



KYPIAKH

A BRIEF SERMON



«I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet» (Rev. 1:10)

Published by the Holy Womens' Coenobitic Monastery of St. Augustine Florina Greece —ph. (+30) 23850-28610 —imaaflo@yahoo.gr

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Conception of the Holy Forerunner
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(†) Bishop
Augustinos Kantiotes

Three Miracles

*Rejoice, O barren, you who do not bear! Break forth and shout, you who are not in labour!
For the desolate has many more children than she who has a husband. (Gal. 4:27 = Is. 54:1).*

We live, my beloved, in an age of disbelief. Out of a hundred people, it's questionable if today there is one person who truly believes in God. The others, if they aren't completely faithless and atheists, in order to justify their small amount of faith, say, "In order to believe, **I want to see a miracle**. If I see a miracle, then I'll believe."

But if there's one religion in the world with miracles, it's the religion that our Lord Jesus Christ founded, through His holy blood. Miracles in this religion aren't something rare. **Our religion is kneaded with miracles**, it's full of miracles. Who can count the miracles in our religion? They are innumerable.

Given the opportunity that today's feast day provides, out of all the miracles, we'll only speak of a few.

Today's feast day is a miracle. Who is celebrated today? In the years just before Christ was born, lived a couple: Zachariah and Elizabeth. They were a pious and loving couple. But something was missing from their life, and if this is missing from a home, that home isn't a happy one. **A child was missing!** Those years weren't like today's, modern times, where a child isn't considered a blessing any more, but where a child, or perhaps many children, are considered to be pests.

Today, mothers and fathers, using terrible, satanic methods, which a person is embarrassed to mention, **try to uproot the life** growing inside them. Every child that is planted in its mother's womb, is a heavenly blossom. It doesn't belong either to the father

or to the mother. If God doesn't will it, then children won't be born. So **every child** which takes root in its mother's womb is a **heavenly flower**. And the mother goes to the atheist doctors with her husband's consent, and uproots that child from within her. If you uproot your neighbour's basil plant, your neighbour will become violent.¹ Try and uproot a basil plant from your neighbour's potplants... You don't dare. But that same woman, whose basil nobody dares to touch, goes of her own accord and uproots her child from within her, that basil and heavenly flower. Who? The mother!

I don't know of a greater sin than this in our generation. And if God will destroy the world, it will be because of this sin. If someone comes and tells me, "I demolished a church," I'll forgive him, because I'll tell him, "Go and rebuild the church." But if a woman tells me, "I went to the doctor and took pills and uprooted the child from within me," I'm not sure if there's enough repentance for this sin. Where should that woman go? Which spiritual father should she find? What prayer and fasting must she do?... There is no greater sin.

And yet, this has now **become the fashion!** Before they get married, a couple agrees to have one or two children, and then stop! And not only in poor families, but in well-off families who have money and can feed two-dozen children; but instead of children, they feed dogs. The poorer families, until recently at least, had children. But now

¹ In Greece, the basil plant is considered blessed, and is used in the service of Holy Water as well as other services.

even they are influenced by the fashion, now the germ has spread everywhere.

You'll probably tell me: You aren't married, you're a monk, you don't know anything about children. Of course, it's a big topic. But I could prove to you that once, when our nation was much poorer, people reared five and ten children. If you don't have God's blessing, even if you have only one child, it will not bring you happiness, but if you have **God's blessing**, you will be able to raise five, ten, fifteen and even twenty children – it's not a fairytale. But now disbelief demands: one child here, one child there, now and there two children – they go and destroy the other children.

But Zachariah and Elizabeth didn't think like that. They pleaded to God to give them a child, and the Almighty gave them a child at an age when they were past child-bearing. And that child is **St. John the Forerunner**, the greatest man of the Old Testament. This event, his conception, that he took root in Elizabeth's holy womb, this miracle of his conception is celebrated today, 23 September, in our holy Church.

But that's not the only miracle. Another similar miracle occurred two-and-a-half thousand years ago, close to the Euphrates River. Another blessed couple lived there: Abraham and Sarah. They were also childless. They pleaded with God to give them a child. And when did He give them a child? —Oh what prayer achieves!— When Abraham was a hundred years old and Sarah was eighty, when she was a sterile stump. And if a stump of wood can sprout flowers, and if a cypress tree can grow from a piece of marble, then that old woman could give birth to a child. Is it ever possible for an old lady, eighty years old, who is approaching death, to nurse a child? And yet the impossible became possible. And so Sarah obtained a child when she was eighty, a chosen child, Isaac. And Isaac, as today's apostle reading says (see. Gal. 4:22-27), is a symbol of the Christian race, because the Christian race, as the Apostle Paul says, grew from idolators; many Christians were previously idolators. And as idolators, they didn't believe in God, they were sterile and barren. But then, those sterile and barren people brought forth a multitude of Christians.

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But now you'll tell me: "What you told us was back in those days. We want a modern miracle, from our times."

Oh my brethren! Miracles occur even today. But out of all the miracles we might see, if we don't experience a specific miracle, we'll go to hell. What is that miracle? **The greatest miracle** that each of us should take delight in, **is for our heart to change**. Oh, those hearts, which are full of hatred and malice, full of snakes and vipers and scorpions, full of vice and immorality, full of avarice and greed! How will those hearts change? *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me* (Ps. 50(51):10). How will that heart change? It's very simple. We need to believe, my brethren, not 5% but 100%, that Christ is God, that He is *King of kings and Lord of lords* (1Tim. 6:15), that He is the alpha and the omega, the life of the world. We need to believe in Him with all our soul.

And something else. We should all accept that we are sinful and need to repent. And then what should we do? We should confess. There are Christians who haven't confessed in years. Out of a thousand Christians, only five go to confession. The others don't confess, and commune the Immaculate Mysteries unprepared. We will be condemned...

Yes, my brethren! **We need to believe**, like Zachariah and Elizabeth, like Abraham and Sarah, like all the saints believed.

I hope that all of us, young and old, men and women, will believe in Christ. Block your ears so as not to listen to the faithless, the atheists, the masons... Guard your faith within your heart. May God make us worthy, when we reach the end of our lives, to make the sign of the cross and say *Remember me Lord, when you come into Your kingdom* (Lk. 23:42). Amen.