

# Orthodox Heritage

Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle [2 Thessalonians 2:15]

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Brotherhood of St. Poimen

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## ST. POIMEN THE GREAT

340-450 AD [From the Gerondikon]

The Monk Poimen the Great was born in about the year 340 in Egypt. With his two brothers, Anubias and Paisias, he went into one of the Egyptian monasteries, and all three accepted monastic tonsure. The brothers were such strict ascetics that when their mother came to the monastery to see her children, they did not come out to her from their cells. The mother stood there for a long time and wept. Then the Monk Poimen said to her through the closed door of the cell: “If thou bearest with the temporal parting from us now, then in the future life wilt thou see us, since we do hope upon God the Lover-of-Mankind!” The mother was humbled and returned home.

Fame about the deeds and virtues of the Monk Poimen spread everywhere. One time the governor of the district wanted to see him. The Monk Poimen, shunning fame, reasoned thus: “If dignitaries begin coming to me with respect, then also many of the people will start coming to me and disturb my quiet, and I shalt be deprived of the grace of humility, which I have found only with the help of God.” And so he relayed a refusal to the messenger. For many of the monks, the Monk Poimen was a spiritual guide and instructor. And they wrote down his answers to serve to the edification of others besides themselves. A certain monk asked: “Ought one to veil over with silence the sin of a transgressing brother, if perchance one see him?” The elder answered: “If we reproach the sins of brothers, then God will reproach our sins, and if thou seest a brother sinning, believe not thine eyes and know, that thine own sin is like a

wood-beam, but the sin of thy brother is like a wood-splinter, and then thou wilt not come into distress and temptation.” Another monk turned to the saint, saying: “I have grievously sinned and I want to spend three years at repentance. Is such a length of time sufficient?” The elder answered: “That is a long time.” The monk continued to ask how long a period of repentance did the saint reckon necessary for him — a year or forty days? The elder answered: “I think that if a man repenteth from the depths of his heart and posits a firm intent to return no more to the sin, then God would accept also a three-day repentance.” To the question, as to how to be rid of persistent evil thoughts, the saint answered: “If a man has on one side of him fire, and on the other side a vessel with water, then if he starts burning from the fire, he takes water from the vessel and extinguishes the fire. Like to this are the evil thoughts, suggested by the enemy of our salvation, which like a spark can enkindle sinful desires within man. It is necessary to put out these sparks with the water, which is prayer and the yearning of the soul for God.”

The Monk Poimen was strict at fasting and did not partake of food for the space of a week or more. But others he advised to eat every day, only but without eating one’s fill. For a certain monk, permitting himself to partake of food only on the seventh day but being angry with a brother, the saint said: “Thou wouldst learn to fast over six days, yet cannot abstain from anger for even a single day.” To the question, which is better — to speak or be silent,

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#### OUR MISSION

To be instruments of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, as He awakens the souls of believers into an awareness of the love, grace, peace and mercy realized when one lives the Word of God, kept and preserved through the ages by the Greek Orthodox Church and Her Holy Traditions.

To be a voice crying out for the return to sacrificial living in accordance with the Apostolic Traditions and through the Orthodox Faith. In this ever-changing world, Christ is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow and so is His Bride, the Holy, never-changing Greek Orthodox Church.

To confront any movement, no matter how subtle, whose message is heretic and whose impact is the schism of His Church or the protestantization of our Faith.

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The *Orthodox Heritage* may, at times, bring up issues or present articles that some may deem controversial or consider as non-conducive to the universal message of our Lord's Salvation for all nations and all people. We consider such material as necessary so as to ensure that a distinction be made between salvation and the 20th century heresy of ecumenism. These are confusing times for all Orthodox faithful and political convenience must be sacrificed so that the message of His TRUTH be brought forth in the limelight.

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the elder said: "Whoso doth speak on account of God, doeth well, and whoso is silent on account of God — that one doth act well." And moreover: "It may be, that a man seems to be silent, but if his heart doth judge others, then always is he speaking. But there are also those, who all the day long speak with their tongue, but within themselves they do keep silence, since they judge no one."

The saint said: "For a man it is necessary to observe three primary rules: to fear God, to pray often and to do good for people." "Malice in turn never wipes out malice. If someone doeth thee bad, do them good, and thine good will conquer their bad." One time, when the monk with his students arrived at an Egyptian wilderness-monastery (since he had the habit to go about from place to place, so as to shun glory from men), it became known to him, that the elder living there was annoyed at his arrival and also was jealous of him. In order to overcome the malice of the hermit, the saint set off to him with his brethren, taking along with them food as a present. The elder refused to come out to them. Thereupon the Monk Poimen said: "We shall not depart from here, until we are granted to see and pay respect to the holy elder," — and he remained standing in the bright heat at the door of

the cell. Seeing such perseverance and lack of malice on the part of the Monk Poimen, the elder received him graciously and said: "It is right what I have heard about you, but I see in you the good deeds and an hundred times even more so." Thus did the Monk Poimen know how to extinguish malice and provide good example to others. He possessed such great humility, that often with a sigh he said: "I shalt be cast down to that place, whither was cast down Satan!"

Once a monk came to get his guidance. He began to speak about sublime matters difficult to grasp. The saint turned away from him and was silent. To the bewildered monk they explained, that the saint did not like to speak about lofty matters. Then the monk began to ask him about the struggle with passions of soul. The saint turned to him with a joyful face: "Here now thou well hath spoken, and I must speak for it needs answer," — and for a long while he provided instruction, as to how one ought to struggle with the passions and conquer them.

The Monk Poimen died at age 110, in about the year 450. Soon after his death he was acknowledged as a saint and received the title "the Great" — as a sign of his humility, modesty, uprightness, and self-denying service to God.

## ABBA PAMBO TO HIS DISCIPLE

[From the *Gerondikon*]

*An Egyptian ascetic on the Nitrian mountain, Abba Pambo was a contemporary of St. Anthony the Great and himself great in monastic asceticism. Born about A.D. 303, he was one of the first to join Amoun in Nitria. He was illiterate until he was taught the Scriptures as a monk and ordained priest in 340. He had two characteristics by which he was especially known; by long training, he sealed his lips, so that no unnecessary word passed them, and he never ate any bread other than that which he gained by his own labour, plaiting rushes. He was like an angel of God and, in old age, his face shone as did the face of Moses in ancient times, so that the monks could not look on it. He did not give a quick answer even to a simple question, without prayer and pondering in his heart. This wonderful saint had clear discernment into the destiny of the living and the dead. He entered into rest in the Lord in the year 374.]*

And I'll tell you this, my child, that the days will come when the Christians will add to and will take away from, and will alter the books of the Holy Evangelists, and of the Holy Apostles, and of the Divine Prophets, and of the Holy Fathers. They'll tone down the Holy Scriptures and will compose troparia, hymns, and writings technologically. Their nous will be spilled out among them, and will become alienated from it's Heavenly Prototype. For this reason the Holy Fathers had previously encouraged the monks of the desert to write down the lives of the Fathers not onto parchment, but onto paper, because the coming generation will change them to suit their own personal tastes. So you see, the evil that comes will be horrible.

Then the disciple said: So then, Geronda, the traditions are going to be changed and the practices of the Christians? Maybe there won't exist enough priests in the Church when these unfortunate times come?

And the father continued: In these times the love for God in most souls will grow cold and a great sadness will fall onto the world. One nation shall face-off against another. Peoples will move away from their own places. Rulers will be confused. The clergy will be thrown into anarchy, and the monks will be inclined more to negligence. The church leaders will consider useless anything concerned with salvation, as much for their own souls as for the souls of their flocks, and they will despise any such concern. All will show eagerness and energy for every matter regarding their dining table and their appetites. They'll be lazy in their prayers and casual in their criticisms.

*Continued on pg. 4*

## A PROCLAMATION BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

[Abraham Lincoln, 1861]

Whereas a joint Committee of both Houses of Congress has waited on the President of the United States, and requested him to "recommend a day of public humiliation, prayer and fasting, to be observed by the people of the United States with religious solemnities, and the offering of fervent supplications to Almighty God for the safety and welfare of these States, His blessings on their arms, and a speedy restoration of peace:"

And whereas it is fit and becoming in all people, at all times, to acknowledge and revere the Supreme Government of God; to bow in humble submission to his chastisements; to confess and deplore their sins and transgressions in the full conviction that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; and to pray, with all fervency and contrition, for the pardon of their past offences, and for a blessing upon their present and prospective action

And whereas, when our own beloved Country, once, by the blessing of God, united, prosperous and happy, is now afflicted with faction and civil war, it is peculiarly fit for us to recognize the hand of God in this terrible visitation, and in sorrowful remembrance of our own faults and crimes as a nation and as individuals, to humble ourselves before Him, and to pray for His mercy, — to pray that we may be spared further punishment, though most justly deserved; that our arms may be blessed and made effectual for the re-establishment of law, order and peace, throughout the wide extent of our country; and that the inestimable boon of civil and religious liberty, earned under His guidance and blessing, by the labors and sufferings of our fathers, may be restored in all its original excellence: —

Therefore, I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, do appoint the last Thursday in September next, as a day of humiliation, prayer and fasting for all the people of the nation. And I do earnestly recommend to all the People, and especially to all ministers and teachers of religion of all denominations, and to all heads of families, to observe and keep that day according to their several creeds and modes of worship, in all humility and with all religious solemnity, to the end that the united prayer of the nation may ascend to the Throne of Grace and bring down plentiful blessings upon our Country.

*Continued on pg. 4*

*Abba Pambo. Continued from pg. 3*

As for the lives and teachings of the Holy Fathers, they'll not have any interest to imitate them, nor even to hear them. But rather they will complain and say that "if we had lived in those times, then we'd have behaved like that". And the bishops shall give way to the powerful of the world, giving answers on different matters only after taking gifts from everywhere and consulting the rational logic of the academics. The poor man's rights will not be defended, they'll afflict widows, and harass orphans. Debauchery will permeate these people. Most won't believe in God, they'll hate each other and devour one another like beasts. The one will steal from the other, they'll be drunk and will walk about as blind.

The disciple again asked: What can we do, in such a state?

And Elder Pambo answered: My child, in these times whoever will save his soul and prompt others to be saved will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven.

*A Proclamation. Continued from pg. 3*

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand, and caused the Seal of the United States to be affixed, this 12th, day of August A.D. 1861, and of the Independence of the United States of America the 86th.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

**W**hen a seaman is sailing with his ship on the sea and going through dangerous places with hidden rocks, do you think that he is looking at the other ships? His eyes are fixed on the helm: 'Be careful of that rock! Here comes a wave!' Or take the example of someone driving along the road: Does he watch how everyone else is driving? His eyes need to be on the road, looking to the right and left, up the hill ahead and down into the valley. Each driver has to watch how he is handling his own car. You too! Keep your hands on the steering wheel of your soul. Watch over your soul so that you don't end up in the ditch! Each one has to care for his own soul and stop being so nosy about the other brother!

**Elder Cleopa (+1998)**

**T**he Faith which I was taught by the Holy Fathers, which I taught at all times without adjusting according to the times, this Faith I will never stop teaching. I was born with it and I live by it.

**St. Gregory the Theologian**

## MODERN-DAY "PROSELYTISM" METHODS BY THE CHECHNENS

[The Story of New Martyr Evgeny, 1984-2002]



+New Martyr Evgeny,  
1984-2002

**W**hen one of our associates was in Moscow last year, just about every parish book stall had a xeroxed notice about a young soldier named Evgeny (Евгений), who had been captured by the Chechnens along with five of his buddies.

The Chechnens promised to spare the young Russians their lives if they converted to Islam. The others agreed, but Evgeny refused, insisting that he was an Orthodox

Christian. The Chechnens beheaded him and subsequently sent his severed head to his mother as a sort of memento. This young lad has been recognized everywhere (Moscow & environs, Sergiev Posad, Murom, Diveevo, Arzamas) as a martyr, in a spontaneous, popular movement of piety. His picture was everywhere, usually with the caption "martyred soldier Evgeny". He was martyred on his 18th birthday, 6 months after he started his service.

Evgeny was beheaded by Chechnen field commander Ruslan Haihoroev, after Evgeny denied conversion to Islam and refused to give up his cross (which by the way was part of the medal for bravery). Many months his mother searched for his body, and finally after paying \$500, was shown the forest where he was buried. She found the bodies of 4 more boys along with his. A giant wooden cross has since been erected on his grave. His own cross, the one that he refused to

give up, his mother, Lubov Radionova, has donated to St. Nicholas Church in Ordinka, Moscow.

The New Martyr Evgeny the Soldier was canonized on August 20th. A church in his name is to be build in Hankala, near Grozniy. It will be the only Orthodox church in Chechnya.





## Λόγοι Διδαχῆς

Γέροντα Ἐφραίμ Κατουνακιώτη



**Δ**έν σέ κατηγορῶ ὅτι ἔκανες ἁμαρτίες πολλές καί σοβαρές, ὄχι, ἄνθρωπος εἶσαι. Σέ κατηγορῶ, γιατί δέν ἐξομολογεῖσαι. Αυτό σέ κατηγορῶ. Ἐπεσε; Στόν πνευματικό. Ἐπεσε; Στόν πνευματικό, ὅλα στόν πνευματικό. Καί ἡ ὁσία Μαρία, πρῶτα ἐξομολογήθηκε.

Στή γειτονιά μας ἦταν κάποιος Κύπριος καί εἶχε ἕναν ὑποτακτικό, ὁ ὁποῖος

τούς γονεῖς του δέν εἶχε ἀναπαύσει, νά ποῦμε. Ὅταν καλογέρευσε, καί τόν Γέροντά του δέν τόν ἀνέπαυσε. Κί' ἐκεῖ πού καθόμαστε στή Μικρή Ἀγία Ἄννα, τόν ἔστειλε ὁ Γέροντάς του στόν Γέροντα, τόν Γέρο-Ἰωσήφ, νά πει τόν λογισμό του καί ὅτι μπορεῖ νά τόν βοηθήσει. Ὅταν ἦρθε ἐκεῖ, ἤμαστε γύρω ἔτσι μέ τόν Γέροντα, λέει: «Ἄντε ἐσύ, πήγαινε ἐσύ, πηγαίνετε στά δωμάτιά σας· ἔλα ἴδω, πάτερ-Ἰωάννη». Ἀνεβαίνει καί πηγαίνει στό δωμάτιό του.

-Γέροντα, λέει, ἡ ψυχή μου κλαίει, κλαίει, κλαίει σάν μικρό παιδί.

-Γιατί, παιδί μου, ἡ ψυχή σου κλαίει;

-Διότι, λέει, δέν ἀνέπαυσα τόν Γέροντά μου.

-Ἐ, ποῦ καταλαμβάνεις ὅτι δέν ἀνέπαυσες τόν Γέροντα;

-Νά, λέει, ἔτσι στήν ὑπακοή.

-Ἄκουσε, παιδί μου. Ἐκεῖ πού γκρέμισες, ἐκεῖ νά διορθώσεις. Ἐχαλάρωσες τό "νά ἴναι εὐλογημένο", τήν ταπείνωση καί τήν αὐταπάρνηση στόν Γέροντα. Μή ζητάς τώρα μέ τήν εὐχή ἢ μέ τήν Θεία Μετάληψη, πάτερ μου, νά διορθώσεις τό λάθος σου. Ἐκεῖ ἔσφαλες, ἐκεῖ νά βάλεις μετάνοια, ἐκεῖ νά διορθώσεις.

Ὁ ἀββάς Παμβώ, ὅταν ἦταν κοσμικός, πήγε καί κλέψανε σῦκα ἀπό ἄλλο γειτονικό ἀμπέλι. Καί ὅταν τούς πήρε μυρωδιά ὁ δραγάτης, τό ἴβαλαν στά ποδάρια να φύγουν. Ἀλλά ἀπό τό μαντήλι

ποῦ εἶχε τά σῦκα, τοῦ ἔπεσε ἕνα σῦκο κάτω καί νά μήν τό χάσει, πήγε καί τό ἔφαγε. Καί λέει ὁ ἴδιος: «Ὅποτε θυμᾶμαι αὐτό τό σῦκο, κάθομαι καί κλαίω. Κάθομαι καί κλαίω... Αὐτό τό σῦκο... »

Ἐτσι κι ἐγώ, νά ποῦμε. Ὅταν θυμᾶμαι αὐτήν τήν παρακοή πού ἔκανα στόν Γέροντα, ὡς ἄλλος ἀπόστολος Πέτρος, κάθομαι καί κλαίω. Γιατί νά κάνω αὐτήν τήν παρακοή, νά μήν τήν κάνω ὑπακοή νά κερδίσω;

Ἐνα πρᾶγμα, ἅμα σέ κεντάει ἡ συνείδησή σου, πήγαινε καί βάλε μετάνοια: «Ἀδερφέ μου, εὐλόγησον, σέ παρακαλῶ νά μέ συγχωρέσεις, ἔσφαλα».

Αὐτό διορθώνει τό λάθος σου. Μήν παραβλέπεις τή συνείδησή σου. Ἄνθρωποι εἴμεθα, ἕνας στόν ἄλλον φταίει. Ἡ σοῦ εἶπε ἕναν λόγο εἴτε δέν ἔκανε ἐκεῖνο τό ὅποιο εἶπες, καί ὅποτε κατόπιν ἡ συνείδηση ἔρχεται ἐλέγχουσα. Μήν τήν παραβλέπεις, πήγαινε ταπεινώσου καί πές τό "εὐλόγησον" εἰς τόν ἀδελφό ἢ εἰς τόν Γέροντα.

**Η** ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΟΣ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ ΚΑΤΕΧΕΙ Η ΑΚΕΡΑΙΑ ΤΗΝ ΠΡΩΤΗ ΠΑΡΑΔΟΣΗ ΚΑΙ ΔΙΔΑΣΚΑΛΙΑ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΗ ΤΗΣ ΜΙΑΣ ΚΑΘΟΛΙΚΗΣ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑΣ ΠΟΥ Ο ΚΥΡΙΟΣ ΕΔΩΣΕ, ΟΙ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΟΙ ΕΚΗΡΥΞΑΝ ΚΑΙ ΟΙ ΠΑΤΕΡΕΣ ΕΦΥΛΑΞΑΝ. ΜΕΣΑ ΣΕ ΑΥΤΗΝ ΘΕΜΕΛΙΩΘΗΚΕ Η ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ, ΚΑΙ ΟΠΟΙΟΣ ΑΠΟΚΟΠΤΕΤΑΙ ΑΠΟ ΑΥΤΗΝ, ΟΥΤΕ ΘΑ ΗΤΟ ΟΥΤΕ ΘΑ ΕΛΕΓΕΤΟ ΧΡΙΣΤΙΑΝΟΣ.

ΜΕΓΑΣ ΑΘΑΝΑΣΙΟΣ

**Ο** ΠΟΙΑ ΩΡΑ ΣΚΕΠΑΣΟΥΜΕ ΤΟ ΣΦΑΛΜΑ ΤΟΥ ΑΔΕΛΦΟΥ ΜΑΣ, ΣΚΕΠΑΖΕΙ ΚΑΙ Ο ΘΕΟΣ ΤΟ ΔΙΚΟ ΜΑΣ. ΚΑΙ ΟΠΟΙΑ ΩΡΑ ΘΑ ΦΑΝΕΡΩΣΟΥΜΕ ΤΟΥ ΑΔΕΛΦΟΥ ΤΟ ΣΦΑΛΜΑ, ΘΑ ΦΑΝΕΡΩΣΕΙ ΚΑΙ Ο ΘΕΟΣ ΤΟ ΔΙΚΟ ΜΑΣ.

ΑΒΒΑΣ ΠΟΙΜΗΝ

**Ε**ΚΕΙΝΟΣ ΠΟΥ ΔΕΝ ΚΥΡΙΑΡΧΕΙ ΣΤΗ ΓΛΩΣΣΑ ΤΟΥ ΣΕ ΩΡΑ ΟΡΓΗΣ, ΑΥΤΟΣ ΟΥΤΕ ΣΤΑ ΠΑΘΗ ΤΟΥ ΘΑ ΚΥΡΙΑΡΧΗΣΕΙ ΠΟΤΕ.

**Π**ΩΣ ΝΑ ΦΥΛΑΞΟΥΜΕ ΤΗΝ ΚΑΡΔΙΑ ΜΑΣ, ΠΟΤΑΝ ΕΙΝΑΙ ΑΝΟΙΚΤΕΣ Η ΓΛΩΣΣΑ ΚΑΙ Η ΚΟΙΛΙΑ ΜΑΣ;

ΑΒΒΑΣ ΤΙΘΟΗΣ

Ένα άπο τά άρραιότερα κείμενα του Άγιου Συμεών του Νέου Θεολόγου στον πρώτο τόμο των κατήχησέων του στο μετά τό περί άτάπης κεφάλαιον. Όταν ή άυτικοί ανακάλυφαν τά κείμενά του θεωρήσαν ότι μάλλον δεν έχει σώσας τάς φρένας, άμέτοχοι όντες ...

« Ο πιστός άνθρωπος, ό ταίς έντολαίς του θεού άεί μετά άκριβείας προσέχων, όταν πάντα τά των θείων έντολων ποιήσῃ και προς τῷ ύφος τουτών ήτουν προς τήν άμωμον πολιτείαν και καθαρσίητά τήν έαυτού διάνοιαν έμβατεύσῃ, τότε άνερευνών τά έαυτού μέτρα, άσθενή έαυτόν εύρήσει και προς τό ύφος εκείνο των έντολων μή ισχύοντα άφικέσθαι, αλλά και πτωχόν λίαν ήτοι άνάξιον εις ύποδοχήν του θεού και εύχαριστίαν και δόξαν, ως μέσω μιδέν κεκίημένον ίδιον άταθόν · ό δέ ταύτα δι' έαυτόν έν αισθήσει φυχής λοιζόμενος πενθήσει πάντως πένθος τό όντως μακαριώτατον, ό και τήν παράκλησιν δέχεται και πραιείαν τήν φυχήν άπεριτάζεται.

Άρραβών τάρ έστί τής βασιλείας των ουρανών ή εκ του πένθους έπινόμην παράκλησις · ήστίς μέν τάρ έστίν έλπιζόμενων ύπόστασις κατά τον άπόστολον, παράκλησις ή εκ τής έλλάμφεως του Πνεύματος ήνομην έν ταίς πενθούσαις φυχαίς έπιδημία θεού,

Ταπεινοφροσύνην ταύταις βραβεύουσα, ήτις και σπόρος και τάλαντον όνομάζεται αυξανόμενή τάρ και πολυπλασιαζόμενή έν ταίς των άτρωιζόμενων φυχαίς έν τριάκοντα και έν εξήκοντα και έν εκατόν, καρποφορεί τῷ θεῷ καρπών άτιον των χαρισμάτων του Πνεύματος · όπου τάρ ταπεινώσις άφευδής, εκεί και ταπεινοφροσύνης βυθός · και όπου ταπεινοφροσύνη, εκεί και έλλάμφεις του Πνεύματος · όπου δέ αι έλλάμφεις του Πνεύματος, εκεί φωτοχυσία θεού και θεός έν σοφία και ήνώσει των μυσηρίων αυτου. Ένθα δέ ταύτα, εκεί βασιλεία ουρανών και βασιλείας έπιήνωσις και, οι άποκεκρυμμένοι θησαυροί τής ήνώσεως του θεού, έν οίς και ή φανέρωσις έστί τής πτώχειας τής πνευματικής · όπου δέ πτώχειας πνευματικής αισθήσις, εκεί και τό χαρμόσυνον πένθος, εκεί και τά άεννάως δρόντα δάκρυα, τά τήν φιλοῦσαν ταύτα φυχήν εκκαθαίροντα και τελείως αυτήν άπεριτάζόμενα φωτεινοτάτην.»



## Παναγία ή Παραμυθία

Από τό βιβλίό «Εμφανίσεις και θαύματα τής ΠΑΝΑΓΙΑΣ» Τής Τεράς Μονής Παρακλήτου

Τανουάριος του 807. Ο Τάλγερίνος ληστοπειρατής Βαρδουχάν, έχοντας σαν βάση έξορμήσεως τή Μηλο, λυμαίνεται μέ τά δεκαεπτά

πειρατικά του πλοία τά νησιά του Αίγαίου, τά

παράλια τής Θράκης και τής Μ. Ασίας. Τόν μήνα αυτό αποφασίζει νά στραφεί ένατίον του Αγίου Όρους. Έτοιμάζει δέκα πλοία, παίρνει μαζί του διακόσιους πειρατές και ξεκινά για τή μονή Βατοπεδίου. Μέ τό χάραμα τής 21ης Ιανουαρίου προσορμίστηκαν στο λιμανάκι του μοναστηριού, βγήκαν στή στεριά και περίμεναν κρυμμένοι τό πρωινό άνοιγμα τής πύλης για νά εισορμήσουν.

Οί μοναχοί μόλις είχαν τελειώσει τήν όρθρινή ακολουθία, και άποσύρονταν στα κελλία τους για νά ήσυχάσουν. Στήν Έκκλησία έμεινε μόνος ό

[συνεχ. στή σελ. 8]

## Μυστική Παράκληση

Κωστής Παλαμάς

Δέσποινα,  
 κανένα φόρεμα τή γύμνια μου  
 δέ φτάνει νά σκεπάση,  
 ή μοναξιά μου είναι σάν τ' άδειο, σάν τ' αλόγιστο  
 χυμένο προτου νάρθη ή πλάση,  
 ή άρρώστεια μου βογγάει σάν τά μεγάλα δάση  
 καθώς τά δέρνει ή μπόρα.  
 Ήρθεν ή ώρα ή φοβερή, ώχ! ήρθε ή ώρα.  
 Έσύ παρθένα, έσύ μητέρα,  
 κι από δροσιά, κι από κελάϊδισμα  
 στάλα του αιθέρα,  
 ήρθεν ή ώρα ή φοβερή, ώχ! ήρθε ή ώρα.  
 Πρόστρεξε, Μυροφόρα,  
 μονάχα Έσένα πίστεψα  
 και λάτρεψα μονάχα Έσένα  
 από τά πρωτινά γλυκοχαράματα  
 κι ως τώρα μέσ στα αίματοστάλαχτα  
 μιās ώργισμένης δύσης.  
 Δέσποινα, στήριξέ μ' Έσύ και μή μ' αφήσης.

Δέσποινα,  
 βήμα δέν έχω μήτε φτέρωμα,  
 μέ γονατίζει τό στοιχειό της θλίψης.  
 Ύψώσου ποιός μου λέει; δέ δύναμαι,  
 δύνασαι κάτου Έσύ ως έμέ νά σκύψης;  
 Ρίξε από πάνου σου,  
 στους άθανάτους τή θεόπρεπη  
 παράτησε άλουργίδα του Όλύμπου,  
 έλα, κατέβα όλόγυμνη, βαφτίσου  
 στον Ιορδάνη του δακρύου,  
 κι ύστερα κρύψε τό τρανό κορμί τό ήλιόχαρο  
 στη σκέπη τή γαλάζια της Αειπάρθενης,  
 που είν' ή χαρά των άσκητών και των μαρτύρων.  
 Δέν είσ' Έσύ των έθνικων ήδονολάστρα ή Μούσα,  
 της πλαστικής και της σκληρής  
 χαράς δέν είσαι ή Πιερίδα,  
 του σπλάχνου του τρανού βαθιογάλανη  
 φορείς Έσύ πορφύρα  
 κι από του θρήνου κατεβαίνεις τήν πατρίδα.  
 Ά! δείξου στό μικρό και τον ανήμπορο,  
 και δείξου καθώς δείχνεσαι στους ταπεινούς,  
 και φτάσε καθώς φτάνει στους άμαρτωλούς,  
 και δείξου καθώς δείχνεται στους σκλάβους  
 ή Αγιά Λεούσα.

Άκου, ένα-σκούσμα τον άερα σπάραξε·  
 Ποιός κλαίει ;  
 Κοίτα, βροχή από λάβα βρέχει ένας θειφότοπος·  
 τί κλαίει ;  
 Έλα κοντά, ένας ήσκιος άργοςάλεψε,  
 και λέει :  
 Του τραγουδιου σου δέ γυρεύω πιά τό θρίαμβο,  
 μηδέ τον κόσμο τον ολάκριβο, τή Λύρα,  
 μηδέ τή μοίρα  
 του δοξασμένου διαλεχτου σου, Δέσποινα!  
 Λυπήσου,  
 και πλάσε μου,  
 και στείλε μου έναν ύπνο ήσυχο ήσυχο,  
 μέ του παιδιου τό γλυκανάσασμα,  
 μαζί μου.

## Έκροφείον Άνηθικότητος και Έγκλήματος ή Τηλεόρασις

Γ. Ζερβός, Ορθόδοξος Τύπος, Τεύχος 1474

Από τήν ήμέραν κατά τήν όποίαν ήρχισαν αί  
 Ασυλλήψεις διά τήν έξάρθρωσιν της τρομο-  
 κρατίας, είμεθα άντιμέτωποι ως πολίται μέ τήν  
 τηλεοπτικήν παραφροσύνην. Τά τηλεοπτικά δίκτυα  
 άφιερώνουν σχεδόν τέσσαρες ώρας έκαστον, διά  
 νά πληροφορήσουν τήν κοινήν γνώμην διά τάς  
 έγκληματικές ενεργείας των τρομοκρατών, τά  
 έρωτικά πάθη των, τά προσωπικά δράματά των  
 κι άλλα συναφή. Δίδουν πίστιν εις όσα λέγουν  
 οί τρομοκράται και αί μυστικάί ύπηρεσίαι, όταν  
 ή κοινωνία αισθάνεται τον έμπαιγμόν. Διότι οί  
 ιδεολογικοί, πολιτικοί και οικονομικοί έγκέφαλοι  
 της δολοφονικής όργανώσεως διαφεύγουν. Τά  
 Τηλεοπτικά Μέσα Ένημερώσεως προβαίνουν  
 ακόμη και εις άναπαραστάσεις κακουρηματικών  
 πράξεων και έπιχειρούν τήν δημιουργίαν κλίματος  
 συμπαθείας. Ο τηλεοπτικός κατήφορος δέν έχει  
 όρια. Δέν άποροϋμεν βεβαίως. Διότι τά Τηλεοπτικά  
 Μέσα ακολουθοϋν στρατηγικήν ισοπεδώσεως.

Ο πιστός λαός έγνώρισε τον χλευασμόν των ΜΜΕ,  
 όταν κατήλθεν εις τάς όδους, διά νά διαφυλάξη  
 και νά υπερασπισθή τήν έθνικήν του ταυτότητα.  
 Τόν συνέκριναν μέ τάς καθυστερημένας μάζας  
 του Ισλάμ. Οί διαμορφωταί της κοινής γνώμης  
 έστρέφοντο έναντίον της πλειοψηφίας του λαου,  
 τήν όποίαν καθύβριζαν ως όπισθοδρομικήν



καί τριτοκοσμικήν. Οί ἴδιοι οἱ δημοσιογράφοι, τὰ ἴδια Μέσα σήμερον παρέχουν βῆμα εἰς τὴν τρομοκρατίαν. Ὅτι δὲν ἐπέτυχον οἱ τρομοκράται μέ τὰς δολοφονίας, τὰς ληστείας, καί τὰς βομβιστικὰς ἐνεργείας, τό ἐπιτυχάνουν σήμερον διὰ τῆς τηλεοράσεως. Τότε ἀπέτυχον νά εἰσέλθουν εἰς τὰ «σαλόνια» τῶν οἰκιῶν. Σήμερον, χάρις εἰς τὴν τηλεόρασιν, εὐρίσκονται ἐντός τῶν οἰκιῶν καί ἕκαστον μέλος ἐκάστης οικογενείας γνωρίζει τὰ πάντα διὰ τούς τρομοκράτας. Πόσον διαφορετικά θά ἦσαν τὰ πράγματα διὰ τὴν κοινωνίαν, ἂν ἡ τηλεόρασις εἶχε διαθέσει τόν ἴδιον χρόνον διὰ τὴν προβολὴν ἐναρέτων ἀνθρώπων, φιλοσόφων καὶ ἐκφραστῶν τῆς Ἑλληνορθοδόξου Παραδόσεως;

Ἡ ἐπιχειρήσις παρακμὴ ἀπὸ τὰ ΜΜΕ, ὅμως, δὲν εἶναι τυχαία. Τὰ ΜΜΕ εἶναι μέσα μαζικῆς (ψυχικῆς-πνευματικῆς-ἠθικῆς) ἐξαθλιώσεως, συνειδητῆς καὶ ἐσκεμμένης. Σκοπὸς εἶναι ἡ μετατροπὴ τῶν ἀνθρώπων εἰς ὁμοίους ἐν ἀποβλακώσει διὰ τῆς ἰσοπεδώσεως εἰς τό κατώτατον δυνατὸν ἐπίπεδον νοήσεως, ἠθικῆς καὶ αισθητικῆς. Ὡς ὄργανα ἐξουσιαστικῶν κέντρων ἀποφάσεων τὰ ΜΜΕ καλλιεργοῦν τὸν σύγχρονον ἀναλφαβητισμὸν καὶ τὴν βαρβαροποίησιν. Οὕτως, εἰς τὰ προγράμματά των τό περιθωριακὸν ἐκδιώκει τό οὐσιῶδες, τό ἀνώμαλον ἐκτοπίζει τό ὀμαλόν, ἡ βλακεία ἀντικαθιστᾷ τὴν εὐφυΐαν, τό «Κουτσομπολιό» ὑποκαθιστᾷ τὴν πνευματικὴν συζήτησιν, αἱ ἀρνητικαὶ εἰδήσεις ἔχουν προτεραιότητα ἐναντι τῶν θετικῶν, τὰ ἀμαρτήματα προτιμῶνται ἀπὸ τὰς ἀρετάς, διαστρεβλώνονται αἱ ἐννοιαί, ἡ δημιουργία ἀγνοεῖται, οἱ σωστοὶ ἄνθρωποι διασύρονται καὶ ἡ χυδαιότης κυριαρχεῖ.

Εἰς αὐτὰ, προστίθενται τὰ πορνό, ὁ διασυρμὸς τοῦ κληρου, αἱ ἐπιθέσεις ἐναντίον τῆς γλώσσης μας, τὰ κηρύγματα ἐναντίον τοῦ «ρατσισμού» καὶ τοῦ «ἐθνικισμού», ὑπὲρ (δῆθεν) τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων δικαιωμάτων, καὶ ἡ γενικὴ διαστρέβλωσις τῆς ἱστορίας μας.

### ΑΝΑΚΟΙΝΩΣΙΣ

ΟΣΟΙ ΣΥΝΔΡΟΜΗΤΑΙ ΕΧΟΥΝ ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΙΚΗ ΕΥΧΕΡΕΙΑ, ΑΣ ΣΥΝΔΡΑΜΟΥΝ, ΑΝ ΘΕΛΟΥΝ, ΣΤΗΝ ΤΑΠΕΙΝΗ ΠΡΟΣΠΑΘΕΙΑ ΜΑΣ ΑΠΟΣΤΕΛΛΟΝΤΑΣ ΚΑΤΙ ΠΕΡΙΣΣΟΤΕΡΟ ΑΠΟ ΤΗΝ ΕΤΗΣΙΑ ΣΥΝΔΡΟΜΗΤΩΝ 24 ΔΟΛΛΑΡΙΩΝ ΠΡΟΣ ΕΝΙΣΧΥΣΙ ΤΗΣ ΑΔΕΛΦΟΤΗΤΑΣ "ΟΣΙΟΣ ΠΟΙΜΗΝ".

## Παναγία Ἡ Παραμυθία

[συνεχ. ἀπὸ σελ. 8]

ἠγούμενος καὶ συνέχισε τὴν προσευχὴ του. Ξαφνικὰ ἀκούει μιά φωνὴ ἀπὸ τὴν εἰκόνα τῆς Παναγίας:

–Νά μὴν ἀνοίξετε σήμερα τίς πύλες. Ἀνεβείτε στὰ τεῖχη καὶ διώξτε τούς πειρατές.

Γυρίζει ἀπορημένος ἀπὸ τό παράδοξο ἄκουσμα καὶ κοιτάζει τὴ Θεοτόκο. Βλέπει τότε ἄλλο θαῦμα ἐκπληκτικώτερο: Τό πρόσωπο τῆς Παναγίας καὶ τοῦ θεοῦ Βρέφους εἶχαν ζωντανέψει. Τὴν ἴδια στιγμὴ ὁ μικρὸς Ἰησοῦς ἀπλώνει τό χέρι, σκεπάζει τό στόμα τῆς Παναγίας Μητέρας Του, καὶ στρέφοντας τό πρόσωπό Του πρὸς αὐτὴν τῆς λέει:

–Ὅχι, μητέρα, μὴν τό λές! Ἄφησέ τους νά τιμωρηθοῦν, ὅπως τούς ἀξίζει!

Ἡ Παναγία ὅμως πιάνει τό χέρι τοῦ Υἱοῦ της, στρέφει λίγο δεξιὰ τό πρόσωπό της καὶ ξαναλέει:

–Νά μὴν ἀνοίξετε σήμερα τίς πύλες τῆς μονῆς!

Ὁ ἠγούμενος συγκλονισμένος σύναξε τούς μοναχοὺς καὶ τούς διηγήθηκε ὅσα θαυμαστά εἶδε καὶ ἄκουσε. Κι ἐκεῖνοι διαπίστωσαν μέ δέος ὅτι τὰ ἱερά πρόσωπα στὴν εἰκόνα τῆς Θεομήτορος εἶχαν ἀλλάξει στάση καὶ ἔκφραση. Ὑστερα, ἀφοῦ εὐχαρίστησαν τὴν Παναγία γιὰ τὴ σωτήρια πρόνοιά της, ἀνέβηκαν στὰ τεῖχη.

Ἦταν καιρὸς. Οἱ πειρατές μέ σκάλες καὶ τσεκούρια ἐτοιμάζονταν γιὰ τὴν ἀναρρίχηση. Ὁ ἠγούμενος, ὄρθιος στίς ἐπάλλξεις, τούς ἄφησε πρῶτα νά πλησιάσουν. Ὑστερα, ὑψώνοντας τὸν Τίμιο Σταυρό, ἔδωσε τό σύνθημα γιὰ τὴν ἀπόκρουση. Δέκα πειρατές ἔπεσαν ἀμέσως νεκροί, ἄλλοι τραυματίστηκαν, καὶ οἱ ὑπόλοιποι μπῆκαν στὰ πλοῖα κι ἔφυγαν.

Οἱ μοναχοὶ κατέβηκαν συγκινημένοι στὸν ναὸ καὶ εὐχαρίστησαν γιὰ μιά ἀκόμη φορὰ τὴ Θεοτόκο. Ἀπὸ τότε ἡ εἰκόνα πῆρε τὴν προσωνυμία «Παραμυθία», δηλαδή παρηγορία, καὶ παραμένει μέχρι σήμερα ἀλλαγμένη, γιὰ νά θυμίζει τό θαυμαστὸ ἐκεῖνο γεγονός.

ΥΠΕΡΑΓΙΑ ΘΕΟΤΟΚΕ  
ΣΩΣΟΝ ΗΜΑΣ





## ON THE APPEARANCE OF JESUS CHRIST

By Pouplios Lantoulos & St. Nicodemos the Hagiorite

Concerning the God-man, the Son and Logos of God, the Evangelists and Apostles wrote about His works in the world in the Divine Gospels. They recorded the accounts of His transfiguration, His crucifixion, His resurrection and His ascension up to heaven. But there were many other private individuals of that period, not followers of Christ, who wrote a more detailed account concerning the life of the Lord. One who wrote about the character, appearances, form and figure of Christ which is worthy of mention, is the Roman Pouplios Lantoulos, who lived during the days of our Lord, residing in Jerusalem at that time. He wrote a letter to the Roman senate which is as follows:

*In those days there appeared a young man, who is still living, a youth that has great power and whose name is Jesus Christ. The populace calls Him a strong prophet and His disciples call Him, Son of God. He raised the dead to life; and cures the sick of every type of disease. The youth is tall but well proportioned. The countenance of His face is both serious and active, so that those who look at Him love Him, and yet in another way, they are afraid of Him. The hair on His head is the color of wine down to the beginning of His ears, lacking brilliance. It is smooth from the beginning of His ears to His shoulders, then twisted and brilliant from the shoulders down, where it hangs divided according to the custom of the Nazarenes. His forehead is smooth and clean, His face without blemish decorated with a light pink color. His appearance is polite and joyful, His nose and mouth are altogether blameless. His beard is thick being of the same color as His hair, and is also divided in two, while His eyes are blue and filled with extreme brilliance. When He scolds He is fearful; when He teaches and advises, He is attractive and beloved. Wonder is the grace of His face and dignified. Not once was He seen laughing, but He was often seen crying. According to the height of His body, His hands being very straight and His arms graceful, and according to His generation, He is the nicest of all men.*

St. Nicodemos the Hagiorite, in "A Handbook of Spiritual Counsel, the Classics of Western Spirituality Proper Delights of the Mind", addresses the great delight of envisioning the physical appearance of Christ.

*Let me say this too. Even the mere envision of the physical appearance and the beauty of the divine face of Jesus brings inexpressible delight so that you will want to say enthusiastically: "You are all sweetness, O Savior; You are all desire and appeal; You are all insatiate; You are all beauty irresistible." Also you will want to say: "You have attracted me with desire, O Christ, and You*

*have transfigured me with your divine love." Moreover, you will want to say with St. Paul: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" (Rom. 8:35) Also you will want to ask the question of the bride: "Have you seen him whom my soul loves?" (Song of Solomon 3:3) And you will want to say many other words of love.*

*Think of those most pure eyes of Jesus, so calm, so sweet; the straightness of His nose; the somewhat chestnut-colored and at the same time golden hair and beard of His; His great and joyous forehead; the blended color of His calm and royal face; His fine, long fingers and his perfectly shaped hands; His moderate stature, and simply all of the other symmetry and grace, which shone in all His members. Jesus was so beautiful that, as Lentulus, that officer who had seen the Lord with his own eyes in Jerusalem, wrote to the senate in Rome, there has never appeared on earth another person more beautiful than Jesus. Foreseeing this beauty, prophet David wrote: "You are the most beautiful of the sons of men" (Ps 45:2). Aquila rendered this line, "You are adorned with beauty by the sons of men." Symmachus rendered it: "Among the sons of men You are good in beauty." The bride in the Song speaks lovingly to Him: "Behold, You are beautiful, my beloved, truly lovely (Song 1:16) This is why the people could not be satisfied when looking upon Him, nor did they want to take their attention away from Him.*

*St. John Chrysostom explaining this passage "When Jesus saw great crowds around Him" (Matt. 8:18), wrote: "The people were really attracted to Him and they loved Him and marveled at Him, desiring always to be looking upon Him. Who would want to leave while He was doing these marvelous deeds? Who would not want to simply get a glance at the face and the mouth that as saying such wonderful things? He was not so wonderful only when He was doing wonders, but even when He was just looked upon, simply He was just full of grace." This is what the prophet David meant when he said that He was the most beautiful among the sons of man.*

*Now if the physical body of sweetest Jesus was so beautiful then when He was bearing a corruptible body, how much more beautiful is it now that it has become incorruptible and glorified and His divine face is shining in heaven infinitely more brightly than the sun? This is why St. John Chrysostom has sought with his eloquent homilies to move us to do everything we can so that we may achieve and enjoy the most sweet vision of the glorified and most beautiful and most desired divine face of Jesus. For if one is to be deprived of the vision of that most beautiful and most desired face of Jesus, this is truly a worse calamity than a thousand hells. For as St. John Chrysostom wrote:*

*"Even if we experience a thousand hells, none of these will be anything like the experience of seeing the calm face of Jesus and His serene eyes turn away from us as being unable to endure looking upon us."*

## THE 30TH BIRTHDAY OF A GENOCIDE

Anonymous

This week I turn 30. It's hard to believe. How time flies. January 22, 1973 seems like so long ago. I'm the oldest in my family. It's a pretty big family, but I'll explain that later.

If you're a baby boomer, you probably don't think much of my generation — Gen X. But that's because we're a threat to you! My generation is changing the world! Just think of all that has happened in the world these past 30 years...

The end of Vietnam. Watergate. Jimmy Carter. Actually, I don't remember much from the 70s, since I was just entering elementary school when Ronald Reagan became president.

I loved the 80s. That's when I grew up, but I had no idea just how much the world was changing.

Then, the Berlin Wall fell. I'll never forget that day in November, 1989. I was 16 and on top of the world. I can remember my history teacher telling me that the world would never be the same. He was right.

Then, something even more dramatic developed. The Internet. If you want to understand me and my generation, then go online. When I was in college, a few of my friends saw it coming. We helped start a revolution online. And don't believe it when they say the Internet bubble has burst. The only thing that has burst is the old way of doing business. Now there are no boundaries for people like me. The sky is truly the limit! I got married three years ago to a beautiful and loving woman, and we're expecting our first child in three months. A new generation begins...

Yes, life is good. Except for one problem. You see, I wasn't actually born on January 22, 1973. In fact, I wasn't born at all. I never was given the chance to take even that first breath... never mind then 381 million breaths that would have followed over these 30 years. Not a single breath. That's because of something else that happened on January 22, 1973. Seven justices made a decision that would dramatically affect my life... and the lives of 40 million others who would never take a breath. That's my family. And it's growing every day. In fact, in the next 24 hours the family of abortion victims will grow by about as many people who died when the World Trade Center buildings collapsed. The 9-11 cleanup concluded after nearly a year, but our cleanup, the one from 1-22 continues. And to think it was all based on a lie. Jane "Roe" of Roe v. Wade was lied to. And so were you — if you believed even for a moment that the mass of tissue wasn't a human life. That mass of tissue was me!

My goal here isn't to make you feel guilty. Rather, think of me... or what could have been me... the next time the topic of abortion comes up.

Think of me graduating from high school and going to college. Think of me getting married and having children. Think of me celebrating my birthday this Wednesday with family and friends.

Think of me turning 30...

If you wish to help reduce my family's size in the future, PLEASE visit "<http://www.grassfire.net/21/life.asp>" and sign the Petition for Life...

## A PERSPECTIVE ON ISLAM AND JIHAD

William J. Herald, from [orthodoxjurisdictions@yahoo.com](mailto:orthodoxjurisdictions@yahoo.com)

Ms. Bat Ye'or<sup>(1)</sup>, an expert on Islam, in her latest book provides a refreshingly honest perspective on Islam and Jihad. Her book is titled "Islam and Dhimmitude<sup>(2)</sup>: Where Civilizations Collide" and in it she examines the trend toward dhimmitude during the 20th century. An assessment of Jihad and Dhimmitude is all the more essential since the terrorist Jihad-war struck America on 11 September 2001. She informs us "that the ideology of jihad was formulated by Muslim jurists and scholars, including such luminaries as Averroes and Ibn Khaldun, from the 8th century onward. A recent Harvard commencement speech notwithstanding, these voluminous writings establish unequivocally the notion of jihad as a war of conquest. For example, Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406) stated, "...the holy war is a religious duty, because of the universality of the Muslim mission and the obligation to convert everyone to Islam either by persuasion or by force...". Jihad conquests were brutal, imperialist advances that spurred waves of Arab and Turkish Muslims to expropriate a vast expanse of lands, and subdue millions of indigenous peoples, across three continents — Asia, Africa, and Europe. Moreover, jihad ideology ultimately regulated the relations of Muslims with non-Muslims. The contemporary relevance of this ideology is also clear, and disturbing.

Professor John Esposito, director of the Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown University, recently identified Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, as one of the most influential contemporary Muslim thinkers. Sheikh al-Qaradawi, an Egyptian cleric and the spiritual leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, reaches an enormous audience during his regular appearances on Al Jazeera. During a January 9, 1998 interview, Sheikh al-Qaradawi observed that Islamic law divided the People of the Book — Jews and Christians — into three categories: 1) non-Muslims in the lands of war; 2) non-Muslims in lands of

temporary truce; 3) non-Muslims protected by Islamic law, that is to say, the dhimmis.

The sheikh had thus summarized the theory of jihad in a few words. Now, as we see from countless calls for jihad and daily world events, this ideology still impregnates current thinking and conduct. Jihad as such, is a genocidal war, since it orders men to be massacred and women and children to be enslaved, if there is resistance. In the Southern Sudan, the ugly living embodiment of the jihad war ideology is visible with the enslavement of the wives and children of Christian and Animist rebels by Muslim agents of the Khartoum government. Unfortunately, although many Muslims do not adhere to this ideology, formal rejection of its precepts by the major Islamic clerics at Al-Azhar University in Egypt, or in Saudi Arabia, has not occurred.

Historically, non-Muslims conquered by jihad wars were governed by the laws of “dhimmitude.” As opposed to flimsy notions of “tolerance” and “protection,” dhimmitude was the actual sociopolitical, and economic status of these vanquished peoples (dhimmis), including Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, Hindus, and Buddhists. Unfortunately, this “tolerance” and “protection” was afforded only upon submission to Islamic domination by a “Pact” — or Dhimma — which imposed degrading and discriminatory regulations. The main principles of dhimmitude are: (i) the inequality of rights in all domains between Muslims and dhimmis; (ii) the social and economic discrimination against the dhimmis; (iii) the humiliation and vulnerability of the dhimmis. Numerous documents from both Islamic sources and the dhimmi peoples, establish the origins and aims of these nefarious regulations, including their contemporary incarnations (for example, in Iran, Egypt, the Sudan, Pakistan, and of course in Saudi Arabia, and under the Taliban in Afghanistan).

Every society and religion has developed its own form of fanaticism, particularly during periods of expansion, or internal unrest. In the Judeo-Christian societies, however, the separation of politics and religion — sometimes, it is true, entirely theoretical — has permitted intolerance and oppression to be challenged. The men who fought for the abolition of slavery and the emancipation of the Jews were Christians. Jews and Christians struggled side by side for the recognition of human rights. A similar progressive movement has yet to appear in the Muslim world, which has never acknowledged the oppressed dhimmi, or recognized that the degradation of the dhimmi represents a crime against humanity. The Muslim intelligentsia has failed to condemn both jihad as a genocidal war, and dhimmitude as a dehumanizing institution, which together resulted in imperialism, slavery, and the deportation

of populations, whose historical and cultural patrimony were totally destroyed. If Muslims continue to avoid meaningful self-criticism of their own history of jihad and dhimmitude, it will be impossible for Islam to accept non-Muslims as full equals, and past prejudices will continue to be rampant.”

<sup>(1)</sup> Ms. Bat Ye’or is the author of “Islam and Dhimmitude: Where Civilizations Collide.” She was born in Egypt. A British citizen living in Switzerland, since 1971 she has written numerous articles and three books on non-Muslims under Islam.

<sup>(2)</sup> *Dhimmitude*: the Islamic system of governing populations conquered by *jihad* wars, encompassing all of the demographic, ethnic, and religious aspects of the political system. The word “dhimmitude” comes from *dhimmi*, an Arabic word meaning “protected”. *Dhimmi* was the name applied by the Arab-Muslim conquerors to indigenous non-Muslim populations who surrendered by a treaty (*dhimma*) to Muslim domination.

**The devil fasts; he never eats; he lives in virginity since he never marries; he keeps vigils. Have you ever heard of the devil sleeping? You work, but do you think he just sits around? He cannot just sit around. Do you think you could outrun him if you started running? In a split second he can be at the other end of the world. There is only one way in which you can surpass him, and that is for you to say to yourself, I am nothing but dust and ashes. I am a sinner and can do nothing. I am not worthy even to live on this earth! Humility is the only thing the devil fears. He is not afraid of anything else, not even if you were the most ascetic person on the earth! If you do not ask others for forgiveness you are in his hands for him to mock as he pleases.**

**Elder Cleopa (+1998)**

**Before all things, keep that good thing which is committed to your trust - - the holy Word of Faith wherein you have been taught and instructed. And let no weed of heresy grow up among you, but preserve the heavenly seed pure and sincere - - that it may yield a manifold harvest to the Master, when he comes to demand account of our lives and to reward us according to our deeds...**

**St. Ioasaph of India**



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TO:

## PROCLAMATION IN FOR THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ASIA MINOR CATASTOPHE

By the Governor of New York, George E. Pataki

Whereas, the Empire State is home to many ethnic communities whose members benefit from the freedom and democracy upon which our Nation was founded; as a global leader in many areas of basic human and social rights, New York State has a prominent role in acknowledging events in history — many of them tragic and distressing — that teach valuable lessons from which our greater society benefits; such events are the destruction of the city of Smyrna and the Genocide of the Greeks of Pontus and Asia Minor, tragedies that took the lives of hundreds of thousands of Greek civilians during World War I; and

Whereas, these Greeks, whose ancestors had lived in communities along present-day northern Turkey near the Black Sea for three millennia, were singled out by the Turkish authorities for expulsion from their ancestral lands along with Armenians and Assyrians; from 1915-1923, Greeks of Asia Minor endured immeasurable cruelty during a Turkish Government-sanctioned systematic campaign to displace them; destroying Greek towns and villages and slaughtering additional hundreds of thousands of civilians in areas where Greeks composed a majority, as on the Black Sea coast, Pontus, and areas around Smyrna; those who survived were exiled from Turkey and today they and their descendants live throughout the Greek diaspora; and

Whereas, in 1922, Smyrna, the largest city in Asia Minor called “the jewel of the Mediterranean”, a cosmopolitan hub populated

by a highly educated Greek community and flourishing commercial and middle-classes, was sacked and burned and its inhabitants massacred by the Turkish forces; the pier of Smyrna became a scene of final desperation as the approaching flames forced many thousands to jump to their death, rather than be consumed by flame; George Horton, the Consul General of the United States in Smyrna at the time of the catastrophe, is quoted as saying, “...the destruction of Smyrna happened, however, in 1922, and no act ever perpetrated by the Turkish race in all its bloodstained history has been characterized by more brutal and lustful features, nor more productive of the worst of human sufferings inflicted on the defenseless and unarmed. It was a fittingly lurid and Satanic finale to the whole dreadful tragedy...”; and

Whereas, it is believed by many that acknowledgment and awareness of this shameful event will not only teach future generations, but also will help mankind prevent such crimes from being repeated; this concept is particularly important as our State works to instill in youth, a universal respect for other cultures, races, religions and viewpoints; and

Whereas, it is fitting that all freedom-loving people worldwide and New Yorkers alike, share in the solemn commemoration of the of Great Catastrophe of Asia Minor of 1915-23, and join with the Greek-American community and its many religious, communal and philanthropic organizations as they honor the sacrifices and memory of their noble ancestors;

Now, Therefore, I, George E. Pataki, Governor of the State of New York, do hereby proclaim October 6th, 2002 as the 80th Anniversary of the Commemoration of the Burning of Smyrna and the Persecution of the Greeks of Asia Minor in the Empire State.

George E. Pataki



# Orthodox Heritage

Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle [2 Thessalonians 2:15]

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Brotherhood of St. Poimen

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## ST. PHOTIOS THE GREAT, A PILLAR OF ORTHODOXY

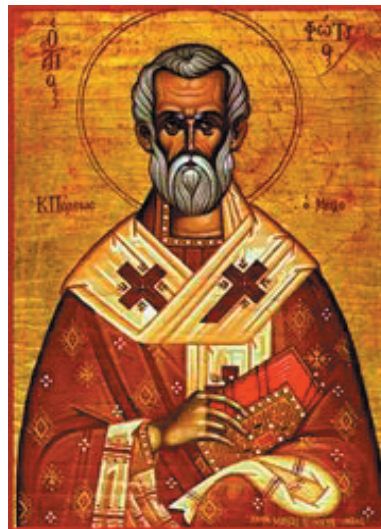
From "<http://www.oca.org>"

Saint Photios, Patriarch of Constantinople, lived during the IX Century, and came from a family of zealous Christians. His father, Sergios, had died a martyr's death in defense of holy icons. His mother, Irene, was an extremely pious woman. Saint Photios received an excellent education and, having family relations with the imperial house, he occupied the position of first state secretary in the Senate. His contemporaries said of him: "He so distinguished himself with knowledge in almost all the secular sciences, that it rightfully might be possible to take into account the glory of his age and compare it with the ancients." The young successor to the throne, Michael, and the future Enlightener of the Slavs, the Equal-to-the-Apostles Cyril, were taught the sciences by him. Deep Christian piety protected Saint Photios from being seduced with the charms of court life—with all his soul he yearned towards monasticism.

In 857 the co-ruler with Emperor Michael, Bardas, expelled Patriarch Ignatios from the Constantinople cathedra-see. The bishops, knowing the piety and extensive knowledge of Photios, informed the emperor about him as a man worthy to occupy the arch-pastoral throne. Saint Photios with humility (and with great re-

sistance in the beginning) eventually accepted the proposal. Over the course of 6 days he was led through the hierarchical positions, and on the day of the Nativity of Christ he was ordained bishop with elevation to the patriarchal throne. Soon, however, there began discord within the Church, stirred up by the expulsion of Patriarch Ignatios from the cathedra. In the year 861 a Council was convened to end the unrest, and at which was af-

firmed the deposition of Ignatios and the affirming of Photios as patriarch. Pope Nicholas I, the envoys of whom were present at this Council, hoped by affirming Photios as patriarch therein to subordinate him to his power, but not having received what he expected, he betrayed Photios with an anathema at a Roman Council. From that moment there



St. Photios the Great  
Patriarch of Constantinople

began for Saint Photios, and lasting to the very end of his life, his opposition to the papal bullying and encroachment upon the Orthodox Church.

In 864 the Bulgarians voluntarily converted to Christianity. The Bulgarian prince Boris was baptized as they proposed, by Patriarch Photios himself, after which Saint Photios dispatched an archbishop and priests for the Baptism of the Bulgarian people, and in the year

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#### OUR MISSION

To be instruments of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, as He awakens the souls of believers into an awareness of the love, grace, peace and mercy realized when one lives the Word of God, kept and preserved through the ages by the Greek Orthodox Church and Her Holy Traditions.

To be a voice crying out for the return to sacrificial living in accordance with the Apostolic Traditions and through the Orthodox Faith. In this ever-changing world, Christ is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow and so is His Bride, the Holy, never-changing Greek Orthodox Church.

To confront any movement, no matter how subtle, whose message is heretic and whose impact is the schism of His Church or the protestantization of our Faith.

The *Orthodox Heritage* is published monthly by the St. Poimen Greek Orthodox Brotherhood.

Please note that all correspondence should be addressed to the Brotherhood  
at the Phoenix address or the e-mail address above.

The *Orthodox Heritage* may, at times, bring up issues or present articles that some may deem controversial or consider as non-conducive to the universal message of our Lord's Salvation for all nations and all people. We consider such material as necessary so as to ensure that a distinction be made between salvation and the 20th century heresy of ecumenism. These are confusing times for all Orthodox faithful and political convenience must be sacrificed so that the message of His TRUTH be brought forth in the limelight.

If you wish to have this mailed to your home, please write us or e-mail us with your address. Your contribution of \$24 per annum will greatly assist us in the costs that it takes to bring this to you.

Checks may be made out to "St. Poimen Greek Orthodox Brotherhood". Paypal users may utilize their credit card and address payments to our e-mail address, "poimen@mail.com".

865—Saints Cyril and Methodios were dispatched for the preaching of Christ in the Slavonic language. But the partisans of the pope incited the distrust of the Bulgarians towards the preachers of the Eastern Church. The calamitous situation in Bulgaria, because of an invasion by the Germans, forced them to seek help in the West, and the Bulgarian prince turned to the pope with a request to send his bishops. Having arrived in Bulgaria, the papal delegates began actively to affirm there Latin teachings and usages in place of the Orthodox. Saint Photios, being a firm defender of truth and denouncer of untruth, informed the Eastern Church by means of a circular letter about the deeds of the pope, indicating that the falling away of the Roman Church from its ancient Orthodoxy was not only in rituals, but also in confession of faith. A Council was convened, censuring the arrogance of the Latins and the pope.

In 867 Basil the Macedonian seized the imperial throne, having murdered the emperor Michael. Saint Photios denounced the murderer and did not permit him to partake of the Holy Mysteries of Christ. For this he was removed from the patriarchal throne and locked up in a monastery under guard. In his place was again put Patriarch Ignatios. A

Council was convened for an investigation into the conduct of Saint Photios: this Council was made with the participation of papal delegates, who demanded of the Council the signing of a document about the unconditional subordination of all the Church to the judgment of the pope. The Eastern bishops, not in agreement with this, entered into an argument with the delegates. Summoned to the Council, Saint Photios answered all the accusations of the legates with silence, and only to the question of the judges as to whether he wished to repent, did he reply: "Wherefore do ye consider yourselves judges?" The opponents of Photios after long disputes gained the victory, and their judgment being baseless, they pronounced an anathema upon Patriarch Photios and the bishops defending him. The saint was sent to prison for 7 years, and by his own testimony, "he thanked the Lord, for patiently enduring His judges...".

During this period of time the Latin clergy were expelled from Bulgaria because of the arrogance of the pope, and Patriarch Ignatios sent there his bishops. In 879, after the death of Patriarch Ignatios, a Council was convened (many fathers of the Church call it the Eighth Ecumenical), and again Saint Photios was acknowledged as the lawful pastor

of the Church. Pope John, the new pope in Rome, knowing Photios personally, through his envoys declared at the Council the annulling of all the former papal decisions about Photios. The Council acknowledged the inalterable invariability of the Nicene-Constantinople Creed, rejecting the Latin distortion (“flioque”), and it acknowledged the independence and equality of both thrones and both Churches (Western and Eastern). The Council decided to abolish usages and rituals in the Bulgaria church introduced by the Latins, which ended their governance there.

Under Emperor Basil’s successor, Leo, Saint Photios again suffered through false denunciations, being accused of speaking against the emperor. Again deposed from his cathedra-see in the year 886, the saint finished his days at the Armonia monastery.

The Orthodox Church venerates Saint Photios as a zealous defender of Orthodoxy from domination by the pope and

## ABORTION THE INDESCRIBABLE CALAMITY AND HOLOCAUST!

from <http://home.it.net.au/~jgrapsas/>

An iconographer, Mr. Kostas Vrousgos from Thessaloniki, has painted a remarkable icon, which has come to be known as “The Abortion Icon”.

Within the icon, we observe Christ our God (bearing the title “Ο Ων” which means “He Who Is” in Greek) is seen looking down from Heaven. His right hand is extended towards the family depicted just below Him, in the characteristic form of blessing. The father of the family is seen supporting and playing with his beloved children, and the mother is seen offering care and the necessities of life.

At the bottom left of the Icon the patience and long-suffering of the unmarried mother who chose to support her baby and suffer hardship or social shame rather than have it killed, is depicted as a mother, nursing her infant whilst bearing the weight of the Cross that she carries daily.

Below the Blessed family unit, we see a woman clothed in red, on her knees

with hands raised in repentance and tears streaming from her eyes. She has undergone an abortion. In her lap rests the dismembered remains of her murdered baby. The woman is tearfully calling to our Lord for Mercy, as she has realised the grave error of her deed. She seeks healing in the Sacrament of Confession and repentance. Of course, this equally applies to the irresponsible and unloving father of the child as well.

In contrast to the repentant mother who yearns for mercy, above and to the right of her, is a series of women, who purposely and intently present their infants for slaughter for various worldly reasons; uncontrolled sensuality, hard-heartedness, superficiality and indifference. The children they carry are a nuisance and a bother, affecting their selfish and hedonistic way of life. The children are offered to a queen. She is given the title, “the new Herod”, who was responsible for the slaughter of thousands of infants at the time of the birth of Christ. This evil queen is Abortion. At her feet lay the dismembered bodies of countless innocents.

Above in Heaven, we see the Mother of God, the Ever-Virgin Mary, the Perfect Mother, who is seen nursing the Infant Christ. To Her left is our Father among the Saints, Saint Stylianos the protector and patron saint of children. The Mother of God, the Saints and all the Heavenly bodies grieve as they look down and see the holocaust below. The Angels weep at this indescribable calamity below.

Behind the evil queen can be seen her servant, the abortionist, murdering another child. Behind the abortionist is the master of the evil queen, the beast, the evil one, who gleefully watches as the mothers offer their children for slaughter, in the process losing their own souls to the beast.

The icon was painted with the blessing of Bishop Joseph of Arianzos. It has been published in thousands of copies. His Grace wrote the following text about abortion and the Icon,

printed on the reverse side of the Icon.

“The All-Holy God is the fountain of life. Life belongs to him. His love provides life to all living organisms and especially to man, whom He created in His own image and likeness. We live and exist because of the overflowing love of God. As in this sacred overflowing love of





God which is life, every person has a right which cannot be taken away. The Son and Word of God became human, was crucified and was resurrected so that all “may have life and abundantly they may have” (John 10:10). God’s gift of life is inviolable and murder is forbidden by the Holy Scriptures and the Holy Tradition of the Church (Holy Fathers, Synods and Canons). He who takes away life opposes the work of the Life-giving Lord and joins with the devil, who “was a murderer from the beginning” (John 8:44).

Human life begins from the moment of conception and fertilisation. The Church believes this, and so does contemporary medicine (Panhellenic Medical Conference 1985). Furthermore the science of embryology, with the assistance of ultrasound and of other admirable technological means which are available, proved that the unborn baby is “certainly a new human being, a new member of human society, inseparable from each and every one of us in any way” (Dr Bernard Nathanson). Therefore, from the moment of conception, the violation of life at whatever stage is murder! As much as the killing of an adult or an adolescent is murder, so much so is the killing of a foetus by abortion at any stage of pregnancy. It is the cowardly murder of an innocent and completely unprotected human being, which has no possibility whatsoever to defend or protect itself.

Despite all these, the various human passions and especially sensuality, hard-heartedness, superficiality and indifference, very often lead to abortion as a “solution” of some “unwanted” or otherwise problematic pregnancy! Nevertheless, this is no solution. It is a manifestation of rage of the above-mentioned fathomless passions, which characterise the souls which are found outside the life of the Church and the fear of God.

I believe that this most beautiful Icon by the talented Iconographer Mr Costas Vrousos, very clearly expresses all the Church wants to say to Her children about the dreadful subject, the indescribable calamity of abortion, the contemporary baby-killer Herod. The Iconographer’s ability to blend colours, being led by the Spirit of Truth, presents the causes of evil, the murderers of innocent babes, the sadness of the Life-giving Christ, the solution and need for repentance of the mother, the equally responsible and unloving father and perjurer murderer-doctor, and to anyone else associated with the crime. The testimonial cross of the unmarried mother who prefers the cost of social shame rather than the killing of her child. The blessing of the Christian family. The eternal prototype of the mother of God, the all-honoured person of the breast-feeding Mother of the Blessed One. No other comment is needed”.

## ORTHODOX PIETY AND SIMPLICITY FROM SIBERIA

From <http://www.russianorthodoxchurch.ws/>



The day of the Epiphany of the Lord turned out to be a magnificent day. The Sun provided, by Siberian standards, warmth, minus 15 degrees... Because the holiday fell on a Sunday, there were more worshippers than

usual. Bishop Evtikhii of Siberia and Ishim concelebrated at the Epiphany Cathedral in Ishim with Hieromonk Savva, Deacon Mikhail Buryakov and Deacon Andrei Sikooff, visiting from Germany. The service was solemn and joyful. At the end of Divine Liturgy, Vladyka Evtikhii gave a sermon in which he underscored the importance of correct belief in God—the Holy Trinity, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for if a person does not possess this proper belief, he is incapable of accepting the Gospel teachings and is like a closed vessel, which cannot be filled with water no matter how deeply the vessel is submerged.



After the Great Blessing of the water at Ishim’s “Jordan,” while the faithful approached the cross in the church, Bishop Evtikhii said that today he saw many people

in church for the first time, though many had come before—on Epiphany the year before. “Do not be ashamed of your faith,” said Vladyka, “I know that you have it; show it and bolster it: pray, do good deeds. I hope that the water of the Epiphany will touch your hearts, will make your hearts open to accepting the Gospel teachings of Jesus Christ.”



## Ηλεκτρονικό Έλεγχο Σκέψης και Προθέσεων Έτοιμάζουν ΗΠΑ και ΕΕ

ΠΗΓΗ : Περιοδικό «Χριστιανική», τεύχος 641

**Η**λεκτρονικό σύστημα με το οποίο θα ελέγχεται ο έγκεφαλος του ανθρώπου, για να διαπιστώνεται αν έχει διαπράξει κάποια αξιόποινη πράξη, ή και αν έχει ύποπτες προθέσεις για τη διάπραξή της, έτοιμάζει η ΝΑΣΑ. Προοπτική που μόνο σ' έργα επιστημονικής φαντασίας συναντάται και προκαλεί φρίκη.

Όπως έγραψε το «Βήμα» (21/8/2002), η σχετική τεχνολογία βασίζεται σ' έρευνα του καθηγητή βιοψυχολογίας Λόρενς Φάργουελ, σύμφωνα με την οποία από τη μελέτη των έγκεφαλικών κυμάτων κάποιου ανθρώπου μπορεί να διαπιστωθεί αν έχει διαπράξει κάποιο έγκλημα, αφού η πράξη αυτή καταγράφεται και αποθηκεύεται σε συγκεκριμένο σημείο του έγκεφάλου! Η ΝΑΣΑ προχωρεί πάρα πέρα. Προγραμματίζει σύστημα που να έρευνά και τις προθέσεις για διάπραξη τρομοκρατικής ενέργειας!

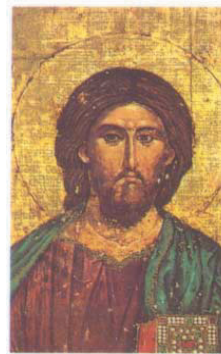
Η «πρόοδος» και ο «έκσυγχρονισμός», που μās επιφυλάσσει «η ήγέτιδα του έλευθέρου κόσμου», οδηγεί σε μία κοινωνία που θα περνά, όπως και τώρα, από έλεγχο των αποσκευών του πολίτη. Αμέσως μετά θα ελέγχεται ο έγκεφαλός του, οι σκέψεις και οι προθέσεις του! Εάν ο νοϋς του πολίτη δεν λειτουργεί σύμφωνα με τις ιδέες της Νέας Τάξης, θα χαρακτηρίζεται τρομοκράτης και η συνέχεια δεν ελέγχεται... Θα άστυνομεύεται και θα διώκεται όχι μόνο η παράνομη πράξη, όπως εξάλλου είναι επιβεβλημένο, αλλά και το φρόνημα και η σκέψη που θα κρίνεται ως πρόθεση διάπραξης αξιόποινης πράξης!

Οι παραπάνω έφιαλτικές προοπτικές δεν κινούνται στον χώρο της ουτοπίας, αλλά βρίσκονται στο πεδίο του έφικτου της σημερινής τεχνολογίας. Εάν, μάλιστα, δεν υπάρξουν, διεθνείς αντιδράσεις και αντιστάσεις, τότε ένα πανίσχυρο όπλο για την έπιβολή μίας παγκόσμιας δικτατορίας, με το πιό άπάνθρωπο και κτηνώδες πρόσωπο που έχει γνωρίσει η ανθρωπότητα, θα βρίσκεται στη διάθεση των ήγετων της Νέας Τάξης.

Αλλά, αν τα σχέδια της ΝΑΣΑ θ' άπαιτήσουν μερικά χρόνια για να γίνουν πράξη, το καθολικό ηλεκτρονικό φακέλωμα στον χώρο της Ε.Ε. δεν είναι πολύ μακριά. Για το διεθυντήριο των Βρυξελλών φαίνεται ότι η Συνθήκη Σένγκεν δεν είναι άρκετή. Γι' αυτό το λόγο μεγάλα κόμματα της Ευρωβουλής, το Συντηρητικό και το Σοσιαλιστικό, έχουν συναποφασίσει να ζητήσουν την

ύποχρεωτική τήρηση άρχείου όλων των τηλεφωνικών συνδιαλέξεων και όλων των έπιστολών ηλεκτρονικού ταχυδρομείου (e-mail) των κατοίκων της Ε.Ε.!

Το μέτρο ύποτίθεται ότι προτείνεται για την πρόληψη και πάταξη της τρομοκρατίας. Είναι, όμως, προφανές ότι μία τέτοια πρακτική παραβιάζει θεμελιώδη δικαιώματα του πολίτη, προσβάλλει βάνανυσα την ανθρωπινή αξιοπρέπεια και έχει ως μοναδικό στόχο την άστυνόμηση σε πλανητικό επίπεδο των κοινωνικών άγώνων έναντι της παγκοσμιοποίησης, της αθλιότητας και βαρβαρότητας της Νέας Τάξης.



«**Ε**γώ πατήρ, εγώ αδελφός, εγώ νυμφίος, εγώ οικία, εγώ τροφεύς, εγώ ιμάτιον, εγώ ρίζα, εγώ θεμέλιος. Πάν ὡς ἄν θέλεις εγώ. Μηδενός ἐν χρεία κατὰ στείς. **Ε**γώ

δουλεύσω. ἤλθον ἵνα διακονῆσαι, οὐ διακονῆσθαι. **Ε**γώ καί φίλος καί ξένος καί κεφαλή καί αδελφός καί αδελφή καί μήτηρ. Πάντα εγώ. Μόνον οικείως ἔχε πρὸς ἐμέ. **Ε**γώ πένης διά σέ καί αλείψης διά σέ, ἐπί σταυροῦ διά σέ, ἄνω ὑπέρ σου ἐντυχάνω τῷ Πατρί. Κάτω ὑπέρ σου πρεσβευτῆς παραίτεονα παρά τοῦ Πατρός. Πάντα μοι σύ καί αδελφός καί συτκληρονόμος καί φίλος καί μέλος. Τί πλέον θέλεις;»

ἱ. Χρυσόστομος

### ΑΝΑΚΟΙΝΩΣΙΣ

ΟΣΟΙ ΣΥΝΔΡΟΜΗΤΑΙ ΕΧΟΥΝ ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΙΚΗ ΕΥΧΕΡΕΙΑ, ΑΣ ΣΥΝΔΡΑΜΟΥΝ, ΑΝ ΘΕΛΟΥΝ, ΣΤΗΝ ΤΑΠΕΙΝΗ ΠΡΟΣΠΑΘΕΙΑ ΜΑΣ ΑΠΟΣΤΕΛΛΟΝΤΑΣ ΚΑΤΙ ΠΕΡΙΣΣΟΤΕΡΟ ΑΠΟ ΤΗΝ ΕΤΗΣΙΑ ΣΥΝΔΡΟΜΗ ΤΩΝ 24 ΔΟΛΛΑΡΙΩΝ ΠΡΟΣ ΕΝΙΣΧΥΣΙ ΤΗΣ ΑΔΕΛΦΟΤΗΤΑΣ "ΟΣΙΟΣ ΠΟΙΜΗΝ".

## Νεοειδωλολατρικές Περιπλανήσεις και η Άληθής Έμπειρία της Εκκλησίας

ΠΗΓΗ : Ίερομόναχος, Φιλόθεος Γρηγοριάτης, «Εἰπὲ τῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ», ἀρ. 2, ΙΜ Ὁσίου Γρηγορίου, Ἅγιον Ὅρος

Στὸ φαινόμενο τῆς νεοειδωλολατρίας, πὸν μίᾳ περὶ του δεκαετία τώρα ἔχει κάνει τὴν ἐμφάνισή του στὴν Πατρίδα μας, ἀναφέρεται τὸ προσφάτως (2002) ἐκδοθὲν βιβλίον τῆς Ἱερᾶς Μονῆς Ὁσίου Γρηγορίου Ἁγίου Ὁρους. Φέρει τὸν τίτλον «Νεοειδωλολατρικές Περιπλανήσεις καὶ ἡ Ἄληθής Ἐμπειρία τῆς Ἐκκλησίας μας» καὶ εἶναι τὸ δευτέρον τῆς σειρᾶς «Εἰπὲ τῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ» τῆς ἰδίας Ἱερᾶς Μονῆς.

Στὸ πρόλογον τοῦ βιβλίου ὁ Καθηγούμενος τῆς Μονῆς, Πανοσιολογιώτατος Ἀρχιμανδρίτης π. Γεώργιος, χαρακτηρίζει σχιζοφρένεια τὴν νοοτροπία ὀρισμένων ἀνιστορήτων Νεοελλήνων πού ζητοῦν νὰ ἀποτινάξουν τὸν Χριστιανισμό καὶ νὰ ἐπανέλθουν στὴν ἀρχαία ἑλληνικὴ εἰδωλολατρία. «Εἰσάγουν μίᾳ τεχνητῇ πόλωσιν», σημειώνει, «πὸν ποτὲ δὲν βιώσαμε οἱ Ἕλληνες στὴν μακρὰ ἱστορία μας. Θέλουν μάλιστα νὰ μᾶς ἐπιβάλλουν τὴν πόλωση αὐτὴ. Γιατί; Γιὰ νὰ πλήξουν τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν. Νὰ ἀποχριστιανίσουν τοὺς Ἕλληνας... Παίζουν τὸ παιχνίδι τῶν ξένων πὸν μᾶς συρρίκνωσαν ὡς ἔθνος καὶ θέλουν περαιτέρω νὰ μᾶς συρρικνώσουν».

Τὸ βιβλίον εἶναι πόνημα τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ τῆς ἐν λόγῳ Ἱερᾶς Μονῆς, Ίερομονάχου Φιλοθέου. Εἶναι πλαισιωμένο ἀπὸ μίᾳ σειρᾶ φωτογραφιῶν πὸν παρουσιάζουν ὄψεις τοῦ ἀρχαίου ναυδρίου τοῦ Ἁγίου Ἐλευθερίου, παρὰ τὸν Μητροπολιτικὸ Ναὸ Ἀθηνῶν, πὸν δείχνουν ὅτι ἀρχαία γλυπτὰ εἶναι ἐνσωματωμένα στὴν τοιχοποιία τοῦ ναυδρίου. Δείγμα τοῦ ἀθηναικοῦ ἑλληνικοῦ πνεύματος πὸν θέλει τὴν ἀρχαία Ἑλλάδα ὀργανικὰ ἐνσωματωμένη στὸ Σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν.

Ὁ π. Φιλόθεος μᾶς πληροφορεῖ ὅτι τὸ ἑλληνικὸ νεοειδωλολατρικὸ κίνημα εἶναι μέλος τοῦ παγκοσμίου κινήματος πὸν ἐπιζητεῖ τὴν ἀναβίωση τῶν ἀρχαίων παγανιστικῶν θρησκειῶν καὶ ἐπισημαίνει εὐστοχα ὅτι τὸ φαινόμενο αὐτὸ ἔχει ἄμεση σύνδεση μὲ τοὺς στόχους τῆς Νέας Ἐποχῆς. Δυστυχῶς, ἐξ ἀφορμῆς τῶν ἐπιχειρημάτων Ὀλυμπιακῶν Ἀγώνων πὸν θὰ γίνονται στὴν Ἀθήνα προβάλλεται περισσότερο. Σὲ μίᾳ σειρᾶ ὀκτῶ εὐσυνόπτων ὑποκεφαλαίων ἀναφέρονται καὶ ἀνασκευάζονται ἰσάριθμες κατηγορίες τῶν νεοειδωλολατρῶν κατὰ τῆς Χριστιανικῆς Πίστεως. Ἀξιοποιῶνται, ὀργανικὰ ἐνσωματωμένες στὴν σκέψιν καὶ στὸ κείμενον τοῦ βιβλίου, οἱ γνώμες ἐγκρίτων

μελετητῶν τῆς ἀρχαίας καὶ τῆς νεοελληνικῆς ἱστορίας καὶ τοῦ ἐνιαίου ἑλληνικοῦ πολιτισμοῦ. Ἰδιαίτερον ἐνδιαφέρον δίδεται στὴν ἀνασκευή τῆς κατηγορίας ὅτι ἡ Παλαιὰ Διαθήκη εἶναι ἐβραϊκὴ ὑπόθεση καὶ γι' αὐτὸ δὲν πρέπει νὰ ἀποτελεῖ ἱερό βιβλίον τῆς θρησκείας τῶν Ἑλλήνων. Μὲ τὴν ἱστορικὴ συνέχεια τοῦ ἀρχαίου καὶ τοῦ νεωτέρου Ἑλληνισμοῦ ἀσχολεῖται τὸ βιβλίον σὲ ἰδιαίτερον κεφάλαιον καὶ προσάγει ὑπὲρ αὐτῆς μαρτυρίες καταξιωμένων μορφῶν τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ Γένους.

Τὴν ὑπέρβαση τῶν μεγάλων φιλοσοφικῶν προβληματισμῶν τοῦ ἀρχαίου ἑλληνικοῦ κόσμου μὲσω τῆς πίστεως τῶν ἀρχαίων προγόνων μας στὸν Χριστὸ πραγματεύεται τὸ βιβλίον στίς σελίδες ἐνός σημαντικοῦ κεφαλαίου, τὸ ὁποῖον καταλήγει μὲ τὴν εὐχή τοῦ ἁγίου Ἰωάννου τοῦ Μαυρόποδος, ἐπισκ. Εὐχαϊτῶν, ὑπὲρ τῶν φιλοσόφων Πλάτωνος καὶ Πλουτάρχου.

Ἡ κοινωνία μας διαθέτει πνευματικὴς ἀντιστάσεις ἀπέναντι στὴν νεοειδωλολατρία. Μόνον ἐάν «πέσουμε καὶ προσκυνήσουμε» τὰ σύγχρονα εἰδῶλα τῶν παραλόγων ἡδονῶν, τοῦ ἀνόμου κέρδους καὶ τῆς ἀρχομανίας, ἀνοίγουμε διόδους γιὰ τὴν σύγχρονη λατρεία τῶν ἀντιστοιχῶν ψευδοθεῶν τῆς ἀρχαιότητος. Αὐτὰ παρατηρεῖ ὁ συγγραφεὺς τοῦ βιβλίου καθὼς περιγράφει τὴν παλαιοδιαθηκικὴ διήγησιν γιὰ τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ Ναβουχοδονόσορος, τὴν ὁποία ἔπασαν καὶ προσκύνησαν ὅλες οἱ φυλές τῆς γῆς ἐκτὸς ἀπὸ τοὺς τρεῖς νέους πὸν ἀγάπησαν τὸν Θεὸ τῶν Πατέρων τους περισσότερο ἀπὸ καθετὴ στὸν κόσμον.

Ἡ ἀναζήτησιν τῆς Ἀλήθειας ἦταν ἡ πεμπουσία τῆς ἀρχαίας ἑλληνικῆς φιλοσοφίας. Τὸ ἐρώτημα «τί ἐστὶν ἀλήθεια» διορθώνεται μὲσα ἀπὸ τὴν ἐμπειρία τῶν Ἁγίων τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας καὶ διατυπώνεται ὡς «τίς ἐστὶν ἡ Ἀλήθεια», ἐπισημαίνει τὸ ἐπόμενο κεφάλαιον τοῦ βιβλίου καὶ προτείνει στοὺς καλοπροαίρετους νεοειδωλολάτρους νὰ τὴν ἀναζητήσουν ὡς Πρόσωπον, τὸν Χριστό, καὶ ὄχι ὡς φιλοσοφικὴ ἰδέαν.

Τελειώνει τὸ βιβλίον μὲ τὴν παρήγορη σκέψιν ὅτι ὁ ἑλληνικὸς λαὸς δὲν συμεριζέται τοὺς πατράοιους πὸν ἐπιθυμοῦν νὰ τὸν ἀπομακρύνουν ἀπὸ τὸν μόνον ἀληθινὸ Θεόν, τὸν Θεὸ τῶν Πατέρων τους, Τὸν Χριστό.

### ΠΟΙΟ ΠΡΟΒΑΤΟ ΤΡΩΕΙ Ο ΛΥΚΟΣ;

**Κάποτε ἔλεγον ὅτι «Τὸ πρόβατον πὸν φεύγει ἀπὸ τὸ μαντρί, τὸ τρώει ὁ λύκος»**

**Τώρα λένε ὅτι «Ὁ λύκος ἔχει μπεῖ τώρα μὲσα στὸ μαντρί καὶ τρώει ἐκεῖ τὰ πρόβατα»**

**Ἡ διαχρονικὴ ὥστόσο παροιμία εἶναι «Πρόβατον πὸν τὸ βλέπει Ὁ Θεός, ὁ λύκος ΔΕΝ τὸ τρώει»**

## Νὰ Σεβαστοῦν Ὅλοι Τὸ Ἅγιο Ὄρος

ΠΗΓΗ: Μακεδονικὸ Πρακτορεῖο Εἰδήσεων, Θεσσαλονίκη, 15 Ἰανουαρίου 2003

Τὴν ἄρση τῆς ἀπαγόρευσης τῆς εἰσόδου τῶν γυναικῶν στὸ Ἅγιο Ὄρος, λόγω παραβίασης τῆς παγκόσμιας ἀρχῆς τῆς ἰσότητος τῶν φύλων, προβλέπει ψήφισμα ποὺ ἐνέκρινε σήμερα τὸ Εὐρωπαϊκὸ Κοινοβούλιο. Ὡστόσο ἡ ἐξέλιξη αὐτὴ δὲν εἶναι δεσμευτικὴ γιὰ τὸ Ἅγιο Ὄρος.

Τὸ σχετικὸ ψήφισμα εἶχε ὑποβάλλει ἡ Ὁλλανδὴ εὐρωβουλευτὴς τοῦ Εὐρωπαϊκοῦ Σοσιαλιστικοῦ Κόμματος Τζὸκ Σβίμπελ καὶ ἀφορᾷ στὴν κατάσταση τῶν θεμελιωδῶν δικαιωμάτων στὰ κράτη μέλη τῆς Εὐρωπαϊκῆς Ἐνωσης κατὰ τὸ 2001. Σημειώνεται ὅτι οἱ εὐρωβουλευτὲς τοῦ ΠΑΣΟΚ καταψήφισαν τὴν παράγραφο τοῦ ψηφίσματος ποὺ ἀφορᾷ στὸ ἄβατο τοῦ Ἁγίου Ὄρους καὶ τόνισαν ὅτι τὸ θέμα εἶχε τεθεῖ στὴ συνθήκη προσχώρησης τῆς Ἑλλάδας στὴν τότε ΕΟΚ. Σημειώνεται ὅτι στὸ ψήφισμα ἀσκεῖται κριτικὴ σχεδὸν σὲ ὅλα τὰ κράτη τῆς ΕΕ γιὰ μίαν σειρὰ ἀπὸ ζητήματα ποὺ ἀφοροῦν στὴν κατάσταση τῶν θεμελιωδῶν δικαιωμάτων τοῦ πολίτη. Σὲ ὅτι ἀφορᾷ στὴν Ἑλλάδα, καλεῖται νὰ ἀναγνωρίσει τὸ δικαίωμα ἄρνησης συστράτευσης τῶν ἀντιρρησιῶν συνείδησης, ἐνῶ γίνονται ἀναφορὲς καὶ σὲ περιπτώσεις διακρίσεων κατὰ τῶν Ἀθίγγανων καὶ κακομεταχείρισης ἀνθρώπων ἐκ μέρους συνοριοφυλάκων.

Τις προτάσεις γιὰ ἄρση τοῦ ἄβατου τοῦ Ἁγίου Ὄρους σχολίασε ὁ ὑπουργὸς Μακεδονίας-Θράκης Γιώργος Πασχαλίδης, μὲ ἀφορμὴ ψήφισμα ποὺ κατέθεσε ἡ εὐρωβουλευτὴς ἀπὸ τὴν Ὁλλανδία Τζὸκ Σβίμπελ. Συγκεκριμένα ὁ κ. Πασχαλίδης ὑπογράμμισε: “Τὸ Ἅγιον Ὄρος εἶναι ἓνας τόπος προσευχῆς. Ἐχει τοὺς δικούς του κανόνες, ἔχει τὸ δικό του χάρτη, συνταγματικὰ κατοχυρωμένο καὶ στὴν Ἑλλάδα καὶ σὲ ἐπίπεδο Εὐρωπαϊκῆς Ἐνωσης. Καὶ αὐτὸ πρέπει νὰ τὸ σεβαστοῦν ὅλοι. Πρέπει νὰ σεβαστοῦν μίαν παράδοση χιλιῶν χρόνων, νὰ σεβαστοῦν τὴν ἐπιθυμία ἀνθρώπων νὰ ἐπιλέξουν τὸ δικό τους τρόπο διαβίωσης, κατοίκησης ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐπικοινωνίας μὲ αὐτὸν τὸν τρόπο τῆς προσευχῆς”.



ΥΠΕΡΑΓΙΑ ΘΕΟΤΟΚΕ ΣΩΣΟΝ ΗΜΑΣ

## Ἀπὸ τὸ Γλωσσάρι μας

**Ἀλληλουῖα:** Ἑβραϊκὴ λέξις ποὺ σημαίνει Αἰνεῖτε τὸν Θεόν. Μπήκε στὴ χριστιανικὴ λατρεία μαζί μὲ τοὺς ψαλμοὺς ἀπὸ τὴν ἰουδαϊκὴ λατρευτικὴ πράξη. Π.χ. στὸν Ἑξάψαλμο, στὴ Θ' Ὠρα, στίς στάσεις τοῦ Ψαλτηρίου κ.λ.π. καὶ ἰδιαίτερα στίς ἀκολουθίες τῆς Μεγάλης Τεσσαρακοστῆς.

**Ἄμαρτία:** Ἡ διακοπὴ τῶν σχέσεων τοῦ ἀνθρώπου μὲ τὸν Θεό, ποὺ γίνεται μὲ λόγια, μὲ ἔργα ἢ μὲ τὴν διάνοια. Εἶναι ἡ προσπάθεια τοῦ ἀνθρώπου νὰ αὐθυπάρξει. Μὲ τὴ χάρις τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος καὶ τὴν ἀνθρώπινη βούληση-προαίρεση-διάθεση καταπολεμεῖται ἡ ἄμαρτία καὶ ἐπανερχεται ὁ ἄνθρωπος στὴν περιοχὴ τοῦ θεοῦ θελήματος.

**Ἀμὴν:** Ἑβραϊκὴ λέξις ποὺ ἔμεινε ἀμετάφραστη καὶ σημαίνει: ναί, βέβαια, μακάρι, σίγουρα, εἴθε νὰ γίνῃ, γένοιτο. Ὅταν κανεὶς λέει Ἀμὴν, διακηρύσσει ὅτι θεωρεῖ ἀληθινὸ αὐτὸ ποὺ μόλις εἰπώθηκε, ἔτσι ὥστε νὰ ἐπιβεβαιώνει μίαν πρόταση, ἢ νὰ μετέχει, μὲ αὐτὴ τὴ λέξις, σὲ μίαν προσευχή.

## Ὁ Διάβολος μὲ τὴν Πολλὴ του Κακία Κάνει τὸ Μεγαλύτερο Καλὸ Σήμερα στὸν Κόσμο

ΠΗΓΗ: Γέροντος Παΐσιου Ἁγιορείτου, «Λόγοι», Τόμος Β' "Πνευματικὴ Ἀφύπνιση", σελ. 121

Στὶς μέρες μας καὶ νὰ μὴ θέλουν νὰ δεθοῦν οἱ πνευματικοὶ ἄνθρωποι, θὰ τοὺς ἀναγκάσῃ ὁ διάβολος νὰ δεθοῦν. Ὁ διάβολος μὲ τὴν πολλὴν του κακία κάνει τὸ μεγαλύτερο καλὸ σήμερα στὸν κόσμο. Γιατί, ἂς ποῦμε, ἓνας πατέρας ποὺ εἶναι πιστὸς καὶ θέλει λ.χ. νὰ κἀν φροντιστήριον στὰ παιδιὰ του, θὰ εἶναι ἀναγκασμένος νὰ βρῆ ἓναν καλὸ καὶ πιστὸ δάσκαλον, γιὰ νὰ βάλῃ στὸ σπῖτι του. Ἐνας δάσκαλος πάλι ποὺ εἶναι πιστὸς καὶ θέλει νὰ κἀν φροντιστήριον σὲ παιδιὰ, γιατί δὲν διορίστηκε ἀκόμη, θὰ ζητᾷ νὰ βρῆ μίαν οἰκογένεια καλὴ, γιὰ νὰ νιώθῃ ἀσφάλεια.

Ἡ ἓνας τεχνίτης ποὺ ζεῖ πνευματικὰ, εἴτε ἐλαιοχρωματιστὴς εἶναι, εἴτε ἠλεκτρολόγος κ.λ.π., θὰ ψάχνῃ νὰ βρῆ νὰ δουλέψῃ σὲ μίαν καλὴν οἰκογένεια, ὥστε νὰ νιώθῃ ἄνετα, γιατί σ' ἓνα κοσμικὸ σπῖτι θὰ βρῖσκη τὸν μελέα του. Ἐνας χριστιανὸς νοικοκύρης πάλι θὰ ψάχνῃ νὰ βάλῃ στὸ σπῖτι του ἓναν καλὸν τεχνίτη, ποὺ νὰ εἶναι καὶ πιστὸς ἄνθρωπος. Ἐτσι θὰ ψάχνῃ καὶ ὁ ἓνας καὶ ὁ ἄλλος νὰ βρῆ ἓναν πνευματικὸν ἄνθρωπον, γιὰ νὰ μπορῆ νὰ συνεργασθῆ. Σιγά-σιγά λοιπὸν θὰ γνωριστοῦν μεταξὺ τους οἱ πνευματικοὶ ἄνθρωποι ἀπὸ ὅλα τὰ ἐπαγγέλματα καὶ ἀπὸ ὅλες τὶς ἐπιστῆμες.



## Τὸ Δόγμα περὶ τοῦ Ἀλάθητου Εἶναι Ἀναγέννησις τῆς Εἰδωλολατρίας

Ἀρχιμ. Ἰουστίνου Πόποβιτς (+1979) ΠΗΓΗ: Περιοδικὸ «Γρηγορεῖτε» τεύχος 8, σελ. 8-10, 4 Μαΐου 2001

Ὅλοι οἱ εὐρωπαϊκοὶ ἀνθρωπισμοί, ἀπὸ τοῦ πλέον πρωτογόνου μέχρι τοῦ πλέον λεπτοῦ, ἀπὸ τοῦ φετιχιστικοῦ μέχρι τοῦ παπικοῦ, βασίζονται ἐπὶ τῆς πίστεως εἰς τὸν ἄνθρωπον, ὅπως εἶναι αὐτὸς μέσα εἰς τὴν δεδομένην ψυχοφυσικὴν του ἐμπειρικὴν κατάστασιν καὶ ἱστορικότητα. Πράγματι, ὅλη ἡ οὐσία τοῦ κάθε οὐμανισμοῦ εἶναι ὁ ἄνθρωπος = homo. Συνοψιζόμενος εἰς τὴν ὄντολογίαν τοῦ κάθε ἀνθρώπου, ὁ οὐμανισμὸς δὲν εἶναι ἄλλο τί παρὰ χομινισμὸς (homo-hominis).

Ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἶναι ἡ ἀνωτάτη ἀξία, ἡ παναξία· ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἶναι τὸ ὑψιστον κριτήριον, τὸ παγκριτήριον «μέτρον πάντων ἄνθρωπος». Αὐτὸ εἶναι, *in nuce*, κάθε οὐμανισμὸς, κάθε χομινισμὸς. Ἐντεῦθεν ὅλοι οἱ οὐμανισμοί, ὅλοι οἱ χομινισμοί, ἐν τελευταῖα ἀναλύσει, εἶναι εἰδωλολατρικῆς, πολυθεϊστικῆς προελεύσεως.

Ὅλοι οἱ εὐρωπαϊκοὶ οὐμανισμοί, ἀπὸ τοὺς πρὸ τῆς Ἀναγεννήσεως, τῆς Ἀναγεννήσεως καὶ περαιτέρω, οἱ προτεσταντικοί, φιλοσοφικοί, θρησκευτικοί, κοινωνικοί, ἐπιστημονικοί, πολιτιστικοί καὶ πολιτικοί, ἐπέδιωκον ἐν γνώσει ἢ ἐν ἀγνοίᾳ, καὶ ἀδιακόπως ἐπιδιώκουν, ἓνα πρᾶγμα· νὰ ἀντικαταστήσουν τὴν πίστιν εἰς τὸν Θεάνθρωπον μὲ τὴν πίστιν εἰς τὸν ἄνθρωπον, νὰ ἀντικαταστήσουν τὸ Εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Θεανθρώπου μὲ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον κατ' ἄνθρωπον, τὴν φιλοσοφίαν κατὰ Θεάνθρωπον μὲ τὴν φιλοσοφίαν κατ' ἄνθρωπον, τὴν κουλτούραν κατὰ Θεάνθρωπον μὲ τὴν κουλτούρα κατ' ἄνθρωπον· μὲ μίαν λέξιν, νὰ ἀντικαταστήσουν τὴν ζωὴν κατὰ Θεάνθρωπον μὲ τὴν ζωὴν κατ' ἄνθρωπον.

Καὶ τοῦτα συνέβαινον ἐπὶ αἰώνας, ἕως ὅτου τὸν παρελθόντα αἰώνα, τὸ 1870, εἰς τὴν Α' Συνόδον τοῦ Βατικανοῦ, ὅλα αὐτὰ συνεκεφαλαιώθησαν εἰς τὸ δόγμα τοῦ ἀλαθήτου τοῦ πάπα. Ἐκτοτε τὸ δόγμα αὐτὸ ἀπέβη τὸ κεντρικὸν δόγμα τοῦ παπισμοῦ. Διὰ τοῦτο ἐπὶ τῶν ἡμερῶν μας, εἰς τὴν Β' Συνόδον τοῦ Βατικανοῦ, ἐπιμόνως καὶ ἐπιδεξίως συνεζητήθη καὶ ὑπεστηρίχθη τὸ ἀπαραβίαστον καὶ τὸ ἀναλλοίωτον αὐτοῦ τοῦ δόγματος. Τὸ δόγμα τοῦτο ἔχει κοσμοϊστορικὴν σημασίαν διὰ ὅλην τὴν τύχην τῆς Εὐρώπης, μάλιστα δὲ διὰ τοὺς ἀποκαλυπτικοὺς καιροὺς τῆς, εἰς τοὺς ὁποίους ἔχει ἤδη εἰσέλθει. Διὰ τοῦ δόγματος αὐτοῦ ὅλοι οἱ εὐρωπαϊκοὶ ἀνθρωπισμοὶ ἀπέκτησαν τὸ ἰδεῶδες καὶ τὸ εἰδωλον των· ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἀνεκηρύχθη ὑπερτάτη

θεότης, πανθεότης. Τὸ εὐρωπαϊκὸν οὐμανιστικὸν πάνθειον ἀπέκτησε τὸν Δία του.

Ἡ εἰλικρίνεια εἶναι ἡ γλώσσα τῆς Ἀληθείας· τὸ δόγμα περὶ τοῦ ἀλαθήτου τοῦ πάπα εἰς τὸν 20ὸν αἰῶνα, δὲν εἶναι ἄλλο παρὰ ἡ ἀναγέννησις τῆς εἰδωλολατρίας καὶ τοῦ πολυθεϊσμοῦ. Ἀναγέννησις τῆς εἰδωλολατρικῆς ἀξιολογίας καὶ κριτηριολογίας. Μεταξὺ ἐνὸς τοιούτου κόσμου, ὁ ὁποῖος ἐκουσίως «ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ κεῖται», καὶ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ποῦ ἀκολουθεῖ τὸν Θεάνθρωπον Χριστὸν δὲν ὑπάρχει συμβιβασμός. Ἐκεῖνος ποῦ ἀκολουθεῖ τὸν Θεάνθρωπον δὲν δύναται εἰς βᾶρος τῆς Εὐαγγελικῆς Ἀληθείας νὰ κάμνη συμβιβασμοὺς μὲ τὸν οὐμανιστικὸν ἄνθρωπον, ποῦ ὅλα αὐτὰ τὰ δικαιολογεῖ καὶ τὰ ἀνάγει εἰς δόγμα. Ἐδῶ πάντοτε πρόκειται περὶ ἀποφασιστικοῦ καὶ κρισιμωτάτου διλήμματος καὶ ἐκλογῆς· ἢ ὁ Θεάνθρωπος ἢ ὁ ἄνθρωπος. Ὁ «ἀλάθητος» ἄνθρωπος, καὶ ἀπέναντί του ὁ «παναμαρτωλὸς» ἄνθρωπος ἢ ταπεινοφροσύνη ἀπὸ τὸ ἓνα μέρος καὶ ἡ ὑψηλοφροσύνη ἀπὸ τὸ ἄλλο.

Ἡ ἀπαράμιλλος ἀηδὼν τοῦ Εὐαγγελίου τοῦ Θεανθρώπου, ὁ ἅγιος Χρυσόστομος, εὐαγγελίζεται· «Θεμέλιος ἐστὶ τῆς καθ' ἡμᾶς φιλοσοφίας ἡ ταπεινοφροσύνη». Ἡ ταπεινοφροσύνη εἶναι τὸ θεμέλιον τῆς φιλοσοφίας μας περὶ τῆς ζωῆς καὶ τοῦ κόσμου, περὶ τοῦ χρόνου καὶ τῆς αἰωνιότητος, περὶ τοῦ Θεανθρώπου καὶ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας. Ἐνῶ θεμέλιον παντὸς οὐμανισμοῦ, ἀκόμη καὶ ἐκεῖνου τοῦ ἀναχθέντος εἰς δόγμα, εἶναι ἡ ὑψηλοφροσύνη, ἡ πίστις εἰς τὸν λόγον τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, εἰς τὸν νοῦν καὶ τὴν λογικὴν του. Ἡ ὑψηλοφροσύνη μετέτρεψεν εἰς διάβολον ἀκόμη καὶ τὸν ἀκτινοβολοῦντα Ἑωσφόρον. Ἡ ὑψηλοφροσύνη εἶναι ἀνίατος νόσος τοῦ νοῦ τοῦ διαβόλου. Ἐντὸς τῆς εὐρίσκονται καὶ ἐξ αὐτῆς πηγάζουν ὅλα τὰ λοιπὰ διαβολικὰ κακὰ.



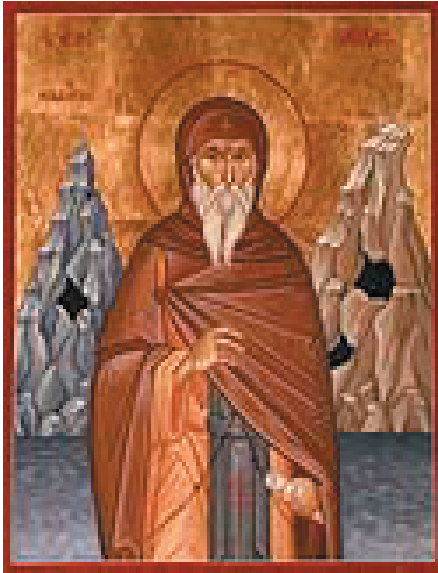
**Καὶ τοῦ φωτὸς αὐτοῦ, ποθεινότερος φίλος· τὸν γνήσιον λέγω. Καὶ μὴ θαυμάσης· βέλτιον γὰρ ἡμῖν σβεσθῆναι τὸν ἥλιον, ἢ φίλων ἀποστερηθῆναι· βέλτιον ἐν σκότῳ διάγειν, ἢ φίλων εἶναι χωρὶς... Πατέρας καὶ υἱοῦς ὑπερβαίνουνσι φίλοι, φίλοι οἱ κατὰ Χριστόν».**

Ἅγιος Ἰωάννης Χρυσόστομος



## SAINT NILUS THE MYRRHSTREAMER SPEAKS OF THE END DAYS (1651)

*(Celebrated on November 12)*



After the year 1900, toward the middle of the twentieth century, the people of that time will become unrecognizable. When the time of the advent of the antichrist approaches, people's minds will grow cloudy from carnal passions, and dishonor and lawlessness will grow stronger. Then the

world will grow unrecognizable. People's appearances will change, and it will be impossible to distinguish men from women due to their shamelessness in dress and style of hair. These people will be cruel and will be like wild animals because of the temptations of the antichrist. There will be no respect for parents and elders, love will disappear, and Christian pastors, bishops, and priests will become vial men, completely failing to distinguish the right-hand way from the left.

At that time, the morals and Traditions of Christians and of the Church will change. People will abandon modesty, and dissipation will reign. Falsehood and greed will attain great proportions, and woe to those who pile up treasures. Lust, adultery, homosexuality, secret deeds, and murder will rule in society. At that future time, due to the power of such great crimes and licentiousness, people will be deprived of the grace of the Holy Spirit, which they received in Holy Baptism, and equally of remorse. The churches of God will be deprived of God-fearing and pious pastors, and woe to the Christians remaining in the world at that time; they will completely lose the true faith because they will lack the opportunity of seeing the light of knowledge from anyone at all. They will separate themselves out of the world in holy refuges in search of lightening of their spiritual sufferings, but everywhere they will meet obstacles and constraints.

...And this will result from the fact that the antichrist wants to be lord over everything and become the ruler of the whole universe, and he will produce miracles and fantastic signs. He

will also give depraved wisdom to an unhappy man so that he will discover a way by which one man can carry on a conversation from one end of the earth to the other. At that time, men will also fly through the air like birds and descend to the bottom of the sea like fish. And when they have achieved all this, these unhappy people will spend their lives in comfort without knowing, poor souls, that it is the deceit of the antichrist. And the impious one! - he will so complete science with vanity, that it will go off the right path and lead people to lose faith in the existence of God.

...Then God will see the downfall of the human race and will shorten the days for the sake of those few who are being saved, because the enemy wants to lead even the chosen into temptation, if that is possible.

...Then the sword of chastisement will suddenly appear to kill the perverter.

### FORSAKEN U.S. HERITAGE...

William Holmes McGuffey is the author of the McGuffey Reader, which was used for over 100 years in our public schools with over 125 million copies sold until it was stopped in 1963. President Lincoln called him the "Schoolmaster of the Nation."

Listen to these words of Mr. McGuffey: "The Christian religion is the religion of our country. From it are derived our notions on the character of God, on the great moral Governor of the universe. On its doctrines are founded the peculiarities of our free institutions. From no source has the author drawn more conspicuously than from the sacred Scriptures. From all these extracts from the Bible I make no apology."

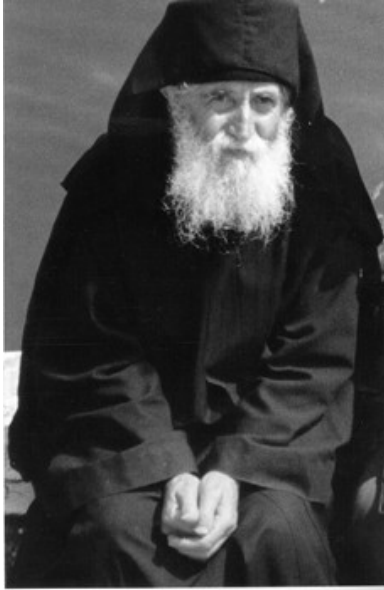
Of the first 108 universities founded in America, 106 were distinctly Christian, including the first, Harvard University, chartered in 1636. In the original Harvard Student Handbook, rule number 1 was that students seeking entrance must know Latin and Greek so that they could study the scriptures: "Let every student be plainly instructed and earnestly pressed to consider well, the main end of his life and studies is, to know God and Jesus Christ, which is eternal life, John 17:3; and therefore to lay Jesus Christ as the only foundation for our children to follow the moral principles of the Ten Commandments"

**Do not become harsh and unmerciful. Think that behind him who seeks charity from you, is the Lord Himself...Give charity for your own benefit and for the benefit of those who are really poor. The Lord will reward you...**

**St. John Chrysostom**

## WISE WORDS ON POSITIVE THINKING

*From Elder Paisios of the Holy Mountain*



I know from experience that in this life people are divided in two categories. A third category does not exist; people either belong to one or the other.

The first one resembles the fly. The main characteristic of the fly is that it is attracted by dirt. For example, when a fly is found in a garden full of flowers with beautiful fragrances, it will ignore them and will go sit on top of some dirt found

on the ground. It will start messing around with it and feel comfortable with the bad smell. If the fly could talk, and you asked it to show you a rose in the garden, it would answer: “I don’t even know what a rose looks like. I only know where to find garbage, toilets, and dirt.” There are some people who resemble the fly. People belonging to this category have learned to think negatively, and always look for the bad things in life, ignoring and refusing the presence of good.

The other category is like the bee whose main characteristic is to always look for something sweet and nice to sit on. When a bee is found in a room full of dirt and there is a small piece of sweet in a corner, it will ignore the dirt and will go to sit on top of the sweet. Now, if we ask the bee to show us where the garbage is, it will answer: “I don’t know. I can only tell you where to find flowers, sweets, honey and sugar; it only knows the good things in life and is ignorant of all evil.” This is the second category of people who have positive thinking, and see only the good side of things. They always try to cover up the evil in order to protect their fellow men; on the contrary, people in the first category try to expose the evil and bring it to the surface.

When someone comes to me and starts accusing other people and puts me in a difficult situation, I tell him the above example. Then, I ask him to decide to which category he wishes to belong, so he may find people of the same kind to socialize with.

## THE APOSTOLIC DIDACHE, OR TEACHINGS OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES (PART 1)

*Editor’s Note: Starting with this issue and continuing with the next few issues, we will present to our readers the Apostolic Didache, a group of short lessons and rules that, to a great extent, constitute the foundation of Holy Orthodox Tradition, our Faith and His Church.*

### TEACHING 1

- 1:1 There are two paths, one of life and one of death, and the difference is great between the two paths.
- 1:2 Now the path of life is this—first, thou shalt love the God who made thee, thy neighbour as thyself, and all things that thou wouldest not should be done unto thee, do not thou unto another.
- 1:3 And the doctrine of these maxims is as follows. Bless them that curse you, and pray for your enemies. Fast on behalf of those that persecute you; for what thank is there if ye love them that love you? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? But do ye love them that hate you, and ye will not have an enemy.
- 1:4 Abstain from fleshly and worldly lusts. If any one give thee a blow on thy right cheek, turn unto him the other also, and thou shalt be perfect; if any one compel thee to go a mile, go with him two; if a man take away thy cloak, give him thy coat also; if a man take from thee what is thine, ask not for it again, for neither art thou able to do so.
- 1:5 Give to every one that asketh of thee, and ask not again; for the Father wishes that from his own gifts there should be given to all. Blessed is he who giveth according to the commandment, for he is free from guilt; but woe unto him that receiveth. For if a man receive being in need, he shall be free from guilt; but he who receiveth when not in need, shall pay a penalty as to why he received and for what purpose; and when he is in tribulation he shall be examined concerning the things that he has done, and shall not depart thence until he has paid the last farthing.
- 1:6 For of a truth it has been said on these matters, let thy almsgiving abide in thy hands until thou knowest to whom thou hast given.

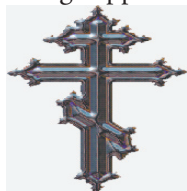
### TEACHING 2

- 2:1 But the second commandment of the teaching is this.
- 2:2 Thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not corrupt youth; thou shalt not commit fornication; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not use soothsaying; thou shalt not practise sorcery; thou shalt not kill a child by

- abortion, neither shalt thou slay it when born; thou shalt not covet the goods of thy neighbour;
- 2:3 thou shalt not commit perjury; thou shalt not bear false witness; thou shalt not speak evil; thou shalt not bear malice;
- 2:4 thou shalt not be double-minded or double-tongued, for to be double tongued is the snare of death.
- 2:5 Thy speech shall not be false or empty, but concerned with action.
- 2:6 Thou shalt not be covetous, or rapacious, or hypocritical, or malicious, or proud; thou shalt not take up an evil design against thy neighbour;
- 2:7 thou shalt not hate any man, but some thou shalt confute, concerning some thou shalt pray, and some thou shalt love beyond thine own soul.

## TEACHING 2

- 3:1 My child, fly from everything that is evil, and from everything that is like to it.
- 3:2 Be not wrathful, for wrath leadeth unto slaughter; be not jealous, or contentious, or quarrelsome, for from all these things slaughter ensues.
- 3:3 My child, be not lustful, for lust leadeth unto fornication; be not a filthy talker; be not a lifter up of the eye, for from all these things come adulteries.
- 3:4 My child, be not an observer of omens, since it leadeth to idolatry, nor a user of spells, nor an astrologer, nor a traveling purifier, nor wish to see these things, for from all these things idolatry ariseth.
- 3:5 My child, be not a liar, for lying leadeth unto theft; be not covetous or conceited, for from all these things thefts arise.
- 3:6 My child, be not a murmurer, since it leadeth unto blasphemy; be not self-willed or evil-minded, for from all these things blasphemies are produced;
- 3:7 but be thou meek, for the meek shall inherit the earth;
- 3:8 be thou longsuffering, and compassionate, and harmless, and peaceable, and good, and fearing alway the words that thou hast heard.
- 3:9 Thou shalt not exalt thyself, neither shalt thou put boldness into thy soul. Thy soul shall not be joined unto the lofty, but thou shalt walk with the just and humble.
- 3:10 Accept the things that happen to thee as good, knowing that without God nothing happens.



## WHAT WENT WRONG IN LITTLETON, COLORADO?

*Paul Harvey*

For the life of me, I can't understand what could have gone wrong in Littleton, Colo. If only the parents had kept their children away from the guns, we wouldn't have had such a tragedy. Yeah, it must have been the guns.

It couldn't have been because of half our children being raised in broken homes. It couldn't have been because our children get to spend an average of 30 seconds in meaningful conversation with their parents each day. After all, we give our children quality time.

It couldn't have been because we treat our children as pets and our pets as children. It couldn't have been because we place our children in day care centers where they learn their socialization skills among their peers under the law of the jungle while employees who have no vested interest in the children look on and make sure that no blood is spilled.

It couldn't have been because we allow our children to watch, on average, seven hours of television a day filled with the glorification of sex and violence that isn't fit for adult consumption. It couldn't have been because we allow our children to enter into virtual worlds in which, to win the game, one must kill as many opponents as possible in the most sadistic way possible.

It couldn't have been because we have sterilized and contracepted our families down to sizes so small that the children we do have are so spoiled with material things that they come to equate the receiving of the material with love.

It couldn't have been because our children, who historically have been seen as a blessing from God, are now being viewed as either a mistake created when contraception fails or inconveniences that parents try to raise in their spare time.

It couldn't have been because our nation is the world leader in developing a culture of death in which 20 to 30 million babies have been killed by abortion.

It couldn't have been because we give two-year prison sentences to teen-agers who kill their newborns.

It couldn't have been because our school systems teach the children that they are nothing more but glorified apes who have evolutionized out of some primordial soup of mud by teaching evolution as fact and by handing out condoms as if they were candy.

It couldn't have been because we teach our children that there are no laws of morality that transcend us, that everything is relative and that actions don't have consequences. What the heck, the president gets away with it.

Nah, it must have been the guns...



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## HOW OLD IS GRANDMA?

One evening a grandson asked his grandmother what she thought about the computer age, and just things in general.

The Grandma replied, "Well, I was born, before television, penicillin, polio shots, frozen foods, Xerox, contact lenses, Frisbees and the pill. There was no radar, credit cards, laser beams or ball-point pens.

Man had not invented pantyhose, air conditioners, dishwashers, clothes dryers, and the clothes were hung out to dry in the fresh air and man hadn't yet walked on the moon.

Your Grandfather and I got married first-and then lived together. Every family had a father and a mother. Until I was 25, I called every man older than I, 'Sir', and after I turned 25, I still called policemen and every man with a title, "Sir."

We were before gay-rights, computer-dating, dual careers, day-care centers, and group therapy. Lives were governed by the Ten Commandments, good judgment, and common sense.

We were taught to know the difference between right and wrong and to stand up and take responsibility for our actions. Serving your country was a privilege; living in this country was a bigger privilege. We thought fast food was what people ate during Lent. Having a meaningful relationship meant getting along with your cousins. Time-sharing meant time the family spent together in the evenings.

We never heard of FM radios, tape decks, CDs, electric typewriters, yogurt, or guys wearing earrings.

We listened to the Big Bands, Jack Benny, and the President's speeches on our radios. And I don't ever remember any kid blowing his brains out listening to Tommy Dorsey.

If you saw anything with 'Made in Japan', it was junk. The term 'making out' referred to how you did on your school exam.

Pizza Hut, McDonald's, and instant coffee were unheard of. We had 5 & 10-cent stores where you could actually buy things for 5 and 10 cents.

Ice-cream cones, phone calls, rides on a streetcar, and a Pepsi were all a nickel. And if you didn't want to splurge, you could spend your nickel on enough stamps to mail 1 letter and 2 post-cards.

You could buy a new Chevy Coupe for \$600 but who could afford one? Too bad, because gas was 11 cents a gallon.

In my day, "grass" was mowed, "coke" was a cold drink, "pot" was something your mother cooked in, and "rock music" was your grandmother's lullaby.

"Aids" were helpers in the Principal's office, "chip" meant a piece of wood, "hardware" was found in a hardware store, and "software" wasn't a word.

And we were the last generation to actually believe that a lady needed a husband to have a baby. No wonder people call us "old and confused" and say there is a generation gap..... and how old do you think I am ???.....

**This Woman would be only 58 years old! Pretty scary if you think about it and pretty sad at the same time.**

# Orthodox Heritage

HTTP://WWW.ORTHODOXHERITAGE.ORG

Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle [2 Thessalonians 2:15]

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Brotherhood of St. Poimen

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## THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE VIRGIN MARY

By Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlachos of Nafpaktos

The Annunciation of the Virgin Mary is a feast of the Lord because Christ was conceived in her womb. It is also a feast of the Mother of God (Theotokos) because she is the person who aided in the conception and Incarnation of the Word of God.

The Theotokos has great value and an important position in the Church, precisely because she was the person whom all generations awaited, and she gave human nature to the Word of God. Thus the person of the Theotokos is associated closely with the Person of Christ. Furthermore, the value of the Virgin Mary is not only due to her virtues, but also to the fruit of her womb. For this reason, Theotokology is very closely associated with Christology. When we speak of Christ we cannot ignore her who gave Him flesh. And when we speak of the Virgin Mary, we simultaneously refer to Christ, because from Him she draws Grace and value. This connection of Christology and Theotokology shows in the lives of the Saints as well. A characteristic mark of the Saints, who are the real members of the Body of Christ, is their love for the Virgin Mary. It is impossible for there to be a Saint who does not love her. Thus, the Annunciation of the Theotokos is the beginning of all feasts of the Lord. In

the dismissal hymn of the feast we chant: “Today is the beginning of our salvation and the revelation of the mystery from the ages...”

The Greek word for “annunciation” is comprised of two words, good and message, and denotes the good notification, the good announcement. This refers to the information that was given through the Archangel that the Word of God would be incarnated for man’s salvation.



This is the fulfilment of God’s promise, given after the fall of Adam and Eve (see Gen. 3:15), which is called the proto-evangelion (i.e., the first gospel). The information of the Incarnation of the Word of God is the greatest notification in history.

The good announcement, the gospel, the Annunciation, is a correction of the events, which occurred at the beginning of man’s creation. There, from a woman, the Fall and its results began; here, from a woman, all good things began. Thus, the Virgin Mary is the new Eve. There was the sensorial Paradise; here, the Church. There, Adam; here, Christ. There, Eve; here Maria. There, the snake; here, Gabriel. There, the whispering of the dragon-snake to Eve; here the greeting of the angel to Mary (Joseph Vryenios). In this manner the transgression of Adam and Eve was corrected.

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### OUR MISSION

To be instruments of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, as He awakens the souls of believers into an awareness of the love, grace, peace and mercy realized when one lives the Word of God, kept and preserved through the ages by the Greek Orthodox Church and Her Holy Traditions.

To be a voice crying out for the return to sacrificial living in accordance with the Apostolic Traditions and through the Orthodox Faith. In this ever-changing world, Christ is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow and so is His Bride, the Holy, never-changing Greek Orthodox Church.

To confront any movement, no matter how subtle, whose message is heretic and whose impact is the schism of His Church or the protestantization of our Faith.

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The Archangel Gabriel told the Virgin Mary: "Rejoice, O thou who art full of grace. The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women" (Luke 1:28-29). According to Saint Gregory Palamas and other holy Fathers, the Virgin Mary had already been filled with grace, and was not just filled with grace on the day of the Annunciation. Having remained in the holy of holies of the Temple, she reached the holy of holies of the spiritual life, theosis. If the courtyard of the Temple was destined for the proselytes and the main Temple for the priests, then the holy of holies was destined for the high priest. There the Virgin Mary entered, a sign that she had reached theosis. It is known that in the Christian age, the narthex was destined for the catechumens and the impure, the main church for the illumined, the members of the Church, and the holy of holies (altar) for those who had reached theosis.

Thus, the Virgin Mary had reached theosis even before she received the visitation of the Archangel. Toward this goal, she used a special method of knowing God and communing with God, as Saint Gregory Palamas interprets in a wonderful and divinely inspired manner. This refers to stillness, the hesychastic way. The Virgin Mary realized that no one can reach God with reasoning, with the senses, with imagination

or human glory, but rather only through the intellect. Thus she deadened all the powers of the soul that came from the senses, and through noetic prayer she activated the intellect. In this manner she reached illumination and theosis. And for this reason she was granted to become the Mother of Christ, to give her flesh to Christ. She didn't have simply virtues, but the god-making Grace of God

The conception of Christ in the womb of the Theotokos occurred with silence and secrecy and not with noise and disturbance. No one, neither of the angels nor of men was able to understand at that moment these great things which were performed. The Great Prophet David prophesied this event saying: "May he be like rain that falls on a fleece, like showers that water the earth!" (Psalm 71:6). Just as rain that falls on a fleece of wool does not cause noise or any corruption, the same thing occurred also during the annunciation and the conception. Christ with His conception did not cause noise or any corruption in the virginity of the Virgin Mary. For this reason the Virgin Mary was and remained a Virgin before the birth, during the birth and after the birth. These are the three stars, which the iconographer forms always on the forehead and the two shoulders of the Virgin Mary.



The Virgin Mary as she conceived Christ without pleasure, in the same way held Him in her womb without toil and without weight. She did not feel weight, despite the fact that the divine infant was developing naturally and had the weight of a developing embryo. Thus the prophecy of the Prophet Isaiah was fulfilled: "Behold the Lord is sitting upon a hollow cloud" (Is. 19:1). With the term "hollow cloud" is meant the human flesh, which was so very light that it did not cause any weight and toil to the Virgin Mary during the time of the nine month carrying in the womb. According to Saint Gregory Nyssa there is a close relationship between pleasure and pain, since every pleasure has pain connected with it. Adam felt pleasure and pain which followed to the whole human race. The birth of Christ did not corrupt the virginity of the Theotokos, precisely as the conception did not occur with pleasure, and the carrying in the womb did not occur with weight and toil.

It is known that the mother who has a babe in the womb has a close and organic relationship with him. Contemporary scholars have proven that the infant is very much influenced not only by the physical state of his mother, but also from her psychological make up. And because the divine infant was conceived of the Holy Spirit, but grew up in the natural manner, that is He had a communion with the Virgin Mary's body, for this reason there exists a close relationship between Christ and the Theotokos. Naturally, we must see that the Virgin Mary gives her blood to Christ, but also Christ gives His Grace and blessing to her. So Christ being carried in the womb did not cease simultaneously being at God's throne united with His Father and the Holy Spirit. Consequently Christ for nine months, day and night, nourished the Virgin Mary with His sanctified blood. This is a foreshadowing of the ceaseless divine Communion and of the ceaseless relationship and communion of the Saints with Christ which will occur mainly in the next life. For this reason the Virgin Mary is a foreshadowing of the future age; she is Paradise.

According to the holy Fathers (Saint Gregory Nyssa, Saint Maximos the Confessor, Saint Symeon the New Theologian, Saint Niketas Stethatos etc.) that which happened physically in the Virgin Mary, this happens spiritually to each one whose soul is virginal, that is, the person is cleansed of the passions. Christ, who was born once in the flesh, wants to be born, always in the spirit, by those who wish, and thus He becomes a babe, forming Himself in them through the virtues.

The Annunciation of the Theotokos is an annunciation of the human race, an information that the Son and Word of God incarnated. This universal feast must aid in a personal feast, in a personal annunciation. We must accept the preludes of our salvation, which is the greatest notification in our life.

## AN ORTHODOX PRIEST VOICES HIS VIEWS ON ECUMENISM AND SECULAR HUMANISM

**D**ear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus, It saddens me to tell you that many Orthodox Clergy and Laity - myself included - have permitted our politically-correct, secular-humanistic, shallow, immoral society to slowly take us away from our Mother: Holy Orthodoxy. Here are some of the "fruits" of our unwatchful condition:

-- Services are being abbreviated to "accommodate" the faithful and weekday services are rare and even non-existent in some Parishes.

-- Clergy that try to follow the external appearance (long hair & beards, cassocks) that has been a part of the Church for over 1500 years are called "fanatics." The 'dress code' for lay people that attend worship seems to imply that 'almost anything goes'; and if a woman chooses to cover her head in worship services, she is branded as a "super Orthodox."

-- The great majority of faithful - and not a few clergy - do not fast on Wednesdays and Fridays as the Church prescribes. And to what extent do we observe the four fasting periods in our Liturgical year?

-- An extremely small number of faithful confess their sins to their Spiritual Father at least 9 times a year, and well over 50% never go to Confession; while great numbers come to receive Holy Communion frequently.

-- I do not even want to know how small the number is of those who have a "daily spiritual discipline" (Prayer Rule, prayer rope canon, prostrations, reading from the Bible and the writings of the holy Fathers [or the lives of Saints], home worship [Akathists, Paraklesis, Compline]).

-- We spend thousands of hours each year meeting, even worshipping, with heterodox. We are members of such heretical organizations as the WCC and NCC. In short, we are immersed in "Ecumania"; and have sacrificed the True Faith for which millions have willingly shed their blood to uphold, on the premise that 'we will enlighten them to become Orthodox.' On the contrary, they have 'enlightened' us to make such tragic

**A**ffliction was allowed to make those afflicted more careful and more pious. What rain is for seeds, tears are for those who are afflicted...

**W**hen effort on our part is absent, then God's help also stops! Remember: Your hope the Church. Your salvation the Church. Your refuge the Church.

**St. John Chrysostom**

and unOrthodox statements as: 'We all worship the same Jesus Christ', or 'We are sister churches', or 'We need to unite the divided church.' or 'We have more in common with one another (in terms of belief) than not.' But we appear to be doing absolutely nothing to rediscover communion with our Old Calendar Orthodox brethren. When will we get together with such jurisdictions as ROCR and the American Exarchate under Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos, and others who have canonical Bishops? Our very active participation for over 50 years in the WCC and NCC has not brought one heterodox group into Orthodoxy, while the distance we find ourselves from these Sister Orthodox Churches continues to widen. When will we do something about this?

It is time for us to rediscover the "fronema" -- the Mind of the Fathers. It is time for us to separate ourselves from both the ecumenism and secular humanism that are seeking to overcome true Orthodoxy. It is time for us to strive - with every fiber of our being - to live the Ascetical/Sacramental life of our Holy Orthodox Faith, so that, through God's grace, the wounds of our souls will be healed and our hearts will be purified, and we can spend eternity in Paradise with our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, our Most Holy Theotokos, The Holy Angels and Saints! It is time to be willing to lose our jobs, our friends - even our very lives - rather than compromise, water down, or deny our Faith.

I beg your prayers for this wretched sinner and unworthy priest, and I leave you with these words of St. Gregory the Theologian. May, by our actions in this life, they become our words before Christ on the awesome Day: "The Faith which I was taught by the Holy fathers, which I taught at all times without adjusting according to the times, this faith I will never stop teaching; I was born with it and I live by it."

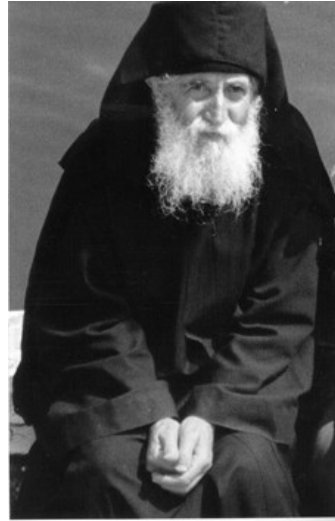
Your worthless servant,  
+Fr. ...

**T**he word "eternity" is frightful! To understand what eternity means, I shall give you an example. Imagine that the whole earth is one big piece of granite, and every thousand years a bird comes to sharpen its beak on this rock. When the entire rock is worn away by the bird sharpening its beak, then we shall have some faint notion of what eternity means, not that we have actually understood eternity, immortality, or life without end! So this life of ours here on earth determines our eternity, like flipping a coin: paradise or hell! Therefore, how much caution must we have...!

**A Contemporary Athonite Elder**

## ON ENCEPHALOGY (THEOLOGY OF THE BRAIN)

*By Blessed Elder Paisios the Athonite (+1994)*



**T**he fathers of those days had great faith and simplicity. Although most of them were basically illiterate, they, nevertheless, received constant divine enlightenment because of their humility and zeal for spiritual combat. While, in our own days, knowledge has increased, unfortunately, logic has shaken people's faith from the foundations and filled their souls with questions and doubts. So, it

is only natural that we should be deprived of miracles, because miracles are experienced and cannot be explained by logic...

...How could anyone have known that in a few years most people would become deformed by too much education – since they are being taught in the spirit of atheism and not in that of God, which can sanctify external education, too – and faintheartedness will reach such a point that miracles will be considered fairy-stories from bygone days? Naturally, when the doctor is an atheist, however many tests he performs on a saint with his scientific equipment (X-rays and so on), he will not be able to discern the grace of God. Whereas if he, too, has holiness in him, he will see divine grace radiating...

...A great evil is it when we theologise cold-heartedly with our mind, passing off our mind for the Holy Spirit. This is called "encephalogy" [theology of the brain], which gives birth to Babel (confusion). In theology, however, there are many tongues (many gifts), but all tongues are in agreement because they have one Master, the Holy Spirit of the Pentecost, and the tongues are of fire... He, who disregards divine enlightenment, gives primacy to the mind and creates an impressive sermon with beautiful wording, is related to the Arians who believed that Christ is a creature of God... We, the Orthodox, believe and confess that the Word of God was not created, but was born "of the Father before all ages" and was incarnate "of the Holy Spirit" and the Virgin Mary and brought salvation to the world.... The word of the mind does not bring change to souls, for it is flesh. The word of God that is born of the Holy Spirit has divine energy and changes souls...

## Ἐκεῖνος

Ἅγιος Ἀμβρόσιος, Ἐπίσκοπος Μεδιολάνων

Ἄν ἐπιθυμῆς νὰ γιατρέψεις τὴν πληγὴ,  
Ἐκεῖνος εἶναι ὁ Ἰατρός.  
Ἄν καίγῃσαι ἀπὸ τὸν πυρετὸ,  
Ἐκεῖνος εἶναι ἡ Πηγὴ ποὺ θὰ σὲ δροοσίσει.  
Ἄν πιέζῃσαι ἀπὸ κάποιο σου λάθος,  
Ἐκεῖνος εἶναι ἡ Δικαίωσή σου.

Ἄν ἔχεις ἀνάγκη ἀπὸ βοήθεια,  
Ἐκεῖνος εἶναι ἡ Δύναμή σου.  
Ἄν φοβᾶσαι τὸν θάνατο,  
Ἐκεῖνος εἶναι ἡ Ζωὴ.  
Ἄν ἐπιθυμῆς τὸν οὐρανὸν,  
Ἐκεῖνος εἶναι ἡ Ὁδὸς.

Ἄν ἀποφεύγεις τὰ σκοτάδια,  
Ἐκεῖνος εἶναι τὸ Φῶς.  
Ἄν εἶσαι πεινασμένος,  
Ἐκεῖνος εἶναι ἡ Τροφὴ.  
Ἄν εἶσαι διψασμένος,  
Ἐκεῖνος εἶναι τὸ ὕδωρ.

Ὁ συγγραφεὺς τοῦ ποιήματος αὐτοῦ εἶναι ὁ Ἅγιος Ἀμβρόσιος. Ἅγιος Ἀμβρόσιος εἶναι ἐπίσης τὸ ὄνομα ἑνὸς πανέμορφου χωριοῦ εἰς τὴν Βόρεια Κύπρον, περιοχὴ Κερύνειας. Ὁ Ἅγιος Ἀμβρόσιος καταλήφθηκε ἀπὸ τὸν τουρκικὸ στρατὸ κατὰ τὴ διάρκειά τῆς ἐπιχείρησης “ΑΤΤΙΛΑΣ 2” τὸν Αὐγούστο τοῦ 1974. Ὅλοι οἱ Ἕλληνες Κύπριοι κάτοικοι τοῦ Ἁγίου Ἀμβροσίου ἐξαναγκάσθηκαν ἀπὸ τὶς Τουρκικὰς στρατιωτικὰς δυνάμεις νὰ ἐγκαταλείψουν τὸν Ἅγιο Ἀμβρόσιο, καὶ εἶναι τώρα πρόσφυγες στὴν ἴδια τους τὴν πατρίδα. Οἱ Ἕλληνες νόμιμοι κάτοικοι τοῦ Ἁγίου Ἀμβροσίου δὲν ξεχνοῦν ποτέ, καὶ περιμένουν τὴν Ἱερὰ ἡμέρα τῆς ἐπιστροφῆς.

Ἡ πανέμορφη ἐκκλησία τοῦ Ἁγίου Ἀμβροσίου ἔχει μετατραπῆ σὲ Μωαμεθανικὸ ναὸ. Ἡ φωτογραφία τῆς (ἀκολουθεῖ τὸ ἄρθρο) ἐλήφθη πρὶν τῆς ἀπάνθρωπης τουρκικῆς εἰσβολῆς. Ἡ ἐκκλησία αὕτη, ὅπως καὶ πολλὰς ἄλλες ἐκκλησίες τῆς Βορείου Κύπρου, ἔχει καπηλευθεῖ ἀπὸ τοὺς βάρβαρους Τούρκους. Οἱ τοιχογραφίες καὶ οἱ θησαυροὶ ἔχουν πωληθεῖ στὴν μαύρη ἀγορά. Αὐτὸ δείχνει σὲ ὀλόκληρο τὸν κόσμον ὅτι οἱ τουρκικὰς ἀρχές, μεθοδικά, καὶ συστηματικά, καταστρέφουν ὅτιδήποτε ἑλληνικὸ ἀπὸ τὶς κατεχόμενες περιοχὰς τῆς Κύπρου, συμπεριλαμβανομένων καὶ αὐτῶν τῶν ἱερῶν συμβόλων τῆς Χριστιανοσύνης. Στόχος τοὺς εἶναι

ἡ πλήρης ἀλλοίωση τοῦ δημογραφικοῦ χαρακτήρα τῶν κατεχόμενων περιοχῶν τῆς Κύπρου καὶ ὁ ψευδὴς ἰσχυρισμὸς ὅτι αὕτη ἡ ἀρχαία ἑλληνικὴ γῆ, εἶναι τουρκική...



Ἐκκλησία τοῦ Ἁγίου Ἀμβροσίου, Ἅγιος Ἀμβρόσιος, Περιοχὴ Κερύνειας, Βόρεια Κύπρος

## Πολὺ Διάβασμα καὶ Λίγη Ἡ Καθόλου Ἐφαρμογή

ΠΗΓΗ : Γέρ. Παΐσιου Ἀγιορείτου, «Ἐπιστολές», σελ. 132

Ἐὰν ὅμως θὰ ζούσαμε Πατερικά, θὰ εἶχαμε ὅλοι πνευματικὴ ὑγεία, τὴν ὁποία θὰ ζήλευαν καὶ ὅλοι οἱ ἑτερόδοξοι καὶ θὰ ἄφηναν τὶς ἀρρωστημένες τους πλάνες καὶ θὰ σώζονταν δίχως κήρυγμα. Διότι τώρα δὲν συγκινοῦνται ἀπὸ τὴν Ἁγία μας Πατερικὴ παράδοση, γιατί θέλουν νὰ ἰδοῦν καὶ τὴν Πατερικὴ μας συνέχεια, τὴν πραγματικὴ μας συγγένεια μὲ τοὺς Ἁγίους μας.

Στὴν ἐποχὴ μας, πλήθυναν δυστυχῶς τὰ λόγια καὶ τὰ βιβλία, καὶ λιγότεψαν τὰ βιώματα, διότι ἐπηρεάστηκαν οἱ ἄνθρωποι πάλι ἀπὸ τὸ κοσμικὸ πνεῦμα, ποὺ ἐπιδιώκει ὅλο τὶς εὐκολίες καὶ ἀποφεύγει τὸν σωματικὸ κόπο. Ἀναπαύονται δηλαδὴ οἱ περισσότεροι ἀπὸ ἐμᾶς στὸ πολὺ διάβασμα καὶ στὴν λίγη ἢ καθόλου ἐφαρμογή. Θαυμάζουμε μόνον τοὺς Ἁγίους Ἀθλητὰς τῆς Ἐκκλησίας μας, χωρὶς νὰ καταλαβαίνουμε τὸ πόσο κοπίασαν, διότι δὲν κοπίασαμε, γιὰ νὰ μπορέσουμε νὰ καταλάβουμε τὸν κόπο τους, γιὰ νὰ τοὺς ἀγαπήσουμε καὶ νὰ ἀγωνισθοῦμε ἀπὸ φιλότιμο νὰ τοὺς μιμηθοῦμε.



## Ὁ Χρυσόστομος Σμύρνης, Ἐνας Μέγας Ἐθνομάρτυρας Ἱεράρχης τῆς Μικρασιατικῆς Καταστροφῆς

Γ. Χατζηφώτης, Πρόεδρος Ἐφορείας Νεότητος τοῦ ΕΕΣ, ΠΗΓΗ: «Ἑλληνικὸς Ἐρυθρὸς Σταυρὸς Νεότητος» 10/99



Ὅπως στὴν Τουρκοκρατία, ὅπως στὸ Εἰκοσιένα, ὅπως σὲ κάθε ἀγώνα καὶ κρίσιμη ὥρα τοῦ γένους, ἡ Ἐκκλησία καὶ οἱ λειτουργοὶ τῆς ἀγκάλιασαν καὶ πάλι στοργικά τὴν Ρωμιοσύνη. Ἐμειναν πιστοὶ πρὸς τὸ ἐθνικὸ χρέος καὶ πλήρωσαν πρῶτοι. Ὅπως ἀκριβῶς ὁ Γρηγόριος ὁ Ε΄, ὁ Ἅγιος Πατριάρχης Κωνσταντινουπόλεως, ἔτσι

καὶ ὁ Χρυσόστομος Σμύρνης εἶχε κάθε δυνατότητα νὰ φύγει. Αὐτὸ τὸν συμβούλευαν ὅλοι, Ἕλληνες καὶ ξένοι. Οἱ πρόσφυγες τὸν ἤθελαν μαζί τους. Ἐκεῖνος ὅμως εἶχε πλήρη συναίσθηση ὅτι ἦταν ποιμένας. Ὅσο ἔμεινε ἐκεῖ ἔστω καὶ μία ψυχὴ ζωντανή, ἔπρεπε νὰ σταθεῖ ὄρθιος στὸ μετερίζι. «Ἡ θέση μου εἶναι κοντὰ στὸ ποίμνιό μου», ἀπαντοῦσε. Καὶ τὴν κράτησε ὡς τὸ τέλος, ὅταν ὁ μαινόμενος ὄχλος, μετὰ ἀπὸ μία εἰκονικὴ δίκη, κυριολεκτικὰ τὸν κατασπάρραξε.

Ὁ πράγματι Φιλέλλην Πρόξενος τῶν Ἡνωμένων Πολιτειῶν στὴ Σμύρνη George Horton, μεταξὺ ἄλλων γράφει: «Ἐνας Τοῦρκος ἀξίωματικὸς πῆγε μαζί με δύο στρατιῶτες στὰ γραφεῖα τῆς Μητροπόλεως καὶ τὸν ὀδήγησε στὸ Νουρεδὶν Πασά, τὸν Τοῦρκο Ἀρχιστράτηγο, ὁ ὁποῖος, ὅπως λέγουν, εἶχε υἱοθετήσει τὴν μεσαιωνικὴ ἰδέα νὰ παραδώσει τὸ Μητροπολίτη στὸ φανατικὸ ὄχλο, γιὰ νὰ τὸν κάνει ὅ,τι ἤθελε».

Δὲν ὑπάρχουν ἐπαρκεῖς ἀποδείξεις τῆς ὀρθότητος αὐτῆς τῆς διαπιστώσεως, εἶναι ὅμως βέβαιο ὅτι ὁ Μητροπολίτης θανατώθηκε ἀπὸ τὸν ὄχλο. Ἐβαιοπράγησαν ἐπάνω του, τοῦ ξεριζώσαν τὴ γενιάδα του, τὸν ἐχτύπησαν μὲ ρόπαλα καὶ μὲ μαχαιριές, ὡστόσο πέθανε καὶ ὕστερα τὸν ἔσυραν σβαρνίζοντάς τον ἐπάνω στοὺς δρόμους. Τὸ μοναδικό του φταίξιμο ἦταν, ὅτι ἦταν ἕνας Ἕλληνας μὲ μεγάλο πατριωτισμὸ καὶ εὐγλωττία, πὺ ἐπιθυμοῦσε τὴν πρόοδο τῆς φυλῆς του καὶ ἐργαζόταν γιὰ τὸν σκοπὸ αὐτό. Τοῦ εἶχαν προσφέρει καταφύγιο στὸ Γαλλικὸ Πρόξενεῖο καὶ τὴ διαφυγὴ του μὲ πλοῖο τοῦ Γαλλικοῦ Ναυτικοῦ, ἐκεῖνος ὅμως δὲν δέχθηκε λέγοντας ὅτι τὸ

καθήκον του ἦταν νὰ μείνει κοντὰ στὸ ποίμνιό του. Πέθανε σὰν μάρτυρας καὶ ἀξίζει νὰ τοῦ ἀπονεμηθοῦν ὑψιστες τιμὲς ἀπὸ τὴν Ἑλληνικὴ Ἐκκλησία καὶ τὴν Ἑλληνικὴ Κυβέρνηση.

Εἶναι ἄξιος τοῦ σεβασμοῦ ὄχι μόνο ὄλων τῶν Ἑλλήνων, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὄλων τῶν φιλελευθέρων λαῶν.

Γιὰ νὰ συνειδητοποιήσει κανεὶς καλύτερα τὴν θυσία τοῦ Ἐθνομάρτυρα Χρυσοστόμου Σμύρνης, δὲν ἔχει παρὰ νὰ τὸν συγκρίνει μὲ τὸν Πολιτικὸ ἐκπρόσωπο τῆς Ἑλλάδας στὴν Μικρὰ Ἀσία, τὸ γνωστὸ Στεργιάδη, ποῦ φρόντισε ἐγκαιρὰ νὰ διαφύγει ἀφήνοντας τοὺς Σμυρνιοὺς καὶ τοὺς Μικρασιάτες, πὺ εἶχαν κατακλύσει τὴν Σμύρνη στὰ νύχια τῶν Τσετῶν καὶ τοῦ τουρκικοῦ ὄχλου.

## Προετοιμασία Γιὰ Τὴν Θεία Κοινωνία

Ἀρχιμανδρίτης Τιμόθεος Παπαμιχαῆλ (+1992)

Ἡ προετοιμασία γιὰ τὴν Θεία Κοινωνία συνιστάται ὄχι τόσο στὴν νηστεία τῶν τροφῶν, ὅσον στὸ ξεριζώμα ἀπὸ τὴν καρδιά μας κάθε ἁμαρτωλοῦ καὶ σάπιου στοιχείου, μὲ τὴν ἱερὰ ἐξομολόγηση, μπροστὰ στὸν πνευματικὸ καὶ μὲ τὴν προσπάθεια νὰ μένουμε πιστοὶ στὸν ὄρκο πὺ δώσαμε στὸ βάπτισμα. Ἄς μὴν ξεχνᾶμε καὶ κάτι ἄλλο: κανένας μὰ κανένας Χριστιανὸς δὲν θὰ ἀνεχόταν νὰ βλέπει μέσα στοὺς ναοὺς διάφορα εἶδωλα. Πὺ ὅμως τότε ἀνεχόμεστε μέσα στοὺς ναοὺς τῶν ψυχῶν μας τόσα πολλὰ εἶδωλα;

Ἄς ἐπιστρέψουμε στὸ Χριστὸ μὲ μετάνοια καὶ ἄς βάλουμε ὡς σκοπὸ τῆς ζωῆς μας νὰ κάνουμε τὸ θέλημά Του. Ἄς ἔχουμε ὡς σύνθημα: Ἐφαρμογὴ αὐτῶν πὺ ὑποσχθήκαμε στο Θεὸ. Καὶ τότε, νὰ τὸ θαῦμα: Μία - μὴ θὰ πραγματοποιηθοῦν μέσα μας ὅλες αἱ ὑποσχέσεις Του...

## 25η Μαρτίου, 2003

Τὴν Ἁγία Ἡμέρα τῆς 25ης Μαρτίου προσευχόμεστε ὅτι ὅλος ὁ Ἑλληνισμὸς, σὲ κάθε γωνιὰ τῆς Οἰκουμένης, θὰ ἀκούσει νὰ φτάνει ἀπὸ τὰ βάθη τῶν αἰῶνων γοερὸς καὶ βροντώδης ὁ παιάνας τοῦ Αἰσχύλου καὶ τῶν Σαλαμινομάχων: Ὡ παῖδες Ἑλλήνων, ἴτε, ἐλευθεροῦτε πατρίδ' ἐλευθεροῦτε δὲ παῖδας, γυναῖκας, θεῶν τὲ πατρῶων ἔδη, θήκας τὲ προγόνων· νῦν ὑπὲρ πάντων ὁ ἀγὼν.

Καὶ τὸν παιάνα αὐτὸν τὸν γοερὸ καὶ βροντερὸ εἶθε νὰ πιάσει καὶ νὰ συνεχίσει ὁ μέγας μας βάρδος, ὁ ἐθνικός μας ποιητὴς Διονύσιος Σολωμός: Ἀπ' τὰ κόκαλα βγαλμένη τῶν Ἑλλήνων τὰ ἱερὰ καὶ σὰν πρῶτα ἀνδρειωμένη χαῖρε, ὦ χαῖρε ἐλευθεριά.

## Ἡ Διπλοπροσωπία Τῶν Εὐρωπαϊκῶν Κυβερνήσεων

Γεώργιος Καρούας, Συντάκτης τῆς Orthodox Heritage

**Π**αρακολουθοῦμε τὶς σκέψεις, τὶς πράξεις καὶ τὶς δυνατὲς φωνὲς τῶν Εὐρωπαϊκῶν λαῶν καὶ κυβερνήσεων ἐπὶ τοῦ Ἰράκ καὶ τοῦ ἐπερχομένου πολέμου.

Κανένας ὅμως εἰς τὰ Μέσα Μαζικῆς Ἐνημερώσεως (ΜΜΕ) δὲν ἔγραψε οὔτε γράφει ὅτι ὅλοι αὐτοὶ οἱ ἡγέτες καὶ οἱ λαοὶ ποὺ σήμερα διαμτύρονται, κόπτονται καὶ οὐρλιάζουν γιὰ τὰ γυναικόπαιδα στὸ Ἰράκ εἶναι οἱ ἴδιοι ποὺ πρὶν μερικὰ χρόνια μᾶς ἐξηγοῦσαν πόσο καλὸ κάνουν οἱ βομβαρδισμοὶ στὴν Γιουγκοσλαβία.

Τὰ ΜΜΕ ποὺ σήμερα πρωτοστατοῦν στὴν εἰρήνη εἶναι τὰ ἴδια ποὺ τότε πρωτοστατοῦσαν στὸν πόλεμο. Ἔτσι βόλευε τότε τὶς Εὐρωπαϊκὲς χῶρες καὶ τὰ συμφέροντά τους καὶ ἀλλιῶς τοὺς βολεῦει σήμερα. Οἱ πορεῖες ἀποτελοῦν τὸ ἄλλοθι γιὰ ὅτι σχεδιάζουν. Οἱ ἴδιοι λαοὶ ποὺ ψήφισαν αὐτὲς τὶς ἡγεσίες οἱ ἴδιοι θὰ τὶς ψηφίσουν καὶ πάλι. Διαβάστε τὴ ἀκριβῶς ἔγραφαν οἱ ἀρθρογράφοι στὰ ΝΕΑ-ΒΗΜΑ-ΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΟΤΥΠΙΑ στὸ Γιουγκοσλαβικὸ καὶ θαυμάστε τὴ γράφουν σήμερα. Δυστυχῶς ἡ μνήμη τῶν λαῶν εἶναι ἴδια μὲ τοῦ χρυσοφάρου, δηλαδὴ κάπου τρία δευτερόλεπτα.

Φυσικῶς (καὶ λογικῶς) πρέπει νὰ ἀπευθύνουμε τὴν ἴδια σκέψη καὶ γιὰ τοὺς ἀντιπροσώπους καὶ ἡγέτες πολλῶν θρησκειῶν, ἀκόμα καὶ μερικῶν Ὁρθοδόξων Ἐκκλησιῶν, οἱ ὁποῖοι τὸ μόνο ποὺ ἔκαναν εἶναι νὰ κάνουν τὶς τυπικὲς καὶ μηχανικὲς δηλώσεις, βγάζοντας κάτι γλιαρὲς καὶ ἀδύνατες φωνὲς γιὰ τὴν (τάχα) μεγάλη ἀδικία στὴν Γιουγκοσλαβία. Ἴσως αὐτὸ τοὺς βοήθησε νὰ ρίξουν λίγο κρῦο νεράκι γιὰ νὰ κρῦψουν τὴν ἐκ Θεοῦ φλέγουσα συνειδήσή τους ποὺ ὅπωςδῆποτε τοὺς ἔκαιγε.

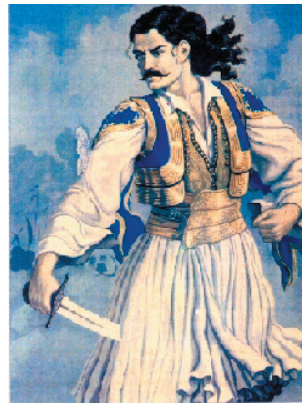
Ἄλλὰ, οἱ καλοὶ Ὁρθόδοξοι λαοὶ γνωρίζουν τὴν πικρὴ καὶ ἐσχατολογικὴ ἀλήθεια· ὅτι τὰ ἀφεντικὰ τους, μέσα ἀπὸ τὶς παγκόσμιες Τεκτονικὲς Στοῆς, τοὺς διέταζαν νὰ μὴν μιλοῦνε, νὰ μὴν διαμαρτύρονται, νὰ μὴν ξυπνοῦνε τοὺς ἀποκοιμισμένους λαοὺς· καὶ αὐτοί, ὡς τὰ ὑπάκουα σκυλάκια ποὺ καταντήσανε, συνθηκολόγησαν καὶ συνειδήση καὶ ἠθικὴ καὶ πατρίδα καὶ ὅτι ἄλλο ἱερὸ καὶ ὄσιο ὑπάρχει, ἀκόμα καὶ Τὸν ἴδιο Τὸν Χριστό...

Ὁ Καλὸς Θεὸς νὰ ἐλεήσει καὶ νὰ δεῖξει ἀκόμα μία φορὰ, τὴν ἀπειρὴ ἀγάπη Του καὶ ὑπομονὴ πρὸς τὸν ἀμαρτωλὸ ἄνθρωπο ποὺ μὲ τόσο μεγάλη ἐπιπολαιότητα λησμονεῖ τὶς ἐντολὲς Του καὶ ἀκολουθεῖ τὴν βούληση τοῦ παμπόνηρου!

**ΥΠΕΡΑΓΙΑ ΘΕΟΤΟΚΕ ΣΩΣΟΝ ΗΜΑΣ**

## Ἀθανάσιος Διάκος

Ὁ Πιὸ Ἄγνος Ἥρωας τοῦ 1821



**Ο** θρυλικὸς αὐτὸς ἥρωας τοῦ 1821, γεννήθηκε στὴ Μουσούνιτσα τῆς Παρνασσίδος τὸ 1788. Παιδὶ ἀκόμα μπήκε στὸ μοναστήρι τοῦ Ἁγίου Ἰωάννη τοῦ Προδρόμου ὅπου ἔμαθε τὰ πρῶτα τοῦ γράμματα. Σὲ ἡλικία 20 χρονῶν ἄφησε τὴ ζωὴ τοῦ μοναστηριοῦ καὶ πήρε τὰ ὄπλα ἐναντίον τῶν Τούρκων.

Ὁ Διάκος ἦταν ἄφταστος στὰ ἀγωνίσματα, στὰ ὄπλα καὶ στὴν ἀνδρεία. Στὰ 1818 ἔγινε τὸ πρῶτο ἀπὸ τὰ ἑπτὰ πρωτοπαλήκαρα τοῦ Ὀδυσσεᾶ Ἀνδρούτσου. Μαζὶ του μυήθηκε στὴν Φιλικὴ Ἐταιρεία καὶ ἔβαλε σκοπὸ τῆς ζωῆς του τὴν ἀπελευθέρωση τῆς φυλῆς. Ἔτσι δημιούργησε δικό του στρατὸ καὶ ὕψωσε τὴ σημαία τῆς Ἐπανάστασης σὲ ὅλη τὴν Ἑλλάδα.

Οἱ Τούρκοι ἀποφάσισαν νὰ τὸν ἀντιμετωπίσουν καὶ ἔστειλαν τὸν στρατηγὸ Ὀμερ Βρυώνη μὲ 18.000 στρατιῶτες. Ὁ Διάκος εἶχε μόνο 1.500 παληκάρια. Ἡ μάχη ἔγινε στὴν Ἀλαμάνα, ἐκεῖ ὅπου 23 αἰῶνες πρὶν, ἔπεσε ὁ Λεωνίδας μὲ τοὺς 300. Ὁ Διάκος πολέμησε ἥρωικά, ἀλλὰ στὸ τέλος οἱ Τούρκοι τὸν συνέλαβαν καὶ τὸν σοῦβλισαν.

Ὁ Διάκος ἀντιμετώπισε τὸ μαρτυρικὸ του θάνατο μὲ θάρρος. Μόνο ἓνα παράπονο βγῆκε ἀπὸ τὰ χεῖλη του, προβλέποντας τὴν ἀνάσταση τοῦ Ἑλληνισμοῦ:

**«Γιὰ δὲς καιρὸ ποὺ διάλεξε ὁ χάρος νὰ μὲ πάρει, τώρα ποὺ ἀνθίζουν τὰ κλαδιὰ καὶ βγάζει ἡ γῆς χορτάρι.»**

### Τὸ τραγούδι του

*Τρία πουλάκια κάθονταν στοῦ Διακού το ἑταίρου  
τὸνα τηράει τὴ Λειβαδιά καὶ τᾶλλο τὸ Ζητοῦνι  
τὸ τρίτο τὸ καλύτερο μοιρολογαίει καὶ λέει.  
«Πολλὴ μαυρίλα πλάκωσε, μαύρη σὰν καλιακούδα.  
Μὴν ὁ Καλύβας ἔρχεται, μὴν ὁ Λεβεντογιάννης;  
Νουδ' ὁ Καλύβας ἔρχεται, νουδ' ὁ Λεβεντογιάννης,  
Ὀμερ Βρυώνης πλάκωσε μὲ δεκοχτῶ χιλιάδες».  
Ὁ Διάκος σὰν τ'ἀγροίκησε πολὺ τοῦ κακοφάνει.  
Ψιλὴ φωνὴν ἐσήκωσε, τὸν πρῶτο του φωνάζει.  
«Τὸν ταίφά μου σὺνάξε, μάσε τὰ παληκάρια,  
δώστους μαπαροῦτη περισσὴ καὶ βόλια μὲ τὶς χοῦφτες  
γλήγορα καὶ νὰ πιάσουμε κάτω τὴν Ἀλαμάνα,  
ποῦναι ταμπούρια δυνατὰ κι' ὄμορφα μετερίζια».  
Παίρνουνε ταλαφρὰ σπαθιά καὶ τὰ βαριά ντουφέκια,  
στὴν Ἀλαμάνα φτάνουνε καὶ πιάνουν τὰ ταμπούρια.  
«Καρδιὰ παιδιὰ μου, φώναξε, παιδιὰ, μὴ φοβηθῆτε!»*



## Ἡ Ἐνοχη Σιωπῆ τῶν Ὑποκριτῶν

ΠΗΓΗ: «Παρακαταθήκη», τεύχος 23: Μάρτ.-Ἀπρ. 2002

**Σημείωση τοῦ Συντάκτη:** Μὲ τὶς ἀκουόμενες σάλπιγγες τοῦ πολέμου ποὺ ὀλοένα δυναμώνουν, ἡ *Orthodox Heritage* θεώρησε σκόπιμο τὴν παρουσίαση ἑνὸς ἄρθρου ποὺ γράφτηκε πρὶν ἓνα χρόνο ἀπὸ τὴν *Παρακαταθήκη*, μὲ θέμα τὰ Ἰσραηλιτικὰ ἐγκλήματα κατὰ τῶν Παλαιστινίων. Δυστυχῶς φοβούμεθα ὅτι τὸ «νόημα» τοῦ ἄρθρου αὐτοῦ ὁπωσδήποτε θὰ ἀκούσουμε νὰ ἀντηχεῖ πίσω ἀπὸ τὶς σφαῖρες καὶ τὶς βόμβες τοῦ Ἰράκ μὲ καινούργια θύματα τῶν συνεχιζομένων ἀδίκων ἐγκλημάτων τὰ γυναικόπαιδα τῶν ἐκεῖ πόλεων.

Ὅι μῆνες Μάρτιος καὶ Ἀπρίλιος τοῦ 2002 ὑπῆρξαν πλούσιοι σὲ νεοταξικὴ ἀποτελεσματικότητα. Διαθρησκειακοὶ διάλογοι γιὰ τὴν προώθηση τῆς νέας τάξεως θρησκευτικῶν πραγμάτων ἀπὸ τὴ μία πλευρά. Καὶ ἀπὸ τὴν ἄλλη, γενοκτονία τῶν Παλαιστινίων γιὰ τὴν προώθηση τῶν πολιτικῶν, οἰκονομικῶν καὶ γεωστρατηγικῶν συμφερόντων τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ καὶ τῶν μεσσιανικῶν του προσδοκιῶν. Βολικὴ δικαιολογία καὶ στίς δυὸ περιπτώσεις ἡ ἀναγκαιότητα συστρατεύσεως γιὰ τὴν πάταξη τῆς τρομοκρατίας. Μόνο ποὺ στὴ δεύτερη περίπτωση ἓνα ὀλόκληρο κράτος, τὸ Ἰσραὴλ, μετετρέπη σὲ τρομοκράτη «γιὰ νὰ πατάξει τὴν τρομοκρατία». Συμβαίνει, βέβαια, ἀντικειμενικὰ τόσο πολὺ νὰ τὸ ἐξυπηρετεῖ ἡ τρομοκρατία. Δι' αὐτῆς προωθεῖ ἄριστα τὴν «τελικὴ λύση» τοῦ μεσανατολικοῦ προβλήματος διὰ τῆς ἐξαφανίσεως τῶν Παλαιστινίων.

Ἡ ἀνθρωπότητα ἔγινε στὸ δῆμινο αὐτὸ μάρτυρας ἑνὸς ἀπάνθρωπου ἐγκλήματος ποὺ ἐκτυλίχθηκε στὰ ἴδια χῶματα ποὺ δυὸ χιλιάδες χρόνια πρὶν ἔλαβε χώρα τὸ Θεῖο Δράμα. Στὸ νοῦ μας ἦλθε τὸ τροπάριο ποὺ ψάλλουμε στὸν ἑσπερινὸ τῆς Μεγάλης Παρασκευῆς. «Λαὸς δυσσεβῆς καὶ παράνομος, ἵνα τί μελετᾶ κενά; Ἵνα τί τὴν ζωὴν τῶν ἀπάντων θανάτῳ κατεδίκασε;». Διαχρονικὴ ἡ ἐπικαιρότητά του.

Τὸ σιωνιστικὸ Ἰσραὴλ συναγωνίστηκε ἐπάξια, ἴσως καὶ νὰ ξεπέρασε τὴ ναζιστικὴ Γερμανία σὲ ἀπανθρωπία καὶ κυνισμό. Οἱ ἐν ψυχρῷ δολοφονίες ἀμάχων, γυναικῶν καὶ μικρῶν παιδιῶν ἐνεγράφησαν στὸ ἑνεργητικὸ του καὶ δὲν εἶναι ἡ πρώτη φορὰ. Ποῦ εἶναι αὐτοὶ ποὺ μὲ τόση εὐκολία βομβάρδιζαν σὲ Κοσσυφοπέδιο καὶ Ἀφγανιστάν; Ποῦ εἶναι οἱ αὐτοδιορισθέντες φύλακες τῆς διεθνοῦς ἀσφάλειας καὶ εἰρήνης; Ποῦ εἶναι οἱ ὑπερασπιστὲς τῶν δικαιωμάτων τῶν ἐθνικῶν καὶ θρησκευτικῶν μειονοτήτων; Ποῦ εἶναι αὐτοὶ ποὺ ἔστησαν τὸ Διεθνὲς Δικαστήριον τῆς Χάγης γιὰ ἐγκλήματα πολέμου; Ποῦ εἶναι αὐτοὶ ποὺ χαλοῦσαν τὸν κόσμον μὲ τὰ ἐλεγχόμενα ἀπὸ αὐτοὺς ΜΜΕ; Ἡ ἔνοχη σιωπὴ τοὺς ἀπεκάλυψε γιὰ ἄλλη μία

φορὰ τὴν ὑποκρισία τους. Καὶ νὰ ἦταν μόνον ἡ σιωπὴ! Ἐφθασαν στὸ σημεῖο νὰ δικαιώνουν τοὺς θύτες καὶ νὰ καταδικάζουν τὰ θύματα. Χαρακτηριστικὴ ἡ δήλωση τῆς Μαντλὴν Ὀλμπράιτ, πρῶν Ὑπουργοῦ Ἐξωτερικῶν τῶν Η.Π.Α. «Εἶναι σαφὲς ὅτι τὸ Ἰσραὴλ δέχεται ἐπίθεση. Αὐτὸ εἶναι πέραν πάσης συζητήσεως.»

Ἐμεῖς βέβαια γνωρίζοντας ὅτι «τὸ ἄδίκον οὐκ εὐλογεῖται» καὶ ὅτι μετὰ τὴ Μεγάλῃ Παρασκευῇ ἔρχεται ἡ Ἀνάσταση ἐξακολουθοῦμε νὰ ἐπιμένουμε, νὰ προσευχόμαστε καὶ νὰ ἐλπίζουμε. Ἐστω καὶ ἂν ἡ Ἀνάσταση φαίνεται νὰ ἀργεῖ πολὺ στὴν Παλαιστίνη.

## Ἡ Ἑλλάς Στὰ Μάτια Τῶν Ξένων

«Χρειάστηκε ἡ πτώση τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως, ἡ ἐξορία τῶν γραμμῶν καὶ τῶν χειρογράφων του Βυζαντίου καὶ ἡ ἀνακάλυψη τῆς τυπογραφίας, γιὰ νὰ κλειδωνισθῇ ἡ νάρκη ποὺ διατηροῦσε προσεκτικὰ ἡ Καθολικὴ Ἐκκλησία. Τὸ πέπλο τῆς ἀγνοίας σχίσθηκε. Μιὰ αὐγὴ ἐγκαταστάθη στὴν Εὐρώπη.» ANTPRE ΛΕ ΦΕΒΡ

«Σὲ ἐκείνους ποὺ σκέπτονται πῶς ἡ Ἑλλάδα σήμερον δὲν ἔχει καμμία σημασία ἄς μοῦ ἐπιτραπῇ νὰ πῶ ὅτι δὲν θὰ μπορούσαν νὰ κάνουν μεγαλύτερο λάθος. Ἡ σημερινή, ὅπως καὶ ἡ παλιὰ Ἑλλάδα, ἔχει ὑψίστη σημασία γιὰ ὅποιονδήποτε ψάχνει νὰ βρεῖ τὸν ἑαυτό του.» XENPI ΜΙΛΛΕΡ

«Ἄν οἱ Ἕλληνες ἀποκτήσουν μόρφωση καὶ ἐνότητα, ἀλίμονό μας.» ΟΥΙΣΤΟΝ ΤΣΩΡΤΣΙΑ

«Ὅταν ἡ κοιτίδα τοῦ εὐγενεστεροῦ πολιτισμοῦ ποὺ γνώρισε ἡ ἀνθρωπότης, ἡ χώρα ποὺ τῆς ὀφείλομε ὅτι καθιστᾶ τὴν ζωὴ ἀνώτερη καὶ ὠραιότερη, ὑφίσταται τέτοια ἐπίθεση, ἡ θέση ὄλων τῶν ἀληθινῶν ἀνθρώπων εἶναι στὸ πλευρὸ της.» ΜΑΚΕΝΖΙ ΚΙΝΚ, Πρωθυπουργὸς Καναδᾶ

«Ὁ πολιτισμὸς μας περνᾶει σήμερον κρίση... κρίση φαινομενικὰ οἰκονομικὴ, ἀλλὰ πρωτίστως κρίση πνευματικὴ, κρίση πολιτισμοῦ. Δὲν ἔχω νὰ προτείνω ἄλλη θεραπεία ἀπὸ τὴν ἐπιστροφή στὴν Ἑλλάδα.» PENE ΠΟΥΥΞ, Γάλλος δημοσιογράφος

«Ἡ Ἑλλάδα ἔδωσε τὸ παράδειγμα ποὺ καθέννας ἀπὸ μᾶς πρέπει νὰ ἀκολουθήσει, ὥσπου οἱ σφετεριστὲς τῆς ἐλευθερίας, ὅπουδήποτε τῆς γῆς κι ἂν βρίσκονται, ὑποστοῦν τὴν δίκαιη τιμωρία τῆς.» ΦΡΑΓΚΛΙΝΟΣ ΡΟΥΣΒΕΛΤ, Πρόεδρος ΗΠΑ

«Ὁ Ἑλληνικὸς λαὸς εἶναι ἀτίθασος καὶ γι' αὐτὸ πρέπει νὰ τὸν πλήξουμε βαθεῖα στίς πολιτιστικὲς του ρίζες... Νὰ πλήξουμε τὴν γλώσσα, τὴν θρησκεία, τὰ πνευματικὰ καὶ ἱστορικὰ τοῦ ἀποθέματα...» XENPI ΚΙΣΣΙΓΚΕΡ



## A PERSPECTIVE ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MARCH 25TH FOR THE GREEK ORTHODOX

*Anonymous*

Of all the solemn days in Orthodoxy the day of March 25 is one not only of religious significance but of national significance as well, allowing the Greek Orthodox to commemorate God's message to Virgin Mary and the independence of Greece on the same day. It is no coincidence that it was also the day the Fathers of the modern Hellenic nation selected to declare their Independence from the rule of the Ottoman barbarians.

The expression, "For God and Country," has real meaning for the Orthodox Greek on the 25th day of March, a day on which he can celebrate two events without diminishing either one for the obvious reason that devotion and patriotism have the same emotional root -- love. If Christianity could be compressed into a single word, that word would be love. The same holds true for patriotism.

Uppermost in the true Greek's mind on March 25, however, is the Virgin Mary, chosen from all the women in the world to be the Mother of Jesus Christ. When the angel Gabriel brought the momentous message from God this day, the gentle Virgin must have felt a solemn dignity, but at the same time a disquieting apprehension at the prospect of this awesome responsibility. Assured by the Archangel, Mary's answer was a simple: "May it be unto me according to thy Word," and the rest is glorious history for now and ever and unto the ages to come.

The world of Mary of two thousand years ago is envisioned as one in which life was simple and free of the complexities that plague the modern world, but in that age of self-sufficiency there were problems which would be insurmountable today. The mother of that day was all things to her family, and it can safely be said that when the Archangel Gabriel departed, the prospective Mother of God must have for several moments felt terribly alone. Everyone knows about the nativity and the

mission of Jesus Christ, but the details of the days, months and years in between are known but to the Virgin Mary and to God; as it says repeatedly in Holy Scripture: "But Mary kept all these things in her heart."

The political importance of March 25 is fully realized only when the suffering of four centuries is called to mind. In 1453 the Ottoman hordes overran all of Greece and most of the Balkans and held hostage a people whose culture dated back more than two thousand years; a people who gave more to the world than it could ever receive in return. It seems that the world just stood by while the cradle of democracy and Christianity was being defiled by a scourge that would have undone a less hardy breed.

Hopelessly outnumbered, Greece endured nearly four hundred years of brutal oppression, but the spirit of its people



**Bishop Germanos of Patras Declares the Independence of Greece**

knew not a single moment's weakness. The fires of rebellion that the Turks thought they had snuffed out were smouldering in Hellenic hearts for almost 400 years. These flames were kindled into a conflagration on 25 March 1821, not by a bemedalled general but by a man of the cloth, Bishop Germanos of Patras, Greece, who chose the day of the Annunciation knowing God would be on the side of the Greeks.

The good bishop held the Cross of Jesus Christ aloft on the 25th day of March, 1821, and proclaimed freedom for all Greek Orthodox Christians. It was a motion seconded by every Greek in the country. In addition to engaging in a war for independence, the Greeks were actually waging a holy war. It was not only Greek against Turk, but Christian against Muslim, and the subsequent Greek victory was a triumph of Christianity.

**S**t. Ephraim the Syrian says, "God does not look upon the quantity of offerings that you make, but the heart with which you bring these offerings." However small your offering may be, give it with humility and a sorrowful heart that you cannot offer more. That is true almsgiving.

**Elder Cleopa Ilie (+1998)**

## WITH MY OWN EYES

*By Pastor Richard Wurmbbrand*

*Pastor Richard Wurmbbrand is an evangelical minister who spent fourteen years in Communist imprisonment and torture in his homeland of Romania. In 1945, when the Communists seized Romania and attempted to control the churches for their purposes, Richard Wurmbbrand immediately began an effective "underground" ministry to his enslaved people and the invading Russian soldiers. He was eventually arrested in 1948. Richard spent three years in solitary confinement, seeing no one but his Communist torturers. Pastor Wurmbbrand was released in a general amnesty in 1964. What follows is a small part of the many experiences he had with Orthodox clergy while he was imprisoned.*

**M**y former fellow-prisoner the Romanian-Orthodox Deacon John Stanescu, suffered in jail for his faith.

Colonel Albon, director of the slave labor camp, was informed that someone had dared to preach in a cell. He entered the cell carrying a cane and demanded to know the culprit. When no one responded, he said, "Well, then all will be flogged."

He commenced at one end of the cell, and there was the usual yelling and rising in tears. When he came to Stanescu, he said, "Not ready yet? Strip this minute!"

Stanescu replied, "There is a God in heaven, and He will judge you."

With this, his fate was sealed. He would surely be beaten to death. But just at that moment, a guard entered the cell and said, "Colonel, you are called urgently to the office. Some generals have come from the Ministry."

Albon left, saying to Stanescu, "We will see each other again soon." However, the generals arrested the colonel (Communists hate and jail each other for no reason), and after an hour Albon was back in the cell, this time as a prisoner.

Many inmates jumped to lynch him. Now Stanescu defended the defeated enemy with his own body, receiving many blows himself as he protected the torturer from the flogged prisoners. Stanescu was a real priest.

Later I asked him, "Where did you get the power to do this?" And he replied, "I live Jesus ardently. I always have Him before my eyes. I also see Him in my enemy. It is Jesus who keeps him from doing even worse things." Beware of a faith without a cross!

When I was in jail I fell very, very sick. I had tuberculosis of the whole surface of both lungs and four vertebra were attacked by tuberculosis. I also had intestinal tuberculosis, diabetes, heart failure, jaundice, and other sicknesses I can't even remember. I was near to death.

At my right hand was an Orthodox priest by the name of Iscu. He was Abbot of a monastery. This man, perhaps in his 40's, had been so tortured he was near to death. But his face was serene. He spoke about his hope of heaven, about his love of Christ, about his faith. He radiated joy.

On my left side was the Communist torturer who had tortured this priest almost to death. He had been arrested by his own comrades.

And so it happened that the Communist torturer who had tortured this priest nearly to death had been tortured nearly to death by his comrades. And he was dying near me. His soul was in agony.

During the night he would awaken me saying, "Father, please pray for me. I can't die, I have committed such terrible crimes."

Then I saw a miracle. I saw the agonizing priest calling two other prisoners. And leaning on their shoulders, slowly, slowly he walked past my bed, sat on the bedside of his murderer, and caressed his head – I will never forget this gesture. I watched a murdered man caressing his murderer! That is love – he found a caress for him.

The priest said to the man, "You are young; you did not know what you were doing. I love you with all my heart." But he did not just say the words. You can say "love," and it's just a word of four letters. But he really loved. "I love you with all my heart."

Then he went on, "If I who am a sinner can love you so much, imagine Christ, Who is Love incarnate, how much He loves you! And all the Christians whom you have tortured, know that they forgive you, they love you, and Christ loves you. He wishes you to be saved much more than you wish to be saved. You wonder if your sins can be forgiven. He wishes to forgive your sins more than you wish your sins to be forgiven. He desires for you to be with Him in heaven. He is Love. You only need to turn to Him and repent."

In this prison cell in which there was no possibility of privacy, I overheard the confession of the murderer to the murdered. Life is more thrilling than a novel – no novelist has ever written such a thing. The murdered – near to death – received the confession of the murderer. The murdered gave absolution to this murderer.

They prayed together, embraced each other, and the priest went back to his bed. Both men died that same night. It was Christmas Eve. But it was not a Christmas Eve in which we simply remembered that 2000 years ago Jesus was born in Bethlehem. It was a Christmas Eve during which Jesus was born in the heart of a Communist murderer.

**These are the things I have seen with my own eyes...**

## THE APOSTOLIC DIDACHE, OR TEACHINGS OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES (PART 2)

*Editor's Note: Continuing from our previous issue, we present to our readers part II of the Apostolic Didache, a group of short lessons and rules that, to a great extent, constitute the foundation of Holy Orthodox Tradition, our Faith and His Church.*

### TEACHING 4

- 4:1 My child, thou shalt remember both night and day him that speaketh unto thee the Word of God; thou shalt honour him as thou dost the Lord, for where the teaching of the Lord is given, there is the Lord;
- 4:2 thou shalt seek out day by day the favour of the saints, that thou mayest rest in their words;
- 4:3 thou shalt not desire schism, but shalt set at peace them that contend; thou shalt judge righteously; thou shalt not accept the person of any one to convict him of transgression;
- 4:4 thou shalt not doubt whether a thing shall be or not.
- 4:5 Be not a stretcher out of thy hand to receive, and a drawer of it back in giving.
- 4:6 If thou hast, give by means of thy hands a redemption for thy sins.
- 4:7 Thou shalt not doubt to give, neither shalt thou murmur when giving; for thou shouldst know who is the fair recompenser of the reward.
- 4:8 Thou shalt not turn away from him that is in need, but shalt share with thy brother in all things, and shalt not say that things are thine own; for if ye are partners in what is immortal, how much more in what is mortal?
- 4:9 Thou shalt not remove thine heart from thy son or from thy daughter, but from their youth shalt teach them the fear of God.
- 4:10 Thou shalt not command with bitterness thy servant or thy handmaid, who hope in the same God as thyself, lest they fear not in consequence the God who is over both; for he cometh not to call with respect of persons, but those whom the Spirit hath prepared.
- 4:11 And do ye servants submit yourselves to your masters with reverence and fear, as being the type of God.
- 4:12 Thou shalt hate all hypocrisy and everything that is not pleasing to God;
- 4:13 thou shalt not abandon the commandments of the Lord, but shalt guard that which thou hast received, neither adding thereto nor taking therefrom;
- 4:14 thou shalt confess thy transgressions in the Church, and shalt not come unto prayer with an evil conscience. This is the path of life.

### TEACHING 5

- 5:1 But the path of death is this. First of all, it is evil, and full of cursing; there are found murders, adulteries, lusts,

fornication, thefts, idolatries, soothsaying, sorceries, robberies, false witnessings, hypocrisies, double-mindedness, craft, malice, self-will, covetousness, filthy talking, jealousy, audacity, pride, arrogance;

- 5:2 there are they who persecute the good -- lovers of a lie, not knowing the reward of righteousness, not cleaving to the good nor to righteous judgment, watching not for the good but for the bad, from whom meekness and patience are afar off, loving things that are vain, following after recompense, having no compassion on the needy, nor labouring for him that is in trouble, not knowing him that made them, murderers of children, corrupters of the image of God, who turn away from him that is in need, who oppress him that is in trouble, unjust judges of the poor, erring in all things. From all these, children, may ye be delivered.

### TEACHING 6

- 6:1 See that no one make thee to err from this path of doctrine, since he who doeth so teacheth thee apart from God.
- 6:2 If thou art able to bear the whole yoke of the Lord, thou wilt be perfect; but if thou art not able, what thou art able, that do.
- 6:3 But concerning meat, bear that which thou art able to do. But keep with care from things sacrificed to idols, for it is the worship of the infernal deities.

### TEACHING 7

- 7:1 But concerning baptism, thus baptize ye: having first recited all these precepts, baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, in running water;
- 7:2 but if thou hast not running water, baptize in some other water, and if thou canst not baptize in cold, in warm water;
- 7:3 but if thou hast neither, pour water three times on the head, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
- 7:4 But before the baptism, let him who baptizeth and him who is baptized fast previously, and any others who may be able. And thou shalt command him who is baptized to fast one or two days before.

### TEACHING 8

- 8:1 But as for your fasts, let them not be with the hypocrites, for they fast on the second and fifth days of the week, but do ye fast on the fourth and sixth days.
- 8:2 Neither pray ye as the hypocrites, but as the Lord hath commanded in his gospel so pray ye: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done as in heaven so on earth. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debt, as we also forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil: for thine is the power, and the glory, for ever.
- 8:3 Thrice a day pray ye in this fashion



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## DOMINIKOS THEOTOKOPOULOS (EL GREKO, 1541-1614)

**D**ominikos Theotokopoulos, later called El Greco (the Greek) by the Spaniards, was born in Candia, on the island of Crete.

Very little is known of his parentage. He was trained as icon-maker in an Orthodox Monastery; he then went to Venice (soon after 1560), where Titian became his greatest mentor. El Greco, however, obtained little influence from his master; on the whole his works are individual and distinct.

In 1570, El Greco went by way of Parma, where he enjoyed interacting with Correggio, to Rome, where he met Michelangelo. He criticized his Last Judgment severely and offered to produce a better composition. But on the whole Michelangelo and the Central Italian Mannerists stimulated him. The works of his Italian period are very different in style: Christ Healing the Blind Man (1560s), The Annunciation of the Theotokos (1570-1575), Christ Driving

the Traders from the Temple (c. 1570), all of them displaying the Byzantine style influence.

Around 1576, the painter went to Spain. At first he was in the service of Philip II. Some of his work, however, did not appeal to Philip, and the painter moved to Toledo in 1580, the old capital and then a major center of artistic, intellectual, and religious life in 16th-century Spain. He stayed in Toledo until his death.

He remained throughout his life proud and independent in both his profession and his Hellenic Orthodox heritage and always signed his work by his Greek name. He did not enjoy the popularity of the following of some of the other Renaissance Masters of his time, and his art was forgotten for well over 300 years.

The re-discovery of his painting was a sensation; he became one of the most popular masters of the past and his paintings raised the interest of collectors, artists, lovers of art and art historians. El Greco is now regarded as one of the most important representatives of European Mannerism.



The Annunciation of the Theotokos  
(El Greco, 1575)

# Orthodox Heritage

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Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle [2 Thessalonians 2:15]

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## THE THEOTOKOS AT THE CROSS

A Poem by St. Romanos

**Theotokos:** “How is it possible that I should not mourn, and that my whole being should not be overwhelmed, when I see Thee naked and hanging as a criminal on the Tree? I see Thee lifted on high, and because of Thy suffering there is neither form nor beauty in Thee; yet when first I saw Thee incarnate in the flesh, Only Begotten Son, Thou wast fairer than all the sons of men; O salvation of all, manifest Thy glory! I am rent with grief, and my heart with woe is torn and broken, as I see Thee slain unjustly, O Word of God. Woe is me, my Son!...Lo, I see Thee now condemned to hang on the Cross, Thee Whom I had hoped to see a mighty King.”

**Christ:** “Banish thy grief, O Mother, banish it, for it is not fitting for thee to grieve, since thou wert called blessed... O all-wise Virgin, thou art in the middle of My bridal chamber, (meaning she will be of central importance in the Church)... Consider them in the bridal chamber as thy slaves, for everyone shall run with fear and trembling to hear thee call, O august one, when thou dost say, ‘Where is my Son and my God?’ ‘My Mother, it is for thee and through thee that I save them. If I had not desired to save them I would not have dwelt in

thee, I would not have caused My Light to arise from thee, and thou would not have been called My Mother. So that I may renew man’s corrupted and subverted nature, I gladly, in My flesh, take death on Me. Wherefore, Mother, be not stricken with lament.”

**Theotokos:** “Why dost Thou say to me, my child, ‘Do not go along with the other women?’ For indeed, just as they bore in their wombs, so I, in mine bore Thee and gave Thee milk at my breasts; how is it then that Thou dost wish, my Son, that I do not lament for Thee as Thou dost hasten to submit unjustly to a death which will raise up the dead, O my



Son and my God? Woe is me, my most beloved child! What has the ungrateful assembly of the Jews done to Thee, wishing to leave me childless...O most beloved One? With what hath the iniquitous and thankless assembly of the Jews, which hath delighted in Thy many and great gifts, rewarded Thee, O my Son? I hymn Thy divine condescension! O my

beloved Son, where is Thy surpassing beauty gone? I magnify Thy mercy, for by Thine own free choice Thou sufferest for all mankind. Yet why dost Thou say to me, O babe of my womb, ‘If I do not suffer, Adam is not healed?’

**Christ:** “In thy heart, O Mother, thou dost know the truth of what I am saying. This poor Adam...was sickened, not only in body but also in soul. Willingly

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### OUR MISSION

To be instruments of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, as He awakens the souls of believers into an awareness of the love, grace, peace and mercy realized when one lives the Word of God, kept and preserved through the ages by the Greek Orthodox Church and Her Holy Traditions.

To be a voice crying out for the return to sacrificial living in accordance with the Apostolic Traditions and through the Orthodox Faith. In this ever-changing world, Christ is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow and so is His Bride, the Holy, never-changing Greek Orthodox Church.

To confront any movement, no matter how subtle, whose message is heretical and whose impact is the schism of His Church or the protestantization of our Faith.

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*Orthodox Heritage* may, at times, bring up issues or present articles that some consider controversial or non-conducive to the universal message of our Lord's Salvation for all nations and all people. Such material is presented so that a distinction be made between salvation and the 20th century heresy of ecumenism. These are confusing times for the Orthodox faithful and political convenience must be sacrificed so that His TRUTH be brought forth in the limelight.

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he suffered, not hearkening to Me, and endangered himself. Thou knowest what I say; therefore, weep not, O Mother. Yea, rather, cry aloud, 'Mercy for Adam and pity Eve, my Son and my God.' By insubordination and gluttony did Adam become ill and was cast into lowest Hades, where he weeps in the sorrow of his spirit. Eve, who instructed him to sin, also sighs with him, having become ill together...Dost thou understand now? Art thou fully aware of what I say? Again, O Mother, cry, 'if Thou dost forgive Adam, also forgive Eve, my Son and my God.'"

**Theotokos:** "My Lord, yet again would I speak; be not wroth with me. I shall tell thee what I have in mind so that I may learn in detail from Thee what I wish. If Thou dost suffer and die, wilt Thou come to me again? If Thou goest to provide for Adam and Eve, shall I behold Thee again? For this I fear, that perhaps after the tomb Thou wilt rise up to heaven, and then I will seek to see Thee and shall mourn and cry out, 'Where is my Son and my God?' Thus, when shall I behold Thee, O my Saviour and God, the Eternal Light, my Joy and my heart's delight? O most-merciful Benefactor, do not leave me, Thy Mother and handmaid alone."

**Christ:** "Be of good courage, Mother, since thou shalt be the first to see Me from the tomb. I shall come to show thee

what I endured to redeem Adam. I shall also show the print of the nails in My hands to My friends. Then, later, O Mother, thou shalt see Eve alive as formerly; and thou shalt say with joy, 'He has saved my ancestors, He Who is my Son and my God.' Bear up for a short time, O Mother, and thou shalt see how, like a physician, I strip and go where they lie and cure their wounds, cutting their callousness and malignity with the lance. I take the vinegar and use it as an astringent on the wound. When I have opened up the cut with the surgical lancet of the nail, I shall use My cloak as dressing. I shall use My Cross as a remedy, O Mother, so that thou mayest sing with understanding: 'He has redeemed suffering by suffering, my Son and my God.' Lay aside thy grief, O Mother, and advance with joy. I now hasten to that for which I came: to do the will of Him Who sent Me [John 6:38]. From the first this was ordained for Me by My Father. Never was it displeasing to My spirit to become man and suffer for the fallen. Hasten, O Mother, to tell the people that, by suffering, He strikes down the enemy of Adam and having conquered, He comes, my Son and my God."

**Theotokos:** "I shall conquer, my child, I shall conquer my pain. Truly, I shall not mourn when I am in my chamber and Thou art on the Cross—I in my house and Thou in the tomb.



Grant that I come with Thee for it helps me to look upon Thee [John 3:14; Num 21:8] I know the boldness of those that trusted Moses; for Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it on a pole, so that those who were bitten, when they beheld the serpent of brass, would live [Num 21:9]. Then the blind were taking vengeance on Moses, so now they have come to slay Thee. Moses said to Israel that the time would come that they would see Life upon the tree [Deut. 28:66]. Who is the Life? It is my Son and my God.”

**Christ:** “If thou comest, then do not weep, O Mother. Do not again be distressed if thou seest the elements of the universe dashed together, for such a reckless and daring act utterly confounds all creation. The vault of heaven is blinded and will not open its eye till I command [Mt 27:45; Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44]... The temple will rend its veil before such deeds of daring [Mt 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45]. The mountains will shake; tombs will be emptied [Mt 27:51-52]. When thou beholdest these things, if, as a woman, thou art frightened, cry out to me, ‘Spare me, my Son and my God.’”

O ye hills and valleys, all ye mountains and dales, and thou multitude of mankind, weep and lament, crying “Woe!” with the Mother of our God. Thou art, as human, able to suffer, but as God, Thou knowest no suffering. Dying, Thou art saving. Thou dost grant to the Holy Virgin fearless confidence to cry to Thee “My Son and my God.”

+++

St. Romanos, surnamed *ho melodos* (ὁ Μελωδός, *the melodist*), was a 6<sup>th</sup> century hymnographer. Syrian by birth, he served as deacon in the church at Berytus, and came to Constantinople in the reign of Anastasios. It was in the Church of the Theotokos that he received the charisma of sacred poetry. After a religious retreat at Blachernae he returned to his church, and one night in his sleep saw a vision of the Theotokos, who gave him a *kontakion* (κοντάκιον, *volume of paper*), saying, “Take the paper and eat it.” The saint, in his dream, opened his mouth and swallowed the paper. It was Christmas Day, and immediately he awakened and marvelled and glorified God for he had miraculously attained musical abilities that were



St. Romanos

previously non-existent. Then, mounting the ambo, he began to chant his *he parthenos semeron*... (Ἡ Παρθένος σήμερον..., *The Virgin Today*...). He wrote about 1,000 *kontakia* before he fell asleep in the Lord. His feast day is October 1<sup>st</sup>.

The poem was taken from “The Life of the Virgin Mary, the Theotokos”, written and compiled by the Holy Apostles Convent, Buena Vista, CO (1989).

## END TIMES INSTRUCTIONS

SOURCE: St. Ambrosy, Elder of Optina (+1891), *End Times and Now* Collection of Writings [edited from the original translation to improve sentence structure]

My child, know that in the last days hard times will come; and as the Apostle says, behold, due to poverty in piety heresies and schisms will appear in the churches; and as the Holy Fathers foretold, then on the thrones of hierarchs and in monasteries there will be no men to be found that are tested and experienced in the spiritual life. Wherefore, heresies will spread everywhere and deceive many. The enemy of mankind will act skillfully, and whenever possible he will lead the chosen ones to heresy. He will not begin by discarding the dogmas on the Holy Trinity, the divinity of Jesus Christ, or the Theotokos, but will unnoticeably start to distort the Teachings of the Holy Fathers, in other words the teachings of the Church herself. The cunning of the enemy and his “tips” (ways) will be noticed by very few -- only those that are most experienced in spiritual life. Heretics will take over the Church, everywhere, and they will appoint their servants, and spirituality will be neglected. But the Lord will not leave His servants without protection. Truly, their real duty is persecution of true pastors and their imprisonment; for without that, the spiritual flock may not become captured by the heretics. Therefore, my son, when you see in the Churches mocking of the Divine act, of the teachings of the Holy Fathers, and of God’s established order, know that the heretics are already present. Be also aware that, for some time, they might hide their evil intentions, or they might covertly deform the divine faith, so that they better succeed by deceiving and tricking the inexperienced.

They will persecute pastors and the servants of God alike, for the devil who is directing the heresy cannot stand the Divine order. Like wolves in sheep skin, they will be recognized by their vainglorious nature, love for lust, and lust for power. All those will be betrayers, causing hatred and malice everywhere; and therefore the Lord said that one will easily recognize them by their fruits. The true servants of God are meek, brother-loving and obedient to the Church (order, traditions).

At that time, monks will endure great pressures from heretics, and the monastic life will be mocked. The monastic families will be impoverished, the number of monks will decrease. The ones remaining will endure violence. These haters of the monastic life, who merely have the appearance of piety, will strive to draw monks to their side, promising them protection and worldly goods (comforts), but threatening with exile those who do not submit. From these threats, the weak at heart will be very humiliated (tormented).

If you live to see that time, rejoice, for at that time the faithful who possess no other virtues will receive wreaths for merely

remaining steadfast in their faith, according to the Word of the Lord, "Everyone who confesses Me before men, I will confess before My Heavenly Father". Fear the Lord, my son, and don't lose this wreath so as to not be rejected by Christ into the utter darkness and eternal suffering. Bravely stand in faith, and if necessary, joyfully endure persecutions and other troubles, for only then will the Lord stand by you...and the holy Martyrs and the Confessors will joyfully watch your struggle.

But, in these days, woe be to monks tied to possessions and riches, and who, for the sake of love of comfort, agree to subjugate themselves to the heretics. They will lull their conscience by saying: we will save the monastery, and the Lord will forgive us. Unfortunate and blinded, they are not even thinking that through heresies and heretics the devil will enter the monastery, and then it will no longer be a holy monastery, but bare walls from which Grace will depart forever.

But God is more powerful than the devil, and will never abandon His servants. There will always be true Christians, till the end of time, but they will choose lonely and deserted places. Do not fear troubles, but fear pernicious heresy, for it drives out Grace, and separates us from Christ, wherefore Christ commanded us to consider the heretic and let him be unto thee as a heathen man and publican.

And so, strengthen yourself, my son, in the Grace of Christ Jesus. With joy, hasten to confession and endure the suffering like Jesus Christ's good soldier who was told: "**Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the wreath of life**".



## THE DONKEY

By G. K. Chesterton

When fishes flew and forests walked  
And figs grew upon thorn,  
Some moment when the moon was blood  
Then surely I was born.

With monstrous head and sickening cry  
And ears like errant wings,  
The devil's walking parody  
On all four-footed things.

The tattered outlaw of the earth,  
Of ancient, crooked will;  
Starve, scourge, deride me; I am dumb,  
I keep my secret still.

Fools! For I also had my hour;  
One far fierce hour and sweet:  
There was a shout about my ears,  
**And palms before my feet...**

## CONDEMNED TO IMMORTALITY: A MEDITATION ON THE RESURRECTION

By Archomandrite Justin Popovic, SOURCE: [www.orthodox.net](http://www.orthodox.net)



People condemned God to death; with His Resurrection He condemned them to immortality. For striking Him, God returned embraces; for insults, blessings; for death, immortality. Never did men show more hate towards God than when they crucified Him; and God never showed His love towards people more than when He was resurrected. Mankind wanted to make God dead, but God, with His Resurrection,

made people alive, the crucified God resurrected on the third day and thereby killed death! There is no more death. Immortality is surrounding man and his entire world.

With the Resurrection of the God-Man, the nature of man is irreversibly led toward the road of immortality and man's nature becomes destructive to death itself. For until the Resurrection of Christ, death was destructive for man; from the Resurrection of Christ, man's nature becomes destructive to death. If man lives in the faith of the Resurrected God-Man, he lives above death, he is unreachable for her; death is under man's feet. Death where is thy sting? Hell, where is thy victory? And when a man who believes in Christ dies, he only leaves his body as his clothes, in which he will be dressed again on the Day of Last Judgement.

Before the Resurrection of the God-Man, death was the second nature of man; life was first and death was second. Man became accustomed to death as something natural. But after His Resurrection the Lord changed everything; and it was only natural until Christ's Resurrection, that the people became mortal, so after Christ's Resurrection it was natural that the people became immortal.

Through sin, man becomes mortal and temporal; with the Resurrection of the God-Man, he becomes immortal and eternal. In this lies the strength, in this lies the power, in this lies the might of Christ's Resurrection. Without the Resurrection there is no Christianity. Among the miracles, this is the greatest one; all other miracles begin and end with it. From it sprouted the faith and the love and the hope and the prayer and the love toward God.



## Ὁ Ἀναλλοίωτος Ὁρθόδοξος Μοναχισμὸς [Ἀποσπάσματα Ὁμιλίας τοῦ Ἀρχιεπισκόπου Ἑλλάδος κ.κ. Χριστοδούλου]

ΠΗΓΗ: <http://www.ecclesia.gr>

Ὁ Μοναχισμὸς ἀνήκει ὀργανικὰ στὸ Σῶμα τῆς Ἐκκλησίας. Γεννιέται καὶ ζῆ μέσα στοὺς κόλπους της, εἶναι «σὰρξ ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς καὶ ὀστοῦν ἐκ τῶν ὀστέων» της. Τρέφεται, ἀνδρῶνεται, καρποφορεῖ καὶ ἀγιάζεται μὲ τὴ χάρι τῶν Μυστηρίων της καὶ συγχρόνως ζωογονεῖ, στηριζέει, δοξάζει, λαμπρύνει τὴν Ἐκκλησία, μέσα σὲ μιὰ ἀδιάσπαστη ὀργανικὴ ἐνότητα καὶ σὲ μιὰ ἀέναη σχέση ἀλληλοπροσφορᾶς. Ἐκτὸς Ἐκκλησίας δὲν νοεῖται μοναχικὴ ἀφιέρωση, ἀλλὰ καὶ χωρὶς Μοναχισμὸ θὰ ἔχανε τὸ Σῶμα τῆς Ἐκκλησίας τὴν ζωτικότητα καὶ εὐρωστία του, ἐφ' ὅσον λέγεται καὶ εἶναι ὁ Μοναχισμὸς ἡ «σπονδυλικὴ στήλη» καὶ «τὰ νεῦρα» της.

Ὁ Μοναχισμὸς παραμένει μέχρι καὶ σήμερα, μετὰ δύο χιλιάδες χρόνια, ἀναλλοίωτος, διότι πρότυπο καὶ ἐμπνευστὴς του, ἡ βάση, τὸ κέντρο καὶ ὁ σκοπὸς του, τὸ Α καὶ τὸ Ω του εἶναι ὁ «χθὲς καὶ σήμερον ὁ αὐτὸς καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας» Κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς. Παραμένει ἄτρεπτος, μέσα στὸν διαρκῶς μεταβαλλόμενο καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ χεῖρω τρεπόμενο κόσμο, διότι βιώνει αὐθεντικὰ τὸ Εὐαγγέλιο, ἐκ τοῦ ὁποῦ «ἴωτα ἐν ἡ μίᾳ κεραΐᾳ οὐ μὴ παρέλθῃ», κατὰ τὸν λόγον τοῦ Κυρίου.

Οἱ Μοναχοὶ εἶναι αὐτοὶ ποὺ ἐνωτίζονται καὶ ἀποδέχονται τὴν σωτήρια ἀποστολικὴ κλήση «δεῦτε ὀπίσω μου καὶ, ἀφήνοντας τὴν πολυκύμαντη τοῦ κόσμου καὶ τῶν παθῶν θάλασσα, τὰ δίκτυα τῶν βιοτικῶν μερμινῶν, συγγένειες καὶ φιλίες, ἀκολουθοῦν τὸν Σωτῆρα Χριστὸ. Τὸν ἀκολουθοῦν στὴν ἀτιμία, στὴν ἐγκατάλειψη καὶ τὴν ὀδύνη τοῦ Σταυροῦ, «σταυροῦντες τὴν σάρκα σὺν τοῖς παθήμασι καὶ ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις». Τὸν συνοδεύουν στὸν Τάφο, θάπτοντες τὶς κοσμικὰς φιλοδοξίες καὶ τὶς γήινες ἐπιδιώξεις τοῦ παλαιοῦ ἀνθρώπου κάτω ἀπὸ τὸ ταπεινὸ ράσο καὶ νεκροῦντες καθημερινὰ «τὸ ἴδιον θέλημα» ὑπὸ τὸν ζυγὸ τῆς ὑπακοῆς. Μετέχουν τῆς Ἀναστάσεως, ἀνιστῶντες ἐντὸς τοὺς τὴν πεπτωκυῖα θεῖα εἰκόνα καὶ

περιβαλλόμενοι, διὰ τῆς πνευματικῆς τελειώσεως, τὴν δόξα τοῦ ἀρχεγόνου κάλλους. Εἶναι οἱ πορευόμενοι στὰ ἴχνη τῶν Ἁγίων Ἀποστόλων, κήρυκες — σωπηλοὶ τὶς περισσότερες φορὲς — τοῦ Εὐαγγελίου καὶ ἀναμορφωταὶ, μὲ τὴν ἐσωτερικὴ τους μεταμόρφωση, τῆς κοινωνίας. Εἶναι οἱ συνεχισταὶ καὶ μιμηταὶ τῶν Μαρτύρων καὶ Ὁμολογητῶν τῆς Πίστεώς μας, ἰσόβιοι αὐτοὶ μάρτυρες τῆς συνειδήσεως, ἀνεξωσμένοι ἐφ' ὄρου ζωῆς σὲ μιὰ ἀνελέγη, συνεχῆ πάλη ἐναντίον τῆς φύσεώς τους, σ' ἓναν πόλεμον χωρὶς ἀνακωχὴ κατὰ τοῦ κόσμου καὶ τοῦ κοσμοκράτορος, σὲ μιὰ διαρκῆ ὀμολογία, ἔργον καὶ λόγον καὶ σήματα.

Θεμέλιο τῆς μοναχικῆς ζωῆς παραμένει πάντοτε ἡ ἀγάπη πρὸς τὸν Νυμφίον τῶν ψυχῶν, μὲ προϋπόθεση τὴν αὐτοπροαίρετη ἀποδοχὴ τῆς θείας κλήσεως, καὶ σκοπὸς ἡ κατὰ χάριν θέωση, διὰ τῆς μετοχῆς σὲ τὶς ἄκτιστες ἐνέργειες τοῦ Τριαδικοῦ Θεοῦ. Φθάνοντας στὴν θεοκοινωνία ὁ Μοναχὸς, ἐκπληρώνει τὸ σκοπὸ τῆς ἐνσάρκου οἰκονομίας τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγου, τὸν σκοπὸ ἀκόμη τῆς δημιουργίας τοῦ κόσμου, ἀφοῦ κατὰ τὸν Ἅγιον Μάξιμον τὸν ὀμολογητὴ «εἰς τοῦτο ἡμᾶς πεποίηκεν ὁ Θεὸς, ἵνα γενώμεθα θείας κοινωνοὶ φύσεως, καὶ τῆς αὐτοῦ ἀϊδιότητος μέτοχοι, καὶ φανῶμεν αὐτῷ ὅμοιοι κατὰ τὴν ἐκ χάριτος θέωσιν». Μὲ τὴν ἐνοίκηση Ἁγίου Πνεύματος προγεύεται τὴν



Ὁ Σταυρὸς Εἰς τὴν Κορυφὴν τοῦ Ἁγίου Ὄρους

τρυφὴ τοῦ μέλλοντος αἰῶνος καὶ βιώνει, ἐν μέρει, ἀπὸ τὴν παροῦσα ζωὴ τὴν ἐσχατολογικὴ πραγματικότητα. Ἡ θεοπτία, κατὰ τοὺς νηπτικούς Πατέρες, ἔρχεται ὡς ἐπιβράβευση τῆς καθαρότητος τῆς ψυχῆς, ἡ ὁποία ἐπιτυγχάνεται διὰ τῆς τηρήσεως τῶν τριῶν θεμελιωδῶν μοναχικῶν ἀρετῶν, τῆς παρθενίας, τῆς ἀκτημοσύνης καὶ τῆς ὑπακοῆς. Στὰ τρία αὐτὰ πνευματικὰ ἀθλήματα ἀγωνίσθηκε τὸ πλῆθος τῶν ἀπ' αἰῶνος ὀσίων μοναχῶν καὶ μοναζουσῶν, γιὰ νὰ λάβῃ τὸ ἔπαθλο τῶν δωρεῶν τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος. Κι ὅσο θὰ προσφέρεται ἡ «τρίσπονδη» αὐτὴ εὐάρεστη θυσία, ὡς «λογικὴ λατρεία» πρὸς τὸ «ζωόθυτον θῦμα», στὰ ἱερὰ θυσιαστήρια τῆς ἐρήμου, θὰ παρατείνεται τὸ ἔλεος τοῦ Θεοῦ στὸν κόσμον καὶ θὰ συνεχίζεται ἡ ζωὴ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.

Θυσία εἶναι καὶ ἡ καθαρὰ προσευχὴ τοῦ Μοναχοῦ, μέσα ἀπὸ τὸ θυσιαστήριον τῆς καρδιάς, ὅπου θυσιάζεται τὸ θέλημα, συντρίβεται τὸ «ἐγώ», καταπνίγονται τὰ



πάθη, φονεύονται οί παντοειδεῖς κακίαι. Αὐτὴ ἡ προσευχὴ συγκινεῖ τὸν Θεὸ καὶ ἀπομένει ἡ μόνη ἐλπίδα σωτηρίας στὸν σύγχρονο βιβλικὸ κατακλυσμὸ τῆς ἀποστασίας, ὅπου εἶναι πλέον ὄρατος ὁ ἐφιαλτικὸς κίνδυνος τῆς αὐτοκαταστροφῆς, ἐφ' ὅσον, κατὰ τὸν Ἅγιο Ἰωάννη τῆς Κλίμακος, ἡ προσευχὴ χαρακτηρίζεται ὡς «κόσμου σύστασις».

Σήμερα, περισσότερο ἀπὸ ποτέ, ἔχουμε ἀνάγκη ἀπὸ ἔμπυχες εἰκόνες τοῦ Εὐαγγελίου, ἀπὸ ἁγίους ποὺ θὰ προσφέρουν τὸν ἑαυτὸ τους ὡς «ὀλοκάρπωμα θυσίας» ὑπὲρ τῶν πληθυσμένων ἀνομιῶν καὶ θὰ ἀποτρέπουν τὴν δίκαιη ὀργὴ τοῦ Θεοῦ. Καὶ τοὺς ἁγίους κυρίως μέσα στὸν κατ' ἐξοχὴν ἁγιοτόκο θεσμό τοῦ Μοναχισμοῦ μπορούμε νὰ τοὺς ἀναζητήσουμε. Ἡ ἀνάδειξη ἁγίων εἶναι ἡ μεγίστη εὐεργεσία τοῦ Μοναχισμοῦ πρὸς τὸν κόσμον καὶ τὸ πλέον φιλόπρωτο κοινωνικὸ του ἔργο. Οἱ ἅγιοι εἶναι οἱ καρποὶ τοῦ Εὐαγγελίου καὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ τὸ ἐκτύπωμα, εἶναι ἡ διάσωση τῆς εὐαγγελικῆς ἀληθείας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, εἶναι οἱ φίλοι τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ οἱ ἰσχυροὶ πρεσβευτὰ ὑπὲρ τῆς οἰκουμένης. Ὁ κόσμος θὰ ὑπάρχει ὅσο θὰ ὑπάρχουν ἅγιοι ἐπάνω στὴ γῆ. Οἱ ἅγιοι εἶναι γιὰ τοὺς πιστοὺς τὰ πρότυπα καὶ οἱ ἀκατανίκητοι ὑπερασπιστὰι στοὺς πειρασμοὺς τοῦ ἀντιδίκου, οἱ ἄμισθοι θαυματοργοὶ ἰατροὶ σὲ κάθε ἀσθένεια καὶ ἡ καταφυγὴ στὶς τρικυμίες τοῦ βίου.

Ὁ Ἅγιος Νικόδημος ὁ Ἁγιορείτης, τονίζει χαρακτηριστικὰ στὸν πρόλογο τοῦ Συναξαριστοῦ του: «Ἐν τῷ Συναξαριστῇ τούτῳ δὲν περιέχονται δύο καὶ τρεῖς, ἢ δέκα, ἢ ἑκατὸν, ἢ χίλιοι ἅγιοι, ἀλλὰ χιλιάδες καὶ μυριάδες καὶ μυλλιώνια ὀλόκληρα ἁγίων, καὶ σύννεφα πυκνότατα ἀπειρῶν δικαίων διατὶ διὰ νὰ σὲ ἀναψύχουν Χριστιανέ, μὲ τὰς πρεσβείας των, ἀπὸ τὸ καῦμα τῶν πειρασμῶν διὰ νὰ σὲ δροσιῶν μὲ τὰς ἐπιρροὰς τῶν χαρίτων τους, ὅταν ξηρανθῆς ἀπὸ τὴν φλόγα τῶν παθῶν διὰ νὰ σὲ σκεπάζουν ἄνωθεν μὲ τὰς πτέρυγας τῶν προστασιῶν τους, ἀπὸ τὰς ἐπιβουλάς τῶν ὀρατῶν καὶ ἀοράτων ἐχθρῶν καὶ τελευταῖον διὰ νὰ σὲ κάμνουν νὰ μὴ φοβῆσαι ἀπὸ τὸν ἀόρατον πόλεμον τῶν παθῶν καὶ τῶν δαιμόνων, ἔχων κύκλω σου μίαν ἀναρίθμητον παράταξιν τῶσων καὶ τῶσων ἁγίων, οἵτινες εἶναι βοηθοί σου».

Ὁ Μοναχισμὸς διέσωσε καὶ θὰ διασώσῃ καὶ πάλι τὴν ἀκεραιότητα τῆς Πίστεως καὶ τὴν θεογνωσία, διὰ τῆς ἐμπειρίας τῆς προσωπικῆς κοινωνίας μὲ τὸν Θεὸ. Προασπιστὰι πάντοτε τῶν Δογμάτων καὶ τῶν Ἀληθειῶν τῆς Ἐκκλησίας οἱ Μοναχοί, πολέμιοι τῶν αἰρέσεων καὶ θεματοφύλακες τῆς Παραδόσεως, θὰ ἀποτελέσουν καὶ σήμερα, μὲ τὸ γνήσιο ὀρθόδοξο αἰσθητήριό τους καὶ μὲ τὸ ὁμολογιακὸ φρόνημά τους, τὴν προφυλακὴ στὸν ὑποὐλο κίνδυνο τοῦ συγκρητισμοῦ καὶ σὲ κάθε ἐπιβουλή κατὰ τῆς Ὁρθοδοξίας.

## Περὶ Ὑπακοῆς

ΠΗΓΗ: Γέροντας Ἐφραίμ Κατουνακιώτης, Ἰ. Ἦσυχαστήριον «Ἅγιος Ἐφραίμ», Κατουνάκια Ἁγίου Ὄρους



Θέλοντας νὰ δείξει ὁ Γέροντας (Ἐφραίμ Κατουνακιώτης) ὅτι ἡ ὑπακοὴ δὲν εἶναι κάποια τυπικὴ διαδικασία, ἀλλὰ οὐσιαστικὰ συνώνυμη τῆς ἀγάπης, διηγεῖτο τὴν ἐξῆς ἱστορία:

«Ἐνας γέροντας συνήθιζε νὰ δέχεται τοὺς λογισμοὺς τοῦ ὑποτακτικοῦ του μετὰ τὸ Ἀπόδειπνο. Ἐπειτα ἔδινε τὴν εὐλογία του στὸν ὑποτακτικὸ καὶ πήγαιναν νὰ ξεκουραστοῦν.

»Κάποτε, ἐνῶ ἔλεγε τοὺς λογισμοὺς του ὁ μοναχὸς, ὁ γέροντας κουρασμένος ἀπὸ τὶς ἐργασίες τῆς ἡμέρας ἀποκοιμήθηκε. Ὁ μοναχὸς μὲ σεβασμὸ σιωπῆσε καὶ περιμένε νὰ ξυπνήσῃ ὁ γέροντας, νὰ τοῦ δώσει τὴν εὐχὴ του καὶ νὰ πάει καὶ ὁ ἴδιος γιὰ ξεκούραση.

»Οἱ ὥρες ὅμως περνοῦσαν, ὁ ἴδιος αἰσθανόταν ὄλο καὶ περισσότερο τὴν κούρασή του, ἀλλὰ ὁ γέροντας δὲν ξυπνοῦσε. Στὶς ὥρες ποὺ πέρασαν, ἐφτὰ φορὲς ὁ μοναχὸς πείσθηκε ἀπὸ τοὺς λογισμοὺς του νὰ ξυπνήσῃ τὸν γέροντα, νὰ πάρει τὴν εὐχὴ του καὶ νὰ πάει γιὰ ὕπνο. Ἀλλὰ ἡ ἀγάπη του καὶ ὁ σεβασμὸς του γιὰ τὸν γέροντά του τὸν ἐμπόδιζε καὶ τὸν ἔπειθε νὰ περμιμένει ἀκόμη λίγο.

»Τελικὰ ὁ γέροντας ξύπνησε καὶ τοῦ ἔδωσε τὴν εὐλογία του. Τὴν ἄλλη μέρα τὸν κάλεσε κι ἄρχισε νὰ ἐξετάζει τοὺς λογισμοὺς ποὺ εἶχε τὴν προηγούμενη νύχτα.

Ὁ μοναχὸς τοῦ ἐξήγησε τὴν ἀδημονία του καὶ τὴν προσπάθεια ποὺ κατέβαλε νὰ μὴν τὸν ἐνοχλήσῃ. Τότε ὁ γέροντας τοῦ εἶπε ὅτι, ὅταν κοιμήθηκε γιὰ δευτέρη φορὰ, εἶδε ἕνα ὄραμα. Εἶδε ἕναν θρόνον καὶ πάνω στὸν θρόνον ἐφτὰ στεφάνια. Κι ἄκουσε φωνὴ: Ὁ θρόνος αὐτὸς ἀνήκει στὸν ὑποτακτικὸ σου καὶ τὰ ἐφτὰ στεφάνια τὰ κέρδισε αὐτὴν τὴν νύχτα».

**Εἶπε ὁ ἀββᾶς Ποιμὴν:** «Ἐὰν ὁ ἄνθρωπος θὰ θυμᾶται τὸ ρητὸ τῆς Γραφῆς ὅτι τὰ λόγια σου θὰ σὲ δικαιώσουν καὶ τὰ λόγια σου θὰ σὲ καταδικάσουν (Ματθ. 12,37), θὰ προτιμᾶει μᾶλλον νὰ σιωπᾷ».

## Οἱ Ἄλλοι Ἐθνομάρτυρες Ἱεράρχες τῆς Μικρασιατικῆς Καταστροφῆς

Ι. Χατζηφώτης, Πρόεδρος Ἐφορείας Νεότητος τοῦ ΕΕΣ, ΠΗΓΗ: «Ἑλληνικὸς Ἐρυθρὸς Σταυρὸς Νεότητος» 10/99

**Α**νάμεσα στους πρώτους οἱ Μικρασιάτες ἀμνημονεύουν τοὺς ἐθνομάρτυρες ἱεράρχες τους καὶ τὴ χορεία τῶν κληρικῶν καὶ μοναχῶν τους, πού, πιστοὶ στὸ Θεὸ καὶ τὴν πατρίδα, πότισαν μὲ νέο αἷμα τὸ δέντρο τῆς φυλῆς. Σὲ ἓνα προηγούμενο τεῦχος τῆς Orthodox Heritage προσφέραμε ἓνα σύντομο βιογραφικὸ σημεῖωμα γιὰ τὸ Μεγάλο Ἐθνομάρτυρα Ἱεράρχη, τὸ κ. Χρυσόστομο Σμύρνης. Ὑπάρχουν καὶ μερικοὶ ἄλλοι ἱεράρχες πού ὀφείλουμε νὰ τιμήσουμε. Ἡ θυσία τους προσφέρει στὸν πανταχοῦ Ἑλληνισμό μιὰ τεράστια ἠθικὴ δύναμη. Τὸ παράδειγμα τοὺς εἶναι ἓνας ἄσβεστος φάρος καὶ οἱ μορφές τους καύχημα καὶ περηφάνεια γιὰ τὴν Ὁρθοδοξία.

### Ὁ Μοσχονησίων Ἀμβρόσιος

Τὸν Μοσχονησίων Ἀμβρόσιο, τὸν ἔθαψαν ζωντανό, μαρτύριο πού τὸ ἐπιφύλαξαν καὶ σὲ πολλοὺς Ἕλληνες κληρικούς καὶ ἱερωμένους. Ὁ Χρῆστος Ἀγγελομάτης χαρακτηρίζει τὸν Ἀμβρόσιο ὡς ἓναν ἀπὸ τοὺς ἡρωικότερους ἱεράρχες καὶ Νεομάρτυρες τῆς Ἐκκλησίας καὶ σημειώνει:

«Τὴν ἡμέρα ἀκριβῶς τῆς ἐορτῆς τοῦ Σταυροῦ, διετάχθη ἀπὸ τοὺς καταλαβόντας τὰ Μοσχονήσια ὁ ἐκτοπισμὸς τοῦ πληθυσμοῦ. Δὲν θὰ ἔμενε κανεὶς εἰς τὸ Μοσχονήσι. Θὰ ὀδηγοῦντο ὅλοι εἰς τὸ ἐσωτερικόν, ἀπὸ τοῦ μητροπολίτου Ἀμβροσίου μέχρι καὶ τοῦ τελευταίου βρέφους. Ἡ διαταγὴ κανένα δὲν ἐξήρει. Ἀπὸ ὅλον αὐτὸν τὸν πληθυσμὸν ἔστω καὶ ἓνας δὲν ἐσώθη, ὥστε νὰ δώσει πληροφορίας διὰ τὸ μαρτύριον τῶν ἕξι αὐτῶν χιλιάδων. Βέβαιον μόνον εἶναι ὅτι ὅλος αὐτὸς ὁ κόσμος ἐξουθενώθη καὶ ἐθανατώθη μέσα εἰς ἓνα πρωί, μὲ πρῶτον τὸν μητροπολίτην Ἀμβρόσιον, τὸν ὁποῖον ἔθαψαν ζωντανὸν διότι ὑπῆρξε καλὸς ποιμὴν, καλὸς Ἕλλην.»

Ἄλλους ἱερωμένους τοὺς πετσόκοψαν κομμάτι κομμάτι, ἄλλους τοὺς διαπόμευσαν καὶ τοὺς διέσυραν καὶ ἄλλους τοὺς κρεμοῦσαν. Ὁ θάνατος χωρὶς μαρτύρια ἀποτελοῦσε ἐξάιρεση σπάνια. Θᾶλεγε κανεὶς ὅτι τὸ ράσο γνώρισε ὅλη τὴν ἐκδικητικὴ μανία τοῦ βάρβαρου καὶ ἀλλόπιστου ἐπιδρομέα.

### Ὁ Κυδωνίων Γρηγόριος

Ὁ Κυδωνίων Γρηγόριος, γράφει ὁ Ἀκαδημαϊκὸς Ἡλίας Βενέξης, Μικρασιάτης κι αὐτὸς πού γνώρισε ὁ ἴδιος τὰ μαρτύρια τῶν Τούρκων, ὁ Γρηγόριος

ἔμεινε στὴν πόλη μὲ τὰ γυναικόπαιδα, ἔκανε ὅ,τι τοῦ περνοῦσε γιὰ τὴ σωτηρία τοῦ ποιμνίου του.

Ὅπως καὶ στὸ Μοσχονησίων Ἀμβρόσιον, ἐτοίμαζαν καὶ στὸν Γρηγόριο Κυδωνίων τὸ ἴδιο μαρτυρικὸ τέλος, σκόπευαν νὰ τὸν θάψουν ζωντανό. «Ἐσένα μπουγιόυκ παπάξ, μπουγιόυκ ἐντεπιξ (ἀρχιπαπά, ἀναιδέστατε), δὲν θὰ σὲ σφάξω, γιατί ξέρεις πόσο σ' ἀγαπῶ» τοῦ εἶπε ὁ Τούρκος ὑπολοχαγὸς πού τὸν συνέλαβε. Δὲν ἐκπλήρωσε ὅμως τὸ ἄνομο σχέδιό του, γιατί ὁ Γρηγόριος ξεψύχησε πρὶν τὸν ἐνταφιάσουν...

### Ὁ Ζήλων Εὐθύμιος

Ἄλλος ἱεράρχης, ὁ Ζήλων τῆς Ἀμασείας Εὐθύμιος πλήρωσε τὸ ἐνδιαφέρον γιὰ τὸ αἰχμαλωτισμένο ποιμνίό του μὲ τὰ πιὸ φοριχτὰ μαρτύρια καὶ τὸν ἀργὸ καὶ ὀδυνηρὸ θάνατό του. Εἶχε συλληφθεὶ κι ὁ ἴδιος στίς 21 Ἰανουαρίου 1921 καὶ φυλακίσθηκε μὲ ὅλους τοὺς ἐξέχοντες Ρωμιούς τῆς πόλεως στὰ μουντρούμια τῆς Ἀμασείας.

Τὸν Πρωτοσύγκελλό του, Ἀρχιμανδρίτη Πλάτωνα Αἰβαζίδη, πού ἄντεξε στὰ βασανιστήρια, τὸν κρέμασαν μαζί μὲ τοὺς προκρίτους καὶ τοὺς ἔρριξαν ὅλους μέσα σὲ ἓνα λάκκο - τάφο. Στὸ στήθος τοῦ ἱερωμένου εἶχαν καρφισώσει τὴν ἀπόφαση τῆς ὁμαδικῆς καταδίκης καὶ τὸ κατηγορητήριον, ὅτι ὑπονόμευαν τὸ τουρκικὸ κράτος. Δικαιολογία καὶ ἀνυπόστατες κατηγορίες εὗρισκαν πολὺ εὔκολα. Πόσοι ἐπόνυμοι κι ἀνώνυμοι ἱεράρχες καὶ κληρικοὶ κι ἄλλοι πιστοὶ Ἕλληνες Ὁρθόδοξοι ἀφανίσθηκαν μ' αὐτὸ τὸν τρόπο;

Πῶς νὰ τὰ ξεχάσουν ὅλα αὐτὰ οἱ Μικρασιάτες; Πῶς νὰ ξεχάσουν τὶς ἐθνικὲς ὑπηρεσίες του **Τραπεζοῦντος, μετέπειτα Ἀθηνῶν, Χρυσανθου**, τὴν περιπέτεια τοῦ **Ἰκονίου Προκοπίου**, τὶς φροντίδες τοῦ **Σεβαστείας, μετέπειτα Γρεβενῶν, Γερβασίου** γιὰ τὴν τύχη τοῦ ποιμνίου του καὶ τὴ διάσωση τῶν ἱερῶν τοῦ κειμηλίων. Πῶς νὰ ξεχάσουν τόσους ἄλλους ἱεράρχες κι ἀπλοὺς παπᾶδες, πού ἄλλοι ἄφησαν στὴ Μικρασία τὴν τελευταία τους πνοή κι ἄλλοι συνόδευσαν τοὺς πρόσφυγες στὴν Ἑλλάδα καὶ τοὺς βοήθησαν νὰ ξαναστήσουν τὰ σπιτικά τους, νὰ συνεχίσουν τὶς ἀσχολίες τους ἢ ν' ἀνοίξουν καινούργιες δουλειές; Μὲ δυσκολίες ἀφάνταστες, μέσα στὴ στέρηση καὶ τὴ φτώχεια, μὲ τὴν πίστη πάντα ὡστόσο στὸν Θεό. Πῶς νὰ ἐπουλωθοῦν οἱ πληγῆς αὐτές; Πῶς νὰ σβήσει ἡ θράκα πού σιγοκαίει στὴ μνήμη;

Καὶ μεταξὺ ἄλλων πολλῶν καὶ διαφόρων σκέψεων, διερωτόμαστε πολλοὶ πιστοὶ τῆς ἐποχῆς μας: ὑπάρχουν πιὰ, ἔστω καὶ μία χούφτα τέτοιων ἡγετῶν τῆς τωρινῆς ἐκκλησίας, ἀνάμεσα στοὺς πολλοὺς Ἕλληνες ἱεράρχες τῆς ἐποχῆς μας;

## Ἡ Ζωή Μας Εἶναι Ὀλίγη

Ἀστέριος Παπανικολάου (1985)

Εἶν' ἡ ζωὴ μας πρόσκαιρη,  
μηδαμινὴ, ὀλίγη  
σὰν τὸν καπνὸ, σὰν τὸν ἀτιμὸ  
θα σβήσῃ καὶ θα φύγῃ.  
Γιὰ τοῦτο πρέπει Χριστιανὲ  
νᾶσαι μετανοιωμένους,  
ἀγαπημένος μὲ ἐχθροῦς  
κ' ἐξομολογημένους.

Ὁ κάθε κτύπος τῆς καρδιάς  
εἶναι καὶ ἓνα βῆμα  
ποῦ προχωρεῖ ὀλοταχῶς  
νὰ μπῆς θνητὸς στὸ μνήμα.  
Γιὰ τοῦτο πρέπει πάντοτε  
νᾶσαι μετανοιωμένους,  
ἀγαπημένος μὲ ἐχθροῦς  
κ' ἐξομολογημένους.

Σήμερα μετανόησε!  
τρέξε ἕξομολογήσου,  
χωρὶς καμμία ἀναβολὴ  
στὸν Κύριο προσευχήσου·  
μὴ σὲ προλάβῃ ὁ θάνατος  
τὸ νῆμα σου νὰ κόψῃ  
καὶ τῆς φρικτῆς κολάσεως  
ἴδῃς τὴν πλήρη ὄψι.

Δάκρυα χῦσε ἄφθονα  
ἔφ' ὅσον ἁμαρτάνεις.  
Μέρα καὶ νύχτα ὀρθόδοξα  
ἔργα καλὰ νὰ κάνῃς.  
Κάθε ἑορτὴ καὶ Κυριακὴ  
νὰ πᾶς στὴν Ἐκκλησίᾳ  
καὶ ΚΑΘΑΡΑ νὰ κοινωνῆς  
στὴν κάθε λειτουργία.

Ἔστειλε κάποτε ὁ Ἐπιφάνιος, ὁ ἐπίσκοπος Κύπρου,  
μῆνυμα στὸν ἀββᾶ Ἰλαρίωνα καὶ τὸν παρακαλοῦσε:

«Ἔλα νὰ δοῦμε ὁ ἓνας τὸν ἄλλον, πρὶν ἀποχωρήσουμε  
ἀπὸ τὸ σῶμα». Πράγματι πῆγε ὁ ἀββᾶς καὶ χάρηκαν ποὺ  
βρέθηκαν. Τὴν ὥρα ποὺ ἔτρωγαν, ἔφεραν στὸ τραπέζι  
πιτηνό. Τὸ πῆρε ὁ Ἐπίσκοπος καὶ τὸ πρόσφερε στὸν  
ἀββᾶ Ἰλαρίωνα. Τοῦ λέει τότε ὁ Γέροντας: «Συγχώρεσέ  
με, ἀπὸ τότε ποὺ πῆρα τὸ σχῆμα δὲν ἔφαγα σφαχτό». Ὁ  
Ἐπίσκοπος ἀποκρίνεται: «Ἐγὼ ἀπὸ τότε ποὺ πῆρα  
τὸ σχῆμα, δὲν ἄφησα κανέναν νὰ κοιμηθεῖ ἔχοντας  
κάτι ἐναντίον μου, οὔτε ἐγὼ κοιμήθηκα ἔχοντας  
κάτι ἐναντίον κάποιου ἄλλου». Τοῦ λέει τότε ὁ Γέροντας:  
«Συγχώρα με, ὁ δικός σου τρόπος ζωῆς εἶναι ἀνώτερος  
ἀπ' τὸν δικό μου».

**Ἀπὸ τὸ Μέγα Γεροντικὸν**

## Τὸ Μυστικὸ Τοῦ Πόνου

Ἀπὸ ἓναν Ἁγιορεῖτη Γέροντα τῆς ἐποχῆς μας

Ὁ Θεὸς δὲν ἤλθε στὴν γῆ γιὰ νὰ καταργήσῃ τὸν  
πόνον, οὔτε γιὰ νὰ τὸν ἐρμηνεύσῃ σέ μᾶς. Ἦρθε  
γιὰ νὰ τὸν σφραγίσῃ μὲ τὴν δική Του παρουσία. Τὸ  
μεγαλεῖο τοῦ Χριστιανισμοῦ εἶναι ὅτι δὲν ἀναζητᾶται  
ἓνα ὑπερφυσικὸ φάρμακο κατὰ τοῦ πόνου, ἀλλὰ μίᾳ  
ὑπερφυσικῆ ἀντιμετώπιση τοῦ πόνου.

Ὁ Σταυρὸς τοῦ Κυρίου ρίχνει ἓνα φῶς στὸ μυστήριο  
τοῦ πόνου. Σὲ κάθε μας δοκιμασίᾳ, ἃς ἀτενίζουμε  
τόν Ἐσταυρωμένο. Τότε, πῶς νὰ τολμήσουμε νὰ  
παραπονεθοῦμε γιὰ τὸν δικό μας σταυρὸ ὅτι εἶναι  
βαρῦς;

Κανεὶς δὲν ἔχει τὸ δικαίωμα νὰ παρακολουθεῖ τὴ  
θλίψη τοῦ ἄλλου μὲ σταυρωμένα τὰ χέρια... ἀπαθῶς.  
Ἡ κοινὴ θλίψη φέρνει πρὸς κοντὰ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους,  
περισσότερο ἀπὸ ὅτι ἡ κοινὴ χαρὰ.



## Ἡ Ἑλλὰς Στὰ Μάτια Τῶν Ξένων

«Ὁ ἀνθρωπισμὸς κατὰ τὸ Ἑλληνικὸ πρότυπο εἶναι  
ἡ πρώτη ἀξία καὶ ἡ μοναδικὴ ἀρετὴ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου,  
ποὺ περιλαμβάνει μέσα της ὅλες τὶς ἄλλες.» ΚΙ  
ΕΛΜΠΕΤΙΟΥΣ

«Ὁ Δυτικὸς κόσμος ἀνάγει τὴν γέννησή του στοὺς  
Ἕλληνες, ποὺ πρῶτοι ἔκαναν τὸ βῆμα ἀπὸ τὰ φυλετικὰ  
ἦθη στὸ ἀνθρώπινο φρόνημα.» Κ. ΠΟΠΕΡ

«Οἱ Ἕλληνες ἐδημιούργησαν σὲ πολλοὺς τομεῖς  
διαχρονικὰ πρότυπα, καὶ γι' αὐτὸ θὰ ἔπρεπε νὰ τοὺς  
θεωρήσῃ κανεὶς ὡς τὸν πνευματικὰ ὑγιέστερο λαὸ τοῦ  
κόσμου.» ΕΓΚΟΝ ΦΡΙΝΤΕΛ

«Ἡ Ἑλλὰς εἶναι τὸ ἐκτυφλωτικὸ φῶς. Μ' αὐτὴν ὅλες  
οἱ ἀπορίες λύονται, τὰ σύννεφα διαλύονται.» ΑΛΕΝ  
ΖΙΠΕΝ, Γάλλος πολιτικός

«Ὅλα τὰ πολιτισμένα ἔθνη εἰς ὅτι ἀφορᾶ τὴν  
δραστηριότητα τοῦ πνεύματος, εἶναι ἀποικίαι τῆς  
Ἑλλάδος.» ΧΕΝΡΙ ΜΕΧΝ

«Χωρὶς Ἑλληνομάθεια δὲν ὑπάρχει παιδεία.»  
ΤΟΛΣΤΟΪ

«Δὲν γνώρισα κανένα ποὺ νὰ ἐμπνέῃ τόσο σεβασμὸ  
ὅσο οἱ Ἕλληνες φιλόσοφοι.» ΝΙΤΣΕ

«Ἄν στὴν βιβλιοθήκη τοῦ σπιτιοῦ σας δὲν ἔχετε τὰ  
ἔργα τῶν ἀρχαίων Ἑλλήνων συγγραφέων, τότε μένετε  
σὲ ἓνα σπῆτι δίχως φῶς.» ΤΖΩΡΤΖ ΜΠΕΡΝΑΡ ΣΩ



## JESUS AND THE HOLY VIRGIN MARY PERSONALLY “CALLED” TO TURKISH COURT

Anonymous, from <http://f27.parsimony.net>

The National Real Estate Directorate, Milli Emlak, was prosecuting Jesus, his mother Mary and Angel Gabriel. When they did not show up at court in Istanbul, their property was confiscated. This appears to be a joke, but it is nevertheless true.

On the 11th of November in 1959, the court served a summons, through the police in Istanbul, to Mariam Bind Ovahim, for her indictment to court. The police replied on the 2nd of December, stating they did not find the person wanted and that her address was unknown. The court delivered its verdict on the 8th of January 1960, in the absence of the accused. The judgement reads as follows: “Mariam Bind Ovahim has disappeared and her property is to fall to the state”.

Large properties in Constantinople belonging to Mariam were confiscated without any delay. On different occasions, the National Real Estate Directorate processed law suits against 80 holy persons. When the people did not appear in court, the authorities confiscated more than 300 different properties in this manner, with the total value of the properties amounting to several billions of SEK (Swedish crowns). These procedures were carried out across the country. The Syrian Catholic residence in Mardin had its properties, its buildings and its land confiscated in this manner.

How did the Turkish authorities carry this through? Following a decree in 1913, Christian pious foundations were forced to register their property in the names of sacred persons, taking such names as the Jesus Foundation, the Mother Mary Foundation, the Angel Foundation, and other similar names. In 1936 the authorities demanded that the Christians would again register their property and the Christian foundations were forbidden to hold any property.

When the authorities decided to usurp the properties, during the court proceedings these foundations were treated as private persons. When these persons did not come to court, their property was confiscated. These violations of rights were carried out by the Turkish state during the years of 1956-1960, 1975-1979 and also during 1982-1991, when all Christians were persecuted and their lives, properties and legal rights were not protected.

Christians, with great difficulties, tried to reacquire their property. However, Christian representatives can up to this day be questioned by the courts being asked such questions as: “where is Jesus”, “where is Virgin Mary”, “in which register is she enrolled”, and “does she have inheritors”?

The abovementioned absurd example of suppression of minorities in Turkey is taken from an article on the 23rd

of November 2002 in the newspaper Sabah. However, this confiscation policy has side effects, which even affected the “gentlemen” that took over the properties belonging to the Christians. The following tragic/comic report was found in Turkish press, on October the 31st, in the Bia newspaper.

Residents of Buyukdere went to the press and complained about their poverty. They blamed their poverty on the acquisition of the Christian holdings, when the latter were driven away weeping in 1915. The villagers believed that the property and the buildings are cursed. The authorities have turned a church into a school, which is said to be warm in winter and cold in summer. But since there is a curse upon the building, poverty mars the district. The villagers claim to be unhappy. The suffering of the Christians did not leave these Turkish citizens with any satisfaction. It can be added that Buyukdere for decades have been known for its fertile earth, its access to running water, and its wealth of fruits, vineyards and olives.

Turkey’s entry to the EU cannot be discussed, if the country does not deal with its past, acknowledge its violations of rights and fully confess to all of those that have been affected. It is every Greek Orthodox Christian’s responsibility to confront Turkey for its violations. Our ancestors that were treated in a barbaric way are no longer alive. It is thus our duty to demand justice. This must be done now. Please contact your government representative and ask that aid of any form to Turkey be severely limited until the time that Turkey acknowledges and apologizes for her violent, inhumane and barbarous past.



## ON THE EVIL OF GRUDGES

SOURCE: The Gerontikon

Humility and love showed to one another in forgiveness is the most powerful method to drive away the evil of grudges. What are most of our grudges about anyway? Abba Isaac recounted how a demon approached him disguised as a youth.

“You are mine” he said. I asked how he could say that. “Because three Sundays running you have received Holy Communion whilst being at daggers-drawn with your neighbor”, he said, and I told him he was lying. But he said, ‘Are you not harboring a grudge against him because of a plate of lentils? I am the one who is in charge of grudges, and, from now on, you are mine.’

When I heard that, I left my cell, went to the brother and prostrated myself before him in order to be reconciled with him. When I returned to my cell I found that my youthful visitor had burned my mat on which I prostrated myself, because he was so consumed with jealousy for our love.”

## THE SIGN OF THE CROSS (A SIGN OF PAPIST ANGER?)

SOURCE: Roman Catholic periodical *The Pilgrim*, Jan. - Feb. 1998, Brooklyn, Missouri

Not too long ago someone asked me why I make the sign of the Cross from the right to the left. It was pointed out to me that, in the West, it is from the left to the right. I pointed out to this person that in the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, the Sign of the Cross was always from the right to the left: "I will go to the right," "Thine own right hand can save thee," "Thy right hand is full of righteousness," and "Thy right hand hath upheld me." These are but a few references to the right hand as the hand of honor. I am sure that we can all think and quote many more references well known from Scripture. Also, it was the Good Thief, who confessed Christ and was crucified with Him on His right side. It is interesting that when the Church was undivided, both East and West shared many things in common; one of them was the Sign of the Cross.

I just recently came across the following information. According to the New Catholic Encyclopedia, "In the thirteenth century we find Pope Innocent III (1198-1216) directing that the sign is to be made with three fingers from the forehead to the breast and from the right to the left shoulder. Later the whole hand with fingers extended was used, and the direction changed from the left to the right." On page 250 of the book *The Mass and Vestments of the Catholic Church: Liturgy, Doctrine, History and Archeology*, by the Rt. Rev. Monsignor John Walsh, published by Benziger Brothers in New York in 1916 [a renowned Roman Catholic publishing house], the *Nihil Obstat* and *Imprimatur* are included, and it says: "The Sign of the Cross. This is made always with the right hand on the forehead, breast, left and right shoulder, with the following distribution of the formula: "In the name of the Father" on the forehead; "and of the Son" on the breast; "and of the Holy Spirit, Amen," as the hand passes from the left to the right shoulder. Until the sixteenth century and Pope Pius V [1566-1572], the custom was to carry the hand from the right to the left shoulder, *which still continues in the Greek Church* [emphasis added by the Roman Catholic editor]. The Pope, bishops, and members of the Carthusian and Dominican Orders follow the primitive arrangement of the fingers in signing the Cross by closing the little and ring fingers of the right hand, and extending the other three. The three extended fingers symbolize the Blessed Trinity and the two folded ones the twofold nature of Christ" (both God and Man). When one reads the reason for Pope Pius V's decision, we find that the reason was that he was angry with the Eastern Church,

and made this decision on the basis of anger and for the purpose of increasing the division of the *One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church* [emphasis added].

After reading this information I began to think that, by making this simple Sign of the Cross, I am making a profession of faith as did the early Christians and Martyrs. . . and the many other Saints who made the Sign of the Cross in the same way, and that while I cannot equal their sanctity or life, I do share with them this symbol of faith of the undivided One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, unchanged until the sixteenth century.

**Note to the Orthodox Christian Witness:** To us, it is also a sign that these good people should abandon all the other practices and doctrines in which the Papacy has, literally, misdirected them for over a millennium. Also, thanks be to God, Christ has not proved to be a false prophet. The gates of Hell have not prevailed against His Church. It is still the undivided One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.



## MOTHER GABRIEL'S WISDOM

SOURCE: *Mother Gabriel, The Ascetic of Love*, by Sister Gabriel, published by [www.topevrevoli.gr](http://www.topevrevoli.gr)

When thoughts of passing judgement on another person cross your mind, pray to God and beg Him to take them away at once, so that you may love this person as He does. Then God will help you see your own faults. If Christ were visible, could you have such thoughts?

If you do not like somebody, think that you see Christ in that person. Then, you would not even dare utter a word of criticism.

We must love people and accept them in our hearts as God presents them to us. It has been thus ordained by the Lord Himself and by the Orthodox Tradition.

No one should become the servant of another man. We are only servants of God. «For ye are bought with a price», says the Apostle (1Cor.6:20). Therefore, there should be no servility in human relations.

The faculty of judgement (Krisis) comes naturally to man. Criticism (Katakrisis) and reproof spring from malice. Discernment (Diakrisis) is a gift from God and we should pray for it. It is essential to our protection and progress.

Whoever lives in the Past is like a dead man. Whoever lives in the Future in his imagination is naive, because the Future belongs to God. The Joy of Christ is found only in the Present, in the Eternal Present of God.

## THE APOSTOLIC DIDACHE, OR TEACHINGS OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES (PART 3)

*Editor's Note: Continuing from our two previous issues, we present to our readers part III of the Apostolic Didache, a group of short lessons and rules that, to a great extent, constitute the foundation of Holy Orthodox Tradition, our Faith and His Church.*

### TEACHING 9

- 9:1 But concerning the Eucharist, after this fashion give ye thanks.
- 9:2 First, concerning the cup. We thank thee, our Father, for the holy vine, David thy Son, which thou hast made known unto us through Jesus Christ thy Son; to thee be the glory for ever.
- 9:3 And concerning the broken bread. We thank thee, our Father, for the life and knowledge which thou hast made known unto us through Jesus thy Son; to thee be the glory for ever.
- 9:4 As this broken bread was once scattered on the mountains, and after it had been brought together became one, so may thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth unto thy kingdom; for thine is the glory, and the power, through Jesus Christ, for ever.
- 9:5 And let none eat or drink of your Eucharist but such as have been baptized in the name of the Lord, for of a truth the Lord hath said concerning this, Give not that which is holy unto dogs.

### TEACHING 10

- 10:1 But after it has been completed, so pray ye.
- 10:2 We thank thee, holy Father, for thy holy name, which thou hast caused to dwell in our hearts, and for the knowledge and faith and immortality which thou hast made known unto us through Jesus thy Son; to thee be the glory for ever.
- 10:3 Thou, Almighty Master, didst create all things for the sake of thy name, and hast given both meat and drink, for men to enjoy, that we might give thanks unto thee, but to us thou hast given spiritual meat and drink, and life everlasting, through thy Son.
- 10:4 Above all, we thank thee that thou art able to save; to thee be the glory for ever.
- 10:5 Remember, Lord, thy Church, to redeem it from every evil, and to perfect it in thy love, and gather it together from the four winds, even that which has been sanctified for thy kingdom which thou hast prepared for it; for thine is the kingdom and the glory for ever.
- 10:6 Let grace come, and let this world pass away. Hosanna to the Son of David. If any one is holy let him come (to the Eucharist); if any one is not, let him repent. Maranatha. Amen.
- 10:7 But charge the prophets to give thanks, so far as they are willing to do so.

### TEACHING 11

- 11:1 Whosoever, therefore, shall come and teach you all these things aforesaid, him do ye receive;
- 11:2 but if the teacher himself turn and teach another doctrine with a view to subvert you, hearken not to him; but if he come to add to your righteousness, and the knowledge of the Lord, receive him as the Lord.
- 11:3 But concerning the apostles and prophets, thus do ye according to the doctrine of the Gospel.
- 11:4 Let every apostle who cometh unto you be received as the Lord.
- 11:5 He will remain one day, and if it be necessary, a second; but if he remain three days, he is a false prophet.
- 11:6 And let the apostle when departing take nothing but bread until he arrive at his resting-place; but if he ask for money, he is a false prophet.
- 11:7 And ye shall not tempt or dispute with any prophet who speaketh in the spirit; for every sin shall be forgiven, but this sin shall not be forgiven.
- 11:8 But not every one who speaketh in the spirit is a prophet, but he is so who hath the disposition of the Lord; by their dispositions they therefore shall be known, the false prophet and the prophet.
- 11:9 And every prophet who ordereth in the spirit that a table shall be laid, shall not eat of it himself, but if he do otherwise, he is a false prophet;
- 11:10 and every prophet who teacheth the truth, if he do not what he teacheth is a false prophet;
- 11:11 and every prophet who is approved and true, and ministering in the visible mystery of the Church, but who teacheth not others to do the things that he doth himself, shall not be judged of you, for with God lieth his judgment, for in this manner also did the ancient prophets.
- 11:12 But whoever shall say in the spirit, Give me money, or things of that kind, listen not to him; but if he tell you concerning others that are in need that ye should give unto them, let no one judge him.

### TEACHING 12

- 12:1 Let everyone that cometh in the name of the Lord be received, but afterwards ye shall examine him and know his character, for ye have knowledge both of good and evil.
- 12:2 If the person who cometh be a wayfarer, assist him so far as ye are able; but he will not remain with you more than two or three days, unless there be a necessity for him to do so.
- 12:3 But if he wish to settle with you, being a craftsman, let him work, and so eat;
- 12:4 but if he know not any craft, provide ye according to your own discretion, that a Christian may not live idle among you;
- 12:5 but if he be not willing to do so, he is a trafficker in Christ. From such keep aloof.



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The views expressed are those of the authors, and do not necessarily represent the views of the Editor or the Brotherhood of St. POIMEN

## GREEK ORTHODOX MUST TAKE CARE OF THEIR LITURGICAL INHERITANCE

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The Orthodox of America must be very careful not to make the same mistakes that the Western Christians made many years ago. Before the ninth century the liturgies and customs of both East and West were so much alike that a Latin priest visiting the East could very easily take part in the Greek and Syrian liturgies even though he did not know the languages. Both Eastern and Western Christians recognized each other as Orthodox.

However, after the ninth century the Western Church underwent various changes and many old customs dropped out while new ones came in. Because of the severance of relations with the West, the Eastern Christians were not aware of the so many gradual changes which were taking place in the West. The Romans [Latins] had changed so many things that little similarity remained between East and West.

Many so-called modern Orthodox writers condemn the arguments and clashes which arose between East and West as trivial and petty. They claim that the real reasons for the split between East and West were more political than anything else. This is a very dangerous misunderstanding which shows clearly that

many people who call themselves Orthodox do not realize what Orthodoxy really is.

In America the Greek Church has already changed parts of the Liturgy and many priests do not perform complete services in order to save time. Gradually the various prayers left out at different services will be completely forgotten by later generations. Thus in a few hundred years Orthodox visiting America from other parts of the world will be embarrassed and amazed at the differences which exist between American Orthodoxy and other Orthodox. If the number of such differences grow, all this may lead to serious complications. It happened before and it can happen again.

Every word and every prayer in Orthodoxy has its place and purpose. Instead of cutting things, let us learn what they mean.

*Editor's Note: This article was taken from "The Organizational Guide", Part IV for the National Junior Greek Orthodox Youth of America, Olympians and Olympiads: Boys and girls 12-18, 09/01/1953 to 12/31/1953. This message is characteristic of the Orthodox state of mind that existed at that time in most, if not all of our parishes. It is of paramount importance that all of us, laity and clergy alike, encourage the return of such messages to our parishes. As Orthodox, we are bound with the Holy Apostles, the Holy Fathers and millions of martyrs. It is our duty and obligation to honor the blood shed by millions though adherence to the Ascetical and Mystical life of our Holy Orthodox Faith.*

# Orthodox Heritage

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Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle [2 Thessalonians 2:15]

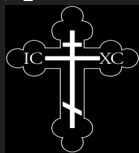
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Brotherhood of St. Poimen

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## ST. POIMEN THE GREAT ON THE GOD-PLEASING LIFE

*Source: The Spiritual Life and How to Be Attuned to It, by St. Theophan the Recluse [This is St. Theophan's letter to a spiritual child on passages by St. Poimen about the God-pleasing life, the conquest of the passions and the sowing of the virtues]*

St. Poimen the Great was from a simple family and was uneducated, but the experiences of spiritual life and grace of God so enlightened his mind that because of his astute, precise knowledge of the laws of the rising up to perfection of the spirit, it is fitting to place him among the first of the instructive Fathers wise in the ways of God.

Repentance in grieving over sins is the beginning of the Divine path. This is what you encounter in St. Poimen. He saw a woman who was sitting on a grave weeping bitterly, and he said, "If all the pleasures of the world were to appear here, they would not free her soul from grief. We too must continually grieve thus." The words of St. Poimen are quoted in this way, "I assure you that if a man does not do away with all fleshly desires and does not thus weep, he cannot become one with God. This woman's entire soul and life were absorbed in grief."

A person who repents and grieves over his sins naturally shuns evil and does well. Until he is this way, he may not undertake to evil by deed, but he cannot be freed from wicked thoughts. That is why his shunning of evil consists almost entirely in struggle with the thoughts. This is what St. Poimen talks about.

One of the brothers went to Abba Poimen and said to him, "Father! I have many thoughts and am in danger of them." The old man took him outside

and said, "Expand your chest and do not inhale!" "I cannot do that," answered the brother. "If you cannot do that then neither can you stem the flow of your thoughts," said the old man. "But your job is to resist them."

Your job is to resist them, but how? First of all, be attentive to yourself and be sober. A brother said that when he was with others, he would amuse himself and return to his cell not the same as when he left it. He asked how he should act. The elder told him, "When you return to your cell, do you want to find yourself the same as when you left? Maintain vigilance over yourself both at home and outside the home." "In general," Abba Poimen would say, "the thing you need most is a sober mind."

When maintaining vigilance over yourself, as soon as you observe the passionate, immediately pray and it will go away. A brother asked Abba Poimen about the struggle with rebellious thoughts, and the Elder answered him, "This situation is like a man who has fire on one side, and a cup of water on the other. When the fire begins to scorch, he takes water from the cup and puts it out. Fire is the suggestion of the enemy, (the passions), while water is earnest prayer to God."

To suffer less from passionate thoughts, it is necessary to remove oneself from occasions that arouse them. "One must remove himself from everything passionate," said St. Poimen. A man who is close to something that could engender passion is like someone standing over a deep precipice into which the man's enemy may easily throw him. But the man who removes himself from that which is capable of arousing passion is like someone standing far from the precipice. Let the enemy drag him so as to toss him into the abyss, but while

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### OUR MISSION

To be instruments of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, as He awakens the souls of believers into an awareness of the love, grace, peace and mercy realized when one lives the Word of God, kept and preserved through the ages by the Greek Orthodox Church and Her Holy Traditions.

To be a voice crying out for the return to sacrificial living in accordance with the Apostolic Traditions and through the Orthodox Faith. In this ever-changing world, Christ is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow and so is His Bride, the Holy, never-changing Greek Orthodox Church.

To confront any movement, no matter how subtle, whose message is heretical and whose impact is the schism of His Church or the protestantization of our Faith.

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*Orthodox Heritage* may, at times, bring up issues or present articles that some consider controversial or non-conducive to the universal message of our Lord's Salvation for all nations and all people. Such material is presented so that a distinction be made between salvation and the 20th century heresy of ecumenism. These are confusing times for the Orthodox faithful and political convenience must be sacrificed so that His TRUTH be brought forth in the limelight.

If you wish to have this periodical mailed to your home, please write us or e-mail us with your address. We suggest to all that share our views and wish to assist us for a contribution/donation of \$24 per annum. This amount will greatly assist us in the costs that it takes to bring this to you as well as to aid in our other educational and philanthropic activities. Checks may be made out to "Greek Orthodox Brotherhood of St. Poimen". Paypal users may utilize their credit card and address payments to our e-mail address, "poimen@mail.com". Please visit our website for the applicable links.

he is dragging him along by force, the man will call out to God and God will help him.

The most important thing is to try in every way possible not to give in to the thoughts. For encouraging this, we read the following in the sayings about St. Poimen, "A brother asked him whether a person could always suppress his thoughts without yielding to the enemy in a single one." The Elder answered, "There are those who suppress ten but yield one." That very same brother asked the same thing of Abba Sisoes, and he said, "Indeed, there are those who yield nothing to the enemy."

Another: Abba Anoub asked Abba Poimen about impure thoughts that are engendered in the human heart and about vain desires. Abba Poimen answered him; "Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? (Isaiah 10:15) "Do not give them a hand and they will not do anything."

What then will come from this unyielding? The passions will die away. That is what Abba Poimen told Abba Isaiah when the latter asked him about impure thoughts,

He said, "If a trunk full of clothing is not looked after, then in time the clothing will disintegrate. So too will the thoughts, if we do not on fact carry them out, vanish in time, as if they disintegrated."



Abba Poimen The Great  
[340-450 AD]

Abba Joseph asked Abba Poimen about the same thing, and he said, "If someone were to place a snake and a scorpion in a jar and close it up, then in time, of course, the creatures would suffocate. So too will the bad thoughts that come from the demon die away, if we resist them patiently and do not feed them."

However, in shunning evil through such ruthless opposition to passionate thoughts and desires, one must at the same time do good, cultivating every sort of virtue within oneself. Through both these things the heat will soon be purified. There are many lessons in St. Poimen about cultivating virtue. Here are the most important ones.

He quotes a saying from Abba John the dwarf, who said, "I desire to possess every virtue, if only to a small degree." Further on he offers his own lessons on this,



saying, "When a man desires to build a house he gathers many materials for construction. So too must we acquire all the virtues, if only to a small degree."

There are, however, virtues that are fundamental and provide guidance, and that is why one must direct all efforts towards them. St. Poimen often indicates which ones these are. For example: "Maintaining self-vigilance, being attentive to one's self, and discernment are the three virtues that guide the soul.

"Fall down before God, humble yourself, and reject your own will; these are the working tools of the soul!" "In the Scriptures it is written 'Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, as I live, they shall deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord God'" (Ezekiel 14:14-20). "Noah represents poverty; Job, patience; Daniel, discernment. If a man has these three virtues, the Lord dwells in him." "The three fundamental virtues are the fear of God, prayer, and charity toward one's neighbor."

Abba Poimen had a layman tell his brothers the following, "I do not know how to speak from the Scriptures, and so I will tell you a parable. A man said to his friend, 'I want to go see the king. Come with me.' The friend answered him, 'I will go with you half-way.' He said to another friend, 'Take me to the king.' He said, 'I will take you as far as the king's palace.' The man said to the third person, 'Come with me to the king.' 'Let's go,' replied the third friend. 'I will go with you to the king's palace, bring you inside, announce your arrival and present you to him.' Abba Poimen asked the layman what the parable meant. He replied, 'The first friend is asceticism, which leads you to the true path; the second is purity, which takes you to Heaven; the third friend is almsgiving, which will fearlessly bring you to the King Himself, God.'

When in this way you do not yield to the passions on the one hand, and you cultivate virtues in the other, the heart gradually softens, warms up, and receives within itself the Divine Flame, which you only have to look after to be safe. Abba Poimen says concerning this, "When a pot is warmed by the fire then no fly or other creature can touch it; but when it becomes cold, then they can perch on it. It is the same way with the soul: So long as it is in a state of spiritual activity (enthusiasm of the spirit for God), the enemy cannot effect it."

These excerpts are sufficient for you. You will find for yourself the other things that are necessary and valuable for you in St. Poimen. I just wanted to use these excerpts to refresh your memory about all that we talked about earlier. Here is the entire path that you have set out on. Indeed, no matter which Father you begin to read, you will find essentially the same thing in each, although they differ in their portrayal and explanation.

May you become wise! Lord give the blessing!



**ABBA POIMEN, PRAY FOR US!**

## THE LEGACY AND FALL OF NEW ROME, CONSTANTINOPLE

by Theodore G. Karakostas, Action Press, May 2002

On April 2, 1453 the day after Pascha, Ottoman Sultan Mehmet began his siege against the imperial city of Constantinople, New Rome. From the outset the Greeks of Constantinople defiantly resisted the aggressive ambitions of the Sultan. Mehmet sent messages to the Emperor guaranteeing the safety of the Christian population if the Greeks surrendered. Led by their Emperor, the population of Constantinople refused to surrender.

For fifty-five days, an army of 7,000 Greek soldiers held out against 180,000 Ottoman soldiers led by the aggressive and ambitious Sultan Mehmet. The Emperor Constantine Palaiologos turned down Mehmet's promise of security if he surrendered the city. Mehmet warned that Islamic tradition requires that cities acquired by force are subject to three days of pillage. The Emperor Constantine declared "*I shall never give you the city*".

Finally, on 29 May 1453 Constantinople fell to the Turks. The Ottoman Turks conquered the city and proceeded to plunder the great treasures of the city, the Churches, the libraries, and to massacre and enslave the population. One of the first to be captured as a slave was the Monk Georgios Scholarius, prominent scholar and theologian who became Patriarch of Constantinople when order was restored in the city.

George Scholarius was the leader of the anti-Unionists who rejected both the false doctrines of the Latin Church and the Church of Rome's blackmail to withhold aid unless the Greeks capitulated and accepted the Latin Church's theological innovations. It can be argued that the fall of Constantinople and the destruction of Byzantium had more to do with the treachery of the Latins than with the Ottoman Turks. It was the invasion and occupation by the Latins during the Fourth Crusade that left the Empire of New Rome weak and unable to restore its position.

The city of Constantinople was founded by Constantine the Great in 330 AD. From the very beginning it was dedicated to the "glory of God". The Church of Constantinople included Patriarchs such as Saints Gregory the Theologian, John Chrysostom, Ignatius, and Photius the Great.

The late historian and scholar Steven Runciman ["The Fall of Constantinople"] wrote:

*"For eleven hundred years there had stood on the Bosphorous a city where the intellect was admired and the learning and letters of the classical past were studied and preserved. Without the help of Byzantine commentators and scribes there is little that we would know today about the literature of ancient Greece. It was also a city whose rulers down the centuries had inspired and encouraged a school of art unparalleled in human history, an art*

that arose from an ever varying blend of the cool cerebral Greek sense of the fitness of things and a deep religious sense that saw in works of art the incarnation of the Divine and the sanctification of matter. "It was also a great cosmopolitan city where, along with merchandise, ideas were freely exchanged and whose citizens saw themselves not as a racial unit but as the heirs of Greece and Rome, hallowed by the Christian faith."

The historical significance of Constantinople and the Greek Byzantine Empire to western civilization is immense. Arab Muslims waged war against Constantinople in 674 and 718 AD. If the city had fallen to Islam during these assaults, Europe would have fallen as well and America would most likely have been discovered by Muslims.

In the ninth and tenth centuries, the Greeks converted the Slavic world to Christianity. The conversion of Russia was of immense religious, historical, and political significance. The Russian envoys' report to Prince Vladimir ("Medieval Russia's epics, chronicles, and tales") describes the Greeks of Byzantium: "When we journeyed among the

Bulgarians we beheld how they worship in their temple, called a Mosque while they stand ungirt. The Bulgarian bows, sits down, looks hither and thither like one possessed, and there is no happiness among them but instead only sorrow and a dreadful stench. Their religion is not good. Then we went among the Germans, and saw them performing many ceremonies in their temples; but we beheld no glory there. Then we went to Greece, and the Greeks led us to the edifices where they worship their God, and we knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth. For on earth there is no such splendor or such beauty, and we are at a loss how to describe it. We know only that God dwells there among men, and their service is fairer than the ceremonies of other nations. For we cannot forget that beauty."

Eleven centuries of civilization, culture, theology, and learning came to an end on 29 May 1453. The Emperor Constantine Palaiologos who had refused to leave the city died in battle defiant to the end. He was canonized shortly after by the Patriarch Georgios Scholarios Gennadius.

Myths and legends were told about the Emperor Constantine during the dark centuries of Tourkokratia. The myth of "The Marble Emperor" which stated that Constantine had been saved by an Angel and would one day awaken and chase the Turks to the Red Apple Tree came into existence. Other myths told of the priest in the Church of Aghia Sophia who had disappeared into the walls of the Church so that the Eucharist would not be defiled by the Muslims.

Orthodox Russia soon declared itself "the Third Rome", and defender of Orthodoxy. In 1589, Patriarch Jeremias of

Constantinople gave his blessing to the Russians to establish a Patriarchate and to the Russian claims to leadership in the Orthodox world. In 1774, 1853, and 1878, the Russians challenged Muslim rule in Constantinople but the Muslims received the support of the western powers who pursued anti-Christian policies in the east.

Then in 1919, the Hellenic nation which had achieved independence one century earlier took control of Smyrna in Asia Minor. The western powers, however, intervened and supported Mustafa Kemal's terrorists in Anatolia who slaughtered the Greek populations of Smyrna and Pontus, and who with

the assistance of the western powers seized Constantinople from the Greeks forever.

The Greek dream of retaking Constantinople vanished as did the dream of worshipping Jesus Christ in the Great Church of Aghia Sophia. Mustapha Kemal converted Aghia Sophia into a museum in 1936. Regardless, the ground of Aghia Sophia remains hallowed.

In 1920, National Geographic published an article by James

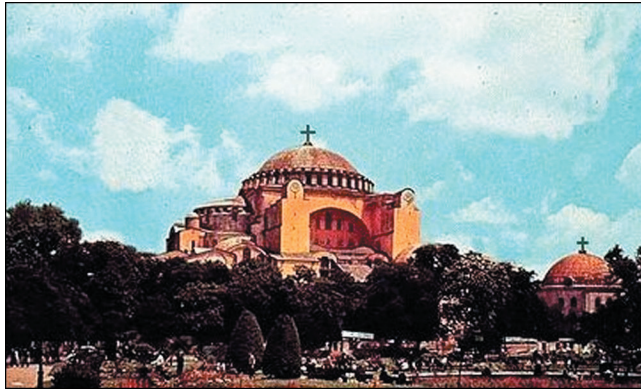
Hosmer Penniman which stated, "For more than thirteen centuries it has been the most magnificent Church in the world and Saint Peter's, Cologne Cathedral, and York Minister are even now surpassed by the richness of its interior, as they are excelled by it in age and historical associations. Saint Sophia was more venerable before those ancient Churches were begun."

An Anglican Priest, Reverend John Douglas wrote in 1919, "Without treachery to England's history and England's boasted calling, that fleet cannot sail away and leave the great Greek city of Constantinople a Turkish city, its Christian people in the underworld, and its mother Church a Mosque".

In 1930, Mustapha Kemal renamed the city Istanbul, which comes from the Greek expression "Is tin poli". In 1955, five centuries after the fall of the city, a pogrom sponsored by the Turkish government led to the final assault against the city's Greek Orthodox population. During the 1960's, tens of thousands of Greeks were expelled from the city.

Today, there are only 2,500 Greeks left in a city that has a population of over ten million. The Patriarchate has remained in the city and has continued to perform its international role among autocephalous Orthodox Churches but is very likely in its last days. The closure of the Patriarchal school of theology on the island of Halki has deprived the Patriarchate of priests.

The city that was once the center of Christian civilization now symbolizes the status of Eastern Christians who have been steadily forgotten, if not abandoned, by their western counterparts.



The Great Church of Aghia Sophia (pre-1453)



## Λόγος Εἰς Τὸ Μέγα Σάββατον Καὶ Εἰς Τὴν Ἁγίαν Ἀνάστασιν (Ἀπόσπασμα)

Τοῦ Αὐτοκράτορος Θεοδώρου Δούκα τοῦ Λάσκαρι (νεοελληνική ἀπόδοσις ὑπὸ τῶν πατέρων τῆς Ἱ. Μονῆς Χρυσοποδαριτίσης Νεζερῶν Πατρῶν, ἀπὸ τὴν ἠλεκτρονική σελίδα τῆς Ἱερᾶς Μητροπόλεως Πατρῶν).

**“Πένθιμος ἡμέρα, χαρᾶς μεγίστης παραίτιος. Πενθηρὸν γὰρ Χριστοῦ, τὴν χθὲς Σταυρουμένου, Τοῦ Λυτρωτοῦ, τὸ σύμπαν περιεβάλλετο, μεταβολὴ τῶν στοιχείων, ἀθρόα τῶν φῶτων ἀλλοίωσις, τοῦ σύμπαντος ὄδυρμος, πολλὰ τὰ ἐπόμενα...”.**

Ἡ ἀνωτέρω περικοπὴ εἶναι οἱ πρώτες φράσεις ἀπὸ τὸν «Λόγον εἰς τὸ Μέγα Σάββατον καὶ εἰς τὸ Πάθος τοῦ Κυρίου καὶ εἰς τὴν Ἁγίαν Ἀνάστασιν» τοῦ εὐσεβοῦς καὶ σοφωτάτου αὐτοκράτορος Βασιλέως Ρωμαίων, Θεοδώρου Δούκα τοῦ Λάσκαρι (1222-1258).

Ὁ μετὰ χεῖρας Λόγος εἶναι ἓνα ἀνέκδοτο ἔργο πὸν ἐξεφωνήθη περὶ τὰ τέλη τῆς ζωῆς του. Εἶναι ἀγλαὸς καρπὸς τῆς ὑψηλῆς θεολογικῆς του ἐμβέλειας, ὄχι ὅμως καὶ ἀντιπροσωπευτικὸς τῆς φιλοσοφικῆς του καταρτίσεως.

Ὁ θεολόγος βασιλεύς, εἰς τὸν Λόγον τοῦτον τῆς τελευταίας περιόδου τῆς ζωῆς του, ὑποστέλλει τὸν ἐκ τῆς θύραθεν σοφίας στοχασμὸν του καὶ ἀφήνει νὰ ἐκχυθεῖ τὸ περίσσειμα τῆς καρδιάς του, ἢ ἀφοσίωσίν του εἰς τὸν Χριστὸν καὶ ἡ προσδοκία τῆς Ἀναστάσεως.

Ἄς σημειωθεῖ ἐν κατακλείδι ὅτι ὁ Θεόδωρος Λάσκαρις ἀπεβίωσε μόλις 36 ἐτῶν καὶ ἡ “βαρεία” νόσος ἐκ τῆς ὁποίας ἐκοιμήθη ἔγινε ὁ λυτρωτικὸς σταυρὸς, πὸν τὸν ὁδήγησε στὴν πνευματικὴ του ἀνάστασις.



**Χ**ριστὸς Ἀνέστη ἐκ νεκρῶν· αὐτὸ εἶπε ὁ ἄγγελος· αὐτὸ εἶδαν καὶ οἱ γυναῖκες· αὐτὸ μαρτυροῦν καὶ οἱ σφραγίδες τοῦ Πιλάτου· ὁ ἄδειος τάφος τὸ φωνάζει δυνατὰ· τὸ μαρτυρεῖ ὁ κυλισμένος λίθος· οἱ φύλακες ἐλέγχονται μὲ τὴν φυγὴ τους· ἡ κουστωδία (φρουρά) τὸ ὁμολογεῖ καὶ λαμβάνει τὰ χρήματα· οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς (Ἄνας καὶ Καϊάφας) ἀποδεικνύονται ἔνοχοι· ὁ Πιλάτος αἰσθάνεται ἐντροπὴ· ὁ κεντυρίων (ἐκατόνταρχος), μὲ τὸ σχίσμα τοῦ καταπετάσματος, πιστεύει· ὁ ἥλιος τὸ ἐδίδαξε (ἔδειξε) πρὶν, σκοτεινιάζοντας εἰς τὸν Σταυρὸ· τὰ ἀναστημένα σώματα τῶν νεκρῶν τὴν ἀλήθεια διεδράνωσαν· ὅλη ἡ φύσις τὴν Ἀνάστασις ἐμαρτύρησε, πὸν ἔγινε εἰς τὸ τέλος τοῦ Σαββάτου πρὸς τὴν ἀρχὴ τῆς πρώτης ἡμέρας.

Χαίρετε ἄνθρωποι· Χριστὸς ἀνέστη ἐκ νεκρῶν· ἡ μαρτυρία εἶναι παναληθής· ἀγαλλιάσθε, ἐλευθερωθήκατε· Ὁ Ἄδης ἐδεσμεύθη εὐφραίνεσθε· Ἀναστάσεως ἡμέρα, ὑψώσατε τὴν φωνή· ὁ ἀρχηγὸς τῆς σωτηρίας μας ἀνέστη ἐκ νεκρῶν· χαίρε ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ· ἰδοὺ, ἀρμονία μεταξὺ ἀγγέλων καὶ ἀνθρώπων, διὰ τῆς

Ἀναστάσεως· χαίρετε τὰ φυτὰ· ἡ νέκρωσις τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἔγινε εἰς τὸν Σταυρὸ, ἀλλὰ δι’ αὐτοῦ συνετελέσθη ἡ Ἀνάστασις· συνανέστησε τὸν Ἀδὰμ· ἡ Εὐὰ ἐλύθη ἀπὸ τὰ δεσμά της· οἱ προφῆτες προπορεύονται ἀπὸ τὸν Δεσπότη· οἱ βασιλεῖς, Σολομῶν καὶ Δαυὶδ, προσφέρουν τοὺς ἐπινίκιους ὕμνους.

Χαίρετε ἄνθρωποι· ἐμειώθη τὸ σκότος, εἰσῆλθε τὸ φῶς· ἔφυγε τροχάδην ἡ σκιά, ἐπῆλθε ἡ χάρις· τὸ ἔαρ (ἄνοιξι) τῆς ζωῆς ἀνέτειλε. Μήπως κανεὶς πρέπει νὰ διδάξῃ τὸν Κύριο; μά, δὲν τὸν γνωρίζουν ὅλοι ἀναστημένο ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν; Ὁ Πιλάτος γιατί μαίνεται ὀργισμένος; ὁ Καϊάφας σκέπτεται, πὸν νὰ λάβει χώρα τὸ συμβούλιο τῶν βουλευτῶν. Εὐφραίνου καὶ σύ, ὁ ληστής, καὶ εἴσελθε, μὲ τὴν συνέλευσις ὄλων, εἰς τὸν παράδεισον· ἰδοὺ, ἡ φλογὴν ρομφαία ἔστρεψε τὰ νῶτα· ὁ προπάτωρ ἐλευθερώθη τὰ παιδιὰ του, εὐφραίνεσθε. Ἀπὸ τὴν προμήτορα Εὐὰ προῆλθε ἡ πῶσις, ἀπὸ τὴν ἀγνή Θεομήτορα ἡ ἀνόρθωσις· μὲ τὴν παρακοὴ ἐπῆλθε ὁ θάνατος, μὲ τὴν ταπεινώσις τοῦ Υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐδόθη, ὡς βραβεῖο, ἡ Ἀνάστασις.

Καὶ πάλι λέγω: Χαίρετε ἄνθρωποι· ἐδεσμεύθη ὁ Ἄδης πρὸς τὰ ἄνω τρέχετε γρήγορα· κάθε φιλόθεος καὶ φιλάρετος ἄς τρέξῃ νὰ ἰδεῖ τὴν Ἀνάστασις· ἄς μὴ νικήσῃ ἡ ὀλιγωρία τῶν γυναικῶν, ἀλλ’ ἄς προλάβῃ ἡ ἀνδρεία· οἱ γυναῖκες κραυγάζουν: Χαίρετε εἰς τὸ ἐξῆς· σὰν θερμότερες εἰς τὸν ζῆλο, κινοῦνται· κι ἐμεῖς, ἄς μὴ ναρκωθοῦμε· γιατί δὲν εἶναι χάριν τοῦ θεάτρου ἡ ὀδοιπορία, ἀλλὰ χάριν τῆς Ἀναστάσεως τοῦ Χριστοῦ ὁ ἦχος τῶν σαλπύγγων· εἰς τὴς πανηγύρεις ἡδὴ ἀντηχεῖ τῶν γυναικῶν ὁ λόγος, πὸν ἐλέγχθη πρὶν εἰς τὴν Ἀνάστασις τοῦ Χριστοῦ. Ἀπὸ γυναῖκα προῆλθε ἡ πῶσις καὶ μὲ γυναῖκα κηρύσσεται ἡ Ἀνάστασις.

Χριστὸς Ἀνέστη ἐκ νεκρῶν· οἱ νεφέλες ἄς ράνουν (ραντίσουν) μὲ νερὸ ἀγαλλιάσεως, τὰ φυτὰ ἄς φέρουν χλωρὰ φύλλα· κι ἄς δώσῃ ἡ γῆ τὸν καρπὸ τῆς· ὁ Δημιουργὸς τῶν πάντων ἀνέστη ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν, καὶ σεις βλαστήσατε· τῆς ἀρετῆς οἱ κλάδοι ἀνθήσατε, γιατί ὁ Ἀρχηγὸς τῆς ζωῆς ἀνέστη ἐκ νεκρῶν. Ποιὸς δὲν χαίρει σήμερα; ποιὸς δὲν ἐνθουσιάζεται; ποιὸς δὲν τέρπεται; καὶ ποιὸς, γιὰ νὰ τὸ εἰπῶ ἔτσι, δὲν εὐφραίνεται;

Ἀνέστη ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν, καὶ τοῦ Ἄδου τὸ βασίλειον κατέλυσε· ἀνέστη, καὶ τὸν διάβολο κατήργησε· ἀνέστη, καὶ τὴν ἁμαρτία ἐξήλειψε· ἀνέστη, καὶ τὴν εἰδωλομανία ἐμείωσε· ἀνέστη, καὶ τὴν πλάνη ἀπεδίωξε· ἀνέστη, καὶ τὸν Ἀδὰμ διέσωσε· ἀνέστη καὶ τοὺς ἀγγέλους ἔκαμε ἀμετακίνητους πρὸς τὸ κακό· ἀνέστη, καὶ τὸν ἄνθρωπο ἔσωσε· ἀνέστη, καὶ τὰ οὐράνια συνέδεσε μὲ τὰ ἐπίγεια, ὑποδεικνύοντας τὸν Ἐαυτὸ Του παγκόσμιον βασιλέα καὶ ὑπέρτατον Δεσπότη ὄλων: τῶν ἀγγέλων, τῶν ἀνθρώπων, τῶν στοιχείων, τῶν στοιχειωτῶν καί, πρωτοφανές, τῶν δαιμόνων. Χαίρετε, λοιπόν, μὲ ἀνεκλάλητη χαρὰ· ὅσοι ἀκούετε ὅτι, ὁ Χριστὸς ἀνέστη ἐκ νεκρῶν, εὐφραίνεσθε·



ποιὸς δὲν προσκυνεῖ τὸν Πρῶτο καὶ τὸν Ἐσχατο, κατὰ τὴν θεηγόρο φωνή· ποιὸς δὲν τὸν δοξάζει; Διελύθη τὸ σκοτάδι· ἐλευθερωθήκαμε ἀπὸ τὰ δεσμά· πρὸς τὴν ἄνω βασιλεία ὑψωθήκαμε.

Ἀναστάσεως ἡμέρα· καὶ ποιὸς δὲν θὰ λάβει πνευματικὴ κινύρα (κιθάρα) γιὰ νὰ ψάλει ἐπαναλαμβανόμενο μέλος (ἄσμα), μὲ ὠδὲς καὶ ψαλμοὺς καὶ ἀγαλλίασι μεγάλη, καὶ μὲ διαπεραστικὴ μελωδία νὰ ἀλαλάξει καὶ νὰ βοήσῃ τό, ἀνέστη ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν; Χριστὸς Ἀνέστη ἐκ νεκρῶν. Φύγε μακριὰ μας κάθε δαμονικὴ φάλαγγα· κι ὁ ἄρχηγὸς τοῦ σκότους, μὲ τὴν στρατιά σου κάτελθε πρὸς τὰ τάρταρα· γιατί ἀνέστη ὁ Ἀρχηγὸς τῆς ζωῆς καὶ τὸ βασίλειό σου ἐσκύλευσε.

Κανείς, ὦ πιστοί, μὲ πενιχρὰ ἐνδύματα ἄς μὴ συνδράμει (συντρέξει) εἰς τὴν ἑορτή ἄς λαμπροφορήσωμε, οἱ ὀρθόδοξοι, στὶς αἰσθητὲς αἰσθήσεις μας καὶ στὶς νοητὲς, τῶν ἀρετῶν ἄς λαμπροφορήσωμε, οἱ ὀρθόδοξοι· ὁ ἀντικείμενος (διάβολος) ἀπέθανε· ὁ Δεσπότης ἀνέστη· ἡ χθεσινὴ λύπη, ἀπὸ χαρὰ διεβίβασθη πρὸς χαρὰ· τί μᾶς ἐμποδίζει νὰ συμπάλωμε μὲ τοὺς μαθητὲς; νὰ ψάλωμε τὰ ἐπινίκια μαζί μὲ τὶς Μαρτίες; Ἡ θεία οἰκονομία συνετελέσθη· ἡ συγκατάβασι, ἡ σύλληψι, ὁ τόκος ὁ ἐκ Παρθένου, τὸ Βάπτισμα, οἱ θεοσημείες, τὰ Πάθη καὶ ἡ Ἀνάστασι, Χριστὸς Ἀνέστη ἐκ νεκρῶν· χαίρετε λαοὶ καὶ ἀγαλλιάσθε.

Ἔτσι, λοιπόν, κι ἐμεῖς κατὰ τὸ μέγα Σάββατο, μὲ θεῖο ὕμνο μελωδοῦμε τὸν δεσπότη Χριστόν, τὸν ἀναστάντα ἐκ νεκρῶν τὸν ἀληθῶς ἀναστάντα· τὸν ἀληθῶς καὶ πέραν πάσης ἀμφισβητήσεως. Καὶ εἰς ἐμᾶς, ὦ Κύριε, πόθεν (ἀπὸ ποῦ) θὰ καταπεμφθεῖ ἡ χάρι τῶν αἰτημάτων μας;



**Ε**νας ἅγιος ἄνθρωπος, ὅταν εἶδε κάποιον νὰ ἁμαρτάνει, δάκρυσε καὶ εἶπε: «Αὐτὸς σήμερα καὶ ἐγὼ σίγουρα αὔριο». Ἀκόμη κι ἂν πραγματικὰ ἁμαρτήσῃ κάποιος μπροστά σου, μὴν τὸν κρίνεις, ἀλλὰ νὰ θεωρεῖς τὸν ἑαυτὸ σου πιδ ἁμαρτωλὸ ἀπ'αὐτόν, ἔστω κι ἂν εἶναι κοσμικός.

**Ἀπὸ Τὸ Μέγα Γεροντικὸν**

## Ἐγωϊσμός: Ὁ Δῆμιος τῶν Ἀρετῶν

ΠΗΓΗ : «Ὁρθόδοξος Τύπος», Τεύχος 1472, Γράφει ὁ κ. Μιχαὴλ Ε. Μιχαηλίδης, Θεολόγος

**Ο** Ἐγωϊσμός εἶναι ἡ πιδ μεγάλη κατάρρα, ποὺ δέρνει τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα», ἔλεγε ὁ Γλάδστων. Μία κατάρρα, ποὺ ξεκίνησε μέσα ἀπ' τὸν πανέμορφο κῆπο τῆς Ἐδέμ. Μία κατάρρα, ποὺ μονάχα ὁ διάβολος θὰ μπορούσε νὰ προκαλέσει. Καὶ τὰ κατάφερε, ἀπ' τὴ στιγμὴ ποὺ γοήτεψε τοὺς πρωτοπλάστους μὲ τὸ δόλωμα τῆς ἰσοθείας: «Καὶ ἔσεσθε ὡς θεοί» (Γέν. γ' 5). Τὸ ὄχυρὸ τῆς ἐλευθερίας καὶ τῆς ὑπακοῆς ἔπεσε καὶ ὀλοκληρώθηκε ἡ ἀνταρσία ἐνάντια στὸ Θεὸ μὲ ὅλες τὶς συνέπειες καὶ τὰ ἐπακόλουθα.

Ἀπὸ τότε ἡ ἁμαρτία ἔγινε κληρονομικὴ, ὁ δὲ ἐγωϊσμός ἡ πηγὴ καὶ ἡ ρίζα ὅλων τῶν κακῶν. Ἀπὸ τότε «οἱ ἄνθρωποι ὑπερηφανεύονται καὶ γι' αὐτὴ τους τὴν τύφλωσι», καθὼς λέγει ὁ ἱερὸς Αὐγουστίνος. Ὁ ἐγωκεντρισμὸς χρωματίζει ὅλες τὶς ἐκδηλώσεις τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. Τὰ πάντα κινοῦνται γύρω ἀπὸ τὸ «ἐγώ».

Καὶ μόνο μιὰ ματιὰ στὶς τόσες μορφὲς τοῦ ἐγωϊσμοῦ, εἶναι ἀρκετὴ νὰ τὸν ἀποδείξει στ' ἀλήθεια, πηγὴ καὶ ρίζα καὶ μητέρα ὅλων ἀνεξαίρετα τῶν κακῶν. Σὰν τέτοιες μορφὲς τοῦ ἐγωϊσμοῦ εἶναι: ἡ κενοδοξία, ἀλαζονεία, φιλαυτία, ματαιοδοξία, ὑπερηφάνεια, περιαντολογία, ταπεινολογία, οἴηση, φιλαρέσκεια, φιλοπρωτία, δοξομανία κι ἕνα σωρὸ τρομακτικὲς παρενέργειες τοῦ ἐγωϊσμοῦ. Εἶναι φίδι μὲ χίλια κεντριά. Κάθε κεντρί καὶ τραῦμα, κάθε τραῦμα καὶ ὀδύνη. Εἶναι πυρετικὴ κατάσταση μὲ φοβερὲς παραισθήσεις. «Εἶναι ὁ δῆμιος, ποὺ σκοτώνει κάθε ἀρετὴ» (Πῶλ Κλωντέλ).

Ὁ ἐγωϊσμός εἶναι φακός, ποὺ μεγαλώνει τὸν ἑαυτὸ μας καὶ μικραίνει τοὺς ἄλλους. Εἶναι βδέλυγμα. Εἶναι ἀποκρουστικὸ εἶδωλο. «Μανία τὶς ἐστὶν ἡ κενοδοξία», λέγει ὁ ἱερὸς Χρυσόστομος. Εἶναι τρέλα. Εἶναι ἀρρώστια. Εἶναι πάθος. Εἶναι μικρόβιο. Εἶναι δηλητήριον τῆς ψυχῆς. «Ἀκάθαρτος παρὰ Θεῷ πᾶς ὑψηλοκάριδος» (Παροιμ. ιστ' 5). Γι' αὐτὸ καὶ «μισητὴ ἔναντι Κυρίου καὶ ἀνθρώπων ὑπερηφανία» (Σοφία Σειρ. ι' 7).

Εἶναι στιγμὲς ποὺ συντριβεῖ ὁ Θεὸς τὴν ὑπερηφάνεια. «Ὁφθαλμοὶ οἱ μετέωροι ταπεινωθήσονται» (Ἠσ. ε' 15). Καὶ «πᾶς ὁ ὑψῶν ἑαυτὸν ταπεινωθήσεται», δίδαξε ὁ Κύριος μὲ τὴν παραβολὴ τοῦ Τελῶνη καὶ Φαρισαίου. Ὅταν οἱ ἄνθρωποι ἐωσφορικὰ πῆραν τὴν ἀπόφασι νὰ οἰκοδομήσουν ἐκεῖνο τὸν πύργου, εἶπανε μεταξύ τους: «Δεῦτε οἰκοδομήσωμεν πόλιν καὶ πύργου, οὗ ἔσται ἡ κεφαλὴ ἕως τοῦ οὐρανοῦ. Καὶ ποιήσωμεν ἑαυτοῖς ὄνομα» (Γέν. ια' 4). Ἡ ἀνοικοδόμησι πόλης καὶ πύργου δὲν ἦταν κακό. Κακὸ καὶ βδελυκτὸ ἦταν ἡ ἀλαζονικὴ διάθεσι τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐκείνων νὰ γίνουν

ισόθεοι. Ἡ ματαιοδοξία τους συναγωνίζεται τὸ θράσος καὶ τὴν αὐθάδεια. Φιλοδοξήσαν τὴ θεοποίησή τους καὶ δέχτηκαν ἄμεση τὴν τιμωρία τους. Πόθησαν τὴν ὑστεροφημία καὶ βρῆκαν σύγχυση (βαβέλ) καὶ ἀλαλία. Ἔτσι ὁ πύργος τῆς Βαβέλ θὰ παραμένει στὴν ἱστορία τὸ σύμβολο τῆς ἀνθρώπινης ἀλαζονείας, τῆς διαίρεσης καὶ τῆς σύγχυσης.

Τὸ ἀντιθεϊκὸ—προμηθεϊκὸ πνεῦμα ἔρχεται στιγμῇ, ποὺ συντριβεται ἐξουθενωτικὰ καὶ ταπεινώνεται παραδειγματικά. Ὁ Φρειδερίκος Νίτσε ὄραματίστηκε τὸν «ὑπεράνθρωπο», τὸ εἶδωλο τῆς ἄκρας ἐωσφορικῆς ἀλαζονείας. Στὴ θέση τοῦ Θεοῦ —ποὺ τὸν θεωρεῖ νεκρὸ— τοποθέτησε τὸν ἄνθρωπο. Τὶς ιδέες τοῦ τὶς ἐγκολπώθηκε ὁ χιτλερισμὸς, τοῦ ὁποῦ τὶς συνέπειες τὶς ἔζησε τόσο τραγικὰ ὅλη ἡ ἀνθρωπότητα. Ἐπαλήθευσε ὁ λόγος τοῦ ἱεροῦ Ψαλμωδοῦ: «Εἶδον τὸν ἀσεβῆ ὑπερψούμενον καὶ ἐπαιρόμενον ὡς τὰς κέδρους τοῦ Λιβάνου καὶ παρήλθον, καὶ ἰδοὺ οὐκ ἦν, καὶ ἐζήτησα αὐτόν, καὶ οὐχ εὗρέθη ὁ τόπος αὐτοῦ» (Ψάλμ. 36, 35-36).

Συγκλονιστικὴ εἶναι ἡ περίπτωση τοῦ Ὁξία τοῦ βασιλέα (τὸν δον π.Χ. αἰώνα), ὁ ὁποῖος ἀπὸ ὑπερηφάνεια μπῆκε στὸ ναὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ, γιὰ νὰ προσφέρει θυμίαμα στὸ θυσιαστήριο, κάτι ἀπαγορευμένο ἐκτὸς τῶν ἱερῶν. Ἦταν πρωτάκουστο βασιλέας, δηλαδὴ λαϊκός, ὅπως θὰ λέγαμε σήμερα, νὰ κάμει ἔργο καθαρὰ τελετουργικὸ. Ὁ ἀρχιερέας Ἀζαρία καὶ ὀγδόντα ἱερεῖς τὸν ἐλέγχουν γιὰ τὴν πράξη του καὶ τοῦ λένε: «ὅτι ἀπέστης ἀπὸ Κυρίου, καὶ οὐκ ἔσται σοὶ τοῦτο εἰς δόξαν παρὰ Κυρίου Θεοῦ» (Β΄ Παραλ. κστ΄ 18). Ὁ Ὁξίας ὅμως ἀντὶ νὰ ἀναγνωρίσει τὸ λάθος του καὶ νὰ δεχτεῖ τὸν ἔλεγχο, «ἐθυμώθη». Θύμωσε κατὰ τῶν ἱερῶν, ἀλλὰ θύμωσε καὶ ὁ Θεὸς ἐναντίον του καὶ τὸν τιμώρησε μὲ λέπρα. Ὁ Νίκ. Βασιλειάδης παρατηρεῖ: «Αἰτία τῆς τιμωρίας τοῦ Ὁξία ἦταν ἡ ὑπερηφάνεια. Ἐζήτησε νὰ σφετερισθῆ ἀξίωμα ἱερατικὸν καὶ ὁ Θεὸς τὸν ἐκτύπησε μὲ ἀσθένειαν, ἡ ὁποία εὗρίσκετο, σύμφωνα μὲ τὸν Μωσαϊκὸν νόμον, κάτω ἀπὸ τὸν ἄμεσον ἔλεγχο τῶν ἱερῶν...». «Εἰσήλθεν ἱερωσύνην λαβεῖν, καὶ τὴν βασιλείαν ἀπώλεσεν», λέγει ὁ ἱερὸς Χρυσόστομος (Παλαιὰ Διαθήκη μετὰ συντόμου ἐρμηνείας, Α-Β Παραλειπομένων, τόμος 7ος).

Ὁ ἐγωϊσμὸς, εἶπε κάποιος, μοιάζει μὲ τὴ σκυιά, ποὺ τίποτε δὲ φυτρώνει κάτω ἀπὸ τὴ σκιά της. Ὅλες οἱ νοσηρὲς καταστάσεις τῆς κενοδοξίας, τῆς ὑπερηφάνειας, τῆς ματαιοδοξίας, τῆς προβολῆς, τῆς περιαντολογίας, ὀφείλονται στὴν ἔλλειψη αὐτογνωσίας. «Εἰ τὶς δοκεῖ εἶναι τί, μηδὲν ὄν, ἑαυτὸν φρεναπατᾶ» (Γαλ. στ΄ 3).

«Δεινότερος ὁ τῆς κενοδοξίας σκοπέλος», λέγει ὁ ἱερὸς Χρυσόστομος. Φράσσει τὸ δρόμο τῆς ἀρετῆς καὶ κλείνει τὴν πόρτα τοῦ παραδείσου. Ὁ παράδεισος ἀνήκει στοὺς «πτωχοὺς τῷ πνεύματι», στοὺς ταπεινοὺς.

## Ἵπουλο Ἐφεύρημα Τοῦ Οἰκουμενισμοῦ: Οἱ Διαθρησκειακὲς Συνάξεις Στοχεύουν στὴν Ἐξαφάνιση τῆς Ὁρθοδοξίας

ΠΗΓΗ: «Χριστιανική», Τεύχος 640, Γράφει ὁ π. Εὐστάθιος Κολλᾶς

*Οἱ διαθρησκειακὲς καὶ διαχριστιανικὲς συνδιασκέψεις, συναντήσεις, συνάξεις, συνέδρια, ἔχουν προκαλέσει καὶ προκαλοῦν ὡς θετικὲς ἐνέργειες, ποὺ συμβάλλουν στὴν συνεννόηση καὶ στὸν συντονισμὸ ἐνεργειῶν τῶν θρησκειῶν καὶ Ἐκκλησιῶν γιὰ τὴν ἀντιμετώπιση καίριων προβλημάτων πλανητικοῦ ἐνδιαφέροντος, ὅπως τῶν ναρκωτικῶν, τῆς μόλυνσης τοῦ περιβάλλοντος, τῆς τρομοκρατίας κ.ἄ. Ἄλλοι πάλι τὶς ἐντάσσουν στὰ σχέδια τῆς Νέας Τάξης, ποὺ προωθοῦν τὸν θρησκευτικὸ συγκρητισμὸ καὶ τὴν πολιτιστικὴ ἰσοπέδωση τῶν λαῶν.*



**Ἐ**ξω καὶ πέρα, παντελῶς ξένες πρὸς τὶς ἀρχές, τὸ ἔργο καὶ τὶς παραδόσεις τοῦ Θεόδοτου Συνοδικοῦ Συστήματος Διοίκησης τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας εἶναι οἱ Διαθρησκειακὲς Συνάξεις, Συνδιασκέψεις, Συναντήσεις, Διεθνῆ Συνέδρια. Εἶναι ἐπικίνδυνα δαιμονικὰ ἐφευρήματα, ποὺ καλλιεργοῦνται καὶ καθοδηγοῦνται ἀπὸ τὸν διεθνῆ Μασονικὸ Οἰκουμενισμὸ καὶ δυστυχῶς πλασάρονται μὲ Ἵπουλους καὶ καταχθόνιους τροχοὺς καὶ μέσα στοὺς κόλπους τῆς Ὁρθοδοξίας μας, ἀπὸ ἀνάξιους τῆς ἀποστολῆς τους ὑψηλόβαθμους ἐκπροσώπους τῆς Ὁρθόδοξης Ἐκκλησίας.

Συνάξεις, ἐκκλησιολογικά, σημαίνει συναθροίσεις πιστῶν σὲ ἱερούς χώρους (Ναὸ καὶ ἀλλοῦ), γιὰ νὰ τιμήσουν «μετ' ἐγκωμίων» κάποιον ἢ κάποια πρόσωπα, καὶ συγκεκριμένα συνέρονται σὲ μνημεσμαρτύρων τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Πίστεώς μας, ἀπ' ὅπου καὶ προήλθαν τὰ γνωστὰ Συναξάρια.

Οἱ Συνάξεις αὐτές, στὴ συνέχεια τῆς ζωῆς τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, ἐξελίχθησαν σὲ Τοπικὲς ἀρχικὰ «Συγκροτήσεις» Ἐπισκόπων καὶ Πρεσβυτέρων καὶ ἀργότερα σὲ Τοπικὲς Συνόδους, οἱ ὁποῖες ἠσχολοῦντο μὲ ἔριδες καὶ ταραχὲς περὶ τοῦ ἐορτασμοῦ τοῦ Πάσχα, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν ἐμφάνιση αἰρέσεων περὶ τὴν ὀρθὴ πίστη. Τελικῶς, ἀπὸ αὐτὲς τὶς «Συνάξεις, Συγκροτήσεις καὶ Τοπικὲς Συνόδους» καὶ ἀπὸ τὰ διάφορα θέματα ποὺ συζητοῦσαν, δημιουργήθηκαν περαιτέρω σοβαρὰ προβλήματα Ὁρθοδόξου Πίστεως, ὅποτε καὶ προέκυψαν ἀναγκαστικὰ οἱ «Οἰκουμενικὲς Σύνοδοι» γιὰ τὴν ἐπίλυσή τους.

Κατὰ συνέπειαν, συμπεραίνεται ἀβίαστα, ὅτι ὁσὰκις συνήρχοντο εἴτε οἱ πιστοὶ σὲ «Συνάξεις, Συγκροτήσεις», εἴτε οἱ Ἱερωμένοι σὲ «Τοπικὲς ἢ Οἰκουμενικὲς Συνόδους», εἶχαν συγκεκριμένα πάντοτε θέματα, γιὰ νὰ



συζητήσουν. Δηλαδή, είτε για να τιμήσουν μνήμες μαρτύρων της Πίστεως, είτε να επιλύσουν «έν αληθεία» θέματα: εκκλησιολογικά, δογματικά, διοικητικά και δικαιοσύνης.

Λοιπόν, τὸ «κακὸ συναπάντημα» τῶν «Διαθρησκειακῶν Συνάξεων» εἶναι ἐντελῶς ἄγνωστο στὸν ὀρθόδοξο χώρο, καὶ οἱ ἐναλλασσόμενες ὀνομασίες (πού μᾶς θυμίζουν περιπτώσεις ἀπατεῶνων), ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ διάφορα θέματα πού κάθε τόσο ἐφευρίσκονται γιὰ νὰ δικαιολογήσουν τὶς συναντήσεις τους, εἶναι δαμονικὲς ἐπινοήσεις τοῦ καταδικασμένου ὑποπτοῦ Οἰκουμενισμοῦ, πού, δυστυχῶς, τὰ σατανικὰ σχέδιά του προωθοῦνται ἀπὸ τὴ διεθνή Μασονία μέλη τῆς ὁποίας εἶναι, ὅπως φημιολογεῖται μετ' ἐπιτάσεως, καὶ Ἐπίσκοποι «ὑψηλοβαθμοί» τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας μας.

Ἐπειδὴ αὐτὲς οἱ ὑπουλες «Διαθρησκειακὲς Συνάξεις» στοχεύουν τελικὰ στὴν «ψευδοένωση τῶν Ἐκκλησιῶν», δηλαδή στὸν ἀπαράδεκτο Οἰκουμενισμό, καλούμεθα, Κλῆρος, πιστὸς Λαὸς καὶ Μοναστική Πολιτεία τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας μας νὰ συστρατευθοῦμε, γιὰ νὰ ἐμποδίσουμε τὴν προγραμματισμένη «Διαθρησκειακὴ Σύναξη τῶν Ἀθηνῶν», τὸν ἐρχόμενο Σεπτέμβριο, πού ὀργανώνεται ἀπὸ τὸν Ἀρχιεπίσκοπο κ. Χριστόδουλο, ἐν ἀγνοία τοῦ τιμίου πρεσβυτερίου καὶ τοῦ Ὁρθοδόξου πιστοῦ λαοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ. Τὸ Δ.Σ. τοῦ Ἱεροῦ Συνδέσμου Κληρικῶν Ἑλλάδος (ΙΣΚΕ) ἤδη ἔχει διαμηνύσει στὴν Ἱερὰ Σύνοδο, ὅτι θ' ἀντιδράσει δυναμικὰ σὲ αὐτὴ τὴν ὑπουλή καὶ ἀντορθόδοξη οἰκουμενιστικὴ μάλλον κίνηση.

Ἡ ἐπίσκεψη τοῦ μέγα αἰρεσιάρχη Πάπα στὴν ὀρθόδοξη χώρα μας ἀρκετὰ σοβαρὰ προβλήματά μας ἔχει δημιουργήσει, τὰ ὁποία οἱ ποιμένες τὰ διαπιστώνουμε καθημερινὰ καὶ δὲν γνωρίζουμε μέχρι πού θὰ φτάσουμε ἀκόμη, ἀν δὲν προσέξουμε πάρα πολύ.

Ἡ μελετωμένη «Διαθρησκειακὴ Σύναξη τῶν Ἀθηνῶν», μὲ θέμα τὸν δῆθεν «Ἀντιτρομοκρατικὸ Ἀγώνα», ἀν πραγματοποιηθεῖ, θὰ δημιουργήσει σύγχυση μεταξὺ ἀληθείας καὶ ψεύδους, λόγω τῶν συμπροσευχῶν πού γίνονται σὲ αὐτὲς τὶς περιπτώσεις. Αὐτὸ συνέβη, ἄλλωστε, καὶ μὲ τὴ «Διαθρησκειακὴ τῆς Προστασίας τοῦ Περιβάλλοντος», πού εἶχε καὶ ἔχει ὡς ἀποτέλεσμα, νὰ συνέρχονται στοὺς Ὁρθόδοξους Ναοὺς μας καὶ νὰ τοὺς βεβηλώνουν ἑτερόδοξοι καὶ ἀλλόθρησκοι «λύκοι βαρεῖς» γιὰ τὴν Ὁρθοδοξία μας.

Ὅχι, λοιπόν, ἄλλα ὑπουλά τεχνάσματα τῶν «Διαχριστιανικῶν καὶ Διαθρησκειακῶν Συνεδρίων τοῦ τύπου τῆς Ραβέννας». Δὲν προστατεύεται τὸ περιβάλλον, οὔτε καὶ ἀντιμετωπίζεται ἡ τρομοκρατία μὲ τὸν συρφετὸ τῶν «Διαχριστιανικῶν καὶ Διαθρησκειακῶν Συνεδρίων». Αὐτὸ εἶναι ἀποκλειστικὸ ἔργο τῆς Πολιτείας, στὸ ὁποῖο μποροῦμε νὰ βοηθήσουμε συμμετέχοντες κάτω ἀπὸ τὶς ὁδηγίες της καὶ ὄχι μὲ τὶς χωριστὲς καὶ ὑπο-

πτές ἐνέργειες «Διαχριστιανικῶν καὶ Διαθρησκειακῶν Συνεδρίων». Τὸ ἔργο καὶ τὸ περιεχόμενο τῶν Διαχριστιανικῶν Συνάξεων εἶναι δοτὸ, «δογματικὸ-ἐκκλησιολογικὸ-διοικητικὸ-δικαστικὸ». Ἐπομένως, τὰ ἐκτὸς τοῦτου εἶναι «ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ καὶ οἱ πονηροὶ ἐξολοθρευθήσονται ἐκ τοῦ λαοῦ».

Τὸν κόσμον ὡς σύνολο, καὶ αὐτὸ ἔχει ἀξία, θὰ τὸν σώσει μόνον ἡ Ὁρθοδοξία. Τὸ ὀρθόδοξο φρόνημα «πάσιν ἀνθρώποις» καὶ πρὸς αὐτὴ τὴν κατεύθυνση ἀκριβῶς ὀφείλουμε νὰ στρέψουμε ὅλη μας τὴν προσοχή. Δηλαδή νὰ συνεχίσουμε νὰ κάνουμε πράξη τῆ θεόδοτη ἐντολή: «Πορευθέντες μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη... διδάσκοντες αὐτοὺς τηρεῖν πάντα ὅσα ἐνετειλάμην ὑμῖν». Ὅλα τὰ παραπέρα, περὶ συμβουλίων καὶ διαβουλίων, εἶναι «προφάσεις ἐν ἀμαρτίαις».

Λοιπόν, Ἕλληνίδες καὶ Ἕλληνες Ὁρθόδοξοι Χριστιανοί, «ἀγιάσατε πόλεμον... ὅτι αἱ ἡμέραι πονηραὶ εἰσὶ».



**Εἶπε ὁ ἄββᾶς Ἡλίας:** «Εἶδα ἐγὼ κάποιον νὰ βάζει κάτω ἀπὸ τὴ μασχάλη ἓνα δοχεῖο κρασὶ καὶ γιὰ νὰ καταισχύνω τοὺς δαίμονες ὅτι ἦταν ἐντύπωση πλανερῆ (καὶ ὄχι πραγματικὴ), λέω στὸν ἀδελφὸ: «Κάνε ἀγάπη καὶ σήκωσε τὸ μου αὐτὸ. Καὶ μόλις σήκωσε τὸ ἐπανωφόρι του, ἀποδείχθηκε ὅτι δὲν ὑπῆρχε τίποτε κάτω ἀπὸ τὴ μασχάλη του. Αὐτὸ τὸ ἀνέφερα μὲ τὴν ἐννοια ὅτι καὶ μὲ τὰ ἴδια σας τὰ μάτια ἀν δεῖτε κάτι ἢ ἀκούσετε κάτι, μὴν τὸ πιστέψετε. Πολὺ περισσότερο νὰ προσέχετε τοὺς λογισμοὺς, τὶς σκέψεις καὶ τὰ νοήματα, γνωρίζοντας ὅτι οἱ δαίμονες τὰ σπέρνουν αὐτὰ στὴν ψυχὴ γιὰ νὰ τὴ διαστρέψουν, ὥστε νὰ σκέφτεται αὐτὰ πού τὴν βλάπτουν καὶ γιὰ νὰ ἀπομακρύνουν τὸν νοῦ ἀπὸ τὶς ἀμαρτίες μας καὶ ἀπὸ τὸν Θεό».

**Ἐπισκέφθηκε κάποιος ἀπὸ τοὺς Γέροντες τὸν ἄββᾶ Ἀχιλλὰ καὶ τὸν εἶδε νὰ φτύνει αἷμα ἀπὸ τὸ στόμα του καὶ τὸν ρωτᾷ:** «Τί εἶναι αὐτό, πάτερ;» Ἀποκρίθηκε ὁ Γέροντας: «Εἶναι λόγος ἀδελφοῦ πού μὲ λύπησε καὶ ἀγωνίστηκα νὰ μὴν τὸ ἀνακοινώσω. Παρακάλεσα τὸν Θεὸ νὰ μὲ ἀπαλλάξει ἀπ'αὐτὸ (δηλαδή ἀπὸ τὴν θύμηση τῶν λόγων τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ) καὶ ἔγινε ὁ λόγος αἷμα στὸ στόμα μου καὶ τὸν ἔφτυσα. Ἔτσι βρῆκα τὴν ἀνάπαυσή μου καὶ λησμόνησα τὴ λύπη μου ».

**Ἀπὸ Τὸ Μέγα Γεροντικὸν**



## WATCHFULNESS: KEEPING OUR FOCUS

by St. John Maximovich, Orthodox America, Vol. XIV, No. 2-3.  
Sept – Oct. 1993 (translated from Pravoslavnyaya Rus)

There was a king who had a wicked son. Having no hope that he would change for the better, the father condemned the son to death. He gave him a month to prepare.

The month went by, and the father summoned the son. To his surprise he saw that the young man was noticeably changed: his face was thin and drawn, and his whole body looked as if it had suffered.

“How is it that such a transformation has come over you, my son?” the father asked.

“My father and my lord,” replied the son, “how could I not change when each passing day brought me closer to death?”

“Good, my son,” remarked the king. “Since you have evidently come to your senses, I shall pardon you. However, you must maintain this vigilant disposition of soul for the rest of your life.”

“Father,” replied the son, “that’s impossible. How can I withstand the countless seductions and temptations?”

Then the king ordered that a vessel be brought, full of oil, and he told his son: “Take this vessel and carry it along all the streets of the city. Following you will be two soldiers with sharp swords. If you spill so much as a single drop they will cut off your head.”

The son obeyed. With light, careful steps, he walked along all the streets, the soldiers accompanying him, and he did not spill a drop.

When he returned to the castle, the father asked, “My son, what did you see as you were walking through the city?”

“I saw nothing.”

“What do you mean, ‘nothing?’” said the king. “Today is a holiday; you must have seen the booths with all kinds of trinkets, many carriages, people, animals ...”

“I didn’t notice any of that,” said the son. “All my attention was focused on the oil in the vessel. I was afraid to spill a drop and thereby lose my life.”

“Quite right, my son,” said the king. “Keep this lesson in mind for the rest of your life. Be as vigilant over your soul as you were today over the oil in the vessel. Turn your thoughts away from what will soon pass away, and keep them focused on what is eternal. You will be followed not by armed soldiers but by death to which we are brought closer every day. Be very careful to guard your soul from all ruinous temptations.”

The son obeyed his father, and lived happily.

### FOCUS ON THE ETERNAL

Just as a basic concern is to be careful of anything that might be harmful to our physical health, so our spiritual concern

should watch out for anything that might harm our spiritual life and the work of faith and salvation.

Therefore, carefully and attentively assess your inner impulses: are they from God or from the spirit of evil? Beware of temptations from this world and from worldly people; beware of hidden inner temptations that come from the spirit of indifference and carelessness in prayer, from the waning of Christian love.

If we turn our attention to our mind, we notice a torrent of successive thoughts and ideas. This torrent is uninterrupted; it is racing everywhere and at all times: at home, in church, at work, when we read, when we converse.

“It is usually called thinking,” writes Bishop Theophan the Recluse, “But in fact it is a disturbance of the mind, a scattering, a lack of concentration and attention.”

The same happens with the heart. Have you ever observed the life of the heart? Try it even for a short time and see what you find. Something unpleasant happens, and you get irritated; some misfortune occurs, and you pity yourself; you see someone whom you dislike, and animosity wells up within you; you meet one of your equals who has now outdistanced you on the social scale, and you begin to envy him; you think of your talents and capabilities, and you begin to grow proud.

And all of this can pass through the heart in a matter of minutes. For this reason one ascetic, who was extremely attentive to himself, was quite right in saying that “man’s heart is filled with poisonous serpents. Only the hearts of saints are free from these serpents, the passions.”

But such freedom is attained only through a long and difficult process of self-knowledge, working on oneself and being vigilant toward one’s inner life, i.e., the soul.

Be careful. Watch out for your soul! Turn your thoughts away from what will soon pass away and turn them toward what is eternal. Here you will find the happiness that your soul seeks, that your heart thirsts for.



The power of the Word makes the priest reverend and honorable, as he is set apart by the newness (*καινότης, kainotis*) of the blessing from fellowship (*κοινωνία, koinotis*) with the multitude. And this the priest does without being in any way changed in body or form. But while to outward appearance he is all the time what he was, yet his invisible soul is favorably transformed by an unseen power and grace.”

St Gregory of Nyssa

## A KING AND HIS FOUR WIVES

Anonymous, taken from <http://www.home.it.net.au/~jgrapsas/>

Once upon a time there was a rich King who had four wives. Of all of his wives, he loved the 4th wife most of all, and adorned her with rich robes, the finest perfumes and treated her to the most sumptuous of delicacies. He gave her nothing but the best.

He also loved the 3rd wife very much and was always showing her off to neighboring princes, ambassadors, and kingdoms. However, he feared that one day she would leave him for another.

He also loved his 2nd wife. She was his confidant and was always kind, considerate and patient with him. Whenever the King faced a problem, he could confide in her, and she would help him get through the difficult times.

The King's 1st wife was a very loyal partner and had made great contributions in maintaining his wealth and kingdom. However, he did not love the first wife. Although she loved him deeply and had done so much for him, he hardly took notice of her.

One day, the King fell ill and he knew his time was short. He thought of his luxurious life and wondered, "I now have four wives with me, but when I die, I'll be all alone." Thus, he asked the 4th wife, "I have loved you the most, endowed you with the finest clothing and showered great care over you. Now that I'm dying, will you follow me and keep me company?" "No way!", replied the 4th wife, and she walked away without another word. Her answer cut like a sharp knife right into his heart.

The sad King then asked the 3rd wife, "I have loved you all my life. Now that I'm dying, will you follow me and keep me company?" "No!", replied the 3rd wife. "Life is too good! When you die, I'm going to remarry!" His heart sank and turned cold.

He then asked the 2nd wife, "I have always turned to you for help and you've always been there for me. When I die, will you follow me and keep me company?" "I'm sorry, I can't help you out this time!", replied the 2nd wife. "At the very most, I can only send you to your grave." Her answer came like a bolt of lightning, and the King was devastated.

Then a quiet voice called out: "I'll leave with you and follow you no matter where you go." The King looked up, and there was his first wife. She was so weak and frail, suffering from malnutrition and neglect, as she did. Suddenly the magnitude of his folly brought deep grief into his heart. Greatly distressed, the King said, "What a fool I am. I should have taken much better care of you while I still had the chance!"

In truth, we all have 4 wives in our lives:

Our 4th wife is our body. No matter how much time and effort we put into keeping it healthy, lavishing it with comfort and making it look good, at the painful hour of death, when we are separated from it, it will go into the grave where it is food for the worms.

Our 3rd wife is our possessions, status and wealth. When we die, none of it will follow us into the grave, it will all go to others. . . 'Naked have you come into the world and naked will you leave it'.

Our 2nd wife is our family and friends. No matter how much they have been there for us, the furthest they can stay by us, in this life, is up to the grave.

And our 1st wife is our immortal soul. So often neglected in pursuit of comfort, temporal happiness, wealth, power and pleasures of the world. However, it is our soul that we will take with us when our dead body is laid in the grave...it is the only thing that will follow us wherever we go. So cultivate, strengthen, and cherish it now, for it shall be our naked soul that shall stand before the frightening Throne of God to be judged and continue with us throughout all of Eternity.

REMEMBER: When the world pushes you to your knees... you are in the perfect position to pray!



**D**o not violate the fast on Wednesday and Friday. This fast is commanded by the Church and is well explained. If you have ever in your life violated this fast, pray to God that He forgives you and sin no more.

The holy and pious men do not consider themselves dispensed from this fast either during a journey, much less even in sickness. St. Pachomius met some men carrying a corpse and he saw two angels in the funeral procession. He prayed to God to reveal to him the mystery of the presence of the angels at the burial of this man. What good did this man do that the holy angels of God accompanied him in procession to the grave? According to God's Providence, both angels approached Pachomius and, in this manner, explained to him: "One of the angels is the angel of Wednesday and the other is the angel of Friday.

Seeing how this man always, even until death, fasted on Wednesdays and Fridays so we are honorably accompanying his body. As he, until death, kept the fast, so we are glorifying him."

St Nikolai Velimirovich (+1956)

## THE APOSTOLIC DIDACHE, OR TEACHINGS OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES (PART 4)

*Editor's Note: Continuing from our three previous issues, we present the last part (part IV) of the Apostolic Didache.*

### TEACHING 13

- 13:1 But every true prophet who is willing to dwell among you is worthy of his meat,  
 13:2 likewise a true teacher is himself worthy of his meat, even as is a labourer.  
 13:3 Thou shalt, therefore, take the firstfruits of every produce of the wine-press and threshing-floor, of oxen and sheep, and shalt give it to the prophets, for they are your chief priests;  
 13:4 but if ye have not a prophet, give it unto the poor.  
 13:5 If thou makest a feast, take and give the firstfruits according to the commandment;  
 13:6 in like manner when thou openest a jar of wine or of oil, take the firstfruits and give it to the prophets;  
 13:7 take also the firstfruits of money, of clothes, and of every possession, as it shall seem good unto thee, and give it according to the commandment.

### TEACHING 14

- 14:1 But on the Lord's day, after that ye have assembled together, break bread and give thanks, having in addition confessed your sins, that your sacrifice may be pure.  
 14:2 But let not any one who hath a quarrel with his companion join with you, until they be reconciled, that your sacrifice may not be polluted,  
 14:3 for it is that which is spoken of by the Lord. In every place and time offer unto me a pure sacrifice, for I am a great King, saith the Lord, and my name is wonderful among the Gentiles.

### TEACHING 15

- 15:1 Elect, therefore, for yourselves bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, men who are meek and not covetous, and true and approved, for they perform for you the service of prophets and teachers.  
 15:2 Do not, therefore, despise them, for they are those who are honoured among you, together with the prophets and teachers.  
 15:3 Rebuke one another, not in wrath but peaceably, as ye have commandment in the Gospel; and, but let no one speak to any one who walketh disorderly with regard to his neighbour, neither let him be heard by you until he repent.  
 15:4 But your prayers and your almsgivings and all your deeds so do, as ye have commandment in the Gospel of our Lord.

### TEACHING 16

- 16:1 Watch concerning your life; let not your lamps be quenched or your loins be loosed, but be ye ready, for ye know not the hour at which our Lord cometh.  
 16:2 But be ye gathered together frequently, seeking what is suitable for your souls; for the whole time of your faith shall profit you not, unless ye be found perfect in the last time.  
 16:3 For in the last days false prophets and seducers shall be multiplied, and the sheep shall be turned into wolves, and love shall be turned into hate;  
 16:4 and because iniquity aboundeth they shall hate each other, and persecute each other, and deliver each other up; and then shall the Deceiver of the world appear as the Son of God, and shall do signs and wonders, and the earth shall be delivered into his hands; and he shall do unlawful things, such as have never happened since the beginning of the world.  
 16:5 Then shall the creation of man come to the fiery trial of proof, and many shall be offended and shall perish; but they who remain in their faith shall be saved by the rock of offence itself.  
 16:6 And then shall appear the signs of the truth; first the sign of the appearance in heaven, then the sign of the sound of the trumpet, and thirdly the resurrection of the dead  
 16:7 -- not of all, but as it has been said, The Lord shall come and all his saints with him;  
 16:8 then shall the world behold the Lord coming on the clouds of heaven.



### DO IT ANYWAY...

*Anonumous*

- People are often unreasonable, illogical, and self-centered. Forgive them anyway.  
 If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish ulterior motives. Be kind anyway.  
 If you are successful, you'll win some false friends and some true enemies. Succeed anyway.  
 If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you. Be honest and frank anyway.  
 What you have spent years building might be destroyed overnight. Build anyway.  
 If you find serenity and happiness, others may be jealous. Be happy anyway.  
 The good you do today will often be forgotten tomorrow. Do good anyway.  
 Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough. Give the world the best you have anyway.  
 You see, in the final analysis, it's between you and God. It was never between you and the others anyway...



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CHRIST IS RISEN!

The views expressed are those of the authors, and do not necessarily represent the views of the Editor or the Brotherhood of St. POIMEN

## EXCERPTS OF A LETTER FROM A PRISONER IN A PENITENTIARY

*Anonymous*

It is indeed a glorious and wonderful day to celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Christ Jesus. The sun is shining and warmth is over the earth in my neck of the woods. As St. Seraphim says, "God is a Fire that warms and kindles the heart and inward parts." And, I feel this warmth, Father.

For the past few weeks I've felt a change come over me; I've been attentive to reading more than usual. I've grown quiet, so much so that my Block officer stopped at my cell to ask me if I'm "okay." Also some of my friends here have also asked me if I'm "okay." They miss me at the "chow" hall. I haven't been eating as much. I don't know what's happening, but I just feel the need for quiet and reflection and holy reading. I'm now re-reading *The Little Russian Philokalia*, Vol. I (St. Seraphim) you sent. What a wonderful book! And, I'm steeped in *Abba Dorotheos*. I've stepped aside from the Buddhist books. They were helpful to a degree, but they miss the mark -- there's no Spirit of holiness to be found in those books.

The articles on the Saints, Elders, Bishops, etc. are very spiritually uplifting and edifying. I've read where St. Justin Popovic said that if a Christian reads and studies the lives of the Saints, that person will grow in holiness. He says the lives of the Saints are "applied dogmatic theology." They show us how to live God's

word, how the Grace of God is applied to the lives of mortal men. "They bear witness to the Life *in* Christ;" and "are said to be the continuation of the Life *of* Christ on earth." Christ's life is continued through the Saints. This is something I never thought of before. I knew that Saints were an example of how to live a Godly life on earth, but I never gave much credence to reading and studying their lives, individually. Or, that a change in my own life could be perfected by reading and reflecting on *their* lives. I always considered their manner of life far out of reach -- that's what made them "Saints." Yet, God's word calls us *all* to become Saints. It never occurred to me that I would need examples of how that's done. Then, it came to my mind that the Apostle Paul said, "Be imitators of me as I imitate Christ." *Ah!* a connection! We must imitate those who have imitated Christ. Who was it that said imitation is the greatest form of flattery? But we don't look to flatter anyone, I know. We strive for that perfection which is only found in Christ.

I'm beginning to see that many people who call themselves "Christians" today are sorely lacking in understanding about what's available for them. They are content with the crumbs of "prosperity," "health," "blessings," as preached by most "evangelical preachers;" when they *could* be eating at the Banquet table, getting the *full meal* offered by Christ. I'm one who was content with getting the crumbs, not realizing that a whole banquet was available to me.

**I feel that the Banquet exists for me in the Orthodox Church.  
I need to get there soon!**

# Orthodox Heritage

So therefore, brethren, persevere, and clinch the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or by our epistle [2 Thess. 2:15]

[HTTP://WWW.ORTHODOXHHERITAGE.ORG](http://www.OrthodoxHeritage.org)

Ἄρα οὖν, ἀδελφοί, στήκετε, καὶ κρατεῖτε τὰς παραδόσεις ἃς ἐδιδάχθητε εἴτε διὰ λόγου εἴτε δι' ἐπιστολῆς ἡμῶν [Θεσσ. Β' 2:15]

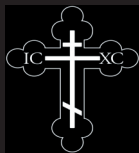
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## WOMAN AS A SYMBOL OF CHRIST

By Bishop Nikolai Velimirovic, Orthodox America Issue 107, Vol XI, No. 7

Can you believe that Christ the Saviour portrayed Himself in the guise of a woman in two of His parables? One is that of the woman who took three measures of flour and made dough. But first let us speak of the other one where the Lord tells us about the woman who had ten drachmas and lost one. These are the most mysterious of all the Saviour's parables. As the parable of the lost drachma is short, we quote it in full.

### The Ten Drachmas

*Or what woman, having ten drachmas, if she loses one, does not light a candle and sweep the house and look diligently till she finds it? And after she has found it, she calls in her friends and neighbors and says, Rejoice with me, for I have found the drachma that I lost* (Luke 15:8-9).

The mystery of the universe is revealed in this simple parable. If we take it literally, it evokes bewilderment. The woman lost only one drachma. Even ten drachmas do not represent a great sum; in fact, a woman who has only ten drachmas must be very poor indeed. Let us assume, first of all, that the finding of the lost drachma meant a great gain for her. Yet it still presents a paradox, for how is it that if she is such a poor woman she lights lamps, sweeps the house and calls in all her friends and neighbors to share her joy. And all because of one drachma! Such a waste of time -- lighting a candle and setting the house in order first of all! Furthermore, if she invites her neighbors, she is obliged, according to Eastern custom, to offer them something to eat and drink, no small expense for a poor woman. To fail to do so would be to ignore an unalterable custom.

Another important point to note is that she did not invite only one woman to whom she might have offered sweets, which would not have involved great expense. But she invited many friends and neighbors, and even if she entertained them modestly, the expense would far exceed the value of the drachma she had found. Why then should she seek the drachma so diligently and rejoice at finding it, only to lose it again in another way? If we try to understand this parable in its literal sense, it does not fit into the frame of everyday life, but leaves the impression of something exaggerated and incomprehensible. So let us try to discover its mystical or hidden meaning. Who is the woman? And why is it a woman and not a man, when a man is more likely to lose money in the ordinary routine of life? Whose house is it that she sweeps and fills with light? Who are her friends and neighbors? If we look for the spiritual instead of the literal meaning of the parable, we shall find the answers to those questions. The Lord said, Seek and ye shall find.

The woman represents Jesus Christ Himself, the Son of God. The ten drachmas are His. It is He Who has lost one of them and sets out to look for it. The drachmas are not coins of gold or silver. According to Orthodox theologians, the number ten represents fullness. The nine unlost drachmas are the nine orders of angels. The number of angels is beyond the grasp of mortals, for it exceeds our power of calculation. The lost drachma represents mankind in its entirety. Therefore Christ the Saviour came down from heaven to earth, to His house, and lit a candle, the light of the knowledge of Himself. He cleaned out the house -- that is, He purified the world of diabolic impurity -- and found the lost drachma, erring and lost humanity. Then He called

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his friends and neighbors (after His glorious Resurrection and Ascension), that is to say, all the countless hosts of the cherubim and seraphim, angels and archangels, and revealed to them His great joy. Rejoice with Me. I have found the lost drachma! That means: I have found men to fill the void in the Kingdom of Heaven, caused by the fall of the proud angels who apostasized from God. At the end of time the number of these found and saved souls will have grown to billions, or, in the language of Scripture, will be as countless as the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore.

Our Lord described Himself as a woman because women are more careful than men in looking after property, in keeping the house in order, and in receiving guests. If this short parable, which consists of only two sentences, is explained in this way, whose heart will not tremble? for it contains the whole tragedy of the world, visible and invisible. It explains why the Son of God came to earth. It sheds a bright ray of light on the history of mankind and the tragedy of each individual's existence. It confronts us with an urgent decision, because our life is swiftly passing -- a decision as to whether we want to be the lost drachma found by Christ or not. Christ is looking for us. Are we going to hide from him, or let ourselves be found by Him before death hides us from Him, from the world, and from life?

It is a vital question and it lies within our will to accept or reject Him. After death it will cease to be an open question, and then no one will expect an answer from us.

### Three Measures of Flour

And again Jesus said, *To what shall I compare the Kingdom of God? It is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour till the whole was leavened* (Luke 13:20-21).

This is another of Christ's mysterious parables that many find hard to understand. The actual theme taken from everyday life is simple and clear. From the earliest times housewives have been bakers; they take flour, put it in bowls, prepare leaven,

knead the dough and bake it. It has been the daily task of the housewife in East and West for thousands of years. But it occurred to no one to take this simple work as a figure or symbol of the Kingdom of God. Only the Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom nothing was too simple or unimportant, took this familiar chore and used it to explain something stupendous and extraordinary. He could picture to Himself His own mother at work.

I will put the following questions to the reader of the Gospel. Why did Christ take woman as His example, instead of man, when men have been bakers throughout the centuries? And why the leaven, when unleavened bread was also commonly used? And why did the woman take three measures, and not one or two or four? Finally, what connection or similarity is there between the reign of God and the kitchen work of a housewife?

If these questions cannot be answered, how can we understand the parable? Yet to answer them without a spiritual key would only lead to further difficulties. All the parables deal with the superficial, but their real meaning lies deep down. They appeal to the eye and seem obvious enough, but they concern the spirit and the spiritual.

This parable has a twofold spiritual interpretation. The first has to do with the three principal races of mankind, the second with the three main faculties or powers of the human soul. In brief, what is outstanding and unusual in this parable is the historical and personal process of man's salvation.

After the Great Flood, there stemmed from the sons of Noah -- Shem, Ham, and Japheth -- three races of mankind, the Shemites, Hamites, and Japhethites. These are the three measures of flour into which Christ puts His heavenly leaven, the Holy Spirit. That means He came as Messiah and Saviour to all the races and nations of mankind without exception. Just as with leaven a woman can transform natural flour into bread, so Christ, through the Holy Spirit, transforms natural



men into the children of God, into immortal inhabitants of the Heavenly Kingdom. That is why, according to Orthodox teaching, holy men are called earthly angels or heavenly men, because, being "leavened" by the Holy Spirit, they are no longer common flour or unleavened biscuits that lie on the earth, but they are leavened bread that has risen. According to the Bible, unleavened bread was the bread of slaves, while leavened bread was for free men, God's children. So for that reason, the Orthodox Church uses leavened bread at Holy Communion. The process of leavening began on that first Trinity Sunday or Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended from heaven onto the apostles. From that day forth this process has continued down to the present day, and it will continue till the end of time when all will be leavened. This, then, is the historical interpretation of the enigmatic parable about the woman baker.

The second interpretation is psychological and personal, and concerns the three main faculties or powers of the human soul: intellect, heart, and will, or, in other words, the power to think, the power to feel, and the power to act. These are the three unseen measures of the soul of the inner man. These three powers either remain totally unleavened, like the bread of slaves, or they are leavened with the leaven of malice and hypocrisy. Therefore, Christ told His disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees which is hypocrisy, because that is the worldly and human leaven, which weakens all the powers of the soul and leaves it crippled and sick. But Christ the Saviour brought to earth a new leaven to raise the powers of the soul. Those who receive this new heavenly leaven through Baptism in the name of the Holy Trinity are called the sons and daughters of God, the heirs of the eternal Kingdom. They will not die, for even when they leave the body, they will be alive and will live for ever. This heavenly leaven fills them with the light of reason, the warmth of divine love, and the glory of good works. All three powers of the soul grow together in harmony, and ascend to heaven, to perfection. As the Lord said, Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Woman has been taken as a paragon and not man, and Christ has compared Himself to a woman baker, because woman, as wife and mother, prepares bread for the family in a loving manner, whereas the man baker bakes bread to sell for gain. Everything that Christ has done for mankind was done out of pure love, and therefore He compares Himself to a woman baker. This is the second interpretation, but both interpretations of this parable are correct. The historical and the psychological meaning derived from this simple parable is like a branching oak that grows out of an acorn, for it is truly majestic in its historical breadth and profound in its psychological depth.

## ON SIN AND CONFESSION

*By Blessed Elder Cleopa of Sihastria (+1998)*

If someone wants to sin, he sins; if he does not want to sin, he doesn't. The devil only puts the ideas in our minds, so if someone is foolish and deceived, he commits sin. Can you say on the day of judgment, 'Lord, the devil took me into the bar, the devil made me sin with that woman, the devil made me a drunkard, the devil made me have an abortion, etc.' If so, then the devil will say, 'Lord show me a witness who saw me drag this person into a bar, or into the fornication or murder'... However, through frequent confession, the devil's nest is destroyed.

The first benefit of frequent confession is that sin does not have time to put down roots in us, and the nest which the devil seeks to weave in us is destroyed. The devil, seeing that you confess often, that you repent, pray, and disclose his wiles, says, 'It is useless for me to work on him since he is constantly going to the priest and confessing, receiving absolution, and thus I gain nothing. It is better for me to go to those who are lazy spiritually, who don't care about their salvation, who confess rarely, if at all, because those do not work against me as this one does!' When someone confesses often, he is more aware of his sins and does not become careless about them. When he has not confessed for a few days, he says, 'What have I been doing!' Immediately he remembers. But when he lets a month or two, or maybe a year go by, how can he remember all his sins?

When someone confesses often, all he has to do is remember his shame before his spiritual father and the penance that he will surely be given, and he will do all he can to keep himself from sin.

Man has so much strength to use against sin; even if all the devils from hell were to come, they would be powerless to do anything to him if he would just oppose sin. This strength to overcome the temptation of the devils is given to each of us by God at the time of our baptism. If man did not have this strength to oppose sin, then hell would not exist to punish sin.

In God's immeasurable goodness, He knows our weaknesses and that we transgress both willingly and unwillingly, in knowledge and in ignorance. There is not a single moment in which we do not err before the Lord. But, no one knows the nature of man better than God, for He created us out of nothing.

When we turn to Him with tears, with a sorrowful heart, and with a pure confession, He forgives us. Whoever has more serious sins has to have a penance, for God is always ready to receive us and forgive us since we are His creation.

## ON THE HERESY OF REINCARNATION

*By Hieromonk Seraphim (Rose), "The Soul After Death", St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, Platina, CA, 1980*

Among the occult ideas which are now being widely discussed and sometimes accepted by those who have "out-of-body" and "after-death" experiences, and even by some scientists, is the idea of reincarnation: the soul after death does not undergo the Particular Judgment and then dwell in heaven or hell awaiting the resurrection of the body and the Last Judgment, but (evidently after a longer or shorter stay on the "astral plane") comes back to earth and occupies a new body, whether of a beast or of another man.

This idea was widespread in pagan antiquity in the West, before it was replaced by Christian ideas; but its spread today is largely owing to the influence of Hinduism and Buddhism, where it is commonly accepted. Today the idea is usually "humanized", in that people assume their "previous lives" were as men, whereas the more common idea both among Hindus and Buddhists and among ancient Greeks and Romans is that it is rather rare to achieve "incarnation" as a man, and that most of today's "incarnations", are as beasts, insects, and even plants.

Those who believe in this idea say that it accounts for all of the many "injustices" of earthly life, as well as for seemingly unexplainable phobias: if one is born blind, or in a condition of poverty, it is as a just reward for one's actions in a "previous life" (or, as Hindus and Buddhists say, because of one's "bad karma"); if one is afraid of water, it is because one drowned in a "previous existence."

Believers in reincarnation do not have any very thorough philosophy of the origin and destination of the soul, nor any convincing proofs to support their theory; its main attractions are the superficial ones of seeming to provide "justice" on earth, of explaining some p s y c h i c mysteries, and of providing some semblance of "immortality" for those who do not accept this on Christian grounds.

On deeper reflection, however, the theory of reincarnation offers no real explanation of injustice at all: if one suffers in this life for sins and mistakes in another lifetime which one cannot remember, and for which (if one was "previously" a beast) one cannot even be held responsible, and if (according to Buddhist teaching) there is even no "self" that survives from one "incarnation" to the next, and one's past mistakes were literally someone else's--then there is no recognizable justice at all, but only a blind suffering of evils whose origin is not to be traced out. The Christian teaching of the fall of Adam, which is the origin of all the world's evils, offers a much better explanation of injustices in the world; and the Christian revelation of God's perfect justice in His judgment of men for eternal life in heaven or hell renders unnecessary and trivial the idea of attaining "justice" through successive "incarnations" in this world.

In recent decades the idea of reincarnation has achieved a remarkable popularity in the Western world, and there have been numerous cases suggesting the "remembrance" of "past lives"; many people also return from "out-of-body" experiences believing that these experiences suggest or instill the idea of reincarnation. What are we to think of these cases?

Very few of these cases, it should be noted, offer "proof" that is any more than vaguely circumstantial, and could easily be the product of simple imagination: a child is born with a mark on his neck, and subsequently "remembers" that he was hanged as a horse thief in a "previous life"; a person fears heights, and then "remembers" that he died by falling in his "past" life, and the like. The natural human tendency of fantasy renders such cases useless as "proof" of reincarnation.

In many cases, however, such "previous lives" have been discovered by a hypnotic technique known as "regressive hypnosis," which has in many cases given striking results in the recall of events long forgotten by the conscious mind, even as far back as infancy. The hypnotist brings a person "back" to infancy, and then asks: "What about before that?" Often, in such cases, a person will "remember" his "death" or even a whole different lifetime; what are we to think of such memories?

Well-trained hypnotists themselves will admit the pitfalls of "regressive hypnosis." Dr. Arthur C. Hastings, a California specialist in the psychology of communication, notes that "the most obvious thing that happens under hypnosis is that the person is extremely compliant. If you ask them to go to a past life, and they don't have a past life, they will invent one for you!"

But what of those cases, publicized widely of late, when there is "objective proof" of one's "previous life"--when a person "remembers" details of time and places he could not possibly have known by himself, and which can be checked by historical documents?

Such cases seem very convincing to those already inclined to believe in reincarnation; but this kind of "proof" is not different from the standard information provided by the "spirits" at séances (which can also be of a very striking kind), and there is no reason to suppose that the source is different. If the "spirits" at séances are quite clearly demons, then the information on one's "previous lives" can also be supplied by demons. The aim in both cases is the same: to confuse men with a dazzling display of seemingly "supernatural" knowledge, and thus to deceive them concerning the true nature of life after death and leave them spiritually unprepared for it.

The early Christian Church fought the idea of reincarnation, which entered the Christian world through Eastern teachings such as those of the Manicheans. Origen's false teaching of the "pre-existence of souls" was closely related to these teachings, and at the Fifth Ecumenical Council in Constantinople in 553, it was strongly condemned and its followers anathema-

*[Cont'd on page 9]*

## Αγιότητας, Ἀρετή, Ἀγώνας

ΠΗΓΗ: “Γέροντας Ἐφραίμ Κατουνακιώτης”, Ἐκδοση Ἀπὸ Τὸ Περιβόλι τῆς Παναγίας, [www.toperivoli.gr](http://www.toperivoli.gr)



**Ἀ**νθρωπος ὁ ὁποῖος ἐπαινεῖ τὸν πλησίον του καὶ κατακρίνει τὸν ἑαυτό του, φθάνει σὲ μέτρα ἀγιότητας. Ἄν ζητᾶς ἐσὺ ἀπὸ τὸν ἄλλον, ἐπειδὴ σὲ λύπησε, νὰ σοῦ βάλει μετάνοια, δὲν εἶσαι καλά, δὲν εἶσαι ἐντάξει, δὲν βαδίζεις στὸ δρόμο τῆς καλογορευτικῆς.

Φθάσαμε, πατέρες, σ’ ἓνα τέτοιο σημεῖο, πὸν μπορῶ νὰ πῶ ὅτι, ὅταν ἤμασταν κοσμικοί, ἤμασταν καλύτε-

ροι. Τώρα δὲν σηκώνουμε λόγο.

Τὰ πατερικὰ βιβλία λένε ὅτι ὁ ἄββας Νισθερῶ ἀπέκτησε φήμη ἀγίου ἀνδρός. Καὶ πῆγε ἄλλος καὶ τοῦ λέει: «Τί ἀρετὴ ἔκανες, πάτερ, κι ἔφθασες σ’ αὐτὰ τὰ μέτρα;» Λέει: «Ἀφότου μπῆκα στὸ μοναστήρι, εἶπα, ἐγὼ καὶ τὸ γαῖδοῦρι ἓνα εἴμαστε. Ὅσο μιλάει τὸ γαῖδοῦρι, ὅταν τὸ δέρνεις, τόσο θὰ μιλήσω κι ἐγώ». Αὐτὸ ἦταν τὸ θεμέλιο, ὅτι καὶ νὰ τὸν δείρουνε, «εὐλόγησον». Τώρα ἐμεῖς φθάσαμε στὸ σημεῖο πὸν δὲν σηκώνουμε λόγο πιά.

Ὁ ἄνθρωπος, ἐφόσον ζεῖ, πρέπει πάντοτε νὰ ἀγωνίζεται. Καὶ ὁ πρῶτος ἀγώνας εἶναι νὰ νικήσει τὸν ἑαυτό του. Ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ κυριότερος ἐχθρὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου δὲν εἶναι ὁ διάβολος, ὄχι. Εἶναι ὁ ἴδιος ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἰς τὸν ἑαυτό του ἐπίβουλος. Καὶ τοῦτο διότι δὲν ἀκούει τὸν ἄλλον, ἀκούει τί τοῦ λέει ὁ λογισμὸς του. Ἐνῶ ἔχουμε τόσοι ἀγίους Πατέρες νὰ τοὺς μιμηθοῦμε διαβάζοντας τὰ συγγράματά τους, ἐντούτοις ὅμως τὸ ἐγὼ μας κυριεύει πολλές φορές. Ὅταν ὁ ἄνθρωπος νικήσει τὸν ἑαυτό του, εἶναι ὁ μεγαλύτερος μεγαλομάρτυρας καὶ τροπαιοφόρος καὶ νικηφόρος ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ!...

...Γι’ αὐτὸ πολλές φορές, νὰ σᾶς πῶ, πατέρες, ἐφοβήθηκα τὴν κρίση τοῦ Θεοῦ. Εἶναι σύμφωνος ὁ Θεὸς μὲ μένανε ἢ μήπως ἀλλάζει ὁ Θεός; «Ἐμνήσθη τῶν κριμάτων σου καὶ παρεκλήθη» (Ψάλμ. 118,12· 52). Ἔτσι εἶναι.

Ὁ Σταυρὸς δὲν λείπει. Γιατί; Γιατί ἐφ’ ὅσον κι ὁ ἀρχηγὸς μας ἀνέβηκε στὸ Σταυρὸ, κι ἐμεῖς θ’ ἀνεβοῦμε, νὰ ποῦμε. Ἀλλὰ ἀπ’ τὴ μία πλευρὰ εἶναι γλυκὺς καὶ ἐλαφρὸς, ἀπ’ τὴν ἄλλη μεριά εἶναι πικρὸς καὶ βαρὺς. Κατὰ τὴν προαίρεσή μας. Ἄν πάρεις μὲ ἀγάπη τὸν Σταυ-

ρὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, εἶναι πολὺ ἐλαφρὸς, εἶναι σφουγγάρι, φελλός. Ἄν τὸ πάρεις, δηλαδή, ἀπὸ τὴν ἄλλη πλευρὰ, τότες εἶναι βαρὺς καὶ ἀσήκωτος.

Γι’ αὐτὸ, καὶ μένα ἡ πείρα αὐτὸ μὲ δίδαξε. Τὸ θέλημα τοῦ Θεοῦ νὰ γίνε. Ἦταν ἀπ’ τὸ Θεὸ ἔτσι. Καὶ εἰρηνεύεις, νὰ ποῦμε. Ἄν πεῖς μὰ γιατί ἐτοῦτο, ἐκεῖνο, δὲν εἰρηνεύεις, δὲν εἰρηνεύεις. Δὲν ἦταν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ Θεοῦ νὰ φύγω τὴν Κυριακή, ἦταν τὴ Δευτέρα. Δὲν ἤθελε ὁ Θεὸς τὴν Τρίτη, ἤθελε νὰ φύγω τὴν Τετάρτη. Ἔε, ὁ Θεὸς ἔτσι τὰ ἔφερε. Ἄν τὰ πάρεις ἀπ’ τὴν ἄλλη πλευρὰ μὲ τὴν κρίση τὴ δική σου, θὰ σφάλεις καὶ μισθὸν δὲν ἔχεις. Μισθὸν δὲν ἔχεις!

Μέσα σου νὰ βράζει ἡ χαρὰ, νὰ μὴ φαίνεται μέσα σου νὰ βράζει ἡ λύπη, ἡ κόλαση ἀλλὰ μὴν τὸ ἐξωτερικεύεις. Αὐτὸς εἶναι ὁ καλόγηρος. Εἰδάλως, ἐσὺ κι ἐγὼ ἐδῶ, καὶ νὰ προσευχόμεθα· νὰ μὴ ἀκούει ὁ ἓνας τὸν ἄλλον. Αὐτὸ εἶναι κατὰ Θεόν. Ἄμα τὸ ἐξωτερικεύεις, εἴτε ὑπερηφάνεια θὰ σὲ πιάσει, ἢ... θὰ τὸ χάσεις.

Γι’ αὐτὸ λέω ὅτι, ὅπου κι ἂν εὑρεθῆ ὁ ἄνθρωπος, νὰ μὴ ἀπελπίζεται. Νὰ μὴ τὰ χάνει, νὰ μὴ τὰ σαστίζει. Γιὰ τὸν ἄλφα καὶ τὸν βῆτα λόγο, ὁ Θεὸς γνωρίζει, σὲ δοκιμάζει. Σὲ δοκιμάζει: Μπορεῖς νὰ κρατήσεις αὐτὴν τὴ θλίψη; Μπορῶ. Θὰ σοῦ δώσω χάρισμα. Δὲν μπορεῖς; Κι αὐτὸ πού σου ἔδωσα, θὰ τὸ ἀφαιρέσω. Ἐγὼ δὲν θέλω δειλοὺς ἀνθρώπους. Ὅχι ὅπως ἔστειλε ὁ Μωϋσῆς τοὺς κατασκόπους, λέει: «Ἐωράκαμεν υἱοὺς γιγάντων καὶ ἤμεν ἐνώπιον αὐτῶν ὡσεὶ ἀκρίδες» (Ἀριθ. 13,34). Ἔτσι; Ναι, ἀλλὰ ποιὸς τὸ λέει αὐτό; Ποιὸς τὸ λέει; «Δειλὸς ἀποσταλεῖς εἰς ὑπακοήν, λέγει λέων κατὰ τὴν ὁδὸν καὶ φονεῖς κατὰ τὰς πλατείας» (Παροιμ. 26,13). Δειλὸς ἄνθρωπος δὲν ἀξίζει τίποτε. Ἐνῶ τολμηρὸς πάντα βγαίνει νικητὴς. Βλέπει;

Ἡ δικαιολογία δὲν εἶναι γραμμένη στὴ Γραφή. Οἱ ἅγιοι ὄχι μόνο δὲν δικαιολογοῦνται, ἀλλὰ ὑποφέρουν ἐκουσίως γιὰ τοὺς ἄλλους.

Πάτερ, ὄχι ἔτσι. Ἐσὺ νὰ διορθώσεις τὸν ἑαυτό σου, ὄχι νὰ περιμένεις τοὺς ἄλλους. Ἐσὺ νὰ σταθεῖς ἀπὸ κάτω, νὰ σὲ πατᾶν ὅλοι. Τότες εἶσαι ἐν τάξει. Εἰδάλως...

Ἐσὺ νὰ ἀρματωθεῖς στὴν ὑπομονή. Ὁ δρόμος ὁ τοῦ Σταυροῦ αὐτὸς εἶναι.

Ὁ ἄνθρωπος, ὅσο καὶ σοφὸς νὰ εἶναι, νὰ συμβουλευεταὶ καὶ λιγάκι. Δὲν εἴμαστε ἐμεῖς θεοδίδακτοι. Οὔτε ὁ Θεὸς καὶ σύ· μπορεῖς νὰ πάρεις πληροφορίαν ἀπὸ τὸ Θεό; Δὲν εἴμαστε σ’ αὐτὴ τὴν κατάσταση. Ἄ, νὰ ρωτήσουμε καὶ κάναν ἄλλον. Νὰ ρωτήσουμε, νὰ συμβουλευτοῦμε. Ἔε, δὲν ἔχεις κανέναν ἄνθρωπο καλύτερό σου;

Θὰ κάνεις ὑπομονὴ στὰ δικά σου τὰ πάθη, θὰ κάνεις καὶ στὰ δικά μου. Ἔτσι θὰ γίνεις ἅγιος.



## Ἡ Φιλία: Δῶρο Τοῦ Θεοῦ Ἀνεκτίμητο

ΠΗΓΗ : Μιχαήλ Ε. Μιχαηλίδης, Θεολόγος, «Ὁρθόδοξος Τύπος», τεύχος 1474.

Ὅσο κι ἂν ἡ ἀνθρώπινη ζωὴ σημαδεύεται ἀπὸ τὶς γκρίζες ζῶνες τῶν θλίψεων καὶ τῶν καταθλίψεων, ἡ φιλία —δῶρο τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀνεκτίμητο— ἀνακουφίζει καὶ παρηγορεῖ. Ὁ καλὸς φίλος μοιάζει σὰν τὸ λιμάνι στὸν ὠκεανὸ καὶ σὰν τὴν ὄαση στὴν ἔρημο.

«Φίλος πιστὸς σκέπη κραταιά, ὁ δὲ εὐρῶν αὐτὸν εὐρεθησαυρόν. Φίλου πιστοῦ οὐκ ἔστιν ἀντάλλαγμα» (Σοφ. Σειρ. στ' 14-15).

Ὁ καλὸς φίλος εἶναι θησαυρὸς πολύτιμος. Εἶναι προστασία καὶ σκέπη, ἀγάπη καὶ παραμυθία, ἐνίσχυση καὶ στηριγμός, δύναμη καὶ ἀσφάλεια, ἐνότητα καὶ ἐπιτυχία, χαρὰ καὶ εὐλογία.

Τὴν ἔχει ἀνάγκη τὴ φιλία ὁ ἄνθρωπος καὶ προπάντων ὁ νέος. Γι' αὐτὸ καὶ δὲν εἶναι χωρὶς σημασία ἡ προτροπὴ τοῦ σοφοῦ Παρομμιαστῆ: «Εἰς πάντα καιρὸν φίλος ὑπαρχέτω σοί» (Παρομμ. ιζ' 17). Οἱ ἄνθρωποι κάποτε ἔχουν πιότερη ἀνάγκη ἀπὸ φίλους, παρὰ ἀπὸ ψωμὶ καὶ χρήματα. Ὁ Σωκράτης ρωτοῦσε:

«Πρὸς ποῖον κτῆμα τῶν ἄλλων παραβαλλόμενος φίλος ἀγαθὸς οὐκ ἂν πολλῶ κρείττων φανείη».

Θεωροῦσε τὸν καλὸ φίλο ἀνώτερο καὶ καλύτερο ἀπ' ὅλα τὰ ἀγαθὰ τοῦ κόσμου. Ὁ δὲ Κικέρων δὲ δίσταζε ν' ἀποκαλεῖ τὸν φίλο alter ego, «ἓνα ἄλλο ἐγώ», μὴ δευτέρη ὑπαρξὴ μας. Ὁ ἱερὸς Χρυσόστομος ἐκφράζεται τόσο ὁμορφα γιὰ τὴ φιλία, ὥστε τὰ λόγια του μοιάζουν μὲ τραγούδι καὶ ὕμνο:

«Καὶ τοῦ φωτὸς αὐτοῦ, ποθεινότερος φίλος τὸν γνήσιον λέγω. Καὶ μὴ θαυμάσης βέλτιον γὰρ ἡμῖν σβεσθῆναι τὸν ἥλιον, ἢ φίλων ἀποστερηθῆναι: βέλτιον ἐν σκότῳ διάγειν, ἢ φίλων εἶναι χωρὶς... Πατέρας καὶ υἱοὺς ὑπερβαίνουνσι φίλοι, φίλοι οἱ κατὰ Χριστόν».

Κι ἀπ' τὸ φῶς εἶναι πιὸ ποθητὸς ὁ γνήσιος καὶ καλὸς φίλος. Εἶναι προτιμότερο νὰ σβῆσει ὁ ἥλιος παρὰ νὰ στερηθοῦμε τοὺς καλοὺς φίλους. Οἱ καλοὶ φίλοι εἶναι ἀπ' τοὺς γονεῖς καὶ τὰ φυσικὰ ἀδέρφια ἀνώτεροι.

Θαυμαστὲς φιλίες ἀναγράφει ἡ ἱστορία, ὅπως τοῦ Δάμωνα καὶ τοῦ Φιντία, τοῦ Δαβὶδ καὶ τοῦ Ἰωνάθαν, τοῦ Φίλιππου καὶ τοῦ Ναθαναήλ, τοῦ Παύλου καὶ τοῦ Βαρνάβα, τοῦ Γρηγορίου τοῦ Θεολόγου καὶ τοῦ Μ. Βασιλείου καὶ ἄλλες πολλὲς στὰ μεταγενέστερα χρόνια. Ψυχὲς μὲ ἀγάπη καὶ ἀλτροῦισμό· ψυχὲς «ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι καὶ μία καρδιά»· ψυχὲς μὲ τὴν ἴδια πίστη καὶ τὰ ἴδια ἰδανικά.

Πόσο ὑπέροχος καὶ μεγαλειώδης ἐκεῖνος ὁ «θρήνος» τοῦ Δαβὶδ στὸ θάνατο τοῦ φίλου του Ἰωνάθαν! Ἔνα, ἴσως, μοναδικὸ θρηνητικὸ τραγούδι ἀγάπης καὶ φιλίας στὴν παγκόσμια λογοτεχνία, εἰπωμένο, ἄλλωστε, ἀπ' τὸν ἔξοχο ποιητὴ τῶν αἰώνων καὶ μουσικὸ καὶ προφη-

τάνακτα, τὸν Δαβὶδ. Ἔνα πένθιμο ἔλεγείο, γεμάτο λυρισμὸ καὶ τρυφερότητα.

«Μέσα ἀπὸ τὰς φράσεις τοῦ ἄσματος ἀναπηδοῦν τὰ πλέον εὐγενῆ αἰσθήματα τῆς φιλοπατρίας, τῆς φιλίας καὶ τῆς πολεμικῆς ἀρετῆς». «Ὅταν μελετῶμεν τὸ κεφάλαιον αὐτό, μένωμεν ἐκπληκτοὶ ἐμπρὸς εἰς τὸ ψυχικὸν μεγαλεῖον τοῦ Δαβὶδ» (Ἰθ. Φραγκόπουλος, Παλαιὰ Διαθήκη, ἔκδ. «Ὁ Σωτήρ», τόμ. 5, σελ. 194, Γεωργίου Ψαλτάκη).

Μερικοὶ στίχοι τῆς ὠδῆς αὐτῆς εἶναι χαρακτηριστικοί (Β' Βασ. 17-27):

«Καὶ ἐθρήνησε Δαβὶδ τὸν θρήνον τοῦτον ἐπὶ Σαοὺλ καὶ ἐπὶ Ἰωνάθαν τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ... Πῶς ἔπεσαν οἱ δυνατοί; Σαοὺλ καὶ Ἰωνάθαν, οἱ ἀγαπημένοι καὶ ὠραῖοι... Πῶς ἔπεσαν οἱ δυνατοὶ ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ πολέμου; Ἰωνάθ ἐπὶ τὰ ὕψη σου τραυματίας. Ἀλγῶ ἐπὶ σοί, ἀδελφέ μου Ἰωνάθαν. Ὁρραϊώθης μοὶ σφόδρα, ἐθαυμαστώθῃ ἡ ἀγάπησίς σου ἐμοὶ ὑπὲρ ἀγάπησιν γυναικῶν. Πῶς ἔπεσαν δυνατοὶ καὶ ἀπώλοντο σκευὴ πολεμικά;»

«Οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδὲν κτῆμα βέλτιον φίλου», ὁμολογεῖ ἀπ' τὴν πείρα τῆς ζωῆς του ὁ ἅγιος Γρηγόριος ὁ Θεολόγος. Καὶ προσθέτει: «Πιστοῦ φίλου νόμιζε μηδὲν ἄξιον». Ἡ ἀληθινὴ φιλία δὲν σπάει μὲ τίποτε. «Οὔτε χρόνου πληθος, οὔτε ὁδῶν διάστημα, οὔτε ἄλλο τῶν τοιούτων οὐδὲν ψυχῆς φιλίαν διακόψαι δύναται ἄν», διακηρύττει ὁ ἱερὸς Χρυσόστομος.

Ἡ πιὸ ὑπέροχη καὶ ἀληθινὴ καὶ γνήσια καὶ αὐθεντικὴ φιλία εἶναι ἡ χριστιανικὴ φιλία. Ὁ φίλος του Θεοῦ εἶναι καὶ ὁ καλύτερος φίλος τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. Ὁ ἐχθρὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ οὐδέποτε μπορεῖ νὰ γίνῃ ἀληθινὸς φίλος τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. Ἡ χριστιανικὴ φιλία, κατὰ τὸν ἅγιο Ἰσίδωρο τὸν Πηλουσιώτη, εἶναι ἐκεῖνη στὴν ὁποία συνυπάρχουν «ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ φόβος καὶ ὁ τῶν φίλων πόθος».

Συχνὰ οἱ φιλίες τοῦ κόσμου δὲν εἶναι παρὰ συνωμοσιές στὸ κακό, ἢ συντροφίες γιὰ διασκέδαση καὶ γλέντι. Ὅπως ὠραία τὸ εἶπε κάποιος: «Φιλία δὲν θὰ πεῖ νὰ βλέπουμε ὁ ἓνας τὸν ἄλλο στὰ μάτια, ἀλλὰ νὰ βλέπουμε μαζὶ στὴν ἴδια κατεύθυνση». Νὰ ἔχουμε, δηλαδή, τὸν ἴδιο στόχο. «Δὲν ὑπάρχει φιλία, παρὰ ἐκεῖνη ποὺ σφυρηλατεῖς Ἐσύ, Θεέ μου, μὲ τὸν δεσμὸ τῆς χριστιανικῆς ἀγάπης», λέγει προσευχητικὰ ὁ ἱερὸς Αὐγουστίνος.

Πόσο μᾶς συγκινεῖ ὁ λόγος τοῦ Κυρίου: «Ὑμεῖς φίλοι μου ἐστὲ, ἐὰν ποιῆτε ὅσα ἐγὼ ἐντέλλομαι ὑμῖν!» (Ἰω. ιε' 14). Ὁ Ἰησοῦς μᾶς ἀποκαλεῖ «φίλους» Του. Ὑψίστη τιμὴ καὶ μέγα προνόμιο. Ἐμεῖς ἀνταποκρινόμεστε στὴ θεϊκὴ Του φιλία; Εἴμαστε πιστοὶ τηρητὲς τοῦ θελήματός Του; Ἐφαρμόζουμε τὸν ἅγιο νόμο Του; Ὅμορφα τραγουδάει ὁ Βερίτης τὴ φιλία τοῦ Χριστοῦ:

«Εἶν' ὁ Χριστὸς μου φίλος μου, ὁ φίλος ὁ μεγάλος... Πάντα μαζὶ στὰ δύσκολα, πάντα μαζὶ μὲ Σένα».

Μὲ τέτοιο Μεγάλο φίλο, ὠραία καὶ χαρούμενη εἶναι ἡ ζωή.

## Τὰ Αἴτια τῆς Πτώσης τῆς Αὐτοκρατορίας

Πρωτοπρεσβυτέρου Γεωργίου Μεταλληνού

**Η** πτώση τῆς Πόλης τὸ 1453 δὲν ἔγινε ἀπροσδόκητα, οὔτε μὲ αὐτὴν ἄρχισε ἡ τουρκοκρατία. Στὶς 29 Μαΐου 1453 ἓνα μεγάλο μέρος τῆς Ρωμανίας ἦταν ἤδη κάτω ἀπὸ τοὺς Ὀθωμανοὺς, τοὺς Ἀραβες καὶ τοὺς Βενετούς. Ἀπὸ τὸ 1204 ἡ Πόλη δὲν μπόρεσε νὰ ἀναλάβει τὴν πρώτη της δύναμη καὶ ὅλα ἔδειχναν πὼς βαδίζει στὴν τελικὴ πτώση. Τὸ φραγκικὸ πλῆγμα ἐναντίον της ἦταν τόσο δυνατὸ, ποῦ ἀπὸ τὸ 13ο αἰῶνα ἡ Κωνσταντινούπολη ἦταν “μια πόλη καταδικασμένη νὰ χαθεῖ”. Ἡ ἄλωση ἦταν ἐξάλλου ἡ κατάληξη μιᾶς μακροχρόνιας ἀποσύνθεσης τῆς πολιτικῆς καὶ οἰκονομικῆς ὑπόστασης τοῦ Γένους.

Ἀπὸ τὸ 13ο αἰῶνα ὁ Ἑλληνισμὸς εἶχε διασπαστεῖ καὶ διαμοιραστεῖ, στὸ μεγαλύτερο μέρος του, σὲ ξένους δυνάστες. Οἱ διεισδύσεις, ἔπειτα, μισθοφόρων στὸ στρατὸ καὶ ἀλλοφύλων στὸ διοικητικὸ μηχανισμὸ τοῦ εἶχαν προκαλέσει τὴν ἐθνολογικὴ του ἀλλοίωση. Οἱ ἐμφύλιοι πόλεμοι (1321-1328, 1341-1355), καὶ ἡ ἐσωτερικὴ ἀναρχία εἶχαν ἐπιφέρει τὴ δημογραφικὴ του συρρίκνωση. Σοβαρὰ λάθη στὴν οἰκονομικὴ πολιτικὴ τῶν αὐτοκρατόρων, ὅπως ἡ συνεχὴς αὔξηση τῆς μεγάλης ιδιοκτησίας σὲ βάρος τῶν μικρῶν, ποῦ πιέζονταν ἀπὸ τὴ δυσβάστακτη φορολογία, ἡ καταχρηστικὴ ἐπέκταση τοῦ θεσμοῦ τῶν “προνοιαρίων” καὶ ἡ ὑπερβολικὴ, πολλὰς φορὲς, αὔξηση τῶν μοναστηριακῶν κτημάτων δημιούργησαν μιὰν οἰκονομικὴ ὀλιγαρχία σὲ βάρος τῶν μικροκαλλιεργητῶν τῆς γῆς, μὲ ἀπώλξη τὴν οἰκονομικὴ κρίση. Τὸ ἐμπόριο εἶχε περιέλθει στὰ χέρια τῶν δυτικῶν καὶ οἱ δυνατότητες γιὰ οἰκονομικὴ ἀνάκαμψη περιορίστηκαν σημαντικά.

Ὑπῆρχαν ὅμως καὶ πνευματικὰ αἴτια τῆς πτώσης. Οἱ θρησκευτικὲς, κοινωνικὲς καὶ ἰδεολογικὲς ἀντιθέσεις προκάλεσαν βαθεῖα σύγχυση, ποῦ λειτούργησε διαλυτικὰ στὸ σῶμα τῆς αὐτοκρατορίας. Ἰδιαίτερα οἱ δυτικὲς ἐπιρροὲς καὶ οἱ συνεχεῖς ὑποχωρήσεις τῶν πολιτικῶν στὶς δυτικὲς (παπικὲς) ἀπαιτήσεις, γιὰ τὴν ἀναμενόμενη στρατιωτικὴ βοήθεια, ὀδήγησαν στὴν πνευματικὴ ἀλλοίωση τοῦ Βυζαντίου, μὲ ἄμεσο κίνδυνο ἀπώλειας τῆς πνευματικῆς καὶ πολιτιστικῆς ταυτότητάς του. Γιατί, ἂν τὸ Βυζάντιο ἔπαυε νὰ διατηρεῖ τὴν πνευματικὴ καὶ πολιτιστικὴ ἰδιαιτερότητά του, ἀκόμη καὶ ἂν δὲν ἔπεφτε στὰ χέρια τῶν Τούρκων, θὰ καταλυόταν ἐσωτερικά, μεταβαλλόμενο σὲ πνευματικὸ προτεκτοράτο τῆς Φραγκιάς. Ἡ πτώση - κατὰ τοὺς ἀνθενωτικοὺς - ἦλθε ὡς σωτηρία, γιατί κράτησε τὴν πνευματικὴ καὶ πολιτιστικὴ καθαρότητα τοῦ Γένους, τὸ ὁποῖο στὴ δουλεία, παρὰ τὶς ταλαιπωρίες του, μπόρεσε νὰ ἀνασυνταχτεῖ καὶ νὰ ἐπιβιώσει.

Τὸ γεγονὸς τῆς ἄλωσης εἶχε τεράστια σημασία πρῶτα γιὰ τὸν Ἑλληνισμὸ καὶ τὴν κατοπινὴ του πορεία. Γιὰ τοὺς Ἕλληνες ἡ ἄλωση ὑπῆρξε μιὰ κρισιμώτατη στιγμή στὴν ἱστορία τους. Γιατί ἄρχισε γι’ αὐτοὺς μιὰ περίοδος μακρᾶς δοκιμασίας μὲ μειωμένους οἰκονομικὰ καὶ πολιτικὰ τὶς δυνάμεις τους. Ἄν οἱ ψυχικὲς καὶ πνευματικὲς δυνάμεις τους δὲν ἦσαν ἀκμαῖες, εἶναι ἀμφίβολο, ἂν θὰ μπορούσε τὸ Γένος νὰ ξεπεράσει τὶς συνέπειες τῆς πτώσης, ὅπως συνέβη μὲ ἄλλους λαοὺς στὴν ἱστορία. Ἡ ἐμμονὴ ὅμως στὴν ὀρθόδοξη παράδοση, καὶ μέσω αὐτῆς καὶ στὴν ἑλληνικότητα, κρατοῦσε δεμένο τὸ Γένος μὲ τὶς ζωτικὲς πηγές του.

Ἡ ἀπώλεια εἰδικὰ τῆς Κωνσταντινούπολης ὑπῆρξε σημαντικώτατο γεγονός. Ἡ Πόλη ἦταν ἡ συνισταμένη ὅλων τῶν ἐλπίδων τῶν Ρωμηῶν. Ἡ διατήρηση τῆς ἐλευθερίας της, παρὰ τὴν τρομακτικὴ συρρίκνωση τῆς αὐτοκρατορίας, ἔτρεφε τὴν αὐτοπεποίθησή τους καὶ συντηροῦσε τὸν ψυχισμὸ τους.

Ὅπως ὑπογράμμισε πρὶν ἀπὸ τὴν ἄλωση ὁ λόγιος μοναχὸς Ἰωσήφ Βρυέννιος: “Ταύτης τῆς πόλεως ἰσταμένης, συνίσταται πὼς αὐτὴ καὶ ἡ πίστις ἀκράδαντος. Ἐδαφισθείσης δὲ ἡ ἀλούσης, ἄπερ, Χριστέ μου, μὴ γένοιτο, ποῖα ἔσται ψυχὴ κατὰ πίστιν ἀκλόνητος;” (δηλαδή: Ὅσο στέκεται ὄρθια αὐτὴ ἡ πόλη, μένει μαζί της ἀκλόνητη καὶ ἡ πίστη. Ἄν ὅμως κατεδαφιστεῖ ἡ ἄλωθεί, ποῦ νὰ μὴ γίνε, Χριστέ μου, ποῖα ψυχὴ θὰ κρατήσῃ τὴν πίστη της ἀσάλευτη;)

Μετὰ τὴν πτώση τῆς Πόλης ἡ δύναμη ἀντίστασης μειώθηκε σημαντικά, ὅπως δείχνουν οἱ ἀλλαξοπιστίες καὶ ἡ μοιρολατρικὴ στάση πολλῶν ἀπὸ τὸν κληρὸ καὶ τὸ λαό. Τὸ Γένος χρειαζόταν κάποια δύναμη, ποῦ θὰ ἐμπόδιζε τὴν ἀλλοτριώσή του καὶ, θὰ ἐξασφάλιζε τὴν ἐπιβίωση καὶ ἀνάκαμψή του. Αὐτὴ τὴ δυσκολότατη, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀναγκαιότατη ἀποστολὴ θὰ ἀναλάβει ἡ Ἐκκλησία, ὡς Ἐθναρχία.

Ἀλλὰ καὶ γιὰ τοὺς Ὀθωμανοὺς ἡ ἄλωση εἶχε ἀνάλογη σημασία. Μὲ αὐτὴ νομιμοποιήθηκε ἡ νίκη τους πάνω στὴν Ἑλληνικὴ αὐτοκρατορία, ἡ ὁποία μὲ τὸ πάρσιμο τῆς Πόλης ἔγινε καὶ τυπικὰ Ὀθωμανικὴ. Ἡ κατάκτηση τῶν ὑπόλοιπων ρωμαϊκῶν ἐδαφῶν (Τραπεζούντας, κυρίως Ἑλλάδας) δὲν ἦταν παρὰ ἡ ὀλοκλήρωση τῆς ὑποκατάστασης τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἀπὸ τοὺς Ὀθωμανοὺς στὴν αὐτοκρατορία τους.

Τὸ σπουδαῖο ὅμως εἶναι, ὅτι τὸ ἄλλοτε βάρβαρο τουρκικὸ φύλο τῶν Ὀθωμανῶν μέσα σὲ σύντομο χρόνον μπόρεσε νὰ συγκροτηθεῖ σὲ μιὰ πανίσχυρη αὐτοκρατορία καὶ νὰ ἐνταχθεῖ στὸ σύστημα τῶν Εὐρωπαϊκῶν κρατῶν. Μέσα στὰ ὅρια τῆς Ὀθωμανικῆς αὐτοκρατορίας θὰ ἀγωνιστεῖ στὸ ἐξῆς ὁ Ἑλληνισμὸς, μαζί μὲ ὅλη τὴ Ρωμηοσύνη, νὰ βρεῖ τὸ δρόμο του στὴ νέα γι’ αὐτὸν πραγματικότητα.

## 13 Ιουνίου, ἡ Ἐπέτειος τοῦ Θανάτου τοῦ Μεγάλου Ἀλέξανδρου

Γεώργιος Καρῶς, Συντάκτης τῆς Orthodox Heritage

Ἦταν 13 Ιουνίου 323 π.Χ. ὅταν ὁ Μέγιστος τῶν Ἑλλήνων Ἀλέξανδρος ὁ Μακεδόνας ἄφησε τὴν τελευταία του πνοή, πρὶν προλάβει νὰ ὀλοκληρώσει τὸ φιλόδοξο σχέδιό του, ἀλλὰ ἔχοντας κατακτήσει ὅλον τὸν τότε γνωστὸ κόσμο. Ὅτι καὶ νὰ πεί κανεὶς γιὰ τὸ ἔργο καὶ τὴν προσφορά τοῦ Ἀλέξανδρου στὸν ἑλληνισμό καὶ στὴν ἀνθρωπότητα σίγουρα θὰ εἶναι τὸ ἐλάχιστο. Ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος ἦταν ὁ μόνος κατακτητὴς στὴν ἱστορία ποὺ οἱ «κατακτημένοι» λαοὶ τὸν δέχθηκαν ὡς ἐλευθερωτὴ τους καὶ πολλοὶ τὸν λάτρεψαν ὡς θεό. Αὐτὸ δὲν ἔγινε τυχαῖα καθὼς ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος σεβάστηκε ὅλους τοὺς λαοὺς καθὼς καὶ τὶς παραδόσεις τους, τὰ ἦθη, καὶ τὰ ἔθμά τους. Ἀνακηρύχθηκε ὄχι ἀπλὰ Μέγας, ἀλλὰ Μέγιστος.

Ἦταν ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος αὐτὸς ποὺ διέδωσε τὴν Ἑλληνικὴ γλῶσσα στὰ πέρατα τῆς οἰκουμένης, καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ γεγονός βοήθησε καὶ στὴν διάδοση τοῦ Χριστιανισμοῦ μέσω τῆς ἑλληνικῆς γλῶσσας. Ἦταν ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος αὐτὸς ποὺ κατάφερε νὰ ἐνώσει γιὰ πρώτη φορὰ ὅλους τοὺς Ἕλληνες. Αὐτὸ ὅμως ποὺ πρέπει νὰ θυμόμαστε σήμερα καὶ νὰ παραδειγματιζόμαστε, εἶναι τὸ γεγονός ὅτι ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος ξεκίνησε μόνο μὲ 30.000 στρατιῶτες ἐναντίων τῶν ἑκατομμυρίων Περσῶν. Ἐγγεῖρημα ποὺ σήμερα ὁ καθένας θὰ θεωροῦσε ἐπιχείρηση αὐτοκτονίας. Καὶ ὅμως τοὺς συνέτριψε! Αὐτὸ γιὰ κάποιους ποὺ σήμερα λένε ὅτι ὅποιαδήποτε σύγκρουσή μας μὲ τὴν Τουρκία εἶναι χαμένη καθὼς οἱ βάρβαροι Τοῦρκοι εἶναι 60 ἑκατομμύρια, κ.λ.π.. Ἐχνοῦν τὸ κατόρθωμα τοῦ Λεωνίδα, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν ἀγωνιστῶν τοῦ '21, ποὺ ξυπόλυτοι γονάτισαν ὀλόκληρη Ὀθωμανικὴ αὐτοκρατορία, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ '40 ὅταν ὁ Ἑλληνικὸς Στρατὸς ἔτρεψε σὲ φυγὴ τὶς «8 ἑκατομμύρια λόγχεις» τοῦ Μουσολίνι.

Ὁ Μέγιστος τῶν Ἑλλήνων Ἀλέξανδρος πρέπει πάντοτε νὰ εἶναι στὴν ψυχὴ μας ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ καλύτερο πρότυπο γιὰ τὴν νεολαία μας, σὲ ἀντίθεση μὲ τὰ «πρότυπα» ποὺ προβάλλει ἡ ὑποκουλτούρα τῆς Νέας Τάξης. Καὶ ΠΑΝΤΑ νὰ θυμόμαστε τὰ λόγια ἐνὸς μεγάλου φιλέλληνα, τοῦ Χ. Μπέγκστον:

«Οὔτε ἡ Ρωμαϊκὴ κοσμοκρατορία, οὔτε ἡ θριαμβευτικὴ πορεία τοῦ Χριστιανισμοῦ τοῦ ὁποίου οἱ κοινότητες ἀπλώνονταν κατὰ τὸ τέλος τῆς ἀρχαιότητος στὸν εὐρύτατο ἀπὸ τὴν Ἰρλανδία μέχρι τὶς Ἰνδίες χῶρο, οὔτε ἀκόμη ἡ Βυζαντινὴ αὐτοκρατορία καὶ ὁ Ἀραβικὸς πολιτισμὸς θὰ μπορούσαν νὰ δημιουργηθοῦν χωρὶς τὸν Μέγα Ἀλέξανδρο καὶ τὸ κοσμογονικὸ του ἔργο.»

## Μὴ Κρίνετε, Ἴνα Μὴ Κριθῆτε (Ματθ. 7, 1)

Ἀπὸ Τὸ Μέγα Γερωντικὸν

Ἔλεγον γιὰ τὸν ἄββᾶ Μάρκο τὸν Αἰγύπτιο ὅτι ἔμεινε τριάντα χρόνια χωρὶς νὰ βγεῖ ἀπ'τὸ κελί του. Ὁ πρεσβύτερος συνήθιζε νὰ πηγαίνει καὶ νὰ τοῦ κάνει τὴν Θεία Λειτουργία. Ὁ διάβολος ὅμως βλέποντας τὴν ἐνάρετη ὑπομονὴ τοῦ ἀνδρός, σοφίστηκε νὰ τὸν ρίξει στὸν πειρασμὸ τῆς κατάκρισης. Ἔτσι ἔκανε κάποιον δαμονισμένο νὰ πάει στὸν Γέροντα γιὰ νὰ τοῦ ζητήσῃ τάχα τὴν προσευχὴ του. Αὐτὸς λοιπὸν ὁ δαμονισμένος πρὶν ἀπὸ κάθε ἄλλο λόγο εἶπε στὸν Γέροντα: «Ὁ πρεσβύτερός σου μυρίζει ἁμαρτία. Μὴν τὸν ἀφήσεις ἄλλη φορὰ νὰ ἴρθῃ κοντά σου». Καὶ ὁ θεόπνευστος ἄνθρωπος τοῦ εἶπε: «Παιδί μου, ὅλοι τὴ βρωμιὰ τὴν πετοῦν ἔξω καὶ ἐσύ μοῦ τὴν ἔφερες ἐδῶ; Ἡ Γραφή λέει: Μὴν κρίνετε γιὰ νὰ μὴν κριθεῖτε (Ματθ. 7,1). Ἀλλὰ ἂν εἶναι ἁμαρτωλὸς ὁ Κύριος θὰ τὸν σώσει. Εἶναι μάλιστα γραμμένο στὴν Ἁγία Γραφή: Νὰ προσεύχεστε ὁ ἕνας γιὰ τὸν ἄλλον γιὰ νὰ θεραπευθεῖτε (Ἰακ. 5,16)». Καὶ πάνω στὸν λόγο αὐτό, προσευχήθηκε καὶ ἔδωξε τὸν δαίμονα ἀπὸ τὸν ἄνθρωπο καὶ τὸν ἔστειλε ὑγιή.

Ὅταν λοιπὸν ἦρθε ὁ πρεσβύτερος, ὅπως συνήθιζε, τὸν ὑποδέχθηκε ὁ Γέροντας μετὰ χαρᾶς. Ὁ Θεὸς ποὺ γνωρίζε τὴν ἀκακία τοῦ Γέροντα, τοῦ ἔδειξε θαυμαστὸ σημάδι. Ὅταν ἦρθε ἡ ὥρα νὰ σταθεῖ ὁ πρεσβύτερος μπροστὰ στὴν ἁγία Τράπεζα, ὅπως ὁ ἴδιος ὁ Γέροντας τὸ περιέγραψε, «εἶδα ἄγγελο Κυρίου νὰ κατεβαίνει ἀπὸ ψηλὰ καὶ ἔβαλε τὸ χέρι τοῦ στοῦ κεφάλι τοῦ κληρικοῦ καὶ ἔγινε ὁ κληρικὸς σὰν ἕνας στύλος φωτιᾶς. Καὶ ἐγὼ καθὼς ἔμεινα ἐκπληκτὸς ἀπὸ τὸ θέαμα, ἄκουσα μία φωνὴ νὰ μοῦ λέει: Ἄνθρωπε γιατί ἐκπλήττεσαι μ'αὐτὸ ποῦ γίνεται; Ἐὰν ἕνας ἐπίγειος βασιλιάς δὲν θ'ἀφήσει τοὺς μεγιστάνες του νὰ στέκονται μπροστὰ του ρυπαροί, ἀλλὰ μόνο ἂν ἔχουν ἐπίσημη περιβολὴ πόσο περισσότερο ἡ θεία δύναμις δὲν θὰ καθαρῶσει τοὺς λειτουργοὺς τῶν ἀρρήτων μυστηρίων, ὅταν στέκονται μπροστὰ στὴν ἄφατη δόξα;»

Ἔτσι ὁ γενναῖος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἀθλητῆς, ὁ Μάρκος ὁ Αἰγύπτιος, ἔγινε ἄξιος τοῦ χαρίσματος αὐτοῦ, ἐπειδὴ δὲν κατέκρινε τὸν κληρικὸ.

**Εἶπε ἕνας Γέροντας: «Μὴν κρίνετε τὸν πόρνο, ἐὰν ἐσὺ εἶσαι σῶφρων. Κι ἐσὺ εἶσαι παραβάτης τοῦ νόμου ὅπως κι ἐκεῖνος. Γιατί Αὐτὸς ποὺ εἶπε νὰ μὴν πορνεύσεις (Ματθ. 5, 27), εἶπε καὶ νὰ μὴν κρίνετε (Ματθ. 7, 1)».**



## ON THE HERESY OF REINCARNATION

[Cont'd from page 4]

tized. Many individual Fathers of the Church wrote against it, notably St. Ambrose of Milan in the West (*On Belief in the Resurrection*, Book II), St. Gregory of Nyssa in the East (*On the Soul and the Resurrection*), and others.

For the present-day Orthodox Christian who is tempted by this idea, or who wonders about the supposed “proof” of it, it is sufficient to reflect on three basic Christian dogmas which conclusively refute the very possibility of reincarnation.

1. *The resurrection of the body.* Christ rose from the dead in the very body which had died the death of all men, and became the first-fruits of all men, whose bodies will also be resurrected on the last day and rejoined to their souls in order to live eternally in heaven or hell, according to God’s just judgment of their life on earth. This resurrected body, like that of Christ Himself, will be different from our earthly bodies in that it will be more refined and more like the angelic nature without which it could not dwell in the Heavenly Kingdom, where there is no death or corruption; but it will still be the same body, miraculously restored and made fit by God for eternal life, as Ezekiel saw in his vision of the “dry bones” (Ezek. 37: 1-14). In heaven the redeemed will recognize each other. The body is thus an inalienable part of the whole person who will live forever, and the idea of many bodies belonging to the same person denies the very nature of the Heavenly Kingdom which God has prepared for those who love Him.

2. *Our redemption by Jesus Christ.* God took flesh and through His life, suffering, and death on the Cross redeemed us from the dominion of sin and death. Through His Church, we are saved and made fit for the Heavenly Kingdom, with no “penalty” to pay for our past transgressions. But according to the idea of reincarnation, if one is “saved” at all it is only after many lifetimes of working out the consequences of one’s sins. This is the cold and dreary legalism of the pagan religions which was totally abolished by Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross: the thief on His right hand received salvation in an instant through his faith in the Son of God, the “bad karma” of his evil deeds being obliterated by the grace of God.

3. *The Judgment.* It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment (Heb. 9:27). Human life is a single definite period of trial, after which there is no “second chance,” but only God’s judgment (which is just and merciful) of a man according to the state of his soul when this life is finished.

In these three doctrines the Christian revelation is quite precise and definite, in contrast to the pagan religions which do not believe either in the resurrection or in redemption, and are vague about judgment and the future life. The one answer to all supposed experiences or remembrances of “previous lives” is precisely the clear-cut teaching of Christianity about the nature of human life and God’s dealings with men.

## A TRUE STORY FROM HOLY RUSSIA’S PRISON SYSTEM

Translated from *Raiskie Tsveti Russi Zmli*, Reprinted by the Russian Orthodox Youth Committee, Baldwin Place, NY, 1984.

During his stay in Moscow in the spring of 1707, Tsar Peter Alexeevich commissioned Prince Feodor Yurevich Romodanovsky to organize the penitentiary system. And so, Romodanovsky set out on an inspection of the Moscow prisons. In the convict prison, accompanied by an inspector and a guard, he walked along all the corridors, looking into each cell and inquiring about the prisoners.

Suddenly, one of the convicts addressed him: “Esteemed Prince! We know that you are a pious and God-fearing man, that you venerate the memory of the saints, especially that of our hierarch St. Nicholas the Wonderworker. For his sake, the merciful one, show thy generous mercy and let me go home for a visit, just for two days.”

“What?!” exclaimed the astonished Romodanovsky. “Are you crazy to think of asking such a thing?”

“I am fully aware and of sound mind,” replied the convict. “I shall add that in my part of the country the feast of St. Nicholas is particularly honored. There in the village church is an altar dedicated to him. And besides, I long to see my young wife and my little children. I want to embrace and to kiss them. Let me go...”

“What kind of a man is this?” asked the prince.

“He murdered one of the tsar’s soldiers,” answered the guard.

“What kind of soldier?”

“One of the Preobrazhensk regiment. True,” added the guard, “it was committed in a fit of anger.”

The prisoner continued:

“Merciful prince! It’s true, I’m a great criminal. I repent of my deed before God and man. Nevertheless, I’d like to go home for a visit. I’m asking for two days only, and be assured that on the third day I shall return here on my own.”

The convict’s frankness impressed the prince, and he asked him, “Who will act as surety for you?”

“St. Nicholas the Wonderworker,” answered the prisoner. “He will secure me against any temptation.”

Here Romodanovsky looked the prisoner straight in the eyes, and something warmly compassionate moved in his soul.

“Unfetter him and release him for two days,” he ordered, pointing to the prisoner.

“Your honor,” said the inspector, “I dare say he will deceive you. He has only to make it out of the prison and there’ll be no trace of him. Nothing in the world is sacred for these criminals. They are masters of fine speech.”

Romodanovsky pondered these words...

“It’s true,” he thought. “Once he leaves the prison, where would one look for him? Maybe he isn’t even interested in



going home but just wants to be released and do what he pleases... Obviously, I wasn't thinking when I gave the order. But once said, there's no turning back; a Romodanovsky doesn't take back his words."

The prince looked once again into the open face of the convict and repeated:

"Release him from prison for two days! I have faith that he will return at the appointed time. His holy surety will guarantee it."

The prisoner threw himself at the feet of the kind prince, while the inspector, sullen and pessimistic, ordered the guard to unfetter him.

... Twenty versts from Moscow, in the village of Nikolsk, the feast of the ninth of May\* was in full swing. At the end of the Liturgy the people spilled out from the church onto the market square. There a colorful picture of a fair presented itself. The temporarily released prisoner mingled happily in the midst of the crowd. In his arms he held a beautiful child who clung tightly with his pudgy arms around the neck of his father. Beside them walked a slender young woman, holding by the hand a lively boy.

"My poor, unfortunate husband," said the woman, "don't leave us orphaned. See how agreeable life is in freedom. But there -- prison, fetters. True, you killed one of the tsar's soldiers. But you did so without evil motive, unintentionally, by accident. Why must you torment yourself in eternal imprisonment and ruin your unhappy family!"

"I can't, my dear," answered the prisoner. "I promised..."

"As a prisoner, I'm sure you promised many things," continued his wife. "If you don't return, no one will be able to do anything. Let's hurry away from here, let's go to the Don. There we can live a free life. Our sons will grow up to be brave Cossacks and will serve our Tsar-batiushka for you."

The prisoner considered the tempting words of his wife. To go away to the Don, to live in freedom... But will it be like that? Will it really be good there? And the conscience? That holy sponsor, who is more powerful than any prison or earthly exile... What shall I do if I deceive his sacred memory? Everything will be lost: there will be neither success, nor joy, nor happiness. I shall pine away worse than a captive slave. It was not in vain that the prince said the Saint would not permit deception.

Under the persuasive arguments of his beloved wife, however, the unfortunate man again began to waver, and he was close to giving in to the decision to run away with his family. But there in the depths of his soul something powerful stopped him, turning his mind towards what was just and true. The prisoner listened to this and thought, "No, Saint Nicholas won't allow it! I must act according to my conscience."

Taking leave of his family the next day, he said to them: "Although it is difficult for me to part with you, I nevertheless feel

that my conscience is at peace. And I trust that he who is my surety will save me from further troubles and misfortunes."

In two days time he was already in Moscow and arrived at the prison an hour before Rodomanovsky drove up. "I was passing by," said the prince to the inspector who met him, "and I remembered about the convict who called upon Saint Nicholas to act as his surety. His term of release is up. Has he returned?"

"Yes, your honor," replied the inspector. "An altogether extraordinary case. He returned within the allotted time and is back in prison."

"Most commendable!" exclaimed the prince. "Today I'm to see the Tsar and I shall tell him about this rare case."

The next day the convict prison was buzzing with the news that in the morning a messenger had come from the Tsar and had taken the prisoner to the palace. When the prisoner returned, everyone impatiently asked him what the Tsar-batiushka had said to him.

"Our majesty," replied the prisoner, "wished to know about the crime for which I was sentenced. Then, having mercifully heard my admission, he said that he is reducing my term."

Here the prisoner crossed himself and added with emotion:

"Glory to St. Nicholas the Wonderworker who, in a critical moment, helped me to vanquish my temptation."

And within a short time, the prisoner was set at liberty.

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(\* ) ed. note -- In Russia many Saints are also celebrated on special days set aside for them in the summer, such as the translation of their relics. This is because winter weather does not permit the long processions of which Russians are so fond on feastdays.



**O**ur distresses are notorious... The doctrines of the Fathers are despised; apostolic traditions are set at naught; the devices of innovators are in vogue in the Churches; now men are rather contrivers of cunning systems than theologians; the wisdom of this world wins the highest prizes and has rejected the glory of the Cross. Shepherds are banished, and in their places are introduced grievous wolves harrying the flock of Christ... The elders lament when they compare the present with the past. The younger are yet more to be extended compassion, for they do not know of what they have been deprived.

St. Basil the Great, "Lives of the Three Great Hierarchs"

## A GREAT SPEECH WHICH NEVER MADE IT ON THE NEWS

*On Thursday, May 27, 1999, Darrell Scott, the father of Rachel Scott, a victim of the Columbine High School shootings in Littleton, Colorado, was invited to address the House Judiciary Committee's subcommittee. What he said to our national leaders during this special session of Congress was painfully truthful. They were not prepared for what he was to say, nor was it received well. It needs to be heard by every parent, every teacher, every politician, every sociologist, every psychologist, and every so-called expert! His words are powerful, penetrating, and deeply personal. The following is a portion of the transcript, as circulated through electronic media.*

Since the dawn of creation there has been both good and evil in the hearts of men and women. We all contain the seeds of kindness or the seeds of violence. The death of my wonderful daughter, Rachel Joy Scott, and the deaths of that heroic teacher and the other eleven children who died must not be in vain. Their blood cries out for answers.

The first recorded act of violence was when Cain slew his brother Abel out in the field. The villain was not the club he used. Neither was it the NCA, the National Club Association. The true killer was Cain, and the reason for the murder could only be found in Cain's heart.

In the days that followed the Columbine tragedy, I was amazed at how quickly fingers began to be pointed at groups such as the NRA. I am not a member of the NRA. I am not a hunter. I do not even own a gun. I am not here to represent or defend the NRA, because I don't believe that they are responsible for my daughter's death. Therefore, I do not believe that they need to be defended. If I believed they had anything to do with Rachel's murder, I would be their strongest opponent. I am here today to declare that Columbine was not just a tragedy: it was a spiritual event that should be forcing us to look at where the real blame lies! Much of the blame lies here in this room. Much of the blame lies behind the pointing fingers of the accusers themselves.

I wrote a poem just four nights ago that expresses my feelings best. This was written way before I knew I would be speaking here today.

Your laws ignore our deepest needs,  
Your words are empty air.  
You've stripped away our heritage,  
You've outlawed simple prayer.  
Now gunshots fill our classrooms,  
And precious children die.  
You seek for answers everywhere,  
And ask the question 'Why?'  
You regulate restrictive laws,  
Through legislative creed.  
And yet you fail to understand,  
That God is what we need!

Men and women are three part beings. We all consist of body, soul, and spirit\*. When we refuse to acknowledge a third part of our makeup, we create a void that allows evil, prejudice, and hatred to rush in and reek havoc. Spiritual influences were present within our educational systems for most of our nation's history. Many of our major colleges began as theological seminaries. This is a historical fact. What has happened to us as a nation? We have refused to honor God, and in so doing, we open the doors to hatred and violence. And when something as terrible as Columbine's tragedy occurs, politicians immediately look for a scapegoat such as the NRA. They immediately seek to pass more restrictive laws that contribute to eroding away our personal and private liberties. We do not need more restrictive laws.

Eric and Dylan would not have been stopped by metal detectors. No amount of gun laws can stop someone who spends months planning this type of massacre. The real villain lies within our own hearts. Political posturing and restrictive legislation are not the answers. The young people of our nation hold the key. There is a spiritual awakening taking place that will not be squelched! We do not need more religion. We do not need more gaudy television evangelists spewing out verbal religious garbage. We do not need more million dollar church buildings built while people with basic needs are being ignored. We do need a change of heart and a humble acknowledgment that this nation was founded on the principle of simple trust in God!

As my son Craig lay under that table in the school library and saw his two friends murdered before his very eyes, he did not hesitate to pray in school. I defy any law or politician to deny him that right! I challenge every young person in America, and around the world, to realize that on April 20, 1999, at Columbine High School, prayer was brought back to our schools. Do not let the many prayers offered by those students be in vain. Dare to move into the new millennium with a sacred disregard for legislation that violates your God-given right to communicate with Him. To those of you who would point your finger at the NRA, I give to you a sincere challenge. Dare to examine your own heart before casting the first stone! My daughter's death will not be in vain! The young people of this country will not allow that to happen!"

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*(\*) ed. note -- When St. Paul the Apostle refers to "body, soul, and spirit", the word "spirit" is used to denote the nous. We do not have two souls as the phrase might somehow suggest. But here, the author is referring not to the nous, but to the breath of God instilled in every man.*





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## HOW DID WE SURVIVE?

Well, some of you are over 40 or close to it. And it gets a bit sentimental, but so what? It's after Pascha and summer is here...

We lived as children in the 50s and 60s or before. Looking back, it's hard to believe that we have lived as long as we have!

As children, we would ride in cars with no seat belts or air bags. Riding in the back of a pickup truck on a warm day was always a special treat. Our baby cribs were covered with brightly colored, lead-based paint, and we had no padded crib protectors to keep us from sticking our heads through the slats.

We could sleep on our backs, our sides, or our stomachs.

We had no childproof lids on medicine bottles, doors, or cabinets, and when we rode our bikes, we had no helmets. (Not to mention hitchhiking to town as a young kid!)

We drank water from the garden hose and not from a bottle.

We would spend hours building our go-carts out of scraps of wood and old wheels or roller skates and then rode down the hill, only to find out we forgot the brakes. After running into the bushes a few times we learned to solve the problem.

We would leave home in the morning and play all day, as long as we were back when the streetlights came on. No one was able to reach us all day. No cell phones. No pagers. Unthinkable!

We played dodge ball and sometimes the ball would really hurt. We got cut and broke bones and broke teeth and there were no lawsuits from these accidents. They were accidents. No one was to blame but us. Remember accidents?

We had fights and punched each other and learned to get over it. And sometimes we made up and became best friends.

We ate cupcakes, bread and butter, and drank sugar soda; but we were never overweight: we were always outside playing.

We shared one grape soda with four friends, from one bottle, and no one died from this.

We did not have Playstations, Nintendo 64, X Boxes, video games of any sort, 699 channels on cable, video tape and DVD movies, surround sound, PCs, internet chat rooms, ...we had real live friends. We went outside and found them. We rode bikes or walked to a friend's home and knocked on the door, or rung the bell or just walked in and talked to them. Imagine such a thing. Without asking a parent! By ourselves!

We made up games with sticks and tennis balls and ate worms, and although we were told it would happen, we did not put out very many eyes, nor did the worms live inside us forever.

Little League had tryouts and not everyone made the team. Those who didn't had to learn to deal with disappointment.

Some students weren't as smart as others, so they failed a grade and were held back to repeat the same grade. Tests were not adjusted for any reason.

We walked to school or at the very least to the bus stop without our parents taking us because it rained or snowed.

The idea of a parent bailing us out if we broke a law was unheard of. They actually sided with the law. Imagine that!

Our generation has produced some of the best risk-takers and problem solvers and inventors, ever. We had freedom, failure, success, and responsibility, and we learned how to deal with it all.

Family and friends were the most important things in our lives.

And somehow, all of us survived!

# Orthodox Heritage

So therefore, brethren, persevere, and grasp the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or by our epistle [2 Thess. 2:15]

[HTTP://WWW.ORTHODOXHERITAGE.ORG](http://www.OrthodoxHeritage.org)

Ἄρα οὖν, ἀδελφοί, στήκετε, καὶ κρατεῖτε τὰς παραδόσεις ἃς ἐδιδάχθητε, εἴτε διὰ λόγου εἴτε δι' ἐπιστολῆς ἡμῶν [Θεσσ. Β' 2:15]

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## THE POWER OF THE JESUS PRAYER

### THE TESTIMONY OF THE NUN TATIANA (1912)

*SOURCE: From the Greek translation of the Russian book, "Orthodox Miracles in the Twentieth Century", pp. 305-311.*

Following the early morning service, at 5:00 a.m., I had scarcely stretched out to rest, when an unusual vision began. I saw myself in St. Petersburg, on Vasiliev Island. I was going to Divine Liturgy at the Cathedral of St. Nicholas. I was wearing my monastic Schema and sitting in a small carriage.

Suddenly I found myself in a dark square. Frightened and overcome by trembling, I ran in different directions, looking for a way out of this terrible situation. Suddenly, I saw hundreds of people coming. They were all laypeople. Their faces were dark, smitten with an everlasting sadness, with faces just like my own face.

"Who are you?" I asked them.

They answered: "We have suddenly passed over to Eternity, just as you have."

What I felt at that moment defies description! Fear and trembling permeated my entire being. Just then, a radiant man, whose countenance was veiled by the light he was emitting, came to me and said, "Follow me." And he took me to the place where the souls of the dead are judged.

He took me past forests, steppes, and buildings. The steppes were endless, and I understood that I had left behind my life on earth and that I had entered into life beyond the grave, but unprepared and unexpectedly.

He then led me into a chamber, where a multitude of laypeople – men and women, adults and children – were

assembled. They were all possessed by a perpetual grief. There was a lady sitting at an enormous table in the middle of the chamber, and she said to me: "This place is prepared for you until the Second Coming of the Lord."

I looked at all of the people there and asked: "What do you do here? Do you pray to God in this place?"

They replied sorrowfully: "In Eternity the Lord will not listen to us, because we have behaved carelessly during our life on earth. We will never have the boldness to call upon the Name of the Lord. When we were living on earth, we were given the task of suffering after ourselves and of praying for our souls. The command of Christ, 'Pray without ceasing' (Thessalonians 5:17), was our duty. Although we should have said the Jesus Prayer throughout our lives, with our every breath, we paid no attention to the state of our hearts. But just as one cannot live without air, so also the soul dies without unceasing prayer. We were individuals who conducted ourselves properly; we fulfilled all of our duties – but not the most important one, that of prayer."

When I heard this, I began to pray and make the sign of the Cross. And what happened? To my horror, I realized that even the sound of my voice was coming back to me! I looked about me and saw a metal ceiling, walls, and a painted wooden floor. I then began to shake with fear from the awareness that I could not run away from that unpleasant situation.

The people around me said: "In Eternity, the Lord will not listen to us. Only those who are alive on earth can remember us before Him."

And then the lady began speaking to me: "These people were good Christians. They loved the Lord and performed good deeds for their neighbor, but they did not acquire the Lord in their souls.

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They ended up here, like you, because of their negligent lives, since they thought that everyone lived the same way."

"Oh!" I said. "Oh, how I am tormented and suffer! It is as if fire is burning me!" I fell down, with the sensation that my body was being separated from my bones.

"What kind of life did you desire?" the lady asked me. I replied, shaking: "I would have liked the kind of life such that, when I died, I would see earthly and heavenly things, the Lord and the Mother of God."

At this point, the lady smiled and said: "Only the Saints enter Eternity in this way – those who, through the Jesus Prayer, acquired the Lord in their hearts while they were alive. But you are a nun, and yet you did not teach yourself this! By means of this prayer, the Grace of God comes to dwell in you, and when the soul is parted from the body, it is with Christ and does not feel this trembling that you are now experiencing. Paradise is in a man's soul; where the Lord is present, there Paradise is also. You should speak about your vision to all monastics and to all Christians who live on earth and are going to perdition on account of their negligence. Only do not speak of it to unbelievers and those whose faith is weak. The Almighty is able to raise up a man who has been dead for a hundred years, in order to prove that there is life after death; but a person so raised would not be believed, and they would kill him."

While the lady was uttering these words, I suddenly felt some hope that I would be returning to earth! All of those who were in the metal chamber pierced me with their glares, saying: "Well, then, do you intend for her to leave this fearful torture chamber?"

The lady continued: "If someone dies while saying the Jesus Prayer, his soul stands in the presence of the Lord, and he will be inseparable from Him for eternity. Likewise, if a man dies while uttering the prayer, 'Most Holy Theotokos, save me, a sinner,' then he will be inseparable from the Mother of God.

If someone is not able to utter even a single word, then, if he struggled to attain this prayer during his life on earth, his soul will say it for him on his deathbed. The state in which the soul leaves the body is the state in which it abides forever. There will be no change for the better. Only if one is commemorated (on earth) can he alter the state of his soul."

Then she said: "O monastics, monastics! You call yourselves monks and nuns, saying that you have abandoned worldly things. But just how do you live? You do not entrust all your problems to God and the Mother of God, but you think: 'I need to have this and that; I cannot live without this thing or the other thing.' The Mother of God does not look after such monastics, either in this life or in the next. She only looks after those who entrust all of their problems to her, who withstand afflictions, poverty, and illness in the name of the Mother of God and say: 'These things must be pleasing to the Queen of Heaven; they have all come upon me in accordance with the will of the Most High.'"

"Do you want me to show you the negligent monastics?" the lady continued. "Look."

And I saw nuns coming towards me – those who served in the Altar and stole money, forever holding in their hands the pieces of paper on which were recorded the people whom the money belonged.

There also came others, who failed to preserve their chastity. Among them were chanters, whose faces were grief-stricken, like my own, wounded by an everlasting sorrow.

"Chant a hymn to the Mother of God; I want to hear one!" I said.

And they responded: "We no longer have such boldness, for when we were living in the monastery, we did not serve her with a pure heart."

I wept bitterly, for on account of our inattentiveness we were deprived of this blessing of chanting hymns to the Lord and His All-Holy Mother.



After all of these things that I saw and heard, the man who had taken me into the judgment chambers came and told me: "We will now go to the place where your soul is separated from your body."

I suddenly awoke on my bed. I was afraid to move. I looked all around my cell, tidied it up, made the sign of the Cross, and uttered a prayer: 'Glory to God, it was only a dream!' I had barely managed to say these words, when I suddenly found myself back in the next life, and the man who had been guiding me said to me: "Do not think that you were dreaming. You really were in the life beyond the grave!"

I fell on my knees before him: "Woe is me! How miserable I am! I am back here again. Why was I only concerned about the things in my cell and not about running to get away?"

"Follow me," he told me. "We will visit many places for twenty days, and afterwards we will return to the place that has been prepared for you to abide in until the Second Coming of the Lord."

I wept and was unable to walk. He turned his face and looked at me with compassion. I asked him: "Are you my Guardian Angel?"

"Yes," he replied.

I began to implore him: "Pray to the Most High and return my soul, so that I may repent."

Then my Guardian Angel said; "I will take you back, but under one condition: that you tell of all that you saw and heard here."

I fell on my knees and promised that I would do all of this. And suddenly, at that very moment, I felt joy in my soul. The Angel said to me: "The Lord is not in your heart, but you have promised to acquire Him. If you are overcome by foolish embarrassment and do not fulfill your promise, then you will return here to your previous place. I will be with you and I will observe how you do all of these things."

At once I was back on my bed. I sprang up, seeing the man standing beside my bed. I ran to my cell-attendant, saying: "I was in the life after death!" After that, I ran from there to the door, to tell all of the Sisters. The man was still standing on the same spot. I was afraid that something was going to happen to me. I opened the door to tell the Sisters everything, with out embarrassment and without concealing anything. Then I saw that the man had disappeared through the wall. I went again into the corridor in a state of rapture; I summoned the Sisters.

They hastened to surround me and were astonished at the extraordinary change that they saw in me, which had come over me in such a short span of time. They had seen me totally calm twenty minutes earlier at our regular service. I fell on my knees before them and told them that from this moment on I would change completely.

No terror on earth can be compared with that horror that I experienced in the life after death. And to this day, I constantly speak with everyone about what I saw, without any hesitation. Amen!

## A REFLECTION ON PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW'S VISIT TO THESSALONIKI, MAY 29, 2003

*By Joseph Hostetler, O.C.N. Opinion, May 2003.*

I have been driven to this keyboard by a feeling of gross illness at the events which are taking place here in Thessaloniki today. Today, when all Orthodox, and especially all Hellenes, remember the fall of the great center of Orthodox Christian civilization, Constantinople, to the Turks, which took place on **May 29th, 1453**, exactly 550 years ago, the Patriarch of this same city spends his day meeting with the Jewish minority of Thessaloniki and remembering the victims of the Holocaust. Today, when memorial services ought to be served for all those who lost their lives in Constantinople defending the city, the Patriarch is visiting the Holocaust memorial and the Jewish Museum and participating in a service to their memory. Today, when not 30 minutes from the Patriarch's entourage Hierarchs and clergy at St. Demetrios' Basilica are serving a memorial for the last Emperor of the Roman Empire, the successor of the Patriarchs of that Empire can't spare 1 hour to join them. (Mind you, this is **THE** Patriarch of Constantinople and New Rome, The Ecumenical Patriarch, spiritual leader of 300 million Orthodox Christians, as he and his press agency so often like to remind us.) Rather, as Archpriest of the New Covenant he passes his time with those who claim to be archpriests of the Old Covenant and who deny the very Christ the Patriarch claims to serve.

One would naturally suppose that He has come to Northern Greece to visit his flock, his children in Christ, the Orthodox Christians of Macedonia. And yet, we are told by the news agencies and by his press secretaries that the purpose of his visit here is mainly to meet with the leaders of other religions. In meeting with them, we are told, he is simply pursuing the road of peace and is not here to try to persuade them about the Truth of Christ. But is that possible -- to sever Peace and Truth in two? Is it possible for a servant of Truth to put Truth aside in order to seek and achieve Peace, which, we believe as Orthodox Christians, is Truth Himself, Christ Himself? Are these not truths that every believer lives and experiences? How then has our Patriarch become so confused as to set them aside, if not deny them, in favor of "achieving peace" among and with those of and in this world? And all of this on the day when God allowed for the Queen of Cities to fall for its lack of faith in Him. How tragically fitting.

At the same time that we witness this course of events, we read that the Patriarch is upset with certain "fanatical professors of theology and clergy" here in Thessaloniki. He tells us that he is not like them, that he is rather blessed as a "peacemaker" and as a follower of the great hierarch of our city, Saint Gregory Palamas. How is that, you ask? Well, "Saint Gregory Palamas conducted a dialogue with Muslims," the Patriarch says. "Did he lose anything by it? No. Rather, he is a Saint of

the Church. These very simple and very logical things, with their great historical basis, are passed over by the fanatics, the intolerant ones, university professors, who shamelessly lead their students into fanaticism.” So says the Patriarch. The only problem with this is that Saint Gregory Palamas did not conduct a dialogue with Muslims willingly and freely. Rather, he was taken captive by the Turks and led as a prisoner to these dialogues. And he was kept in Asia Minor just as long as it took for his friends in Constantinople to raise enough money to ransom him from his captives, and then the “dialogues” came to an abrupt end.

Can the Patriarch claim to anything similar? Where is he conducting his dialogue, and under what circumstances? The international, inter-religious dialogue that the Patriarch is attending and leading is being held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Thessaloniki. No one to my knowledge is attending with a knife to their throat or is in need of ransoming, unless, that is, we are talking in spiritual terms about their salvation. So much for following in that “long tradition” of dialogues with non-Christians, so “simple” and “logical” with its “historical basis.” Perhaps the Patriarch ought to think again about who is “shamelessly leading others in fanaticism”. Fanaticism, you know, is not the exclusive property of those whom you don’t agree with. Patriarchs and professional ecumenists can be just as fanatical about their cause as any one else. And such fanaticism often expresses itself in half-truths and inaccuracy such as that presented by the Patriarch, which, by the way, have no historical base.

One stands in awe at the boldness and brazenness, the shamelessness and fearlessness. One shivers in fear and trembling at the site of such a betrayal of the Patriarchate’s legacy and mission, of Orthodoxy’s nature and purpose. What will become of us, the pleoroma of the Church, if we do not act quickly and lovingly to reverse matters? Are we awaiting a change of course from the Patriarch of his own accord, for him to come to his senses and assume his responsibilities as Archshepherd? We are deluded if we think that this will happen. The Patriarch assures us that “the voice of the Mother Church is not about to change just because certain people yell and scream and hand out pamphlets on Mount Athos.” And he calls upon the “intolerant” to “come to their senses, repent and pray, because they will lose their souls with that which they do.”

The fact that the Patriarch has no intention to change his course of actions should come as no surprise, for it is apparent that he fears neither God nor men in terms of these actions. He has been emboldened by the silence of the many, who, nonetheless, are clearly unsettled by his actions. Yet their uneasiness has not translated into action, which brings a change of course. Has the love of many indeed grown so cold that even the Hierarchs and faithful of the Church are frozen into non-action? Have they too lost their love for God, but also for the Patriarch himself? We have to believe they have not, and that the time has now come for action to happen and for the love of Christ and our Mother, the Church, to be lived out in word and deed. For finally, at this point, the only thing that silence and cooperation is **not**, is love.

## AN EXPERIENCE DURING HOLY COMMUNION

*SOURCE: From the book “Εμπειρίες Κατά τήν Θεία Λειτουργία / Experiences during the Divine Liturgy” by Protopresbyter Stephanos K. Anagnostopoulos, Peiraias, 2002, pg. 33, translated from Greek by Kostas Matsourakis.*



Fr. Ieronimos (+1966)

This is something that took place in our own century with Fr. Ieronimos the “One-Handed” of Aegina, who managed to survive in his own hand-built Hesycasterion until his falling asleep in 1966. A year before, in 1965, I had visited him with my Presvytera and after many counsels he made sure to relate to me, with much solemnity, about his ordination to priesthood and how and why he gave it up.

In 1923, when he was still a deacon with the name Vasilios, Metropolitan Panteleimon of Karystia, while visiting him on Aegina, after much pressure by many, he was convinced and ordained him a priest. He then assigned him to the Hospital of Aegina, where he served as Chaplain. The name Ieronimos he took a year later from the holy Elder Ieronimos of Simonopetra, when he gave him the Great Angelic Schema, since by then he had already given up the priesthood.

This took place the fortieth day after his ordination, during the Divine Liturgy. It was just after the Consecration of the Holy Gifts, and although the moment to commune had come, enraptured and transported as he was from the prayer and awe of his heart, he suddenly watched the Holy Gifts within the Holy Chalice take on the form of Flesh and Blood. True flesh and true blood! Of course, he was utterly shattered by this otherworldly sight and for quite some time he remained praying before this most awesome mystery, shedding many scalding tears. Then, full of trembling, he came to the Royal Gate and made the Dismissal, without an explanation to anybody.

Then, for many hours he prayed with great intensity, pleading with God to show mercy, and to return His most-holy Body and Blood to their natural form of bread and wine, which finally happened. Thereafter, that very night in fact, he handed in his resignation. From that time on, he said, his hands felt unable to “spear” the Lord during the Holy Preparation or to “divide” Him after the Consecration. He did continue to serve in the Church at the Hospital as a chanter and homilist.

In his unique manner he said to me with great emphasis: “It is not possible with my mortal and sinful hands to touch the Lord of Glory.” And as we were departing, after having kissed, he told me sententiously: “Be careful, my papa. Because very few priests are saved.” To another cleric he once said very naturally: “If you don’t see your Guardian Angel next to you while you’re at the Holy Altar, don’t liturgize!”

## Ἡ Μοναδικότητα τῆς Γῆς στὸ Σύμπαν Ὡς Μία Ἄλλη Απόδειξη Τῆς Ὑπὸ Θεοῦ Δημιουργίας

Γράφει ὁ Γιάννης Ἡρακλέους Χαρανᾶς, Καθηγητῆς Πανεπιστημίου Γιόρκ, Τμῆμα Ἀστρονομίας καὶ Φυσικῆς, Τορόντο, Καναδάς.

Ἐξετάζοντας μὲ λεπτομέρεια τὴν φυσικὴ τοῦ πλανήτη Γῆ εἶναι πραγματικὰ ἀδύνατον γιὰ τὸν κάθε στοχαστὴ ἐπιστήμονα ἢ ὄχι νὰ μὴν ἔρθει πολὺ σύντομα ἀντιμέτωπος μὲ τὴν μεταφυσικὴ διάσταση τοῦ προβλήματος, ἐνὸς προβλήματος ποὺ πολὺ σύντομα ἀντιλαμβάνεται κανεὶς ὅτι μπορεῖ νὰ πάρει τὶς διαστάσεις ἐνὸς τρομερᾶ ἐμπεριστατωμένου σχεδίου. Ἔτσι σκοπὸς μας εἶναι νὰ παρουσιάσουμε ἀπλὰ αὐτὲς τὶς τόσο κατ' ἄλλους «τυχαῖες» συμπτώσεις οἱ ὁποῖες κυριαρχοῦν στὴν φυσικὴ τοῦ πλανήτη Γῆ.

Ὡς γνωστόν, ἡ Γῆ εἶναι ὁ μοναδικὸς πλανήτης ὁ ὁποῖος βρίσκεται σὲ τροχιά γύρω ἀπὸ τὸν ἥλιο, καὶ στὸν ὁποῖο ἡ ζωὴ ὅπως τὴν ξέρουμε θὰ μπορούσε νὰ ὑπάρχει καὶ ὑπάρχει πραγματικὰ. Ἐὰν ρίχναμε μία γρήγορη ματιὰ καὶ συγκρίναμε τὴν Γῆ μας μὲ τοὺς ἄλλους πλανῆτες θὰ βρῖσκαμε ἀρκετὲς ἀξιοσημείωτες ἀντιθέσεις. Ἀπὸ χημικῆς ἀπόψεως καὶ συστατικῶν, ἡ Γῆ ἀποτελεῖται κυρίως ἀπὸ σίδηρο, ὀξυγόνο, θεῖο, πυρίτιο, μαγνήσιο, καὶ νικέλιο συνολικοῦ ποσοστοῦ 98%, καὶ ἐνὸς ἄλλου ποσοστοῦ 2% τὸ ὁποῖο ἀποτελεῖται ἀπὸ ἑκατὸ περίπου ἄλλα στοιχεῖα. Ἡ Γῆ ὅμως ὅπως κανένας ἄλλος ἐκ τῶν πλανητῶν καλύπτεται ἀπὸ θάλασσες, βουνά, δάση, καὶ σὲ τελευταία ἀνάλυση ὅταν κάποιος τὴν παρατηρεῖ ἀπὸ τὸ διάστημα ἐμφανίζει τὰ πιὸ ὁμορφα χρώματα στὴν ἐπιφάνειά της, σὲ ἀντίθεση μὲ τοὺς ἄλλους πλανῆτες οἱ ὁποῖοι παρουσιάζουν θαμπὰ χρώματα. Τέλος καὶ πάνω ἀπ' ὅλα, ἡ Γῆ φιλοξενεῖ τὸ μοναδικὸ φαινόμενο τῆς ζωῆς, ἀπὸ τὸν ἰσημερινὸ μέχρι καὶ στὰ παγωμένα βᾶθη τῆς Ἀνταρκτικῆς.

Ἡ Γῆ ἔχει μέση πυκνότητα  $5,515 \text{ gm/cm}^3$  καὶ διάμετρο  $12,756 \text{ Km}$ , ζυγίζει δὲ περίπου  $6,6 \times 10^{24} \text{ kg}$ . Ἐὰν τώρα ταξίδευε στὴν τροχιά της (ποὺ ἔχει μῆκος  $476.20$  ἑκατομμύρια χιλιόμετρα γύρω ἀπὸ τὸν ἥλιο) πολὺ πιὸ γρήγορα ἀπὸ  $30 \text{ km/sec}$ , ἡ φυγόκεντρος δύναμη θὰ τὴν τραβοῦσε μακριὰ ἀπὸ τὸν ἥλιο μὲ ἀποτέλεσμα, κάθε μορφὴ ζωῆς θὰ πέθαινε πάνω στὴν Γῆ. Ἄν ὅμως τώρα ἡ Γῆ ταξίδευε στὴν τροχιά της μὲ ταχύτητα μικρότερη ἀπ' αὐτὴν ποὺ ταξιδεύει, τότε ἡ Γῆ θὰ πλησίαζε περισσότερο τὸν ἥλιο μὲ ἀποτέλεσμα καὶ πάλι τὴν καταστροφὴ κάθε μορφῆς ζωῆς πάνω στὸν πλανήτη λόγω τῆς τρομερῆς ἡλιακῆς θερμοκρασίας. Ἡ περίοδος περιστροφῆς τῆς Γῆς γύρω ἀπὸ τὸν ἥλιο εἶναι ἴση μὲ  $365$  ἡμέρες,  $5$  ὥρες,  $48$  λεπτά, καὶ  $45.51$  δευτερόλεπτα, ἔχει δὲ ἀκρίβεια τῆς τάξεως τοῦ ἐνὸς χιλιοστοῦ τοῦ δευτερολέπτου. Ἐὰν τώρα ἡ μέση θερμοκρασία τῆς Γῆς ἀνέβαινε ἢ κατέβαινε

ἔστω καὶ μερικοὺς βαθμοὺς, ἓνα μεγαλύτερο μέρος τῆς ζωῆς πάνω στὴν Γῆ καὶ πάλι θὰ χάνονταν μιὰ καὶ ἡ ἐπιφάνεια τῆς Γῆς καὶ πάλι θὰ θερμαίνονταν ἢ θὰ πάγωνε. Αὐτὴ ἡ ἀλλαγὴ θὰ κατέστρεφε τὶς ἰσορροπίες νερῶν καὶ πάγων, καθὼς καὶ ἄλλες ἰσορροπίες μὲ μέγιστα καταστροφικὰ ἀποτελέσματα. Ἐὰν τέλος ἡ Γῆ περιστρεφόταν γύρω ἀπὸ τὸν ἄξονά της πολὺ πιὸ ἀργὰ ἀπ' ὅτι περιστρέφεται, καὶ πάλι ὅλες οἱ μορφές ζωῆς θὰ ἔπαυαν, ἀφοῦ τὴν νύχτα τὰ πάντα θὰ πάγωναν ἀπὸ τὴν ἔλλειψη τῆς θερμοτῆτος τοῦ ἡλίου, καὶ τὴν ἡμέρα τὰ πάντα θὰ καίγονταν ἀπὸ τὸν πολὺ ἥλιο.

Δεύτερος τώρα στὴν σειρά προτεραιότητος γιὰ τὰ γῆινα φυσικὰ φαινόμενα εἶναι ὁ ἥλιος. Ἀπ' ὅλη τὴν ἐνέργεια ποὺ παράγει, μόνο ἓνα δισεκατομμυριοστὸ αὐτῆς τῆς ἐνέργειας λαμβάνει ἡ Γῆ στὴν ἐπιφάνειά της. Στὴν κυριολεξία, ὁ ἥλιος προμηθεύει τὴν Γῆ μὲ  $130$  τρισεκατομμύρια ἄλογα ἰσχύος κάθε μέρα, ποὺ ἀντιστοιχοῦν σὲ περίπου πενήντα χιλιάδες ἄλογα ἰσχύος ἀνὰ κάθε κάτοικο τῆς Γῆς. Ἄν καὶ στὸ σύμπαν ὑπάρχουν περίπου μερικὲς χιλιάδες δισεκατομμύρια γαλαξίες, ὑπάρχει μόνο ἓνα ἄτομο γιὰ  $88$  γαλόνια χώρου ἢ ἓνα ἄτομο ἀνὰ  $51.633,12 \text{ cm}^3$ . Αὐτὸ φυσικὰ σημαίνει ὅτι κατὰ κανόνα τὸ μεγαλύτερο μέρος τοῦ σύμπαντος εἶναι ἄδειος χώρος!

Ἄν τώρα ἡ σελήνη ἦταν πολὺ πιὸ κοντὰ στὴν Γῆ, ἓνα ἀπὸ τὰ ἄμεσα ἀποτελέσματα θὰ ἦταν οἱ τρομερὰ μεγάλες παλίρροιες οἱ ὁποῖες θὰ δημιουργοῦσαν μεγάλες πλημμύρες, κατατρώγοντας ἐδάφη καὶ βουνά. Ὑπολογίζεται ὅτι τὸ νερὸ θὰ κάλυπτε τὴν ἐπιφάνεια τῆς Γῆς σὲ μῆκος  $2,413,5 \text{ Km}$  ἀπὸ τὴν ἐπιφάνεια τῆς θάλασσας καὶ πρὸς τὸ ἐσωτερικὸ. Ἐὰν ἐπίσης κλίση τοῦ ἄξονα τῆς Γῆς δὲν ἦταν  $23$  μοῖρες ἀλλὰ  $90$  σὲ σχέση μὲ τὸν ἥλιο, τότε, δὲν θὰ ὑπῆρχαν κἂν οἱ τέσσερες ἐποχές, καὶ αὐτὸ θὰ σήμαινε ἀκόμη μιὰ φορὰ τὸ τέλος τῆς ζωῆς πάνω στὴν Γῆ, οἱ δὲ πόλοι θὰ ἦταν σὲ ἓνα αἰώνιο λυκόφως. Ἔτσι, οἱ ἄτμοι τοῦ νεροῦ ἀπὸ τοὺς ὠκεανοὺς οἱ ὁποῖοι θὰ μεταφέρονταν διὰ τῶν ἀνέμων πρὸς τοὺς πόλους, θὰ πάγωναν μόλις ἔφθαναν κοντὰ στοὺς πόλους, μὲ ἀποτέλεσμα ὅτι μὲ τὰ χρόνια στὴν κυριολεξία ἡπειροὶ ἀπὸ πάγους καὶ χιόνι θὰ συσσωρεύονταν πρὸς τὶς πολιτικὲς περιοχές, ἀφήνοντας τὴν ὑπόλοιπη ἐπιφάνεια τῆς Γῆς μιὰ ξερὴ ἔρημο. Τελικὰ οἱ ὠκεανοὶ θὰ ἐξαφανίζονταν καὶ οἱ βροχὲς θὰ σταματοῦσαν. Ἡ συσσώρευση τοῦ τεράστιου βάρους τῶν πάγων στοὺς πόλους θὰ ἔκανε τὸν ἰσημερινὸ τῆς Γῆς νὰ ἐξογκωθεῖ, καὶ σὰν ἀποτέλεσμα ἡ περιστροφὴ τῆς Γῆς θὰ ἄλλαζε δραστικά.

Ἐνα ἄλλο στοιχεῖο τὸ ὁποῖο ἐπίσης παίζει μεγάλο ρόλο γιὰ τὴν ζωὴ πάνω στὴν Γῆ εἶναι φυσικὰ ὅπως ὅλοι γνωρίζουμε τὸ νερὸ. Τὸ  $70 \%$  τῆς ἐπιφάνειας τῆς Γῆς καλύπτεται ἀπὸ νερὸ. Σ' αὐτὸ τὸ μεγάλο ποσοστὸ τοῦ ὑδροῦ στοιχείου εἶναι βαπτισμένοι οἱ ἡπειροὶ. Ἔτσι, τὸ νερὸ παίζει τὸν τόσο σημαντικὸ ρόλο του νὰ



ἀπορροφᾶ μεγάλα ποσοστά θερμότητας χωρὶς φυσικὰ νὰ ἀλλάξει πολὺ ἡ θερμοκρασία τῆς ἐπιφάνειας τῆς Γῆς. Ἡ ταχύτητα αὐτὴ τῆς ἀπορροφῆσεως εἶναι πάρα πολὺ μεγάλη. Κατὰ τὴν διάρκειά τῆς ἡμέρας, οἱ θάλασσες ἀπορροφοῦν ἓνα μεγάλο μέρος τῆς θερμότητας ἔτσι ὥστε ἡ Γῆ νὰ μένει ἀρκετὰ δροσερή. Τὴν νύχτα, οἱ ὠκεανοὶ ἀφήνουν ἐλεύθερη τὴν θερμότητα αὐτὴ τὴν ὁποία ἀπερρόφησαν τὴν ἡμέρα, ἡ ὁποία σὲ συνδυασμὸ μὲ διάφορα ἀτμοσφαιρικὰ φαινόμενα, βοηθᾷ στὸ νὰ μὴν μειώνεται ἡ θερμοκρασία τῆς ἐπιφάνειας τὴν νύχτα πολὺ χαμηλά. Ἄν λοιπὸν δὲν ὑπῆρχαν οἱ μάζες αὐτὲς τοῦ νεροῦ πάνω στὴν Γῆ θὰ ὑπῆρχαν ὁποσδήποτε πιὸ μεγαλύτερες μεταβολὲς στὶς ἡμερήσιες καὶ νυχτερινὲς θερμοκρασίες τῆς. Πολλὰ μέρη πάνω στὴν Γῆ θὰ ἦταν τόσο θερμὰ πὸν τὸ νερὸ θὰ ἔβραζε ἀπὸ μόνο του κατὰ τὴν διάρκειά τῆς ἡμέρας, καὶ θὰ πάγωνε κατὰ τὴν διάρκειά τῆς νύχτας. Πρέπει νὰ τονίσουμε ὅτι τὸ νερὸ παῖζει τὸν ρόλο τοῦ σταθεροποιητῆ τῆς θερμοκρασίας, οἱ δὲ ὠκεανοὶ εἶναι τόσο βασικοὶ καὶ γιὰ τὴν δική μας ἐπιβίωση.

Προβλήματα θὰ μπορούσαν νὰ ὑπάρξουν καὶ ἀπὸ τὶς ὑπάρχουσες μάζες τοῦ νεροῦ πάνω στὴν Γῆ. Ὅπως ὅλα τὰ στοιχεῖα, ἔτσι καὶ τὸ νερὸ συστέλλεται ὅταν ψύγεται μέχρι πὸν νὰ φτάσει τὴν θερμοκρασία τῶν 4° C, καὶ μετὰ, κατὰ θαυμαστὸ τρόπο, ἀρχίζει νὰ διαστέλλεται μέχρι πὸν νὰ παγώσει. Ἄν τὸ νερὸ συνέχιζε νὰ συστέλλεται ψυχωμένο θὰ γινόταν φυσικὰ καὶ πιὸ βαρύτερο, μὲ ἀποτέλεσμα, νὰ βυθιζόταν στὸν πυθμὲνα τῶν ὠκεανῶν, κἀνοντας καὶ πάλι τὸ ἴδιο ἂν μετατρέπονταν σὲ πάγο, μὲ ἀποτέλεσμα τὸ ἄμεσο πάγωμα τοῦ πυθμὲνα τῶν ὠκεανῶν, καὶ τὴν καταστροφὴ λόγω ψύχους κάθε μορφῆς ζωῆς.

Τώρα, πάνω στὴν ἐπιφάνεια τῆς Γῆς συμβαίνει κάτι τὸ ὁποῖο εἶναι ἀντίθετο ἀπ' αὐτὸ πὸν συμβαίνει στοὺς ὠκεανούς, δηλαδή, ὁ ἀέρας πὸν βρῖσκεται κοντὰ στὴν ἐπιφάνεια θερμαίνεται ἀπὸ τὶς ἀκτίνες τοῦ ἡλίου, καὶ στὴν συνέχεια ἀνεβαίνει πρὸς τὰ πάνω. Σὰν ἀποτέλεσμα αὐτοῦ τοῦ φαινομένου εἶναι τὸ γεγονὸς ὅτι ὁ ἀέρας κοντὰ στὴν ἐπιφάνεια τῆς Γῆς ἔχει τὴν θερμοκρασία τὴν ὁποία χρειάζεται γιὰ νὰ συντηρηθεῖ καὶ νὰ ὑπάρξει ζωὴ. Ἄν ὁ ἀέρας συμπεριφερόταν μὲ τὸν ἴδιο τρόπο ὅπως τὸ νερὸ, τότε ἡ θερμοκρασία πάνω στὴν ἐπιφάνεια τῆς Γῆς θὰ ἦταν ἀφόρητη καὶ ἔτσι ἡ ζωὴ δὲν θὰ μπορούσε νὰ διαρκέσει γιὰ πολὺ.

Ἡ κίνηση τοῦ ζεστοῦ ἀέρα ἀπὸ τὴν ἐπιφάνεια καὶ πρὸς τὰ πάνω παράγει ἀέρια ρεύματα ( ἀνέμους ) τὰ ὁποία εἶναι πολὺ σπουδαία γιὰ τὸ οἰκολογικὸ σύστημα τῆς Γῆς. Γιὰ νὰ εἴμαστε πιὸ λεπτομερεῖς, μεταφέρουν μακριὰ ἀπὸ κέντρα πὸν ὑπερπαράγουν τὸ διοξείδιο τοῦ ἄνθρακος, ὅπως οἱ πόλεις, καὶ κινοῦν τὸ χρήσιμο ὀξυγόνο στὶς ἴδιες ἢ ἄλλες περιοχὲς πὸν τὸ

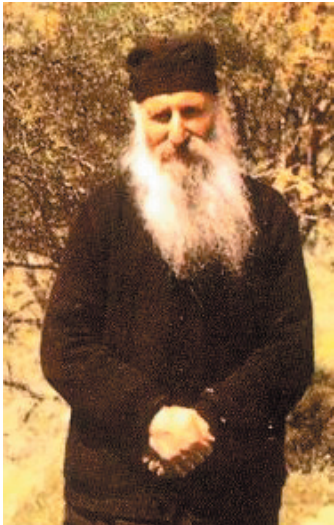
χρειάζονται. Ἡ ἀναλογία τῶν ἀερίων πὸν ὑπάρχουν στὴν ἀτμόσφαιρα, καὶ φυσικὰ χωρὶς τὴν μόλυνση τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, εἶναι τέλεια γιὰ νὰ συντηρήσουν τὴν ζωὴ. Ἄν, γιὰ παράδειγμα, ἦταν σὲ διαφορετικὴ ἀναλογία περισσότερο ὀξυγόνο καὶ λιγότερο διοξείδιο τοῦ ἄνθρακος, ἢ ἔαν ἡ ἀτμοσφαιρικὴ πίεση ἦταν πιὸ λιγότερη ἢ περισσότερο, καὶ πάλι ἡ ζωὴ δὲν θὰ μπορούσε νὰ ἀναπτυχθεῖ καὶ νὰ συντηρηθεῖ στὴν Γῆ. Ἐνα ἀκόμη σπουδαῖο παράδειγμα εἶναι τὸ πάχος τῆς ἀτμόσφαιρας. Μιὰ πιὸ λιγότερο παχιά ἀτμόσφαιρα θὰ προξενούσε στὴν Γῆ τεράστιες καταστροφὲς ἀπὸ τὰ ἑκατομμύρια μετεωρίτες πὸν δὲν θὰ προλάβαιναν νὰ καοῦν στὴν ἀτμόσφαιρα τῆς Γῆς.

Ἐὰν τώρα ὑποθέσουμε ὅτι οἱ μηχανισμοὶ τῆς ἐξελίξεως εἶναι πραγματικὰ ἡ μοναδικὴ αἰτία γιὰ τὴν διαμόρφωση τῆς ζωῆς καὶ μὲ τὴν βοήθεια ἐπίσης κάποιων ἀνάλογων συνθηκῶν καὶ περιβάλλοντος πάνω στὴν Γῆ, εὐλόγα κανεὶς ἔρχεται ἀντιμέτωπος μὲ τὴν ἐξῆς ἐρώτηση. Γιατί τότε κατὰ τὸν ἴδιο τρόπο καὶ μὲ ἴση πιθανότητα δὲν ἀναπτύχθηκε ἡ ζωὴ σὲ ὅλα τὰ γήινα ὑπόλοιπα “περιβάλλοντα” παρὰ προτίμησε μόνο μερικὰ ἀπ' αὐτὰ ἢ μόνο μερικὲς σὲ σχέση μὲ ἄλλες συνθήκες; Ἀκόμη πρέπει νὰ τονίσουμε πὸς ἡ Γῆ διαθέτει τὸ πιὸ τέλειο περιβάλλον γιὰ τὴν ἀνάπτυξη ζωῆς ἀπ' ὅλους τοὺς ἄλλους πλανῆτες. Ἡ τόσο τέλεια ἰσορροπία μεταξὺ ζωῆς καὶ περιβάλλοντος μπορεῖ νὰ κατανοηθεῖ μὲ τὸ ἐξῆς παράδειγμα. Ἐὰν ἡ μέση θερμοκρασία τῆς Γῆς ἄλλαξε μόνο ἓνα βαθμὸ τότε θὰ μπορούσε μὲ τὸν χρόνον νὰ προξενήσει μεγάλη καὶ σημαντικὴ ἀλλαγὴ στὴν ζωὴ πάνω στὴν Γῆ, οἱ δύο δὲ βαθμοὶ θὰ ἦταν στ' ἀλήθεια καταστροφικοὶ γιὰ κάθε μορφὴ ζωῆς στὸν πλανῆτη. Ἡ πιθανότητα ὅτι καὶ ἄλλοι πλανῆτες στὸ σύμπαν θὰ μπορούσαν νὰ ἔχουν τὶς ἴδιες συνθήκες γιὰ νὰ ἀναπτυχθεῖ ζωὴ εἶναι πάρα πολὺ μικρὴ μὴ καὶ οἱ συνθήκες εἶναι πολὺ ἀκατάλληλες. Ἡ περίπτωση ἑνὸς πλανῆτου νὰ ἔχει πρῶτον τὸ σωστὸ μέγεθος, δεύτερον τὴν σωστὴ ἀπόσταση ἀπὸ ἓνα ἀστέρι, καὶ τρίτον νὰ εἶναι τοῦ σωστοῦ φασματοσκοπικοῦ τύπου εἶναι στ' ἀλήθεια πάρα πολὺ μικρὴ, ἀκόμη καὶ γιὰ ἐκεῖνα τὰ ἀστέρια τὰ ὁποία φιλοξενοῦν πλανῆτες σὲ τροχιά τους.

Πρέπει στὸ σημεῖο αὐτὸ νὰ ὑπενθυμίσουμε ὅτι ἡ μαθηματικὴ πιθανότητα ὄλων αὐτῶν τῶν φυσικῶν καθὼς καὶ ὄλων τῶν εἰδικῶν συνθηκῶν γιὰ τὴν ζωὴ νὰ ἔγιναν τυχαῖα εἶναι ἓνας ἀριθμὸς ἴσος μὲ ἓνα πρὸς μερικὰ δισεκατομμύρια. Μπορεῖ ἐπίσης νὰ μὴν εἶναι τυχαῖο τὸ γεγονὸς ὅτι σὲ θεωρητικοὺς ὑπολογισμοὺς πλανητικῶν συστημάτων, πὸν θὰ μπορούσαν νὰ φιλοξενήσουν ζωὴ μὲ βάσει τὸν ἄνθρακα, οἱ τιμὲς τῶν παραμέτρων γιὰ καλλίτερα ἀποτελέσματα συμπίπτουν μὲ τὶς ἤδη ὑπάρχουσες γιὰ τὴν δημιουργία τῆς Γῆς!!!

## Μὲ Νομίζουνε Χαζὸ καὶ Τρελὸ

Γέροντας Ἰάκωβος Τσαλίκης, Ἀπὸ τὸ βιβλίο «Ὁ Μακαριστὸς Ἰάκωβος Τσαλίκης», Ἐκδόσεις Τροχαλία.



Ὅλο τὸν Ὀκτώβρη πονοῦσε καὶ ὑπέφερε ἀφάνταστα. Γινότανε κάτωχρος, ἔχανε ἀπὸ τὸ πρόσωπο κάθε ἴχνος ζωῆς, τὸν ἐνόμιζε κανεὶς νεκρό. Τοῦ ἀπαγόρευαν κάθε ἀπασχόληση, νὰ μὴν ἐξομολογεῖ, οὔτε στὴν Ἀκολουθία νὰ κατεβαίνει. Ἐκεῖνος, μόλις λίγο συννερχόταν, καὶ ἐξομολογοῦσε καὶ στὴν Ἀκολουθία κατέβαινε.

Προπαντὸς προσευχότανε γιὰ τὰ προβλήματα

τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ποὺ τοῦ τὸ ζητοῦσαν. Οἱ θεραπείες πλήθαιναν, καὶ ὁ κόσμος ὅλο καὶ περισσότερο κατέφευγε στὸ Μοναστήρι. Ἀλλὰ δὲν ἦτανε μόνο οἱ φρόνιμοι καὶ εὐσεβεῖς. Κάποιοι σκέφτονταν καὶ λέγανε δυσάρεστα γιὰ τὸ γέροντα, ποὺ μὲ τὸ δικό του τρόπο τὰ ἐπληροφορεῖτο. Στεναχωριότανε γι' αὐτὰ καὶ μία μέρα ἀφέθηκε:

«Πάτερ μου, μὲ νομίζουνε χαζό, τρελό... ἅμα πεθάνω θὰ δοῦνε ποιὸς εἶναι ὁ Ἰάκωβος... Δὲν τὰ λέω ἀπὸ ἐγωισμό καὶ ὑπερηφάνεια, ἀλλὰ τὰ λέω πρὸς δόξαν Θεοῦ αὐτά!»

Καὶ πράγματι, ὅσο πλησίαζε τὸ τέλος του, ἐνῶ ἰκέτευε γιὰ τὸ ἔλεος τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἐνῶ ἔλεγε καὶ ξανάλεγε ὅτι «δὲν ἔχω κάνει τίποτα γιὰ τὸ Χριστό», ἀφηνότανε καμιά φορὰ κι ἔλεγε γιὰ τὰ χαρίσματα, ποὺ τοῦ ἔδωσε ὁ Θεός:

«Ἐχω τὴν ὑπακοή καὶ τὴν ταπεινοφροσύνη, γιατί νὰ μὴν τὸ πῶ... ἀφοῦ ὁ Θεός μου τὰ ἔδωσε!»

Ἄλλοτε πάλι, μὲ λίγο πλάγιο τρόπο, θέλοντας νὰ πείσει ὅτι λησιμονεῖ ὅσα τοῦ ἐξομολογοῦνται, εἶπε:

«Θεέ μου, μοῦ ἔχεις δώσει πολλὰ χαρίσματα. Σὲ παρακαλῶ νὰ μοῦ δώσεις κι ἄλλο ἓνα; νὰ ξεχνῶ αὐτὰ ποὺ μοῦ λένε στὴν ἐξομολόγηση.»

Καὶ κάτι πολὺ περισσότερο. Μεταξὺ 15 καὶ 20 Ὀκτωβρίου, τὸν ἄκουσε ὁ π. Κύριλλος νὰ μονολογεῖ:

«Στὴν κηδεῖα μου θὰ μαζευτεῖ κόσμος, θὰ ῥθουνε φύλλα καὶ χορτάρια (= πολλοὶ ἄνθρωποι)... Ὅθ' ῥθει πολὺς κόσμος κι ἂν κάνω πῶς τοὺς εὐλογῶ κιόλας...»

Πράγματι, ὅταν ἔξω ἀπὸ τὸ ναὸ σηκώσανε ψηλὰ τὸ φέρετρο, νὰ δοῦν τὸ γέροντα οἱ χιλιάδες κόσμου, κάποιοι δήλωσαν ὅτι τὸν εἶδανε ὄρθιο νὰ εὐλογεῖ τοὺς παρόντες. Τὸν τελευταῖο τοῦτο καιρὸ εἶχε καὶ

τὴν ἀγωνία τοῦ οἰκείου ἐπισκόπου. Εἶχε καιρὸ νὰ ἐπικοινωνήσῃ μὲ τὸ Σεβασμιώτατο Μητροπολίτη Χαλκίδας Χρυσόστομο καὶ ἀναζητοῦσε τὴν εὐκαιρία νὰ τὸ κάνει. Ἐπικοινωνήσῃ μὲ τὸν ἐπίσκοπό του, ζήτησε τὴν εὐχή του κι ἐνίωσε γι' αὐτὸ πολὺ βαθιὰ χαρὰ.

Ὁ μακαριστὸς γέροντας ζοῦσε γνήσια καὶ παραδοσιακὴ ἐκκλησιαστικότητα. Εἶχε συνείδηση τοῦ λειτουργήματος τοῦ ἐπισκόπου καὶ σεβότανε ὅλους τοὺς ἐπίσκοπους. Τὸν στενοχωροῦσαν καὶ καταδίκασε τὶς ἀσχήμιες εἰς βάρος ἐπισκόπων, ὅποιοιδήποτε καὶ ἂν ἦσαν. «Εἶναι ἐπίσκοπος», ἔλεγε, «δὲν παύει νὰ εἶναι ἀρχιερέας». Χρησιμοποιοῦσε πολὺ τὴ λέξη ἀρχιερέας καὶ μόνο ὁ τρόπος ποὺ τὴν πρόφερε ἔδειχνε ὅτι κατανοοῦσε τὸ βάθος της. Γι' αὐτὸ καὶ ὅλες τὶς ἐνδοεκκλησιαστικὲς ταραχὲς τῶν τελευταίων μηνῶν τὶς καταδίκασε.



### Ἀπὸ Τὸ Μέγα Γεροντικὸν

Εἶπε ἓνας Γέροντας: Τίποτε δὲν παροργίζει τόσο τὸν Θεὸ καὶ τίποτε δὲν ἀπογυμνώνει τόσο τὸν ἄνθρωπο ἀπὸ τὴ χάρη, ὥστε νὰ φτάσει καὶ σὲ ἐγκατάλειψη ἀπὸ μέρος τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὅσο τὸ νὰ κατηγορεῖ τὸν πλησίον τοῦ ἢ νὰ τὸν κατακρίνει ἢ νὰ τὸν ἐξουθενώνει. Καὶ εἶναι τόσο βαρύτερη ἢ κατάκριση ἀπὸ κάθε ἄλλη ἁμαρτία, ὥστε ὁ ἴδιος ὁ Χριστὸς λέει: «Ὑποκριτή, βγάλε πρῶτα τὸ δοκάρι ποὺ ἔχεις στὸ μάτι σου καὶ τότε θὰ δεῖς καθαρὰ γιὰ νὰ βγάλεις τὸ σκουπιδάκι ποὺ βρίσκεται στὸ μάτι τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ σου (Λουκ. 6,42)». Παρομοίασε δηλαδὴ τὸ ἁμάρτημα τοῦ πλησίον μὲ τὸ σκουπιδάκι, ἐνῶ τὴν κατάκριση μὲ τὸ δοκάρι. Εἶναι τόσο κακὸ τὸ νὰ κατακρίνει κανεὶς. Σχεδὸν ξεπερνᾷ κάθε ἁμαρτία.

Ἐπομένως τίποτε δὲν εἶναι βαρύτερο, ἀδελφοί μου, οὔτε χειρότερο ἀπὸ τὸ νὰ καταδικάσουμε ἢ νὰ ἐξουθενώσουμε τὸν πλησίον. Γιατί νὰ μὴ προτιμοῦμε νὰ κατακρίνουμε τὸν ἑαυτό μας; Καὶ ἐννοῶ τὰ κακὰ τὰ δικά μας ποὺ καλὰ τὰ γνωρίζουμε καὶ γιὰ τὰ ὁποῖα πρόκειται νὰ δώσουμε λόγο στὸν Θεό. Γιατί ἀρπάζουμε τὸ δικαίωμα τῆς κρίσης τοῦ Θεοῦ; Τί θέλουμε ἀπὸ τὸ πλάσμα του, τί θέλουμε ἀπὸ τὸν πλησίον; Τί ζητᾶμε ἀπὸ τὰ βάρη τοῦ ἄλλου; Ἐχουμε, ἀδελφοί τί νὰ φροντίσουμε. Ὁ καθεὶς ἅς προσέχει τὸν ἑαυτό του καὶ τὶς δικές του κακίες. Ἡ ἐξουσία νὰ δικαιώνει καὶ νὰ καταδικάζει, ἀνήκει μόνο στὸν Θεό, ποὺ γνωρίζει καὶ τὴν κατάσταση τοῦ καθενὸς καὶ τὴ δύναμη τὸν τρόπο τῆς ζωῆς καὶ τὰ χαρίσματά του· τὴν ἰδιοσυγκρασία καὶ τὶς ἰκανότητές του· ἀνήκει στὸν Θεὸ ποὺ κρίνει ἀνάλογα μὲ τὸ καθένα ἀπ' αὐτὰ, ὅπως ὁ ἴδιος μόνος τὰ γνωρίζει.



## Ἐκκληση γιὰ τὴν Ἐπιβίωση τῆς Ἱστορίας

ΠΗΓΗ: Περιοδικὸ «Χριστιανικὴ», τεύχος 641. Γράφει ἡ κ. Μαρία Μπινιάρη.

**Τ**υφώνας ποὺ σαρώνει καὶ ἐρειπώνει στὸ πέρασμά του τὰ πάντα, μοιάζει ἡ γενικότερη ἀλλαγὴ «πρὸς τὰ χεῖρα», δυστυχῶς, γιὰ τὸ κέντρο τῆς Ἀθήνας, τὸ ἱστορικὸ εἰδικά, ποὺ μπορεῖ κάποιοι πεζόδρομοι νὰ ἔνωσαν τοὺς ἀρχαιολογικοὺς χώρους, ἀλλὰ ἔχουν μείνει στὸ ἔλεος τοῦ Θεοῦ, κυριολεκτικά, ἀλλὰ μνημεῖα κάποιων «ὑστερο-ἀρχαίων» ἐποχῶν. Ἅγιοι Ἀναργυροί-Ψυρρή, βυζαντινὸς ναὸς μοναδικὸς στὴν Ἑλλάδα, μὲ διπλοθέσιο τροῦλλο, κτίσμα τοῦ 11 μ.Χ. αἰώνα. Τόπος συνάντησης τῶν ἀγωνιστῶν τοῦ 1821, ἓνας ἀπὸ τοὺς λίγους ἐνοριακοὺς ναοὺς τοῦ 1837. Προσκύνησαν, λειτούργησαν, λειτουργήθηκαν, ἔψαλαν, περπάτησαν στὸν περίβολό του μεγάλες μορφές τούτου τοῦ τόπου, ὅπως ὁ Παπαδιαμάντης, ὁ Μωραϊτίδης, ὁ Ἅγιος Νικόλαος Πλανᾶς καὶ σὰν διάκος ἀκόμα, ὑπηρετήσε ὁ Ἅγιος Νεκτάριος.

Σήμερα, ἡ ἐνορία αὐτὴ δὲν ὑπάρχει σὰν ἐνορία ἐφ' ὅσον ἡ ὑποβάθμισή της ἀρχίζει ἀπὸ τὸν καιρὸ ποὺ ἡ πολυκατοικία μπαίνει σὰν πολιτιστικὴ ἔκφραση στὴ ζωὴ τῶν φουκαράδων Ἑλλήνων. Ἀπὸ τότε, δηλαδή, τὴ δεκαετία τοῦ '70 καὶ μετὰ, εἶχε ἀρχίσει σταδιακὰ νὰ γίνεται βιοτεχνικὴ ζώνη ἐλάχιστα βήματα πρὸς τὸν ἀρχαιολογικὸ περίβολο τοῦ Θησείου. Τὸ Θησεῖο καὶ τὸ Μοναστηράκι εἶναι γεμάτο βυζαντινοὺς ναοὺς, ποὺ ὅλοι ἔχουν τὴν τύχην τῆς ἀδιαφορίας εἴτε ἀπὸ τὴν Ἀρχαιολογικὴ Ἑταιρεία ἢ ἄλλους ἀρμόδιους φορεῖς.

Σ' ἐγκύκλιο ποὺ τὸ Ἐκκλησιαστικὸ Συμβούλιο τοῦ ναοῦ μοιράζει στοὺς προσκυνητὲς ἀνήμερα τῆς ἐορτῆς τῶν Ἁγίων Ἀναργύρων, ἀναφέρει μίαν σειρὰ λόγων ποὺ ἀναγκάζουν τὸ ναὸ σὲ πολὺ σύντομο χρονικὸ διάστημα νὰ διακόψει τὴ λειτουργία του ὡς ναὸς. Ἐφθασε στὸ «ἀμὴν» τῆς ἐπιβιώσεώς του.

«Ὁξύτατο οἰκονομικὸ πρόβλημα», τονίζει ἡ ἐγκύκλιος, «ποὺ λύνεται καὶ θεραπεύεται, μόνον ἂν γίνουν ἐκούσιες εἰσφορὲς ἀπὸ τὸν λαὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ». Οἱ λόγοι ποὺ ἀναγκάζουν τὸ ναὸ νὰ μὴν ἔχει «μέλλον» εἶναι: α) ἡ ἐνορία ἀποτελεῖται ἀπὸ ἐλάχιστους ἐνορίτες καὶ τὴν ἐνοριακὴ ζώνη καταλαμβάνουν βιοτεχνίες καὶ ἐπαγγελματικὲς στέγες, β) ἡ ἐνορία ἔχει ἀλλοιωθεῖ ἀπὸ ἀλλοδαπούς, γ) τὰ ἐντὸς τῆς ἐνορίας λειτουργοῦντα τέσσερα ἐνοριακὰ παρεκκλήσια (αὐτὸ πῶς τρώγεται;), δ) οἱ δρώντες προτεσταντικὸ οἶκος καὶ ἡ ἐν γένει ὑποβάθμιση τῆς ἐνοριακῆς περιφέρειας μαζί μὲ τὴ χωριστὴ διάταξη τοῦ ἐνοριακοῦ χώρου, καὶ ε) ἡ νομοθεσία ποὺ θέλει τὰ ἔσοδα ἀκινήτων τῶν ναῶν νὰ φορολογοῦνται πλέον τοῦ 60%. Εἴμαστε σοβαροί; Ἐνα τέτοιο μνημεῖο μέσα στὸ ἱστορικὸ κέντρο, ποὺ συμπεριελήφθη τόσο ἀνόητα ἀπὸ τόσες κυβερνήσεις στὴ γενικότερη ὑποβάθμιση τῆς Ἀθήνας, ποὺ ἀφήνουν ἔξω μόνον τὸ Κολωνάκι καὶ τὴν Πλάκα, διότι ἐκεῖ

μένουν κάποιοι ἐπώνυμοι τοῦ συρμοῦ, θὰ παύσει νὰ λειτουργεῖ;

Ὅσοι εἴχαμε τὴν τύχην νὰ γεννηθοῦμε στὴν Ἀθήνα καὶ ζήσαμε τὴν ἀξιοπρέπεια τῶν φτωχῶν, τίμιων οἰκογενειῶν, ποὺ ἀποτελοῦσαν τὶς ἐνορίες καὶ τὶς συνοικίες γύρω ἀπὸ τὸ κέντρο, νοιώθουμε σήμερα θλίψη. Ἄνθρωποι-πολίτες ποὺ τὴ φρόντιζαν, γιὰ τὴν ἀγαποῦσαν, καὶ κάποια στιγμή ἔφυγαν ἀπὸ τὴ ζωὴ, μετοίκησαν καί... καί... καί... Τὰ δικὰ τους τὰ σπιτάκια, μονόροφα ἢ διόροφα, ἔπρεπε νὰ γίνουν βιοτεχνίες ἢ στὰ τωρινὰ δεδομένα, οὐζερί, μουσικὰ καφενεῖα;

Ποῦ εἶναι ἡ πολιτισμικὴ εὐαισθησία τῆς Ἀθήνας τοῦ 2004; Ἐτσι ἔχουν κάνει οἱ Εὐρωπαῖοι ἐταῖροι στὶς παλιές-ἱστορικὲς περιοχὲς τῶν πρωτευουσῶν τους; Γενεύη, Λυών, Ρώμη, ἀκόμα καὶ ἡ Πράγα ἢ ἡ Βουδαπέστη, ποῦ ἔρχονται ἀπὸ ἄλλες δύσκολες καταστάσεις; Σχεδὸν οἱ περισσότεροι Ἕλληνες ταξίδεψαν καὶ ταξιδεύουν ἀνὰ τὸν κόσμον, καὶ μάλιστα οἱ ἐκκλησιαστικοί, ἔχουν γνώση καὶ ἰδέα του πῶς ἔχουν διατηρηθεῖ μνημεῖα, ποὺ πολλὲς φορὲς ἔχουν ἀσήμαντη ἱστορικὴ σπουδαιότητα...

Μήπως πρέπει καὶ ὁ οἰκονομικὸς φορέας τῆς Ἐκκλησίας τῆς Ἑλλάδος, τὸ τμήμα ἐκεῖνο ποὺ διαχειρίζεται τὰ ποικίλα ἔσοδα τῆς Ἐκκλησίας πρέπει νὰ ἐνδιαφεροθεῖ λίγο;

Οἱ ναοὶ εἶναι τοῦ λαοῦ κι αὐτὸς μὲ τὸν δικό του ὄβολο τοὺς φτιάχνει. Ἀλλὰ ὑπάρχουν καὶ οἱ ἔκτακτες περιπτώσεις. Θέλει καὶ πνευματικὴ ὑποστήριξη πολλὲς φορὲς ἢ οἰκονομικὴ δυσπραγία. Πόσα θὰ φορτώνουμε τοῦ λαοῦ; Τιμολογιακὲς διαφορὲς στὰ μυστήρια, δίσκοι ἔργων καὶ φιλανθρωπίας καὶ μάλιστα σὲ ἀκατάλληλες στιγμὲς τῆς Θ. Λειτουργίας. Καθολικὸ τὸ χουὶ αὐτό.

Μήπως ἡ ὑπὸ μελέτη ρευστοποίηση τῶν ἀκινήτων τῆς Ἐκκλησίας μπορεῖ νὰ συμπεριλάβει καὶ τοὺς ναοὺς ποὺ ὑπάρχουν στὶς «ὑποβαθμισμένες» περιοχὲς τοῦ ἱστορικοῦ κέντρου; Κάπως ἔτσι ἔκλεισαν ναοὶ καὶ στὴν Εὐρώπη.

Δὲν πρέπει νὰ διατηρηθοῦν τὰ ἱστορικὰ καταφύγια τῆς πίστεως καὶ τῆς παράδοσης ἀνεξάρτητα ἀπὸ τὴν οἰκονομικὴ συμμετοχὴ τοῦ περιεστώτος λαοῦ;



### Σοφὰ Λόγια Τοῦ Λαοῦ Μαξ

(Γιὰ Ὅλους μας, Στὶς Μέρη Τοῦ Οἰκουμενισμοῦ)

**Αὐτὸς ποὺ μπαίνει ἀπὸ τὸ παράθυρο, δὲν εἶναι νοικοκύρης.**

**Ὅτι ὀρίζουν τὰ θεμέλια, προσκυνοῦν τὰ κεραμίδια.**

**Ὅποιος ἀγοράζει τὰ περιττά, πουλάει τὰ ἀναγκαῖα.**



## BAPTISMAL THEOLOGY

*By Metropolitan Hierotheos S. Vlachos. Translated from the Greek original in "Ekklesiastike Parembase," No. 71 (December 2001), p. 12. Reprinted from "Orthodox Tradition," Vol XX, No 2, pp. 40-43.*

THERE HAS BEEN in the past, and there is in our own day, a good deal of discussion about the baptism of heretics (the heterodox [1]); that is, whether heretics who have deviated from the Orthodox Faith and who seek to return to it should be baptized anew or simply chrismated after making a profession of faith. Decisions have been issued on this matter by both local and Oecumenical [2] Synods.

In the text that follows, I should like to discuss, by way of example, the agreement reached between the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of America and the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in America [3] on June 3, 1999. The Greek translation of the original text was made by Protopresbyter George Dragas, a professor at the Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Boston [Brookline—Trans.], who also provided a summary and critique of this agreed statement between Orthodox and Roman Catholics in America.

The basis of this document is the Balamand Agreement of 1993, "Uniatism, Method of Union of the Past and the Present Search for Full Communion," which it evidently wishes to uphold.

The text on which we are commenting, that is, the agreement signed by Orthodox and Roman Catholics in America and entitled "Baptism and 'Sacramental Economy,'" is based on several points, in my observation, that are very typical of the contemporary ecumenical movement and indicative of its entire substance.

The first point is that "Baptism rests upon and derives its reality from the faith of Christ Himself, the faith of the Church, and the faith of the believer" (p. 13). At first sight, one is struck by the absence, here, of *any reference to the Triune God*—perhaps in order to justify this flexible interpretation of baptism. Faith, then, becomes the fundamental mark and element of baptism.

The second point is that baptism is not a practice *required by the Church*, but is, "rather, the Church's foundation. It establishes the Church" (p. 26). Here, the notion that baptism is not the "initiatory" mystery whereby we are introduced into the Church, but the foundation of the Church, is presented as the truth.

The third point is that "Baptism was never understood as a private ceremony, but rather *as a corporate event*" (p. 13). This means that the baptism of catechumens was "the occasion for the whole community's repentance and renewal" (p. 13). One who is baptized "is obliged to make his own the community's common faith in the Savior's person and promises" (p. 14).

The fourth point is a continuation and consequence of the foregoing points. Since baptism rests upon faith in Christ, since it is the basis of the Church, and since, moreover, it is the work of the community, this means that any recognition of baptism entails recognition of the Church in which the Baptism is performed. In the Agreed Statement we read: "The Orthodox and Catholic members of our Consultation acknowledge, in both of our traditions, a common teaching and a common faith in one baptism, despite some variations in practice which, we believe, do not affect the substance of the mystery" (p. 17). According to this text, there is a common faith and teaching concerning baptism in the two "Churches," and the differences that exist do not affect the substance of the mystery. The two sides each acknowledge an ecclesial reality "in the other, however much they may regard their way of living the Church's reality as flawed or incomplete" (p. 17). "The certain basis for the modern use of the phrase 'sister churches'" (p. 17) is to be found in this point. The Orthodox Church and the Latin Church are these two "sister Churches," because they have *the same tradition, the same faith, and the same baptism*, even though there are certain differences between them. Hence, the following opinion is repeatedly affirmed in the text: "We find that this mutual recognition of the ecclesial reality of baptism, in spite of our divisions, is fully consistent with the perennial teaching of both churches" (p. 26). Misinterpreting the teaching of St. Basil the Great, the signers of this document aver that the two "Churches," in spite of the "imperfections" that exist, constitute the same ecclesial reality: "By God's gift we are each, in St. Basil's words, 'of the Church'" (p. 26).

The fifth point is that the authors of the Agreed Statement **find fault with St. Nicodemos the Hagiorite**, who, in interpreting the views of St. Cyprian of Carthage, St. Basil the Great, and the Second Oecumenical Synod, talks—as do all of the *Kollyvades* Fathers of the eighteenth century—about exactitude (*ἀκρίβεια, akrivia*) and economy (*οἰκονομία, oikonomia*) with regard to the way in which heretics are received into the Orthodox Church. That is to say, the Fathers have at times received heretics by exactitude—namely, by baptism—and at times by economy—namely, by chrismation. However, even when the Church does receive someone by economy, this means that She effects the mystery of salvation at that very time, precisely because the Church is superior to the canons, and not the Canons to the Church, and because the Church is the source of the mysteries and, *eo ipso*, of baptism, whereas baptism is not the basis of the Church. The Church can receive this or that heretic by the principle of economy, without any implication that She recognizes as a Church the community that previously baptized him. This is the context within which St. Nicodemos interprets the relevant decision of the Second Oecumenical Synod.

Confusion is certainly heightened by the fact that one of the recommendations of the Agreed Statement is subject to many different interpretations. According to this recommendation, the two Churches should make it clear that “the mutual recognition of baptism does not of itself resolve the issues that divide them, or reestablish full ecclesial communion between the Orthodox and Catholic Churches, but that it does remove a fundamental obstacle on the path towards full communion” (p. 28).

From this brief analysis, it is obvious how much confusion prevails in ecumenist circles regarding these issues. It is also obvious that [Orthodox] ecumenists understand the acceptance of the baptism of heretics (Catholics and Protestants, who have altered the dogma of the Holy Trinity and other dogmas) to mean accepting the ecclesial status of heretical bodies and, worse still, that the two “Churches,” Latin and Orthodox, are united in spite of “small” differences, or that we derive from the same Church and should seek to return to it, thereby forming the one and only Church. This is a blatant expression of the branch theory.

When there is such confusion, it is necessary to adopt an attitude of strictness, which preserves the truth: that all who fall into heresy are outside the Church and that the Holy Spirit does not work to bring about their deification.

In any event, baptismal theology creates immense problems for the Orthodox. From the standpoint of ecclesiology, the text under consideration is riddled with errors. The patristic Orthodox teaching on this subject is that the Church is the Theanthropic Body of Christ, in which revealed truth—the Orthodox faith—is preserved and the mystery of deification is accomplished through the mysteries of the Church (baptism, chrismation, and the Divine Eucharist). The essential precondition for this is that we participate in the purifying, illuminating, and deifying energy of God. Baptism is the initiatory mystery of the Church. The Church does not rest upon the mystery of baptism; rather, the baptism of water, in conjunction with the baptism of the Spirit, operates within the Church and makes one a member of the Body of Christ. **There are no mysteries outside the Church, the living Body of Christ, just as there are no senses outside the human body.**

In closing, I should like to cite the conclusion of Father George Dragas, which he appends to his “Summary and Critique”:

These recommendations will not win the agreement of all Orthodox, and certainly not of those who are Greek-speaking (or Greek-minded), and consequently they are, by their very nature, divisive. My primary reason for coming to such a negative conclusion is that this inquiry into sacramental theology is devoid of any ecclesiological basis and that it onesidedly interprets—or rather, misinterprets—the facts of Orthodox sacramental practice, and particularly vis-à-vis the heterodox at different periods in the history of the Church.

These recommendations and conclusions and, indeed, the entire Agreed Statement are the epitome of Western skepticism. **Their acceptance by Orthodox theologians signals a deliberate betrayal of Orthodox views and a capitulation to the outlook of Western ecumenism. This is something that we should reject.**

#### Notes

1. *We have retained, here, for the sake of faithful translation, the word “heretic,” though with some concern that many readers may assume that it carries with it the vitriol that has been attached to it in Western Christianity—and especially since the Inquisition—or by some of the more irresponsible and less reflective and spiritually-enlightened Orthodox traditionalists, today. We could have justifiably used the word “heterodox,” which is not frequently used as an ad hominem epithet, as the word “heretic” so frequently is, but which simply indicates what both words actually mean: a person who holds to views that deviate from established belief and, in the Orthodox Church, who accepts an opinion held in opposition to the Patristic consensus and the conscience of the Church. The word takes on wholly pejorative meanings, in the Orthodox Church, only when applied to those who, in their absolute intransigence, fail to succumb to the entreaties of the Church (and to spiritual sobriety), in the face their of error, and thus cause harm to the harmonious ethos of Orthodoxy and lead others into error and delusion—Trans.*

2. *Constantine Cavarnos has made the wise suggestion to spell Ecumenical as “Oecumenical” when it refers to the Church Synods or the Church Oecumenical, in order to distinguish them from the ecumenical movement—Editor.*

3. *To be precise, the agreement in question was signed by members of the North American Orthodox-Catholic Theological Consultation, meeting at St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Seminary in Crestwood, New York—Trans.*



**This is the way we should see Christ. He is our friend, Our brother; He is whatever is good and beautiful. He is everything. Yet, He is still a friend and He shouts it out, “You’re my friends, don’t you understand that? We’re brothers. I don’t hold hell in my hands. I am not threatening you. I love you. I want you to enjoy life together with me!”**

**Christ is Everything. He is joy, He is life, He is light. He is the true light who makes man joyful; Christ is Everything. He makes man soar with happiness; makes him see everything, everybody; makes him feel for everyone, to want everyone with Him, everyone with Christ.**

**Love Christ and put nothing before His Love. Christ is Everything. He is the source of life, the ultimate desire, He is everything. Everything beautiful is in Christ.**

**Somebody who is Christ’s must love Christ; and when he loves Christ, he is delivered from the devil, from hell, and from death.**

Elder Porphyrios (+1991)

## APOPHTHEGMS BY THE GOD-INSPIRED ST. ISAAC THE SYRIAN, PART 1

*SOURCE: From the book "475 Apophthegms by the God-Inspired St. Isaac the Syrian," pp. 1-5, published by Orthodox Kypseli, translated from the Greek by George Karras.*

*Starting with this issue, Orthodox Heritage will present the ongoing translation of the aforementioned book. It is separated in 48 lessons, each of them providing us with an invaluable set of rules for daily behavior and life.*

### 1st Lesson

1. Fear of God gives rise to the virtue that is born through faith and is sown in the heart, which in turn occupies herself with matters that involve the salvation of the soul.

2. A virtuous life starts when you occupy yourself with the study of the Divine Word, thus avoiding the honor of the world, which in fact is dishonor.

3. Without the warmth of faith in God we are unable to rid ourselves from the slavery of passions.

4. When we are deprived of God's Grace for an extended period, then we knowingly and consciously dismiss Holy Providence.

5. The beginning of the true life of the faithful is fear of God, and the Divine Joy that is born through Him, within our heart.

6. God's word, in other words virtue, sprouts within the hearts of those who neither worry nor concern themselves with matters of this world.

7. Do you wish to feel the sweetness of union with God within you? Love God and all your fellow men.

8. As in the case of water in a painting being unable to quench thirst, similarly, a teacher who does not possess God's Grace is equally unable to pass it to others.

9. Your good and bad characteristics linked to your flesh will follow you all the way to the grave. Whatever, though, is connected to your soul, will become your eternal inheritance...

10. Your good attributes must be hidden, because it was through holy baptism and faith in God that they continue to mediate on your behalf.

### 2nd Lesson

11. The face of a bashful person imitates Christ's humility. Nothing separates us more from Divine Wisdom than sneering, laughter, outspokenness, and humor.

12. Let us sanctify our bodies with prayer and good deeds so Christ may enter and reside within us through Holy Communion.

13. Which friend have you acquired in the Heavens so that He can welcome you when you leave this world? Whose farm have you labored at so that you can be rewarded accordingly? Shed lots of tears so that the Holy Spirit may ease within you and clean the filth of your heart

14. I abandoned You, Lord; please do not abandon me; grant me entrance in Your pastures; nourish me with the grass of Your Holy Sacraments; comfort me, and sweeten me with Your Divine Joy.

15. Neither the demons, nor nature's elements, not even the worst of people or beasts are capable of harming us without God's concurrence. This is because if God did not keep them enchained, not a single person would survive.

16. To those who experience powerful temptations, God intends to grant Wisdom and His Grace.

17. He who longs for the world does not love God. Whoever keeps constant company with the world is unable to keep company with God. Whoever is preoccupied with matters of the world cannot possibly attend to matters of God.

18. God withdraws His love from the person who cares excessively for his body.

19. He who suffers for justice becomes a partaker of Christ's sufferings.

20. Be aware that without temptations, you will find yourself far from the path of God, and thus not walking in the footsteps of the saints.

### 3rd Lesson

21. People despise poverty while God detests a proud soul. To people, there is honor in riches. God, on the other hand, sees honor only in a humble and contrite soul.

22. When you live a virtuous life, await temptations. The person who does not believe in God is terrified even by his shadow. However, only the person who has the praise of his conscience awaits death with desire!

23. God's commandments are more honorable than all of the world's treasures, for whoever keeps them finds God!

24. He who believes in God will gain the praise of even his enemies. He who considers his sins as insignificant will fall into greater sins.

25. He who desires God's Will has the angels as his advocates. The person who tolerates slander with patience has reached a perfect state and is admired even by the angels.

26. Have you lost prudence and common sense? God will not accept your almsgiving for as long as you insist on sins of the flesh. Since you are easily defeated by ill will, why do you fight and resist sleep?

27. Keep your tongue and lips mild and sweet and you will find friends among all people.

28. Temptations harden us in grace. Otherwise our virtues will be untried and false.

29. God, for our humility, allows us to lose whatever we boast about. Whoever happily suffers injustices also has God's consolation and comfort.

30. Our Saints were strengthened by holy visions and patiently withstood every temptation so that they gained God's Love.

31. Dedication to God guides us to the comfort of thoughts. Poverty and lack of property guide us to freedom from the disturbances of evil thoughts. Quiet of bodily senses paves the road to the peace within our nous.

32. Temptations help us acquire the wisdom of the Holy Spirit. Faith in God provides for our disdain and contempt toward temptations.

33. Without a taste of Christ's suffering our soul will never gain communion with God.



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## DON'T JUDGE BY LOOKS

*By Paul Harvey, "The Rest of the Story."*

A lady in a faded gingham dress and her husband, dressed in a homespun, threadbare suit, stepped off the train in Boston, and walked timidly without an appointment into the president's outer office. The secretary could tell in a moment that such backwoods, country hicks had no business at Harvard and probably didn't even deserve to be in Cambridge. She frowned.

"We want to see the president," the man said softly.

"He'll be busy all day," the secretary snapped.

"We'll wait," the lady replied.

For hours, the secretary ignored them, hoping that the couple would finally become discouraged and go away. They didn't. And the secretary grew frustrated and finally decided to disturb the president, even though it was a chore she always regretted to do. "Maybe if they just see you for a few minutes, they'll leave," she told him. And he sighed in exasperation and nodded. Someone of his importance obviously didn't have the time to spend with them, but he detested gingham dresses and homespun suits cluttering up his outer office.

The president, stern-faced with dignity, strutted toward the couple. The lady told him, "We had a son that attended Har-

vard for one year. He loved Harvard. He was happy here. But about a year ago, he was accidentally killed. And my husband and I would like to erect a memorial to him, somewhere on campus". The president wasn't touched -- he was shocked.

"Madam," he said gruffly, "we can't put up a statue for every person who attended Harvard and died. If we did, this place would look like a cemetery."

"Oh, no," the lady explained quickly, "we don't want to erect a statue. We thought we would like to give a building to Harvard."

The president rolled his eyes. He glanced at the gingham dress and homespun suit, then exclaimed, "a building! Do you have any earthly idea how much a building costs? We have over seven and a half million dollars in the physical plant at Harvard." For a moment the lady was silent.

The president was pleased. He could get rid of them now.

The lady turned to her husband and said quietly, "Is that all it costs to start a University? Why don't we just start our own?" Her husband nodded. The president's face wilted in confusion and bewilderment.

Mr. and Mrs. Leland Stanford walked away, traveling to Palo Alto, California, where they established the University that bears their name, a memorial to a son that Harvard no longer cared about!

# Orthodox Heritage

So therefore, brethren, persevere, and grasp the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or by our epistle [2 Thess. 2:15]

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Ἄρα οὖν, ἀδελφοί, στήκετε, καὶ κρατεῖτε τὰς παραδόσεις ἃς ἐδιδάχθητε, εἴτε διὰ λόγου εἴτε δι' ἐπιστολῆς ἡμῶν [Θεσσ. Β' 2:15]

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## THE KINGDOM OF GOD: "PROGRESS" OR THE CROSS?

*by Archbishop Averky of Syracuse [of Blessed Memory], from Orthodox Life, Vol. 28, Issue No. 6, pp. 23-26.*

On August 1, according to our Orthodox ecclesiastical calendar, our Holy Church begins the celebration of the Precious and Life-creating Cross of the Lord, which reaches its climax on September 14, the great feast of the Exaltation of the Cross of the Lord, and concludes with the Leave-taking (Apostosis) of the feast on September 21.

Why is this? Is it not enough that we commemorate the Crucifixion of the Lord on the Cross on Great Friday, and that the Holy Church glorifies the Cross of the Lord every Friday?

A profound, inner meaning is concealed in this celebration of the Cross of the Lord: the Holy Church, our concerned mother, wishes to direct our particular attention to this great and saving sign, against which the world, "which lieth in wickedness" (1 Jn. 5:19), has always waged, and in our days continues to wage, a deliberate and unrelenting battle against the world which has now plainly fallen away from Christ and is preparing itself to worship Antichrist.

Can anyone dare call himself a Christian who shuts his eyes to all the horrors taking place in the world today, and soothes his conscience, and the consciences of those around him, with assurances that everything is an incidental, transient phenomenon, and that in general the world is moving towards "progress," towards the establishment of the "Kingdom of God on earth"?

It is frightening to think that we are hearing such assurances more and more often in our days, not only from non-

believers, not only from the sectarians who are "chiliasts" (those whose doctrine includes belief in a thousand-year kingdom on earth), but even from certain Orthodox clerics, including some who bear the rank of bishop!

It is difficult to say what these people believe who have apparently been appointed to instruct the people in the pure teaching of the Word of God and the holy Fathers of the Church, and why they are so disposed, marching to the tune of the sectarians at times, and at other times with those who do not believe in God and with the "Christian progressives." Either they are naive in the extreme and completely ignorant of the clear teaching of the word of God, or they themselves do not believe in anything, but say that which is required of them by the overlords who provide for them, whom they faithfully serve, fearing to lose those worldly goods received from them: money, titles, jobs, high rank in society, pleasures, etc.

The word of God does not give us even the slightest foundation for belief in the establishment of a "Kingdom of God on earth," or in any worldly progress for humanity; quite the contrary. It foretells much suffering for true followers of Christ and the "bearing of the cross" in imitation and following of the Lord Who bore the Cross; and for this world, which lieth in wickedness, it foretells an inevitable end. The promised "Kingdom of Christ on earth" is by no means tangible, but noetic-within the souls, of those who truly believe in Christ, for Whom the Lord became King.

Surely it is not in vain that, laying down the whole course of a true Christian's earthly life, Christ our Savior said: "Whosoever, will come after Me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me" (Mk. 8:34); and on the Cross, He forewarned His disciples: "In

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Orthodox Heritage may, at times, bring up issues or present articles that some consider controversial. Such material is presented so that a distinction be made between salvation and the 20th century heresy of ecumenism. These are confusing times for the Orthodox faithful, and political correctness must be sacrificed so that His TRUTH be brought forth.

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the world ye shall have tribulation" (Jn. 16:33). Neither in vain did the holy Apostles, in complete accord, with these words of the Divine Teacher, instruct Christians, "We must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God" (Acts 14: 22), or "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow His steps" (I Pet. 2:21).

Alas, this transient, earthly world, in which the "progressives," despite the sorry witness of their own eyes, promise the people some completely illusory, happy, "paradisical" life with total well-being and prosperity for all, is doomed to destruction on the "day of the Lord." The clear teaching of the word of God is "... the heavens shall pass away with a rushing sound, and the elements, being burned with intense heat, shall be dissolved; and the earth and the works in it shall be burned completely" (II Pet. 3:10).

Modern thinkers do not want to hear of this, saying that this might happen "some day," "many million years hence," but "never today." By such statements, they liken themselves to the "scoffers" that the holy Apostle refers to when he alerts Christians to the dangers lurking for the morality of Christian people. "Know this first, that there shall come in the last days deceitful scoffers, walking after their own lusts and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation" (II Pet. 3:3-4). It is a characteristic indication that those who speak thus are people who are "walking after their own lusts!" To such "lusts" have they surrendered themselves, darkening the eyes of their souls so that they no longer see anything, for they look at everything only from the distorted point of view of their "lusts," which occupy all their attention and interest.

Yet, our Lord Himself clearly taught us not to think of relegating His Second Coming to some vague remote future "millions of years hence," but commanded us to expect Him always, comparing His arrival in its suddenness to that of a

thief: "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the householder had known in what watch the thief would come he would have watched and would not have suffered his house to be broken into. Therefore, be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Mt. 24:42-44). The "faithful and wise servant" never says that the Second Coming will be "sometime after many, many years;" and that it is thus not necessary to trouble oneself with this thought, for he knows that the Lord Himself has forbidden him to say: "my Lord delayeth His coming" (Mt 24:48).

What, then, can be said of these who not only do not consider the possibility of the nearness of the end of the world and the Second Coming of Christ, which many signs indicate to us, but believe in some imaginary progress of humanity and the approach of a general well-being and prosperity, although all of modern life, with its total decline of true faith and morality, with its terrible, destructive inventions which deal death to man, simply cries out against this. Such people are totally alien to Christianity, even though they bear the exalted positions and titles of Christian clerics and hierarchs!

One must know and remember that it is such earthly "progress," such illusory well-being and prosperity of man on earth, that Antichrist, Christ's opponent, promises to give to the people. His servants, who are preparing for his reign on earth, are already striving beforehand in like manner to influence the people, shouting and preaching everywhere about this "paradise on earth" which supposedly awaits the people. And all those who strive for this earthly "progress" forgetting Christ's words: "But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Mt. 6:33), who avoid bearing their cross as Christ commands, but think only of how they might make the world better and more free, richer, and more carefree, enjoying all the earthly goods and pleasures, are in the same camp with the servants of the



imminent Antichrist, working consciously or unconsciously for his swift appearance and reign in the world.

Such as these are not of Christ, but of Antichrist. But we, if we are true Christians and do not falsely or hypocritically bear the name "Christian," must gaze constantly upon the Cross of Christ, that saving sign of God's love for us, the token of our salvation, and drawing therefrom abundant and grace-imparting powers "which pertain unto life and godliness" (II Pet. 1:3), must bear our cross as the Lord has commanded us, and must regard this transient earthly life as but a sojourn in a hostel, whence we must return home to those "heavenly mansions" which the Lord has prepared for us by His suffering on the Cross (Jn. 14:2).

With the great Apostle we must "consider all things as dung in order to win Christ" (Phil. 3:8). And we must thus forsake all our purely earthly concerns, all controversies, quarrels, disputes and altercations, from which no one receives any benefit, but only spiritual harm. "Our life is in Heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:20). This we must ever constantly keep in mind.

Soon all will come to an end -- all this temporal, transient, corrupt earthly world. Surely we shall not lose our hope of eternal life by surrendering ourselves to our petty passions and lusts! "Seek those things which are above," the holy Apostle Paul thus exhorts us, "where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:1-2).



### A Miracle from Communist Russia (1919)

On the eve of Pascha in the year 1919, Georgian and Russian clergymen imprisoned by the evil communists asked permission to go to church, but they were not allowed to go. Then, they all together fervently prayed to the Resurrected Christ to strengthen them. When they chanted the "Christ is Risen," the jail shook and the gates opened on their own.

From the noise which was created all the inhabitants of the city ran to see what was happening. They saw three sacred figures holding the Precious Cross, processing in a circle above the jail, chanting 'Lord, have mercy.'

This divine sign lasted all night long, so that all of the gathered people of the city saw it. As soon as the dawn came this heavenly vision ceased. The following day, all captive priests, along with their Elder, were ready for martyrdom.

From "Blessed Elder George Karslides" (+1959)

### MAKE AN EFFORT...

By Blessed Ft. Seraphim Rose (+1982), *Orthodoxy in America*, 1979

Make an effort... we must be aware of what we are doing. If you've ever talked to an earnest Protestant or unbeliever who really wants to know what you believe and why you behave the way you do, you will understand how important this awareness is. You can literally save the soul of someone like that if you can begin, even in a little way, to open up to him the depths of Orthodox Christianity. Why do you make the sign of the Cross? Why do you pray to saints? Why do you stand up in church, or make prostrations during Lent? Why are you always singing "Lord, have mercy"? What is Holy Communion? Why do you confess your sins to a priest? Especially today, when we are surrounded by people who don't know the truth but some of whom are really thirsting for it -- we can't just do these things out of habit; we must be able, as the Apostle Peter says, to give an account of what we believe and do to those outside the Church. There are many ways to become educated in Orthodox Christianity -- ask your parish priest, read books, obtain a copy of some of the Church's services and begin to enter more deeply into their meaning... These books are all written for You.

And another very important thing: You should be reading spiritual books. St. John Chrysostom goes so far as to say that a Christian who doesn't read spiritual books can't be saved. Why? Because the world, whose spirit we absorb unconsciously many hours a day, is so strong that we will almost automatically follow its ways unless we are consciously filling our minds and hearts with Christian impressions. Innumerable books exist for this purpose, both in Russian and English: first of all the Holy Scriptures and Orthodox commentaries on them. Then the Lives of Saints and recent ascetics; "My Life in Christ" by St. John of Kronstadt; "Unseen Warfare" by St. Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain and Bishop Theophan the Recluse; the Spiritual Instructions of St. Abba Dorotheos; the Homilies of St. Macarius the Great; the Orthodox service books, several of which are now in English; the "Lausaic History" and the Lives and Sayings of the Desert Fathers, which are just as fresh now as when uttered 1,500 years ago; Lives of Russia's New Martyrs; Archbishop Andrew's "The One Thing Needful."

The monastery bookstore here can sell you these and many other books. If you have a spark of Christian fervor in you, you will be surprised how much your soul will be refreshed by reading books like these; they will give you a taste of that other-worldliness without which the Christian soul withers and dies, especially in our worldly times...



## A REFLECTION ON ST. KOSMAS DISDAIN FOR THE LATINS

*By Joseph Hostetler, Thessaloniki, Greece*

Many were scandalized here in Greece - mainly those of the papist confession or those far from the Church - when, on the eve of the Pope's visit, many priests and monks, some of whom I know personally, repeated often the words and prophecy of St. Kosmas Aitolos:

**"Curse the Pope, for he is the cause of the evils"**

The papist representative here, while being interviewed on TV together with the struggling confessor of Orthodoxy, Fr. George Metallinos, expressed his shock and disdain for the saint and asked how the Orthodox could glorify a man who cursed others! Indeed, it is easy to understand his incredulousness and misunderstanding, for it is hard to imagine too many Westerners understanding what the saint is saying. It is a scandal to ears that have grown used to hearing and seeing a castrated Christianity;

a "Christianity" that long ago lost a living relationship with the Lord of Hosts and Judge of All (Pantocrator);

a "Christianity" restricted to this world, to serving the interests of the "peace" of this world, a peace at complete odds with the Prince of Peace who brought a sword to separate the sheep from the goats;

a "Christianity" filled with homosexuals and women bishops;

a "Christianity" relegated to being the "yes-man" to so many hypocritical humanitarian missions, sent on the coat-tails of so many bombing missions;

a "Christianity" that hasn't suffered, hasn't lived the Cross, but is so puffed-up with the sweets and so drunk with the wine of this world that it can't see straight.

The God of the Old Testament is the same God of the New Testament. The Judge of All is the One Crucified for All. The curse of those responsible for "all the evils" is quite in line with the living God and the living relationship His people have with Him. The Saints' righteousness, as expressed in godly anger and godly disdain for that which takes men away from God, is quite in line and in the same spirit with both the prophets of the Old Testament and even the Apostle of Love, who said so "harshly": "Don't even greet a heretic on the road, let alone invite him into your house." How can this be? How can we "love one another as Christ has loved us" and curse those responsible for "all the evils"? I thought the devil was responsible for all the evils? Is this even Christian - this business of cursing?

We do err when we blame the devil for "all the evils." No one sins against his will. No one is excused for his delusions. God is not at fault, nor even the devil, for man is free and freely apostatizes from or approaches God.

Likewise, love, as the Apostle of Love himself intimates, is not the stuff of puff-balls and popcorn, so sought after by our flesh-loving generation. It is the stuff of sweat, blood, and tears. It is the stuff of sacrifice and death. Love is serious business and when the Apostle of Love says, in essence, curse the heretic by not even greeting him let alone allowing him in your house, it is the love of Christ that he is expressing. Likewise, the Love of Christ is being expressed by Saint Kosmas, Equal to the Apostles, when he tells later generations to curse the cause of "the evils" -- the Pope. For, he saw how many would be deluded by the delusions of the heretical pope. He saw how there would be no repentance, but only cunningness and worldly power-machinations on the part of the papacy. He saw how, when there is no repentance and willingness to change (i.e. when there is hardness of heart and pride), only the "curse" of the righteous -- which is no true curse at all, but love even for those under anathema -- can save the faithful and the unfaithful from mass delusion.

For, finally, all the fathers of all the Oecumenical Councils pronounced curses - i.e. anathemas, for it means the same thing in Greek - on the heretics. **Anathema!** they shouted repeatedly when they condemned Arius. **Anathema!** they shouted when they condemned Eutychius! etc. etc. And, in celebrating the Orthodoxy of these lovers of the Lover of Man (the only **Philanthropos**), we say: "**This** is the faith of the Apostles! **This** is the faith of the Orthodox! **This** if the faith that has established the Universe!" This should be known to everyone, as it is given by the Church to be said everywhere by the faithful every Sunday of Orthodoxy. It is called the Synodicon of Orthodoxy. Alas, most parishes omit it, and in the process omit themselves from acquiring the mind of the Church, which is our salvation from this evil generation.

This is the faith of the Orthodox. But, alas, it is certainly **not** the faith of most people today, even many who call themselves Orthodox. Let us, then, who have by God's Loving Kindness and Providence been ushered into the Ark of Salvation, flee from this apostasy from God, not allowing ourselves to be complacent, but girding up our spiritual loins and taking care to love with true love the true God, and not the God of our fleshly imagination.



### On Priestly Attire

**H**ow important clothes are! A whole complex of feelings, ideas, movements of the soul, is linked to clothes, to uniforms. In particular, I feel that the priest must not wear civilian-type of clothes. When he removes his priestly garb, he inevitably acquires an 'unpriestly' feeling, and in some measure betrays his priesthood.

Fr. Alexander Elchaninov, *The Diary of a Russian Priest*



## Παντελεήμων Ο Β': Ένας Μαχητής Της Όρθοδοξίας Και Τοῦ Ἑλληνισμοῦ

Γ. Καρρᾶς, Συντάκτης τῆς Orthodox Heritage

Ένας μαχητής τῆς Όρθοδοξίας και τοῦ Ἑλληνισμοῦ ἄφησε τὴν τελευταία του πνοή στις 9 Ἰουλίου τοῦ τρέχοντος ἔτους, σὲ ἡλικία 78 ἐτῶν. Ὁ Παναγιώτατος Μητροπολίτης Θεσσαλονίκης κ.κ. Παντελεήμων Β', ἕνας ἀπὸ τοὺς ἀρχαιότερους ἱεράρχες τῆς Ἑλλαδικῆς Ἐκκλησίας, ἐκοιμήθη ἀπὸ ἀνακοπή καρδιάς σὲ κελί τῆς ἱερᾶς μονῆς Ἰβήρων, στὸ Ἅγιον Ὄρος, ὅπου συνήθιζε νὰ ἀναπαύεται τὰ καλοκαίρια.

Ὁ ἐκλιπὼν Μητροπολίτης Θεσσαλονίκης Παντελεήμων Β' ἀνέπτυξε τεράστιο κοινωνικό, πνευματικό και ἐπιστημονικό ἔργο. Ἐξελέγη μητροπολίτης Θεσσαλονίκης τὸ 1974, ἐνῶ στὰ χρόνια ποὺ ἀκολούθησαν συνέδεσε τὸ ὄνομά του μὲ πολλὰ σημαντικά γεγονότα ποὺ ἐκτυλίχθηκαν στὴν πόλη μετὰ τὴν μεταπολίτευση. Ἦταν γνωστὸς γιὰ τὴν καθαρότητα και τὸ ἀνάργυρό του βίου του, καθὼς και τὴν εὐθύτητα τοῦ χαρακτήρα του. Εἶχε μεγάλη ἀγάπη γιὰ τοὺς κληρικούς του και, ὅσο αὐστηρὸς και νὰ ἦταν, εἶχε πάντα μεγάλη ἀφοσίωση πρὸς αὐτοὺς και δὲν τιμῶρησε ποτὲ κανέναν ἱερέα. Ὁ αἰοίδιμος Παντελεήμων Χρυσοφάκης ποίμανε ἐπὶ 29 ἔτη τὴ μεγάλη και ἱστορική πόλη τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης, τὴν πρωτεύουσα τῆς Όρθοδοξίας. Διακρίθηκε ἰδιαίτερα γιὰ τὴν ἀφοσίωσή του στὴν παράδοση και τὴν τάξη τῆς Ἐκκλησίας.

Ὁ κ.κ. Παντελεήμων πρωτοστάτησε στὴ θεμελίωση και ἀποπεράτωση πολλῶν Ἱερῶν ναῶν, μετὰξὺ τῶν ὁποίων ὁ Ἱερὸς ναὸς τῶν ἁγίων Κυρίλλου και Μεθοδίου. Ἡ ἀναζήτηση και κατάθεση τοῦ μοναδικοῦ ὑπάρχοντος Ἱεροῦ λειψάνου τοῦ Ἁγίου Μεθοδίου παρέχει τὸ ἀπαραίτητο κέντρο πρὸς στήριξη και προαγωγή τῆς εὐσέβειας. Ἔτσι, οἱ ἅγιοι γίνονται πλέον γνωστοὶ ὡς «Ἑλληνες Θεσσαλονικεῖς» και ἡ ἀλήθεια ἀποκαθίσταται.

Μὲ ἐνέργειές του ἐπίσης μετακομίζονται ἢ ἀνευρίσκονται και ἄλλα λείψανα ἁγίων, ὅπως τοῦ Ἁγίου Κυρίλλου, τῆς Ἁγίας Αἰκατερίνας, τοῦ Ὁσίου Δαβὶδ τοῦ ἐν Θεσσαλονίκη, τοῦ Ἁγίου Νέστορος, τοῦ Ἁγίου Γεωργίου τοῦ ἐξ Ἰωαννίνων, τῆς Ἁγίας Ἀνυσίας τῆς ἐν Θεσσαλονίκη, τοῦ Ὁσίου Εὐθυμίου τοῦ Νέου, τοῦ Ἁγίου Θεοδώρου τοῦ Στουδίτου, τοῦ Ἁγίου Εὐσταθίου, τῆς Ἁγίας Μακρίνας, τοῦ Ἁγίου Νικολάου τοῦ Νεομάρτυρος, τοῦ Ἁγίου Βασιλείου τοῦ Ὁμο-

λογητοῦ και πολλὰ ἄλλα τὰ ὁποῖα παρέχουν στὴν συμπρωτεύουσα χάρη και εὐλογία.

Ἐπιθυμώντας τὴν ἀναβίωση τῶν ἑορτῶν πρὸς τιμὴ τοῦ Ἁγίου Μεγαλομάρτυρος Δημητρίου, τὸ 1979 καθιερώνει τὴν Μεγάλη Ἑβδομάδα τοῦ Ἁγίου Δημητρίου, ἑβδομάδα ἀκολουθιῶν ποὺ εἶχε ἀτονήσει τὸν 15<sup>ο</sup> αἰώνα. Χίλια ἑξακόσια ἑβδομῆντα πέντε χρόνια μετὰ τὴν ἄθληση και τὸ μάρτυριο τοῦ Ἁγίου Δημητρίου, κατορθώνει τὸ 1978 νὰ ἐπαναφέρει τὴν κἀρα τοῦ Ἁγίου και δυὸ ἔτη ἀργότερα, τὴν 12<sup>η</sup> Ἀπριλίου τοῦ 1980, ὁργανώνει τὴν μετακομιδὴ τοῦ ἱεροῦ λειψάνου τοῦ Ἁγίου, ἀπὸ τὸ Σὰν Λορέντζο Ἴν Κάμπο τῆς Ἰταλίας ὅπου και βρισκόταν.



Ὁ κ.κ. Παντελεήμων σὲ Λιτανεῖα τοῦ Ἁγίου Δημητρίου

Τὸ σκῆνωμα τοῦ ἐκλιπόντος Ἱεράρχη εἶχε ἐκτεθεῖ γιὰ προσκύνημα στὸν ἱερὸ ναὸ Ἁγίου Δημητρίου Θεσσαλονίκης. Χιλιάδες Θεσσαλονικεῖς ἔσπευσαν νὰ τὸ προσκυνήσουν. Ὁ Παντελεήμων ὁ Β' τίμησε ἐπάξια τὴν πόλη και τὸν ἱστορικό μητροπολιτικό θρόνο, ὑπηρετώντας μὲ συνέπεια τὸ σύστημα τῶν ἀξιώων, στὸ ὁποῖο ἀφιέρωσε τὴ ζωὴ του. Ἀνεδείχθη σὲ Ἱεράρχη Δεσπότη βυζαντινοῦ τύπου και ὑπῆρξε δικαιωμένος συνεχιστὴς τῆς ἱστορίας τῶν Ἑλλήνων Ἀρχιερέων. Ἦταν ἄνθρωπος μὲ ἀποψη, και πρωτοστάτησε ἐπανειλημμένως σὲ ἀγῶνες γιὰ τὴν πατρίδα και γιὰ τὰ ἐθνικά θέματα, ὅπως τοῦ ὀνόματος τῆς

Μακεδονίας, τὴν ὁποία ἀγαποῦσε ἰδιαίτερα. Ἡ πλούσια ἐκκλησιαστική, ἐθνική και κοινωνική δράση θὰ λειτουργήσει ὡς ὁδηγὸς πρὸς τοὺς νεώτερους, τόσο τοὺς κληρικούς ὅσο και τοὺς λαϊκούς.

Εἶναι ἀξίολογο νὰ σημειώσουμε δυὸ προσωπικές ἐμπειρίες. Πρῶτον, ἦταν ἀδύνατον νὰ φέροι στὰ χεῖλια του τὸ ὄνομα τῆς Παναγίας χωρὶς δάκρυα, ἀνεξαρτήτως ποὺ εὐρίσκονταν. Ὅταν στοὺς Α' Χαιρετισμοὺς τῆς Ἁγίας Σαρακοστῆς τοῦ 1999 ἄρχισε νὰ ψάλλει «Τῆ Ὑπερμάχω...», ὁ Μητροπολίτης κατέληξε σὲ λυγμούς και τοῦ ἦταν ἀδύνατον νὰ συνεχίσει. Δεύτερον, οὐδέποτε ἀγγίξε τὸν μηνιαῖο του μισθὸ ἄλλὰ εἶχε δώσει (ἐδῶ και πολλὰ χρόνια) ὁδηγίες γιὰ τὰ χρήματα αὐτὰ νὰ πηγαίνουν σὲ ἐλεημοσύνες και ὑποτροφίες πρὸς νέα, φτωχὰ Ἑλληνόπαιδα.

Ὁ λαὸς τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης θὰ θυμᾶται μὲ συγκίνηση τὸν φλογερὸ ἱεροκήρυκα, τὸν δωρικό ποιμένα, τὸν μαχητικό πατριώτη, τὸν φιλόανθρωπο και φιλεύσπλαχνο Μητροπολίτη, τὸ μεγάλο στήριγμα γιὰ ὅλους τοὺς Θεσσαλονικεῖς. Τὸ φωτεινὸ του πνεῦμα ἄς καθοδηγεῖ γιὰ πάντα τὶς ζωές μας και ὁ Κύριος ἄς ἀναπαύσει τὴν ψυχὴ του.

Αἰωνία του ἡ μνήμη!



## Βασικά Σημεία Διαφορᾶς Μεταξύ Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας Καὶ Παπισμοῦ

Τοῦ Σέβ. Μητροπολίτου Ναυπάκτου κ. Γεροθέου Βλάχου

**Ο**ἱ Ἐπίσκοποι τῆς Παλαιᾶς Ρώμης, παρὰ τὶς μικρὲς καὶ μὴ οὐσιαστικὲς διαφορᾶς, εἶχαν πάντοτε κοινωρία μὲ τοὺς Ἐπισκόπους τῆς Νέας Ρώμης καὶ τοὺς Ἐπισκόπους τῆς Ἀνατολῆς μέχρι τὸ 1009-1014, ὅταν γιὰ πρώτη φορᾶ κατέλαβαν τὸν θρόνο τῆς Παλαιᾶς Ρώμης οἱ Φράγκοι Ἐπίσκοποι. Μέχρι τὸ 1009 οἱ Πάπες τῆς Ρώμης καὶ οἱ Πατριάρχες τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως ἦσαν ἐνωμένοι στὸν κοινὸ ἀγώνα ἐναντίον τῶν Φράγκων Ἡγεμόνων καὶ Ἐπισκόπων, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν κατὰ καιροὺς αἰρετικῶν.

Οἱ Φράγκοι στὴν Σύνοδο τῆς Φραγκφούρτης τὸ 794 καταδίκασαν τὶς ἀποφάσεις τῆς Ζ' Οἰκουμενικῆς Συνόδου καὶ τὴν τιμητικὴ προσκύνηση τῶν ἱερῶν εἰκόνων. Ἐπίσης τὸ 809 οἱ Φράγκοι εἰσήγαγαν στὸ Σύμβολο τῆς Πίστεως τὸ Filioque, τὴν διδασκαλία δηλαδὴ περὶ τῆς ἐκπορεύσεως τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ ἐκ τοῦ Υἱοῦ. Αὐτὴν τὴν εἰσαγωγὴν καταδίκασε τότε καὶ ὁ ὀρθόδοξος Πάπας τῆς Ρώμης. Στὴν Σύνοδο τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως ἐπὶ Μεγάλου Φωτίου, στὴν ὁποία συμμετεῖχαν καὶ ἐκπρόσωποι τοῦ ὀρθοδόξου Πάπα τῆς Ρώμης, καταδίκασαν ὅσους εἶχαν καταδικάσει τὶς ἀποφάσεις τῆς Ζ' Οἰκουμενικῆς Συνόδου καὶ ὅσους προσέθεσαν στὸ Σύμβολο τῆς Πίστεως τὸ Filioque. Ὅμως γιὰ πρώτη φορᾶ ὁ Φράγκος Πάπας Σέργιος Δ' τὸ 1009 στὴν ἐνθρονιστήρια ἐπιστολὴ του προσέθεσε στὸ Σύμβολο τῆς Πίστεως τὸ Filioque καὶ ὁ Πάπας Βενέδικτος Η' εἰσήγαγε τὸ Πιστεύω μὲ τὸ Filioque στὴν λατρεία τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, ὁπότε ὁ Πάπας διεγράφη ἀπὸ τὰ δίπτυχα τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας.

Ἡ βασικὴ διαφορὰ μεταξὺ τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας καὶ τοῦ Παπισμοῦ βρίσκεται στὴν διδασκαλία περὶ τῆς ἀκτίστου οὐσίας καὶ ἀκτίστου ἐνεργείας τοῦ Θεοῦ. Ἐνῶ οἱ Ὁρθόδοξοι πιστεύουμε ὅτι ὁ Θεὸς ἔχει ἄκτιστη οὐσία καὶ ἄκτιστη ἐνέργεια καὶ ὅτι ὁ Θεὸς ἔρχεται σὲ κοινωρία μὲ τὴν κτίση καὶ τὸν ἄνθρωπο μὲ τὴν ἄκτιστη ἐνέργειά Του, ἐν τούτοις οἱ Παπικοὶ πιστεύουν ὅτι στὸν Θεὸ ἡ ἄκτιστη οὐσία ταυτίζεται μὲ τὴν ἄκτιστη ἐνέργειά Του (actus purus) καὶ ὅτι ὁ Θεὸς ἐπικοινωνεῖ μὲ τὴν κτίση καὶ τὸν ἄνθρωπο διὰ τῶν κτιστῶν ἐνεργειῶν Του, δηλαδὴ ἰσχυρίζονται ὅτι στὸν Θεὸ ὑπάρχουν καὶ κτιστὲς ἐνέργειες. Ὅποτε ἡ Χάρη τοῦ Θεοῦ διὰ τῆς ὁποίας ἀγιάζεται ὁ ἄνθρωπος θεωρεῖται ὡς κτιστὴ ἐνέργεια. Ἀλλὰ ἐτσι δὲν μπορεῖ νὰ ἀγιασθῇ.

Ἀπὸ αὐτὴν τὴν βασικὴ διδασκαλία προέρχεται ἡ διδασκαλία περὶ ἐκπορεύσεως τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ ἐκ τοῦ Υἱοῦ, τὸ καθαρτήριο πῦρ, τὸ πρωτεῖο τοῦ Πάπα κ.λ.π.

Ἐκτὸς ἀπὸ τὴν θεμελιώδη διαφορὰ μεταξὺ τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας καὶ τοῦ Παπισμοῦ στὸ θέμα τῆς οὐσίας καὶ ἐνεργείας στὸν Θεὸ, ὑπάρχουν ἄλλες μεγάλες διαφορᾶς, πού ἔγιναν ἀντικείμενα θεολογικῶν διαλόγων, ἥτοι:

- τὸ Filioque ὅτι τὸ Ἅγιον Πνεῦμα ἐκπορεύεται ἀπὸ τὸν Πατέρα καὶ τὸν Υἱὸ μὲ ἀποτέλεσμα νὰ μειώνεται ἡ μοναρχία τοῦ Πατρὸς, νὰ καταργεῖται ἡ τέλεια ἰσότητα τῶν προσώπων τῆς Ἁγίας Τριάδος, νὰ μειώνεται ὁ Υἱὸς κατὰ τὴν ιδιότητά Του νὰ γεννᾶ, ἐὰν ὑπάρχει ἐνότητα μεταξὺ Πατρὸς καὶ Υἱοῦ, νὰ ὑποτιμᾶται τὸ Ἅγιον Πνεῦμα ὡς μὴ ἰσοδύναμο καὶ ὁμόδοξο μὲ τὰ ἄλλα πρόσωπα τῆς Ἁγίας Τριάδος, ἀφοῦ παρουσιάζεται ὡσεὶ «πρόσωπο στεῖρο»,

- ἡ χρησιμοποίησις ἀζύμου ἄρτου στὴν θεία Εὐχαριστία πού παραβαίνει τὸν τρόπο μὲ τὸν ὁποῖο ὁ Χριστὸς ἐτέλεσε τὸ Μυστικὸ Δεῖπνο,

- ὁ καθυγιασμός τῶν «τιμίων δώρων» πού γίνεται ὄχι μὲ τὴν ἐπίκληση, ἀλλὰ μὲ τὴν ἐπαγγελία τῶν ἱδρυτικῶν λόγων τοῦ Χριστοῦ «λάβετε φάγετε... πίετε ἐξ αὐτοῦ πάντες...»,

- ἡ θεωρία ὅτι ἡ σταυρικὴ θυσία τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐξιλίωσε τὴν θεία δικαιοσύνη, πού παρουσιάζει τὸν Θεὸ Πατέρα ὡς φεουδάρχη καὶ παραθεωρεῖ τὴν Ἀνάστασι,

- ἡ θεωρία περὶ τῆς «ἀξιομισθίας» τοῦ Χριστοῦ πού τὴν διαχειρίζεται ὁ Πάπας καὶ ἡ «ὑπερπερισεύουσα» χάρις τῶν ἁγίων,

- ὁ χωρισμός καὶ ἡ διάσπαση μεταξὺ τῶν μυστηρίων Βαπτίσματος, Χρίσματος καὶ θείας Εὐχαριστίας,

- ἡ διδασκαλία περὶ τῆς κληρονομίσεως τῆς ἐνοχῆς τοῦ προπατορικοῦ ἁμαρτήματος,

- οἱ λειτουργικὲς καινοτομίαι σὲ ὅλα τὰ μυστήρια τῆς Ἐκκλησίας (Βάπτισμα, Χρίσμα, Ἱερωσύνη, Ἐξομολόγησις, Γάμος, Εὐχέλαιον),

- ἡ μὴ μετάληψη τῶν λαϊκῶν ἀπὸ τὸ «Αἷμα» τοῦ Χριστοῦ,

- τὸ πρωτεῖο τοῦ Πάπα, κατὰ τὸ ὁποῖο ὁ Πάπας εἶναι «ὁ episcopus episcoporum καὶ ἡ πηγὴ τῆς ἱερατικῆς καὶ ἐκκλησιαστικῆς ἐξουσίας, εἶναι ἡ ἀλάθητος κεφαλὴ καὶ ὁ Καθηγμένων τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, κυβερνῶν αὐτὴν μοναρχικῶς ὡς τοποτηρητὴς τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς» (Ι. Καρμίρης). Μὲ αὐτὴν τὴν ἐννοία ὁ Πάπας θεωρεῖ τὸν ἑαυτοῦ τοῦ διάδοχό τοῦ Ἀποστόλου Πέτρου, στὸν ὁποῖον ὑποτάσσονται οἱ ἄλλοι Ἀπόστολοι, ἀκόμη καὶ ὁ Ἀπόστολος Παῦλος,

- ἡ μὴ ὑπαρξὴ συλλειτουργίας κατὰ τὶς λατρευτικὲς πράξεις,

- τὸ ἀλάθητο τοῦ Πάπα,

- τὸ δόγμα τῆς ἀσπίλου συλλήψεως τῆς Θεοτόκου καὶ γενικὰ ἡ μαριολατρεία, κατὰ τὴν ὁποία ἡ Παναγία ἀνυψώνεται στὴν Τριαδικὴ θεότητα καὶ μάλιστα γίνεται λόγος καὶ γιὰ Ἁγία Τετράδα,

- οἱ θεωρίαι τῆς analogia entis καὶ analogia fidei πού ἐπικράτησαν στὸν δυτικὸ χῶρο,

- ἡ συνεχὴς πρόοδος τῆς Ἐκκλησίας στὴν ἀνακάλυψη τῶν πτυχῶν τῆς ἀποκαλυπτικῆς ἀλήθειας,

- ἡ διδασκαλία περὶ τοῦ ἀπολύτου προορισμοῦ,

- ἡ ἀποψη περὶ τῆς ἐνιαίας μεθοδολογίας γιὰ τὴν γνώση τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τῶν κτισμάτων, ἡ ὁποία ὀδήγησε στὴν σύγκρουση μεταξὺ θεολογίας καὶ ἐπιστήμης.

Ἐπίσης, ἡ μεγάλη διαφοροποίησις, ἡ ὁποία δεῖχνει τὸν

τρόπο της θεολογίας βρίσκεται και στην διαφορά μεταξύ σχολαστικής και ήσυχαστικής θεολογίας. Στην Δύση αναπτύχθηκε ο σχολαστικισμός, ως προσπάθεια διερεύνησης όλων των μυστηρίων της πίστεως με την λογική ( Άνσελμος Καντερβουρίας, Θωμάς Ακινάτης), ενώ στην Όρθόδοξη Έκκλησία έπικρατεί ο ήσυχασμός, δηλαδή ή κάθαρση της καρδιάς και ο φωτισμός του νοῦ, για την άποκτηση της γνώσης του Θεοῦ. Ο διάλογος μεταξύ του άγιου Γρηγορίου του Παλαμά και του σχολαστικού και ονίτη Βαρλαάμ είναι χαρακτηριστικός και δείχνει την διαφορά.

Συνέπεια όλων τῶν άνωτέρω είναι ότι στον Παπισμό έχουμε άποκλιση από την Όρθόδοξη Έκκλησιολογία. Ένώ στην Όρθόδοξη Έκκλησία δίνεται μεγάλη σημασία στην θέωση που συνίσταται στην κοινωνία με τον Θεό, δια της όράσεως του άκτίστου Φωτός, όποτε οί θεούμενοι συνέρχονται σε Οικουμενική Σύνοδο και όριοθετοῦν άσφαλῶς την άποκαλυπτική αλήθεια σε περιπτώσεις συγχύσεως, εν τούτοις στον Παπισμό δίνεται μεγάλη σημασία στον θεσμό του Πάπα, ο οποίος Πάπας υπέρκειται άκόμη και από αυτές τις Οικουμενικές Συνόδους. Σύμφωνα με την λατινική θεολογία «ή άυθεντία της Έκκλησίας υπάρχει τότε μόνον όταν στηρίζεται και έναρμονίζεται με την θέληση του Πάπα. Σε αντίθετη περίπτωση έκμηδενίζεται». Οί Οικουμενικές Σύνοδοι θεωροῦνται ως «συνέδρια του Χριστιανισμού που συγκαλοῦνται υπό την άυθεντία και την έξουσία και την προεδρία του Πάπα». Άρκει να βγῆ ο Πάπας από την αίθουσα της Οικουμενικής Συνόδου, όποτε αυτή παύει να έχη κύρος. Ο Έπίσκοπος Μαρὲ έγραψε: «Θά ήταν πιό ακριβείς οί ρωμαιοκαθολικοί αν έκφωνώντας τὸ “Πιστεύω” έλεγαν “και εις έναν Πάπα” παρά να λένε “και εις μίαν... Έκκλησίαν.”»

Έπίσης, «ή σημασία και ο ρόλος τῶν Έπισκόπων μέσα στην ρωμαϊκή Έκκλησία δέν είναι παρά άπλή έκπροσώπηση της παπικής έξουσίας, στην όποία και οί ίδιοι οί Έπίσκοποι υποτάσσονται, όπως οί άπλοι πιστοί». Στην παπική Έκκλησιολογία ουσιαστικά υποστηρίζεται ότι «ή άποστολική έξουσία εξέλιπε με τούς άποστόλους και δέν μετεδόθη στους διαδόχους τούς έπισκόπους. Μονάχα ή παπική έξουσία του Πέτρου, υπό την όποια βρισκονταν όλοι οί άλλοι, μετεδόθη στους διαδόχους του Πέτρου, δηλαδή στους Πάπες». Μέσα σε αυτήν την προοπτική υποστηρίζεται από την παπική « Έκκλησία» ότι όλες οί Έκκλησίες της Άνατολής είναι διίσταμένες και έχουν έλλείψεις και κατά οικονομία μᾶς δέχονται σε κοινωνία, και βέβαια κάτ' οικονομία μᾶς δέχονται ως άδελφές Έκκλησίας, επειδή αυτή αυτοθε-

ωρείται ως μητέρα Έκκλησία και έμᾶς μᾶς θεωροῦν θυγατέρες Έκκλησίες.

Τὸ Βατικανὸ είναι κράτος και ο έκάστοτε Πάπας είναι ο ήγέτης του Κράτους του Βατικανού. Πρόκειται για μία άνθρωποκεντρική όργάνωση, για μία έκκοσμίκευση και μάλιστα θεσμοποιημένη έκκοσμίκευση. Τὸ Κράτος του Βατικανού ιδρύθηκε τὸ 755 από τὸν Πιπῖνο τὸν Βραχῦ, πατέρα του Καρλομάγνου και στην εποχή μας αναγνωρίσθηκε τὸ 1929 από τὸ Μουσολῖνι. Είναι σημαντική ή αιτιολογία της άνακηρύξεως του Παπικού Κράτους, όπως τὸ υποστήριξε ο Πίος ΙΑ΄: «ὁ ἐπὶ της γῆς ἀντιπρόσωπος του Θεοῦ δέν δύναται να είναι υπήκοος ἐπιγείου κράτους». Ο Χριστὸς ἦταν υπήκοος ἐπιγείου κράτους, ο Πάπας δέν μπορεί να είναι! Η παπική έξουσία συνιστᾶ θεοκρατία, αφού ή θεοκρατία όρίζεται ως ταύτιση κοσμικής και έκκλησιαστικής έξουσίας σε ένα πρόσωπο. Σήμερα θεοκρατικά κράτη είναι τὸ Βατικανὸ και τὸ Ἰράν.

Είναι χαρακτηριστικά τὰ ὅσα υποστήριξε στον ένθρονιστήριο λόγο του ο Πάπας Ἰννοκέντιος Γ΄ (1198-1216): «Αὐτὸς που έχη τὴ νύμφη είναι ο νυμφίος. Ἄλλὰ ή νύμφη αὐτὴ (ή Έκκλησία) δέν συνεζεύχθη με κενὰ τὰ χέρια, ἀλλὰ πρόσφερε σε μένα ασύγκριτη πολύτιμη προίκα, δηλαδή την πληρότητα τῶν πνευματικῶν αγαθῶν και την εύρύτητα τῶν κοσμικῶν, τὸ μεγαλειὸ και την άφθονία άμφοτέρων... Σὰ σύμβολα τῶν κοσμικῶν αγαθῶν μοῦ ἔδωσε τὸ Στέμμα, τὴ Μί-



Άγ. Γρηγόριος Παλαμάς  
Ο Μέγας Στύλος της Όρθοδοξίας

τρα υπέρ της Ἰερωσύνης, τὸ Στέμμα για τὴ βασιλεία και με κατέστησε ἀντιπρόσωπο Ἐκεῖνου, στὸ ένδυμα και στὸ μηρὸ του όποιου γράφτηκε: ο Βασιλεὺς τῶν βασιλέων και Κύριος τῶν κυρίων».

Έπομένως, υπάρχουν μεγάλες θεολογικές διαφορές, οί όποίες καταδικάσθηκαν από την Σύνοδο ἐπὶ Μεγάλου Φωτίου και στην Σύνοδο ἐπὶ Ἁγίου Γρηγορίου του Παλαμά, όπως φαίνεται και στὸ «Συνοδικὸ της Όρθοδοξίας». Ἐπὶ πλέον και οί Πατέρες της Έκκλησίας και οί Τοπικές Σύνοδοι μέχρι τὸν 19ο αῖωνα καταδίκασαν όλες τις πλάνες του Παπισμοῦ. Τὸ πράγμα δέν θεραπεύεται ούτε βελτιώνεται από κάποια τυπική συγγνώμη που θά δώση ο Πάπας για ένα ιστορικό λάθος, όταν οί θεολογικές άπόψεις του είναι εκτὸς της Ἄποκαλύψεως και ή Έκκλησιολογία κινεῖται σε έσφαλμένο δρόμο, αφού μάλιστα ο Πάπας παρουσιάζεται ως ήγέτης του Χριστιανικού κόσμου, ως διάδοχος του Ἄποστόλου Πέτρου και βικάριος-άντιπρόσωπος του Χριστοῦ πάνω στην γῆ, ὡσαν ο Χριστὸς να ἔδωσε την έξουσία του στον Πάπα και Ἐκεῖνος ἀναπαύεται ευδαίμων στους Ουρανούς.



## Πόσο Κοστίζει Η Ανθρώπινη Ζωή;

Μάρω Σιδέρη, Μυτιλήνη, Ελλάδα

ΠΗΓΗ: Ιστοσελίδες της Ιερᾶς Μητροπόλεως Μυτιλήνης

Τὸ ἐρώτημα δὲν εἶναι ρητορικό. Εἶναι πραγματικό καὶ δε-  
δομένη, πολὺ φοβᾶμαι ὅτι τὰ φαινόμενα καθημερινὰ σὰς  
διαψεύδουν. Βλέπετε, ὅποια κι' ἂν εἶναι ἡ ἄποψή μας γιὰ  
τὴν ἀξία ἐνὸς ἀγαθοῦ, ἡ ἀληθινή του τιμὴ φαίνεται πάν-  
τοτε στὸ ταμεῖο. Πόσο κοστολογεῖται λοιπὸν ἡ ζωὴ ἐνὸς  
ἀνθρώπου στὸ ταμεῖο τῆς ἀνθρωπότητας; Μᾶλλον κάτι λι-  
γότερο ἀπὸ τίποτα!

Ἀκούγεται κυνικό; Ἔχετε δίκιο. Σκεφτεῖτε ὅμως ὅτι κυ-  
νισμὸς εἶναι ἡ προσπάθεια νὰ περιγραφεῖ ἡ φρίκη, καὶ μ'  
αὐτὸ τὸ δεδομένο δέχομαι τὴν κατηγορία: Ναι, ἀγαπητοί  
μου, τὸ κείμενο αὐτὸ εἶναι μᾶλλον κυνικό!

Πόσο κοστίζει ἡ ἀνθρώπινη ζωὴ; Οἱ πολιτικοὶ ἄνδρες τῆς  
ὕψηλίου λένε πὼς εἶναι ἀνεκτίμητη. Τὸ ὑπέρτατο ἀγαθὸ,  
ὁ σκοπὸς τῆς πολιτικῆς τους ὑπαρξης.

Ἄνοιχοι εἶναι ἡ εὐτυχία της, ἡ ἀσφάλεια καὶ ἡ πρόο-  
δός της. Καὶ ξαφνικὰ φτάνουν στὸ ταμεῖο καὶ τὴν ἀγορά-  
ζουν ἢ τὴν πουλοῦν ἐναντι πινακίου φακῆς.

Στηρίζουν τὴν παγκόσμια εἰρήνην πάνω σὲ ἀνθρωποθυσίες  
καὶ μᾶς διδάσκουν ὅτι αὐτὸ ὀνομάζεται πολιτισμὸς. Ἡ ἀν-  
θρωποθυσία πολιτισμὸς; Ἦταν πολιτισμένοι λοιπὸν οἱ Ρω-  
μαῖοι ποὺ διασκέδαζαν ρίχνοντας δούλους στὰ θηρία, ἢ οἱ  
δικαστὲς τοῦ Μεσαίωνα ποὺ ἔριχναν τοὺς «ἀμαρτωλοὺς»  
στὴν πυρὰ γιὰ νὰ λιώσουν τὶς ἀμαρτίες τους; Στὸ σχολεῖο  
μαθαίναμε πὼς ὄχι. Βγαίνοντας στὴν κοινωνία, συνειδητο-  
ποιοῦμε πὼς αὐτὸ οἱ λαοὶ τὸ λένε πολιτισμὸ.

Καὶ πρὶν βιαστοῦν νὰ ἀντιδράσουν οἱ φίλοι τῶν «πολιτι-  
σμένων», ἄς θυμηθοῦν τὰ κλάματα τῶν νεογνῶν σ' ἐκεῖνο  
τὸ μαιευτήριό στη Σερβία, ὅταν οἱ φιλερηνικὲς Νατοϊκὲς  
δυνάμεις βομβάρδιζαν γειτονιὲς «κακῶν» ἀμάχων καὶ τὰ  
διαμελισμένα σώματα τῶν προσφύγων, μὲ στόχο τὴν τάξη  
καὶ τὴν ἀσφάλεια. Ἄς θυμηθοῦν τὰ βρέφη τοῦ Ἰράκ ποὺ γεν-  
νιοῦνται καταδικασμένα ἐξαιτίας τῶν «ἔξυπνων βομβῶν»  
καὶ τοὺς ἀμερικανικοὺς στρατιῶτες, παλικάρια ποὺ ἀργοπε-  
θαίνουν, θύματα τῶν ἰδίων τους τῶν ὄπλων. Πόσο κοστο-  
λογοῦν λοιπὸν οἱ ἄνθρωποι τὴν ἀνθρώπινη ζωὴ;

Σίγουρα πολὺ λιγότερο ἀπὸ ἓνα βαρέλι πετρέλαιο, ἀπ'  
ὅτι δείχνει τὸ νέο σχέδιο ἐπίθεσης τῆς πανίσχυρης Ἀμερι-  
κῆς στὸν λαὸ τοῦ Ἰράκ. Βλέπετε, «ὁ κάθε ἄνθρωπος εἶ-  
ναι ἀξιοσέβαστος», ἀλλὰ τὰ πετρέλαια τοῦ Ἰράκ εἶναι ἐπὶ  
τῆς οὐσίας πιὸ ἀξιοσέβαστα. Ἔτσι οἱ ἔταιρειες, προκειμέ-  
νου ν' ἀποκτήσουν τὸ δικαίωμα νὰ ἐλέγχουν καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ  
ἀγαθὸ, ζήτησαν ἀπὸ ἓναν ἄνθρωπο νὰ γίνῃ Μαριονέτα  
τους καὶ νὰ χτυπήσει γυναικόπαιδα, μὲ στόχο «τὴν ἐγκαθί-  
δρυση τῆς δημοκρατίας στὸ ταλαιπωρημένο ἀσιατικὸ κρά-  
τος» - λὲς καὶ δὲν ὑπάρχουν ἄλλα κράτη ποὺ βασανίζον-  
ται ἀπὸ ἀπολυταρχικὰ καθεστῶτα - καὶ τὴν ἐξουδετέρωση  
τῶν ἱρακινῶν ὄπλων ποὺ ἀπειλοῦν τὴν παγκόσμια εἰρήνην.

Ἄπλων ἰδίων μ' αὐτὰ ποὺ ἔχουν οἱ περισσότερες χῶρες σὲ  
ὅλο τὸν κόσμο! Μὲ βάση τὴ λογικὴ (;) αὐτὴ, σύντομα θὰ  
ξεκινήσει ἓνας νέος κύκλος αἵματος μέσα στὸν ὅποιο χω-  
ροῦν - ἀλλοιμόνο μας - μόνο ἄμαχοι. Πόσο κοστίζει ἡ ἀν-  
θρώπινη ζωὴ;

Πολὺ λιγότερο ἀπὸ τὰ οὐρλιαχτὰ τῶν φανατισμένων τάχα  
ιδεαλιστῶν, οἱ ὅποιοι αὐτοαποκαλοῦνται ἀγωνιστὲς καὶ  
ἐραστὲς τῆς ἐλευθερίας καὶ μ' αὐτὸ τὸ πρόσχημα ρίχνουν  
ἀεροπλάνο πάνω σὲ κτίρια, σκοτώνοντας ἀθώους πολίτες  
ποὺ ἐργάζονταν γιὰ νὰ ἐξασφαλίσουν τὶς ζωὲς τῶν παιδιῶν  
τους. Πολὺ λιγότερο ἀπὸ τὸν παραλογισμό ψευτοεπαναστα-  
τῶν, ποὺ γιὰ τὴν ἐπανάστασή τους γεμίζουν μὲ σφαῖρες τὰ  
κορμιά «ἐνόχων» καὶ ἀθῶων, βυθίζοντας ἔτσι στὸ πένθος  
ὀλόκληρες οικογένειες. Πόσο κοστίζει ἡ ἀνθρώπινη ζωὴ;

Μακρὰν λιγότερο ἀπὸ ἓνα ἐγκλημα, εἰδικὰ ἐὰν ὁ φονιάς  
εἶναι εὐπρεπῶς ντυμένος καὶ πολιτικὰ καλυμμένος, ὅπως  
στὴν περίπτωση τῆς Κύπρου, ὅπου ἀκόμα ζητοῦν δικαίωση  
οἱ νεκροί, οἱ ἀγνοοῦμενοι οἱ κακοποιημένοι καὶ οἱ πρόσφυ-  
γες. Θα καθίσουν ποτὲ στὸ ἐδῶλιο τοῦ κατηγορουμένου οἱ  
ἐμπνευστὲς τέτοιων φρικαλεοτήτων; Ὁχι. Γιατί ἀπλᾶ ἐκεῖ-  
νοι οἱ νεκροὶ τῆς Κύπρου καὶ τοῦ Ἰράκ, τῆς Σερβίας, τῆς  
Ἀμερικῆς καὶ τῆς Ἑλλάδας - καὶ Κύριος οἶδε πόσων ἄλλων  
χωρῶν - εἶναι ἀπλῶς ἄνθρωποι, καὶ σὲ τοῦτο τὸν πλανήτη  
οἱ ἄνθρωποι δὲν κοστίζουν τίποτα. Οὔτε τὰ δάκρυα ἐκεῖ-  
νων ποὺ μεγαλοφυῶν πατώντας στοὺς τάφους τους.

Υ.Γ.: Ἐὰν μελετήσετε τὴν ἱστορία τῶν πολέμων ἢ ἐπανα-  
στάσεων ποὺ συγκλόνισαν τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα καὶ τὴ συγκρί-  
νετε μὲ τοὺς πολέμους ποὺ γίνονται σήμερα, θὰ διαπιστώ-  
σετε τὴν τιμὴ τῆς ἀνθρώπινης ζωῆς στὸ σύγχρονο κόσμο.  
Συγκρίνετε, π.χ., τὸν ἀριθμὸ τῶν νεκρῶν ΑΜΑΧΩΝ στὸν  
Α' παγκόσμιο πόλεμο μὲ τὸν ἀντίστοιχο ἀριθμὸ στὸν Περ-  
σικὸ κόλο, τὴ δεκαετία τοῦ '90. Ἐγὼ τουλάχιστον, συ-  
νειδητοποιώντας τὴ διαφορά, ντράπηκα ποὺ εἶμαι ἄνθρω-  
πος!



### ΓΙΑ ΝΑ ΜΗΝ ΞΕΧΝΑΜΕ!

Μὲ τὰ ροῦχα αἱματομέννα, ξέρω ὅτι ἐβγαίνεις κρυφά,  
νὰ γυρεῖς εἰς τὰ ξένα, ἄλλα χέρια δυνατά.

Μοναχὴ τὸν δρόμο ἐπῆρες, ἐξανάλθες μοναχὴ,  
δὲν εἶν' εὐκολὲς οἱ θύρες, ἐὰν ἡ χρεῖα τὲς κουρταλεῖ.

Ἄλλος σ' ἔκλαψε εἰς τὰ στήθια, ἀλλ' ἀνάσασε καμμιὰ,  
ἄλλος σοῦ ἔταξε βοήθεια, καὶ σὲ γέλασε φρικτά.

Ἄλλοι, ὠϊμέ! στὴ συμφορὰ σου, ὅπου ἐχαίροντο πολὺ,  
«σῦρε νὰ βρεῖς τὰ παιδιὰ σου, σῦρε», λέγαν οἱ σκληροί.

Διονύσιος Σολωμός,  
«Ὕμνος Εἰς Τὴν Ἐλευθερίαν», στίχοι 9-12



## A PROPHECY OF FUTURE LAWLESSNESS

*From a letter of the Optina Elder [and New Martyr] St. Anatoly the Younger (+1922), Source: Orthodox Life, #3, 1993*

And from that heresies will spread everywhere and deceive many people. The enemy of the human race will act with cunning in order to draw into heresy, if possible, even the elect.

He will not begin by crudely rejecting the dogmas of the Holy Trinity, the divinity of Jesus Christ and the virtue of the Theotokos, but he will begin imperceptibly to distort the teachings and statutes of the Church and their very spirit, handed down to us by the Holy Fathers through the Holy Spirit.

Few will notice these wiles of the enemy, only those more experienced in the spiritual life. Heretics will seize power over the Church and will place their servants everywhere; the pious will be regarded with contempt. He (the Lord) said, by their fruits ye shall know them, and so, by their fruits, as well as by the actions of the heretics, strive to distinguish them from the true pastors.

These are spiritual thieves, plundering the spiritual flock, and they will enter the sheepfold (the Church), climbing up some other way, using force and trampling upon the divine statutes. The Lord calls them robbers (cf. St. John 10:1). Indeed, their first task will be the persecution of the true pastors, their imprisonment and exile, for without this it will be impossible for them to plunder the sheep.

Therefore, my son, when you see the violation of patristic tradition and the divine order in the Church, the order established by God, know that the heretics have already appeared, although for the time being they may conceal their impiety, or they will distort the Divine Faith imperceptibly, in order to succeed better in seducing and enticing the inexperienced into the net.

The persecution will be directed against not only pastors but against all servants of God, for all those ruled by heresy will not endure piety. Recognize these wolves in sheep's clothing by their proud dispositions and love of power. They will be slanderers, traitors, everywhere sowing enmity and malice; therefore the Lord said that by their fruits you will know them. True servants of God are humble, love their neighbor and are obedient to the Church.

Monastics will be greatly oppressed by the heretics and monastic life will be scorned. Monasteries will become scarce, the number of monastics will decline, and those who remain will endure violence. These haters of monastic life, however, having only the appearance of piety, will strive to attract the monks to

their side promising them protection and worldly goods, and threatening those who oppose them with expulsion.

These threats will cause great despair among the fainthearted, but you, my son rejoice that you have lived until that time, for then the faithful who have not shown any other virtues, will receive crowns merely for standing firm in the faith, according to the word of the Lord (cf. St. Matthew 10:32).

Fear the Lord my son. Fear to lose the crown prepared (for you), fear to be cast by Christ into the outer darkness and eternal torment. Stand bravely in the faith, and if necessary, endure persecution and other sorrows, for the Lord will be with you... and the holy martyrs and confessors, they will look upon you and your struggle with joy.

But woe to the monks in those days who will be bound with possessions and riches, who because of love of peace will be ready to submit to the heretics. They will lull to sleep their conscience, saying, "We are preserving and saving the monastery and the Lord will forgive us." The unfortunate and blind ones do not at all consider that through heresy the demons will enter the monastery and then it will no longer be a holy monastery, but merely walls from which grace will depart.

God, however, is mightier than the enemy, and He will never leave His servants. True Christians will remain until the end of this age, only they will choose to live in secluded, deserted places. Do not fear sorrows, rather fear pernicious heresy, for it strips us of grace and separates us from

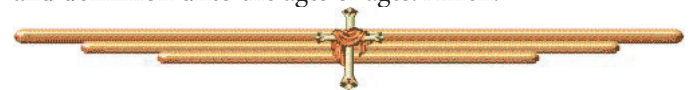
Christ. This is why the Lord commanded us to consider the heretic as a pagan and a publican.

And so my son, strengthen yourself in the grace of Jesus Christ. Hasten to confess the faith, to endure suffering as a good soldier of Jesus Christ (cf II St. Timothy 2:13), Who has said, Be faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life (Rev.2:10).

To Him, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be honor, glory, and dominion unto the ages of ages. Amen.



**St. Anatoly the New Martyr**



### A Prayer for Orthodox Christians of the Latter Times

Deliver me O Lord from the deceptions of the God-hating and evil antichrist, whose coming is at hand, and shelter me from his snares in the secret desert of Thy salvation. Grant me, O Lord strength and courage to firmly confess Thy Most Holy Name, that I may not abandon You because of the devil's fear and that I may not deny Thee, my Savior and Redeemer, nor Thy Holy Church. But grant me O Lord cries and tears for my sins, and spare me O Lord in the hour of Thy dreaded judgment. Amen.

St. Anatoly the New Martyr (+1922)

## THE RED MARBLES

*Author Unknown*

During the years of the depression in a small southeastern Idaho community, I used to stop by Mr. Miller's roadside stand for farm-fresh produce as the season made it available. Food and money were still extremely scarce and bartering was used, extensively. One particular day Mr. Miller was bagging some early potatoes for me. I noticed a small boy, delicate of bone and feature, ragged but clean, hungrily apprising a basket of freshly picked green peas. I paid for my potatoes but was also drawn to the display of fresh green peas. I am a pushover for creamed peas and new potatoes. Pondering the peas, I couldn't help overhearing the conversation between Mr. Miller and the ragged boy next to me.

"Hello Barry, how are you today?"

"H'lo, Mr. Miller. Fine, thank ya. Jus' admirin' them peas ... sure look good."

"They are good, Barry. How's your Ma?"

"Fine. Gittin' stronger alla' time."

"Good. Anything I can help you with?"

"No, Sir. Jus' admirin' them peas."

"Would you like to take some home?"

"No, Sir. Got nuthin' to pay for 'em with."

"Well, what have you to trade me for some of those peas?"

"All I got's my prize marble here."

"Is that right? Let me see it."

"Here 'tis. She's a dandy."

"I can see that. Hmmmm, only thing is this one is blue and I sort of go for red. Do you have a red one like this at home?"

"Not 'zackley .....but, almost."

"Tell you what. Take this sack of peas home with you and next trip this way let me look at that red marble."

"Sure will. Thanks, Mr. Miller."

Mrs. Miller, who had been standing nearby, came over to help me. With a smile she said:

"There are two other boys like him in our community; all three are in very poor circumstances. Jim just loves to bargain with them for peas, apples, tomatoes, or whatever. When they come back with their red marbles, and they always do, he decides he doesn't like red after all and he sends them home with a bag of produce for a green marble or an orange one, perhaps."

I left the stand, smiling to myself, impressed with this man. A short time later I moved to Colorado but I never forgot the story of this man, the boys, and their bartering.

Several years went by each more rapid than the previous one. Just recently I had occasion to visit some old friends in that Idaho community, and while I was there, learned that Mr. Miller had died. They were having his viewing that evening, and knowing my friends wanted to go, I agreed to accompany them.

Upon our arrival at the mortuary we fell into line to meet the relatives of the deceased and to offer whatever words of comfort we could. Ahead of us in line were three young men. One was in an army uniform and the other two wore nice haircuts, dark suits and white shirts ... very professional looking.

They approached Mrs. Miller, standing smiling and composed, by her husband's casket. Each of the young men hugged her, kissed her on the cheek, spoke briefly with her and moved on to the casket. Her misty light blue eyes followed them as, one by one, each young man stopped briefly and placed his own warm hand over the cold pale hand in the casket. Each left the mortuary, awkwardly, wiping his eyes.

Our turn came to meet Mrs. Miller. I told her who I was and mentioned the story she had told me about the marbles. Eyes glistening she took my hand and led me to the casket.

"Those three young men who just left were the boys I told you about. They just told me how they appreciated the things Jim 'traded' them. Now at last, when Jim could not change his mind about color or size ... they came to pay their debt. We've never had a great deal of the wealth of this world," she confided, "but right now, Jim would consider himself the richest man in Idaho."

With loving gentleness she lifted the lifeless fingers of her deceased husband. Resting underneath were three, exquisitely shined, red marbles.



### FISH PHILOSOPHY & THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

In a small pond some carp had gathered to discuss philosophical issues. A dispute took place as to whether there was such a thing as water.

One carp said that there was definitely a substance called water. Others bitterly denied this, saying that they had lived all their lives without water. If it exists – where is it? We cannot see it or feel it. If it existed everyone would know about it! The dispute continued until finally the carp decided to take the matter to an elderly pike.

"You taught us that there is water. But where is it? Do we really need it?" demanded the carp.

The old pike looked at them for a moment and then said: "You foolish carp! You were born in water and you live in water and it is by water that you are able to live".

Like the carp, people living in this world created by God often ask, "Where is God? If I could see Him, I would believe..."

They fail to see that we are born in God. In God we live and have our being. Without God there would be nothing.

Anonymous

## APOPHTHEGMS BY THE GOD-INSPIRED ST. ISAAC THE SYRIAN, PART 2

*SOURCE: From the book "475 Apophthegms by the God-Inspired St. Isaac the Syrian," pp. 1-5, published by Orthodox Kypseli, translated from the Greek by George Karras.*

### 4th Lesson

34. Those that comfort others please God.
35. Illnesses are ceded by God for the health of their soul to those who are spiritually indolent and negligent but love God.
36. God permits afflictions so that we may draw near Him through prayer and humility and so that we do not suffer Satan's calamity.
37. Sorrows remind us of God ("in sorrows I remembered You") and draw us near Him, thus removing us from vain and perishable thoughts and giving us the gift of every blessing that we receive.
38. Frankness towards God is attained through continuous and vigorous prayer. This is the result of rejoicing that is felt within "the heart of those who seek the Lord."
39. The Lord grants His mercy to those who acknowledge, confess, and abandon their sins.
40. The person who deadens himself to the world withstands temptations and misfortunes patiently and gladly. Whoever, though, is preoccupied with the world, is easily disturbed, enraged, and pities himself.
41. God grants His grace to those that are humble. The prideful person, though, is surrounded with sorrowful circumstances so that he may find humility and be guided towards salvation.
42. The humble person always welcomes God's mercy. Humble yourself in everything and in front of people. Anticipate and receive all people with a bow and they will all honor you. Humiliate yourself so that you may be allowed to see God's glory. Struggle to have others ignore you so that God may glorify you!
43. Do not seek honor from people. The person who looks for honor loses it. He who avoids honor, honor follows him and becomes the herald of his humility.
44. Blessed is the virtuous person who appears worthless and valueless but lives a bright life and with a humble spirit... God will grant His riches to the person that hungers and thirsts for Him. Become ignorant, naive, and simple, and do not allow yourself to turn into a wise man of your foolishness.

### 5th Lesson

45. Associate with humble people whose appearance as well as instruction is beneficial. Neither sneer at those who appear atrocious or desperate nor get disgusted by those who are wounded. Give honor to your fellow man more than his worth, praise him for things that he does not possess, and thus heal your own vices.
46. Be cautious and guard against critiquing others on any and all matters. Love never censures others with passions!...

47. When you do not withdraw yourself away from the causes of sin then you give the enemy reasons to fight you. The study of the Holy Scriptures removes evil thoughts and sinful memories.

48. When a person is away from the world then the cause of falling due to anger, desire, resentment or vainglory are withdrawn. It is better to die fighting than to remain alive and defeated by our passions.

49. Avoid outspokenness toward other people. Do not interrupt others while they speak. Consider yourself lesser than all others. Eat and drink moderately. Do not rush while you walk and for no reason. Speak to others gently and mildly.

50. Do not look others in the face while you talk with them. Do not censure and judge the faults of others. Do not avoid the lesser tasks... Be a friend with those who fear God. Hide from all people your secrets and your battles.

51. Have contempt for yourself and do not despise others. Be unjust to yourself and not to others. Do not love the worldly things. Give alms to all and abstain from all. Do not prattle. Do not quarrel. Do not keep company with prideful people.

52. Do not examine the Church's doctrines. Do not cross the path of angry or combatant people and risk filling your heart with rage and wrath.

53. Carelessness, willful disregard, delinquency, and sorrow result in the distress and grief of the soul. Our heart's joy, on the other hand, forces the mouth to quiet down, and this brings pleasure, delight, and exultation to the soul. This delight and exultation represent the arrival of the Heavenly Kingdom within us. By entering our heart, delight and exultation provide health to the soul and remove her from the abyss of faithlessness.

54. Hunger, study of the Scriptures, all-night vigils, and abundant prayers (especially the last two) reveal the wealth of God's Grace, according to our own worth.

### 6th Lesson

55. To sit within your own cell may also teach you a lot. What? It will teach you the warmth of the heart that guides oneself to unceasing tears, the purification of the nous, and the mysteries of God that are revealed only to those that are humble.

56. A monastic must ensure that his actions and accomplishments serve as a model and are beneficial to the laity. This is because the monastic community constitutes the pride and glory of Christ's Church.

57. The character of a true monastic is as follows: (a) Disdain for all worldly matters, (b) perpetual sojourn in tranquility and quietness, (c) caution on visions, (d) perfect cutting of all quarrelling, (e) few words, (f) simplicity and innocence of the heart, (g) avoidance of people and persistence in prayer and scriptural study, (h) indifference toward honors and courageous fighting of all temptations, (i) ceaseless tears, and (j) guardianship of prudence and common sense. With all these attributes, the monastic draws near God and is considered dead to the world.



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## THE WORLD HAS SUFFERED GREAT HARM FROM TELEVISION

*SOURCE: "Pain and Love for Contemporary Man" by Elder Paisios the Athonite (due out in 2004)*

**Question:** Geronda, today there is televised communication, such that at one and the same time you can see events which are taking place on the other side of the world.

**Answer:** The whole world they see; only themselves they don't see. Today the people of the world are being destroyed by man's mind. It is not God Who is destroying them.

**Q:** Geronda, does the television do great harm?

**A:** He's wondering if television is all right! Someone came to me and said, "Is the television good father?" "Eggs are good," I tell him, "if, however, you mix them with bird droppings, they become useless." That's what happens with the television and the radio as well. Today, if you turn on the radio to hear some news, you have to suffer through a song, because, as soon as the song is finished, they will have a news story. It didn't used to be like this. You knew what time they would have news on the radio; click, you turned it on and listened. Now you are obliged to hear the song as well, because, if you turn it off, you'll miss the news.

The world has suffered great harm from the television; the little children, in particular, are being devastated. A little seven-year old boy came to the hermitage with his father. I saw the demon

of television, speaking through his mouth, just as a demon speaks through the mouths of the possessed. It was as though a baby had been born with teeth. Today, you often don't see normal children; they are monsters. And you see, they don't mature and learn to think for themselves; but that which they have heard, that which they have seen, that is what they repeat. In this way, they want to make people into idiots with the television. That is to say, the things people hear, they are to believe, and they are to do.

**Q:** Geronda, mothers ask us how they can cut their children off from the television.

**A:** They need to make their children understand that they're being made into blockheads through the television; they're unable to think. Not to mention that they're damaging their eyes. This television is the work of man, but there is another television, the spiritual one. When, that is to say, a person is divested of the old man, the eyes of the soul are cleansed; then man sees even further, without machines. Have they told their children about this television? They need to understand about the spiritual television, because with those boxes they'll become mindless. The First Created had the gift of spiritual insight. This was lost after the fall. When children preserve the Grace of Holy Baptism, they will also have the gift of spiritual insight, spiritual television. It requires attention, spiritual work. Mothers today are lost in meaningless things and then, "What can I do father? I'm losing my child!"

# Orthodox Heritage

So therefore, brethren, persevere, and grasp the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or by our epistle [2 Thess. 2:15]

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Ἄρα οὖν, ἀδελφοί, στήκετε, καὶ κρατεῖτε τὰς παραδόσεις ἃς ἐδιδάχθητε, εἴτε διὰ λόγου εἴτε δι' ἐπιστολῆς ἡμῶν [Θεσσ. Β' 2:15]

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## INTERRELATIONS OF SOUL, NOUS, HEART AND MIND

*From "Orthodox Psychotherapy" by Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlahos of Nafpaktos (edited for article length)*

In the texts of Holy Scripture and the Holy Fathers there is confusion, but also distinction, among the terms soul, nous, heart, and mind (*dianoia*). These terms appear to be interchangeable. This article attempts to distinguish them and to describe the framework within which each term is utilized.

A man's soul is in the image of God, and since the soul gives life to the attached body, the image in man is stronger than the image in the angels. The soul is all through the body and both the whole man and the body itself can be regarded as in the image of God. The hymn by St. John of Damascus sung in the funeral service is characteristic. "I weep and I wail when I think upon death, and behold our beauty, fashioned after the image of God, lying in the tomb disfigured, dishonored, bereft of form." In this hymn, the image refers to the body, which is in the tomb.

### Nous and Soul

In the texts of the New Testament and the Fathers the soul is identified with the nous. The terms *nous* and soul interchange. St. John of Damascus writes that the nous is the purest part of the soul, it is the eye of the soul: "The soul does not have the nous as something distinct from itself, but as its purest part, for as the eye is to the body, so is the nous to the soul". Thus, he is saying that the soul has the nous as its eye.

St. Gregory Palamas uses the term *nous* in two senses. It is the whole soul, the image, and it is also a power of the soul, because, as the Trinitarian God is

Nous, Word and Spirit, so the soul too has nous, word and spirit. According to this Athonite saint, the nous is identified with the soul, but it is also a power of the soul.

There is a characteristic passage containing these concepts. After the creation of man, writes the saint, the angels saw with their eyes "the soul of man joined to sense and flesh; they were seeing another god not only come into being on earth through divine goodness, nous and flesh the same man, but transformed by this extravagance and by the grace of God so as to be the same flesh and nous and spirit. Thus, the soul had the image and likeness of God, as completely unified in nous, word and spirit".

In the beginning it speaks of the soul which is joined with flesh and the senses. A little further, the terms *soul* and *nous* are interchanged. Instead of *soul* he uses *nous*, "nous and flesh the same man". In what follows he uses the division: flesh, nous and spirit, the spirit being the grace of the Holy Spirit, since God did not form man only of soul and body, "but also divinely favored with grace. For such is the truly living soul". After this he writes that the soul is in the image and likeness of God, "completely unified in nous and word and spirit." So it seems clear in this text that the soul is in the image of God, that the nous is sometimes identified with soul and at other times regarded as a power of the soul, the eye of the soul, as St. John of Damascus says.

The Holy Fathers refer the image of God to the soul. But at the same time it is also said that the image refers to the nous: "It is not the bodily constitution but the very nature of the nous which possesses this image". Inasmuch as God has essence and energy, so too the soul, which is in the image of God, has essence and energy. But since, as we have

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seen, the nous is also identified with the soul, the nous too has essence and energy.

St. Gregory Palamas, with all his wisdom and discrimination, analyzes this fact. The heart is the essence of the soul, and the activity of the nous, consisting of thoughts and conceptual images, is the energy of the soul. Therefore the nous too has essence and energy. So the term *nous* is used sometimes to mean essence and sometimes to mean energy or action. The saint writes characteristically: "What is called nous is also the activity of the nous, consisting of thoughts and conceptual images. Nous is also the power which produces this and which in Scripture is called the heart".

#### Nous and Heart

The nous is also called the essence of the soul, that is to say the heart. In many passages of Holy Scripture and in the Fathers there is this identification of nous and heart, since these terms are used interchangeably. The Lord blesses the pure in heart: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matt. 5:8). God is revealed in the heart and it is there that man comes to know Him. The Apostle Paul writes that God's illumination is there: God has caused His light to shine "in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6). The same Apostle prays "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your hearts being enlightened that you may know..." (Eph. 1:17-18). The heart receives the revelation of the knowledge of God. Elsewhere this heart is replaced by the nous. When the Lord was among his disciples after his resurrection, "He opened their understanding (*nous*) that they might comprehend the Scriptures" (Lk. 24:45). Since man comes to know God through opening the eyes of his heart and purifying his heart, the phrase "He opened their understanding" is the same as "He opened their hearts". Likewise "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" is, I

believe, linked with the apostolic passage: "...be transformed by the renewing of your mind (*nous*)..." (Rom. 12:2).

So, in this sense, the nous is also called heart and the two terms nous and heart interchange. St. Maximus the Confessor, interpreting Christ's saying: "Give alms from what is inside, and you will find that everything is clean for you" (Luk. 11:41), says: "This applies to those who no longer spend their time on things to do with the body, but strive to cleanse the nous (which the Lord calls *heart*) from hatred and dissipation. For these defile the nous and do not allow it to see Christ, who dwells in it by the grace of holy baptism". So the nous is called the essence of the soul, that is, the heart. In this conception nous and heart are identical, since Christ dwells in the nous.

#### Nous and Reason

However, the energy of the nous, "consisting of thoughts and conceptual images", is also called nous. The Apostle Paul writes to the Corinthians: "If I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my nous is unfruitful. What am I to do? I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the nous also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the nous also" (1 Cor. 14:14-15). In this passage the spirit is the gift of tongues, and the nous is reason. So here *nous* is identified with reason, intelligence. There are many passages in Holy Scripture with this meaning.

Beyond these things St. Maximus the Confessor, giving the name nous to the intelligence and the heart, which is the center of our being, through which we acquire knowledge of God, presents the distinction and energy of each function. "A pure nous sees things correctly. A trained intelligence puts them in order". The nous (heart) is that which sees things clearly and therefore should be purified, and the intelligence is that which formulates and expresses what has been seen. With this passage we come to the point of asserting that in order to be a Father of the Church it is necessary to have not only a clear nous but also expression, that is trained speech, in order to express these supernatural realities as far as is possible.



### Nous and Attention

Other Fathers use the term *nous* to define attention, which is subtler than reason. Theoleptos of Philadelphia links nous with attention, word with invocation, spirit with compunction and love. When the powers of the soul function in this way, then “the whole of the inner man serves the Lord. But it sometimes happens that while the mind is offering the words of prayer, the nous (the more subtle attention) does not go with it. It does not fix its gaze on God, with whom the words of the prayer are speaking, but it is distracted by different thoughts without realizing it. So the mind says the words from habit, but the nous is taken away from knowledge of God. Therefore the soul too then seems not to be aware or organized, since the nous is scattered in various fantasies and is engaged in things which deceive it or in things which it desires”.

So the nous itself, which is not simply the thoughts, but the subtler attention, should return to the heart, to the essence of the soul, which is located within the bodily organ of the heart, since this bodily organ is the seat of intelligence and “the first intelligent organ of the body”. Thus, we should concentrate our nous, which is scattered abroad by the senses, and bring it back again “to the selfsame heart, the seat of thoughts”.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the term *nous* has many meanings in the biblical-patristic tradition. The nous is identified with the soul, but at the same time it is also energy of the soul. Like the soul, the nous too is in the image of God. And just as the soul is divided into essence and energy, the same is true of the nous. And just as in God essence and energy are separated inseparably, so it is with the nous. That is why in some places the Fathers characterize nous as essence, that is the heart, in which case the nous is identified with the heart, and in other passages they characterize nous as energy, conceptual images and thoughts and the subtler attention which is poured out through the senses, when it should return to the heart. The Fathers mainly refer to the nous more generally as the heart and the soul, without excluding the other names, which we mentioned before.

We have lost our tradition relating to it, and many of us identify the nous with intelligence. We do not at all suspect that aside from intelligence there is also another power which has greater value: the nous, the heart. The whole of civilization is a civilization of the loss of the heart. And a person cannot understand what he has not in his heart. The heart has died, the nous has been darkened, and we cannot perceive their presence. That is why this clarification has been necessary. A person who has the Holy Spirit within him, who is “in the revelation”, does not need many clarifications, because he himself knows from experience the presence and existence of the nous, the heart.



## THE MEANINGS OF THE WEEK-DAY NAMES

George Karras, “Orthodox Heritage” Editor

The strong roots of pagan phraseology and traditions in western culture has often been cited as a primary contributor to the many obstacles one faces whenever Orthodox Christian values are attempted to be infused in our daily lives. Perhaps nothing makes the case better for such a hypothesis than the terminology utilized for the days of the week.

### IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

The origin of weekday names comes from pagan tradition and has its roots as far back as ancient Greece. The ancient Greeks named the week’s days after the sun, the moon and the five known planets, which were in turn named after the gods Ares, Hermes, Zeus, Aphrodite, and Cronus. The ancient Greeks called the days of the week *theon hemerai* “days of the gods” (θεῶν ἡμέραι). The Romans substituted their equivalent gods for the Greek gods, Mars, Mercury, Jove (Jupiter), Venus, and Saturn. (The two pantheons are very similar.) The Germanic peoples generally substituted roughly similar gods for the Roman gods, Tiu (Tiwia), Woden, Thor, Freya (Fria), but did not substitute Saturn. It is with the latter that the named the days of the week.

**Sunday** -- Sun’s day:

*Middle English* sone(n)day or sun(nen)day

*Old English* sunnandæg “day of the sun”

*Germanic* sunnon-dagaz “day of the sun”

**Monday** -- Moon’s day

*Middle English* monday or mone(n)day

*Old English* mon(an)dæg “day of the moon”

**Tuesday** -- Tiu’s day

*Middle English* tiwesday or tewesday

*Old English* tiwesdæg “Tiw’s (Tiu’s) day”

Tiu (Tiwia) is the English/Germanic god of war and the sky. He is identified with the Norse god Tyr.

**Wednesday** -- Woden’s day

*Middle English* wodnesday, wednesday, or wednesdai

*Old English* wodnesdæg “Woden’s day”

Woden is the chief Anglo-Saxon/Teutonic god. Woden is the leader of the Wild Hunt. Woden is from wod “violently insane” (+) -en “headship”. He is identified with the Norse Odin.

**Thursday** -- Thor’s day

*Middle English* thur(e)sday

*Old English* thunresdæg “thunder’s day”

*Old Norse* thorsdagr “Thor’s day”

Thor is the Norse god of thunder. He is represented as riding a chariot drawn by goats and wielding the hammer Mjölnir. He is the defender of the Aesir, destined to kill and be killed

by the Midgard Serpent.

**Friday** -- Freya's day

*Middle English* fridai

*Old English* frigedæg "Freya's day"

*Germanic* frije-dagaz "Freya's (or Frigg's) day"

Freya (Fria) is the Teutonic goddess of love, beauty, and fecundity (prolific procreation). She is identified with the Norse god Freya. She is leader of the Valkyries and one of the Vanir. She is confused in Germany with Frigg.

Frigg (Frigga) is the Teutonic goddess of clouds, the sky, and conjugal (married) love. She is identified with Frigg, the Norse goddess of love and the heavens and the wife of Odin. She is one of the Aesir. She is confused in Germany with Freya.

**Saturday** -- Saturn's day

*Middle English* saterday

*Old English* sæter(nes)dæg "Saturn's day"

### IN THE GREEK LANGUAGE

This could be contrasted with the terminology utilized in the Greek language, as implemented during the early years of Christianity (shortly after the establishment of the Hellenic Byzantine Empire, 313 A.D.)

In Greek, the naming of the days exclusively utilize our Lord and Savior and most specifically, His Resurrection as the central and only focus. Thus, the first day of the week is called the Lord's Day (day of Resurrection, often referred to as the Christian Sabbath), the day after that as the second day after the Lord's Day (second post-Resurrection day), etc. The only two days that do not follow this rule are Friday, called the Preparation day (preparation for Pascha) and Saturday which has adopted the Jewish term of Sabbath. Thus, a complete list of the days of the week is as follows:

**Lordsday** (Κυριακή, *Kyriaki*): Sunday

**Secondday** (Δευτέρα, *Theftera*): Monday

**Thirdday** (Τρίτη, *Triti*): Tuesday

**Fourthday** (Τετάρτη, *Tetarti*): Wednesday

**Fifthday** (Πέμπτη, *Pempti*): Thursday

**Preparationday** (Παρασκευή, *Paraskevi*): Friday

**Sabbath** (Σάββατο, *Savato*): Saturday

It is being suggested by some pious Orthodox leaders of our day that the English-speaking Orthodox should perhaps consider referring to the days of the week by their Christian names rather than by their pagan names. Of course, in all of our dealings with non-Orthodox, the common pagan names will have to be used out of necessity. But at least we will now be able to put into use the Christian names amongst ourselves and thus remove another pagan term from within the walls of our homes and especially from within our Churches.

## ON THE CALL TO ALL CHRISTIANS TO BE SAINTS

By St. Nikolai Velimirovic, from "The Prologue from Ochrid"

St. Paul writes: "To the saints which are in Ephesus..." (Eph. 1:1)

The Apostle calls the Christians in Ephesus saints. He does not call one or two of them saints, or any one group of them, but them all. Is this not one of God's great wonders: that men, not in the desert but in the city, and that an idolatrous and dissolute city, should be saints? That married men should be saints, men who had children, who worked and traded. Such were indeed the first Christians. Their dedication, faithfulness and zeal in the Faith, as well as their holiness and purity of life, gives them the right to be called saints. If saints have become the exception in the latter days, the unholy were the exception in those first days. Saints were the norm. We must not, therefore, be surprised that the Apostle calls all baptised souls in Ephesus saints – and has another, yet more lofty, name for all Christians: that of sons, sons of God (Gal. 4:6). The Lord Christ Himself gave us the right to call ourselves such, when He taught us to address God as 'Our Father'.

Oh, my brethren, do we not say to God every day: 'Holy God'? Do we not call the angels holy? Do we not call the Mother of God holy? And the prophets and apostles, and the martyrs and the righteous? Do we not call heaven, and the Kingdom of heaven holy? Who, then, can dwell in the holy Kingdom but the saints? If we hope for salvation, we hope also for sanctity.

O holy God, who dwellest in the holy place and restest among the saints, calling the holy to Thyself and having mercy on them; help us also, that we may be sanctified in thought, word and deed – to Thy glory and our salvation. To Thee be glory and praise for ever. Amen!



Where there are obedience, humility and struggles, the demons are never able to take a man captive. Hardness, disobedience and pride give birth to despondency and negligence, whence come all the demons who make a dung heap and cowshed out of the soul of that man. And they will not rest until they have rendered him guilty of old and new sins, and have finally made him a captive.

I came to know You [our Lord Jesus Christ] on Mt. Tabor. I came to know You in the Resurrection. I came to know You in the Ascension. I came to know You in so many different glories, and so many marvelous aspects. I came to know You on Golgotha!

St. Joseph the Hesychast (+1959)



## Άλέξανδρος Παπαδιαμάντης, Ὁ Ἅγιος Τῶν Γραμμάτων Μας

ΠΗΓΗ: Από την Ελληνική Ιστοσελίδα «Σταχυολογήματα»

Συχνά υπήρχαν στην παλιά Ἀθήνα επαγγελματίες δημοσιογράφοι που είναι περισσότερο γνωστοί από τὸ λογοτεχνικό τους ἔργο. Παρόμοια περίπτωση είναι αὐτὴ τοῦ μεγάλου Σκιαθίτη διηγηματογράφου Ἀλέξανδρου Παπαδιαμάντη, τοῦ ταπεινοῦ, ἀσκητικοῦ, θρησκευόμενου ἱεροψάλτη, ποὺ ἡ θητεία του στὸν Τύπο κράτησε σαράντα ὀλόκληρα χρόνια. Μετέφραζε ἀπὸ τὰ Ἀγγλικά, ἔγραφε σημειώματα, ἐπιφυλλίδες, διηγήματα, μυθιστορήματα σὲ διάφορες ἡμερίδες τῆς ἐποχῆς του καὶ θὰ μπορούσε νὰ ζεῖ καλύτερα καὶ νὰ μὴν δίνει τὴν ἐντύπωση φτωχοῦ ἀνθρώπου, ἂν δὲν ἦταν τόσο ἀφιλοκερδῆς.

Ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος Παπαδιαμάντης, ὁ καὶ Ἅγιος τῶν γραμμάτων μας χαρακτηριζόμενος, γεννήθηκε στὴ Σκιάθο στὶς 4 Μαρτίου τοῦ 1851. Τέσσερες ἀδελφές κι ἓνας ἀδελφός θὰ εἶναι ἡ μόνη περιουσία ποὺ θὰ κληρονομήσει ἀπὸ τὴν φτωχὴ οἰκογένειά του. Μὲ τὴν ἀγωνία τῆς Παιδείας ὁ ἴδιος, ἂν καὶ χωρὶς τὰ μέσα νὰ προχωρήσει, μὲ δυσκολία θὰ τελειώσει τὸ σχολεῖο, κι ἀμέσως μετὰ, τὸ 1872, θὰ φύγει γιὰ τὸ Ἅγιον Ὅρος μαζί μὲ τὸν φίλο του Νικόλαο Διανέλο, ἀργότερα μοναχὸ Νήφωνα. Ὁ Παπαδιαμάντης μετὰ λίγους μῆνες θὰ ἐπιστρέψει στὸν κόσμον διότι δὲν θεώρησε τὸν ἑαυτὸ του ἄξιο γιὰ τὸ Σχῆμα. Μὲ τὴν ἐπιστροφή του, ἐγγράφεται στὴν Φιλοσοφικὴ Σχολὴ τοῦ Πανεπιστημίου Ἀθηνῶν, ἀπὸ τὴν ὁποία ποτὲ δὲν θὰ ἀποφοιτήσει. Βγάζει τὰ πρὸς τὸ ζῆν τοῦ πενιχροῦ ὑλικά βίου του προοιμιάζοντας μαθητές. Μόνος του θὰ μάθει ἀγγλικά καὶ γαλλικά στὰ πρῶτα χρόνια τῶν σπουδῶν του.

Φίλος καὶ σύντροφός του σ' αὐτὰ τὰ χρόνια ὁ λογοτέχνης ἐξάδελφός του Ἀλέξανδρος Μωραϊτίδης, ἀργότερα μοναχός. Ὁ Μωραϊτίδης θὰ τὸν φέρει σὲ ἐπαφὴ μὲ λογοτεχνικούς καὶ δημοσιογραφικούς κύκλους τῆς ἐποχῆς, κι ὁ Παπαδιαμάντης θ' ἀρχίσει νὰ βλέπει τὰ ἔργα του νὰ δημοσιεύονται στὸν «Ραμπαγά», στὸν «Νεολόγο» τῆς Κωνσταντινούπολης, στὸ «Μὴ Χάνεσαι» καὶ στὶς ἡμερίδες «Ἐφημερίς» καὶ «Ἀκρόπολις».

Γρήγορα οἱ συνεργασίες του μὲ περιοδικὰ καὶ ἡμερίδες θὰ αὐξηθοῦν, ἀλλὰ, βιοποριστικό του ἐπάγγελμα θὰ γίνῃ ἡ δημοσιογραφία κι οἱ μεταφράσεις. Οἱ προοπτικὲς φαίνονται

μεγάλες γιὰ μίαν ἐπιτυχή δημοσιογραφικὴ καὶ λογοτεχνικὴ πορεία στὴν Πρωτεύουσα, ὅμως αὐτὸ δὲν συγκινεῖ τὸν «κοσμοκαλόγερο», τὸν μοναχικὸ καὶ ταπεινὸ Παπαδιαμάντη. Οἱ μόνες ὥρες ποὺ φαίνεται νὰ χαίρεται στὴν Ἀθήνα εἶναι ἐκεῖνες ποὺ περνᾷ μὲ τοὺς ἀπλοὺς καθημερινοὺς λαϊκοὺς ἀνθρώπους, κι ἐκεῖνες ποὺ ψάλλει στὸν Ἅγιον Ἐλισσαῖο στὸ Μοναστηράκι. Δεξιὸς ψάλτης ὁ Παπαδιαμάντης, ἀριστέρος ὁ Μωραϊτίδης, καὶ ἱερέας ὁ προσφάτως ἀγιοποιηθεὶς Ἅγ. Νικόλαος Πλανᾶς, ὁ βίωσας τὴν Ταπεινώση.

Πέρα ἀπὸ τὴν δυσκολία του νὰ προσαρμοστῆι στὴν πρωτεύουσα, παθαίνει καὶ ρευματισμοὺς στὰ χέρια, μὲ ἀποτέλεσμα νὰ μὴν μπορεῖ νὰ συνεχίσει τὴ δημοσιογραφικὴ του ἐργασία. Χωρὶς κανέναν οἰκονομικὸ πόρον θὰ ἐπιστρέψει στὴ Σκιάθο ὅπου, ἄρρωστος, θὰ ἀφεθεῖ γιὰ λίγο στὶς φροντίδες



Ἀλέξανδρος Παπαδιαμάντης  
(1851 - 1911)

τῶν ἀδελφῶν του. Θὰ προειδεῖ τὸν θάνατό του, καὶ τὴν δυσκατοπτοσία τῶν τελευταίων ὡρῶν του, καὶ θὰ ζητήσει νὰ τὸν κοιωνήσῃ ὁ ἱερέας τῆς ἐνορίας του δυὸ μέρες πρὶν. Κοιμήθηκε στὶς 3 Ἰανουαρίου τοῦ 1911.

Χαρακτηριστικὸ τῆς νοοτροπίας του, εἶναι τὸ ἐξῆς περιστατικό: Ὅταν ὁ Παπαδιαμάντης προσλήφθηκε στὴν ἡμερίδα «Ἄστου» τοῦ Θέμου Ἄννινου καὶ Κακλαμάνου ὁ τελευταῖος, ἀφοῦ τοῦ μίλησε γιὰ τὴν δουλειά του, ἤρθε καὶ στὸ ζήτημα τοῦ μισθοῦ. Τοῦ λέγει, λοιπόν, μὲ δισταγμό. Ὁ μισθός σας θὰ εἶναι 150 δραχμές. Ὁ Παπαδιαμάντης ἀρχισε νὰ κάνει ὑπολογισμοὺς μὲ τὸ νοῦ του. Ὁ Κα-

κλαμάνης, ποὺ νόμισε πὼς τὰ ἔβρισκε λίγα, ἦταν ἔτοιμος νὰ αὐξήσει τὸ ποσόν. Ἀλλὰ ὁ Παπαδιαμάντης τὸν ξάφνιασε ὅταν τοῦ εἶπε. Πολλὲς εἶναι οἱ 150. Μοῦ φτάνουν 100!. Καὶ ἔφυγε χωρὶς ἄλλη κουβέντα. Στὴ ἡμερίδα Ἄστου ποὺ ἐργαζόταν, ἦταν πάντα στὴν ὥρα του. Δούλευε χωρὶς διακοπὴ καὶ διεκπεραίωνε τὴν δουλειά ποὺ τοῦ ἀνέθεταν, χωρὶς καθυστέρηση.

Ὁ γιατρός Ἀποστολίδης, διηγεῖται ὅτι ὁ Ἀνδρέας Συγγρός, ποὺ δὲν γνώριζε προσωπικὰ τὸν Παπαδιαμάντη, τὸν πέρασε σ' ἓνα περίπατο γιὰ ζητιάνο καὶ ἐτοιμαζόταν νὰ τὸν ἐλεήσει. Ὁ γιατρός τὸν ἐμπόδισε, ἐξηγώντας του ὅτι ὁ κακοντυμένος αὐτὸς ἄνθρωπος, ἦταν ὁ μεγαλύτερος Ἕλληνας διηγηματογράφος.

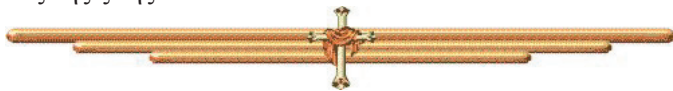
Ἄν καὶ ὁ Παπαδιαμάντης ζοῦσε μέσ' τὴν κοσμικὴ καὶ κοινωνικὴ ζωὴ τῆς Ἀθήνας, ἔμεινε ἀνεπηρέαστος καὶ ἀμέτοχος. Σύχναζε σ' ἓνα μικρὸ καφεενδάκι στὴν πλατεία δεξιαμενῆς (στὸ Κολωνάκι) παρέα μὲ μερικοὺς ἀπλοϊκοὺς ἀνθρώπους. Κάποτε μερικοὶ φίλοι καὶ συνάδελφοί του



ἀποφάσισαν νὰ κάνουν ἓνα τραπέζι πρὸς τιμὴν του καὶ ἀγωνίστηκαν νὰ τὸν πείσουν νὰ παρευρεθεῖ. Ὁ Παπαδιαμάντης πῆγε τελικὰ στὸ ἐστιατόριο πού εἶχαν ὀρίσει, ἀλλὰ ἔφτασε πρὶν τοὺς φίλους του. Ἀναζητώντας τους, ἄκουσε μία φωνὴ νὰ τοῦ λέγει: Τί θές ἐδῶ μέσα παλιοζητιάνε; δὲν ξέρεις ὅτι ἀπαγορεύεται ἡ ζητιανιά σ' αὐτὸ τὸ κέντρο. Ὁ Παπαδιαμάντης ἔφυγε, χωρὶς νὰ πεί λέξη.

Τὸ ἔργο τοῦ Παπαδιαμάντη συγκεντρώθηκε ὀλόκληρο, χάρις στὸ μεράκι, τὴν ἀγάπη καὶ τὴν κοπιώδη προσπάθεια τοῦ γνωστοῦ Παπαδιαμαντιστῆ Ν. Δ. Τριανταφυλλόπουλου, καὶ τοῦ φιλολόγου Μαυρόπουλου, ὁ ὁποῖος ἴδρυσε, μάλιστα, ἐκδοτικὸ Οἶκο, τὸν Δόμο, ἀκριβῶς γιὰ νὰ φιλοξενήσει αὐτὴ τὴν προσπάθεια. Ἡ συγκέντρωσή του, διασκορπισμένου σὲ ἐφημερίδες καὶ περιοδικὰ, ἔργου του, κράτησε χρόνια, ὅμως τὰ Ἄπαντα τοῦ Παπαδιαμάντη εἶναι πιά μιὰ πραγματικότητα, κι οἱ ἐκδόσεις Δόμος μποροῦν νὰ υπερφανεύονται γιὰ τὴ σημαντικότερη αὐτὴ κορωνίδα των. Παρ' ὅλη ὅμως τὴν μέχρι πρόσφατα ἔλλειψη καταγραφῆς τοῦ ἔργου του, μυθιστορήματα καὶ διηγήματα τοῦ Παπαδιαμάντη ἀποτελοῦσαν κι ἀποτελοῦν ἐκ τῶν οὐκ ἄνευ τῆς παιδείας τῶν Ἑλληνοπαίδων. Τὰ Χριστουγεννιάτικα διηγήματά του, ὁ Ἀμερικάνος, τὸ Στὸ Χριστὸ στὸ Κάστρο, τὰ Πασχαλινὰ, ὁ Λαμπριάτικος ψάλτης, τὸ Χωρὶς στεφάνι, τὰ καταπληκτικὰ ψυχογραφικὰ μυθιστορήματά του σὰν τὴν Φόνισσα καὶ τὴ Γυφτοπούλα, παρὰ τὴν ἰδιότυπη γλώσσα πού χρησιμοποιοῖ ὁ μέγας ταπεινὸς δημιουργὸς τους, ἔχουν προσφέρει ἀφειδώλευτα γεύση Ἑλλάδας σὲ ὅλους ὅσους στάθηκαν ἀρκετὰ τυχεροὶ ὥστε νὰ τὸν «συναντήσουν» στὸ δρόμο τους.

Ὁ κοσμοκαλόγερος τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς λογοτεχνίας εἶχε ἰδιαίτερη ἀγάπη ἀλλὰ καὶ ὡς κελὶ ὀλόκληρο τὸ νησί του, τὴν πανέμορφη Σκιάθου. Μέσα ἀπὸ τὰ διηγήματά του, τίς παραμυθίες του, ἡ Σκιάθος προβάλλει ὡς τόπος βίωσης τῆς πρὸ στέρας κι ἰσχυρῆς παράδοσης, τοῦ ἑλληνικοῦ, ἡ καλύτερα ρωμαϊκοῦ, τρόπου, ὡς ὁ τρόπος σωτηρίας. Ἐκεῖ γυρίζει γιὰ ν' ἀναπαυθεῖ, ἐκεῖ γυρίζει γιὰ νὰ κοιμηθεῖ στὸ τέλος τῆς ζωῆς του.



**Ε**ἶμαι ἀπὸ τὴν Σικελία, δηλαδὴ τὴν Μεγάλῃ Ἑλλάδα καὶ ὑπάρχει ἀκόμη πολὺ ἀπὸ τὴν Ἑλλάδα στὴν Σικελία. Τὸ μέτρο, ἡ ἀρμονία καὶ ὁ ρυθμὸς ζοῦν ἀκόμη. Ἐξ' ἄλλου εἶμαι καὶ ὁ ἴδιος ἐγὼ Ἑλληνικῆς καταγωγῆς. Ναί, ναί μὴν ἐκπλήττεσθε. Τὸ οἰκογενειακὸ μου ὄνομα εἶναι Πυράγγελος. Τὸ Πυραντέλλο δὲν εἶναι παρὰ ἡ φωνητικὴ παραφθορὰ τοῦ Πιράτζελο-Πιραντέλλο.

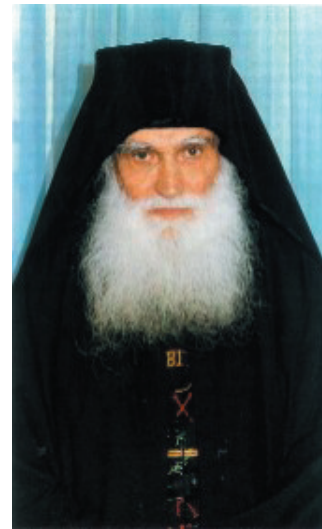
Λουϊτζι Πιραντέλλο

**Ο** κόσμος εἶναι ἡ διαστελλόμενη Ἑλλάς καὶ ἡ Ἑλλάς εἶναι ὁ συστελλόμενος κόσμος.

Βίκτωρ Οὐγκὼ

## Περὶ Ἱερωσύνης

Ἀπὸ τὸ “Γέροντας Ἐφραίμ Κατουνακιώτης”, ἐκδοση ἀπὸ τὸ Περιβόλι τῆς Παναγιᾶς, [www.toperivoli.gr](http://www.toperivoli.gr)



**Ο**ταν λειτουργᾶς, νὰ χεῖς ὑπ' ὄψει σου ὅτι εἶσαι μεσίτης. Παραλαμβάνεις ἀπὸ τὸν κόσμο πόνο, δάκρυα, ἀσθένειες, παρακλήσεις καὶ τ' ἀναφέρεις ἐπάνω εἰς τὸ θρόνο τῆς θεότητος. Καὶ μεταφέρεις κατόπιν στὸν κόσμο παρηγοριά, θεραπεία, ὅτι ἔχει ἀνάγκη ὁ καθένας. Μεγάλο ἀξίωμα σ' ἔχει ἀξιώσει, παιδί μου, ὁ Θεός. Νὰ τὸ καλλιεργήσεις. Τὸ αὐτὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ εἶναι στὸ στόμα τοῦ ἱερέως.

Μεγάλῃ δύναμη ἔχει τὸ πετραχήλι. Τὸ πετραχήλι εἶναι ὁ διαλλακτικὸς τοῦ πεπτωκότος ἀνθρώπου μὲ τὸν Πατέρα, μὲ τὸν Δημιουργὸ του. Γι' αὐτὸ ὅσο μπορεῖς περισσότερα ὀνόματα νὰ μνημονεύεις. Ὅσο μπορεῖς περισσότερα.

Στὸν καιρὸ τῆς Τουρκοκρατίας γύριζαν πολλοὶ παπάδες, ἀλλὰ ἓνας παπᾶς γύριζε καὶ μάζευε ὀνόματα καὶ τὰ μνημόνευε στὴ Λειτουργία. Καὶ εἶπε ὁ καϊμακάκης, ὁ Τούρκος ἀστυνομικὸς: «Βρέ, αὐτὸς ἐγείρει τὸν κόσμον σὲ ἐπανάσταση». Τὸν πιάνει καὶ τὸν βάζει μέσα. Καὶ στὸν ὕπνο τοῦ φανερώνονται ὅλοι αὐτοὶ πού μνημόνευε καὶ λένε: «Ἄκουσε, ἡ βγάξεις τὸν παπᾶ ἐξω, διότι αὐτὸς μᾶς μνημονεύει καὶ μᾶς παρηγορεῖ, ἡ θὰ σοῦ πάρουμε τὸ πρῶτο παιδί». Κι ὁ Τούρκος φοβήθηκε. Ἐπὶ Τουρκοκρατίας. «Ἄντε, παπᾶ, πᾶνε στὸ καλὸ», λέει, «πᾶνε, ἐγὼ θὰ χάσω τὸ παιδί μου;»

Μεγάλῃ δύναμη ἔχει τὸ πετραχήλι, παιδί μου. Ὅσο μπορεῖς περισσότερα ὀνόματα νὰ μνημονεύεις.

Ναί, ἐμένα παλιά μουῦδωσε ὁ πρ. Ἀρσένιος, ὁ παραδερφὸς τοῦ γερο-Ἰωσήφ, κάτι ὀνόματα ἀπ' ὅταν ἦταν μετανάστης ἀπ' τὴ Ρωσία καὶ ἦρθε στὴν Ἑλλάδα. Κι ἐγὼ τὰ μνημόνευα. Κι ἔπειτα μοῦ λέει: «Ξέρεις, Γέροντα, τί εἶδα; Εἶδα στὸν ὕπνο μου ὅτι ἄνθρωποι ἀπ' ἐκείνους μ' αὐτὰ τὰ ὀνόματα πού σοῦδωσα, πῆγαν σ' ἓνα σπίτι πού ξερα. Λέω σ' ἓναν, πῶς τὰ περνᾶς ἐδῶ; Ἐ, λέει, λιγάκι, καλὰ, ἀλλὰ ἔρχεται ὁ παπᾶ-Ἐφραίμ καὶ μᾶς παρηγορεῖ». Εἶναι πού τοῦ μνημόνευα τὰ ὀνόματα. Νὰ. Ἐπειτα ὁ ἄλλος: «Ἐσὺ πῶς τὰ περνᾶς;» «Νὰ, ἔτσι κι ἔτσι, ἀλλὰ πέφτει λιγάκι βροχὴ καὶ κρυώνω, ἀλλὰ ἔρχεται ὁ παπᾶ-Ἐφραίμ, λέει, καὶ μᾶς παρηγορεῖ». Λέω: «Εἶναι, ἀδερφέ μου, τὰ ὀνόματα πού μνημονεύω».

Ὁ παπᾶ-Πλανᾶς γιατί ἀγίασε; Ἐμνημόνευε ὀλόκληρα χαριτιά, ἐμνημόνευε. Κι ἐγὼ θυμήθηκα κάτι ὀνόματα καὶ τὰ τοιχοκόλλησα στὴν Προσκομιδὴ. Ἐκεῖ ἐκ τοῦ προχείρου. Καὶ

στὸν ὕπνο μου βλέπω, λοιπόν, ὅτι ἦρθαν κάτι γέροι παλαιοί, με παλαιϊκὰ ρούχα, ὅπως ἀκουγα ἐγὼ ἀπὸ τὴν μητέρα τοῦ πατέρα μου. Λένε: «Ἐσὺ, παιδί μου, μᾶς ἔγραψες, ἀλλὰ ὁ Γέροντας, παιδί μου, δὲν μᾶς μνημονεύει».

-Ἐλα, λέω τοῦ Γέροντα, γιατί δὲν τὰ μνημονεύεις;

-Δὲν τὰ ἔβλεπα καθαρά, λέει.

-Γέροντα, αὐτὸ κι αὐτὸ εἶδα: ὅτι ὁ Γέροντας δὲν μᾶς μνημονεύει, λέει.

Κι ἀπὸ τότες ἔλαβα προθυμία νὰ μνημονεύω ὅσα ὀνόματα περισσότερα. Ὅσα ὀνόματα περισσότερα, περισσότερο μισθὸ λαμβάνεις. Ἀλλὰ αὐτὴ εἶναι ἡ μεγαλύτερη ἐλεημοσύνη: νὰ ἐνώσεις τὸν ἄνθρωπο με τὸν Θεό. Αὐτὴ εἶναι ἡ μεγαλύτερη ἐλεημοσύνη. Καὶ μπορεῖς νὰ τὸ κάνεις. Ὅσα, παιδί μου, περισσότερα ὀνόματα μνημονεύεις, τόσο περισσότερο μισθὸ λαμβάνεις. Ναί.

*Ἐνας Ἱερομόναχος:* Καὶ γιὰ τὰ δάκρυα ποῦ εἶπατε; Πῶς μπορεῖ κανεὶς, ἔτσι, νὰχει δάκρυα στὴν ὥρα τῆς Θ. Λειτουργίας;

*Γέροντας:* Νὰ σοῦ πῶ, ἐγὼ τώρα ἔχω κἀναν χρόνο πού σταμάτησα, διότι δὲν βλέπω, ἀλλὰ ὄλην τὴν ἡμέρα προπαρασκευαζόμουνα γιὰ τὴ Θ. Λειτουργία. Νὰ μὴν περιορισθεῖς, παιδί μου, στὶς εὐχές τῆς Μεταλήψεως. Διότι τὴ Μετάληψη τὴ διαβάζει καὶ ὁ λαϊκός, κι ὁ παπᾶς, κι ὁ δεσπότης, κι ὁ πατριάρχης. Ἀλλὰ δὲν εἶναι ὅλοι ἕνα. Ὁ κόσμος τὰ παραλαμβάνει ἔτοιμα τὰ Δῶρα. Ἐνῶ ὁ παπᾶς εἶναι χασάπης. Θυσιάζει τὸν Χριστὸ καὶ τὸν μεταδίδει κατόπιν στὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ λαοῦ. Ἐχει μεγάλη διαφορά, δὲν εἶναι τὸ ἴδιο. Γι' αὐτὸ, παιδί μου, ἂν θέλεις νὰ 'χεις κατὰστασι, μὴν περιορίζεσαι στὶς εὐχές τῆς Μεταλήψεως. Γιατί ἐσὺ εἶσαι χασάπης. Σφάζεις καὶ θυσιάζεις. Ἐνῶ ὁ ἄλλος τὸν παίρνει ἔτοιμο τὸν ἅγιο Ἄρτο. Γι' αὐτὸ ὄλη τὴν ἡμέρα νὰ παρακαλᾶς τὴν Παναγία, πού ἔχεις κοντά: «Παναγία μου, ἀξίωσε με νὰ δῶ τί θυσιάζω, τί ὑπόυργημα μουῦδωσε ὁ Θεός. Νὰ τὸ αισθανθῶ». Καὶ θὰ σοῦ τὸ δώσει ἡ Παναγία. Ναί. Ἄμα λειτουργήσες καὶ δὲν δάκρυσες, εἶσαι λιγάκι... ὑπὸ μέμψιν, εἶσαι ὑπὸ κατάκρισιν.

*Ἱερομόναχος:* Στενοχωριέμαι κι ἐγώ.

*Γέροντας:* Ναί. Ἄμα, ὅμως, κλάψεις στὴ Λειτουργία, θὰ καταλάβεις ὅτι λειτουργήσες, ὅτι ἔφαγες κρέας πνευματικό, νὰ ποῦμε. Ἄν, ὅμως, δὲν ἔκλαψες εἴτε στὴν προσευχή σου, εἴτε στὴ Λειτουργία, εἶναι σὰν νὰ ἔφαγες νερόβραστο. Ἄν, ὅμως, κλάψεις, θὰ καταλάβεις ὅτι ἔφαγες πνευματικό κρέας.

*Ἱερομόναχος:* Γέροντα, κανεὶς προσπαθεῖ νὰ προετοιμάζεται ὅσο μπορεῖ, ὅμως βλέπει ὅτι ὁ ἐχθρὸς δὲν κάθεται, δηλαδή φέρνει λογισμοὺς πολλὰς φορὲς αἰσχροὺς, βλασφημίες, ρυπαροὺς. Τότε τί κάνει, ἄς ποῦμε, τί πρέπει, πῶς νὰ τοὺς ἀντιμετωπίσει;

*Γέροντας:* Ἄκουσε νὰ δεῖς, ἄνθρωποι εἴμεθα. Ἐ, ἄνθρωποι εἴμεθα, δὲν εἴμεθα ἄγγελοι. Φέρνει καὶ λογισμοὺς αἰσχροὺς, φέρνει καὶ λογισμοὺς ὑπερηφανείας, φέρνει καὶ λογισμοὺς κατακρίσεως, ὅλα. Ἐμεῖς θ' ἀγωνιζόμαστε.

Ἄλλη φορά ἦρθε κάποιος ἐδῶ πέρα καὶ με τὴν ὁμιλία προβήκαμε σὲ κατάκριση. Ἐπειτα πάω νὰ λειτουργήσω καὶ δὲν

μπορῶ νὰ πῶ τίς εὐχές. Βρέ, τί ἔκανα; λέω. Μπρός! Ἦρθε ὁ τάδε γείτονας καὶ κατακρίναμε κάτι δεσποτάδες καὶ τὸ αὐτό. Ἀπάνω στὴ Λειτουργία, λειτουργώντας, λέω: «Θεέ μου, συγχώρεσέ με. Συγχώρεσέ με, Θεέ μου. Ἐσφαλα, Θεέ μου. Γιὰ ποιὸν εἶναι τὸ “ἔσφαλα”, Θεέ μου; Ὑπάρχει καὶ γιὰ μένα συγχωρητικὴ εὐχή», λέω. «Ἐ, καλά, Θεέ μου, εὐλόγησον». Καὶ στὸ τέλος εἰρήνευσα καὶ λέω: «Ἄμα θέλεις ἄλλη φορά, κατάκρινε!»

Μεγάλο πρᾶγμα εἶναι, μεγάλο κακὸ εἶναι ἡ κατάκρισις. Ἐ, ὡς ἄνθρωποι θὰ σφάλουμε, παιδί μου. Ἀλλὰ τί; Καὶ ἡ ἐξομολόγησις εἶναι μυστήριον, παιδί μου.

Ἐγὼ μόνο τὸ Γυμνάσιο ἔβγαλα, δὲν πῆγα παραπάνω. Κι ἔγραψα ὅλους τοὺς συμμαθητὰς μου, ὅλους τοὺς καθηγητὰς μου, τοὺς δασκάλους ἀπὸ τὴν πρώτη Δημοτικὴ μέχρι τὴν τελευταία τάξη τοῦ Γυμνασίου. Καὶ ὅταν τὰ μνημονεύω, πόση χαρὰ λαμβάνω! Ξέρεις πόση χαρὰ λαμβάνω; Διότι μνημονεύω ἐκείνους, οἱ ὅποιοι με ἔκαναν ἄνθρωπο καλὸ. Τώρα, ἐπειδὴ ἔχω ἕνα χρόνο πού δὲν πάω στὴ Λειτουργία, γιατί δὲν ἀκούω, καὶ θέλω νὰ μνημονεύσω πάλι ἐκεῖνα τὰ ὀνόματα, καὶ λίγο-λίγο πάλι τὰ θυμᾶμαι, αὐτοὶ οἱ ἄνθρωποι ὠφελοῦνται. Γι' αὐτὸ, παιδάκι μου, θέλεις νὰ σωθεῖ ἡ ψυχὴ σου δωρεάν; Ὅσα μπορεῖς περισσότερα ὀνόματα νὰ μνημονεύεις.

Μεγάλη παρρησία ἔχει τὸ πετραχήλι, μεγάλη παρρησία. Γι' αὐτὸ, παιδάκι μου, θές ν' ἀποκτήσεις κατὰστασι; Ἄμα λειτουργήσεις καὶ δὲν κλάψεις, κάπου ἔπαισες, κάπου ἔκανες λάθος. Ἐγὼ ὄλη τὴν ἡμέρα προπαρασκευάζα τὸν ἑαυτό μου γιὰ τὴν ὥρα τῆς Λειτουργίας. Κι ὅταν ἔμπαινα στὴ Λειτουργία, δὲν μποροῦσα νὰ σταματήσω τὰ δάκρυα. Ναί! Πολλὰς φορὲς δηλαδή εἶδα καὶ ἀπάνω στὴν ἁγία Τράπεζα σῶμα νεκρὸ, νὰ ποῦμε, σὰν σὲ ἔκστασι, σῶμα νεκρὸ.

*Ἱερομόναχος:* Ἐγώ, Γέροντα, ἤμουνα εἴκοσι χρόνια ἀπλὸς μοναχός. Καὶ εἶναι ἀλήθεια, ὅταν ἔγινα παπᾶς, μετὰ δυσκολεῦτηκα, δὲν μποροῦσα νὰ συνηθίσω ὅτι ἤμουνα ἱερεὺς. Καὶ ἀπὸ τὴν ἄλλη μέρα πού ἔγινα παπᾶς με πολέμησε ὁ διάβολος με λογισμοὺς, με ἀγωνία, με φόβο, με αὐτὰ, με πάλεψε πολὺ με αὐτὰ.

*Γέροντας:* Ἐ, τὴ δουλειὰ του κάνει αὐτός. Τὴ δουλειὰ του, ἀλλὰ κι ἐμεῖς θὰ κάνουμε τὴ δουλειὰ μας. Ἐκεῖ εἰς τὴν Παναγία, νὰ παρακαλᾶς τὴν Παναγία, παιδί μου, διότι ὅλοι οἱ Ἅγιοι παρακάλεσαν τὴν Παναγία. Δὲν δίνεται ἕνα χάρισμα ἀπὸ τὸν Θεὸ εἰς τὸν ἄνθρωπο, εἰ μὴ διὰ μέσου τῆς Παναγίας. Ἡ Παναγία μοιράζει τὰ χαρίσματα στὸν κόσμον, ἡ Παναγία τὰ μοιράζει.

*Ἱερομόναχος:* Κι ἔτσι εθαύμασα. Λέω, πῶς ὁ διάβολος οὔτε τὴ Θ. Λειτουργία δὲν φοβάται, με τοὺς λογισμοὺς του, με αἰσγρά, με τὸ ἕνα, με τὸ ἄλλο.

*Γέροντας:* Δὲν λείπουν, παιδί μου, αὐτὰ τὰ πράγματα. Δὲν λείπουν.

*Ἱερομόναχος:* Περιφρόνηση χρειάζεται...

*Γέροντας:* Περιφρόνηση. Ἐ, τὴ δουλειὰ του κάνει αὐτός, παιδί μου, τὴ δουλειὰ του κάνει. Ἀλλὰ ἐμεῖς τὴ δουλειὰ μας, τὴ δουλειὰ μας.



## Προσκλητήριο Αγίων Τοῦ 1922

ΠΗΓΗ: Ὁμιλία τοῦ Πρωτ. Ἀθανασίου Γιουσιμᾶ, Ἐφημερίου I.N. Αγίου Θεράποντος Μυτιλήνης, 13/9/93.

**Μ**έχρι πέρυσι τέτοιο καιρὸ -- καιρὸ και μέρεις πού μᾶς θυμίζουσι τὴ Μικρασιατικὴ Τραγωδία τοῦ 1922 -- τελούσαμε μνημόσυνα ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀγρίως φονευθέντων Μικρασιατῶν ἀδελφῶν μας. Πέρυσι, ὅμως, τὸ Νοέμβριο, ἡ Ἑλλαδικὴ Ἐκκλησία μὲ μίαν ἱστορικὴν τῆς ἀπόφαση, στὴν ὁποία συμμετεῖχε καὶ ὁ Σεβασμιώτατος Μητροπολίτης μας, κατέταξε ὅλους τοὺς ἔθνομάρτυρες τοῦ '22, θάλεγα τοὺς Χριστιανομάρτυρες μεταξὺ τῶν Ἁγίων τῆς θριαμβεύουσας ἐκκλησίας. Κι αὐτοὶ ἦσαν χιλιάδες καὶ μυριάδες, κληρικοὶ, λαϊκοὶ, γυναῖκες, ἄνδρες, παιδιά. Ἄς τοὺς προσκαλέσουμε στὴ μνήμη μας:

-Χρυσόστομος, Μητροπολίτης Σμύρνης, τὸν κατακρεοῦργησαν στὶς 28 Αὐγούστου οἱ Τοῦρκοι καὶ μαζί του 342 κληρικοὺς τῆς Μητροπόλεως Σμύρνης καὶ τῶν περιχώρων πού ἄγρια βασανίστηκαν καὶ μαρτύρησαν γιὰ τὴν Ἑλλάδα καὶ τὸ Χριστό! Τὰ ὀνόματά τους δὲν διεσώθησαν. Θυμίζω μόνο τοὺς:

-Ιερεὺς Μελέτιος, τὸν σταύρωσαν στὸν κορμὸ ἑνὸς πεύκου!

-Ιερεὺς Ἰάκωβος Ἀρχαντζάκης, ἄγρια τὸν παλούκωσαν!

-Ιεροδιάκονος Γρηγόριος, τὸν ἔκαψαν ζωντανό!

-Γρηγόριος Μητροπολίτης Κυδωνιῶν, τὸν ἔθαψαν ζωντανό καὶ μαζί του ἓνα πλῆθος κληρικῶν καὶ λαϊκῶν τῆς περιοχῆς του.

-Ἀμβρόσιος Μητροπολίτης Μοσχονησιῶν, τοῦ πετάλωσαν τὰ πόδια καὶ τὸν κατατεμάχισαν. Μαζί του 11 ἱερεῖς καὶ 2 ἀγνώστων στοιχείων μοναχοὺς τοὺς ἔσφαξαν ἄγρια.

-Εὐθύμιος ἐπίσκοπος Ζήλων, ἀπὸ τὰ Παράκοιλα τῆς Καλλονῆς, πέθανε στὴ φυλακὴ μετὰ ἀπὸ βασανιστήρια.

-Προκόπιος Μητροπολίτης Ἰκονίου, κακοποιήθηκε λίγο πρὶν τὸ 1922.

Μαζί μ' αὐτοὺς τοὺς περήφανους ρασοφόρους πού θυσιάσαν τὴ ζωὴ τους ὑπὲρ τῶν προβάτων, χιλιάδες Ἕλληνες καὶ Ἑλληνίδες ἄγρια θανατώθηκαν σὲ διάφορα σημεῖα τῆς γῆς τῆς Μικρασίας.

Μνημονεύουμε τὸν Ἰσαὰκ Γιαβρόγλου πού τὸν κρέμασαν ἔξω ἀπὸ τὸ Δημαρχεῖο μῆς πόλης τῆς Καισαρείας. Τὸ Νικόλαο Μπουτζαλι πού μαζί μὲ ἄλλους 6 Σμυρναῖους τοὺς ἔσφαξαν στὸ κατώφλι τοῦ σπιτιοῦ του. 50.000 οἱ θανατωθέντες Σμυρναῖοι! Τοὺς: Ἀλέξανδρο, Παναγιώτη, Κυριάκο, Δημητρὸ, Ἐμμανουήλ, Ἐλευθέριο, Ἰωάννη, Παναγιώτη, Νικόλαο... λίγα ὀνόματα ἀπὸ τοὺς 4.000 Αἰβαλιῶτες πού θανατώθηκαν ἐκεῖνες τῆς μέρες. Τοὺς: Κωνσταντῖνο, Παναγή, Ἀμερσουδά, Εἰρήνη, Εὐάγγελο, Θηρεσία ἀπὸ τῆς Παλαιᾶς Φώκιες πού οἰκτρὰ θανατώθηκαν μαζί μὲ 3.500 Φωκαεῖς.

Νὰ ἀναφέρουμε τὸν τρόπο μὲ τὸν ὁποῖο θανατώθηκε ἡ προαναφερθεῖσα Εἰρήνη, ἦταν ἔγγυος 9 μηνῶν ὅταν τὴ συνέλαβαν οἱ Τοῦρκοι. Ἄγρια ὄρμησαν ἐπάνω της καὶ μὲ τὴ ξιφολόγη τῆς ἀνοῖξαν τὴν κοιλιά γιὰ νὰ δοῦν... τί

παιδιὰ θὰ γεννοῦσε! Νικόλαος, Φώτιος, Σταμάτης, Ἰωάννης, Ραλλοῦ, Βιργινία, Χαρίκλεια, Νικόλαος, Φώτιος ἀπὸ τὴν Προῦσα. Λίγα ὀνόματα μέσα στὰ ἑκατοντάδες χιλιάδες πού “χάλασαν”, ὅπως ἔλεγε Μοσχονησιώτισσα γιαγιά, οἱ Τοῦρκοι! 3.361 Περγαμηνιώτες, 6.000 Μοσχονησιῶτες... Κι ἀνάμεσα σ' ὅλους αὐτοὺς καὶ μικρὰ παιδιά σὰν τοὺς προσκόπους τοῦ Ἀϊδινίου, πού δὲν τὰ σεβάστηκαν οἱ Τοῦρκοι, γιατί δὲ ξέρουν καὶ δὲν τοὺς ἔμαθε κανεὶς νὰ σέβονται οἱ αἱμοσταγεῖς Τοῦρκοι ἀνθρώπινα δικαιώματα, ὡς τῆς μέρες μας προχθὲς στὴν Ἰμβρο καὶ Τένεδο καὶ Κύπρο καὶ χθὲς στὸ Νεοχώρι τῆς Κωνσταντινούπολης...

Ἀπ' ὅλους αὐτοὺς τοὺς νέους Νεομάρτυρες τῆς Μικρασίας μας, μιὰ φωνὴ φτάνει ὡς τ' αὐτιά μας. Μιὰ φωνὴ πού ἀπευθύνεται σὲ μᾶς τοὺς νεοέλληνες τῆς σκοπιμότητος καὶ τῆς διπλωματίας. Μιὰ φωνὴ πού θαρρῶ πὼς τοῦτα λέει: Δὲν ἀνήκωμεν εἰς τὴν Δύσιν, ἀνήκωμεν εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα. Μείνετε Ἕλληνες. Εἴστε Ἕλληνες καὶ ὄχι Εὐρωπαῖοι, οἱ Εὐρωπαῖοι μᾶς πρόδωσαν! Θυσιαστήκαμε γιὰ τὸ Χριστό καὶ γιὰ τὴν Πατρίδα, γιὰ τὸ Σταυρὸ καὶ γιὰ τὴν Ἑλλάδα.

Χριστὸς καὶ Ἑλλάδα, Ἑλλάδα καὶ Χριστὸς!



### ΛΕΗΛΑΣΙΕΣ ΚΑΙ ΣΦΑΓΕΣ ΤΗΣ ΣΜΥΡΝΗΣ

**Ο**ἱ δημοσιογράφοι τῶν ξένων ἐφημερίδων μετέδιδαν μέσω τῶν ἀνταποκριτῶν τους:

«Μὲ κᾶρα, γαιδούρια, ἄλογα, ἀραμπάδες, μὲ κάθε εἶδος τροχοφόρο, ἄλλοι στοὺς ὄμους, μικροὶ καὶ μεγάλοι, οἰκογένειες ὀλόκληρες τούρκων κουβαλοῦσαν ἀνενόητοι τὰ κλοπιμαῖα, παράνομο καρπὸ τῆς λεηλασίας τους».

Τὸ τρίπτυχο δράμα βιασμῶν, σφαγῶν, λεηλασιῶν, κορυφώθηκε τὴ νύκτα τῆς 31ης Αὐγούστου ξημερώνοντας ἡ ἀποφράδα τῆς 1ης Σεπτεμβρίου. Στὴ λαϊκὴ συνοικία τῆς λεγόμενης Τεπετζίκι σφάχτηκαν 300 γυναῖκες, 80 νήπια, 550 ἄνδρες ἀπὸ τοὺς αἰμοβόρους γκριζοὺς λύκους, ἀπὸ τσέτες καὶ ζεμπέκρηδες δηλαδὴ τοὺς ἄτακτους τοῦ τουρκικοῦ στρατοῦ πού ἀποτελοῦν τὴν ἐγκληματικὴ πρωτοπορία σ' ἐπιθετικούς καιροὺς. Καὶ συμπληρώνει τοὺς ἀνήσυχους δημοσιογράφους ὁ ἱστορικός:

«Στὴ συνοικίαν τοῦ Ἁγίου Κωνσταντίνου διεπράχθησαν φρικαλέα ἐγκλήματα ἀπὸ τοὺς τσέτες. Στὴν ἐκκλησία μέσα τῆς Μυρτιδιώτισσας στὸ Μερσινλή στραγγαλίστηκαν δεκάδες κορίτσια ἐνῶ στρατιῶτες ἀποπατοῦσαν πάνω στὴν Ἁγία Τράπεζα. Πτώματα ἐπὶ πτωμάτων στοιβάχθηκαν καὶ σχημάτισαν σοροὺς στὸ Οἰνοπνευματοποιεῖο τοῦ Πανάρετου καὶ συγκεκριμένα στὴ συνοικία τοῦ ἁγίου Βουκόλου (τ' ὄνομα παρμένο ἀπὸ τὸν ἅγιον μαθητὴ τοῦ ἀποστολικοῦ πατέρα καὶ πρώτου τῆς Σμύρνης μάρτυρα ἱεράρχη Πολύκαρπου) εἶχαν καταφύγει ἑκατοντάδες γυναικόπαιδα καὶ κτυπήθηκαν ἐκεῖ μέσα μὲ ὄλμους καὶ χειροβομβίδες».



## THE PROPHECIES OF STARETS LAVRENTII (+1950), PART I OF II

*From 'Prepodobnyistarets' ["The Venerable Elder"], originally published in the May 1996 issue of the Russian Orthodox newspaper 'Zhizn Vechnaya' ["Eternal Life"]*

Starets (Elder) Lavrentii was a Schema-Archimandrite Monk at the Chernigov-Trinity Convent. With his illuminating gift of clairvoyance, he served as a guide for hundreds of monastics and laity struggling to find their way through the manifest entanglements of early 20<sup>th</sup> century life. He reposed in 1950. We are presenting Part I of his prophecies, as published within the aforementioned source. Part II will be presented in our next issue.

### YOU WILL LIVE TO SEE ANTICHRIST!

Accompanied by two keleinitsy [lay-sisters], the igumeny [abbess] of the Domnitskaya Convent came to have tea with batiushka [father (dim. aff.)] Lavrentii. During dinner, he said: "You and I, matushka - igumenya [abbess-mother (dim. aff.)], will not live to see antichrist; but, these -- your keleinitsy, will live to see him!" That was in 1948. Both nuns had been born in 1923. Monakhinya [nun] N. was the one who told the story.

### I NEED TO SEE

Whenever Fr. Lavrentii would sit down at table to dine, while waiting for everyone to gather together, he would say: "I am not hungry, but I need to see you all, and to speak with you a little concerning what lies ahead for all of you." Then he would weep and say: "If you but knew what fate awaits men and what lies ahead for you. If you but knew how people suffer in hell!"

### AND HOW HE WILL RECOIL!

This was recorded from the words of Sister M. Batiushka Lavrentii would say: "Do not be astonished when you hear that people are praying in every which way in the churches. When those in their golden-caps [archi- and proto-hieratical mitres] forbid the reading of the Psalter -- and, later, of the hours -- then will the Lord endure but a little; and, O how He will then recoil from them! The Second Coming is now no longer far-distant!"

### REMEMBER THIS!

"This happened when my father was yet alive," I. M. would recall, concerning her conversation with batiushka Lavrentii. "We were extremely poor, incapable of regaining our senses after the destruction of the war. I went to see starets [elder] Lavrentii, in order to ask him to bless me, that I might secretly wear a podriasnik [an under-cassock, (to be a secret nun)]; but he said to me: "Not all who are in the world will perish; nor will everyone in a monastery be saved! Do you understand? It is not yet time." Again I began to implore him [to grant me his permission] to enter a women's monastery, for it is so extremely difficult for one to save oneself in the world, but batiushka said to me: "Monks and schema-monks in the monasteries will

attain unto the seventh Heaven; but if you only knew what awaits those virgins who live in the world! The Lord will tell those schema-bearers to make way for these secret ones who did not live in a monastery. And these latter will exceedingly precede the former! Do you understand that, before God, the secret ones will be superior to those in the monasteries? Do you understand?" the starets asked. "I understand nothing," was my reply. "Then remember what I just told you, at least!" batiushka said."

### IF ONE LIVES ACCORDING TO THE LAW OF LOVE

A certain pious widow had a dream: "I saw, as it were, batiushka Lavrentii of Chernigov in the Trinity Convent, with its inhabitants. There were many sisters there, and the choir was chanting: "Rejoice, O Tsaritsa". Then, suddenly, the starets rose up in the air, but there were only a few matushki (mother nuns) with him seven or eight total! I ran to ask him: "Why had so few nuns risen up?", but upon uttering these words, I awoke, without having received an answer."

"When I went to see Fr. Lavrentii, he said: "It is as you dreamed it! Had they lived in accordance with the Law of Love, then everything would have been fine. If someone has a piece of bread, it is in order that he might share it with another, who would then offer up a prayer for him. Thus, both would receive their largesse, and all would have been saved! But, with us, it is just the opposite: the one who has the piece of bread stirs up great rows. That is why there are so few who are lifted up, because there is no love!"

### FEW ARE SAVED

The venerable Fr. Lavrentii of Chernigov would frequently repeat that souls go to hell just like people come out of a church on a feastday; but they go to Heaven like people go to church on a weekday. Batiushka would frequently sit and weep: he pitied the people who were perishing. "How many people there are, who are packed in the inferno like herring in a barrel," starets Lavrentii would say. His spiritual children would console him, but he would reply, through his tears: "You do not see. If you could but see... How pitiful it is! And in the last days, hell will be filled with young people."

### TWIRL THIS AROUND YOUR MOUSTACHE

"And I say unto you, and with great regret do I say it, that you will be buying houses, and killing time by adorning large and lovely monastic buildings. But you will have no time for prayer, although you made a vow of non-possession! It will not be difficult to be saved during the last days, but wisely so. The one who overcomes all these temptations, the same will be saved! Such one will be among the first. The former will be like unto lamps; the latter will be like the sun. You have other dwellings prepared for you. So listen, and twirl this around your moustache!" Thus did the venerable starets, gazing into the future with his perspicacious mind, admonish his many, many spiritual children.

*[Part II will be presented in our next issue]*

## QUESTION ON THE KISS OF PEACE

*Author Anonymous*

**Question:** Why is it that some parishes practice the exchange of the kiss of peace among the faithful during the Divine Liturgy and others do not? After all, this was a practice of the early Church, so why is it not universally used?"

**Answer:** Just because a practice existed in the "early church" does not arbitrarily mean that it should be practiced today; after all, the early Church also held that the catechumens leave the Divine Liturgy after the Litany for the Catechumens following the gospel, and confession of sins in the early Church was public. We do not find many people clamoring for the reinstatement of these practices now.

In the living tradition of the Church, that which has been passed on to us from our fathers, and which has been under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we do not find an unbroken continuity of the exchange of the "kiss of peace" among the faithful during the Divine Liturgy. It should also be noted that until relatively recent history men stood on one side of the church and women on the other, making it evident that any exchange of the kiss of peace within the congregation was confined and there was no "kiss" or touch between sexes. In fact, St. Hippolytus and the Apostolic Constitutions state quite clearly that no exchange of the kiss of peace was to take place between members of the opposite sex.

It seems that some very well intentioned people who base its practice on the "early Church" have reinstated the exchange of the kiss of peace. Yet, in the classic work, *A Commentary on the Divine Liturgy* by Nicholas Cabasilas in the 13th/14th century, we find no mention of this practice, especially among the faithful, hence, no continuity.

Those who encourage that the congregations exchange the kiss of peace before or during the recitation or singing of the Creed cite that it is essential for the people, especially those who will partake of Holy Communion, to be at peace with their neighbor. Clearly, if one intends on receiving the life-giving Body and Blood of our Lord, he should not wait until that time so late in the Divine Liturgy to make peace with someone! All the faithful should make it a point to be at peace with everyone before even entering the church, especially if they intend to receive Holy Communion.

In places where the kiss of peace is practiced among the faithful, it causes a definite disruption during the recitation or singing of the Creed: turning to others (who may and should be deeply in prayer), moving about, general confusion, taking our focus off of God and directing it to our neighbor. In some parishes, there is literally a suspension of the action of the Divine Liturgy as people move throughout the church to greet each other. It can also degenerate into the silliness of

awkwardly turning to someone and shaking hands or carefully positioning oneself between people who are either close family or acquaintances, and avoiding those with whom one may have a grudge or lack of peace! It tends to turn the Divine Liturgy into a sociological phenomenon and secularize that which is divine. The Divine Liturgy is the people of God doing the same thing together and not to each other!

There is a consistency in Orthodoxy, and we find this consistency regarding the kiss of peace, to be sure! In our liturgical texts we see clearly that the clergy exchange this kiss of peace with each other to show that they minister this holy Sacrament of our Lord's Body and blood in harmony with each other.

Should the practice of the kiss of peace be exchanged between the laity? Absolutely! Before entering the temple. Our Lord Jesus Christ said clearly, "if you bring your gift to the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift." (Matt. 5:23-24).

Let us make our peace before we enter through the doors of the temple and not disrupt the action, the journey, of the Divine Liturgy by turning to this side and that.



## THE METHOD BY WHICH THE CHURCH CARRIES OUT HER DIVINE MISSION

*By St. Justin Popovich (+1979)*

The holy Christ-bearing Apostles once and for all gave the definition of the ecclesial dimension of divine humanity: "For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us" (Acts 15:28). First, the Holy Spirit, and then, us; "us" in as much as we allow the Holy Spirit to act through us. Included in this theanthropic apostolic definition is the entire method by which the Church carries out her divine-human activity in the world. The holy martyrs and confessors, the holy fathers and Ecumenical Synods accepted and continued this method. If someone departs from this method he departs from the Holy Spirit as well as the Holy Apostles, martyrs, fathers and Ecumenical Synods. Further, he deviates from the unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity of the theanthropic faith of Christ, that is, he is cut off from the Lord Jesus Christ. The Orthodox Church is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic because She does not deviate from this sacred method.

## APOPHTHEGMS BY THE GOD-INSPIRED ST. ISAAC THE SYRIAN, PART 3

*SOURCE: From the book "475 Apophthegms by the God-Inspired St. Isaac the Syrian," pp. 10-15, published by Orthodox Kypseli, translated from the Greek by George Karras.*

### 6th Lesson (continued)

58. There exist three orders of spiritual advancement: (a) The beginner, (b) the combatant, and (c) the perfected. During the first one, our passions move freely within us. During the second one, we find ourselves between the impassionate and the dispassionate stages. And during the third one we noticeably become recipients of the Holy Spirit's grace.<sup>59</sup> What can one say about the believer who received the Holy Spirit's grace within his heart? Due to his association with her, we ought to consider him saved, even if he does not become worthy of the perfect grace.<sup>60</sup> The cloud of the Holy Spirit's Grace begins to shadow your heart's tent when your nous descends to your heart...<sup>61</sup> Progress signs for the soul are: (a) Wealth of prayer, (b) elimination of boasting and discounting the faults of those near us, (c) desire to step out of our body, (d) patiently and joyfully withstanding all of our sorrows, and (e) thanking and glorifying God for everything!...

### 7th Lesson

62. One who is full of cares and a busy body can not achieve the meekness and stillness necessary for the continuous prayer which allows us to draw near God.

63. Conversing and "theories" by the worldly and impious monastics provoke muddling of the nous to those who seek stillness and quiet and result in disrespect towards God and the despair of the soul.

64. A proud person walks in the dark and considers himself above all others when in fact he is the worst of them all since he chose to avoid the path of God which is humility.

65. Lifelong study of Holy Scriptures fills the soul with admiration and divine delight.

66. There are tears that are mixed with honey and come at times to hermits through study and prayer; and then there are the unceasing tears that guide a person to peace in thoughts and the mysteries of God.

67. The person who has disdain for worldly glory and fame becomes worthy of the glory of God.

68. Whoever submits himself to God everything is in turn submitted to him because God grants peace in his heart. If we do not humble ourselves, God will humble us. True humility results in divine knowledge and the recognition of temptations.

69. Faith and partaking of the sacrament of Holy Communion grant us the greatest gifts and result in our renewal.

70. Young children have pure bodies and dispassionate souls. They lack, though, clarity of the nous which leads to perfection because with spiritual strength it penetrates the Divine revelations of the Heavenly world.

### 8th Lesson

71. Knowledge which precedes faith is natural knowledge. Knowledge, though, that comes after faith is spiritual knowledge.

72. Natural knowledge (distinction between good and evil) leads us to faith in God. Faith will in turn guide us to fear of God. Fear will then result in repentance and good deeds. It is through good deeds that spiritual knowledge desires as well as the realization of mysteries which give birth to the "theoria" of God.

73. "Theoria" or sight of God is the enjoyment of God.

74. Do you wish to gain everlasting life? Hold on to these two virtues: faith and humility.

75. When you stand in prayer, consider yourself an ant, a lizard, a leech, an infant.

76. Direct all of your cares and concerns to God and pray with fervor until you feel joy within.

77. The person with worldly (scientific) knowledge is unable to fully receive and comprehend spiritual knowledge unless he first denies fully and completely his worldly one.

78. In order to feel within yourself the pleasure and joy of the future life, you must first change and become like a child, just as our Lord said.

79. If you direct all of your cares towards God, Who naturally and always takes care of you, you will then experience the wonders of God.

80. Through faith, avoidance of crowds and aversion away from worldly knowledge, we purify our heart and taste the grace and joy of the Holy Spirit which is spiritual knowledge.

81. Divine Grace is granted to the person who dismisses every worldly assistance and human hope and in turn, dedicates himself to God.

### 9th Lesson

82. Every virtue, which is realized with comfort, becomes subject to criticism and accusations. This is because, as St. Mark says, "every virtue becomes a cross when it is carried out through the direction of the Holy Spirit."

83. When a person starts to feel pride, God permits greater temptations so that he is defeated by them and thus regains humility and asks again for God's help.

84. Mortification of oneself (while alive) is to feel neither sadness from life's sorrows nor happiness from life's joys.

85. What are you saying, my fellow man? You wish to ascend to Heaven, inherit the kingdom of God, enjoy the rest of the heavenly beatitudes and unite with angels in the everlasting life and you ask whether the path of salvation has difficulties.

86. When our heart seeks with zeal spiritual matters, our body then does not feel grief by sorrows because it anticipates something superior; the Kingdom of Heaven.

87. Humility is the clothing of Divinity. It is this clothing that God wears when, through the humble elements of bread and wine descends from Heaven, enters our bodies and sanctifies us.



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SEPTEMBER 14<sup>TH</sup>

+ A DAY SET ASIDE IN MEMORY OF THE GREEK ORTHODOX VICTIMS OF THE ASIA MINOR GENOCIDE OF 1922 +

The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Editor or the Brotherhood of St. POIMEN

## SOME DETAILS OF THE 1922 TURKISH ATROCITIES DURING THE DESTRUCTION OF SMYRNA

*By George Horton (For Thirty Years Consul and Consul-General of the USA in the Near East), "The Blight of Asia," Bobbs-Merrill Publishing Company, 1926 – Excerpts from Chapter XIX.*

At Athens, at Paris, and later in the United States, I met various eye-witnesses of the great disaster who related to me things that they had seen. I have made notes of the testimony of several of these persons, carefully excluding all such as were Greek or Armenian, not with the feeling that statements made by such would necessarily be unreliable, but rather that it might be impugned as prejudiced.

American relief workers, standing on the deck of a ship, which left Smyrna soon after the Simpson, related that they saw a man throw himself into the sea and swim toward the vessel. A Turkish soldier raised his rifle, took aim and blew the man's head off. Another American, in relating the same incident to me, added the detail that the Turk pointed his rifle over the shoulder of a British Marine. Teachers and others of the American Girls' school told me that they saw a lady who resided in the house directly across the street standing in the road surrounded by Turkish soldiers, who were robbing her and tearing the rings from her fingers. When they finished, one of them stepped back and cut one of her hands off with his sword. The lady was never seen again and doubtless died as the result of her injuries.

The story has frequently been told by Americans and others

who were at Smyrna that a crowd of residents, men, women and children, had gathered on a light boat, lying in the harbor but a short distance from the pier, with the hope that some Entente or American launch would tow them to a ship and save them. The Turks threw petroleum on them and burned them all to death. A confirmation of this dreadful story was furnished me by Miss Emily McCallam, directress of the Intercollegiate Institute of Smyrna. She arrived in that ill-fated city on the morning of September 14, 1922, after the fire set by the Turks had been raging all night, and saw a number of charred bodies floating in the harbor, which she was informed were the corpses of the people cremated on the lighter.

A prominent Dutch merchant of Smyrna, who had taken refuge on his yacht during the fire, related to me at Athens that all through the night of the dreadful thirteenth he heard fearful screams from the shore, ending suddenly in a queer watery gurgle. He learned the next morning that a lot of throats had been cut.

A book of great human interest could be written by any one who cared to interview the refugees and set down the stories he would thus hear of hairbreadth escapes and the desperate and ingenious expedients resorted to.

There are horrible tales told of the burning of the sick in the hospitals and of children in the schools. Wholesale violation of women and girls was one of the outstanding features of the Smyrna horror. It is necessary to mention this disgusting subject, though not to dwell upon it; it can not be possible that the Christian people of America for material advantages will be in sympathy with a policy of coddling a race that specializes in such conduct.

# Orthodox Heritage

So therefore, brethren, persevere, and grasp the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or by our epistle [2 Thess. 2:15]

[HTTP://WWW.ORTHODOXHHERITAGE.ORG](http://www.OrthodoxHeritage.org)

Ἄρα οὖν, ἀδελφοί, στήκετε, καὶ κρατεῖτε τὰς παραδόσεις ἃς ἐδιδάχθητε, εἴτε διὰ λόγου εἴτε δι' ἐπιστολῆς ἡμῶν [Θεσσ. Β' 2:15]

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## LIFE AFTER DEATH

*A Homily by St. John Maximovich of Shanghai and San Francisco, from <http://www.saintjohnwonderworker.org>*

*Recently there have been many questions raised about what happens to the soul when a person dies. The following sermon by St. John of San Francisco outlines the Orthodox teaching. The sermon has been appended by way of endnotes, additional comments, and extensive Patristic support for these comments. It is important for us, as we approach this all-important subject, to lay aside all preconceptions and to be willing to accept what the Fathers of the Church teach. Your opinion and my opinion are just that: OPINIONS; what is presented here is TRUTH! — Fr. John Mack*

*Editor's Note: Due to the great length and the many details within the homily's endnotes, they have been left out. We ask that our readers refer to the article's source, should they desire to review them, or e-mail us ([Poimen@mail.com](mailto:Poimen@mail.com)) and we will send you a copy of the complete sermon with the aforementioned comments and endnotes.*

Limitless and without consolation would have been our sorrow for close ones who are dying, if the Lord had not given us eternal life. Our life would be pointless if it ended with death. What benefit would there then be from virtue and good deed? Then they would be correct who say: "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!" But man was created for immortality, and by His resurrection Christ opened the gates of the Heavenly Kingdom, of eternal blessedness for those who have believed in Him and have lived righteously. Our earthly life is a preparation for the future life, and this preparation ends with our death. "It is appointed unto man once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb 9:27). Then a man leaves all his earthly cares; the body disintegrates, in order to

rise anew at the General Resurrection. Often this spiritual vision begins in the dying even before death, and while still seeing those around them and even speaking with them, they see what others do not see.

But when it leaves the body, the soul finds itself among other spirits, good and bad. Usually it inclines toward those which are more akin to it in spirit, and if while in the body it was under the influence of certain ones, it will remain in dependence upon them when it leaves the body, however unpleasant they may turn out to be upon encountering them.

For the course of two days the soul enjoys relative freedom and can visit places on earth which were dear to it, but on the third day it moves into other spheres. At this time (the third day), it passes through legions of evil spirits which obstruct its path and accuse it of various sins, to which they themselves had tempted it. According to various revelations there are twenty such obstacles, the so-called "toll-houses," at each of which one or another form of sin is tested; after passing through one the soul comes upon the next one, and only after successfully passing through all of them can the soul continue its path without being immediately cast into Gehenna. How terrible these demons and their toll-houses are may be seen in the fact that the Mother of God Herself, when informed by the Archangel Gabriel of Her approaching death, answering Her prayer, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself appeared from heaven to receive the soul of His Most Pure Mother and conduct it to heaven. Terrible indeed is the third day for the soul of the departed, and for this reason it especially needs prayers then for itself.

Then, having successfully passed through the toll-houses and bowed down before God, the soul for the

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Orthodox Heritage may, at times, bring up issues or present articles that some consider controversial. Such material is presented so that a distinction is made between salvation and the 20th century heresy of ecumenism. These are confusing times for the Orthodox faithful, and political correctness must be sacrificed so that His TRUTH be brought forth.

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course of 37 more days visits the heavenly habitations and the abysses of hell, not knowing yet where it will remain, and only on the fortieth day is its place appointed until the resurrection of the dead. Some souls find themselves (after the forty days) in a condition of foretasting eternal joy and blessedness, and others in fear of the eternal torments which will come in full after the Last Judgment. Until then, changes are possible in the condition of souls, especially through offering for them the Bloodless Sacrifice (commemoration at the Liturgy), and likewise by other prayers.

How important commemoration at the Liturgy is may be seen in the following occurrence: Before the uncovering of the relics of St. Theodosius of Chernigov (1896), the priest-monk (the renowned Starets Alexis of Goloseyevsky Hermitage, of the Kiev-Caves Lavra, who died in 1916) who was conducting the re-vesting of the relics, becoming weary while sitting by the relics, dozed off and saw before him the Saint, who told him: "I thank you for laboring with me. I beg you also, when you will serve the Liturgy, to commemorate my parents" -- and he gave their names (Priest Nikita and Maria). "How can you, O Saint, ask my prayers, when you yourself stand at the heavenly Throne and grant to people God's mercy?" the priest-monk asked. "Yes, that is true," replied St. Theodosius, "but the offering at the Liturgy is more powerful than

my prayer."

Therefore, panikhidas (i.e., Trisagion Prayers for the Dead) and prayer at home for the dead are beneficial to them, as are good deeds done in their memory, such as alms or contributions to the church. But especially beneficial for them is commemoration at the Divine Liturgy. There have been many appearances of the dead and other occurrences which confirm how beneficial is the commemoration of the dead. Many who died in repentance, but who were unable to manifest this while they were alive, have been freed from tortures and have obtained repose. In Church prayers are ever offered for the repose of the dead, and on the day of the Descent of the Holy Spirit, in the kneeling prayers at vespers, there is even a special petition "for those in hell."

Every one of us who desires to manifest his love for the dead and give them real help, can do this best of all through prayer for

them, and particularly by commemorating them at the Liturgy, when the particles which are cut out for the living and the dead are let fall into the Blood of the Lord with the words: "Wash away, O Lord, the sins of those here commemorated by Thy Precious Blood and by the prayers of Thy saints." We can do nothing better or greater for the dead than to pray for them, offering commemoration for them at the Liturgy. Of this they are always in need, and especially during those forty



**St. John Maximovich serving in Tunis  
surrounded by the Uncreated Light (1952)**



days when the soul of the deceased is proceeding on its path to the eternal habitations. The body feels nothing then: it does not see its close ones who have assembled, does not smell the fragrance of the flowers, does not hear the funeral orations. But the soul senses the prayers offered for it and is grateful to those who make them and is spiritually close to them.

O relatives and close ones of the dead! Do for them what is needful for them and within your power. Use your money not for outward adornment of the coffin and grave, but in order to help those in need, in memory of your close ones who have died, for churches, where prayers for them are offered. Show mercy to the dead, take care of their souls. Before us all stands the same path, and how we shall then wish that we would be remembered in prayer! Let us therefore be ourselves merciful to the dead. As soon as someone has reposed, immediately call or inform a priest, so he can read the Prayers appointed to be read over all Orthodox Christians after death. Try, if it be possible, to have the funeral in Church and to have the Psalter read over the deceased until the funeral. Most definitely arrange at once for the serving of the forty-day memorial, that is, daily commemoration at the Liturgy for the course of forty days. (NOTE: If the funeral is in a church where there are no daily services, the relatives should take care to order the forty-day memorial wherever there are daily services.) It is likewise good to send contributions for commemoration to monasteries, as well as to Jerusalem, where there is constant prayer at the holy places. Let us take care for those who have departed into the other world before us, in order to do for them all that we can, remembering that "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."



## ON OBEDIENCE AND HUMILITY

Where there are obedience, humility and struggles, the demons are never able to take a man captive. Hardness, disobedience and pride give birth to despondency and negligence, whence come all the demons who make a dung heap and cowshed out of the soul of that man. And they will not rest until they have rendered him guilty of old and new sins, and have finally made him a captive.

I came to know You [our Lord Jesus Christ] on Mt. Tabor. I came to know You in the Resurrection. I came to know You in the Ascension. I came to know You in so many different glories, and so many marvelous aspects. I came to know You on Golgotha!

St. Joseph the Hesychast (+1959)

## THE STAGES OF THE JESUS PRAYER

SOURCE: "A Night In The Desert Of The Holy Mountain," by Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlahos of Nafpaktos

*Editor's Note: The Bible presents to us the basis of the well established practice among many Orthodox faithful known as the Jesus Prayer ("Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner"). Specifically, we are told that it is necessary to pray continuously (1 Thess 5:17); to pray in the Spirit on every possible occasion (Eph. 6:18); in every place to lift our hands reverently in prayer (1 Tim. 2:8)\*. This article provides a small glimpse into this powerful prayer which is NOT only for monastics (as "some" maintain) but for all clergy and laity as well.*

Geronda, can you please tell me the stages of the Prayer more analytically? Where does one start from and how does one progress?

There are primarily five stages.

Firstly: The reciting of the Jesus Prayer vocally. We repeat the Jesus Prayer with our lips while trying at the same time to focus our attention on the words of the Prayer.

Secondly: The nous takes the Jesus Prayer and says it silently. Our whole attention is centred again in the words, but is concentrated on the nous. When the nous gets tired then we start again to vocalize the Prayer with the lips. This method, of course, or the use of the Prayer rope is still the elementary level school of the Jesus Prayer. A beginner should start however, from this stage, and when he reaches the more perfect, the imperfect one will then fade away. After the nous has rested, we start again to concentrate our attention there. St. Neilos advises to "always remember God and your nous will become heaven."

Thirdly: The Jesus Prayer then descends into the heart. Nous and heart are united. The attention now is centred in the heart and is immersed again into the words of the Jesus Prayer, and primarily into the name of Jesus which has an imperceptible depth.

Fourthly: The Prayer now becomes automatic. It is done while the ascetic is working, eating, discussing or while he is in church or even while he is sleeping. "I sleep but by heart wakeneth"\*\*\* is said in the Holy Scripture. (Song of Songs 5. 2)

Fifthly: Then one feels a divine soft flame burning within his soul and making it joyful. The grace of Christ lives in the heart. The Holy Trinity is established. "We become the dwelling place of God, when He lives within us, established in the memory."

Thus, we become the temple of God when remembrance of Him is not disturbed by earthly cares, and the mind is not distracted by unexpected thoughts. Fleeing the latter, the friend of God withdraws into Him, chasing away the passions which invite intemperate thoughts, and occupying himself in a way which leads to virtue". (St. Basil the Great) Thus,

he feels the divine presence within himself, and this grace passes through to his body which becomes dead to the world and is crucified. And this is the most extreme stage which is sometimes connected with the vision of the uncreated Light. This is, virtually, the course of the development of the Jesus Prayer. Each stage has a corresponding grace.

(\*) 1 Thessalonians 5:17 - Pray without ceasing. Ephesians 6:18 - With all prayer and supplication, pray at every opportunity in the Spirit. To that end, be watchful with all perseverance and supplication for all the holy ones. 1 Timothy 2:8 - It is my wish, then, that in every place the men should pray, lifting up holy hands, without anger or argument.

(\*\*) This passage is written in the book of the Old Testament which is called "Song of Songs." It is not difficult to explain. Prophet David says that man's heart is deep. All the events, all the impressions of the day and the occupations of the mind go into the depths of the heart, into what we call nowadays the subconscious. So, whatever things a man is occupied with during the day, the heart will be occupied with these same things at night, when the mind and the human energies rest. And this can be seen clearly in our dreams.



## WHY GOD ALLOWS TEMPTATIONS

*SOURCE: The Ascetic Treatises of Saint Isaac the Syrian.*

**B**y the love which the saints show unto God in return for what they bear for the sake of His name in that they undergo trials without leaving the excellency which God loves, their heart acquires freedom to look towards Him without a veil and to ask from Him with confidence.

Great is the power of prayer in freedom of speech. Therefore He allows that His saints are tried by all afflictions on the way towards Him in order that they may acquire freedom of speech and may experience His help and His care for them in that He is found to be their saviour in danger; and in order that His friends may acquire wisdom through temptations so that they are not dull and destitute of training. So through temptation they acquire knowledge concerning everything, and are not laughed at lightly by the demons.

For if He would train them by good things only they would lack training in other things and they would be as blind men in trials. And if someone should say, "He guides them without training and without self-knowledge," [the conclusion would be] that He wished them to be like oxen and asses who possess no freedom whatever. There is even no taste in the good, when a man has not first been tried by temptations of evil and afterwards finds it and when he does not use it for his own

in knowledge and freedom. How sweet that knowledge is which has been acquired through training and the experience of labours, and how much strength it imparts to him that has found it after many personal experiences, is known to those who are acquainted with the help afforded by it.

They learn the weakness of nature and the help afforded by divine power when He first withdraws power from them while they are in temptations. Then they perceive the weakness of nature and the strength of temptations and the wickedness of the fiend, [perceiving] of which nature their fiend is, with which nature they are clad, and how they are guarded by divine power; and how, though they run and are uplifted, when the divine power withdraws itself from them, they become weak before all passions.

Through all this they acquire humbleness, and press close to God, expecting His help and persevering in prayer. How could they have acquired all this, if they had not experienced a myriad of evils, without God's caring for their being surrounded by them 'And lest I should be exalted through the abundance of revelations, there was given me a thorn the flesh, the messenger of Satan. (2 Cor. 12,7)

Man acquires also a confirmed faith by temptations, through experiencing divine help, when it is granted several times. And furthermore he is without fear and acquires courage by temptation, on account of the training he acquires.

Temptation is useful to every man. The virtuous are tempted in order that their riches may increase; the lax, in order that they may be preserved from injuries; the sleepy, in order that they may be armed with alertness; those that are afar off, that they may come nearer to God; the members of the household, that they may approach with freedom of speech.

A son that is not trained, cannot profit by the riches that are given to him from his father's house. Therefore God allows temptations and torment first, then He shows His gift. Glory to that Lord who by strong drugs brings us the delight of health. There is no one, to whom the time of exercise is not hard, and there is no one, to whom the time during which he is obliged to drink the potion of temptations is not bitter. But without this, a sound constitution cannot be obtained. Even to endure not of our own. How should a clay vessel endure the vehemence of the waters, if the divine fire had not hardened it? If we deign to ask in humbleness fervently and perseveringly, we shall receive everything.



**A man may seem to be silent, but in his heart is condemning others, he is babbling ceaselessly. There may be another who talks from morning till night and yet he is truly silent, that is, he says nothing that isn't profitable.**

**Abba Poimen the Great**

## Έτσι... Άρχισε Ο Πόλεμος Του Σαράντα

ΠΗΓΗ : «Χριστιανική», τεύχος 644, γράφει ο Πρωτοπρεσβ. Εὐάγγελος Σκορδάς, τ. Λυκειάρχης

**Μ**ια Κυριακή χαράματα, ξημερώματα Δευτέρας, πού ο ήλιος ό έλληνικός δίσταζε να προβάλλει, μη μαθευτεί στις γειτονίες, μήν άκουστέι στις ρουγες, πώς πόλεμο μάς κήρυξαν οι Ίταλοι του Ντουτσε, οι «όμόθρησκοί» μας άδελφοί.

Πράγματι, κάπως έτσι άρχισε ό πόλεμος του Σαράντα. Τά χαράματα μάς Κυριακής πρός Δευτέρα. Τή μουντή ώρα ένός φθινοπωριάτικου πρωινού, πού ό φιλήσυχος λαός μας κοιμόταν άκόμη τόν γλυκό ύπνο τής ειρήνης και ό ήλιος δέν είχε προλάβει να άνατείλει ζεστός και να φωτίσει τή γαλανή μας χώρα. Οι άνθρωποι ξαφνιασμένοι ξύπνησαν και κρεμάσθηκαν στα παράθυρα και στα μπαλκόνια. Άλλοι ξεχύθηκαν στους δρόμους και τις πλατείες να άκούσουν και να μάθουν, τί συνέβαινε. «Πόλεμος, πόλεμος», φώναζαν όλοι.

Τά φανταράκια μας με πίστη και προθυμία έπιστρατεύθηκαν και προχώρησαν πρός τά άλβανικά σύνορα. Σκληρότατοι οι άγώνες μέσα στο φοβερό κρύο και τά χιόνια του πρόωρου χειμώνα. Οι στρατιώτες μας μπόρεσαν να φθάσουν νικηφόρα στις ψηλές κορυφές τής Πίνδου και να διώξουν τόν έπιδρομέα. Γρήγορα έφθασαν στην πανέμορφη Κορυτσά και ή γαλανόλευκη σιγά-σιγά στήθηκε σε όλες τις πόλεις και τά χωριά τής Βορείου Ήπειρου. Η Βόρειος Ήπειρος για δεύτερη φορά έλευθερη. Σύσσωμος και ένωμένος ό Έλληνισμός με τή γενναιότητά του πλήγωσε τό φασιστικό τέρας του Μουσολίνι. Η προσβολή στην ίταμότητα του μεγαλαύχου και κυριευμένου από τό στείρο σύμπλεγμα τής ήγεμονίας είχε παγκόσμια άπήχηση. Ο πυρσός πού άναψε στην Πίνδο έγινε άπολλώνειο φώς, πού άπλώθηκε στα πέρατα τής γής και ένίσχυσε τους άγωνιζόμενους λαούς έναντίον του Φασισμού και του Ναζισμού. Τό μεγάλο θαύμα του Σαράντα είχε τις ρίζες του στην άρχαία Ελλάδα, στο Βυζάντιο, στο Εικοσιένα, στον Μακεδονικό Άγώνα.

Στην κρίσιμη αυτή καμπή του έλληνοϊταλικού πολέμου, κήρυξε τόν πόλεμο ή ναζιστική Γερμανία, για να υπερασπίσει τήν τρωθείσα άξιοπρέπεια του Μουσολίνι. Βέβαια, προηγουμένως, οι προτάσεις τής Γερμανίας πρός τόν τότε Πρωθυπουργό τής Ελλάδος ήσαν δελεαστικές. Η Ελλάδα θα κρατούσε τή Βόρειο Ήπειρο, άρκεί τά γερμανικά στρατεύματα έλευθερα να περνούσαν από τήν Ελλάδα. Και πάλι λέχθηκε νέο «Όχι» και δέν προδόθηκαν οι Σύμμαχοι.

Η άμυντική γραμμή Μεταξά στα βουλγαρικά σύνορα δέν έσπασε. Δέν λύγισε. Ο γερμανικός στρατός εισήλθε από τήν Κροατία και προχώρησε από τήν κοιλάδα του Άξιου στη Θεσσαλονίκη. Άκολούθησε μία σκληρή κατοχή. Ο έλληνικός λαός πείνασε, υπέφερε, κακοπάθησε, «έν φόνω μαχαίρας πολλοί άπέθανον». Ο πεινασμένος έλληνικός λαός, όσους περιπλανώμενους Άγγλους, Καναδούς, Αυστραλούς εύρισκε, τους περιέθαλπε με κίνδυνο τής ζωής του.

Ο πόλεμος τελείωσε. Η Ελλάδα με τόν άγώνα της βοήθησε τους Άγγλους να άπωθήσουν τους Γερμανοϊταλούς από τή

Βόρεια Άφρική. Στη Ρωσία δόθηκε ό χρόνος τής προετοιμασίας με σύμμαχο τό χειμώνα, πού έθραυσε τις γερμανικές μεραρχίες στο Στάλινγκραντ.

Οι μεγάλοι νικητές μετά τή νίκη έκαναν τή μοιρασιά. Στην άγωνισθείσα Ελλάδα γύρισαν τά νώτα. Η Βόρειος Ήπειρος παρέμεινε υπόδουλη σ' ένα σκληρό τυραννικό άλβανικό καθεστώς. Η Άγγλία όχι μόνο άρνήθηκε να έπιστρέψει τήν Κύπρο, αλλά με δολιχοδρομίες υπέκίνησε τήν τότε άνυποψίαστη Τουρκία, με άποτέλεσμα να υποδουλωθεί ή μισή Κύπρος στις όρδες του Άττίλα. Η Κύπρος μέχρι σήμερα παραμένει αιμάσσουσα. Μόνο τά Δωδεκάνησα παραχωρήθηκαν, και αυτά κατά κάποια συγκυρία, όταν τέλειωσε ή μοιρασιά. Η άχαριστία στο έπακρο.

Γιορτάζουμε και φέτος τό μεγάλο θαύμα του Σαράντα. Οι καρδιές μας άς τροφοδοτηθούν από τά μεγάλα ιδανικά του τότε Άγώνα και άς ύψωθούν στους σημερινούς χαλεπούς καιρούς. Και σήμερα ή ανθρωπότητα δοκιμάζεται ποικιλοτρόπως και μέσα στη σύγχρονη παγκοσμιοποίηση και ή Ελλάδα αντιμετωπίζει δυσκολίες. Ο Μαρξισμός κατέρρευσε, αλλά νέες έκσυγχρονιστικές ιδέες έμφανίσθηκαν, πού έπιζητούν τόν κλονισμό των έθνικών, θρησκευτικών και πολιτιστικών θεσμών μας. Καταναγκαστικοί νόμοι έπιβάλλουν τόν άφανισμό τής έθνικής και θρησκευτικής μας ταυτότητας. Η έλληνική παιδεία καταπίπτει με μία άντιπνευματική τεχνοκρατική νοοτροπία, χωρίς Θεό, χωρίς ιδέες, και κατά τήν έκφραση του Μακαριωτάτου μας, «άγκονάρι-άγκονάρι» γκρεμίζεται ό έθνικός μας πολιτισμός. Καταστάσεις δύσκολες και έπικίνδυνες.

Εμείς, οι Έλληνες Ορθόδοξοι Χριστιανοί, έμψυχωμένοι από τις ήθικές άξίες του '40, παραμένουμε άκοίμητοι στον δύσκολο δρόμο του καλού, του ωραίου, του ύψηλου και του άληθινού. Δέν λείπουν και σήμερα οι Έλληνες Χριστιανοί πού είναι σταθεροί και φωτισμένοι και μεταδίδουν γύρω τους τό φώς πού φέρουν μέσα τους. Τό έλληνικό και όρθόδοξο φώς. Και «δέν κατοκνούμε μακράν όδόν πορεύεσθαι». Άνατρέχοντες στο παρελθόν διδασκόμεθα, ότι τό ανθρωπιστικό αίτημα είναι αιώνιο και θα φανερωθεί, όσο γίνεται καθαρότερα, στη σύγχρονή του εμφάνιση με τήν προβολή τής έλληνορθόδοξης σκέψης, με μία άνανεωμένη έλληνική παιδεία με ανθρωπιστικό περιεχόμενο.



«Άν δέν υπήρχε ή άνδρεία και ή γενναιοψυχία των Έλλήνων, δέν γνωρίζουμε ποιό θα ήταν τό άποτέλεσμα του Β' Παγκοσμίου πολέμου.»

«Μετά τήν τελική νίκη και λύτρωση ή Ελλάδα θα πάρη όλα όσα τής ανήκουν, και θα ζήση υπερήφανα και ήρωικά μέσα στους νικητές.»

ΟΥΙΝΣΤΟΝ ΤΣΕΡΤΣΙΑ



## Πράγματι... Σώμα Και Αίμα Χριστού

ΠΗΓΗ: «Θαύματα και Αποκαλύψεις από την Θεία Λειτουργία», Εκδόσεις της Γερᾶς Μονῆς Παρακλήτου-Ωρωπού Ἀττικῆς

### Ὁ Πλανεμένος Ἀναχωρητῆς

ΚΑΠΟΙΟΣ ἀναχωρητῆς, ἀπὸ ἀμάθεια πιὸ πολὺ, δὲν ἤθελε νὰ παραδεχθεῖ πὼς ὁ ἅγιος Ἄρτος πὸν μεταλαμβάνουμε εἶναι τὸ Σῶμα τοῦ Κυρίου. Οἱ γέροντες τῆς Σκήτης, ὅταν τὸ ἔμαθαν, τὸν κάλεσαν καὶ τὸν κατήχησαν μὲ τὴν ὀρθὴ διδασκαλία τῆς Ἐκκλησίας γιὰ τὰ ἄχραντα Μυστήρια. Ἐκεῖνος ὅμως ἐπέμενε στὴν πλάνη του. Οἱ πατέρες τὸν ἄφησαν, ἀλλὰ προσευχήθηκαν νὰ τὸν φωτίσει ὁ Θεός, ὥστε νὰ καταλάβει τὴν ἀλήθεια.

Μία Κυριακὴ, ὁ ἀναχωρητῆς συμμετεῖχε στὴ Θεία Λειτουργία ἀπὸ τὸ ἅγιο βῆμα τοῦ ναοῦ τῆς Σκήτης. Τὴ στιγμὴ πὸν ὁ ἱερέας πῆρε στὰ χέρια του τὸ πρόσφορο γιὰ νὰ προσκομίσει, ὁ πλανεμένος μοναχὸς εἶδε κατάπληκτος ἓνα βρέφος ξαπλωμένο πάνω στὴν ἅγια τράπεζα. Κι ὅταν ἄρχισε νὰ διαμελίζει τὸν Ἄρτο φάνηκε ἅγιος ἄγγελος ἀπὸ τὸ θυσιαστήριο κρατώντας στὸ χέρι του ἓνα μαχαίρι. Συγχρόνως μὲ τὸν ἱερέα διαμέλισε κι αὐτὸς τὸ Θεῖο Βρέφος κι ἔχυσε τὸ Αἷμα Του στὸ ἅγιο Ποτήριο. Ὁ ἀναχωρητῆς ταραχθῆκε. Μὰ ὕστερα ἀπὸ λίγο, ὅταν πῆγε νὰ κοινωνήσει, συνέβη κάτι πιὸ φοβερό. Εἶδε μέσα στὸ ἅγιο Ποτήριο ἀνθρώπινη σάρκα βαμμένη στὸ αἷμα. Κλαίγοντας τότε ὁμολόγησε τὴν πλάνη του καὶ παρακάλεσε τὸν Κύριο νὰ σκεπάσει μὲ τὴ χάρη Του τὰ Θεῖα Μυστήρια, γιὰ νὰ τολμήσει νὰ κοινωνήσει. Πραγματικά, μέσα στὸ ἅγιο Ποτήριο εἶδε πάλι ψωμί καὶ κρασί, ἀπὸ τὰ ὁποῖα μετάλαβε εὐχαριστώντας τὸν Θεό.

### Ὁ Δύσπιστος Μοναχὸς

ΕΝΑΣ μοναχὸς πάλευε μὲ λογισμοὺς ἀμφιβολίας, γιὰ τὸ ἂν Τὰ Τίμια Δῶρα εἶναι πραγματικὰ Σῶμα καὶ Αἷμα Χριστοῦ ἢ ἀπλὰ σύμβολα καὶ τύποι. Οἱ ἄλλοι μοναχοί, ὅταν ἐνημερώθηκαν σχετικὰ, τὸν κάλεσαν σὲ μία Θεία Λειτουργία, στὴ διάρκεια τῆς ὁποίας προσεύχονταν ὅλοι θερμὰ νὰ τοῦ δεῖξει ὁ Θεός μὲ θαῦμα τὴν ἀλήθεια, γιὰ νὰ διώξει τοὺς λογισμοὺς τῆς ἀπιστίας. Μετὰ τὴν ἀπόλυση, ὁ ἀδελφὸς αὐτὸς διηγήθηκε στοὺς ἄλλους τὰ ἐξῆς:

«Ὅταν ὁ διάκονος ἀνέβηκε στὸν ἄμβωνα γιὰ νὰ διαβάσει τὸ Εὐαγγέλιο, εἶδα ν' ἀνοίγει ἡ στέγη τῆς Ἐκκλησίας. Μετὰ τὴν εὐχὴ τῆς προσκομιδῆς, εἶδα νὰ σχίζονται οἱ οὐρανοὶ καὶ νὰ κατεβαίνει φωτιὰ πάνω Στὰ Τίμια Δῶρα. Ὑστερα παρουσιάστηκε πλῆθος ἀγγέλων κι ἀνάμεσά τους ἓνα Παιδί. Μαζί τους κατέβηκαν ἄλλα δυὸ πρόσωπα μὲ ὁμορφιὰ ἀπερίγραπτη. Κατόπιν οἱ ἄγγελοι στάθηκαν κυκλικά γύρω ἀπὸ τὴν Ἁγία Τράπεζα, ἐνῶ τὸ Βρέφος ἐνθρονίστηκε πάνω σ' Αὐτήν. Ὅταν πλησίασαν οἱ ἱερεῖς γιὰ νὰ τεμαχίσουν τὸν Ἄρτο τῆς προθέσεως, εἶδα ἐκεῖνα τὰ δυὸ πρόσωπα νὰ πιάσουν τὸ Παιδί ἀπὸ τὰ χέρια καὶ τὰ πόδια, καὶ μ' ἓνα μαχαίρι νὰ τὸ σφάζουν, χύνοντας τὸ Αἷμα Του στὸ ἅγιο Ποτήριο. Στὴ συνέχεια ἔκοψαν Τὸ Σῶμα Του σὲ μικρὲς μερίδες, πὸν τις τοποθέτησαν πάνω στὰ τεμάχια τῶν ἄρτων.

Ἀμέσως τότε οἱ ἄρτοι μεταβλήθηκαν κι αὐτοὶ σὲ σάρκα. Στὸ «Μετὰ φόβου...», στοὺς ἀδελφοὺς πὸν πλησίαζαν, προσφέρονταν κομμάτια ἀπὸ σάρκα. Μόλις ὅμως ἔλεγαν «ἀμήν», γινόταν ἄρτος στὰ χέρια τους.

«Ὅταν πλησίασα κι ἐγώ, μοῦ δόθηκε σάρκα καὶ δὲν μποροῦσα νὰ μεταλάβω. Τότε ἐνίωσα μία φωνὴ νὰ ψιθυρίζει στ' αὐτί μου: "Ἄνθρωπε, γιατί δὲν μεταλαμβάνεις; Δὲν σοῦ προσφέρεται αὐτὸ ἀκριβῶς πὸν ζήτησες;" "Λυπήσου με, Κύριε, δὲν μπορῶ νὰ μεταλάβω σάρκα." "Μάθε λοιπὸν πῶς, ἂν μποροῦσε ὁ ἄνθρωπος νὰ μεταλάβει καθαρὴ σάρκα, τότε μέσα στὸ ἅγιο ποτήριο θὰ ὑπῆρχε σάρκα, ὅπως τὴν εἶδες ἐσύ. Ἐπειδὴ ὅμως δὲν μπορεῖ νὰ μεταλάβει κάτι τέτοιο, ὄρισε ὁ Θεός τοὺς ἄρτους τῆς προθέσεως. Ἄν λοιπὸν πίστευες ὅτι ὁ ἁγιασμένος αὐτὸς Ἄρτος εἶναι τὸ ἴδιο τὸ Σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, μετάλαβε αὐτὸ πὸν ἔχεις στὸ χέρι σου!" "Πιστεύω, Κύριε, ἀπάντησα τότε συντριμμένος." Ἀμέσως ἡ σάρκα πὸν κρατοῦσα ἔγινε πάλι Ἄρτος. Εὐχαρίστησα τὸ Θεὸ καὶ κοινωνήσα. Ἀφοῦ τελείωσε ἡ ἱερὴ μυσταγωγία, εἶδα ν' ἀνοίγει πάλι ἡ στέγη τοῦ ναοῦ καὶ νὰ ἀνεβαίνουν οἱ Ἀγγελικὲς δυνάμεις στὸν οὐρανό.»

### Ἡ Θεόσαρκη Μεριδα

ΔΩΔΕΚΑ μίλια ἐξω ἀπὸ τὴν Δαμασκὸ ἀσκήτευε ἓνας στυλίτης. Κάποτε σκανδαλίστηκε μ' ἓναν ἱερέα τῆς πόλης, γιὰ τὸν ὁποῖο πληροφορήθηκε πὼς ἔπεφτε σὲ σαρκικὴ ἁμαρτία. Σὲ λίγες μέρες ὁ ἱερέας αὐτὸς ἔτυχε νὰ πάει νὰ λειτουργήσει στὸ μοναστήρι, ὅπου βρισκόταν καὶ ὁ στυλίτης τοῦ ἀσκητῆ. Τὴν ὥρα τοῦ κοινωνικοῦ, ὁ στυλίτης κατέβασε σ' ἓνα καλάθι τὸ ἅγιο Ποτήριο πὸν εἶχε μαζί του, καὶ μέσα σ' αὐτὸ τοῦ ἔβαλαν τὰ ἄχραντα Μυστήρια. Ὅταν ὅμως ἀνέβασε πάνω τὴν θεία Κοινωνία, δίσταζε νὰ μεταλάβει. Ἐφερνε στὸ νοῦ του τὴν κατηγορία πὸν εἶχε ἀκούσει γιὰ τὸν λειτουργὸ ἱερέα, καὶ συλλογιζόταν: "Ἄραγε, ἔχει ἁγιαστεῖ αὐτὴ ἡ μερίδα; Ἐπιφοίτησε σ' αὐτὴ τὸ ἅγιο Πνεῦμα ἢ ἐμπόδισε τὸν ἐρχομὸ Του ἡ ἁμαρτία τοῦ λειτουργοῦ; Ἐτσι ὅπως εἶμαι σκανδαλισμένος μὲ τὸν ἱερέα, πρέπει νὰ μεταλάβω ἢ ὄχι;"

Ἐνῶ συλλογιζόταν αὐτὰ, ὁ Θεός οἰκονόμησε νὰ συμβεῖ κάτι φρικτό, γιὰ νὰ πληροφορηθεῖ ὁ στυλίτης καὶ συνάμα νὰ στηριχθεῖ κάθε χριστιανικὴ ψυχὴ. Τὴν ὥρα πὸν τεμαχίζονταν Τὸ Πανάγιο Σῶμα, πρὶν τὴν μετάληψη τοῦ λαοῦ, μία μερίδα κύλησε ἀπὸ τὸ δισκάριο κι ἔπεσε στὴν ἅγια τράπεζα, ὅπου μεταβλήθηκε σὲ σάρκα μπροστὰ στὰ μάτια ὅλων ὄσων βρισκόνταν ἐκεῖ. Ὁ λειτουργός, θαμπωμένος, δοκίμασε ν' ἀκουμπήσει καὶ νὰ ψηλαφίσει τὴν ἅγια μερίδα. Μόλις ὅμως τὴν ἄγγιξε, ἐκεῖνη κόλλησε στὸ δάχτυλό του σὰν ζωντανή, φρεσκοσφαγμένη σάρκα. Καὶ καθὼς τράβηξε τὸ χέρι του, ὑψώθηκε καὶ ἡ ἅγια μερίδα κολλημένη στὸ δάχτυλο. Ἀμέσως ἔσταξαν τρεῖς σταγόνες Αἷμα στὴν ἅγια τράπεζα, πὸν πότισαν τὸ πρῶτο καὶ δεῦτερο κάλυμμα κι ἔφτασαν μέχρι τὸ μάρμαρο. Ὅταν πληροφορήθηκε ὁ στυλίτης τὸ θαυμαστὸ γεγονός, μετάλαβε μὲ φόβο καὶ τρόμο τὴν ἅγια μερίδα πὸν τοῦ εἶχαν στείλει, καὶ ὁμολόγησε σ' ὅλους τὴ δύσπιστία του.

Ὁ ὁσῖος Ἀναστάσιος ὁ Σιναΐτης, πὸν διηγήθηκε τὴ

θαυμαστή αυτή ιστορία, υπήρξε αυτόπτης μάρτυρας του θαύματος. Αξιώθηκε να δει, να προσκυνήσει και να πάρει μαζί του ένα κομμάτι από τη θεόσαρκη μερίδα. Κάποτε βρέθηκε στα Ίεροσόλυμα, όπου συνάντησε ένα δαιμονισμένο. Με άδισταχτη πίστη του κρέμασε στο λαιμό, μέσα σε σακουλάκι, την άγια μερίδα, και σε μερικές μέρες ο άσθενής είχε θεραπευθεί.

### Η Εμφάνιση Τῆς Θεοτόκου

ΖΟΥΣΕ στη χώρα των Αλαμανών ένας ιερέας πολύ ένάρετος, ο Πελάγιος, που έτρεφε ξεχωριστή ευλάβεια στην Ύπεραγία Θεοτόκο. Ο διάολος όμως τον φθόνησε και του έσπειρε λογισμό άπιστίας για Τῆ Θεία Κοινωνία. «Πώς είναι δυνατόν!», σκεφτόταν, «να γίνονται τὸ ψωμί Σῶμα και τὸ κρασί Αἷμα Χριστοῦ!». Ἄπ' τοὺς λογισμοὺς αὐτοὺς έπεφτε σὲ μεγάλη θλίψη, ἀλλὰ δὲν τολμοῦσε νὰ συμβουλευθεῖ κανέναν ἄνθρωπο. Γι' αὐτὸ πρόστρεξε στὴν ἴδια τὴν Παναγία και τὴν παρακάλεσε νὰ τὸν πληροφορήσει σχετικά.

Κάποια μέρα λοιπόν, ἐνῶ λειτουργοῦσε, ὅταν ἔφτασε στὸ «Ἐξαιρέτως τῆς Παναγίας ἀγράντου...», ἐξαφανίστηκε ἀπὸ τὸ δισκάριο ὁ ἅγιος Ἄρτος. Ἐρεῦνησε ὁ Πελάγιος τριγύρω, ἀλλὰ δὲν τὸν βρῆκε. «Παναγία μου!» Φώναξε τρομαγμένος, «γνωρίζω ὅτι γιὰ τὴν ὀλιγοπιστία και τὴν ἀμφιβολία μου μὲ σιχάθηκε ὁ Χριστὸς κι ἔφυγε ἀπὸ μπροστά μου γιὰ νὰ μὴν κοινωνήσω, ὁ ἀνάξιος. Ἐσὺ ὅμως παρακάλεσέ Τον νὰ μὲ συγχωρήσει!»

Βλέπει τότε μπροστά στὴν ἅγια τράπεζα τὴν ὑπερένδοξη Βασίλισσα μὲ Τὸ Θεῖο Βρέφος στὴν ἀγκαλιά της νὰ τοῦ λέει: «Αὐτὸ τὸ Βρέφος εἶναι ὁ Ποιητὴς τῆς οἰκουμένης, ὁ Γιὸς και Λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ, Τέλειος Θεὸς και Τέλειος Ἄνθρωπος. Αὐτὸς πέθανε στὸ Σταυρὸ γιὰ τὴ σωτηρία τοῦ κόσμου και ἀναστήθηκε. Αὐτὸς και τώρα καθημερινὰ συγκαταβαίνει μὲ θαυμαστὸ τρόπο στὸ σχῆμα τοῦ ψωμοῦ και τοῦ κρασιοῦ, γιὰ τὴν πολλὴ ἀγάπη Του στοὺς ἀνθρώπους, και προσφέρεται σ' αὐτοὺς γιὰ τὸν ἁγιασμό τῆς ψυχῆς τους. Ψηλάφισέ Τον λοιπόν κι ἐρεῦνησε ἄφοβα, γιὰ νὰ διαπιστώσεις ὅτι πρόκειται γιὰ ἀληθινὴ θεωρία, ὅτι εἶναι σῶμα πραγματικὸ μὲ Σάρκα και Αἷμα, καθὼς Τὸν γέννησα. Ἔτσι ἀκριβῶς γίνονται ὁ Ἄρτος και ὁ Οἶνος ὅταν λειτουργεῖς. Ἐπειδὴ ὅμως ἡ ἀνθρώπινη φύση δὲν μπορεῖ νὰ φάει σάρκα ὠμὴ και νὰ πιεῖ Αἷμα, γι' αὐτὸ μὲ πάνσοφο τρόπο ὁ Παντοδύναμος προσφέρεται μὲ τὴ μορφή τοῦ ψωμοῦ και τοῦ κρασιοῦ, ὥστε νὰ μπορεῖ ὁ καθένας νὰ τὸν μεταλαμβάνει μὲ λαχτάρια και πόθο. Κοινώνησε λοιπόν κι ἐσὺ μὲ ευλάβεια και πίστη, γιατί ὁποῖος Τὸν παίρνει μέσα του ἄξια, γίνεται μέτοχος τῆς Θείας Δόξας Του.»

Μ' αὐτὰ τὰ λόγια ἡ Δέσποινα ἀπέθεσε τὸ Βρέφος στὴν Ἅγια Τράπεζα, κι ἀφοῦ Τὸ προσκύνησε ταπεινά, ἔγινε ἄφαντη. Τότε ὁ ιερέας πῆρε μὲ φόβο και χαρὰ στὰ χέρια του τὸ Θεῖο Βρέφος, Τὸ ἀσπάστηκε ευλαβικά και διαπίστωσε πὼς ἦταν πράγματι ἕνα ζωντανὸ βρέφος μὲ ἀληθινὴ σάρκα. Ὑστερα Τὸ ἀκούμπησε στὴν Ἅγια Τράπεζα, ἔπεσε στὴ γῆ και προσευχήθηκε μὲ δάκρυα: «Πιστεύω, Κύριε, και ὁμολογῶ πὼς Ἐσὺ εἶσαι ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, που γεννήθηκες

ἀπὸ τὴν ἀειπάρθενη Μαρία. Σ' εὐχαριστῶ γιὰ τὴ χάρη που ἀξιώθηκα σήμερα ὁ ἀνάξιος, και παρακαλῶ νὰ μου συγχωρέσεις τὴν παλιὰ μου δυσπιστία. Και τώρα ἀξίωσε με νὰ Σὲ κοινωνήσω ὄχι σὰν Βρέφος, ἀλλὰ σὰν Ἄρτος.» Ἀφοῦ προσευχήθηκε ἔτσι μὲ πίστη, σηκώνεται, και βλέπει μπροστά του τὸν Ἅγιο Ἄρτος ὅπως και πρὶν. Μετάλαβε μὲ εὐφρόσυνη, και συνέχισε σ' ὅλη του τὴ ζωὴ νὰ ἱεουργεῖ τὰ Θεῖα Μυστήρια μὲ φόβο Θεοῦ και βαθειὰ πίστη.



### ΓΙΑ ΝΑ ΜΗΝ ΞΕΧΝΑΜΕ...

Ἡ καρδιά συγχοσπαράζει. Πλὴν τί βλέπω; Σοβαρὰ νὰ σωπάσω μὲ προστάζει μὲ τὸ δάκτυλο ἡ θεά.

Κοιτάει γύρω εἰς τὴν Εὐρώπη τρεῖς φορές μ' ἀνησυχία? Προσηλώνεται κατόπι στὴν Ἑλλάδα, και ἀρχινᾷ:

«Παλληκάρια μου, οἱ πολέμοι γιὰ σᾶς ὄλοι εἶναι χαρά, και τὸ γόνα σας δὲν τρέμει στοὺς κινδύνους ἐμπροστά.

Ἄπ' ἐσᾶς ἀπομακραίνει κάθε δύναμη ἐχθρική, ἀλλὰ ἀνίκητη μιὰ μένει που τὲς δάφνες σᾶς μαδεῖ.

Μία, που ὅταν ὡσὰν λύκοι ξαναρχόστενε ζεστοί, κουρασμένοι ἀπὸ τὴ νίκη, ἄχ, τὸ νοῦ σᾶς τυρανεῖ.

Ἡ Διχόνοια που βαστάει ἕνα σκῆπτρο ἢ δολερὴ καθενὸς χαμογελάει, «πάρ' το», λέγοντας, «και σύ».

Κεῖο τὸ σκῆπτρο που σας δείχνει ἔχει ἀλήθεια ὠραία θωριά· μὴν τὸ πιάστε, γιατί ρίχνει εἰσὲ δάκρυα θλιβερά.

Ἀπὸ στόμα ὁποῦ φθονάει, παλληκάρια, ἄς μὴν 'πωθῆ, πὼς τὸ χέρι σας κτυπάει τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ τὴν κεφαλή.

Μὴν εἰποῦν στὸ στοχασμὸ τους τὰ ξένα ἔθνη ἀληθινά: «Ἐὰν μισοῦνται ἀνάμεσά τους δὲν τοὺς πρέπει ἐλευθεριά».

Διονύσιος Σολωμὸς  
«Ὑμνος Εἰς Τὴν Ἐλευθερίαν», Στίχοι 139-147



«Ρίξτε ἕνα βλέμμα στὸν μικρὸ κατάλογο τῶν ἔθνων που ὑπετάχθησαν ὑπὸ τοῦ Ἄξονα ἀπὸ τὸ 1938, και θὰ δῆτε ὅτι ἡ γεννεοψυχία τῶν Ἑλλήνων φωτίζει σὰν ἥλιος ἕνα σκοτεινὸ κόσμο.»

ΚΑΝΤΙΤΟΥΣ, Ἄγγλος συγγραφεὺς



## Ένα Θαύμα Στην Μικρά Ασία: Οι Τουρκόφωνοι Ρωμηοί

ΠΗΓΗ: «Τὰ Νειάτα», τεύχος 328, γράφει ὁ κ. Κων. Χολέβας, πολιτικός ἐπιστήμων.

Όγδόντα ἔνα χρόνια συμπληρώθηκαν ἐφέτος ἀπὸ τὴν γενοκτονία τοῦ Μικρασιατικοῦ Ἑλληνισμοῦ. Τὸ 1922 ὁ τουρκικὸς ὄχλος μὲ ὀδηγίες τοῦ Κεμάλ Ἀτατούρκ ἔκαψε τὴν Σμύρνη. Ἐφόνευσε, ἔκαψε καὶ ἐξεδίωξε κάθε τί τὸ Ἑλληνικό. Ὁ Μητροπολίτης Χρυσόστομος Καλαφάτης καὶ πολλοὶ ἄλλοι Ἐπίσκοποι καὶ ἄπλοιοι κληρικοὶ βρῆκαν μαρτυρικό θάνατο. Ὁ Ἑλληνισμὸς ξερριζώθηκε ὄχι μόνον ἀπὸ τὴν Σμύρνη, ἀλλὰ ἀπὸ ὀλόκληρη τὴν Μικρὰ Ἀσία, στὴν ὁποία ἀνεπτύχθη ὁ ἑλληνικὸς πολιτισμὸς ἐπὶ 28 αἰῶνες, ἀπὸ τὴν ἐποχὴ τοῦ Ὀμήρου. Τὸ 1923 ἡ Συνθήκη τῆς Λωζάνης ἐπεσφράγισε τὸν ξερριζωμὸ μὲ τὴν ἀνταλλαγὴ τῶν πληθυσμῶν. Ὅλοι οἱ Ὀρθόδοξοι Χριστιανοὶ ἀπὸ τὴν Μικρὰ Ἀσία καὶ τὸν Πόντο ἤλθαν πρόσφυγες στὴν Ἑλλάδα, ἐνῶ ὅλοι οἱ Μουσουλμάνοι τοῦ ἑλλαδικοῦ χώρου μετακινήθηκαν πρὸς τὴν σημερινὴ Τουρκία. Ἡ Συνθήκη προέβλεπε δυὸ ἐξαιρέσεις. Τὴν Ἑλληνικὴ Κοινότητα τοῦ Νομοῦ Κωνσταντινουπόλεως καὶ τῶν νήσων Ἴμβρου καὶ Τενέδου, ἡ ὁποία παρέμεινε στὴν Τουρκία καὶ δυστυχῶς σήμερα κινδυνεύει νὰ ἐξαφανισθεῖ διότι ὑπέφερε καὶ ὑποφέρει ἀπὸ πολλὰς διώξεις. Καὶ τὴν Μουσουλμανικὴ μειονότητα τῆς Θράκης ποὺ παρέμεινε στὴν Ἑλλάδα καὶ ἀποτελεῖται ἀπὸ Τουρκογενεῖς, Πομάκους καὶ Ἀθιγγάνους.

Ἐπὶ πολλοὺς αἰῶνες στὰ χῶματα τῆς Μικρᾶς Ἀσίας περπάτησαν Ἅγιοι Πατέρες τῆς Ὀρθόδοξης Ἐκκλησίας μας. Ἐκεῖ διδάξε ὁ Ἀπόστολος Παῦλος καὶ ἐκεῖ βρίσκονται οἱ ἐπτὰ Ἐκκλησίες ποὺ ἀναφέρει ὁ Ἰωάννης στὴν Ἀποκάλυψη. Ἐκεῖ μαρτύρησαν ὁ Ἅγιος Πολύκαρπος καὶ ὁ Ἅγιος Γεώργιος, ἐκεῖ ἔλαμψαν οἱ μορφές τῶν Μεγίστων Φωστήρων τῆς Θεολογίας ὅπως ὁ Μέγας Βασίλειος, ὁ Γρηγόριος ὁ Ναζιανζηνός, ὁ Γρηγόριος Νύσσης. Ἐκεῖ στὰ δύσκολα χρόνια τῆς Τουρκοκρατίας συνετελέσθη καὶ ἓνα θαῦμα: Ἡ ἐπιβίωση τῆς ἑλληνικότητας τῶν Ρωμηῶν ποὺ ἀναγκάστηκαν νὰ μιλοῦν τουρκικά. Ρωμηοὶ λεγόντουσαν οἱ Ὀρθόδοξοι Ἕλληνες στὴν περίοδο ἐκείνη γιὰ νὰ θυμοῦνται τὴν Νέα Ρώμη -- Κωνσταντινούπολη καὶ τὴν Ρωμανία, ὅπως ἦταν τὸ πραγματικὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Βυζαντινοῦ κράτους. Στὴν περιοχή τῆς Καππαδοκίας, στὸ κέντρο τῆς Μικρᾶς Ἀσίας καὶ τῆς σημερινῆς Τουρκίας, τοὺς τέθηκε ἀπὸ τοὺς Ὀθωμανοὺς Τούρκους τὸ δίλημμα: Ἡ θὰ ἀλλάξετε τὴν Πίστη σας ἢ θὰ ἀλλάξετε τὴν γλῶσσα σας. Χωρὶς δισταγμὸ καὶ ἀφοῦ συμβουλευθῆκαν τοὺς ἱερεῖς τοὺς ἀπάντησαν: Τὴν γλῶσσα μας τὴν ἀλλάζουμε, ἀλλὰ τὴν Ὀρθόδοξη Πίστη μας δὲν τὴν προδίδουμε! Ἔτσι χιλιάδες Ρωμηοὶ τῆς Καππαδοκίας ἄρχισαν νὰ μιλοῦν τουρκικά καὶ νὰ ξεχνοῦν τὰ ἑλληνικά. Μετὰ ἀπὸ μερικὲς γενιές τὰ ἑλληνικά δὲν τὰ γνώριζε κανεὶς. Μιλοῦσαν μόνον τουρκικά καὶ στὸν γραπτὸ λόγο ἔγραφαν τὴν τουρκικὴ γλῶσσα μὲ ἑλληνικοὺς χαρακτήρες. Αὐτὸ τὸ βλέπουμε σήμερα σὲ μερικὰ Εὐαγγέλια ποὺ σώθηκαν ἀπὸ τὴν ἐποχὴ

ἐκείνη καὶ τὰ ἔφεραν στὴν Ἑλλάδα οἱ πρόσφυγες. Πρόκειται γιὰ τὴν λεγόμενη «καραμανλίδικη» γραφὴ καὶ ἓνας ἀπὸ αὐτοὺς ποὺ διέσωσαν τέτοια βιβλία τὸ 1922 ἦταν ὁ Ἅγιος Ἀρσένιος ἀπὸ τὰ Φάρασα τῆς Καππαδοκίας.

Κι ὅμως οἱ τουρκόφωνοι αὐτοὶ Μικρασιάτες δὲν τούρκεψαν! Δὲν ἄλλαξαν ἐθνικὴ συνείδηση! Παρὰ τὴν ἀλλαγὴ τῆς γλώσσας κρατήθηκαν γερὰ μέσα στὸν κορμὸ τοῦ Ἑλληνισμοῦ, στὸ Γένος τῶν Ρωμηῶν. Τὸ θαῦμα αὐτὸ ὀφείλεται στὴν Ἐκκλησία. Ἐμειναν Ὀρθόδοξοι, γι' αὐτὸ παρέμειναν καὶ Ἕλληνες! Ἐνῶ στὸ σπῆτι τους δὲν μιλοῦσαν οὔτε μία λέξη ἑλληνικά, στὴν Ἐκκλησία ὅλες οἱ Ἀκολουθίες ἐτελοῦντο μόνον στὴν ἑλληνικὴ γλῶσσα. Εἶναι συγκινητικὸ νὰ διαβάσει κάποιος τὶς διηγήσεις ἀνθρώπων ποὺ ἔζησαν τὰ γεγονότα. Ὁ ἱερεὺς λειτουργοῦσε στὰ ἑλληνικά, δηλαδὴ σὲ μία γλῶσσα τὴν ὁποία δὲν καταλάβαινε! Οἱ τουρκόφωνοι ψάλτες ἔψελναν στὰ ἑλληνικά, γλῶσσα ποὺ οὔτε αὐτοὶ καταλάβαιναν! Καὶ τὸ πολυάριθμο ἐκκλησίασμα παρακολουθοῦσε ὑπομονετικά ἐπὶ ὧρες τὶς Ἀκολουθίες στὰ ἑλληνικά, δηλαδὴ μία γλῶσσα ποὺ οὔτε αὐτοὶ καταλάβαιναν. Ὅλοι ἦταν τουρκόφωνοι, ἀλλὰ μέσω τῆς θείας Λατρείας ζοῦσαν τὴν σύνδεση μὲ τὴν ρίζα τους, τὴν Ἱστορία τους, τὴν Παράδοσή τους. Καὶ ἔτσι διατηρήθηκε ἡ ἐθνικὴ τους ταυτότητα. Ὅχι μόνον παρέμειναν συνειδητοὶ Ρωμηοί, ἀλλὰ ἔδωσαν καὶ σημαντικὲς μορφές στὴν Ἐκκλησία μας, ὅπως ὁ προαναφερθεὶς Ἅγιος Ἀρσένιος, ὁ γνωστὸς σὲ ὅλους μας μακαριστὸς π. Παῖσιος ὁ Ἄγιορείτης, ὁ προσφάτως ἀποθανὼν θεολόγος π. Ἰωάννης Ρωμανίδης κ.ά.

Ὅσο κι ἂν προσπαθήσουμε εἶναι δύσκολο νὰ ἐξηγήσουμε λογικά τὸ θαῦμα. Πῶς νὰ μὴ θαυμάσουμε τὴν ἐπιμονὴ τῶν Τουρκοφώνων τῆς Καππαδοκίας νὰ χρησιμοποιοῦν στὴν Θεία Λειτουργία τὰ ἑλληνικά, ἂν καὶ δὲν τὰ καταλάβαιναν; Πῶς νὰ μὴ ἐντυπωσιασθοῦμε ἀπὸ τὰ ὑπόγεια ρεύματα ποὺ συνδέουν τὴν Ὀρθόδοξη Ἐκκλησία μὲ τὴν συνείδηση τοῦ Γένους, μὲ τὴν ἐθνικὴ ταυτότητα τῶν Νεοελλήνων; Πῶς νὰ μὴ βροντοφωνάξουμε τὸ ἱστορικὸ αὐτὸ γεγονὸς γιὰ νὰ τὸ ἀκούσουν ἐκεῖνοι οἱ ἀμφισβητίες ποὺ δὲν θεωροῦν τὴν Ὀρθόδοξη στοιχεῖο τῆς ἐθνικῆς μας ἰδιοπροσωπίας; Μόνον ἡ Ὀρθόδοξη Ἐκκλησία μπόρεσε νὰ κρατήσει τὸ πατριωτικὸ συναίσθημα αὐτῶν τῶν ταλαίπωρων ὁμοεθνῶν μας μέσα στὸ σκοτάδι τῶν διωγμῶν καὶ τῶν καταπιέσεων! Τί ἀλλὰ παραδείγματα θέλουν γιὰ νὰ πεισθοῦν οἱ μόνιμοι ἀντιρρησίες;

Ἐμεῖς πάντως δὲν καταγράφουμε τὴν ἱστορία γιὰ νὰ μεταπίσουμε τοὺς πάσης φύσεως ἀμφισβητίες. Ὅσοι ἂν αὐτοὺς εἶναι καλοπροαίρετοι ἄς ἀντικρίσουν κατὰματα τὶς ἱστορικὲς ἀλήθειες. Ἐμεῖς καταγράφουμε τὴν ἱστορία πρωτίστως γιὰ νὰ ξέρουμε ποῦ πατᾶμε καὶ ποῦ πηγαινόμαστε. Γιὰ νὰ γνωρίζουμε ποιὲς εἶναι οἱ πηγές «ὑδατος ἁλομένου εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον», οἱ ὁποῖες κράτησαν ὄρθιο τὸν Ἑλληνισμὸ σὲ ἐποχές κατακτῆσεων, διωγμῶν καὶ ὑποδουλώσεων. Καὶ γιὰ νὰ μπορέσουμε νὰ δώσουμε ἓνα μέλλον στὸ παρελθόν μας. Πιὸ Ὀρθόδοξο καὶ πιὸ Ἑλληνικό. Ποῦ σημαίνει πιὸ ἀνθρώπινο καὶ πιὸ Οἰκουμενικό.



## THE PROPHECIES OF STARETS LAVRENTII (+1950), PART II OF II

*From 'Prepodobnyistarets' ["The Venerable Elder"], originally published in the May 1996 issue of the Russian Orthodox newspaper 'Zhizn Vechnaya' ["Eternal Life"]*

**S**tarets (Elder) Lavrentii was a Schema-Archimandrite monk at the Chernigov-Trinity Convent. With his illuminating gift of clairvoyance, he served as a guide for hundreds of monastics and laity struggling to find their way through the manifest entanglements of early 20<sup>th</sup> century life. We are presenting Part II of his prophecies, as published within the aforementioned source.

### A FRIGHTFUL TIME

“Not long before antichrist is enthroned, even those churches that have been closed will be repaired and restored -- not only their exteriors, but their interiors, as well. They will gild the cupolas of bell-towers and cathedrals, alike; and when they have completed the main one, then will the time have come for antichrist to be enthroned. Pray that the Lord might lengthen that time, that we might be encouraged and sustained; it is a frightful time that awaits us. The restoration of the cathedrals will continue up to the very moment that antichrist is crowned. We will have unprecedented splendour,” Starets Lavrentii would say.

“Do you see how craftily and insidiously all this is being prepared?” Batiushka would continue, tearfully. “All the cathedrals will be exceedingly splendid, as never before, but you must not attend these cathedrals, for the Bloodless Sacrifice of Jesus Christ will not be offered there. Remember, there will be churches, but Orthodox Christians must not attend them, as the entire ‘synagogue of Satan’ (Apoc. 2.9) will be gathered there! I repeat yet again that one must not attend those cathedrals; there will be no grace in them!”

### CONCERNING ANTICHRIST

“Antichrist will be crowned king in a splendid rebuilt temple in Jerusalem, with the clergy and the Patriarch of Russia participating [in his coronation]. There will be free ingress and egress from Jerusalem for everyone, but do not attempt to go there then, as everything will have been done so as to ‘deceive.’ (Matt. 24.24) He [antichrist] will be exceedingly learned in all satanic wiles and will show great signs. The entire world will hear and see him. He will ‘stamp’ his people with satan’s seal; he will hate Orthodox Russia,” the venerable Starets Lavrentii of Chernigov would say.

### THERE IS NO NEED TO BE AFRAID

To a certain deacon who is yet alive, but who is now quite aged, Batiushka Lavrentii forthrightly said:

“You will live to see the time when antichrist comes to power. Do not be afraid, but tell everyone that this is he -- and that there is no need to be afraid! There will be a war, and where

it passes, there will be none left alive! But, prior to that time, the Lord will send minor ailments to the weak and they will die, for during antichrist’s time there will no longer be any death. The Third World War will not be for repentance, but for annihilation; but the Lord will leave the strongest alive, that they might confront him [antichrist].

### THE SUPREME “PEACE-MAKER”

The venerable Starets Lavrentii of Chernigov spoke frequently of antichrist, saying:

“There will come a time when they will fight and fight, and a world war will break out. And in the very thick of it, they will say, ‘Let us choose for ourselves a single king over all the inhabited earth.’ And they will elect him! They will elect antichrist as the universal king and supreme ‘peace-maker’ of the world. It will be necessary to listen carefully; it will be necessary to exercise caution! As soon as they begin to vote for one single man in all the world, know that it is none other than himself, and that it is forbidden [to Orthodox Christians] to vote [for him].”

### ALL [MY] WORDS ARE TRUE!

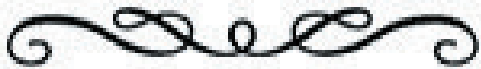
Batiushka Lavrentii was sitting in the choir-loft, speaking of the last days and of the end of this world, relating the details of antichrist’s enthronement over those who have fallen away from God... And priests Nikifor, Grigorii and Vasiliu Ganzin objected to Fr. Lavrentii that he had also spoken differently concerning these things. But he replied to them: “Fathers and brothers, there is one thing that you neither know nor understand; I speak not only of Russia, but of the whole world! All my words concerning future events are true, because the Holy Spirit has revealed them to me by [His] grace.”

### FOR A SHORT WHILE

Schema-Archimandrite Feofan related that Batiushka Lavrentii would joyfully say, with a smile: “The Russian people will repent of deadly sins: that they allowed ... [antichristian] impiety to hold sway in Russia; that they did not defend God’s Anointed Tsar, the Orthodox churches and monasteries, and all that is holy and sacred in Russia. They despised piety and came to love demonic impiety. But there will be a spiritual upheaval! And Russia, together with all the Slavic nations and lands, will constitute a mighty Tsardom. She will be governed by an Orthodox Tsar, by God’s Anointed One. Because of him, all schisms and heresies will vanish away in Russia. There will be no persecution of the Orthodox Church. The Lord will have mercy on Holy Russia because the dreadful time preceding that of antichrist has already taken place in her. Even antichrist himself will fear the Russian Orthodox Tsar - Samoderzhets [Tsar - Autocrat]. But all the other nations, save only Russia and the Slavic lands, will be ruled by antichrist and will undergo all the horrors and torments written of in Holy Scripture. In Russia, however, there will be rejoicing and a blossoming of faith -- but only for a short while, for the Dread Judge will come to try both the living and the dead.”

### CONCERNING ANTICHRIST'S PERSON IN THE HOLY PLACE

“Blessed and thrice-blessed is the man who will not desire to do so and, hence, will not see the God-abominated person of antichrist. Whosoever will see him and hear his blasphemous words promising all earthly blessings, the same will be seduced and will go forth to worship him. And they will perish, along with him, as far as eternal life is concerned; they will burn in eternal fire!” We asked the venerable one, “How shall this be?” And he answered us with tears, [saying]: “The abomination of desolation will stand in the holy place and will show-forth the foul seducers of the world who, working false miracles, will deceive all such men as have fallen away from God. And, after them, antichrist will appear! The entire world will see him at one and the same time.” To the question “Where in the holy place -- in church?” venerable Lavrentii said; “Not in church, but in the home! Beforetimes, a table used to stand in the corner wherein the holy icons were. Then, however, that space will be occupied by seductive instruments for the deception of men. Many who have departed away from the Truth will say, ‘we need to watch and hear the news.’ And it is in the news that antichrist will appear; and they will accept him.”



### SANCTIFIED SIN

By Charley Reese, August 13, 2003

The confirmation by the Episcopal Church of a practicing homosexual as bishop of New Hampshire is just one more example of the deconstruction of Christianity by people determined to have the benefits of both sin and salvation.

The scriptural condemnation of homosexual behavior is explicit and unavoidable. The fact that the Rev. Gene Robinson paraded around the convention with his partner on his arm says about everything you would want to know about liberal Episcopalians.

The problem causing the demise of Christianity is wider than these liberal Episcopalians. The basic cause is what I call cafeteria Christians. They pass along the line of Christian scripture, pick up what they like and ignore what would inconvenience them. There's no doubt that many modern so-called Christians find both chastity and the condemnation of greed mighty inconvenient.

To the liberal, though, nothing is more inconvenient and repellent than the prospect of standing up against the latest fashions and cultural aberrations. Had the liberals been born in another time, they would have tripped over each other in a rush to get on the bandwagon of the Roman emperor. Martyrs they would never be.

C.S. Lewis summed up the situation years ago: “Christianity is a religion. To earn the name ‘Christian,’ one must believe that Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary, performed miracles,

was crucified and rose from the dead. If you don't believe that, then the whole religion is a fraud. Stripped of its divinity, all you have left is a mishmash of altruistic maxims that are by no means unique or original.”

The problem is that the only source of information on these divine aspects of Jesus is in the Scriptures. If you take the position of modernists that the Scriptures are only partly true and are not divinely inspired, then, of course, you undermine the divinity of Jesus and therefore destroy the religion.

A friend of mine who amassed 400 hours of college credits while majoring in scotch [*pondering the world*] once remarked that nearly all the atheists and agnostics in the philosophy department planned to go into the Christian ministry. Their explanation was simple: Where else could a guy with a doctorate in philosophy knock down a six-figure salary? That in part explains the gradual destruction of Christianity.

Christianity, of course, has been under steady and persistent attack in the modern age by both secularists and its traditional enemies. Except for Catholics, it appears to be as dead as Hector in Western Europe. All of those beautiful cathedrals are mostly empty, except for tourists.

In America, of course, some of the evangelical cults have both politicized and militarized the religion, preaching hate and intolerance and leading the cheers for warmongers. Nothing could more blatantly contradict the basic teachings of Christianity.

I heard one of the liberal Episcopalians say that if you relied on scripture, you'd have to condone slavery. That is false. Christian scripture neither condones nor condemns slavery. It merely instructs slaves to be good servants and masters to be good masters. It would do modern Christians well to reread their Christian Bible and see if they find anywhere in it a condemnation of the Roman Empire or any of its institutions or practices.

The answer is you won't. Nor will you find any admonitions to lobby the Roman Senate or make any other efforts to reform society. Christianity is directed to the individual. Politicizing Christianity is just one of many modern heresies. So, too, is the effort to turn it into a social activist organization.

The one bright spot is that many people are increasingly turning to the Orthodox Church. There you will find an unadulterated Christianity pretty much as it was practiced in the days of the apostles. It doesn't matter if the sign on the church says Greek or Serb or Russian or Antioch. They are all the same Orthodox Church. I warn you, though — the real religion is not for hedonists.



The knowledge of correct dogmas does not suffice for our salvation, but an excellent life is also needed.

Saint John Chrysostom

## APOPHTHEGMS BY THE GOD-INSPIRED ST. ISAAC THE SYRIAN, PART 4

*SOURCE: From the book "475 Apophthegms by the God-Inspired St. Isaac the Syrian," pp. 16-20, published by Orthodox Kypseli, translated from the Greek by George Karras.*

### 9th Lesson

(continued from our previous issue)

88. Nobody hates, reproaches or despises a humble person. Christ loves him and he is loved by all. He loves everybody and everybody wants him around. The wise man and the teacher quiet down around a humble person and everybody pays attention to him. He is brief and concise. His words are sweeter than honeycomb and all consider him God-like, even if he lacks education and his appearance is despicable. Whoever despises a humble person blasphemes God Himself. The beasts are tamed by him because they sense in him the fragrance of Adam.

89. A humble person considers himself sinful, worthless and despicable. He perceives the snakes as if they were grasshoppers. He draws near people who look out for him, as if he was approaching the Lord. Even the malice and vice of the demons fades and withers away in front of a humble person. This is the grandeur of humility and the strength which the saints receive.

90. Is it possible for a man to become humble? Yes, through the strength of the Immaculate Mysteries which perfect a person, just as in the case of the blessed apostles through "tongues of fire" on Pentecost, and through the perfection of all the virtues.

91. Blessed is the person who recognizes his weaknesses, as this constitutes the foundation of every virtue.

### 10th Lesson

92. Nobody is capable of recognizing his own weaknesses unless he succumbs to spiritual and physical temptations. It is then that he prays, he is crushed and gains humility.

93. Spiritual temptations are: a) lack of faith, b) blasphemy, c) pride, d) open war with the devil, and e) anger and wrath. Physical temptations are: a) illnesses of the body, and b) hardships for the love of God.

94. God loves the humble person as much as He loves the Seraphim.

95. When the heart is humbled, God's mercy surrounds her and is filled with pleasure and delight. It is then that she stops praying with difficulty and starts praying with joy.

96. When we approach God (i.e., Holy Communion) with longing, yearning and desire, God draws near us through His Gifts and never withdraws His Grace for as long as we remain humble.

97. A person that does not know his own weaknesses lacks humility. He who lacks humility is deprived of perfection. He who lacks perfection is always dreadful because he has no dependency on God. Thus, it is for our benefit that God permits temptations.

98. The person who is free of worldly cares and fully dedicated to God lays all of his hopes correctly and wisely on God.

99. He who goes through life in sin has no right to hope in God's help when the need arises unless he fully and truly repents.

### 11th Lesson

100. Do not attempt to "hold onto winds with your palm," in other words, pursue acquisition of faith without deeds.

101. Do not be deluded; toil in the name of God and sweat in your work, for the Lord's commandments are preceded by hope in God. If you are a believer, it is good. However, faith in God requires good deeds, and our hope in God is apparent through our sufferings on the behalf of virtues.

102. "I am with you in your afflictions and sorrow and I thus render my help to the just person and glorify him, granting him long life and revealing the salvation of his soul."

103. A soul that loves God finds rest and comfort only in the things that have to do with God. In order to unite with God, you must release from within yourself every external bond that you have with the materialism of this world.

104. Never praise a person who seeks to hear much, enjoys saying much and whose eyes wander all over the place, even when he is experiencing bodily afflictions. In other words, he does not take seriously the message that God is giving him.

105. Joy follows hardship in the name of God. Endure contempt with gladness so that you may attain boldness with God. The person that knowingly removes himself from the vainglory of this world is able to comprehend the glory of the future life.

106. It is a great virtue to forgive the wrongdoings of those who have offended you. It is an equally great virtue to endure injustice and act mercifully towards those who have treated you unjustly.

107. Honor the all-night vigil with spiritual deeds, and your soul will find consolation. Insist quietly on the study of the Holy Scriptures, and you will admire God. Guard yourself from small faults so that you do not commit great ones. How is it possible for a person seeking human glory to have humble thoughts? Whoever seeks human glory is not humble.

### 11th Lesson

108. The libertine has neither a humble mind (nous) nor a pure heart and satisfies his hunger with the food of the beasts and not of the angels. The humble one is temperate, sober, modest and timid. As far as the vain and conceited person, he is a servant of harlotry.

109. Love poverty. Take care of your soul, withdrawing from the crowds of people. Love humble clothes because a person who adorns himself with fancy clothing is prideful.

110. It is good for you to theologize about God; it is better, however, to cleanse yourself for God.

111. Many were those who, although with ill souls, plummeted into the sea of humanity to heal the souls of others and thus ended up losing their own souls. This was the result of their becoming impassioned, venomous and spiteful and thus spiritually dead.



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The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Editor or the Brotherhood of St. POIMEN

## THINK ABOUT IT!

**How is it** that a \$20 bill looks so big when you take it to church, but so small when you take it to the mall?

**How is it** that a couple of hours spent at church seem so long, but how short they are when watching a movie?

**How is it** that we get thrilled when a game goes into extra innings, but we complain when a sermon is longer than usual?

**How is it** that we find it hard to read a chapter in the Bible, while we find it so easy to read 100 pages of a best-selling novel?

**How is it** that people want to get a front seat at any game or concert, but insist on standing at the back of the church during the services?

**How is it** that we need two or three weeks' advance notice to fit a church event into our schedule, but we can adjust our schedule for other events at the last moment?

**How is it** that people find it difficult to learn a simple gospel well enough to tell others, while these same people have no problem understanding and repeating gossip?

**How is it** that we follow our doctor's orders, but disregard what our priest tells us?

**How is it** that we spend hours and search for the best doctor when our body aches yet we neglect to look for a spiritual father as our soul suffers?

**How is it** that everyone wants to go to heaven, provided they do not have to believe, or to think, or to say, or to do anything?

## WHEN...

**When** you are forgotten or neglected and you don't hurt with the insult, but your heart is happy and your lips are constantly praising God -- **that is dying to self.**

**When** your advice is disregarded, your opinions ridiculed, and you refuse to let anger rise in your heart, and take it all in patient, loving silence -- **that is dying to self.**

**When** you lovingly and patiently bear disorder, irregularity, tardiness, and annoyance... and endure it as Christ endured it -- **that is dying to self.**

**When** you never care to refer to yourself in conversation or record your own good works, or itch for praise after an accomplishment, when you can truly love to be unknown yet search for ways to be charitable to your neighbor... **that is dying to self.**

**When** you can see your brother or sister prosper and can honestly rejoice with him, and feel no envy even though your needs are greater -- **that is dying to self.**

**When** you are content with any food, any offering, any raiment, any climate or any society -- **that is dying to self.**

**When** you can take correction, when you can humbly submit inwardly as well as outwardly, with no rebellion or resentment rising up within your heart -- **that is dying to self.**

**When** you preoccupy yourself with prayers and think of yourself as inferior to all creatures -- **that is dying to self.**

...And rising with Christ.

# Orthodox Heritage

So therefore, brethren, persevere, and grasp the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or by our epistle [2 Thess. 2:15]

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Ἄρα οὖν, ἀδελφοί, στήκετε, καὶ κρατεῖτε τὰς παραδόσεις ἃς ἐδιδάχθητε, εἴτε διὰ λόγου εἴτε δι' ἐπιστολῆς ἡμῶν [Θεσσ. Β' 2:15]

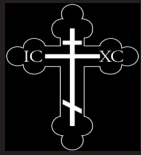
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Brotherhood of St. Poimen

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## THE SEAT OF MOSES ITS POWERS AND PERILS

SOURCE: [http://www.st\\_annas.org/Articles/bymonth/april00/Seat\\_of\\_Moses.htm](http://www.st_annas.org/Articles/bymonth/april00/Seat_of_Moses.htm)

*Editor's Note: Due to its length, we are presenting an edited version of this outstanding paper. The unedited version will be posted on our website.*

“**W**hat can we do? These are our bishops. We know that they have betrayed Orthodoxy and that they are breaking the Holy Canons that tell us that we must avoid all prayers with the heterodox. We know that they believe in the Anglican Branch Theory and practice ‘eucharistic hospitality,’ and that they preach ‘Marxist Christianity,’ and that their joys and sorrows are one with their theistic overlords. But what can we do? Willingly or unwillingly one is forced to remain with the hierarchy that has been given us, for without a bishop there is no Church. We have to obey our bishops, don’t we?”

Orthodox Christians are duty bound to have Orthodox bishops. They are obliged to obey their bishops only if their bishops obey Holy Tradition, as it is embodied in the Holy Scriptures, the Holy Canons and the teachings of the Church Fathers. If the bishops are not obedient to the Church, we are not obliged to be obedient to them. Indeed, how can one demand obedience to disobedience? Why should one show reverence to irreverence?

The Orthodox Church has criteria by which the Orthodoxy of all—bishops, clergy and lay people alike is evaluated. These criteria are the Holy Scriptures and the Holy Tradition, as it is expressed in the Holy Canons and writings of the Saints of God and Church Fathers. As a result, there is no room here either for anarchy, or for despotism. There is no danger of slipping into dictatorial papism or into free-for-all protestantism.

Our Orthodox bishops know exactly

where they stand and they know they must stand there correctly or they will have to answer to God and to the people of God. At their ordination to the episcopacy, they make three solemn declarations and vows before God and the Orthodox faithful. In the first declaration, the candidate recites the Creed wherein, among other things, he declares his belief not in the Anglican Branch Theory, but in the Undivided Church which is “One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic.” He professes that the Holy Spirit proceeds “from the Father”—not “from the Father and the Son” as the heretical denominations aver. In the second declaration he pronounces the Orthodox Catholic faith regarding the Person of the Son of God, and here he denounces the doctrines of Sables, Arius, Nestorius, Eutyches, Dioscorus and all the other Monophysites and Monothelites. In the third declaration, he professes the Orthodox Faith concerning the Holy Trinity, adding also the words, “I believe also in the One, Catholic and Apostolic Church’s traditions and interpretations concerning God and things divine.” Furthermore, he denounces those who do not accept the holy icons as the Church has accepted them. And at the end of the declaration, he states, “I anathematize and openly proclaim with a great voice: To every heretic anathema, to all heretics, anathema.”

Of course, like every other mortal, bishops too have failings. But, like all other mortals, they too struggle with their weaknesses and try as best as they can to overcome them. Despite the fact that they too have human flaws, as long as they uphold and defend and teach the Orthodox Faith, they are being faithful to the confession of faith and the vows that they made at their ordination. We revere our bishops because, though mortals and, therefore, possessing human failings, they have taken upon themselves the heavy task

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Orthodox Heritage may, at times, bring up issues or present articles that some consider controversial. Such material is presented so that a distinction is made between salvation and the 20th century heresy of ecumenism. These are confusing times for the Orthodox faithful, and political correctness must be sacrificed so that His TRUTH be brought forth.

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of: (1) defending and propagating the Holy Orthodox Faith. (2) striving to cultivate an increase in the piety and fervor for God of the flock with which they have been entrusted. and (3) seeking by all means to increase that flock. They are the living icons of Christ and as such, it is their duty to rightly divide the word of truth and to observe and uphold the Holy Canons, to maintain and extend that Truth, and to see to it that their flock does the same.

Granted that not all bishops are saints, and perhaps a few are totally unworthy of their calling, what does Our Saviour teach us in regard to this point? Our Lord and God taught us that those religious leaders who do not observe the laws of God stand convicted of hypocrisy, like the scribes and pharisees of old. Nevertheless, as long as they continue to teach us the law of God—even though they themselves do not observe it—we are to obey them. Our Saviour said:

*"The scribes and pharisees sit in Moses' seat: all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye according to their works: for they say, and do not."* [Mat. 23:2]

Here too, in our Saviour's words, we find the key to understanding the difference between human sin and blasphemous heresy: **Sin is a transgression of the Gospel's precepts. Heresy, on the other hand, is an alteration of those precepts.**

So, as long as our hierarchs sit in the seat of Moses, the Prophets, the Apostles, the Church Fathers, and Saints and continue to teach the Orthodox faith correctly and without alteration, we are to obey them, even though they themselves, perhaps, are not in order personally. On the other hand, if they openly and without shame teach heresy and change the teachings that have been delivered unto us by the Saints of God—then we **are not under any obligation whatsoever to listen to them or to obey them.** They no longer sit in the seat of Moses.

What, then, should one do if one is faced with the possibility that one's bishop has gone astray in matters of the faith? "We are just simply, Orthodox Christians. What do we know about theological matters anyway?" This is a typical statement, heard too often. The answer, of course, is that we are the rational

flock of Christ. As conscientious Orthodox Christians, we are expected to know our Orthodox Faith well and to live it.

To begin with, the first thing an Orthodox Christian must do—once he is sure his bishop no longer preaches Orthodoxy—is to find the nearest bishop who does preach Orthodoxy. Although this is the first, and easiest, solution, things do not always work out so simply. There have been occasions when the entire hierarchy of an area fell into heresy, as occurred in all North Africa during the Arian controversy in the fourth century. There have been other occasions in the Church's history when the Orthodox Christians did not know who the nearest Orthodox bishop was as during the iconoclast period. What did they do when all the bishops known to them were iconoclast? They simply commemorated "our Archbishop" or "Metropolitan" or "Bishop" without mentioning any name, and by this they meant the nearest Orthodox bishop whose name, at the moment, was unknown to them.

The life of Saint Maximus is also instructive for us. He resisted and cut off communion with every hierarch because of their having been infected with the heresy of Monothelitism. At his last interrogation by the "ecclesiastical" authorities, the following dialogue took place:

The Saint said, *"They [the Patriarchs of Constantinople and Alexandria and all the other heretical bishops of the East] have been deposed and deprived of the priesthood at the local council which took place recently in Rome. What Mysteries, then, can they perform? Or what spirit will descend upon those who are ordained by them?"*

*"Then you alone will be saved, and all others will perish?"* they objected.

To this the Saint replied, *"When all the people in Babylon were worshipping the golden idol, the Three Holy Children did not condemn anyone to perdition. They did not concern themselves with the doings of others, but took care only for themselves, lest they should fall away from true piety. In precisely the same way, when Daniel was cast into the lion's den, he did not condemn any of those who, fulfilling the law of Darius, did not wish to pray*



to God, but he kept in mind his own duty, and desired rather to die than to sin against his conscience by transgressing the Law of God. God forbid that I should condemn anyone or say that I alone am being saved! However, I shall sooner agree to die than to apostatize in any way from the true faith and thereby suffer torments of conscience.”

“But what will you do,” inquired the envoys, “when the Romans are united to the Byzantines? Yesterday, indeed, two delegates arrived from Rome and tomorrow, the Lord’s day, they will communicate the Holy Mysteries with the Patriarch.”

The Saint replied, “Even if the whole universe holds communion with the Patriarch, I will not communicate with him. For I know from the writings of the holy Apostle Paul: the Holy Spirit declares that even the angels would be anathema if they should begin to preach another Gospel, introducing some new teaching.”

As history had demonstrated, Saint Maximus, a simple monk (not even ordained), and his two disciples were the ones who were Orthodox, and the illustrious, famous and influential Patriarchs and Metropolitans were the ones who were in heresy. In the end, the Sixth Ecumenical Council condemned for heresy four patriarchs of Constantinople, one Pope of Rome, one Patriarch of Alexandria, two Patriarchs of Antioch and a multitude of other Metropolitans, Archbishops and Bishops. That one simple monk was right, and all those notable bishops were wrong.

In the Life of Saint Hypatius of Rufinianus, as well as many other saints, we find similar accounts. The Holy Canons are not silent in this regard either. Here is what the 15th Canon of the First and Second Council sets forth:

“If any presbyter or bishop or metropolitan dares to secede from communion with his own patriarch and does not mention his name as is ordered and appointed in the divine mystagogy, but before a synodical arraignment and his [the patriarch’s] full condemnation, he creates a schism, the Holy Synod has decreed that this person be alienated from every priestly function, if only he be proved to have transgressed in this. These rules, therefore, have been sealed and ordered concerning those who on the pretext of some accusations against their own presidents [i.e., prelates] stand apart, creating a schism and severing the unity of the Church. But as for those who on account of some heresy condemned by Holy Synods or Fathers sever themselves from communion with their president, that is, because he publicly preaches heresy and with bared head teaches it in the Church, such persons as these not only are not subject to canonical penalty for walling themselves off from communion with the so-called bishop before synodical clarification, but they shall be deemed worthy of due honor among the Orthodox. For not bishops, but false bishops and false teachers have they condemned, and they have not fragmented the Church’s unity with schism, but from schisms and divisions have they earnestly sought to deliver the Church.”

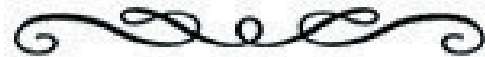
Orthodox faithful did not mince words, nor were they afraid to take immediate action when they ascertained that their bishop had strayed from Orthodoxy. Inevitably, there were those who found fault with this “extreme” course of action. The latter were not so much disturbed by the heresy of their

bishop as they were by the words and actions of the “zealots,” as they usually labeled the conscientious flock. These “super-correct” extremists were disturbing the peace of the Church and fomenting schism, said they. How did those “unhealthy elements” dare to rebuke the bishop and cut off communion with him before any synodal clarification? Saints Maximus the Confessor, Hypatius, Theodore the Studite, and Mark of Ephesus all gave us concrete examples of how they dared, and today the church honors and reveres them for doing so.

The Church saw that there were often occasions when, for one reason or another, there was no possibility of calling an Orthodox council. Precisely for this very reason, therefore, the First and Second Council which convened in Constantinople in 861 formulated the Fifteenth Canon, which merely articulated and gave canonical expression to the ancient practice of the Church, to wit, that the Orthodox Christians should “wall themselves off from communion with the so-called bishop before synodical clarification.” Thus, should the Orthodox faithful ever find themselves in an extreme situation—doctrinally speaking—they were encouraged and protected by this canon—no matter what they were called by others, and no matter what sanctions and actions the erring bishop threatened to take against them. Actually history has demonstrated repeatedly that the believers who were the first to react against heresy were wholly justified in their course of action on every occasion.

This, then, is the Orthodox understanding and the ancient practice of the Church in this matter. As we mentioned in the beginning, there is room here neither for anarchy, nor for despotism. We have criteria, and these criteria are the Holy Scriptures, the writings of the Church Fathers, the Lives of the Saints, Church History, and the Holy Canons.

This witness, this Faith is sealed with the blood of the martyrs and confessors of the Church. And truly, since the Church is built upon this rock, how is it possible for the gates of Hades to prevail against Her?



## TAKING SIDES CHOOSING THE TRUTH OR THE LIE

By St. Nikolai Velimirovic

He, who does not believe the apostles, believes in Judas, Caiaphas, Herod and Nero, the persecutors of the apostles and traitors of the truth.

He who does not believe in the righteous ones has no other alternative left but to believe in the unrighteous ones.

He who does not believe in the pure ones, must believe in the impure ones.

He who does not believe in those who suffer for the truth, must believe in the torturers and libertines.

Day does not dawn for anything else except that men may take sides with one or the other.

O Lord our Savior and Enlightener, enlighten our souls by Your holy words, for which Your apostles suffered.

## A YOUNG ORTHODOX MARTYR

*From the "Autobiography of Saint Paisius Velichkovsky," J.M.E Featherstone, trans. Harvard Library of Early Ukrainian Literature, English Translations: Volume IV. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989.*

Leaving that little hermitage, we made our way with great difficulty to the high ground where there was a great level plain, and the air there was quite salubrious. Forthwith I began to feel my illness abating, and little by little I grew stronger in body and could walk with greater ease and comfort. With all my soul I rendered thanks for God's goodness, which had not forsaken me utterly. But as the monks and I made our way, beginning at noon the sky grew dimmer and dimmer with very dark and gloomy clouds, and seeing this others hurried greatly on their way in order to escape the rain. Since I was unable to go so quickly with them, however, I was left alone, and soon a great cloud came overhead with the frightful noise of hail, and a great rain poured down with frightful lightning and thunder. Hail the size of small nuts fell and covered the field to a depth of nearly four inches, and I was so completely soaked that water dripped from my clothes. With great difficulty I made my way through the hail, and it was very late in the night when I reached the village where my companions were.

Having spent the night in the house of a certain man, I found them in the morning in a school, where a certain cantor had given them lodging; and seeing me they rejoiced greatly. Then they began inquiring of the cantor which road led to Moldavia, telling him that it was their intention to go thither. But he began telling them:

"O holy fathers, I advise you not to go there at this time, for there is great fear on the road. Soldiers are on patrol everywhere on account of the fear of brigands, and I fear lest you fall into the hands of these merciless soldiers who, if for no other reason, simply because of their hatred of the Orthodox faith, may do you the utmost harm. For not long ago in this our village the following happened. There was in this church before me a cantor of blessed memory who feared denunciation by the persecutors of the Orthodox faith, and when during the liturgy he read the Creed, that is, 'I believe in one God,' and came to the part, 'And in the Holy Ghost,' he would read it thus: '*the Lord, the Giver of life, which proceedeth from the Father true.*' (i.e., *istina* ['true,' masc sing gen], which sounds very much like *i syna* [=filioque].)"

"Reading the Creed in this manner, he escaped denunciation by the enemies of the Orthodox faith. But in time he was denounced to the administrator of the village by the blasphemers of the holy faith for not reading the Creed in accordance with their blasphemy: not '*the Holy Ghost which proceedeth from the Father and the Son,*' but only, '*from the Father true.*' Hearing this the administrator was greatly enraged, and taking several soldiers he came with them to the church a little before the

reading of the Creed, forthwith the other drew near him to listen diligently to his reading of it."

"The cantor understood why the other had drawn near, and he read loudly and slowly, with boldness. When he got to the words, '*And in the Holy Ghost,*' he was filled with the Holy Ghost and pronounced loudly, '*And in the Holy Ghost, the Lord, the Giver of life, which proceedeth from the Father,*' omitting the addition of the word *true*, which he had included out of fear."

"Hearing this, the administrator forthwith shouted like a wild beast and set upon him; and seizing him by the hair he threw him upon the ground and kicked him mercilessly with his feet. He ordered him to be dragged from the church and to be beaten mercilessly with rods. Whilst this was being done, someone went quickly to call his mother, telling her also the reason why her son was being beaten.

She ran to him with tears and exhorted him not to lose heart in his struggle: calling upon God for help, he ought not shrink from giving his life over to death for the Orthodox faith. Kissing his head she said to him, '*O dearly beloved son of mine, be not afraid of this brief torment which you suffer for your confession of the Orthodox faith: persevere as a valiant soldier of Christ for His sake even unto death, that you may be deemed worthy by Him of a martyr's crown in His heavenly Kingdom.*'"

"Said he to his mother, '*O dearly beloved mother of mine, have no doubt about me, for I am ready, God is strengthening me, to suffer not only this beating, but ten thousand of the most cruel deaths for the Orthodox faith. Even as God, glorified and worshipped in the holy Trinity, is one, and there is no God but Him, so the holy faith of the holy Eastern church, in which alone is certain hope of salvation through good deeds, is one, and there is no other but it. How, therefore, can I not fervently desire to suffer the most cruel of deaths for its sake?*'"

"Hearing this, his mother rejoiced with inexpressible joy and, raising her hands to heaven, thanked Christ God that she had been deemed worthy to give birth to such a sufferer for His sake. When that tormentor saw and heard this, he became yet more wroth, and shouted to the soldiers to beat him more harshly. The sufferer for Christ's sake endured this cruel beating with joy and, thus refuting the impiety of the Westerners and glorifying the Orthodox faith by his confession of it, he committed his soul into the hands of God."



"Power and authority are divided into two. One is worldly: God entrusted this to secular rulers; the other is spiritual: God put this in the hands of Bishops and stewards of souls. The Pope, besides being a bishop, wants also to be a king – a mixture of things unmixable."

St. Nicodemos the Hagiorite



## Πνευματική Σκιαγραφία Ἐνὸς Ἁγίου

ΠΗΓΗ: Από τὸ βιβλίον τοῦ Ἀρχιμανδρίτου Σωφρονίου (Σαχάρωφ), «Ὁ Ἅγιος Σιλουανὸς ὁ Ἀθωνίτης (1866-1938)», Ἐκδόσεις Ἱερᾶς Σταυροπηγιακῆς Μονῆς Τιμίου Προδρόμου, Ἑσσεξ Ἀγγλίας 1995

Ὁ Γέρον Σιλουανὸς ἦτο ἄνθρωπος ἀληθῶς τρυφερᾶς καρδίας, συγκινητικῆς ἀγάπης, ἐξαιρέτου λεπτότητος καὶ εὐσπλαγχνίας εἰς πάσαν θλίψιν καὶ πάντα πόνον, ἄνευ οὐδεμιᾶς νοσηρᾶς καὶ θηλυπρεποῦς αἰσθηματικότητος. Τὸ συνεχῆς βαθὺ πνευματικὸν πένθος ποτὲ δὲν μετετρέπετο εἰς συναισθηματικούς κλαυθμηρισμούς. Ἡ ἀκοίμητος ἐσωτερικὴ ἔντασις οὐδὲ σκιὰν νευρικότητος εἶχεν.

Ἀξία πολλοῦ θαυμασμοῦ εἶναι καὶ ἡ μεγάλη σωφροσύνη τοῦ ἀνδρὸς τούτου, παρὰ τὸ ρωμαλέον σῶμα. Ἐφύλαττεν ἑαυτὸν ἰσχυρῶς, προσέτι καὶ ἀπὸ παντὸς λογισμοῦ μὴ εὐαρέστου εἰς τὸν Θεόν. Παρὰ ταῦτα συμπεριφέρετο καὶ συναναστρέφετο μεθ' ὄλων τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐντελῶς ἐλευθέρως καὶ φυσικῶς, μετ' ἀγάπης καὶ ἀπλότητος, ἀνεξαρτήτως τῆς θέσεως καὶ τοῦ τρόπου τῆς ζωῆς αὐτῶν. Ἐντὸς αὐτοῦ οὐδὲ σκιά ἀποστροφῆς ὑπῆρχεν, ἔτι καὶ δι' ἀνθρώπους οἵτινες ἔζων ρυπαρῶς, ἀλλ' ἐν τῷ βάθει τῆς ψυχῆς αὐτοῦ ἐθλίβετο διὰ τὰς πτώσεις αὐτῶν, καθὼς ὁ πατὴρ ἢ ἡ μήτηρ θλίβονται διὰ τὰ ὀλισθήματα τῶν ἡγαπημένων αὐτῶν τέκνων.

Ἐδέχετο τοὺς πειρασμούς καὶ ἔφερεν αὐτοὺς μετὰ μεγάλης ἀνδρείας.

Ἦτο ἄνθρωπος παντελῶς ἄφοβος καὶ ἐλεύθερος, καὶ συγχρόνως δὲν ὑπῆρχεν ἐντὸς αὐτοῦ οὐδὲ ἴχνος θρασύτητος. Ἄφοβος ὢν, ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ ἔζη ἐν φόβῳ. Τῷ ὄντι, ἐφοβεῖτο νὰ λυπήσῃ Αὐτὸν ἔστω καὶ διὰ κακοῦ λογισμοῦ.

Ἦτο ἀνὴρ μεγάλης ἀνδρείας, καὶ ἐν τῷ ἅμα ἐξαιρέτου πραότητος· σπάνιος καὶ ἀσυνήθους ὠραιότητος συνδυασμός.

Ὁ Γέρον ἦτο ἄνθρωπος βαθείας, γνησίας ταπεινώσεως, καὶ ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ ἐνώπιον τῶν ἀνθρώπων. Ἠγάπα νὰ δίδῃ τὸ προβάδισμα εἰς τοὺς ἄλλους, ἡγάπα νὰ εἶναι κατώτερος, νὰ χαιρετίσῃ πρῶτος, νὰ λαμβάνῃ εὐλογίαν παρὰ τῶν φερόντων ἱερατικὸν βαθμόν, ἰδίως παρὰ τῶν ἐπισκόπων καὶ τοῦ ἡγουμένου, καὶ πάντα ταῦτα ἄνευ οὐδεμιᾶς ἀνθρωπαρεσκείας ἢ κολακείας. Ἐτίμα εἰλικρινῶς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους οἵτινες εἶχον ἀξίωμα ἢ θέσιν, καὶ τοὺς πεπαιδευμένους, ἀλλ' οὐδέποτε ἐντὸς αὐτοῦ ὑπῆρχεν αἴσθημα φθόνου ἢ μειονεκτικότητος, ἴσως ἐπειδὴ βαθῶς ἐγνώριζε τὸ ἐφήμερον πάσης κοσμικῆς θέσεως, ἐξουσίας, πλοῦτου, προσέτι δὲ ἐπιστημονικῶν γνώσεων. Ἐγνώριζε «πόσον πολὺ ἀγαπᾷ ὁ Κύριος τοὺς ἀνθρώπους Αὐτοῦ», καὶ ἐξ ἀγάπης

πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν καὶ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐτίμα ἀληθῶς καὶ ἐσέβετο πάντα ἄνθρωπον.

Ἡ ἐξωτερικὴ αὐτοῦ διαγωγή ἦτο ἀπλή, καὶ ταυτοχρόνως ἢ ἀναμφίβολος ποιότης αὐτοῦ ἦτο ἡ ἐσωτερικὴ εὐγένεια, ἢ ἀριστοκρατία, ἂν θέλητε, ἐν τῇ ὑψηλοτέρᾳ σημασίᾳ τῆς λέξεως. Ἐν τῇ ὑπὸ διαφόρους συνθήκας ἐπικοινωνία μετ' αὐτοῦ ὁ ἄνθρωπος καὶ τῆς λεπτοτέρας εἰσέτι διαισθήσεως δὲν ἠδύνατο νὰ παρατηρήσῃ εἰς αὐτὸν τραχείας κινήσεις καρδίας: ἀντιπάθειαν, ἀπροσεξίαν, περιφρόνησιν, προσποίησην καὶ τὰ παρόμοια. Ἦτο ἀνὴρ εὐγενῆς ὡς δύναται νὰ εἶναι μόνον ὁ χριστιανός.

Ὁ Γέρον ποτὲ δὲν ἐγέλα ἠχηρῶς. Ποτὲ δὲν ὠμίλει κατὰ τρόπον διαφορούμενον. Οὐδέποτε περιεγέλασε καὶ οὐδέποτε ἡστειεύθη ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους. Ἐπὶ τοῦ συνήθως σοβαροῦ γαληνίου προσώπου αὐτοῦ μόλις ἐσχεδιάζετο ἐνίοτε ἐλαφρὸν τί μειδιάμα, μὴ ἀνοιγομένων τῶν χειλέων (ἐκτὸς ἐὰν ὠμίλει).

Ἀνθίστατο εἰς τοὺς πειρασμούς καὶ ὑπέμενεν αὐτοὺς μετὰ μεγάλης ἀνδρείας. Τὸ πάθος τοῦ θυμοῦ δὲν εἶχε θέσιν εἰς αὐτόν. Ἀλλὰ παρὰ τὴν φανερὰν ἀπλότητα, τὴν σπανίαν διαλλακτικότητα καὶ τὴν ὑπακοήν, ἦτο ἀπολύτως ἀντίθετος πρὸς πᾶν ψευδές, πονηρὸν καὶ ἄσχημον. Κατάκρισις, χυδαιότης, μικρότης καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα εἰς αὐτόν δὲν εὐρίσκοντο. Ἐπὶ τούτου ἐξεδήλου ἔμμονον ἀκαμψίαν, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τρόπον ὥστε νὰ μὴ θλίβῃ τὸν ἁμαρτάνοντα, καὶ προσεῖχε νὰ μὴ προσβάλλῃ αὐτόν οὐχὶ μόνον ἐξωτερικῶς, ἀλλὰ, τὸ κυριώτερον, οὐτε καὶ διὰ τῆς κινήσεως τῆς καρδίας αὐτοῦ, διότι ὁ λεπτὸς ἄνθρωπος αἰσθάνεται καὶ τὰς κινήσεις τῆς καρδίας. Ἐπετύγχανε δὲ τοῦτο προσευχόμενος ἐσωτερικῶς καὶ μένων ἡσυχος, ἀνεπηρέαστος ἀπὸ παντὸς δυστρόπου.

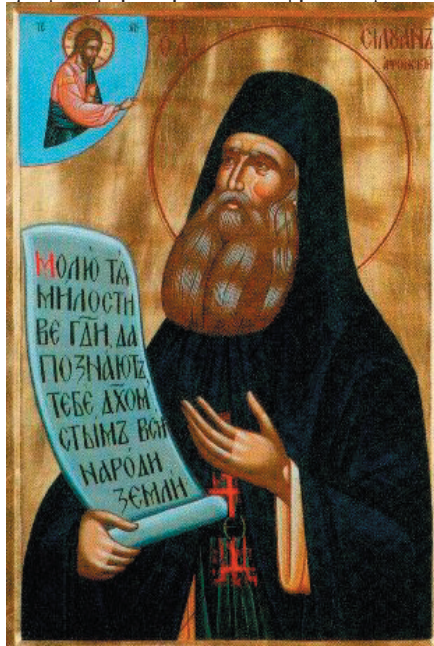
Παρατηρεῖτο εἰς αὐτόν θέλησις σπανίας δυνάμεως, ἄνευ πείσματος· ἀπλότης, ἐλευθερία, ἀφοβία καὶ ἀνδρεία μετὰ πραότητος καὶ προσηνείας· ταπεινώσεως καὶ ὑπακοῆς, ἄνευ δουλοπρεπείας καὶ ἀνθρωπαρεσκείας. Ἦτο ἀληθῶς ἄνθρωπος, εἰκὼν καὶ ὁμοίωσις Θεοῦ.

Ὁραῖος ὁ κόσμος, δημιουργήμα τοῦ μεγάλου Θεοῦ· ἀλλ' οὐδὲν θαυμασιώτερον τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, τοῦ ἀληθοῦς ἀνθρώπου, τοῦ υἱοῦ Θεοῦ!



Προτιμότερο εἶναι νὰ τρώει κανεὶς κρέας καὶ νὰ πίνει κρασί, παρὰ νὰ τρώει τίς σάρκες τῶν ἀδελφῶν του μετὰ τὴν καταλαλιά.

Ἀββᾶς Τιθόης



Ὁ Ἅγιος Σιλουανὸς ὁ Ἀθωνίτης



## Σύντομο Ιστορικό τών Σχέσεων Οικουμενικού Πατριαρχείου - Εκκλησίας τής Ελλάδος

ΠΗΓΗ: Σεβ. Μητροπολίτου Ναυπάκτου και Αγίου Βλασίου Γεροθέου Βλάχου, δημοσιεύθηκε στην Έφημερίδα “Τά Νέα”, 9-9-2003.

Τὸν τελευταῖο καιρὸ γίνεται πολὺς λόγος γιὰ τὶς σχέσεις μεταξύ τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριαρχείου καὶ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας τῆς Ἑλλάδος. Ὁ πολὺς κόσμος, ποὺ δὲν γνωρίζει τὴν ἱστορία καὶ τὴν ἐκκλησιολογία τοῦ θέματος, δὲν μπορεῖ νὰ παρακολουθήσῃ τὴν συζήτηση καὶ μάλιστα θεωρεῖ ὅτι πρόκειται γιὰ ἀνωφελεῖς συζητήσεις καὶ προσωπικὲς ἀντιπαράθεσεις. Ὅμως τὰ πράγματα δὲν εἶναι ἔτσι ὅπως παρουσιάζονται. Γιὰ τὸν σκοπὸ αὐτὸ στὴν συνέχεια θὰ ὑπογραμμίσω μερικὰ σημεῖα γιὰ τὴν κατανόηση τοῦ θέματος.

1. Οἱ σχέσεις μεταξύ τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας ἐν Ἑλλάδι καὶ τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριαρχείου διέπονται ἀπὸ τὸν Συνοδικὸ Τόμο τοῦ 1850 καὶ τὶς Πατριαρχικὲς Πράξεις τῶν ἐτῶν 1866, 1882, καὶ 1928.

2. Μὲ τὴν κήρυξη τῆς ἐπαναστάσεως τοῦ 1821 ἕως τοῦ 1833 οἱ Ἀρχιερεῖς τῆς Ἑλλάδος, οἱ ὁποῖοι μέχρι τότε ὑπῆγοντο στὸ Οἰκουμενικὸ Πατριαρχεῖο, εἶχαν δυσκολία νὰ ἐπικοινωνήσουν μὲ αὐτὸ καὶ βρίσκονταν σὲ μία διάσταση μαζί του, χωρὶς νὰ ἀνεξαρτητοποιηθοῦν ἀπὸ αὐτό. Ὅμως τὸ 1833 ἀνακηρύχθηκε ἡ Ἐκκλησία τῆς Ἑλλάδος, αὐτογνομόνως καὶ πραξικοπηματικῶς, ὡς Ἀυτοκέφαλη μὲ τὴν ἐπέμβαση ἐξωτερικῶν παραγόντων, τῆς Βαυαροκρατίας καὶ τὴν ἀναγκαστικὴ συμφωνία τῶν ὑπαρχόντων τότε Ἱεραρχῶν, χωρὶς τὴν συγκατάθεση τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριαρχείου. Τὸ Οἰκουμενικὸ Πατριαρχεῖο δὲν ἀνεγνώρισε αὐτὴν τὴν πραξικοπηματικὴ ἐνέργεια, μὲ ἀποτέλεσμα ἡ Ἐκκλησία τῆς Ἑλλάδος νὰ βρίσκεται σὲ μία σχισματικὴ κατάσταση γιὰ δεκαεπτὰ χρόνια.

3. Τὸ 1850 τὸ Οἰκουμενικὸ Πατριαρχεῖο μὲ τὴν παρέμβαση τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς Πολιτείας ἀνεκήρυξε ὡς Ἀυτοκέφαλη τὴν Ἐκκλησία τῆς Ἑλλάδος, χωρὶς νὰ ἀναγνωρίσῃ τὴν ὑπάρχουσα ἕως τότε κατάσταση (1833-1850), ἀλλὰ μὲ βασικοὺς ὅρους καὶ ἀπαραίτητες προϋποθέσεις. Μεταξὺ τῶν ὄρων ἦταν ὅτι ἡ Ἐκκλησία τῆς Ἑλλάδος θὰ διοικῆται ἀπὸ Διарκῆ Ἱερά Σύνοδο, τῆς ὁποίας Πρόεδρος θὰ εἶναι ὁ ἐκάστοτε Μητροπολίτης Ἀθηνῶν, καὶ ὅτι οἱ Μητροπολίτες τῆς Ἐκκλησίας τῆς Ἑλλάδος θὰ μνημονεύουν κατὰ τὶς Θεεῖς Λειτουργίες τὴν Ἱερά Σύνοδο ὡς ἀνωτάτη ἐκκλησιαστικὴ ἀρχή, καθὼς ἐπίσης ἡ Ἐκκλησία θὰ διοικῆται ἐλεύθερη ἀπὸ πολιτικὲς σκοπιμότητες. Ἐπομένως, τὸ σύστημα διοικήσεως τῆς Ἐκκλησίας τῆς Ἑλλάδος, τὸ ὁποῖο προβλέπει ὁ Συνοδικὸς Τόμος τοῦ 1850 δὲν εἶναι οὔτε Μητροπολιτικὸ, οὔτε Πατριαρχικὸ, ἀλλὰ Συνοδικὸ.

4. Τὸ ἔτος 1866 τὸ Οἰκουμενικὸ Πατριαρχεῖο μὲ εἰδικὴ Πατριαρχικὴ Πράξη παρεχώρησε κατ’ ἀφομοίωσιν τὶς Μητροπόλεις τῆς Ἑπτανήσου στὴν Ἀυτοκέφαλη Ἐκκλησία τῆς

Ἑλλάδος. Τὸ κατ’ ἀφομοίωσιν σημαίνει ὅτι θὰ ἰσχύη καὶ γι’ αὐτὲς ὅτι ἀκριβῶς προβλέπει ὁ Συνοδικὸς Τόμος τοῦ 1850.

5. Τὸ ἔτος 1882 τὸ Οἰκουμενικὸ Πατριαρχεῖο μὲ ἄλλη Πατριαρχικὴ Πράξη παρεχώρησε καὶ πάλι κατ’ ἀφομοίωσιν τὶς Μητροπόλεις τῆς Θεσσαλίας καὶ μερικῶν τμημάτων τῆς Ἡπείρου. Καὶ βέβαια, καὶ σὲ αὐτὴν τὴν περίπτωση ἰσχύουν οἱ ὅροι ποὺ προβλέπει ὁ Συνοδικὸς Τόμος τοῦ 1850.

6. Μετὰ τοὺς νικητήριους Βαλκανικοὺς ἀγῶνας 1912-1913 δημιουργήθηκε τὸ πρόβλημα πῶς θὰ διοικῶνται οἱ Μητροπόλεις τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Θρόνου στὴν Μακεδονία, τὴν Θράκη, τὴν Ἡπειρο καὶ τὰ νησιὰ τοῦ ἀνατολικοῦ Αἰγαίου, ποὺ ὀνομάσθηκαν “Νέες Χῶρες”, διότι ἔτσι τὶς εἶχαν χαρακτηρίσει πολιτικοὶ παράγοντες. Ἐγιναν πολλὲς διεργασίες ἀπὸ τὸ ἔτος 1914 ἕως τὸ 1928 γιὰ τὸν τρόπο διοικήσεώς τους, προτάθηκαν πολλὰ σχήματα, ὅπως παραχώρηση κατ’ ἀφομοίωσιν στὴν Ἐκκλησία τῆς Ἑλλάδος, δημιουργία ἡμι-αυτόνομης Ἐκκλησίας. Καὶ τελικὰ –μετὰ ἀπὸ εἰσήγηση τοῦ Ἀρχιεπισκόπου Ἀθηνῶν Χρυσόστομου Παπαδοπούλου– μὲ τὴν Πατριαρχικὴ Πράξη τοῦ 1928 τὸ Οἰκουμενικὸ Πατριαρχεῖο παρεχώρησε τὰ τμήματα αὐτὰ στὴν Ἀυτοκέφαλη Ἐκκλησία τῆς Ἑλλάδος, ὄχι κατ’ ἀφομοίωσιν, ἀλλὰ “ἐπιτροπικῶς”. Μὲ ἀλληλογραφία ποὺ διεξήχθη τὸ 1929 μεταξύ τοῦ τότε Ἀρχιεπισκόπου Ἀθηνῶν Χρυσόστομου καὶ τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριάρχου Βασιλείου διεκρινίσθηκε ὅτι τὸ “ἐπιτροπικῶς” ἐρμηνεύεται “ὑπὸ τύπον προσωρινότητος” καὶ ὅτι οἱ Ἀρχιερεῖς τοῦ Πατριαρχικοῦ Θρόνου στὴν Ἑλλάδα (Νέων Χωρῶν) θὰ μνημονεύουν κατὰ τὴν Θεία Λειτουργία τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριάρχου, ὡς ἀνωτάτης πνευματικῆς τους Ἀρχῆς καὶ τῆς Ἱερᾶς Συνόδου τῆς Ἐκκλησίας τῆς Ἑλλάδος, ὡς διοικητικῆς τους Ἀρχῆς, καθὼς ἐπίσης ἔγιναν τροποποιήσεις σὲ μερικοὺς ὅρους.

7. Τρεῖς φορές ἐπιχειρήθηκε ἀπὸ τὴν Ἐκκλησία τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἡ ἀλλαγὴ διαφόρων ὄρων τῶν ἐπισήμων αὐτῶν Πατριαρχικῶν Κειμένων, ἤτοι τοῦ Συνοδικοῦ Τόμου τοῦ 1850 καὶ τῆς Πατριαρχικῆς Πράξεως τοῦ 1928.

Ἡ πρώτη προσπάθεια ἀλλαγῆς ἔγινε ἀπὸ τὴν Ἱεραρχία τοῦ 1923, ἐπὶ τῆς Ἀρχιεπισκοπείας τοῦ Χρυσόστομου Παπαδοπούλου γιὰ τὴν ἀλλαγὴ τῆς μνημονεύσεως ἀπὸ τοὺς Ἀρχιερεῖς, δηλαδὴ ἀντὶ νὰ μνημονεύουν τὴν Ἱερά Σύνοδο, ὅπως λέγει ὁ Συνοδικὸς Τόμος τοῦ 1850, νὰ μνημονεύουν τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Ἀρχιεπισκόπου. Ἡ δευτέρα προσπάθεια ἔγινε ἀπὸ τὴν Μείζονα Σύνοδο τὸ 1941, ἐπὶ Ἀρχιεπισκοπείας Δαμασκηνοῦ Παπανδρέου, πάλι γιὰ τὴν μνημόνευση τοῦ ὀνόματος. Ἡ τρίτη προσπάθεια ἔγινε τὴν περίοδο 1967-1974 ἐπὶ Ἀρχιεπισκοπείας Ἱερωνύμου γιὰ τὴν ἀλλαγὴ τοῦ τρόπου συγκροτήσεως τῆς Διарκοῦς Ἱερᾶς Συνόδου, ἀντίθετα ἀπὸ ὅτι προέβλεπε ἡ Πατριαρχικὴ Πράξη τοῦ 1928.

Καὶ τὶς τρεῖς φορές δὲν ἐπετεύχθη ἀλλαγὴ. Τὶς μὲν δύο πρῶτες φορές, διότι μετὰ τὴν ἀντίδραση τῶν Ἱεραρχῶν ἀπέσυραν τὴν συζήτηση οἱ δύο κατὰ τοὺς χρόνους ἐκείνους Ἀρχιεπίσκοποι, τὴν δὲ τρίτη φορά, διότι τὸ Συμβούλιο τῆς Ἐπικρατείας ἀκύρωσε τὴν ἀπόφαση τῆς Ἱεραρχίας μὲ τὴν ὁποία

έξελέγησαν τὰ Μέλη τῆς Διαρκοῦς Ἱερᾶς Συνόδου καὶ δὲν τηρήθηκε ὁ ὅρος τῆς Πατριαρχικῆς Πράξεως τοῦ 1928.

8. Τὸ Οἰκουμενικὸ Πατριαρχεῖο ἀντέδρασε σὲ κάθε ἐπιχειρούμενη ἀλλαγὴ, διότι σαφῶς ἐπιθυμεῖ τὴν διατήρηση τῶν ὄρων τῶν ἐπισήμων αὐτῶν Πατριαρχικῶν Κειμένων. Μάλιστα, ἀπέστειλε στὴν Ἐκκλησίαν τῆς Ἑλλάδος, κατὰ καιροῦς, σοβαρὰ ἔγγραφα, στὰ ὁποῖα φαίνεται καθαρὰ ἡ ἐπιθυμία του νὰ τηρηθοῦν ἀπαρασαλεύτως οἱ ὅροι τοῦ Συννοδικοῦ Τόμου τοῦ 1850 καὶ τῆς Πατριαρχικῆς Πράξεως τοῦ 1928.

9. Ἐπανειλημμένως τὸ Οἰκουμενικὸ Πατριαρχεῖο, ὅπως καὶ ὁ Οἰκουμενικὸς Πατριάρχης κ. Βαρθολομαῖος ἔχουν δηλώσει, ὅτι δὲν ἐπιθυμοῦν καμμία ἀλλαγὴ στὰ Πατριαρχικὰ αὐτὰ κείμενα. Ἄλλωστε αὐτὸ ἔχει τὸ δικαίωμα νὰ ἐκδίδῃ τὶς Πράξεις καὶ νὰ τὶς αἶρη. Τόσο τὸ Πατριαρχεῖο ὅσο καὶ ἡ Ἐκκλησία τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἔχουν δηλώσει στὸ παρελθὸν ὅτι τὰ κείμενα αὐτὰ εἶναι “ἱερά” καὶ “θεμελιακά”. Τὸ ὅτι τὸ Πατριαρχεῖο ἐπιμένει νὰ μὴ γίνῃ καμμία ἀλλαγὴ φαίνεται ἀπὸ τὸ ὅτι δὲν ἐκμεταλλεύθηκε πρὸς ἴδιον ὄφελός του ὅταν τὸ 1987 ἡ Ἐκκλησία τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἐπρότεινε τὴν ἄρση τοῦ Αὐτοκεφάλου. Νομίζω ὅτι, ἐὰν ἡ Ἐκκλησία τῆς Ἑλλάδος δηλώσῃ καὶ ἐκεῖνη ὅτι δὲν ἐπιθυμεῖ καμμία ἀλλαγὴ στὰ κείμενα αὐτά, ὅπως τὸ ἔχει δηλώσει τὸ Οἰκουμενικὸ Πατριαρχεῖο, τότε θὰ ἀμβλυνθοῦν ὅλες οἱ διαφορές.

10. Ἐπειδὴ κατὰ καιροῦς ἀναφύονται διάφορα θέματα στὶς σχέσεις μεταξὺ τῶν δυῶν Ἐκκλησιῶν, θὰ πρέπη νὰ ἀντιμετωπίζονται καθ’ ἕκαστον ἔτος ἀπὸ διμερεῖς Ἐπιτροπές, στὶς ὁποῖες θὰ συμπεριλαμβάνονται Κληρικοὶ καὶ λαϊκοὶ πού εἶναι βαθεῖς γνῶστες τῶν προβλημάτων καὶ διαθέτουν νηφαλιότητα καὶ διάκριση.

11. Ἡ Ἐκκλησία τῆς Ἑλλάδος εἶναι Αὐτοκέφαλη, ἀλλὰ μὲ ιδιαίτερες καὶ σαφεῖς προϋποθέσεις - ὅρους, καθὼς ἐπίσης διοικεῖ τὶς Μητροπόλεις τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Θρόνου ἐν Ἑλλάδι πάλι μὲ σαφεῖς ὅρους. Καί, βέβαια, πρέπει νὰ συνεργάζεται στενὰ μὲ τὸ Οἰκουμενικὸ Πατριαρχεῖο γιὰ τὴν ἐπίλυση τῶν διαφορῶν ἐκκλησιαστικῶν ὑποθέσεων πού ἀνακύπτουν, ἔχοντας ὑπ’ ὄψη τὴν τοὺς ἐκκλησιολογικοὺς καὶ ὄχι μόνον τοὺς ἐθνικοὺς κινδύνους πού προέρχονται ἀπὸ τοὺς διαφοροὺς ἐθνικισμοὺς, οἱ ὁποῖοι εἶναι οἱ σύγχρονες “αἱρέσεις” τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας, διότι συρρικνώνουν τὴν οἰκουμενικότητα καὶ διασποῦν τὴν ἐνότητά της.

12. Τὸ Οἰκουμενικὸ Πατριαρχεῖο εἶναι ἕνας εὐλογημένος θεσμός, πού κατοχυρώθηκε ἀπὸ τοὺς Πατέρας Οἰκουμενικῶν Συνόδων, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡ Ἐκκλησία τῆς Ἑλλάδος εἶναι μία ζωντανὴ Ἐκκλησία πού ἔχει μεγάλη θεολογικὴ, μοναχικὴ καὶ ποιμαντικὴ παράδοση. Ἐπομένως, οἱ διενέξεις μεταξὺ τῶν δυῶν Ἐκκλησιῶν ἀποτελοῦν “πολυτέλεια” γιὰ τὴν ἐποχὴ μας μὲ τὰ τόσα πνευματικά, κοινωνικά καὶ ἐθνικιστικά προβλήματα.

## Δυὸ Μεγάλα Θαύματα Τῆς Παναγίας

(Κατὰ τὴν ἱερὰ προσκύνηση τῆς θαυματουργοῦ εἰκόνας τῆς Παναγίας τῆς Ἱεροσολυμίτισσας εἰς τὸν ἱερὸ Ναὸ τοῦ Ἁγίου Ἀλεξάνδρου Νέφσκι εἰς τὴν Σόφια)

ΠΗΓΗ: Ὁρθόδοξος Τύπος, Τεύχος τῆς 1<sup>ης</sup> Αὐγούστου, 2003



Ὅπως ἀναφέρει ὁ μοναχὸς Πέτρος Ἁγιοταφίτης, μὲ εὐλογία τοῦ Μακαριωτάτου Πατριάρχου Ἱεροσολύμων κ. Εἰρηναίου τοῦ Α΄, (στὸ δίμηνο Ὁρθόδοξο Χριστιανικὸ περιοδικὸ «Κοσμᾶς ὁ Αἰτωλός», τῆς Ἱερᾶς Μητροπόλεως Αἰτωλίας καὶ Ἀκαρνανίας, τεύχος 272, Μάιος - Ἰούνιος 2003), κατὰ τὴ πρόσφατο μεταφορὰ τῆς θαυματουργοῦ εἰκόνας τῆς Παναγίας τῆς Ἱεροσολυμίτισσας, γιὰ προσκύνημα στὸ Ἱερὸ

Ναὸ τοῦ Ἁγίου Ἀλεξάνδρου Βουλγαρίας, συνέβησαν δυὸ μεγάλα θαύματα ἐνώπιον τῆς Ἀχειροποίητου Ἁγίας αὐτῆς εἰκόνας.

«Παράλυτος ἐκ γενετῆς, ἡλικίας ἄνω τῶν 60 ἐτῶν, ὁδηγήθηκε πρὸ τῆς Ἁγίας Εἰκόνας, ὅπου καθήμενος στὸ καροτσάκι του ἰκέτευε τὴν Παναγία νὰ τὸν θεραπεύσει, ὅπως καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς θεράπευσε τὸν ἐπὶ “38 ἔτη” παραλυτικὸ. Καὶ ἀκούστηκε ἐκ τῆς Ἁγίας Εἰκόνας φωνή, λέγουσα:

“Ἐγέρθητι καὶ ἔλα νὰ προσκύνησης.”

Καὶ ὁ ἀνίατος παράλυτος στάθηκε ἐπὶ τοὺς πόδας του ὑγῆς! Καὶ τὸν εἶδαν νὰ προσκυνεῖ καὶ νὰ ἀσπάζεται τὴν θαυματουργὸν Εἰκόνα, καὶ νὰ διαλαλεῖ τὸ θαῦμα, δοξάζοντας τὸν Θεὸ καὶ τὴν Παναγία. Καὶ ἔγινε τότε σεισμὸς πίστεως καὶ εὐσέβειας ἐντὸς καὶ ἐκτὸς τοῦ μεγάλου Ναοῦ ἀπειραριθμοῦ Ὁρθοδόξου Λαοῦ, ὁ ὁποῖος ἔγινε αἰσθητὸς σὲ ὅλη τὴν Βουλγαρία καὶ πέραν αὐτῆς. Ἀκολούθησαν χαρμόσυνοι κωδωνοκρουσίαι καὶ ὁ Πατριάρχης κατῆλθε στὸ Ναὸ, καὶ ἔγινε πάνδημο προσκύνημα καὶ ἀκολουθία εὐχαριστίας - δοξολογίας καὶ παρακλήσεως. Καὶ χάριξε ὁ Ὁρθόδοξος Λαὸς χαρὰ Ἀναστάσεως, τοῦ ὁποῖου πρὸ τίνος ἡ εὐσέβεια διωκότανε!

Ἀκολούθησε δὲ καὶ ἄλλο θαῦμα. Τὸ ἀπόγευμα τῆς αὐτῆς ἡμέρας, ὁδηγήθηκε πρὸ τῆς Ἁγίας Εἰκόνας τυφλὴ, ἐκ γενετῆς καὶ αὐτή, 15 περίπου ἐτῶν, ἡ ὁποία προσευχόμενη ἔλεγε πρὸς τὴν Θεοτόκο.

“Παναγία μου, θεράπευσε καὶ ἐμέ, ὅπως θεράπευσες τὸ πρῶτ’ ὁ παράλυτο. Σὲ παρακαλῶ, χάρισε καὶ σὲ μένα τὸ φῶς τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν μου.”

Καὶ ἀκούγεται πάλιν φωνὴ ἐκ τῆς Ἁγίας Εἰκόνας, λέγουσα:

“Ἀνάβλεψε.”

Καὶ ἡ ἐκ γενετῆς τυφλὴ εἶδε!..





## Ανακοίνωσις τῆς Ἱερᾶς Κοινότητος Ἁγίου Ὁρους Ἄθω

17/30 Σεπτεμβρίου, 2003

Ἐπειδὴ γιὰ δευτέρη φορά μέσα στὸ 2003 ψήφισμα τοῦ Ἑυρωπαϊκοῦ Κοινοβουλίου προέτεινε πρόσφατα μεταξὺ ἄλλων καὶ τὴν κατάργησι τῆς ἀπαγορεύσεως εἰσόδου γυναικῶν, δηλ. τοῦ λεγομένου «ἀβάτου» τοῦ Ἁγίου Ὁρους, ἡ Ἱερὰ Κοινότης Ἁγίου Ὁρους Ἄθω θεωρεῖ καθήκον τῆς νὰ ὑπογραμμίσῃ πρὸς κάθε ἐνδιαφερόμενο τὰ ἑξῆς:

1. Τὸ «ἀβατον» τῆς χερσονήσου τοῦ Ἁγίου Ὁρους, ὅπως θεσπίστηκε τὸν Ι΄ αἰώνα καὶ ἔχει ἔκτοτε ἐπικυρωθῆ ἀπὸ ὅλη τὴν διάδοχὴ πολιτειακὴ νομοθεσία (ἀκόμη καὶ τὴν ὀθωμανικὴ), ἀποτελεῖ οὐσιώδες γνῶρισμα τοῦ Ἀγιορειτικοῦ Μοναχισμοῦ.

2. Τὸ μοναστηριακὸν «ἀβατον», δηλ. ἡ ἀπαγόρευσι εἰσόδου καὶ διαμονῆς ἀνδρῶν σὲ γυναικεία μονὴ καὶ γυναικῶν σὲ ἀνδρική μονή, εἶναι πανάρχαιος θεσμός, ἀπορρέει ἀπὸ αὐτὴ τὴν ἴδια τὴν οὐσία τοῦ μοναχισμοῦ, ἀπαντᾷ ἤδη στοὺς κανόνες τῶν Μ. Ἀντωνίου, Ἀγ. Παχωμίου καὶ Μ. Βασιλείου (Δ΄ αἰ.), καθιερῶνται ἀπὸ τὸν αὐτοκράτορα Ἰουστινιανὸν (539), τὴν Πενθέκτη (692) καὶ τὴν Ζ΄ Οἰκουμένην Σύνδοδον (787), υἱοθετεῖται ἀπὸ τὰ περισσότερα μοναστηριακὰ «τυπικά» καὶ ἐφαρμόζεται μέχρι σήμερον ἀπὸ πάμπολλα μοναστήρια σὲ ὅλο τὸν χριστιανικὸν κόσμον. Τὸ ἐντυπωσιακὸν τῆς περιπτώσεως τοῦ Ἁγίου Ὁρους ἐγκεῖται στὸ γεγονός ὅτι αὐτὸς ὁ κανόνας τοῦ «ἀβάτου» ἐφαρμόζεται ὁμαδικὰ ἀπὸ εἴκοσι ὁμορες μονές με κοινὴ διοικητικὴ ὀργάνωσι, πάνω σὲ μία χερσονήσο πολὺ εὐδιάκριτη στὸν γεωγραφικὸν χάρτη, ἐπεκτεινόμενο ἔτσι πάνω σὲ ὀλόκληρη τὴν χερσονήσο, καθὼς αὐτὴ διέπεται ἀπὸ εἰδικὸν καθεστῶς αὐτοδιοικήσεως. Ἐπίσης τὸ ὅτι αὐτὴ ἡ ὁμαδικὴ τήρησι τοῦ «ἀβάτου» ἔχει περιβληθῆ ἀπὸ τὴν Ἑλληνικὴν Πολιτείαν με ηὔξημένο νομικὸν κύρος, γιὰ λόγους ἱστορικοῦς, θρησκευτικοῦς καὶ πολιτιστικοῦς. Ἄλλωστε τὸ «ἀβατον» ἀποτελεῖ ἀναφαίρετο δικαίωμα τοῦ Ἁγίου Ὁρους, πὺ θεμελιώνεται τόσο στὸ αὐτοδιοικητὸν του ὅσο καὶ στὶς προστατευόμενες ἀπὸ τὸ ἔθνικὸν καὶ εὐρωπαϊκὸν δίκαιον θεμελιώδεις ἀρχές τῆς θρησκευτικῆς ἐλευθερίας καὶ τῆς προστασίας τῆς ἰδιοκτησίας καὶ τοῦ ἰδιωτικοῦ ἀσύλου.

3. Τυχὸν ἀπόπειρα καταργήσεως αὐτοῦ τοῦ συγκεκριμένου «ἀβάτου» ἐκ μέρους τῆς ὁποιασδήποτε κρατικῆς ἢ ὑπερκρατικῆς κοσμικῆς ἐξουσίας θὰ σήμαινε τὴν ἀπαρχὴν διωγμοῦ κατὰ τοῦ Ἀγιορειτικοῦ ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῦ ἐν γένει Ὁρθοδόξου Μοναχισμοῦ. Τὸ Ἅγιον Ὄρος δηλώνει σύσσωμον ὅτι οὐδέποτε θὰ ἀποδεχθῆ κάτι τέτοιο, ἀκόμη καὶ ἂν χρειασθῆ νὰ ὑποβληθῆ σὲ πολλοὺς κόπους καὶ ἀγῶνες.

4. Ἡ Ἱερὰ Κοινότης Ἁγίου Ὁρους Ἄθω δοξολογεῖ εὐχαριστηρίως τὸν ἐν Τριάδι Θεό, διότι ἡ Ἑλληνικὴ Κοινωνία, διὰ στόματος τῶν πνευματικῶν καὶ πολιτικῶν ταγῶν τῆς, τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς ἡγεσίας τῆς, τῶν νομομαθῶν τῆς, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτῶν τῶν ἰδίων τῶν Ἑλληνίδων (πλὴν τῆς γνωστῆς λυπηρᾶς ἐξαιρέσεως), ἐκφράζει με κάθε εὐκαιρία τὸν σεβασμὸν

καὶ τὴν ἐκτίμησίν τῆς πρὸς τὸν Ἀγιορειτικὸν Μοναχισμὸν καὶ τὶς πνευματικῆς καὶ ὕλικῆς ἀξίες πὺ αὐτὸς διαφυλάσσει. Ἡ Ἱερὰ Κοινότης παρατηρεῖ με ἰδιαίτερη ἱκανοποίησι ὅτι οἱ Ἑλληνες ἐκπρόσωποι τοῦ Ἑυρωπαϊκοῦ Κοινοβουλίου με τὶς σημαντικῆς διαχρονικῆς δηλώσεις καὶ ἐπισημάνσεις τὸς κατανοοῦν τὴν εἰδοποιὸν αὐτὴν διαφορὰ τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ Ἁγίου Ὁρους.

5. Τὰ συγκεκριμένα ψηφίσματα τοῦ Ἑυρωπαϊκοῦ Κοινοβουλίου ἀσφαλῶς ὀφείλονται σὲ ἄγνοια βασικῶν ἱστορικῶν, πολιτιστικῶν καὶ θρησκευτικῶν δεδομένων, χάρις στὰ ὁποῖα, κατὰ θεῖαν πρόνοιαν καὶ με τὴν προστασία τῆς Κυρίας Θεοτόκου, τὸ Ἅγιον Ὄρος ζεῖ ἀδιάκοπα περισσότερο ἀπὸ χίλια χρόνια. Ἡ γνώσι αὐτῶν τῶν ἱστορικῶν δεδομένων διευκολύνει τὴν κατανόησι τοῦ εἰδικοῦ προνομιακοῦ καθεστώτος τοῦ Ἁγίου Ὁρους καὶ τῆς σοφίας αὐτῶν πὺ τὸ θέσπισαν καὶ ἐκείνων πὺ τὸ σεβάσθησαν. Δημιουργεῖ ἐπίσης τὴν ὑποχρέωσι στὴν Ἑλληνικὴν Πολιτείαν νὰ μεριμνᾷ γιὰ τὴν διαχρονικὴ κατοχύρωσίν του, πρᾶγμα πὺ τῆς προσθέτει εὐθύνην καὶ στὸ πλαίσιο τῶν τωρινῶν σχετικῶν εὐρωπαϊκῶν διεργασιῶν.

Οἱ Ἀγιορεῖτες στὶς καθημερινῆς προσευχῆς τὸς ὑπὲρ τοῦ σύμπαντος κόσμου, θὰ προσθέσουν καὶ αὐτὴ τὴν σύντομη αἴτησι : Ἡ Κυρία Θεοτόκος, Μητέρα καὶ Ὑπέρμαχος τῶν Ἑλλήνων, νὰ φωτίσι τὸς ἡγέτες τὸς, ὥστε νὰ φροντίσουν καλύτερα γιὰ τὴν προστασία τοῦ Περιβολιοῦ Τῆς.

**Ἄπαντες οἱ ἐν τῇ κοινῇ Συνάξει Ἀντιπρόσωποι καὶ Προϊστάμενοι τῶν εἴκοσιν Ἱερῶν Μονῶν τοῦ Ἁγίου Ὁρους**



**Ἀπὸ τὸν Γέροντα Πορφύριον (+1991)**

**Ὁ Διοραπικός, Προοραπικός καὶ Ἰαμαπικός Γέροντας τῆς Ἐποχῆς μας**

Πολλοὶ λένε ὅτι ἡ χριστιανικὴ ζωὴ εἶναι δυσάρεστη καὶ δύσκολη, ἐγὼ λέω ὅτι εἶναι εὐχάριστη καὶ εὐκόλη, ἀλλὰ ἀπαιτεῖ δυὸ προϋποθέσεις: ταπεινωσι καὶ ἀγάπη.

Ἄν ἔρθει ἡ χάρις τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὅλοι καὶ ὅλα ἀλλάζουν, ἔλα ὁμως πὺ γιὰ νὰ ἔρθει, χρειάζεται πρῶτα νὰ ταπεινωθοῦμε! Μπορεῖ κάποιος νὰ μιλάει γιὰ τὶς ἀμαρτίες του καὶ νὰ εἶναι ὑπερήφανος κι ἄλλος νὰ μιλάει γιὰ τὶς ἀρετῆς του καὶ νὰ εἶναι ταπεινός.

Νὰ εἴμαστε ταπεινοί, ἀλλὰ νὰ μὴν ταπεινολογοῦμε. Ἡ ταπεινολογία εἶναι παγίδα τοῦ διαβόλου, πὺ φέρνει τὴν ἀπελπισία καὶ τὴν ἀδράνεια, ἐνῶ ἡ ἀληθινὴ ταπεινωσι φέρνει τὴν ἐλπίδα καὶ τὴν ἐργασία τῶν ἐντολῶν τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

Δὲ γίνεται κανεὶς χριστιανός με τὴν τεμπελιά, χρειάζεται δουλειά, πολλὴ δουλειά!

*Ἀπὸ τὸ βιβλίον «Κοντὰ Στο Γέροντα Πορφύριον»*



## THE “JOYOUS” FEAST OF THE PUMPKIN

*By Bishop Kyrill of Seattle, reprinted from Orthodox Life, Vol. 43, No. 5, September - October, 1993.*

It is that time of the year when the secular society in which we live is preparing for the festival of Halloween. Many do not know its spiritual roots and history, and why it contradicts the teachings of the Church. The feast of Halloween began in pre-Christian times among the Celtic peoples of Great Britain, Ireland and northern France. These pagan peoples believed that life was born from death. Therefore they celebrated the beginning of the “new year” in the fall (on the eve of October 31 and into the day of November 1) when, as they believed, the season of cold, darkness, decay and death began. A certain deity whom they called Samhain was believed by the Celts to be the Prince of Death and it was he whom they honored at their New Year’s festival.

From an Orthodox Christian point of view, we can see many diabolical beliefs and practices associated with this feast which have endured to this time. On the eve of the New Year’s festival, the Druids, who were the priests of the Celtic cult, instructed their people to extinguish all hearth fires and lights. On the evening of the festival, a huge bonfire built from oak branches (oak was regarded by the Celts as sacred) was ignited. Upon this fire sacrifices were burned as an offering in order to appease and cajole Samhain, the Prince of Death. It was also believed that Samhain, being pleased by the offerings, allowed the souls of the dead to return to their homes for a festal visit on this day. It is from this belief that the practice of wandering about in the dark dressed up in costumes imitating ghosts, witches, hobgoblins, fairies, etc., grew up. For the living entered into fellowship and communion with the dead by what was, and still is, a ritual act of imitation, through costume and the activity of wandering around in the dark of night, even as the souls of the dead were believed to wander.

The dialogue of trick or treat is also an integral part of this system of beliefs and practices. It was believed that the souls of the dead who had entered into the world of darkness, decay and death, and therefore into total communion with and submission to Samhain, bore the affliction of great hunger on their festal visit. Out of this grew the practice of begging, which was a further ritual enactment and imitation of what the Celts believed to be the activities of the souls of the dead on their festal visit. Associated with this is the still further implication that if the souls of the dead and their imitators were not appeased with “treats”, i.e., offerings, then the wrath and anger of Samhain would be unleashed through a system of “tricks”, i.e., curses. Such is the true meaning of this pagan feast. It is then evident that for Orthodox Christian participation at any level is impossible and idolatrous, resulting in a genuine betrayal of God and Church. If we participate in

the ritual activity of imitating the dead and wandering in the dark asking for treats or offering them to children, we then have willfully sought fellowship with the dead, who’s Lord is not Samhain, but rather Satan. It is to Satan then that these treats are offered, not to children.

There are other practices associated with Halloween from which we must stay away, such as sorcery, fortune telling, divination, games of chance, witchcraft and the carving of an ugly face upon a pumpkin and then placing a lit candle within the infamous Jack O’ Lantern. The pumpkin (in older days other vegetables were used) was carved by the Celts in imitation of the dead and used to convey the new light (from the sacred oak fire) to the home where the lantern was left burning through the night. This “holy lantern” is no other than an imitation of the truly holy votive light (lampada) offered before an icon of Christ and the saints. Even the use and display of the Jack O’Lantern involves participation in this “death” festival honoring Satan.

The Holy Fathers of the first millennium (a time when the Church was one and strictly Orthodox) counteracted this Celtic pagan feast by introducing the Feast of All Saints. It is from this that the term Halloween developed. The word Halloween has its roots in the Old English of All Hallow E’en, i.e., the Eve commemorating all those who were hallowed (sanctified), i.e., Halloween. Unfortunately, either due to lack of knowledge or understanding, the Celtic pagan feast being celebrated on the same day as the Christian feast of All Saints (in western Christendom) came to be known as Halloween.

The people who remained pagan, and therefore anti-Christian, reacted to the Church’s attempt to supplant their festival by celebrating this evening with increased fervor. Many of these practices involved desecration and mockery of the Church’s reverence for Holy Relics. Holy things, such as crosses and the Reserved Sacrament, were stolen and used in perverse and sacrilegious ways. The practice of begging became a system of persecution designed to harass Christians who were, by their beliefs, unable to participate by making offerings to those who served the Lord of Death.

One can see in contemporary Western society that the Western Church’s attempt to supplant this pagan festival with a Christian feast failed. How then did something that is so obviously contradictory to the Holy Orthodox faith gain such acceptance among Christian people?

The answer is spiritual apathy and listlessness (which are the spiritual roots of atheism and turning away from God). Today’s society urges one that Halloween and other such festivities, notwithstanding their apparent pagan and idolatrous origin, are nonetheless harmless and of no consequence. Upon closer consideration, these pagan festivals are the source for destroying any kind of spiritual foundation and lead to disbelief and outright atheism.

*(continued on next page)*

## WHY NOT ABSTINENCE!

*Anonymous*

I was holding a notice from my 13-year-old son's school announcing a meeting to preview the new course in sexuality. Parents could examine the curriculum and take part in an actual lesson presented exactly as it would be given to the students.

When I arrived at the school, I was surprised to discover only about a dozen parents there. As we waited for the presentation, I thumbed through page after page of instruction in the prevention of pregnancy or disease. I found abstinence mentioned only in passing. When the teacher arrived with the school nurse, she asked if there were any questions. I asked why abstinence did not play a noticeable part in the educational material.

What happened next was shocking. There was a great deal of laughter, and someone suggested that if I thought abstinence had merit, I should go back to burying my head in the sand. The teacher and the nurse said nothing as I drowned in a sea of embarrassment. My mind had gone blank, and I could think of nothing to say. The teacher explained to me that the job of the school was to teach "facts," and the home was responsible for moral training.

I sat in silence for the next 20 minutes as the sexuality course was explained. The other parents seemed to give their unqualified support to the materials.

At the break time, the teacher announced that there were donuts in the back of the room and requested that everyone put on a name tag and mingle with each other. Everyone moved to the back of the room. As I watched them affixing their name tags and shaking hands, I sat deep in thought. I was ashamed that I had not been able to persuade them to include a serious discussion of abstinence in the educational materials. I uttered a silent prayer for guidance.

My thoughts were interrupted by the teacher's hand on my shoulder.

"Won't you join the others, Mr. Layton?" The nurse smiled sweetly at me. "The donuts are good."

"Thank you, no," I replied.

"Well then, how about a name tag? I'm sure the others would like to meet you."

"Somehow I doubt that," I replied.

"Won't you please join them?" she coaxed.

Then I heard a still, small voice whisper, "Don't go." The message in my head was unmistakable: "Don't go!"

"I'll just wait here," I said.

When the class was called back to order, the teacher looked around the long table and thanked everyone for putting on name tags. She ignored me. Then she said,

"Now we're going to give you the same lesson we'll be giving

your children. Everyone please peel off your name tags and look at the back of the tag."

I watched in silence as the tags came off. "Now then, I drew a tiny flower on the back of one of the tags. Who has it, please?" the teacher asked.

The gentleman across from me held it up. "Here it is!"

"All right," she said. "The flower represents disease. Do you recall with whom you shook hands?"

He pointed to a couple of people. "Very good," she replied. "The handshake in this case represents intimacy. So the two people you had contact with now have the disease." There was laughter and joking among the parents.

The teacher continued, "And whom did the two of you shake hands with?"

The point was well taken, and she explained how this lesson would show students how quickly disease is spread. She concluded by saying, "Since we all shook hands, we all have the disease."

It was then that I heard the still, small voice again "Speak now," it said, "but be humble."

I wryly noted the latter admonition, then rose from my chair. I apologized for any upset I might have caused earlier, congratulated the teacher on an excellent lesson that would impress the youth, and concluded by saying I had only one small point I wished to make. "Not all of us were infected with the disease," I said. "One of us abstained."



## THE "JOYOUS" FEAST OF THE PUMPKIN

*(continued from previous page)*

Halloween undermines the very basis of the Church which was founded on the blood of martyrs who had refused, by giving up their lives, to partake in any form of idolatry. The Holy Mother Church must take a firm stand in counteracting any such (pagan) events. Christ taught us that God is the judge in all our actions and beliefs and that we are either FOR GOD or AGAINST GOD. There is no neutral or middle of the road approach.

Today we witness a revival of satanist cults; we hear of satanic services conducted on Halloween night. Children are kidnapped by satanists for their ritualistic sacrifices. Orthodox clergy are ritualistically killed as has happened more than once in California. Everywhere Satan reaches out to ensnare as many innocent people as possible. The newsstands are filled with material on spiritualism, supernatural phenomena, séances, prophecies and all sorts of demonically inspired works. These works all serve Satan, for they are not the fruit of the Holy Spirit, but the fruit of the spirit of this world.

## APOPHTHEGMS BY THE GOD-INSPIRED ST. ISAAC THE SYRIAN, PART 5

*SOURCE: From the book "475 Apophthegms by the God-Inspired St. Isaac the Syrian," pp. 20-24, published by Orthodox Kypseli, translated from the Greek by George Karras.*

### 12<sup>th</sup> Lesson

(Continued from our previous issue)

112. Wherever you go, consider yourself a stranger and you will forego the damage of boldness and idle talk. At every moment pretend that you know nothing.

113. Speak as a student and not as a teacher. On every subject, believe that you are in need of learning and you will thus be wise during your whole life.

114. You must never read heretical books. You ought to always study the books of the Church's teachers (the Holy Fathers).

115. You must always praise and offer your blessing to others and you ought never to curse anyone. Praises and blessings give rise to more blessings. Accusations and curses, on the other hand, lead to more cursing.

116. Never pass on to others what you have not mastered within yourself, your own life and deeds.

### 13<sup>th</sup> Lesson

117. When God's Grace opens the eyes of your soul, the tears then flow as if from a faucet. This is the most obvious sign of Divine intervention.

118. Study the Holy Gospels at a peaceful location so that you become familiar with God's wonders and thus feel in your soul Heavenly joy and sweetness.

119. Within your home, you must only invite those who are of the same manners, opinions, morals, mind, and virtue as yourself.

120. Combine your prayer with almsgiving and you will be enlightened with Divine Light.

121. Study Holy Scriptures and the Lives of the Saints and you will feel God's sweetness when you stand in prayer.

122. As in the case of the harlot who is not allowed to discuss issues on morality, carnal humans are similarly prohibited from discussing spiritual matters for as long as they have not tasted in their souls the sweetness of their own spiritual deeds.

123. Our Lord ate together with the tax collectors and the sinners so that through the fear of God, He might draw them near Him. When you do a good deed do not ask for repayment and you will be rewarded from God.

124. Lack of food guides man towards temperance while abundance guides him towards intemperance. Whoever wins the war with his senses is like the person who secures the city's gates and only has to fight with the enemies within the city walls.

125. Handiwork was appointed by the Church Fathers to those that are troubled by thoughts; to the person who has attained perfection, handiwork is agitating.

### 14<sup>th</sup> Lesson

126. For a person to rest in quiet ("*hesychia*") behind the door of his cell is a gift from God.

127. Even when one has not yet achieved perfection, he may still have hope for salvation and he may be deemed worthy of God's Grace as long as he avoids the improper acts of sin and instead comes to grips with the good deeds of virtue.

128. If a person does not "kill" his external self from all of the world's cares, sin, improper memories, and evil thoughts, then it is unlikely that he will realize the sweetness of the Holy Spirit.

129. Blessed is the person who sits in quiet and is preoccupied only with prayer and with nothing else.

130. Whoever withdraws from the world in a reformatory manner, he discovers within his soul the mystery of everlasting life and becomes worthy of Divine Grace.

131. The perceptive signs of God's love are: a) our face turns red, as if emitting light, and cheerful; b) our body temperature rises; c) we start considering the terrible hour of death as a joyful moment; d) we constantly remember heavenly matters and we speak of them, and e) our "nous" is suspended, as if conversing with someone else, and in ecstasy.

132. If we do not attain the virtue of holy humility, we will neither have rest nor rid ourselves of our enemies' plots.

133. Those that fall ill against their will and may thus be unable to earn everlasting life, God guides their souls through involuntary sorrows to the attainment of virtues.

134. Be aware that whatever (material) thing's yearning is superior within you, that thing is alive within you.

### 15<sup>th</sup> Lesson

135. God's philanthropy is analogous to the severity of sorrows which His Goodness allows. If you do not remain dispassionate towards sorrows, then the world lives within you more than the passion for Christ. In other words, the love for your body is what lives within you and not Christ's love.

136. When the body is drowning in temptations and sorrows, then Christ's love defeats the grief of the intellect.

137. The path that guides a person to the Light and a life in Christ is: a) quiet ("*hesychia*"), b) consumption of food in moderation, and c) constant preoccupation with diligence towards and study of matters of God, i.e., Holy Communion, the Jesus prayer, and study of Holy Scriptures. Through these one accrues a) the freedom of the true Christian, b) the joy of heart, and c) the everlasting rest with Christ in the Heavenly Kingdom.

138. The indecent and lewd glutton feels a) dizziness in the head, b) heavy body and debility, c) sloth and a clouded mind, and d) delinquency towards anything spiritual.

139. We do not study the Holy Scriptures because we have never tasted the sweetness of God's Word due to our high spiritual fever.

140. The desert dweller has no casual temptations because he neither sees women nor are his ears exposed to improper or idle talk or anything else that could harm his godlike behavior.



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## QUESTION: WHY ARE VIGIL LAMPS LIT BEFORE ICONS?

*By St. Nikolai Velimirovich of Serbia (+1956), on-line article from Orthodox America.*

**F**irst-because our faith is light. Christ said: I am the light of the world (John 8:12). The light of the vigil lamp reminds us of that light by which Christ illumines our souls.

**S**econd-in order to remind us of the radiant character of the saint before whose icon we light the vigil lamp, for saints are called sons of light (John 12:36, Luke 16:8).

**T**hird-in order to serve as a reproach to us for our dark deeds, for our evil thoughts and desires, and in order to call us to the path of evangelical light; and so that we would more zealously try to fulfill the commandments of the Saviour: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works" (Matt. 5:16).

**F**ourth-so that the vigil lamp would be our small sacrifice to God, Who gave Himself completely as a sacrifice for us, and as a small sign of our great gratitude and radiant love for Him from Whom we ask in prayer for life, and health, and salvation and everything that only boundless heavenly love can bestow.



**F**ifth-so that terror would strike the evil powers who sometimes assail us even at the time of prayer and lead away our thoughts from the Creator. The evil powers love the darkness and tremble at every light, especially at that which belongs to God and to those who please Him.

**S**ixth-so that this light would rouse us to selflessness. Just as the oil and wick burn in the vigil lamp, submissive to our will, so let our souls also burn with the flame of love in all our sufferings, always being submissive to God's will.

**S**eventh-in order to teach us that just as the vigil lamp cannot be lit without our hand, so too, our heart, our inward vigil lamp, cannot be lit without the holy fire of God's grace, even if it were to be filled with all the virtues. All these virtues of ours are, after all, like combustible material, but the fire which ignites them proceeds from God.

**E**ighth-in order to remind us that before anything else the Creator of the world created light, and after that everything else in order: And God said, let there be light: and there was light (Genesis 1:3). And it must be so also at the beginning of our spiritual life, so that before anything else the light of Christ's truth would shine within us. From this light of Christ's truth subsequently every good is created, springs up and grows in us.

*May the Light of Christ illumine you as well!*

# Orthodox Heritage

So therefore, brethren, persevere, and grasp the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or by our epistle [2 Thess. 2:15]

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Ἄρα οὖν, ἀδελφοί, στήκετε, καὶ κρατεῖτε τὰς παραδόσεις ἃς ἐδιδάχθητε, εἴτε διὰ λόγου εἴτε δι' ἐπιστολῆς ἡμῶν [Θεσσ. Β' 2:15]

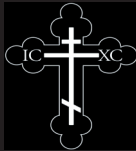
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## THE VISION OF OUR HOLY FATHER JOHN, WONDERWORKER OF KRONSTADT

*Translated by Priestmonk Orestes, Christ the Saviour Orthodox Seminary*

The Holy and Righteous John of Kronstadt recalled this vision which he had in January of 1901:

After evening prayers I laid down to rest a little in my dimly lit cell since I was fatigued. Hanging before the icon of the Mother of God was my lit lampada. Not more than a half-hour had passed when I heard a soft rustle. Someone touched my left shoulder, and in a tender voice said to me, "Arise servant of God John, and follow the will of God!" I arose and saw near the window a glorious Staretz (elder) with frosty gray hair, wearing a black mantia, and holding a staff in his hand. He looked at me tenderly, and I could scarcely keep from falling because of my great fear. My hands and feet trembled, and I wanted to speak, but my tongue would not obey me. The Staretz made the sign of the cross over me, and calm and joy soon came over me. Then I made the sign of the cross myself. He then pointed to the western wall of my cell with his staff in order that I should notice a certain spot. The Staretz had inscribed on the wall the following numbers: 1913, 1914, 1917, 1922, 1924, and 1934. Suddenly the wall vanished, and I walked with the Staretz toward a green field and saw a mass of crosses—thousands standing as gravemarkers. They were wooden, clay, or gold. I asked the Staretz, "What are these crosses for?" He softly answered, "They are for those who suffered and were murdered for their faith in Christ and for the Word of God and have become martyrs!" And so we continued to walk.

Suddenly I saw an entire river of blood and asked the Staretz, "What is the meaning of this blood? How much has been spilled?" The Staretz looked around and replied, "This is the blood of true Christians!" The Staretz then pointed to some clouds, and I saw a mass of burning white lamps. They began to fall to the ground one after another by the tens and by the hundreds. During their descent they grew dim and turned to ashes. The Staretz then said to me, "Look!" I saw on a cloud seven burning lamps. I asked, "What is the meaning of the burning lamps which fell to the ground?" He said, "Those are the churches of God which have fallen into heresy, but these seven lamps on the clouds are the seven Catholic and Apostolic Churches which will remain until the end of the world!"

The Staretz then pointed high into the air and I saw and heard angels singing, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of Sabbaoth!" Then a large crowd of people with candles in their hands rushed by with joy on their shining faces. They were archbishops, monks, nuns, groups of laymen, young adults, and even children and babies. I asked the wonderworking Staretz, "What is the meaning of these people?" He responded, "These are all the people who suffered for the Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church, for the holy icons at the hands of the wicked destroyers." I then asked the great Staretz if I could sit down next to them. The Staretz said, "It is too early for you to suffer, so joining them would not be blessed by God!" Again I saw a large group of infants who had suffered for Christ under Herod and had received crowns from the Heavenly King.

We walked further and went into a large church. I wanted to make the sign of the cross, but the Staretz said, "It is not necessary to cross yourself because this is a place of abomination and

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Orthodox Heritage may, at times, bring up issues or present articles that some consider controversial. Such material is presented so that a distinction is made between salvation and the 20th century heresy of ecumenism. These are confusing times for the Orthodox faithful, and political correctness must be sacrificed so that His TRUTH be brought forth.

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desolation!" The church was very gloomy. On the altar was a star and a Gospel book with stars. Candles made of tar were burning and crackling like firewood. The chalice was standing there covered by a strong stench. There was proshpora with stars. A priest stood before the altar with a face like pitch and a woman was under the altar covered in red with a star on her lips and she screamed and laughed throughout the church saying, "I am free!" I thought "Oh, Lord, how awful!" The people, like madmen, began to run around the altar, scream, whistle, and clap their hands. Then they began to sing lecherous songs. Suddenly lightning flashed, a frightening thunderbolt resounded, the earth trembled, and the church collapsed, sending the woman, the people, the priest, and the rest into the abyss. I thought "Oh Lord, how awful, save us!"

The Staretz saw what had happened as did I. I asked, "Father, tell me, what is the meaning of this frightening church?" He responded, "These are the earthly people, heretics who have abandoned the Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church and recognized the newly innovated church which God has not blessed. In this church they do not fast, do not attend services, and do not receive Holy Communion!" I was frightened and said, "The Lord has pity on us, but curses those with death!" The Staretz interrupted me and said, "Do not mourn, but just pray!" Then I saw a throng of people, each of whom had a star on his lips and was terribly exhausted from thirst, walking here and there. They saw us and yelled loudly, "Holy Fathers, pray for us. It is very hard for us because we ourselves cannot. Our Fathers and Mothers did not teach us the Law of God. We do not even have the name of Christ, and we have received no peace. We rejected the Holy Spirit and the sign of the cross!" They began to cry.

I followed after the Staretz. "Look!" he said, pointing with his hand. I saw a mountain of human corpses stained in blood. I was very frightened, and I asked the Staretz, "What is the meaning of these dead bodies?" He replied, "These are people who lived the monastic life, were rejected by the Antichrist, and did not receive his seal. They suffered for their faith in Christ and the Apostolic Church and received martyrs crowns

dying for Christ. Pray for these servants of God!"

Without warning the Staretz turned to the north and pointed with his hand. I saw an imperial palace, around which dogs were running. Wild beasts and scorpions were roaring and charging and baring their teeth. And I saw the Tsar sitting on a throne. His face was pale and masculine. He was reciting the Jesus Prayer. Suddenly he fell like a dead man. His crown fell. The wild beasts, dogs, and scorpions trampled on the anointed Sovereign. I was frightened and cried bitterly. The Staretz took me by my right shoulder. I saw a figure shrouded in white -- it was Nicholas II. On his head was a wreath of green leaves, and his face was white and somewhat bloodied. He wore a gold cross around his neck and was quietly whispering a prayer. And then he said to me with tears, "Pray for me, Fr. John. Tell all Orthodox Christians that I, the Tsar-martyr, died manfully for my faith in Christ and the Orthodox Church. Tell the Holy Fathers that they should serve a Panahida for me, a sinner, but there will be no grave for me!"

Soon everything became hidden in the fog. I cried bitterly praying for the Tsar-martyr. My hands and feet trembled from fear. The Staretz said, "Look!" Then I saw a throng of people scattered about the land who had died from starvation while others were eating grass and vegetation. Dogs were devouring the bodies of the dead, and the stench was terrible. I thought, "Oh Lord, these people had no faith. From their lips they expelled blasphemy, and for this they received God's anger."

I also saw an entire mountain of books and among the books worms were crawling, emitting a terrible stench. I asked the Staretz, "What is the meaning of these books?" He said, "These books are the Godlessness and blasphemy which will infect all Christians with heretical teachings!" Then the Staretz touched his staff to some of the books, and they ignited into flames. The wind scattered the ashes.

Further on, I saw a church around which was a large pile of prayer intentions for the departed. I bent over and wanted to read them, but the Staretz said, "These prayer requests for the dead have been lying here for many years, and the priests have



forgotten about them. They are never going to read them, but the dead will ask someone to pray for them!" I asked, "Who will they get to pray for them?" The Staretz answered: "The angels will pray for them!"

We proceeded further, and the Staretz quickened the pace so that I could hardly keep up with him. "Look!" he said. I saw a large crowd of people being persecuted by demons, who were beating them with stakes, pitchforks, and hooks. I asked the Staretz, "What is the meaning of these people?" He answered, "These are the ones who renounced their faith and left the Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church and accepted the new innovative church. This group represents priests, monks, nuns, and laymen who renounced their vows or marriage, and engaged in drinking and all sorts of blasphemy and slander. All of these have terrible faces and a terrible stench comes from their mouths. The demons beat them, driving them into the terrible abyss, from where hellfire comes forth." I was terribly frightened. I made the sign of the cross while praying, "Lord deliver us from such a fate!"

I then saw a group of people, both old and young, all of whom were terribly dressed, and who were raising a large, five pointed star. On each corner were twelve demons and in the middle was satan himself with terrifying horns and a straw head. He emitted a noxious foam onto the people while pronouncing these words, "Arise you accursed ones with the seal of ..." Suddenly many demons appeared with branding irons and on all the people they placed the seal on their lips, above the elbow and on their right hands. I asked the Staretz, "What is the meaning of this?" He responded, "This is the mark of the Antichrist!" I made the sign of the cross and followed after the Staretz.

He suddenly stopped and pointed to the east with his hand. I saw a large gathering of people with joyous faces carrying crosses and candles in their hands. In their midst stood a large altar as white as snow. On the altar was the cross and the Holy Gospel and over the altar was the aer with a golden imperial crown on which was written in golden letters, "For the short term." Patriarchs, bishops, priests, monks, nuns, and laymen stood around the altar. They were all singing, "Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth." Out of great joy I made the sign of the cross and praised God.

Suddenly the Staretz waved his cross upwards three times, and I saw mountain of corpses covered in human blood and above them angels were flying. They were taking the souls of those murdered for the Word of God to heaven while they sang "Alleluia!"

I observed all this and cried loudly. The Staretz took me by the hand and forbade me to cry. "What is pleasing to God is that Our Lord Jesus Christ suffered and shed His precious blood for us. Such ones will become martyrs who do not accept the seal of the Antichrist, and all who shed their blood will receive heavenly crowns." The Staretz then prayed for these servants of God and pointed to the east as the words of the Prophet Daniel came true, "Abomination of desolation."

Finally, I saw the cupola of Jerusalem. Above it was a star.

Within the church millions of people thronged and still many more were trying to enter. I wanted to make the sign of the cross, but the Staretz grabbed my hand and said, "Here is the abomination of desolation!" So we entered into the church, and it was full of people.

I saw an altar on which tallow candles were burning. On the altar was a king in red, blazing, porphyry. On his head was a golden crown with a star. I asked the Staretz, "Who is this?" He replied, "The Antichrist!" He was very tall with eyes like fire, black eyebrows, a wedge-shaped beard, a ferocious, cunning, evil, and terrible face. He alone was on the altar and he reached his hands out to the people. He had claws as those of a tiger for hands and he shouted, "I am King. I am God. I am the Leader. He who does not have my seal will be put to death."

All the people fell down and worshipped him, and he began to place his seal on their lips and on their hands in order that they should receive some bread and not die from hunger and thirst. Around the Antichrist his servants were leading several people whose hands were bound as they had not bowed down to worship him. They said, "We are Christians, and we all believe in our Lord Jesus Christ!" The Antichrist ripped off their heads in a flash and Christian blood began to flow. A child was then led to the altar of the Antichrist to worship him, but he boldly proclaimed, "I am a Christian and believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, but you are a minister, a servant of satan!" "Death to him!" exclaimed the Antichrist. Others who accepted the seal of the Antichrist fell down and worshipped him.

Suddenly, a roar of thunder resounded and a thousand lightning flashes began to sparkle. Arrows began to strike the servants of the Antichrist. Then a large flaming arrow flashed by and hit the Antichrist himself on the head. As he waved his hand, his crown fell and was crushed into the ground. Then millions of birds flew in and perched on the servants of the Antichrist. I felt the Staretz take me by the hand.

We walked further on, and I again saw much Christian blood. It was here that I remembered the words of Saint John the Theologian in the book of Revelation that blood would "be up to the horse's bridle." I thought, "Oh my God, save us!" At that time I saw angels flying and singing, "Holy, Holy, Holy. Lord of Sabaoth!" The Staretz looked back and went on to say, "Do not grieve, for soon, very soon, will come the end of the world! Pray to the Lord. God be merciful to His servants!"

Time was drawing near to a close. He pointed to the east, fell to his knees and began to pray so I prayed with him. Then the Staretz began to quickly depart from the earth to the heights of heaven. As he did so, I remembered that I did not know his name, so I cried out loudly, "Father, what is your name?" He tenderly replied, "Seraphim of Sarov!" That is what I saw, and this is what I have recorded for Orthodox Christians.

A large bell rang above my head, and I heard the sound and arose from bed. "Lord, bless and help me through the prayers of the great Staretz! You have enlightened me, the sinful servant, the priest John of Kronstadt."

## PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

*By St. Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessaloniki (+1360), from the web pages of "Orthodox America"*

Let no one think, my dear brothers in Christ, that the duty of praying unceasingly and always belongs only to those of priestly rank and monastics and not to laymen. No, no; all of us Christians have the duty of being always in the state of prayer. Just see what the holy Patriarch of Constantinople, Philotheus writes in the life of St. Gregory of Thessalonika:

This hierarch had a beloved friend whose name was Job, a simple man but full of good deeds. Once they were conversing and the bishop said concerning prayer that all Christians must struggle in prayer always and must pray constantly just as the Apostle Paul exhorts: pray without ceasing (I Thess. 5:17); and as the prophet David says of himself [in spite of the fact that he was king and had to take care of his entire kingdom]: I beheld the Lord ever before me (Ps. 15:8), i.e., in my mind's eye I always see the Lord before me in my prayer. And St. Gregory the Theologian teaches all Christians and tells them that they should remember the name of God more often than they breathe.

Having said this and much else to his friend Job, the hierarch added that not only should we, obeying the commands of the saints, ourselves pray always, but we should teach others to do the same; all, without distinction--monks and laymen, learned and simple, men and women and children--we should urge to pray without ceasing.

Hearing this, the elderly Job thought this was something new and began to argue, telling the hierarch that to pray always was the work only of ascetics and monks "who live outside the world and its cares, and not of laymen who have so many cares and activities." The hierarch brought forth more evidence in support of this truth and new irrefutable proofs, but even these did not convince the elder Job. Then the holy Gregory, avoiding talkativeness and strife, became silent and they each went to their separate cells.

Afterwards when Job was praying alone in his cell, there appeared to him an angel sent from God, Who desired that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (I Tim. 2:4), and reproached him for arguing with St. Gregory and opposing such an evident matter on which depends the salvation of Christians. He announced from God Himself that in the future he should take heed and beware of telling anyone anything contrary to this soul-saving matter and not resist the will of God, that even in his own mind he should not have any thought opposed to this, not allow himself to think in any way contrary to that which St. Gregory had said. Then the simple elder Job hurried to St. Gregory and falling to his feet asked his forgiveness for his opposition and strife and disclosed to him all that the angel of the Lord had said.

Now you see, my brethren, how all Christians, from the least to the greatest, must always pray within their hearts: "Lord,

Jesus Christ, have mercy on me!" in such a way that their mind and heart would always be in the habit of pronouncing these holy words. Be assured how pleasing this is to God and how much good comes from this, when, in His infinite love for mankind, He sent an angel from heaven to reveal this to us so that no one would have any doubt about it. But what do laymen say? "We are overburdened with things to do and worldly cares. How can we pray without ceasing?"

I would answer them that God did not command us to do anything impossible, but only that which we are able to do. And therefore, this can be done by anyone who fervently seeks the salvation of his soul. If this were impossible, then it would be impossible for anyone living in the world and there would not be so very many of those who, in the midst of the world, carried on unceasing prayer as they should. Among many such people, we may take as examples the father of St. Gregory of Thessalonika, the wondrous Constantine, who, despite his involvement in the life of the court, being called the father and tutor of the Emperor Andronicus and daily occupied with affairs of state as well as with those of his own household -- he had a large estate with many servants, a wife and children -- in spite of all this, he was so inseparable from God and so attached to unceasing mental prayer, that he often forgot what it was the Emperor and his lords were discussing with him concerning matters of state, so that he often would ask and even repeat one and the same question. The other lords, not understanding the reason for this, were disturbed and reproached him for being so forgetful and burdening the Emperor with his repetitive questions. But the Emperor, knowing the reason behind all this, came to his defense and said, "Constantine has his own thoughts which sometimes do not permit him to attend fully to what we are saying."

There are countless numbers of others who, living in the world, were entirely given over to ceaseless prayer, as can be testified by historical writings. And so, my dear brothers in Christ, I entreat you -- I together with St. John Chrysostom -- for the sake of your soul's salvation, do not neglect this prayer. Imitate the example of those of whom I have spoken, and follow after them as much as possible. At first this may seem very difficult, but be assured, as if this were from the Almighty God, that the very name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ceaselessly invoked by you, will help you to overcome all difficulties, and with time you will become accustomed to this and you will taste how sweet is the name of the Lord. Then you will know by experience that this activity is not impossible nor difficult, but both possible and easy. This is why St. Paul, knowing much better than we what great benefit comes from this prayer, exhorted us to pray without ceasing. He would not have required this of us had it been so very difficult and utterly impossible, knowing beforehand that in such a case, being unable to fulfill this task, we would inevitably be disobedient to his command and become transgressors of it and thereby make ourselves worthy of judgment and punishment. But this could not have been the Apostle's intent.

In order to pray in this way, we must bear in mind the method of prayer, how it is possible to pray without ceasing, i.e., to pray with the mind. We can always do this, if only we desire it. While we are occupied with handiwork, while we walk, while we eat or drink--we can always pray with the mind, or perform mental prayer pleasing to God, true prayer. With our body let us work, but with our soul let us pray. Let our outer man perform all his bodily activities; but let the inner man be completely given over to serving God and never cease this spiritual activity of mental prayer as Jesus the God-Man commanded us in the holy Gospel: When thou prayest, enter into the closet and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret (Matt. 6:6). The closet of the soul is the body: the doors are our five bodily senses. The soul enters its closet when the mind does not wander here and there pursuing worldly matters, but when it finds its place in our heart. Our senses shut themselves up and remain that way when we do not allow them to cling to outward sensual matters and in this way our mind remains free from all worldly attachments and by means of the hidden mental prayer, unites itself to God its Father.

And thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly, adds the Lord. God, Who knows everything hidden, sees mental prayer and rewards with manifest and great gifts. For that is true and perfect prayer which fills the soul with divine grace and spiritual gifts--like myrrh which, the more you compress it into a vessel, makes the vessel the more fragrant. So it is with prayer: the tighter you lock it into your heart, the more it abounds with God's grace.

Blessed are they who become accustomed to this heavenly activity, for by it they conquer all the temptations of the evil spirits, just as David conquered the proud Goliath. In this way they quench the disorderly desires of the flesh, just as the three youths quenched the flames of the furnace. By means of mental prayer the passions are tamed, just as Daniel tamed the wild beasts. It draws the dew of the Holy Spirit down into the heart, just as the prayers of Elijah brought down rain upon Mt. Carmel. This mental prayer reaches the very throne of God where it is treasured in golden vials and like a censer it gives off a sweet fragrance before the Lord just as St. John the Theologian saw in his revelation: Four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints (Rev. 5:8). This mental prayer is the light enlightening man's soul and enkindling his heart with the fire of love towards God. It is the chain uniting God to man and man to God. O, there is nothing that can compare to the grace of mental prayer! It makes man a constant converser with God. O truly wondrous and most wondrous work! In the body you are with people, but mentally you converse with God.

Angels do not have sensible voices, but mentally they offer up constant praise to God. This is their whole occupation; their entire life is dedicated to this. And you too, brother, when you enter your closet and shut the door, i.e. when your mind no longer wanders to and fro, but enters the inner recesses of your heart, and your senses are locked up and kept away from

the things of the world, and in this manner you always pray, then you are like the holy angels, and your Father, seeing your secret prayer which you offer to Him out of the treasury of your heart, will bestow upon you openly great spiritual gifts. And what more do you desire from this when mentally you are always in the presence of God and converse with Him ceaselessly--you converse with God, without Whom no man can ever be blessed either here or in the other life.



**W**e wish to inform our readers that our first CD in ENGLISH is now available. It contains the homilies of Fr. Athanasios Mitilinaios on the book of Tobit (translated by Constantine Zalalas, St. Nicodemos Publications). The CD contains a total of 40 homilies (in MP3 format) with spiritual advice for Orthodox of ALL ages. These homilies are a must CHRISTMAS GIFT for our youth! See insert in this month's issue for details on how to acquire it.

## HALLOWEEN IS NOW BANNED IN MOSCOW SCHOOLS

Source: <http://www.ananova.com/news/>, 10/28/2003.

**H**alloween has been banned from schools in Moscow after Russian education chiefs ruled it was too pagan. Officials caved in to Church demands and issued a blanket ban on all Halloween celebrations from carving pumpkin heads to dressing up. The Moscow Education Department has ordered all schools in the capital to ban any Halloween celebrations, Izvestia newspaper reported. In a letter sent to school heads and governors teachers were warned that:

"The very fact that Halloween activities contain elements such as the cult of death, rejecting death, personification of death and evil spirits produces a destructive effect upon the psychological, moral and spiritual health of students."

A ban had earlier been called for by the Orthodox Church as the pagan festival was satanic. Kudos to the Russian Orthodox Church and for their position on this very important issue!

**F**rom the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit dwells within the Church and distributes His charismata to the Apostles and theologians and teachers of the Church. The same Holy Spirit which lead the Apostles into true theology, thereafter guided also the Fathers and continues to direct until today. The Apostles and Fathers suffered and learned the Divine. That is why there is no difference of qualitative worth or grading between the Holy Scriptures and Fathers. The Apostles are Fathers of the Church, and the Fathers are Equal-to-the-Apostles. There is one, and only one father and teacher of theology, Christ. And only one guide, the Holy Spirit...It is the common and natural energy and grace of the One in Essence and Undivided Trinity which is given, by the Holy Spirit, in all ages to those who are worthy.

Saint Philotheos Kokkinos



## Ἐπιστολή Γέροντος Πορφυρίου Πρὸς τὰ Πνευματικά του Παιδιά

(έκοιμήθη στις 2 Δεκεμβρίου τοῦ 1991)



Γέρων Πορφύριος (+1991)

**Ἀ**γαπητά πνευματικά μου παιδιά.

Τώρα πού ἀκόμα ἔχω τὰς φρένας μου σῶας θέλω νὰ σᾶς πῶ μερικές συμβουλές.

Ἀπὸ μικρὸ παιδί ὄλο στις ἀμαρτίες ἤμουνα. Καὶ ὅταν με ἔστειλεν ἡ μητέρα μου νὰ φυλάξω τὰ ζῶα στὸ βουνό, γιατί ὁ πατέρας μου, ἐπειδὴ ἤμασταν φτωχοὶ εἶχε πάει στὴν Ἀμερική γιὰ νὰ ἐργαστεῖ στὴν διώρυγα τοῦ Παναμᾶ γιὰ ἐμᾶς τὰ παιδιά του, ἐκεῖ, πού ἔβροσκα τὰ ζῶα συλλα-

βιστὰ διάβαζα τὸν βίο τοῦ ἁγίου Ἰωάννου τοῦ Καλλυβίτου καὶ πάρα πολὺ ἀγάπησα τὸν Ἅγιο Ἰωάννη καὶ ἔκανα πάρα πολλές προσευχές σὰν μικρὸ παιδί πού ἤμουνα 12-15 χρονῶν δὲν θυμᾶμαι ἀκριβῶς καλὰ καὶ θέλοντας νὰ τὸν μιμηθῶ με πολὺ ἀγῶνα ἔφυγα ἀπὸ τοὺς γονεῖς μου κρυφὰ καὶ ἤλθα στὰ Καυσοκαλύβια τοῦ Ἁγίου Ὄρους καὶ ὑποτάκτηκα σὲ δυὸ γεροντάδες ἀυταδέλφους, τὸν Παντελεήμονα καὶ τὸν Ἰωαννίκιο. Μοῦ ἔτυχε νὰ εἶναι πολὺ εὐσεβεῖς καὶ ἐνάρετοι καὶ τοὺς ἀγάπησα πάρα πολὺ καὶ γι' αὐτὸ με τὴν εὐχή τους τοὺς ἔκανα ἄκρα ὑπακοή.

Αὐτὸ με βοήθησε πάρα πολὺ, αἰσθάνθηκα καὶ μεγάλη ἀγάπη καὶ πρὸς τὸν Θεὸ καὶ πέρασα πάρα πολὺ καλὰ. Ἀλλὰ, κατὰ παραχώρηση τοῦ Θεοῦ, γιὰ τὶς ἀμαρτίες μου ἀρρώστησα πολὺ καὶ οἱ Γεροντάδες μου μοῦ εἶπαν νὰ πάω στοὺς γονεῖς μου στὸ χωριὸ μου εἰς τὸν Ἅγιον Ἰωάννη Εὐβοίας. Καὶ ἐνῶ ἀπὸ μικρὸ παιδί εἶχα κάνει πολλές ἀμαρτίες ὅταν ξαναπῆγα στὸν κόσμον συνέχισα τὶς ἀμαρτίες οἱ ὁποῖες μέχρι καὶ σήμερον εἶχαν πάρα πολλές.

Ὁ κόσμος ὅμως με πῆρε ἀπὸ καλὸ καὶ ὄλοι φωνάζουσε ὅτι εἶμαι ἅγιος. Ἐγὼ ὅμως αἰσθάνομαι ὅτι εἶμαι ὁ πῶ ἀμαρτωλὸς ἄνθρωπος τοῦ κόσμου. Ὅσα ἐνθυμόμουνα βεβαίως τὰ ἐξομολογήθηκα, ἀλλὰ γνωρίζω ὅτι γι' αὐτὰ πού ἐξομολογήθηκα με συγχώρησε ὁ Θεός, ἀλλ' ὅμως τώρα ἔχω ἕνα συναίσθημα ὅτι καὶ τὰ πνευματικά μου ἀμαρτήματα εἶναι πάρα πολλὰ καὶ παρακαλῶ ὅσοι με ἔχετε γνωρίσει νὰ κάνετε προσευχὴ γιὰ μένα διότι καὶ ἐγὼ ὅταν ζοῦσα πολὺ ταπεινὰ ἔκανα προσευχὴ γιὰ σᾶς, ἀλλ' ὅμως τώρα πού θὰ πάω γιὰ τὸν οὐρανὸ ἔχω τὸ συναίσθημα ὅτι ὁ Θεὸς θὰ μοῦ πεῖ: τί θέλεις ἐσὺ ἐδῶ; Ἐγὼ ἕνα ἔχω νὰ τοῦ πῶ. Δὲν εἶμαι ἄξιος Κύριε γιὰ ἐδῶ, ἀλλ' ὅτι θέλει ἡ ἀγάπη σου ἄς κάμει γιὰ μένα. Ἀπὸ ἐκεῖ καὶ πέρα δὲν ξέρω τί θὰ γίνει.

Ἐπιθυμῶ ὅμως νὰ ἐνεργήσει ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ. Καὶ πάντα εὐχομαι τὰ πνευματικά μου παιδιά νὰ ἀγαπήσουν τὸ Θεό, πού εἶναι τὸ πᾶν, γιὰ νὰ μᾶς ἀξιώσει νὰ μποῦμε στὴν ἐπίγειο ἄκτιστο ἐκκλησία του. Γιατί ἀπὸ ἐδῶ πρέπει νὰ ἀρχί-

## Χριστὸς Γεννᾶται....

Ἁγίου Γρηγορίου Θεολόγου

**Χ**ριστὸς γεννᾶται, δοξάσατε, Χριστὸς ἐξ οὐρανῶν, ἀπαντήσατε, Χριστὸς ἐπὶ γῆς, ὑψώθητε. Ἄσατε τῷ Κυρίῳ πᾶσα ἡ γῆ... Μ' ἕνα λόγο: Ἄς εὐφραίνωνται οἱ οὐρανοὶ καὶ ἄς ἀγάλλεται ἡ γῆ γιὰ τὸν ἐπουράνιο, πού κατόπιν ἐγίνε ἐπίγειος. Ὁ Χριστὸς παρουσιάζεται με ἀνθρώπινο σῶμα, ἀγαλλιάσθε με τρόμο καὶ χαρὰ. Μὲ τρόμο γιὰ τὴν ἐνοχὴ τῆς ἀμαρτίας καὶ με χαρὰ γιὰ τὴν ἐλπίδα τῆς σωτηρίας...

Πάλι διαλύεται τὸ σκοτάδι, πάλι ὑπάρχει τὸ φῶς. Πάλι τιμωρεῖται με σκοτάδι ἡ Αἴγυπτος καὶ πάλι ὁ ἰσραηλιτικὸς λαὸς φωτίζεται με τὸν πύρινο στύλο. Ὁ λαὸς πού καθόταν στὸ σκοτάδι τῆς ἀγνοίας, ἄς δῆ τὸ μεγάλο φῶς τῆς θεογνωσίας. «Τὰ ἀρχαῖα παρῆλθον, ἰδοὺ γέγονε τὰ πάντα καινά». Τὸ νεκρὸ γράμμα ὑποχωρεῖ. Τὸ πνεῦμα ἐπικρατεῖ. Οἱ σκιεὲς τοῦ νόμου περνοῦν. Ἡ ἀλήθεια θριαμβεύει. Ὁ Μελχισεδέκ, πού ἦταν ἕνας τύπος, τώρα δείχνει ποῖον προσήμεινε, δηλαδὴ τὸν Χριστό. Αὐτός, πού ὡς Θεὸς δὲν ἔχει μητέρα, γεννιέται χωρὶς πατέρα. Γιατί στὸν Δημιουργὸ τῆς φύσεως δὲν ἰσχύουν οἱ φυσικοὶ νόμοι. Ὅλα τὰ ἔθνη χειροκροτήσατε, γιατί «παιδίον ἐγεννήθη ἡμῖν, υἱὸς καὶ ἐδόθη ἡμῖν, οὗ ἡ ἀρχὴ ἐπὶ τοῦ ὄμου αὐτοῦ καὶ καλεῖται τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Μεγάλης Βουλῆς Ἄγγελος». Ἄς φωνάζη δυνατὰ ὁ Ἰωάννης Βαπτιστής: «Ἐτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν Κυρίου». Καὶ ἐγὼ θὰ φωνάζω τὴν δύναμη καὶ τὴ σημασία τῆς μεγάλης αὐτῆς ἡμέρας τῶν Χριστουγέννων.

Αὐτός πού εἶναι ἀναρχος καὶ αἰώνιος, τώρα λαμβάνει ἀρχή. Αὐτός πού εἶναι αὐθύπαρκτος, δημιουργεῖται. Αὐτός πού εἶναι ἄπειρος, χωρεῖται στὴν περιορισμένη ἀνθρώπινη φύση. Αὐτός πού πλουτίζει με τὰ ἀγαθὰ Του τὸν κόσμον, γίνεται φτωχὸς, παίρνοντας ἀνθρώπινο σῶμα, γιὰ νὰ πλουτίσω ἐγὼ με τὴν θεοότητά Του. Ποῖος μπορεῖ νὰ παραστήσει πόσος εἶναι ὁ πλοῦτος τῆς ἀγαθότητός Του; Γι' αὐτὸ καὶ σὺ μαζί με τὸν Ἀστέρα τρέξε καὶ μαζί με τοὺς Μάγους φέρε Του γιὰ δῶρα, χρυσὸ καὶ λιβάνι καὶ σμύρνα. Τίμησέ Τον ὡς Βασιλέα καὶ Θεὸ καὶ ὡς Λυτρωτή, πού νεκρώθηκε γιὰ σένα. Μαζί με τοὺς ποιμένες δόξασέ Τον, με τοὺς ἀγγέλους ὑμνησέ Τον, με τοὺς ἀρχαγγέλους σκίρτησε ἀπὸ χαρὰ. Ἄς εἶναι κοινὴ ἡ πανήγυρις τῶν οὐρανίων καὶ τῶν ἐπιγείων δυνάμεων...



σομε. Ἐγὼ πάντα εἶχα τὴν προσπάθεια νὰ προσεύχομαι καὶ νὰ διαβάζω τοὺς Ὑμνοὺς τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, τὴν Ἁγία Γραφή καὶ τοὺς βίους τῶν Ἁγίων μας καὶ εὐχομαι καὶ ἐσεῖς νὰ κάνετε τὸ ἴδιο.

Ἐγὼ προσπάθησα με τὴ χάρις τοῦ Θεοῦ νὰ πλησιάσω τὸν Θεὸ καὶ εὐχομαι καὶ ἐσεῖς νὰ κάνετε τὸ ἴδιο. Παρακαλῶ ὅλους σας νὰ με συγχωρέσετε γιὰ ὅτι σᾶς στεναχώρησα.

Ἱερομόναχος Πορφύριος

Ἐν Καυσοκαλυβίοις τῆ 4/17 Ἰουνίου 1991

## Γιατί Δέν Θά ἤΘελα Ποτέ Νά Πάω Στό Ἅγιον Ὅρος

*Ἡ ἀπάντησι μιᾶς γυναίκα στίς κινήσεις γιά τήν κατάργησι τοῦ ἄβату στή μοναστική πολιτεία, τῆς Στέλλας Τσαρτσαρά, Τό Βῆμα 8/2/2003.*

*Στίς 15 Ἰανουαρίου τό Εὐρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιό ἐνέκρινε ἔκθεσι σχετική μέ τὰ θεμελιώδη δικαιώματα ὅπου μεταξὺ τῶν ἄλλων, ζητεῖται νά ἀρθεῖ ἡ ἀπαγόρευσι εἰσόδου γυναικῶν στό Ἅγιον Ὅρος. Εἰσηγήτρια τῆς ἔκθεσις γιά τήν κατάργησι τοῦ ἄβату στή μοναστική πολιτεία ἦταν ἡ ὀλλανδῆ βουλευτής Γιόκε Σβίμπελ. Στό κείμενο πού ἀκολουθεῖ, μία γυναίκα (καί αὐτό ἔχει βεβαίως τή σημασία του) ἐξηγεῖ στήν ὀλλανδῆ εὐρωβουλευτή γιατί αὐτή τουλάχιστον δέν θά ἤθελε ποτέ νά πάει στό Ἅγιον Ὅρος.*

Δέν θά σᾶς ἀπαντήσω νομικά ἢ πολιτιστικά, ὅπως ἄλλωστε ἔχουν κάνει ἐπιτυχῶς πολλοί, μεταξὺ τῶν ὁποίων καί ὁ συνάδελφός σας ὁ κ. Γιάννης Μαρίνος σέ ἓνα ἀπολαυστικό ἄρθρο στό «Βῆμα τῆς Κυριακῆς,» 26/01/2003. θά σᾶς μιλήσω γιά τό πῶς καταλαβαίνω ἐγώ τὰ θεμελιώδη δικαιώματα, μέ τόν τρόπο πού ἔχω μάθει νά τὰ ἀντιλαμβάνομαι καί νά τὰ σέβομαι ἐδῶ στό τόπο μου, στήν Ἑλλάδα.

Ἔσεῖς κυρία Swiebel, λέτε ὅτι παραβιάζονται τὰ δικαιώματά μου ὡς γυναίκα λόγω διάκρισις τοῦ φύλου καί ὡς πολίτη ἐπειδή δέν ἔχω πρόσβασι ἐκεῖ ὅπου ἔχουν οἱ ἄρρενες συμπολίτες μου, ἔτσι ὅπως σωστά θά ἴσχυε σέ ὅποιονδήποτε ἄλλη περίπτωση πού θά ἀφοροῦσε κοινά διακυβευόμενα, σέ επίπεδο κοινωνικό ἢ πολιτειακό. Ἐγώ σᾶς λέω, κυρία Swiebel, ὅτι ἡ πολιτιστική μου ταυτότητα ὡς Ἑλληνίδας Χριστιανῆς Ὀρθόδοξης, μέ ὅτι αὐτό περικλείει ὡς συστατικό (ὅπως ἔχει διαμορφωθεῖ μέσα τοὺς αἰῶνες καί ὅποιοσδήποτε ἔχει μελετήσει Ἱστορία καί γνωρίζει, τότε ἀναγνωρίζει) μοῦ ὑπαγορεύει ὅτι ἡ ἀειφόρος διδαχὴ πού αὐτή φέρει ἀποτελεῖ ἀξίωμα ἀγράφων νόμων στοὺς ὁποίους ὑπακούω μέ τήν ἴδια φυσικότητα πού ἀγάλλομαι ὅταν βλέπω τήν πρώτη εἰκόνα τῆς θάλασσας κάθε ἀρχὴ τῆς ἀνοιξις. Αὐτό πού γιά ἐσᾶς εἶναι παραβίασι δικαιωμάτων γιά ἐμένα εἶναι τρόπος προσεκτικῆς διαφύλαξις τῶν εὐθραυστων συστατικῶν ἐνός μέρους τοῦ πολιτισμοῦ μου.

Θά μοῦ πεῖς γιατί τέτοια εὐαισθησία; Γιατί ἀκριβῶς αὐτό εἶναι πού ὁ δικός σας πολιτισμός δέν μπορεῖ νά ἐννοήσῃ. Ἡ διάκρισις ἐπιτρέπει στή γνώση νά σκαλίζει τό ψηφιδωτό πού εἶναι ἡ σοφία, γνώρισμα τῶν παλαιῶν πολιτισμῶν. Αὐτό πού ἐσεῖς μέ τρόπο λέτε «ἀναχρονιστικό», ἐγώ τρέμω μὴν τό χάσω ἢ μοῦ τό ἀλλοιώσῃ ἢ νεαρή ἀδόκιμη γνώση τῶν συντακτικῶν κάποιας ἔκθεσις, ὅπως γιά παράδειγμα τῆς δικῆς σας, κυρία Swiebel.

Ἡ δική σας ἐννοια τῆς ἐλευθέρης διακίνησις γιά μένα εἶναι ἀπόπειρα κατάφωρης παραβίασις τῆς ἐπιλογῆς (ἐκτός τοῦ ὅτι ζοῦν στό ιδιόκτητο σπίτι τους οἱ ἄνθρωποι) γιά ἀπομόνωση καί ἄσκησι τῶν μοναχῶν καί ὄχι μόνο αὐτῶν τοῦ Ἁγίου Ὁρους, ἔτσι ὥστε νά φθάσουν σέ μία κατάστασι, ὅπου θά γίνουν ὑποδοχεῖς τῆς Θεῆς Χάριτος. Αὐτό ξέρετε τί σημαίνει, κυρία Swiebel; Ὅτι ἡ θεία ἐνέργεια κοινωνεῖ

μέ τοὺς ἄνθρώπους. Δέν μπορεῖτε νά τό καταλάβετε αὐτό, κυρία Swiebel, πῶς γίνεται, ἀλλὰ οὔτε καί ἐγώ.

Θέλει προϋποθέσεις πού δέν ἄπτονται διανοητικῶν νόμων ἀλλὰ πνευματικῶν. Εἶμαι σίγουρη ὅτι ὑπάρχουν καί μέσα στίς δικές σας κοινωνίες ἄνθρωποι πού διακατέχονται ἀπό βαθιά κατάνυξι στό θέμα τῆς σχέσεως Θεοῦ καί ἀνθρώπου. Πού τρέφουν ὄχι σεβασμό, ἀλλὰ εὐλάβεια, κατάνυξι.

Βλέπετε, στὸν δικό μας πολιτισμό, μέ κάποιοι τρόποι γραμμένο σέ ἓνα ἀπροσδιόριστο κώδικα, ἢ κατάνυξι καί ἢ ἀγάπη ἀκόμη λειτουργοῦν ἀπέναντι στὸν Θεό. 2.500.000 ἄνθρωποι προσκύνησαν τήν Παναγία τήν Ἱεροσολυμίτισσα! Καί ὅλη ἡ Ἑλλάδα ἀριθμεῖ περίπου 10. Ἐντυπωσιακό νούμερο ὅταν ξέρει κανεὶς ὅτι ἔπρεπε νά περιμένει 4-5 ὥρες γιά νά προσκυνήσει. Δέν εἶναι τό ἴδιο μέ τὸν σεβασμό στό κοινό μας πάρκο πού, ναί, θά ἔπρεπε νά ὑπάρχει. Εἶναι ὁμοῦ ἄλλο πράγμα αὐτό!

Οἱ μοναχοὶ καί οἱ μοναχῆς ζοῦν ἀπομονωμένοι καί ἀσκοῦνται πνευματικά μέ ἀπώτερο σκοπὸ τὴν ἀπάθεια, δηλαδή τὴ μὴ συμμετοχὴ σέ ὅτιδήποτε τοὺς ἀποσπᾷ ἀπὸ τὴν ἐπικοινωνία τους μέ τὸ Θεὸ μέσῳ τῆς προσευχῆς.

Ἰπῆρχαν δυὸ γέροντες. (Ὅπως προσδιορίζει τὸν ὄρο ὁ ἐπίσκοπος Διοκλείας καί καθηγητῆς στό Πανεπιστήμιο τῆς Ὁξφόρδης κ. Κάλλιστος Ware ὡς «ὁ σοφός ὡς πρὸς τὴν ἐμπειρία του γιά τὴ Θεῖα Ἀλήθεια καί εὐλογημένος μέ τὴ Χάρη τῆς «πνευματικῆς πατρότητας»).

Ὁ ἓνας, ὁ γέρον Πορφύριος, ἤθελε πάντα νά ζήσει στό Ἅγιον Ὅρος, ἀλλὰ ἔζησε στή πλατεία Ὁμονοίας στό κέντρο τῆς Ἀθήνας καί θαυματουργοῦσε, ἐτάφη ὁμοῦ στό Ἅγιον Ὅρος καί ὁ ἄλλος ὁ γέρον Παῖσιος, ἐνῶ ἔζησε πάντα στό Ἅγιον Ὅρος καί ἐπίσης θαυματουργοῦσε, ἐτάφη κοντά μας καί παίρνομε καί ἐμεῖς οἱ γυναῖκες τὴ χάρι του.

Γράφει, λοιπὸν ὁ γέρον Παῖσιος σέ ἓνα ἀπὸ τὰ βιβλία του: «Ἡ ὀρθόδοξι ἐγκράτεια καί γενικὰ ἡ πνευματικὴ ἄσκησι ἀποβλέπει πάντα σέ ἀνώτερο πνευματικὸ σκοπὸ, στὸν ἀγιασμό τῆς ψυχῆς». «Ἡ ἡσυχία (μακρὰν τοῦ κόσμου) πολὺ γρηγόρα φέρνει καί τὴν ἐσωτερικὴ ἡσυχία στήν ψυχὴ μέ τὴν ἄσκησι καί τὴν ἀδιάλειπτη προσευχὴ καί τότε πιά ὁ ἄνθρωπος δέν ἐνοχλεῖται ἀπὸ τὴν ἐξωτερικὴ ἀνησυχία, γιατί στήν οὐσία μόνον τὸ σῶμα βρίσκεται στή γῆ, ἐνῶ ὁ νοῦς βρίσκεται στὸν οὐρανὸ». «Μὴν περιμένουμε νά βλαστήσει μέσα μας τὸ θεῖο, ἂν δέν πεθάνει πρῶτα τὸ ἄνθρωπινο». «Ἐπομένως, τὸ πᾶν εἶναι ἡ Χάρις τοῦ Θεοῦ καί τὴν ψυχὴ μπορεῖ νά τὴ βοηθήσει μόνον Χαρितωμένος Πνευματικός, μέ πίστη, πού ἀγαπάει τὴν ψυχὴ καί τὴν ἀξία». «Ἐκεῖνοι πάλι πού πετᾶνε ἀκόμη καί τὸν ἑαυτὸ τους στό κόσμο, ἀπὸ ἀγάπη, ἀφοῦ πέταξαν πιά τὸν κόσμον ἀπὸ μέσα τους, αὐτοὶ πετᾶνε πιά στὸν οὐρανὸ καί δέν πιάνονται ἀπὸ τὸν κόσμον». «Ὅποιος θέλει νά ἐξετάσει τὴ θεῖα λογικὴ μέ τὸ μυαλό του θά χάσει καί αὐτὸ τὸ λίγο μυαλό πού ἔχει». «Τὸ θαῦμα εἶναι μυστήριον καί τὸ μυαλό δέν μπορεῖ νά τὸ ἐρμηνεύσει, ἀλλὰ μόνον ζεῖται».

Ἰπάρχουν χιλιάδες, κυρία Swiebel, ὄχι ἑκατοντάδες ἀλλὰ χιλιάδες, μερικοὶ ἀπὸ τοὺς ὁποίους εἶναι καί στή χώρα σας, πού ἔχουν θεραπευθεῖ, ὀδηγηθεῖ πνευματικά καί σωθεῖ ἀπὸ



ψυχιατρεία και ναρκωτικά, μόνο από αυτούς τους δυο γέροντες, με τρόπο που η επιστήμη δεν μπορεί να εξηγήσει και που εμείς οι ὀρθόδοξοι λέμε «θαυματουργική επίδραση του Θεοῦ μέσω τῶν ἀσκητῶν αὐτῶν τῆς Ὀρθοδοξίας». Ὁ γέρον Παΐσιος λέει: «Μὲ τὸ μυαλό δεν μπορεί κανεὶς νὰ καταλάβει τις θεῖες ἐνέργειες, ἀν δεν ἀσκηθεῖ πρῶτα νὰ τις ζήσει, γιὰ νὰ ἐνεργήσει μέσα του ἡ Χάρις τοῦ Θεοῦ».

Αὐτὴ λοιπὸν ἡ ἰκανότητα εἶναι ἀποτέλεσμα τῆς ὀλοκληρωτικῆς ἀφοσίωσής τους στὸν Θεό. Ἐσεῖς γιατί θέλετε νὰ χαλάσετε αὐτὴ τὴ τέλεια ἄρμονία; Ὅποτε νὰ πάω ἐγὼ νὰ κάνω τί, κυρία Swiebel, στὸ Ἅγιον Ὄρος; Ἄν ποτὲ ἔχω τὴ τύχη θὰ τοὺς ἐγγραφα, θὰ προσκυνῶσα αὐτὴ τὴν ἀγιοσύνη με εὐλάβεια καὶ θὰ σὰς συνιστοῦσα, ἀν στὸ μέλλον ἔχετε κάποιο πρόβλημα κρίσιμο στὴ ζωὴ σας, νὰ ζητήσετε νὰ δεῖτε τί μπορεί νὰ κάνει ἡ ἀγιασμένη προσευχὴ ἐνὸς τέτοιου μοναχοῦ. Κάποιοι συμπατριῶτες σας τὸ ξέρουν.

Δὲν εἶμαι σίγουρη -- ἀν καὶ τὸ εὐχομαι -- ἀν καταλαβαίνετε, κυρία Swiebel, γιὰ τί πράγμα μιλάμε. Τουλάχιστον, ὁμως, δεχθεῖτε τὴ σοφία ἐνὸς καθεστῶτος αἰῶνων.

Ἐγὼ λοιπὸν ὡς γυναίκα, 35 χρονῶν, ἀνώτατης μόρφωσης καὶ μέσου εἰσοδήματος, με ἀδυναμία στὴν τεχνολογία καὶ στὰ ἀνανεωτικὰ Σαββατοκύριακα, δηλαδὴ ὁ μέσος ὄρος, κατάλαβα διαβάζοντας γεωπολιτικὴ τῆς Ὀρθοδοξίας (Francois Thual: «La geopolitique de l' orthodoxie», Editions Dunod, Paris 1994. « L' Atlas des peuples d' Europe centrale et orientale», Andri Sellier et Jean Sellier, La Decouverte, Paris, premiere edition, 1991) ὅτι δεν μπορῶ -- καὶ νὰ τὸ θέλω -- νὰ εἶμαι τίποτε ἄλλο παρὰ συνέχεια τῆς ἱστορικῆς μου παράδοσης. Τὸ ὅτι δεν τὸ ἤξερα πρὶν ὀφειλόταν στὸ γεγονός ὅτι δεν εἶχα ἀντικατοπτριστεῖ στὸν καθρέφτη μου, δηλαδὴ ἐσὰς, κυρία Swiebel, γιὰ νὰ δῶ τις διαφορὲς μας.

Κατάλαβα, ἐπίσης, ὅτι στὴν Ε.Ε. πᾶμε νὰ φτιάξουμε ἕνα σπιτί ἀπὸ διαφορετικὰ ὕλικά. Μπορεῖ κάποτε νὰ ζήσουμε στὶς Ἠνωμένες Πολιτεῖες τῆς Εὐρώπης με σφιχτοὺς νόμους μίας ὁμοσπονδίας, γιὰ τὴν ἐπίτευξη τῆς ὁποίας δουλεύω καὶ ἐγὼ με πολλὴ θέρμη. Τὴν πολιτιστικὴ διαφορὰ ὁμως δεν μπορεῖ νὰ τὴν ἀλλάξει κανένα νομικὸ πλαίσιο ἢ νὰ εἰσηγηθεῖ τὴν ἀλλοίωση τῶν βάσεων τῆς μίας ἔκθεσης. Οὐτὲ ἡ προσωπικὴ σας εὐαισθησία θὰ ἔπρεπε νὰ ἐπιτρέπει τέτοιες ἐκβάσεις. Τέτοια θέματα θέλουν λεπτὸ χειρισμό, κυρία Swiebel. Μερικὲς φορὲς θὰ πρέπει νὰ ἀντιλαμβανόμαστε τὴ θυσία τῆς δικῆς μας βούλησης σὰν καθῆκον, ἀπὸ εὐαισθησία καὶ ἐπίγνωση ὅτι αὐτὸ θὰ φέρει ἰσορροπία. Στὴν ἀντίθετη περίπτωση, μὴ μοῦ τοὺς κύκλους τάραττε, κυρία Swiebel...



**ΜΕ ΤΙΣ ΕΟΡΤΕΣ ΤΩΝ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥΓΕΝΝΩΝ, ΣΥΝΙΣΤΟΥΜΕ ΣΤΟΥΣ ΑΝΑΓΝΩΣΤΕΣ ΜΑΣ ΝΑ ΛΑΒΟΥΝ ΥΠΟΨΗ ΟΤΙ Η ΑΔΕΛΦΟΤΗΣ ΜΑΣ ΠΡΟΣΦΕΡΕΙ ΣΕ ΤΥΠΟ CD-MP3 ΔΙΑΦΟΡΕΣ ΣΕΙΡΕΣ ΟΜΙΛΙΩΝ ΤΟΥ ΠΡ. ΑΘΑΝΑΣΙΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΜΥΤΙΛΗΝΑΙΟΥ ΣΕ ΧΑΜΗΛΟΤΑΤΕΣ ΤΙΜΕΣ. ΘΑ ΑΠΟΤΕΛΕΣΟΥΝ ΤΟ ΙΔΑΝΙΚΟ ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΙΚΟ ΔΩΡΟ ΓΙΑ ΤΑ ΑΓΑΠΗΜΕΝΑ ΣΑΣ ΠΡΟΣΩΠΑ. ΕΣΩΚΛΕΙΟΥΜΕ ΕΝΑ ΔΕΛΤΙΟ ΠΑΡΑΓΓΕΛΙΑΣ ΓΙΑ ΤΟΥΣ ΕΝΔΙΑΦΕΡΟΝΤΕΣ.**

## Σῶμα Καὶ Αἷμα Χριστοῦ

ΠΗΓΗ: «Θαύματα καὶ Ἀποκαλύψεις ἀπὸ τὴν Θεία Λειτουργία», Ἐκδόσεις «Ἱερὰ Μονὴ Παρακλήτου-Ἱεροῦ Ἀττικῆς»

Ὁ ἄμμηρᾶς τῆς Συρίας ἔστειλε κάποτε τὸν ἀνιψιὸ του στὴ Διόσπολη γιὰ ὀρισμένες ἐργασίες. Στὴν πόλη αὐτὴ ὁ ἀνιψιὸς συνάντησε ἕναν θαυμάσιο ναὸ τοῦ Ἁγίου Γεωργίου. Ἀμέσως πρόσταξε τοὺς ὑπηρετές του νὰ μεταφέρουν τὰ πράγματά του ἐπάνω στὰ κατηχούμενα τοῦ ναοῦ, ὅπου ἐγκαταστάθηκε κι ὁ ἴδιος. Ὑστερα εἶπε νὰ βάλουν μέσα στὸ ναὸ καὶ τις δώδεκα καμήλες του, παρὰ τις διαμαρτυρίες καὶ τις παρακλήσεις τῶν ἱερέων. Μόλις ὁμως οἱ καμήλες μπῆκαν στὴν ἐκκλησία, ἔπεσαν στὸ ἔδαφος νεκρές, ἐνῶ ὁ ἀνιψιὸς τοῦ ἄμμηρᾶ ἔμεινε νὰ θαυμάζει τὴν ἀκαταμάχητη δύναμη τοῦ Ἁγίου Γεωργίου.

Τὴν ἄλλη μέρα, καθὼς ὁ ἱερέας τελοῦσε τὴ θεία λειτουργία. Ὁ Σαρακηνὸς τὸν παρακολουθοῦσε ἀπὸ τὰ κατηχούμενα. Τότε ὁ φιλόanthropos Θεὸς τοῦ ἀνοιξε τὰ μάτια τῆς ψυχῆς, καὶ βλέπει τὸν ἱερέα νὰ σφάζει ἕνα μικρὸ παιδί καὶ νὰ χύνει τὸ αἷμα του μέσα στὸ ἅγιο ποτήριο, ἐνῶ τὸ σῶμα του νὰ τὸ κόβει καὶ νὰ τὸ τοποθετεῖ στὸ ἱερὸ δισκάριο! Ὅταν τελείωσε τὸ κοινωνικὸ, παρατηροῦσε ὁ Σαρακηνὸς ἀπορημένος τὸν ἱερέα νὰ μεταδίδει στὸ λαὸ τις σάρκες καὶ τὸ αἷμα τοῦ παιδιοῦ.

Μετὰ τὴ λειτουργία πῆρε ὁ ἱερέας τὰ καλύτερα πρόσφορα καὶ τὰ πῆγε φιλοδώρημα στὸ Σαρακηνό. Τί εἶναι αὐτά; ρώτησε ἐκεῖνος. Αὐτά, ἀφέντη μου, εἶναι ψωμιά ποὺ προσφέρουν οἱ πιστοί. Μ' αὐτά λειτουργοῦμε στὴν Ἐκκλησία μας.

Ἀπ' αὐτὰ πῆρες καὶ λειτούργησες σήμερα; ρώτησε θυμωμένος ἐκεῖνος. Δὲν σὲ εἶδα ἐγὼ, ποὺ ἔσφαξες τὸ παιδί καὶ ἔδωσες τὴ σάρκα καὶ τὸ αἷμα του στὸ λαό; Νομίζεις πὼς ὄλ' αὐτὰ δεν τὰ ἔβλεπα, κακοῦργε καὶ φονιά;

Ὁ ἱερέας τρόμαξε. Δόξασε τὸ Θεὸ καὶ εἶπε: Πιστεύω, ἀφέντη μου, πὼς ὁ Θεὸς σ' ἔχει κατατάξει στὴ χορεία τῶν σωζόμενων, ἀφοῦ σὲ ἀξίωσε νὰ δεῖς τέτοιον φρικτὸ μυστήριον. Αὐτὴ τὴ θεωρία ποτὲ δεν ἀξιώθηκα ἐγὼ νὰ τὴ δῶ, ἀλλὰ βλέπω πάντα μπροστὰ μου ψωμί καὶ κρασί. Ἐμεῖς πιστεύουμε πὼς ὁ ἄρτος καὶ ὁ οἶνος, ποὺ προσφέρουμε στὴ λειτουργία μας, εἶναι Σῶμα καὶ Αἷμα Χριστοῦ, μὰ τοῦτο τὸ θαυμάσιο δεν τὸ βλέπει ὁ καθένας.

Ἀκούγοντας τὴν ἐξήγηση ὁ Σαρακηνός, θαύμασε καὶ ἀποφάσισε νὰ γίνεῖ χριστιανός. Βαπτίστηκε, πῆγε στὸ Σινά, ἔγινε μοναχός, καὶ ἀργότερα ἐπισφράγισε μετὰ τὸ μαρτύριο τὴν Ὀρθόδοξη πίστη του.



Ἐνας ἄνθρωπος νὰ με ὑβρίσει, νὰ φονεύσει τὸν πατέρα μου, τὴν μητέρα μου, τὸν ἀδελφὸ μου καὶ ὕστερα τὸ μάτι νὰ μοῦ βγάλει, ἔχω χρέος ὡσὰν χριστιανός νὰ τὸν συγχωρήσω. Τὸ δὲ νὰ ὑβρίσει τὸν Χριστὸ μου καὶ τὴν Παναγία μου, δεν θέλω νὰ τὸν βλέπω... Δεν φοβάσαι τρισάθλιε, μήπως ἀνοίξει ἡ γῆ καὶ σὲ καταπιεῖ;

Ἄγιος Κοσμάς ὁ Αἰτωλός



## ON THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

*SOURCE: "The Truth of Our Faith: A Discourse from Holy Scripture on the Teachings of True Christianity," by Elder Cleopa of Romania, Uncut Mountain Press, 2000, Ch.15.*

**I**nquirer: Father, what can you tell us about the exact date of the Second Coming of Christ?

Elder Cleopa: Christ's true Church provides us with a number of apt testimonies which show that God did not entrust this date to anyone, neither to angels, nor to men, nor even to His own Son as man. Listen to the divine words of Scripture on the subject:

"But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be . . . Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh . . ." (Mat. 24:36-51)

If neither the angels in heaven nor the Son of Man Himself as man know the appointed time, how is it possible for it to be known among men? From the words of the Saviour it is understood only that we must be ever vigilant and mindful of our salvation, ever ready for the coming of the Lord, for we know neither the day nor the hour of His coming, nor even the hour of our own end in this life. His appearance will be unexpected, as the Lord forewarned us when he said, "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh." (Mat. 25:13)

Inq.: It is true that at first the Apostles didn't know the exact date of the Second Coming of the Saviour (Mat. 24: 36), however, from the time they were strengthened from on high at the descent of the Holy Spirit they were made aware of all. For, as the Saviour foretold, by the Holy Spirit all the mysteries were revealed: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come" (Jn. 16:

12-13). From the time of the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost the Apostles, as well as all faithful Christians, with the illumination and wisdom given them by the Holy Spirit, were made able to know "all truth." In other words, they became aware of the entirety of the divine plan for the history of the world and its end, and thus were able to determine through Holy Scripture the events of the future, such as the date of the Second Coming. Isn't such a determination possible?

EC: William Miller calculated that, according to Scripture between the first of March 1843 and the first of March 1844 the Second Coming of Christ would take place. He had announced this date from as early as 1833 in the brochure "Prophecy from Holy Scripture of the Second Coming of the Lord in the year 1843." Another "prophet," Joseph Chimes, had proposed in the journals "The Voice of Midnight" (1842) and "The Bell of Danger" that the Lord would come in the year 1843.



**Elder Cleopa of Romania**  
(+1998)

The closest disciple of Miller, a Mr. Snow, decided to add to the "prophecy" of Miller another seven months and ten days, predetermining the date of the Second Coming of the Lord as the tenth of October 1844. He was also put to ridicule along with his teacher. Those who believed their pronouncements spent their fortunes, handing out all they had and buying white garments and candles in order to go out and meet the Lord. It's possible that the shop windows were even filled then with white garments for those traveling to heaven on the tenth of October 1844. Yet, this day passed like all others. The so-called "prophets" became the recipients of every kind of shame, derision and mockery from those deluded people who had scattered their fortunes trusting in the false prophecies.

From these pitiful experiences we must at least come to understand that the promise of our Saviour Jesus Christ concerning the revelation of the future by the Holy Spirit did not refer to the date of the Second Coming, as it appeared to many, but rather to prophecies pertaining to various events and signs due to come to pass in the Church. For, indeed, there have been revelations through the Holy Spirit, as we see, for example, in the Book of Revelation and other books of Holy Scripture. These revelations contain a variety of eschatological teachings (on the appearance of the Antichrist, of the false prophets, the unleashing of the persecutions of Christians), as well as the indispensable wisdom of the Apostles which enabled them to present the divine teachings when they were led to give a defense before their accusers (Mat. 10:19-20). These are the future events of which the Saviour speaks in the text that you read.

Inq.: The Apostle Paul writes: "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all

the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness" (1 Thess. 5:4-5). From these words it follows that Christians can and should know the exact date of the Second Coming in order to be ready to accept it.

EC: Why have you read from only verses four and five of chapter five from First Thessalonians, leaving out verses one and two which serve to interpret verses four and five? Listen to what the Apostle Paul says there: "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night" (1 Thess. 5:1-2). This is the truth to which Christ's Church has remained faithful. The true Church teaches, equally with the Apostle Paul, that the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night and that no one knows the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man will come.

It is possible only for the approach of the Second Coming to be known by the signs which must come before:

- The preaching of the Gospel throughout the world. (Mat. 24:15)
- The turn of the Jews to Christianity after the preaching of the Gospel in the entire world. (Rom. 11:25-34)
- The appearance of the Antichrist, also called the man of iniquity or the beast, together with his representatives, pseudo-Christ, false prophets, and every type of false wonder worked by the power of Satan in order to deceive the people. The Antichrist will sit in the place of God acting as if he were God and as an unrelenting beast he will pursue with all rage and furor the chosen servants of God. (1 Jn. 2:18; 2 Thess. 2:3-11; Rev. 13:1-8, 20:1-10; Mat. 24:9)
- The multiplication of wickedness and the growing cold of love between men, hatred and betrayal of one another. (Mat. 24:10-12)
- A torrent of bloodshed, wars and rumors of wars between nations, people and states. (Mat. 24:6-7)
- The appearance of calamities such as mass starvation, sicknesses etc. (Mat. 24:7-9)
- The appearance of certain signs in the world such as the darkening of the sun and moon, the falling of stars from the sky, the passing away of heaven and earth.
- The appearance in the heavens of the sign of the Son of Man, the True Cross, because this is the sign of victory of our Lord and no other sign so alerts us of His imminent arrival as does His Cross.

The Lord explains these signs thus: "Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors." (Mat. 24:32-33) Therefore, concerning the signs that will precede the Second Coming of the Lord, we have explanations and confirmation from the Saviour Himself, while of the exact date of His coming neither the angels nor even the Son of Man Himself, as man, are informed, but the Father alone knows.

## WISDOM FROM THE PULPIT OF GREEK ORTHODOX CLERGY

*Orthodox Heritage has collected these sayings from various homilies and translated them for the benefit of our readers and for the Glory of our Trinitarian God*

What is sleep? Sleep is a small death. And death, what is death? Death is the great sleep!

Befriending the sinful world makes you an enemy of God.

There will come a time that people will become so evil that whoever is good will be called mad (crazy) by all others.

A Christian mindset requires very few words, lots of examples, and even more prayer.

The "woe to you" by Christ was addressed to neither the prostitute nor the thief. Christ addressed it to the hypocrites, over and over.

Do not shed tears for the physical death. Shed your tears for the death of the soul. That is the great calamity!

Christian youth, do NOT yield. Protect your virtue and innocence! Chastity never caused harm to anyone.

How very wonderful alms are when accompanied by humility!

There exists an abundance of disabled people who shed tears yet they have no eyes and do their cross constantly yet they have no hands.

Man never feared poverty, illness and death as much as he does now that he has lost fear for God...

To progress in your spirituality you must not neglect the lower steps as they are the ones that lead to the higher ones.

All of us have the capacity to become saints as we all carry our own cross. The only requirement is that we carry it while walking on the path of Christ!

Our conscience is an infallible judge as long as we have not uprooted her from within our heart.

Peace of conscience is the greatest reward of a virtuous life.

The first lesson, which a child must learn, is the one on responsible freedom; and the path to freedom starts from a life that is tempered from material abundance and teaches a child that he cannot have it all.

Laws without punishment for those that break them are worthless.

Spring is nature's renewal and one of God's many examples of immortality.

God gave us one mouth and two ears so that we listen twice as much as we speak.

The world is in a moral crisis. It is in dire need of mothers with a feeling of responsibility and with a spirit of sacrifice.

Do not waste your life in front of the television. The remote in your hands is equipped with an off button as well!

You need not remind God of your works in His Name; He knows...

Life is your school. Excel by following the path of a virtuous life in Christ!

## APOPHTHEGMS BY THE GOD-INSPIRED ST. ISAAC THE SYRIAN, PART 6

*SOURCE: From the book "475 Apophthegms by the God-Inspired St. Isaac the Syrian," pp. 24-29, published by Orthodox Kypseli, translated from the Greek by St. POIMEN Brotherhood.*

### 16<sup>th</sup> Lesson

141. The devil, once he coerces us to abandon the unceasing prayer of the heart and our prayer rule, as defined by our spiritual father, then casts us from one bad situation to a worse one.

142. Bravery of heart is attained through abundant faith in God; faith is attained through humility of the heart.

143. A faint-hearted person is ill from his love of the flesh and his lack of faith. Whoever defeats these two ailments truly believes in God.

144. Outspokenness towards God is attained through a good conscience and virtuous deeds.

145. Maintaining continuous silence takes place either for the glory of men or as a result of virtuous zeal or is due to you attending to a divine labor within your heart.

146. God and His angels rejoice in our sorrows and worries and the devil in our comforts and rest. We show contempt towards God when we scorn our sorrows and worries because they are the source of our virtues.

147. Sorrows and afflictions kill the passions. Rest feeds them.

148. The Christian who is preoccupied day and night with the study of the Holy Scriptures and prayer is being fed with honey.

149. The person who persists in vigilant prayer performs the work of angels and is deemed by God worthy of great gifts.

150. If you ensured that your daily labors were in harmony with the nightly ones, you would always find yourself in the arms of our sweetest Jesus. Do not scatter the day for it will require great toil to amass yourself with prayers at night.

### 17<sup>th</sup> Lesson

151. When I practice silence and stay awake studying the Holy Scriptures throughout the night, my eyes then become as two faucets of tears.

152. True repentance is found through the acquisition of humility and then we no longer have lustful thoughts.

153. There is no such thing as an unforgivable sin except the sin that has not been repented of.

154. So that you withstand your small sorrows, think of the great ones that others are suffering.

155. Be in peace with yourself and the whole heaven and earth will appear peaceful to you. Study your entry into the treasury of your heart and you will see the Treasury of the Heavens.

156. Spiritual pleasure differs from the pleasure and the sweetness of this world's joyous things. This is because the feeling of the kingdom of Heaven within us is the result of action by the Holy Spirit and not worldly matter that we can sense.

157. A friend of virtues is a person who with joy accepts the ills that follow a virtue.

158. You must always preoccupy yourself with the study of Holy Scriptures so you do not have lecherous thoughts. Cover the person who has erred so that you give him courage and you in turn are supported by God's mercy.

159. Your nous darkens and becomes confused when it is not preoccupied with spiritual work and prayer because it is deprived of divine help and is demonized.

160. God's gifts arrive on their own if your heart is cleansed.

### 18<sup>th</sup> Lesson

161. The world is passions: a) the desire for riches and wealth, b) pleasure of the body and lust, c) a yearning for honors with malice, d) love of power, e) vanity and vainglory, and f) the glory of men and resentment of others. When you rid yourself of these, you then exit the world of passions and become truly free, breathing the air of the Holy Spirit and attaining spirituality.

162. The joy in prayer is the same as that of a beginner/novice; theoria, on the other hand is for those who have achieved perfection. Theoria is not the vision of divine shapes but the ecstasies that follows the prayer as "body follows the soul."

163. All methods of prayer aim towards purity in prayer. After this, there is no other type of prayer. One in a thousand achieves purity in his prayer.

164. All of God's commandments aim at the cleansing of our hearts.

165. The saints do not pray in the future life but, once they are fully immersed in the passion for the Holy Spirit, they join in the joyous banquet of the glory of heaven.

166. What is the rapture of the nous? It is prayer of the nous that becomes captive and can no longer feel itself.

167. When a priest has prepared properly and stands in prayer, appeasing God, gathering his nous, and pleading, the Holy Spirit then descends on the bread and wine that are on the Holy Altar and sanctifies them.

168. All visions that have been revealed to saints were revealed during prayer.

169. Blessed is the person who has attained the ignorance that is inseparable from prayer and has thus reached the ecstasy that we may all become worthy of through the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.



**E**cumenism is the common name for the pseudo-Christianity... of Western Europe. Within it is the heart of European humanism, with Papism as its head.

All of pseudo-Christianity, all of those pseudo-Churches, are nothing more than one heresy after another. Their common evangelical name is Panheresy.

St. Justin Popovich



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The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Editor or the Brotherhood of St. POIMEN

## NOW IS CHRIST BORN!

*Nativity Epistle of ROCA Archbishop Antony (+1993)*

**C**hrist is born, give ye glory, Christ comes from heaven, meet ye Him. The words of this joyous Nativity hymn, calling us to meet Christ Who is come from heaven, do not say that Christ was born nearly two thousand years ago, but that He IS BORN, that is, they tell us of His birth in the present time. How is it that Christ IS BORN now, this year, in our lifetime? Here lies the Mystery of His Church.

All that Jesus Christ accomplished for our salvation in the thirty three years of His life on earth, years which long ago became history, takes place also today, in reality and in actuality, in His Church. All of His life's events on earth must be perceived by us with a greater sense of reality, awareness and joy than His contemporaries. Those who witnessed Christ's life were, after all, still outside the Church; they did not partake of the grace of God--the Holy Spirit; with the exception of the Apostles, they did not partake of the Body and Blood of Christ, and even the Apostles only did so in the last hour; they were in no position to be able to understand the Mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God; for them, Jesus Christ was but a Man.

But we, as Church members, receive the grace of the Holy Spirit through the Sacrament of Baptism and Chrismation; we partake of Christ in the Mystery of the Eucharist; through the Church there are opened to us the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven. We have been given more..., and more is to be expected of us.

For this reason, the yearly cycle of the Great Feasts of the Church cannot be for us simply a remembrance of some histori-

cal events which took place long ago and which have no bearing on us today. The very manner in which we are called to prepare for the Feasts testifies to their importance and their reality in the present. Ordinarily, we prepare to commemorate a historical event by enriching our knowledge of the causes, the details and the results of the event. For the great Feasts of the Church, however, we must prepare ourselves every year with PRAYER and FASTING, which means to battle with our fallen human nature, to quash our sinful egotism, and to purify our hearts and minds. Only after such preparation will the Feast truly become for us the greatest reality in this present life; a reality which overshadows all other reality in the world surrounding us; a reality which is beyond this world and beyond time. And it is not only for those children of the Church who fast, but for the whole world, that the holy night appears each year as a living and eternal recurrence of that night when the angels first sang: *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will among men.*

Regardless of the passing of time, the same wickedness of Herod seeks to kill the Christ Child, to kill Him there where He IS BORN, in pure hearts, in souls cleansed by fasting and prayer. Just as centuries ago when the children of Bethlehem were killed, we continue to see today martyrs for Christ. And just as before, Christ IS BORN for very few, for those who love and seek Him; He remains unseen and unrecognized by the world which lies in evil and which has forgotten its Creator.

In this way, Christ IS BORN even today in His Church. He IS BORN in my life, for my sake, loving me. Make haste, O Christian, to delight your heart with His love, to find your Saviour in the manger, and there also to find the joy of true communion with Him.