



ΛΥΧΝΟΣ

A GREEK ORTHODOX PERIODICAL FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

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

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After rising from the dead, the Lord spent forty days with His disciples teaching them the deeper meanings of the resurrection, and giving them His final instructions before gloriously ascending into heaven. While ascending from the Mount of Olives, He commissioned the Apostles to make disciples of all the nations and commanded that they baptise them in the name of the Holy Trinity.

Soaring into heaven, Jesus presented His glorified human nature to the Father and having fulfilled the divine Will in all things, was enthroned at His right hand. Fulfilling the promise to send the Holy Spirit, He left one thing to be finished, being His second

coming, and the judgement of the living and the dead. This final prophecy concerning Jesus was proclaimed by the angels who appeared at the Ascension saying that Jesus will return in the same manner the disciples saw Him ascend into heaven (Acts 1:11). This is also captured in the icon of the Ascension where Christ seems as though He is both ascending and descending.

Consequently, most people can understand how the living will be judged, but how will Christ judge the dead? St Paul tells us that the dead will be raised just as Jesus was raised. He emphasised that "if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen", and added that without the resurrection

our faith is useless and we are the most pitiful of all people (1 Corinthians 15:13-19).

Evidently, everything we see in Jesus is a fulfilment of what each of us can expect in our own lives. He died on the Cross and was buried, we also will die and be buried. He rose, and we too will be raised. He was presented to the Father, as we will be presented and kneel before Him. He

underwent trial and was sentenced, and we all will be subject to judgement.

Now the question for us is to what shall we resurrect? Jesus tells us that "those who have done good [will rise] to the resurrection of life, and those who have done

evil to the resurrection of condemnation" (John 5:29). If we have been baptised and believe in Jesus Christ according to all we proclaim in the Creed, then let us not stumble on this point, namely the resurrection of the dead and the life of the age to come.

Directing their attention up to heaven, the disciples gazed as the Lord ascended into heaven. May we also lift up our hearts and raise our minds to the heights of heaven and the presence of God. Let us remain steadfastly in His company throughout our lives so that when Christ comes to fulfil His final prophecy, we may ascend into heaven with Him.





Η προσευχή «**Βασιλεύ Ουράνιε**» που αναφέρεται στο Άγιο Πνεύμα, αποτελεί την εναρκτήρια προσευχή κάθε ιερουργίας και ακολουθίας της Εκκλησίας μας. Στο περιεχόμενό της, περιλαμβάνει και διαγράφει τη σωστή πορεία του ανθρώπου για τη πνευματική του υποδομή.

Η βασιλική ιδιότητα του Αγίου Πνεύματος, εκφράζεται με την αδιάκοπη και αφανή παρουσία και προσφορά του προσώπου Του. Το Άγιο Πνεύμα είναι πάντα σαν κρυμμένο, γι' αυτό και δεν έχουμε συγκεκριμένη εικόνα Του. Όμως είναι πάντα παρών όποτε αναπτύσσεται η αδελφική αγάπη και η επικοινωνία μας με τον Θεό.

Ο «**Παράκλητος**» είναι ο παρηγορητής και ο υπερασπιστής κάθε ανθρώπου. Είναι το «**Πνεύμα της Αληθείας**», εφόσον ο άνθρωπος που μετανοεί ειλικρινά, εισέρχεται στο χώρο της Αληθείας. Το Άγιο Πνεύμα τότε ακουμπά πάνω στην «**συντετριμμένη καρδιά**», και καθαρίζει την ύπαρξή μας από «**πάσης κηλίδος**» και στη συνέχεια μας παρέχει την εμπειρία της σωτηρίας.

Στα κείμενα και διδαχές των Αγίων Πατέρων της Εκκλησίας μας, έχουμε φανερή την επενέργεια του Αγίου Πνεύματος. Αυτός ο «**Ουράνιος Βασιλιάς**», απομακρύνει τις δαιμονικές δυνάμεις του εγωισμού και της φιλαυτίας του ανθρώπου. Με τη Χάρη Του, αποκτούμε οικειότητα με το Θεό, και σφραγίζεται η υιοθεσία μας από το Θεό. Και αυτή η αδελφική σχέση του Χριστού με τον άνθρωπο, τελεσιουργείται με την επενέργεια του Αγίου Πνεύματος. Το ίδιο και όλες οι σχέσεις που συνάπτουν οι άνθρωποι μεταξύ τους, σαν «**Σώμα Χριστού**» και προάγουν πνευματικά τη ζωή τους. Είναι αδύνατον να παγιωθούν και να τελεσφορήσουν χωρίς το φωτισμό και την επενέργεια του «**Παρακλήτου**». Με την βοήθειά Του, αποκτούμε την ενότητα μεταξύ μας και μιλούμε την «**ίδια γλώσσα**». Αυτή την «**κοινή γλώσσα**» μιλούσαν και μιλούν οι Άγιοι οπουδήποτε και οποτεδήποτε έζησαν.

Δυστυχώς, στις μέρες μας επικρατεί στις ανθρώπινες κοινωνίες η κατάσταση της Βαβέλ. Πασχίζουμε να φτιάξουμε με τις αυτόνομες

εγωιστικές μας δυνάμεις, «το πύργο της σωτηρίας» μας, και μπερδευόμαστε αφάνταστα μεταξύ μας. Οι γλώσσες που ακούγονται σήμερα παγκοσμίως, δημιουργούν σύγχυση. Γλώσσες πολιτικών, οικονομολόγων, κοινωνιολόγων, τεχνοκρατών, ακόμα και επιστημόνων, διαφέρουν μεταξύ τους και γίνονται αίτιοι διαστάσεως και διχασμού.

Αλλοίμονο και μεις οι Χριστιανοί αφού δεν έχουμε αποκτήσει την ενότητα του Αγίου Πνεύματος μιλάμε ακατανόητα. Δεν καταλαβαίνουμε τη γλώσσα των Αγίων μας, δεν αντιλαμβανόμαστε τη γλώσσα της Εκκλησίας. Με αποτέλεσμα πολλές φορές να δίνουμε αυθαίρετα μια νέα ερμηνεία του Χριστιανισμού που διαφέρει κατά πολύ από την αποκάλυψη και τον τρόπο ζωής των Αγίων μας.



Κοντολογίς, γυρεύουμε έναν Χριστιανισμό «κομμένο και ραμμένο» στα μέτρα μας, πιο μοντέρνο και εκσυγχρονισμένο, αφού, στο κάτω κάτω, ζούμε στον 21^ο αιώνα! Το αποτέλεσμα είναι πως έτσι επιτείνουμε την σύγχυση μέσα μας και μεταξύ μας. Είναι τρομερό ακόμη και Ορθόδοξοι Χριστιανοί να μην καταλαβαίνουμε τη γλώσσα των Αγίων μας.

Ανάγκη επιτακτική στις μέρες μας, να επιστρέψουμε στις ρίζες μας. Να εντρυφήσουμε στις διδαχές των πατέρων μας, κι ακόμα πιο πολύ, στη μίμηση και βίωση των παραδειγμάτων τους. Να ξανα-επισκεφθούμε την Ιερά Παράδοση της Εκκλησίας μας, να ευθυγραμμίσουμε τη δική μας

ζωή σαν οργανική συνέχεια της ζωής τους.

Την ημέρα της Πεντηκοστής - όπως και κάθε μέρα του χρόνου - καλούμαστε να προσευχηθούμε θερμά στον «**Ουράνιο Βασιλιά**» μας, στο Άγιο Πνεύμα, να κατασκηνώσει μέσα στη καρδιά μας. Εμείς οι Ορθόδοξοι - παρ' όλη την αμαρτωλότητα μας - αισθανόμαστε την παρουσία του Αγίου Πνεύματος πολύ κοντά μας. Ιδιαίτερα σ' αυτές τις ιερές στιγμές της Θείας Λειτουργίας μας. Να 'ρθεί λοιπόν μέσα μας να μας αγιάσει, να μας μεταμορφώσει.

Έτσι με τη Χάρη Του να εισέλθουμε μέσα στη Παράδοση της Εκκλησίας μας και των Αγίων μας, και ν' αποκτήσουμε και μεις, χαρά, ειρήνη και ελευθερία.



The Three Steps of Spiritual Perfection

Many people believe that the purpose of religion is to prepare them for the life after death. Some Orthodox Christians believe that the Orthodox Faith has this exclusive purpose. They do not do much in this life, but they wait until they die, so when that time comes, they can go to Paradise, because when alive they were Orthodox Christians.

Another group are quite active in this life – they pray regularly, ask the priests to offer supplication [paraklesis] or holy unction prayers, attend church frequently, etc, so that God may help them to live a quiet and pleasant life, bless their business, help their children to succeed, etc.

Both these concepts about the ultimate function of Faith are wrong, as they do not have a common spiritual axis or centre of reference. The only true axis that maintains the coherence of the Orthodox Faith, and places everything on a correct footing is the axis of: **Catharsis**, **Photismos**, and **Theosis**. Each of these come to fruition only with the help of the Holy Spirit.

1. Catharsis [Κάθαρσις - Cleansing of the inner self]. This means rooting out: one's passions (ie. sins done habitually, over time); defects of character; bad habits; evil thoughts; and, even the occasional evil deed or sentiment.

Cleansing of one's inner self is the task of the one who undertakes the procedure, although his spiritual father plays a significant part in it. In fact, the process cannot succeed without his active participation. It is the Grace of the Holy Spirit that completes the process.

2. Photismos [Φωτισμός - Illumination of the mind]. This arises when the person is in a constant state of being conscious of the presence of God within himself, even when he may be asleep: "I slept, but my heart was awake" (Song of Solomon 5:21). The knowledge of God by the person is "empirical", due to his personal experience.

3. Theosis [Θέωσις - State of sainthood]. This is the condition which is given to those who live in a constant state of Photismos and who experience "Noetic Prayer" [ie. the Jesus Prayer]. Those in Theosis see the glory of God, commonly as God's Uncreated Light, or some other vision. The experience may last only minutes or hours, in fact as long as God determines. All Saints belong to this category, and end up as friends of God.

The Fathers of the Church emphasise that what will

happen to the person after death, depends upon the kind of life they lived whilst on earth. As this determines our eternal future, the Fathers insist that our earthly life should be dominated by Catharsis and a partial state of Photismos. When this is achieved, we will be able to see God, both in this life, and in the other to come.

This raises the question what is the purpose of Catharsis and Photismos? From the Orthodox theological viewpoint, whether one is Orthodox, Buddhist, atheist or whatever else, everyone will see the Glory of God at the common end of humankind during the Second Coming of Christ.

Yes, everyone will see the Glory of God, but each one in a different way. Those who are saved will see it as "Light" which is soothing, pleasant and never ending. In contrast the condemned will see it as "Fire", eternally burning and tyrannising "where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched" [Mk 9:44].

This event, which no human mind can possibly comprehend, has defined the work of the Church on earth. That is, preaching to the world that God is real. He will be seen by all men during the Second coming, and the Church works so that its members will see God as Light.

The task and the agony of the Church is to prepare its members to see God as Light, which in fact is "a therapeutic process, which has to start and be completed in this life." This dogma is the substance of the Orthodox Tradition, and the major task of the Orthodox Church.

For us, the above ideas are challenging. They bring to the fore that as Christians we have to make many sacrifices in our life. And yet these sacrifices can be made with the Power of and the Faith in Jesus Christ, as we accepted His word, that "he who hears my word and believes in Him who sent me, has everlasting life" [John 5:24]. This secures our future.

The present will be secured by the continuous presence of Jesus Christ in our daily life, having in mind His admonition, "The kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force" [Mat 11:24]. This means that we need to work by being forceful on ourselves, and active in our life.

[Key article source: Romanidis J: *Patristic Theology*, Parakatathiki; 2004, pp46-48].

Από Τους Αγίους Της Εκκλησίας Μας

Η Αγία Κυριακή η Μεγαλομάρτυς
(η μνήμη της τιμάται 7 Ιουλίου)

Η Αγία Κυριακή γεννήθηκε στη Νικομήδεια, η μοναδική κόρη του Δωρόθεου και της Ευσεβίας. Οι ευσεβείς γονείς της ήταν χριστιανοί και πλούσιοι, αλλά άτεκνοι. Μετά προσευχές απέκτησαν την Κυριακή. Ονομάστηκε έτσι γιατί γεννήθηκε την ημέρα της Κυριακής.

Ήταν όμορφη κόρη και στο σώμα και στην ψυχή, μεγαλωμένη με χριστιανικές αρχές. Πολλοί την ζήτησαν σε γάμο, αλλά δεν ήθελε κανέναν, λέγοντας ότι είναι αρραβωνιασμένη με τον Χριστό, και ήθελε να πεθάνει παρθένα. Ένας δικαστής θέλησε την Κυριακή για το γιο του, αλλά και η δική του πρόταση απορρίφθηκε. Τότε για εκδίκηση κατήγγειλε την Κυριακή και τους γονείς της ως Χριστιανούς στον αυτοκράτορα Διοκλητιανό.

Ο αυτοκράτορας διέταξε να υποβληθούν σε βασανιστήρια. Ο Δωρόθεος ξυλοκοπήθηκε άγρια, αλλά χωρίς αποτέλεσμα, δεν αλλαξοπιστούσαν. Στο τέλος ο Δωρόθεος και η Ευσεβία εξορίστηκαν, όπου πέθαναν υπομένοντας πολλά δεινά για τον Χριστό.

Η Κυριακή αρνήθηκε να προσκυνήσει τα είδωλα. Ο Μαξιμιανός διέταξε να τη μαστιγώσουν. Τη βασάνισαν με κάθε δυνατό τρόπο, αλλά η πίστη της ήταν ακλόνητη. Ένα βράδυ άκουσε τη φωνή του Θεού να της λέει: «Μη φοβάσαι τα βασανιστήρια Κυριακή, το πνεύμα μου είναι μαζί σου».

Έπειτα από πολλές δοκιμασίες, ο Μαξιμιανός απέτυχε να πείσει τη νεαρή γυναίκα να αλλάξει την πίστη της. Την έστειλε τότε στον έπαρχο της Βιθυνίας Ιλαρίωνα, από τον οποίο ζήτησε να κάνει την Κυριακή ειδωλολάτρη ή να του την ξαναστείλει.

Ο Ιλαρίων έβαλε τα δυνατά του για να το πετύχει αυτό. Ένα από τα βασανιστήρια που δοκίμασε ήταν να την κρεμάσει από τα μαλλιά της για αρκετές ώρες, ενώ στρατιώτες της έκαιγαν το σώμα με αναμμένες δάδες. Τέλος, την έριξαν σε ένα κελί φυλακής. Εκείνη τη νύχτα ο Χριστός εμφανίστηκε και της θεράπευσε τις πληγές. Βλέποντας τη θαυματουργή σωτηρία της Κυριακής πολλοί ειδωλολάτρες πίστεψαν στο Χριστό και αποκεφαλίστηκαν για αυτό.

Οδήγησαν την Κυριακή στο ναό να θυσιάσει στα είδωλα. Στο δρόμο εκείνη παρακαλούσε τον Θεό να την βοηθήσει να μην κάνει κάτι τέτοιο. Την στιγμή που έφτασαν στον ναό, ένας δυνατός σεισμός κατατρόμαξε τους δημίους και τα αγάλματα του ναού έπεσαν από τα βάθρα τους κι έγιναν θρύψαλα.

Η Κυριακή παρ' όλα αυτά βασανίστηκε ακόμα μια φορά από τον Απολλώνιο. Όταν όμως την έριχναν στη φωτιά, οι φλόγες δεν την έκαιγαν. Όταν την έριχναν στα άγρια θηρία αυτά ηρέμευαν. Στο τέλος ο Απολλώνιος την καταδίκασε σε αποκεφαλισμό στις 7 Ιουλίου 282μ.Χ. Της δόθηκαν λίγα λεπτά για να προσευχηθεί, και ζήτησε από το Θεό να παραλάβει την ψυχή της. Όταν την πλησίασε ο δήμιος για να την εκτελέσει, η Κυριακή ήταν ήδη νεκρή. Ήταν μόλις 21 χρονών. (ekklesiaonline.gr)

From the Saints of our Church

St Kyriake the Great Martyr
(Commemorated on 7 July)

St Kyriake was born in Nicomedia, the only daughter of Dorotheos and Eusebia. Her pious parents were Christian and rich, but childless. Following their prayers a daughter was bestowed to them, who was named after the day she was born, being a Sunday.

Kyriake was beautiful both in body and soul, and was raised with Christian principles. Many asked for her hand in marriage, but she did not want anyone, saying that she was engaged to Christ, and she wanted to die a virgin. A judge wanted Kyriake for his son, but his proposal was rejected. In revenge, he denounced Kyriake and her parents as Christians to the emperor Diocletian.

The emperor ordered them to be tortured. Dorotheos was savagely beaten, but to no avail, they did not change their minds. Eventually Dorotheos and Eusebia were exiled, where they died enduring much suffering for Christ.



Kyriake refused to worship the idols. Maximian ordered her to be flogged. She was tortured in every possible way, but her faith was unshakable. One night she heard the voice of God say to her: "Do not be afraid of torture Kyriake, my spirit is with you." After many trials, Maximian failed to persuade the young woman to change her faith. He then sent her to the prefect of Bithynia Hilarion, from whom he asked to make a pagan of Kyriake or to send her to him again.

Hilarion did his best to achieve this. One of the tortures she endured was to be hung from her hair for several hours while soldiers burned her body with burning torches. Finally, she was thrown into a prison cell. That night Christ appeared and healed her wounds. Seeing Kyriake's miraculous salvation, many pagans believed in Christ and were beheaded for it.

They led Kyriake to the temple to sacrifice to idols. On the way she begged God to help her not to do such a thing. As soon as they reached the temple, a strong earthquake terrified the executioners and the statues of the temple fell from their pedestals and were crushed. Kyriake, however, was once again tortured by Apollonius. However, when they threw her into the fire, the flames did not burn her, and when they threw her at the wild beasts, they died.

In the end, Apollonius sentenced her to beheading on July 7, 282 AD. She was given a few minutes to pray, and asked God to take her soul. This was granted, and as the executioner approached for the execution he saw that Kyriake was already dead. She was only 21 years old.

Questions & Answers

A clergyman of our Archdiocese answers ...

How can we help our families to grow spiritually?

Those that ask this question come from a variety of backgrounds. It is a very common question amongst parents who have come to love Christ, and who yearn for their children to come to love Christ. Those that ask this question could even be young people who love the members of their family and deeply desire that their loved ones, as the psalmist says, come to "taste and see that the Lord is good" (Psalm 33 [34]:9).

Saint Porphyrios said the following for parents, but his words apply to all, no matter what their position is in their family.

"What saves and makes for good children is the life of the parents in the home... Parents need to become saints in their relation to their children through their mildness, patience and love. They need to make a new start every day, with a fresh outlook, renewed enthusiasm and love for their children... Children's behaviour is not improved by reprimands, disciplining, or strictness... Mothers know how to express anxiety, offer advice and talk incessantly, but they haven't learned to pray. Most advice and criticism does a great deal of harm. You don't need to say a lot to children. Words hammer at the ears, but prayer goes to the heart... When the love between you and towards your children is holy and Christian love, then you will have no problem. The sanctity of the parents saves the children... The same divine grace will then illuminate, warm and animate the souls of the children."

St Paisios also stressed prayer, if someone from our family is not interested in the Church

he advised us not to be anxious but surrender this matter to Christ. He said, "If a child is falling away, parents need to turn to God in prayer and in faith and place their child in the hands of the Lord. Sometimes parents have the grudge - we are regular at Church, why should my child turn away so much - they do not give the screwdriver to Christ to tighten some screws - they want to do it all themselves - even though they are faithful, they act as if there is no God, and thus they hinder Divine intervention."



In other words, the main answer to the question on how can we help other members of our family come closer to Christ is that we ourselves need to strive to grow spiritually. The emphasis is not so much on what we say to them, though occasionally, in a humble and loving way, we may have to say a few things to them.

The main way we can help them is if we are growing in prayer, and if we are growing towards sanctity. If we are being renewed constantly, becoming more selfless, tolerant, humble, kind, loving and giving, then this gives us

the best chance of helping others.

We cannot hide our true selves in our families. If we are trying to tell them to come more regularly to Church, they are not likely to listen if they know we have anger, are judgemental, lazy and selfish. If we have tasted of the joy and peace of the Lord, and if we have genuine love and humility, then there may come a time when our loved ones will also be touched by the Grace of God.

† Fr D. K.



1821 Independence

At the start of the war of independence, the Greeks had been under the Turkish yoke for almost 400 years. The Greeks faced the Ottomans, a well-established world power for 400 years. The Greeks did not have a regular army, centralised government or military command, let alone materials for waging war, or funds for the struggle. However, the Greeks had a desire for liberty and religious freedom. As Kolokotronis said "Greeks, God has signed our Liberty and will not take his signature back." As God blessed David against Goliath, so He blessed the Greeks in their struggle.

The Peloponnese was the heartland of the revolution. On 25 March 1821, the revolution was declared by Metropolitan Germanos of Patras, who raised the banner with the cross in the Monastery of Agia Lavra (near Kalavryta).

The early phase of the struggle resulted in many victories for the Greeks. On 17 March 1821, a force of 2,000 under the command of Petros Mavromichalis advanced on Kalamata, where they united with troops under Kolokotronis, Nikitaras and Papaflessas. The Greeks captured strategic cities (Kalamata, Kalavryta and Patras) in the Peloponnese. By the end of March 1821, the Greeks controlled the countryside, while the Turks were confined to the fortresses in the Peloponnese.

The battle for central Greece was more complicated and dangerous. Athanasios Diakos led successful attacks on Phocis and Salona. The initial Greek successes were followed by defeats at the battles of Alamana and Eleftherohori against the army of Omer Vroni, and Albanina, the Ottoman commander in the Roumeli. The Greeks managed to halt the Turkish advance at the Battle of Gravia. Odysseas Androutsos and a handful of men, inflicted heavy casualties upon the Turkish army. However, Omer Vroni managed to defeat Androutsos' forces and cause a Greek retreat. A Greek force of 2,000 men managed to destroy a Turkish relief army on its

way to Vrioni. This caused the Turks to abandon Attica in September and retreat to Ioannina. By the end of 1821, the revolutionaries had managed to temporarily secure their positions in Central Greece.

Soon after the start of the war, the Greeks took control of three important islands: Hydra, Spetses and Psara. This effectively gave the Greeks control of the sea. The Greek ships were not designed for warfare and were only equipped with light guns and armed seamen. In contrast, the Ottoman fleet was designed for war, well equipped and under central command. In this uneven fight, the Greeks made good use of fire ships (πυρπολικά or μπουρλόττα). On the island of Lesbos, at Eresos, on 27 May 1821, the Greeks under Dimitrios Papanikolis used a fire ship to

successfully destroy an Ottoman frigate. Throughout the war, fire ships were used 59 times and were successful 39 times. A notable example, which attracted international fame was the destruction of the Ottoman flagship by Konstantinos Kanaris at Chios, after the Ottoman massacre of the island's Greek population in June

1822. Conventional naval actions were also fought, at which naval commanders like Andreas Miaoulis distinguished themselves.

After the initial Greek successes in the Peloponnese, the tide changed in favour of the Ottomans when Sultan Mahmud II enlisted the support of Mehmet Ali, the pasha of Egypt. In 1825, Mehmet Ali's son, Ibrahim landed at Methoni, in the Peloponnese, with a well-trained Egyptian force. Ibrahim engaged in a scorched earth campaign. Kolokotronis could not stem Ibrahim's advance. Ibrahim came within striking distance of Nafplion. The city was saved by Makriyannis and Dimitrios Ypsilantis who successfully defended Miloi at the outskirts of Nafplion.

Ibrahim sent an envoy to the Greeks of Mani (a coastal region on the southern Peloponnese) demanding that they surrender or else he would



The Naval Battle of Navarino

ence Milestones

plunder their land as he had done to the rest of the Peloponnese. The Maniots simply replied: "From the few Greeks of Mani and the rest of the Greeks who live there, to Ibrahim Pasha. We received your letter in which you try to frighten us, saying that if we don't surrender, you'll kill the Maniots and plunder Mani. That's why we are waiting for you and your army. We, the inhabitants of Mani, sign and wait for you."

Ibrahim's army of 7,000 men was held off by an army of 2,000 Maniots and 500 refugees from other parts of Greece until Kolokotronis attacked the Egyptians from the rear and forced them to retreat. The Maniots pursued the Egyptians all the way to Kalamata. Simultaneously, Ibrahim sent his fleet further down the Maniot coast in order to outflank the Greek defenders and attack them from the rear. However, when his force landed at Pyrgos Dirou, they were confronted by a group of Maniot women and repelled. Ibrahim again attempted to enter Mani from central Laconia, but again the Maniots defeated the Turkish and Egyptian forces at Polytsaravo. The Maniot victory dealt the death blow to Ibrahim's hope of occupying Mani.

The Egyptian involvement in the Peloponnese moved the European Powers (predominantly England, France and Russia) from a position of neutrality to an interventionist position in favour of the Greeks. The Treaty of London (1827), envisaged the creation of an autonomous Greek state, still under the authority of the Sultan. The Greeks agreed to the intervention of the European Powers. The Sultan refused this intervention. The allied fleets in the Mediterranean were instructed to secure an armistice but without engaging in hostilities.

The cost of the protracted negotiations was a deteriorating military situation in Greece. In April 1826, an attempt by the inhabitants of Messolonghi to lift Ibrahim Pasha's siege resulted in a massacre. Thousands of Greeks were killed,

many more were enslaved. Many who remained behind decided to blow themselves up with gunpowder rather than be enslaved.

The massacre at Messolonghi brought unprecedented international support for the Greek cause. This support was critical in the Battle of Navarino. In October 1827, a large Ottoman fleet was anchored at Navarino bay (near modern day Pylos, on the western coast of the Peloponnese). The Ottomans refused to renounce hostilities. Admiral Codrington, the commander of the combined British, Russian and French fleet, destroyed the Ottoman fleet on 20 October 1827. Out of 89 Ottoman ships, only 14 survived. This victory ensured that independence would be granted to the Greeks.

Despite the defeat of his navy, the Sultan refused to grant independence. In April 1828, Russia declared war on the Ottoman Empire. In the Russo-Turkish war, the Ottoman armies suffered major losses. At the end of the war, the Russians forced the Ottomans to concede large territories to the Greeks. In 1832, the new Greek territory extended south of the line extending from Volos to Arta. Prince Otto of Bavaria accepted the Greek crown. In 1832, the Ottoman Sultan recognised

Greek independence with the Treaty of Constantinople.

The Greek War of Independence was a heroic struggle. At the start of the war, there was no surety of success. The stark facts favoured the Ottomans. At times, the Greeks were hopelessly divided. During the struggle, there were two Greek civil wars. At times, there were two Greek governing assemblies. Against all odds, the Greeks succeeded.

As Kolokotronis said "When we revolted, we said first for our Christian Faith and then for the Nation." God does not forget those who love Him.



The Sortie of Messolonghi (1853)

ΠΕΤΡΟΣ

Ο ΕΚ ΤΩΝ ΠΡΩΤΟΚΟΡΥΦΑΙΩΝ



Πέτρος, ο Μαθητής που επαίνεσε τόσο πολύ όσο κανένα - άλλο ο Κύριος. Όταν έκανε την ερώτηση «ποιος νομίζουν οι άνθρωποι, ότι είμαι εγώ, ο υιός του ανθρώπου;» ο Πέτρος πρώτος ομολόγησε την Θεότητα του Χριστού. Όταν είπε «Συ είσαι ο Χριστός ο Υιός του Θεού του ζώντος» ήταν δείγμα της βαθιάς του πίστεως.

Ο Κύριος μεταξύ άλλων του είπε: «Σίμων, την ομολογία αυτή σου την φανέρωσε ο Πατήρ μου ο Επουράνιος και εσύ είσαι ο Πέτρος και σ' αυτήν την πέτρα θα οικοδομήσω την Εκκλησία μου και πύλες του Άδη δεν θα την νικήσουν. Και θα σου δώσω τα κλειδιά της βασιλείας των ουρανών ...».

(Ματθ. Ιστ' 16-19, Μετάφραση Τρεμπέλα).

Αλλά και τον «μάλωσε» στο ίδιο κεφάλαιο (Ιστ' 22-23), όταν ο Πέτρος τον «μάλωνε» να μην θυσιαστεί στα Ιεροσόλυμα, με το: «πήγαινε πίσω μου σατανά!», μια βαριά κουβέντα. Αλλά όχι με θυμό. Η καταγωγή του ήταν η Βηθσαϊδά της Γαλιλαίας - χώρα «των εθνών». Ζούσε με την γυναίκα του στην Καπερναούμ.

Ήταν ψαράς στη λίμνη της Γεννησαρέτ (ή θάλασσα της Τιβεριάδος) με τον αδελφό του Ανδρέα, σε συνεργασία με τα δυο αδέρφια Ιάκωβο και Ιωάννη, γιούς του Ζεβεδαίου.

Εκεί τους γνώρισε ο Ιησούς και τους κάλεσε να τους κάνει «αλιείς ανθρώπων» (Ματθ. δ' 22, Μαρκ. α' 16) και «αφήσαντες» τα πάντα μαθήτευσαν κοντά Του για τρία χρόνια.

Μόρφωση: Βασική από την οικογένειά του ή γνώση της Π. Διαθήκης. Ο Πέτρος δεν φαίνεται να είχε πάρει κάποια ανώτερη μόρφωση. Η «παρέα» του Πέτρου δέχτηκε με έτοιμη καρδιά και με χαρά την πρόσκληση του Χριστού, γιατί όπως είπε και ο πρωτόκλητος Ανδρέας «βρήκαμε τον Μεσσία» (Ιω. Α' 41).

Χαρακτήρας: Θαυμάσιος τύπος Γαλιλαίου που εμπιστεύεται, φιλελεύθερος, υπάκουος, θαρραλέος αλλά και ευμετάβλητος. Ο Κύριος όμως διείδε την εσωτερική του δύναμη και σταθερότητα και τον ανέδειξε «Στύλο και Εδραίωμα» της Εκκλησίας.

Οι ευαγγελιστές στα γεγονότα που περιγράφουν τον παρουσιάζουν σαν άνδρα γενναίο, δυνατό, με ηγετικά προσόντα, ζωηρό, ενεργητικό, ορμητικό, ευέξαπτο, συναισθηματικό, πολύ ανθρώπινο τόσο στις αρετές του όσο και στις πτώσεις του.

Γεγονότα της ζωής του: Με το Ιάκωβον και Ιωάννη μόνοι μάρτυρες της Μεταμόρφωσης του Κυρίου. Εκεί εκδηλώνεται ο αυθορμητισμός του.

Στην εβδομάδα των Παθών και αμέσως μετά την Ανάσταση: Ορμητικός κόβει το αυτί του Μάλχου και στην αυλή του Αρχιερέα «τρεις» αρνείται τον Χριστό «πριν ο αλέκτωρ φωνήσει». Σώζεται με το πικρό κλάμα και την μετάνοια. Για να εξαφανιστεί ο φόβος, και η ντροπή το πρωί της Κυριακής! Ο ίδιος ο Αναστημένος Ιησούς παρουσιάζεται αποκλειστικά σ' αυτόν! (Λουκ. Κδ' 34) Δεν τον ξέχασε στη θλίψη και στην πτώση του. Το τι ειπώθηκε ανάμεσά τους άγνωστο. Όμως σε λίγες μέρες δίπλα στη θάλασσα της Γαλιλαίας ο αναστημένος Χριστός τον αποκατέστησε ρωτώντας τον τρεις φορές (όσες και η άρνησή του) «Σίμων Ιωνά, με αγαπάς περισσότερο απ' αυτούς;» και τρεις φορές πήρε την απάντηση «ναι Κύριε φιλώ σε» και τρεις φορές πήρε την απάντησή Του: «βόσκε τα πρόβατά μου». Και τον ξαναέκανε «κορυφαίο της Εκκλησίας» και προφήτευσε «με ποιο θάνατο θα δόξαζε το Θεό» (Ιω. Κα' 18,19).

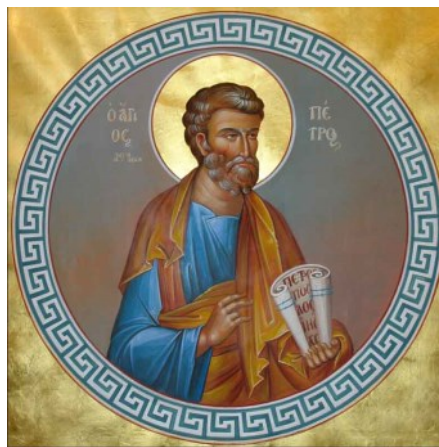
Την Πεντηκοστή με την κάθοδο του Αγίου Πνεύματος βγαίνει από το υπερών και με θάρρος κηρύττει για το Χριστό και μαζί με τους άλλους μαθητές πείθουν τα πλήθη και 3,000 Ιουδαίοι πιστεύουν, βαπτίζονται, και γίνονται ο πυρήνας των πρώτων Χριστιανών.

Η δράση του Πέτρου κατά τις Πράξεις: Κηρύττει στους χριστιανούς της Σαμαρείας,

Καισαρείας, Ιόππης, Λύδδας. και τις δύο Επιστολές του τις απευθύνει στους χριστιανούς της: διασποράς Πόντου, Γαλατίας, Καππαδοκίας, Ασίας.

Πρώτος βαπτίζει την οικογένεια τού εθνικού Κορνηλίου. Παίρνει ενεργό μέρος στην Α' Αποστολική Σύνοδο Των Ιεροσολύμων.

Το τελευταίο μέρος της ζωής του: Ελάχιστα γνωρίζουμε για το τέλος της ζωής του. Κατά την παράδοση ήλθε στη Ρώμη, πιθανότατα τον ίδιο καιρό που και ο Παύλος ευρίσκετο εκεί. Εμαρτύρησε κατά τον διωγμό τού Νέρωνος – μεταξύ 64 και 66 μ.Χ. Ζήτησε να σταυρωθεί με το κεφάλι κάτω για να διαφοροποιήσει τον θάνατο του από το θάνατο τού Κυρίου του.



From The Old Testament



Ψαλμός / Psalm 62:2

“O God, my God, I rise early to be with You;
My soul thirsts for You.
How often my flesh thirsts for You
In a desolate, impassable, and waterless land.”

«Ὁ Θεὸς ὁ Θεός μου, πρὸς σὲ ὀρθρίζω· ἐδίψησέ
σε ἡ ψυχὴ μου, ποσσαπλῶς σοι ἡ σὰρξ μου ἐν γῇ
ἐρήμῳ καὶ ἀβάτῳ καὶ ἀνύδρῳ».

This Psalm was written by the Prophet and King David when he was in the wilderness of Judea, when he was fleeing from the persecution of Saul. It is striking that David, in a time of such great difficulty, found it possible to write a Psalm with such love for God.

When someone rises early, the reason for this arises from love. For David's love towards God, St Nicodemus the Hagiorite expresses it in this way: “[O]n waking my thoughts turn at once to you, making my converse with you prior to any word or deed, and having dedicated such converse to you as the first-fruit of the day.” It is fitting that this is the third of the Psalms recited during Matins.

This sentiment is repeated when David writes “My soul thirsts for You”, and this shows the intensity of his love for God. The idea of thirsting for God is repeated throughout the Psalms, and refers to the times when God provided the Israelites water in the desert after they had fled from Egypt. In the same way that the Israelites were physically nourished, so the “Living Water” quenches the thirst of the soul for God.

However, this thirst is quenched for the soul and body. This emphasises the physical element of both the creation of humanity and of worship. Christ became incarnate, taking on and redeeming the human body. This human body is called, alongside the rest of Creation, to worship God. This physical worship can be experienced in the Divine Liturgy, where all of the senses are brought closer to God. This Psalm also reiterates the ongoing nature of our desire for God. This desire is not a rarity, but a constant within the life of the faithful.

While everyday life may not appear conducive towards cultivating this thirst for God, we must remember that David managed this in the desert. The world can appear spiritually “desolate” and “waterless”, but that should only encourage the Christian to hunger and thirst for righteousness through Christ as He instructs us in the Beatitudes.



Holiness In Our Times

Argyro (the Leper)



A German firing squad is about to execute a group of soldiers in WWII. A young woman marches across placing herself between the rifles and the soldiers, pleading for the life of her fiancé. This was Argyro. When the executioner granted her request he was surely caught off guard when she demanded that all should be released or else she would not step aside.

After the war she and her fiancé were married but the joy was short lived for after her first child she was diagnosed with the then incurable Hansen's disease. Forced to go to Spinalonga (a leper island) away from her family, her desire to see her child grew. One night she escaped, swimming to the mainland and walking for seven days to find her family. If the physical exhaustion, hunger and thirst she faced to get there were not enough, she would soon add heartbreak, for as she arrived they told her that her child had reposed. Broken and unable to offer anything else, she took the long path back to Spinalonga, the same way she left.

She would repeat this journey five more times out of a sense of honour (“philotimo”). On one occasion it was to attend her husband's second wedding who, seeing her condition getting worse asked if he could remarry. The other four times, to attend the baptisms of each of his children. Each time she simply left her blessing and a satchel of money she collected from her little allowance.

When Spinalonga finally closed in 1957, Argyro moved to the Leprokomeio (Hospital of Infectious Diseases) in Athens. Many had come here who, although healed, were too disfigured to return home. She spent her days praying and fasting while ministering to older patients and preparing them for burial. Here she also met St Nikiforos the Leper and Elder Evmenios Saridakis, the chapel priest.

Born in Vasilies, Crete around 1920, this courageous woman managed to turn her suffering into acts of love. Her prayer and fasting would contribute to the cure for leprosy. Argyro and some other devout women had asked God to provide the cure and they would never again taste oil. Once discovered, every Pascha thereafter, these blessed women would but dip a finger in the oil candle and touch their lips so as to honour the Resurrection without breaking their promise to God. May her memory be eternal.



What we Hear in Church



Pentecost Kneeling Prayers

“The Lord Jesus Christ sowed a most precious seed in the field of this world,” writes St Nikolai Velimirovich, “but the power of the Holy Spirit was needed to come upon it, to give it warmth and light, and make it grow.” At Pentecost, Orthodox Christians celebrate the descent of the Holy Spirit on the disciples and on the whole of the earth. Towards the conclusion of the Pentecost Divine Liturgy, it is the recent practice that the prayers of the Vespers service for the commemoration of the Holy Spirit on the next day are read. During these prayers, the clergy and the laity kneel for the first time since Pascha fifty days prior.

There are seven prayers which are read during the three times the church kneels. The first two prayers, addressing God the Father, are read together. These two prayers recall all that the Father has done for us through Creation, the Ministry of Christ and the sending down of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. In these prayers we seek forgiveness, freedom from oppression and that our prayers may be heard.

The next two prayers are read together with the church kneeling. These implore Christ “as the reflection of the Father” who sent down the grace of the Holy Spirit to the Apostles to also grant us the Holy Spirit. This is asked for our support in the spiritual life and protection from the things of the world.

Finally, the last three prayers are read. These prayers are longer, and focus on life and death in Christ. We remember Christ’s harrowing of Hades and defeat of death, the Judgement which is to come, as well as those who have departed. In concluding these prayers, we are brought back to the present, seeking that our prayers may be answered and that we have a peaceful night.

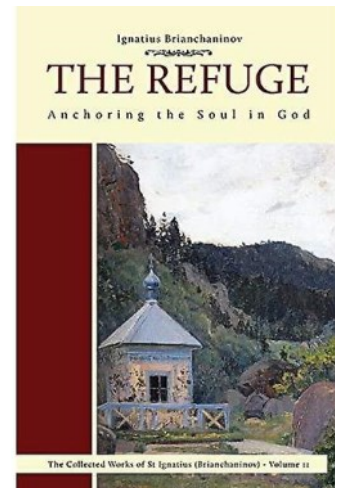
While the Holy Spirit is not directly addressed in these prayers, it is “present everywhere and filling all things”. What is sought from the Father and the Son is now accomplished after Pentecost through the Grace of the Holy Spirit.



The Refuge

The Refuge is a modern English translation of some of the writings of St Ignatius Brianchaninov. St Ignatius, who lived between 1807 and 1867, was a bishop and theologian of the Russian Orthodox Church. He was one of the most prolific and influential writers of the modern Church, and wrote extensively on the spiritual life, on prayer, and on how to progress in the spiritual world. Many readers would be familiar with another of his books, *The Arena*, which sets out a series of guidelines for the spiritual life.

The Refuge contains 21 chapters, each seeking to inspire the reader to take actions to purify themselves, seek refuge in the Lord, and perfect the image of God that is inside them. These chapters include “The Fear of God and the Love of God” (Ch.4), “Seeing One’s Sins” (Ch.7), “The Jesus Prayer” (Ch.17) and “Salvation and Christian Perfection” (Ch.20).



In each chapter, St Ignatius ties together many reflections on the Bible (including the Old Testament and the Psalms), the writings of the Church fathers, and his own spiritual insights to guide the reader on this journey. This approach is engaging and insightful.

The Refuge is a book that requires careful study as it raises deep insights regarding the hidden workings of the spiritual realm. More importantly, however, it is a book that repays action. St Ignatius is not undertaking a theological discourse for post-graduate studies. Instead, he seeks to provide the reader with concrete actions to be taken in this life. From the very first page of the book, he challenges the reader to “come and listen to the salvific teaching” and to stop wasting time “with constant, futile toil, unrewarded by any fruits.” Once we begin listening to “the holy song” - when we live a life of prayer, repentance, and love - the Lord’s consolation will descend and we will understand the words of the Psalmist: “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly” (Psalm 1:1).



Who for us and for our salvation, came down from Heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became human.

“Beholding Herself in purity, the Holy One courageously said to Gabriel: ‘Your strange voice seems unbelievable to my soul; for how do you speak of birth-giving without seed?’ (1st Stanza, Salutations to the Theotokos).”

This expression of great wonder directed by the Virgin Mary towards the Archangel Gabriel upon receiving the “Ευαγγελισμός” (Good news), that she was chosen to conceive within her womb and bring forth the Son of God, inevitably finds itself on the lips of all believers through the generations.

To appear “in the flesh” (incarnate) was the way in which God chose to approach humanity. That the Pre-Incarnate Son of God became Incarnate; His conception in Mary, the *Womb of Divine Incarnation* (1st Stanza, Salutations to the Theotokos); that *the Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin* (Dismissal Hymn, Feast of the Annunciation), is inconceivable before the laws of science as understood by the human mind.

That Christ was “incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary,” reveals the unique manner of His conception, which was unlike any other in the course of human history. It was a “seedless conception” followed by a “Virgin birth.” It also emphasises Christ’s divinity, whilst declaring at the same time that He is human like us.

In the role of the Virgin Mary, we behold the most magnificent example of synergy between God and man. Her free acceptance of God’s will, her small and yet so immense “yes” offered to God through His Archangel, exalts all of humanity! She brought honour to the whole human race, and we honour her as “Theotokos”, the God-bearer, and as

“Panagia”, the All-Holy One.

The Virgin Mary’s question to the Archangel, “How can this be, since I do not know a man?” (Luke 1:34), could seem at first glance to signify disbelief, based in rational thought restrained by the laws of human biology. Persisting in this line of thinking which tends to focus on the “how” rather than the “what”, restricts one’s thoughts to the laws of the Created world and sole human capability, leaving no room for God and His intervention.

Fortunately, Mary was moved to proclaim: “Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me

according to your word” (Luke 1:38). Even though this incredible event remained something she could not explain the ‘how’ of, it was the “what” that she could comprehend and accept on the basis of her faith in God’s divine uncreated energies.

This truth is triumphantly declared by both St Athanasius the Great and St John Chrysostom concerning the event of the Incarnation: “where God so wills, the laws of nature are overcome.” And God willed to become human.

There may be times when we feel within us, an ‘incompatibility’ between

our rational thoughts as people (especially as citizens of Western society), and what we believe as Orthodox Christians. Instead of dwelling in uncertainty and confusion, let us consider the disposition shown by our Most Holy Lady the Virgin Mary in the work of the Incarnation. May we never allow scholastic analysing, rationalising and arguing within ourselves, or with others, to imprison us and triumph over the Truth that sets us free, the Truth that ... Christ is Risen!

The next edition on “Our Creed” will focus on the last phrase of Article 3: “and became human”





NEWS and VIEWS



200 years of Greek independence celebrations

Laskarina Bouboulina, Mando Mavrogenous and Domma Visvizi were three amazing women of the 1821 revolution who devoted their entire personal fortune to build and man ships for the struggle for Greek Independence. They were the theme for the fourth 1821 event by the Greek Orthodox Christian Society. This was presented by the Girls' Orthodox Christian Fellowships (Omades) on Sunday 23 May 2021, in the presence of His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia and other Clergy of our Holy Archdiocese, at the Parish/Community of All Saints Belmore.



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