

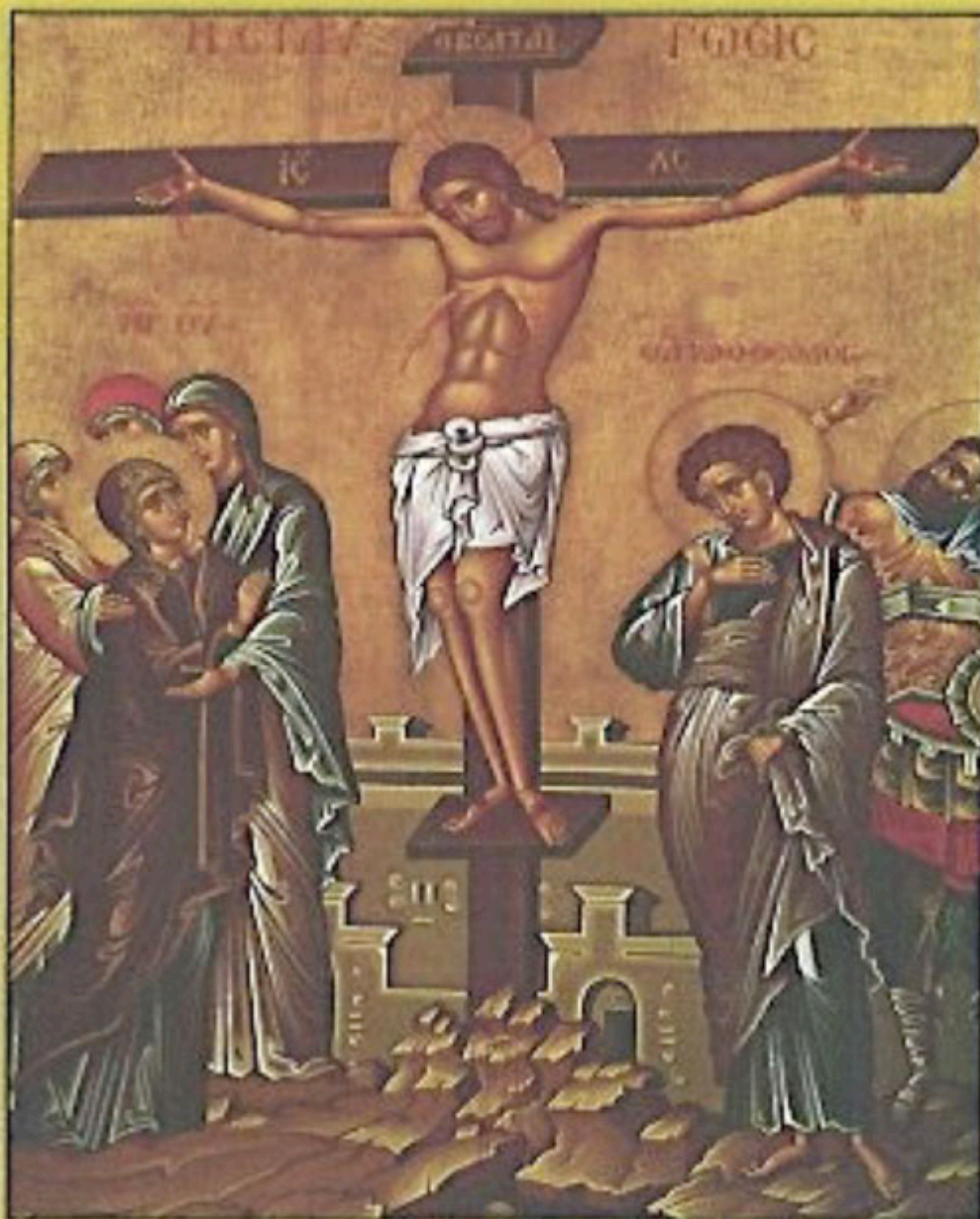


DIRECT ARCHDIOCESAN  
DISTRICT

# THREE HIERARCHS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

SUNDAY WEEKLY BULLETIN September 18th, 2016  
V. Rev. Archimandrite Eugene N. Pappas

## SUNDAY AFTER THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS



*Icon of the Holy Cross and Crucifixion*

## St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 2:16-20

Prokeimenon. Mode 4.

Psalm 103.24,1

O Lord, how manifold are your works. You have made all things in wisdom.

Verse: Bless the Lord, O my soul.

BRETHREN, you know that a man is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of the law, because by works of the law shall no one be justified. But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we ourselves were found to be sinners, is Christ then an agent of sin? Certainly not! But if I build up again those things which I tore down, then I prove myself a transgressor. For I through the law died to the law, that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

## Πρὸς Γαλάτας 2:16-20

Προκείμενον. Ἦχος δ.

ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 103.24,1

Ὡς ἐμεγαλύνθη τὰ ἔργα σου Κύριε, πάντα ἐν σοφίᾳ ἐποίησας.

Στίχ. Εὐλόγει ἡ ψυχὴ μου τὸν Κύριον.

Ἀδελφοί, εἰδότες ὅτι οὐ δικαιῶται ἄνθρωπος ἐξ ἔργων νόμου, ἐὰν μὴ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστεῦσαμεν, ἵνα δικαιωθῶμεν ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ, καὶ οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου· διότι οὐ δικαιωθήσεται ἐξ ἔργων νόμου πᾶσα σὰρξ. Εἰ δέ, ζητοῦντες δικαιωθῆναι ἐν Χριστῷ, εὐρέθημεν καὶ αὐτοὶ ἁμαρτωλοί, ἄρα Χριστὸς ἁμαρτίας διάκονος; Μὴ γένοιτο. Εἰ γὰρ ἂ κατέλυσα, ταῦτα πάλιν οἰκοδομῶ, παραβάτην ἑμαυτὸν συνίστημι. Ἐγὼ γὰρ διὰ νόμου νόμῳ ἀπέθανον, ἵνα θεῷ ζήσω. Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμαι· ζῶ δέ, οὐκέτι ἐγώ, ζῆ δὲ ἐν ἐμοὶ Χριστός· ὃ δὲ νῦν ζῶ ἐν σαρκί, ἐν πίστει ζῶ τῆ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ, τοῦ ἀγαπήσαντός με καὶ παραδόντος ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ.

## Sunday after 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 after 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 θέλη 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 ἐὰν κερδήσῃ τὸν κόσμον ὅλον, καὶ ζημιωθῇ τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ; ἢ τί δώσει ἄνθρωπος ἀντάλλαγμα τῆς ψυχῆς αὐτοῦ; ὃς γὰρ ἐὰν ἐπαισχυνθῇ με καὶ τοὺς ἐμοὺς λόγους ἐν τῇ γενεᾷ ταύτῃ τῇ μοιχαλίδι καὶ ἁμαρτωλῷ, καὶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐπαισχυνθήσεται αὐτὸν 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.

## UP-COMING EVENTS:

- A . 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!
- B . 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 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 for his devotion to the cause.

**TODAY:** we welcome HIS GRACE + SEBASTIAN Bishop of Zelon of the Holy Archdiocese of New York and Chief Secretary of the HOLY SYNOD who will preside at the MEMORIAL TRIBUTE of the ASIA MINOR HOLOCAUST of 1914 – 1923.

This memorial anniversary marks the 94th annual tribute in sacrifice of the millions of Greek, Armenian and Syrian Orthodox Christians who were systematically destroyed by the GENOCIDE of the Ottoman Empire. This event most tragically heralded the FIRST GENOCIDE of the 20th century which continues into the 21st century with the murder, massacre and eviction of tens of thousands of Orthodox Christians from the Middle East (LEVANT).

Please see insert flyer of further details

**TODAY:** We welcome a son of the parish DEAN S. SIRIGOS, journalist graduate of Georgetown University and Legislative Assistant at the HELLENIC AMERICAN INSTITUTE of Washington D.C. who is the guest homilist at the 94th Memorial Tribute. Everyone is invited to the COFFEE AGAPE FELLOWSHIP for refreshments and a personal introduction to the speakers

**TODAY:** We are in receipt of missives , proclamations, and citations in observance of this solemn occasion. Representatives from Archbishop Barsamian of the ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC ORTHODOX CHURCH and Bishop Nicholas Di Marzio of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn ( FR. TOM AHERN ) are among the distinguished guests.

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

**MR. MRS. MS. CLUB** will meet on Tuesday, September 20th , in WHITEHALL at 7:00 P.M.

**PHILOPTOCHOS LADIES SOCIETY** will convene on Monday, September 26th at 7:00 P.M.

**A.H.E.P.A.** will convene September 19th , Monday at 7:00 PM

**DAUGHTERS of PENELOPE :** will convene September 19th Monday at 7:00 P.M.

**GREEK SCHOOL ;** registrations have already commenced with the September 14th, AGIAMOS for students, faculty and administration. ARE YOUR CHILDREN ENROLLED?

**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 18<sup>TH</sup> 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](http://LIVESTREAMINGPLAYER) . The website address. [W.W.W.gaepis.org](http://W.W.W.gaepis.org) ([Click live audio](#))

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

**MEMORIALS NEXT WEEK:** + **THEODORE and + GEORGIA VEROUTIS**  
+ **DEMETRA MITRAKIS**





On the occasion of the Nativity of the Theotokos Blessed Virgin Mary, our parish hosted the presence and participation at Divine liturgy of ARCHIMANDRITE SERAPHIM DEMETRIOU, former CHANCELLOR and presently Pastor of the renowned Saint Marina Parish of ATHENS, GREECE. Father Seraphim's homily on the birthday of the Holy Virgin was inspirational and enlightening to everyone. In the distribution of the Artoklasia that morning, many of the faithful desired to be photographed with him. We all look forward to his next visitation to our parish. This was Father Seraphim's second visit to us in Brooklyn.







# 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 1969

Κυριακὴ μετὰ τὴν Ὑψωσιν (Μάρκ. 8,34 - 9,1)  
18 Σεπτεμβρίου 2016

Συντάκτης (†) ἐπίσκοπος  
Αὐγουστῖνος Ν. Καντιώτης

## Ἔτοιμοι γιὰ θάνατο!

«Ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ» (Μάρκ. 8,34)

**Ο** Ἰησοῦς, ἀγαπητοί μου, δὲν στρατολογήει ὀπαδοὺς διὰ τῆς βίας. Μολονότι περισσότερο ἀπὸ κάθε ἄλλον αὐτὸς θὰ εἶχε τὸ δικαίωμα καὶ τὴν ἀξίωσι νὰ ἀπαιτήσῃ, ὅλοι οἱ ἄνθρωποι, τοὺς ὁποίους δημιούργησε καὶ ἔφερε στὴν ὕπαρξι, νὰ ὑποταχθοῦν στὸ θέλημα καὶ τὸ κέλευσμά του καὶ νὰ προσέλθουν νὰ καταταχθοῦν στὸ στράτευμά του, ἐν τούτοις **ἀφήνει τὸν καθένα ἐλεύθερο** νὰ κἀνῃ μόνος του τὴν ἐπιλογή, νὰ πάρῃ τὴν ἀπόφασιν ποὺ κρίνει σωστὴ καὶ νὰ πῆ ἂν θέλῃ νὰ γίνῃ ἀκόλουθος καὶ ὑπῆκόος του. «Ὅστις θέλει», λέει, «ὀπίσω μου ἐλθεῖν» (Μάρκ. 8,34). Τὸ εἶπε τότε στοὺς μαθητὰς του, τὸ εἶπε σὲ ὅλο τὸν ὄχλον ποὺ τὸν περιστοιχίζε τῆ στιγμῇ ἐκείνῃ, τὸ λέει καὶ σ' ἐμᾶς σήμερα.

Εἴμαστε λοιπὸν ἐλεύθεροι νὰ ποῦμε ποιά ἀπὸ τίς δύο σημαῖες διαλέγουμε - γιατί δὲν ὑπάρχει τρίτη - ἔχουμε μπροστά μας ἢ τὴ σημαία τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἢ τὴ σημαία τοῦ σατανᾶ καὶ τοῦ δαιμονικοῦ κόσμου. Ἄλλ' ἀπὸ τὴ στιγμῇ ποὺ ἡ θεία χάρις θὰ μᾶς φωτίσῃ νὰ πάρουμε **τὴ σημαία τοῦ Χριστοῦ** καὶ νὰ ἐκλέξουμε τὸ δικό του δρόμο, στὸ ἐξῆς ὀφείλουμε σὲ ὄλη μας τὴ ζωὴ νὰ ἐφαρμόζουμε τὸ δικό του πρόγραμμα, τὸ πρόγραμμα ποὺ αὐτὸς ὁ ἴδιος ὁ Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς συνέταξε καὶ τὸ ὁποῖο ἰσχύει γιὰ ὅλα τὰ παιδιὰ του, γιὰ ὅλους τοὺς ἀκολούθους του.

Καὶ **τὸ πρόγραμμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ** τί προβλέπει; Τὸ εἶπε ὁ ἴδιος: «Ὅστις θέλει ὀπίσω μου ἀκολουθεῖν, ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν καὶ ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἀκολουθεῖτω μοι» (ἐλ.). Ἀπαιτεῖ λοιπὸν τρία πράγματα. Πρῶτον, νὰ μισήσουμε τὴν ἁμαρτία, τῆς ὁποίας τὸ φαρμακερὸ κεντρὶ καὶ ἡ πικρὴ ρίζα βρίσκονται μέσα στὴν καρδιά μας (αὐτὸ σημαίνει τὸ «ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν»). Δεύτερον, νὰ εἴμαστε ἔτοιμοι γιὰ θάνατο (αὐτὴ τὴν ἐννοια ἔχει τὸ

«ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ»). Καὶ τρίτον, νὰ βαδίζουμε μὲ εὐλαβικὴ ὑπακοὴ ἐπάνω στὰ ἴχνη τῆς δικῆς του ἁγίας ζωῆς (αὐτὸ σημαίνει τὸ «ἀκολουθεῖτω μοι»).

Σὲ ἓνα σύντομο κήρυγμα δὲν προλαβαίνουμε ν' ἀναπτύξουμε καὶ τὰ τρία αὐτὰ σημαντικὰ μέρη τοῦ προγράμματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ. Ἀφήνοντας λοιπὸν τὸ πρῶτο καὶ τὸ τρίτο μέρος, καὶ μέσα στὸν χρόνο ποὺ διαθέτουμε, **θὰ στρέψουμε τὴν προσοχή μας στὸ δεύτερο**. Ἡ δευτέρη ἀπαίτησι τοῦ Χριστοῦ, τὸ «ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ», βρίσκεται, ὅπως βλέπουμε, ἀνάμεσα στὶς δύο ἄλλες ἀπαιτήσεις του, τὴν πρώτη καὶ τὴν τρίτη, καὶ τρόπον τινὰ τίς ὑποβαστάζει καὶ τίς ἐνισχύει. Αὐτὴν θὰ προσπαθήσουμε ν' ἀναπτύξουμε σ' αὐτὸ τὸ σύντομο κήρυγμά μας ἐπὶ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου.

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«**Ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ**». Ὁ ἀκόλουθος τοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἀγαπητοί μου, πρέπει νὰ σηκώσῃ τὸν σταυρὸν του.

Ὁ **τίμιος σταυρὸς**, ἐπάνω στὸν ὁποῖο θυσιάστηκε χάριν τῆς σωτηρίας τοῦ κόσμου ὁ «ἀρχηγὸς τῆς πίστεώς» μας (Ἐβ. 12), εἶνε τὸ σύμβολο τῆς ὑπερτάτης θυσίας. Συμβολίζει καὶ ἐκφράζει τὴν μεγαλύτερη καὶ μοναδικὴ θυσία, τοῦ Υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ γιὰ τὴ σωτηρία μας.

Ὅσοι λοιπὸν **τιμοῦν** καὶ ἀσπάζονται αὐτὴ τὴν ἄμωμη καὶ ἀκήρατη θυσία, αὐτοὶ ἐλκύνονται καὶ οἱ ἴδιοι ἀπὸ τὴ χάρι τῆς, συγκινούνται ἀπὸ τὸ μεγαλεῖο τῆς. Ἐξοικειώνονται μὲ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ σταυροῦ, αἰσθάνονται ἀλληλέγγυοι μ' αὐτό, ξεπερνοῦν τὸν φόβο τῆς κακοπαθείας καὶ τοῦ θανάτου. Γι' αὐτὸ καὶ φιλοτιμοῦνται, **ὅπως ὁ ἀπόστολος Παῦλος**, νὰ «ἀναταπληροῦν τὰ ὑστερήματα τῶν θλίψεων τοῦ Χριστοῦ» (Κολ. 1,24), ν' ἀναπληρῶνουν στὴν καθημερινὴ ζωὴ τους ὅσα θὰ πάθαινε ὁ Χριστὸς ἂν ἦταν ἀκόμη ἐπάνω στὴ γῆ σωματικῶς. Ὁ



πόθος και ή λαχτάρα τους τους έμπνέει να επιθυμοῦν «τό ἀναλῦσαι καί σὺν Χριστῷ εἶναι», να πεθάνουν για να βρεθοῦν μιὰ ὥρα γρηγορώτερα κοντὰ στὸ Χριστό (Φλ. 1,23). Φτάνουν ἀτρόμητοι στὸ σημεῖο να κινδυνεύουν καί ν' «ἀποθνήσκουν καθ' ἡμέραν», να πεθαίνουν καθημερινῶς (1 Κορ. 15,31).

Μὲ ἄλλα λόγια λοιπὸν κ' ἐμεῖς, ἐφ' ὅσον μὲ τὴ χάρι τοῦ Θεοῦ καταταχθήκαμε στὸ στράτευμα τοῦ Κυρίου, πρέπει να εἴμαστε ἔτοιμοι για τὰ πάντα· ἔτοιμοι να θυσιάσουμε ὄχι μόνο ἀναπαύσεις καί τιμές καί δόξες καί πλοῦτη, ἀλλὰ κι αὐτὴ τὴ ζωὴ μας ἀκόμη· ἔτοιμοι για πόλεμο, ἔτοιμοι για θάνατο. Ἄς λέμε κ' ἐμεῖς μαζί μὲ τὸν ψαλμωδὸ καί τὸν ἀπόστολο· Για σένα, Κύριε, πεθαίνουμε κάθε μέρα, μᾶς ἔχουν σὰν τὰ πρόβατα ποὺ πᾶνε για σφαγὴ· «ἐλογίσθημεν ὡς πρόβατα σφαγῆς» (Ψαλμ. 43,23· Ρωμ. 8,36).

**Τὸ στράτευμα τοῦ Κυρίου** δὲν ἔχει προορισμὸ να ἄδρανῆ, να διασκεδάζῃ καί να κοιμᾶται. Πρόκειται να περάσῃ μέσα ἀπὸ χῶρες ἐχθρικές, ἀνάμεσα ἀπὸ «λύκους» (Ματθ. 10,16· Λουκ. 10,3). Θὰ ὑποχρεωθῆ να δίνη μάχες, να γκρεμίζῃ τὰ ὀχυρώματα τοῦ σατανᾶ, να συγκρούεται μὲ τοὺς ἀντιχριστοὺς, να προχωρῆ πάντα μπρός.

Πῶς ὅμως θὰ γίνουν ὅλα αὐτὰ, ἂν οἱ στρατιῶτες τοῦ Κυρίου εἶνε δειλοί; Ὁ δειλὸς στρατιῶτης ὄχι μόνο ὁ ἴδιος κινδυνεύει να συλληφθῆ ἀπὸ τὸν ἐχθρό, ἀλλὰ γίνεται καί πρόσκομμα καί ἐμπόδιο στοὺς συμπολεμιστὰς του· διότι καί ἕνας μόνο να δειλιάζῃ, προκαλεῖ τὸν πανικὸ καί στοὺς ἄλλους. Ἔτσι καί ὁ δειλὸς Χριστιανός, αὐτὸς ποὺ τρέμει μπροστὰ στὶς θυσίες· καί ὁ ἴδιος θὰ κινδυνεύσῃ τὸν ἔσχατο κίνδυνο, να χάσῃ δηλαδὴ τὴν ψυχὴ του καί να γίνῃ αἰχμάλωτος τοῦ σατανᾶ, ἀλλὰ καί πρόσκομμα στὴν ὁδὸ τῆς σωτηρίας καί ἄλλων ἀδελφῶν του θὰ γίνῃ, διότι ἡ δειλιὴ του στάσι σὲ ζητήματα πίστεως καί ἠθικῆς θὰ ἐπιτρεᾶσῃ καί θ' ἀπογοητεύσῃ πολλοὺς.

Γι' αὐτὸ χρειάζεται να πάρῃ ἡρωικὴ ἀπόφασι καί να πῆ· Θὰ πεθάνω στὸ πεδίο τῆς μάχης τοῦ Χριστοῦ. Δὲν θ' ἄρνηθῶ τὴν πίστι μου, δὲν θὰ παραβῶ τὸ καθῆκον μου, δὲν θὰ καταπατήσω τὴν ἠθικὴ τοῦ Εὐαγγελίου, ἔστω καί ἂν οἱ ἀντίπαλοί μου (ὁ κόσμος, ἡ ἁμαρτία, ὁ σατανᾶς) μοῦ δείχνουν ἕνα σταυρό, ἐπάνω στὸν ὁποῖο πρέπει κ' ἐγὼ ν' ἀφήσω, ὅπως ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὁ Ναζωραῖος, τὴν τελευταία μου ἀναπνοή.

Αὐτὴ τὴν ἀπόφασι πρέπει να πάρῃ κάθε Χριστιανός, ἂν θέλῃ να εὐαρεστήσῃ στὸν ἀρχηγὸ τῆς στρατιάς, τὸν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν. Ἐὰν ἕνας ἐπίγειος βασιλιάς τιμᾶ τοὺς γενναίους στρατιῶτες του μὲ παράσημα, καί ὁ Κύριος

**θὰ τιμῆσῃ** τοὺς ἀνδρείους Χριστιανοὺς «μετὰ δόξης αἰωνίου» (1 Τιμ. 2,15), γιατί ἀναδείχθηκαν «πιστοὶ ἄχρι θανάτου» καί ἀξίζουν να τοὺς δώσῃ «τὸν στέφανον τῆς (αἰωνίου) ζωῆς» (Μα. 2,17). Ἄκουσαν καί ἐκτέλεσαν τὴν προσταγὴ τοῦ Κυρίου «ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ» καί «Γίνου πιστὸς ἄχρι θανάτου καί δώσω σοι τὸν στέφανον τῆς ζωῆς».

Ὅποιος φθάνει μὲ τὴ χάρι τοῦ Θεοῦ στὴν ἀπόφασι αὐτὴ, αὐτὸς ἔχει ξεπεράσει κάθε ἄλλο ἐμπόδιο. Ἐκεῖνος ποὺ πῆρε τὴν ἀπόφασι, χάριν τῆς πίστεως καί τῆς ἠθικῆς τοῦ Εὐαγγελίου, να θυσιάσῃ –ἂν παραστῆ ἀνάγκη– καί αὐτὴ τὴ ζωὴ του, αὐτὸς ὁ Χριστιανός θὰ ἔχη πάντοτε εἰρήνη στὴν ψυχὴ καί θὰ βαδίζῃ ἀτάραχος τὴν ὁδὸ τοῦ Κυρίου. Καί πῶς ὄχι; Ἄφου ἀποφάσισε να θυσιάσῃ τὴ ζωὴ του, τὸ πολυτιμότερο ἀπὸ τὰ ἐπίγεια ἀγαθὰ, τί ἔχει πλέον να φοβηθῆ; Αὐτὸς ποὺ μπορεῖ καί περιφρονεῖ τὸν μεγαλύτερο ἐχθρὸ τῆς ζωῆς, τὸν θάνατο, πῶς δὲν θὰ περιφρονήσῃ εὐκολα καί τοὺς μικρότερους ἐχθροὺς τῆς ζωῆς του, τίς θλίψεις καί τίς ποικίλες στενοχώριες; Ὅποιος ἔχει τὴ δύναμι να θυσιάσῃ τὸ μεγαλύτερο κεφάλαιο πῶς δὲν θὰ θυσιάσῃ σὲ δεδομένη στιγμὴ μικρὰ καί ἀσήμαντα ποσά; Ὁ στρατιῶτης ποὺ πέφτει μὲ θάρρος στὴ φωτιὰ τοῦ θανάτου κ' εἶνε ἔτοιμος για τὴν τιμὴ τῆς πατρίδος καί τὸ αἷμα του να χύσῃ, πῶς δὲν θὰ ὑποφέρῃ εὐκολώτερα κάθε ἄλλη κακουχία τοῦ πολέμου;

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Νά λοιπὸν, ἀγαπητοί μου, γιατί κάνω σήμερα αὐτὸ τὸ τολμηρὸ κήρυγμα. Ἡ ἀπόφασι να πεθάνουμε για τὸ θέλημα τοῦ Κυρίου θὰ μᾶς κἀνῃ βράχους ἀκλόνητους σὲ κάθε πειρασμό. Μένοντας σταθεροὶ στὶς χριστιανικὲς μας ἀρχές καί πεποιθήσεις, **θ' ἀντικρίζουμε ἄφοβα κάθε ἄλλο κίνδυνο**. Ἐτοιμοὶ για τὸ θάνατο, ἔτοιμοὶ για σφαγὴ, θὰ εἴμαστε συγχρόνως ἔτοιμοὶ καί για κάθε ἄλλη μικρότερη θυσία ποὺ θὰ ζητήσῃ ἀπὸ μᾶς ὁ Χριστός. Ἄν εἴμαστε κοντὰ στὸν Κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, θὰ διατελοῦμε δὲ διαρκῆ ἐπιστράτευσι.

Πεθαίνοντας κάθε μέρα καί στιγμὴ για τὸν γλυκύτατο Κύριό μας καί συνοδεύοντάς τον στὸ δρόμο τοῦ σταυροῦ του, θὰ ἔχουμε τὴν ἐλπίδα να γίνουμε μέτοχοι καί τῆς αἰωνίου του δόξης καί χαρᾶς.

Ἀδελφοί μου! Ἄς παρακαλέσουμε τὸν Κύριο να μᾶς φωτίσῃ, για να λάβουμε τὴν ἡρωικὴ ἀπόφασι καί να ἐκτελέσουμε κ' ἐμεῖς τὴν ἐντολή του «ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ».

(†) 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**

### *We Hope For What We Do Not See*

Patience is a precept for salvation given us by our Lord, our teacher: Whoever endures to the end will be saved. And again: If you persevere in my word, you will truly be my disciples; you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

Dear brothers and sisters, we must endure and persevere if we are to attain the truth and freedom we have been allowed to hope for; faith and hope are the very meaning of our being Christians, but if faith and hope are to bear their fruit, patience is necessary.

We do not seek glory now, in the present, but we look for future glory, as Saint Paul instructs us when he says: By hope we were saved. Now hope which is seen is not hope; how can a man hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it in patience. Patient waiting is neces-

sary if we are to be perfected in what we have begun to be, and if we are to receive from God what we hope for and believe.

In another place the same Apostle instructs and teaches the just, and those active in good works, and those who store up for themselves treasures in heaven through the reward God gives them. They are to be patient also, for he says: Therefore while we have time, let us do good to all, but especially to those who are of the household of the faith. But let us not grow weary in doing good, for we shall reap our reward in due season.

*St. Cyprian of Carthage*

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