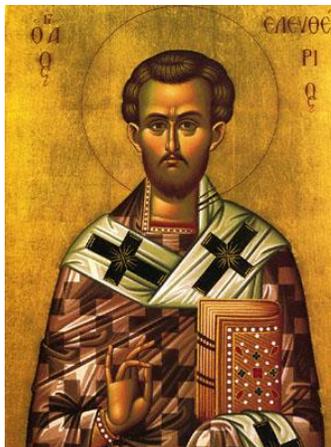




Saint Barbara Greek Orthodox Church  
8306 NC HWY 751  
Durham NC 27713 919-484-1600  
fatherstavroforos2012@gmail.com  
www.stbarbarachurchnc.org  
News & Announcements  
December 15, 2019

*11<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Luke*  
*Κυριακή 11η του Λουκά*



- [Eleutherios the Hieromartyr, Bishop of Illyricum, and his mother Anthia 12/15/2019](#)
  - The Martyr Susannah the Deaconess 12/15/2019

*Children's Choir Divine Liturgy & Christmas Program*

NEWCOMERS AND VISITORS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME

*Sunday Worship Schedule: Matins 9:00 am & Divine Liturgy at 10:00 a.m.*

*To Our Visitors and Guests*

*We welcome you to worship with us today, whether you are an Orthodox Christian or this is your first visit to an Orthodox Church, we are pleased to have you with us. Although Holy Communion and other Sacraments are offered only to baptized and chrismated (confirmed) Orthodox Christians in good standing with the Church, all are invited to receive the Antidoron (blessed bread) from the priest at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy. The Antidoron is not a sacrament, but it is reminiscent of the agape feast that followed worship in the ancient Christian Church. After the Divine Liturgy this morning please join us in the Church Hall for fellowship and refreshments. Please complete a Visitor's Card before you leave today and drop it in the offering tray, or give it to one of the parishioners after the service, or mail it to the Church Office.*

# *The Sunday Epistle Reading*

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.

Verse: What shall I render to the Lord for all that he has given me?

The reading is from St. Paul's Second Letter to Timothy 1:8-18



TIMOTHY, my son, do not be ashamed then of testifying to our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel in the power of God, who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not in virtue of our works but in virtue of his own purpose and the grace which he gave us in Christ Jesus ages ago, and now has manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. For this gospel I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, and therefore I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me. Follow the pattern of the sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus; guard the truth that has been entrusted to you by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us.

You are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me, and among them Phygelos and Hermogenes. May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphoros, for he often refreshed me; he was not ashamed of my chains, but when he arrived in Rome he searched for me eagerly and found me - may the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that Day and you well know all the service he rendered at Ephesos.

Τίμιος ἐναντίον Κυρίου ὁ θάνατος τῶν ὁσίων αὐτοῦ.

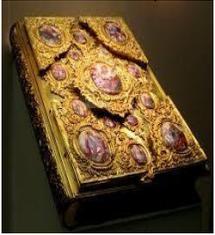
Στίχ. Τί ἀνταποδώσωμεν τῷ Κυρίῳ περὶ πάντων, ὧν ἀνταπέδωκεν ἡμῖν;

Πρὸς Τιμόθεον Δευτερας Επιστολης Παυλου τὸ ἀνάγνωσμα 1:8-18.

Τέκνον Τιμόθεε, μὴ οὖν ἐπαισχυνθῆς τὸ μαρτύριον τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν, μηδὲ ἐμὲ τὸν δέσμιον αὐτοῦ· ἀλλὰ συγκακοπάθησον τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ κατὰ δύναμιν θεοῦ, τοῦ σώσαντος ἡμᾶς καὶ καλέσαντος κλήσει ἁγία, οὐ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα ἡμῶν, ἀλλὰ κατ' ἰδίαν πρόθεσιν καὶ χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσαν ἡμῖν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ πρὸ χρόνων αἰώνιων, φανερωθεῖσαν δὲ νῦν διὰ τῆς ἐπιφανείας τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, καταργήσαντος μὲν τὸν θάνατον, φωτίσαντος δὲ ζωὴν καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, εἰς ὃ ἐτέθην ἐγὼ κῆρυξ καὶ ἀπόστολος καὶ διδάσκαλος ἐθνῶν. Δι' ἣν αἰτίαν καὶ ταῦτα πάσχω, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐπαισχύνομαι· οἶδα γὰρ ὅτι πεπίστευκα, καὶ πέπεισμαι ὅτι δυνατός ἐστιν τὴν παραθήκην μου φυλάξαι εἰς ἐκείνην τὴν ἡμέραν. Ὑποτύπωσιν ἔχε ὑγιαινόντων λόγων ὧν παρ' ἐμοῦ ἤκουσας, ἐν πίστει καὶ ἀγάπῃ τῇ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. Τὴν καλὴν παραθήκην φύλαξον διὰ πνεύματος ἁγίου τοῦ ἐνοικοῦντος ἐν ἡμῖν. Οἶδας τοῦτο, ὅτι ἀπεστράφησάν με πάντες οἱ ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ, ὧν ἐστὶν Φύγελος καὶ Ἑρμογένης. Δῶφ' ἔλεος ὁ κύριος τῷ Ὀνησιφόρου οἴκῳ· ὅτι πολλάκις με ἀνέψυξεν, καὶ τὴν ἄλυσίν μου οὐκ ἐπαισχύνθη, ἀλλὰ γενόμενος ἐν Ῥώμῃ, σπουδαιότερον ἐζήτησέν με καὶ εὔρεν - δῶφ' αὐτῷ ὁ κύριος εὐρεῖν ἔλεος παρὰ κυρίου ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ - καὶ ὅσα ἐν Ἐφέσῳ διηκόνησεν, βέλτιον σὺ γινώσκεις.

## *The Sunday Gospel Reading*

### The Gospel According to Luke 14:16-24



The Lord said this parable: "A man once gave a great banquet, and invited many; and at the time of the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for all is now ready.' But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I go out and see it; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I must go to examine them; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' So the servant came and reported this to his master. Then the householder in anger said to his servant, 'Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and maimed and blind and lame.' And the servant said, 'Sir, what you commanded has been done, and there is still room.' And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges, and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet. For many are called, but few are chosen.'"

### Ἐκ τοῦ Κατὰ Λουκᾶν Ἁγίου Εὐαγγελίου τὸ Ἀνάγνωσμα 14:16-24

Εἶπεν ὁ Κύριος τὴν παραβολὴν ταύτην· Ἄνθρωπός τις ἐποίησε δεῖπνον μέγα καὶ ἐκάλεσε πολλούς· καὶ ἀπέστειλε τὸν δούλον αὐτοῦ τῇ ὥρᾳ τοῦ δείπνου εἰπεῖν τοῖς κεκλημένοις· ἔρχεσθε, ὅτι ἤδη ἔτοιμά ἐστι πάντα. καὶ ἤρξαντο ἀπὸ μιᾶς παραιτεῖσθαι πάντες. ὁ πρῶτος εἶπεν αὐτῷ· ἀγρὸν ἠγόρασα, καὶ ἔχω ἀνάγκην ἐξελθεῖν καὶ ἰδεῖν αὐτόν· ἐρωτῶ σε, ἔχε με παρητημένον. καὶ ἕτερος εἶπε· ζεύγη βοῶν ἠγόρασα πέντε, καὶ πορεύομαι δοκιμάσαι αὐτά· ἐρωτῶ σε, ἔχε με παρητημένον. καὶ ἕτερος εἶπε· γυναῖκα ἔγημα, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο οὐ δύναμαι ἐλθεῖν. καὶ παραγενόμενος ὁ δούλος ἐκεῖνος ἀπήγγειλε τῷ κυρίῳ αὐτοῦ ταῦτα. τότε ὀργισθεὶς ὁ οἰκοδεσπότης εἶπε τῷ δούλῳ αὐτοῦ· ἔξελθε ταχέως εἰς τὰς πλατείας καὶ ῥύμας τῆς πόλεως, καὶ τοὺς πτωχοὺς καὶ ἀναπήρους καὶ χωλοὺς καὶ τυφλοὺς εἰσάγαγε ὧδε. καὶ εἶπεν ὁ δούλος· κύριε, γέγονεν ὡς ἐπέταξας, καὶ ἔτι τόπος ἐστί. καὶ εἶπεν ὁ κύριος πρὸς τὸν δούλον· ἔξελθε εἰς τὰς ὁδοὺς καὶ φραγμοὺς καὶ ἀνάγκασον εἰσελθεῖν, ἵνα γεμισθῇ ὁ οἶκος μου. λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐδεὶς τῶν ἀνδρῶν ἐκείνων τῶν κεκλημένων γεύσεται μου τοῦ δείπνου. Πολλοὶ γὰρ εἰσιν κλητοί, ὀλίγοι δὲ ἐκλεκτοί.



## Children's Liturgy & Christmas Concert December Today

Please join us for a special liturgy on December 15<sup>th</sup>. Our children's choir will be chanting the liturgy that morning (they have been working on this since this summer and can't wait to share what they have learned). Afterwards, please join us for coffee hour and some traditional Christmas carols and fun holiday songs from our youth.

Parents, please bring your children to church at 10:00 A.M. sharp, as the kids will start the Divine Liturgy at around 10:15. Our youth look forward to celebrating this holy season with you!

Costa Constantinou  
Children's Music Director

Catherine Wilson  
Youth Programming Director

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## Eleutherios the Hieromartyr, Bishop of Illyricum, and his mother Anthia

### Reading

This Saint had Rome as his homeland. Having been orphaned of his father from childhood, he was taken by his mother Anthia to Anicetus, the Bishop of Rome (some call him Anencletus, or Anacletus), by whom he was instructed in the sacred letters (that is, the divine Scriptures). Though still very young in years, he was made Bishop of Illyricum by reason of his surpassing virtue, and by his teachings he converted many unbelievers to Christ. However, during a most harsh persecution that was raised against the Christians under Hadrian (reigned 117-138), the Saint was arrested by the tyrants. Enduring many torments for Christ, he was finally put to death by two soldiers about the year 126. As for his Christ-loving mother Anthia, while embracing the remains of her son and kissing them with maternal affection, she was also beheaded

## Parish Financial Summary

	November		Year to Date		
	Income	Expenses	YTD Income	YTD Expenses	2019 Budget
<b>Operations Fund</b>	\$29,914	\$40,737	\$185,744	\$257,311	\$204,000
<b>Mortgage Fund</b>	\$5,752	\$12,717	\$215,642	\$173,893	\$159,980

Fund	YTD Income	YTD Expenses	2019 Budget
Operations Fund	\$185,744	\$257,311	\$204,000
Mortgage Fund	\$215,642	\$173,893	\$159,980

Note: The Operations Fund income above is the total of Sunday offering and Stewardship; it excludes the Greek Festival. The Operations Fund pays all Church expenses except for the mortgage payment. The Mortgage Fund includes all Mortgage Fund donations and fundraisers (e.g., Taste of Greece, Gyro Feast). The Mortgage Fund pays our mortgage which is \$12,713.36/month.

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

- ❖ Although the \$29,914 in Operations Fund Income for November looks great, it includes our insurance reimbursement of \$20,758 for the vandalism of our air conditioning units. Our expenses include an additional \$1,000 we had to pay out-of-pocket for our deductible.
- ❖ Our Stewardship contributions for November totaled only \$7,332 as we fell farther behind our Stewardship goal for 2019 of \$176,000.
- ❖ In the Christmas season, we are all deluged with requests for giving and donations. While there are many worthwhile charities, please remember your Church when you consider givin.
- ❖ **Please prayerfully consider if you can increase your stewardship giving to give back to God from what he has so generously given to you and together we can reach our goal.**

My Dear Fellow Parishioners,

As the year 2019 draws to a close, I would like to thank everyone in our St. Barbara community for their generosity throughout the year; both your commitment of time and financial resources. Together we form the community of St. Barbara, this is our church and our community where we come together to share our Orthodox faith. As Romans 12:5 tells us “so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.”

However, as we near the end of another year, I must share with you the financial condition of our community, especially those who may have been unable to attend the recent General Assembly. Our budget for Stewardship this year was \$176,000. As of the end of November though, Stewardship has totaled only \$131,000 with only \$7,000 in Stewardship donated in October. Together with Offerings and the Festival, Stewardship pays for all of the operation expenses of our beloved St. Barbara Church; the utilities, insurance, maintenance, etc. We are facing a shortfall \$31,000 in our Stewardship budget if Stewardship does not increase from October’s low.

A deficit shortfall of \$31,000 would require a significant drawdown of our savings and may result in a technical default of our mortgage loan requirements.

Therefore, on behalf of the entire community, I am asking the entire community – in the months of November and December, please remember your Church. For this is truly your Church. This is not Father Stavroforos’ church, it is not the Parish Council’s Church, it is not my Church. It is your Church and our Church together. I hope that St. Barbara Church is for all of you what it is for me – my spiritual home, a community of friends and a place of refuge in today’s world.

Romans 12:6-7 goes on to tell us: “Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; he who teaches, in his teaching; <sup>8</sup>he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who contributes, in liberality; he who gives aid, with zeal; he who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.”. As the Parish Council President, I hope my exhortation has helped you to understand the financial needs of your Church. I would ask that you reflect on the gifts that you have received this year from our Lord and if you are able, to contribute and to give aid to your Church.

In Faith,

Daniel Przybyl

Parish Council President, St. Barbara Greek Orthodox Church



***Join us for St. Barbara Community Nights!  
6- 8 pm***

***Join us as we enjoy food and fellowship as a church family. All ages are welcome! This program will consist of a 5-part short lesson series on being disciples of Christ. Pot luck dinner starts at 6:00 pm. Bring enough food for yourself and your family (main dish, side, or dessert--your choice, just make sure it's meat-free since this is a fast day). Kids will have their own activities so parents can enjoy fellowship with the other adults. See you this Friday!***

**Proposed lesson topics:**

**Jan. 17- The costs of being a disciple**

**Feb. 21 - The rewards of being a disciple**

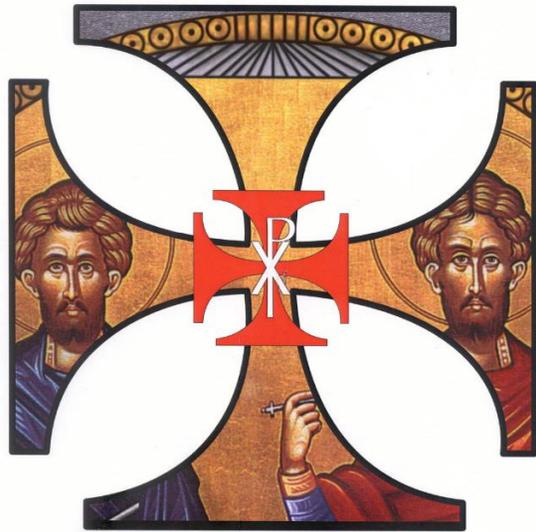
**Mar. - Stewardship – How do I use my talents?**

***Hope You Can Join Us!***

# Blood DRIVE



PHILOPTOCHOS



Dear Parishioners,

In the early part of 2020, St. Barbara's Ahepans and Philoptochos members will be jointly hosting a blood drive. We would like to know if you will  
1) donate blood (all types are needed) and / or  
2) assist with the coordination of the blood drive.

Please email Andrew Christakos ([acchris1114@gmail.com](mailto:acchris1114@gmail.com)) with your desire to participate. We would like to have as many members as possible come out and support this worthy cause. Details, including date and time, will be forthcoming.

Thank you.

# Stewards as of December 9, 2019

**Our 2019 Stewardship drive is going quite well. We have 155 Stewards as of December 9, 2019, 97% of our goal of 160 for the year. Thank you. We're just five Stewards short of our goal. Please help us meet our goal by pledging your support, our expenses don't stop. Your time, talents and treasury are critical to the success of our Ministries.**

**Also prayerfully please increase the amount of your 2019 contribution so that we can meet our budget and cover expenses. We are currently well below what we need to fund ongoing expenses as well as substantial unexpected and unbudgeted expenses. Stewardship is the primary source of the funding for our Ministries and operating obligations. Please help your Church. Please put Christ, Our, Your, Lord and Savior at the top of your Christmas gift list.**

John & Elly Ackerly	John & Ana Dates	Daniel & Hrisavgi Mangum	Al & Christine Safarikas
Susan Alexander	Gus & Vanessa Demetriades	Johnny & Catherine Mariakakis	Peter Saloupis
Alec and Frances Alexiades	Anne Dennos	Dr. Pete & Joan Marinis	Theone Saltis
Matt & Vickie Amos	George & Patricia Dennos	Azeb Martin	Andrea Stoney
Alexander & Laurel Arapoglou	Betty Bouchlas Dorton	Ellene Mashalidis	Vaia Sigounas & Adam Silverstein
Dr. Marina Arvanitis	Elena Dufault	Dr. Nikolaos Maurogiorgos &	Nick Simos
William & Donna Athas	Brian & Maria Easton	Dr. Marjory Charlot	Zeljko Smeunovic
Basile & Mary Bakis	Elena Eliseeva	Panayiotis Mavroidis &	Dr. Charles Stamitulos
George & Marie Bakis	Laurice Ferris	Dimitra Sakellaris	Mattheos & Marika Stavrakakis
Nicholas & Eugenia Balafas	Dimitra Fitzherbert	MaryJon McWhirter	Zoe Stefanadis
Effie Barbee	David Flynn & Sabina Borza Flynn	Rodney & Katharine Meadows	Epiphany Stephens
Lance & Maria Barton	Dr. Crist & Maria Frangakis	Gus & Yael Megaloudis	Hon. Ron & Vicky Stephens
Thalia Becak	Socratis & Alik Gerondelis	Matthew & Tina Megaro	William & Jennifer Sullivan
Tamar Beridze	Dr. George & Dr. Amy Glekas	John & Dawn Mehalek	Marian P. Sunas
John Biggs & Diana Dobrica	Jim & Evy Glekas	Nicholas Mermigas	Senait Tesfatsion
Agape Blackley	Christopher Goodwin	Panos Messis	Rebecca Theophanous
Barbara Bonfiglio	Leonard & Elaine Goodwin	Davis & Courtney Napier	Konstantinos Theodosiadis
Marilyn Boska	Paul Kacoyanis	Larry & Hope Odzak	Zacharias Theodosiadis
Nick Bourbous	Christos & Janet Kamilaris	Richard Oladipo	Charalmbos & Cathy Tragas
Peter Bourbous	Nicholas Kamilaris	Cindy Paliouras	Donna Trohanis
Peter Bougades	Ed & Eve Kantner	Jim & Helen Paliouras	Tryphon & Suzanne Tryphonos
Katherine Marie Callahan	Mike & Agatha Karakonstantis	John & Dena Paliouras	Lou Tsipis
Manuel & Carole Capsalis	Paul Klikas & Dana Mann	Niko Paliouras	Dr. Dimitrios Varelas
Sophie Carr	Antonios & Claire Karamalegos	Peter & Evelyn Panos	Georgina Varellas
Andrew & Cheryl Christakos	George & Karen Karas	Yuri & Elena Panov	John Varelas
Dr. Arthur Christakos	Dr. Thomas Kash &	James & Stella Pantelidis	Janetis Vassiliades
Eleni Christakos	Dr. Zoe McElligott	George & Janet Pantermakis	Demi Vlachos
Lia Christakos	Wendy Katsigianis	Kleanthis & Angeika Papanickas	Helen Vurnakes
George & Deborah Christie	Dr. Kenneth & Karen Korach	Sam & Cleo Papanikas	James & Frances Vurnakes
Dr. Bessie Chronaki	Helen Koutouzakis	Matina Papazoglou	Ray & Eleni Walter
Cadee Chronaki	James Koutsis	Katherine Pappas	Alexa Waters
Erie Cocolas	Dr. Andrew Kuyper	Dr. Ted & Theky Pappas	Preston & Catherine Wilson
Costa Constantinou	Dr. Lee & Pauline Kuyper	George Pashales	Diane Winans
John Constatinou	Elias & Madeline Lambiris	Wes Platt & Catherine Constatinou	Robert & Roberta Wippich
Lou Constantinou	Catherine Lewis	Henry & Judith Presler	Grace Witham & Nick Brantley
Dean Costas	George Livanos & Renee Lisander	Daniel & Lori Przybyl	Jonathan & Maria Wood
Nick Cotroukis	Katherine Livas	Olgha Qaqish	Betsy Xenakis
Sharan Dababnah	Matha Loden	Angela Quint	Dino & Kerri Zaferatos
George & Helen Dais	Thalia Lyras	Keith & Alexia Rheinhardt	Christina Zehia
	Fr. Stavroforos Mamaies		Tony & Evelyn Zehia

*December 2019*

*12 – Thursday - Spyridon the Wonderworker - 9:00 am*

*November 15 – December 25 Nativity Fast*



*15 – 11<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Luke – Saint Eleftherios – 9:00 am*

*22- Sunday before Nativity 9:00 pm*

*24 – Tuesday Evening - Divine Liturgy for Christmas - 6:30 pm*

*27 – Friday - Feast of St. Stephen - 9:00 am*

*29 – Sunday after the Nativity – 9:00 am*

**Nativity Fast.**

During the early part of the fast, the rule is identical to that of the Apostles' Fast. During the latter part of the fast, fish is no longer eaten on Saturdays or Sundays. In different traditions, this heightening of the fast may be for either the last week or the last two weeks.

**Apostles' Fast**

The rule for this variable-length fast is more lenient than for Great Lent.

**Monday, Wednesday, Friday:** Strict fast.

**Tuesday, Thursday:** Oil and wine permitted.

**Saturday, Sunday:** Fish, oil and wine permitted.

This is the rule kept by many monasteries during non-fasting seasons.

Dear parents:

I want to thank each and every one of you for helping your kids with their thankfulness boxes. We are still receiving the results (and if you haven't sent them in yet, please do), and their level of participation has been amazing. The elementary class had a total goal of 500, and already we are close 700 and still counting! The preschoolers had a goal of 100 and are already at 220! I am so proud of them, and so grateful for your help in encouraging them to do this. They are such a great group of kids. I will be doing a more thorough write up for the entire parish, but I wanted to share the results with you first. We will be planning our celebration for January after everyone is back from the holidays, and we may host a coffee hour for the entire parish to show how thankful we are for everyone in our church.

Thanks for helping our kids say thanks!  
Catherine W.

## Ο Άγιος Γέροντας Παΐσιος για τα Χριστούγεννα: πως «πρέπει» να ζήσουμε τα Αληθινά Χριστούγεννα;



Μέσα στη θύελλα αυτού του κόσμου, μέσα στον παραλογισμό της κοσμικότητας, μέσα στην τρικυμία της απιστίας και ενώ ο κόσμος ξεγελιέται με δειντάκια και λαμπιόνια, με γλυκίσματα και ψεύτικες συνήθειες, με Χριστούγεννα χωρίς Χριστό, εμείς ας επαγρυπνήσουμε σαν τους ποιμένες, ψάλλοντας «Μεθ' ἡμῶν ὁ Θεός, γνῶτε ἔθνη καὶ ἠττάσθε», διότι ο Θεός είναι μαζί μας. Δεν υπάρχει μεγαλύτερη αλήθεια, δεν υπάρχει μεγαλύτερη χαρά. «Δεῦτε ἀγαλλιασώμεθα τῷ Κυρίῳ, τὸ παρὸν μυστήριον ἐκδιηγούμενοι».

Ας διαβάσουμε τα λόγια του Γέροντος Παϊσίου για το πως πρέπει να ζήσουμε τα Αληθινά Χριστούγεννα! «Όταν ο νους είναι στα θεία νοήματα, ζει τα γεγονότα ο άνθρωπος, και έτσι αλλοιώνεται.»

### [Σοφία Ντρέκου](#)

«Ο Χριστός με τη μεγάλη Του αγάπη και με την μεγάλη Του αγάλλιαση που σκορπάει στις ψυχές των πιστών με όλες τις αγίες γιορτές Του, μας ανασταίνει αληθινά αφού μας ανεβάζει ψηλά πνευματικά. Αρκεί να συμμετέχουμε και να έχουμε όρεξη πνευματική να τις πανηγυρίζουμε πνευματικά· τότε τις γλεντάμε πνευματικά και μεθάμε πνευματικά από το παραδεισένιο κρασί που μας φέρνουν οι Άγιοι και μας κερνούν.

Τις γιορτές για να τις ζήσουμε, πρέπει να έχουμε τον νου μας στις αγίες ημέρες και όχι στις δουλειές που έχουμε να κάνουμε για τις αγίες ημέρες. Να σκεφτόμαστε τα γεγονότα της κάθε αγίας ημέρας και να λέμε την ευχή δοξολογώντας τον Θεό. Έτσι θα γιορτάζουμε με πολύ ευλάβεια κάθε γιορτή».

«Να μελετάει και να ζει τα θεία γεγονότα συνέχεια. Όταν κανείς μελετάει τα γεγονότα της κάθε γιορτής, φυσιολογικά θα συγκινηθεί και με ιδιαίτερη ευλάβεια θα προσευχηθεί. Έπειτα στις Ακολουθίες ο νους να είναι στα γεγονότα που γιορτάζουμε και με ευλάβεια να παρακολουθούμε τα τροπάρια που ψέλνονται. Όταν ο νους είναι στα θεία νοήματα, ζει τα

γεγονότα ο άνθρωπος, και έτσι αλλοιώνεται.

- -Γέροντα, μετά την Αγρυπνία των Χριστουγέννων δεν κοιμόμαστε;
- -Χριστούγεννα και να κοιμηθούμε! Η μητέρα μου έλεγε: «**Απόψε μόνον οι Εβραίοι κοιμούνται**». Βλέπεις, την νύχτα που γεννήθηκε ο Χριστός οι άρχοντες κοιμόνταν βαθιά, και οι ποιμένες «αγραυλούσαν». Φύλαγαν τα πρόβατα την νύχτα παίζοντας την φλογέρα. Κατάλαβες; Οι ποιμένες πού αγρυπνούσαν είδαν τον Χριστό.
- -Πώς ήταν Γέροντα, το σπήλαιο;  
-Ήταν μία σπηλιά μέσα σε έναν βράχο και είχε μία φάτνη· τίποτε άλλο δεν είχε. Εκεί πήγαινε κανένας φτωχός και άφηνε τα ζώα του. Η Παναγία με τον Ιωσήφ, επειδή όλα τα χάνια ήταν γεμάτα και δεν είχαν πού να μείνουν, κατέληξαν σε αυτό το σπήλαιο. Εκεί ήταν το γαϊδουράκι και το βοϊδάκι, που με τα χνώτα τους ζέσταναν τον Χριστό! «Έγνων βούς τον κτησάμενον και όνος την φάτνην του κυρίου αυτού», δεν λέει ο Προφήτης Ησαΐας;
- -Σε ένα τροπάριο, Γέροντα, λέει ότι η Υπεραγία Θεοτόκος βλέποντας τον νεογέννητο Χριστό, «χαίρουσα όμοῦ καὶ δακρύνουσα» άναρωτιόταν:... «Επιδώσω σοι μαζόν, τῷ τὰ σύμπαντα τρέφοντι, ἢ υμνήσω σε, ὡς Υἱόν καὶ Θεόν μου; ποίαν εὔρω ἐπὶ σοὶ προσηγορίαν;»  
-Αυτά είναι τα μυστήρια του Θεού, η πολύ μεγάλη συγκατάβαση του Θεού, την οποία δεν μπορούμε εμείς να συλλάβουμε!
- Γέροντα, πως θα μπορέσουμε να ζήσουμε το γεγονός της Γεννήσεως, ότι δηλαδή ο Χριστός «**Σήμερα γεννάται εκ Παρθένου**»;
- Για να ζήσουμε αυτά τα θεία γεγονότα, πρέπει ο νους να είναι στα θεία νοήματα. Τότε αλλοιώνεται ο άνθρωπος. «**Μέγα και παράδοξον θαύμα τετέλεσται σήμερα**», ψάλλουμε. **Άμα ο νους μας είναι εκεί, στο «παράδοξον»**, τότε θα ζήσουμε και το μεγάλο μυστήριο της Γεννήσεως του Χριστού. Εγώ θα εύχομαι η καρδιά σας να γίνη Αγία Φάτνη και το Πανάγιο Βρέφος της Βηθλεέμ να σας δώσει όλες τις ευλογίες Του.

Απόσπασμα από το βιβλίο: «Περί προσευχής», [Γέροντος Παΐσιου Αγιορείτου](#), Λόγοι ΣΤ' (σελ. 195-196). Εκδόσεις Ιερόν Ησυχαστήριον «Ευαγγελιστής Ιωάννης ο Θεολόγος» Σουρωτή Θεσσαλονίκης. Πηγή [www.sophia-ntrekou.gr](http://www.sophia-ntrekou.gr)

### Σχετικά:

- [Ο Χριστουγεννιάτικος Ύμνος που έγινε εικόνα: «Τι σοι προσενέγκωμεν Χριστέ» Ανάλυση, Μετάφραση, Ποιητική απόδοση και Βίντεο](#)
- [Ζεις τη μελαγχολία των γιορτών; Έλα μαζί μας...!!](#)
- [Γέροντας Παΐσιος - Πως λειτουργούν οι πνευματικοί νόμοι](#)
- [π. Νικόλαος Χατζηνικολάου: Διαφορετική προσέγγιση στο πνεύμα των εορτών](#)
- [π. Νικόλαος Μεσογαίας - Χριστουγεννιάτικες Ιστορίες... \[Βίντεο\]](#)
- [Το άγνωστο μήνυμα των Χριστουγέννων: να γίνεις θεός! Ο άνθρωπος γίνεται θεός;](#)

## Christmas Are we Ready?



Beloved in Christ, I would like to ask you a question; I ask it of myself and I ask it of you. Are we prepared to celebrate the great feast of Christmas?

There are two kinds of preparation; material and spiritual. Our material preparation is more or less finished. Housewives have cleaned their houses, husbands have finished – or have almost finished – their shopping, and children await their presents. Everyone has written their Christmas cards, signing them with the customary, ‘Merry Christmas’ and ‘Happy New Year’. This is worldly preparation; I am not interested in this. What I am interested in is spiritual preparation, the kind of preparation which makes us ready to celebrate the great event of the Incarnation of the Divine Word as is proper. Only a small number have properly prepared themselves. Of a thousand Christians, I doubt if even one celebrates Christmas truly. Does my estimate seem exaggerated? Let us see.

How is Christmas celebrated today? A portion of Christians will celebrate it ‘typically’, let us say. Hearing the bells on Christmas Eve, they will go and take part in the service out of habit. This is certainly better than being absent altogether; it is something at least.



Others will imitate foreign customs and practices, forgetting the ecclesiastical celebration altogether; in other words, they will pass Christmas Eve without the scent of Christ. For Orthodox Christians, Christmas is meaningless if it is celebrated without church services, without prayer, without confession, without Holy Communion, without forgiveness, without almsgiving. Indeed, the devil has sown a new seed in our homeland, and it is sprouting up everywhere like mushrooms grow in manure. On Christmas Eve people put on these reveillon – a foreign custom and a foreign word – they put on parties in luxurious hotels and other such places, far from the Church, far from hymns, far from

the Divine Liturgy, where people gather and amuse themselves with worldly music, with food, with drink and whatever follows from these things. Such a practice is a thorn in the field of our homeland. If it continues to spread, the spirit of secularization will overtake the Christian feast altogether.

Some, then, celebrate Christmas ‘typically’, others put on these reveillon and trade in the Church feast for something altogether worldly. And still others, what do they do? They leave. They are not satisfied here. Greece is not enough for them. They have money to spare so they take trips and go on tours. On Christmas Eve when the bells are ringing, these people will be far from their homes in different places,

and not only in our country. They aren't satisfied here, so they hop on an airplane and go celebrate Christmas in Rome, in London, in Paris, in different places.

These, beloved, and anyone else who has openly denied the faith, have cast Christmas out of their hearts. For a large number of people, then, Christmas is nothing but another chance to dull their boredom; the actual content of the feast holds no appeal for them. Yes! That day you will have it all! You will have your great salons, your ornate rugs, your curtains, your fancy cutlery, your drinks, your meals, your music, your trips. You will have everything! You will be missing one thing, however. You will be missing the most valuable thing; the thing which gives the feast meaning! Lacking this thing, what kind of Christmas can you expect to have? Your Christmas will be a Christmas without Christ!

But why? How did this happen? How did things get to this point? This is the age which the Prophet Isaiah foresaw. There will come a day, he said, when men will be drunk without wine. This day has arrived. Contemporary man is, "...drunk, but not with wine." (Isaiah 29:9) For one to be drunk with wine during these days is undoubtedly a sin, for, drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Cor 6:10) There is, however, a worse kind of drunkenness: woe to those who are drunk without wine, says Isaiah.

What, then, is contemporary man drunk on? One is drunk on the love of glory. Another is drunk on the love of money; another is drunk on women and indecent sights; another is drunk on card playing, on games of chance; another on an obsession with sports teams; another on plays and films; another on enjoyments and luxuries. I have particularly noticed that a good many are drunk on politics, something which has become a passion only for us in Greece alone. I say this as one who keeps himself out of party politics. Were you to open my heart you would find nothing but my homeland and my Christ. Here in Greece there is a pathological attachment to politics. Even on Christmas Eve, the feast will be overshadowed by discussions of politics. Nowhere else can one find such a phenomenon.

I have also noticed of late that many have become drunk on that strong wine described in the Apocalypse; that wine which the noetic Babylon will give the rulers and the people to drink. This wine, the commentators say, is the pagan spirit, the moral depravity of the world. This wine is so strong that if you were to drink just a few drops, it will cause you to lose your faith, you will forget everything. The strongest wine, then, is not money, or women, or shameful lusts, or other sensual pleasures; it is the cosmopolitan spirit of modern life, it is the emancipation from devotion, knowledge infused with pride, the science of the atheist, the atheistic rebellion, the denial of God and the divinization of man. It is this wine which has made many in our age drunk.

Men are drunk, then, on various wines offered to him by the ruler of this age in his golden cup. Do you know what these men are like? I will show you by means of an example.

I try, with God's help, to be a teacher. So I travel to a village where I find someone and try to teach him something about Christ, about the faith, about the mysteries. He listens, but the others tell me, "Don't waste your time, he's drunk! Don't bother sitting with him and talking to him!" This is how the world is today...it is drunk without wine! Is it worth speaking to such men?

But I appeal to you, my brothers. I am not speaking to drunks, to those made dizzy by the idols. It is my hope that I speak to the faithful who know but one kind of drunkenness, that holy drunkenness described by the Psalmist who exhorts us to, "...taste and see that the Lord is good." (Psalm 33:8) I hope that you have your ears open for, "Blessed is he that speaketh in the ears of them that will hear." (Sirach 25:9)

Metropolitan Avgoustinos (Kantiotes) of Florina  
Translated by fr. John Palmer