



DIRECT ARCHDIOCESAN  
DISTRICT

# THREE HIERARCHS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

SUNDAY WEEKLY BULLETIN January 8th , 2017  
V. Rev. Archimandrite Eugene N. Pappas

## SUNDAY AFTER THEOPHANY



*Icon of Saints Dominica, George, and Elladius -- January 8th*

## **St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 4:7-13**

Prokeimenon. Mode 1.

Psalm 32.22,1

Let your mercy, O Lord, be upon us.

Verse: Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous.

BRETHREN, grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it is said, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." (in saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is he who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

## **Πρὸς Ἐφεσίους 4:7-13**

Προκείμενον. ᾠχος α΄.

ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 32.22,1

Γένοιτο, Κύριε, τὸ ἔλεός σου ἐφ' ἡμᾶς.

Στίχ. Ἀγαλλιᾶσθε δίκαιοι ἐν Κυρίῳ

Ἀδελφοί, ἐνὶ ἐκάστῳ ἡμῶν ἐδόθη ἡ χάρις κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τῆς δωρεᾶς τοῦ Χριστοῦ. Διὸ λέγει, Ἀναβὰς εἰς ὕψος ἠχμαλώτευσεν αἰχμαλωσίαν, καὶ ἔδωκεν δόματα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις. Τὸ δέ, Ἀνέβη, τί ἐστὶν εἰ μὴ ὅτι καὶ κατέβη πρῶτον εἰς τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς; Ὁ καταβάς, αὐτός ἐστιν καὶ ὁ ἀναβὰς ὑπεράνω πάντων τῶν οὐρανῶν, ἵνα πληρώσῃ τὰ πάντα. Καὶ αὐτὸς ἔδωκεν τοὺς μὲν ἀποστόλους, τοὺς δὲ προφήτας, τοὺς δὲ εὐαγγελιστάς, τοὺς δὲ ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους, πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων, εἰς ἔργον διακονίας, εἰς οἰκοδομὴν τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ· μέχρι καταστήσωμεν οἱ πάντες εἰς τὴν ἐνότητα τῆς πίστεως καὶ τῆς ἐπιγνώσεως τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ, εἰς ἄνδρα τέλειον, εἰς μέτρον ἡλικίας τοῦ πληρώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

## **Sunday after Epiphany**

### **The Gospel according to Matthew 4:12-17**

At that time, Jesus heard that John had been arrested, He withdrew into Galilee; and leaving Nazareth He went and dwelt in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, toward the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned." From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

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**AGAPE COFFEE HOUR TODAY:** is being hosted by the PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY in Whitehall. Everyone is cordially invited for coffee and sweets.

**PHILOPTOCHOS LADIES :** will have a short meeting in the WHITEHALL after the Agape Coffee Fellowship hour! Preparations are being made for the ANNUAL LUNCHEON on Martin Luther King Day – Monday, January 16th, at RUSSO’S ON THE BAY CATERERS at 12 noon.

**LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS LUNCHEON;** The annual stellar affair is scheduled for **MONDAY (MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY) January 16th . Please refer to the centerfold flyer for all details...**

**TODAY EPIPHANY HOLY WATER DISTRIBUTION** will take place after the Divine Liturgy. 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.

**CHURCHINGS TODAY:** We welcome into the embrace of the Holy Mother Church new born babies into the community:  
‘PENELOPE’ new born daughter of Nicholas and Monique ELEFTERAKIS ..... NA SAS ZESE!  
‘KATERINA’ new born daughter of George and Maria Plevritis .....NA SAS ZESE!  
Both fathers of the new born baby girls are Parish Council members!

**FATHER EUGENE** will attend a special celebratory occasion in the CHICAGO METROPOLIS on Monday evening, January 9th. He will be out of the OFFICE until mid week. Fr. Eugene will be a guest and honored speaker at the Metropolis dinner.

**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. Ask for your calendar.

**UKRAINIAN, RUSSIAN and GEORGIAN :** Orthodox Christians in our Parish are celebrating Saint Basil’s Day on Saturday, January 14th with a Divine Liturgy at 10:00 A.M. ( This observance is according to the OLD Julian calendar). Chronia Polla to all named BASILIOS and BASILIKI.

**NEW YEAR’S EVE REVEILLION: Dinner Dance was a major success as always. Hosted by the BOY SCOUT TROOP #531 ‘Golden Greeks; under the able aegis of LOUIS and GUS VELLIOS of Konstantin Florists everyone enjoyed an event long to be remembered Feasting, dancing , dining and revelry highlighted to entrance to 2017! At midnight the church bells rang in the new year with family blessings at the sanctuary altar by the Reverend Clergy. WHAT A WAY TO BEGIN A NEW YEAR!**

**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.

**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](#))

**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.

**PARISH COUNCIL:** Elections to the Executive Board will be held on Tuesday Evening, January 17th, at 7:00 P.M. in WHITEHALL. All council members are eligible and approved for election.

**MEMORIALS TODAY:**

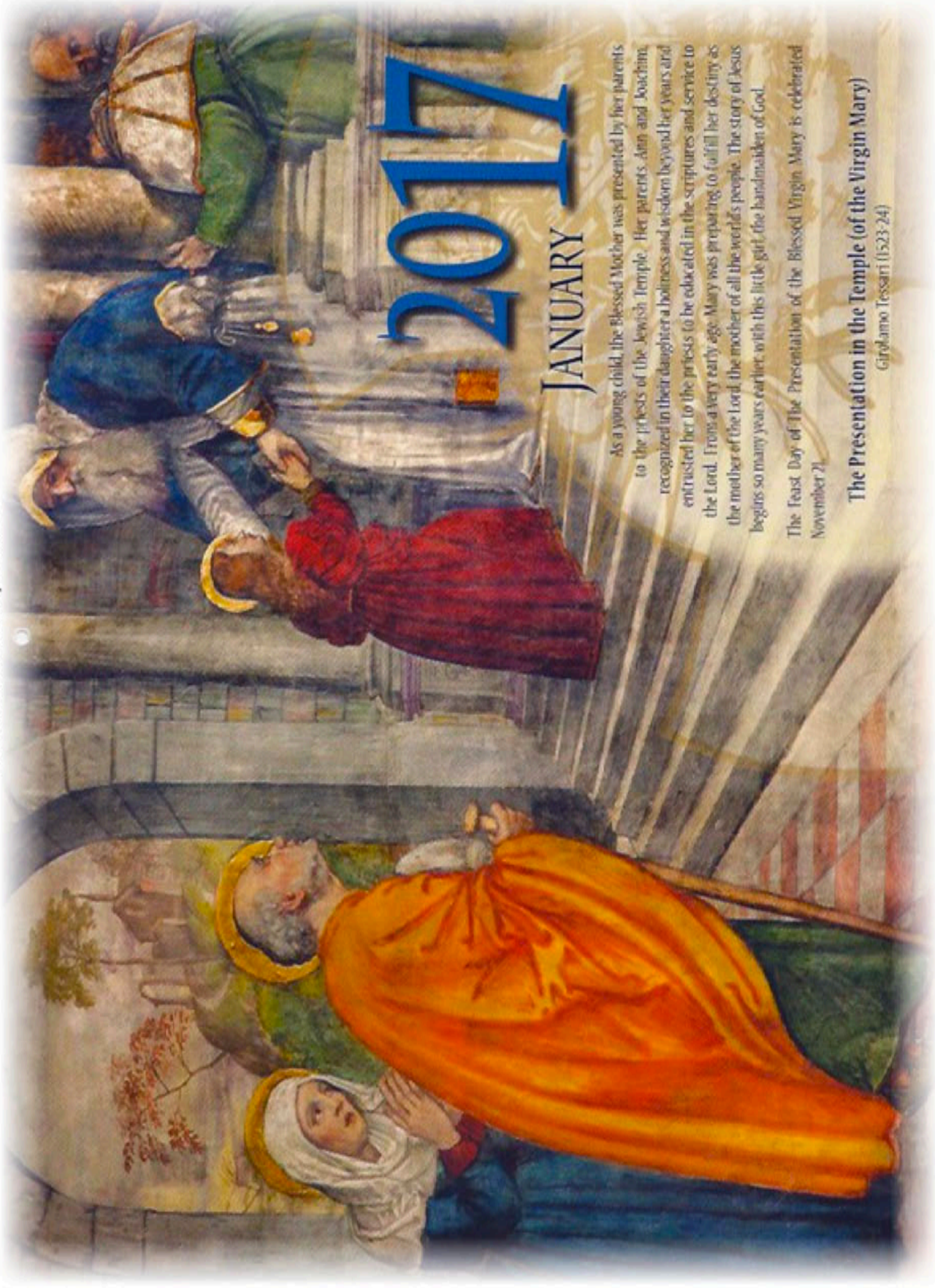
+ EKATEPINA VLAHOS

+ BARBARA VELLIOS + SPYRIDOULA VELLIOS + PATRICIA NICHOLAS  
+ MARY DARCHI + ANA KALLINIKOS + HELEN FAVA

**MEMORIALS NEXT WEEK:**

+ ANTHONY CHRISTODOULAKIS + JOAN PAVLOUNIS  
+ CALLIOPE HOURMOUZIS

Among the highlighted feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary is her ' EISODIA ' (GREEK) of ENTRANCE TO THE TEMPLE OF SOLOMON. At the tender age of pre-teen she was dedicated to service in the TEMPLE by her parents IOAKIM and ANNA. She was to be a temple bride!



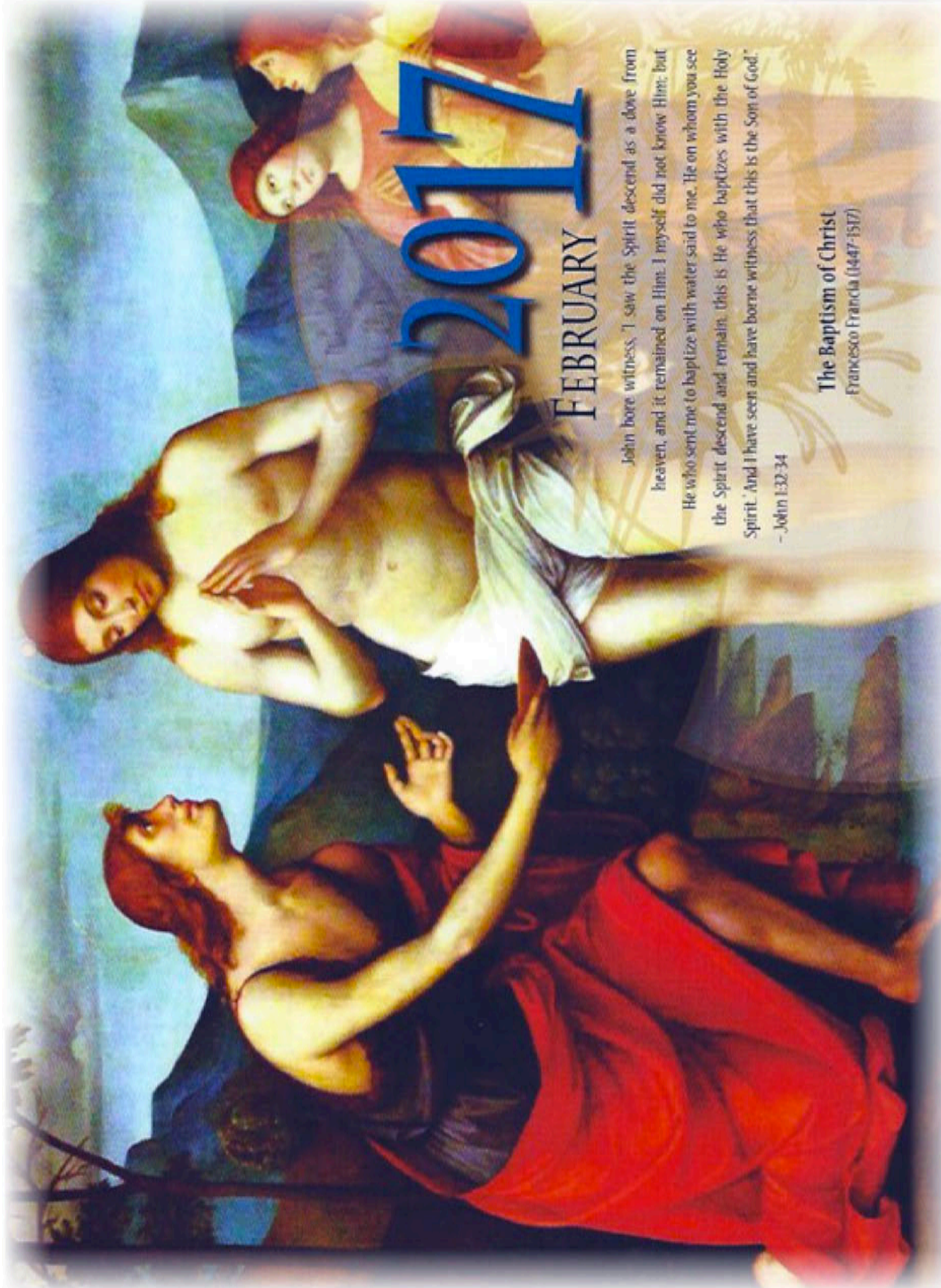
# 2017

## JANUARY

As a young child, the Blessed Mother was presented by her parents to the priests of the Jewish Temple. Her parents, Ann and Joachim, recognized in their daughter a holiness and wisdom beyond her years and entrusted her to the priests to be educated in the scriptures and service to the Lord. From a very early age, Mary was preparing to fulfill her destiny as the mother of the Lord, the mother of all the world's people. The story of Jesus begins so many years earlier, with this little girl, the handmaiden of God.

The Feast Day of The Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary is celebrated November 21.

**The Presentation in the Temple (of the Virgin Mary)**  
Girolamo Tessari (1523-24)



# 2017

## FEBRUARY

John bore witness, I saw the Spirit descend as a dove from heaven, and it remained on Him; I myself did not know Him; but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit. And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.”  
- John 1:32-34

**The Baptism of Christ**  
Francesco Francia (1447-1517)

*At the epiphany (showing from on high) also called the Theophany (showing of the god-head) we see a reluctant John the Baptist imparting the baptism with water on the CHRIST. Herein the HOLY TRINITY is made aparent with the LOGOS INCARNATE (JESUS) , the dove symbolizing the HOLY SPIRIT and the voice of the FATHER declaring His beloved Son in whom He is well pleased.*



# ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ

## ΣΥΝΤΟΜΟΝ ΚΗΡΥΓΜΑ



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

Ἐκδίδεται ἀπὸ τὴν Κοινοβιακὴ Γενναϊκία Τετὰ Μονὴ Ἁγίου Αὐγουστίνου Φλωρίνης – 531 00 ΦΛΩΡΙΝΑ – τηλ. 23850-23610 – info@yaho.gr

Περίοδος Δ΄ - Ἔτος ΛΔ΄  
Φλώρινα - ἀριθμ. φύλλου 1988

Κυριακὴ μετὰ τὰ Φῶτα (Ἐφ. 4,7-13)  
8 Ἰανουαρίου 2017

Συντάκτης (†) ἐπίσκοπος  
Αὐγουστίνος Ν. Καντιώτης

## Βάθος – ὕψος

«Ὁ καταβάς αὐτός ἐστι καὶ ὁ ἀναβάς ὑπεράνω πάντων τῶν οὐρανῶν» (Ἐφ. 4,10)

Θὰ μοῦ ἐπιτρέψετε, ἀγαπητοί μου, νὰ σὰς ἀπασχολήσω λίγα λεπτὰ ἐπάνω στὰ νοήματα τοῦ σημερινοῦ ἀποστόλου, ποῦ γιὰ τοὺς πολλοὺς δυστυχῶς ἀποτελοῦν «ἄλγεβρα».

Τὸν ἀκούσατε; Ἔχει νοήματα πολὺ ὕψηλά· **θεολογεῖ ὁ Παῦλος** στὴν πρὸς Ἐφεσίους ἐπιστολή. Ὅλο τὸ κείμενο εἶνε χρυσᾶ νομίσματα, ἀλλὰ θὰ προσπαθῆσω νὰ πάρω ἓνα ἀπὸ αὐτὰ καὶ μὲ τὴν ἐρμηνεία τῶν πατέρων τῆς Ἐκκλησίας νὰ τὸ κάνω λιανὰ, ὥστε νὰ κυκλοφορήσῃ μεταξὺ ὄλων σας. Θὰ μιλήσω ἀπλᾶ.

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Ἐάν, ἀγαπητοί μου, ρωτήσῃς ἓνα μαθητὴ τοῦ δημοτικοῦ, ποῖο εἶνε τὸ **βαθύτερο** μέρος τῆς ὑδρογείου, θὰ σοῦ ἀπαντήσῃ, ὅτι εἶνε κάπου στὸν Εἰρηνικὸ ὠκεανό· ἐκεῖ τὸ βάθος τῆς θαλάσσης φτάνει τὰ 11.000 μέτρα. «*Αὕτη ἡ θάλασσα ἡ μεγάλη καὶ εὐρύχωρος, ἐκεῖ ἐρπετά, ὧν οὐκ ἔστιν ἀριθμὸς...*» (Ψαλμ. 133,25-26). Καὶ ἂν πάλι ρωτήσῃς τὸ παιδί, ποῦ εἶνε τὸ **ὕψηλότερο** σημεῖο τοῦ πλανήτου μας, θὰ σοῦ ἀπαντήσῃ, ὅτι εἶνε στὰ Ἰμαλία ὄρη τῆς Ἀσίας καὶ ἡ ὕψηλότερη κορυφή τους φτάνει τὰ 9.000 μέτρα, ὅπου προσπαθοῦν ν' ἀνεβοῦν οἱ ὄρειβάτες.

Μά, θὰ πῆς, τί σχέσι ἔχουν μ' ἐμᾶς τὸ βάθος τῆς θαλάσσης καὶ τὸ ὕψος τῶν ὀρέων; Ἔχουν κάποια σχέσι, γιὰτὶ καὶ ὁ σημερινὸς ἀπόστολος μιλάει γιὰ κάποιο **βάθος** καὶ κάποιο **ὕψος**.  
● **ΤΟ ΒΑΘΟΣ.** Ἔχετε δεῖ ποτέ σας ἀετὸ νὰ πετάῃ; Ὅταν βρῖσκεται πολὺ ψηλά, ἀπὸ τῆ γῆ φαίνεται ὡς μιά τελεία στὸν οὐρανό. Μετὰ ὁμως διαγράφει κύκλους, χαμηλώνει, κ' ἔρχεται καὶ κάθεται σ' ἓνα βράχο. Ἔχει μεγαλεῖο.

Θαυμάζεις λοιπὸν πῶς ἓνα πουλὶ ἀπὸ τόσο ψηλά κατέβηκε κάτω ἐδῶ στὴ γῆ; Ἔλα τώρα, Χριστιανέ, νὰ θαυμάσῃς κάτι ἄλλο. Γιὰτὶ αὐτὰ ποῦ βλέπουμε στὴ φύσι εἶνε εἰκόνες καὶ παραδείγματα τῶν ἀοράτων. Ἄν ἀνοίξετε τὴν Ἀποκάλυψι, θὰ δῆτε ὅτι μιλάει γιὰ κάποιον ἄλλο ἀετό (βλ. 12,14)· ὁ νοητὸς αὐτὸς ἀετός, ὁ χρυσᾶς-

τος, ποῦ σηκώνει στὶς μεγάλες φτεροῦγες του ὄλο τὸν κόσμο, εἶνε ὁ **Κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστός**. Αὐτὸς ὡς ἀετὸς ἀπὸ τὰ ὕψη τοῦ οὐρανοῦ **κατέβηκε χαμηλὰ ἐδῶ στὴ γῆ**.

Ἀλλὰ ὁ ἀπόστολος δὲν λέει ὅτι κατέβηκε ἀπλῶς στὴ γῆ· λέει ὅτι «**κατέβη εἰς τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς**» (Ἐφ. 4,9). Γιὰ νὰ καταλάβουμε ποῖα εἶνε «τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς», πρέπει ν' ἀνοίξουμε τὴν Παλαιὰ Διαθήκη. Ἐκεῖ βλέπουμε ὅτι ὁ πατριάρχης Ἰακώβ, μιλώντας στὰ παιδιὰ του μὲ πόνο γιὰ τὴ θλίψι ποῦ τοῦ προξενοῦν, τοὺς λέει· *Λυπημένο θὰ μὲ κατεβάσετε στὸν ἄδη τώρα στὰ γηρατεῖά του*· «**κατάξετέ μου τὸ γῆρας μετὰ λύπης εἰς ἄδου**», λέει (βλ. 23,42). Καὶ ὁ ψαλμωδὸς ἐπίσης, θέλοντας νὰ πῆ, ὅτι κόντεψα νὰ πεθάνω, λέει· «*ἡ ζωὴ μου τῷ ἄδη ἤγγισε*» (Ψαλμ. 87,3). Καὶ στὸν Ἐξάψαλμο, ποῦ λέγεται κάθε μέρα στὸν ὄρθρο, ὁ Δαυὶδ λέει· «**καὶ ὁμοιωθήσομαι τοῖς καταβαίνουσιν εἰς λάκκον**» (βλ.), ὅτι θὰ γίνω ὡς τοὺς νεκροὺς ποῦ τοὺς κατεβάζουν στὸν τάφο. Ὅστε λοιπὸν, ὅταν ὁ ἀπόστολος λέει «**εἰς τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς**», δὲν ἐννοεῖ τὰ σπήλαια, τίς ῥωγμές, τὰ φαράγγια· ἐννοεῖ τὸ θάνατο, τὸν **ἄδη**, τὸν «κάτω κόσμο» ποῦ λέει ὁ λαός.

Στὸν ἄδη, ὅπως ἔλεγαν καὶ οἱ ἀρχαῖοι, βασιλεύει σκοτάδι καὶ ἔρεβος. **Ἐκεῖ εἶνε ὅλες οἱ ψυχές**, ὅλοι ἀνεξαιρέτως οἱ πρὸ ἡμῶν· καὶ ἐκεῖ μιά μέρα θὰ πᾶμε κ' ἐμεῖς.

Ἐκεῖ κάτω κατέβηκε ὁ Χριστός· αὐτὴ εἶνε ἡ «**εἰς ἄδου κάθοδος**». Αὐτὸ ἔγινε μετὰ τὴ σταυρικὴ θυσία του καὶ ὅσο τὸ σῶμα του παρέμενε στὸν τάφο. Ὅπως ψάλλει ποιητικὰ ἡ Ἐκκλησία μας τὸ Μέγα Σάββατο, ἔσπασε τίς χάλκινες πύλες, τίς μπρούτζινες πόρτες τοῦ ἄδου καὶ κατέλυσε τὴν ἐξουσία του. Μπῆκε μέσα καὶ τὸ σκοτεινὸ ἐκεῖνο βασίλειο ἔλαμψε, ἔγινε πᾶμφωτο. Ἐκεῖ ὁ Χριστὸς πάλεψε μὲ τὸ χάρο, νίκησε τὸ θάνατο, κήρυξε στὶς φυλακισμένους ψυχές, στὰ «**ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύματα**» (κ' Πέτρ. 3,19), κα-

πήργησε τὸν ἐξουσιαστή τοῦ θανάτου, «*τοῦτ' ἔστι τὸν διάβολον*», καὶ ἐλευθέρωσε τοὺς δεσμίους, ὄσους «*φόβω θανάτου διὰ παντός τοῦ ζῆν ἐνοχοὶ ἦσαν δουλείας*» [Ἔβρ. 2,14-15].

Ὅποτε λοιπὸν, ὅταν λέγῃ ὁ ἀπόστολος ὅτι ὁ Χριστὸς «*κατέβη*», ἐννοεῖ καὶ στὸ σπήλαιο τῆς φάτνης, καὶ στὸν Ἰορδάνη, καὶ στὸ Γολγοθᾶ, ἀλλὰ προπαντὸς ἐννοεῖ τὴ **νίκη του στὸν ᾄδη**.

● **ΤΟ ΥΨΟΣ**. Ἀφοῦ εἶδαμε, ἀγαπητοί μου, τὸ βάθος, τώρα ἂς δοῦμε τὸ ὕψος γιὰ τὸ ὁποῖο μιλάει ὁ ἀπόστολος; Λέει, ὅτι ὁ Χριστὸς ὡς ἄνθρωπος μετὰ τὴν ἀνάστασι καὶ τὴν ἀνάληψί του ἀνέβηκε. Ποῦ ἀνέβηκε; Γιὰ προσέξετε τί λέει ὅτι «*ὁ καταβάς αὐτός ἐστι καὶ ὁ ἀναβάς ὑπεράνω πάντων τῶν οὐρανῶν*» [Ἔβρ. 4].

Ἡ Γραφὴ δηλαδὴ λέει, ὅτι δὲν ὑπάρχει ἕνας οὐρανός, ὑπάρχουν πολλοί. Γι' αὐτὸ εἶνε θεόπνευστη! Πέταξε ἕνας ἄθεος ἀστροναύτης γύρω ἀπὸ τὴ Γῆ, κι ὅταν κατέβηκε κάτω εἶπε εἰρωνικά: «*Ἐκεῖ ποῦ πέταξα δὲν εἶδα πουθενὰ φτερὰ ἀγγέλου*». Ὁ ταλαίπωρος δὲν ἄνοιξε ποτὲ τὴ Γραφὴ νὰ δῇ ὅτι ὑπάρχουν **τρεῖς οὐανοί**. ✓ Ὁ πρῶτος οὐρανὸς εἶνε ὁ **ἀτμοσφαιρικός**, αὐτὸς ποῦ χρωματίζεται γαλάζιος ἀπὸ τὶς ἀκτίνες τοῦ ἡλίου· εἶνε ἡ ἀτμόσφαιρα ποῦ μᾶς περιβάλλει. Καθίσαμε ποτὲ νὰ σκεφτοῦμε, ὅτι μόνο ἡ Γῆ ἔχει ἀτμοσφαιρικό ἀέρα; Τὸ φεγγάρι δὲν ἔχει, οὔτε ὁ Ἄρης οὔτε τὰ ἄλλα ἄστρα. Γιὰ σκεφτῆτε, τί εἶνε ὁ ἀτμοσφαιρικός ἀέρας· εἶνε ἡ μεγαλύτερη δωρεὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ. Ὅπως τὸ ψάρι κολυμπᾷ στὴ θάλασσα, ἔτσι ἐμεῖς κολυμπᾷμε στὸν ἀέρα. Ἄν ἀφαιρέσης τὸν ἀτμοσφαιρικό ἀέρα, ὁ ἄνθρωπος δὲν ζῆ. Καὶ ἡ μὲν γῆ ἔχει βάθος 11.000 μέτρα, ὁ δὲ ἀτμοσφαιρικός ἀέρας φτάνει τὰ 80.000 μέτρα. ✓ Πάνω ἀπὸ τὰ 80 χιλιόμετρα δὲν ὑπάρχει ἀτμόσφαιρα· μπαίνουμε πλέον – ποῦ; στὸ διάστημα μὲ τὰ δισεκατομμύρια τῶν «*ἀστέρων τοῦ οὐρανοῦ*» [ἔβρ. 1,17-1,19-21-124]. Ὁ πρῶτος οὐρανὸς εἶνε ὁ ἀτμοσφαιρικός, καὶ μετὰ ἀπὸ αὐτὸν ἔρχεται ὁ **οὐρανὸς τῶν πλανητῶν**, ποῦ μεταξὺ τους βρίσκονται σὲ τεράστιες ἀποστάσεις. Πρέπει νὰ ταξιδεύης ὄχι μὲ πυραύλους ἀλλὰ μὲ ταχύτητα ἀκτίνης καὶ νὰ περάσουν ἐπὶ φωτὸς γιὰ νὰ φτάσης στὸν Ὑρίωνα, στὰ ἄλλα ἄστρα καὶ στοὺς γαλαξίες. Ἰλιγγος σὲ πιάνει νὰ σκέπτεσαι τὸ διάστημα μέσα στὸ σύμπαν. ✓ Τέλος, πάνω ἀπὸ τὰ ἄστρα καὶ τοὺς γαλαξίες εἶνε ὁ «*τρίτος οὐρανός*» [β' Κορ. 12]. Ποιὸς εἶνε ὁ «*τρίτος οὐρανός*»; Ἐκεῖ πλέον λάμπει ἕνας ἄλλος Ἥλιος – ὦ Θεέ μου, τί μεγαλεῖα ἔχει ἡ πίστι μας, καὶ τί σκουλήκια γίναμε ἐμεῖς! Πάνω ἀπὸ τὰ ἄστρα τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ὑπάρχει ἕνας ἄλλος Ἥλιος, ἀφάνταστος, ἀπερίγραπτος·

ἕνα μυστήριο ἀσύλληπτο, ἕνα φῶς ἀπειρο καὶ αἰώνιο, **ἡ ἁγία Τριάς**: Πατὴρ, Υἱὸς καὶ ἅγιον Πνεῦμα! Εἶνε ὄχι ἕνας ἀπλῶς ἥλιος, ἀλλὰ τρεῖς ἥλιοι ἢ «*τρισηλίος Θεότης*», ὅπως θ' ἀκούσουμε στὶς 30 Ἰανουαρίου στὸ ἀπολυτίκιο τῶν Τριῶν Ἱεραρχῶν, «*φωστήρων τῆς τρισηλίου Θεότητος*». Στὸν τρίτο οὐρανὸ μετὰ τὸ πρῶτο φῶς, τὴν τρισηλίον Θεότητα, τὸ δεύτερο φῶς, ποῦ λάμπει σὰν τὴ σελήνη, σὰν πανσέληνος, εἶνε ἡ ὑπεραγία Θεοτόκος. Καὶ μετὰ τὴν Θεοτόκο, σὰν ἀστέρες, λάμπουν οἱ ἄγγελοι καὶ ὄλοι οἱ ἅγιοι. Ἐδῶ λοιπὸν ἀνέβηκε ὁ Χριστὸς, ἀφοῦ νίκησε τὸ θάνατο καὶ ἀνέστη ἐκ νεκρῶν. Μὲ τὴν ἀνάληψί του, ἀφοῦ πέρασε τὸν πρῶτο καὶ τὸν δεύτερο οὐρανὸ, ἔφτασε καὶ **κάθισε καὶ ὡς ἄνθρωπος πλέον «ἐκ δεξιῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ»** [Μάρκ. 16,19].

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Σκεφθήκατε, ἀδελφοί μου, τί σημαίνουν τὰ λόγια τοῦ ἀποστόλου; Ὁ Χριστὸς, ποῦ δὲν τὸν χωροῦν τὰ σύμπαντα, ταπεινώνεται τόσο πολὺ· ἐνῶ εἶνε πάνω ἀπὸ τὰ ἄστρα, βρίσκεται καὶ ἐδῶ κάτω στὴ γῆ, πάνω στὴν ἁγία τράπεζα, μέσα στὸ ἅγιο ποτήριο. Σὲ κάθε σταγόνα καὶ κάθε μαργαρίτη τῆς θείας εὐχαριστίας, μέσα σὲ κάθε ἠλεκτρόνιο τῶν τιμίων δώρων, εἶνε ὁλόκληρος «*ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν βασιλευόντων καὶ κύριος τῶν κυριευόντων*» [1 τμ. 6,15]. Σὲ πιάνει Ἰλιγγος. Τὸ πιστεύεις; ἔλα στὴν ἐκκλησία· δὲν τὸ πιστεύεις; κάθισε στὸ σπιτάκι σου. Τὴν ὥρα τῆς θείας λειτουργίας παρίσταται ἐκεῖ ὁ ἴδιος ὁ Χριστὸς. «*Ὅπου*», λέει, «*εἶνε δύο ἢ τρεῖς συνηγμένοι εἰς τὸ ἐμὸν ὄνομα*», ὄχι γιὰ ἐγκόσμια πράγματα ἀλλὰ γιὰ προσευχὴ στὸ Χριστό, «*ἐκεῖ*», λέει, «*εἶμαι ἐν μέσῳ ὑμῶν*» [Ματθ. 18,20]. **Ὁ Χριστέ, πῶς σὲ κοινωνοῦμε, πῶς χωρῆς μέσα στὸ ἀκάθαρτο σῶμα μας καὶ σὲ φιλοξενοῦμε!**

Ἕνα ἀκόμη πρακτικὸ διδάγμα. Δὲν ἀρνούμεθα τὴν ἀξία τῆς ἐπιστήμης· ὅσο προχωρεῖ ἡ ἐπιστήμη, περισσότερα ἐπιχειρήματα προσφέρει ὑπὲρ τῆς πίστεώς μας. Ἀλλὰ μὲ τὴν ἐπιστήμη ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὑψώθηκε μὲν τεχνολογικῶς καὶ πολιτιστικῶς, ἔπεσε ὁμως πνευματικῶς καὶ ἠθικῶς. Τί νὰ τὸν κάνης τὸν πολιτισμὸ αὐτόν; Ἀφοῦ λοιπὸν **πέσαμε τόσο χαμηλὰ** καὶ ὡς ἄτομα καὶ ὡς οἰκογένειες καὶ ὡς πολιτεία καὶ ὡς ἀνθρωπότης, ἂς παρακαλέσουμε τὸν μεγαλοπτερυγα Ἄετὸ τῆς Ἀποκαλύψεως νὰ χαμηλώσῃ, νὰ μᾶς πάρῃ στὶς φτεροῦγες του, ὅπως εἶπε ὁ Κρυστάλλης, γιὰ **νὰ ὑψωθοῦμε** καὶ ν' ἀξιωθοῦμε νὰ φθάσουμε κάποτε στὸν τρίτο οὐρανὸ ψάλλοντας: «*Χαῖρε, ὕψος δυσανάβατον ἀνθρωπίνους λογισμοῖς· χαῖρε, βάθος δυσθεώρητον καὶ ἀγγέλων ὀφθαλμοῖς*» [ἰωάν. ἴμν. 13].

(†) **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 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 Gift of the Holy Spirit to All Mankind*

In a plan of surpassing beauty the Creator of the universe decreed the renewal of all things in Christ. In His design for restoring human nature to its original condition, He gave a promise that He would pour out on it the Holy Spirit along with His other gifts, for otherwise our nature could not enter once more into the peaceful and secure possession of those gifts.

He therefore appointed a time for the Holy Spirit to come upon us: this was the time of Christ's coming. He gave this promise when He said: In those days, that is, the days of the Savior, I will pour out a share of my Spirit on all mankind.

The Only-begotten Son received the

Spirit, but not for His own advantage, for the Spirit is His, and is given in Him and through Him, as we have already said. He receives it to renew our nature in its entirety and to make it whole again, for in becoming man He took our entire nature to Himself. If we reason correctly, and use also the testimony of Scripture, we can see that Christ did not receive the Spirit for Himself, but rather for us in Him; for it is also through Christ that all gifts come down to us.

*Saint Cyril of Alexandria*

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