



DIRECT ARCHDIOCESAN
DISTRICT

THREE HIERARCHS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

SUNDAY WEEKLY BULLETIN February 27th, 2022

V. Rev. Archimandrite Eugene N. Pappas

JUDGMENT SUNDAY



Icon of the Ladder of Divine Ascent

Prokeimenon. Mode 4.

Psalm 146.5;134.3

Great is our Lord, and great is his power.

Verse: Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good

The reading is from St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 8:8-13; 9:1-2

Brethren, food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. Only take care lest this liberty of yours somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. For if any one sees you, a man of knowledge, at table in an idol's temple, might he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols? And so by your knowledge this weak man is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died. Thus, sinning against your brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food is a cause of my brother's falling, I will never eat meat, lest I cause my brother to fall. Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not you my workmanship in the Lord? If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

Προκείμενον. Ἦχος δ'. ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 146.5;134.3

Μέγας ὁ Κύριος ἡμῶν, καὶ μεγάλη ἡ ἰσχὺς αὐτοῦ. Στίχ. Αἰνεῖτε τὸν Κύριον, ὅτι ἀγαθός.

Πρὸς Κορινθίους α' 8:8-13, 9:1-2 τὸ ἀνάγνωσμα

Ἀδελφοί, βρῶμα ἡμᾶς οὐ παρίστησιν τῷ θεῷ· οὔτε γὰρ ἐὰν φάγωμεν περισσεύομεν, οὔτε ἐὰν μὴ φάγωμεν ὑστερούμεθα. Βλέπετε δὲ μήπως ἡ ἐξουσία ὑμῶν αὕτη πρόσκομμα γένηται τοῖς ἀσθενούσιν. Ἐὰν γὰρ τις ἴδῃ σε τὸν ἔχοντα γνῶσιν ἐν εἰδωλείῳ κατακείμενον, οὐχὶ ἡ συνείδησις αὐτοῦ ἀσθενοῦς ὄντος οἰκοδομηθήσεται ἐκ τῶν εἰδωλόθυτα ἐσθίειν; Καὶ ἀπολείται ὁ ἀσθενῶν ἀδελφὸς ἐπὶ τῇ σῇ γνώσει, δι' ὃν Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν; Οὕτως δὲ ἁμαρτάνοντες εἰς τοὺς ἀδελφούς, καὶ τύπτοντες αὐτῶν τὴν συνείδησιν ἀσθενοῦσαν, εἰς Χριστὸν ἁμαρτάνετε. Διόπερ εἰ βρῶμα σκανδαλίζει τὸν ἀδελφόν μου, οὐ μὴ φάγω κρέα εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, ἵνα μὴ τὸν ἀδελφόν μου σκανδαλίσω. Οὐκ εἰμὶ ἀπόστολος; Οὐκ εἰμὶ ἐλεύθερος; Οὐχὶ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν ἑώρακα; Οὐ τὸ ἔργον μου ὑμεῖς ἐστε ἐν κυρίῳ; Εἰ ἄλλοις οὐκ εἰμὶ ἀπόστολος, ἀλλὰ γε ὑμῖν εἰμὶ· ἡ γὰρ σφραγὶς τῆς ἐμῆς ἀποστολῆς ὑμεῖς ἐστε ἐν κυρίῳ.

Ἐκ τοῦ Κατὰ Ματθαῖον 25:31-46 Εὐαγγελίου τὸ Ἀνάγνωσμα

The Lord said, "When the Son of man comes in his glory and all the holy angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.' Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?' Then he will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me.' And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

Εἶπεν ὁ Κύριος· Ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν τῇ δόξῃ αὐτοῦ καὶ πάντες οἱ ἅγιοι ἄγγελοι μετ' αὐτοῦ, τότε καθίσει ἐπὶ θρόνου δόξης αὐτοῦ, καὶ συναθροίσεται ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, καὶ ἀφοριεῖ αὐτοὺς ἀπ' ἀλλήλων ὥσπερ ὁ ποιμὴν ἀφορίζει τὰ πρόβατα ἀπὸ τῶν ἐρίφων, καὶ στήσει τὰ μὲν πρόβατα ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ, τὰ δὲ ἐρίφια ἐξ εὐωνύμων. τότε ἐρεῖ ὁ βασιλεὺς τοῖς ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ· δεῦτε οἱ εὐλογημένοι τοῦ πατρὸς μου, κληρονομήσατε τὴν ἡτοιμασμένην ὑμῖν βασιλείαν ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου. ἐπείνασα γάρ, καὶ ἐδώκατέ μοι φαγεῖν, ἐδίψησα, καὶ ἐποτίσατέ με, ξένος ἦμην, καὶ συνηγάγετέ με, γυμνός, καὶ περιεβάλετέ με, ἡσθένησα, καὶ ἐπεσκέψασθέ με, ἐν φυλακῇ ἦμην, καὶ ἤλθετε πρὸς με. τότε ἀποκριθήσονται αὐτῷ οἱ δίκαιοι λέγοντες· κύριε, πότε σε εἶδομεν πεινῶντα καὶ ἐθρέψαμεν, ἢ διψῶντα καὶ ἐποτίσαμεν; πότε δέ σε εἶδομεν ξένον καὶ συνηγάγομεν, ἢ γυμνὸν καὶ περιεβάλομεν; πότε δέ σε εἶδομεν ἀσθενῆ ἢ ἐν φυλακῇ, καὶ ἤλθομεν πρὸς σε; καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐρεῖ αὐτοῖς· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἐφ' ὅσον ἐποιήσατε ἐνὶ τούτων τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν ἐλαχίστων, ἐμοὶ ἐποιήσατε. τότε ἐρεῖ καὶ τοῖς ἐξ εὐωνύμων· πορεύεσθε ἀπ' ἐμοῦ οἱ κατηραμένοι εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον τὸ ἡτοιμασμένον τῷ διαβόλῳ καὶ τοῖς ἀγγέλοις αὐτοῦ. ἐπείνασα γάρ, καὶ οὐκ ἐδώκατέ μοι φαγεῖν, ἐδίψησα, καὶ οὐκ ἐποτίσατέ με, ξένος ἦμην, καὶ οὐ συνηγάγετέ με, γυμνός, καὶ οὐ περιεβάλετέ με, ἀσθενῆς καὶ ἐν φυλακῇ, καὶ οὐκ ἐπεσκέψασθέ με. τότε ἀποκριθήσονται αὐτῷ καὶ αὐτοὶ λέγοντες· κύριε, πότε σε εἶδομεν πεινῶντα ἢ διψῶντα ἢ ξένον ἢ γυμνὸν ἢ ἀσθενῆ ἢ ἐν φυλακῇ, καὶ οὐ διηκονήσαμεν σοι; τότε ἀποκριθήσεται αὐτοῖς λέγων· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἐφ' ὅσον οὐκ ἐποιήσατε ἐνὶ τούτων τῶν ἐλαχίστων, οὐδὲ ἐμοὶ ἐποιήσατε. καὶ ἀπελεύσονται οὗτοι εἰς κόλασιν αἰώνιον, οἱ δὲ δίκαιοι εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον.



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA ARCHDIOCESAN DISTRICT

TODAY: We welcome 'home' our WEST POINT CADET in his second year at the MILITARY ACADEMY – Sophomore ALEX JOLIA. He will be assisting the CLERGY at the Divine Liturgy as Past President of the Saint Stephanos Society of the Altar Boys. **WELCOME HOME, WE ARE PROUD OF YOU!**

AGIASMOS for Month of March is on Tuesday 1st of March at 11:00 A.M. Take some Holy Water home for the Lenten period.

GOLDEN GREEKS BOY SCOUT TROOP #531 will host a 'sleep-over' in the parish gymnasium from Friday evening March 4th, through to and including a sumptuous breakfast on Saturday, March 5th. Parent chaperones and scoutmasters will have a full night of activities for the young men who will be sleeping in tents on the gym floor. **DO YOU REALLY THINK THEY WILL SLEEP?**

PSYCHOSABBATON SERVICES: began on Saturday, FEBRUARY 26th at 10:00 A.M. Two weeks away and we start the 'marathon' of Lenten observance with the THREE (3) PSYCHOSABBATA (Saturday of All Souls). Prepare to honor the memory of your faithfully departed kin and friends. Kollyva may be ordered through the Church Office from 11:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M. , Monday through Friday.

Enclosed with this Sunday BULLETIN is a copy of the 'name list' to be used on the forthcoming PSYCHOSABBATON. Please return the names for proper dispensation and intoning at the altar by 10.00 A.M. at the Liturgy.

2nd, PSYCHOSABBATON (Saturday of ALL Souls) will be observed on Saturday, March 05th, from 10:00 A.M. Plates of Kollyva will be available in the Narthex of the Church Proper for those who wish to purchase a plate of the prepared wheat commemoration. A aluminum tray of 'kollyva' is offered at \$15.00 each. This is being done as a convenience to those who do not know the recipe of preparation or don't have the time to make it at home.

NEXT SUNDAY: We shall witness the formal striping of the altar from the joyous colors of red, gold, and white, to the somber altar coverings of GREAT and HOLY LENT (black and purple). The sacred and solemn act will occur in the silence of the church directly after Sunday divine Liturgy. Sacred reading , music and intonation of hymns will be sung. This visibly places us on the EVE of GREAT LENT – Monday March 07th. **SET THE MOOD!**

MARK THE CALENDAR: Lenten Agiasmos is scheduled for Tuesday-March 01st, at 11 A.M. The 6 week schedule of LENTEN SERVICE for each week has been posted in the mail to all registered stewards of the parish. Copies of the sacred service listing are available upon request in the church office.

LENT BEGINS MARCH 7th (Monday) with a Lenten dinner open to all FREE by the AHEPA Coney Island Chapter #200 at 6:00 P.M. in Whitehall. Join in the fellowship of the 'breaking of bread' together. **OPEN TO ONE AND ALL!**

LENTEN POT LUCK DINNERS: are being hosted FREE by the Philoptochos Society Ladies on Wednesday evening March 16th, at 7:00 PM, directly after the PRE-SACRIFIED LITURGY of Pope Saint Gregory of Rome. The daughters of Penelope Ladies will host the final FREE ' pot luck dinner on Wednesday, April 06th, at 7:00 P.M after the final PRE-SANCTIFIED LITURGY AT 6:00 P.M. **EVERYONE IS WELCOMED TO THE TABLE.**

ANNOUNCING: PLEASE TAKE NOTE! This year's BI-CENTENNIAL GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY NEW YORK CITY 5th Avenue PARADE is scheduled for SUNDAY – JUNE 05th. Mark our calendars from now. We wish to have a large contingent to represent our PARISH at the Parade route. Men, women, and children of all ages are invited to join in the festive celebration of 200 years of INDEPENDENCE from the tyranny of the OTTOMAN EMPIRE.

MEMORIALS TODAY: +SPYRIDON FILOS +PANAGIOTIS KARVELAS



GRACIE MANSION was the venue for a private luncheon reception hosted by the new MAYOR of NEW YORK CITY, The Honorable ERIC ADAMS. 14 leaders of the Greek-American Community of New York City were invited guests, commencing with His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros. Our Pastor and long time friend and avid supporter of the Mayor over the past decade was present. The gracious hosting took place on Tuesday, February 15th. Civic, business, diplomatic and cultural figures were among the 14 guests of honor.



Greek School students presented a special 'GREEK LETTERS' Three Hierarchs Feast Program Sunday-February 13th. Three young lads represented the THREE HOLY HIERARCHS-(Basil The Great, John The Chrysostom, and Gregory the Theologian). Poetry, prose, history and hymnology filled the air in the joyous presentation. Congratulation to the FACULTY, STUDENTS and P.T.A.



ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ

ΣΥΝΤΟΜΟΝ ΚΗΡΥΓΜΑ



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

Ἐκδίδεται ἀπὸ τὴν Κοινοβιακὴ Γενναίκα Ἱερὸ Μονὴ Ἁγίου Αὐγουστίνου Φλωρίνης - 531 00 ΦΛΩΡΙΝΑ - τηλ. 23850-28510 - info@yahoo.gr

Περίοδος Δ' - Ἔτος ΛΘ'
Φλώρινα - ἀριθμ. φύλλου 2445

Κυριακὴ τῆς Ἀπόκρεω (Α' Κορ. 8,8 - 9,2)
27 Φεβρουαρίου 2022

Συντάκτης (†) ἐπίσκοπος
Αὐγουστίνος Ν. Καντιώτης

Ἄσχημους ἀδελφούς περιφρονεῖς; Τὸν Χριστὸ περιφρονεῖς

«Ἀμαρτάνοντες εἰς τοὺς ἀδελφούς καὶ τύπτοντες αὐτῶν τὴν συνείδησιν ἀσθενοῦσαν εἰς Χριστὸν ἀμαρτάνετε» (Α' Κορ. 8,12)

Τρίτη Κυριακὴ τοῦ Τριωδίου σήμερα, ἀγαπητοί μου, Κυριακὴ τῆς Ἀπόκρεω. Ὁ ἀπόστολος Παῦλος στὸ ἀνάγνωσμα ποὺ ἀκούσαμε (βλ. Α' Κορ. 8,8-9,2) προχωρεῖ σὲ **λεπτότερα ζητήματα**, ποὺ ἔχουν νὰ κάνουν μὲ τὴν καθαρότητα τῆς συνειδήσεως τῶν πιστῶν. Ὅ,τι λέει καὶ κάνει ὁ Χριστιανός, πρέπει νὰ γίνεται μὲ ἀγαθὴ συνείδησι· διαφορετικὰ, ὑπάρχει φόβος νὰ χάσῃ τὴν ἀξία του καὶ ὁ κόπος νὰ πάῃ χαμένος.

Καθὼς λοιπὸν ἐτοιμαζόμαστε μετὰ ἀπὸ μία ἐβδομάδα ν' ἀρχίσουμε τὴ νηστεία, μᾶς καθοδηγεῖ πῶς, **μὲ ποιὸ δηλαδὴ φρόνημα**, πρέπει νὰ ἀσκηθοῦμε **στὸ ἀγώνισμα τῆς νηστείας**.

Ἐπὶ τῆς ἐποχῆς τοῦ ἀποστόλου Παύλου ἔνα ζήτημα ποὺ ἀπασχολοῦσε τοὺς πιστοὺς ἦταν **τὸ ζήτημα τῶν εἰδωλοθύτων**. Ἐπιτρεπόταν δηλαδὴ σ' αὐτοὺς νὰ τὰ τρῶνε ἢ ὄχι;

Στὴν Κόρινθο ὑπῆρχαν μερικοὶ Χριστιανοί, ποὺ εἶχαν προσδεύσει στὴν χριστιανικὴ γνῶσι καὶ εἶχαν μία ὀρθὴ ἀντίληψι. Πίστευαν δηλαδὴ ὅτι, ἂν φᾶνε εἰδωλόθυτα, ἀπὸ τὰ κρέατα ἐκεῖνα ποὺ οἱ εἰδωλολάτρεις θυσίαζαν στοὺς βωμοὺς τῶν θεῶν τους, καθόλου δὲν ἀμαρτάνουν. Γιατί; Διότι φρονοῦσαν ὅτι, ἐφ' ὅσον οἱ θεοὶ τῶν εἰδωλολατρῶν ἦταν ψεύτικοι, ἀνύπαρκτοι, ἐπομένως καὶ τὰ κρέατα ποὺ προσφέρονταν καὶ θυσιάζονταν στὴ λατρεία τέτοιων θεῶν δὲν εἶχαν ἀξία μεγαλύτερη ἀπ' ὅ,τι εἶχαν τὰ ἄλλα κρέατα τῆς ἀγορᾶς. Ἔτσι λοιπὸν **ἐτρωγαν κι ἀπ' αὐτὰ** ὅπως ἐτρωγαν ὁποιοδήποτε ἄλλο φαγητό.

Ἐκτὸς ὅμως ἀπὸ τοὺς Χριστιανούς αὐτοὺς ποὺ εἶχαν τὴν ἀνώτερη ἀντίληψι στὸ ζήτημα τῶν εἰδωλοθύτων, ὑπῆρχαν στὴν Κόρινθο καὶ ἄρκετοὶ Χριστιανοί οἱ ὁποῖοι, ἔχοντας μόλις πρὸ ὀλίγου ἐγκαταλείψει τὰ εἰδωλα καὶ ἔχοντας προσέλθει στὴν χριστιανικὴ πίστι, ὅταν ἔβλεπαν τοὺς ἄλλους ἀδελφούς των νὰ κάθωνται σὲ τραπέζια τῶν εἰδωλολατρῶν καὶ νὰ

τρῶνε ἀφοβα ἀπὸ τὰ εἰδωλόθυτα, **σκανδαλίζονταν καὶ κλονίζονταν** ἰσχυρά.

Ὁ **κίνδυνος ἦταν πολὺ σοβαρός**. Ὑπῆρχε φόβος, οἱ ἀπλοὶ Χριστιανοί, ποὺ δὲν εἶχαν ἀκόμη σαφὴ γνῶσι τῶν πραγμάτων, ἀπ' αὐτὴ τὴ διαγωγὴ τῶν οὕτως εἰπεῖν «μορφωμένων» Χριστιανῶν νὰ ψυχρανθοῦν καὶ νὰ ξαναγυρίσουν πάλι στὴν εἰδωλολατρία.

Γι' αὐτὸ στὸν σημερινὸ ἀπόστολο **βλέπουμε τὸν ἀπόστολο Παῦλο νὰ ἐπεμβαίνει**. Ὑψώνει τὸ μαστίγιό τοῦ ἐλέγχου του· δείχνει τὸ τίμιο αἷμα τοῦ Λυτρωτοῦ· κηρύττει τὴν ἀξία καὶ μιᾶς ἔστω ψυχῆς ποὺ λυτρώνει ἡ θυσία του· προβάλλει τὸ δικό του παράδειγμα· καί, σὰν πατέρας ποὺ πονεῖ γιὰ τὴ σωτηρία ὄλων, φωνάζει· **«Εἰ βρῶμα σκανδαλίζει τὸν ἀδελφόν μου, οὐ μὴ φάγω κρέα εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, ἵνα μὴ τὸν ἀδελφόν μου σκανδαλίσω»** (Α' Κορ. 8,13). Δηλαδὴ· ἂν ὑπάρχῃ κάποιο φαγητό ποὺ σκανδαλίζει τὸν ἀδελφόν μου, δὲν θὰ τὸ ἀγγίξω· ὄχι γιατί τὸ θεωρῶ ἁμαρτία νὰ φάω αὐτὴν ἢ ἐκείνη τὴν τροφή, ἀλλὰ γιατί πρέπει ν' ἀποφύγω τὸ σκάνδαλο καὶ νὰ σώσω τὸν ἀδελφόν μου. Πάνω ἀπ' ὅλα εἶνε ἡ **σωτηρία τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ μου**, ἔστω καὶ ἂν αὐτὸς εἶνε μικρὸς καὶ ἄσημος. Γι' αὐτὸν θυσιάστηκε ὁ Χριστός, γι' αὐτὸν πρέπει κ' ἐγὼ νὰ ὑποστῶ μιὰ μικρὴ θυσία.

Λόγια χρυσᾶ, ἀδελφοί μου, ἀνεκτίμητα! Λόγια ὅμως, τὰ ὁποῖα δυστυχῶς ἔχει λησμονήσει μεγάλη μερίδα τῶν σημερινῶν Χριστιανῶν. Οἱ πολλοί, οἱ περισσότεροι, **ζοῦμε σύμφωνα μὲ τὶς ὁρέξεις καὶ τὶς ἐπιθυμίες μας**, καὶ ἐν τούτοις νομίζουμε πῶς εἴμαστε ἐν τάξει, ἐπειδὴ οἱ ὁρέξεις καὶ οἱ ἐπιθυμίες μας δὲν ἀπαγορεύονται ἀπὸ τὸ νόμο τοῦ Θεοῦ.

Παράδειγμα. Εἶμαι ἀσθενής κ' εἶνε Μεγάλη Τεσσαρακοστή. Ὁ γιατρός μου λέει, ὅτι πρέπει νὰ καταλύσω τὴ νηστεία, καὶ ἐγὼ συμ-

φωνώ μαζί του, γιατί η νηστεία ωρίστηκε όχι προς εξόντωσιν τοῦ σώματος, ἀλλὰ πρὸς σωτηρίαν τῆς ψυχῆς - καὶ τοῦ σώματος μαζί. Ἄν ὁμως πρόκειται, καταλύοντας τὴ νηστεία μέσα στὴν ἀγορά, μέσα σὲ δημόσια ἐστιατόρια, νὰ σκανδαλίσω τὶς ψυχὲς ἐκείνων ποὺ μὲ βλέπουν ἀλλὰ δὲν γνωρίζουν ὅτι ἔχω ὁργανισμὸ ἐξασθενημένο καὶ ποὺ ἔχει ἀνάγκη ἀπὸ τροφὴ καὶ ἰδιαίτερη διαίτα, ἔ τότε τὸ καθήκον μου εἶναι σαφές, σαφέστατο· τὸ καθορίζει ὁ Παῦλος· «Οὐ μὴ φάγω κρέα εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, ἵνα μὴ τὸν ἀδελφόν μου σκανδαλίσω» (ἔλ.).

—Μά, σ' ἀκούω νὰ λές, οἱ Χριστιανοὶ αὐτοὶ εἶναι ἀμαθεῖς καὶ ἀγράμματοι· ἐσφαλμένως νομίζουν ὅτι τὸ ἅπαν τῆς θρησκείας μας εἶναι ἡ νηστεία. Ἐγὼ δὲν μπορῶ νὰ λαμβάνω ὑπ' ὄψιν τί θὰ πῇ ὁ ἕνας καὶ ὁ ἄλλος, ποὺ δὲν μελέτησαν καλὰ τὸ Εὐαγγέλιο καὶ δὲν γνώρισαν τί σημαίνει Χριστιανισμός. Δὲν μπορῶ νὰ σύρωμαι ἀπὸ τὶς προλήψεις τοῦ λαοῦ, ὁ ὁποῖος ἔχει καταντήσῃ τὴ θρησκεία μας ἀγνώριστη...

Φίλε μου! Ὅσα καὶ ἂν πῇς, δὲν εἶσαι ἐν τάξει μὲ τὸ νόμο τῆς Χριστιανικῆς ἀγάπης, ποὺ αὐτὸς καὶ μόνο θὰ ἔπρεπε νὰ κανονίξῃ τὶς σχέσεις μας καὶ τὴ στάσι ἀπέναντι στοὺς ἀδυνάτους πνευματικὰ ἀδελφούς σου. Καὶ ὁ νόμος αὐτὸς λέει τὸ ἑξῆς· Ἄν ὁ ἄλλος εἶναι ἀγράμματος, ἀμαθής, ἐσύ ὀφείλεις νὰ τὸν διδάξῃς, ὅχι ὁμως νὰ τὸν σκανδαλίσῃς· ὀφείλεις νὰ τὸν ἀγαπήσῃς, καὶ ὅχι νὰ τὸν περιφρονήσῃς.

Νὰ μιμηθῇς τὸν δεσπότη Χριστό, ὁ ὁποῖος «ἐκκλινεν οὐρανοὺς καὶ κατέβη» (β. Βα. 22,10. Ψαλμ. 17,10. 143,5· πρβλ. 168,38.37) καὶ «μετὰ ἀνθρώπων συνανέστραφη» (Βα. 3,38), ἀνθρώπων ποὺ ζοῦσαν μέσα στὴν ἀγνοία. Οἱ μικροὶ καὶ ἄσημοι, τοὺς ὁποίους οἱ φαρισαῖοι τῆς ἐποχῆς του δὲν καταδέχονταν νὰ πλησιάσουν, ἐγίναν οἱ πρῶτοι ἀκόλουθοι τοῦ Χριστοῦ· ἐγκολπώθηκαν, ἀγράμματοι αὐτοί, τὴν ὑψηλὴ του διδασκαλία, αὐτοὶ ἐχρημάτισαν οἱ μεγάλοι ἀπόστολοι ποὺ μετέδωκαν παντοῦ τὸ φῶς τῆς νέας πίστεως.

Καυχᾶσαι λοιπὸν σήμερα ἐσύ γιὰ τὶς γνώσεις σου, καὶ λές ὅτι γνωρίζεις τὸ βαθύτερο πνεῦμα τοῦ Χριστιανισμοῦ, καὶ περιφρονεῖς γι' αὐτὸ τοὺς τάχα καθυστερημένους ἀδελφούς τοῦ Χριστοῦ; Ἀλλὰ σκέψου, ὅτι ὅλοι οἱ φιλόσοφοι τοῦ Χριστιανισμοῦ **περιφέρουν τὰ ῥήματα ἐκείνων τῶν ἁλίων τῆς λίμνης Γεννησαρέτ**· σκέψου, ὅτι ἀπὸ τοὺς μικροὺς καὶ ἄσημους ἀκολούθους τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἀπαρτίσθηκε ἡ Ἐκκλησία του, τῆς ὁποίας στῦλοι εἶναι ὅχι οἱ φιλόσοφοι ἀλλὰ οἱ ἁλιεῖς τῆς Τιβερίδος.

Ὡ αὐτοὶ οἱ μικροὶ καὶ ἄσημοι! Νὰ ἤξερες πόσο τοὺς ἀγαπᾷ ὁ Χριστός, ὁ ὁποῖος ἐβλεπε ὅτι στὸ βάθος τῆς ἀγνῆς καρδιᾶς τους ὑπάρχει ἡ σπιθαμὴ τῆς πίστεως, τῆς θαυματουργικῆς πίστεώς Του!

Γι' αὐτοὺς, ποὺ σήμερα ἐμεῖς τοὺς περιφρονοῦμε καὶ ἀδιαφοροῦμε ἂν γινώμαστε σκάνδαλο στὶς ψυχὲς τους, ὁ Χριστὸς εἶπε τὰ σπουδαῖα τοῦτα λόγια· «Ὅρᾶτε μὴ καταφρονήσητε ἐνὸς τῶν μικρῶν τούτων· λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν, ὅτι οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτῶν ἐν οὐρανοῖς διὰ παντὸς βλέπουσι τὸ πρόσωπον τοῦ πατρὸς μου τοῦ ἐν οὐρανοῖς. ἦλθε γὰρ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου σωσαι τὸ ἀπολωλός» (Ματθ. 18,10-11). Προσέξτε, φωνάζει ὁ Χριστός, μὴ περιφρονεῖτε κανένα ἀπὸ ἐκείνους ποὺ —ἐπειδὴ δὲν κατέχουν θέσεις σπουδαῖες, εἶναι ἀγράμματοι καὶ ἄσημοι— ὁ κόσμος τοὺς θεωρεῖ μικροὺς. Σὰς διαβεβαίωνω, ὅτι ἔχουν τόσο μεγάλη ἀξία καὶ σπουδαιότητα καὶ τόσο πολὺ φροντίζει γι' αὐτοὺς ὁ οὐράνιος Πατέρας μου, ὥστε **τοὺς φρουροῦν διαρκῶς ἄγγελοι** καὶ δίνουν γι' αὐτοὺς ἀναφορά στὸ θρόνο του καὶ μεταφέρουν στὸν Παντοκράτορα τὰ αἰτήματα τῆς καρδιᾶς τους.

Ὡ ἀδελφοί μου! Ἐὰν μᾶς φώτιζε ἡ θεία χάρις, θὰ βλέπαμε **στὸ πρόσωπο** καὶ τοῦ τελευταίου Χριστιανοῦ καὶ τῆς τελευταίας Χριστιανῆς **τὸν ἴδιο τὸν Χριστό** μας. Naί, τὸν Χριστό μας! Διότι αὐτὸς δὲν θεωρεῖ ἀνάρμοστο στὸ μεγαλεῖο του αὐτοὺς τοὺς ἀφανεῖς δούλους του νὰ τοὺς ὀνομάζῃ **«ἀδελφούς»** του (Ἐβρ. 2,11. Ψαλμ. 21,23) καὶ συνιστᾷ καὶ σ' ἐμᾶς νὰ τοὺς περιβάλλουμε μὲ τὴν ἀγάπη μας.

Ἄς τοὺς σεβώμαστε λοιπὸν. Δὲν εἶναι τυχαῖα πρόσωπα, **εἶναι πρίγκιπες τοῦ οὐρανοῦ**. Μὴν τοὺς γκρεμίζουμε μὲ τὴν ὑπεροπτικὴ συμπεριφορὰ μας· ἀντιθέτως νὰ τοὺς ὑπολογίζουμε, νὰ ἀναγνωρίζουμε τὴν ἀξία ποὺ ἔχουν, νὰ τοὺς θαυμάζουμε γιὰ τὴν παρρησία ποὺ διαθέτουν ἐνώπιον τοῦ παντάνακτος Θεοῦ, νὰ τοὺς στηρίζουμε στὸν ἀγῶνα ποὺ δίνουν. Νὰ συναγωνιζώμαστε μαζί τους, νὰ θεωροῦμε τιμὴ μας τὴ σχέση μαζί τους. Νὰ φροντίζουμε μὲ ἔργα καὶ μὲ λόγια ν' ἀποδεικνύουμε τὴν ἀγάπη καὶ φιλίαν μας σ' αὐτοὺς. Μὴν τοὺς κατεβάζουμε —συμμαχώντας μὲ τοὺς ἀπίστους— σὲ τάρταρα τοῦ ᾄδου, ἀλλὰ νὰ τοὺς τιμοῦμε, νὰ τοὺς ἀνυψώνουμε καὶ νὰ τοὺς οἰκοδομοῦμε πνευματικὰ.

Τότε θὰ εἶμαστε μιμηταὶ τοῦ Παύλου καὶ πραγματικοὶ ἀδελφοὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

(†) 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 2022 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

Pushing or Pulling?

A couple, vacationing in Maine, visited the harbor to watch the boats return from fishing and trapping lobsters. One lobster boat docked near where they sat and unloaded buckets of fresh lobsters. The wife became intrigued as she watched the lobsters scurry about in a bucket. She noticed that as soon as one lobster began to climb its way out of the pail, the other lobsters would pull it back down. It seemed to her that it would have been fairly easy for each lobster to escape from the bucket, except that they always were being pulled back down by the others.

Lobsters certainly can teach us about human nature as well. Doesn't it seem that as soon as one person decides to climb out of the "bucket," there are so many others trying to

pull him or her back down? Rather, shouldn't we try to support and push the other person farther along?

Let us look at the icon on the cover of the bulletin. The icon depicts people traveling from earth to heaven on a ladder. Can we see ourselves on the ladder? Let us ask ourselves: Do we push our neighbor further up the ladder to Heaven, or do we pull them down?

In the Gospel reading today, Jesus speaks of our obligation to assist other people in every need. Moreover, Our Lord tells us that whatever we do to others we do to Him. Conversely, if we neglect others, we neglect Our Lord. "Whatever you do to the least of My brothers, you do to me." (Matthew 25:40)

RADIO MINISTRY: Each Saturday at 1:15 PM Fr. Eugene hosts the radio broadcast **MATTERS OF CONSCIENCE NOW IN ITS 23rd 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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