



SUNDAY WEEKLY BULLETIN December 29th, 2019
V. Rev. Archimandrite Eugene N. Pappas

THE SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD



Icon of the Synaxis of the Nativity

Prokeimenon. Mode 4. Psalm 67.35,26

God is wonderful among his saints. Verse: Bless God in the congregations.

The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 1:11-19

Brethren, I would have you know that the gospel which was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it; and I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother.

Προκείμενον. Ἦχος δ'. ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 67.35,26

Θαυμαστός ὁ Θεὸς ἐν τοῖς Ἁγίοις αὐτοῦ. Στίχ. Ἐν Ἐκκλησίαις εὐλογεῖτε τὸν Θεόν.

Πρὸς Γαλάτας 1:11-19 τὸ ἀνάγνωσμα

Ἀδελφοί, γνωρίζω δὲ ὑμῖν, ἀδελφοί, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τὸ εὐαγγελισθὲν ὑπ' ἐμοῦ, ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν κατὰ ἄνθρωπον. Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐγὼ παρὰ ἀνθρώπου παρέλαβον αὐτό, οὔτε ἐδιδάχθην, ἀλλὰ δι' ἀποκαλύψεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. Ἠκούσατε γὰρ τὴν ἐμὴν ἀναστροφὴν ποτε ἐν τῷ Ἰουδαϊσμῷ, ὅτι καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ἐδίωκον τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ ἐπόρθουν αὐτήν· καὶ προέκοπτον ἐν τῷ Ἰουδαϊσμῷ ὑπὲρ πολλοὺς συνηλικιώτας ἐν τῷ γένει μου, περισσοτέρως ζηλωτὴς ὑπάρχων τῶν πατρικῶν μου παραδόσεων. Ὅτε δὲ εὐδόκησεν ὁ θεὸς ὁ ἀφορίσας με ἐκ κοιλίας μητρός μου καὶ καλέσας διὰ τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ, ἀποκαλύπτει τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐν ἐμοὶ ἵνα εὐαγγελίζωμαι αὐτὸν ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, ἐν ὅσῳ οὐ προσανεθέμην σαρκὶ καὶ αἵματι· οὐδὲ ἀνῆλθον εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα πρὸς τοὺς πρὸ ἐμοῦ ἀποστόλους, ἀλλὰ ἀπῆλθον εἰς Ἀραβίαν, καὶ πάλιν ὑπέστρεψα εἰς Δαμασκόν. Ἐπειτα μετὰ ἔτη τρία ἀνῆλθον εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα ἱστορῆσαι Πέτρον, καὶ ἐπέμεινα πρὸς αὐτὸν ἡμέρας δεκαπέντε. Ἐτερον δὲ τῶν ἀποστόλων οὐκ εἶδον, εἰ μὴ Ἰάκωβον τὸν ἀδελφὸν τοῦ κυρίου.

The Gospel According to Matthew 2:13-23

When the wise men departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there till I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." And he rose and took the child and his mother by night, and departed to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt have I called my son." Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, was in a furious rage, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time which he had ascertained from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they were no more." But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." And he rose and took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaos reigned over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. And he went and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

Ἐκ τοῦ Κατὰ Ματθαῖον 2:13-23 Εὐαγγελίου τὸ Ἀνάγνωσμα

Ἀναχωρησάντων δὲ αὐτῶν ἰδοὺ ἄγγελος Κυρίου φαίνεται κατ' ὄναρ τῷ Ἰωσήφ λέγων· ἐγερθεὶς παράλαβε τὸ παιδίον καὶ τὴν μητέρα αὐτοῦ καὶ φεῦγε εἰς Αἴγυπτον, καὶ ἴσθι ἐκεῖ ἕως ἃν εἶπω σοι· μέλλει γὰρ Ἡρώδης ζητεῖν τὸ παιδίον τοῦ ἀπολέσαι αὐτό. Ὁ δὲ ἐγερθεὶς παρέλαβε τὸ παιδίον καὶ τὴν μητέρα αὐτοῦ νυκτὸς καὶ ἀνεχώρησεν εἰς Αἴγυπτον, καὶ ἦν ἐκεῖ ἕως τῆς τελευτῆς Ἡρώδου, ἵνα πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν ὑπὸ τοῦ Κυρίου διὰ τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος· ἐξ Αἰγύπτου ἐκάλεσα τὸν υἱόν μου. Τότε Ἡρώδης ἰδὼν ὅτι ἐνεπαίχθη ὑπὸ τῶν μάγων, ἐθυμώθη λίαν, καὶ ἀποστείλας ἀνέειλε πάντας τοὺς παῖδας τοὺς ἐν Βηθλεὲμ καὶ ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς ὁρίοις αὐτῆς ἀπὸ διετοῦς καὶ κατωτέρω, κατὰ τὸν χρόνον ὃν ἠκρίβωσε παρὰ τῶν μάγων. τότε ἐπληρώθη τὸ ῥηθὲν ὑπὸ Ἱερεμίου τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος· φωνὴ ἐν Ῥαμὰ ἠκούσθη, θρήνος καὶ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὀδυρμὸς πολὺς· Ῥαχὴλ κλαίουσα τὰ τέκνα αὐτῆς, καὶ οὐκ ἤθελε παρακληθῆναι, ὅτι οὐκ εἰσίν. Τελευτήσαντος δὲ τοῦ Ἡρώδου ἰδοὺ ἄγγελος Κυρίου κατ' ὄναρ φαίνεται τῷ Ἰωσήφ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ λέγων· ἐγερθεὶς παράλαβε τὸ παιδίον καὶ τὴν μητέρα αὐτοῦ καὶ πορεύου εἰς γῆν Ἰσραὴλ· τεθνήκασι γὰρ οἱ ζητοῦντες τὴν ψυχὴν τοῦ παιδίου. ὁ δὲ ἐγερθεὶς παρέλαβε τὸ παιδίον καὶ τὴν μητέρα αὐτοῦ καὶ ἦλθεν εἰς γῆν Ἰσραὴλ. ἀκούσας δὲ ὅτι Ἀρχέλαος βασιλεύει ἐπὶ τῆς Ἰουδαίας ἀντὶ Ἡρώδου τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ, ἐφοβήθη ἐκεῖ ἀπελθεῖν· χρηματισθεὶς δὲ κατ' ὄναρ ἀνεχώρησεν εἰς τὰ μέρη τῆς Γαλιλαίας, καὶ ἐλθὼν κατώκησεν εἰς πόλιν λεγομένην Ναζαρέτ, ὅπως πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ τῶν προφητῶν ὅτι Ναζωραῖος κληθήσεται.

COFFEE FELLOWSHIP HOUR: is being hosted by the Parish Council Whitehall directly after the Divine Liturgy. Please join us for refreshments.

Many thanks are extended to our gracious and generous FLORISTS in the parish who decorate our church proper and exterior during the HIGH HOLY DAYS throughout the year! By name we celebrate Avenue "J", HENRY'S, Madison, Marine Park, Irene's, Plaza, Ellingville, Modern, Ben's FLORIST establishments. We also hail the Deno and Susan Christakos Family that donate the church 'TREE' each year for the solea. What a joy to see the beauty of the Lord's House.

NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS for a most holy, happy, healthful and success filled year ANNO DOMINI 2020! With each new year we are given a fresh page of life to change what MUST be changed, to commence the good habits we promise ourselves each year, and to renew the base of our spiritual life through the sacraments, liturgical attendance, prayer and contrition. YES! ALL THAT 1.....YOU CAN DO IT!

Up-coming schedule OF DIVINE SERVICES for Christmas, New Year 2020, Holy Epiphany, AGIASMOS SERVICES and the Feast of John the Baptist:

Holy Innocents:	December 29th,	Divine Liturgy	10:00 - 12:00 P.M.
Saint Basil Day:	January 01st,	Divine Liturgy	10:00 - 12:00 P.M.
Theophany Eve:	January 05th,	Divine Liturgy	9:30 A.M.
	Minor Agiasmos		12:00 P.M.
EPIPHANY Day:	January 06th,	Divine Liturgy	9:30 A.M.
	Greater Blessing of the Water		11:30 A.M.
Saint John Baptist	January 07th,	Divine Liturgy	9:30 A.M.

HOLY WATER BOTTLES will be distributed upon request after the Liturgies of January 5,6,7th.

CHRONIA POLLA: ME YGEIA, HARA and ZOE to all celebrating their patronal name day during these holy high holidays: Christos Christa, Emmanuel, Emmanuella, Basilios, Basilissa, Basiliki, John Joanna, Theophanis, Theophania, Epiphany, Epiphania. ARTKLASIES are most welcomed as you celebrate your holy patronal name-day! Please inform the church office of your intentions. Please cooperate with the schedule.

NO MEMORIALS are observed during the 12 days of Christmas (December 25th through January 6th *THE EPIPHANY). All memorial tributes will begin with Sunday January 12th. This is a festive and triumphant ecclesiastical period during which we focus on life and peace. Please see the Office Secretary to reserve memorial tributes in advance of the Bulletin printing.

TROOP #531 of the Boy Scouts of America in our Parish will host a 3 day CAMPING EXPERIENCE at Camp Alpine in New Jersey on January 24- 25-26. What a wonderful for any teenage boy to commune with God and nature up close and personal. Is your young lad in the scouting program? You can sign-up? any Friday night between 7-9:00 P.M. on the community center.

ALTAR BOY SOCIETY of Saint Stephanos enjoyed an evening together with the clergy for dinner and movies at United Artists in Sheepshead Bay on last Thursday, December 26th. The young lads are much appreciated for their dedication and service to the liturgical life of the faith community.

MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY: the ladies of our Philoptochos Society will host their 87th Annual LUNCHEON at Russo on the Bay Caterers from 12 noon to 5:00 P.M. Food, Wine, Dancing, Music, PRIZES! FOR EVERYONE. JUST COME AND SEE. MARK YOUR CALENDAR: Monday – January 20th 12 noon.

We ARE having a New Year's Eve 2019 – 2020 Dinner Dance in Rosehall this year! Plan to share an evening of sumptuous dining and dancing until dawn.

2020 GREEK ORTHODOX ECCLESIASTICAL CALENDARS are mailed to all registered stewards of the Parish. You will receive your by mail. ARE YOU REGISTERED?

PARKING LOT PERMITS are being prepared upon request by the Church Office for the 2020 YEAR. Please update your present placard to avoid any towing issues. PLACARDS must be prominently displayed AT ALLTIMES IN THE in the lot:

RADIO MINISTRY: Each Saturday at 1:15PM Fr. Eugene hosts and produces the radio broadcast MATTERS OF CONSCIENCE NOW IN it's 21st 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)

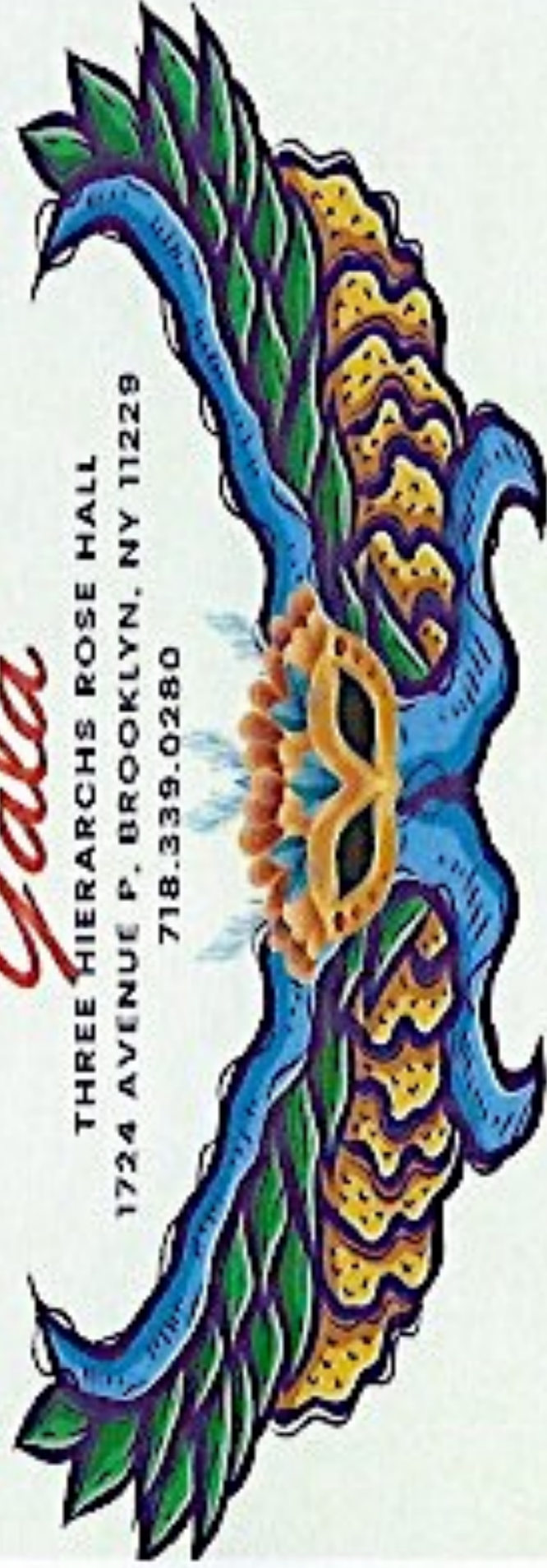
CENTENNIAL DECADE CELEBRATION!

SAVE THE DATE

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 22, 2020 | 7PM

Mardi Gras Gala

THREE HIERARCHS ROSE HALL
1724 AVENUE P, BROOKLYN, NY 11229
718.339.0280





Happy New Year 2020!

"FOR EVERYTHING THERE IS A FIXED TIME AND A TIME FOR EVERY BUSINESS UNDER THE SUN." O.T. Ecclesiastes 3:1

The New Year 2020 heralds many things for you and me. With joyous anticipation we suspect the new "anno domini" will bring a better tomorrow than the yesterdays now gone, however we also step lightly with trepidation that this year may portend things burdensome to soul and body. Nonetheless, the time is set upon our shoulders to experience it, to live it, and at all times to relish in it! You and I are here in the NOW of it all. Wow! God must indeed have a cause, a plan, a new direction for us, each and all. Discern then your timid resolutions, what you can and maybe MUST do, to appreciate this God-bestowed gift of time and breathe. Our Hellenic sages certainly "had a word for it". Time was measured by chronos, kairos, epoche, and aeon. Each word had a distinctive clarity of content and measure. We as mortals inevitably have and will savor each of these time elements in the now or eternal dimension.

2020 carries a clarion call to God to be with us in each of our personal and familial situations. We entreat the Lord Almighty to live among us, to live with us and in us. We implore that He fill the distances that separate and divide us one from another. Seeking reconciliation with friend and kin, we open our hearts to the mystery of His Love and the invitation to His Grace. It's all quite possible by you, if you unleash your complacency to conversion; and your harsh judgments of others, to compassionate acceptance of time, place and person. It is the Christ Himself who as the Incarnate Logos enters human historic time with loving justice to bring peace, thus transforming creation. Jesus is within time to experience your day to day life and inspire you to His service. The call is there, as is the time. Is your response ready in the affirmative.

In the midst of apparent darkness and longing that may overpower us upon occasion we are urged to enkindle our sacred hope in agape. As we long for families to be united, for disputations to be reconciled, for cures and healings to restored health, we seek our Lord's presence in time with us now and evermore. Time is HIS GIFT in the NOW! Time is to be used, not abused. It is to be cherish in its delicateness and uniqueness. This TIME is yours.

V. Rev. Eugene N. Pappas
Archimandrite, Pastor



2020





ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ

ΣΥΝΤΟΜΟΝ ΚΗΡΥΓΜΑ



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

Ἐκδίδεται ἀπὸ τὴν Κοινοβιακὴ Γραμματεία ἱερὰ Μονὴ Ἁγίου Αὐγουστίνου Φλωρίνης - 531 00 ΦΛΩΡΙΝΑ - τηλ. 23850-28610 - info@yghoo.gr

Περίοδος Δ' - Ἔτος ΛΣΤ'
Φλώρινα - ἀριθμ. φύλλου 2248

Κυριακὴ μετὰ Χρ. Γέννησιν (Γαλ. 1,11-19)
29 Δεκεμβρίου 2019

Συντάκτης (†) ἐπίσκοπος
Αὐγουστίνος Ν. Καντιώτης

Τί φοβίζει τὸν ἀπόστολο· ἡ συκοφαντία!

Ἔργαζόταν, ἀγαπητοί μου, καὶ κοπίαζε ὁ ἀπόστολος Παῦλος γιὰ νὰ σπείρῃ τὸ λόγον τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, νὰ σώσῃ ψυχές, καὶ νὰ τὴν ὁδηγήσῃ στὸν Κύριο, στὸν παράδεισο.

Ἀλλὰ καὶ ὁ σατανᾶς, ὁ φοβερός ἐχθρὸς τῆς σωτηρίας τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, δὲν ἔπαυε νὰ καταπολεμῇ τὸ ἔργο τοῦ Θεοῦ. Πολεμοῦσε τοὺς Χριστιανούς γιὰ νὰ τοὺς ρίξῃ σὲ ἁμαρτία. Πολεμοῦσε καὶ τοὺς ἀποστόλους καὶ κήρυκες τοῦ Θεοῦ λόγου, γιατί αὐτοὶ εἶνε οἱ ἐπὶ κεφαλῆς τῶν «καλῶν στρατιωτῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ» (β' Τιμ. 2,3), οἱ ἀξιωματικοὶ καὶ ὁδηγοὶ τῆς «παρατάξεως Κυρίου» (βλ. ρομ. 8,38-39).

● Γι' αὐτὸ βλέπουμε μὲ τὰ ὄργανά του ὁ διάβολος νὰ προσπαθῇ νὰ ἐξοντώσῃ τὸν κήρυκα τῶν Ἱεροσολύμων, τὸν ἀπόστολο Ἰάκωβο τὸν ἀδελφόθεο, τοῦ ὁποίου τὴν ἱερὰ μνήμη ἐορτάζει σήμερα ἡ Ἐκκλησία μας.

Ὁ Ἰάκωβος κήρυττε τὸ Χριστὸ στὴν ἁγία πόλι καὶ ἐθεωρεῖτο «στύλος» (Γαλ. 2,9), κολώνα, τῆς ἐκκλησίας τῶν Ἱεροσολύμων. Κι ὁ σατανᾶς δὲν ὑπέφερε νὰ βλέπῃ ὀρθῶς τὴν κολώνα. Φαντίσε λοιπὸν τοὺς ὁπαδούς του μὲ τέτοιο μῖσος ἐναντίον ἐκείνου τοῦ ἁγίου ἀνθρώπου, ὥστε τὸν συνέλαβαν καὶ τὸν ἀνέβασαν στὸ «πτερύγιον τοῦ ἱεροῦ» (πρβλ. Ματθ. 4,5· Λουκ. 4,9), δηλαδὴ στὸ «ἄκρο τῆς στέγης (τοῦ ναοῦ) ποὺ προσεῖχει» (βλ. Σαμὴλ, Σύντομο λεξικὸ τῆς Κ. Διαθήκης, Θεολογία 2012', σ. 71). Καὶ ἐκεῖ τὸν ἀνάγκαζαν νὰ ἀρνηθῇ τὸ Χριστόν - μπορούμε νὰ φανταστοῦμε τὴ σκηνὴ καὶ τὸν κίνδυνον ποὺ διέτρεχε ὁ ἀπόστολος.

Ἀλλὰ ὁ Ἰάκωβος ἦταν ἀτρόμητος κ' ἔμμενε ἀκαμπτος στὶς πιέσεις καὶ ἀπειλές τους.

-Τί μὲ ρωτᾶτε γιὰ τὸν Ἰησοῦν τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου; Αὐτὸς κάθεται ἐκ δεξιῶν τοῦ παντοδυνάμου Θεοῦ· καὶ θὰ ἔρθῃ μετὰ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ νὰ κἀν κρίσι καὶ ἀνταπόδοσι (ἅγιον Νικόδημον Ἀγορεύτου, Ἑρμηνεία εἰς τὰς ἐπιστολὰς ἀπὸ Κωνσταντίνου 1966, σ. 33).

Τὰ λόγια αὐτὰ ἐξώργισαν τοὺς Ἰουδαίους.

Τυφλοὶ ἀπὸ μῖσος, τὸν ἐσπρωξαν καὶ τὸν ἔριξαν ἀπὸ τὸ ὕψος τοῦ ναοῦ κάτω στὴν πλατεία. Ἐκεῖ τὸν ἀποτελείωσαν, ἐνῶ ἐκεῖνος παρακαλοῦσε τὸ Θεὸ ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν καὶ ἔλεγε ὅπως καὶ ὁ Κύριός του· «Πάτερ, ἄφες αὐτοῖς· οὐ γὰρ οἶδασιν τί ποιοῦσι» (Λουκ. 23,34).

Ἡ ἀπώλειά του λύπησε πολὺ τοὺς Χριστιανούς. Ἐλπίσι μεγάλη σὰν μαῦρο σύννεφο ἀπλώθηκε στὶς ψυχές τῶν πιστῶν· ἔχασαν τὸν ἐπίσκοπό τους, τὸν κήρυκα, τὸν διδάσκαλο, τὸν πατέρα, ποὺ μέρα καὶ νύχτα προσευχόταν γονατιστὸς στὸν Κύριο γιὰ ὅλους. Ἐκλαιγε ὁ λαὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ· χαίρονταν καὶ πανηγύριζαν ὁ διάβολος καὶ τὰ ὄργανά του, γιατί κατάφεραν νὰ γκρεμίσουν μία μεγάλη κολώνα τῆς Ἐκκλησίας τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

● Ἀλλὰ ὑπῆρχε καὶ ἄλλη κολώνα στὴν Ἐκκλησία, ὁ Παῦλος! Καὶ αὐτὸν τὸν πολεμοῦσε ὁ διάβολος περισσότερο ἀπὸ τοὺς ἄλλους ἀποστόλους, γιατί αὐτὸς «κοπίαζε περισσότερο ἀπ' ὅλους» (βλ. Α' Κορ. 15,10) γιὰ τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ Θεοῦ. Ἐπνεε μένεα ἐναντίον του. Ἄν ἐκλείνε τὸ στόμα τοῦ Παύλου, ὁ σατανᾶς καὶ τὰ ὄργανά του θὰ χαίρονταν περισσότερο ἀπ' ὅ,τι χάρηκαν γιὰ τὴν ἐξόντωσιν τοῦ Ἰακώβου.

Ἀλλὰ τὸν Παῦλον τὸν προστάτευε ἄγρυπνα ὁ Κύριος καὶ τὸν ἐνίσχυε στοὺς κόπους του. Ἦταν «σκεῦος ἐκλογῆς», διαλεχτὸ ὄργανο τῆς θείας προνοίας, γιὰ νὰ βαστάσῃ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Κυρίου «ἐνώπιον ἐθνῶν καὶ βασιλέων υἱῶν τε Ἰσραὴλ» (Ῥώμ. 1,10). Τοῦ εἶχε ἀναθέσει ὠρισμένη ἀποστολὴ καὶ ἔπρεπε νὰ τὴν ὀλοκληρώσῃ. Δὲν εἶχε ἀκόμη τελειώσει «τὸ ἔργον, στὸ ὁποῖο τὸν εἶχε προσκαλέσει» (ἔβ. 13,2). Ὁ Παῦλος θὰ ἐκλείνε τὰ κουρασμένα μάτια του ὅταν θ' ἀποφάσιζε ὁ Θεός. Γι' αὐτὸ ὅλες οἱ προσπάθειες τοῦ διαβόλου νὰ τὸν ἐξοντώσῃ ἀποτυγχάνουν. Ὁ Παῦλος γλυτώνει πολλὰς φορὲς ἀπὸ τὰ κακοῦργα ὄργανα τοῦ σατανᾶ.

Ὁ διάβολος ὅμως δὲν ἡσυχάζει. Ἀφοῦ δὲν μπόρεσε, ἐπὶ τοῦ παρόντος τοῦλάχιστον, νὰ

τὸν θανατῶσιν φυσικῶς, ὡς σωματικὴ ὑπαρξίς. Ζητάει νὰ τὸν ἐξοντῶσιν ἠθικῶς. Διότι ὑπάρχει καὶ φόνος χωρὶς τραύματα καὶ αἵματα, χωρὶς φυσικὸ θάνατο. Ποιὸς εἶνε ὁ φόνος αὐτός;

Εἶνε ἡ συκοφαντία. Αὐτὸς εἶνε ὁ πιὸ φοβε-
ρὸς φόνος. Τί νὰ τὴν κάνη τῇ ζωῇ μία παρθέ-
νος κόρη, ὅταν ἐοὺ ὁ συκοφάντης τῆς τὴν
παρουσιάξῃς ὅτι εἶνε μία πόρνη καὶ διεφθαρ-
μένη; Ἡ τί νὰ τὴν κάνω ἐγὼ ὁ κήρυκας τοῦ
θεοῦ λόγου τῇ ζωῇ, ὅταν ἐοὺ μὲ συκοφαντῇς
καὶ μὲ παρουσιάξῃς στὰ πλήθη ὅτι εἶμαι διε-
φθαρμένος, ἀνήθικος; Προτιμῶ νὰ βάλουν μία
πλάκα βαρεῖα ἐπάνω στὰ στήθη μου, παρὰ νὰ
μὲ συκοφαντήσουν. Πῶς θὰ διδάξω τὸ λαό;
πῶς θὰ κατηχήσω τὴ νεολαία; Ἡ συκοφαντία
εἶνε **δόλιο ὄπλο τοῦ διαβόλου** ἐναντίον τῶν
κηρύκων τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου. Πόσοι Χρυσόστο-
μοι δὲν κατέβηκαν στὸν τάφο χτυπημένοι ἀ-
πὸ τὸ τὰ φαρμακερὰ βέλη συκοφαντίας; Πόσοι
ἀρχιερεῖς εὐαίσθητοι δὲν κατέβηκαν στὸν τά-
φο γιατί βρέθηκαν ὄντάρια νὰ λερώσουν μὲ
τὴ λάσπη τῆς βρώμικης ψυχῆς τους πάλλευ-
κες ὑπολήψεις καὶ συνειδήσεις;

Συκοφαντία! αὐτὸ τὸ ὄπλο χρησιμοποίησε ὁ διάβολος καὶ ἐναντίον τοῦ ἀποστόλου Παύλου. Ναί. Συκοφάντησε ποιόν; Τὸν οὐράνιο ἄνθρωπο, τὸν κορυφαῖο ἀπόστολο τῆς Χάριτος, τὸν κήρυκα τῶν ἐθνῶν. Δὲν τὸν ἄφησε ἀπείραστον ὁ διάβολος. Σκόρπιζε παντοῦ τὰ ὄργανά του, τοὺς Ἰουδαίους. Ὅπου πῆγαινε ὁ Παῦλος, ἀπὸ κοντὰ του καὶ αὐτοί. Κήρυττε ὁ Παῦλος; ἀμέσως αὐτοὶ ἔλεγαν στὸ λαὸ· Τὸν Παῦλο κάθεστε κι ἀκούτε; αὐτὸς δὲν εἶνε ἀπόστολος, εἶνε ἕνας ἀγύρτης...

Φοβερό πράγμα ή συκοφαντία. Και τὸ φοβήθηκε ὁ ἀτρόμητος ἀπόστολος. Δὲν τὸν ἔμελε τὸν Παῦλο ὅτι ὁ ἴδιος ὑβρίζετο καὶ ἐσυκοφαντεῖτο, δὲν τὸν ἐνοίαζε ἡ προσωπικὴ του ὑπόληψις· τὸν ἔμελε ὅτι μὲ τέτοιες συκοφαντίες οἱ ἐχθροὶ του «**πρίονιζαν**» τὸ **ἔργο του**. Ἄν γίνονταν πιστευτὰ αὐτὰ ποῦ ἔλεγαν οἱ συκοφάντες του, ποῖος πλέον θὰ ἔδινε σημασίαν στὸ κήρυγμά του; ποῖος θὰ ἔδινε ἐμπιστοσύνη στὴ διδασκαλία του; ποῖος ἐν τέλει θὰ ἐσώζετο; Θὰ ματαιωνόταν ἡ ἀποστολή του.

Γι' αὐτό ὁ Παῦλος ἀναγκάζεται νὰ ἀπολογηθῇ. Ἔτσι, κάθεται καὶ γράφει τὴν πρὸς Γαλάτας ἐπιστολὴν του. Καὶ μὲ ὅσα ἔγραψε σ' αὐτὴν κλείνει τὰ στόματα τῶν συκοφαντῶν του.

Μὲ κατηγοροῦν, λέει, πὼς δὲν εἶμαι ἀπόστολος ὅπως οἱ ἄλλοι ἀπόστολοι, ὅτι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ποὺ κηρύττω δὲν ἔχει τὴν ἴδια ἀξία ποὺ ἔχει τὸ εὐαγγέλιον καὶ τὸ κήρυγμα τῶν ἄλλων ἀποστόλων.

Λοιπὸν τοὺς πληροφορῶ, ὅτι τὸ εὐαγγέλιό μου εἶνε ὄχι ἀνθρώπινο ἀλλὰ θεῖο, ἐξ οὐρανοῦ. Δὲν μὲ διδάξε κανεὶς ἄλλος παρὰ ἑνα καὶ μόνο, ὁ Χριστός. Δὲν πῆγα σὲ πανεπιστήμια καὶ θεολογικὰς σχολὰς. Δὲν ἐγνώρισα κανένα ἀπόστολο. Καὶ πῶς ἦταν δυνατόν νὰ γνωρίσω, ὅφου ἐγὼ ἦμουν ἑνας δεδηλωμένος ἐχθρὸς τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, ἑνας φανατικὸς διώκτης τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ τῶν Χριστιανῶν; Εἶχα τέτοια μανία ἐναντίον τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὥστε ἔταξα στὸν ἑαυτὸ μου ἑνα σκοπὸ· πῶς νὰ γκρεμίσω καὶ νὰ ξεθεμελιώσω ὅλες τὶς ἐκκλησίες. Γι' αὐτὸ ἔτρεχα δεξιὰ καὶ ἀριστερά, κατασκοπεύοντας καὶ κυνηγώντας παντοῦ τοὺς Χριστιανούς, μὲ σκοπὸ νὰ τοὺς συλλαμβάνω, νὰ τοὺς τυραννῶ, νὰ τοὺς ἐξοντώνω.

Ἐπάνω ὅμως σ' αὐτὴ τὴ δαιμονικὴ ἐπιχείρησι, ἦρθε ὁ Χριστὸς καὶ μὲ ἐλέησε. Ἔκανε τὸ μεγάλο του θαῦμα· ἀπὸ διώκτη μὲ μετέβαλε σὲ κήρυκα τοῦ εὐαγγελίου. Πῶς ἔγινε αὐτό; Ὁ ἴδιος παρουσιάστηκε μπροστά μου, καθὼς πῆγαινα στὴ Δαμασκὸ συνεχίζοντας τὸ ἔργο τοῦ διώκτου, καὶ μὲ συνετάραξε. Ἐκεῖ μὲ φώτισε μὲ τὸ οὐράνιο φῶς. Κι ἀπὸ τότε, χωρὶς νὰ πλησιάσω κανέναν ἀπόστολο, χωρὶς νὰ πάρω μαθήματα ἀπὸ κανένα Χριστιανό, κηρύττω τὸ εὐαγγέλιο τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

南 京 市

Τὰ ἐπιχειρήματα τοῦ Παύλου εἶνε, ἀγαπητοί μου, ἀκαταμάχτητα. Εἶνε σὰν νὰ τοὺς λέη· Μὴ συκοφαντεῖτε, πῶς δὲν εἶμαι ἀπόστολος; Ἀλλὰ ἐξηγήσете μου, πῶς ἐγὼ μεταβλήθηκα; πῶς γνώρισα τὸ εὐαγγέλιον; ποίος μὲ δίδαξε;

Αὐτὰ εἶνε ἐρωτήματα, στὰ ὁποῖα δὲν μποροῦν νὰ δώσουν ἀπάντησι οἱ ἄπιστοι. Γιατὶ ἡ **ζωὴ τοῦ ἀποστόλου Παύλου εἶνε θαῦμα**. Θαυμάστε· μόνο ἡ δύναμις τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐνεργεῖ. Ὁ Θεός, ποῦ κάνει τὸ σκοτάδι νὰ γίνη φῶς, αὐτὸς μετέβαλε τὴν ψυχὴ τοῦ Παύλου σὲ λαμπρὸ ἀστέρι τῆς Ἐκκλησίας. Ὁ Θεὸς τὸν κάλεσε στὸ ἀξίωμα τοῦ ἀποστόλου, αὐτὸς τοῦ διδάξε τὴ διδασκαλίαν τῆς Χάριτος. Ὁ Θεὸς τὸν ἐνίσχυε γιὰ νὰ πολεμᾷ καὶ νὰ νικᾷ τοὺς ἐχθροὺς τῆς πίστεως. Ὁ Θεὸς τὸν ἀνέδειξε ἀπόστολο τῶν ἐθνῶν, στὸν ὁποῖον ὄχι μόνο οἱ Γαλάτες, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡμεῖς οἱ Ἕλληνες ὀφείλουμε τὴ Χριστιανικὴ πίστι μας· γιατί τὸν σπόρο τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τὸν ἔφερε καὶ στὴν πατρίδα μας ὁ ἀπόστολος Παῦλος. Καὶ αὐτὸς κοπίασε καὶ μόχθησε γιὰ νὰ ριζώσῃ στὴν Ἑλλάδα.

Ἄς εὐχηθοῦμε, ἡ πατρίδα μας ν' ἀκολουθῇ πάντοτε τὰ λόγια τοῦ Παύλου καὶ νὰ μὴ δίνει πίστι στὰ λόγια τῶν ἐχθρῶν τῆς πίστεως.

(†) 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

The Twofold Coming of Christ

We do not preach only one coming of Christ, but a second as well, much more glorious than the first. The first coming was marked by patience; the second will bring the crown of a divine kingdom.

In general, whatever relates to our Lord Jesus Christ has two aspects. There is a birth from God before the ages, and a birth from a virgin at the fullness of time. There is a hidden coming, like that of rain on fleece, and a coming before all eyes, still in the future.

At the first coming He was wrapped in swaddling clothes in a manger. At His second coming He will be clothed in light as in a garment. In the first coming He

endured the cross, despising the shame; in the second coming He will be in glory, escorted by an army of angels.

We look then beyond the first coming and await the second. At the first coming we said: Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. At the second we shall say it again; we shall go out with the angels to meet the Lord and cry out in adoration: Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem

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