

ΟΙΚΟΥΜΕΝΙΚΟΝ ΠΑΤΡΙΑΡΧΕΙΟΝ  
ΙΕΡΑ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΗ  
ΘΥΑΤΕΙΡΩΝ & Μ. ΒΡΕΤΑΝΝΙΑΣ



ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE  
ARCHDIOCESE OF  
THYATEIRA & GREAT BRITAIN



ΛΟΓΟΣ ΚΥΡΙΟΥ  
THE WORD OF OUR LORD

ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ Η' ΜΑΤΘΑΙΟΥ  
2 Αύγουστου 2020  
Ἦχος βαρῦς, Ἀριθμ. 31

8<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY OF MATTHEW  
2 August 2020  
Grave (Plagal of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Mode). No. 31

Στεφάνου πρωτομάρτυρος (ἀνακομιδῆ λειψάνων), Θεοδώρου νεομάρτυρος ἐκ Δαρδανελλίων, Φωτεινῆς Κυπρίας  
Protomartyr Stephen (Trans. of relics), Theodore Neomartyr, Photinē of Cyprus

ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΙΚΟΝ ΑΝΑΓΝΩΣΜΑ

Α' Κορ. α', 10-17

**Α**δελφοί, παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς, διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἵνα τὸ αὐτὸ λέγητε πάντες, καὶ μὴ ἦ ἐν ὑμῖν σχίσματα, ἧτε δὲ κατηρτισμένοι ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ νοῦ καὶ ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ γνώμῃ. Ἐδηλώθη γάρ μοι περὶ ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοί μου, ὑπὸ τῶν Χλόης, ὅτι ἔριδες ἐν ὑμῖν εἰσιν. Λέγω δὲ τοῦτο, ὅτι ἕκαστος ὑμῶν λέγει, Ἐγὼ μὲν εἶμι Παύλου, Ἐγὼ δὲ Ἀπολλῶ, Ἐγὼ δὲ Κηφᾶ, Ἐγὼ δὲ Χριστοῦ. Μεμέρισται ὁ Χριστός; Μὴ Παῦλος ἐσταυρώθη ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, ἢ εἰς τὸ ὄνομα Παύλου ἐβαπτίσθητε; Εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ ὅτι οὐδένα ὑμῶν ἐβάπτισα, εἰ μὴ Κρίσπον καὶ Γάϊον· ἵνα μή τις εἴπῃ ὅτι εἰς τὸ ἐμὸν ὄνομα ἐβάπτισα. Ἐβάπτισα δὲ καὶ τὸν Στεφανᾶ οἶκον· λοιπὸν οὐκ οἶδα εἴ τινα ἄλλον ἐβάπτισα. Οὐ γὰρ ἀπέστειλὲν με Χριστὸς βαπτίζειν, ἀλλ' εὐαγγελίζεσθαι· οὐκ ἐν σοφίᾳ λόγου, ἵνα μὴ κενωθῇ ὁ σταυρὸς τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

EPISTLE READING

1 Cor. 1: 10-17

**B**rethren, I appeal to you by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree and that there be no dissensions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brethren. What I mean is that each one of you says, «I belong to Paul,» or «I belong to Apollos,» or «I belong to Cephas,» or «I belong to Christ.» Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispos and Gaius; lest any one should say that you were baptized in my name. (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized any one else.) For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

*The Protomartyr Stephen had so much truth in him, the light of God, that he did not lose heart. He remained faithful to the Lord and gladly accepted that the enemies become enraged at him, shout at him, drag him along violently, start to stone him, and he says: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge" (Acts 7: 60).*

## ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΚΟΝ ΑΝΑΓΝΩΣΜΑ

Ματθ. ιδ', 14-22

**Τ**ῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ, ἐξεληθὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶδε πολὺν ὄχλον, καὶ ἐσπλαγχνίσθη ἐπ' αὐτοῖς καὶ ἐθεράπευσε τοὺς ἀρρώστους αὐτῶν. ὁψίας δὲ γενομένης προσῆλθον αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ λέγοντες· ἔρημός ἐστιν ὁ τόπος καὶ ἡ ὥρα ἤδη παρήλθεν· ἀπόλυσον τοὺς ὄχλους, ἵνα ἀπελθόντες εἰς τὰς κώμας ἀγοράσωσιν ἑαυτοῖς βρώματα. ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· οὐ χρειᾶν ἔχουσιν ἀπελθεῖν· δότε αὐτοῖς ὑμεῖς φαγεῖν. οἱ δὲ λέγουσιν αὐτῷ· οὐκ ἔχομεν ὧδε εἰ μὴ πέντε ἄρτους καὶ δύο ἰχθύας. ὁ δὲ εἶπε· φέρετέ μοι αὐτούς ὧδε. καὶ κελεύσας τοὺς ὄχλους ἀνακλιθῆναι ἐπὶ τοὺς χόρτους, λαβὼν τοὺς πέντε ἄρτους καὶ τοὺς δύο ἰχθύας, ἀναβλέψας εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν εὐλόγησε, καὶ κλάσας ἔδωκε τοῖς μαθηταῖς τοὺς ἄρτους, οἱ δὲ μαθηταὶ τοῖς ὄχλοις. καὶ ἔφαγον πάντες καὶ ἐχορτάσθησαν, καὶ ἦσαν τὸ περισσεῦον τῶν κλασμάτων δώδεκα κοφίνους πλήρεις. οἱ δὲ ἐσθίοντες ἦσαν ἄνδρες ὡσεὶ πεντακισχίλιοι χωρὶς γυναικῶν καὶ παιδίων. Καὶ εὐθέως ἠνάγκασεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ ἐμβῆναι εἰς τὸ πλοῖον καὶ προάγειν αὐτὸν εἰς τὸ πέραν, ἕως οὗ ἀπολύσῃ τοὺς ὄχλους.

## GOSPEL READING

Matt. 14: 14-22

**A**t that time, Jesus saw a great throng; and he had compassion on them, and healed their sick. When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, «This is a lonely place, and the day is now over; send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves.» Jesus said, «They need not go away; you give them something to eat.» They said to him, «We have only five loaves here and two fish.» And he said, «Bring them here to me.» Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass; and taking the five loaves and the two fish he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and broke and gave the loaves to the crowds. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children. Then he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds.

## ΕΡΜΗΝΕΙΑ ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΚΟΥ ΑΝΑΓΝΩΣΜΑΤΟΣ

**Τ**ὸ θαῦμα τὸ ὁποῖο ἀναφέρεται στό σημερινό εὐαγγέλιο εἶναι γνωστό ὡς ὁ χορτασμός τῶν πεντακισχιλίων. Βαρύτητα δὲ χρειάζεται νά δώσουμε στόν ἀριθμὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων τοὺς ὁποίους ἔθρεψε ὁ Κύριος, ὕστερα ἀπὸ τὴν εὐλογία τῶν πέντε ψωμιῶν καὶ τῶν δύο ψαριῶν. Θά πρέπει ὅμως νά ἀναζητήσουμε ποῖα διδάγματα μπορεῖ νά ἀντλήσουμε μέσα ἀπὸ τὴ διήγηση τῆς παρούσας περικοπῆς τοῦ εὐαγγελίου. Τό θαῦμα τοῦτο μᾶς ὑπενθυμίζει ὅτι ὁ Κύριος ἐξουσιάζει καὶ κυβερνᾷ μέ τό λόγο του ὅλη τὴ δημιουργία. Ὅταν δημιούργησε τὰ σύμπαντα καὶ τὴ γῆ βεβαίως, τότε ἔθεσε σέ λειτουργία τοὺς φυσικούς νόμους. Ὅταν ὅμως Ἐκεῖνος θέλει, τότε ἀναστέλλει αὐτούς τοὺς νόμους προσωρινά, ἐπεμβαίνει κάνοντας κάποιο θαῦμα ἢ θαύματα καὶ ἔπειτα τοὺς ἐπιτρέπει νά ἐπανέλθουν στήν κανονικὴ τους πορεία καὶ λειτουργία.

Ὁ σύγχρονος ἄνθρωπος δὲ θέλει δυστυχῶς νά κινεῖται καὶ νά ζεῖ μέσα στὰ ὅρια καὶ κάτω ἀπὸ τοὺς νόμους, τοὺς ὁποίους ἔχει θεσπίσει ὁ Θεός. Μέ τὴν ἀπελευθέρωση τοῦ

πλήθους τῶν στοιχείων τῆς γνώσεως καί τίς δυνατότητες, τίς ὁποῖες παρέχει ἡ σύγχρονη τεχνολογία πρὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπο, αὐτὸς ἐπιθυμεῖ καί προσπαθεῖ, ἂν εἶναι δυνατόν, νά ξεπεράσει κάθε περιορισμό. Κάποιος μπορεῖ νά ἰσχυρισθεῖ ὅτι αὐτὸ εἶναι ἐπιτρεπτό καί εὐρίσκεται μέσα στά πλαίσια τῆς ἐντολῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ πρὸς τὸν πρῶτο ἄνθρωπο, πρὸς τὸν ὁποῖο ὁ Θεὸς εἶπε: «αὐξάνεσθε καὶ πληθύνεσθε καὶ πληρώσατε τὴν γῆν καὶ κατακυριεύσατε αὐτῆς καὶ ἄρχετε τῶν ἰχθύων τῆς θαλάσσης...» (Γεν. α' 29). Κάποιος ἄλλος ὅμως μπορεῖ νά ἰσχυρισθεῖ ὅτι τέτοια συμπεριφορά εἶναι καρπὸς ἐγωισμοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, ἡ ὁποία θά ὀδηγήσει, μέ τετραγωνικὴ ἀκρίβεια, στοῦ ἀποτελέσματος τῆς συγχύσεως, τὸ ὁποῖο δέ θά διαφέρει ἀπὸ ἐκεῖνο τοῦ Πύργου τῆς Βαβέλ. Ὁ ἄνθρωπος πολλές φορές θυσιάζει τὰ πάντα, γιὰ νά φθάσει γρήγορα στοῦ εὐκόλου κέρδους. Γιὰ τοῦτο ζεῖ κάτω ἀπὸ ἓνα συνεχές ἄγχος, τὸ ὁποῖο τοῦ δημιουργεῖ καρδιακά καὶ ἐγκεφαλικά προβλήματα καὶ πολλὴ ἀβεβαιότητα γιὰ τὸ μέλλον.

Οἱ ἀρχαῖοι Ἕλληνες εἶχαν ὡς ρυθμιστὴ τῆς ζωῆς τους, τὴν ἀρχὴ «πάν μέτρον ἄριστον». Δυστυχῶς οἱ ἄνθρωποι σήμερα πολυτρῶγουν καὶ πολυπίνουν σάν νά ἔχουν ζήσει τὴ στέρηση τοῦ πολέμου. Πολλοὶ ἔχουν περιορίσει τὴ ζωὴ τους στὴν ὀριζόντια διάσταση. Ἀσχολοῦνται μέ τὸ πόσα θά ξοδέψουν, τί θά φορέσουν καὶ γενικά σέ ποιά κοινωνικὴ τάξη θά ὑπαχθοῦν, ἔχοντας ὡς κριτήριον τὴν οἰκονομικὴ τους δυνατότητα. Στὴν ἀρχαία Ἑλλάδα οἱ Ἐπικούριοι φιλόσοφοι εἶχαν ὡς σύνθημά τους τὸ «φάγωμεν, πίνωμεν, αὔριον γὰρ ἀποθνήσκωμεν». Δυστυχῶς καὶ σήμερα ὑπάρχουν ἄνθρωποι, οἱ ὁποῖοι ἐμφοροῦνται καὶ κινοῦνται μέσα στά ἴδια πλαίσια. Ὁ λόγος ὅμως τοῦ Θεοῦ ὡς «ζῶν καὶ ἐνεργῆς καὶ τομώτερος ὑπὲρ πάσαν μάχαιραν δίστομον» (Ἐβρ. δ' 12) δέν παύει νά βροντοφωνάζει καὶ νά λέγει: «οὐκ ἐπ' ἄρτω μόνῳ ζήσεται ἄνθρωπος, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ παντὶ ρήματι ἐκπορευομένῳ διὰ στόματος Θεοῦ» (Ματθ. ιδ' 4).

Ὁ τρόπος ζωῆς τοῦ σύγχρονου ἀνθρώπου παραμένει ἑτεροβαρῆς. Ὑπενθυμίζουμε ὅτι ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἀποτελεῖ μιὰ ψυχοσωματικὴ ὄντοτητα. Τόσο τὸ σῶμα ὅσο καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ ἔχουν τίς δικές τους ἀνάγκες. Ὅποιο ἀπὸ τὰ δύο αὐτὰ μέρη παραμεληθεῖ, τότε δημιουργεῖ πρόβλημα στοῦ ἄλλου. Γι' αὐτὸ καὶ ἡ Ἐκκλησία ψάλλει: «ἀσθενεῖ μου τὸ σῶμα, ἀσθενεῖ μου καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ». Ἡ φροντίδα γιὰ τὸ σῶμα εἶναι ἐπιβεβλημένο καθῆκον ἀλλὰ παράλληλα καὶ ἡ μέριμνα γιὰ τὴν ψυχὴ παραμένει πολὺ ἀναγκαῖα κί ἀπαραίτητη. Ἡ ἐμφάνιση πρόσφατα τῆς πανδημίας Covid-19 συνετάραξε ὅλη τὴν ὑφήλιο. Τὸ κεφάλαιο βέβαια τῶν ἀσθενειῶν ἀποτελεῖ ἓνα θεολογικὸ πρόβλημα, τὸ ὁποῖο προέκυψε ἀπὸ τὴν παράβαση τῶν ἐντολῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀπὸ τοὺς Πρωτοπλάστους καὶ τὴν πτώση τοῦ ἀνθρωπίνου γένους, ἡ ὁποία ἐπακολούθησε. Δέν εἶναι ὅμως ἐφικτόν νά καταπιαστοῦμε καὶ νά διερμηνεύσουμε τοῦτο τὸ ζήτημα στά πλαίσια τοῦ παρόντος κηρύγματος.

Οἱ σύγχρονες κοινωνίες ἔχουν ἐπιδοθεῖ στοῦ νά ἀντιμετωπίσουν τὸ γνωστὸ ὡς οἰκολογικὸ πρόβλημα, νά ἐπιδείξουν σεβασμὸ στὴ φύση καὶ νά ἀφοσιωθοῦν στὴν προστασία τοῦ περιβάλλοντος. Ἀκοῦμε ἐπίσης σήμερα γιὰ τίς προσπάθειες, τίς ὁποῖες καταβάλλουν οἱ διάφορες ἀρχές, ὡς πρὸς τὴ διαλογὴ καὶ ἀνάλογη ἀξιοποίηση τῶν ἀπορριμάτων μέ τὸν γνωστὸ τρόπο ὡς ἀνακύκλωση. Στὸ σημερινὸ θαῦμα προσέχουμε ὅτι ὁ Κύριος ἀνέθεσε στους μαθητὲς νά περισυλλέξουν τὰ περισσεύματα. Τὸ ἀποτέλεσμα ἦταν νά συγκεντρώσουν δώδεκα κοφίνια γεμάτα. Ὁ ἄνθρωπος μέ βάση αὐτὸ τὸ σημεῖο τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἀπαιτεῖται νά ἀποβαίνει καλὸς οἰκονόμος καὶ ἀντάξιος διαχειριστὴς ὅλων τῶν δώρων καὶ τῶν ἀγαθῶν, τὰ ὁποῖα μᾶς χαρίζει πλουσιοπάροχα ὁ Θεός. Ἀμήν!

Ἐπίσκοπος Τροπαίου Ἀθανάσιος

## SERMON ON THE GOSPEL READING

**W**hat a tragedy when we are proud of our Orthodox Christian Faith, but do not actually live it. What a tragedy when our conduct actually undermines the life-transforming message of the Cross, so desperately needed now, as ever, by our aching and confused world. What a tragedy when individual egos obscure our sight of the One Who is the Truth, our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Such was the case here in Corinth. The Christian community had fallen into this trap in various ways. Other bad things were going on, but, in today's Epistle reading, what is highlighted is their getting fixated on who had baptised them, setting up a league table of the apostolic leaders, promoting personalities, dividing into factions, and in so doing damaging the life and witness of the church. How easily we get drawn into focussing on things in the life of the church which matter little, and thereby end up undermining the things which matter a lot. The Holy Apostle pleads with them to be united, 'perfectly joined together', in their speaking, their mind, and their judgement. This is how the church should be. This is what happens when we are deeply rooted in the life of Christ. This is what happens when we are kneeling together in humility at the foot of the Cross. This is the blessed experience of authentic Christian community life (cf. *Psal.* 132).

Sadly, it seems that the Corinthian Christians had lost sight of the transforming power of the Cross. Although the community, comprising both Jews and Greeks (*Acts* 18.1-11), had come into being through its life giving message, they still lived in a world of beguiling philosophies, adept speakers, and rhetorical devices. Such were now apparently grabbing their attention again. But St Paul reminds them very specifically that the Gospel of Christ cannot be preached '*with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect*' (v.17).

Think about it. This was how the Gospel conquered the Ancient World, all by the innate power of the Cross. Uneducated men had outshone the whole world. St John Chrysostom in his third Homily on First Corinthians, likens it to twelve non-military men beating a professional army. Nakedness against men at arms. What about the modern world? There is still the temptation to be dazzled by the wisdom of words. There is still the temptation to latch onto personalities and get into contentions. There is still the temptation to lose sight of the power of the Cross. There is only one thing to do. Let the power of the Cross have its full effect in our lives, and astound those around us by our way of life, rather than by our words.

This is what St John Chrysostom calls, '*the unanswerable argument, the argument from conduct*'. He is also very clear that when our lives do not demonstrate what we say we believe as Christians, '*this is what stays the unbelievers from becoming Christians*'. The Corinthian Christians, wrapped up in their own agendas, were clearly not thinking about the effect of their behaviour on the non-Christian people around them. If we have fallen into this same trap, may God forgive us, and enable us again to know the life-transforming power of the Cross in our own hearts and lives.

*Oeconomos John Garnett*

Archdiocese of Thyateira & Great Britain, 5 Craven Hill, London W2 3EN  
Tel.: 020 7723 4787. Fax: 020 7224 9301. E-mail: mail@thyateira.org.uk . Website: www.thyateira.org.uk