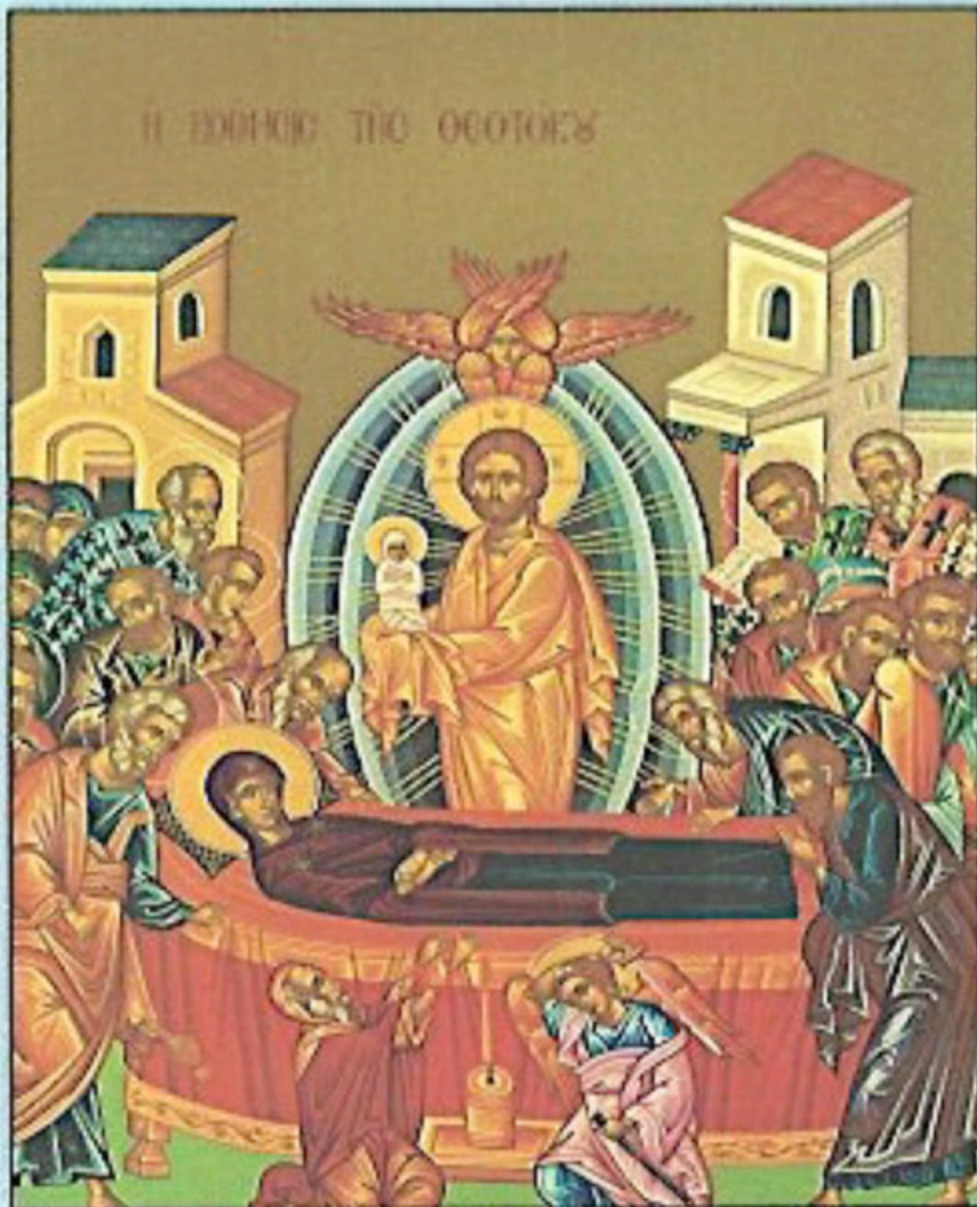




THREE HIERARCHS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

SUNDAY WEEKLY BULLETIN August 14th, 2016
V. Rev. Archimandrite Eugene N. Pappas

EIGHTH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW



Icon of the Dormition — August 15th

St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 1:10-17

Prokeimenon. Grave Mode.

Psalm 28.11,1

The Lord will give strength to his people.

Verse: Bring to the Lord, O sons of God, bring to the Lord honor and glory.

BRETHREN, I appeal to you by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree and that there be no dissensions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brethren. What I mean is that each one of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispos and Gaius; lest any one should say that you were baptized in my name. (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized any one else.) For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

Πρὸς Κορινθίους α' 1:10-17

Προκείμενον. Ἦχος βαρύς.

ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 28.11,1

Κύριος ἰσχὺν τῷ λαῷ αὐτοῦ δώσει.

Στίχ. Ἐνέγκατε τῷ Κυρίῳ υἱοὶ Θεοῦ, ἐνέγκατε τῷ Κυρίῳ δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν.

Ἀδελφοί, παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἵνα τὸ αὐτὸ λέγητε πάντες, καὶ μὴ ἦ ἐν ὑμῖν σχίσματα, ἥτε δὲ κατηρτισμένοι ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ νοῖ καὶ ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ γνώμῃ. Ἐδηλώθη γάρ μοι περὶ ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοί μου, ὑπὸ τῶν Χλόης, ὅτι ἔριδες ἐν ὑμῖν εἰσιν. Λέγω δὲ τοῦτο, ὅτι ἕκαστος ὑμῶν λέγει, Ἐγὼ μὲν εἰμι Παύλου, Ἐγὼ δὲ Ἀπολλῶ, Ἐγὼ δὲ Κηφᾶ, Ἐγὼ δὲ Χριστοῦ. Μεμέρισται ὁ Χριστός; Μὴ Παῦλος ἐσταυρώθη ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, ἢ εἰς τὸ ὄνομα Παύλου ἐβαπτίσθητε; Εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ ὅτι οὐδένα ὑμῶν ἐβάπτισα, εἰ μὴ Κρίσπον καὶ Γάϊον· ἵνα μὴ τις εἴπῃ ὅτι εἰς τὸ ἐμὸν ὄνομα ἐβάπτισα. Ἐβάπτισα δὲ καὶ τὸν Στεφανᾶ οἶκον· λοιπὸν οὐκ οἶδα εἴ τινα ἄλλον ἐβάπτισα. Οὐ γὰρ ἀπέστειλὲν με Χριστὸς βαπτίζειν, ἀλλ' εὐαγγελίζεσθαι· οὐκ ἐν σοφίᾳ λόγου, ἵνα μὴ κενωθῇ ὁ σταυρὸς τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

8th Sunday of Matthew

The Gospel according to Matthew 14:14-22

At that time, Jesus saw a great throng; and he had compassion on them, and healed their sick. When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a lonely place, and the day is now over; send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves." Jesus said, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." They said to him, "We have only five loaves here and two fish." And he said, "Bring them here to me." Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass; and taking the five loaves and the two fish he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and broke and gave the loaves to the crowds. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children. Then he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds.

8th Sunday of Matthew

Κατὰ Ματθαῖον 14:14-22

Τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ, ἐξελθὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶδε πολὺν ὄχλον, καὶ ἐσπλαγχνίσθη ἐπ' αὐτοῖς καὶ ἐθεράπευσε τοὺς ἀρρώστους αὐτῶν. ὀψίας δὲ γενομένης προσῆλθον αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ λέγοντες· ἔρημός ἐστιν ὁ τόπος καὶ ἡ ὥρα ἤδη παρήλθεν· ἀπόλυσον τοὺς ὄχλους, ἵνα ἀπελθόντες εἰς τὰς κώμας ἀγοράσωσιν ἑαυτοῖς βρώματα. ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· οὐ χρειᾶν ἔχουσιν ἀπελθεῖν· δότε αὐτοῖς ὑμεῖς φαγεῖν. οἱ δὲ λέγουσιν αὐτῷ· οὐκ ἔχομεν ὧδε εἰ μὴ πέντε ἄρτους καὶ δύο ἰχθύας. ὁ δὲ εἶπε· φέρετέ μοι αὐτούς ὧδε. καὶ κελεύσας τοὺς ὄχλους ἀνακλιθῆναι ἐπὶ τοὺς χόρτους, λαβὼν τοὺς πέντε ἄρτους καὶ τοὺς δύο ἰχθύας, ἀναβλέψας εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν εὐλόγησε, καὶ κλάσας ἔδωκε τοῖς μαθηταῖς τοὺς ἄρτους, οἱ δὲ μαθηταὶ τοῖς ὄχλοις. καὶ ἔφαγον πάντες καὶ ἐχορτάσθησαν, καὶ ἦσαν τὸ περισσεῦον τῶν κλασμάτων δώδεκα κοφίνους πλήρεις. οἱ δὲ ἐσθίοντες ἦσαν ἄνδρες ὡσεὶ πεντακισχίλιοι χωρὶς γυναικῶν καὶ παιδίων. Καὶ εὐθέως ἠνάγκασεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ ἐμβῆναι εἰς τὸ πλοῖον καὶ προάγειν αὐτὸν εἰς τὸ πέραν, ἕως οὗ ἀπολύσει τοὺς ὄχλους.

DEVOTIONS THIS WEEK:

Sunday,	August 14th,	Divine Liturgy of Saint Marcellus	10:30 A.M.
Sunday,	August 14th,	VESPER of Koimisis Theotokou (our sister parish in Brooklyn) 5th Avenue	7:00 P.M.
Monday,	August 15th,	ASSUMPTION of the BLESSED VIRGIN MARY Koimisis Theotokou LITURGY at THREE HIERARCHS	9:30 A.M.
		Artoklasias at	11:30 A.M.
Wednesday	August 17th,	PRAYER and HEALING service	6:00 P.M.

AGAPE COFFEE FELLOWSHIP For \$125, (ONE HUNDRED TWENTY – FIVE DOLLARS) you can host the coffee fellowship as a birthday, anniversary tribute or memorial recognition any Sunday with coffee, tea, bagels and smears. Our committee will do the serving upon request. Call: 718-339-0280. Share the recognition of ‘THE DAY’ with others through fellowship.

MARIGOLD FLOWERS: which are in full bloom in this season are the traditional floral tribute to the Mother of God (THEOTOKOS VIRGIN MARY). The flower’s name is derived from ‘Mary’s gold’ the golden hue that beautifies the burial shroud of the Virgin Mary. Many thanks to the faithful that are bringing ‘marigold flowers’ from their gardens each night to the services.

CONFIRMATION SERVICE TODAY: (August 14th)! We are pleased to receive into the embrace of the Holy Mother Church: Ms. MARIA ‘DESPINA’ MARTINELLI, with her sponsor Jeanette Santamouris of TINOS, GREECE, AXIA! AXIA! AXIA!

ST. PHANOURIOS FEAST: The Patron Saint of “lost” or mislaid items will be celebrated in two weeks with solemnity and DOZENS of PHANOURO-PITES (sweet cakes) in honor of the saint. Liturgy and blessing of the many cakes will be SATURDAY – AUGUST 27th at 9:00 A.M. Don’t miss the joy of the holiday and taste of dozens of cakes. Are you bringing a cake? Are you baking your own cake? All blessed cakes honor the saint for a **LOST ITEM FOUND!**

ARTOKLASIA TOMORROW: is being offered in honor of the blessed Mother Mary by Ms. MARY NICHOLAS, in memorial tribute to her father + JOHN NICHOLAS, eternal be his memory Chronia Polla to all these celebrating their name day MARY, MARIA, MARIO, PANAGIOTA, PANAGIOTI and DESPINA. YPSOMATA will be distributed to the honorees.

ALTAR BOYS get a double header on Sunday, August 21st, when we celebrate altar server DAMIAN VAGANOV’s (TENTH BIRTHDAY) observance, with many thanks to two loving parents Larisa and Philip. Then on Tuesday, August 23rd, many of the boys (20) will go to a CYCLONES BASEBALL GAME in Coney Island at 7:00 P.M. Baseball caps and other treats will be distributed as souvenirs. **PLAY BALL!**

TAKE NOTE: The solemn observance of the BEHEADING of Saint John the Baptist will be commemorated on SUNDAY – AUGUST 28th. Please observe the strict fast that is designated for Monday the 29th. Fr. Bassakyros invites one and all to the sacred vesper at his parish of SAINT JOHN the BAPTIST in Gramercy Park, New York on Sunday evening the 14th, at 7:00 P.M. It’s an historic tiny church nestled in some of the prime real estate of New York City. Visit and be amazed!.....Pray too!

SACRAMENTAL WINE: is needed for altar use. Donors of wine may secure MAVRODAPHNE wine or make a purchase from KINGS HIGHWAY LIQUORS for the appropriate red sweet wine. Thank you for the generosity of your purchase.

CHRISMATION: is the appropriate sacramental service for the reception of non-Orthodox Christians (Roman Catholic, Anglican, Protestant) who are validly baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity entering the ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH. We are receptive to any interested parties who may wish to enter the sacramental life of Orthodoxy by confession of faith and anointing. Please communicate with the clergy if you or another is interested. The ancient rite of CHRISMATION (confirmation) will be administered during the Divine Liturgy today Sunday, August 14th, prior to the Eucharistic distribution. COME! SEE! LEARN! REJOICE! MANY THANKS: to the wine donors that submitted EUCHARISTIC WINES for the Holy Communion; MR. and MRS STEVE KRITSAS, MRS. ANTONIA TSISMENAKIS, MRS FOTINI DANIL..... the Lord blesses the gracious donor in the vineyard of the harvest.

ELEVATOR PROJECT: is on the rise..... donations are always welcomed as we inch by inch look forward to the finalization of this much needed accessibility for our ‘senior citizen’ members. You may **NOT** be one today, but surely will be one tomorrow. MAKE A DONATION. THANK YOU! Special thanks to **MARIA COURTOS** who donated \$2500 on Sunday!

THREE HIERARCHS U.P.K. OBSERVATION REPORT from the City of New York earned ABOVE AVERAGE RATING in overall score to program structure. Hence we have ONE of the BEST U.P.K. PROGRAMS IN THE city. DO YOU HAVE CHILDREN OR GRAND-CHILDREN 4 YEARS OF AGE IN SEPTEMBER THAT CAN BE ENROLLED? This program 8:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. DAILY --- is TUITION FREE. There is no COST to the parents. It is a service offered by the city department of education. SIGN UP NOW! SEND US YOUR E MAIL ADDRESS : and we will send the weekly bulletin to your home. Going to Greece? Show the bulletin to your family in your old home town. What a treat.....and it’s FREE! Call the office 718 339-0280 and speak to Effie.

RADIO MINISTRY: Each Saturday at 1:15PM Fr. Eugene hosts and produces the radio broadcast **MATTERS OF CONSCIENCE NOW IN ITS 18TH 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: + **CHRISTOS VLAHOS**
MEMORIALS NEXT WEEK: + **THERESA PRESVELOU**

We are indeed indebted to Bishop Demetrios of the Metropolis of Chicago who visited us a couple of weeks ago and delivered an inspirational greeting from the

ONLY OTHER

'Three Hierarchs' church in the

United States of America

in Champaign, Illinois on the campus of the UNIVERSITY of ILLINOIS! His grace is always welcomed to our 'home away from home' for him. COME BACK SOON!



Phanouropita-Cake of Saint Phanourios

The greatest honor Christians have bestowed upon Saint Phanourios has been created by popular piety. It is a traditional custom of the Saint's pita or, Phanouropita. The Phanouropita is round molded and made from sifted flour, sugar, cinnamon and oil. All these ingredients are mixed together, kneaded, placed in a round pan and baked in an oven at a moderate temperature.

The pita is offered so that the Saint will reveal a lost object, or direct the unemployed person to a job, reveal action to be taken, restore health to the sick or other similar situations of need.

The custom has been preserved in many regions. It is offered after Vespers or Divine Liturgy to approximately forty "40" other persons while expressing the phrase :
"May God grant rest to the soul of Saint Phanourios mother."



The Orthodox Church celebrates the memory of Saint Phanourios, the "Newly Appeared " Martyr on the 27th of August each year.

PHANOUROPITA -- ST. PHANOURIOS CAKE

INGREDIENTS:

4c. self - rising flour OR (4 c. regular flour , 4 tsp. baking powder & pinch of salt) 1 tsp. cinnamon 1 c. corn oil 1 c. & 2 Tbsp. sugar	1/2 c. water grated peel of 1 lemon 1/2 c. golden raisins 1/2 c. dark raisins 1/2 c. coarsely chopped walnuts powered sugar 12 TBsp. orange juice
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Mix flour and cinnamon. In another bowl, mix oil, sugar, orange juice, water , and lemon peel. Beat mixture for a few minutes then add flour , raisins, and walnuts. Mix well. Oil the baking pan and dust it with flour. Turn the pan over and tap it. Pour the mixture into the pan. Bake for 45 minutes at 350 degrees F. Allow the cake to cool.

Dust with powdered sugar. The baker then cuts "40" forty square pieces and distributes one piece per parishoner. Everyone shares their "pita" with everyone else and all return home with a full tray of various tastes and flavors from other pitas.



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 1962

Κυριακὴ Η' Ματθαίου (Ματθ. 14,14-22)
14 Αὐγούστου 2016

Συντάκτης (†) ἐπίσκοπος
Αύγουστίνος Ν. Καντιώτης

Λαὸς ἄξιος τῶν ὑλικῶν ἀγαθῶν

«Ἐξελθὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶδε πολὺν ὄχλον...» (Ματθ. 14,14)

Ὁ Κύριος, ἀγαπητοί μου, διὰ θαύματος τρέφει μέσα στὴν ἔρημο ἕναν ὀλόκληρο λαό.

Δὲν εἶνε θαυμαστό νὰ βγαίνει τόσοσ κόσμος στὴν ἔρημο; Ἐγίνε ἄλλοτε κάτι τέτοιο; Μόνο ὅταν ὁ Μωυσῆς ὠδηγοῦσε τὸν Ἰσραὴλ στὴ Γῆ τῆς ἐπαγγελίας. Οἱ ἅγιοι ἐρημίτες εἶνε σπάνιοι· κατὰ κανόνα ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἶνε κοινωνικὸ ὄν.

Στὴν ἔρημο τὸ πλῆθος· μόνο οἱ ἄντρες ἦταν πέντε χιλιάδες (Ματθ. 14,21)· μαζί μὲ τίς γυναῖκες καὶ τὰ παιδιά θὰ ἦταν πολὺ περισσότεροι.

Ἐκεῖ λοιπόν, στὴν ἔρημο, αὐτὸς ποὺ τρέφει ὅλη τὴν οἰκουμένη, ετοίμασε ἀπὸ «πέντε ἄρτους καὶ δύο ἰχθύας» **τραπέζι** γιὰ τὸ ἀμέτρητο πλῆθος. Τραπέζι ὄχι φτωχικὸ ἀλλὰ **πλούσιο**, ἀπ' ὅπου σηκώθηκαν ὄλοι χορτᾶτοι. Ἀπόδειξις ὅτι χόρτασαν εἶνε τὰ περισσεύματα: «ἔφαγον πάντες καὶ ἐχορτάσθησαν, καὶ ἦσαν (=σηκώσαν, μάζειψαν) τὸ περισσεῦον τῶν κλασμάτων δώδεκα κοφίνους πλήρεις» (Ματθ. 14,20).

Ὁ Κύριος, καθὼς τοὺς εἶδε ὄλους ἐκείνους μπροστά του, αἰσθάνθηκε συμπάθεια καὶ **ἔδειξε ἐξαιρετικὴ ἀγάπη**. Θεράπευσε τοὺς ἀρρώστους, ποὺ εἶχαν φέρεи μαζί τους, καὶ τοὺς ἔθρεψε ὄλους, ἄντρες, γυναῖκες, παιδιά. Ἐγίνε γιὰ τὸ λαὸ καὶ **γιατρός** καὶ **πατέρας**: τοὺς ἔδωσε ὄ,τι πιὸ ἀναγκαῖο, τὴν υἰγεία καὶ τὴν τροφή.

Μὴ νομίση ὄμως κανεῖς ὄτι τὰ δῶρα αὐτὰ δόθηκαν χαριστικά. Ὁ μὲν Κύριος ἀνοῖξε τὸ παντοδύναμο χέρι του καὶ ἔδωσε πλούσια εὐλογία, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὁ λαὸς αὐτὸς ἦταν **ἄξιος νὰ λάβη** ὄ,τι ἔλαβε, ὄτι εἶχε ἀξία καὶ ἀρετὴ, ἢ ὄποια καὶ εἴλκυσε τὴν εὐνοια τοῦ Κυρίου. Ἄς ἐπισημάνουμε δυὸ - τρία σημεῖα, ποὺ βγαίνουν ἀπὸ τὸ κείμενο τοῦ ἱεροῦ εὐαγγελίου.

* * *

● Ἀπόδειξις τῆς ἀρετῆς τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ εἶνε τὸ γεγονός, ὄτι ἢ συρροή του στὴν ἔρημο γιὰ νὰ συναντήση τὸν Κύριο ἔγινε ἀμέσως μετὰ ἀπὸ ἕνα συνταρακτικὸ γεγονός, τὸ ὄποιο λογικά θὰ ἔπρεπε νὰ τοὺς ἔχη φοβίσει ὄλους· ἢ

συγκέντρῳσι στὴν ἔρημο **ἔγινε λίγο μετὰ τὴ σφαγὴ τοῦ ἁγίου Ἰωάννου τοῦ Προδρόμου** ἀπὸ τὸν Ἡρώδη (Ματθ. 14,13). Ἐνα τέτοιο γεγονός θὰ περίμενε κανεῖς νὰ ἔχη ταράξει καὶ τρομοκρατήση τὸν κόσμο. Τὸ πλῆθος σκορπίζει καὶ κλείνεται στὰ σπίτια, ὄταν βλέπη τὴν κρατικὴ ἐξουσία νὰ πατάση τοὺς ὄδηγούς του. Καὶ οἱ δώδεκα ἀπόστολοι κλείστηκαν στὸ ὑπερῶο «διὰ τὸν φόβον τῶν Ἰουδαίων» (Ματθ. 23,19). Κ' ἐδῶ λοιπὸν φονεύθηκε ὁ Ἰωάννης; ὄ λαὸς θὰ ἔπρεπε νὰ πτοηθῇ καὶ νὰ φοβάται, μήπως ὄ κακοῦργος Ἡρώδης προχωρήση καὶ συλλάβη καὶ τὸν ἄλλο γνωστὸ ὄδηγὸ τοῦ λαοῦ, τὸν Ἰησοῦ τὸ Ναζωραῖο, καὶ χτυπήση τοὺς ἀκολούθους του. «**Πατάξω τὸν ποιμένα**», ἔλεγε ἢ προφητεία, «**καὶ διασκορπισθήσονται τὰ πρόβατα τῆς ποιμνῆς**» (Ματθ. 23,37): λόγια ποὺ ὑπενηθύμισε ὄ Χριστὸς στοὺς μαθητὰς του ἀμέσως μετὰ τὸ μυστικὸ δείπνο (Ματθ. 26,31). Αὐτὸ λοιπὸν θὰ περίμενε κανεῖς καὶ ἐδῶ, μετὰ τὴ θανάτωσι τοῦ Ἰωάννου τοῦ Προδρόμου. Ἐν τούτοις «τὸ δρᾶμα τοῦ Ἰωάννου» δὲν φόβισε τὸ λαὸ, ὄπως παρατηρεῖ ὄ ἅγιος Ἰωάννης ὄ Χρυσόστομος: ἢ ἀγάπη καὶ ἢ ἐκτίμησι ποὺ ἔτρεφαν στὸ πρόσωπο τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἦταν τόση, ὄστε δὲν ὑπολόγισαν κανένα κίνδυνο· μεθάρρος, ἐκδηλώνοντας φανερὰ τὰ αἰσθημάτων τους, τρέχουν νὰ συναντήσουν τὸν Ἰησοῦ. Αὐτὸ εἶνε μία πρώτη ἀπόδειξις τῆς ἀρετῆς τοῦ λαοῦ· ἀλλὰ ἔχουμε κι ἄλλη, δεῦτερη ἀπόδειξις.

● Ὁ λαὸς, μόλις ἀντιλήφθηκε ὄτι ὄ Ἰησοῦς ἔφυγε σὲ ἔρημο μέρος, **τὸν ἀκολουθοῦν «περὶ ἀπὸ τῶν πόλεων»** (Ματθ. 14,13). Τί σημαίνει ἢ πληροφορία αὐτὴ τοῦ εὐαγγελιστοῦ; ὄτι ὄ λαὸς αἰσθάνονταν τόσο τὴν ἀνάγκη νὰ ἔχουν τὸ Χριστὸ ἀνάμεσά τους, ὄστε δὲν κάνουν χωρὶς αὐτόν· δὲν περιμένουν οὔτε γιὰ λίγο διάστημα, μέχρις ὄτου ἐκεῖνος νὰ ἐπιστρέψη κοντὰ τους. Ἐτοι ξεκινοῦν νὰ πάνε κοντὰ του· καὶ μάλιστα ὄχι μὲ ἄλλα μέσα, πλοίαρια ἢ ὑπο-

ζύγια, αλλά με τὰ πόδια, «πεζή», μία λέξι πού λέει πολλά. Νά φανταστή κανείς ἐκεῖνο τὸ πλήθος νὰ ὁδοιπορῇ σὲ δύσβατους τόπους· ὄχι μόνο παιδιὰ καὶ νέοι, ἀλλὰ καὶ γυναῖκες καὶ ἡλιωμένοι καὶ ἀσθενεῖς. Εἶνε συγκινητικό. Τί ἀγάπη, τί ἔρωτας, τί δίψα τῆς ψυχῆς! Ὁ Χριστὸς βέβαια δὲν θὰ ἔμενε διαρκῶς στὴν ἔρημο· θὰ ἐπέστρεφε καὶ στὴν Καπερναοὺμ καὶ στὶς ἄλλες πόλεις τῆς Γαλιλαίας, καὶ θὰ εἶχαν πάλι εὐκαιρία νὰ τὸν δοῦν καὶ νὰ τὸν ἀκούσουν. Ἄλλ' αὐτοὶ δὲν ἀντέχουν νὰ μένουν μακριὰ του. Τὸν ἐπιθυμοῦν, ξεσηκώνονται, βγαίνουν καὶ τὸν ἀναζητοῦν στὴν ἔρημο. Ἡ δίψα τοὺς αὐτῆ ζωντανεύει τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ ψαλμωδοῦ γιὰ τὸ διψασμένο ἐλάφι, πού τρέχει, διασχίζει μεγάλες ἀποστάσεις ἀναζητώντας νερό, νὰ βρῇ τὴ δροσερὴ πηγὴ, πού θὰ σβήσῃ τὸ καμίνι τῆς δίψας του. «Ὁν τρόπον», λέει, «ἐπιποθεῖ ἡ ἐλάφος ἐπὶ τὰς πηγὰς τῶν ὑδάτων, οὕτως ἐπιποθεῖ ἡ ψυχὴ μου πρὸς σέ, ὁ Θεός» ὅπως τὸ ἐλάφι λαχταρᾷ καὶ τρέχει ἐκεῖ πού πηγάζουν νερά, ἔτσι, Θεέ μου, λαχταρᾷ καὶ τρέχει ἡ ψυχὴ μου σ' ἐσένα (Ψαλμ 42). Ἐλάφια διψασμένα γιὰ τὸ λόγο καὶ τὴ χάρι τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἦταν ὅλοι αὐτοί.

● Θέλουμε κι ἄλλη μία ἀπόδειξι τῆς ἀρετῆς τοῦ λαοῦ; Ἄς προσέξουμε πόσο χρόνο θὰ μείνουν ἐκεῖ στὴν ἔρημιά. Ἐφτασαν ἐπὶ τέλους στὸ σκοπὸ τους, βρῆκαν αὐτὸν πού ζητοῦσαν. Κ' ἐκεῖνος, ἀφοῦ θεράπευσε τοὺς ἀρρώστους πού εἶχαν φέρει μαζί τους, ἄνοιξε τὸ στόμα του καὶ ἄρχισε νὰ τοὺς διδάσκῃ. Κρέμονται ἀπὸ τὰ χεῖλη του. Κ' ἐνῶ οἱ ὥρες περνοῦν, ὁ λαὸς αὐτὸς δὲν δείχνει νὰ κουράζεται, δὲν βαριέται, δὲν δυσανασχετεῖ. **Παρατείνει τὴ διαμονή του στὴν ἔρημο.** Μετὰ ἀπὸ λίγο ὁ ἥλιος θὰ βασιλέψῃ· ἀλλὰ τί με τοῦτο; λάμπει ἐμπρὸς τοὺς ὁ Ἰησοῦς, ὁ πνευματικὸς Ἥλιος· πρὸς αὐτὸν μικροὶ καὶ μεγάλοι ἔχουν στραμμένη τὴν προσοχή τους καὶ ἀδιαφοροῦν γιὰ τὴ δύσι τοῦ ἡλίου, γιὰ τὴ νύχτα πού ζυγώνει, γιὰ τὴν ἀνάγκη τῆς τροφῆς. Μένουν κοντὰ στὸν Ἰησοῦ στὸ ὑπαιθρο, νηστικοί, ἀτενίζοντας ὅλοι σὲ ἓνα σημεῖο, στὸ πρόσωπό του. Ἡ προσήλωσί τους εἶνε τέτοια, ὥστε οἱ μαθηταὶ ἄρχισαν νὰ σκέπτονται ἐκεῖνο πού ὁ λαὸς αὐτὸς δὲν σκεπτόταν· τί θὰ γίνῃ ἂν νυχτώσῃ; Ποῦ θὰ βρεθοῦν τρόφιμα γιὰ τόσο κόσμος; πῶς θὰ οἰκονομηθῇ ἀπὸ πλευρᾶς φαγητοῦ τέτοια συγκέντρωσι; Γι' αὐτὸ οἱ μαθηταὶ παίρνουν τὸ θάρρος καὶ παρεμβαίνουν γιὰ νὰ παρακαλέσουν τὸν Κύριο νὰ ἀπολύσῃ τοὺς ὄχλους λέγοντας· «Ἐρημὸς ἐστὶν ὁ τόπος καὶ ἡ ὥρα ἤδη παρήλθεν· ἀπόλυσον τοὺς ὄχλους,

ἵνα ἀπελθόντες εἰς τὰς κώμας ἀγοράσωσιν ἑαυτοῖς βρώματα» (Μαθ 14,15).

Ἄλλ' ἀκριβῶς γιὰ τὸ πλήθος ἔδειξε στὸν Κύριο τέτοια προθυμία, ἀφοσίωσι καὶ ἀγάπη, γι' αὐτὸ κ' ἐκεῖνος ἔκρινε ὅτι ὁ λαὸς αὐτὸς εἶνε **ἄξιος νὰ τραφῇ ἀκόμη καὶ με ἓνα θαῦμα.** Δὲν εἶνε ὁ Χριστὸς ἐκεῖνος πού εἶπε σὲ ὄσους ἀγωνιοῦν γιὰ τὴ συντήρησί τους «Ζητεῖτε πρῶτον τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τὴν δικαιοσύνην αὐτοῦ, καὶ ταῦτα πάντα προστεθήσεται ὑμῖν» (Μαθ 6,33); Αἱ λοιπὸν· τὴν ἐπίσημη αὐτῆ ὑπόσχεσί του τὸν βλέπουμε νὰ τὴν πραγματοποιῇ τώρα. Ὁ λαὸς αὐτὸς εἶχε ἀποδείξει τὴν ἡμέρα αὐτῆ με τὴν ὄλη συμπεριφορὰ του, ὅτι θέτει τὰ πνευματικὰ πάνω ἀπὸ τὰ ὑλικά· «ἐζητεῖ πρῶτον τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ». Κ' ἐκεῖνος λοιπὸν τοὺς δίνει τὰ ἀγαθὰ του πλουσιοπάροχα· θεραπεύει, εὐλογεῖ, τρέφει, ἐλεεῖ τὸ λαό. Καὶ ὁ λαὸς φεύγει ἀπὸ τὴν ἔρημο ψυχικὰ καὶ σωματικὰ χορτασμένος. Ὁ Κύριος ἔθρεψε καὶ τίς ψυχὰς καὶ τὰ σώματα. Δὲν ὑπάρχει κανένας πεινασμένος!

Τί ἀποδεικνύει, ἀγαπητοί μου, αὐτῆ ἡ ὁμαδικὴ διατροφή τοῦ λαοῦ; Ὅτι ἓνας λαὸς πού ἀκολουθεῖ τὸν Κύριο στὸ δρόμο τῆς εὐσεβείας καὶ τῆς ἀρετῆς, ἓνας λαὸς πού ἐκτιμᾷ τὰ πνευματικὰ πράγματα περισσότερο ἀπὸ τὰ ὑλικά, ἓνας λαὸς πού δὲν ἐννοεῖ ἀκόμη καὶ σὲ καιρὸ δυσμενῶν περιστάσεων ν' ἀπομακρυνθῇ ἀπὸ τὸν Κύριο, ἓνας λαὸς πού πιστεύει, ὁ λαὸς αὐτὸς **δὲν θὰ στερηθῇ οὔτε καὶ τὰ ὑλικά ἀγαθὰ,** ὅσα εἶνε ἀναγκαῖα γιὰ τὴ συντήρησί του. Ἐνα τέτοιο λαὸ ποτέ δὲν θὰ τὸν ἀφήσῃ ὁ Κύριος νὰ πεινάσῃ καὶ νὰ πεθάνῃ ἀπὸ τὴν πείνα.

Γι' αὐτό, ἂν θέλουμε νὰ ἔχουμε πάντοτε τὴν εὐλογία τοῦ Κυρίου, πρέπει ὡς λαός, ἀρχοντες καὶ ἀρχόμενοι, **νὰ ζήσουμε μιὰ ζωὴ πίστεως καὶ ἀρετῆς,** πού νὰ ἐξαρτᾶται ἀπὸ τὸν Κύριο. Ἐὰν κρεμαστοῦμε ἀπὸ τὸν Κύριο, τότε βάλουμε τοὺς ἑαυτοὺς μας, τίς οἰκογενεῖές μας καὶ ὀλόκληρο τὸ ἔθνος μας κάτω ἀπὸ τὴν κραταιὰ προστασία του. Σὰν πιστὰ καὶ ἀφωσιωμένα τέκνα τῆς «**βασιλείας**» του, δηλαδὴ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας του, θὰ καθώμαστε συνδαιτυμόνες στὴν τράπεζα τοῦ ἐλέους του, ἡ ὁποία πάντοτε θὰ ἔχῃ κάτι νὰ μᾶς δώσῃ καὶ γιὰ τὴν ψυχὴ μας καὶ γιὰ τὸ σῶμα μας. Διότι ὁ Κύριος εἶνε αὐτὸς πού τρέφει ὄλους, καὶ μάλιστα τοὺς ἀφωσιωμένους σ' αὐτὸν διὰ τῆς πίστεως καὶ τῆς ἀρετῆς ψυχῶν.

(f) **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

On the Dormition

O how did heaven receive her who is greater than heaven? How did she, who had received God, descend into the grave? This truly happened, and she was held by the tomb. It was not after bodily wise that she surpassed heaven. For how can a body measuring three cubits, and continually losing flesh, be compared with the dimensions of heaven? It was rather by grace that she surpassed all height and depth, for that which is divine is incomparable. O sacred and wonderful, holy and worshipful body, ministered to now by angels, standing by in lowly reverence. Demons tremble; men approach with faith, honoring and worshipping her, greeting her with eyes and lips, and drawing down upon themselves abundant blessings. Just as a rich scent sprinkled upon clothes or places, leaves its fragrance even after it has been withdrawn,

so now that holy, undefiled, and divine body, filled with heavenly fragrance, the rich source of grace, is laid in the tomb that it may be translated to a higher and better place. Nor did she leave the grave empty; her body imparted to it a divine fragrance, a source of healing, and of all good for those who approach it with faith.

Watch over us, O Queen, the dwelling-place of our Lord. Lead and govern all our ways as you will. Save us from our sins. Lead us into the calm harbor of the divine will. Make us worthy of future happiness through the sweet and face-to-face vision of the Word made flesh through you. With Him, glory, praise, power, and majesty be to the Father and to the holy and life-giving Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

St. John of Damascus

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