



DIRECT ARCHDIOCESAN
DISTRICT

THREE HIERARCHS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

SUNDAY WEEKLY BULLETIN February 19th , 2017
V. Rev. Archimandrite Eugene N. Pappas

MEATFARE SUNDAY SUNDAY OF THE LAST JUDGMENT



Icon of the Last Judgment

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St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 8:8-13; 9:1-2

Prokeimenon. Mode 4.

Psalm 146.5;134.3

Great is our Lord, and great is his power.

Verse: Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good.

Brethren, food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. Only take care lest this liberty of yours somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. For if any one sees you, a man of knowledge, at table in an idol's temple, might he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols? And so by your knowledge this weak man is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died. Thus, sinning against your brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food is a cause of my brother's falling, I will never eat meat, lest I cause my brother to fall.

Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not you my workmanship in the Lord? If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

Πρὸς Κορινθίους α' 8:8-13, 9:1-2

Προκείμενον. Ἦχος δ.

ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 146.5;134.3

Μέγας ὁ Κύριος ἡμῶν, καὶ μεγάλη ἡ ἰσχύς αὐτοῦ.

Στίχ. Αἰνεῖτε τὸν Κύριον, ὅτι ἀγαθός.

Ἀδελφοί, βρῶμα ἡμᾶς οὐ παρίστησιν τῷ θεῷ· οὔτε γὰρ ἐὰν φάγωμεν περισσεύομεν, οὔτε ἐὰν μὴ φάγωμεν ὑστερούμεθα. Βλέπετε δὲ μήπως ἡ ἐξουσία ὑμῶν αὐτῆ πρόσκομμα γένηται τοῖς ἀσθενοῦσιν. Ἐὰν γάρ τις ἴδῃ σε τὸν ἔχοντα γινῶσιν ἐν εἰδωλείῳ κατακείμενον, οὐχὶ ἡ συνειδησις αὐτοῦ ἀσθενοῦς ὄντος οἰκοδομηθήσεται εἰς τὸ τὰ εἰδωλόθυτα ἐσθίειν; Καὶ ἀπολείται ὁ ἀσθενῶν ἀδελφός ἐπὶ τῇ σῆ γνώσει, δι' ὃν Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν; Οὕτως δὲ ἁμαρτάνοντες εἰς τοὺς ἀδελφούς, καὶ τύπτοντες αὐτῶν τὴν συνειδησις ἀσθενοῦσαν, εἰς Χριστὸν ἁμαρτάνετε. Διόπερ εἰ βρῶμα σκανδαλίζει τὸν ἀδελφόν μου, οὐ μὴ φάγω κρέα εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, ἵνα μὴ τὸν ἀδελφόν μου σκανδαλίσω. Οὐκ εἰμι ἀπόστολος; Οὐκ εἰμι ἐλεύθερος; Οὐχὶ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν ἑώρακα; Οὐ τὸ ἔργον μου ὑμεῖς ἐστε ἐν κυρίῳ; Εἰ ἄλλοις οὐκ εἰμι ἀπόστολος, ἀλλὰ γε ὑμῖν εἰμι· ἡ γὰρ σφραγὶς τῆς ἐμῆς ἀποστολῆς ὑμεῖς ἐστε ἐν κυρίῳ.

Judgment Sunday (Meatfare Sunday)

The Gospel according to Matthew 25:31-46

The Lord said, "When the Son of man comes in his glory and all the holy angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.' Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?' Then he will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me.' And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

Judgment Sunday (Meatfare Sunday)

Κατὰ Ματθαῖον 25:31-46

Εἶπεν ὁ Κύριος· Ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν τῇ δόξῃ αὐτοῦ καὶ πάντες οἱ ἅγιοι ἄγγελοι μετ' αὐτοῦ, τότε καθίσει ἐπὶ θρόνου δόξης αὐτοῦ, καὶ συναχθήσεται ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, καὶ ἀφοριεῖ αὐτοὺς ἀπ' ἀλλήλων ὡσπερ ὁ ποιμὴν ἀφορίζει τὰ πρόβατα ἀπὸ τῶν ἐρίφων, καὶ στήσει τὰ μὲν πρόβατα ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ, τὰ δὲ ἐρίφια ἐξ εὐωνύμων. τότε ἐρεῖ ὁ βασιλεὺς τοῖς ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ· δεῦτε οἱ εὐλογημένοι τοῦ πατρὸς μου, κληρονομήσατε τὴν ἡτοιμασμένην ὑμῖν βασιλείαν ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου. ἐπεινάσα γάρ, καὶ ἐδώκατέ μοι φαγεῖν, ἐδίψησα, καὶ ἐποτίσατέ με, ξένος ἦμην, καὶ συνηγάγετέ με, γυμνός, καὶ περιεβάλετέ με, ἠσθένησα, καὶ ἐπεσκέψασθέ με, ἐν φυλακῇ ἦμην, καὶ ἤλθετε πρὸς με. τότε ἀποκριθήσονται αὐτῷ οἱ δίκαιοι λέγοντες· κύριε, πότε σε εἶδομεν πεινῶντα καὶ ἐθρέψαμεν, ἢ διψῶντα καὶ ἐποτίσαμεν; πότε δὲ σε εἶδομεν ξένον καὶ συνηγάγομεν, ἢ γυμνὸν καὶ περιεβάλομεν; πότε δὲ σε εἶδομεν ἀσθενῆ ἢ ἐν φυλακῇ, καὶ ἤλθομεν πρὸς σε; καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐρεῖ αὐτοῖς· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἐφ' ὅσον ἐποιήσατε ἐνὶ τούτων τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν ἐλαχίστων, ἐμοὶ ἐποιήσατε. τότε ἐρεῖ καὶ τοῖς ἐξ εὐωνύμων· πορευέσθε ἀπ' ἐμοῦ οἱ κατηραμένοι εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον τὸ ἡτοιμασμένον τῷ διαβόλῳ καὶ τοῖς ἀγγέλοις αὐτοῦ. ἐπεινάσα γάρ, καὶ οὐκ ἐδώκατέ μοι φαγεῖν, ἐδίψησα, καὶ οὐκ ἐποτίσατέ με, ξένος ἦμην, καὶ οὐ συνηγάγετέ με, γυμνός, καὶ οὐ περιεβάλετέ με, ἀσθενῆς καὶ ἐν φυλακῇ, καὶ οὐκ ἐπεσκέψασθέ με. τότε ἀποκριθήσονται αὐτῷ καὶ αὐτοὶ λέγοντες· κύριε, πότε σε εἶδομεν πεινῶντα ἢ διψῶντα ἢ ξένον ἢ γυμνὸν ἢ ἀσθενῆ ἢ ἐν φυλακῇ, καὶ οὐ διηκονήσαμεν σοι; τότε ἀποκριθήσεται αὐτοῖς λέγων· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἐφ' ὅσον οὐκ ἐποιήσατε ἐνὶ τούτων τῶν ἐλαχίστων, οὐδὲ ἐμοὶ ἐποιήσατε. καὶ ἀπελεύσονται οὗτοι εἰς κόλασιν αἰώνιον, οἱ δὲ δίκαιοι εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον.

DEVOTIONS THIS WEEK:

Sunday	February 19th,	APOKREES Saint Philothea of Athens	9:30 A.M.
		Fasting from all meat products commences	
Saturday	February 25th,	SECOND Psycho-Sabbaton Liturgy	9:30 A.M.
		Commemoration of ALL SOULS	
Wednesday	February 22nd,	PRAYER and HEALING Service	6:30 P.M.
		Cleanse yourself before LENT !	
Sunday	February 26th,	TYROFAGOU-Cheese Fare Observance	9:30 P.M.
		St. Porphyrios of GAZA	
Monday	February 27th,	LENT BEGINS for PASCHA Strict Fast	
Monday	February 27th,	A.H.E.P.A. Lenten Dinner	7:00 P.M.

WHITEHALL / OPEN FREE TO ALL!

AGAPE COFFEE FELLOWSHIP: is being hosted today by the Parish Council. Please join us in WHITEHALL for refreshments , open to all.

PHILOPTOCHOS LADIES are reminded that there will be a GENERAL MEETING of the Membership NEXT SUNDAY – February 26th, directly after the Divine Liturgy at 12:30 P.M.

PRAYER and HEALING: for the MONTH of FEBRUARY will be held Wednesday February 22nd. from 6:30 -8:00P.M. Coffee and sweets always end the session with good fellowship. COME! SEE! LEARN! BE HEALED!

HELLENIC HERITAGE COMMITTEE announces the Annual Citation of Greek-American Brooklyn luminaries for MONDAY-MARCH 20th at 6:00 P.M. in the ROTUNDA of BOROUGH HALL.. Three members of our parish: George P. Annis, Julia Demakakos, and Connie Ioannides, will be honored with distinction. Buses will be available FREE from the church to and from Borough Hall. Reserve your bus seat NOW!

CONGRATULATIONS CHOIR: Certificates of Honor were distributed last Sunday February 12th, by the President of the Archdiocesan District Choir Federation ANNA DOUNELIS to the following choir members for years of dedicated service:

FIFTY GOLDEN YEARS: Georgia Bouzakis, Nicholas Serras, Sylvia Vellios

THIRTY-FIVE YEARS: Xanthe Apergis, Bob Geroulanos , Maryanne Kolidas , Helen Pavlides and Elizabeth Perlegis

TWENTY YEARS: Robert Malfi

FIFTEEN YEARS: Anargyros and NIKI Apergis

Christine Gavaris, Anna Glyptis, Evanthea Karounos, Mary Loukas, Harry and Tula Orthos

TEN YEARS Evanthia Basias

PSALTI/Chanter: Leonidas Koutsouflakis

PSYCHOSABBATTA are upon us Saturday : February 25th 9:30 A.M.

Saturday : March 04th 9:30 A.M.

Please submit your names for commemoration as soon as possible for the appropriate intoning of the names during the services. Memorial ‘forms’ may be secured in the candle ‘pangari’ area, or at the church office upon request.

PSYCHOSABBATON commemoration flyers will be distributed by the Altar Boys at the reception of the Antidoron.

Secure yours for Saturday of ALL SOULS!

SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY: FIRST SUNDAY of LENT is traditionally observed with the procession of icons. Our church will celebrate the occasion as prescribed. The PAN ORTHODOX VESPER of ORTHODOXY will be held on SUNDAY, MARCH 5th at 4:00 P.M. at the Saint Nicholas Antiochian (SYRIAN) Cathedral on State Street, Brooklyn. Please refer to the flyer for all details.

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 /GRANDCHILDREN! 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 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](#))

MEMORIALS

+ MARY TERZIDIS

MEMORIAL NEXT WEEK: + NADEZDAH KOTILNIKOVA + ALEXEY, + LARISA and +VIKTOR KOSLOV

+THEODOROS GAVARIS



DAUGHTERS OF PENELOPE DEMETRA CHAPTER#33

Sponsor BINGO NIGHT



MONDAY MARCH 6TH , 2017
7:00 P.M., WHITEHALL
THREE HIERARCHS CHURCH
1724 Avenue P
Brooklyn, N.Y.
718-627-0967

YOU ARE ALL INVITED !
A NIGHT FULL OF FUN!
PLEASE COME AND SUPPORT
OUR EFFORTS.



Many Prizes and
Refreshments

DONATION
\$10.00 per card
additional cards 1:00
Each

CASH PRIZES & GIFTS

B I N G O





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 Γεννακία Ἰερὰ Μονὴ Ἁγίου Αὐγουστίνου Φλωρίνης - 531 00 ΦΛΩΡΙΝΑ - τηλ. 23850-28610 - imaafllo@yahoo.gr

Περίοδος Δ' - Ἔτος ΛΔ' Φλώρινα - ἀριθμ. φύλλου 1994	Κυριακὴ τῆς Ἀπόκρεω (Ματθ. 25,31-46) 19 Φεβρουαρίου 2017 πρῶτῃ	Συντάκτης (†) ἐπίσκοπος Αὐγουστίνος Ν. Καντιώτης
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Ἡ ἀγάπη εἶνε ὁ βασιλικὸς νόμος

Ἀπορία μεγάλη, ἀγαπητοί μου, μεγάλη ἀπορία στὴ σκέψι πολλῶν Χριστιανῶν προκαλεῖ ἓνα σημεῖο τῆς εὐαγγελικῆς περικοπῆς ποὺ ἀκοῦμε σήμερα Κυριακῇ τῶν Ἀπόκρεω.

Ὁ εὐαγγελιστὴς Ματθαῖος στὸ 25ο (ἔξ) κεφάλαιο τοῦ Εὐαγγελίου του περιγράφει τὴ Μέλλουσα Κρίσι, τὸ **συγκλονιστικὸ γεγονός** μὲ τὸ ὁποῖο μέλλει νὰ κλείσῃ ἡ αὐλαία τοῦ δράματος τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος κατὰ τὴ συντέλεια τοῦ παρόντος κόσμου. Τὸ περιγράφει χωρὶς περιττὰς λεπτομέρειες καὶ φλύαρες ἐπεκτάσεις, ὅπως θὰ ζητοῦσε ἡ ἀνθρώπινη περιέργεια, ἀλλὰ μὲ τρόπο λιτὸ καὶ ἀπέριττο.

«Ὅταν», λέει τὸ ἱερό κείμενο, «ὅταν ἔλθῃ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου» πάλι ἐδῶ στὴ γῆ, δὲν θὰ ἔλθῃ ὅπως τὴν προηγούμενη φορά. Ἡ δευτέρα παρουσία του δὲν θὰ μοιάζῃ καθόλου μὲ τὴν πρώτη. Κατὰ τὴν πρώτη ἔλευσί του δὲν ἔγινε ἀντιληπτὸς ἀπὸ ὄλους, γιατί ἤλθε ταπεινὰ καὶ ἀθόρυβα. Ἐλάχιστοι μόνο, οἱ ποιμένες καὶ οἱ μάγοι, εἰδοποιήθηκαν γιὰ τὴν ἔλευσί του καὶ ἔσπευσαν νὰ τὸν προσκυνήσουν. Τὴ δεύτερη δὲμος φορά θὰ ἔλθῃ «ἐν τῇ δόξῃ αὐτοῦ», θὰ εἶνε «πάντες οἱ ἄγιοι ἄγγελοι μετ' αὐτοῦ», καὶ «τότε καθίσει ἐπὶ θρόνου δόξης αὐτοῦ» (Ματθ. 25,31).

Θὰ ἔλθῃ τότε ὁ Χριστὸς γιὰ νὰ δικάσῃ τὸν κόσμον, νὰ κρίνῃ «ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς», ὅπως πιστεύουμε καὶ ὁμολογοῦμε κάθε φορά ποὺ ἀπαγγέλλουμε τὸ Σύμβολο τῆς πίστεώς μας, τὸ «Πιστεύω» (ἰβ. 7). Θὰ συγκεντρωθοῦν τότε ἐνώπιόν του ὄλοι οἱ ἄνθρωποι, ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου, καὶ θὰ τοὺς χωρίσῃ ὅπως ὁ τοσπᾶνος χωρίζει τὰ πρόβατα ἀπὸ τὰ γίδια.

Πῶς θὰ δικάσῃ ὁ Κριτής; Θὰ στήσῃ τὰ μὲν πρόβατα στὰ δεξιὰ του, τὰ δὲ γίδια στὰ ἀριστερά. Σ' αὐτοὺς ποὺ θὰ ἔναι στὰ δεξιὰ του θὰ πῇ Ἐλάτε, εὐλογημένα παιδιὰ τοῦ Πατέρα μου, περάστε νὰ κληρονομήσετε τὸν παράδεισον, τὴ βασιλεία ποὺ ἔχει ἐτοιμασθῆ γιὰ σᾶς,

γιατὶ δείξατε ἀγάπη στὸν πεινασμένο καὶ στὸ διψασμένο, στὸν ξένο καὶ στὸ γυμνὸ, στὸν ἄρρωστο καὶ στὸ φυλακισμένο· ὅ,τι κάνατε στὸν καθένα ἀπὸ αὐτούς, ἦταν σὰν νὰ τὸ κάνατε σ' ἐμένα τὸν ἴδιο. Κατόπιν θὰ πῇ καὶ σ' αὐτοὺς ποὺ θὰ βρίσκονται στὰ ἀριστερά του· Φύγετε ἀπὸ μένα, κατηραμένοι, πηγαίνετε στὴν αἰώνια φωτιὰ τῆς κολάσεως μαζί μὲ τὸν διάβολο καὶ τοὺς δαίμονές του· γιατί δὲν δείξατε ἀγάπη στὸν πεινασμένο καὶ στὸ διψασμένο, στὸν ξένο καὶ στὸ γυμνὸ, στὸν ἄρρωστο καὶ στὸ φυλακισμένο· νὰ ξέρετε πῶς, ὅ,τι δὲν κάνατε στὸν καθένα ἀπὸ αὐτούς, ἦταν σὰν νὰ μὴν τὸ κάνατε σ' ἐμένα τὸν ἴδιο.

Βλέπουμε λοιπὸν ὅτι ἡ κρίσι θὰ γίνῃ μὲ δικαιοσύνη καὶ μὲ βάσι τὸν ἴδιο νόμο γιὰ ὄλους. Ἐδῶ ἀκριβῶς ὅμως βρίσκεται τὸ σημεῖο ποὺ προκαλεῖ τὴν ἀπορία, γιὰ τὴν ὁποία εἴπαμε στὴν ἀρχή. Ποιὸ εἶνε τὸ σημεῖο αὐτό· ὅτι στὴ Μέλλουσα Κρίσι, σύμφωνα μὲ τὰ λόγια τοῦ δικαίου Κριτοῦ, τόσο γιὰ τοὺς δικαίους ὅσο καὶ γιὰ τοὺς ἀμετανόητους ἁμαρτωλοὺς, ἡ ἀπόφασί τοῦ δικαστηρίου θὰ ἐκδοθῆ **μὲ βάσι τὸ νόμο τῆς ἀγάπης καὶ μόνο αὐτόν**. Στὸν παράδεισον θὰ εἰσέλθουν οἱ πρῶτοι, διότι τήρησαν τὸ νόμο τῆς ἀγάπης· καὶ στὴν κόλασι θὰ πορευθοῦν οἱ δεύτεροι, διότι δὲν τήρησαν τὸ νόμο τῆς ἀγάπης στὸν κόσμον αὐτόν.

Ἀλλὰ πῶς ἡ κρίσι θὰ βασισθῆ μόνο στὸ νόμο τῆς ἀγάπης; Ὁ Θεὸς τόσες ἄλλες ἐντολὲς ἔχει δώσει στὸν ἄνθρωπον· ὁ Δεκάλογος τοῦ Μωυσέως, ἡ Ἐπι τοῦ ὄρους ὁμιλία τοῦ Κυρίου, ὄλα τὰ βιβλία τῆς Παλαιᾶς καὶ τῆς Καινῆς Διαθήκης περιέχουν ἓνα πλῆθος θείων ἐντολῶν, μικρῶν καὶ μεγάλων. Καὶ ὅμως ἀπ' ὄλες αὐτὲς τίς ἐντολὲς καμμία δὲν ἀναφέρεται στὴν εὐαγγελικὴ περικοπὴ ποὺ περιγράφει τὴν Μέλλουσα Κρίσι· μόνο ἡ ἐντολὴ τῆς ἀγάπης μνημονεύεται καὶ αὐτὴ ὅπως βλέπουμε θ' ἀποτελέσῃ τὸν **γνώμονα**, βάσει τοῦ

όποιου θα κριθῆ ἡ ζωὴ τῶν ἀνθρώπων. Οἱ ἄλλες λοιπὸν ἐντολὲς δὲν θὰ ἰσχύσουν; Πῶς ἐξηγεῖται αὐτό;

Ὁ λόγος, ἀγαπητοί μου, γιὰ τὸν ὅποιον τόση ἐξαιρετικὴ σημασία θὰ δοθῆ στὴν ἀγάπη κατὰ τὴν ἡμέρα τῆς Παγκοσμίου Κρίσεως, εἶνε διότι ἡ ἀγάπη ἀποτελεῖ **τὸ κατ' ἐξοχὴν διακριτικὸ γνώρισμα** τῶν Χριστιανῶν (βλ. 1^η 13,35) ἡ ἀγάπη εἶνε ὁ «*σύνδεσμος τῆς τελειότητος*» (βλ. 3,14), εἶνε τὸ «*πλήρωμα νόμου*» (βλ. 13,8-10).

Αὐτὸ τὸ καταλαβαίνουμε εὐκόλα, ἂν λάβουμε ὑπ' ὄψιν μας ὅτι, ὅπου ὑπάρχει ἀγάπη, ὅπως τὴν διδάξε καὶ τὴν ἐφάρμοσε στὴν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ζωὴ του ὁ Χριστός, ἐκεῖ κανένα κακὸ δὲν ὑπάρχει· ἐκεῖ ἀντιθέτως ὑπάρχουν **ὄλα τὰ καλά**.

Ἐκεῖνος ὁ ἄνθρωπος, ποὺ ἔχει στὴν καρδιά του ἐνθρονισμένη τὴν ἀγάπη, **δὲν μπορεῖ νὰ κἀν κακὸ** εἰς βάρος τοῦ συνανθρώπου του· «*ἡ ἀγάπη τῷ πλησίον κακὸν οὐκ ἐργάζεται*» (βλ. 13,9). Ἐφ' ὅσον κάποιος ἀγαπᾷ τὸν πλησίον του σὰν τὸν ἑαυτὸ του (βλ. Ματθ. 19,19· Μάρκ. 12,31,33), πῶς εἶνε δυνατόν νὰ τὸν κλέψῃ ἢ νὰ τὸν ἀδικήσῃ ἢ νὰ τὸν συκοφαντήσῃ ἢ νὰ τὸν ἀτιμᾷσῃ ἢ πολὺ περισσότερο νὰ τὸν θανατώσῃ;

Καὶ ὄχι μόνον τὸ κακὸ ἀποκλείεται νὰ κἀν αὐτὸς ποὺ ἀγαπᾷ κατὰ Χριστόν, ἀλλὰ καὶ **ἔχει προθυμία μεγάλη στὸ νὰ κἀν τὸ καλὸ** καὶ νὰ διακονῇ τὸν πλησίον του. Ἡ ἀγάπη δηλαδὴ, ἐνῶ δένει τὰ χέρια καὶ δεσμεύει τὸν ἄνθρωπο ἀπὸ τὸ νὰ πράξῃ τὸ κακὸ, ἀντιθέτως τὸν ὠθεῖ καὶ τοῦ δίνει φτερὰ στὸ νὰ κἀν παντοῦ τὸ καλὸ, νὰ βοηθᾷ ὅπου μπορεῖ καὶ νὰ ἐρχεται ἄρωγος σὲ ὅποιον ἔχει ἀνάγκη.

Ἡ ἀγάπη εἶνε ἡ μητέρα τῆς ἀρετῆς· εἶνε ἡ ρίζα – ποὺ σημαίνει βάθος, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡ κορυφὴ τῆς ἀρετῆς – ποὺ σημαίνει τὸ ὕψος τῆς.

● Εἶνε ἡ **ρίζα**· γιατί ὅπως στὸ δέντρο ἡ ρίζα εἶνε τὸ στήριγμά του στὸ ἔδαφος καὶ ἡ πηγὴ ἀπ' ὅπου ἀντλεῖ χυμοὺς γιὰ νὰ ζῆσῃ καὶ νὰ καρποφορήσῃ, ἔτσι ἡ ἀγάπη στηρίζει, ἐνδυναμώνει καὶ τροφοδοτεῖ κάθε ἐνάρετη κίνησι καὶ ἐνέργεια. Δέντρο χωρὶς ρίζα δὲν μπορεῖ νὰ σταθῆ, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀρετὴ χωρὶς ἀγάπη δὲν μπορεῖ νὰ νοηθῆ· καὶ ἂν ἀκόμη ὑποτεθῆ ὅτι γίνεται κάποιο κατόρθωμα ἀρετῆς χωρὶς ἀγάπη, αὐτὸ τὸ κατόρθωμα, καὶ τὸ μεγαλύτερο ἀκόμη ἂν εἶνε, δὲν ἔχει καμμία ἀξία· γιατί ὅπως λέει ὁ ἀπόστολος Παῦλος «*Καὶ ἐὰν ψωμίσω (δῶσω σὲ ἐλεημοσύνη) πάντα τὰ ὑπάρχοντά μου, καὶ ἐὰν παραδῶ τὸ σῶμά μου ἵνα καυθήσομαι (καὶ ἂν ἀκόμη μαρτυρήσω), ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω, οὐδὲν ὠφελοῦμαι*» (1^η Κορ. 13,3).

● Ἡ ἀγάπη λοιπὸν εἶνε ἡ ρίζα, ποὺ σημαίνει τὸ βάθος τῆς ἀρετῆς, ἀλλ' εἶνε ἐπίσης καὶ ἡ **κορυφὴ** τῆς, ποὺ δείχνει τὸ ὕψος τῆς κάθε ἐναρέτου ἐνεργείας. Γιατί ὅσο αὐξάνει ἡ ἀγάπη, τόσο αὐξάνει καὶ ἡ ἀρετὴ. Ἄν κάποιος ἔχῃ πολλὴ ἀγάπη, αὐτὸς θὰ δείξῃ καὶ πολλὴ πραότητα, πολλὴ ἐλεημοσύνη, πολλὴ δικαιοσύνη, πολλὴ τιμιότητα, πολλὴ εὐσπλαχνία.

Δικαίως λοιπὸν ὁ Κύριος εἶπε, ὅτι ὄλα τὰ καθήκοντά μας, καὶ πρὸς τὸν Θεὸ καὶ πρὸς τὸν πλησίον, ἐξαρτῶνται ἀπὸ τὴν ἀγάπη, τὴν ἀγάπη πρὸς τὸν Κύριό μας καὶ τὴν ἀγάπη πρὸς τὸ συνάνθρωπό μας. «*Ἐν ταύταις ταῖς δυσὶν ἐντολαῖς ὄλος ὁ νόμος καὶ οἱ προφῆται κρέμνεται (σ' αὐτὰς τὶς δύο ἐντολὰς στηρίζονται ὄλα ὅσα διδάσκει ὁ νόμος καὶ οἱ προφῆτες)*» (Ματθ. 22,34). Γι' αὐτὸ καὶ ὁ θεὸς Παῦλος, ὅπως εἶδαμε πρὶν πάνω, ὠνόμασε τὴν ἀγάπη «*σύνδεσμον τῆς τελειότητος*»· ἡ ἀγάπη, δηλαδὴ, **συνδέει ὄλες τὶς ἀρετὲς σὲ ἓνα τέλειο σύνολο**. Διατηρεῖται ὁ ἅγιος αὐτὸς δεσμὸς τῆς ἀγάπης; ἐκεῖ βασιλεύει ἡ θεῖα ἁρμονία καὶ τάξις· καταστρέφεται καὶ διαλύεται ὁ δεσμὸς τῆς ἀγάπης; ἐκεῖ κυριαρχεῖ δυσαρμονία καὶ ἀταξία καὶ πολλὴ καὶ μεγάλη ἀνομία.

Γι' αὐτὸ καὶ ὁ Κύριος τὴν ἡμέρα τῆς Κρίσεως **τὸ εἰσιτήριο τῆς ἀγάπης** θὰ ζητήσῃ ἀπὸ κάθε πιστό. Καὶ ἐκεῖνοι μὲν ποὺ φρόντισαν, ὅσο βρῖσκονταν μέσα σ' αὐτὴ τὴν κοινωνία, ν' ἀποκτήσουν μὲ ἔργα ἀγάπης τὸ εἰσιτήριο αὐτό, θὰ εἶνε μακάριοι - εὐτυχισμένοι, γιατί θ' ἀκούσουν τὴ γλυκεῖα φωνὴ τοῦ Σωτῆρος «*Δεῦτε οἱ εὐλογημένοι τοῦ πατρὸς μου, κληρονομήσατε τὴν ἡτοιμασμένην ὑμῖν βασιλείαν ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου*» (Ματθ. 25,34). Ἐκεῖνοι ὅμως ποὺ ὄσο ζοῦσαν μέσα στὴν κοινωνία αὐτὴ ἐδίωξαν μακριὰ τους τὴν ἀγάπη καὶ ἐζήσαν σὰν θηρία ἄγρια, μὲ πρόγραμμα τὸ μῖσος καὶ τὴν ἀδιαφορία γιὰ τοὺς μικροὺς καὶ τοὺς πάσχοντας, θὰ εἶνε δυστυχισμένοι, γιατί ὁ Κύριος θὰ τοὺς δείξῃ τὴν πύλη τῆς κολάσεως καὶ θὰ τοὺς πῆ ἀύστηρὰ τὰ φοβερὰ καὶ γεμᾶτα πικρία ἀπερίγραπτη λόγια του «*Πορεύεσθε ἀπ' ἐμοῦ οἱ κατηραμένοι εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον τὸ ἡτοιμασμένον τῷ διαβόλῳ καὶ τοῖς ἀγγέλοις αὐτοῦ*» (ἐβ. 25,41).

Ἀδελφοί μου! «**Ἀγαπήσωμεν ἀλλήλους**» (βλ. 1^η Κορ. 13). Νὰ κοπιᾶσουμε καὶ ν' ἀγωνιστοῦμε, γιὰ ν' ἀποκτήσουμε τὴν ἀγάπη, τὴ μητέρα τῆς ἀρετῆς, τὴ βασίλισσα τῶν ἀρετῶν, ἡ ὁποία καὶ θὰ μᾶς εἰσαγάγῃ στὴν βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.

(†) **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 Twofold Coming of Christ

We do not preach only one coming of Christ, but a second as well, much more glorious than the first. The first coming was marked by patience; the second will bring the crown of a divine kingdom.

In general, whatever relates to our Lord Jesus Christ has two aspects. There is a birth from God before the ages, and a birth from a virgin at the fullness of time. There is a hidden coming, like that of rain on fleece, and a coming before all eyes, still in the future.

At the first coming He was wrapped in swaddling clothes in a manger. At His second coming He will be clothed in light as in a garment. In the first coming He endured

the cross, despising the shame; in the second coming He will be in glory, escorted by an army of angels.

We look then beyond the first coming and await the second. At the first coming we said: Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. At the second we shall say it again; we shall go out with the angels to meet the Lord and cry out in adoration: Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem

For more information on Eastern spirituality, visit
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