



## Πάσχα - PASSAGE Ανάσταση - RESURRECTION!

**T**here is no better introduction for the Christian celebration of Pascha [Resurrection], which the Orthodox Church has called “feast of feasts”, than the unique joy experienced by the faithful at the time, and its associated spiritual uplifting.

The Christians received this feast from the Jews. But while they commemorate their exit from Egypt, we celebrate something far more important and beneficial for the whole humanity - the Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

In one word, Resurrection means the entire message of Christianity, the whole content of our Faith, the complete meaning of the Gospel: “If Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty, and so is our faith” (1 Cor 15:14).

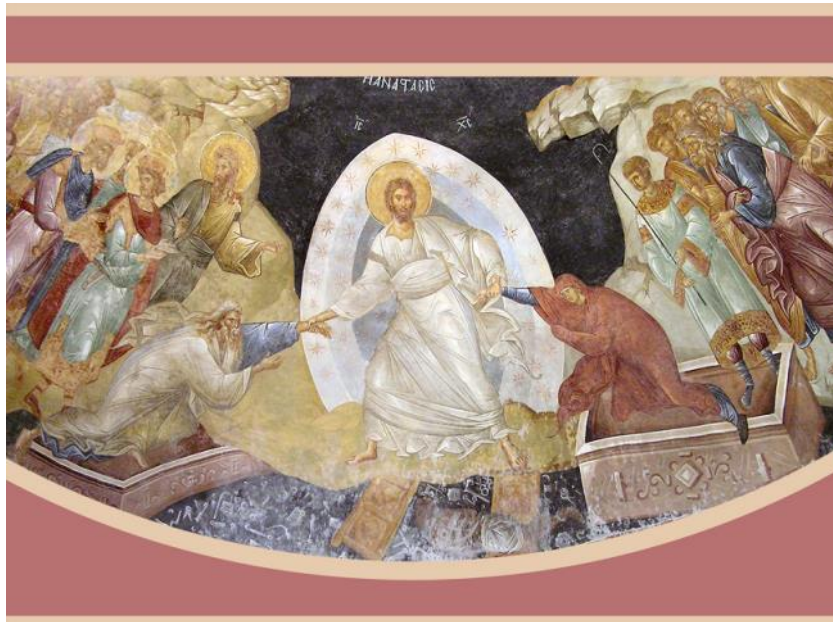
But Christ has risen from the dead, as attested by the millions who believed and believe in Him, and the millions of martyrs who died for His name. Further, the undisputed proof of His rising is the Tomb of Christ and the Divine Light that springs forth from it every Pascha, following prayers and supplications offered on that day by the Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem - but by no other religious leader of the Christian faith.

But the Resurrection of Christ is not an event the significance of which is confined to Christ. It means that we too will be raised on that day when He returns again. But for those who truly believe in Him, they pre-taste the life of Resurrection whilst on earth, as they experience the grace of the Risen Christ in their daily life. Their life now reflects the Orthodox spirit, and their life partakes

of the life of Jesus, as declared by Saint Paul – “it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me” (Gal 2:20).

Those who experience the grace of the risen Lord in their life, attain that by living as though they are within His risen body. This is no other, but our Church in this world, here and now, with Faith in the Resurrection and the defeat of sin. But to do that, the Fathers of the Church say, there have to be three resurrections of man:

- The resurrection of the Body - which became defiled by its passions,
- That of the Soul - corrupted by sinful sensual pleasures, and can be purified by a life of virtue, and
- That of the Mind - distorted by worldly cares, but cleansed by repentance, the Sacraments of the Church and dependence on divine providence.



Pascha brings to the faithful **divine joy** and **spiritual uplifting**, and fills our hearts with **optimism**, in spite of being surrounded by a society so complex and difficult, more so than in any other period of our lives. And yet, we feel secure, knowing that we have in our

midst the risen Lord, not only in spirit, but as a tangible entity, **in His Holy Church**. Jesus confirmed this when he assured us, “and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matt 28:20).

And so we greet one another with Joy:

**Christ is risen – Χριστός Ανέστη!**

Only to receive a joyful response:

**Truly, He is risen – Αληθώς Ανέστη!**

# Πασχαλινές Εμπειρίες

**Α**ν η Αγία και Μεγ. Τεσσαρακοστή είναι το κέντρο του εκκλησιαστικού χρόνου, το Άγιο Πάσχα είναι το κορύφωμα της. Είναι η «**εορτή εορτών και πανηγυρίς πανηγύρεων**».

Η Ανάσταση του Χριστού αγιάζει την ανθρώπινη ιστορία - οδηγεί τον άνθρωπο στη Θέωση.

Οι Απόστολοι του Κυρίου είδαν και έζησαν τον Αναστημένο Χριστό. Έγινε σε ορισμένο τόπο και χρόνο. Έγινε «**ἐπὶ Ποντίου Πιλάτου**» (Σύμβ. Πίστεως).

Όμως, παρά την ιστορικότητα της, η Ανάσταση του Χριστού, παραμένει ένα μυστήριο. Η ανθρώπινη λογική δεν μπορεί να το κατανοήσει. Μπορεί μόνο να το εκφράσει όταν το ζει η καρδιά. Ενώ λοιπόν η Ανάσταση του Κυρίου μας, είναι γεγονός που ξεπερνά το χρόνο, όμως οι πιστοί την ζούν, την βιώνουν μέσα στο χρόνο.

Κάθε Θεία Λειτουργία είναι επανάληψη της Πασχαλινής Θείας Λειτουργίας, όπου βιώνουμε μυστηριακά αυτό το ίδιο γεγονός της Ανάστασης του Χριστού.

Γι' αυτό και η Ορθόδοξη Εκκλησία μας είναι γνωστή σαν η Εκκλησία της Αναστάσεως.

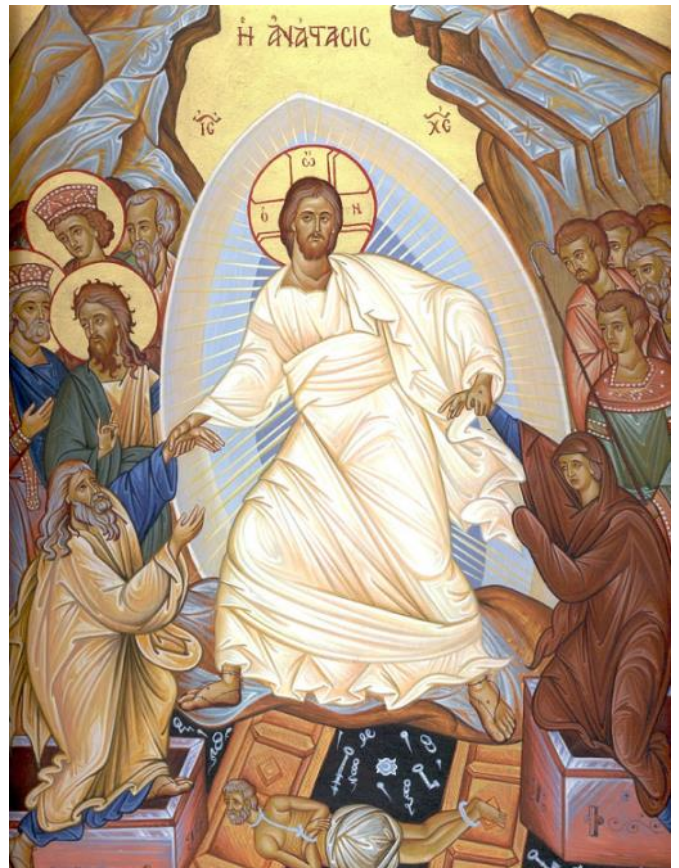
Όπως είπαμε πιά πάνω, οι Απόστολοι όχι μόνο είδαν αλλά για 40 μέρες έζησαν, βίωσαν τον Αναστάντα Διδάσκαλο τους. Βέβαια την ημέρα της Πεντηκοστής με την επιφοίτηση του Αγ. Πνεύματος, απόκτησαν την εσωτερική βεβαιότητα της Αναστάσεως και αυτή τη μαρτυρία έδωσαν στο κόσμο.

Στη συνέχεια όλοι οι άγιοι της Εκκλησίας μας, μέχρι και των σημερινών, έστω κι'άν δεν γνώρισαν σωματικά το Χριστό, έδωσαν ο καθένας με το δικό του τρόπο τη μαρτυρία της προσωπικής τους εμπειρίας της Ανάστασης του Χριστού. Τη δύναμη αυτής της εμπειρίας την βλέπουμε στο τρόπο που έζησαν την επίγεια ζωή τους. Άλλοτε με έξαρση πνευματική, άλλοτε με θεία μέθη, άλλοτε με τον ενθουσιασμό του μάρτυρα και άλλοτε με την ανείπωτη χαρά του ασκητή. Όλοι με αγάπη ανέκφραστη προς το Θεό και τον συνάνθρωπο.

Ένας σύγχρονος ασκητής, ο Άγ. Σιλουανός ο Αγιορείτης, να πώς περιγράφει αυτή τη κατάσταση της Πασχάλειας εμπειρίας του: «**Η ψυχή μου αγαπά τον Κύριο. Και πώς θα έκρυβα αυτή τη φωτιά που θερμαίνει τη καρδιά μου; Πώς θα μπορούσα να μη μιλώ για το Θεό, αφού η ψυχή μου είναι αιχμαλωτισμένη απ' Αυτόν;**»

Η μαρτυρία λοιπόν των αγίων και κατ'επέκταση και «έν δυνάμει» η δική μας ζωή, είναι μαρτυρία της Αναστάσεως.

Οι εμπειρίες αυτού του είδους ξεχωρίζουν τη ζωή των πιστών απ' αυτούς που ακόμη ολιγοπιστούν,



κλονίζονται και τελικά χάνουν τη πίστη τους. Όμως έτσι χάνουν και ό, τι αγνό και ωραίο μπορεί η πίστη να γενήσει μέσα τους.

**Αυτοί που βιώνουν την Ανάσταση του Χριστού είναι αυτοί που δίνουν την μαρτυρία της αληθινής ζωής.**

Έχουμε πια κουρασθή σαν κοινωνίες ανθρώπων από τις ανθρώπινες ιδεολογίες, από τις μωρές συζητήσεις και τις άδειες φιλοσοφίες που οδηγούν σε αδιέξοδα.

Θεοποιήσαμε την τεχνολογία μας, εμπορικοποιήσαμε τη ζωή των ανθρώπων, λατρεύσαμε το «έχειν» μας και τα υλικά αγαθά μας.

Αυτά τα είδωλα πρέπει να πέσουν. Πρέπει να γκρεμίσουμε τη ψευδαίσθηση πως θα μας σώσουν οι άνθρωποι. Ανάγκη να στραφούμε προς το Θεό.

Γι' αυτό σήμερα, πιά πολύ από κάθε άλλη εποχή, οι άνθρωποι του Θεού που ζούν το ύψιστο βίωμα της Ανάστασης του Χριστού πρέπει να φανούν. **Όλη τους η ζωή, όλη τους η ύπαρξη είναι μιά Ανάσταση που σκοτώνει το θάνατο.**

Για τούτο και ψάλλουμε όλοι μας θριαμβευτικά: **«Χριστὸς Ἀνέστη ἐκ νεκρῶν, θανάτῳ θάνατον πατήσας, καὶ τοῖς ἐν τοῖς μνήμασι, ζωὴν χαρισάμενος»!**

# Current Issues

## Loneliness in Our Times

**L**oneliness is the essence of being human. Each human being comes into the world alone, travels through life as a separate person and ultimately dies alone. Coping with this situation, accepting it, and learning how to manage his life with some degree of grace and satisfaction, is the human condition.

The condition is complex, usually an unpleasant emotional response to isolation, and typically is associated with some degree of anxiety and even anger. An accurate definition is difficult, but roughly one can define loneliness as: a reduced degree of social interaction available to the individual, compared to the amount of such interaction that he or she needs to feel satisfied.

The condition is more common in those past middle age, it also affects young people causing more severe unhappiness, and is not rare in adolescents and even school children.

In younger people it may follow after being left alone for prolonged periods with a carer, or with people with whom the person is not very familiar, whilst there is yearning for the mother, an image of whom is kept in the mind.

Family breakup, divorce, loss of important long term relationships, or loss of a person from one's social circle, can trigger the feeling of loneliness or isolation. Living alone, absence of close family ties, retirement from work, loss of a loved one, lack of purpose in life, and language difficulties, can usher in the condition. However, recent demographic studies have produced spectacular data showing that genetic causes account for about 50% of cases of loneliness, particularly in young people. Finally, clinical or subclinical mental disturbances e.g. depression, neurotic or paranoid states, may lead to social isolation or overt loneliness.

What can help such people to break the vicious cycle of Loneliness?

1. Where the family is available, re-connecting the person with family members can work wonders.



2. Getting out of the house, one or a few hours, best with friends or spouse for social or other reasons, is most helpful, particularly if done regularly.
3. Maintain good health by eating and sleeping properly. Alcohol should be avoided. It is a depressant and has corresponding effects.
4. Join a volunteer organisation: helping others is therapeutic.
5. Renewal of old friendships – it is amazing what and whom you can find.

The problem of Loneliness has been dealt above from the general point of view, as it affects modern people in a social environment, made more complex by the uncontrolled effects of technology.

However, there is a form of periodic loneliness or social isolation practised by devout Christians, for the purpose of advancing their spiritual life. The person enters into a state of **Spiritual Quietness**, where the mind is in a condition of quietness as to matters of the world, resting its thoughts in God alone, either simply with reflection or in association with mental [noetic] prayer. This is the conviction of the Church, according to God's directive **"Take time out, and know that I am God"** (Ps 45:11). It is under such circumstances, that Saints in the past, and Sainly people who are alive now, were and are seeing God [Θεοπτία]. This is not a wish to have a rest, but on the contrary a valiant effort to be as close to God as possible. Loneliness does not affect such people, as they are in the company of God every day!

## Από Τους Αγίους Της Εκκλησίας Μας

## From the Saints of our Church

**Η Αγία Μάρτυς Αυτοκράτειρα Αλεξάνδρα**  
(Η Μνήμη της εορτάζεται 21<sup>η</sup> Απριλίου)

**Holy Martyr Alexandra the Empress**  
(Commemorated 21<sup>st</sup> April)

**Η** Αλεξάνδρα ήταν σύζυγος του Ρωμαίου Αυτοκράτορα Διοκλητιανού, που κατεδίωκε σκληρά τους χριστιανούς, το τελευταίο τρίτο του 4ου αιώνας Μ.Χ. Η ίδια ήταν εκεί όταν εμαρτύρησε ο Άγιος Γεώργιος, και μιά από εκείνους που πίστεψαν στο Χριστό όταν είδε το θάρρος με το οποίο υπέφερε ο Άγιος το μαρτύριο του. Επίσης το πλήθος των θεατών που είδαν τον χριστιανό Γεώργιο να πλησιάζει το Διοκλητιανό, αποφασισμένος να απολογηθεί, τον είδαν επίσης θαυματουργικώς να παραμένει απείραχτος από ότι του έκαναν, και τους έκανε εντύπωση η αφωσίωσή του στο Χριστό, παρά τα βασανιστήρια που υπέφερε.

Η Αλεξάνδρα ομολόγησε στον σύζυγο της ότι ο Χριστός είναι ο αληθινός Θεός, ενώ εκείνος έγινε θηρίο, την φυλάκισε, και κατόπι την απεκεφάλισε μαζί με τον Άγιο Γεώργιο. Προτού πεθάνει η Αλεξάνδρα, έμαθε ότι θα μαρτυρούσε για τον Χριστό, έπεσε στο γόνατα με προσευχή, πριν την αγγίσει ανδρικό χέρι.

Τρεις από τους υπηρέτες της Αυτοκράτειρας, ο Απωλός, ο Ισάκιος και ο Κορδάτος, έγιναν και αυτοί χριστιανοί, βλέποντας την κυρία τους να πεθαίνει για την αγάπη του Χριστού. Τότε πήγαν στο Αυτοκράτορα, και τον κατηγορήσαν για βαρβαρότητα. Ο Κορδάτος απεκεφαλίσθηκε, και οι άλλοι δύο πέθαναν στην φυλακή από την πείνα.

Μάρτυρας σημαίνει αυτός που λέει την αλήθεια. Υπάρχουν πολλοί τρόποι που οι Άγιοι της Εκκλησίας μαρτύρησαν για τον Χριστό. Η Αγία Αλεξάνδρα μας δείχνει πως ο Θεός βοηθά εκείνους που πεθαίνουν για τον Χριστό. Όταν τον πλησιάζουμε θα μας πάρει στην αγκαλιά Του, θα μας σκεπάσει με τη χάρη Του, ανάλογα με τις συνθήκες της ζωής μας.

**A**lexandra was the wife of Roman Emperor Diocletian, who mercilessly persecuted Christians in the late third and early 4th century AD. She witnessed the martyrdom of Saint George and was one of many who converted upon seeing how perseveringly the Saint withstood his many tortures. Not only did the pagan masses see this Christian man approach Emperor Diocletian determined to make his case, but they saw him miraculously remain un-

harmful by the tortures, undeterred in his devotion to Christ before the cruellest of emperors.

Having confessed Christ as the true God, Alexandra was met with the fury of her husband herself. Diocletian ordered her imprisonment and beheading alongside her role model, Saint George.

When Alexandra learnt of her fate, she fell down in prayer and gave up her soul before she could be harmed by any man.

Three of the Empress' servants, Apollo, Isaccius and Codratus, converted

to Christianity after seeing how their mistress died for the love of Christ. They went to the Emperor accusing him of barbarism. Codratus was beheaded and the other two were left to starve to death in prison.

'Martyr' means 'witness'. There are many ways in which the Saints of our Church have borne witness and suffered for Christ. St Alexandra reflects the divine economy of God in her death for Christ. When we draw towards Him, He will bring us into His embrace in mercy, each according to their circumstance.



# Questions & Answers

A clergyman of our Archdiocese answers ...

## How do we know we have a soul ?

If you think about it, there is nothing we can be more certain about than the fact that we are aware of our own existence, that we have our own first person perspective, that we have feelings and we are aware that we have these feelings, or that there is a certain “inner feel”, a “me-ness” about us. The vast majority of people believe that this is due to our soul; indeed this seems very obvious to most of us, it is “primordial data”.

One has to admit, however, that there are neuroscientists who believe we do not have a soul. Atheists and materialists believe that everything that exists is physical, that there is no soul, and that our consciousness, the deeper aspects of our mind, our self-awareness, are simply due to our brain. They use fancy terms- consciousness somehow “emerges” from the physical properties of the brain. Within the brain there are very complex circuits and networks, and atheists believe that somehow phenomenal consciousness can be “reduced” to these physical neuronal events. Daniel Dennet, an atheist, believes that “all varieties of perception - indeed, all varieties of thought or mental activity - are accomplished in the brain by parallel, multitrack processes of interpretation and elaboration of sensory inputs”.<sup>1</sup>

It is a fact that today no neuroscientist is even close to understanding how the workings of the brain could explain all aspects of consciousness.

They say, however, that one day, after neuroscience has progressed in its understanding and its imagination, we will then understand. Other equally deep thinkers, such as the very impressive philosopher David Bentley Hart, believe “that the widely-cherished expectation that neuroscience will one day discover an explanation of consciousness solely within the brain’s electrochemical processes is no less enormous a category error than the expectation that physics will one day discover the reason for the existence of the material universe”.<sup>2</sup>

In recent years, science has been researching near-death experiences<sup>3</sup>. There are now very many accounts from people whose heart stopped, they received CPR, and they then reported what they remembered. Due to differences of religion or culture, the vocabulary used to describe and interpret the experience varies, but despite this the content of the near-death experience and the effects on patients seem remarkably similar across all cultures and times. Such research does not prove 100% that the soul exists, but it does lead an honest thinker to question the modern trend. Atheists want us to believe that consciousness is due only to the physical brain, but then again when the brain is virtually dead, with no blood going to it, consciousness is not

only still okay but in many such cases there is heightened consciousness. One author, who is not religious but just an honest researcher, put it as follows: “The paradoxical occurrence of a heightened, lucid awareness and logical thought processes during a period of impaired cerebral perfusion raises particular perplexing questions for our current understanding of consciousness and its relation to brain function. A clear sensorium and complex perceptual processes during a period of apparent clinical death challenge the concept that consciousness is localised exclusively in the brain”.<sup>4</sup>

What seems most convincing is simply meditating on our own self-awareness. How can this be due to something physical, due to something like a very complex computer? Yes, computers are impressive: they can be good at chess, they have memory, etc, but no computer is aware of its own existence, no computer has feelings, nor is any computer aware of itself feeling those feelings. David Bentley Hart has said: “a coherent materialistic model of mind is an impossibility... the mechanistic picture of nature is self-evidently false, nothing more than an intellectual adherence to a limited empirical method that has been ineptly mistaken for a complete metaphysical description of reality”.<sup>5</sup>

Of course, with the help of the Church, one can come to a higher level. Through prayer one can come to communion with the Holy Trinity, one can experience for oneself what the Apostle Paul meant when he said, “Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, ‘Abba, Father!’” (Gal 4:6). By living the life of the Church, the Sacraments and the Liturgy, one can come to know what Jesus meant when he said, “The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:20-21). We then no longer need logical proofs and philosophical arguments but can see spiritual realities clearly.

† Fr D. K.

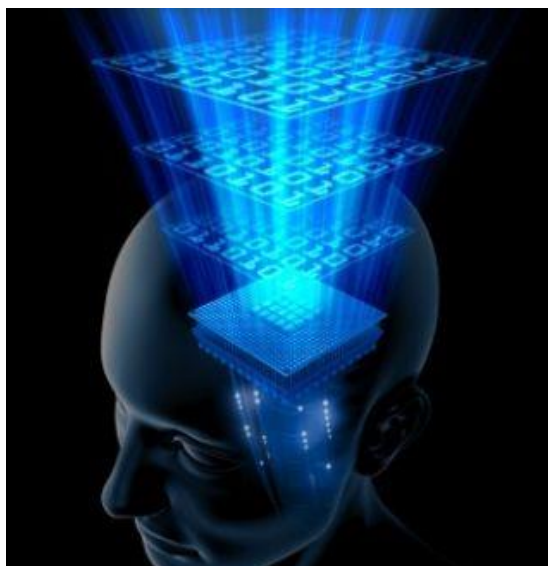
<sup>1</sup> Daniel Dennett. *Consciousness Explained*. Back Bay Books. Boston 1991, p. 111

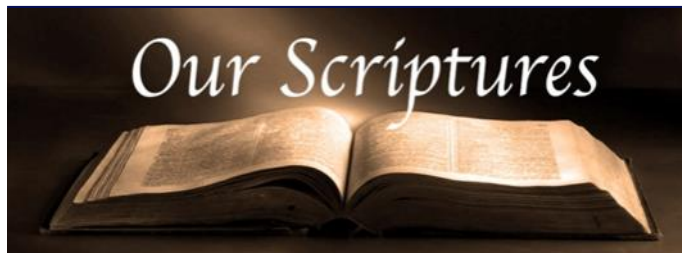
<sup>2</sup> David Bentley Hart. *The experience of God: Being, Consciousness, Bliss*. Yale University Press. New Haven and London, 2013, p. 153

<sup>3</sup> Van Lommel et al. Near-death experiences in survivors of cardiac arrest: A Prospective study in the Netherlands. *The Lancet*, 2001 Dec 15; 358(9298), pp. 2039-2045

<sup>4</sup> Greyson, B. *General Hospital Psychiatry* 25(4), 2003, p. 275

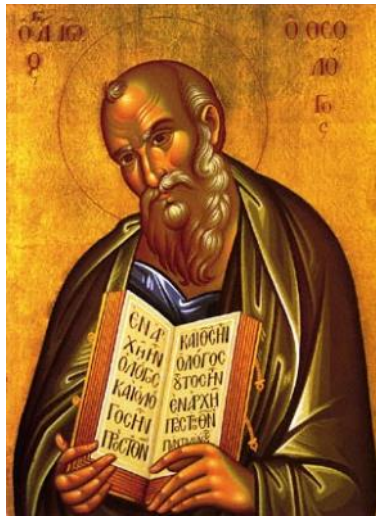
<sup>5</sup> *ibid* p. 236





## The Word Became Flesh (John 1:1-17)

The Gospel reading for the Divine Liturgy of Pascha begins by stating that the Word (or Logos) of God was present with God in the beginning and is God by nature, and all things were created through Him: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made." (John 1:1-3).



Nevertheless, we humans did not know Him who is the life and light of Mankind, and thus were on a hopeless downward spiral that led to death and destruction.

The Out of His abundant love for Mankind, the Word became flesh, He Incarnated and took on our human nature and dwelt amongst us. The Gospel continues to show us exactly who this was. It says St John the Baptist who was sent by God bore witness of Him who took up our flesh, and it was Jesus Christ.

In writing this, St John (the Evangelist) being one of the twelve Apostles had personal experiences of Jesus, he spoke with Him and walked with Him and ate with Him and saw His many miracles and heard His many sermons continuously for three years. He testifies here that Jesus became a Man with the same flesh all humans have, and he beheld the glory of Jesus, full of grace and truth.

This is an important testimony because it shows that God the Word having taken our flesh in the person of Jesus Christ, sanctified it with His blameless and holy life by fulfilling all righteousness, suffered and died in the flesh on the Cross taking upon Him the sin of the world, was buried and victoriously defeated death by His Resurrection on the third day, and ascended with our human nature - now cleansed of sin and liberated from death - offering it to the Father and restoring Mankind's relationship with the Father through His own flesh.

This is summarised by St Gregory the Theologian who stated that God had to become fully human to save us, since "that which has not been assumed, has not been redeemed". This is what we are reminded on Pascha, and rightly so, just before we receive the fullness of His flesh and blood, so that our nature too will be cleansed by grace and filled with His light and life, to vouchsafe our inheritance in the Kingdom of God with the only begotten Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.



## The Saving Work of Christ: Sermons by Saint Gregory Palamas Published by Mount Thabor, 2013

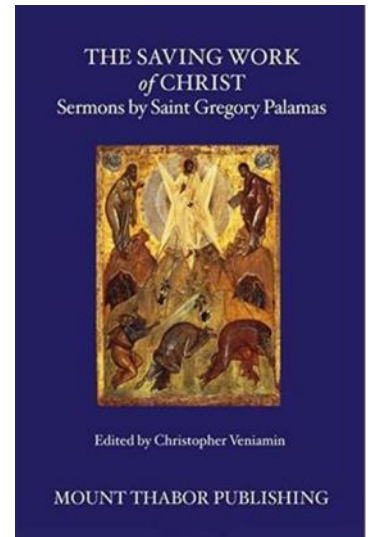
THE SAVING WORK OF CHRIST is the second volume in the series of sermons by Saint Gregory Palamas (1296–1359), Archbishop of Thessalonica, whose brilliant and inspiring sermons have a refreshingly practical relevance to our daily lives. This second volume edited by Dr Christopher Veniamin covers his sermons on the major Feast Days of Jesus Christ (Δεσποτικές Εορτές): Christmas; Presentation; Epiphany; Transfiguration; Palm Sunday; the Precious and Life-giving Cross; Redemption; Sabbath and the Lord's Day; Ascension; as well as the bestowing of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

The Precious and Life-giving Cross symbolises our need to deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow Jesus. St Gregory notes that the first mystery of taking up our Cross involves fleeing from the ways of the world that are a hindrance to attaining piety and a devout life. It also involves the training of our body through fasting and ascetic endeavours.

The second mystery of the Cross involves crucifying our passions and attachments to all worldly attractions and deceptions. The contemplative part of the soul strengthens and supports the part concerned with desires, helping to chase away fleshly lusts. We need to attain the contemplation of God so that these passions can completely leave us, particularly leave our thoughts. This requires us to approach contemplation through action, as well as through the cleansing of our inner selves via the Sacrament of Confession.

Through contemplation and prayer, a warmth is born in our heart which chases away evil thoughts, instils spiritual peace and consolation in our soul, and bestows sanctification on our body. If we strive as hard as we can to ensure that our inner labour is according to God's will, we will conquer the outward passions. Then we will rediscover the divine treasure which we ourselves have hidden, for the kingdom of God lies within us.

This volume contains many other practical pieces of advice to assist us in our spiritual struggle and to make us grateful to our Lord Jesus Christ for His redemptive work, through His Crucifixion and Resurrection, to save us and restore us to the Holy state He created us to attain.





## Recalling the sound of hand grenades

A gentle, tall and dignified man, Barba Gianni, recalls his memories of the German occupation during the Second World War in Greece. He remembers the different sounds of hand grenades, and how as children they had been taught to distinguish between the sizzle and the whistling sounds. He remembers how he was fearful of overhead planes, and remembers how he had a very close encounter with death when a bomb exploded near him. Regarding the civil war, he recalls how his father refused to take sides when coerced by a Greek communist fighter (andarte), because he was the head of a large family and his young children depended on him as the principal bread winner. The person who tried to enlist civilians to his rebel cause was himself killed by a member from an opposing rebel group. There was much in-fighting amongst various andarte groups, and so family-oriented people like his father, who had been raised with traditional religious values, tried to avoid taking sides. Barba Gianni was then a young boy, and under the guardianship of his father. So no matter how frightening the incidents around him may have been, he did not need to make adult decisions, and perhaps that is why he did not experience the nightmares that many other survivors of the war did. He may have felt safe because he had a physically strong father who protected his family.

After the war, as an adolescent, Gianni migrated to Germany on a work visa and was relieved to find that most of the German people he came in contact with were very decent and helpful to him, respecting him because of his physical strength and good work ethic. He learnt much from his apprenticeship training as an electrical engineer, and always used his strength for a good cause. There was a workplace accident in the factory where a worker had become pinned to the ground by a heavy metal rod that had fallen. Gianni acted quickly and lifted the

rod with his bare hands. This required extreme physical strength. His quick action saved the worker from dying, but it also reaffirmed how goodness and self-sacrifice triumphs over old animosities. Gianni later migrated to Australia, learnt English in an evening college and managed to apply his engineering skills in his new job. In his new home in Western Sydney, he interacted with his community and church and stood out as a peaceful and gentle giant amongst his peers.

Years later, with an ageing body riddled with arthritis, a walking stick and the same peaceful smile, Barba Gianni recalls his past with no regrets. His son, also a gentle giant, maintains his father's willingness to help his church and his community by using the physical strength he had been graced with.



# Αγία Φωτεινή η Σαμαρείτιδα

**Η** Αγία Φωτεινή καταγόταν από την πόλη Συχάρ της Σαμαρείας. Οι συμπατριώτες της την είχαν στιγματισμένη, γιατί ζούσε έκλυτο βίο. Έτσι προτιμούσε να πηγαίνει για νερό το καταμεσήμερο, που ησύχαζαν όλοι και ήταν ερημιά.

Ένα μεσημέρι συνάντησε τον Ιησού, ο οποίος μετά από κοπιαστική περιοδεία, κάθισε στο πεζούλι εκεί στο φρέαρ του Ιακώβ. Διψασμένος από τη μεσημεριάτικη πορεία, της ζήτησε νερό. Εκείνη παραξενεύθηκε πώς ένας Ιουδαίος μιλά σε μια Σαμαρείτισσα και ο Κύριος βρήκε την ευκαιρία να πιάσει συζήτηση μαζί της. Της φανέρωσε τα μυστικά της αμαρτωλής ζωής της και της απεκάλυψε μεγάλες δογματικές, θεολογικές και λατρευτικές αλήθειες.

- **Ότι ο Θεός είναι Πνεύμα και ως πνεύμα λατρεύεται παντού.**
- **Χριστός είναι ο Υιός του Θεού, ο αναμενόμενος Μεσσίας, που σημαίνει Σωτήρας του κόσμου.**
- **Ότι «τὸ ὕδωρ τὸ ζῶν» είναι η αστείρευτη πηγή της Χάριτος του Αγίου Πνεύματος, που καθαρίζει, δροσίζει και ζωοποιεί τις ψυχές.**

Η αποκάλυψη των μυστικών της ζωής της, την συγκλόνισαν και οι αλήθειες του Χριστού μίλησαν στην καρδιά της. Ενθουσιασμένη άφησε τη στάμνα και έτρεξε στην πόλη, να φωνάξει τους συμπολίτες της:

**«Ελάτε να δείτε έναν άνθρωπο που μου είπε όλα όσα έκανα!»** (Ιωαν Δ' 29). Οι Σαμαρείτες άρχισαν να έρχονται

προς το πηγάδι, να δουν τον Κύριο.

Έτσι άρχισε η πρώτη της ιεραποστολή.

Η Σαμαρείτισσα πίστεψε στον Ιησού, μετανόησε, βαπτίστηκε και πήρε το όνομα Φωτεινή. Μαζί της βαπτίστηκαν τα δύο παιδιά της και οι πέντε αδελφές της.



Για την αγάπη του Χριστού με θυσίες και σκληρές δοκιμασίες, πραγματοποίησε τεράστιο έργο ιεραποστολής σε πολλές χώρες, προσφέροντας τη διδασκαλία του Ιησού σε χιλιάδες διψασμένες ψυχές.

Με τη χάρη του Χριστού έκανε χριστιανή, τη Δομνίνα, κόρη του αυτοκράτορα Νέρωνα, και πολλές δούλες τους. Όταν το έμαθε ο Νέρων, τη συνέλαβε με τα παιδιά και τις πέντε αδελφές της. Υπέστη πολλά βασανιστήρια και αξιώθηκε να χύσει το αίμα της για το Χριστό. **Η Εκκλησία μας τιμά την Αγία Φωτεινή ως Μεγαλομάρτυρα και Ισαπόστολο.**

Πόσοι άνθρωποι σήμερα που βρίσκονται στην άγνοια και στο σκοτάδι διψούν να ακούσουν το

μήνυμα της λυτρώσεως, να ξεδιψάσουν από το ύδωρ της ζωής! Ζητούν λίγη χαρά, ανάπαυση, κάπου να πιαστούν, λίγη ελπίδα, λίγο φως! Έχουμε χρέος να κάνουμε το έργο της Σαμαρείτιδας.

Οι ψυχές περιμένουν. Κάποιος πρέπει να τρέξει κοντά τους.

## Orthodox Youth Groups (Ορθόδοξες Χριστιανικές Ομάδες)

Dear Teenager,

Come to fellowship («Ομάδα») and you will find a Person who loves you more than anyone else – a Person who is a father, brother, and a good friend to you – *all at once*. That Person is our Lord Jesus Christ.

At Ομάδα you will find friends whom you can trust and who have the same goals in life as you. Learn all about your Church at Ομάδα and how to live your Orthodox Faith.

Ομάδα organises two major camps per year, sporting activities, bush walks and other fun activities.

Even if you receive religious education at School or attend a Greek Orthodox College, you will still benefit enormously from being at Ομάδα.

**Christian Youth Groups for young people aged 14-18 are held in the following Parishes:**

### For Boys

Transfiguration, Earlwood (Saturdays 4 - 6:30 pm)  
All Saints, Belmore (Fridays 6 - 8 pm)  
Resurrection, Kogarah (Fridays 6:30 - 8 pm)  
St Ioannis, Parramatta (Saturdays 5 - 6:45 pm)



### For Girls

Transfiguration, Earlwood (Fridays 6:30 - 8 pm)  
All Saints, Belmore (Fridays 6:30 - 8 pm)





«ποῦ πορευθῶ ἀπὸ τοῦ πνεύματός σου, καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ προσώπου σου ποῦ φύγω;» (Ψαλμ. ΡΛΘ' 7)  
**“Where could I go from Your Spirit, or flee from Your face?” (Ps 138:7)**

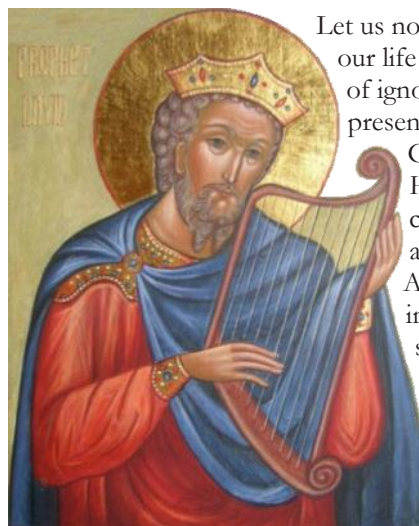
**P**salm 138 is a remarkable portrait of the deep awareness the Holy Prophet-King David had of God’s presence in his life.

David was well acquainted with every corner of the land of Israel. As a young shepherd, he would wander through the mountains, he spent much of his youth hiding from King Saul in the forests and the caves, and he fought many battles in the plains and deserts of Israel and beyond. Wherever he would go, David watered the earth with his tears, the natural outpouring of his soul’s deep yearning and love for God.

He searched for God to the ends of the earth, but he discovered that it was rather God’s mercy which was pursuing him and which was in fact present everywhere. No matter where he would go, God would already be there waiting to lead him. Amid all his dangers, David saw God’s hand with him, guiding him and keeping him safe.

Whenever David lifted his mind to heaven in prayer, he experienced God’s living presence. But even when he descended into the depths of sin, he discovered that God never left him. God doesn’t only dwell in the heights of heaven, nor is he found only at the ends of the earth, but he even searches out the sinner and seeks to snatch him out from the jaws of Hades.

The presence of God which permeates human history and fills every human heart is a reality that no one can escape from. King David and the Saints throughout the ages made this truth their own personal reality by seeking to live in full awareness of God’s presence in their everyday lives.



Let us not allow the years of our life go by in the darkness of ignorance of God’s presence. Let us search for God, yearning to know Him as David did, crying out for His help amid our struggles. And even when we fall into the darkness of sin, let us not forget that God is still there, waiting for us to get up again and to run back into His embrace.



## St Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow (1865-1925)

**B**orn Vasily Ivanovich Belavin in the Pskov region of Russia in 1865, St Tikhon from his youth displayed fervour for the Orthodox Faith. He entered the Pskov seminary at the age of thirteen, and went on to graduate from the St Petersburg Theological Academy at the age of 23.



He took monastic vows at the age of 26, taking the name of Tikhon in honour of St Tikhon of Zadonsk. Made an Archimandrite in 1892, he became Bishop of Lublin in 1897. The next year, he was made Bishop of the Aleutians and Alaska, a diocese later renamed “Of the Aleutians and North America”.

In the nine years he spent in America, he did much to spread Orthodoxy there. He built churches and cathedrals and helped to give the church there a structure, in spite of the ethnic diversity of the diocese (later made an archdiocese). He had Saint Raphael of Brooklyn as an assistant bishop.

The next ten years from 1907 were spent ministering to dioceses in Yaroslavl and Lublin with love and wisdom. In 1917, that chaotic year in the history of Russia, Bishop Tikhon was made Bishop of Moscow, Metropolitan of Moscow, and later Patriarch of Moscow. His election as Patriarch of Moscow, the first for almost three hundred years, came though the drawing of lots.

Later that year, the October Revolution catapulted the Communists to power and Russia into civil war. Through the guidance of Patriarch Tikhon, the Church stayed strong and neutral in the conflicts and supported those starving in the famines.

However in 1922, the Communist Party decided to confiscate valuables, and their first targets were church ornaments. By resisting this, Patriarch Tikhon was imprisoned for fifteen months. When he came out he stayed firm in his faith.

In 1924, his health started to decay and he reposed on April 7 1925. Patriarch Tikhon was made a saint in 1989. For many years, his remains were thought missing due to the Communists, but in 1992 they were found concealed in the Donskoy Monastery in Moscow.



## What we Hear in Church



### 8th Ode of the Katavasias of Pascha

Αὕτη ἡ κλητὴ καὶ ἁγία ἡμέρα, ἡ μία τῶν Σαββάτων, ἡ βασιλὶς καὶ κυρία, ἑορτῶν ἑορτή, καὶ πανήγυρις ἐστὶ πανηγύρεων, ἐν ἧ εὐλογοῦμεν, Χριστὸν εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας.

This chosen and holy day is the first of Sabbaths, the Queen and Lady, the Feast of Feasts and the Festival of Festivals on which we bless Christ to all the ages.

This hymn is the 8th Ode of the Katavasias of Easter, chanted for the first time in the Church Calendar during the Matins service of Easter Sunday and then for the following 40 days. St John of Damascus, the author of these hymns, draws on both Biblical and Patristic sources to convey to us the magnitude of Christ's Resurrection.

St Nicodemus the Agiorite drawing from the Old Testament (Exodus 12:16) states that the Sunday of Pascha is called 'chosen' and 'holy' for two reasons: *"firstly, because it is the eighth day and a type of the age to come, and also because it is the day of Passover... Now, if the feast of the usual, Jewish Passover was called chosen and holy, how much more so should the radiant Sunday of the true and actual Passover be called so, which brings us Our Risen Lord Christ?"*

The phrase, «μία τῶν Σαββάτων», reminds us of all the Synoptic Gospel accounts of the Resurrection, where the phrase «μία τῶν σαββάτων», meaning the first day after the Sabbath, the first day of the week, is used verbatim or in slight variation (Matthew's Gospel).

The evocative phrases of *"Queen and Lady"* and *"the Feast of Feasts and the Festival of Festivals"* are Patristic in origin. The first is from St Gregory the Theologian's 44<sup>th</sup> Homily "On the New Day of our Lord": *"Now, through the feast, everything is assembled and takes delight in that which is good... The Queen of seasons, the princess of days, escorts and gifts that which is most good and most joyous."*

The second is from his 45<sup>th</sup> Homily, "On Holy Pascha": *"This is to us a Feast of feasts and a Festival of festivals as far exalted above all others, not only those which are only human and come and go on the ground, but even those which are of Christ Himself and are celebrated in His honour, as the Sun is above the stars."*

Through poetic repetition, both the Holy Father and the Hymnographer are expressing the singular pre-eminence of the Feast of Pascha in comparison to all other Christian Feast days and Festivals.



## From the Holy Father...

### Saint Ephraim the Syrian — "Death Slew and was Slain"

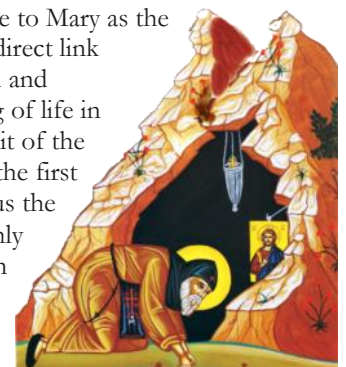
In his sermon "On Our Lord", the masterful poet and orator St Ephraim the Syrian portrays with all his customary eloquence the theological significance of the death and Resurrection of our Lord.

The Saint commences by confirming that our Lord did in fact die: "[death] trampled our Lord underfoot".

However, this trampling was in no way a defeat, for Christ "in turn treated death as a high road for His own feet". In other words, Christ's death was not an unintended consequence of His coming. There was a mission from which God never departed. Christ submitted to death in order to defeat it. St Ephraim says, "death slew Him by means of the body which He had assumed, but that same body proved to be the weapon with which He conquered death". That same body was elected by God. God chose the "chariot" by which He would arrive on earth (the Theotokos), and thus subjected Himself to bodily mortality. Christ's death involved the pain felt by the death of any mortal man suffering such extreme tortures. Christ did not use His powers to relieve the pain, to withdraw the sting of the nails, or to quicken His suffering. But death was only able to kill a natural human life, "[beneath] the cloak of His manhood, His Godhead engaged death in combat; in slaying our Lord, death itself was slain".

What is Pascha, if not the Christian celebration of the defeat of death, the passing from death to eternal life, the opening of the gates of Paradise for generations to come?

"Since a tree had brought about the downfall of mankind, it was upon a tree that mankind crossed over to the realm of life". With this and by reference to Mary as the new Eve, St Ephraim draws a direct link between the Lord's Crucifixion and Resurrection and the beginning of life in Genesis. He shows that the fruit of the Resurrection is the reversal of the first sin. Thus, the Saint reveals to us the purpose of Christ's entire earthly mission: the restoration of man as the child of God and his ultimate salvation.





## Palm Sunday Crosses (Βάγια)

When our Lord entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, sitting on the colt of a donkey, he was greeted with crowds waving palm leaves. They welcomed Him as the Messiah who would liberate Israel from the tyranny of the Romans.



He had resurrected Lazarus from the tomb after four days, He had performed countless miracles, His fame had spread and the people came out to greet Him. "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord!" Hence the use of the palm branch which was considered a symbol of triumph and victory!

Jesus was entering Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover feast just prior to His trial, death, burial and Resurrection. He entered as the Prince of Peace, riding on a donkey, considered to be an animal of peace and not of war as is the horse.

In remembrance of this event, the Church faithful get together as a community, young and old, to make Βάγια (Palm) crosses. They are made from the frond of a palm and knotted into small crosses - a special technique that is passed on from generation to generation. More intricate patterns are also weaved to adorn the church. A prayer is read over the palm crosses and then distributed to the faithful to be taken home and put on the iconostasis.

With one voice the people chant the Apolytikion of the day: "By raising Lazarus from the dead before Your passion, You did confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God! Like the children with the palms of victory, we cry out to You, O Vanquisher of death: Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord!"

We are to receive and worship Christ in the same manner, acknowledging Him as our King and Lord, who is always present in His Church.

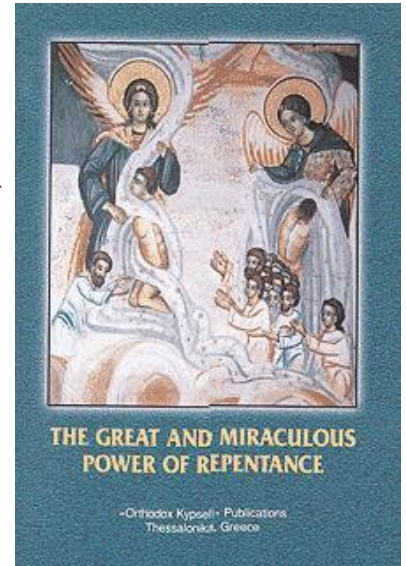
## The Great and Miraculous Power of Repentance

Published by Orthodox Kypseli

**T**he greatest miracle is this; A proud man to become humble. An unrighteous to become righteous... A man of vice to become a man of virtue.

This transformation is of course achieved through the great and miraculous power of repentance.

This short book contains a collection of the sayings of the Holy Fathers with an emphasis on sayings and examples relating to salvation which springs from the repentant way of life.



Examples include such Fathers as St John Chrysostom who says, "The one who repents does not repeat things for which he has repented for", St Isaac the Syrian who affirms that, "Whoever considers his sins to be small, falls into worse ones", and St John of the Ladder who says, "Our pride makes us forget our sins because their remembrance leads to humility".

But the book also contains many inspiring examples of repentance found in the lives of the Saints. One such story relates how Saint Martin, a merciful man who was always giving alms to the poor, would occasionally have some crippled and half-paralysed beggars flee from him. This was because they knew the Saint also performed miracles and that he might cure them. If they were cured, they would not be able to beg for alms in the future and would have to work hard like everyone else. "How many of us imitate them and avoid going to Confession or studying God's word for fear that our eyes might open and we shall be obliged to lose our lifestyle and so miss our pleasures!"

This book is an easy read and yet stimulating. It is highly recommended especially in preparation for Holy Confession.

"When man confesses his sins, his soul is cleansed and becomes radiant like a diamond. Without confession there is no repentance, and without repentance man cannot be saved" (Hermit Joseph the Athonite).

A wide range of Orthodox Christian books is available from the Orthodox Mission Bookstore, 217 Bexley Road, Kingsgrove.  
Tel: (02) 9787 9779 E-mail: editor@lychnos.org  
Internet: www.orthodoxbookstore.org.au

# NEWS & VIEWS

## Greek National Day Celebration

On Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> March, the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese and Community of Sydney held their annual march in Sydney's CBD to commemorate Greek Independence Day. Church parishes, schools and Greek organisations all participated, along with the Greek Orthodox Christian Society and the Greek Orthodox Ladies Groups. A memorial service was held at Martin Place, officiated by His Eminence Archbishop Stylianos, followed by a march towards Sydney Opera House, where large crowds enthusiastically greeted the procession. The event was honoured by the attendance of numerous federal and state political leaders and other dignitaries, who spoke warmly of the historical and spiritual significance of the Day, as well as the strong contribution of Greeks to Australian society.



Young men and women of the Greek Orthodox Christian Society, Greek Orthodox Ladies Groups, and Youth Groups (Ομάδες) marching along Pitt St, Sydney



Entering the forecourt of Sydney Opera House



Young men and women holding up a large Greek flag



Lift-up the flag... higher!

**Ακούτε το ραδιοφωνικό πρόγραμμα  
«Η ΦΩΝΗ ΤΗΣ ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΙΑΣ»**

**κάθε Κυριακή:**

**10:45 π.μ. στο 2MM-AM 1665**

**11:00 π.μ. στο 2ERA-FM 151.675 (scanner)**

**5:30 μ.μ. στο Galaxia FM 151.850 (scanner)**

**κάθε Πέμπτη:**

**3:30 μ.μ. στο Radio Club AM 1683**

**« ΛΥΧΝΟΣ »**

**is a bimonthly publication of the  
Greek Orthodox Christian Society,  
under the auspices of the  
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia.**

**Phone: (02) 9787 9779.**

**E-mail: editor@lychnos.org**

**Internet: www.lychnos.org**