



DIRECT ARCHDIOCESAN  
DISTRICT

## THREE HIERARCHS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

SUNDAY WEEKLY BULLETIN August 13th, 2023

V. Rev. Archimandrite Eugene N. Pappas

### TENTH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW



*Icon of the Dormition of the Theotokos -- August 15th*

## Prokeimenon. Mode 1

### Psalm 32.22,1

Let your mercy, O Lord, be upon us.

Verse: Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous.

The reading is from St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 4:9-16

Brethren, God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute. To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are ill-clad and buffeted and homeless, and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we try to conciliate; we have become, and are now, as the refuse of the world, the off-scouring of all things. I do not write this to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. I urge you, then, be imitators of me.

## Προκείμενον. Ἦχος α'

### ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 32.22,1

Γένοιτο, Κύριε, τὸ ἔλεός σου ἐφ' ἡμᾶς.

Στίχ. Ἀγαλλιᾶσθε δίκαιοι ἐν Κυρίῳ

Πρὸς Κορινθίους α' 4:9-16 τὸ ἀνάγνωσμα

Ἀδελφοί, ὁ θεὸς ἡμᾶς τοὺς ἀποστόλους ἐσχάτους ἀπέδειξεν ὡς ἐπιθανατίους· ὅτι θέατρον ἐγενήθημεν τῷ κόσμῳ, καὶ ἀγγέλοις, καὶ ἀνθρώποις. Ἡμεῖς μωροὶ διὰ Χριστόν, ὑμεῖς δὲ φρόνιμοι ἐν Χριστῷ· ἡμεῖς ἀσθενεῖς, ὑμεῖς δὲ ἰσχυροί· ὑμεῖς ἔνδοξοι, ἡμεῖς δὲ ἄτιμοι. Ἄχρι τῆς ἄρτι ὥρας καὶ πεινῶμεν, καὶ διψῶμεν, καὶ γυμνητεύομεν, καὶ κολαφιζόμεθα, καὶ ἀστατοῦμεν, καὶ κοπιῶμεν ἐργαζόμενοι ταῖς ἰδίαις χερσίν· λοιδορούμενοι εὐλογοῦμεν· διωκόμενοι ἀνεχόμεθα· βλασφημούμενοι παρακαλοῦμεν· ὡς περικαθάρματα τοῦ κόσμου ἐγενήθημεν, πάντων περίφημα ἕως ἄρτι. Οὐκ ἐντρέπων ὑμᾶς γράφω ταῦτα, ἀλλ' ὡς τέκνα μου ἀγαπητὰ νουθετῶ. Ἐὰν γὰρ μυρίους παιδαγωγοὺς ἔχητε ἐν Χριστῷ, ἀλλ' οὐ πολλοὺς πατέρας· ἐν γὰρ Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἐγὼ ὑμᾶς ἐγέννησα. Παρακαλῶ οὖν ὑμᾶς, μιμηταὶ μου γίνεσθε.

## The Gospel According to Matthew 17:14-23

At that time, a man came up to Jesus and kneeling before him said, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and he suffers terribly; for often he falls into the fire, and often into the water. And I brought him to your disciples, and they could not heal him." And Jesus answered, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him here to me." And Jesus rebuked him, and the demon came out of him, and the boy was cured instantly. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" He said to them, "Because of your little faith. For truly I say to you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move hence to yonder place,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you. But this kind never comes out except by prayer and fasting." As they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him, and he will be raised on the third day."

Τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ, ἐλθόντων αὐτῶν πρὸς τὸν ὄχλον προσῆλθεν αὐτῷ ἄνθρωπος γονυπετῶν αὐτὸν καὶ λέγων· Κύριε, ἐλέησόν μου τὸν υἱόν, ὅτι σεληνιάζεται καὶ κακῶς πάσχει· πολλάκις γὰρ πίπτει εἰς τὸ πῦρ καὶ πολλάκις εἰς τὸ ὕδωρ. καὶ προσήνεγκα αὐτὸν τοῖς μαθηταῖς σου, καὶ οὐκ ἠδυνήθησαν αὐτὸν θεραπεῦσαι. ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν· ὦ γενεὰ ἄπιστος καὶ διεστραμμένη! ἕως πότε ἔσομαι μεθ' ὑμῶν; ἕως πότε ἀνέξομαι ὑμῶν; φέρετέ μοι αὐτὸν ὧδε. καὶ ἐπετίμησεν αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, καὶ ἐξῆλθεν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ τὸ δαιμόνιον καὶ ἐθεραπεύθη ὁ παῖς ἀπὸ τῆς ὥρας ἐκείνης. Τότε προσελθόντες οἱ μαθηταὶ τῷ Ἰησοῦ κατ' ἰδίαν εἶπον· διατί ἡμεῖς οὐκ ἠδυνήθημεν ἐκβαλεῖν αὐτό; ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· διὰ τὴν ἀπιστίαν ὑμῶν. ἀμὴν γὰρ λέγω ὑμῖν, ἐὰν ἔχητε πίστιν ὡς κόκκον σινάπεως, ἐρεῖτε τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ, μετάβηθι ἐντεῦθεν ἐκεῖ, καὶ μεταβήσεται, καὶ οὐδὲν ἀδυνατήσκει ὑμῖν. τοῦτο δὲ τὸ γένος οὐκ ἐκπορεύεται εἰ μὴ ἐν προσευχῇ καὶ νηστείᾳ. Ἀναστρεφόμενων δὲ αὐτῶν εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς· μέλλει ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου παραδίδοσθαι εἰς χεῖρας ἀνθρώπων καὶ ἀποκτενοῦσιν αὐτόν, καὶ τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ ἐγερθήσεται. καὶ ἐλυπήθησαν σφόδρα.



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA  
ARCHDIOCESAN DISTRICT

**ARCH – EPISCOPAL VISITATION:** TODAY Our Parish will be graced with the visitation and con-celebration at the 12:30 Divine Liturgy by : HIS BEATITUDE METROPOLITAN ANTHONY and HIS EMINANCE ARCHBISHOP DANIEL of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of America.

LARISA on behalf of the Desnyatnikov, Nikandrov and Vaganov family as is MARY NICHOLAS are offering an artoklasia in 'THANKSGIVING' to the THEOTOKOS for their many blessings in life, health and family.

Artoklasies are most welcomed for TUESDAY, August 15<sup>TH</sup>, THE REPOSE of the BLESSED VIRGIN MARY  
LITURGY: ASSUMPTION (Repose) of the Virgin Mary 10:00 A.M.  
Veneration of the EPITAPHION from August 01-15<sup>th</sup>.

COFFEE FELLOWSHIP: will be offered next week by the family of + CAROL POULOS in WHITEHALL directly after the 10:30 divine Liturgy. Please join us. May her memory be eternal !

Wedding Bells are ringing: On THURSDAY , AUGUST 17<sup>TH</sup>, for the nuptials of THOMAS CHARLES TSATSIS to AMANDA ROSE STANZIONE at 5:30 p.m. We wish the happy couple many years of joy, health, peace and life !  
KALA STEPHANA TO THE PROMISED COUPLE !

PRAYER and HEALING SERVICE has been transferred to THURSDAY EVENING – AUGUST 24<sup>th</sup>, as usual at 6:30 P>M. – 8:00 P.M. The 'theme' is MOTHER and QUEEN of ALL We are in the OCTAVE of the Assumption Feast and will be able to venerate the Blessed Virgin Mary in Repose. COME ! VISIT ! VENERATE !  
REINVIGORATE !

Marigold flower blossoms are the traditional bloom offered to the THEOTOKOS, hence it is named 'mary's gold' marigold. Pick some from your home garden and place them at the 'epitaphion' of the Mother of God!

CONGRATULATIONS are being extended to Parish Council Member NICHOLAS PARAS who will be united in the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony on Saturday, August 26<sup>th</sup> to Ms. MARIA GONAKI on the Island of Crete in Greece. We wish the couple every blessing from the lord. KALA STEPHANA !

GREEK SCHOOL REGISTRATIONS are commencing. Please consider enrolling your child or grand-child in the program which fosters Hellenic scholarship learning language, history, religion and culture of GREECE. IT IS THEIR HERITAGE and LEGACY ! it's certainly worth the effort, KALES SPOUDES !

Feast of Saint Phanourios is fast approaching: SUNDAY – AUGUST 27<sup>TH</sup>. This remarkable holy centurion (ROMAN) was martyred on the Greek Island of Rhodes. This particular saint martyr suffered many persecutions of the flesh by his enemies. The tortures were many because as a Roman Officer he refused to recognize Caesar as both KING and GOD. He pledged his allegiance to Caesar as Emperor but NOT as god! Phanourios was a devout CHRISTIAN during the early persecutions of the fledgling faith. His mother was a devout 'pagan' offering her sacrifices to the myriad gods of Rome. Despite his constant appeals for her to accept JESUS as the CHRIST (Messiah of the world) she refused. This was a major disappointment for blessed Phanourios who was devoted to his maternal love. Each icon of the martyr evidences Phanourios holding a lighted candle searching throughout the heavens for his mother's lost and wandering' soul. Saint Phanourios is the 'patron' of lost things, lost causes, lost direction. If you lose something, call out in supplication for the saint's assistance and it SHALL BE FOUND !

PHANOUIROPITES are special cakes that are prepared as thanksgiving to honor this martyr for 'things FOUND'. Traditionally each cake or 'pita' is cut into portions to be shared with others celebrating his 'heavenly birthday'.....his holy martyrdom. I'm sure that you have something to be thankful for that was lost. Come and share the JOY, the STORY, the CAKE.

Up-coming MEMORIALS: Sunday August 20<sup>th</sup> :

+ CAROL POULOS +NICHOLAS ZANETAKOS + THEODORE PAPADAKIS + STEPHANIE FELDMAN  
Eternal be the memory of the faithfully departed !





Photographed are the celebrants at the TRANSFIGURATION of CHRIST Divine Liturgy on Sunday - August 6th., Fr. Scoutas and Fr. Bassakyros here attend the readings before the address by fr. Vasili. Fr. Shak invokes the blessing on the blue sacred vestments.



Last Sunday: Our Divine Liturgy was graced with the presence of FIVE (5) priests: Our Pastor Fr. Eugene , Fr. STEVEN SCOUTAS of Sydney, Australia, Fr. VASIL BASSAKYROS, Fr. JUVENALY REPASS of Guatemala and Fr. VASYL SHAK of Ukraine. Talk about universal Orthodoxy! It was alive and well as the clergy blessed the first harvesting of the grapes of TRANSFIGURATION FEAST.



Fr. Steven Scourtas opens his address to the congregation in pure "AUSSIE" English....it was a treat for all. The blessing and distribution of the grape harvest continued...



On the steps of our beloved house of prayer are some of the clergy present at the holiday occasion.

A set of Cloud Blue vestments honoring the Blessed Virgin Mary was presented to Fr. Eugene as a birthday gift to be worn on Panagia's Feast day - August 15th.

Fr. Vasyl Shak did the honors of consecrating the vestments to the Glory of God.







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

Περίοδος Δ' - Ἔτος Μ'  
Φλώρινα - ἀριθμ. φύλλου 2575

Κυριακὴ Ι' Ματθαίου (Ματθ. 17,14-23)  
13 Αὐγούστου 2023

Συντάκτης (†) ἐπίσκοπος  
Αὐγουστίνος Ν. Καντιώτης

## Ἡ σκληρὴ πραγματικότητα

«Τότε προσελθόντες οἱ μαθηταὶ τῷ Ἰησοῦ κατ' ἰδίαν εἶπον· Διατί ἡμεῖς οὐκ ἠδυνήθημεν ἐκβαλεῖν αὐτό; ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· Διὰ τὴν ἀπιστίαν ὑμῶν» (Ματθ. 17,19-20)

**Α**φάνταστα μεγαλοπρεπής, ἀγαπητοί μου, ἦταν ἡ **σκηνὴ τῆς Μεταμορφώσεως** τοῦ Κυρίου στὸ Θαβώρ. Οἱ τρεῖς μαθηταὶ του, ποὺ ἀξιώθηκαν νὰ τὴ δοῦν, ζητοῦσαν εἰ δυνατόν νὰ μείνουν ἐκεῖ γιὰ πάντα.

Μέσα στὴ χαρὰ τοὺς λησμονοῦσαν τοὺς ἄλλους ἐννέα συμμαθητάς τους, ποὺ ἐκεῖ στοὺς πρόποδες τοῦ ὄρους περνοῦσαν δύσκολες στιγμές, εἶχαν ἀνάγκη ἀπὸ βοήθεια καὶ ἂν μπορούσαν θὰ φώναζαν, Τρέξτε γρήγορα, ὁ ἐχθρὸς μᾶς νικᾷ, ἡ συνοδεία μας ἐκτίθεται!... Στὴν κορυφὴ δηλαδὴ τοῦ Θαβώρ γαλήνη καὶ φῶς, ἐνῶ στοὺς **πρόποδες σκοτάδι καὶ ταραχὴ**. Κάτω ἐκεῖ ἡ δυστυχία θρηνεῖ, ἡ μοχθηρία χύνει πικρία· ἐκεῖ τὰ δαιμόνια ἀφρίζουν, ὁ ἐχθρὸς θριαμβεύει.

Ἀλλὰ ὁ **Κύριος**, ποὺ ὡς Θεὸς γνωρίζει τὰ πάντα, δὲν θὰ ἄφηνε κ' ἐκεῖνα τὰ παιδιὰ του μόνα. Ἔτσι αὐτός, ποὺ χαμήλωσε ἀπὸ τὰ οὐράνια γιὰ νὰ βρεθῇ στὴ γῆ καὶ νὰ μᾶς παραδειγματίσῃ μὲ τὴν ταπείνωσί του, τώρα **κατεβαίνει ἀπὸ τὸ ὄρος** στὴν πεδιάδα, ἔρχεται κοντὰ στοὺς ἀνθρώπους τῆς δυστυχίας καὶ τῆς θλίψεως.

Ὁ εὐαγγελιστὴς Μάρκος σημειώνει τὴ λεπτομέρεια, ὅτι οἱ ἄνθρωποι βλέποντας τὸν Κύριο νὰ πλησιάζῃ **θαμπώνονταν**, γιὰ τὸ πρόσωπό του καὶ μετὰ τὴ Μεταμόρφωσι διατηροῦσε ἀκόμη λάμψι. Ἔτσι ἔλαμπε κι ὁ Μωυσῆς ὅταν κατέβαινε ἀπὸ τὸ ὄρος Σινὰ κρατώντας τὶς πλάκες τοῦ Νόμου (βλ. Ἐξ. 34,29-35). Ἐνῶ ὅμως ἡ λάμψι τοῦ Μωυσῆ ἀπαυθόυσε τότε τοὺς Ἰσραηλῖτες, ἡ λάμψι τώρα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐλκύει τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, οἱ ὁποῖοι **«προστρέχοντες ἠσπάζοντο αὐτόν»** (Μάρκ. 9,15).

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Ἕνας ἀπὸ τὸ πλῆθος τότε πλησιάζει τὸν Κύριο, γονατίζει μπροστὰ του καὶ τοῦ λέει τὸν πόνο του. Εἶχε ἓνα **γυιό, στὸν ὁποῖο εἶχε φωλιάσει δαιμόνιο**, τὸ ὁποῖο ταλαιπωροῦσε τὸ θῦμα του ἀνάλογα μὲ τὶς φάσεις τῆς σελήνης· γι' αὐτὸ τὸν δαιμονιζόμενο τὸν ἔλεγαν **σεληνιαζόμενο**. Αὐτὸ ἦταν ἀπάτη τοῦ διαβόλου καὶ γινόταν σκοπίμως, ὅπως ἐξηγεῖ ὁ ἱερὸς Χρυσόστομος, γιὰ νὰ κατηγορηθῇ τὸ δημιούργημα τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἡ σελήνη, ὡς αἰτία τοῦ κακοῦ (βλ. εἰς Ματθ. ὁμ. ΝΖ, γ'· Ρ.Γ. 58,562). Ἡ κρίσι τῆς

ἀσθενείας αὐτῆς ἦταν φοβερή, φανέρωνε τὴν κακία τοῦ πονηροῦ· ὁ δαιμονιζόμενος ἐβγαζε ἀφρούς, ἔτριζε τὰ δόντια, σπάραζε, ἔμενε ξερός· ἄλλοτε ἔπεφτε στὴ φωτιά ἢ στὸ νερό, ἐβγαζε κραυγὰς ἀναρθρες. Ἡ ἐξουσία τοῦ ἐχθροῦ εὐτυχῶς δὲν εἶνε ἀπεριόριστη· διαφορετικά, ὅχι μόνο τὸ θῦμα του χίλιες φορές θὰ τὸ ἔχε πνίξει ἀλλὰ καὶ ὅλη τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα θὰ εἶχε καταστρέψει.

Αὐτὸ τὸ θῦμα τοῦ διαβόλου ἔφερε ὁ δύστυχος πατέρας στοὺς ἀποστόλους. Εἶχε ἀκούσει ὅτι ἔχουν τὴ δύναμι νὰ διώχνουν δαιμόνια, νὰ ἐλευθερώνουν τοὺς πάσχοντες, καὶ ἠλπίζε ὅτι θὰ τὸ θεραπεύσουν. **Οἱ μαθηταὶ** ἐπιχείρησαν νὰ τὸ διώξουν, ἀλλὰ **δὲν τὰ κατέφεραν**. Τὸ δαιμόνιο στὴν περίπτωσι αὐτὴ ἀποδεικνυόταν δυνατότερο ἀπ' αὐτούς. Πῆραν λοιπὸν ἀφορμὴ οἱ ἐχθροὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, ποὺ παραμόνευαν, νὰ δείξουν τώρα ὅλη τὴν ἐμπάθεια καὶ χαιρεκακία τους γιὰ τὴν ἀδυναμία τῶν ἀποστόλων, ὥστε νὰ μειώσουν τὴν αἴγλη τοῦ Ναζωραίου.

Πόσες φορές **σφάλματα καὶ ἀδυναμίες Χριστιανῶν δίνουν ἀφορμὴ** στοὺς αἰώνιους κατηγόρους τῆς Ἐκκλησίας νὰ θριαμβολογοῦν λέγοντας, ὅτι ὁ Χριστιανισμὸς εἶνε ἀνίκανος νὰ θεραπεύσῃ τὸ πολύμορφο κακὸ τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος, ἰδίως ὅταν οἱ ἀδυναμίες καὶ τὰ σφάλματα παρατηροῦνται μετὰ τῶν ἡγετικῶν στελεχῶν τῆς στρατευομένης Ἐκκλησίας! Ἐπιχαίρει ὁ διάβολος ὅταν συμβῇ πτώσις ἐνὸς ἐπισκόπου· βρίσκουν τὰ ὄργανά του ἀφθονο ὑλικὸ γιὰ νὰ **διασύρουν τὸ τίμιο ὄνομα τοῦ Χριστιανισμοῦ**.

Ἀλλ' ἂς ἐπανεέλθουμε στὴ διήγησι. Ὁ ἀσθενὴς βρίσκεται τώρα μπροστὰ στὸ Χριστό. Τί θὰ γίνη; **Θὰ μπορέσῃ ἄραγε ὁ Ἰησοῦς νὰ τὸν θεραπεύσῃ;**... Ὁ δύστυχος πατέρας ἀμφιβάλλει, ἡ πίστι του εἶνε ἀδύναμη. Μετὰ βέβαια ἀπὸ τὰ τόσα πασίγνωστα θαύματα, ποὺ εἶχε κάνει ὁ Ἰησοῦς, κανεὶς δὲν ἔπρεπε τώρα νὰ ἀμφιβάλλῃ γιὰ τὸ πρόσωπό του· καὶ οὔτε οἱ φαρισαῖοι νὰ ἐπικρίνουν, οὔτε ὁ ἀπόστολοι νὰ κλονίζωνται. Βλέποντας ὁ Χριστὸς τὸν κόσμον ἐκεῖνο νὰ ἀπιστῇ αἰσθάνεται μεγάλη θλίψι, ἀφόρητη λύπη. Ὁ ἱερὸς Χρυσό-



στομος λέει ότι θεωρούσε πιο βαρύ όχι το να σταυρωθῇ ἀλλὰ τὸ νὰ ζῇ μέσα σὲ τέτοιο κόσμος· «οὐ τὸ σταυρωθῆναι, ἀλλὰ τὸ εἶναι μετ' αὐτῶν βαρύ» (βλ. ἔ.ἀ.: P.G. 58,561).

Παρ' ὅλη τὴ θλίψι πού δοκίμαζε ἡ καρδιά τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, ἡ ἀγάπη του γιὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπο δὲν μειώθηκε. Κι αὐτὸς ὁ δριμύς ἐλεγχὸς του ἔκρυβε ἀγάπη. Δὲν διώχνει λοιπὸν τὸν πατέρα, δὲν ἀρνεῖται τὴ χάρι του, ἀλλὰ μὲ τὴν παντοκρατορικὴ προσταγὴ του **διώχνει τὸ δαιμόνιο** καὶ ἐλευθερώνει τὸ πλάσμα του.

**Ἔργατες τοῦ Εὐαγγελίου**, ὅσοι ζῆτε μέσα σὲ μιὰ γενεὰ πού τῆς ταιριάζει ἡ φωνὴ τοῦ Χριστοῦ «*Ὡ γενεὰ ἄπιστος καὶ διεφθαρμένη...*» (Ματθ. 17,17), ναί, εἶνε βαρεῖα ἡ θλίψι σας ὅταν μετὰ ἀπὸ τόσους κόπους σας βλέπετε νὰ ὀρθώνεται πάλι μπροστά σας ἡ ἀμφιβολία, ἡ ἀπιστία, ἡ κακία τοῦ κόσμου. Θὰ θέλατε καλύτερα νὰ πεθάνετε παρὰ νὰ βλέπετε τὰ πνευματικά σας παιδιά νὰ παρὰσύρονται μακριὰ ἀπὸ τὸν Κύριο. Παρ' ὅλα αὐτὰ **διατηρῆστε τὴν ἀγάπη σας** καὶ γιὰ τὴν πιὸ ἀπιστὴ κοινωνία. Μιμηθῆτε τὸν Κύριο· μιμηθῆτε καὶ τὸν ἀπόστολο Παῦλο πού, μετὰ τὰ ὅσα ἔκανε γιὰ τοὺς συμπατριῶτες του καὶ τὸ μῖσος τους γι' αὐτόν, διατηροῦσε τόση ἀγάπη ὥστε ἔφτανε στὸ σημεῖο νὰ εὐχεται νὰ χωριστῇ αὐτὸς ἀπὸ τὸ Χριστὸ ἀρκεῖ νὰ σωθοῦν ἐκεῖνοι (βλ. Ρωμ. 9,3).

Τὸ παιδί λοιπὸν θεραπεύθηκε, ὁ πατέρας ἔφυγε ἀνακουφισμένος, ὁ κόσμος δόξαζε τὸ Θεό, οἱ φαρισαῖοι ἀποχώρησαν ντροπισμένοι. Καὶ **οἱ μαθηταί**; Ἄ, αὐτοὶ ἦταν ἀξιολύπητοι. Τοὺς εἶχε καταλάβει λύπη καὶ ἀγωνία, μήπως ἔχασαν πιά τὸ χάρισμα πού εἶχαν νὰ βγάξουν δαιμόνια. Πλησιάζουν κατ' ἰδίαν τὸν Κύριο καὶ τὸν ῥωτοῦν· «*Διατί ἡμεῖς οὐκ ἠδυνήθημεν ἐκβαλεῖν αὐτό;*». Καὶ ὁ Κύριος ἀπαντᾷ· «*Διὰ τὴν ἀπιστίαν ὑμῶν*» (Ματθ. 17,19-20). Ἦταν ἄπιστοι οἱ ἀπόστολοι; Ἀσφαλῶς ὄχι. Ἀλλὰ σὲ ὠρισμένες περιπτώσεις, ὅπως καὶ σ' αὐτὴν, ἡ πίστι τους ἦταν τόσο ἀδύνατη πού μᾶλλον θὰ τὴν ἔλεγε ἀπιστία. Γι' αὐτὸ ὁ Κύριος προσέθεσε ὅτι, ἂν εἶχαν **πίστι** «*ὡς κόκκον σινάπεως*» (ἔ.ἀ.), θὰ μπορούσαν καὶ βουνὰ ἀκόμη νὰ μετακινήσουν, νὰ κάνουν δηλαδὴ πράγματα ἀκατόρθωτα γιὰ τὸν κόσμο ὅπως εἶνε π.χ. ἡ ἀνάστασι ἐνὸς νεκροῦ ἢ ἡ σωτηρία ἐνὸς ἀσώτου.

Τέλος γιὰ τὴν πάλιν πρὸς ἐκδίωξιν τῶν δαιμονίων ὁ Κύριος συνιστᾷ δύο ἰσχυρὰ **ὄπλα**: τὴν προσευχὴ καὶ τὴ νηστεία· «*Τοῦτο τὸ γένος οὐκ ἐκπορεύεται εἰ μὴ ἐν προσευχῇ καὶ νηστείᾳ*» (ἔ.ἀ. 17,21).

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Ἡ **ἀδυναμία**, ἀγαπητοί μου, στὴν ὁποία βρέθηκαν οἱ ἐννέα ἀπόστολοι, μᾶς δίνει ἀφορμὴ νὰ διδαχθοῦμε. Ὅπως ἐκεῖνοι συνάντησαν ἰσχυρὸ δαιμόνιο καὶ δὲν μπόρεσαν νὰ τὸ νικήσουν, ἔτσι καὶ ὅσοι συνεχίζουν τὸ ἔργο τῶν ἀποστόλων συναντοῦν στὸν κόσμο πολὺ ἰσχυρὰ δαιμόνια, δαιμονικὲς καταστάσεις, δέντρα πανάρχαια μὲ βαθεῖς ρίζες στὸν ψυχικὸν κόσμο τῶν ἀνθρώπων. Ἐθιμα εἰδωλολατρικά πού γιορτάζονται πανδήμως, συ-

νήθειες πού καταντοῦν μόδες τῆς ἐποχῆς καὶ παρὰσύρουν ὅλους, ψυχικὰ νοσήματα πού ἐνδημοῦν σὲ ὠρισμένες περιοχές, προλήψεις καὶ πλάνες, συστήματα αἰρέσεων, συγκροτήματα ἀπιστίας καὶ ἀθείας, νὰ μερικὰ βαθύρριζα δέντρα πού πίσω τους κρύβονται δαιμόνια.

Αὐτὰ δὲν ξερρίζωνονται! ἀκοῦς νὰ λένε νωθοὶ καὶ ὀκνηροὶ ποιμένες. Καὶ τὸ λένε προτοῦν κἂν ἐπιχειρήσουν νὰ πολεμήσουν ἔστω καὶ λίγο τὸ κακό· προσεοφλοῦν τὴν ἥττα τους πρὶν ἔλθουν σὲ ἀψιμαχία μὲ τὸν ἐχθρό.

Προσπαθοῦσα κάποτε νὰ πείσω **μητροπολίτη**, ὅτι πρέπει νὰ τεθῇ ἐπὶ κεφαλῆς τοῦ πιστοῦ λαοῦ γιὰ νὰ καθαριστῇ ἡ πόλις τῶν Πατρῶν ἀπὸ τὸ μίasma τῶν **καρναβαλικῶν ἑορτῶν**, καὶ στάθηκε ἀδύνατο· δὲν ἤθελε ν' ἀκούσῃ πόλεμο, νὰ δυσαρρστήσῃ τοὺς ἄρχοντες τῆς πόλεως. Οὔτε ὁ ἴδιος ἀγωνιζόταν οὔτε ἄλλους ἄφηνε ν' ἀγωνιστοῦν κατὰ τοῦ κακοῦ. Κι ὅταν ἐγίνε ἀρχιεπίσκοπος μὲ κάλεσε γιὰ νὰ μοῦ ἀπαγορεύσῃ κάθε ἐνέργεια κατὰ τοῦ καρναβάλου· ἀλλὰ τοῦ ἀπήντησα καταλλήλως... Στὰ πρόσωπα τέτοιων ἀρχιερέων ὁ σατανᾶς καὶ τὰ ὄργανά του βρίσκουν τοὺς καλύτερους συνεργάτες.

**Οἱ πιστοὶ καὶ γενναῖοι στρατιῶτες**, πού γνώρισε ἡ Ἐκκλησία τοῦ Χριστοῦ, δὲν ἀπογοητεύονταν. **Πολέμησαν καὶ νίκησαν**. Τόλημσαν τὰ πιὸ παράτολμα κατὰ κόσμον· γκρέμισαν εἰδωλα στὰ ὁποῖα κρύβονταν λεγεῶνες δαιμόνων, ἔκαθαρίσαν περιοχές ἀπὸ τὰ μιάσματα τοῦ σατανᾶ, ξερρίζωσαν συνήθειες καὶ ἔθιμα αἰώνων, ἔκαναν τὰ ἄλλα καὶ κουφὰ πνεύματα τῶν ἀνθρώπων νὰ ἀκοῦνε καὶ νὰ λαλοῦν τὰ μεγαλεῖα τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἀνέστησαν ἀπὸ τοὺς τάφους «*νεκροὺς τοῖς παραπτώμασι*» (Ἐφ. 2,1,5. Κολ. 2,13). Ἔτσι μετακίνησαν ὄρη, μετέστρεψαν κοῖτες ποταμῶν, ἄλλαξαν τὸν ροῦ τῆς ἱστορίας, ἀναμόρφωσαν τὸν κόσμον.

Πῶς τὰ πέτυχαν αὐτά; πῶς ἔβγαλαν τὰ ἰσχυρὰ δαιμόνια; **Διὰ τῆς πίστεως**, τῆς ἀκραδάντου καὶ θερμῆς «*ὡς κόκκου σινάπεως*» (Ματ. 17,20· βλ. & Λουκ. 17,6). Αὐτὴ ἡ πίστι γιγαντωνόταν μὲ τὴν ἁγία ζωὴ, τὴν προσευχὴ καὶ τὴ νηστεία. Μολονότι πολλοὶ ἀπὸ αὐτοὺς εἶχαν φυσικὲς ἱκανότητες, εὐφυΐα καὶ μὀρφωσι ὄχι τυχαία, ἐν τούτοις γιὰ τὸν πόλεμο κατὰ τῆς κακίας καὶ τῆς πλάνης δὲν ἐμπιστεύονταν στὶς δικές τους δυνάμεις, τὶς θεωροῦσαν ἀνεπαρκεῖς· καὶ συναισθανόμενοι τὴν ἀδυναμία τους γιὰ ἓνα τέτοιο ἐγχείρημα, ὅπως εἶνε ἡ μάχη κατὰ τοῦ δαιμονικοῦ στοιχείου, κατὰ τοῦ ἀντιθέου φρονήματος, νῆστευαν κ' ἔπεφταν γονατιστοὶ μπρὸς στὸν Ἑσταυρωμένο καὶ ζητοῦσαν μὲ δάκρυα τὴ βοήθειά του λέγοντας· «*Κύριε, πρόσθεες ἡμῖν πίστιν*» (Λουκ. 17,5).

Ὡ ἐὰν καὶ σήμερα ἡ **Ἐκκλησία**, γεμάτη πίστι, ἔβγαινε **σὲ πόλεμο κατὰ τοῦ δαιμονικοῦ κόσμου!** Θὰ προσέθετε στὴν ἱστορία τῆς νέες νίκες καὶ θριάμβους, καὶ δὲν θὰ πέθαιναν οἱ ποιμένες τῆς μετὰ τὸ στίγμα τῶν ἡττημένων καὶ ἀπίστων.

(†) **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 2023 commitment **TODAY!** The benefits you shall receive beyond grace include the satisfaction and knowledge that this Church and community thrive thanks to your outreach.

***Falling Asleep, You Have Not Forsaken the World***

At the time of her death, so it is believed, the Mother of God was living in the house of St. John on Mount Zion. The Twelve were preaching the Gospel in different parts of the world. But so that they might see the Virgin once again before her death, all of them except Thomas were carried miraculously on clouds to the Holy City. Besides the Twelve, the Apostle Paul, together with the bishops Dionysios the Areopagite, Hierotheos, and Timothy, were also present at her bedside. As they stood round her, the Holy Virgin commended her spirit into the keeping of her Son and God. He Himself descended from heaven and took her soul up with Him in His arms. Led by Peter, the apostles sang funeral hymns in her honor, and carried her body down to the valley of Cedron, close to Gethsemane, where she laid in a tomb specially

prepared for her. The Jews tried to interrupt the funeral procession, one of them even attempting to upset the bier. His hands were cut off by an angel, but he was subsequently healed. Thomas arrived on the third day after the burial. Since he was anxious to look for a last time on the Theotokos, the apostles opened the tomb – and found it empty.

Without insisting on the literal truth of every element in this account, Eastern tradition is clear and unwavering in regard to the central point: the Holy Virgin underwent, as did her Son, a physical death, but her body – like His – was afterwards raised from the dead and she was taken up into heaven, in her body as well as in her soul.

*Bishop Kallistos of Diocletia*

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**RADIO MINISTRY:** Each Saturday at 1:15 PM Fr. Eugene hosts the radio broadcast **MATTERS OF CONSCIENCE NOW IN ITS 25th 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](http://W.W.W.gaepis.org) (**Click live radio**)