



DIRECT ARCHDIOCESAN
DISTRICT

THREE HIERARCHS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

SUNDAY WEEKLY BULLETIN August 29th, 2021
V. Rev. Archimandrite Eugene N. Pappas

BEHEADING OF THE HOLY AND GLORIOUS PROPHET, FORERUNNER AND BAPTIST JOHN



Icon of the Beheading of John the Baptist

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Prokeimenon. Grave Mode. Psalm 63.11,1

The righteous shall rejoice in the Lord. Verse: Oh God, hear my cry.

The reading is from Acts of the Apostles 13:25-33

IN THOSE DAYS, as John was finishing his course, he said, "What do you suppose that I am? I am not he. No, but after me one is coming, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie." Brethren, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you that fear God, to us has been sent the message of this salvation. For those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers, because they did not recognize him nor understand the utterances of the prophets which are read every sabbath, fulfilled these by condemning him. Though they could charge him with nothing deserving death, yet they asked Pilate to have him killed. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a tomb. But God raised him from the dead; and for many days he appeared to those who came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses to the people. And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus.

Προκείμενον. Ήχος βαρύς. ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 63.11,1

Εὐφρανθήσεται δίκαιος ἐν Κυρίῳ. Στίχ. Εἰσάκουσον, ὁ Θεός, τῆς φωνῆς μου.

Πράξεις Ἀποστόλων 13:25-33 τὸ ἀνάγνωσμα

Ἐν ταῖς ἡμεραῖς ἐκεῖναις, ὡς δὲ ἐπλήρου ὁ Ἰωάννης τὸν δρόμον, ἔλεγεν, τίνα με ὑπονοεῖτε εἶναι; Οὐκ εἰμὶ ἐγώ. Ἄλλ' ἰδοὺ, ἔρχεται μετ' ἐμέ, οὐ οὐκ εἰμὶ ἄξιος τὸ ὑπόδημα τῶν ποδῶν λῦσαι. Ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, υἱοὶ γένους Ἀβραάμ, καὶ οἱ ἐν ὑμῖν φοβούμενοι τὸν θεόν, ὑμῖν ὁ λόγος τῆς σωτηρίας ταύτης ἀπεστάλη. Οἱ γὰρ κατοικοῦντες ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ καὶ οἱ ἄρχοντες αὐτῶν, τοῦτον ἀγνοήσαντες, καὶ τὰς φωνὰς τῶν προφητῶν τὰς κατὰ πᾶν σάββατον ἀναγιγνωσκομένας, κρίναντες ἐπλήρωσαν. Καὶ μηδεμίαν αἰτίαν θανάτου εὐρόντες, ἤτησαντο Πιλάτον ἀναιρεθῆναι αὐτόν. Ὡς δὲ ἐτέλεσαν πάντα τὰ περὶ αὐτοῦ γεγραμμένα, καθελόντες ἀπὸ τοῦ ξύλου, ἔθηκαν εἰς μνημεῖον. Ὁ δὲ θεὸς ἤγειρεν αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν· ὃς ὡφθη ἐπὶ ἡμέρας πλείους τοῖς συναναβάσιν αὐτῷ ἀπὸ τῆς Γαλιλαίας εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ, οἵτινές εἰσιν μάρτυρες αὐτοῦ πρὸς τὸν λαόν. Καὶ ἡμεῖς ὑμᾶς ἐυαγγελίζομεθα τὴν πρὸς τοὺς πατέρας ἐπαγγελίαν γενομένην, ὅτι ταύτην ὁ θεὸς ἐκπεπλήρωκεν τοῖς τέκνοις αὐτῶν ἡμῖν, ἀναστήσας Ἰησοῦν

The Gospel According to Mark 6:14-30

At that time, Herod the King heard about the fame of Jesus, for his name had become known. He said, "John the baptizer has been raised from the dead; that is why these powers are at work in him." But others said, "It is Elijah." And others said, "It is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old." But when Herod heard of it he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised." For Herod had sent and seized John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; because he had married her. For John said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." And Herodias had a grudge against him, and wanted to kill him. But she could not, for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and kept him safe. When he heard him, he was much perplexed; and yet he heard him gladly. But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and the leading men of Galilee. For when Herodias' daughter came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests; and the king said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will grant it." And he vowed to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom." And she went out, and said to her mother, "What shall I ask?" And she said, "The head of John the baptizer." And she came in immediately with haste to the king, and asked, saying, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." And the king was exceedingly sorry; but because of his oaths and his guests he did not want to break his word to her. And immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard and gave orders to bring his head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, and brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother. When his disciples heard of it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb. The apostles returned to Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught.

Τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ, ἤκουσεν ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἡρώδης· φανερόν γὰρ ἐγένετο τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ· καὶ ἔλεγεν ὅτι Ἰωάννης ὁ βαπτίζων ἐκ νεκρῶν ἠγέρθη, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἐνεργοῦσιν αἱ δυνάμεις ἐν αὐτῷ. ἄλλοι ἔλεγον ὅτι Ἠλίας ἐστίν· ἄλλοι δὲ ἔλεγον ὅτι προφήτης ἐστίν ὡς εἰς τῶν προφητῶν. ἀκούσας δὲ ὁ Ἡρώδης εἶπεν ὅτι ὃν ἐγὼ ἀπεκεφάλισα Ἰωάννην, οὗτός ἐστιν· αὐτὸς ἠγέρθη ἐκ νεκρῶν. αὐτὸς γὰρ ὁ Ἡρώδης ἀποστείλας ἐκράτησε τὸν Ἰωάννην καὶ ἔδησεν αὐτὸν ἐν φυλακῇ διὰ Ἡρωδιάδα τὴν γυναῖκα Φιλίππου τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ αὐτοῦ, ὅτι αὐτὴν ἐγάμησεν. ἔλεγε γὰρ ὁ Ἰωάννης τῷ Ἡρώδῃ ὅτι οὐκ ἔξεστί σοι ἔχειν τὴν γυναῖκα τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ σου. ἡ δὲ Ἡρωδιάς ἐνεῖχεν αὐτῷ καὶ ἠθέλεν αὐτὸν ἀποκτείνειν, καὶ οὐκ ἠδύνατο. ὁ γὰρ Ἡρώδης ἐφοβεῖτο τὸν Ἰωάννην, εἰδὼς αὐτὸν ἄνδρα δίκαιον καὶ ἅγιον, καὶ συνετήρει αὐτόν, καὶ ἀκούσας αὐτοῦ πολλὰ ἐποίησε καὶ ἠδέετο αὐτόν· καὶ γενομένης ἡμέρας εὐκαιροῦ, ὅτε Ἡρώδης τοῖς γενεσίοις αὐτοῦ δεῖπνον ἐποίησε τοῖς μεγιστᾶσιν αὐτοῦ καὶ τοῖς χιλιάρχουσιν καὶ τοῖς πρώτοις τῆς Γαλιλαίας, καὶ εἰσελθούσης τῆς θυγατρὸς αὐτῆς τῆς Ἡρωδιάδος καὶ ὀρχησαμένης καὶ ἀρεσάσης τῷ Ἡρώδῃ καὶ τοῖς συνανακειμένοις, εἶπεν ὁ βασιλεὺς τῷ κορασίῳ· αἰτήσόν με ὃ ἐὰν θέλῃς, καὶ δώσω σοι. καὶ ὤμοσεν αὐτῇ ὅτι ὃ ἐὰν με αἰτήσῃς δώσω σοι, ἕως ἡμίσεος τῆς βασιλείας μου. ἡ δὲ ἐξεληθούσα εἶπε τῇ μητρὶ αὐτῆς· τί αἰτήσομαι; ἡ δὲ εἶπε· τὴν κεφαλὴν Ἰωάννου τοῦ βαπτιστοῦ. καὶ εἰσελθούσα ἐθύετο μετὰ σπουδῆς πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα ἠτήσατο λέγουσα· θέλω ἵνα μοι δῶς ἐξαυτῆς ἐπὶ πίνακι τὴν κεφαλὴν Ἰωάννου τοῦ βαπτιστοῦ. καὶ περίλυπος γενόμενος ὁ βασιλεὺς, διὰ τοὺς ὄρκους καὶ τοὺς συνανακειμένους οὐκ ἠθέλησεν αὐτὴν ἀθετῆσαι. καὶ ἐθύετο ἀποστείλας ὁ βασιλεὺς σπεκουλάτωρα ἐπέταξεν ἐνεχθῆναι τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ. ὁ δὲ ἀπελθὼν ἀπεκεφάλισεν αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ φυλακῇ, καὶ ἤνεγκε τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ πίνακι καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτὴν τῷ κορασίῳ, καὶ τὸ κοράσιον ἔδωκεν αὐτὴν τῇ μητρὶ αὐτῆς. καὶ ἀκούσαντες οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ ἦλθον καὶ ἦραν τὸ πτῶμα αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἔθηκαν αὐτὸ ἐν μνημείῳ.

THREE HIERARCHS CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS

SEPTEMBER 2021-JUNE 2022

AFTERNOON GREEK SCHOOL: Registration is OPEN NOW! Agiasmos, Tuesday, September 14th, from 4:00-5:00 PM. First classes will commence on Wednesday, September 15th, at 3:45-5:30 PM. Annual tuition: One child \$650 and two children \$950. You must be registered member with the church. Membership is \$300.00 Per family.

SUNDAY SCHOOL: Registrations for Pre-Kindergarten through 8th Grade will take place in Sunday School Office (basement) Sunday, September 19th from 11 AM to 12 Noon. Sunday School begins on Sunday, September 26th.

BOY SCOUTS, CUB SCOUTS & GIRL SCOUTS: Scouts meet every Friday 7-9 PM starting September 24th. For Boys Scout information call Dean Veroutis at 718-668-1726, for Cub Scouts call Billy Apostolou 917-650-6842, or John Lambrakis 917-673-9830 and for Girl Scouts call Mandy Tsvidakis at 917-952-4288.

ALTAR BOYS: Every young boy in the parish between the ages of 10 & 18 should have the joy and pride of serving in the Altar of God as an acolyte, and receive the special blessing reserved for him as ANAGNOSTI. They meet every Sunday in the Vestry. For more information please contact the Clergy.

CROSS OF LIFE: for information call the Church Office 718-339-0280

CHOIR: Director Katie Hambas. New members welcomed!

PHILOTOCHOS SOCIETY: The ladies meet the 2nd or 4th Monday of every month. Dues are \$30 annually. For more information call Mary Plessias at 718-232-1177.

HOLY ORDER: For more information call Billy Paloympis 718-339-2039 or Louis Vellios 718-258-7762.

SENIOR CLUB: Their recreational program is being held every Wednesday from 1 to 5 PM in the Whitehall. Dues are \$20.00 annually per person. For information please call the church Office 718-339-0280.

GREEK SCHOOL P.T.A: Meets upon invitation of the principal dues are collected annually. For information call the P.T.A. President Sylvia Raptis at 347-693-3191.

G.A.V.A. (Greek American Veterans Association): For information call William Demakakos 718-934-6969.

A.H.E.P.A (American Hellenic Education Progress Association): Meets every 1st or 3rd Monday of the Month at 7:30 PM. For more information call Harry Lambrakis 718-9980234 or Tony Lambrides 917-836-7546

DAUGHTERS OF PENELOPE: Is offered to ladies and meet every 1st or 3rd Monday of the month at 7:30PM Whitehall. For information call Efthymia Galiatsatos 718-627-0967.

MAIDS OF ATHENA "OLGA MOUTSELOS CHAPTER" For information call Laina Tzanides at 347-860-0441 or E-mail Itzanides@gmail.com

PRAYER AND HEALING GROUP: meets on the middle Wednesday each month from 6:30 PM-8:00 PM. Open to all. refreshments are served at 8PM.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR: Each month on the FIRST (01st) or if it be a SUNDAY, then the very next day...02nd, the AGIASMOS SERVICE (thirty minutes) is offered with fresh holy water to take home, to share with others, to bless graves and homes.....and automobiles. This water you may drink and sprinkle on your threshold, beds, and doorways for protection and dedication in the name of JESUS CHRIST. See you on the first from 11:00 -11:30 A.M.

Traditionally on the middle WEDNESDAY EVENING of the month we host the PRAYER AND HEALING study, witnessing, prayer and spiritual healing DOES TAKE PLACE, from 6:30-8:00 P.M. You should join us and receive the Divine Grace of the HOLY SPIRIT'S presence.

MEMORIALS TODAY : + MARK MIGDAL + SPYROS FILOS + THEODOROS GAVARIS
+ NICHOLAS and + KALLIOPIE DEMAKAKOS

UNIVERSAL PRE- PRE-KINDERGARTEN (U.P.K. SCHOOL) at Three Hierarchs Church is expanding its outreach to community children aged 3 and 4 years old. SIX CLASSES are open for full registration FREE OF CHARGE by the New York City Department of Education. Are there 3 or 4 year olds in your family which deserve a full head start in education ? REGISTER FREE at THREE HIERARCHS by calling (347) 729 0446 and ask for GEORGIA BOUZAKIS (school Secretary) or POLINA ROBBINS (school Director)for full information. Take advantage of this excellent opportunity for the kids and working parents. CALL NOW!



**Greek Afternoon
School
Registration**

SCHOOL YEAR 2021-2022

Children aged 5 through 13 years old may be inscribed for weekday Greek Language, History, Religion and Culture lessons

REGISTRATION IS OPEN NOW!

Α Β Γ Δ Ε Ζ Η Θ Ι Κ Λ Μ
Ν Ξ Ο Π Ρ Σ Τ Υ Φ Χ Ψ Ω

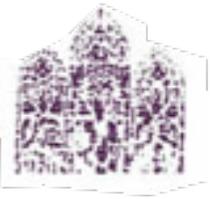
REGISTRATION FEES

Books and Tuition: 1 child \$650 per year
2 children \$950 per year

For further details contact the church Office at
718 -339-0280

Principal V. Rev. Fr. Eugene Pappas





FEAR MAY CONSUME YOU

"There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear". 1 John 4:18

Despite all our evidences of love; in time, place, and specific persons, we also recall encounters with the power of fear. Such moments make us shudder in disbelief. Love may indeed be strong but so is its adversary-fear! Imitating the apostles as the prototypes of the Lord's calling, we are urged to alleviate our hesitations, apprehensions and fears. Flesh and spirit must acknowledge the Lord's embrace. DIVINE LOVE CONQUERS ALL! In the presence of CHRIST, the apostles were astonishingly fearless. The apostles did however in their human frailty express fear when they sensed abandonment, loss, or estrangement from Jesus. This is vividly expressed at Golgotha, in the "upper room" and in the Gospel readings in Gethsemane, the Sea of Galilee and the Praetorium trial. Witnessing these powerful events, apostolic humanity had to overcome the fears that threatened human dignity and true faithfulness. Remember that DIVINE LOVE CONQUERS ALL!

The modern age, replete with negative adages presents our culture popularly dismissive. We hear about "the culture of death" expressed by theologians referring to abortion, war, capital punishment, and "end of days". Still others cite philosophical expressions, "the culture of disbelief" or sometimes the culture of insidious complaint. So much negativity is expounded that the culture of fear shocks our spirit into stagnation. Spiritually we are challenged to paralysis. Now, take a deep breathe, regroup, knowing that DIVINE LOVE CONQUERS ALL!

Love of God and His creation in its totality, empowers us to a love of self and neighbor. This "Grace" IS GOD! It is the true love that extinguishes all falsity and fear from the human psyche. Question yourself about your fears, apprehensions and anxieties. Yesterday's fears are for the most part forgotten or faded by lapse of memory. They're gone, but you're still here! So, you are the stronger and victor in this spiritual bout. The human soul is always afraid until it attains with certainty true agape. DIVINE LOVE CONQUERS ALL! Comforting are Jesus' words "BE NOT AFRAID". Open yourself to hear this gracious invitation again...be not afraid! Exemplify the apostles in their love and faith for the Lord Jesus, even unto martyrdom. The apostolic Christians knew "THE WAY". The way is Christ Jesus who sits at the right hand of the Father. Your place awaits you also. Be fearless, be loving, be faithful! DIVINE LOVE CONQUERS ALL! Sit at the right hand of the Lord!

With all God's Blessings,

V. Rev. Eugene N. Pappas.
Pastor



ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ

ΣΥΝΤΟΜΟΝ ΚΗΡΥΓΜΑ



«*Εγενόμην ἐν Πνεύματι ἐν τῇ Κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ καὶ ἤκουσα φωνῆν ὀπίσω μου μεγάλην ὡς σάλπιγγος*» (Ἀπ. 1,10)

Ἐκδίδεται ἀπὸ τὴν Κοινοβιακὴ Γυναικεία Ἱερὰ Μονὴ Ἁγίου Αὐγουστίνου Φλωρίνης – 531 00 ΦΛΩΡΙΝΑ – τηλ. 23850-28510 – imsflo@yahoo.gr

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| Περίοδος Δ' - Ἔτος ΛΗ' Φλώρινα - ἀριθμ. φύλλου 2404 | Ἀποτομὴ κεφαλῆς Προδρόμου (Μάρκ. 6,14-30) Κυριακὴ 29 Αὐγούστου 2021 | Συντάκτης (†) ἐπίσκοπος Αὐγουστίνος Ν. Καντιώτης |
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Ἕνα ἔγκλημα

«*Οὐκ ἔξεστί σοι ἔχειν τὴν γυναῖκα τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ σου*» (Μάρκ. 6,18)

Σήμερα, ἀγαπητοί μου, εἶνε ἡ ἑορτὴ τῆς ἀποτομῆς τῆς τιμίας κεφαλῆς τοῦ ἁγίου Ἰωάννου τοῦ προδρόμου καὶ βαπτιστοῦ τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. Νὰ ἐγκωμιάσουμε ἔμεῖς τὸν ἅγιο; Τὰ ἀνθρώπινα ἐγκώμια δὲν ἀξίζουν· τὸν ἐγκωμιάσε ὄχι ἄνθρωπος ἀλλὰ ὁ Θεὸς ἄνθρωπος, ὁ ὁποῖος εἶπε, ὅτι μεταξύ ὄλων τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου μέχρι τότε, δὲν παρουσιάστηκε πρόσωπο ἀνώτερο ἀπὸ αὐτόν· «*οὐκ ἐγήγερται ἐν γεννητοῖς γυναικῶν μείζων Ἰωάννου τοῦ βαπτιστοῦ*» (Ματθ. 1,1).

Τὸν ἑορτάζουμε σήμερα, ἀλλὰ ἡ Ἐκκλησία μας τὸν τιμᾷ καὶ σὲ ἄλλες ἡμέρες· στὶς 23 Σεπτεμβρίου εἶνε ἡ σύλληψις του· στὶς 24 Ἰουνίου εἶνε ἡ γέννησίς του· στὶς 7 Ἰανουαρίου, τὴν ἐπομένη τῶν Θεοφανείων, εἶνε ἡ σύναξις πρὸς τιμὴν του γιατί ἀξιώθηκε νὰ βαπτίσῃ τὸν Κύριό μας. Ἀλλὰ τὸν τιμᾷ καὶ τὴν Τρίτῃ ἐκαστῆς ἐβδομάδος μὲ ὕμνους στὸν ὄρθρο.

Ἡ σημερινὴ ἑορτὴ του εἶνε μεγάλη. Πρὸς τιμὴν του ἡ Ἐκκλησία καλεῖ τοὺς πιστοὺς σὲ πένθος· πενθεῖ ὁ οὐρανός, ἡ γῆ, ὁ Ἰορδάνης, ἡ ἔρημος, οἱ ἀσκηταί, ὄλος ὁ χριστιανικὸς κόσμος. Σήμερα ἢ ἡμέρα ἔχει κάτι ἀπὸ τὴ Μεγάλῃ Παρασκευῇ· τότε προσκυνούμε τὰ σεπτὰ πάθη τοῦ Χριστοῦ, σήμερα τιμοῦμε τὸ μαρτυρικό τέλος τοῦ Προδρόμου. Γι' αὐτὸ σήμερα ἔχουμε νηστεία αὐστηρῇ· μόνο ὅταν ἡ ἑορτὴ πέσῃ Σάββατο ἢ Κυριακὴ ἔχουμε κατάλυσιν ἐλαίου. Ὅσοι πιστοὶ λοιπόν, ὅσοι κρατοῦν τίς παραδόσεις καὶ ζοῦν ὀρθοδόξως, σήμερα νηστεύουν γιὰ τὸ τέλος τοῦ ἁγίου Ἰωάννου.

Ὁ βίος τοῦ Προδρόμου δὲν ἔληξε μὲ ἕνα φυσικὸ θάνατο. Εἶχε ἕνα βίαιο καὶ κατὰ κόσμον ἄδοξο τέλος· φαινόταν ὅτι ἠττήθηκε ἢ ἀλήθεια καὶ ἡ ἀγιότης, κατίσχυσε καὶ θριάμβευσε ἢ φαυλότης καὶ τὸ ψέμα. Διέπραξε κάποιον ἔγκλημα ὁ Ἰωάννης, ὥστε νὰ τιμωρηθῇ μὲ ἀποκεφάλισι; Ὁχι. Ἡ μᾶλλον ναί, διέπραξε ἕνα «ἔγκλημα». Ποιὸ τὸ ἔγκλημά του; Ὅτι εἶπε

τὴν ἀλήθεια! Καὶ σὲ ἐποχὲς διαφθορᾶς καὶ ἐκφυλισμοῦ τὸ νὰ πῆ κανεὶς τὴν ἀλήθεια εἶνε «λάθος» τραγικό, κίνδυνος - θάνατος. Τὴν ἀλήθεια εἶπε ὁ Σωκράτης στὴν Ἀθήνα καὶ ἤπιε τὸ κώνειο· ἔτσι καὶ ὁ Ἰωάννης στὰ Ἱεροσόλυμα, καὶ ἡ ποινὴ ἦταν νὰ σιγήσῃ ἢ γλώσσα του.

Ἄλλ' ἄς δοῦμε συντόμως, ὑπὸ ποιῆς συνθήκης διεπράχθη αὐτὸ τὸ «ἔγκλημα».

Τὴν ἐποχὴ ἐκείνη στὴν Ἰουδαία τῆς Παλαιστίνης βασιλεῦσε ὁ Ἡρώδης Ἀντίπας, γιὸς τοῦ Ἡρώδη τοῦ Μεγάλου, ἐκείνου τοῦ ἐκφύλου καὶ αἰμοβόρου ποὺ διέταξε τὴ σφαγὴ τῶν 14.000 νηπίων νομίζοντας ὅτι μεταξύ αὐτῶν θὰ εἶνε τὸ Θεῖο Βρέφος. Τέτοιος πατέρας τέτοια παιδιὰ καὶ ἐγγόνια ἔβγαλε· οἱ ἀπόγονοί του τοῦ ἔμοιασαν, ἀφοῦ κατὰ τὸν ἀπόστολο Παῦλο, ἀνάλογα μὲ τὴ ρίζα εἶνε καὶ τὰ κλαδιά (βλ. Ρωμ. 1,16).

Ἐννοια σας! θὰ πληρώσουμε μὲ τόκο καὶ ἐπιτόκιο τὴ σημερινὴ διαφθορὰ· λειτουργεῖ κληρονομικότης. Τὰ παιδιὰ μοιάζουν στοὺς γονεῖς ὄχι μόνο σωματικά μὰ προπαντὸς ψυχικά. Ἐκφυλοὶ γονεῖς θὰ γεννήσουν ἐκφυλα ἀγόρια καὶ κορίτσια. Εἶνε νόμος· σάπια ρίζα θὰ βγάλῃ σάπιους καρπούς. Γονεῖς! ὁ γάμος δὲν εἶνε γλέντι, ἀπόλαυσι, ἱκανοποίησι ἐνστίκτων· εἶνε κάτι μεγάλο, ἀποστολή, δημιουργία, θυσία. Ἄν θέλετε τὰ παιδιὰ σας νὰ τιμήσουν τὸ ὄνομά σας καὶ νὰ γράψουν ἱστορία, διορθωθῆτε.

Ἀπὸ πατέρα ἐκφυλο, ἐκφυλος βγήκε καὶ ὁ υἱὸς Ἡρώδης Ἀντίπας. Εἶχε πάρει σύζυγο μία ὠραία καὶ τίμια γυναῖκα, θυγατέρα τοῦ Ἀρέτα βασιλέως τῶν Ἀράβων, ἡ ὁποία δὲν τοῦ ἔδωσε καμμία ἀφορμὴ. Αὐτὸς ὅμως ἔκανε ἕνα τουριστικὸ ταξίδι στὴ Ῥώμη, φιλοξενήθηκε στὸ σπίτι τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ του τοῦ Φιλίππου, καὶ ἐκεῖ συνῆψε ἀμαρτωλὲς σχέσεις μὲ τὴ γυναῖκα τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ του, τὴν Ἡρωδιάδα. Καὶ ἡ Ἡρωδιάδα αὐτὴ ἔγινε ἀνδροχωρίστρα· μὲ πλεκτάνες καὶ ἀπάτες κατώρθωσε νὰ παρασύρῃ τὸν Ἡρώδη

ώστε να διώξη από τὰ ανάκτορα τὴν τίμια θυγατέρα τοῦ Ἀρέτα. Ἐτσι ἢ μὲν μοιχαλίδα καὶ αἰμομείκτρια ἀνέβηκε στὸ θρόνο κ' ἔγινε βασίλισσα, ἢ δὲ ἀπατημένη σύζυγος ἔφυγε διωγμένη καὶ γύρισε στὸν πατέρα της, ὁ ὁποῖος ὠργισμένος στράφηκε κατὰ τοῦ Ἡρώδη.

Ἡ ἀνδροχωρίστρα Ἡρωδιάδα δεχόταν συγχαρητήρια ἀπ' ὄλο τὸν κύκλο τῶν ἀξιωματούχων τῆς αὐλῆς. Τί εἶπα, «ὄλο»; Λάθος. Βρέθηκε ἕνας ἀντίθετος – νὰ τὸ ἐγκλημά του. Ποιὸς ἦταν αὐτός; μήπως κάποιος ῥαββῖνος; μήπως κάποιος ἱερεὺς ἢ ἀρχιερεὺς; μήπως κάποιος ἀξιωματοῦχος; Κανεὶς ἀπὸ αὐτοὺς. Ἦταν κάποιος ἀσκητής, ποὺ μόνη περιουσία του εἶχε μιὰ κάππα φτειαγμένη ἀπὸ τρίχες καμήλου. Αὐτός, ὁ **Ἰωάννης ὁ βαπτιστής**, ἦρθε στὴν πόλι, ἀνέβηκε στὰ ανάκτορα, στάθηκε ἀπέναντι ἀπ' τὸ ἀμαρτωλὸ ζεῦγος καὶ εἶπε ἕνα σύντομο λόγο. Δὲν ῥητόρευσε, ὅπως κάνουμε ἐμεῖς. Τὸ κήρυγμά του δὲν κράτησε οὔτε ἕνα λεπτό, ἀλλὰ ἀξίζε ὅσο μύρια κηρύγματα. Ἐπείσε σὰν κεραυνὸς καὶ ἔσεισε τὰ ανάκτορα. **Τί εἶπε;** Πέντε λέξεις· Βασιλιᾶ, «*οὐκ ἔξεστί σοι ἔχειν τὴν γυναῖκα τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ σου*» (Μάρκ. 6,18). Ἀμέσως τὸν συνέλαβαν, τὸν ἔδεσαν καὶ τὸν ἔρριξαν στὶς φυλακὲς τοῦ φρουρίου τῆς Μαχαιροῦντος. Ἀλλὰ καὶ μέσα ἀπὸ τὴ φυλακὴ ἐξακολουθοῦσε νὰ φωνάζη· «Δὲν σοῦ ἐπιτρέπεται νὰ συζῆς μὲ τὴ γυναῖκα τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ σου».

Ἡ Ἡρωδιάδα δὲν τὸ ὑπέφερε, ζητοῦσε εὐκαιρία νὰ ἐξοντώσῃ τὸν θανάσιμο ἐχθρό της. Καὶ ἦρθε ἡ ἡμέρα τῶν γενεθλίων τοῦ Ἡρώδη. Τὰ ανάκτορα φωταγωγημένα. Μεσάνυχτα, ὦρα τοῦ διαβόλου. Ἐκεῖ ὄλοι οἱ ἀξιωματοῦχοι, διασκέδαζαν. Ἐπιναν καὶ ἔτρωγαν καὶ στὸ τέλος ἀκολούθησε χορὸς. Τί χορὸς; χορὸς ἐκφυλος, χορὸς τῆς κοιλιᾶς. Χόρευε ἡ Σαλώμη, κόρη τῆς Ἡρωδιάδος, καὶ μὲ τὶς κινήσεις καὶ τοὺς κορδακισμοὺς της προκάλεσε ντελίριο, παραλήρημα, τῶν ἀφρόνων θαμώνων. Μεθυσμένος καὶ ὁ ἐκφυλος βασιλιᾶς εἶπε στὴ χορεύτρια· **Ζήτησέ μου ὅ,τι θέλεις**· εἶμαι ἔτοιμος νὰ σοῦ δώσω μέχρι τὸ μισὸ βασιλείο μου.

Τί μπορούσε νὰ ζητήσῃ τὸ κορίτσι αὐτό; πολλὰ πράγματα· κτήματα, κήπους, ἐλαιῶνες, ἀμπελώνες, μέγαρα, χρυσό, ἀσήμι, διαμάντια. Ἡ πονηρὴ ἀλεποῦ δὲν ζήτησε τέτοια πράγματα. Πῆγε στὴ μάνα της. –Μάνα, τί νὰ ζητήσω; –Νὰ ζητήσῃς –**ὦ κακία γυναῖκας!**– τὸ κεφάλι τοῦ βαπτιστοῦ. Ἐρχεται στὸ βασιλιᾶ καὶ λέει· –Θέλω ἀμέσως σ' ἕνα πιάτο **τὸ κεφάλι τοῦ Ἰωάννου τοῦ βαπτιστοῦ** (βλ. Μάρκ. 6,25). Λυπήθηκε ὁ Ἡρώδης. Ἀλλὰ ἐπειδὴ εἶχε δώσει δημοσίως ἔνορκη ὑπόσχεσι, ἀναγκάστηκε νὰ τὴν ἐκ-

πληρώσῃ. Καὶ ἀμέσως μέσ' στὴ νύχτα ἔστειλε σπεκουλάτορα, ἀποκεφάλισε τὸν Ἰωάννη, καὶ ἡ τίμια κεφαλὴ του, στάζοντας αἷμα μάρτυρος, δόθηκε στὴ Σαλώμη κι ἀπ' τὴ Σαλώμη στὴν Ἡρωδιάδα.

Λένε μερικοί· Τί εἶνε ὁ χορὸς!; δὲν εἶνε τίποτε... Μὲ συγχωρεῖτε, κύριοι· τὸ σημερινὸ εὐαγγέλιο σᾶς διαψεύδει. Ὁ χορὸς δὲν εἶνε παιχνίδι ἀγγέλων, εἶνε παγίδα τοῦ διαβόλου. Ὅπως λέει ὁ ἱερὸς Χρυσόστομος, «*ἐνθα ὄρχησις, ἐκεῖ διάβολος (=ὄπου χορός, ἐκεῖ διάβολος)*» (Ε.Π. Μigne 58,491,493). Ἀπὸ τὸ χορὸ ἀρχίζουν πορνεῖες, μοιχεῖες, διαζύγια. Καὶ ὡς ἀμοιβὴ τοῦ χοροῦ δόθηκε ἡ κεφαλὴ Ἰωάννου τοῦ Προδρόμου.

Ἐτσι τελείωσε τὴ ζωὴ του, ἀγαπητοί μου, ὁ ἅγιος Ἰωάννης· εἶχε τέλος δραματικὸ, στὸ ὁποῖο καίριο ρόλο ἔπαιξε ἡ **κακία καὶ ἡ πονηρία** τῆς Ἡρωδιάδος, ἡ ὁποία ὁμως βρῆκε ἔδαφος στὴν **ἀκολασία καὶ χαύνωσι** τοῦ Ἡρώδη.

Πέρασαν ἀπὸ τότε 19 αἰῶνες. Νέα ἐποχὴ τώρα, κ' ἐγὼ τ' ὁμολογῶ· ἐποχὴ προόδου, πυραύλων, ἀστροναυτῶν, τηλεοράσεως... Ἀπὸ πλευρᾶς ἐπιστήμης φτάσαμε στὸ ζενίθ' ἀπὸ πλευρᾶς ὁμως ἀνθρωπιᾶς, ἡθους, ἀρετῆς καταπέσαμε στὸ ναδίρ. Ὁ **ἐκφυλισμὸς** ἔρριξε τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα στὸ μηδὲν καὶ κάτω ἀπ' τὸ μηδὲν.

Στὴν ἐποχὴ τοῦ Ἰωάννου ἕνας, ὁ Ἡρώδης, ἦταν ἐκεῖνος ποὺ ἔδωξε τὴ γυναῖκα του. Σήμερα; **Πληθος** εἶνε ἐκεῖνοι (καὶ ἐκεῖνες) –πολλοὶ εἶνε διάσημοι, κατέχουν καὶ ὑψηλὰ ἀξιώματα– ποὺ διαλύουν τὶς οἰκογένειές τους ἐγκαταλείποντας τὶς (ἢ τοὺς) συζύγους καὶ τὰ παιδιὰ τους.

Δὲν λείπουν βέβαια καὶ τίμιοι (καὶ τίμιες) **σύζυγοι**, ποὺ μένουν πιστοὶ στὸ γάμο τους. Οἱ νέοι ὁμως νόμοι, ποὺ ψηφίζονται κατ' ἐντολὴν ξένων κέντρων, δὲν προστατεύουν τὴν συνοχὴ τῆς οἰκογενείας· ἀντιθέτως ὑποσκάπτουν τὰ θεμέλιά της καὶ εὐνοοῦν ποικιλοτρόπως τὴν διάλυσί της.

Στὸν αἰῶνα αὐτὸν τῆς ἀκολασίας εἶνε ἀπόλυτη ἀνάγκη οἱ πιστοὶ νὰ διατηρήσουν στὸ ὕψος του τὸ θεσμὸ τῆς **οἰκογενείας** ποὺ θεμελίωσε τὸ κήρυγμα τοῦ Εὐαγγελίου, τὰ λόγια τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ τῶν ἀποστόλων. Ἄς θυμηθοῦν ἀκόμη καὶ προγονικὰ διδάγματα, ὅπως π.χ. τῆς ὁμηρικῆς Πηνελόπης, ἡ ὁποία ἔμεινε μέχρι τέλος **πιστὴ στὸ γάμο** της· ἡ ὑπομονὴ της νίκησε ὄλα τὰ ἐμπόδια καὶ ἡ ἐπιμονὴ της δικαιώθηκε καὶ θριάμβευσε.

Μικρὸς - ταπεινὸς λειτουργὸς τοῦ Ὑψίστου, ἔχω χρέος ἱερὸ νὰ **λαλῶ τὴν ἀλήθειαν**.

(†) **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

The Prophet and Forerunner

Now although the principle stands that "We all offend in many ways" (James 3:2), which of us dare to say that blessed John sinned in act or word or dress or food, when the gospel history praises the harshness of his clothing and the frugality of his meals; when everything he said either rendered testimony to the truth or refuted those who spoke against him; when even those who did not like him held in veneration his works of justice? What place could there have been in his inmost heart for sin, when the coming of the Holy Spirit consecrated him even before his birth, when not even in comparison with the ordinary way of human life could he be turned aside from the path of virtue, who from his boyhood on led an entirely solitary life?

And yet a man of this sort, one who

was so preeminent, reached the end of his earthly life by shedding his blood after a long period of affliction in chains. He who brought the good news of the freedom of heaven was thrust into chains by wicked people; he who "came to bear testimony to the light" (John 1:8), and who merited to be called "a burning and shining lamp" by the very light which is Christ (John 5:35), was shut up in the darkness of prison; he who was greater than all those born of women (Matt. 11:11; Luke 7:28) was punished by being beheaded at the request of the basest of women; and he to whom it was granted to baptize the world's Redeemer, to hear the Father's voice above him, and to see the grace of the Holy Spirit descending upon him, was baptized in his own blood.

Venerable Bede, *Homily II.23*

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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