



DIRECT ARCHDIOCESAN
DISTRICT

THREE HIERARCHS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

SUNDAY WEEKLY BULLETIN April 28th
V. Rev. Archimandrite Eugene N. Pappas

ENTRANCE INTO JERUSALEM (PALM SUNDAY)



Icon of the Entrance into Jerusalem

Prokeimenon. Mode 4 Psalm 117.26,1

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Verse: Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good. His mercy endures forever.

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

BRETHREN, rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let all men know your forbearance. The Lord is at hand. Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, do; and the God of peace will be with you.

Προκείμενον. Ἦχος δ' ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 117.26,1

Εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἐν ὀνόματι Κυρίου.

Στίχ. Στίχ. Ἐξομολογεῖσθε τῷ Κυρίῳ ὅτι ἀγαθός, ὅτι εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τὸ ἔλεος αὐτοῦ.

Πρὸς Φιλιππησίους 4:4-9 τὸ ἀνάγνωσμα

Ἀδελφοί, χαίρετε ἐν κυρίῳ πάντοτε· πάλιν ἐρῶ, χαίρετε. Τὸ ἐπιεικὲς ὑμῶν γνωσθήτω πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις. Ὁ κύριος ἐγγύς. Μηδὲν μεριμνᾶτε, ἀλλ' ἐν παντί τῇ προσευχῇ καὶ τῇ δεήσει μετὰ εὐχαριστίας τὰ αἰτήματα ὑμῶν γνωρίζεσθω πρὸς τὸν θεόν. Καὶ ἡ εἰρήνη τοῦ θεοῦ ἡ ὑπερέχουσα πάντα νοῦν, φρουρήσει τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν καὶ τὰ νοήματα ὑμῶν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. Τὸ λοιπόν, ἀδελφοί, ὅσα ἐστὶν ἀληθῆ, ὅσα σεμνά, ὅσα δίκαια, ὅσα ἀγνά, ὅσα προσφιλή, ὅσα εὐφήμα, εἴ τις ἀρετὴ καὶ εἴ τις ἔπαινος, ταῦτα λογίζεσθε. Ἄ καὶ ἐμάθετε καὶ παρελάβετε καὶ ἠκούσατε καὶ εἶδετε ἐν ἐμοί, ταῦτα πράσσετε· καὶ ὁ θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης ἔσται μεθ' ὑμῶν.

Six days before Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. There they made him a supper; Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at table with him. Mary took a pound of costly ointment of pure nard and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was to betray him), said "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" This he said, not that he cared for the poor but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box he used to take what was put into it. Jesus said, "Let her alone, let her keep it for the day of my burial. The poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me." When the great crowd of the Jews learned that he was there, they came, not only on account of Jesus but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. So the chief priests planned to put Lazarus also to death, because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus. The next day a great crowd who had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" And Jesus found a young donkey and sat upon it; as it is written, "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!" His disciples did not understand this at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that this had been written of him and had been done to him. The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead bore witness. The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign.

Πρὸ ἕξ ἡμερῶν τοῦ πάσχα ἦλθεν Ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἰς Βηθανίαν, ὅπου ἦν Λάζαρος ὁ τεθνηκώς, ὃν ἤγειρεν ἐκ νεκρῶν. ἐποίησαν οὖν αὐτῷ δεῖπνον ἐκεῖ, καὶ ἡ Μάρθα διηκόνει· ὁ δὲ Λάζαρος εἰς ἦν τῶν ἀνακειμένων σὺν αὐτῷ. ἡ οὖν Μαρία, λαβοῦσα λίτραν μύρου νάρδου πιστικῆς πολυτίμου, ἤλειψε τοὺς πόδας τοῦ Ἰησοῦ καὶ ἐξέμαξε ταῖς θριξίν αὐτῆς τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ· ἡ δὲ οἰκία ἐπληρώθη ἐκ τῆς ὀσμῆς τοῦ μύρου. λέγει οὖν εἰς ἐκ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ, Ἰούδας Σίμωνος Ἰσκαριώτης, ὁ μέλλων αὐτὸν παραδιδόναι· διατί τοῦτο τὸ μύρον οὐκ ἐπράθη τριακοσίων δηναρίων καὶ ἐδόθη πτωχοῖς; εἶπε δὲ τοῦτο οὐχ ὅτι περὶ τῶν πτωχῶν ἔμελεν αὐτῷ, ἀλλ' ὅτι κλέπτῃς ἦν, καὶ τὸ γλωσσόκομον εἶχε καὶ τὰ βαλλόμενα ἐβάσταζεν. εἶπεν οὖν ὁ Ἰησοῦς· ἄφες αὐτήν, εἰς τὴν ἡμέραν τοῦ ἐνταφιασμοῦ μου τετήρηκεν αὐτό. τοὺς πτωχοὺς γὰρ πάντοτε ἔχετε μεθ' ἑαυτῶν, ἐμὲ δὲ οὐ πάντοτε ἔχετε.

Ἔγνω οὖν ὄχλος πολὺς ἐκ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ὅτι ἐκεῖ ἐστὶ, καὶ ἦλθον οὐ διὰ τὸν Ἰησοῦν μόνον, ἀλλ' ἵνα καὶ τὸν Λάζαρον ἴδωσιν ὃν ἤγειρεν ἐκ νεκρῶν. ἐβουλεύσαντο δὲ οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς ἵνα καὶ τὸν Λάζαρον ἀποκτείνωσιν, ὅτι πολλοὶ δι' αὐτὸν ὑπῆγον τῶν Ἰουδαίων καὶ ἐπίστευον εἰς τὸν Ἰησοῦν. Τῇ ἐπαύριον ὄχλος πολὺς ὁ ἐλθὼν εἰς τὴν ἑορτήν, ἀκούσαντες ὅτι ἔρχεται Ἰησοῦς εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα, ἔλαβον τὰ βαῖα τῶν φοινίκων καὶ ἐξηλθον εἰς ὑπάντησιν αὐτῷ, καὶ ἔκραζον· ὡσαννά, εὐλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἐν ὀνόματι Κυρίου, ὁ βασιλεὺς τοῦ Ἰσραήλ. εὐρῶν δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὀνάριον ἐκάθισεν ἐπ' αὐτό, καθὼς ἐστὶ γεγραμμένον· μὴ φοβοῦ, θύγατερ Σιών· ἰδοὺ ὁ βασιλεὺς σου ἔρχεται καθήμενος ἐπὶ πῶλον ὄνου. Ταῦτα δὲ οὐκ ἔγνωσαν οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ τὸ πρῶτον, ἀλλ' ὅτε ἐδοξάσθη ὁ Ἰησοῦς, τότε ἐμνήσθησαν ὅτι ταῦτα ἦν ἐπ' αὐτῷ γεγραμμένα, καὶ ταῦτα ἐποίησαν αὐτῷ. Ἐμαρτύρει οὖν ὁ ὄχλος ὁ ὢν μετ' αὐτοῦ ὅτε τὸν Λάζαρον ἐφώνησεν ἐκ τοῦ μνημείου καὶ ἤγειρεν αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν. διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ὑπήντησεν αὐτῷ ὁ ὄχλος, ὅτι ἠκούσαν τοῦτο αὐτὸν πεποιηκέναι τὸ σημεῖον.

Condolences are extended to the family of the late + GEORGE STOILAS who fell –asleep In the Lord on Sunday, April 14th. As a former Parish Council Member he was always ready – willing and able to serve the needs of Three Hierarchs Parish. His beloved spouse Aphrodite presently on the COUNCIL and teenage son and daughter Fotini and Demetri are involved in all assets of the community. May the Lord console them all. The 40 day MEMORIAL TRIBUTE is scheduled for Sunday-May 19th, AHEPA SUNDAY!

BISHOP DEMETRIOS of Mokissos will once again visit us with his hierarchal blessings for two services on GOOD FRIDAY May 03rd, THE APOKATHELOSIS (Descent from the Cross) at 3:00 P.M. and the EPITAPHIOS THRINOS (Burial of the Corpus of Christ) at 7:00 P.M. A solemn street procession of Hierarchy, Clergy, Acolytes, Myrophores, Scouts, and Faithful will escort the two Epitaphias to their resting place on the sacred altars. Please join us in this funeral tribute to our LORD, MESSIAH SAVIOR , JESUS CHRIST.

Palm Sunday Luncheon at Three Hierarchs WHITEHALL at 1:00. Please see the insert flyer for all details. Join us as we open HOLY WEEK.

EASTER BAKE SALE of delicious and traditional Grecian pastries will be baked and offered by the Ladies Philoptochos Society on Sunday of Palms, APRIL 28th. See the Flyer!

TAKE NOTE: The FEAST of SAINT GEORGE (normally observed April 23rd) will be honored on EASTER MONDAY – MAY 06th, with a Divine Liturgy at 10:00 A.M. Artoklasies are most welcomed on this post Paschal celebration. Chronia Polla to All.

MOTHER’S DAY Observance will be celebrated on Sunday May 12th, with the announcement of ‘WOMAN OF THE YEAR’ award. Join us in celebrating motherhood and womanhood!

ORGANIZATION UPDATES::

A.H.E.P.A. Coney Island will initiate 40 new members to the ‘men’s society’ at their meeting – MAY 8th. At 7:00 P.M. Best wishes are extended to the young men joining the ranks of others who serve.

PHILOPTOCHOS LADIES will host their Annual Spring Social for all members on Thursday, May 9th at 7:00 P.M. at NICK’S LOBSTER HOUSE. It’s a fun fill affair of fellowship and dining. ARE YOU A MEMBER?

DAUGHTERS of PENELOPE Demetra Chapter 33 will host their Annual Social opening the summer recess with a dinner party at PERRY’S RESTAURANT on Thursday, May 16th, at 7:00 P.M. All daughters are invited!

HOLY PASSION WEEK		
April 27-LAZARUS SATURDAY Divine Liturgy : 10:00 - 11:00 A.M.	May 2 - HOLY THURSDAY MORNING *DIVINE LITURGY 7:00 A.M. - 8:30 A.M.	May 4 - SATURDAY EVE HOLY PASCHA: Orthros 11:00 P.M. THE RESURRECTION 12:00 MIDNIGHT Divine Liturgy 12:30 - 1:30 A.M.
April 28 - PALM SUNDAY Orthros 10:00 - 11:00 AM Divine Liturgy 11:00 A.M. 12:30 P.M.	May 2 - HOLY THURSDAY EVENING 12 GOSPELS - Crucifixion Of Christ	May 5 - PASCHA SUNDAY AGAPE VESPERS: 11:00 A.M. - 12:00 Noon Children's Easter Service Gospel will be read in many languages
April 28 - PALM SUNDAY EVENING The Nymphios Service - 7:00 P.M.	May 3rd - GOOD FRIDAY AFTERNOON Apokatheosis - Descent from the cross 3:00 P.M. - 4:30 P.M. CHILDREN ARE ENCOURAGED	May 6 - MONDAY ST. GEORGE Divine Liturgy 10:00 A.M. - 11:00 A.M.
April 29 - HOLY MONDAY EVENING The Nymphios Service 7:00 P.M.	May 3 - GOOD FRIDAY EVENING The Epitaphios 7:00 P.M. SOLEMN STREET PROCESISION 8:30-9:30 P.M. Myrophores attending	May 12 - SUNDAY - MOTHER'S DAY ST. THOMAS (Woman of the Year 2024) Divine Liturgy 10:30 A.M. - 12:00 Noon
April 30 - HOLY TUESDAY EVENING The Nymphios Service 7:00 P.M. Troparion of Kassiani	May 4 - HOLY SATURDAY MORNING *Divine Liturgy 7:00 - 8:00 A.M. EUCCHARIST CONCLUDES 8:30 A.M.	May 19 - SUNDAY OF MYRRH BEARERS Divine Liturgy 10:30 A.M. - 12 Noon
May 1 - HOLY WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON Holy Unction 5:00 P.M. - 7 :00 P.M. (ONE SERVICE ONLY)		
HOLY CONFESSION WILL NOT BE HEARD DURING HOLY WEEK CONFESSIONS WILL BE HEARD BY APPOINTMENT WITH THE CLERGY ON THE FOLLOWING DATES: April 29 - Monday and April 30 - Tuesday - 1:00 P.M. - 3:00 P.M.		

LENTEN NEEDS: The sacred and solemn occasion of our many religious services and traditions is fast approaching. HOLY WEEK is 2 weeks away! Please consider the following outreach in cooperation and dialogue with the Reverend Clergy. Speak to Father Eugene before making any decision. Communion wine is appropriate for the Holy Eucharist, King Size WHITE SHEETS are needed for the Holy Thursday and Good Friday services, Olive Oil is necessary in abundance for the Holy Wednesday anointing. Incense, Prosphora, altar flowers, are but a few of the essentials.

THREE HIERARCHS PALM SUNDAY LUNCHEON

TODAY

THREE HIERARCHS CHURCH
APRIL 28TH., WHITEHALL

1724 Ave P
Brooklyn, NY
718-339-0280

MENU

SPLIT PEA SOUP
SALAD

BAKALIARO & SKORDALIA
ROASTER LEMON POTATOES

WINE & SOFT DRINKS

SPANAKORIZO

COFFEE or TEA

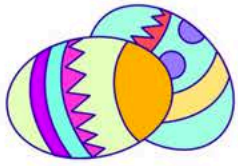
FRESH FRUIT & LENTEN SWEETS

ADULTS: \$30.00 CHILDREN: \$15.00
under 10 years

RESERVE SEATS Call:

John Lambrakis (917) 673-9830
or Church Office 718-339-0280





Three Hierarchs



Ladies Philoptochos

Easter Bake Sale

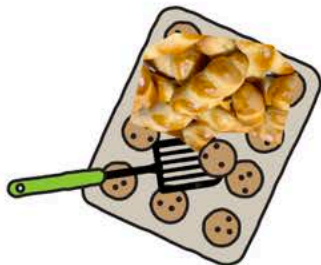


Menu	
TSOUREKIA	- \$ 10.00
KOULOURAKIA	- \$ 10.00
KOURABIEDES	- \$ 15.00
MIXED	- \$ 15.00



Today: Palm Sunday

April 28th, 2024





ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ

ΣΥΝΤΟΜΟΝ ΚΗΡΥΓΜΑ



«Έγενόμην ἐν Πεντάμητι ἐν τῇ Κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ καὶ ἤκουσα φωνὴν ὀπίσω μου μεγάλην ὡς ὀσπίγγος» (Ἀπ. 1,10)

Εκδίδεται ἀπὸ τὴν Κοινοβιακὴ Γενναεὶα Τερὰ Μονὴ Ἁγίου Αὐγουστίνου Φλωρίνης - 531 00 ΦΛΩΡΙΝΑ - τηλ. 23850-23810 - info@synthema.gr

Περίοδος Δ' - Ἔτος ΜΑ' Φλώρινα - ἀριθμ. φύλλου 2613	Κυριακὴ Θαΐων βράδου 28 Ἀπριλίου 2024	Συντάκτης (†) ἐπίσκοπος Αὐγουστίνος Ν. Καντιώτης
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Ἄρραβώνας καὶ γάμος

«Ἰδοὺ ὁ Νυμφίος ἔρχεται ἐν τῷ μέσῳ τῆς νυκτός...» (μεσονυκτ. τροπ.)

Απόψε, ἀγαπητοί μου, ἀρχίζει ἡ ἁγία καὶ Μεγάλη Ἑβδομάδα, τὸ μεγάλο πένθος τῆς Ἐκκλησίας. Τὴν ἑβδομάδα αὐτὴ ἔπρεπε ὅλοι νὰ ζοῦμε σὲ ἀτμόσφαιρα κατανύξεως. Ὅχι βόλτες καὶ περιπάτοι, οὔτε γέλια καὶ ἀστεία. Κλειστά τὰ μαγαζιά τῆς ψυχαγωγίας, ταβέρνες κ.τ.λ.

Συγκινήθηκα σήμερα. Πῆγα τὸ πρωὶ σ' ἓνα προντικὸ χωριὸ κ' ἐκεῖ μεταξὺ τῶν Χριστιανῶν εἶδα ἓνα νέο 30 ἐτῶν μὲ γένεια. -Καλόγερος θὰ γίνης; τὸν ρώτῶ. -Ὅχι, λέει. -Παπῆς; -Ὅχι. -Πέθανε ὁ πατέρας σου; ἡ μητέρα σου; -Ὅχι ὁ παππούς μου εἶπε, ὅτι στὸν Πόντο, μόλις ἔμπαινε ἡ Μεγάλη Σαρακοστή, οἱ ἀντρες ἀφήναν τὰ γένεια γιὰ νὰ πενθήσουν. Ξυρίζονταν τὸ Μέγα Σάββατο πιά, περιμένοντας τὴν Ἀνάστασι.

Ἦραϊα ἔθιμα, ὠραῖες παραδόσεις τοῦ γένους μας! Φύγαμε πολὺ μακριὰ ἀπὸ αὐτά.

Πενθεῖ λοιπὸν ἡ ἁγία μας Ἐκκλησία. Εἶδατε; τὰ φῶτα σβήνουν, ἡ ἁγία τράπεζα μαυροφορεῖ, οἱ παπᾶδες κι αὐτοὶ στὰ μαῦρα. Καὶ ἐνῶ ὁ ἱερεὺς κρατεῖ τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ Νυμφίου, ὁ λαὸς ἀκούει μὲ συγκίνησι τὸ «Ἰδοὺ ὁ Νυμφίος ἔρχεται ἐν τῷ μέσῳ τῆς νυκτός...» (μεσονυκτ.).

Τὸ τροπάριον τοῦτο, ποὺ θ' ἀκούγεται καὶ αὐριο καὶ μεθαύριο στὴν ἀκολουθία αὐτῆ τοῦ Νυμφίου, εἶνε ἐμπνευσμένο ἀπὸ τὴν παραβολὴ τῶν δέκα παρθένων ποὺ εἶπε ὁ Κύριος. Σὰς παρακαλῶ ἀνοίξετε τὸ Εὐαγγέλιον ἀπόψε στὸ σπίτι καὶ διαβάστε τὴν [β. κατ. 25:1-13].

Ἡ παραβολὴ αὐτὴ στηρίζεται στὰ ἔθιμα τοῦ Ἰσραηλιτικοῦ γάμου. Ὅπως ἐμεῖς ἔχουμε ἔθιμα γύρω ἀπὸ τὸ γάμο, εἶτσι εἶχαν καὶ οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι. Ποιὰ ἔθιμα ἐκρατοῦσαν τότε, τὴν ἐποχὴ τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ;

Ἡ νύφη δὲν ἐβγαίνει ἔξω, ἔμενε στὸ σπίτι περιμένοντας τὸ νυμφίον - γαμπρὸ νὰ ἔρθῃ ἀπὸ τὸ σπίτι του νὰ τὴν πάρῃ. Πότε θὰ ἐρχόταν ἦταν ἀκαθόριστο λόγω τῶν ἀποστάσεων. Ὁ γαμπρὸς ἔφτανε συνήθως νύχτα, σὲ ὦρα προχωρημένη. Δὲν ἐρχόταν μόνος· τὸν συνώδευαν οἱ φίλοι του μὲ ἐπὶ κεφαλῆς τὸν πιὸ ἐμπιστο. Ὅταν αὐτοὶ πλησίαζαν, ἐβγαίνει ἀπὸ τὸ σπίτι τῆς νύφης νὰ τοὺς προὔπαντῆσῃ ἓνας ἄλλος ἄνθρωπος, ἀπὸ παρθένες νεάνιδες συγγενεῖς τῆς νύφης ποὺ κρατοῦσαν κἀνιστρα μὲ

ἀνθή κι ἀναμμένα λυχνάρια - λαμπάδες φωτεινές. Αὐτὲς ἔστηναν καρτέρι στὸ δρόμο καὶ περιμέναν τὸ νυμφίον ἐκ μέρους τῆς νύφης. Μετὰ τὴ συνάντησι οἱ δύο ἄνθρωποι, τῶν νέων μὲ τὸ γαμπρὸ καὶ τῶν νεανίδων συγγενῶν τῆς νύφης, ἔφταναν στὸ σπίτι τῆς. Κι ὅταν ὁ γαμπρὸς ἔμπαινε μέσα, ἡ πόρτα ἔκλεινε καὶ ἀρχίζε ἡ τελετὴ. Τέλος ἐπαίφναν τὴ νύφη καὶ τὴν μετέφεραν στὸ πατρικὸ σπίτι τοῦ νυμφίου. Ἔτσι γινόταν ὁ γάμος [β. β. κ. π. 19:20].

Λέει λοιπὸν ὁ Κύριος ὅτι δέκα παρθένες, κορίτσια ἀγνά, πῆραν τὰ λυχνάρια τους καὶ βγήκαν στὸ δρόμο περιμένοντας πότε θὰ ἔρθῃ ὁ νυμφίος, νὰ τὸν συνοδέψουν στὸ σπίτι τῆς νύφης. Οἱ πέντε ἀπ' αὐτὲς ἦταν προνοητικές, οἱ ἄλλες πέντε ἀμελεῖς. Οἱ ἀμελεῖς αὐτὲς πῆραν τὰ λυχνάρια ἀλλὰ δὲν πῆραν μαζί τους καὶ λάδι, ἐνῶ οἱ ἐπιμελεῖς μαζί μὲ τὰ λυχνάρια ἐφωδιάσθηκαν καὶ μὲ λάδι. Ἡ ὦρα ὁμοῦς περνοῦσε, νύσταξαν ὅλες κι ἀποκοιμήθηκαν. Κατὰ τὰ μεσάνυχτα ἀκούσθηκε ἑξαφνικὰ φωνή· Νὰ ὁ νυμφίος ἔρχεται, βγῆτε νὰ τὸν προὔπαντῆσομε! Τότε σηκώθηκαν ὅλες κι ἄναψαν τὰ λυχνάρια. Οἱ πέντε ἀμελεῖς παρακαλοῦσαν τῆς ἄλλης· -Δώστε μας λίγο λάδι, γιὰ τὸ λυχνάριον μας σβήνουν. Οἱ προνοητικὲς ἀποκρίθηκαν λέγοντας· -Αὐτὸ ποὺ ἔχουμε φοβόμαστε πὼς δὲν θὰ φτάσῃ καὶ γιὰ μᾶς καὶ γιὰ σὰς· πηγαίνετε καλύτερα σ' ἐκείνους ποὺ πούλανε καὶ ἀγοράστε νὰ ἔχετε. Ἐνῶ ὁμοῦς ἐκεῖνες πῆγαιναν ν' ἀγοράσουν, ἦρθε ὁ γαμπρὸς, οἱ ἔτοιμες μπῆκαν μαζί του μέσα γιὰ τὴν τελετὴ καὶ ἡ πόρτα ἔκλεισε. Ὑστερα ἦρθαν καὶ οἱ ὑπόλοιπες παρθένες χτυπώντας τὴν πόρτα καὶ φωνάζοντας· -Κύριε κύριε, ἀνοίξέ μας. Ὁ νυμφίος ὁμοῦς τοὺς ἀποκρίθηκε· -Ἀλήθεια σὰς λέω, οὐκ εἶδα ὑμᾶς, δὲν ἔχω ἐξέρω. Καὶ ὁ Κύριος κλείνει μὲ τὸ συμπέρασμα· «Γρηγορεῖτε οὖν, ὅτι οὐκ οἴδατε τὴν ἡμέραν οὐδὲ τὴν ὥραν ἐν ἧ' ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἔρχεται» [κατ. 25:13].

Τὶ μᾶς λέει ἐδῶ, ἀδελφοί μου, ὁ Χριστός:
✓ Πρῶτον ποῖς εἶνε ὁ Νυμφίος. Στὰ ἱερά βιβλία ἡ λέξι «Νυμφίος» γράφεται μὲ ΝΥ κεφαλαῖο πρὸς διακρίσιν. Γιὰ τὸ ὑπάρχουν κι ἄλλοι νυμφῖοι, μὲ νῦ μικρὸ, οἱ ἐπίγειοι γαμπροί· αὐτοὶ, ὅσο σπουδαῖοι κι ἂν εἶνε, εἶνε ἀνθρώποι ἀτελεῖς, μὲ ἑλαττώματα καὶ πονηρίες. Ἐχῶ ὅπ' ὄψι μου στὴ Φλώρινα περίπτωσι, ποὺ

κάποιος με τὸ παρουσιαστικό του παγίδευε στὸν ἔρωτα μὴ κοπέλλα ἐκλεκτὴ καὶ ἔγινε ὁ γάμος· σὲ λιγώτερο ὄμως ἀπὸ δύο μῆνες, νύπτην στὴ Μητρόπολι καὶ μὲ κλάματα ζητοῦσε διαζύγιο... Δὲν ὑπάρχει, ἰδίως στὴν ἐποχὴ μας, γάμος ἰστανικός! Μέσα σὲ χίλιους γάμους, εἶνε ζήτημα ἂν ὑπάρχουν πέντ' - ἔξι γάμοι ἰδεώδεις· οἱ ἄλλοι ἀπέχουν ἀπὸ τὸ ἰδεώδες.

Οἱ νυμφίοι ποὺ θαυμάζουν οἱ νέες εἶνε μὴ σκιά τοῦ ἰστανικοῦ. Ὁ ἰστανικός Νυμφίος, ὁ «ἀραῖος κάλει πάρα τοὺς υἱοὺς τῶν ἀνθρώπων» (βλ. 43), ὁ ἀγαπητὸς τῶν ἀγαπητῶν, εἶνε ὁ Κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστός. Αὐτὸς εἶνε τὸ Ἄλφα καὶ τὸ Ὠμέγα, ἐκεῖνος ποὺ πρέπει νὰ ἀγαπήσουμε μὲ δλη μας τὴν καρδιά. Γυναίκες, ἂν ἀγαπᾶτε μὴ φορᾶ τὸν ἀντρα σας –καὶ πρέπει νὰ τὸν ἀγαπᾶτε–, χίλιες φορές περισσότερο ν' ἀγαπᾶτε τὸν Χριστὸ κ' εσεῖς, ἀντρες, ἂν ἀγαπᾶτε τίς γυναῖκες σας –καὶ πρέπει νὰ τίς ἀγαπᾶτε–, πολὺ περισσότερο νὰ ἀγαπᾶτε τὸ Χριστὸ, τὸ Νυμφίον τῆς Ἐκκλησίας μας. Ἐὰν δὲν αἰσθάνεσθε τὴν ἀγάπην αὐτῆ, τότε ἐπιτρέψτε μου νὰ σᾶς πῶ, ὅτι ἀκόμα δὲν γίνετε Χριστιανοί.

✓ Νυμφίος λοιπὸν εἶνε ὁ Χριστός. Καὶ ποιὰ εἶνε ἡ νύφη του; Κατὰ τὴν Ἀποκάλυψιν εἶνε ἡ ἀγία μας Ἐκκλησία. Αὐτὴ περιλαμβάνει ἀποστόλους, προφήτες, μάρτυρες, ὁσίους, ἀγίους, πατέρες καὶ διδασκάλους. Ὀνομάζεται «νύμφη» (βλ. 21β 21γ). Εἶνε στολισμένη μὲ τὸ αἷμα τῶν μαρτύρων, λάμπει ὑπὲρ τὸν ἥλιο καὶ τὸ χιόνι. Ἡ νύμφη Ἐκκλησία ἀναστενάζει ἐδῶ στὴ γῆ, ἀνυπομονεῖ πότε νὰ ἐνωθῆ μὲ τὸ Νυμφίον Χριστὸ.

Ἐπειδὴ λοιπὸν ἡ Ἐκκλησία ἀποτελεῖται ἀπὸ πολλὰ μέλη, χιλιάδες ψυχές, καὶ καθεμὴ ἀπὸ αὐτὲς ἀντιπροσωπεύει κατὰ κάποιο τρόπο τὴν Ἐκκλησία, γι' αὐτὸ νύμφη ὀνομάζεται καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ κάθε ἀνθρώπου. Ἡ ψυχὴ μας εἶνε ἡ νύμφη τὴν ὁποία ἀγάπησε ὁ Χριστός. Ἐὰν θέλετε νὰ δῆτε τί ἔρωτα πρέπει νὰ αἰσθάνεται ἡ ψυχὴ γιὰ τὸ Χριστὸ, διαβάστε τὸ Ἄσμα φσμάτων· εἶνε ἕνα τραγούδι παρεξηγημένο, μέσα στὸ ὁποῖο ψάλλεται ὁ ἀμοιβαῖος ἔρωτας Ἐκκλησίας καὶ Χριστοῦ, ψυχῆς καὶ Χριστοῦ.

✓ Εἶπαμε λοιπὸν ποιὸς εἶνε ὁ Νυμφίος, ποιὰ ἡ νύφη. Καὶ ποιές εἶνε οἱ παρθένες, ποὺ ὑπηρετοῦν τὴν Νύμφην; Ἰδιαιτέρη θέσι ἔχουν κοντὰ τῆς κόρης ποὺ κρατοῦν, ὡς κἀνίστρα μὲ ἀνθη, τίς ἀρετὲς καὶ μάιστα τὴν καθαρότητα τῆς παρθενίας. Τίς παρθένες τῆς παραβολῆς ἀκολουθεῖ καὶ σήμερα τὸ τάγμα τῶν παρθένων. Κορίτσια ποὺ μ' ἀκοῦτε, φυλάξτε τὴν παρθενία σας· εἶνε ὕψος, εἶνε ἥλιος. Κοντὰ στὸ Χριστὸ θὰ εἶνε ὅλοι οἱ σφζόμενοι, ἀλλὰ ἐξαιρετικὴ θέσι δίπλα του θὰ ἔχη τὸ τάγμα τῶν παρθένων, ἀνδρῶν καὶ γυναικῶν, ποὺ ἀφιέρωσαν τὸν ἑαυτὸ τους στὴ λατρεία καὶ τὴν ἰεραποστολή.

✓ Τέλος καὶ μὴ λέει γιὰ τὴ λυχνία ποὺ κρατοῦσαν οἱ παρθένες. Συμβολίζει τὴν ἀναμμένη λαμπάδα ποὺ θὰ ἔχουν ὅλοι οἱ σεσωσμένοι. Προσεῖτε λοιπὸν τὴ λαμπάδα σας, προσοχὴ μὴ σβῆσῃ! Ἐχομε μὴ λαμπάδα, ποὺ μᾶς τὴν παρέδωσαν ἀπὸ χέρι σὲ χέρι γενεῆς γενεῶν. Ποιὰ εἶνε ἡ λαμπάδα αὐτή; Ἡ πίστις μας, ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος πίστις. Ἀπὸ γενεὰ σὲ γενεὰ, μέσ' ἀπὸ ἀνέμους καὶ θύελλες, διωγμοὺς καὶ μαρτύρια, εἶφη καὶ φωτιές, θηρία ὄλογα καὶ ἀνθρωπόμορφα, «διὰ πυρός καὶ ὕδατος» (βλ. 6,13), κρατήσα-

με ἐπὶ εἴκοσι αἰῶνες τὴ λαμπάδα τῆς Ὁρθοδοξίας. Καὶ ἔχομε χρέος νὰ τὴν παραδώσουμε ἀναμμένη στὰ παιδιὰ κ' ἐγγόνια μας. Ἄνεμοι σφοδροὶ ζητοῦν νὰ τὴ σβῆσουν. Λοιπὸν, τὴ λαμπάδα καὶ τὰ μάτια μας, ἀδελφοί μου!

Ὅπως μὴ κοπέλλα αἰσθάνεται τρυφερὴ ἀγάπην πρὸς τὸν ἐκλεκτὸ τῆς, παρομοίως πρέπει νὰ αἰσθάνεται καὶ καθένος ἀπὸ μᾶς γιὰ τὸ Χριστὸ. Καὶ δπως πρὶν τὸ γάμο γίνεται ἀρραβῶνας, ἔτσι κ' ἐμεῖς ἔχομε τώρα ἀρραβῶνα, ὑπόσχεσι· δὲν ἔγινε ἀκόμα γάμος. Μὲ τὸν ἀρραβῶνα ἡ κόρη δὲν ἰκανοποιεῖται. Μετράει τίς μέρες. Τὰ ἀγνὰ κορίτσια, ποὺ δὲν ἔχουν γνωρίσει ἀντρα, ἐπιθυμοῦν πότε νὰ ἔρθῃ ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ γάμου, τῆς ἐνώσεως μὲ τὸν ἐκλεκτὸ τους. Τὸ δὲ δαχτυλίδι εἶνε τὸ σύμβολο τῆς ὑπόσχεσεως γιὰ γάμο.

Ὅπως λοιπὸν οἱ ἀρραβωνιασμένοι περιμένουν τὸ γάμο, ἔτσι κ' ἐμεῖς περιμένουμε τὴν ἐνωσὶν μᾶς μὲ τὸ Χριστὸ. Ἐδῶ ἔχομε ἀρραβῶνα. Εἶμαστε ὅλοι ἀρραβωνιασμένοι. Ἀπὸ πότε; Ἀπὸ τὴν ὥρα ποὺ βαπτιστήκαμε. Στὸ βάπτισμα, τὴν ὥρα ποὺ ἀκούγεται «Βαπτίζεται ὁ δοῦλος τοῦ Θεοῦ (Δημήτριος π.χ. ἢ Παῦλος) εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος» καὶ βγαίνουμε μέσα ἀπὸ τὴν κολυμβήθρα, τὴν ὥρα ἐκείνη ἀρραβωνιαζόμαστε. Μὲ ποιόν; Μὲ τὸ Χριστὸ. Τοῦ δίνουμε ὑπόσχεσι, ὅτι θὰ τὸν ἀγαποῦμε αἰωνίως. Ὅποιος εἶνε βαπτισμένος ἔχει κάνει ἀρραβῶνα. Ὅτι τὸ βάπτισμα εἶνε ἀρραβῶνας τὸ λέει ὁ ἀπόστολος Παῦλος (βλ. Εφ. 121-22 ἔξ. Εφ. 1,13-14).

Ἄφου λοιπὸν εἶμαστε ἀρραβωνιασμένοι, τί περιμένουμε; Τὸν γάμο. Πότε θὰ γίνῃ ὁ γάμος; Στὸ τέλος τῆς ζωῆς μας καὶ στὴ συντέλεια τοῦ κόσμου. Ποῦ; Στὰ οὐράνια δώματα. Ἐὰν εἶνε ὠραῖο νὰ βλέπῃς τὸ γαμπρὸ καὶ τὴ νύφη στὴν γαμήλιον πομπή, φαντάζεστε ἐκεῖ τὸ κάλλος τοῦ Νυμφίου Χριστοῦ, τῆς νύμφης του Ἐκκλησίας, καὶ τῆς κάθε ψυχῆς - νύμφης του; Δὲν περιγράφεται. Αὐτὸς εἶνε ὁ γάμος ποὺ θὰ κἀνῃ στὸν οὐρανὸν ὁ Κύριος μὲ τίς ἐκλεκτὲς ψυχές (βλ. 13,14).

Αὐτὴ ἡ εἰκόνα προβάλλεται ἐμπρὸς μᾶς δταν ψάλλεται τὸ «Ἰσοῦ ὁ Νυμφίος ἔρχεται...» (μωμ. γα). Ἐρχεται, ἔρχεται! Ἄχ κόσμε, ντυνηὶ φεῦγῆ! Μοῦ ἔρχεται νὰ πάω σ' ἕνα μοναστήρι νὰ κλάψω. Ὅσα καὶ νὰ ποῦμε, οἱ καρδιές μένουν ψυχρές, μποῦζι, Βόρειος Πόλος. Μᾶς ἔφαγε ὁ κάμπος. Ὅταν ἐπιστρέφουν νικηταὶ στρατηγοὶ, πολιτικοὶ, ὀλυμπιονίκες, ἀστροναῦτες ἀπὸ τὸ διάστημα κ.λπ., ὁ κόσμος τοὺς κάνει ἐνθουσιώδη ὑποδοχή. Τώρα ποιὸς ἔρχεται! Ὅχι ἀστροναῦτης, ὄχι νικητῆς, ὄχι ἀγγελος, ὄχι ἀρχάγγελος· ἔρχεται ὁ Βασιλεὺς τῆς δόξης. Ὡ τί ὕψος! Ἐρχεται ὁ Βασιλεὺς τῆς δόξης. «Δεῦτε προσκυνήσωμεν καὶ προσπεσωμεν Αὐτῷ».

Εἶχομαι, ἀδελφοί μου, δταν «παρέλθῃ ὁ κόσμος οὗτος» (βλ. 21, 22) κι δταν ὅλοι πλέον περάσουμε τὴ γέφυρα τοῦ θανάτου καὶ βρεθοῦμε στὰ θνω βασιλεία, νὰ μᾶς ἀξιῶσῃ κ' ἐκεῖ ὁ Θεὸς νὰ ὑποδεχθῶμε τὸν Χριστὸ αἰνοῦντες καὶ δοξολογοῦντες αὐτὸν εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας· ἀμήν.

(†) 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

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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 2024 commitment **TODAY!** The benefits you shall receive beyond grace include the satisfaction and knowledge that this Church and community thrive thanks to your outreach.

Accompanying Christ

Let us go together to meet Christ on the Mount of Olives. Today He returns from Bethany and proceeds of His own free will toward His holy and blessed passion, to consummate the mystery of our salvation. He who came down from heaven to raise us from the depths of sin, to raise us with Himself, we are told in Scripture, above every sovereignty, authority and power, and every other name that can be named, now comes of His own free will to make His journey to Jerusalem.

Let us run to accompany Him as He hastens toward His passion, and imitate those who met Him then, not by covering His path with garments, olive branches or palms, but by doing all we can to prostrate ourselves before Him by being humble and by trying to live as He would wish. Then we shall be able to receive the Word at His coming, and God, whom no limits can contain, will be within us.

In His humility Christ entered the dark regions of our fallen world and He is glad that He became so humble for our sake, glad that He came and lived among us and shared in our nature in order to raise us up again to Himself. And even though we are told that He has now ascended above the highest heavens – the proof, surely, of His power and godhead – His love for man will never rest until He has raised our earthbound nature from glory to glory, and made it one with His own in heaven.

So let us spread before His feet, not garments or soulless olive branches, which delight the eye for a few hours and then wither, but ourselves, clothed in His grace, or rather, clothed completely in Him. We who have been baptized into Christ must ourselves be the garments that we spread before Him. Now that the crimson stains of our sins have been washed away in the saving waters of baptism and we have become white as pure wool, let us present the conqueror of death, not with mere branches of palms but with the real rewards of His victory. Let our souls take the place of the welcoming branches as we join today in the children's holy song: Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. Blessed is the king of Israel.

St. Andrew of Crete

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