



ΑΡΧΙΜΑΝΔΡΙΤΗΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΟΥ
Ο ΠΡΩΗΝ ΗΓΟΥΜΕΝΟΣ ΤΗΣ ΜΟΝΗΣ ΙΒΗΡΩΝ, ΑΓΙΟΥ ΟΡΟΥΣ

ARCHIMANDRITE VASILEIOS
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Η ΘΕΙΑ ΛΕΙΤΟΥΡΓΙΑ
ΩΣ ΤΡΙΑΔΙΚΗ
ΘΕΟΦΑΝΕΙΑ

THE DIVINE LITURGY AS A
THEOPHANY OF THE
HOLY TRINITY



ΤΟ ΟΙΚΟΥΜΕΝΙΚΟΝ ΜΗΝΥΜΑ
ΤΗΣ ΘΕΟΛΟΓΙΑΣ ΤΩΝ
ΤΡΙΩΝ ΙΕΡΑΡΧΩΝ

THE THEOLOGY OF THE THREE
HIERARCHS AND ITS
OECUMENICAL MESSAGE

2015 μ.Χ.
2015 A.D.

Ἡ Θεία Λειτουργία ὡς Τριαδικὴ Θεοφάνεια

Τὸ οἰκουμενικὸν μῆνυμα τῆς
θεολογίας τῶν Τριῶν Ἱεραρχῶν

*Ἡ ομιλία αὐτὴ ἐκφωνήθηκε ἀπο τοῦ
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στόν Ἑλληνικὸ Καθεδρικό Ναό τῆς Ἁγίας Τριάδος
στήν Νέα Ὑόρκη, τῶν
Ἡνωμένων Πολιτειῶν
τῆς Ἀμερικής*

The Divine Liturgy as a Theophany of the Holy Trinity

The theology of the Three Hierarchs
and its oecumenical message

*An offering by Archimandrite Vasileios
given on January 30, 2015
at the Holy Trinity Greek
Orthodox Cathedral in
New York City,
USA*

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ΤΟ ΟΙΚΟΥΜΕΝΙΚΟΝ ΜΗΝΥΜΑ ΤΗΣ ΘΕΟΛΟΓΙΑΣ
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ΜΕΤΑΦΡΑΣΗ ΑΠΟ ΤΑ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΑ : DR ELIZABETH THEOKRITOFF

2015 μ.Χ.

ARCHIMANDRITE VASILEIOS
FORMER ABBOT OF IVERON MONASTERY, MOUNT ATHOS

THE DIVINE LITURGY AS A
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THE THEOLOGY OF THE THREE HIERARCHS
AND ITS OECUMENICAL MESSAGE

TRANSLATED BY DR ELIZABETH THEOKRITOFF

2015 A.D.



ΤΡΟΠΑΡΙΟ ΤΡΙΩΝ ΙΕΡΑΡΧΩΝ ΣΤΟ ΠΡΩΤΟ ΗΧΟ

Τούς τρεις μεγίστους φωστήρας τῆς
Τρισηλίου θεότητος, τούς τὴν οἰκουμένην
ακτίσι δογματῶν θείων πυρσεύσαντας, τούς
μελιρρῦτους ποταμούς τῆς σοφίας, τούς
τὴν κτίσιν πάσαν θεογνωσίας νάμασι
καταρδεύσαντας, Βασίλειον τὸν μέγαν, καὶ
τὸν Θεολόγον Γρηγόριον, σὺν τῷ κλειῷ
Ἰωάννῃ, τῷ τὴν γλῶτταν χρυσορρήμονι,
πάντες οἱ τῶν λόγων αὐτῶν ερασταί,
συνελθόντες ὕμνοις τιμήσωμεν, αὐτοὶ γάρ
τῇ Τριάδι, ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν αἰεὶ πρεσβεύουσι.

ΚΟΝΤΑΚΙΟ ΤΩΝ ΤΡΙΩΝ ΙΕΡΑΡΧΩΝ ΣΤΟ ΔΕΥΤΕΡΟ ΗΧΟ

Τούς Ἱερούς καὶ θεοφθόγγους Κήρυκας, τὴν
κορυφὴν τῶν Διδασκάλων Κύριε,
προσελάβου εἰς ἀπόλαυσιν τῶν ἀγαθῶν σου
καὶ ἀνάπαυσιν, τούς πόνους γάρ ἐκείνων καὶ
τὸν κάματον, εδέξω ὑπὲρ πάσαν
ολοκάρπωσιν, ὁ μόνος δοξάζων τούς Ἁγίους
σου.

TROPARION OF THE THREE HIERARCHS IN THE FIRST TONE

Let us who love their words gather together
And honor with hymns the three great torch-
bearers of the triune Godhead:
Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and
John Chrysostom.
These men have enlightened the world with
the rays of their divine doctrines.
They are sweetly-flowing rivers of wisdom
filling all creation with springs of heavenly
knowledge.
Ceaselessly they intercede for us before the
Holy Trinity!

ΚΟΝΤΑΚΙΟΝ ΤΩΝ ΤΡΙΩΝ HIERARCHS IN THE SECOND TONE

O Lord, You have taken up to eternal rest
And to the enjoyment of Your blessings the
divinely-inspired heralds,
The greatest of Your teachers,
For You have accepted their labors and deaths
as a sweet-smelling sacrifice,
For You alone are glorified in Your saints!



Άγιος Βασίλειος ο Μέγας
St Basil the Great

Άγιος Ιωάννης ο Χρυσόστομος
St John Chrysostom

Άγιος Γρηγόριος ο Θεολόγος
St Gregory the Theologian

ΟΙ ΤΡΕΙΣ ΙΕΡΑΡΧΕΣ

Ἡ **Θεία Λειτουργία τοῦ Μεγάλου Βασιλείου** καὶ ἡ **Θεία Λειτουργία τοῦ ἁγίου Ἰωάννου τοῦ Χρυσοστόμου**, μαζὶ μὲ τὶς **θεολογικὲς ὁμιλίες τοῦ ἁγίου Γρηγορίου τοῦ Θεολόγου**, μᾶς εἰσάγουν στὸ μυστήριό τῆς **Τριαδικῆς Θεότητος** καὶ μᾶς φωτίζουν τὸ νόημα τῆς ζωῆς.

THE THREE HIERARCHS

The **Liturgy of St Basil the Great** and the **Liturgy of St John Chrysostom**, together with the **homilies on theology of St Gregory the Theologian**, induct us into the mystery of the Godhead in Trinity and throw light on the meaning of life.

Ἡ Θεία Λειτουργία ὡς Τριαδικὴ Θεοφάνεια



ΟΙ ΠΑΤΕΡΕΣ ΠΟΥ ΑΝΑΚΕΦΑΛΑΙΩΝΟΥΝ ΤΗΝ ΛΕΙΤΟΥΡΓΙΚΗ
θεολογία τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ὡς μυσταγωγία εἶναι οἱ τρεῖς Ἱεράρχες.

Ἡ Θεία Λειτουργία τοῦ Μεγάλου Βασιλείου καὶ ἡ Θεία Λειτουργία τοῦ ἁγίου Ἰωάννου τοῦ Χρυσοστόμου, μαζί με τις θεολογικές ὁμιλίες τοῦ ἁγίου Γρηγορίου τοῦ Θεολόγου, μᾶς εἰσάγουν στὸ μυστήριο τῆς Τριαδικῆς Θεότητος καὶ μᾶς φωτίζουν τὸ νόημα τῆς ζωῆς.

Ἡ Θεία Λειτουργία ὡς συλλειτουργοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῦ ἱερέως μετὰ τοῦ πιστοῦ λαοῦ, ἀποτελεῖ τὴν καρδιά τῆς Ἐκκλησίας. Καὶ διαμορφώνει μετὰ τὴν εὐλογία τοῦ Τριαδικοῦ Θεοῦ τὸν συνοδικὸ τρόπο τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς ὑπάρξεως. Στὴν πέμπτη εὐχή τοῦ Εὐχελαίου ὁ ἱερεὺς εὐχαριστεῖ τὸν Θεὸ γιὰ τὸν ἀξίωσε νὰ περάσῃ στὸ ἐνδότερο τοῦ καταπετάσματος καὶ νὰ ἀπολαύσῃ τὴ Θεία Λειτουργία.

Εἶναι ἀπόλαυσι ἡ Θεία Λειτουργία ἐπειδὴ σὲ πείθει ὅτι εἶναι ἀπόλαυσι ἡ ζωή. Καὶ εἶναι ἡ ζωή ἀπόλαυσι ἐπειδὴ εἶναι πόνος πολὺς καὶ σταυρὸς ἀνυπόφορος, ἀλλὰ καταλήγει μέσα στὴν Ἐκκλησία σὲ χαρὰ ἀνεκλάλητη. «Ἴδου γὰρ ἦλθε διὰ τοῦ Σταυροῦ χαρὰ ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ κόσμῳ».

Καὶ ἡ ἀνεκλάλητη χαρὰ ποὺ ἔρχεται σὲ ὅλο τὸν κόσμον εἶναι ἡ κατάργησι τοῦ θανάτου «Κατέλυσας τῷ Σταυρῷ σου τὸν θάνατον». Ἐδῶ μαθαίνεις τὴν ἀλήθεια ὅτι τίποτε δὲν εἶναι καλὸ ἂν δὲν εἶναι εὐλογία γιὰ ὅλο τὸν κόσμον. Καὶ τίποτε δὲν εἶναι εὐλογία γιὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἂν δὲν καταργῆ τὸν θάνατον.

THE DIVINE LITURGY AS A THEOPHANY OF THE HOLY TRINITY



THE FATHERS WHO SUM UP THE LITURGICAL THEOLOGY of the Church as a mystagogy are the Three Hierarchs.

The Liturgy of St Basil the Great and the Liturgy of St John Chrysostom, together with the homilies on theology of St Gregory the Theologian, induct us into the mystery of the Godhead in Trinity and throw light on the meaning of life.

The Divine Liturgy, as a concelebration of heaven and earth and also of priest and people, is the heart of the Church. With the blessing of God in Trinity, it shapes the Church's conciliar mode of existence.

In the fifth prayer at the Rite of Anointing, the priest gives thanks to God for accounting him worthy to pass within the veil and enjoy the Divine Liturgy.

The Divine Liturgy is 'enjoyment' because it convinces you that life is enjoyment. And life is enjoyment because it is a lot of pain and a cross too heavy to bear, but it ends in the Church in expressible joy: *'For behold, through the Cross has joy come to all the world'*.

And the inexpressible joy which comes to all the world is the abolition of death: *'By Your Cross, You have destroyed death'*.

Here you learn the truth that nothing is good if it is not a blessing for all the world. And nothing is a blessing for the human race if it does not do away with death.

Ἡ μοναδική χαρά γιὰ ὅλο τὸν κόσμο εἶναι ἡ Ἀνάστασι τοῦ Χριστοῦ ποὺ χαρίζει τὴν κατάργησι τοῦ θανάτου. Γεμίζει τὰ πάντα μὲ φῶς καὶ ζωή.

Αὐτὴ εἶναι ἡ μεγάλη προσφορὰ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας. Αὐτὸ δὲν εἶναι κατόρθωμα ἀνθρώπινο, ἀλλὰ θεϊκὸ δῶρο ποὺ διαλύει κάθε κατῆφεια καὶ ψευτιά. Καὶ ἀνοίγει τὸ δρόμο γιὰ τὴν θέωσι.

Ἡ Θεία Λειτουργία, ἡ ζωὴ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, στηρίζεται πάνω σ' αὐτὸ τὸ γεγονός τῆς Ἀναστάσεως καὶ τῆς καταλύσεως τοῦ θανάτου, ποὺ ἐξήσαν οἱ Ἀπόστολοι. «Εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς οὐκ ἐγήγερται, κενὸν ἄρα τὸ κήρυγμα ἡμῶν, κενὴ δὲ καὶ ἡ πίστις ἡμῶν» (Α' Κορ. 15, 14).

Αὐτὸ παρουσιάζεται ξεκάθαρα καὶ σὲ ἓνα θαυμαστὸ γεγονός. Ὅταν μετὰ τὴν Ἀνάστασι τοῦ Κυρίου ὁ Λουκάς καὶ ὁ Κλεόπας εἶναι πνιγμένοι στοὺς λογισμοὺς καὶ παίρνουν τὸν δρόμο πρὸς Ἐμμαοὺς συζητῶντας τὰ θέματα ποὺ τοὺς ἀπασχολοῦν· μιὰ στιγμή παρουσιάζεται κάποιος Ἄγνωστος. Μπαίνει στὴ συζήτησι καὶ τοὺς ἐρωτᾷ γιὰ ποῖο λόγο εἶναι τόσο σκυθρωποί. . .

Ὅταν στὸ τέλος τῆς πορείας στὴν κλάσι τοῦ ἄρτου καὶ στὸ σπάσιμο τῆς δικῆς των ἀντοχῆς ἀνοίξαν τὰ μάτια τους, εἶδαν ὅτι αὐτὸς ἦταν ὁ Ἀναστημένος Χριστὸς καὶ ἀμέσως ἔγινε ἄφαντος.

Τότε κατάλαβαν διὰ μιᾶς τὰ πάντα. Φωτίστηκαν τὰ προηγούμενα. Καὶ πῆραν δύναμι γιὰ τὰ μελλοντικά, γιὰ τὴ συνέχισι τῆς πορείας ποὺ εἶναι νὰ ἀναγγεῖλουν τὸ γεγονός ὅτι ἀνέστη ὁ Κύριος. Τὸν εἶδαν. Ἐγινε ἄφαντος. Καὶ τοὺς πῆρε μαζί Του, καὶ μένει μαζί τους.

Ἔτσι «ἐξηγοῦντο τὰ ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ καὶ πῶς ἐγνώσθη αὐτοῖς ἐν τῇ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου» (Λουκ. 24, 35). Ὅλη ἡ ζωὴ εἶναι μιὰ πορεία ποὺ ὀδηγεῖ στὴν τελικὴ ἐκπληξι τῆς αἰδιότητος.

Ἀπὸ τὸ τέλος, τὴν κατάληξι, τὴν Ἀνάστασι, φωτίζονται τὰ πάντα. Χωρὶς τὴν Ἀνάστασι εἶναι ὅλα σκοτεινὰ καὶ χωρὶς νόημα.

The sole joy for all the world is the Resurrection of Christ, which bestows the destruction of death. It fills all things with light and life.

This is the Church's great contribution. It is not a human achievement, but a divine gift which dispels all despondency and illusion. And it opens the way to deification.

The Divine Liturgy, the life of the Church, is based on this event of the Resurrection and the destruction of death, which the apostles lived through. *'If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain and our faith is vain'* (1 Corinthians 15:14).

This is again presented very clearly in a remarkable event. After the Resurrection of the Lord, Luke and Cleopas are journeying to Emmaus, overwhelmed with troubling thoughts and talking about their preoccupations: and all of a sudden a Stranger appears. He gets into conversation with them and asks why they are so downcast

At the end of their journey, in the breaking of bread and with their own powers of endurance at breaking point, their eyes were opened and they saw that he was the risen Christ, and immediately He vanished from sight.

Then in an instant they understood everything. What had happened previously became clear. And they took courage for what was to come, for the continuation of their journey, which was to proclaim the fact that the Lord was risen. They saw Him. He vanished. And He took them with Him, and remains with them.

So *'they told what had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of the bread'* (Luke 24:35). The whole of life is a journey leading to the final amazement of eternity.

It is the end, the conclusion, the Resurrection that throws light on everything. Without the Resurrection, everything is obscure and meaningless.

Δέν υπάρχει ζωντανός οργανισμός χωρίς κεφάλι· τραγωδία χωρίς κάθαρσι· Μεγάλη Έβδομάδα χωρίς Πάσχα· και άνθρωπος χωρίς κατάργησι του θανάτου.

Χωρίς την Άνάστασι και την έλευθερία από το θάνατο είναι μισερός ο άνθρωπος. Δέν ζή, αλλά φυτοζωή. Μαραίνεται και σβήνει, μέσα στο χρόνο, χωρίς να βλαστήση από τον κορμό της ζωής του το άνθος της αιωνίου χαράς που είναι ο σκοπός της δημιουργίας του κόσμου και του ανθρώπου.

Ο Δημιουργός και πλάστης του παντός δέν ενεφύσησε πνοήν ζωής στο πρόσωπο του ανθρώπου (Γεν. 2, 7) για να τον βασανίση αλλά για να τον σώση και να τον θεώση.

Από το έσχατο, την αιωνιότητα, φωτίζεται όλη ή ζωή και ή ιστορία.

Είναι ωραία ή ζωή, τα νειάτα και τα γεράματα, επειδή είναι ωραία ή αιωνιότης.

Και είναι ωραία (γεμάτα ζωή και περιεχόμενο) τα βάσανα γιατί δι' αυτών κερδίζομε την αιώνια παράκλησι του Πνεύματος. Χωρίς την αιωνιότητα, για τον άνθρωπο όλα χάνουν την αξία τους.

Ο άνθρωπος της Αναστάσεως είναι ο άνθρωπος που έχει μέσα του τη χαρά που νικά το θάνατο.

Η ζωή φωτίζεται στο τέλος, όταν ανασταίνεται ο Χριστός και τα πάντα γεμίζουν με φώς.

Και στους δύο μαθητές όλα φωτίστηκαν στο τέλος της πορείας όταν άνοιξαν τα μάτια τους, γνώρισαν τον αναστημένο Χριστό. Άλλαξαν έσωτερικά. Και πήραν δύναμι για τη συνέχεια της ζωής.

Η ζωή αρχίζει από τότε που βλαστάνει μόνη της και έπεκτείνεται αυτόδύναμα· από τότε που αρχίζει ή αυτόματη καρποφορία (Μαρκ. 4, 28) μετά το θάνατο του σπόρου στη γή.

Έπιτυχία είναι όχι το λίγο που μπορώ να πετύχω με τις δυνάμεις

There is no living organism without a head. No tragedy without catharsis. No Holy Week without Easter. And no human being without the abolition of death.

Without the Resurrection and freedom from death, man is a defective creature. He does not live, he vegetates. He withers and is obliterated within time, and his life never blossoms into the flower of eternal joy, which is the goal of the creation of the world and of man.

The Creator and maker of all did not breathe the breath of life into the human person (Genesis 2:7) to torment him, but to save him and deify him.

From the eschaton, from eternity, light is shed on the whole of life and history.

Life is good – youth and old age – because eternity is good.

And our troubles are good (full of life and meaning) because it is through them that we gain the eternal comfort of the Spirit. Without eternity, everything loses its value for us.

A person of the Resurrection is one who has within him or her the joy that conquers death.

Life is elucidated at the end, when Christ is risen and all things are filled with light.

For the two disciples, as well, everything was elucidated at the end of their journey: when their eyes were opened and they recognised the risen Christ. They were inwardly changed. And they took courage for the continuation of their lives.

Life starts from the point where it springs up by itself and spreads on its own. From the point where it starts to '*bring forth of itself*' (Mark 4:28) after the seed has died in the earth.

'Success' is not the little that I can achieve by my own capacities,

μου, αλλά τὸ αἰώνιο ποῦ μοῦ χαρίζεται ὡς ἀνάληψι εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν («ἔως ἡμᾶς εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀνήγαγε»).

Ἐπιτυχία εἶναι ὄχι νὰ πιῆς ἕνα ποτήρι νερὸ καὶ νὰ μείνης διψασμένος, ἀλλὰ νὰ δεχθῆς τὸ νερὸ ποῦ θὰ σὲ κάνη «πηγὴ ὕδατος ἀλλομένου εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον» (Ιω. 4,14).

Ὅλα τὰ μεγάλα καὶ θαυμαστὰ γίνονται τελικὰ μόνον τους «ἀκόπως», μετὰ ἀπὸ τὸν πολὺ κόπο καὶ τὴν ὑπομονὴ τῆς ζωῆς. Εἶναι μιὰ ἔκπληξι ὡς δωρεὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ. Μετὰ τὴν ἐμπειρία τῆς Ἀναστάσεως, τῆς Ἀναλήψεως καὶ τῆς Πεντηκοστῆς, ἀρχίζει ἡ ζωὴ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας. Ὅλα εἶναι εἰρηνικὰ καὶ λειτουργοῦν μὲ τὴ χάρι τοῦ Πνεύματος. Ὁ Πατὴρ διὰ τοῦ Υἱοῦ ἐν Ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι ποιεῖ τὰ πάντα.

Γι' αὐτὸ καὶ ἡ Θεία Λειτουργία ἀρχίζει μὲ τὴ θριαμβευτικὴ δοξολογία τῆς τριαδικῆς Θεότητος.

«Εὐλογημένη ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος, νῦν καὶ ἀεὶ καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. Ἀμήν». Ὅλα ἱεουργοῦνται μέσα στὸ πνεῦμα τῆς εἰρήνης.

«Ἐν εἰρήνῃ τοῦ Κυρίου δεηθῶμεν».

Συνεχίζομε «ἔτι καὶ ἔτι ἐν εἰρήνῃ» τὴν προσευχή.

Καὶ καταλήγομε ὅλη τὴν ἀκολουθία μέσα στὴν ἴδια εἰρήνη. «Ἐν εἰρήνῃ προέλθωμεν». Καὶ γιὰ νὰ ἔλθῃ μέσα μας ἡ εἰρήνη τοῦ Πνεύματος, ὅπως συνέβη μὲ τοὺς Ἀποστόλους ποῦ πέρασαν τὴν ἀγωνία τους καὶ ἔφτασαν στὴ βεβαιότητα τῆς Ἀναστάσεως, ἡ Θεία Λειτουργία μᾶς λέει τὴν ἀλήθεια. Εἶναι δύσκολα τὰ πράγματα καὶ χρειάζεται ἀγῶνας πολὺς, ἀλλὰ εἶναι μεγάλη ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ. Αὐτὸ τὸ ζῆ ὁ ἱερεὺς κατ' ἀρχὴν καὶ ὅλοι οἱ πιστοὶ στὴ συνέχεια.

Ὁ ἱερεὺς, τὴν ὥρα ποῦ ψάλλεται ὁ χερουβικὸς ὕμνος, διαβάζει μυστικῶς τὴν εὐχή:

«Οὐδεὶς ἄξιος τῶν συνδεδεμένων ταῖς σαρκικαῖς ἐπιθυμίαις καὶ

but the eternal which is given me as an ascension, a taking-up into heaven ('... until He had brought us up to heaven ...').

'Success' is not drinking a glass of water and still being thirsty, but receiving the water that will make you '*a spring a water welling up into eternal life*' (John 4:14).

Everything that is great and wonderful ultimately happens '*without effort*', following the ample effort and patient endurance of life. It is a surprise, a gift from God.

After the experience of the Resurrection, the Ascension and Pentecost, the life of the Church begins. Everything is peaceful and operates by the grace of the Spirit. The Father does everything, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit.

That is why the Divine Liturgy begins with the triumphant doxology of the Godhead in Trinity: '*Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and to the ages of ages. Amen*'.

The entire sacred action is celebrated in the spirit of peace.

'In peace let us pray to the Lord'.

We continue our prayer '*again and again in peace*'.

And we conclude the whole service in the same peace: 'Let us depart in peace'.

In order that the peace of the Spirit may enter into us, as happened with the Apostles when they got over their anxiety and came to the certainty of the Resurrection, the Divine Liturgy tells us the truth. Things are difficult and a major struggle is required, but God's love is great. This is the experience of the priest first of all, and subsequently of all the faithful people.

While the Cherubic Hymn being sung, the priest reads this prayer

ήδοναῖς, προσέρχεσθαι ἢ προσεγγίζειν ἢ λειτουργεῖν σοι, Βασιλεῦ τῆς δόξης. Τὸ γὰρ διακοπεῖν σοι μέγα καὶ φοβερόν, καὶ αὐταῖς ταῖς ἐπουρανίαις Δυνάμεσι».

Ἐὰν - σκέφτεται ὁ ἱερεὺς - εἶναι φοβερὸ καὶ στὶς ἴδιες τὶς ἐπουράνιες δυνάμεις τῶν Ἀγγέλων, ποῦ μπορῶ ἐγὼ νὰ σταθῶ; Τί μπορῶ νὰ κάμω; Μόνο νεκρὸς καὶ ἀνύπαρκτος μπορῶ νὰ λειτουργήσω.

Τὴν ὥρα ὅμως ποῦ πάει νὰ καταρρεύσῃ ὁ ἱερεὺς, ἔχομε μία θεία ἐπέμβασι. Ἡ εὐχή συνεχίζει:

«Ἄλλ' ὅμως διὰ τὴν ἄφατον καὶ ἀμέτρητόν σου φιλανθρωπὴν ἀτρέπτως καὶ ἀναλλοιώτως γέγονας ἄνθρωπος καὶ Ἀρχιερεὺς ἡμῶν ἐχρημάτισας καὶ τῆς λειτουργικῆς ταύτης καὶ ἀναιμάκτου θυσίας τὴν ἱερουργίαν παρέδωκας ἡμῖν».

Ἐσύ, μὲ τὴν ἄφατή σου ἀγάπη, καλύπτεις τὸ ἀγεφύρωτο χάσμα μεταξὺ ἀνθρώπου καὶ Θεοῦ. Καὶ δὲν μᾶς πλησιάζεις μόνο. Ἀλλὰ γίνεσαι τέλειος ἄνθρωπος καὶ μᾶς παραδίδεις αὐτὴ τὴν ἱερουργία.

Ἔτσι μπορῶ νὰ προχωρήσω ἀποδεχόμενος καὶ ὁμολογώντας τὴν ἀδυναμία μου καὶ παραδιδόμενος σὲ Σένα ποῦ τὰ κάνεις ὅλα στὴ ζωὴ καὶ στὴ Θεία Λειτουργία ὡς προσφέρων καὶ προσφερόμενος καὶ προσδεχόμενος καὶ διαδιδόμενος. Γιὰ τοὺς πιστοὺς ἡ ἴδια δοκιμασία παρουσιάζεται ὅταν πρὶν ἀπὸ τὴ Θεία Κοινωνία ὁ ἱερεὺς ἐκφωνεῖ: «τὰ Ἅγια τοῖς ἁγίοις». Τὰ ἅγια δίδονται στοὺς ἁγίους.

Γιὰ νὰ ἐνωθοῦν δύο μέταλλα πρέπει νὰ εἶναι καὶ τὰ δύο πυρακτωμένα. Καὶ γιὰ νὰ δεχθῆς τὰ Ἅγια πρέπει νὰ εἶσαι ἅγιος. Μόνον οἱ ἅγιοι μποροῦν νὰ δεχθοῦν ἀκατακρίτως τὰ ἅγια.

Τότε ὁ λαὸς διὰ τῶν ψαλτῶν ἀπαντᾷ: «Εἷς ἅγιος, εἷς Κύριος, Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, εἷς δόξαν Θεοῦ Πατρός, Ἀμήν».

Μὴν ζητᾷς, ὦ ἱερέα, ἀπὸ μᾶς καμμία ἀγιότητα ἀντάξια τῶν θείων μυστηρίων. Ὅλα τὰ δεχόμεθα ὡς εὐλογία ἀπὸ τὸν Δημιουργὸ καὶ

inaudibly:

None of those who are entangled in carnal desires and pleasures is worthy to approach or draw near or minister to You, King of glory; for to serve You is great and awesome even for the heavenly Powers.

So, the priest thinks: *if this is fearful even for the angelic powers of heaven, where does that leave me? What can I do? The only way I can celebrate the Liturgy is if I am dead and non-existent.*

But just as the priest is about to have a complete breakdown, we have a divine intervention. The prayer goes on:

Yet on account of Your inexpressible and boundless love for mankind You became man without change or alteration and were named our High Priest, and have committed to us the sacred mystery of this liturgical sacrifice without shedding of blood.

You, with Your ineffable love, have spanned the unbridgeable gulf between man and God. And You don't just approach us: You become perfect man and give us this Liturgy.

So I am able to go on, accepting and confessing my weakness and giving myself over to You, who do everything in life and in the Divine Liturgy, since You are the One who offers and are offered and received and distributed.

For the congregation, the same trial presents itself when, just before Holy Communion, the priest exclaims: *'The Holy Things for those who are holy'*. The Holy Things are to be given to saints.

In order for two metals to be joined into one, both have to be red hot. And in order to receive the Holy Things, you have to be a holy person. Only saints can receive the Holy Things without condemnation.

Then the people respond, through the chanters: *'One is holy, one is Lord, Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father. Amen'*.

Σωτήρα μας, πού είναι ό μόνος Άγιος, ό μόνος Κύριος, ό Ίησους Χριστός.

Αυτό τόν συγκλονισμό μās προσφέρει ή Θεία Λειτουργία: τήν αίσθησι τής ανθρωπίνης αδυναμίας. Καί τή φανέρωσι τής αφάτου και άμετρήτου αγάπης του Θεού πού τά κάνει όλα. Εύρισκόμενοι μέσα σ' αυτή τήν πλησμονή τής χαράς και τών ευεργεσιών Του, θέλομε να ευχαριστήσωμε τόν πανάγαθο Θεό. Αυτή είναι ή φυσική και αυθόρμητη κίνησι. Άλλά τότε βλέπομε ότι δέν έχομε τίποτε δικό μας να Του προσφέρωμε ως ευχαριστία. Καί παίρνομε όλα τά δικά Του και τά προσφέρομε σ' Αυτόν πού μās τά έδωσε και κάνει τά πάντα για να μās σώση. Καί αυτό γίνεται άφου ένθυμηθοῦμε, δια μās, όλα εκείνα πού έγιναν και πρόκειται να γίνουν: «Του Σταυρου, του Τάφου, τής τριμέρου Αναστάσεως, τής εις ουρανους Αναβάσεως, τής εκ δεξιων Καθέδρας, τής δευτέρας και ενδόξου πάλιν Παρουσίας». Καί συνεχίζει ή Θεία Λειτουργία:

«Τά σα έκ τών σών σοι προσφέρωμεν κατά πάντα και δια πάντα».

Έκείνη τήν ώρα, τής ολοκληρωτικής προσφοράς, ένώνονται όλες οι προσευχές. Υμνοῦμεν, ευλογοῦμεν, ευχαριστοῦμεν και δεόμεθα.

Όλα λέγονται με τόν λόγο και πραγματοποιούνται με τó έργο. Λειτουργοῦμε και λειτουργούμεθα. Προσφέρομε τά τίμια δώρα και προσφερόμεθα. Παρακαλοῦμε τόν ουράνιον Πατέρα να καταπέμψη τó Άγιον Πνεῦμα εφ' ήμās, κατ' αρχήν, και επί τά προκειμένα δώρα. Καί να ποιήση:

Τόν άρτον, τίμιον σῶμα του Χριστου.

Και τόν οϊνον, τίμιον αίμα του Χριστου.

«Μεταβαλών τῷ Πνεύματί σου τῷ Αγίῳ».

Και έμās να καταστήση άξιους να δεχθοῦμε τά άγια μυστήρια, «εις νήψιν ψυχής, εις άφεσιν άμαρτιών, εις κοινωνίαν του Αγίου Πνεύ-

They tell the priest: *Don't ask of us any holiness worthy of the divine mysteries. We receive everything as a blessing from our Creator and Saviour, who alone is the Holy One, who alone is the Lord, Jesus Christ.*

This is the shock the Divine Liturgy gives us: the sense of human frailty. And the manifestation of the ineffable and measureless love of God which does everything.

When we find ourselves amidst this abundance of joy and of His benefactions, we want to thank God who is all-God. This is a natural and spontaneous gesture. But then we see that we do not have anything of our own to give Him as a thank-offering. So we take everything of His and offer it to Him who has given it to us and who does everything in order to save us. And this happens because all of a sudden we recall everything that has happened and is going to happen: *'The Cross, the Tomb, the Resurrection on the third day, the Ascension into heaven, the sitting at the right hand and the second and glorious Coming'*. And the Divine Liturgy goes on:

'Your own of Your own we offer You, in all and for all'.

At that moment of total offering, all prayers are united into one. We hymn, we bless, we give thanks and we pray.

Everything is said in words and actualised in actions. We celebrate the Liturgy and are part of the Liturgy. We offer the precious Gifts and are ourselves offered. We beseech our heavenly Father to send down the Holy Spirit upon us, first of all, and upon the Gifts set forth. And to make:

The bread to be the precious Body of Christ.

And the wine, the precious Blood of Christ.

'Making the change by the power of Your Holy Spirit'.

And to render us worthy to receive the holy Mysteries *'for sobri-*

ματος, εἰς βασιλείας οὐρανῶν πλήρωμα.»

Ἐπιτομή ἢ χάρις τῆς Ἁγίας Τριάδος εἶναι παρούσα. Ἡ Ἐκκλησία παρακαλεῖ, δέεται καὶ ἱκετεύει. Καὶ δέχεται τὴν θεία ἐπίσκεψιν μέσα στὴν παρατεταμένη Πεντηκοστή τῆς λειτουργικῆς ζωῆς.

Ζῶντας καὶ δουλεύοντας ὁ ἄνθρωπος μέσα σ' αὐτὸ τὸ λειτουργικὸ κλίμα τῆς Ἐκκλησίας νοιώθει ὅτι δὲν ἔχει σημασία πόσο πολλὰ ἢ λίγα ἔπραξε ἢ δημιούργησε, ἀλλὰ πόσο πραγματικὰ ἀλλοιώθηκε ὁ ἑαυτὸς τοῦ «τῷ Πνεύματι τῷ Ἁγίῳ». Αὐτὴ εἶναι ἡ κεντρικὴ φράσι πού ὀρίζει τὴν δύναμι στὴν ὁποία ἀνήκει τὸ πρωτεῖο καὶ ρυθμίζει τὰ πάντα μέσα στὴν Ἐκκλησία: «Ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι περικρατεῖται πάντα τὰ ὁρατὰ τε σὺν τοῖς ἀοράτοις» (α' ἀντίφωνον Ἀναβαθμῶν ἤχου πλ. α').

Καὶ βλέπεις τί γίνεται μὲ ἓνα ταπεινὸ καὶ ἅγιο ἄνθρωπο, πλήρη Πνεύματος Ἁγίου: Ὅταν αισθανθῆς τὴν παρουσία του, ἀκούσης τὸν λόγο του, διαβάσης κείμενό του ἢ προσκυνήσης τὴν εἰκόνα του, κάτι συμβαίνει μέσα σου. Ἰεουργεῖται μία θεία ἀλλοίωσις εἰς Πνεύματος Ἁγίου κοινωνίαν, εἰς Βασιλείας οὐρανῶν κληρονομίαν. Ὅλα εἶναι μία ἀέναος θεία κοινωνία.

Ὅταν ἐπέλθῃ ὁ λειτουργικὸς ἁγιασμός, τότε ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἰρηνεύει: γίνεται μία αἴσθησις πού δέχεται μηνύματα καὶ προχέει παράκλησι. Ὅλα τοῦ κάνουν καλὸ· πρὸ παντὸς τὰ ἐπώδυνα. Σὲ ὅλους δίδει μηνύματα ζωῆς· πρὸ παντὸς στοὺς πονεμένους καὶ διαλυμένους.

Συνέχεια ὠριμάζει. Ἀποκτᾷ ἄλλη βαρύτητα καὶ χάρις ὁ λόγος καὶ ἡ σιωπὴ του.

Αὐτὸ φαίνεται στὸν τρόπο πού ζοῦν καὶ συμπεριφέρονται οἱ πιστοί. Ἐδῶ ὅλα ἀγιάζονται ἀληθινὰ καὶ μεταμορφώνονται. «Φύσις καινοτομεῖται καὶ χρόνος» (Ἀπολυτίκιον ΛΑ' Αὐγούστου).

Αὐτὸ τὸ διακρίνεις σὲ ὅλο τὸν κόσμον καὶ τὴν διαγωγὴν τῆς Ἐκκλησίας: πῶς οἱ πιστοὶ διοργανώνουν τὴν ζωὴν τους γύρω ἀπὸ τὴν Θεία Λει-

ety of soul, for remission of sins, for communion of the Holy Spirit and the fullness of the Kingdom of heaven'.

All the grace of the Holy Trinity is present. The whole Church beseeches, prays and supplicates. And it receives the divine visitation in the extended Pentecost of liturgical life.

When we live and work in this atmosphere, the liturgical atmosphere of the Church, we have the sense that it does not matter how much or how little we have done or created, but how far our own self has actually been changed by the Holy Spirit. '*By the Holy Spirit*' is the core phrase defining the power takes presidency and regulates everything in the Church: '*By the Holy Spirit all things are held together, the visible with the invisible*' (1st antiphon of the *Hymn of Degrees*, Tone 5)

And you see what happens with a humble and holy person, filled with the Holy Spirit: When you sense his presence, when you hear his words, when you read something he has written or venerate his icon, something happens within you. A rite of divine change is accomplished, a change unto communion of the Holy Spirit and inheritance of the Kingdom of heaven. Everything is a continuous Holy Communion.

Once the liturgical sanctification comes upon a person, he is at peace; he becomes a single sense which receives messages and pours forth consolation. Everything does him good, especially things that are painful. He gives messages of life to everyone, above all to those who are suffering and exhausted.

He is maturing all the time. His words and his silence take on a new weight and grace.

This shows in the way Christian believers live and behave. Here everything is truly sanctified and transfigured. '*Nature is made new, and also time*' (Troparion, 31 August).

τουργία. Πώς θεολογούν. Κτίζουν τούς ναούς. Εικονογραφούν τούς Αγίους, ψάλλουν τούς ύμνους.

Όλα συλλειτουργούν ως πνευματοκίνητα και εκπέμπουν θεία αίγλη. Η θεολογία γίνεται ποίηση και μελωδία. Οί Πατέρες είναι «οί μελωδήσαντες εν μέσῳ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας μέλος ἑναρμόνιον θεολογίας». Ἡ εἰκόνα εἶναι φανέρωσι οὐρανοῦ κάλλους. Καί οἱ πιστοὶ εἰκονίζουν τὰ χερουβὶμ ψάλλοντες τὸν τρισάγιο ὕμνο.

Όλα εἶναι ἓνα συλλειτουργο με Μέγα Ἀρχιερέα τὸν Θεάνθρωπο Κύριο. Όλα συμψάλλουν τὸν τρισάγιο ὕμνο με τὴ δική τους φωνή, τὸ χρῶμα, τὸ σχῆμα, τὴν κίνησι καὶ τὸ μέλος.

Πλησιάζοντας αὐτὸ τὸν λειτουργικὸ κόσμο νοιώθεισ ὅτι κάτι ἱερό καὶ ἐνιαῖο συμβαίνει ὡς διοργάνωσι ζωῆς, δημιουργία καὶ τέχνη. Όλα εἶναι ἐλεύθερα καὶ ἐνωμένα. Όλα εἶναι καλὰ καὶ ἅγια. Δηλαδή ξεπερνούν τὴν ἀνθρώπινη καλωσύνη καὶ ὁμορφιά καὶ ντύνονται με μιὰ θεία εὐπρέπεια.

Ό Θεὸς ὡς ἀγάπη ἔφερε τὰ πάντα στὴν ὕπαρξι. Καὶ τὰ παρακολουθεῖ με τέτοια λεπτότητα σὰν νὰ εἶναι ἀνύπαρκτος, ὥστε τὰ πάντα ἐλεύθερα καὶ ἑναρμόνια νὰ χορεύουν τὴν περὶ τὸν Δημιουργόν τους χορείαν.

Καὶ ὅταν ἐμεῖς τὰ χαλάσαμε με τὴν ἐπιπολαιότητα τοῦ ἐγωῖσμοῦ μας καὶ τὴν ἁμαρτία μας, Αὐτὸς ἐπεμβαίνει ὄχι γιὰ νὰ μᾶς τιμωρήσῃ, ἀλλὰ νὰ μᾶς σώσῃ. Κάνει τὸ πᾶν («οὐκ ἀπέστησεν πάντα ποιῶν») ἕως ὅτου μᾶς ἀνυψώνει στὸν οὐρανὸ καὶ μᾶς χαρίζει τὴν μέλλουσαν βασιλείαν.

Ό πιστὸς ποὺ μπαίνει μέσα σ' αὐτὴ τὴ ζωὴ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας καὶ βαπτίζεται ὀλόκληρος εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος ἀναπτύσσεται μέσα στὴ θέρμη τῆς ἀγάπης καὶ τοῦ κάλλους. Γνωρίζει ἀληθινὰ τὸν ἑαυτό του καὶ ὄλο τὸν κόσμο.

You can see this in the entire world of the Church and its conduct: the way believers organise their lives round the Divine Liturgy. The way they do theology. The way they build their churches. The way they depict the Saints in icons and chant the hymns.

Everything concelebrates, as being moved by the Spirit, and radiates a divine glory. Theology becomes poetry and melody. The Fathers are '*those who have composed in the midst of the Church a harmonious strain of theology*'. The icon is a manifestation of heavenly beauty. And the faithful image the cherubim as they sing the thrice-holy hymn.

Everything is a concelebration, with the Lord, the God-Man, as Great High Priest. Everything joins in singing the thrice-holy hymn with its own voice, with colour, form, movement and melody.

When you approach this liturgical world, you feel that something sacred and integral is taking place in the way life is organised, in creativity and art. Everything is free and unified. Everything is good and holy. Which is to say that it goes beyond human goodness and beauty and is clothed in a beauty that is divine.

In that God is love, He has brought all things into being. And He supervises them with such delicacy that it is as if He did not exist, until all things join freely and in harmony in the dance round their Creator.

And when we spoilt things with our thoughtless pride and our sin, He intervenes, not to punish us but to save us. He does everything ('*You have left nothing undone*') until He has raised us up to heaven and granted us the Kingdom which is to come.

The believer who enters into this life of the Church and is wholly baptised in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit develops in the warmth of love and beauty. He truly knows himself and the whole world.

Φτάνει στη διπλή διάγνωση: τῆς δικῆς του ἀδυναμίας καὶ τῆς ἀφάρτου καὶ ἀμετρήτου ἀγάπης τοῦ Θεοῦ.

Αὐτὸς ὁ ἄνθρωπος ζῆ στὴ γῆ καὶ τρέφεται ἀπὸ τὸν οὐράνιον ἄρτον, τὸν μελιζόμενον καὶ μὴ διαιρούμενον, τὸν πάντοτε ἐσθιόμενον καὶ μηδέποτε δαπανώμενον. Ὁμολογεῖ: «Θεοῦ τὸ σῶμα καὶ θεοὶ με καὶ τρέφει. Θεοὶ τὸ πνεῦμα, τὸν δὲ νοῦν τρέφει ξένως».

Βλέπει διαφορετικὰ ὄλο τὸν κόσμο. Δὲν φοβᾶται: μόνο δοξολογεῖ. Δὲν κρίνει: μόνον ἀγαπᾷ. Ἔχει παραδώσει τὰ πάντα Χριστῷ τῷ Θεῷ.

Ἡ καρδιά ποῦ μᾶς τρέφει καὶ ἡ θεολογικὴ σχολὴ ποῦ μᾶς διδάσκει τὴν ἀλήθεια εἶναι ἡ Θεία Λειτουργία.

«Εὐχαριστοῦμέν σοι ὑπὲρ τῆς Λειτουργίας ταύτης, ἣν ἐκ τῶν χειρῶν ἡμῶν δέξασθαι κατηξίωσας καίτοι σοι παρεστήκασι χιλιάδες Ἀρχαγγέλων...».

Τὸ νὰ γίνης μέτοχος σ' αὐτὸ τὸ συλλειτουργο εἶναι δῶρο τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ Θεοῦ σὲ σένα καὶ διὰ σοῦ σὲ ὄλο τὸν κόσμο, γιατί ἓνα σῶμα εἴμαστε οἱ πολλοί. Ἔτσι μυστικὰ προχέεται χάρι υἰείας καὶ δύναμι πίστεως.

Μὲ τὴν ἐκκληζὶ τῆς θείας δωρεᾶς ποῦ δέχθηκες, ἀλλιώθηκες καὶ αἰσθάνεσαι οἰκείος μὲ τοὺς ξένους καὶ ἀδελφὸς μὲ τοὺς ἀγνώστους.

Στὴ Θεία Λειτουργία βρίσκομε τὴν ἀγάπη ποῦ μᾶς γέννησε καὶ τὴν εὐλογία ποῦ μᾶς ἐξέπληξε.

Ἐδῶ ἀπολαμβάνεις τὴν ἐλευθερία τῶν ἐσχάτων καὶ τὴν ἀγιότητα τῶν προσκαίρων. Καὶ ὅλα αὐτὰ εἶναι δῶρα τῆς παρουσίας τοῦ Θεανθρώπου Κυρίου ποῦ δεσπόζει τῶν ἐπουρανίων καὶ τῶν ἐπιγείων.

Δέχεσαι τὸν καιρὸ τῆς εἰρήνης ὡς δῶρο Θεοῦ: καὶ τὴν περίοδο τῶν δοκιμασιῶν ὡς προετοιμασία γιὰ εὐλογίες ποῦ δὲν θὰμποροῦσες διαφορετικὰ νὰ δεχθῆς.

Ἡρεμεῖς μέσα στὴν ταραχὴ τῶν προβλημάτων, γιατί νοιώθεις τὴν

The diagnosis he reaches is twofold: his own frailty, and the ineffable and immeasurable love of God.

Such a person lives on earth and is nourished with the bread of heaven which is broken and not divided, which is ever being eaten and never consumed. He confesses, 'It is the body of God, and it deifies me and nourishes. It deifies my spirit and strangely nourishes my mind'.

He sees the entire world differently. He is not afraid; he simply glorifies God. He does not judge; he simply loves. He has surrendered all things to Christ our God.

The heart that nourishes us and the theological school that teaches us the truth – the Divine Liturgy is both of these.

'We thank You for this Liturgy which You have deigned to accept at our hands, though there stand about You thousands of Archangels ...'

Becoming a participant in this concelebration is a gift of God's love to you and through you to everyone, since we who are many are one body. Thus the grace of healing and the power of faith is mystically poured forth.

Surprised by the divine gift you have been given, you have changed; you feel like one of the family with strangers, a brother or sister to people you do not know.

In the Divine Liturgy, we discover the love that gave us birth and the blessing that so surprised us.

Here you enjoy the freedom of the eschaton and the holiness of things transient. And all these things are gifts of the presence of the Lord, the God-man, who rules over things in heaven and on earth.

You accept times of peace as a gift from God. And times of trial you accept as a preparation for blessings that you would not otherwise be able to receive.

παρουσία Αυτού πού όλα τὰ ξεπερνᾶ· θεραπεύει τοὺς ἀσθενεῖς καὶ ἀνιστᾶ τοὺς νεκρούς. Ὅλους τοὺς ἀγαπᾶ· μηδενὸς ἐξαιρουμένου. Ὅλα τὰ φανερώνει εὐλογία· πρὸ παντὸς τὰ ἐπώδυνα.

Οἱ πιστοὶ εὐχαριστοῦν γι' αὐτὰ πού τοὺς χαροποιοῦν καὶ γιὰ κεῖνα πού τοὺς θλίβουν. Γιατὶ γνωρίζουν ὅτι ὅλα εἶναι ἐπεμβάσεις τοῦ Ἰατροῦ τῶν ψυχῶν καὶ τῶν σωμάτων.

Αἰσθάνονται τὸν Θεὸ πολὺ μακρὰ ὡς ἀπρόσιτο, ἀόρατο, ἀκατάληπτο. Καὶ ταυτόχρονα πολὺ κοντὰ γιατί νοιώθουν τὴν ἀγάπη Του νὰ πλησιάζη τὸ βαθύτερό τους εἶναι πού μένει ἀόρατο καὶ ἀκατάληπτο γι' αὐτούς.

Ἐγινε ἡ καρδιά σου παράδεισος καὶ ἡ οἰκουμένη σπίτι σου.

Μία στιγμή ἕνας ταπεινὸς καὶ ἀδύνατος δέχεται ὅλη τὴ χάρι καὶ γίνεται θεολόγος καὶ κήρυκας τῶν ἀρρήτων χωρὶς νὰ λή τίποτε.

Ἡ χαρὰ πού γεμίζει τὴν συντετριμμένη καρδιά τοῦ μετανοοῦντος εἶναι θεϊκὸ δῶρο πού ἀπλώνεται σὲ ὅλο τὸν κόσμο. «Χαρὰ γίνεται ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ ἐπὶ ἐνὶ ἁμαρτωλῷ μετανοοῦντι».

Αὐτοὶ πού καυχῶνται γιὰ τὰ προτερήματα καὶ τὶς ἀρετές των, ἀπομονώνονται μόνοι τους καὶ βασανίζονται, μολύνοντας τὸ περιβάλλον.

Οἱ ταπεινὲς ψυχὲς πού γεμίζουν ἀπὸ θεϊκὴ παράκλησι τρέφουν ὅλους μὲ τὸν πλοῦτο τῆς χάριτος καὶ ἐνισχύονται ἀπὸ τὴν παρουσία τῶν ἁγίων.

Αὐτὸς πού δέχθηκε μέσα του τὴ μικρὴ χαρὰ πού περιγεῖλᾶ τὸν θάνατο εἶναι πραγματικὰ οἰκουμενικὸς ἄνθρωπος. Ἡ χαρὰ του μερίζεται καὶ δὲν διαιρεῖται, προσφέρεται καὶ δὲν ἐλαττώνεται ἀλλὰ αὐξάνει. Ἐνῶ ἔχει δοθῆ στὴ Ὁρθόδοξη Ἐκκλησία ὁλος αὐτὸς ὁ πνευματικὸς πλοῦτος ὡς ἐνσάρκωσι τῆς ἀγάπης καὶ τοῦ κάλλους, πάνω στὰ πράγματα φανερώνομε τὴν ἀδυναμία μας. Δεχόμαστε ξένες ἐπιδράσεις καὶ ἀλλοιώσεις. Περνοῦμε τὴ βαβυλώνια αἰχμαλωσία τῆς ὀρθοδόξου θεο-

You remain calm amidst the turmoil of your problems, because you can feel the presence of Him who transcends everything; He heals the sick and raises up the dead. He loves everyone, with no exceptions. He shows everything to be a blessing, especially things that are painful.

The faithful give thanks for things that bring them joy and things that grieve them. Because they know that all these things are operations performed by the Physician of souls and bodies.

They are aware of God as very distant, in that He is unapproachable, invisible, incomprehensible. And at the same time very close, because they feel His love approaching their deepest being which remains invisible and incomprehensible even to themselves.

Your heart has become paradise, and the world has become your home.

In a moment, a humble and frail human being receives the totality of grace and becomes a theologian and preacher of ineffable mysteries, without saying a thing.

The joy that fills the contrite heart of one who repents is a divine gift that extends to all the world. *'There is joy in heaven over one sinner who repents'*.

Those who boast of their accomplishments and their virtues isolate themselves and endure torments, polluting the environment.

The humble souls who are filled with divine consolation nurture everyone with the richness of grace and are strengthened by the presence of the saints.

Someone who has received into himself the little joy that laughs at death is truly oecumenical, a man for all the world. His joy is partaken of without being divided; it is offered and does not diminish,

λογίας (π. Γεώργιος Φλορόφσκη).

Πολλά ύποφερομε. Άρκετὰ χάνομε καὶ ξεχνοῦμε. Ἀλλὰ ὑπάρχει κάτι πού δὲν χάνεται. Κάποιος δὲν μᾶς ξεχνᾷ. Αὐτὸς βρίσκεται στὴν καρδιά τῆς ζωῆς μας· εἶναι ἡ ἴδια ἡ ζωὴ μας, ὁ Χριστός.

Δὲν ἀλλοιώνεται ὁ Ἀναλλοίωτος. Δὲν μᾶς ἐγκαταλείπει ἡ χάρις Του. Ὑπάρχει ἡ δύναμι τῆς πίστεως. Ὑπάρχει ἡ κοινωνία τῶν Ἁγίων καὶ ἡ πνευματικὴ ἐνδοχώρα τοῦ λειτουργημένου πιστοῦ λαοῦ πού μᾶς σώζει.

Ὅσο καὶ ἂν παραστρατήσωμε, δὲν χάνονται οἱ Ἅγιοι καὶ οἱ εὐλογίες τους. Ἐχομε ἀνάγκη ἀπὸ τὴν παρουσία τους καὶ ζοῦμε τὴ βοήθειά τους. Μᾶς μιλοῦν γιὰ τὸν Παράδεισο πού ζοῦν καὶ μᾶς συνοδεύουν μὲ τὸν τρόπο πού γνωρίζουν.

Ὅταν περνοῦμε οἱ ὀρθόδοξοι λαοὶ δοκιμασίες καὶ ὑποδουλώσεις ξένων κατακτητῶν ἢ ἀθῆων συστημάτων, τότε ἡ Θεία Λειτουργία μᾶς κρατᾷ στὴ ζωὴ. Καὶ ὅταν ἀναγκαζώμαστε νὰ μεταναστεύσωμε, αὐτὴ μᾶς συνοδεύει.

Ἔτσι ζοῦμε τίς δοκιμασίες ὡς εὐλογίες γιὰ τὸν ἑαυτό μας καὶ γιὰ τὴν οἰκουμένη ὁλόκληρη, ὑπὲρ τῆς ὁποίας προσφέρεται ἡ Θεία Λειτουργία. Αὐτὴ εἶναι ὄντως θεοπαράδοτο μυστήριο πού μᾶς τρέφει πνευματικὰ καὶ μᾶς χρεώνει ἀληθινὰ πρὸς ὄλο τὸν κόσμο πού πεινᾷ καὶ διψᾷ τὰ αἰώνια.

Ὑπάρχουν Ὀρθόδοξοι πού ἀναγκάστηκαν νὰ φύγουν ἀπὸ τὸν τόπο τους. Καὶ μὲ τὴ Θεία Λειτουργία πού τοὺς συνόδευε ἔζησαν τὴ νέα χώρα ὡς πατρίδα τους καὶ τοὺς ἄγνωστους ὡς ἀδελφούς.

Καὶ οἱ παλιοὶ κάτοικοι τοῦ τόπου βρῆκαν τὴν ἀληθινὴ τους πατρίδα μέσα στὴ Θεία Λειτουργία, πού ἀγκαλιάζει τὴν οἰκουμένη καὶ ἐλευθερώνει τὸν ἄνθρωπο. Γιατὶ ἡ Ὀρθόδοξη Ἐκκλησία δὲν σὲ προσηλυτίζει σὲ μιὰ ἄποψι, ἀλλὰ σὲ ἐλευθερώνει μὲ μιὰ θεοφάνεια.

but rather increases.

All of this spiritual wealth, as love and beauty incarnate, has been given to the Orthodox Church; but in the practical application, we show our frailty. We open ourselves to alien influences and distortions. We are going through a 'Babylonian captivity' of Orthodox theology (Fr Georges Florovsky).

We are suffering greatly. There is plenty that we are losing and forgetting. But there is something that is not lost. Someone does not forget us. He is at the heart of our life: He is Christ, our life itself.

The changeless One does not change. His grace does not abandon us. The power of faith is there. The communion of Saints is there, and the spiritual heartland of the faithful people who have taken part in the Liturgy, and that is what saves us.

However much we go astray, the Saints and their blessings are not lost. We need their presence and we experience their help. They speak to us of the Paradise which they themselves experience, and accompany our journey as they know how.

When Orthodox peoples are going through difficult times and subjugation to foreign conquerors or atheistic regimes, that is when the Divine Liturgy keeps us alive. And when we are obliged to go abroad, it goes with us.

And so we experience our trials as blessings, for ourselves and for the world as a whole, on behalf of which the Divine Liturgy is offered. The Liturgy is indeed a mystery imparted to us by God, which nourishes us spiritually and truly gives us an obligation towards everyone who hungers and thirsts for things eternal.

There are Orthodox who are obliged to leave their own homeland. And through the Divine Liturgy which accompanies them, they

Είναι μεγάλη εύλογία να υπάρχει μία Ὁρθόδοξη ἐκκλησία κάπου, και να τελῆται ἀπὸ ἕναν ἀπλὸ ἱερέα ἢ Θεία Λειτουργία. Νὰ διαβάζω-νται οἱ εὐχὲς στὴ θέσι τους. Νὰ λειτουργοῦνται ἀληθινὰ οἱ πιστοί. Νὰ ψάλλουν και νὰ ζοῦν φεύγοντας ἀπὸ τὸ ναὸ τὴν ἀλήθεια: «Εἶδομεν τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν, ἐλάβομεν Πνεῦμα ἐπουράνιον, εὖρομεν πίστιν ἀληθῆ, ἀδιαίρετον Τριάδα προσκυνούντες, Αὕτη γὰρ ἡμᾶς ἔσωσεν».

Ἔτσι λειτουργεῖ ὁ ἑαυτός σου. Ζῆς τὴν συμπαράστασι τῶν Ἁγίων, παλαιῶν και νεωτέρων, ποὺ μᾶς ἐρμηνεύουν τὰ ἀνερμήνευτα και μᾶς κάνουν αἰσθητὴ τὴν παρουσία τοῦ Θεοῦ τῆς ἀγάπης.

Και εἶναι θαυμαστὸ ὅταν διάδοχοι τῶν μεγάλων Πατέρων και Οἰκουμενικῶν Διδασκάλων βρίσκονται συχνὰ στὰ πρόσωπα κάποιων ἐλαχίστων και ἀγνώστων πιστῶν.

Ἀναφέρω τὴν περίπτωσι τῆς γιαγιάς Μαρίας, σὲ ἕνα μεγάλο χωριὸ τῆς Πίνδου. Εἶχε ὀκτῶ παιδιά, πολλὰ ἐγγόνια. Ἦταν 85 ἐτῶν. Δὲν πήγε στοὺς σχολεῖο. Πήγαινε στὴν ἐκκλησία κάθε μέρα. Γνώριζε τὴ Θεία Λειτουργία ἀπ' ἔξω. Μίλαγε μὲ τοὺς Ἁγίους ὅπως κάποιος μιλά μὲ τὰ ἀδελφια του.

Πῆρε πληροφορία γιὰ τὴν κοίμησί της· πότε ἀκριβῶς θὰ συμβῆ, ἐνῶ ἦταν ὑγιής. Τὸ ἀνέφερε στὰ παιδιά και τὰ ἐγγόνια της. Χαιρέτισε ὄλους. Ἔβαλε τὸ σάβανό της. Προσευχήθηκε. Ξάπλωσε στὴν τελικὴ της κλίνη και σὲ δέκα λεπτὰ ἔφυγε εἰρηνικά... (ἦταν ψυχοσάββατο, δέκα ἡ ὥρα πρωινῆ, 20 Φεβρουαρίου 1971)

Ἐξεπλάγη ὁ κόσμος ὅλος ἀπὸ τὴν ἡρεμῆ και ἀθόρυβη παρουσία τῆς Χάριτος ποὺ ἀπλώθηκε γύρω ὡς εὐῶδια τοῦ Πνεύματος. Και μένει διαρκῶς.

Αὐτὰ ποὺ ἐμεῖς ἀγωνιζόμαστε νὰ πετύχωμε, αὐτὴ τὰ πέτυχε και τὰ ξεπέρασε. Πῆρε διδακτορικὰ μὲ ἄριστα χωρὶς νὰ πάη στοὺς σχολεῖο. Μπήκε στὰ Ἅγια τῶν Ἁγίων τῆς τελικῆς ἐλευθερίας, ὅπου ἡ χαρὰ τῶν

have experienced their new country as a homeland, and people they had never met as brothers and sisters.

The earlier inhabitants of the country, too, have found their true homeland in the Divine Liturgy, which embraces the whole world and liberates man. Because the Orthodox Church does not proselytise you to adopt a certain view, but liberates you with a theophany.

It is a great blessing when there is an Orthodox church somewhere, and the Liturgy is celebrated by a simple priest. When the prayers are read in their proper place. When the faithful truly take part in the Liturgy. When they sing these words, and live them when they go home from church: *'We have seen the true light, we have received the Holy Spirit, we have found the true faith, worshipping the Holy Trinity; for It has saved us'*.

This is the way you own self functions and conducts its own 'liturgy'. You experience the support of the Saints, ancient and modern, who interpret for us things that are inexplicable and make the presence of the God of love perceptible to us.

It is a wonderful thing when successors to the great Fathers and Ecumenical Teachers are to be found, as they often are, in the persons of completely unassuming and unknown believers.

I could mention the example of Yiayia Maria, who lived in a large village in Pindos. She had eight children and many grandchildren. She was eighty-five. She had never gone to school. She used to go to church every day. She knew the Divine Liturgy by heart. She used to talk to the Saints the way you talk to your brothers and sisters.

She was given to know when she would fall asleep; she was told exactly when it would happen, even though she was quite healthy. She told her children and grandchildren. She said good-bye to everyone. She put on her shroud. She prayed. She lay down on her death bed

παιδιῶν τῆς Βασιλείας τῶν οὐρανῶν. Μᾶς βλέπει, μᾶς ἀγαπᾶ, μᾶς καταλαβαίνει. Καί με τὸ χαμόγελό της τὸ ἅγιο μᾶς εὐχεται καλὸν ἀγῶνα καὶ καλὴ ὑπομονή.

Φωτίζει πάναγνα τὴν οἰκουμένη, γιατί δέχθηκε τὴν ἀνάπαυσι τοῦ Πνεύματος χωρὶς νὰ ἔχη τὴν ἐντύπωσι ὅτι εἶναι κάτι ἰδιαίτερο.

Ἔτσι, χωρὶς νὰ μιλά, διδάσκει. Καὶ χωρὶς νὰ τὴν βλέπης σοῦ γεμίζει τὸ χῶρο με παρηγοριὰ ἐλπίδος.

Νοιώθεις δι' αὐτῆς μιὰ καύχησι ἐν Θεῷ γιὰ τὸ μεγαλεῖο τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, καὶ πόσο μπορεῖ νὰ λάμψη με φῶς οὐράνιας παρακλήσεως μιὰ ἀπλῆ ψυχή.

Ἄς εἶναι εὐλογημένες αὐτὲς οἱ ἅγιες ψυχὲς τῆς ἀλήθειας τῆς πίστεως, πὺ μαλακώνουν τὸν πόνο τοῦ κόσμου ἀπὸ τὸ ξεροβόρι τῆς ψευτιᾶς καὶ μᾶς λύνουν τὰ προβλήματα χωρὶς νὰ ἀναφερθοῦν σ' αὐτά.

Τελικὰ ὅλα εἶναι ἓνα: μιὰ εὐλογία. Μία εἶναι ἡ ἅγια καθολικὴ καὶ ἀποστολικὴ Ἐκκλησία.

Μία Θεία Λειτουργία εἶναι ὅλη ἡ ἱστορία καὶ ἓνας ναὸς ὅλος ὁ κόσμος.

«Εἷς Κύριος, μία πίστις, ἐν βάπτισμα» (Ἐφ. 4,5), ἓνας θάνατος καὶ μία Ἀνάστασι πὺ καλεῖ τοὺς πάντες στὸ συμπόσιο τῆς πίστεως καὶ στὴ χαρὰ τοῦ Κυρίου. Εἶναι παντοδύναμος ὁ Ἀναστημένος: γι' αὐτὸ παρουσιάζεται ὡς ἀδύνατος.

Εἶναι μικρὰ ἡ ζύμη τῆς Βασιλείας μετὸ μεγάλο δυναμισμὸ.

Εἶναι μικρὰ ἡ ποιμνὴ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας καὶ εὐρυχωροτέρα τῶν οὐρανῶν.

«Μὴ φοβοῦ τὸ μικρὸν ποιμνιον» (Λουκ. 13, 32), γιατί δὲν εἶναι ἀπειλή γιὰ κανένα οὔτε φοβᾶται καμμία ἀπειλή.

Ἡ δυνατότητα πὺ ἔχω δὲν εἶναι νὰ σκοτώσω τὸν ἄλλον γιὰ νὰ ἐπικρατήσω. Οὔτε νὰ συνθλίψω τὸν ἀδύνατο γιὰ νὰ φανῶ πρῶτος.

and ten minutes later, she departed in peace ... (it was a Soul Saturday, 10 A.M. on the 20th of February, 1971).

Everyone was amazed at the calm and silent presence of Grace which spread all round, like a fragrance of the Spirit. And it remains in perpetuity.

What we struggle to achieve, Yiayia Maria had achieved, and more. She received her doctorate with distinction without ever going to school. She entered into the Holy of Holies of ultimate freedom, where the joy of the children of the Kingdom of heaven reigns. She sees us, she loves us, she understands us. And with her holy smile, she wishes us a 'good struggle' and patience.

She shines an all-pure light on all the world, because she has received the repose of the Spirit, without having any idea that it is anything special.

And so she teaches without saying a word. And even though you cannot see her, she fills the space about you with the consolation born of hope.

On account of this woman, you feel a godly pride in the grandeur of the human being, in the way a simple soul is able to shine with the light of heavenly consolation.

Blessed be these holy souls of the truth of faith, which soothe the pain of a world lashed by the icy winds of illusion, and solve our problems for us without ever mentioning them!

Ultimately, everything is one. One single blessing. The holy, catholic and apostolic Church is one.

One Divine Liturgy is the whole of history, and one church building is the entire world.

'One Lord, one faith, one baptism' (Ephesians 4:5), one death and

ἀλλὰ ἔχω τὴν δυνατὴτητα νὰ θυσιαστῶ ἀπὸ ἀγάπη γιὰ τὸν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἀποθανόντα καὶ Ἀναστάντα, καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφούς μου. Ἔτσι καταλαβαίνω τί εἶναι ζωὴ. Καὶ γιὰτί δημιουργήθηκε ὁ κόσμος.

Ἐδῶ βρίσκεις τὸ τετελειωμένο ἔργο τῆς ἱστορίας ἀπὸ τὴν ἀρχὴ τῆς δημιουργίας μέχρι τῆς δευτέρας Παρουσίας. Καὶ ἀναπαύεσαι γιὰτί:

«ἡ χάρις τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

καὶ ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ Πατρὸς

καὶ ἡ κοινωνία τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος»

κατευθύνουν τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν καὶ τὸν κόσμον ὀλόκληρο.

Γι' αὐτὸ στὴ Μοναδικὴ καὶ Τριαδικὴ Θεότητα πρέπει πᾶσα δόξα, τιμὴ καὶ προσκύνησις νῦν καὶ αἰεὶ καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. Ἀμήν.



one Resurrection which summons all to the banquet of faith and the joy of the Lord.

The risen One is all-powerful; that is why He makes Himself out to be frail.

The leaven of the Kingdom is little, with its great dynamism.

The flock of the Church is little, and more spacious than the heavens.

'Fear not, little flock' (Luke 13:32) – and do not fear the little flock – [Lioness 1]¹ because it is no threat to anyone, nor does it fear any threat.

The capacity I have is not to kill the other in order to prevail. Nor is it to crush the weak in order to take first place; rather, I have the capacity to sacrifice myself out of love for Him who died and rose from the dead for our sake, and for my brothers and sisters. That is how I come to understand what life is all about, and why the world was created.

Here you find the completed work of history, from the beginning of creation to the Second Coming. And you are at peace, because:

the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ

and the love of God the Father

and the communion of the Holy Spirit'

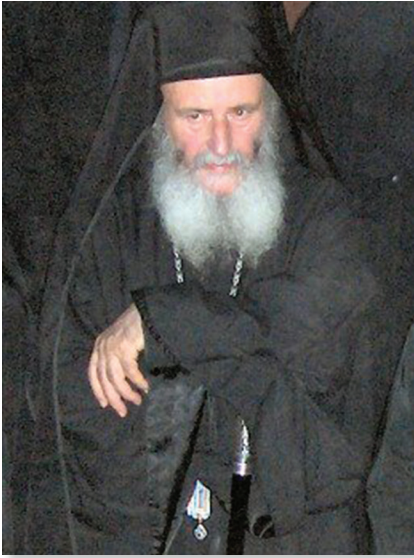
direct the path of the Church and of the whole world!

For this reason, to the One Godhead in Trinity is due all glory, honour and worship, now and for ever and to the ages of ages. *Amen.*



¹ the ambiguity of the Greek in the Gospel.

ΑΡΧΙΜΑΝΔΡΙΤΗΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΟΣ

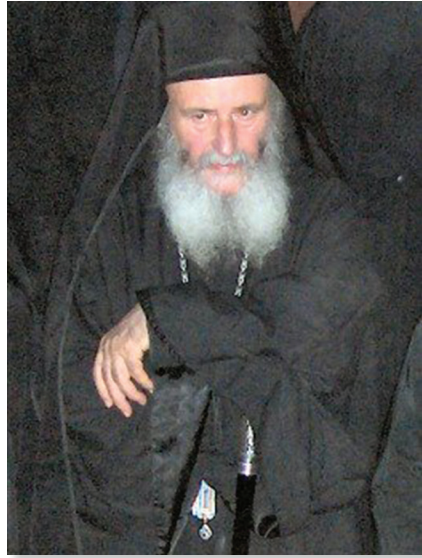


ARCHIMANDRITE VASILEIOS (Gondikakis), former Abbot of Iveron Monastery on Mount Athos, was born on Crete in 1936, and studied theology in Athens and in Lyon, France. Upon visiting Mount Athos, he felt “at home”, and decided to remain there. Initially, he stayed in a hermitage close to the Elder Paisios.

In 1968, he was asked to become abbot of the Stavronikita Monastery. In his twenty-two years, 1968–1990, as abbot, a life-giving breeze of renewal and a particular intensity of stillness and watchfulness (*hesychia* and *nepsis*), that characterises Athonite spirituality, has been treasured by thousands of visitors and pilgrims who, through their personal experience in a very simple and humble way, “*taste and see that the Lord is good*”. In 1990, Fr Vasileios assumed the leadership of the Iveron Monastery, becoming its abbot reintroducing its cenobitic life. He stepped down as abbot in 2005.

Fr Vasileios was first introduced to the English-public through his well-known work, *Hymn of Entry* in which he was described by Bishop Kallistos (Ware) as the pioneer of the striking revival and renewal of monastic life on the Holy Mountain, whose message is “a word of life not for Athos only, but for the Christian world as a whole”.

Over the last forty years, Fr Vasileios has spread this message beyond the borders of Mount Athos by participating in, and speaking at, theological meetings, youth conferences, and gatherings of the faithful. His words bring that “fresh vision of theology, Church, and the world”.



ἈΡΧΙΜΑΝΔΡΙΤΗΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΟΣ
Ο ΠΡΩΗΝ ΗΓΟΥΜΕΝΟΣ ΤΗΣ ΜΟΝΗΣ ΙΒΗΡΩΝ, ΑΓΙΟΥ ΟΡΟΥΣ

Ἡ Θεία Λειτουργία ὡς Τριαδικὴ Θεοφάνεια

ΤΟ ΟΙΚΟΥΜΕΝΙΚΟΝ ΜΗΝΥΜΑ
ΤΗΣ ΘΕΟΛΟΓΙΑΣ ΤΩΝ
ΤΡΙΑΩΝ ΙΕΡΑΡΧΩΝ



Ἀναφέρω τὴν περίπτωσι τῆς γιαγιάς Μαρίας, σὲ ἓνα μεγάλο χωριὸ τῆς Πίνδου. Εἶχε ὀκτὼ παιδιά, πολλὰ ἐγγόνια. Ἦταν 85 ἐτῶν. Δὲν πήγε στὸ σχολεῖο. Πήγαινε στὴν ἐκκλησία κάθε μέρα. Γνώριζε τὴ Θεία Λειτουργία ἀπ' ἔξω. Μίλαγε μὲ τοὺς Ἁγίους ὅπως κάποιος μιλά μὲ τὰ ἀδελφία του.

Πῆρε πληροφορία γιὰ τὴν κοίμησί της: πότε ἀκριβῶς θὰ συμβῆ, ἐνῶ ἦταν ὑγιής. Τὸ ἀνέφερε στὰ παιδιά καὶ τὰ ἐγγόνια της. Χαίρετισε ὅλους. Ἐβαλε τὸ σάβανό της. Προσευχήθηκε. Ξάπλωσε στὴν τελικὴ τῆς κλίνης καὶ σὲ δέκα λεπτά ἐφυγε εἰρηνικά...

Αὐτὰ ποὺ ἐμεῖς ἀγωνιζόμαστε νὰ πετύχωμε, αὐτὴ τὰ πέτυχε καὶ τὰ ξεπέρασε. Πῆρε διδακτορικὰ μὲ ἄριστα χωρὶς νὰ πάη στὸ σχολεῖο. Μπήκε στὰ Ἅγια τῶν Ἁγίων τῆς τελικῆς ἐλευθερίας, ὅπου ἡ χαρὰ τῶν παιδιῶν τῆς Βασιλείας τῶν οὐρανῶν. Μᾶς βλέπει, μᾶς ἀγαπᾷ, μᾶς καταλαβαίνει. Καὶ μὲ τὸ χαμόγελό της τὸ ἅγιο μᾶς εὐχεται καλὸν ἀγῶνα καὶ καλὴ ὑπομονή.

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Ἀρχιμανδρίτης Βασίλειος

ARCHIMANDRITE VASILEIOS
FORMER ABBOT OF IVERON MONASTERY, MOUNT ATHOS

THE DIVINE LITURGY AS A THEOPHANY OF THE HOLY TRINITY

THE THEOLOGY OF THE THREE
HIERARCHS AND ITS
OECUMENICAL MESSAGE

I could mention the example of Yiayia Maria, who lived in a large village in Pindos. She had eight children and many grandchildren. She was eighty-five. She had never gone to school. She used to go to church every day. She knew the Divine Liturgy by heart. She used to talk to the Saints the way you talk to your brothers and sisters.

She was given to know when she would fall asleep; she was told exactly when it would happen, even though she was quite healthy. She told her children and grandchildren. She said good-bye to everyone. She put on her shroud. She prayed. She lay down on her death bed and ten minutes later, she departed in peace...

What we struggle to achieve, Yiayia Maria had achieved, and more. She received her doctorate with distinction without ever going to school. She entered into the Holy of Holies of ultimate freedom, where the joy of the children of the Kingdom of heaven reigns. She sees us, she loves us, she understands us. And with her holy smile, she wishes us a 'good struggle' and patience.

She shines an all-pure light on all the world, because she has received the repose of the Spirit, without having any idea that it is anything special.

Blessed be these holy souls of the truth of faith, which soothe the pain of a world lashed by the icy winds of illusion, and solve our problems for us without ever mentioning them!

Ultimately, everything is one. One single blessing. The holy, catholic and apostolic Church is one.

One Divine Liturgy is the whole of history, and one church building is the entire world.

Archimandrite Vasileios