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

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ΛΥΧΝΟΣ

A GREEK ORTHODOX PERIODICAL



Το Φώς της Αναστάσεως στη ζωή μας

Το Άγιο Πάσχα ήλθε και πέρασε. Όλοι μας ζήσαμε την μεγάλη και λαμπροφόρο ημέρα. Όμως, παρότι περνούν ημέρες και εβδομάδες από τότε, ακόμα φωτίζει το νου, την καρδιά και τη ζωή των ανθρώπων, των Ορθοδόξων χριστιανών. Το Πάσχα έχει την ικανότητα να φωτίζει όλη μας την ύπαρξη. Δεν είναι μόνο μια φορά το χρόνο η

«εορτών εορτή και η πανήγυρις πανηγύρεων».

Γιατί αν ο Χριστός είναι

«μεθ' ημών πάσας τας ημέρας της ζωής ημών»,

λοιπόν το Πάσχα το έχουμε για όλο το βίο μας. Δηλαδή είναι δυνατόν η ζωή μας να είναι μια συνεχιζόμενη εορτή εορτών.

Γιατί το φως της Αναστάσεως έχει τη δύναμη να μπαίνει σε όλες τις λεπτομέρειες της ζωής μας και σε όλη μας την ύπαρξη. Έτσι είναι δυνατόν να γίνουμε όλοι φως, διατηρώντας την αυτοσυνειδησία και την προσωπικότητά μας, αλλά και αισθανόμενοι τις άχτιστες ενέργειες του Αγίου Πνεύματος να επιδρούν στη διανοητική, πνευματική, ακόμη και στη βιολογική μας ζωή.

Όλες οι γιορτές της Εκκλησίας μας σκοπό έχουν να μας θυμίσουν το απολυτρωτικό έργο του Κυρίου μας. Η τελική φάση είναι η Ανάσταση, που την ολοκληρώνουν η Θεία Του Ανάληψις και η Αγία Πεντηκοστή, όπου ιδρύεται η Εκκλησία μας. Αλλά η Ανάσταση είναι η αρχή, αλλά είναι και το κίνητρο, είναι η ανακεφαλαίωση όλου του λυτρωτικού έργου της Θείας Οικονομίας. Η Ανάσταση καθορίζει τι ήμασταν πριν, τι γινόμαστε μετά, και τι οφείλουμε να γίνουμε.

Είναι τόσο θεμελιώδους σημασίας η Ανάσταση του Κυρίου μας, ώστε στη ζωή των Ορθοδόξων χριστιανών να τη γιορτάζουμε 52 φορές το χρόνο, κάθε Κυριακή. Η σημασία της δεν εξαντλείται στο ότι, αν ο Χριστός δεν ανέστη, τότε ματαιά είναι η πίστη μας, αλλά προχωρεί βαθύτερα. Χωρίς την Ανάσταση, δεν μπορούμε να κατανοήσουμε ούτε τα Χριστούγεννα, ούτε το Πάθος, ούτε τη Σταύρωση. Η Ανάσταση ενώνει και φωτίζει τα πάντα.

Ο Θεός έλαβε την ανθρώπινη φύση, την πεσμένη και εμπαθή, και την θεώνει. Έτσι ο άνθρωπος δεν είναι πλέον μόνο σάρκα και αίμα, αλλά καλείται να γίνει κοινωνός θείας φύσεως, κατά χάριν Θεός. Η παρούσα ζωή, με την Ανάσταση του Χριστού, γίνεται πέρασμα προς την αιωνιότητα, όπου θα ζήσουμε πληρέστερα τη ζωή του Θεού.

Αυτή η ζωή εν Θεώ, που ανέτειλε από τον τάφο, εκφράζεται ήδη από τώρα ως χαρά, ειρήνη, φως και αγάπη. Και όπως λέει ο Άγιος Συμεών ο Νέος Θεολόγος, τότε αισθανόμαστε τον εαυτόν μας να μεταμορφώνεται, να φωτίζεται και να γίνεται μέτοχος της θείας ζωής. Δεν ζούμε πλέον απλώς βιολογικά, αλλά ζούμε εν Χριστώ.

Αυτό το ανέσπερο φως της Αναστάσεως δεν είναι ιδέα ούτε απλώς σύμβολο, αλλά ζώσα πραγματικότητα μέσα στην Εκκλησία. Ο Άγιος Ιωάννης ο Χρυσόστομος, στον περίφημο Κατηχητικό του Λόγο, προσκαλεί όλους τους πιστούς να μετάρσχουν σε αυτή τη χαρά:

«Εἴ τις εὐσεβῆς καὶ φιλόθεος, ἀπολαύετω τῆς καλῆς ταύτης καὶ λαμπρᾶς πανηγύρεως».

Το φως της Αναστάσεως δεν κάνει διακρίσεις, αλλά προσφέρεται σε όλους, καλώντας κάθε άνθρωπο να εξέλθει από το σκοτάδι της αμαρτίας και του θανάτου.

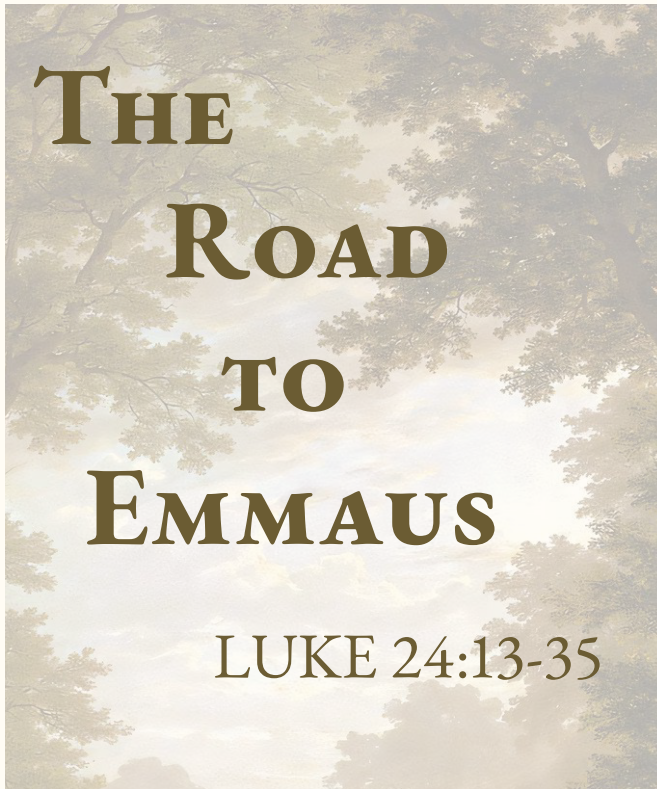
Και συνεχίζει με θριαμβευτική βεβαιότητα:

«ἀνέστη Χριστός, καὶ πεπτῶκασιν δαίμονες· ἀνέστη Χριστός, καὶ χαίρουσιν ἄγγελοι».

Αυτή η νίκη του Χριστού γίνεται και δική μας νίκη, όταν ζούμε εν μετανοία και εν κοινωνία με Αυτόν. Τότε το φως δεν μένει εξωτερικό, αλλά γίνεται εσωτερική εμπειρία, που μεταμορφώνει τον άνθρωπο και τον οδηγεί από το θάνατο στη ζωή.

Έτσι, το Πάσχα δεν τελειώνει. Συνεχίζεται μέσα στην καρδιά μας, στη ζωή μας, στην καθημερινότητά μας. Και καλούμαστε να διατηρήσουμε αυτό το φως, ώστε να γίνει τρόπος υπάρξεως, μαρτυρία πίστεως και πρόγευση της αιωνίου ζωής.



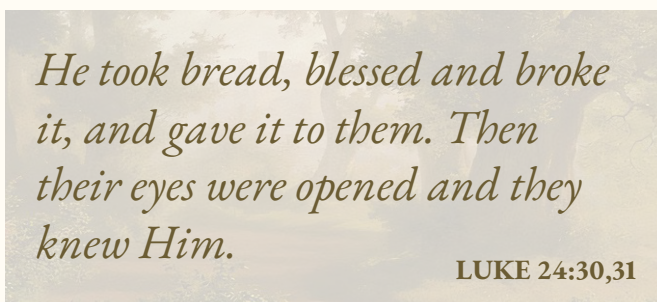


THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

LUKE 24:13-35

CHRIST IS RISEN! In the hearts of the disciples walking on the day of the Resurrection from Jerusalem to Emmaus, however, this was not so. Their conversation was sombre; their hearts filled with fear by reason of the tragic event of the Crucifixion they had beheld in the past few days. Mourning Him as dead, they failed to recognise that the risen Jesus had joined them on the road. Their eyes were restrained from recognising Him because their hearts did not believe that He had in fact risen. Indeed, they recited to Jesus the very events that led to His death and their own expectations that He would redeem Israel as if to say they must have been mistaken about His being the Messiah (for, "He was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God").

The tone of their conversation caused a rebuke from the Lord which was followed by His explanation of all the Scriptures concerning Himself starting at Moses. Even in His resurrection Christ continues His ministry. In expounding the Scriptures to them, we read that their hearts were aflame. Their hope in the Lord was



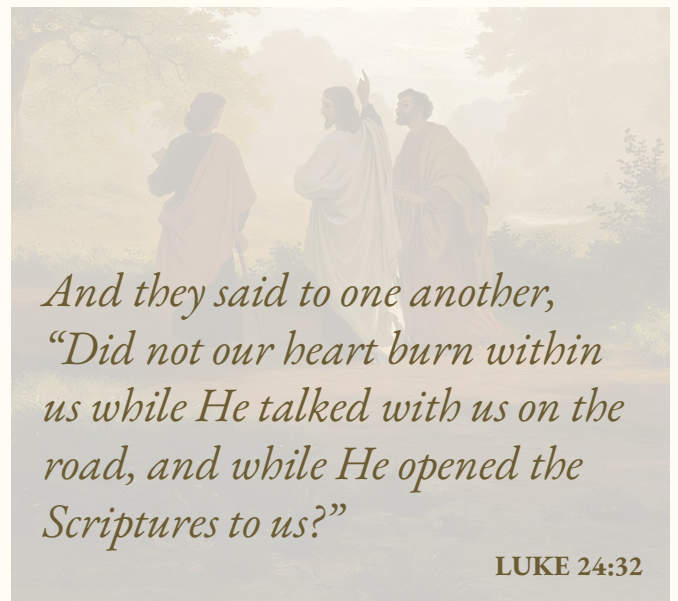
He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him.

LUKE 24:30,31

rekindled and their faith was set alight. Yet, it was not until He broke the bread upon blessing it that their eyes were opened. In that same hour, they rushed back to Jerusalem to give their account to the disciples of their sighting of the Lord. The same road which had been filled with sadness and gloom only an hour before was now stamped upon with cheerful, renewed feet. Imagine the joy that filled them; imagine the unbridled emotion at their proclamation to the disciples that the "Lord is risen indeed"!

This account of the journey of two disciples from the gospel of Luke perfectly captures the sentiments in Jerusalem among the followers of Jesus. They were terrified and yet, among the fear that caused them to hide, they received the Lord on multiple occasions which confirmed for them the truth of His teaching and the truth of His person. That He was in fact the Son of God, had been raised from the dead and had not abandoned them was a cause of ineffable joy.

This same joy fills the hearts of all pious Christians on the feast of Pascha. Just as the disciples travelled on the road twice, so also do we travel twice: once, in



And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?"

LUKE 24:32

joyful sorrow (χαρμολύπη) towards the Passion and once more in spiritual ecstasy towards the resurrection. Further, we travel from death to life, finding our faith with God's help. Our own journey to Emmaus (and back to Jerusalem) sees us cast off our old selves (Eph. 4:22) and put on the armour of light (Rom. 13:12).

May the Lord's Resurrection bring the joy that sprung from the hearts of the disciples into our own hearts this Easter for Christ is truly risen.

THE ANZACS IN CRETE



In May 1941, the island of Crete became the theatre of one of the most ferocious and consequential battles of the Second World War. Among the Allied defenders were thousands of Australian and New Zealand soldiers, the ANZACs, who fought with extraordinary courage against the largest airborne assault the world had yet witnessed.

Operation Mercury, as the German invasion was codenamed, began on 20 May 1941. Wave upon wave of Fallschirmjäger, elite German paratroopers, descended from the sky alongside glider-borne troops over Crete. Maleme, Heraklion, Rethymno – each airfield became a killing ground. For the Greek and ANZAC defenders, the sight of thousands of parachutes darkening the sky must have seemed almost apocalyptic. Remarkably, despite being outnumbered, the Germans held the decisive advantage in the air. This would prove fatal to the Allied cause.

What is often forgotten is the fierce resistance put up not only by trained soldiers but by the Cretan civilian population - men, women, and children - who seized whatever weapons they could find including rifles, axes, farming tools. The Cretans fought as people defending something sacred, for their homeland was not merely territory but a living inheritance of faith. Their monasteries, their icons, their way of life were all under threat.

The ANZACs, many of whom had already endured the disastrous campaign in Greece, displayed remarkable steadfastness. At Rethymno and Heraklion, small forces held vastly superior German units at bay for days. At Maleme, the failure to counterattack at a critical moment proved fateful, allowing the Germans to secure the airfield and pour in reinforcements. This led to the capture of the island and by 1 June 1941, the battle was lost.

Among the ANZAC soldiers fighting on Crete was a young Gunditjmara man from Victoria named Reg Saunders, who would go on to become the first Aboriginal Australian commissioned as an officer in the Australian Army. He had survived the sinking of his troopship, the *Costa Rica*, near Kalamata and made it to Crete aboard a British destroyer. There, with his battalion, the 2/7th, he took part in the fighting at what the soldiers grimly nicknamed "42nd Street", where ANZAC rearguard actions helped thousands of Allied troops reach evacuation ships at Souda Bay. When the final vessels departed on 1 June 1941, Reg and hundreds of his fellow Australians were left behind.

What followed speaks powerfully to the bond forged between the ANZAC soldiers and the Cretan people. Rather than surrender, Saunders spent eleven months in hiding under the protection of a Cretan family near the village of Tsikalaria until his eventual evacuation. His daughter later recalled that he found in his hosts a family whose deep loyalty and love mirrored his own Gunditjmara upbringing.

Two peoples, worlds apart in geography and language, were united by the same instinct of sheltering a stranger at great personal cost. This philoxenia, the ancient Greek virtue of hospitality to the stranger, was, for a devout Orthodox people, nothing less than their faith in action. Christ Himself had said: "I was a stranger and you took me in" (Matthew 25:35).

Over 3,100 Australians were captured of the 6,540 deployed in Crete. 274 were killed and 507 wounded. The Battle of Crete reminds us that true courage is caring for one's neighbour and trusting God even when the outcome is uncertain. It is a lesson the ANZACs and the Cretan people teach us together – may we honour their memory. "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends." (John 15:13)

Q & A

WITH Fr D. K.

How do we respond to illness?

The first thing to point out is that our illness or symptom can be minor, and we can panic and the problem becomes bigger than it needs to be. We may catastrophise the situation, a minor matter becomes a mountain, and this reaction can lead to additional suffering, both for the sufferer and for their family.

In these cases, sometimes the way we deal with the problem can lead to more suffering than the actual original problem. An old wise proverb put it as follows, "If they throw you a dagger, it makes all the difference if you catch it with the handle or with the blade".

Of course, not all illnesses are minor, and our calling in life may be to suffer a serious illness and to grow spiritually through striving to be patient. It is important to remember that our Lord will never allow us to go through a suffering that we cannot bear. The Apostle Paul expressed it as follows: "God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. (1 Corinthians 10:13). (The word "temptation" is a translation of the Greek word "πειρασμός," which in Koine Greek can mean, depending on the context, both internal temptation to sin, or external affliction).

The Scriptures and the Church teach us that if we are faced with either minor or serious illnesses to trust in the Lord, and to be able to pray, "Your will be done". If we are faced with an illness, the Church encourages us to go to a good doctor, follow their advice and be obedient

to them, but also to surrender the matter to Prayer and to the Lord. A nice Orthodox tradition is if a serious illness is diagnosed, that the family gets together, brings to their home a Priest, and together they do the Service of Holy Unction, which is a Sacrament specifically for illnesses.

Many ask, "Why does God allow illness and suffering?" Countless Christians through the ages have experienced the answer to this question, while they are going through the hardship they may struggle to see God's love, but later they can understand that the hardship was a bitter medicine sent by God for their healing. Suffering can open our eyes, and we can then see and understand what we could not understand before.

Elder Ephraim of Arizona put it as follows. "God allows suffering so as to awaken us towards remembrance of Him, and though we beseech Him, he pretends that he does not hear us, so that we can cry out to Him more fervently and thus our heart can be sanctified...

Without temptations pride would have turned us into demons, our good Father has allowed suffering, so as to protect us with humility, which will lighten the burden of our sins... No one has been saved in ease and without hardships. So if we are going through hardships, we should be glad, for this is the journey that was taken by those who were saved".



Meek and Humble In Heart: *SAINT SOPHIA OF KLEISOURA*

In a world that places so much emphasis on self-love, it is often difficult for us to look past our own desires and wants in this life. However, as Christians, we are called to not live for this life and its pleasures but to live for the life to come. To do this, we must listen to Christ's words, 'Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls' (Matt 11:29).

One such person who embodied this calling to lowliness in the eyes of the world is Saint Sophia of Kleisoura. Sophia Saoulidi was born in Pontus, Asia Minor, in 1883, at a time of growing hostility between the Turkish and Greek populations.

Early on her life was marked by tragedy, first by the disappearance of her husband and then by the death of her two-year old boy. However, while many would view these misfortunes as evidence of God's absence and providing reason to despair, these hardships created in Sophia what can only be described as a repentant spirit with acute awareness of the need to rely solely on God.

In 1919, Sophia fled Turkey and journeyed to Greece, where the Mother of God appeared to her saying, "Come to my house. I am in Kleisoura". So, she went and found refuge in the Monastery of the Nativity of the Theotokos in Kleisoura. It was there that Sophia would spend the rest of her life, not even as a tonsured nun, but as a lowly laywoman in obscurity and constant self-denial.

If one was to see Saint Sophia they would not have paid any attention, much less have been able to



recognise that they were in the presence of holiness. She was hunched over, poorly dressed, practically barefoot with hair down to her waist, a hollowed out complexion from years of strict fasting and constantly wearing a black scarf over her head.

She made her home in the fireplace of the monastery, sleeping for only two hours of the night and spending the rest on her knees in fervent prayer.

Slowly but surely, God began to reveal Saint Sophia's holiness to those around her. While some would mock her and label her as 'Crazy Sophia', truly she was of the only right

mind, that is the 'mind of Christ'

Saint Sophia felt deep pain not only for the poor and sick but for the whole world. She would say, "The Panagia weeps, she weeps every day. She says to her Son: 'My Son and my God, grant the world wisdom, forgive the world.'"

In 1967, Saint Sophia became very ill with open sores in her stomach resulting in great pain and to which she would begin to say, "the Panagia will come to take away my pain. She promised me".

On 6 May 1974, Saint Sophia reposed in the Lord at the monastery in Kleisoura, where her relics are still there and venerated to this day. Perhaps some would look at her life and conclude that it was a life of insignificance. However, in choosing to make herself insignificant in the eyes of the world, Saint Sophia was truly exalted in the presence of the Lord and in His Kingdom.

THE PASCHAL CANON



According to tradition, the two great hymnographers, Saint John of Damascus and his brother Saint Kosmas the Melodist, challenged each other to each compose a canon (a set of hymnal odes) for Pascha. Once complete, Saint Kosmas chanted his first which his brother praised. Saint John went next. Saint Kosmas listened as his brother chanted the now famous line:

“Now all things are filled with light!”

Struck with awe, he interrupted and said with humility: “Brother, you have captured the universe in these words. I therefore yield and confess my defeat. Let your canon rightly have the first place and be chanted in the churches of Christ!”

Saint John's paschal canon is a work of astonishing theological density that indeed captures φωτισμός, as Saint Kosmas said, the universe, the whole of creation. The canon exhorts us to take up the light of the resurrection.

We will examine the final and ninth ode, which opens with a command:

“Enlightened, be enlightened, O New Jerusalem, for the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.”

St Nikodemos the Hagiorite notes that the deeply sacramental word ‘enlightenment,’ φωτισμός, was an early word for baptism, a sacrament that would frequently be incorporated in the Paschal vigil.

This troparion calls the faithful to a recognition that they have become the New Jerusalem through their baptism and through the transformative light of the risen Christ.

This light is not symbolic but tangible, not personal but cosmic, not far off but thrust on the whole of creation by Christ who fills “both heaven and earth and all things beneath the earth” with light, as we hear earlier in the canon.

“Dance now, O Sion, rejoice and be glad, you too rejoice, all pure Mother of God, as He arises, to whom, you gave birth.”

Panagia's weeping sorrow at the Cross as she looked upon her dying Son is now transformed through Paschal joy. We recall her words in the gospel of Saint John, where she cried out “my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour” (Luke 1:47).



“O divine! O beloved! O your sweetest voice! True the promises you made to us, to be with us evermore, even, O Christ, until time finds its end; this we possess as an anchor of hope, and we, the faithful, rejoice therein.”

Christ's promise to be with us evermore is fulfilled. This becomes, as Saint Nikodemos emphasises, the foundation of Christian hope, not a distant assurance, but a present reality.

“O Pascha, great Pascha, great and most sacred Pascha, Christ! O Wisdom, O Word of God, and Power of God! Grant us, O Lord to partake of you yet more clearly in the day with no evening, of your Kingdom.”

The final troparion mirrors Saint Gregory the Theologian's second Easter homily: “But, O Pascha, great and sacred and cleansing the whole cosmos, for I will speak to you as to a living person! O Word of God, and Light and Life and Wisdom and Power! I rejoice in all your names”

The canon begins acclaiming the “day of resurrection”. Now speaking to Pascha as Christ Himself, we pray to Him that we can partake of “the day with no evening”, the eternal Pascha.



The Book of Job: On Suffering, Faith and Redemption

As the Church reflects on the radiant feast of Pascha, the Book of Job stands before us as a profound companion. Its pages refuse easy answers, yet they draw us into the mystery of suffering, faith, and the God who brings life out of death. Job's story is not merely an ancient tale of misfortune; it is a mirror held up to every believer who has ever asked, "Where is God when the world collapses around me?"

Job begins in blessing, but blessing quickly gives way to devastation. In a single cascade of losses, Job's wealth, children, and health are taken away from him. The narrative wastes no time confronting us with the reality of human vulnerability. Yet Job's first response is telling: "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21). His faith when faced with terror is a fierce clinging to God in the dark.

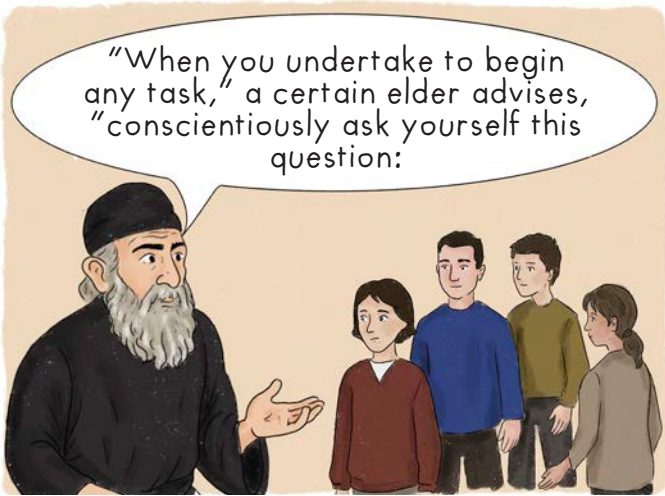
As the book unfolds, Job's lament deepens. He cries out in confusion, protests his innocence, and demands an audience with God. His friends, well meaning but misguided, insist on tidy theological formulas: suffering must be punishment, and righteousness must guarantee prosperity. Job refuses these simplifications. His honesty becomes an act of faith. He brings his anguish directly to God rather than turning away in bitterness. In this, Job becomes a model for every Christian who has ever prayed through tears.

The turning point arrives not with explanations but with an encounter. Out of the whirlwind, God speaks to reveal His majesty, His wisdom, and His intimate governance of all creation. God does not answer Job's "why"; but He answers by showing him that God's purposes are larger than the human mind can grasp. Job's response is humility, awe, and renewed trust in the Lord's will.

This movement, from suffering, through lament, into divine encounter, echoes the Church's journey through Holy Week. Christ, the only sinless One suffers and enters the depths of human pain. On the cross He cries out words that could have been Job's: "My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?" Yet in His resurrection, God answers not with an argument but with victory over death itself. Pascha is the ultimate whirlwind speech: the revelation that God's wisdom is not abstract but incarnate, not distant but evident in all things.

As we draw near to Pascha, Job invites us to bring our questions, our sorrow and our longing for justice into the presence of the One who conquered the grave. His story prepares our hearts to behold the mystery of the cross and the empty tomb, where God transforms suffering into glory and death into everlasting life.

A STORY ABOUT YOUR CONSCIENCE

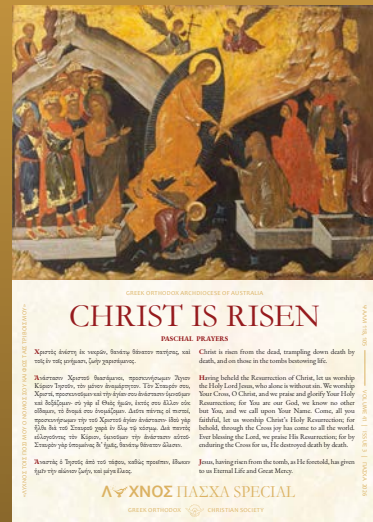


'If I were visited by the Lord at this moment, what would I do?'



Take care to listen well to what your conscience answers you.
 If it reproves you, immediately stop what you had decided to do and begin some other task of which it approves.

Be assured that your task will be intrinsically rewarding."



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BOOK REVIEW

Encountering Women of Faith

Vol. 3

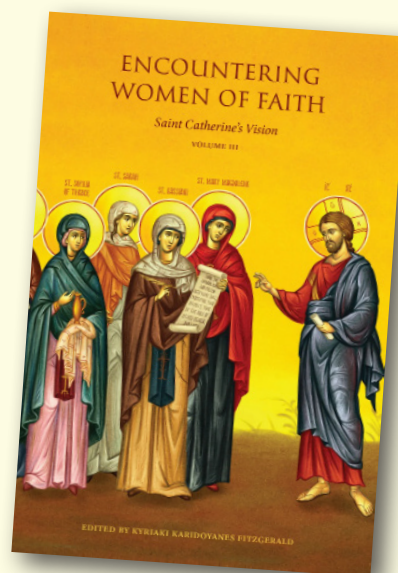
Encountering Women of Faith is a book series that bears powerful witness to how women in the past and today serve within the life of the Church. It is both spiritual and academic in nature, with the purpose of demonstrating and cultivating the Divine Compassion of God within the life of the Orthodox Church.

Volume 3, which was published in 2019, begins with a thought-provoking analysis of Divine Compassion (or Divine Eleos). The word compassion is divided into two root words: “com”, meaning with, and “passion”, meaning suffering. This indicates that Divine Compassion means that our God suffers together with us; a unique relationship that God has forged between Himself and His fallen creation. It is, therefore, the gate to Heaven and “an expression of love from the Powerful to the weak, from the Generous to the ungrateful, and from the Unblemished to the sinful.”

Although as humans we are unworthy, we are not unwanted or unwelcome. In fact, just like the Prodigal Son, we know that we are unworthy but also never deprived of our Father’s mercy.

After this eye-opening introduction, the book then presents eleven chapters of different encounters with female saints from across the ages. Each chapter dives into their story, and also provides reflection questions that are related to the life of each saint. Reading this book is a unique and spiritually edifying experience for that reason, asking us to reflect on ways in which we can imitate the holy women the Church has presented to us over time.

For example the second chapter, written by Presbytera Vera Simonovic, delves into the practical reality of what it means to be a Myrrhbearer, both in the time of Christ and today. She introduces herself first and states that she grew up in “a cultural world where I felt a constant



negotiation took place between my participation in mainstream culture, and the preservation of our religious and cultural traditions.” After a simple and beautiful retelling of the Myrrhbearers’ story, she explains that these women became the image of the whole experience of the Church. Christ, in His wisdom, will continue to set aside people to build up the body of the Church.

So the Church needs to always be active, always loving, striving to bring people to Christ through many acts of love. The “now” is equally as important as any time in history.

“To choose to serve is to choose the way of the myrrhbearers. You may share the fear and uncertainty of the myrrhbearers, yet you go forward with a firm belief in Jesus Christ, just as they were convinced that before them stood the Son of God.”

Through their witness, the myrrhbearers demonstrate a true and healthy understanding of how love can infuse service. So for us today, their ministry is the image of consistent self-emptying care.

The essence of this book is that we will never be deprived of our Father’s mercy who truly has Divine Compassion on, with, and for, us.

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On Marriage

based on the teachings of
Metropolitan Nikolaos of Mesogaia

Part 2

We continue our series *"On Marriage"*, based on the teachings of **Metropolitan Nikolaos of Mesogaia and Lavreotiki**, a respected hierarch in the Greek Orthodox Church known for his background in astrophysics and engineering. He is a prolific writer and speaker on many contemporary issues in our Church and community.

Metropolitan Nikolaos of Mesogaia examines several aspects of the mystery of marriage.



Two people become attracted to each other and decide to unite their lives together forever. How is it that out of all the young people that exist it happens that something inside of them 'clicks' for a particular person? God's 'oikonomia' allows opportunities for two people to come together for this great adventure and mystery of marriage! When two people pray and put their trust in God and submit themselves to God's will, then they have a sense or conviction **that the person they marry is God's gift to them** and a reminder of the dimension of holiness in their marriage. It is not just 'luck' or a 'practical arrangement'

Another aspect of the mystery is **the willingness of the young couple to give their everything to the other**, to dedicate themselves, to offer themselves to the other in love forever. It is just the same for a priest who gives his everything (we hope and expect this) for the people of God. There is no room in a young marriage, or for a priest dedicated to his calling, for any 'ifs' or 'buts' or 'I will see how it goes and if I don't like it I will walk away' or 'I will only give so much, and only if..' This attitude of 'I give my everything, I give it all', is fulfilled whether it is smooth sailing or not.

Some couples appear to be harmonious and suited to each other, and often the result is an outpouring of generosity to the wider church, community and children. Others appear less suitably matched, and their marriage is not such an easy fit. Yet the journey of their marriage is equally beautiful and blessed and bears fruit because the couple struggle to grow in their relationship, to humble themselves, to learn from each other, to be patient, to forgive, to put themselves in the shoes of the other, to understand each other, to value what is different in the other, to complement each other.

The aches and pains of this marriage result in the acquiring of virtue and the smoothing out of character, the overcoming of faults and weaknesses, the discovery of hidden strengths and abilities, the development of resilience and courage, the ability to go beyond oneself. These marriages are like a workshop where virtues are honed, purified and smoothed out like precious metals and gold. This struggle and hard work is blessed by God and is another aspect of the mystery of marriage, where love for the other gives the impetus to develop and grow as a person and as a couple.

The third aspect is **the mystery of kenotic love**. It mirrors the mystery of Christ's love for the church who emptied Himself for her and sacrificed Himself for her. The union of two to become one, means that I seek my husband/wife's happiness before my own, I sacrifice for him/her. Kenotic love is not selfish, or possessive or jealous, or mean. It has *archontia* (nobility), *philotimo* (honourable love) and *leventia* (courage). It puts the other first, and there is respect and esteem for the other. It means that I regard the other as precious, that I am grateful for the other. It embraces mercy, hope, compassion.



THE RESURRECTION

There is no better introduction for the Christian celebration of Pascha [Resurrection], which the Orthodox Church has called "*feast of feasts*", than the unique joy experienced by the faithful at the time, and its associated spiritual uplifting.

The Christians received this feast from the Jews. Whereas the Jewish Passover commemorates the exit from Egypt, Christians celebrate something far more important and beneficial for the whole humanity - the Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. 'Resurrection' means the entire message of Christianity in one word, the whole content of our Faith, the complete meaning of the Gospel: "*If Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty, and so is our faith*" (1 Cor 15:14).

Christ has risen from the dead, attested to by millions who believed and believe in Him, and millions of martyrs who died for His name. The recurring proof of His rising is the Tomb of Christ and the Divine Light that springs forth from it every Pascha, following prayers and supplications offered on that day by the Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem.

As much as we witness this historic and world-changing event each year, we should be mindful that the Resurrection is also real and personal. We too will be raised on that day when He returns again. Those who truly believe in Him can 'pre-taste' the life of Resurrection whilst on earth; they experience the grace of the Risen Christ in their daily life. Their life now reflects the Orthodox spirit, and their life partakes of the life of Jesus, as declared by Saint Paul - "*it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me*" (Gal 2:20).

Those who experience the grace of the risen Lord in their life, live as though they are within His risen body.

This is no other, but our Church in this world, here and now, with Faith in the Resurrection and the defeat of sin.

But to do that, the Fathers of the Church say, there are three resurrections of man:

- ♦ The resurrection of the Body - which became defiled by its passions,
- ♦ That of the Soul - corrupted by sinful sensual pleasures, and can be purified by a life of virtue, and
- ♦ That of the Mind - distorted by worldly cares, but cleansed by repentance, the Sacraments of the Church and dependence on divine providence.

Pascha brings to the faithful divine joy and spiritual uplifting, and fills our hearts with optimism, in spite of being surrounded by a society so complex and difficult, more so than in any other period of our lives. And yet, we feel secure, knowing that we have in our midst the risen Lord, not only in spirit, but as a tangible entity, in His Holy Church. Jesus confirmed this when He assured us, "*and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age*" (Matt 28:20).

And so we greet one another with Joy: **Christ is risen –**

Χριστός Ανέστη!

And receive a joyful response: **Truly, He is risen –**

Αληθώς Ανέστη!



Δοξαστικό του Πάσχα

*Ἀναστάσεως ἡμέρα, καὶ λαμπρυνθῶμεν τῇ πανηγύρει,
καὶ ἀλλήλους περιπτυξώμεθα. Εἴπωμεν ἀδελφοί, καὶ τοῖς
μισοῦσιν ἡμᾶς· Συγχωρήσωμεν πάντα τῇ Ἀναστάσει, καὶ
οὕτω βοήσωμεν·*

*Χριστὸς ἀνέστη ἐκ νεκρῶν, θανάτῳ θάνατον
πατήσας, καὶ τοῖς ἐν τοῖς μνήμασι, ζωὴν
χαρισάμενος.*

Doxastikon of Pascha

*It is the day of the Resurrection. Let us shine brightly for the
festival, and also embrace one another. Brethren, let us say
even to those who hate us, “Let us forgive everything for the
Resurrection.” And thus let us cry aloud,*

*“Christ is risen from the dead, by death
trampling down upon death, and to those
in the tombs He has granted life.”*

The Quiz

Paschal Edition



1

How many days after Christ's Resurrection did He appear to Apostle Thomas together with the other disciples?

2

Name the eight myrrhbearing women.

3

At which pool did the paralytic lie beside for 38 years, hoping to be healed?

- A) Pool of Siloam
- B) Pool of Samaria
- C) Pool of Hebron
- D) Pool of Bethesda

4

Which Gospel writer recounts the story of the Samaritan Woman who talks to Jesus at Jacob's well?

5

To which pool did Jesus send the man who was blind from birth to wash his eyes and be healed?

- A) Pool of Siloam
- B) Pool of Samaria
- C) Pool of Hebron
- D) Pool of Bethesda

6

Which common theme links the Gospel readings of Mid-Pentecost and the three Sundays before the Feast of the Ascension?

7

What gift did Christ promise His disciples just before He ascended to heaven?

8

Which church-uniting event do we celebrate on the Sunday before Pentecost?

9

In the letter to the Thessalonians, who does St Paul say will rise first to the Lord?

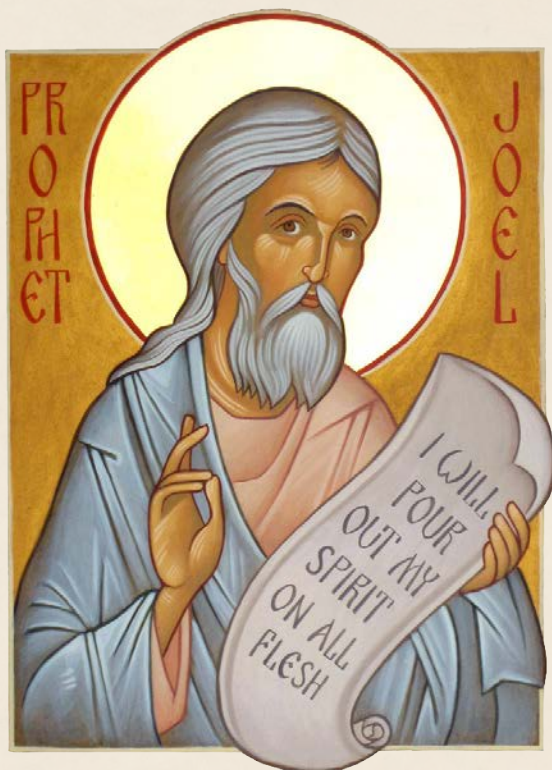


1. Eight days 2. Panagia, St Mary Magdalene, Mary the wife of Cleopas, Joanna the wife of Chouza, Salome the wife of Zebedee, Mary and Martha the sisters of Lazarus, Susanna 3. D (Pool of Bethesda) 4. John 5. A (Pool of Siloam) 6. Water/Baptism (The theme of water symbolically refers to Holy Baptism and the living water which Christ speaks of in a reference to the Holy Spirit) 7. "You shall be baptised with the Holy Spirit not many days from now" (Acts 1:5) 8. The 318 Holy Fathers who defended the Orthodox faith at the First Ecumenical Council 9. The dead in Christ

Answers

ΟΙ ΜΙΚΡΟΙ ΠΡΟΦΗΤΕΣ:

Ο ΙΩΗΛ



Και ἔσται μετὰ ταῦτα καὶ ἐκχεῶ ἀπὸ τοῦ πνεύματός μου ἐπὶ πᾶσαν σάρκα

+ Ιωήλ 3:1

Αὐτά που γνωρίζουμε για τον Ιωήλ τα γράφει ο ίδιος στο βιβλίο του. Το όνομα Ιωήλ πηγάζει από το όνομα Γιχβέλ που είναι Ιεχωβά (Θεός). Ο πατέρας του ήταν ο Βαθουήλ. Στο βιβλίο του συχνά αναφέρει την Ιουδαία, την Ιερουσαλήμ, την Σιών και το Ναό, που εννοεί ότι μάλλον ήταν Ιουδαίος και έδρασε στην Ιερουσαλήμ. Δεν αναφέρει ότι ήταν ιερέας αλλά από τα γραπτά του καταλαβαίνουμε ότι ήταν μορφωμένος. Το βιβλίο του δεν αναφέρει κανένα βασιλιά ούτε και καμία χρονολογική σημείωση και γι' αυτό υπάρχει διαφωνία για το πότε έδρασε. Οι παλαιότεροι ερμηνευτές αναθέτουν το βιβλίο περίπου το 836 – 797 πΧ και οι νεότεροι ερμηνευτές το αναθέτουν μετά την αιχμαλωσίαν της Βαβυλωνίας το 500 – 400 πΧ.

Το βιβλίο του Ιωήλ αναφέρεται στο παρόν και στο μέλλον του Ισραηλιτικού λαού. Χωρίζεται σε δυο μέρη. Τα πρώτα δυο κεφάλαια περιγράφουν μια τρομερή πληγή από ακρίδες και το τρίτο και το τέταρτο περιγράφουν την Μεσσιακή εποχή και την εσχάτη ημέρα.

Πρώτα είναι η περιγραφή για την τρομερή πληγή από ακρίδες που κατέστρεψε κάθε φυτό στη χώρα του Ισραήλ, γίνεται με ποιητικές εικόνες για να παρακινήσει το λαό

να μετανοήσει. Θέλει να προαναγγείλει ότι μετά από τη μετάνοια του λαού θα σταματήσει η οργή το Θεού και θα έχουν άφθονους καρπούς.

Στο δεύτερο μέρος δίνει υποσχέσεις ότι στο μακρινό μέλλον θα έρθει η πλούσια έγχυση πνευματικών αγαθών και η τιμωρία των εθνών που θα εκστρατεύσουν εναντίων της Σιών. Και στον επίλογο βλέπουμε τον θρίαμβο του λαού του Θεού.

Τα προφητικά βιβλία συνδέουν τα ιστορικά γεγονότα και το τέλος του κόσμου. Το βλέπουμε όταν ο Ιησούς συνέδεσε τη καταστροφή της Ιερουσαλήμ και το τέλος του κόσμου. Ο Ιωήλ στη περιγραφή του για τις ακρίδες αφήνει να εννοήσουμε φυσική καταστροφή και ημέρα λύτρωσης. Ο λαός του Θεού με τη πληγή, και τις φυσικές και πολιτικές τιμωρίες, μετανοεί και επιστρέφει στο Θεό. Η ημέρα του Κυρίου είναι ημέρα ευλογίας και θριάμβου σαρκικά και πνευματικά για τους Ισραηλίτες και τιμωρία για τα έθνη. Οι μέλλουσες ευλογίες είναι αντιστάθμιση για τις δοκιμασίες του παρελθόντος. Η γονιμότητα στη Μεσσιακή εποχή είναι αποζημίωση για τις καταστροφές που άφησαν οι ακρίδες.

Οι μέλλουσες ευλογίες είναι πνευματικές ευλογίες με το ξεχείλισμα του Πνεύματος. Προφητεύει ο Ιωήλ ότι στη Μεσσιακή εποχή το Πνεύμα θα ξεχειλίσει άφθονα στους πάντες. Γράφει ότι όλοι θα έχουν τα χαρίσματα αυτά ανεξάρτητα από φύλο, ηλικία, τάξη, κλπ. Η προφητεία του Ιωήλ έγινε αιώνες πριν από το Χριστό και εκπληρώθηκε με το Χριστό. Ο Απόστολος Πέτρος αναφέρει τη προφητεία του Ιωήλ για να εξηγήσει το ξεχείλισμα του Αγίου Πνεύματος την ημέρα της Πεντηκοστής.

Ο Ιωήλ δεν προφητεύει μόνο το άφθονο ξεχείλισμα του πνεύματος σε όλους αλλά περιγράφει την κατάσταση της ευτυχίας με εκφράσεις που δεν θα φέρονταν σε καμία περίοδο της Ιουδαϊκής ιστορίας αλλά μόνο σε Μεσσιακή εποχή. Λέει ότι τα πάντα θα λάβουν χαρμόσυνη όψη με τη χαρά του Μεσσία. Τέλος ο Ιωήλ μας λέει ότι η κατάσταση αυτή θα είναι αιώνια.

Η μνήμη του Προφήτη Ιωήλ γιορτάζεται στις 19 Οκτωβρίου.

News & Events

Sunday School children of NSW gathered for a Paschal Day at St Spyridon College

In a spirit of joy celebrating the Resurrection of our Lord, over 300 children from the Sunday Schools of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia gathered for a special 'Paschal Day' on Bright Wednesday, 15th April 2026. The event was kindly hosted by the Parish of St Spyridon, Kingsford, in conjunction with St Spyridon College, on its beautiful grounds at the Senior Campus in Maroubra.

Children had gathered from all parishes of Sydney, greeting each other with the 'Christ is Risen'. They split into their corresponding age groups and participated in a range of games and Paschal-themed activities, including making paper lanterns, beaded crosses, key rings, various sports, and an Easter egg hunt.

The children then gathered together in the Sports and Performing Arts Centre of St Spyridon College where they chanted the 'Christ is Risen' beautifully, in unison, as well as the Dismissal Hymn of St Spyridon the Wonderworker. Fr Stavros Ivanos, Assistant Priest at St Spyridon Parish, addressed the children with much joy, sharing the glorious message of the Resurrection.

Finally, the children shared a paschal meal all together, making new friends and enjoying the beautiful weather that God had blessed them with.

The Sunday School Committee of NSW would like to express their deepest gratitude to the Parish of St Spyridon, the Parish Priests Fr Steven Scoutas and Fr Stavros Ivanos, the Parish President Mr Elias Economou, and the Head of St Spyridon College Mrs Amelia Katsogiannis together with a number of generous and helpful staff for hosting and supporting this blessed event for the children of our Church.

COME & SEE! Sunday School provides a friendly and nurturing environment in which children can begin to appreciate the beauty of their Orthodox Christian Faith and a life in Christ.

Please contact your parish priest, Sunday School coordinator or email sundayschool@greekorthodoxchristians.com for more information. Parents can register their children at this link: sundayschool.lychnos.org/registration/



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