

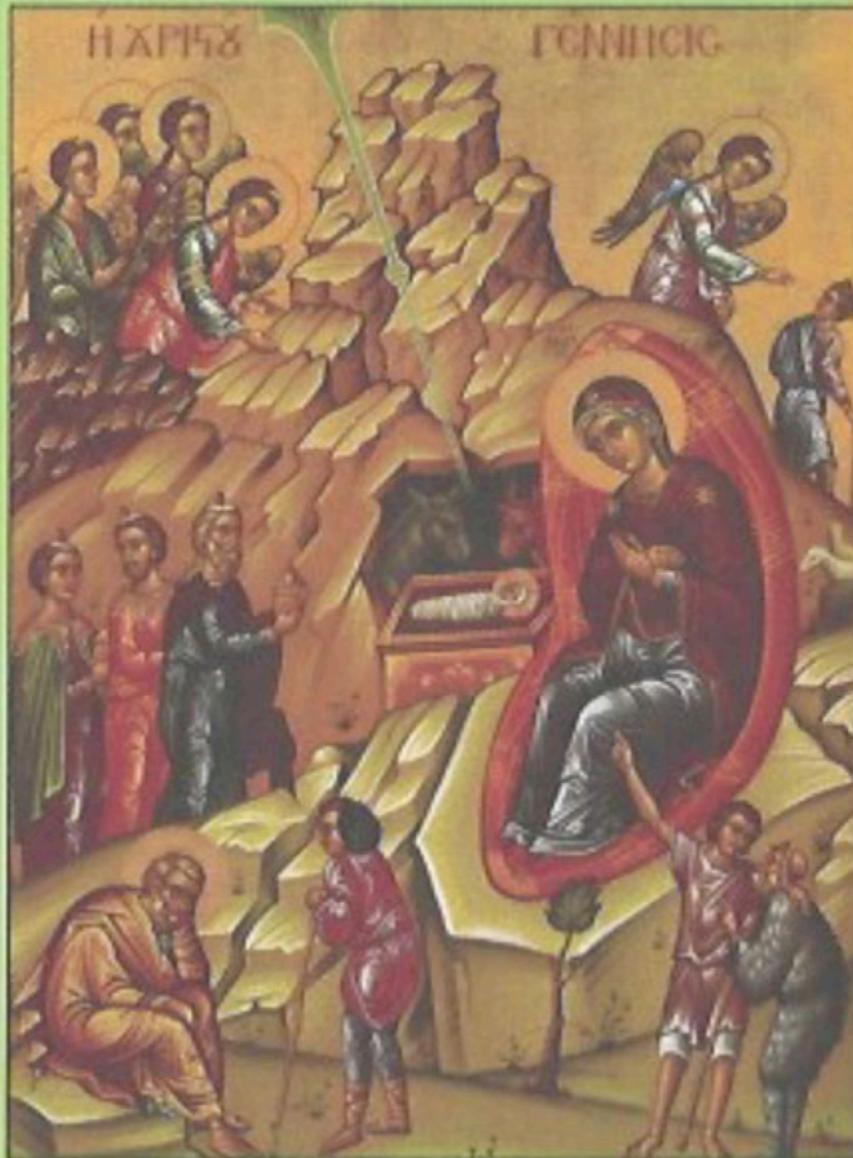


DIRECT ARCHDIOCESAN  
DISTRICT

# THREE HIERARCHS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

SUNDAY WEEKLY BULLETIN December 24th, 2017  
V. Rev. Archimandrite Eugene N. Pappas

## SUNDAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS



*Icon of the Nativity of Our Lord*

St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 11:9-10; 32-40

**Prokeimenon. Mode 4.**

**Daniel 3.26,27**

Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of our fathers.

Verse: For you are just in all you have done.

The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 11:9-10; 32-40

BRETHREN, by faith Abraham sojourned in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked forward to the city which has foundation, whose builder and maker is God.

And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets - who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, received promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were killed with the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated - of whom the world was not worthy - wandering over deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

Πρὸς Ἑβραίους 11:9-10, 32-40

**Προκείμενον. Ἦχος δ'.**

**Δανιήλ 3.26-27**

Εὐλογητὸς εἶ, Κύριε, ὁ Θεὸς τῶν Πατέρων ἡμῶν.

Στίχ. Ὅτι δίκαιος εἶ ἐπὶ πάντιν, οἷς ἐποίησας ἡμῖν.

Πρὸς Ἑβραίους 11:9-10, 32-40 τὸ ἀνάγνωσμα εἶναι ἀπο

Ἀδελφοί, πίστει παρώκησεν Ἀβραὰμ εἰς τὴν γῆν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας ὡς ἀλλοτρίαν, ἐν σκηναῖς κατοικήσας μετὰ Ἰσαὰκ καὶ Ἰακώβ τῶν συγγληρονόμων τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τῆς αὐτῆς· ἐξεδέχετο γὰρ τὴν τοὺς θεμελίους ἔχουσαν πόλιν, ἧς τεχνίτης καὶ δημιουργὸς ὁ Θεός. Καὶ τί ἔτι λέγω; Ἐπλειψεὶ γάρ με διηγούμενον ὁ χρόνος περὶ Γεδεών, Βαράκ τε καὶ Σαμψὼν καὶ Ἰεφθάε, Δαυὶδ τε καὶ Σαμουὴλ καὶ τῶν προφητῶν, οἱ διὰ πίστεως κατηγωνίσαντο βασιλείας, εἰργάσαντο δικαιοσύνην, ἐπέτυχον ἐπαγγελιῶν, ἔφραξαν στόματα λεόντων, ἔσβησαν δύναμιν πυρός, ἔφυγον στόματα μαχαίρας, ἐνεδυναμώθησαν ἀπὸ ἀσθενείας, ἐγενήθησαν ἰσχυροὶ ἐν πολέμῳ, παρεμβολὰς ἔκλιναν ἀλλοτρίων· ἔλαβον γυναῖκες ἐξ ἀναστάσεως τοὺς νεκροὺς αὐτῶν· ἄλλοι δὲ ἐτυμpanίσθησαν, οὐ προσδεξάμενοι τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν, ἵνα κρεῖττονος ἀναστάσεως τύχωσιν· ἕτεροι δὲ ἐμπαιγμῶν καὶ μαστίγων πείραν ἔλαβον, ἔτι δὲ δεσμῶν καὶ φυλακῆς· ἐλιθάσθησαν, ἐπρίσθησαν, ἐπειράσθησαν, ἐν φόβῳ μαχαίρας ἀπέθανον, περιήλθον ἐν μηλωταῖς, ἐν αἰγείοις δέρμασιν, ὑστερούμενοι, θλιβόμενοι, κακουχούμενοι, ὧν οὐκ ἦν ἄξιος ὁ κόσμος, ἐν ἐρημίαις πλανώμενοι καὶ ὄρεσι καὶ σπηλαίοις καὶ ταῖς ὄποις τῆς γῆς. Καὶ οὗτοι πάντες μαρτυρηθέντες διὰ τῆς πίστεως οὐκ ἐκομίσαντο τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν, τοῦ Θεοῦ περὶ ἡμῶν κρεῖττον τι προβλεψαμένου, ἵνα μὴ χωρὶς ἡμῶν τελειωθῶσι.

Ἐκ τοῦ Κατὰ Ματθαῖον 1:1-25 Εὐαγγελίου τὸ Ἀνάγνωσμα

Βίβλος γενέσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, υἱοῦ Δαυὶδ υἱοῦ Ἀβραάμ. Ἀβραὰμ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἰσαὰκ, Ἰσαὰκ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἰακώβ, Ἰακώβ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἰούδαν καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς αὐτοῦ, Ἰούδας δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Φαρὲς καὶ τὸν Ζαρά ἐκ τῆς Θάμαρ, Φαρὲς δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἑσρῶμ, Ἑσρῶμ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἀράμ, Ἀράμ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἀμιναδάβ, Ἀμιναδάβ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ναασσῶν, Ναασσῶν δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Σαλμών, Σαλμών δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Βοὸζ ἐκ τῆς Ῥαχάβ, Βοὸζ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ὠβηδ ἐκ τῆς Ῥούθ, Ὠβηδ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἰεσσαί, Ἰεσσαί δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Δαυὶδ τὸν βασιλέα. Δαυὶδ δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐγέννησε τὸν Σολομῶνα ἐκ τῆς τοῦ Οὐρίου, Σολομῶν δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ῥοβοάμ, Ῥοβοάμ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἀβιά, Ἀβιά δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἀσά, Ἀσά δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἰωσαφάτ, Ἰωσαφάτ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἰωράμ, Ἰωράμ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ὀζίας, Ὀζίας δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἰωάθαμ, Ἰωάθαμ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἀχαζ, Ἀχαζ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἐζεκίαν, Ἐζεκίας δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Μανασσῆ, Μανασσῆ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἀμὼν, Ἀμὼν δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἰωσίαν, Ἰωσίας δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἰεχονίαν καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τῆς μετοικεσίας Βαβυλώνος. Μετὰ δὲ τὴν μετοικεσίαν Βαβυλώνος Ἰεχονίας ἐγέννησε τὸν Σαλαθιήλ, Σαλαθιήλ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ζοροβάβελ, Ζοροβάβελ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἀβιοὺδ, Ἀβιοὺδ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἐλιακίμ, Ἐλιακίμ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἀζῶρ, Ἀζῶρ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Σαδώκ, Σαδώκ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἀχειμ, Ἀχειμ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἐλιοὺδ, Ἐλιοὺδ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἐλεάζαρ, Ἐλεάζαρ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ματθάν, Ματθάν δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἰακώβ, Ἰακώβ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν Ἰωσήφ τὸν ἄνδρα Μαρίας, ἐξ ἧς ἐγεννήθη Ἰησοῦς ὁ λεγόμενος Χριστός. Πᾶσαι οὖν αἱ γενεαὶ ἀπὸ Ἀβραάμ ἕως Δαυὶδ γενεαὶ δεκατέσσαρες, καὶ ἀπὸ Δαυὶδ ἕως τῆς μετοικεσίας Βαβυλώνος γενεαὶ δεκατέσσαρες, καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς μετοικεσίας Βαβυλώνος ἕως τοῦ Χριστοῦ γενεαὶ δεκατέσσαρες. Τοῦ δὲ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἡ γέννησις οὕτως ἦν. μνηστευθεῖσιν γὰρ τῆς μητρὸς αὐτοῦ Μαρίας τῷ Ἰωσήφ, πρὶν ἢ συνελθεῖν αὐτοὺς εὐρέθη ἐν γαστρὶ ἔχουσα ἐκ Πνεύματος Ἁγίου. Ἰωσήφ δὲ ὁ ἀνήρ αὐτῆς, δίκαιος ὢν καὶ μὴ θέλων αὐτὴν παραδειγματίσαι, ἐβουλήθη λάθρα ἀπολύσαι αὐτήν. ταῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ ἐνθυμηθέντος ἰδοὺ ἄγγελος Κυρίου κατ' ὄναρ ἐφάνη αὐτῷ λέγων· Ἰωσήφ υἱὸς Δαυὶδ, μὴ φοβηθῆς παραλαβεῖν Μαριάμ τὴν γυναῖκα σου· τὸ γὰρ ἐν αὐτῇ γεννηθὲν ἐκ Πνεύματος ἁγίου ἐστίν Ἁγίου. τέξεται δὲ υἱὸν καὶ καλέσεις τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦν· αὐτὸς γὰρ σώσει τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν. Τοῦτο δὲ ὅλον γέγονεν ἵνα πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν ὑπὸ τοῦ Κυρίου διὰ τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος· ἰδοὺ ἡ παρθένος ἐν γαστρὶ ἔξει καὶ τέξεται υἱόν, καὶ καλέσους τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἐμμανουήλ, ὃ ἐστὶ μεθερμηνευόμενον μεθ' ἡμῶν ὁ Θεός. Διεγερευθεὶς δὲ ὁ Ἰωσήφ ἀπὸ τοῦ ὕπνου ἐποίησεν ὡς προσέταξεν αὐτῷ ὁ ἄγγελος Κυρίου καὶ παρέλαβε τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ, καὶ οὐκ ἐγίνωσκεν αὐτὴν ἕως οὗ ἔτεκε τὸν υἱὸν αὐτῆς τὸν πρωτότοκον, καὶ ἐκάλεσε τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦν.

## DEVOTIONS THIS WEEK:

Sunday	December 24th,	Vesperal Liturgical Observance	10:30 P.M.
Monday	December 25th,	CHRISTMAS NATIVITY LITURGY	10:30 A.M.
Sunday	December 31st,	FINAL SUNDAY of the YEAR LITURGY	10:30 A.M.
Sunday	December 31st,	New Year's Eve MIDNIGHT blessing	Midnight

in the hallowed atmosphere of a candle-lighted church-Doxology blessing are imparted on all in the church as individuals or coming forward to the altar as family groupings. The CHURCH is open from 11:30 P.M.....

**AGAPE COFFEE FELLOWSHIP:** this Sunday is being hosted by the Parish Council. Please join us in **WHITEHALL FOR CHRISTMAS REFRESHMENTS. OPEN TO ALL**

**GREEK SCHOOL NEWS:** Congratulations to the children of our GREEK SCHOOL who presented their Christmas Pageant in Church last week. Brava! Brava! to our faculty members Mrs. Zoe Anastasakos and Mrs. Maria Halkias for their professional diligence. A fond 'hooray' to the P.T.A. for the sumptuous Agape Coffee Fellowship reception in Whitehall after the production.

**CALENDARS 2018 :** The bilingual GREEK/English and the RUSSIAN/English Liturgical Calendars were mailed to the homes of all the Parish registered stewards. Did you get yours? Are you registered as a supporting steward (member) of the parish and Archdiocese. Make a resolution now, sign up in the Church Office for the NEW YEAR 2018! Get your coveted calendar while they last.

**NATIVITY CARD:** heralding the birth of our LORD JESUS CHRIST has been posted to 1,000 homes in the parish community. Did you get yours? Everyone is looking for your name....hope it's there. Santa Claus is looking too!

**NEW YEAR RESERVATIONS:** for the Annual GALA REVEILLON in Rose-hall are being taken NOW. Please check the centerfold for further details. Our event is safe, convenient, friendly, festive, with an incredulous dinner and full top shelf open bar from 9:00 P.M till dawn! Will you join us? Call now and be assured. RESERVE YOUR SEAT!

**QUIET DONOR:** A lifelong member of the Parish, recently made a Christmas donation to his beloved parish. When asked for the specific direction of the gift, he humbly responded ' FOR THE GENERAL BENEFIT OF MY CHURCH'. He remains anonymous as requested, however we are indeed most appreciative of his TEN THOUSAND DOLLAR ( \$10,000.) gift to Three Hierarchs . God Bless his intentions.

**WINE DONORS** are to be applauded for the keen response to our altar plea for sacramental wine to be used in the upcoming festal season. It's just such a simple thing that puts a smile on the face of Jesus as well as all who commune the blessed Eucharist! ALLELUJIA! ( altar supply ) is very limited) We are grateful for any and all donations for the purchase of the appropriate wine. Please see Father Eugene or visit KINGSWAY LIQUORS – our supplier.

**MARK THE CALENDAR:** Monday , January 15th, (MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY ) the gracious ladies of the PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY will present the 85th, ANNUAL LUNCHEON at Russo on the Bay Caterers at 12 noon. It is always a major success and hit as the ladies celebrate their philanthropic efforts for charities outside the parish walls. Dining, dancing, and prizes galore!!! Please join us and bring a friend too. Three Ladies will be honored by the Chapter:  
Niki Bouroutis, Maritsa Konstas and Eleni Lambrakis.

**BOYS SCOUTS CAMP:** the **GOLDEN GREEKS'** will host their first camping trip of the New Year 2018 on the first weekend of January 05,06,07 – AT camp Alpine, New Jersey. Brrrr! Have fun boys!

**RADIO MINISTRY:** Each Saturday at 1:15PM Fr. Eugene hosts and produces the radio broadcast **MATTERS OF CONSCIENCE NOW IN ITS 19<sup>TH</sup> 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](http://LIVESTREAMINGPLAYER) . The website address. [W.W.W.gaepis.org](http://W.W.W.gaepis.org) ([Click live audio](#))

**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 .





# Merry Christmas!



The Senior Club celebrated the leadership dedication of SYLVIA VELLIOS for the Mr. and Mrs. Club over the past 33 years. Her undaunting stamina, inspiration, blood, sweat and tears were expended with loving dedication to the 'CLUB' at Three Hierarchs. Pictured are Senior Club members Haido Theodosakis, Carol Janetakis, Father Eugene, SYLVIA VELLIOS and Seniors' President Helen Pavlides at the festivities on Saint Eugene Day - December 13th.





# ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ

## ΣΥΝΤΟΜΟΝ ΚΗΡΥΓΜΑ



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

Ἐκδίδεται ἀπὸ τὴν Κοινοβιακὴ Γυναίκα Τερτὸ Μονὴ Ἁγίου Αὐγουστίνου Φλώρινης - 531 00 ΦΛΩΡΙΝΑ - τηλ. 23050-20610 - imailio@yahoo.gr

Περίοδος Δ' - Ἔτος ΛΔ'  
Φλώρινα - ἀριθμ. φύλλου 2057

Κυριακὴ πρὸ Χρ. Γεννήσεως (Ματθ. 1,1-25)  
24 Δεκεμβρίου 2017

Συντάκτης (†) ἐπίσκοπος  
Αὐγουστίνος Ν. Καντιώτης

## Ἡ ἀρετὴ τοῦ Μνήστορος

«Ἰωσήφ δὲ ὁ ἀνὴρ αὐτῆς, δίκαιος ὢν καὶ μὴ θέλων αὐτὴν παραδειγματίσαι, ἐβουλήθη λάθρα ἀπολύσαι αὐτήν» (Ματθ. 1,19)

Στὸ μυστήριον τῆς ἐνσάρκου οἰκονομίας πού ἐορτάζουμε, τῆς ἐνανθρωπήσεως δηλαδή τοῦ Υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὑπηρετήσε, ἀγαπητοί μου, ὁ Ἰωσήφ, πού τὸ γενεαλογικὸ του δένδρο περιέχεται στὸ πρῶτο κεφάλαιο τοῦ κατὰ Ματθαῖον Εὐαγγελίου καὶ τὸ ἀκούσαμε σήμερα ὡς εὐαγγελικὸ ἀνάγνωσμα τῆς Κυριακῆς πρὸ τῆς Χριστοῦ Γεννήσεως (βλ. Ματθ. 1,1-16).

Ἀλλὰ ποιὸς ἦταν ὁ Ἰωσήφ; Ἦταν ἓνας ἀπὸ τοὺς ταπεινοὺς κατοίκους ἑνὸς ἄσημου χωριοῦ τῆς Γαλιλαίας, τῆς κωμοπόλεως Ναζαρέτ, πού μεταξὺ τῶν Ἰσραηλιτῶν δὲν φαίνεται νὰ ἔχαιρε καὶ πολὺ μεγάλης ὑπολήψεως (βλ. βλ. 1,17). Ἦταν ἓνας ἀπλὸς τεχνίτης, μαραγκὸς στὸ ἐπάγγελμα. Ζοῦσε καὶ συντηροῦσε τὴν οἰκογένειά του κοπιᾶζοντας καὶ μοχθῶντας μὲ τὰ χέρια του. Μετὰ τὸ θάνατο τῆς γυναίκας του εἶχε μείνει ἐν χρεοῖα, μόνος στὴν ἀνατροφή καὶ ἀποκατάστασι τῶν παιδιῶν του.

Αὐτὸς λοιπὸν ὁ ἀπλοϊκὸς ἄνθρωπος ἐξελέγη ἀπὸ τὴ Θεία Πρόνοια, γιὰ νὰ παίξῃ ἓνα μοναδικὸ ρόλο στὸ σχέδιο τῆς σωτηρίας τοῦ κόσμου. Τὸν κάλεσε ὁ Θεὸς καὶ τοῦ ἀνέθεσε τὴν ἐξῆς ἄκρως ἐμπιστευτικὴ ἀποστολή. Σὲ προχωρημένη ἤδη ἡλικία, ἀνέλαβε νὰ ἐμφανισθῇ δίπλα στὴν Παναγία, τὴν ὁποία μνηστεύθηκε παραλαμβάνοντάς τὴν ἀπὸ τὸ ναό, καὶ ἀπὸ τὴ θέσι αὐτή, ὡς μνηστήρας τῆς Παρθένου, νὰ ὑπηρετήσῃ στὸ μέγα μυστήριον τῆς ἐνσάρκου οἰκονομίας. Μὲ τὴν παρουσία του δίπλα στὴν ἐγκυμονοῦσα θὰ ἐκάλυπτε τὴν εὐλογη ὑπόνοια τῶν ἀνθρώπων καί, ἐνῶ δὲν εἶχε καμμία συζυγικὴ σχέσι μαζί της, θὰ παρουσιαζόταν ὡς πατέρας τοῦ Παιδιοῦ πού θὰ ἐγεννᾶτο, φυλάσσοντας τὸ ἀκριβὸ μυστικὸ στὰ βάθη τῆς καρδιάς του μέχρι τὸ τέλος τῆς ζωῆς του. Ἔτσι ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ θὰ κατέβαινε στὴ Γῆ διαφεύγοντας τὴν προσοχὴ ὄχι μόνον τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτοῦ τοῦ διαβόλου. Οἱ

πατέρες καὶ διδάσκαλοι τῆς Ἐκκλησίας λένε, ὅτι δύο πράγματα διεφύγαν τὴν προσοχὴ τοῦ διαβόλου, ἡ παρθενία τῆς Παναγίας καὶ ἡ θεότης τοῦ ἐνανθρωπήσαντος Υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ. Ἔτσι ἐξαπατήθηκε ὁ μέγας ἀπατεώνας καὶ συνετελέσθη ἡ δική μας σωτηρία. Στὸ σχέδιο αὐτὸ συνέπραξε σημαντικὰ ὁ ἅγιος Ἰωσήφ.

Ἡ ὅλη του διαγωγή καὶ συμπεριφορὰ ἀπέναντι στὸ συντελεσθὲν μυστήριον ἀπέδειξε, ὅτι στὸ πρόσωπό του ἡ Θεία Πρόνοια ἐξέλεξε τὸν κατάλληλο ἄνθρωπο. Ἡ κλησι του ἦταν ὑψηλὴ ἀλλὰ συγχρόνως βαρεῖα καὶ γεμάτη εὐθύνης· ἐκλήθη νὰ γίνῃ ὁ κηδεμόνας, ὁ θετὸς πατέρας τοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁ προστάτης τῆς Παρθένου Μαρίας. Καὶ ὁ Ἰωσήφ ἀνταποκρίθηκε τελείως στὴν κλησι αὐτή καὶ ἐξετέλεσε ἄψογα τὸ καθῆκον του.

Ἔδειξε ἀρετὴ μεγάλη καὶ θαυμαστή. Μερικὰ σημεῖα ἀπὸ τὴ λάμψι αὐτῆς τῆς ἀρετῆς θὰ ἐπισημάνουμε τώρα ἐμεῖς ἐδῶ.

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● Ὁ Ἰωσήφ, ἀγαπητοί μου, ὅταν ἀντιλήφθηκε τὴν ἐγκυμοσύνη τῆς Παρθένου, ἔδειξε τὴν ἡμερότητα καὶ τὴν ἐπιείκεια τῆς ψυχῆς του.

Μέχρι τὴν περίοδο ἐκείνη δὲν ἐγνώριζε ἀκόμη τίποτε, δὲν φανταζόταν ποιοῦ βαθύ μυστήριον ἔκρυβε ἡ ἐγκυμοσύνη αὐτή. Ἦταν λοιπὸν φυσικὸ νὰ ὑποψιασθῇ, νὰ πάῃ ἡ σκέψι του στὸ πονηρὸ καὶ νὰ περάσουν ἀπὸ τὸ νοῦ του θλιβεροὶ λογισμοὶ κατὰ τῆς ἀγιότητος τῆς Παρθένου. Σὲ τέτοιες περιπτώσεις καὶ μία μόνο κακὴ ὑπόνοια εἶνε δυνατόν νὰ ξεσηκώσῃ στὴν καρδιά τοῦ συζύγου φοβερὰ κύματα ζηλοτυπίας καὶ ν' ἀρχίσῃ νὰ σκέπτεται Ὅστε λοιπὸν μὲ ἀπάτησε; δὲν φάνηκε πιστὴ σ' ἐμένα;... Ὁ Ἰωσήφ εἶχε μὲ τὸ μέρος του τὸ μωσαϊκὸ νόμο καὶ θὰ σκεπτόταν Ἐμπορῶ νὰ τὴν διαπομπεύσω, νὰ στιγματίσω τὴν πράξι της; θὰ τὴν ὀδηγήσω στὸ εἰδικὸ δικαστήριον πού τι

μωρεϊ ἀμείλικτα, με θάνατο, τις μοιχαλίδες... Αυτό θα ἔκανε ὁποιοσδήποτε ἄλλος βλέποντας τὴν ἐγκυμοσύνη τῆς Παρθένου.

Ἄλλὰ ὁ Ἰωσήφ, ὅπως τὸν χαρακτηρίζει ὁ εὐαγγελιστὴς Ματθαῖος, εἶνε «*ἄνθρωπος δίκαιος*» (ἐλ. 1,19), δηλαδή ἐνάρετος, ἡμερος, ἐπιεικὴς. Δὲν χάνει τὴν ψυχραιμία του καὶ δὲν ἀκολουθεῖ τὰ ἄκρα. Γνωρίζει, ὅτι ἡ ἀπόλυτη δικαιοσύνη ὁδηγεῖ πολλές φορές σὲ ἀδικίες καὶ ἠθικὲς βλάβες· καί, ὡς ἄνθρωπος συνेतὸς, καλοκάγαθος καὶ ταπεινός, **βασανίζει τὸ πρᾶγμα**. Τέλος καταλήγει στὴν ἀπόφασί, τὴν ὁποία με λίγες λέξεις σημειώνει ὁ εὐαγγελιστὴς· «*Ἰωσήφ δὲ ὁ ἄνθρωπος αὐτῆς, δίκαιος ὢν καὶ μὴ θέλων αὐτὴν παραδειγματίσαι, ἐβουλήθη λάθρα ἀπολύσαι αὐτήν*» (ἐλ. 1,20)· ἐπειδὴ εἶνε ἄνθρωπος ἐνάρετος, δὲν θέλει νὰ τὴν διαπομπεύσῃ καὶ **σκέφτηκε νὰ τὴν ἀποπέμψῃ ἀπὸ τὸ σπίτι του ἀνεπίσημα καὶ ἀθόρυβα**. Τί μεγαλεῖο ψυχῆς περιγράφεται στὸν στίχο αὐτὸν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου! Ὁ Ἰωσήφ ἀποφάσισε νὰ πηῖ μόνος του τὸ ποτῆρι τῆς ὀδύνης. Δὲν θὰ κἀνῃ λόγο σὲ κανένα, οὐδὲ σ' αὐτὴ τὴν ἴδια, γιὰ νὰ μὴν τὴν λυπήσῃ. Μὲ τρόπο κατάλληλο θὰ τὴν ἀπομακρύνῃ ἀπὸ τὸ σπίτι του, χωρὶς νὰ πάρῃ κανέναν εἶδησι.

Εἶνε νὰ μὴ θαυμάσῃ κανεὶς τὸν ἄνδρα αὐτὸν γιὰ τὴν ἡμερότητα τῆς ψυχῆς του; **Ἔδειξε** στὸ σπουδαῖο αὐτὸ περιστατικὸ τῆς ζωῆς του τέτοια **ἀρετὴ**, πού σπάνια –Χριστιανοὶ ἔμεῖς– δείχνουμε σὲ παρόμοια περιστατικὰ τῆς οἰκογενειακῆς μας ζωῆς.

● Ἄλλὰ καὶ **ὑποταγὴ στὸ θέλημα τοῦ παντοκράτορος Κυρίου** ἔδειξε ὁ Ἰωσήφ.

Ὅταν, δηλαδή, σὲ ὄνειρο πού εἶδε, ἄγγελος Κυρίου διέλυσε τις ὑπόνοιές του καὶ τοῦ ἀπεκάλυψε τὸ μέγα μυστήριον, καὶ τὸν διαβεβαίωσε ῥητῶς ὅτι ἡ Παρθένος εἶνε ἀγνή Μητέρα τοῦ μοναδικοῦ τῆς τέκνου, τότε ὁ ἅγιος Ἰωσήφ **πειθεται** στὶς ἀνακοινώσεις τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, **πιστεύει** στὰ ὑπερφυσικὰ αὐτὰ γεγονότα, καὶ **ἡσυχάζει** πλέον.

Ἄλλὰ καὶ ὅταν ὁ ἄγγελος τοῦ μετέφερε τὴν ἐντολὴ τοῦ Θεοῦ «*Μὴ φοβηθῆς παραλαβεῖν Μαριάμ τὴν γυναῖκά σου*», **πειθαρχεῖ** στὴ φωνὴ τοῦ Θεοῦ καί, ὅπως σημειώνει ὁ εὐαγγελιστὴς, «*διεγερθεὶς ὁ Ἰωσήφ ἀπὸ τοῦ ὕπνου ἐποίησεν ὡς προσέταξεν αὐτῷ ὁ ἄγγελος Κυρίου*», ἔκανε ὅ,τι τὸν διέταξε ὁ Κύριος διὰ τοῦ ἀγγέλου του, «*καὶ παρέλαβε τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ*», **πῆρε χωρὶς κανένα δισταγμὸ πλέον τὴ μνηστὴ του Μαριάμ στὸ σπίτι του** (ἐλ. 1,22).

Δὲν εἶνε λοιπὸν ὅλα αὐτὰ **δειγμάτων τῆς ὑπακοῆς** τοῦ θείου αὐτοῦ ἀνδρὸς στὸ θέλημα τοῦ Κυρίου; Δὲν δείχνει με ὅλα αὐτὰ ὁ Ἰωσήφ

ὅτι παραπάνω ἀπὸ τὴ μαρτυρία τῶν αἰσθησῶν του αὐτὸς θέτει τὴ μαρτυρία τοῦ ἀγγέλου, δηλαδή τὴν προσταγὴ τοῦ Θεοῦ;

● Ἄλλὰ **ἡ ἀρετὴ τοῦ Ἰωσήφ δὲν ἐκδηλώθηκε** μόνο κατὰ τὴν περίοδο τῆς ἐγκυμοσύνης τῆς Παναγίας οὔτε μόνο στὸν καιρὸ τῆς γεννήσεως τοῦ Σωτῆρος· φάνηκε καθαρὰ **καὶ στὸ ἐπόμενο διάστημα**. Καὶ μετὰ τὴν θεία γέννησι καὶ μέχρι τὴν ἡμέρα τοῦ θανάτου του (πέθανε, κατὰ τὴν ἀρχαία παράδοσι τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, μετὰ τὸ 12ο ἔτος τῆς ἡλικίας τοῦ Ἰησοῦ) ὁ Ἰωσήφ ὑπηρετήσε με ἀφοσίωσι τὸ μυστήριον τῆς ἐνσάρκου οἰκονομίας.

Ἀκολούθησε τὴν Παρθένο κατὰ τὴ φυγὴ τῆς **στὴν Αἴγυπτο** καὶ χωρὶς ἀμφιβολία στὸ διάστημα τῆς προσφυγίας καὶ ἐξορίας αὐτῆς ὁ Ἰωσήφ ἦταν ἐκεῖνος πού φρόντιζε ἐκεῖ γιὰ τὴ συντήρησι τῆς Παρθένου καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ τῆς.

**Στὴ Ναζαρέτ**, ὅπου μετὰ τὴν ἐπάνοδό τους ἐγκαταστάθηκαν, καὶ ἐκεῖ ἦταν ὁ προστάτης τους. Μὲ στοργὴ παρακολουθοῦσε τὸ μικρὸ Ἰησοῦ σὲ ὅλα του τὰ βήματα. Τὸν ἀγαποῦσε σὰν παιδί του –μολονότι δὲν ἦταν παιδί του–, τὸν ἀγαποῦσε περισσότερο ἀπὸ παιδί του.

Γι' αὐτὸ τὸν βλέπουμε νὰ συνοδεύῃ τὸν Ἰησοῦ 12ετῆ **στὰ Ἱεροσόλυμα** καὶ με ἀγωνία μεγάλη νὰ τὸν ἀναζητῇ στοὺς δρόμους τῆς ἀγίας πόλεως ὅταν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐπὶ τρεῖς ἡμέρες ἔμεινε στὸν οἶκο τοῦ Θεοῦ. Καὶ ποῖά ἦταν ἡ χαρὰ του ὅταν τὸν συνάντησε στὸ ναο!

Κατόπιν ἐπέστρεψε μαζί του στὴ Ναζαρέτ, κ' ἐκεῖ ὁ δίκαιος κοιμήθηκε τὸν ὕπνο τοῦ δικαίου. **Εἶχε πλέον ἐκπληρώσει τὴν ἀποστολὴ του**.

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Τὸ παράδειγμα τοῦ Ἰωσήφ, ἀγαπητοί μου, ἂς εἶνε διδασκαλία γιὰ ὅλους μας. Γιατὶ κ' ἔμεῖς, ὅπως ἐκεῖνος, ἔχουμε νὰ ἐκπληρώσουμε μία ἀποστολὴ· **νὰ υπηρετήσουμε στὰ σχέδια τοῦ ἔργου τῆς Θείας Οἰκονομίας**. Γιὰ νὰ προαχθῇ ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, γιὰ νὰ ἐλκυσθοῦν ψυχὰς στὴ σωτηρία, ἂς ἐμπνευσθοῦμε ἀπὸ τὸ παράδειγμα τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ μνηστορος Ἰωσήφ.

**Ἄς υπηρετήσουμε κ' ἔμεῖς τὸν Κύριο**, καὶ στὰ ἐλάχιστα του ἔργα, με ἡρεμία καὶ ἐπιεικεία, με ὑπακοὴ καὶ ὑποταγὴ στὸ θέλημα τοῦ Κυρίου, με ἀγάπη καὶ ἀφοσίωσι. Καὶ τότε ἀσφαλῶς τὰ ὀνόματά μας, κι ἂν μείνουν ἀγνωστα ἐδῶ στὴ γῆ, θὰ γραφοῦν ὁμοῦς στὰ βιβλία τῶν οὐρανῶν, ὅπως καὶ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ ἀσῆμου τέκτονος τῆς Ναζαρέτ, τοῦ Ἰωσήφ τοῦ μνηστορος, ἐγράφη στὸ ἱερὸ Εὐαγγέλιον καὶ μνημονεύεται ἤδη ἐπὶ τὸσους αἰῶνες.

(†) **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

### *Remember Your Dignity*

Dearly beloved, today our Savior is born; let us rejoice. Sadness should have no place on the birthday of life. The fear of death has been swallowed up; life brings us joy with the promise of eternal happiness.

No one is shut out from this joy; all share the same reason for rejoicing. Our Lord, victor over sin and death, finding no man free from sin, came to free us all. Let the saint rejoice as he sees the palm of victory at hand. Let the sinner be glad as he receives the offer of forgiveness. Let the pagan take courage as he is summoned to life.

In the fullness of time, chosen in the unfathomable depths of God's wisdom, the Son of God took for Himself our common humanity in order to reconcile it with its creator. He came to overthrow the devil, the origin of death, in that very nature by which he had overthrown mankind.

And so at the birth of our Lord the angels sing in joy: Glory to God in the highest, and they pro-

claim peace to his people on earth as they see the heavenly Jerusalem being built from all the nations of the world. When the angels on high are so exultant at this marvelous work of God's goodness, what joy should it not bring to the lowly hearts of men?

Christian, remember your dignity, and now that you share in God's own nature, do not return by sin to your former base condition. Bear in mind who is your head and of whose body you are a member. Do not forget that you have been rescued from the power of darkness and brought into the light of God's kingdom.

Through the Sacrament of Baptism you have become a temple of the Holy Spirit. Do not drive away so great a guest by evil conduct and become again a slave to the devil, for your liberty was bought by the blood of Christ.

*St. Leo the Great*

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