



ΛΥΧΝΟΣ

A GREEK ORTHODOX PERIODICAL FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

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

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The Angelic Hosts



Angels were created as the most perfect reflections of God's grandeur and glory. In Scripture they can be seen as heralds of God's will, guides, and ministers of our salvation. We also see that they are innumerable, whereby "a thousand thousands ministered to Him and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him" (Daniel 7:10).

According to St Dionysius the Areopagite in his work *On the Heavenly Hierarchy*, the angelic hosts are triadic in structure, like God, and are divided into three orders with three ranks of angels in each order. Each rank has a name corresponding to the property of God it exhibits, and each property is transmitted from the higher orders to the lower. The three orders and nine angelic ranks can be summarised as follows:

Lower Orders

Angels (Ἄγγελοι) are the lowest of all the heavenly orders and the closest to man. They announce the lesser mysteries and intentions of God, and teach people to live virtuously and righteously before God. At Baptism, each person receives as a life long companion a guardian angel from this rank.

Archangels (Ἀρχάγγελοι) are the heralds of good news: they reveal prophecies, knowledge, and understanding of God's will. They strengthen people in Faith, enlightening their mind with the light of knowledge of the Holy Gospel and revealing the mysteries of God.

Principalities (Ἀρχές) receive their name as they are wholly turned towards the Prince of Princes. They are entrusted with the management of the universe and the keeping of all the kingdoms, lands and all people, races and nations.



Middle Orders

Virtues (Ἐξουσίες – lit. authorities) perpetuate God's beauty and send down the grace of miracle-working to those worthy. They help people labouring and those overburdened by troubles, bearing the infirmities of the weak and strengthening all in virtue.

Powers (Δυνάμεις) maintain peace and harmony. They restrain the demons and repulse the temptations brought upon people by the fallen angels. They help those wrestling with passions and vices to cast out evil thoughts.

Dominions (Κυριότητες – lit. lordships) dominate over the lower ranks of angels, and preside

over nations. They transmit God's forgiveness and mercy and perpetually send power to the other ranks for prudent governing and wise management. They teach how to control the senses, how to subdue desires and how to rule over one's will to overcome temptations.

Higher Orders

Thrones (Θρόνοι) reflect God's righteous judgment. They serve His justice, glorifying it and pouring it out onto all other ranks, down to our earthly judges and masters to help them bring forth right judgment.

The many-eyed **Cherubim** (Χερουβείμ – lit. out-flowing wisdom) are radiant with the knowledge of the mysteries of God and the depths of His wisdom. They transmit the knowledge of God down to other ranks and humans and spiritually enlighten them to "see" God.

Seraphim (Σεραφεῖμ – lit. flaming) are aflame with love for God "for our God is a consuming fire" (Heb 12:29). Being closest of all angelic ranks to God, they kindle others to the love of God.



Η Τιμία Σκέπη της Υπεραγίας Θεοτόκου

Στις 28 του Οκτώβρη η Εκκλησία μας μαζί με την Εθνική επέτειο για την ιστορική νίκη του στρατού μας εναντίον των Ιταλών στη Βόρειο Ήπειρο το 1940, συμπανηγυρίζει και τη γιορτή της Τιμίας Σκέπης της Υπεραγίας Θεοτόκου. Η γιορτή της Αγίας Σκέπης γιορτάζονταν για αιώνες την 1η του Οκτώβρη.



Σκέπη πανταχού παρούσα. Να δυναμώσει το φρόνημα, να ενισχύσει τους απελπισμένους, να διασώσει τους άμεσα κινδυνεύοντας.

Στη συνέχεια παραθέτουμε αυτούσιο το απολυτίκιο της Αγίας Σκέπης της Θεοτόκου για πνευματική

οικοδομή των αναγνωστών.

Σύμφωνα με την ιερή παράδοση της Εκκλησίας μας, η Υπεραγία Θεοτόκος παρουσιάστηκε σε όραμα στο Ναό των Βλαχερνών στην Κωνσταντινούπολη. Ήταν 4:00 η ώρα το πρωί και γινόταν αργυρνία. Οι πιστοί παρακαλούσαν τη Παναγία των Βλαχερνών να τους προστατεύσει από τους βαρβάρους των Ρως. Τότε ακριβώς παρουσιάστηκε από ψηλά η Παναγία βαστώντας το ωμοφόριό της που το άπλωσε πάνω από τους προσευχόμενους πιστούς ως να τους προστάτευε με αυτή τη πράξη της. Το όραμα αυτό δεν το είδε ο λαός. Το είδε όμως ο Άγιος Ανδρέας ο κατά Χριστόν Σαλός και ο μαθητής του, ο μετέπειτα Άγιος Επιφάνιος.

Ήταν περίπου αρχές του 10ου αιώνα και από τότε καθιερώθηκε η ανάμνηση αυτού του οράματος να γιορτάζεται στη Ορθόδοξη Εκκλησία μας κάθε 1η του Οκτώβρη.

Από το 1952 όμως και μετέπειτα μεταφέρθηκε στις 28 του Οκτώβρη σύμφωνα με απόφαση της Ιεράς Συνόδου της Εκκλησίας της Ελλάδας, για να μη ξεχαστεί ποτέ η συμβολή της Υπερμάχου Στρατηγού μας, της Παναγίας μας, στις θαυμαστές νίκες των Ελλήνων στο έπος του 40.

Χωρίς αμφιβολία, η ηρωική απάντηση του Ελληνικού λαού στις κατακτητικές διαθέσεις των Ιταλών ήταν γεγονός υπεράνθρωπο που στηρίχτηκε πάνω στη δύναμη που μόνο ο Θεός δίνει στους ανθρώπους.

Πολυάριθμα τα προσωπικά αλλά και τα ομαδικά περιστατικά της θαυμαστής επέμβασης της Υπεραγίας Θεοτόκου στο Αλβανικό μέτωπο. Η ακαταίτητη προστασία της, η αμετάθετη μεσιτεία της, η Αγία της

«Τῆς Σκέπης σου Παρθένη, ἀνυμνοῦμεν τὰς χάριτας, ἦν ὡς φωτοφόρον νεφέλην, ἐφαπλοῖς ὑπὲρ ἔννοιαν, καὶ σκέπεις τὸν λαόν σου νοερῶς, ἐκ πάσης τῶν ἐχθρῶν ἐπιβουλῆς. Σὲ γὰρ σκέπην καὶ προστάτιν καὶ βοηθόν, κεκτῆμεθα βοῶντές σοι. Δόξα τοῖς μεγαλείοις σου Ἄγνη, δόξα τῇ θεῖᾳ Σκέπῃ σου, δόξα τῇ πρὸς ἡμᾶς σου, προμηθεΐᾳ Ἄχραντε».

Σ'αυτό το απολυτίκιο υπογραμμίζονται με λυρικό τρόπο οι παρακάτω αλήθειες:

- 1) Αναγνωρίζονται οι χάριτες και η στοργή της Θεομήτορος στο πλήρωμα της Εκκλησίας.
- 2) Η Παναγία εικονίζεται ως «φωτοφόρος νεφέλη» και μας παραπέμπει στη φωτεινή νεφέλη της Παλαιάς Διαθήκης που καθοδηγούσε τους Ισραηλίτες στη πορεία τους μέσα από την έρημο προ τη γη της επαγγελίας, δηλ. τον Παράδεισο. Οι πατέρες ερμηνεύουν πως εκείνη η φωτεινή νεφέλη ήταν το Άγιο Πνεύμα. Γι'αυτό η Παναγία ως «φωτοφόρος νεφέλη» ακτινοβολεί στους ανθρώπους την «επισκίασιν του Αγίου Πνεύματος».
- 3) Η Παναγία με τη παρουσία της σκεπάζει, προστατεύει και βοηθεί τους ανθρώπους σε κάθε περίπτωση και μάλιστα όταν απειλούνται τα αγαθά της ελευθερίας και της ειρήνης.
- 4) Τέλος, βιώνοντας οι πιστοί όλες τις χάριτες της Παναγίας, εκφράζουμε με τη δοξολογία μας τα μεγαλεία της, τη θεία Σκέπη της και τη πρόνοια και αγάπη της σε μας.

Μακάρι όλοι εμείς οι όπου γης Ορθόδοξοι, να γίνουμε μέτοχοι των θείων χαρίτων της!



Current Issues

Celebrating Without Meaning

On Saturday October 1st, the Grand Final contest between the two AFL teams in Melbourne, finally took place. The mass media portrayed "the electrifying atmosphere". The enthusiasm of the people was obvious by the colourful clothes of the fans, their laughter, singing and shouting, and particularly by the parade on the day before through the streets of Melbourne, attended by thousands of people. Victory went to the Western Bulldogs and the joy of players and their fans lasted for hours, and with the hard core of fans for days.

The whole affair celebrated a sports game, where its aim was victory-defeat, without any other meaningful purpose, such as a significant social, patriotic, religious or artistic event, which fills one's inner self with a feeling of pleasure, peace, soul satisfaction or an uplifting experience. Sport is now a dominant feature in the life of many people, which they follow with great dedication, and in so doing consider themselves sportspersons, people of healthy habits, physical well being, and clean living, even though they themselves do not play any of the sports they are supporters of and not a few come to imagine themselves as one or more of the sports heroes they admire - what is called in psychology, a process of projection. Their idols eventually become incorporated into their own personality, an imaginary experience which they enjoy!



The above event portrays more or less, what happens in many spheres of the life of our society. We pay attention to values and events of little or of no consequence for our lives. Sport of one form or another is looked at as important by many, as it acts as an emotional stimulant in the mundane life of most people. Other items include fashion, dressing according to the occasion, having our photos printed on the social pages of our newspapers, showing off our wealth, beauty, social standing, our power in some aspect of social life, making public scandals of our personal life (domestic problems, divorces, new attachments, etc), accompanied by the flowery descriptive language of the columnist, which make them appear as playful and light hearted matters.

The real problems for the majority of us are ignored, or passed over lightly, without any attempt to offer a meaningful solution. Consider the matters of youth suicide, drug use, delinquency, alcoholism, domestic violence, school problems, and many others. And as though these were not enough, we are now faced with a tsunami of social engineering, "Marriage Equality" and "Safe Schools".

The solution offered by politicians on the one hand, and those working in the field on the other, is the same: provision of money, more funding, more personnel and better organisation. No one makes an appeal to the inner person - to morality, personal responsibility, honesty, higher principles, faith, God!

When will we understand that there has never been a society that survived in the world without morality and spiritual values. Are we leaving ourselves and our children in a rudderless boat, travelling in the ocean of the future to an uncertain destination?





The Holy Unmercenaries, Cosmas and Damian

Commemorated November 1st

Saints Cosmas and Damian were brothers born in Ephesus in the 3rd century AD. Theodota, their mother, was raised a Christian and provided her sons an example of real, unconditional love. Cosmas and Damian became well educated and both dedicated themselves to the art of medicine. The Grace of God extended their art so that the pair cast out unclean spirits and spiritually healed those who approached them. People began to seek out the gifted brothers from all over, and each one found healing and comfort.

Having freely received the Holy Spirit, Cosmas and Damian tended to all people seeking nothing in return. Thus they are called unmercenaries, meaning unmaterialistic or non-commercial. In Greek the term is *anargyroi*, meaning adverse to silver. The pair practised *philotimo* (gratitude and service to all) everyday by living in devotion to others.

Saint Damian, the younger brother, was the first to pass away in peace from this temporal life, followed some time later by Saint Cosmas. Crowds came in a constant stream to the church built over their tomb in Fereman in Asia Minor. Their precious relics remain an abundant source of healing for the sick.

Saints Cosmas and Damian, and all the Holy Unmercenaries are invoked in the service of Holy Unction in the Orthodox Church. Hymns to them are traditionally chanted after the service while the faithful receive the Holy Oil.



Οι Άγιοι Ανάργυροι Κοσμάς και Δαμιανός

1 Νοεμβρίου

Οι Άγιοι Ανάργυροι Κοσμάς και Δαμιανός, γεννήθηκαν στην Έφεσο, κατά τον 3ο αιώνα μετά Χριστόν. Η μητέρα τους Θεοδότα, ανατράφηκε η ίδια σαν χριστιανή, και μεγάλωσε τα παιδιά της με πολύ αφοσίωση και πολύ αγάπη. Όταν μεγάλωσαν, ο Κοσμάς και Δαμιανός σπούδασαν την ιατρική επιστήμη, στην εξάσκηση της οποίας αφοσίωσαν την ζωή τους. Η Χάρη του Θεού τους συνόδευε στη εργασία τους, και έγιναν ικανοί να διώχνουν δαιμόνια από ανθρώπους που υπέφεραν απ' αυτά, και θεράπευαν και πνευματικά ακόμη και εκείνους που τους πλησίαζαν. Πολλοί ήταν εκείνοι που ερχόταν, ακόμη και από μακρινά μέρη, να παρακαλέσουν τους δύο διάσημους αδελφούς, για να εύρουν θεραπεία και την υγεία τους.

Έχοντας λάβει την δωρεά του Αγίου Πνεύματος, οι δυο αδελφοί θεράπευαν όλους τους αρρώστους δωρεάν, χωρίς να ζητούν τίποτε για τον εαυτό τους. Για τον λόγο αυτό ονομάστηκαν Ανάργυροι (δεν έπερναν **αργύρια**, δηλαδή χρήματα - because at that time all money was minted in Silver - άργυρος). Οι ίδιοι ζούσαν πολύ απλά και με αγάπη ο ένας προς τον άλλον.

Ο άγιος Δαμιανός, ο νεώτερος αδελφός, εκοιμήθη πρώτος εν Κυρίω, και μετά λίγα χρόνια ο άγιος Κοσμάς. Πολλοί άνθρωποι έρχονταν να επισκεφθούν τον Ναό που κτίστηκε επάνω στον τάφο τους, στη Fereman της Μικράς Ασίας. Τα πολύτιμα λείψανα τους εξακολουθούν να θεραπεύουν αρρώστους μέχρι τώρα.

Οι Άγιοι Κοσμάς και Δαμιανός αλλά και όλοι οι Άγιοι Ανάργυροι, αναφέρονται κατά την ακολουθία του Αγίου Ευχελαίου στην Εκκλησία μας. Μετά δε την ακολουθία ψάλλονται διάφοροι ύμνοι στους Αγίους καθώς οι πιστοί χριούνται με το Άγιο Έλαιον.

Την μνήμη των Αγίων Κοσμά και Δαμιανού η Εκκλησία την εορτάζει την 1η Νοεμβρίου.



Questions & Answers

A clergyman of our Archdiocese answers ...

Does what we eat affect us spiritually?

I would answer yes. If we are full, if we have eaten many desserts and in general a big meal, it is more difficult to pray. To progress in prayer and in general to progress spiritually we need above all to be humble and to love, we need faith, but also self-discipline and asceticism helps.

I feel that what you are asking about is fasting. If someone has significant medical problems or other hardships, then their spiritual father may advise them not to fast, or to fast in a modified way. Most of us, however, are encouraged by the Church to fast. This means that we do not eat certain foods on Wednesdays and Fridays, on Wednesday because of the unlawful council against Jesus and the betrayal of Judas on that day; and Friday is the day Jesus suffered and died on the Cross. There are also periods of the Church year that we are called upon to fast: before the great feasts of Pascha, Christmas, the Dormition of Panagia, and the feast of the Apostles. There are also the single-day fasts: on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, on the eve of Epiphany, and on the day commemorating the Beheading of St John the Baptist. When we fast we abstain from certain foods: this varies somewhat, but often consists of not having meat, dairy products, eggs, fish and on very strict fasts even oil. On fasting days we also try to not eat as much, to finish our meal a little before we are full.

Fasting is beneficial spiritually. Of course it can become even more beneficial if during fasting periods, as well as avoiding certain foods, we try extra hard to be spiritual.

In other words to put extra effort into prayer, reading of the Scriptures and spiritual books, being attentive during Church services, participating in the Sacraments, striving to do works of love, to bring others to Christ, to forgive, to be humble and patient. The *Sticheron* at Vespers on Wednesday of the First Week of Lent is as follows: "While fasting physically, brethren, let us also fast spiritually. Let us loose every knot of iniquity; let us tear up every unrighteous bond; let us distribute bread to the hungry, and welcome into our homes those who have no roof over their heads".

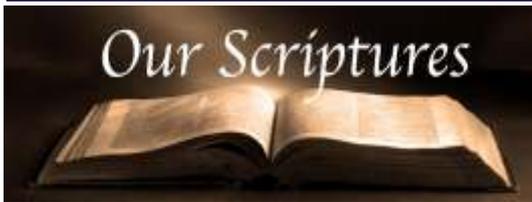
Fasting does affect us spiritually, and does help us. Fasting is a type of rebellion, a refusal to accept that I am just a body, and that the needs of my body are the only part of me. Fasting forces us to remind ourselves that there are higher aspects to our nature than just our bodily needs. Fasting is a spiritual discipline. As Fr Alexander Schmemmann wrote in his book *Great Lent*: "the purpose of fasting is to liberate man from the unlawful tyranny of the flesh, of that surrender of the spirit to the body and its appetites which is the tragic result of sin and the original fall of man. It is only by slow and patient effort that man discovers that he *'does not live by bread alone'* - that he restores in himself the primacy of the spirit".

In terms of how we see people around us who are not fasting, we need prudence. St John of Damascus put it as follows: "*It is good to fast, but may the one who fasts not blame the one who does not fast. In such matters you must neither legislate, nor use force, nor compel the flock entrusted to you; instead, you must use persuasion, gentleness and a word seasoned with salt*". (On the Holy Fasts, Homily 3).

Fasting has been with our Church from the beginning. Jesus Himself fasted for forty days before commencing His public ministry (Luke 4:1-2) and provided instructions on how to practice fasting (Matthew 6:16-18). In the book of Acts we learn that in the early Church they would fast, particularly prior to some great and holy work: "So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed" (Acts 14:23).

† Fr D. K. ✠





Gospel Reading Sunday November 20th (Luke 12:16-21)

This passage recounts the parable of the rich fool, which Jesus narrated to warn against the dangers of material possessions dominating our life, corrupting our spiritual journey towards the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus describes the life of a rich man whose fields yield a great harvest. In fact, the fields yielded so plentifully that the rich man did not have enough room in his barns to house all that he was harvesting. He then set about building bigger barns and said to himself proudly: “soul you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat drink and be merry”. The rich man, blinded by his material comforts, put his trust in his worldly possessions rather than in God. God then said to the rich man: “Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?”

With this parable, Christ teaches that we were not created in the divine image and likeness for a life dominated by worldly ambition or unrestrained self-indulgence. Instead, Christ wants us to become ever more like Him in holiness. But if we refuse and try to find peace in our worldly accomplishments, satisfying our self-centered inclinations, we will become less than human. We will become slaves to our desires and pleasures, which soon become addictions, and which will soon make us miserable, separating us even from those we love most in this life. How easy it is for people to gain the whole world and lose their souls!

Material things, wealth, relationships and other blessings, all have their place in life. But they are not to become what life is about. If we make them false gods, we will destroy ourselves and lose them also, because only God is God. No part of creation finds peace or fulfillment unless it is offered to Him for blessing in accordance with His purpose for it. There is no path to the richness of the Kingdom apart from obedience. In the end, our choice is clear: either to serve ourselves or our Lord. ❖



Orthodox Youth in Medan

In December 2014, with the blessings of His Eminence Archbishop Stylianos and His Eminence Metropolitan Chrysostomos, the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church of Indonesia Society travelled to Medan, Indonesia, on their second missionary visit there at the request of Fr Chrysostomos.

The people that we met on this missionary trip made an enormous impact on us. The Indonesian people are by nature, polite, gentle and respectful. The Indonesian Orthodox impressed us as they voluntarily chose the Faith we have brought handed as a birthright. The best way to gain an insight into their mindset is with their own words:

“Our parishes in North Sumatra have more youth than adults. It's a good sign for the future existence of the local church. Youth are trying to organize themselves today to make something useful for the congregation. Some do chanting, some others teach Sunday school kids. Some assist priests preparing things for services. Most of them are students (high school up to University).”

- Presvitera Elisabeth Koamesakh, wife of Fr Chrysostomos Manalu.

“Orthodox Youth in Medan also organise some weekly activities like youth catechism, choir/psalter class for parishioners, which are held every Saturday afternoon. The other activities also include preparation for Church Feast days, in the form of decorating our Church, choir inauguration and other activities.”

- Themisocles Marulia Sianturi, an Orthodox convert.

Our group also presented talks to the students at St Paul's Theological College in Medan. This was a reflection written by one of the students:

“Through these speech[es], I considered that it is not enough to praise God with the words of my lips. I have to learn how to praise God with my soul. So, I don't have to be afraid of having bad voice, and I can't sing well, as my voice does not fit notes, but when I sing with my soul it will fit on God's will. Thank you Dr John [Psarommatis], you have not just cured our [sick] body but you also made our soul healthy to praise God.

Leisure life is a situation where a person is in [a] good zone without interruption, and [living an] enjoyable life. Human life is a leisure life when one becomes a rich man. He has everything and [is] uncomfortable [with] life. Differently from a poor [man] who does not have any [comforts] (Luke 16: 19-31). From this local seminar, I learned that a very comfortable life can have a negative impact, namely: selfishness, no socialization, arrogant and tend to forget God.

On this point, our friends from Australia said.... the rich men are those who do not have much desire, but always grateful with what they have. Reversely, the poor are those who have a lot of passions but cannot be grateful. In other words, comfort of life is not dependent on things that we have, but the comfort of life is a situation where we are always grateful with what we [have].

Give thanks in all things is the key for comfortable life. I don't have to despair. His grace will always cover my needs. Happiness is never laid on materials I have, but in satisfaction in Christ.”



North Sumatra

Metropolitan Konstantinos of Singapore, nine men from the Greek Orthodox Christian Missionary Society, and a priest of Indonesian background.



Theological students at one of the seminars given by the missionary group at St Paul's Theological College, Medan.



Indonesian Orthodox youth with members of the missionary group.



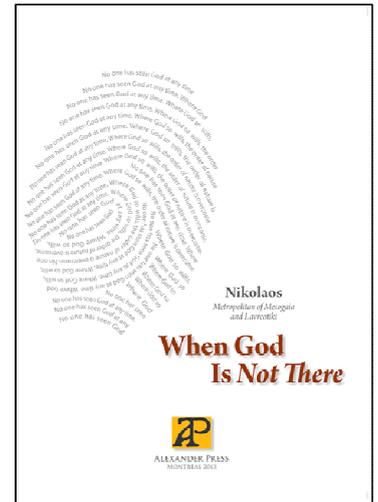
Indonesian Orthodox outside the Church of St Dimitrios, Medan.



When God is Not There, by Metropolitan Nikolaos of Mesogaia and Lavreotiki

Published by Alexander Press, 2013

This is an exceptional book written by an exceptional author. With a PhD in biomedical engineering from Harvard and MIT and with NASA as a former employer, Metropolitan Nikolaos of Mesogaia and Lavreotiki is one of those people who, when they speak, should be listened to. When he writes a book about suffering and faith, it must be read.



With such a pedigree, one would expect a complex, theoretical analysis. This could not be further from the truth. His style is simple, yet powerful, and the book is very readable. Metropolitan Nikolaos makes his points through the real scenarios he has encountered as a volunteer at a hospital, and through the questions that he has asked. Through these simple, everyday events and conversations, he grapples with big questions.

Despite being a respected scientist, theologian and Orthodox bishop, Metropolitan Nikolaos is unafraid and unashamed to leave some questions unanswered. There is the understanding that God is “inexpressible, inconceivable, invisible, incomprehensible, ever existing, ever the same”.

The title of the book shows how we feel in those moments when we are struggling with a problem or when we start to lose faith, when God’s incomprehensibility and invisibility are negatives rather than positives in our eyes. What is conveyed throughout the book, however, is the sense that in these moments it is impossible for humanity to understand the benefits of God’s workings. This book shows that everything comes about because of God’s will. The message of this book is that in the darkest hours of our existence when we think that God isn’t there and when we think He isn’t present, that He is always there and always works in our interest, whether we know it or not.





Ουράνιες Δυνάμεις



Κάθε χρόνο στις 8 Νοεμβρίου η Εκκλησία τιμά τους **Αρχαγγέλους Μιχαήλ και Γαβριήλ και γενικά όλους τους Αγγέλους**. Στην ορθόδοξη χριστιανική παράδοση οι Άγγελοι είναι πνευματικά δημιουργήματα του Θεού, τα οποία έχουν ως αποστολή να δοξάζουν τον δημιουργό τους, να ανακοινώνουν στους ανθρώπους το θείο θέλημα και να εκτελούν τις θείες βουλές. Η Αγία Γραφή αναφέρει πως υπάρχουν «μυριάδες Αγγέλων» που σύμφωνα με τον Άγιο Διονύσιο τον Αρεοπαγίτη χωρίζονται σε τρεις τάξεις και εννέα τάγματα:

- Σεραφεΐμ, Χερουβείμ, Θρόνοι
- Κυριότητες, Εξουσίες, Δυνάμεις
- Αρχές, Αρχάγγελοι, Άγγελοι

Τα Τάγματα των Αγγέλων που δημιούργησε πριν από τους ανθρώπους ο Θεός, ήτανε δέκα. Ένα όμως από αυτά, που είχε αρχηγό τον Άγγελο Εωσφόρο, δεν αρκέστηκε στη θαυμαστή λαμπρότητά του, και θέλησε την πλήρη εξομοίωσή του με το Θεό. Ήταν η στιγμή που οι άγγελοι αυτοί κυριεύτηκαν από εγωισμό και σαν αστραπή γκρεμίστηκαν από τον ουρανό στην Άβυσσο και έγιναν δαίμονες.

Η φωνή του αρχαγγέλου Μιχαήλ, με το «**Στώμεν καλώς**» προς τις μυριάδες των άλλων αγγέλων συντάραξε το Σύμπαν και η πύρινη ρομφαία του, έγινε από τότε ο τρόμος των δαιμόνων.

Αποτελεί σταθερή διδασκαλία της Ορθόδοξης Εκκλησίας μας ότι **ο κάθε πιστός έχει τον φύλακα Άγγελό του, ο οποίος, μας δίνεται μέσω του Αγίου Βαπτίσματος**, και όχι μόνο ο κάθε άνθρωπος, αλλά και κάθε πόλη και χώρα έχει τον φύλακα Άγγελό της. Γι' αυτό και είναι καθημερινή η δέηση της Εκκλησίας προς το Θεό να δίνει στον καθένα μας «**Άγγελον ειρήνης, πιστόν ὁδηγόν, φύλακα τῶν ψυχῶν καὶ τῶν σωμάτων ἡμῶν**».

Οι Άγιοι Άγγελοι είναι προστάτες και φύλακες των ανθρώπων. Αυτοί είναι που μας βάζουν τον καλό λογισμό, αυτοί είναι που χαίρονται, όταν ζούμε



σύμφωνα με το θείο θέλημα, αλλά και λυπούνται πολύ όταν απομακρυνόμαστε απ' αυτό. Αυτοί είναι οι πραγματικοί μας φίλοι, οι οποίοι είναι πάντα δίπλα μας. Το ότι δεν τους βλέπουμε δεν σημαίνει ότι δεν υπάρχουν, το ότι δεν αντιλαμβανόμαστε την βοήθειά τους δεν σημαίνει ότι δεν μας την δίνουν. Μας παρηγορούν στις θλίψεις, απαλύνουν τους πόνους μας, συμπάσχουν μαζί μας. Μας οδηγούν στη μετάνοια και μας προστατεύουν από ορατούς και άορατους εχθρούς. Οι Άγιοι Άγγελοι δε θυμώνουν με τους ανθρώπους. Δεν τιμωρούν. Μόνον εκτελούν το θέλημα του Θεού και δεν μας εγκαταλείπουν ποτέ.

Η Εκκλησία μας έχει αφιερώσει τη Δευτέρα στους Αγίους Αγγέλους και μας προτρέπει κάθε βράδυ στο Απόδειπνο να λέμε την προσευχή στον Άγγελό μας, που χαρίζει απίστευτη ηρεμία και γαλήνη.

Ας ικετεύουμε λοιπόν τον Άγγελό μας να φωτίζει τον δρόμο της ζωής μας και να μας καθοδηγεί. ❌

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Psalm 118 (119 in Greek)

The longest of all the Psalms is Psalm 118, consisting of twenty-two stanzas of eight lines each. Every verse in each stanza begins with the same letter of the alphabet. There is a tradition that King David used this Psalm to teach his young son Solomon the alphabet - but not just the alphabet for writing letters: the alphabet of the spiritual life.

The Psalm comprises an entire *Kathisma* (division of the Psalter) in Orthodox liturgical practice. In Orthodox monasteries it is read daily at the Midnight Office: “At midnight I arose to give thanks unto You for the judgments of Your righteousness”. A major portion of Matins on Holy Saturday comprises chanting the entire psalm divided into three parts with Praises interspersed between each verse. The Psalm is also chanted with special solemnity at Orthodox funeral services.

Psalm 118 is concerned entirely with the Law of God, the Torah. Its structural use of the alphabet serves here the purpose of asserting that the Law of God is the essential substance of human language. Language is a gift of God. Its primary function in the Bible is the formation of thought in accord with reality - and the world’s deepest reality is the Torah, the Law of God. The final purpose of language is to lead man’s thought to the knowledge of God. In Psalm 118, Law and Word tend to be used interchangeably.

Christians will insist that the eternal Law is really derived from God’s eternal thought, and that God’s eternal thought is His Word. The Torah, that is to say, speaks of Christ - the Law of God points to and is fulfilled in Christ. The final purpose of language is that all people may know Christ.

Throughout this whole Psalm the Law of God is described as the path to knowledge of the truth. It is the Law of God that “is a lamp unto my feet” that “gives light to my eyes”, “my meditation all the day”, “sweeter than honey to my mouth”, and “better unto me than thousands of gold and silver”.



Almost every line also is constructed on an I-You polarity: “I keep Your precepts” - “You hold me up”, “teach me to do Your statutes” - “You have taught me”, and so on. The entire Psalm becomes a sustained I-You prayer. ❖



Elder Ephraim of Katounakia (1912-1998)

Elder Ephraim of Katounakia, Mt Athos, is one of the greatest and most memorable elders of the twentieth century. He was a giant of Athonite hesychasm, renowned for his obedience and his gifts of clairvoyance.

The Elder began his life on Athos in 1933 at Katounakia, the desert of Mt Athos, and remained there until his repose in 1998. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1936.



Even though he did not live in the brotherhood of Elder Joseph the Hesychast, Elder Ephraim was wholeheartedly devoted to Elder Joseph. His own elder, Elder Nikiphoros, was an extremely severe and simple monk who could not offer the young Father Ephraim guidance in the frequent spiritual states he was experiencing. Father Ephraim found the water he had long thirsted for in the teachings and guidance of his beloved Elder Joseph. He found answers to all his questions, receiving direction in the patristic tradition. Elder Joseph taught him about the Jesus prayer, about the fruits of obedience, about the life of divine Grace, and opened for him the doors to an earthly paradise.

But what a dilemma for Father Ephraim! He lived in a brotherhood of elders ignorant of the treasures he had discovered. He had thoughts of leaving to join the brotherhood of Elder Joseph, but the wondrous fruits of spiritual progress were to be won through the life of absolute obedience and so, he remained with Elder Nikiphoros. Elder Joseph once whispered to him: “I know your thoughts and your entire spiritual state. Don't be afraid; I'll never leave you alone”. Such words sufficed to comfort the young priestmonk.

Thus, a life of obedience saw this holy man receive gifts beyond belief. He became a luminary for the entire Holy Mountain and the Orthodox faithful who made the journey to receive his blessing. From lived experience, Elder Ephraim repeated to all who would listen that “obedience is life; disobedience, death”. ❖



What we Hear in Church



FROM THE HOLY FATHERS...

From the Compline Service to our Guardian Angel

«Άγιε Ἄγγελε, ὁ ἐφρεστῶς τῆς ἀθλίας μου
ψυχῆς καὶ ταλαιπώρου μου ζωῆς...»

“Holy Angel, overseer of my wretched soul
and miserable life...”

In the daily cycle of prayers in the Orthodox Church, there exist the services of the Great and Small Compline (ἀπόδειπνο), which are performed after the evening meal and before the nightly sleep. The Great Compline (Μέγα Απόδειπνο) is usually performed in our Churches during the weekdays of Great Lent. The Small Compline can be performed in Church with a priest, however its structure lends itself to being performed as part of personal prayer in one’s home or in one’s own cell in monastic practice.

Just before the conclusion of the service, a personal prayer to our Guardian Angel is read. This begins: “Holy Angel, overseer of my wretched soul and miserable life...” The prayer is written as a plea, largely penitent in tone and reveals the following truths about our relationship with our guardian angel.

Firstly, our guardian angels provide great protection against demonic temptations and attacks. St John Chrysostom in his sermon on the Synaxis of the Holy Archangels states: “The Angels are honoured, for they are our allies against the opposing foes that war against us.”

Angels are Holy beings in Orthodox understanding, immaterial creations of God endowed with free will. However as Saint Basil explains in his treatise on the Holy Spirit: “their sanctification, being external to their substance, causes their perfection through the communion of the Spirit. They keep their rank by their abiding in the good and true, and while they retain their freedom of will, never fall away from their patient attendance on Him who is truly good.” The Angels can strengthen us, as the prayer states, in our fear of God, because they utilize their will to stay firmly obedient and attached to the will of God. This fear is not to be scared of God Himself, but to be fearful of being sinful in the eyes of God. Our Guardian Angel not only protects us from the Devil, he also bears witness to our whole life, our birth, our rebirth through Baptism, the rises and falls of our spiritual life and eventually the separation of soul and body in death. ❖

St Nectarios - On the Immortality of the Soul

It is a fundamental tenet of our Orthodox Christian worldview that we are created as both body and soul. In fact, this is the great factor that separates man from the rest of creation. Whereas creation was brought into existence by the phrase “Let there be”, it was Man that was formed by the hands of his Divine Creator, and brought to life by God’s divine breath. We received a living body and a living soul by God through this creative act.



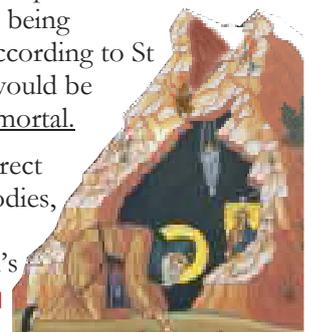
More than this, we were created “In the image and likeness” of God. The true significance is highlighted by St Nectarios of Aegina when he explains: “Because he became the image and likeness of God and [he] was created in order to live eternally and dwell in the same place as the heavenly angels. This is a marvellous reality, and an example of God’s supreme love for Man and his nobility in the eyes of God.”

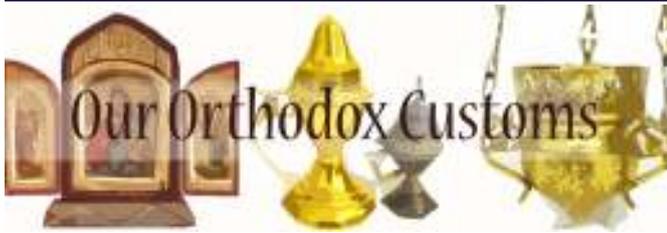
This great destiny is achieved in this life by the co-working of both soul and body. According to the teaching of St Nectarios, the body may well die, but the soul lives on and is immortal. In fact, the soul has “supernatural, infinite aspirations” according to the Saint.

If the soul were not immortal, and died together with the body, then it follows that the soul would be dependent on the body. The soul would be reliant on the body, and therefore the body is primary. The reverse is true, however, and it is in fact the soul which is master over the body.

The dominance of the soul over the body is proven by the way that we submit our body to the will of the soul. Acts of self denial, sacrifice, principles and ideas are some examples of the will of the soul being expressed through the body. According to St Nectarios, such abstract ideas would be meaningless to a soul that was mortal.

May we too understand the correct significance of our souls and bodies, so that we can use our whole being for the fulfilment of God’s Divine Plan. ❖





Wearing a Cross

In the Orthodox Church infants (and adults converting to the faith) receive a Cross at their Baptism to hang around their necks. This is not an adornment for cosmetic purposes but rather a **WITNESS** and **SYMBOL** of the Faith that they have been received into.



The Cross is the universal Christian symbol acknowledged by all to mean that the wearer is a follower of Jesus Christ.

Before the Crucifixion of Christ the cross signified suffering, defeat and death. With Christ's death on the Cross, it became the symbol of triumph, salvation and eternal life.

The Cross is the first and greatest Christian sacred object. When the priest sanctifies the water, he immerses the Cross in it and it becomes holy. The Fathers of the Church tell us that the evil spirits fear the power of the cross and flee from it!

Unfortunately some people, in ignorance, favour the wearing of the 'mati' or 'eye' to ward off the 'evil eye'. This is **NOT** Orthodox practice but a pagan practice based on superstitious beliefs that they will be protected from bad luck, ill health etc. It is absolutely **FORBIDDEN** to wear this adornment for any Orthodox Christian. Much love and patience is required to inform these people that the Cross is our protection against all evil! By the cross we were **saved** and wearing the cross is a simple way to keep Christ in our daily lives and to fight the influence of the devil.

The Church acknowledges that evil and envy exist and has special prayers for her flock for cases of 'βασκανία' which are read by the priest over the affected person.

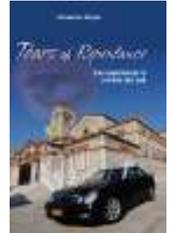
A 'filakto' can also be worn by the faithful and is often pinned on a baby before they are baptised. This normally takes the form of a square or triangular shape and is embroidered with the sign of the cross. They are made in monasteries and sewn into them is something from holy ground or something that is blessed e.g, soil from the grave of a Saint, cotton wool with oil and myrrh, flowers from the epitaphios etc.

Many Christians today are persecuted and martyred for wearing a cross for bearing witness to Christ. Let us with all consciousness wear and **adore** the cross around our necks!



Tears of Repentance, by Athanasios Katigas Saint Nicodemos Publications, 2015

This priceless pearl offers us life-changing experiences from Athanasios (Thanasi) Katigas, a Greek taxi driver from Thessaloniki in the 21st century. Thanasi shares a few out of his many spiritually edifying encounters and conversations with customers who enter his taxi. He reflects on these and draws upon personal experiences in an attempt to provide advice for others attempting to traverse the narrow road of repentance. His deep sense of love and compassion for his fellow man encourages us to be the best Christians we can, wherever we are.



The chapter, 'Thanasi, today you were sent to me by Christ', relates his encounter with a renowned elderly doctor. Thanasi, with the grace of God, initiated a spiritual conversation (possibly aided by the spiritual talk or chanting he often had playing in the background). This doctor had not had much time for church but would kneel and pray when faced with a difficult operation. However, as the conversation continued, the doctor became increasingly defensive. 'Why do I need to go to confession? I don't remember having done anything evil...'

Thanasi replies that since the doctor is wiser, he should go home and cross out the word 'repentance' in the New Testament so that it is no longer there to reprove. The doctor continues, 'Why must I go to a physical church? Isn't the Church of God everywhere?' Thanasi asks why the doctor was married in a church not on the patio and why his children were baptised in a church and not in a bathtub but now when it's time for confession, we are quick to say, 'Why should I go to a priest?' 'You have been holding the surgical scalpel in your hand for so many years... however it seems it never occurred to you to make the incision on yourself, to perform your own personal surgery in order to excise your spiritual maladies.'

Thanasi tells us, 'Run, my brother! Run, my sister! Run to a good confessor in order to start your life of repentance, a life that will finally give meaning to your existence and grant you understanding of what real joy is.'

With God's grace, this book can help us to shed even one tear for our spiritual state and direct us onto the road to true repentance.



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NEWS and VIEWS

Sunday School Camp

On the 28-30 September, 64 Sunday School children aged 10-12 from all parishes of Sydney attended a combined annual camp at Vision Valley, about 1 hour north of Sydney. Along with the memorable Divine Liturgy Service, communal prayers, talks and lessons, games and sporting activities, a particular blessing of this year's camp was the visit by His Eminence Archbishop Stylianos and His Grace Bishop Iakovos, who were very well-received by the children. We wish to convey our particular congratulations and thanks to all the teachers and helpers for their tireless efforts to make this camp such a resounding success. Sunday School annual camps have been running since 2004, and with God's grace will continue to be organised in the coming years for children aged 10-12. For more information, contact your local Sunday School Teachers and Parish Priest. ☩



Participants of this year's Sunday School Camp with His Eminence Archbishop Stylianos, His Grace Bishop Iakovos, and Fathers from Pantanassa Monastery Abbot Fr Eusebios and Fr Nectarios.



During the Divine Liturgy Service conducted by Fr Eusebios.



One of the many sporting activities enjoyed by the children at Vision Valley!



Children listening to a lesson by a teacher during the camp.

**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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