

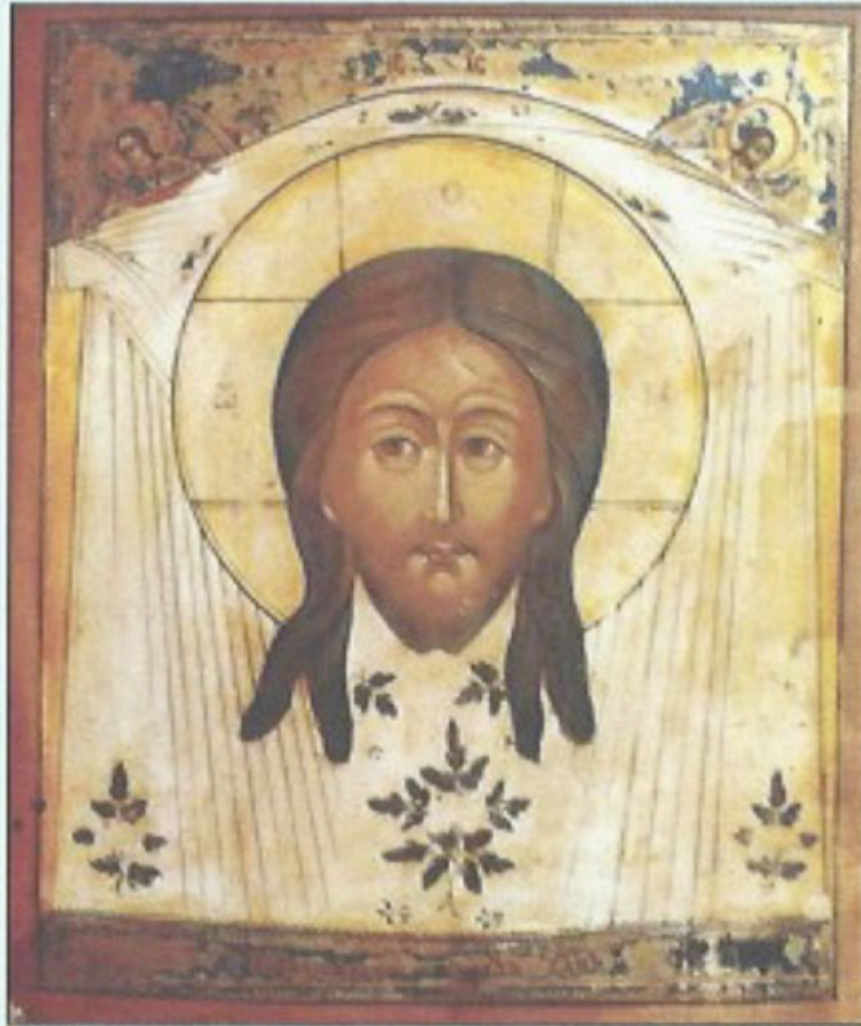


DIRECT ARCHDIOCESAN
DISTRICT

THREE HIERARCHS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

SUNDAY WEEKLY BULLETIN February 18th, 2018
V. Rev. Archimandrite Eugene N. Pappas

CHEESEFARE SUNDAY
SUNDAY OF FORGIVENESS



Icon of the Holy Napkin

**Prokeimenon. Mode Plagal 4.
Psalm 75.11,1**

Make your vows to the Lord our God and perform them.

Verse: God is known in Judah; his name is great in Israel.

The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Romans 13:11-14; 14:1-4

Brethren, salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed; the night is far gone, the day is at hand. Let us then cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us conduct ourselves becomingly as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

As for the man who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not for disputes over opinions. One believes he may eat anything, while the weak man eats only vegetables. Let not him who eats despise him who abstains, and let not him who abstains pass judgment on him who eats; for God has welcomed him. Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for God is able to make him stand.

Πρὸς Ῥωμαίους 13:11-14, 14:1-4

**Προκείμενον. Ήχος πλ. δ'.
ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 75.11,1**

Εὐξασθε καὶ ἀπόδοτε Κυρίῳ τῷ Θεῷ ἡμῶν.

Στίχ. Γνωστὸς ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ ὁ Θεός, ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ μέγα τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ.

Πρὸς Ῥωμαίους 13:11-14, 14:1-4 τὸ ἀνάγνωσμα εἶναι ἀπο

Ἀδελφοί, νῦν ἐγγύτερον ἡμῶν ἢ σωτηρία ἢ ὅτε ἐπιστεύσαμεν. Ἡ νύξ προέκοπεν, ἡ δὲ ἡμέρα ἤγγικεν· ἀποθώμεθα οὖν τὰ ἔργα τοῦ σκότους, καὶ ἐνδυσώμεθα τὰ ὄπλα τοῦ φωτός. Ὡς ἐν ἡμέρᾳ, ἐὺσχημόνως περιπατήσωμεν, μὴ κώμοις καὶ μέθαις, μὴ κοίταις καὶ ἀσελγείαις, μὴ ἐριδι καὶ ζήλῳ. Ἀλλ' ἐνδύσασθε τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, καὶ τῆς σαρκὸς πρόνοιαν μὴ ποιήσθε, εἰς ἐπιθυμίας. Τὸν δὲ ἀσθενοῦντα τῇ πίστει προσλαμβάνεσθε, μὴ εἰς διακρίσεις διαλογισμῶν. Ὅς μὲν πιστεύει φαγεῖν πάντα, ὁ δὲ ἀσθενῶν λάχανα ἐσθίει. Ὁ ἐσθίων τὸν μὴ ἐσθίοντα μὴ ἐξουθενείτω, καὶ ὁ μὴ ἐσθίων τὸν ἐσθίοντα μὴ κρινέτω· ὁ θεὸς γὰρ αὐτὸν προσελάβετο. Σὺ τίς εἶ ὁ κρίνων ἀλλότριον οἰκέτην; Τῷ ἰδίῳ κυρίῳ στήκει ἢ πίπτει. Σταθήσεται δέ· δυνατὸς γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ θεὸς στήσαι αὐτόν.

Forgiveness Sunday

The Gospel According to Matthew 6:14-21

The Lord said, "If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

"And when you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by men but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Ἐκ τοῦ Κατὰ Ματθαῖον 6:14-21 Εὐαγγελίου τὸ Ἀνάγνωσμα

Εἶπεν ὁ Κύριος· Ἐὰν γὰρ ἀφήτε τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τὰ παραπτώματα αὐτῶν, ἀφήσει καὶ ὑμῖν ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος· ἐὰν δὲ μὴ ἀφήτε τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τὰ παραπτώματα αὐτῶν, οὐδὲ ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ἀφήσει τὰ παραπτώματα ὑμῶν. Ὅταν δὲ νηστεύητε, μὴ γίνεσθε ὡσπερ οἱ ὑποκριταὶ σκυθρωποί· ἀφανίζουσι γὰρ τὰ πρόσωπα αὐτῶν ὅπως φανῶσι τοῖς ἀνθρώποις νηστεύοντες· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ἀπέχουσι τὸν μισθὸν αὐτῶν. Σὺ δὲ νηστεύων ἄλειψαί σου τὴν κεφαλὴν καὶ τὸ πρόσωπόν σου νίψαι, ὅπως μὴ φανῆς τοῖς ἀνθρώποις νηστεύων, ἀλλὰ τῷ πατρὶ σου τῷ ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ, καὶ ὁ πατὴρ σου ὁ βλέπων ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ ἀποδώσει σοι ἐν τῷ φανερῷ. Μὴ θησαυρίζετε ὑμῖν θησαυροὺς ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, ὅπου σὴς καὶ βρώσις ἀφανίζει, καὶ ὅπου κλέπται διορύσσουσι καὶ κλέπτουσι· θησαυρίζετε δὲ ὑμῖν θησαυροὺς ἐν οὐρανῷ, ὅπου οὔτε σὴς οὔτε βρώσις ἀφανίζει, καὶ ὅπου κλέπται οὐ διορύσσουσιν οὐδὲ κλέπτουσιν· ὅπου γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ θησαυρὸς ὑμῶν, ἐκεῖ ἔσται καὶ ἡ καρδιά ὑμῶν.

THIS WEEK:

Sunday	February 18th	CHEESEFARE “TYROFAGOU” St. Leo of Rome	10:30 A.M.
Monday	February 19th	GREAT LENT COMMENCES (40 Day journey to PASCHA)	
Wednesday	February 21st	Pre-Sanctified Liturgy	9:30 A.M.
Friday	February 23rd	FIRST Salutations to the B.V.M.	7:00 P.M.
Saturday	February 24th	FINAL (Third) PSYCHOSABBATON (All Souls)	9:00 A.M.
Sunday	February 25th	Saints Regis and Tarasios	10:30 A.M.
		Procession of Holy Icons	12:00 Noon
		Pan Orthodox Vespers	4:00 P.M.
		St. Nicholas Antiochian Cathedral-State Street	
Wednesday	February 28th	PRAYER HEALING SERVICE	5:30 P.M.
		Evening Pre-Sanctified Liturgy	6:00 P.M.
		Philoptochos POT LUCK LENTEN Dinner	7:15 P.M.

NEXT SUNDAY: Please note the event packed day: Sunday of Orthodoxy

- (a) **Divine Liturgy of the Restoration of the Sacred Icons**
- (b) **Great Process of the sacred images and utensils**
- (c) **Recitation of the SYNODICAL AFFIRMATION of FAITH (by all)**
- (d) **Boy Scout Troop #531 LENTEN PASTA LUNCHEON** **12:30 P.M.**
- (e) **Pan – Orthodox Vesper of Orthodoxy Antiochian Cathedral** **4:00 P.M.**
- (f) **Lenten Dinner hosted FREE (Arabic Foods) Antiochian Cathedral** **6:00 P.M.**

AGAPE COFFEE FELLOWSHIP hosted by Parish Council. All are welcome to attend.

LENTEN SCHEDULE of SERVICES: (GREEK and ENGLISH) is available in the Church office upon request. The program was mailed to all 1,000 CHURCH STEWARD MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES. SINCE YOU ARE not registered with the Parish Office you did not receive one. REGISTER TODAY as a faithful supporter of the Church and Christ’s holy mission.

GOLDENGREEKS BOY SCOUT TROOP #531 : will host and serve the ANNUAL PASTA LUNCHEON on Sunday February 25th. A complete luncheon of a variety of pasta dishes will be served with beer, wine and soda for all. Coffee and sweets to follow the RAFFLE PRIZES GALORE and the ‘ famous ‘ 50///50 Drawing. It’s a family event for everyone in support of our Parish Scouting Program. TICKETS are only \$15.00 for adults and \$10.00 for children 10 years old and younger. Mark your calendar and join us in a fun filled afternoon at ROSEHALL.

ORTHODOXY SUNDAY: February 25th, will be a Pan-Orthodox Event at 4:00 P.M. at Saint Nicholas ANTIOCHIAN (Syrian/Lebanese) ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL 355 State Street, Brooklyn (four blocks from Saint Constantine Greek Cathedral). Traditionally 30 or more priests and deacons join in declaring the CONFESSION of FAITH SERVICE. The guest speaker will be A NIGERIAN ARCHIMANDRITE from the ALEXANDRIAN PATRIARCHATE, of ALL AFRICA! A Lenten supper is hosted FREE to all in attendance. Delicious Arabic food and delicacies will be served. COME JOIN US!

PSYCHOSABBATA: There are three Saturdays of ALL SOULS (February 10, 17, and 24th.) Tradition dictates that our faithfully departed be memorialized in prayers and intonation of their name at the sacred high altar. Early Christians expressed their concern for the repose of the soul of their beloved one by personal and communal (liturgical) prayer. Saint John Chrysostom (our Patron) recommended that prayers for the well-being of the faithfully departed also benefit the person offering the prayers (you and me). Saint Cyril of Jerusalem also expresses that memorial prayers tied to the Divine Liturgy greatly benefit the clemency of God towards our faithfully departed. The CHURCH is NOT only constituted of the living members on earth (church militant) but ALSO of the members who have fallen ‘asleep ‘, in the Lord (triumphant church) in heaven. The APOSTOLIC CONSTITUTIONS of the early church encourage ‘MEMORIAL SERVICES’ for the deceased on the 3rd, 9th, and 40th day after their demise, as well as annual tributes as close to the day of passing.

FINAL PSYCHOSABBATON is being offered on Saturday February 24th. This is also the commemoration of Saints Theodore (the two generals). Plain kollyva are prepared for distribution to the eligible unwed of the parish for the customary – vision of their future spouse (so folk tradition and legend tell us).

PLEASE TAKE NOTE: Enclosed with the bulletin is a memorial form to be filled out and given to the clergy for proper commemoration. Each Saturday a NEW FORM must be completed in the subsequent Saturdays or Sundays. The names will be intoned aloud in the order of reception. Come early and listen for your names to be commemorated.

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 2:30 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.

MEMORIALS TODAY: + ANNA and + ANDREAS FOUNDOULAKIS + BASIL and + CHRISTINA MENEDES



THREE HIERARCHS GREEK SCHOOL STUDENTS PRESENTED A PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTING THE PATRONS OF OUR CHURCH:

SAINT BASIL the GREAT, SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM and SAINT GREGORY the THEOLOGIAN. Students are here pictured with the Pastor Father Eugene and two teachers Zoe Anastasakos and Maria Halkias. BRAVO to all!



Our former Parochial School Assistant Secretary and ' school mom ' Mrs. Elpida (HOPE) Bassakyros has passed the centennial mark as she celebrates her 101 st BIRTHDAY with her daughter and son-Fr. Basilios Bassakyros (Pastor of Saint John the Baptist Church-Gramercy Park). One hundred and one pounds of fun, that's what our faithful HOPE celebrated on her CENTENNIAL PLUS ONE EVENT! HAPPY BIRTHDAY , CHRONIA POLLA, NA TA CHILIASIS!
..... Congratulations.



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 Γενναϊκὴ Ἱερὰ Μονὴ Ἁγίου Αὐγουστίνου Φλωρίνης - 531 00 ΦΛΩΡΙΝΑ - τηλ. 23850-23610 - imassfo@yahoo.gr

Περίοδος Δ' - Ἔτος ΑΕ' Φλώρινα - ἀριθμ. φύλλου 2069	Κυριακὴ τῆς Τυροφάγου 18 Φεβρουαρίου 2018	Συντάκτης (†) ἐπίσκοπος Αὐγουστίνος Ν. Καντιώτης
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Νηστεία σωματικὴ ἀλλὰ καὶ πνευματικὴ

Στὰ χρόνια ποὺ ζοῦμε, ἀγαπητοί μου, τὸ νὰ σκηρῦξη κανεὶς τὴν ἀλήθεια ἀκέραιη, ὅπως τὴν εἶπε ὁ Κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς καὶ οἱ ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ πατέρες τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, εἶνε μαρτύριο. Ὁ κόσμος, στὸν αἰῶνα αὐτὸ τὸν ἀπατεῶνα, ἀρέσκεται στὸ ψέμα. Γι' αὐτὸ ὅποιος ἔχει συνείδησι τοῦ χρέους ἀπέναντι στὸ Θεὸ καὶ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, πρέπει προηγουμένως νὰ σκεφτῆ πολὺ ἂν πρέπη ν' ἀνεβῆ στὸ βῆμα αὐτό. Εἶνε ἐποχὴ γιὰ τὴν ὁποία ὁ προφήτης εἶπε «Κύριε, τίς ἐπίστευσε τῇ ἀκοῇ ἡμῶν; καὶ ὁ βραχίων Κυρίου τίνι ἀπεκαλύφθη;» (ἠα 53,1) ὅλα ἐκφυλίστηκαν καὶ ἀρμόζει τὸ ψαλμικὸ «Πάντες ἐξέκλιναν, ἅμα ἠχρειώθησαν, οὐκ ἔστι ποιῶν χρηστότητα, οὐκ ἔστιν ἕως ἑνός» (Ψαλμ. 133).

Διότι σὰς ἐρωτῶ ποῖός τῶρα ἐκτελεῖ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ Θεοῦ; Ὁ ἀπόστολος σήμερα (βλ. Ρωμ. 13,1-14) μᾶς φωνάζει, νὰ κάνουμε ὄχι τὰ κέφια τῆς σαρκὸς ἀλλὰ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ Κυρίου ἐν τούτοις οἱ ἄνθρωποι πορεύονται «κατὰ τὰς ἐπιθυμίας τῶν καρδιῶν αὐτῶν» (Ρωμ. 1,24. β' Πέτρ. 3,1 τοῦδ. 18). Μὴ φανοῦν αὐτὰ ὑπερβολικὰ ἢ ἀφηρημένα.

Σήμερα, ἀγαπητοί μου, καθὼς ἐτοιμαζόμαστε νὰ μποῦμε στὴ Μεγάλῃ Τεσσαρακοστῇ, βλέπω ἕναν ἄγγελο νὰ κατεβαίνει ἀπ' τὰ οὐράνια, νὰ μπαίνει στὶς ἐκκλησίες καὶ νὰ γράφῃ μπροστά μας, ὅπως ὁ δάσκαλος στὸν πίνακα, **τρεῖς λέξεις**. Τρία πράγματα εἶν' αὐτά, πού, ἂν ὁ κόσμος ἤθελε νὰ τὰ πιστέψῃ καὶ νὰ τὰ ἐφαρμόσῃ, ἢ γῆ αὐτὴ θὰ γινόταν παράδεισος.

● Ἡ πρώτη λέξι, πού γράφει μὲ γράμματα φωτεινὰ ὁ ἄγγελος, εἶνε κάτι στὸ ὁποῖο κλωτᾶει ἡ ἐγωιστικὴ ψυχοσύνθεσί μας· εἶνε ἡ λέξι **συγχώρησις** πού ἀκούσαμε (βλ. ἠα 14-15).

— Συγχώρησι; θὰ φωνάξουν οἱ ψευτοδιανοούμενοι, πού ὅμως κινοῦνται στὸ σκοτάδι τοῦ μίσους. Ὁχι συγχώρησι, σοῦ λένε· ἢ συγχώρησι εἶνε ἀδυναμία· μὲ τὴ γροθιά θὰ ἐπιβληθοῦμε. Ὁχι συγχώρησι λοιπόν, ἀλλὰ τί· **ἐκδίκησι**, ἐκδίκησι μέχρι τέλους. Ὁχι «Ἀγαπήσωμεν ἀλ-

λήλους...» πού ἀκοῦμε στὴν ἐκκλησία, ἀλλὰ θάνατος, «ὁ θάνατός σου ζωὴ μου».

● Ὁ ἄγγελος ὅμως τολμᾷ πάλι καὶ γράφει τὴ δευτέρῃ λέξι· λέξι πού, ἂν ὁ κόσμος τὴν ἐφαρμόζε, δὲν θὰ ὑπῆρχε φτωχός, δυστυχία, ταξικὲς ἐπαναστάσεις καὶ ἐμφύλιοι σπαραγμοί, ἀλλὰ θὰ βασιλεῦε ἡ «**ισότης**» τῆς ἀγάπης (βλ. β' Κορ. 13,11 καὶ 13). Εἶνε ἡ λέξι **ἐλεημοσύνη**, πού ἐπίσης σήμερα προβάλλει τὸ εὐαγγέλιο (βλ. ἠα 8,19-21).

Μὰ ἐκεῖνοι πού ἐννοοῦν τὴν **ισότητα** ὡς ἀναγκαστικὴ ἰσοπέδωσι, ὡς ὁδοστρωτήρα, λένε· «τὰ δικά σου δικά μου». Ἐνῶ ὁ Χριστός, μὲ τὴν ἐλεημοσύνη, λέει· «καὶ τὰ δικά μου δικά σου». Σβήνουν λοιπόν τὴ λέξι τοῦ ἀγγέλου καὶ γράφουν· Ὁχι ἐλεημοσύνη, ἀλλὰ **ἀρπαγή**, καὶ προτρέπουν «Ἄρπαξε νὰ φᾶς καὶ κλέψε νὰ ᾄχῃς».

● Μετὰ ἀπ' αὐτὰ τί περιμένετε, ἀγαπητοί μου; στὸ μυαλό τοῦ σημερινῶν καλομαθημένων ἀνθρώπων θὰ χωρέσῃ ἡ τρίτῃ λέξι πού γράφει ὁ ἄγγελος, ἡ λέξις **νηστεία** (βλ. 11,16-18).

Καὶ ὄντως, μόλις οἱ σημερινοὶ ἄνθρωποι, πού «εἶνε δοῦλοι στὴν κοιλιὰ τους» κ' «ἔχουν τὴν κοιλιὰ Θεοῦ τους» (Ρωμ. 16,18 καὶ 3,19), μόλις ἀκούσουν γιὰ νηστεία, ἀποροῦν πῶς ὑπάρχουν ἀκόμα κήρυκες πού μιλάνε γιὰ νηστεία καὶ ἀντιδροῦν· Ὁχι, σοῦ λέει, αὐτὸ εἶνε **ἀδύνατον!**...

Ἐδῶ θὰ μοῦ ἐπιτρέψετε νὰ ἐπιμείνω.

Ἐλα ἔδῳ. Ποῖός εἶσαι σὺ πού τολμᾷς καὶ ὑψώνεις τὸ σπιθαμαῖο σου ἀνάστημα ἐμπρὸς στὸν Κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν; Ἐκεῖνος εἶπε ὅτι ὀφείλουμε καὶ νὰ νηστεύσουμε· κ' ἔδωσε ὁ ἴδιος τὸ παράδειγμα, νηστεύει σαράντα μέρες στὴν ἔρημο, δὲν ἔφαγε καὶ δὲν ἤπιε· καὶ σήμερα μᾶς δίδαξε καὶ πῶς θέλει νὰ γίνετα ἡ νηστεία. Ὡ Τὸν βλέπεις ὅμως τὸν κύριο αὐτόν, πού δὲν ἐννοεῖ νὰ νηστεύῃ οὔτε Μεγάλῃ Παρασκευῇ, ὅταν ἀρρωσταίνει καὶ ὁ **γιατρός** τοῦ ὀρίζῃ δίαιτα, καὶ λέει· — Γιατρέ, ὅ, τι μοῦ πῆς θὰ κάνω! Ὡ Βλέπεις καὶ τὴ μοντέρνα κυρία, πού συμβουλεύεται τὰ φηγουρίνια; ἢ **μόδα** τῆς ἐπιβάλλει,

για να διατηρήσει τη σιλουέττα της, να τρώει σαν τὸ σπουργίτη. Ἐγραψαν οἱ ἡμερησίως, ὅτι στὴ Νέα Ὑόρκη μία κυρία τῆς ἀριστοκρατίας ἐπέβαλε στὸν ἑαυτό της τέτοια νηστεία πού στὸ τέλος πέθανε ἀπὸ τὸν ὑποσιτισμὸ.

Μὰ τί εἶνε ἡ διαίτα; δὲν εἶνε τίποτ' ἄλλο παρὰ μιὰ αὐστηρὴ νηστεία, ἀκόμα καὶ τὸ Πάσχα. Ὅταν, δηλαδή, ὁ Χριστὸς ὀρίζῃ νηστεία σύμμετρη μὲ τὶς δυνάμεις σου, δὲν τὸν ἀκοῦς· δὲν ὁ γιατρός ἢ ὁ διαιτολόγος ἢ ἡ κοσμικὴ μόδα διατάζουν κάτι πολὺ πιὸ σκληρό, τότε ὑπακοῦς μέχρι ἐξαντλήσεως· ὑπάρχει λοιπὸν νηστεία τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ νηστεία τοῦ διαβόλου. Ἡ σωματικὴ νηστεία, πού ὀρίζει ἡ Ἐκκλησία, εἶνε θεάρεστο ἀγώνισμα γιὰ ὄλους τοὺς ὑγιεῖς.

Γιὰ νὰ εἶμαι ὁμως δίκαιος, πρέπει νὰ πῶ ὅτι δυσκολία ἢ καὶ ἀδυναμία νὰ νηστεύουν ἀντιμετωπίζουν καὶ ἄνθρωποι πιστοὶ πού βρίσκονται κάτω ἀπὸ διάφορες πιεστικὲς συνθήκες· αὐτοὶ δὲν περιφρονοῦν τὸ νόμο τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας. –Εἶμαι ὄρρωστος, λέει ὁ ἕνας, βγήκα ἀπ' τὸ νοσοκομεῖο, μοῦ ἐπέβαλαν ἄριστήν διατροφή. –Εἶμαι γέρος, λέει ὁ ἄλλος, τρέμουν τὰ πόδια μου· ἂν δὲν πιῶ λίγο γάλα - λίγο ζουμί, πῶς νὰ σταθῶ; –Εἶμαι μάνα, λέει μιὰ γυναίκα, θηλάζω βρέφος, νιώθω ἐξάντλησι. –Εγώ, λέει ὁ ἄλλος, εἶμαι σὲ βαρεὶα δουλειά, ἔχουμε ἀνθυγιεινὲς ἀναθυμιάσεις στὸ ἐργοστάσιο. –Εγώ, λέει ἄλλος, μένω σὲ ἀνήλιο ὑπόγειο, ἀναπνέω καυσαέρια, δυσκολεύομαι...

Τί νὰ ποῦμε σ' αὐτούς; Στους ἄλλους μιλήσαμε ἄλλιως, σ' αὐτοὺς δὲν θὰ μιλήσουμε ἔτσι. Ἡ Ἐκκλησία εἶνε μάνα, ἀγαπᾷ τὰ παιδιὰ της, διακρίνει περιπτώσεις. Γι' αὐτὸ ὄχι ἐγὼ ὁ ἁμαρτωλός, ἀλλὰ τὸ Πηδάλιο, οἱ ἅγιοι πατέρες πού θέσπισαν τοὺς ἱεροὺς κανόνες, λένε, ὅτι στίς περιπτώσεις αὐτὲς ἀρμόζει ἐπιείκεια. Ὅλοι αὐτοὶ ἐξαιροῦνται ἀπὸ τὸν κανόνα. Δὲν τοὺς ἐξαιρῶ ἐγώ – δὲν ἔχω δικαίωμα· τοὺς ἐξαιρεῖ ἡ σοφὴ οἰκονομία τῆς ἀγίας μας Ἐκκλησίας.

Ἀλλὰ προτοῦ νὰ τελειώσω, σὰς λέω καὶ κάτι ἄλλο – καὶ ἔρχομαι στὸ σπουδαιότερο σημεῖο τοῦ θέματος. Δὲν ἐξαιρεῖται, τὸ τονίζω, δὲν ἐξαιρεῖται κανένας ἀπὸ τὴ νηστεία. –Μὰ τώρα μόλις δὲν εἶπες ὅτι κάποιος ἐξαιροῦνται; τί κάνει λοιπὸν ἐδῶ; φάσκεις καὶ ἀντιφάσκεις; πῶς συμβιβάζονται αὐτά;

Ἀκοῦστε, ἀγαπητοὶ μου. Δὲν ὑπάρχει μόνον ἡ σωματικὴ νηστεία. Ὑπάρχει καὶ μιὰ ἄλλη πιὸ σπουδαία, ἡ πνευματικὴ νηστεία, καὶ σ' αὐτὴν σὰς καλῶ ὄλους. Τί θὰ πῆ νηστεία πνευματικὴ; ✓ Ἐχεις μάτια; Τὰ μάτια δὲν σοῦ τὰ ὄωσε ὁ Θεὸς γιὰ νὰ ἁμαρτάνης· λοιπὸν τὰ μάτια σου

νὰ νηστεύουν τὴ Μεγάλῃ Σαρακοστή, νὰ μὴ χαζέψουν δηλαδή σὲ θεάματα ἁμαρτωλά, εἴτε σὲ ὀθόνες καὶ ἔντυπα εἴτε στὴν καθημερινὴ ζωὴ. Μία Ἐκκλησία μὲ πνευματικὰ κριτήρια εἶνε ἐπιεικέστερη στὴ σωματικὴ νηστεία, ἀλλὰ εἶνε αὐστηρὴ στὴν πνευματικὴ νηστεία.

✓ Ἐχεις αὐτιά; Δὲν μπορείς νὰ τὰ τεντώνης ν' ἀκούσης τὰ αἰσχρὰ καὶ βλάσφημα. Θὰ κλείσης τὸ ραδιόφωνο καὶ τὴν τηλεόρασι, πού ρυπαίνουν τὸ σπῆτι, μολύνουν καὶ τὰ μικρὰ παιδιὰ. Σοῦ ρίχνουν κοπριά μὲ τὸ φτυάρι, κ' ἐσύ κάθῃσαι καὶ τ' ἀκοῦς; Τί νὰ σὲ κάνω;

✓ Νὰ νηστεύουν τὰ μάτια, νὰ νηστεύουν τὰ αὐτιά· νὰ σὰς πῶ κάτι πιὸ δύσκολο; νὰ νηστεύῃ ἢ γλώσσα, πού «κόκκαλα δὲν ἔχει καὶ κόκκαλα τσακίζει». Νήστεψέ τὴν ἀπὸ ψέμα, φλυαρία, πολιτικολογία, κουτσομπολιό, κατάκρισι, ψευδορκία, καὶ πρὸ παντὸς ἀπὸ βλασφημία!

✓ Τέλος τὸ ἀγώνισμα τῶν ἁγίων καὶ τῶν ὁσίων. Ποιό; Νήστεψε τὸ μυαλό σου ἀπὸ λογισμοὺς μίσους, ὑπερηφανείας, αἰσχροτήτος!... Ἀπὸ τοὺς λογισμοὺς ξεκινοῦν ὄλα, καλὰ καὶ κακὰ. Πές μου τί σκέπτεσαι τὴ νύχτα, νὰ σοῦ πῶ τί εἶσαι.

Πάρε λοιπὸν τὸ κόσκινο τῆς νηστείας καὶ κοσκίνισε θεάματα, ἀκροάματα, λόγια καὶ λογισμοὺς. Κι ἄμα φθάσης νὰ περνᾷς τὴ νύχτα μὲ τὸ νοῦ στὸ Θεό, μὲ μεγάλες - οὐρανογεῖτονες σκέψεις, τότε θὰ σοῦ πῶ ὅτι νήστεψες. Ἄν δὲν μπορῆς νὰ νηστεύῃς τὴ σωματικὴ νηστεία γιὰ λόγους ὑγείας, μπορείς ὁμως νὰ νηστεύῃς τὴν ἀγία πνευματικὴ νηστεία.

Θὰ ὑπάρξουν αὐτιά νὰ μ' ἀκούσουν; Ἀμφιβάλλω. Οὔτε τὴ μία νηστεία κάνουμε, οὔτε τὴν ἄλλη. Τί θὰ γίνῃ; Ἐμένα ρωτᾶτε; Νὰ σὰς πῶ; Δὲν πᾶμε καλά. Μαῦρα σύννεφα μαζεύονται. Ἄντε στὰ σπιτάκια σας καὶ γονατίστε. Ἐγὼ θὰ πεθάνω, μὰ νὰ τὸ θυμᾶστε, κάτι φοβερό θὰ γίνῃ στὸν κόσμο. Θὰ πληρῶσῃ ὁ ἁμαρτωλὸς κόσμος αὐτὰ πού διαπράττει τὶς ἅγιες αὐτὲς ἡμέρες. Τί θὰ συμβῆ; Ἀρνεῖσαι λοιπὸν τώρα νὰ νηστεύῃς; Ἐ, θὰ ῥθουν μέρες, πού τὰ τρόφιμα θὰ ἔναι ἄφθονα, μὰ δὲν θὰ τολμᾷς νὰ τ' ἀγίγῃς. Γιατί; Γιατί ὁ Θεὸς θὰ ἐπιτρέψῃ νὰ πέσῃ πάνω τους σκόνῃ - ῥαδιενέργεια, πού θὰ γίνῃ σάβανο τῆς ἁμαρτωλῆς ἀνθρωπότητος.

Λοιπὸν σὰς εἰδοποιῶ νὰ μετανοήσουμε ὄλοι, κλῆρος καὶ λαός· ν' ἀγαπήσουμε τὴ συνδιαλλαγὴ, τὴν ἐλεημοσύνη, τὴ νηστεία. Ἐτσι, ἀδέρφια μου, νηστεύοντας σωματικὰ καὶ πνευματικὰ, νὰ διανύσουμε τὴν ἀγία Τεσσαρακοστή. Καὶ ἄμποτε ὁ Θεὸς νὰ μᾶς ἀξιῶσῃ νὰ ἐορτάσουμε τὴ Μεγάλῃ Ἑβδομάδα, τὰ σεπτὰ πάθη τοῦ Κυρίου καὶ τὴν ἔνδοξον αὐτοῦ ἀνάστασιν· ἀμήν.

(†) 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 2018 commitment **TODAY!** The benefits you shall receive beyond grace include the satisfaction and knowledge that this Church and community thrive thanks to your outreach.

YOU ARE PART OF THE GREAT FRESCO OF FAITH

Forgive, So That You May Be Forgiven

Let us fix our attention on the blood of Christ and recognize how precious it is to God His Father, since it was shed for our salvation and brought the grace of repentance to all the world.

Recall especially what the Lord Jesus said when He taught gentleness and forbearance. Be merciful, He said, so that you may have mercy shown to you. Forgive, so that you may be forgiven. As you treat others, so you will be treated. As you give, so you will receive. As you judge, so you will be judged. As you are kind to others, so you will be treated kindly. The measure of your giving will be the measure of your receiving.

Let these commandments and precepts strengthen us to live in humble obedience

to His sacred words. As Scripture asks: Whom shall I look upon with favor except the humble, peaceful man who trembles at my words?

Sharing then in the heritage of so many vast and glorious achievements, let us hasten toward the goal of peace, set before us from the beginning. Let us keep our eyes firmly fixed on the Father and Creator of the whole universe, and hold fast to his splendid and transcendent gifts of peace and all His blessings.

St. Clement of Rome

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