



«**Ἡ Παρθένος σήμερον τὸν Ὑπερούσιον τίκτει, καὶ ἡ Γῆ τὸ σπήλαιον τῷ ἀπροσίτῳ προσάγει, Ἄγγελοι μετὰ ποιμένων δοξολογοῦσι, Μάγοι δὲ μετὰ ἀστέρος ὁδοιποροῦσι, Δι' ἡμᾶς γὰρ ἐγεννήθη παιδίον νέον ὁ πρὸ αἰώνων Θεός.**»



Ἀγαπητοὶ Ἐνοριῖτες, μετὰ τὴ βοήθεια τοῦ Θεοῦ εἰσερχόμεστε στὸν τελευταῖο μῆνα τοῦ 2012. Αὐτὸ ποὺ κάνει ἐμᾶς τοὺς χριστιανοὺς νὰ «ξεχωρίζουμε» τίς ἡμέρες αὐτὲς εἶναι τὸ

γεγονὸς ὅτι γιὰ ἐμᾶς ὁ Δεκέμβριος δὲν εἶναι μόνο ὁ τελευταῖος μῆνας τοῦ ἔτους, γιὰ ἐμᾶς ὁ Δεκέμβριος εἶναι ὁ μῆνας ποὺ γεννήθηκε ἡ ἐλπίδα, ἡ ἐλπίδα τῆς σωτηρίας ὁλόκληρου τοῦ κόσμου, εἶναι ὁ μῆνας τῶν Χριστουγέννων!

Ἡ ἑορτὴ τῶν Χριστουγέννων, κατὰ τὴν χαρακτηριστικὴ ἔκφραση τοῦ Ἁγίου Γρηγορίου τοῦ Θεολόγου, ἀποτελεῖ "σεισμόν γῆς" ἐνῶ ὁ Μέγας Βασίλειος τὰ χαρακτηρίζει ὡς "τὰ σωτήρια τοῦ κόσμου, ἡ γενέθλιος ἡμέρα τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος, ἡ κοινὴ ἑορτὴ πάσης τῆς κτίσεως", ἐπειδὴ, ὁ "ἐπιδημήσας Λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐκένωσεν ἑαυτόν, ἵνα τῷ κενώματι αὐτοῦ πληρωθῇ ὁ κόσμος". "Ἐπειδὴ ὁ Θεός," λέγει ὁ ἅγιος Ἰωάννης ὁ Δαμασκηνός, "μᾶς ἔδωκε νὰ κοινωνήσουμε τὸ καλύτερο καὶ δὲν τὸ φυλάξαμε, γι' αὐτὸ μεταλαβαίνει τὸ χειρότερο, ἐννοῶ τὴ φύση μας, ὥστε ἀπὸ τὴ μιά μεριά νὰ ἀνακαινίσῃ τὸν ἑαυτό Του καὶ μετὰ τὸν ἑαυτό Του τὸ κατ' εἰκόνα καὶ καθ' ὁμοίωσιν, καὶ ἀπὸ τὴν ἄλλη νὰ διδάξῃ καὶ σὲ μᾶς τὴν ἐνάρετη πολιτεία, ἀφοῦ μετὰ τὸν ἑαυτό Του τὴν ἔκαμε σὲ μᾶς δυνατὴ. Νὰ μᾶς ἐλευθερώσῃ ἀπὸ τὴ φθορὰ μετὰ τὴν κοινωνία τῆς ζωῆς γενόμενος ἀπαρχὴ τῆς ἀναστάσεώς μας. Νὰ ἀνακαινίσῃ τὸ σκεῦος ποὺ ἀχρειώθηκε καὶ κομματιάστηκε, νὰ μᾶς λυτρώσῃ ἀπὸ τὴν τυραννία τοῦ διαβόλου, μετὰ τὸ νὰ μᾶς καλέσῃ σὴ θεογνωσία καὶ νὰ τὸν νεκρώσῃ, νὰ μᾶς μάθῃ νὰ παλεύουμε ἀποτελεσματικὰ μετὰ τὸν τύραννο, ὀπλισμένοι μετὰ ὑπομονὴ καὶ ταπεινώσῃ".

Πόσο ἀληθινὰ εἶναι τὰ λόγια τοῦ ὁσίου Σιλουανοῦ τοῦ Ἀθωνίτου, ὁ ὁποῖος, μεταξὺ ἄλλων, ὑπογραμμίζει ὅτι: "Μερικοὶ σκέφτονται πὼς ὁ Κύριος γεννήθηκε καὶ ἔπαυε ἀπὸ ἀγάπη γιὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπο· ἐπειδὴ ὅμως δὲν βρῖσκουν μέσα τους αὐτὴ τὴν ἀγάπη, διαλογίζονται πὼς αὐτὸ ἔγινε

κάποτε παλιὰ καὶ πέρασε. Ὅταν ὅμως ἡ ψυχὴ μας γνωρίσει τὴν ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ, τότε αἰσθάνεται καθαρά πὼς ὁ Κύριος εἶναι ὁ Πατέρας μας, ὁ γνησιότατος, ὁ πλησιέστατος, ὁ πιὸ ἀγαπημένος, ὁ ἀγαθότατος καὶ δὲν ὑπάρχει μεγαλύτερη εὐτυχία ἀπὸ τὸ ν' ἀγαπᾶς τὸ Θεὸ μέ ὅλο τὸ νοῦ καὶ τὴν καρδιά καὶ τὸν πλησίον σὰν τὸν ἑαυτό σου. Κι ὅταν πιά ἐγκατασταθεῖ μέσα μας αὐτὴ ἡ ἀγάπη, τότε ὅλα χαροποιοῦν τὴν ψυχὴ".

Πράγματι, τὸ μεγαλύτερο πρόβλημα τῆς σημερινῆς κοινωνίας δὲν εἶναι τόσο ἡ οἰκονομικὴ κρίση, ὅσο ἡ ἔλλειψη ἀγάπης, ἡ ἀπομάκρυνση ἀπὸ τὸν Κύριο καὶ ἡ ἄνευ ὄρων παράδοση στὴν ὑπερκατανάλωση καὶ στὶς ὕλικές ἀπολαύσεις. Αὐτὸ εἶναι ποὺ τελικῶς δημιουργεῖ τὴν κρίση: οἰκονομικὴ, ἠθικὴ, κοινωνικὴ. Αὐτὸ εἶναι ποὺ ὀδηγεῖ τοὺς συνανθρώπους μας στὴν ἀπόγνωση καὶ στὴν ἀπογοήτευση. Μόνο ἡ «ἐπιστροφή» στὸν Χριστὸ εἶναι ἱκανὴ νὰ μᾶς χαρίσῃ ἐκ νέου τὴν αὐτοπεποίθηση καὶ τὴ σιγουριά, νὰ γεμίσει καὶ πάλι τίς καρδιές μας μετὰ ἀγάπη γιὰ τὸν συνάνθρωπό μας. Καὶ μόνο ὅταν ἀνακαλύψουμε ἐκ νέου αὐτὴ τὴν ἀγάπη θὰ κατανοήσουμε τὸ «πνεῦμα» τῶν Χριστουγέννων.

Καλὰ καὶ εὐτυχισμένα Χριστούγεννα!

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A Teenager's Take on Christmas



Given the time of year, I thought it would be rather topical to write about Christmas. However, Christmas time, at least for me, is not simply a single day but an entire period that lasts for approximately two weeks. It is about

giving, hope, love and happiness. In this short article I want to give an insight into what Christmas is like for a teenager in this day and age.

Let me start with a short story. It was the second week of December and exams were over. Pupils at school were on the metaphorical 'home-straight' that was the last week of school approaching ever closer to that metaphorical 'finish-line' that was the end of school and the start of the Christmas holidays. One English lesson, our teacher took us all into a school room full of elderly people. We were there to entertain our guests, and so, we began pairing up each pupil with his elderly counterpart and so began the introductions. I happen to fall upon an elderly lady, who I later learnt was 71 years old. It was not long before we began learning about one another. I soon discovered she was born in Burma, in 1940, during the 2nd World War to English parents. I replied by saying that I was 15 years old born in England to Cypriot parents. She then continued to tell me of her many visits to Cyprus in her youth, since her father was an officer in the army stationed for a while in Cyprus. After exchanging stories and anecdotes which, I have to admit, hers were rather better and far more interesting than mine, I asked her whether she was looking forward to Christmas. Her happy face dropped a little and she replied saying that she had no family, no brothers or sisters and, frankly, was most likely to spend Christmas alone. I, a little saddened as well as shocked, quickly brushed over this and we swiftly moved on to a game of bingo. However, this comment never left my mind and was further engraved as she thanked me whilst leaving at the end of the lesson saying that I had made her Christmas.

I have been told many times in life that Christmas is about family and consequently how lucky I am. However, I think that single thought-provoking comment from an old lady really made me appreciate just how lucky and privileged I am to have such a family. Perhaps I simply was not mature

enough to appreciate this fact. Moreover, this really brought to light the fact that Christmas is not simply a time of presents and consequently of materialism but instead, a time of love, charity, family and giving, and above all, of hope in Jesus Christ. As a child I used to remember how I waited impatiently for Christmas so I could run downstairs on Christmas morning to find a plethora of presents under our Christmas tree and subsequently crying as I was told by my parents that only after we had returned from church would I be allowed to open them. This year my family and I decided to have a 'Secret Santa' – just for a little fun. Names were thrown into a hat and I drew my younger nine-year-old brother. To keep things fair between children and adults each of us was handed a ten pound note which represented the entirety of our budget. On Christmas morning my brother's face lit up as he opened his present, signed by his Secret Santa, to find a Lego Lamborghini model. My brother is a huge fan of Lamborghinis. He danced around with joy and I, as his Secret Santa, also felt warmth in my heart as he expressed his delight. Perhaps it was the first time that I realised this joy I felt for giving a present and what a truly special thing it was giving a present on Christmas day.



by **Andreas Ioannou**

Η γυναίκα στη δημόσια λατρεία του Θεού

Ἡ Ἱερά Σύνοδος τῆς ἀγιωτάτης Ἐκκλησίας τῆς Κύπρου, στοιχοῦσα εἰς τὴν ἀποστολικὴν διδασκαλίαν ὅτι ἐν τῷ σώματι τοῦ Χριστοῦ «οὐκ ἐν ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ» καὶ λαμβάνουσα ὑπ' ὄψιν ὅτι ἐν τῇ ἀρχαίᾳ ἐκκλησίᾳ, κατὰ τὴν ὥραν τῆς λατρείας συμμετεῖχον ἅπαντες ἐν τῇ ψαλμοδίᾳ καὶ μάλιστα, συμφώνως πρὸς τὴν παρότρυνσιν μεγάλων πατέρων τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, συμμετεῖχον εἰς τοὺς χοροὺς τῶν ψαλτῶν καὶ γυναῖκες, ἀπεφάσισε νὰ δώσῃ εἰς τὸ γυναικεῖον πλήρωμα τῆς Ἐκκλησίας τὴ δυνατότητα νὰ ψάλλῃ εἰς τὰς λατρευτικὰς συνάξεις τῇ γνώσει καὶ ἀδείᾳ τοῦ οἰκείου ἀρχιερέως. Ἐν κατακλείδι ἐπισημαίνομεν ὅτι οὐδεὶς ἱερός κανὼν τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἀπαγορεύει εἰς τὰς γυναῖκας τὴν ψαλμοδίαν. Διὰ τῆς ἀποφάσεως αὐτῆς ἡ Ἱερά Σύνοδος, ἐν τῷ πνεύματι τῆς ποιμαντικῆς τῆς εὐαισθησίας καὶ εὐθύνης, ἐλπίζει εἰς τὴν ὀλόθυμον συμμετοχὴν τοῦ πληρώματος, εἰς τὴν εὐσχήμονα καὶ εὐτακτον συμμετοχὴν εἰς τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν τοῦ Ἱεραδικοῦ Θεοῦ.