

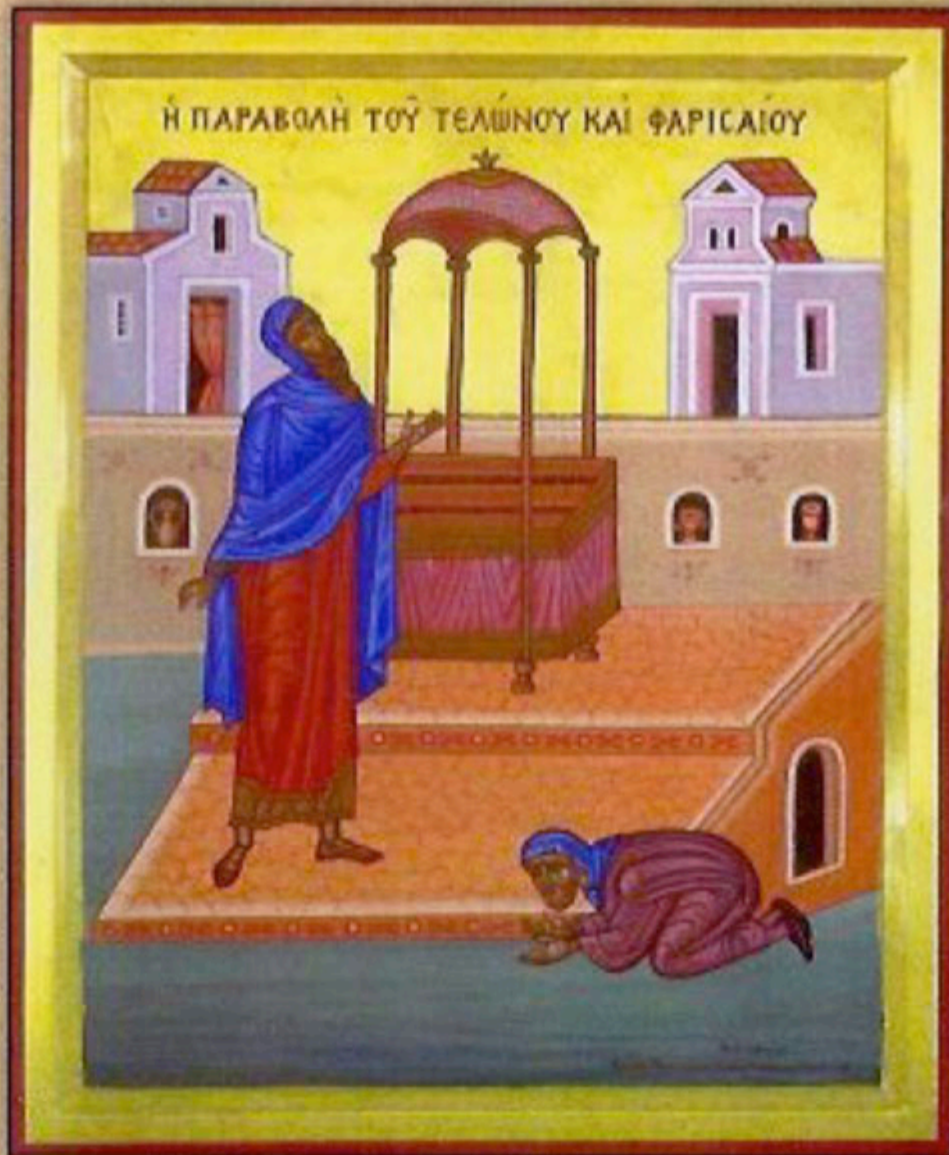


DIRECT ARCHDIOCESAN
DISTRICT

THREE HIERARCHS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

SUNDAY WEEKLY BULLETIN February 5th , 2017
V. Rev. Archimandrite Eugene N. Pappas

SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN AND PHARISEE



Icon of the Publican and Pharisee

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St. Paul's Second Letter to Timothy 3:10-15

Prokeimenon. Mode Plagal 4.

Psalm 75.11,1

Make your vows to the Lord our God and perform them.

Verse: God is known in Judah; his name is great in Israel.

TIMOTHY, my son, you have observed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions, my sufferings, what befell me at Antioch, at Iconion, and at Lystra, what persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. Indeed all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil men and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceivers and deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

Πρὸς Τιμόθεον β' 3:10-15

Προκείμενον. Ἦχος πλ δ.

ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 75.11,1

Εὕξασθε καὶ ἀπόδοτε Κυρίῳ τῷ Θεῷ ἡμῶν.

Στίχ. Γνωστὸς ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ ὁ Θεός, ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ μέγα τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ.

Τέκνον Τιμόθεε, παρηκολούθηκάς μου τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ, τῇ ἀγωγῇ, τῇ προθέσει, τῇ πίστει, τῇ μακροθυμίᾳ, τῇ ἀγάπῃ, τῇ ὑπομονῇ, τοῖς διωγμοῖς, τοῖς παθήμασιν, οἷά μοι ἐγένετο ἐν Ἀντιοχείᾳ, ἐν Ἰκονίῳ, ἐν Λύστροις, οἷους διωγμοὺς ὑπήνεγκα· καὶ ἐκ πάντων με ἐρρύσατο ὁ κύριος. Καὶ πάντες δὲ οἱ θέλοντες εὐσεβῶς ζῆν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ διωχθήσονται. Πονηροὶ δὲ ἄνθρωποι καὶ γόητες προκόψουσιν ἐπὶ τὸ χειρὸν, πλανῶντες καὶ πλανώμενοι. Σὺ δὲ μένε ἐν οἷς ἔμαθες καὶ ἐπιστάθης, εἰδὼς παρὰ τίνος ἔμαθες, καὶ ὅτι ἀπὸ βρέφους τὰ ἱερά γράμματα οἶδας, τὰ δυνάμενά σε σοφίσει εἰς σωτηρίαν διὰ πίστεως τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee: Triodion Begins Today

The Gospel according to Luke 18:10-14

The Lord said this parable, "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I get.' But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee: Triodion Begins Today

Κατὰ Λουκᾶν 18:10-14

Εἶπεν ὁ Κύριος τὴν παραβολὴν ταύτην· Ἄνθρωποι δύο ἀνέβησαν εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν προσεύξασθαι, ὁ εἷς Φαρισαῖος καὶ ὁ ἕτερος τελώνης. ὁ Φαρισαῖος σταθεὶς πρὸς ἑαυτὸν ταῦτα προσηύχετο· ὁ Θεός, εὐχαριστῶ σοι ὅτι οὐκ εἰμι ὡσπερ οἱ λοιποὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἄρπαγες, ἄδικοι, μοιχοί, ἢ καὶ ὡς οὗτος ὁ τελώνης· νηστεύω δις τοῦ σαββάτου, ἀποδεκατῶ πάντα ὅσα κτῶμαι. καὶ ὁ τελώνης μακρόθεν ἐστὼς οὐκ ἤθελεν οὐδὲ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἐπάραι, ἀλλ' ἔτυπεν εἰς τὸ στήθος αὐτοῦ λέγων· ὁ Θεός, ἰλάσθητί μοι τῷ ἁμαρτωλῷ. λέγω ὑμῖν, κατέβη οὗτος δεδικαιωμένος εἰς τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ ἢ γὰρ ἐκεῖνος· ὅτι πᾶς ὁ ὑψῶν ἑαυτὸν ταπεινωθήσεται, ὁ δὲ ταπεινῶν ἑαυτὸν ὑψωθήσεται.

DEVOTIONS THIS WEEK: Sunday February 05th, Saint Agatha of Sicily Liturgy 9:30 A.M.
Sunday February 05th, VENERATION of Saint Xenophon 11:30 A.M.

TODAY: We are observing the post feast day of SAINT XENOPHON (Jan. 26th) with an ARTOKLASIA from the Steven and Sylvia Raptis Family. The veneration of the sacred icon will take place during the blessing of the 5 loaves, wine and oil.
CHRONIA POLLA TO ALL!

AGAPE COFFEE FELLOWSHIP: is being hosted today by the Coney Island Chapter #200 of the A.H.E.P.A. Everyone is welcome to attend.

CHOIR HONORS: next Sunday, February 12th distinguished members of the Three Hierarchs Choir will be cited for extraordinary service to the choral music of the parish by the GREEK ORTHODOX CHORALE FEDERATION by the Executive Officer Ms. Anna Dounelis. Congratulations to everyone in the CHOIR.

PHILOTOCHOS BASILOPITA : luncheon will be hosted next Sunday, February 12 in WHITE-HALL. TICKETS ARE \$10.00 (ten dollars) for a delicious luncheon with raffle prizes at 3 tickets for \$10:00 with all proceeds going to benefit SAINT BASIL ACADEMY in Garrison, New York .

SENIOR CLUB ACTIVITY UPCOMING: is a VALENTINE DAY PARTY on the 15th of February ! Yes! We know that it's one day too late.....however hearts , chocolates, roses , and diamonds are all discounted THE NEXT DAY! so will you be my 'VALENTINE' discounted ? Join us any Wednesday Afternoon at 1:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M. for fellowship , bingo , activities, coffee and sweets. Light luncheon will be served for PRESIDENTS; DAY on February 22nd.

EUCCHARISTO! MERCI! DANKE! GRACIAS! to our florists who so beautifully decorated the exterior and interior of the Church as well as ROSEHALL for our Patronal feast week-end (January 29-30th). We salute the Tsintzelis brothers of MARINE FLORIST, Peter Giannopoulos of HENRY'S , MADISON FLORIST and the Vellios Family of AVENUE 'J' FLORIST.

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!

CLERGY RETREAT: The Archdiocesan clergy retreat will convene for two days Tuesday-Wednesday: February 07-08th at the Immaculate Conception Seminary in Huntington, Long Island. Our Pastor Fr. Eugene will be attending as President of the Metropolitan District Fellowship. Father Eugene will be in Office on Thursday.

PSYCHOSABBATTA are upon us: Saturday of All Souls Liturgies are scheduled.

Saturday : February 18th 9:30 A.M.

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!

PHILOTOCHOS LADIES SOCIETY and DEMETRA CHAPTER DAUGHTERS of PENELOPE: are acknowledged with sincere gratitude for hosting the Vesper reception in ROSEHALL last Sunday evening with a 'birthday cake' for the Archbishop, and the Monday noon reception after the Patronal Liturgy in ROSEHALL. The artos and Greek pastries were a treat for all.
YGEIA STA HERIA SAS!

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](#))

MEMORIAL TODAY:

+ THEODORE THOMAS

MEMORIALS NEXT WEEK:

+ CHRISTOS VLAHOS + MARTHA KOUSOULAS

The week-end of January 29-30th, filled the church with services and festivities honoring the Patrons of the Parish - THE THREE HOLY HIERARCHS (Saints Gregory the Theologian, Basil the Great and John the Chrysostom). With liturgies, vespers, receptions, programs, citations, presentations, benevolence and other events the celebration was a major success.



Among the dignitaries who graced our parish, we were honored with the presence of His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, the Arch-deacons, the Arch-priests from other parishes, the Consuls of Greece, and two Representatives of CONGRESS, the Honorable Gus Bilirakis of Florida and the Honorable Carolynn Maloney of New York. The HELLENIC HERITAGE AWARD was presented to both Congress members. The Brooklyn AHEPA submitted a check for \$20,000. (TWENTY THOUSAND DOLLARS) towards the World Trade Center SAINT NICHOLAS NATIONAL SHRINE CHURCH. Greek School students sang hymns and poetry.





ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ

ΣΥΝΤΟΜΟΝ ΚΗΡΥΓΜΑ



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

Ἐκδίδεται ἀπὸ τὴν Κοινοβιακὴ Γυναικεία Τετὰ Μονὴ Ἁγίου Αὐγουστίνου Φλωρίνης - 531 00 ΦΛΩΡΙΝΑ - τηλ. 22850-28510 - imaaflo@yahoo.gr

Περίοδος Δ' - Ἔτος ΛΔ'
Φλώρινα - ἀριθμ. φύλλου 1992

Κυριακὴ Τελώνου & Φαρισαίου
5 Φεβρουαρίου 2017

Συντάκτης (†) ἐπίσκοπος
Αὐγουστίνος Ν. Καντιώτης

Τριῶδιο

Απὸ τὴν Κυριακὴ τοῦ Τελώνου καὶ τοῦ Φαρισαίου μετὰ τὴ χάρι τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἀγαπητοῦ μου, μπαίνουμε στὴν περίοδο τοῦ Τριῶδιου.

Ἐνα ἀρχαῖο γνωμικὸ ἔλεγε: «*Βίος ἀνεόρταστος μακρὰ ὁδὸς ἀπανδόκευτος*», δηλαδή: ζωὴ πεζὴ ποὺ δὲν ποικίλλεται κατὰ διαστήματα ἀπὸ ἑορτὲς μοιάζει με δρόμο μακρὺ ποὺ δὲν ἔχει κάπου ἓνα πανδοχεῖο, ὅπου ὁ ὁδοιπόρος νὰ μπορῇ νὰ σταθμεύσῃ γιὰ νὰ ξεκουραστῇ (Δημοκρίτου, Ἄποσι. 237 Fragm. VersoK: Diels - Kranz II, στ. 191, 11-12) παρὰ Μεγαλὴ Τ. Τστρού, Πόθεν καὶ ἄρα - εἰδικὴ ἐγκυκλοπαίδεια, 787ημ. 1972, 100).

Τὸν παλιὸ καιρὸ, ποὺ δὲν ὑπῆρχαν τὰ σημερινὰ μέσα συγκοινωνίας καὶ οἱ ταξιδιώτες μετακινούνταν ἢ μετὰ τὰ πόδια ἢ μετὰ ζῶα, στὶς μεγάλες δημόσιες ἀρτηρίες κατὰ διαστήματα ὑπῆρχαν πανδοχεῖα, τὰ χάνια ὅπως τὰ ἔλεγαν τότε, καὶ ἐκεῖ στάθμευαν γιὰ νὰ ξεποστᾶσουν καὶ νὰ ἀνεφοδιαστοῦν. Ἐκεῖ, ἂν τοὺς ἔπιανε ἡ νύχτα, ἔβρισκαν μέρος νὰ διανυκτερεύσουν καὶ τροφή γιὰ τὸν ἑαυτὸ τους καὶ τὰ ζῶα τους. Τὸ **πανδοχεῖο** ἦταν μιὰ ἀνάγκη.

Μήπως ὁμως καὶ σήμερα, ποὺ τὰ ταξίδια ἔχουν γίνει πολὺ πιὸ εὐκόλα, δὲν ὑπάρχει ἡ ἀνάγκη αὐτή; Ὑπάρχει: μόνο ποὺ τώρα τὸ παλιὸ χάνι τὸ ἀντικατέστησε ὁ σύγχρονος **σταθμὸς ἀνεφοδιασμοῦ**, με βενζινάδικο γιὰ καύσιμα ἢ ἄλλα ἐφόδια τοῦ αὐτοκινήτου, με ἐστιατόριο γιὰ πρόγευμα ἢ φαγητό, με ἀναψυκτήριο, ἢ με καταστήματα ποικίλων εἰδῶν.

Τὸ μακρὺ καὶ μονότονο ταξίδι ἦταν ἀνεκάθευ καὶ εἶνε πάντα κουραστικὸ γι' αὐτὸ ἢ ὁ στάθμευσι θεωρεῖται ἀπαραίτητη. Κάτι ἀνάλογο ὁμως συμβαίνει καὶ μετὰ τὴν πνευματικὴ μας πορεία μέσα στὴ ζωὴ. Ἐνα ταξίδι εἶνε κι αὐτὴ: κι ὅταν δὲν ἔχη σταθμούς, ἢ πορεία καταντᾶ κουραστικὴ καὶ ἀχαρῆ. Χρειάζονται κ' ἐδῶ οἱ σταθμοί. Καὶ σταθμοὶ ποιοὶ εἶνε; εἶνε **οἱ ἑορτὲς**, ἔθνικες καὶ θρησκευτικὲς, ποὺ ἔρχονται καὶ διακόπτουν τὴν μονοτονία τῆς καθημερινότητος μέσα στὸν ἐτήσιο κύκλο.

Στὴν θρησκευτικὴ μας ζωὴ οἱ Ἕλληνες, ἀφ' ὅτου δεχθῆκαμε καὶ ἀσπασθῆκαμε τὴν πίστι τοῦ Χριστοῦ, οἱ ἑορτὲς τῆς παλαιᾶς θρησκείας τῶν δώδεκα θεῶν παραμέρισαν καὶ ἔδωσαν τὴ θέσι τους στὶς **χριστιανικὲς ἑορτὲς**, οἱ ὁποῖες ἔχουν ὡς βάσι τὸ Εὐαγγέλιο καὶ τὴ ζωὴ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας. Οἱ χριστιανικὲς ἑορτὲς τῶν ὀρθοδόξων Ἑλλήνων, ποὺ ὠραίζουν τὰ τέσσερις ἐποχὲς τοῦ ἐκκλησιαστικοῦ ἔτους, δὲν ἔρχονται ἀπλῶς νὰ διακόψουν τὴν μονοτονία τῆς καθημερινῆς ζωῆς: ἔρχονται καὶ ἀγιάζουν τὸ χρόνο, δίνουν νόημα στὴν πεζὴ καθημερινότητα, διδάσκουν, φωτίζουν, ἐνθουσιάζουν, ἀναπτερώνουν, τονώνουν.

Τὴν περίοδο αὐτὴ, καθὼς ἐτοιμαζόμαστε γιὰ τὴ μεγάλη ἑορτὴ τοῦ Πάσχα, γιὰ νὰ ἐορτάσουμε δηλαδή τὴν σταυρικὴ θυσία καὶ τὴν ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀνάστασι τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἡ Ἐκκλησία, γιὰ τὸν σκοπὸ αὐτό, μᾶς εἰσάγει στὸ **Τριῶδιο**. Εἶνε μιὰ περίοδος ἑβδομήντα ἡμερῶν, δέκα ἑβδομάδων. Οἱ τρεῖς πρώτες ἑβδομάδες εἶνε εἰσαγωγικὲς, ἀκολουθοῦν οἱ ἔξι ἑβδομάδες τῆς Μεγάλης Τεσσαρακοστῆς, καὶ τὸ Τριῶδιο κλείνει μετὰ τὴ Μεγάλῃ Ἑβδομάδα τῶν παθῶν τοῦ Κυρίου.

«Ἦρθε τὸ Τριῶδιο» ἢ «ἀνοίγει τὸ Τριῶδιο», λέει ὁ κόσμος: καὶ δοκιμάζουν χαρὰ μεγάλη. **Πρόκειται ὁμως ἄραγε γιὰ χαρὰ χριστιανικὴ;**

Φοβᾶμαι πολὺ, ὅτι ἡ χαρὰ αὐτὴ δὲν εἶνε χαρὰ χριστιανικὴ, ἀλλὰ **εἶνε χαρὰ τοῦ κόσμου**. Γιατί τὸ λέω αὐτό; Διότι ὁ τρόπος, μετὰ τὸν ὁποῖο οἱ πολλοὶ ζοῦν κατὰ τὴ διάρκεια τῆς περιόδου αὐτῆς τοῦ Τριῶδιου, δὲν εἶνε αὐτὸς ποὺ ταιριάζει σὲ Χριστιανούς. Δὲν βλέπετε πῶς διασκεδάζουν; Χοροὶ ἄσεμνοι, μεταμφιέσεις, τραγούδια αἰσθησιακά, θεάματα πορνικά, φαγοπότια ἁμαρτωλά, μεθύσια καὶ κραιπάλες, κάθε εἶδους σπατάλες καὶ ἀσωτίες, νὰ μετὰ τί παραγεμίζουν, οἱ λεγόμενοι Χριστιανοί, τὶς πρώτες ἡμέρες τοῦ Τριῶδιου.

Ἡ περίοδος τῶν ἡμερῶν αὐτῶν θά ἔπρεπε νὰ ἔνε σὰν ἓνα κρυστάλλινο ποτήρι, πού ἀπὸ μέσα κι ἀπ' ἔξω ν' ἀστράφτη ἀπὸ καθαριότητα, γεμᾶτο ἀπὸ τὰ πολυτίμα δάκρυα τῆς μετανοίας καὶ τῆς συντριβῆς· καὶ ὁμως, ἀντὶ γιὰ τέτοιο ποτήρι, ἐμεῖς προσφέρουμε στὸ Χριστὸ ἓνα ποτήρι –συχώρεσέ μας, Κύριε, γιὰ τὶς ἁμαρτίες μας!– πού ἀπ' ἔξω μπορεῖ ἴσως νὰ φαίνεται χρυσοῦ καὶ νὰ λάμπη, ἀλλὰ εἶνε **ποτήρι «γέμον βδελυγμάτων»** (ἠλ. 17,4), γεμᾶτο ἀπὸ τὶς ἀκαθαρσίες μιᾶς εἰδωλολατρικῆς ζωῆς, τὴν ὁποία δυστυχῶς ζοῦμε τὶς ἅγιες αὐτὲς ἡμέρες οἱ περισσότεροὶ ἀπὸ τοὺς λεγομένους Χριστιανούς.

Ἴσως καμμία ἄλλη περίοδος τοῦ ἐκκλησιαστικοῦ ἔτους νὰ μὴν παρουσιάζη τέτοιο καὶ τόσο φορτωμένο **ἀπολογισμό ἁμαρτημάτων** ὅπως αὐτὴ ἐδῶ ἢ εἰσαγωγικὴ περίοδος, πού ἀρχίζει ἀπὸ τὴν Κυριακὴ τοῦ Τελώνου καὶ τοῦ Φαρισαίου καὶ τελειώνει τὴν Κυριακὴ τῆς Τυροφάγου. Ἐπὶ τρεῖς ἐβδομάδες οἱ Χριστιανοὶ ζοῦν σὰν κάποιος –ποῖός ἄλλος παρὰ ὁ σατανᾶς;– νὰ τοὺς ἔχη ἀνοίξει διὰ πλάτα τὶς πύλες τῆς ἀνομίας καὶ τῆς φουλότητος!

Καὶ ὁμως, παρὰ τὴν πλειονότητα τῶν ἀνθρώπων οἱ ὁποῖοι τὶς ἡμέρες αὐτὲς περιμένουν ν' ἀνοίξουν οἱ πύλες τῆς ἀνομίας καὶ τῆς φουλότητος γιὰ νὰ ὀργιάσουν μὲ τὸν πιὸ ἀντιχριστιανικὸ τρόπο, ὑπάρχει –δόξα τῷ Θεῷ– καὶ μία μερίδα, **«τὸ μικρὸν ποίμνιον»** (ἠακ. 12,32) τοῦ Κυρίου, πού μὲ τελείως διαφορετικὲς, ἐντελῶς ἀντίθετες, ψυχικὲς διαθέσεις εἰσέρχεται στὴν περίοδο αὐτὴ τοῦ Τριωδίου.

Χαίρονται καὶ οἱ Χριστιανοὶ αὐτοί· ἀλλ' ὄχι γιὰ τὴν θ' ἀνοίξουν οἱ αἴθουσες τῶν χορῶν, ὄχι γιὰ τὴν θὰ παρελάσουν τὰ ἄρματα καὶ οἱ ἀποκριτικοὶ μασκαράδες, ὄχι γιὰ τὴν εἴφτασε ὁ καιρὸς τῶν αἰσθησιακῶν ἀπολαύσεων· ὄχι! Χαίρονται, **γιατὶ ἀνοίγουν οἱ πύλες** τῆς ψυχικῆς περισυλλογῆς, τῆς συντριβῆς, τῆς προσευχῆς, **τῆς μετανοίας**. Μαζὶ μὲ τὸν Τελώνη καὶ μαζὶ μὲ τὸν ὑμνωδὸ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ὑψώνουν ψυχῆς καὶ καρδιᾶς πρὸς τὰ ἄνω καὶ λένε πρὸς τὸν πανοικτίρμονα Θεὸ τὴν προσευχὴ τοῦ Τελώνου, τὴν προσευχὴ τῶν ταπεινῶν· **«Ὁ Θεός, ἐλάσθητί μοι τῷ ἁμαρτωλῷ»** (ἠακ. 18,13) καὶ **«Τῆς μετανοίας ἀνοίξόν μοι πύλας, ζωοδότα ὀρθρίζει γὰρ τὸ πνεῦμά μου πρὸς ναὸν τὸν ἅγιόν σου, ναὸν φέρον τοῦ σώματος ὄλον ἐσπιλωμένον· ἀλλ' ὡς οἰκτίρμων κάθαρον εὐσπλάγχνω σου ἔλεε!»** (Πράξ. 1,17. 16. 17. 18. 19.).

Ὡ οἱ ψυχῆς αὐτὲς, πόσο τὶς μακαρίζω, πόσο τὶς θαυμάζω! Μοιάζουν μὲ **πλοῖα πού ἐ-**

τοιμάζονται ν' ἀποπλεύσουν, ν' ἀνοίχθουν στὸ πέλαγος γιὰ πνευματικὸς ἀγῶνες, στοὺς ὁποίους τοὺς καλεῖ τώρα μὲν ἢ πρώτη σάλπιγγα τοῦ Τριωδίου, καὶ μετὰ ἀπὸ λίγο θὰ τοὺς καλέσῃ ἐντονώτερα ἢ σάλπιγγα τῆς Μεγάλης Τεσσαρακοστῆς, τῆς ὁποίας ὠραῖο προοίμιό εἶνε ἢ εἰσαγωγικὴ αὐτὴ περίοδος τῶν τριῶν πρώτων ἐβδομάδων τοῦ Τριωδίου.

Ἄς ἀκολουθήσουμε κ' ἐμεῖς, ἀγαπητοί μου, τὶς ψυχῆς αὐτὲς στοὺς πνευματικὸς ἀγῶνες. Ἄς ὑψώσουμε τὰ ἰστία τῆς ψυχῆς μας, **ὡς ἀνοίξουμε τὰ πανιά**, γιὰ νὰ δεχθούμε δυνατὴ τὴν ἐνέργεια τοῦ παναγίου Πνεύματος. Γιὰ τὸ ὅπως ἓνα πλοῖαριό πού ἔχει μαζεμένα τὰ πανιά δὲν κινεῖται βέβαια πρὸς τὰ ἐμπρός, ἔστω καὶ ἐὰν πνέη οὐριος ἄνεμος, ἔτσι καὶ μία ψυχὴ πού μένει ἀποχαυνωμένη καὶ ἀδρανῆς στὴν προσευχὴ, ἀπόθυμη στὴ νηστεία, δυσκίνητη στὴ μετάνοια, ἢ ψυχὴ αὐτὴ θὰ παραμείνῃ στάσιμη καὶ μέσα σ' αὐτὴ τὴν περίοδο τοῦ Τριωδίου καὶ τῆς Μεγάλης Τεσσαρακοστῆς, ἔστω καὶ ἐὰν τώρα πνέη οὐριος ὁ ἄνεμος τῆς θείας χάριτος.

Ἀφήνοντας λοιπὸν κατὰ μέρος τὸν ἁμαρτωλοῦ κόσμου, πού δὲν μπορεῖ νὰ νιώσῃ τὴν πνευματικότητα τῶν ἁγίων αὐτῶν ἡμερῶν, ὡς συμπλεύσουμε μαζὶ μὲ τὶς ψυχῆς ἐκεῖνες, πού τὰ πλοῖαριά τους ὑπὸ τὴν ὁδηγία τοῦ παναγίου Πνεύματος κατευθύνονται **πρὸς τὸ λιμάνι τῆς βασιλείας τῶν οὐρανῶν**.

Μὲ τὴν χάρι τοῦ Θεοῦ θὰ περάσουμε χριστιανικὰ τὴν περίοδο αὐτὴ· **θὰ διαπλεύσουμε «τὴν «θάλασσαν τὴν μεγάλην καὶ εὐρύχωρον»** (ἠακ. 103,25) (=τὴν μεγάλην καὶ πλατεῖαν θάλασσαν), **πολλῶν μὲν θηρίων γέμουσαν, πολλῶν δὲ σκοπέλων** (=πού εἶνε γεμάτη ἀπὸ πολλοὺς καρχαρίες καὶ πολλοὺς σκοπέλους), **πολλοὺς δὲ ἡμῖν χειμῶνας τίκτουσαν** (=καὶ μᾶς γεννάει πολλὰς κακοκαιρίες), **καὶ ἐξ αἰθρίας μέσης χαλεπωτάτην ζάλην ἐπεγείρουσαν** (=καὶ ἐνῶ ἐπικρατεῖ καλωσύνη ξεσηκώνει φοβερὴ τρικυμία), ὅπως λέει ὁ ἱερὸς Χρυσόστομος (Ἐπ. Μγμ).

Ὅλα, δηλαδή, τὰ ἐμπόδια, πού θὰ συναντήσουμε σ' αὐτὴ τὴν πνευματικὴ μας πορεία, νὰ τὰ ὑπερπηδήσουμε μὲ τὴ βοήθεια τῆς θείας χάριτος· **νὰ ζήσουμε «σωφρόνως καὶ δικαίως καὶ εὐσεβῶς»** (ἠπ. 2,12) **«ἐν μέσῳ γενεᾶς σκολιᾶς καὶ διεστραμμένης»** (ἠακ. 2,15).

Πῶς θὰ γίνῃ αὐτό; Ἀρκεῖ μόνο, μὲ θερμὴ **προθυμία**, μὲ φλόγα πνευματικῆς ζωῆς, νὰ εἰσέλθουμε στὸ στάδιο τῶν πνευματικῶν ἀγῶνων τοῦ Τριωδίου καὶ τῆς Μεγάλης Τεσσαρακοστῆς.

(†) **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

Humbling Ourselves

A man begins to go astray when he withdraws from humility. He who has abandoned God does the evil spirit oppress, as he did Saul.

The enemy's snares are smeared with honey. He who is attracted by the sweetness of honey becomes caught in the snares and filled with all manner of woe. Love humility and you will never fall into the devil's snare, for, soaring on humility's swift wings you will always remain above the enemy's snares.

Arrogance is like a very tall but rotten tree. All of its branches are brittle, and if someone climbs upon it, he immediately falls from the height he has attained.

Blessed is he who is enriched with good hope and illuminated with good thoughts: his glory is great and everlasting.

Let us strive for sober attention, that we might recognize our sins and be constantly humbled, that we might not nurture, like the serpent, a high opinion of ourselves or wickedness. Let us love sobriety, that we might have a pure heart and that we might preserve the temple entrusted to us undefiled by sinful corruption.

Wondrous is prayer accompanied by sighs and tears, especially if the tears are shed in secret. He who prays in his mind with faith beholds the Lord before himself. For in Him do we live, move, and exist. If your heart has been hardened, weep before the Lord, that He might shine upon you the illumination of knowledge and grant that with an ardent heart you might be carried up to Him.

St. Ephrem the Syrian

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