



DIRECT ARCHDIOCESAN
DISTRICT

THREE HIERARCHS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

SUNDAY WEEKLY BULLETIN April 4th, 2021
V. Rev. Archimandrite Eugene N. Pappas

THIRD SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST SUNDAY OF THE HOLY CROSS



Icon of the Sunday of the Holy Cross

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Prokeimenon. Mode Plagal 2.

Psalm 27.9,1

O Lord, save your people and bless your inheritance.

Verse: To you, O Lord, I have cried, O my God.

The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:1-6

BRETHREN, since we have a high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. Because of this he is bound to offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people. And one does not take the honor upon himself, but he is called by God, just as Aaron was. So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, "Thou art my Son, today I have begotten thee"; as he says also in another place, "Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek."

Προκείμενον. Ἦχος πλ. β'.

ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 27.9,1

Σῶσον, Κύριε τὸν λαὸν σου καὶ εὐλόγησον τὴν κληρονομίαν σου.

Στίχ. Πρὸς σέ, Κύριε, κεκράξομαι ὁ Θεός μου.

Πρὸς Ἑβραίους 4:14-16, 5:1-6 τὸ ἀνάγνωσμα

Ἀδελφοί, ἔχοντες οὖν ἀρχιερέα μέγαν, διεληλυθότα τοὺς οὐρανοὺς, Ἰησοῦν τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, κρατῶμεν τῆς ὁμολογίας. Οὐ γὰρ ἔχομεν ἀρχιερέα μὴ δυνάμενον συμπαθῆσαι ταῖς ἀσθενείαις ἡμῶν, πεπειραμένον δὲ κατὰ πάντα καθ' ὁμοιότητα, χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας. Προσερχώμεθα οὖν μετὰ παρρησίας τῷ θρόνῳ τῆς χάριτος, ἵνα λάβωμεν ἔλεον, καὶ χάριν εὕρωμεν εἰς εὐκαιρον βοήθειαν. Πᾶς γὰρ ἀρχιερεὺς, ἐξ ἀνθρώπων λαμβανόμενος, ὑπὲρ ἀνθρώπων καθίσταται τὰ πρὸς τὸν θεόν, ἵνα προσφέρῃ δῶρά τε καὶ θυσίας ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτιῶν· μετριοπαθεῖν δυνάμενος τοῖς ἀγνοοῦσιν καὶ πλανωμένοις, ἐπεὶ καὶ αὐτὸς περὶκεῖται ἀσθενείαν· καὶ διὰ ταύτην ὀφείλει, καθὼς περὶ τοῦ λαοῦ, οὕτως καὶ περὶ ἑαυτοῦ, προσφέρειν ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτιῶν. Καὶ οὐχ ἑαυτῷ τις λαμβάνει τὴν τιμὴν, ἀλλὰ καλούμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, καθάπερ καὶ Ἀαρών. Οὕτως καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς οὐχ ἑαυτὸν ἐδόξασεν γεννηθῆναι ἀρχιερέα, ἀλλ' ὁ λαλήσας πρὸς αὐτόν, Υἱός μου εἶ σύ, ἐγὼ σήμερον γεγέννηκά σε. Καθὼς καὶ ἐν ἑτέρῳ λέγει, Σὺ ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισεδέκ.

Sunday of the Holy Cross

The Gospel According to Mark 8:34-38; 9:1

The Lord said: "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? For what can a man give in return for his life? For whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power."

Εἶπεν ὁ Κύριος· Εἴ τις θέλει ὀπίσω μου ἔλθειν, ἀπαρνησάσθω ἑαυτὸν καὶ ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἀκολουθεῖτω μοι. ὃς γὰρ ἂν θέλῃ τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ σῶσαι, ἀπολέσει αὐτήν· ὃς δ' ἂν ἀπολέσῃ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ψυχὴν ἕνεκεν ἐμοῦ καὶ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, οὗτος σώσει αὐτήν. τί γὰρ ὠφελήσει ἄνθρωπον ἐὰν κερδήσῃ τὸν κόσμον ὅλον, καὶ ζημιωθῇ τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ; ἢ τί δώσει ἄνθρωπος ἀντάλλαγμα τῆς ψυχῆς αὐτοῦ; ὃς γὰρ ἐὰν ἐπαισχυνθῇ με καὶ τοὺς ἐμοὺς λόγους ἐν τῇ γενεᾷ ταύτῃ τῇ μοιχαλίδι καὶ ἁμαρτωλῷ, καὶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐπαισχυνθήσεται αὐτόν ὅταν ἔλθῃ ἐν τῇ δόξῃ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ μετὰ τῶν ἀγγέλων τῶν ἁγίων. Καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι εἰσὶ τινες τῶν ὧδε ἐστηκότων, οἵτινες οὐ μὴ γεύσονται θανάτου ἕως ἂν ἴδωσι τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐληλυθυῖαν ἐν δυνάμει.

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

HAITIAN DELEGATION VISIT: On Sunday, March 28th, our parish made 'history' in being the only Greek Orthodox Church community in the U.S.A. out of 600 churches, chapels, shrines, and institutes to commemorate the initial response of the Republic of Haiti in recognizing the 1821 Independence Declaration of GREECE! The enthusiastic response of the island nation to Hellas' struggle for freedom was recounted at ceremonies, speeches, songs, and drama at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy. An exchange of gifts between the Greek and Haitian delegations highlighted the solidarity of the two communities which have shared the dignified struggle for liberty. PLEASE SEE THE CENTERFOLD FOR VISIONS OF THE EVENT.

MANY THANKS are extended to the GREEK SCHOOL faculty, students and P.T.A. for the Independence Day Bi-Centennial Program and reception of Sunday, March 28th. Everyone was delighted with the children's presentations and the ethnic costuming.

TODAY: Our Orthodox Church observes and celebrates the VENERATION of the HOLY CROSS. A solemn procession and Litany will conclude this morning's divine worship as the RELIC of the HOLY CROSS (Rome) is presented to the faithful in venerable adoration and reverence.

PASCHAL SUPPLIES ARE NEEDED: Please see the Reverend Clergy for our Holy Week necessities, wine, olive oil, aromatics, incense, prosphora QUEEN SIZE WHITE linen winding sheets for the Epitaphion burial and shroud. Please do not purchase anything without the approval of the clergy. Let's coordinate to make sure nothing is missing!

SERVICES THIS WEEK: Do not miss any of the unique devotions this week as we enter the FOURTH WEEK of HOLY LENT-

Wednesday	April 07th,	Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 6-7:00 P.M.
Friday	April 09th,	Fourth Stanza of Salutations 7:00 P.M.
Saturday	April 10th,	Anointing Service by Fr. VasyI for Lenten period 4-6:30 P.M.

EASTER GREETING CARD APPEAL: Each year our Parish presents a PASCHAL CHRISTOS ANESTI (Blessed Resurrection) card to 1,000 homes. You may wish to have your name and family inscribed extending greetings to all. For only \$20.00 (twenty dollars) your offering will assist our needs. Please fill in the form submitted with your donation.

TODAY: we observe the THIRD SUNDAY of LENT (Veneration of the HOLY CROSS) Stavro-Proskinesis at Noon! Please make every effort to be present to receive the blessing of the sacred relic. Flowers will be distributed for your home shrine and the cemetery of your beloved reposed.

HANDS, HANDS, HANDS, are necessary for the weaving of the Palm crosses for distribution on Palm Sunday – APRIL 25TH. We are reserving Tuesday, Wednesday Thursday- APRIL 20-21-22 from 11:00 A.M. Rosehall. Wear a mask and 'come on down'.....

PALM SUNDAY LUNCHEON is scheduled for reserved seating at the church or for 'take out' orders to go. Please see the enclosed flyer for details. All food will be prepared on the premises of the church kitchens, deliciously and traditionally! BAKALIARO AT ITS'BEST!

PASCHA IS CELEBRATED ON MAY 02nd.

MEMORIALS NEXT WEEK: + MARITSA KONSTAS + SPYRIDON GIANNOPOULOS
+ FRANGOULA VORIAS + IOANNIS KOUKOURAS



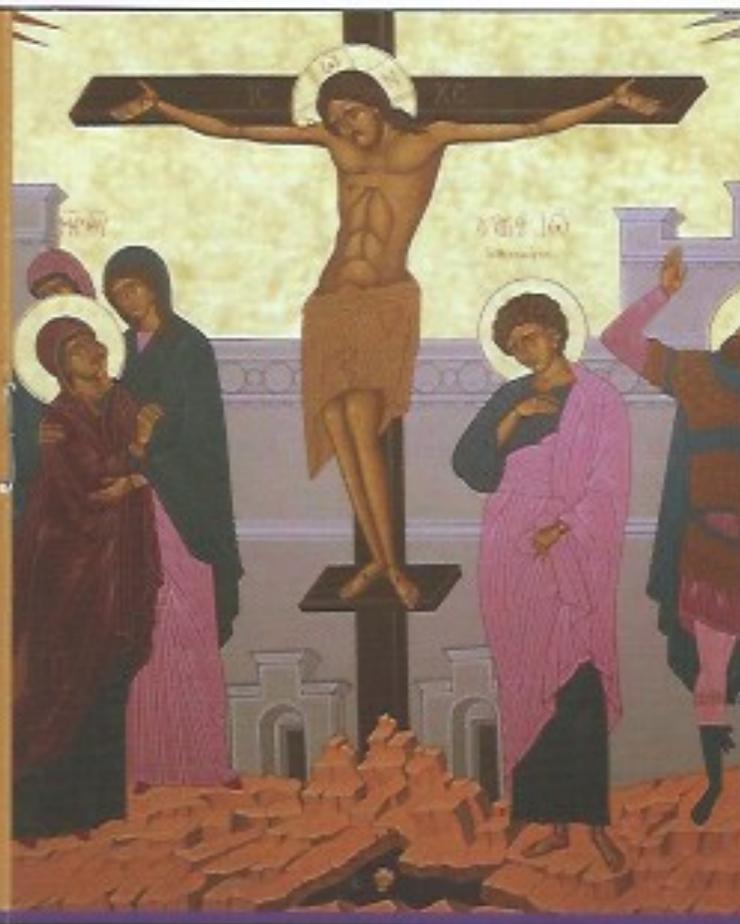
VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

Rev. Father John Salem

St. Elijah Antiochian Orthodox Church
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

The Lord said: "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

— MARK 8:34



On the third Sunday of Great Lent, Mark's Gospel reminds us that following Christ requires work. In this season, the Church offers fasting, prayer, and giving as part of this work. These disciplines are ways we can each follow Christ.

Commenting on another Lenten Gospel (Mt 6:1 ff.), read during Great Compline earlier in the fast, the Blessed Theophylact – 11th and 12th century Archbishop of Bulgaria – suggests how we can achieve the goals set before us in a proper way.

Giving alms is a private discipline and calls for humility: "When you give alms, let not your left hand know what your right hand does" (Mt 6:3). "The left hand," writes Theophylact, "represents vainglory and the right hand, almsgiving. Let not your vainglory be aware of your almsgiving."

Likewise, prayer is for personal spiritual growth, not display: "When you pray, enter into your inner chamber and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father Who is in secret" (Mt 6:6). "Should I not then pray in church?" asks the bishop. "Indeed I should, but with a right mind and not for show. It is not the place which harms prayer, but the manner and the intent with which we pray."

Finally, why do we pray? "Not to inform God of anything," Theophylact writes, "but instead, that we may detach ourselves from the cares of life and receive benefit by conversing with God."

This, in the end, is the aim of our Lenten disciplines and in part what it means to take up our cross. May we each earnestly, humbly seek our Lord this Lent.



ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ

ΣΥΝΤΟΜΟΝ ΚΗΡΥΓΜΑ



«*Εγενόμην 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 – imaaflo@yahoo.gr

Περίοδος Δ' - Ἔτος ΛΗ'
Φλώρινα - ἀριθμ. φύλλου 2364

Γ' Κυρ. Νηστειῶν - Σταυροπροσκυνησεως
4 Ἀπριλίου 2021

Συντάκτης (†) ἐπίσκοπος
Αὐγουστίνος Ν. Καντιώτης

Ὁ σταυρὸς τοῦ Κυρίου

Α'. Σημασία καὶ ἀξία

«Ὁ σταυρὸς σου, Κύριε, ζωὴ καὶ ἀνάστασις ὑπάρχει τῷ λαῷ σου· καὶ ἐπ' αὐτῷ πεποιθότες σὲ τὸν ἀναστάντα Θεὸν ἡμῶν ὑμνοῦμεν· ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς» (Παρακλ. ἡχ. πλ. β', Κυρ. αἰν.)

Ανεβαίνοντας, ἀγαπητοί μου, σὲ ἀμβωνες μεγάλων κεντρικῶν ναῶν αἰσθάνομαι δέος. Γιὰ νὰ εἶμαι ὅμως εἰλικρινής, ὁ σπουδαιότερος ἀμβωνας ποὺ ἔχω ἀνεβῆ εἶνε κάποιος ἄλλος. Ποιός; Κάτι χαλάσματα, ἐρείπια σὲ χωριὰ κατεστραμμένα ἀπὸ φωτιά καὶ σίδηρο, ῥαχοῦλες εὐλογημένες, βουνὰ πανύψηλα, βράχια γυμνά ποτισμένα μὲ αἷμα, Θερμοπύλες ὅπου γράφτηκε ἡ νεώτερη ἱστορία τοῦ σταυροφόρου ἔθνους μας, ζυγίζουν γιὰ μένα παραπάνω ἀπ' ὅλες τῆς μεγαλοπόλεις. **Τὰ βράχια** ἐκεῖνα, ποὺ μὲ ἐλέησε ὁ Θεὸς ν' ἀνεβῶ σὲ ἡμέρες φρικτές, ἦταν ὁ ὠραιότερος ἀμβωνάς μου.

Ἡ πρωτεύουσα –μὴ κακοφανῆ σὲ κανένα– εἶνε γιὰ μένα Νινευί, Σόδομα, Βαβυλώνα. Ἄχ χωριουδάκια εὐλογημένα, καλύβες φτωχικές, βράχια ὅπου σφύζει ὁ παλμὸς τῆς πατρίδος! πόσο χάνουμε ὅλοι μας ὅταν κακὸς ἄνεμος μᾶς ξερριζῶνῃ, μᾶς παίρνῃ ἀπὸ σᾶς καὶ μᾶς ρίχνῃ στὴν χαώδη βαβυλωνιακὴ ζωή!

Ἐπάρχουν στὴν Ἀθήνα **ἀκροαταί**: Κατὰ τὴν ἀποστολικὴ ἐποχὴ τὰ λιγώτερα «ψάρια», τοὺς λιγώτερους πιστοὺς, ὁ ἀπόστολος Παῦλος τοὺς ἐπίασε στὴν Ἀθήνα. Οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι ἦταν **περίεργοι**, ἄνθρωποι ποὺ ἤθελαν «νὰ λένε καὶ ν' ἀκούνε κάτι καινότερον» (Πρῶξ 17,21), νὰ μαθαίνουν πάντα κάτι νέο. Σὲ μία ὅμως ὁμιλία μου σὲ ναὸ τῶν Ἀθηνῶν συνέβη τὸ ἔξῃς. Μετὰ τὸ κήρυγμα μὲ πλησίασε ἕνας νέος καὶ μοῦ λέει: Ἐγώ, πάτερ, νὰ σοῦ ἐξομολογηθῶ, μπῆκα στὴν ἐκκλησία καὶ ἤρθα στὸ κήρυγμα μὲ ἄλλους φίλους, –ἄκου κουβέντα– γιὰ νὰ κάνω πλάκα... Ἀλλὰ ἐδῶ εἶνε, ἀγαπητοί μου, ἡ δύναμις τοῦ Χριστοῦ· αὐτὸν τὸ νέο, ποὺ μπῆκε μαζὶ μὲ τοὺς ἄλλους γιὰ νὰ κάνῃ πλάκα, τὸν συνέλαβε τὸ δίχτυ τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ **μετανόησε!**

Τώρα λοιπὸν, ποὺ μὲ τὴν ὁμιλία αὐτὴ ρίχνω πάλι τὰ δίχτυα, ταπεινὸς κήρυκας, μικρὸς ψα-

ρᾶς τοῦ μεγάλου ψαρᾶ, τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, **παρακαλῶ τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον νὰ κάνῃ τὸ θαῦμα του**. Καὶ μιὰ ψυχὴ νὰ γονατίσῃ μπροστὰ στὸν Ἐσταυρωμένο καὶ νὰ πῇ τὸ «*Μνήσθητί μου, Κύριε*» (Λουκ. 23,42), γιὰ μένα ἀρκεῖ.

Ποιὸ θὰ εἶνε ἐδῶ τὸ θέμα μας; Δὲν μπορεῖ νὰ ἔνε ἄλλο παρὰ αὐτὸ ποὺ δίδει ἡ σημερινὴ ἡμέρα, ἡ Τρίτη Κυριακὴ τῶν Νηστειῶν, τῆς Σταυροπροσκυνησεως· εἶνε ὁ σταυρὸς τοῦ Κυρίου. **Περὶ τοῦ σταυροῦ** λοιπὸν θὰ μιλήσομε. Σταυρὸ τοῦ Κυρίου, βοήθει μας!

Τί εἶνε ὁ σταυρὸς, ἀδελφοί μου; Ὅπως ἂν πάρῃς ἕνα νόμισμα στὰ χέρια σου ἔχει δύο ὄψεις ἢ ὅπως καὶ τὸ ὕφασμα ἔχει δύο ὄψεις, ἔτσι καὶ ὁ σταυρὸς **ἔχει δύο ὄψεις**. Ἡ μία ὄψη του εἶνε ὄρατὴ, ἡ ἄλλη εἶνε ἀόρατὴ· ἡ μία εἶνε ὕλικὴ, ἡ ἄλλη πνευματικὴ - ἄυλη.

● Ἡ ὕλικὴ - ὄρατὴ ὄψη εἶνε ἡ **ὕλη, ἀπὸ τὴν ὁποία κατασκευάζεται ὁ σταυρὸς**. Τί λένε γι' αὐτὸ τὰ βιβλία τῆς Ἐκκλησίας; Ἄν τὸ πῶ τώρα καὶ τ' ἀκούσουν κάτι μοντέρνοι θεολόγοι, θὰ χαμογελάσουν. Ὡ αὐτοί! Δὲν κινδυνεύει ἡ πίστι μας τόσο ἀπὸ τοὺς ἔξω (διώκτας, μασόνους, ἀθέους μαρξιστάς), ὅσο ἀπὸ τοὺς ἔσω (ὑπερφίαλα πνεύματα, αἰρετικούς, καινοτόμους, μοντέρνους θεολόγους). Ἄν λοιπὸν ἀκούσῃ κάποιος μοντέρνος αὐτὸ ποὺ θὰ πῶ, μειδίαμα θὰ διαστίξῃ τὰ χεῖλη του.

Ἀλλὰ ἐγώ, ἀγαπητέ μου, δὲν μειδιῶ· πιστεύω –ἐλπίζω δὲ ὅτι κ' ἐσεῖς ὅλοι πιστεύετε– στοὺς ἀρχαίους θεσμοὺς τῆς ἁγίας μαρτυρικῆς ἀποστολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας. Τί ἐννοῶ ὅτι ὁ πρῶτος σταυρὸς, σύμφωνα μὲ τὰ βιβλία τῆς Ἐκκλησίας μας, ὁ σταυρὸς τοῦ Κυρίου μας, ἦταν φτειαγμένος **ἀπὸ τρία ξύλα**. Ἔτσι λένε τὰ βιβλία. Ἄν κάνουν λάθος αὐτά, κάνω λάθος κ' ἐγώ. Πῶς τὰ θεωροῦν οἱ μοντέρνοι

τά βιβλία αυτά; τὰ ἔχουν γιὰ κάψιμο; Μπορεῖ νὰ καοῦν ὅλα τὰ βιβλία τοῦ κόσμου, ἀλλ' αὐτὰ πού εἶνε ἐπάνω στοῦ ἀναλόγιου δὲν καίγονται, εἶνε βιβλία αἰώνια. Σύμφωνα λοιπὸν μὲ τὰ βιβλία τῆς Ἐκκλησίας μας ὁ σταυρὸς τοῦ Κυρίου ἦταν «**τριμερής**» (βλ. Μηνιαῖον Σειτ. 18', δοξ. πεντηκοστ.), ἦταν δηλαδὴ φτειαγμένος ἀπὸ ξύλο τριῶν μαζὶ δέντρων· ἀπὸ **κυπαρίσσι**, ἀπὸ **πεῦκο**, καὶ ἀπὸ **κέδρο**. Αὐτὸ στηρίζεται σὲ προφητεία τοῦ Ἡσαΐου πού ὁμιλεῖ γιὰ δόξα «**ἐν κυπαρίσσῳ καὶ πεύκῃ καὶ κέδρῳ ἄμα**» (Ἠσ. 60,13). Στηριζόμενος στὸ θεόπνευστο αὐτὸ λόγο καὶ ὁ ἱερὸς ὑμνογράφος ἀναφέρει κατ' ἐπανάληψιν στὴν Παρακλητικὴ τὰ τρία δέντρα μὲ τὴν ἴδια ἢ λίγο διαφορετικὴ σειρά (βλ. Παρακλ. Ἐκδ. «Φωτὸς», Ἀθήναι 1997' ἤχ. β' σσ. 72, 97' ἤχ. γ' σσ. 147, 162, 165' ἤχ. βαρ. σ. 377' ἤχ. πλ. δ' σ. 45). Τὰ δέντρα λαμβάνονται μὲ **συμβολικὴ ἔννοια** καὶ τονίζουν τὸ βαθὺ νόημα, τὴν **σημασίαν** τοῦ τιμίου σταυροῦ.

✓ Τὸ **κυπαρίσσι**, πού συνήθως σκιάζει τοὺς τάφους μας στὰ κοιμητήρια, σημαίνει τὸ πένθος γιὰ τὸν σταυρωθέντα Υἱὸν τῆς Παρθένου καὶ «**τὴν πίστιν**» τῶν κοιμηθέντων σ' Αὐτόν.

✓ Ὁ **κέδρος**, ξύλο ἀρωματικό, σημαίνει «**τὴν εὐσέβειαν**», πού μυρώνει τὴν σταυρικὴ ζωὴ τοῦ πιστοῦ καὶ ἀποπνέει στὴν κοινωνία τὴν «**εὐωδίαν Χριστοῦ**» (β' Κορ. 2,15).

✓ Καὶ τέλος ἡ **πεύκη** σημαίνει «**τὴν ἀγάπην**» καὶ λέει στοὺς Χριστιανούς· Δροσίστε –ὅπως τὸ πεῦκο μὲ τὴ σκιά καὶ τὴν πνοή του– μὲ ἀναψυχὴ ἀγάπης καὶ ζωογονίστε μὲ ἔμπρακτε καλωσύνη τὸν ταλαίπωρο κόσμον γύρω σας.

Ὅπως ὁ σταυρὸς τοῦ Κυρίου ἦταν ἀπὸ ξύλο τριῶν δένδρων, ἔτσι καὶ κάθε σταυρὸς σήμερα κατασκευάζεται ἀπὸ **διάφορα ὕλικά**, ἀκριβώτερα ἢ φθηνότερα. Μικροὶ στὸ χωριὸ μας, κάναμε σταυρουδάκια ἀπὸ βέργια, καλάμι ἢ ξύλο. Τσοπάνηδες στὰ βουνὰ τῆς Πίνδου κρατοῦσαν ξύλινους σταυρούς· μερικοὶ εἶνε ἀπὸ ἐκείνους πού μοίραζε ὁ ἅγιος Κοσμάς ὁ Αἰτωλός! Ἄλλοι σταυροὶ εἶνε ἀπὸ μπρούτζο ἢ σίδηρο ἢ μάρμαρο ἢ ἑλεφαντόδοντο· ἄλλοι ἀπὸ ἀσήμι ἢ χρυσὸ ἢ σμάλτο· ἄλλοι ἔχουν ρουμπίνια καὶ πετράδια, εἶνε μεγάλης ὕλικης ἀξίας. Ἀλλὰ ἡ **ἀξία τοῦ σταυροῦ** εἶνε ἄραγε στὸ ὕλικό του; Ποῦ βρίσκεται ἡ ἀξία του;

● Ἀδελφοί μου, μὴ ἀπατάσθε. Μπορεῖ ἐγὼ νὰ κρατῶ ἓνα σταυρὸ μὲ ρουμπίνια, νὰ τὸν βάλω ἐπάνω σὲ νεκρὸ καὶ ὁ νεκρὸς νὰ μὴ σαλέψη, καὶ μπορεῖ ἓνας ἄλλος νὰ κρατᾷ ἓνα σταυρὸ σιδερένιο ἢ ξύλινο, νὰ τὸν ἀγγίξει κι ὁ νεκρὸς ν' ἀναστηθῇ. Σιδερένιος ἦταν ὁ σταυρὸς τοῦ ἁγίου Ἀθανασίου τοῦ Ἀθωνίτου στὴ Μεγίστη Λαύρα, μὰ ἔχει χάρι· σιδερένιος ὁ σταυρὸς τοῦ ἁγίου Γερασίμου στὴν Κεφαλονιά, ἀλλ' ὅταν

περνᾷ οἱ δαίμονες καίγονται καὶ λένε «Μ' ἔκαψες, καψάλη!». Δὲν εἶνε λοιπὸν ἡ ὕλη πού δίνει ἀξία στὸ σταυρὸ, ἀλλὰ ἡ πίστι ἐκείνου πού τὸν κρατᾷ. Ἄν δὲν ἔχῃς πίστι, μὴν τὸν πιάνεις! **Ἡ ἀξία τοῦ σταυροῦ εἶνε στὴν πίστι.**

Ποιά πίστι· ὅτι αὐτὸς ὁ σταυρὸς εἶνε – τί; Ἡ γλώσσα μου ἐδῶ ἀδυνατεῖ νὰ ψάλλῃ ὕμνον στὸ σταυρὸ καὶ θ' ἀναγκασθῶ νὰ κάνω δάνειο. Ὁ φτωχὸς δανεῖζεται, κ' ἐγὼ ὁ φτωχὸς δανεῖζομαι τὴ γλώσσα ἱερῶν συγγραφέων καὶ ὕμνογράφων. Ὁ σταυρὸς λοιπὸν εἶνε·

- «**τὸ σημεῖον τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου**» (Ματθ. 24,30),
- ἡ μυστικὴ «**ψῆφος**» τῆς Ἀποκαλύψεως (2,17), τὸ ψηφίον στὸ ὁποῖο συμπύσσεται τὸ Εὐαγγέλιο, ὅλο τὸ μυστήριον τῆς θείας οἰκονομίας.
- **εἶνε ἡ ἔδρα** –μὴ μοῦ μιλάτε γιὰ ἔδρες καθηγητῶν–, τὸ βῆμα ἀπὸ τὸ ὁποῖο ἀκούστηκε ἡ ὑψηλότερα διδασκαλία στὸν κόσμον.
- **εἶνε ἡ ἐξέδρα** τοῦ Βασιλέως, μπροστὰ ἀπὸ τὴν ὁποία παρελαύνουν τιμητικὰ στρατιᾶς μαχητῶν καὶ λένε «Χαῖρε, ὁ Βασιλεὺς ἡμῶν!».
- **εἶνε τὸ ζωηφόρο δέντρο**, τὸ ὁποῖον «**πεφυτούργηται**» ὑπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ στὴ γῆ (καταβ. Στ. ὡδ. θ'), ποτίζεται μὲ τὰ αἵματα μαρτύρων καὶ τοὺς ἰδρωτῆς καὶ τὰ δάκρυα ὁσίων, ἀπλωσε κλαδιά, καὶ κανένα χέρι ἀνθρώπου ἢ τσεκούρι διαβόλου δὲν θὰ μπορέσῃ ποτὲ νὰ τὸ ξερριζώσῃ.
- **εἶνε ἀκόμη ὁ σταυρὸς τοῦ Κυρίου μας τὸ ἀλέτρι**, πού πῆραν στὰ χέρια οἱ ἀπόστολοι καὶ γεώργησαν τὸν χέρσο ἀγρὸ τοῦ κόσμου.
- **εἶνε ἡ λύρα**, μὲ τὴν ὁποία οἱ ἄγγελοι παίζουν καὶ ὕμνοῦν τὸ «**γλυκὺ ἔαρ**» (β' Κ. Μ. Σαβ. σ. γ'), τὴν αἰωνία ἀνοιξί τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ ζωῆς.
- **εἶνε ἡ νοπητὴ ρομφαία**, ἡ μάχαιρα, μὲ τὴν ὁποία τραυματίζεται καιρίως ὁ διάβολος.
- **εἶνε προπαντὸς ἡ ἄγκυρα** τῆς σωτηρίας, ἡ ἐλπίς τῶν ἀηλιπισμένων,
- **εἶνε τὸ σωσίβιο** τῶν ναυαγῶν μέσα στὸν σάλο τῶν κυμάτων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου.
- **εἶνε ὁ βωμὸς**, ἐπάνω στὸν ὁποῖο θυσιάστηκε ἐκουσίως ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, τὸ ἐθελόθυτον θῦμα, γιὰ τὴν σωτηρία τῶν ἀνθρώπων·
- **εἶνε ἡ πρώτη ἀγία τράπεζα** ἐπάνω στὴν ὁποία ὁ μέγας ἀρχιερεὺς Χριστὸς, ὁ ἀμόλυπτος Υἱὸς τῆς Παρθένου, προσέφερε ἐφ' ἅπαξ τὸν ἑαυτοῦ θυσία «**ὑπὲρ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου ζωῆς καὶ σωτηρίας**» (Ἰερ. Μ. Βασ. καὶ ἀγ. γ') ἐκεῖ προσέφερθη τὸ ἀκήρατον σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἐκεῖνο ἀκριβῶς πού ἀποκαθῆλωσε καὶ ἐκήδευσε ὁ Ἰωσήφ. Ἡ θυσία αὐτὴ ἀναιμάκτως μὲν συνεχίζεται σὲ ὅλα τὰ θυσιαστήρια τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας, μετέχουν δὲ σ' αὐτὴν αἱμακτῶς οἱ μάρτυρες τῆς πίστεως καὶ τῆς ἀρετῆς.

(†) **ἐπίσκοπος Αὐγουστίνος**

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

The Cross, Our Victory

Have you seen the wonderful victory? Have you seen the splendid deeds of the Cross? ... Who can tell the Lord's mighty deeds? By death we were made immortal: these are the glorious deeds of the Cross.

Have you understood the victory? Have you grasped how it was wrought? Learn now, how this victory was gained without any sweat or toil of ours. No weapons of ours were stained with blood; our feet did not stand in the front line of battle; we suffered no wounds; witnessed no tumults; and yet we obtained the victory.

The battle was the Lord's, the crown is ours. Since then victory is ours, let us imitate the soldiers, and with joyful voices sing the songs of victory.

Let us praise the Lord and say, "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?"

The Cross did all these wonderful things for us: the Cross is a war memorial erected against the demons, a sword against sin, the sword with which Christ slew the serpent.

The Cross is the Father's will, the glory of the Only-begotten, the Spirit's exultation, the beauty of the angels, the guardian of the Church. Paul glories in the Cross; it is the rampart of the saints, it is the light of the whole world.

St. John Chrysostom

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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