

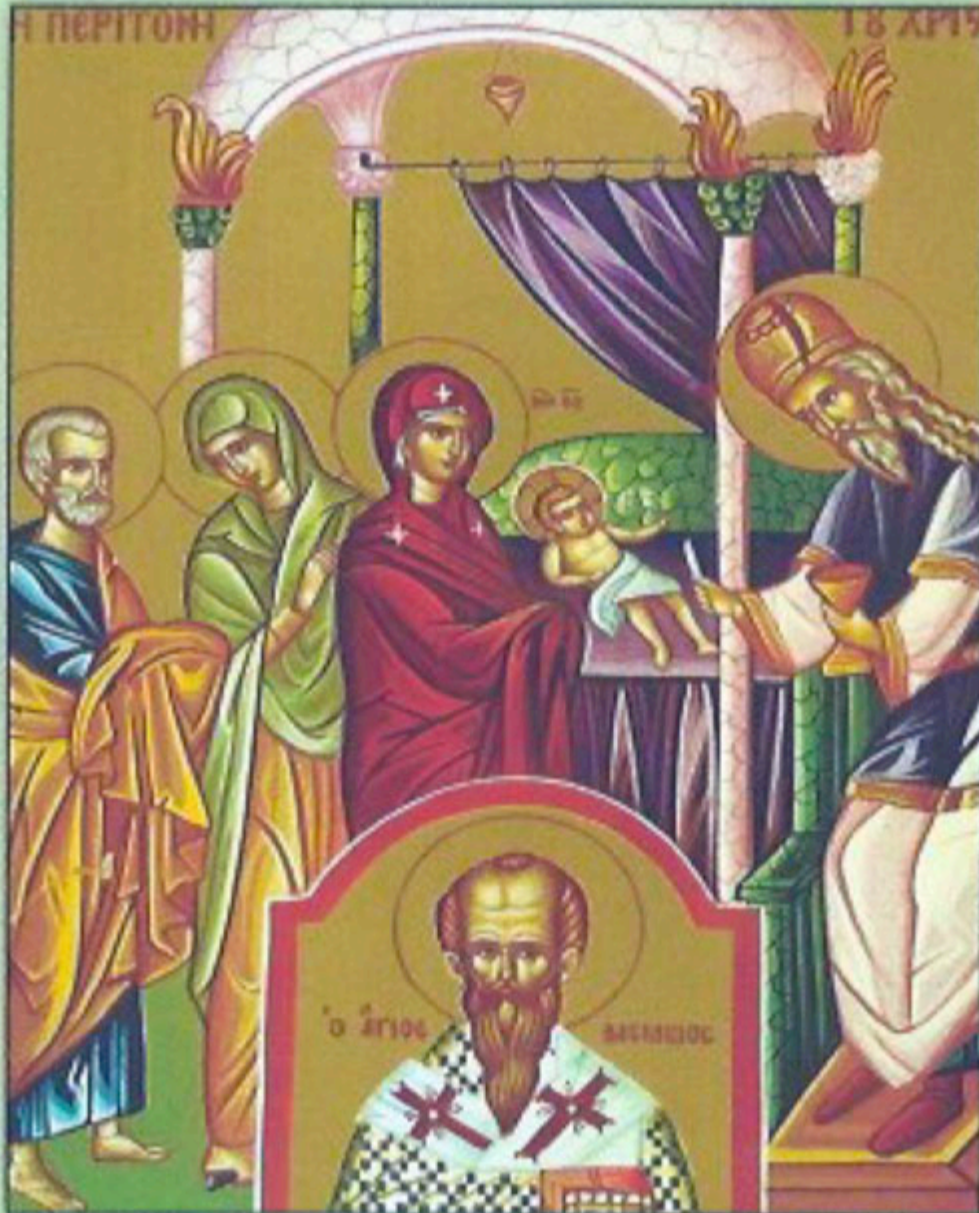


DIRECT ARCHDIOCESAN
DISTRICT

THREE HIERARCHS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

SUNDAY WEEKLY BULLETIN January 1st, 2017
V. Rev. Archimandrite Eugene N. Pappas

CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD SAINT BASIL THE GREAT



Icon of the Circumcision -- January 1st

St. Paul's Letter to the Colossians 2:8-12

Prokeimenon. Mode 1.

Psalm 48.3,1

My mouth shall speak wisdom and the meditation of my heart shall bring forth understanding.

Verse: Hear this all you nations.

BRETHREN, see to it that no one makes a prey of you by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ. For in him the whole fulness of deity dwells bodily, and you have come to fulness of life in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of flesh in the circumcision of Christ; and you were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.

Πρὸς Κολοσσαεῖς 2:8-12

Προκείμενον. Ἦχος α΄.

ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 48.3,1

Τὸ στόμα μου λαλήσει σοφίαν καὶ ἡ μελέτη τῆς καρδίας μου σύνεσιν.

Στίχ. Ἀκούσατε ταῦτα, πάντα τὰ ἔθνη.

Ἀδελφοί, βλέπετε μή τις ὑμᾶς ἔσται ὁ συλαγωγῶν διὰ τῆς φιλοσοφίας καὶ κενῆς ἀπάτης, κατὰ τὴν παράδοσιν τῶν ἀνθρώπων, κατὰ τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου, καὶ οὐ κατὰ Χριστόν· ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ κατοικεῖ πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τῆς θεότητος σωματικῶς, καὶ ἐστε ἐν αὐτῷ πεπληρωμένοι, ὅς ἐστιν ἡ κεφαλὴ πάσης ἀρχῆς καὶ ἐξουσίας· ἐν ᾧ καὶ περιετμήθητε περιτομῇ ἀχειροποιήτῳ, ἐν τῇ ἀπεκδύσει τοῦ σώματος τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν τῆς σαρκός, ἐν τῇ περιτομῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, συνταφέντες αὐτῷ ἐν τῷ βαπτίσματι, ἐν ᾧ καὶ συνηγέρθητε διὰ τῆς πίστεως τῆς ἐνεργείας τοῦ θεοῦ, τοῦ ἐγείραντος αὐτὸν ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν.

Circumcision of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

The Gospel according to Luke 2:20-21, 40-52

At that time, the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him. Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom; and when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, but supposing him to be in the company they went a day's journey, and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintances; and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking him. After three days, they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions; and all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. And when they saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been looking for you anxiously." And he said to them, "How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" And they did not understand the saying which he spoke to them. And he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man.

Circumcision of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

Κατὰ Λουκᾶν 2:20-21, 40-52

Τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ, ὑπέστρεψαν οἱ ποιμένες δοξάζοντες καὶ αἰνοῦντες τὸν Θεὸν ἐπὶ πᾶσιν οἷς ἤκουσαν καὶ εἶδον καθὼς ἐλαλήθη πρὸς αὐτούς. Καὶ ὅτε ἐπλήσθησαν αἱ ἡμέραι ὀκτῶ τοῦ περιτεμεῖν τὸ παιδίον, καὶ ἐκλήθη τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦς, τὸ κληθὲν ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀγγέλου πρὸ τοῦ συλληφθῆναι αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ κοιλίᾳ. Τὸ δὲ παιδίον ἠύξανε καὶ ἐκραταιοῦτο πνεύματι πληρούμενον σοφίας, καὶ χάρις Θεοῦ ἦν ἐπ' αὐτό. Καὶ ἐπορεύοντο οἱ γονεῖς αὐτοῦ κατ' ἔτος εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ τῇ ἑορτῇ τοῦ πάσχα. καὶ ὅτε ἐγένετο ἐτῶν δώδεκα, ἀναβάντων αὐτῶν εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα κατὰ τὸ ἔθος τῆς ἑορτῆς καὶ τελειωσάντων τὰς ἡμέρας, ἐν τῷ ὑποστρέφειν αὐτούς ὑπέμεινεν Ἰησοῦς ὁ παῖς ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ, καὶ οὐκ ἔγνω Ἰωσήφ καὶ ἡ μήτηρ αὐτοῦ. νομίσαντες δὲ αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ συνοδίᾳ εἶναι ἦλθον ἡμέρας ὁδὸν καὶ ἀνεζήτησαν αὐτὸν ἐν τοῖς συγγενέσι καὶ ἐν τοῖς γνωστοῖς· καὶ μὴ εὐρόντες αὐτὸν ὑπέστρεψαν εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ ζητοῦντες αὐτόν. καὶ ἐγένετο μεθ' ἡμέρας τρεῖς εὔρον αὐτὸν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ καθεζόμενον ἐν μέσῳ τῶν διδασκάλων καὶ ἀκούοντα αὐτῶν καὶ ἐπερωτῶντα αὐτούς· ἐξίσταντο δὲ πάντες οἱ ἀκούοντες αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τῇ συνέσει καὶ ταῖς ἀποκρίσεσιν αὐτοῦ. καὶ ἰδόντες αὐτὸν ἐξεπλάγησαν, καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸν ἡ μήτηρ αὐτοῦ εἶπε· τέκνον, τί ἐποίησας ἡμῖν οὕτως; ἰδοὺ ὁ πατήρ σου καγὼ ὀδυνώμενοι ἐζητοῦμέν σε. καὶ εἶπε πρὸς αὐτούς· τί ὅτι ἐζητεῖτέ με; οὐκ ἤδειτε ὅτι ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρός μου δεῖ εἶναι με; καὶ αὐτοὶ οὐ συνῆκαν τὸ ῥῆμα ὃ ἐλάλησεν αὐτοῖς. καὶ κατέβη μετ' αὐτῶν καὶ ἦλθεν εἰς Ναζαρέτ, καὶ ἦν ὑποτασσόμενος αὐτοῖς. καὶ ἡ μήτηρ αὐτοῦ διετήρει πάντα τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτῆς. Καὶ Ἰησοῦς προέκοπτε σοφία καὶ ἡλικία καὶ χάριτι παρὰ Θεῶ καὶ ἀνθρώποις.

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| DEVOTIONS TODAY: | Sunday, January 01st, | Feast of Saint Basil the Great | 10:30 A.M. |
| | Thursday, January 05th, | Epiphany LESSER blessing | 10:30 A.M. |
| | Friday, January 06th, | FEAST of the EPIPHANY | 10:30 A.M. |
| | Saturday, January 07th, | SAINT JOHN the BAPTIST | 9:30 A.M. |
| | Sunday, January 08th, | Saint Dominica Feast | 9:30 A.M. |

ARTOKLASIA is being offered today by the family of Vasilios AGORITSAS on the occasion of his NAMEDAY SAINT BASIL. Grandfather and GRANDSON will carry forward the blessed bread, CHRONIA POLLA!

PLEASE TAKE NOTE: EPIPHANY HOLY WATER DISTRIBUTION will take place each day after the Divine Liturgy of January 5th, 6th., 7th., and 8th. The suggested offering is a minimum of two dollars for each plastic bottle of sacred water. You may have as many bottles as you wish by simply indicating the same to the clergy at distribution time. A BLESSED NEW YEAR TO ALL! It is suggested that a bottle of holy water may be kept in the home shrine where the icons are displayed and another bottle on the 'glove compartment' of YOUR CAR! Carry the blessing wherever you go.

OLD CALENDAR (Julian) CHRISTMAS will be observed by the Russian, Ukrainian and Georgian COMMUNITIES here at Three Hierarchs on January 6th, 7th and 8th. The scheduling of the liturgical cycle is printed and published upon request in the Church Office and the pangari.

ECCLESIASTICAL GREEK/ENGLISH; Christian orthodox calendars were sent to all registered 'stewards' (MEMBERS) of our parish. DID YOU GET YOURS? Please inscribe your name, address and telephone number with church office, submitting your membership for THE NEW YEAR 2017.

GRATITUDE: Is extended to all in the RUSSIAN, UKRAINIAN and GEORGIAN communities attached to three Hierarchs for their generous recognition of Father Eugene's NAMEDAY – December 13th. A tribute was held at the end of Liturgy from, BORIS, OLGA, LYUDMILA, ELENA, BEZUGLY FAMILY, IRINA, YRI, NEONILA, IRINA, TATYANA, IVAN, GIORGI, LARISA, IRINA, MICHAEL, TEIMURAZ, MARIANA, LYUDMILA, MANANA, MELINA, DINA, SOPHIA, TEODOZIA, FLORYNA, NINA TATYANA GENNADIY, NADEJDA, ALEXANDER, ALLA, ELENA, MARIA, VASILYIY, DEMETRY, GEORGE, MARINA, TETYANA, OLGA, LYUDMILA ANNA, TATYANA, SOPHIA and GALINA!!

EARLY REGISTRATIONS for the Universal Pre-Kindergarten at Three Hierarchs will commence **Jan. 17 to Feb. 24, 2017.** Any child 4 years of age is eligible for FREE enrollment at our school operated by the New York City Department of Education. Classes are held each day from 8:00 A.M. through 3:00 P.M. with free lunch served by the City. IT'S ALL YOURS FREE FOR THE ASKING AND TAKING. DON'T MISS THIS OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUR CHILDREN /GREANDCHILDREN! Call now: (347) 729-0446 . TWO "OPEN-HOUSE" RECEPTION DAYS ARE WEDNESDAY FEB 8TH, 4P.M-7P.M AND MARCH 08TH 4P.M. – 7 P.M.

NEW ICON PRESENTATION: of the life giving fountain (Zoodochos Peghe) was made last Sunday by Mrs. Joyce (ZOE) Mitchell and her family. The sacred icon was enshrined on the CANTOR'S wall. This is a healing icon with GRACE imparted by the Virgin Mother.

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](#))

CONGRATULATIONS to the SIX NEW BOARD MEMBERS elected for the term 2017! George Annis, John Lambrakis , HARRY LAMBRAKIS, Alexandra Diolis , George Giannopoulos, and HARITINI Pandis. The EXECUTIVE BOARD of the 2017 COUNCIL will be elected on January 17th. All parish council members are approved for election.

MEMORIALS NEXT WEEK: + MARY DARCHI + ANA KALLINIKOS + HELEN FAVA



The devotion and veneration of the Theotokos (God-bearer) Ever Virgin Mary is highlighted in the Orthodox Christian tradition. As much as we celebrate Christ in the Nativity, we are at a loss without due focus on the PANAGIA (All Holy) mother of the Christ child! Visit her sacred icon and venerate her with your kiss!



In Orthodox Christianity we celebrated many THEO-MITORIKES EORTES (Feasts of the Virgin Mary). From her PRESENTATION to the TEMPLE, to the ANNUNCIATION, and onward throughout the gospel accounts of her presence in the life of Jesus. She is the window looking into paradise. She is the reflection of perfect humanity surrendering to the WILL of the FATHER. Allelujia! She awaits lovingly as your 'spiritual mother' for your adoring kiss!



ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ

ΣΥΝΤΟΜΟΝ ΚΗΡΥΓΜΑ



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

Ἐκδίδεται ἀπὸ τὴν Κοινοβιακὴ Γραμματεία τῆς Μονῆς Ἁγίου Αὐγουστίνου Φλωρίνης - 531 00 ΦΛΩΡΙΝΑ - τηλ. 23850-28610 - ima2010@yahoo.gr

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| Περίοδος Δ' - Ἔτος ΚΔ' Φλώρινα - ἀριθμ. φύλλου 1312' | Περιτομὴ τοῦ Κυρίου Κυριακὴ 1 Ἰανουαρίου 2017 (2007) | Συντάκτης (†) ἐπίσκοπος Αὐγουστίνος Ν. Καντιώτης |
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Τί εἰκονίζει ἡ περιτομὴ

Ἐορτὴ, ἀγαπητοί μου, σήμερα. Τριπλὴ ἑορτή. Εἶνε ἡ πρώτη τοῦ πολιτικοῦ ἔτους κατὰ τὸ κοσμικὸ ἑορτολόγιο (κατὰ τὸ ἑορτολόγιο τῆς Ἐκκλησίας πρώτη τοῦ ἔτους εἶνε ἡ 1η Σεπτεμβρίου). Εἶνε δεῦτερον ἡ ἑορτὴ τοῦ Μεγάλου Βασιλείου. Καὶ τρίτον καὶ κυριώτερον σήμερα εἶνε **ἑορτὴ δεσποτική**. Γιατί λέγεται δεσποτική; Διότι ἑορτάζει ὁ Δεσπότης. Ποιὸς δεσπότης, ἡ ἀφεντιά μου; Ἐμεῖς οἱ ἐπίσκοποι καταχρηστικῶς λεγόμαστε δεσπότες· εἶμαστε μία σκιά ἀπλῶς τῆς ἀπεράντου ἐξουσίας τοῦ Χριστοῦ μας. Ὁ Χριστὸς εἶνε ὁ δεσπότης ὄχι σὲ σχετικὸ ἀλλὰ σὲ ἀπόλυτο βαθμὸ, ἕκατὸ τοῖς ἑκατὸ δεσπότης· δεσπότης ὄχι μὲ τὴν τυραννικὴ ἀλλὰ μὲ τὴν ἀγαθὴ ἔννοια. Δεσπόζει καὶ ἐξουσιάζει τὸ σύμπαν, εἶνε «ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν βασιλευόντων καὶ κύριος τῶν κυριευόντων» (Κ' Τιμ 6,15), ὁ ἀξίονας γύρω ἀπὸ τὸν ὁποῖο στρέφονται ὅλα τὰ κτίσματα. Τὸ πιστεύουμε;

Δεσποτικὲς ἑορτὲς εἶνε τὰ Χριστούγεννα, ἡ Ὑπαπαντή, τὰ Θεοφάνεια καὶ ἄλλες. Μεταξὺ αὐτῶν συγκαταλέγεται καὶ ἡ σημερινή, ἡ **ἑορτὴ τῆς περιτομῆς** τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. Τί ἑορτάζουμε;

Ἡ **περιτομὴ** στηρίζεται στὸ Μωσαϊκὸ νόμο, εἶνε ἔθιμο τῶν Ἑβραίων. Σ' αὐτούς, ὅταν τὸ ἀρσενικὸ παιδί γινόταν ὀκτῶ ἡμερῶν, ἐτελεῖτο στὴ συναγωγὴ μία οἰκογενειακὴ ἑορτὴ. Ἐν μέσῳ ὕμνων καὶ δοξολογίας πρὸς τὸν Θεό, ὁ πατέρας ἢ κάποιος εἰδικὸς ἐπαιρνε ἕνα μαχαίρι ὄχι ἀπὸ σίδηρο ἀλλ' ἀπὸ πέτρα—αὐτὰ χρησιμοποιοῦσαν τότε καὶ ἀνευρίσκονται τέτοια μέσα σὲ τάφους τῶν ἀρχαίων— καὶ ἔκοβε ἕνα ἄκρο. Τί ἔκοβε; Δυσκολεῦμαι νὰ ἐκφρασθῶ, διότι ἡ περιτομὴ ἀναφέρεται στὰ ἀφροδίδια, στὸ γεννητικὸ σύστημα τοῦ ἀνδρός. Μιλώντας λοιπὸν εὐπρεπῶς λέμε, ὅτι μὲ τὴν περιτομὴ ἔκοβαν τὸ ἄκρο τοῦ δέρματος ποῦ σκεπάζει τὸ ἀνδρικό μορίο, τὴν βάλανο. Αὐτὴ ἦταν ἡ συνήθεια

τῶν Ἑβραίων. Καὶ ἐνῶ πέρασαν τέσσερις χιλιάδες χρόνια ἀφ' ὅτου ὁ Θεὸς θέσπισε τὴν περιτομὴ, μέχρι σήμερα ὅλοι οἱ Ἑβραῖοι περιτέμνονται· ὅπως ἐμεῖς βαπτίζομαστε, ἔτσι αὐτοὶ περιτέμνονται. Καὶ ὄχι μόνο οἱ Ἑβραῖοι, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὅλοι οἱ μουσουλμᾶνοι, ποῦ πιστεύουν στὸ Κοράνιο, ἔχουν τὴν περιτομὴ.

Περιετμήθη λοιπὸν ὁ Κύριος. Ἀλλὰ γεννᾶται ἡ ἀπορία· Καλὰ, οἱ Ἑβραῖοι περιτέμνοντο ὡς ἁμαρτωλὰ τέκνα τοῦ Ἀδάμ καὶ τῆς Εὔας· ὁ Χριστὸς, ὁ ἀναμάρτητος, **γιατί** περιετμήθη;

Ἀπαντῶ σύντομα. **Γιὰ τρεῖς λόγους.**

Ὁ πρῶτος λόγος. Ἡ περιτομὴ εἶνε **μὴ ἀπάντησι σὲ αἰρετικούς**. Παρουσιάστηκαν οἱ λεγόμενοι *δοκῆται*, ποῦ ἔλεγαν, ὅτι ὁ Χριστὸς δὲν ἔγινε πραγματικὰ ἄνθρωπος, ἀλλὰ ἡ ἀνθρωπίνη φύσις τοῦ ἦταν μία φαντασία. Ἡ αἴρεσι δηλαδὴ αὐτὴ, ἐν ἀντιθέσει πρὸς τὸν ἀρειανισμό, ἤρνεϊτο τὴν ἀνθρωπίνη φύσι τοῦ Χριστοῦ. Ἄλλ' ἐὰν ὁ Χριστὸς δὲν εἶχε πραγματικὸ ἀνθρώπινο σῶμα, τότε πῶς ἔγινε ἡ περιτομὴ; Εἶνε λοιπὸν μία ἀπάντησις ὅτι πράγματι ὁ Χριστὸς «*μορφὴν ἀναλλοιώτως ἀνθρωπίνην προσέλαβε*», ὅπως ψάλλει τὸ ἀπολυτίκιο σήμερα.

Δεῦτερον, ὁ Χριστὸς δέχθηκε τὴν περιτομὴ ὅπως δέχθηκε καὶ τὸ βάπτισμα. Βαπτίσθηκε ὄχι ὡς ἁμαρτωλός, ἀλλὰ γιὰ νὰ εἶνε, ὡς ἄνθρωπος, ὑπόδειγμα ὑπακοῆς καὶ συμμορφώσεως μὲ τὸ νόμο τῆς παλαιᾶς διαθήκης. Εἶνε **ὑπόδειγμα ὑπακοῆς καὶ πειθαρχίας** στὸν θεῖο νόμο.

Τρίτον, ἡ περιτομὴ εἶνε μία **σκιά**, μία **προτύπωσις**, μία **εἰκόνα** πραγμάτων καὶ καταστάσεων, ποῦ θὰ συνέβαιναν στὴν καινὴ διαθήκη. Μπαίνω τώρα στὸ σπουδαιότερο μέρος τῆς ὁμιλίας, καὶ θὰ προσπαθῶ νὰ παρουσιάσω ὅσο μπορῶ πιὸ κατανοητὰ τὶς βαθειᾶς ἔννοιες ποῦ περικλείει ἡ μεγάλη αὐτὴ ἑορτὴ.

● Ἄν ἀνοίξουμε ἕνα λεξικὸ τῆς ἑλληνικῆς γλώσσης—ποῦ κοντεύουμε νὰ τὴ λησμονήσουμε καὶ σὲ λίγο, ἀφοῦ ἐδῶ τὴ θάψαμε, θὰ

τρέχουμε στο έξωτερικό να τή μάθουμε–, θα δούμε ότι *περιτομή* σημαίνει κυκλικό κόψιμο. Από την άποψη αυτή η περιτομή **εικονίζει την περικοπή του περιττού**. Θέλετε παραδείγματα; Υπάρχει η εσφαλμένη αντίληψις, ότι όσο περισσότερο καταναλώνει κάποιος τόσο πιο προωδευμένος είναι. Και στην καταναλωτική εποχή μας υπάρχουν πολλά περιττά. Νά τὸ τσιγάρο. Περιττό πράγμα· και ὄχι μόνο περιττό, ἀλλὰ και βλαβερό. Πῶς μπορεί κανείς να τὸ περικόψῃ; Στην Ἀγγλία ἡ Θάτσερ διέταξε, ἐπάνω στὰ πακέττα τοῦ καπνοῦ νὰ ζωγραφίζεται καρκίνος, σὰ νὰ σοῦ λέγῃ· Κάπνισε, ἐλεύθερος εἶσαι· ἀλλὰ νὰ ξέρῃς, ὅτι μία σοβαρὴ αἰτία τοῦ καρκίνου εἶνε αὐτό. Καὶ ὁμως πολλοὶ τὸ ἔχουν ὡς ἀπαραίτητο, καὶ καμαρώνουν μὲ τὸ τσιγάρο στὸ στόμα. Τὸ κόψιμο τοῦ τσιγάρου εἶνε μιὰ περιτομὴ στὴν προσωπικὴ ζωὴ. Ἐμπρός λοιπόν, κουράγιο, κόψε τὸ τσιγάρο! Ἄλλο παράδειγμα. Δὲν ἀναμειγνύομαι στὰ πολιτικά, ἀλλ' ἐὰν μπορούσε ἡ περιτομὴ νὰ μπῆ λ.χ. στὸ ὑπουργεῖο τῶν οἰκονομικῶν, νὰ πάρῃ ψαλίδα ὁ ὑπουργὸς καὶ νὰ κἀνῃ περικοπές, ὦ τί θὰ γινόταν! Κινδυνεύουμε νὰ γίνουμε ἀπέραντο τεμπελοχανεῖο. Κι ὁ Ὀλυμπος νὰ ἦταν χρυσός, θὰ τὸν τρώγαμε. Εἶνε ἀνάγκη στὴν δημοσίᾳ ζωὴ νὰ περικοποῦν δαπάνες καὶ σπατάλες. Θὰ ἐξοικονομηθοῦν δισεκατομμύρια.

● Ἡ περιτομὴ εἰκονίζει τὴν περικοπὴ τῶν περιττῶν. Τί ἄλλο; Γιὰ τὰ παιδιὰ τῶν Ἑβραίων, πού τὴν ὑφίσταντο, ἦταν μιὰ ἐγχείρησι, στὴν ὁποία πονοῦσαν καὶ ἔκλαιγαν, ὅπως σήμερα τὰ δικά μας βρέφη καίειν ὅταν τὸ βουτᾶνε στὸ νερὸ τῆς κολυμβήθρας. **Σύμβολο λοιπὸν τοῦ πόνου τῆς ζωῆς** ἡ περιτομὴ. Ὅλη ἡ ζωὴ εἶνε πόνος. Ὅπως εἶπε ὁ Ἰώβ, τὰ πουλιὰ γεννήθηκαν γιὰ νὰ πετοῦν στὸν ἀέρα· ἐμεῖς γεννηθήκαμε γιὰ τὸν κόπο καὶ τὸν πόνον (βλ. Ἰβ' 37).

● Ἡ περιτομὴ λοιπὸν συμβολίζει τὴν περικοπὴ τοῦ περιττοῦ καὶ τὸν πόνον τῆς ζωῆς μας. Ἀλλὰ στὴν περιτομὴ τὸ μικρὸ παιδί ἔχανε αἷμα ἀπὸ τὴν τομὴ, πού ἀνοίγε τὸ πέτρινο μαχαίρι. Ὑπῆρξαν μάλιστα καὶ περιπτώσεις πού παιδάκια πέθαναν ἀπ' τὴν αἱμορραγία. Ἔτσι ἡ περιτομὴ εἶνε καὶ **σύμβολο τοῦ αἵματος**. Χωρὶς θυσία δὲν γίνεται τίποτε. Ἡ περιτομὴ συμβολίζει τὸ αἷμα πού χύθηκε γιὰ τὰ μεγάλα καὶ ὑψηλά. Καὶ δὲν ὑπάρχει τίποτε μεγαλύτερο καὶ ὑψηλότερο ἀπὸ τὴν ἀλήθεια τῆς πίστεώς μας, γιὰ τὴν ὁποία μαρτύρησε ὁ Χριστός. Τὸ αἷμα, πού ἔχουσε κατὰ τὴν περιτομὴ, ἦταν προσοίμιον τῆς μεγάλης καὶ ὑπέροχης θυσίας πού προσέφερε στὸ Γολγοθᾶ· ἐκεῖ, ἐπάνω στὸ σταυρό, ἀνοιξε τὶς φλέβες του καὶ προσέφερε ὄχι πλέ-

ον σταγόνες ἀλλὰ ὄλο τὸ τίμιον αἷμα του γιὰ τὴ σωτηρία μας. Εἶνε τὸ αἷμα πού προσφέρεται κατὰ τὴν θεῖα λειτουργία, τὴν ἀνάιμακτη θυσία του, καὶ ἀκούμε *«Πίετε ἐξ αὐτοῦ πάντες...»*.

● Ἡ περιτομὴ, τέλος, εἶνε **τύπος τοῦ ἁγίου βαπτίσματος**, τὸ ὁποῖο στὸ ἐξῆς πήρε τὴ θέσιν της καὶ τὴν ἀντικατέστησε.

* * *

Τέτοια νοήματα ἔχει, ἀγαπητοί μου, ἡ περιτομὴ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, πού ἐορτάζουμε σήμερα. Θὰ κλείσω μὲ τὸ ἐξῆς. Ὅπως ὅταν βαπτίζεται τὸ παιδάκι στὴν Ἐκκλησία μας παίρνει ὄνομα καὶ μ' αὐτὸ εἶνε πλέον γνωστὸ στὸν κόσμον, ἔτσι καὶ τὰ Ἑβραϊόπουλα τὴν ἡμέρα τῆς περιτομῆς ἔπαιρναν ὄνομα. Καὶ τὸ Θεῖο Βρέφος τὴν ἡμέρα τῆς περιτομῆς ἔλαβε ὄνομα, καθωρισμένο ἤδη δι' ἀγγέλου κατ' ἐντολὴν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ. Εἶνε τὸ *«ὄνομα τὸ ὑπὲρ πᾶν ὄνομα»* (βλ. 2θ), τὸ ὄνομα *«Ἰησοῦς»* (βλ. 2θ). Τί σημαίνει *Ἰησοῦς*; Εἶνε ἑβραϊκὴ λέξις καὶ σημαίνει **«σωτήρ»**. Ἀπὸ τὴν ἀρχαιότητα παρουσιάστηκαν –μετρήστει– ἑκατὸν πενηντατρεῖς (153) πού πήραν τὸ ὄνομα *σωτήρ*. Ἦταν δυνάστες, τύραννοι, κακοῦργοι, ἀπαίσια τέρατα, πού βύθισαν στὸ αἷμα τὸν κόσμον· ψευδεῖς σωτήρες. Ὁ Χριστὸς εἶνε ὁ Σωτήρ μὲ τὴν ἀληθινὴ καὶ ἀπόλυτη ἐννοία. Αὐτὸ ἀποδεικνύουν τὰ πράγματα· ἡ ἐπίδρασί του στὴν παγκόσμια ἱστορία, τὰ ἑκατομμύρια τῶν σεσωσμένων. Εἶνε ὄντως Σωτήρας.

Ἀλλὰ προσοχή· δὲν ἀρκεῖ νὰ λέμε ὅτι ὁ Χριστὸς εἶνε Σωτήρας τοῦ κόσμου· πρέπει νὰ γίνῃ καὶ προσωπικὰ δικός μας Σωτήρας. Ὅπως ὁ ἄρρωστος λέει *«ὁ γιατρός μου»*, ἔτσι ἐμεῖς νὰ λέμε γιὰ τὸ Χριστὸ *«ὁ Σωτήρας μου»*. Καὶ θὰ εἶνε ὁ Σωτήρας μας, ἐὰν τὸν πιστέψουμε, ἐὰν ἀποφασίσουμε νὰ πᾶμε στὴν ἱερὰ **ἐξομολόγησι**. Οἱ περισσότεροι δὲν ἔχουν ἐξομολογηθῆ ποτέ· οὔτ' ἓνα δάκρυ δὲν ἔχουσαν γιὰ τὶς ἁμαρτίες τους. Δὲν ἐξομολογήθηκες, δὲν ἔκλαψες, δὲν ζήτησες σωτηρία; Τότε ὁ Χριστὸς εἶνε Σωτήρας τοῦ κόσμου –καὶ οἱ δαίμονες ἀκόμα τὸ ὁμολογοῦν–, ἀλλὰ δικός σου Σωτήρας δὲν εἶνε. Πρέπει νὰ γίνῃ Σωτήρας «σου» καὶ Σωτήρας «μου». Διότι μέσ' στοὺς χίλιους ἔνας εἶνε πραγματικὸς Χριστιανός. Οἱ ἄλλοι εἶνε ψευτοχριστιανοί, μακριὰ ἀπὸ τὰ μυστήρια, χωρὶς οὐσιαστικὴ σχέσι μὲ τὴν Ἐκκλησία, τὴν ὁποία θυμούνται μόνο στὶς μεγάλες ἐορτές.

Συνδεδεμένος λοιπὸν, ἀγαπητέ, μὲ τὸ Χριστό, νὰ μπορῆς νὰ πῆς· Δὲν ἔχω ἀνάγκη ἀπὸ μαρτυρία ἄλλων· μοῦ ἀρκεῖ ἡ **δική μου πείρα**, ὅτι ὄντως ὁ Χριστὸς εἶνε Σωτήρας μου. Αὐτῷ ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος εἰς αἰῶνας αἰώνων· ἀμήν.

(†) **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 2017 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 Mystery of the Lord's Baptism

The Gospel tells us that the Lord went to the Jordan River to be baptized and that He wished to consecrate Himself in the river by signs from heaven. Someone might ask, "Why would a holy man desire baptism?" Listen to the answer: Christ is baptized, not to be made holy by the water, but to make the water holy, and by His cleansing to purify the waters which He touched. For the consecration of Christ involves a more significant consecration of the water.

For when the Savior is washed all water for our baptism is made clean, purified at its source for the dispensing of baptismal grace to the people of future ages. Christ is the first to be baptized, then, so that Christians will follow after Him with confidence.

I understand the mystery as this. The column of fire went before the sons of Israel through the Red Sea so they could follow on their brave

journey; the column went first through the waters to prepare a path for those who followed. As the Apostle Paul said, what was accomplished then was the mystery of baptism. Clearly it was baptism in a certain sense when the cloud was covering the people and bringing them through the water.

But Christ the Lord does all these things: in the column of fire He went through the sea before the sons of Israel; so now, in the column of His body, He goes through baptism before the Christian people. At the time of the Exodus the column provided light for the people who followed; now it gives light to the hearts of believers. Then it made a firm pathway through the waters; now it strengthens the footsteps of faith in the bath of baptism.

Saint Maximus of Turin

For more information on Eastern spirituality, visit
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