



The Tower

Saint Barbara the Great Martyr Orthodox Church

Sunday 11th October 2026

3rd Sunday of St. Luke

Issue 038



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We've now reached the 3rd Sunday of St. Luke and are slowly approaching the blessed time of the Nativity Fast and the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ. Before we reach this time, we will celebrate our parish feast on the 4th of December. We will soon begin the process of organising something for this Feast.

The Last couple of weeks have been very busy with the organisation of our main pilgrimage event of the year, the 40th visit to the Shrine of St. Winifred in Holywell. And what a day it was! It was everything we could have wanted for this Feast, and more!

This pilgrimage is one of the oldest in this holy land, and probably one of the oldest in our Archdiocese. It usually attracts people from different Orthodox Dioceses and churches from all over the country. And this year wasn't any different as 234 people came to celebrate and venerate this Saint with us.

Our Bishop Maximos of Miletine came to lead us through the Divine Services and we also had six priests in the altar and two Deacons. This included our Fr. Pancratios, Fr. Panteleimon from Shrewsbury with the usual large group of people, Archimandrite Philip and Deacons John and James from the Antiochian Diocese, Fr. Radu from the Romanian Orthodox Church who also attended the last couple of years and Fr. George from the Georgian Orthodox Church in Manchester attended for the first time.

Let's also not forget about the very large group of people who walked a great distance overnight from Chester to Holywell. 28 people set off early in the morning at 2.30am from St. Barbara's in Chester. Thankfully, the weather was good

and everyone arrived at the Chapel for the beginning of Matins. This pilgrimage walk has slowly taken shape as a very popular event and the number of participants is increasing each year. We have to say a big thank you to Brian who years ago made the idea of walking from Chester to Holywell a reality, and at the beginning only a handful of people walked overnight. After the Divine Liturgy we had a procession to the well and our Bishop Maximos served the blessing of the water and many people went into the well afterwards. Then we had a picnic with plenty of very nice food and drinks. After that we served Great Vespers which was very well attended then we packed all our liturgical items and delivered them safely back to St. Barbara's. Finally, I would like to say many thanks to:

- all the people who participated
- the people who helped in any way to organize this event
- our Bishop Maximos who led our services
- the priests who came to celebrate with us
- all people who walked from Chester to Holywell
- the people from the catholic church who manage the place who have always been very welcoming
-and each and all.

Thank you very much for the amazing day. Next year it will be bigger and better! Glory to God for all!

Fr. John

Announcements

- Please note that we now have access to the park behind the cemetery through the back door next to the gravediggers hood. The gate was closed for a number of years due to antisocial behaviour but is now open. This park is a great place for walk.

Upcoming Services

11 Oct Sunday	9.00am 10.00am	Matins Divine Liturgy	3rd Sunday of St Luke
14 Oct Wednesday	6.30pm 7.15pm	Vespers Catechesis	
17 Oct Saturday	5.30pm	Great Vespers	
18 Oct Sunday	9.00am 10.00am	Matins Divine Liturgy	4th Sunday of St Luke



Announcement New Church Website



We're delighted to announce that our new church website is now live. It includes a range of new features, including a lending library and an easy way to submit prayer requests.

The new website is also more welcoming and inviting to newcomers, with dedicated pages for newcomers and catechumens to help them learn more about our parish and take their first steps in the life of the Church.

Thank you to Mina for all his hard work creating the website!

Children`s behaviour in the church

Please be advised of our parish expectations regarding children at the Divine Liturgy:

If your kids are loud, please still come to Liturgy.

If you're running late because getting everyone dressed and out the door was a battle, please still come to Liturgy.

If your toddler won't sit still, please still come to Liturgy.

If your baby needs to eat, please still come to Liturgy.

If your child asks questions at the least convenient moment, please still come to Liturgy.

If someone cries, drops a toy, or has to make their third trip to the bathroom, please still come to Liturgy.

If your child doesn't know all the prayers, responses, or exactly when to sit or stand, please still come to Liturgy.

If you feel like you spent the entire Liturgy managing your children and heard approximately 12% of the homily, please still come to Liturgy.

If Sunday morning feels messy instead of peaceful, please still come to Liturgy.

If you're worried your children are distracting the people around you, please still come to Liturgy.

If your child has a disability or special needs, please still come to Liturgy.

Children do not learn how to be part of the Church by staying home until they can sit quietly. They learn by being here.

They learn the Sign of the Cross by watching us make it.

They learn the prayers by hearing us pray them.

They learn the Scriptures by hearing the Word of God proclaimed.

They learn reverence by watching us bow and make prostrations.

They learn that Christ is truly present in the

Holy Eucharist by seeing the love and reverence with which we approach the Holy Chalice.

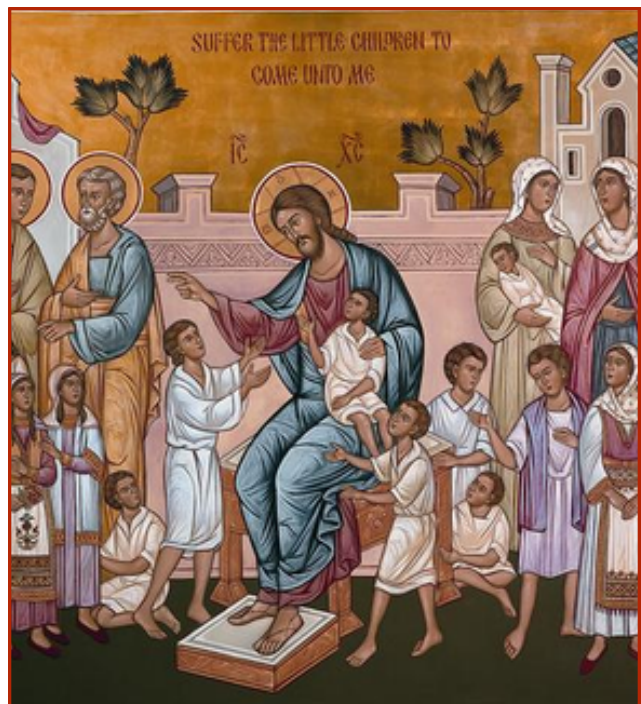
They learn that the Church is their home because we make room for them here.

The wiggles, whispers, crying babies, and little voices are not signs that children don't belong at Liturgy. They are signs that the Church is alive.

So bring the babies. Bring the toddlers. Bring the big kids. Sit where the little ones can see. Step out when you need to, but always come back in.

At Baptism and Chrismation, these children became full members of the Body of Christ. They belong here. They need the grace of the Holy Mysteries, the example of their parents, and the love and patience of their parish family.

Children are not simply the future of the Orthodox Church. They are part of the Church right now!



Source:

<https://www.facebook.com/share/1R4YXQR2o9/>



Synaxarion

Saint Paraskeve

Paraskeve was born in Rome of Christian parents and from her youth was instructed in the Faith of Christ. With great fervence, St. Paraskeve endeavored to fulfill all the commandments of God in her life. Believing strongly and living according to her faith, Paraskeve directed others on the path [of salvation] with the help of the True Faith and pious living.

When her parents died Paraskeve distributed all of her property to the poor and was tonsured a nun. As a nun she preached the Faith of Christ with an even greater zeal, not hiding from anyone, even though at that time the Roman authorities bloodily persecuted the Faith of Christ.

First the pernicious Jews accused St. Paraskeve of preaching the prohibited Faith. She was brought to trial before Emperor

Antoninus. All the flatteries of the emperor did not help in the least to cause her to waver in the Faith. They then subjected her to fiery torments and placed a red-hot helmet on her head. The Lord miraculously saved her and Paraskeve was delivered and left Rome.

She again traveled from city to city to convert the pagan people there to the True Faith. In two more cities she was brought before princes and judges and was tortured for her Lord, at the same time working great miracles and by the power of God quickly recuperated from her pains and wounds. The pagans, as always, ascribed her miracles to magic and her power of recovery to the mercy of their gods.

St. Paraskeve once said to the prince who tortured her: "It is not your gods, O prince, who healed me but my Christ the True God." Finally Prince Tarasius beheaded her. Thus this Saint gloriously ended her fruitful life. Her relics were later translated to Constantinople. She suffered honorably for Christ in the second century.

Apolytikion in the First Tone

Appropriate to your calling, O Champion Paraskeve, you worshipped with the readiness your name bears. For an abode you obtained faith, which is your namesake. Wherefore, you pour forth healing and intercede for our souls.

Kontakion in the Plagal of the Fourth Tone

O most majestic One, we have discovered your temple to be a spiritual clinic wherein all the faithful resoundingly honor you, O famed and venerable martyr Paraskeve.



App Recommendation - Athon: Orthodox Bible

Athon is an app designed to help Orthodox Christians, catechumens, and seekers integrate faith into daily life. It provides a structured approach to prayer, Scripture study, and spiritual reflection, making it easier to follow the rhythm of the Church and deepen one's connection to Christ.

Hierarchical Divine Liturgy and Procession at the Shrine of St Winefride

On Saturday, 3 October 2026, a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy was celebrated at the Shrine of the Holy Virgin-Martyr Winefride in Holywell, North Wales, on the occasion of the annual pilgrimage. His Grace Bishop Maximos of Melitene presided over the Divine Liturgy and the celebrations of the day.

Concelebrating with Bishop Maximos were the Very Revd Archimandrite Philip Hall of the Patriarchate of Antioch; the Revd Protopresbyter Pankratios Sanders; the Revd Presbyters Ioannis Petkov and Panteleimon Maxfield; the Revd Presbyter Georgios of the Patriarchate of Georgia; and the Revd Presbyter Radu of the Patriarchate of Romania. The Revd Deacons Ioannis and Ioannis served during the Divine Liturgy.

The Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the Shrine Church, which stands above the spring associated with St Winefride. The Gothic building dates from the late fifteenth century, and the construction is attributed to Lady Margaret Beaufort, mother of King Henry VII of England. At the lower level, the spring flows into a star-shaped basin beneath a vaulted ceiling. The Shrine is regarded as the only place of pilgrimage in Britain to have continued receiving pilgrims without interruption following the Reformation.

St Winefride, a niece of St Beuno, lived in North Wales during the seventh century and desired from an early age to dedicate her life to Christ. Caradoc, the son of a local ruler, pursued Winefride after she rejected his advances and beheaded her with a sword near the church where she had sought refuge. A spring arose at the place where the head of the Saint fell and continues to attract pilgrims to the present day.

According to tradition, St Beuno placed the head upon the body and, through prayer, restored Winefride to life, with only a fine scar remaining around the neck. St Winefride thereafter lived as a nun and reposed as Abbess at Gwytherin.

In the homily, Bishop Maximos reflected upon the life and martyrdom of St Winefride, who remained steadfast in the dedication to Christ even before the sword of the persecutor. His Grace called upon the faithful to cultivate the same devotion to God and emphasised the strength of faith, stating: "Faith that takes root in the human heart enables a person to stand firm in every trial."

Bishop Maximos subsequently spoke of the trust that every Christian is called to place in Christ, observing that the Lord "knows how to transform even our pain into a source of life and grace". His Grace then connected the place of the beheading of St Winefride with the spring that arose at the same location. "When we too are wounded in our lives, may the very place where we bleed become an opportunity for spiritual rebirth," Bishop Maximos remarked. "Every difficulty and every wound in this life should become the starting point for something new, giving us strength and making us spiritually stronger."

Following the dismissal, a procession took place. The clergy and faithful proceeded to the lower, subterranean section of the Shrine, where the holy spring is located. Bishop Maximos celebrated the Blessing of the Waters, after which a large number of faithful approached to receive the blessing.





Hierarchical Divine Liturgy and Procession at the Shrine of St Winefride | Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain

The following readings and sermon have been extracted from the Archdiocese of Thyateira & Great Britain news bulletin.

To access the full bulletin, please visit: www.thyateira.org.uk.

ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΙΚΟΝ ΑΝΑΓΝΩΣΜΑ

Τίτ. γ', 8-15

Τέκνον Τίτε, πιστὸς ὁ λόγος, καὶ περὶ
τούτων βούλομαί σε διαβεβαιουῖσθαι,
ἵνα φροντίζωσιν καλῶν ἔργων προϊστασθαι
οἱ πεπιστευκότες Θεῷ. ταῦτά ἐστιν καλὰ
καὶ ὠφέλιμα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις· μωρὰς δὲ
ζητήσεις καὶ γενεαλογίας καὶ ἔριν καὶ μάχας
νομικὰς περιῖστασο, εἰσὶν γὰρ ἀνωφελεῖς
καὶ μάταιοι. αἰρετικὸν ἄνθρωπον μετὰ μίαν
καὶ δευτέραν νουθεσίαν παραιτοῦ, εἰδὼς
ὅτι ἐξέστραπται ὁ τοιοῦτος καὶ ἁμαρτάνει,
ὢν αὐτοκατάκριτος. Ὅταν πέμψω Ἀρτεμᾶν
πρὸς σέ ἢ Τυχικόν, σπούδασον ἐλθεῖν
πρὸς με εἰς Νικόπολιν, ἐκεῖ γὰρ κέκρικα
παραχειμάσαι. Ζηνᾶν τὸν νομικὸν καὶ
Ἀπολλῶν σπουδαίως πρόπεμψον, ἵνα
μηδὲν αὐτοῖς λείπη. μανθανέτωσαν δὲ καὶ
οἱ ἡμέτεροι καλῶν ἔργων προϊστασθαι εἰς
τὰς ἀναγκαίας χρείας, ἵνα μὴ ὦσιν ἄκαρποι.
Ἀσπάζονται σε οἱ μετ' ἐμοῦ πάντες. Ἀσπασαί
τοὺς φιλοῦντας ἡμᾶς ἐν πίστει. Ἡ χάρις μετὰ
πάντων ὑμῶν.

EPISTLE READING

Tit. 3: 8-15

Titus, my son, the saying is sure. I desire
you to insist on these things, so that those
who have believed in God may be careful to
apply themselves to good deeds; these are
excellent and profitable to men. But avoid
stupid controversies, genealogies, dissensions,
and quarrels over the law, for they are
unprofitable and futile. As for a man who is
factious, after admonishing him once or twice,
have nothing more to do with him, knowing
that such a person is perverted and sinful; he
is self-condemned. When I send Artemas or
Tychicos to you, do your best to come to me
at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the
winter there. Do your best to speed Zenas the
lawyer and Apollos on their way; see that they
lack nothing. And let our people learn to apply
themselves to good deeds, so as to help cases of
urgent need, and not to be unfruitful. All who
are with me send greeting to you. Greet those
who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all.

ΑΝΑΣΤΑΣΙΜΟΝ ΑΠΟΛΥΤΙΚΙΟΝ

Ἦχος β'

Ὅτε κατήλθες πρὸς τὸν θάνατον, ἡ ζωὴ
ἡ ἀθάνατος, τότε τὸν δη ἐνέκρωσας,
τῇ ἀστραπῇ τῆς θεότητος· ὅτε δὲ καὶ τοὺς
τεθνεῶτας ἐκ τῶν καταχθονίων
ἀνέστησας, πᾶσαι αἱ Δυνάμεις τῶν
ἐπουρανίων ἐκραύγαζον· Ζωοδότα Χριστέ,
ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν, δόξα σοι.

RESURRECTION APOLYTIKION

2nd Mode

When you went down to death, O
immortal life, then you slew Hell
with the lightning flash of your Godhead;
but when from the depths below the earth
you raised the dead, all the Powers in the
heavens cried out: Giver of life, Christ our
God, glory to you!



Christian Orthodox Thyateira Youth (COTY)
COTY is the official youth ministry of the Archdiocese of
Thyateira and Great Britain, for ages 16-35.
To learn more visit: www.coty.org.uk.
Instagram: COTY_org





ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΚΟΝ ΑΝΑΓΝΩΣΜΑ

Λουκ. η´, 5-15

Εἶπεν ὁ Κύριος τὴν παραβολὴν ταύτην·
 Ἐξῆλθεν ὁ σπείρων τοῦ σπείρειν τὸν
 σπόρον αὐτοῦ. καὶ ἐν τῷ σπείρειν αὐτὸν ὁ
 μὲν ἔπεσε παρὰ τὴν ὁδὸν, καὶ κατεπατήθη,
 καὶ τὰ πετεινὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ κατέφαγεν
 αὐτό· καὶ ἕτερον ἔπεσεν ἐπὶ τὴν πέτραν, καὶ
 φυὲν ἐξηράνθη διὰ τὸ μὴ ἔχειν ἱκμάδα· καὶ
 ἕτερον ἔπεσεν ἐν μέσῳ τῶν ἀκανθῶν, καὶ
 συμφυεῖσαι αἱ ἄκανθαὶ ἀπέπνιξαν αὐτό.
 καὶ ἕτερον ἔπεσεν εἰς τὴν γῆν τὴν ἀγαθὴν,
 καὶ φυὲν ἐποίησε καρπὸν
 ἑκατονταπλασίονα. ταῦτα λέγων ἐφώνει· ὁ
 ἔχων ὦτα ἀκούειν ἀκουέτω. Ἐπὴρ-
 των δὲ αὐτὸν οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ λέγοντες·
 τίς εἷη ἡ παραβολὴ αὕτη; ὁ δὲ εἶπεν· ὑμῖν
 δέδοται γινῶναι τὰ μυστήρια τῆς βασιλείας
 τοῦ Θεοῦ, τοῖς δὲ λοιποῖς ἐν παραβολαῖς,
 ἵνα βλέποντες μὴ βλέ-
 πωσι καὶ ἀκούοντες
 μὴ συνιῶσιν. ἔστι δὲ αὕτη ἡ παραβολή· ὁ
 σπόρος ἐστὶν ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ· οἱ δὲ
 παρὰ τὴν ὁδὸν εἰσιν οἱ ἀκούσαντες, εἴτα
 ἔρχεται ὁ διάβολος καὶ αἶρει τὸν λόγον
 ἀπὸ τῆς καρδίας αὐτῶν, ἵνα μὴ
 πιστεύσαντες σωθῶσιν. οἱ δὲ ἐπὶ τῆς
 πέτρας οἱ ὅταν ἀκούσωσι, μετὰ χαρᾶς
 δέχον-
 ται τὸν λόγον, καὶ οὗτοι ρίζαν οὐκ
 ἔχουσιν, οἱ πρὸς καιρὸν πιστεύουσι καὶ ἐν
 καιρῷ πειρασμοῦ ἀφίστανται. τὸ δὲ εἰς τὰς
 ἀκάνθας πεσόν, οὗτοί εἰσιν οἱ ἀκούσαντες,
 καὶ ὑπὸ μεριμνῶν καὶ πλούτου καὶ ἡδονῶν
 τοῦ βίου πορευόμενοι συμπνίγονται καὶ οὐ
 τελεσφοροῦσι. τὸ δὲ ἐν τῇ καλῇ γῇ, οὗτοί
 εἰσιν οἵτινες ἐν καρδίᾳ καλῇ καὶ ἀγαθῇ
 ἀκούσαντες τὸν λόγον κατέχουσι καὶ
 καρποφοροῦσιν ἐν ὑπομονῇ. ταῦτα λέγων
 ἐφώνει· ὁ ἔχων ὦτα ἀκούειν ἀκουέτω.

GOSPEL READING

Luke 8: 5-15

The Lord said this parable: A sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell along the path, and was trodden under foot, and the birds of the air devoured it. And some fell on the rock; and as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns grew with it and choked it. And some fell into good soil and grew, and yielded a hundredfold. And when his disciples asked him what this parable meant, he said, To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God; but for others they are in parables, so that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand. Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, that they may not believe and be saved. And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy; but these have no root, they believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. And as for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bring forth fruit with patience. As he said these things, he cried out, He who has ears to hear, let him hear.



Η ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΙΚΗ ΔΙΑΠΟΪΜΑΝΣΗ ΤΟΥ ΛΑΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ

Ἡ Ἐκκλησία εἶναι παράδοξος τόπος. Ἡ Κεφαλή της, ὁ Χριστός, ἔθεσε τὸν ἑαυτό Του κάτω ἀπὸ ὅλους. Ὑπέμεινε φρικτὴ κένωση. Αὐτὸς εἶναι «ὁ Ἄμνός τοῦ Θεοῦ ὁ αἰρὼν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου» (Ἰωάν. 1, 29). Οἱ Ποιμένες τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, οἱ ὁποῖοι ἴστανται «εἰς τύπον Χριστοῦ», ὀφείλουν καὶ αὐτοὶ νὰ ἀκολουθήσουν τὴν κενωτικὴ ὁδὸ Του. Ὦντας δυνατοὶ ἐν Πνεύματι, ἔχουν κληθεῖ νὰ βαστάζουν τὰ ἀσθενήματα τῶν ἀδυνάτων (Ρωμ. 15, 1). Ἐν γένει, τὰ χαρίσματα ποὺ χορηγεῖ ἡ Ἐκκλησία εἶναι προνόμια διακονίας τοῦ πλησίον καὶ ὄχι ἐξουσίας αὐτοῦ. Σὲ ἓνα στίχο τῆς σημερινῆς περικοπῆς ὁ Παῦλος συνοψίζει βασικὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ ἡθους, δυνάμει τοῦ ὁποῖου ὁ Χριστὸς ἐργάσθηκε τὴ σωτηρίαν τοῦ κόσμου. Περιγράφει πῶς πρέπει νὰ πολιτεύονται οἱ ἀληθινοὶ Χριστιανοί, εἴτε Προεστώτες εἶναι εἴτε ὑποτακτικοί: «[Δεῖ] μηδένα βλασφημεῖν, ἀμάχους εἶναι, ἐπεικεῖς, πᾶσαν ἐνδεικνυμένους πραότητα πρὸς πάντας ἀνθρώπους».

Ἡ ὑπακοή, ἡ ἐπεικεία, ἡ πραότητα, ἡ ταπείνωση, συνιστοῦν τὶς προϋποθέσεις γιὰ τὴν ἀπρόσκοπτη μετάδοση τῆς ἱερᾶς Παραδόσεως καὶ τὴν καρποφορίαν τοῦ Εὐαγγελίου. Οἱ Ποιμένες τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, μιμούμενοι τὸν Χριστὸ ὁ ὅποιος «οὐκ ἤλθε διακονηθῆναι ἀλλὰ διακονῆσαι» (Ματθ. 20, 28), δὲν ζοῦν γιὰ τὸν ἑαυτό τους, ἀλλὰ γι' αὐτοὺς ποὺ τοὺς ἐμπιστεύθηκε ἡ θεία Πρόνοια. Μεταδίδουν ἀπὸ γενεὰ σὲ γενεὰ τὴν «ἱερὰν παρακαταθήκην». Καταπονοῦνται γιὰ νὰ φυλάξουν ἀκραιφνῆ τὴν πίστη. Μεριμνοῦν γιὰ τὴν ἐνότητα τῆς Ἐκκλησίας τοῦ Χριστοῦ. Ἐπωμίζονται τὴ μέριμνα τῆς οἰκοδομῆς τοῦ λαοῦ.

Ἡ ἐπεικεία τοῦ πιστοῦ ἔχει ὡς στόχο πάντοτε τὸν ἐκάστοτε ἄλλον καὶ οὐδόλως τὸν ἑαυτό του. Ἐφόσον ἡ πνευματικὴ ζωὴ εἶναι μαθητεία στὸν Χριστό, προϋποθέτει αὐταπάρνηση, ἀποταγὴ τῶν πάντων, αὐτομεμψία, ἔτι καὶ αὐτομίσος. Ὅσον ὅμως ἀφορᾷ τοὺς ἀδελφούς, προϋποθέσεις τῆς πνευματικῆς ζωῆς εἶναι ἡ ἐπεικεία, ἡ πραότητα καὶ ἡ ἀγάπη πρὸς πάντας. Αὐτὰ ἀποτελοῦν τὰ χαρακτηριστικὰ τῆς πολιτείας κάθε συνειδητοῦ Χριστιανοῦ. Τὸ αὐτομίσος καθαίρει τὴν καρδίαν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἀπὸ κάθε ἐμπαθῆ κίνηση. Τὴν καθιστᾷ τρυφερὴ καὶ εὐαίσθητη, ἔτοιμη νὰ ἀνταποκριθεῖ θετικὰ σὲ κάθε ἀνάγκη τοῦ πλησίον. Ὅταν ὅλα τὰ μέλη τῆς Ἐκκλησίας πορεύονται στὴ χριστοειδῆ αὐτὴν ὁδὸ, ὁ Θεὸς μπορεῖ μὲ τὴν ὑπεράγαθην Πρόνοιάν Του νὰ ἐξασφαλίζει ἀγαθὰ γιὰ τοὺς πάντες.

Ἐν συνεχείᾳ, ὁ Ἀπόστολος ἐπισημαίνει ὅτι ὁ Χριστιανὸς ὀφείλει νὰ ἀποφεύγει «μωρὰς ζητήσεις, ἔρεις, μάχας νομικὰς». Οἱ ματαιολογίες καὶ οἱ «κενοφωνίες» (Β' Τιμ. 2, 16) διαφθείρουν τὸν νοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. Τὸν ἀποστεροῦν ἀπὸ τὴν ἀλήθεια (Α' Τιμ. 6, 4-5).

Ἀποβαίνουν ἐντελῶς ἀλυσιτελεῖς γιὰ ὅποιον ἐπιθυμεῖ νὰ ἐπαγγέλλεται θεοσέβεια.

Ἐπιπλέον, ὁ Παῦλος προτρέπει τοὺς πιστοὺς νὰ μὴν ἐμπλέκονται σὲ συζητήσεις γενεαλογιῶν· νὰ μὴ θέτουν δηλαδὴ τὴν πεποίθησή τους στὰ κατορθώματα τῶν προγόνων τους. Τί τὸ ὄφελος νὰ ἔχουν ὡς πατέρα τὸν Ἀβραάμ, ἐὰν δὲν φέρουν τοὺς ἴδιους καρποὺς πίστεως μὲ αὐτόν; «Δύναται ὁ Θεὸς ἐκ τῶν λίθων τούτων ἐγείραι τέκνα τῷ Ἀβραάμ» (Ματθ. 3, 9).

«Μανθανέτωσαν δὲ καὶ οἱ ἡμέτεροι καλῶν ἔργων προϊστασθαι εἰς τὰς ἀναγκαίας χρεῖας, ἵνα μὴ ὦσιν ἄκαρποι». Ἡ πίστη χωρὶς ἀνάλογα ἔργα ἀγάπης παραμένει κενή· ματαιώνεται. Οἱ Προϊστάμενοι εὐρίσκονται πάντοτε «ἐν σπουδῇ» (Ρωμ. 12, 8). Δὲν ὑπάρχει ἐξαισιότερο θέαμα, ἀπὸ τὸ νὰ βλέπεις ἐκείνους ποὺ ἄρχουν νὰ ζοῦν λιτότερα ἀπὸ ὅλους, νὰ ἐργάζονται φιλοπονότερα ἀπὸ ὅλους, νὰ εἶναι ταπεινότεροι ἀπὸ ὅλους. Βεβαίως, τότε οἱ θεράποντες τοῦ Θεοῦ «διπλῆς τιμῆς ἀξιούσθωσαν», μάλιστα δὲ ἐὰν κοπιᾶζουν «ἐν λόγῳ καὶ διδασκαλίᾳ» (Α' Τιμ. 5, 17). Ὡς δεῖγμα σεβασμοῦ οἱ πιστοὶ τοὺς φιλοῦν τὰ χέρια· ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ πόδια νὰ μποροῦσαν νὰ τοὺς φιλήσουν πάλι δὲν θὰ ἦταν ἀρκετό. Σὲ ἄλλο σημεῖο τῶν Ἐπιστολῶν τοῦ ὁ Παῦλος παραινεῖ: «Τοὺς τοιοῦτους ἐντίμους ἔχετε» (Φιλιπ. 2, 29). Δόξα νὰ ἔχει ὁ Θεός, ὁ ὅποιος οὐδέποτε ἔπαυσε νὰ χορηγεῖ τὸ ποιμαντικὸ χάρισμα. Σὲ κάθε γενεὰ παρέχει ὑποδείγματα θεοφιλοῦς βιοτῆς. Ἔτσι, οἱ πιστοὶ δὲν ἔχουν πρόφασιν καὶ δικαιολογία νὰ ἀμελοῦν τοῦ δικοῦ τους χαρίσματος· τοῦ χαρίσματος τῶν ταπεινῶν καὶ πράων προβάτων ποὺ ἀκολουθοῦν τοὺς Ποιμένες τους καὶ δι' αὐτῶν τὸν πρῶο καὶ ταπεινὸ Χριστό.

Ἀρχιμ. Ζαχαρίας

SERMON ON THE GOSPEL READING

The Divine Sower is walking the fields, which represent our lives, sowing His seed, His life-giving Word. With hope and joy, the Sower is looking forward to a blessed and rich harvest. Those in whom God's seed brings forth fruit, watered by the grace of the Holy Spirit, are the saints. But Christ's parable also gives a warning: some of the seeds will end up destroyed. They will not bring fruit, as they will go astray, or the soil on which they fall will lack moisture, or birds will come and devour them. In the reading from the Epistle, Saint Paul directs the Apostle Titus to teach the people under his charge 'to maintain good works ... that they may not be unfruitful' (Titus 3:14).

The theme of fruitfulness unto God is chosen for the Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, whom we commemorate today. At the First Council of Nicaea in AD 325, the Church confessed its faith in Christ as 'true God from true God ... who for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate and became man'. At the Seventh Council, which also met at Nicaea in AD 787, the Church defended the legitimacy of the icons of Christ, for they proclaim in colour, just as the Gospel does in ink, the reality of the Incarnation.

As the Council decreed, 'the honour paid to an icon passes to the prototype' (or the model from which an image is made). A believer who kisses an icon, or bows before it, rises in thought to honour the saintly person or event represented on it. The bowing down before an icon is not aimed at the wood of which it is made, which would be idolatrous. The gesture is like the respect people give to the portrait of an earthly king (for example, in Britain at a citizenship ceremony). The theology of icons articulated by the Seventh Council goes back to fourth-century interpretations of the words of Christ: 'he who has seen Me has seen the Father' (John 14:9). As Saint Paul explained, this was so because Christ is 'the image' (icon in Greek) 'of the invisible God' (Colossians 1:15). These verses were taken as proof of the Son's equality with the Father. In the words of the Nicene Creed, He is 'of one essence with the Father'.

Icons made of wood or other materials are obviously not 'of one essence' with Christ or the saint represented on them. And yet, the icons are venerated. In Orthodox Christianity, matter matters! The Church has always believed that our world is the creation of a good God. There is nothing evil in creation itself. This is why we can and do use matter in our worship – wood, mosaic, etc. – to make icons of Christ, of the Mother of God, or of the saints, who could all say, with Saint Paul, that 'Christ lives in me' (Gal. 2:20).

Finally, the Seventh Council decided that no Christian church can be considered properly consecrated unless relics of a holy martyr are placed in the altar table (Canon 7). During the rite of consecration of an Orthodox church, the officiating bishop thanks God for the special glory He has given to His martyr saints: 'that their relics should be sown in all the earth, in Your holy churches, and should bring forth fruits of healing' (Consecration Liturgy).

The Divine Sower went out to throw His seed, and only some found fertile ground. His seeds continue to fall as we gather, week after week, to hear the Gospel in the company of the saints. May their relics, planted in the altar tables of our churches, be a source of healing for us at this Holy Eucharist, and may we, each in our own unique way, come to bear fruit unto God. Amen.

Presbyter Prof Nikita Banev

For your prayers

5 Oct	Kevin Mitache Feodor Litman	Baptised this day in 2018 Laid to rest this time in 2015
6 Oct	Ciprian Amadeus Gujba	Baptised this day in 2013
8 Oct	Arlo Christos Mandrallis	Baptised this day in 2017
10 Oct	Marius Daniel Bota Rhiana Dumitru Salariu Andonis Niko Koamis Margo Aimeloglou	Baptised this day in 2010 Baptised this day in 2010 Baptised this day in 2021 Laid to rest this time in 2008
11 Oct	Antoniou Niko Koamis Jozef Tarnowski	Baptised this day in 2015 Baptised this day in 2020
12 Oct	Jacob Knox Lekky Papastavrou	Baptised this day in 2008 Laid to rest this time in 2018

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Thank you for your continous support !



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