

ΟΙΚΟΥΜΕΝΙΚΟΝ ΠΑΤΡΙΑΡΧΕΙΟΝ
ΙΕΡΑ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΗ
ΘΥΑΤΕΙΡΩΝ & Μ. ΒΡΕΤΑΝΝΙΑΣ



ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE
ARCHDIOCESE OF
THYATEIRA & GREAT BRITAIN



ΛΟΓΟΣ ΚΥΡΙΟΥ
THE WORD OF OUR LORD

ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ Θ' ΜΑΤΘΑΙΟΥ
9 Αύγουστου 2020
Ἦχος πλ. δ'. Ἀριθμ. 32

9th SUNDAY OF MATTHEW
9 August 2020
Plagal of the 4th Mode. No. 32

Ματθίου ἀποστόλου, Ἁγίων 10 μαρτύρων ἐν τῇ Χαλκῇ Πύλῃ
Matthias apostle, 10 Martyrs for the Icon of Christ

ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΙΚΟΝ ΑΝΑΓΝΩΣΜΑ

Α' Κορ. γ', 9-17

Αδελφοί, Θεοῦ γάρ ἐσμεν
συνεργοί· Θεοῦ γεώργιον, Θεοῦ
οἰκοδομή ἐστε. Κατὰ τὴν χάριν τοῦ
Θεοῦ τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι, ὡς σοφὸς
ἀρχιτέκτων θεμέλιον τέθεικα, ἄλλος
δὲ ἐποικοδομεῖ. Ἐκαστος δὲ βλέπετω
πῶς ἐποικοδομεῖ. Θεμέλιον γάρ
ἄλλον οὐδεὶς δύναται θεῖναι παρὰ τὸν
κεείμενον, ὃς ἐστὶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστός. Εἰ
δέ τις ἐποικοδομεῖ ἐπὶ τὸν θεμέλιον
τοῦτον χρυσόν, ἄργυρον, λίθους
τιμίους, ξύλα, χόρτον, καλάμην,
ἐκάστου τὸ ἔργον φανερόν γενήσεται·
ἢ γὰρ ἡμέρα δηλώσει, ὅτι ἐν πυρὶ
ἀποκαλύπτεται· καὶ ἐκάστου τὸ ἔργον
ὁποῖόν ἐστιν τὸ πῦρ δοκιμάσει. Εἴ
τινος τὸ ἔργον μένει δὲ ἐποικοδόμησεν,
μισθὸν λήψεται. Εἴ τινος τὸ ἔργον
κατακαήσεται, ζημιωθήσεται· αὐτὸς
δὲ σωθήσεται, οὕτως δὲ ὡς διὰ πυρός.
Οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι ναὸς Θεοῦ ἐστε, καὶ τὸ
πνεῦμα τοῦ Θεοῦ οἰκεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν; Εἴ τις
τὸν ναὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ φθείρει, φθερεῖ
τοῦτον ὁ Θεός· ὁ γὰρ ναὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ
ἅγιός ἐστιν, οἵτινες ἐστε ὑμεῖς.

EPISTLE READING

1 Cor. 3: 9-17

Brethren, we are God's fellow workers;
You are God's field, God's building.
According to the grace of God given to
me, like a skilled master builder I laid a
foundation, and another man is building
upon it. Let each man take care how he
builds upon it. For no other foundation
can any one lay than that which is laid,
which is Jesus Christ. Now if any one
builds on the foundation with gold, silver,
precious stones, wood, hay, straw - each
man's work will become manifest; for
the Day will disclose it, because it will be
revealed with fire, and the fire will test
what sort of work each one has done.
If the work which any man has built on
the foundation survives, he will receive a
reward. If any man's work is burned up,
he will suffer loss, though he himself will
be saved, but only as through fire. Do you
not know that you are God's temple and
that God's Spirit dwells in you? If any one
destroys God's temple, God will destroy
him. For God's temple is holy, and that
temple you are.

God doesn't take us out of the middle of things to put someone else in our place. He will save us, ourselves. After He cleanses us from sin, in us will remain the greatness that derives from the divine roots that every man has in him by having been created in the image and likeness of God.

ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΚΟΝ ΑΝΑΓΝΩΣΜΑ

Ματθ. ιδ', 22-34

Τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ, ἠνάγκασεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τοὺς μαθητὰς ἐμβῆναι εἰς τὸ πλοῖον καὶ προάγειν αὐτὸν εἰς τὸ πέραν, ἕως οὗ ἀπολύσῃ τοὺς ὄχλους. Καὶ ἀπολύσας τοὺς ὄχλους ἀνέβη εἰς τὸ ὄρος κατ' ἰδίαν προσεύξασθαι. Ὀψίας δὲ γενομένης μόνος ἦν ἐκεῖ. Τὸ δὲ πλοῖον ἤδη σταδίου πολλοῦ ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς ἀπέιχεν, βασανιζόμενον ὑπὸ τῶν κυμάτων, ἦν γὰρ ἐναντίος ὁ ἄνεμος. Τετάρτῃ δὲ φυλακῇ τῆς νυκτὸς ἦλθεν πρὸς αὐτοὺς περιπατῶν ἐπὶ τὴν θάλασσαν. Οἱ δὲ μαθηταὶ ἰδόντες αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τῆς θαλάσσης περιπατοῦντα ἐταράχθησαν λέγοντες ὅτι Φάντασμα ἔστιν, καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ φόβου ἔκραξαν. Εὐθὺς δὲ ἐλάλησεν [ὁ Ἰησοῦς] αὐτοῖς λέγων, Θαρσεῖτε, ἐγὼ εἰμι· μὴ φοβεῖσθε. Ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ αὐτῷ ὁ Πέτρος εἶπεν, Κύριε, εἰ σὺ εἶ, κέλευσόν με ἐλθεῖν πρὸς σὲ ἐπὶ τὰ ὕδατα· ὁ δὲ εἶπεν, Ἐλθέ. καὶ καταβὰς ἀπὸ τοῦ πλοίου ὁ Πέτρος περιεπάτησεν ἐπὶ τὰ ὕδατα καὶ ἦλθεν πρὸς τὸν Ἰησοῦν. Βλέπων δὲ τὸν ἄνεμον ἐφοβήθη, καὶ ἀρξάμενος καταποντίζεσθαι ἔκραξεν λέγων, Κύριε, σῶσόν με. Εὐθέως δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐκτεῖνας τὴν χεῖρα ἐπελάβετο αὐτοῦ καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ, Ὀλιγόπιστε, εἰς τί ἐδίστασας; καὶ ἀναβάντων αὐτῶν εἰς τὸ πλοῖον ἐκόπασεν ὁ ἄνεμος. Οἱ δὲ ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ προσεκύνησαν αὐτῷ λέγοντες, Ἀληθῶς Θεοῦ υἱὸς εἶ. Καὶ διαπεράσαντες ἦλθον ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν εἰς Γεννησαρέτ.

GOSPEL READING

Matt. 14: 22-34

At that time, Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up into the hills by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but the boat by this time was many furlongs distant from the land, beaten by the waves; for the wind was against them. And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, «It is a ghost!» And they cried out for fear. But immediately he spoke to them, saying «Take heart, it is I; have no fear». And Peter answered him, «Lord, if it is you, bid me come to you on the water». He said, «Come». So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus; but when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, «Lord, save me». Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, «O man of little faith, why did you doubt?» And when they entered the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, «Truly you are the Son of God». And when they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret.

ΕΡΜΗΝΕΙΑ ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΚΟΥ ΑΝΑΓΝΩΣΜΑΤΟΣ

Κινούμενοι οἱ ὀρθόδοξοι χριστιανοὶ σὲ Παρακλητικὸς ρυθμὸς πρὸς τὴν Κυρία Θεοτόκο, ἀναμένοντας τὸ Πάσχα τοῦ καλοκαιριοῦ καί, ἤδη πρότρυτα, ἐορτάσαντες τὴ Μεταμόρφωση τοῦ Δεσπότη Χριστοῦ, ἔχοντας δοκιμασθεῖ καὶ ἀποκτώντας τὴν ἐμπειρία τῆς ἐφαρμογῆς τοῦ πνευματικοῦ νόμου μέσα ἀπὸ τὴν τραγωδία τῆς πανδημίας καὶ τῶν συνεπειῶν της, ἐμβαθύνουμε περισσότερο στὰ βιώματα τῆς πίστεως καὶ ὀριοθετοῦμε, πλέον, τὴ δυναμικὴ στὴ σχέση μὲ τὰ παραγγέλματά της.

Εἶναι ἤχηρὰ καὶ ἄκρως συγκλονιστικὰ μερικὰ σημεῖα τῆς εὐαγγελικῆς περικοπῆς ποὺ διαβάζουμε σήμερα, κι ἐστιάζουμε σ' αὐτά, λόγω τῆς ἀμεσότητας ποὺ ἐπαληθεύονται στὴ ζωὴ μας. Ἀναγκάζει κι ἐμᾶς ὁ Κύριος, πολλές φορές, μέσα ἀπὸ τοὺς μυστικούς Του δρόμους, νὰ μετακινηθοῦμε ἀπὸ τὶς θέσεις καὶ ἀπόψεις μας, γλυτώνοντάς μας ἀπὸ τὴ βοή καὶ τὴ δίνη τοῦ κοσμικοῦ φρονήματος καὶ τῆς ἀλλοίωσης ποὺ ἐπέρχεται, ὅταν συσχηματιζόμαστε μ' αὐτό.

Χωρὶς νὰ τὸ ὑποπτευόμαστε κᾶν, μᾶς σηκώνει στοὺς ὦμους Του, γιὰ νὰ μὴ γίνουμε θηριάλωτοι ἀπὸ τὸ μισόκαλο ἐχθρὸ μας. Βασανιζόμαστε ἀπὸ τόσες ἀντιξοότητες καὶ ἄπειρα προβλήματα, χάνοντας τὸ θάρρος, τὴν αὐτοπεποίθηση, τὴν αἰσιοδοξία μας, ὄχι μὲ βάση τὰ κοσμικὰ κριτήρια, ἀλλὰ τὴ βεβαιότητα ποὺ ἐμπνέει Ἐκεῖνος. Δὲν ἐμπιστευόμαστε οὔτε τὴν παρουσία, οὔτε τὴν παρέμβαση Του. Καὶ Τὸν θεωροῦμε φάντασμα, δημιούργημα τῆς φαντασίας μας, ὅπως κάποιοι αἰρετικοὶ παλαιότερα, μειώνοντάς Τον, περιφρονώντας Τον, ἀφαιρώντας Του τὸ δικαίωμα νὰ σπεύσει γιὰ νὰ μᾶς σώσει καὶ νὰ μᾶς μεταμορφώσει σὲ ἀληθινὰ παιδιὰ τῆς Βασιλείας Του, τὸν ἀναγκάζουμε μὲ τὴ σειρά μας νὰ φύγει καὶ νὰ μὴ μᾶς ἐνοχλεῖ, σκάβοντας ἔτσι τὸ βάραθρο τῆς πτώσης καὶ τῆς κόλασής μας.

Ἐν τούτοις, δὲν ἀπομακρύνεται, μᾶς ἀφήνει νὰ πειραματισθοῦμε στὸν ὠκεανὸ τῆς ἀμφιβολίας μας, νὰ ἀνέβουμε σὲ ὕψη ὑπέρτατης ἀμφισβήτησής Του, ἀπευθύνει προσκλήσεις νὰ τρέξουμε κοντὰ Του, κι ὅταν ὁ ὀρθολογισμὸς μᾶς βυθίζει στὴ φουρτούνα καὶ τὸ μάταιο ψεῦδος του, ὁ Θεὸς ἀπλώνει τὸ χέρι καί, μὲ ἀγάπη καὶ πόνο, μᾶς σώζει καὶ ρωτᾷ, γιατί διστάζουμε νὰ τὸν κοιτάξουμε κατάματα καὶ νὰ δεχθοῦμε, χωρὶς περιστροφές καὶ κενές, μάταιες καὶ ἀνωφελεῖς σκέψεις, τὸ ἔλεός Του!

Κι ἐδῶ, ἐπιτιμᾷ τὴν ὀλιγοπιστία, τὴ χλιαρότητα, τὶς διπολικές ταλαντεύσεις, τὰ «ναὶ μὲν ἀλλὰ», ὀτιδήποτε καλλιεργεῖ αὐτὴ τὴν ἀνίερη στάση, ποὺ μᾶς ἀποστερεῖ ἀπὸ τὴν εὐεργετικὴ Του μέριμνα. Νὰ γιατί, ἴσως, βρεθήκαμε στὴν ἀπόγνωση ποὺ ἡ πανδημία ἐγγενῶς δημιούργησε. Θαρσεῖτε!, φωνάζει ὁ Χριστός, φόβος δὲν ὑπάρχει, πάτησα τὸ θάνατο καὶ ἡ ἐπαγγελία τῆς σωτηρίας εἶναι ἡ παρακαταθήκη μου, ἡ νίκη ἀπέναντι στὸ στοιχειωμένο κόσμο καὶ τὴν ἀπάτη του, ἐλάτε κοντὰ μου καὶ ζῆστε τὸ θαῦμα, ὄχι μαγικὰ καὶ μὲ μαγγανεῖες θρησκευτικοῦ δαιμονισμοῦ, ἀλλὰ, ἀπλᾶ, νηπτικά, ὀρθῶς φρονοῦντες καὶ πράττοντες, ὅπως ἀρμόζει σὲ γεωργία καὶ οἰκοδομὲς Χριστοῦ, βυθισμένοι στὴν πληρότητα τῆς ἐμπιστοσύνης σὲ μένα.

Δὲ μένουν πολλὰ ἀδελφοί, γιὰ νὰ χάνουμε τὸν πολύτιμο χρόνο τῆς διάβασής μας ἀπὸ τούτη τὴ γῆ. Συνεργοῦμε μὲ τὸν Κύριο, ἀνακόπτωντας τὴ φθορὰ τῆς ἀμαρτίας καὶ τῆς ἐξαθλίωσης τῶν σχημάτων πού, ξεπερνώντας τὴν ἀπειλή, ἐπιτίθενται πιά κατὰ μέτωπο, γιὰ νὰ ἀφανίσουν τὴν ἀγιότητα τοῦ ναοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ, αὐτοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. Ὁμολογώντας τὸν ἀληθινὸ Θεό, μεταμορφωνόμαστε σὲ τροπαιοῦχους τῆς νίκης ἐνάντια στὴ σήψη καὶ τὴν ἀπώλεια, «ἵνα μὴ γενώμεθα υἱοὶ ἀπωλείας», τῆς θείας πίστεως μας, μὲ τὶς πρεσβεῖες τῆς Ἑπέρμαχης Μητέρας τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ὄλων μας, ἀμήν.

Ἀρχιμ. Αἰμιλιανὸς Παπαδάκης

SERMON ON THE GOSPEL READING

In today's Epistle reading, St Paul reminds us of the tremendous gift and privilege that has been given to us as baptised members of Christ's Holy Church. The Spirit of God now dwells within us, and Christ has become the foundation on which we build our lives, a foundation that cannot be shaken or taken away. However, while we should rejoice in that fact, we must not become complacent. Although the foundation is there, and we have been given all we need to build upon it, *what* we choose to build remains up to us. The foundation might be unshakable, but what good is that to us if we build upon it a house of cards that will come tumbling down at the slightest gust of wind? And it is not just a question of effort, but of whether that effort is well spent (building a house of cards is difficult and time consuming precisely because of how unstable it is!). As the Psalmist says, "*Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it*" (Psal. 127:1). In order for the house to stand, we have to be God's co-labourers (*Theou synergoi*), and the story told in today's Gospel reading is a perfect illustration of precisely this notion of *synergy* with God.

Christ, the eternal Word of God made flesh, is seen walking on the water. St Peter calls out to him and says, "*Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water*". Peter steps out of the boat onto the sea, and begins to walk. At that moment, his foundation was not the water under his feet, which could not have supported him, but rather his faith in Christ. When we are joined to Christ we become, as the same Apostle says in his second epistle, "*partakers of the divine nature*" (2 Peter 1:4), and this is what allowed Peter at that moment to do what the Lord had done and walk on the water. We saw this also last Thursday when we celebrated the Transfiguration of the Lord, and Peter and the other two Apostles saw Jesus on Mount Tabor shining with the uncreated light. The Fathers tell us that it was not Christ who was transfigured at that moment, but rather the eyes of the Apostles which were opened to see Jesus as he truly is; they were granted some form of participation in his divine energies.

However, although this possibility of participation is a gift freely given, it requires this same cooperation, the synergy that Paul mentions. The Lord did not withdraw from Peter, he did not take back the gift given to him. Rather it was Peter who took his eyes off the Lord, saw the storm, became afraid and lost faith. He stepped off the Rock, which is Christ, and back into the sea and thus immediately began to sink.

The foundation has been laid, the tools are at our disposal, but as for what we build and whether we make use of those tools, the choice is ours. As we work to build our lives, do we keep our gaze fixed on Christ and with him build things that will last into eternity, or do we turn aside to focus on the storm and build something that will only last as long as the temporary concerns and troubles of this life? More importantly, when we do go wrong, do we cry "*Lord, help me*", as did Peter, or do we choose to drown in our self-reliance?

Oeconomos Kristian Akselberg

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