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«ΛΥΧΝΟΣ ΤΟΙΣ ΠΟΙΣΙ ΜΟΥ Ο ΝΟΜΟΣ ΣΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΦΩΣ ΤΑΙΣ ΤΡΙΒΟΙΣ ΜΟΥ» ΨΑΛΜ 118, 105

Geographische beschryvinge,
VAN DE
WANDELING DER APOSTELEN
ende de Reyzen
PAULI;
Mitsgaders de Landen ende Rycken daer sy het Evangelium
eerst hebben vercondicht, na vlyt gecorigeert
Claes Iansz

ΛΥΧΝΟΣ

A GREEK ORTHODOX PERIODICAL

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Η Πεντηκοστή είναι, όπως και η Ανάσταση του Κυρίου μας, «εορτή εορτών και πανήγυρις πανηγύρεων». Γιατί τη μέρα αυτή το Πνεύμα το Άγιο επεδήμησε στους αγράμματους μαθητές και με αυτούς θεμελίωσε τη Χριστιανική Εκκλησία.

Ο θεός Χρυσόστομος την ονομάζει **Μητρόπολη των εορτών**. Κατά την υμνολογία της Εκκλησίας μας, είναι η «**μεθέορτος καὶ τελευταία ἑορτή**» που συμπληρώνει την υπόσχεση του Κυρίου στους μαθητές Του, και κλείνει τον κύκλο όλων των γεγονότων της ζωής του Χριστού πάνω στη γη.

Στο 2^ο κεφάλαιο των Πράξεων των Αποστόλων, ο Ευαγγελιστής Λουκάς με ασύγκριτη λιτότητα που τον διακρίνει, περιγράφει το κοσμοϊστορικό γεγονός.

Σε ελεύθερη μετάφραση: «είχαν πιά συμπληρωθεί πενήντα μέρες από την Ανάσταση και ήταν όλοι μαζεμένοι με μια σκέψη και μια καρδιά. Ξαφνικά ακούστηκε μια βουή από τον ουρανό σα να φυσούσε δυνατός αέρας και γέμισε όλο το σπίτι που κάθονταν. Και φάνηκαν σαν να μοιράζονται γλώσσες σαν από φωτιά που μια-μια κάθισαν πάνω στον καθένα απ' αυτούς. Και γέμισαν όλοι από Άγιο Πνεύμα και άρχισαν να μιλούν διάφορες γλώσσες καθώς το Πνεύμα τους έδινε τρόπο να εκφράζονται» (Πραξ. β' 1-4).

Είναι γνωστό ότι η Πεντηκοστή των Χριστιανών είναι αντιστοιχη της Εβραϊκής Πεντησκοστής. Όπως οι Εβραίοι τιμούσαν τη μέρα που ο Μωυσής παρέλαβε τις 10 εντολές, 50 μέρες μετά το δικό τους Πάσχα, έτσι και μείς 50 μέρες μετά το δικό μας Πάσχα, λαμβάνουμε το Άγιο Πνεύμα.

Το παράδοξο γεγονός της Πεντηκοστής προβάλλεται, υμνολογείται και εγκωμιάζεται με ωραιότατους ύμνους και λόγους από όλους τους Αγίους πατέρες και υμνογράφους της Εκκλησίας μας. Όλοι αυτοί, φωτισμένοι από το ίδιο το Άγιο Πνεύμα ιερολογούν, θεολογούν, και συνθέτουν ό,τι το πιο ωραίο, ό,τι το πιο υψηλό, ό,τι το πιο ευπρεπές, για να υμνήσουν άξια το μέγα αυτό γεγονός της Πεντηκοστής.

Οι ψυχές των πιστών στο άκουσμα αυτών των ύμνων, θερμαίνονται, ανυψώνονται, αλλοιώνονται, κινούνται με έναν θείο έρωτα προς τον Θεό. Γεννά μέσα μας αυτή η υμνολογία, υπερκόσμιες θεωρίες. Ανάβουν ζήλο ιερό στις καρδιές των Ορθοδόξων για μια αγάπη ουσιαστικότερη απέναντι του Δημιουργού μας αλλά και των συνανθρώπων μας, το Σώμα του Χριστού, την Εκκλησία μας. Γιατί «**πάντα χορηγεί τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον· βρῦει προφητείας, ἱερέας τελειοῖ... ὅλον**

Αγία Πεντηκοστή

Υμνολογία και Ἄγιο Πνεύμα

συγκροτεῖ τὸν θεσμὸν
τῆς Ἐκκλησίας...» (δηλ.
όλα μας τα δίνει το
Ἄγιο Πνεύμα, αναβλύζει
προφητείες, τελειοποιεί τους
ιερείς... αυτό συγκροτεῖ ὅλη την
Εκκλησία μας.)

Αυτό το Ἄγιο Πνεύμα – ο Παράκλητος – που λάβαμε με το βάπτισμά μας ὅλοι οι Ορθόδοξοι, είναι που μέσα μας γεννά τον πόθο να φωνάξουμε στις συγκινητικές εκείνες στιγμές της προσευχής μας «**Ἀββᾶ ὁ Πατήρ**» (δηλ. Πατέρα μου). Και πάλι Αυτός ο Παράκλητος στις στιγμές της μεγάλης ανάγκης και της θλίψης έρχεται κοντά μας και ενώ εμείς «**στενάζομεν στεναγμοῖς ἀλαλήτοις**» (στενάζουμε με σιωπηλούς στεναγμούς), Αυτός είναι που τους κουβαλά στο θρόνο του Θεού για να μας δοθεί η λυτρωτική ανακούφιση και αναψυχή. Και τελικά, μόνο με το Ἄγιο Πνεύμα μέσα μας μπορούμε να επικαλεσθούμε τον Κύριον («**λέγομεν Κύριον Ἰησοῦν**») και χωρίς Αυτό δεν υπάρχει καμιά ελπίδα αιώνιας ζωής.

Όλοι εμείς που μέσα στα πηλίνα σώματά μας κρύβουμε αυτόν τον θησαυρό της χάριτος, έχουμε πολύ μεγάλη ευθύνη. Αφού τη μέρα της Πεντηκοστής βαπτισθήκαμε «**ἐν Πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ πυρί**» (με Ἄγιο Πνεύμα και φωτιά).

Αυτό το γεγονός μας υποχρεώνει να φυλάξουμε πιστά μέσα στα φυλλοκάρδια μας το Δώρο αυτό του Παρακλήτου «**περιπατοῦντες ἐν καινότητι ζωῆς**» (περιπατούντες την καινούργια ζωή). Γι'αυτό το σκοπό ας επικαλούμεθα συχνά και θερμά «**Βασιλεῦ Οὐράνιε... ἔλθε καὶ σκήνωσον ἐν ἡμῖν...καὶ σῶσον τὰς ψυχὰς ἡμῶν**».





St Paul: Apostle to the Nations

Saint Paul, more than anyone else, embodies the greatness of the human person, the gentility of the human spirit which was inflamed with the love of God. For over 25 years, St Paul never ceased teaching and spreading the Word of God. Initially, he began to teach at the Jewish synagogue, but when he saw his own people were not receptive, he travelled throughout the known world to spread Christ's message of salvation to the nations of Gentiles.

This fiery Apostle identifies the kind of transformational power the grace of the Holy Spirit can have on the human person. He never forgot who he had been prior to his encounter with the Lord on the road to Damascus. He had always been led by his great love for God, even when he persecuted the Christians, and it was this burning zeal for the traditions of his fathers that drove him to persecute the Christians. After his conversion, however, this love for God reached its fulfilment in his ministry to the nations, wherein he reached the height of virtue.

St John Chrysostom compares St Paul to great people from the Old Testament: patriarchs, the righteous,

martyrs who died for their faith in God, yet, he says, St Paul **died many deaths**. Paul himself affirms this where he describes himself and his helpers as "having the sentence of death in ourselves... not trusting in ourselves but in God who raises the dead" (2 Cor 1:9). He further describes his trials; "in labours, in stripes, in prisons" as small 'deaths' where he was given thirty-nine stripes five times, three times beaten with rods, once stoned, three times shipwrecked; in perils of robbers, by his own countrymen, by Gentiles, by false brethren. He tells of his weariness, sleeplessness, hunger, thirst, fasting, facing cold and nakedness (2 Cor 11: 23-30). In all these sufferings, it was his deep love and concern for all God's people that sustained him and allowed him to continue his ministry. His word was Christ-centred, and an inner necessity, because he knew that only through God's Word could people be drawn to heavenly salvation.

St John Chrysostom compares Paul's zeal for God and his righteousness with Noah's, but he points out that the latter only saved his family, whereas St Paul cared about all people and thought very little of himself, preferring to forfeit everything for the sake of his fellow men. Noah, he argues, built the Ark to save mankind using planks of wood, whereas St Paul used his Epistles to build up the Church to save all those who were sinking under the weight of sin. Like Abraham, Paul obeyed God's commandment to immediately leave his homeland, but he not only left his nation, his home, and people but he abandoned the whole world and even heaven and asked for only one thing: the love of Christ. He firmly believed that nothing in the present or in the future, neither height, nor depth could separate us from God's love. With this firm faith he endured the trials of evil waged against him, remaining steadfast like a rock. It was, however, in his weakness that he was at his greatest, bending before God's providence after begging Him three times to remove the thorn in the flesh that God had allowed so that he would not be exalted. It was his weakness, not his mystical experiences, that allowed the power of Christ to remain in him. He had come to know through experience that "God's grace was sufficient", and his "strength would be made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor 12: 9).

St Paul willingly crucified himself to do God's will on earth and offered his body and soul and everything he had for those he loved. He changed the course of history through his ministry, and he is one of the greatest spiritual fathers of all time, overcoming his natural needs and abandoning his minor self through his pure dedication to the Lord. May we imitate him, as he imitated our Lord.



There is abundant scientific evidence, that a healthy human childhood, both physical as well as psychological, leads to better physical health in adult life, as well as a balanced and well-adjusted individual. One factor that contributes to these benefits, is the feeling of mateship, that connects two or more people, with the bond of Friendship. Between true friends, there are feelings of respect, devotion, and interest of the wellbeing for one another.

Unfortunately, the current tsunami of social engineering sweeping the world at present, now wants to distort Friendship, this sacred, innocent, and beneficial emotional bond of our children and youth, starting at the classroom. One such example is the report by the Daily Telegraph reporter last year, informing the Australian public that certain schools are discouraging students from having best friends, the reason being to protect them from being hurt when they break up! A top Australian psychologist called the idea *dumb and destructive*, adding that **"the greatest predictor of well-being in life is not being good looking, or successful or rich, - it is having a small group of quality friends"** (Dr Michael Carr-Gregg - Australian psychologist).

It is well recognised that loneliness (the lone wolf syndrome), is a great misfortune to befall a child and particularly an adolescent, and frequently a preamble to depression or anti-social behaviour. On the other hand,

Friendship, is a **"divine"** experience, filling the person with confidence, optimism and what is most important for the young, *enthusiasm*.

Such Friendships help young people feel a sense of acceptance and belonging, and support the development of compassion, care, and empathy. They play a significant role in developing a sense of identity outside the family. But the outstanding effect of adolescent Friendship is beneficial psychological well-being into adulthood, where support can be very important.

God advises young people – **"at all times, have a friend near yourself"** (Prov 17:17).

As children leave their childhood and enter adolescence, Friendships become increasingly important. Dr Daniel Siegel (psychologist, UCLA), believes that teenage desire for friendship, is biologically hardwired! In fact, the importance of friends for teenage life is so significant, that going without it hurts - literally. Brain imaging shows that the *same parts of the brain* are activated by *social rejection* as by *physical pain*. Children left out feel the rejection. **"I feel left out"** is one of the worst things a parent can hear!

The miracle called Friendship, was first described by the ancient Greek philosophers.





According to Plato, Friendship is the bond among people pursuing the realisation of what *is good*. So, real friends are those who in common wish what is good and excellent.

On the other hand, Aristotle defines Friendship as the bond affected between persons in the pursuit of *virtue*. Whereas the Ancient World cultivated friendship as a valuable feeling and experience, the Friendship among the Greek people was admired by outsiders, as they were coming into contact with them.

“ The greatest predictor of well-being in life is not being good looking, or successful or rich - it is having a small group of quality friends. ”

But long before the ancient Philosophers spoke about Friendship, we find in the Old Testament a perfect description of it – **“He who has found a friend, has discovered a treasure. A trusted friend is the elixir of life, and is found by those who respect the Lord”** (Sirach 6:14,16).

The Holy Bible describes the sentimental features of Friendship with spectacular realism. When you decide to acquire a friend, proceed slowly. Friendship between young people can be established quickly, without much thought (Sirach 6:7). As time marches on and the friend remains truly as a friend, your friendship becomes genuine and most valuable.

Such friendship becomes a noble and indispensable bond between friends, and each recognises the other as the most valuable person in his/her life. With your friend happiness is multiplied, and misfortune shared by both. His smiling face, bright eyes, warm enthusiasm, and joy in your successes, create a paradise on earth! **“There is no substitute for a true friend, and his kindness cannot be measured”** (Sirach 6:15).

For all of us, who God has called to know His Will and His wishes, and belong to the Missionary Brotherhood of our Church, the environment for establishing true friendship with one or more members is so much easier, since most of the underlying conditions for the task are already there, having been prepared by our spiritual progress over the years.

The benefits for such a Friendship are enormous, - **our emotional health, spiritual state, and missionary work for the Glory of God.**





Περίληψις του επικηδείου για τον Σταμάτη Γεωργίου από τον κατηχητή κ. Μιχαήλ Αντωνιάδη (από τα ιδρυτικά στελέχη και πρώην πρόεδρο της Ορθοδόξου Χριστιανικής Ενώσεως (ΟΧΕ) Σύδνεϋ).

Τον αδελφό Σταμάτη τον γνωρίσαμε το 1963 όταν πρόθυμα, έγινε μέλος της Ενώσεως. Είχε μόλις τελειώσει τις πανεπιστημιακές σπουδές του. Στην Αυστραλία είχε έλθει το 1952 σε ηλικία 12 ετών.

Διέπρεψε σαν κατηχητής και ομαδάρχης. Στη συνέχεια ως υπεύθυνος των Κατηχητικών Σχολείων αρχικά και των Νεανικών Ομάδων αργότερα. Όπως επίσης και ως Αντιπρόεδρος της Χριστιανικής Ενώσεως για περίπου 20 χρόνια.

Ο αδελφός μας Σταμάτης έζησε τη ζωή του υπηρετώντας το Χριστό και την Εκκλησία Του. Το πιο χαρακτηριστικό του γνώρισμα ήταν πως όλος ο κόσμος και τα του κόσμου ήταν άσχετα γι' αυτόν, ενώ η πνευματική ζωή και η πνευματική προκοπή των αδελφών ήταν το πάν.

Είθε ο Κύριος να αναπαύσει την ψυχή του στην αιώνια βασιλεία Του. Είμαστε βέβαιοι πως και εκείνος ήδη προσεύχεται για μας από κει που ευρίσκεται μετά των Αγίων στη Βασιλεία του Κυρίου μας. Αμήν.

κ. Σταμάτης Γεωργίου (1940-2023) – Αιωνία η Μνήμη

Mr Stame George (1940-2023) – an Inspirational, Meek and Loving Christian

The following is an excerpt from the eulogy delivered at the funeral of beloved Mr Stame George (Σταμάτης Γεωργίου), by the lay-preacher of our Archdiocese, Professor Michael Anthony, former President of the Greek Orthodox Christian Society.

Mr Stame George was born on the island of Lesbos in 1940. His father migrated to Australia in 1947, bringing his wife Irene and son here in 1952. Stame was a studious young man, completing his high school in a perfect manner, obtaining dux of his year. He continued his studies in Bachelor of Science at the University of Sydney, from where he graduated with the grade of distinction in physics. He worked for a short while in various places, until he was appointed Chief physicist at the Royal North Shore Hospital. Mr George joined the Greek Orthodox Christian Society in the year 1963, where he met his wife Vivi, whom he married in 1967. They worked fervently in the Society, teaching Sunday School, Youth Groups and other groups. In 2017, Stame's health began to deteriorate. And in spite

of the continuous care of his wife Vivi and their faith in the Lord, he drew his last breath on the 18th of May. Stame George loved God and loved mankind, and through this, was able to positively influence the lives of many people. When he smiled, his whole face shone. He loved telling anecdotes, and his laugh was contagious. He was kind, compassionate, and never judged anyone or spoke ill of anyone. He never stressed about things, and saw all the good in all and in everyone. He was intelligent, and wise, making deep and complex thoughts simple and easy to be understood by everybody. When asked by his young son, how he knew that God and all he believed in existed. His answer was, "I don't know. But if I live my life in a Christian manner, and God exists, I'm a winner. On the other hand, if I live my life in a Christian way, and God doesn't exist, I'm still a winner, as I have lived my life, in the best way possible". This was Stame – a faithful, thoughtful, loving, kind, and humble man. May God rest his soul. He will be forever in our thoughts and in our memory.



Mr Stame George (front row, fourth from left) at the annual Camp of the Greek Orthodox Christian Society, 1988.

Q & A

• With Fr N.S.

What does almsgiving mean in 21st Century Australia?

After prayer and fasting, almsgiving is the third pillar of our life in Christ. Our Lord Jesus Christ, in His Sermon on the Mount, placed a lot of importance on these three pillars. However, if you count the references to money, they outnumber the references to prayer or fasting. While prayer and fasting are the first two pillars, our love of and connection to wealth and comfort stop us from progressing in the first two pillars. Jesus makes so many references to money, wealth, almsgiving, and helping others, in order to help us disconnect from this temporary world and connect more fully to His Kingdom, which is spiritual and eternal.

Jesus Christ invites us to engage in almsgiving, primarily for spiritual reasons. He wants us to detach us from worldly things and instead to pursue spiritual benefits, to pursue a relationship with God. He tells the rich young man to distribute his wealth to the poor so that he would be free to follow Him. However, the young man seems unable to do it. St. Paul expands on this, inviting us to be 'cheerful givers,' sowing bountifully with our charity so that we can reap bountifully in God's grace and eternal life.

Many great saints, such as St. Basil the Great, St. John Chrysostom, St. Nicholas, St. Philothei of Athens, and countless others did as Jesus taught. They gave their wealth for the service of others. In doing so, they freed themselves of worldly concerns and pursued their love of Christ, becoming spiritual citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven while still living in the world, but not controlled

by the world. Our Lord said we cannot serve two masters, both God and mammon (wealth). Therefore, to serve God, we have to take steps to emotionally and literally disconnect from wealth.

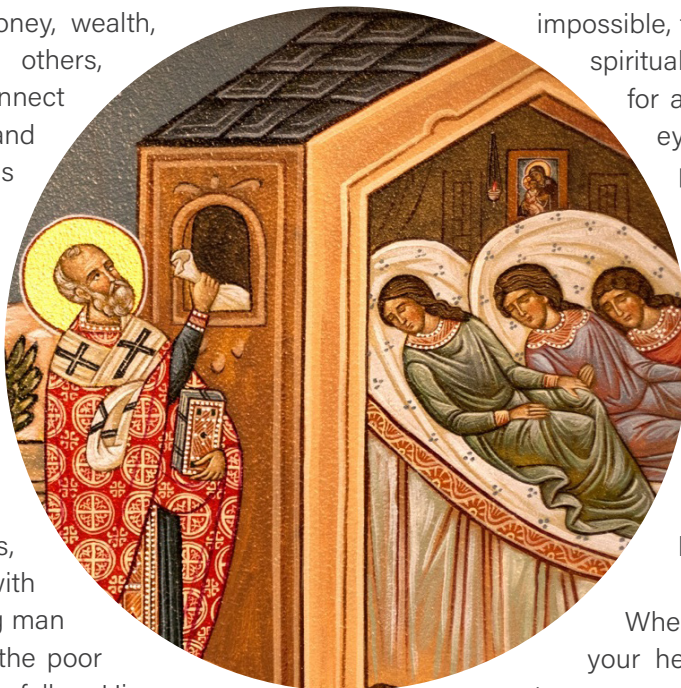
In the 21st Century, especially in Australia, we are wealthier than at any other time in the history of humanity.

This wealth makes it very difficult, perhaps impossible, to make any progress in our spiritual lives. Jesus said, it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

Our wealth is like honey, and we are like the bees that have become stuck in a pool of honey, unable to fly, eventually drowning in the sweetness, losing not only the ability to fly, but life itself.

Where your treasure is, there is your heart also (Matt 6:21). If you treasure your relationship with our Lord, your heart will be there. If you treasure your wealth, comfort, and lifestyle, then your heart will be there. Of those two options, only one transports you into the Kingdom of Heaven.

You would be correct to be troubled about your salvation in light of your connection to your wealth. However, do not despair. On this very topic Jesus said what is impossible for man is possible with God. Make it a topic of prayer, asking our Lord to show you how to overcome your love of wealth and comfort, asking Him to open up to you opportunities and pathways for almsgiving.



Rublev's Holy Trinity

The Awesome Mystery of our Triune God

In this sublime 15th century representation of the hospitality of Abraham, the iconographer-cum-monk (and later saint), Andrei Rublev, continues the iconographic and theological tradition of the Church by depicting the scene from Genesis as a theophany: a revelation of the Holy Trinity to Abraham.

On one level, the iconographer depicts an historic, Old Testament scene, albeit, without Abraham or Sarah. On another, he theologises about two aspects of the nature of God – the first being the unity of the Trinity (the Trinity is a 'Monad') and the second being the three hypostases of the Godhead (Father, Son and Holy Spirit, a 'Triad'). Rublev's icon conforms with historical church tradition. There is nothing novel about the scene depicted, but what makes this icon a masterpiece of Orthodox spiritual art? It is the layering of theological meaning extracted from the symbols used in the icon, the colours employed, the stances of the angels, and much more. There is much to say about this icon but let us focus on one aspect which is particularly relevant to the ecclesiastical season in which we find ourselves, Pentecost.

If the icon depicts the Trinity, which of the angels depicts the hypostasis of the Father, which the Son and which the Holy Spirit? The figures in the middle and to the right incline their heads to the figure to the left, indicating that he represents the Father. The colours of the middle figure's clothes (contrasting earthly and heavenly colours) and his place in what appears to be the figure of a chalice formed by the silhouettes of the figures on the right and left, indicate that the figure in the middle is the Son (for he is the offering). What about the third figure, the hypostases of the Holy Spirit? By focusing on the right hands of each of the angels, one will observe



Rublev, Andrei, *The Trinity*, c. 15th Century, Tretyakov Gallery

that the angels depicting the hypostases of the Father and the Son both point and bless in the direction of the figure to the right. In turn, the angel to the right points down in humble obedience. Not only does this signify that the Spirit proceeds from the Father (Jn 15:26) and that He is sent to us through the Son and in His name (Jn 14:26), but that this icon is in fact a festal icon of Pentecost, the feast of the coming of the Paraclete (Gk Παράκλητος – Comforter). Rublev is using the traditional depiction of the Trinity to subtly create an icon in celebration of the feast of Pentecost. He thus masterfully leads the worshipper to the understanding that the sending of the Holy Spirit is the fulfilment of the salvific plan of God. Rublev's Trinity highlights the place of the Spirit in the divine plan and in the unity of the Holy Trinity.

Through this masterful icon, Rublev grapples with the astonishing mystery of the inseparable Trinity. Separate figures represent three unified hypostases with particular emphasis on the third person of the Holy Trinity for the feast of the Paraclete.

St Seraphim of Sarov on The Acquisition of the Holy Spirit

Nikolay Motovilov was a Russian nobleman and disciple of St Seraphim of Sarov. He transcribed many of his conversations with the Saint, including his favourite in which St Seraphim, in a forest near Sarov, explained that the purpose of the Christian life was to acquire the Holy Spirit. This conversation has been depicted in several icons and is considered one of modern Orthodoxy's most important spiritual treasures.

The revelations of the Saint in that conversation almost 200 years ago remain relevant today, as they remind us of the necessities of our Christian faith such as to not do good deeds as an end in themselves but as a means to serve those next to us for the glory of Christ Jesus. Then, by the grace of God, we may acquire the Holy Spirit.

Below are selected excerpts from that conversation:¹

It was Thursday. The day was gloomy. The snow lay eight inches deep on the ground and dry, crisp snowflakes were falling thickly from the sky when Father Seraphim began his conversation with me in a field adjoining his hermitage. He sat me on the stump of a tree which he had just felled, and he squatted opposite me.

"The Lord has revealed to me," said the great Elder, "that in your childhood you had a great desire to know the aim of our Christian life, and that you continually asked many great spiritual persons about it."

The Saint continued, "Prayer, fasting, vigil and all other Christian activities, however good they may be in themselves, do not constitute the aim of our Christian life, although they serve as the indispensable means of reaching this end."

I sat listening in wonder as the Saint then explained: The true aim of our Christian life consists in the acquisition of the Holy Spirit of God. As for fasts, and vigils, and prayer, and almsgiving, and every good deed done for Christ's sake, they are only means of acquiring the Holy Spirit of God. But mark, my son, only the good deed done for Christ's sake brings us the fruits of the Holy Spirit. All that is not done for Christ's sake, even though it be good, brings neither reward in the future life nor the grace of God. That is why our Lord Jesus Christ said: 'He who gathers not with Me scatters' (Luke 11:23).

"What do you mean by acquiring?" I asked. "Somehow I don't understand that."

"Acquiring is the same as obtaining," he replied before going on to explain, "you understand, of course, what acquiring money means? Acquiring the Spirit of God is exactly the same. You know well enough what it means in a worldly sense to acquire. The aim in life of ordinary worldly people is to acquire or make money, and for the nobility it is in addition to receive honours, distinctions, and other rewards for their services to the government. The acquisition of God's Spirit is also capital, but grace-giving and eternal, and it is obtained in very similar ways, almost the same ways as monetary, social and temporal capital."

The Saint further explained, "Our Lord Jesus Christ compares our life with a market, and the work of our life on earth He calls trading and says to us all: 'Trade till I come' (Luke 19:13), redeeming the time, because the days are evil (Eph. 5:16). That is to say, make the most of your time for getting heavenly blessings through earthly goods. Earthly goods are good works done for Christ's sake and conferring on us the grace of the All-Holy Spirit"



¹ This conversation is reproduced from the book "A Wonderful Revelation to the World", available from the Orthodox Mission Bookstore, orthodoxbookstore.org.au

Prophet Elijah

and the Resurrection of the Widow's Son

1 Kings 17:7-16

In the days of the Old Testament, the Prophet Elijah cursed Israel with a drought because they turned away from God to worship idols. The drought caused great suffering, famine and many deaths. Yet Elijah, in righteous anger, turned away from the people who were suffering and refused to pray to God for rain until they cast aside their idols.

During this period, God told the Prophet to go and find a certain widow in the city of Zarephath. She was not an Israelite, but an idolater. Yet, obeying God, Elijah went, and when he found her, he asked for water and bread. She gave him water, but said, "I do not have any bread. I am preparing a little flour and oil for myself and my son, so that we may eat it and then die."

Prophet Elijah was moved by her simplicity and prophesied that if she fed him before she fed herself, the flour and oil she had in her house would never run out. Having great faith in his words as a man of God, the widow baked him bread and the Prophet's words were fulfilled by the Lord. Her flour and oil never ran out and they ate for many days.

Yet after this miracle, the widow's son suddenly became sick, and died. Seeing her grief, Elijah carried her son into an upper room and prayed over the child three times, calling on the Lord to return the child's soul to him. St Ephraim the Syrian says that at this moment, God spoke to the Prophet and said: "How can you ask me to resurrect this child when you prayed to close the heavens?"

When he heard this, Prophet Elijah realised what suffering he had caused through his righteous anger, and that he had ignored the suffering of the people of God for a long time while waiting for their hearts to change. In other words, he realised that he was responsible for the death of this widow's son - and not only this child, but many others in the kingdom as well. In this moment his heart softened. Only then did the Lord answer Elijah's prayer and the child was resurrected. Elijah brought him to his mother, and the widow said: "Now I know that you are a man of God."

Why did the widow say these words at this moment? She had seen many miracles brought about by Prophet

Elijah earlier. Her never-ending jar of flour, and oil, was not enough to convince her of the righteousness of God. However, the resurrection of her son led her to the true God.

This event is the first example of a resurrection in the Bible. In a mysterious way, it is a sign from God which points us to the truth of Christ. The Son of God would be incarnate (take bodily form) on earth many centuries later and would Himself rise from the dead. Yet Christ would not only rise, but raise up the whole of humanity with Him, destroying death itself. All of this is hinted at in this - the very first resurrection - of the widow's son.

For the Prophet's part, his heart was softened by this experience. Why did the widow's son move his heart when the deaths of other Israelites did not? Because for the first time Elijah was a witness. He witnessed the widow's selfless hospitality when she agreed to feed him even at the expense of herself and her son, and then her bitterness and sorrow when her only child died a short while later. So he saw for himself how much suffering he had caused the people of Israel, where previously he had only seen their sins. As a result of this, God sent rain again on the land of Israel through Prophet Elijah's prayers.

As a spiritual message, this story is a powerful example. Christ Himself says, He came not to judge the world, but to save the world. God's message to us is that we are not judges of one another, but brothers and sisters. Through the mouth of another prophet, God speaks to us directly: "Comfort, comfort ye my people." (Is. 40:1) In the final years of his life, St Paisios used to repeat this very passage, saying it was God's advice for him. From the time of Prophet Elijah to St Paisios, God's message of love, rather than judgement, is unchanging.



On Prayer

by Saint Paisios
the Athonite

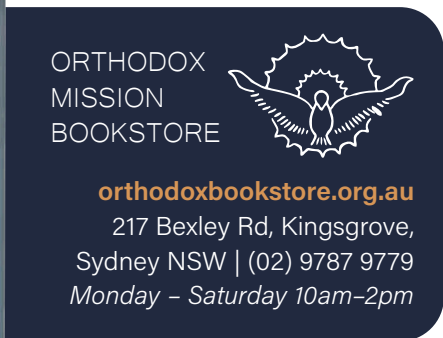
On Prayer is the most recent book published in St Paisios' Spiritual Counsels series. It is a masterpiece and is highly recommended for all Orthodox Christians who have the longing to understand and experience prayer as conversation with God. Similar to the rest of the series, the book consists of advice given by the contemporary St Paisios to his spiritual daughters – the sisters at the Holy Monastery of St John the Theologian in Souroti of Greece.

The underlying theme throughout the book is that prayer is not a series of words read from a prayer book, nor is it simply requests made to God when we are in need. Instead, St Paisios beautifully articulates in simple language that prayer is a sacred union with our Heavenly Father, it is a conversation with our Lord, and it is a natural response to a life that follows the commandments and loves God such that it cannot cease to repeat the sweetest name of Jesus Christ. This is how the book opens, with a chapter describing how prayer is communion with God.

What follows is a section describing how, for an Orthodox Christian, prayer can be a struggle. Here, St Paisios explains that the devil becomes very jealous of a Christian who wants to unite with God in prayer and comments on the strategies used by the enemy to distract and destroy our prayer. But St Paisios offers many practical strategies to renew our prayer life and to overcome these obstacles. In fact, this is a most edifying feature of this book – it is not limited to a theoretical or theological analysis of prayer, but rather practical tools that can be adopted by any Christian to cultivate their prayer life.

St Paisios then discusses the immense benefit we receive when we pray to our most-loving Mother Panagia, as well as our guardian angel and the saints. St Paisios decorates his teachings with inspiring stories – some from his own holy life and others from the lives of saints and other holy people he experienced. He also shares strategies on how to effectively pray for others and for those who have fallen asleep. In a unique and inspirational manner, St Paisios explains that prayer for others doesn't only involve recalling their names in time of prayer, but rather a heart filled with φιλότιμο (honour-loving) that feels the pain of those suffering and expresses this love to God.

Given that prayer is central in the life of a Christian, this book is a must read. It is easy to read, filled with inspirational stories and practical advice, and relevant for all; old and young, those who are veterans in prayer, and those who are only beginning to pursue the Christian life.



THE ARK OF SALVATION

"...when once the Divine long-suffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. There is also an antitype which now saves us - baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) through the resurrection of Jesus Christ..."

1 Peter 3:20-21

Noah's Ark (Genesis 6-9) was built by the Righteous Noah at God's command to save himself, his family and earth's creatures from destruction. God's purpose in sending the flood was the salvation and regeneration of His creation, not its destruction. The floodwaters were a type of Baptism, in which we are saved. Our goal is the fulfillment of Baptism - salvation and heaven.

To be saved from our daily trials and to inherit eternal Paradise, we must be on the Ark of Salvation. This ark is the Orthodox Church. To Orthodox Christians the Church is a life-saving boat. Just as Noah's Ark saved his family and the creatures with him from perishing in the flood, likewise the Church offers refuge as we journey through life toward heaven.

The ark was Noah's refuge from the storm, just as the Church is our refuge from life's trials. Once Noah was in the ark, he was secure. We can also take comfort that we are secure in Jesus' Church.

The ark was a gift given to Noah by God, without which he would have perished. God also gave us Jesus, His only Son, so that if we believe in Him, we will not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16).

The name Noah means 'rest' in Hebrew. Noah entering into the ark signifies the respite that we obtain from this world by entering into the Church.

The Church has always been seen as the refuge of faithful Christians struggling through the hardships of life. One of the main priorities of the Greek migrants to Australia was to build a church - a place to worship God and to seek refuge in those difficult days.

If we examine the lives of the martyr Saints, they seem to be at peace despite their suffering. We too can obtain this peace through the Ark of Salvation, the Church, and the grace of the Holy Spirit, symbolised by the dove bringing the olive branch to Noah after the waters had subsided.

Sometimes in life, we may feel that there is a flood against us, whether it's our daily responsibilities, temptations or passions. This flood threatens to topple us. We can take comfort that if we remain on the ark of the Church, led by Jesus, we are safe. This ark is headed for calm waters and the eternal Kingdom of Heaven. Let us seek the Church in whatever may come in our lives, knowing that Jesus will guide us and His providence is upon us.





OUR CREED

In one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church

The fathers articulated these four attributes to describe the Church, in response to the many heresies springing from Gnosticism, a major threat to Christian dogma during the first few centuries. The four attributes share significant overlap in meaning and yet, they effectively highlight specific aspects of our Church which we today, living in a multifaith country like Australia, have the duty to appreciate both on a personal level, and for the sake of others around us. For how can we have a genuine and constructive dialogue with people of other faith, if we do not know our own?

One

The Church is one because God is one: "There is one body and one Spirit, ...one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph 4:4-6). Christ is the one Head of the Church which He founded. The Church is the one body of Christ, and we the baptised, "are members of His body" (Eph 5:30). There is one Truth which is God and His revelation to us.

The common confession of one faith unified the early Christians and safeguarded the Church from the invasion of foreign doctrines.

We pray for this unity at every Divine Liturgy. Shortly before the joint proclamation of the Creed, the priest exhorts, "Let us love one another, that with one mind we may confess" to which, the choir on behalf of the people responds, "Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Trinity of one essence and inseparable." This unified stance of the Church, as the gathering of all the faithful, both clergy and laypeople, is reinforced as we approach the crowning moment of unity – the communion of the Holy Gifts of the Body and Blood of Christ. We pray, "And grant that with one mouth and one heart we may glorify and praise your all-honoured and majestic name, Father, Son and Holy Spirit..."

Christ Himself prayed to God the Father for the Church and the unity of faith, at the crucial moment just before His betrayal and arrest: "I do not pray for these [the Apostles] alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us..." (John 17:20-21). As the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity are unified by one essence, we the members of the Church strive for unity by grace. The undivided continuation of the one Church founded by Christ exists today as the Orthodox

Church, in which the teachings of Christ have been preserved fully and unchanged, without addition or subtraction, as handed down through the centuries.

Holy

The Church is holy, because her head, Christ, is holy. This does not mean that the Church is for the perfect, "...for there is no one who lives and does not sin" (Funeral service). Rather, the Church embraces the sinful, the weak and the sick, just as Christ did in His ministry. The work of Christ, His Apostles, and consequently the Church, is to heal us, to make us participants in the life of Christ, to sanctify us, to produce saints. The Church is a workshop of divine grace; a place of mystical communion with Christ where we receive spiritual nourishment and are perfected in virtue.

Apostle Paul urges the faithful of all times, "Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot?" Certainly not!" (1 Cor 6:15). We are called to glorify God by living a life set apart to Him; in obedience to His will; fleeing from those things which hinder His presence.

We will continue to examine the attributes of the Church in the next issue.

OUR CREED | 13

Εἰς μίαν, ἁγίαν, καθολικὴν καὶ ἀποστολικὴν Ἐκκλησίαν.

In one holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I acknowledge one baptism for the



Προτού ασχοληθούμε με την Ελληνική Μετάφραση της Εβραϊκής Βίβλου, γνωστή ως των Εβδομήκοντα (Ο'), καλό θα είναι περιληπτικά να παρακολουθήσουμε την Ιστορία των Ισραηλιτών από την έξοδο τους από την Αίγυπτο (περίπου το 1450 π.Χ.) μέχρι την εποχή της παραπάνω μεταφράσεως.



Οι Ισραηλίτες λοιπόν, έχοντας πια συνάψει μια διαθήκη με τον Θεό, το περιεχόμενο της οποίας περιέχεται στο βιβλίο της Τορά (Νόμου), με αρχηγό τον διάδοχο του Μωυσέως, τον Ιησού γιο του Ναυή, κυρίεψαν τη γη της Χαναάν και εγκαταστάθηκαν σ' αυτήν

(περίπου το 1406 π.Χ.), αφού την διαίρεσαν μεταξύ τους κατά φυλές που αντιπροσώπευαν τους 12 γιούς του Ιακώβ (Ισραήλ). Η φυλή του Λευί δεν κληρονόμησε γη αλλά το προνόμιο να υπηρετεί τελετουργικά και λειτουργικά τον Κύριο, ετοιμάζοντας και αφιερώνοντας τις διάφορες θυσίες που περιέχονταν στον τρίτο κύλινδρο του Νόμου, γνωστού σε εμάς ως Λευιτικόν (από αυτή τη φυλή, οι απόγονοι του Ααρών αποτελούσαν το εβραϊκό ιερατείο). Αντιθέτως η φυλή του Ιωσήφ κληρονόμησε δύο εδαφικές μερίδες που φέρουν τα ονόματα των γιων του, Εφραίμ και Μανασσή, επαναφέροντας έτσι τον αριθμό των φυλών σε δώδεκα.

Για τετρακόσια περίπου χρόνια οι Ισραηλίτες δεν ήταν ενωμένοι ως ενιαίο κράτος αλλά ζούσαν ξεχωριστά ανά φυλές, έχοντας κατά διαστήματα θεόσταλτους ηγέτες, γνωστούς ως Κριτές. Είναι πολύ σημαντικό να καταλάβουμε πως ο περιούσιος αυτός λαός ήταν για αρκετό διάστημα ενοθεϊστής. Δηλαδή λάτρευε μεν τον αληθινό Θεό, τον Γιαχβέ, ο Οποίος τον ελευθέρωσε από την δουλεία της Αιγύπτου, αλλά δεν απέκλειε την ύπαρξη και άλλων θεών, οι οποίοι ήταν λιγότερο ισχυροί από τον δικό τους. Αποτέλεσμα αυτού του χαλαρού δόγματος ήταν να παρασύρονται αρκετές φορές στη λατρεία των άλλων αυτών θεών, επηρεασμένοι από τα γειτονικά τους έθνη και έχοντας ως αφορμή ασήμαντες συμπτώσεις, π.χ. την κατά καιρούς πιο εύφορη γη των γειτόνων τους την οποία ερμήνευαν ως αδυναμία του Γιαχβέ έναντι των άλλων θεών. Αποτέλεσμα αυτών των παρεκτροπών ήταν η κατά καιρούς υποδούλωσή των στους ειδωλολάτρες γείτονές των, την μετάνοιά τους που αθέτησαν την διαθήκη τους με τον Γιαχβέ και τους διάφορους επιτυχημένους

αγώνες τους για ελευθερία υπό την αρχηγία των Κριτών.



Κατά το 1012 π.χ. ο τελευταίος Κριτής των Ισραηλιτών, ο προφήτης Σαμουήλ, ένωσε όλες τις Ισραηλιτικές φυλές και κατά απαίτησή των τους έχρισε τον πρώτο βασιλιά, τον Σαούλ, από την φυλή Βενιαμίν. Μετά τη αποτυχία του Σαούλ να ανταποκριθεί πλήρως στο θέλημα του Κυρίου, χρίεται από τον προφήτη Σαμουήλ στο βασιλικό αξίωμα ο Δαβίδ, από την φυλή Ιούδα (1004 – 965 π.Χ.) διαδεχόμενος από τον υιό του Σολομώντα (965 – 925 π.Χ.) κατά την διάρκεια του οποίου χτίστηκε ο περίφημος ομώνυμος Ναός στην Ιερουσαλήμ, στον οποίο εγκαταστάθηκε πια οριστικά η Σκηνή του Μαρτυρίου, η οποία περιείχε τις δύο πλάκες του Δεκαλόγου, δείγμα του μάννα και την επτάφωτη λυχνία. Μόνο σε αυτόν τον Ναό στη συγκεκριμένη του τοποθεσία θα μπορούσαν από δω και πέρα να λατρεύουν τελετουργικά οι Ισραηλίτες τον Θεό.

Τον Σολομώντα διαδέχτηκε στον θρόνο ο γιος του Ροβοάμ, ο οποίος ακολουθώντας τις επιτολίες συμβουλές των συνομηλίκων του, αύξησε τους φόρους που πλήρωνε ο λαός. Τότε οι 10 φυλές επαναστάτησαν μαζί με τον μισό πληθυσμό της φυλής Βενιαμίν. Με αρχηγό τον Ιεροβοάμ ίδρυσαν ένα ανεξάρτητο βασίλειο- αυτό του Ισραήλ- στα βόρεια, ενώ όσοι παρέμειναν πιστοί στον βασιλικό οίκο του Δαβίδ (η φυλή του Ιούδα και η άλλη μισή του Βενιαμίν), συνέχισαν το κράτος τους ως βασίλειο του Ιούδα, με πρωτεύουσα την Ιερουσαλήμ.

Χωρίς πρόσβαση στον Ναό του Σολομώντα, ο Ιεροβοάμ και οι διάδοχοί του, που προέρχονταν από διαφορετικούς οίκους (και κατόπιν αλληπάλληλων φόνων), ενεθάρρυναν τους υπηκόους τους να στήνουν λατρευτικές στήλες σε διάφορα μέρη, αντίθετα με την Θεία προσταγή, και να λατρεύουν άλλους θεούς. Μέσα σ' αυτές τις αποκλίσεις από το Θείο θέλημα εμφανίστηκαν διάφοροι προφήτες όπως ο Ηλίας, ο Ελισσαίος κλπ. Τελικά το 722 π.Χ. οι Ασσύριοι κυρίεψαν το βασίλειο του Ισραήλ, πήραν τους κατοίκους αιχμαλώτους στην πρωτεύουσά τους- Νινευή και εγκατέστησαν στην περιοχή ένα κράμα Ισραηλιτών και αλλοφύλων, με μια θρησκεία που περιείχε Εβραϊκά και ειδωλολατρικά στοιχεία. Αυτοί είναι οι γνωστοί σε εμάς Σαμαρείτες.



Το βασίλειο του Ιούδα, παρόλο που παρέμεινε πιστό στον βασιλικό οίκο του Δαβίδ, δεν έδειξε καλύτερη ευσέβεια με εξαίρεση μερικούς βασιλείς όπως τον Οζία και τον Εζεκία. Το 589 π.Χ. οι Βαβυλώνιοι, με βασιλιά τον Ναβουχοδονόσορα, κυριεύουν την Ιερουσαλήμ και καταστρέφουν τον Ναό του Σολομώντα, παίρνοντας μαζί τους αιχμαλώτους τους κατοίκους, που από δω και στο εξής έγιναν γνωστοί ως Ιουδαίοι, και τους εγκατέστησαν στη πρωτεύουσά τους Βαβυλώνα.

Εκεί οι Ιουδαίοι συνειδητοποίησαν τελικά την ματαιότητα των ειδώλων και τη μοναδικότητα του δικού τους Θεού και έγιναν μονοθεϊστές.



Το Βαβυλωνιακό κράτος κατακυριεύτηκε από τους Πέρσες, των οποίων ο βασιλιάς Κύρος επέτρεψε την επανεγκατάσταση των Ιουδαίων στην πατρίδα των και την ανοικοδόμηση του δεύτερου Ναού του Σολομώντος το 538 π.Χ., με καθοδηγητές τον Έσδρα και τον Νεεμία.

Το 333 π.Χ. ο Μέγας Αλέξανδρος διέλυσε το Περσικό κράτος και μετά τον θάνατό του το 323 π.Χ. η Ελληνική Αυτοκρατορία διαμελίζεται. Η νεόκτιστη πόλη της Αλεξάνδρειας στην Αίγυπτο γίνεται πολιτισμικό και εμπορικό κέντρο, ελκύοντας πολλούς Ιουδαίους που αναζητούσαν μια καλύτερη τύχη. Εκεί, σε αυτή την πόλη, δημιουργήθηκε η ανάγκη να μεταφραστούν οι Εβραϊκές γραφές στην Ελληνική. Το γεγονός αυτό - θεία προνοία- θα ετοιμάσει το κήρυγμα του Ευαγγελίου στα έθνη.



Why we light the Oil Lamp

1. It is an offering to God - we offer the best olive oil.
2. The light of the oil lamp is peaceful. It calms us, it helps us spiritually in devotion and in prayer.
3. It animates our icons by shining light on the Lord, Panagia and the saints, and limits sensory stimuli.
4. It reminds us of the light of Christ who said, "I am the Light of the World" (John 8:12).
5. It reminds us of the candelabra and oil lamps in church, replicating the same atmosphere in our home.
6. The oil reminds us of the mercy of God ('mercy' and 'oil' sound similar in Greek). We ask for divine mercy in the Jesus prayer, and also receive it through Holy Chrism and Holy Unction.
7. A burning oil lamp on the grave of a loved one is unceasing prayer for their soul.





Ordination

On Sunday 23rd April, Mr Panteleimon Toumbelekis, a member of the Greek Orthodox Christian Society who served on the Lychnos editorial committee for many years and with zeal managed the Society's many multimedia mission outreach projects, was ordained to the holy diaconate by His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia. Two weeks later, on Saturday May 6th, His Eminence further ordained him to the holy priesthood. Fr Panteleimon is now the newly appointed parish priest of the Church of St Gerasimos in Leichhardt, Sydney. We pray that our Lord gives him, along with his Presbytera Metaxia and their two children, every strength and blessing for their sacrifice of service and love to God's Holy Church and His people. Πάντα ἅγιος!

Eternal be the Memory of Mr Stame George

On the 18th May, our beloved brother, Mr Stame George (Σταμάτης Γεωργίου), sadly reposed in the Lord after many years of illness. Mr George served as vice-president of the Greek Orthodox Christian Society for 20 years, and was one of its earliest Sunday School Teachers and Youth-Group Leaders - an inspiration to many as a devout, loving, kind, thoughtful, and genuine Christian example. He also served as the layout publisher for our Lychnos periodical for over two decades until 2016. He is survived by his wife Vivian (κα Βιβή), his son Raphael, daughter-in-law Elaine, and his grandson Samuel (Σταμάτης).



Key Dates

JULY

1 Saturday Cosmas and Damianos, the Unmercenary	2 Sunday John Maximovitch
9 Sunday Hieromartyr Pancratius	16 Sunday Fathers of the 4th Ecumenical Council
23 Sunday Prophet Ezekiel	30 Sunday Julitta of Caesarea

AUGUST

1 🌿 Tuesday Procession of the Holy Cross Fast begins	6 🐟 Sunday TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD
15 Tuesday DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS	24 Thursday Kosmas of Aetolia
27 Sunday Martyr Phanourios	29 🌿 Tuesday BEHEADING OF JOHN THE FORERUNNER



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