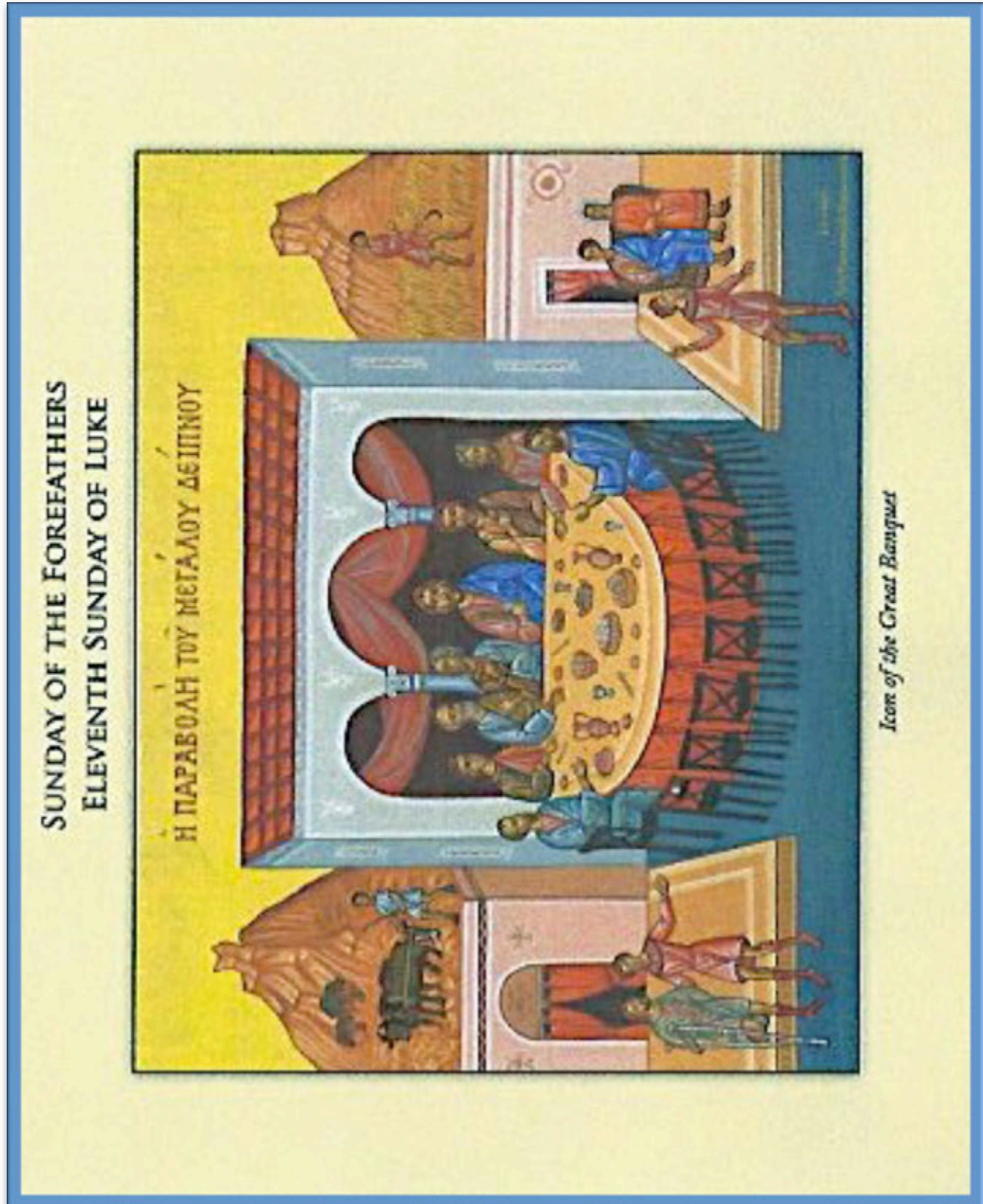




DIRECT ARCHDIOCESAN
DISTRICT

THREE HIERARCHS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

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



St. Paul's Letter to the Colossians 3:4-11

Prokeimenon. Mode 4.

Daniel 3.26,27

Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of our fathers.

Verse: For you are just in all you have done.

BRETHREN, when Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience. In these you once walked, when you lived in them. But now put them all away; anger, wrath, malice, slander, and foul talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old nature with its practices and have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all, and in all.

Πρὸς Κολοσσαεῖς 3:4-11

Προκείμενον. ᾠχος δ.

Δανιήλ 3.26-27

Εὐλογητὸς εἶ, Κύριε, ὁ Θεὸς τῶν Πατέρων ἡμῶν.

Στίχ. Ὅτι δίκαιος εἶ ἐπὶ πᾶσιν, οἷς ἐποίησας ἡμῖν.

Ἀδελφοί, ὅταν ὁ Χριστὸς φανερωθῆ, ἡ ζωὴ ἡμῶν, τότε καὶ ὑμεῖς σὺν αὐτῷ φανερωθήσεσθε ἐν δόξῃ. Νεκρώσατε οὖν τὰ μέλη ὑμῶν τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, πορνείαν, ἀκαθαρσίαν, πάθος, ἐπιθυμίαν κακὴν, καὶ τὴν πλεονεξίαν, ἣτις ἐστὶν εἰδωλολατρεία, δι' ἣ ἔρχεται ἡ ὀργὴ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπὶ τοὺς υἱοὺς τῆς ἀπειθείας· Ἐν οἷς καὶ ὑμεῖς περιπατήσατέ ποτε, ὅτε ἐζῆτε ἐν αὐτοῖς. Νυνὶ δὲ ἀπόθεσθε καὶ ὑμεῖς τὰ πάντα, ὀργὴν, θυμὸν, κακίαν, βλασφημίαν, αἰσχρολογίαν ἐκ τοῦ στόματος ὑμῶν· μὴ ψεύδεσθε εἰς ἀλλήλους, ἀπεκδυσάμενοι τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον σὺν ταῖς πράξεσιν αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐνδυσάμενοι τὸν νέον, τὸν ἀνακαινούμενον εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν κατ' εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαντος αὐτόν· ὅπου οὐκ ἔνι Ἕλληνα καὶ Ἰουδαῖον, περιτομὴ καὶ ἀκροβυστία, βάρβαρος, Σκύθη, δοῦλος, ἐλεύθερος· ἀλλὰ τὰ πάντα καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν Χριστός.

1th Sunday of Luke

The Gospel according to Luke 14:16-24

The Lord said this parable: "A man once gave a great banquet, and invited many; and at the time of the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for all is now ready.' But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I go out and see it; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I must go to examine them; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' So the servant came and reported this to his master. Then the householder in anger said to his servant, 'Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and maimed and blind and lame.' And the servant said, 'Sir, what you commanded has been done, and there is still room.' And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges, and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet. For many are called, but few are chosen.'"

11th Sunday of Luke

Κατὰ Λουκᾶν 14:16-24

Εἶπεν ὁ Κύριος τὴν παραβολὴν ταύτην· Ἄνθρωπός τις ἐποίησε δεῖπνον μέγα καὶ ἐκάλεσε πολλούς· καὶ ἀπέστειλε τὸν δοῦλον αὐτοῦ τῇ ὥρᾳ τοῦ δείπνου εἰπεῖν τοῖς κεκλημένοις· ἔρχεσθε, ὅτι ἤδη ἔτοιμά ἐστι πάντα. καὶ ἤρξαντο ἀπὸ μιᾶς παραιτεῖσθαι πάντες. ὁ πρῶτος εἶπεν αὐτῷ· ἀγρὸν ἠγόρασα, καὶ ἔχω ἀνάγκην ἐξελεῖν καὶ ἰδεῖν αὐτόν· ἐρωτῶ σε, ἔχε με παρητημένον. καὶ ἕτερος εἶπε· ζεύγη βοῶν ἠγόρασα πέντε, καὶ πορεύομαι δοκιμάσαι αὐτά· ἐρωτῶ σε, ἔχε με παρητημένον. καὶ ἕτερος εἶπε· γυναῖκα ἔγημα, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο οὐ δύναμαι ἐλθεῖν. καὶ παραγενόμενος ὁ δοῦλος ἐκεῖνος ἀπήγγειλε τῷ κυρίῳ αὐτοῦ ταῦτα. τότε ὀργισθεὶς ὁ οἰκοδεσπότης εἶπε τῷ δούλῳ αὐτοῦ· ἔξελθε ταχέως εἰς τὰς πλατείας καὶ ῥύμας τῆς πόλεως, καὶ τοὺς πτωχοὺς καὶ ἀναπήρους καὶ χωλοὺς καὶ τυφλοὺς εἰσάγαγε ὧδε. καὶ εἶπεν ὁ δοῦλος· κύριε, γέγονεν ὡς ἐπέταξας, καὶ ἔτι τόπος ἐστί. καὶ εἶπεν ὁ κύριος πρὸς τὸν δοῦλον· ἔξελθε εἰς τὰς ὁδοὺς καὶ φραγμοὺς καὶ ἀνάγκασον εἰσελθεῖν, ἵνα γεμισθῇ ὁ οἶκος μου. λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐδεὶς τῶν ἀνδρῶν ἐκείνων τῶν κεκλημένων γεύσεται μου τοῦ δείπνου. Πολλοὶ γὰρ εἰσιν κλητοί, ὀλίγοι δὲ ἐκλεκτοί.

DEVOTIONS THIS WEEK:

MAJOR FEAST DAYS COMING UP: Sunday, December 11th, SAINT LUKE AND DANIEL LITURGY 10:30 A.M. & SAINT SPYRIDON (12th) * celebrated today!
Tuesday, December 13th, SAINT EUGENE 9:30 A.M.
Coffee and cake reception for all in the vestry. 11:00 A.M.
** Thursday, December ** 15th, SAINT ELEUTHERIOS Feast to be celebrated with artoklasis next Sunday December 18th!

NEXT SUNDAY December 18th, **THE CATECHETICAL SCHOOL** children will present a short Christmas pageant in Church after the Divine liturgy. **GREEK SCHOOL STUDENTS** : will also present their ANNUAL pageant on Sunday, December 18th, next week, after the Divine liturgy.

TODAY: The AGAPE COFFEE FELLOWSHIP is being hosted by the men of the CONEY ISLAND CHAPTER of the A.H.E.P.A. in Whitehall. Everyone is cordially invited as guests to partake of refreshments.

NEXT SUNDAY: December 18th, Elections to the Parish Council will be held in SCHOOL ROOM #104 (opposite the church office) from 10:00 a.m. through 3:00 p.m. Exercise your duty and privilege to determine the parish leadership for the next year 2017!

SENIOR CLUB: Christmas LENTEN Luncheon is being hosted for ALL MEMBERS on Wednesday, December 21st, in WHITEHALL. Special music from the Peter Gardianos TROUPE will entertain . The question is : WHY ARE YOU NOT A MEMBER / TO SHARE IN THIS FELLOWSHIP. JOIN TODAY! A year of activities each Wednesday afternoon from 1:00 to 5:00 P.M. Bring your friends and create your own table!

MR. MRS. and MS. CLUB Christmas Party is scheduled for TUESDAY, December 13th. (by coincidence-Saint Eugene Day) in Whitehall at 7:00 P.M.

A.H.E.P.A. Men's fraternal organization will host their Christmas Dinner for BROTHER MEMBERS ONLY on Thursday December 15th at PERRY'S at 7:00 P.M.

FAITH and HEALING Services are held mid -month -and - every month. Why not visit us on these WEDNESDAY evening (6:30 – 8:00 P.M.) special spiritual journeys. You will be in a religious renaissance. TRY IT! Next session is Wednesday December 21st. "I AM THE WAY"

CHRISTMAS SERVICES: Please take note of the special sacred services for the HOLY DAY of OUR LORD'S NATIVITY:
Saturday Evening, December 24th, 10:30 P.M. – MIDNIGHT
Saturday Evening, December 24th, Midnight Carols and Processional Veneration of the sacred ICON.
Sunday Morning, December 25th, LITURGY of the HOLY NATIVITY 9:30 A.M.
Sunday Noon, December 25th, Carol Hymnology and HOMILY 11:30 A.M.
' I AM THE WAY '
' I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD '

CHRISTMAS CARD PROJECT: Extolling the good news of our Savior Jesus Christ's Nativity to 1000 homes in the parish family and friends is your personal greeting for 2016. Please do so by having your name and loved ones printed in the exquisite Byzantine Triptych of icons depicting the ANNUNCIATION, the PRESENTATION and the NATIVITY iconography in detail. It's a treasure to have, to keep and TO SEND. All the work including postage is done for you with a donation of only \$20.00. (twenty dollars). Spread the word and keep the CHRIST in CHRISTMAS! Fill in the form at the church office after services.

TOYS FOR TOTS : Christmas appeal for those children outside the parish in need will commence SUNDAY. November 27th. Think of your childhood and what you as little boy or girl desired MOST! Anonymously, unwrapped gifts may be left at the foot of the Blessed Virgins ICON for proper handling distribution.

RESERVATIONS FOR NEW YEAR'S EVE REVELLION: at Three Hierarchs are now being taken. Our spectacular New Year Eve dinner dance is renowned. Mark your calendar December 31st. SATURDAY NIGHT!!! at 8:00 P.M. in ROSEHALL. **Please see flyer insert.** Reserve your place now 718-339-0280. Dinner,Dance, Open Bar, Tickets only \$100.ea.

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)

MEMORIAL TODAY: + NICHOLAS ANASTASAKOS +GEORGE ANASTASIADIS
+ IOANNIS ZAHARIAS +EVANGELOS DAOUKAKIS
MEMORIAL NEXT WEEK : + CAROL BROGNA +GEORGE MITCHELL

PHOTOS BELOW INCLUDE: Dean Veroutis, Boy Scouts of America; Archon Teddy Klingos, Archdiocesan Cathedral; Susan Jannace, PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY; Frank X. Rourke, St. John University Alumni, Paulette Poulos, Leadership 100; Senator Marty Golden, New York State Senate



2016, Anniversary Dinner Dance Honoring the GOLDEN 50th, ORDINATION ANNIVERSARY of our beloved Pastor, Father Eugene Pappas, Friday Evening, December 02nd 2016 EL CARIBE CLUB CATERERS.



Photos above include: Andrew Goumardes Esq, Borough President Counsel; Andrew Zachariadis, National AHEPA President; Jimmy Kokotas, National AHEPA Treasurer; Helen Kokis, SENIOR CLUB; Family Members, Sister Georganne and Bill Conis and brother Deno and Kryssi Pappas.



ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ

ΣΥΝΤΟΜΟΝ ΚΗΡΥΓΜΑ



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

Ἐκδίδεται ἀπὸ τὴν Κοινοβιακὴ Γυναικεῖα Τερτὴ Μονὴ Ἁγίου Αὐγουστίνου Φλωρίνης - 531 00 ΦΛΩΡΙΝΑ - τηλ. 23850-28610 - info@io@yahoo.gr

Περίοδος Δ' - "Ἔτος ΛΓ" Φλώρινα - ἀριθμ. φύλλου 1984	Κυριακὴ ΙΑ' Λουκᾶ (Λκ. 14,16-24· Μθ. 22,14) 11 Δεκεμβρίου 2016	Συντάκτης (†) ἐπίσκοπος Αὐγουστίνος Ν. Καντιώτης
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Μακριὰ οἱ προφάσεις!

«*Ἄγρὸν ἡγόρασα... Ζεύγη βοῶν ἡγόρασα πέντε... Γυναῖκα ἔγνημα...*» (Λουκ. 14,18-20)

Στὴν ώραία παραβολὴ τοῦ σημερινοῦ εὐαγγελίου, ἀγαπητοί μου, βλέπουμε **ἓνα παράδοξο πρᾶγμα**. Ποιό δηλαδή;

Κάποιος ἀπὸ τὴν ἀρχοντικὴ τάξι τῶν φαρισαίων, ὅπως ἱστορεῖ ὁ ἱερὸς εὐαγγελιστής, εἶχε καλέσει, ἡμέρα Σάββατο, τὸν Κύριό μας νὰ τοῦ κἀνὴ τὸ **τραπέζι** (βλ. Λκ. 14,15). Ὁ Χριστός, παρ' ὅλο πὸ ἐγνώριζε ὅτι οἱ διαθέσεις τῶν φαρισαίων δὲν εἶνε ἀγαθές, ὅτι παρατηροῦν κάθε κίνησί του ζητώντας ἀφορμὴ νὰ τὸν κατηγορήσουν, ἐν τούτοις δὲν ἐπρόβαλε κάποια πρόφασι γιὰ ν' ἀρνηθῆ τὴν πρόσκλησι, ἀλλὰ πῆγε. Δὲν πῆγε βέβαια γιὰ ν' ἀπολαύσῃ φαγητά· πῆγε γιὰ νὰ δοθῆ **εὐκαιρία νὰ διδάξῃ**. Καὶ πράγματι, κατὰ τὴ διάρκεια ἐκείνου τοῦ γεύματος θεράπευσε ἓναν ἀσθενῆ, διδάσκοντας ὅτι δὲν ἀμαρτάνει ὅποιος ἀγαθοεργεῖ τὴν ἡμέρα τοῦ Σαββάτου· καὶ ἐνῶ αὐτὸ τὸ ἄκουσαν ὅλοι, κανεὶς ἀπὸ τοὺς συνδαιτυμόνες δὲν τόλμησε νὰ τοῦ φέρῃ ἀντίρρησι. Δίδαξε ἐπίσης τὴν ταπεινωσι λέγοντας: Ὅταν σῶς καλοῦν σὲ γάμους, νὰ προτιμᾶτε στὸ τραπέζι ὄχι τὴν πρώτη ἀλλὰ τὴν τελευταία θέσι. Τέλος εἶπε καὶ στὸν οἰκοδεσπότη: Ὅταν κἀνης τραπέζι, νὰ καλῆς ὄχι φίλους καὶ συγγενεῖς ἢ πλουσίους γειτόνους, ἀλλὰ φτωχοὺς καὶ σακάτηδες, πὸ δὲν μποροῦν νὰ σοῦ τὸ ἀνταποδώσουν ἐδῶ στὴ γῆ, ὥστε νὰ σοῦ ἀνταποδοθῆ στὸ τέλος ὅταν θὰ γίνῃ ἡ κοινὴ ἀνάστασι. Ἀκούγοντας τὰ τελευταία αὐτὰ λόγια ἓνας ἀπὸ τοὺς συνδαιτυμόνες εἶπε στὸν Κύριό με πόθο: Εὐτυχισμένος ὅποιος θ' ἀξιωθῆ νὰ παρακαθῆ στὸ τραπέζι τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ Θεοῦ!

Τότε, με ἀφορμὴ τὸν λόγο αὐτόν, ὁ Κύριός μας εἶπε τὴν **παραβολὴ τοῦ μεγάλου δεῖπνου** πὸ ἀκούσαμε σήμερα. Ὅτι κάποιος ἄνθρωπος ἔκανε μεγάλο βραδινὸ τραπέζι καὶ καλεσε πολλούς. Κι ὅταν ἦρθε ἡ ὥρα κ' ἦταν ὅλα ἔτοιμα, ἔστειλε τὸ δούλο του νὰ τοὺς φωνάξῃ.

Ἐκεῖ ὅμως συνέβη τὸ παράδοξο πὸ εἶπαμε στὴν ἀρχή· οἱ καλεσμένοι φίλοι ἀρχισαν νὰ δίνουν ὄλοι τὴν ἴδια ἀπάντησι, λὲς καὶ ἦταν συν-ενοημένοι. Οἱ πρῶτοι προσκεκλημένοι ὁ ἓνας μετὰ τὸν ἄλλο ἀρνοῦνται νὰ λάβουν μέρος στὸ δεῖπνο. Προφασίζονται, ὅτι διάφορες ἐπεΐγουσες τάχα ἀσχολίες, ὅπως ὁ «*ἀγρός*», τὰ «*ζεύγη βοῶν*» καὶ ἡ οἰκογένεια («*γυναῖκα ἔγνημα*»), τοὺς ἐμποδίζουν νὰ συμμετάσχουν στὸ τραπέζι (βλ. Λκ. 14,18). Δὲν εἶνε λοιπὸν παράδοξο αὐτὸ τὸ πρᾶγμα; Πολὺ παράδοξο.

Ἄλλ' ἐάν, ἀγαπητοί μου, «ἀποκρυπτογραφήσουμε» τὴν παραβολή, θὰ βροῦμε **τὸ νόημα τῆς**, αὐτὸ πὸ Κύριος θέλει νὰ μᾶς διδάξῃ.

Κάτω ἀπὸ τὸ «*μέγα δεῖπνον*» πρέπει νὰ ἐννοήσουμε τὴν **χριστιανικὴ ζωὴ** γενικά, ἢ ὅποια εἶνε γεμάτη ἀπὸ πνευματικὰ θέληγτρα καὶ ἀπολαύσεις, ὄχι μόνο στὸν οὐρανὸ ἀλλ' ἀκόμη καὶ σ' αὐτὴν ἐδῶ τὴ γῆ. Κάτω δὲ ἀπὸ τοὺς προσ- «*κεκλημένους*» πρέπει νὰ ἐννοήσουμε τὰ διάφορα πρόσωπα πὸ προσκαλοῦνται νὰ γευθοῦν τὰ ἀγαθὰ τῆς χριστιανικῆς ζωῆς. Ἐχοντας τώρα ὑπ' ὄψιν αὐτά, τὸ παράδοξο πὸ περιγράφει ἡ παραβολὴ μετατρέπεται πλέον σὲ ἓνα γεγονὸς πολὺ συνηθισμένο, πὸ τὸ βλέπουμε νὰ συμβαίῃ κάθε μέρα, εἴτε μέσα στὴ δικὴ μας τὴν καρδιά εἴτε μέσα στὶς καρδιὰς τῶν ἄλλων. Διότι πρᾶγματι πουθενά ἄλλοῦ ὁ ἄνθρωπος δὲν συμπεριφέρεται τόσο ἀπρόθυμα ὅσο στὰ ζητήματα πὸ ἀφοροῦν στὴν σωτηρία τῆς ψυχῆς του. Ἄεικίνητος σὲ ὄλα, ἐδῶ γίνεται βραδυκίνητη χελώνα - καὶ μακάρι νὰ πῆγαινε σὰν τὴ χελώνα· ἐδῶ γίνεται πέτρα ἀκίνητη, δὲν ἐννοεῖ νὰ σαλέψῃ, νὰ κινηθῆ ἀπὸ τὴ θέσι του.

Ματαιίως τοῦ ἔρχονται οἱ **προσκλήσεις** με διαφόρους τρόπους: μηνύματα, εἰδήσεις, προτροπὲς φίλων, κηρύγματα, ἔλεγχοι τῆς συν-

ειδήσεως, εὐχάριστα ἢ δυσάρεστα γεγονότα εἴτε τῆς προσωπικῆς του ζωῆς εἴτε τοῦ οικογενειακοῦ του περιβάλλοντος εἴτε καὶ τοῦ ἐθνικοῦ ἢ τοῦ παγκοσμίου βίου. Μὲ ὄλους αὐτούς τοὺς τρόπους ὁ πανάγαθος Θεὸς προσκαλεῖ τὸν καθένα στὴν χριστιανικὴ ζωὴ, στὴ ζωὴ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας. Εἶνε τόσο ἀγαθὸς αὐτὸς ποὺ προσκαλεῖ, εἶνε τόσο μεγάλη ἡ τιμὴ ποὺ προτείνει, εἶνε τόσο ζηλευτὰ τὰ βραβεῖα ποὺ προσφέρει, ὥστε φυσιολογικὰ ὁ ἄνθρωπος θὰ ἔπρεπε, χωρὶς πολλὴ σκέψι καὶ χωρὶς κανένα δισταγμὸ, νὰ δεχθῆ τὴν πρόσκλησι ποὺ φθάνει μὲ ἕναν ἀπὸ τοὺς τρόπους ποὺ εἶπαμε, ν' ἀφήσῃ πίσω τὸ παρελθόν του, νὰ μετανοήσῃ, καὶ νὰ τρέξῃ ἐκεῖ ὅπου τὸν προσκαλεῖ ὁ Χριστός, ἔχοντας πλήρη βεβαιότητα ὅτι, ὅπου καλεῖ ὁ Χριστός, ἐκεῖ βρίσκεται ἡ πραγματικὴ χαρὰ καὶ εὐτυχία. Καὶ ὅμως αὐτό, τὸ τόσο λογικὸ, πολὺ σπανίως γίνεται. Γιατί;

Ἐπὶ ἄλλοι εἶναι ἐλευθερία. Ἄλλα στὴν ἐλευθερία παρεμβαίνουν ἄλλοι. Ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἔχει πολλοὺς κακοὺς συμβούλους. Ἐχει πρῶτα - πρῶτα τὸν διεφθαρμένο ἑαυτό του, ποὺ τὸν κρατᾷ δεμένο σὲ χρόνια πάθη. Ἐχει ἔπειτα τοὺς συγγενεῖς, τοὺς φίλους, τὸν κόσμον, ποὺ ζοῦν ὅπως κι αὐτὸς στὴν ἁμαρτία καὶ τὸν ἀποθαρρύνουν, ὥστε νὰ μὴν τολμήσῃ νὰ πετάξῃ πρὸς ψηλά. Ἐχει τέλος καὶ τὸν σατανᾶ, ποὺ μὲ δόλιο τρόπο τὸν ἐξαπατᾷ, ὥστε νὰ μὴ βλέπῃ τὸ συμφέρον του. Ὅλοι αὐτοὶ μὲ κοινὴ συμφωνία εἰσηγούνται στὸν ἄνθρωπο ν' ἀπορίψῃ τὴν πρόσκλησι καὶ νὰ μένῃ στὰ ἴδια. Ἔτσι ὁ δῦστυχος ἄνθρωπος δέχεται τίς εἰσηγήσεις τῶν ἐχθρῶν τῆς χαρᾶς καὶ τῆς εὐτυχίας του, ἀπορρίπτει τὴν πρόσκλησι, καὶ γιὰ νὰ δικαιολογήσῃ τὰ ἀδικαιολόγητα ἢ μᾶλλον γιὰ νὰ κοιμισθῇ τῇ συνειδήσει του, πλάθει διάφορες δικαιολογίες γιὰ νὰ ἀμνηστεύσῃ τὸ ὀλέθριο λάθος του, τὴν παράλειψι τοῦ ὑψίστου χρέους του νὰ σπεύσῃ κοντὰ στὸν Ἰησοῦ ποὺ τὸν καλεῖ.

«*Ἄγρον ἠγόρασα*» – «*ζεύγη βοῶν ἠγόρασα πέντε καὶ πορεύομαι δοκιμάσαι αὐτά*» – «*γυναῖκα ἔγημα, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο οὐ δύναμαι ἔλθειν*», νὰ τί προφασίζεται ὁποῖος δὲν ἔχει διάθεσι νὰ δεχθῆ τὴν πρόσκλησι τοῦ Χριστοῦ. Ἄλλα οἱ προφάσεις αὐτὲς εἶνε ἀνόητες καὶ μαρτυροῦν πόσο ἀδικεῖ τὸ Χριστὸ καὶ τὴ χριστιανικὴ ζωὴ ὁποῖος προβάλλει τέτοιες δικαιολογίες.

Ἡ χριστιανικὴ ζωὴ, ἡ γνήσια εὐαγγελικὴ ζωὴ, δὲν εἶνε ἄρνησι τῆς ζωῆς μέσα στὸν κόσμον. Πραγματοποιεῖται μέσα στὴν κοινωνία. Μπορεῖ νὰ συμβαδίσῃ σὲ ὅλα τὰ στάδια τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ νὰ σταθῇ **πολύτιμος σύντροφός** του, σὲ ὅποιοδήποτε εἶδος νομί-

μου ἐργασίας καὶ ἂν αὐτὸς καταγίνεται. Ὁ Χριστὸς δὲν εἶπε ν' ἀφήσουμε ἀκαλλιέργητα τὰ χωράφια, νὰ κλείσουμε τὰ καταστήματα, νὰ ἀρνηθοῦμε τὸ γάμο καὶ νὰ καταργήσουμε τὴν οἰκογένεια, προκειμένου νὰ τὸν ἀκολουθήσουμε. Μποροῦμε καὶ ὡς ἀγρότες καὶ ὡς ἔμποροι καὶ ὡς ἔγγαμοι οἰκογενειάρχες νὰ ζήσουμε σύμφωνα μὲ τὰ παραγγέλματα τοῦ Κυρίου μας. Ἡ ζωὴ ἡ χριστιανικὴ ὄχι μόνο δὲν μᾶς ἐμποδίζει ἀπὸ τὴν ἐκτέλεσι τῶν καθημερινῶν μας ἔργων, ἀλλ' ἀντιθέτως **ἐξυψώνει καὶ ἐξευγενίζει** τὰ ἔργα καὶ τίς ἀσχολίες μας ἐκεῖνες ποὺ ἐκτελοῦνται κάτω τὸ βλέμμα τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

Ἐπειτα, ἡ πρώτη καὶ ὑψίστη ὑπόθεσι τῆς ζωῆς μας εἶνε ἡ **σωτηρία τῆς ψυχῆς** μας, καὶ κατόπιν κατὰ σειρὰν ἀξίας ἔρχονται οἱ ἄλλες ὑποθέσεις, γιὰ τὴν οἰκογένειά μας, γιὰ τὰ κτήματά μας, τὰ ἐμπορίατά μας κ.τ.λ. Ἐκεῖνος ποὺ ἀφήνει τὸ νοῦ του ν' ἀπορροφηθῆ ἐξ ὀλοκλήρου ἀπὸ τίς σκέψεις μόνο τοῦ ἐπαγγέλματός του καὶ τῶν ἄλλων καθημερινῶν του ἀσχολιῶν, δείχνει ὅτι δὲν πιστεύει στὴν ἀθανασία τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ τὴ μέλλουσα ζωὴ· γιατί ἂν πίστευε, θὰ εὑρίσκε χρόνο ν' ἀσχοληθῆ καὶ μὲ τὰ ζητήματα τῆς σωτηρίας του, χρόνο ἴσο τοῦλάχιστον μὲ τὸ χρόνο ποὺ διαθέτει γιὰ τὰ μικρὰ βιοτικὰ ζητήματα. Ἀλλὰ τώρα; Ἀσχολεῖται νὰ τακτοποιήσῃ τὸ δωμάτιο, στὸ ὁποῖο θὰ κοιμηθῆ μία μόνο νύχτα, καὶ καθόλου δὲν μεριμνᾷ γιὰ τὸ οἶκημα τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, στὸ ὁποῖο ὄχι ὥρες καὶ ἡμέρες ἀλλὰ χρόνια καὶ αἰωνίως θὰ παραμείνῃ. Τόση φροντίδα γιὰ τὰ ἐπίγεια, τόση ἀμέλεια γιὰ ὅ,τι ἀφορᾷ στὸ πολυτιμότερο μέρος τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης υπάρξεως.

Μακριὰ λοιπὸν ἀπὸ μᾶς οἱ προφάσεις! Καὶ ἐπειδὴ οἱ προφάσεις εἶνε προϊόν τῆς ἁμαρτίας, ποὺ ζητᾷ νὰ καλυφθῆ κάτω ἀπὸ αὐτές, γι' αὐτὸ ἂς λέμε στὸν Κύριο τὴ θερμὴ προσευχὴ τοῦ Δαυὶδ· «*Κύριε, μὴ ἐκκλίνῃς τὴν καρδίαν μου εἰς λόγους πονηρίας τοῦ προφασίζεσθαι προφάσεις ἐν ἁμαρτίαις*», μὴ μ' ἀφήσῃς νὰ βρῶσκω ἁμαρτωλὲς προφάσεις (Ψαλμ. 140/4).

Ἄς τρέχουμε παντοῦ ὅπου μᾶς καλεῖ ὁ Χριστός· καὶ στὰ προσκλητήριά του εἶθε οἱ ἄγγελοί του ποτέ νὰ μὴ σημειώνουν γιὰ μᾶς τὴ λέξι «**ἀπῶν**», ἀλλὰ νὰ σημειώνουν πάντοτε τὴ λέξι «**παρῶν**». Τότε θὰ ἔχουμε κ' ἐμεῖς τὴν ἐλπίδα, νὰ παρακαθῆσουμε στὴν τράπεζα τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, στὴν οὐράνιο βασιλεία του. Καὶ «*μακάριος, ὃς φάγεται ἄριστον ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ Θεοῦ*» (Λουκ. 14/15).

(†) **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

Invited to the Banquet

It is written in the Gospel: The Master sent out his servants to call them who wish to come, inviting them: "My banquet is ready." But those who were called began to excuse themselves, one saying: "I bought some yoke of oxen." Another: "I have married" (Luke 14:16ff). You see, he was ready who called, but the invited refused. They themselves were alone responsible in the way they answered.

Thus, so great is the dignity of Christians. Consider, the Lord has prepared for them the Kingdom and has called them to enter, but they have refused. Concerning the gift that Christians will receive by way

of their inheritance, one could rightly say that if anyone, from the time of Adam's creation to the end of the world, should battle against Satan and put up with afflictions, it would be nothing in comparison to the glory which he is to obtain. For he will reign forever together with Christ. Glory to Him who so loved such a person that He gave himself and His grace and entrusted himself to Him. Glory to His greatness!

Pseudo-Macarius

For more information on Eastern spirituality, visit
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