

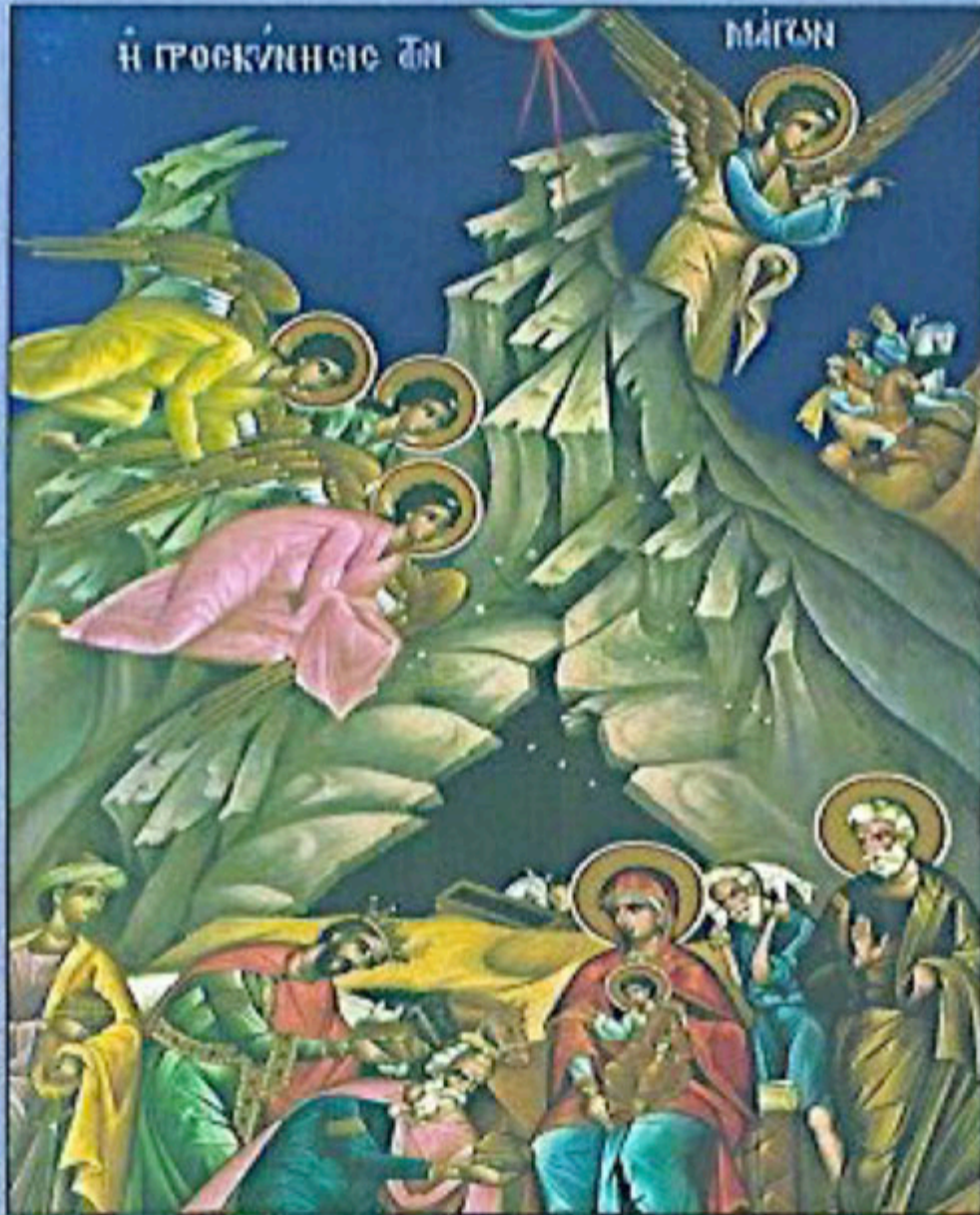


DIRECT ARCHDIOCESAN  
DISTRICT

# THREE HIERARCHS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

SUNDAY WEEKLY BULLETIN December 25th, 2016  
V. Rev. Archimandrite Eugene N. Pappas

## CHRISTMAS, THE BIRTH OF OUR LORD, GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST



*Icon of the Visit of the Magi*

## St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 4:4-7

Prokeimenon. Mode Plagal 1.

Psalm 65.4,1

Let all the earth worship you, and sing praises to you.

Verse: Shout with joy to God, all the earth.

BRETHREN, when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son then also an heir of God through Christ.

## Πρὸς Γαλάτας 4:4-7

Προκείμενον. Ἦχος πλ α΄.

ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 65.4,1

Πᾶσα ἡ γῆ προσκυνησάτωσάν σοι καὶ ψαλάτωσάν σοι.

Στίχ. Αλαλάξατε τῷ Κυρίῳ πᾶσα ἡ γῆ.

Ἀδελφοί, ὅτε δὲ ἦλθεν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου, ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ, γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικός, γενόμενον ὑπὸ νόμον, ἵνα τοὺς ὑπὸ νόμον ἐξαγοράσῃ, ἵνα τὴν υἰοθεσίαν ἀπολάβωμεν. Ὅτι δὲ ἐστε υἱοί, ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν, κρᾶζον, Ἀββᾶ, ὁ πατήρ. Ὡστε οὐκέτι εἶ δοῦλος, ἀλλ' υἱός· εἰ δὲ υἱός, καὶ κληρονόμος θεοῦ διὰ Χριστοῦ.

## The Nativity of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ

### The Gospel according to Matthew 2:1-12

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him." When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it is written by the prophet: 'And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will govern my people Israel.'"

Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star appeared; and he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him bring me word, that I too may come and worship him." When they had heard the king they went their way; and lo the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy; and going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

## The Nativity of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ

### Κατὰ Ματθαῖον 2:1-12

Τοῦ δὲ Ἰησοῦ γεννηθέντος ἐν Βηθλεεμ τῆς Ἰουδαίας ἐν ἡμέραις Ἡρώδου τοῦ βασιλέως, ἰδοὺ μάγοι ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν παρεγένοντο εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα λέγοντες· ποῦ ἐστὶν ὁ τεχθεὶς βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων; εἶδομεν γὰρ αὐτοῦ τὸν ἀστέρα ἐν τῇ ἀνατολῇ καὶ ἦλθομεν προσκυνῆσαι αὐτῷ. Ἀκούσας δὲ Ἡρώδης ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐταράχθη καὶ πᾶσα Ἱεροσόλυμα μετ' αὐτοῦ, καὶ συναγαγὼν πάντας τοὺς ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ γραμματεῖς τοῦ λαοῦ ἐπυνθάνετο παρ' αὐτῶν ποῦ ὁ Χριστὸς γεννᾶται. οἱ δὲ εἶπον αὐτῷ· ἐν Βηθλεεμ τῆς Ἰουδαίας· οὕτω γὰρ γέγραπται διὰ τοῦ προφήτου· καὶ σὺ Βηθλεεμ, γῆ Ἰούδα, οὐδαμῶς ἐλαχίστη εἶ ἐν τοῖς ἡγεμόσιν Ἰούδα· ἐκ σοῦ γὰρ ἐξελεύσεται ἡγούμενος, ὅστις ποιμανεῖ τὸν λαόν μου τὸν Ἰσραὴλ. Τότε Ἡρώδης λάθρα καλέσας τοὺς μάγους ἠκρίβωσε παρ' αὐτῶν τὸν χρόνον τοῦ φαινομένου ἀστέρος, καὶ πέμψας αὐτοὺς εἰς Βηθλεεμ εἶπε· πορευθέντες ἀκριβῶς ἐξετάσατε περὶ τοῦ παιδίου, ἐπὶ δὲ εὑρήτε, ἀπαγγείλατέ μοι, ὅπως κἀγὼ ἐλθὼν προσκυνήσω αὐτῷ. οἱ δὲ ἀκούσαντες τοῦ βασιλέως ἐπορεύθησαν· καὶ ἰδοὺ ὁ ἀστήρ ὃν εἶδον ἐν τῇ ἀνατολῇ προῆγεν αὐτούς, ἕως ἐλθὼν ἔστη ἐπάνω οὗ ἦν τὸ παιδίον· ἰδόντες δὲ τὸν ἀστέρα ἐχάρησαν χαρὰν μεγάλην σφόδρα, καὶ ἐλθόντες εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν εἶδον τὸ παιδίον μετὰ Μαρίας τῆς μητρὸς αὐτοῦ, καὶ πεσόντες προσεκύνησαν αὐτῷ, καὶ ἀνοίξαντες τοὺς θησαυροὺς αὐτῶν προσήνεγκαν αὐτῷ δῶρα, χρυσὸν καὶ λίβανον καὶ σμύρναν· καὶ χρηματισθέντες κατ' ὄναρ μὴ ἀνακάμψαι πρὸς Ἡρώδη, δι' ἄλλης ὁδοῦ ἀνεχώρησαν εἰς τὴν χώραν αὐτῶν.

<b>DEVOTIONS TODAY:</b>	<b>NATIVITY ORTHROS ( MATINS)</b>	<b>9:30 A.M.</b>
	<b>NATIVITY DIVINE LITURGY</b>	<b>10:30 A.M.</b>
	<b>solemn process of the sacred ICON</b>	
	<b>Christmas carols by the congregation</b>	<b>12:30 P.M.</b>

**TODAY:** The AGAPE COFFEE FELLOWSHIP is being hosted by the PARISH COUNCIL in Whitehall.  
**OPEN TO ONE AND ALL.**

**SATURDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 31st, NEW YEAR'S EVE at 12:15 A.M.**

The Church will be open midnight to ----- 1:00 A.M.  
with the clergy giving blessings upon the individuals  
and family groupings as they approach sanctuary.  
Candle lighting will commence at midnight.

**SUNDAY MORNING, JANUARY 1st,**

Saint Basil Day / NEW YEAR 2017  
Orthros Of Saint Basil Feast 9:30 A.M.  
Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil 10:30 A.M.  
GREEK New Year Caroling 12:00 P.M.  
Coffee fellowship and BASILOPITA for all.

**CHRISTMAS GREETING CARD DRIVE:** was a full success. The cards are mailed to the 1,000 homes of the faithful on our registry. Please look for your name and share in spreading the 'good tidings' to all!

**TOYS FOR TOTS:** was once again this year a bountiful success as many gifts were anonymously dropped off at the base of the Blessed Virgin Mother's icon. Distribution of these gifts go outside the parish community to those much less fortunate.  
**GOD BLESS THE CHEERFUL GIVER!**

**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, VASILIIY, 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 YEARS'S EVE RESERVATIONS:** Should be made NOW! Call (347) 991-8787 Only 220 place settings are available. Are you one of them? Don' miss this spectacular event for only \$100. (ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS) Dining from the best caterers, open bar all evening, dancing from 8:00 – 2:00 P.M. Décor by KONSTANTINOS FLORISTS.

**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 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](#))



Greek School students from various classes present the CHRISTMAS PAGEANT with hymns and recitations. FR. MSTISLAV, FR. EUGENE and FR. NIKOLAI are pictured with faculty members MRS HALKIAS and MRS ANASTASAKOS.



Catechetical School children of the SUNDAY SCHOOL Department offered a wonderfully inspiring series of 'carols' including RUDOLPH the RED NOSED REINDEER..... in GREEK! Included in the photo are MRS. MARIA RINIS and MRS CHRISTINA HANTZOPOULOS. The faithful were all 'smiles' with the children!



# ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ

## ΣΥΝΤΟΜΟΝ ΚΗΡΥΓΜΑ



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

Ἐκδίδεται ἀπὸ τὴν Κοινοβιακὴ Γυναικεία Ἱερά Μονὴ Ἁγίου Αὐγουστίνου Φλωρίνης – 531 00 ΦΛΩΡΙΝΑ – τηλ. 23850-28610 – info@lo@yshoo.gr

Περίοδος Δ' - Ἔτος ΛΓ'  
Φλώρινα - ἀριθμ. φύλλου 1987

Ἡ Γέννησις τοῦ Σωτῆρος Χριστοῦ  
Κυριακὴ 25 Δεκεμβρίου 2016

Συντάκτης (†) ἐπίσκοπος  
Αὐγουστίνος Ν. Καντιώτης

## «Ἐπὶ γῆς εἰρήνη»

(Λουκ. 2,14)

**Σ**ὲ ἐξαιρετικὴ κίνησι, ἀγαπητοί μου ἀδελφοί, σὲ ἐξαιρετικὴ κίνησι βρίσκεται ἀπόψε – νύκτα τῆς γεννήσεως τοῦ Σωτῆρος Χριστοῦ ὁ ἀγγελικὸς κόσμος.

Μακριὰ ἀπὸ τὰ μάτια τοῦ κόσμου, ἓνα ἄσημο σημεῖο τῆς γῆς, τὸ σπήλαιο τῆς Βηθλεέμ, συγκεντρώνει τὴν προσοχὴ τῶν ἀγγέλων. Ἐκεῖ συνέβη τὸ μοναδικὸ γεγονός, ποῦ οὔτε ἔγινε ποτὲ ἄλλοτε οὔτε θὰ ξαναγίνῃ. Γι' αὐτὸ κατεβαίνει οὐράνια στρατιά· γιὰ νὰ χαιρετίσῃ καὶ νὰ προσκυνήσῃ τὸ Νήπιο τῆς Βηθλεέμ, τὸν Υἱὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ ποῦ ἀπὸ ἀγάπη καὶ εὐσπλαχνία γιὰ μᾶς ἔγινε καὶ Υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου. Οἱ αἰθέρες τῶν οὐρανῶν ἀντιλαλοῦν καὶ δονοῦνται ἀπὸ τοὺς χαρμόσυνους ἤχους τοῦ ὕμνου τους· «*Δόξα ἐν ὑψίστοις Θεῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς εἰρήνη, ἐν ἀνθρώποις εὐδοκία*» (Λουκ. 2,14), ποῦ ἀναλυτικώτερα σημαίνει· Δοξασμένος στὰ οὐράνια ἀπ' τοὺς ἀγγέλους τοῦ ὁ Θεός, καὶ κάτω ἐδῶ στὴν ταραγμένη ἀπὸ τὴν ἁμαρτία γῆ ἄς βασιλέψῃ πιά ἡ ποθητὴ εἰρήνη τῶν ψυχῶν· εὐδόκησε τώρα ὁ Πανάγαθος νὰ φέρῃ στοὺς ἀνθρώπους τὴ σωτηρία.

Οἱ καθαρὲς καρδιὲς τῶν ποιμένων, ποῦ «ἀγραυλοῦν», μένουσιν στοὺς ἀγρούς - στὸ ὕπαιθρο, καὶ «φυλάσσουν φυλακὰς τῆς νυκτὸς ἐπὶ τὴν ποιμνὴν αὐτῶν» (Ἰακ. 28), φρουροῦν τὴ νύχτα τὸ κοπάδι τους μὲ βάρδιες, αὐτὲς οἱ καρδιὲς σὰν ἄριστος ψυχικὸς δέκτης συλλαμβάνουν κι ἀκοῦνε πρῶτες τοῦτο τὸν ὕμνο. Κι ἀπὸ τὸ στόμα τῶν ποιμένων ὁ θεσπέσιος αὐτὸς ὕμνος μεταδίδεται ἀπὸ τότε στὸν χριστιανικὸ λαό. Καὶ εἶνε αὐτὸς ὁ τελειότερος ὕμνος, μὲ τὸν ὁποῖο οἱ πιστοὶ ὄλων τῶν αἰώνων μποροῦν νὰ ὑμνήσουν τὸν ἐνανθρωπήσαντα Υἱὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ. Σὲ δοξάζουμε, Κύριε, λέμε στὸ Χριστὸ μὲ τὸν ὕμνο τοῦτο· διὰ σοῦ δοξάζεται ὁ Θεός, **διὰ σοῦ εἰρηνεύει ἡ γῆ**, διὰ σοῦ ὁ ἀνθρώπος γίνεται παιδί ἀγαπημένο τοῦ οὐράνιου Πατέρα.

Τὸ Νήπιο τῆς Βηθλεέμ, λοιπόν, ἦρθε γιὰ νὰ φέρῃ στὸν κόσμο τὴν εἰρήνην. Αὐτὸ τὸ Νήπιο εἶνε ἡ **εἰρήνη τῶν ἀνθρώπων**. Στὸ νόημα αὐτὸ παρακαλῶ νὰ στρέψουμε τὴν προσοχὴ μας.

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● Τίθεται τὸ ἐρώτημα, ἀγαπητοί μου· **ποιὰ εἶνε ἡ εἰρήνη** ποῦ ἔφερε στὴ γῆ ὁ Χριστός;

Δὲν πρόκειται πάντως γιὰ εἰρήνη ἀπλῶς ἐξωτερικὴ, ὅπως αὐτὴ ποῦ ἐννοεῖ συνήθως ὁ κόσμος καὶ οἱ πολιτικοί· πρόκειται γιὰ εἰρήνη ἐσωτερικὴ, βαθεῖα, μυστικὴ, θεῖα. Εἶνε μία κατάστασι τῆς ψυχῆς, ποῦ μόνο ὅσοι ἔχουν πλησιάσει τὸν Σωτῆρα τοῦ κόσμου μὲ πίστι καὶ μετάνοια εἶνε σὲ θέσι νὰ ζήσουν. Εἶνε δῶρημα θεῖο. Πρόκειται γιὰ τὴν **ἀποκατάστασι τῶν σχέσεων τοῦ ἀνθρώπου μὲ τὸ Θεό**, αὐτὴ εἶνε ἡ εἰρήνη ποῦ μᾶς ἔφερε ὁ Χριστός.

Γιὰ νὰ καταλάβουμε κάπως καλύτερα τί σημαίνει «εἰρήνη Χριστοῦ», πρέπει νὰ ἔχουμε ὑπ' ὄψιν, ὅτι μέχρι τὴν ἐνανθρώπησι τοῦ Θεοῦ ὁ ἀνθρώπος βρισκόταν σὲ ἐχθρότητα μαζί του, τὸν χώριζε τεῖχος· τὸ τεῖχος ἦταν ἡ **ἁμαρτία**. Ἡ ἁμαρτία εἶνε **φραγμός, τεῖχος σινικό**, ποῦ διακόπτει τὴς σχέσεις ἀνθρώπου καὶ Θεοῦ. Καὶ ὁ φραγμὸς αὐτὸς ἦταν φραγμὸς αἰώνων. Ὁ ἀνθρώπος ἁμαρτάνοντας ἀπομακρυνόταν συνεχῶς ἀπὸ τὸ Θεό, τὴν πηγὴ τοῦ καλοῦ, καὶ ὁ φραγμὸς ὀλοένα ὑψωνόταν. Οἱ πρωτόπλαστοι ἔβαλαν τὸν πρῶτο λίθο· πάνω στὸν λίθο αὐτόν, στὸ προπατορικὸ ἁμάρτημα, προστέθηκε δεύτερος λίθος, τὸ ἁμάρτημα τοῦ Κάιν· στὸν δεύτερο λίθο τρίτος καὶ οὕτω καθεξῆς· καὶ ἔτσι διὰ μέσου τῶν αἰώνων οἱ ἁμαρτίες τοῦ ἀνθρωπίνου γένους σχημάτισαν τεῖχη σινικά, μέσα στὰ ὁποῖα κλείστηκε αἰχμάλωτη ἡ ἀνθρώπινη ψυχὴ, χωρὶς νὰ μπορῇ νὰ ἐπικοινωνήσῃ μὲ τὸ Θεό.

Οὔτε ἀνθρώπος οὔτε ἄγγελος οὔτε ἀρχάγγελος μποροῦσε νὰ γκρεμίσῃ τὸ φοβερὸ αὐ-

τὸ τεῖχος. Τί λέω νὰ γκρεμίση; Οὔτε μιά πέτρα ν' ἀφαιρέση ἀπὸ τὰ τεῖχη αὐτά, ποὺ μαύρα, ἀπαίσια, βουβά, ἀκίνητα ὑψώνονταν μπροστὰ στὴν ἀνθρωπότητα. **Ποιὸς θὰ κατεδάφιζε τὰ τεῖχη αὐτὰ τῆς ἁμαρτίας,** τὰ ἀπείρως πιὸ φοβερὰ ἀπὸ τὰ τεῖχη τῆς Ἰεριχοῦς; Ποιὸς θὰ ἐπανασυνέδεε τὸ πλάσμα μὲ τὸν Πλάστη του; ποιὸς θὰ συμφιλίωνε πάλι τὸν ἐπαναστάτη μὲ τὸν Βασιλέα του, ποιὸς θὰ εἰρήνευε τὸν ἄσωτο υἱὸ μὲ τὸν Πατέρα του;

Τὸ πρόσωπο, ποὺ θ' ἀνελάμβανε τὸ ἔργο αὐτό, θὰ ἔπρεπε νὰ εἶνε ἀνώτερο ἀπὸ ἀνθρώπους, ἀνώτερο κι ἀπὸ ἀγγέλους. **Μόνο ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ** εἶχε τὴ δύναμι αὐτή. Γι' αὐτὸ ἐνανθρώπησε. Μὲ τὸ αἷμα, ποὺ ἔχυσε πάνω στὸ σταυρὸ του ὁ Υἱὸς τῆς Παρθένου ποὺ ἦταν καὶ Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, συμφιλίωσε τὸν ἀνθρώπο μὲ τὸ Θεό. Ὁ ἀνθρώπος ἔπαψε πιά νὰ εἶνε τὸ ἀντικείμενο τῆς ἀποστροφῆς καὶ ὀργῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ. Ἐγίνε φίλος τοῦ Θεοῦ, οἰκεῖος τοῦ Θεοῦ, τέκνον τοῦ Θεοῦ.

**Ἔτσι τὸ τεῖχος τῆς ἁμαρτίας γκρεμίστηκε.**

● Ἀπὸ τὴν ἀποψη αὐτὴ ἡ εἰρήνη ποὺ ἔφερε ὁ Χριστὸς στὴ γῆ ἀποτελεῖ **μυστήριον**, τὸ ὁποῖο μόνο διὰ τῆς πίστεως μπορεῖ κανεὶς νὰ αἰσθανθῆ καὶ νὰ ζήσει, χωρὶς καὶ πάλι νὰ εἶνε σὲ θέσι νὰ τὸ περιγράψῃ· ὅπως λέει ὁ ἀπόστολος Παῦλος, «*ἡ εἰρήνη*» αὐτὴ «*ὑπερέχει πάντα νοῦν*» (Ῥωμ 47), εἶνε ἀπερίγραπτη.

Ἄλλ' ἐὰν ἡ κορυφὴ τῆς εἰρήνης αὐτῆς χάνεται στὰ μυστηριώδη ὕψη τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, ἡ βάση, τὸ θεμέλιό της, βρίσκεται μέσα στὴν καρδιὰ κάθε πιστοῦ καὶ ἀποτελεῖ γι' αὐτὸν μιά ψηλαφητὴ πραγματικότητα. Καὶ πῶς ὄχι; **Ἦταν ἐχθρὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ.** Ὅλα τὰ γύρω του καὶ ὅλα τὰ ἐντὸς του μαρτυροῦσαν, ὅτι δὲν μπορεῖ νὰ ἔχη σχέση ὁ ἀκάθαρτος μὲ τὸν Ἀμόλυντο, ὁ ἐπαναστάτης μὲ τὸν Βασιλέα, ὁ ἀποστάτης μὲ τὸν Κύριό του.

Ἡ συναίσθησι αὐτὴ τὸν τυραννοῦσε. Σὰν δαμόκλειος σπάθη κρεμόταν πάνω ἀπ' τὴ συνείδησί του καὶ δὲν τὸν ἄφηνε νὰ ἡσυχάσῃ. **Ἦθελε νὰ συμφιλιωθῆ μὲ τὸ Θεό,** ζητοῦσε τρόπο. Ἀλλὰ πῶς; μὲ ὁδοιπορίες σὲ ἁγίους τόπους; μὲ νηστείες; μὲ θυσίες; μὲ τί τέλος πάντων θὰ ἐξευμένιζε τὴν θεία ὀργή, ὅπως πίστευαν οἱ ἀρχαῖοι; Τὰ δοκίμασε ὅλα· μὰ ὕστερα ἀπὸ τόσες δοκιμὲς ὁ ἀνθρώπος αἰσθάνονταν πάλι, ὅτι δὲν ἐπῆλθε τὸ προσδοκώμενο καὶ ἐπιθυμητὸ ἀποτέλεσμα, ἡ εἰρήνη. Ἡ ταραχὴ τῆς συνειδήσεώς του ἐξακολουθοῦσε νὰ 'νε ἡ ἴδια ἢ καὶ γινόταν ἀκόμα πιὸ σφοδρὴ.

Ἀνησυχὴ ἢ ψυχὴ ἀτένιζε πρὸς τὰ ὕψη καὶ μὲ βαθύ πόνο ζητοῦσε τὸν **Συμφιλιωτὴ**, ἐκεῖ-

νον ποὺ θὰ τὴν συνέδεε μὲ τὸν οὐρανὸ καὶ θὰ τὴν ἔφερνε σὲ ἐπικοινωνία, σὲ σχέσεις φιλικές, στενές, τρυφερές, ἁγίες, μὲ τὸν Αἰώνιο Κυρίαρχό του.

Καὶ ὁ **Συμφιλιωτὴς βρέθηκε!** βρέθηκε μόνο στὸ πρόσωπο τοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. Εἶνε ὁ ἴδιος ὁ Θεὸς ποὺ ἔγινε ἀνθρώπος καὶ μὲ τὴν ἐνανθρώπησί του ἔνωσε τὴ γῆ μὲ τὸν οὐρανὸ. Αὐτὸς ἔστειλε τὸ περιστέρι τῆς εἰρήνης, νὰ πετάξῃ πάνω ἀπ' ὅλη τὴν ὑδρόγειο καὶ νὰ φέρῃ τὸν κλάδο τῆς ἐλαίας, τὸ μήνυμα τῆς συμφιλίωσης, ὅπως εἶχε γίνει ἄλλοτε μὲ τὴν περιστερὰ τοῦ Νῶε μετὰ τὸν κατακλυσμὸ (βλ. Γέν. 8,11). Αὐτὸς ἐξαφάνισε τὸ χάσμα, τὸ βαθύ καὶ ἀγεφύρωτο, καὶ ἔζευξε τὸ κενό. Αὐτὸς μὲ τὸ αἷμα του ὑπέγραψε στὸν Γολγοθᾶ τὴν συμφιλίωσι τῶν ἀνθρώπων μὲ τὸ Θεό. Αὐτὸς, καὶ μόνο αὐτὸς, ἔχει τὴ μυστικὴ δύναμι νὰ ἐπαναφέρῃ στὴν ἀγκάλη τοῦ Θεοῦ τοὺς ἀσώτους καὶ νὰ δημιουργήσῃ ἄρρηκτους δεσμούς εἰρήνης ἀνάμεσα στὴν ψυχὴ καὶ τὸν Δημιουργό της· δεσμούς, ποὺ οἱ γνωστοὶ μας ἀνθρώπινοι δεσμοὶ τῆς φιλίας, τῆς συγγενείας, τῆς συζυγικῆς ἀγάπης εἶνε ἀσθενεῖς σκιές.

**Ἔτσι ἐπιτεύχθηκε ἡ συμφιλίωσις.**

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«*Καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς εἰρήνη*», ἀδελφοί μου!

Ἄς πλησιάσουμε τὸν σαρκωθέντα Θεό. **Ἄς πιστέψουμε σ' αὐτόν.** Τότε ἡ εἰρήνη τοῦ Χριστοῦ σὰν λεπτὴ πνοή, σὰν δροσερὴ αὔρα τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, θὰ δροσίξῃ, θὰ διαποτίζῃ καὶ θὰ ζωογονῇ ὁλόκληρη τὴν ὑπαρξί μας.

Ἄν ἐμεῖς ἔχουμε βαθειὰ μέσα μας τὴν εἰρήνη τοῦ Χριστοῦ, θὰ μένουμε ἀσάλευτοι ὅπως μένουν ἀσάλευτα τὰ νησάκια μέσα στὴ θύελλα τοῦ ὠκεανοῦ καὶ ὅπως μένουν ἀκίνητοι οἱ βράχοι μέσα στὴ θαλασσοταραχὴ τοῦ πελάγους. **Ἄς μαίνωνται οἱ ἄνεμοι,** ἄς λυσοῦν ὅσο θέλουν τὰ στοιχεῖα τῆς φύσεως, ἄς σειέται ἡ γῆ, ἄς βροντᾶ ὁ οὐρανός, ἄς σαλεύωνται τὰ ὄρη, ἄς σκοτίζεται ὁ ἥλιος, ἄς πέφτουν τ' ἀστέρια, ἄς πολεμοῦν τὰ ἔθνη, ἄς γίνετα ὁ κόσμος ἄνω κάτω· ἐμεῖς θὰ ἔχουμε μέσα μας τὴν εἰρήνη, καὶ θὰ εἴμαστε εὐτυχισμένοι.

Τὴν εἰρήνη τοῦ Χριστοῦ, τὴν ἐσωτερικὴ, τὴ μυστικὴ, τὴ βαθειά, τὴν θεία, κανένας ἀνθρώπος καὶ κανένα πρᾶγμα δὲν θὰ μπορέσῃ νὰ τὴν ἀφαιρέσῃ ἀπὸ τὴν καρδιὰ τοῦ πιστοῦ. Αὐτὸς, μέσα σ' ἓνα κόσμον ταραγμένο καὶ ἀνήσυχον, θὰ μπορῆ τὴ νύχτα τῶν Χριστουγέννων νὰ ψάλλῃ μαζί μὲ τοὺς ἀγγέλους τὸ «*Δόξα ἐν ὑψίστοις Θεῷ, καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς εἰρήνη, ἐν ἀνθρώποις εὐδοκία*».

(†) **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**

### *The Lord Has Made His Salvation Known to the Whole World*

The loving providence of God determined that in the last days He would aid the world, set on its course to destruction. He decreed that all nations should be saved in Christ. A promise had been made to the holy patriarch Abraham in regard to these nations. He was to have a countless progeny, born not from his body but from the seed of faith.

In the persons of the Magi let all people adore the Creator of the universe; let God be known, not in Judea only, but in the whole world. ... As Isaiah prophesied: the people of the Gentiles, who sat in darkness, have seen a great light, and for those who dwell in the region of the shadow of death a light has dawned. He spoke of them to the Lord: The Gentiles, who do not know you, will invoke you, and the peoples, who knew you not, will take refuge in you. ...

This came to be fulfilled, as we know, from the time when the star beckoned the three wise men out of their distant country and led them to recognize and adore the King of heaven and earth. The obedience of the star calls us to imitate its humble service: to be servants, as best we can, of the grace that invites all men to find Christ.

Dear friends, you must have the same zeal to be of help to one another; then, in the kingdom of God, to which faith and good works are the way, you will shine as children of the light: through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with God the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.

*St. Leo the Great*

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