

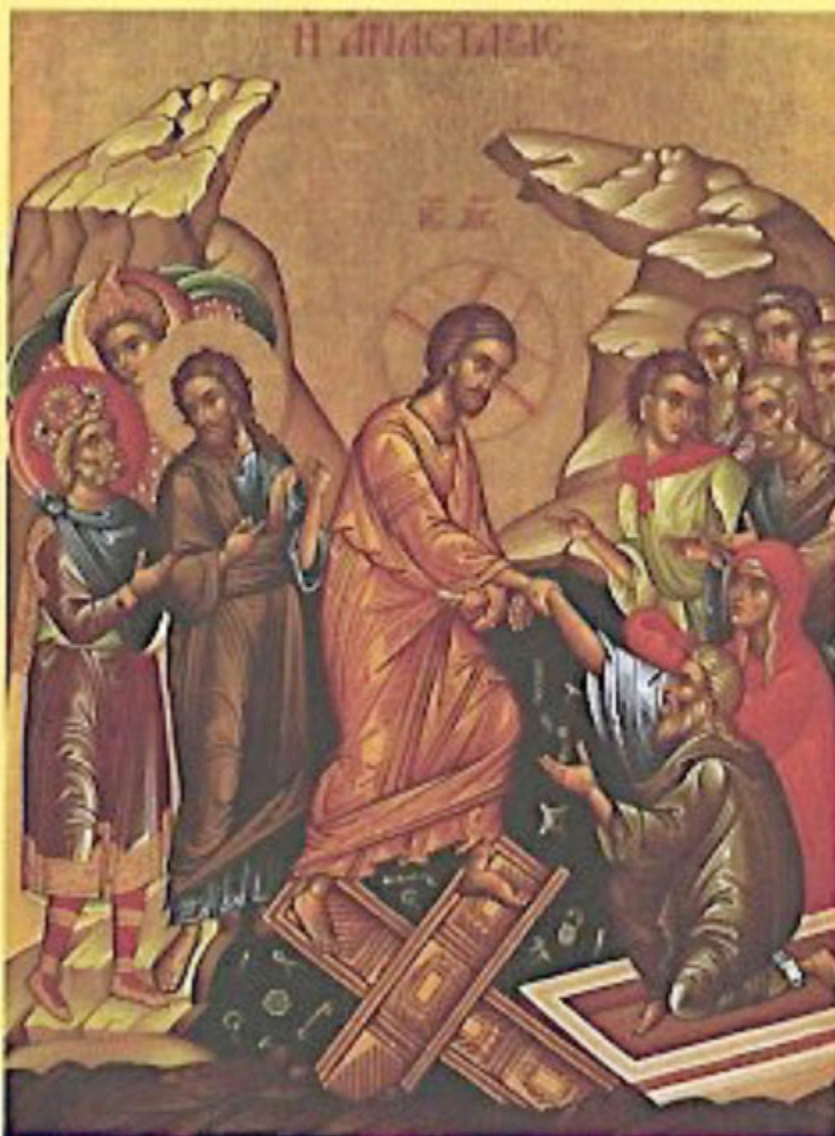


DIRECT ARCHDIOCESAN
DISTRICT

THREE HIERARCHS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

SUNDAY WEEKLY BULLETIN April 16th, 2017
V. Rev. Archimandrite Eugene N. Pappas

GREAT AND HOLY PASCHA: RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST



Icon of the Descent into Hades

This is the day which the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Verse: Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his mercy endures for ever.

The reading is from Acts of the Apostles 1:1-8

IN THE FIRST BOOK, O Theophilos, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commandment through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. To them he presented himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days, and speaking of the kingdom of God. And while staying with them he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me, for John baptized with water, but before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit." So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom of Israel?" He said to them, "it is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth."

Προκείμενον. Ἦχος πλ. δ'.

ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 117.24,29

αὕτη ἡ ἡμέρα, ἣν ἐποίησεν ὁ Κύριος· ἀγαλλιασώμεθα καὶ εὐφρανθῶμεν ἐν αὐτῇ

Στίχ. ἐξομολογεῖσθε τῷ Κυρίῳ, ὅτι ἀγαθός, ὅτι εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τὸ ἔλεος αὐτοῦ

Πράξεις Ἀποστόλων 1:1-8 τὸ ἀνάγνωσμα εἶναι ἀπο

Τὸν μὲν πρῶτον λόγον ἐποίησάμην περὶ πάντων, ᾧ Θεόφιλε, ὧν ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς ποιεῖν τε καὶ διδάσκειν, ἄχρι ἥς ἡμέρας, ἐντειλάμενος τοῖς ἀποστόλοις διὰ πνεύματος ἁγίου οὐς ἐξελέξατο, ἀνελήφθη· οἷς καὶ παρέστησεν ἑαυτὸν ζῶντα μετὰ τὸ παθεῖν αὐτὸν ἐν πολλοῖς τεκμηρίοις, δι' ἡμερῶν τεσσαράκοντα ὀπτανόμενος αὐτοῖς, καὶ λέγων τὰ περὶ τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ Θεοῦ. Καὶ συναλιζόμενος παρήγγειλεν αὐτοῖς ἀπὸ Ἱεροσολύμων μὴ χωρίζεσθαι, ἀλλὰ περιμένειν τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πατρὸς, ἥν ἠκούσατέ μου· ὅτι Ἰωάννης μὲν ἐβάπτισεν ὕδατι, ὑμεῖς δὲ βαπτισθήσεσθε ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ οὐ μετὰ πολλὰς ταύτας ἡμέρας. Οἱ μὲν οὖν συνελθόντες ἐπηρώτων αὐτὸν λέγοντες, Κύριε, εἰ ἐν τῷ χρόνῳ τούτῳ ἀποκαθιστάνεις τὴν βασιλείαν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ; Εἶπεν δὲ πρὸς αὐτοὺς, Οὐχ ὑμῶν ἐστιν γινῶναι χρόνους ἢ καιροὺς οὓς ὁ πατὴρ ἔθετο ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ ἐξουσίᾳ. Ἀλλὰ λήψεσθε δύναμιν, ἐπελθόντος τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος ἐφ' ὑμᾶς· καὶ ἔσεσθέ μοι μάρτυρες ἐν τε Ἱερουσαλὴμ, καὶ ἐν πάσῃ τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ καὶ Σαμαρείᾳ, καὶ ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς.

The Gospel According to John 1:1-17

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came for testimony, to bear witness to the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness to the light.

The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world knew him not. He came to his own home, and his own people received him not. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God; who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father. (John bore witness to him, and cried, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, for he was before me.'") And from his fullness have we all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Ἐκ τοῦ Κατὰ Ἰωάννην 1:1-17 Εὐαγγελίου τὸ Ἀνάγνωσμα

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ Λόγος, καὶ ὁ Λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, καὶ Θεὸς ἦν ὁ Λόγος. Οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν Θεόν. πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν ὃ γέγονεν. ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν, καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων. καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει, καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν.

Ἐγένετο ἄνθρωπος ἀπεσταλμένος παρὰ Θεοῦ, ὄνομα αὐτῷ Ἰωάννης· οὗτος ἦλθεν εἰς μαρτυρίαν, ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ περὶ τοῦ φωτός, ἵνα πάντες πιστεύσωσι δι' αὐτοῦ. οὐκ ἦν ἐκεῖνος τὸ φῶς, ἀλλ' ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ περὶ τοῦ φωτός. Ἦν τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν, ὃ φωτίζει πάντα ἄνθρωπον ἐρχόμενον εἰς τὸν κόσμον. ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἦν, καὶ ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ ὁ κόσμος αὐτὸν οὐκ ἔγνω. εἰς τὰ ἴδια ἦλθε, καὶ οἱ ἴδιοι αὐτὸν οὐ παρέλαβον. ὅσοι δὲ ἔλαβον αὐτόν, ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τέκνα Θεοῦ γενέσθαι, τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ, οἳ οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων, οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκός, οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρός, ἀλλ' ἐκ Θεοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν.

Καὶ ὁ Λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός, πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας. Ἰωάννης μαρτυρεῖ περὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ κέκραγε λέγων· οὗτος ἦν ὃν εἶπον, ὃ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος ἔμπροσθέν μου γέγονεν, ὅτι πρῶτός μου ἦν. Καὶ ἐκ τοῦ πληρώματος αὐτοῦ ἡμεῖς πάντες ἐλάβομεν, καὶ χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος· ὅτι ὁ νόμος διὰ Μωϋσέως ἐδόθη, ἡ χάρις καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐγένετο.

DEVOTIONS THIS WEEK:

SUNDAY	April 16th,	P A S C H A Easter Sunday	11:00 A.M.
		Vespers of Agape / Children's Service	
		Gospel in various languages	
		Blessing of Pascha Baskets	12:00 noon
THURSDAY	April 20th,	Great Vesper of Zoodochos Peghe	7:00 P.M.
		B R O N X S H R I N E	
FRIDAY	April 21st,	Liturgy of the LIFE GIVING FOUNTAIN - Three Hierarchs	9:30 A.M.
		ZOODOCHOS PEGHE - FONTE BONNE	
SUNDAY	April 23rd,	JOINT FEAST: Saint George and Saint Thomas	
		Divine Liturgy	10:30 A.M.
		Artoklasia to Saint Lazarus (Raptis Family)	Noon

PASCHAL GRATITUDE: is extended to the myriad of volunteers who helped to make PASCHA 2017 nostalgic inspirational and memorable.

APPLAUSE to the PALM CROSS WEAVERS, to the RED EGG DYERS, to the MARY and MARTHA SOCIETY (linen and altar drapers, laundresses) to the Psaltai and Choir Members, to the Altar Boy Society of Saint Stephanos and to BOY SCOUT TROOP #531 and leaders, to the many florists who decorated the Church (upper and lower) and the 3 THREE EPITAPHIA for the street procession, to the Parish council , to our secretarial and bulletin staff EFFIE AND STELLA, to the custodial staff, DENNIS, MAYA and JOEL., and to YOU THE FAITHFUL who responded in person to the sacred services and offerings and to the donors of sacramental wine , olive oils, linen/shrouds, rose essence and Rose Water for Good Friday.

GOD IS WELL PLEASED INDEED! so is Father Eugene!

AGIASMOS for MONTH of MAY: is being up-dated to THIS COMING SATURDAY APRIL 29th, 1:00 -1:30

SENIOR CLUB PASCHA PARTY: for MEMBERS ONLY is being hosted and catered in White-Hall Wednesday afternoon on April 19th at 1:00 P.M. Attending guests may make a donation of \$10.-00 . per person as NON-MEMBERS.

ALLIANCE for CONEY ISLAND: Annual testimonial is being hosted at GARGIULO'S RESTAURANT on Thursday evening April 20th, at 6:00 P.M. Father Eugene will be there on behalf of the VOURDERIS FAMILY of Deno's Wonder-Wheel Park of the boardwalk. WE HAIL THE CONEY ISLAND GREEKS.

HELLENIC COLLEGE/HOLY CROSS: will be the venue in BOSTON for the three day Archdiocesan Presbyters' Council Meeting (Monday-Wednesday / April 24-26). Father Eugene is the New York Archdiocesan Representative to the NATIONAL COUNCIL of 20 PRIESTS.

FLORISTS TO BE CONGRATULATED: AVENUE 'J' , MADISON , MARINE PARK, HENRY'S PLAZA, BEN'S , IRENE'S and ELLINGVILLE FLORISTSONE AND ALL. THE LORD LOVES THOSE WHO BLESS THE HOUSE OF GOD AND BEAUTIFY HIS TEMPLE.

GRECIAN FESTIVAL: Is scheduled for our parish FRIDAY, SATURDAY, SUNDAY, JUNE 2, 3, 4TH on the plaza of our community center. PLEASE REFER TO THE INSERT FLYER.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: for the annual festival highlighting our culture, food, delicacies , music and folk dancing. you may wish to help in food servicing , beverage bars, merchandise sales, sweets and pastries area. Please call
GEORGE PLEVITIS Festival Chairman at 917-541-7034

EARLY REGISTRATIONS; PRE- K FOR ALL : 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 commence again on APRIL 30th : + **STAMATIA ANTZOULIS,** + **STEVE ARNIOTES**
+ **EVDOKIA FIRIOS**

Please register through the Office now



*Three Hierarchs Parish
was first and center
at the
Greek Independence Parade
on
Fifth Avenue, New York City*

Three Hierarchs



*School Students prepare 5,000 woven palm
crosses for distribution to the faithful.
Alleluia ! Hosanna!*



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. 23850-23610 - info@kyriaki.gr

Περίοδος Δ' - Ἔτος ΛΔ' Φλώρινα - ἀριθμ. φύλλου 2009	Κυριακὴ Πάσχα (Ἰω. 1,1-17) 16 Ἀπριλίου 2017 στὴν 8. λειτουργία	Συντάκτης (†) ἐπίσκοπος Αὐγουστίνος Ν. Καντιώτης
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Εἴμαστε παιδιά τοῦ Θεοῦ;

«Ὅσοι δὲ ἔλαβον αὐτόν, ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τέκνα Θεοῦ γενέσθαι, τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ» (Ἰω. 1,12)

Ο Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, ἀγαπητοί μου, ὁ Λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ, τὸ ἕνα ἀπὸ τὰ τρία πρόσωπα τῆς Θεότητος, ὁ ἕνας τῆς ἁγίας Τριάδος, ὁ Βασιλεὺς οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς, ὁ Δημιουργὸς τῶν πάντων, ἀπὸ τὴν ἀπειρὴ ἀγάπη του γιὰ μᾶς, φόρεσε τὴν ἀνθρώπινη σάρκα -ντύθηκε δηλαδὴ τὰ κουρέλια τοῦ ζητιάνου ἀνθρώπου- καὶ κατέβηκε ἐδῶ στὴ Γῆ. Ἦλθε σὰν Φῶς, σὰν Ζωή, σὰν Εὐεργέτης, γιὰ νὰ φωτίσῃ, γιὰ νὰ ζωοποιήσῃ, γιὰ νὰ εὐεργετήσῃ τὸν ἄνθρωπο.

Τὸν μεγάλο αὐτὸν Ἐπισκέπτη θὰ ἔπρεπε νὰ τὸν ὑποδεχθοῦν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ γενικὰ οἱ ἄνθρωποι μὲ τὸν μεγαλύτερο ἐνθουσιασμό καὶ μὲ τίς μεγαλύτερες τιμές. Ἀλλοίμονο ὅμως! Οἱ ἄνθρωποι, ποὺ ὅπως μᾶς πληροφορεῖ ἡ ἱστορία καὶ τυράννους ἀκόμη ὑποδέχθηκαν καὶ ὑποδέχονται σὰν θεούς, τὸν Ἰησοῦ, τὸν μεγάλο Εὐεργέτη τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος, ὅχι μόνο τὸν ἀγνόησαν, ὅχι μόνο δὲν τὸν τίμησαν, ἀλλὰ καὶ πολλοὶ ἀπὸ αὐτοὺς **πῆραν καὶ παίρνουν ἐχθρική στάσι ἀπέναντί του**. Ὡς τί ἀχαριστία καὶ τί μοχθηρότητα δείχνουν οἱ ψυχές τους! Γράφοντας γιὰ τὴν ἀχαριστίαν τῇ αὐτῇ συμπεριφορᾷ τους στὴν ἀρχὴ τοῦ Εὐαγγελίου του ὁ εὐαγγελιστὴς Ἰωάννης λέει: «Ὁ κόσμος αὐτὸν οὐκ ἔγνω, εἰς τὰ ἴδια ἦλθε, καὶ οἱ ἴδιοι αὐτὸν οὐ παρέλαβον»· ὁ κόσμος δὲν τὸν ἀναγνώρισε, ἦρθε στὸ σπίτι του καὶ οἱ δικοί του δὲν τὸν δέχτηκαν (Ἰω. 1,10-11).

Ὁ Χριστὸς ἦρθε, ἀλλ' αὐτοὶ δὲν πίστεψαν σ' αὐτόν. Οἱ ἄνθρωποι αὐτοὶ ὅμως, μὲ τὴν ἐλλειπὴ συμπεριφορὰ ποὺ ἔδειξαν, δὲν ἔβλαψαν τὸ Χριστό -δὲν ἔχει ὁ Χριστὸς ἀνάγκη ἀπὸ αὐτούς, αὐτοὶ ἔχουν ἀνάγκη τὸ Χριστό-, **τὸν ἑαυτὸ τους ἔβλαψαν προξενώντας του μάλιστα βλάβη ἀφάνταστη**. Γιατί ἔμειναν μακριὰ ἀπὸ τὴ χάρι του καὶ στέρησαν τοὺς ἑαυ-

τούς των ἀπὸ τὰ ὕψιστα ἐκεῖνα δῶρα καὶ τὰ μοναδικὰ προνόμια, ποὺ ὁ Χριστὸς προσέφερε καὶ προσφέρει σὲ ὅλους ἀδιακρίτως ὅσους πιστεύουν σ' αὐτόν.

Ποιά εἶνε αὐτὰ τὰ δῶρα καὶ προνόμια ποὺ χαρίζει ὁ Χριστὸς, τὸ λέει ἐν συνεχείᾳ ὁ εὐαγγελιστής: «Ὅσοι δὲ ἔλαβον αὐτόν (=ὅσοι δέχτηκαν καὶ πίστεψαν στὸ Χριστό), ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τέκνα Θεοῦ γενέσθαι (=τοὺς ἔδωσε τὸ δικαίωμα νὰ γίνουν παιδιά τοῦ Θεοῦ)» (Ἰω. 1,12). Ἀκοῦς, ἄνθρωπε, τί μεγάλο δῶρο, τί προνόμιο ἀνεκτίμητο; «**Τέκνα Θεοῦ!**» Αὐτὸ **τὸ χάνουν οἱ ἄπιστοι, τὸ κερδίζουν οἱ πιστοί.**

«**Τέκνα Θεοῦ**». Ἀλλὰ γιατί λέει «νὰ γίνουν»; θὰ ρωτήσετε· δὲν εἴμαστε ὅλοι οἱ ἄνθρωποι δημιουργήματα -πλάσματα τοῦ Θεοῦ;...

Ἀσφαλῶς· ἕνας Θεὸς μᾶς δημιούργησε ὅλους καὶ ἕνα Κύριο ἔχουμε. Αὐτὸς εἶνε ὁ Πατέρας ὅλων μας, ἐφ' ὅσον ἐννοεῖται παραμένουμε πιστοὶ καὶ ὑπάκουοι στὸ ἅγιο θέλημά του. Ἀλλὰ δυστυχῶς κάποια στιγμή ὁ ἅγιος αὐτὸς δεσμὸς Θεοῦ καὶ ἀνθρώπου διεκόπη. Ἀπὸ τὴν ὥρα ποὺ ἡ ἁμαρτία εἰσχώρησε στὸν κόσμο, οἱ ἁρμονικὲς σχέσεις Θεοῦ καὶ ἀνθρώπου διαταράχθηκαν. Ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐγενήθη ἐπ' ἀναστάτης· σήκωσε τὴ σημαία τοῦ δικοῦ του θελήματος, τράβηξε ἕνα δικό του δρόμο. Ἀπομακρύνθηκε ἀπὸ τὸ πατρικὸ του σπίτι ὅπως ὁ ἄσωτος υἱός, καὶ ζοῦσε στὴ χώρα τῆς ἁμαρτίας. Ἐκεῖ δὲν εἶχε καὶ δὲν ἐνιωθε ὡς πατέρα τὸν ἀγαθὸ Θεό· ὡς πατέρα εἶχε πλέον τὸν σατανά, ἀφοῦ τὰ δαιμονικὰ θελήματα ἐκτελοῦσε πιστά. **Ἔτσι ὁ ἀποστάτης ἄνθρωπος, μόνος του, διαγράφηκε ἀπ' τὸ βιβλίον τῶν τέκνων τοῦ Θεοῦ.**

Ἐν τούτοις ὁ Θεὸς δὲν ἔπαυε νὰ ἐνδιαφέρεται γιὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπο· ἀνύστακτο ἦταν τὸ

ένδιαφέρον και η φροντίδα του. Ὁ λιποτάκτης ἔπρεπε νὰ ξαναγυρίσῃ πάλι στὴ θέσι του, ὁ ἄσωτος υἱὸς ἔπρεπε νὰ ἐπιστρέψῃ πάλι στὸ πατρικὸ του σπίτι, ὁ ἐπαναστάτης ἔπρεπε νὰ κατεβάσῃ, νὰ ποδοπατήσῃ καὶ νὰ ξεσχίσῃ τὴ δική του σημαία, καὶ νὰ ὑποταγῇ πάλι στὸ θέλημα τοῦ Θεοῦ. Ὁ ἐχθρὸς ἔπρεπε νὰ γίνῃ καὶ πάλι φίλος τοῦ Θεοῦ, παιδί τοῦ Θεοῦ. Πῶς θὰ τὸ ἐπιτύγχανε αὐτό; Σ' αὐτὸ ἀπέβλεπε τὸ μεγάλο καὶ πάνσοφο **σχέδιο τῆς Θείας Προνοίας**. Γι' αὐτὸ, ὅπως κηρύττει δυνατὰ ὁ ἀπόστολος Παῦλος, «*ὅτε ἦλθε 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*» (Γαλ. 4:4).

«**Τέκνα Θεοῦ**». Πῶς μπορεῖ κανεὶς νὰ γίνῃ «τέκνον Θεοῦ»; «**Τέκνα Θεοῦ**» γινώμαστε καὶ ἐγγραφόμαστε πάλι στὸ βιβλίον τῶν τέκνων τοῦ Θεοῦ κάνοντας **τρία βήματα - τρεῖς ἐνέργειες**· πρῶτον πιστεύοντας στὸ Χριστό, δεύτερον βαπτιζόμενοι στὸ ὄνομά του, καὶ τρίτον ζώντας κατὰ τὶς ἀγίες ἐντολές του. Πίστις - βάπτισμα - ἀγία ζωὴ, νὰ ποιά εἶνε ἐκεῖνα ποὺ μᾶς ἐξασφαλίζουν καὶ μᾶς δίνουν τὸ χάρισμα τῆς υἰοθεσίας.

● Ἡ μὲν **πίστις** σὰν ἕνα οὐράνιος δεσμὸς μᾶς συνδέει μὲ τὸ Χριστό· κι ἀφοῦ ὁ Χριστὸς μᾶς ἀναγνωρίζει καὶ μᾶς ἀγαπᾷ ὡς ἀδελφούς του, ὁ Θεὸς Πατὴρ μᾶς ἔχει ὡς τέκνα τοῦ ἀγαπητά, ὡς ἀδελφούς τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

● Τὸ δὲ **βάπτισμα** εἶνε τὸ ἱερὸ ἐκεῖνο χωνευτήρι, μέσα στὸ ὁποῖο ὅποιοι βαπτίζεται ἀποβάλλει τὸν «*παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον*», ἐνδύεται τὸν «*νέον*» (Ρωμ. 6:6. Ἐφ. 4:22-24. Κολ. 3:9-10) καὶ βγαίνει λευκὸς σὰν τὸ χιόνι, καθαρὸς σὰν τὸν ἥλιο, ἀστράφτει καὶ λάμπει ἀπὸ τὴν ἀκτινοβολία τοῦ παναγίου Πνεύματος. Εἶνε πλέον τέκνον Θεοῦ.

● Ἀλλὰ ἐδῶ τώρα χρειάζεται προσοχή, καὶ μάλιστα προσοχή μεγάλη· ὅποιος ποθεῖ τὴν υἰοθεσία πρέπει νὰ ζῇ **ζωὴ ἁγία**. Ἡ δωρεὰ δόθηκε, ἡ παλιγγενεσία καὶ ἀναγέννησις ἐγίνετο· ὁ ἄνθρωπος διαγράφηκε ἀπὸ τὰ κατὰ στίχα τοῦ διαβόλου καὶ πολιτογραφήθηκε στὸ βασίλειο τοῦ φωτός. Τώρα λοιπὸν προσοχή· γιατί ὑπάρχει φόβος ὁ πρίγκιπας ν' ἀφήσῃ πάλι τὰ ἀνάκτορα τῆς νέας ζωῆς καὶ νὰ ξανακυλιστῇ στὴν κοπριά. Προσοχή, γιὰ νὰ φυλάξουμε τὴν δωρεὰ, νὰ αὐξήσουμε τὴ χάρι, νὰ σταθεροποιήσουμε στὴν ἀρετὴ, νὰ τιμήσουμε ἐκεῖνον ποὺ μᾶς τίμησε μὲ τὸ χάρισμα τῆς υἰοθεσίας. Καὶ θὰ τὸν τιμήσουμε – πῶς; διὰ τῆς ἁγίας ζωῆς ποὺ πρέπει νὰ ζοῦμε. Ἐφ' ὅσον εἴμαστε τέκνα Θεοῦ, πρέπει νὰ φιλοτιμηθοῦμε ν' ἀποκτήσου-

με, ὅσο εἶνε δυνατόν, τὶς ἀρετὲς τοῦ Πατέρα μας, νὰ μοιάσουμε ἠθικὰ μὲ τὸν Θεὸ Πατέρα.

Κατ' αὐτὸ τὸν τρόπο ἡ **υἰοθεσία** δὲν θὰ εἶνε ἕνα στάσιμον καὶ νεκρὸ χάρισμα· θὰ ἐξελλίσσεται συνεχῶς, θὰ σημειώων προόδους, θὰ ἰσχυροποιῇ καθημερινὰ τοὺς δεσμούς μας μὲ τὸν οὐράνιο Πατέρα μας, θὰ μεταδίδῃ χαρὰ ἀνέκφραστη στὴν καρδιά μας, τὴν ὁποία τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιο, κατὰ τρόπο μυστηριώδη, θὰ τὴν πληροφορῇ λέγοντας· «*Μὴ φοβᾶσαι· εἶσαι παιδί τοῦ Θεοῦ*». Βρίσκεσαι κάτω ἀπὸ τὴν προστασία τοῦ Θεοῦ. Ὅ,τι καὶ ἐὰν σοῦ συμβῇ στὸ δρόμο τῆς ζωῆς σου, ὁ Θεὸς εἶνε κοντά σου ὡς φιλόστοργος καὶ παντοδύναμος Πατέρας».

Ἀγαπητὲ ἀδελφέ! Ἐὰν ἦσουν ἕνας ἀλήτης, ἔρημος καὶ ἀπροστάτευτος στὸν κόσμον, καὶ μιὰ μέρα διάβαζες στὴν ἐφημερίδα ἢ μὲ κάποιο ἄλλο τρόπο μάθαινες, ὅτι **κάποιος βασιλεὺς ἢ πλοῦσιος ζητᾷ νὰ σὲ υἰοθετήσῃ**, νὰ σὲ κἀνῃ παιδί του καὶ κληρονόμο τῆς μεγάλης περιουσίας του, τί θὰ ἔκανες; Θὰ ἔμενες ἀδιάφορος; Ὁχι βέβαια· μὲ καρδιά γεμάτη εὐγνωμοσύνη καὶ μὲ δάκρυα χαρᾶς θὰ ἔτρεχες, νὰ μὴ χάσῃς τὴν ἔκτακτη αὐτὴ εὐκαιρία, νὰ γίνῃς παιδί ἐνὸς βασιλεῖ καὶ ἐκατομμυριούχου. Ποῦ τέτοια τύχη! θὰ μοῦ πῆς· αὐτὰ τὰ πράγματα δὲν γίνονται σήμερα, δὲν υἰοθετοῦν τόσο εὐκόλα πλοῦσιοι φτωχοὺς κι ἀλήτες.

Ἀδελφέ μου, παρηγορήσου. Πάνω ἀπὸ τὶς υἰοθετήσεις τοῦ κόσμου ὑπάρχει μιὰ υἰοθέτησι, ποὺ ξεπερνᾷ κάθε ἄλλη σὲ ἀξία, σὲ δύναμι, σὲ πλοῦτη, σὲ ὁμορφιά. Εἶνε ἡ υἰοθεσία, γιὰ τὴν ὁποία μιλήσαμε ἐδῶ. Ὁ Παμβασιλεὺς τοῦ κόσμου μὲ τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιο **ἔχει δημοσιεύσει στὸ Εὐαγγέλιό του μιὰ ἀγγελία**, στὴν ὁποία λέει, ὅτι ἐσένα τὸν ἁμαρτωλό, τὸν ἀλήτη, ὁ Θεὸς σὲ καλεῖ νὰ σὲ κἀνῃ παιδί του. Σοῦ υπόσχεται νὰ σοῦ ἀφήσῃ μιὰ κληρονομιά, ποὺ μπροστὰ τῆς καὶ οἱ μεγαλύτερες περιουσίες εἶνε ἕνα πελώριο μηδενικόν. **Σοῦ υπόσχεται «τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν»** (Ματθ. 3:2. 5:3. 8:11-12. 13:11, 21, 28. 25:1 κ.ά.). Σοῦ υπόσχεται εἰρήνην καὶ γαλήνην συνειδήσεως μέσα στὸν ταραγμένο τοῦτο κόσμον. Σοῦ υπόσχεται... καὶ τί δὲν σοῦ υπόσχεται ὅ,τι ὠραῖο, πνευματικὸ καὶ ἅγιο!

Ἀδελφέ μου! Ὅσο ἡ ἀγγελία αὕτη ἰσχύει, τρέξε. Ἄκου καὶ μελέτησε στὰ σοβαρὰ γιὰ μιὰ ἀκόμη φορὰ τὸ ἀγγελτήριο τοῦ εὐαγγελιστοῦ Ἰωάννου· «*Ὅσοι δὲ ἔλαβον αὐτόν (τὸν Χριστό), ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τέκνα Θεοῦ γενέσθαι, τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ*».

(†) **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 Lamb Who Was Slain Has Delivered Us from Death and Given Us Life

There was much proclaimed by the prophets about the mystery of the Passover: that mystery is Christ, and to Him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

For the sake of suffering humanity He came down from heaven to earth, clothed Himself in that humanity in the Virgin's womb, and was born a man. Having then a body capable of suffering, He took the pain of fallen man upon Himself; He triumphed over the diseases of soul and body that were its cause, and by His Spirit, which was incapable of dying, He dealt man's destroyer, death, a fatal blow.

He was led forth like a lamb; He was slaughtered like a sheep. He ransomed us from our servitude to the world, as He had ransomed Israel from the land of Egypt; He freed us from our slavery to the devil, as He had freed Israel from the hand of Pharaoh. He sealed our souls with His own Spirit, and the members of our body with His own blood.

He is the One who covered death with shame and cast the devil into mourning, as Moses cast Pharaoh into mourning. He is the One who smote sin and robbed iniquity of offspring. He is the One who brought us out of slavery into freedom, out of dark-

ness into light, out of death into life, out of tyranny into an eternal kingdom; who made us a new priesthood, a people chosen to be His own forever. He is the Passover that is our salvation.

It is he who endured every kind of suffering in all those who foreshadowed Him. In Abel He was slain, in Isaac bound, in Jacob exiled, in Joseph sold, in Moses exposed to die. He was sacrificed in the Passover lamb, persecuted in David, dishonored in the prophets.

It is He who was made man of the Virgin, He who was hung on the tree; it is He who was buried in the earth, raised from the dead, and taken up to the heights of heaven. He is the mute lamb, the slain lamb, the lamb born of Mary, the fair ewe. He was seized from the flock, dragged off to be slaughtered, sacrificed in the evening, and buried at night. On the tree no bone of His was broken; in the earth His body knew no decay. He is the One who rose from the dead, and who raised man from the depths of the tomb.

St. Melito of Sardis

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