



# WEEKLY BULLETIN

BULLETIN BUILDER

## Assumption Greek Orthodox Church

**July 11, 2021: 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Matthew**

**MARTYRS: Euphemia the Great; Nektarios the New; Nikodemos of Elvasan; Kindeos of Pamfylia; Marcian; Martyrokles; Arsenios Patriarch of Alexandria; Five Monks of Lipsoi; All Neomartyrs after 1453**

**SAINTS: Olga, Equal-to-the-Apostles, Princess of Kiev; Leo of Mandra; Nicodemos Vatopedinos; Cyrill the New of Paros; Sophronios of Essex; All Hierarchs of Novgorod**

### Gospel and Epistle Readings

**Matins Gospel Reading** - *Third Orthros Gospel, Mark 16:9-20*

When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast seven demons. She went and told those who had been with him, as they mourned and wept. But when they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her, they would not believe it.

After this he appeared in another form to two of them, as they were walking into the country. And they went back and told the rest, but they did not believe them.

Afterward he appeared to the eleven themselves as they sat at table; and he upbraided them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen. And he said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up serpents, and if they drink something deadly, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover."

So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that attended it. AMEN

**Epistle Reading** - *St. Paul's Letter to the Corinthians 6:1-10*

BRETHREN, working together with him, we entreat you not to accept the grace of God in vain. For he says, "At the acceptable time I have listened to you and helped you on the day of salvation." Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. We put no obstacle in any one's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, tumults, labors, watching, hunger; by purity, knowledge, forbearance, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything. AMEN

**Gospel Reading** – *3rd Sunday of Matthew, Matthew 6:22-33*

The Lord said, "The eye is the lamp of the body. So, **if your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light**; but if your eye is wicked, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. **You cannot serve both God and mammon.** Therefore, I tell you, **do not be anxious about your life**, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his height or some time on his lifespan? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor weave; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O men of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles

seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows you need them all. But **seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.**" AMEN

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Matthew – Have Faith and Worry Not

Today's reading deals with something almost all of us are suffering from nowadays: **ANXIETY**. Also, deals with something available to all of us, which only a few of us are relying upon: **DIVINE PROVIDENCE**. Our Lord's words come from the **Sermon on the Mountain**. There, He spoke repeatedly about the **Kingdom of God**. When He finished, the crowds were astonished. "**He taught them like nobody before did. Like someone who had authority, and not as their scribes**" (Matt 7:29).

The Lord gives us 3 messages in His sermon: 1) **God is Light**. If we want to be in the light, we must return to God. 2) **God requires dedication**. We cannot serve Him and worship material things at the same time. 3) God **requires faith**. We should not worry about our material lives. Instead, we should **rely in His Divine Providence**.



To get these messages across He uses a number of metaphors. 1) He calls the eye "**the lamp of the body**." Just as the lamp gives light to a room, the eye illuminates the body. But since God is light, a righteous eye is a sign of the presence of God within you. On the other hand, a wicked and greedy eye fills your whole body with darkness. And since evil loves darkness, a wicked eye is a sign of the presence of evil within you. 2) He says, those who worship at the same time both material things and God, are like those **working for two masters**. But you cannot serve two masters. You must choose to love the one above the other. Does this mean if you choose to love God more than money, you should abandon all material things and live in the desert? No! It means you will

**make God more important than money** and you will prove this with your life, in your acts of worship and charity towards God and your fellow men. 3) He uses **the birds of the sky** and **lilies of the field** to tell us not to worry about our food, clothes and material things in general. "**Can you add some inches to your height or some years to your lifespan by being anxious?**" He asks. The opposite is true, you reduce it! "**Was King Salomon, with all his riches, better dressed than a simple lily in the field?**" He was not!

Anxiety about the future and the daily cares only **burden a man's soul** and lead him or her to many **diseases of the body and the psyche (the soul)**. Anxiety is equal to **denying God**. Anxiety is equal to **lack of faith**. St. Paisios of the Holy Mountain used to say: "*Anxiety is like lifting your car wheels off the ground, getting behind the wheel, revving the engine as hard as you can, and wondering why you are not going anywhere!* **Prayer is where the rubber hits the road**. If you have anxiety, it means you do not pray to God enough." Anxiety also comes from the fact we **rely on our own efforts** to overcome difficulties and **forget to put our problems in the hands of God**. Does relying to God means we lay down and abandon every effort? No! It means we **pray to God to bless our efforts** and give us the strength and wisdom to pull through. The birds of the sky do not sow, harvest or store grain in barns. Still, they do not worry where their food will be coming from. Only they fly from their nests early in the morning, labor for their food, and **trust HIM WHO SUSTAINS THE UNIVERSE to provide for them**. And God provides food to the birds, but He does not put it in their nests!

Is our life only about food and clothing? It is not, says the Lord. So, if we stop focusing on these things, what do we need to focus on? "**Ask for the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness and everything else will be provided to you,**" He says. The Sunday Prayer does not start with "**Give us today our daily bread!**" It starts by first hallowing the Name of our Heavenly Father, then by asking for His Kingdom to come on earth and then by asking His righteousness be applied in our world as it is in His Kingdom. Why is that? Because in the Kingdom of God there is **no hunger, pain, disease or death**. There is **no need to survive**, to **count time and money**, to **have accounts and investments, there is no need to even have a family!** Because there your life is guaranteed by your proximity to your Creator who **is the source of life**. Because your Creator is eternal and owns the entire universe, together with you, your "important" accounts, and your "wise" investments! He guarantees your life! God gives life abundantly and eternally to all who seek Him in truth!

Our eyes need to be **righteous and simple!** They need to **seek a single place: God's Kingdom and His righteousness!** Like Ulysses who had his eye on Ithaca and would not let the tempting fruits of a tiny paradise island, or the song of the Sirens, make him stay long anywhere along the way; we should also know our true home is somewhere else. Like him, we should also be ready to weigh anchor, set the sails and heave to the open ocean. We should constantly read the wind, the sun, and the stars above. We should not be afraid to toil with the waves and we should constantly correct our course. And like Ulysses, our eye should be steadily seeking our own Ithaca in the horizon: The Kingdom of God. Then, everything else will be provided to us. AMEN

### Wisdom of the Fathers

The truth is that people are afraid of being poor because they have no faith in Him who promised to provide all things to those who seek the Kingdom of God. It is this fear that spurs them, even when they have everything they need, and prevents them from freeing themselves from this sick desire for more. So, they go on amassing wealth, loading themselves with worthless burden, enclosing themselves while still living in a most absurd kind of grave.

*St. Gregory Palamas, Philokalia vol. 4, page 305, 14th century*