



ΛΥΧΝΟΣ

A GREEK ORTHODOX PERIODICAL FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

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

Ψαλμ 118, 105

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Let the Children Come to Me

Jesus said, “Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 19:14)

The love that Jesus shows for children is profound. The disciples were dismissive of the parents who sought Jesus’ blessing for their children. They did not want the Master disturbed by little children as he was going about His business of teaching adults. They thought He was too important for them.

Yet Jesus turned everything on its head, teaching the disciples and us to be lowly, and to trample upon worldly pride. He receives the little children with open arms and much joy, embraces them lovingly in His arms, and He promises the kingdom to those that are like them.

Thus, He emphasises that children can teach us: they are loving, they are forgiving, they have an innocent soul and mind, they are willing to be taught, and they are unencumbered in their thoughts.

“Let us also then, if we would be inheritors of the Heavens, possess ourselves of this virtue with much diligence,” says St John Chrysostom, “for this is the limit of true wisdom; to be simple with understanding; this is angelic life; yes, for the soul of a little child is pure from all the passions. Towards them who have vexed him he bears no resentment, but goes to them as to friends, as if nothing had been done.”

As we learn from children, we come to understand our obligations towards them - that children are our highest and most important investment.

St Paisios says that “parents should be very attentive to their children’s spiritual development; they bear responsibility not only for themselves, but for their children as well.” We need to show by example the traits that children naturally possess,

so that they can continue to be encouraged to develop these virtues.

If we do not live exemplary and pious lives then our children will mimic the bad habits we display.

Therefore, children learn from us, just as we learn from them.

We need to invest time in our children and not

neglect them through excessive time spent at work, at watching shows, on our mobile devices, and in other things that take precedence over them.

More than that, we need to encourage children to come and embrace our Lord Jesus Christ through: daily family and personal prayer; reading the Bible and the lives of Panagia and the Saints; attendance every Sunday at the Divine Liturgy and Sunday School, and other Christian youth groups such as Omathes; and providing them with all the pearls that Orthodoxy has to offer through its sacraments, traditions, and Church activities.



Ηρώων Μιμητές

Κάθε χρόνο, μόλις μπει ο μήνας του Οκτώβρη, η σκέψη του Έλληνα στρέφεται σαν το ηλιοτρόπιο (το λουλουδί του ήλιου) προς την 28η ημέρα του. Τότε που έλαμψε για άλλη μιά φορά η "ψυχή" των Ελλήνων. Για να πάρουμε δύναμη και φώς εμείς οι σημερινοί από τους ένδοξους προγόνους μας που στόλισαν με την αρετή τους την παγκόσμια ιστορία.

Γιατί το ΟΧΙ του 40 ήταν ένα ακόμα, στα πολλαπλά "ΟΧΙ" της τρισχιλιετούς ιστορίας της πατρίδας μας. Και αυτό είναι φυσικό αφού η Ελληνική ψυχή ήταν και είναι πάντα το ίδιο γενναία και ηρωϊκή. Από τα βάθη των αιώνων αντιλαλούν τα ΟΧΙ των Ελλήνων στις Θερμοπύλες, στο Μαραθώνα, στη Σαλαμίνα, στο Βυζάντιο. Στην παλιγγενεσία του Έθνους του 1821, στα Βαλκάνια το 1912.

Δεν είναι λιγότερο μεγαλοπρεπές και επιβλητικό το ΟΧΙ του 40. Μέσα σε ένα κλίμα τρόμου και πανικού που έσπερναν - στην Ευρώπη κυρίως - οι δυνάμεις του "Άξονα", ακούστηκε για άλλη μιά φορά το ΟΧΙ των Ελλήνων. Αυτή τη φορά προασπίζοντας την Ελευθερία όλων των ανθρώπων.

Γεμάτο μεγαλείο αν και λακωνικότατο το διάγγελμα του Βασιλιά των Ελλήνων Γεωργίου του Β':

«Με πίστιν εις τον Θεόν και εις τα πεπρωμένα της φυλής, το Έθνος σύσσωμον και πειθαρχούν ως εις άνθρωπος θα αγωνισθή υπέρ βωμών και εστιών μέχρι της τελικής νίκης».

Μέ τέτοια πίστη και μ'αυτά τα ιδανικά πολεμούσαν οι αρχαίοι προγόνους μας. Το ίδιο και οι Έλληνες του 40 με την προστασία και υπό την σκέπην της Παναγίας μας. Και μας άφησαν παράδειγμα. Παράδειγμα αυτοθυσίας, ηρωϊσμού και θάρρους.

Το έχουμε ανάγκη εμείς οι σημερινοί Έλληνες - εντός και εκτός πατρίδος - αυτό το παράδειγμα. Όχι απλά για να ανταποδώσουμε τη τιμή και τη δόξα που τους πρέπει. Αλλά κυρίως να παραδειγματισθούμε και να εμπνευσθούμε απ'αυτούς.



Γιατί και σήμερα απαιτείται αγώνας για την ανθρώπινη αξιοπρέπεια καθώς η αξία του "ανθρώπου" έχει τόσο υποβιβαστεί.

Αγώνας για την θεόδοτη ελευθερία του πνεύματος και της βούλησης του ανθρώπου που торπιλλίζεται από τους σύγχρονους θιασώτες της παγκοσμιοποίησης και μαζοποίησης του ανθρώπου.

Χρειαζόμαστε η νέα γενιά - απόγονοι αυτών των ηρώων - να τους μιμηθούμε στο θάρρος και την ανδρεία. Αυτοί εναντίον των ιταμών Ιταλών και Γερμανών, εμείς εναντίον των "νοητών" εχθρών της σύγχρονης υπερκαταναλωτικής

κοινωνίας μας που υπερτρέφει τα πάθη μας και κεντρίζει τον ευδαιμονισμό μας.

Να σκύψουμε με σεβασμό μπροστά στην αυτοθυσία τους "υπερ βωμών και εστιών" και να τους υποσχεθούμε πως και μεις είμαστε έτοιμοι σαν χρειαστεί να παλαίψουμε και να κακοπαθήσουμε, γιά τα Ιερά και Όσια της Πίστης μας, για τις ακατάλυτες αξίες που συνιστούν τον ευλογημένο απ'το Θεό οικογενειακό βίο.

Πάνω απ'όλα να τους διαβεβαιώσουμε πως αντίθετα από πολλούς συγχρόνους μας που "ελαφρά τη συνειδήσει" τους αντιπαρέρχονται και τους αγνοούν.

Εμείς ποτέ δεν θα τους λησμονήσουμε. Τουναντίον, η μνήμη

τους θα παραμένει καίρια θεμελιώδης και συντελεστική στο να διαμορφώνουμε όχι μόνο το παρόν αλλά και το μέλλον μας, επικροτώντας τον μεγάλο μας ποιητή Γ. Σεφέρη: **«Όποιος σβήνει ένα κομμάτι από το ιστορικό παρελθόν του Έθνους, σβήνει ταυτόχρονα κι ένα κομμάτι από το παρόν και το μέλλον του».**

Όταν το ηλιοτρόπιο δεν βλέπει τον ήλιο, φθίνει, μαραζώνει, ξηραίνεται. Εμείς τους ατενίζουμε, ενδυναμούμεθα απ'αυτούς, τους ευγνωμονούμε και συν Θεώ να τους μιμηθούμε. Άς είναι η μνήμη τους αιωνία.



CURRENT ISSUES

Spiritual Messages from Satellites

When the Russian *Sputnik* (Vostok 1) went into orbit around the earth in April 1959, the atheists in the Soviet regime declared that, “the Kingdom of God has come to an end. The Kingdom of man has now begun.” When in 1961 Yuri Gagarin became the first man to circumnavigate the Earth in a satellite, on his return they further declared in his name that he did not see God, whom the majority of people on earth believe in.

On the other hand, after the moon landing 50 years ago by the Americans Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin, on the voyage back to Earth Aldrin publicly broadcast the Old Testament

Psalm 8:3-4: “When I considered the heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained, what is man that Thou art mindful of him.”

Leaving aside the disparate views of the two political camps at the time, we discover that many eternal truths

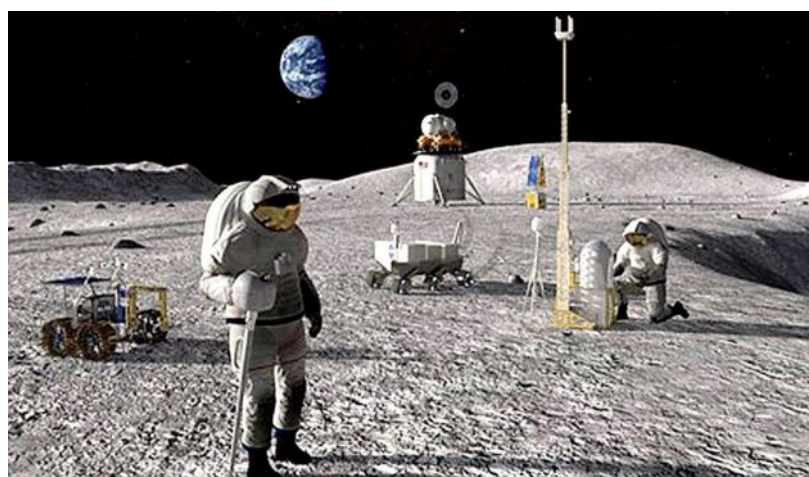
become more certain and more true, after each scientific success. For instance, astrophysicists have shown that our Universe continually expands, and yet every change is accompanied by a similar change in other parts of our “cosmos”, even in fractions of a second, and which if they did not occur would cause the collapse of the whole Universe.

Alan Sandage, winner of the Crawford prize in astronomy, writes: “I find it improbable that such order came out of chaos. There has to be some organising principle. **God to me is a mystery, but is the explanation for the miracle of existence**, why there is something instead of nothing.”

On the other hand, Fred Hoyle, a British astrophysicist stated, “A common sense interpretation of the facts suggests that a **super-intellect** has monkeyed with physics, as well as with chemistry and biology, and that there are no blind forces worth speaking about in nature. The numbers one calculates from the facts seem to me so overwhelming as to put this conclusion almost beyond question.”

Finally, the late Robert Jastrow, first chairman of NASA’s Lunar Exploration Committee and a self-proclaimed atheist said, “For the scientist who only trusted the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountain of ignorance, and on reaching the peak he is greeted on the other side by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries.”

The statements of the top scientists above raise for us a serious problem. What is it that drives man to work so hard, to conquer space, visit the Moon, and continue his searches even further?



It is the divine spark, given to us by our Creator as a privilege, which moves our fantasy and mind to conceive, and our hands to create. This same spark motivates the astronauts to operate all the instruments of their spacecraft, either on earth or in flight, with speed and precision.

If we were only earth and dust, if we did not have an immortal soul, none of the spectacular feats would have been possible. The landing on the moon reminds us that man is in fact “a small god”, made by the hands of God “according to His image.” (Gen 1:27)

The Universe with its perfect physical laws is a creation of the invisible God, and it is God who gives the ability to man to discover and even to subjugate it to his will.

However, there is another truth, superior to what was said so far. The leap to the Moon tells us that we are in need of another leap upwards. **This is done without noise and in secrecy.** To lift up our hearts and take control of our inner self. To conquer the gravitational pull of our passions, weaknesses of character, bad habits, the influence of unsuitable friendships, and dark inner thoughts and desires. If our intentions are sincere, this can easily be achieved by the grace of the crucified Son of God. Then, we shall reach not only the stars, but the heights of Heaven, “where Divine peace and justice dwell.”

Από Τους Αγίους Της Εκκλησίας Μας

From the Saints of our Church

Ο Άγιος Ιωάννης ο Χρυσόστομος
(η μνήμη του τιμάται 13 Νοεμβρίου)

St John Chrysostom
(Commemorated 13th November)

Ο Άγιος Ιωάννης ο Χρυσόστομος, Αρχιεπίσκοπος Κωνσταντινουπόλεως, είναι ένας από τους πιο σημαντικούς και σπουδαίους Πατέρες της Εκκλησίας μας. Μαζί με την επώνυμη Θεία Λειτουργία που συνέθεσε και τελούμε σχεδόν κάθε Κυριακή, έκανε αμέτρητα κηρύγματα στο λαό, που έχουν φτάσει πάνω από 1400 σε αριθμό, στη δική μας εποχή.

Τα λόγια του έχουν εμπνεύσει και διαμορφώσει πνευματικά πολλούς Χριστιανούς όλων των εποχών, γεγονός που εκφράζεται στο απολυτίκιο του στα λόγια, «**Ἡ τοῦ στόματός σου καθάπερ πυρός ἐλάμψασα χάρις, τὴν οἰκουμένην ἐφώτισεν**». Δηλαδή, «**Ἡ χάρις τῶν λόγων τοῦ στόματός σου, που λάμπουν σαν από φωτιά, φώτισαν ὅλο το κόσμο**».

Λόγω της μεγάλης ευφράδειας του, έλαβε το όνομα, «**Χρυσόστομος**» και είναι ένας από τους Τρεις Ιεράρχες που τιμά η Εκκλησία μας.

Ο Άγιος Ιωάννης γεννήθηκε στην Αντιόχεια γύρω στις 345 μ.Χ. Από νεανική ηλικία, έδειξε μεγάλη ικανότητα ως ρήτορας, μαζί με μεγάλο ζήλο για τον Χριστό. Μαθήτευσε κοντά στον Λιβάνιο, τον πιο διάσημο Έλληνα λόγιο της εποχής, ενώ νουθετήθηκε εν Χριστώ από τους ευσεβείς γονείς του, Σεκούνδο και Ανθούσα. Τελικά, αποφάσισε να εγκαταλείψει την ρητορική, και να ζήσει σαν μοναχός μεταξύ το 374 και 381 μ.Χ. Η σωματική του υγεία όμως δεν άντεξε στην ακραία άσκηση που τελούσε, και έτσι επέστρεψε στην Αντιόχεια κατά το 381 μ.Χ. όπου χειροτονήθηκε διάκονος. Το 386, έγινε ιερέας και το 398 χειροτονείται Αρχιεπίσκοπος Κωνσταντινουπόλεως.

Το εμπνευσμένο κήρυγμα του έθιξε πολλούς υψηλά ισταμένους της εποχής του, και αυτοί αντέδρασαν εχθρικά εναντίον του. Επέκρινε με δυνατό τρόπο τους διεφθαρμένους ιερείς και επισκόπους που ζούσαν στη χλιδή, λόγω των θέσεων τους, και καταδίκασε την Βασίλισσα Ευδοξία αρκετές φορές, για την ανήθικη συμπεριφορά της, π.χ. έστησε ανδριάντα του ομοιώματός της μπροστά στον Ναό της Αγίας Σοφίας. Κατά συνέπεια, εξορίστηκε αρκετές φορές, και τελικά πεθαίνει σε εξορία στον Πόντο στις 14ης Σεπτεμβρίου 407. Εφόσον αυτή η ημερομηνία είναι η εορτή της Υψώσεως του Τιμίου Σταυρού, μετατέθηκε η εορτή της μνήμης του στην 13η Νοεμβρίου.

St John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, is one of the most influential and important Fathers of our Church. In addition to writing the Divine Liturgy, which we celebrate most Sundays, he gave countless sermons to the people, of which more than 1,400 are available today. His words have inspired and shaped countless Christians and, for that reason, his Apolytikion begins with the words, “the grace of your words illuminated the world like a shining beacon.” Indeed, his great eloquence earned him

the title of “Chrysostom” (“golden-mouth” in Greek), and he is regarded as one of the Three Holy Hierarchs.

St John was born in Antioch around the year 345. From a young age, he showed both great promise as an orator, as well as great zeal for Christ. He learnt the former from Libanius, the greatest Greek scholar of the day, whilst he learnt the latter from his pious parents, Secundus and Anthusa. He eventually decided to forsake a career as an orator, and instead chose to live a monastic life between the years 374 and 381. Due to the effect that his extreme asceticism had on his health, he returned to Antioch in 381, where he was ordained a deacon. In 386, he became a priest, and in 398 he was made Archbishop of Constantinople.

St John’s passionate preaching earned him many enemies amongst the authorities. He strongly denounced the practices of priests and bishops living luxurious lives as a result of their positions, and he condemned the Empress Eudoxia on a number of occasions for her lax morals and for having a statue of herself erected in front of the church of St Sophia. As a result of his boldness, he was banished on a number of occasions, and eventually died in exile in Pontus on 14 September 407. As that is the feast day of the Elevation of the Cross, we celebrate his memory on 13 November.



Questions & Answers

A clergyman of our Archdiocese answers ...

What draws people to Orthodox Christianity?

If we are to look at the usual makeup of the congregations in the Greek Orthodox Church in Sydney, most of the worshippers are ‘cradle Orthodox’, ie. worshippers who are Orthodox because they were born into the faith. Converts are a small minority. However, that is not the case everywhere. There are pockets of Orthodox missions in developing countries, especially in Africa and Asia, which are blossoming. There are also pockets of Orthodox Churches in the United States whose congregations have a significant proportion of converts to Orthodoxy. Books written by converts, such as *Living in a Land of Shallow Wells* by Matthew Gallatin and *Dancing Alone* by Frank Schaeffer, very captivantly describe their journey to Orthodoxy.

There is a common theme in many of these accounts. On the whole, the converts grew up in Protestant or other Christian denominations. They were bothered by the possibility that their church did not believe and worship in the way that the early Church did. They went on a mission to find whether there are any remnants of the early Church surviving today, and they came across Orthodox

Christianity. They discovered that the Orthodox Church was the truly apostolic Church, that has kept faith and worship unadulterated since apostolic times. One such convert, Fr Andrew Stephen Damick, puts it this way:

“I examined both the Scriptures and the early history of Christianity, and I became convinced that the only church that matches them both is

Orthodoxy. Particularly formative for me were the writings of St Ignatius of Antioch, a disciple of the Apostle John. The church life he described was definitely not what I saw in Evangelicalism. Since he was someone who learned how to be a Christian from the Apostles themselves, I wanted to be in his church.

Orthodoxy takes history seriously and doesn’t gloss over the hard stuff. It also doesn’t pick and choose from early Christian witness to develop a streamlined “system” of theology that is easy to swallow. Rather, because Orthodoxy is truly the community descended from the Apostles, within its theological memory are centuries of dogma, doctrine and theological reflection. Not all of it

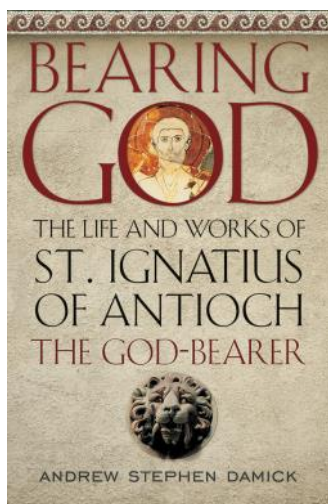
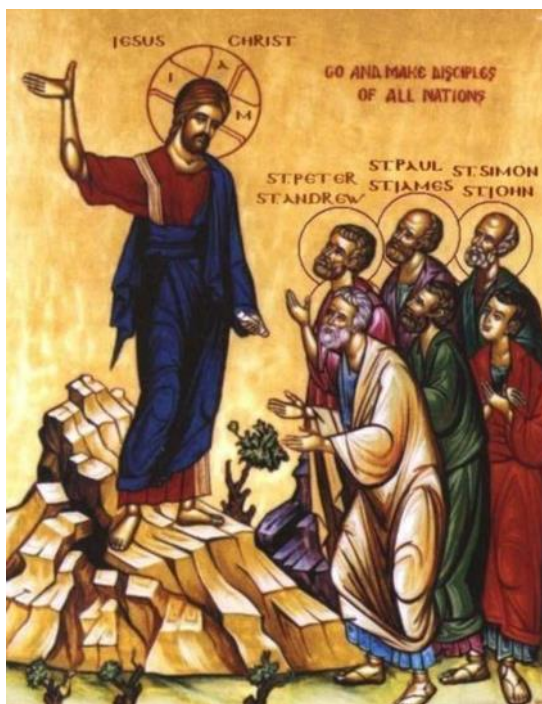
is totally consistent or easy to sort out, but it is nevertheless one great river of truth with an overall unified direction.”

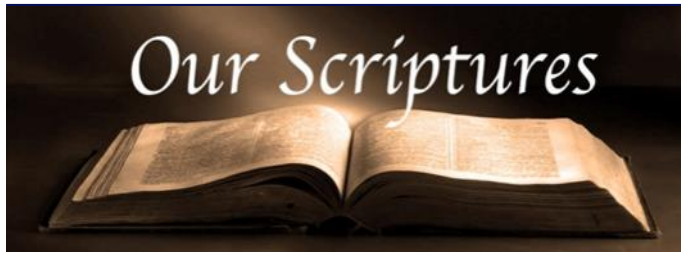
These accounts ought not make us complacent or boastful. After all, all missionary work is a response to Jesus’ commission to “make disciples of all the nations” (Matthew 28:18-20). It is a serious and essential part of Church life. Church without mission is lifeless. And perhaps we have not done enough in proclaiming the message of the Scriptures to the nations.

Upon His Eminence Archbishop Makarios’ arrival in Australia on 18th June 2019, he stated at his airport address that now is perhaps the right time for our Church to provide its witness to wider Australian society; to share its gifts and its treasures.

In essence, what draws receptive people to Orthodox Christianity is the Holy Spirit. And when people are illumined in such a way, it is a prerogative for the Church and for each of its living members to receive them with love, and to guide and support them appropriately. Then through a genuine life in Christ, and with bold and discerning witness, we are called to continue to inspire others in Christ, into the One, Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, which is Orthodox Christianity.

† Fr G. L.





Hymn of Love (1 Corinthians 13:1- 8)



This passage is the definitive explanation of what is expected of Christian love (*agape*). St Paul explains to the Corinthians, and to us today, that love surpasses other graces or talents. St Paul rejects the idea that the gifts of tongues (v.1), prophecy, knowledge and faith (v.2), and

even the acts of almsgiving and martyrdom (v.3) can be performed in a Christian manner without love. This helps us to understand that though works and faith are spiritually essential for us, they of themselves are not adequate to bring us closer to Christ. They need to be done in the correct spirit. That spirit is one of love, which is the foundation of the two commandments given by Christ in the Gospels: to love God with all of one's heart, soul, mind and strength; and, to love one's neighbour as oneself. (Mark 12:29-31)

The character of the love to be shown is then described by St Paul in the five verses which follow, and which flow like a poem in both English and the original Greek. They describe what we must do to achieve true *agape* of the kind which Christ expects of humanity, and to which humanity is called.

This starts by highlighting the virtues required for perfect love. These are patience, kindness, not envying, not boasting, and humility. (v.4) This love is one which "bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things." (v.7)

However, it is not a love which accepts all things. It takes "no account of evil" (v.5) and "does not rejoice in unrighteousness." (v.6) St John Chrysostom describes love as "not only subduing vice, but not even suffering it to arise at all." When it is performed in the way described by St Paul, and shown in the lives of Christ, the Theotokos, and His Saints, "this love will never fail." (v.8)

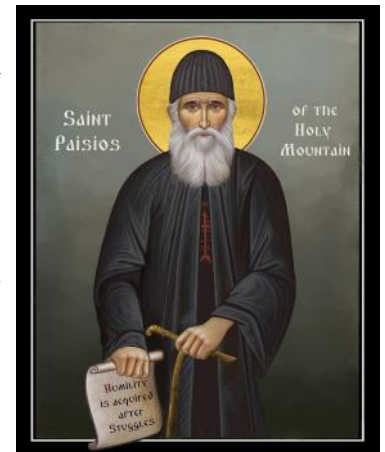


From the Holy Fathers...

St Paisios on non-possessiveness

When someone asks us for something and we're sad when we give it to them, that means that we love it more than we love Christ. - St Paisios

Not willing to let anything stand between himself and Christ, St Paisios disdained all worldly possessions and happily gave away anything that was asked of him, "for God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:7) His life is a pure testimony to the godly grace that is provided when one follows a life of non-possessiveness.



Whilst non-possessiveness is often seen as a monastic virtue, St Paisios strongly believed that it applied to lay people as well. In the Saint's view, the pursuit and accumulation of unnecessary possessions burdens and ties the soul down to this life, and prevents it from ascending to higher spiritual planes. He thus encouraged everyone to pursue true riches – those found in heavenly matters – and to grow the spiritual bank account which lasts forever, rather than the material bank account.

In practical terms, acquiring this virtue begins through avoiding worldly company as far as possible, as such company encourages the gathering of worldly riches. It then proceeds by living a life of simplicity and forgoing unnecessary luxuries and ostentatious living. Such a lifestyle brings with it many other spiritual benefits, two of which are humility and a stronger faith in the providence of God. Given that the Saint lived this lifestyle of non-possessiveness to its admirable extreme, it is only natural that he was able to experience each of those blessings. He was imparted with such grace that he would live like one of the birds described by Jesus in Matthew 6:26, he neither gathered anything into barns nor stored possessions, and yet God took care of him time and again.

May we have the same trust and faith in God, and avoid possessions beyond our necessities.

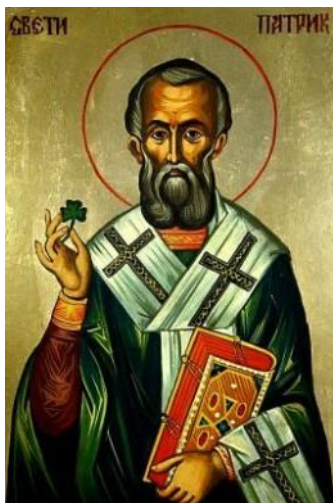
Orthodox Saints of the World

III The Spread of Christianity throughout Europe

In the previous articles of this series we discussed how Christianity spread in the Apostolic period. We will now focus on the later centuries when Christianity made its way through Europe, from the Eastern-most parts of the Roman Empire to the West, including Britain.

While Christianity was not recognised by authorities and was subject to intense persecution during the first centuries AD, it nevertheless continued to steadfastly make its way through Europe through the blood of the martyrs. Their lives and deaths have been recorded in the Synaxarion of the Church and are commemorated every day of the liturgical year. Some of these Saints include Sts George and Demetrios the Great-Martyrs, Catherine of Alexandria, Ignatios of Antioch, Panteleimon the Unmercenary, Dionysius of Paris, Alena of Belgium, Clement of Rome, Gregory the Enlightener of Armenia, and millions of other Christians who suffered martyrdom under the yoke of polytheism and secularism.

After the persecutions, great men and women arose in Christianity who became beacons of light for their respective nations and consequently for the entire world. These Saints followed the path of the Apostles and enlightened the rest of the known world. Some of these Saints include Sts Nina the Enlightener of Georgia, Patrick the Apostle of Ireland, Olga of Kiev, Gregory the Illuminator of Armenia, Sava the Enlightener of Serbia, Cyril and Methodios and their disciples the Teachers and Enlighteners of the Slavs,



Olaf the King and Enlightener of Norway, Remigius the Apostle to the Franks, and Alban the Protomartyr of Britain. Two examples are mentioned below in more detail:

St Patrick

St Patrick arrived in Ireland in 432 AD. There were also other missionaries active on the southeast coast, but it was



Saint Patrick who had the greatest influence and success in preaching the Gospel of Christ, which is why he is known as “The Enlightener of Ireland.”

He founded many churches and monasteries across Ireland, but the conversion of the Irish people was no easy task. His autobiographical ‘Confession’ tells of the many trials and disappointments he endured.

There was much hostility, and he was assaulted several times. He faced danger and insults and was reproached for being a foreigner and a former slave. There was also the very real possibility that the pagans would try to kill him. Despite the many obstacles, he remained faithful to his calling and he baptised many people into Christ.

Sts Cyril and Methodios

In the 9th century, St Prince Rastislav, the ruler of the Slav state of Moravia (now Czech Republic), sent a request to Byzantium asking for missionaries to bring the Christian Faith to his people in their own language. Frankish missionaries using Latin had already been at work in his land, but he realized that the Faith would be much more meaningful to his people if they could have the Scriptures and the liturgical services in their native tongue. In response to Prince Rastislav’s request, Emperor Michael III and Patriarch St Photios the Great of Constantinople sent two devout and well-educated brothers named Constantine (who became Cyril) and Methodios as missionaries. In Moravia the brothers used this alphabet in translating Church books into the Slavic language, which came to be known as Old Church Slavonic. They taught the alphabet and literacy, introduced the use of Slavonic in the Church services, and began training men for the diaconate and priesthood as the first step in raising up a native clergy for the Moravian Church.

Γιορτές και Άγιοι

Τι είναι αυτό που κάνει κάποιον Άγιο; Ο Μητροπολίτης Ναυπάκτου Ιερόθεος, υπογραμμίζει την θέση της εκκλησίας όσον αφορά το ερώτημα αυτό με τα εξής λόγια:

«Άγιος δεν είναι ο καλός άνθρωπος ή έστω ο ενάρετος άνθρωπος, αλλά εκείνος που ζώντας μέσα στην Εκκλησία με τα μυστήρια και την ευαγγελική ζωή, ενώνεται με τον Χριστό και αισθάνεται μέσα του την Χάρη του Χριστού».

Αυτός ο άνθρωπος μπορεί να είναι μάρτυρας ή να έχει ζήσει οσιακά, ώστε να πραγματοποιηθούν θαύματα δια μέσου του Ιησού, όταν με πίστη επικαλεσθεί ο πιστός τη βοήθεια του αγίου.

Το Οικουμενικό Πατριαρχείο διευκρινίζει ότι δεν «αγιοποιεί» η Εκκλησία διάφορα πρόσωπα, αλλά κάνει «αγιοκατάταξη». Τοποθετεί στο αγιολόγιο της Εκκλησίας ορισμένα πρόσωπα που αναγνωρίζονται και από τους ανθρώπους που τους γνώρισαν, ή,

είχαν δεχθεί θαυματουργική βοήθεια από αυτούς.

Είναι αυτοί οι άνθρωποι που κατόρθωσαν να ευαρεστήσουν τον Θεό τηρώντας τις εντολές

Του, ελκύοντας έτσι το Πνεύμα το Άγιο.

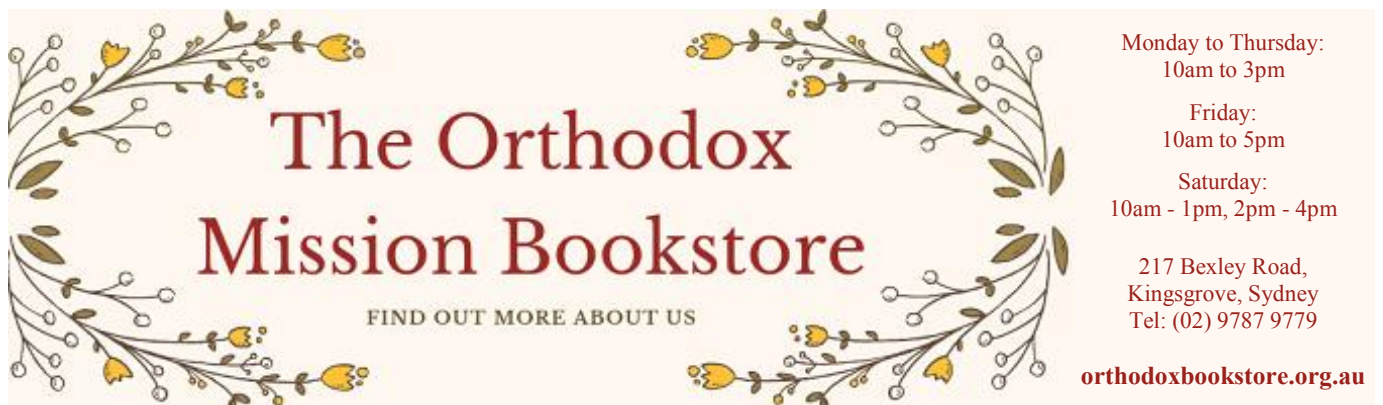
Υπάρχουν επίσης πολλοί άγιοι, οι οποίοι δεν έχουν αναγνωριστεί επίσημα από την Εκκλησία, κατόνομα, και που τους γνωρίζει μόνο ο Θεός. Οι οποίοι όμως δεν παύουν να βοηθούν την Εκκλησία με τις προσευχές τους, και τον κάθε άνθρωπο με τις πρεσβείες τους.

Σαν ένδειξη ευλάβειας και τιμής προς τους αγίους, η Εκκλησία εορτάζει την μνήμη ενός η περισσότερων αγίων κάθε μέρα του χρόνου.

Όστε ο χριστιανός ο οποίος συνήθως έχει δεχθεί το όνομα ενός αγίου της Εκκλησίας, και αφού υποτίθεται έχει

μελετήσει τον βίο του, γιορτάζει την μνήμη αυτού του αγίου ευπρεπώς με τους γνωστούς του, που του εύχονται «να ζήσεις» και «Χρόνια Πολλά».





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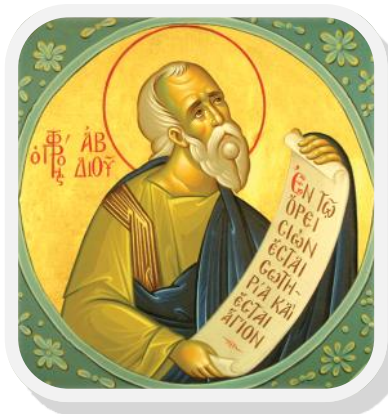
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From The Old Testament



The Book of Obadiah



The book of Obadiah is one of the shortest in the Old Testament, comprising only one chapter. It is the prophet Obadiah's retelling of the vision which he received from God, which had both a literal and a spiritual dimension.

Obadiah of Shechem was born into the tribe of Ephraim and was, according to St Ephraim the Syrian, a contemporary of prophets Hosea, Joel, Amos and Isaiah. His vision was a prophecy against the Edomites, who had collaborated with the Babylonians against the Jews. This betrayal was made worse because the Edomites did this to their relatives (they were descendants of Esau - the brother of Jacob and son of Isaac).

God had revealed that after the conclusion of the Jews exile in Babylon, the Edomites would be subject to Israel and that they would be removed from the land which they had taken from the chosen people of Judah. Their nation would be destroyed by the Babylonian Nebuchadnezzar, and they would lose their own homeland.

There is a deeper meaning in the passage beyond the literal. In verse 1 there is a reference to the people rising up and fighting against Edom. The word used for rising up (*anastasis*) is the same as the word for resurrection, and prefigures Christ's resurrection. This rising up to fight against Edom is to be seen in the context of the spiritual combat, in which we are to fight against sin and Satan – which are symbolised by Edom.

Verse 15 also prefigures the Day of Judgment when it is written, "For the day of the Lord upon all the nations is near; As you have done, it shall be done to you; Your reprisal shall return upon your own head".

The location of the relics of Prophet Obadiah are currently unknown, but his tomb is located in Sebastia in Palestine next to that of St John the Baptist and the Prophet Elisha.



Elder Gervasios Paraskevopoulos

Abbot Holy Monastery of Saint Anthony the Great

Yet another holy elder who was a spiritual child of St Nectarios of Aegina is elder Gervasios of Patra. He was instrumental in reviving, with much zeal, the Orthodox faith among young and old.

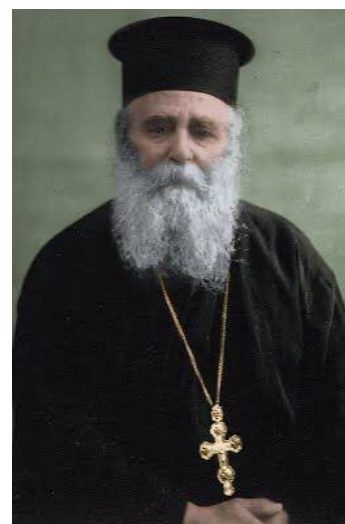
In 1923, he founded the first catechetical schools of Patra. His students numbered in the thousands. "I remember him", writes Professor Panagiotis Trembelas, "surrounded by a multitude of children ... with what patience, what approachability, with how much love and calmness he stood!"

He paid great attention to the girls because he believed that the renewal of society, and the future of the nation, depended on the heart of the family - the mother. "Give me mothers," he used to say, "and if everything else is abolished, but the bond of the family remains unharmed, do not fear ... the woman can prove to be vital to civilization."

In 1946 he also established summer camps for the youth where they could learn about their faith and participate in church services. His spiritual children recount: "it was moving to see young people aged 12 and 14 saying in their conversations: 'The Fathers do not say this,' or 'Thus says the Tradition of our Church'."

During the last years of his life, when he was less mobile, he preached to the multitudes with a microphone from his bed into a special room outside his cell, which was set aside for this purpose. His talks were so moving that many times people would confess their sins publicly.

He reposed in the Lord at the age of 87 on June 30, 1964. His relics were translated in 2014 to the Church of St Paraskevi at the Anaplastiki School in Patra, which he also founded. His philanthropic activity, his gentle presence, and his untiring ministry made him a true model of a priest.





What we Hear in Church



Wedding Hymn-Troparion of the Holy Martyrs

«Άγιοι Μάρτυρες, οί καλῶς ἀθλήσαντες καὶ στεφανωθέντες, πρεσβεύσατε πρὸς Κύριον, ἔλεθηῆναι τὰς ψυχὰς ἡμῶν».

“O holy Martyrs, who have contested well and have been crowned, intercede with the Lord, that mercy be granted to our souls.”

The Orthodox wedding service makes many references to the Holy Martyrs. The central prayer of crowning, which sets out how God marriage” to be a woman, then God to bless and newly wedded same manner as well known couples Testament such as Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah and so forth. Then, having traversed the Old Testament, special mention is made of the Holy Forty Martyrs of Sebaste: “remember them, Lord our God, as you remembered your Forty holy Martyrs and sent down upon them crowns from heaven.”



“ordained physical between a man and proceeds to ask remember the couple in the God blessed the from the Old Abraham and Sarah,

Indeed, the theme of crowns is a major theme of the service. The hymn of the actual crowning ceremony calls on God to “crown them with glory and honour.”

Why so much emphasis on royalty? Does the Orthodox Church do this to make a couple feel special on their wedding day? It is of much deeper significance.

The Mystery of the Wedding is a calling to both husband and wife to sacrifice themselves to one another in Christ. In body and in spirit. And lest one think that this is only a spiritual metaphor, a mere symbol, the actual prayer of the crowning banishes any such thought: “crown them to one flesh.”

The witnessing to one another, this sense of self-less sacrifice is a psychosomatic act, both body and soul. This is why the memory of the martyrs is so ingrained into the fabric of the Wedding service. Even the dismissal prayer of the service mentions the Holy Great-Martyr St Procopius.

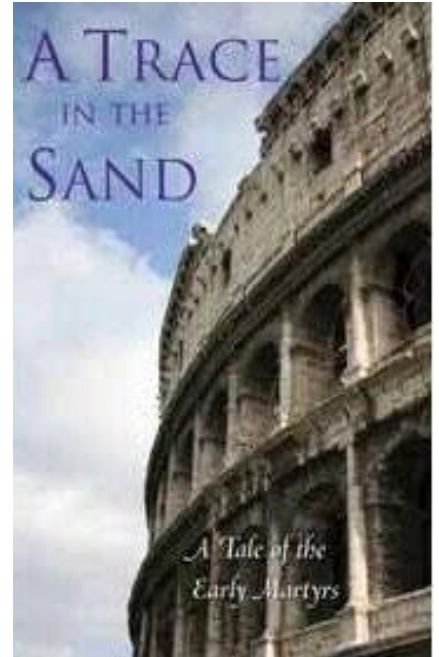
The Martyrs did not just pay lip service to their belief in Christ. For them it was not just about thoughts, or words easily spun off their tongues. They put their bodies on the line for their faith, their very lives. And in doing so they were rewarded with ‘crowns from heaven’, as the hymn of the Wedding procession reminds us.

As Paul Evdokimov so aptly explains in his book on Marriage, the Sacrament of Love, “perfect love is love crucified. This is why the crowns refer to the Lord’s crown of thorns, the only one that can give meaning to all others. Throughout their entire life, the spouses will hear echoes, strong or dim, of the Troparion of the Holy Martyrs.”

BOOK REVIEW

A Trace in the Sand

The year is AD 274, the grand and mighty Roman Empire rules supreme and paganism reigns throughout the conquered lands. A wealthy son of a Roman Senator ponders upon the meaning of life, whilst his parents are focused solely on wealth and power, and his young slave lives in fear and anxiety. Amongst all this, the bravery and love of a young Christian sparks interest in the minds of these people until his flame of love is passed on and grows in them all.



A Trace in the Sand is an inspiring and engaging tale of the early Martyrs. As each page is turned, the reader is taken into the Roman Empire and enters the lives of Alexamenos, Brutus and Milvius, who are such young Christians.

The reader will learn many valuable and beneficial lessons on sacrificial love, courage and faith, and appreciate the Orthodox Faith which has remained steadfast over 2000 years. Most of all, the reader will question themselves with the simple question that captures the essence of this book: “Am I a Christian: yes or no?” This was the daily question of the early Christians and their answer could lead them to the mouths of lions or the whips of ruthless soldiers. One will learn, from reading *A Trace in the Sand*, what the early Christians’ secret was to give their definite answer of “Yes”. They loved Christ more than the praise of men, more than wealth and possessions, and even more than their very lives.

Though this book is simple and easy to read, it is powerful and is a wonderful spiritual book for teenagers. Reading *A Trace in the Sand* is a wonderful way to rekindle the fire for Christ within us, the fire of love by which the early Christians were characterised.



HOLY EUCHARIST

In the Orthodox Church, the faithful gather together at the Divine Liturgy as one community, to pray, to read the Holy Scriptures, to proclaim God's word, and to remember Christ and His all saving passion, death and resurrection.

The culmination of the Divine Liturgy is the sacrament of the Eucharist, which is also known as Holy Communion. 'Eucharist' in Greek means thanksgiving. We thank God for all that He has done in making, saving and glorifying the world. The Eucharist is offered every Sunday (the Day of the Lord), as well as on Feast days and at the Pre-Sanctified Liturgies during Great Lent. It is rarely celebrated daily, except in monasteries.

The Holy Eucharist was instituted at the Last "Mystical" Supper. Jesus took bread, blessed, broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat, this is My body." He took a cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." (Matthew 26:26-28) The Eucharist is the real presence of Christ, His true Body and Blood mystically present in the bread and wine which are consecrated by the Holy Spirit. This was made clear by Jesus when He said, "I am the living bread which came down from

heaven; if anyone eats of this bread he will live forever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh." (John 6:51)

This mystery defies analysis and explanation in purely rational and logical terms ... it is indeed a mystery of the Kingdom of Heaven which is 'not of this world'. This is why it is at the centre of the church's life, everything leads to it and all things flow from it.

Holy Communion is given only to baptised members of the Orthodox faith. It is provided in a spoon containing a small piece of the Holy Bread (consecrated earlier during the service of the "Proskomedia"), together with a portion of the consecrated wine. It is received standing. A strict fast is observed during the week (Wednesday and Friday) and from the night before, with nothing being eaten or drunk after waking in the morning and prior to Holy Communion.

Those who have not communed receive a small piece of unconsecrated bread called the Antidoron at the end of the service, as an expression of love and fellowship.

None of us are worthy to commune the Body and Blood of Christ but we need it as medicine for our souls and bodies. We become part of the Mystical Body of Christ by our communion of the Holy Eucharist, united with Christ and each other as a church. Only by belonging to the Church can we attain salvation unto eternal life.



NEWS and VIEWS

Sunday School Annual Picnic

On Monday 7th October, the Sunday Schools of Sydney held their annual Picnic at the new location of Gough Whitlam Park. It was attended by numerous clergy, parents, teachers and children. There were many organised games and various competitions, including war cries and athletic races. The day was a very enjoyable experience for all!



Sunday School Camp

The annual Sunday School Camp was held at Vision Valley Conference Centre, Arcadia, from Tuesday 8th to Thursday 10th of October. The theme of the Camp was “Η Παναγία Μας”. 94 children and 22 adult leaders participated. The children enjoyed the activities of rock climbing, archery, and sport, and the thrill of leaping off the edge with “power fan” and “flying fox” jumps. Particular blessings were the formal visits and lessons provided by Dr John Psarommatis and Mr Asimakis Tsomis. As always, the highlight of the Camp was the Divine Liturgy Service presided by Abbot Eusebios and the fathers from Pantanassa Monastery on Thursday morning.



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