

## Be optimistic!

### Informative Bulletin of the Latin Paphos Parish January 2019

#### Time is on our side



At the dawn of every morning our possibilities for creativity, programming, work, recreation, reflection, study and prayer are renewed.

The alteration between day and night, light and darkness, summer and winter, spring and autumn is the pattern of our every experience: toil but also rest, joy but also sadness, health but also sickness, loneliness but also company, kindness but also evildoing.

We run to catch up with our projects for the day, the week, the month, the year...and then we start up from the beginning.

Some consider this cyclic repetition of seasons and activities lacking in meaning. Nothing is further from the truth!

All serve a purpose! All are included in God's plan who "*so much He loved the world that He sent us His only Son to save the world, not to condemn it*" (John 3, 16).

God's Incarnation and His coming amongst us show us the value that the creation holds in God's eyes, and esp. we, the human beings, created in His image!

Christ's presence in the world—in the land of Palestine two thousand years ago, and nowadays in His faithful, i.e. in us, has sanctified the universe and time within it!

Christ's sacrifice on the cross and His Resurrection are the inexhaustible source of our sanctification and salvation.

And to this purpose time is on our side: God's plans unfold in time and He is long-suffering, which is patient.

He gives us the necessary time to get to know ourselves, to develop, to freely act, to make mistakes and miss our targets, to repent, to get to know Him and to love Him.

We wish you all a holy 2019!

## One like a Son of Man

*I turned round to see the voice that was speaking to me.*

*And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and among them was someone “like a son of man”, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash round his chest.*

*His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire*

*...His voice was like the sound of rushing waters.*

*...His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.*

(Book of Revelation, 1, 12-16)

## The Ancient of Days



*“As I looked, thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him...”*

This is how Prophet Daniel describes the first Dream he had (Dn. 7, 9).

In that dream the earthly kingdoms are compared and differentiated from God's kingdom (Dn. ch. 7)

God is mentioned as “**the Ancient of Days**”, a reference to His eternal existence and pre-existence before the creation of the world, which is His work anyway.

There is emphasis in God's transcendence, i.e. that He is beyond time and He has neither beginning

nor end.

We, children of time upon this earth, have reason to rejoice because the ever-living God took our human nature and became a man— like all of us but without sin, and granted us the possibility to participate in His eternity once we leave this earth.

This eternity with God we call “Salvation”.

*Above, fresco of the 14th century of the Ancient of Days in a church in Ubisi, Georgia.*

## The Vasilópita



The custom of a bread, cake or pie with a coin or another symbolic object kneaded in it was popular in Ancient Greece and Rome.

However, as the celebration of the First of the New Year, in a largely pagan world, was licentious and bereft of propriety, the Church initially forbade her faithful to take part in the celebrations.

In the 4th century when the 1st of January was set as the memorial day of Saint Basel of Cappadocia (329-378) the First Day of the Year took on a distinct Christian character.

Saint Basel was baptized in 358 and ordained priest in 364. he was totally devoted to the service of the Church. He was a great theologian and pastor. He led an ascetic life. He founded model orphanages and hospitals as well as “schools’ for the technical education of those without qualifications.

Our well-known “Vassil-pita” gets its name from him; he used to help the poor and the prisoners by giving them money hidden in cakes.

His charity was always discreet and efficient.

*The photo above: a vassilópita with the two-headed eagle, looking eastward and westward, a symbol of the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantium).*

## Did you know...

**The religion of the Bible** is founded upon a historical revelation. This fact differentiates it from all other religions.

Some of these religions claim no revelation, as is the case with Buddhism, which at its starting point relies on the all-too-human lights of a sage.

Other religions present their content as a heavenly revelation due, though, to a legendary or mythical founder, as is the case of Hermes Trismegistus for the Hermetic knowledge.

**On the contrary, in the Bible, the revelation is a historical concrete event;** Its mediators are known and their words have been preserved either directly or within a steady tradition.

Moreover, the Biblical revelation, in addition to the signs which show its authenticity, does not content itself with the teaching of a unique founder it, rather, develops in the space of fifteen to twenty centuries before its fulfillment through the coming of Christ, who is the revelation par excellence.

Faith is, for the Christian, the acceptance of this revelation that history transmits to men and women.

The Church is the historical continuation of the transmission of this authentic revelation.

## Full-blown Peace



"The word peace was the most important topic in our lives in this year. Who should be the first to respond to the human desire for peace, full-blown peace with God's orders, grounded with love and justice? We Christians are called to be the first peacebuilders in this world."

This is what Cardinal Andrew Yeom Soo-Jung, Archbishop of Seoul, said in the message sent to his community for Christmas, reported Fides News Agency.

"As Pope Francis has always stressed we should keep mercy in our minds which enables endless forgiveness and unconditional sharing.

We, above all, should start from prayers.

True peace is God's gift which we can receive only when we ask for through prayers. Thus, let's keep devoting our prayers to peace on the Korean Peninsula," the Cardinal wrote.

"However, the road to peace is long and tough.

We, the faithful, should keep patience and continue praying while doing our best in our everyday lives.

We, by becoming those on whom his favor rests, finally can achieve peace which Christ promised."

(Zenit.org, 21/12/2018)



## Ring Out Wild Bells

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,  
The flying cloud, the frosty light:  
The year is dying in the night;  
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:  
The year is going, let him go;  
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind  
For those that here we see no more;  
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,  
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,  
And ancient forms of party strife;  
Ring in the nobler modes of life,  
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,  
The faithless coldness of the times;  
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes  
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,  
The civic slander and the spite;  
Ring in the love of truth and right,  
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;  
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;  
Ring out the thousand wars of old,  
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,  
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;  
Ring out the darkness of the land,  
Ring in the Christ that needs to be.

*Alfred, Lord Tennyson*

(1809-1892)

## Why should I forgive?

It is a reason for great joy that we gather for the celebration of the Eucharist around this altar. It has become a symbol of your suffering, that, when joined to the sacrifice of Christ, becomes a source of peace and salvation for the world.

From ancient times, the Christian community in this city has been marked by vibrant faith, even amid all kinds of hardship and persecution. You yourselves have experienced trials, injustice, betrayal, and the destruction of all that you held most sacred, like this cathedral.

In God's saving plan, your sacrifices will be no less fruitless than the witness of the many martyrs who, from the first centuries of Christianity, bathed this land with their blood and lived their faith heroically to the end.

Our response as Christians to the gift of our becoming God's sons and daughters is seen in forgiveness. The word of God that we just heard shows the importance of forgiveness, and the hope born from faith, for the building of a new world.

We may ask ourselves: Why should I forgive? Why should I cancel debts? The answer is very simple: because that is what God does. Practicing forgiveness draws us closer to God. Through forgiveness, let us overcome evil with good, transform hatred into love, and thus render the world more pure.

*Cardinal Parolin speaking to the faithful in Qaraqosh, Iraq, Dec. 2018 (excerpts)*