



ΛΥΧΝΟΣ

A GREEK ORTHODOX PERIODICAL FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

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

Ψαλμ 118, 105

Volume 30, Issue 1

DECEMBER 2014 – JANUARY 2015



'He took my body. He offers me His Spirit. He gives me the treasure of eternal life, taking but also giving: He takes my body so that He may sanctify it, He gives me His Spirit so that He may save me.' (St John Chrysostom, Homily on the Birth of our Saviour Jesus Christ).

Christmas has come to be synonymous with gifts, but St John Chrysostom's above words, delivered to his congregation at a Christmas service in Antioch in the fourth century A.D., remind us about the greatest divine gift of all. Christmas, the Incarnation of our Lord is God's gift to humankind. God sent His only begotten Son, to take on our flesh and live on the earth with us so that we, together with Adam could be redeemed.



and live amongst His people so that this first relationship could be restored in a more perfect way.

The sons of Adam also waited. In the Old Testament we read about Abraham, and in the beginning of the New Testament we are introduced to Simeon. Both of these righteous men wished to see God's Day, the Day of the Incarnation. They anticipated it

Why did God have to send His Son to live amongst us since God is omnipresent? St John Chrysostom together with the other Fathers of our Church, teach us that Christ's visitation as a human being, His personal visit to the children of our fallen ancestor Adam, was an essential part of God's divine plan for our salvation. Out of His immense good will, He wished to restore the original relationship humanity shared with God, but had been lost when Adam disobeyed. In the Garden of Eden, Adam had a very close relationship with God. He experienced God's love and had no sense of fear of Him until only after he had sinned. For the sin of disobedience, Adam was exiled from Eden, living thereafter with the constant sense of having lost the presence of God, the loving Father. And the Father continued to care for Adam and his offspring, waiting for the right time to come and visit,

prophetically, and when it finally came they were glad, in the same way that the Magi and the humble shepherds saw the Christ Child in the manger and realised God's great gift to humankind. This Child was 'God [who] appeared to men, taking our form and deifying that which He assumed.'¹ This great mystery surpasses interpretation, and yet it has given us the gift of hope. How blessed are those who hope in the Lord, St Nectarios tells us, for 'they bless the Most High, their Redeemer, and sanctify 'His holy name'. They hope, and cry to God from the bottom of their hearts: 'Lord, when shall I come and appear before your face?' Such blessed souls no longer fear, because they have realised the depth of the mystery of our redemption through the incarnation of God's Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. His Crucifixion and Resurrection destroyed the power of death and the devil and so cast out the fear that we had all inherited from Adam's sin. May we realise God's great gift to us this Christmas and live a life worthy of such an immeasurable blessing! ✠

¹ E-matins, Great Hours, Idiomela mode pl.4.



Ζούμε στο κόσμο του σήμερα. Όλα τα δρώμενα γύρω μας και εντός μας, προγραμματισμένα ή απρογραμματίστα, σημαδεύουν το διάβα μας καθώς πορευόμαστε σε τούτη τη ζωή. Τα υλικά πράγματα και νοοτροπίες, μας περιβάλλουν από παντού, μας μαγεύουν, μας συναρπάζουν, άλλοτε πάλι μας προδώνουν.

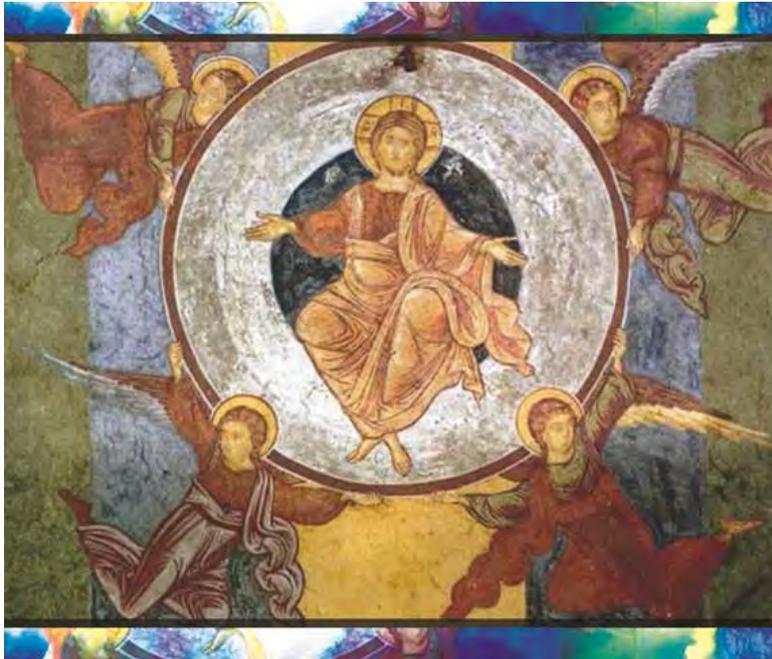
Και μεις ταξιδεύουμε στο χρόνο σαν πάνω σε μιά βάρκα σε πλωτό ποτάμι. Και το ποτάμι του χρόνου έχει και γαλήνη αλλά έχει και φουρτούνες, κάποτε και μοχθηρούς ύφαλους που χαιρέκακα συντρίβουν και καταποντίζουν την εύθραστη βάρκα μας.

Και ενώ τα πάντα δείχνουν την παροδικότητα τούτης της ζωής **«παράγει γάρ τὸ σχῆμα τοῦ κόσμου τούτου»** (Α' Κορ. Ζ' 31), εμείς αδυνατούμε να ξεκολλήσουμε από τα εφήμερα, από το εδώ και το τώρα.

Έτσι λοιπόν ξεχνούμε το γρήγορο πέρασμα του χρόνου, δεν τον υπολογίζουμε και κείνος παρέρχεται και η βάρκα μας πριν να το καταλάβουμε έχει βρεθεί στην αντίπερα όχθη. Εκεί που παύει ο χρόνος και το ταξίδι της ζωής μας τελειώνει.

Τι κρίμα! Δεν νοιώσαμε λοιπόν ποτέ μέσα μας την ακατάλυτη δύναμη της ψυχής που μας φωνάζει:
– Άνθρωπε! Δεν πεθαίνεις... έχεις πνοή του αιώνιου Δημιουργού μέσα σου! Ποθείς την αιωνιότητα! Και υπάρχει τρόπος να αντιμετωπίσεις και τη φθορά και τη γεύση του θανάτου. Υπάρχει απάντηση και λύση στα πάμπολλα ερωτηματικά και αδιέξοδα της πρόσκαιρης ζωής σου.

Είναι ο αιώνιος Λόγος του Θεού που αποκαλύπτει την αιωνιότητα στη μικρή, πεζή και πεπερασμένη ζωή μας. Με τέτοια πίστη αντιμετωπίζουμε σωστά και το



κοσμικό φρόνημα και την παροδικότητα τούτης της ζωής. Ίσως όμως ακόμη σπουδαιότερο είναι το γεγονός πως όσο πιο πολύ εντρυφούμε στο Λόγο του Θεού, όσο πιο πολύ γευόμαστε τη ζεστασιά της Ορθόδοξης λατρείας μας, τόσο πιο πολύ αναπτύσσομε σχέσεις ουράνιες. Η αιώνια βασιλεία του Θεού δεν είναι πιά κάτι το μακρινό και απλησίαστο αλλά κάτι το πολύ κοντινό και προσιτό, από τούτη

ακόμα τη ζωή.

Τότε βρίσκομε τον καιρό και την όρεξη για πνευματικούς αγώνες, για κατακτήσεις πνευματικές. Για ιεραποστολή, για δράση να απλωθεί ο Λόγος του Θεού σε περισσότερες ψυχές. Και από κοντά η Χάρις του Θεού παρούσα σε κάθε μας βήμα **«ή τὰ ἀσθενή θεραπεύουσα καὶ τὰ ἐλλείποντα ἀναπληρούσα»** (ευχή από το μυστήριο της Ιεροσύνης), να μας θεραπεύει, να μας δυναμώνει.

Στους Χριστιανούς που ζουν με τέτοια βιώματα, η μεταλλαγή του παράγοντα χρόνου από καταλυτικό σε εποικοδομητικό, έχει πλήρως συντελεσθεί. Παύει πιά ο χρόνος να ασκεί την πιεστική του επίδραση στη ζωή τους. Τουναντίον η κάθε ώρα, η κάθε στιγμή είναι καιρός για Σωτηρία **«Ἴδου νῦν καιρὸς εὐπρόσδεκτος, ἰδου νῦν ἡμέρα σωτηρίας»** (Β' Κορ. ΣΤ' 2).

Καθώς προσανατολιζόμαστε προς τα αιώνια του Θεού, μέσα μας θεριεύει περισσότερο η πίστις. Η ζωή μας ρυθμίζεται σύμφωνα με τις Εντολές του Θεού και τη ζωή της Εκκλησίας μας. Ξεπερνούμε το σήμερα και το τώρα.

Η βάρκα της ζωής μας πορεύεται προς το λιμάνι της Αιωνιότητος του Θεού: **«Ἐνθα ὁ τῶν ἑορταζόντων ἦχος ὁ ἀκατάπαυστος καὶ ἡ ἀπέραντος ἡδονὴ τῶν καθορώντων τοῦ σοῦ προσώπου (Χριστοῦ) τὸ κάλλος τὸ ἄρρητον»** (ευχή μετά τη Θ. Μετάληψη). 

Current Issues

Christmas ... Xmas ... ?!

In the past, perhaps up to the generation previous to ours, Christmas was celebrated with a significant insight into its meaning: that is, we commemorated the birth of Jesus Christ. As a result, the day had a considerable religious significance with corresponding relevant expressions of Church events, carol singing, exuberant Christmas decorations, giving to the poor and the needy, and real expressions of goodwill to one another.

That was then. . . when people celebrated Christmas more or less meaningfully.

But things changed, somehow with rapidity. Our "Western" civilisation, discovered the commercial potential of the occasion, and like the hot winds of the Middle East known as "Sharav", which burn everything in their path, so they converted the most important event of our Faith into ashes, and our dreams for the day into a meaningless landscape.

Christ was displaced from the Manger and replaced with gold! So presents, shopping, travel to other lands, spending the day on the beach or having a short holiday for two or three days, have become the mundane aim of the great feast-day.

And now, its history is approaching the end. For the purpose of not to offend those of different faiths, it is looked down upon, and in some big cities forbidden, to show signs that have to do with the Birth of Jesus. So we have a Manger without Jesus, Christmas lights without the Star of the Magi, with no Angels and no shepherds. Birthdays of everyone else are celebrated (Queen's birthday + holiday), but not that of Jesus, so we do not offend the sensitivities of others!

The manic voices of the foolish people in the Old Testament are heard from the depths of the centuries - "let us abolish all feast-days of God from the face of the



earth!" (Psalm 74: 8).

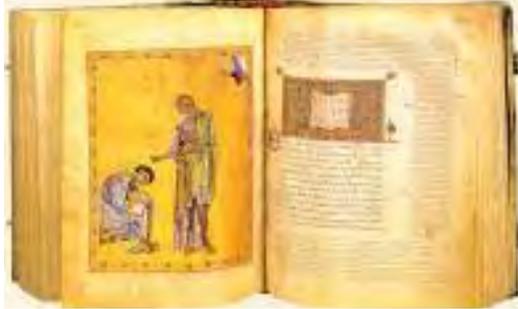
At first glance, the development of these events appears to be negative. They do not fail to cause pain and grief to the devout Christians. But do they?

In reality, the evolution of events becomes the most appropriate environment for us to discover the true meaning of Christmas. In these difficult times, we will move deeper into the depths of the occasion. We will come to realise that presents, bright lights, and superficial good will - **will only lead us to seek the "light of divine knowledge"** that is present in the Manger of Bethlehem. **And we will celebrate Christmas with deep reverence, with Jesus at the centre!**





Epistle Reading December 25th (Galatians 4: 4-7)



In this brief passage, which is read on Christmas day, St Paul puts to the Galatians the entire purpose of our Lord's Incarnation. He says that Christ took on human form and was born under the law so that He might redeem "those who were under the law" (v. 5). Redemption is critical to Christ's mission here on earth. However for St Paul, redemption is only significant because it leads to our receiving the "adoption as sons" (v. 5) by God. Redemption was for the purpose of renewing our relationship with our Creator. Christ became as we are so that we can become as He is by grace. Children do, after all, take on their parents' features.

St John Chrysostom states in his commentary on this passage that "[the two objects and effects of the Incarnation are the] deliverance from the curse of the Law, and promotion to sonship". The ability to walk as sons of God was lost by Adam in Paradise, but through redemption, Christ renewed our nature, making us capable of living as His children.

St Paul writes that we are no longer servants but sons, and because of this we become heirs of God's Spirit. This Spirit is a mark of our adoption by God. We cannot call ourselves children if we have no similarity or connection to our parents. God sent His Spirit into our hearts not as an expression of our redemption from sin but as an invitation to join Him and to live as children worthy of calling Him Father.

Christmas is a time to remember that by His human birth to a woman, Christ freed us from the burden of the Law which is death. By His resurrection, death was defeated and eternal life was granted to those who choose to accept to be His child.

What a truly great Christmas gift!



The Three Holy Hierarchs Celebrated on January 30



Saints Basil the Great (c.330-379), Gregory the Theologian (329-c.390) and John Chrysostom (c.349-407) each had devoted followers during the 11th century who sought to declare one Saint superior to the other two. Some spoke of Saint Basil, who explained the mysteries so well, as superior to Saint John Chrysostom, who was inclined to absolve sinners. Supporters of Saint John pointed to his homilies as the most accomplished interpretation of the Divine Word. Others declared Saint Gregory the Theologian as preferred of the three for his purity and grace in explaining the dogma of the Holy Trinity.

These factions caused an ongoing dispute within the Church until the Three Hierarchs appeared to Saint John, Metropolitan of Euchaita in a dream. In unison, they told him that "there is not among us a first, a second or third" and that they were to be celebrated together in one Feast. With these miraculous instructions, Saint John of Euchaita arranged for the composition of a service with commemorative hymns for each of the three, and chose the date at the end of the month in which they are all celebrated individually.

In the troparia chanted in their honour, the Three Hierarchs are celebrated as an earthly trinity who encapsulate the Church's entire ministry and who propagated the correct understanding of our Faith. In Greece, the Feast has long been associated with education and learning, and is recognized officially as the major Feast for schools by the Greek state.



Questions & Answers

A clergyman of our Archdiocese answers ...

Is my personal holiness enough for salvation?

We speak a lot about the spiritual struggle. We say that we need to be close to Christ; be one with Him. We need to pray, to participate in the Sacraments of the Church, to fast, to fight against the passions, to cultivate virtue. However, if we become too introspective with our spiritual life, we lose perspective and thus lose sight of the purpose of our spiritual life.

Unfortunately many people practice Christianity in a very personalised and self-centred way. They end up feeling very privileged and entitled in the eyes of God, but unfortunately they end up deluded about themselves and disconnected from the Body of Christ, the Ark of Salvation, which is the Church.

Thus, if we have a close look at the way this question is worded, we will find a problem. That is, there is no such thing as 'personal holiness'. Instead, we are saved through each other. Holiness happens through the cleansing of ourselves and the giving of ourselves to God through communion and love with each other. Even the most isolated hermit will be in communion with the Church through his prayers, and especially his heartfelt prayers about the world.

St Paul puts it very beautifully when he describes the Church as the body of Christ. As members of this body, we are all interdependent; we depend on each other in order to progress spiritually, and ultimately, to be saved. He says:

I bid every one among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment... For as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them... Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with brotherly affection; outdo one another in showing honour.
(Romans 12:3-10, RSV).

In practical terms, our salvation depends on how much we can give of ourselves to each other in the Lord. God has given us different gifts so we can help the other. Most importantly, we are dependent on each other's prayers. My prayer will help you and others, and your prayer will



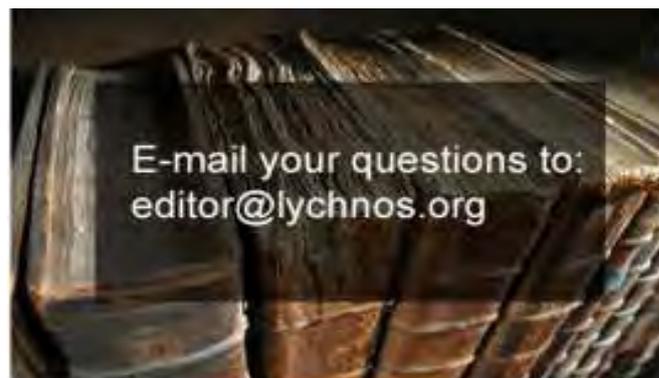
help me and others, and so forth.

God is Trinity, which means there is a communion of love between the three Persons of the Trinity (i.e. not a self-centred or even a two-way love). Also, if we look at the example of the Saints, not one of them achieved salvation just for themselves. Their prayer and holy life edified and sanctified those around them. Also, each of the Saints was, at some point, edified by someone else from within the Church.

The source of holiness is Christ, and those who attain holiness do so in the body of Christ, i.e. the Church. Attaining holiness then edifies the Church and its other members, so that those who are living members of the Body of Christ can be saved.

May the good Lord thus grant that we are living members of His Body.

† Fr G. L. ✠





Elder Iakovos and the Night of Pascha

When Elder Iakovos of Evia (1920-1991) was serving in the army before he became a monk, he was granted permission to take all of Holy Week and Pascha off.

But during the week, he noticed one of his fellow soldiers was very depressed. And he asked him, “Why are you so sad, Mr George?”

“Papa-Iakove, you with your religiosity, managed to convince the commander to give you the entire week off. You will be fine with your chanting, your monk practices, but how about me? I also want to go to my village to spend Pascha with my fiancée.”

“Okay, George, now you want the day of Pascha off – do you also want a couple of other days off?”

“Well, it would be good to have Great Friday off, and even Thursday, so I can get to church and hear a couple of gospels...”

“Don’t worry George, I will take care of it.”

This man of God, who lived for these services – this was his life, these hymns were his breath – he sacrificed it all for his fellow man, and he stayed inside the barracks – Holy Thursday, Holy Friday, Saturday and Pascha Sunday.

Out of curiosity I asked him, “Very well, Elder, how did you pass these days?”

“I was serving guard duty, and I was on a hill watching the citizens of Athens going to their churches, and I was trying to repeat the prayer of Jesus. And on the night of Pascha, when I heard the joyous bells, I sighed and I said, ‘O my Christ, now our Christians are receiving Your Holy Light.’ And as I said this, the Holy Light came to me as well!”

“How did this happen, Elder?”

“Well, my child, a light came from on high and rested on me, and I became all light!”

The man of God had sacrificed the created light of the Pascha candle, and he received the uncreated Light of Divinity. This was Elder Iakovos. This was inside his nature – the willingness to sacrifice even his prayer and his personal effort and struggle, for the love of his neighbour.

Source: From a talk given by Bishop Neophytos of Morphou, Cyprus.



It is said that icons are a pictorial representation of Scripture, where iconographers utilise not only geometry and colour, but also symbolism, theology and perspective. This is true for the icon of the Nativity of Christ where the mystery of the Incarnation, which was hidden from before time, is now revealed to all through its contemplation.

Isaiah states that “the ox knows its owner and the donkey its master’s crib; but Israel does not know, my people do not consider” (Isaiah 1:3). Here the least intelligent of domesticated animals show wise instinct to recognise the Saviour, whereas Israel did not recognise Him. Thus “Christ the True Light”, “the light of men... shines in the darkness” (John 1:4,5) of the ignorance of humanity (the dark cave) and reveals the great plan of Salvation. However this plan would include the death of Christ on the Cross, and is symbolically expressed by depicting the Christ-child in swaddling clothes, the linen straps used to prepare a body for burial.

This star emits a tri-solar light descending from the heavens as a single ray and splitting into three rays. Theologically, this signifies the one essence and three Persons of God. All participate in the economy of Salvation, and our journey to Christ the Saviour encompasses our whole life (youth, adulthood and maturity) expressed by the three different age groups of the wise men. Moreover, the two lower scenes theologically emphasise the divine and human natures of Christ. In the lower left scene, Joseph is troubled by the unexplainable pregnancy of Mary, who conceived by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit yet remaining a Virgin (Matthew 1:20), while the midwives on the right emphasise Christ’s humanity where the baby whose body “suffers” washing has the same flesh that suffers on the Cross.

The cosmic events depicted in the icon are not shown in linear time used. This can be seen in the two upper scenes, where events that occur at the same time are shown in a vertical sequence. On the right, the “Angels with shepherds give glory” (*Kontakion* of Christmastide) and the “Angels with shepherds give glory” (*Kontakion* of Christmastide) before the birth and the shepherds are the first to be informed of the reality is the present tense of the celebration.

In the centre, the Theotokos truly stands out written with a rich red cushion. The stars on her two shoulders and head symbolise her virginity, the red colours signify her warmth, love and royal lineage. Finally, she has happened: how God has “regarded the lowly state of His maidservant” (Luke 1:48).





rather, a technique called episodic time (or epic perspective) is used where events that occurred at different times are shown in the same icon. On the right (the manger scene), and on the left “those who worshipped the stars are led by a star (the three wise men). Here, the three wise men set out travelling many months before the Nativity. This creates the abolition of linear time, where the only

the Virgin Mary is shown reclining on a royal red garment with gold stripes and stars, reclining on a royal red garment before, during and after her mystical birth of Christ, whereas she is humbly depicted contemplating and making sense of all that has happened, “the handmaid and the servant”, and that henceforth all generations will call her blessed



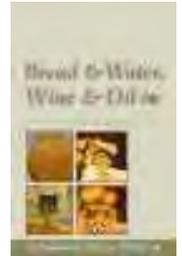
book review

Bread & Water, Wine & Oil: An Orthodox Christian Experience of God.

By Archimandrite Meletios Webber.

Published by Conciliar Press, 2003.

In this book we are taken on a fascinating journey into the workings of the mind, the source of the “logismoi”, and how it creates an awareness of a shallow self – our ego. Because of the Fall, this sense of self has been broken - we are told how this happened in the beginning as well as how it continues to play out today.



Although necessary, the mind usually functions involuntarily and takes control of our lives. On learning to use the mind only when it is needed, one can come to an entirely new level of awareness.

A deeper self is to be found in what the Fathers call “the heart, the nous or the soul”. It is through this “nous” that we have the capacity for direct contact with God.

In the process of falling from Paradise, our mind and heart became disconnected, even lost to each other. In the practice of Orthodox Christian life, they are given the opportunity to heal and to start the process of reintegration.

Archimandrite Meletios describes in a very engaging way how broken our mind actually is! What draws the reader most however, is his beautiful analysis of how to begin healing. This healing is nothing less than developing a very personal relationship with God.

Both heart and mind are called to participate in the Mystery that is the life of God, reflected in participation in the Mysteries (i.e. Sacraments) that are the life of the Church.

Everyday substances – oil, water, bread, wine – together with simple external actions such as offering, blessing, washing, anointing – are the means by which God intervenes in our lives. And here, God does all the work. We just need to be present and prepared.

Father Meletios offers very real and practical advice on this life-long journey to reunite our mind and heart and to find the treasure within all of us. He describes the Sacraments of our Church to help us gain a better understanding on how to use them in our quest to reinvigorate the heart and to enter into a meaningful, personal relationship with our Maker.



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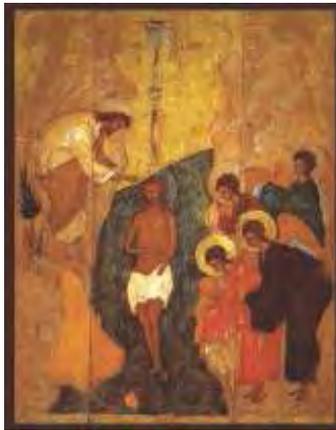


Το Νόημα των Θεοφανείων

Σε λίγες μέρες αγαπητοί μας φίλοι θα γιορτάσουμε την μεγάλη Δεσποτική γιορτή των Θεοφανίων. Την γιορτή της φανέρωσης του μεγάλου μυστηρίου της Αγίας Τριάδος.

Φανερώνεται στον κόσμο η Αγία Τριάς την ώρα που ο Χριστός βαπτίζεται στον Ιορδάνη ποταμό από τον Άγιο Ιωάννη το Πρόδρομο. Με την γέννηση του Χριστού έγινε η αρχή της παρουσίας του Θεού στη γη. Μετά τα Άγια Θεοφάνεια έχουμε την παρουσία της Αγίας και Ομοουσίου Τριάδος. Στον Ιορδάνη ποταμό πηγαίνει ο Ιησούς. Εκεί όπου ο Ιωάννης ο Πρόδρομος κήρυττε τη μετάνοια και βάπτισε το λαό, αφού πρώτα οι βαπτιζόμενοι εξομολογούνταν τις αμαρτίες τους. Πηγαίνει στον Ιωάννη ο Ιησούς, για να βαπτισθεί. Εκείνος κατ' αρχήν αρνείται, αλλά ο Ιησούς επιμένει: «ἄφες ἄρτι· οὕτω γὰρ πρέπει ἕστίν ἡμῖν πληρῶσαι πᾶσαν δικαιοσύνην» (Ματθ. 3:13-15) - Ἄφησε τις αντιρρήσεις, Ιωάννη, και μη φέρνεις δυσκολίες στο βάπτισμα μου. Πρέπει να εκπληρώσω κάθε εντολή του Θεού με αυτή την ταπείνωση, κάθε δικαιοσύνη Του.

Τότε ο Ιωάννης υποχωρεί και βαπτίζει τον αναμάρτητο Ιησού, ο οποίος αμέσως ανέβηκε από το νερό. Και ξαφνικά άνοιξαν γι' αυτόν οι ουρανοί! Και είδε το Πνεύμα του Θεού με μορφή που εξωτερικά έμοιαζε με περιστέρι να κατεβαίνει και να έρχεται επάνω του. Τότε ακούστηκε φωνή από τον ουρανό που έλεγε: «οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν ᾧ εὐδόκησα» (Ματθ. 3:17) - Αυτός είναι ο Υιός μου ο αγαπημένος, στον οποίο ευαρεστήθηκα. Αυτός είναι εκείνος τον οποίο γέννησα προαιώνιος. Και ως Θεός



είναι μονάκριβος Υιός μου. Ως άνθρωπος είναι ο απολύτως αναμάρτητος. Έκανε πάντοτε αυτό που ήταν αρεστό σε μένα.

Ο Χριστός βαπτίζεται στον Ιορδάνη ποταμό. Και ο Θεός Πατέρας πιστοποιεί τη Θεότητα του Υιού του. Βαπτίζεται ο Χριστός, για να ανοίξει το δρόμο προς το βάπτισμα, για να καθιερώσει το μυστήριο. Παρουσιάζει τον εαυτό του ως παράδειγμα στον αμαρτωλό άνθρωπο, για να του προσφέρει την υιοθεσία. Ταπεινώνεται και βαπτίζεται ο Χριστός, για να κάνει τον άνθρωπο υιό του Θεού.

Και έτσι ο μονογενής υιός του Θεού φανερώνεται. Βαπτίζεται, προσκυνείται, και μαρτυρείται.

Γι' αυτό και στο μυστήριο του βαπτίσματος του κάθε πιστού έχουμε μια επανάληψη της βαπτίσεως του Χριστού. Ο κάθε βαπτιζόμενος χριστιανός με την τριπλή κατάδυση και ανάδυση βαπτίζεται στο όνομα της Αγίας Τριάδος και αναγεννιέται κατά χάρη, γενόμενος μέλος του σώματος της Εκκλησίας. Κατά την βάπτιση του Χριστού άνοιξαν οι ουρανοί και φανερώθηκε η Αγία Τριάδα. Στη βάπτιση μας κατέρχεται η Αγία Τριάδα. Ο Χριστός μας προσκαλεί στο ουράνιο κατηκητήριο, μας ποιεί υιούς Θεού. Μεγάλη τιμή, μεγάλη ευλογία, μεγάλη δωρεά. Ο νεοβαφτισμένος ονομάζεται τώρα νεοφώτιστος. Πήρε φως, νόημα, νέα διάσταση η ζωή του. Ἄφησε το σκοτάδι της αμαρτίας, της κακίας και του δαίμονος. Ολόφωτος, ολόλαμπρος, ηλιόμορφος.

Αυτή είναι η μοναδική χάρη του Χριστού, η ευλογία της Εκκλησίας, το νόημα των Θεοφανείων. ✠

Greek Orthodox Sunday Schools

"Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." (Mat. 19:14)

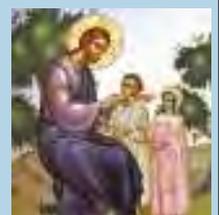
Dear Parents,

All of us wish to see our children grow up to be happy and able to face life's challenges. Sunday School can help.

Sunday School provides a variety of activities your children will enjoy. It is a place where they can find good friends. Most of all it develops in your child a love for God and His Church, which is the basis for a happy and successful life.

Even if your children receive religious education at School or attend our Greek Orthodox Colleges, they will still benefit enormously from Sunday School.

Classes for children aged 4-16 are held every Sunday morning at all Parishes, either from 9-10 am or immediately after the Church Service.





Psalm 109 (110)

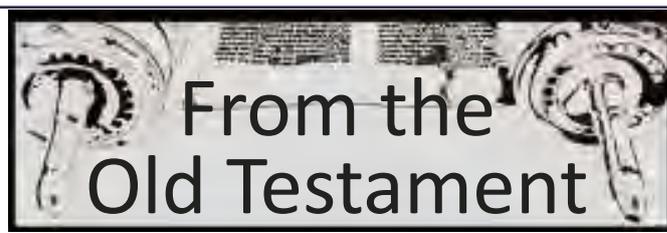
«Εἶπεν ὁ Κύριος τῷ Κυρίῳ μου· Κάθου ἐκ δεξιῶν μου,
ἕως ἂν θῶ τοὺς ἐχθρούς σου ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν
σου»

The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies the footstool of Your feet.”

This psalm is a prophecy concerning the birth and priestly reign of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who will triumph over the enemies of evil, sin, and death. Parts of this psalm are read in Church during the Divine Liturgy on Christmas day. The first verse relates God the Father promising the Son that He will place His enemies below His feet. This reminds us of Christ’s victory at His Resurrection, for which we triumphantly chant: “Christ is risen from the dead. By death He has trampled on death”! Jesus Himself quoted this very psalm to the Pharisees to show His Divine origin: ““What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?” They said to Him, “The Son of David.” He said to them, “How then does David in the Spirit call Him ‘Lord,’ saying: ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool”’? If David then calls Him ‘Lord,’ how is He his Son?” And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore” (Mat 22: 42-46).

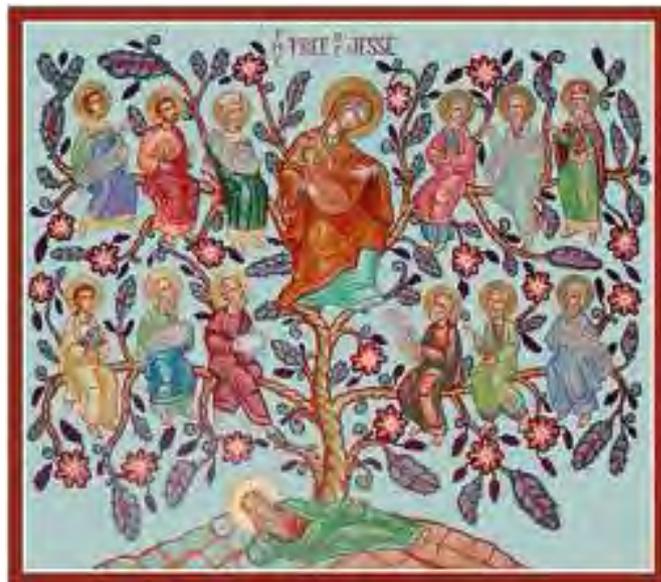
The psalm also relates directly to the Nativity of our Lord: “I have begotten You from the womb before the morning star” (v. 3) reveals his earthly birth from the womb of the Theotokos according to His human nature, but also His Divine nature as begotten from the Father before all time, expressed through the words “before the morning star”.

Finally, the psalm also affirms that Christ is “a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek” (v. 4). In his Epistle to the Hebrews, St Paul explains that Melchizedek, king of Salem and priest of the Most High God (Gen 14:18-20), was superior to Abraham and the whole priesthood of Levi, and being “without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually” (Heb 7:3). Melchizedek was therefore a foreshadow of Christ, the true high priest, the embodiment of ultimate humility and crucified love, who would sacrifice Himself on the Cross for the sins of all. ❖



The Rod of Jesse

“There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.” (Isaiah 11:1)



This is one of the many prophecies regarding the Incarnation of Christ, which clearly states that Christ will be born with royal lineage. The Genealogies of Christ found in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, confirm that Jesus’ descendants can be traced back to Jesse through the Holy Theotokos. Our Church hymnography expresses the same message in the Katavasies of Christmas: “*Jesse’s root produced a branch, O Christ, and You its flower blossomed forth.*” The rod refers to the Mother of God, a descendent of Jesse, the father of King David. The flower that has blossomed out of this rod is Christ, “Who destroyed the stench of worldly pollutions and poured out the fragrance of eternal life”, as writes St Ambrose of Milan.

A rod is a symbol of support and strength. For the Orthodox Christian, the Virgin Mary is a source of protection and refuge, as she was the only woman in history deemed worthy to give birth to Christ, the incarnate Second Person of the Holy Trinity. We must learn to call upon the Virgin Mary in times of trouble and sorrow, since she is always quick to intercede to her Son on our behalf.

The underlying message in this prophesy is that God Eternal, the Creator of all, took on flesh out of the ‘roots’ that He Himself had Created, in order that man be restored to his original glory. ❖



What we Hear in Church



Dismissal Hymn of Theophany (6th January)

Εν Ἰορδάνῃ βαπτιζομένου σου Κύριε, ἡ τῆς Τριάδος ἐφανερώθη προσκύνησις· τοῦ γὰρ Γεννήτορος ἡ φωνὴ προσεμαρτύρει σοι, ἀγαπητόν σε Υἱὸν ὀνομάζουσα· καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμα ἐν εἴδει περιστερᾶς, ἔβεβαίου τοῦ λόγου τὸ ἀσφαλές. Ὁ ἐπιφανεὶς Χριστὲ ὁ Θεός, καὶ τὸν κόσμον φωτίσας δόξα σοι.



When You were baptised in the Jordan, O Lord, the worship of the Trinity was revealed; for the voice of the Father bore witness to You, calling You His beloved Son. And the Spirit in the form of a dove confirmed the certainty of the word. O Christ our God, Who has appeared and has enlightened the world, glory be to You.

It was no mere co-incidence that the Holy Trinity was revealed when Christ was baptised by St John the Baptist in the Jordan river. Our tradition teaches us that Christ means, "one who is anointed", chosen by God for a special mission. This Christ however was not anointed with oil as the prophets and Kings of the Old Testament were, to witness for God, or to be God's representative on Earth.

He is Himself the "theophany", the Son of God who reveals to us God as Holy Trinity. In his Catechetical Lectures, St Cyril of Jerusalem tells us that for there to be a Christ, an anointed Son, there must be One who anoints Him, that is, the Father; and One who is the oil, that is, the Holy Spirit who remains on Him. Of course, Jesus did not become the Christ during His Baptism. Being the Eternal Word of God, "*begotten by the Father before all ages*", the Holy Spirit has always been upon Him. This is the same Christ, proclaimed by the Prophet Isaiah hundreds of years before the Baptism, saying "*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me*" (Isaiah 61:1). However on the day of His baptism, this eternal reality was revealed to mankind.

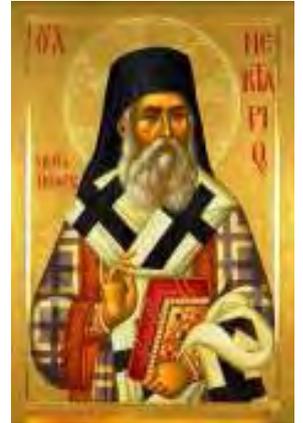
This revelation is not just a show of Divine Power. It reveals to us that only the Holy Trinity through the presence of the God-Man Jesus Christ, the new Adam, can cleanse us, the crown of God's Creation, and through the blessing of the Waters, the whole world. This is why the Church celebrates this event with such splendour. All other baptisms before this, even of St John's which was a baptism of repentance, did not have the grace or the power to redeem not just fallen man, but the whole of fallen Creation. St Cyril of Jerusalem summarises for us: "*Jesus sanctified Baptism by being Himself baptised*".



FROM THE HOLY FATHERS...

St Nectarios on Christology

St Nectarios, the much beloved saint of the 20th century, is remembered as a great example of Christian love, sacrifice and long-suffering. However, one aspect of his legacy that is often overlooked is his significant theological work. St Nectarios was a very learned man and through his writings in modern Greek, he made the Apostolic and Patristic theological traditions of Orthodox Christianity approachable to the wider public of the Greek nation.

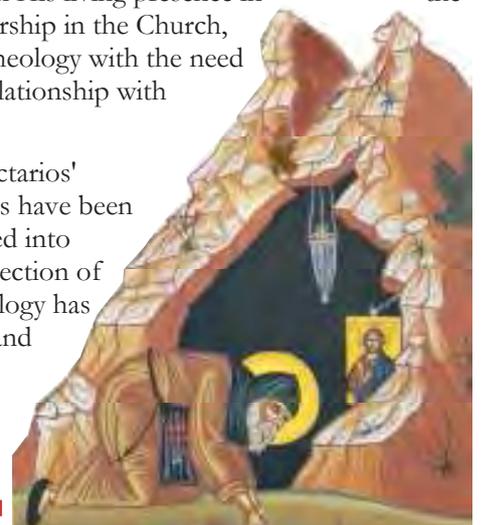


In his extensive writings on Christology, St Nectarios examines the coming and the person of the Saviour and Messiah, Jesus Christ. Using a similar style of writing to earlier Church Fathers, St Nectarios begins with the Scriptures and draws out multiple references to Christ from throughout the Old and New Testaments.

He examines the origin of sin and death, the types of Christ in the early Old Testament and the prophecies of His coming. However, he also draws on the writings of the Ancient Greeks and Romans, to highlight that it was not only the people of Israel who were looking for the Messiah. He uses examples from various poets, philosophers and historians, who were able to foresee that the solution to the problem of sin and death would arrive in the form of a divine man, the Son of Man who would also be the Son of God.

St Nectarios also expands on the revelation of Jesus as Christ and Saviour in the gospels and epistles of the New Testament and in His living presence in the tradition and worship in the Church, always relating theology with the need for a personal relationship with Christ.

Several of St Nectarios' theological works have been recently translated into English. His collection of work on Christology has been translated and published by St Nectarios Greek Orthodox monastery in New York.





Kalanta – Carols



Kalanta (κάλαντα) in contemporary times are traditionally sung on Christmas Eve, New Years Eve and Epiphany. The carols are different for each festivity as they refer to the Nativity of Christ for Christmas, to St Basil for New Years and to the Baptism of Christ at Epiphany.

The tradition of the Kalanta however, has its roots in ancient Greece adopted during the Byzantine period. The word itself derives from the Latin *calendae* which means “the beginning of the month”, and while the form of the custom has changed as we moved from the ancient to the Christian belief system, two aspects remain the same. Firstly, the custom of giving gifts, sweets and even money to the singers and secondly, the custom of singing for the health and prosperity of the head of the household.

Another cultural aspect of Kalanta is that each area or island of Greece has carols unique to that region. This is reflected in the words of the carols which tell of historical events, customs and traditions. Children will dress in traditional costume and go from door to door with triangles, harmonicas and accordions and shout out loud «να τα πουμε» (shall we sing them?). The response is always an emphatic «να τα πητε!» (say them!).

Kalanta also have a philanthropic element, as they are used as a means to raise much-needed funds for charity. Many groups visit hospitals and nursing homes during the Christmas period, so that the elderly and sick will not miss out on the joy of the Season.

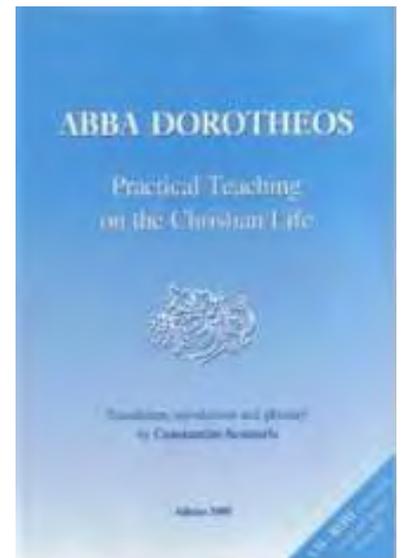
This tradition, which started in Greece, continues on in the Diaspora: passed on from generation to generation. Will you think about continuing this tradition? ❌



Practical Teaching on the Christian Life by Abba Dorotheos Published by Athens University, 2002.

The book, Practical Teaching on the Christian Life by Abba Dorotheos details the life and wisdom of this grace-filled desert Father.

Abba Dorotheos lived in Gaza Palestine during the 6th century. He denied himself many worldly pleasures out of his greater love for Christ, and became a magnet for those who sought guidance on how to improve their spiritual life.



Seventeen of his practical teachings have been published in this book. Of paramount importance to the Abba was the need for humility, for no other virtue could be obtained without it: “*We need humility more than anything else, to be ready to say ‘Forgive’ whenever anything is said to us.*”

The Abba also wrote letters to disciples, monks and lay people who were in need of his spiritual guidance. The book contains sixteen of these letters. In one letter to a brother beset by temptations the Abba writes: “*Reproach yourself, be patient and pray*”. The last section of the book has some brief sayings loaded with practical advice such as how to deal with our neighbour: “*Do not demand love from your neighbour. The demander is disturbed if he is not answered. Rather, show your love for your neighbour and comfort him, and thus, bring your neighbour to love you.*”

The greatest appeal of this book is the universal application of what is taught regardless of year or geographical location. Abba Dorotheos as an early Elder of our Church lived a Christ-like existence, and sought to highlight the pitfalls he encountered on this journey, so that we would not make the same mistakes and succumb to the snares of the evil one. Upon reading this book there are two questions (1) are these teachings being genuinely applied on a daily basis (2) If not, what are we waiting for? ❌

NEWS and VIEWS

Sunday School Concerts

During the months of October to December, Sunday Schools at various Orthodox parishes of Sydney held their annual concerts to celebrate the end of another fruitful year of learning. In particular, the parish of All Saints Belmore, held its concert with major play productions involving the Boys and Girls Ομάδες (Youth Fellowships), to celebrate 50 years since the founding of the parish. With God's help, Sunday Schools will resume again in all parishes next year in March. For more information, contact your local parish priest.



The Sunday School children of St Dimitrios Parish, St Marys, performing at their annual concert.

Missionary visit to Medan, Indonesia

On Wednesday 26th November, with the blessings of His Eminence Archbishop Stylianos and His Eminence Metropolitan Konstantinos of Singapore, nine men from the Greek Orthodox Christian Society departed for Medan, Indonesia, at the request of Fr Chrysostomos Manalu, an Orthodox priest of Indonesian background. The men will provide medical assistance, as well as deliver Christian talks and sermons to the many Orthodox faithful in Medan. In upcoming editions of Lychnos, we will be featuring a new series of articles on this visit and the Orthodox faithful in Indonesia.



Nine members of the Greek Orthodox Christian Society on their departure for Medan, Indonesia. From left to right are Dr George Polyzoidis, Mr Pantelis Toumbelekis, Dr Ian Gotis, Mr Chris Sergios, Mr Andrew Psarommatis, Dr John Psarommatis, Dr Hoomis Pahos, Dr Greg Roditis, and Mr Stelios Giakoumatos.

Missionary visit to St Nicholas, Canberra

On Sunday 30th November, with the blessings of His Eminence Archbishop Stylianos, a small group from the Greek Orthodox Christian Society, along with their families, visited the parish of St Nicholas, Canberra. They delivered a sermon, chanted in a Byzantine choir, presented a talk and play, and exhibited Orthodox Christian books. The visit was greeted by the parish priest, Fr Petros Kipouros, with precious blessings for all. ✠



Members of the Greek Orthodox Christian Society and their families, with Fr Petros Kipouros, at their visit to St Nicholas Greek Orthodox Parish, Canberra.

**Ακούτε το ραδιοφωνικό πρόγραμμα
«Η ΦΩΝΗ ΤΗΣ ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΙΑΣ»**

κάθε Κυριακή:

10:45 π.μ. στο 2MM-AM 1665

11:00 π.μ. στο 2ERA-FM 151.675 (scanner)

5:30 μ.μ. στο Galaxia FM 151.850 (scanner)

κάθε Πέμπτη:

3:30 μ.μ. στο Radio Club AM 1683

« ΛΥΧΝΟΣ »

**is a bimonthly publication of the
Greek Orthodox Christian Society,
under the auspices of the**

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia.

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