



Saints Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church
THE WEEKLY CHURCH BULLETIN

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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2020

Κυριακή 6η Δεκεμβρίου 2020

Κυριακή 1^η Λουκά - Του Ἁγ. Νικολάου

Ἀποστ : Εβρ. 13:17-21

Ευαγγ: Λουκά 6:17-23

10th Sunday of Luke – *Feastday of St. Nicholas*

Today's Readings

Epistle: Hebrews 13:17-21

Gospel: Luke 6:17-23

LET US STRAIGHTEN UP!

Today's Gospel lesson is a call to all of us to "Straighten Up!" In the passage, we are told of a woman who had "a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years." She was bent over, and could in no way lift herself. When Jesus saw her, He "called her, laid His hands on her and immediately she was made straight." The first message of this incident is the power of Christ to straighten out that which are not straight. Of all the creatures in this world, we are the only ones who were made to look up. But sin bends us to the ground. The more we serve God, the more we will be upright, simple, and straight. The more we sin, the more bent will be our inner life — our minds and our hearts.

There are those who say, "You cannot change human nature." This statement is a denial of God. It is a fact that God came into this world for the purpose of changing human nature. The Apostle Paul writes that "Some of you were drunkards, idolaters, thieves, sorcerers. But now you are changed, now you are made over, now you are new persons in Christ." In nature, things aren't straight because they follow the line of least resistance. With human beings many times, it follows the same pattern. When, instead of following Christ, we follow the line of least resistance, the end result is that our lives are not straight.

This is a parable of our lives. Little by little we get tangled up in temptations and sins and they can become the "new normal". Finally the day comes when we discover we can no longer help ourselves. Someone from the outside has to come and help us, if we have any hope to free us from all the entanglements. God is willing to help, but we must be willing to come to Him with faith.

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We must consider the lives of so many persons who have been straightened out by the power of the living Christ. Consider the woman of the streets in today's Gospel lesson who was bent under the great burden of guilt. She got up and was able to face life as a new person because the Great Physician had forgiven her and had straightened out her life. Consider the thief crucified next to Christ whose life was totally bent by sin. Before he died, on his last breath, he asked, "Lord, remember me." The response was instantaneous as the great love of God flowed into his heart, and he heard the promise, "Today you will be with me in paradise."

Today's lesson brings us to the striking difference between life and death. As Jesus described the illness of this woman, "this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years", we see here that Jesus attributes this woman's illness not to God but to Satan. In many cases, we associate the will of God with what is evil, with sickness and death. This isn't what God wants. Christ spent His life healing the sick. Death did not come into existence because God wanted it. God gives us every opportunity to cooperate with Him to help make straight lives that have been bent by sin and suffering. The will of God for His most proud Creation is health, happiness, and abounding vitality. Let us all "Straighten Up!"

ST NICHOLAS THE WONDERWORKER AND ARCHBISHOP OF MYRA



St. Nicholas lived during the reign of Saint Constantine the Great, and reposed in 330. As a young man, he desired to espouse the solitary life. He made a pilgrimage to the holy city Jerusalem, where he found a place to withdraw to devote himself to prayer. It was made known to him, however, that this was not the will of God for him, but that he should return to his homeland to be a cause of salvation for many. He returned to Myra, and was ordained bishop. He became known for his abundant mercy, providing for the poor and needy, and delivering those who had been unjustly accused. No less was he known for his zeal for the truth. He was present at the First Ecumenical Council of the 318 Fathers at Nicaea in 325; upon hearing the blasphemies that Arius brazenly uttered against the Son of God, Saint Nicholas struck him on the face. Since the canons of the Church forbid the clergy to strike any man at all, his fellow bishops were in perplexity what disciplinary action was to be taken against this hierarch whom all revered. In the night our Lord Jesus Christ and our Lady Theotokos appeared to certain of the bishops, informing them that no action was to be taken against him, since he had acted not out of passion, but extreme love and piety. The Dismissal Hymn for holy hierarchs, The truth of things hath revealed thee to thy flock ... was written originally for Saint Nicholas. He is the patron of all travellers, and of sea-farers in particular; he is one of the best known and best loved Saints of all time.





ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ Ι' ΛΟΥΚΑ

Η διήγηση της σημερινής Ευαγγελικής περικοπής μας περιγράφει τη θεραπεία της συγκύπτουσας, μιας γυναίκας που λόγω της ασθένειάς της ήταν κυρτωμένη και ταλαιπωρούνταν επί δεκαοκτώ έτη. Όταν την είδε ο Χριστός, ένα Σάββατο που δίδασκε στη Συναγωγή, την σπλαγχνίστηκε, μας λέει ο ευαγγελιστής Λουκάς, και με ένα Του λόγο, χωρίς αυτή να το ζητήσει, τη θεράπευσε.

Ωστόσο το θαύμα αυτό αντί να κάνει τους σκληρόκαρδους φαρισαίους να θαυμάσουν μαζί με όλο το λαό τα μεγαλεία του Θεού, κίνησε την αγανάκτηση του αρχισυνάγωγου, που τους κάλεσε να προσέρχονται τις άλλες μέρες για να θεραπεύονται, και να μη "καταλύουν" την αργία του Σαββάτου. "Υποκριτές", απαντά ο Ιησούς, "ο καθένας δεν λύνει το Σάββατο το βόδι του ή το γαϊδουράκι του για να πάει να το ποτίσει; και αυτή η γυναίκα, που δεν είναι ζωντανό αλλά παιδί του Αβραάμ, δεν έπρεπε λοιπόν να λυθεί από τα δεσμά που επί δεκαοχτώ χρόνια την είχε δέσει ο διάβολος, επειδή σήμερα είναι Σάββατο;"

Μέσα από τη σημερινή διήγηση ο Κύριος στηλιτεύει την υποκρισία και την τυπολατρία όχι μόνον των φαρισαίων, αλλά και κάθε ανθρώπου, κάθε εποχής. Οι φαρισαίοι της εποχής Του είχαν μετατρέψει τις εντολές του Δεκαλόγου και του Νόμου σε ένα στείρο σύστημα υποχρεώσεων και περιορισμών, και γι αυτό συχνά αντιδρούσαν με αγανάκτηση όταν ο Χριστός θεράπευε τα Σάββατα, σε σημείο να λένε ότι εφόσον δεν τηρεί το Σάββατο, δεν προέρχεται από τον Θεό¹. Η τυπολατρία τούς έκανε να θεωρούν τους εαυτούς τους αυτάρκεις έναντι του Θεού.

Αγανακτούν οι φαρισαίοι που ο Χριστός κάνει θαύματα το Σάββατο, αγανακτούν που συνομιλεί και τρώει μαζί με αμαρτωλούς, αγανακτούν όταν βλέπουν τους μαθητές Του να τρώνε χωρίς προηγουμένως να έχουν πλύνει τα χέρια τους, ή να μην τηρούν επακριβώς τις νηστείες.

Το μήνυμα επομένως της σημερινής περικοπής μας αγγίζει και μας αφορά όλους, μιας που συχνά, ίσως και ασυναίσθητα, προτάσσουμε τις εντολές του Θεού και βάζουμε σε δεύτερη μοίρα την αγάπη προς τον πλησίον. Άλλες φορές πάλι, είτε θεωρούμε τους εαυτούς μας εντάξει έναντι του θεού, και άρα ο Θεός μάς οφείλει, είτε αγανακτούμε όταν κάποιος από τους αδελφούς μας δεν τηρούν όλα όσα εμείς τηρούμε, και προσπαθούμε να τους πειθαναγκάσουμε να ακολουθήσουν το δικό μας μοτίβο πίστεως και ασκήσεως.

Διανύουμε την περίοδο της νηστείας των Χριστουγέννων και πολλοί από εμάς νηστεύουμε και προετοιμαζόμαστε για την μεγάλη εορτή που έρχεται. Αν κάποιοι ανάμεσά μας δεν τηρούν τη νηστεία, ας μη τους κατακρίνουμε. Ας θυμηθούμε ότι πάνω από τη νηστεία, πάνω από κάθε εξωτερικό τύπο, σημασία έχει να μη καταλύεται ο σύνδεσμος της αγάπης. Και το ένα είναι ωφέλιμο, και το άλλο ουσιώδες. Αλίμονο αν παραθεωρήσουμε είτε το ένα είτε το άλλο, ή αν προσπαθήσουμε να επιβάλλουμε στους ανθρώπους γύρω μας τη στάση μας και τις επιλογές μας. Αλίμονο αν γίνουμε τυπικοί τηρητές των υποχρεώσεών μας απέναντι στο Θεό, και λησμονήσουμε τη μεγαλύτερη των εντολών Του, αυτή της αγάπης προς τον πλησίον.

<http://www.poimin.gr>

Σάββατο 12η Δεκεμβρίου - Του Αγίου Σπυρίδωνος

"Ωρα 9·00 π.μ. - Θεία Λειτουργία

Κυριακή 13 Δεκεμβρίου - Κυριακή ΙΑ' Λουκά

"Ωρα 9·00 - 10·30 π.μ. - Θεία Λειτουργία

ACTIVITIES OF THE WEEK

Saturday, December 12:

Feastday of St. Spyridon

9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy

Sunday, December 13:

11th Sunday of Luke

9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. Divine Liturgy

2020 Stewardship Campaign

To make a One-Time Gift:

Online Giving: Go to
www.stconstantinehelen.org

In Person: Stop into the Church Office and you may pay by Cash, Check or Credit Card;

By mail: Mail your check or credit information to the Church office (do not mail cash!)

By phone: Call (708) 974-3400 and provide the necessary information

To set up Recurring Giving:

Online Giving: Set up recurring contributions online on our website. Options include monthly intervals and selection of days of giving.

“The giver of every good gift has called upon us to mimic *His* giving by Grace, through Faith and this is not for ourselves.”

- St. Nicholas of Myra

† MEMORIALS †

1 Year George Panos

† May his memory be eternal †

† FUNERAL †

The following funeral was recently held

Paraskevi Manikas – December 1, 2020

† May her memory be eternal †

SACRAMENT

BAPTISM

We welcome the following into the Orthodox Faith and we pray that God grant her, many years!

Saturday, December 5, 2020 at 12:00 noon

Kalliopie (Ellie), daughter of Vasilios and Kathy Vasilopoulos

Sponsors:

Angelo & Alexandra Giannakopoulos

see you...



...Next Sunday