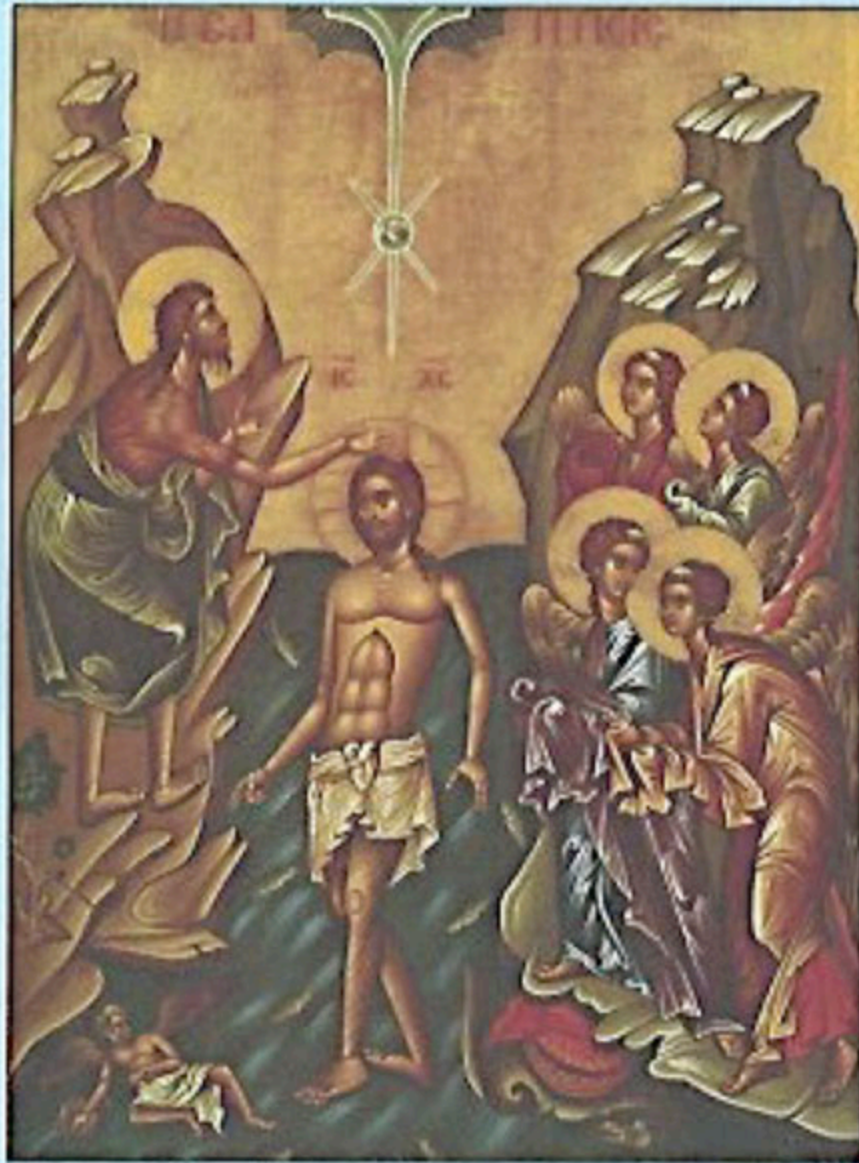


SUNDAY WEEKLY BULLETIN December 31st, 2017
V. Rev. Archimandrite Eugene N. Pappas

SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS



Icon of the Theophany (Epiphany) of Our Lord

St. Paul's Second Letter to Timothy 4:5-8

Prokeimenon. Mode Plagal 2.

Psalm 27.9,1

O Lord, save your people and bless your inheritance.

Verse: To you, O Lord, I have cried, O my God.

The reading is from St. Paul's Second Letter to Timothy 4:5-8

TIMOTHY, my son, always be steady, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil your ministry.

For I am already on the point of being sacrificed; the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

Προκείμενον. Ήχος πλ. β'.

ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 27.9,1

Σῶσον, Κύριε τὸν λαὸν σου καὶ εὐλόγησον τὴν κληρονομίαν σου.

Στίχ. Πρὸς σέ, Κύριε, κεκράζομαι ὁ Θεός μου.

Πρὸς Τιμόθεον β' 4:5-8 τὸ ἀνάγνωσμα εἶναι ἀπο

Τέκνον Τιμόθεε, νῆφε ἐν πᾶσιν, κακοπάθησον, ἔργον ποιήσον εὐαγγελιστοῦ, τὴν διακονίαν σου πληροφόρησον. Ἐγὼ γὰρ ἤδη σπένδομαι, καὶ ὁ καιρὸς τῆς ἐμῆς ἀναλύσεως ἐφέστηκεν. Τὸν ἀγῶνα τὸν καλὸν ἠγώνισμαι, τὸν δρόμον τετέλεκα, τὴν πίστιν τετήρηκα· λουπόν, ἀπόκειται μοι ὁ τῆς δικαιοσύνης στέφανος, ὃν ἀποδώσει μοι ὁ κύριος ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ, ὁ δίκαιος κριτής· οὐ μόνον δὲ ἐμοί, ἀλλὰ καὶ πᾶσιν τοῖς ἠγαπηκόσιν τὴν ἐπιφάνειαν αὐτοῦ

Sunday before Epiphany

The Gospel According to Mark 1:1-8

The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the prophets, 'Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who shall prepare your way; the voice of one crying in the wilderness: prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.' John was baptizing in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And there went out to him all the country of Judea, and all the people of Jerusalem; and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, and had a leather girdle around his waist, and ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, "After me comes he who is mightier than I, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

Ἀρχὴ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ. Ὡς γέγραπται ἐν τοῖς προφήταις, ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω τὸν ἄγγελόν μου πρὸ προσώπου σου, ὃς κατασκευάσει τὴν ὁδὸν σου ἔμπροσθέν σου· φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ, ἐτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν Κυρίου, εὐθείας ποιεῖτε τὰς τρίβους αὐτοῦ, ἐγένετο Ἰωάννης βαπτίζων ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ καὶ κηρύσσων βάπτισμα μετανοίας εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν. Καὶ ἐξεπορεύετο πρὸς αὐτὸν πᾶσα ἡ Ἰουδαία χώρα καὶ οἱ Ἱεροσολυμίται, καὶ ἐβαπτίζοντο πάντες ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ ποταμῷ ὑπὸ αὐτοῦ ἐξομολογούμενοι τὰς ἁμαρτίας αὐτῶν. Ἦν δὲ ὁ Ἰωάννης ἐνδεδυμένος τρίχας καμήλου καὶ ζώνην δερματίνην περὶ τὴν ὀσφὺν αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐσθίων ἀκρίδας καὶ μέλι ἄγριον. Καὶ ἐκήρυσσε λέγων· ἔρχεται ὁ ἰσχυρότερός μου ὀπίσω μου, οὗ οὐκ εἰμὶ ἰκανὸς κύψας λῦσαι τὸν ἱμάντα τῶν ὑποδημάτων αὐτοῦ· ἐγὼ μὲν ἐβάπτισα ὑμᾶς ἐν ὕδατι, αὐτὸς δὲ βαπτίσει ὑμᾶς ἐν Πνεύματι Ἁγίῳ.

Sunday December 31st,
DEVOTIONS THIS WEEK:

There are NO memorials this day nor next Sunday-January 07th.

Sunday	December 31st,	FINAL SUNDAY of the YEAR LITURGY	10:30 A.M.
Sunday	December 31st,	New Year's Eve MIDNIGHT blessing	
		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.....
Monday	January 01,	Liturgy of Saint Basil	9: 30 A.M.
Monday	January 01,	BASILOPITA (Artoklasia)	11:00 A.M.
Friday	January 05,	Pre THEOPHANY Liturgy	9:30 A.M.
Friday	January 05,	First Blessing of the WATERS	11: 00 A. M.
Saturday	January 06,	HOLY EPIPHANY LITURGY	9: 00 A. M.
Saturday	January 06,	GREAT Blessing of the WATERS	10:30 A. M.
Sunday	January 07,	SAINT JOHN the BAPTIST LITURGY	10:30 A.M.
Sunday	January 07,	ARTOKLASIA of the Baptist	11:30 A.M.

Russian and Ukrainian and Georgian CHRISTMAS SERVICES:

following the OLD CALENDAR (Julian calculation) also known as 'little Christmas' many of our faithful will attend services as follows:

Saturday	January 06,	Old Calendar CHRISTMAS EVE	8:00 P.M.
		This is an evening service with vespers	
Sunday	January 07,	Old Calendar CHRISTMAS DAY	12:30 P.M.
Monday	January 08,	Synaxis of the THEOTOKOS	10:00 A.M.
Tuesday	January 09,	Saint Stephanos Liturgy	10.00 A.M.

AGAPE COFFEE FELLOWSHIP: this Sunday is being hosted by the Parish Council. Please join us in WHITEHALL
OPEN TO ALL! HAPPY NEW YEAR!

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.

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.

2018 CHURCH STEWARDSHIP (Membership) is due. Please register with the Church Office. It is imperative for us to have your essential information in our records, (NAME, ADDRESS, PHONE and/or email) With this registration you will receive all mailings and important announcement from the parish and the Archdiocese.

HOUSE AND BUSINESS BLESSINGS for the EPIPHANY will commence the week of January 8th, by appointment and arrangement with the clergy directly. Call for a visitation 718-339-0280.

ALTAR BOY SOCIETY: Enjoyed a fabulous day of festivity on Wednesday December 27th, with a luncheon at KOUROS DINER on Nostrand Avenue hosted by the owners the GIANNAKOUROS FAMILY and then on to UNITED ARTISTS MOVIES in Sheepshead Bay for an evening of cinema. Twenty-five boys were invited to share the fun and fellowship. WAS YOUR SON AMONG THEM? Inscribe your son today.

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 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.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 8:30A.M. through 2:50 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 .

Good Bye 2017, Hello 2018

Tonight!

TROOP 531 - "THE GOLDEN GREEKS" PRESENT:

NEW YEARS EVE

Sunday, December 31, 2017

At 9:00PM

Three Hierarchs Greek Orthodox Church
1724 Avenue P, Brooklyn, NY, 11229

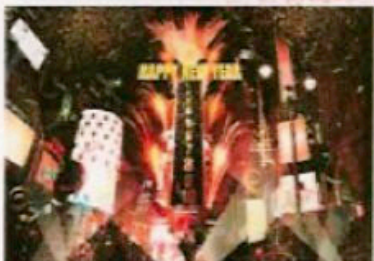
21 and Older: \$125.00

Under 21: \$80.00

For Reservations, Please Call 347-305-5332

Price Includes:

Top Shelf Open Bar All Night
Gourmet Foods
Live DJ and Lighting





You're Invited!

85th

*Three Hierarchs
Ladies Philoptochos
Annual Luncheon*



Admit 1 ~ Table 3
Your Invitation to a
spectacular event. Honoring three
special ladies. Niki Bouroutis,
Maritsa Konstas & Helen Lambrakis
Music, raffles, prizes, laughter.
Take your seat and have the time of
your life.



V.I.P.



*Dancing , Raffles, Prizes
Monday January 15th ,2018
12:00 Noon*

*Russo's on the Bay
Howard Beach, New York*

*For Reservations call
Marie Paizis
(718) 338-1446
Effie Paraponiaris
(718) 253-7219*



*Bus available from
Three Hierarchs
Free of Charge*



Donation \$65.00



ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ

ΣΥΝΤΟΜΟΝ ΚΗΡΥΓΜΑ



«Εγενόμην ἐν Πνεύματι ἐν τῇ Κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ καὶ ἤκουσα φωνὴν ὀπίσω μου μεγάλην ὡς σαλπγγος» (Απ. 1,10)

Ἐκδίδεται ἀπὸ τὴν Κοινοβιακὴ Γραμματεία τερὰ Μονὴ Ἁγίου Αὐγουστίνου Φλωρίνης - 531 00 ΦΛΩΡΙΝΑ - τηλ. 23850-28510 - imaafla@yahoo.gr

Περίοδος Δ' - Ἔτος ΛΔ' Φλώρινα - ἀριθμ. φύλλου 2061	Κυριακὴ πρὸ τῶν Φώτων (Μάρκ. 1,1-8) 31 Δεκεμβρίου 2017	Συντάκτης (†) ἐπίσκοπος Αὐγουστίνος Ν. Καντιώτης
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Ἡ ἐγκράτεια τοῦ Προδρόμου

«Ἦν δὲ ὁ Ἰωάννης ἐνδεδυμένος τρίχας καμήλου καὶ ζώνην δερματίνην περὶ τὴν ὀσφύν αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐσθίων ἀκρίδας καὶ μέλι ἄγριον» (Μάρκ. 1,6)

Ἔστησε, ἀγαπητοί μου, τὸ βῆμα του δίπλα **Ἐστὸν Ἰορδάνη** ποταμὸ ὁ ἅγιος Ἰωάννης ὁ Πρόδρομος καὶ ἀναρίθμητα πλήθη ἀνθρώπων ἀπ' ὅλες τὶς κοινωνικὲς τάξεις συνέρρεαν στὶς ὄχθες τοῦ ποταμοῦ. Ἦταν ὁ ἀπεσταλμένος νὰ προετοιμάσῃ τὸ δρόμο γιὰ νὰ περάσῃ ὁ Λυτρωτὴς, νὰ ἐτοιμάσῃ δηλαδὴ τὶς ψυχὰς τῶν ἀνθρώπων νὰ δεχτοῦν τὸ σωτήριον μήνυμα ποῦ θὰ καλοῦσε ὄλους σὲ μετάνοια.

Καὶ τί ἄκουγαν καὶ τί ἐβλεπαν ἐκεῖ τὰ πλήθη; Δὲν θὰ ἐξαπατοῦσε ὁ Βαπτιστὴς καὶ δὲν θ' ἀποκοίμιζε τοὺς ἀκροατὰς του μὲ ἀνούσιες φλυαρίες· ἂν ἐπρόκειτο ν' ἀκούσουν λόγια τετριμμένα, δὲν θ' ἄφηναν τὰ σπίτια τους νὰ τρέχουν στὴν ἔρημο. Οὔτε ὅμως λόγια ποῦ κολάκευαν ἀδυναμίες καὶ πάθη εἶχε ὁ Ἰωάννης· εἶσι κήρυτταν οἱ ψευδοπροφῆτες, ὄχι αὐτός.

Ἄκουγαν τὰ πλήθη ἐκεῖ μιὰ διδασκαλία, ἡ ὁποία σὰν βούνευρο χτυποῦσε τὶς κοιμισμένες συνειδήσεις τους, ξεσκέπαζε τὶς πληγὲς τῆς ψυχῆς τους, καυτηρίαζε τὰ αἴσχη τῆς ζωῆς τους καὶ ξυπνοῦσε μέσα στὶς καρδιές τους τὸν πόθο τῆς μετάνοίας, τῆς ἐπιστροφῆς στοῦ Θεοῦ. Αὐτὴ τὴ διδασκαλία ἄκουγαν τὰ πλήθη· **διδασκαλία τελειῶς διαφορετικὴ** ἀπὸ τὴν ξερὴ, τὴν τυπικὴ, τὴν πλαδαρὴ διδασκαλία τῶν φαρισαίων. Καί, παρὰ τὸν ἔλεγχο ποῦ δέχονται, τὰ πλήθη ἐνθουσιάζονται!

Τὰ πλήθη ὅμως ἐνθουσιάζονται ὄχι μόνο γιὰτὶ ἄκουγαν μιὰ νευρώδη, ἐμπνευσμένη καὶ θεῖα διδασκαλία, ἀλλὰ καὶ γιὰτὶ ἐβλεπαν μπροστά τους τὸν Ἰωάννη, τὸν κήρυκα τῆς μετάνοίας, ἕνα **πρότυπο ζωῆς ἀφωσιωμένης στοῦ Θεοῦ**. Ἡ ἀρετὴ του προκαλοῦσε κατάπληξι. Ἦταν ἕνα θέαμα - θαῦμα, ποῦ τέτοιο οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι εἶχαν νὰ δοῦν ἀπὸ τὴν ἐποχὴ τοῦ προφήτου Ἠλία τοῦ Θεοβίτου. Καὶ ἀσφαλῶς ἀπὸ ὅλες τὶς ἀρετὲς τοῦ Βαπτιστοῦ ἐκείνη ποῦ θὰ προκαλοῦσε τὴ μεγαλύτερη ἐντύπωσι στὰ

πλήθη θὰ ἦταν ἡ αὐστηρὴ **ἐγκράτειά** του, ἡ λιτότητα στὴν τροφὴ καὶ τὴν ἐνδυμασίᾳ του, ὅπως μὲ λίγα λόγια τὸν ζωγραφίζει τὸ σημερινὸ εὐαγγέλιο· «Ἦν δὲ ὁ Ἰωάννης ἐνδεδυμένος τρίχας καμήλου καὶ ζώνην δερματίνην περὶ τὴν ὀσφύν αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐσθίων ἀκρίδας καὶ μέλι ἄγριον»· ἦταν δηλαδὴ ὁ Ἰωάννης ντυμένος μ' ἕνα ροῦχο ἀπὸ τρίχας καμήλας καὶ μιὰ δερματίνην ζώνη γύρω ἀπ' τὴ μέση του, καὶ ἔτρωγε ἀκρίδες καὶ ἄγριο μέλι (Μάρκ. 1,6).

Ἐγκρατὴς ὁ ἅγιος Ἰωάννης. Εἶχε περιωρίσει τὶς σωματικὲς του ἀνάγκες στοῦ ἐλάχιστο· εἶχε ἀπαλλαγῆ ἀπὸ τὸν φόρτο τῶν σαρκικῶν μεριμνῶν καὶ εἶχε ἀφοσιωθῆ ἐξ ὀλοκλήρου στὴ λατρεία τοῦ Θεοῦ. Καὶ εἶσι ἐζῆσε ὡς τὸ τέλος του καὶ πέθανε, **ἀσκητὴς!** Ὁ τρόπος αὐτὸς τοῦ χάριζε ἐλευθερία. Τὸν ἀποδέσμευε ἀπὸ τὸ φόβο καὶ τὴν ἐξάρτησι, τοῦ ἔδινε φτερά νὰ κινῆται πάνω ἀπὸ συμφέροντα καὶ φόβους, ποῦ δεσμεύουν τοὺς κοινούς θνητοῦς.

Ἐκτοτε ἀπὸ τὸν ὥραϊο καὶ ἀξιοζήλευτο ἀσκητικὸ του βίῳ **ἐμπνέονται οἱ ἀναχωρηταί, οἱ μοναχοί**, ὅσοι ἐγκατέλειψαν τὸν κόσμον καὶ τὰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ τερπνά, γιὰ νὰ καλλιεργήσουν μιὰ ζωὴ ἀφοσιώσεως στοῦ Θεοῦ, τηρήσεως τῶν ἐντολῶν του μὲ ἀκρίβεια καὶ λατρείας τοῦ ἁγίου ὀνόματός του.

Ἀλλὰ γιὰτὶ καὶ ὅσοι ζοῦν στὸν κόσμον δὲν μποροῦν νὰ διδαχθοῦν πολλὰ ἀπὸ τὸν τρόπο ζωῆς τοῦ ἁγίου αὐτοῦ ἀνδρός; Μοναχοὶ βέβαια δὲν θὰ γίνουν οἱ πολλοί· ἐλάχιστοι εἶνε σὲ κάθε γενεὰ ἐκεῖνοι ποῦ ἀκολουθοῦν πιστὰ τὸ ὥραϊο παράδειγμα τοῦ ἁγίου Ἰωάννου. Μὴ λησμονοῦμε ὅμως ὅτι ἡ ἀρετὴ τῆς ἐγκρατείας καὶ τῆς λιτότητος εἶνε ἀρετὴ, τὴν ὁποία ὄχι μόνο ὅσοι ζοῦν στὰ βουνὰ καὶ στὶς ἐρήμους ἀλλὰ καὶ ὅσοι ζοῦν στὶς πόλεις καὶ τὶς κοινωνίες πρέπει νὰ ἐξασκοῦν. **Λιτὴ - ἀπλὴ πρέπει**

νά 'νε ἡ ζωὴ κάθε Χριστιανοῦ· λιτὴ στὴν τροφή, στὴν ἐνδυμασία, στὴν κατοικία, παντοῦ.

● **Λιτοὶ στὴν τροφή** μας. Δὲν θὰ συμβουλευάμε βέβαια τοὺς σημερινούς Χριστιανούς νὰ τρῶνε «ἀκρίδες καὶ μέλι ἄγριο», ὅπως ἦταν ἡ καθημερινὴ τροφή τοῦ ἁγίου Ἰωάννου. Ὁ ἄνθρωπος, καὶ μάλιστα αὐτὸς ποὺ ἐργάζεται σὲ κοπιαστικά ἐργα, πνευματικά ἢ σωματικά, πρέπει νὰ τρέφεται καλά. Ναί, νὰ τρέφεται, ἀλλ' ὄχι νὰ ἀσωτεύη καὶ νὰ σπαταλᾷ τὴν περιουσία του γιὰ νὰ παραθέτῃ κάθε μέρα στὸ τραπέζι του πιάτα καὶ πιατέλλες μὲ ὀρεκτικά καὶ ψητὰ καὶ πλούσια γεύματα, καὶ σαλάτες, καὶ μπουκάλια μὲ ἀναψυκτικά ἢ κρασιά ἢ ἄλλα οἶνοπνευματώδη ποτά, καὶ γλυκίσματα καὶ ποικίλα ἐπιδόρπια, ὧν οὐκ ἔστιν ἀριθμὸς. Μ' αὐτὰ δὲν τρέφεται ὑγιεινά, ἀλλὰ ὑποσκάπτει τὴν ὑγεία του, γίνεται δούλος τῶν ὀρέξεων του, καταντᾷ ἕνας ἀσπλαχνος καλοφαγᾶς ὅπως ὁ πλούσιος ἐκεῖνος τῆς γνωστῆς παραβολῆς τοῦ πτωχοῦ Λαζάρου, καὶ τέλος ἀποκτηνώνεται μὴ φροντίζοντας γιὰ τίποτ' ἄλλο παρὰ γιὰ τὸ πῶς θὰ γεμίξῃ τὴν κοιλιὰ του.

Γιὰ ν' ἀποφύγουμε λοιπὸν τὸ ἄθλιο αὐτὸ κατάντημα, ἂς ζοῦμε μὲ ἐγκράτεια· ἂς εἴμαστε λιτοὶ στὴν τροφή μας, ἂς ἀποφεύγουμε κάθε τι περιττὸ ποὺ ἀπλῶς εὐχαριστεῖ τὴν αἰσθήσεις· **νὰ τρῶμε γιὰ νὰ ζοῦμε καὶ νὰ ἐργαζώμαστε**, καὶ ὄχι «νὰ ζοῦμε γιὰ νὰ τρῶμε», ὅπως λέει τὸ δόγμα τῶν ὑλιστῶν καὶ τῶν ἐπικουρεῖων.

● **Λιτοὶ στὴν τροφή**, ἀλλὰ λιτοὶ καὶ **στὴν ἐνδυμασία** μας. Καὶ ἀσφαλῶς πάλι δὲν θὰ προτείναμε στοὺς σημερινούς Χριστιανούς νὰ ντύνονται φορώντας «ρούχο ἀπὸ τρίχες καμήλας καὶ ζώνη δερμάτινη γύρω ἀπ' τὴ μέση τους», ὅπως ὁ Ἰωάννης ὁ Πρόδρομος. Ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἔχει ἀνάγκη νὰ ντύνεται. Νὰ ντύνεται ὅμως ὄχι γιὰ νὰ ἐπιδεικνύεται μ' αὐτὰ ποὺ φοράει, ἀλλὰ γιὰ νὰ σκεπάζῃ τὴν γύμνια του καὶ νὰ προστατεύῃ τὸ σῶμα του ἀπὸ τὴς καιρικῆς μεταβολῆς. Ἄν ἐφαρμόσῃ αὐτὴ τὴν ἀρχὴ ὡς πρὸς τὴν ἐνδυμασία του, θὰ δῆ τότε ὅτι πολλὰ ἀπὸ αὐτὰ ποὺ σήμερα θεωροῦνται ἀναγκαῖα καὶ ἀπαραίτητα γιὰ τὴν κοσμικὴ ἐμφάνισι, εἶνε περιττά, καὶ ματαίως οἱ ἄνθρωποι—καὶ μάλιστα οἱ γυναῖκες—ξοδεύουν γι' αὐτὰ μυθῶδη χρηματικά ποσά.

Μιὰ ἀπλότητα γύρω ἀπὸ τὴν ἐνδυμασία, ποὺ θὰ τὴν ἀγαπήσουν καὶ θὰ τὴν υἰοθετήσουν ὅλοι, ἀπὸ τὰ ἀνώτερα στρώματα μέχρι τὰ κατώτερα, θὰ φέρῃ πολλὰ καλά στὴς κοινωνίες· **θὰ σώσῃ οἰκογένειες ἀπὸ οἰκονομικὰ ναυάγια**, ἀλλὰ—γιατί ὄχι— **καὶ ἀπὸ ἠθικὰ ναυάγια**, στὰ ὁποῖα καταντοῦν σήμερα ἄντρες καὶ

ἰδίως γυναῖκες, οἱ ὁποῖες γιὰ ἕνα φόρεμα πολυτελείας δὲν διστάζουν νὰ παραδώσουν ὅ,τι ἔχει μίᾳ γυναίκα καλύτερο καὶ πιὸ ἀκριβό;

● **Λιτοὶ ἀκόμη καὶ στὴν κατοικία**. Δὲν μποροῦν φυσικὰ νὰ ζήσουν ὅλοι στὸ ὑπαιθρο ἄστεγοι ὅπως ὁ Βαπτιστὴς Ἰωάννης στὴς καλαμιές τοῦ Ἰορδάνου, καὶ ἐξαίρεσι ἀποτελοῦν οἱ ἐρημίτες ποὺ ἀρκοῦνται σὲ μιὰ πρόχειρη καλύβα ἀπὸ κλαδιὰ μακριὰ ἀπ' τὸν κόσμο. Γι' αὐτοὺς ὅμως ποὺ ζοῦν στὸν κόσμο, στὰ χωριά καὶ στὴς πολιτείες, ἕνα ἀπλὸ σπιτάκι εἶνε ἀπαραίτητο ἀκόμα καὶ γιὰ τὸν πιὸ φτωχό, καὶ μπορεῖ αὐτὸ νὰ τὸ ἀποκτήσῃ μὲ τὸν τίμιον ἰδρώτα του. Ἀπὸ τὸ σημεῖο ὅμως αὐτό, μιᾶς στοιχειώδους στέγης, μέχρι τὴς πολυτελεῖς ἐπαύλεις, τὰ πολλὰ διαμερίσματα σὲ πολυκατοικίες, καὶ τὴς πολλαπλῆς κατοικίας, χειμερινῆς καὶ ἐξοχικῆς, μὲ ὅλα τὰ σύγχρονα κομφορ καὶ ὄλες τὴς σημερινῆς εὐκολίας, ὑπάρχει τεραστία ἀπόστασι· οὔτε ἀποκτῶνται αὐτὰ—συνήθως— μὲ νόμιμο τρόπο, οὔτε ἐξασφαλίζουν τὴν εὐτυχία.

Σὲ μιὰ ἀπλή κατοικία, ὅπου συνωθοῦνται τὰ μέλη μιᾶς πολυτέκνου οἰκογενείας, μπορεῖ συχνότερα νὰ δῆ κανεὶς τὴ **χαρὰ** νὰ λάμπῃ στὰ πρόσωπα, γιατί ὑπάρχει ἡ **εὐλογία τοῦ Κυρίου**.

Ἄν τώρα ἡ ἐκούσια λιτότητα στὴν τροφή στὴν ἐνδυμασία στὴν κατοικία ἐπεκταθῇ **καὶ σὲ ἄλλους τομεῖς** τῆς ζωῆς μας, τότε θὰ δοῦμε τὴ ζωὴ μας νὰ ἐλευθερώνεται ἀπ' τὰ δεσμὰ περιττῶν ἀναγκῶν, ν' ἀπογειώνεται καὶ νὰ ὑψώνεται στὴς πνευματικῆς ἐκεῖνες σφαῖρες, ὅπου ὑψώθηκε ἡ ψυχὴ τοῦ τιμίου Προδρόμου καὶ εἶδε τὸν Ἰησοῦν, τὸν «**ἰσχυρότερόν**» του (Ματθ 17), ἐρχόμενον μετὰ δόξης μεγάλης.

* * *

Ἔιχε, ἀλήθεια, δίκιο ὁ **Σωκράτης**, ἀγαπητοῦ μου, ὅταν δίδασκε τοὺς μαθητὰς του, ὅτι ὅσο λιγώτερα πράγματα ἔχει ἀνάγκη ὁ ἄνθρωπος, τόσο περισσότερο πλησιάζει πρὸς τὸ Θεό· γιατί ὁ Θεὸς εἶνε «**ἀνεπιδεικτός**», δὲν ἔχει ἀνάγκες.

Πλήθος ἀνάγκες περιττές, ποὺ φαντάζουν ἀπαραίτητες, ἔχει ἐπιβαρύνει δυσβάστακτα τὸν σημερινὸ ἄνθρωπο, τὸν συμπνίγει, τὸν ἀποπροσανατολίζει, τὸν κάνει ἐναγώνιο καὶ μεμφίμοιρο. Ρεαλιστικώτερη ἐπανεξέτασι θὰ ἀπέριπτε πολλὰς ἀπ' αὐτές, θὰ μᾶς ἀπὴλλασσε ἀπὸ τὸν φόρτο τους. **Μιὰ ἀπόφασι χρειάζεται.**

Τὴν ἀπλότητα λοιπὸν, τὴ λιτότητα, τὴν ἐγκράτεια ἂς ἀγαπήσουμε κ' ἐμεῖς. **Μακριὰ ἀπὸ μᾶς ἡ πολυτέλεια**. Ἄς ζήσουμε μὲ ἐγκράτεια, τὴν ὁποία τόσο θαυμαστά ἐφάρμοσε στὴ ζωὴ του ὁ μέγας ἀσκητὴς τῆς ἐρήμου, ὁ ἅγιος Ἰωάννης ὁ Πρόδρομος.

(†) **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 Anointing with the Holy Spirit

When we were baptized into Christ and clothed ourselves in Him, we were transformed into the likeness of the Son of God. Having destined us to be His adopted sons, God gave us a likeness to Christ in his glory, and living as we do in communion with Christ, God's anointed, we ourselves are rightly called "the anointed ones." When He said: Do not touch my anointed ones, God was speaking of us.

We became "the anointed ones" when we received the sign of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, everything took place in us by means of images, because we ourselves are images of Christ. Christ bathed in the river Jordan, imparting to its waters the fragrance of His divinity, and when He came up from them the Holy Spirit descended upon Him, like resting upon like. So we also, after coming up from the sacred waters of baptism, were anointed with chrism, which signifies the Holy Spirit, by whom Christ was anointed and of whom blessed Isaiah prophesied in the name of the Lord: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because

he has anointed me. He has sent me to preach good news to the poor.

The oil of gladness with which Christ was anointed was a spiritual oil; it was in fact the Holy Spirit Himself, who is called the oil of gladness because He is the source of spiritual joy. But we too have been anointed with oil, and by this anointing we have entered into fellowship with Christ and have received a share in His life. Beware of thinking that this holy oil is simply ordinary oil and nothing else. After the invocation of the Spirit it is no longer ordinary oil but the gift of Christ, and by the presence of His divinity it becomes the instrument through which we receive the Holy Spirit. While symbolically, on our foreheads and senses, our bodies are anointed with this oil that we see, our souls are sanctified by the Holy and Life-giving Spirit.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem

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