



ΛΥΧΝΟΣ

A GREEK ORTHODOX PERIODICAL FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

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

Ψαλμ 118, 105

Volume 34, Issue 5

AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2019

† The Cross of the Faithful †

The cross is the one symbol that is instantly identifiable as being truly Christian. In the two millennia since Christ was crucified, the sign of the cross has proliferated all over the world marking things sacred.

From apostolic times it was seen as a mystery and incorporated into daily life. Christ tells us to take up our cross daily and follow Him (Luke 14:27), teaching us to draw power from His suffering and His passion and carry on patiently, knowing that the crucifixion always leads to the resurrection.

Furthermore, St. Cyril of Jerusalem writing in the 4th Century tells us: "Let us not then be ashamed to confess the Crucified. Be the cross our seal made with boldness by our fingers on our brow and on everything, over the bread we eat and the cups we drink, in our comings in and goings out, before our sleep, when we lie down and when we awake, when we are traveling and when we are at rest." (*Catecheses* 13.36). Thus it is a sacred sign which not only sanctifies us and the objects we make the sign over, but also allows us to witness to our faith, and to our Lord who sanctified the Holy Cross with His precious blood and defeated death by His death on it.

Moreover, it is also a powerful sign of our salvation because it proclaims the second coming of Christ in power and glory. Referred to as the sign of the Son of Man, the Precious Cross will appear in the heavens just before the eternal and Final Judgement. (Matthew 24:30)

Therefore it is the unveiling of Paradise to the

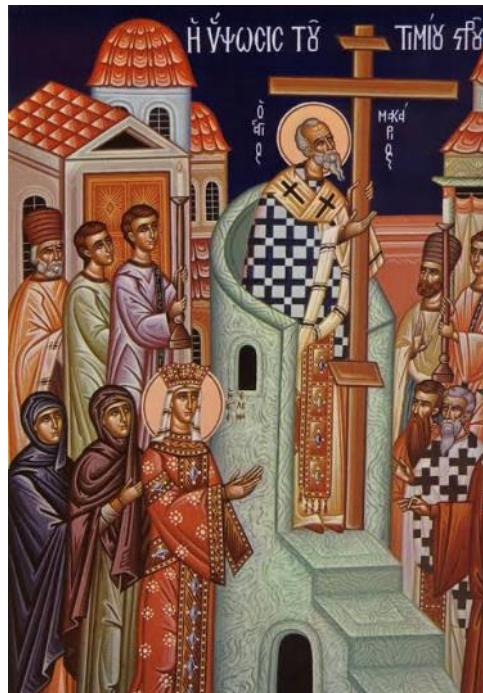
faithful and a fearful sight to Satan and his followers.

When we make the sign of the cross it must be coupled with faith and understanding and always completed with reverence. It becomes sacramental if

we make it with the right hand by touching the forehead, showing our belief, then the chest, showing our love, then across the shoulders (right to left), showing our readiness to bear our cross. In uniting our thumb, index and middle finger, we also profess our belief in the Holy Trinity, one God united in three Divine Persons.

With these thoughts, let us never fear to make the sign of the cross when it is required and how it is required, for in so doing many have been able to work miracles, cure diseases, avoid deception, discern danger, defeat enemies, protect property and ward off the evil one. Make it in prayer and thanksgiving, to bless and to

sanctify, in time of need or danger, when ill or on route, make it over the heart in time of temptation, but never in haste or carelessly. Respect it in every form for it is the cross of the faithful.



Η μωρία και το σκάνδαλο του Σταυρού

Στο αποστολικό ανάγνωσμα που η εκκλησία μας διαβάζει την ημέρα της Υψώσεως του Τιμίου Σταυρού λέγει ο Απόστολος Παύλος:

«...**ημείς δε κηρύσσομεν Χριστόν εσταυρωμένον, Ιουδαίοις, μεν σκάνδαλον, Ἕλλησι δε μωρία.**» (Α' Κορ, 1:23) Δηλαδή εμείς κηρύσσομε Χριστόν εσταυρωμένο που είναι για μεν τους Ιουδαίους σκάνδαλο, για δε τους Ἕλληνας, μωρία.

Ο Σταυρός του Χριστού ήταν την εποχή του Αποστόλου Παύλου **“μωρία”**, δηλαδή ανοησία και εξακολουθεί να είναι για τους ορθολογιστές, **“τους λογικούς”**, ανθρώπους όλων των εποχών μια ανοησία.

Ένας αμείλικτος, σκληρός ορθολογισμός θα μπορούσε να αναγνωρίσει ένα Θεό που με την ακατανίκητη δυναμὴ Του συντρίβει εύκολα τους κακούς και τους εχθρούς. Ἡ ἔστω να παραδεχθεί έναν Χριστό που να γεμίζει όλα τα φιλοσοφικά και νοησιαρχικά **“κενά”** του. Είναι αδύνατο για τους **“σοφούς”** του κόσμου τούτου να μπορέσουν να αντιληφθούν την φανέρωση της αγάπης του Θεού μέσα από την ύψιστη ταπείνωση του Σταυρού.

Ο Απόστολος Παύλος ποδηγετεί τους **“Ἕλληνας”** όλων των εποχών και τους ανεβάζει στο Γολγοθά για να τους δείξει ένα Θεό ζωντανό που αγαπά και που εκουσίως κρεμάται επί του Σταυρού, για να σώσει το δημιούργημά του. Είναι ανέβασμα υπερβατικό που δεν το χωρεί η ανθρώπινη νόηση και για τούτο το κατατάσσει σε **“μωρία”**.

Γι'αυτό το λόγο οι **“λογικοί”** άνθρωποι όλων των εποχών αδυνατούν να πλησιάσουν και το πιά σπουδαίο να οικειωθούν το Μυστήριο του Σταυρού.

Η ίδια απόρριψη του Σταυρού ως **“σκάνδαλον”** γίνεται και από τους Ιουδαίους της εποχής του

Κυρίου. Αυτοί περίμεναν έναν Μεσσία παντοδύναμο που με την ισχύ Του θα ελευθέρωνε και θα τιμωρούσε όλους αυτούς που αντιτίθενται στο Θεό.

Οι Ιουδαίοι της εποχής εκείνης όπως και όλοι οι σύγχρονοι άνθρωποι που σκέπτονται σαν αυτούς, αποτυγχάνουν να αντιληφθούν πώς η δύναμη του Θεού πηγάζει από την ελεύθερη Αγάπη Του και συνιστά το μοναδικό τρόπο υπάρξεως και ενέργειας του Θεού στο κόσμο. Το **“ασθενές του Θεού”** που

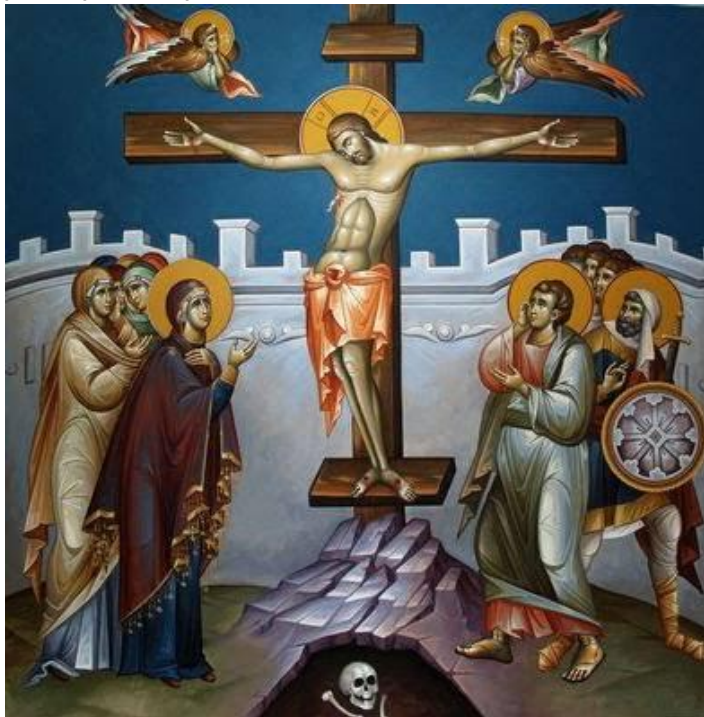
αποκαλύπτει την αγάπη Του στην **“ήττα”** του Σταυρού είναι **“ισχυρότερον των ανθρώπων”** γιατί κλείνει μέσα του **«Χριστόν Θεού δύναμιν και Θεού σοφίαν»** (Α' Κορ, 1:25), δηλαδή ο εσταυρωμένος Ιησούς Χριστός είναι Θεού δύναμη κα Θεού σοφία.

Ο Απόστολος Παύλος προβάλλει στους ανθρώπους όλων των αιώνων την μοναδική αιώνια αλήθεια, πως δηλαδή η εκούσια Σταυρική Θυσία του Κυρίου, είναι η πηγή του

μυστηρίου της αγάπης, απ'όπου τα πάντα προέρχονται και τελικά διασώζονται. Αυτή η κένωση, η εκούσια **“αδυναμία”** του Θεού-Λόγου πάνω στο Σταυρό πηγάζει από τη παντοδυναμία της Αγάπης Του. Και είναι Αυτή, η ίδια Αγάπη που τελικά σώζει τον άνθρωπο.

Οι Πατέρες τονίζουν πως ο Θεός δεν είναι τόσο πολύ δυνατός, όσο όταν βρίσκεται στην έσχατη **“αδυναμία”** της Αγάπης Του που ζωοποιεί και σώζει τον άνθρωπο.

Αυτή την αλήθεια του Σταυρού τη νοιώσαμε και την ζούμε οι Χριστιανοί όλων των αιώνων. Για μας ούτε σκάνδαλο, ούτε μωρία ο Σταυρός του Κυρίου. Μάλλον η δύναμις και η σοφία του Θεού που δια του Σταυρού, μέσα απο τη Μυστηριακή Ζωή της Εκκλησίας μας, μας ανυψώνει από το θάνατο στη ζωή και από τη γή προς τον ουρανό.



Questions & Answers

A clergyman of our Archdiocese answers ...

What can I learn from old people ?

We can learn many things from older people because whatever they are, their personalities and characteristics, good and bad are amplified in old age.

Just like the very, very young, so too the very old cannot hide behind masks of politeness and civility like younger people can. Everything they are, good or bad, pours out freely, almost uncontrollably. Those who interact with the elderly will attest that every day with them is a school day, a day of learning.

Some old people might teach us wisdom, understanding, patience, faith and glorification of God.

“Is not wisdom found amongst the aged? Does not longer life bring understanding?” Job 12:12

Old people have the benefit of having lived many years. They have seen more things, they have experienced more pain, they have made more mistakes, and they have enjoyed more successes than young people. Old people have had the time to accumulate wisdom and understanding. We can learn much from them if we listen and observe them.

“Age should speak; advanced years should teach wisdom.” Job 32:7

We can learn from old people by seeing how patient and quiet they are. We can watch older people as they do things and we can copy them. We can listen to their stories and learn about how to bear suffering and how to navigate life. Older people can teach us how to encounter situations and how to deal with other people because they have done it so many times. Older people can especially teach us what not to do. They can teach us to distinguish between what matters in life and what doesn't matter. They know what is important, and which activities are wasteful of life.

Primarily, if you spend time with faithful older people, they will teach you that only two things matter, loving and connecting with other people and loving, connecting with and glorifying God. All other activities may have some importance and relevance in life, but ultimately fade away and the only things that are left in the later years are one's connection with God and other people. Older people see the hand of God in everyone and everything.



“My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.” Psalm 73:26

Finally, from pious older people, if we watch carefully and with an open heart, we learn that, as the years go by, one by one, everything can be stripped away from us. Everything! Our beauty, our fitness, our capacity to work, our health, our sharp intellect, our strength, our family, our capacity to stand, to speak and even to eat. But one thing remains! One strength, one hope, one sweetness, one salvation, one God.

However, some old people can also be a warning to us of what we might become if we do not take control of ourselves while we can, while we are young and strong.

If old people are not people of faith, instead of glorifying God and being people of serenity and happiness, they may harbour bitterness, anger, sadness, regret and worse of all, fear. They may find they can no longer conceal the passions and weaknesses that they once hid, but did not bother controlling as young people. They tend to be angry with God, as if he is to blame for their current spiritual emptiness and their fear.

One thing all older people say in common is “whatever you are going to do, do it now, while you are young. Later you will want to, but you will not be able to.”

Indeed, there is much that we can learn from old people.

† Fr N. S.

Από τους Αγίους της Εκκλησίας μας

Ο Άγιος Μάξιμος ο Ομολογητής
(η μνήμη του τιμάται 13 Αυγούστου)

Σε έναν κόσμο όπου οι ηγέτες γυρίζουν την πλάτη στην πίστη μας για τα συμφέροντα τους ο Άγιος Μάξιμος ο Ομολογητής είναι ένα συγκινητικό παράδειγμα για το πώς ένας σοφός, σταθερός υπηρέτης της Εκκλησίας μπορεί να υπερασπιστεί την Ορθόδοξη πίστη παρά τις αφάνταστες πιέσεις.

Γεννήθηκε το 580 και έλαβε υποδειγματική εκπαίδευση στη φιλοσοφία, τα μαθηματικά και τις επιστήμες. Ο Μάξιμος έγινε ένας ισχυρός αξιωματούχος του δικαστηρίου. Εντούτοις τελικά εγκατέλειψε τις κοσμικές θέσεις στον κόσμο για να αγκαλιάσει τη ζωή ενός απλού μοναχού, όπου μπορούσε να καλλιεργήσει τα ειδικά προσόντα του συνδυάζοντας την κοσμική γνώση με την αληθινή αγάπη του, η θεολογία.

Δυστυχώς ο βυζαντινός αυτοκράτορας και οι επίσκοποι της εποχής αγκάλιαζαν την αίρεση του «Μονοθελητισμού», ισχυριζόμενοι ότι ο Ιησούς είχε μόνο μία θέληση, θεϊκή θέληση. Η στάση τους ήταν σε μεγάλο βαθμό πολιτική, για να προστατεύσουν την εθνική ασφάλεια, καθώς η Εκκλησία της Ανατολής είχε πέσει στην αίρεση και ο Αυτοκράτορας χρειάστηκε να προστατεύσει τα κοινά συμφέροντα.

Ο Άγιος Μάξιμος απέρριψε αυτή την αίρεση δηλώνοντας ότι, καθώς ο Χριστός είναι Θεός και άνθρωπος, έχει θεϊκή θέληση και ανθρώπινη βούληση. Αυτή η αλήθεια δεν μπορεί να πωληθεί προς το συμφέρον της πολιτικής σκοπιμότητας. Πάλεψε σκληρά ο Άγιος Μάξιμος για αυτό το θέμα και κέρδισε αμέτρητους ανθρώπους σε όλη την αυτοκρατορία, παρά τις αντιδράσεις των ισχυρών πολιτικών και κακοπροαίρετων επισκόπων.

Αυτοί που τον φοβούνταν και τον μισούσαν για αυτή την επίμονη αντίσταση, τον καταδίκασαν για «αίρεση». Αλλά δεν κατάφεραν να τον σταματήσουν. Σε απελπισία, ο Βυζαντινός αυτοκράτορας διέταξε να κοπούν η γλώσσα και το χέρι του και τον εξόρισε στα άκρα της αυτοκρατορίας. Ήταν εκεί, στη φυλακή, όπου ο Άγιος Μάξιμος έκοιμήθη εν Κυρίω.

Οι ένδοξοι αγώνες του δεν ήταν μάταιοι: οι διδασκαλίες του Μαξίμου επέζησαν και εξαπλώθηκαν σχεδόν είκοσι χρόνια αργότερα. Επισφραγίστηκε πλήρως και η θεολογία του επιβεβαιώθηκε στη Τρίτη Οικουμενική Σύνοδο της Κωνσταντινούπολης. Τα αμέτρητα πολύτιμα έργα του εξακολουθούν να μελετώνται από χριστιανούς μέχρι σήμερα. Γιορτάζουμε τη μνήμη του στις 21 Ιανουαρίου και στις 13 Αυγούστου, την ημέρα που κοιμήθη.

From the Saints of our Church

St Maximus the Confessor
(Commemorated 13th August)

In a world where leaders turn their backs on our faith in the interests of “just getting along” Saint Maximus the Confessor is a moving example of how a wise, steadfast servant of the Church can defend our faith despite unimaginable pressures.

Born in 580 and receiving an exemplary education in philosophy, mathematics and the sciences, Maximus rose to become a powerful Court official. However he eventually forsook the secular positions in the world to embrace the life of a simple monk, where he was able to cultivate his special gifts in combining his worldly knowledge with his true love: Theology.

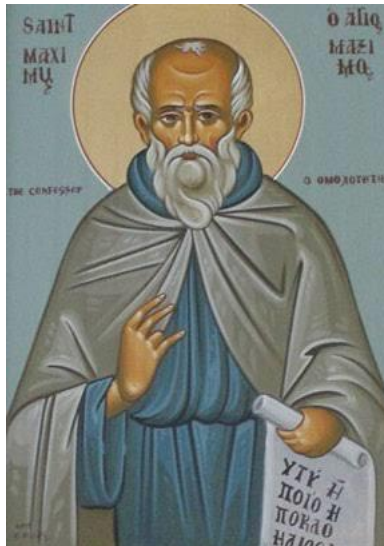
Sadly both the Byzantine Emperor and the Bishops of the time were embracing a new heresy called “Monothelism”, claiming that Jesus had only one will, a divine will. Their stance was largely politically motivated, to protect national security, as the Church of the East had fallen away into heresy and the Emperor needed everyone to “just get along”.

Maximus rejected this heresy declaring that as Christ is both God and human he has a divine will and a human will.

This truth cannot be sold off in the interests of “just getting along”, or political expediency. He fearlessly debated this and won over countless people throughout the empire, despite what powerful politicians and misguided bishops espoused.

Becoming so feared and hated for this effective resistance, he was dragged through several kangaroo courts and repeatedly convicted of “heresy”. These public trials of persecution all failed to stop him. In desperation, the Byzantine emperor had Maximus’ tongue and writing hand cut off, and he exiled him to the edges of the empire. It was there, imprisoned, where Maximus fell asleep in the Lord.

His glorious struggles were not in vain: Maximus’ teachings survived and spread, and almost twenty years later he was completely exonerated and his theology upheld in the Third Ecumenical Council of Constantinople. His countless works are still treasured and studied by Christians throughout the world today. We commemorate his memory on 21 January and 13 August, the day he fell asleep.



CURRENT ISSUES

The Complex of the FOX

Aesop's Fables, and other ancient fables, have recently been recognised as addressing the area where subconscious reactions reside, and how they operate in the human person. *The Fox and the Grapes* is a well known Aesop fable:

A hungry Fox had been walking for some time looking for food.

It arrives at a vineyard with abundant hanging grapes. It instinctively pushes to solve the existential problem of hunger.

Several curious animals observe the Fox's actions. The Fox

estimates the height of the grapes from the ground and makes a powerful jump – but is unable to reach the grapes! It does not have the bodily strength to succeed in its effort.

Until now its reaction has been quite normal, because no animal or human can always be successful in every effort.

After accepting its failure and explaining its bodily limitations to the observing animals the Fox had two options: (1) try again; or, (2) justify its failure by departing. Both of these reactions are normal.

However, the Fox adopts neither of them. Instead, it entirely rejects these normal reactions by saying to its audience, “the grapes are not ripe!”

The Fox's rejection of the normal reactions creates an unrealistic picture of the grapes. It also produces in itself an unrealistic subconscious reaction – known as rejection of itself!

You may well ask, “what is rejected?” Having failed in its attempt, the correct response for the Fox would have been to return to its previous psychological state. But this does not happen. The Fox instead returns to a subconscious state where reality is rejected and an unrealistic picture of the object which it failed to conquer is created.

This helps us to understand that whoever transfers or



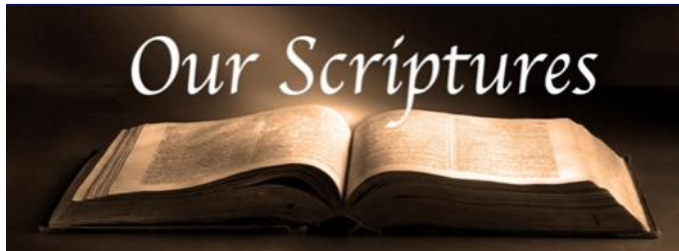
projects their conscious self to the territory of the subconscious, is absent from the area of their consciousness. Thus, their authentic self is rejected, and instead an idol [a false image] of themselves is installed into their conscious.

The result of the irrational and unexpected reaction of the Fox is a suitable setting for the development of a complex in its psychological makeup. Its justification for its failure is the excuse that the grapes are not ripe. Aesop continues, “So some men, unable to attain things they

wish, they use as an excuse the circumstances at the time.” Therefore, in the case of the Fox, its explanation is not simply a naive justification, but a downright deception. By telling the animals around that “the grapes are not ripe”, it is saying cunning lies and distorting the truth.

There is a powerful message for all of us regarding the use of justification or excuses for errors we have done, or personal failures. As we try to self-analyse ourselves in preparation for confession we need to be aware that an excuse or justification is not always innocent or true. Rather, in most cases it hides a very cunning Fox. We must be very careful in the use of excuses, which can spring up suddenly, for our actions. These excuses can arise because we are seeking to save ourselves from some trauma to our ego or prestige. However, if we check their identity, we shall mostly discover the jump of the Fox.

Elder Sophrony of Essex wrote in *St Silouan the Athonite* that, “Every man for many of his actions, can find an excuse – but if he examines his heart carefully, he will discover that by justifying himself, he cannot avoid some degree of cunning.” When we face such a dilemma, we must turn to Him, who knows our true self, and ask with fear and humility, and as the Psalmist cry out: “Lord, cleanse me from my secrets!”



On the calling of the first apostles (Luke 5:1-11)

St Luke introduces us to the blessed moment when Jesus first began choosing His Disciples.

When Jesus was done with teaching the people at the Lake of Gennesaret, he told Peter to let down his net to catch some fish. St Peter was an experienced fisherman and even though he hadn't caught anything after a whole night of fishing, Peter obeyed in humility. The two boats subsequently filled so greatly with fish that they began to sink. All who witnessed this catch were amazed.



Jesus then told Peter, and the brothers James and John (the sons of Zebedee), that they would now “become fishers of men” (5:10), and they immediately left everything and followed Him.

St John Chrysostom writes that the fishermen were called through their profession of fishing, just as the Magi were called through their work of astronomy. This shows that all can be called to Christ through their work, and can serve Christ through their work.

Christ, however, had greater fishing plans for these fishermen, and they showed their obedience by leaving everything at once and following Him.

There is a deeper spiritual meaning to this catch of fish, with the boat being a type of the Church, through which the Apostles would be filled with the faithful. St Cyril of Alexandria writes that this haul gave the Apostles courage and strength on their evangelising missions, as they knew that their efforts would bear fruit. Following on from this, he writes that Christ calls all to conversion who “are in the depths of the sea, that is to say, those who live in the surge and waves of worldly things.”

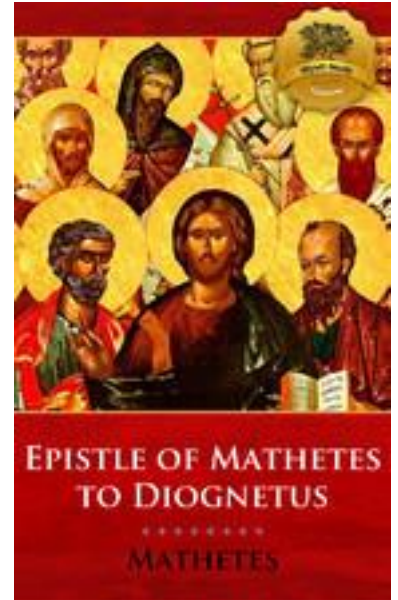


From the Holy Fathers...

The Epistle to Diognetus

The Epistle to Diognetus is a short letter addressed by an unknown Christian author to the pagan Diognetus (translated as “Born of Zeus”).

The manuscript is speculated to have been written in the years 100-150AD and was rediscovered in 1436 in Constantinople, when it was found by a young priest in a pile of packing paper in a fish shop!



The Epistle is regarded as an apology (defence) of Christianity and begins with an introductory address to Diognetus, who is curious about Christianity. He wants to know about God, the reasons why they do not follow the practices of the Greeks or the Jews, how they love each other, and why Christianity was not around earlier. These questions are all answered.

It is what this Epistle says about the Christian life that has rendered it as truly being a part of the Holy Tradition. After explaining that Christians are not different in terms of their “country, language or customs” (ch. 5.1), the author explains that Christians:

“are found in the flesh, but do not live according to the flesh. They live on earth but participate in the life of heaven. They are obedient to the laws that have been made, and by their own lives they supercede the laws. They love everyone and are persecuted by all. They are not understood and they are condemned. They are put to death and made alive.” (ch. 5.8-5.12)

This Epistle teaches us how “Christians live in the world but do not belong to the world” (ch. 6.3). The late Fr Thomas Hopko, reflecting on this Epistle, calls it “a most beautiful letter” and expresses his desire “that this description of Christians in the second century be a description of Christians today in the twenty-first century.”

Στή μνήμη ενός Ανθρώπου του Θεού

In memory of a man of God

«**Α**ΐκαιοι εις τον αιώνα ζώσι.» (Σοφ. Σολομ. 5'15)
 Όποιος γνώρισε προσωπικά τον εν Χριστώ αδελφό Φειδία Κυριακίδη, δεν μπορεί να έχει αμφιβολία ότι έζησε, πόθησε και εργάστηκε όπως οι δίκαιοι που ευαρεστούν τον Κύριο, και τώρα ευρίσκονται εις την Βασιλεία Του.

Από χαρακτήρος, ο αδελφος Φειδίας, ήταν άνθρωπος ήπιος, ειρηνικός και ειλικρινής χριστιανός. Όποια γνώμη και αν είχε, ήξερε κανείς ότι ήταν αυτό που εξέφραζε, χωρίς να υπάρχει καμία υστεροβουλία. Ακόμα, και η εξωτερική του εμφάνιση έδειχνε άνθρωπο ευσεβείας και αξιοπρέπειας. Το ότι ήταν ταπεινός, η ποθητή αρετή κάθε χριστιανού, ήταν φανερό από την όλη του συμπεριφορά. Δεν επιζητούσε διακρίσεις ούτε προβολή του εαυτού του ή των κόπων του, ούτε επέμενε να επιβάλει την δική του γνώμη. Ο μακαριστός Φειδίας ήταν μεταξύ των πρώτων που εργάστηκαν να ιδρυθεί η Ενωσή μας, στις 5 Φεβρουαρίου 1955.

Μετά από συνεννόηση με άλλους φοιτητές, που τους άρεσε η ιδέα να υπάρχει μια ομάδα νέων Ελλήνων, συγκεντρωθήκαμε 5 – 6 άτομα, με την ελπίδα ότι θα έρχονταν αργότερα και άλλοι. Μα η αύξηση των μελών ήταν δύσκολη. Ο μακαριστός Φειδίας, ποτέ δεν δειλίασε με τους μικρούς αριθμούς. Έλεγε, «**θα μας δείξει ο Θεός**», και πράγματι κάθε δυσκολία την ακολουθούσε πάντοτε η λύση της.

Σύντομα προσήλθαν άλλοι νέοι, αλλά και μετανάστες από την Πατρίδα, που είχαν γνώση χριστιανικών ομάδων, καθώς και άλλοι βλέποντας τα βιβλία που πωλούσαμε έξω από τις δύο τότε Εκκλησίες, και τα οποία είχε την πρόνοια να παραγγείλει από την Ελλάδα ο μακαριστός Φειδίας. Έτσι τα μέλη της Ενώσεως αυξήθηκαν γρήγορα και πριν κλείσει ο χρόνος είμαστε πάνω από 20. Από τότε μέχρι τώρα, ευλόγησε ο Κύριος τους αγώνες μας, ώστε να βρισκόμαστε στη σημερινή ευχάριστη κατάσταση, που είναι γνωστή σε όλους μας.

Το 1959, ο μακαριστός Φειδίας αποφασίζει να επιστρέψει στην πατρίδα του, την Κύπρο. Εκεί παντρεύτηκε, έκανε οικογένεια, και ένας από τους δύο γιούς του ζει τώρα στο Σύδνευ. Από τότε επέστρεψε στην Αυστραλία τρεις φορές για να δει τα παιδιά του, ενώ η τελευταία του επίσκεψη ήταν περίπου πριν δύο χρόνια.

Η ανάμνηση του μακαριστού Φειδία Κυριακίδη θα μείνει ανεξίτηλη στη μνήμη μας, ως αγαπητού αδελφού, συμπαθούς ανθρώπου και ενός από τους στυλοβάτες της Ενώσεως εδώ στο Σύδνευ.

Δυστυχώς, τελείωσε την ζωή του αναπάντεχα. Την 11η Ιουνίου του 2019, πέρασε στην αιωνιότητα. Τώρα περιμένει την Κοινή ανάσταση, ελπίζοντας ο Κύριος να τον εισάγει στην Βασιλεία Του.

Του αδελφού Φειδία Κυριακίδη, ας είναι η Μνήμη του Αιώνια!

“**B**ut the righteous live forever.” (Wisdom of Solomon 5:15) Anyone who personally knew our Brother in Christ, Pheidias Kyriakides has no doubt that he lived and worked righteously to please the Lord and is worthily in His Kingdom.

By character, Brother Pheidias was a gentle, peaceful and sincere Christian. His outward appearance was of a man of reverence and dignity. His humility and virtues were evident in his conduct. He did not seek to promote himself nor did he insist on imposing his own opinion.

Blessed Pheidias was one of the first founders of the Greek Orthodox Christian Society, which commenced on 5 February 1955. Five to six people initially gathered, with the hope that others would come later. Growing the membership proved to be difficult but the blessed Pheidias was never discouraged by the small numbers. He would say that “God will show us” and indeed every difficulty that presented would always be followed by a solution.

Soon there were other young people, including immigrants from the homeland who had knowledge of Christian groups, who joined. Others came as a consequence of our encounters in selling books, which the blessed Pheidias ordered from Greece. The members of the Society increased rapidly to 20 in number. From then until now, the Lord has blessed our struggles so that we find ourselves today in a pleasant state.

In 1959, the blessed Pheidias returned to his hometown in Cyprus where he married, raised a family, and has one of his two sons now living in Sydney. Since then he has returned to Australia three times to see his children, his last visit being about two years ago.

The blessed Pheidias Kyriakides will remain indelibly in our memory as a dear brother, a sympathetic man and one of the pillars of the Society here in Sydney.

Unfortunately, his life ended unexpectedly, on the 11th June 2019, due to a medical incident and he departed to eternity.

May Brother Pheidias Kyriakides' Memory be Eternal!

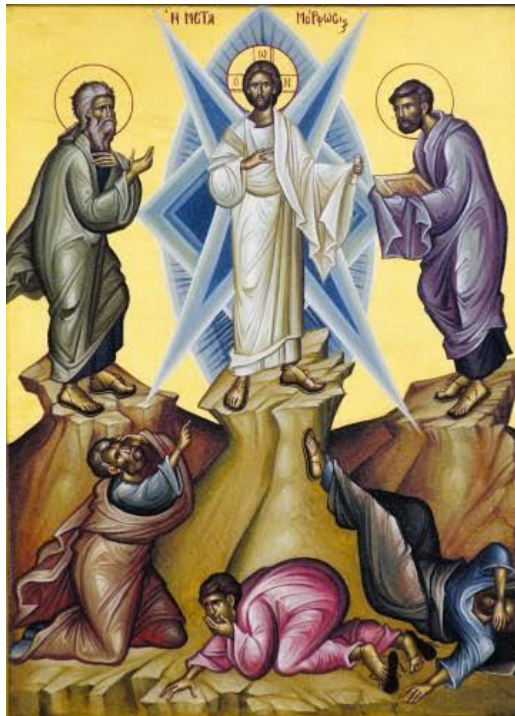
Η Μεταμόρφωση

Η Μεταμόρφωση έγινε 40 μέρες πριν την Σταύρωση. Ο σκοπός της ήταν να δυναμώσει την πίστη των Αποστόλων, ότι ο Χριστός είναι ο Υιός του Θεού και να καταλάβουν ότι θα πήγαινε στο πάθος Του εθελοντικά.

Έτσι η Μεταμόρφωση θα έπρεπε να εορτάζεται 40 μέρες πριν την Μεγάλη Παρασκευή. Αλλά επειδή θα ήταν μέσα στην Σαρακοστή, την εορτάζουμε στις 6 Αυγούστου, 40 μέρες πριν την εορτή της Ύψωσης του Τιμίου Σταυρού (η οποία είναι σαν μία άλλη Μεγάλη Παρασκευή).

Ο Κύριος πριν την Μεταμόρφωση, είπε στους μαθητές Του ότι όποιος θέλει να τον ακολουθήσει πρέπει να άρει τον σταυρό του. Και τους υπόσχεται ότι μερικοί δεν θα πέθαναν μέχρι να δουν τον Υιό του Ανθρώπου να έρχεται μέσα στη Βασιλεία Του.

Και αμέσως μετά, περιγράφεται η Μεταμόρφωση. Αυτό δείχνει ότι η Βασιλεία του Θεού είναι η όραση της άκτιστης χάριτος και η δόξα της Αγίας Τριάδος. Η Βασιλεία του Θεού βρίσκεται όπου είναι ο Χριστός που είναι η πηγή του ακτίστου φωτός.



Στο Θαβώρ δεν έχουμε μόνο αποκάλυψη του Κυρίου αλλά και μεταμόρφωση των Αποστόλων. Μπόρεσαν να δουν τον μεταμορφωμένο Χριστό, την θέωση της ανθρώπινης φύσεως, όχι μόνο με τα μάτια της ψυχής αλλά και με τα φυσικά μάτια. Μπόρεσαν να δουν την αρχική ομορφιά του ανθρώπου προτού της πτώσεως και τον τελικό μας προορισμό μέσω της θέωσης μας.

Και η φωνή του Πατρός μας δείχνει τον δρόμο για αυτόν τον προορισμό. Το να ακούμε τον Κύριο, δηλαδή να κτίσουμε την ζωή μας πάνω στις υποσχέσεις και εντολές του Κυρίου μας!

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

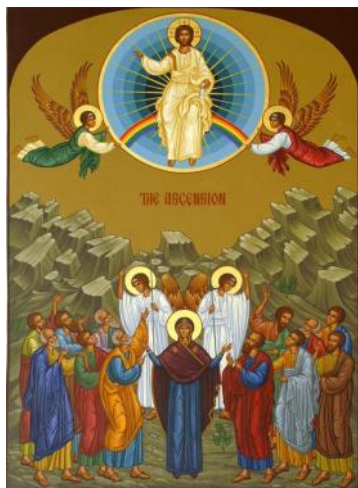
Transfiguration, Earlwood (Fridays 6:30 - 8 pm)
All Saints, Belmore (Fridays 6:30 – 8 pm)

From The Old Testament



**The earth is the Lord's, and its fullness,
the world and all who dwell therein**

(Psalm 23)



This Psalm of David is used in preparation for Holy Communion and in many Church services. It is intended for the first day of the week, being Sunday, and is also a reference to the eighth day, being the Resurrection. St Athanasius the Great

notes that this Psalm is teaching us about the Ascension of Christ and how the Gentiles can become worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven.

It starts in verse 1 with recognition that God created the earth and that the earth is His, "The earth is the Lord's, and its fullness, the world and all who dwell therein." St Athanasius finds this to be an example of the inclusion of non-Jews in God's plan for salvation, as the "fullness" of the earth includes all people and not just the twelve tribes of Israel.

However, those who are to "ascend to the mountain of the Lord" need to have "innocent hands and a pure heart" (v.3-4). St Didymus the Blind interprets this ascension as the progress of the soul from the earthly to the spiritual.

"Lift up the gates, O you rulers, and be lifted up you everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall enter." (v.7) This verse and those following refer to multiple events. Many of the Church Fathers find that it prefigures Christ breaking down the doors of Hades before the Resurrection and Sts Athanasius and Gregory of Nyssa regard this as a reference to the Ascension.

The blessings and righteousness referred to in verse 5 cannot be achieved without God, and so we are told to allow God to strike down the doors of the heart. With the assistance of "the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord powerful in battle", the heart of every person can be softened towards God and ascend spiritually.



Elder Placide Deseille

Abbot Holy Monastery of Saint Anthony the Great

Archimandrite Père Placide Deseille was an outstanding and inspiring French cleric and theologian who was renowned for his intelligence, his consistency and his modesty.

He was born on 16 April 1926 in Issy-les-Moulineaux, France. At the age of 16 he became a monk at the Roman Catholic



Cistercian monastery of Bellefontaine. In 1966 he founded a Byzantine-rite monastery in Aubazine en Corrèze, together with some monastic friends. Because of his broad education, he directed the publication «Sources Chretiennes», publishing the Holy Fathers of the Church.

After a long and taxing spiritual quest he and the monks decided to become Orthodox. They were received into the Orthodox Church on 19 June 1977, and in February 1978 became monks of the Mt Athos Holy Monastery of Simonos Petras.

Père Placide was then sent by Abbot Aimilianos to establish a dependency of the Monastery in France. On 14 September 1978 Fathers Placide and Séraphin inaugurated the Monastery of Saint Anthony the Great, in a dilapidated building in Saint Laurent en Royans, in a wild valley in Vercors. A monastery for nuns, the Protection of the Mother of God, was formed and later became known as the Monastery of Solan.

Abbot Père Placide dedicated his life to transplanting the monastic and hesychast tradition of the Holy Mountain to the soil of France. He taught Patristics at the Saint-Serge Institute of Orthodox Theology in Paris. He also founded the collection 'Oriental Spirituality', published by the Abbey of Bellefontaine. He was the author of many works on the history of monasticism and Orthodox spirituality. He produced excellent texts on the relationship of the human soul and God, as this is described in the Song of Songs.

At one o'clock, midday, on 7 January 2018, on the Synaxis of the Honourable Forerunner, Archimandrite Placide Deseille fell asleep in the Lord at the age of 91.



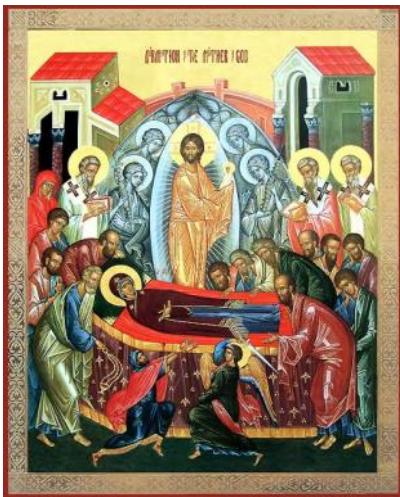
What we Hear in Church



Dormition Hymn

Ἀπόστολοι ἐκ περάτων, συναθροισθέντες ἐνθάδε,
Γεθημανῇ τῷ χωρίῳ, κηδεύσατέ μου τὸ σῶμα, καὶ
σὺ Υἱὲ καὶ Θεέ μου, παράλαβέ μου τὸ πνεῦμα.

“Apostles, you have been gathered from the ends of the Earth, to this place of Gethsemane, I ask you, lay my body to rest, and you my Son and my God, receive my spirit.”



Much of our Orthodox Tradition, including our hymnology, draw upon events that are not in Scripture. This hymn, which is chanted during the Supplicatory Canons to the Theotokos from 1st – 14th August, immediately preceding the Great Feast of Panayia, the Dormition of the Theotokos on the

15th August, is from the Matins service of the Feast day.

The narrative that first entered the writings and homilies of the Fathers and then became embodied in our hymns is as follows: Mary is informed by an angel that her death is near. She is then joined by eleven of the twelve Apostles, miraculously transported from their apostolic missions all over the world. After several speeches by herself and those gathered there, she commits her soul to Jesus and dies. As the Apostles prepare to bury her body in a tomb at Gethsemane, a Jew named Jephoniah tries to hinder the procession, and is deprived of the use of his hands. The Apostles keep vigil at her tomb for three days and then realise, after St Thomas' late arrival, that her body has in addition to her soul been conveyed to Paradise.

This hymn is written in the first-person perspective of the Theotokos herself, which is a rarity in most hymns we hear in Church, but not so much for those about Panayia.

Her graceful acceptance of death is made even more immediate to us, as she speaks with her own voice. As we sing these words we pray that we will have the same calm resignation, the same graceful acceptance, and the same expectation from Our Lord, Her Son, to receive our own souls into His hands, when our hour approaches.

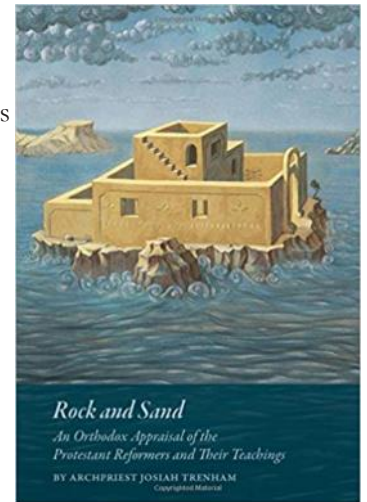
BOOK REVIEW

Rock and Sand

by Archpriest Josiah Trenham

The title of this book originates from the teaching of Christ about the different houses, with the one founded on the sand collapsing but the one founded on the rock being secure. This metaphor outlines the key aim of the book, which highlights the differences between Protestantism and Orthodoxy and shows how the Orthodox Church is founded on the rock and the Protestant denominations on sand.

Rock and Sand approaches this task of explaining the differences between Orthodoxy and the various strands of Protestantism methodically. It starts by explaining the origins of the Protestant Reformation as arising through the faults of the Roman Catholic Church after the Great Schism. It proceeds to examine each Protestant denomination (Lutheran, Anglican, Calvinist etc.) or movement (Evangelicalism, Pentecostalism, Charismatic, etc.) and its history, and how it differs theologically from Orthodox Christianity.



One key focus of the book is to look at the interactions between Orthodox Christianity and the Protestant denominations. One instance is in the communications between the Lutheran Church and the Patriarchate of Constantinople in the 16th century for potential unification, where the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate responded in detail to the Augsburg Confession which stated the dogmas of Lutheran Protestantism and rejected any possible union.

This book is very detailed, with primary sources contained throughout the text and included as appendices at the back of the book. The author, Fr Josiah Trenham, is a convert to Orthodoxy from the Presbyterian branch of Protestantism and studied at a Protestant tertiary institution. His wealth of experience and knowledge is drawn upon in explaining the key tenets of the Protestant denominations to the reader.

All in all, this book is recommended as it provides insights into the unique Protestant way of thinking about God and allows the reader to appreciate the authenticity of Orthodox Christianity.



SACRAMENTS

CHRISMATION

In our previous article we spoke about the Mystery of Baptism and the threefold immersion into the water to shed the 'old' man and create a 'new' creation in Christ.

In the Sacrament of Chrismation (anointing), the newly baptised person receives the Holy Spirit through the anointing with Holy Chrism/Myrrh by the priest. In anointing the recipient with chrism, the priest makes the sign of the cross on the forehead, eyes, nostrils, mouth, ears, breast, hands and feet using the following words each time, "The seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Christ repeatedly promised the gift of the Holy Spirit to His disciples. His last words before His Ascension included a promise: "John truly baptised with water, but you shall be baptised with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." (Acts 1:5) This was fulfilled 10 days later on the day of Pentecost.

The Sacrament of Chrismation is an extension of the day of Pentecost. The people who heard Peter speak at Pentecost asked him how they might receive salvation. He answered, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38)

In Orthodox teaching, our baptism is not merely cleansing but it is a change in our human nature. The Holy Spirit bestows grace and power to live the new life in Christ. Each of us is a valuable member of the Church as we are all blessed by the Spirit with certain gifts and talents. We now become full members of the Church and are able to participate in the other sacramental mysteries, especially the Eucharist – Holy Communion. This is why babies are baptised and chrismated, so that they also grow spiritually through partaking in Christ.

In Apostolic times the gifts of the Holy Spirit were transmitted via the laying of hands on candidates immediately after their Baptism. Given the rapid spread of the faith however the laying of hands was, for practical reasons, replaced by anointing with Holy Myrrh.

The preparation of Holy Chrism is conducted by the Ecumenical Patriarch in Constantinople, with many hierarchs present, during Holy Week according to need.

In the 20th century for example it was prepared on 9 separate occasions.

It consists of many aromatic spices mixed in olive oil, based on the tradition of the Old Testament where God instructed Moses (Exodus 30:20-25). Once prepared it is distributed

worldwide to all canonical Bishops and then the priests of all Orthodox churches. It is stored in ornate metallic containers for use when conducting the Sacrament.

As an aside, in some cases Chrismation alone may be used to receive converts to Orthodoxy through the exercise of *oikonomia*. This discretion of the Bishop is exercised if these candidates have been baptised in the name of the Trinity and have undergone catechumen classes.

Baptism and Chrismation therefore are the beginning of a new God-centred life that must be nurtured each day through prayer, repentance, worship and continual service to others.



NEWS and VIEWS

Omatha boys mid-year winter retreat

This year's Omatha boys mid-year retreat took place from 19th to 21st of July. Thirty-six boys and eleven teachers attended across three different camp sites.

The highlight was the Sunday Divine Liturgy service at the Pantanassa Monastery, at which all attendees were provided with the blessing of venerating some personal items of St Paisios during the Matins service.

Each Omatha had their own programs with Bible studies, talks, time for friendship, bushwalks, games, Christian songs and hymns. There were wonderful spiritual moments that arose which will remain with the boys for ever.



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

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