



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AUSTRALIA

PARISH OF THE ANNUNCIATION OF OUR LADY, "EVANGELISMOS"

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SUNDAY 7 JULY 2019 - PUT YOUR FAITH IN GOD

EPISTLE The Reading is from St Paul's Letter to the Galatians
[3:23-29, 4:1-5]

But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all, but is under guardians, and stewards until the time appointed by the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

EXPLANATION: St Paul writes that the Law has been a custodian or **tutor** to bring us to Christ, but no man is made righteous on the basis of the Law. Righteousness is granted on the basis of faith in Christ. Once the faith has come, there is no going back. **(3:24-25)** Those who accept faith in Jesus Christ, whether Jew or Gentile, became **sons of God** through **Baptism.** **(3:26-27)** Through Baptism we share one human nature in Christ. Therefore valuing people on opinions and ethnicity (Jew or Gentile); pride and social status (slave and free); and gender (male or female) has no place in the Church. All are one in nature and so all are one in dignity. **(3:28)** All are part of the messianic community – “**Abraham’s offspring**” to whom the promise had been made. And since “**heirship**” is bound to this promise and not to the Law, the Galatians are full heirs of Abraham and of the promise of blessing made to him and his offspring. **(3:29)** But as minors (that is, children in their spiritual understanding) they require **guardians** and **administrators** who provide the special discipline and protection required for their spiritual growth. **(4:1-2)** So also with us, when we were children (minors), we were enslaved under the “**elements of the world**”. That is, because “we” includes Paul, then elements of the world must point to the Mosaic Law. **(4:3) And God sent his Son, Who was born under the Law, to redeem those under the Law** and to fulfil his promise to Abraham and all his offspring. So in adoption we became everything God is, except in nature. We become members of His family by grace – a new birth, a new life – born again. **(4:4-5)**

GOSPEL The Reading is from St Matthew [6:22-33] The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be

loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? So, why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you. O you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

EXPLANATION: Jesus refers to things within the reach of the senses so that we may more easily grasp His teachings. As the eye is the **lamp of the body**, so the mind (nous) is the spiritual eye of the soul. It illuminates the whole inner man. Keeping our mind pure is fundamental to a Christian life. If you fill your mind with worries over money, impure thoughts, etc, you extinguish the lamp and darken your soul. (V22,23) No man can serve two lords who command things that are opposed to each other. Such lords are God and mammon. We make the devil our lord and make the belly our god. People attempting to maintain an attachment to both earthly and heavenly things is impossible because both demand full allegiance. Jesus calls “**mammon**” a master, not because it is by nature evil, but because of the absolute and wretched servility it

extracts. (V24) Jesus warns against severe anxiety and concern over money which drives man away from God. Physical growth and length of life is dependent upon God's providence – more than food, drink and clothing. Persistent anxiety over the things of this world demonstrates internal insecurity and a weak or superficial faith. Jesus warns us not to give ourselves over entirely to our cares and to neglect God. This means, will not He who gave what is greater, life itself, and fashioned the body, will He not also give us food and clothing? (V25) Are we more witless than birds who have instinctive knowledge for finding food? (V26) Even if we take the utmost care, we can do nothing if God does not will it. Why then do we drive ourselves to exhaustion with futile worries? (V27) Even though we go to great lengths, we are not able to adorn ourselves as beautifully as the lilies of the field. (V28,29) Therefore, one who beautifies himself is like grass. But you, He says, are creatures endowed with reason, whom God fashioned with both body and soul. Those of "little faith" are those who concern themselves with such thoughts. For if they had perfect faith in God, they would not give such anxious thoughts to these things. (V30) Luxury and excess are harmful to the soul. (V31,32)