

ΛΥΧΝΟΣ

AN ORTHODOX PERIODICAL FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

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

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ΑΠΟ ΤΗΝ ΕΔΕΜ ΣΤΗ ΒΗΘΛΕΕΜ

Απορία και κατάπληξη θα γέμισε τις ψυχές των αγγέλων του Θεού όταν έβλεπαν το πιο υπέροχο δημιούργημα του Θεού, τον άνθρωπο, να το απατά ο διάβολος, και να γκρεμίζεται από το ύψος της θείας αρετής στη σκοτεινή καταστροφή της κόλασης. Και όμως το παν δεν χάθηκε! Εκεί στην Εδέμ απορούσαν, εδώ όμως στη Βηθλεέμ θαυμάζουν. Γιατί γεμάτη παρηγοριά και γλυκιά ελπίδα ανοίγει τώρα στο σπήλαιο η νέα ιστορία του κόσμου. Δεν είδε και δεν θα ξαναδεί η ανθρωπότητα γεγονός πιο μεγάλο και πιο ένδοξο από εκείνο του οποίου την επέτειο γιορτάζουμε τις μέρες αυτές. **«Ετέχθη ημίν σήμερα Σωτήρ».**

Αδελφέ – ξενιτευμένος, δούλος και κατάδικος ήσουν, όπως κι' εγώ και όλοι οι αδελφοί μας. Ξενιτευμένοι από την αγκαλιά του Πατέρα μας, δούλοι σε μια χώρα πικρή και κοιλάδα του κλαυθμώνος, όπου μας τυραννούσε ένας εχθρός άσπονδος,

Αλλά σήμερα? Ευλογημένη και μέρα ποθητή. Δούλε της ύλης και της αμαρτίας, ατιμασμένες και παιχνίδι του Σατανά, σήκωσε το κεφάλι σου ψηλά και κράτησε υπερήφανο το μέτωπό σου. Σήμερα γεννήθηκε για σένα Σωτήρας και Λυτρωτής. Η ουράνια πατρίδα σου δεν είναι πια αποκλεισμένη για σένα. Το χειρόγραφο της καταδίκης σου έχει σχισθεί. Η αγκαλιά του ουράνιου Πατέρα σου είναι τώρα ανοιχτή να σε δεχθεί με κάθε στοργή και θερμότητα.

Και όμως, όλοι δεν δέχονται τον Σωτήρα! Τι λυπηρή διαπίστωση! Όταν επρόκειτο να γεννηθεί η Αγία Παρθένος δεν υπήρχε τρόπος να φέρει στον κόσμο τον Υιό του Θεού. Ούτε θέση στην καρδιά των Ιουδαίων να τον υποδεχθούν.

Και σήμερα ακόμη, ο λεγόμενος χριστιανικός κόσμος, στο σύνολό του

δείχνει προς στον Σωτήρα την ίδια διαγωγή. Δεν αρνείται ολότελα να δεχθεί την επίσκεψη του Χριστού, αλλά και δεν του δίνει τόπο στην καρδιά του. Δεν τον στέλνει στην φάτνη. Τον στέλνει εις τον ναό, από τον οποίον όμως λείπουν οι Χριστιανοί με ζωντανή πίστη και φλογερό ζήλο για τον Χριστό. Ξοδεύει εκατομμύρια πολλά να χτίζει ναούς στο όνομά Του, οργανώνει μεγαλοπρεπείς εορτές, παραθέτει τώρα τα Χριστούγεννα πλούσια τραπέζια, αλλά δεν δίνει την καρδιά του στο Χριστό. Και όμως Εκείνος αυτό μόνο ζητά – την καρδιά μας, το νου μας, το λογικό μας, τις σκέψεις μας, για να μεταδώσει φως και σοφία, ώστε να σκεπτόμαστε σωστά. Ζητά το σώμα μας για να το κάνει ναό, αφιερωμένο στον Θεό!

Εμείς όμως δεν θα μοιάσουμε τους χριστιανούς που δεν δίνουν τόπο στον Κύριο. Θα κάνουμε το πάν να κάνουμε αυτό που μας ζητά – όπως το έκαναν οι μυριάδες ευλογημένων ψυχών που δια μέσον των αιώνων κατέπληξαν τον κόσμο με την αρετή τους και απεκάλυψαν την νέα ζωή που φέρνει στον άνθρωπο η Γέννηση του Χριστού.



THE ORTHODOX CHURCH WHO ARE WE?

I. The Early Church

The heresy of Arius was followed by many others, fortunately of lesser significance, and these were quickly condemned and eliminated without damage to the dogmas or structure of the Church.

It is of interest, though, for one to enquire into the manner of which the Church was governed once Christianity became the official religion of the vast Byzantine Empire, which now had its capital in Constantinople.

In general, the Emperor was the supreme arbiter of things practical in the Church. There were times where he would appoint the bishops, even the Patriarch, decide which diocese would be elevated to an archdiocese or a metropolitan see, and even which Church was to become autocephalous. Only the Emperor could call an Ecumenical Synod, and he was presiding there either personally or through his representatives. Some Emperors took the title of Pontifex Maximus (Μέγας Αρχιερέυς), in the manner of the Roman Emperors, who were so named by virtue of their office. There was a precedent, after all, in Judaism, where the Jewish Kings were also recognised as Archpriests. The only difference being that the Emperor could not officiate at religious services. The Church fought these tendencies with variable tenacity. When it was expedient for the holder of the office, particularly the Patriarch, to oppose the Emperor this was done, but if it was not so the Church accepted the dominance of the Emperor. At times the disagreement was very public and at times prolonged, until the Patriarch or the Emperor would give in for the sake of the faithful or the cohesion of the Empire. It was not until after the 10th Century, that the Church was able to control its own affairs.

Unfortunately, these controversies in the life of the Church had as a result the reduction of the spiritual and moral fibre of the Christians, particularly in the earlier centuries. However, a peaceful and mainly silent resistance against such conditions was the development and flourishing of monastic life.

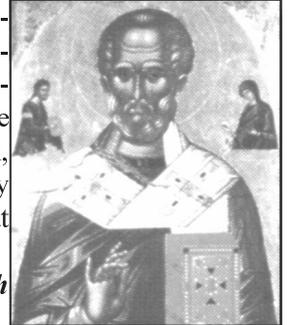


Saint of the Month

St Nicholas the Wonderworker

Commemorated December 6

Did you know that the legend of Santa Claus originated from the life of St Nicholas (Santa Nicholas)? While there are some elements of truth, his life-story has been grossly distorted. Let's have a look at the differences:



Did he really live on the North Pole?

Well... no. He was born in the region of Lycea (in modern-day South-West Turkey), around 250 AD. He was a very pious man living an ascetic life, so he was made a priest and later a bishop in a city of Lycea called Myra. He died on 6th December 330 AD.

Was he a jolly fat man with a white beard?

While the icons do portray him with a white beard, he was a great ascetic, so he was certainly a solemn and lean man. His holiness, however, made him radiant and thus he attracted many people to God. He is one of the best known and best loved Saints of all time.

Did he travel around with reindeer and slay?

No, but he is the patron saint of sea-farers. While still a priest, he was travelling from Myra to the Holy Lands. During the journey the ship was caught up in a fierce storm. With St Nicholas' prayers the seas immediately quietened, but not before one of the sailors was killed. St Nicholas prayed again and the dead man came back to life. He performed many other miracles, both while he was alive and also after his death.

Did he climb down chimneys to distribute gifts to children?

Not quite. However, this legend may be based on the following story. In Myra there was a rich man with three beautiful daughters. He lost his riches and became very poor. Not knowing what to do with his daughters, he decided to involve them in immoral work (he could not marry them off since he was now very poor). When St Nicholas found out, he took a sack of money and by night secretly threw it through a window into the man's house. The man was jubilant, since with that money he could marry off his eldest daughter. This happened two more times. Thus, he married off all his daughters and thus they were saved from immorality and damnation.

This is the real St Nicholas. So when you hear of Santa Claus this Christmas, think of the real saint, and pray that he may protect us from the dangers and immoral temptations of this life.



NEWS AND VIEWS

Walkathon

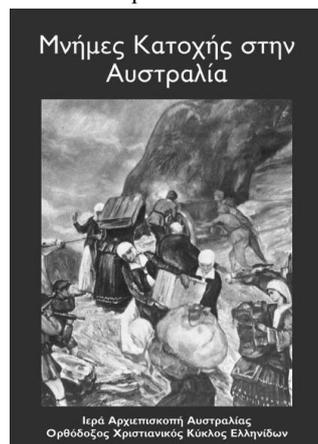
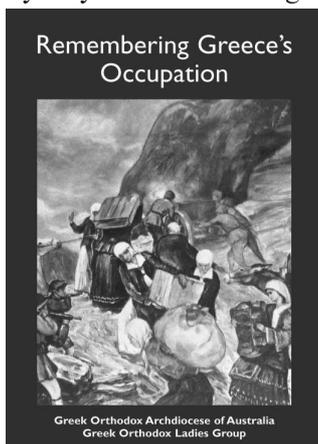
On Sunday 3rd November, the Greek Welfare Centre held its 26th annual Walkathon at the parish of St Stephanos, Hurlstone Park, with the participation of many faithful, young and old, as well as His Eminence, Archbishop Stylianos, His Grace, Bishop Seraphim and other clergy. The day was an enormous success, with the total amount of funds raised to assist the work of the Centre being an incredible \$32,500! Of this total, almost \$13,000 alone was raised from the efforts of Sunday School children across Sydney. For raising the most funds, first prize went to Earlwood Sunday School (\$4,151), followed by Parramatta (\$1,893) and Leichhardt (\$739). Congratulations to all the Sunday School children and teachers for helping to raise these enormous amounts, as well as for their generous assistance and participation on the day of the event. May God continue to bless abundantly the work of the Greek Welfare Centre in its never-ending task of helping the most needy among us.



Some participants of this year's Walkathon gather outside St Stephanos parish before embarking on their trek.

Book Launch

On Tuesday, the 5th November, a new book was launched by the Greek Orthodox Ladies Group of Sydney - "Remembering Greece's Occupation". The



book, written in both Greek and English, was officially launched by His Eminence Archbishop Stylianos. The women of the Greek Orthodox Ladies Group interviewed more than thirty of

their members who lived during World War II and the occupation of Greece by Italy and Germany in 1940-1945. "Memory is something sacred", writes the Archbishop in the book's Foreword: "I have no doubt that we shall all read these 'memories' that are now recorded, with approximately the same attentiveness that Christians once read the lives of the Saints, when they still valued spiritual edification more than the 'sights' and 'spectacles' of this passing world".

In this oral history the women tell their stories of poverty, hunger, fear, pain and suffering. They also relive heroic and cherished moments of courage, tenderness, solidarity, hope and faith. Proceeds from the sale of the 270 page book will go to the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia's St Andrew's Theological College and the Voice of Orthodoxy Radio Program.

The book is available from all bookstalls at Sydney's Greek Orthodox churches and the Greek Orthodox Bookstore at 31a Enmore Rd, Newtown. Ph: (02) 9519 6245.



Over one hundred people gathered for the launch at the Main Hall of the Greek Orthodox Cathedral of the Annunciation, Redfern.



His Eminence, Archbishop Stylianos, with members of the book's publishing committee.

- More News over the page -

NEWS AND VIEWS

Tireless Church Worker Honoured

On Tuesday 26th November, His Eminence Archbishop Stylianos awarded the gold cross of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia to Professor Michael Anthony, MBE, neurologist, professor of medicine at the University of NSW, lay preacher and president of the Greek Orthodox Christian Society of NSW. The rare award, reserved only for those individuals who have offered substantial services to the Church, was awarded to Professor Anthony for almost half a century of missionary work and zeal within the Archdiocese, including the establishment of Sunday Schools, Ομάδες, the Orthodox Bookstore, as well as preaching the word of God from the pulpit to countless faithful over many years. May God continue to enlighten and strengthen him and his family in his untiring efforts to glorify His Holy name, to the benefit of many generations of Greek-Australians yet to come.



Spiritual Evening For Young People

On Friday 22nd November, all the Senior Sunday Schools and Ομάδες of Sydney gathered for a spiritual evening at the Orthodox Bookstore, Newtown, with organized indoor games followed by a talk and discussion with Father Nicholas Stavropoulos. An experienced educator, Father Nicholas spoke about some of the contemporary moral dangers facing young people. Judging from the



Fr Nicholas addressing the ομαδόπουλα and senior Sunday school students of Sydney.

sincere and enthusiastic comments of the young people involved, it proved to be a most insightful and inspiring evening for all. With God's help, more such evenings will be planned for the coming year.

Sunday School Concerts

Throughout months of November and December, Sunday School children from all the Greek Orthodox parishes of Sydney will be hosting their annual Sunday School concerts. The concerts provide a wonderful opportunity for the children to recount exactly what they learned at Sunday School over the past year in the form of poems, plays and songs. Now that the Sunday Schools are ending for yet another year, we wish all the children a most blessed holiday season, full of God's grace and protection, and look forward to seeing them again next year. Sunday Schools are expected to begin again in March, 2003. For more enquiries, please ask your parish priest.



Children from the junior Sunday School classes of Liverpool (above) and Earlwood (below) performing at this year's annual concerts.



**Ακούτε το ραδιοφωνικό πρόγραμμα
«η Φωνή της Ορθοδοξίας»
κάθε Κυριακή
11.30 π.μ. Στο 2MM-AM 1650
1.30 μ.μ. Στο 2SER-FM 107.3**

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