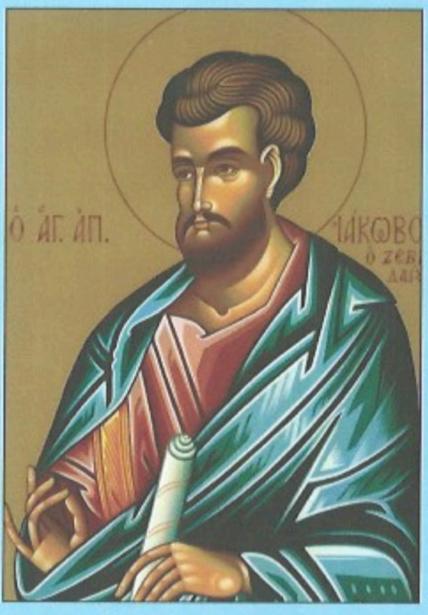


Three Hierarchs Greek Orthodox Church

SUNDAY WEEKLY BULLETIN April 30th, 2017 V. Rev. Archimandrite Eugene N. Pappas

SUNDAY OF THE OINTMENT-BEARING WOMEN FEAST OF THE HOLY APOSTLE JAMES, THE BROTHER OF JOHN



Icon of the Saint James -- April 30th

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Prokeimenon. Mode 2. Psalm 117.14.18

The Lord is my strength and my song. Verse: The Lord has chastened me sorely.

The reading is from Acts of the Apostles 6:1-7

IN THOSE DAYS, when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists murmured against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. And the twelve summoned the body of the disciples and said, "it is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brethren, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." And what they said pleased the whole multitude, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochoros, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaos, a proselyte of Antioch. These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands upon them. And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.

Προκείμενον. Ήχος β'.
ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 117.14,18
Ἰσχύς μου καὶ ὕμνησίς μου ὁ Κύριος.
Στίχ. Παιδεύων ἐπαίδευσέ με ὁ Κύριος.

Πράξεις Άποστόλων 6:1-7 τὸ ἀνάγνωσμα είναι απο

Εν ταῖς ἡμεραῖς ἐκείναις, πληθυνόντων τῶν μαθητῶν, ἐγένετο γογγυσμὸς τῶν Ἑλληνιστῶν πρὸς τοὺς Ἑβραίους, ὅτι παρεθεωροῦντο ἐν τῆ διακονία τῆ καθημερινῆ αἰ χῆραι αὐτῶν. Προσκαλεσάμενοι δὲ οἱ δώδεκα τὸ πλῆθος τῶν μαθητῶν, εἶπον, Οὐκ ἀρεστόν ἐστιν ἡμᾶς, καταλείψαντας τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ, διακονεῖν τραπέζαις. Ἐπισκέψασθε οὖν, ἀδελφοί, ἄνδρας ἐξ ὑμῶν μαρτυρουμένους ἐπτά, πλήρεις πνεύματος ἀγίου καὶ σοφίας, οῦς καταστήσωμεν ἐπὶ τῆς χρείας ταύτης. Ἡμεῖς δὲ τῆ προσευχῆ καὶ τῆ διακονία τοῦ λόγου προσκαρτερήσομεν. Καὶ ἤρεσεν ὁ λόγος ἐνώπιον παντὸς τοῦ πλήθους· καὶ ἐξελέξαντο Στέφανον, ἄνδρα πλήρης πίστεως καὶ πνεύματος ἀγίου, καὶ Φίλιππον, καὶ Πρόχορον, καὶ Νικάνορα, καὶ Τίμωνα, καὶ Παρμενᾶν, καὶ Νικόλαον προσήλυτον Ἀντιοχέα, οῦς ἔστησαν ἐνώπιον τῶν ἀποστόλων· καὶ προσευξάμενοι ἐπέθηκαν αὐτοῖς τὰς χεῖρας. Καὶ ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ ηὕξανεν, καὶ ἐπληθύνετο ὁ ἀριθμὸς τῶν μαθητῶν ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ σφόδρα, πολύς τε ὅχλος τῶν ἱερέων ὑπήκουον τῆ πίστει.

The Gospel According to Mark 15:43-47; 16:1-8

At that time, Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God, took courage and went to Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. And Pilate wondered if he were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he was already dead. And when he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the body to Joseph. And he bought a linen shroud, and taking him down, wrapped him in the linen shroud, and laid him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where he was laid.

And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week they went to the tomb when the sun had risen. And they were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the door of the tomb?" And looking up, they saw that the stone was rolled back; for it was very large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe; and they were amazed. And he said to them, "Do not be amazed; you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen, he is not here; see the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him, as he told you." And they went out and fled from the tomb; for trembling and astonishment had come upon them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Έκ τοῦ Κατὰ Μᾶρκον 15:43-47, 16:1-8 Εύαγγελίου τὸ Άνάγνωσμα

Τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ, ἐλθὼν Ἰωσὴφ ὁ ἀπὸ ᾿Αριμαθαίας, εὐσχήμων βουλευτής, ὃς καὶ αὐτὸς ἦν προσδεχόμενος τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ, τολμήσας εἰσῆλθε πρὸς Πιλᾶτον καὶ ἡτήσατο τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ. ὁ δὲ Πιλᾶτος ἐθαύμασεν εὶ ἤδη τέθνηκε, καὶ προσκαλεσάμενος τὸν κεντυρίωνα ἐπηρώτησεν αὐτὸν εὶ πάλαι ἀπέθανε· καὶ γνοὺς ἀπὸ τοῦ κεντυρίωνος ἐδωρήσατο τὸ σῶμα τῷ Ἰωσήφ. καὶ ἀγοράσας σινδόνα καὶ καθελὼν αὐτὸν ἐνείλησε τῇ σινδόνι καὶ κατέθηκεν αὐτὸν ἐν μνημείῳ, ὃ ἦν λελατομημένον ἐκ πέτρας, καὶ προσεκύλισε λίθον ἐπὶ τὴν θύραν τοῦ μνημείου. ἡ δὲ Μαρία ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ καὶ Μαρία Ἰωσῆ ἐθεώρουν ποῦ τίθεται. Καὶ διαγενομένου τοῦ σαββάτου Μαρία ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ καὶ Μαρία ἡ τοῦ Ἰακώβου καὶ Σαλώμη ἡγόρασαν ἀρώματα ἵνα ἐλθοῦσαι ἀλείψωσιν αὐτόν. καὶ λίαν πρωὶ τῆς μιᾶς σαββάτων ἔρχονται ἐπὶ τὸ μνημεῖον, ἀνατείλαντος τοῦ ἡλίου. καὶ ἔλεγον πρὸς ἑαυτάς· τίς ἀποκυλίσει ἡμῖν τὸν λίθον ἐκ τῆς θύρας τοῦ μνημείου; καὶ ἀναβλέψασαι θεωροῦσιν ὅτι ἀποκεκύλισται ὁ λίθος-ἦν γὰρ μέγας σφόδρα. καὶ εἰσελθοῦσαι εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον εἶδον νεανίσκον καθήμενον ἐν τοῖς δεξιοῖς, περιβεβλημένον στολὴν λευκήν, καὶ ἐξεθαμβήθησαν. ὁ δὲ λέγει αὐταῖς· μὴ ἐκθαμβεῖσθε· Ἰησοῦν ζητεῖτε τὸν Ναζαρηνὸν τὸν ἐσταυρωμένον· ἡγέρθη, οὐκ ἔστιν ὧδε· ἴδε ὁ τόπος ὅπου ἔθηκαν αὐτόν. ἀλλὶ ὑπάγετε εἴπατε τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ καὶ τῷ Πέτρῳ ὅτι προάγει ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν· ἐκεῖ αὐτὸν ὄψεσθε, καθὼς εἶπεν ὑμῖν. καὶ ἐξελθοῦσαι ἔφυγον ἀπὸ τοῦ μνημείου· εἶχε δὲ αὐτὰς τρόμος καὶ ἔκστασις, καὶ οὐδενὶ οὐδὲν εἶπον· ἐφοβοῦντο γάρ.

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!

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.

FATHER EUGENE will be out of the office Monday through Thursday of the week attending duties abroad. He will resume office hours Friday May 05th. All emergencies will be covered by Fr. Makris.

CENTENNIAL Celebration of our sister parish of SAINT MARY on Ridge Boulevard and 80th Street in Bay Ridge (ANTOCHIAN ARCHDIOCESE) Syrians and Lebanese Orthodox Christians will be observed on Saturday, May 06th with a solemn service and DINNER AT THE PARISH HALL. Father Eugene will represent our community of faithful from Three Hierarchs. For further details call Fr. Michael Ellias 718-745-8481

GOLDEN GREEKS BOY SCOUT TROOP #531 will host its annual ALUMNI REUNION (old boy scouts) on the weekend of Friday – Sunday May 5, 6, and 7th, at TEN MILE RIVER CAMP with the entire troop of youngsters. Indeed it will be an event to remember!

PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY: Generously presented the Church a Check for TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$10,000) earmarked for the ELEVATOR FUND. Everyone is most grateful and anticipate full participation from the church membership to accomplish this project.

PARISH WOMAN of the YEAR 2017: Committee ladies representing 20 different clubs, groups, societies in the community will gather on: FRIDAY EVENING, MAY 05th, AT 7:00 P.M.FOR THE SECRET BALLOT. Last year's recipient Was Mrs. Efthymia Pappas!

A.H.E.P.A. DAY is scheduled to coincide with the Feast of Saints Constantine and Helen, SUNDAY MAY 21st. The Coney Island Chapter of AHEPA will host a collation reception as they honor SPYROS and EFFIE GALIATSATOS. Spyros Has Served As A Lifetime Member Of The Chapter and as Treasurer, whereas Effie has Served 4 Terms As President of the Daughters Of Penelope 'Demetra Chapter #33' and 2 terms as DISTRICT GOVERNOR of the 'DAUGHTERS OF PENELOPE''. Congratulations to two hard workers and devoted phil-Hellenes. Please join us as our guests after divine Liturgy in WHITEHALL for the reception.

SENIOR CLUB: will celebrate Mexican Cinco de Mayo (Independence) on Wednesday afternoon May 03rd, at 1:00 P.M. Fiesta treats for all. B I N G O . Coffee and sweets.

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 PLEVRITIS 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 TODAY: + STAMATIA ANTZOULIS, + STEVE ARNIOTES

+ EVDOKIA FIRIOS + MARIA MITSIOS

MEMORIALS NEXT WEEK: + GEORGIA (MICHALOPOULOS) + SALAVATORE SCLAFANI









«Έγενόμην έν Πνεύματι έν τη Κυριακή ήμέρα και ήκουσα φωνήν όπίοω μου μεγάλην ώς σάλπιγγος» (An. 1.10)

Έκδιδεται ἀπό τήν Κοινοβιακή Γυναικεία Ίερα Μανή Άγίου Αύγουστίνου Φλωρίνης – 531 00 ΦΛΩΡΙΝΑ – τηλ. 23850-28610 –imsaflo⊕yahoo.gr

Περίοδος Δ΄ - "Ετος ΛΔ΄ Φλώρινα - αριθμ. φύλλου 2011 Κυριακή Μυροφόρων (Μάρκ. 15,43 – 16,8) 30 Άπριλίου 2017

Συντάκτης (†) ἐπίσκοπος Αὐγουστίνος Ν. Καντιώτης

Έσεῖς τί ζητᾶτε στὴ ζωή σας;

«Ίησοῦν ζητεῖτε τὸν Ναζαρηνὸν τὸν ἐσταυρωμένον...» (Μᾶρκ. 16,6)

Έδῶ στὸ ναὸ παρουσιάζομαι σήμερα ἐνώπιόν σας, ἀδελφοί μου, γιὰ νὰ μιλήσω. Θὰ σᾶς παρακαλέσω νὰ κάνετε ὑπομονὴ λίγα λεπτά, γιὰ ν' ἀκούσετε λόγια ἀπλᾶ.

"Όταν, ἀγαπητοί μου, συμβή κάπου ἔγκλημα, τὸ μέρος αὐτό, ὁ τόπος ποὺ σκοτώνεται ἄνθρωπος καὶ βάφεται μὲ αἴμα, ἀπὸ τὴν ὥρα ἐκείνη ἀποκτῷ κάποια ἀγριότητα. Οἱ ἄνθρωποι τὸν ἀποφεύγουν γυναϊκες καὶ παιδιά, τὴ νύχτα ἰδίως, φοβοῦνται νὰ περάσουν ἀπὸ 'κεῖ. Ύπάρχουν καὶ λαῖκὲς παραδόσεις –ποὺ βέβαια δὲν εἶνε σωστές, ἀλλ' ἐν πάσῃ περιπτώσει ἐκφράζουν αὐτὴ τὴν ἀντίληψι—, ὅτι ἐκεῖ ποὺ χύνεται αἶμα ἄδικα ὁ τόπος βρυκολακιάζει. Στὸν κόσμο ὅλο, ὅπως καὶ στὸν τόπο μας, πολλὰ ἐγκλήματα ἔχουν γίνει, ἰδίως τὰ τελευταῖα χρόνια, καὶ νομίζει κανεὶς ὅτι ἔχουν βρυκολακιάσει τὰ βουνὰ καὶ τὰ λαγκάδια μας καὶ βογγα ἡ γῆ μας.

Άλλ' ἄν μὲ ρωτήσετε, ποιό εἶνε τὸ μεγαλύτερο ἔγκλημα ποὺ ἔγινε ποτὲ πάνω στὴ γῆ, θὰ σᾶς πῶ ὅτι εἴνε ἡ Σταύρωσις τοῦ Κυρίου ἡ-μῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. Διότι ὁ Χριστὸς δὲν ἦταν ἔνας ἀτελὴς ἄνθρωπος ὅπως ὅλοι ἐμεῖς εἴνε ὁ άθῷος καὶ ἀναμάρτητος. Δὲν εἶχε κάνει καμμία ἀμαρτία, καὶ συνεπῶς δὲν ἔπρεπε νὰ ὑποστῆ αὐτὸ τὸν ἀτιμωτικὸ θάνατο ποὺ ὑπέστη. Ἐκρυψε ὁ ἥλιος τὶς ἀκτῖνες του, σείστηκε ἡ γῆ, σχίστηκε τὸ καταπέτασμα τοῦ ναοῦ, ἄνοιξαν τὰ μνήματα. Τρόμος καὶ φόβος κατέλαβε ὅλους ἐκείνους ποὺ εἴχαν συντελέσει στὴν σταύρωσί του []]. Μπλ. 27,51. λωκ. 23,45]. «Πατεῖς με - πατῶ σε» ἔφυγαν ἀπὸ τὸ Γολγοθᾶ οἱ γραμματεῖς καὶ φαρισαῖοι, δὲν ἔμεινε κανένας ἐκεῖ.

"Εμεινε μόνος ὁ Χριστὸς κρεμασμένος ἐπάνω στὸ σταυρό. "Εκεῖ ἦταν μόνο οἱ στρατιῶτες κι ὁ ἐκατόνταρχος, γιὰ νὰ ἐκτελέσουν τὴ διαταγὴ τῆς προϊσταμένης τους ἀρχῆς, ποὺ ἦταν νὰ φρουροῦν τὰ πτώματα τῶν ἐκτελεσθέντων. Αὐτοὶ καὶ μετὰ τὴν Ἀποκαθήλωσι, ἡ όποία ἔγινε μὲ εὐλάβεια ἀπὸ τὰ χέρια τοῦ Ἰωσὴφ καὶ τοῦ Νικοδήμου, ἔμειναν τὴ νύχτα ἐκεῖ καὶ φύλαγαν τὸν τάφο τοῦ Χριστοῦ, σύμφωνα μὲ τὴν ἐντολὴ ποὺ εἴχαν ἀπὸ τὸν Πόντιο Πιλᾶτο, ἔτοιμοι καὶ νὰ ἐκτελέσουν ἀκόμη ἐπὶ τόπου ὅποιον ποὺ θὰ τολμοῦσε νὰ πλησιάση. Νύχτα μυστηρίου, νύχτα φόβου καὶ τρόμου ἐκάλυπτε τὸ μέρος. Ποιός τολμοῦσε νὰ πάῃ ἐκεῖ; μήπως ὁ Πέτρος ἢ κανεὶς ἄλλος ἀπὸ τοὺς μαθητὰς τοῦ Κυρίου; Κανείς.

Καὶ ὅμως στὸν φρικτὸ ἐκεῖνο τόπο τοῦ Γολγοθα καὶ τοῦ τάφου πῆγαν – ποιοί; κάποιες γυναῖκες, οἱ μυροφόρες κι αὐτὸ ἀποτελεῖ αἰώνιο ἔπαινό τους, καὶ γι' αὐτὸ σήμερα ἡ Ἐκκλησία μας ἐορτάζει τὴν ἱερὰ μνήμη τους. Αὐτές, τὸ ἀσθενὲς λεγόμενο φῦλο, ποὺ ἀγαποῦσαν τὸ Χριστὸ πάνω ἀπὸ ὁ,τιδήποτε ἄλλο, δὲν φοβήθηκαν οὖτε τὸ σκοτάδι τῆς νύχτας οὖτε τοὺς ώπλισμένους στρατιῶτες οὖτε τὴ μεγάλη πέτρα ποὺ ἔφραζε τὴν εἶσοδο τοῦ τάφου. Λὲς καὶ εἶχαν φτερὰ στὰ πόδια ἔτρεξαν καὶ πρὶν τὴν ἀνατολὴ τοῦ ῆλιου βρέθηκαν ἐκεῖ. Γι' αὐτό, ὡς ἀμοιβὴ τῆς φλογερῆς ἀγάπης τους, τοῦ κόπου καὶ τῆς θυσίας τους, ἄκουσαν πρῶτες αὐτὲς ἀπ' ὅλο τὸν κόσμο τὸ «Χριστὸς ἀνέστη».

Δὲν θέλω, ἀγαπητοί μου, νὰ σᾶς κουράσωμόνο μιὰ σκέψι νὰ κάνουμε πάνω στὰ λόγια ποὺ εἶπε ὁ φτερωτὸς ἄγγελος στὶς μυροφόρες.

Ό ἄγγελος τοὺς εἶπε· «Μὴ ἐκθαμβεῖσθε», μὴν τρομάζετε (Μὰκ. Ικὰ), «μὴ φοβάστε ἐσεῖς» (Μαίκ. Ικὰ). Ἐσεῖς δὲν ἔχετε τὴν καρδιὰ τοῦ Πιλάτου, τοῦ "Αννα, τοῦ Καιάφα ἢ τοῦ Ἰούδα. Ξέρω, ὅτι ἐσεῖς ἀνεβήκατε ἐδῶ μὲ αὐταπάρνησι κι ἀπὸ ἀγάπη. Ξέρω πολὺ καλὰ τί θέλετε· ξέρω ὅτι, περισσότερο ἀπὸ ὁ,τιδήποτε ἄλλο στὸν κόσμο αὐτόν, ἐσεῖς «ζητεῖτε Ἰησοῦν τὸν Ναζαρηνὸν τὸν ἐσταυρωμένον» λοιπὸν «ἡγέρθη, οὐκ ἔστιν ὥδε· ἴδε ὁ τόπος ὅπου ἔθηκαν αὐτόν» (Νὰκ. Ιξή).

Αὐτὸ ποὺ εἶπε καὶ βεβαίωσε ὁ ἄγγελος, ὅτι

οί γυναϊκες έκεϊνες ζητούσαν Ίησούν τὸν Ναζωραῖον, αὐτὸ σὰν νὰ τ' ἀκούω τώρα καὶ ἐδῶ νὰ τὸ λέῃ σ' ἐμᾶς. Ἐὰν λοιπὸν ἕνας ἄγγελος, άπὸ αὐτοὺς ποὺ κατὰ τὴν πίστι μας μᾶς συνοδεύουν καὶ ἀοράτως βρίσκονται ἀνάμεσά μας. αν ένας αγγελος μας κάνη τὸ ἐρώτημα «Τί ζητάτε, τί θέλετε;» αν τὸ κάνη σ' ἐμένα, σ' ἐσας, στὸν ἀνώτατο ἄρχοντα, σ' αὐτὸν ποὺ εἶνε μέσα στὸ κατάστημα ἢ στὴν τράπεζα, ἢ στὸν ἐργοστασιάρχη, στὸν ἐργάτη, στὴ γυναῖκα, στὸ παιδί, αν ὁ αγγελος μας πῆ «Τί ζητατε στὸν κόσμο αὐτό, τί ψάχνετε νὰ βρῆτε;», ποιά θὰ εἶνε ἡ άπάντησί μας; Οί μυροφόρες γυναϊκες ζητούσαν ὄντως, έκατὸ τοῖς έκατά, «Ἰησοῦν τὸν Ναζαρηνὸν τὸν ἐσταυρωμένον» ἐμεῖς τί ζητᾶμε, τί ψάχνουμε νὰ βροῦμε στὸν κόσμο αὐτόν:

"Αν εἵμαστε εἶλικρινεῖς, ἃν βάλη ὁ καθένας τὸ χέρι στὴν καρδιὰ καὶ ἐρευνήση τὸ ἐσωτερικό του, ἐνδοσκοπήση τὸν ἑαυτό του, τότε θὰ ὁμολογήση ὅτι κάθε ἄλλο παρὰ τὸν Ἰησοῦ τὸ Ναζωραῖο ζητᾶμε. Φοβᾶμαι ὅτι ὅπως τὰ πεινασμένα σκυλιὰ τρέχουν δεξιὰ - ἀριστερὰ νὰ βροῦν κρέατα σάπια, ἔτσι κ' ἐμεῖς γυρίζουμε ψάχνοντας στοὺς δρόμους καὶ στὶς ἀγυιὲς τοῦ κόσμου. Τί ζητοῦν οἱ ἄντρες, οἱ γυναῖκες, οἱ νέοι καὶ οἱ νέες μας; τί ζητάει ὁ κόσμος; Ζητάει λεφτὰ - χρήματα, ζητάει δόξα - τιμή - ἀξιώματα, ζητάει ἡδονές - διασκεδάσεις - γλέντια. Ὁ κόσμος ζητάει κάθε ἄλλο παρὰ τὸν Ἰησοῦ τὸ Ναζωραῖο.

Δὲν ὑπάρχει δυστυχῶς ζήτησις ἀνωτέρων πραγμάτων, δὲν ἐκτιμοῦμε ἐμεῖς τὰ πνευματικὰ καὶ τὰ ἄγια πράγματα. Κάποιος μῦθος τοῦ Αἰσώπου λέει, ὅτι σὲ μιὰ αὐλὴ ἔνας κόκορας σκάλιζε ζητώντας νὰ βρῆ σκουλήκια καὶ σπόρους. Ψάχνοντας, τὸ νύχι του σκόνταψε – ποῦσ' ἔνα διαμάντι. Καὶ τὸ ἀνόητο πουλὶ τὸ κλώτσησε, τὸ πέταξε πέρα, τὸ περιφρόνησε. Δὲν μποροῦσε νὰ τὸ ἐκτιμήση σκουλήκι ἤθελε, ὅχι διαμάντι. "Ετσι κ' ἐμεῖς περιφρονοῦμε τὰ μεγάλα καὶ πολύτιμα πράγματα, ζητᾶμε μικρὰ καὶ ἀσήμαντα καὶ σ' αῦτὰ δίνουμε ὅλη τὴν καρδιά μας.

Νὰ ποῦμε τὴν ἀλήθεια· ἀκόμη καὶ μέσα στὴν ἐκκλησία, σᾶς ἐρωτῶ, ποιός ἀπὸ τὸ «Εὐλογημένη ἡ βασιλεία...» μέχρι τὸ «Δι' εὐχῶν...» ἔχει τὸ μυαλὸ καὶ τὴν καρδιά του στὸ Θεό; Ὁ καθένας τότε θὰ βρῆ νὰ σκεφτῆ ὁ,τιδήποτε ἄλλο. Εἴμαστε –ἄς ἐπιτραπῆ ἡ λέξι– θεομπαῖχτες, καὶ θὰ μᾶς κλείση ὁ Θεὸς τὶς ἐκκλησιές. Στὰ παλιὰ τὰ χρόνια τὰ εὐλογημένα, ποὺ δὲν εἶχαν οὔτε ῥαδιόφωνα οὔτε τηλεοράσεις, ἀλλὰ εἶχαν πίστι, ἔμπαιναν στὴν ἐκκλησιὰ «ὄρθρου βαθέος», ἔπιαναν μιὰ γωνιὰ καὶ προσεύχονταν χωρὶς νὰ κοιτάζουν ὁ ἔνας τὸν ἄλλο, κι ἀ-

πό τὰ μάτια τους ἔτρεχαν δάκρυα ποὺ ἔβρεχαν τὰ πλακάκια. Ποῦ τώρα εὐλάβεια, ποῦ πίστις, ποῦ δάκρυα! Οὖτε καὶ τὴν ὥρα αὐτὴ τὴν ἱερὰ δὲν ζητοῦμε Ἰησοῦν τὸν Ναζωραῖον.

Καὶ θὰ θυμηθῶ πρὶν τελειώσω κάτι ποὺ εἶπε ὁ ἄγιος Κοσμᾶς ὁ Αἰτωλός. "Ενας πραγματευτής - ἔμπορος πενήντα χρόνια γύριζε καὶ ἔψαχνε στὸν κόσμο νὰ βρῆ καλὰ πράγματα, πολύτιμα πετράδια, καὶ τὰ μάζευε σ' εναν τορβά. "Όταν ὁ τορβᾶς γέμισε, τὰ πῆγε ὅλα σ' ἕνα σαράφη - χρηματιστή. Αὐτός, ἀφοῦ τὰ ἐξέτασε όλα, τοῦ λέει: "Ανθρωπέ μου, ἀπ' όλα αὐτὰ τὰ πετράδια ένα μόνο ἀξίζει, τοῦτο τὸ μικρό, τὸ διαμάντη όλα τ' άλλα είνε ψεύτικα, πέταξέ τα στὸ ρέμα. Δὲν τὸν πίστεψε καὶ πῆνε σὲ δεύτερο, σὲ τρίτο, σὲ τέταρτο σαράφη: κι αὐτοὶ τὸ ῗδιο τοῦ εἰπαν, ὅτι πράγματι ἔνα μόνο ἀξίζει, τὸ διαμάντι. Τὸ πῆρε λοιπὸν τὸ διαμάντι καὶ γιὰ νὰ ἐξακριβώση τὴν ἀξία του, ὅταν στὸ δρόμο είδε ένα τυφλό, κάνει μὲ τὸ διαμάντι τὸ σημεῖο τοῦ σταυροῦ, τὸ ἀγγίζει στὸ μάτι του, καὶ ό τυφλὸς εἶδε τὸ φῶς του. Παρακάτω βλέπει ένα κουφό, τὸ ἀγγίζει στὸ αὐτί του κάνοντας τὸ σημεῖο τοῦ σταυροῦ, καὶ ὁ κουφὸς ἀκούει. Παρακάτω βλέπει μιὰ γριὰ κ' ἔνα γέρο, τὸ ἀγγίζει πάνω τους καὶ γίνονται νέοι. Παρακάτω περνούσε μιὰ κηδεία, ἀγγίζει τὸ διαμάντι πάνω στὸ νεκρὸ καὶ ὁ νεκρὸς ἀνασταίνεται (Εί. έπ. Αύγουστίκου Ν. Καντιώτου, Κοσμάς ὁ Αίτωλός, Χθήνοι 2013°, οσ. 271-4). Ποιά εἶνε ή έρμηνεία· έμεῖς εἵμαστε οἱ πραματευτάδες, όλοι μας, που ψάχνουμε να βρούμε άλήθεια στὸν κόσμο τοῦτο, καὶ μαζεύουμε καὶ μαζεύουμε... Ψεύτικα εἶνε ὅλα, ἕνα ἔχει ἀξία, τὸ διαμάντι, ὁ Κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστός. "Οπου τὸ ἀγγίξης, κάνει θαύματα, ἀρκεῖ νὰ πιστεύης πραγματικά. Αὐτὸ τὸ διαμάντι, τὴν πίστι στὸ Χριστό, ἀξίζει νὰ ζητᾶμε.

Στό ἐρώτημα λοιπὸν «τί ζητᾶτε;» ἄς ἀπαντήσουμε κ' ἐμεῖς, ἀγαπητοί μου: «Χριστέ μου, δὲν ζητᾶμε τίποτε ἄλλο: σὰ φτάνεις!». Αὐτὸν νὰ ζητᾶμε, τὸν Ἰησοῦ τὸ Ναζωραῖο. Καὶ πῶς νὰ τὸν ζητᾶμε; Θερμά, ὅχι ψυχρά: ὅπως ὁ πεινασμένος τὸ καρβέλι, ὅπως ὁ διψασμένος τὸ νερό, ὅπως τὸ μικρὸ παιδὶ τὴ μάνα του, ὅπως ὁ φυλακισμένος τὴ λευτεριά του, ὅπως ὁ φτωχὸς τὴν ἄνεσί του, ὅπως ἡ μέλισσα τὸ ἄνθος, ὅπως τὸ ἀρνάκι τὴ χλόη.

Ζητάτε Ίησοῦ τὸ Ναζωραῖο, καὶ τότε θὰ εἶστε εὐτυχισμένοι ἐκατὸ τοῖς ἐκατό. Ὅποιος ἔχει τὸν Ἰησοῦ τὸ Ναζωραῖο, ἔχει τὸ Θεό, τὴν εὐτυχία, τὴ χαρά. Ἰησοῦν τὸν Ναζωραῖον, ὃν ὐμνεῖ πάσα ἡ κτίσις εἰς αἰῶνας αἰώνων- ἀμήν.

(†) ἐπίσκοπος Αὐνουστῖνος

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

Fight the Good Fight of Faith

About that time King Herod laid hands upon some members of the church to harm them. He had James, the brother of John, killed by the sword, and when he saw that this was pleasing to the Jews he proceeded to arrest Peter also. (It was [the] feast of Unleavened Bread.) He had him taken into custody and put in prison under the guard of four squads of four soldiers each. He intended to bring him before the people after Passover. Peter thus was being kept in prison, but prayer by the church was fervently being made to God on his behalf.

On the very night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter, secured by double chains, was sleeping between two soldiers, while outside the door guards kept watch on the prison. Suddenly the angel of the Lord stood by him and a light shone in the cell. He tapped Peter on the side and awakened him, saying, "Get up quickly." The chains fell from his wrists. The angel

said to him, "Put on your belt and your sandals." He did so. Then he said to him, "Put on your cloak and follow me." So he followed him out, not realizing that what was happening through the angel was real; he thought he was seeing a vision. They passed the first guard, then the second, and came to the iron gate leading out to the city, which opened for them by itself. They emerged and made their way down an alley, and suddenly the angel left him. Then Peter recovered his senses and said, "Now I know for certain that [the] Lord sent his angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people had been expecting." When he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John who is called Mark, where there were many people gathered in prayer.

Acts of the Apostles 12: 1-12

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