

ΟΙΚΟΥΜΕΝΙΚΟΝ ΠΑΤΡΙΑΡΧΕΙΟΝ  
ΙΕΡΑ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΗ  
ΘΥΑΤΕΙΡΩΝ & Μ. ΒΡΕΤΑΝΝΙΑΣ

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE  
ARCHDIOCESE OF  
THYATEIRA & GREAT BRITAIN



## ΛΟΓΟΣ ΚΥΡΙΟΥ THE WORD OF OUR LORD

ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ ΠΡΟ ΤΗΣ ΥΨΩΣΕΩΣ

BEFORE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

13 Σεπτεμβρίου 2020

13 September 2020

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Ἐγκαίνια Ναοῦ τῆς Ἀναστάσεως, Ἀριστείδου φιλοσόφου, Κορνηλίου ἐκατοντάρχου  
Consecration of the church of the Holy Resurrection, Cornelius the Centurion, Aristides, Hierotheus of Iviron

### ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΙΚΟΝ ΑΝΑΓΝΩΣΜΑ

Γαλ. στ', 11-18

**Α**δελφοί, ἴδετε πηλίκους ὑμῖν ἁγράμμασιν ἔγραψα τῇ ἐμῇ χειρί. Ὅσοι θέλουσιν εὐπροσωπῆσαι ἐν σαρκί, οὗτοι ἀναγκάζουσιν ὑμᾶς περιτέμεσθαι, μόνον ἵνα μὴ τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ Χριστοῦ διώκωνται. Οὐδὲ γὰρ οἱ περιτετμημένοι αὐτοὶ νόμον φυλάσσουν, ἀλλὰ θέλουσιν ὑμᾶς περιτέμεσθαι, ἵνα ἐν τῇ ὑμετέρᾳ σαρκὶ καυχῆσωνται. Ἐμοὶ δὲ μὴ γένοιτο καυχᾶσθαι εἰ μὴ ἐν τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δι' οὗ ἔμοι κόσμος ἐσταύρωται, καὶ γὰρ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ. Ἐν γὰρ Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ οὔτε περιτομὴ τι ἰσχύει, οὔτε ἀκροβυστία, ἀλλὰ καινὴ κτίσις. Καὶ ὅσοι τῷ κανόνι τούτῳ στοιχήσουσιν, εἰρήνην ἐπ' αὐτούς, καὶ ἔλεος, καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰσραὴλ τοῦ θεοῦ. Τοῦ λοιποῦ, κόπους μοι μηδεὶς παρεχέτω· ἐγὼ γὰρ τὰ στίγματα τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματί μου βαστάζω. Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μετὰ τοῦ πνεύματος ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοί. Ἀμήν.

### EPISTLE READING

Gal. 6: 11-18

**B**rethren, see with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that would compel you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. For even those who receive circumcision do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may glory in your flesh. But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. Peace and mercy be upon all who walk by this rule, upon the Israel of God. Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen.

*Here the earth is temporal: one day everything will burn and nothing will exist, neither the earth nor heaven, nor anything else. Our lasting habitation is elsewhere, elsewhere our abode, elsewhere is our homeland: eternal life. He who believes this and who really wants to be Christ's and to get to where he must get, to eternal life, has to drink the cup to the dregs, to the last drop, in order to reach the end. That's how he'll find true life.*

## ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΚΟΝ ΑΝΑΓΝΩΣΜΑ

Ἰωάν. γ´, 13-17

**Ε**ἶπεν ὁ Κύριος, οὐδεὶς ἀναβέβηκεν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν εἰ μὴ ὁ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καταβάς, ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὁ ὢν ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ. καὶ καθὼς Μωϋσῆς ὕψωσε τὸν ὄφιν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ, οὕτως ὑψωθῆναι δεῖ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν μὴ ἀπόληται ἀλλ' ἔχῃ ζωὴν αἰώνιον. Οὕτω γὰρ ἠγάπησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν κόσμον, ὥστε τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ ἔδωκεν, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν μὴ ἀπόληται ἀλλ' ἔχῃ ζωὴν αἰώνιον. οὐ γὰρ ἀπέστειλεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἵνα κρίνῃ τὸν κόσμον, ἀλλ' ἵνα σωθῇ ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ.

## GOSPEL READING

John 3: 13-17

**T**he Lord said, «No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. «For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him».

## ΕΡΜΗΝΕΙΑ ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΚΟΥ ΑΝΑΓΝΩΣΜΑΤΟΣ

«ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν μὴ ἀπόληται, ἀλλ' ἔχῃ ζωὴν αἰώνιον».

**Ἡ** Κυριακὴ σήμερα, ἀναφέρεται εἰς τὸ Συναξάρι ὡς Κυριακὴ πρὸ τῆς Ὑψώσεως τοῦ Τιμίου καὶ Ζωοποιοῦ Σταυροῦ, ἐπειδὴ τὴν ἐπόμενη, 14<sup>η</sup> Σεπτεμβρίου, ἡ Ἐκκλησία τιμᾷ, προσκυνεῖ καὶ δοξάζει τὸν Τίμιον Σταυρὸ καὶ τὴν παγκόσμια Ὑψωσὴ Του. Ἔτσι λοιπὸν τὸ περιεχόμενον τοῦ Εὐαγγελίου σήμερα ἀναφέρεται στὸν Τίμιον Σταυρὸ τοῦ Κυρίου μας. Οἱ ἀναφορές καὶ οἱ προτυπώσεις τοῦ Σταυροῦ εἶναι ἀάπολλες στὴν Παλαιὰ καὶ Καινὴ Διαθήκη, ἀπὸ τὴν ὁποία πηγάζει τόσο ἡ Ὑμνολογία ὅσο καὶ τὸ Εὐαγγελικὸ ἀνάγνωσμα τῆς ἡμέρας. «Ὅπως δὲ ὁ Μωϋσῆς ἐκρέμασε ὑψηλὰ τὸ χάλκινο φίδι εἰς τὴν ἔρημον, διὰ νὰ τὸ ἀντικρύζουν μὲ πίστιν οἱ Ἰσραηλίται καὶ νὰ σώζωνται ἀπὸ τὸ θανατηφόρον δηλητήριον τῶν φιδιῶν τῆς ἐρήμου, ἔτσι, σύμφωνα μὲ τὸ πάνσοφον σχέδιον τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἔπρεπε νὰ κρεμασθῇ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐπάνω στὸν σταυρόν». (Ἰω. γ´ 14). Καὶ ἀπὸ ἄλλο σημεῖο στὴν Παλαιὰ Διαθήκη ἔχουν ἐμπνευσθεῖ οἱ στίχοι τοῦ τροπαρίου, «σταυρόν χαράξας Μωσῆς, ἐπ' εὐθείας ῥάβδῳ, τὴν Ἐρυθρὰν διέτεμε, τῷ Ἰσραὴλ πεζεύσαντι» (Καταβασία τῆς ἡμέρας). Σύμφωνα μὲ τὴν διήγηση τῆς Παλαιᾶς Διαθήκης, ὁ Μωυσῆς σημείωσε τὸ σημεῖο τοῦ Σταυροῦ ἐπάνω στὴν Ἐρυθρὰ θάλασσα καὶ αὐτὴ σχίστηκε στὰ δύο. Μὲ αὐτὸν τὸν τρόπο οἱ Ἰσραηλίτες μπόρεσαν καὶ διέβησαν στὴν ἀντίπερα ὄχθη καὶ λυτρώθηκαν ὀριστικὰ ἀπὸ τὴν μανία τῶν Αἰγυπτίων οἱ ὅποιοι καὶ τοὺς καταδίωκαν, μετὰ τὴν ἔξοδό τους ἀπὸ τὴν μακρόχρονη αἰχμαλωσία.

Συνεχίζοντας τὸ λυτρωτικὸ ἔργο τοῦ Μωυσέως γιὰ τὴν σωτηρίαν ὅχι μόνον τῶν Ἰσραηλιτῶν ἀλλὰ καὶ ὅλου τοῦ κόσμου, ὁ Κύριός μας ἀνεβαίνει στὸ τέλος τῆς ἐπὶ γῆς παρουσίας Του στὸν Σταυρὸ γιὰ νὰ σωθοῦν ὅλοι οἱ ἄνθρωποι ἀπὸ τὴν κατὰρα τῆς ἁμαρτίας. “Ἴδού γάρ ὁ Ἐμμανουὴλ τάς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν τῷ σταυρῷ

προσήλωσε” (Ἐσπέριον ἀΐ ἤχου). Μέ πολλή σαφήνεια ὁ Εὐαγγελιστής Ἰωάννης ἐξηγεῖ τοὺς λόγους γιὰ τοὺς ὁποίους ὁ Θεὸς Πατέρας ἀποστέλλει τὸν Υἱὸ Του στὸν κόσμο τοῦτο, δηλαδή ὄχι γιὰ νὰ κρίνει ἀλλὰ γιὰ νὰ σώσει τὸν κόσμο μὲ τὴν θυσία Του: «δὲν ἔστειλεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν Υἱόν του εἰς τὸν κόσμον διὰ νὰ κρίνῃ καὶ καταδικάσῃ τὸν κόσμον, ἀλλὰ διὰ νὰ σωθῇ ὁ κόσμος μὲ τὴν θυσίαν Του» (Ἰω. γ΄ 17).

Ὡστε λοιπὸν ὁ ἀπώτερος σκοπὸς τῆς ἐλεύσεως τοῦ Χριστοῦ στὸν κόσμο καὶ τῆς Σταυρώσεώς Του ἦταν τέτοιος, σύμφωνα μὲ τὸν Εὐαγγελιστὴ Ἰωάννη, ὥστε κανένας ἀπὸ ἐκείνους πού θὰ πιστεύσουν εἰς Αὐτόν νὰ μὴν καταδικασθῇ εἰς τὴν αἰώνιαν ἀπώλειαν, ἀλλὰ νὰ κερδίσῃ ζωὴν τὴν αἰώνιον (Ἰω. γ΄ 15). Ὁ Θεὸς μας ἐπομένως εἶναι Θεὸς θυσιαστικῆς Ἀγάπης γιὰ κάθε ἄνθρωπο, ἀνεξαρτήτως τῶν ἔργων του, καθὼς «τόσον πολὺ ἠγάπησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν βυθισμένον στὴν ἁμαρτίαν κόσμον, ὥστε παρέδωκεν εἰς σταυρικὸν θάνατον τὸν μονογενῆ του Υἱόν· διὰ νὰ μὴ καταδικασθῇ εἰς τὴν αἰώνιαν ἀπώλειαν ὅποιος πιστεύσῃ εἰς Αὐτόν, ἀλλὰ νὰ ἔχῃ ζωὴν αἰώνιον» (Ἰω. γ΄ 16).

Συνεπῶς, ἀκολουθώντας τὴν ζωὴ τοῦ Χριστοῦ πού σταυρώθηκε γιὰ τὴν σωτηρίά μας, ὅλοι οἱ χριστιανοὶ καλούμαστε μέσα στὴν Ἐκκλησία Του νὰ γίνουμε μέτοχοι καὶ τῆς Ἀγάπης Του μέσα ἀπὸ τὴν κοινωνία τοῦ σωτηριώδους ἔργου Του καὶ τῶν ζωοποιῶν μυστηρίων Του, ἰδιαίτερα τῆς θείας Κοινωνίας, ὥστε νὰ μπορέσουμε τελικὰ νὰ ἀξιωθοῦμε καὶ τῆς ἐπουρανίου Βασιλείας Του. Γένοιτο!



## SERMON ON THE GOSPEL READING

**T**oday's reading from St Paul's epistle to the *Galatians* encourages us to focus the attention of our hearts on the Cross of Christ. It means noticing that God far from being selfish, sacrifices himself for his creatures. When Jesus was thirty, he, the sinless God-Man, took upon himself all the sins of the world and washed them away by his baptism in the Jordan. He was not washed by the water of Jordan: the water of Jordan was washed by his presence. That is why often in church we bless water by plunging the Cross of Christ into it.

Let us think a little more about what Jesus did. Instead of proclaiming, *I am God, I am in charge of everything, I control everything*, he took into himself everything that is wrong and painful, to the point of allowing the important people, the



politicians and religious leaders, to humiliate him, make him suffer, and murder him by nailing him to a Cross. God always fills our suffering world with his love. God always takes the humblest place. God never says, *look at me, I am so important!*

At the beginning of his public ministry, Jesus went into the desert by the Dead Sea for forty days. The devil tried to convince him that he should try and rule the whole world, but Christ rebuked the devil, saying that seeking power in this world would involve him in making a deal with Satan. God alone must be worshipped, not power or money. After that, Jesus spent three years healing the sick, comforting those rejected by others, teaching his disciples to be gentle and loving and to reject self-importance. He taught us never to divide people into two categories, *them* and *us*, but instead to love even our enemies. This is the challenge our Saviour has left us, calling us to see that his Cross forbids us to seek power try to control others.



Now let us look at today's Gospel (Joh. 3: 13-17). It reminds us that *the light has come into the world* (3: 19), that is, the revelation of God. We know God when we are aware that the Cross shows God's nature: *The Son of Man must be lifted up on the Cross* (3: 14), because God's glory and joy is to take upon himself everything that is dark in the world and transform it into eternal life. *God so loved the world... that he did not send his Son to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him* (3: 16-17). Our salvation is through faith in Christ, which means loving light and not darkness (3: 19). Light and love are the same thing. *Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends* (1 Cor. 13: 4-8).

The Christian Gospel makes demands on us: *Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you* (Luk. 6: 27). In baptism, we are plunged into the death of Christ. A baptised Christian's ego is dead, and says like Saint Paul, *it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me* (Gal. 2: 20). Receiving Communion, we become one with the Crucified Lord. Communion gives us eternal life, but the price is high! In his first Epistle to the Corinthians Saint Paul reminds us that, *all who eat and drink [Communion] without discerning the body [without realising that Communion implies dying with Christ] eat and drink judgement against themselves* (1 Cor. 11: 29). Let us have gratitude for the gift of eternal life. Let us be humble and generous. Amen.

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