



Saints Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church THE WEEKLY CHURCH BULLETIN

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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2017

Κυριακή 17η Δεκεμβρίου 2017

ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ ΙΑ΄ ΛΟΥΚΑ - ΤΟΥ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΔΙΟΝΥΣΙΟΥ

Αποστ: Κολ. 3:4-11

Ευαγγ: Λουκα. 14:16-24

11th Sunday of Luke – Feastday of St. Dionysios

Today's Readings

Epistle: Col. 3:4-11

Gospel: Luke 14:16-24



WHAT DID YOU GET FOR CHRISTMAS?

Regardless of our age, as the day of the Nativity of our Lord approaches, you hear more and more people asking the question: "What did you get for Christmas?" Needless to say, if we put a great emphasis on what we get at Christmas, then the whole point of this holy season is lost. As Christians, we give gifts at Christmas in humble imitation of the Gift that God gave - His only Son, our Lord Jesus. For the Christian, the emphasis is on giving.

There was once a family that read the Christmas story prior to opening all their presents. The father of the children asked for quiet, and said, "Of all the presents you received, I want you to decide which one you like the very best, and set it in front of you." When this was done, the father continued, "Now I want each of you to think of someone you know who is less fortunate than you, and who is not getting presents as you are, and let us go and we will have the fun of delivering to this person the presents you have chosen as the very best." If this was to happen to any one of us, it would truly be an unforgettable experience. This teaches us what Christmas is all about - God gave to humankind the very best He had.

We should think about gifts we can give, not only at Christmas, but every day of our lives, to help make real to those around us the true spirit of Christmas: the love of Christ.

There was once a young man who said that the greatest gift he ever received was from his father who gave him a small box. Inside was a note saying: "Son, this year I will give you 365 hours, one hour every day after dinner. It's yours. We'll talk about what you want to talk about, we'll go where you want to go, play what you want to play. It will be your time." He continued to say that his father not only kept his promise of that gift, but every year he renewed it. He proudly proclaimed it as the greatest gift he ever had in his life. He was the good result of that hour every day. The most personal, most appreciated and most unique gift that anyone of us can give is the gift of our time. The valuable twenty-four hours a day that only we can spend.

And there are many more gifts we can give. The greatest gifts are free. The gift of friendship. The gift of praise. The gift of encouragement, the gift of saying, "I love you" to someone whose love we have taken for granted, the gift of forgiveness, the gift of saying, "I'm sorry" to someone we have hurt, the gift of understanding, the gift of really listening when someone tries to convey their point of view, to try to understand how they really feel. To be sensitive to what others are really saying, to give one's whole and serious attention to another person, is a real gift.

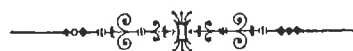
Finally, the Lord Jesus tells us that whatever the gift we give, we should give it to the person with the greatest need, expecting nothing in return. As Jesus said, "When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or your rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return, and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. You will be repaid at the resurrection of the just."

By far, the best Gift ever offered is the One God gave when He sent Jesus. "God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life." This is the best gift because it is many gifts in one. He is Emmanuel — God is with us.

So when we hear the question: What did you get for Christmas? Let us all answer: I received the greatest gift of all: Christ as my Lord and Saviour!



“Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full.” Luke 14:23



MESSAGE FROM FATHER TOM...

As the Feast of the Nativity approaches, again this week, I will be visiting those who are homebound, in nursing home and hospital facilities to offer the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

Especially, at this time of year, please know that whatever your pastoral need - **I am at your service** – please contact me in the Church Office at (708) 974-3400 or email: Tomdemed@aol.com

ST. DIONYSIOS OF ZAKYNTHOS

St. Dionysios of Zakynthos, was born in 1547. Though born into a noble family, he was determined to flee the world and set his mind upon heavenly things. He entered the monastery of Strophada, and though young in years, he surpassed many of his elders in virtue, and was found worthy of ordination to the holy priesthood.

With deep humility, St. Dionysios was consecrated Bishop of Aegina and he never ceased to teach his flock. He feared the praise of others, lest he should fall into the sin of vainglory, so he resigned his See and returned to Zakynthos.

In 1579, when the Bishop of Zakynthos had died, Dionysios agreed to care for it until a new Bishop could be elected. Once a new hierarch was elevated, Dionysios went to the Monastery of the Most Holy Theotokos Anaphonitria, twenty miles from the main village.

The murderer of the saint's brother, Constantine, by chance or by God's will, sought refuge in the monastery where St. Dionysios was the abbot. When the saint asked the fugitive why he was so frightened, he confessed his sin and revealed his secret to St. Dionysios. Then he comforted the murderer and hid him, showing him great compassion and love. After forgiving him, St. Dionysios helped him escape to another place in order to save his life. Because of the saint's Christ-like virtue, he was granted the gift of working miracles.

Having passed his life in holiness, Saint Dionysios reached a great age, then departed to the Lord on December 17, 1624.



ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ ΙΑ΄ ΛΟΥΚΑ
(Λουκά κεφ. ιδ' στίχοι 16-24)
Η παραβολή του Δείπνου

Η Εκκλησία μας βοηθεί με την παραβολή του μεγάλου Δείπνου να καταλάβουμε τις εξής αλήθειες: α) ο Θεός καλεί όλους Τους ανθρώπους στο τραπέζι της Βασιλείας του, δηλ. στον Παράδεισο, β) ο Θεός θέλει όλοι οι άνθρωποι να δεχτούν την πρόσκληση και να καθίσουν στο τραπέζι της σωτηρίας και γ) οι άνθρωποι είναι ελεύθεροι να δεχτούν η και να απορρίψουν την πρόσκληση του Θεού.

Ο Δεσπότης που προσκαλεί στο Δείπνο είναι ο Θεός. Οι προσκαλούμενοι είναι όλοι οι άνθρωποι χωρίς καμιά εξαίρεση. Δείπνο είναι η Βασιλεία του Θεού, δηλαδή, εκεί όπου ο άνθρωπος συμμετέχει και κοινωνεί στη ζωή και στη δόξα του Θεού. Συνήθως οι άνθρωποι βρίσκουν διάφορες δικαιολογίες για να αρνηθούν την πρόσκληση του Θεού στο μεγάλο Δείπνο της Βασιλείας του. Οι καλεσμένοι απάντησαν στον οικοδεσπότη με τα ίδια σχεδόν λόγια: «Σε παρακαλώ άφησε με ήσυχο και βγάλε με από την υποχρέωση».

Η δικαιολογία του πρώτου ήταν: «αγόρασα χωράφι και έχω πολλές δουλειές και σκοτούρες». Ο άνθρωπος αυτός αντιπροσωπεύει όλους εκείνους, που θέλουν να έχουν όσο μπορούν περισσότερα υλικά αγαθά. Η πλεονεξία δεν τους αφήνει να φροντίσουν και για το χωράφι της ψυχής τους. Το αφήνουν ακαλλιέργητο και τελικά πνίγεται στα χορτάρια και τα πολλά ζιζάνια.

Ο δεύτερος απάντησε: «Αγόρασα πέντε ζευγάρια βόδια και πάω να τα δοκιμάσω». Αυτός αντιπροσωπεύει τους ανθρώπους εκείνους που ασχολούνται μόνο με το εμπόριο και τις επιχειρήσεις. Είναι πολύ απασχολημένοι με τις εργασίες τους και δεν έχουν καθόλου χρόνο να φροντίσουν για την ψυχή τους και τη σωτηρία τους.

Ο τρίτος απάντησε: «Έκαμα το γάμο μου και γι' αυτό δεν μπορώ να έλθω». Εδώ ανήκουν όλοι οι άνθρωποι, που είναι πνιγμένοι με τις οικογενειακές ανάγκες και φροντίδες. Προσπαθούν να αποκτήσουν όσο το δυνατόν περισσότερα υλικά αγαθά για τα παιδιά τους. Τελικά όμως αρνούνται τη συμμετοχή τους στο τραπέζι της Βασιλείας του Θεού.

Η απόφαση του οικοδεσπότη είναι τρομερή. Μας βεβαιώνει ο Κύριος πως κανένας από αυτούς, δε θα πάρει μέρος στη Βασιλεία του γιατί αρνήθηκαν την πρόσκληση. Ο διάβολος θέλει να μας χωρίσει από το Θεό. Γι' αυτό και μας βάζει ένα σωρό δικαιολογίες στο μυαλό. Εύκολα μπορούμε να δικαιολογηθούμε, γιατί δεν πάμε στην εκκλησία, δεν εξομολογούμαστε, δεν κοινωνάμε, δεν προσευχόμαστε. Ο Χριστός μας προσκαλεί όμως κάθε μέρα και ώρα. Μας προσκαλεί να επικοινωνούμε μαζί του με την προσευχή. Γι' αυτό και δεν πρέπει να παραμελούμε τις ώρες της προσευχής μας. Να παρακαλούμε το Θεό στο «Πάτερ ημών» να έλθει η Βασιλεία του στις καρδιές όλων των ανθρώπων και επομένως και στις δικές μας. Ο Κύριος επίσης μας προσκαλεί να πάρουμε μέρος στο μεγάλο Δείπνο της Εκκλησίας, που είναι το μυστήριο της θείας Ευχαριστίας. Πρέπει να ετοιμαζόμαστε με πολύ προσοχή, με πίστη και μετάνοια για να παίρνουμε μέσα μας το Σώμα και το Αίμα του Χριστού μας. Η συμμετοχή μας στο κυριακάτικο Δείπνο της θείας Κοινωνίας δείχνει την επιθυμία μας να βρεθούμε στην αιώνια Βασιλεία του Θεού.

Πηγή: <http://paroutsas.jmc.gr>

Πεμπτη 21η Δεκεμβριου

Ώρα 9:00 π.μ. - Θεία Λειτουργία για τους μαθητές του ΚΟΡΑΗ
θά ψάλλουν τά μέλη τῆς παιδικῆς μας χορωδίας

Κυριακη 24η Δεκεμβριου - Παραμονή Χριστουγέννων

Ώρα 8:00 - 11:15 π.μ. - Ώρθρος καί Θεία Λειτουργία
Τό εσπέρας Ώρα 7:00 μ.μ. - Μέγας Ώσπερινός καί ἐν συνεχεια τά ΚΑΛΑΝΤΑ
θά τά ψάλλουν τά μέλη τῆς παιδικῆς μας χορωδίας

Δευτέρα 25η Δεκεμβριου - Η ΓΕΝΝΗΣΙΣ ΤΟΥ ΚΥΡΙΟΥ ΗΜΩΝ ΙΗΣΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ

Ώρα 8:00 π.μ - 11:00 π.μ. - Ώρθρος καί Θεία Λειτουργία

ACTIVITIES THIS WEEK

Tuesday, December 19:

6:30 p.m. 3rd/4th Biddy/Grade School
B-Ball practice

Wednesday, December 20:

3:30 p.m. Youth Choir
5:30 p.m. JOY B-Ball Rookies Camp 3
6:30 p.m. JOY B-Ball Mighty Mights Game 3
7:30 p.m. JOY B-Ball Minors Game 3
8:30 p.m. JOY B-Ball Majors Game 3

Thursday, December 21:

9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy for Koraes Students
and all the faithful
6:00 p.m. Girls' B-Ball practice

Friday, December 22:

1:30 p.m. Koraes Christmas Program
5:30 p.m. JOY B-Ball Rookies Camp 4
6:30 p.m. JOY B-Ball Mighty Mights Game 4
7:30 p.m. JOY B-Ball Minors Game 4
8:30 p.m. JOY B-Ball Majors Game 4

Sunday, December 24:

Sunday Before the Nativity – Christmas Eve

8 – 11:15 a.m. Orthros and Divine Liturgy
7:00 p.m. Great Vespers – Our Youth Choir will
chant responses and Christmas Carols
will follow

Monday, December 24:

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST CHRISTMAS DAY

8 – 11:00 a.m. Orthros and Divine Liturgy

OFFERING ENVELOPES

The 2018 Offering Envelopes are
available in the Church Office for
those who are interested.

See you...



...Next **SUNDAY!**

MEMORIALS

40 Day Vasilios Ioannis Manikas
40 Day Tula Vlahakis

† May their memory be eternal. †

COFFEE FELLOWSHIP

Today's Coffee Fellowship is
hosted by our GOYA
Please join them!

FUNERALS

The following funeral was held recently.
Nicholas Nicholaou – Friday, December 15th
† May his memory be eternal. †

2017 STEWARDSHIP

As the year is quickly coming to a close,
we would like to take this opportunity to *Thank*
Our Parish Families for all that you do for our
beloved *Saints Constantine and Helen Church
and Koraes School!*
*If you have not contributed your 2017
Stewardship, please do so prior to yearend.*

Please be advised that our

2018 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN
will begin in January – not in November
as in previous years.

However, those parishioners wishing to submit
their 2018 Stewardship prior to the end of this
calendar year – for tax purposes -
may do so by mailing contributions to the Church
office and noting 2018 Stewardship
on the Memo line or

Simply go to <http://www.stconstantinehelen.org>

*For those with recurring online payments, please
remember to change your
contributions to '2018 Stewardship' in January*