



DIRECT ARCHDIOCESAN  
DISTRICT

# THREE HIERARCHS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

SUNDAY WEEKLY BULLETIN March 17th, 2019  
V. Rev. Archimandrite Eugene N. Pappas

## FIRST SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY



*Icon of the Holy Images*

**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 11:24-26, 32-40

Brethren, by faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to share ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.

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 enemies 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 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.

**Προκείμενον. Ήχος δ'.**

**Δαυΐλ 3.26-27**

Εὐλογητὸς εἶ, Κύριε, ὁ Θεὸς τῶν Πατέρων ἡμῶν.

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

Πρὸς Ἑβραίους 11:24-26, 32-40 τὸ ἀνάγνωσμα

Ἀδελφοί, πίστει Μωϋσῆς μέγας γενόμενος ἠρνήσατο λέγεσθαι υἱὸς θυγατρὸς Φαραῶ, μᾶλλον ἐλόμενος συγκακοῦχεῖσθαι τῷ λαῷ τοῦ θεοῦ ἢ πρόσκαιρον ἔχειν ἀμαρτίας ἀπόλαυσιν· μείζονα πλοῦτον ἠγησάμενος τῶν Αἰγύπτου θησαυρῶν τὸν ὄνειδισμόν τοῦ Χριστοῦ· ἀπέβλεπεν γὰρ εἰς τὴν μισθαποδοσίαν. Καὶ τί ἔτι λέγω; Ἐπιλείπει γὰρ με διηγούμενον ὁ χρόνος περὶ Γεδεῶν, Βαράκ τε καὶ Σαμψῶν 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 ἐκλιναν ἀλλοτρίων. Ἔλαβον γυναῖκες ἐξ ἀναστάσεως τοὺς νεκροὺς αὐτῶν· ἄλλοι δὲ ἐτυμpanίσθησαν, οὐ προσδεξάμενοι τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν, ἵνα κρείττονος ἀναστάσεως τύχωσιν· ἕτεροι δὲ ἐμπαιγμῶν καὶ μαστίγων πείραν ἔλαβον, ἔτι δὲ δεσμῶν καὶ φυλακῆς· ἐλιθάσθησαν, ἐπρίσθησαν, ἐπειράσθησαν, ἐν φόνῳ μαχαίρας ἀπέθανον· περιήλθον ἐν μηλωταῖς, ἐν αἰγείοις δέρμασιν, ὑστερούμενοι, θλιβόμενοι, κακουχούμενοι - ὧν οὐκ ἦν ἄξιος ὁ κόσμος - ἐν ἐρημίαις πλανώμενοι καὶ ὄρεσιν καὶ σπηλαίοις καὶ ταῖς ὄραις τῆς γῆς. Καὶ οὗτοι πάντες, μαρτυρηθέντες διὰ τῆς πίστεως, οὐκ ἐκομίσαντο τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν, τοῦ θεοῦ περὶ ἡμῶν κρείττον τι προβλεψαμένου, ἵνα μὴ χωρὶς ἡμῶν τελειωθῶσιν.

**Sunday of Orthodoxy**

The Gospel According to John 1:43-51

t that time, Jesus decided to go to Galilee. And he found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael, and he said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" Nathanael said to him, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." Nathanael answered him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" Jesus answered him, "Because I said to you, I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You shall see greater things than these." And he said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."

Ἐκ τοῦ Κατὰ Ἰωάννην 1:44-52 Εὐαγγελίου τὸ Ἀνάγνωσμα

Τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ, ἠθέλησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐξελθεῖν εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν· καὶ εὕρισκε Φίλιππον καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ· ἀκολούθει μοι. ἦν δὲ ὁ Φίλιππος ἀπὸ Βηθσαϊδά, ἐκ τῆς πόλεως Ἀνδρέου καὶ Πέτρου. εὕρισκε Φίλιππος τὸν Ναθαναὴλ καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ· ὃν ἔγραψε Μωϋσῆς ἐν τῷ νόμῳ καὶ οἱ προφῆται, εὕρηκαμεν, Ἰησοῦν τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ Ἰωσήφ τὸν ἀπὸ Ναζαρέτ. καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ Ναθαναὴλ· ἐκ Ναζαρέτ δύναται τι ἀγαθὸν εἶναι; λέγει αὐτῷ Φίλιππος· ἔρχου καὶ ἴδε. εἶδεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὸν Ναθαναὴλ ἐρχόμενον πρὸς αὐτὸν καὶ λέγει περὶ αὐτοῦ· ἴδε ἀληθῶς Ἰσραηλίτης, ἐν ᾧ δόλος οὐκ ἔστι. λέγει αὐτῷ Ναθαναὴλ· πόθεν με γινώσκεις; ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· πρὸ τοῦ σε Φίλιππον φωνῆσαι, ὄντα ὑπὸ τὴν συκὴν εἶδόν σε. ἀπεκρίθη Ναθαναὴλ καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ· ῥαββί, σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, σὺ εἶ ὁ βασιλεὺς τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ. ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· ὅτι εἶπόν σοι, εἶδόν σε ὑποκάτω τῆς συκῆς, πιστεύεις; μείζω τούτων ὄψει. καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ· ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἀπ' ἄρτι ὄψεσθε τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀνεωγμένον, καὶ τοὺς ἀγγέλους τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀναβαίνοντας καὶ καταβαίνοντας ἐπὶ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου.

**AGAPE COFFEE FELLOWSHIP HOUR:** is being offered and served to all at the Boys Scout Pasta Luncheon in Rose-Hall. Everyone is most welcomed. Join us please.

**TODAY:** we observe the ‘ Sunday of Orthodoxy ‘ with the restoration of the sacred icons to their respective and honored place in our churches and homes. This celebrates the victory over the iconoclast heresy that divided the faithful in the body of Christ (CHURCH MILITANT ). The solemn procession will take place at the conclusion of Liturgy.

**TODAY WE WELCOME** the V. REV. FR. CHRISTOPHER METROPOULOS PRESIDENT of HELLENIC COLLEGE and HOLY CROSS SEMINARY ,who will address the faithful at the Divine Liturgy discussing the premier accredited Orthodox Christian college, graduate school of theology and seminary in the UNITED STATES of AMERICA. Truly this is an honor for our community and a learning lesson for all regarding the accomplishments in academia for the Greek Orthodox Church.

**WELCOME FR. ATHANASIOS** from the PATRIARCHAL GEORGIAN MONASTERY of MARYLAND who will be the celebrant at Liturgy next Sunday – March 24th.

**FOLLOWING** the HELLENIC COLLEGE /HOLY CROSS President’s delivery a PASTA LUNCHEON will be hosted and served in ROSEHALL by the ‘Golden Greeks’ BOY SCOUT TROOP 531. This annual fund raiser helps promote the moral and ethical study and exercise of our young lads. This is the FIRST SUNDAY of LENT! Come and share the Lenten table of delicious dining and gracious fellowship on the occasion of Saint Patrick’s Day (MARCH 17th. ) The sacred icon of this ORTHODOX SAINT will be venerated for all. Your IRISH-AMERICAN neighbors, friends, and kin must be invited.

**TODAY:** the BROOKLYN PAN ORTHODOX VESPER highlighting the ICON RESTORATION will be hosted at 4:00 P.M. at Saint Nicholas ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CATHERDRAL on State Street in downtown Brooklyn. Everyone is invited. A sumptuous Lenten Arabic dinner will be served at 5:30 P.M. open to all in attendance. **SHARE THE JOY OF UNITED ORTHODOXY!** All Three Hierarchs Clergy will be in attendance and celebrate.

**HELLENIC HERITAGE AWARDS** are to be presented at Borough Hall on Monday, March 18th, from 6-7:00 P.M. with a sumptuous Greek meal hosted by the Borough President and Hellenic Committee **OPEN FREE TO EVERYONE** 7:30 – 8:30 P.M. We are celebrating two of our prestigious members **GEORGE IOANNIDES** and **GEORGIA BOUZAKIS**. A free bus will depart from the Church on **MONDAY AFTERNOON AT 4:30 P.M.** reserve your seat **NOW, NOW, NOW.**

**FR. EUGENE:** will be out of the office and Parochial duties from Tuesday March 19th, through and including **NEXT SUNDAY** March 24th. The Pastor will return from abroad on Sunday afternoon (the Vespers of the Annunciation). He will be the celebrant on **MONDAY – MARCH 25th.** Annunciation ( Evangelismos ) and the Greek Independence Observance at **THREE HIERARCHS 9 – 11 A.M.**

**GREEK PARADE on FIFTH AVENUE:** this year is scheduled for **SUNDAY, APRIL 14th .** Please circle your calendar from **NOW....**not to miss that memorable patriotic expression of our ethnic heritage. Buses will depart from the Church for the afternoon (1:30 P.M. – 5:30 P.M.) event. Seats are reserved by name. First come, first seated.

**TWO LENTEN POT LUCK DINNERS SCHEDULED OPEN TO EVERYONE**  
**Wednesday - March 27th and April 10th.**

The Philoptochos Society will host the first dinner with the **DAUGHTERS of Penelope Demetra Chapter** hosting the second dinner. Both dinner events are at **7:15 P.M.** directly after the **EVENING PRE-SANCTIFIED LITURGY** at **6:00 P.M.** After work, come to Liturgy and Lenten table to share fellowship.

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**RADIO MINISTRY:** Each Saturday at 1:15PM Fr. Eugene hosts and produces the radio broadcast MATTERS OF CONSCIENCE NOW IN it’s 20<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 The website address. W.W.W.gaepis.org (Click live audio)

**MEMORIAL TODAY: + GEORGE CROMAS ETERNAL BE HIS MEMORY!**



SENIOR CLUB  
THREE HIERARCHS CHURCH  
MARCH 2019



March 6th

Regular Meeting  
Bingo  
Coffee and Sweets



SUNDAY the 10th  
Senior Club  
Hosts Coffee

Father Eugene will lecture on the  
Roman Catholic tradition of ASH  
WEDNESDAY opening of Lent!

March 13th



WE START  
EARLY TODAY  
BINGO

PRE-SANCTIFIED LITURGY 9:30 A.M.  
followed by COMMUNION BREAKFAST 11:00 A.M.  
FULL LENTEN TABLE  
-juices, tea, coffee, bagels  
buns, peanut butter, jams and jellies,  
fruit, nuts.

March 20th



1st DAY OF SPRING !!!  
Saint Patrick's Day Celebration  
'WEARING OF THE GREEN'  
B I N G O  
Sweets and coffee

March 27th



Celebrating GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY  
MARCH 25, 1821  
Happy name day to all EVANGELOS and  
EVANGELIAS, ANGELAS, ANGELOS,  
BINGO  
Greek sweets and treats. CHRONIA POLLA

Dates to remember in MARCH:

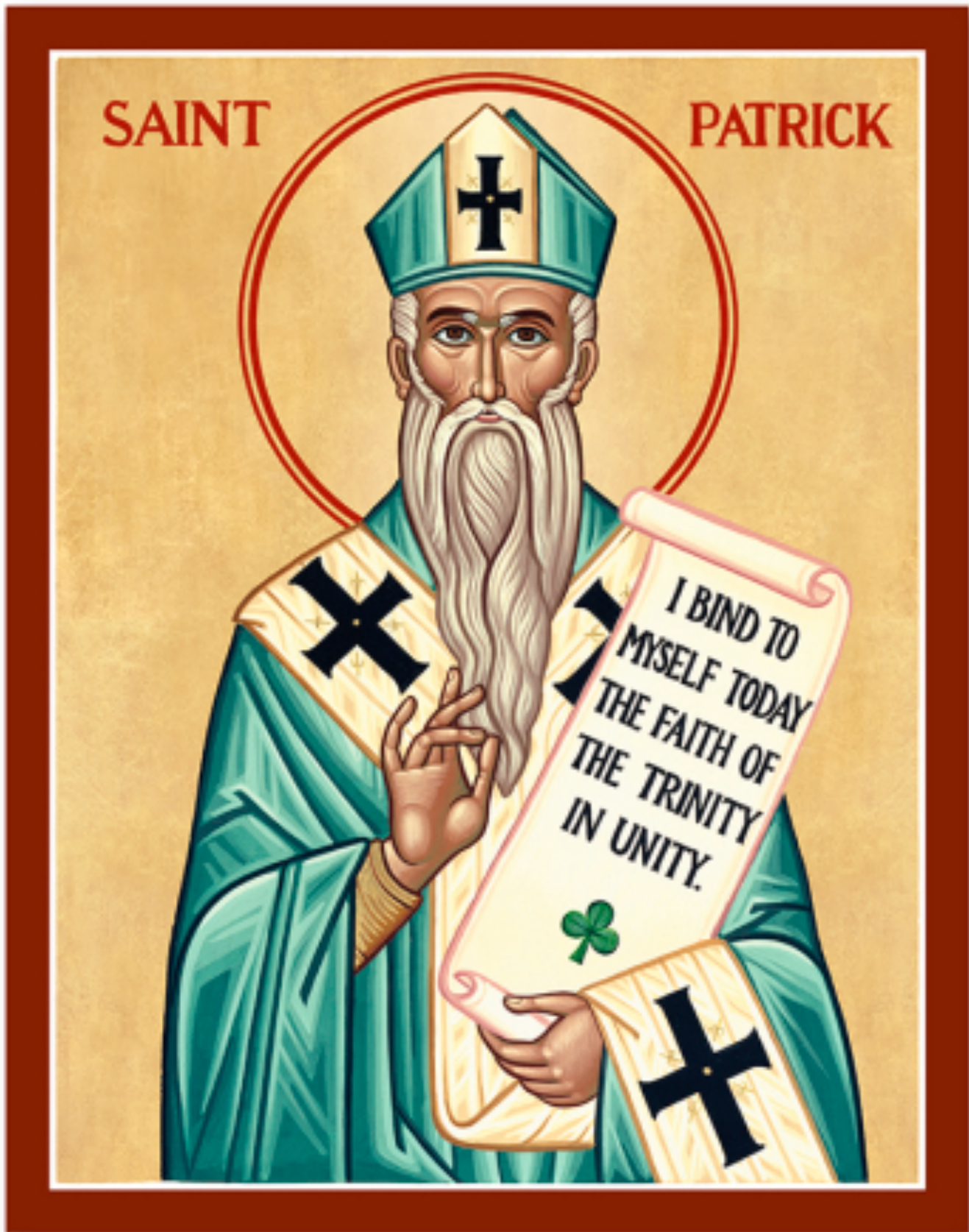
Saturday 02nd	PSYCHOSABBATON Liturgy	9:00-11:00 A.M.
Sunday 10th	CLOCKS GO FORWARD ONE HOUR	
Monday 11th	LENT BEGINS	
Friday 15th	Open-house dinner by AHEPA for all	7:00 P.M.
Saturday 16th	FIRST SALUTATIONS to the B.V.M.	7:00 P.M.
Sunday 17th	F I N A L PSYCHOSABBATON	9:00 A.M.
Monday 18th	ICON PROCESSION in church at	11:30 A.M.
Monday 25th	BOROUGH HALL HELLENIC HERITAGE	6:00 P.M.
Wednesday 27th	ANNUNCIATION (Evangelismos)	9:00 A.M.
	Philoptochos LENTEN Pot Luck Dinner	7:30 P.M.



HAVE A BLESSED LENTEN SEASON

Helen Pavlides, President





*TODAY is Saint Patrick's Day on the western Gregorian calendar. Did you know that this great missionary priest is 'OURS'! He is a saint of the fourth century of the ONE HOLY CATHOLIC and APOSTOLIC (ORTHODOX) CHURCH of CHRIST. Share this with your Irish neighbor. Chronia Polla to all who celebrate their 'name-day' TODAY.*



# ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ

## ΣΥΝΤΟΜΟΝ ΚΗΡΥΓΜΑ



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

Ἐκδίδεται ἀπὸ τὴν Κοινοβιακὴ Γραμματεία τῆς Μονῆς Ἁγίου Αὐγουστίνου Φλωρίνης - 531 00 ΦΛΩΡΙΝΑ - τηλ. 23850-28610 - [info@synthoma.gr](mailto:info@synthoma.gr)

Περίοδος Δ' - Ἔτος ΛΣΤ' Φλώρινα - ἀριθμ. φύλλου 2166	Κυριακὴ Α' Νηστειῶν - τῆς Ὁρθοδοξίας 17 Μαρτίου 2019	Συντάκτης (†) ἐπίσκοπος Αὐγουστίνος Ν. Καντιώτης
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## Τί εἶνε Ἐκκλησία;

Σήμερα, ἀγαπητοί μου, εἶνε ἑορτὴ καὶ πανηγυρις μεγάλη. Δὲν ἑορτάζει ἓνας ἢ δύο ἢ τρεῖς ἢ σαράντα ἢ χίλιοι ἅγιοι· ἑορτάζει ἐκεῖνη ποὺ γέννησε ὄλους τοὺς ἁγίους καὶ μάρτυρας, ἢ «μία, ἁγία, καθολικὴ καὶ ἀποστολικὴ Ἐκκλησία» (Σύμβ. πίπ. 8). Πανηγυρίζει τὴν ἑνδοξη νίκη τῆς, τὸν θρίαμβο ποὺ κατήγαγε ἐναντίον τῆς αἰρέσεως τῶν εἰκονοκλαστῶν, καὶ τιμᾶ τὴ μνήμη «τῶν τῆς Ὁρθοδοξίας προμάχων» (Συντάκτικ.).

Θὰ προσπαθῆσω νὰ σᾶς ἐξηγήσω μὲ ἀπλᾶ λόγια τί εἶνε Ἐκκλησία, στὴν ὁποία κ' ἐμεῖς ἀνήκουμε, καὶ τί χρέος ἔχουμε ἀπέναντί τῆς.

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Ἡ Ἐκκλησία, ἀδελφοί μου, εἶνε σὰν τὸ δέντρο, ποὺ ἓνα μέρος του φαίνεται καὶ τὸ ἄλλο εἶνε κρυμμένο στὴ γῆ, σπουδαιότερο ὁμως εἶνε τὸ κρυμμένο, ἢ ρίζα· ἂν κόψῃς κλαδιὰ ἢ καὶ τὸν κορμὸ τὸ δέντρο βλαστάνει πάλι, ἐνῶ ἂν καταστραφῇ ἢ ρίζα τὸ δέντρο νεκρώνεται. Καὶ ἡ Ἐκκλησία εἶνε δέντρο οὐράνιο, ἀγλαόκαρπο καὶ εὐσκιόφυλλο· καὶ ὅπως τὸ δέντρο ἔτσι κι αὐτὴ εἶνε ἐν μέρει ὄρατὴ καὶ ἐν μέρει ἀόρατὴ, καὶ τὸ σπουδαιότερο εἶνε ἡ ρίζα τῆς.

Ποιά εἶνε ἡ ρίζα τοῦ δέντρου τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, ποὺ ὅλοι οἱ δαίμονες νὰ μαζευτοῦν δὲν θὰ μπορέσουν ποτέ νὰ τὸ ξερριζώσουν; Εἶνε ὁ Κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, ἢ πιστὸς ὅτι ὁ Χριστός εἶνε ὁ Θεός, ὄχι ἀπλῶς ἄνθρωπος, κι ὅτι «ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ὤφθη καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις συναναστάθη» (βλ. 13). Ἔτσι ἐγίνε ὄρατος καὶ περιγραφτός· μπορεῖ νὰ ζωγραφίζεται, καὶ γι' αὐτὸ σήμερα «προσκυνοῦμεν τὴν ἀχραντὸν εἰκόνα» αὐτοῦ (βλ. 1), ὅπως καὶ τῶν ἁγίων. Ἄφ' ὅτου ὁμως ὁ Χριστός ἀνελήφθη στοὺς οὐρανοὺς, δὲν εἶνε πλέον ὄρατος ὅπως προηγουμένως ποὺ τὸν ἔβλεπαν ὄλοι· τώρα εἶνε ἀόρατος, δὲν τὸν βλέπουμε μὲ τὰ μάτια τὰ σαρκικά· τὸν βλέπουμε μὲ τὰ μάτια τῆς ψυχῆς, μὲ τὴν πίστι.

• Τὸ ἴδιο καὶ ἡ Ἐκκλησία. Εἶνε καὶ αὐτὴ καὶ ὄρατὴ καὶ ἀόρατὴ. Ἀόρατὴ μὲν ὡς πρὸς τὴν κεφαλὴ - τὸν ἀρχηγό τῆς, δηλαδὴ τὸν Χριστό.

Ἀόρατὴ ἀκόμη ὡς πρὸς τὴν ψυχὴ τῆς, δηλαδὴ τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιο. Ἀόρατὴ καὶ ὡς πρὸς ὠρισμένα μέλη τῆς, δηλαδὴ τοὺς ἀγγέλους καὶ ἀρχαγγέλους, τοὺς ἁγίους, καθὼς καὶ τὶς ψυχὰς τῶν «τετελειωμένων πνευμάτων» (βλ. 1).

• Εἶνε ὁμως καὶ ὄρατὴ ἡ Ἐκκλησία μας. Γιατί; Διότι κατὰ τὴν ἐντολὴ τοῦ Κυρίου ἐξαπλώνεται πάνω στὴ Γῆ, ἀποτελεῖται ἀπὸ ἀνθρώπους, καὶ ἔτσι λαμβάνει ἓνα ὕλικό σχῆμα. Ἄς τὸ ἀναλύσουμε αὐτὸ ἀκόμη ἀπλούστερα.

✓ Ἡ Ἐκκλησία ἐν πρώτοις εἶνε - ποῖός; ὁ ναός. Ὅταν ἐκκλησιαζόμεστε ἄς σκεφτοῦμε ὡς ἐξῆς. Προτοῦ νὰ κτιστῇ ὁ ναός αὐτός, ἐδῶ τί ἦταν; Ἐνα οἰκόπεδο σὰν ὅλα τὰ ἄλλα, οἰκόπεδο ποὺ ἔπαιζαν μπάλλα τὰ παιδιὰ. Ἄλλ' ἀπὸ τὴν ὥρα ποὺ ὁ πιστὸς λαὸς τῆς περιοχῆς ξεχώρισε αὐτὸ τὸ τετράγωνο καὶ εἶπε, Ἐδῶ θὰ χτίσουμε ἔκκλησία, ἀπὸ τὴν ὥρα ποὺ ἔβαλαν θεμέλιο μὲ τὸν τίμιο σταυρό, ἀπὸ τὴν ὥρα ποὺ στήθηκε ἁγία τράπεζα κι ὁ ναός ἀρχισε νὰ λειτουργῇ, ὁ χώρος αὐτὸς ξεχώρισε. Δὲν εἶνε πιά οἰκόπεδο τοῦ ἐνός καὶ τοῦ ἄλλου. Ἐδῶ πλέον δὲν εἶνε γῆ. Ὅταν μπαίνης στὴν ἔκκλησία μὲ πίστι, ὄχι ὅπως μπαίνει ὁ ἄπιστος καὶ ἄθεος, τότε δὲν πατῆς πλέον τὴ γῆ, βρίσκεσαι στὸν οὐρανό· ἐδῶ εἶνε κομμάτι τοῦ οὐρανοῦ. Ἀπὸ τὴν ὥρα λοιπὸν ποὺ ὁ ναός ἐγκαινιάσθηκε, εἶνε τόπος ἱερός καὶ ἅγιος. Ἐδῶ μέσα τελεῖται τὸ μυστήριον τῆς θείας εὐχαριστίας κι ἀκούγεται ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ· ἐδῶ ὁ ἄνθρωπος βαπτίζεται καὶ παίρνει ὄνομα χριστιανικό, ἐδῶ στεφανώνεται, ἐδῶ ἀποχαιρετῇ τοὺς νεκρούς του, ἐδῶ στὸ τέλος κηδεύεται κι αὐτός. Ὅ,τι βλέπουμε καὶ ἀκούμε μέσα στὸ ναὸ εἶνε ἅγιο. Ὁ ναός ἀποτελεῖ τὸ ὄρατό κέντρο τῆς Ἐκκλησίας μας. Καὶ γι' αὐτὸ ὁ πιστὸς ἀγαπᾶ νὰ βρίσκεται στὸ ναὸ. «Ὡς ἀγαπητὰ τὰ σκηνώματά σου, Κύριε τῶν δυνάμεων, ἐπιποθεῖ καὶ ἐκλείπει ἡ ψυχὴ μου εἰς τὰς αὐλὰς τοῦ Κυρίου», λέει ὁ ψαλμωδός (Ψαλ. 84,3).

Δυὸ πράγματα δείχνουν τὸν πολιτισμὸ μιᾶς

χώρας, ὁ ναός καὶ τὸ σχολεῖο. Ἐγώ, πού περῶδευσα ὡς ἱεροκήρυκας πολλὰ χωριά, αὐτὸ συμπέρανα· ῥημαγμένο σχολεῖο - χωριὸ ἄξεστο, ἀπεριποίητη ἐκκλησία - χωριὸ ἀφώτιστο· ὅταν δῆς σχολεῖο περιποιημένο καὶ ἐκκλησία λαμπρὴ καὶ μεγάλη, στὸ χωριὸ αὐτὸ κατοικοῦν **ἄνθρωποι εὐγενεῖς**.

✓ Ἐκκλησία λοιπὸν ἴσον ναός· ἀλλ' ὄχι μόνο ναός. Εἶνε καὶ κάτι ἄλλο σπουδαιότερο, πού δυστυχῶς τὸ περιφρονοῦμε, κι αὐτὸ εἶνε ὁ **ἱερεὺς**. Μπορεῖς νὰ φανταστῆς σχολεῖο χωρὶς δάσκαλο, νοσοκομεῖο χωρὶς γιατρό, στρατὸ χωρὶς ἀξιωματικό, πλοῖο χωρὶς καπετάνιο; Ὁχι. Ἐτοὶ δὲν ὑπάρχει καὶ Ἐκκλησία χωρὶς ἱερέα.

Θέλετε νὰ τὸ καταλάβετε; Ἐπάνω στὴν ἀγία τράπεζα, ὅταν γίνεται θεία λειτουργία, βάζουμε λίγο ψωμί καὶ λίγο κρασί. Ὁλος ὁ κόσμος νὰ μαζευτῆ καὶ νὰ παρακαλῆ (λαὸς καὶ ἄρχοντες, στρατηγοὶ καὶ καθηγηταί, μοναχοὶ καὶ ἄσκηται ἀκόμη), τὸ ψωμί δὲν γίνεται σῶμα Χριστοῦ καὶ τὸ κρασί δὲν γίνεται αἷμα του. Ἐνα παπᾶς ὄμως, ὅς εἶνε ἀγράμματος - ἀστοιχειώτος, **εἶνε ἱκανὸς νὰ τελῶσῃ τὸ μυστήριον**. Αὐτὴ εἶνε ἡ πίστις μας. Ἄν δὲν πιστεύετε, μὴ μπαίνετε στὴν ἐκκλησία· καὶ χαρὰ σ' ἐκεῖνον πού πιστεύει καὶ κοινωνεῖ εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον.

Μὰ τί ἀκούω· Ὁ παπᾶς εἶνε τέτοιος καὶ τέτοιος!... Ἄκουσε, ἀδελφέ μου. Ἀπὸ τὴν ὥρα πού θὰ βάλῃ τὰ ἄμφια καὶ θὰ πῆ *«Εὐλογημένη ἡ βασιλεία...»*, ἢ θ' ἀγίασῃ τὴν κολυμβήθρα ἢ θὰ εὐλογήσῃ τὰ στέφανα, τὸ μυστήριον ἐγίνε· ἐκεῖνη τὴν ὥρα δὲν εἶνε πλέον ὁ ἄλφα ἢ ὁ βῆτα - ἂν ἔχη ἁμαρτίες θὰ τὸν κρίνῃ ὁ Θεός. Ὅπως στὸν ἀξιωματικό ἐν ὑπηρεσίᾳ, ὅ,τι κι ἂν εἶνε στὴν ἰδιωτικὴ του ζωὴ, ἀναγνωρίζουν τὴν ἐξουσία του καὶ πειθαρχοῦν, κατὰ παρόμοιο τρόπο κ' ἐδῶ. Φόρεσε τὸ πετραχήλι ὁ παπᾶς; Ἄ ἐκεῖνο τὸ πετραχήλι εἶνε Ἰορδάνης, στὸν ὅποιο πλένονται καὶ καθαρίζονται οἱ ψυχές. *«Αὐτὴ ἡ πίστις τῶν ὀρθοδόξων»* (ἱναὶ), ἡ πίστις ἢ ἀποστολική. Ἡ Ἐκκλησία δὲν εἶνε τὰ ντουβάρια καὶ οἱ εἰκόνες, εἶνε ὁ ἱερεὺς. Στὶς ἄλλες ὀρθόδοξες χώρες σέβονται τὸν παπᾶ, ἐδῶ ντρέπομαι νὰ πῶ τί κάνουν... Σὺ, ἂν ἀγαπᾶς τὴν Ἐκκλησία, **τίμησε τὸν ἱερέα**.

✓ Ἐκκλησία ἴσον ναός, Ἐκκλησία ἴσον ἱερεὺς, ἀλλὰ καὶ κάτι ἄλλο· Ἐκκλησία εἶνε καὶ **ὄλος ὁ πιστὸς λαός**. Κάθε ὀρθόδοξος Χριστιανός, βαπτισμένος στὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, εἶνε ἕνα ζωντανὸ κύτταρο μέσα στὸν ὄργανισμὸ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας. Ὁ ἱερεὺς, πού εἶπαμε, καὶ ἐν γένει ὁ ἱερός κληρὸς ὑπάρχουν γιὰ τὸν πιστὸ λαό. Ἀλλὰ ἐπ' αὐτοῦ δὲν ἐπεκτείνονται· σπεύδω νὰ προσθέσω κάτι τελευταῖο καὶ σημαντικώτερο.

✓ Ἡ Ἐκκλησία, ἀγαπητοὶ μου, τί εἶνε; Εἶνε τὸ Σύμβολο τῆς πίστεώς μας, τὸ **«Πιστεύω»**. Ὁ αὐτὸ τὸ **«Πιστεύω»!** Μετρήστε τὶς λέξεις του. Τὸ **«Πιστεύω»** δὲν εἶνε γραμμένο μὲ πέννα καὶ μελάνι, εἶνε γραμμένο μὲ αἷμα, αἷμα πού ἀχνίζει. Κάθε λέξις τοῦ **«Πιστεύω»** δὲν γράφτηκε σὲ σχολὲς καὶ γραφεῖα καὶ βιβλία ἐπιστημονικά· τὸ **«Πιστεύω»** γράφτηκε μέσα σὲ ἱερεὺς Συνόδους, πάνω στὴ μάχη τῆς Ἐκκλησίας γιὰ τὴν ἀλήθεια τοῦ Χριστοῦ· στάζει δάκρυ προσευχῆς καὶ μαρτυρικὸ αἷμα ὀρθοδόξου ὁμολογίας. Τὸ **«Πιστεύω»** αὐτὸ εἶνε ἡ ἀκριβὴς διατύπωσις τῆς πίστεως τῆς Ἐκκλησίας μας.

Ποιά εἶνε, λοιπὸν, ἡ Ἐκκλησία; Ἐκκλησία στὴν οὐσία τῆς εἶνε ὁ,τι δίδαξε ὁ Κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, ὁ,τι κήρυξαν οἱ ἀπόστολοι, ὁ,τι ἐρμήνευσαν οἱ πατέρες καὶ διδάσκαλοι τῆς οἰκουμένης, ὁ,τι ὤρισαν οἱ Οἰκουμενικὲς Σύνοδοι, ὁ,τι ὁμολογεῖ ἡ Ὀρθοδοξία μας. **Αὐτὴ εἶνε ἡ Ἐκκλησία**. Καὶ δὲν ἔχουμε δικαίωμα νὰ πειράξουμε κάτι. Ὅπως δὲν μπορεῖς νὰ πῆς στὴν Ἀκρόπολι καὶ νὰ διορθώσῃς κάτι πάνω στὸν Παρθενῶνα, γιατί θεωρεῖται ὡς κάτι τέλειο, ἕνα ἀριστούργημα, ἔτσι καὶ ἡ Ὀρθοδοξία μας εἶνε τὸ **ἀριστούργημα τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος**. Δὲν μπορεῖς νὰ προσθέσῃς ἢ νὰ ἀφαιρέσῃς οὔτε ἕνα γιώτα. Εἶνε τὸ γνήσιο ἐκτύπωμα τοῦ Χριστιανισμοῦ.

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Αὐτὴ, ἀγαπητοὶ μου, μὲ λίγες λέξεις εἶνε ἡ Ἐκκλησία μας. Εἶνε δένδρο θεοφύτευτο. Ρίζα του ὁ Χριστός, κλαδιά του ἐμεῖς. Κέντρο τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ὁ ναός, λειτουργοὶ οἱ ἱερεῖς. Ὅπως στὸ στρατὸ σαλπίζει σάλπιγγα, ἔτσι σάλπιγγα στὴν Ἐκκλησία εἶνε τὸ κήρυγμα τοῦ Εὐαγγελίου. Τὸ Πιστεύω μας εἶνε ἡ ἁγία ὀρθόδοξος πίστις. Σ' αὐτὴ τὴν ὀρθόδοξο Ἐκκλησία βαπτισθήκαμε καὶ σ' αὐτὴν ἀνήκουμε οἱ Ἕλληνες.

Καὶ ἐὰν τὴν ὀρθόδοξο Ἐκκλησία τὴν γνωρίζουν διὰ τῆς ἱεραποστολῆς καὶ τὴν ἀσπάζονται λαοὶ τῆς Ἀφρικῆς καὶ τῆς Ἀσίας, ἐὰν τὴν ὀρθόδοξο Ἐκκλησία τὴν ἀγαποῦν μὰ φορὰ οἱ Σέρβοι καὶ οἱ Βούλγαροι καὶ οἱ Ρουμᾶνοι καὶ οἱ Ρῶσοι, ἐμεῖς οἱ Ἕλληνες πρέπει χίλιες φορὲς νὰ τὴν ἀγαποῦμε. Γιατὶ ἡ ἱστορία μας βεβαιώνει ὅτι, ἂν δὲν ὑπῆρχε ὀρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία, δὲν θὰ ὑπῆρχε Ἑλλάς. **Τὸ ρῆσο ἔφτεισε πατρίδα**. Ἡ ὀρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία ἀνέστησε τὴν Ἑλλάδα. Ἡ ὀρθοδοξία εἶνε ἡ ψυχὴ τοῦ ἔθνους μας, ἡ μεγάλη μάνα μας. Σ' αὐτὴν γεννηθήκαμε καὶ σ' αὐτὴν θὰ πεθάνουμε.

Ὁ Κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός ὅς εἶνε μαζί μας ἐν τῇ ὀρθοδόξῃ Ἐκκλησίᾳ· ἀμήν.

(f) **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: \$300 PER YEAR**  
**SINGLE MEMBERSHIP: \$250 PER YEAR**  
**SENIOR CITIZEN INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP \$200 PER YEAR**  
**SENIOR CITIZEN HUSBAND & WIFE MEMBERSHIP: \$225 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 2019 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

### *Icons Show the Human Face of God*

In recent months my Sunday reflections have frequently focused on our Christian brothers and sisters of the East. Wishing as it were to embrace their rich tradition of faith in a single glance, today I would like to refer once again to the sense of mystery which is apparent in their icons. The East and the West vie with each other to put their art at the service of the faith.

But from the East, where icons had to be defended with bloodshed in the iconoclast crisis of the eighth and ninth centuries, comes a particular call jealously to preserve the religious nature of this art. It is based on the mystery of the Incarnation, in which God chose to assume a human face. In the last analysis, sacred art seeks to transmit something of the mystery of that face.

This is why the East firmly insists on the spiritual qualities which must characterize the artist, to whom Simeon of Thessalonica, the great defender of Tradition, addresses this important exhortation: "Teach with words, write with letters, paint with colors, in conformity with Tradition; the painting is true, as is the writing of books; and the grace of God is present in them, because what is represented there is holy."

By contemplating icons in the whole context of liturgical and ecclesial life, the Christian community is called to grow in its experience of God, and to become more and more a living icon of the communion of life between the Three Divine Persons.

*Pope John Paul II*

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