



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AUSTRALIA

PARISH OF THE ANNUNCIATION OF OUR LADY, “EVANGELISMOS”

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YOUR FAITH HAS MADE YOU WELL

EPISTLE **The Reading is from St Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians [5:8-19]** For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore He says: *“Awake, you who asleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light.”* See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.

EXPLANATION:

Because the “wrath of God” will come upon sinners, we are urged by St Paul not to be like them otherwise we will also suffer this wrath. Prior to our Baptism, we too were in the **darkness** of ignorance, but now we have been illumined, we have become “**children of light**”, because Christ has shone on us in Holy Baptism. **(5:8)** Quoting a Christian Hymn (which was based on Isaiah 60:1), St Paul describes our Baptism as our having been raised **from the dead**, by Christ, our **awakening** like a **sleeper** from the sleep of sin and death. Christ, the Light now **shines** on us in our new life, making us “children of light”. It is for this reason that baptism is called “illumination”. (Heb 6:4) **(5:14)** In this new life, we bear the **fruit of the light** – that is, deeds reflecting **all goodness, righteousness and Truth**. Instead of the **unfruitful works of darkness**, we bear the fruit of a changed life so that others derive from us benefit and blessing. **(5:19)** Thus we **prove**, or learn by the experience of doing, **what is well-pleasing to the Lord** and we must live in active opposition to the darkness that surrounds us. **(5:10)** Not only are we not to **co-share** in their sins, but we should also **expose** them. That is, we must first confess our sins and repent of them – just as light exposes darkness. As darkness gives place to light (**for whatever makes manifest or visible is light**), so we are to reprove sin and persuade those in darkness to join us in **arising from the dead** and to shine with the Light of Christ. **(5:11)** But St Paul warns us to pay attention to our lives, not to be heedless and **unwise** and to be watchful. He urges regular examination of our conscience and to keep our wits about us as we **walk through the world, because the days are evil**. That is, this age is full of temptation and difficulties and it hurries towards its final catastrophe. Therefore, as **wise** men, we are to **redeem the time**, using every opportunity to do good, doing **the will of God**. **(5:15-17)** We must not participate in drunkenness and fornication which results in **dissipation** (recklessness and frivolous activity) which sever all bonds with God. But rather we should seek the acquisition of the **Holy Spirit (5:18)** –

through prayer, the sacraments, **psalms, hymns and spiritual songs**. With all of these we **sing with our hearts** to the Lord. We should always give **thanks** to God for **all things** and make our entire life a Eucharistic offering to God in **the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ**. That is, we are to live as His disciples, doing nothing in our own name, but in everything for the Glory of God. **(5:19)**

GOSPEL The Reading is from St Luke [18:35-43]

Then it happened, as He was coming near Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the road begging. And hearing a multitude passing by, he asked what it meant. So they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. And he cried out, saying, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Then those who went before warned him that he should be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be brought to Him. And when he had come near, He asked Him, saying, "*What do you want Me to do for you?*" He said, "Lord, that I may receive my sight." Then Jesus said to him, "*Receive your sight; your faith has made you well.*" And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.

EXPLANATION:

A blind man sat by the road begging, and hearing the commotion asked what was going on? They told him, "**Jesus of Nazareth is passing by**". And believing that Christ is the seed of David cried out, "**Son of David, have mercy on me!**" The bystanders tried to stop him; they rebuked him, **but he cried out all the more**. He was persistent

in his quest. And Jesus, hearing the cry of human sorrow stopped and healed him. The Lord said, **“Your faith has made you whole”**. For you have believed with faith that I am the Son of David, the Christ, Who is now revealed, and you have shown such zeal that you did not keep silent even when rebuked. Similarly Jesus hears all our prayers when we ask Him with faith. If the blind man had not prayed with faith, Jesus would have passed him by. How many times has Jesus passed us by because we did not ask Him to stop? How many needs are there in our lives that are not met simply because we have not fallen on our knees in humility and not prayed? But Jesus will not give us what we ask for if we do not make a good request. That is, if it is not good or profitable for our soul. The Blind man saw not only the light of day, but also the light of life – his spiritual sight. When we embrace Christ as our Lord and Saviour, He enables us to see things we never saw before. Such sight changes a man’s life. He lives no longer for the passing things of this world, but for the things that endure, that last unto eternity. Such sight requires a man to walk away from his beggar’s mat into the discipleship of Christ, away from prejudice into life of love and brotherhood, away from sin to a new life in Christ. When the blind beggar received his sight, **“he followed Jesus”**. He had enough of darkness. Now he would live in the presence of Him who was and is and will ever be **“the light of the world”**. Jesus continually knocks on the door of our hearts. He reveals Himself in the Bible. He speaks to us through the Church. He offers Himself to us through the Sacraments. He is always just a prayer away from us. But we remain inactive and He passes by unheeded. We fail to respond, to seize the opportunity that would have given us sight, light, happiness, joy and fulfilment beyond our highest expectation, leading on to eternal life. To miss Christ is to miss all. To gain Christ is to gain all. If you do not open the door of your heart you will shut Him out with your indifference and lose life’s greatest opportunity to invite Christ into your life. **(18:35-43)**