



ΛΥΧΝΟΣ

A GREEK ORTHODOX PERIODICAL FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

«Λύχνος τοῖς
ποσὶ μου ὁ
νόμος σου καὶ
φῶς ταῖς τρίβοις
μου»
Ψαλμ 118, 105

Volume 36, Issue 2

FRBRUARY—MARCH 2021

1821 2021 Church & Freedom

March 25 is a major day in both our Orthodox faith and in our Greek culture. For the former, we celebrate the Annunciation – that blessed day when the Archangel Gabriel announced to Panagia that she would give birth to the Son of God, the cause of our salvation. For the latter, we celebrate Greek Independence Day - the commemoration of the successful revolution of the Greeks against the oppressive 400 year rule of the Ottomans.

This equivalence of dates is no coincidence: the feast day of the Annunciation was chosen as the day to start the Revolution so that the Mother of God could bless the fight for freedom. Indeed, the start of the Apolytikion for the Annunciation: “Today marks the crowning of our salvation...” is also applicable to the physical salvation and freedom that the Greeks valiantly fought for in the Revolution.

2021 is a particularly special year as it marks the 200 year anniversary of the commencement of the Revolution. As we close two centuries of liberation. It is essential that we reflect on the significance of this event, and the important role that the Church played in it, so that we do not risk forgetting a core part of our history.

The story begins in 1453 when the great city of Constantinople fell to the Ottomans. The great Byzantine (Eastern Roman) Empire, which had lasted for over 1,000 years, came to an abrupt and violent end. The Ottomans imposed harsh limits on the freedoms of the Greeks. These included limits on their ability to speak their language, to learn about their faith, and participate in the life of the Church. Orthodox Christians were treated as second class citizens with restricted rights and were pressured to abandon their faith and follow Islam. Unfortunately, many were tempted and succumbed to this pressure.

Throughout the entire period of oppression, however, the Church played a vital role in preserving Orthodoxy and the Greek culture. This preservation was a true miracle.

The Church, led by its Metropolitans and Bishops, established schools in their provinces and ran secret services to share the Holy Mysteries with the people.

This was also a period of martyrdom, with those who gave up their lives during this period known as the 'neomartyrs'. Some famous examples are St George of Ioannina and St Gregory V, the Patriarch of Constantinople who secretly blessed the revolution. Their martyrdom gave continual courage to those around them. We should not forget,

however, that those Orthodox who managed to keep their faith during this difficult period also lived a life of struggle and martyrdom. We should be moved and inspired by their example to continually struggle in hope.

The Church also played a pivotal role in the Revolution of 1821. Indeed, the proclamation of freedom was made by Bishop Germanos who blessed the flag at the Agia Lavra Monastery. There were many other Church leaders also involved in leading the Greeks to freedom: In addition to Patriarch Gregory V, Patriarch Cyril VI, Isaia of Salona, and Archbishop Kyprianos of Cyprus are just a few notable examples.

St Paul had proclaimed “Christ has made us free” (Galatians 5:1). Ultimately, the preservation of the Orthodox faith throughout Ottoman rule and the successful Greek Revolution were only

possible through the grace and power of Christ and the intercession of the blessed Theotokos and other blessed Saints.

This struggle reminds us that there is a more important freedom than this physical freedom. That is the freedom which Christ gives each of us to be free from our passions and from the consequences of death. St Paul invites us in the passage immediately following the above, to emulate the spirit of the freedom fighters so as to let us “not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.”

ΖΗΤΩ Η ΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΙΑ! LONG LIVE FREEDOM!





Διακόσια χρόνια εφέτος συμπληρώνονται από κείνη τη μοναδική και μαρτυρική ανάσταση του έθνους μας. Απομένουμε έκπληκτοι σαν μπροστά σε θαύμα. Νιώθουμε θαυμασμό και συγκλονισμό ιερό.

Ένα έθνος ταπεινωμένο, το δικό μας Έθνος μα με μία ιστορία άφραστη από δόξα και τιμή περνά μέσα από το μαύρο σκοτάδι τετρακοσίων χρονών σκλαβιάς βασανισμένο, καταπονημένο και ξυπόλητο, μα με μία ψυχή γεμάτη πίστη και με παιδιά έτοιμα να πεθάνουν για «**του Χριστού την πίστη την Αγία και της πατρίδος την Ελευθερία,**» και κάνουν το θαύμα της Ελληνικής επανάστασης.

Το μεγάλο θαύμα του 21 συνταίριασε την θρησκευτική πίστη με το εθνικό πάθος.

Μέσα στο αγιασμένο καμίνι αυτής της θρυλικής επανάστασης, φάνηκε πόσο στερεά με αιώνιους δεσμούς ενώθηκε η Ορθοδοξία μας με το Έθνος. Φάνηκε πόσο καθαρά μπορούσε το έθνος με την αρετή, τη λεβεντιά, την αδελφοσύνη και το φιλότιμό του να εκφράσει τέλεια το ήθος και το ύφος της εκκλησίας μας αλλά και τις πατροπαράδοτες αρετές της φυλής μας.

Αυτά τα συγκλονιστικά βιώματα κάνουν τον Γέρο του Μωριά να φωνάξει, «για την αγάπη της πίστεως και της πατρίδος, ελάβαμε τα όπλα, ύψωσαμε τη σημαία του Σταυρού, γινήκαμε λιοντάρια και τους κατασπαράξαμε. Έλληνες θα τους εξολοθρεύσουμε τους Τούρκους διότι ο θεός μας βοηθεί, πολεμώντας δια την πίστη μας, δια την πατρίδα μας, δια τους γέροντες γονείς μας, δια τις γυναίκες μας και τις θυγατέρες μας, δια τα αδύνατα τέκνα μας, δια τους αδελφούς και φίλους μας, δια τη ζωή μας, την ιδιοκτησία μας, την τιμή μας. Δια τα δίκαια τα οποία ο Θεός μας χάρισε και χωρίς των οποίων δεν μπορούμε να ζήσουμε εις τον κόσμο. Όταν δε ο δίκαιος Θεός μας βοηθεί ποίος εχθρός

θα δυνηθεί ποτέ να μας αντισταθεί;»

Τέτοια βιώματα, τέτοιοι περήφανοι και εξαγιασμένοι στοχασμοί, στοχασμοί Ελευθερίας και Αρετής γέννησε και γεννά η συμβίωση της Ορθοδοξίας με το έθνος των Ελλήνων. Το φαινόμενο είναι μοναδικό και η κληρονομιά βαριά και μεγάλη.

Εμείς όλοι που περάσαμε από το αίματοπότιστο εικοσιένα και κερδίσαμε με τη βοήθεια του Θεού την ελευθερία μας, σήμερα κινδυνεύουμε να την χάσουμε, πέφτοντας στη σκλαβιά μιας άλλης τυραννίας. Έρχεται με το όνομα, άλλοτε της **παγκοσμιοποίησης**, άλλοτε της **Νέας τάξης**

πραγμάτων, άλλοτε του **Υλισμού**. Και όλες αυτές οι σύγχρονες δουλείες πότε μαζί και πότε χωριστά αναισθητοποιούν τα εθνικά μας αισθητήρια, κοιμίζουν την Ορθόδοξη Ελληνική μας συνείδηση, ευτελίζουν τις θεόδοτες αρετές, που το γένος των Ελλήνων πάντα κρατούσε ψηλά σαν ορόσημα και σημεία αναφοράς.

Διακόσια χρόνια πέρασαν από τότε και δεν είναι καθόλου αρκετό για μας απλώς να θυμόμαστε τα ανδραγαθήματα και τις θυσίες των ηρώων μας.

Ει μη τι άλλο, ιδιαίτερα εφέτος, χρειάζεται να νιώσουμε βαθύτερα τους στενούς δεσμούς αίματος που μας συνδέουν με τους ήρωες του 21, και να μη μιλήσουμε άλλο πια για αυτούς, αλλά να μιλήσουμε σε αυτούς και να τους πούμε:

«Σε όλους εσάς που θυσιαστήκατε στο Ζάλογγο, στην Αλαμάννα, στο Σούλι, στο Μεσολόγγι, στα Ψαρά, στο Μανιάκι, τα Δερβενάκια, ή το χάνι της Γραβιάς, έχουμε χρέος ιερό να φανούμε αντάξιοι απόγονοι σας. Σας υποσχόμαστε πως όχι μόνο αναγνωρίζουμε την ηρωική σας θυσία αλλά αν χρειαστεί (και εδώ πολλοί σύγχρονοι μας θα μας ειρωνευτούν), ακόμη και το αίμα μας να χύσουμε για του Χριστού την πίστη την Αγία και της πατρίδος την Ελευθερία.»

(Στην επόμενη έκδοσή μας θα αφιερώσουμε λίγες σελίδες στους ήρωες του 1821)



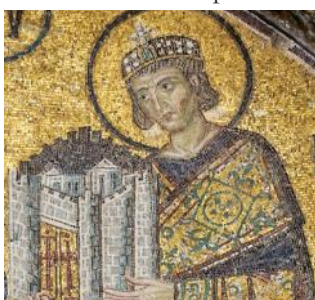
Western Mentality and Eastern Morality

One of the great empires of the world was the Roman Empire, which was created in 31BC. At various points in its history it was divided into two separate Eastern and Western imperial courts as an administrative expediency, followed by a later reuniting. The Western Roman Empire was abolished by the Germanic Goths in 476AD. By the 5th century Christianity was well developed among the masses, and was more dominant in the East but spread at a slower pace in the West.

Dramatic changes happened in the population in western Europe early in the 5th century. Large masses of peoples from Northern Europe and the central Asian plains invaded Europe looking for space to expand, and better living conditions. The invaders included Goths, Visigoths, Huns, Franks, Saxons, etc. The result was a vast increase in the population of western Europe, with the invaders forcing the inhabitants to flee westward or amalgamating with the existing local population.

The newcomers were illiterate and the Church in Western Europe made an enormous contribution to the assimilation, education, living standards, social awareness and religious education of the new arrivals. In the meantime, the population was becoming self-conscious, and so began to develop its own conscience, dominated by the Franks in the south and the Germans in the north. Of the Frankish leaders, the most famous is Charlemagne [*Latin*: Carolus Magnus], whose aim was to dislodge the Hellenic-Roman Popes and replace them with Franks. This became a reality in the year 800 when Leo III became pope, who crowned Charlemagne Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, whilst the authentic Emperor of the Roman Empire reigned in Constantinople.

If one were to draw a vertical line from the east of modern Venice down to Libya – you would divide the then Roman Empire into the Latin west and the predominantly Hellenic - Roman east. What concerns us here is not the political, geographical or social differences that followed such divide, as much as the differing courses the Christian Faith developed along on the two sides.



In the west, the Popes assumed complete control of the Church and worship practices were changed at will by the post-schism scholastic theologians. In addition, although the Church had accepted the dogmas voted at all Ecumenical Synods, the West neither understood their implications nor adopted them in practice. The effects of this continue to the current day in Roman Catholicism, where there have been further departures from Tradition, loss of absolute meaning and moves towards ecumenism and syncretism.

The Frankish Popes restricted themselves by adopting St Augustine as their national theologian. He had a view of the Holy Trinity that adopted a Neoplatonic model which went too far and asserted things that cannot be known. St Augustine's limited Greek hindered, but did not prevent, him from discovering the extensive and elaborate writings of the Hellenic-Roman Fathers of the East. It is only now that the Western Church is discovering the numerous errors left behind by the ideas that evolved from their foundational theologian (e.g. filioque, purgatory, divine visions, inquisition, etc, etc) [*Romanides, 2002, publ. Pournara*].

It is amazing that in spite of the fact that there had been numerous changes in theological approaches, scientific progress, multiplicity of languages and even religions, including many upheavals (suffice it to only mention the Reformation), that the European historians insist that there is only one western civilisation!

And yet, they do not see the obvious fact that the spirit of the Hellenic-Roman civilisation continues to exist unchanged from the time of Constantine the Great onwards, with a true theology which was initially expressed by the great Fathers in the 4th to 6th centuries.

This is faithfully practiced and adhered to by its followers in many countries in Eastern Europe and other parts of the world.

[to be continued next issue]

In this St Sophia church mosaic Emperor Constantine the Great presents, as a tribute, to the enthroned Mary and Christ Child, a representation of the Byzantium city of Constantinople.

Από Τους Αγίους Της Εκκλησίας Μας

From the Saints of our Church

Ο Άγιος Γεράσιμος ο Ιορδανίτης
(Η μνήμη του τιμάται τη 4η Μαρτίου)

St Gerasimos the Jordanite
(Commemorated on March 4)

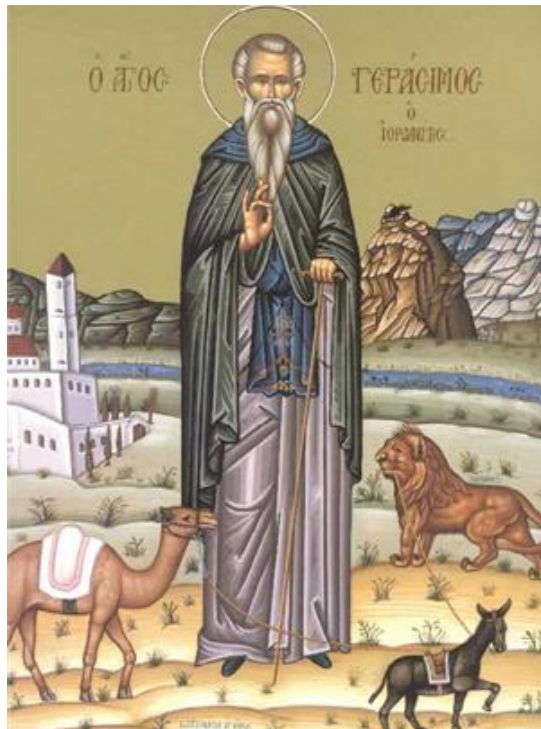
Ο Άγιος Γεράσιμος, ο ερημίτης του Ιορδάνη, γεννήθηκε στην περιοχή της Λυκίας στη Μικρά Ασία προς το τέλος του τέταρτου αιώνα. Παρά το γεγονός ότι ήταν ακόμη παιδί, μπήκε σε ένα μοναστήρι όπου παραδόθηκε σε προσευχή και νηστεία. Από αυτό το μοναστήρι ταξίδεψε για να επισκεφτεί τους Αγίους Τόπους, όπου εκεί έκανε το σπίτι του στην έρημο κοντά στη Νεκρά Θάλασσα.

St Gerasimos, the Hermit of the Jordan, was born in the region of Lycia in Asia Minor towards the end of the fourth century. Despite still being a child, he entered a monastery where he gave himself to prayer and fasting. It was from this monastery that he travelled to visit the Holy Land, where he came to make his home in the desert near the Dead Sea.

Λόγω της μεγάλης αρετής του άρχισε να δέχεται μαθητές, και καθώς ο αριθμός τους μεγάλωνε, ίδρυσε ένα μοναστήρι στις όχθες του ποταμού Ιορδάνη. Η μοναστική ζωή ήταν αυστηρή, έτρωγαν μόνο ψωμί και νερό κατά τη διάρκεια της εβδομάδας. Ο σκοπός των μοναχών ήταν να καταστρέψουν τις επιγίγιες προσκολλήσεις, να αντιμετωπίσουμε τα πάθη, και να αποκτήσουν αρετές.

Due to his great virtue he started receiving disciples, and as their number grew he founded a monastery on the banks of the Jordan River. The monastic life was strict, with only bread and water eaten during the week. The monks aimed to destroy all earthly attachments, to deal with the passions, and to acquire virtues.

Κάποτε, ο Άγιος Γεράσιμος περπατούσε δίπλα στον Ιορδάνη όταν είδε ένα μεγάλο λιοντάρι να ουρλιάζει με πόνο. Είχε ένα αγκάθι στο πόδι του που του το έβγαλε. Γεμάτο ευγνωμοσύνη το λιοντάρι, που τελικά ονομάστηκε Ιορδάνης, ακολούθησε τον Άγιο Γεράσιμο και έζησε σαν ένας από τους μαθητές του. Έτρωγε μόνο ψωμί και λαχανικά και η δουλειά του ήταν να οδηγεί ένα γαϊδουράκι να βόσκει δίπλα στο ποτάμι.



Once, St Gerasimos was walking by the Jordan when he saw a large lion howling with pain. It had a thorn in its foot which he pulled out. Full of gratitude, the lion – later named Jordan – followed St Gerasimos and lived like one of his disciples. It ate only bread and vegetables and was given a job, to lead a donkey to graze by the river.

Μια μέρα, ο γαϊδαρος έφυγε μακριά και ο Ιορδάνης επέστρεψε στο μοναστήρι με το κεφάλι του σκυμμένο. Ο Άγιος Γεράσιμος υπολόγισε λογικά ότι το λιοντάρι έφαγε το γαϊδουράκι και στο λιοντάρι δόθηκε η δουλειά του γαϊδουριού να φέρει νερό στο μοναστήρι. Ο Ιορδάνης δέχτηκε αυτήν την εργασία χωρίς παράπονο. Όταν ο Ιορδάνης είδε το γαϊδουράκι στα χέρια ενός ανθρώπου, που τον είχε κλέψει, ο Ιορδάνης οδήγησε το γαϊδουράκι και τρεις καμήλες πίσω στο μοναστήρι και απέδειξε την αθωότητά του.

One day, the donkey wandered away and Jordan returned to the monastery with his head bowed low. St Gerasimos logically assumed the lion ate the donkey, and the lion was given the donkey's job of bringing water to the monastery. Jordan accepted this job without complaint. When Jordan saw the donkey in the hands of a camel-herder, who had stolen it, Jordan led the donkey and three camels back to the monastery and proved his innocence.

Πέντε χρόνια αργότερα, το 475, ο Άγιος Γεράσιμος κοιμήθη. Όταν ο Ιορδάνης το άκουσε, αρνήθηκε να φάει και ούρλιαζε στη θλίψη του. Στη συνέχεια μεταφέρθηκε στον τάφο του Αγίου. Αφού προσκύνησε μπροστά στον τάφο, ούρλιασε δυνατά και πέθανε. Σχολιάζοντας αυτό, ο Άγιος Ιωάννης Μόσχος είπε ότι ο Ιορδάνης ήρθε στον Άγιο Γεράσιμο για να δοξάσει τον άνθρωπο που δόξασε τον Θεό.



Five years later, in 475, St Gerasimos reposed in the Lord. When Jordan heard about this, he refused to eat and roared in his sadness. He was then taken to the grave of the Saint. After prostrating before the tomb, he roared mightily and died. St John Moschus, commenting on this, said that Jordan came to St Gerasimos to glorify the man who glorified God.

*Αγαλμα του Λιονταριού στην Ιερά Μονή του Αγίου Γεράσιμου του Ιορδάνη
Statue of the lion at the Holy Monastery of Saint Gerasimos of the Jordan*

Questions & Answers

A clergyman of our Archdiocese answers ...

What is the "Fear of God"?

Our parents and grandparents did not have an issue with the term "Fear of God." It is a term that appears throughout the Old and New Testaments, and a term that was in the minds of the faithful throughout the ages.

These days, however, this phrase troubles many people, who seek to re-define and soften it. They ask "why should we fear God? Isn't He the God of love? Isn't He our Father in Heaven?" If you are one of those people, then consider that in essence, you seek to not be accountable for yourself and your life choices.

Consider also, that if we do not fear God, then perhaps it is a sign that we do not know God at all.

If we truly understood His greatness, His power and His majesty, then we would truly fear God in the same way that we fear the powerful people in our lives. If we understood His all-encompassing love, and the depths He has gone to and will go to for our benefit and our salvation, then again, we would truly fear God, in the same way that we fear breaking the relationship with all those people in our lives who love us deeply.

We can allow ourselves to fear God as King. In this way, we fear breaking his rules for life, knowing that in doing so we travel away from the path to Heaven and become lost. On a higher order, we can allow ourselves to fear God as Father. Not wanting to disgrace and soil ourselves with wrongdoing, mindful that He created us in His image and likeness. God gave His only begotten Son for our salvation that resulted in Him being nailed to the cross to save us.

When we understand this, will we not find ourselves ashamed to betray Him and His love for us?

Do we fear the police officer whose job it is to keep the law? How much more so the Creator of the Universe who laid out for us simple rules for good living and love for each other. Do we fear standing before leaders of this country, who hold the highest office? How much more so the King of Heaven who sits upon the throne of Cherubim and is honoured by the Seraphim. Do we fear our

own mother whose love for us knows no boundaries? How much more so our Father in Heaven who gave His Son's life for us.

If you find that you cannot fear God through knowledge of Him or His love, then fear God whose face Moses was not permitted to see. If you cannot do that either, then contemplate and fear your own eternal destruction brought about by blinding

yourself to His presence. If even that is too difficult, then consider whether you fear death. If (like most people) you do, then surely you can take the next small step and begin to fear God.

Those saints who lived with fear of God kept His rules to the best of their ability. When they understood that they had made a mistake, they would repent and run to Him to seek His forgiveness. They lived by His example as laid out in the New Testament. They copied His love in their dealings with other people. They were His sheep and He was their Shepherd.

Do not seek to redefine "Fear of God". Embrace it as part of your life in His flock. † Fr N. S.



ΣΥΝΘΗΜΑ

Χριστός ημάς ηλευθέρωσεν (Γαλ 5:1)

Το φετινό σύνθημα είναι παρμένο από την Επιστολή του Αποστόλου Παύλου προς τους Γαλάτας «...Χριστός ημάς ηλευθέρωσε...» (Γαλ 5:1).

Για την Εκκλησία, η βασικότερη μορφή ελευθερίας είναι η εσωτερική ελευθερία. Αυτήν την κατακτά ο άνθρωπος, όταν ελευθερώνεται από τα πάθη του. Όπως μας λέει ο Άγιος Ιωάννης Χρυσόστομος, «Μόνος ελεύθερος και μόνος άρχων και των βασιλέων, βασιλικότερος όλων των παθών απηλαγμένος.»

Δεν υπάρχει τίποτα πιο σκληρό στο κόσμο τούτο από τη σκλαβιά – τη τυραννία της αμαρτίας και των παθών. Χρειάζεται όλη τη δύναμή μας και τη θέλησή μας.

Όπως γνωρίζουμε και με το παράδειγμα των Ελλήνων αγωνιστών κατά την πρώτη χρονιά της Επανάστασης, όπου ξεσηκώθηκαν με όλη τη δύναμη της καρδιάς τους.

Τέτοια καρδιά χρειαζόμαστε, αν θέλουμε κι μείς την πραγματική ελευθερία. Να εξαφανίσουμε τον ατομισμό μας και την «αγάπη που ζητεί τα εαυτής» στην «αγάπη που δεν ζητεί τα εαυτής» και να μεταμορφωθούμε.

Δεν θα χαρούμε ποτέ αν δεν υπερβούμε τον εαυτό μας. Δεν μπορούμε να αισθανθούμε ελευθερία, όσο θα είμαστε σκλαβωμένοι μέσα στα πάθη μας. Μόνο και μόνο όταν ελευθερωθούμε από τον παλιό εαυτό μας και τα πάθη μας θα αισθανθούμε πραγματική ελευθερία, πραγματική χαρά, πραγματική αγάπη.

Πως μπορούμε να γίνουμε πραγματικά ελεύθεροι;

1. «Όποιος θέλει» ... Δηλαδή, εξαρτάται πρώτα αν το θέλουμε ή όχι.

Συμβαίνει συχνά οι άνθρωποι να μας προτρέπουν ή οι περιστάσεις να μας οδηγούν σε κάποια συγκεκριμένη πράξη, η τελική απόφαση, όμως ανήκει αποκλειστικά σ'εμάς. Το δικαίωμα της αποφάσεώς μας, δεν μπορεί κανένας να μας το αφαιρέσει. Αυτή την ελευθερία της ψυχής, δεν την δεσμεύει ούτε ο ίδιος ο Πλάστης και Κυριός της, ο Θεός.

Όταν οι πιστοί προσφέρουν τη θέλησή τους στον Χριστό, δεν σημαίνει ότι στερούνται την ελευθερία τους. Αντίθετα μάλιστα, οικειώνονται το πνεύμα του Χριστού. Αλλά το πνεύμα του Χριστού, που παίρνουν οι άνθρωποι μέσα στην Εκκλησία, δεν είναι «πνεύμα δουλείας» - αλλά «πνεύμα υιοθεσίας», πράγμα που σημαίνει ότι είναι «πνεύμα ελευθερίας.»

2. Να μη στηριζόμαστε στις δικές μας δυνάμεις

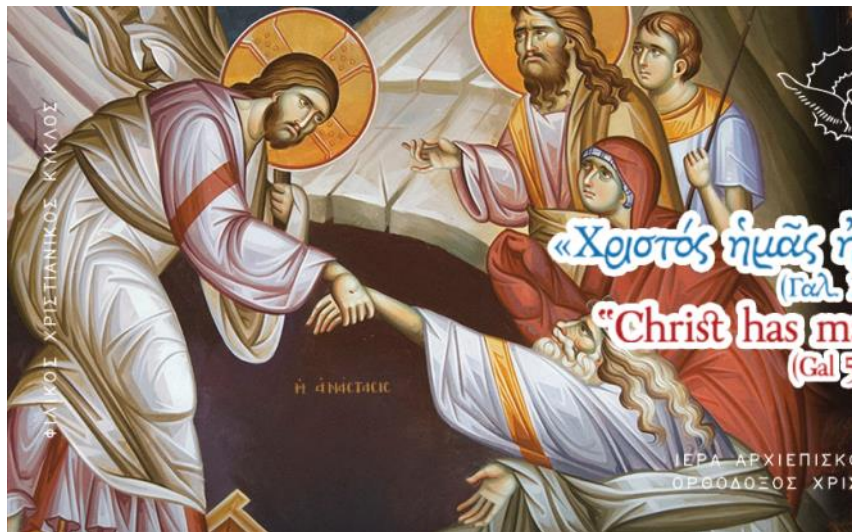
Ο αγώνας μας, ενώ εξαρτάτε από τη θελήσή μας, δεν στηρίζεται στις δικές μας δυνάμεις.

Η πραγματική ελευθερία εξασφαλίζεται τόσο με την προσπάθεια του ανθρώπου, όσο και κυρίως με το Πνεύμα του Κυρίου, διότι «όπου υπάρχει το Πνεύμα του Κυρίου εκεί υπάρχει και ελευθερία» (Β' Κορ 3,17).

Με την ίδρυση της Εκκλησίας ο Χριστός γίνεται η αστείρευτη πηγή της θείας χάριτος, που απελευθερώνει τον πιστό μέσω των μυστηρίων από την αμαρτία και τις συνέπειές της. Με την δύναμη των μυστηρίων και την ανθρώπινη συνεργία διατηρείται η χάρη ενεργός, τούτο σημαίνει ταυτόχρονα και την παρουσία της πραγματικής ελευθερίας του.

3. Το αποκορύφωμα της ελευθερίας είναι η αποδοχή του ανθρώπου να γίνει δούλος του Χριστού, αυτό το οποίο άλλωστε έκανε και ο ίδιος ο Απόστολος Παύλος. Αυτοχαρακτηρίζεται συνήθως στις επιστολές του «δούλος Ιησού Χριστού» και ομολογεί ότι «Είμαι ελεύθερος, χωρίς εξάρτηση από κανένα. Κι όμως έκανα τον εαυτό μου σκλάβο όλων», όπως γράφει στην Επιστολή προς Κορινθίους, «για να κερδίσω όσο το δυνατόν πιο πολλούς», γιατί «όποιος δέχτηκε την κλήση του Κυρίου όντας δούλος, απελευθερώθηκε από τον Κύριο. Παρόμοια κι αυτός που όντας ελεύθερος δέχτηκε την κλήση του Κυρίου, γίνεται δούλος του Χριστού» (Α' Κορ. 7,22).

Ελευθερία και αγάπη είναι συνώνυμα. Είμαι ελεύθερος όταν αγαπώ όχι όταν ικανοποιώ τον εγωισμό μου.



ΜΑ 2021

Christ has made us free (Galatians 5:1)

St Paul's invocation "Christ has made us free" invites us to reflect on what it really means to be free as Orthodox Christians living in a modern world.

Freedom is commonly thought of as the ability to choose between right or wrong, good or bad. The word in Greek *eleftheria* (ελευθερία) is made up of two roots – *eleftho* (ἐλεύθω) meaning "to come towards" or "to approach", and *eros* (ερός), meaning "love" or "desire." "Freedom" (ελευθερία) is taken to mean "being able to live consistent with that which we desire."

What is it that prevents us from reaching this state? Simply, the effect of sin. As the passions develop within, we become less able to exercise our freedom correctly. As St Paul says to the Romans, we become slaves to sin, and sinful desires becomes our master. We simply, effortlessly, and mindlessly, tend toward sin, neither appreciating where we are going, nor that we have lost our freedom along the way.

St Paul continues "For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not do; but for what I hate, that I do." We might find ourselves in a state where we know what is right, know what temptations to avoid or which sensations trigger the passions within. But, tied down to our senses and

seeking easy pleasures, we give in and mis-use the same gifts that God gave us for freedom, in slavery.

Modern society holds that almost every level of our existence is a matter of our 'choosing' – our careers, our social and economic status, our sexuality, our family, perhaps our death. Together with this, is the emphasis of the individual "As long as I'm not hurting anyone, I should be free to act and believe in whatever I like."

The beauty of the Orthodox Church is that each of us are individuals, and dependent on others, in our journey toward God. We may lead a life of obedience, say to our Spiritual Father, but even in that state we do not lose our freedom or our individuality.

The more we allow ourselves to live by God's will, and not our own, the greater will be our experience of Him. St Paul, again to the Romans, says "But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and in the end, everlasting life."

Elder Aimilianos of Simonopetra, describing the state when someone lets go of their own will in obedience to a spiritual father, says "Now I can live as an autonomous person, because I've freed myself from the greatest force there is: my own wilfulness. Now there's nothing to stop my free and independent progress. I have to be ready to walk on the road that God will show me."

Our Orthodox Faith emphasises a unique and fulfilling approach to being free in the modern age. Our aim is to be free from the turbulence of our own thoughts or passions. The free person is one who simply, humbly, and quietly seeks to be close to God, managing their own wilfulness and passions, and in that way allows themselves to become the person they were meant to be.





Η πρώτη Κυριακή της Μεγάλης Τεσσαρακοστής (Α' Νηστειών) ονομάζεται «Κυριακή της Ορθοδοξίας» γιατί γιορτάζουμε την αναστήλωση των αγίων Εικόνων και τον θρίαμβο της Ορθοδόξου Πίστεως κατά της φοβερής αιρέσεως των Εικονομάχων, των αιρετικών δηλαδή εκείνων που δεν εδέχοντο να τιμούν τις αγίες Εικόνες.

Το «Ωρολόγιο» της Εκκλησίας γράφει: «Για εκατό και πλέον χρόνια διαταράχθηκε η Εκκλησία με διωγμούς από κακοδόξους εικονομάχους.» Πρώτος υπήρξε ο αυτοκράτορας Λέων ο Ίσαυρος και τελευταίος ο Θεόφιλος, ανδρας της αγίας Θεοδώρας, η οποία μετά το θάνατο του συζύγου της ανέλαβε την εξουσία και στερέωσε πάλι την Ορθοδοξία μαζί με τον Πατριάρχη Μεθόδιο.

Η Βασίλισσα Θεοδώρα διακήρυξε δημόσια ότι ασπαζόμεθα τις Εικόνες, όχι λατρευτικά, ούτε ως Θεούς, αλλά ως εικόνες των αρχετύπων.

Την πρώτη Κυριακή των νηστειών το έτος 843, η Θεοδώρα μαζί με το γιό της αυτοκράτορα Μιχαήλ, λιτάνευσαν και ανεστήλωσαν τις αγίες εικόνες μαζί με τον κλήρο και το λαό. Από τότε εορτάζουμε κάθε χρόνο την ανάμνηση αυτού του γεγονότος γιατί καθωρίσθηκε οριστικά ότι δεν λατρεύουμε τις Εικόνες, αλλά τιμούμε και δοξάζουμε όλους τους Αγίους που εικονίζουν και λατρεύουμε μόνο τον εν Τριάδι Θεό. Τον

Πατέρα, τον Υιό και το Άγιο Πνεύμα και κανένα άλλο είτε Άγιο είτε Άγγελο.

Πολλοί Όρθοδοξοι Θεολόγοι αποδίδουν τα θαύματα μερικών Εικόνων όχι στις ίδιες Εικόνες, αλλά στη πίστη των ανθρώπων που προσεύχονται ενώπιόν των. Ότι η πίστη θαυματουργεί και η θερμή προσευχή, είτε μπροστά στις Εικόνες είτε όχι, αυτό είναι έξω από κάθε αμφιβολία. Αυτό όμως δεν είναι λόγος να αρνηθούμε ότι μερικές Εικόνες μπορούν να έχουν και οι ίδιες, θαυματουργική χάρη. Δεν είναι παράδοξο, αλλά πολύ φυσικό.

Το Ευαγγέλιο αναφέρει ότι οι Απόστολοι θαυματουργούσαν όχι μόνο με τα χέρια τους, αλλά στο πέρασμά τους ακόμη και με τη σκιά τους! (Πραξ. ε', 12-14). Ακόμα τα μανδήλια του Αποστόλου Παύλου, ριπτόμενα πάνω στους ασθενείς ή δαιμονισμένους, τους θεράπευαν! (Πραξ. ιθ', 12).

Όστε όχι μόνο οι ίδιοι Απόστολοι είχαν θαυματουργικό χάρισμα, αλλά και αυτά τα αντικείμενα της προσωπικής τους χρήσεως. Η χάρις από το Θεό έφθανε μέχρι τα μανδήλια τους. Τι το παράδοξο λοιπόν να ευλογήσει ο Θεός ανθρώπους βαθιάς ταπεινώσεως, νηστείας, προσευχής τους ίδιους να θαυματουργούν ή και τα εκτυπώματα αυτών, δηλαδή οι εικόνες, να καθίστανται θαυματουργικές.

[<http://www.monipetraki.gr/sarakosti1.html>]

**The Orthodox
Mission Bookstore**

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT US

Monday to Thursday:
10am to 3pm

Friday:
10am to 5pm

Saturday:
10am - 1pm, 2pm - 4pm

217 Bexley Road,
Kingsgrove, Sydney
Tel: (02) 9787 9779

orthodoxbookstore.org.au

From The Old Testament



Psalm 33 (34)

I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall be praised in the Lord; let the gentle hear, and be glad. Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together. I sought the Lord, and He heard me; and He delivered me from all my sojourning. Come to Him, and be enlightened, and your face shall never be ashamed. This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him from all his afflictions. The Angel of the Lord shall encamp around those who fear Him, and He will deliver them. Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who hopes in Him. Fear the Lord, you His saints, for there is no want for those who fear Him. Rich men turned poor and went hungry; but those who seek the Lord shall not lack any good thing. Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord. Who is the man who desires life, who loves to see good days? Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit. Shun evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it. The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are open to their supplications. The Lord's face is against those who do evil, so as to destroy their remembrance from the earth. The righteous cried, and the Lord heard them; and He delivered them from all their afflictions. The Lord is near those who are broken-hearted, and He will save the humble in spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but He will deliver them from them all. The Lord shall guard all their bones; not one of them shall be broken. The death of sinners is evil, and those who hate the righteous shall go wrong. The Lord will redeem the souls of His servants, and all who hope in Him shall not go wrong.

Psalm 33 (34) is a psalm of thanksgiving sung by King David when he fled from the court of Abimelech of Geth (also known as Achous the Philistine). David had come to Abimelech's court when he fled from the madness of Saul. However, when he saw those around Abimelech looking at him and whispering, he feigned insanity and was dismissed by Abimelech. In this way, according to St Nicodemus the Hagiorite, David escaped certain death and was thankful to God.

Despite his ingenious escape, David remembered that it was God who was ultimately responsible for it. This gratitude is seen throughout the Psalm, starting with the second verse: "I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth."

This Psalm is useful for all who are in danger, and reminds us of our weakness in the face of our enemies and temptations. However, it never leaves us despairing as we are always reminded of God's strength. We see that he delivers and illuminates without shaming (33:5-6).

David instructs the listeners to fear the Lord and place all of their hopes in Him, not trusting in riches or the things of this world. While those seeking holiness are to fear the Lord, this fear is simply the doing of God's will by avoiding sin and turning towards virtue.

Many of the verses in this Psalm are regularly chanted and prayed in our Orthodox Church. The phrase "taste and see that the Lord is good" (33:9) is often chanted and recited prior to receiving Holy Communion – the Body and Blood of Christ. Additionally, verse eleven is chanted before meals: "The rich have become poor and gone hungry, but those who seek out the Lord will not be lacking in any good thing."

May we also seek out the Lord, as "the Lord will redeem the souls of his servants, and all who hope in him will surely not err" (33:23).



St Joseph the Hesychast

St Joseph the Hesychast, who was canonised by the Ecumenical Patriarchate on 20 October 2019, is one of Orthodoxy's newest saints. He was a shining beacon of monasticism in the 20th century and played a major role in the revitalisation of Mt Athos and the teaching of the Jesus Prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me."

St Joseph was born in Paros in 1897. His family was extremely poor and so the Saint left home at the age of 17 to work in Pireaus. After receiving a vision of two angels serving the heavenly king in his early twenties, he lost all interest in a worldly life and went to fast and pray in the nearby countryside. Two years later, in 1921, he abandoned the world entirely and left for Mt Athos. There he met his co-ascetic and struggler, Father Arsenios. The two would be inseparable for the rest of their lives. They lived a very strict life consisting of the denial of the body and the unceasing repetition of the Jesus Prayer. In turn, God graced him with exalted spiritual gifts, including visions of the uncreated light.

After some years, St Joseph's fame began spreading, and he attracted disciples who wanted to imitate his way of life. Eventually, a strong brotherhood was formed consisting of St Joseph, Father Arsenios, Father Athanasios, Father Joseph the Cypriot (later Abbot of Vatopaidi Monastery), Father Ephraim (later Abbot of Philotheou Monastery) and Father Haralambos (later Abbot of Dionysiou Monastery). These disciples subsequently spread St Joseph's theology to their respective monasteries, which led to a resurgence of noetic prayer in the Holy Mountain.

In 1959, a few months before his death, St Joseph was visited by Panagia who promised him that she would take him on her feast day. True to her word, St Joseph passed away on the Feast of the Dormition, on 15 August 1959.

May the great Saint intercede to the Lord for us.

The Holy Relics of St Panteleimon the Great-Martyr (right) and the Sacred Skull of Elder Joseph the Hesychast, treasured in St Anthony's Monastery, Arizona





What we Hear in Church



Ο Ευαγγελισμός της Υπεραγίας Θεοτόκου Ὁρθρος

«Χαίρε κατάρας λύτρωσις, τοῦ Ἀδὰμ Θεοτόκε, χαίρε σεμνή Μητρόθεε, χαίρε ἔμψυχε βάτε, χαίρε λαμπάς, χαίρε θρόνε, χαίρε κλίμαξ καὶ πύλη, χαίρε τὸ θεῖον ὄχημα, χαίρε κούφη νεφέλη, χαίρε ναέ, χαίρε στάμνε πάγχρυσε, χαίρε ὄρος, χαίρε σκηνὴ καὶ τράπεζα, χαίρε Εὐσας ἢ λύσις.» (25 Μαρτίου, Β' Ἐξαποστειλάριον, Ἦχος β')

From the Service of Matins for the Annunciation of the Lady Theotokos

"Rejoice, Theotokos redemption of Adam's curse, rejoice noble Mother of God, rejoice, living bush, Rejoice, O lampstand; rejoice, O throne. Rejoice, O ladder and gate. Rejoice, divine chariot. Rejoice, O swift cloud, rejoice O temple; Rejoice, O golden jar, rejoice, O mountain. Rejoice, the tent and the table. Rejoice, Eve's deliverance" (25th March 2nd Exapostilarion, Mode 2).

The Orthodox tradition interprets many of the events and objects of the Old Testament as types, or symbols, prophesying events and people to be revealed later in the New Testament. A classic example is Jonah's expulsion from the whale after three days which pre-figures the death and resurrection of Christ.

Accordingly, it is most appropriate that during the celebration of the major feast of the Annunciation of Our Lady the Theotokos on 25 March, some of these Old Testament pre-figurations are brought to the fore. They remind us of the major part the Theotokos played in bringing God's pre-eternal plan for the salvation of the human race to fruition. We do not have the space to cover all the symbols touched on in this hymn, but we can touch on the more pre-eminent ones.

The Theotokos is called the living bush, in reference to the burning bush which Moses encountered on the slopes of Mount Horeb recounted in the Book of Exodus; the bush which appeared to be burning but was not consumed by the fire. This refers to the reality that the Mother of God held the second person of the Holy Trinity inside her womb but was not consumed by Him.

The ladder is a reference to the means by which God chose to physically enter into the world and which connects God to the physical world. It also touches on Jacob's vision of the ladder recorded in the Book of Genesis: "He saw in his sleep a ladder standing upon the earth, and the top thereof touching heaven, the angels also of God ascending and descending by it" (Genesis 28:12).

Finally, the gate is an Old Testament reference to the perpetual virginity of the Theotokos: "And the Lord said unto me: This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall pass through it; because the Lord God of Israel hath entered in by it, and it shall be shut" (Ezekiel 44:2).



Metropolitan Kallistos Ware of Diokleia

Metropolitan Kallistos is an English bishop and theologian of the Orthodox Church. He honed his skills as a master orator over 35 years (from 1966 to 2001) as the lecturer of Eastern Orthodox Studies at the University of Oxford.

He was tonsured a monk at the monastery of St John the Theologian in Patmos. He has written many books (including the "Orthodox Church" and the "Orthodox Way"), and many articles. He was one of the translators into English of the Philokalia, Lenten Tridion, and Festal Menaion.



His podcasts are engaging, dynamic and beautifully elucidated. Most are between 45-60 minutes long. He skilfully weaves his topic with quotes from the Bible, church fathers, authors such as Dostoyevsky and philosophers. His style is loving and compassionate. He is not dogmatic nor judgmental. He gives advice and gently encourages his listener with "this has helped me... it may also help you."

Metropolitan Kallistos is well known for his sense of humour, which he skilfully uses to refresh his audience, and refocus our lagging concentration. He gleefully admits "I have always had plenty to say."

Metropolitan Kallistos' podcasts cover many topics including the Transfiguration of our Lord, the role of women in the church, personhood – the relationship between God and man, the prodigal son and the Jesus prayer. His talk on the relationship between Orthodox and non Orthodox Christians is impressive for its boldness and sensitivity. One will delight in his talk on Orthodoxy: ethnicity versus the ecumenical nature of the Orthodox Church.

Listening to his podcasts, one becomes aware and insightful of the great depth of the Orthodox faith, and the great love God has for humanity. His talks are not academic or theoretical. His podcasts are for those striving to come closer to God. They can be found on Ancient Faith radio (search archived podcasts or browse by author) and the Cambridge Orthodox Forum.



The series on our Creed continues ...

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages, light from light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one essence with the Father, through Whom all things were made.

The main body of the Creed (Articles 2-7) outlines our belief in God the Son. The need for the Church to formally state and clarify the identity of the Son of God was triggered by the mother of heresies – Arianism. Arius, a priest of the Christian Church in Alexandria, argued that the Son of God was a created being and therefore not Co-eternal with God the Father. This distorted teaching proved severely problematic not only to Trinitarian dogma, but to the very essence of our salvation. If Christ is a created being and therefore not God, our potential for salvation is effectively cancelled.

The biblical titles “Lord”, “Jesus”, and “Christ”, form the first part of the Jesus Prayer: “Lord Jesus Christ Son of God have mercy on me a sinner”; a prayer so brief and yet so potent in the Orthodox Christian’s struggle to attract God’s grace into their life. “Lord” refers to the sovereign ruler one is obliged to obey i.e. God. Both the Father and the Son possess this same sovereign power and authority. “Jesus” comes from the Hebrew name “Yeshua” meaning “God saves”. “Christ” translates the Hebrew word “Messiah”, indicating the chrismated one. In the Old Testament, it was the king who was anointed with oil.

As “only-begotten”, the Son of God is unique. There is no other born from the Father. Furthermore, that which

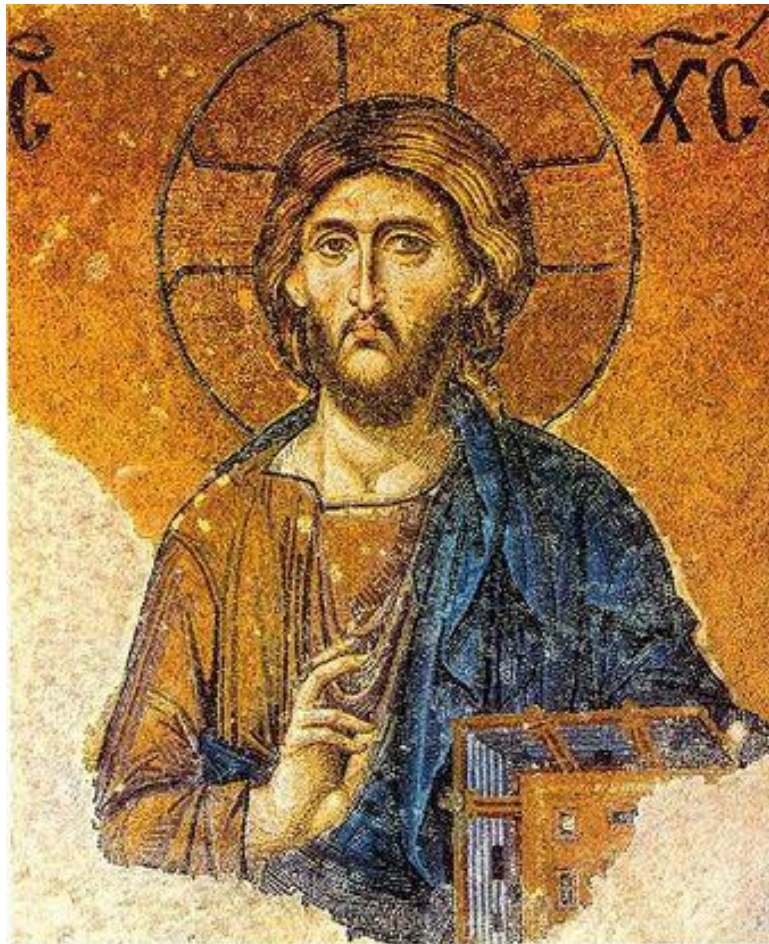
is begotten is of the same essence as that which begets it, as opposed to something which is made. That the Son is “of one essence with the Father” is greatly emphasised to underline the unity and equality of Father and Son in the Holy Trinity. When Christ said “I and My Father are one” (Jn. 10:30), the pharisees accused Him of blasphemy and attempted to stone Him as they recognised these words as a claim to equality with God.

Further refuting the false belief of Arius, the Church fathers inserted the phrase “before all ages” highlighting the Son’s Co-eternity with the Father. This is proclaimed by the opening verse of the Gospel according to St John: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

John’s Gospel continues to underline the divinity of the Son of God, describing His role as Co-Creator “through Whom all things were made”: “All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made” (Jn. 1:3). The Evangelist John declares unequivocally that the Father created all things through the Son, both of Whom possess the same divine creative energy.

As “light from light, true God from true God”, Christ said “I am the light of world” (Jn. 8:12). In His unique Person, He reveals God the Father, “enlightening those in darkness”, and leading us to the Truth which alone can assure our salvation. As He Himself said so clearly: “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (Jn. 14:6). May we each heed this call to become children of the True God.

We will continue with our Creed in the next issue.



NEWS and VIEWS

Synthima and Camps

Various activities and informative presentations took place over the Summer period including: the New Year Synthima (motto) of “Christ has made us free” which was presented in Greek and English (see pages 6 and 7 of this Lychnos issue); a parenting talk for couples; the Omatha boys and Omatha girls camps; and two men’s camps (necessitated by the Covid-19 restrictions). All these activities were spiritually beneficial and rewarding to all who participated.



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

Phone: (02) 9787 9779

E-mail: editor@lychnos.org

Internet: www.lychnos.org