

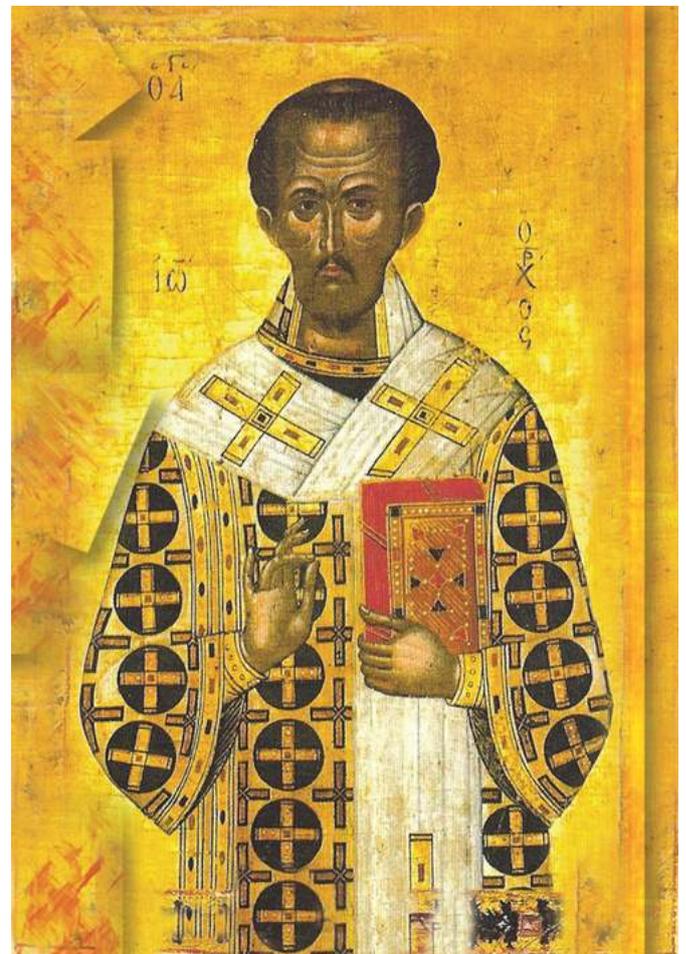


## The *Fiery* Warrior

‘Strip yourself of worldly cares, for the season is one of wrestling. Clothe yourself with the spiritual armour, for we have a heavy warfare to wage with demons. ... Sharpen your sickle, which you have blunted through gluttony - sharpen it by fasting.’ (Homily 3 On the Statues).

**S**t John Chrysostom (AD c.347-407) was a truly committed Christian warrior for Christ. The above words were written to his congregation in order to remind them to look beyond the difficulties of their day-to-day struggles, and to realise their heavenly destiny. There was a very turbulent period of social and civil unrest, in which he had been called upon to quieten the public fighting. Even though he was only a presbyter at the time, he had acquired the honourable reputation of being a gifted teacher who could inspire and lead the church congregation. At this particular time, his congregation was facing severe civil punishment because they had been involved in a mass riot culminating in the destruction of the statues of the Emperor and Empress. When he addressed the people, St John turned the people’s gaze to look beyond their discontent and to focus on deeper issues. His words helped them to realise that their rebellion had been misdirected because they had been motivated by material concerns, and they had forgotten their Lord’s example. He reminded them of their Christian calling, and to remember their Lord’s sacrifice for them. If they were called upon to choose between living and dying, he advocated that they remember the example of their holy forefathers and martyrs, who embraced death rather than betray their Lord and their Faith.

St John Chrysostom faced many challenges in his own life. He readily embraced any sacrifice with the strength derived from his personal relationship with God. When he was given the position of Archbishop of Constantinople, he was severely tested by people in high places who were jealous of his integrity. Many loved him, but others violently hated him because he had taken his vocation of priesthood seriously, and was beyond corruption. Like St John the Baptist, he spoke out against injustice and corrupt authority, and this resulted in his recurrent banishment and exile. Twice he farewelled his



loyal bishops and gave himself up to the guards having delivered his departing sermon. He did not agitate for mass rebellion on his behalf, even though he knew that he had right on his side. The extreme hardships he faced in exile led to his untimely death, and yet as he was dying he continued to glorify his Maker, as he had done a whole lifetime. He expired with the following verse of prayer on his lips: ‘Glory be to God for all things’!



## Ο Κόσμος των Αγγέλων

**Σ**το σύμβολο της πίστεως μας, λέμε: **«Πιστεύω εἰς ἕνα Θεόν... Ποιητὴν... ὁρατῶν τε πάντων καὶ ἀορατῶν»**. Στα ἀόρατα δημιουργήματα φυσικά, περιλαμβάνονται και οι τάξεις των Αγίων Αγγέλων και Αρχαγγέλων.

Οι ἄγγελοι αναφέρονται πολλαπλῶς μέσα στην Αγ. Γραφή. Η Ορθόδοξη Εκκλησία μας εἶναι γεμάτη με τη παρουσία τους, ὄχι μόνο στα βιβλικά ἀναγνώσματα ἀλλὰ και στην υμνολογία μας και στην εικονογραφία μας και ἰδιαίτερα στη θεία λατρεία μας, οι ἄγγελοι βρίσκονται παντού.

Κάθε φορά που τελείται Θ. Λειτουργία, στην ἀρχὴ της αγίας ἀναφοράς, ἀκούμε τον ιερέα μεταξύ ἄλλων να ευχαριστεῖ τον Θεό: **«Εὐχαριστοῦμέν σοι καὶ ὑπὲρ τῆς Λειτουργίας ταύτης... καίτοι σοι παρεστήκασι χιλιάδες ἀρχαγγέλων καὶ μυριάδες ἀγγέλων, τὰ Χερουβεὶμ καὶ τὰ Σεραφεὶμ...»**.

Γνωρίζουμε για τους ἀγγέλους πως ο Θεός τους δημιούργησε ελεύθερα ὄντα με ἀπειρη ομορφιά. Ο Προφήτης Ησαΐας μας πληροφορεῖ, πως ο Εωσφόρος ἀπὸ ἄγγελος φωτός και ἀρχηγός ἀγγελικῆς τάγματος που ἦταν, στράφηκε ἐναντίον του Θεοῦ. Θέλησε να στήσει το θρόνο του πιο ψηλά ἀπὸ το Δημιουργό του. Αυτό εἶχε σαν ἀποτέλεσμα να πέσει στην ἄβυσσο και να γίνεῖ διάβολος. Μαζί του ἔπεσε και ὄλο το τάγμα του. Και βέβαια, ὄλοι ξέρουμε πόσο συνετέλεσε η διαβολικὴ συμβουλή του Εωσφόρου στη πτώση και την ἔξωση των πρωτοπλάστων ἀπὸ το Παράδεισο.

Επίσης ο Ἀπόστολος Παῦλος στην προς Εβραίους ἐπιστολή του, λέγει πως οι ἅγιοι ἄγγελοι εἶναι πνεύματα υπηρετικά που ἀποστέλλονται ἀπὸ το Θεό σε υπηρεσία ὄλων ὄσων πρόκειται στο μέλλον να κληρονομούν την αἰώνια ζωή. Η Εκκλησία μας ζητεῖ στις προσευχές της για τον καθένα μας:



**«Ἄγγελον εἰρήνης, πιστὸν ὁδηγόν, φύλακα τῶν ψυχῶν καὶ τῶν σωμάτων ἡμῶν...»**.

Η πίστη μας για την προστασία που μας παρέχουν οι ἄγγελοι εἶναι διάχυτη στη ζωή της Εκκλησίας μας. Ἀπὸ τη στιγμή που βαπτιστήκαμε μέχρι του θανάτου μας, οι ὀρθόδοξοι πιστεύουμε στην παρήγορη και φωτεινὴ παρουσία των ἀγγέλων στη ζωή μας.

Στο Ευαγγέλιο ο ἴδιος ο Κύριος κάνει λόγο για ἀγγέλους στους ουρανοὺς που προστατεύουν τα ἀθῶα παιδιά και που βλέπουν συνεχῶς το πρόσωπο του Θεοῦ. Στην Παλαιά Διαθήκη διαβάζουμε **«παρεμβαλεὶ ἄγγελος Κυρίου κύκλω τῶν φοβουμένων Αὐτὸν καὶ ῥύσεται αὐτούς» (Ψαλ. 33:8)**. Δηλ. Ἄγγελος Κυρίου στρατοπεδεύει γύρω ἀπὸ ἐκείνους που φοβούνται το Θεό και τους γλυτώνει ἀπὸ κάθε κακό.

Βέβαια οι πιο πολλοί ἀπὸ μας που ζούμε και σκεφτόμαστε πολὺ υλικά, εἴμαστε ἀνίκανοι να ἀντιληφθοῦμε μια τέτοια ἀγγελικὴ παρουσία στη ζωή μας. Ὅσοι ὄμως πιστεύουν και ἐφαρμόζουν στη ζωή τους τη διδασκαλία της Εκκλησίας μας, ἔχουν πολλὰ να μας πουν για αὐτὴ τη συχνὴ ἐπικοινωνία του ουρανοῦ με τη γη. Πολλοί πιστοὶ ἔχουν να λένε για πολλὰ θαύματα που τους ἔγιναν μέσω του φύλακα ἀγγέλου τους. Ἀν ὄμως ο ἄνθρωπος ἐπιμένει στο κακό, τότε ο ἀγγελός του ἀπομακρύνεται. Δηλ. τον διώχνουμε με τα πονηρά μας ἔργα.

Οι ἄγγελοι εἶναι οι 'μεγαλύτεροι ἀδερφοὶ μας'. Εἶναι ἔτοιμοι να μας βοηθήσουν στον ἀγῶνα μας κατὰ των δαιμόνων. Ἐμπνέουν θάρρος και παρηγοριά, χωρὶς εμεῖς να το καταλάβουμε.

Τέλος προτείνουμε, ὄλοι να διαβάσουμε το Μικρὸ Ἀπόδειπνο της Εκκλησίας μας. Στο τέλος του ὑπάρχει μια εἰδικὴ προσευχὴ στον φύλακα ἀγγέλο. Ἀξίζει να την μελετήσουμε και να την λέμε τακτικά.



# Current Issues

## The Needs of the Soul Determine our Behaviour

Every human being, irrespective of race, colour, ethnic background or educational status, has certain **inner basic needs**, which must be satisfied if he is to feel content in this world. In fact he should be able to enjoy life, though the nature of enjoyment differs from person to person. In this article we deal with the three major such needs, which dominate the inner world of the human being.

### 1. To love and to be loved.

To be the recipient of love, and to be capable to offer love, is the dominant need of the human soul. This need, can be expressed in various forms, e.g. as friendship, love of parents, love for the family, and so on. This leads us to perform certain activities so as to satisfy our need for love. We need to learn to evaluate our mistakes, to be ready to admit them, and to make every effort to put them right, and preferably not to repeat them. If we neither evaluate our behaviour nor try to improve it, we are bound to suffer as much as *when we do not love or are not loved*.

Our health and our happiness depend on our ability to satisfy this need. The famous German philosopher Heine, has said: **to be unable to love**, is the greatest misfortune that can befall a human being.

### 2. To feel that we are of value (to have self-esteem).

Equally important to the need of love, is the feeling that **we are of value** to ourselves, as well as to others. The person who loves others and is loved, feels that he has value. And equally, he who feels he has value *is a man who loves* and at the same time *capable to offer love*. But, this does not appear to happen always.

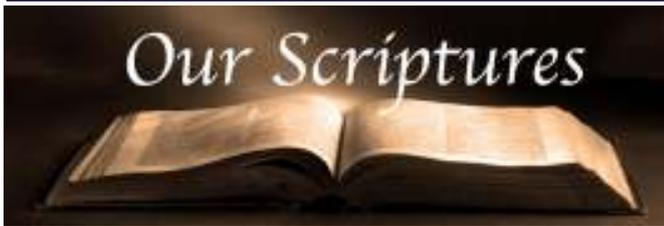
Children who have all their desires satisfied by their parents, cannot distinguish whether this is due to parental love, or to their own behaviour approved by their parents. The result is they cannot develop *the feeling of being*



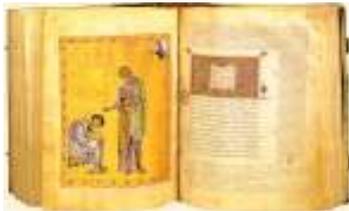
*of value* - they cannot *develop self-esteem*. This happens when, contrary to appearances, their parents do not in fact love their children, because they have an ulterior motive: for instance, they may want to be left alone to enjoy themselves. What, however, can be worse is for the parent or parents to try to secure the exclusive and life-long attachment of the children to themselves. The result being there would be no one else in the life of the children to stand by them, prepared to support them later on in their life.

### 3. Responsibility.

For a person to **be responsible** is the result of the feeling that **one has value**. When a responsible person promises to do something for someone else, he will do what is asked of him for the sake of the other person, spurred by the feeling of **his own value** and **self-esteem**. Fortunately, many people who behave responsibly do try to create an environment within which they attempt to pass on this principle mostly by their own example, as well as by teaching it, though their teaching should not be different from their own practice. Those who should pay heed to this point include in particular parents, teachers, clerics, and others in position of authority. ❌



## Gospel Reading November 2<sup>nd</sup> (Luke 16: 19-31) The Rich Man and Lazarus



A number of messages can be drawn from the severe contrast this parable presents between the earthly lives of the rich man and Lazarus and also their experiences in the next life.

The first message is that there is a life after death and that what we do in our earthly lives will determine how we will experience eternity. It was not the rich man's wealth as such that condemned him. The reference to Lazarus being carried by angels to "Abraham's bosom" (Luke 16: 22) (Abraham was a wealthy man during his earthly life) confirms that wealth, when used properly and in accordance with God's will, does not deprive a person of the eternal kingdom. Rather, it is the misuse of wealth, especially as a means to super-feed one's egoism and self-centredness that results in the loss of the eternal kingdom.

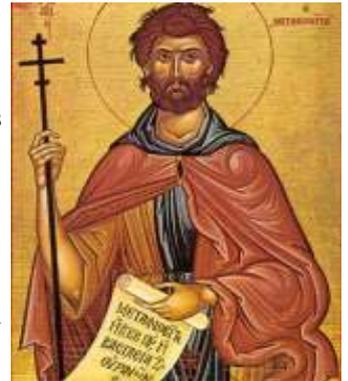
Lazarus lived just outside the rich man's door. Yet the rich man gave no consideration to helping him, not even to the extent of sharing with Lazarus the left-overs from his sumptuous table. The rich man lived only for himself and the satisfaction of his own desires. The parable makes clear the consequences of this way of living. As well as poisoning the soul, it ultimately de-humanizes the person. This is confirmed by the fact that the parable does not even mention the rich man by name, thereby confirming that self-centred and egotistic living results in the loss of one's true personal identity.

Much can also be learnt from Lazarus' experience. No explanation is given as to why Lazarus suffered such misery during his earthly existence. Lazarus (whose name means "God is my helper") confirms by his example that with God's help, a person can choose how to respond to the afflictions of life. When we see such afflictions in the context of eternity, in other words as experiences that will eventually pass away, and when we respond to them with patience and without grumbling and blaming God, then we will certainly convert them into an eternal victory. ✠



## Holy Father Nikon the Preacher of Repentance Commemorated on November 26<sup>th</sup>

Born in 930 AD near Pontus, Nikon had a privileged upbringing. He witnessed the laborious toils of the field-workers on his father's estate as a child and contemplating this as he grew, he realised that working hard on a field or living comfortably and wealthy, all people will go to the grave in the end - in the hands of



God. Nikon decided to become a monk and joined the Monastery of the Golden Stone, located on the borders of Pontus in the north-east of today's Turkey. He shrugged off the anxieties of the world and began a life of self-denial, complete obedience and humility.

After two years, the young monk was given the blessing to withdraw to a cell alone. Nikon wept every day for his unworthiness, so that the floor of his cell was always damp. After twelve years, God revealed to Nikon's spiritual father that it was time for Nikon to serve as a preacher to communities in need. Taking nothing with him, Nikon bade farewell to the brethren of the monastery and took to the road, barefoot and without concern for food and shelter. Everywhere he went, he preached - emphasising the importance of repentance. After three years, he took a boat to Crete, which had been regained by the Byzantine Empire in 961 from the rule of the Arabs. The piratical state that the Iberian Muslims had established left Crete hostile to Christianity. Nikon spent seven years restoring the Christian spirit there before moving to the mainland of Greece, sporadically travelling to nearby islands. St Nikon worked many miracles during this time. When he began to build a church in Sparta, necessary materials and food for the workmen miraculously appeared.

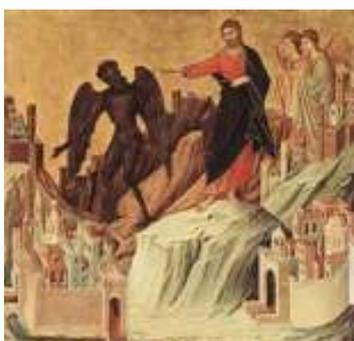
People who came into contact with St Nikon never wanted to leave his company. His wise counsels enlightened and comforted all those around him so that crowds flocked to his side. In his last words to his disciples, he urged them to let go of their pride and regularly confess in order to keep their dearest possession: love for God. ✠

# Questions & Answers

A clergyman of our Archdiocese answers ...

## Where does evil come from?

The ultimate source of evil is the devil. The Bible tells us that the devil was once an angel of light, who fell because of pride. The devil tempts us, but we are free, and it is up to us whether we fall for the devil's traps. The devil is very cunning, so we need to be vigilant and watchful. The Apostle Peter warns us: **"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour"** (1 Peter 5:8). We must not be complacent, believing we are good and that we will never fall into the devil's traps, we should not underestimate how clever the devil is, **"Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall"** (1 Corinthians 10:12).



The Church Fathers tell us that as well as the devil, evil can come for two other sources: from the world and from us.

The world was created by God and is good and beautiful. When the Bible and Church Fathers talk about the world as an enemy, they are referring to the worldly mindset. A worldly mindset is one that is superficial, that emphasizes what has only short term value and not what has eternal value, a focus on money, or looks, or material things, the opinions of other people, human glory and prestige. Worldly people can become very busy: with their work, social commitments, etc. Not that it is bad to work etc, but there is a problem when there is no time for our spiritual development.

The Bible is quite clear that the "world" can lead us astray. In Romans 12:2 we read, **"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind"** - the Apostle Paul is encouraging us not to conform, take the "form" of this world. The Apostle Paul's advice is not to necessarily leave the world, but to not let the world entangle us: **"No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life"** (2 Timothy 2:4). In James 1:27 we read, **"Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world"**. It is significant that St James, defining religion, emphasizes two things, doing works of love, and not allowing the world to stain us. Later, in James 4:4 we read, **"Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a**

**friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God."**

The other source of evil is us. Our passions drag us away from **God**, do not allow us to progress in prayer and in the spiritual life, and lead, sooner or later, to our misery. Because we give in to our passions we cannot see God: **"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God"** (Matthew 5:8). Our passions also result in us hurting other people, even

those we love the most. The following is a list of some of the passions, it is not complete:

- Gluttony (greediness in eating)
- Lust (uncontrolled and unlawful sexual desire)
- Avarice (greed for money)
- Judging others, not forgiving them, bitterness, grudges
- Hatred
- Anger
- Lying
- Insensitivity (hard heartedness, forgetfulness)
- Ακηδία - difficult to translate, probably best translated "listlessness"- so being lazy, the opposite of zeal and enthusiasm
- Vainglory (caring about what others think of us)
- Pride. Pride is described by St John of the Ladder as "the denial of God's assistance, the extolling of one's own exertions, demonic in character." Those with pride just care about themselves, cannot benefit from constructive criticism, and tend to blame others, even if they are at fault.

Fr D. K. ✠



## Miracles of our Times

### St Nectarios and the village in Romania

In a village of Romania, the people constantly pleaded with their Patriarch to send them a priest. Unfortunately, the Patriarch had no priest to send, and since no priest was in the village, no Sacraments or Liturgies could be performed: no marriages, baptisms or funerals.



One day a car pulled up outside the village church and out came a priest. The villagers were surprised but pleased. They warmly welcomed him and asked how the Patriarch was able to send him when he told them he had no extra priests. He answered: "Didn't you want a priest? Look, I have come". He began immediately to perform Sacraments and serve the Divine Liturgy for the faithful to participate in Holy Communion.

One day he told the people he had completed his work and had to leave. The villagers did not want him to go, but he insisted. So they thanked the priest and reluctantly farewelled him. Shortly afterwards, the villagers visited the Patriarch and thanked him for sending them a priest, asking if he could also send another. The Patriarch however was confused and told them he did not send a priest. He rang his vicar-general, who also confirmed that no priest was sent.

The patriarch then asked the villagers what did the priest do in the village? They told him that he performed marriages, baptisms, funerals, and whatever else a priest does. The Patriarch enquired if he left any paper records for these Sacraments. "Of course", said the villagers, "He left them in the parish records". "Did you see what he wrote? With what name did he sign?" The people responded that the papers were in Romanian but the signature was in a foreign language. He asked to see the papers. When the villagers returned, the Patriarch couldn't believe his eyes when he saw that that the paperwork was written in Romanian, expect for the priest's signature which was written in Greek:

*Nectarios, Bishop of Pentapolis*

Sources:

<http://www.johnsanidopoulos.com/2009/11/unbelievable-yet-true-miracle-of-saint.html>, and  
[http://ierosnaosagandreou.blogspot.com.au/2009/10/blog-post\\_1466.html](http://ierosnaosagandreou.blogspot.com.au/2009/10/blog-post_1466.html)



## The Massacre June 14

In 1944, the Head of the International Red Cross in Greece, the Swede Sture Linner, wrote the following account in his book "My Odyssey"<sup>1</sup>.

*On June 14, Emil Santrom, chair of the Greek Committee, showed me a telegram he had just received: The Germans had been slaughtering for three days the people of Distomo, near Delphi, and then they burned the village down. If there were any survivors, they would be in need of immediate assistance.*

*Distomo was within the region of my responsibility for the supply of food and medicines. ... It was dawn by the time we finally reached the main road that led to Distomo.*

*Vultures were rising slowly and hesitantly at a low height from the sides of the road when they heard us coming. For hundreds of yards along the road, human bodies were hanging from every tree, pierced with bayonets – some were still alive.*

*They were the villagers, who were punished this way – they were suspected of providing help to the guerillas of the region, who had ambushed us.*

*The odor was unbearable.*

*In the village the last remnants of the houses were still burning. Hundreds of dead bodies lay on the dirt... We descended in the midst of the disaster and yelled in Greek: "Rescue us!"*

*From the distance a woman approached with hesitation. She told us that only a few were left. She said that she and her we started searching for them.*

*Not long after this horrific massacre, our connection with Distomo would conclude.*

*When the German occupation forces were forced to leave Greece, things did not get better in the same area, at Distomo. I thought that this might be taken by the Greeks and their lorries, I wired to Distomo word of our planned arrival, and we found ourselves welcomed.*

*When we reached the outskirts of the village, we were met by a committee led by a man with a long beard. Next to him the guerilla captain, fully armed. The priest spoke first and said: "We are all starving here, both us and the German prisoners. Now, though we are free, they are also far from their country. Give them the food you have with you, they will be grateful."*

*I was just standing there weeping....*

<sup>1</sup> *Min Odysse*, by Sture Linner (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1982). Unfortunately, I found the text from an on-line translation at [http://www.greece.org/blogs/wwii/?page\\_id=1466](http://www.greece.org/blogs/wwii/?page_id=1466)



# The Church at Prayer, 1944



and an SS unit.

dead bodies of people of all ages, from elderly to newborns, were strewn around on the road. Red Cross! Red Cross! We came to help!"

A handful of villagers managed to escape before the attack began. Together with

include with this remarkable epilogue.

go as planned for them. A German unit was surrounded by guerillas exactly in the way I had planned. It was an opportunity for a bloody revenge... I loaded with food necessities a few trucks on the same road, once again.

by the elderly priest. He was an old fashioned patriarch, with a long, wavy, white beard. He thanked us on behalf of everybody for the food supplies. Then he added: "We are famished, we are at least in our land. The Germans have not just lost the war; they have a long way ahead."

the book is not available in English, and we have reproduced the account in Greek. 

## book review

### The Church at Prayer – The Mystical Liturgy of the Heart.

By Archimandrite Aimilianos of Simonopetra.  
Published by Indiktos, Athens, 2005.

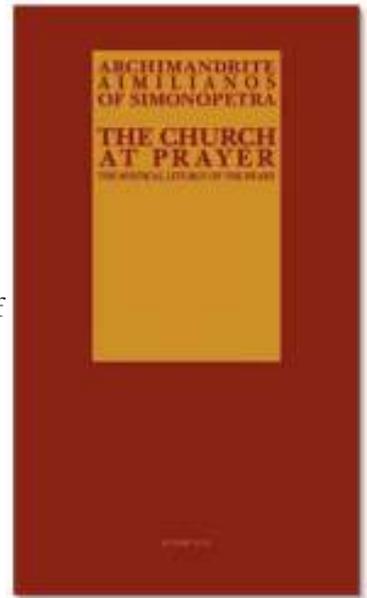
*"Let us leave the earth below and let us become like flames of fire, so that we too can ascend to where God is."*

**T**he Church at Prayer' is a book compiled of various sermons delivered by the Athonite Elder at various monasteries and parishes in Greece and Cyprus. Elder Aimilianos discusses some of the most important aspects of our lives as Orthodox Christians, with chapters on Prayer, the Divine Liturgy, Spiritual Study, and the Spiritual life.

The first chapter is on Prayer. The Elder details how we can approach God in prayer, even though we have made Him so far away from us. This is when we need to cry out to God *"so that he will take pity on me and answer me."*

In the chapter 'The Divine Liturgy,' Elder Aimilianos explains this *"window of Heaven"* that we experience every week, but perhaps take for granted. He analyses the major parts of the Liturgy expressing in such beautiful language how every prayer and hymn that we hear and chant is truly an experience of the Kingdom of Heaven. The chapter reaches its climax when the Elder expresses how important it is for us to *"set our heart on fire with the flame of His love"* at the completion of every liturgy so that it may *"burn up within us everything that is rotten, and which will cleanse us in preparation for eternal life."*

One of the greatest problems many Orthodox Christians face today is that we do not know God personally. 'The Church at Prayer', written by such a Holy Elder of our times, shows us how we are to approach Christ Himself through the Divine Liturgy and Prayer: these awesome gifts that God has given us! 



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# Το Ηρωικό Έπος Της 28ης Οκτωβρίου 1940

**Τ**ο ΟΧΙ που αντέταξε ο τότε Πρωθυπουργός της Ελλάδος Ιωάννης Μεταξάς στον θρασύδειλο Ιταλό Πρέσβη ήταν απροσδόκητο όσο και αυθόρμητο. Κατέπληξε «Ουρανόν τε και Γην και τα καταχθόνια». Μόνον ο Πάνσοφος Θεός το γνώριζε. Θούριο έγινε σε χίλια μύρια ΟΧΙ σαν ανέβαινε στο Ιερό Ελλαδικό Στερέωμα και έσμιγε μ' Αγγελικές δοξολογίες στις κωδωνοκρουσίες στις Εκκλησιές μας. Ήταν αφύπνιση τριών χιλιάδων χρόνων ιστορίας της Ελληνικής Ψυχής. Όλες οι τρέχουσες ιδεολογικές και αθεϊστικές και κάθε είδους αλλοπρόσαλλες παγκόσμιες καταστάσεις έμειναν στο περιθώριο άφωνες και βουβές. Διαποτισμένη όπως ήταν με τις Αιώνιες Παναθρώπινες Αξίες βροντοφώναζε και πάλι με τα στόματα των φαντάρων μας: «υπέρ βωμών και εστιών» και «νυν υπέρ πάντων ο αγών» και «παίδες Ελλήνων ίτε!» Με την Υπέρμαχο Παναγία και την Αγία Της Σκέπη Πρόμαχο, απίστευτο Θαύμα ξετυλίγονταν μπροστά στα έκθαμβα μάτια εχθρών και «φίλων». Όμως το Θαύμα δεν κράτησε πολύ. Οι σκοτεινές δυνάμεις διαίρεσαν για πολλοστή φορά τον άμοιρο Λαό μας. Δυχόνοια, εμφύλιος σπαραγμός κατακρεούργησαν κάθε καλό και καταρράκωσαν τα πάντα. Και συνεχίζεται αυτό μέχρι των ημερών μας. Σαν αόρατη καταχνιά διεισδύουν οι δίχως Θεό πια ακολασίες σε όλη την υφήλιο, καθώς και σε εμάς τους Έλληνες, που θα έπρεπε να ξέρουμε καλλίτερα. Έσβησε τάχα για πάντα το Αθάνατο Ελληνικό Πνεύμα; Όχι βέβαια, γιατί Αθάνατη είναι η Ελληνορθόδοξη Πίστη μας, αυτό το ατίμητο διαμάντι, «και Πήλαι Άδου ου κατισχύσουσιν αυτήν». Είναι ζωντανή και βιωματική με Αγίους και σήμερα όπως και σε όλους τους αιώνες. Ζουν ανάμεσά μας και τώρα, όπως ο άγιος Πορφύριος με αυτόπτες μάρτυρες όλα του τα



πνευματικά παιδιά. Ο Γέροντας Παΐσιος, που και αυτός έχει χιλιάδες πνευματικά του τέκνα. Υπάρχουν ευσεβείς γονείς και άγιοι, άγνωστοι εν πολλοίς, που είναι φυτώριο τέκνων του μέλλοντος αγαπητά. Αυτοί είναι που παίρνουν την σκυτάλη της Πίστης και της Λευτεριάς. Λευτεριάς, που προτάσσουν με το δικό τους ΟΧΙ στα θέληγτρα και στις όποιες απειλές στο ηθικό τους ανάστημα.

Μας προσκαλούν και μας προκαλούν μαζί τους να ξαναζωντανέψουμε το «θαύμα» του 1940, ελεύθεροι από ξένες επιρροές και συμφέροντα. Ζητούν και περιμένουν να ανταποκριθούμε με μια κατακλυσμιαία συρροή στο διαδίκτυο γενικά και του τεύχους αυτού και σε συγγενείς και φίλους. Μια καταμέτρηση, ένας απολογισμός για να καταδείξουμε πόσοι, επί τέλους, είμαστε ομόθυμοι, ομόαιμοι, ομόψυχοι στην Πίστη, στις Αρχές και στις Αξίες μας ανά τον κόσμο. Να βροντοφωνήσουμε με μια φωνή και μια καρδιά το καταδικό μας ΟΧΙ «Τοις κείνων ρήμασι πειθόμενοι». ❌

## 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.**





## Bless the LORD, O my Soul!

Psalm 102 (103)

«Εὐλόγει, ἡ ψυχὴ μου, τὸν Κύριον»

Psalm 102 (103 in English Bibles) is a poetic prayer read (and sometimes chanted) in the Orthodox Church at the beginning of the service of Vespers.

In this Psalm, the Psalmist meditates on the various parts of God's Creation: the heavens and the earth, the mountains, the valleys and the water which passes through them, the ministering angels, the diversity of plants and animals including the cattle, the cedars of Lebanon, the young lions who snatch their prey, the sparrows and their nests, and finally humanity. God's love runs through all of creation: "When You open Your hand, all things shall be filled with goodness (v28).

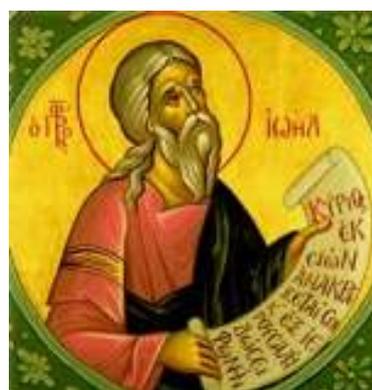
The Psalmist suggests a cooperation between God's work and humanity's work, especially in regards to the land: "You are He who causes grass to grow for the cattle, and the green plant for the service of man. To bring forth bread from the earth; And wine gladdens the heart of man, to brighten his face with oil; and bread strengthens man's heart" (v14-15).

Towards the end of the Psalm, the Holy Spirit is revealed as the one Who works in the world: "You shall send for Your Spirit, and they shall be created, And you shall renew the face of the earth" (v30).

Finally, the Psalmist finishes with a personal promise to God: "I will sing to the LORD all my life; I will sing to my God as long as I exist; May my words be pleasing to Him, and I shall be glad in the LORD... Bless the LORD, O my soul." (v33- 35).



## The Prophet Joel



Nothing certain is known of the life of the holy Prophet Joel outside of his book of the Old Testament. The Book of Joel is very short, but contains a very important prophecy relating to the events that occurred on Pentecost: "I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh; your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions" (Joel 3:1).

The promise of the Holy Spirit is followed by a prophecy that the good news shall be proclaimed by those whom the Lord calls. This perhaps heralds the evangelisation of the gentiles which is recorded in the Book of Acts.

The central message of the Book is that "the day of The Lord draws near" (Joel 1:15) and that repentance is needed. The Prophet calls for the trumpet to sound in Zion and for a proclamation to be made in the mountain. All must be made aware of the darkness and gloom that is to come. He calls for the people to turn back to God with all their hearts because He is merciful and compassionate.

Repentance will save the Lord's people from captivity. The captivity of the unrepentant is relevant for us as it was for the Israelites. Put simply, it means that if we fail to repent for our sins, then we become slaves to our own pride and we become confident that God is not necessary in our lives. Joel's message that the day of the Lord is near, is never old. Those that are unrepentant will not be ready for judgment and their mourning will be too late.

We should mourn for our sins and ask for forgiveness, not out of fear of God's judgment, but because without such repentance we will be caught up in the captivity and blindness of our own pride.





## What we Hear in Church



## FROM THE HOLY FATHERS...

### Alleluia - Ἀλληλουῖα



The use of the exclamation, “*Alleluia*” was inherited by the first Christians from Hebrew worship. It means, “God be praised” or “Praise God”. In the Orthodox Church it is in itself an exclamation as well as an exhortation to praise God. It is used throughout all the prayers and services of the Orthodox Church. However, its deeper significance is derived from its use in the Holy Liturgy which is the pre-eminent service of worship in the Orthodox Church and the source for all the other Church Services.

In the Holy Liturgy, it is sung as a hymn of praise and greeting just before the reading of the Gospel, which is in itself, according to the long patristic tradition of the Orthodox Church, the Word of God, Christ Himself.

Father Alexander Schmemmann, writing about the singing of the Alleluia before the Gospel reading, says that “*its logical content can of course be translated with the words “praise God”, but by this content it is not exhausted.... for the word itself is a transport of joy and praise before the appearance of the Lord, a “reaction” to his coming.*”<sup>1</sup>

St Nicholas Cabasilas furthers this explanation by commenting that “*before the presence of Christ on Earth, it was not possible for man to be joyful because only Christ brought us joy. Whoever was joyful on Earth before His arrival, was joyful because they had become initiated into His Mystery.*”<sup>2</sup>

In our Church Services, this joy can be expressed in the triumphant singing of 'Alleluia' as a refrain to celebratory psalm verses sung at the beginning of the Ὁρθρος-Matins service during a long vigil-αγρυπνία service. It is also shown in a more solemn manner, with the slow, contrite singing of the 'Alleluia' at the start of the Holy Week evening services.

Christ Himself is the rejoicing created in the souls of the gathered faithful. We mimic the angelic ranks, circling the throne of God. Just as it is “*joy, rejoicing, elation and glory for the Angels*”<sup>3</sup>, it is the same experience for us, united in the liturgical act of our Church.

<sup>1</sup> A. Schmemmann, *The Eucharist, SVSP*, Crestwood NY, 1988 p.75

<sup>2</sup> St Nicholas Cabasilas, *A Commentary on the Divine Liturgy*.

<sup>3</sup> St John Chrysostom, *Homily 1 on Isaiah 6* “I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up” ❖

### St John of Kronstadt

#### Entrance of the Theotokos in the Temple

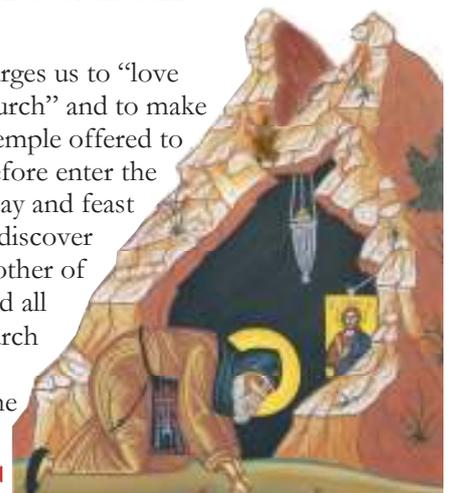
In his homily on the Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos (November 21), St John of Kronstadt (1828-1908) asks “How did the most blessed Virgin spend her time in the Temple?” He notes just four things, and pleads with us to imitate the Theotokos in these, adding that the Church is the “school of faith and piety” which we too, like her, must make the centre of our life.



First he states that she spent her time learning how to pray directly by the Holy Spirit, showing us with what “warmth of heart and love we must pray to the Lord”. Next, he notes that the Theotokos spent time reading the word of God, and encourages us also to study the Scriptures, for in them the mysteries of God are revealed. Third the Virgin spent time in divine contemplation, teaching us that we too must “love the Lord, our Creator, more than anything else in the world... more than anyone dear to us”. Finally, she spent time doing handiwork, showing us “how we must dedicate ourselves to Him [the Lord] wholeheartedly” and to “entrust our fate to His wise and all good Providence”.

St John of Kronstadt goes on to say that as Christians we are called to become “heavenly citizens, divine inheritors and co-inheritors with Christ”. In order to achieve this calling, he states that the Church assists us by offering heavenly peace necessary for prayer, the Holy Bible for education, strength for spiritual labour through the Holy Mysteries, and, the lives of the Saints as examples.

In conclusion, he urges us to “love going to God’s Church” and to make ourselves a living temple offered to God. May we therefore enter the Church every Sunday and feast day, where we will discover the Saviour, the Mother of God, the Saints, and all things that the Church offers in order to form us, as it did the Virgin, into vessels of divine grace. ❖





## The Kandili – Vigil Lamp

The pace of family life today has become undeniably hectic. The vigil lamp (κωνδήλι) serves as a means to slow us down. When the family, 'the little church', comes together in prayer in front of the iconostasis, it should be a haven, a shutting out of the outside world and an entry into a world of peace.



The kandili is a necessity for ALL Orthodox homes and should be kept alight at all times. It is placed on our iconostasis in front of our icons as a reminder that Jesus Christ is the light of the world and He illumines all.

The Lord also tells His disciples "You are the light of the world... Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matt 5:14-16).

When lighting the kandili, we need to be attentive. We should clear our minds of all thoughts and recite the Jesus Prayer. We use the best possible olive oil as our offering to God and allow a small, steady flame which does not flicker. The oil used symbolises the infinite mercy of God and is derived from the Greek word for oil - ἐλαιον - meaning mercy.

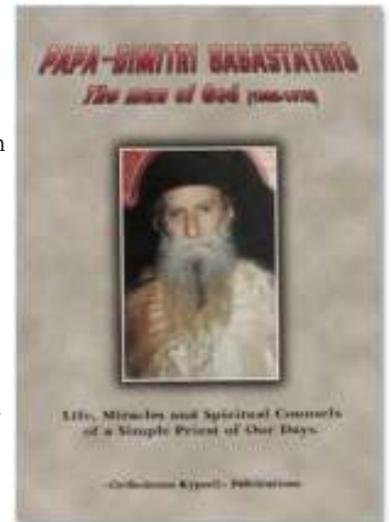
Of the many reasons we light the kandili the following are most significant:

1. To remind us of the need for prayer;
2. To remind us that Christ is the only true light;
3. To illuminate the space and drive away the darkness; and,
4. For the love and honour of His Saints whose light shines according to the Word of God.

We are all given talents to be used for the glory of God throughout our journey toward salvation. If we utilise them to the best of our ability, they become part of that light which enlightens our world. ❌

## Papa-Dimitri Gagastathis – The Man of God (1902-1975) Published by Orthodox Kypseli, 1977.

Many people are embarrassed or even offended by the thought that others might characterize them as simple. Even as Orthodox Christians, we may admire simplicity in others but we seldom make a conscious effort to nurture it in ourselves, forgetting that the Lord said plainly "unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 18:3).



Papa-Dimitri (1902-1975) lived in the small village of Platanos on the Thessalian plain. He grew up in a poor family with 11 children. In May 1931, he was ordained to the priesthood, and served in the Church of the Archangels, the parish of his youth. In 1966 he was diagnosed with cancer. An operation in 1969 provided him a few years' reprieve, but the disease returned, finally claiming his life on January 29, 1975.

Father Dimitrios was a simple man chosen by God to enlighten others in the dark days of war torn Greece. He had no education and could not even conduct a proper sermon. In his great simplicity and love for God, he became worthy of receiving God's grace abundantly and became a living sermon himself. He lived amidst the cares and problems of everyday life that beset us all. At the same time, through his great love and devotion to God, his childlike purity of heart, meekness and humility, he lived effectively among the Saints in Heaven.

The life, miracles and spiritual counsels of Fr Dimitri are divided into three sections in this book, which contains interesting short stories and pictures from his life. He is an example and guide for all of us. His humility is exemplified in the way he referred to himself: "If you learn that I left this world, don't get sad, but rather be happy because the Church will have gotten rid of the most sinful and unlearned priest of the era"! ❌

# NEWS and VIEWS

## Sunday School Camp

On the 23-25<sup>th</sup> September, this year's annual Sunday School Camp took place in Somersby, near Gosford, in which a total of 59 children, primarily aged between 10 and 12 years, along with 14 teachers, spent three wonderful days together. The camp motto was 'Parables', with the 'The Great Banquet' being the overall theme. Fittingly, the Divine Liturgy on Wednesday morning, with Abbot Eusebios and the Fathers from Pantanassa Monastery, was the spiritual highlight of the Camp. We have now entered the second decade in which these annual Sunday School Camps have been taking place, and both children and adults thank the Lord for this great blessing.



This year's participants of Sunday School Camp with Abbot Eusebios following the Divine Liturgy Service.

## Sunday School Picnic

On the long-weekend of Monday 6<sup>th</sup> October, the Sunday Schools of Sydney held their combined annual Sunday School Picnic at Lachlan Reserve, Centennial Park. Along with the excellent weather, the event was especially blessed with the presence of His Eminence Archbishop Stylianos and with His Grace Bishop Iakovos, who both addressed the children, as well as numerous clergy, and crowds of parents and children who all thoroughly enjoyed the day!



His Eminence Archbishop Stylianos and His Grace Bishop Iakovos with children at this year's Sunday School Picnic.

## Ladies' Fellowship Retreat

On the weekend of October 10-12, the Greek Orthodox Ladies Fellowships of Sydney held their Annual Retreat at the Rathane Convention Centre in the Royal National Park, about one hour south of Sydney. The highlight of the Retreat was the Divine Liturgy officiated by Fr Eusebios, Abbot of Pantanassa Monastery. Against the beautiful scenic settings of the Royal National Park, the ladies thoroughly enjoyed their brief Retreat, firmly deepening their Christian fellowship with each other. ✠



The participants at this year's Ladies Fellowship Retreat, along with Fathers Eusebios and Nectarios from Pantanassa Monastery.

**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**

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