

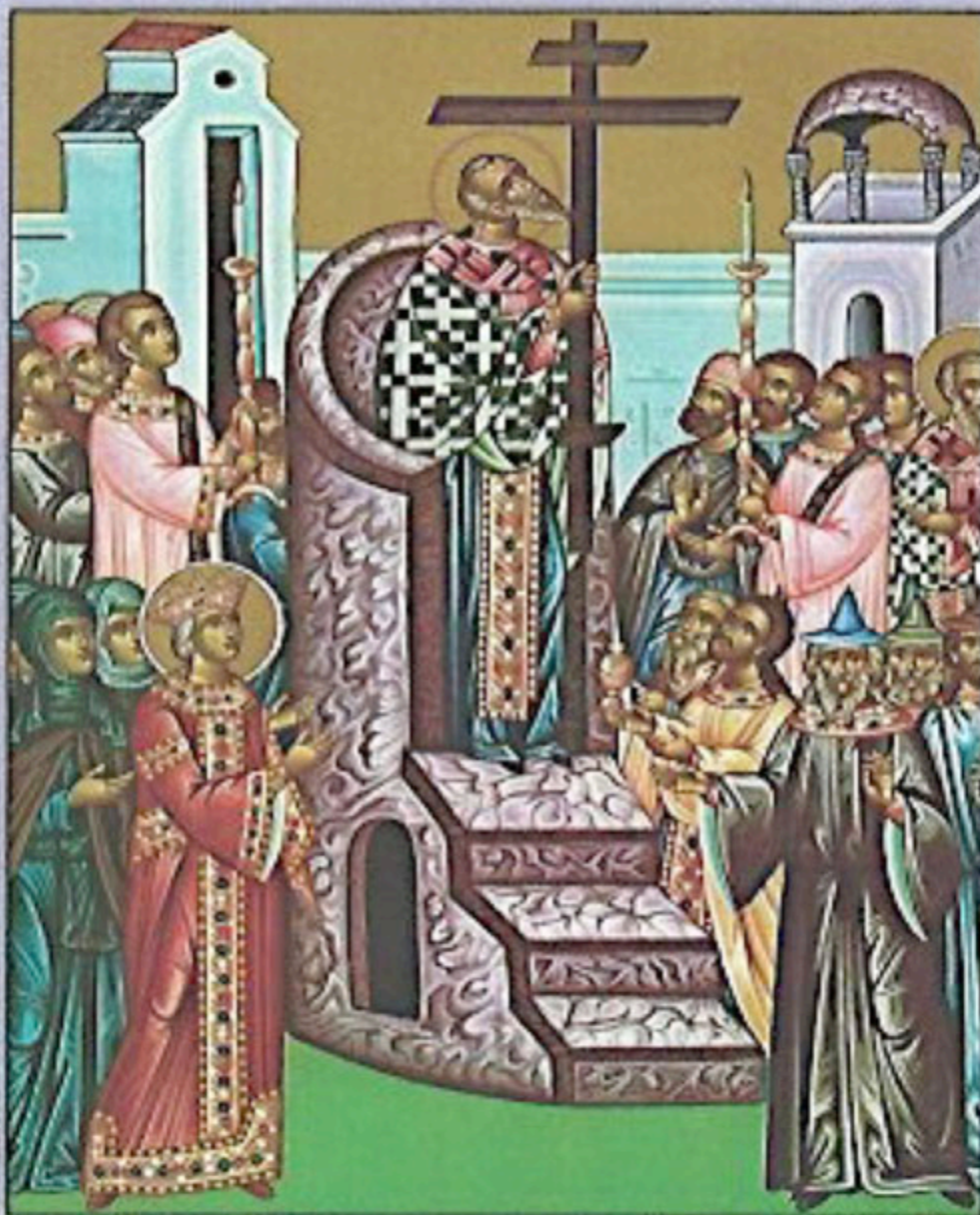


DIRECT ARCHDIOCESAN
DISTRICT

THREE HIERARCHS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

SUNDAY WEEKLY BULLETIN September 11th, 2016
V. Rev. Archimandrite Eugene N. Pappas

SUNDAY BEFORE THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS



Icon of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross -- September 14th

St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 6:11-18

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, see with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that would compel you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. For even those who receive circumcision do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may glory in your flesh. But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. Peace and mercy be upon all who walk by this rule, upon the Israel of God. Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen.

Πρὸς Γαλάτας 6:11-18

Προκείμενον. Ἦχος πλ β´.

ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 27.9,1

Σῶσον, Κύριε τὸν λαὸν σου καὶ εὐλόγησον τὴν κληρονομίαν σου.

Στίχ. Πρὸς σέ, Κύριε, κεκράζομαι ὁ Θεός μου.

Ἀδελφοί, ἴδετε πηλίκους ὑμῖν γράμμασιν ἔγραψα τῇ ἐμῇ χειρί. Ὅσοι θέλουσιν εὐπροσωπῆσαι ἐν σαρκί, οὗτοι ἀναγκάζουσιν ὑμᾶς περιτέμνεσθαι, μόνον ἵνα μὴ τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ Χριστοῦ διώκωνται. Οὐδὲ γὰρ οἱ περιτετμημένοι αὐτοὶ νόμον φυλάσσουν, ἀλλὰ θέλουσιν ὑμᾶς περιτέμνεσθαι, ἵνα ἐν τῇ ὑμετέρᾳ σαρκὶ καυχῆσονται. Ἐμοὶ δὲ μὴ γένοιτο καυχᾶσθαι εἰ μὴ ἐν τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ· δι' οὗ ἐμοὶ κόσμος ἐσταύρωται, καὶ γὰρ τῷ κόσμῳ. Ἐν γὰρ Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ οὔτε περιτομὴ τι ἰσχύει, οὔτε ἀκροβυστία, ἀλλὰ καινὴ κτίσις. Καὶ ὅσοι τῷ κανόνι τούτῳ στοιχῆσουσιν, εἰρήνην ἐπ' αὐτούς, καὶ ἔλεος, καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰσραὴλ τοῦ θεοῦ. Τοῦ λοιποῦ, κόπους μοι μηδεὶς παρεχέτω· ἐγὼ γὰρ τὰ στίγματα τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματί μου βαστάζω. Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μετὰ τοῦ πνεύματος ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοί. Ἀμήν.

Sunday before Holy Cross

The Gospel according to John 3:13-17

The Lord said, "No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him."

Sunday before Holy Cross

Κατὰ Ἰωάννην 3:13-17

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Εἶπεν ὁ Κύριος· καὶ οὐδεὶς ἀναβέβηκεν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν εἰ μὴ ὁ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καταβάς, ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὁ ὢν ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ. καὶ καθὼς Μωϋσῆς ὑψωσε τὸν ὄφιν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ, οὕτως ὑψωθῆναι δεῖ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν μὴ ἀπόληται ἀλλ' ἔχη ζωὴν αἰώνιον. Οὕτω γὰρ ἠγάπησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν κόσμον, ὥστε τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ ἔδωκεν, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν μὴ ἀπόληται ἀλλ' ἔχη ζωὴν αἰώνιον. οὐ γὰρ ἀπέστειλεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἵνα κρίνη τὸν κόσμον, ἀλλ' ἵνα σωθῇ ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ.

AGAPE COFFEE FELLOWSHIP is being hosted TODAY in loving memory of + ATHANASIOS VAZINTARIS by his wife and family.

DEVOTIONS THIS WEEK:

Sunday,	September 11th,	Liturgy of Saint Theodora	10:30 A. M.
Tuesday,	September 13th,	Great Vesper of HOLY CROSS	7:00 P. M.
		Solemn Street Procession	8: 30 P. M.
		Holy Cross Parish-RIDGE BOULEVARD	
Wednesday,	September 14th,	DIVINE LITURGY of HOLY CROSS	9:30 A. M.
		Three Hierarchs Parish	
		Artoklasies	11:00 A. M.
		Veneration of the RELIC of Holy Cross	N 0 0 N

UP-COMING EVENTS:

- A. Asia Minor Holocaust MEMORIAL: Sunday, September 18th
His Grace Bishop SEBASTIAN will be the celebrant with
guest homilist: Dean S. Sirigos of the American Hellenic Institute
- B. Pray and Healing MONTHLY session, Wednesday, September 21st,
from 6:30 – 8:00 P.M. Testimonies, healings, scripture and
anointing. Theme: THE JONAH and THE CHRIST . Refreshments:
coffee and sweets are always hosted to all. COME! SEE! LEARN!
- C. CHOIR HONORS DAY ; is scheduled for Sunday, October 02nd.
Honoring the Patron Saint of Orthodox ecclesiastical music Saint Romanos.
Our choir will be blessed with an ARTOKLASIA.

AGAPE COFFEE HOUR FELLOWSHIP: is being hosted next week September 18th by the Parish Council in tribute to the ASIA MINOR MEMORIAL and the national observance instituted by ARCHON BASILIOS THEODOSAKIS (Three Hierarchs Past Parish Council PRESIDENT). God grant him many years of blessings.

ENGAGEMENT CONGRATULATIONS: are extended on the betrothal of Parish Council Vice –President CONSTANTINE VELLIOS to MISS ANGELA KILADITIS. May God grant them many years of nuptial bliss united in their faith and blessed by family, kin and friends. KALA STEPHANA!

SENIOR CITIZENS CLUB: will commence it's annual schedule of WEDNESDAY meetings 1:00 - 4:00 P.M. on SEPTEMBER 21. See you there?

BASILIKO PLANTS and ‘ CUTTINGS ‘ are needed for the celebration of the exaltation of the Holy Cross – September 14th. Please oblige and offer the cuttings early in the service for proper distribution to the faithful.

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.

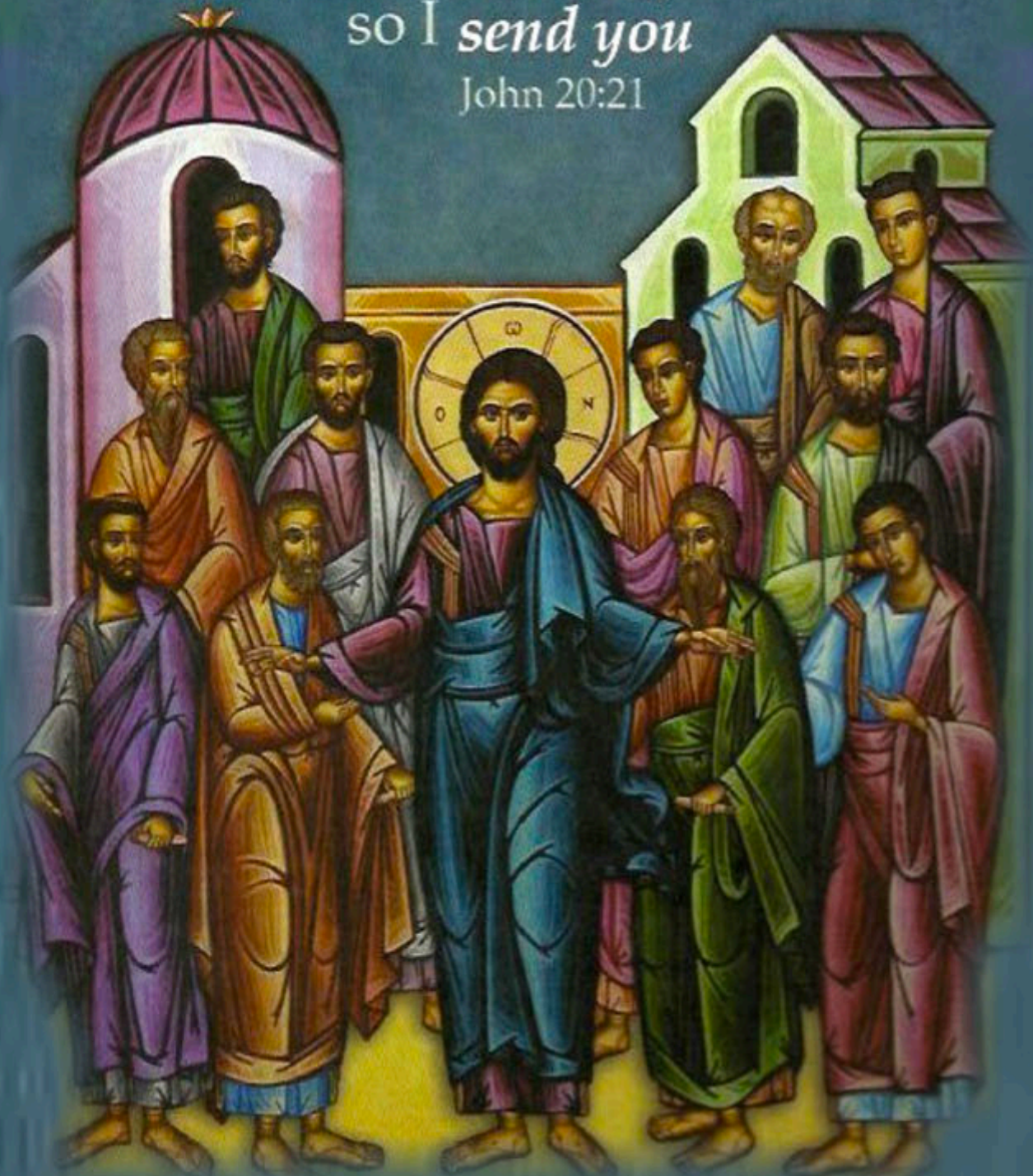
RADIO MINISTRY: Each Saturday at 1:15PM Fr. Eugene hosts and produces the radio broadcast **MATTERS OF CONSCIENCE NOW IN ITS 18TH YEAR OF BROADCASTING LIVE ON WNYE 91.5 COSMOS FM, with listener** telephone participation. Subjects of interest regarding Greek Orthodox theology, faith and practice, as well 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: + **THEODORE THOMAS** + **IOANNIS ZACHARIAS**
+ **ATHANASIOS VANZINTARIS** + **NICHOLAS MAOUNIS**
+ **JAMES MAOUNIS**

MEMORIALS NEXT WEEK: + **HOLOCAUST VICTIMS ASIA MINOR**
+ **NIKI (STRATONIKI) GEROULANOS**

As the
Father has *sent me,*
so I *send you*

John 20:21



Family Registration For Husband And 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!



**COMMEMORATION
of the
ASIA MINOR HOLOCAUST**

**HONORING THE SACRIFICED CHRISTIAN
ORTHODOX VICTIMS OF
THRACE, ASIA MINOR, PONTOS
BY THE YOUNG TURKS AND THE KEMALISTS**

A Memorial Service and Observance of the
“Megali Katastrophe”

Sunday, September 18th, 2016

Three Hierarchs Greek Orthodox Church
1724 Avenue P, Brooklyn- Tel: 718- 339- 0280

Guest Homilist: Constantine S. Sirigos, M.S.
Georgetown University

Journalist, Legislative Assistant American Hellenic Institute;
Washington D.C.



Divine Liturgy - 10:30 AM
Memorial Service- 12:00 PM



Coffee Fellowship to Follow In Whitehall



ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ

ΣΥΝΤΟΜΟΝ ΚΗΡΥΓΜΑ



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

Περίοδος Δ' - Ἔτος ΑΓ'
Φλώρινα - ἀριθμ. φύλλου 1967

Κυριακὴ πρὸ τῆς Ὑψώσεως (Ἰω. 3,13-17)
11 Σεπτεμβρίου 2016 ἐσπέρας

Συντάκτης (†) ἐπίσκοπος
Αὐγουστίνος Ν. Καντιώτης

Ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ

«Οὕτως ἠγάπησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν κόσμον, ὥστε τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ ἔδωκεν, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν μὴ ἀπόληται, ἀλλ' ἔχη ζωὴν αἰώνιον» (Ἰω. 3,16)

Ὅλα τὰ ῥητὰ τῶν Εὐαγγελίων καὶ τῆς ἁγίας Γραφῆς, ἀγαπητοί μου, εἶνε λόγοι τοῦ παναγίου Πνεύματος, εἶνε **λόγια θεόπνευστα**, καὶ προξενοῦν βαθεῖα ἐντύπωση σ' ἐκείνους ποὺ ἀνοίγουν τὰ αὐτιά καὶ τὰ μάτια τους καὶ μὲ προσοχὴ καὶ εὐλάβεια ἀκοῦνε ἢ διαβάζουν τὴν ἁγία Γραφή. Ὅπως λέει κάπου ὁ ἱερός Χρυσόστομος, καὶ μία ἀκόμη λέξι τῆς ἁγίας Γραφῆς, ἂν τὴν μελετήσῃ καλὰ ὁ Χριστιανός, μπορεῖ νὰ τὸν εἰσαγάγῃ σὲ πέλαγος θεῶν νοημάτων.

Ὅλα τὰ ῥητὰ τῆς ἁγίας Γραφῆς εἶνε θησαυροὶ τῆς Σοφίας τοῦ Θεοῦ. Ὑπάρχουν ὁμως, μέσα σ' αὐτὸν πλοῦτο, καὶ μερικά ῥητὰ ποὺ διακρίνονται ἰδιαίτερος καὶ ξεχωρίζουν γιὰ τὴν ἐξαιρετικὴ ὠραιότητά τους· εἶνε σὰν ἀστέρηδες πρῶτου μεγέθους, ποὺ λάμπουν μὲ ἓνα θαυμαστὸ φῶς στὸ πνευματικὸ στερέωμα τῆς ἁγίας Γραφῆς. Ἐνα λοιπὸν ἀπὸ τὰ ῥητὰ αὐτά, τὰ ὁποῖα σὰν στήλες φωτεινῆς φωτίζουν τὸν κόσμο στὴν ὁδὸ τῆς σωτηρίας, εἶνε καὶ **τὸ ῥητὸ** τοῦ σημερινοῦ εὐαγγελίου ποὺ ἀνέφερα στὴν ἀρχή. Τὸ ἐπαναλαμβάνω: *«Οὕτως ἠγάπησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν κόσμον, ὥστε τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ ἔδωκεν, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν μὴ ἀπόληται, ἀλλ' ἔχη ζωὴν αἰώνιον»*, δηλαδή: Τόσο πολὺ ἀγάπησε ὁ Θεὸς τὸν κόσμο, ποὺ ἔφθασε στὸ σημεῖο νὰ παραδώσῃ τὸν μονογενῆ Υἱό του νὰ θυσιασθῇ, ὥστε κάθε ἄνθρωπος ποὺ πιστεύει σ' αὐτὸν νὰ μὴ χάνεται ἀλλὰ νὰ ἔχη ζωὴ αἰώνια (Ἰω. 3,16).

Εἶνε λόγος τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. Πότε τὸν εἶπε: Ὁ λόγος αὐτὸς βγήκε ἀπὸ τὰ χεῖλη τοῦ Θεοῦ Διδασκάλου ὅταν ὁ **Νικόδημος**, ἓνας ἀπὸ τοὺς ἄρχοντες τῶν Ἰουδαίων, τὸν ἐπισκέφθηκε ἐν καιρῷ νυκτὸς στὸ κατάλυμά του, γιὰ εἶχε ἔλκουσθῇ ἀπὸ τὴ δι-

δασκαλία του καὶ ἐπιθυμοῦσε νὰ πάρῃ σαφέστερες πληροφορίες γιὰ τὴ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν. Τὰ λόγια αὐτὰ ποὺ τοῦ εἶπε ὁ Κύριος εἶνε ἓνας θαυμάσιος ὕμνος στὴν ἀγάπη τοῦ οὐρανοῦ Πατρός· φανερώνουν τὸ βάθος καὶ τὸ ὕψος, τὸ μήκος καὶ τὸ πλάτος τῆς θεϊκῆς ἀγάπης, πόσο ὁ Θεὸς ἀγαπᾷ τὸν κόσμο ποὺ δημιούργησε.

Πολλὲς εὐγενεῖς ψυχὲς μελέτησαν τὸν λόγο αὐτὸν τοῦ Χριστοῦ μας καὶ συγκινήθηκαν βαθεῖα. **Ἄς τὸν μελετήσουμε** λοιπὸν κ' ἐμεῖς ρίχνοντας, ὅσο μᾶς ἐπιτρέπουν τὰ χρονικὰ ὄρια ποὺ διαθέτουμε, ἓνα βλέμμα στὴν ἀχανῆ καὶ ἀπέραντη θάλασσα τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ Θεοῦ.

Ὁ Θεὸς μᾶς ἀγαπᾷ! Τὴν ἀγάπη του τὴ βλέπουμε παντοῦ· τὴ βλέπουμε στὴν δημιουργία τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, τὴ βλέπουμε στὴν πτώσι τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, τὴ βλέπουμε τέλος καὶ στὴν ἀπολύτρωσί μας. Ἄς δοῦμε **τὰ τρία αὐτὰ στάδια** πρὸ ἀναλυτικά.

● Τὴν ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ τὴ βλέπουμε πρῶτα **στὴν δημιουργία** τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. Γιατὶ ἀπὸ ἀγάπη καὶ μόνο κινήθηκε ὁ Θεὸς γιὰ νὰ δημιουργήσῃ τὸν ἄνθρωπο. Καὶ ὄχι ἀπλῶς νὰ τὸν δημιουργήσῃ, σὰν ἓνα ἀπ' τὰ πολλὰ ἄλλα δημιουργήματά του, ἀλλὰ νὰ τὸν δημιουργήσῃ –ὅπως καὶ τὸν δημιούργησε– *«κατ' εἰκόνα καὶ καθ' ὁμοίωσιν»* δικῆ Του (Ἰν. 1,26). Βλέπουμε δηλαδή στὴν ἀρχὴ τῆς ἁγίας Γραφῆς, στὸ πρῶτο κεφάλαιο τῆς Γενέσεως, ὅλη ἡ ἁγία Τριάς, Πατὴρ Υἱὸς καὶ ἅγιον Πνεῦμα, νὰ συσκέπτεται τρόπον τινὰ πῶς θὰ δημιουργήσῃ τὸν ἄνθρωπο. Ὁ λόγος *«Ποιήσωμεν ἄνθρωπον κατ' εἰκόνα ἡμετέραν καὶ καθ' ὁμοίωσιν»* ἐλέγχθη μόνο γιὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπο, γιὰ κανένα ἄλλο δημιούργημα. Ἔτσι ἀπὸ τὸ ἐργαστήριό τῆς Θεῆας Σοφίας βγήκε αὐτὸ τὸ ὑπέροχο καλλιτέ-

χνημα, ὁ ἄνθρωπος, ἡ κορωνίδα ὅλων τῶν δημιουργημάτων, ὁ βασιλιάς τὸν ὁποῖον ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ φρόντισε νὰ ἐγκαταστήσῃ στὸ βασίλειό του, τῆ γῆ. Προέβλεψε νὰ μὴν τοῦ λείψῃ τίποτα· παράδεισο φύτεψε γι' αὐτόν, πολῦτιμο σύντροφο (τὴν Εὐα) ἔφερε δίπλα του, τοῦ ἔδωσε φυτά, δέντρα καὶ ζῶα νὰ τὸν ὑπηρετοῦν ὡς πιστοὶ ὑπῆκοοι, γιὰ νὰ ἔννε ἡ ζωὴ του γεμάτη χαρὰ καὶ εὐτυχία. Παρ' ὅλα ὁμῶς αὐτὰ ὁ ἄνθρωπος, ὅπως γνωρίζουμε, παρέβη τὴν ἐντολὴ τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἔπεσε καὶ μετὰ τὴν πτώσι του ἐκδιώχθηκε ἀπὸ τὸν παράδεισο.

● Ἀλλὰ καὶ μέσα **στὴν πτώσι** ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ δὲν ἐγκατέλειπε τὸν ἄνθρωπο. Ἐὰν ἡ δικαιοσύνη του ἐπέβαλε τὴν τιμωρία τοῦ παραβάτου γιὰ τὸ ἀμάρτημά του ἐκεῖνο, ἡ ἀγάπη του ὁμῶς δὲν σταμάτησε νὰ τὸν παρακολουθῆ καὶ ἔξω ἀπὸ τὸν παράδεισο, στὴν «*κοιλιάδα τοῦ κλαυθμῶνος*» (Ψαλμ. ...). Σὰν πατέρας τὸν τιμώρησε καὶ τὸν διαπαιδαγωγοῦσε περνώντας τον ἀπὸ τὸ μεγάλο σχολεῖο τῆς θλίψεως. Ἐκεῖ ὁ ἄνθρωπος θὰ ἔπαιρνε πολῦτιμα μαθήματα καὶ σοφὰ διδάγματα, ὅπως π.χ.· πόσο πικροὶ εἶνε οἱ καρποὶ τῆς ἁμαρτίας, πόσο πρέπει ν' ἀπιστῆ στὴ φωνὴ τοῦ σατανᾶ, πόσο ἡ καρδιά του θὰ μένη ἀνήσυχη ὅσο βρίσκεται μακριὰ ἀπ' τὸ Θεό, καὶ πολλὰ ἄλλα. Οὔτε ἔπαψε ὁ Κύριος στὸ μακρὸ διάστημα τῆς ἐξορίας τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἀπὸ τὸν παράδεισο νὰ ἐπισκέπτεται τὸν κόσμον καὶ νὰ φροντίζει τοὺς λαοὺς μὲ ἀνθρώπους ποὺ ἐκεῖνος ἔστειλε· σειρὰ ὀλόκληρη πατριαρχῶν, προφητῶν, θεοπρόβλητων βασιλιάδων καὶ σοφῶν διδασκάλων, ἐπιστημόνων καὶ εὐεργετῶν μέσα σὲ ὅλα τὰ ἔθνη πιστοποιεῖ τὸ γεγονὸς, ὅτι ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ παρακολουθοῦσε μὲ ἀγρυπνο ἐνδιαφέρον ὅλα τὰ ἀνθρώπινα πράγματα καὶ κατηύθυνε τὴν πορεία τοῦ κόσμου σὲ ἕνα εὐτυχέστερο δρόμο. Σὲ κάθε βῆμα τῆς ἀνθρώπινης ζωῆς βλέπει κανεὶς καὶ μιὰ ἄλλη ἐνδειξὴ τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ Θεοῦ. Τὸ σκάφος τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος, ἐὰν τὸ χέρι τοῦ Κυρίου δὲν τὸ ὠδηγοῦσε διὰ μέσου τόσων σκοπέλων καὶ ὑφάλων, ἐξάπαντος θὰ εἶχε ναυαγήσει καὶ ὁ κόσμος θὰ εἶχε καταστραφῆ.

● Ἀλλ' ἐκεῖ ποὺ ὁ πιστὸς μένει κατάπληκτος μπροστὰ στὴν ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ εἶνε ἡ **ἀπολύτρωσις**, πῶς δηλαδὴ ὁ Θεὸς σχεδίασε τὴν ἀπελευθέρωσι καὶ ἀνόρθωσί μας καὶ πῶς ἐξασφάλισε τὴ σωτηρία μας. Στὸ σημεῖο αὐτὸ ἂς ἀφήσουμε τὸν ἀγαπημένο μαθητὴ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, τὸν εὐαγγελιστὴ Ἰωάννη, νὰ μᾶς παρουσιάσῃ τὴν ἀγάπη αὐτὴ τοῦ Θεοῦ. «*Ἐν τούτῳ*», λέει, «*ἐφανερώθη ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐν*

ἡμῖν, ὅτι τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ ἀπέσταλκεν ὁ Θεὸς εἰς τὸν κόσμον, ἵνα ζήσωμεν δι' αὐτοῦ. Ἐν τούτῳ ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγάπη, οὐχ ὅτι ἡμεῖς ἠγαπήσαμεν τὸν Θεόν, ἀλλ' ὅτι αὐτὸς ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς καὶ ἀπέστειλε τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἰλασμόν περὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν» (1^η 4:9-10). Χριστιανοί, φωνάζει ὁ Ἰωάννης· ἐλάτε καὶ παρατηρήστε τὴν ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ. Ἥμασταν λαὸς ποὺ οἱ ἁμαρτίες του εἶχαν ἐξοργίσει τὸ Θεό. Τί ἔπρεπε νὰ μᾶς κἀνῆ· νὰ στείλῃ τοὺς ἀγγέλους του, γιὰ νὰ μᾶς τιμωρήσουν. Ἀλλὰ ἐκεῖνος –ὦ τῆς ἀγάπης του!– τί κάνει· στέλνει τὸν Υἱὸ τοῦ ὄχι γιὰ νὰ μᾶς καταστρέψῃ, ἀλλὰ γιὰ νὰ μᾶς σώσῃ! – «*ἵνα ζήσωμεν δι' αὐτοῦ*» (ἐά). Ἥμασταν ἐτοιμοθάνατοι, ἢ μᾶλλον νεκροί, καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς διὰ τοῦ αἱματός του μᾶς ἀνέστησε σὲ νέα ζωὴ.

* * *

Τὸ τελευταῖο αὐτὸ σημάδι τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἀγαπητοὶ μου ἀδελφοί, στὰ μάτια τῶν ἀπίστων φαίνεται ξεθωριασμένο. Ἀλλ' **ἐὰν κάποιος πιστέψῃ** στὸ γεγονὸς ὅτι ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶνε ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ ὁ Σωτῆρας τοῦ κόσμου, τότε ἡ εἰκόνα τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ Θεοῦ θὰ παρουσιαστῆ μπροστὰ του μὲ ἔκτακτη καὶ πρωτοφανῆ ζωηρότητα, ποὺ θὰ τὸν κἀνῃ νὰ δακρύσῃ καὶ νὰ πῆ·

Τώρα πείθομαι, ὅτι ὁ Θεὸς μὲ ἀγαπᾷ. Ἥμουν ἕνας ἁμαρτωλὸς καὶ αὐτὸ ποὺ μοῦ ἄρμοζε ἦταν ἕνας σταυρὸς, πάνω στὸν ὁποῖο δικαίως θὰ ἔπρεπε νὰ πεθάνω γιὰ τίς ἁμαρτίες μου. Ἀλλ' ἀντὶ νὰ σταυρωθῶ ἐγώ, σταυρώθηκε ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὁ Χριστὸς. Αὐτὸς φορτώθηκε τίς δικές μου ἁμαρτίες, ὅλες τίς ἁμαρτίες μου. Ποιὰ ἄλλη μεγαλύτερη ἀπόδειξι τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ Θεοῦ θέλω; Ὅλες οἱ ἄλλες ἀγάπες τοῦ Θεοῦ μπροστὰ στὴν ἀγάπη αὐτὴ μοῦ φαίνονται μικρές. Σ' εὐχαριστῶ, Θεέ μου, γιὰ τὴν ἀξίωσιν νὰ γνωρίσω τὴν ἀγάπη ποὺ τρέφεις γιὰ μένα καὶ νὰ πιστέψω σ' ἐσένα.

Ἦ ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ! Εἶνε μεγάλη. Τὰ μνημεῖα τῆς ἀγάπης του εἶνε πολλὰ, ἀναρίθμητα. Τὸ μεγαλύτερο ὁμῶς ἀπ' ὅλα τὰ μνημεῖα τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ οὐρανοῦ Πατὸς εἶνε ὁ **Γολγοθᾶς** τοῦ Υἱοῦ του. Τὸ Γολγοθᾶ δείχνει στὸν κάθε ἁμαρτωλὸ ἀπὸ μᾶς καὶ λέει·

Ἄμαρτωλέ, ἐδῶ θυσίασα τὸν Υἱόν μου γιὰ σένα! Πλησίασε καὶ διάβασε τὴν ἐπιγραφή· «*Οὕτως ἠγάπησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν κόσμον, ὥστε τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ ἔδωκεν, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν μὴ ἀπόληται, ἀλλ' ἔχῃ ζωὴν αἰώνιον*».

(†) **ἐπίσκοπος Αὐγουστῖνος**

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

Glory to You, Lover of Mankind

Master of all, alone without sin, for me the unworthy sinner were given over to death, death on a Cross, that you might free the sinner's soul from the bonds of sins. And what shall I give you in return for this, Master?

Glory to you, Lover of mankind! Glory to you, O Merciful! Glory to you, O Long-suffering! Glory to you, who pardon every fault! Glory to you, who came down to save our souls! Glory to you, incarnate in the Virgin's womb! Glory to you, who were bound! Glory to you, who were scourged! Glory to you, who were crucified! Glory to you, who were buried! Glory to you, who were raised! Glory to you, who were proclaimed! Glory to you, who were believed! Glory to you, who were taken up! Glory to you, who were enthroned with great glory at the Father's right hand, and are coming again with the glory of the Father and the holy Angels to judge every soul that has despised your holy

sufferings in that dread and fearful hour, when the powers of heaven will be shaken; when Angels, Archangels, Cherubim and Seraphim will come all together with fear and trembling before your glory; when all the foundations of the earth will tremble, and everything that has breath will shudder at your great and unendurable glory.

In that hour your hand will hide me under its wings and my soul be delivered from the fearful fire, the gnashing of teeth, the outer darkness and unending weeping, that blessing you, I may say, Glory to the One, who wished to save the sinner through the many acts of pity of His compassion.

St. Ephrem the Syrian

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