



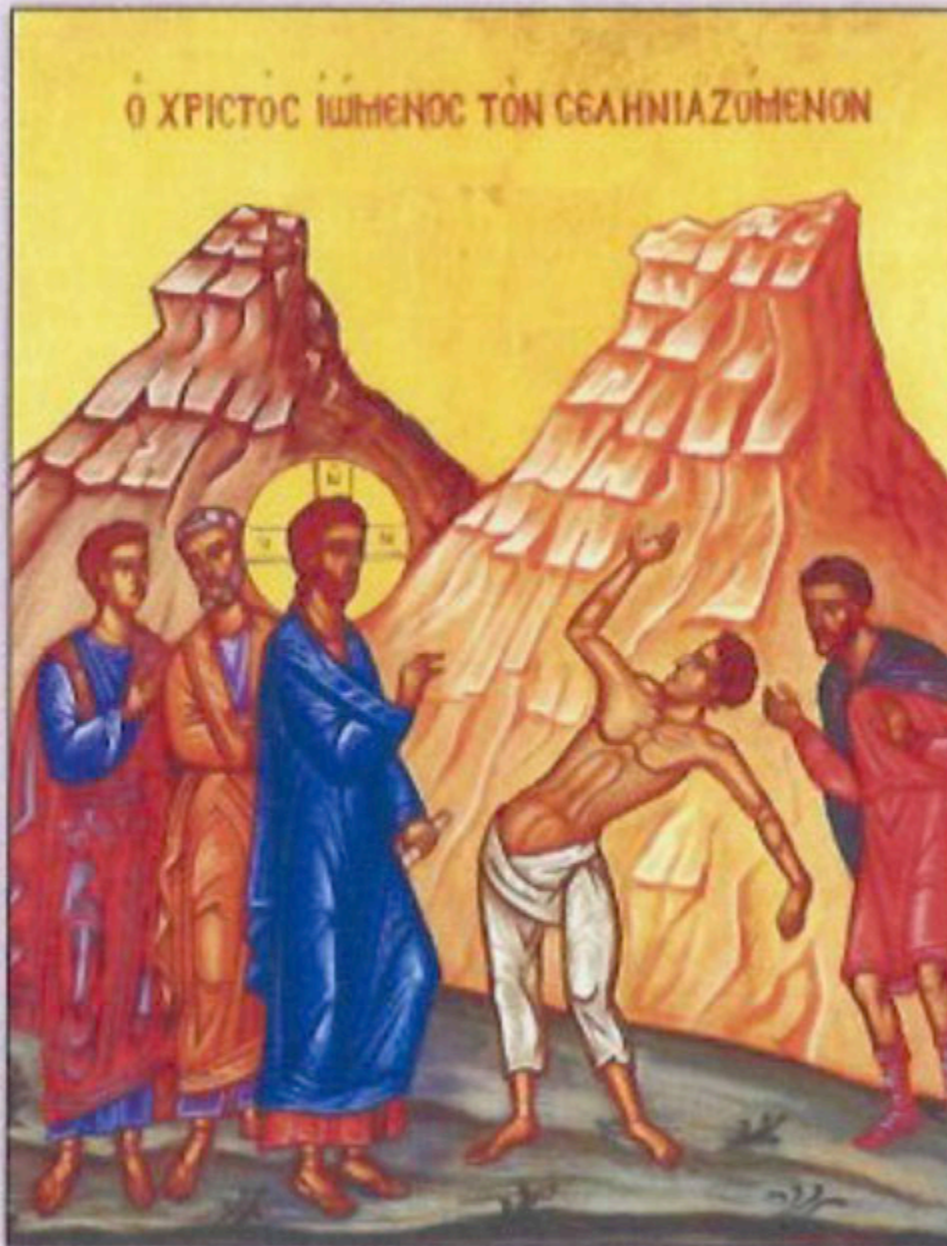
DIRECT ARCHDIOCESAN
DISTRICT

THREE HIERARCHS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

SUNDAY WEEKLY BULLETIN March 18th, 2018

V. Rev. Archimandrite Eugene N. Pappas

FOURTH SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST
SUNDAY OF ST. JOHN CLIMACUS



Icon of Healing the Boy with a Demon

Sunday of St. John Climacus
St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 6:13-20
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 Hebrews 6:13-20

BRETHREN, when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore to himself, saying, "Surely I will bless you and multiply you." And thus Abraham, having patiently endured, obtained the promise. Men indeed swear by a greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he interposed with an oath, so that through two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible that God should prove false, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to seize the hope set before us. We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner shrine behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

Sunday of St. John Climacus

Πρὸς Ἑβραίους 6:13-20

Προκείμενον. Ἦχος 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 Ἑβραίους 6:13-20 τὸ ἀνάγνωσμα εἶναι ἀπο

Ἀδελφοί, τῷ Ἀβραάμ ἐπαγγελάμενος ὁ θεός, ἐπει κατ' οὐδενὸς εἶχεν μείζονος ὁμόσαι, ὥμοσεν καθ' ἑαυτοῦ, λέγων, ἼΗ μὴν εὐλογῶν εὐλογήσω σε, καὶ πληθύνων πληθυνῶ σε. Καὶ οὕτως μακροθυμήσας ἐπέτυχεν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας. Ἄνθρωποι μὲν γὰρ κατὰ τοῦ μείζονος ὁμνύουσιν, καὶ πάσης αὐτοῖς ἀντιλογίας πέρας εἰς βεβαίωσιν ὁ ὄρκος. Ἐν ᾧ περισσώτερον βουλόμενος ὁ θεός ἐπιδείξει τοῖς κληρονόμοις τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τὸ ἀμετάθετον τῆς βουλῆς αὐτοῦ, ἐμεσίτευσεν ὄρκῳ, ἵνα διὰ δύο πραγμάτων ἀμεταθέτων, ἐν οἷς ἀδύνατον ψεῦσασθαι θεόν, ἰσχυρὰν παράκλησιν ἔχωμεν οἱ καταφυγόντες κρατῆσαι τῆς προκειμένης ἐλπίδος· ἦν ὡς ἄγκυραν ἔχομεν τῆς ψυχῆς ἀσφαλῆ τε καὶ βεβαίαν, καὶ εἰσερχομένην εἰς τὸ ἐσώτερον τοῦ καταπετάσματος· ὅπου πρόδρομος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν εἰσῆλθεν Ἰησοῦς, κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισεδέκ ἀρχιερεὺς γενόμενος εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

Sunday of St. John Climacus

The Gospel According to Mark 9:17-31

At that time, a man came to Jesus kneeling and saying: "Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a dumb spirit; and wherever it seizes him it dashes him down; and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid; and I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able." And he answered them, "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me." And they brought the boy to him; and when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. And Jesus asked his father, "How long has he had this?" And he said, "From childhood. And it has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if you can do anything, have pity on us and help us." And Jesus said to him, "If you can! All things are possible to him who believes." Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!" And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You dumb and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again." And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse; so that most of them said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" And he said to them, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer and fasting." They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And he would not have any one know it; for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of man will be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him; and when he is killed, after three days he will rise."

Sunday of St. John Climacus

Ἐκ τοῦ Κατὰ Μάρκον 9:17-31 Εὐαγγελίου τὸ Ἀνάγνωσμα

Τῷ καιρῷ ἐκεῖνῳ, ἄνθρωπός τις προσῆλθε τῷ Ἰησοῦ λέγων, διδάσκαλε, ἤνεγκα τὸν υἱόν μου πρὸς σε, ἔχοντα πνεῦμα ἄλαλον. καὶ ὅπου ἂν αὐτὸν καταλάβῃ, ῥήσσει αὐτόν, καὶ ἀφρίζει καὶ τρίζει τοὺς ὀδόντας αὐτοῦ, καὶ ξηραίνεται· καὶ εἶπον τοῖς μαθηταῖς σου ἵνα αὐτὸ ἐκβάλωσι, καὶ οὐκ ἴσχυσαν. ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς αὐτῷ λέγει· ὦ γενεὰ ἄπιστος, ἕως πότε πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἔσομαι; ἕως πότε ἀνέξομαι ὑμῶν; φέρετε αὐτὸν πρὸς με. καὶ ἤνεγκαν αὐτὸν πρὸς αὐτόν. καὶ ἰδὼν αὐτὸν εὐθέως τὸ πνεῦμα ἐσπάραξεν αὐτόν, καὶ πεσὼν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἐκυλίετο ἀφρίζων. καὶ ἐπηρώτησε τὸν πατέρα αὐτοῦ· πόσος χρόνος ἐστὶν ὡς τοῦτο γέγονεν αὐτῷ; ὁ δὲ εἶπε· παιδιόθεν. καὶ πολλάκις αὐτόν καὶ εἰς πῦρ ἔβαλε καὶ εἰς ὕδατα, ἵνα ἀπολέσῃ αὐτόν· ἀλλ' εἴ τι δύνασαι, βοήθησον ἡμῖν σπλαγχνισθεὶς ἐφ' ἡμᾶς. ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτῷ τὸ εἰ δύνασαι πιστεῦσαι, πάντα δυνατὰ τῷ πιστεῦοντι. καὶ εὐθέως κράξας ὁ πατὴρ τοῦ παιδίου μετὰ δακρύων ἔλεγε· πιστεύω, κύριε· βοήθει μου τῇ ἀπιστίᾳ. ἰδὼν δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὅτι ἐπισυντρέχει ὄχλος, ἐπετίμησε τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἀκαθάρτῳ λέγων αὐτῷ· τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἄλαλον καὶ κωφόν, ἐγὼ σοὶ ἐπιτάσσω, ἐξέλθε ἐξ αὐτοῦ καὶ μηκέτι εἰσελθῆς εἰς αὐτόν. καὶ κράξαν καὶ πολλὰ σπαράξαν αὐτὸν ἐξῆλθε, καὶ ἐγένετο ὡσεὶ νεκρός, ὥστε πολλοὺς λέγειν ὅτι ἀπέθανεν. ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς κρατήσας αὐτόν τῆς χειρὸς ἤγειρεν αὐτόν, καὶ ἀνέστη. καὶ εἰσελθόντα αὐτόν εἰς οἶκον οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ ἐπηρώτων αὐτόν κατ' ἰδίαν, ὅτι ἡμεῖς οὐκ ἠδυνήθημεν ἐκβαλεῖν αὐτό. καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· τοῦτο τὸ γένος ἐν οὐδενὶ δύναται ἐξελθεῖν εἰ μὴ ἐν προσευχῇ καὶ νηστείᾳ. καὶ ἐκεῖθεν ἐξελθόντες παρεπορεύοντο διὰ τῆς Γαλιλαίας, καὶ οὐκ ἠθέληεν ἵνα τις γνῶ· ἐδίδασκε γὰρ τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς ὅτι ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου παραδίδοται εἰς χεῖρας ἀνθρώπων, καὶ ἀποκτενοῦσιν αὐτόν, καὶ ἀποκτανθεὶς τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ ἀναστήσεται.

DEVOTIONS THIS WEEK:

Sunday	March 18th	Liturgy of Saint John Klimacos THIS IS THE LAST SUNDAY FOR MEMORIALS UNTIL POST-PASCHA – April 22nd Each time you ascend ‘STAIRS’ this week call upon St. Klimacos to assist your climb to PARADISE ...ask for mercy repeatedly!	10:30 A.M.
Monday	March 19th,	Borough Hall HELLENIC HERITAGE	6:00 P.M.
Wednesday	March 21st,	Prayer and Healing Service Pre-sanctified Liturgy St. Gregory POT LUCK LENTEN DINNER (hosted by the Daughters of Penelope)	5:30 P.M. 6:00 P.M. 7:15 P.M.
Friday	March 23rd,	A K A T H I S T H Y M N Entire Salutations to the THEOTOKOS	7:00 P.M.
Saturday	March 24th,	Great Vesper of EVANGELISMOS ANNUNCIATION OBSERVANCE N.Y.C.	7:00 P.M.
Sunday	March 25th,	Liturgy of the Annunciation Visit DOXOLOGY of GREEK INDEPENDENCE School Children’s Program	10:30 A.M. 12:00 P.M.
	March 25th,	Commemoration of St. Mary of Egypt Call upon Mary of Egypt to purify your THOUGHTS and WORDS!	

AGAPE COFFEE FELLOWSHIP is being hosted and served by the PHILOPTOCHOS LADIES SOCIETY in White-hall. Please join us in fellowship refreshments.

HELLENIC HERITAGE AWARDS: for the Borough of Brooklyn, issued to the Brooklyn Greeks who have displayed exceptional efforts in support of Hellenism and Orthodox Christianity. The large CITATIONS are signed and presented by the Borough President The Honorable ERIC ADAMS. Two ladies from the parish are being honored most deservedly:

SYLVIA VELLIOS
&
HELEN PAVLIDES

Please mark your calendars for this monumental honor to our parish for Monday –March 19th at 5:30 p.m. at Borough Hall –Court Street. a bus free will transport 40 guests to the event departing from the church at 4:30 P.M. Seats will be reserved on a first come – first seated list. RESERVE YOUR SEAT TODAY through the Church Office. A full Greek dinner buffet, wines soda and sweets with coffee will be offered by the Committee, free to all attending. The bus will return to the church at 8:30 P.M. Let’s all hail our ladies!

DAUGHTERS of PENELOPE will host and serve a LENTEN POT – LUCK DINNER after the celebration of the Pre-Sanctified liturgy of WEDNESDAY – March 21st, at 7:00 P.M. This is an open – house invitation for all to attend the liturgy at 6-7:00 P.M. and break bread together in White-hall.

PASCHAL HOLY WEEK NEEDS: as usual, there are many who wish to reach out and help in: the preparations for PASCHA. Please speak with the clergy directly if you plan to make an offering of any of the following necessities: Altar WINE , PROSPHORA, ANTHO-NERO, AROMATICS (Euchelaion) OLIVE OIL, LARGE FLAT WHITE SHEETS – (apo-kathelosis). ALTAR CLOTHS. Too much of ONE thing and none of ANOTHER does not help! Lord bless those who live the beauty of thy house! KALI TESSARAKOSTI!

PASCHA-EASTER CARD: What more pleasant greeting can you express to one and all than “CHRISTOS ANESTI ! ALITHOS ANESTI!” For a donation of twenty dollars (\$20) your name will be imprinted on the triptych icon of Byzantine design and mailed to 1,000 homes of the parish registry. Don’t miss out in sharing the good news that CHRIST IS RISEN FROM THE DEAD....ALLELUJIA! Please see flyer.

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)

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: + NICHOLAS HAMBAS

+ STEVE (STAVROS) ANIOTES



*Most Holy God, give us compassion to see
and to serve wherever needed, and cleanse
our hearts that we may seek only You.*

St. John Climacus

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

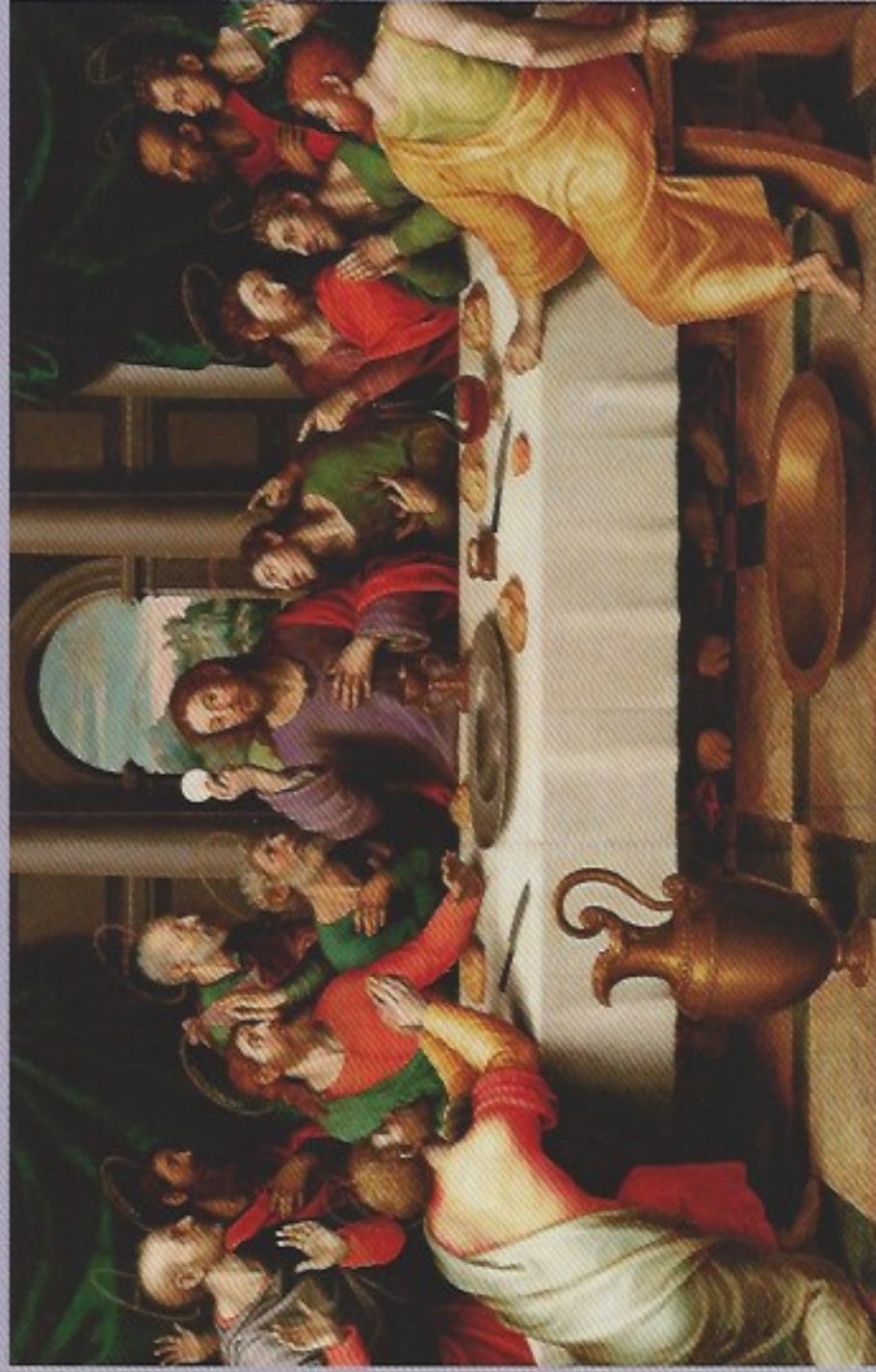
Very Rev. Michael Elias
St. Mary's Antiochian Orthodox Church,
Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, New York

*He said to them, "But who do you say
that I am?" Peter answered and said to
Him, "You are the Christ." – Mark 9:29*

This Sunday, the fourth in our pilgrimage toward Christ's Resurrection, the Church in its wisdom holds up as an example of asceticism a great saint whose life and writings can inspire those who honor him. St. John Climacus, or St. John of the Ladder, was the abbot of St. Catherine's Monastery on Mt. Sinai in the sixth century.

St. John stands as a witness to the spiritual effort that is necessary both for our Lenten journey and for our entrance into the Kingdom of God. The spiritual struggle of the Christian life is "not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers of the present darkness" (Ephesians 6:12). We must, therefore, take steps to become detached from things of this world and to cling more closely to God alone. Fasting, prayer, and almsgiving are our spiritual resources. During Great Lent the Church reminds us to draw our attention away from daily distractions, desires, and passions and to place it once again on our ultimate goal, union with our merciful and holy God.

St. John encourages the faithful in their efforts and reminds us that "he who endures to the end will be saved" (Matthew 24:13). How can we achieve this? We can draw spiritual strength through the sacraments and by humbly practicing the disciplines handed down to us in the Church. If we are to be one with Christ, we must also serve as He served, seeing those in need around us and around the world.



The Last Supper

The Last Supper was a Passover meal that was the final time Jesus and The Twelve would be together before the Resurrection. Jesus was arrested that night by Roman soldiers, then tried and crucified. Although the Mass was codified centuries after His death, here the great Spanish Renaissance artist Juan de Juanes depicts Jesus celebrating the Eucharist. As

described in the Gospel of Mark, *"While they were eating, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it and gave it to them and said, 'Take it; this is my body.' (Mark 14:22).* The apostles may be identified by the halos bearing their names. Only the traitor Judas, seated near the end of the table, is without a halo. His hair is red (an artistic reference to the devil), and he clutches in his right hand the thirty pieces of silver he received for his betrayal of Jesus. Ridden with guilt, Judas hanged himself after Jesus was crucified.

Juan de Juanes, *The Last Supper* (c. 1560-55)
© Museo del Prado, Madrid, Spain
Photo credit: Scala/Art Resource, NY



ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ

ΣΥΝΤΟΜΟΝ ΚΗΡΥΓΜΑ



«Έγενόμην ἐν Πνεύματι ἐν τῇ Κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ καὶ ἤκουσα φωνὴν ὅπως μου μεγάλῃν ὡς σάλπιγγος» (Απ. 1,10)

Ἐκδίδεται ἀπὸ τὴν Κοινοβιακὴ Γυναικίᾳ Τετρᾷ Μονῇ Ἁγίου Αὐγουστίνου Φλωρίνης - ΣΟ1 00 ΦΛΩΡΙΝΑ - τηλ. 23850-28510 - imaefflo@yahoo.gr

Περίοδος Δ' - Ἔτος ΛΕ' Φλώρινα - ἀριθμ. φύλλου 2077	Κυριακὴ Δ' τῶν Νηστειῶν (Ἔβρ. 6,13-20) 18 Μαρτίου 2018	Συντάκτης (†) ἐπίσκοπος Αὐγουστίνος Ν. Καντιώτης
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Ἐλπίδα, ἡ ἄγκυρα τῆς ζωῆς μας

«... Ἰσχυράν παράκλησιν ἔχωμεν οἱ καταφυγόντες κρατῆσαι τῆς προκειμένης ἐλπίδος· ἦν ὡς ἄγκυραν ἔχομεν τῆς ψυχῆς ἀσφαλῆ τε καὶ βεβαίαν...» (Ἔβρ. 6,18-19)

Ο ἀπόστολος Παῦλος, ἀγαπητοί μου, δὲν εἶνε μόνο ὁ σφοδρὸς ἐλεγκτὴς τῆς ἀνθρώπινης κακίας· δὲν μόνο αὐτὸς ποὺ ρίχνει κεραυνούς, αὐτὸς ποὺ σὰν πέλεκυς πέφτει καὶ συντρίβει τὰ γερασμένα δέντρα τῆς ἀμαρτίας· εἶνε καὶ ὁ παρήγορος ἄγγελος τῆς ἀνθρώπινης καρδιάς.

Γνωρίζει καλὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπο ὁ ἀπόστολος Παῦλος. Ἀγάπησε προηγουμένως τὸν Κύριο καὶ μετανόησε εἰλικρινὰ γιὰ τὸ παρελθόν του. Βαπτίστηκε καὶ μπῆκε στὴν Ἐκκλησία. Πῆρε στὸ ὦμο τὸ σταυρὸ του καὶ ἔζησε μὲ ἀκρίβεια καὶ συνέπεια τὴ χριστιανικὴ ζωὴ· δοκίμασε τὴ δυσκολία, τὸν ἀγῶνα καὶ τοὺς πειρασμούς της· ἤπιε τὰ πικρὰ ποτήρια τῆς θλίψεως.

Γνωρίζει λοιπὸν ἀπὸ δική του πείρα ὅτι ἔρχονται στιγμὲς ποὺ ὁ πιστός, κάτω ἀπ' τὸ βάρος τοῦ σταυροῦ ποὺ σηκώνει, κάμπτεται, καὶ τότε **ἔχει ἀνάγκη ἀπὸ βοήθεια, παρηγοριά, ἐμψύχωσι**. Ἀλλὰ τὴν ἐμψύχωσι αὐτή, στίς φοβερὲς ἐκεῖνες ἡμέρες καὶ ὥρες τῆς ζωῆς, τὴν δίνει μόνο ἡ ἐλπίδα στὸ Χριστό. Γι' αὐτὸ τώρα, γράφοντας στοὺς ἔξ Ἑβραίων Χριστιανούς, ποὺ ὑπέφεραν τὰ πάνδεινα ἀπὸ τοὺς ὀμοφύλους τους μέσα σὲ μιὰ γενεὰ ἄπιστη, ὁ ἀπόστολος θέλει νὰ τοὺς ἐμψυχώσῃ μὲ τὴ χριστιανικὴ ἐλπίδα.

Μὴν ἀπελπίζεστε, τοὺς λέει. **Νὰ ἔχετε τὶς ἐλπίδες σας στὸ Θεό**. Ὁ Κύριος, ποὺ ἔδωσε ὑποσχέσεις, θὰ ἐκπληρώσῃ τὶς ὑποσχέσεις του. Στηρίξτε τὴν ἐλπίδα σας σ' αὐτὸν ὅπως ἔκανε κι ὁ Ἄβραάμ, ὁ ὁποῖος πέρασε μὲν ἀπὸ τὴν πρωτάκουστη ἐκεῖνη δοκιμασία, νὰ τοῦ ζητήσῃ δηλαδὴ ὁ Θεὸς νὰ θυσιάσῃ τὸ μονάκριβο παιδί του, ἀλλὰ δὲν κλονίστηκε· κράτησε τὴν ἐλπίδα του, καὶ τέλος εὐλογήθηκε πλοῦσια. Κ' ἐσεῖς μὴν ἀφήσετε νὰ χαθῆ ἡ ἐλπίδα σας, κρατῆστε τὴν σφιχτά, καὶ δὲν θὰ

χαθῆτε. Ὁ Κύριος δὲν λείπει ποτέ ψέματα, εἶνε ἀδύνατον νὰ πῆ ψεῖμα· λοιπὸν δὲν θὰ σὰς ἐξ-απατήσῃ, δὲν θὰ σὰς γελάσῃ. Μπορεῖ νὰ ἀργῆ, ἀλλὰ δὲν λησμονεῖ· πραγματοποιεῖ τὸ λόγο του, εἶνε φερέγγυος καὶ ἀξιόπιστος. Ἡ ψυχὴ σας βέβαια θὰ περάσῃ ἀπὸ ἕναν ὠκεανὸ θλίψεως, γιὰτὶ κατὰ τὸ σοφὸ σχέδιο τοῦ παναγάθου Κυρίου μας αὐτὸς εἶνε ὁ στενὸς καὶ δύσβατος δρόμος ποὺ ὀδηγεῖ στὴν κάθαροι καὶ τὴ σωτηρία, αὐτὴ εἶνε ἡ «**τεθλιμμένη ὁδὸς ἡ ἀπάγουσα εἰς τὴν ζωὴν**» (Ματθ. 7,14)· ἐφ' ὅσον ὁμως ἔχετε τὴν ἐλπίδα σας στὸ Θεό, δὲν θὰ καταποντισθῆτε, δὲν θὰ χαθῆτε.

Ἡ ἐλπίδα, νὰ ἡ ἄγκυρα τῆς ψυχῆς, νὰ τὸ **στήριγμα τοῦ πιστοῦ**. Ὅσοι λοιπὸν καταφύγαμε καὶ πιαστήκαμε ἀπὸ τὴν ἐλπίδα στὸν Κύριο, νὰ νιώθουμε δυνατὴ παρηγοριά. Αὐτὴ τὴν ἐλπίδα ἔχουμε «**ὡς ἄγκυραν τῆς ψυχῆς ἀσφαλῆ τε καὶ βεβαίαν καὶ εἰσερχομένην εἰς τὸ ἐσώτερον τοῦ καταπετάσματος, ὅπου πρόδρομος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν εἰσῆλθεν Ἰησοῦς, κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισεδέκ, ἀρχιερεὺς γενόμενος εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα**» (Ἔβρ. 6,19-20). Ἡ ἐλπίδα μας εἶνε ὁ Χριστός, ὁ ὁποῖος, μὲ τὴ θυσία του ποὺ προσέφερε ὡς αἰώνιος ἀρχιερεὺς, εἰσῆλθε στὰ ἀληθινὰ ἅγια τῶν ἁγίων, δηλαδὴ στὸν οὐρανὸ, ἐτοιμάζοντας τὸ δρόμο γιὰ νὰ τὸν ἀκολουθήσουμε κ' ἐμεῖς. Ἐκεῖ λοιπὸν εἶνε τὸ δυνατό καὶ ἀσάλευτο στήριγμά μας, ἐκεῖ εἶνε ἡ ἀδιάψευστη ἐλπίδα μας.

Ἡ ἐλπίδα, ἀγαπητοί μου, εἶνε θεῖο δῶρο. Εἶνε μία ἀπὸ τὶς πιὸ σημαντικὲς δυνάμεις τῆς ψυχῆς. Χωρὶς αὐτὴν δὲν μπορεῖ ὁ ἄνθρωπος νὰ κάνῃ οὔτε ἕνα βῆμα πρὸς τὰ ἔμπροσ.

Ἡ ἐλπίδα εἶνε ἀπαραίτητη σὲ κάθε ἔργο. Ὁ γεωργὸς σπέρνει τὸ σπόρο στὸ χωράφι μὲ τὴν ἐλπίδα ὅτι θὰ θερίσῃ περισσότερο ἀπ' ὅ,τι ἔ-

σπειρε. Ὁ ναυτικός φεύγει ἀπὸ τὸν τόπο του, ξανοίγεται στὸ πέλαγος καὶ διασχίζει τὸν ὠκεανὸ μὲ τὴν ἐλπίδα ὅτι θὰ φτάσῃ καλὰ στὸ λιμάνι τοῦ προορισμοῦ του. Ὁ ἐμπόρος τολμᾷ καὶ ρίχνει στὴν ἀγορὰ τὰ κεφάλαιά του μὲ τὴν ἐλπίδα ὅτι θὰ κερδίσῃ καὶ θὰ τὰ πολλαπλασιάσῃ. Ὁ ἄρρωστος παίρνει τὸ φάρμακο ποῦ τοῦ γράφει ὁ γιατρός καὶ ὑποβάλλεται σὲ αὐστηρὴ δίαιτα μὲ τὴν ἐλπίδα ὅτι θὰ θεραπευθῇ καὶ θ' ἀπαλλαγῇ ἀπὸ τὴν ἀσθένειά του.

Ἡ ἐλπίδα εἶνε σύντροφος καὶ ἐκείνου ποῦ εὐτυχεῖ, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐκείνου ποῦ δυστυχεῖ. Αὐτὸς μὲν ποῦ ζῆ τώρα εὐτυχισμένος ἐλπίζει, ὅτι ἡ εὐτυχία του αὐτὴ θὰ διατηρηθῇ καὶ θὰ ὑπάρχῃ στὴ ζωὴ του διαρκῶς· ἐνῶ αὐτὸς ποῦ ζῆ τώρα σὲ δυστυχία ἐλπίζει, ὅτι αὐριο οἱ συνθήκες τῆς ζωῆς του θὰ βελτιωθοῦν, θὰ βγῇ ἀπὸ τὴ δυστυχία καὶ θὰ γνωρίσῃ καὶ αὐτὸς τὴν εὐτυχία. **Ἡ ἐλπίδα εἶνε σύντροφος ὄλων.** Ῥίχνει σὰν ἥλιος τὶς φωτεινὲς ἀκτίνες τῆς παντοῦ· καὶ στὰ ἀνάκτορα, ὅπου οἱ ἄρχοντες ζοῦν μὲ ἄνεσι καὶ εὐχονται ὁ χρόνος τῆς ἐξουσίας νὰ μὴν τελειώσῃ, ἀλλὰ καὶ στὶς φυλακές, ὅπου ὁ βαρυποινίτης ζῆ μὲ στερήσεις καὶ δὲν βλέπει τὴν ὥρα πότε ἡ ποινὴ του θὰ λήξῃ καὶ ἡ πόρτα τοῦ κελιοῦ του θ' ἀνοίξῃ γιὰ νὰ βγῇ ἀπ' τὴ φυλακὴ ἐλευθέρως.

Ἡ ἐλπίδα εἶνε ὁ καλὸς σύντροφος ὄλων· καὶ μπορούμε νὰ ποῦμε ὅτι ὁ μόνος πραγματικὰ δυστυχισμένος εἶνε ἕνας, ἐκεῖνος στὸν ὁποῖο ὁ ἥλιος τῆς ἐλπίδος ἔπαψε νὰ στέλνῃ τὶς ἀκτίνες του. **Ζωὴ χωρὶς ἐλπίδα εἶνε μαρτύριο, μὴ μικρὴ κόλασις**· γιὰτὶ καὶ τῆς κολάσεως αὐτὸ εἶνε τὸ χαρακτηριστικόν, ὅτι ἐκεῖ μέσα θὰ ἐκλείψῃ καὶ θὰ σβῆσῃ κάθε ἐλπίδα.

Ἄν ἡ ἐλπίδα, ἀγαπητοί μου, εἶνε χρησιμὴ στὰ καθημερινὰ μας βιοποριστικὰ ἔργα, πολὺ πιὸ χρησιμὴ, χρησιμώτατη, εἶνε στὸ ὑψηλὸ ἔργο, στὴν οὐράνια ὑπόθεσι τῆς σωτηρίας τῆς ψυχῆς μας. Ἡ ἐλπίδα ὅτι ὁ Χριστὸς θὰ μᾶς βοηθᾷ πάντοτε, ὅτι θὰ ἐκπληρώσῃ τὶς ὑποσχέσεις του ποῦ εἶνε γραμμένες στὸ ἱερὸ Εὐαγγέλιο καὶ γενικὰ στὴν ἀγία Γραφή, ἡ ἐλπίδα αὐτὴ εἶνε, ὅπως τὴ χαρακτηρίζει ὁ ἀπόστολος Παῦλος σήμερα, **«ἀσφαλὴς καὶ βεβαία»**, ἀξιόπιστη δηλαδὴ καὶ σίγουρη.

Ἄλλες ἐλπίδες διαψεύδονται, καὶ τότε ἐκεῖνος ποῦ στηρίχθηκε σ' αὐτὲς ἀπογοητεύεται ὁ ἴδιος ἀλλὰ καὶ ντροπιάζεται μπροστὰ στοὺς ἄλλους ποῦ βλέπουν ὅτι ἀπατήθηκε, ὅτι τὸ στηρίγμά του τὸν πρόδωσε. Μιὰ ἐλπίδα ποῦ στηρίζεται σὲ πρόσωπα καὶ πράγματα τοῦ κόσμου τούτου ἀποδεικνύεται πολλὰς

φορὰς ψεύτικη καὶ γίνεται, ὅπως λέει κάποιος ἀπὸ τοὺς ἀρχαίους σοφοὺς, **«μῆτηρ συμφορῶν»**. Ἀντιθέτως ἡ ἐλπίδα ποῦ στηρίζεται **στὸ Χριστὸ ἔχει τὸ βέβαιο καὶ τὸ ἀσφαλές**, ἔχει ἀξιοπιστία καὶ σιγουριά.

Ἡ ἐλπίδα αὐτὴ εἶνε ἡ ἄγκυρα τῆς ψυχῆς στὸ ταξίδι τῆς ζωῆς. **Τί εἶνε ἡ ἄγκυρα;** Ἐνα βαρὺ σιδερένιο ἐξάρτημα, μὲ τὸ ὁποῖο εἶνε ἐφωδιασμένα ἀπαραιτήτως ὅλα τὰ σκάφη ποῦ πλέουν στὴ θάλασσα. Αὐτὸ ποντίζεται μὲ ἀλυσίδα μεγάλου μήκους στὸ βάθος τῆς θαλάσσης, ὅπου λόγῳ τοῦ ἀγκυλωτοῦ σχήματος καὶ τοῦ βάρους του ἀγκιστρώνεται στὸ βυθὸ καὶ συγκρατεῖ τὸ πλοῖο ἀπὸ τὸν κίνδυνο νὰ παρασυρθῇ ἀπὸ τὰ κύματα καὶ τοὺς ἀνέμους καὶ νὰ προσκρούσῃ σὲ βράχους ἢ νὰ προσαράξῃ.

Ὅπως λοιπὸν τὸ πλοῖο, ὅταν ρίξῃ τὴν ἄγκυρά του ἀσφαλίζεται καὶ δὲν παρασύρεται ἀπὸ τὰ ρεύματα, ἔτσι καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ μας, ὅταν ἔχη τὴν ἐλπίδα τῆς στὸ Χριστό, **εἶνε ἐξασφαλισμένη**· δὲν θὰ παρασυρθῇ ἀπὸ τοὺς ἀνέμους τῆς ἀπιστίας, δὲν θὰ γίνῃ παιχνιδι κανενός, δὲν θὰ κινδυνεύσῃ ἡ σωτηρία τῆς.

Ἀγαπητοί μου! Ὅλες οἱ ἐλπίδες ποῦ στηρίζουμε σὲ πράγματα τοῦ κόσμου τούτου εἶνε ἄγκυρες, ἀλλὰ **ἄγκυρες ἐπισηλαεῖς**, στηρίγματα ἀνίσχυρα, ποῦ μία σφοδρὴ θύελλα τῆς ζωῆς μπορεῖ νὰ τὰ παρασύρῃ καὶ νὰ τὰ ἀχρηστεύσῃ, καὶ τότε ἐμεῖς θὰ μείνουμε μέσα στὸν κόσμον δίχως ἐλπίδα, σὰν πλοῖα δίχως ἄγκυρα μέσ' στὸν ὠκεανόν.

Ἀσφαλὴς ἄγκυρα, ποῦ ποτέ κανεὶς καὶ τίποτα δὲν μπορεῖ νὰ κόψῃ τὴν ἀλυσίδα τῆς, εἶνε μόνον ἡ ἐλπίδα στὸ Χριστό. Γιατὶ αὐτὴ **ἐξαρτᾷ τὸν Χριστιανὸ ὄχι ἀπὸ τὴ γῆ**, ἡ ὁποία μιὰ μέρα θὰ παρέλθῃ μαζί μὲ ὅλα τὰ ἀγαθὰ τῆς, τὰ ἰνδάλματά τῆς καὶ τὰ στηρίγματά τῆς, **ἀλλ' ἀπὸ τὸν οὐρανόν, ἀπὸ τὸ Χριστό**. Ἐκεῖνος κατὰ τὴν πίστι μας εἶνε αἰώνιος καὶ ἀμετακίνητος, καὶ μέσα στὶς τροπὲς καὶ ἀλλοιώσεις μένει ἄτρεπτος καὶ ἀναλλοίωτος.

Μὴ γινώμαστε λοιπὸν ἄφρονες. Ἄς παραδειγματιστοῦμε ἀπὸ τὴ φρονιμάδα τῶν ναυτικῶν. Ὅπως αὐτοὶ δὲν ἐπιχειροῦν νὰ ταξιδέψουν στὶς θάλασσες ἂν δὲν ἔχουν ἐν τάξει τὴν ἄγκυρα τοῦ πλοίου τους, ἔτσι κ' ἐμεῖς, ἂν θέλουμε νὰ διαπλεύσουμε τούτῃ τὴ ζωὴ καὶ νὰ σώσουμε τὶς ψυχές μας, τὸ δικό μας σκάφος, ἂς ἔχουμε ὡς ἐφόδιο, σὰν ἄγκυρα, τὴν ἐλπίδα στὸ Χριστό· **«ἢ δὲ ἐλπίς οὐ κατασχύνει»**, αὐτὴ ἡ ἐλπίδα δὲν θὰ μᾶς ἀπατήσῃ ποτέ (Ρωμ. 5,5).

(†) **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

Journeying to Pascha

Jesus continues today his work of healing and exorcism, and that is appropriate for this time of Lent, because Lent is a time for healing and exorcism. It is a time for us to heal the wounds of our souls – self-inflicted wounds due to our complacency and laziness and self-indulgence. It is time to get rid of those demons of our own sinful habits and anything that keeps us away from God and from living that abundant life that Christ came to give us.

We start to make our way toward Jerusalem. At the end of today's Gospel already there is the prediction of the passion, the death and the resurrection of Christ, giving a little hint in the Gospel that the course of Lent is moving now towards Jerusalem. We have gone through several weeks now of spiritual preparations, Scripture texts, prayers and activities. Now our focus

is starting to turn towards Jerusalem. That will be made more explicit in next Sunday's Gospel, but we are already getting a hint of it now.

There are only three weeks now until Easter, two weeks until Palm Sunday, when we are really liturgically accompanying Christ into the mystery of His Passion.

So it is coming soon, and we have to start turning towards Jerusalem. We have to get focused, we have to get recollected, we have to really revive our Lenten prayer and fasting so that we can make the rest of this journey and be fruitful and overcome the demons and find healing for the wounds of our souls – and go with Christ to his Passion and, through the mystery of His Cross, come to that great, transfiguring, glorious celebration of His Resurrection.

WEB-SITE: information is **ALWAYS ON LINE** ready to see and read. If you submit **YOUR E-MAIL** address we can forward Bulletin Information to you personally. See :Website: www.threehierarchsbrooklynny.org