

ΟΙΚΟΥΜΕΝΙΚΟΝ ΠΑΤΡΙΑΡΧΕΙΟΝ  
ΙΕΡΑ ΑΡΧΙΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΗ  
ΘΥΑΤΕΙΡΩΝ & Μ. ΒΡΕΤΑΝΝΙΑΣ

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE  
ARCHDIOCESE OF  
THYATEIRA & GREAT BRITAIN



## ΛΟΓΟΣ ΚΥΡΙΟΥ THE WORD OF OUR LORD



ΚΥΡΙΑΚΗ ΤΗΣ ΑΠΟΚΡΕΩ  
23 Φεβρουαρίου 2025  
Ἦχος β΄. Ἀριθμ. 269

MEATFARE SUNDAY (LAST JUDGEMENT)  
23 February 2025  
2<sup>nd</sup> Mode. No. 269

*Πολυκάρπου ἐπισκόπου Σμύρνης, Λαζάρου τοῦ νέου ἱερομάρτυρος τοῦ ἐν Τριπόλει, Γοργονίας ὁσίας  
Polycarp bishop of Smyrna, Lazarus new hieromartyr of Tripoli, Gorgonia*

### ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΙΚΟΝ ΑΝΑΓΝΩΣΜΑ

*Α΄ Κορ. η΄, 8-13 - θ΄, 1-2*

**Α**δελφοί, βρῶμα ἡμᾶς οὐ παρίστησιν τῷ Θεῷ· οὔτε γὰρ ἐὰν φάγωμεν περισσεύομεν, οὔτε ἐὰν μὴ φάγωμεν ὑστερούμεθα. Βλέπετε δὲ μήπως ἡ ἐξουσία ὑμῶν αὕτη πρόσκομμα γένηται τοῖς ἀσθενοῦσιν. Ἐὰν γὰρ τις ἴδῃ σε τὸν ἔχοντα γνῶσιν ἐν εἰδωλείῳ κατακείμενον, οὐχὶ ἡ συνείδησις αὐτοῦ ἀσθενοῦς ὄντος οἰκοδομηθήσεται εἰς τὸ τὰ εἰδωλόθυτα ἐσθίειν; Καὶ ἀπολεῖται ὁ ἀσθενῶν ἀδελφὸς ἐπὶ τῇ σῆ γνώσει, δι' ὃν Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν; Οὕτως δὲ ἁμαρτάνοντες εἰς τοὺς ἀδελφούς, καὶ τύπτοντες αὐτῶν τὴν συνείδησιν ἀσθενοῦσαν, εἰς Χριστὸν ἁμαρτάνετε. Διόπερ εἰ βρῶμα σκανδαλίζει τὸν ἀδελφόν μου, οὐ μὴ φάγω κρέα εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, ἵνα μὴ τὸν ἀδελφόν μου σκανδαλίσω. Οὐκ εἰμὶ ἀπόστολος; Οὐκ εἰμὶ ἐλεύθερος; Οὐχὶ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν τὸν Κύριον ἡμῶν ἑώρακα; Οὐ τὸ ἔργον μου ὑμεῖς ἐστε ἐν Κυρίῳ; Εἰ ἄλλοις οὐκ εἰμὶ ἀπόστολος, ἀλλὰ γε ὑμῖν εἰμι· ἡ γὰρ σφραγὶς τῆς ἐμῆς ἀποστολῆς ὑμεῖς ἐστε ἐν Κυρίῳ.

### ΑΝΑΣΤΑΣΙΜΟΝ ΑΠΟΛΥΤΙΚΙΟΝ

*Ἦχος β΄*

**Ο**τε κατήλθες πρὸς τὸν θάνατον, ἡ ζωὴ ἢ ἀθάνατος, τότε τὸν Ἄδη ἐνέκρωσας, τῇ ἀστραπῇ τῆς θεότητος· ὅτε δὲ καὶ τοὺς τεθνεῶτας ἐκ τῶν καταχθονίων ἀνέστησας, πᾶσαι αἱ Δυνάμεις τῶν ἐπουρανίων ἐκραύγαζον· Ζωοδότα Χριστέ, ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν, δόξα σοι.

### EPISTLE READING

*1 Cor. 8: 8-13 ; 9: 1-2*

**B**rethren, food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. Only take care lest this liberty of yours somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. For if any one sees you, a man of knowledge, at table in an idol's temple, might he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols? And so by your knowledge this weak man is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died. Thus, sinning against your brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food is a cause of my brother's falling, I will never eat meat, lest I cause my brother to fall. Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not you my workmanship in the Lord? If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

### RESURRECTION APOLYTIKION

*2<sup>nd</sup> Mode*

**W**hen you went down to death, O immortal life, then you slew Hell with the lightning flash of your Godhead; but when from the depths below the earth you raised the dead, all the Powers in the heavens cried out: Giver of life, Christ our God, glory to you!

## ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΚΟΝ ΑΝΑΓΝΩΣΜΑ *Ματθ. κε', 31-46*

**Ε**ἶπεν ὁ Κύριος· Ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν τῇ δόξῃ αὐτοῦ καὶ πάντες οἱ ἅγιοι ἄγγελοι μετ' αὐτοῦ, τότε καθίσει ἐπὶ θρόνου δόξης αὐτοῦ, καὶ συναχθήσεται ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, καὶ ἀφοριεῖ αὐτοὺς ἀπ' ἀλλήλων ὡσπερ ὁ ποιμὴν ἀφορίζει τὰ πρόβατα ἀπὸ τῶν ἐρίφων, καὶ στήσει τὰ μὲν πρόβατα ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ, τὰ δὲ ἐρίφια ἐξ εὐωνύμων. τότε ἔρεῖ ὁ βασιλεὺς τοῖς ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ· δεῦτε οἱ εὐλογημένοι τοῦ Πατρὸς μου, κληρονομήσατε τὴν ἡτοιμασμένην ὑμῖν βασιλείαν ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου. ἐπέειπασα γάρ, καὶ ἐδώκατέ μοι φαγεῖν, ἐδίψησα, καὶ ἐποτίσατέ με, ξένος ἦμην, καὶ συνηγάγετέ με, γυμνός, καὶ περιεβάλετέ με, ἡσθένησα, καὶ ἐπεσκέψασθέ με, ἐν φυλακῇ ἦμην, καὶ ἦλθετε πρὸς με. τότε ἀποκριθήσονται αὐτῷ οἱ δίκαιοι λέγοντες· Κύριε, πότε σε εἶδομεν πεινῶντα καὶ ἐθρέψαμεν, ἢ διψῶντα καὶ ἐποτίσαμεν; πότε δέ σε εἶδομεν ξένον καὶ συνηγάγομεν, ἢ γυμνὸν καὶ περιεβάλομεν; πότε δέ σε εἶδομεν ἀσθενῆ ἢ ἐν φυλακῇ, καὶ ἦλθομεν πρὸς σε; καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ βασιλεὺς ἔρεῖ αὐτοῖς· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἐφ' ὅσον ἐποιήσατε ἐνὶ τούτων τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν ἐλαχίστων, ἐμοὶ ἐποιήσατε. τότε ἔρεῖ καὶ τοῖς ἐξ εὐωνύμων· πορεύεσθε ἀπ' ἐμοῦ οἱ κατηραμένοι εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον τὸ ἡτοιμασμένον τῷ διαβόλῳ καὶ τοῖς ἀγγέλοις αὐτοῦ. ἐπέειπασα γάρ, καὶ οὐκ ἐδώκατέ μοι φαγεῖν, ἐδίψησα, καὶ οὐκ ἐποτίσατέ με, ξένος ἦμην, καὶ οὐ συνηγάγετέ με, γυμνός, καὶ οὐ περιεβάλετέ με, ἀσθενής καὶ ἐν φυλακῇ, καὶ οὐκ ἐπεσκέψασθέ με. τότε ἀποκριθήσονται αὐτῷ καὶ αὐτοὶ λέγοντες· Κύριε, πότε σε εἶδομεν πεινῶντα ἢ διψῶντα ἢ ξένον ἢ γυμνὸν ἢ ἀσθενῆ ἢ ἐν φυλακῇ, καὶ οὐ διηκονήσαμέν σοι; τότε ἀποκριθήσεται αὐτοῖς λέγων· ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἐφ' ὅσον οὐκ ἐποιήσατε ἐνὶ τούτων τῶν ἐλαχίστων, οὐδὲ ἐμοὶ ἐποιήσατε. καὶ ἀπελεύσονται οὗτοι εἰς κόλασιν αἰώνιον, οἱ δὲ δίκαιοι εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον.

## GOSPEL READING *Matt. 25: 31-46*

**T**he Lord said, When the Son of man comes in his glory and all the holy angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.' Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?' Then he will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me.' And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

## ΕΡΜΗΝΕΙΑ ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΚΟΥ ΑΝΑΓΝΩΣΜΑΤΟΣ

**Κ**υριακὴ τῆς Ἀπόκρεω ἢ σημερινή, καὶ ἡ Ἐκκλησία μας ἔχει ὀρίσει νὰ διαβάζεται ἡ εὐαγγελικὴ περικοπὴ στὴν ὁποία περιγράφεται, μέσα ἀπὸ μία παραβολή, ἡ Δευτέρα Παρουσία καὶ ἡ ἡμέρα τῆς κρίσεως. Σήμερα εἶναι ἡ τελευταία ἡμέρα κρεωφαγίας μέχρι το Πάσχα, καὶ μὴν ἀκούτε τοὺς ἀμαθεῖς ποὺ ἀναφέρονται στὴν ἐπόμενη Κυριακῇ, τὴν Κυριακὴ τῆς Τυρινῆς, σάν τὴν «τελευταία Ἀποκριά». Εἶναι πραγματικῶς ἀπορίας ἄξιον πῶς τόσοι ἀδελφοί μας, ἐνῶ ἔχουμε εἰσελθεῖ στὴν κατανυκτικὴ περίδο τοῦ Τριωδίου, καὶ σήμερα ἡ Ἐκκλησία μας ψάλλει « Ὡ ποία ὥρα τότε καὶ ἡμέρα φοβερά!», σκέπτονται καρναβάλια, μεθύσια καὶ γενικῶς ὅ,τι εἶναι ἀντίθετο ἀπὸ τὴν διδασκαλία τῆς Ἐκκλησίας μας!

Δὲν εἶναι τυχαῖο ποὺ κατὰ τὴν σημερινὴ ἡμέρα, μετὰ τίς δύο παραβολές τοῦ Τελώνου καὶ

τοῦ Φαρισαίου καί τοῦ Ἀσώτου, διαβάζεται ἡ συγκεκριμένη εὐαγγελική περικοπή. Πολύ σοφά οἱ Ἱεροί Πατέρες τοποθέτησαν τήν μνήμη τῆς φοβερᾶς ἡμέρας τῆς κρίσεως σήμερα, προκειμένου νά υπενθυμίσει σέ ὅλους μας ὅτι ὁ Κύριος, ἐκτός ἀπό φιλόανθρωπος καί ἐλεήμων, ὅπως ἀκούσαμε τίς δύο προηγούμενες Κυριακές, εἶναι καί Δίκαιος. Ὅπως ὁμολογοῦμε στό Σύμβολο τῆς Πίστεως, θα ἔλθει πάλι «μετά δόξης, κρῖναι ζῶντας καί νεκρούς» καί κατά τήν ἡμέρα τῆς Δευτέρας Παρουσίας θά ἀποδώσει στόν καθένα κατά τά ἔργα του.

Βασικό κριτήριό κατά τήν ἡμέρα τῆς κρίσεως δέν θά εἶναι οὔτε ἡ μόρφωση, οὔτε ἡ ἐθνικότητα, οὔτε κᾶν ἡ θέση πού κατέχει κανείς μέσα στήν Ἐκκλησία, ἀλλά ἡ κορωνίδα τῶν ἀρετῶν, ἡ ἀγάπη. Ἡ ἀγάπη πρὸς τόν Θεό καί τόν συνάνθρωπο, διότι ἀπό τήν ἀγάπη πρὸς τόν Θεό καί τόν πλησίον «ὅλος ὁ νόμος καί οἱ προφηταί κρέμονται» (Ματθ. κβ΄ 40). Δέν ἀπορρίπτει ὁ Κύριος καμία ἀρετή, ὅμως ἀναφέρεται στήν ἀγάπη καί αὐτό διότι ἀπό αὐτήν ἐξαρτῶνται ὅλες οἱ ὑπόλοιπες ἀρετές, «πλήρωμα νόμου ἡ ἀγάπη» (Ρωμ. ιγ΄ 10β). Ὅπως ἀναφέρει ὁ σήμερα ἐορταζόμενος Ἅγιος Ἱερομάρτυς Πολύκαρπος, ἐπίσκοπος Σμύρνης, ἄμεσος μαθητής καί διάδοχος τῶν Ἀποστόλων, «ὁ ἔχων ἀγάπην μακράν ἐστὶν πάσης ἀμαρτίας».

Στό πρόσωπο κάθε ἀναξιοπαθοῦντος πρέπει νά βλέπουμε τόν ἴδιο τόν Χριστό, ὁ ὁποῖος ἔδωσε τήν εἰκόνα του σέ κάθε ἄνθρωπο, «ἐφ’ ὅσον ἐποιήσατε ἐνὶ τούτων τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν ἐλαχίστων, ἐμοὶ ἐποιήσατε» (Ματθ. κέ΄ 40). Καί τοῦτο διότι ὁ Χριστός εἶναι ἐκεῖνος πού δίνει ἀξία στήν ἀγάπη μας. Μακρυνά ἀπό τόν Χριστό καί χωρίς τόν Χριστό δέν ὑπάρχει σωτηρία. Αὐτός εἶναι ἡ πύλη, ἀπό τήν ὁποία ὁποῖος περνάει σώζεται καί γίνεται πολίτης τῆς Βασιλείας τῶν οὐρανῶν. Ἄν ὁ Χριστός, περιγράφοντας τήν μέλλουσα κρίση, ἐξῆρε περισσότερο τά ἀγαθὰ ἔργα, τό ἔπραξε διότι ἤθελε νά ἐλέγξει τήν ἀκαρπία μας καί νά μᾶς διδάξει ὅτι ὄχι μία θεωρητική πίστη, ἀλλά ἡ πίστη μέ τά ἔργα σώζουν τόν πιστό. Ὁ ἀπόστολος Ἰάκωβος μᾶς τό τονίζει «ἡ γὰρ κρίσις ἀνέλεος τῶ μὴ ποιήσαντι ἔλεος» (Ἰακ. β΄ 14).

Ὅλοι μας θά περάσουμε ἀπό αὐτή τήν κρίση, «πάντας ἡμᾶς φανερωθῆναι δεῖ ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ βήματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ» (Β΄ Κορ. ε΄ 10). Ὁ Κύριος θά κρίνει τίς σκέψεις μας, τούς διαλογισμούς μας καί τίς πράξεις μας καί ὅλα τά μυστικά ἀμαρτημάτά μας θά γίνουν φανερά. «Κύριος καρδίας πάντων γινώσκει... αὐτὸς οἶδεν πάντα, ὃς ἀποδίδωσιν ἐκάστῳ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ» (Παρ. κδ΄ 12). Ἡ ἀλήθεια αὐτή θά πρέπει νά μᾶς ὠθεῖ συνεχῶς σέ ἀναθεώρηση τῆς ζωῆς καί τῶν πράξεών μας. Ἡ σκέψη καί μόνο τῆς ὥρας ἐκείνης, ἀλλά καί ἡ βεβαιότητα μέσα μας ὅτι αὐτή ἡ Κρίση θά πραγματοποιηθεῖ, μποροῦν νά μᾶς βοηθήσουν ὥστε καθημερινά νά ἐργαζόμαστε τά ἔργα τῆς ἀρετῆς καί τῆς ἀγάπης.

Ἄς προσπαθοῦμε λοιπόν, ἀδελφοί μου, νά προετοιμαζόμαστε γιά τήν ἡμέρα τῆς κρίσεως ὥστε νά τήν ὑποδεχθοῦμε μέ ἔργα ἀγάπης, «ἄξια τῆς μετανοίας» (Πραξ. κ΄ 20) καί νά μπορέσουμε, μέ αὐτό τόν τρόπο, νά ἀτενίσουμε τό πρόσωπο τοῦ δικαιοκρίτου Χριστοῦ, ἀλλά καί νά ἀξιωθοῦμε νά ἀκούσουμε τήν φωνή Του «δεῦτε οἱ εὐλογημένοι τοῦ πατρὸς μου, κληρονομήσατε τήν ἡτοιμασμένην ὑμῖν βασιλείαν» (Ματθ. κέ΄ 34). Ἀμήν.

Πρεσβ. Δαβίδ Σόμαλης

## SERMON ON THE EPISTLE READING

**T**he Sunday of the Last Judgement marks the culmination of a three-week period that precedes Forgiveness Sunday and the beginning of Great Lent. It is also the last day that Orthodox Christians consume meat until Easter.

Last Sunday, we heard of the limitless compassion and love that God the Father has for us through Christ’s parable of the Prodigal Son. However, today, Christ gives a severe message about how people will be judged by the Son of Man when He comes in glory, surrounded by His angels as He takes His place on His Judgement Seat. Today, we are reminded that eventually, we will all find ourselves stood face to face with the Living God who separates us, “...one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats...” (Matt. 25:32) What a frighteningly awesome thought, to be stood in front of the Just Judge, ready to hear His assessment of how we have lived our lives. For this reason, it is worth ensuring we fully understand what Christ preaches so that we can prepare.

In the Gospel reading, Christ turns to those on His right, the sheep, and says “Come, O blessed

of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world..." (Matt. 25:34) O what a wonderful thing to hear from our Creator! Why do the sheep receive such news? Christ explains "for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was in prison and you visited me!" (Matt. 25:35-36) Those called sheep are surprised to hear such words and they, demonstrating their humility and unable to even acknowledge their 'good deeds' ask, "Lord, when did we see you and do all these things?" (Matt. 25:37) Christ's response is powerful. He says "...as you did it to one of the least of my brethren, you did it to me." (Matt. 25:40) The reading goes on and those on His left, the goats, are told to depart from the Son of Man because they did not do as the sheep did. It is worth mentioning here that the goats show their hidden pride by asking "when did we see You... and not minister to you?" (Matt. 25:44) Christ again says "when you did it not to the least of these, you did it not to me" (Matt. 25:45)

Now, this Gospel reading can be used to show the philanthropic nature of Christ. However, there is a deeper element. Yes, it is good to give to charity and to help the poor. However, these actions can lack one very important aspect of what Christ is saying; a personal connection, a personal relationship. These actions are matters of the heart. The sheep see the one who is in need and act, whereas the goat is oblivious. What is also worth noting is that both the sheep and the goats call the Son of Man 'Lord' showing that they see themselves as His followers. On the one hand, the sheep have allowed the ascetic practices that the Church encourages us to undertake such as fasting, prayer, regular confession and attending church services to ultimately soften their hearts and become more astutely aware of the suffering of their neighbour. The goats may have also undertaken the same very practices but like the Pharisees, through pride and egotism, are unable to soften their hearts and therefore remain oblivious to the plight of their neighbour.

As we journey through the upcoming Lenten period may we too, be as sheep, sincerely engaging with the ascetic practices of our Church that our hearts be softened to the needs of our neighbour. May we too prepare for our own personal meeting with the Lord of all, in the hope that we may hear the sweet words 'Come blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'



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Are you between the ages of 16-35? If yes, join us at Christian Orthodox Thyateira Youth, our official Archdiocesan Youth and Young Adult Ministry.

To learn more visit: [www.coty.org.uk](http://www.coty.org.uk). Follow us on Instagram: COTY\_org



### Visitors Are Welcome

We would like to thank you for visiting and worshiping with us today. Kindly know that although all are welcome to attend our Sacred Services, a prerequisite to receive Holy Communion is unity in the Faith, as well as spiritual preparation by prayer, fasting, and regular participation in the Sacrament of Holy Confession. Non-Orthodox Christians are kindly requested to refrain from receiving Communion. All are, however, welcome to partake of the "antidoron" (blessed bread) distributed by the clergy at the conclusion of the Service, as well as to introduce themselves while doing so.

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