

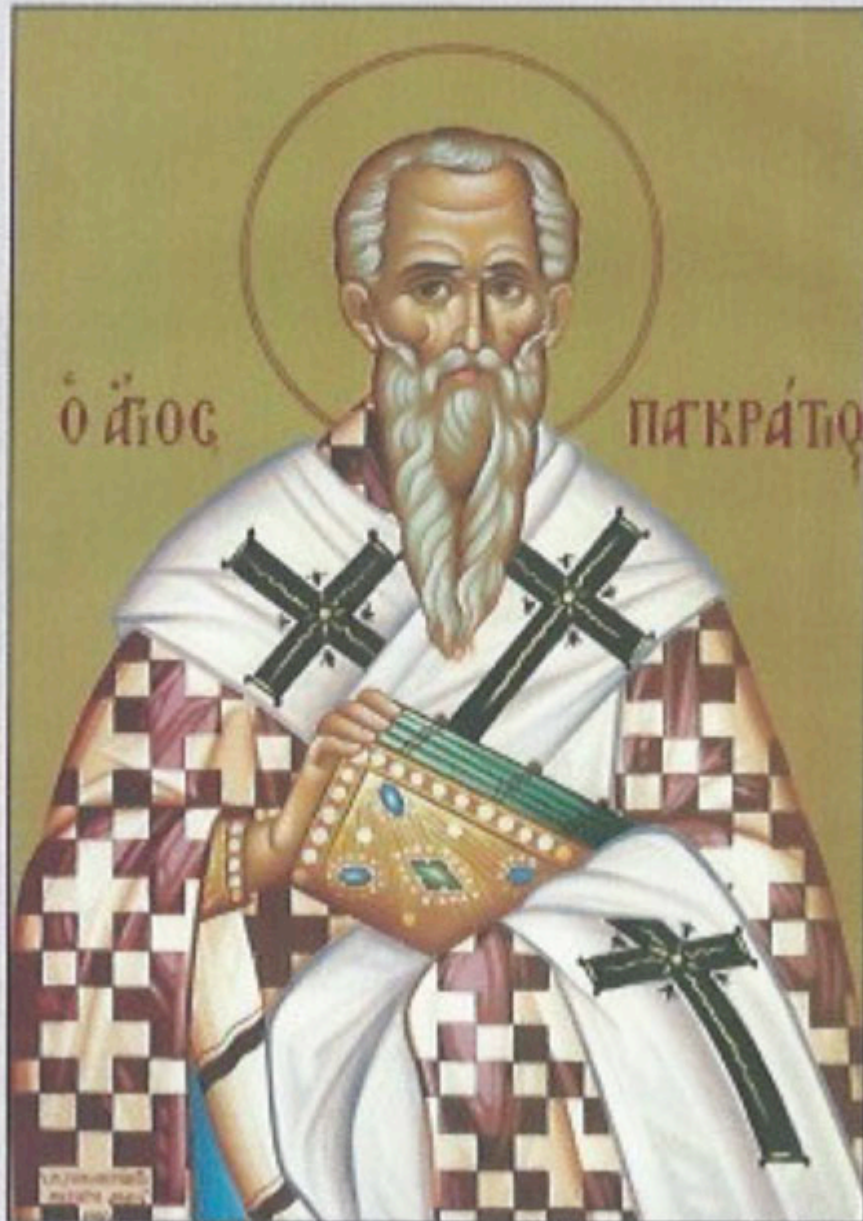


DIRECT ARCHDIOCESAN
DISTRICT

THREE HIERARCHS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

SUNDAY WEEKLY BULLETIN July 9th, 2017
V. Rev. Archimandrite Eugene N. Pappas

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
FIFTH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW



Icon of Saint Pankratios -- July 9th

St. Paul's Letter to the Romans 10:1-10

Prokeimenon. Mode 4.

Psalm 103.24,1

O Lord, how manifold are your works. You have made all things in wisdom.

Verse: Bless the Lord, O my soul.

The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Romans 10:1-10

BRETHREN, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but it is not enlightened. For, being ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. For Christ is the end of the law, that every one who has faith may be justified. Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on the law shall live by it. But the righteousness based on faith says, Do not say in your heart, "Who will ascend into heaven?" (that is, to bring Christ down) or "Who will descend into the abyss?" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart (that is, the word of faith which we preach); because, if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved.

Προκείμενον. Ἦχος δ'.

ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 103.24,1

Ὡς ἐμεγαλύνθη τὰ ἔργα σου Κύριε, πάντα ἐν σοφίᾳ ἐποίησας.

Στίχ. Εὐλόγει ἡ ψυχὴ μου τὸν Κύριον.

Πρὸς Ῥωμαίους 10:1-10 τὸ ἀνάγνωσμα εἶναι ἀπο

Ἀδελφοί, ἡ μὲν εὐδοκία τῆς ἐμῆς καρδίας καὶ ἡ δέησις ἡ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ὑπὲρ τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ ἐστὶν εἰς σωτηρίαν. Μαρτυρῶ γὰρ αὐτοῖς ὅτι ζῆλον θεοῦ ἔχουσιν, ἀλλ' οὐ κατ' ἐπίγνωσιν. Ἄγνοοῦντες γὰρ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην, καὶ τὴν ἰδίαν δικαιοσύνην ζητοῦντες στήσαι, τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐχ ὑπετάγησαν. Τέλος γὰρ νόμου Χριστὸς εἰς δικαιοσύνην παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι. Μωϋσῆς γὰρ γράφει τὴν δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ τοῦ νόμου, ὅτι ὁ ποιήσας αὐτὰ ἄνθρωπος ζήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς. Ἡ δὲ ἐκ πίστεως δικαιοσύνη οὕτως λέγει, Μὴ εἴπῃς ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου, Τίς ἀναβήσεται εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν; - τοῦτ' ἔστιν Χριστὸν καταγαγεῖν - ἢ, Τίς καταβήσεται εἰς τὴν ἄβυσσον; - τοῦτ' ἔστιν Χριστὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναγαγεῖν. Ἀλλὰ τί λέγει; Ἐγγύς σου τὸ ῥῆμά ἐστίν, ἐν τῷ στόματί σου καὶ ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου· τοῦτ' ἔστιν τὸ ῥῆμα τῆς πίστεως ὃ κηρύσσομεν· ὅτι ἐὰν ὁμολογήσῃς ἐν τῷ στόματί σου κύριον Ἰησοῦν, καὶ πιστεύσῃς ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου ὅτι ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ἠγειρεν ἐκ νεκρῶν, σωθήσῃ· καρδίᾳ γὰρ πιστεύεται εἰς δικαιοσύνην, στόματι δὲ ὁμολογεῖται εἰς σωτηρίαν.

The Gospel According to Matthew 8:28-34; 9:1

At that time, when Jesus came to the country of the Gergesenes, two demoniacs met him, coming out of the tombs, so fierce that no one would pass that way. And behold, they cried out, "What have you to do with us, O Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?" Now a herd of many swine was feeding at some distance from them. And the demons begged him, "If you cast us out, send us away into the herd of swine." And he said to them, "Go." So they came out and went into the swine; and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and perished in the waters. The herdsmen fled, and going into the city they told everything, and what had happened to the demoniacs. And behold, all the city came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw him, they begged him to leave their neighborhood. And getting into a boat he crossed over and came to his own city.

Τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ, ἐλθόντος τῷ Ἰησοῦ εἰς τὸ πέραν εἰς τὴν χώραν τῶν Γεργεσηνῶν ὑπήντησαν αὐτῷ δύο δαιμονιζόμενοι ἐκ τῶν μνημείων ἐξερχόμενοι, χαλεποὶ λίαν, ὥστε μὴ ἰσχύειν τινὰ παρελθεῖν διὰ τῆς ὁδοῦ ἐκείνης. καὶ ἰδοὺ ἔκραξαν λέγοντες· τί ἡμῖν καὶ σοί, Ἰησοῦ υἱὲ τοῦ Θεοῦ; ἤλθες ὧδε πρὸ καιροῦ βασανίσει ἡμᾶς; ἦν δὲ μακρὰν ἀπ' αὐτῶν ἀγέλη χοίρων πολλῶν βοσκομένη. οἱ δὲ δαίμονες παρεκάλουν αὐτὸν λέγοντες· εἰ ἐκβάλλεις ἡμᾶς, ἐπίτρεψον ἡμῖν ἀπελθεῖν εἰς τὴν ἀγέλην τῶν χοίρων. καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ὑπάγετε. οἱ δὲ ἐξελθόντες ἀπῆλθον εἰς τὴν ἀγέλην τῶν χοίρων· καὶ ἰδοὺ ὤρμησε πᾶσα ἡ ἀγέλη τῶν χοίρων κατὰ τοῦ κρημοῦ εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ ἀπέθανον ἐν τοῖς ὕδασι. οἱ δὲ βόσκοντες ἔφυγον, καὶ ἀπελθόντες εἰς τὴν πόλιν ἀπήγγειλαν πάντα καὶ τὰ τῶν δαιμονιζομένων. καὶ ἰδοὺ πᾶσα ἡ πόλις ἐξῆλθεν εἰς συνάντησιν τῷ Ἰησοῦ, καὶ ἰδόντες αὐτὸν παρεκάλεισαν ὅπως μεταβῆ ἀπὸ τῶν ὁρίων αὐτῶν. Καὶ ἐμβὰς εἰς πλοῖον διεπέρασε καὶ ἦλθεν εἰς τὴν ἰδίαν πόλιν.

DEVOTIONS THIS WEEK:

AGAPE COFFEE HOUR is being hosted today in Whitehall. Please join us for coffee and sweets.

TODAY:: we honor the memory of Martyred Saint Pankratios and Saint Dionysios Orator.

UP – COMING COMMEMORATIONS:

Monday ,	July 17th	Martyred Saint Marina	9:30 A.M.
Thursday,	July 20th,	Prophet Elias	9:30 A.M.
Thursday,	July 27th,	JOINT OBSERVANCE	9:30 A.M.
		Saints Paraskeve and Panteleimon	

CHURCHING TODAY: the ‘SARANTISIS’ prayers are offered for ‘ **LEONIDAS NICHOLAS** ‘ the new born son of the proud parents Scott and Diana Romano. . NA SAS ZESE!

CHURCHING NEXT SUNDAY , 16th t he ‘ SARANTISIS ‘ prayers are offered for the new born son ‘ **LOUKAS KYRIAKOS** ‘ of the proud parents Charles and Louisa (ROMANO) ASPIOTIS. NA SAS ZESE!

FATHERS DAY SALUTATIONS: were extended to Father Eugene by the UKRAINIAN, RUSSIAN and GEORGIAN faithful in the Parish on last Sunday. Absent on vacation, Father Eugene was most surprised and pleased with outpouring of respect and admiration from the following: GIORGI, TEINURAZ, OKSANA TATYANA, ELENA AND MARIA, OLGA, TETYANA AND OLGA, NADEZHDA, BORIS, ANDREY, SOPHIA, LYUDMILA AND LEONID, ALLA, ELENA, VASILY, DINA, EVA, IRINIA, DONA AND IVAN, TATYANA, SOPHIA ROUMANIA, NEONILA, IRINA, NINA TEODOZIA, FLORYNA, LYUDMILA, MANANA, LARISA AND IRINA , MELINA TATYANA, ANNA., FATHER MYKIOLA, VASIL, ROMAN. “MNOGAYA LETA !”

LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS OFFICERS have received the endorsement of their election from his Eminence for the term May 2017 – May 2019, from the office of His Eminence the Archbishop. Best wishes and congratulations to the new President Eleutheria XENAKIS and her board of Officers.

PRAYER and HEALING SERVICE: for the month of July is scheduled for Wednesday evening, July 19th, at 6:30 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. Prayers, Anointing, Scripture, Witnessing and so much more to be experienced. The focused theme is PROPHECY IN THE MODERN AGE as we highlight the Feast of Prophet Elias celebrated on the next morning.

SENIOR CITIZENS: AND THE DISABLED: TAKE NOTICE! Citizens aged 65 years old and older are eligible to obtain REDUCED FARE METRO CARDS ! APPOINTMENTS ARE NOT NECESSARY!

TAKE NOTE: FRIDAY , JULY 28th. from 10:00 A.M. - to NOON t ASSEMBLYMAN WILLIAM COLTON’S COMMUNITY OFFICE 155 Kings highway (West 12th – West 13th Street) 718-236-1598

WHAT TO BRING: PROPER proof of age (MEDICARE CARD, DRIVERS LICENSE) Valid Photo I.D Processing may take 8 weeks --- but you will get your CARD !

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION: The Pastor will host his annual festive event on the exact date of his birthday – SUNDAY , JULY 23rd, with PIZZA, PIZZA, PIZZA, SOFT DRINKS, BIRTHDAY CAKE and COFFEE for everyone. Don’t miss the event IT ONLY HAPPENS ONCE A YEAR.....EVERY YEAR ON AND ON AND ON AND ON! See the invitation attached. ARTOKLASIES are invited for the saint.

RADIO MINISTRY: Each Saturday at 1:15PM Fr. Eugene hosts and produces the radio broadcast **MATTERS OF CONSCIENCE NOW IN ITS 19TH 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](#))

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.

“LET THE LITTLE CHILDREN COME TO ME”

Children as Teachers in the New Testament

“But Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.’”

– Matthew 19:14

DR. BRUCE N. BECK

In all three synoptic Gospels there is a difficult story in which the disciples keep the children from approaching Jesus to get a blessing from Him. What reason would the disciples have had for such an action? Was Jesus being crowded, and they were providing protection for Him? Was He busy or occupied with important matters and could not be disturbed by a group of kids? Perhaps so. It would be like a group of children running to greet our Archbishop Demetrios as he speaks in a parish hall.

Just before the children come, Jesus is speaking with a group of Pharisees who have come to test Him about whether



WISDOM, ANCIENT AND MODERN

And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all." Then He took a little child and set him in the midst of them. And when He had taken him in His arms, He said to them, "Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me."

—*Mark 9:35–37*

Are you not responsible for the salvation of your children? Are you not likely to have to give an account of their upbringing? Just as we, the shepherds of the flock, will give an account for what we have done for your souls, so fathers of families will have to answer before God for all the people in their home.

— *St. John Chrysostom*

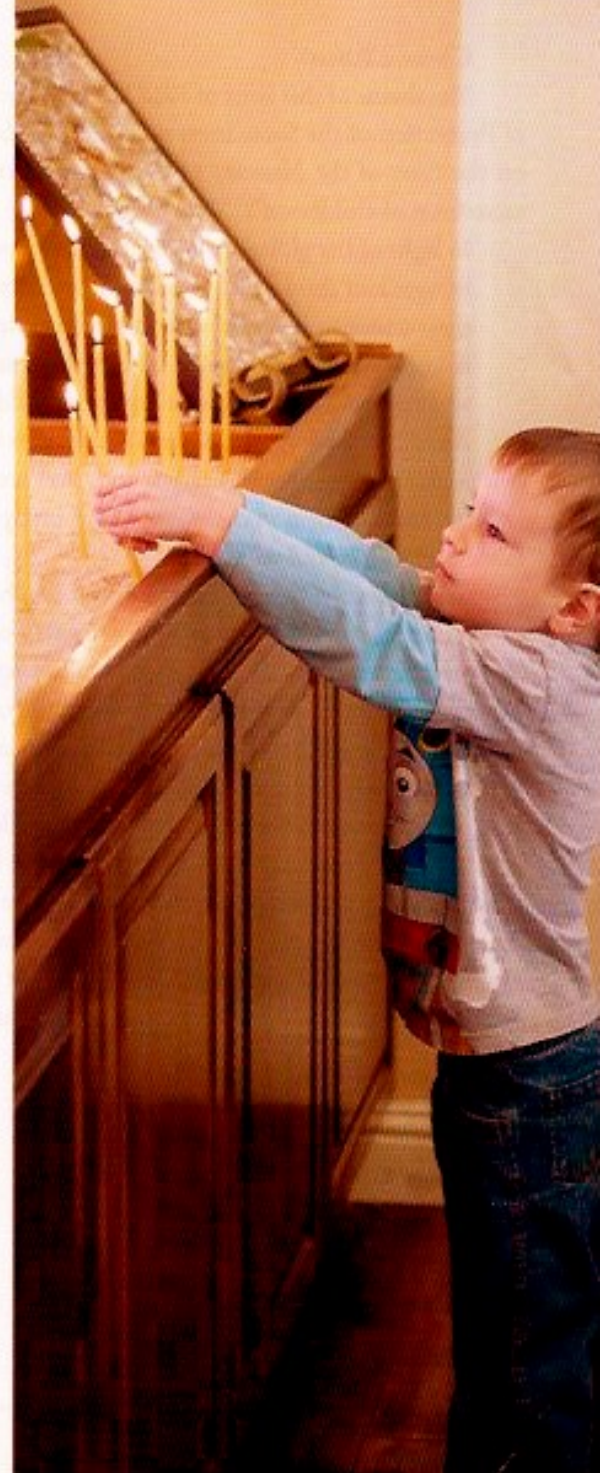
For You possess my heart, O Lord;
You took hold of me from my mother's womb.
I will give thanks to You,
For I am fearfully and wondrously made;
Marvelous are Your works,
And my soul knows this very well.

— *Psalm 138:13–14 (SAAS)*

O God, our heavenly Father, who lovest mankind, and art most merciful and compassionate, have mercy upon thy servants for whom I humbly pray thee, and commend to thy gracious care and protection. Be thou, O God, their guide and guardian in all their endeavors, lead them in the path of thy truth, and draw them nearer to thee, that they may lead a godly and righteous life in thy love and fear; doing thy will in all things.

— *from "A Prayer of Parents for Their Children
and for Relatives and Friends,"*

A Pocket Prayer Book for Orthodox Christians





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 Γυνακκία Τερπὸ Μονὴ Ἁγίου Αὐγουστίνου Φλωρίνης - 531 00 ΦΛΩΡΙΝΑ - τηλ. 23850-28610 - imsaflo@yahoo.gr

Περίοδος Δ' - Ἔτος ΛΔ' Φλώρινα - ἀριθμ. φύλλου 2025	Κυριακὴ Ε' Ματθαίου (Ματθ. 8,28 - 9,1) 9 Ἰουλίου 2017	Συντάκτης (†) ἐπίσκοπος Αὐγουστίνος Ν. Καντιώτης
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ἜΥπάρχει Θεός;

Δὲν ὑπάρχει κόλασι, δὲν ὑπάρχει Θεός!... Ποιός τὰ λέει αὐτά, ἀγαπητοί μου; Οἱ ἄπιστοι καὶ ἄθεοι. Γι' αὐτούς ἀρμόζει τὸ τοῦ Δαυὶδ «*Εἶπεν ἄφρων ἐν καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ· οὐκ ἔστι Θεός*» (Ψαλμ. 22) δηλαδή, μόνο ἄνθρωπος ποὺ ἔχασε τὰ λογικά του μπορεῖ νὰ πῆ, Δὲν ὑπάρχει Θεός.

Ἐὰν καμμιά φορά συναντήσετε ἄθεο, δὲν εἶνε ἀνάγκη νὰ κάνετε μακρὲς συζητήσεις γιὰ νὰ τὸν πείσετε· κάντε του μερικὲς ἀπλὲς ἐρωτήσεις. Ρωτήστε τον· τὸ σπίτι ποὺ κάθεται χτίστηκε χωρὶς χτίστη; τὸ ρολοὶ ποὺ ἔχει στὸ χέρι του φύτρωσε ἔτσι χωρὶς νὰ τὸ κατασκευάσῃ τεχνίτης; τὸ ροῦχο ποὺ φοράει ἔγινε χωρὶς ράφτη; Ἐὰν μὲ πείσης, πέστε του, ὅτι τὸ σπίτι σου, τὸ ρολοὶ σου, τὸ ροῦχο σου ἔγιναν μόνα τους, τότε θὰ δεχτῶ, ὅτι καὶ τὸ σπίτι τὸ μεγάλο, τὸ τεράστιο σπίτι ποὺ λέγεται σύμπαν, ἔγινε χωρὶς **Δημιουργό**. Ὁ ἀπόστολος Παῦλος λέει· «*Πᾶς οἶκος κατασκευάζεται ὑπὸ τινος, ὁ δὲ τὰ πάντα κατασκευάσας Θεός*»· κάθε σπίτι ἔχει τὸν κατασκευαστή του, καὶ **αὐτὸς ποὺ κατασκεύασε** τὰ σύμπαντα εἶνε ὁ Θεός (Ἐβρ. 3).

Κοντὰ σ' αὐτὴν καὶ σ' ἄλλες ἀποδείξεις, ποὺ μπορεῖ κανεὶς ν' ἀναφέρῃ (ψυχολογικές, φιλοσοφικές, ἱστορικές), ἐγὼ θεωρῶ ἰσχυρὴ ἀπόδειξι τῆς ὑπάρξεως τοῦ Θεοῦ - ποιό; Τὸ ὅτι, ἂν δὲν ὑπῆρχε ἓνας ἀνώτατος νοῦς ποὺ κυβερνᾷ τὸ σύμπαν, τότε ὁ κόσμος αὐτὸς δὲν θὰ μπορούσε νὰ σταθῆ. Γιατί ὅπως μιὰ μηχανὴ δὲν μπορεῖ νὰ λειτουργήσῃ ἐὰν δὲν ὑπάρχῃ ἀπὸ πάνω της ὁ μηχανικός ποὺ τὴ ρυθμίζει, ἔτσι κι ὁ κόσμος αὐτὸς ἐὰν δὲν ὑπῆρχε ὁ οὐράνιος ρυθμιστής, ὁ **προνοητὴς ποὺ τὸν κατευθύνει**.

Ἄλλὰ δὲν εἶνε μόνο αὐτὴ ἡ ἀπόδειξι· εἶνε καὶ ἡ ἄλλη. Ἄν δὲν ὑπῆρχε Θεός, δὲν θὰ μπορούσε ὁ **κόσμος** νὰ σταθῆ οὔτε δευτερόλεπτο, γιατί ...**κινδυνεύει!** Ἀπὸ τί; ἀπὸ σεισμό, φωτιά, πλημμύρα, καταποντισμό, ἠφαιστεια...; Ναι κινδυνεύει κι ἀπ' αὐτά, **ἀπὸ τὰ στοιχεῖα τῆς φύσεως**. Διότι ποιός ἄλλος κυβερνᾷ τὰ στοιχεῖα τῆς φύσεως; Ὅπως τὸ ἄλογο τὸ κρατᾷ ὁ καβαλά-

ρης μὲ τὸ καπίστρι καὶ τὸ αὐτοκίνητο τὸ κυβερνᾷ ὁ ὁδηγὸς μὲ τὸ βολάν, εἰδᾷλλως μπορεῖ νὰ πέσουν σὲ γκρεμό, κατὰ παρόμοιο τρόπο καὶ αὐτὴ τὴν ἄλογο φύσι, τὰ στοιχεῖα αὐτά, τὰ κυβερνᾷ μὲ τὰ δικά του βολάν καὶ τὰ δικά του καπίστρια ὁ **μεγάλος κυβερνήτης**, ὁ Θεός.

Ἐκτὸς ὁμως ἀπὸ τὸν κίνδυνο αὐτὸν ὑπάρχει καὶ ἄλλος κίνδυνος πολὺ χειρότερος. Ποιός; Ἄν τὸν πῶ, κάποιος θὰ πῆ· -Δὲ βαριέσαι· δὲν ἔχεις τίποτ' ἄλλο νὰ πῆς; τώρα στὸν αἰῶνα αὐτὸν θὰ μᾶς φοβερίσῃς μὲ μπαμποῦλες καὶ σκιάχτρα;... Μακάρι, ἀγαπητοί μου, νὰ ἦταν σκιάχτρο, νὰ ἦταν μπαμπούλας, νὰ ἦταν φάσμα· μὰ εἶνε μιὰ πραγματικότης. Λέω λοιπόν, ὅτι ὁ μεγαλύτερος κίνδυνος ποὺ διατρέχει τὸ σύμπαν εἶνε ἀπὸ κάποια πονηρὴ δύναμι, ἀόρατη φοβερὴ καὶ τρομερὴ δύναμι, ποὺ σὰν τὴν ἀράχνη ἀπλώνει τὸ δίχτυ της παντοῦ, κ' ἔχει τόση κακία καὶ τόσο μῖσος, ποὺ ἂν μπορούσε θὰ κατέστρεφε ὁλόκληρο τὸν κόσμο. Ποιὰ εἶν' αὐτή; Εἶνε ὁ **σατανᾶς, ὁ διάβολος**. Καὶ ἀκριβῶς ὅποιος θέλει νὰ δῆ τί ἔστι διάβολος, τί δύναμι ἔχει καὶ τί κακὸ καὶ τί συμφορὰ μπορεῖ νὰ προκαλέσῃ, ἄς τεντώσῃ τὸ αὐτί του ν' ἀκούσῃ τί εἶπε σήμερα τὸ εὐαγγέλιο. Ὅλο τὸ ἱερὸ κείμενο ἀπ' τὴν ἀρχὴ μέχρι τὸ τέλος ὁμιλεῖ περὶ δαιμόνων καὶ δαιμονισμένων. Τί λέει ὅτι ὁ διάβολος μπορεῖ νὰ κἀνῃ κακό. Ποῦ; Σὲ ἀνθρώπους καὶ σὲ ζῶα.

Σ' ἓνα βουνό, ἀγαπητοί μου, κάθε μέρα ἔβοσκαν **χοῖροι**. Πόσοι ἦταν; Κοπάδι ὁλόκληρο, «περίπου δυὸ χιλιάδες» λέει ἓνας εὐαγγελιστῆς (Μαρκ. 5,13) «*λεγεών*», ὁλόκληρη ῥωμαϊκὴ μεραρχία, λέει ἄλλος εὐαγγελιστῆς (Μαρκ. 5,9). Ἄλλὰ μιὰ μέρα αὐτὰ τὰ ζωντανά, ἐκεῖ ποὺ ἔτρωγαν ἡσυχὰ τὰ βελανίδια τους, ξαφνικὰ σηκώθηκαν ὄρθια, ἄρχισαν νὰ γρυλίζουν, ὥρμησαν σὰν λυσσασμένα σ' ἓνα γκρεμό, καὶ ἀπὸ ἐκεῖ ἔπεσαν ὅλα μέσα στὴ λίμνη· σὲ λίγο τὰ νερά γέμισαν ἀπὸ πτώματα - κουφάρια τῶν χοίρων.

Τί ἔπαθαν; Ἐμένα ρωτᾷτε; ρωτήστε τὸ εὐ-

αγγέλιο. Έπαθαν δαιμονισμό, **δαιμονοπληξία**. Όπως υπάρχει ηλεκτροπληξία, έτσι υπάρχει και δαιμονοπληξία. Και πού βρεθήκαν τὰ δαιμόνια εκεί στο βουνό; Τὰ δαιμόνια πάνε παντού.

Τὸ εὐαγγέλιο λέει, ὅτι βγήκαν ἀπὸ δύο ἀνθρώπους καὶ μπήκαν στοὺς χοίρους. Ἦταν **δύο νέοι** πού, ἐνῶ προηγουμένως ἦταν παιδιὰ καλὰ, υπάκουα καὶ ἐργατικά, σὲ μιὰ «κακιὰ ὥρα» πού λέει ὁ κόσμος μὲ τὴν ἀπλή του πίστι, ἀλλάξαν. Δὲν υπήκουαν πιά, ἀγρίεψαν, ἐγίναν ἀδιάντροποι, ἀσεβεῖς, βλάσφημοι, ἐπιθετικοί, ἐπικίνδυνοι, φόβος καὶ τρόμος τῆς περιοχῆς. Γύριζαν γυμνοὶ χωρὶς ντροπὴ, πετοῦσαν κοτρώνια στοὺς ἀνθρώπους, κοιμόντουσαν μέσ' στὰ μνήματα. Κι ἀπέκτησαν τέτοια δύναμι πού, ἐνῶ τοὺς ἔδεναν μὲ σχοινιά καὶ ἀλυσίδες, αὐτοὶ τὶς ἔσπαζαν σὰν νὰ ἦταν κλωστές. Τὸ ἴδιο δὲν συμβαίνει καὶ τώρα στὴν Κεφαλονιά, στὸν Ἄγιο Γεράσιμο; Πού βρέθηκε αὐτὴ ἡ δύναμι; Ἄς μὴν πιστεύουν οἱ ἄπιστοι· ὑπάρχει αὐτὴ ἡ ἀόρατη πονηρὴ δύναμις πού ἀπειλεῖ τὸν κόσμο.

Πῶς ἀλλάξαν τότε ἐκεῖνα τὰ παιδιὰ; Πῶς ἀλλάζει καὶ σήμερα τὸ μικρὸ παιδί, τὸ ἀγγελουδί πού εἶχε χθὲς στὴν ἀγκαλιά σου καὶ τὸ στόλιζες μὲ χιλιά δυὸ γλυκὰ ὀνόματα, καὶ τώρα ἐγινε ἀσύδοτος, σπάει τὸ κεφάλι τοῦ πατέρα, βλαστημάει τὴν πατρίδα, καταπατεῖ τὰ πάντα, καὶ γίνεται τρομοκράτης. Ἡ ἐξήγησι πού δίνει τὸ εὐαγγέλιο εἶνε, ὅτι **μπήκε μέσα τοῦ δαιμόνιο**. Σὲ δέντρο πού εἶνε στέρεο δὲν τρυπώνουν μέσα σκουλήκια· ὅπου ὁμως ὑπάρχει κουφάλα, ἐκεῖ μπαίνουν οἱ σφίγγες, κάνουν σφιγγοφωλιές καὶ δὲν τολμᾶς νὰ πλησιάσῃς· ἔτσι μέσ' στίς «κουφάλες» τοῦ ψυχικοῦ κόσμου στήνουν σφιγγοφωλιές τὰ δαιμόνια, καὶ ἐκείνους τοὺς ἡσυχους ἀνθρώπους, ἐκεῖνα τὰ ἀρνάκια τοῦ Χριστοῦ, τὰ κάνουν λύκους καὶ τρομοκράτες.

Παρ' ὅλη ὁμως τὴν ἀγριότητα τὰ δαιμόνια, ὅπως βλέπουμε στὸ εὐαγγέλιο, **δὲν τολμοῦν νὰ ποῦν ὑβριστικὸ ἢ βλάσφημο λόγο** στὸ Χριστό. «*Τί ἡμῖν καὶ σοί, Ἰησοῦ υἱέ τοῦ Θεοῦ*», λένε τρέμοντας, «*ἤλθες ὧδε πρὸ καιροῦ βασανίσαι ἡμᾶς*» (Ματθ. 12). Ἐσὺ λοιπόν, πού ἀνοίγεις τὸ βρωμερό σου στόμα καὶ βλαστημᾶς τὸ Χριστό, τὴν Παναγιά καὶ τοὺς ἁγίους, εἶσαι χειρότερος ἀπὸ τὸ διάβολο. Γιατί ὁ διάβολος ὅλα τ' ἁμαρτήματα τὰ κάνει, ἓνα ἁμάρτημα δὲν τὸ κάνει· δὲν βλαστημάει τὸ Θεό.

Ἄκου πῶς μιλάνε οἱ δαίμονες: «*Ἦλθες ὧδε πρὸ καιροῦ βασανίσαι ἡμᾶς*»! Γνωρίζουν, ὅτι ἡ κακία τους θὰ λάβῃ τέλος, **ἀναγνωρίζουν τὴν ἐξουσία τοῦ Χριστοῦ** καὶ κατὰ ἓνα τρόπο τοῦ ζητοῦν παράτασι. Δὲν ἤρθε ἀκόμη, λένε, ἡ ὥρα μας νὰ τιμωρηθοῦμε. Σὰν τὸν κακοῦρ-

γο, πού ζητάει στὸ δικαστήριο ἀναβολὴ τῆς δίκης, νὰ κερδίσῃ χρόνο καὶ νὰ μὴ φτάσῃ ἡ ὥρα τῆς ἐκτελέσεώς του.

Κ' ἐπειδὴ τὰ δαιμόνια δὲν μποροῦν νὰ σταθοῦν λεπτὸ χωρὶς νὰ κάνουν κακὸ σὲ κάποιον, ἔστω καὶ σὲ ζῶο ἂν ὄχι σὲ ἀνθρώπο, λένε: Κάπου πρέπει νὰ πᾶμε· ἀφοῦ μᾶς κάνεις βιαιὰ ἔξωσι ἀπὸ τοὺς δύο ἀνθρώπους ὅπου εἴχαμε φωλιάσει, σὲ παρακαλοῦμε, δός μας σπίτι νὰ μείνουμε, δός μας τὸ δικαίωμα νὰ πᾶμε στοὺς χοίρους. Καὶ ὁ Κύριος τοὺς δίνει τὴν ἄδεια. «*Ἐπάγετε*», νὰ πᾶτε, λέει. Καὶ ἀπ' ἐδῶ τί μαθαίνουμε· ὅτι, ἂν δὲν ἐγκρίνη καὶ δὲν παραχωρήσῃ ὁ Θεός, τίποτε δὲν μποροῦν νὰ κάνουν οἱ δαίμονες· **χωρὶς τὴν ἄδειά του εἶνε δέσμοι**, οὔτε κἂν τὰ ζῶα δὲν μποροῦν νὰ πειράξουν, πόσο μᾶλλον τοὺς ἀνθρώπους!

Ὁ Κύριος **ἐπέτρεψε τὴν τιμωρία αὐτῆ δικάως**, γιατί αὐτοὶ πού ἔτρεφαν τοὺς χοίρους ἔκαναν παράνομο ἐμπόριο· καὶ τὰ ἁμαρτωλὰ ἐμπόρια ὁ Θεὸς δὲν τὰ θέλει. Μέσα σὲ λίγα λεπτὰ σκορπίστηκε ἡ παράνομη περιουσία· «*τ' ἀνεμομαζέματα διαβολοσκορπίσματα*». Ἐτσι θὰ ῥθῃ μέρα, πού κάθε ἀτιμία θὰ τιμωρηθῇ.

Ἔχε πίστι στὸ Θεὸ καὶ κάθισε στὸ φτωχὸ καλυβάκι σου πού ἔνε εὐλογημένο· τὸ χτίσε ὁ πατέρας σου ἢ ἐσὺ ὁ ἴδιος μὲ τὸν ἰδρώτα σου, κ' εἶνε παλάτι, ἐνῶ τὰ σπίτια τὰ μεγάλα, πού χτίστηκαν μὲ ἀτιμίες καὶ κομπίνες καὶ κλεψιές, θὰ γίνουν σκορποχώρι, ὅπως σκορποχώρι ἐγίνε ἡ ἀνομη περιουσία τῆς ἀγέλης.

* * *

Ὅλο τὸ εὐαγγέλιο, ἀγαπητοί μου, τί κηρύττει; τὴν ὑπαρξὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ. Γιατί φοβερὰ εἶνε τὰ διάφορα ἄλλα κακὰ καὶ φοβερώτερο ἀπ' ὅλα ὁ σατανᾶς, ἀλλὰ πιὸ ἰσχυρὸς κι ἀπὸ τὸ σατανᾶ εἶνε ὁ Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ὁ Ναζωραῖος. Μιὰ μέρα μπροστά του ὄλοι καὶ ὄλα, κι αὐτοὶ ἀκόμα οἱ δαίμονες, «*θὰ κάμψουν τὸ γόνυ*» (Ματθ. 2,10). **Δόξα σοι, Χριστέ βασιλεῦ αἰώνιε!**

Γι' αὐτὸ **πίστευε** στὴν ὑπαρξὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ **καὶ μὴ φοβᾶσαι τίποτα**. Οὔτε δαίμονες, οὔτε ἀνθρώποι, οὔτε μάγοι μποροῦν νὰ σὲ βλάψουν. Ἐχεις τὸ Χριστό; πιστεύεις, μετανοεῖς, προσεύχεσαι, κοινωνεῖς; ἂς μαζευτοῦν οἱ διάβολοι κι ἂς βγοῦν στὴ γῆ· ἓνας Χριστιανὸς μὲ τὴν πίστι τοῦ Χριστοῦ θὰ καταδιώξῃ λεγεῶνες δαιμονίων. «*Αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ νίκη ἡ νικήσασα τὸν κόσμον, ἡ πίστις ἡμῶν*» (1^η Ἰω. 5,4). «*Γνωτε, ἔθνη, καὶ ἠττάσθε...*, ὅτι μεθ' ἡμῶν ὁ Θεός» (1^η Ἰω. 10). «*ἠττάσθε*»! δὲν θὰ νικήσουν οἱ δαίμονες, θὰ νικήσῃ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὁ Ναζωραῖος· ὄν, παῖδες, ὑμνεῖτε καὶ υπερηψοῦτε εἰς πάντας τοὺς αἰῶνας· ἀμήν.

(†) **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 Holy Bishop Martyr Pancratius

Sicily was home to many early Christian saints, and the arena of their martyrdom. One of the first saints of that ancient island is the Holy Martyr, Pancratius of Taormina.

St. Pancratius, Bishop of Taormina, was born when our Lord Jesus Christ still walked upon the earth. The parents of Pancratius were natives of Antioch. Legend has it that hearing the good news of Jesus Christ, Pancratius' father took his young son with him and went to Jerusalem in order to see the great Teacher. The miracles astonished Pancratius, and when he heard the divine teaching, he then believed in Christ as the Son of God. He became close with the disciples of the Lord, and during this time the young Pancratius got to know the holy Apostle Peter.

The legend continues that after the Ascension of Our Savior, one of the Apostles came to Antioch and baptized the parents of Pancratius together with their entire household. When the parents of

Pancratius died, he left behind his inherited possessions and went to Pontus and began to live in a cave, spending his days in prayer and deep spiritual contemplation. The holy Apostle Peter, while passing through those parts, visited Pancratius at Pontus. He took him along to Antioch, and then to Sicily, where the holy Apostle Paul then was. There the holy Apostles Peter and Paul made St Pancratius Bishop of Taormina in Sicily.

St Pancratius toiled zealously for the Christian conversion of the people and the numbers of believers quickly grew with almost all the people of Taormina and the surrounding cities accepting the Christian Faith. St Pancratius governed his flock peacefully for many years. Non-believers, however, plotted against the saint, and seizing an appropriate moment, they stoned him. Thus, St Pancratius ended his life as a martyr.

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