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"DESMOS"

CHRISTIANITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

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ΧΡΙΣΤΙΑΝΙΣΜΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΕΡΙΒΑΛΛΟΝ

Τοῦ Σεβ. Μητροπολίτου Προικοννήσου ΙΩΣΗΦ

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Ιερά Μονή Πεντέλης
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Dear Scouts,

After welcoming you all warmly to this congregation, I will try, as per your request, to say a few words on the topic of 'Christianity and the Environment'.

I would like to ask you to recall the events of the Creation of the world and of man, as they are recorded in the first book of the Holy Bible, the Genesis. Therein, Moses the prophet notes a 'detail' that perhaps is the 'key' to comprehend the Christian (and of course the Judaic) perception of the relationship between man and the environment.

In the second chapter of Genesis, verse 15, we read: "and the Lord our God took the man whom He had created, and settled him in the [Eden] paradise to cultivate it and care for it". Note these two words: *cultivate* and *care*.

Paradise, that is, garden, denotes the world. Man has a god-given mission to work within the world, but at the same time care for the world! He cannot afford to abuse the world, nor can he disregard its destiny. He is the king of all creation – which is why he was created last. Kings and leaders are not beyond reproach. They have responsibilities and must be accountable. Neither do they only have rights, but also obligations. Man received from God power over all the animals on land, sea and air, over plants and trees, but also undertook clear obligations towards them and towards all of Creation. He only is created "in God's image", endowed not only with the gift of speech, but also with the responsibility of freedom. He stands between God the Creator and the rest of the Creation. He tastes the richest love of God, since the Son of God became his equal, that is He became a man for his sake, and indeed was crucified and died for man's salvation, and with His Resurrection and the bestowment of the Holy Spirit on the Pentecost, He gives him the possibility to become, with His Grace, a small god himself. This rich love of God that man enjoys, he is obligated to reflect around him, without exceptions: towards his fellow men, towards animals, towards birds, towards sea creatures, towards trees, towards flowers, towards anything living. At the same time, this love must make man stand with respect towards the water, towards expendable energy sources, towards the atmosphere and towards all of the

environment. Love does not permit an egotistical abuse of the world! I know that men are usually egocentric, greedy, and want, if possible, to eat and consume everything. But a true Christian believes that other people also have a right to life and its goods, especially the underprivileged of the so-called Third World, but also of the marginal districts of every city and of the underdeveloped regions in every country. They, too, must eat and drink to sustain themselves. Everyone is entitled to a clean atmosphere so as to ensure their health and survival. So do animals. Plants, too, need their water and clean atmosphere, so as to sustain the circle of life! And then, there are those who will come after us! The next generations of men. History does not end with us! There will be others, like us, children of the same God, with the same rights to life! We are not immortal, nor exclusive owners of the world, but temporary minders and keepers of the common heritage of Creation. The Christian takes all that in very serious consideration, and that is why he is not greedy, but he sacrifices and limits his power, his appetite, his needs, his consumption, and economises for others.

We often speak of the 'consumer society' «καταναλωτική κοινωνία» in Greek. For Christianity this is an obvious contradiction. Consumption requires a herd, driven only by instinct, the law of the jungle. «Κοινωνία» that is *society - community*, requires love, altruism, modesty, sharing, giving, offering, sacrifice. Not 'I' but 'we'! A 'we' that includes all of God's creations! With such a perception we do not consume, but we 'commune', according to our basic needs, of the goods of Creation. I think that the above more or less constitute principles of Scouting and that you are quite familiar with them!

The Church aiming to help her children behave correctly towards the world, projects the person and teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ, but also the example of the perfect Christians, namely the Saints. The Son of God as a man never behaved competitively or with animosity towards anyone or any creature. He loved all, He preached and practiced ascetic austerity and self-control, He lived meekly, He fasted, that is He economised for others, He looked after the health and nourishment of those in need. The Bible reports it and His miracles ascertain it. The Saints, without becoming nature-worshipers, they love animals, nature, green. They live simply with the bare

necessities and subject themselves to many efforts and sacrifices for everyone. They waive their legal rights to prevent anyone and anything from being treated unfairly. I know of Saints, such as Saint Gerasimos of the desert of the river Jordan, who treated a wounded lion until it recovered, and it remained and served him doing the work of a donkey. Saint Seraphim of Sarof fed a lonely bear, and it obeyed him as if it was his child. The Elder Amfilochios of Patmos said to those that went to confess that they should plant pine trees. Thus, the island of the Apocalypse became green, and local people call pines 'amfilochies' in his honour. Another Saint of the 20th century, the Elder Porfyrios, here in Athens, loved greenery and birds very much. His parrot, who is still alive, carries on praying. Indeed this Saint cared about the water and atmosphere and transferred this sensitivity to all of his spiritual children. In the Holy Mountain, during Easter, Monks process through gardens and forests and spray everything with holy water, so that everything can feel the joy of the Resurrection! In the prayer books of the Orthodox Church there are prayers for animals, vegetables, beehives, food, atmospheric conditions (storms, droughts, rough seas, hurricanes etc.), for the water of the well who may have been contaminated and many others. It is not unusual here in Greece, during drought periods, to see Christians congregate in churches, pray, and then, with the Holy Cross in the foremost rank, with the sacred icons and portions of Saints' relics, to have large litanies outdoors, praying for rain. Most of the times they return to the church soaked by the sudden rain.

In the last few years, the Ecumenical Patriarchate established the 1st of September, which is the New Year's Day of the ecclesiastical year, as a Day of Prayer for the Protection of the Natural Environment, and in our orthodox churches we sing appropriate prayers and appeals. His Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, who I have the great honour of representing today in your event, has given priority and great importance to the issue of the protection of the environment, and you may have heard of the relevant initiatives he has undertaken, from Bosphorus and the Black Sea to the Danube and the Adriatic Sea, to Greenland and the Arctic Sea, to the Amazon and the Mississippi, with relevant conferences and actions, as well as of the Summer Ecological Symposia that he had earlier convened in the Theological School of

Chalki. Each year, on the 5th of June, World Environment Day, as well as on the 1st of September, he never neglects to send related messages to the world, inviting young and seniors to recognise their responsibility towards the whole of God's Creation. The Declaration that he addressed from Rome and Venice jointly with the former Pope John-Paul II on the 10th of June 2002 was joyfully accepted by the public and instilled concern in every man of good will.

I have already said too much! I have tired you! Just remember that as Christians we reject greed and voracity. We condemn it as idololatry, according to the teachings of Saint Paul the Apostle. We live by modest means. We think of others' needs and behave accordingly. We economise in expendable goods, food, water, energy, natural energy resources (oil, natural gas etc.), to leave enough for the next generations. We keep the environment clean in the realm of our capabilities. We raise our voice to the powerful of the earth to prioritise their goals in a way that will ascertain the preservation of the Creation, reverse the catastrophic climate change, ensure a clean atmosphere and water horizon, guarantee food, education and dignity for all humankind. And above all, we pray! What men cannot or will not do, let God Himself take care of. He knows and can change to the better the thoughts and decisions of men, but also He can intervene dynamically in the route of history, because He never stopped loving us!...

Thank you, I wish you always have Jesus Christ in your heart, and I wish complete success in the proceedings of your meeting.

Ἀγαπητοὶ πρόσκοποι,

Ἀφοῦ σᾶς καλωσωρίσω θερμὰ ὅλους στὴ σύναξί σας αὐτή, θὰ προσπαθήσω, ἀνταποκρινόμενος σὲ παρὰ κλησί σας, νὰ σᾶς πῶ μερικὰ λόγια ἐπὶ τοῦ θέματος: **«Χριστιανισμὸς καὶ Περιβάλλον»**.

Θὰ σᾶς παρακαλοῦσα νὰ θυμηθῆτε λίγο τὰ περιστατικὰ τῆς Δημιουργίας τοῦ κόσμου καὶ τῆς πλάσεως τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, ὅπως αὐτὰ καταγράφονται στὸ α' βιβλίο τῆς Ἀγίας Γραφῆς, τὴν Γένεσι. Ἐκεῖ ὁ Προφήτης Μωυσῆς σημειώνει μιὰ «λεπτομέρεια», ποὺ εἶναι ἴσως τὸ «κλειδί» γιὰ νὰ ἐννοήσουμε τὴν χριστιανικὴ (καὶ ἰουδαϊκὴ, ἀσφαλῶς) ἀντίληψι γιὰ τὶς σχέσεις τοῦ ἀνθρώπου μὲ τὸ περιβάλλον.

Στὸ 2^ο κεφάλαιο τῆς Γενέσεως, στίχο 15 διαβάζουμε: «Καὶ ἔλαβε Κύριος ὁ Θεὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον, ὃν ἔπλασεν, καὶ ἔθετο αὐτὸν ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ ἐργάζεσθαι αὐτὸν καὶ φυλάσσειν». Προσέξτε τὶς δύο ἐκεῖνες λέξεις: *ἐργάζεσθαι* καὶ *φυλάσσειν*.

Παράδεισος, δηλ. κήπος, ἐννοεῖται ὁ κόσμος. Ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἔχει θεόδοτη ἀποστολὴ νὰ ἐργάζεται μέσα στὸν κόσμο, ἀλλὰ ταυτόχρονα καὶ νὰ διαφυλάσσει τὸν κόσμο! Δὲν ἔχει περιθώριο γιὰ κατάχρησι τοῦ κόσμου, οὔτε μπορεῖ νὰ ἀδιαφορῇ γιὰ τὴν τύχη τοῦ κόσμου! Εἶναι ὁ βασιλιάς ὅλης τῆς δημιουργίας – γι' αὐτὸ ἄλλωστε καὶ πλάσθηκε τελευταῖος. Οἱ βασιλεῖς καὶ οἱ ἡγέτες δὲν εἶναι ἀσύδοτοι. Ἔχουν εὐθύνες καὶ ἀποδίδουν λόγο. Οὔτε ἔχουν μόνο δικαιώματα, ἀλλὰ ἔχουν καὶ ὑποχρεώσεις. Ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἔλαβε ἀπὸ τὸν Θεὸ ἐξουσία πάνω σὲ ὅλα τὰ ζῶα τῆς στεριᾶς, τῆς θάλασσας καὶ τοῦ ἀέρα, πάνω στὰ φυτὰ καὶ τὰ δένδρα, ἀλλὰ ἀνέλαβε καὶ σαφεῖς ὑποχρεώσεις ἀπέναντί τους καὶ ἀπέναντι ὅλης τῆς δημιουργίας. Αὐτὸς εἶναι μόνον πλασμένος «κατ' εἰκόνα καὶ ὁμοίωσιν Θεοῦ», προικισμένος ὅχι μόνο μὲ τὸ χάρισμα τοῦ λόγου, ἀλλὰ καὶ μὲ τὴν εὐθύνη τῆς ἐλευθερίας. Στέκεται ἀνάμεσα στὸν Κτίστη Θεὸ καὶ στὴν ὑπόλοιπη Κτίσι. Αὐτὸς γεύεται πλουσιώτερα τὴν ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἀφοῦ ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ ἔγινε ὁμοίος του, δηλ. ἄνθρωπος γιὰ χατῆρι του καὶ μάλιστα σταυρώθηκε καὶ ἀπέθανε γιὰ τὴ σωτηρία του, καὶ μὲ τὴν Ἀνάστασί Του καὶ τὴν ἀποστολὴ τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος στὸν κόσμο κατὰ τὴν Πεντηκοστή, τοῦ δίδει τὴ δυνατότητα νὰ γίνῃ μὲ τὴν Χάρι

Του ἑνὸς μικροῦ θεοῦ κι ὁ ἴδιος. Αὐτὴ τὴν πλούσια ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ ποὺ γεύεται ὁ ἄνθρωπος, ἔχει χρέος νὰ τὴν καθρεφτίζει γύρω του, χωρὶς ἐξαιρέσεις: Καὶ πρὸς τοὺς συνανθρώπους, καὶ πρὸς τὰ ζῶα, καὶ πρὸς τὰ πουλιά, καὶ πρὸς τὰ θαλάσσια ὄντα, καὶ πρὸς τὰ δένδρα, καὶ πρὸς τὰ λουλούδια, καὶ πρὸς κάθε τι ποὺ ἔχει ζωὴ. Τὴν ἴδια στιγμή, αὐτὴ ἡ ἀγάπη πρέπει νὰ τὸν κάνει νὰ στέκεται μὲ σεβασμὸ καὶ πρὸς τὸ νερό, καὶ πρὸς τὶς ἀναλώσιμες πηγὲς ἐνεργείας, καὶ πρὸς τὴν ἀτμόσφαιρα καὶ πρὸς ὅλο τὸ περιβάλλον. Ἡ ἀγάπη δὲν ἐπιτρέπει ἐγωιστικὴ κατάχρησι τοῦ κόσμου! Τὸ ξέρω ὅτι οἱ ἄνθρωποι συνήθως εἶναι ἐγωκεντρικοί, πλεονέκτες, καὶ θέλουν, ἂν εἶναι δυνατόν νὰ ἀποκτήσουν, νὰ φᾶνε καὶ νὰ καταναλώσουν τὰ πάντα. Ὅμως ὁ ἀληθινὸς Χριστιανὸς σκέφτεται ὅτι μερίδιο στὴ ζωὴ καὶ στὰ ἀγαθὰ τῆς ἔχουν καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι ἄνθρωποι, καὶ μάλιστα οἱ ἀδικημένοι τοῦ λεγομένου Τρίτου Κόσμου, ἀλλὰ καὶ οἱ τῶν περιθωριακῶν συνοικιῶν κάθε πόλεως καὶ τῶν ὑπανάκτικτων περιοχῶν κάθε χώρας. Κι αὐτοὶ πρέπει νὰ φᾶνε καὶ νὰ πιοῦν τὸ ἀναγκαῖο τους. Ὅλοι δικαιοῦνται μιὰ καθαρὴ ἀτμόσφαιρα γιὰ ν' ἀνασαίνουν καθαρὸ ὁξυγόνο ποὺ θὰ διασφαλίζει τὴν υἰεία καὶ τὴν ἐπιβίωσί τους. Τὸ ἴδιο δικαιοῦνται καὶ τὰ ζῶα. Καὶ τὰ φυτὰ ἐπίσης χρειάζονται τὸ νερό τους καὶ τὴν καθαρὴ ἀτμόσφαιρά τους, γιὰ νὰ διατηρεῖται ἀδιάκοπος ὁ κύκλος τῆς ζωῆς! Ὑστερα, εἶναι κι ἐκεῖνοι ποὺ ἔρχονται μετὰ ἀπὸ μᾶς! Οἱ ἐπόμενες γενιὲς τῶν ἀνθρώπων. Ἡ ἱστορία δὲν τελειώνει μ' ἐμᾶς! Θάρθουν καὶ ἄλλοι, σὰν κι ἐμᾶς, παιδιὰ κι αὐτοὶ τοῦ ἰδιοῦ Θεοῦ, μὲ τὰ ἴδια δικαιώματα στὴ ζωὴ! Δὲν εἴμαστε ἀθάνατοι, οὔτε ἀποκλειστικοὶ ἰδιοκτῆτες καὶ κάτοχοι τοῦ κόσμου, ἀλλὰ προσωρινοὶ οἰκονόμοι, δηλαδὴ διαχειριστὲς τῆς κοινῆς κληρονομίας τῆς Δημιουργίας. Ὁ Χριστιανὸς τὰ συνυπολογίζει ὅλα αὐτὰ πολὺ σοβαρά, καὶ γι' αὐτὸ δὲν εἶναι πλεονέκτης, οὔτε παμφάγος, ἀλλὰ περιορίζει θυσιαστικὰ καὶ τὴν ἐξουσία του, καὶ τὴν ὀρεξί του, καὶ τὶς ἀνάγκες του, καὶ τὴν κατανάλωσι, καὶ κάνει οἰκονομία γιὰ τοὺς ἄλλους.

Μιλᾶνε συχνὰ γιὰ «καταναλωτικὴ κοινωνία». Γιὰ τὸν Χριστιανισμὸ αὐτὸ εἶναι ἀντίφασι. Ἡ κατανάλωσι προϋποθέτει ἀγέλη, ποὺ τὴν ὀδηγεῖ μόνο τὸ ἔνστικτο, δηλαδὴ ὁ νόμος τῆς ζούγκλας. Ἡ κοινωνία προϋποθέτει ἀγάπη, ἀνθρωπιά, συστολή, μοίρασμα, δόσιμο, προσφορά, θυσία! Ὁχι «ἐγώ», ἀλλὰ

«ἐμεῖς»! Ἐνα «ἐμεῖς» ποὺ περιλαμβάνει ὅλα τὰ δημιουργήματα τοῦ Θεοῦ! Μὲ μιὰ τέτοια ἀντίληψι δὲν καταναλώνουμε, ἀλλὰ «κοινωνοῦμε», κατὰ τὶς βασικὲς ἀνάγκες μας, τῶν ἀγαθῶν τῆς Δημιουργίας. Νομίζω ὅτι αὐτὰ λίγο-πολύ ἀποτελοῦν βασικὲς ἀρχὲς καὶ τοῦ Προσκοπισμοῦ καὶ τὰ ἀντιλαμβάνεσθε!

Ἡ Ἐκκλησία γιὰ νὰ βοηθήσῃ τὰ παιδιά Της νὰ σταθοῦν σωστὰ ἀπέναντι στὸν κόσμο, προβάλλει τὴν μορφὴ καὶ τὴν διδασκαλίαν τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ παράδειγμα τῶν τέλειων Χριστιανῶν, δηλ. τῶν Ἀγίων. Ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ ὡς ἄνθρωπος ποτὲ δὲν στάθηκε ἀνταγωνιστικὰ ἢ ἐχθρικὰ ἀπέναντι σὲ κανέναν καὶ σὲ κανένα δημιούργημα. Ἀγαποῦσε ὅλους, ἐδίδασκε κι ἐφήρμοζε τὴ λιτότητα καὶ τὴν ἐγκράτεια, ἐζοῦσε ταπεινά, ἐνήστευε, δηλ. ἔκανε οἰκονομία γιὰ τοὺς ἄλλους, ἐφρόντιζε γιὰ τὴν υἰεὶα καὶ τὸ φαγητὸ ὅσων βρισκόνταν σὲ ἀνάγκη. Τὸ Εὐαγγέλιο τὸ μαρτυρεῖ καὶ τὰ θαύματά Του τὸ βεβαιώνουν. Οἱ Ἅγιοι, χωρὶς νὰ γίνωνται φυσιολάτρεις, ἀγαποῦν τὰ ζῶα, τὴ φύσι, τὸ πράσινο. Ζοῦν λιτὰ μὲ τὰ ἀπολύτως ἀναγκαῖα μόνο καὶ ὑποβάλλονται σὲ πολλοὺς κόπους καὶ θυσίες γιὰ ὅλους. Παραχωροῦν καὶ τὰ νόμιμα δικαιώματά τους, προκειμένου νὰ μὴν ἀδικηθῇ κανένας καὶ τίποτε. Ξέρω Ἁγίου, ὅπως ὁ Ἅγιος Γεράσιμος τῆς ἐρήμου τοῦ Ἰορδάνη, ποὺ περιποιοῦταν ἓνα πληγωμένο λιοντάρι ὥσπου ἔγινε καλά, κι ἐκεῖνο ἔμεινε καὶ τὸν ὑπηρετοῦσε κάνοντας τὶς δουλειὲς ποὺ κάνει ἓνα γαιῶδες ἀράκι. Ὁ Ἅγιος Σεραφεῖμ τοῦ Σάρωφ ἔτρεφε μιὰ μοναχικὴ ἀρκουῶδα, κι ἐκείνη τὸν ὑπάκουε σὰν νὰ ἦταν παιδί του. Ὁ Γέροντας Ἀμφιλόχιος τῆς Πάτμου, σ' αὐτοὺς ποὺ πηγαινάν νὰ ἐξομολογηθοῦν ἔλεγε νὰ φυτεύουν πεῦκα. Ἔτσι, τὸ νησί τῆς Ἀποκαλύψεως ἀπέκτησε πράσινο, καὶ οἱ ἄνθρωποι ἐκεῖ τὰ πεῦκα τὰ ὀνομάζουν «ἀμφιλοχίες» πρὸς τιμὴν του. Ἐνας ἄλλος Ἅγιος τοῦ 20^{οῦ} αἰῶνα, ὁ Γέροντας Πορφύριος, ἐδῶ στὴν Ἀθήνα, ἀγαποῦσε πολὺ τὸ πράσινο καὶ τὰ πουλιά. Ὁ παπαγάλος του ποὺ ζῆ ἀκόμα, ἐξακολουθεῖ νὰ λέῃ προσευχές. Μάλιστα ὁ Ἅγιος αὐτὸς εἶχε μεγάλη ἔννοια γιὰ τὸ νερὸ καὶ τὴν ἀτμόσφαιρα καὶ μετέδιδε τὴν εὐαισθησία του αὐτὴ σ' ὅλα τὰ πνευματικά του παιδιά. Στὸ Ἅγιον Ὄρος οἱ Μοναχοὶ τὸ Πάσχα κάνουν λιτανεῖες στοὺς κήπους καὶ στὰ δάση, ραντίζουν τὰ πάντα μὲ ἁγιασμένο νερὸ, γιὰ νὰ νοιώσουν τὰ πάντα τὴ χαρὰ τῆς Ἀναστάσεως! Στὰ βιβλία προσευχῶν τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας ὑπάρχουν προσευχές γιὰ τὰ

ζῶα, γιὰ τὰ κηπευτικά, γιὰ τὰ μελίσσια, γιὰ τὰ τρόφιμα, γιὰ τὴν ἀτμοσφαιρική κατάστασι (κακοκαιρίες, ἀνομβρίες, ξηρασίες, τρικυμίες, κυκλῶνες κ.λπ.), γιὰ τὸ νερὸ τοῦ πηγαδιοῦ ποὺ τυχὸν μολύνθηκε κ.ἄ.π. Δὲν εἶναι ἀσυνήθιστο στὴν Ἑλλάδα, σὲ περιόδους ξηρασίας, νὰ δῆτε τοὺς Χριστιανοὺς νὰ μαζεύονται στοὺς ναοὺς, νὰ κάνουν προσευχές, καὶ κατόπιν, μὲ τὸν Τίμιο Σταυρὸ ἐπικεφαλῆς, μὲ τὶς ἅγιες εἰκόνες καὶ τὰ λείψανα τῶν Ἀγίων, νὰ κάνουν μεγάλες λιτανεῖες στὴν ὑπαιθρο, προσευχόμενοι γιὰ βροχή. Τὶς περισσότερες φορές ἐπιστρέφουν στὸ ναὸ μουσκεμένοι ἀπὸ τὴν ξαφνικὴ βροχή.

Τὰ τελευταῖα χρόνια τὸ Οἰκουμενικὸ Πατριαρχεῖο καθιέρωσε τὴν 1^η Σεπτεμβρίου, ποὺ εἶναι ἡ Πρωτοχρονιά τοῦ ἐκκλησιαστικοῦ ἔτους, ὡς Ἡμέρα Προσευχῆς γιὰ τὴν Προστασία τοῦ Φυσικοῦ Περιβάλλοντος, καὶ στὶς ὀρθόδοξες ἐκκλησίες μας ψάλλονται κατάλληλες ἀκολουθίες μὲ ἀνάλογες προσευχές καὶ δεήσεις. Ὁ σημερινὸς Οἰκουμενικὸς Πατριάρχης Παναγιώτατος κ. Βαρθολομαῖος, τὸν ὁποῖο καὶ ἔχω τὴ μεγάλη τιμὴ νὰ ἐκπροσωπῶ ἀπόψε στὴ Σύναξί σας, ἔχει δώσει προτεραιότητα καὶ μεγάλη βαρύτητα στὸ θέμα τῆς προστασίας τοῦ περιβάλλοντος καὶ ἴσως ἔχετε ἀκούσει γιὰ τὶς σπουδαῖες διεθνεῖς πρωτοβουλίες ποὺ ἔχει ἀναλάβει σχετικά, ἀπὸ τὸν Βόσπορο καὶ τὴ Μαύρη Θάλασσα μέχρι τὸν Δούναβι καὶ τὴν Ἀδριατικὴ, μέχρι τὴν Γροιλανδία καὶ τὴν Ἀρκτική Θάλασσα, μέχρι τὸν Ἀμαζόνιο καὶ τὸν Μισισσιπὶ, μὲ ἀντίστοιχα συνέδρια καὶ παρεμβάσεις, καθὼς καὶ γιὰ τὰ Θερινὰ Οἰκολογικὰ Συμπόσια ποὺ συνεκάλεσε παλαιότερα στὴν Θεολογικὴ Σχολὴ τῆς Χάλκης. Κάθε χρόνο, τόσο τὴν 5^η Ἰουνίου, Παγκόσμια Ἡμέρα Περιβάλλοντος, ὅσο καὶ τὴν 1^η Σεπτεμβρίου, δὲν παραλείπει νὰ ἀπευθύνῃ ἀνάλογα μηνύματα πρὸς ὅλο τὸν κόσμον, καλῶντας μικροὺς καὶ μεγάλους νὰ ἀναλάβουν τὶς εὐθύνες τοῦ ὁ καθένας ἀπέναντι στὴν ὅλη Δημιουργία τοῦ Θεοῦ. Ἀκόμη, εἶναι γνωστὴ ἡ κοινὴ Διακήρυξις ποὺ ἀπηύθυνε ἀπὸ Ρώμη καὶ Βενετία μαζὶ μὲ τὸν προηγούμενον Πάπα Ἰωάννη-Παῦλο Β' στὶς 10 Ἰουνίου 2002, ἡ ὁποία προκάλεσε αἰσθησι καὶ προβληματισμὸ σὲ κάθε καλοπροαίρετο ἄνθρωπον.

Εἶπα ἤδη πολλά! Σᾶς κούρασα! Νὰ θυμᾶστε μόνο ὅτι ὡς Χριστιανοὶ ἀπορρίπτουμε τὴν πλεονεξία καὶ παμφαγία. Τὴν καταδικάζουμε ὡς εἰδωλολατρία,

κατὰ τὴν διδασκαλία τοῦ Ἀποστόλου Παύλου. Ζοῦμε μὲ λιτότητα. Σκεφτόμαστε τὶς ἀνάγκες τῶν ἄλλων κι ἐρχόμαστε ἀλληλέγγυοι. Κάνουμε οἰκονομία σὲ ἀναλώσιμα ἀγαθὰ, τρόφιμα, νερό, ἐνέργεια, φυσικοὺς ἐνεργειακοὺς πόρους (πετρέλαιο, φυσικὸ ἀέριο κ.λπ.), γιὰ νὰ βροῦν καὶ οἱ ἐπόμενες γενιές. Κρατοῦμε καθαρὸ τὸ περιβάλλον στὴν ἀκτῖνα ποὺ φτάνουν οἱ δυνατότητές μας. Ὑψώνουμε φωνὴ στοὺς ἰσχυροὺς τῆς γῆς νὰ ἱεραρχήσουν τὶς προτεραιότητές τους μὲ τρόπο ποὺ θὰ διασφαλίζῃ τὴν καλὴ διατήρησι τῆς Δημιουργίας, μὲ ἀνατροπὴ τῆς καταστρεπτικῆς κλιματικῆς ἀλλαγῆς, ἐξασφάλισι καθαρῆς ἀτμόσφαιρας καὶ καθαροῦ ὕδροφόρου ὀρίζοντος, ἐξασφάλισι τροφῆς, παιδείας καὶ ἀξιοπρέπειας γιὰ ὅλους τοὺς ἀνθρώπους. Καὶ πρὸ παντός, προσευχόμαστε! Ὅσα δὲν μποροῦν ἢ δὲν θέλουν νὰ κάμουν οἱ ἄνθρωποι, νὰ τὰ ἀναλάβῃ ὁ ἴδιος ὁ Θεός. Ἐκεῖνος ξέρει καὶ μπορεῖ ν' ἀλλάξῃ πρὸς τὸ καλὸ τὶς σκέψεις καὶ ἀποφάσεις τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ἀλλὰ ἐπίσης, μπορεῖ καὶ νὰ ἐπεμβαίῃ δυναμικὰ στὴν πορεία τῆς Ἱστορίας, γιὰτὶ ποτὲ δὲν ἔπαψε νὰ μᾶς ἀγαπᾷ!...

Σᾶς εὐχαριστῶ, σᾶς εὐχομαι νὰ ἔχετε πάντα στὴν καρδιά σας τὸν Χριστὸ καὶ εὐχομαι πλήρη ἐπιτυχία στὶς ἐργασίες τῆς Συνάξεώς σας.

