



72nd Year

Sept. 8, 2024

Pamphlet #36 (3719)

THE SUNDAY GOSPEL (John 3:13-17)

“So that the world be saved through Him”

The 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."

THE SALVATION OF THE WORLD

God the Father "did not send His Son into the world to judge the world, but for the world to be saved through Him." We hear this word in the gospel passage that is read in the Divine Liturgy, on the Sunday before the Elevation [of the Venerable and Life-Giving Cross]. The Lord's death on the cross is the great mystery of divine philanthropy, the pledge of divine mercy and salvation, the most earthly and tangible image of the heavenly cross of love. The preaching of the Church, which is not an ideology or a philosophy, but a true story, is the real and historical death of God, which precisely brings about the real and essential resurrection of man.

The great joy

"Behold, for through the Cross there is joy in the whole world." This is why the Apostle Paul "preaches Christ crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2, 1:23) and boasts "in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal. 6:14).

Thus, to show our love to the Lord, we make the sign of the Cross. We hymn and glorify "the blessed wood," the new wood of life, on which the King of Glory died, to give eternal life to the entire creation. The Cross of Christ is both the peak and the key of the gospel story. The Church chants the power of the Cross: "the invincible and indestructible and divine power of the precious and life-giving Cross do not abandon me, the sinner."

The death on the cross is the Pascha of the New Testament. The death on the cross had a result not because someone innocent died, but because the one who died was the incarnate Lord. "We needed a God incarnate; God died so that we might live," to use a bold phrase of Saint Gregory of Nazianzus (Homily 45:28).

The scale of justice and judgment

All of us people find ourselves around Christ on our cross, on the cross of our trials and pain. However, what distinguishes people is not sinfulness and purity, but the relationship with Christ and the Cross of Christ. Thus, the Cross of the Lord becomes a scale of justice, as our Church wonderfully chants.

"The Father... gave all judgment to the Son... because he is the Son of Man" (John 5:22 and 27). But what does this judgement consist of? It consists in the fact that He demonstrated that the observance of the Father's commandments is possible for man, and this, in fact, under any conditions, which we can only encounter in this world. For centuries, the words of the Lord are repeated, but they do not find the due resonance in the petrified hearts, which are indifferent to spiritual thoughts. And yet, these reasons are a saving revelation of God's love for us.

Man is judged by his attitude towards the cross of Christ, his friendship or blasphemy. A troparion of the Ninth Hour states wonderfully: "In the middle of two robbers, Your cross was found to be the scale of justice; of the one descending to Hades under the weight of blasphemy, while the other being comforted from the transgressions unto the knowledge of theology."

The Cross of the Lord reminds the whole world and us that when we choose the Cross as our way of life, as the lifestyle of our ecclesiastical life, then we also have the Resurrection. Then we have our true freedom, our true rest in the love of God and the love of our brethren, the true peace of soul. And when circumstances and sorrows and needs surround us, we raise the eyes of our soul and gaze with faith at the Cross of our Christ. And we move forward with hope, crucified and resurrected. Together crucified and co-resurrected with Jesus Christ.

Proceeding towards the feast of the Elevation of the Precious Cross, let us also raise our eyes up to Golgotha and exclaim: "Remember me, O Lord, in Your kingdom."

† F. A.

From the publications of the Apostolic Ministry

ΜΙΚΡΟ ΕΙΣΟΔΙΚΟ ΣΤΑ ΜΥΣΤΗΡΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑΣ ΜΑΣ
(SMALL ENTRANCE INTO THE MYSTERIES OF OUR CHURCH)

(1st Edition, in Greek, Size 21x22 cm, 128 pages)

By Metropolitan Agathangelos of Phanouriou, General Director of the
Apostolic Ministry of the Church of Greece

In an era in which the Sacred Mysteries become, through attitudes of vainglory and vanity, mere social ceremonies, stripped of their liturgical and sacramental character, it is essential and important for us to know what is happening in the Church at every moment of worship and liturgical life. First, we learn, then we love, and then we believe. For this reason, the Apostolic Ministry proceeded with the publication of this catechetical book, in which the sacred Mysteries, their ritual, and the liturgical symbols are briefly analyzed. The book is addressed to young people and families, more generally to the wide readership, who are so thirsty to learn the things of faith and liturgical life.

September 8, 2024: Sunday Before the Elevation of the Holy Cross
The Nativity of the Theotokos, Chrysostom of Smyrna and those martyrs
killed with him during the Catastrophe of Asia Minor (1922)
2nd Tone – Eothinos: 11 – Epistle: Gal. 6:11-18 – Gospel: John 3:13-17
NEXT SUNDAY: Sept. 15th, Sunday After the Elevation of the Holy Cross
Epistle: Galatians 2:16-20 – Gospel: Mark 8:34-9:1

SCHOOL FOR THE TRAINING OF CANDIDATE CATECHISTS

In a period of multifarious ideological, spiritual, and social confusions, the functioning of the School for the Training of Candidate Catechists comes to offer the young people who long to serve the Church through the work of Catechism of children and adolescents, the capability to be trained practically but also experientially, and simultaneously to make them partakers of undertaking responsibilities to trustworthily witness the faith, the liturgical life, and the Gospel Word.

The duration of the studies is two years. The lessons of the 1st year take place every Saturday 4:00-6:30 p.m., and the 2nd year on the same day from 7:00-9:30 p.m.

- Presuppositions: Students of both genders are accepted, aged 18-40 years old, after they present: (a) Proof of studies (at least a high school diploma), and (b) a recent photograph.
- The beginning of lessons: On Saturday October 5th, the beginning of the lessons of the Training School will take place.
- For more information, those interested can contact:
 - The Office of Catechism and Youth of the Apostolic Ministry, tel. 210-727-2347-348 (Monday-Friday 8am-2pm)
 - Email katixisi@apostoliki-diakonia.gr
 - The Apostoliki Diakonia Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/apostoliki.diakonia>
 - The website www.apostoliki-diakonia.gr in the section “ΠΟΙΟΙ ΕΙΜΑΣΤΕ” and the subsection “ΤΟΜΕΑΣ ΚΑΤΗΧΗΣΕΩΣ ΚΑΙ ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΟΥ ΜΑΡΤΥΡΙΑΣ”.

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