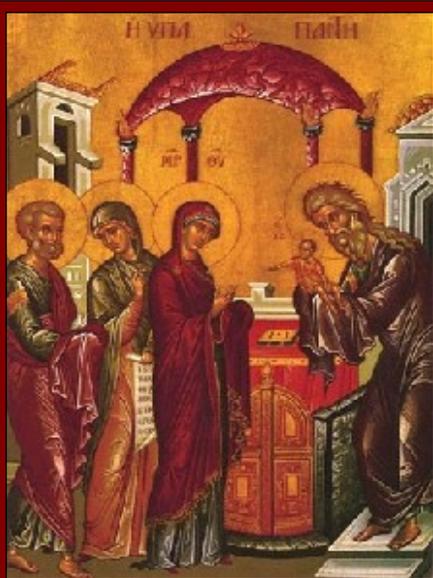


Christian Light

February 2021 — Vol. 33



February Message: *You are That Which You Have Not Yet Become . . .*

In this issue of “Christian Light” we host a profound reflection by Fr. Charalambos Papadopoulos (“Fr. Livyios”):

You are that which you have not yet become . . .

We say in the Church that “every saint has a past and every sinner a future.” What does this phrase really mean theologically? It is true that according to the teaching of the Church there is no one who doesn’t participate somehow in the fall and in sin. We all sin. Our nature is not perfect and we need to accept this. We may perfect ourselves in Christ but this will be accomplished completely only at the end times, at the culmination of history. In the present phase of life we suffer, we toil, we sin and we die in the hope of the resurrection. For the Fathers of the Church that which is surprising is not the

existence of sin but the lack of repentance. Or, even worse, the lack of self-awareness and humility. That which is horrific is not that you are a sinner but that you point your finger at others pontificating on ethics and judging their life. That is an insult to the mercy of God.

We have all committed misguided and mistaken actions in our life. We have sinned and fallen. We have gotten back up and hoped again. We have hurt others and others have hurt us. Whoever claims that only people have hurt them and not visa-versa is lying. It is impossible to live, to exist and to not commit mistakes, and, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, to not hurt another person, a thing or our natural environment. However, a person is not defined by this. Because a person is not only his or her mistakes or sins. He or she is not only darkness but light, gifts and potential.

No one can be understood or judged then only on the basis of his or her actions. Because oftentimes we have bitten off more than we can chew.

Reverend Dr. Philip Zymaris
Protosphyter



E-mail: pzymaris@hchc.edu
(401) 725-3127 Phone (401) 725-9270 Fax
(857) 204-9021 Emergencies
Web Site: www.assumptionri.org

SUNDAY SERVICES

Orthros 8 A.M. and Divine Liturgy 9:30 A.M.

ALL CHURCH SERVICES LIVE STREAM

*****RESERVATION IS REQUIRED for Sunday Services*****

RESERVATION NOT REQUIRED for Weekday Services

OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday 8:30 A.M. to 1:30 P.M.

Elizabeth Lazouras

secretary@assumptionri.org

NO ACCESS TO CHURCH OFFICE UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

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	Sophia Balamas-Young
Seminarian:	James Harritos

A person can't be defined only by what he or she does. He is something deeper and unseen. The human being for the Fathers is a mystery. You cannot easily put him in a box, neither can you absolutize him by glorifying him or condemning him. His or her past does not determine his or her future. That which today happened wrongly can be done great tomorrow and that which you did not accomplish yesterday could become a reality in the future.

For this reason the phrase that "every saint has a past and every sinner has a future" has profound meaning. For the Fathers of the Church the human being is not his past but his future. Not that which he is but that which he will be. Not that which he did not accomplish but that which he cannot even yet imagine that he can accomplish.

The Metropolitan of Pergamon John Zizioulas says that "no one is that which he is, rather he is that which he will be on the 'last day' no judgment on his brother should claim to have an ontological character. We are all potential saints. Repentance and the forgiveness that the Church grants would mean nothing without an eschatological ontology, that is to say, to allow the future, the eschaton, to liberate a person from his past"

*Every saint
has a past
&
every sinner
has a future.*

Μήνυμα Φεβρουαρίου: «Εἶσαι αὐτὸ πὸν δὲν ἔγινες ἀκόμη»

**Στὸ τρέχον τεῦχος τοῦ
«Χριστιανικοῦ Φωτὸς»
φιλοξενούμε ἓνα βαρυσήμαντο
μῆνυμα τοῦ π. Χαράλαμπος
Παπαδόπουλος («π. Λίβυος»).**

Εἶσαι αὐτὸ πὸν δὲν ἔγινες ἀκόμη

Λέμε στὴν Ἐκκλησία ὅτι «κάθε ἅγιος ἔχει ἓνα παρελθὸν καὶ κάθε ἀμαρτωλὸς ἓνα μέλλον». Τὶ σημαίνει θεολογικὰ ὅμως αὐτὴ ἡ φράση; Εἶναι ἀλήθεια ὅτι κατὰ τὴν διδασκαλία τῆς Ἐκκλησίας δὲν ὑπάρχει κανεὶς ἄνθρωπος πὸν νὰ μὴν μετέχει στὴν πτώση καὶ τὴν ἀμαρτία. Πάντες ἀμαρτάνουμε. Ἡ φύση μας δὲν εἶναι τέλεια κι αὐτὸ χρειάζεται ἀποδοχή. Μπορεῖ ἐν Χριστῶ νὰ τελειοποιούμαστε ἀλλὰ αὐτὸ ὀλοκληρωτικὰ θὰ συμβεῖ στὰ ἔσχατα, στὸ τέλος τῆς ἱστορίας. Στὴν παρούσα φάση ζωῆς ὑποφέρουμε, πάσχουμε, ἀμαρτάνουμε καὶ πεθαίνουμε μὲ προσδοκία ἀναστάσεως. Γιὰ τοὺς πατέρες τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, τὸ παράδοξο δὲν εἶναι ἡ ἀμαρτία ἀλλὰ ἡ ἀμετανοησία. Ἡ ἀκόμη χειρότερα, ἡ ἀπουσία αὐτογνωσίας καὶ ταπεινώσης. Τὸ φοβερὸ δὲν εἶναι ὅτι εἶσαι ἀμαρτωλὸς ἀλλὰ ὅτι κουνᾶς τὸ δάκτυλο στοὺς ἄλλους μιλῶντας γιὰ ἠθικὴ κρίνοντας τὴν ζωὴ τους. Αὐτὸ εἶναι πρόκληση ἀπέναντι στὴν μακροθυμία τοῦ Θεοῦ.

Ὅλοι ἔχουμε κάνει ἄστοχες καὶ λανθασμένες κινήσεις στὴν ζωὴ μας. Ἐχουμε ἀμαρτήσῃ καὶ πέσει. Ἐχουμε σηκωθεῖ καὶ ἐλπίσει ξανά. Πληγώσαμε καὶ μᾶς πλήγωσαν. Ὅποιος λέει ὅτι μονάχα τὸν πλήγωσαν ἀπλὰ λέει ψέματα. Δὲν γίνεται νὰ ζεῖς, νὰ ὑπάρχεις καὶ νὰ μὴν κάνεις λάθη, νὰ μὴν ἔχεις πληγώσει ἠθελημένα ἢ

ἄθελά σου κάποιον ἄνθρωπο, κάποια ὑπαρξή, τὴν φύση. Ὅμως αὐτὸ δὲν ἐξαντλεῖ τὸν ἄνθρωπο. Διότι ὁ ἄνθρωπος δὲν εἶναι μονάχα τὰ λάθη ἢ οἱ ἀμαρτίες του. Δὲν εἶναι μονάχα σκοτάδι ἀλλὰ καὶ φῶς, χαρίσματα καὶ δυνατότητες.

Κανεὶς ἄνθρωπος δὲ μπορεῖ νὰ ἐρμηνευθεῖ ἢ νὰ κριθεῖ μονάχα ἀπὸ τὶς πράξεις του. Διότι πολλές φορές ποθήσαμε ἐκεῖνα πὸν δὲν ἀντέξαμε νὰ πράξουμε. Ἡ ψυχὴ εἶναι πιὸ βαθιὰ ἀπὸ τὰ κατορθώματα μας. Τὶ ὠραία πὸν τὸ θέτει ὁ Ντοστογιέφσκι, «ὁ Θεὸς θὰ κρίνει τοὺς πόθους τὶς καρδιᾶς μας». Γιατί; Διότι πάντα αὐτὸ πὸν νιώθουμε εἶναι πιὸ δυνατὸ ἢ μεγαλύτερο ἀπὸ ἐκεῖνο πὸν στὸ τέλος καταφέραμε νὰ ποῦμε ἢ νὰ πράξουμε.

Δὲν τελειώνει ὁ ἄνθρωπος μονάχα σὲ αὐτὸ πὸν κάνει. Εἶναι κάτι βαθύτερο καὶ ἀθέατο. Ὁ ἄνθρωπος γιὰ τοὺς πατέρες τῆς Ἐκκλησίας εἶναι μυστήριον. Δὲν μπορεῖς εὐκόλα νὰ τὸν ὀρίσεις, νὰ τὸν ἀποθεώσεις ἢ καταδικάσεις. Τὸ χθὲς δὲν προδιαγράφει τὸ αὔριο. Αὐτὸ πὸν σήμερα ἔγινε λάθος μπορεῖ αὔριο νὰ γίνῃ ὑπέροχο, κι αὐτὸ πὸν ἐχθὲς δὲν κατάφερες αὔριο μπορεῖ νὰ γίνῃ πραγματικότητα.

Γι' αὐτὸ ἔχει μεγάλη σημασία αὐτὴ ἡ φράση ὅτι «κάθε ἅγιος ἔχει ἓνα παρελθὸν καὶ κάθε ἀμαρτωλὸς ἓνα αὔριο . . .». Γιὰ τοὺς ἁγίους τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ὁ ἄνθρωπος δὲν εἶναι τὸ χθὲς τοῦ ἀλλὰ τὸ μέλλον του. Ὅχι αὐτὸ πὸν εἶναι ἀλλὰ ἐκεῖνο πὸν θὰ γίνῃ. Ὅχι αὐτὸ πὸν δὲν κατάφερε ἀλλὰ αὐτὸ πὸν δὲν ξέρει ἀκόμη ὅτι μπορεῖ.

Ἀναφέρει ὁ Μητροπολίτης Περγάμου Ἰωάννης, «κανένας ἄνθρωπος δὲν εἶναι αὐτὸ πὸν εἶναι, ἀλλὰ, αὐτὸ πὸν θὰ εἶναι «ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ» . . . καμία κρίση γιὰ τὸν ἀδελφὸ μας δὲν πρέπει ἂν ἔχει ὄντολογικὸ χαρακτήρα. Ὅλοι εἶναι δυνάμει ἅγιοι. Ἡ μετάνοια καὶ ἡ ἄφεση πὸν παρέχει ἢ Ἐκκλησία εἶναι ἀδιανόητες χωρὶς τὴν ἐσχατολογικὴ ὄντολογία, χωρὶς δηλαδὴ νὰ ἐπιτρέπει στὸ μέλλον, στὰ ἔσχατα, νὰ ἀπελευθερώσουν τὸν ἄνθρωπο ἀπὸ τὸ παρελθὸν τοῦ . . .».

EURIPIDES' MASTERPIECE

"HIPPOLYTUS"

ADULT CLASS SEMINAR

Studies in Greek Civilization



Mondays from 7 PM to 8:30 PM

February 22 to March 29

6-Week Class

Due to pandemic restrictions,
classes will be conducted online via Zoom

For More Information

John Lyssikatos 401-728-4452



February 2021



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 	2 THE PRESENTATION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST CHURCH SERVICE CANCELLED DUE TO SNOWSTORM	3	4	5	6
7 16th SUNDAY OF MATTHEW 8AM Orthros 9:30AM Divine Liturgy Live Stream and Limited In-Person Church Attendance — Reservation Required Email Church Office	8	9	10 HARALAMBOS THE MARTYR 8AM Orthros 9AM Divine Liturgy Live Stream and Church Attendance — Reservation Not Required	11	12	13
14 SUNDAY OF THE CANAANITE 8AM Orthros 9:30AM Divine Liturgy Live Stream and Limited In-Person Church Attendance — Reservation Required Email Church Office	15	16 4:30PM Greek School	17 4:30PM Greek School	18	19	20
21 SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN AND PHARISEE (Triodion Begins) 8AM Orthros 9:30AM Divine Liturgy Live Stream and Limited In-Person Church Attendance — Reservation Required Email Church Office	22 7PM to 8:30PM Adult Class Seminar EURIPIDES' MASTERPIECE "HIPPOLYTUS" Online via Zoom	23 4:30PM Greek School	24 4:30PM Greek School	25	26	27
28 SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON 8AM Orthros 9:30AM Divine Liturgy Live Stream and Limited In-Person Church Attendance — Reservation Required Email Church Office						

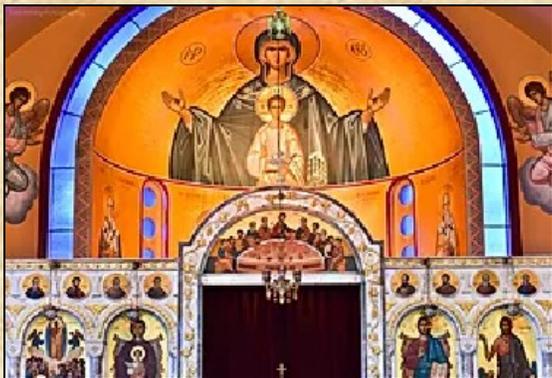
Upcoming Lecture

We all know about the war of the Greek Independence in 1821. However, that war liberated only half of today's Greece while the other half — the northern part — became free during the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 in which the Greek-Americans played an important and decisive role.

Up to now, not enough attention has been paid to the contribution of the Greek-Americans and the American philhellenes made in the Balkan Wars. Fortunately, very recently, Peter Giakoumis, a Greek-American military historian, researched and chronicled very thoroughly the story of almost 50,000 Greek-Americans who in 1910 left the USA and joined the Greek army. It has been estimated that the Greek-American forces constituted one-third of the army of that war. Some of them were from the state of Rhode Island (probably our grandfathers and great-grandfathers).

To learn more about this important event, on Monday, February 15th, from 7pm to 8pm, Peter Giakoumis will make a Zoom presentation on his research (a 600-page book!).

Those interested in attending this presentation please contact Bill Frangos at:
Wfrangos@gmail.com
to be connected to the Zoom link.



WATCH LIVE STREAM OF OUR CHURCH SERVICES

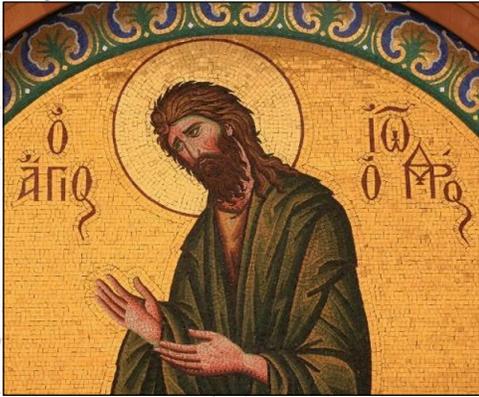
Visit Assumption of the Virgin Mary
Greek Orthodox Church homepage of our website:

<https://www.assumptionri.org/>

You will find the following options on
our website homepage:

1. To watch live stream of church services, click button that says: **"WATCH NOW"**
2. To light a red glass candle, click button that says: **"VIRTUAL CANDLE"**
3. To make an offering, click button that says: **"VIRTUAL TRAY"**

Contributions are crucial to the survival of our church. Despite the pandemic, these contributions can still take place thanks to options made readily available on our website. On the homepage of our website, there are buttons that make such donations very easy. Please avail yourselves of this opportunity while following the services online or any time you wish so that this year can be just like any other year despite the pandemic. Thank you to our Parishioners for your continued support.



“And as he was walking in the temple, the chief priests and the scribes and the elders came to him, and they said to him, ‘By what authority are you doing these things, or who gave you this authority to do them?’ Jesus said to them, ‘I will ask you a question; answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. Was the baptism of John from heaven or from men? Answer me.’ And they argued with one another, ‘If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ But shall we say, ‘From men?’ — they were afraid of the people, for all held that John was a real prophet. So they answered Jesus, ‘We do not know.’ And Jesus said to them, ‘Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.’” (Mk 11: 27-33)

It's clear that the chief priests, scribes, and elders did not believe John. But here the Lord exposes that they are concerned not with the truth of their beliefs, but with the political implications thereof. Because their politics had become more important to them than their faith. So, although neither He nor His interlocutors give a “straight” answer to a question here, – He does not lie, as do they. He says, I will not tell you, while they say, “We do not know.” And although this is a difficult lie, because they usually presented themselves as knowing-it-all in matters of religion, it is still “safer” politically, than professing their not believing John. After all, they did not want to end up as did he, whose truth-telling cost him his head.

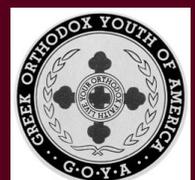
It's not possible for God to reveal Himself in our public discussions, when we are concerned, in the midst of these discussions, with how “we” look, politically. So let me open up to His grace today, in some heartfelt prayer, that I may re-focus on the truth of the questions with which He challenges us, and not on any political affiliation. O Lord, by the prayers of St. John the Baptist, help us to follow his example, that we may serve Your agenda and not our own.



GOYA

As Christmas quickly rolled around, GOYA was very fortunate to be able to hold our annual Christmas Card Project! We were able to give out hundreds of Christmas cards to many different families who are a part of our church. We would love to give a big thank you to all parishioners who supported us in this project and we wouldn't be able to complete it without all of you! Furthermore, GOYA would like to thank Erin and Konstandina, who chaired this project and got all of the cards done since all of the GOYANS could not gather due to COVID restrictions. Lastly, although COVID does not allow all GOYANS to get together in person, this December we all gathered over a fun virtual meeting and played trivia games!

Respectfully Submitted,
Athanasia Dafulas, GOYA Recording Secretary



On the 2nd of February a poor Christ...

About forty days after Christmas, we celebrate the Meeting of the Lord, the holiday when the Panagia and Joseph brought the forty-day old Christ (they “offered” Him) to the Temple as was required by the Jewish religious law. This seems like a simple routine action, right? Think again, this event hides a very profound dynamic

First of all, this event of the “Meeting of the Lord” is narrated only by the Gospel of Luke, which has a reputation as “the Gospel of the poor and oppressed.” Indicative of this is the fact that Luke, in his narration of the Nativity event, does not mention the three Magi and their expensive gifts, rather, he mentioned the poor shepherds.

Now we come to the Meeting of the Lord. In Luke’s description he writes that the parents of Jesus “offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, ‘a pair of turtledoves or two pigeons.’”

A simple phrase, right? Actually it is full of nuances and innuendos: according to the religious law of the Jews, parents were actually supposed to offer other, more expensive things: a one-year old lamb as well as a turtledove or a pigeon. The poorer sacrifice offered by Joseph and Mary was that which was the alternative version for poor people!

The Gospel does not offer a news report of events. It purposefully illumines certain aspects of the story to give a specific theological message. Since “the Jesus of Luke is the great lover of all who are the despised and heirless of the world: the poor, the sinners, the Samaritans, and women.”

(From a blog of the Theologian Thanasis Papathanasiou, editor of the flagship theological journal *Synaxe*).

Notes:

For the pericopes on the Meeting of the Lord see Luke 2:22 – 24. For the normal, more expensive offering stipulated by the Jewish religious law see Leviticus 12:6 – 8.



Thanasis Papathanasiou

On the offering given by poor people (given by the family of Jesus in the Meeting of the Lord event) and on the fact that Joseph and Mary did not reap benefit from the expensive gifts of the Magi (described only in Matthew) because they were sold so they could survive being refugees in Egypt, see the book by Thanasis Papathanasiou, *My God the Refugee*, (Athens: En Plo, 2018), 70.

The phrases in quotation marks are quotes from the book by Stanley B. Marrow, *The Words of Christ in the Gospels*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1979).

Στις 2 Φεβρουαρίου ένας φτωχός Ίησοῦς . . .

Σχεδόν σαράντα μέρες μετά τὰ Χριστούγεννα, γιορτάζεται ἡ Ὑπαπαντή, δηλαδή τὸ γεγονός ὅτι ἡ Μαρία καὶ ὁ Ἰωσήφ πῆγαν («πρόσφεραν») τὸν σαρανταήμερο Ἰησοῦ στὸν ναό, ὅπως ὄριζε ὁ θρησκευτικός τους νόμος. Ἀπλὴ ρουτίνα, ἔ; Γιὰ νὰ δοῦμε ὅμως μήπως μία ἄλλη δυναμικὴ ὑποφώσκει ἐδῶ

Πρῶτα ἀπ' ὅλα, τὴν Ὑπαπαντὴ τὴν ἐξιστορεῖ μόνο τὸ εὐαγγέλιο τοῦ Λουκᾶ, τὸ ὁποῖο ἔχει τὴ δική του ρετινιὰ ὡς τὸ «εὐαγγέλιο τῶν καταπιεζόμενων καὶ τῶν φτωχῶν». Εἶναι ἐνδεικτικὸ ὅτι στὴ γέννηση τοῦ Χριστοῦ ὁ Λουκᾶς δὲν εἶχε μνημονεύσει τοὺς τρεῖς Μάγους καὶ τὰ ἀκριβὰ δῶρα τους, εἶχε μνημονεύσει ὅμως τοὺς τσοπάνηδες.

Ἐρχόμαστε στὴν Ὑπαπαντὴ. Ὅταν ὁ Λουκᾶς τὴν περιγράφει, γράφει ὅτι οἱ γονεῖς τοῦ Ἰησοῦ «ἔπρεπε νὰ προσφέρουν καὶ θυσία ἓνα ζευγάρι τρυγόνια ἢ δύο μικρὰ περιστέρια». Φράση ἀπλούα, ἔ; Κι ὅμως, γεμάτη δυναμικὰ συμφραζόμενα: Βάσει τοῦ θρησκευτικοῦ νόμου, οἱ γονεῖς κανονικὰ ἔπρεπε νὰ προσφέρουν ἄλλα, ἀκριβότερα πράγματα: ἓνα χρονιάρικο ἀμνὸ κι ἓνα νεοσσὸ περιστερᾶς ἢ τρυγόνας. Ἡ οἰκονομικὰ εὐτελέστερη θυσία ποὺ πρόσφεραν λοιπὸν ὁ Ἰωσήφ καὶ ἡ Μαρία ἦταν ἀκριβῶς ἡ θυσία ποὺ προβλεπόταν νὰ προσφέρουν οἱ φτωχοί!

Τὸ εὐαγγέλιο δὲν κάνει ρεπορτάζ. Φωτίζει ἠθελημένα μία συγκεκριμένη θεολογικὴ ἐπιλογή. Καθόσον «ὁ Ἰησοῦς τοῦ Λουκᾶ εἶναι [...] ὁ μέγας ἐραστὴς ὅλων τῶν περιφρονημένων καὶ ἄκληρων αὐτοῦ τοῦ κόσμου: τῶν πτωχῶν, τῶν ἀμαρτωλῶν, τῶν Σαμαρειτῶν καὶ τῶν γυναικῶν».

(Ἀπὸ μπλόγκ τοῦ θεολόγου Θανάση Παπαθανασίου)

Γιὰ τὴν ἀφήγηση τῆς Ὑπαπαντῆς βλ. Λουκ. 2:22-24. Γιὰ τὴν κανονικὴ, ἀκριβότερη προσφορὰ βλ. Παλαιᾶ Διαθήκη, Λευιτ. 12:6-8.



Γιὰ τὴ θυσία τῶν φτωχῶν (τὴν ὁποία πρόσφερε ἡ φανίλια τοῦ Ἰησοῦ στὴν Ὑπαπαντὴ) καὶ γιὰ ὅτι δὲν φαίνεται νὰ εἶχε πλουτίσει ἀπὸ τὰ δῶρα τῶν Μάγων, τὰ ὁποῖα, σύμφωνα μὲ μία παράδοση, τὰ ξόδεψε στὴν προσφυγιᾶ τῆς Αἰγύπτου, βλ τὸ βιβλίο τοῦ Θανάση Παπαθανασίου, *Ὁ Θεός μου ὁ Ἀλλοδαπός*, ἔκδ. Ἐν Πλῶ, Ἀθήνα 2018 (ἔκδ. 5η), σ. 70.

Τὰ παραθέματα εἶναι ἀπὸ τὸ Stanley B. Marrow, *Τὰ λόγια τοῦ Ἰησοῦ στὰ Εὐαγγέλια*, (μτφρ. Σ. Ἀγουρίδη), ἔκδ. Ἄρτος Ζωῆς, Ἀθήνα 1986, σσ. 130-131. Βλ. Καὶ Π. Ν. Τρεμπέλας, *Υπόμνημα εἰς τὸ κατὰ Λουκᾶν εὐαγγέλιον*, ἔκδ. Σωτήρ, Ἀθήναι 1983, σ. 102.

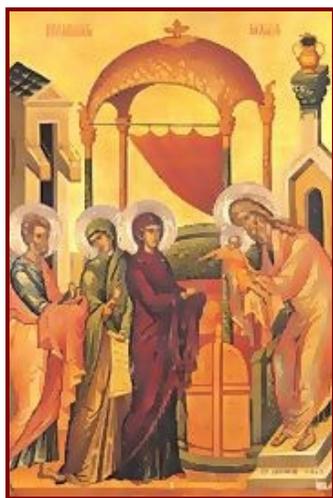
The Presentation of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

Biblical Story

The story of the Presentation celebrated on February 2nd is told in Luke 2:22-29. Mary and Joseph were faithful Jews and observed their religious customs. An important custom was for the couple to take their first-born son to the Temple. The baby was taken to the Temple forty days after his birth and was dedicated to God. In addition, if the parents were wealthy, they were to bring a lamb and a young pigeon or a turtle dove to be offered as a sacrifice at the Temple. The custom provided that if the parents were poor, they were to offer two pigeons or two turtle doves for the sacrifice.

When Jesus was forty days old, Mary and Joseph took Him to the Temple in Jerusalem. They were not wealthy, so they took two turtle doves with them to offer as a sacrifice at the Temple. As they arrived at the Temple, Mary and Joseph were met by a very old man named Simeon. He was a holy man and was noted as a very intelligent scholar. Simeon spent much time studying about the prophets of Israel. It was during his studies that he learned of the coming of the Messiah. The Jewish people were waiting for the Messiah to come and deliver Israel from their conquerors. From that time on, Simeon spent his time praying for the Messiah to come. He spent many years in prayer. Finally, while Simeon was praying he heard the voice of God. God promised Simeon that he would not die until he had seen the Messiah. When Simeon saw Jesus, he took the baby in his arms and blessed the Lord and said: "Lord, now let Your servant go in peace according to Your promise, because my eyes have seen Your salvation which you have prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory to your people Israel." Also, in the Temple was Anna the Prophetess. She had been a widow for many years. Anna was about 84 years old and spent her time in the Temple worshipping, fasting, and praying. When she saw the Christ Child she praised God and spoke of him to all who were awaiting the Messiah.

After Jesus was presented in the Temple, the family returned to Galilee to the town of Nazareth. The Bible tells us that Jesus grew and became strong, and was filled with wisdom.



Icon of the Feast

The Holy Icon shows that the meeting takes place inside the Temple and in front of the altar. The altar has a book or a scroll on it and is covered by a canopy. The Theotokos stands to the left and is holding out her hands in a gesture of offering and humility. The one hand of the Theotokos is covered by her cloak or as it is known, the maphorion. She has just handed her Son to Simeon. Christ is shown as a child, but He is not in swaddling clothes. He is clothed in a small dress and his legs are bare. Jesus appears to be giving a blessing. Simeon holds Jesus with both hands which are covered. This shows the reverence Simeon had for the Messiah. Simeon is bare headed and there is nothing to show that he is a priest. Some biblical scholars say that Simeon was probably a priest of the Temple or a Doctor of the Law. Joseph is behind the Theotokos. He is carrying the two turtle doves for the sacrifice. Anna the Prophetess is also standing behind the Theotokos and is pointing to the Christ child. Joseph offers the sacrifice of a poor family while Anna the Prophetess praises God and "speaks about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem." Luke 2:38

The words Simeon spoke when he saw the Christ Child are known as "St. Simeon's Prayer." This prayer is sung daily at the evening Vespers services of the Orthodox Church. In the Orthodox Church, both baby boys and baby girls are taken to the Church on the fortieth day after their birth. This is done in remembrance of the Theotokos and Joseph taking the infant Jesus to the Temple.

Christmas Offerings (as of 1/31/2021)

Dr. & Mrs. Vasili Amfilo

Mr. & Mrs. Elias Antonakos

Mr. & Mrs. Ioannis Apostolakis

The Augoustakis Family
(Donation towards Christmas Poinsettias)

Mrs. Sophia Balamas
(Donation towards Christmas Poinsettias in Loving Memory of Husband Panagiotis and Parents)

The Chrysanthopoulos Family

Mr. Patrick Lee Cummings

Mrs. Tina Demopulos

Rev. Fr. & Presytera George Economou

Mr. & Mrs. George Fackos

Mr. Steven Fackos

Mrs. Georgette Ferrucci
(In Loving Memory of Father George G. Skoutas and Husband Michael Ferrucci)

Mr. & Mrs. Richard Forest

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Mr. & Mrs. William Gaza

Mrs. Eve Gouras

Mr. Charles Johnson

Ms. Stavroula Kalivas

Mr. George Karalis

Mr. & Mrs. Steve Karavasilis

Mrs. Eleni Katsios

Ms. Barbara Kiras

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Mr. & Mrs. Roger Lemire

Mr. Paul Microulis

Mrs. & Mrs. Stephen Mirabile

Mrs. Betty Missirlis
(In Loving Memory of Husband George and Parents Achille and Martha)

Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Mudge

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Mr. & Mrs. George Panagos

Ms. Patricia Panichas
(In Loving Memory of Parents)

Mrs. Harriet Pappas

Mr. & Mrs. Costas Perdikakis

Mr. & Mrs. Michael Platsidakis

Mrs. Marion Pollock

Mrs. Dorothy Skoutas
(In Loving Memory of Husband George G. Skoutas and Son-in-Law Michael Ferrucci)

Mrs. Emily Soukas

St. Barbara Philoptochos
(Donation towards Christmas Decorations for the Church)

Mrs. Dorothea Stergis and Family

Mrs. Pashalia Strekouras

Mr. & Mrs. Richard Thibeault

Ms. Georgia Tsimortos

Ms. Nicoletta Tsimortos

Mrs. Efthia and Ms. Fotini Tzaferis

Mrs. Penny Vartanian

Mr. & Mrs. George Vastis

Mr. & Mrs. Nickolas Vellopoulos

Miss Anastasia Vellopoulou

Dr. Thomas & Marie (Lascares) Walsh

Mrs. Joanne Wright

Thanksgiving Offerings (as of 1/31/2021)

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Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Mudge

Dr. & Mrs. Constantine Pagonis

Mrs. Harriet Pappas

Ms. Elaine Sioras

Mrs. Emily Soukas

Miss Anastasia Vellopoulou

Cemetery Fund (as of 1/31/2021)

Assumption Church is in the process of having work performed by landscapers on our grounds at Walnut Hill Cemetery on Armistice Boulevard in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. It would be greatly appreciated if you would consider making a donation to help with the upkeep and beautification of the grounds where so many of our deceased loved ones are buried. If you have not already done so, please contribute to the Cemetery Fund so that completion of the work can take place. Special thanks are expressed to the following parishioners for their very generous donations:

Dr. & Mrs. Vasili Amfilo
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Mr. & Mrs. George Foussekis

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in Memory of Aristidis Triantafilou

Ms. Elaine Sioras and Mrs. Irene Sioras
in Memory of father and husband, Harry Sioras

Mr. George Sioras
in Memory of father, Harry Sioras



AHEPA A121, Pawtucket Chapter Announces Community Webinars!

During these challenging times of the pandemic, our community engagements as an AHEPA chapter are even more important and even more needed than before! We are happy to announce that we will be starting a series of online Webinars to our community which will cover many areas including:

- **Financial matters**
- **Health matters**
- **Hellenic Affairs**
- **General topics**
- **Community online discussions!**

Most will be in English however some will be in Greek. Reservations will be required, and attendees will be able to use a smartphone, tablet, laptop, or desktop computer. Internet access (Wi-Fi) connection will be required. **Keep an eye for our email blasts announcing our specific dates and topics!**

Μερικά λόγια για σένα – τον Έλληνα της Αμερικής!



Χρόνια πολλά τώρα έχεις δουλέψει και έχεις ιδρώσεις για ένα καλύτερο μέλλον για σένα και την οικογένεια σου. Με τον αγώνα σου έχεις δείξει σε όλους τι μπορούν οι Έλληνες της Αμερικής να κατορθώσουν. Κέρδισες σεβασμό, προκοπή και άλλα πολλά. Θυμάσαι τα μέρη που ήλθες, θυμάσαι ίσως και τα μικρά σου χρονιά στην πατρίδα μας. Τα πανηγύρια που κάνουμε στην Αμερική είναι καλά και τα χαιρόμαστε αλλά δεν μπορούν να κρύψουν τον καημό μας και την Ελλάδα μας που μας λείπει.

Όλα αυτά που θυμόμαστε από την Ελλάδα, δεν ήταν πάντα έτσι. Χρειάστηκαν πίστη, αγώνες, θυσίες και αίμα ηρώων για να γίνουν. Σήμερα, αυτά που έχουμε μέσα στην καρδιά μας από την Ελλάδα απειλούνται. Και όλοι μας πρέπει να σκεφθούμε τι θα κάνουμε.

Μπορούμε να συζητάμε για το τι θα κάναμε εμείς αν είμαστε πρωθυπουργοί η υπουργοί όταν πίνουμε το καφεδάκι μας. Η ίσως μας απασχολεί η επίθεση που δέχεται ο Ελληνισμός μέχρι να πάμε στο επόμενο γλέντι (όταν μπορούσαμε), η μέχρι την επόμενη μέρα μέχρι να πάμε πίσω στη δουλειά.

Αυτό όμως πόσο βοηθάει την Ελλάδα μας; Όσο δεν κάνουμε κάτι, αφήνουμε την Ελλάδα μας στην τύχη της. Αν ψάχνετε να βρείτε τρόπο να βοηθήσετε την Ελλάδα μας, η ΑΧΕΠΑ σας καλεί να ενωθείτε μαζί μας. Και μόνο απλό μέλος να γίνετε, χωρίς τίποτα άλλο να κάνετε, δίνετε δύναμη στη φωνή της ΑΧΕΠΑ.

Όταν η ΑΧΕΠΑ μιλάει στους ισχυρούς αυτής της χώρας μας ρωτάνε πόσοι είσαστε και που είναι οι Έλληνες της Αμερικής; Όσοι Έλληνες πατριώτες, βοηθήστε μας να τους δώσουμε τη απάντηση που μόνο μαζί μπορούμε να δώσουμε! Ταυτόχρονα, ισχυροποιείται ο Ελληνισμός της Αμερικής – δηλαδή τα παιδιά σας και τα εγγόνια σας!

Ήρθε η ώρα να γράψουμε ιστορία στην Αμερική και τον κόσμο. Αυτή η ώρα είναι η δική μας ώρα, ανήκει στη δική μας γενιά. Μόνο εμείς θα το κάνουμε, κανένας άλλος. Ενταχθείτε στην ΑΧΕΠΑ, βοηθήστε μας με κάθε τρόπο!

Για περισσότερες πληροφορίες και αίτηση εγγραφής στην ΑΧΕΠΑ, επικοινωνήστε με τον Γιάννη Αποστολάκη, A121 Pawtucket Chapter, President & Secretary (apos_main@outlook.com, (508) 261-1221).



AHEPA Commends U.S. Embassy's Campaign to Commemorate Greece's Bicentennial

The American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (Order of AHEPA) commends the U.S. Embassy in Athens on the launch of its year-long campaign to commemorate Greece's Bicentennial entitled "USA & Greece: Celebrating 200 Years of Friendship," announced Supreme President George G. Horiates.

"We are pleased to see a campaign that highlights stories of friendship and the historical connection between our people of Greece and the United States; educates and celebrates the role American Philhellenes played in Greece's fight for independence; champions entrepreneurship; and overall, displays pride and commitment to the strategic partnership between two allied countries, Greece and the United States."

"AHEPA looks forward to a year full of commemorative events that includes, with great anticipation, hosting our annual Supreme Convention in Athens in July 2021. We are pleased to be working in cooperation with the Greek government and the U.S. Embassy in Athens to join in the celebration of the bicentennial of Greece's independence," Supreme President Horiates said. AHEPA previewed the U.S. Embassy's campaign in the newly-released issue of The Ahepana magazine.

We Must Preserve the Legacy We Inherited! We need you to join our AHEPA A121 (Pawtucket) Chapter!

We ask all of you to join and support your AHEPA Pawtucket chapter. You can get as much involved as you have time or desire. Please keep in mind, that just by becoming a member and through your yearly membership fee you help us to . . .

- ***Support AHEPA activities and publications***
- ***Support our Chapter's activities and representation***
- ***Give strength to our Pawtucket chapter through membership counts***
- ***Provide academic and athletic scholarships***
- ***Make our voice heard for things that matter***
- ***Make a difference in every community and in the country as well***

This is an invitation to everyone – we need all of you! Your opinion will always count, whether you are attending our meetings in person, or you are submitting your ideas via email, phone, text or personal conversation. For membership information, applications please see Yianni Apostolakis, Tom Andrikopoulos or Nick Bitsakis.

For more information, please visit www.ahepa.org.



*In an incredibly challenging season,
a few stories of faith, love and fellowship
can always put a smile of hope in our face!*

Greece: Celebrating Success, Looking Ahead at Frontistirio



With support from IOCC, the Social Frontistirio of the Archdiocese of Athens offers specialized tutoring for talented students who otherwise couldn't afford it. These lessons, typically expensive, are necessary for success in the Panhellenic Examinations, Greece's university entrance exams. With its high-quality courses offered free of charge, Frontistirio is opening a path to higher education to hardworking students. While the pandemic made this year particularly challenging, with support from IOCC and Church partner

Apostoli, during Greece's lockdown Frontistirio quickly moved all lessons online and saw students through to their goal of scoring well in the Panhellenic Exams.

Moving Toward His Dream

An example of the strength and perseverance of children from Jordan.



Dia was born with spina bifida, a birth defect in his spinal bones that left him unable to walk without help. Living with a disability is challenging under any circumstances — compound that with difficult living conditions and very limited resources — and it could be easy to lose hope. Despite his challenging start, Dia grew to be a strong and intelligent boy.

In 2017, Dia's mother sought help from an IOCC screening team in East Amman. The team found that with a specialized wheelchair Dia would be able to attend school. I had the pleasure of meeting this young man and was there as he was fitted for the wheelchair. I saw the look of joy as he moved on his own power for the first time — and realized what this chair meant for his future.

Thanks to your support, Dia is in third grade at an IOCC-partner-run school. He has friends, is doing well in school, and working toward his dream of being an architect.

Growing to Self-Sufficiency

Sometimes life as we know it can change quickly — a devastating storm, wildfire, or in this case war. What caused our life to change isn't as important as how we react to it and how we rebuild. This *Story of Hope* demonstrates the resilience of those we serve when life takes an unexpected turn. *Before the Balkan wars, Miroslav, his wife, and children lived with his parents on their farm in Bosnia's Una River*



valley. They worked in a metal factory to provide for their family. After the war, they were unable to find salaried employment. Miroslav began farming full time to support his family.

Miroslav has a new 3,200 square-foot greenhouse from IOCC, where he was growing seedlings in the rich valley soil. In time, he did so well that the family added a second greenhouse to grow flowers. Thanks to your generosity, today, Miroslav also produces and sells *rakia*, a brandy made from pears and plums — a clear example of how the right kind of help has lasting impacts.

Here is How YOU Can Help More!

- **Become a monthly donor to IOCC**
- **Send a donation to IOCC for a cause that touches your heart!**
- **Give a donation to Ioannis Apostolakis, payable to IOCC, for any occasion you would like to make a difference!**

Help Us Provide For Those in Need!

And remember, 92 cents of every dollar you give goes to our humanitarian work. The other 8 cents is for administration and fundraising costs. Charity Navigator gives IOCC a 4-star rating (highest possible) for financial health, accountability and transparency. Plus, every dollar you give helps us secure \$7 more in support from governments, foundations, and other sources.

IOCC is the official humanitarian aid agency of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America. Since its inception in 1992, IOCC has delivered \$650 million in relief and development programs to families and communities in more than 50 countries. IOCC is a member of the ACT Alliance, a global coalition of churches and agencies engaged in development, humanitarian assistance and advocacy. To learn more about IOCC, please visit our website at iocc.org

Yiannis Apostolakis

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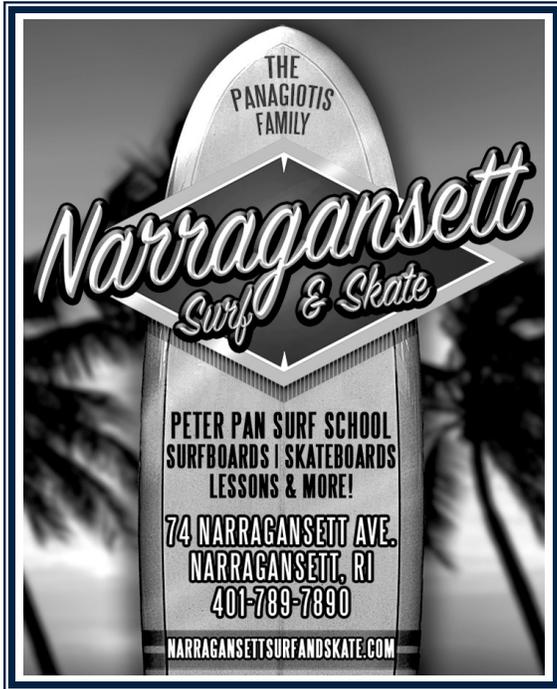
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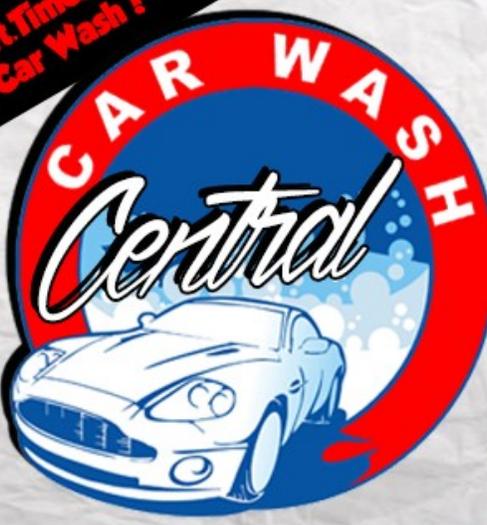


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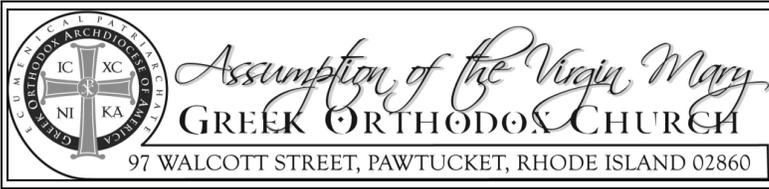
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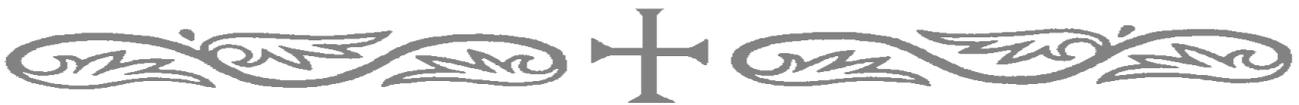
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