



## GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AUSTRALIA

### PARISH OF THE ANNUNCIATION OF OUR LADY, “EVANGELISMOS”

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### SUNDAY 19 JANUARY 2020 – THE TEN CLEANSED LEAPERS

#### **EPISTLE The Reading is from St Paul’s Letter to the Colossians**

**[3:4-11] When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth; fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.**

#### **EXPLANATION:**

When Christ **appears** at the Second Coming, those who have received Christ’s exalted resurrection in life in baptism will be manifested in **glory** along with Him, for they are united with Him. Baptism incorporates us into Christ so that, all that He is,

we are also. Christ died, so we die. Christ was raised and we are co-raised with Him. Christ sits at the right hand of God and, in Him, so do we. **(3:4)** Therefore we should **put to death** (mortify) our passions and sinful behaviour. Our hearts are to find rest and satisfaction in God alone. To be totally consumed by **greed** is to make possessions our true god which is **idolatry**. For he who has given his heart over to greed rather than the living God is an **idolater**. **(3:5)** And those who live a pagan lifestyle with **fornication, uncleanness** (sexual sins), **gluttony, evil desire** and **greed** will bring about the **wrath of God**. **(3:6)** They used to live this way, **walking** in these sins, but no more. Now they have a new life in Christ. There can be no going back. **(3:7)** Even sins such as **anger** (wrath), **indignation, malice, reviling** and **verbal obscenities** must all cease and be **put off**. **(3:8)** They must no longer **lie** to one another, using one another. This was part of the **“old man”**, that is, the former life, with all its evil practices and false ways which were **stripped off** in baptism. **(3:9)** Through that Sacramental Mystery of Baptism, they put on the **new man**, the new self (even as they put on new garments after their baptism). Through this they were continually and progressively being **renewed** – that is, brand new, fresh, unused. The new man grows from one stage of perfection to another, becoming the **image** of Jesus Christ and throughout eternity remaining the image of **Him Who created him**. It is through this that we come to an intimate **real-knowledge** of our Creator. St Paul says here that we were originally created in God’s image to know Him and share in His joy. Sin obscured this image and ruined this fellowship, but now, through Christ, this image is being restored so that we can walk with God and know Him once again. In this baptismal renewal, we have all **put on the new man**. **(3:10)** In this new creation, all earthly categories and divisions have been transcended. People of all kinds are

equally given this new life. Thus in this new creation there are no longer any racial divisions such as Greek and Jew. The only abiding reality is Christ – He is all and in all and everything and the only thing that matters. (3:11)

**GOSPEL** **The Reading is from St Luke [17:12-19]** Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. And they lifted up their voices and said, *“Jesus, master, have mercy on us!”* So when He saw them, He said to them, *“Go, show yourselves to the priests.”* And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. So Jesus answered and said, *“Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?”* And He said to him, *“Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well.”*

#### **EXPLANATION:**

Leprosy was one of the most wretched and hopeless diseases at that time. The person would slowly become a mass of ulcerated malodorous growths. Since it was contagious, the leper was isolated from society. This is why the ten lepers, who were probably part of a leper colony **“stood as a distance”** when they called out to Jesus. (17:12) Another one of the symptoms of leprosy was that the voice became merely a hoarse whisper. This is why they **“lifted up their voices”** when they cried out to Jesus. They called Him **“Master”**, which means that they believed He had the power to heal them. That is, they came to Him with faith. (17:13) Jesus did not heal the ten lepers immediately He saw fit to test their faith. So he made them

walk the road of obedience by telling them to first **“go and show yourselves to the priests”**. Not only was Jesus testing their faith, but He was also following the prescription of Jewish law which required any leper who was cured of his leprosy to go to the priest in the temple to secure a certificate of healing. Only then was he allowed to return to his family and towns people. But how could they go to the priests looking as they did? Yet they went. They went on faith. Sometimes God answers our prayers on condition that we exercise our faith. Instead of turning away disappointed, these ten lepers did as Jesus commanded them. And as a consequence of their faith the miracle happened. **“As they went they were cleansed.” (17:14)** We can imagine the indescribable joy they must have felt when they realized they had been healed. One would think they would have rushed back to thank Jesus for delivering them from this dreadful disease. But only one, a Samaritan (a Gentile despised by Jews) came back to thank Him. The nine who were Israelites showed themselves to be ungrateful. God’s blessings are all too easily taken for granted or forgotten. **(17:15-19)** This miracle also signifies the common salvation that came to the whole human race. For the ten lepers represent all of human nature, and that nature was leprous with wickedness, ulcerated with the ugliness of sin, standing afar off from God. And although Jesus was quick to show mercy, took on flesh, tasted death, and healed the whole leprous nature of man, the Jews showed themselves ungrateful; and did not return from the path of their vain foolishness to give glory to God Who saved them. They did not confess the incarnate and crucified Lord of glory. But the foreign and accursed people of the Gentiles recognized the One Who makes clean, and believed and glorified Him as the Son of God, Our Lord and Saviour.