



A TIMELESS INVITATION

The first invitation was given at the majestic shore of Lake Tiberias. The Great Fisherman, Jesus, came to fish for fishers.

He called them and they replied immediately.

'Follow Me,' He told them, and they 'forsook all' and followed Him. They became His first followers – His disciples, His friends, His chosen ones.

"We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, write - Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph", they declared.

For three years they joined their lives with His. For three years they were allured by His words, they wondered at His wisdom. His Might fascinated them. His Divine Love captured their hearts. With Him they endured endless journeys in the wind, rain and scorching sun, suffering dangers, misfortunes and deprivations. The Great Mentor mended their mistakes, weaknesses and lack of faith with tenderness and love.

After they drank the bitter cup of disappointment in front of His Cross, they gladly received in the Light of the Resurrection the second commandment: 'Go and make disciples of all the nations...' 'Feed my lambs...' 'Tend my sheep...'

At Pentecost, on the Upper Floor, the Holy Spirit accomplished a most amazing transformation. The illiterate fishermen become the most wise. The fearful become fearless. The unknown become the all-known.

All of them become precious and living stones in the foundation of the Church. In their new calling the glorious Apostles sow the universe with dedication and sacrifice. They teach, they do marvellous miracles, they clash with principalities and powers. In the end they are declared as the greatest people of history, as instructors of the universe. They are the ones called by God; the honoured ones; the chosen ones.

In the passage of time the same invitation, 'Follow Me', creates legions of apostles and missionaries. The vessel of Christ, the Church, spreads victoriously everywhere. Many times It is endangered by storms of persecutions, heresies and fearful enemies. It is not overcome, because its captain is Christ Himself, and its crew are all the faithful.

The invitation is timeless and universal. It is given today to everyone as it was given to the fishermen of Tiberias



2000 years ago. Whoever accepts it and follows the way of the Apostles, brings Christ's message of joy, love and salvation everywhere – to the home, the school, the neighbourhood and the group of friends. They become "co-workers with God" (1 Cor. 3:9), God's elect, labourers in His harvest, the chosen few from the many who are called. Let us take up Christ's timeless invitation, imitating the Holy Apostles who left all to follow Him – The Fisher of Men.



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THE ORTHODOX CHURCH ELEMENTARY ORTHODOX THEOLOGY

9. MORAL & SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES FOLLOWING THE "FALL" AND THE EFFECTS ON CREATION

Having corrupted human nature thoroughly, sin began to create untold problems in the daily lives of the original man (Adam and Eve), and their descendants. These were:

1. Moral Disorientation. The ignorance and loss of the memory of God, made man lose the last traces of the Divine, and led him to a dense spiritual darkness. The expression of this spiritual calamity was nothing less but idolatry and paganism. Man was thus worshipping the creation instead of the Creator-God. Having made such a choice, original man delivered this to their descendants as a way of life. However, not only did man select simply his own way of life, but this was opposite to his own nature and the divine standard God had designed for him.

2. Social Disorganization. Ignorance of God had as a consequence the corruption of all men, and led to the complete breakdown of social order: injustice, crime, exploitation, wars, etc, had been the order of the day of all nations and races of men. Arrogant and tyrannical leaders, products of the universal moral and social disorder, make their appearance in different periods through the ages, who tyrannize and harass the people, and spread destruction among small or large racial or national groups.

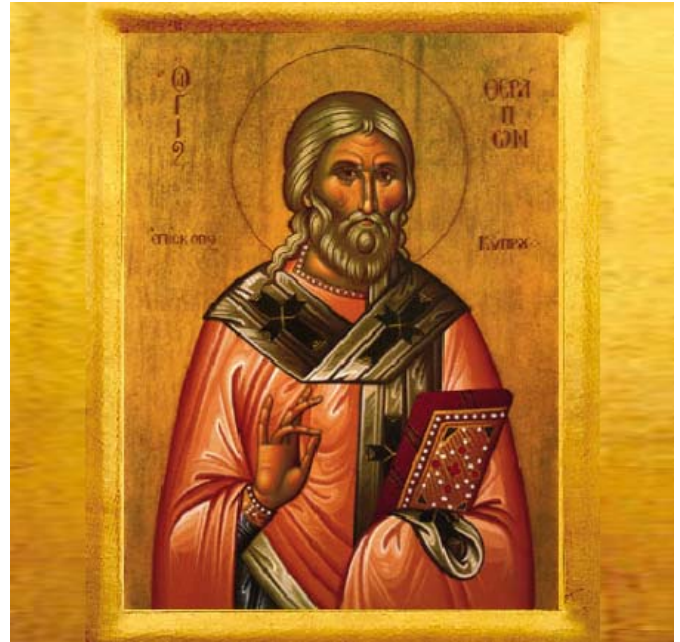
3. Consequences on Creation. Man having disobeyed God, became corruptible and mortal, as he lost immortality by sinning. But the physical Creation sustained no such damage, it remained perfect. The co-existence of mortal man with a perfect physical creation, would, according to St.Simeon, lead to a cosmic catastrophe!

God intervened to avert such a disaster, but made the physical Creation similarly mortal, and subject to destruction and death. This led to Creation becoming hostile to man, making it difficult for him to provide for his survival, and causing him many hardships, and revealing her secrets to him with great difficulty. ✠



SAINT OF THE MONTH

SAINT THERAPON Commemorated May 14



The Hieromartyr Therapon, bishop of Cyprus, was a monk and ascetic that lived around the mid 2nd century AD (a hieromartyr is a member of the clergy who dies for their faith). He brought many Greeks to the Christian faith but was cruelly persecuted by the pagans, being starved, imprisoned and bashed. They stripped him and ridiculed him, bound him to four posts and beat him ruthlessly, until they had torn the flesh from his bones. However, the martyr survived and the four posts became green and grew into tall trees from which many sick were healed. Finally, St Therapon was slain and entered into the Kingdom of Heaven in about 259 AD.

At first, the Saint's body rested in a local church in Cyprus, but during the reign of the Byzantine Emperor Nicephorus in 806 AD, the Hagarenes (Islamic forces) attacked Cyprus. St Therapon appeared to the keeper of the church, told him that Cyprus was going to be attacked and ordered him to have his relics transferred to Constantinople. The keeper obeyed immediately. When the ship with the casket put to sea, a great storm arose, but the sea around the ship remained calm and a sweet scent spread from the casket around the whole ship. The keeper opened the casket and saw that it was full of myrrh, which flowed from the Saint's relics. Many of the sick anointed themselves with this myrrh and their health was restored.

A church was later built in Constantinople over the relics of the miracle-working Saint, which continued to give healing to all who approached with faith. The worst diseases such as paralysis, cancer, insanity, blindness and tuberculosis have been healed by St Therapon's relics. ✠

Για Μικρούς και Για Μεγάλους

ΝΑ ΔΙΑΒΑΣΤΕΙ ΑΠ' ΟΛΗ ΤΗΝ ΟΙΚΟΓΕΝΕΙΑ

ΤΩΝ ΑΓΙΩΝ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΩΝ

Η εκλογή των δώδεκα Αποστόλων από τον Κύριο όπως περιγράφεται στη Καινή Διαθήκη μαζί με τη συγκίνηση δημιουργεί και μια έντονη εντύπωση. Αυτή η εντύπωση είναι το ότι ο Χριστός δεν εμπιστεύτηκε την αποκάλυψη και τη συνέχεια του λυτρωτικού του έργου σε ανθρώπους σοφούς, ισχυρούς, αξιωματούχους ή ευγενείς, αλλά σε δώδεκα απλούς ανθρώπους, οι πιο πολλοί ψαράδες της Γαλιλαίας.

Μια δωδεκάδα ανθρώπων, χωρίς προσόντα κοσμικά, ανέλαβαν να βασιλεύουν το μοναδικό έργο της λυτρώσεως του ανθρώπου.

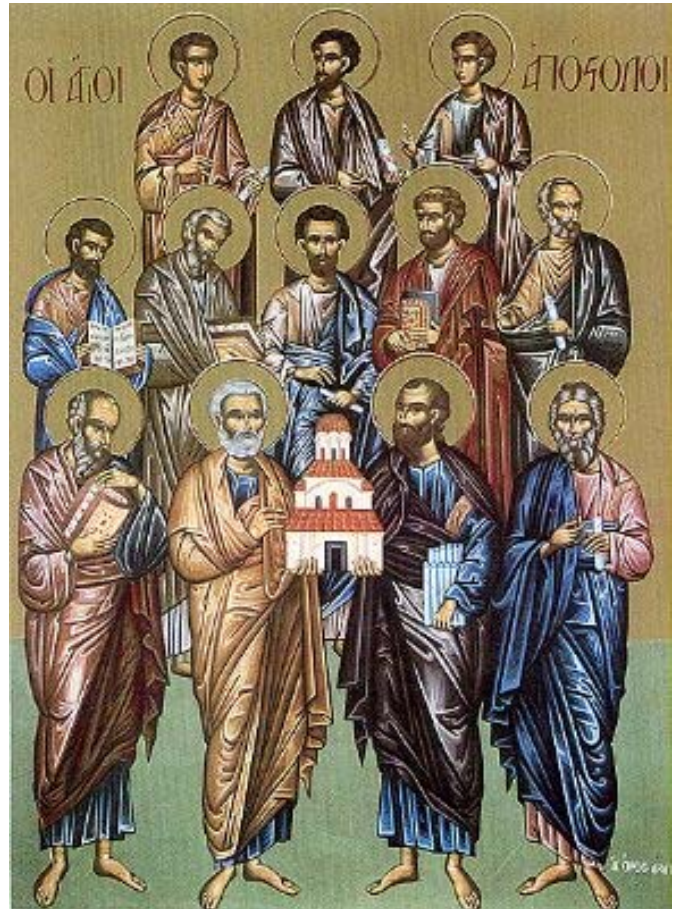
Ο λόγος είναι απλός. Αυτοί οι πρώτοι δώδεκα άνθρωποι, οι Απόστολοι, ήταν «οι καινοί ασκοί». Οι ψυχές τους έρημες από την αυτοπεποίθηση που δημιουργεί η σοφία, ο πλούτος, η δύναμη, η καταγωγή, ήταν έτοιμες και ανοιχτές να δεχθούν τη Θεία Αποκάλυψη. Να διατηρήσουν το Λυτρωτικό Λόγο του Θεού καθαρό και ανόθευτο από τα φθοροποιά στοιχεία του κόσμου τούτου.

Η πίστη τους έπρεπε να στηριχθεί όχι στα ανθρώπινα προσόντα αλλά στον Ιησού Χριστό, που είναι «Θεός δύναμις και Θεός σοφία». Και μάλιστα στον Εσταυρωμένο Ιησού Χριστό. Το έργο της θείας λυτρώσεως δεν έπρεπε καθόλου να φανεί πως αντλεί το κύρος του από τα επιτεύγματα των προσοντούχων ανθρώπων. Έπρεπε να παραληφθεί και να διατηρηθεί καθαρό σαν λόγος και σαν πράξη θείκη. Και αυτοί που το παράλαβαν και το μετέδωσαν – οι Δώδεκα – να είναι έτοιμοι να θυσιάσουν και τη ζωή τους ακόμη γι' αυτή τους τη μαρτυρία – πράγμα που έγινε.

Το κήρυγμα του Ευαγγελίου, η ίδρυση της Εκκλησίας του Χριστού είχε ανάγκη από αυταπάρνηση. Και οι απλοί αυτοί άνθρωποι «αφέντες άπαντα ηκολούθησαν αυτόν» οι ψαράδες τα δίχτυα, τη βάρκα τους και τον πατέρα τους. Ο Ματθαίος το τελώνει. Αργότερα ο Παύλος την πολυτάλαντη καριέρα ενός κορυφαίου διδασκάλου του Νόμου. Και προσφέρθηκαν σαν θύματα «μωρά και εξουθενημένα» με τη δύναμη του Αγίου Πνεύματος στη ύψιστη υπόθεση του ανθρώπου: Τη Χριστιανική Λύτρωση.

Ποιος σοφός αφήνει εύκολα τα φιλοσοφικά βιβλία του για να ριχθεί ολόψυχα στην αβεβαιότητα της ζωής ενός πλανόδιου αποστόλου; Και ποιος αφήνει όποιο με κόπο απέκτησε θησαυρό σε υλικά ή πνευματικά αγαθά, για μια αμφίβολη επιτυχία, με κόστος την αγνωμοσύνη και την κοροϊδία του κόσμου;

Οι Απόστολοι του Κυρίου μπορεί – εκτός ελαχίστων – να μη ήταν ούτε σοφοί, ούτε ισχυροί, ούτε ευγενείς κατά κόσμο. Ήταν όμως εκλεκτοί, ευγενείς, δυνατοί, πλούσιοι σε αγνότητα ψυχής, σε καθαρότητα αισθημάτων και ικανότητα



πνευματική, ώστε να αγαπήσουν τον Θεάνθρωπο Λυτρωτή και να κατανοήσουν την υπερφυσική Αλήθεια της Αποκαλύψεως.

Το Άγιο Πνεύμα βρήκε στις καθαρές τους ψυχές, τα πιο δυνατά δοχεία της Χάριτος, τους πιο ικανούς «λύχνους» - φάρους του Θεού φωτός, για να διαδώσουν με ακαταπόνητο θάρρος το Ευαγγέλιο.

Όσο για διάνοιες!... ποιος σοφός μπορεί να σταθεί ισάξια πλάι στον Ευαγγελιστή του Θείου Λόγου; Ήταν Αποκάλυψη θείκη το Ευαγγέλιο του Ιωάννου του Θεολόγου! Βέβαια! Αλλά ο Θεός εκφράζεται με τις ανθρώπινες ικανότητες, τις εμπνέει, τις φωτίζει, τις πλουτίζει, τις τελειοποιεί ποτέ δεν τις καταργεί ή τις αχρηστεύει. Και τι να πούμε για τη πολυέδρη σοφία του Αποστόλου των Εθνών που εκπλήσσει σοφούς πανεπιστημιακούς, ώστε να εισηγούνται να διδάσκεται στη Φιλοσοφική Σχολή «Η φιλοσοφία του Παύλου»!

Η Χριστιανοσύνη τιμά τους Αποστόλους σαν Δώδεκα στύλους της άνω Ιερουσαλήμ και η Εκκλησία μας κλείνει το μήνα του Ιουνίου με το πανηγυρισμό της μνήμης τους 29 Ιουνίου, Πέτρου και Παύλου των πρωτοκορυφαίων και 30 Ιουνίου, των Αγίων Ενδόξων Δώδεκα Αποστόλων.



NEWS and VIEWS

Fr Demetrios Ordained

On Sunday April 28th Fr Demetrios Kokkinos, specialist neurologist, former Sunday School Teacher and Omatha leader, was ordained to the priesthood in a moving Ordination Service at the Cathedral of the Annunciation by His Eminence Archbishop Stylianos. We pray that our Lord provides abundant blessings to Fr Demetrios, Presbytera Thekla, and their family of six children to continue to spiritually nourish, bless and sanctify the People of God. May he always be worthy!



Fr Demetrios (standing at centre) during the Ordination Service.

Spiritual Evening

On Friday May 11th, a spiritual evening was held at the Orthodox Bookstore Enmore, for all the children of Omathes and senior Sunday Schools of Sydney. The evening consisted of organized games, as well as a talk by specialist rheumatologist Dr Ian Gotis-Graham on the topic of “*Orthodoxy and our Health*”. Through an informative slide presentation, Dr Gotis referred to many of the health issues faced by young people in today’s society, including mental well-being. He spoke about how our Orthodox Christian Faith can provide complete spiritual and bodily health, offering examples of wisdom from the Fathers of the Church as well as Ancient Greek Philosophy. The talk was enjoyed by all. With God’s help, other such evenings will be held later throughout the year. Please enquire through your Sunday School teacher or Omatha leader.



Above. Dr Ian Gotis-Graham delivering his talk on Orthodoxy and our Health.



Some 70 participants were present from all the Omathes and Senior Sunday Schools. Above, some of the girls, and below, some of the boys present.



**Ακούτε το ραδιοφωνικό πρόγραμμα
«η Φωνή της Ορθοδοξίας»
κάθε Κυριακή
11.00 π.μ. στο 2ERA-FM 93.3
11.30 π.μ. στο 2MM-AM 1665**

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