



DIRECT ARCHDIOCESAN
DISTRICT

THREE HIERARCHS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

SUNDAY WEEKLY BULLETIN March 14th, 2021

V. Rev. Archimandrite Eugene N. Pappas

CHEESEFARE SUNDAY -- FORGIVENESS SUNDAY



Icon of the Sermon on the Mount

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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.

Προκείμενον. Ἦχος πλ. δ'.

ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 75.11,1

**Εὔξασθε 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

Ἀδελφοί, νῦν ἐγγύτερον ἡμῶν ἢ σωτηρία ἢ ὅτε ἐπιστεύσαμεν. Ἡ νύξ προέκοψεν, ἡ δὲ ἡμέρα ἤγγικεν· ἀποθώμεθα οὖν τὰ ἔργα τοῦ σκότους, καὶ ἐνδυσώμεθα τὰ ὄπλα τοῦ φωτός. Ὡς ἐν ἡμέρᾳ, εὐσχημόνως περιπατήσωμεν, μὴ κώμοις καὶ μέθαις, μὴ κοίταις καὶ ἀσελγείαις, μὴ ἔριδι καὶ ζήλῳ. Ἄλλ' ἐνδύσασθε τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, καὶ τῆς σαρκὸς πρόνοιαν μὴ ποιήσητε, εἰς ἐπιθυμίας. Τὸν δὲ ἀσθενοῦντα τῇ πίστει προσλαμβάνεσθε, μὴ εἰς διακρίσεις διαλογισμῶν. Ὃς 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 δὲ δυνατὸς γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ θεὸς στήσαι αὐτόν.

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

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."

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 ἀλειψαί σου τὴν κεφαλὴν καὶ τὸ πρόσωπόν σου νίψαι, ὅπως μὴ φανῆς τοῖς ἀνθρώποις νηστεύων, ἀλλὰ τῷ πατρί 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 καρδία ὑμῶν.

The clocks have gone forward **ONE FULL HOUR** and it is **SPRINGTIME** on the horizon.

Thank you for coming to church on time 'TODAY' keep up the good work.

LENT COMMENCES: Monday March 15th..... and the journey continues!

Two PSYCHOSABBATA: have now passed, with only ONE MORE to go.... this Saturday, March 20th.

Please use the enclosed 'memorial listing page' to inscribe those whom you may wish to commemorate in loving tribute; parents, God-parents, Grand-parents, siblings, spouse, cherished friend..... there are so many who have nurtured us through the years. **REMEMBER THEM! MEMORIALIZE THEM! HONOR THEM!**

PRE-SANCTIFIED LITURGY of Pope Saint Gregory of Rome' will be celebrated as a morning service **WEDNESDAY** March 17th, (10:30-11:30 A.M.) Holy Eucharist will be distributed from the Sunday Divine Liturgy. All are most welcome.

FIRST SALUTATIONS to the Blessed Virgin Mary **THEOTOKOS:** will be intoned on Friday **MARCH 19th, 7:00 – 8:00 P.M.** This is the 'eve' before the **THIRD** and **FINAL PSYCHOSABBATON** this Lent. Names may be collected on Friday night for the Saturday morning Divine Liturgy.

NEXT SUNDAY: Is the **FIRST SUNDAY** of **LENT – Sunday of Orthodoxy!** This is a most holy day of veneration and reverencing the sacred icons. A solemn procession of **HOLY ICONS** of the Saints and Feast Days will be observed with fellow parishioners carrying a icon representing the various philanthropic, academic, fraternal, service and youth programs and organizations in the parish. The **GREAT DECLARATION** of **ORTHODOXY** will be proclaimed in Greek and English indicating the truths of the 'universe' revealed in faith.

BROOKLYN BOROUGH HALL HERITAGE AWARDS CEREMONY: this year once again will be postponed due to the Pandemic Civic directives of assembly and social distancing. We sure do miss this observance which is a highlight of mid-lent! **NEXT YEAR?**

SAINT THEODORE 'KOLLYVA' will be blessed and distributed on Saturday – March 20th. This traditional kollyva is only for those **UN-WED!** Father Eugene will relate the observance for young men and young ladies seeking a spouse. Don't be embarrassed.....take a handful.....certainly can't hurt!

Bi-Centennial Observance of the INDEPENDENCE of GREECE from the yoke of Turkish Ottoman oppression and subjugation begins **THIS YEAR (1821-2021)** on Thursday – **MARCH 25th.**

(ANNUNCIATION/EVANGELISMOS FEAST). Our Parish will highlight this historic, monumental, phenomenal feat of liberation, identity and renaissance of the Greek nation throughout the year. Please join us in every endeavor to encourage our people, our faithful, and particularly our **YOUTH** in the significance of the 200 year old event and it's consequences in **OUR** life **TODAY!** We are holocaust survivors too having suffered the indignation of oppressed servitude for **OVER 400** years of Ottoman, Turkish and Islamic domination. **ZHTO H ELLAS ! ZHTO O LAOS !**

Special commemorations will commence at **THREE HIERARCHS** on March 25th and there after. It is the duty of all to commemorate this event with pride and marvel, while reflecting upon the determined strength of our ancestral roots that served as the catalyst of the renewed democracy, freedom, heritage and legacy that we cherish today. it was **OUR,** is **OURS,** and will with God's Grace – be **OURS** forever.

FASTING NOTE: There is no fasting on March 24th, (Wednesday, March 25th, (Thursday) and March 26th, (Friday), as we approach **CARNIVALE (Apokrees)** Celebrate and eat up! **Happy Greek Independence!**

ARTOKLASIES are most welcomed for feast days, name days, thanksgiving and special intentions. Please coordinate with the Office for scheduling.

WINE and **PROSPHORA** are always needed for liturgical rites. Please see the clergy for direction and scheduling.

PASCHA IS CELEBRATED ON MAY 02nd.



THE BICENTENNIAL OF THE GREEK
REVOLUTION

His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America
invites you to a Doxology, celebrating the Bicentennial
of the Greek Revolution 1821-2021

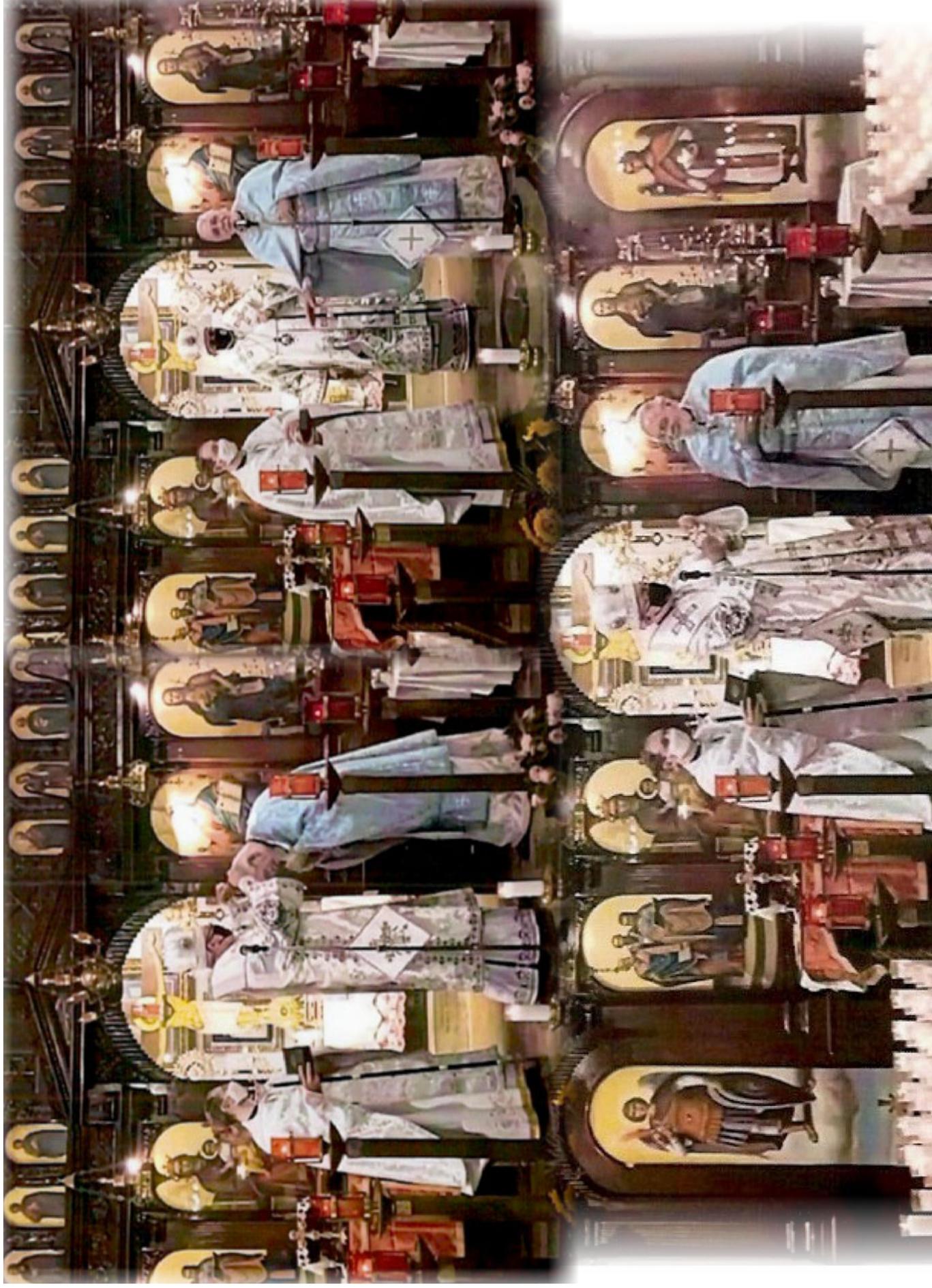
Thursday, March 25, 2021, 1:30 p.m.

Archdiocesan Cathedral of the Holy Trinity
319 East 74th Street, New York, NY 10021

Please respond by e-mailing
RSVP200@goarch.org
or by calling 212-570.3500

**Please note this invitation is non-transferable.
Covid-19 Precautions will be observed.*





At the Divine Liturgy of Sunday, March 07th, HIS EMINENCE ARCHBISHOP DANIEL of the UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH of AMERICA bestowed upon our Pastor-Father Eugene the gold pectoral cross of the hierarch's Archdiocese. Father Eugene was both honored and most surprised. Fr. Vasyli Shak was also present sharing the moment and the camaraderie. His Eminence encouraged the laity to 'joyfully' enter the spirit of denial and renewal at LENT! MONDAY-MARCH 15th, commences Holy Lent.



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 Γυναικεία Ἱερὰ Μονὴ Ἁγίου Αὐγουστίνου Φλωρίνης – 531 00 ΦΛΩΡΙΝΑ – τηλ. 23850-28610 – imaafllo@yahoo.gr

Περίοδος Δ' - Ἔτος ΑΗ' Φλώρινα - ἀριθμ. φύλλου 2357	Κυριακὴ τῆς Τυροφάγου (Ῥωμ. 13,11 – 14,4) 14 Μαρτίου 2021	Συντάκτης (†) ἐπίσκοπος Αὐγουστίνος Ν. Καντιώτης
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Ἡ νύχτα τῆς παρουσίας ζωῆς

«Ἡ νύξ προέκοψεν, ἡ δὲ ἡμέρα ἤγγικεν» (Ῥωμ. 13,12)

Ο Παῦλος, ἀγαπητοί μου, ὁ μέγας Παῦλος, στὴν πρὸς Ῥωμαίους ἐπιστολή του, ἀπὸ τὴν ὁποία εἶνε ἡ περικοπὴ τοῦ σημερινοῦ ἀποστολικοῦ ἀναγνώσματος, **σαλπίζει**

Χριστιανοί τῆς Ῥώμης, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὄλων τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν, **ξυπνήστε**, κινήθητε! ντυθῆτε τὴν ἀρετὴ, εὐτρεπίστε τὶς ψυχές σας· γιατί ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ Κυρίου, ἡ ἡμέρα δηλαδὴ τῆς κρίσεως, ἔρχεται· ὅσο περνοῦν οἱ ἡμέρες τῆς παρουσίας ζωῆς, τόσο καὶ πλησιάζει **ἡ ἡμέρα ἐκείνη!** **Ἐτοιμασθῆτε λοιπόν!**

Αὐτὸ τὸ νόημα ἔχουν τὰ λόγια του, τὰ ὁποῖα ἀκούσαμε σήμερα στὸν ἀπόστολο τῆς Κυριακῆς τῆς Τυρινῆς, «*Ἡ νύξ προέκοψεν, ἡ δὲ ἡμέρα ἤγγικεν*» (Ῥωμ. 13,12)· δηλαδὴ, **ἡ νύχτα** προχώρησε, πλησιάζει νὰ φέξη, κοντεύει πιά νὰ ξημερώση, ἔρχεται ἡ μεγάλη ἡμέρα, ἡ μοναδική, ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ Κυρίου.

Τί ἐννοεῖ ἄραγε; γιὰ ποιά νύχτα καὶ ποιά ἡμέρα μιλάει ἐδῶ ὁ ἀπόστολος Παῦλος; **Νύχτα ἐννοεῖ τὴν παρούσα ζωὴ**, καὶ ἡμέρα τὴν ἄλλη ζωὴ, ἐκείνη πού ἀρχίζει πέρα ἀπὸ τὸν τάφο. **Γιατί** χαρακτηρίζει ἔτσι ὁ ἀπόστολος τὴν παρούσα ζωὴ ἐν σχέσει μὲ τὴ μέλλουσα;

Τὸ ὅτι **ἡ μέλλουσα ζωὴ**, πρὸς τὴν ὁποία ὄλοι κατευθυνόμεθα, **θα εἶνε ἡ κατ' ἐξοχὴν ἡμέρα**, αὐτὸ πιστεύω ὅτι εὐκόλα τὸ καταλαβαίνουμε. Θὰ λάμψη τότε ἓνα φῶς λαμπρότερο ἀπὸ τὸν ἥλιο. «*Ἡμέραν ὀνομάζει τὸν μέλλοντα αἰῶνα*», ὅπως ἐξηγεῖ ὁ ἅγιος Νικόδημος ὁ Ἁγιορείτης στὴν ἐρμηνεία του, «*διὰ τὸ φῶς ὅπου ἔχουν οἱ δίκαιοι καὶ διατὶ τότε φανερόνται τὰ κρυπτὰ ὄλων τῶν ἀνθρώπων*» (Ἑρμηνεία εἰς τὰς 14 Ἐπιστολάς τοῦ ἀποστόλου Παύλου, ἐκδ. «Ὁρθόδοξος Κηφέλη», τ. Α', Θεσσαλονίκη 1989, σσ. 305-6). Οἱ δίκαιοι θὰ ζοῦν μέσα στὸ φῶς, χωρὶς φόβο, γιατί τὰ ἔργα τους εἶνε καθαρά καὶ ἀντέχουν στὸ φῶς τῆς δημοσιότητος· οἱ ἁμαρτωλοὶ ὁμως θὰ αἰσθανθοῦν τότε ντροπή, γιατί τὸ φῶς θὰ φανερώση τὰ κρυφὰ ἀνομήματα καὶ ἐγκλήματα πού ἔχουν διαπρά-

ξει. Αὐτὸ νομίζω ὅτι εἶνε κατανοητὸ καὶ κανένας πιστὸς δὲν τὸ ἀμφισβητεῖ.

Ἐκεῖνο πού θέλει περισσότερη ἐξήγησι εἶνε, ὅτι ὁ παρὼν βίος εἶνε «**νύξ**», ὅτι **ἡ ζωὴ αὐτὴ πού ζοῦμε εἶνε μία νύχτα**· αὐτὸ πρέπει νὰ τὸ ἀναλύσουμε, νὰ τὸ ἐξηγήσουμε μὲ λίγα ἔστω λόγια, ὅσο τοῦλάχιστον ἐπιτρέπει ὁ χρόνος, τὰ λίγα λεπτὰ πού ἔχουμε στὴ διάθεσί μας.

Ἡ παρούσα ζωὴ, ἀγαπητοί μου, λέγεται μεταφορικῶς «**νύχτα**», διότι κατ' αὐτὴν ἐπικρατεῖ σκοτάδι, **σκοτάδι πνευματικό**. Ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ καθενός, οἱ σκέψεις καὶ τὸ φρόνημά του δὲν εἶνε ἐδῶ πάντοτε φανερά· ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πλεῖστον εἶνε κρυμμένα. Μέσα στὶς ψυχές τῶν ἀνθρώπων καλλιεργοῦνται καὶ δουλεύουν λογισμοὶ κακοί, πονηρὲς βλέψεις, σχέδια σκοτεινά.

Αὐτὸ βέβαια δὲν ἰσχύει γιὰ ὄλους. **Ἐξαιροῦνται οἱ πιστοί**. Διότι οἱ Χριστιανοί, ὅσοι δηλαδὴ ζοῦν ἐν Χριστῷ, αὐτοὶ κινοῦνται ἀπὸ τώρα «*ἐν τῷ φωτί*» (Κολ. 1,12. Α' ἴω. 29,10.). *Περιπατοῦν ὡς ἐν ἡμέρᾳ εὐσχημόνως*», ὅπως λέει σήμερα ὁ ἀπόστολος (Ῥωμ. 13,13), δηλαδὴ **ζοῦν μὲ εὐπρέπεια**. Αὐτοί, μέσα στὸ μαῦρο σκοτάδι τοῦ παρόντος αἰῶνος, **ἔχουν ἡμέρα**· φωτίζονται μυστικά ἀπὸ τὸν ἄδυτο ἥλιο, τὸν Κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν. Γι' αὐτοὺς δηλαδὴ, ἀντιθέτως, ἡ παρούσα ζωὴ δὲν εἶνε νύχτα· εἶνε «*ἡμέρα*» καὶ καιρὸς ἐργασίας. Λέει ὁ Κύριος γιὰ τὸν ἑαυτό του στὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην Εὐαγγέλιο· «*Ἐμε δεῖ ἐργάζεσθαι τὰ ἔργα τοῦ πέμψαντός με ἕως ἡμέρας ἐστίν· ἔρχεται νύξ ὅτε οὐδεὶς δύναται ἐργάζεσθαι*» (ἴω. 9,4). Αὐτὸ λοιπὸν ἰσχύει καὶ γιὰ τὸν ἀληθινὸ Χριστιανό.

Γεννᾶται βέβαια τὸ ἐρώτημα· **πόσοι εἶνε αὐτοὶ οἱ Χριστιανοί** πού ζοῦν πραγματικὰ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ; Ἄν στὴν ἐποχὴ τοῦ ἀποστόλου Παύλου ἦταν λίγοι, πολὺ λιγώτεροι εἶνε σήμερα, στὴ δική μας ἐποχὴ. Ὁ πολὺς κόσμος, ἡ μεγάλη πλειονότης τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ζοῦμε

δυστυχώς μακριά από τὸ Χριστό, μακριά από τὸ Φῶς. **Γιὰ ἐμᾶς** λοιπόν, πού ζοῦμε στὴν ἁμαρτία, ἡ **παρούσα ζωὴ εἶνε «νύχτα»**. Ξέρετε πῶς μοιάζουμε; Ζοῦμε καὶ συμπεριφερόμεθα σὰν κοιμισμένοι πού βλέπουν τὴ νύχτα ἕνα **δνευρο**. Ὅ,τι κάνουμε ἢ λέμε ἢ σκεπτόμαστε, ὅλα γίνονται σὰν σὲ δνευρο, μέσα σὲ **ὑπνο** κάτω ἀπὸ τὴ σκιά τοῦ δέντρου τῆς ἁμαρτίας.

Ἐνῶ, ἀδελφοί μου, **κινδυνεύουμε, ἐμεῖς κοιμόμαστε!** Κοιμόμαστε, τὴ στιγμή πού **ὁ σατανᾶς «ὡς λέων ὠρυόμενος περιπατεῖ ζητῶν τίνα καταπίη»**, τριγυρίζει σὰν λιοντάρι πού ψάχνει γιὰ τροφή, ποιόν ἀπὸ μᾶς νὰ καταπίη (Α' Πέτρ. 5,8). Ἀλλοίμονό μας! Γιατί ὄχι ἀπλῶς κοιμόμαστε, ἀλλὰ καὶ **«ρέγχομεν»**, ῥοχαλίζουμε, **—ὅπως ὁ Ἰωνᾶς** μέσα στὴν «κοίλη», στὸ ἀμπάρι, τοῦ πλοίου— (βλ. Ἰωνᾶ 1,5), τὴ στιγμή πού τὰ λυσσασμένα κύματα τῆς ἁμαρτίας χτυποῦν τὸ ἕνα μετὰ τὸ ἄλλο τὸ σκάφος τῆς ψυχῆς μας καὶ ζητοῦν νὰ τὸ συντρίψουν. Κοιμόμαστε **ὅπως ὁ Σαμψὼν** στὰ γόνατα τῆς πονηρῆς Δαλιδᾶς (βλ. Κριτ. κεφ. 16ο), ὁ ὁποῖος ξυπνοῦσε τρομαγμένος ἀπὸ τὴ φωνὴ **«Ἀλλόφυλοι, ἐπὶ σέ»**, ἐχθροὶ ἐναντίον σου! (Ἐδ. 16,20)· κ' ἐμᾶς μᾶς ἀποκοιμίζει ἡ ἁμαρτία, πιὸ φοβερὴ ἀπ' τὴ Δαλιδά, τὴ στιγμή πού οἱ ἐχθροὶ μας παραμονεύουν κι ἀκούγεται τὸ ἐγερτήριο· Ξύπνα, ῥάθυμε, **«Ἀλλόφυλοι, ἐπὶ σέ»!** κοιμᾶσαι ἀμέριμνος, τὴν ὥρα πού ληστές, ἄνθρωποι καὶ δαίμονες, ἀρπάζουν ὅ,τι πολῦτιμο ἔχει ὁ οἶκος τῆς ψυχῆς σου;

Ἄχ! Γιὰ μᾶς, πού ζοῦμε στὴν ἁμαρτία, ἡ παρούσα ζωὴ εἶνε «νύχτα». Ὅπως αὐτοὶ πού κοιμοῦνται δὲν κάνουν τίποτε ἀξιόλογο, ἔτσι καὶ ὅσοι κοιμόμαστε στὰ διάφορα ὑπνωτήρια τῆς ἁμαρτίας δὲν πρόκειται νὰ πετύχουμε τίποτε γενναῖο καὶ ὑψηλό, καμμία νίκη ἀρετῆς, κανένα ἄθλο ἀγιότητος· ἔτσι θὰ κυλᾶ καὶ θὰ χάνεται ἡ ζωὴ μας, μέσα σὲ **ἄπραξία καὶ ἀδράνεια** ἀπὸ τὴ νωθρότητα καὶ ἀποχαύνωσί μας. Καὶ ὅπως αὐτοὶ πού κοιμοῦνται βλέπουν στὸν ὑπνο τους **δνευρα ἀπατηλὰ**—ἄλλος ὅτι γίνεται στρατηγός, ἄλλος ἑκατομμυριοῦχος, ἄλλος κληρονόμος ἀνακτόρων κ.τ.λ.—, ἔτσι κ' ἐμεῖς ζώντας στὴν ἁμαρτία πλάθουμε δνευρα καὶ πύργους εὐτυχίας. Δὲν εἶνε κρίμα, ὅλη ἡ ζωὴ μας νὰ φεύγῃ σὰν σὲ ὑπνο μέσ' στὴ νύχτα;

Γιὰ μᾶς θὰ ἔπρεπε ἡ **Κασσιανὴ** νὰ ξαναψάλῃ τὸ περίφημο τροπάριό της· **«Οἴμοι! λέγουσα, ὅτι νύξ μοι ὑπάρχει, οἴστρος ἀκολασίας, ζοφώδης τε καὶ ἀσέληνος ἔρωσ τῆς ἁμαρτίας»** (βοξ. αἰν. Μ. Τετ.). Δυστυχία μου! δηλαδὴ, ὁ ἁμαρτωλὸς ἔρωτας καὶ ἡ μανία τῆς ἀκολασίας μὲ βύθισαν σὲ **μιὰ νύχτα σκοτεινὴ**, πού δὲν τὴ φωτίζει κανένα ἄστρο καὶ καμμία σελήνη. Τὰ λό-

για αὐτὰ ταιριάζουν σ' ἐμᾶς, ὄχι σ' ἐκείνην. Ἡ ἁγία ἐκείνη ποιήτρια τοῦ Βυζαντίου ἔγραφε ἔτσι ἀπὸ βαθειὰ ταπείνωσι. Ἡ ἴδια εἶχε ἐγκαίρως ἀντιληφθῆ τὴ ματαιότητα τῶν ἐγκοσμίων, ἀπέκρουσε τὰ δελεαστικὰ θέληγτρα τοῦ κόσμου, πολέμησε τὴ ῥαθυμία καὶ τὴν ὑπνηλία, καὶ δέχτηκε πρόθυμα τὴ φωνὴ τοῦ οὐρανόου Νυμφίου πού καλεῖ τοὺς ἐκλεκτοὺς λέγοντας· **«Ὡρα ἡμᾶς ἡδὴ ἐξ ὑπνου ἐγερθῆναι»**, εἶνε ὥρα νὰ σηκωθοῦμε πιά ἀπ' τὸν ὑπνο (Ρωμ. 13,11). Ἐτσι ἀποτίναξε τὸν θανατηφόρο ὑπνο τῆς ἁμαρτίας καὶ ὡς φρόνιμη νύμφη τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἔσπευσε πρὸς τὸ Φῶς.

Ἀδελφοί μου! Ἄς ἀκούσουμε σήμερα γιὰ μία ἀκόμη φορά καὶ ἂς σκεφτοῦμε τώρα πιὸ σοβαρὰ τὸ ἐγερτήριο σάλπισμα τοῦ ἀποστόλου Παύλου· **«Ἡ νύξ προέκοψεν, ἡ δὲ ἡμέρα ἤγγικεν. ἀποθώμεθα οὖν τὰ ἔργα τοῦ σκοτόους καὶ ἐνδυσώμεθα τὰ ὄπλα τοῦ φωτός»** (Ρωμ. 13,12). Ἄς ἀπαρνηθοῦμε **«τὰ ἔργα τοῦ σκοτόους»**, αὐτὰ πού γίνονται στὸ σκοτάδι, καὶ ἂς ντυθοῦμε **«τὰ ὄπλα τοῦ φωτός»**, τὴ φωτεινὴ πανοπλία.

Ἡ παρούσα ζωὴ, μὲ ὅλα τὰ φόβητρά της καὶ μὲ ὅλα τὰ ἀπατηλὰ θέληγτρά της, εἶνε μιὰ νύχτα **«ζοφώδης τε καὶ ἀσέληνος»**. Ἡ νύχτα ὅμως αὐτὴ **πηγαίνει ὀλοταχῶς πρὸς τὸ τέρμα της**. Οἱ ἡμέρες, οἱ μῆνες, τὰ χρόνια—τί λέω;—, οἱ αἰῶνες φεύγουν καὶ ὄλο πλησιάζει ἐκείνη ἡ μοναδικὴ ἡμέρα, **«ἡ ἡμέρα Κυρίου ἡ μεγάλη καὶ ἐπιφανής»** (Ἰωήλ 3,4 = Πράξ. 2,20).

Στὴν ἀποστολικὴ ἐποχὴ τὰ μέλη τῆς πρώτης Ἐκκλησίας ζοῦσαν μὲ τὴν πίστι καὶ τὴν προσδοκίαν τῆς ἐλεύσεως τοῦ Χριστοῦ, **πότε νὰ ἔλθῃ πάλι ὁ Κύριος στὴ γῆ, νὰ θέσῃ τέρμα στὴ νύχτα** τῆς παρουσίας ζωῆς, καὶ μὲ τὴ δεύτερα παρουσία του νὰ ἐγκαινιάσῃ τὴν **«ὀγδόην ἡμέραν»** (βλ. Ψαλμ. 6,1. Μ. Βασίλειος Ἐ.Π. Μigne 29,52), δηλαδὴ τὴν ἀτελεύτητη αἰωνιότητα.

Αὐτὸ δείχνει ὁ τρόπος πού ἐκφράζονται οἱ ἅγιοι ἀπόστολοι. **«Ὁ Κύριος ἐγγύς»**, γράφει σὲ μία ἄλλη ἐπιστολὴ τοῦ ὁ ἀπόστολος Παῦλος (Φιλ. 4,5). **Ὁ Κύριος πλησιάζει**, ἔρχεται, ἔφτασε!

Ἄς ἐτοιμαστοῦμε λοιπόν. Ἄς **«εὐτρεπίσωμεν»** τίς λαμπάδες μας, ἵνα **«ἐτοιμοὶ»** καθ' ὅλα, ντυμένοι τὴ στολὴ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, **«εἰσέλθωμεν σὺν Αὐτῷ εἰς τοὺς γάμους»** (καθ. Μ. Τρ.), δηλαδὴ στὴ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν, στὴν ὁποία, ὅπως γράφει ὁ εὐαγγελιστὴς Ἰωάννης στὴν Ἀποκάλυψι, **«νύξ οὐκ ἔσται»** ἐκεῖ, καὶ **«χρείαν»** οὐκ ἔχουσι **«λύχνου καὶ φωτός ἡλίου, ὅτι Κύριος ὁ Θεὸς φωτιεῖ αὐτούς, καὶ βασιλεύουσιν εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων»** (Ἀπ. 22,5).

(†) **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: \$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 2020 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

Forgiveness Sunday

So, fathers, brothers, sisters: let us forgive one another. Let us not think about why. There is enough to think about. Let us do it. Right now, in a kind of deep breath, say: "Lord, help us to forgive. Lord, renew all these relationships." What a chance is given here for love to triumph! – for unity to reflect the Divine unity, and for everything essential to return as life itself. What a chance! Is the answer we give today yes or no? Are we going to that forgiveness? Are we gladly accepting it? Or is it something which we do just because it is on the calendar today ... No! this is the crucial moment. This is the beginning of Lent. This is our spring "repair" because reconciliation is the powerful renewal of the ruin.

So, please, for the sake of Christ: let us forgive each other. The first thing I am asking all of you, my spiritual family, is to forgive me. Imagine how many temptations of laziness, of avoiding too much, and so on and so forth. What a constant defense of my own interests, health, or this or that ... I know that I don't even have an ounce of this self-giving, self-sacrifice which is truly a true repentance, the true renewal of love.

Please forgive me and pray for me, so that what I am preaching I could first of all somehow, be it only a little bit, integrate and incarnate in my life.

Father Alexander Schmemmann

RADIO MINISTRY: Each Saturday at 1:15 PM Fr. Eugene hosts the radio broadcast **MATTERS OF CONSCIENCE NOW IN ITS 22nd 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 radio)**

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