

BRIGHT STAR



POVERTY

THE PAINTING - BOOK



CRETE 2022

INTERNATIONAL AWARD



INTERNATIONAL ART ACADEMY

Για τη συμμετοχή της στα Διεθνή Βραβεία 2023, η

Μαρία Μαριδάκη

έλαβε Εξαιρετική Διάκριση και η Επιτροπή Αξιολόγησης ομόφωνα απονέμει

1ο Διεθνές Βραβείο

για το Έργο της

“Φτώχεια”

Σεπτέμβριος 2023

Yorgos Foudoulis

Chief Executive



CURRICULUM VITAE

I was born in Agios Nikolaos, Crete, where I graduated High School, I continued my studies in music, (main instrument learning the piano) and Psychology in Athens.

In addition to the aforementioned, I also dealt with business activities.

In the last fifteen years, I was won over by the visual arts space and then the writing of texts, poems and illustrations. My above activity evolved into under publication visual books, with similar content.

Something unique in its kind, we would say at a global level.

This event was crowned with success, since my effort she was recognized, successful and awarded with an honorary award distinction from the International Art Academy, with 1st International Prize to September 2023, for my project "POVERTY".

I am a member of the Literary Association "CRITON LOGOS".

Yours sincerely Maridaki

Mary

with the stage name "BRIGHT STAR"

Translation: Chara Maherianaki

BRIGHT STAR

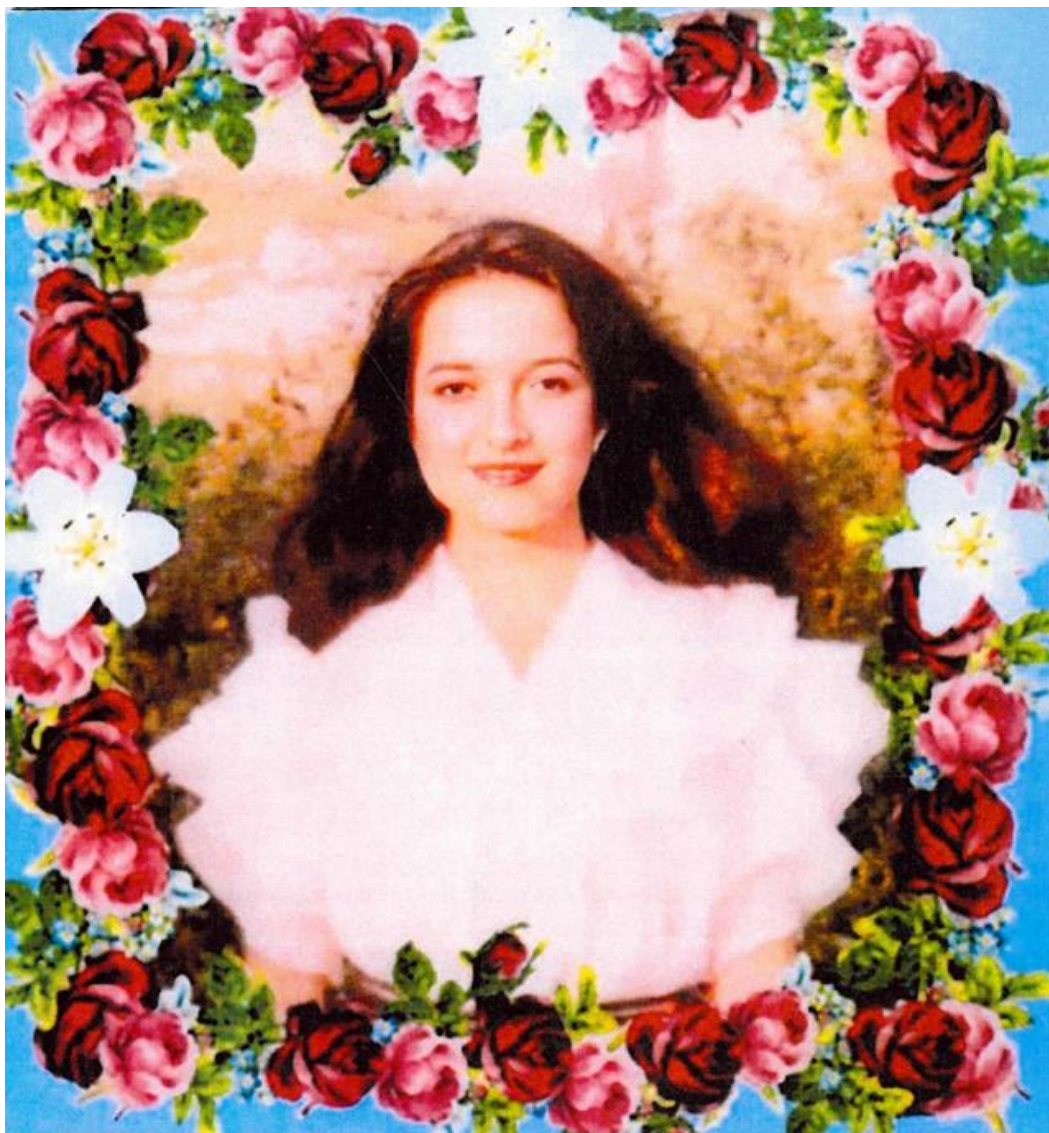


POVERTY

THE PAINTING – BOOK



CRETE 2022



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17.10.2024

International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (Anniversary)

Full Moon

Just like the full moon, this work titled "Poverty" is also complete, which I present to you.

"THE PAINTING - BOOK"

In the darkness of the world, the time has come for the truth to shine once again.

I dare to present my work, because freedom requires courage and virtue.

The Creator

Maria Maridaki

Artistic Pseudonym "SHINING STAR"

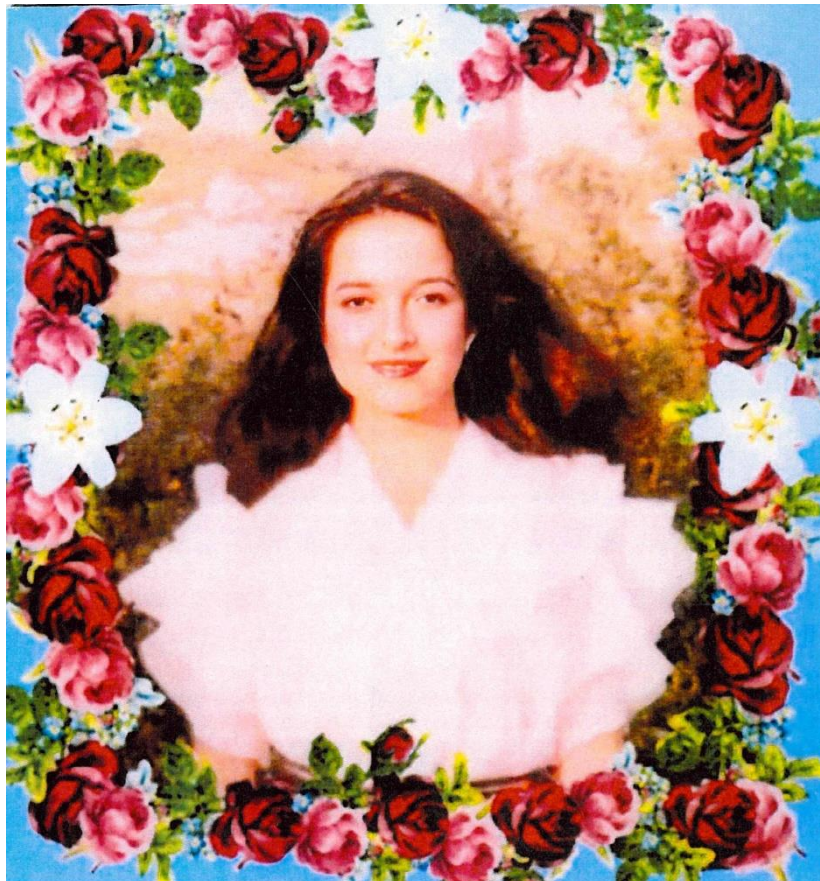


Dedication

Dedicated with love to the poor, despised and forgotten people all over the world, giving them a wish:

To realize their desires and visions in life, walking undaunted by obstacles and difficulties of monotonous and mundane daily life. For the Principle of Good survives against all odds, overcoming every obstacle, to finally manifest its mighty power in the world.

With our eyes fixed on the All-Mighty God, let us hope that He, the Invisible One, who truly loves us, will help us and will never abandon us. We move forward, convinced that a door can open for each of us, a unique opportunity that will one day present itself and change our lives, so that we, in turn, can help others.



**International unanimous award from the evaluation
committee**



FOREWORD

In our technocratic, globalized age, the materialistic mindset prevails first and foremost, and the values of life have, unfortunately, been flattened. However, the true meaning of human existence is not only the biological - practical existence of man, the becoming, but the metaphysical entity of Being (God), which really defines it.

That is why Art, in essence, intertwines with knowledge and truth, rendering its real meaning, as it captures it from a new perspective of life.

The sensible world must function only as a counterweight to the super-sensible world, the eminently true.

The significance of an act is evaluated according to the essence of its content, which is why it is perceived as the highest creation, as it has the spirit as its starting point.

Man, by will and knowledge, approaches his highest aim, which is considered to be the ascent to moral perfection, since his spirit is lifted up to heaven. He thus becomes self-actualized through faith in the True and Eternal Being, which manifests itself in all aspects of his life, culminating in the virtue of love.

This self-purpose is expressed, through Art, in the concept of the High and the Beautiful, as it directs the artist to the idealized creation, enriching the field of Art with particularity and originality.

INTRODUCTION

Through our traditional folk Art and, in particular, the humble and forgotten embroidery, I have been searching for a personal and particularly satisfying form of expression, with the aim of developing it as far as humanly possible to a new, upgraded level, as a new functional perspective, a necessary requirement, in order to clarify and successfully complete any subjective reflection.

Occasionally, Art gives some creations - exhibits a timeless value, since Art civilizes, creating at the same time concern and emotions.

Art offers solutions to problems of everyday life, marking the starting point for a new start in life or, if you like, a new orientation, showing others the way to true freedom and achievement. After all, Art is mainly creation, through which there is every permissible possibility of expression.

In this case, a wall mounted artwork was created, a Folk-Art Painting, measuring one metre and sixty centimetres by one metre and fifteen centimetres (1.60 x 1.15 m, with the carved wood frame surrounding it), and entitled "POVERTY". Made with materials of natural black silk and coloured threads, it is a hand embroidery on silk fabric and its theme is life itself in its broader social dimension.

The artistic Work (the created wall mounted -Painting) is interspersed and supplemented with the present text, which contains reflections, comments and even poetry, in order to bring out the Work as a single, two-part overall "Composition", with the same title, "POVERTY", which, in this way, is thus constituted both by the artistic Painting and by the present text, which analyses and guides the "body reading" of this Painting.

In the work “POVERTY” are presented quotations and extracts from various texts which come from thinkers whose views I have no intention or desire to appropriate, as these come from various sources.

I have, however, turned to those sources with a view to thoroughly completing an as much ideal picture as possible of the Themes of the Work.

This work was created to open new and wide horizons, both within the intellectual turmoil of our time and in the perceived and emotional field that prevails in the field of Art.

It marks, therefore, a different beginning in Art, a new approach to a spiritual and exciting way of recreating - reconstructing the phenomenon of real life, as the work aims at Truth, as the Supreme Principle of beings and the most essential in the human search for Existence during our “journey” to “Ithaca”.

According to the above, this overall, synthetic Work highlights its foundation both in the sensitivity and knowledge of the creator and in her inspiration and experience, thus constituting, in the most appropriate way, a remarkable and entirely original artistic Work, which deals with the grim phenomenon of poverty.

I declare that, as the creator, I will donate part of the proceeds to charity.

This particular work “POVERTY” emerged from some hopeless negative experiences, similar to those of many of my fellow citizens, during the prolonged, decade-long, economic crisis in Greece during the three Memoranda.

I turned with particular interest to Art, finding there a way out, responding, through it and in this way, to the existing and long-standing social problems that afflict the majority of the population, economic deadlocks which, in turn, have many psychological and negative social implications.

The motivation, but at the same time, the intended purpose is always the intellectual benefit of the readers (for the present text) and viewing (for the artistic Work - this wall mounted Painting), respectively, since the Work, in general, seeks to awaken and sensitize people who feel, for various reasons, great frustration, loneliness or despair, by suggesting hope and optimism for a new, creative start in life. The aim of the work is to eliminate any possibility of suicide, as long as they discover in this work their lost values and the true meaning of life.

In fact, during the many years of creating this work, I myself suffered from a difficult and incurable disease, according to the experts in the field. When one is confronted with death, one usually redefines one's attitude and way of life, as well as one's choices, according to the Divine Will and necessity.

Reasonably, as you now understand, I attribute my inspiration to the Higher Divine Power, in that it inspired the numerous thematic units, one hundred and six (106) in number, that I am quoting, as well as the ability to implement and complete the Work.

With its wings spread,
it flies, and struggles to hold on
the soaring flight,
alone in the storms,
his strength
To show us all.

(Lyrics by the author)

Man, that which you love, that too you will become, God, if you love God, and earth, earth if you love.

(Goethe)

Therefore, we also need to speak considering that:

Speak either of things which you absolutely possess, or if necessity requires you to speak.

(Isocrates)

I use sayings and quotations of intellectuals and distinguished fellow citizens to emphasize, by expressing through them, eternal truths which modern man ought to embrace.

Ah! Be the sun, give light! That is the desire of our life... For there is much sun in each of us. And we must awaken it, so that the world can shine and be warmed.

(Yannis Ritsos)

The ability of spiritualization that the spiritual man has to illuminate and warm the world is also reflected in the words of Nikos Kazantzakis:

Man has a duty to transform matter into spirit.

Because,

when we do not give the spirit things that are worthy, it functions (for it cannot but function) with things that are random and insignificant, which humiliate us.

(George Seferis)

For this reason, poverty is not only of a material nature, known to all as material deprivation, which is due to social inequality and constitutes a form of injustice for human beings [Learn how to be righteous you who live on earth (the clear Word of the Gospel)], but also the mental - spiritual poverty and pettiness that, indeed, humiliates every human being.

However, the knowledge of high ideas becomes the food of the spirit, since inspiration coexists with imagination.

Lack of inspiration and imagination will always be the main sin of the wicked, who end up in poverty through lack of love.

(Giannis Tsarouchis)

It can be seen, then, that in the most valuable works, at least among the masterpieces of art, the depiction of the “essence” of things predominates, making them clearly timeless, rightly appreciated and beautiful. After all, Art has no borders, as it unites all peoples.

The possible extension of the axiom is to get used to the horror of being frightened by beauty.

¹Nikos Kazantzakis' phrase is quoted twice in the book: once now, at the beginning, and once towards the end of the book - the same one: Man has a duty to transform matter into spirit. And this is to point out the true “essence” of things.
(Manos Hadjidakis)

If eyes were made to see, then beauty has special reasons for existing.

(Ralph Waldo Emerson)

According to what is mentioned earlier, the work POVERTY pursues innovation in the field of Folk Art, while its content is developed in range and depth, capturing, with the illustrations on the Painting, the artist's concept, which is complemented by the present text, thus creating an original, large overall Composition.

This overall work reflects reality through simple, but many ideas and experiences that define it.

The social phenomenon of poverty remains multidimensional in all corners of the globe, and its dimensions highlight the causes and negative consequences of the phenomenon across the globe.

The Painting, I repeat, includes one hundred and six (106) thematic sections, in order to reflect, awaken and, therefore, lead us to reflect on values and ideals that tend to become extinct in our modern times. Its title, POVERTY, remains indicative and definitive, since it characterizes the years of the economic crisis that Greece, and other then Southern European countries, went through during the difficult decade (2008-2018, until 2019).

The presented work is truly personal, original and, therefore, unique, as a historical landmark that records and preserves the socioeconomic and, in part, political events of our times.

Naturally, I was inspired by the general discontent, due to the austerity that prevailed for a long time in my country, and the prolonged economic hardship which caused a great deal of suffering to the majority of the Greek population. During that period, public information showed that there was an increase in the number of suicide attempts, but also in the number of committed suicides of thousands of our fellow citizens.

According to the publications, during the period from 1-1-2009 to 28-8-2012, the number of suicides and attempted suicides reached three thousand one hundred and twenty-four (3,124) nationwide. From 2013 to July 2015, they reached fifteen thousand (15,000)! But also now, in the years 2020-2021, the economic shortage is certainly continuing, due to the existing global pandemic from Covid-19 and, of course, the attempts to end the lives of desperate citizens are not decreasing.

The message of the Work is not revolution, nor is it the rumination and recollection of well-known events that have scarred and affected large population groups, **but hope, optimism, faith, as a light** “at the bottom of a dark tunnel”, for a safer future in every respect, which people are fighting for and deserve.

This, obviously, is also achieved through individual effort and responsibility, in order to bring about the necessary, inner, essential change. And it is expressed through Art as creative Ascension.

October 2021

THE CREATOR OF THE WORK

under the pseudonym

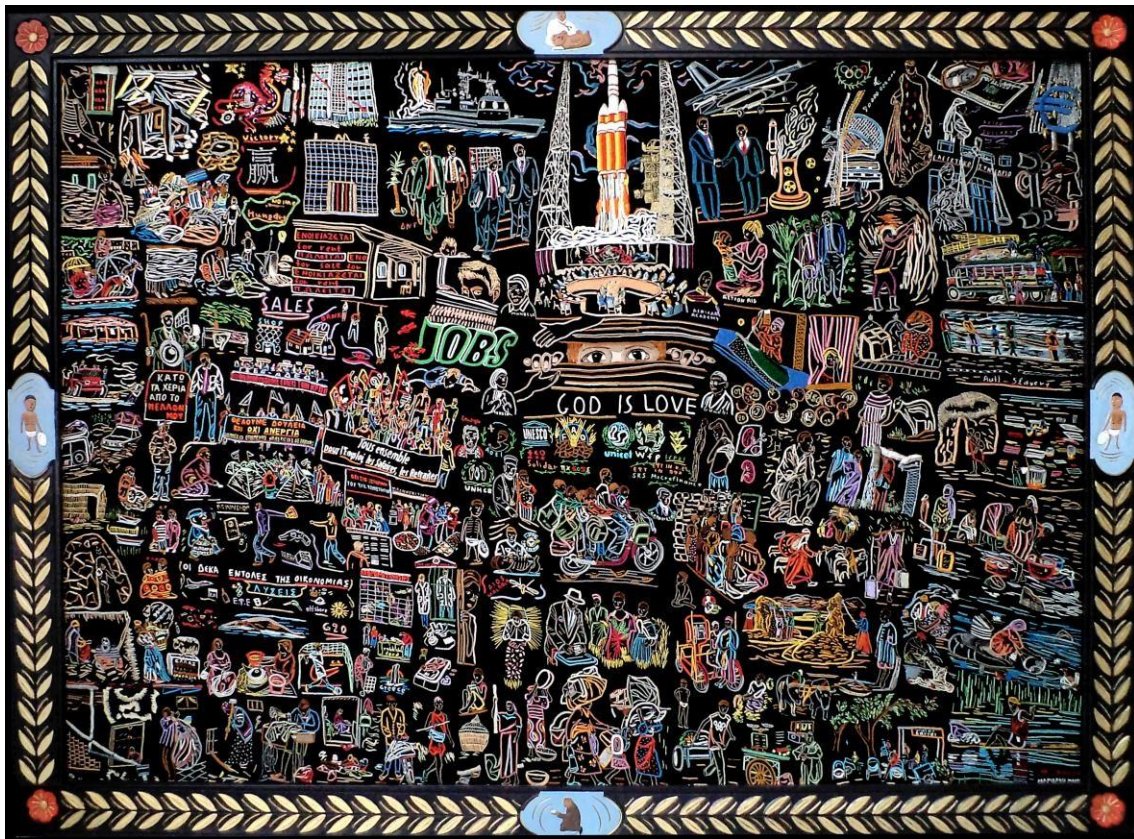
"BRIGHT STAR"

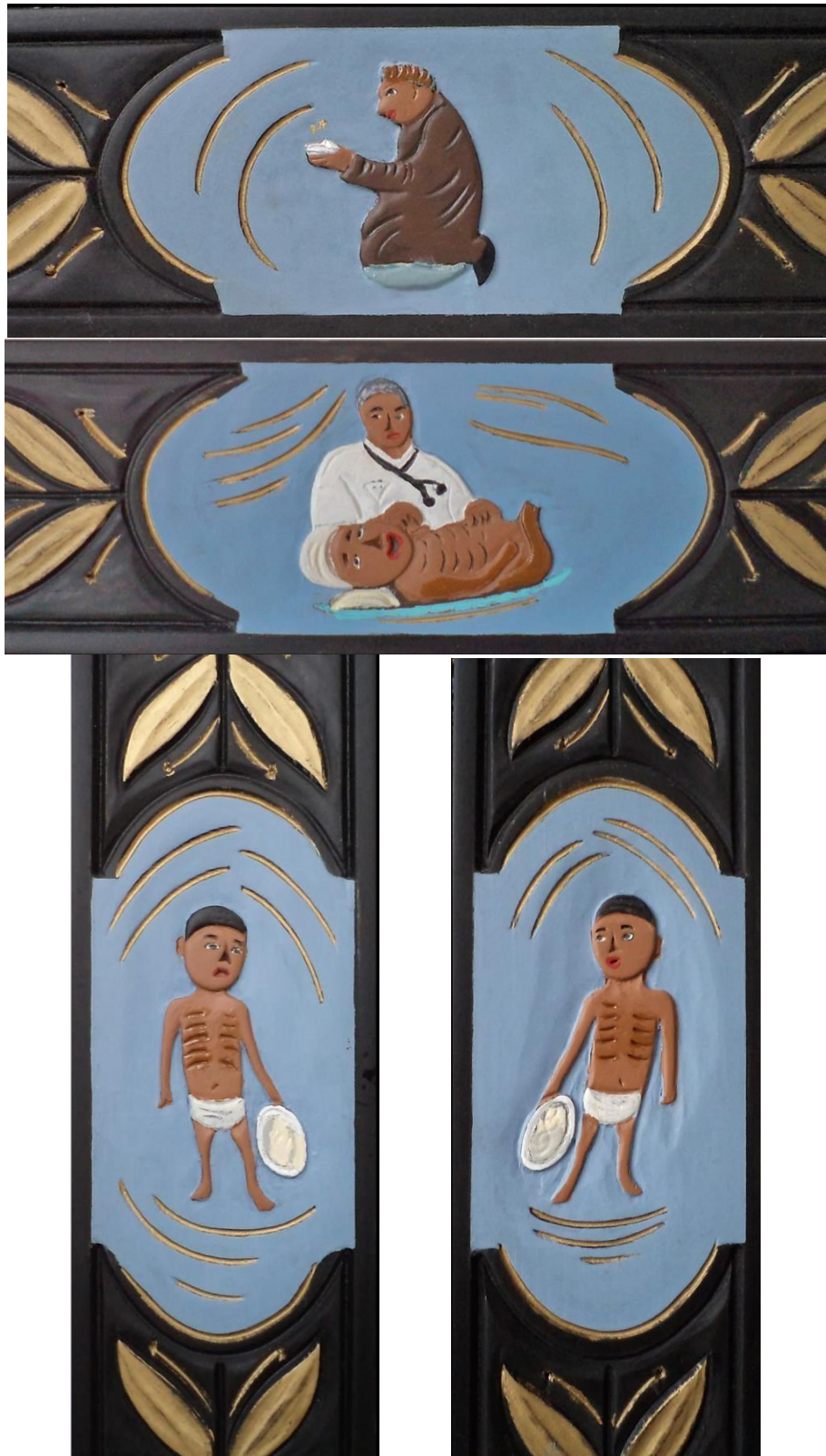


² See also the article of the Athens newspaper Nauteboriki, entitled: "Greek Statistical Authority: Over4,200 suicides from 2008-2016, with a record in 2014" (published on 13-5-2019), at (internet):
<<https://www.naftemporiki.gr/story/1474790/gsa-pano-apo-4200-autoktonies-to-2008-2016-me-rekor-to-2014>>, as well as the Capital.gr article entitled "Greek Statistical Authority's response to the data on suicides" (published: 1-3-2019), at (internet):<<https://www.capital.gr/epikairota/3346556/i-apantisi-epi-ton-stoixeion-gia-tis-autoktonies>>.

THE ARTISTIC WORK (PAINTING)

“POVERTY”





Details of the wood-carved frame of the artwork "POVERTY"

“POVERTY”

PAINTING measuring 1,60 x 1,15 m.

(Including the carved frame)

The more we give, the more we get. The more we love, the more we are loved.

J. A. Livraga

THIS IS A HANDMADE EMBROIDERY ON NATURAL BLACK SILK.

THE PRESENT WORK IS OFFERED FOR PRESENTATION - READING AND STUDY,
ONLINE AND IN PRINT.

AS IT DEALS WITH THE GRIM PHENOMENON OF POVERTY, PART OF THE
PROCEEDS WILL BE DONATED TO CHARITY.

The purpose of life is accomplished when you sacrifice, for this purpose, the small and great joys of everyday life, since you are wholeheartedly devoted to a duty which human existence believes must be fulfilled when it benefits others. Individuality then belongs to all humanity.

Of course, this also contributes to working systematically and methodically, even through whatever difficulties and obstacles arise, without regretting what happens to us, since we always hope for the best. Because, and the result of every action is positive when we serve our purpose as best as possible, and that is what is joyful, to live more meaningfully. The creative purpose, then, becomes the psychic force that reflects the spiritual Light, which radiates throughout time, throughout human generations, into eternity.

The Inseparable God does not fit into human frames and moulds, such as the work, framed by a frame. Because:

nothing can come from nothing, nor something more perfect from less perfect,

as Descartes argues, based on the principle of causality.

Plato clarifies the relationship between idea and thing through the concept of methexis, as he separates the two worlds of “substance” and

“genesis”, thus laying down the principles of the problem of the relation between them. In his work Phaedon, he points out:

If a thing is beautiful, besides being beautiful in itself, it is beautiful not from any other cause than because it partakes of that which is Absolutely Beautiful.

(Plato's Phaedon, 100 c)

The black colour of the Painting is inspired by the allegory of Plato's “cave”. From this is derived and emphasized the degradation or devaluation of the perceived world in comparison to the cognitive or hyper perceived. The perceived world, according to Plato, is like a cave, as opposed to ideas, which are found in the Light of the Sun. Good, then, is the ultimate cause of Being, as

Being is related to perfection. “Being” means to be something perfect. **The greater the perfection, the greater the reality. The ultimate goal, towards which all things aim, is perfection, the optimum.**

(Plato's Phaedo, 97c)

According to Plato, we approach perfection through ideas, since, in this way, we reach knowledge of the True Being, that is, knowledge of the Absolute Good, which becomes an end in itself.

For God said: “Out of darkness the light will shine”, He shone into our hearts and enlightened us, to know the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ.

(Apostle Paul, Second Epistle to the Corinthians, ch. 4, v. 6)

Becoming, change, is nothing but the movement of all things toward good. **The good is the source of being, which is the cause of being and the essence of things.** That is why we ought to give special honour to the good.

As the supreme creative principle, good is identified with the concept of God, who is eternal, transcendent and acts invisibly but internally. Let us, therefore, arm ourselves with courage, as God himself acts for every good work.

For the good is in size and order.

(Aristotle on Poetics)

Let us show patience and strength of soul in toil, that we may win the favour of God and that every possible effort may prosper in us.

Patience enough in toil until something good is accomplished. Charity enough to see some good in your neighbour. Love so much as to stimulate you to make the things of GOD come true, are some of Goethe's exhortations.

By studying this unique work “POVERTY”, thoughts and feelings are generated that flow from the source of life, God, The Absolutely Beautiful.

Evaluating this work objectively, one will judge it to be rare and exceptional, for no artist in the history of the world has ever spoken through a work so extensively that this painting has been turned into a book, thus moving from the beauty of Art, which creates emotions, to reflection. This, of course, is a novelty. It is considered a wonderful, multifaceted work, that is to say, it shows versatility. At the same time, it becomes topical, timeless and always true, great, as a work is considered great the more it touches reality - creating reflection, emotions and, of course, conveying the appropriate messages (it is that which we are called upon to serve, and it is called Art).

When one admires a painting, one remains ecstatic in the face of a beautiful physical depiction, faithfully rendered, vividly, by a master painter. But for all the magic that this physical representation evokes, it has nothing more substantial to convey. This is because the sensory aspect of the painting subordinates, in the work as a whole, certain other, intellectual values. However, a stagnation results from this, which characterizes stereotyped forms of Art, while it brings out in a prominent way some others, which follow their own individual path, without ever being defined by anyone and without barriers, sometimes even exceeding human limits.

The successful ones in Art are usually the visionaries and pioneers, that is, those who discover their own way and way of seeing and criticizing things, and do not use the simple, common and well-trodden path. The important thing is to be able to discover by offering people possibilities of expression for new creations, which, in difficult times, contribute effectively to boosting morale. These creations are expressed through works of ideas, where individuality clearly appears and reflection predominates.

Individuality must not be destroyed and the individual must not become a mere instrument of society, something like a bee or an ant. For a society of standardized individuals, without personal originality and personal aspirations, would be a poor society, with no possibility of development.

(Einstein)³

When individuality appears, this is the beginning of Art.

(Pablo Picasso)

In this work, **social issues** - life stimuli - are touched upon and developed with the aim of prevailing values, which, unfortunately, are declining in our time.

A true lover of Art must first and foremost be an athlete of the spirit.

(Mikis Theodorakis)

An athlete, that is to say, whose personal vision comes from good springs in congruence with the Truth of God, choosing events which refer to the essence of humanity, since, value-wise, they mark a new course in Art.

³ Einstein, Albert 1951 (edition 1975). The present world. Athens. Publisher Maris, p. 34.

The supremacy of Art is thus established, which, first and foremost, is considered universal.
Besides,

Our true nationality is humanity.

(Orson Welles)

Philosophers, simply, interpreted the world in different ways; what we need to do, is to change it.

(Karl Marx)

And the world changes when we each move from theory and formulation to practical love for others, feeling ourselves, constantly, deeply grateful for God's countless gifts. For this reason, the prudent, unassuming and humble artist acknowledges and thanks the First Creative Principle, which contributes, invisibly but decisively, to the final positive result of the work, whose spiritual background is emphasized, which a great work of Art must necessarily have. In other words, the artist reflects on the fact that from an amorphous material he initially possessed, the miracle of composing numerous colourful icons was gradually realised, so that his concept could thus be widely transmitted and his creation could be projected in a way that would inspire others to imitate and follow him...

Inspiration is essential, especially for the poor. The poor would not be so much in need of handouts - charity, which provides them with minimal benefits for so little, without eliminating the existing problem of poverty, if they had inspiration and creativity. Only then would they have the opportunity to change their lives, since it would ensure that they would be able to adequately meet their daily living needs...

Obviously, art that has a moral basis beautifies and enriches life, and it is art that ultimately gives meaning to things, since it eliminates any notion of epiphany.

The most beautiful thing we can experience is that which has mystery. It is the basic feeling that lies between art and science.

(Albert Einstein)

Theology, Philosophy and Art complement each other. Theology expressing the idea of truth, which derives from the existence of God and leads to the realization of the good, and Philosophy capturing that which, from every point of view, remains always unchanging and unchangeable (eternal ideas), and Art, in the form of the Idea of Beauty, create between them an unbreakable bond, through **which the artist attempts to depict reality, transforming ugliness into beauty, darkness into Light.**

Man always hopes to realize his dreams, even if they seem utopian.

It is worth it, my friend, to exist for a dream, even if its fire is to burn you. And if we are told that we are almost romantic, that we are incorrigible, idealistic, that we think the impossible, we must answer a thousand times over: Yes, we are!

(Che Guevara)

Those who refuse the battle are more seriously wounded than those who take part in it.

(Oscar Wilde)

Every work we create, from the simplest to the most complex and difficult, is still relevant and represents the events of the time.

Great works are those that enlighten, as they convey messages of truth to the reading public and, ultimately, succeed in changing the course of creative expression in relation to a predominantly broader and deeper field of issues. These artistic creations remain intact and eternal, since social events are characterised by a political, historical and theological connotation. In this way, inner completeness is achieved, as self-determination and self-realization of the artist, which is attributed, through the external expression of the discourse, to his readers. At the same time, the catharsis of the creator occurs with this novel, special and beautiful creation.

This work, which has emerged through Art, is a positive dimension in these days of economic and health crisis (due to covid-19),

as it conveys hope, optimism and faith to build something great, true and beautiful, supporting the truth and going relatively against the establishment.

As Odysseus Elytis states:

Art is the only remaining opponent of the power that the quantitative valuation of values has come to have in our times.

Les anges sont blancs

(The angels are white)

**... The angels are white, white-hot white and the eye withers to behold them
and there's no other way you have to be like a stone when you seek their company
and when you seek the miracle you must sow your blood in the eight corners of the winds
for the miracle is nowhere but in the veins of man.**

(George Seferis)⁴

⁴ George Seferis, 1st edition, 1965. "Les anges sont blancs", Deck Diary A. In: George Seferis, Poems, Athens: Ikaros publications. Approved by Olga Dafni Krinou.

PRESENTATION - ANALYSIS OF THE PAINTING WITH THE TITLE

“POVERTY”

THE PAINTING TITLED “POVERTY” includes, in detail, one hundred and six (106) **thematic units**, as they are presented, indicatively, as illustrations (icons).

INTRODUCTORY ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE PAINTING

INITIALLY, IN THE INTRODUCTION TO THE WORK, THREE (3) ILLUSTRATIONS ARE SHOWN:

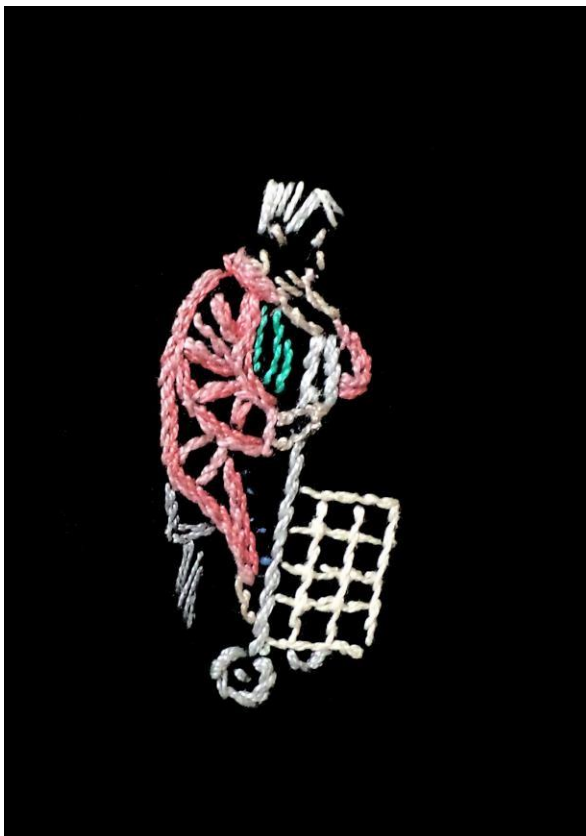
A) THE MALNOURISHED CHILD OF AFRICA



B) ANOTHER, DEPRIVED CHILD, HOLDING AN EMPTY PLATE



C) THE ELDERLY PENSIONER, WONDERING ABOUT HER EMPTY CART



1st Thematic Unit

SPACE TRAVEL - SATELLITE LAUNCH INTO SPACE

IN THE PAINTING, THE SATELLITE LAUNCH IS CLEARLY SHOWN, USING A DELTA BOOSTED ROCKET.



We all know that NASA, holding the lead, spends billions of dollars on space studies and research, as long as it is proposed and widely considered to continually increase its spending for this purpose.

NASA is spending millions of dollars on studies to endure the human body on Mars, and this trip is planned to take place in the 2030s.

But the human body is not made for space. In weightless conditions, as it is 60% water, fluids rise in the chest and head, resulting in atrophied legs, swollen face and increased intracranial pressure.⁵

But that is not all, as bones and muscles are affected, the functioning of the heart, sleep, as well as the problem of radiation, since there is no oxygen in the alien life.

⁵ Source: <www.enoidaotioudenoida.blogspot.gr> (23-2-2014).

2nd Thematic Unit

AEGIS SYSTEM - NAVY CRUISER

IN THE PAINTING, THE CRUISER WARSHIP LAUNCHES THE MISSILE.



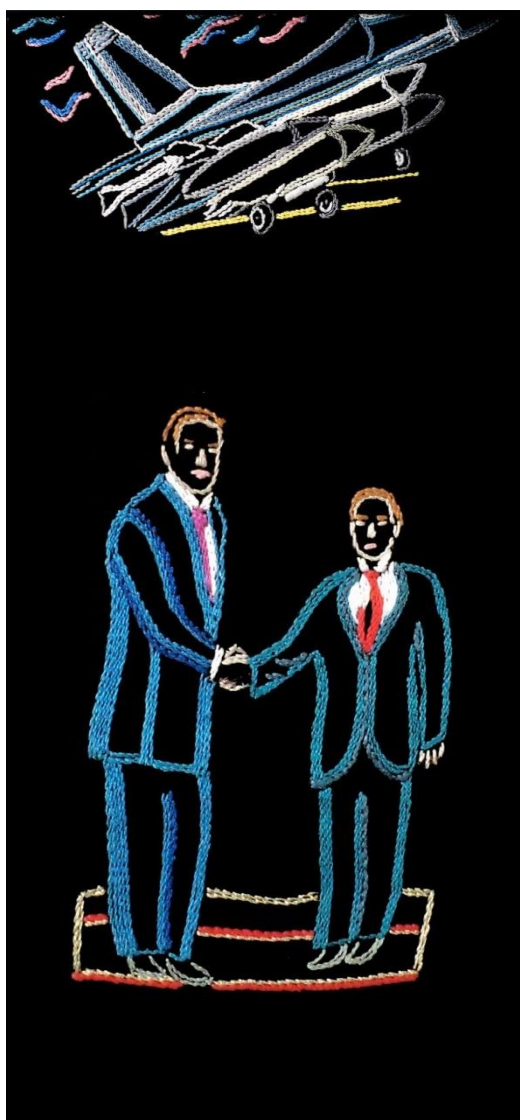
The advanced AEGIS system is intended to shield ships from aerial threats and attacks since it is considered a powerful space weapon.

It was circulating in the Euronaval corridors that the Saudis were interested in three destroyers with AEGIS (with three more in option), solely for the system's anti-ballistic capabilities.⁶

⁶ Source: Flight & Space magazine's online blog.

THE HEADS OF STATES AGREEMENT ON ARMAMENTS

IN THE PAINTING, THE HEADS OF STATES REACH AN AGREEMENT, AND THE FIGHTER AIRCRAFT IS SHOWN ON IT.



A suitable and effective super-weapon has recently been built for the deactivation of satellites.

Several billions are now being spent on the purchase of eighteen (18) state-of-the-art Rafal fighter aircrafts in Greece. The French company's spokesman told the international press that the Raphal aircrafts will contribute effectively “to securing Greece's leading position as a major regional power”.

According to the latest news, Greece, in addition to the Rafal fighters, has agreed to the supply and delivery by France of state-of-the-art Belharra frigates, as announced by the media.

With air defence capability and anti-submarine warfare, they also aim to shoot down long-range air targets, as the new generation super frigates are equipped with Seafire radars. Their purchase is considered necessary by the Ministry of National Defence, because only in this way will the Navy be effectively strengthened, as it is estimated that the

risk of a neighbouring invasion (by Turkey) in air, land and sea space will be reduced, or somewhat prevented.

On the basis of the historic agreement between Greece and France and with France now, in fact, on our side, a Defence Pact was signed in Paris for military assistance from France to

Greece and vice versa, when a threat from a third foreign country is identified, in case, of course, there may be a military incident.

The press has also been informed that, depending on the type of aircraft, the operating costs range from ten thousand euros (€10,000) to twenty thousand (€20,000) euros (!) per flight hour for the Air Force. It is estimated that the daily costs of a frigate are also fifty-five thousand euros (€55,000).

The cost to the Air Force (1990-2009) amounted to 416,362,500 euros for 362,000 interceptions of Turkish Air Force aircraft within the Athens FIR.

(Stockholm Independent Research Institute Stockholm - SIPRI)

Russia, from 2016 onwards, has been stepping up its efforts to procure state-of-the-art 5th generation fighter aircraft, costing thirty to forty billion dollars (\$30 - \$40 billion)!

According to statistics,

from 1999 to 2008, world military spending increased by 45% (from 847 billion dollars / 592 billion euros to 1.226 trillion dollars / 857 billion euros)!

In conclusion, the Governments of the economically weaker countries that spend huge amounts of money on their armament programs for their national integrity and security, are bound to create conditions of impoverishment of their peoples...

4th Thematic Unit

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

THE PAINTING SHOWS THE NUCLEAR POWER STATION AND THE NUCLEAR HEAD.



Nuclear weapons number in the thousands, with a steadily increasing trend, as do existing nuclear reactors, in countries such as the USA, Britain, France, Iran, Russia, Germany, China, Germany and North Korea.

Following the latest nuclear accident in Japan, the European Union decided to subject its one hundred and forty-three (143) nuclear reactors to special stress tests in order to allay the world's concerns. The “safety deficiencies” in the European Union's one hundred and forty-three nuclear reactors have been revealed by Greenpeace, which has carried out a preliminary examination of the results of

the official tests.

The documents reveal a number of technical problems and omissions in the shielding of the reactors against natural disasters or attacks.⁷

⁷ Athens Eleftherotypia newspaper, Saturday 5-11-2011.

ATHENS STOCK EXCHANGE

THE PAINTING SHOWS THE BUILDING OF THE STOCK EXCHANGE, WITH THE GENERAL INDEX OF STOCK EXCHANGE TRANSACTIONS “HITTING RED”.



The picture on the Painting refers to the “stock market crash” in 1999, when many billions changed hands and, unfortunately, with their fortunes wiped out, many of our fellow citizens committed suicide.

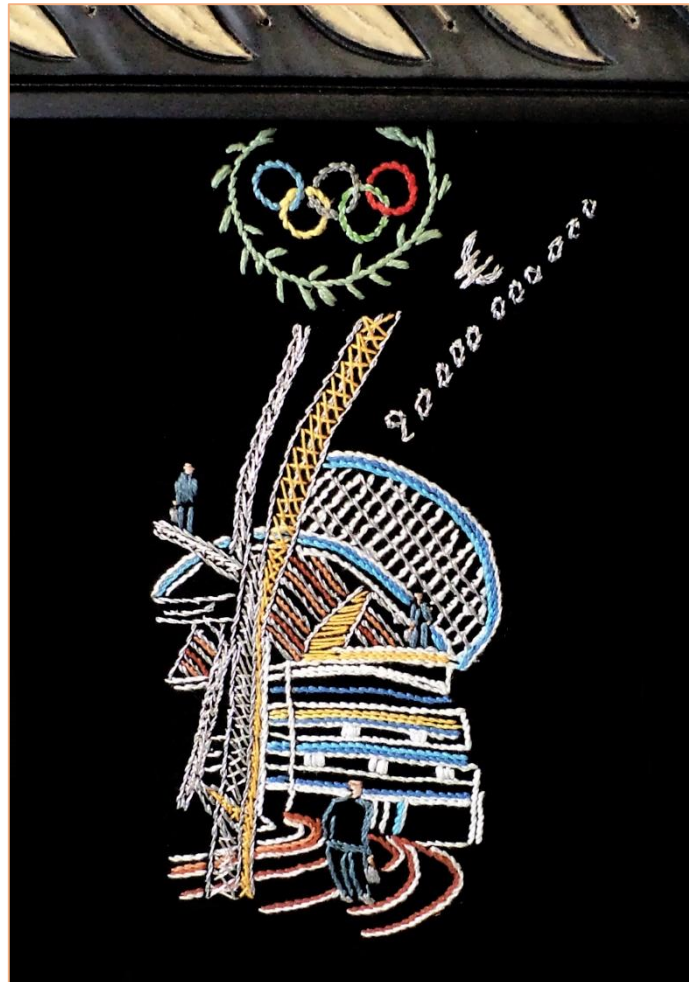
Many billions then changed hands, as the financial scandal was intended to redistribute wealth and, thus, the money went into the unclean hands of the corrupted people of the Greek Stock Exchange.

But much later, in June 2015, with the implementation of “Capital controls”, we had, as a negative consequence, the renewed “plunge” of the stock market index, which prompted Greeks to sell

their shares to foreign investment funds.

OLYMPIC GAMES 2004

THE PAINTING SHOWS THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE OLYMPIC FACILITIES (STADIUMS), WITH CONTRACTORS HOLDING ...INFLATED PORTFOLIOS.



We were never informed of the real cost of the twenty-three (23) facilities built for the organization of the Games, as well as the very expensive security systems, some of which did not work, while it is estimated that the public debt and deficit skyrocketed because of them.

It is estimated that the annual return to the state from the Olympic venues does not exceed thirty million euros (€30 million) per year, despite the fact that the Olympic projects were a burden on Greek taxpayers. Therefore, it is right to talk about their further exploitation.

7th Thematic Unit

IMF (INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND)

- INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND (KNOWN AS “INSTITUTIONS”)

THE TABLE SHOWS CLEARLY THE IMF BUILDING, WHERE THEY ARE DISCUSSING OUR FUTURE... AND THE "HARDLINERS OF THE DFD", WHO ARRIVE TO INSPECT THE GREEK MINISTRY OF FINANCE, ARE ALSO DISTINGUISHED.



“The Memorandum is a one-way street for Greece, and to get out of it we have to implement it strictly”, claimed the then Papandreou government in 2010. That period was said to be a clear answer of the Papandreou Government, to the question of the Official Opposition why we did not go out to the markets in January when the interest rates were low.

<<We went to the markets asking for 5 billion euros. We were offered 23 billion and finally we got 8 billion. If we took it all, we would send the market the message that we are in dire straits. The consequence would be that the interest rates would take off the next day and the economy would be left unprotected, since the Support Mechanism had not yet been set up>>

It was then that, in 2010, Greece was forced to resort to the Support Mechanism, and the country, economically, was suffocating, and as a result, the Memorandum regulations were imposed, which involved changes in issues such as insurance, health, tax system, controls, wage and pension cuts, layoffs, etc., applying rigorously the harsh surveillance measures of the Memorandum.

In Heraklion, Crete, one thousand three hundred and eighty (1,380) citizens signed, in June 2011, an Extrajudicial Declaration - protest, asking our MPs not to vote for the new Memorandum, mainly due to the harsh measures imposed on the people.

8th Thematic Unit

HUNGARY

IN THE PAINTING, THE GEOGRAPHICAL MAP OF HUNGARY TOGETHER WITH THE 'NO IMF', WHICH IS ALSO ITS REFUSAL TO BORROW FROM THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND/INSTITUTIONS.

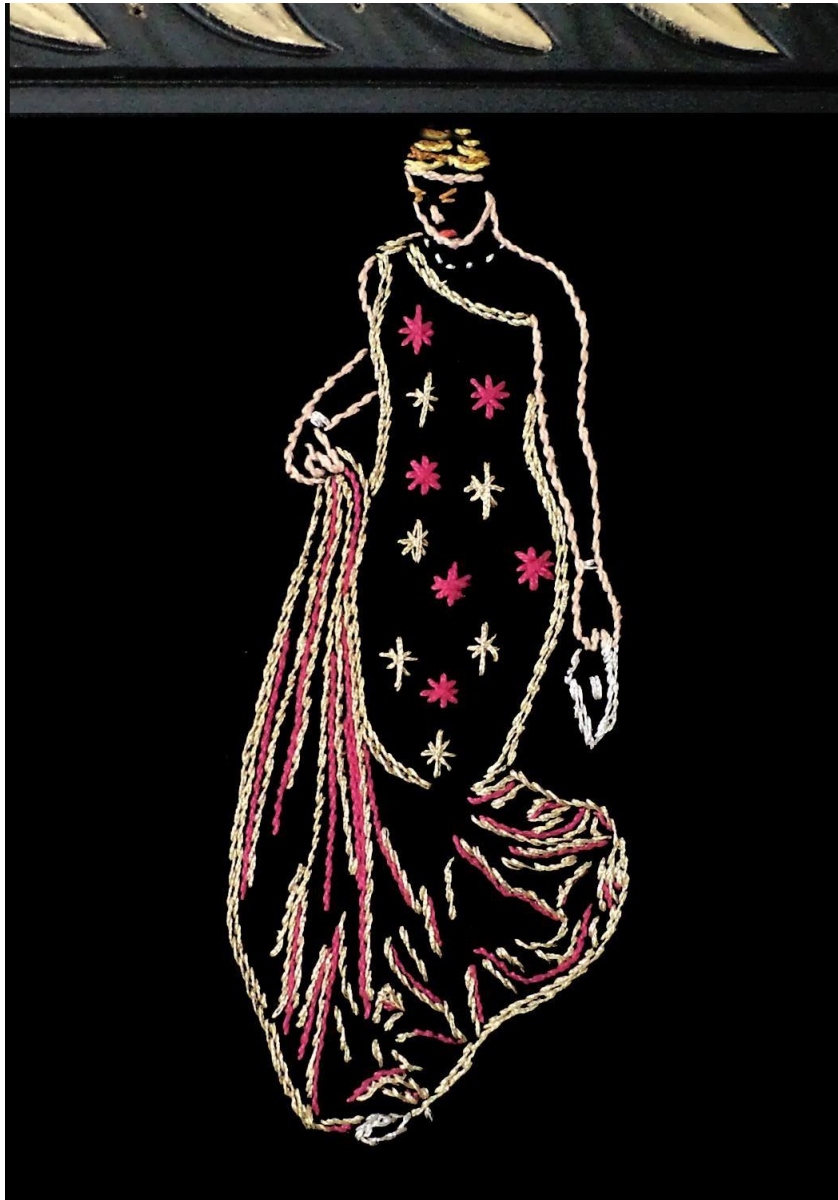


The country of Hungary taxed insurance - stock exchange companies and even Banks, with a small percentage of the gross revenues, in order not to burden its people financially, and thus resisted, insubordinate and proud, refusing, answering with a resounding “NO” to the lending proposed by the IMF (Institutions).

9th Thematic Unit

SOCIAL SHOWING-OFF - ARROGANCE OF LIFE

IN THE PICTURE THE LADY, WITH HER EXPENSIVE DRESS AND DIAMOND JEWELLERY, A LADY OF THE ARISTOCRACY (OF THE INTERNATIONAL JET SET), OF THE 'ELITE'.



But madame:

Happiness is fleeting. It never lasts long. The gods beat her sails.

(Euripides)

I wonder if she ever considered that her own children are deprived of nothing, unlike some other, unhappy ones, who are starving to death every second? How much is that purple and gold branded dress costing along with the multi-carat diamonds she carries on her? Probably half of Africa would live for a whole year if she cashed them in!

The following poem is indicative of Euripides' above quote about "fleeting" worldly happiness.

HAPPINESS

Happiness is like an elusive bird
that avoids the confusion and turmoil of the world
as, by nature, it likes to escape
no matter how stubbornly you chase it.
But if you manage to catch it,
be not sure, for
it will quickly fly again, it will be in a hurry,
for joy is short-lived.
It soon takes wings again
And builds an elaborate nest elsewhere,
And out of arrogance, greediness, and roguery
it stands afar off.
But it likes to sing
With a sweet voice
To those who are prudent
and their lives prove of that.
It roosts in peaceful houses
that are usually poor
And flies away
even from bright and shining palaces. (Poem by the author)

10th Thematic Unit

**NATURAL DISASTERS - FLOODS, EARTHQUAKES, TSUNAMIS, FIRES,
CYCLONES, HURRICANES**

IN THE PAINTING, THE WET CHILD, IN THE MUDDY WATERS, BELONGS, AS AN ILLUSTRATION, TO ALL THREE (3) CATEGORIES OF NATURAL DISASTERS SUCH AS FLOODS, CYCLONES, TSUNAMIS.



THE FALLEN BUILDING FROM THE EARTHQUAKE CAN BE SEEN



AND, IN THE FIRES, THE YOUNG MAN ON THE RAILS OF THE TRAIN.



Man, faced with the torrent of destructive natural elements, is most often unable, feeling so small and inadequate, to face them safely, risking his own life each time.

Over the centuries, hundreds of thousands of victims of natural disasters have been estimated. Indeed, the human inability to overcome them was clearly demonstrated in the 2013 onslaught of the devastating Typhoon Haiyan in the central Philippines, which killed thousands of people.

“How can you beat the typhoon?” said Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin when asked whether the government had taken appropriate measures to deal with it.

“It is the fiercest on the planet. We did everything we could, we had made a lot of preparations. This is a lesson for us,” he said.

11th Thematic Unit

APPEAL FOR HELP

THE PAINTING ILLUSTRATES THE HUMANITARIAN AID DISTRIBUTION OF ESSENTIAL SURVIVAL GOODS PLACED IN LARGE BAGS.



Governments of countries affected by natural disasters are desperately appealing for help.

Humanitarian aid and rescue teams are always on standby to provide water, food, medicine, clothing, etc. to the affected people.

12th Thematic Unit

WATER INSUFFICIENCY

IN THE PICTURE, THE FALLEN PITCHER, LEFT ON THE DRY GROUND, AND THE NATIVE CARRYING TWO BUCKETS OF WATER ON HIS SHOULDERS.



The insufficiency of available drinking water in many parts of the world, below one thousand cubic metres (1,000 m³) per person each year, and even below five hundred cubic metres (500 m³), results in great water deprivation of the organism, which constitutes the permanent water scarcity.

The forecasts remain extremely worrying when we are informed that '1.8 billion people by 2025 will live in areas or countries of complete water scarcity', when the available water, although cloudy and inadequate, is constantly being drawn from rivers and lakes, mainly for agricultural use.

Unfortunately, the unsuitable drinking water remains chemically untreated, causing deadly diseases, with the result that millions of people suffer all the ills of poverty.

13th Thematic Unit

WATER - THE DREAM OF THE AFRICANS

IN THE PICTURE, YOUNG AFRICANS ADMIRE THE SPRING FROM WHICH ABUNDANT WATER GUSHES.



The problem of water scarcity is becoming particularly acute in South Africa, as water resources are steadily declining, with forecasts pointing to a significant shortage from 2030 onwards...

While, on the other hand, permits are being approved for large factories and coal mines, drawing most of the water resources for their operating needs.

14th Thematic Unit

EGYPT - NOT PROVIDING ITS NEIGHBOURS WITH WATER

THE PAINTING SHOWS THE FISHERMAN ON THE RIVER NILE RAFT AT ITS BOTTOM RIGHTHAND SIDE.



This is Egypt's exploitation of the largest water reserve, at a time when other countries, such as Kenya, Congo, Burundi, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Rwanda, Eritrea and Rwanda are seeking to acquire water rights to the river. All these countries are seeking a share in the river, which may happen if the monopoly of Egypt and Sudan ceases.

15th Thematic Unit

WATER BARREL

THE PAINTING SHOWS THE WATER BARREL WITH THE WATER BARREL MEN.



Water barrel men transport water to the villages of Africa, in barrels mounted on wheels, under adverse weather conditions, always travelling long distances.

16th Thematic Unit

WASHING UP

IN THE PAINTING WE SEE THE POND GIRL NEXT TO THE WATER LILLIES.



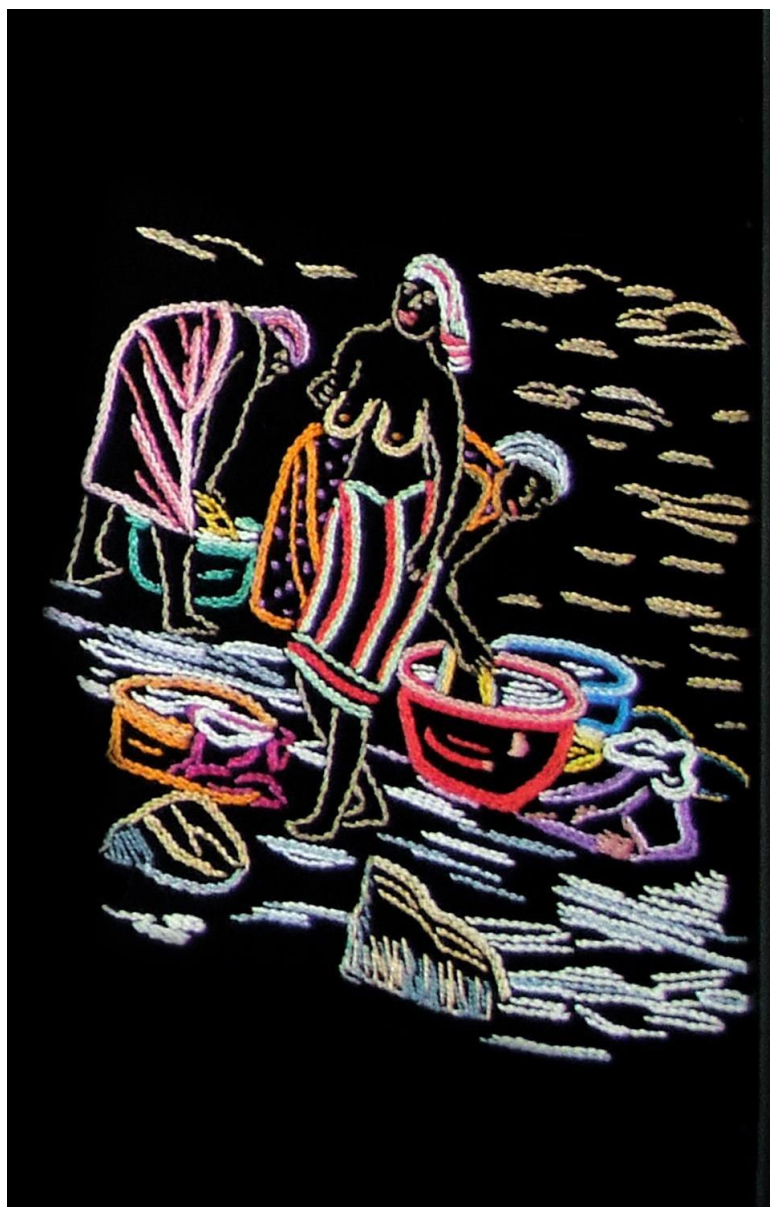
The little girl is washing her pots in the water lillies pond, without any dishwashing liquid. She happily engages in washing them, without grunt or indignation, sitting on a wide wrapped hose.

Thus, she faces the daily hardships imposed by poverty with inner strength and dignity.

17th Thematic Unit

PLASTERS

THE PAINTING DEPICTS WOMEN, WITH THEIR BOWLS, WASHING CLOTHES.



Barefoot but happy, the destitute women of Africa, with their feet in the soapy water and by the river, are busy cleaning their clothes.

18th Thematic Unit

CONTAMINATED 'DRINKING' WATER

IN THE PICTURE, THE INDIGENOUS WOMAN FILLS HER CANS WITH CONTAMINATED WATER.



In a country in Africa, in recent decades a multinational company has contaminated the water table after using billions of litres of water to extract uranium, above, of course, permitted limits. The indigenous people of the region, having no alternative, are filling their cans with contaminated water!!!

THE 'WASHING MACHINES' OF YAMUNA

THE PAINTING SHOWS, SPREAD OUT ON THE GROUND, THE CLOTHING (SHEETS, BLANKETS), THE BURNING BARRELS, AS WELL AS THEIR STIRRER.



In India, on the banks of the Yamuna River, in Agra, workers are engaged in cleaning, choosing the most economical and practical solution.

It is the traditional way, secured by large barrels whose water is heated by wood which is burnt underneath them.

The stirrer, with a long stick, takes charge of stirring them, which is the reason why cheap and poor labour is largely preferred to washing machines.

FOREIGN CAPITALISTS INVESTING IN THE LAND OF AFRICA

IN THE PAINTING, THE EUROPEAN WHO CONTROLS THE SUGARCANE PLANTATION.

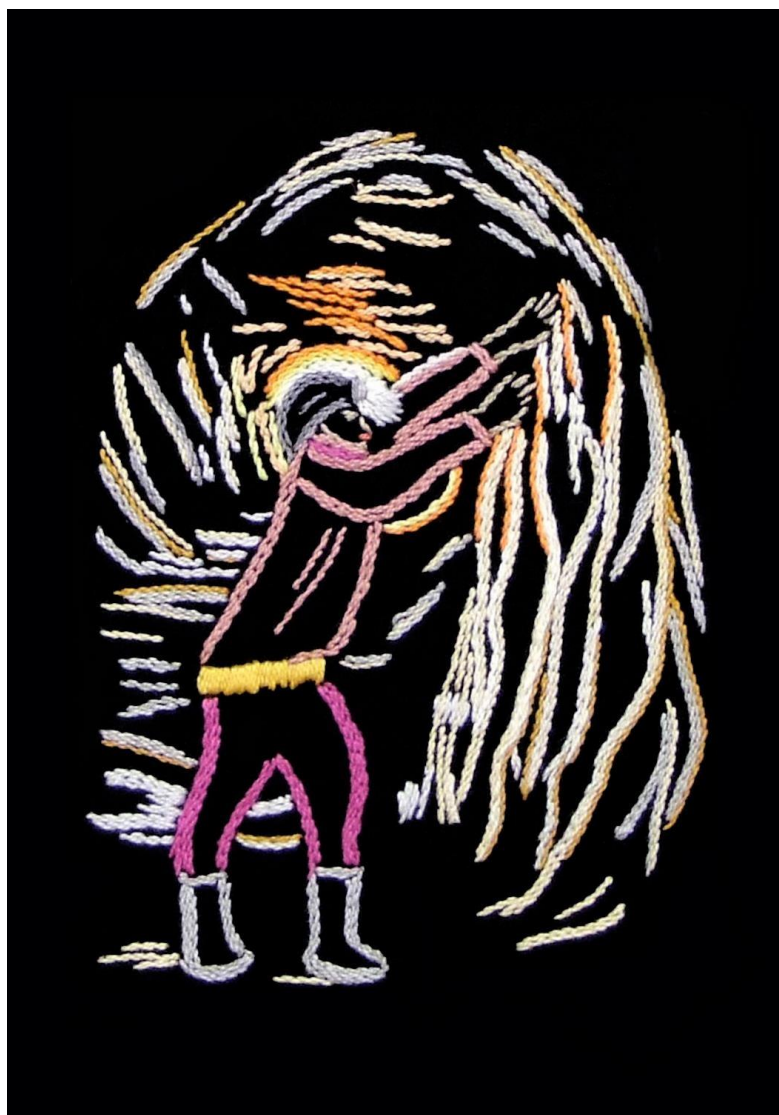


Hundreds, thousands, or even millions more tracts of the African continent are estimated to continue to pass into the hands of European investors for exploitation every year. The land is then always subject to hard bargaining, and deals are struck at very low prices in most countries for purchase or long-term leasing.

According to irrefutable data, the research organisation Food Policy has reported that one hundred and fifty to two hundred million hectares (150 to 200 million hectares) have changed hands soon since 2006, as they have been taken over by wealthy foreign masters for profitable exploitation.

DEATHS IN MINING – “BLOOD DIAMONDS”

IN THE PAINTING, THE WORKER IN THE MINE GALLERY.



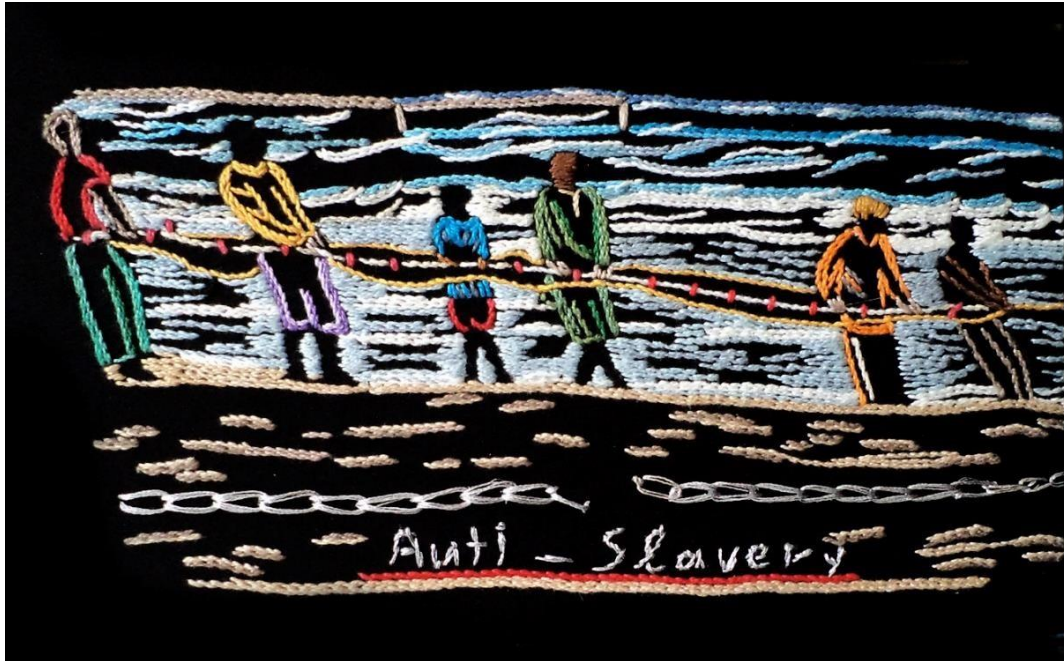
Every day, workers and underage children in the mine galleries are confronted with the “horror of a living” and sudden death. This is because accidents are often occurring under appalling diamond mining conditions, such as the one in Sierra Leone.

22nd Thematic Unit

ANTI - SLAVERY

ON THE PAINTING, THE SLAVES WHO WILL BREAK THEIR CHAINS ONE DAY.

[WRITTEN SEPARATELY (ANTI-SLAVERY), TO EMPHASIZE THE TERM (“ANTI-SLAVERY”: ABOLITION OF SLAVERY).



Worldwide, December 2 has been established as "Slavery Eradication Day", and, unfortunately, even today this unacceptable social phenomenon persists on the planet in various forms.

The exploitation of human beings by human beings always constitutes a form of slavery, whether it is called psychological violence or physical violence (trafficking in white flesh, with women, mainly from the Eastern bloc, being forced into prostitution).

But also in the labour sector, there is exploitation of the poor worker by the wealthy employer, with the meagre and uninsured wage he is guaranteed.

According to UNESCO figures, “more than twelve million (12 million) people on the planet live in slavery”.

23rd Thematic Unit

UNDER TORRENTIAL RAIN

IN THE PAINTING, THE OCCUPANTS, WITH UMBRELLAS, ARE SHOWN CROWDED IN THE BOAT.



People in Bangladesh crowd into boats during the rainy season in order to get to work on time.

24th Thematic Unit

WARS

THE PAINTING SHOWS THE DEATH BLANKET COVERING THE VICTIMS OF WARS AND INTER-TRIBAL CONFLICTS.



Since ancient times, wars have always been fought in all corners of the world, leaving behind millions of dead (World War I - World War II - Atomic bomb, etc.).

THE LITTLE GIRL

Nazim Hikmet

It is I who knock at your door.

Here or elsewhere, I knock on all doors.

Oh! Don't be frightened at all that I'm innocent.

No one can see a little dead girl.

For ten years, I've been sitting here.

In Hiroshima, death found me. And I'm a child.

I didn't make it to be seven, but dead children don't grow up.

First my long braids caught fire.

My hands and eyes were burned.

I'm all but a handful of ashes.

The wind took it too, in a cloudy sky.

Oh, think not that I ask anything for myself.

No one can sweeten me,

For the child that burned like a newspaper

can no longer eat your candy.

It is I who knock at your door, listen to me,

treat me with your signature only.

So that the little children won't be killed

and can eat the candy.

(Translated by Yannis Ritsos)

25th Thematic Unit

CIVIL WARS

THE PAINTING IS DOMINATED BY THE SAME SCENE, WITH THE PEOPLE KILLED IN THE WARS.



Civil wars have always been the curse of nations. It sowed discord among the population where it shouldn't have been. Brother betrays brother for his political beliefs and, as a result, there is mutual annihilation, mutual hatred.

Hostilities are generalized by the use of violence and, by the force of fire, the dead and wounded are now numbered on both sides. They are fighting one against the other, claiming freedom and justice with slogans and claiming, as their principle, the establishment and proper functioning of the democratic constitution in the face of autocracy - dictatorship.

We do not forget the “Gang War”, which left behind thousands of dead, thus making the Greeks impoverished, but also the events of the Polytechnic, which contributed decisively to free Greece from the Junta of the Colonels.

However: When people remain united, they are never defeated.

Fratricides

Help us, Holy Mother,

now that battles fiercely rage,

their cause but stubborn creeds of politics,

with neither temperance nor wisdom, drawing into strife

the children of the world entire.

And may the heart of the sorrowing Mother quiver once more,

at these unheard-of afflictions.

Yet she wonders why must it be thus?

For they were raised as brethren,

in the very neighborhood of her soul.

A ruthless struggle once more unfolds,

from each contending side for in their path

the sovereign lords are blade and fire.

Without conscience, without shame, they spill their brothers' blood,

at times exalting even cruel murder.

Thus do the fratricides sow upon their people

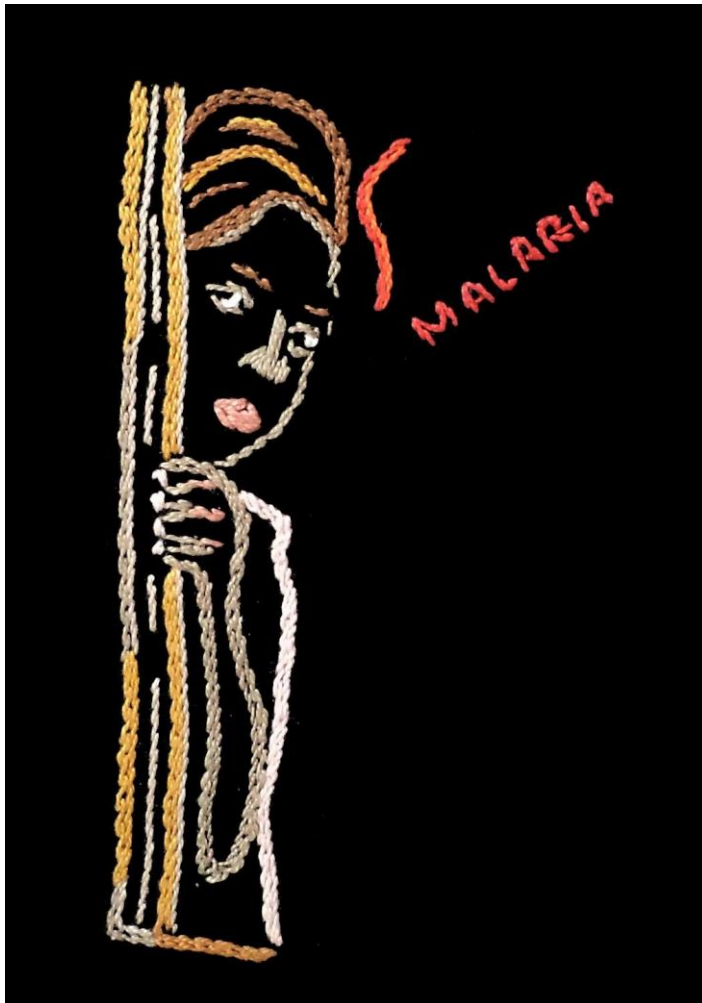
a harvest of every evil.

Poem of the Creator

DISEASES - EPIDEMICS IN POOR REGIONS OF THE WORLD

–MALARIA

THE WORD “MALARIA” APPEARS IN THE PAINTING, AND THE FRIGHTENED AFRICAN GIRL CAN BE SEEN BEHIND THE DOOR.



As has been established, the disease of malaria mainly affects poor populations living in areas adjacent to swamps, through the bite of health damaging female mosquitoes of the genus *Anopheles*.

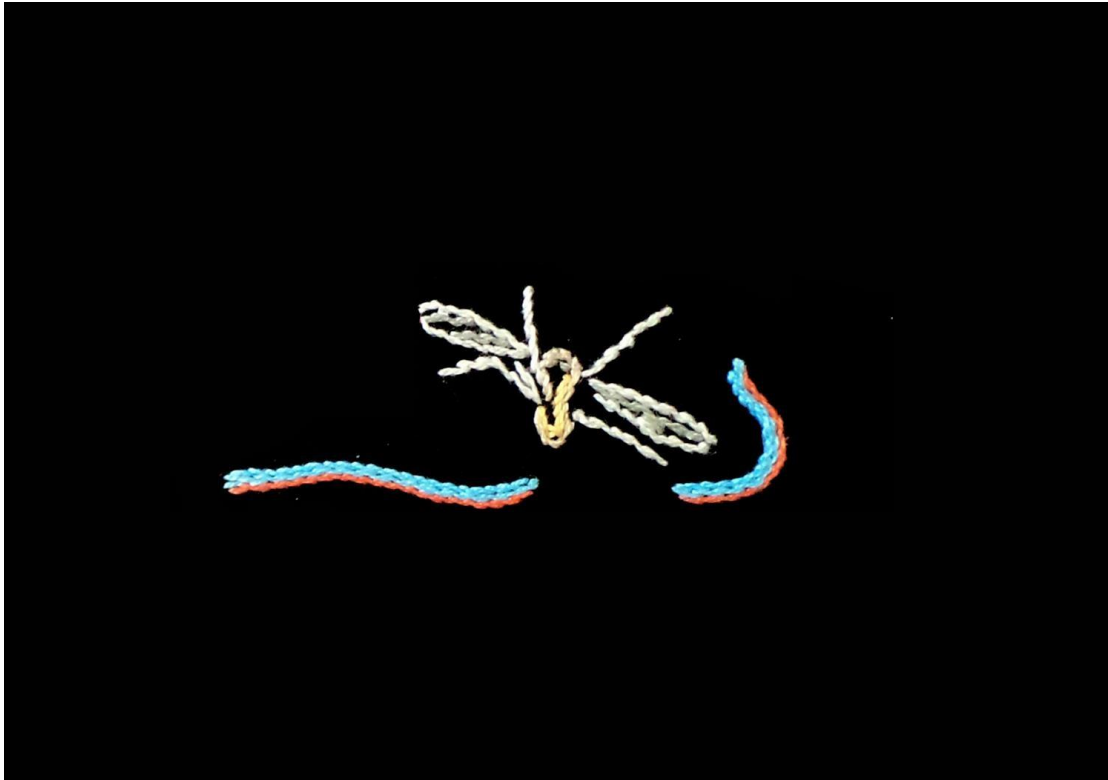
According to the World Health Organisation, “this infectious disease plagues populations in tropical and subtropical zones, decimating one to two million (1-2 million) people and affecting one hundred and twenty million (120 million)”.

But there is a solution when, with a serum costing around ten euros (€10), we can effectively relieve them.

27th Thematic Unit

YELLOW FEVER

THE PAINTING SHOWS THE MOSQUITO.



Something similar to the above occurs here, with the transmission of this infectious disease, for which the bite of the infected mosquito *Aedes aegypti* is responsible. The number of victims worldwide is innumerable, which is why vaccination is recommended for people living in areas where the disease is endemic.

Apart from the deaths caused by an otherwise visible mosquito, now, in the last years 2020-2021, lives are at risk from invisible enemies called coronaviruses (Covid-19).

28th Thematic Unit

AIDS

IN THE PAINTING THE WORD AIDS (ACQUIRED IMMUNODEFICIENCY SYNDROME)



The HIV virus dangerously weakens the human immune system by causing a range of symptoms.

In poverty-stricken Africa, the virus is so widespread that the death toll is in the millions, while carriers are able to survive the disease with two (2) pills a day, costing forty (40) cents.

DOCTORS OF THE WORLD

IN THE PAINTING THE DOCTOR EXAMINING THE SICK CHILD OF AFRICA, AS SEEN ON THE UPPER PART OF THE WOOD-CARVED FRAME.



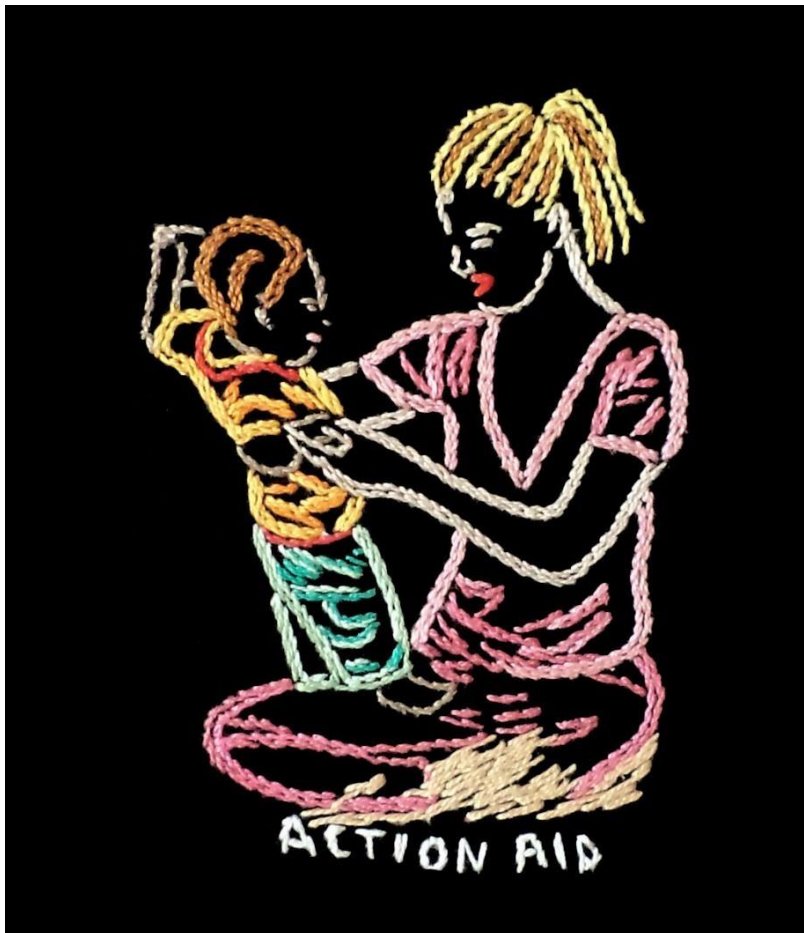
With successful community service work in fifty (50) countries, the volunteer doctors provide the valuable health services to innumerable needy people, as well as arrive in humanitarian aid in cases of natural disasters (earthquakes, etc.).

Undoubtedly, the conscientious and sensitive DOCTORS OF THE WORLD rush, under adverse conditions, to save every human being, as they did in earthquake-stricken Haiti.

30th Thematic Unit

ACTIONAID

IN THE PAINTING THE NAME ACTION AID AND THE EUROPEAN SPONSOR,
SITTING ON A STRAW WITH THE AFRICAN CHILD.



Action Aid partners are doing their utmost to reduce human deprivation in terms of necessities (food, water), but also to help ensure that needy children have access to education in developing countries.

For this reason, the charity is making known and recommending:

Become a foster parent and change a child's life forever.

Fostering a child does not mean adoption. It means supporting a child and their family to achieve lasting improvements in the quality of their lives.

31st Thematic Unit

FOR THE POOR CHILDREN OF AFRICA, A GOAT IS CONSIDERED ... GREAT WEALTH!

IN THE PAINTING WE SEE THE CHILD HOLDING HIS GOAT WITH THE ROPE.



In poverty-stricken Africa, children, when they manage to get a goat, feel rich and happy.

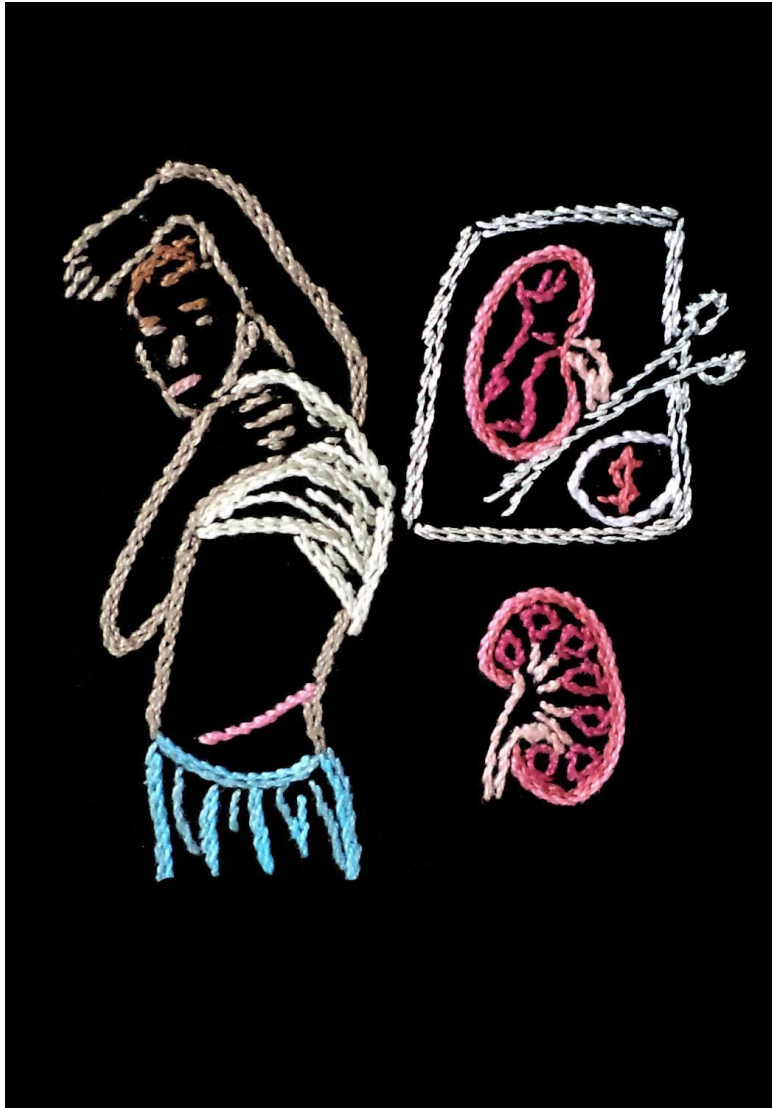
These are the orphaned children of Kenya, who are fed with the domestic animal's protein milk to prevent them from dying of starvation, and at the same time, by strengthening their bodies, they become able to study at school and even achieve excellent results.

In addition, they also save a meagre income, which allows them to stop starving and thus reduce the incidence of AIDS.

32nd Thematic Unit

SELLING HUMAN ORGANS

IN THE PAINTING THE POOR MAN, OPERATED ON IN THE RIBS, WHO SOLD HIS KIDNEY.



When demand exceeds supply, then, unfortunately, the law of commerce applies here too.

Kidney transplants are literally sold in the black market, especially when the people involved, who are desperately seeking a transplant, are rich.

They, through others, are financially associated with poor, desperate people, but also with those who are determined to sell their kidney because of their poverty.

This is a common phenomenon, considering that patients have to wait up to five (5) years to find a compatible donor in order

to obtain a life-saving transplant from a living donor, sometimes even more than twenty (20) years.

TRAFFIC LIGHTS CHILDREN

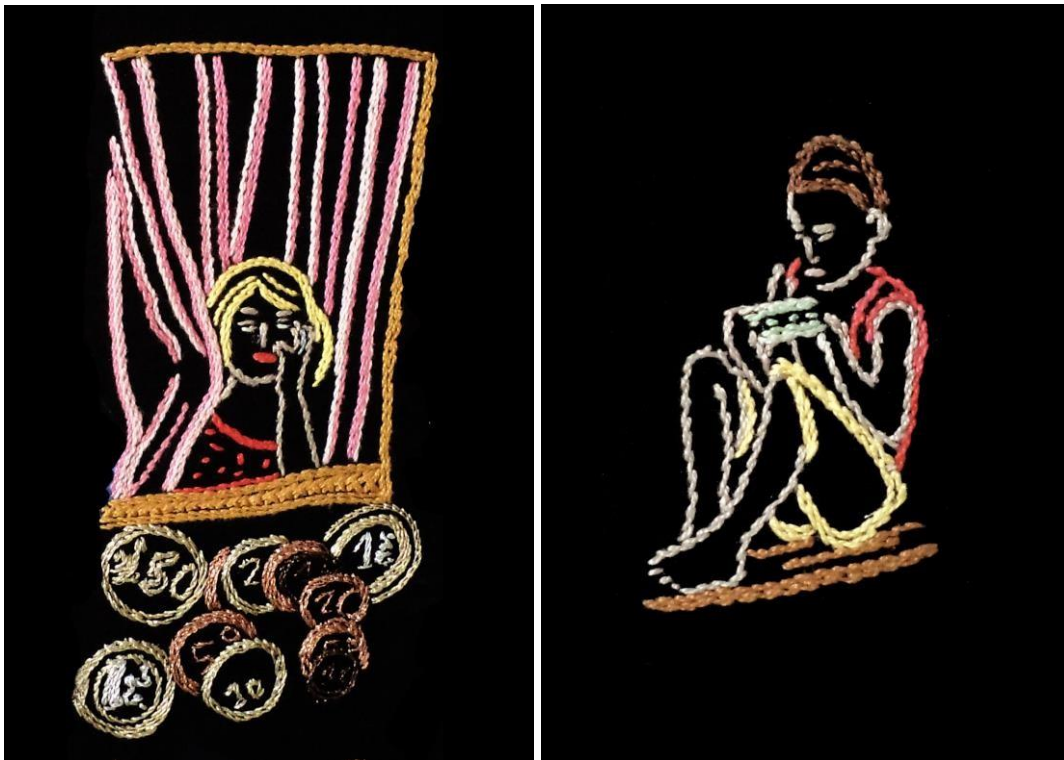
IN THE PAINTING, THE LITTLE CHILD THAT CLEANS THE WINDSCREENS OF THE CAR AND SELLS TISSUES FOR PENNIES, AND THE LITTLE CHILD WITH THE BIG ASHTRAY.



In the old days, there were countless 'traffic lights boys', busy cleaning car windscreens, offering drivers a packet of tissues. In this way, they saved a few coins. In recent years, however, they have disappeared from traffic lights because of the strict legislation since child begging is strictly prohibited. During the period when they were cleaning the cars, many of them disappeared...

CHILD PROSTITUTION

THE PAINTING SHOWS THE GIRL IN THE WINDOW WITH THE PINK CURTAIN, THE EUROPEAN COINS AND THE LITTLE BOY WITH THE BANK NOTE.



Innocent children, at their tenderest age, face the harsh face of life, pushed by extreme poverty, often by their own parents, in order for all the other members of the same family to survive. Mostly in Southeast Asian countries, even the youngest children are forced into prostitution to meet basic survival needs.

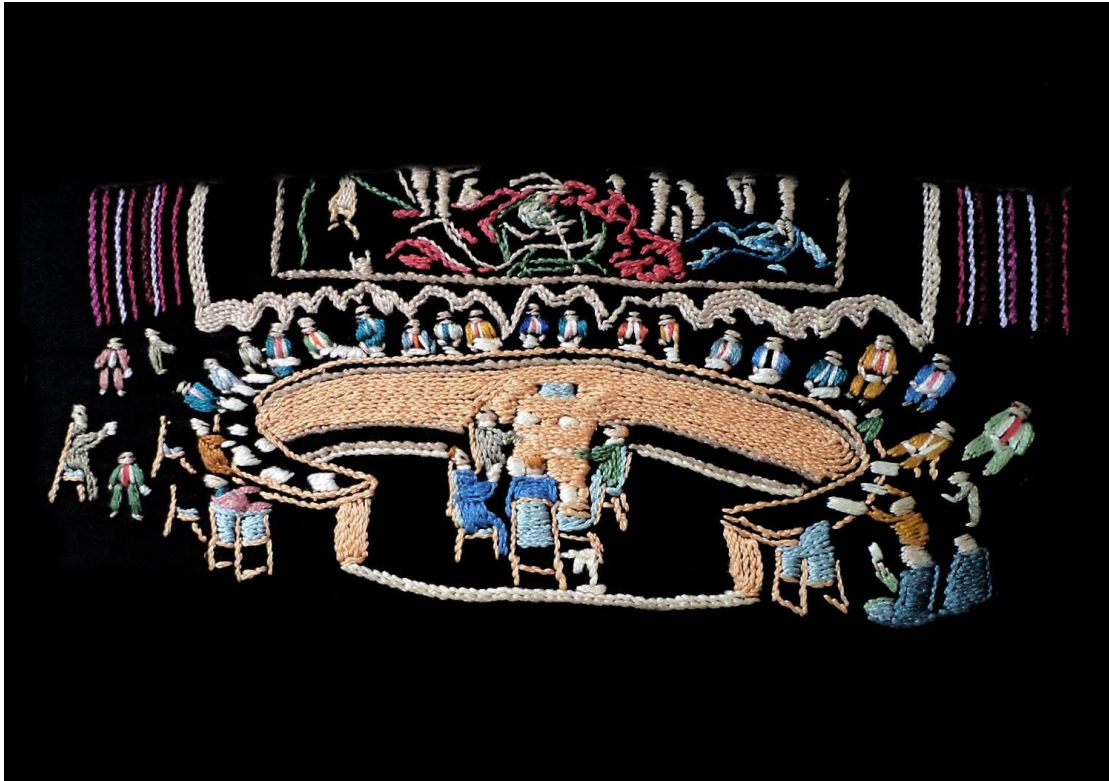
The view of the vulnerable and defenceless ten-year-old girl in the window of the pink curtained shack is the one that is captured in the Painting. The little girl worries, wonders, fears and is depressed, since many see her only as an object of exploitation and satisfaction of their brutal desires.

Alas! All these poor little children will fall too low! The price is high!!!! But no motive can justify the human exploitation promoted by child prostitution.

35th Thematic Unit

THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON POVERTY

THE PAINTING SHOWS THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ROOM.



The United Nations (UN) highlights: “The number of poor countries will double in the next forty (40) years. The number of people in extreme poverty has increased to over four hundred and twenty-one million (421,000,000). Unfortunately, the traditional models that have been applied have not worked,” the UN Secretary-General had stated at a press conference.

The accepted solutions have, therefore, proved ineffective, and new solutions are constantly being sought in order for a modern model of social welfare to work properly and successfully to reduce poverty.

The UN Summit met in Monrovia, the capital of Liberia, to support poor developing countries, with the aim of combating poverty and ensuring that the most serious social inequalities are eliminated. The eight (8) “indicators” of poverty and hunger, defined by the late economist-sociologist David Gordon, became internationally accepted and are now the official United Nations Guide to the definition of absolute poverty:

As soon as any person does not meet at least two (2) of at least **eight (8) conditions** and, in particular:

1. **Diet:** Body Mass Index to be above 16.
2. **Safe drinking water**, accessible in less than fifteen minutes (15 minutes) on foot.
3. **Hygiene facilities:** toilets, private and public, either inside or near the house.
4. **Health:** the provision of immediate medical care to everyone is considered imperative.
5. **Shelter:** People staying in one (1) room is recommended to be less than four (4). Floors will not be roughly made of mud or clay, nor will they be unclean.
6. **Education:** Citizens will all attend school or, at least, not be illiterate.
7. **Information:** Everyone needs to have access to a telephone, radio, newspaper, television and computer within the home.
8. **Access to services:** Kindergartens, Schools, Day Care Centres, Public Services, Colleges, Universities and financial companies (Banks, Insurance companies etc.).

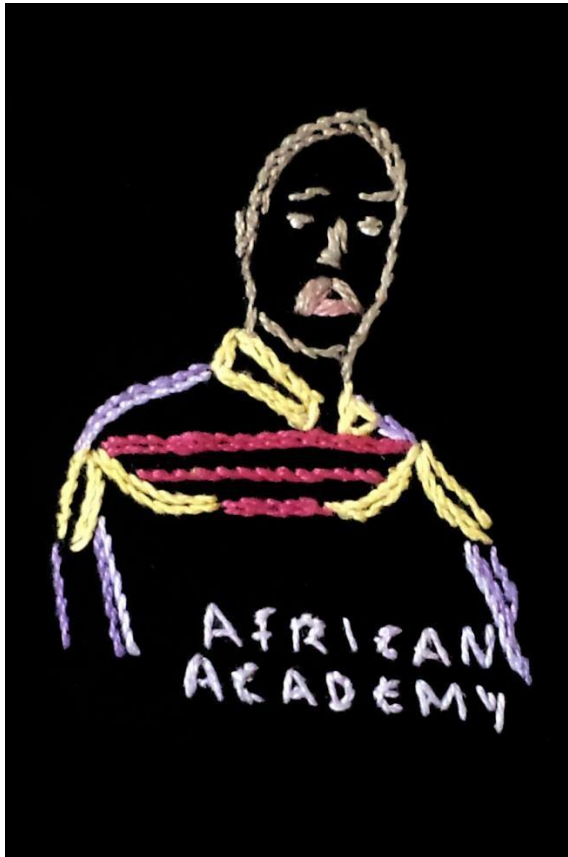
When at least two (2) of the eight (8) conditions are not met, then the person is below the absolute poverty line.

After this brief digression, let us proceed with the analysis of the work.

36th Thematic Unit

AFRICAN ACADEMY

THE PAINTING DEPICTS THE AFRICAN LEADER OF THE AFRICAN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY.



In Johannesburg, excellent students from forty (40) African countries attend the model academy from which Africa's future leaders come. They are, for the most part, poor children, who lived in slums and camps.

The demands of the African Leadership Academy

on its students are quite high, as they have to demonstrate new ideas on the social and political problems of developing African countries, the main one being the fight against poverty.

Let us then get to know some world-class leaders.

37th Thematic Unit

NELSON MANDELA

THE PAINTING SHOWS THE LEADER - SYMBOL OF SOCIAL STRUGGLES
NELSON MANDELA.

The Leader - symbol for the abolition of racial segregation (Apartheid) was the President who, decisively, contributed and contributed to the reduction of poverty. His words remain in our minds always, as bright signposts of life:



If there are dreams of a beautiful South Africa, then there are roads that lead to their goal. Two of these roads could be called “kindness” and “forgiveness”.

Poverty, like slavery, like apartheid, is not caused by nature, but by man.

Fighting poverty is not an act of charity, it is an act of justice.

A statesman of integrity and a staunch defender of human rights taught us

not to accept the world as it is,

and he also taught us that

we can play our part in making the world as it should be.

38th Thematic Unit

MOTHER TERESA

IN THE PAINTING, MOTHER TEREZA PRAYS.



Mother Teresa has emerged as a symbol of practical love, as she offered so many beneficial works to the community for more than fortyfive (45) years. She founded schools, orphanages, and was particularly concerned with the care and concern of the poor.

As she mentioned,
my calling from God was to the poorest of the poor.

It does not matter whether our offering to the poor is small or large, but how much love is contained in that offering.

GANDHI

THE PAINTING SHOWS THE LEADING FIGURE OF THE GREAT POLITICIAN GANDHI.



As a prominent leading figure, Gandhi contributed quite significantly to reduce the poverty of his fellow citizens. He condemned the use of violence, influenced by Christ's "Sermon on the Mount".

The deadliest form of violence is poverty, says Gandhi's Great Soul.

Non-violence, like truth, according to Gandhi, is closely related, so that,

non-violence is the means; Truth is the end.

I obey the Truth. It is the only principle to which I am devoted.

And all this contrasts with some common, yet destructive sins.

THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS

- *Riches without work*
- *Entertainment without conscience and moderation*
- *Knowledge without character*
- *Business dealings without morality*
- *Science without humanity*
- *Faith without sacrifice and*
- *Politics without principles.*

KAPODISTRIAS

IN THE PAINTING, THE FIGURE OF THE GREEK GOVERNOR IS CLEARLY VISIBLE.



He remains the only Greek politician who refused his salary (1829), in as much as Kapodistrias wished to abstain from public money, up to an obolus, for his own use, and that for the contribution and benefit of the community.

At that time, Kapodistrias founded an orphanage in Aegina, and Panoraia Chatzikosta, nicknamed “Psorokostaina”, washed the clothes of orphaned children for free.

Although she herself was a great lady, her entire family and her children were slaughtered in Asia Minor by the Turks. She survived, since then alone, poor and sick. After the horrific massacre of her family, she took the lead in the struggle for the fighting Messolonghi, offering what she had left: her silver ring and one (1) piaster, for the financial support of the struggle, setting an example to the rest of her fellow citizens.

From then on, the specific description “Psorokostaina”, uttered by a Member of Parliament, has been identified with poverty and attributed to Greece.

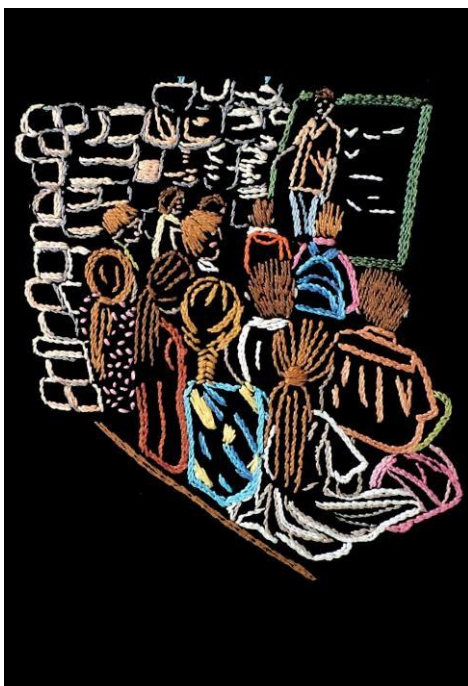
41st Thematic Unit

EDUCATION

THE PAINTING SHOWS THE FATHER, WITH HIS CHILDREN ON THE MOTORBIKE,
ON HIS WAY TO SCHOOL.



AND THE CHILDREN, SEATED ON THE FLOOR, WATCHING THE LESSON.



Where a school is built, a prison is closed.

Victor Hugo

Education is the second sun for people.

Plato

On his overloaded motorbike, a father with many
children crosses a potholed road, heading for his
children's school.

But apart from the unpaved roads, children, in poor and developing countries, went to School without desks, attending classes sitting on the ground.

The illiteracy rates prevalent in African countries remain quite high, demonstrating the magnitude of the problem.

However, school is children's progress in life - their future, which they build for themselves, for their intellectual advancement, but also for their subsequent economic autonomy and social advancement.

Education is a driving force of the sharpness of the mind, to think, to judge, to choose, to act, or even to react, therefore, it often has the ability to ... resist!

Besides, learning is like a horizon without limits, and when we despise the acquisition of knowledge, we make many people live in ignorance, which also causes many mistakes, which make them suffer.

Therefore:

Knowledge is to the spirit what the eyes are to the body, that is, the light of the intellect.

On the contrary, ignorance and illiteracy, darkness.

(Plutarch)

Without learning, neither art nor science can be acquired.

(Democritus)

Particularly in our demanding times, at least in developed countries where young people have access to all levels of education, talent can coexist and complement existing knowledge, which is certified by Education.

Neither talent without education nor education without talent can make a perfect artist.

(Vitruvius)

By possessing knowledge, you can and must fight ignorance and illiteracy.

By possessing truth, you can and must banish falsehood and deceit.

By possessing beauty, you can and must eliminate ugliness.

By possessing Virtue, you can and must resist violence, hatred and vulgarity.

(Marios Ploritis.)

Learning without thinking is wasted energy. Thinking without learning is a dangerous thing.

(Confucius)

Often busy people refuse to recognize ideas and to delve into eternal truths which touch upon the super-sensual mental world. This is why our Ecclesiastic Father **St. Gregory** points out:

Not to know is ignorance. But not to want to know is arrogance.

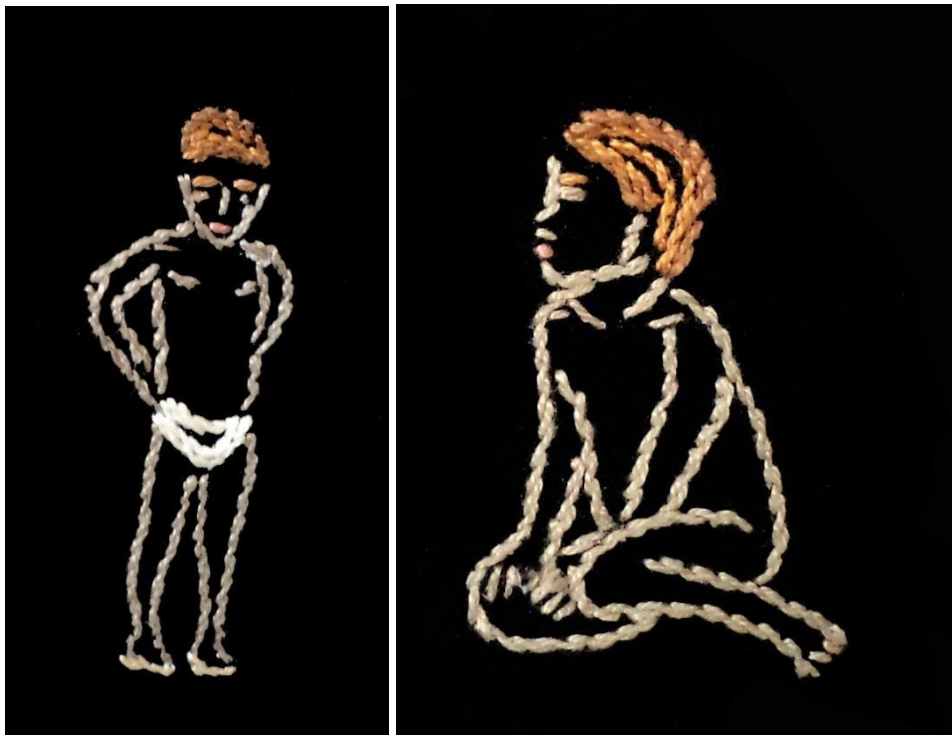
Illiteracy is the mother of all suffering.

(Pythagoras)

42nd Thematic Unit

UNICEF

THE PAINTING DEPICTS THE UNICEF LOGO, AS WELL AS THE TWO YOUNG CHILDREN AWAITING HELP.



We all know the importance and mission of UNICEF's intergovernmental organization to meet the short-term and long-term needs of poor children in the so-called "Third World".

One thousand eight hundred (1,800) children die every day because of unclean water and poor sanitation and hygiene conditions, UNICEF points out.

Sometimes we focus on the numbers and fail to see the human tragedies behind every statistic,` argues in an interview Sanjay Wijesekera, UNICEF's Head of the Water and Sanitation Sector.

The statistics that have been made public and accepted internationally remain shocking, as it is estimated that

115,000,000 children do not go to school, 510,000 children died of AIDS in 2004 and 1,200,000 children are victims of organ trafficking.

An estimated 5 700 000 people work in slavery and 2 000 000 000 children die each year due to lack of clean water and sanitation.

In addition, another 2 million children were killed in civil conflicts in the 1990s, 6 million live with permanent disabilities and 12 million children remain homeless.

There are also 1.8 million victims of prostitution and pornography, 146 million children are undernourished, and millions more are estimated to be orphans.

Let us, therefore, realise that millions of defenceless poor children are dying helplessly, and let us become helpers in works of love by giving them from our surplus or even from our savings.

Moreover, in order to provide them with the necessities for their survival, we must strive vigorously in this direction, and this will certainly be the greatest spiritual gain for us.

If somewhere in the world one of our fellow human beings is suffering and being wronged, then we must sympathize and fight for it.

(Che Guevara)

43rd Thematic Unit

FAO (FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANISATION)

THE PAINTING SHOWS THE FAO LOGO.



The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is now also active at an international level, aiming to improve the quality of agricultural, livestock and fishery products to feed the population of economically weaker countries.

FAO believes that “the increased demand for food will continue to exert pressure on commodity markets and will be a highly volatile trend, affecting consumers and producers”.

44th Thematic Unit

WFP

(WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME)

THE PAINTING SHOWS THE WFP LOGO.



The World Food Programme aims to reduce and combat malnutrition and hunger. Its members are altruistic in that they strive not only to meet the material needs of needy citizens, but also to save lives from natural disasters and wars.

45th Thematic Unit

UNESCO
(UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC, AND CULTURAL
ORGANISATION)

THE PAINTING SHOWS UNESCO LOGO.



The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation develops activities in areas related to scientific progress, education and culture of its Member States. It is oriented and acts in positive directions, contributing to the prevalence of human values and world peace, and promotes programmes to combat poverty.

46th Thematic Unit

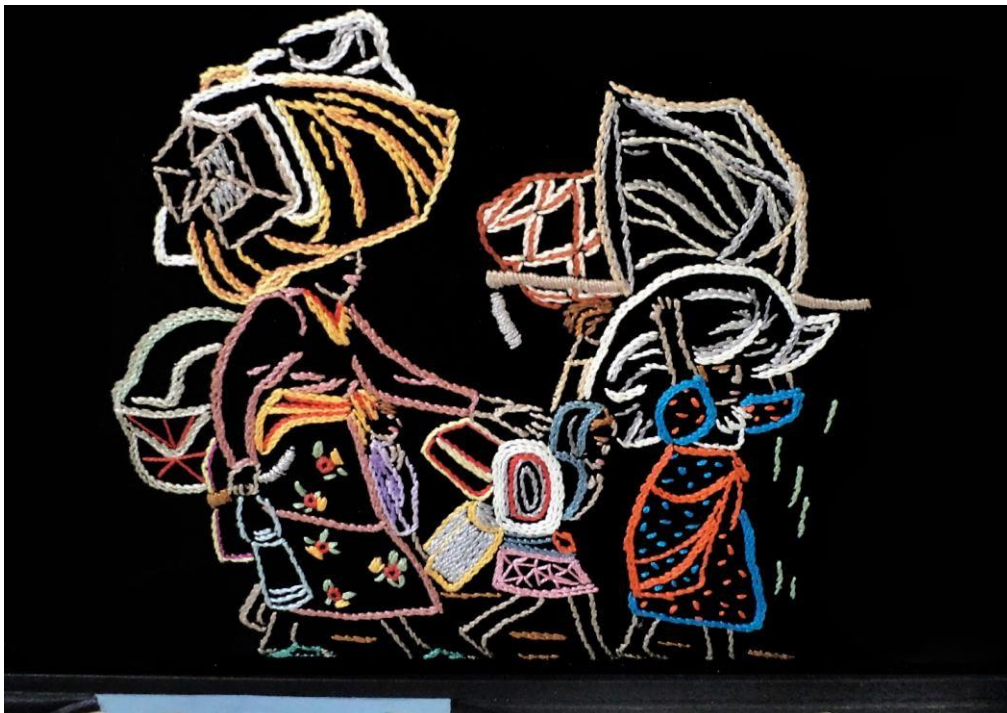
UNHCR

(UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES)

THE PAINTING SHOWS THE LOGO AND INITIALS OF THE OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES.



STILL, THE CONGO REFUGEES ARE DISTINGUISHED, WITH THE STRONG AFRICAN MOTHER AND HER CHILDREN, LOADED WITH ALL KINDS OF NECESSARY SURVIVAL SUPPLIES.



The UNHCR supports millions of refugees around the world who are forced to emigrate because they are persecuted in their country for political or religious reasons or even because their lives are threatened by wars or tribal conflicts.

UNHCR provides asylum - care to refugees from all over the world, as long as, in their new home country, it helps them to integrate and reintegrate into the society they have chosen as their destination. It does not fail, of course, to plan for their repatriation when necessary.

Unfortunately, there are also the unscrupulous illegal traffickers who, in order to get rich, exploit the dreams and hopes of a better life of thousands of refugees and transport them by any means they can, while there are many times when refugees, risking their own lives, become victims of shipwrecks.

With the Asia Minor catastrophe, one and a half million (1,500,000) impoverished refugees arrived in Greece from the coast of Asia Minor.

47th Thematic Unit

IFPRI

(INTERNATIONAL FOOD POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE)

THE PAINTING SHOWS THE LOGO AND THE INITIALS IFPRI (INTERNATIONAL FOOD POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE).



Worldwide, natural disasters are extreme and alarming phenomena, the majority of which are natural disasters. These, in turn, cause shortages of basic agricultural products, ultimately leading to instability in food market prices.

Floods, fires, hailstorms and droughts make up the catastrophic puzzle, affecting all agricultural production, large or small, with the expected trend being higher prices.

Consequently, inflation has resulted in the flourishing of the monopoly of

speculators, who, with the consent of the State, trade, sell and distribute large quantities of agricultural products, but at prohibitive prices, since their high purchase prices affect the incomes of low-income and poor consumers.

48th Thematic Unit

N.G.O.

(NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION)

IN THE PAINTING THE INITIALS N.G.O.

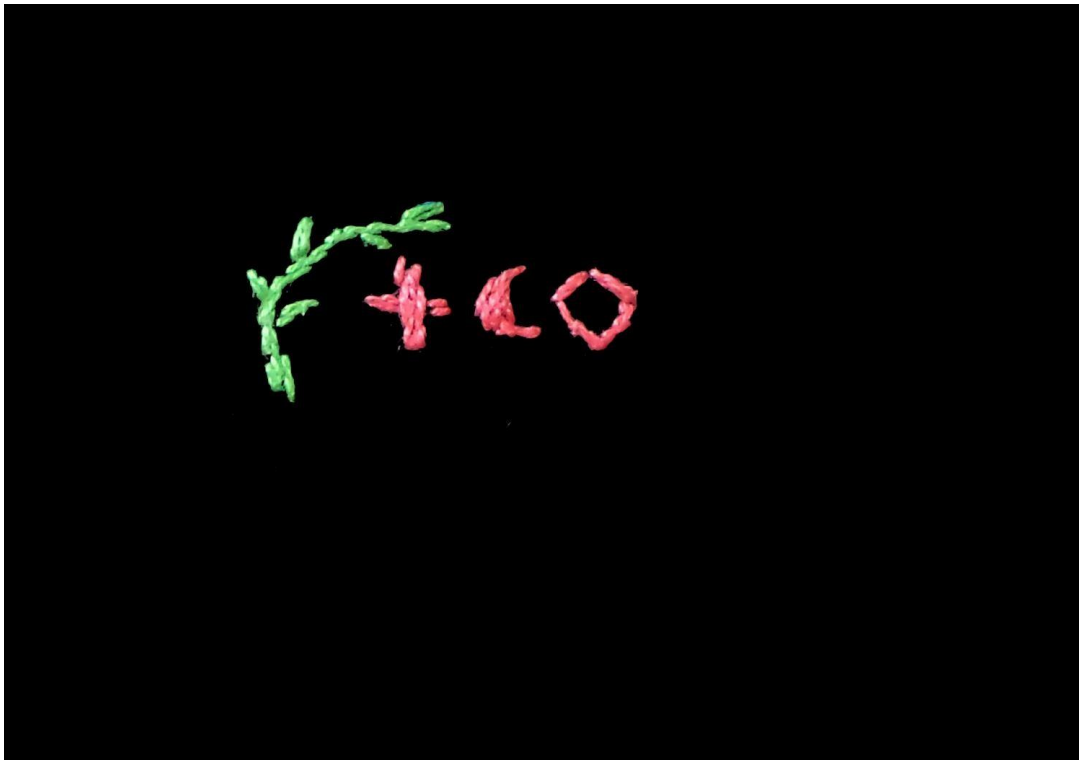


A non-governmental organisation is an autonomous and private organisation, not controlled by governments. Its aim is to provide all kinds of assistance, both material and supportive, in order to alleviate human suffering, especially that of the poor.

It has become internationally accepted that the World Bank now defines NGOs as “private organisations that operate to alleviate suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment and provide basic social services”.

THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS AND THE RED CRESCENT +C◇

THE PAINTING SHOWS THE LOGO OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS, THE RED CRESCENT AND THE RED CRYSTAL.



Large and important, worldwide, the humanitarian movement is at the forefront, helping and treating the wounded of wars and natural disasters.

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is the symbol of altruistic giving without borders, for the improvement of the lives of vulnerable population groups, it is the practical effort to realize the vision of a world that walks with respect for human dignity and progresses as a whole through humanitarianism.⁹

⁹Source: Greek Red Cross, on the (Internet):<www.redcross.gr>.

50th Thematic Unit

SOLIDAR

THE PAINTING SHOWS THE WORD *SOLIDAR* (with the first letter of the word capitalised).



The European Network of Organisations strives for social justice and equality, thus aiming to reduce and combat poverty.

The challenge today is how to reconcile economically competitive societies in a globalised world with the appropriate social protection that citizens need.

Today's Europe, in which a balanced approach to the economy, employment and social policy is imperative, is now being called into question.

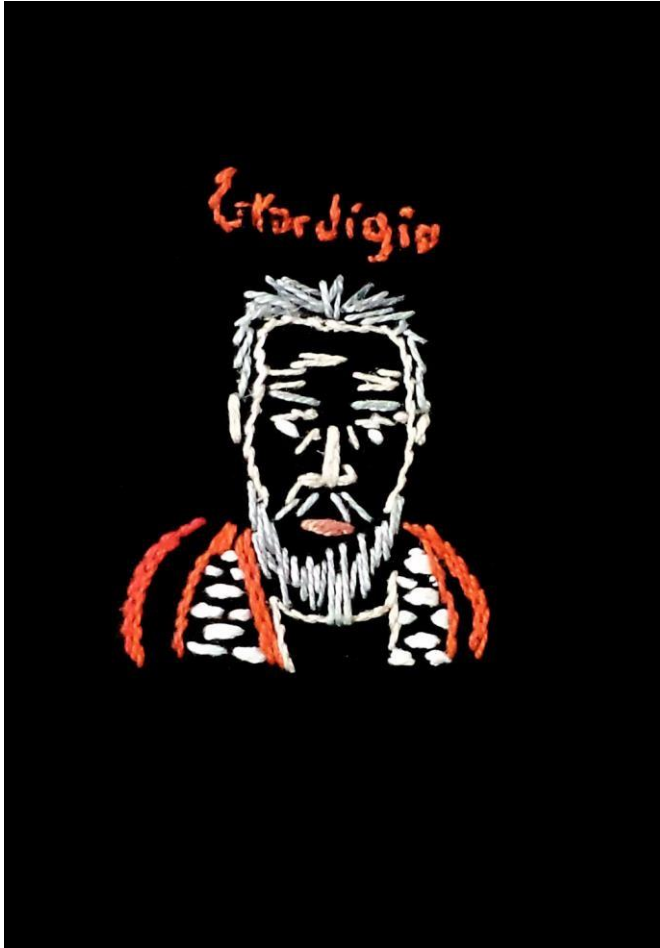
The consequences of failed policies are painful and long-lasting. They are defined by the increase in social inequality, the marginalisation of large sections of the world's population and the prevalence of a philosophy of life that deprives the poor of any opportunities to improve their social status and standard of living,

points out the humanitarian organisation SOLIDAR.

51st Thematic Unit

GKORDIGIO

THE PAINTING SHOWS THE FIGURE OF MAYOR GKORDIGIO, AS WELL AS HIS NAME IN ENGLISH.



The mayor of Marinalenda (a village of 2,645 inhabitants) in Andalusia, Spain, was decisive in setting up an agricultural cooperative to help the inhabitants of the area to prosper.

The village workers were given acres of land to cultivate for a daily wage of forty-seven euros (€47), with working hours of six and a half hours (6.5 h).

The profits from production are invested in the land market in order to effectively address and eliminate the problem of unemployment.

He points out:

We know that people can work for other values, not exclusively for money.

52nd Thematic Unit

FOFM

(FRATERNITY OF ORTHODOX FOREIGN MISSIONARIES)

ON THE PAINTING THE LOGO OF FOFM.



I was hungry and you gave me food,

are the words of Jesus Christ engraved on the hearts and minds of missionaries who preach the Divine Word to the ends of the earth.

The Brotherhood, with much love and patience, ministers to the world, since, in addition to the spiritual Word, which embraces and calms, it cares and provides all kinds of material support and assistance (food, medicine, clothing, books, etc.).

All these are distributed without discrimination (gender, religion, race, age) to the poor, no matter how far away they are.

BISHOP OF IRINOPLE DIMITRIOS ZACHAREGAS

THE PAINTING SHOWS THE BISHOP WITH THE LITTLE BOY FROM TANZANIA.



Let the Bishop be, among the people, an example to be emulated.

The Bishop of Irinople has, for some

years, been resident in Tanzania.

That country where three thousand (3,000) children die every day from hunger, lack of drinking water, but also from a multitude of diseases and epidemics.

The children, in an effort not to miss their rations, travel many kilometres on foot, otherwise, and inevitably for them, they will make do with

whatever they find in front of them most often, of course, they will turn to the bush to satiate their hunger.

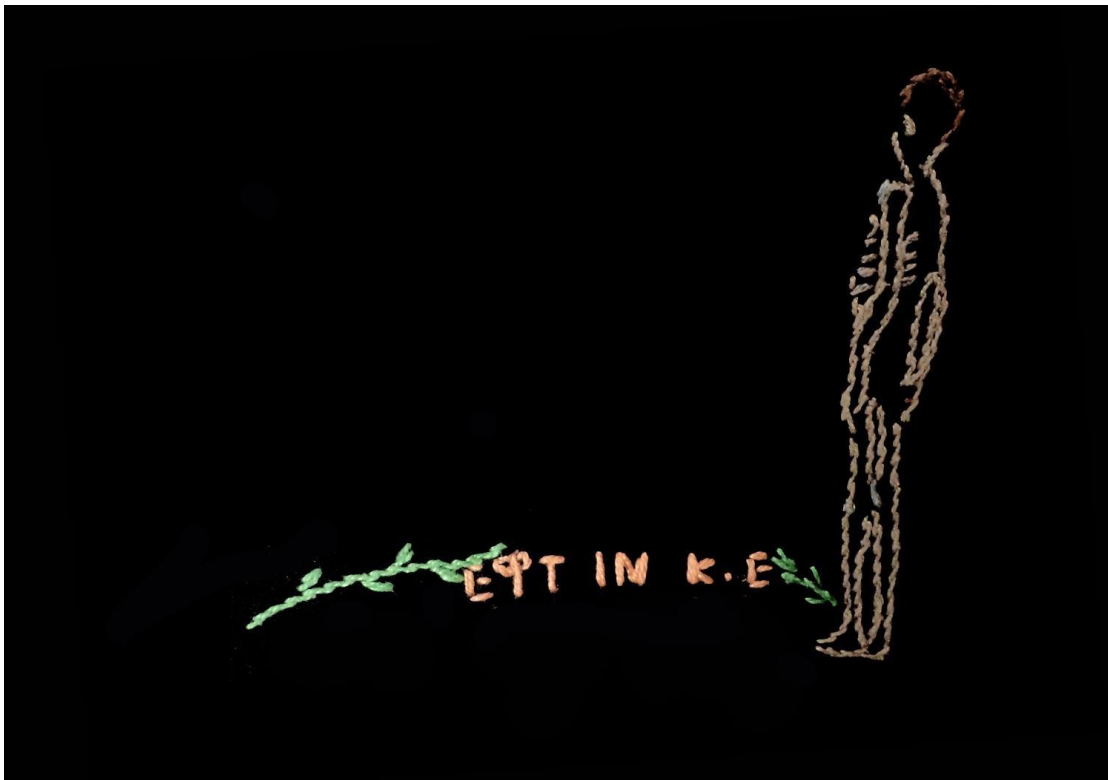
The visionary holy bishop helps and organizes soup kitchens, such as the one in India in 1992 for lepers, and, since 2004, he has been at the side of the children of Tanzania, feeding, with volunteers, one thousand (1,000) children.

54th Thematic Unit

PF CHPC

**(CHARITABLE FUND OF SAINT CONSTANTINE & SAINT HELEN PARISH
CHURCH)**

THE PAINTING SHOWS THE INITIALS.



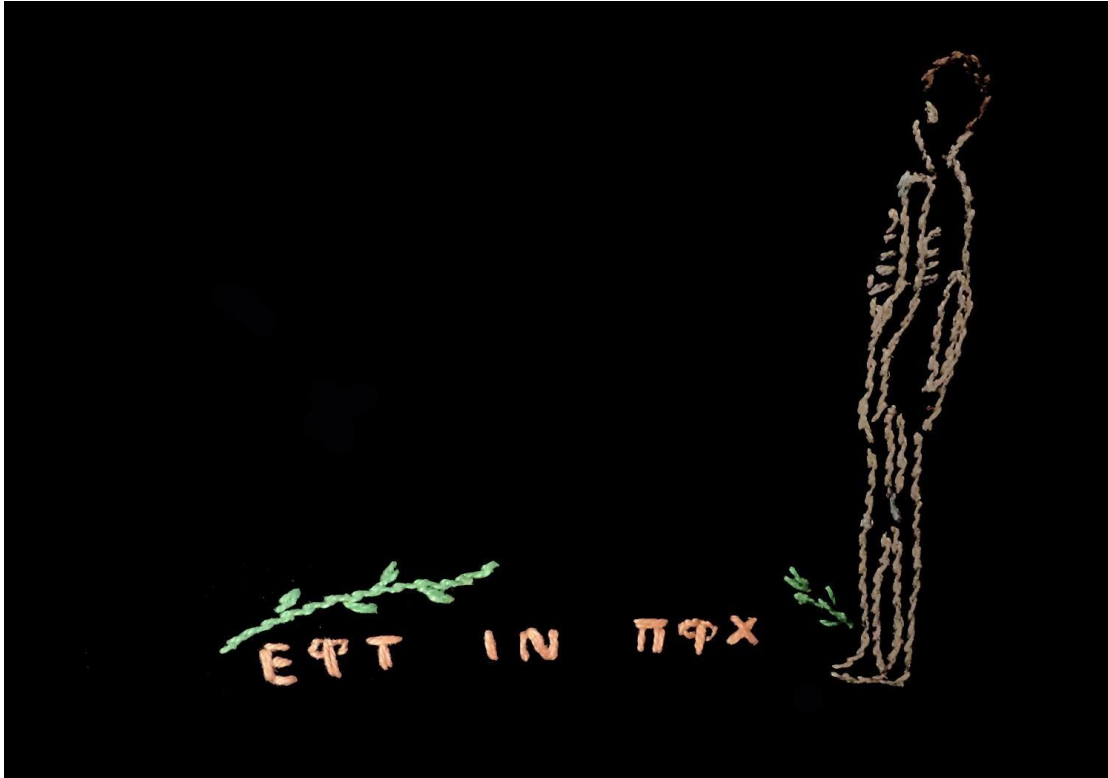
The Vicar of the Holy Church located next to the Council Estate of Gazi in the Municipality of Malevizi, Region of Crete, assists underprivileged families, examining each case that arises and intervenes as much as possible to alleviate human suffering.

55th Thematic Unit

CF HMPCC

**(CHARITABLE FUND OF HOLY MARY PARISH CHURCH IN
CHOLARGOS)**

THE PAINTING SHOWS THE INITIALS.



The Charitable Fund of the Holy Mary Parish Church of Cholargos, Attica, is a pioneer in works of charity and love, having distributed thousands of euros (63,850 €), as we have been informed, to the needy.

56th Thematic Unit
SKS MICROFINANCE

IN THE PAINTING WE SEE THE BRIEF NAME OF THE COMPANY OF THE POOR,
AS WELL AS THE WOMEN OF INDIA WHO ARE WAITING FOR THEIR LOANS TO
BE APPROVED.



SKS Microfinance is a company that lends to the lower economic classes, as well as to the poor women of India, who resort to borrowing as their only remaining option.

SKS Microfinance, with a focus on local production and development, develops programmes for lending to new businesses. With the idea of helping the economically weaker ones for a fresh start with the capital provided, since both are looking forward to future financial returns. This model is, therefore, considered the most effective way to reduce the pestilence of poverty.



57th Thematic Unit
MOBILE TELEPHONY

THE PAINTING SHOWS THE TELEPHONE OF PAST TECHNOLOGY ON LARGE IRON WHEELS, WITH THE TWO WOMEN NEXT TO IT.



Telephone communication in African villages is becoming problematic and sometimes almost impossible. The indigenous people have to travel long distances to get to a place where there are telephones installed on transportable iron structures with large iron wheels, and all this inconvenience contrasts with our convenience and comfort, that of the mobile phone in the palm of our hand, with the Internet built in.

58th Thematic Unit

LIVESTOCK

IN THE PAINTING, AN ARAB WATCHES THE SHEEP AND GOATS.



Since ancient times, people have had as their main occupation the rearing of animals, from which they have been fed. Of course, transactions in the past were not carried out with money, as they are now, but with the simpler method of the barter economy.

In Greece, in accordance with the current implementation of Law No. 4056/2012 (Government Gazette A-52/12-3-2012), the relevant regulations are defined for the improvement of livestock farming in general, with emphasis on the infrastructure of livestock facilities, but also on the capacity of the unit in relation to the livestock. In addition, financial aid is also granted as an incentive for investment in livestock farming through the Development Law.

AGRICULTURAL WORK - PLOUGHING

THE PAINTING SHOWS THE PLOUGHMAN WITH THE ANIMALS READY FOR PLOUGHING.



The poor traditional farmer has been in his field since dawn to start ploughing with the harnessed animals, digging furrows in the soil with the plough. He does not fail, of course, to sow the seeds, hoping to enjoy the new, lucrative harvest a little later.

The plough is also mentioned in the Erotokritos by Vincenzo Kornaros (early 17th century).

*Like a flower that has great beauty
and it is cool in the plain with a great fragrance,
and when the plough comes without mercy, and tears it deep,
it withers, and its beauty melts...*

60th Thematic Unit

GRANARIES

IN THE PAINTING, THE WOMEN ARE THRESHING THE WHEAT.



The women are happy, as the time of the grain harvest has begun.

The familiar procedure is followed: threshing first, followed by winnowing.

Beside them, the yellow hills rise, while they all together continue the threshing of the wheat,
singing and holding rakes.

GIVE ME WHEAT TO TASTE

Give me wheat to keep,
I'll make bales of it,
with which to greet my brothers and sisters in the light,
to make them look like gold coins.

Give me wheat to taste,
give me a loaf of bread.

Thanking God for his providence,
as manna once sent from heaven.

Give wheat to the poor man, too,
round sesame bread, freshly baked bread.
Let the hungry man be filled,
make the orphan feel happy.

Give me wheat to taste
when I go to church,
to eat bread, which is the body of Christ,
to have eternal life.

(Poem of the author)

61st Thematic Unit

FISHING

THE PAINTING DEPICTS FISHERMEN WITH THEIR FISHING RODS.

ALSO, THE FISHERMAN ENGAGED WITH HIS NET, LIKE THE AFRICAN WITH HIS OCTOPUS].



Planets of the sea, you are to men the perpetual and lucrative source of wealth.

How many and how many fishermen cast their nets daily into the deep waters, in seas and oceans, expecting to get a good catch

All kinds of catches, fish, seafood, and crustaceans, have their place of honour in the crates of fishing boats, so that professional fishermen can earn a living.

Salt and iodine are the flavour of the catch.

62nd Thematic Unit

MALAWI

THE PAINTING SHOWS THE LATE PRESIDENT OF MALAWI MUTARIKA AND, NEXT TO HIM, THE PEASANT WOMEN.



One of the poorest countries on the African continent was Malawi. However, Malawi later emerged as a pioneer, having managed to reduce, or even eliminate hunger among its people in just five (5) years (2010-2015).

It is, therefore, a model of economic recovery/growth and owes it to its late President Mutharika.

The late President did not dare to compromise the future of his poor Country according to the terms and dictates of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. He simply changed course, implementing his own development programme, emphasising the considerably reduced prices of agricultural products, which involved seeds and fertilisers. So much did the President lower prices that they were sold at 1/6 of the original higher prices. This had the positive effect of increasing production and exports, reducing inflation, and moving and strengthening the market. Consequently, economic relief was brought to the people, and famine deaths were reduced.

63rd Thematic Unit

HOUSING

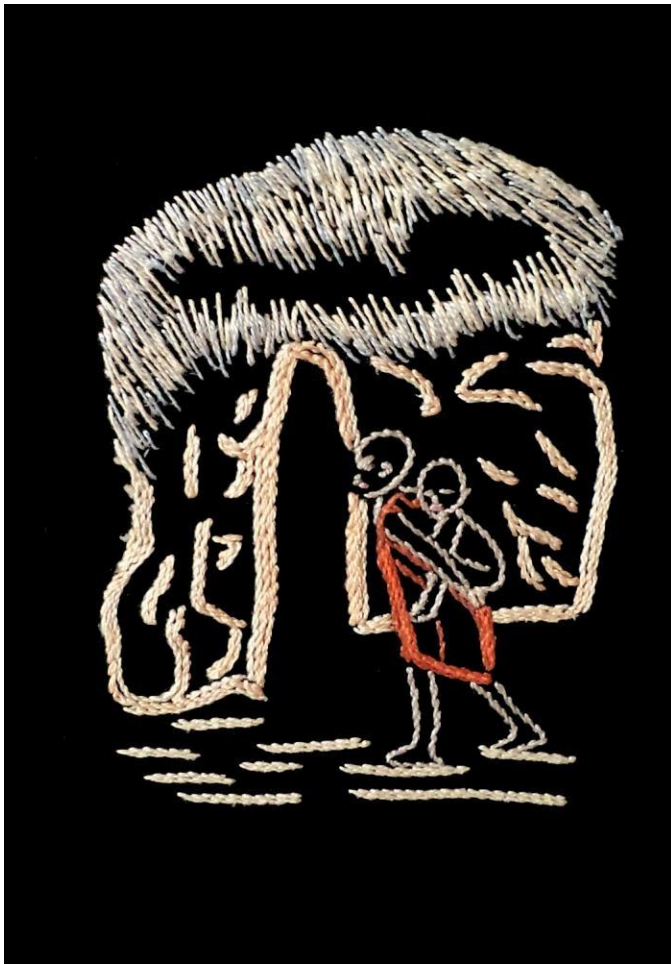
IN THE PAINTING WE SEE THE CHILD WITH THE BUCKET, OUTSIDE A "HOUSE"
MADE OF MUD,



HUTS MADE FROM THE PLANT TOTORA,



THE WOMAN WITH THE CHILD ON HER BACK COMING OUT OF THE HUT,



THE FISHERMEN'S PALAFITOS,



THE DISCOLOURED WALL WITH THE SEWER PIPES OUTSIDE,



AND THE WOMAN IN HER SHACK.



The poor child with the baby carrier grows up in a house made of dried mud, with no windows, no sanitary space, no floors and no door for those who stay. A large opening, at the

front, replaces the door. The poverty, in that place, becomes shocking, and the improvement of living conditions impossible.

- The traditional way of life of the Aymara tribe commands that their huts be yellow in colour, made of the totora plant, and so are their boats. (A water-loving plant that grows in the waters of Lake Titicaca).

- Other huts, in the sea, made of poles, the palafitos, are used to house fishermen and their families in the Los Roques Islands (Venezuela).

- Tent houses and brick huts can be seen in slum villages and, more generally, in all degraded areas when crossing the dirt roads leading to them.

In Nairobi, the poor are not registered, neither when they are alive nor in death...

- In the slums, the destitute survive in houses made of sheet metal, in shacks made of bricks, in tin huts made of tarpaulins and paper. Without the basic infrastructure to serve them, such as sewerage, electricity, health care, transport.

And with inadequate or non-existent education, the people continue to suffer and live below the poverty line.

- At best, further away from the slums and in upgraded areas, one sees “geometric shapes” of sewer and water pipes so close together, as they are outlined on the painted wall.

Despite Africa's great mineral wealth in diamonds, oil, gold, uranium, bauxite, iron, lead, copper and crops, most of its countries have failed to fight poverty. This is because the global political system collaborates with and serves big foreign interests, or dismisses and betrays the visions of their peoples, since, obviously, any notion of justice is devalued.

64th Thematic Unit
NOMADIC TRIBES

THE PAINTING SHOWS A NATIVE OF THE MAASAI TRIBE.



ALSO, THE BEDOUINS WITH THEIR CAMEL.



- Tribes of Arabia and Africa, the Bedouins have in recent years abandoned the vast desert lands and settled in the oil countries (Libya, Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia), preferring urban comforts.

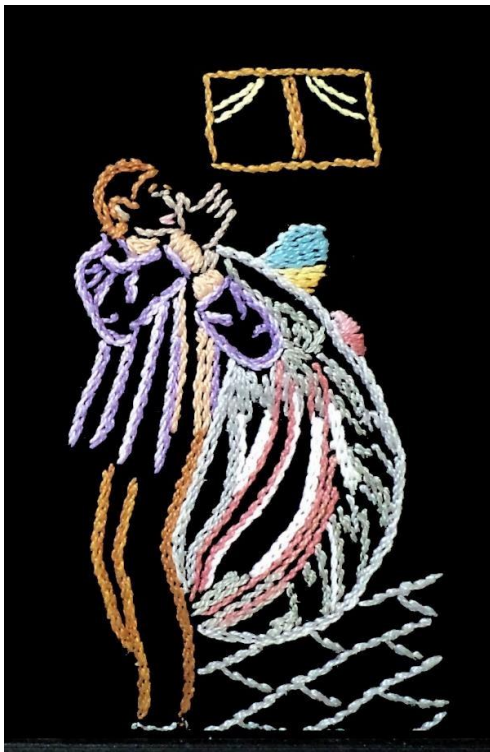
- The traditional Maasai tribe still breed cattle, and their huts are made of wood, twigs, leaves, reeds, straw, mud - all natural materials.

The tall and restless Maasai tribe discovered the “secret of happiness” by despising and forsaking all property, large or small.

65th Thematic Unit
NOMADIC TRIBES

IN THE PAINTING:

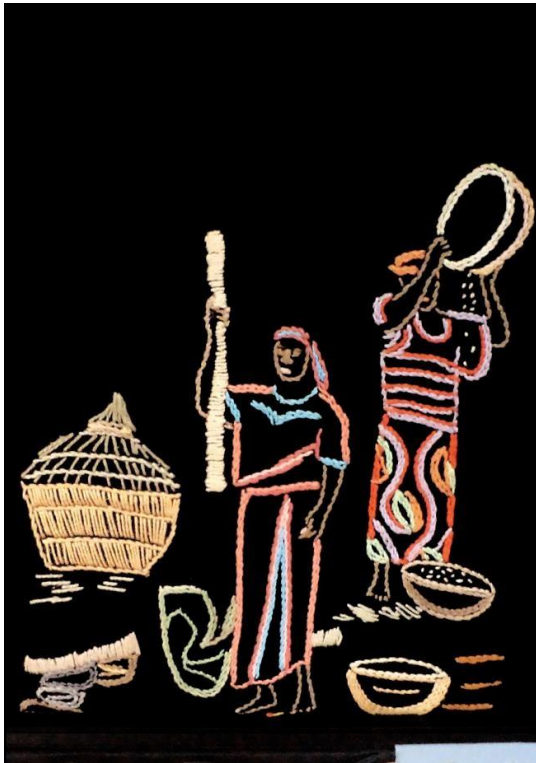
THE SCAVENGER, LOADED, WITH THE SACK ON HIS BACK,



THE YOUNG MAN, WITH THE CART HALF-FULL OF VEGETABLES, THE
GREENGROCER WITH THE SCALES, THE AFRICAN WOMAN WITH THE
BANANAS



THE WOMAN WITH THE STICK, BEATING THE SEEDS IN THE BOWL,
THE NATIVE WOMAN WHO THROWS SEEDS INTO A POT,



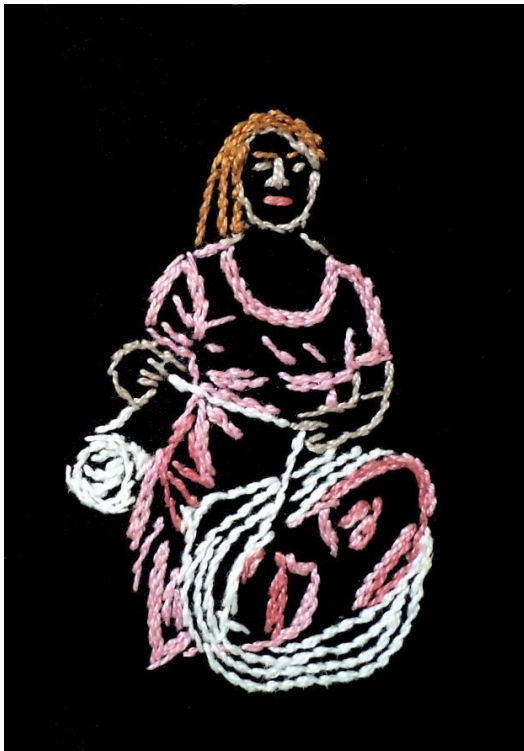
THE ETHIOPIAN MAN SITTING AT THE SEWING MACHINE,



THE IMMIGRANT WOMAN BREAKING WOOD,



THE WOMAN WRAPPING THE THREAD IN A WHITE BALL OF YARN.



ALSO, THE HOUSEWIFE GRINDING WHEAT IN THE HAND MILL



AND THE TECHNICAL INSPECTOR WITH HIS HEAD IN A CLOGGED MANHOLE.





- A scavenger, loaded on his back with the sack, returns to his shack with a jumble of objects of petty value, without any shame, looking relatively satisfied.



The cart, in developing countries, is the means of transporting all goods. The young man, with the cart half-full of vegetables, heads to his father to deliver the remaining agricultural products.

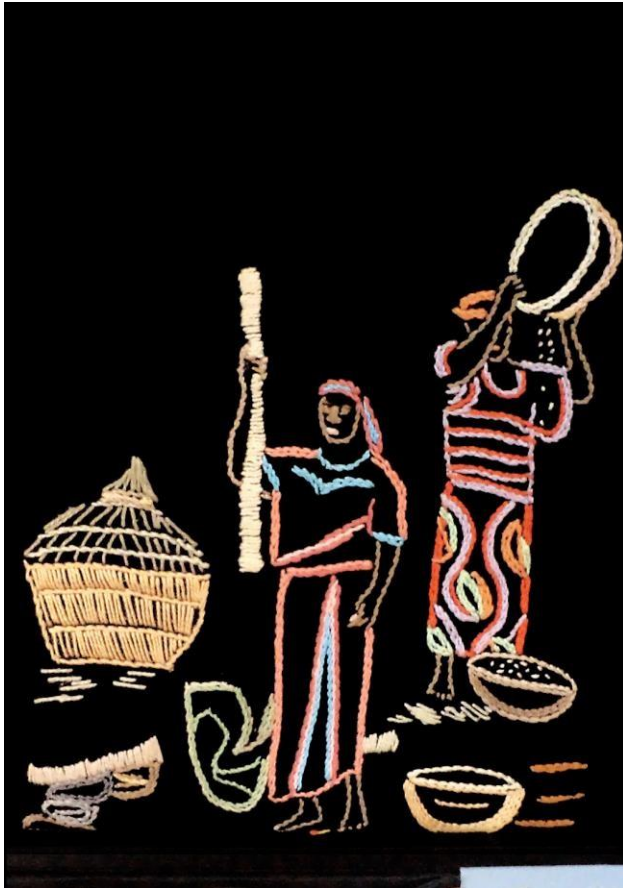


All day long on the street, the greengrocer, with his stall set up, his traditional scales and his merchandise, tries to entice passers by to buy some of his produce.



The mother of the young man with the cart sells bananas on the street.

In Uganda, the bananas are boiled and used to make their famous food 'matooke'.



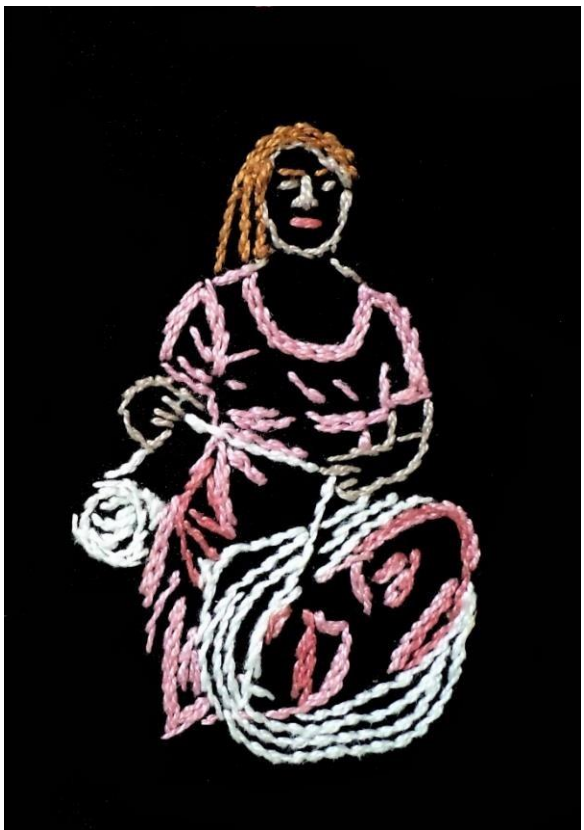
African women beat, incessantly and frequently, seeds in large wooden pans, which they mix with water.



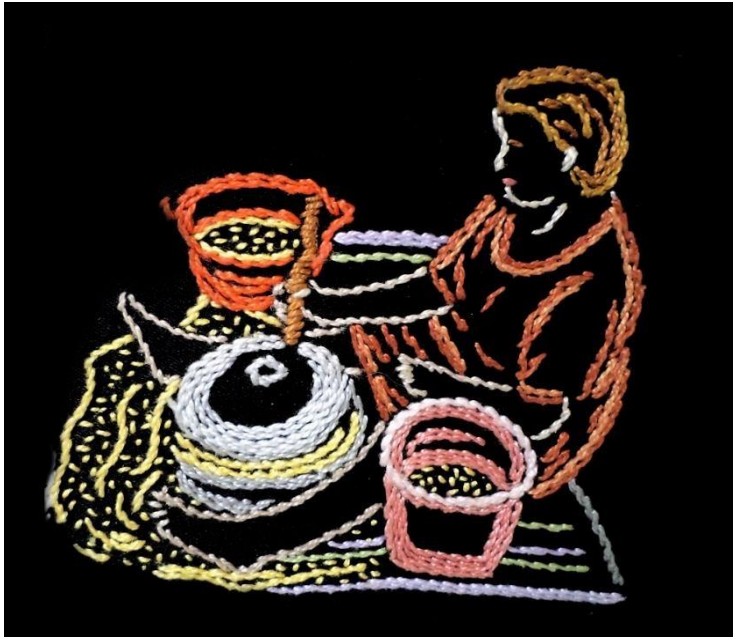
Street sewing: The young Ethiopian works for hours, bent over the sewing machine, to secure a living.



Migrant woman, on the street, breaks firewood,
for her own use, but also for sale.



The newly married woman, in pink dress, passes
the thread, with her hand, from the arm to
forked thumb with her other fingers, to wind the
thread into a large white ball.



The housewife, with the hand-mill, pensive and sitting on a rug, grinds the wheat to make flour.



Inspector of technical installations:
the Greek graduate could not find work anywhere for several months. He was forced to resort to the municipality, taking on any project. The Public Service assigned him the task of checking - inspecting all

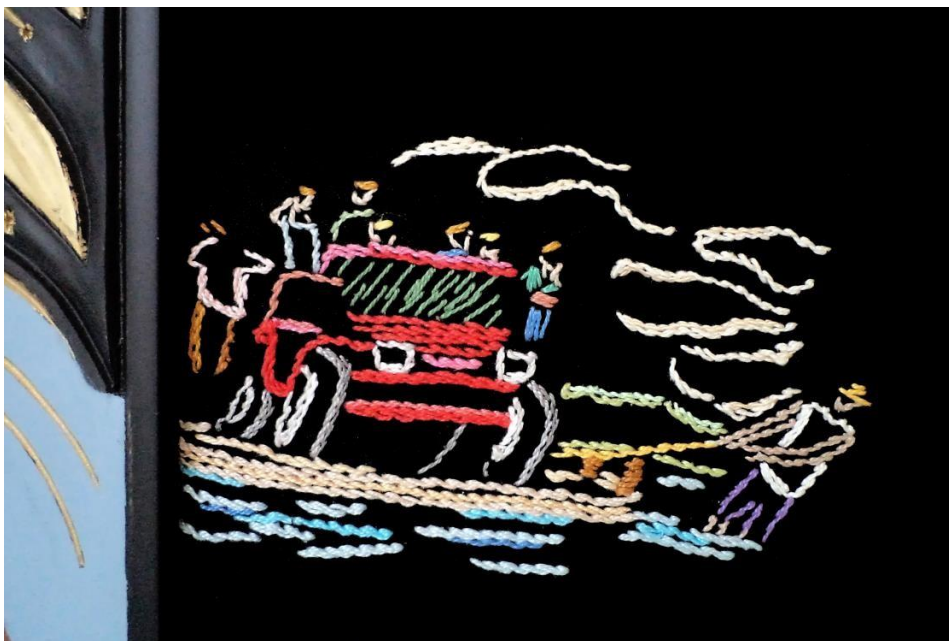
the municipal pipelines, even the rotten, broken, blocked or overflowing ones , and he dives into the blocked and overflowing manhole with his head!

PUBLIC TRANSPORT-TRANSPORTATION

THE PAINTING SHOWS A CAR STUCK ON A MUDDY ROAD,



THE AFRICAN MAN HELPING TO TRANSPORT TOURISTS, IN A JEEP, ON A
FLOATING RAFT (FOR THE CROSSING TO THE LAKE),



A VERY OLD COACH, OVERLOADED WITH PASSENGERS, CLOTHES, BAGS, FOOD, LUGGAGE AND MORE, WHICH CAN EVEN CARRY ANIMALS!



- In the developing world, it is a common occurrence for cars to get stuck on muddy roads, as the lack of infrastructure makes it difficult to move and transport people.
- The African is tasked with transporting tourists, in jeeps, on the floating raft.
- Transportation of over forty (40) year old passengers is carried out by coaches, where they are piled up, along with luggage, sacks, clothes, food, possibly animals...

JOB POSITIONS

IN THE PAINTING, THE YOUNG PERSON IS LOOKING FOR A JOB, READING THE LIST OF THE EMPLOYMENT AGENCY.



In our country, looking for a job, especially in the time of the economic crisis, but also recently due to Covid-19, when unemployment is rocketing, is considered a difficult these days. The high demand for labour, in relation to the special skills, the level of education of those interested, but also the number of companies that underperform or even close down permanently, demonstrates the magnitude of the problem.

The lists of the Employment Agency are now also available online, on the Internet, for thousands of interested parties.

In these difficult times, any attempt to find a job is becoming difficult or, even worse, tending to disappear, with our young people being supported by the low unemployment benefits.

Nevertheless, young people who wish to pursue a professional career must hope for a 'place in the sun'. As long as they carry out market research and at the same time move steadily and methodically, they are likely to find work related to their qualifications.

UNEMPLOYMENT

THE PAINTING SHOWS THE UNEMPLOYED YOUNG MAN, WITH HIS POCKETS EMPTY, AND THERE IS ANOTHER MAN, AN IDLER, WHO APPEARS QUITE TROUBLED.



In Greece, but also in the rest of Europe, especially since 2009, unemployment has been hitting red-hot, as, unfortunately, has been the case for members of the same family. Unemployment affects a large part of the population, especially young people and women.

The figures speak for themselves, pointing to hundreds of millions of unemployed people worldwide, with unemployment rates stabilising and sometimes fluctuating or, depending on international circumstances, increasing, as the International Labour Organisation (ILO) claims.

THE UNEMPLOYED

(Dialogue between a son and a mother)

Son: It seems, for a hundredth time, that I'm very unlucky
I can't even get hired as a garbage collector anymore,
while I'm so often afflicted with those damn respiratory problems...

Mother: My child, look for work elsewhere...
But put your hope in the Virgin Mary,
since you have been charged with the task of feeding nine little orphan brothers and sisters.

Son: Mother, I've come home from work again with nothing...
The job I was going to get, the security guard's job,
Me the unfortunate will never see it again,
as thousands have gone before me in line...

Mother: Child, look again for some trivial work,
Even if the money is little,
since you are now engaged
to an unemployed fiancée...

Son: Mother, I've come home from work with nothing again...
I went to my friend's house,
He sent me away without saying a word,
he is in debt with loans,
the reckless one, many loans.
and ran out of money, poor fellow!

Mother: My child, look for some work on the ships,
like your late Dad
who ran out of money,
for we've got a mountain of bills again...
I can't cook without a fire,
We are only left with some pasta...

Son: Mother, I've come again with nothing from the work on ships...
Of course, I went and asked at the shipping offices in Piraeus.
You see, I have now turned to the ones
Dad used to go back in the old days.
But the ships are full,

with the foreign Brazilian men.

Mother: My child, then run off and find a godly job.

Go, and I give you my blessing to be a good priest,
after you marry your fiancée,
for I find the money there satisfactory.
People always crowd in churches.
- you'll never run out of work...

Son: Mother, it's partly good news this time.

The Church has given me Her blessed bread.
It will take care of my orphan brothers and sisters...
But without a degree in Theology,
We'll never get any money,
because today, you need a lot of credentials.

Mother: My child, hurry and enter the Garden of the Blessed Virgin.

There, they won't need any of the worldly credentials
and you will be well fed...
As long as you love God...
But you must forget
all about your beautiful fiancée
in that place.

Mount Athos awaits in its bosom again
all the desperate, strayed
and unemployed male children...

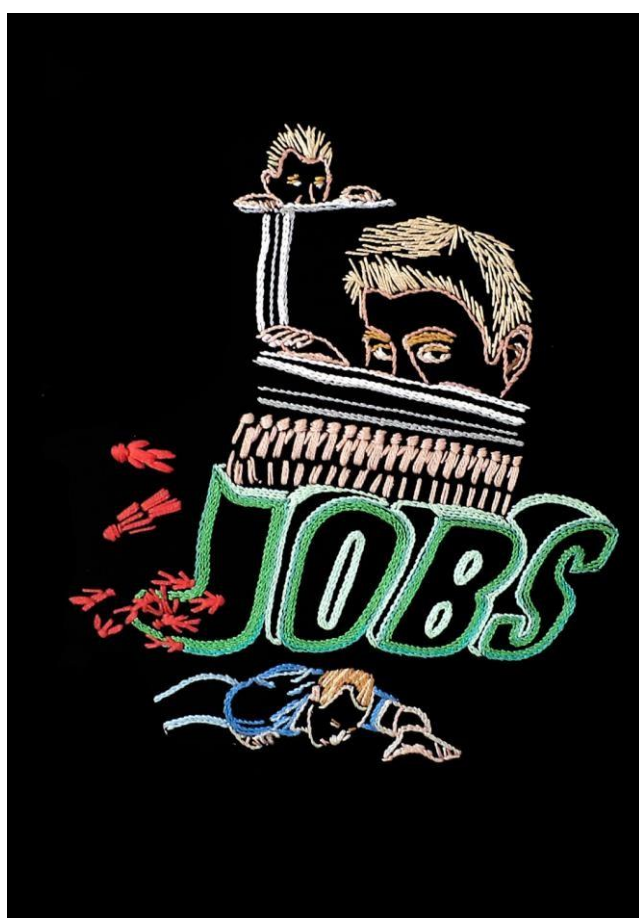
(Poem by the author)

LABOUR SUBVERSIONS - JOBS

THE WORD JOBS IS REPRODUCED IN GREEN LETTERS ON THE PAINTING, AND THE EMPLOYEES, ON TOP OF IT, KEEP FALLING (AS IN THE DOMINOES) AND BEING KILLED WHEN THEIR DISMISSAL IS ANNOUNCED.

ALSO, THERE ARE TWO EUROPEANS, INSECURE AND AFRAID, AT WORK.

ANOTHER MAN FAINTED WHEN HIS DISMISSAL WAS ANNOUNCED AS HE THOUGHT ABOUT THE FAMILY THAT EXPECTS HIM TO FEED THEM.



The subversions implemented in the labour sector are considered to be imperative and stormy and, while they abolish labour rights, they have become the norm, in the period of economic crisis.

With the new austerity policies, wages and pensions are being introduced, defined and implemented with a large reduction in wages and pensions, as well as the surge of redundancies in the private sector due to the reduction in business turnover.

This whole situation marks a major upheaval, affecting, as a “tsunami”, labour relations in the middle and lower social classes. As a result, thousands of workers have given up work altogether, being neglected, while others, more fortunate, have changed jobs in the hope of better opportunities.

The Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz, in an interview with the French newspaper *Le Monde*, points out:

Europe does not need an austerity that will lead to a high increase in unemployment and recession...

For us, there is no other definition of socialism than the abolition of the exploitation of one man by another.

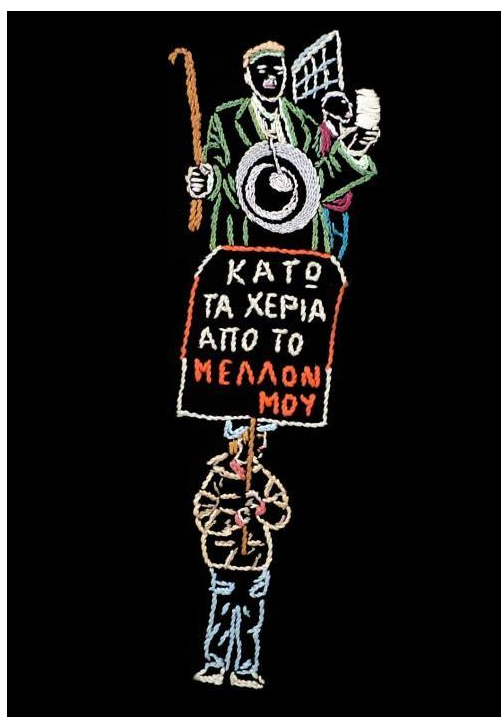


GSEE – ADEDY TRADE UNIONS

IN THE PAINTING WE SEE THE PROTEST RALLIES OF THE TRADE UNION ORGANISATIONS GSEE – ADEDY.



WE ALSO SEE THE PENSIONER PROTESTING, AS WELL AS THE YOUNG MAN WITH THE BANNER.



WE WILL NOT PAY FOR THE CRISIS, is written on the protest banner of the two trade union organisations, which held their planned mobilisations. The trade union militants, and in particular, the ADEDY Trade Union, express their concern about the wave of layoffs that is about to take place following a government decision to abolish the tenure of civil servants. This measure, by the trade unionists, was deemed unconstitutional.

GSEE Trade Union: “500,000 full-time jobs lost in five (5) years of crisis”.

All in the struggle, young and old, are present at the rallies of the GSEE – ADEDY Trade Unions.

DO NOT JEOPARDISE MY FUTURE, the young man with the placard is demonstrating, as are the pensioners for the unbearable cuts in both main and supplementary pensions, as a great economic and social deadlock results from the Memoranda.

71st Thematic Unit
COURT OF AUDITORS

THE PAINTING SHOWS THE COURT OF AUDITORS PREMISES.



In the wake of the withholding of public pensions, several unjustified pensioners have appealed to the Court of Auditors for justice. The pensioners strongly oppose the measures of public pensions deductions and are fighting for the removal of the unconstitutionality of the contested provisions, since, with the insurance law 3.865/2010 (article 11), a deduction was introduced “as a pensioners' solidarity contribution” (SSC), which was intended to cover deficits of the new Social Security Solidarity Account (SSSA).

The Court of Auditors, in the pensioners' appeal in 2012, stated:

In view of the financial situation of the country, the imposition of deductions is constitutionally tolerable, provided that its duration is temporary (5 years) and not permanent, as the relevant provision stipulates.

INDUSTRY REDUNDANCIES - PROTESTS

IN THE PAINTING WE SEE PROTESTERS OF THE TEXTILE UNION OF THESSALONIKI, WITH THEIR PROTEST BANNERS AND FLAGS, AS WELL AS THEIR TENTS IN THE OCCUPATION AREA.



With the slogan on the banner, WE WANT JOBS AND NOT UNEMPLOYMENT, the protesters of the Thessaloniki Textile Union protested in 2012. Their employers made unjustified redundancies of employees under the pretext of falling turnover, reduced orders and exports of the company.

The workers in the factories, for decades (more than 20 years), suddenly found themselves out of work, on the street, unable from now on to feed their families. The unannounced dismissal by the industrialists has brought negative feelings to the dismissed workers, as the factory workers are now possessed of a lot of insecurity about their future, feeling frustrated, discredited, and defenceless.



Labour relations and social ties, which at the beginning of cooperation are pleasantly established on both sides (employee – employer), have been ruthlessly damaged in recent years, as the spirit of self-interest dominates all aspects of our daily life.



PROTESTERS BANNER:

WE ARE AGAINST THE SALE OF THE POSTAL SAVINGS BANK

IN THE PAINTING, THE WORKERS OF THE POSTAL SAVINGS BANK ARE MOBILIZED WITH THE BANNER, IN VIEW OF THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION.



There has been intense mobilisation due to continuous contacts between politicians and senior executives of our four Banks (Alpha Bank, National Bank, Piraeus Bank Group, Eurobank) concerning the privatisation of Postal Savings Bank.

It goes without saying that the employees of Post Office Savings Bank were worried about the decision of the Greek State to proceed with the privatisation process soon.

Indeed, the takeover of Post Office Savings Bank was completed, passing, by the government's decision, to the jurisdiction of Eurobank.

***TOUS ENSEMBLE POUR L' EMPLOI, LES SALAIRES, LES
RETRAITES***

– DEMONSTRATIONS THROUGHOUT EUROPE

THE PAINTING SHOWS THE FRENCH DEMONSTRATORS WITH THE BIG BANNER OF PROTEST.



With the slogan ALL TOGETHER FOR A JOB, SALARIES, PENSIONS, the French are demonstrating. Demonstrations against austerity measures are taking place all over Europe. Mobilizations are escalating in Greece, with the previously mentioned trade unions. Besides, the same mood of mobilisations is prevailing in France, Britain, Germany, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Italy, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Portugal and Spain.

In France, of course, trade union strikes are dominating, with demonstrations against the increase in the retirement age, as well as against the pension reform framework in general.

In Portugal, citizens protested against the cuts in salaries and pensions, but also against the high taxation affecting their incomes. And all this is being implemented because of the imposition of the austerity measures of the Memorandum.

In Germany, people are protesting against the tax increases.

In our neighbour Italy, wages freeze and spending cuts are in force. As in the other countries, the economic menu includes the well-known austerity policy reforms.

75th Thematic Unit

HOMELESS

IN THE PAINTING, THE HOMELESS MAN IS SLEEPING IN THE PARK BENCH UNDER THE TREE.



Worldwide, this social phenomenon of homelessness is experienced in its tragic dimensions, as well as by our poor fellow citizens who are left without jobs, money and shelter at some point in time. Then, they are forced to survive by living on the street, under adverse conditions, and constructing makeshift shelters from cardboard boxes, nylon and tarpaulins, finding shelter there.

The Church of Greece has provided hostels for the homeless, along with the Municipalities, who also accommodate many homeless people in their social structures throughout the Greek territory.

THE HOMELESS

All day, all night and every day
questioning,
in case they, too, will ever find a small home.
Really, what a shame!

Why, which one of them,
will really care about them?
It means one thing for the homeless
- sidewalk or bench?

All day, all night, every day.
in the cold, in the heat, in the rain
the soul is gone,
since, as a rule, there is no roof.
Really, what a shame!
Why do our Pharisees and our well-to-do Christians
have learned to pretend to be merciful...
It means one thing for the homeless
- sidewalk or bench?

All day, all night and every day,
in cardboard boxes for the most part,
the unfortunate ones, naked of possessions,
and so the world always despises them...
So many passers-by...
Truly, what a shame!
For people are cruel...

But if the homeless would just be patient,
with fervent prayer,
a little room will be found for them one day.
And so, God will be glorified!
From the homeless,
When their lives are somehow settled.

(Poem by the author)

76th Thematic Unit

“SCORING A GOAL AGAINST POVERTY”

– SOCIAL EXCLUSION (with initials K.A.)

IN THE PAINTING, THE SOCIALLY EXCLUDED HOMELESS MAN PLAYS FOOTBALL, SCORING A GOAL IN THE NET OF POVERTY.



People who, systematically and over years, are discredited by the community they had joined, eventually become distanced from it, now experiencing a marginalised and lonely life. This social phenomenon is defined as “social exclusion”.

The homeless group, determinedly, was “present” by playing football in Syntagma Square and sought to pass on to everyone the message against social exclusion by scoring a “goal against poverty”!

77th Thematic Unit

EVICTIONS

IN THE PICTURE WE SEE THE SAD WOMAN, WITH HER HEAD ON HER KNEES,
AND THE FEW PIECES OF LUGGAGE BESIDE HER.



Poverty-stricken individuals are, more often than not, unable to meet the overdue, due agreed rent to satisfy the financial demands of property owners (landlords).

But this, unfortunately, under Law 4055/2012, means the eviction of the tenant (lessee) from the property, literally pushing him/her out into the street.

Several of our fellow citizens, due to evictions, out of desperation, have committed suicide!

Here, the well-known song “Life without hope” fits perfectly.

HEARTLESS LIFE,

you threw us to the side of the road

you have wronged us.

Not for a moment

You never came to shed a tear,

you chased us.

*Our pity is heavy,
you have made us poor,
with a bitter heart,
full of sighs.*

*A barren life,
We didn't want to be given
palaces and stars.
We just wanted to be given
A little bread
For us, the orphaned doves,
Let us be pampered.*

***We were beaten by the north wind
The rain took from us
The blood of the heart
For we are poor.***

[Composition: Stavros Xarchakos
Lyrics: Lefteris Papadopoulos
Song: Grigoris Bithikotsis & Ria Kourti
(first performance: 1963)
Music record: Grigoris Bithikotsis, 1963-1971(1981)]

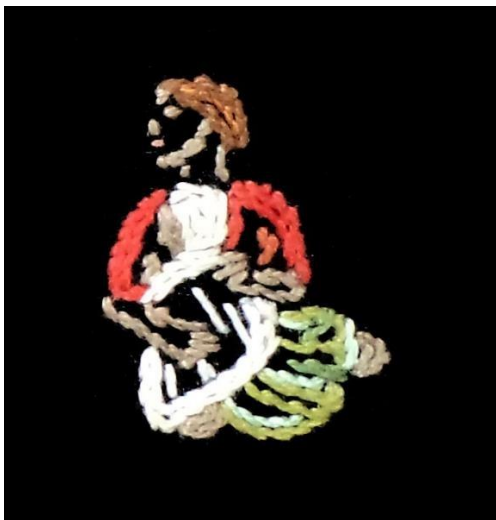
78th Thematic Unit

BEGGARY

THE BEGGAR WHO BEGS IS SHOWN IN THE PAINTING,



AND THE WOMAN WITH THE BABY IN HER ARMS.



“Good health to you!”, “May your dead be forgiven!”, “Some milk for the baby?”, “Give what you can!”, “Some chicken...” you can hear everywhere in the country the stereotypical words of beggars.

Most beggars practice the “art” of begging as a “lucrative profession”, as they are seen, without fail, outside churches, but also in busy places and main streets, seeking to extract as much money as possible, and our compassion.

According to Article 407 of the Penal Code, as it was in force before its recent abolition by Law 4619/2019 (- Government Gazette A 95), anyone who begged for runaway money or philanthropy was punished with a prison sentence of up to three (3) months.

However, beggars, in order to survive, apart from their lies, we find that they are also financially demanding, remaining idle and inactive.

THE GIRL BEGGAR

Madam, will you give me something?

We are seven children...

As great as the seven wonders of the world.

So, will you give me something?

Madam, just this?

We are seven children...

as blessed as the Seven Sacraments of the Church.

So, will you give me something more?

Madam, it's still not enough, is it?

We are seven children...

As beautiful and striking as the colours of the rainbow...

How about you, will you give me what I need?

Madam, are you giving us discounts now, too?

We are seven children...

as disciplined, as orderly as the days of the week.

So, will you give us what we need?

Madam, I see you're ungenerous with me.

I'm not asking you for any more money, seeing how poorly you're dressed.

And what I have been given is not enough for our needs.

We only ask for a little more:

chicken, gruyere, mullets and whatever else you can think of...

(Dialogue between a girl beggar and the author)

79th Thematic Unit

IMMIGRATION

THE PAINTING SHOWS THE YOUNG IMMIGRANT ON A BICYCLE SELLING A LARGE TUNA FISH.



December 19 is the day established worldwide as International Immigrants Day. The UN has adopted the “International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Immigrant Workers”.

However, the situation on the Greek islands (Lesvos, Kos, Leros) is tragic, as they are literally suffocated by immigrants, who flock by the thousands (especially before the Covid era) in search of a better fate.

They are very poor people, and they keep almost nothing with them, except a few clothes or an old bicycle for their travels.

Unfortunately, there are also several cases of immigrant smugglers abandoning them on the streets of large urban centres, and among them are underage children...

Two wonderful poems that have become songs are quoted below, because both of them deal with poverty, which also has a negative effect on immigration.

I'LL CLOSE MY EYES

Love has been poisoned by misery

Poverty has torn the heart apart.

Summers didn't come for us

and life became so heavy.

I'll close my eyes, spread my hands

Away from poverty, away from misery.

I'll take the road and I'll take the big one,

I'll close my eyes and wherever it takes me.

Where can shame be found to keep me

in the mud and on the wooden roof...

Poverty, which has brought us to our knees,

I feel a greater shame.

I'll close my eyes, spread my hands

away from poverty, away from misery.

I'll take the road and I'll take the big one,

I'll close my eyes and wherever it takes me.

(First performance - Lyrics: Akis Panou
Music: Akis Panou
Singer: Grigoris Bithikotsis)

LIKE AN IMMIGRANT

*Like an immigrant in your own land,
day and night you solve - you bind the wound.
And all around is foreign, and all petrified,
and the dawn will not come.*

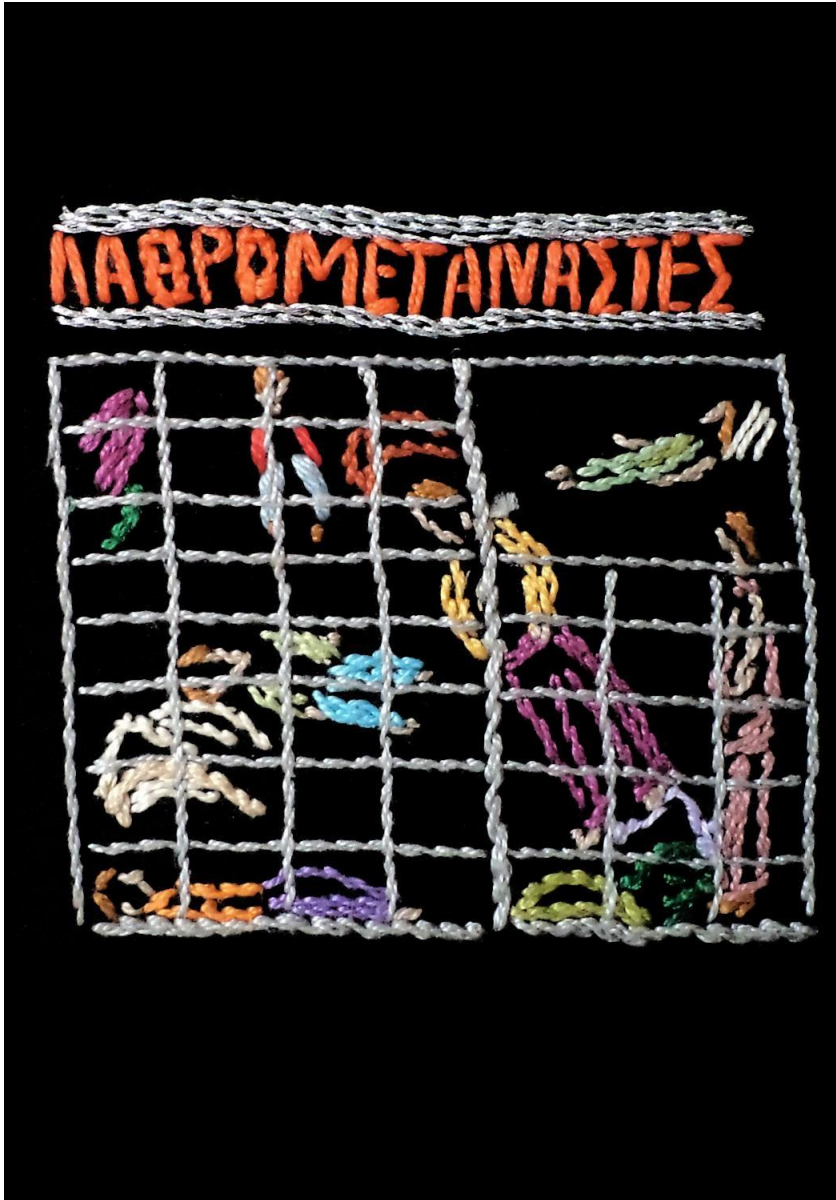
*Your life is drained and bleeding...
Every hour terror, pain and cry.
And the strangers hear you, and the brother is silent...
there is no deeper wound than this.*

*Wire, and more wire, and thick glass.
The sun has bled in the East.
You weep and sigh, foreign land, you cry,
but hope is a black and elusive bird.*

(Lyrics: Lefteris Papadopoulos
Music: Zülfü Livaneli
Singer: Maria Farantouri)

80th Thematic Unit
ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS

IN THE PAINTING WE SEE THE ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS, WITH FORGED DOCUMENTS SO THEY ARE DETAINED IN THE LARGE IRON CHAMBER (CAGE) OF THE POLICE.



There are thousands of people entering our country illegally, mainly from the Evros border, which, however, from 2020 onwards, will be guarded by military forces to repel them. Illegal immigrants have changed course and no longer sail easily through the Aegean Sea, as the

European Border and Coast Guard Agency (FRONTEX) is making its presence in this maritime area strong and effective.

The distressed illegal immigrants, more often than not, have a weakened organism, as they may remain fasting for some time due to their escape. They do not have enough money to feed themselves adequately or to pay for the necessary medical examinations. They always fear the risk of deportation.

Some of them fall ill and do not receive medication, and it is possible that some of them are carriers of epidemics.

Paying the price of their poverty, if they are found with forged documents, they are crammed into small, iron-barred enclosures in police detention centres, literally one on top of the other, while their inarticulate cries of anguish can be heard.

HEALTH – WORK SUSPENSION

THE PAINTING SHOWS THE DOCTORS WHO HAVE STOPPED WORKING.

ALSO SHOWN ARE THE MATERIALS: GAUZES, SCISSORS, AS WELL AS THE WHEELCHAIR WHERE THE PATIENT IS BEING TREATED, IN A HOSPITAL WARD.



The doctors of the public hospitals are protesting with the slogan: HEALTH IS A PUBLIC GOOD, NOT A COMMODITY.

Indeed, a great man and doctor, Mohamed Masali, the modern doctor of the poor, was not paid by his destitute fellow Egyptians. The late Masali once stated:

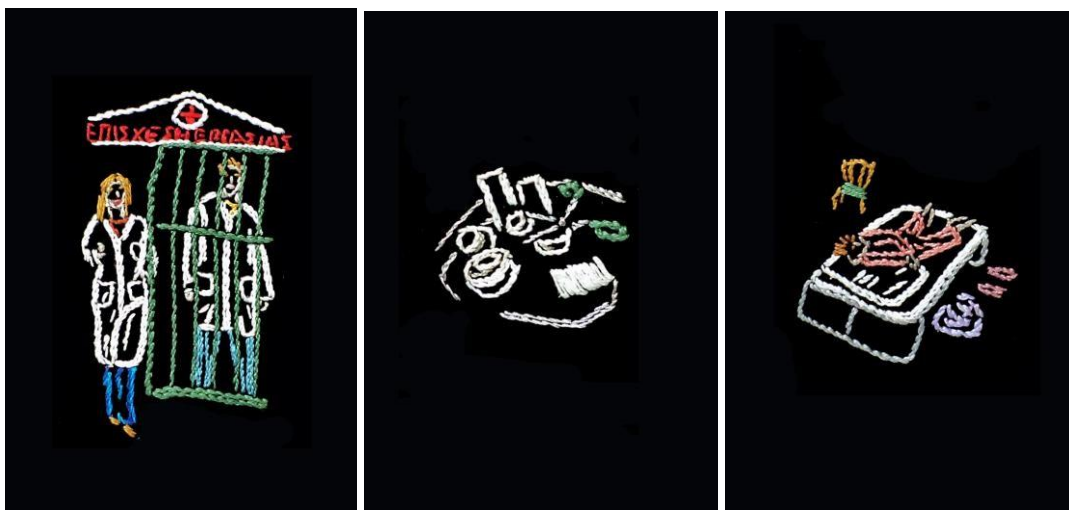
I promised God that I would not take a cent from a poor patient
and that I would stay in my clinic to help the needy.

Medicine is a humanitarian profession, not a commercial one.¹⁰

In Greece, during the decade-long economic crisis, at the behest of the Institutions (IMF), cuts in pharmaceutical expenditure were implemented in the National Health System, and the National Health System was further reformed, with its more essential “reordering” by the Troika.

The doctors contracted with the National Organization for the Provision of Health Services (EOPYY) are reacting to the unpaid on-call time, the cuts in their salaries, with a work stoppage, resulting in the cancellation of patients' regular appointments.

Poor people are unable to pay for urgent medical examinations in the private sector, such as high-cost medicines, so they regularly turn to relatives to help them financially. At the public hospital, the wait for tests or surgery can take up to several months...



¹⁰ Health Advisor Magazine, vol. 102 / Sept. - Oct. 2020, p. 69-70.

MY GOD, GIVE THE WORLD HEALING

My God, give the world healing
with Your redeeming Grace,
You, who are the True Physician,
and of great power.

*

Oh God, give the world healing,
to make them happy,
not to often need doctors
and be unhappy.

*

God, give the world a cure
and have mercy on the poor,
for the needy have no money
to benefit from.

*

Oh God, give the world healing,
to take away pain quickly,
to make them feel comfort
as they endure sickness
so very patiently
as You in Calvary,
with great strength of soul.

*

Oh God, give the world healing,
and cure their illnesses,
let the unfortunate suffer no more,
young and old,
and Heal them,
with Your merciful hand.

*

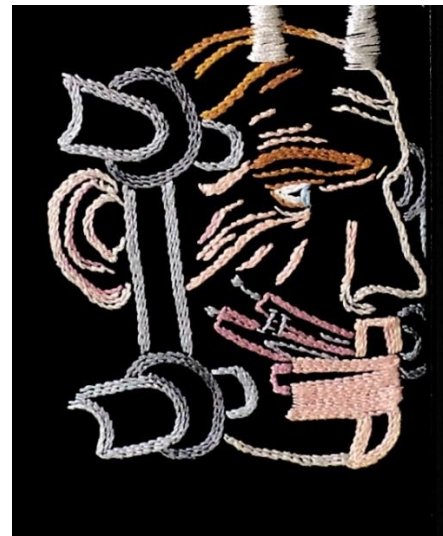
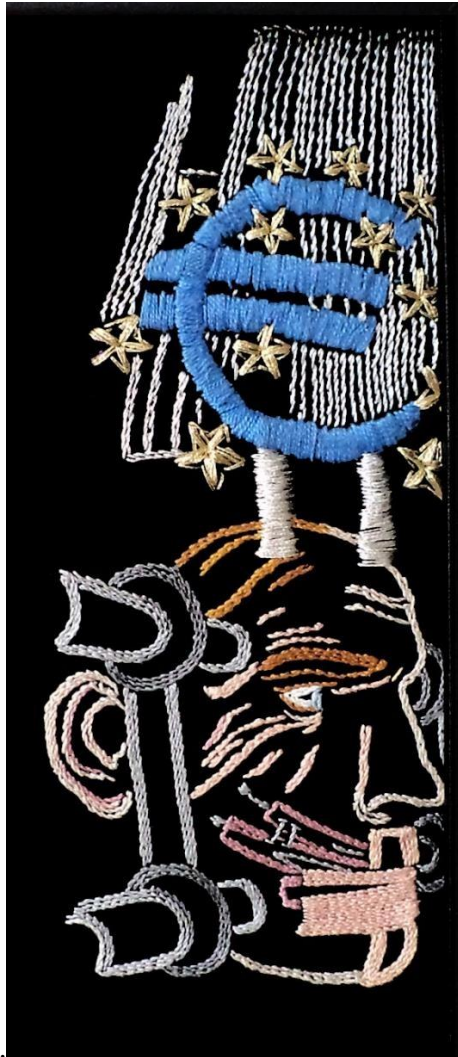
Oh God, give the world healing
and show to all Your great wonders,
so they all turn to Your Grace again,
as in the past,
with faith, hope and this time,

as You take away once and for all
all the sicknesses that afflict the world...

(Poem by the author)

SOCIAL WELFARE IS IN COLLAPSE

THE PAINTING SHOWS THE MAN OF THE INSTITUTION WITH THE BAND-AID IN HIS MOUTH, LIKE THE EURO, WHICH HAS CONSEQUENCES, EVEN IN TERMS OF SOCIAL WELFARE



As usual, the weaker social groups are particularly affected by the drastic cuts in expenditure on welfare benefits, which are largely being cut back for the vulnerable social groups. The austerity measures reduce and cut social benefits to thousands of citizens, such as disabled children, cancer patients, mentally ill people and, in general, people in need of full support and social protection.

MALNUTRITION

IN THE PAINTING, IMPOVERISHED EUROPEANS ARE FED BY CHARITIES.



17 October has been designated as the World Day for the Eradication of Poverty. Despite this, it finds millions of impoverished citizens of the western world hungry along with the rest of the developing world for a little food.

The economic crisis has widened social inequalities by causing massive layoffs of millions of people worldwide. Consequently, due to the loss of their incomes, they are experiencing economic misery and poverty, resorting to the soup kitchens of charitable organisations, or picking up the leftovers from the farmers' markets.

The Commission states:

More than 13 million people are fed by charities and local social services.

An estimated 47-48 million people have remained or been pushed into poverty as a result of the economic crisis, according to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Development (UN - DE - SA).

For this reason, the eradication of hunger must become a priority for governments, in line with the campaign of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO):

One billion people suffer from chronic hunger and that makes me furious.

SEARCHING FOR FOOD THROUGH GARBAGE
[FOOD INSIDE GARBAGE]

IN THE PAINTING WE SEE THE MAN LOOKING FOR HIS FOOD IN THE GARBAGE BIN, AS WELL AS A CAT NEXT TO HIM.



In 21st century Greece, our impoverished fellow citizens are looking for their daily food inside garbage cans. Particularly in the big cities, where the economic problem remains acute, our fellow citizens do not throw garbage into the bins. Instead, they look for something to eat in them.

But even to get something edible out of them, they will have to be very lucky, because when they are opened, the cats are the first to pounce...

Desperate as they are, they don't even think about the diseases spread by picking and eating unhealthy food through the garbage.

Really, then, what kind of civilization are we talking about?

THE GARBAGE CONSUMER

It's raining, and yet he's bent over again,

He searches through the smelly bin

To secure his daily unhealthy food.

Sick, alone and exhausted, he rifles through the bin

to find something edible that will satisfy him

to feel better, to survive...

He waits, in the midsummer, in case he finds something refreshing

Something thrown away from the neighbourhood, from the children,

To enjoy it with all his heart...

He celebrates, and yet he, alone still, keeps well,

though he knows not what a feast is,

without wine,

nor home-made hot food.

He goes away when he is unfortunate to find

even a little food,

compared to the well-bred one,

our modern, voracious consumer...

He picks through the bins with unparalleled care,

in case he finds something in the garbage again,

and people only wonder

when they see him...

He gets angry and rebels

these days the garbage consumer

when he sees the dogs enjoying the expensive

and tasty food

- and all this happens in our electronic age...

But he also hopes to find something good in there

to avoid future shame.

And it will be that something

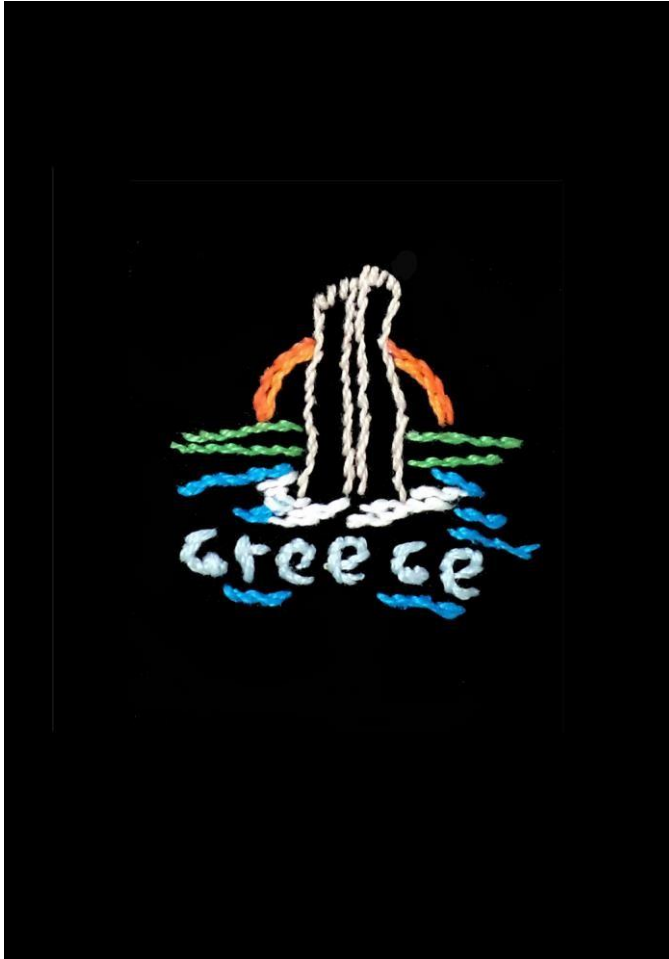
that will probably somehow change

his ruined life...

(Poem by the author)

TOURISM

THE PAINTING SHOWS THE PROGRESS OF GREEK TOURISM: HEAD IN THE BOTTOM AND FEET IN THE AIR!



Due to the economic crisis, foreigners did not travel or chose cheaper destinations in our neighbouring countries. Therefore, the result was obvious, with a great decline in the tourist flow in Greece.

Tourism, as a sensitive product, depends on international political and economic circumstances. Some years later, tourism recovered, as in 2014:

According to the Bank of Greece data for 2014, the number of foreign tourist arrivals increased by 23%, exceeding 22,000,000, compared to 17,900,000 in 2013.

It should be noted that in 2013, total tourist arrivals from abroad had reached 20,100,000.

But again, the heavy industry of Greek tourism was hit and literally “plunged” in 2020, with the health crisis of the pandemic from Covid-19, as almost all tourist accommodation in the country was closed.

86th Thematic Unit
CONSTRUCTION SECTOR

THE CONSTRUCTION TROLLEY, EMPTY OF ALL MATERIALS, IS SHOWN IN THE PAINTING, AS IS THE WORKER'S HAT, LEFT WITH ALL OTHER CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS.



During a prolonged economic crisis, the construction industry in Greece is at its nadir. The construction sector is experiencing the greatest crisis, as prospective buyers are indifferent to the supply of expensive newly built apartments and are increasingly turning to the market for older and more economical properties.

The downward decline in the sector has continued to this day, since, according to the Urban Planning Department's data, the number of building permits issued

has recorded a nationwide decline in the overall activity of the construction sector.

In particular, there has been an increased decrease in the number of building permits, but also in the area and volume of construction, as people are now turning to repairing and restoring their properties.

87th Thematic Unit
ESTATE AGENCY
[FOR RENT - FOR SALE

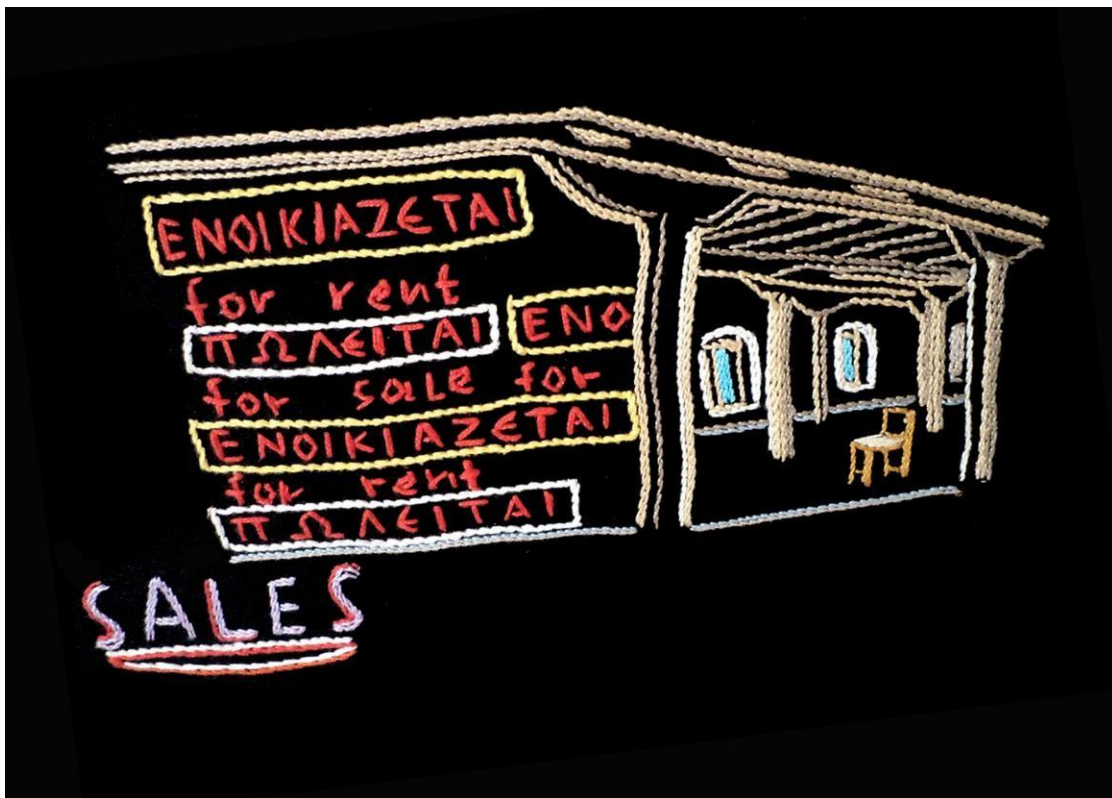
FOR SALE - FOR RENT

FOR RENT - FOR SALE

SALES]

THE PAINTING SHOWS, IN RED LETTERS, THE RENTALS - SALES.

ALSO, THE EMPTY BUSINESS BUILDING IS SHOWN (WITH THE CHAIR).



Up to two hundred thousand (200,000) and more are estimated to be the properties in our Country that are looking for interested buyers which is not easy at all, and it takes time. Several of them are overpriced, thus their sale has been delayed for decades. Others, on the other hand, are disadvantaged due to their age and lack of maintenance, so they are sold for peanuts.

Their purchase prices are falling far below their objective values, even below their objective values, and seaside properties in towns and cities are being “sold off at very low prices” in order to cover the debts of their owners towards the tax demands of the State.

The Single Property Tax [EN.F.I.A. (Law 4223/2013)] was the finishing stroke to the selling off of properties, which was exploited by foreign investors.

For Rent - For Sale

For sale - For rent...

The thousands of advertisements stuck on poles and entrances of apartment buildings are countless...

A similar fall in prices is also being seen in lettings, as wages have been squeezed and unemployment has risen to high levels. Several landlords are also reducing the rental prices of their properties in order to attract interested tenants, due to the high supply of rental apartments. Other landlords, with greater financial need, go to the extent of rent-free rentals for the repair and maintenance of their properties, with the resident having to pay only the water and electricity bills.

88th Thematic Unit
ARABS – PETRODOLLARS

IN THE PAINTING THE BIG ARAB INVESTOR.

[FOR EMPHASIS, IT IS SEPARATED AND WRITTEN WITH TWO WORDS: PETRO (UP), DOLLARS (DOWN).]



For the economic support of Greece, about a decade ago and under the government of George Papandreou, an urgent agreement was signed between our country and Qatar. The resulting agreement, worth five billion euros (€5 billion), was aimed at attracting big foreign investors and involved investments in tourism, marinas, casinos, energy, construction, health, pharmaceuticals, etc.

For example, “Abu Dhabi Mar”, a giant group, invests in shipyards, as it owns four (4) shipyards, but also maintains the largest ownership stake in the Skaramanga Shipyards. (We were last informed that the Skaramanga Shipyards were bought by a Greek shipowner.) Besides, there is a great interest on behalf of the Arab “petrodolarians” in an investment concerning energy in Astakos, Aitolokarnania, which is the reason why the companies “Qatar Petroleum International” and “Qatar Electricity & Water Company” took action.

TRADE – CLOSEDOWNS IN THE MARKET: SHOP

THE PAINTING, WITH THE BLINDS DOWN, SHOWS A SHOP WITH A PADLOCK.



Unpaid bills of exchange, bounced cheques dominate the retail sector, according to ICAP Group as well.

The shops in Greece have their fair share of “padlocks”, of which the shopping streets of the cities are teeming.

Commercial businesses are closing down, thousands of jobs are being lost, bankruptcies are increasing, and commercial loans are being largely rejected.

In Heraklion, Crete, half of the shops on the central Kalokairinou Avenue, at the height to Hanioporta, have remained

“unclaimed”, for more than a decade, with the padlock on the door, since they have obviously now become discredited and ...abandoned, because the general purchasing power of the Greek consumer has been weakened.

Uncertainty prevails in trade, with the over-indebted companies, in the absence of financial incentives, declaring bankruptcy...

90th Thematic Unit
DOLLAR - YUAN CURRENCY WAR

THE PAINTING SHOWS THE TWO BANKNOTES.



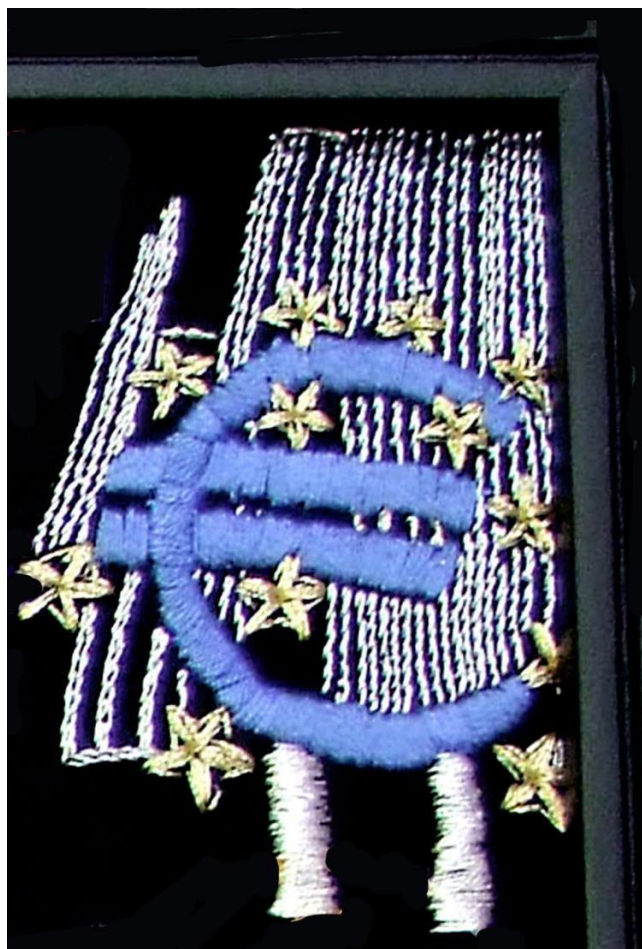
The Chinese yuan tends to become a competitor to the dollar. The fact is that China is seeking to keep its currency in line with the dollar without accepting further pressure from the US to revalue its currency.

Let us not forget that China remains the largest creditor of the United States, with the largest foreign exchange reserves, estimated at trillions of dollars. It became a world record twenty-year high, set in October 2013, for the Chinese currency, the yuan, against the dollar, after three (3) consecutive days of revaluation, reaching 6.10 yuan per dollar.

According to economists' estimates, "China has kept its currency stable at the exchange rate of 6.83 per dollar in recent years to promote exports, and its currency has been depreciated by up to 40%. The recovery of the Chinese economy, combined with a weak dollar, is likely to lead to further yuan revaluations as Chinese authorities intensify their efforts to promote the yuan as a currency for international trade."

EURO

THE PAINTING SHOWS OUR CURRENCY, THE EURO (€).



The Euro (€), as the official currency of the Eurozone, has been a cause of reflection and debate among economists and politicians, putting at stake whether Greece, as a country with a budget deficit, should remain in the Eurozone.

It is noted that a possible exit of our country from the Eurozone would also signal a series of problems in the global economy.

The 5th of July 2015 was a landmark date, with the resounding “NO” of the Greeks in the referendum that was held, with a percentage (61.3%), but which divided the Greek people, preparing the ground for the adoption and imposition of the 3rd Austerity Memorandum.

92nd Thematic Unit

G20

THE PAINTING, BOTTOM LEFT, SHOWS THE G20, AS WELL AS THE OPENING OF THE “INCOME GAP”.

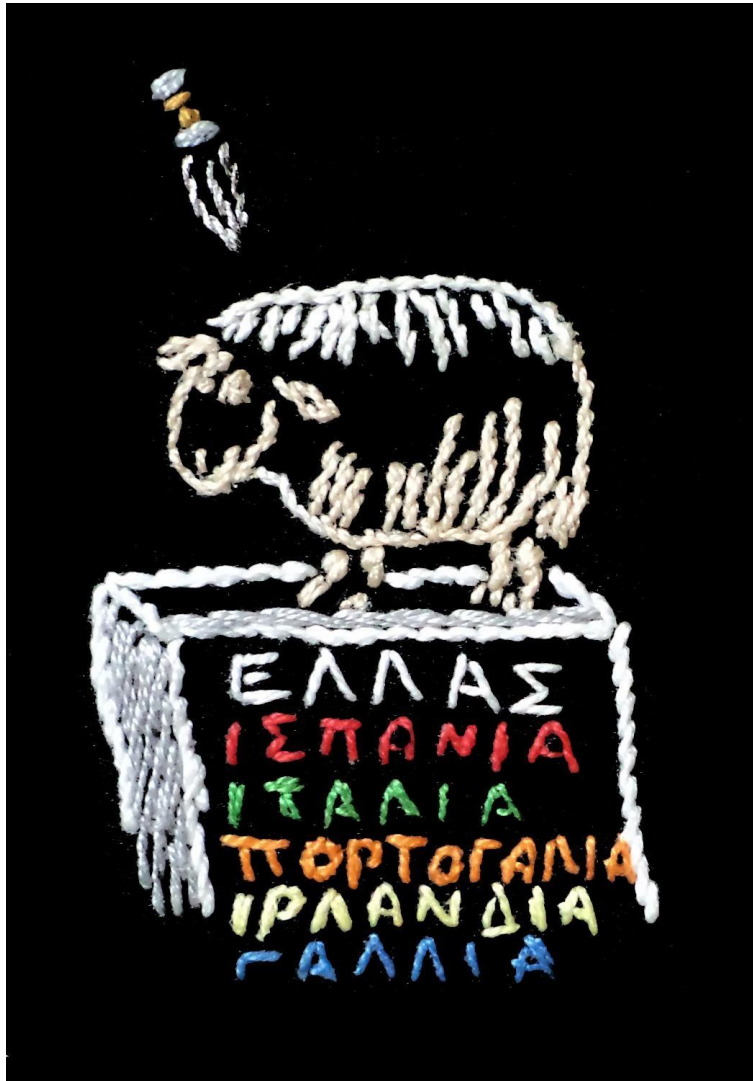


At the meeting of the world's twenty (20) largest economies, the G20, exchange rates are being discussed at length, with the aim of boosting exports. “When it comes to exchange rates, the general discussion will take place in the G20” said Pierre Moscovici. But when it comes to the increase in global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) above 2% of the forecast, this too will be considered by the Group of Twenty Largest and Richest Economies (G20).

RECESSION IN THE EUROZONE COUNTRIES

- “A SHEEP READY FOR SLAUGHTER”

IN THE PAINTING WE SEE THE “SHEEP” (EUROZONE COUNTRIES IN RECESSION), READY FOR SLAUGHTER, ON THE “ALTAR” OF SACRIFICE...



In the face of a generalised economic crisis, the recession rates in the Eurozone demonstrate the scale of the problem facing the countries.

Ireland, in 2012, held the lead in public and private external debt, [0.9% of Gross National Product (GNP), according to international media reports].

Portugal followed in the same year with a 3.8% recession, Spain with 1.8% and counting more than six million (6,000,000) unemployed, Italy with 2.7%, and France with a 0.3% recession.

Greece remained with the largest public debt, relative to the percentage of GDP, since, as announced by the Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT), “the consolidated debt of the General Government of Greece in nominal terms at the end of 2013 amounted to 318.7 billion euros or 175.1% of GDP”.

In an interview with the Austrian newspaper *Kleine Zeitung*, Martin Schulz asks:

Why, in countries in crisis, should ordinary citizens consistently pay their taxes, and many rich people export their money tax-free abroad or to tax havens?

94th Thematic Unit

GREEK ROCKY ISLETS FOR RENT

THE PAINTING SHOWS A BEAUTIFUL ROCKY ISLET WITH EXTENSIVE SANDY BEACHES.



“Forty (40) beautiful rocky islets of high standards are for rent, by concession of the Greek State and the Troika [or Institutions], with crystal clear waters, pristine nature, sheep and goats (kri-kri), sandy beaches, small harbours, to distinguished foreigners!”

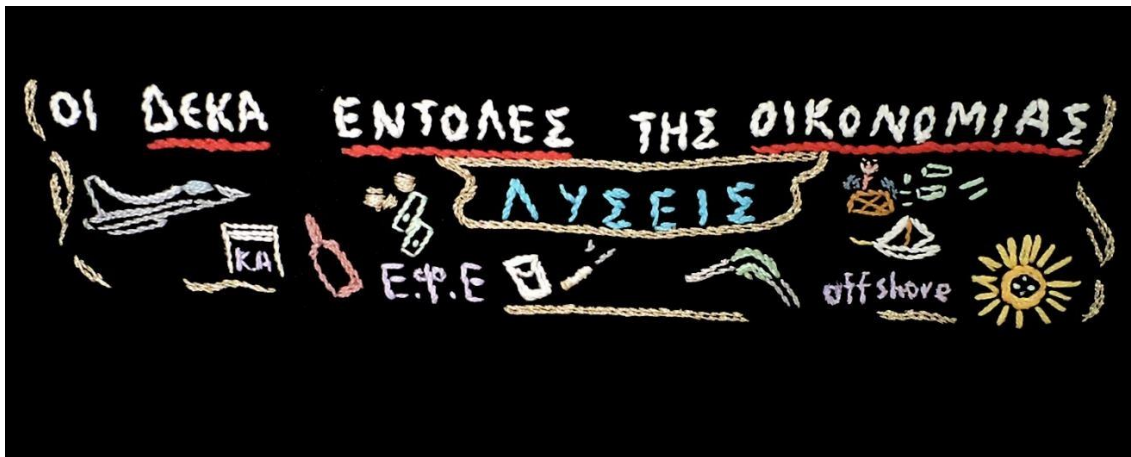
A nice ad would be this one to rent out all our little rocky islets without any waiting and delay.

Several islands, large and small, dry or densely vegetated, as well as archaeological sites of rocky islets (Grantes Island) are offered by the State to private individuals, for lucrative “businesses”.

The archaeological sites, however, remain non-negotiable as treasures of our cultural heritage and, therefore, cannot be the subject of a transaction.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF ECONOMY – SOLUTIONS

THE PAINTING SHOWS THE CHART, AS WELL AS THE CORRESPONDING, INDICATIVE, SMALL ILLUSTRATION OF EACH COMMANDMENT.



1st COMMANDMENT: LOW REDUCTION OF ARMAMENTS WHEN CONDITIONS PERMIT

THE PAINTING SHOWS THE FIGHTER AIRCRAFT.



Greece pays billions of euros to foreign companies for its defence expenditure. With the tension in the Aegean, most of the billions are spent on the purchase of state-of-the-art RAFAL fighter aircraft and BELHARRA frigates, in order for Greece to effectively counter any threat with our neighbour Turkey.

2nd COMMANDMENT: SMUGGLING OF TOBACCO AND CIGARETTES



IN THE PAINTING WE SEE THE PACKET OF CIGARETTES.

With the increasing sales of illegal cigarette packets, the state is losing several million euros in lost tax revenue.

Therefore, the tax provisions of the National Customs Code, which is harmonized with Community law and governs the issues of manufactured tobacco in our country, as well as the provisions of Law 4410/2016 [Government Gazette A', 141/03.08.2016], which established a national licensing system for the movement, import and export of tobacco and equipment for the production of manufactured tobacco, must be complied with in order to combat the smuggling of tobacco and its products.

3rd COMMANDMENT: SMUGGLING OF FUEL

THE PAINTING SHOWS THE PETROL “HOSE”



Fuel smuggling is valued at three (3) billion euro. The adulterated fuels (a percentage of diesel is adulterated with that of heating oil) are checked with portable detection analysers to prevent adulteration, with the aim of eliminating the phenomenon.

The Coordinating Centre for Combating Illegal Trade (SYKEAP) and the Interdepartmental Market Control Unit (DIMEA) of the General Secretariat for Trade and Consumer Protection of the Ministry of Development and Investment confirm daily a large number of violations due to illegal trade in general.

4th COMMANDMENT: UNDERGROUND ECONOMY

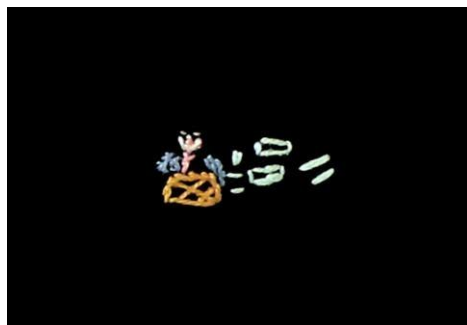
IN THE PAINTING WE SEE THE BOTTLE OF LIQUOR.



Smuggling is flourishing as it is a transaction aimed at illegal profit, since no taxes are paid to the State. On the other hand, the smuggling of alcoholic beverages also contributes to a reduction in state revenues, which in turn results in a corresponding tax burden for citizens.

5th COMMANDMENT: GAMBLING

THE PAINTING SHOWS THE TWO GREEN EURO NOTES OF THE GAMBLING GAMES, ON WHICH GAMBLERS PLACE THEIR GOLDEN HOPES OF WINNING.



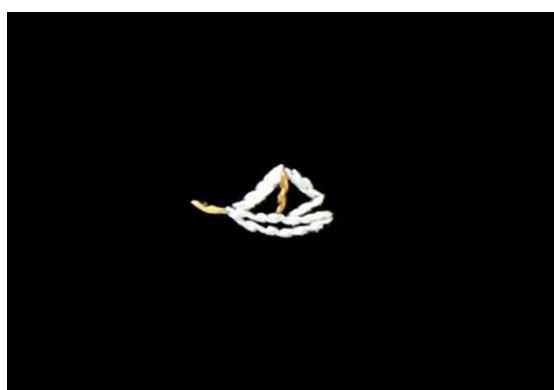
In gambling (legal and illegal gambling), the really lucky winner is the one who does not gamble.

Hope always prevails among the players. The future belongs to them, but the dream is extinguished when it has already destroyed many of them...

OPAP, from these so-called games of chance, has a net profit of hundreds of millions of euros.

6th COMMANDMENT: YACHTS - OFFSHORE COMPANIES

THE PAINTING SHOWS THE SAILING BOAT, AS WELL AS THE TERM OFFSHORE.



The Greek, resourceful like Odysseus, is constantly inventing “tricks” to get out of taxes and prevent the state mechanism from collecting the expected revenues. However, the Ministry of Finance seized two and a half thousand (2,500) yachts when it was found that their owners had set up fictitious shipping companies. In addition, the luxury living tax was reintroduced for private yachts.

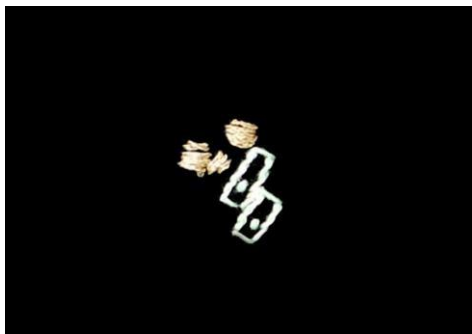
Offshore companies: An offshore company can be established and operate in Greece under Law 89/1976, as amended by Laws 814/1978 and 2234/1994, as well as subsequent amendments up to Law 4712/2020 (Government Gazette 146/A/29-7-2020).

Certainly, it can work without obstruction, since, with reduced taxation as a strong incentive, the great wealth evades taxation.

Offshore companies (intermediaries) invest in real estate, shares, yachts, etc.

7th COMMANDMENT: FOREIGN DEPOSITS

THE PAINTING SHOWS THE BANK OFFICE FROM WHICH SEVERAL BILLION EUROS WERE DISBURSED AND “THROWN” ABROAD.



The transfer of billions of euros from Greek banks abroad, where they are not taxed, was successfully carried out during the period of ten years of austerity.

These sums of money are thought to have exceeded twenty billion euros (€20 billion), literally “winging” their way out of our credit institutions.

8th COMMANDMENT: A.T.R. (E.F.E.) (ADDITIONAL TAXATION OF THE RICH)

THE PAINTING SHOWS THE INITIALS A.T.R.(E.F.E.)



Junker to Tsipras:

“I told you, tax the shipowners”.

Greek shipowners are credited by domestic banks for building ships, so that they owe billions of euros to the banking institutions, while their total debts are eventually passed on to the state budget.

SHIPPING LOANS: Here is the proof:

Steady, side by side with the world's leading naval power. The National Bank of Greece remains steadfastly by the side of Greek Shipping, one of the most nerve-wracking sectors of our economy, with a top position in the global ranking.

With significant financing in excess of two (2) billion dollars (\$), it has emerged as a major financial partner of the sector, thus contributing to the expansion and modernization of the Greek fleet, as well as to the development of our National Economy ¹¹.

Of course, our generous big captains are also becoming donors of ships to support the Coast Guard (Coast Guard), with their contribution being acknowledged, of course. Besides, with these donations, they enjoy special privileges, titles and tax exemptions from the State.

[“PGI ATLAS I” and “HERACLES”: the two newest ships that are now part of the fleet to strengthen the Navy Force.]

Kyriakos Mitsotakis: “Greece needs you”.

In the taxation of the rich, the Bankers follow, who communicate their profitability on the internet, whose financial figures are considered provocative in an era of austerity and poverty.

Large hotel groups, companies listed on the Athens Stock Exchange, pharmaceutical manufacturers, insurance companies, TV journalists, football players with contracts worth millions of euros, famous artists, doctors, surgeons, while politicians are not excluded from the list...

¹¹ Text of an advertisement of the National Bank of Greece in the magazine Ephoplistis, Vol. 326 / July-August 2020.

POLITICIANS AND THE CRISIS ¹²

It is well known how much politicians want
to get a lot of votes, to get into parliament.
And they don't do it, of course, because they love us,
but because they want to make themselves comfortable.
They have high salaries, and much more.
which are, no doubt, great privileges.
But these things are not enough, and they call it a joke
The money they get because they're greedy.
And more and more they care to make
With laws that we know they pass unanimously.
And while most Greeks are suffering,
they receive much and offer little.
Thirty years have passed since they began to squander money,
under the pretext of making everyone live well.
Here and there they gave away money by the sack
and the treasury was empty from all the waste.
And when you spend more than you have,
then, of course, you must borrow.
Borrowing once is, perhaps, a solution.
If you keep borrowing, how are you going to pay it back?
Governments, unfortunately, have found it clever
and they decide to borrow and borrow and borrow.
And that's how they've left us in debt over the years,
that even the grandchildren won't be able to pay back.
bribery, mismanagement, fraud and waste
have brought our country to its blackest mess.
and to the great disappointment of the Greeks.

¹² Chourdakis, Ioannis, 2016. Early Senility - One from here, and one from there. Agios Nikolaos of Crete, p. 158-159.

We have a great crisis and we are all living it.
and there's less and less in the wallet.
And the treasury is empty, and it is, as they say, in the red
And we have become beggars in the International Monetary Fund.

And the Governors, alas, who run around,
**have begun to impose many taxes that are unbearable
on the Greeks and, of course, they're doing them an injustice.
The rich escape, and the poor groan.**

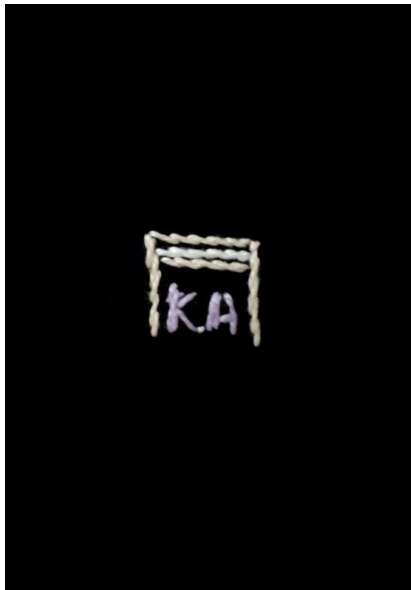
(Ioannis Hourdakis)

**In a well-governed country, poverty is a disgrace.
In a country that is badly governed, wealth is a disgrace.**

(Confucius)

9TH COMMANDMENT: STATE-OWNED PROPERTIES (S.P.)

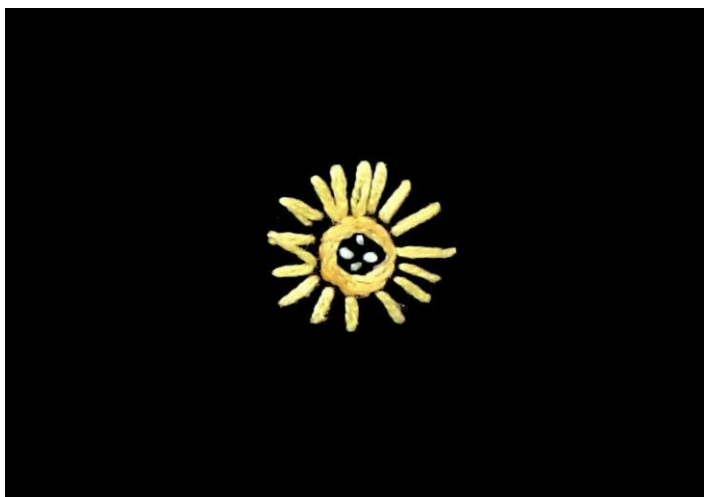
THE PAINTING SHOWS THE BUILDING WITH THE INITIALS S.P.



State-owned real estate includes buildings, marinas, casinos, beachfront land, golf courses, hotels such as the former “Xenia”, etc., since the state-owned real estate is approaching three hundred billion euros (€300,000,000,000). Efforts are being made to exploit them, with the prospect that they will yield revenues of hundreds of millions of euros, while, according to the privatisation programme, airports and ports are being handed over to foreigners...

10TH MANDATE: 'SUN' PROJECT - NATURAL GAS

THE PAINTING SHOWS THE SUN - ECOLOGICAL ENERGY POWER POINT (SOCKET).



Sun means light, energy, heat. Indeed, the sun in Greece and especially in our southern, island country offers the most efficient energy solutions (electricity production through photovoltaic parks) to help Greeks to exit from the long-term austerity and to reduce the public debt.

Natural gas: The production of electricity from natural gas is an ideal solution for several everyday uses, while its exploitation is considered by experts to bring Greece hundreds of billions of dollars in profits.

According to the article published by the news agency “Reuters”,

a study by three (3) Greek scientists estimates the natural gas reserves in the area south of Crete at 3.5 trillion cubic metres, capable of generating five hundred and ninety-nine (599) billion dollars in state revenues for Greece over twenty-five (25) years.

[I will not solve Greece's economic problem, but I must, as a free and responsible person, express my opinions by creating Art, which is the deepest flowering of the soul and the immortal voice of the people throughout the centuries...]

LOAN COMPROMISES – PARALLEL LIVES

IN THE PAINTING WE SEE GREECE LOADED WITH THE SACK ON HER BACK FULL OF ... LOANS!



In the bankrupt Modern Greece, from 2010 to the present, we see similarities that correlate with the past and, in particular, with the year 1897.

It was then again, with the loans, that Greece was financially strengthened by the foreign international agents with many loans (on its back), which amounted to the sum of eight hundred and fifty million (850.000.000) drachmas. Strict financial control was imposed for the repayment of Greek debts, as the International Financial Control of 1898 by the Great

Powers was in force and applied, with the six-member Financial Control Committee (Britain, France, Russia, Germany, Italy, Italy, Austria-Hungary), lasting eighty (80) years (1898-1978).

Perpetual monopolies of agricultural and livestock products, oil, raisins, wine, meat, tobacco, salt, light oil, prevailed and all this always under international control.

This event seems corresponding and similar to our borrowing after the appeal to the European Union and the International Monetary Fund.

ABORTIONS

THE PAINTING SHOWS THE DISMEMBERED, BLEEDING FOETUS AND ITS HEART, WHICH LONGED TO BE ALIVE!



Greece holds the sad record for abortions in Europe, according to official statistics.

According to Greek Law 1609/1986, abortions are legally permitted as long as the woman's health is prioritized.

But what is legal is not always ethical. The right to self-determination of the female body, as well as the right to decide on the termination of pregnancy, is invoked by the accomplices and supporters of abortion.

From the moment of conception, the embryo is a self-existent entity. However, the abortion process is unnaturally and artificially violent, as the foetus, from an early age, has a highly developed sense of pain, as scientists claim. The embryo, therefore, as a living creature, feels and perceives, even at an unconscious level because from the first months of embryonic life its human organs and characteristics are still being formed.

The poster that was removed from the Athens Metro in just one day, dated 13-1-2020, was about the right of the foetus to life and urged mothers to carry the foetus, pointing out, in capital letters, “CHOOSE LIFE”. Probably, this phrase upset some abortion-guilty consciences, since it was immediately ordered by the Ministry to disappear...

Specifically, it read:

TO THE UNBORN CHILD...

DID YOU KNOW THAT: from the 18th day ITS HEART IS BEATING?

IT FEELS PAIN after the 10th week?

So, the decision makers suggested the removal of the poster because the foetus in the centre was a divisive issue in our modern society!

Apart from the economic and social reasons for which a pregnancy is terminated and the fear of assuming responsibilities (obligations) by both sexes, I believe that the child that comes into the world is a gift of nature, the fruit of the feelings and love of two people, and not simply the result of the sexual act, which for others means only personal pleasure. Still, we find that in the animal kingdom, too, there are never such phenomena of rejection / incidents of “cutting up” of the pregnancy. On the contrary, the maternal instinct prevails to the maximum extent, protecting, nurturing, feeding and caring for its young...

98th Thematic Unit

CRIMINALITY OUTBREAK

THE PAINTING SHOWS THE MAN WHO STOLE A YOUNG WOMAN'S PURSE, AS WELL AS THE PISTOL, WITH THE BULLETS, WHICH ARE INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE BOX.



Unfortunately, despite the policing and civil protection measures, crime in our country is on the increase, creating worrying feelings and great insecurity among citizens, who are now unable to protect even their own lives.

Every day we are confronted with criminal incidents of burglary, fraud, theft, embezzlement, drug trafficking, kidnapping and murder by foreigners and fellow citizens, while some crimes remain unsolved for years, with the result that the whole of society is threatened by the unapprehended perpetrators.

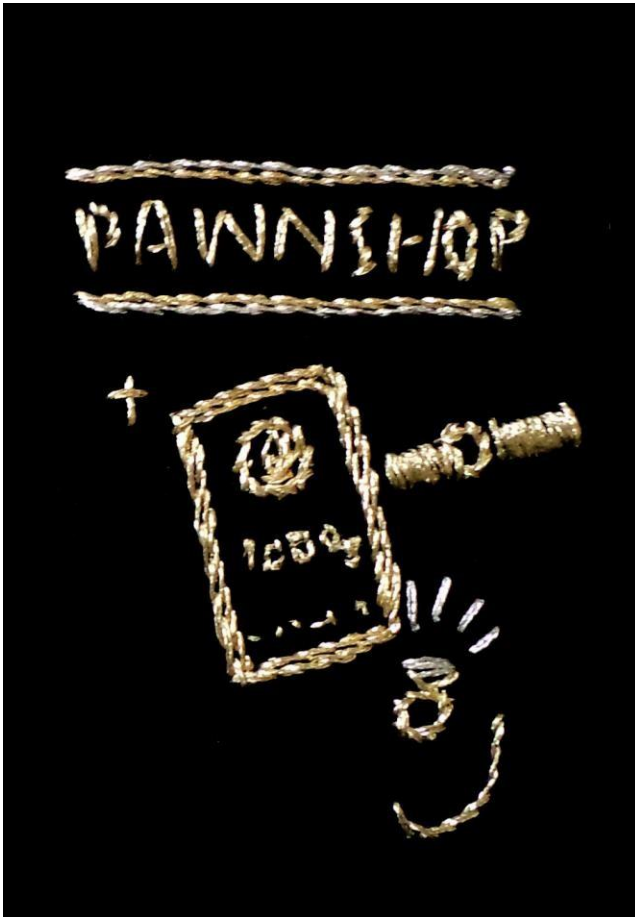
In order to prevent and suppress any delinquent behaviour, we propose more and effective policing, checks on foreigners (place of residence - occupation or profession - marital status), as well as recording cameras everywhere, in streets, parks, alleys, squares, as well as

additional security measures in places with holiday homes, to suppress any form of delinquency.

In order to avert the risk of the social phenomenon of crime, it is advisable to further improve living conditions, especially for the lower social strata, which are suffering, with a relative rise in their standard of living. At the same time, the family should be supported by social structures, and every effort should be made to improve their educational level, provided that the state, of course, provides equal opportunities and incentives for all. These measures will also help to reduce the gap between the rich and the poor, since this is the only way to reduce the majority of offences.

99th Thematic Unit
GOLD - PAWNSHOP

IN THE PAINTING WE SEE THE PAWNSHOP, I.E. THE PAWNSHOP, WITH THE GOLD AND JEWELLERY.



All kinds of gold, such as gold bars, gold pounds, jewellery, watches (gold, "Rolex"), shares of companies that manage mines, have their place of honour. People's insecurity in times of crisis drives them to buy gold, considering it a safe and necessary investment.

It was common in the past for the rich to show off their abundance of money by putting on gold teeth. A similar extreme example is the act of a son of a wealthy aristocratic family of Heraklion, who, for a generous fee, persuaded his dentist to put a gold tooth in his little dog, so that he could proudly display it in the Heraklion salons where he frequented. By this action, however, he subsequently suffered censure, as well as many other negative comments from all his poor fellow citizens.

It is a human passion for displaying wealth, recognition, and power, which negatively orients and enslaves people.

According to the Financial Times,

the “SPDR Gold Trust”, the second largest gold fund in the world, has come to hold forty-two (42) million ounces of gold, worth over fifty-one and a half (51.5) billion dollars. In total, investment funds, worldwide, hold over one thousand two hundred (1,200) tonnes of gold.

During the financial crisis (of the last 10 years), and also during the Covid-19 period, countless pawnshops are estimated to have opened their doors to desperate and financially devastated people, who sell off what they have left in gold for pennies on the dollar.

Pawnbrokers are doing 'business as gold', as their profit rate is a hundred times higher than gold sales or pawning.

[Poem about gold and marble:]

GOLD AND MARBLE

[Ioannis Polemis (1862-1924)]

Said the gold to the marble:

– To the ends of the earth,

what sun shines like me, what light has my light?

I rule the world, I weave happiness,

I trample on beauty, I make ugliness beautiful.

I lead my thief's hand into the darkness,

I sharpen the murderer's double-edged sword.

I buy honour and sell it on the street,

I conquer virtue, I break the law.

My favours are many, and my power alone,

that shatters and builds thrones...

What do you do, marble?

And it answers:

– I seize your power in the darkness of the tomb...

100th Thematic Unit

DIRTY MONEY HOLDERS - TAX EVADERS

IN THE PAINTING YOU CAN SEE THE DIRTY MONEY HOLDER- A TAX-GRABBER, WITH HIS SHIRT AND HIS BRIEFCASE FULL OF MONEY].



December 9 was established as World Anti-Corruption Day.

Kickbacks (illegal profits from services or commissions), bribery, speculation, tax evasion (“black money”) are just a few words typical of the definition of corruption.

Since antiquity, this social phenomenon has been of great concern to our ancestors, who were unable not only to eliminate it, but also to contain it [Aristotle, Politics, B, 1270 b].

In financial transactions, dishonesty prevails to a large extent, with illegal bribery, which brings in a lot of tax-free income.

At the request of the Ministry of Finance, the bank deposits of suspected tax evaders are being checked. Those who present our bankrupt state with fictitious tax documents or do not pay their taxes or conceal part of their real income.

Based on the EU Directive 2011/16/EU, the financial data of taxpayers are checked and information concerning deposits, interest, shares, trade, purchases and, of course, real estate purchases are exchanged by the Department of the General Directorate of Tax Controls.

But what about the “Golden Boys”? Are they too subject to the target of financial audits? Or are they exempt?

The twenty-five (25) managers of the largest investment funds received billions of dollars, fourteen (14) billion from fees and profits of their own investments, according to a report in the Financial Times.

Your conclusions are your own...

CHINA - THE ATTACK OF THE “DRAGON”

IN THE PAINTING, THE CHINESE RED DRAGON COEXISTS WITH CHINESE TECHNOLOGY.



In recent years, China has become a global economic power, since it always goes hand in hand with Technology, a fact that worries the Superpower. The USA and the European Union are seeking to prevail over their rival China, while the latter envisages a modern world by making the Asian country the strongest player on the international economic chessboard. The future will show...

It was acknowledged and disclosed that Chinese banks are leading the way in granting several billion dollars in loans, financing large infrastructure projects in other countries. This

financing even includes part of an oil pipeline in Russia to fully meet its energy needs. After all, China's economic strategy has primarily been to attract foreign big investors to the country, with the strong incentive of low labour costs.

China has always been in favour of 'monkey' investments. It is concluding deals worth billions of euros, while Cosco is implementing its commercial plans for our country's largest port, Piraeus, for the handling of containers. In addition, China has expressed a keen interest in acquiring Athens International Airport. It is also oriented towards the new airport in Kastelli, Crete, as well as towards the realization of hydrocarbon extraction in our country.

Following an agreement, it was announced that “Exim Bank” and also “CDB” are the banks that approve the granting of billions of dollars in loans for mega projects, making clear reference to the generous lending to shipowners. In addition to this, the Chinese are not failing to constantly implement major infrastructure projects in their country, since Beijing is looking forward to and planning to eradicate poverty everywhere on Chinese territory.



VICTORY: THE IDEOGRAM OF VICTORY

THE PAINTING CLEARLY SHOWS THE CHINESE IDEOGRAM OF VICTORY AS INTERPRETED BY THE FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE COSCO SPEECH, CAPTAIN WAI JIAFU.



The business philosophy of the former Chairman of the giant Cosco Group, the world's second largest maritime transport company, has been shared, winning the hearts of the business world...

According to Captain Wei Jiafu,

it consists of five (5) individual characters, which, together, make up a logical business mindset, and they are:

- Death: to win, you must be prepared for the risks that can "kill" your business. If you don't prepare properly, you can't win the final battle.
- Mouth: As the head of a business, you must constantly communicate, defend your strategy and explain your philosophy to the people around you.
- The month, that is, the time: Time is valuable - it's money. In everything you do, you must follow a strict schedule. Never put off until tomorrow what needs to be done today.
- Wealth: In business, success means making money for investors, for shareholders. Without money, China could not have helped Greece during the crisis. Without money, it could not repatriate its thirty-six thousand (36,000) citizens trapped in the Libyan riots.
- Profit: it refers to normality, meaning that in successes you should not get overly excited, just as in failures you should not get overly disappointed. If you achieve this, it doesn't mean that tomorrow you won't be threatened. If you fail, it doesn't mean that a new opportunity won't present itself tomorrow. So, in order for your success to be continuous and consistent, and for you to prove yourself a mature and competent entrepreneur, you need to maintain a critical psychological balance: to develop the mindset that whatever happens, you go about your business as usual and work as usual.

These were the wise words of Captain Giafu from an earlier interview.

103rd Thematic Unit
BANKS - FORECLOSURES

IN THE PAINTING, THE BANK'S "BIG HAND" REACHES OUT MENACINGLY ... TO FORECLOSE ON MORTGAGED PROPERTIES.



The States are supporting and rescuing the Banks, supporting them with billions of euros, without any real return, at a time when the Banks, now powerful from state subsidies (recapitalisations), are soon and without warning, carrying out electronic auctions of thousands of properties, leaving countless families unable to repay their mortgages on the street.

In the USA, for example, banks were previously supported by government grants of seven hundred (700) billion dollars, while home foreclosures were already prevalent.

In Spain and Greece, the same banking system of mortgages prevails for thousands of properties, which are daily put under the hammer by the banks, with homeowners not only thinking about but also finding, unfortunately, the costliest solution to their financial deadlock, ending their lives violently (suicides).

The banks, with their unabated mortgage interest rates, are making it much more difficult to repay mortgages, which are now classified as 'red loans', in order to make it easier for them to speed up the process of auctioning properties.

More generally, according to data accepted and communicated by the Magistrates' Courts of the Greek Territory, it is noted:

Applications for inclusion in Law 3869/2010 (known as the Katseli Law) currently reach one hundred and twenty thousand (120,000), and the hearing date determined by some Athens Magistrates' Courts even reaches 2030. At the same time, the extension for the protection of the first home, established by the recent Law 4224/2013 for a transitional period of one year, has so far had a limited effect, to the extent that it concerns borrowers for whom the auction procedure has been initiated.

However, the New Bankruptcy Code [Law 4738/2020 “Debt Settlement and Second Chance Provision and Other Provisions” (codified, Government Gazette A207/27-10-2020), as amended and in force] has already been enacted.

SUICIDES

PHILOSOPHICAL THEORIES - SPIRITUAL TEACHINGS

[THE PURPOSE OF THE WORK: TO PREVENT THE FREQUENT SUICIDES OF PEOPLE IN FINANCIAL, AND NOT ONLY, DEADLOCK.]



THE PAINTING SHOWS THE HANGED PEOPLE WHO COMMITTED SUICIDE, AS WELL AS THE 'AWFUL BLOODY EYE WHERE THE WORLD DROWNS AND REDEEMS ITSELF', IN THE WORDS OF NIKOS KAZANTZAKIS.

THE LATTER SYMBOLIZES DESPAIR AND, MORE GENERALLY, RESIGNATION TO LIFE.

[IN THE PAINTING, EMBROIDERED IN PURPLE AND RED TO CONTRAST WITH THE BLACK BACKGROUND.]

I.

Dostoyevsky clarified it for us:

When there is no God, everything is allowed.

We have banished God from our modern consumer societies, with the result that the tragic record suicide rate continues, ever increasing! It is estimated that by July 2015 the number of suicides in Greece reached fifteen thousand (15,000)! And this, unfortunately, happens because, in our modern times, the eternal and true supreme values, without, of course, faith in God, are questioned, but also by some progressive circles completely discredited and marginalized as ...anachronistic.

What does nihilism mean? - That supreme values lose their value. The purpose is missing, the answer to “why?” is missing.

Radical nihilism is the belief in an absolute ungroundedness of existence when the issue is the highest values we recognize.¹³

(Friedrich Nietzsche)

We live in an age of the decline of all values, an age of uncertainty, where nothing stands on firm foundations and a solid faith.

[Friedrich Nietzsche (xv 188)]

On this particular premise, every stable spiritual foundation that constitutes the Eternal Creative Principle of the world is retreated and set aside by society, since man posits as the cause of his existence his own self-centred self and the relatively ephemeral power that derives from it. Consequently, man becomes disoriented as to the purpose of his existence, with the result that he embraces the philosophical theories of nihilism and materialism, which, of course, serve him, since they cover all his subsistence needs, as his primary and sole pursuit. Of course, man then cares and strives for the acquisition of wealth with insatiable desire, using legitimate or illegitimate means (obscene profit) ...

¹³ Friedrich Nietzsche 2014. The Will to Power (ed.: Zisis Sarikas). Thessaloniki: Panopticon Magazine, p. 21.

For this reason, many of us prefer the fleeting and deceptive materialistic mindset to the Eternal and True God. People no longer turn to the Sponsor of Life seeking His mercy, just as they do not place themselves in His Divine Providence, but, unfortunately so recklessly, in all kinds of difficulties they choose, as a solution to their problems, to hasten the end of their lives.

But just as we ourselves did not choose to be born into the world, in the same way we have no right to end our earthly life tragically and ingloriously. Most important of all, by killing ourselves we lose our very souls.

Berkeley: “The only reality is the psychic reality.”

Are you thinking of suicide? But this is the perfect devil's banquet. That means going neither according to God's will nor your own will, but according to the will of the devil.

Rope around the neck - eternal life lost. And indeed, in the sharp and unfavourable turn of life, nothing can keep a man, except a living faith in the living God, Who gives and takes, and takes and gives, testing our faith and love at the same time.

Unbelievers go down with Judas to the river to be hanged, while souls of heroic faith go up to Calvary to drink the cup of bitterness and rise again.

(St. Nicholas Velimirovich)

According to **Schopenhauer**, in general, man's suicide stems from an insatiable thirst and will to live. The latter, however, for him, is also the end in itself of existence when it is aimed at the enjoyment and satisfaction of things he seeks to acquire... But this enjoyment is regarded as senseless, temporary and futile, and therefore reprehensible. But when those goods which man desires and dreams of having are not attained or, while he has gained them, he then loses them, then he, as an impatient and cowardly being, will himself write the tragic epilogue of the failure of his life, after having painfully experienced the frustration of his desires.

¹⁴ St. Nicholas Velimirovic 10th ed.2021. Road without God is not bearable - Missionary Letters I (eds.) Athens. pp30-31.

But man, when he is overcome by passions **and wants to burn his desires without any restraint**, as **he disobeys and violates the controls of the holy conscience**, and in order to no longer be controlled by it, like another Herod, he cuts off the head of John, that is, **he does not consider his conscience and makes the decision to perish.** ¹⁵

The violent cessation of life is disastrous for his own body and, of course, for his immortal soul.

The most important obligation of man is the care of the soul, the care for moral improvement.

(Plato, Gorgias)

In his Apology, Socrates instructs us:

I am not going to stop philosophizing and advising and enlightening you, saying those things which I am accustomed to say:

Are you not ashamed to take care how you may acquire as much money and glory and honor as you can, and not to care and be indifferent to wisdom and truth and how you may make your soul as good as possible?

[Plato, Apology of Socrates, 29 d]

He claimed these things, though he himself lived in great poverty.

First and foremost, the cultivation of the soul, contemplating the ideals and true values of life, prevails as an idea. On this basis, the experiential feeling of self-knowledge prevails, which, through the power of the will, impels man to even more self-criticism and introspection, setting as his primary goal the curation of the soul. For,

as heaven differs from earth and heavenly goods from earthly goods, so does the soul differ from the body.

(Basil the Great)

¹⁵ Saint Nicodemus of Mount Athos 2014. The Invisible War. (Rendering in Modern Greek. H: “The examination of conscience”. New Skete of Mount Athos: Publications of the Escort of Monk Spyridon - Holy Hut “St. Spyridon A”, p. 259.

Plato notes:

... as the soul's wandering from a nocturnal day to a true, essential return of the being.

(Plato's Republic, 521 c 6-7)

[... a passage of the soul from some day dark as night to a true day, a return to the true being].

It is considered necessary to precede the soul's crushing (true repentance) in order to return and approach God.

Break your hearts and return to the Lord your God.

(Old Testament, Joel 2:13)

After the grace of Holy Baptism, the grace of repentance was given to men. **Repentance is the second spiritual regeneration... Repentance is the door of divine mercy**, which is opened to those who seek it. through the door of repentance, we enter into divine mercy, and without this door we find no mercy; for all have sinned according to the divine scripture, and are justified freely by the grace of God.

(Isaac the Syrian)¹⁶

As widely stated in the Scriptures of the Christian faith,

“God will save all men and bring them to the knowledge of the truth.”

(New Testament, Apostle Paul to Timothy I, b4)

God has placed man so highly, as the crowning glory of His creation. Therefore, it is an insult and contempt against the Living Creator God to commit this heinous criminal act of man, to turn against himself, since he first denies the Divine Being as an idea, let alone as an Invisible Presence, bringing about, as a result, the rejection of his love and union with God the Father.

¹⁶ Abba Isaac of Syros Ascetic Discourses (Discourse OB) [transferred from the ancient to the modern Greek (puristic Modern Greek) by the Hierodeacon Kallinikos Pantokratorinos - Now published by Monk Pavlos]. Athens: 2nd ed. Publications of the Orthodox Foundation “The Apostle Barnabas”, p. 247.

Ultimately, the suicide fails of the high moral purpose for which he is destined, as he substitutes, himself now, for the exterminating means of his redemption. Definitely, of course, human nature is radically destroyed by the termination of life, since man himself dissolves the image and abolishes the most ideal and highest of all, which is the likeness.

Certainly, he never again approaches His Creator, even in perspective, since there is no room for repentance after death. This is exactly what Judas did when he was hanged...

For this reason,

never despair for man, but only for him who loses hope for himself.

(John Chrysostom)

Suicide means, quite simply, failure of life. However, man has a mind and potential to transcend the darkness of life, to think as positively as he can and to turn to open paths (outlets), aiming at the salvation of his existence. The thought of committing the heinous act of suicide clearly demonstrates the immaturity of the individual, who, with his mind clouded by despair, becomes incapable of planning for the future something right, creative, beneficial and effective, which will enable him to emerge courageously from difficulties, passing contentedly to the other side of life.

Unfortunately, our fellow human beings who are facing all kinds of serious problems, and not only financial ones, resort to suicide as the only solution to get rid of their tormenting deadlocks once and for all.

“To the ruined merchant that everyone has abandoned”:

You write that you're ruined. Your friends have abandoned you. Some turn their heads away from you, others mock you. Only faith in God keeps you from going mad or hurting yourself. That's how you write. Your property is ruined, not you.

A ruined merchant is not a ruined man. Wealth wasn't born with you. You acquired it along the way, and at the end of your life you have to detach yourself from it. But because the wealth was taken from you before the end of your life, that makes you bitter.¹⁷

Therefore, an economic disaster brings not only bitterness but also great despair to those who have high expectations of success in this temporary life, while at the same time all trust in the Creator God is shaken to the core. Thus, they abandon anew every effort to achieve their

goals, overwhelmed by an unbearable pessimism, experiencing a “tombstone” in their souls (the well-known “psychological pressure”).

Nowadays, we have reached the point where suicides are committed openly, in front of a global audience, having become a "fashion" via the Internet, which projects the unacceptable images before the voracious eyes of a curious and gloating public. A spectacle, in other words, almost equivalent to what once, much earlier, happened in the Roman arenas (and in the Colosseum in Rome).

Turning away the face, Lord, I have denied You

Reaching out to other idols, I ignored You.

I passed You by without stopping,

staining the white robe of Your love

with my black hatred. I loved you,

in my despair I hoped in You,

and my refusal was no more

but an insane call.

[Michael Stasinopoulos (Academician), Apology]

Even in despair, then, hope in God must not be forgotten or, even worse, hope must not die, since at the bottom of every human existence lies the effort we all ought to make, and that is the search for Truth, something so very important for the cultivation of the soul and the virtues, since, as Plato emphasizes,

The Truth of beings lies within our soul.

(Plato's Menon, 86 b)

¹⁷ St. Nicholas Velimirovic 10th ed. 2021. The road without God is not bearable - Missionary Letters A (eds.: Petsin Svetlana, Saragudas Elias, Saraguda-Petsin Nefelios - Theol. ed.: Panagopoulos Alexis). Athens: En Plo,p.28.

All true ideas are in God.

(Spinoza, Ethics, I, 25)

And **Spinoza** continues:

God's existence and His essence are one and the same thing.

(Spinoza, Ethics, II)

II.

We now open a large chapter in philosophical reflection, through various philosophical systems, in order to derive thoroughly the views of our philosophers on the existence of God.

According to Aristotle,

the divine is good and eternal.

(Aristotle's *After the Physics*, 192, 1, 16)

Form without matter is God, without body, for God is mind or intellect.

For the beginning is cognition.

(Aristotle, 1072, a, 30)

According to this ancient Philosopher, God is life itself in its highest degree, that is, eternal:

The energy of the mind is life, and he is energy. And energy is the life of him, which is the energy of God. Therefore we see that God is a life, and is a life, and is excellent, so that life and eternal life are continuous and identical in God: for this is God.

(Aristotle *After the Physics*, 1072, b, 28-32)

Parmenides the Eleatic (VI, 5-9):

For perplexity in their breasts drives the wandering mind, and they wander deaf at the same time, and blind, bewildered, sharp-edged sexes, for whom Being and Non-being mean the same thing.

Mich. D. Stasinopoulos

– *Sir, said the Judge,*
I give you back your justice,
which you entrusted to me.
to judge men.

– *Sir, said the Master,*
I give you back your teaching,
which you entrusted to me,
to make free men.

– *Lord, said the Priest,*
I give you back your Word,
which you entrusted to me
to seek the souls of men.

– *Lord, said the Soldier,*
I give you back your sword,
which you entrusted to me
to fight your enemies.

– *Lord, said all four,*
forgive us
for all together,
in this time,
we have betrayed you.

For Parmenides, being is both immovable, anarchic, impermanent and identical:

And immovable in the bounds of great bonds, anarchic and immortal since genesis and destruction are far cast out: true faith hath cast them out. Same and abiding in the same place, it lies therein, and so there it shall stand firm. For it needs in its bonds the hold of the boundary that encloses it.

(VIII, 26-31)

On the one hand we have the path of persuasion that follows the truth and on the other the inaccessible path that imposes the necessity of the existence of non-being, because we could

neither know non-being, nor express it, since 'noein'/think and Being are the same: «For the same thing is there both to be thought of and to be».

«The identity of Noein'/Think and Being eliminates Non-Being from the realm of Noein'/Think as something unthinkable and unspeakable. [Excerpt from the book of Professor Mr. Nikos Avgelis "Introduction to philosophy p. 129], And Parmenides goes on to refer back: **«For confusion in their breasts leads the deluded mind and they wander, deaf and at the same time blind, bewildered, nonjudgmental sexes, for whom Being and Not-Being mean the same thing»** (VI 5-9).

«So since everything was called light and night and what corresponded to their powers were attributed to everything, everything is full of light and night invisible at the same time. Both are the same, because **zero does not exist in any of them** (IX 1-4) [Translation in the Primary Language].

Melissus of Samos (fr. B1):

Always there was what was and always will be. For if it was born, it must necessarily have been nothing before it was born.

If, therefore, it was nothing, nothing could ever be made from nothing.

Being always remains eternal (fr. B1):

Since everything that exists was not made, it is now and has always been and always will be. It had neither beginning nor end, but is infinite. For, if it had become, it would have had a beginning (for it should have begun sometime) and it would have had an end (it would have ceased to be sometime). But, since it never began nor ceased to be, it was always and will always be without beginning and without end.

Empedocles criticizes, indeed [Fr. B11], the folly or foolishness of those who believe that something can be born from “non-being” or obliterated. He maintains that nothing is made from non-being and that the void does not exist [Fr. B12, B13, B14].

Kant:

The absolutely necessary being is the supreme being (*ens realissimum*) and contains existence in its meaning: “God exists”.¹⁹

The cosmological proof begins from experience; that is, it presupposes that something exists in space and time (which has the character of the accidental) and infers from this the existence of an absolutely necessary being: If there is something, then there must also be an absolutely necessary being as its cause.

This is the proof that Leibniz called the proof *contingentia mundi*. The whole argument is as follows: Everything that exists must have a cause, which, in so far as it has the character of contingency, must have another cause, and so on, until the series is terminated in an absolutely necessary cause.

Without an absolutely necessary cause (absolutely necessary being), we cannot fully explain the accidental. From this absolutely necessary being we further deduce the existence of a supreme being, God.²⁰

¹⁸ Avgelis, Nikos 4th ed. revised 2004. Introduction to Philosophy. Thessaloniki, p. 148.

¹⁹ Avgelis, ‘The ontological proof’, p. 442-443.

²⁰ Avgelis, ‘The cosmological proof’, p. 443-444.

On the basis of Kant's ontological proof, God, as a perfect being, has all the positive attributes (Goodness, Wisdom, Omnipotence, etc.) to the highest degree, while His existence is clearly determined by His concept.²¹ The physical-theological proof refers to the unparalleled beauty, perfection, harmony that everything is arranged according to the universal laws governing the universe. And all of this was created by the wisdom of a Prime Maker. Thus, beholding the four elements, fire, air, water and earth, and contemplating their essence and power and energy, you will with great pleasure say to the perfect Creator, who in such a way created them: “Oh divine essence! Oh infinite Power and energy absolutely desirable, **how I rejoice and exult, for thou art only the beginning and cause of every created substance of beings and of every energy and power.**”

He noted that according to St. Maximus **the essence of beings has as its image the Father, the power the Son, the energy the Holy Spirit** so that everything presents its poet God, **not only as one, but also as three.**²²

At this point, let us now make a parenthesis with the Word of the Gospel, about the creation of the world by God.

The Word became man.

Of all things before there was the Word,

and the Word was with God,

and the Word was God.

From the beginning He was with God.

All things were created through Him,

and of all that was made, nothing was made without Him.

He was for the creatures life,

and that life was the light for men.

This Light shone in the darkness of the world.

But the darkness did not accept it.

²¹ Kant, A 588 / B 626 (‘God exists’). In: Avgelis, 2004, p. 443.

²² St. Nicodemus the Athonite, 10th ed. 2014. The Invisible War (ed.) Benedict XVI: Publications of Monk Spyridon, p.95.

The Word was the true Light,
that as it comes into the world, it illuminates every man.
In the world it was,
and through him the world was made,
but the world did not recognize Him.

(New Testament, Gospel of John, Ch. 1, v. 1-6, 9-11)

Leibniz:

God is the first cause and ultimate reason of things.²³

As the Church tells us, the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Ultimate, are God.

The knowledge of necessary and eternal truths is what distinguishes us from mere animals and enables us to have reason and the sciences, elevating us to knowledge of ourselves and God. This is what we call in us an intelligent soul or spirit.²⁴

It is the root of all possibility, for the Divine mind is the domain of ideas or truths. The Divine Mind is identified with eternal truths, with what is logically necessary and possible.²⁵

If there were no eternal substance (substance) there would be no eternal truths. The very possibility of things is grounded in the existence of God, for if there were no God there would be no possibility, and possibility is eternally defined in the ideas of the Divine mind.²⁶

As he who intends to build upon sandy ground must continue to dig until he reaches a stony and firm foundation. And as Archimedes asked for an immovable point to stand to move the greatest weight, so to lay the foundation of the elements of human knowledge requires a fixed point on which we can rest and from which we can safely start. This principle must be sought in the general nature of truths (“in ipsa generali natura veritatum”).²⁷

²³ Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm 1890. philosophical writings (IV). Berlin: Gerhardt, p.358.

²⁴ Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm 1903. opusculs et fragments ineditis. Paris: L. Culturat, pp 45 § 29.

²⁵ Leibniz, VII, p. 311.

²⁶ Leibniz, VII, p. 440.

²⁷ Leibniz, p.401.

The principle of apocryphal reason has a double character: it is both a logical and an ontological principle.

As a logical principle, it can be formulated as follows: "Every true judgment is open to foundation".

As an ontological principle, it is formulated as follows: 'Nothing exists without a reason' or 'Every event has a cause'.²⁸

For Leibniz, God is pure energy, the source of good, as well as the beginning of all knowledge.²⁹

Jaspers:

The experience of limiting states, as limiting states are death, pain, struggle, guilt, states that cannot be overcome, cannot be changed, then man experiences the ultimate limits of his existence, he realizes the finiteness of his life. He feels that his existence is not the true reality and that beyond himself there is the transcendent sphere that surrounds and grounds his existence. Man now sees reality from another perspective. It is the experiential experience of limit states that reveals to him the realm of the absolute, the Divine.

The idea that conceives Transcendence from the unfulfillment of all communications and from the failure of every form of truth in the world is equivalent to proof of the existence of God: from the unfulfillment of any truth and on the condition that, in spite of this, there must be truth, thought reaches "Transcendence."³⁰

Hegel:

God, as the absolute being, unceasingly, acts and exists at the same time in a Triune form. The three persons of the one Divine nature are regarded as three degrees of the dialectical development of the rational idea.

²⁸ Leibniz, ch. 1. 'Reason and Metaphysics', 1-1. 'The Analytic Theory of Judgment'.

²⁹ Leibniz, p. 520.

³⁰ Jaspers, Karl 1973. *Nernunft und Existenz* [3rd Lecture (Truth and Communication)]. Munchen:Piper.

Isaac the Syrian:

When we have attained to love, we have attained to God, and the way of the day is ended, and we have passed into the isle beyond this world, where the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are.

When we have attained to love, we have attained to God, and the way of the day is ended, and we have passed into the isle beyond this world, where the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are.³¹

THANKING YOUR GLORY

(Poem of the creator)

With three fingers
I hold the candle in my hand
reverently making a little prayer,
since You prolong my life,
and unceasingly, the soul thanks You.

Again, King of Heaven,
who by battalions of angels you are glorified everywhere,
enlighten every wandering mind
to comprehend the Existence of the Triune God,
which is the doctrine of every Christian.

No one should doubt,
but, firmly, in the Three Persons
of the One Essence of the Divine Powers should be convinced,
and necessarily to turn away from sin.

And when this now happens,
having accepted the Trinitarian form,
it will be proof enough
that in the apostate world the change has come.

³¹ Abba Isaac of Syros Ascetic Discourses (Discourse OB) [transferred from the ancient to the modern Greek (the puristic Modern Greek) by the Hierodeacon Kallinikos Pantokratorinos - Now published by Monk Pavlos]. Athens: 2nd edition of the Orthodox Foundation 'The Apostle Barnabas', p. 249.

Man must realize
that he is infinitely imperfect and inadequate.
Even the knowledge of the university
there will come, perhaps, a time
by others to be disproved.

And that, to humble himself
every arrogant soul,
that it cannot be compared
to the true wisdom,
which is divine
and most creative.

At the same time, he must consider
the transience of short life
- which is also necessary
to repent
and not to deify anything built.

With three fingers,
You have given me patience
to embroider on the cloth.

With three fingers,
I write, with love, on paper
Your glory, Saviour, Redeemer.

Descartes:

In a way, the representation of the infinite is in me prior to that of the finite, that is, the idea of God is prior to my ego. For how could I conceive that I doubt, that I desire, that is, that I lack something, that I am not perfect, if I did not have in myself the representation of a perfect being to which I am compared and, in this way, know my deficiencies? (Med. III, 24)

God cannot deceive us, for this contradicts His perfection. Deception depends on some deficiency
This is obvious to the natural light of the mind. (Med. 3, 38)

Among the qualities of the perfect substance is its filiality. God's filiality is the guarantee of the objective validity of my clear and distinct ideas. **God, as a perfect being, cannot not exist. And so, I see with complete clarity that the certainty and truth of all science depends on the knowledge of the true God.** (Med. 5, 16)

The idea of God is inherent in man since our ego cannot be conceived, nor can it exist, without the idea of an infinite and perfect being. Eternal truths (*veritates aeternae*), Descartes argues, have been engraved in man's soul by God and are simple innate ideas which the mind grasps insightfully, clearly and distinctly. These simple and dispassionate ideas contrast with the ideas of the senses, which remain vague and confused, misleading the intellect.

The idea of God is not a product of the senses, nor of my imagination, for nothing can be taken away or added to it. **God, when He created me, implanted this idea in me, to be the mark by which the artist signs his work. And that mark is no different from the work itself.** (Med. III, 37-38)

In conclusion, the Idea of the Absolute (God), of necessity, runs up against the calculation that it comes from us imperfect ones or from some other mortal being, since we have claimed, within our consciousness, to have this Idea implanted by the Eternal and Ultimate Being.

Descartes, on the basis of the principle of causality, raises his spirit to the transcendent level, to the Deity:

There must be as much reality in the cause as there is in the effect of that cause.

From this it follows that nothing can come from nothing, nor something more perfect from less perfect. ³²

³² Avgelis, Nikos, 2004. 'Descartes -The Existence of God, as an objective criterion of truth. The epistemological proof'. In: Nikos Avgelis, Introduction to Philosophy. Thessaloniki. ed. Ant. Stamoula, 2004, p.269

[The above-mentioned philosophical theories are included in the philosophical book by Nikos Avgelis, Professor of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, which I have studied in detail with regard to philosophical systems, in order to provide you with indicative extracts of thorough scientific, philosophical and didactic studies.

The book is called Introduction to Philosophy (ed. Ant. Stamoula, Thessaloniki, 2004).

It was donated to me the day my sweet mother Evangelia passed away.

I want to conclude by saying that: NOTHING IS RANDOM].

SUICIDES

– PHILOSOPHICAL THEORIES AND
EXPLANATION OF THE EXPRESSION OF NIKOS KAZANTZAKIS
CONCERNING



***THE AWFUL BLACK EYE, WHERE THE WORLD IS DROWNED AND
REDEEMED***

I.

WHEN ANYONE TALKS ABOUT SUBJECT MATTERS OF GREAT PHILOSOPHICAL MATTERS, he could not fail to mention our great writer and thinker Nikos Kazantzakis, the man who was tormented all his life between existence and non-existence, and who constantly urged others to struggle.

Struggle means crucifixion, to be followed by resurrection...

The struggle of the great Cretan writer-intellectual consisted of a constant effort to transcend his personal existence, which was focused on the struggle for social justice (indeed, he advocated that material goods be equally distributed so that no one would starve), freedom, the realization - and not the violation - of moral values, the detachment and liberation from matter.

Kazantzakis believed that man should not work only for money and, in general, not be subordinate to matter, but fight for the values of life and ideology.

In an application of the above exhortation of the great thinker Kazantzakis, **Leonhard Ragaz**, a Swiss philosopher, in 1921 gave up his university chair at the University of Zurich and devoted himself to the education of poor workers in a run-down suburb of the city.

Ragaz's religio-social vision was based on the moral imperative rather than Marxism. A key source for understanding his teachings is his book on the **“Sermon on the Mount”**. There he argues, for example, that "blessed are the poor in spirit" does not accurately convey Jesus' saying. According to Ragaz, that “in spirit” was added later by a later person who did not like the original “blessed are the poor”.

The Swiss religious philosopher interprets the “Sermon on the Mount” **as a sermon against wealth and for the poor, as a hopeful and joyful message of justice already here on earth and not only in heaven.**

He writes in a word: “This is the Universal Revolution of Christ”.

(Excerpt from a lecture by the university professor Pavlos N. Tzermias)³³

The **“Sermon on the Mount”** is similarly depicted in the famous painting by the Danish painter Carl Bloch (1834-1890) "Sermon on the Mount" (Florence, 1877).

³³ Tzermias, Pavlos N. (Academic) 2017. ‘Christ Recrucified by Nikos Kazantzakis: A message of particular relevance’ Lecture at the Museum of the City of Athens - Vouros Eftaxia Foundation), published 12-4-2017 at (web): <<https://anthologio.wordpress.com/2017/04/12/%CF%8C-%CF%8E-%CE%AFkappa/>>.



Nikos Kazantzakis speaks of the 'poverty of the spirit' in his work *Christ Recrucified*:

“But Constantine had a question: what does it mean to **be poor in spirit**?” he asked.

“Those who are illiterate,” said Yannakos. “Those who have not gone to great lengths, that their minds may be blown.”

“**Not illiterate,**” corrected Manolios. “You can be literate, like Papa Fotis, and enter the kingdom of heaven. You can be illiterate and not get in, like old Ladas. That's not what he's trying to say, Yankee. What do you think, Michelis?”

“**The uninitiated,**” suggested Michelis, “**those who have the simple, pure spirit, who do not split hairs into four, but believe with innocence and confidence...**”³⁴

Nikos Kazantzakis, in his work LETTER TO GRECO, firmly feels:

What you intend to do, he said to my heart, is in vain. **The world as you long for it, that no one should be hungry, no one should be cold, no one should be wronged, does not exist, will never exist.** But the heart, I could hear it deep in my heart responding to him:

“It doesn't exist, but it will exist, because I want it. In every heartbeat I long for it and I want it. I believe in a world that doesn't exist. But in believing it, I create it. We call unmanifest what we don't miss enough.”

This response of the heart was a shock to me. If what he says is true, **what a terrible responsibility man has for all the injustices and shames of the world.**³⁵

Christ, Buddha, Moses found an abyss. But they threw a bridge and passed over. And behind them, for centuries, the human flocks have passed... (!)

You cannot subdue the chaos within you and create the whole Word. and whimpering excuses. “I can't fit into the old overalls...”

But moving on to contemplation or action, you could reach the heroic frontier, where ten souls like your soul could easily fit and work. You could, taking your cue from the familiar symbols of a religion, rush into your own divine attempts **and give what you seek and do not know: synchronized form to the eternal passions of God and man.**³⁶

Kazantzakis describes in the Letter to Greco that he hears the inner voice (conscience) saying to him:

³⁴ Kazantzakis, N. 2010. Christ is crucified again. Athens. Ed. Dioptra, p. 218.

³⁵ [Nikos. Nikos Kazantzakis' Letter to Greco (Ch. KE). Athens, Ed. Dioptra, p. 546.

³⁶ N. Kazantzakis, ed. Dioptra, p. 388.

What do you seek here in my house? You are not pure, you are not honest, your eye plays right and left, I don't trust you. You are ready at any moment to betray. Your loyalty is an unholy mosaic of many infidelities. **And you don't know that at the end of every road God sits waiting. But you will always be in a hurry, fainting in the middle of the road and turning back to take another way.**

The dumb people see no Sirens, hear no songs in the air. Blind, deaf, they shine bent in the holds of the land. But the choicest, the captains, **they hear within them a Siren, their soul, and bravely follow its voice. What else is life worth?**

But the little captains cry out for Siren and do not believe, they are huddled behind wisdom and impatience, weighing yes and no with pale weights in their whole life. **And God, not knowing where to cast them, lest they adorn Hades, lest they defile Paradise, commands them to hang between corruption and no corruption, upside down in the air.**³⁸

Kazantzakis was searching for the essential meaning of man's existence, closely interwoven in his relationship with God, while claiming that man must become a saint and, on the basis of the universal human values of life and the unceasing struggle [crucifixion - the struggle between spirit and flesh (the spirit must fight and defeat the flesh)], end up, now justified, in resurrection. Kazantzakis also pointed out the path that Jesus Christ followed in earthly life.

Nevertheless, our Cretan thinker was contradictory in his religious beliefs.

In his reference to Greco (p. 441), Kazantzakis notes that the Buddha was for him

the black eye where the world is drowned and redeemed. (ed. Dioptra, p. 630, ch. KΘ')

³⁷ Isaiah also tells why they could not believe: "God has blinded their eyes [i.e., the eyes of their soul], so that they will not see with their eyes and understand with their minds, and they will return to me and I will heal them." This is what Isaiah said about Jesus. He had spoken thus of Him, for He had foreseen His glory." Chapter 12, v. 12. 39-42.

³⁸ N. Kazantzakis Letter to Greco. N.G. Gaskas, in the words of the author of the book 'On Grace', Athens, Ed. Dioptra (Patroclos Stavrou), p. 387.

At the same time, in chapter KD of the Reference to Greco (pp. 340-341), he recounts his orientation and faith in Buddhism, after realizing for good that he had gone astray by betraying the true faith:

Surely, the lion's coffin of the Luciferian prophet had strengthened me, **and I had begun to feel ashamed of trying to cover the abyss with a fancy wreath; I dared not look it in the face, naked as it is and hideous.** Christ had stood between me and the abyss, and had stretched out his arms in pain, and would not let me see her, lest I should be frightened.³⁹

... "This is he," the voice told me, "this is the last redeemer. He redeems man from hope, from fear, from the gods. I couldn't, I didn't have time. **The Almighty came, held out a great hope to me, and I went astray.** I had no time left to reach him. Reach your own master, the Almighty, the Nazarene, reach where I could not reach - the ultimate freedom."⁴⁰

Indeed, the writer was wavering between the chaotic and hideous abyss and Christ. which the Lord would not let him face, lest he should be frightened by the great darkness that reigned in it, and surrender to the illusion that there the soul would be redeemed.

On the contrary, the prophet David, with unswerving faith and confidence in God, implored Him to shine by His grace into the darkness of his soul, through the illumination of the mind:

Lord, my God, you illuminate my darkness.

(Ch. 17: 29)

17:17: Send Your light and Your truth.

(Ch. 42: 3)

Kazantzakis, of course, always contemplated God as an invisible, unseen, unseen presence, as he himself mentions, hiding behind the apparent world. Specifically, in the Asceticism, he writes:

There is only one thing I long for: **to grasp what lies behind appearances**, what is the mystery that gives birth to me and kills me, **and whether behind the visible unceasing flow of the world**

³⁹ Nikos Kazantzakis Letter to Greco. Athens: Ed. Dioptra, p. 487-488.

⁴⁰ Nikos Kazantzakis, p. 486, Ed. Dioptra.

there is an invisible, unchanging presence. If the mind cannot, it is not its work to attempt beyond the frontiers the heroic desperate exit, if only my heart could!

... That's what I want! I know now, I hope for nothing, I fear nothing, **I'm redeemed from mind and heart**, I've risen higher, I'm free. That's what I want. I want nothing else. **I asked for freedom.**⁴¹

So, then, in order to feel truly free, he had to shake off every link, **mental and heart**, that he maintained with the higher and invisible principle of All - since he aimed at unbridled freedom...

It is logical that, with this particular rationale, he was no longer able to conceive with the intellect God, the Supreme invisible Essence (**since he was redeemed from the mind**, as he notes in his book Asceticism). **But even with the heart**, which houses the feelings, the Thinker was unable to be redeemed, to feel free - even from the true God, whose essence consists in His infinite love for His creatures.

That is why, says Basil the Great, “when the mind is not dispersed in external things, nor spread out into the world by the senses, it returns to itself and through itself ascends to the knowledge of God” ...

According to the Areopagite Dionysius, “the superior and first sovereign movement of the soul is called cyclical”, for, as, for example, **when the two ends of a rod are joined together, it becomes a wreath and a circle**, so also when the mental and cognitive power and energy of the soul, which is exquisitely located in the brain, as a bodily organ, **is united with the mental substance of the soul located in the centre of the heart** and the therein purest vital spirit, as in a bodily organ, according to the Gospel and the Lenten Fathers (Philokalia). **From the union and return of these two, a certain circle is made, and by this circle the mind is united with the divine grace, which is in the middle of the heart.**

To cite a better example. As the rays of the sun, the farther they are from the centre and the middle of the glass which lights the isca⁴², the weaker, thinner and darker they become, and the more they gather at the centre the stronger, denser and brighter they become, so also the mind and the cognitive powers of the soul, **the more they gather at the centre of the heart, the stronger and brighter they become.**⁴³

⁴¹ Nikos Kazantzakis' Asceticism. Athens: Ed. Dioptra, p.94 & 73

⁴² "isca" (Mk. esca < Latin esca): fuse for firing.

⁴³ Saint Nicodemus the Athonite, 10th ed.2014. The Invisible War (tr: Monk Benedict the Athonite). Nea Skete Mount Athos: Publications Synodeias Monk Spyridon, pp. 123-124.

Consequently, Kazantzakis was unable to connect the human soul with the hope (Paradise - Salvation - Eternity) that arises from the belief in the Supreme Principle and cause of all creations, God [On hope the wise must base their lives (Euripides)].

That is why, deliberately, Kazantzakis cultivated the idea of the denial of goodness, which is associated with Paradise. Whereas, on the contrary, Hell (evil) draws guilt, fear, punishment. Just as he also denied the idea of good, i.e. Paradise - with salvific hope and psychic human redemption.

However, by eliminating any notion of fear (Hell) and hope (Paradise), he essentially left an existential void within himself, denying Truth, living with the illusion of an illusory freedom.

Kazantzakis, as a cowardly predator, sought, but also obtained, complete freedom. But here, at this point, lies his spiritual deviation from true faith. Consequently, all those beliefs which formed his final creed were concerned with the difficulty and weakness which man has in discovering the Higher Essence which lies behind the phenomena of matter and is perceived as a failure of the soul.

However, in his work *Christ Recrucified*, he states:

Brothers, he said at last, like the fruit of the tree is every decision of man. Slowly, patiently, with the sun, with the rain, with the wind, the fruit ripens and falls. Be patient, my brothers and sisters, ask no one. Your blessed time will come and then you will not ask. Quietly, without pain, you will leave wife and children, and parents and merchants, **you will sell all these little pearls and find the big pearl, Chris**

(N. Kazantzakis *Christ is crucified again*) ⁴⁴

Man, which, etymologically, comes from “*ano throsko*”, means the man who looks and moves upward, full of hope, optimism and goals, that is, he is the Golden Eagle of the spirit. The two wings of the Golden Eagle, faith and hope, which make up its members, in relation to the head (mind - love), successfully lead it to its goal, the top, which is spiritual communication (prayer) and union, through the sacraments, with the Triune God.

II.

Let us dwell a little further on the chapter of suicides, extending our philosophical discourse, in order to fully interpret the views of well-known thinkers, who have expressed their beliefs through their enduring writings. Undoubtedly, we draw from them valuable spiritual lessons and conclusions about the immortality of the soul. And let millions of people who are wavering, indifferent or even outright denying the existence of the Timeless, Invisible and Eternal, True Being, reflect, reflecting according to their reasoning.

Bonaventura: Refers to the concept of the threefold dimension of each thing. Primarily, we observe the material and aesthetic, followed by the association of each science with the intellect of man, and the third dimension, which concerns his spiritual expression and communication with God. The third dimension is the most determinative of man's being, since it makes him superior to the animal kingdom.

Bonaventure drills down upon these parameters - perspectives and, indeed, in his work *Submission of the Arts to Theology*, he briefly concludes that the infinitely superior is considered that of the illumination of the Grace of the Divine Scriptures, which, finally, even more so after death, accompanies every moral and righteous human being the dazzling Light of Heavenly glory.

In conclusion, the Italian philosopher points out that man communicates with God through the mind, through the Divine Ideas, which pre-exist in him, the heart-feeling and the soul, which has already been purified.

⁴⁴ Nikos Kazantzakis *Christ is Crucified again*, ed. Dioptra, p. 313.

Albert the Great: His philosophy is based on the principle that every human effort of creativity must be focused and aimed, essentially, at communication with God. Clearly, he speaks of divine illumination - gift of divine gifts, as well as that the material creation was created by God - the Creator, since the world of eternity - ideas are inherent in Him.

According to him, by the logic of God the world has been created, which is ordered and obeys lawfully under the state of Divine Providence. He, in his life, lived voluntarily impoverished, putting into practice, as a Bishop, the words of the Gospel, and his copious writings include thirty-eight (38) volumes.

In every purified human soul dwells the Holy Spirit, as a gift and fruit of love. It is something that elevates human nature, which ought to respond fully to the call, as in any work with a strong spiritual element.

Earl Shaftesbury: The indispensable condition for all good work is considered to be divine inspiration - Invisible Presence. As well as the fact that it constitutes the cause of understanding and separation of the good and beneficial, which distinguishes man for the realization of the good, and not of the evil and abominable.

In his work *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Manners, Opinions, and Times*, the philosopher emphasizes the idea of the morally acceptable, inasmuch as man, in his spiritual struggle, is inspired by ideas and actions that are superior, inasmuch as they are generally identified with the moral code and philanthropy, and not with the embrace of evil.

John the Scot: The philosopher makes a clear distinction between Creator and creatures, since everything received substance from God. He (God) Himself is Uncreated, but everything is supervised by Him in every phase of its creation. In this sense, it attributes to God the designation of “Super Being”, since God stands above all things, directs them, is their beginning, their cause and the continuation of their course to the end.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau: On the logic that everything, without exception, was created very well ordered by the Creator, man then becomes the destroyer of everything, since Nature will suffer the great negative effect by his thoughtless and illegitimate destructive intervention upon the whole environment. The philosopher makes a great point, which concerns an unstoppable coercion of natural things by unsatisfied man, because of which everything is under distortion.

He wants nothing as nature has made it, nor his own species.

(Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emilius* or *On Education*)

Voltaire: The Being's existence occupies a position of regulator over everything. Human knowledge, according to him, is considered insufficient for the understanding of the Divine, limited indeed, while he holds the view that there exists that “something”, because from nothing, nothing arises.

People who think are few and do not care to upset the world.

(Voltaire, *Philosophical Letters*)

Nicolas Malebranche: The French philosopher Malebranche's discourse on Ideas is captured in the fact that ideas are considered divine and eternal in nature, as long as they presuppose a thinking spirit.

True ideas are considered necessary, as they prove the whole greatness of the intelligible world, on the basis of the absolute moral Truth of the existence of God.

His most important works: *On the Search for Truth*, *Dialogues on Metaphysics and Religion*, *Dialogues on Death*.

Friedrich Schelling. Matter is also the cause of turning away from God, who is the Absolute, as the “Divine Principle of things” as he notes.

Art, as creation, provides the possibility of the soul's union with matter. Then only Art, as a representation of the world of reality, achieves its purpose, when the work is completed, reflecting the artist's psychic mood and ideological background, connected and identified with its material form. That, indeed, is what characterizes and evolves Art, since it points the path of knowledge towards the Absolute.

His main works: *Philosophy and Religion*, *Philosophy of Art*, *Philosophy of Revelation*, *The Natural and Divine Principle of Things*.

Feuerbach:

We are living in an age of the decline of Christianity: the place of faith has been taken by unbelief; the place of the Bible has been taken by reason; the place of religion and the Church has been taken by

politics; the place of heaven has been taken by earth; the place of prayer has been taken by work; the place of hell has been taken by material necessity; the place of Christ has been taken by man.

And it goes on:

Man worships as God that on which he believes his life depends.

(VIII, 62)

Origen: Origen, thoroughly immersed himself in Philosophy, aiming to form a fuller picture of Christian truth by revelation. He asserts that:

Christianity is the true Philosophy, making a clear distinction between human and divine wisdom, which he also characterizes as a gift of God's Grace. Let no one be content with a simple, superficial faith, but along with knowledge the mind is enlightened by the Grace of God in order that faith may be empowered, setting as a condition of knowledge an intelligible faith.

St. Augustine notes that Philosophy does not achieve its purpose, which is the knowledge of God, as long as it remains unsubmissive to the Evangelical Faith. According to him, Christianity is also the true Philosophy, since he himself sought God outside of it, the moment he discovered that He dwelt within it.

Giambattista Vico: The philosopher, though he himself lived very poorly, nevertheless, sought the Creator God, the Eternal Truth, behind everything, natural and human. God became incarnate on earth, taught, healed the sick and voluntarily suffered death on the cross, proving, by his example, that God - Creator of the world - is relevant and concerned about his creatures. However, self-centred man, although God has implanted in him the idea of perceiving Him intellectually, nevertheless, man is constantly tending towards a life of complete detachment.

The inadequacy of human cognition, which lies immersed, as the Philosopher states, in a material body, is in contrast to the inner, deeper experience of the self (introspection), since sensation predominates. In his work *The New Scientific Knowledge*, he emphatically notes:

... just as the eyes of the body see all objects outside of it, but they need a mirror to see themselves.⁴⁵

III.

The foregoing are the philosophical beliefs of the thinkers about the “twofold” (matter and spirit) of every human being.

We will not see the two opposing concepts (good, Paradise; evil, Hell, guilt) almost the same, for evil is nothing but the negation of good.

Light dispels darkness and life conquers death.

Man is not the beginning and end of his existence, but God is the Alpha and Omega of every entity.

To the philosophical questions which arise in thought, as to “who we are” and “why we exist”, we must understand that we are what we have sought to become, according to our beliefs, or else our actions bear witness to who we really are.

Anton Chekhov emphasizes:

You are what you believe.

Why do we exist?

I believe that there is always a purpose - a necessity for each of us that we fail to grasp. A secret plan in our lives.

What can I know?

We answer: The Truth, through the reflection of knowledge of the True Being.

What do I have to do?

But, of course, our destiny consists in performing, in all the circumstances of our lives, even under adverse circumstances, the good.

⁴⁵ Giambattista Vico 2015. The New Scientific Knowledge (Introd. Transl:Giorgos Kentrotis) Athens: Gutenberg, p.14.

What can I hope for?

Moral perfection, which is attained through knowledge of the Being and the beneficial acts which spring from Him and culminates in the virtue of love.

By this simple logical approach, eternal and true life is gained. And all this, in order to be achieved, requires man to see things completely objectively and dispassionately.

In his poem, **Paul Verlaine** also questions himself about the purpose of man's life in the phrase:

Qu' est _ce que je fais en ce monde?

(What am I doing in this world?)

Gaspard Hauser chante
Je suis venu, calme orphelin
Riche de mes seuls yeux tranquilles

Gaspard Ogier sings:
I am here, meek orphan
Rich from my eyes only the serene ones

Vers les hommes des
grandes villes
Ils ne m'ont pas trouvé
malin
Suis-je né trop tôt
or trop tard?

To the people
Of the great cities
They did not find me
wicked
I was born too soon
Or too late?

**Qu' est-ce que je fais
en ce monde?**

**What am I doing
In this world?**

O vous tous,
ma peine est profonde:
Priez pour le pauvre
Gaspard!

Oh, you all,
the sorrow is deep:
Pray for the poor
Gaspar!

The purpose - the duty of man is the knowledge of the True Being (God) and spiritual union with Him, in order to bring about soul redemption and salvation.

Therefore, **we recommend, definitively and irrevocably, to avoid the conception of any idea** - way for imminent ...suicide! Since this heinous act indicates despair, nihilism - atheism, materialism...

So that no human soul will be lost, eternally!

We also find that life and health are a gift from God. Even the fact, if we consider the fact, that young people are confined for life to a bed or a wheelchair - a very painful thing, of course - but that they themselves show so much patience and patience every day, and also nurture within themselves the hope for a possible future improvement in health. And this example of patience is in stark contrast to some who are healthy but impatient and ungrateful to God because they take certain things in life for granted and for granted. But in most cases, this is not the case.

We observe, therefore, that among our shallow and superficial fellow citizens, dreams and high expectations, which conscience commands for their realization, sometimes betray them, since life itself has so many adversities, contingencies and misfortunes.

Every misfortune is subject to patience.

(Virgil)

Just as precious stones and noble metals are cleaned and polished by some form of treatment, so people are improved by trials, and that too, so that they may one day become spiritually mature (perfected).

Indeed, only then will any resignation or denial about life be subdued, since positive thought and effort will prevail in the mind, which promotes and develops the individual.

Let us wish that no more incidents of suicide may ever again occur, and for any reason, lest any soul fall and be eternally precipitated into that place where it should not and is the pitch-black bottomless abyss where the beast lurks... And drowns, but, in fact, never redeems the world there.

Most people insist that there is nothing after death. The suicide who hanged himself is forever free of all his suffering. Did anyone cross the threshold of death and come back to tell us?

Therefore, whatever we eat here, whatever we drink, whatever we drink, whatever we entertain, to go away full and happy with ... "bread and circuses".

Simple and common is this popular formulation, which contrasts with the verse about the foolish rich man in the Gospel. That rich man who died suddenly and after death begged God to grant him a second chance to return to earth, seeking to admonish his prodigal brothers and sisters - they were living on binges and indifference - so that after their death they too would not suffer, as he did in Hades, so many sufferings (guilt of conscience - death of the soul due to negligence - eternal punishment).

On the question of death, the Prophet Isaiah assures us that in Hades:

The proud and the great and the rich shall perish, and man shall be humbled and dishonored, and the eyes of the blind shall be humbled.

(Old Testament, Isaiah 5:14-15)

What is earthly life compared to endless eternity? Certainly, nothing, since the duration of this temporary life is short, like steam that appears for a while and then dissipates...

IV.

Let us approach the fact of death a little more closely. In this way we grasp more fully the eternal human destiny, so that man today may become negative as to the ultimate and wrong choice of suicide. It is estimated that its rates have increased alarmingly due to economic deprivation, but also to disturbances in the psyche of many people due to incarceration during the coronavirus quarantine period (Covid-19).

Death is defined as the severing of the bonds between soul and body and, of course, is common to all.

Do not mourn for the dead, for the way is common to all, and he who has finished it is blessed.

(Saint Nilus the Ascetic)

The King of Heaven Jesus, the Lord of Life and conqueror of death, goes before all:

I will go before thee, and I will make the mountains smooth, I will break down the gates of brass, and I will bind up the bars of iron, and give thee treasures of dark secret places, I will open unto thee invisible.

(Old Testament, Isaiah 45:2-3)

In the question - reflection on how the human mind understands the dead as existing entities that survive, we argue the possibility of their eternal existence in a purely immaterial spiritual state when we contemplate a transparent airy shadow that lives forever after death. This image comes to mind, and we can grasp it because it is the distinct image of the airy shadow, clearly separated from the dead body, that we touch. The material body is, in fact, a semblance, because the body, as a creature, is also fickle, that is, it changes, decays and dies.

The example in the moonlight is typical, to observe our shadow as it appears to the bodily eyes, and thus we perceive our second self, independent of our palpable material body, which we touch, although, unfortunately, some eliminate it... Consequently, after death the material body dissolves, but there **remains eternally the second entity, the second "copy", of the transparent airy shadow, which is invisible, though alive.** In this immaterial state of the shadow, therefore, the dead survive eternally, since their aura, the ethereal entity, after death, as an eternal spirit, crosses space with lightning speed like imagination. To the place where the epidermal body is located the shadow is transferred, but also to the other places that the soul knew, suffered, but also loved in its earthly life.

In the spiritual world, which we are usually unable with our senses to observe and, therefore, mentally (fully) to grasp, we cannot, rationally, understand that the dead emit their aura throughout the spiritual plane, since their ethereal bodies coexist there.

Man ought to delve still further into these profound mysteries, such as that of Death. The dead, though we are not perceptibly aware of it, are close to us, they read our thoughts, just as they mentally understand our feelings. That is, whether we love them, whether we think of them often enough or not. All those thoughts and feelings are experienced and imprinted in the spiritual or elemental world of the dead.

They, as spiritual entities, belong, now completely, to the subtle heavenly world and, by extension, to the entire universe.

The dead may be imperceptible, but they are not absent.

(Victor Hugo)

The people of the world avoid the thought and memory of death, so as not to cut off the mood and desire they have for the earthly things to which they are attached, and they are sad if they think of abandoning them.

(St. Nicodemus the Athonite) ⁴⁶

The basic condition of not fearing death is to know that death does not negate the essence of existence, being, but becoming. The latter, as the false substance of life, tends to change constantly and, in the end, with death, decays.

Death frightens people, because they believe that after it there is nothing, neither good nor bad.

(Aristotle)

The fear of death grieves him who is condemned by his own conscience.

(Isaac the Syrian)⁴⁷

The end of life is near, wake up, man.

(Saint Nilus the Ascetic)

⁴⁶ Saint Nicodemus the Athonite 2014. *The Invisible War* (ed. I “How we should prepare ourselves against the enemies who fight us in the time of death”. New Skete of Mount Athos: ed. Synodeias of Monk Spyridon, p. 262.

⁴⁷ Abba Isaac of Syros *Ascetic Discourses* (Discourse A) [transferred from the ancient to the modern Greek (Purist Greek) by the Hierodeacon Kallinikos Pantokratorinos - Now published by Monk Paul]. Athens. 2nd ed. Publications of the Orthodox Foundation “The Apostle Barnabas”, p. 7.

The rupture of man's relationship with the First Creative Principle brought about, as a result, the fall, which is intertwined with death and the dissolution of the bodily substance, characterizing the perishable body as the bone vessel of the soul.

What is certain in this life? What is the place - even bare and desolate, without any beauty and riches - **where man could take root with certainty?**

Where at last is there something that will not escape him, like sand between his fingers, when he wants to lift it out of the amorphous mass of life and hold it for a few moments at least?

At what point are the dream separated from reality, the ego from the world, the deep content from the fleeting impression?

Someone has died and the questions drag the one who is left alone with impetuous force into their eternal whirlpool.

(Georg Lukacs, The Soul and Forms)⁴⁸

Besides, our Church herself proclaims this:

The God of spirits and all flesh,

The God of the dead (of all spirits), meaning that He is the God of the dead (of all spirits), but at the same time He also appears to be the God of the living, **the God-Man Christ, who, by His Resurrection, broke and crushed the state of death.** He became the first-born of the dead, the Quorum of all who have fallen asleep, freeing the human race from the bondage of Hades.

⁴⁸ Lukács, Georg 1986. The Soul and the Forms (ed. - foreword: Economou, Antonis; ed.: Zahou, Dina). Athens. Publ. Themelio, p.227.

RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

Poem of the author

Resurrection of Christ

It is always Sunday,
A joyous, glorious, Spring Day,
blessed and fragrant,
Such a special day,
Because it's divine.

Resurrection of Christ

It finds Christians everywhere rejoicing,
since the resurrection of the living and victorious Jesus
Signifies the beyond the grave
eternal life of every believer.

Resurrection of Christ

Becomes the hope of the spiritually and mentally blind,
since the presence of living and victorious Christ
to his disciples after His death,
to receive the gift of enlightenment,
was the occasion of the Ecumenical Evangelization.

Resurrection of Christ

Message of the rebirth of the repentant sinner
with the appearance of Jesus
to women bringing chrism, to the Apostles, to the followers of Christ
to participate as His eyewitnesses,
in the Kingdom of God.

Resurrection of Christ

A celebration of the sinless God-Man Jesus,
but also, of every Christian
who has endured suffering in life,

so patiently,
to enjoy eternal goods.

Resurrection of Christ

We say, without any doubt, to all so convincingly,
and not like Thomas' shaken faith,
which was afterwards fortified,
when he saw His Risen Lord before him
and touched him... palpably.

Resurrection of Christ

means an irrefutable Christian fact
of the destruction of the palace of Hades,
where the Lord descended, He preached there too,
he scattered it
and left it in ruins.

Resurrection of Christ

we cry out with one mouth everywhere.
Death, you are destroyed by the power of our risen Christ.
Hades, you have been triumphantly forever defeated
by the Word of God,
and we were absolutely freed
from the destructive bondage of sin.

Resurrection of Christ

We gloriously celebrate
for we know that the human body of God
has suffered no corruption.
But His redeemed soul
was kept away
from the great darkness of Hades.

Resurrection of Christ

As a bright rising light,
He came forth, supernaturally,
From the poor tomb, the King,

guarded by the soldiers
so diligently, so carefully,
but He rose triumphantly on the third day.

Resurrection of Christ

The Majesty of the Resurrection of Christ
opens wide the gates of heaven
to the man who is like Christ
in His virtues, in His way of life,
always in imitation of the Creator.

Resurrection of Christ

The dead believer has the opportunity,
To be resurrected one day as Christ himself,
if he was good in earthly life.

Resurrection of Christ

The supernatural happens in the Holy Tomb of our Life-Giving Christ
when the Uncreated Light of the Triune God
descends from heaven.

The Sacred Candles of the Tomb of Christ bear witness to this,⁴⁹
which are miraculously ignited
by the brilliant Light of God Himself.
The proof of this fact and this exquisite miracle
presupposes the unshakable proof
of the believer's trust.

⁴⁹ "It is customary in the holy and great Church of Jerusalem, of the Holy Resurrection, every holy sabbath, that a new and heavenly light should light the candles on the divine tomb... Suddenly, not only the interior of the Tomb but almost the entire Temple of the Resurrection was aglow with light. The Patriarch, therefore, uttered this hymn (divine light) as thanksgiving, and from that time to this day in pleasant memory everyone receives it (the hymn) and sings it to God: "Jesus Christ, you who are the Divine Light of the holy glory of the immortal, heavenly, holy and blessed Father, now that we have reached the setting of the sun, you, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the One God. ..." (excerpt). Skarlakidis, Haris K. 2011. The Holy Light - The Miracle of the Great Sabbath at the Tomb of Christ - Forty-five historical testimonies (9th-16th century). Nea Smyrni, Attica. Publ: Elaias p.34.

Resurrection of Christ

Easter in Jerusalem has been established
the ceremony of the Holy Light,
and whoever is in the Holy Temple of the Resurrection there,
will surely be overwhelmed,
as his nothingness is realized
and warmly praises our Risen Christ!

(Poem of the author)

But the truth is that Christ has risen, making the beginning of the resurrection of all the dead. For, as death came into the world from one man, so, from one man came the resurrection of the dead. **As all die because of the kinship with Adam, so, because of the kinship with Christ, all will be given life again.** Each in turn: first Christ was raised, then those who are his in the day of his presence will be raised.

... If the dead are not to be raised, then, as it is said, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we shall not live.

(Testament of the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians 1, ch. 15, v. 20-23, 32)

As death is the source of all bitterness, it is the universal bitterness, so the resurrection of Christ the Saviour is the source of all joy, it is the universal joy.

(Elder Justin Popovich)

For the sound of the trumpet will be heard, **and immediately the dead will return to life incorruptible, and we the living will change the old body for a new one. It is true that what is perishable must be changed into imperishable, and what is mortal must become immortal.** When that which is perishable is changed into imperishable and that which is mortal is changed into immortal, then the word of the Bible will be fulfilled: death is gone; victory is complete!

Death, where is the sting of your power?

The power to mortally wound is taken by death from sin, and sin takes its power from the law.

(Testament, Paul's Apostle to the Corinthians 1, chap. 15 "The Resurrection of the Body". f. 52-57)

This is why the Christian Religion condemns the burning of the dead human body, because it considers it revered, as it is the temple of our soul and of the Holy Spirit (which we received in the sacrament of Baptism. And as the Lord was buried, so must men do, for the human material, corruptible body must return to the earth from which it was taken, according to the Word of God: "earth be and to earth go forth" (P. Testament, Gen. 3. 19).

In the balance of Christ, that which makes permanent value in man **is neither derived from wealth nor lost from poverty.**

But, on the stronger or weaker love towards the law of God depends the tide or ebb of that permanent value which does not go down to the grave with the body.

(St. Nicholas Velimirovich) ⁵⁰

People who have not repented of their shameful deeds in their earthly life experience a second, spiritual death again, while others, the righteous, the righteous, live after death in the abundant Light of happiness and freedom, and thus the spiritual heavenly world opens before them in all its glory.

If what I believed continues to burn in the hearts of men, as I hoped, then, even when the body is buried, life will still exist.

(Mahatma Gandhi)

Pleasures are mortal, virtues are immortal.

(Periander)

He who has no virtue can have nothing else good.

(Xenophon)

Virtue is a state of warfare, we must constantly fight with ourselves.

(Jean-Jacques Rousseau)

Quotations of great men and philosophers praise the height and value of the virtues, as they remain eternally true and eternal.

⁵⁰ St. Nicholas Velimirovic 10th edition 2021. Road without God is not bearable - Missionary Letters A. (eds.: Petsin Svetlana, Saragoudas Elias, Saragouda-Petsin Nefeli - Theol. ed.: Panagopoulos Alexis). Athens:En Plo p.29.

But virtues are also associated with many difficulties and innumerable obstacles. It is the “narrow gate” which, however, leads to eternal life.

Enter by the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many enter by it.

Narrow is the gate and full of difficulties is the way that leads to life, and few are those who find it.

(New Testament, Matthew, ch. 7, v. 13-14)

“I have heard, my Father, that the door of Paradise is very narrow. No one, he says, fat man can pass through. But we three will pass through. Long live poverty!”

[N. Kazantzakis *Christ Recrucified*, p. 406, ed. Dioptra]

In **Joachim Patinir's** excellent painting “**The Crossing of the Styx**” (1520) we observe Charon standing upright in the boat crossing the river (Styx) carrying the soul of the dead to the underworld.

In the boat, the human soul oscillates between two choices: the right-hand path, which is narrow and difficult but ultimately leads to the hole of Paradise and eternal life with the angels, where the soul joyfully enjoys heavenly good things, and the left-hand path, which is the wide and easy way, to Hell.

The angel who is on the right bank desires to orient the soul, for the soul is with the Charon in the boat of the river, and to direct it to Paradise. However, the boat follows the gaze of the soul of the occupant, with the final direction now on the left bank. At the entrance of the latter is the Kerberos, the dog, the monster who, according to mythology, guards the gates of Hades. In the interior lurks, through fires, fiery flames, the abyss of Hell, as vividly depicted in Patinir's painting.



The Charon, standing as he accompanies the soul in the boat, focuses his gaze on the observer (us), demonstrating that we too will one day have to decide between these two paths.

“Man is a monster, really,” he mused. “Whatever he wants to do, whichever way he wants to go. The door of Hell and the door of Paradise are close together, and wherever he wants to enter... The devil alone can enter Hell, the angel alone can enter Paradise. man can go where he wants to go!”

(N. Kazantzakis *Christ is Crucified Again*, *ibid.* p. 131., Dioptra Publications)

Basil the Great points out:

Beware lest, by avoiding the narrowness of the way that leads to salvation, you seek the spaciousness of sin.

DEATH CRISIS

(Dialogue - Poem by the author)

God: Angel, it is time to open the books,
tell me what is written in the books,
Though I know them, secretly and openly,
all that he did in his short life
always with hypocrisy,
since with his immoral body
he has tarnished to death
his vile deceitful soul.

Angel: My Almighty God, I praise You and I kneel before You.
This one here, the impious, overcome with anger,
He hurled from his filthy mouth
blasphemies, without any shame,
at Your holy face,
the Bright.

God: Angel don't stop,
as Omniscient,
I foresee everything.
But the vile sinner.
has been, since he lived on earth, contemptuous of me
and even more scornful of all the Divine symbols.
Me, the Eternal Creator,
- that mortal vessel,
that now lies rotting on earth
suffocating under the black soil.

Angel: My Almighty God, I praise You and I kneel before You.
This one here, the hedonist one,
has never been restrained,
misleading, the storyteller,
virgins and little children
every time he had time from work.
In his sweet, false, cunning way,
he managed to enjoy a good life
on Earth, delightfully,
the time that went by

like water swiftly,
with unconsciousness and light heart.
The offender is unacceptable
for, though a doctor by generation,
he was well acquainted with Your Moral Law.

God: Angel, the time has come for the soul to enlist.

Find him something extenuating,
trivial or important,
so that his black soul
can be saved again.
Though I tell you I was watching him closely,
what he was secretly doing in the neighbourhood,
all the years he lived on Earth in heartlessness,
with no one else to love,
but himself and his two little children.

Angel: My Almighty God, I praise You and I kneel before You.

For extenuating circumstances, I think, it is a little difficult,
since the negligent, without love, without affection,
when he lived on Earth
no poor man he ever thought to have mercy on...
He only knew, before innocent defenceless babies
were born into the world,
by every thoughtless expectant mother,
to shred, to remove
without ever having compassion,
spreading death to foetuses systematically
with his bloody tools, his murderous, bloody tools.
since, greedy as he was, his motives were strong,
to make a fortune,
being obsessed with money.

God: Angel, his soul must be judged with justice.

What shall I now do to this poor one to save him,
since there are no extenuating circumstances, only bad things.
from his earthly misbehaviour...
But the secret things of his life were afterwards made known to all.
Wanting to avoid the outcry, he went to a foreign land,
for his deeds were cunning.

He knew only how to praise himself
and despised all others.
The villa of eight hundred square meters bears witness to this
with the swimming pools, the garages,
and whatever else the foolish man decorated inside.
So much and such expensive goods have been accumulated by him,
that their gathering shows a palace luxury.
Only he alone was interested
to show off to others,
and so, even more so,
to be socially distinguished,
since, at some stage, in order to be fully advantaged,
he even intended to become a politician.

Angel: My Almighty God, I praise You and I kneel before You.

Indeed, in earthly life
he was cruel, two-faced and very proud
and he could never forgive those who wronged him
because he was deluded
that the temporary and false life
would last even longer with merriment
and did not foresee the heart attack.
On the contrary, he distressed his wife,
and in despair the woman attempted to kill herself,
since he always enjoyed himself with the “little ones”
all his private moments.
He returned home days later,
since his hobby was cheating,
and influenced by the “impressive” ones,
who gave him magical nights,
he drank bottles of alcohol
creating unjustified scenes in his house,
and loud voices could be heard throughout the neighbourhood.
And all this in front of underage children,
who were also so frightened that they were speechless,
- in case, in the midst of the raucous brawl,
he'd get the idea to slaughter mum,
because he had a pocketknife on him...

God: Angel, hear my verdict
and write it in ink on my papers.
The deceased is, I tell you, an abomination.
and pollutes heaven with pure souls.
Put him out at once,
and let him dwell in Hades for ever.
Therefore, in the Book of Life
no longer has he any place,
since Hell awaits him,
with demonic joy.
So, the sinner's soul will go
to Hell to be punished,
since of all the mischievous creatures,
he has not been accused unjustly.
In the infernal place there,
the soul can never rest,
but on the contrary, shame and guilt prevail
for every cruel, unrepentant soul.
In the bowels of the earth, in the darkness,
is the realm of Death,
the homicidal Satan.
That is utterly distracted, for good,
from the Presence of my Love
and Zest.
**My Light, however, shines brightly
to my repentant, faithful and obedient children,
who have been finally absolved
from the bonds of sins,
to enjoy now and in the future,
Heaven's divine eternal gifts...**

(Poem by the author)

The last days:

Know even this: in the last days there will come hard times. For men will be filthy-mouthed, miserly, arrogant, proud, proud, blasphemous, unthankful to their parents, ungrateful, wicked, disrespectful, disloyal, intolerant, slanderous, profligate, savage, enemies of good, traitors, insolent, puffed up with selfishness. They will love pleasure more than God. **They will show that they have godliness, but they will have denied its power by their actions.**

(New Testament, Apostle Paul to Timothy, 2 Ch. 3, v. 1-5)

V.

Certainly erroneously, much of the world's population maintains that man has no divine origin, since, over the long term, he evolved from some other species of mammals that bear many similarities to the human race (**Darwinian theory**).

The idea that dominated Darwin's mind was: "Did man descend from apes?"

It is on this misguided view of the origin of species that we will focus and expand as briefly as possible, at a time when, scientifically too, in our modern age, the Darwinian theory is being disproved.

Man is not only a material, physical being, but also a deeper spiritual entity. That is, just as a perfect machine was made by a good and experienced craftsman, so man, too, was created (in His image) by His Creator - always in congruence of the Creator with the created. In no way can the construct ever exceed in ingenuity, wisdom and perfection the maker, or, in other words, the creature exceeds the Creator (God). Undoubtedly, no reference was made by Darwin to God, nor to his social circle, about the origin of beings from the First Creative Principle.

In general, Darwin sought, from his thorough study of plants and animals, to draw his own conclusions about the changes of species within their natural environment. Although he described himself as an agnostic, he seems to have been influenced by Malthus' A Treatise on

the Principle of Population. In this book, he compared the natural law balances (diseases, epidemics, deaths, natural disasters) with those human actions that are directed against the human species itself and are highly destructive (wars - infanticide). All those evils have always had an impact on humanity, as inhibiting factors contributing to the decimation of peoples. Darwin, now a materialist, embraced those Malthusian doctrines which then dominated the ruling class of England. He found, indeed, that innumerable of the poor, because of inadequate and poor quality of food, were being led sooner than others into the vortex of death. This, to him, meant that their later generations, under similar and unfavourable circumstances, would not become more improved, but would also meet the same end as the earlier ones. Consequently, stronger organisms tend not only to survive better, since they adapt more readily to more favourable conditions, but also to live longer than weaker ones, while at the same time their rate of reproduction increases. Over time, their offspring have a better chance of getting better than their ancestors and the next generations evolve even more. That was Darwin's theory.

However, the information of the genetic material is passed on from sires to offspring, regardless of the influence of the environment (favourable or unfavourable conditions) in which a person is destined to grow and evolve. Undoubtedly, the geneticist **Thomas Morgan**, that distinguished scientist of Columbia University, made known his theory concerning the existence of genes. It was later shown that genes clearly exhibit a sequence, defined in the chromosomes that exist within cells. Numerous experiments were therefore carried out, and the chromosomes were refined - refined in the most appropriate way, we might say - in order to obtain the mutations appropriate to the various species, as the scientists sought. The result of the whole difficult undertaking was successful, since Morgan, with his book published at the time, won the coveted Nobel Prize.

Darwin was convinced that some of the hereditary characteristics of living beings are inherited by some mixture - their combination - in subsequent generations, without this being absolute, of course.

By observation and study in peas, **Gregory Mendel** demonstrated to the scientific community new law-like facts of heredity.

Modern biology, therefore, in this crucial question of the evolution of species, puts forward the genes and their information, which are recorded - encoded in the DNA of each organism.

Molecular Genetics strongly suggests - it will prove to us tomorrow - **that genetic changes in higher organisms are much more profound, numerous and rapid than we think.** Apart from that, the total number of people who inhabit or have inhabited this planet represents fewer individuals than there are bacteria living in ten (10) millilitres of nutrient material.

The fact is that **there is much more heterogeneity in the human population than in a small bacterial population.**

It is necessary to take these orders of magnitude into account, as well as certain other arguments of rationality, which will probably lead us to correct our view of evolution.

As for me, I have a very vivid feeling that theories advocating gradual evolution will not survive for long.

It seems to me that it is less important to ask Darwin's ghost to inform us whether recent discoveries can be reconciled with his occult dispositions than to formulate appropriate adjustments **to a theory that is increasingly revealed to be inadequate,**

we read in the book DNA - The thread of life and genetic interventions,⁵¹ by Philippe Kourilsky.⁵²

The French philosopher **Henri Bergson**, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature, in his book The Two Sources of Ethics and Religion, states that evolution is achieved at a rapid pace, while the French thinker posits that **the precondition and cause of life is man himself**, because of whom the fascinating world of species diversity was created and organised. Apart from this, we ought to understand that man, in his species and in his essence, remains unchanging, unchanging. They change only, with the passage of time, his forms - like the embryo, which in time develops and perfects itself, in its organs, in its mother's womb.

We find, then, that the theory of the evolution of species and the laws which govern it are founded on the theory of genes.

Scientifically, it has been documented that 99.9% of human genes are common to all mankind. This is considered enough to show due respect and awe to any natural process that takes place and is also considered a Sacred Power for the creation of human life.

⁵¹ Kourilsky, Philippe, 21991. DNA - The thread of life and genetic interventions. Athens: Cedar - Rappa, p. 202-203.

⁵² Philippe Kourilsky was born in 1942 in Paris and studied at the Ecole Polytechnique. He is Director of Research at the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) and directs the Institut Pasteur in Paris, a laboratory of Molecular Genetics and Immunobiology.

If the Darwinian theory of human evolution from other mammalian species were true, gradually over the centuries, as the English naturalist Charles Darwin argued, the Divine Christ would not have been incarnated on earth and would not have suffered the ignominious Death of the Cross, shedding His All-Holy Blood, for an animal species inferior to man, such as that of chimpanzees...

Even Darwin himself, though distanced from God, did not cease, in the depths of his soul, to recognize that there is indeed a supreme power in the world, above even this cognitive training (human wisdom).

Besides, we also understand the fact that **the perfect adaptation of all beings to their environment irrefutably proves the existence of God.**

Emerson once stated:

In fact, there is no history, only biography. The history of life is a biography, our biography, the biography of the entire human race. No one can approach such a subject without a sense of humility and inadequacy of supplies.

From **Nicholas Berdiaev'** s book Divine and Human,⁵³ we read:

The error of the natural theory of evolution lies in this, that it believed in the possibility that the lower could produce the higher and the material the spiritual.

⁵³ Berdiaev, Nikolaos 1971. Divine and Human. Thessaloniki.Publ. Pournara,p.194.

In conclusion, we conclude that man, as the Image of God, was created by his Creator, who is the Archetype.

The human soul, as the immortal that it is, must seek and, with the heart, mingle with God, in order not to be lost and to free itself from obsessions and self-destructive ideas that hopelessly overwhelm the mind.

At the same time, society must support these people who are facing problems and support them, and even more so their family environment, so that they do not take unwise steps.

With patience, faith, hope, courage and optimism for new beginnings, we are putting a definitive end to human despair, closing the chapter of 'suicide'.

And our Nobel Prize-winning poet George Seferis encourages every new beginning after all kinds of difficulties:

I seek neither stagnation nor turning back.

I seek the mind, sensitivity and courage of people who move forward.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ George Seferis, 1965. "Language in our poetry". In: George Seferis, honorary doctor of the Faculty of Philosophy. Thessaloniki: Publications of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki [also published on (the internet): <http://users.uoa.gr/~nektar/arts/tributes/george_seferis/language_in_our_poetry.htm>].

105th Thematic Unit

SOLIDARITY

IN THE PAINTING WE SEE THE HANDS READY TO HELP. - THE HAND OF COUNTRIES OF THE DEVELOPED NORTH SHOULD HELP NOT ONLY POOR AFRICA BUT ALSO THE MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES (GREECE).



AS WE ALSO SEE THE CHILDREN OF THE SOCIAL GROCERY (ETC.),
THE OTHER TWO LITTLE CHILDREN OF THE ARK OF THE WORLD,



AND THE CHILDREN'S VILLAGES OF SOS HELLAS.

[THE "O", FOR EMPHASIS, IN GREEN, WHICH IS THE COLOUR OF HOPE!]



The time of our life is short... Therefore, let us do good to others, as our conscience dictates.

Be in a hurry to do good to others.

(St. Luke, Archbishop of Crimea - Physician)

Indeed, before the time of our own harvest (death), we are given by the Lord the time to have mercy on those who suffer, with alms and, thus, to be freed from a multitude of sins.

Therefore, be free from your sins by alms and from your iniquities by mercy to the poor.

(Old Testament, Daniel, 5, 24)

GIANNIS RITSOS *SMOKED POT*

(Set to music)⁵⁵

*The wind has fallen. Silence. In the corner of the chamber
a plough pondering - waiting to plough.
You can hear more clearly the water bubbling in the pot.*

***Those waiting on the wooden bench
are the poor, our own, the strong,
are the wimps, the students and the proletarians,
- their every word is a glass of wine
a corner of black bread
a tree by the rock
a window open to the sunshine.***

They are our Christs, our Saints.
[Recites the poet:]
*... Their fingerprints are not only in the prison records
they are kept in the archives of history,
their fingerprints are the dense railway tracks
that cross the future. And my heart
nothing more, my comrades, than a blackened clay pot
that does its work well...*

⁵⁵ Yannis Ritsos, 1974. Smoked Pot. Athens: Kedros. Composed work ("Columbia" album of the same title, 1975). Music: Christos Leontis. Singers: Nikos Xylouris, Tania Tsanaklidou, Vassilis Barnis.

It seems clear that the poet's heart is sad and sympathetic to the sufferings to which the poor are subjected, as those approximate to the Passion of Christ.

In the popular chant which follows, the sorrows of the poor are spoken of, who, as usual, alone and helpless, ache and suffer in the livelihood of life.

Poor woman, I sing for you every song,
for your woes that roam the neighbourhood.
Poor woman, you make a flower from the clay
and you weave your woes into a fine needlework.

In your hands men with clear eyes
grew, hurt and fought
**Tall cypress trees - joy to the girls
who are hugging the fire.**

[Lyrics: Lefteris Papadopoulos
Music: Stavros Xarchakos
Singer: Grigoris Bithikotsis (1964)]

Generations and generations are nurtured in the miseries of poverty, not only in Greece, of course, but all over the planet, and men and women acquire valiant strength - all those who embrace this ravenous “fire” of poverty, especially when they reach the point of being deprived of even the necessities.

There is no one among them who is deprived of the necessities. For those who had fields or houses sold them and brought the price of what they sold and put it at the disposal of the Apostles. Of this was given to each according to his needs.

(New Testament, Acts of the Apostles, Ch. 4: 34-36)

The community of believers in the early Christian centuries was exemplary, since love literally reigned among them from the moment they shared everything together. Love thus proved to be so strong, warm, and true.

As St. Clement had narrated,

many were those who sold all they had and gave it in alms, and many of them, making the great excess, in the end sold themselves as slaves to give the price to the poor!

What greatness of soul!!!!

Let each one give what his heart tells him, without distress or compulsion, for "God loves him who gives with pleasure."

God has the power to grant you richly every gift, so that you may always, in everything, be completely self-sufficient and give abundantly to every good cause.

The Bible says: **"He gave to the poor; his goodness will endure forever."**

(KJV, Paul's Apostle to the Corinthians 2, ch. 9, v. 7-10).

In the face of each of our fellow human beings, needy, poor and homeless, God himself emerges, asking us not to be indifferent or to turn our backs on him, but to stand by the sick and hungry by opening our hearts to those who are truly suffering, as if it were the Lord himself.

Godly deeds soothe and gladden sensitive hearts, unlike the cynical actions of rough and hard-hearted people.

Men's hearts are stony, their words hard: "Get out, get out, you are shameless!" These are the words he hears from all, and the boy's heart hardens, and in vain the poor and frightened little boy shivers with cold like a bird that has fallen from its broken nest. His hands and feet are frozen. **He breathes with difficulty as he is beaten by the freezing chill.**

The next thing he will know is a cough, and not long after that, sickness. A sickness that will look like a filthy serpent will slip into his chest, and death will be burning in some dark corner.

(Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Poor World*)⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Dostoevsky, Fyodor 2014. *The Poor World*. Thessaloniki. Ed. Malliaris Paideia, p. 195-196.

Therefore, of all those ruthless people who do not sympathize, but on the contrary, are biased against the poor because they do not love, it has been written:

For in the final judgment, there will be no mercy for him who has shown no mercy. But for the merciful, the final judgment will be a triumph.

(KJV, James, ch. 2, v. 13)

Either all will be hungry and cold, or all will have food to eat and clothes to wear. Can we not, Lord, bring justice into the world?⁵⁷

Those who are Christians believe in the other world. What do you mean, believe in the other world? That all our deeds here on earth will be weighed, the good ones will be washed away. **He who has mercy on his brothers here in this temporal life will be compensated with eternal life.**⁵⁸

We are, like it or not, equal. You may be rich and I may be poor. You may have lush pastures to feed your flock. And I, you see, have no place to lay my head. But before God we are equal. I may be closer to God, for I am hungry.⁵⁹

(N. Kazantzakis: Christ Recrucified)

⁵⁷ Kazantzakis, N. 2010. Athens. Kazantzakis (Patroclos Stavrou), p. 214. , ed. Dioptra

⁵⁸ N. Kazantzakis, p.344., ed. Dioptra

⁵⁹ N. Kazantzakis, p. 65., ed. Dioptra

Kazantzakis sought a world where justice was served, a world that fought for universal human values.

You boast that you are rich, that you have acquired a great fortune, that you need nothing. You forget, it seems, that in reality you are poor and wretched, poor, blind and naked. Therefore, I advise you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so that you may acquire wealth, white clothes to dress yourself and not be ashamed of your nakedness being seen, and collyrium to anoint your eyes and acquire your light. I educate those I love with rigour. So be jealous and repent.

(John's Apocalypse, ch. 3, v. 17-19)

Wealth when not shared resembles thorns, which are not only unfruitful but become detrimental to crops.

And just as thorns are easily delivered to the fire and are hated by the farmers, so are worldly things. And as in the thorns there are hidden beasts and vipers and scorpions, so also in the deceitfulness of wealth. But let us imitate the fire of the spirit, so that we may destroy the thorns and drive out the beasts of the farmer, and after the cleansing let us water him with the spiritual waters.

(St. John Chrysostom)⁶⁰

The most important exponent of volunteerism is considered to be Basil the Great: He founded the “Vassiliada”, where countless poor people found shelter and warmth. He offered them everything: from food, shelter, rest and even the opportunity to learn various arts, so that they could work and survive. He used to say:

If you are dazzled by money, because you think it brings honour and glory, take heed to see that it brings much more glory to be called the father of thousands of children than to have thousands of money in your safe.

For though you will leave the money here on earth, and even without wanting the glory, yet for your benefactions and good works you will take it with you and enjoy it before God, when in the day of judgment a multitude of people near the Common Judge will call you provider and benefactor, and will bestow upon you all the names of charity.

⁶⁰ St. John Chrysostom “Spiritual Pearls”. Thessaloniki: ed. Orthodox Hive, 2015, pp. 97-98.

In the context of the institution of solidarity, which was manifested at a satisfactory level and its important role was not ignored even in the year 1602, we read from the notes of the Duke of Crete Jerome Catellus:

The monks of Sina, great in times of pestilence [plague], provided charity and alms to the poor in the pestilence of Crete.

For this reason, the Apostle Paul advised the Apostle Titus to confirm the word of salvation with godly works:

These words are the trustworthy ones, and I want you to confirm them by your personal testimony, so that those who have believed in God may take care to lead the way in good works. These are the good and useful to men.

(New Testament, Paul's Apostle to Titus, ch. 3, v. 8)

Otherwise, people, without beneficial works, remain unfruitful - since they do not take advantage of the opportunities presented to them.

The Lord, of course, also commands the rich, who have greater financial resources, to share what they have and give to the poor, thus ensuring, in this way, eternal life.

To the rich of this world, command that **they should not be proud or rest their hopes on something uncertain, such as wealth, but on God, the living One**, who gives us all things richly to enjoy.

To command them to do good, **to become rich in good works, to be willing to give and share with others what they have**. In this way, they will store up their treasure and lay a good foundation for the future, **to obtain eternal life**.

(New Testament, Paul's Apostle to Timothy A

Chap. 6, v. 17-20)

Through almsgiving we shall enter eternal life.

(St. John Chrysostom)

But most of the rich seem not to enter the Kingdom of Heaven because not only do they not know how to have mercy, but at the same time they mismanage the goods of wealth.

This is why it is difficult for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God, because, although he knows very well that countless fellow human beings around the world are malnourished and

eventually end up dying of hunger, he nevertheless does not want to share any of his goods with others, as if he or his children, who will inherit it, are going to live forever.

“The inheritance of holiness”

We humans strive to acquire goods to bequeath to those after us, without seeing **that true beauty is found in the riches that God offers by his grace to those who trust him and know that only near him and in the life of the Church is the truth of life.**

Let us, then, make the riches of holiness our own and bequeath them to future generations as an inexhaustible treasure. ⁶¹

A rich man is the man who is worth much, not the man who has much.

(Pythagoras)

For what one good soul deserves is not worth the riches of the whole world.

[At this point I refer to my mother Evangelia, who had pure feelings towards everyone and benefited them].

That is why we ought always to honour good and virtuous people.

Man, in everything he thinks, says, and does, must maintain within himself the divine control, listening to the voice of conscience.

Another most important exhortation for all of us is to perform actions that benefit others and are not carried out of competition, ostentation, or vanity.

⁶¹ BC. M'. 2021. “A Different Wealth”. “Voice of the Lord” magazine, Athens. “The Church of the Greek Orthodox Church”, Vol. 48 (3574) / 28-11-2021 / Year 69, p. 191 (article published also in: <[http://www.apostoliki-diakonia.gr/gr_main/fk/2021/48_2021\(3574\).pdf](http://www.apostoliki-diakonia.gr/gr_main/fk/2021/48_2021(3574).pdf)>).

Do nothing out of competition or vanity, but, in humility, let each one consider the other superior. **Let each of you not only look after what interests you, but also what benefits others.**

(New Testament, Apostle Paul to the Philippians, ch. 2, v. 3-4)

Solidarity is a genuine expression of practical love, especially in the faces of our poor, sick and despised fellow human beings.

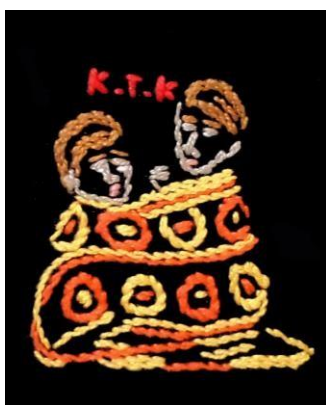
We believe that everything begins with each of us, with what little one can offer. It is also important to realize that from small things are built big and beneficial things, and finally, to move forward boldly, defying the countless obstacles that present themselves, without wasting time looking back... We use the time to improve ourselves, focusing on the heart of the problem (benefit of others) and learning from good examples, for social well-being.

There is always the human contribution that is infused with hope.



The solution is offered by the **SOS Children's Villages of Greece (C.V. SOS G.)**, where services are provided to poor children, such as food, creative activities, psychological support for children and parents, educational assistance for children with learning difficulties, as well as important moral-material assistance, in order to avoid any break-up of the family.

Ark of the World (A.T.W.)



The non-governmental organization Ark of the World cares for and nurtures poor children, providing them with all their feeding and educational needs.

In addition, the Ark of the World also provides financial support to their families in order to help them cope with the financial obligations of their household.

Social Grocery (SP)



The Social Grocery covers the basic survival needs of the economically weaker social groups.

All sensitive citizens who can offer small or large help should contact the Social Grocery of their area, so that no one is deprived of basic foodstuffs and personal hygiene items.

In Heraklion, Crete, in 2012, a year of economic crisis, in view of the Easter holidays, more than six hundred (600) families were supported with food and fruit and vegetables by the Social Grocery of the Region of Crete. More than

eight (8) tons of food and vegetables were collected with the help of individuals, cooperatives, and businesses.

If, of course, we consider that the impoverished people in Greece during the economic crisis of 2015 amounted to 3,884,700 and with the unemployed officially estimated at 1,216,870 people, it is considered imperative to support and help them through social institutions (Church, Municipalities, Organizations), but also by individuals. Those who are able to do so should support them in order to avoid the poverty that leads them to marginalisation and isolation, steadily leading them to despair.

With an understanding of the problems, our moral and material help will make it possible to resolve a number of issues that concern everyone and are relevant to everyday life, in order to achieve social progress and cohesion.

Solidarity - philanthropy has always been an activity of major importance, integrated in the service of the weak and weaker social groups. But, in order to make a selfless contribution to our distressed fellow citizens, we need to keep the flame of love smouldering within us.

Even if I have no other qualification, I can only succeed with love.

Without it, I will fail, even if I have all the knowledge and skills in the world.

I will greet today with love, and I will succeed.

(Og Mandino, The Greatest Salesman in the World) ⁶²

A kind and great contribution in the difficult days of the global recession was made by the “greatest investor of the 20th century” Mr. Warren Buffett.

The business tycoon donated two billion eighty-four million dollars (\$2,084,000,000) to five (5) charities, with the “lion's share” (\$2.1 billion) being given to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for charitable purposes. He remains faithful to his commitment to donate, in stages, 99% of his fortune and urges other billionaires to donate their fortunes to charity with the aim of eradicating poverty.

It is very important, by looking back to the “principles” and with the aim of finding the Absolute Truth, which is the Ideal of human nature, to find the purpose of one's life by forming an attitude and a way of life that will develop him and allow him to contribute to society as a whole.

⁶² Og Mandino, 2018. *The Greatest Salesman in the World* (transl: Avramidis Omiros-Barouxis Giorgos). Athens: Dioptra, p. 90 (international Best Seller).

GOD IS LOVE

*He is the centre of all
in which all the substances of beings are found and fixed,
according to the passage of Scripture:
“for in him we live and move and have our being”.
(Apostle Paul - Acts, Ch. 17, 22-31)⁶³*

IN THE CENTRE OF THE PAINTING THERE IS THE PHRASE 'GOD IS LOVE'.

THE POOR CHILD, WITH THE INNOCENT, BIG BLACK EYES, LOOKS THROUGH
THE BROKEN WOODEN WINDOW OF THE SHACK.



Perfect love is the one that offers everything and expects nothing.

(Leo Buscaglia)

For only the one who loves exists.

(Feuerbach)

⁶³ Saint Nicodemus the Athonite 2014. The Invisible War (transl. Monk Venedikos, Athonite), Ch. K' "The soul, after being stripped of its will, must stand before God". New Skete of Mount Athos: published by Synodeias Monk Spyridon, p. 282.

“Love”, in its absolute form, means “sacrifice”. Real love is intertwined with pain, and the more love increases, the stronger the pain becomes. That is why this love is the true, the crucified love, as it is always characterized by sacrifice.

The God-Man Jesus has perfect love for all His creatures. He, in His earthly life, experienced the suffering that people gave Him on the cross, thus atoning for the sufferings of all humanity.

All my bones were enumerated.

(Psalm of the Prophet and King David, 21, 18)

For the love of mankind, all the blood of His only begotten Son of God was shed. In His sacrifice on the cross, the greatness and supreme offering of His love is revealed.

Many, throughout the whole world, were crucified, but none are feared by the demons. But of Christ, who was crucified for us, and only the sign of the Cross to behold, the demons tremble.

(Cyril of Jerusalem)

The demonic powers were defeated by far at the cross of Christ. Based on astronomical, calendar and historical data, it has been calculated that Christ's crucifixion occurred on **Friday, April 3, 33 AD.**

Darkness covered the whole earth, and there was a great earthquake after the stones were split, monuments were opened and the dead were raised during the Crucifixion, as mentioned in the Gospel. Dionysius the Areopagite, who was at that time in Egypt, exclaimed:

Either God is suffering, or the end of the world has come!

After this redemptive Sacrifice for us, it is impossible not to love Him since He first loved us.

Just as good parents sacrifice themselves for their children, so the Lord of Glory ended, in His earthly life, on the wood of the Cross of Love, which is also the symbol of His Absolute Majesty. And, while we bestowed ingratitude, pain and death upon Him, He richly repaid us with our freedom from the curse of Hades, as well as the bliss of Paradise with eternal life.

Therefore, to deny the Cross is to deny the love that leads to eternal life, which is why the Lord declares that **a true disciple and follower of Him must walk the path of crucified-**

love. We are distinguished through forgiveness, enduring patiently, unapologetically enduring difficulties, when we continually “crucify” our passions.

Jesus gave himself up to death for our iniquities and rose again for our salvation.

(New Testament, Paul's Apostle to the Romans, ch. 4, v. 25)

As Christ set the perfect example, Who emptied (humbled) Himself by taking the form of a servant, becoming a man, and endured the ignominious death on the cross, so let us, too, take up our own cross (sickness, privations, afflictions), following His example, in order to progress, through trials, in virtue, loving God and, selflessly, loving people.

To love and to be loved should be the greatest pursuit of our whole life.

(Rousseau)

The mystery of the Trinity of God is the communion and love of the Three Persons. When the Father is glorified by Christ, who proves to be the Son of God, and manifested, the name of the Father contributes to the salvation of men, as formulated by the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council (325 A.D.). Therefore, every confession in His name is, therefore, also a love. A sacrifice, in the name of the Divine Trinity.

Christ came to the world not only to redeem it, but also to teach it the truth, when He teaches not only in words but, much more, in abundant deeds of love. He gives eternal life to His children who believe and practice His words.

The heavenly bread is Christ, who came down from heaven and gave life to the world. And this is the food of the angels. **He that obtained love, ate Christ every day and every hour, is made immortal** for he who eats of the bread which I shall give him will not see death. **Blessed therefore is he that eats of this bread of love, which is Jesus Christ.**

He that eats of the bread of love eats Christ, the God of all, John testifies, saying, **God is love.**

Whoever therefore lives in love shall receive life from God and shall breathe into this present world that air of resurrection. **Love is the kingdom, which the Lord secretly promised to the apostles to eat in his kingdom:** for what is this eating and drinking in my kingdom but love? For love is able to feed a man instead of eating and drinking. This is the wine that makes glad the heart of man.

Blessed therefore is he that drinks of this wine. The wicked drank of this wine and they became pious. The sinners drank it and they forgot the sinful life. The drunkards drank it and they started fasting. The rich men drank it and they craved for poverty. The poor drank it and they

became rich of hope. The sick drank it and they became strong. The ignorant drank it and they became wise.

[Saint Isaac of Syros Discourse OB (excerpt)]⁶⁴

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sake of the sheep. The employee, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and abandons the sheep and leaves, because he is an employee and does not care about the sheep; so the wolf seizes them and scatters them. I am the good shepherd and I know the sheep that are mine, and mine recognize me as Father recognizes me, and I recognize Father. And I sacrifice my life for the sake of the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong in this stockyard; I must lead them too. They will know my voice and become one flock with one shepherd. **That is why Father loves me, because I sacrifice my life so that I may take it back.**

[New Testament, John, ch. 10, v. 11-18]

My sheep recognize my voice, and I recognize them and they follow me; I give them eternal life and they will never perish, for no one will be able to snatch them from my power. What my Father has given me is above all things, and no one can snatch what is in my Father's hands. I and the Father are one.

The price for your release has been paid. (Christ's sacrifice on the cross.) **Therefore, do not be enslaved to men.**

(New Testament, Paul's Apostle to the Corinthians I, ch. 7, v. 23)

Love inspires the commitment and courage to defy even terrible death, even to die for what we love.

(Lacordaire)

⁶⁴ Abba Isaac of Syros Ascetic Discourses (Discourse OB) [transferred from the ancient to the modern Greek (Purist Greek) by the Hierodeacon Kallinikos Pantokratorinos - Now published by Monk Paul]. Athens:2nd ed. Publications Of the Orthodox Foundation "Apostle Varnavas" p. 248.

If you love me, you will obey my commandments. And I will ask Father to give you the Spirit of Truth, so that he may be with you forever. This spirit cannot be received by the world, for it neither discerns it nor knows it; you know it because **it is near you and will exist in you. I will not leave you alone and orphaned; I will come to you again. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me, for I will still be alive. so will you live.**

When that day comes, you will understand that I am inseparable from Father, and you from me, and I from you.

He who keeps my commandments and carries them out, he loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and reveal myself to him.

[New Testament, John, ch. 14, v. 15-22]

“Lord,” says Judas, not Iscariot, “why will you reveal yourself to us and not to the world?”

“He who loves me,” Jesus replied, “will keep my word. And my Father will love him, and we will come to him and dwell with him. **He who does not love me does not follow my words. But the words you hear do not come from me, but from Father who sent me.**”

[New Testament, John, ch. 11, v. 22-25]

But modern societies, now in the digital age, do not accept the Word of God, because they are founded mainly on a scientific rationalism (observation - experiment), as well as on modern technological achievements. Of course, this is considered desirable and necessary in order to develop science for the benefit of man and to achieve social welfare.

Unfortunately, we can see that man is not free from modern problems, which lead him to dead ends, as there are many times when a climate of anxiety and insecurity prevails, as even world peace is at stake from the powers that be. With wars, millions of people become refugees, and millions more, in the poorest countries of the world, are subjected to the spectre of hunger and chronic malnutrition, ending in death.

In addition, social groups are economically affected by unconstitutional and unjust measures to save billions of euros - dollars and accumulate in the reserves of the Banks and Governments.

In contrast to the love of God, we have the political pre-election proclamations (commitments) for a better future, which almost always remain words “in the air”, never implemented, presenting only inconsistency and lies in their commitments. All this proves that the governments of the day do not really love the people, but only power, to impose

themselves, through their legislation, from a position of power on others and against the benefits of the citizens.

Christ, however, remains the same throughout the ages. Christ loves us, He does not pretend, He does not change His mind, He does not lie. His words are always, unequivocally just, true, peaceful, whole and timeless. The Lord of Glory, as the Son of God, knows the present and future of each of us.

Therefore, trusting in His omniscience, goodness and infinite love, we also turn to Him, confident in His person. Thus, the future becomes present, and the present future, so that mortal man may be joined to the eternity of God. Whoever follows the commandments of God, that is, the will of His Creator, is possessed of love, not only for God, but also for all mankind.

GOD IS LOVE, and love is perfect, complete and absolute. This concept of love becomes the essence and purpose of His commandments. That is, to reach love for God and our fellow man:

If I can speak all the tongues of men, even of angels, but have not love for others, my words sound like the sound of a brass bell or the clanging of a cymbal.

And if I have the gift of prophecy and all the mysteries and all knowledge, and if I still have all faith, so that I can move mountains, but I have no love, I am nothing.

And if I still distribute to the poor all my possessions, and if I give my body to the fire to be burned, but have not love, nothing benefits me.

He who loves has longsuffering, he has goodness; he who loves is not jealous; he who loves does not boast or take pride, he is decent, he is not selfish or irritable; he forgets the evil done to him.

He does not rejoice in the wrong done but shares in the joy of the right.

He who loves endures all things; in all things he trusts, for all things he hopes, for all things he endures.

Love will never cease to exist.

(New Testament, Apostle Paul to the Corinthians, Chapter A, v. 1-8)



True love has no conditions, nor does it set limits. Christ has true love for man, without any personal gain entering it, as is true of human relationships and affections. **Love, as the perfect fulfilment of God's commandments, casts out every kind of fear**, such as intense anxiety-anxiety about sickness, poverty, lack of work, repaying loans, paying many bills.

Love casts out fear, which is absent from itself and from hope.

Love is considered greater than hope and constitutes the highest of the virtues. **That is why Christianity is founded, exclusively, on love.**

Love is stronger than the wall and more solid than adamant.

(St. John Chrysostom)

What is of paramount importance is that we do not deprive ourselves of Divine Mercy and become unworthy of God's Love.

What, then, can separate us from Christ's love for us? Could it be suffering, distress, persecution, hunger, nakedness, danger, or martyrdom?

According to the Bible: for you we die all day long. We are treated like sheep taken to slaughter. **But we emerge victorious from all difficulties with the help of Christ, who loved us.**

And I am truly confident that neither death nor life nor angels nor other heavenly powers, neither present nor future nor anything else, whether in heaven or in Hades, nor any other creature will ever be able to separate us from God's love for us, as revealed in the person of Jesus Christ our Lord.

(New Testament, Paul's Apostle, Romans, ch. 8, v. 35 ff.)

When we love others, we also love God, trusting in Him who gives us spiritual salvation and redemption.

Dear people, let us love one another, for **love comes from God**. Whoever loves shows that he has been born again of God and that he knows God. Whoever does not love has not known God, because **God is love. This is how God's love for us has been demonstrated: He sent His only begotten Son into the world to give us new life if we are united with Him. This is the characteristic of God's love: Not that we loved Him, but that He loved us and sent His Son, who sacrificed Himself to free us from our sins.**

If God, beloved, so loved us, we ought to love one another. No one has ever before been worthy to see God. **If we love one another, we are in communion with God, and His love in us is complete.**

(New Testament, John 1, ch. 4, v. 7-13)

And we now know the love that God has for us, and we trust ourselves to it. God is love. And whoever lives in love lives in Him. So we understand that love is complete in us: When we face the Day of Judgment with courage. For we too live in this world as He lived.

Whoever loves is not afraid. Perfect love casts out fear. For fear is associated with punishment, and whoever fears punishment shows that he has not attained perfect love. **We love God because He first loved us.**

If someone says "I love God" but hates his brother, he is a liar. For, indeed, he who does not love his brother, whom he sees, how can he love God, whom he does not see? This is the commandment that Christ gave us.

(New Testament, John, 1, ch. 4, v. 16 ff.)

I give you a new commandment, love one another. **As I have loved you, you also love one another.** So you will all be known to be my disciples if you have love for one another.

(New Testament, John, ch. 13, v. 34-35)

As Father has loved me, so have I loved you; remain faithful to my love. And you will remain faithful to my love if you keep my commandments, just as I have kept my Father's commandments, and therefore I remain faithful to his love.

I have told you these things so that my joy may be in you, and your joy may be complete. **This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you.**

No one has greater love than he who sacrifices his life for the sake of his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I no longer call you slaves, for a slave does not know what his master is doing. But you, **I have called you friends, because I have made known to you all that I have heard from my Father.** You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit, and your fruit to be permanent. So that **whatever you ask of Father in my name, he will give it to you. This is the commandment I give you: love one another.**

(New Testament, John, ch. 15, v. 9-18)

As You sent me into the world, so I sent them into the world. And for their sake I dedicate and offer myself to You, so that they too, with the help of Truth, may be dedicated to You.

And I pray not only for them, but also for those who by their preaching will believe in me, **that they may all be one, as You, Father, are united with me, and I with You. That they too may be united with us, and so the world may believe that You sent me.** And I have given the glory that You have given me to them, that they may be one with one another, as we are one. **I united with them, and You united with me, that they may be one perfect unity, and so the world may believe it, that You sent me, and that You loved them as You loved me.**

Father, those whom You have given me I want where I am that they may also be with me, that they may see the glory of mine, **the glory that You have given me, because You loved me before the world was.**

Justifier Father, the world has not known You, while I have known You, and they have recognized that You sent me. I have taught them who You are and I will continue to teach them, so that the love with which You loved me may be in them, as I will be with them.

(New Testament, John, ch. 17, v. 18 ff.)

Father loves the Son and has given Him authority over all things. He who believes in the Son has eternal life.

(New Testament, John, Ch. 3, v. 35-36)

More commonly, however, we invoke and trust in God's help and love, especially in difficulties of all kinds, in order to face them; such difficulties include health problems, pandemics, economic, professional, and political instability, with global implications and upheavals. All these, combined with some unforeseen and catastrophic events due to climate change (heat waves, floods), signal and seal future uncertainty and daily anxiety.

GOD IS LOVE, and we who have recourse to Him, with confidence, exclaim: “You are my hope”.

(Old Testament, Psalm 1:6)

God is love and the object of love: this is the whole contribution of mysticism. The mystic will never stop talking about this double love. His description is inexpressible, because inexpressible is what he wants to describe. But what he says clearly is that **divine love is not a part of God: it is God himself.**

[...]

Indeed, mystics unanimously testify that God is in need of us as we are of Him. **Why would He need us, if not to love us?** ... The Philosopher would consider Creation to be God's undertaking to create creatures, to recruit beings worthy of His love.

[...]

Beings were then called into existence who were **destined to love and to be loved, since creative energy must be defined by love... These people are the mystics. They opened a path on which other people can walk. In doing so, they showed the philosopher where life came from and where it was going.**

[Henri Bergson, The Two Sources of Ethics and Religion (indicative quotes)] ⁶⁵

Mystics are men of great humility, intuitive, as they expect to fulfil their purpose, which is none other than to stimulate the true faith of the people by calling them to repentance.

Albert Schweitzer, winner of the 1953 Nobel Peace Prize, refers to the Mysticism of the Apostle Paul in his book **My Life and My Thought**, published by Galaxy. In summary, but not in full, I am transmitting some of the author's thoughts concerning the Apostle Paul.

The Early Apostle speaks of those who believe in Christ as Messiah and, spiritually, mystically, secretly, unite with Him.

⁶⁵ Bergson Henri 2006. The Two Sources of Ethics and Religion (transl. Tomanas, Vas.). Thessaloniki: Nisides, pp.194-195, 197 and 199-200.

The supernatural powers that contributed to the undoing of death and the resurrection of the Lord turn out to be as powerful and effective as those of believers who by their life have overcome the weak - physical human condition (the annihilation of the desires of sinners). And this, in order to make them worthy of a true life of full love, which will allow them to become co-heirs of the eternal and eschatological Messianic Kingdom, as a result of this mystical union with Him.

Through the darkness, the world is walking into a new spirituality and a new mysticism... It will be oriented towards the world and people, but it will not face the world objectively, as a real world...

The new mysticism must enclose a powerful prophetic and Messianic element and allow for the exorcism of an authentic knowledge, free from the worldly temptation of the gnostics of the past. **All painful contradictions, all divisions will find a solution in this new mysticism, the absolutely Religious.**

This will be at the same time **a victory over the artificial forms of social mysticism, a victory of the kingdom of the Spirit over the kingdom of Caesar.**

(N. Berdyaev, Kingdom of the Spirit and Kingdom of Caesar)⁶⁶

All man is being renewed in Christ, and yet that the whole world must be put into a transforming process.

(Archbishop Anastasios of Albania)⁶⁷

Thinking long enough about all that had happened, restrained and humbled, Napoleon the Great then wrote the following words:

“I know men and I tell you that Jesus was not only a man. His Religion is a mystery that springs from the knowledge of men, but such knowledge that we cannot call it human knowledge. ... **he came into the world to reveal the laws of the Spirit.**

⁶⁶ Berdiayev, Nikolaos 1971. Kingdom of the Spirit and Kingdom of Caesar (transl. Gioultsis, Vas.). Thessaloniki:Publ. Pournaras, pp. 192-193.

⁶⁷ Archbishop Anastasios of Albania 2011. “Yoga and Orthodox Mysticism”, in the blog of Archpriest Dimitrios Athanasiou:<<https://fdathanasiou.wordpress.com/2011/03/15/>>.

Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne and I founded great empires. But on what did we base the creation of the great creations of our intelligence? **Power.**

Jesus alone founded His kingdom on Love, and behold even now, many are ready to die for Him.

I will die in due time. My body will be delivered to the ground and become food for worms.

Here is the fate that awaits the great Napoleon.

How vast is the difference between my deep misery and the eternal kingdom of Christ, who by preaching it magnifies it and spreads it over the earth.”

(St. Nicholas Velimirovich) ⁶⁸

Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, did not forget God's blessings in the past, which also revealed His love, drawing strength and hope for the future, regarding the dangers ahead.

To whom, then, do we turn in our difficult times?

Like little children, we, too, find love, a solution to life's problems, affection and warmth in the Heavenly Father. Christ remains eternally as the ship's anchor in the harbour of our soul, for He is love, stability, as well as hope, help and salvation. The Lord will never betray us nor will He ever forsake us.

I will not hold you in contempt, ⁶⁹

He assures us as, through trials - hardships, He educates, cares for and arranges our eternal salvation, since He Himself is an inexhaustible source of Love.

⁶⁸ St Nicholas Velimirovich 2016. War and the Bible (transl: Saragoudas Ilias), Athens: Publ. Parrisia, p. 136

⁶⁹ Old Testament, Isaiah, n. 15.

The acquisition of perfect trust in God's love and providence is achieved when we believe in Him, who is perfect Love, Mercy, Wisdom, and Omnipotence, so that we become in heart like the little, harmless, innocent, naive and immature children whom He loves especially.

Unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven, the Apostle Matthew tells us in the Gospel.

In the Kingdom of Heaven, the love of God prevails as the crown of virtues.

The expression of the Kingdom of Heaven ushers in a new age, or new life, declaring the love that prevails in good souls, instead of hatred and revenge. Instead of the darkness of unbelief, the **Light** of faith shines; instead of despair and desperation, the hope of our lives is entrusted to the **Lord of Love**.

GLORY TO YOUR MAJESTY, LORD.

(Poem of the author)

The mouth, with boldness, always confesses You,
when it reads the Scriptures,
with all its power,
and this pleases You.

Glory to Your Majesty, Lord.

The heart, full of love,
always praises You,
when, at Your prompting,
it invites the enemies
to forgive.

Glory to Your Majesty, Lord.

The mind will be enlightened by You
when Truth is sought,
since, with faith and hope, and for the life to come,
it makes a spiritual struggle from here on earth,
so that Your Divine Word may be kept.

Glory to Your Majesty, Lord.

The body, by Your commandments, in this short life,
must also be completely freed from its passions
and must be purified,
to gain true and eternal life.

Glory to Your Majesty, Lord.

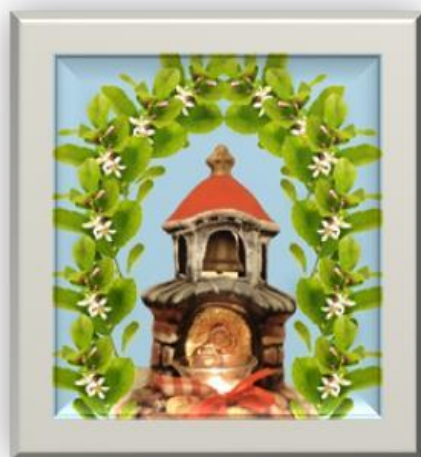
EPILOGUE

Glory to You, Holy Trinity of one God, Glory to You, One in three hypostases.

Glory to the Three in a like state, Glory to the one threefold beauty.

Glory, Father Almighty, Poet of all, Glory, Word of life, Redeemer of men.

(From Euchology, a manual of prayers of the Holy Orthodox Church)



God of Love and Truth,

Justify, as Your Work, the work we have carried out as children of Your love and obedient instruments.

Do this so that it can be accepted by men, so that they believe in Your infinite Mercy, in Your Omnipotence, so that the rational dissenters return to You, just as the prodigal son of the parable did, so that we all glorify ourselves by giving thanks to **Your Greatness.**

The Creator of the Work,
under the pseudonym
“BRIGHT STAR”



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