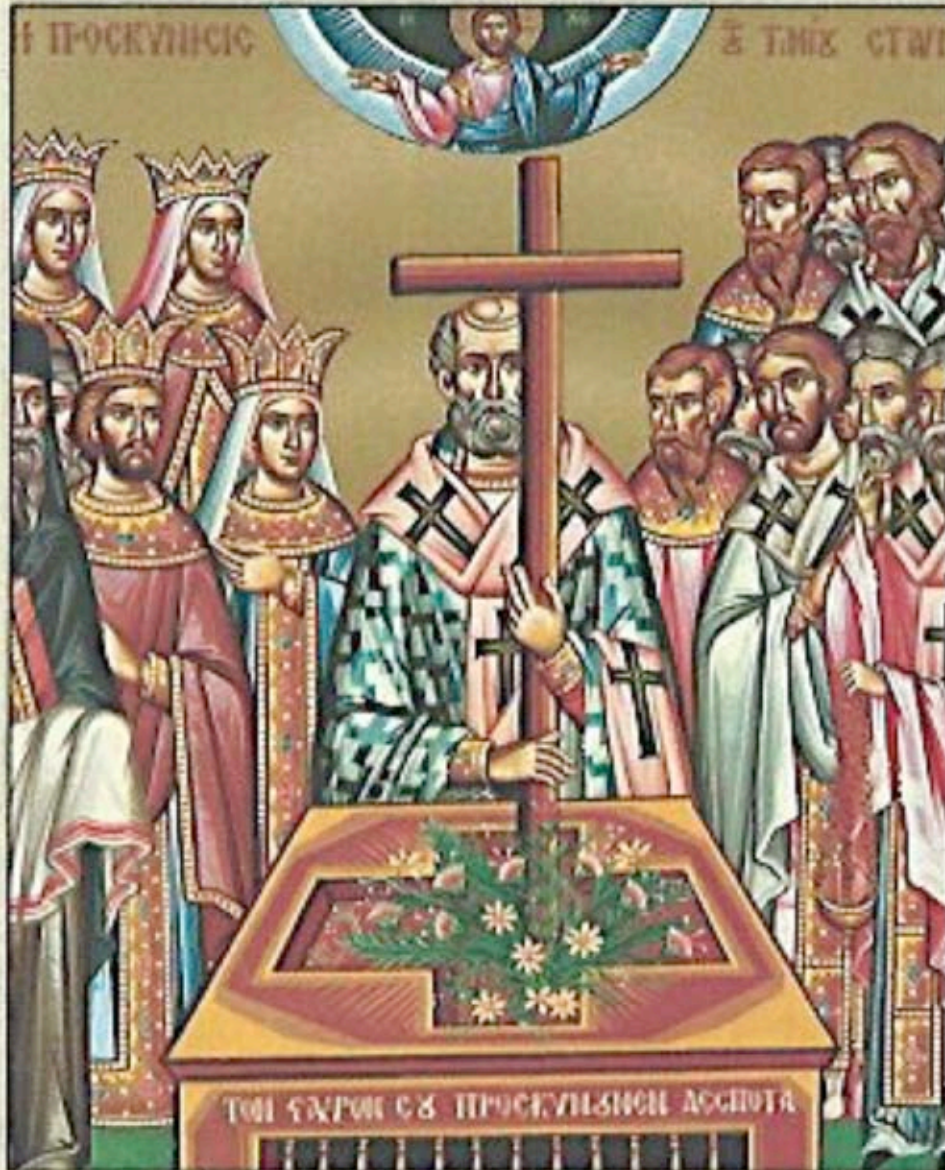


DIRECT ARCHDIOCESAN
DISTRICT

THREE HIERARCHS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

SUNDAY WEEKLY BULLETIN April 3rd, 2016
V. Rev. Archimandrite Eugene N. Pappas

THIRD SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS



Icon of the Veneration of the Holy Cross

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' ὁμοίότητα, χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας. Προσερχώμεθα οὖν μετὰ παρρησίας τῷ θρόνῳ τῆς χάριτος, ἵνα λάβωμεν ἔλεον, καὶ χάριν εὐρωμεν εἰς εὐκαιρον 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 ἑαυτῷ τις λαμβάνει τὴν τιμὴν, ἀλλὰ καλούμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, καθάπερ καὶ Ἀαρών. Οὕτως καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς οὐχ ἑαυτὸν ἐδόξασεν γεννηθῆναι ἀρχιερέα, ἀλλ' ὁ καλήσας 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 according to 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 ἀκολουθεῖτω 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 εἰάν κερδήσῃ τὸν κόσμον ὅλον, καὶ ζημιωθῇ τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ; ἢ τί δώσει ἄνθρωπος ἀντάλλαγμα τῆς ψυχῆς αὐτοῦ; ὃς γὰρ εἰάν ἐπαισχυνηθῇ με καὶ τοὺς ἐμούς λόγους ἐν τῇ γενεᾷ ταύτῃ τῇ μοιχαλίδι καὶ ἁμαρτωλῷ, καὶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐπαισχυνησεται αὐτόν 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.

DEVOTIONS THIS WEEK:

Sunday,	April 03rd,	VENERATION of the HOLY CROSS RELIC	Noon
		Solemn Procession and Litany.	
Wednesday,	April 06th,	PRE-SANCTIFIED Liturgy	6:30 P.M.
Thursday,	April 07th,	shut – in EUCHARISTIC VISITS	11:00 A.M.
		(please call the OFFICE for an appointment)	
Friday,	April 08th,	4th, STANZA of the SALUTATIONS	7:00 P.M.
Sunday,	April 10th,	GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY PARADE N.Y.C.	
		Buses will depart from church at 1:00 P.M.	
		Reserve your seat NOW!	

AGAPE COFFEE FELLOWSHIP HOUR is being hosted today by the Ladies Philoptochos Society in WHITEHALL. Please join us for refreshments.

CHURCHINGS TODAY:

“ CONSTANCE PENELOPE ‘ new born daughter of Christopher and Alexa (PEIST) FRANCESE. NA SAS ZESE!
 “ CHRYSOVOULANTIS GEORGE “ new born son of George and Irene (PLEVRITIS) XENAKIS. NA SAS ZESE!

RELIC of the HOLY CROSS: which is enshrined on the Sacred Altar throughout the year is traditionally processed through the faithful on the 3rd, SUNDAY of LENT (STAVROPROSKYNISIS) and the EXALTATION of the CROSS on September 14th. We ask you to let the shadow of the cross relic fall upon you as we kneel in solemn prayer for the intentions of our soul. **MAY YOU BE BLESSED!**

POPE SAINT GREGORY of ROME an Orthodox Saint of the undivided CHURCH prescribed the PRE – SANCTIFIED LITURGY of the Lenten period. Have you NOT attended any of these ‘unique’, inspirational and most moving liturgical services? Make an effort THIS WEDNESDAY EVENING 6:00 – 7:00 P.M. after work and before your dinnerreceive the LIVING LORD in the EUCHARIST! you will never be the same again. This coming Wednesday April 06, at 6:00 P.M. - 7:00 P.M.

NARTHEX RENOVATION COMMENCES: Please excuse our narthex conditions while we are under renovation and renewal of the area. With your support and assistance the finished product will be a pride to our church. Solicitation of donations for the NARTHEX will commence after PASCHA. Please consider a POST – PASCHA memorial tribute to our loved one.

LENTEN FULL SCHEDULE of all services from NOW until HOLY WEEK has been printed and mailed to all member stewards of the parish. If you have NOT received one please register with the church office NOW! Upon request of the staff, copies of the schedule are available in the OFFICE. Take special note of the evening sacred devotions and liturgies.

PASCHA DONATIONS :are requested for the Holy Week Services. Please do not purchase any items unless you confirm with Father Eugene as to what is required. Too much of one thing and little of another does not help us. **DO NOT SPEAK TO FATHER AT THE DISTRIBUTION OF ANTIDORON, P L E A S E !** See him in the office after services or by telephone. **OUR NEEDS EACH YEAR:**

1. Aromatics for the Sacrament of Euchelaion
2. PURE OLIVE OIL FOR THE ANOINTINGS OF HOLY WEDNESDAY,
3. Large King Size WHITE FLAT sheets for the APOKTHELOSIS of Good Friday afternoon Descent from the Cross.
4. Funeral Wreaths for the Holy Cross CRUCIFIXION of Good Friday. Dimensions are available. upon request.
5. Sacramental wine for altar use Holy Thursday, Holy Saturday and PASCHA. Special wine is prescribed, SO ASK!
6. VOLUNTEERS! VOLUNTEERS! VOLUNTEERS! To help weave 5,000 palm crosses for PALM SUNDAY distribution. Other hands to help DYE the RED EGGS of PASCHA night!

PASCHAL (Easter Card) In anticipation of the Resurrection of our Lord, and keeping this Great Lent period of spiritual reflection, we are offering you the opportunity to be included in our “Parish Easter Card”. Your name will be listed on the card for a nominal donation of \$20.00. In this manner you will benefit our Church, sending the good news of our Lord’s Resurrection to over 1,000 families and friends of the Three Hierarchs parish. If you wish to be listed on the Parish Easter Card, please complete the form sent to you and return it in the enclosed envelope, together with your check payable to “Three Hierarchs Church:.. DEADLINE IS SUNDAY, APRIL 10, 2016.

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 CITY.....FREE. 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: + EILEEN PINES



SELECT STUDENTS OF THE GREEK SCHOOL WITH PRINCIPAL FR. EUGENE AND TWO FACULTY MEMBERS, MS. ZOE ANASTASAKOS AND MS. MARIA HALKIAS AT THE INDEPENDENCE PRESENTATION.

THREE HIERARCHS PARISH SENIOR CLUB NEWSLETTER APRIL 2016



Wednesday

April 06th,



UNITED ARTISTS THEATER DAY

Sheepshead Bay

MY BIG FAT GREEK WEDDING II

MOVIE ON APRIL 6TH AT 11:30 A.M.

Car Pooling from church AT 11:00 A.M.

KOFFEE and KAKE at KOUROS DINER!

(members are treated by the club)

Wednesday

April 13th,



COMMUNION B R U N C H

Pre-Sanctified Liturgy

10:00 A.M.

Brunch

11:00 A.M.

B I N G O

Coffee and Biscuits

Wednesday,

April 20th,



PALM WEAVING DAY

(starting at 11:00 A.M.)

11:00 A.M.

B I N G O

Coffee and Lenten sweets

WE NEED YOUR NIMBLE FINGERS !!!!

Wednesday

April 27th,

NO MEETING DAY – HOLY WEEK

Anointings
and



3:00-4:00 P.M.

7:00-8:00 P.M.

We wish to extend to all our members a most holy, happy and
healthful **PASCHA. CHRISTOS ANESTI! ALITHOS ANESTI!**

Up-coming events:

Sunday, April 10th,

GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY PARADE: 5TH Avenue

Buses from church

NOON

Friday April 15th,

AKATHISTOS HYMN to the Blessed Virgin

7:00-8:30 P.M.

Monday, April 18,19, and 20th,

PALM WEAVERS needed for the crosses of Palm Sunday



11:00 A.M.

Wednesday, April 20th,

PRE-SANCTIFIED LITURGY and POT LUCK DINNER

(Served by the Daughters of Penelope)

6:00 P.M.

DON' MISS ANYTHING!

HELEN PAVLIDES - PRESIDENT





ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ

ΣΥΝΤΟΜΟΝ ΚΗΡΥΓΜΑ



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

Περίοδος Δ' - Ἔτος ΛΓ' Φλώρινα - ἀριθμ. φύλλου 1939	Κυρ. Γ' Νηστ. Σταυρ/σεως (Ἑβρ. 4,14 - 5,6) 3 Ἀπριλίου 2016	Συντάκτης (†) ἐπίσκοπος Αύγουστίνος Ν. Καντιώτης
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Ταπεινοὶ στὸ θρόνο

«Προσερχώμεθα οὖν μετὰ παρρησίας τῷ θρόνῳ τῆς χάριτος, ἵνα λάβωμεν ἔλεον καὶ χάριν εὐρωμεν εἰς εὐκαιρον βοήθειαν» (Ἑβρ. 4,16)

Ὁ ἄνθρωπος, ἀγαπητοί μου, εἶνε ὑπερήφανος, πολὺ ὑπερήφανος, ἰδίως ὁ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ αἰῶνος μας. Καυχᾶται γιὰ τὴ δύναμί του, γιὰ τὰ πλοῦτη, τὴν τέχνη, τὴν εὐφυΐα του, καὶ πρὸ παντὸς γιὰ τὴν ἐπιστήμη του. Ἄντε τώρα σ' ἓνα τέτοιο ἄνθρωπο νὰ μιλήσης γιὰ τὸ Θεό. Σήμερα, σοῦ λέει, πού πετᾶμε στὸ διάστημα, δὲν ἔχουμε ἀνάγκη ἀπὸ τὸ Θεό.

Ἀλλὰ πόσο πλανᾶται! Ὅσο κι ἂν προσδεύῃ ἢ ἐπιστήμη, ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἶνε ἓνα ἀσθενικὸ πλάσμα. Ὅπως λέει ὁ ψαλμωδός, «ὡς ἄνθος μαραίνεται καὶ ὡς ὄναρ παρέρχεται καὶ διαλύεται πᾶς ἄνθρωπος» (Ἑβρ. 3,11: βλ. Ψαλμ. 102,15. Ψλ. 142,15.30. Ψαλ. 49,8-11. Πέρ. 1,24). Μία σταγόνα αἷμα στὸν ἐγκέφαλο, ἓνα μικρόβιο, καὶ νὰ ὁ θάνατος.

Κι αὐτὰ τὰ μηχανήματα, γιὰ τὰ ὁποῖα καυχᾶται ἡ τεχνολογία, ἔγιναν ὁ μεγαλύτερος φόβος τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. Παράδειγμα τὰ αὐτοκίνητα. Κι αὐτὴ τὴν ὥρα ἴσως κάποιος κάπου σκοτώνεται κάτω ἀπ' τοὺς τροχοὺς... Καὶ ἀπὸ διαστημολογία ἀκόμη διὰ τοῦ ραδιοτηλεφώνου ἀκούστηκε κάποτε σπαρακτικὴ φωνή. Ἔνας ἀστροναύτης, ὄχι ἀπ' αὐτοὺς πού σώζονται κ' ἐπιστρέφουν ἀλλ' ἀπὸ ἐκείνους πού χάνονται, ἀκούστηκε νὰ φωνάζει: «Ἄχι σκοτάδι, ἀβυσσος, Θεέ μου...», κ' ἡ φωνὴ του ἔσβησε.

Ἔλα λοιπόν, ἄνθρωπε, μὲ τὰ μηχανήματα καὶ ὅλα τὰ ἐπιτεύγματά σου, καὶ δὲς ὅτι δὲν εἶσαι τίποτε. Ἀναγνώρισε τὴν ἀδυναμία, τὴν ἀσθένεια, τὴν ἐξάρτησί σου, καὶ ταπεινώσου. Δὲν ἔχεις ἀνάγκη τὸ Θεό; Τί λόγος εἶν' αὐτός;

Δὲν ζῆ τὸ λουλουδί χωρὶς νερό, τὸ πουλὶ χωρὶς ἀέρα, τὸ ψάρι ἔξω ἀπ' τὴ θάλασσα· καὶ ὁ ἄνθρωπος δὲν ζῆ χωρὶς Θεό. Εἶνε μία ἀνάγκη βαθυτάτη, ἀνεκρίζωτη ἀπὸ τὰ στήθη κάθε ἀνθρώπου, εἴτε κατοικεῖ στὰ σπήλαια εἴτε στοὺς οὐρανοξύστες, εἴτε φωτίζεται μὲ ὄχι εἴτε ἀνάβει ἠλεκτρικὲς λάμπες. **Ἔχει ἀνάγκη τὸ Θεό.**

Μά, θὰ μοῦ πῆτε, μᾶς ἀκούει ὁ Θεός; ἐκεῖ-

νος εἶνε τόσο ψηλά... Τί εἶπατε, ἀδελφοί μου; Ἐμεῖς δὲν πιστεύουμε σ' ἓνα Θεὸ πού βρίσκεται σὲ κάποια γωνία τοῦ ἀπείρου σύμπαντος καὶ βλέπει ἀπαθῶς τὴν κατάστασί μας· δὲν πιστεύουμε ὅπως οἱ Γιαπωνέζοι καὶ οἱ Κινέζοι καὶ οἱ Ἴνδοι ἢ οἱ ἀρχαῖοι εἰδωλολάτρες πρόγονοί μας. Ἐμεῖς πιστεύουμε σ' ἓνα Θεό — «τίς Θεὸς μέγας ὡς ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν;» (Ψαλμ. 76,14) — πού ἀπὸ τὰ ὕψη τοῦ οὐρανοῦ κατέβηκε ἐδῶ στὴ Γῆ κ' ἔγινε ἄνθρωπος· ἔκλαψε, πείνασε, δίψασε, πόνεσε, ὑπέστη ὅλα τὰ ἀνθρώπινα καὶ στὴ Γεθσημανῆ ἔσταξε «ὁ ἰδρῶς αὐτοῦ ὡσεὶ θρόμβοι αἵματος» (Ματθ. 26,44)· πάλεψε μὲ τὸ κακό, συκοφαντήθηκε καὶ σταυρώθηκε, γνώρισε ὅλη τὴν τραγωδία τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης ζωῆς, κ' εἶνε συμπαθὴς σ' ἐμᾶς. **Ἄς τρέξουμε λοιπὸν κοντὰ του,** ἄς προσπέσουμε στὰ ματωμένα πόδια τοῦ Ἐσταυρωμένου, κ' ἄς ποῦμε σ' αὐτὸν τὰ βάσανα καὶ τὴς θλίψεις μας, γιὰ νὰ βροῦμε «εὐκαιρον βοήθειαν», ὅπως λέει σήμερα ὁ ἀπόστολος (Ἑβρ. 4,16).

Ἄφου σᾶς εἰδεῖξα, ἀγαπητοί μου, τὴν ἀδυναμία τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, θὰ σᾶς δεῖξω τώρα μερικὲς περιπτώσεις πού ὁ ἀδύναμος ἄνθρωπος καταφεύγει στὸ Θεό καὶ ζητᾶει βοήθεια.

● **Ἀρρώστιας;** ἔχεις πέσει στὸ κρεβάτι κ' οἱ γιατροὶ σ' ἔχουν ξεγράψει; Μὴν ἀπελπισθῆς. Πάνω ἀπὸ γιατροὺς καὶ νοσοκομεῖα εἶνε ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὁ Ναζωραῖος. Σ' αὐτὸν νὰ καταφύγῃς. Κι ὅπως ὅταν ἦταν ἐδῶ στὴ Γῆ θεράπευσε τόσο ἀρρώστους, ἔτσι καὶ σήμερα θεραπεύει ἀρκεῖ νὰ τὸ ζητήσης. Δὲν εἶνε παραμῦθι αὐτό — ἄς φωνάζουν οἱ ἄπιστοι· εἶνε ἀλήθεια. Κ' ἐδῶ τώρα ὑπάρχουν κάποιοι πού, ἐνῶ ἀπογοητεύθηκαν ἀπὸ τοὺς γιατροὺς, ξαφνικὰ μὴ προσευχῆ τῆς μάνας κ' ἓνα δάκρυ στάθηκαν ἢ αἰτία νὰ θεραπευθοῦν. Ἀμέτρητα εἶνε τὰ παραδείγματα πού φωνάζουν, ὅτι παραπάνω ἀπ' ὅλα εἶνε ὁ Χριστός. Ἄς τρέξουμε κοντὰ σ'

αυτόν, πού εἶνε «ὁ ἰατρὸς τῶν ψυχῶν καὶ τῶν σωμάτων ἡμῶν» (βλ. Λευ. μετὰ τὸ Πῦρ ἡμῶν).

● Δὲν ἔχεις χρήματα, δὲν εἶσαι πλούσιος, δὲν ἔχεις καράβια, δὲν εἶσαι ἓνας ἐκμεταλλευτῆς πού θησαυρίζει, ἀλλὰ εἶσαι ἓνας φτωχὸς ἐργάτης πού δουλεύει σκληρὰ ἀπ' τὸ πρωὶ μέχρι τὸ βράδυ καὶ ποτίζει τὴ γῆ με ἰδρώτα καὶ δάκρυ; Νά ἔχης χαρὰ κ' ἐλπίδα. Ἔλα κοντὰ στὸ Χριστό· αὐτὸς ἦταν ὁ πρῶτος ἐργάτης τοῦ κόσμου.

● Εἶσαι οἰκογενειάρχης; παλεύεις με μύρια ἐμπόδια (ἰδιοτροπία συζύγου, αὐθάδεια παιδιῶν, προπέτεια τῆς κόρης, σκάνδαλα τῆς κοινωνίας); ἀγωνίζεσαι πῶς θὰ κρατήσης τὴν τιμὴ τοῦ σπιτιοῦ, πῶς θ' ἀναστήσης τὰ παιδιὰ σου, πῶς θὰ παντρεύῃς τὰ κορίτσια σου, πῶς θ' ἀνταποκριθῆς στὰ χρέη σου; – μόνο ἓνας πατέρας ξέρει τί ἀγῶνας γίνεται σήμερα μέσα στὸ χάος πού δημιούργησε μία γενεὰ ἀποστάτικα καὶ «μοιχαλὶς» (Mt 12:10-13). Τρέξε λοιπὸν στὸ Χριστό, πού εἶνε ὁ ἀληθινὸς φίλος τῆς οἰκογενείας. Γράψτε το· ὅπου πατήση τὸ πόδι τοῦ ὁ Χριστός, ἐκεῖ καὶ ἡ καλύβα γίνεται παράδεισος· ὅπου λείπει ὁ Χριστός, ἐκεῖ καὶ τὰ παλάτια γίνονται κολάσεις. Τρέξε κοντὰ του με πίστι. Δὲν ὑπάρχει ἄλλο στήριγμα στὸν κόσμο.

● Δὲν εἶπα ὅμως ἀκόμη τίποτα, ἀδέρφια μου. Τὴν ἁγία αὐτὴ ἡμέρα τῆς Σταυροπροσκυνήσεως, θὰ μοῦ ἐπιτρέψετε ν' ἀπευθύνω τὸ σπουδαιότερο ἐρώτημα. Δὲν σέ ρωτῶ τώρα ἂν εἶσαι ἄρρωστος ἢ ἐργάτης φτωχὸς ἢ οἰκογενειάρχης. Ἐνώπιον τοῦ Ἑσταυρωμένου καὶ τοῦ τιμίου Σταυροῦ, ἐρωτῶ: εἶσαι ἀμαρτωλός; Πρέπει ν' ἀπαντήσης σήμερα· σέ ὑποχρεώνει ὁ σταυρὸς νὰ πῆς ἂν εἶσαι ἀμαρτωλός. Ἄν πῆς «οὐκί», λές ψέματα· γιατί ἡ Γραφή λέει ὅτι, καὶ μιὰ μέρα ἀκόμα ἂν ζήσῃ ὁ ἄνθρωπος πάνω στὴ γῆ, εἶνε ἀδύνατον νὰ μείνῃ καθαρὸς καὶ ἀναμάρτητος (βλ. Mt 14:45 βλ. κτλ. Π. Παρμ. 20). Ἐνας μόνο εἶνε ὁ ὁσῖος καὶ ἀναμάρτητος, ὁ Κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστός· ἐμεῖς οἱ ἄλλοι εἶμαστε ἀμαρτωλοί.

Ποιὲς εἶνε οἱ ἀμαρτίες μας; Πάρε σήμερα τὴ ζυγαριὰ τοῦ σταυροῦ καὶ ζύγισε τὰ ἀμαρτήματά σου. Δὲν ἐννοῶ μόνο τις ἐξωτερικὲς πράξεις (μοιχεῖες, πορνείες, ἐγκλήματα)· ἀμαρτήματα εἶνε καὶ τὰ λόγια, ἀμαρτήματα εἶνε καὶ οἱ λογισμοί, οἱ κινήσεις τῆς ψυχῆς, ὄλου τοῦ συναισθηματικοῦ καὶ νοητικοῦ κόσμου μας. Κάθε ἀμαρτία, ὅπως εἶπε κάποιος, εἶνε μιὰ μαύρη πέτρα τῆς κολάσεως. Κι ἂν μαζέψῃς ὅλες αὐτὲς τις μαῦρες πέτρες, ἀπὸ τὴν παιδικὴ ἡλικία καὶ τὰ νιάτα σου μέχρι σήμερα, θὰ φτειάξῃς ἓναν Ὀλυμπο κατὰμαυρο. Ποιὸς μπορεῖ νὰ μετακινήσῃ αὐτὸ τὸ βουνό, τὸ μαῦρο καὶ γρανιτῶδες ὄρος τῆς ἀμαρτίας;

Ὁ Ἀρχιμῆδης ἔλεγε «Δός μοι πᾶ σῶ καὶ τὰν γὰν κινάσω» (βλ. Mt 1:21, Πῶς καὶ ὅσι α 148)· δῶσ' μου πού νὰ σταθῶ, δῶσ' μου ὑπομόχλιο, καὶ θὰ κινήσω ὀλόκληρη τὴ Γῆ. Κ' ἐγὼ λέω· δὲν ἔχουμε ἀνάγκη ἀπὸ ὑπομόχλιο. Βουνὸ ἀπέναντί μας, πού πλακώνει τὰ στήθη, εἶνε οἱ ἀμαρτίες μας. Ἀνεβαίνω στὸ Γολγοθᾶ. Κ' ἐκεῖ ὁ Χριστός, με μοχλὸ τὸ σταυρὸ καὶ ὑπομόχλιο τὸ Γολγοθᾶ, σηκώνει τὸ βουνό, τὸ ἀνατρέπει καὶ τὸ ρίχνει στὴν ἄβυσσο τοῦ θεοῦ ἐλέους καὶ τῶν οἰκτιρμῶν. Μὴν ἀπελπίζεσαι λοιπὸν, ἀμαρτωλέ, ὅσο πολλὰ καὶ μεγάλα κι ἂν εἶνε τ' ἀμαρτήματά σου. Ὁ Χριστός εἶνε «ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἀμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου» (βλ. 1:23).

Μόνο μὴ ἀναβάλλεις· τρέξε σήμερα, μὴ χάσης τὴν εὐκαιρία. Τὸ «σήμερα» τονίζει ὁ ἀπόστολος (βλ. 1:15-17). Τὸ σήμερα εἶνε δικό μας, ὄχι τὸ αὔριο. Ἄν ἀκούσης τὴ φωνὴ του, νὰ ὑπακούσης ἀμέσως. Σήμερα πού ζῆς, πού ἡ σκέψι σου λειτουργεῖ, πού τὰ χέρια σου κινούνται, πού τὰ πόδια σου τρέχουν, πού ἡ γλῶσσα σου μιλάει. Ἄντε στὸ σπιτάκι σου, κλείσου στὸ δωμάτιό σου, πάρε ζυγαριὰ καὶ μέτρησε τ' ἀμαρτήματά σου καὶ γονάτισε μπροστὰ στὸν Ἑσταυρωμένο με μετάνοια. Ὅπως εἶπε ὁ ἀπόστολος Παῦλος, «προσερχώμεθα ... τῷ θρόνῳ τῆς χάριτος, ἵνα λάβωμεν ἔλεον καὶ χάριν εὐρωμεν εἰς εὐκαιρον βοήθειαν» (βλ. 4:16).

Ἀδελφοί μου, τελείωσα. Σφραγίζω τὰ λόγια μου μ' ἓνα παράδειγμα. Τὰ καράβια εἶνε ἀπαραίτητο νὰ ἔχουν ἀσύρματο. Σὲ ὦρα κινδύνου ἐκπέμπουν τὸ σήμα ΣΟΣ (SOS) κι ἀμέσως πλοῖα κι ἀεροπλάνα σπεύδουν νὰ βοηθήσουν.

Μὲ ἐννοήσατε; Θάλασσα εἶνε κι ὁ κόσμος αὐτός. Καὶ μακάρι νὰ εἶχαμε μπουνάτσα. Δὲν ζοῦμε σὲ καιρὸ μπουνάτσας – νὰ φύγῃ ἀπὸ τὸ μυαλό μας αὐτό. Μέσα στὰ ἄγρια κύματα σὰν μικρὰ σκάφη πλέουμε κ' ἐμεῖς, καὶ ὡς ἄτομα καὶ ὡς οἰκογένειες καὶ ὡς ἔθνος. Ἡ πατρίδα μας δὲν γνώρισε μπουνάτσες· τρικυμίες γνώρισε. Ἄλλα ἔθνη πνίγηκαν, καταποντίστηκαν, χάθηκαν. Ἄλλὰ τὸ μικρὸ σκάφος πού λέγεται Ἑλλάς ἔχει ἀσύρματο· καὶ ὁ ἀσύρματός του εἶνε ἡ προσευχὴ «Κύριε τῶν δυνάμεων μεθ' ἡμῶν γενεῶ...» (Mt 1:18). Αὐτὸ πιστεύουμε. Στὴ γῆ αὐτὴ τοῦ μαρτυρίου καὶ τοῦ πόνου – δὲν εἶνε παραμύθια αὐτά–, στὰ ψηλά μας βουνά, στοὺς κάμπους καὶ στὶς θάλασσές μας, ἀκούγεται ἡ προχευχὴ τῶν ἡρώων μας – μυριάδες τάφοι! Ὅχι, δὲν θὰ νικήσῃ ἡ ἀπιστία κ' ἡ ἀθεΐα. Θὰ νικήσῃ ὁ Χριστός, ἡ ἁγία του πίστις. Αὐτὸς εἶπε καὶ ἐλάλησε, καὶ ἡ μαρτυρία του εἶνε ἀληθινή.

(†) 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 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

The Cross

The Cross abolished idolatrous worship, enlightened the whole universe, gathered all the nations into one Church and united them with love. The Cross is the resurrection of the dead. The Cross is the hope of Christians. The Cross is the staff for the lame. The Cross is comfort for the poor. The Cross is the deposing of the proud. The Cross is the hope of those who despair. The Cross is food for sailors. The Cross is haven for the storm-tossed. The Cross is the father for orphans. The Cross is comfort for those who mourn. The Cross is the protector of children. The Cross is the glory of men. The Cross is the crown of elders. The Cross is light for those sitting in darkness. The Cross is freedom for slaves, wisdom for the ignorant. The Cross is the preaching of prophets, the fellow-traveler of apostles. The Cross is the chastity

of maidens, the joy of priests. The Cross is the foundation of the Church, the establishment of the universe. The Cross is the destruction of idolatrous temples, temptation for Jews. The Cross is the cleansing of the lepers, the rehabilitation of the weak. The Cross is bread for the hungry, a fountain for the thirsty. The Cross is the good hope of monks, clothing for the naked.

If, O Christian, you will always take up the Cross of Christ on yourself as a help, then evil shall not come towards you, nor any scourge come near your habitation: for the opposition power seeing it trembles and leaves.

St. Ephrem the Syrian

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