



# ΛΥΧΝΟΣ

A GREEK ORTHODOX PERIODICAL FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

«Λύχνος τοῖς ποσὶ  
μου ὁ νόμος σου  
καὶ φῶς ταῖς  
τρίβοις μου»

Ψαλμ 118, 105

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## The Mother of Life

**W**hile most people ponder over what the meaning of life is, they tend to lose focus of what life is and where it comes from. Some say it is precious or is a gift, others say it is complicated and has its ups and downs; however, these accounts are too vague and superficial.

When God created man the Scriptures say that He “breathed upon his face the breath of life, and the man became a living soul” (Gen 2:7). Our life originates from God Himself, as God lives, so too we receive life and we draw our existence from Him. Nevertheless, we cannot speak of life without speaking of death. Death as we know it is the tragic result of sin which was realised when Adam and Eve disobeyed God’s commandment. Sin caused an existential failure that affected their very human nature, spiritually disconnecting them from the divine source of life. This disconnection spread biologically to all of mankind through birth, and thus, death crept into creation.

So then, if disobedience caused death, it was fitting that obedience would bring re-birth. This was achieved by the Incarnation, life, death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ (the new Adam). He was born, not of a man and woman, but by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary. Born miraculously without seed, he did not inherit the “original sin”, and living without sin, Death had no power over Him. So when He took upon Himself the sins of the world and died on the Cross, He disrupted the stronghold of Death over us.

In this synergy wherein God and Man worked out our salvation and gave us a fresh breath of life, the ever-virgin Mary (the new Eve) was also obedient to God, humbly accepting to become the mother of our Lord. In so doing she gave us “the bread of life... that one may

eat of it and not die” (John 6:48-50). He nurtures us with His immortal body and becomes Life personified, assuring us that “whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life” (John 6:54).

It is proper then to call His mother the Mother of Life, for He received His flesh from her flesh and His blood from her blood, and thus was able to make a new covenant for the remission of sins and eternal life. Was it ever possible then that her life would be given over to Death, or that the Earth would contain the body of her who is

“Wider than the Heavens”, or that she who is “more honourable than the Cherubim and incomprehensibly more glorious than the Seraphim” would suffer corruption?

At the feast of the Dormition, we are reminded that life is more than a simple measure of happiness. Sure, it may be hard at times, but all is possible when God is present. This is precisely what Panagia teaches us. She was a bride yet unwedded, a mother yet a virgin, a mere mortal yet the mother of God, and now in this feast, she died and yet lives. What we sow in this life is what we shall reap in the next, and the Mother of Life shows us how to harvest eternal life.



# Η Αποτομή της Τιμίας Κεφαλής του Προδρόμου

**Ο** Ιωάννης ο ο Πρόδρομος και Βαπτιστής του Κυρίου υπήρξε φυσιογνωμία πρώτου μεγέθους. Παραμένει στη συνείδηση των Ορθοδόξων ανά τους αιώνες ως ο κήρυκας της μετανοίας.

Είναι γνωστά τα περιστατικά που οδήγησαν τον Προφήτη στο μαρτυρικό τέλος. Ο Πρόδρομος ήλεγξε δριμύτατα την παρανομία του Ηρώδη λέγοντας **«οὐκ ἔξεστί σοι ἔχειν τὴν γυναῖκα τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ σου» (Μαρκ. 6:18). (Δεν σου επιτρέπεται από το νόμο του Θεού να έχεις σύζυγο τη γυναίκα του αδελφού σου, ο οποίος ζει ακόμα).** (Ερμ. Παν. Τρεμπέλα).

Αυτό δημιούργησε το μίσος της Ηρωδιάδας με αποτέλεσμα το θάνατο του Προφήτου.

Δεν μπορεί ο Προφήτης του Θεού, ο κήρυκας της Αληθείας να κρατήσει κλειστό το στόμα του μπρός στη κατάφωρη παρανομία του Βασιλιά Ηρώδη.

Ο λαός που έβλεπε το Βασιλιά του τόσο αδιάντροπα και εύκολα να παρανομεί σκανδαλίζονταν, κλονίζονταν η ηθική του. Γενικό το κακό. Γι'αυτό και ορθώνει το ανάστημά του ο μέγας Πρόδρομος.

Ο Ηρώδης, μας πληροφορεί ο ευαγγελιστής, σεβόταν τον Ιωάννη γιατί έβλεπε πόσο δίκαιος και πόσο άγιος ήταν. Μάλιστα και με ευχαρίστηση τον άκουγε. Όμως η Ηρωδιάδα – κόρη του παμπόνηρου διαβόλου – κοίταζε να βρει την ευκαιρία πως να τον αφανίσει.

Στα γενέθλια του Ηρώδη της δόθηκε η ευκαιρία. Εκεί στο αμαρτωλό συμπόσιο με τους φαύλους χορούς και τις σαρκικές απολαύσεις. Χορεύει η κόρη της μοιχαλίδος, η Σαλώμη. Τυφλός από το μεθύσι ο Ηρώδης υπόσχεται με όρκο ό, τι του ζητήσει. Και εκείνη δασκαλεμένη από τη πονηρή μητέρα της, ζητεί **«τὴν κεφαλὴν Ἰωάννου τοῦ βαπτιστοῦ».**

Η υμνωδία της Εκκλησίας μας εκδηλώνει αγανάκτηση και αποστροφή καθώς περιγράφει με ωμότητα και γραφικότητα μαζί, το ανοσιούργημα (ασεβή πράξη):

**«Γενεθλίων τελουμένων τοῦ ἀναιδεστάτου Ἡρώδου, τῆς ἀσελγοῦς ὀρηστρίδος (αισχροῦς χορεύτριας) ἐπληροῦτο ἡ διάθεσις τοῦ ὄρκου».**

**«Ὁρχήσατο (χόρευσε) ἡ μαθήτρια τοῦ παμπόνηρου**

**διαβόλου».**

**«Ὁ συμπόσιου πλήρους αἱμάτων!»**

**«Ὁ Βαπτιστὴς ἀπετέμνετο καὶ Ἡρώδης ἐταράττετο».**

Αυτά τα αποτελέσματα έχουν τα άνομα και αμαρτωλά, τα φαύλα και ανήθικα έργα. Τα ένοχα συμπόσια, οι άσεμνοι χοροί, τα αμαρτωλά γλέντια.

Μέσα από το μάλλον λυπηρό και μελαγχολικό κλίμα που δημιουργεί στις καρδιές των πιστών το γεγονός της αποτομής της Τιμίας Κεφαλής του Προδρόμου, προβάλλουν κάποια σπουδαία πορίσματα/συμπεράσματα.

Πρώτον, πόσο πρόσκαιρη μπροστά στην αιωνιότητα του Θεού είναι η ηδονή της αμαρτίας και πόσο ατέλειωτο είναι το βασανό της!! Πού είναι ο Ηρώδης; Πού η Ηρωδιάδα, πού η Σαλώμη; Τα αναθέματα όλου του κόσμου, όλων των αιώνων τους συνοδεύουν.

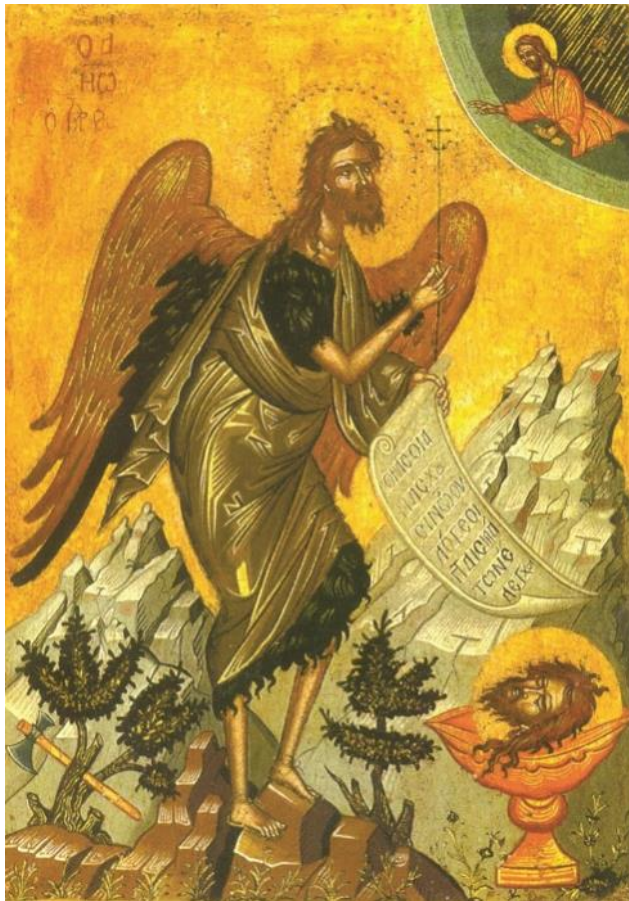
Δεύτερον, πόσο διαρκούν οι κοσμικές απολαύσεις, τα ανθρώπινα γλέντια και οι διασκεδάσεις; Χάνονται όλα σα καπνός, εξαφανίζονται σα τη σκόνη. Στάχτη στον άνεμο.

Τρίτον, στο δράμα τούτο του Προδρόμου, φαίνεται το δράμα όλου το κόσμου, όλων των αιώνων και όλων των εποχών. Δηλαδή η σύγκρουση του καλού με το κακό. Της αλήθειας με το ψέμα. Της αρετής με τη μοχθηρία. Και φαίνεται πως το ψέμα περισσεύει, η αμαρτία βασιλεύει. Λιγοστοί οι αγωνιστές της αρετής. Όμως όσοι με συνέπεια Χριστιανική αγωνίζονται εναντίον στο κακό, δεν απελπίζονται, πιστεύουν και ελπίζουν στην εξ ύψους δύναμη. Ζούν τη ζωή της Εκκλησίας. Λαμβάνουν τη Χάρη του Θεού. Επικαλούνται τις

μεσιτείες του Τιμίου Προδρόμου και πάντων των αγίων και προχωρούν.

Τελικά, εκείνοι που υποφέρουν για τη δόξα του Θεού. Αυτοί που δεν συνθηκολογούν με το κόσμο. Αυτοί που υπομένουν κοροϊδίες, απειλές, ακόμη και μαρτύριο προκειμένου να υπερασπίσουν την Αλήθεια του Χριστού. Αυτοί γνωρίζουν καλύτερα κι' από τον Πρόδρομο (γιατί ζούν μετά Χριστόν, στην εποχή της Χάριτος) πως τους προσμένει η αιώνια δόξα κοντά στο Θεό.

Με τις πρεσβείες του Τιμίου Προδρόμου αυτούς να μιμηθούμε. Σ'αυτούς να μοιάσουμε.



# Current Issues

## The Miracle of Friendship

There is abundant scientific evidence that a healthy human childhood, both physical as well as psychological, leads to better physical health in adult life, as well as being a balanced and well-adjusted individual. One factor that contributes to these benefits is the feeling of mateship that connects two or more people, without any erotic desire, with the bond of **friendship**. Between true friends, there are feelings of respect, devotion and interest of the wellbeing for one another.

Unfortunately, the current tsunami of social engineering sweeping the country at present, wants now to distort **friendship** - this sacred, innocent and beneficial emotional bond of our children and youth, starting at the classroom.

We must be grateful to Jackie Sinnerton (Daily Telegraph, May 12, 2018), who informed us that certain schools are discouraging students from having best friends; the reason being to protect them from being hurt when they break up! A top Australian psychologist called the policy “dumb and destructive”, adding that “the greatest predictor of wellbeing in life is not being good looking, or successful or rich, it is having a small group of quality friends”. Dr Michael Carr-Gregg called the idea nonsense, and stated that boys who spent more time with friends as children, had better physical health parameters by the time they hit their 30s.

It is well recognised that loneliness (the lone-wolf syndrome), is a great misfortune to befall a child, particularly an adolescent, and is frequently a preamble to depression or anti-social behaviour. On the other hand, **friendship** is a “divine” experience, filling the person with confidence, optimism, and what is most

important for the young, enthusiasm. At the same time, sincere and true **friendships** established during childhood and adolescence continue into adult life nearly always, and as described above, are not only a source of health of body and soul, they also contribute greatly to the happiness of the person.

The miracle called **friendship** was first described by the ancient Greek philosophers. According to Plato, Friendship is the bond among people pursuing the realisation of what is **good**. So, real friends are those who in common want what is good and excellent.

On the other hand, Aristotle defines **friendship** as the

bond affected between persons in the pursuit of **virtue**. Whereas the ancient world cultivated **friendship** as a valuable feeling and experience, they always admired the **friendship** displayed by the Greek people when they encountered them.

But long before the philosophers spoke about **friendship**, we find in the Old Testament a perfect description of it: “**a faithful**

**friend is a strong shelter, and he who finds one finds a treasure**” (Sirach 6:14). However, the nucleus of the bond between people is the sacrifice of **Jesus Christ** himself, who established **friendship** with His blood. Jesus felt the need of a friend, and that was Lazarus, and cried for his death. But not only that. He became the friend of all sinners: “**You are My friends**” (John 15:14), and again, “**I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid**” (Luke 12:4).

We, as Christians, should not allow those who have no respect for the moral principle of **Friendship** to poison the minds of our children and youth, by destroying in their hearts the most sacred bond among people, replacing it by a meaningless hypothesis.



## Από Τους Αγίους Της Εκκλησίας Μας

## From the Saints of our Church

**Ο Άγιος Δωρόθεος της Γάζας**  
(Η μνήμη του τιμάται 13<sup>η</sup> Αυγούστου)

**St Dorotheos of Gaza**  
(Commemorated 13<sup>th</sup> August)

**Σ**τις μέρες μας βλέπουμε την Γάζα της Παλαιστίνης σαν μια επικίνδυνη περιοχή όπου κυριαρχεί η βία. Και όμως, στον έκτο αιώνα μ.χ., ήταν μια περιοχή ηρεμίας, προσευχής και ασκητισμού. Διαβάζουμε για τους μοναχούς-πατέρες της περιοχής, όπως τον άγιο Βαρσανούφιο, τον άγιο Ιωάννη τον Προφήτη και τον άγιο Ισαάκ. Όμως πρέπει να αναφέρουμε και τον Άγιο Δωρόθεο, που η μνήμη του είναι στις 13 Αυγούστου, ο οποίος μαζί με τους άλλους που αναφέραμε, επηρέασαν πολύ τον άγιο Ιωάννη (τον συγγραφέα της Κλίμακος).

Ο Άγιος Δωρόθεος (505 – 565), σπούδασε στα νιάτα του κοινωτικές επιστήμες και φιλοσοφία. Όμως, αυτός ο τρόπος ζωής δεν τον ικανοποιούσε, και τελικά κατέληξε σε ένα μοναστήρι της Παλαιστίνης, όπου έγινε μαθητής του Αγίου Ιωάννη του Προφήτη. Στα συγγράμματά του (τα οποία ονόμασε «Ομιλίες»), γράφει: «Όταν μπήκα στο Μοναστήρι, είπα στον εαυτό μου: Όταν μελετούσα φιλοσοφία, το διάβασμα με γέμιζε με τόση επιθυμία και ζήλο, που έγινε συνήθεια για μένα, τότε θα πρέπει με ακόμη πιο πολύ ζήλο να αφιερωθώ στη μελέτη της αρετής.

Όταν αργότερα ο πνευματικός του πατέρας αρρώστησε, ο Άγιος Δωρόθεος στράφηκε για βοήθεια στον Άγιο Βαρσανούφιο. Όμως εκείνος έγινε ερημίτης μετά τον θάνατο του Ιωάννη του Προφήτη, τότε ο Άγιος Δωρόθεος πήγε στην έρημο, για να ζήσει την ζωή της προσευχής και αφοσίωσης στον Θεό, που τόσο επιθυμούσε. Μολονότι ζούσε μακριά στην έρημο, τον ακολούθησαν πολλοί άλλοι ευσεβείς, και τελικά ίδρυσε Μοναστήρι για όλους. Για να βοηθήσει τους μοναχούς, έγραψε οδηγίες και συμβουλές, που μπορούμε να τις διαβάσουμε και σήμερα στις Ομιλίες του.

Ο Άγιος Δωρόθεος της Γάζας, έζησε σύμφωνα με την ασκητική παράδοση των πατέρων, κάνοντας μεγάλη υπακοή στους γέροντες του, Άγιο Ιωάννη τον Προφήτη και τον Άγιο Βαρσανούφιο, και έκανε πολλή χρήση της προσευχής του Ιησού. Ο μαθητής του, Άγιος Δοσίθεος (μνήμη 19 Φεβρουαρίου), έλεγε για εκείνον: «Προς τους αδελφούς που αγωνιζόταν μαζί τους για την αρετή, μιλούσε πάντα με σεμνότητα, ταπείνωση, ευγένεια και χωρίς υπερηφάνεια ή αυθάδεια».

**Τ**oday we see Gaza, in Palestine, as a dangerous place, full of strife and conflict. In the sixth century AD however, it was a place of prayer and asceticism. We still read about the monastic fathers of this area such as St Barsanuphius, St John the Prophet and St Isaias. These Saints, along with St Dorotheos, were to influence St John Climacus (author of The Ladder of Divine Ascent).

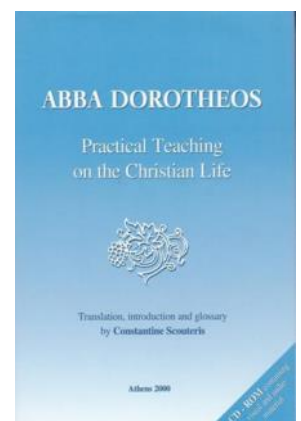
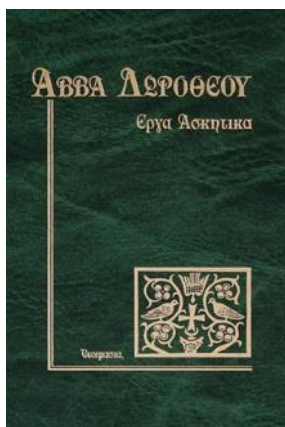
St Dorotheos lived from around the years 505 to 565. In his youth, he displayed a zeal for secular studies and philosophy. However this manner of life was not his true calling, and he eventually made his way to a monastery in Palestine, becoming a disciple of St John the Prophet. He writes in his Discourses: “When I entered the monastery I therefore said to myself, “If while studying superficial philosophy the practice of reading had generated within me such desire and zeal, and it had developed into a habit for me, then I should be even more zealous in the study of virtue.”

After his spiritual father became ill, St Dorotheos turned to St Barsanuphius for spiritual counsel. But after St Barsanuphius became a recluse in the wake of St John’s death, St Dorotheos went out into the desert that he had longed for throughout his time in the monastery, seeking a life of prayer and devotion to God. Even in the remote desert, he attracted such a large following that he eventually established his

own monastery. It was to these disciples that the sayings and instructions we read today in his Discourses were addressed.

St Dorotheos of Gaza followed in the ascetic tradition by valuing obedience to his spiritual fathers, Sts John the Prophet and Barsanuphius, and by making use of the Jesus Prayer. His disciple, St Dositheus (February 19), said of him: “Towards the brethren labouring with him he responded with modesty, with humility, and was gracious without arrogance or audacity.”

The writings of St Dorotheos are a treasury of spiritual wisdom and advice, revealing the majesty of his discernment, humility and obedience; highly recommended reading for all.



# Questions & Answers

A clergyman of our Archdiocese answers ...

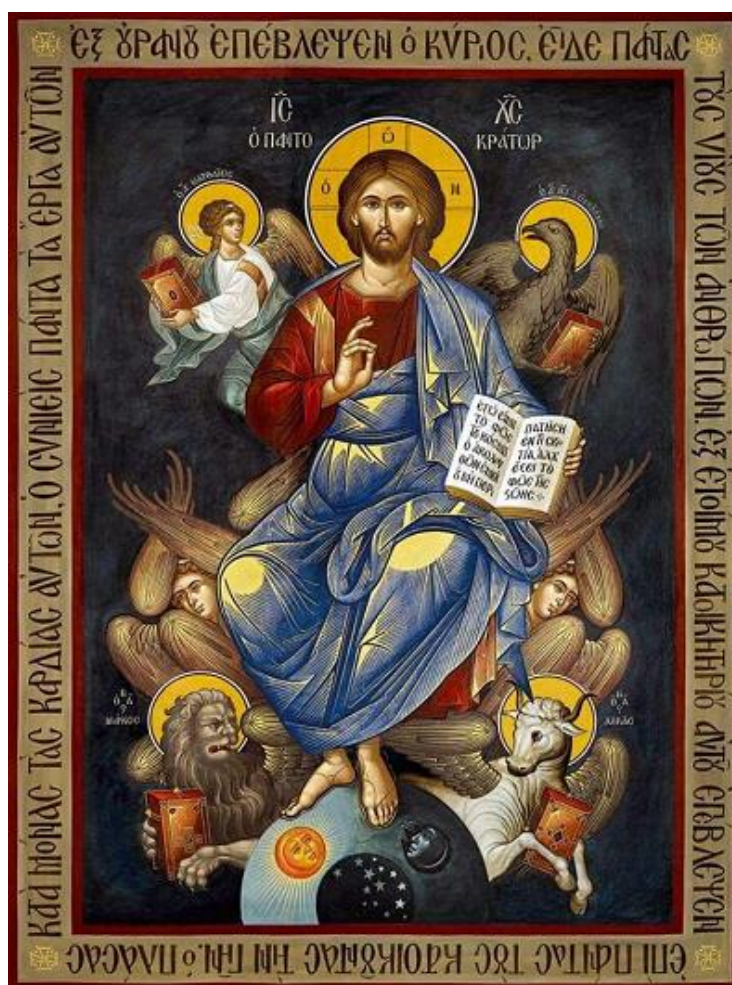
## *What is meant by Christ's words, "Heaven and earth will pass away" (Matt 24:35) ?*

In each of the synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke), we read about Jesus' account of the Great Tribulation. The passage was set during Holy Week. According to the Scriptural accounts, the Disciples, walking through the Temple, were amazed by the grandeur of the Temple buildings. Jesus, however, was less impressed, remarking, "Truly I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another, that will not be thrown down" (Matt 24:2). He then warned them of the many signs that will precede the end times, including the rise of false teachers, the onset of wars and persecutions and then the Tribulation itself, where people will urgently need to flee their homes. Finally, as Jesus described, the sun will be darkened, and the people "will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matt 24:30). He subsequently assured His listeners that even though no one knows the hour when these things will happen, they will surely happen. He emphasised this by saying, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away" (Matt 24:35).

Some of this discourse was predicting the destruction of the Temple of Solomon by the Romans in AD 70, but Jesus was using this as an opportunity to teach us about the end of the ages. He reinforced the importance of vigilance in His followers' spiritual lives, so that they would be ready for any eventuality at any time.

Heaven and earth are absolute and permanent realities. The word "heaven" in this passage is the translation of the Greek word οὐρανός, which can also be translated as "sky", or even "outer space". Jesus is saying that these current physical realities, no matter how grand, are transient and have a use-by date. However, His words are absolute; they have no use-by date, and will definitely be fulfilled and validated. Moreover, heaven and earth were made to serve humankind, but the words of Jesus were uttered to govern humankind; thus they are more authoritative than anything in heaven or on earth.

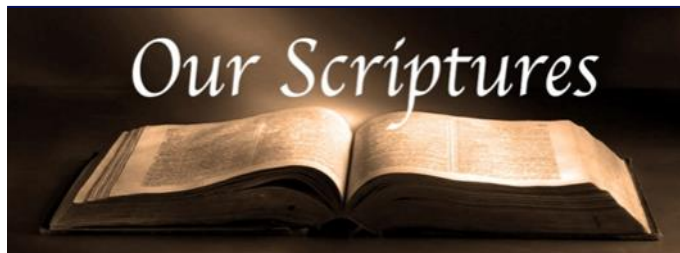
Jesus' intent in these words is to shake off any complacency in His Disciples. Uncertainty makes



people careless, but certain conviction leads to preparedness, especially when feeling threatened. Thus, Jesus is strengthening His Disciples' faith to recognise the adversity of the end times, and to be ever-prepared.

In this life, we most often live for the transient things; those things that are outwardly appealing, but lack substance. We may live without any true purpose. Jesus Christ is giving us a purpose. The things of this life will pass away, but Jesus is elevating us to the eternal things that will not pass away. The purpose of our lives is not to indulge in the things of this life, but to cleanse our hearts so that we can worthily partake in the eternal realities. As we do not know when our life will end, or when these things will take place, being ever-ready is the surest way to prepare for the eternal realities.

† Fr G. L.



**Gospel Reading, Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> August  
The Rich Young Ruler  
(Matthew 19:16-26)**

A rich young ruler approaches Christ in earnest seeking to know how to obtain eternal life. He calls Christ 'good teacher'. That is, he recognises Christ's authority as a teacher, as one who can discern between good and evil, between a godly life and a sinful life; but he approaches Christ merely as a teacher, and fails to recognise His divinity. Because of this, St John Chrysostom says that Christ chooses to communicate with him as a man and teacher. He responds by saying "no one is good but One, that is, God". Christ is not saying that He is not good, but can perceive that the young ruler can be tested.



He goes on to instruct him to simply follow the commandments, but the man responds by saying that he has kept them all from his youth. This brings about the end of Christ's superficial discourse. At this point He tells him that perfection can be obtained if he sells what he has, gives it to the poor and follows Christ. This passage perhaps reveals the most poignant lesson for all Christians. That is, to obtain perfection we must dedicate our entire lives to Christ. This means to pray earnestly to Christ, listen for His calling, to see Him in our neighbour, to know His will, and ultimately to follow Him to the cross.

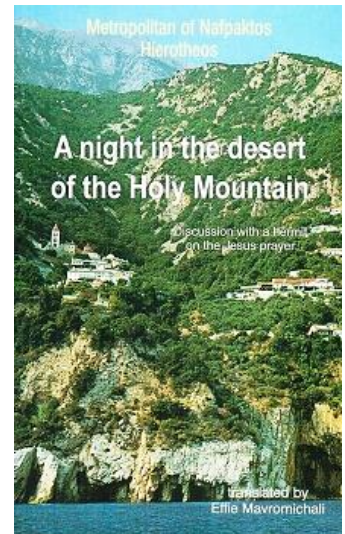
This challenge was too much for the young ruler "for he had great possessions". He was glad and willing to take his faith to a certain point, but when challenged by Christ to take the further step, he could not do so because he was tied to earthly things.

Christ speaks to the old and young in this passage, telling us that He wants our hearts. His calling is there to be taken, and there is no better time than now to accept that invitation.



**A Night in the Desert of the Holy Mountain  
by Metropolitan of Nafpaktos Hierotheos.  
Published by the Birth of the Theotokos  
Monastery, Greece, 2003 (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)**

A Night in the Desert of the Holy Mountain details a discussion between Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos and a Holy Elder who lived in the solitary peaks of Mount Athos. The author, Metropolitan Hierotheos, at the request of the Elder with whom he speaks, purposefully maintains his anonymity. The book begins with a young Hierotheos traversing the peaks of Mount Athos searching for this unnamed Elder to satisfy his



increasing thirst for God and to question him with this burning desire to draw near to Christ. Metropolitan Hierotheos describes this elder as: "Living in a little more than an opening in the earth, he has overcome all the conventions of this world... You do not know how to describe him. As he has escaped the categories of this world, he goes on towards the depths of eternity. He touches the divine fire and he is literally aflame. He is on fire now with the Uncreated Light. At times while you are talking with him you think that he will be ignited and be completely consumed in flames."

The description of the Elder is genuine and true. One can immediately understand this after beginning to read the wise words of the Elder. This Holy man is not from our world, but speaks as if he lives in another, a higher world. The conversation recorded in this book covers the topic of the Jesus prayer, and delves into the varying subjects that surround it including temptation, how to pray the Jesus prayer, the Grace and blessings associated with the prayer and the significance and spiritual states regarding the prayer.

This book should not be quickly dismissed as a mere spiritual conversation between two people, but as the Metropolitan Hierotheos notes in his introduction: "should not be read as a story, but rather as a teaching sent by God". A teaching for all on a central aspect of Orthodoxy, a prayer that has guided our Holy Fathers and Saints for centuries, and with the Grace of God will continue to guide us.



## Greek Australian Migrant Journeys

### Surviving the difficult years

**D**imitri was a gentle man who would rarely speak about his early years. He had grown up in north western Greece, in a mountain village near the Albanian border in the 1920s. His father had died when he was a young teenager and being the oldest of four boys, he became the main breadwinner of the family. His mother, Maria, was a generous and compassionate woman, but the harsh conditions of the village life and the absence of a strong male presence took its toll on her. She was often short tempered and took out her frustration on her oldest son. Dimitri worked very hard in the fields but he was just a young boy.

On one occasion the harvester fell apart as he was tilling the field, and Maria lost her temper and blamed him for not being careful with this tool. Dimitri swallowed the unjust verbal abuse he had received from his mother and stayed up all night to repair it. He left the repaired harvester in front of the shed so that his mother would see it in the morning when she went to milk the goats, and he left a note on the kitchen table in which he stated he had left to find work in the township about ten kilometres away.

After going from shop to shop, he found a baker who was willing to take him on and teach him the trade of bread-making at the local fourno (oven). He would have a roof over

his head and he would learn a trade that would serve him well, especially as the baker saw potential in Dimitri. He was a boy that did not cringe at hard work and an early 3.00 a.m. start every day.

When Maria realised what she had done by taking out her frustration on her son, she became distraught. Not only had she accused Dimitri of something he had not been responsible for, but she had also lost her leading farm hand and her household helper. He was the one who had supported her after she had lost her husband. After trying to carry on without him for a few weeks, she went and found him, and her tears and pleading won Dimitri over. He abandoned an excellent

opportunity to gain a stable trade and returned to the village to help her. It was not long however before she too passed away due to a flu epidemic, and Dimitri was left to be the protector and guardian of his brothers.

Later on, with a family of his own, he had to make the difficult decision to migrate to Germany first as a migrant worker, and then to Australia. Wherever he went, his employers loved him because he remained a man of few words but of deep commitment who never put himself forward. It was always the needs of others he served.



# Η Τίμια ζώνη της Παναγίας

**Σ**τις 31 Αυγούστου γιορτάζουμε την **Κατάθεση της Τιμίας Ζώνης της Θεοτόκου**, το μοναδικό Ιερό κειμήλιο που σχετίζεται με τον επίγειο βίο της. Τρεις μέρες μετά την κοίμηση της Θεοτόκου, κατέβηκε ο Κύριος με συνοδεία των Αρχαγγέλων Μιχαήλ, Γαβριήλ, πλήθος Αγγέλων, και παρέλαβε την Αγία Σορό της Παναγίας.

Ο Απόστολος Θωμάς ήταν ο μόνος από τους Αποστόλους που είδε τη Μετάσταση της Παναγίας. Στις Ινδίες όπου βρισκόταν, ενώ τελούσε τη Θεία Λειτουργία, βρέθηκε με θαυμαστό τρόπο στη Γεθσημανή. Παρακάλεσε τότε την Παναγία να του δώσει για ευλογία τη Ζώνη της και εκείνη, καθώς ανέβαινε στους ουραμούς, του την έριξε: **«Πρὸς δόξαν ἀκήρατον ἀνερχομένη Ἀγνή, χερί σου δεδώρησαι τῷ Ἀποστόλῳ Θωμᾷ, τὴν πάνσεπτον Ζώνην σου»**, ψάλλουμε στο απολυτίκιο της εορτής.

Σύμφωνα με την παράδοση, τη Ζώνη την ύφανε η ίδια η Θεοτόκος από τρίχες καμήλας. Την **Τίμια Ζώνη** την διαφύλαξαν στα Ιεροσόλυμα έως το **395** ὅσπου ο αυτοκράτορας **Αρκάδιος**, υἱός του **Μ. Θεοδοσίου**, την μετέφερε στην

**Κωνσταντινούπολη** και την κατέθεσε σε μία υπέροχη λειψανοθήκη, την οποία ονόμασε **«Αγία Σορό»**.

Μετά από λίγα χρόνια η κόρη του Αρκαδίου, η



αυτοκράτειρα **Πουλχερία**, ανήγειρε **λαμπρό Ναό των Χαλκοπρατείων** και **εναπόθεσε εκεί την Τίμια Ζώνη**. Η ίδια η αυτοκράτειρα την κέντησε με χρυσή κλωστή, έτσι όπως φαίνεται μέχρι σήμερα.

Πλήθος πιστών συνέρρεαν για να την προσκυνήσουν με ευλάβεια. Άνθρωποι δυστυχημένοι και πονεμένοι βρήκαν λύτρωση με τη θαυματουργή δύναμη της.

Στη συνέχεια η Αγία Ζώνη τεμαχίστηκε και τεμάχιά της μεταφέρθηκαν σε διάφορους ναούς της Κωνσταντινούπολης. Μετά την άλωση της Πόλης, κάποια τεμάχια αρπάχτηκαν από τους βαρβάρους και απολίτιστους κατακτητές και

κάποια άλλα μεταφέρθηκαν στη Δύση το 1204 από τους Σταυροφόρους.

**Έτσι το μοναδικό σωζόμενο τμήμα είναι αυτό που φυλάσσεται στο Άγιο Όρος, στην Ιερά Μονή Βατοπεδίου** όπου έφτασε με εξαιρετικά περιπετειώδη τρόπο.

Τα θαύματα που πραγματοποίησε και πραγματοποιεί η Τίμια Ζώνη είναι πολλά και ποικίλα. Βοηθά ειδικά άτεκνα ανδρόγυνα να αποκτήσουν παιδί.

**Η Τίμια Ζώνη διατηρεί τη θαυματουργική της δύναμη, ευφραίνοντας όσους την πλησιάζουν με πίστη και ευλάβεια**, γιατί η Χάρη της Παναγίας καθαγιάζει τους πιστούς που προσέρχονται ευλαβικά για να την προσκυνήσουν, τους ανυψώνει από τη φθορά και τους απαλλάσσει από ασθένειες και θλίψεις.



GREEK ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN SOCIETY

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Find out more information about the history and activities of the Greek Orthodox Christian Society such as Sunday Schools, Youth Fellowships, the Sydney School of Byzantine Chant and Orthodox Bookstore, and subscribe to our bi-monthly update.



## From The Old Testament



### The Seven Holy Maccabee Martyrs

**T**radition informs us that the seven Maccabee martyrs, Abim, Antonius, Gurias, Eleazar, Eusebonus, Alimus and Marcellus, their mother Solomonia and their teacher Eleazar, suffered in the year 167 BC under the impious Syrian King Antiochus.



The King compelled the people to not live by the laws of God: “A man could neither keep the Sabbath, nor observe the feasts of his fathers, nor simply confess himself to be a Jew” (2 Mac 6:6). Eleazar, a Jewish scribe, was forced to open his mouth to eat swine’s flesh, however he spat out the flesh and approached the rack on his own accord. His martyrdom is consistent with the martyrs we see after Christ: “I am enduring terrible sufferings in my body from this beating, but in my soul I gladly suffer these things because I fear Him” (2 Mac 6:30).

Seven brothers with their mother were also arrested and shared the same courage as Eleazar, with the oldest stating: “What do you intend to ask and learn from us? For we are ready to die rather than transgress the law of our Fathers” (2 Mac 7:2). One by one, all the seven brothers were subjected to fierce tortures: their tongues were torn out, their hands and feet were cut off, they were placed in cauldrons and in large frying pans. Through all these sufferings, with the help of God, they displayed an extraordinary courage addressing the King: “You set us free from this present life, but the King of the world will raise us to an everlasting renewal of life, because we die for His laws” (2 Mac 7:9). The youngest brother was the last to be left alive and Antiochus suggested to Saint Solomonia to persuade the boy to obey him, so that her last son at least would be spared. Instead, the brave mother told him to imitate the courage of his brothers. The child reviled the King and was tortured even more than his brothers. Saint Solomonia then stood over their bodies, raised up her hands in prayer to God and died.

These unwaveringly faithful Jews are examples for all of us in their courage to keep God’s law, and for this reason on their commemoration on August 1, they are called “great martyrs, before the martyrs of Christ”.

## Holiness In Our Times



### Father Simon Arvanitis (1901-1988)

**F**ather Simon was born in 1901 in Koukouvaounes, Attica, Greece. At the age of 16 he went to Mount Athos with friends in order to receive the blessing of Metropolitan Nectarios (St Nectarios). The Saint took his hands and told him prophetically: “You will become a Spiritual Father and save souls”.



Simon’s love for God grew, and at age 24 he secretly left his family to be tonsured a monk at the monastery of St Haralambos. However he longed to be a cave-dwelling hermit, and continually begged this from the Monastery elders. The elders prayed for a week to Panagia to determine the correct path. After a week, Simon was told: “The Holy Mother informed us that you must return to the world which needs you to be led to salvation”. In obedience, he left Mount Athos and was ordained a priest-monk.

He gathered several monks around him and countless spiritual children who remember his great faith and miracles. One of these monks, Zosimas, had a phobia of the dark. Fr Simon prayed over him and allowed him to sleep in his own cell while he, the elder, slept on the roof of the cell. Zosimas had a dream that the devil appeared and said: “Your Elder is up on the roof and I can’t come inside”. With the prayers of Fr Simon, he was healed.

Fr Simon reposed in 1988. On the day of his burial, the grace of God was evident. The Metropolitan approached to kiss his body and the elder lifted his hand for the Metropolitan to kiss. Contemporary Saints such as St Iakovos Tsalikis knew and admired the Christian work of Fr Simon during his lifetime. His selflessness, wisdom and love inspired countless struggling Christians during his life and after his blessed repose.



## What we Hear in Church



### Hymn to the Theotokos Τὴν Ὠραιότητα τῆς Παρθενίας Σου

#### Θεοτοκίον Ἦχος γ'

Τὴν Ὠραιότητα τῆς παρθενίας σου, καὶ τὸ  
ὑπέρλαμπρον τὸ τῆς ἀγνείας σου, ὁ Γαβριήλ  
καταπλαγεῖς ἐβόα σοι Θεοτόκε, Ποῖόν σοι ἐγκώμιον  
προσαγάγω ἐπάξιον; τί δὲ ὀνομάσω σε; ἀπορῶ καὶ  
ἐξίσταμαι· διὸ ὡς προσετάγην βοῶ σοι, Χαῖρε ἡ  
Κεχαριτωμένη.

Awed by the beauty of your virginity and by the brilliance of your purity, Gabriel cried aloud to you, O Mother of God, "How can I praise you as I should? With what name shall I call you? I am at a loss and amazed; therefore as I was commanded, I cry to you: Rejoice, full of grace!"

Many hymns referring to the Theotokos were written in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries as hymnographers, many of them monks, began to enrich the hymnology of the Church. This popular hymn, based on the events of the Annunciation, is found in the book known as the Paraklitiki, and is used throughout the Church year.

It was a common theme running through the writings and hymnology of the Church Fathers that the Theotokos was pure in both body and soul when she entered the Temple, and that she was there prepared to become the vessel and Mother of Light. George of Nicomedia characteristically states in his Homily on the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple that the Virgin Mary was "clean of all human manner and passion, not being subject to these and above the need of nature". He goes on to focus on her purity of mind, rhetorically asking: "Which mind, motivated so much to achieve perfect dispassion, is more pure compared to the one which she, the spotless one, exhibited from childhood?" Like the Angel, he cannot fail but address the Theotokos using similar language to the hymn, "Oh! The most beautiful adornment of the beautiful!" («Ὁ τῶν Ὠραίων Ὠραιότατον Ὠραΐσμα!»).

Following the example of the Angel, we and the hymnographers can only express our joy. Archbishop Theophylact of Bulgaria, in his commentary on the Gospel reading of the Annunciation, says that the angel cries out with the greeting, "Rejoice, full of Grace!", to indicate with the word, 'rejoice', that Eve's sadness, when God told her that, "in pain you shall bring forth children", is now dissolved and with the words, 'full of Grace', which means, blessed, replaces the curse of Eve after the fall, "I will greatly multiply your sorrow..."

Indeed, according to St Nicholas Kabasilas, the Virgin Mary herself rejoices on the Good News received from the Angel: "the greatest reason for which the Virgin Mary rejoices is not simply because through her, God, but also she herself, due to those things she knew and foresaw, brought resurrection to mankind."



## From the Holy Fathers...

### St Maximus the Confessor (On the Liturgy)

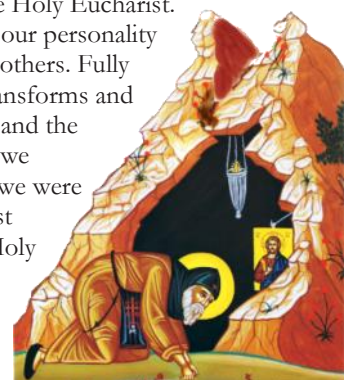
St Maximus the Confessor was born in 580 AD to an aristocratic family of Constantinople, and received the finest education. He was an imperial secretary for four years before realising his calling to become a monk at the age of 34. He lived through the tumultuous events of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, which saw Jerusalem occupied by Persians and Christ's True Cross taken and carried away; its subsequent recovery by Byzantine Emperor Heraclius; the Persian attack



on Constantinople averted miraculously by the Theotokos' defence of the city (from which the Akathist Hymn arose); and the destruction of the millennium-old Persian empire by Arab Muslims whose conquests reached Armenia and North Africa.

St Maximus personally became involved in two dogmatic battles from the age of 36. Though the heretics accepted our Lord Jesus Christ's two natures (i.e. divine and human), they claimed erroneously that Jesus had only one "energy" or mode of action (monoenergism) and only one will (monothelism). He was tried and exiled twice for defending the truth at the age of 75 and again at 82. On the second occasion, he was punished by having his tongue and right hand cut off and died shortly thereafter. His Orthodox stance was vindicated 18 years after his death by the Sixth Ecumenical Council in 680 AD.

St Maximus' writings reveal that he was bestowed with abundant grace and attained deep spiritual insight. In his work titled Mystagogy he explains how the actions and symbols of the Divine Liturgy are not just figurative. Rather, God is communicating with and sanctifying us throughout the entire Liturgy. God does not just transmit information but reveals his own criteria allowing us to think, live and act in a divine manner. We transcend via the Holy Spirit in accordance with our relationship and union with God, our faith and love, and through our participation in the Holy Eucharist. Our union with God strengthens our personality and, increases our closeness to others. Fully assumed, the Divine Liturgy transforms and deifies both the human person and the community. Thus, he explains, we achieve the purpose for which we were created: the attainment of Christ within, and attainment of the Holy Spirit. We become one with God, "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet 1:4).





## Our Orthodox Customs



## A Teenager Reviews...

### Making the sign of the Cross



In Holy Orthodoxy, everything we do reflects the Apostolic and living theology of the Church. This is most evident in the way we make the sign of the cross, being the symbol of Christ's victory over death. Using only the right hand, we join our thumb and first two fingers and lay the last two fingers flat against our palm.

The **three** fingers together signify the **Holy Trinity**, i.e. Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and the **two** fingers in the palm represent the **dual natures** of Christ, i.e. divine and human.

We touch our forehead, then our lower chest, our right shoulder and then our left, thus tracing the sign of the cross on our bodies.

This is to acknowledge that all our faculties, mind, heart, soul, and all our strength is dedicated to God. It must always be done with faith, conviction and humility.

It is second nature for Orthodox Christians to cross themselves as a protection from evil or as an assertion of faith.

Most commonly the sign is made when entering church or passing by one, when hearing the words "Father, Son and Holy Spirit", or at the Trisagion prayer "Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us". Other times we do the sign of the cross include when we hear the name of the Theotokos or the Saints, before and after receiving Holy Communion, at the end of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, after the reading of the Gospel, when we venerate an icon or cross, before and at the end of our daily prayers, before and after each meal, and when we travel daily from our home or work or general travel anywhere. It is used as a protection over our children and grandchildren and is a blessing before exams or tasks. It is burned into the thresholds of our homes on Pascha night as a protection against all evil and made whenever we are confronted with danger.

Whether we wear a cross or make the sign of the Cross we identify ourselves as followers of Christ.

### The Illumined Heart

By Frederica Mathewes-Green.

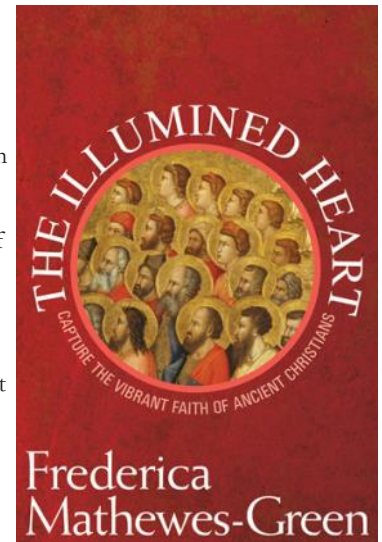
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Paraclete Press,  
2007

In *The Illumined Heart*, Frederica Mathewes-Green writes about the experiences of Anna and her family, to explain how the teachings of the Orthodox Church were preserved from the time of the Apostles until today. When Jesus taught his Disciples, they in turn taught others and passed down Christ's teachings to the churches they started. The disciples spread Christ's teachings through both written and verbal communication, as St Paul says: "Brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter." (2 Thess 2:15).

Sins are all the little actions and inactions that serve our selfish impulses and can be so hard to resist and detect. The author writes that God wants us to turn from our sins. God's love is a healing love: "Toughness can be shown as much by fast as by fist". Fasting from food isn't the only kind of discipline. The author stresses that we need to discipline our bodies, and our passions can have a positive purpose. With the exercise of mental watchfulness, a person grows in the ability to recognise and reject thoughts that would be disruptive and gains peace.

Have you ever tried to pray constantly? Is it possible to have two kinds of thoughts going on at the same time- the Jesus prayer and the working thought? Or pray one short prayer over and over? Repenting the Jesus prayer is very beneficial to us. The author says that the Jesus prayer becomes like background music of other thoughts and actions in our lives. We forget that we need mercy. We become self-sufficient and lose our humility. By asking for mercy it reminds us that we are needy. The goal is to encounter Jesus, to live in Christ.

The author attempts through Anna and her family to rediscover a unifying Faith that transcends all modern cultural messages. To truly live in Christ, current believers must travel the path of the ancient Church. To achieve an illumined heart, one must pray, fast, and repent as vigorously as did the initial generations of Christians. This book is a moving, educating look at the vibrant spiritual life of the ancient Christians: a heritage lost to many modern Christians, but still alive and well in the Orthodox Church.



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# NEWS & VIEWS

## Visit to St John the Baptist Parish, Cairns

With the blessing of His Eminence Archbishop Stylianos, a group of around 20 members of the Greek Orthodox Christian Society visited the parish of St John the Baptist, Cairns, on the weekend of July 21-22. The group was very warmly received by Fr Menelaos Hatzoglou and the entire parish community.

During the Divine Liturgy in which the young men of the Society chanted, the sermon was delivered by the President of the Society and lay-preacher, Dr John Psarommatis. After the Liturgy, an Orthodox Christian book exhibition took place, followed by a presentation of songs, a play and a spiritual talk on "Orthodox Tradition".



Fr Menelaos and parishioners outside the Church of St John the Baptist, Redlynch, Cairns, with members of the Greek Orthodox Christian Society.

## Mid-Year Winter Retreats

From Friday 13 July to Sunday 15 July, boys from the youth fellowships (Ομάδες) of Kogarah, Belmore, Earlwood and Parramatta held their mid-year retreat at Mangrove Mountain, north of Sydney. The highlight of this retreat was the Divine Liturgy Service held at Pantanassa Monastery, celebrated by Abbot Eusebios, along with his subsequent talk which left a lasting impression on the boys. With games, discussions, Bible studies and other activities, the boys had a chance to get away from fast-paced Sydney and grow spiritually alongside other boys their age and their leaders.

The girls held their camp from the 9-11th July, also at Mangrove Mountain. The theme of their retreat was "In the Footsteps of the Saints", and a highlight was the compline service officiated at the campsite by Fr Eusebios, as well as sermon and a talk by the Abbot.



Exhibit of Orthodox Christian books on the Church grounds of St John's, Cairns.



Participants of the Girls Winter Retreat with Fr Eusebios, Abbot of Pantanassa Monastery.



The boys enjoying a game of football at their retreat.

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«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**

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