

IN THE 65TH YEAR OF THE "VOICE OF THE LORD"

The "Voice of the Lord" joyfully announces its entrance into the 65th year of its publication, with the present pamphlet. For so many years, every Sunday, in thousands of churches, monasteries, hospitals, military units and prisons it is distributed to our Christians, imparting the word of our Lord, the word of truth and life, whereas it is also sent to 20 countries abroad, for the Greeks abroad.

Erudite clergyman (bishops, archimandrites and priests) were the composers of the written sermon, while the content of the pamphlet aims at the edification of its readers, in topics of orthodox faith and life. During this period, the "Voice of the Lord" remained firmly attached to its initial goal: to be a brief edifying pamphlet about life in Christ.

We glorify our philanthropic Lord, because with the intercessions of the Most Holy Theotokos and of His Saints, the Apostolic Ministry managed to perform this offering for 65 years already. And we fervently thank our colleagues in this ministry, and promise to continue our effort, with the grace of the Holy Trinity.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 1, 2017 CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR

JESUS CHRIST *Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, Gregory, Bishop of Nanzianzos, Father of Gregory the Theologian, Peter the New Martyr of the Peloponnesos, Theodotos the Martyr, Righteous Theodosios of Triglia, Emmelia, Mother of Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, Makrina, and Peter of Sebaste, Telemachos the Martyr Fulgentius, Bishop of Ruspe.*

TONE OF THE WEEK *First Tone*

EOTHINON : *Sixth*

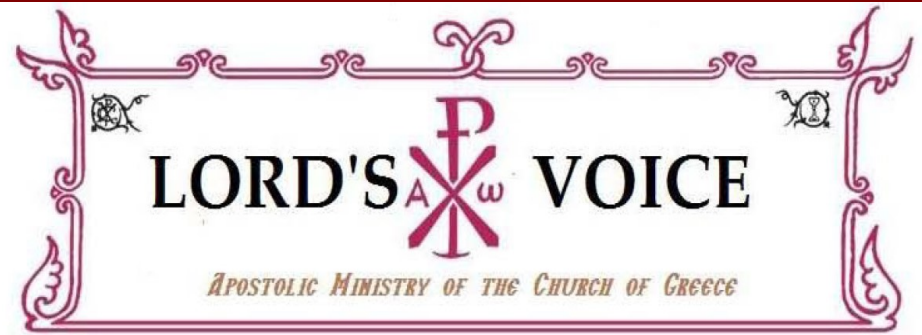
EPISTLE: *St. Paul's Letter to the Colossians 2:8-12*

GOSPEL: *Luke 2:20-21, 40-52*

NEXT SUNDAY, JANUARY 8, 2017 SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY, *George of Hozeva, Domnica the Righteous of Constantinople, Atticus and Cyrus, Holy Patriarchs of Constantinople, Afterfeast of the Theophany of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Emilianos the Confessor, Bishop of Cyzikos, Gregory of the Kiev Caves, Pega the Virgin, Hermitess of Peakirk*

EPISTLE: *St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 4:7-13*

GOSPEL: *Matthew 4:12-17*



65TH YEAR

JANUARY 1 2017

PAMPHLET # 1 (3318)

CIRCUMCISION NOT MADE BY HANDS AND UNCIRCUMCIZED HEART

The Apostle Paul, beloved brethren, addressing the Colossians, in today's epistle passage, rings the danger bell, because he wants to make them careful before the danger of the heresies of their age. He calls them "philosophy" and "empty deception".

Empty philosophies

Precisely as deceptive philosophies they deceive the believer and afterwards he, poisoned spiritually, recovers with great difficulty. In order for us to understand with what difficulty a person is trapped into heresy, borrowing the opinion of the elder Joseph the Cave Dweller, who in his epistles (36th epistle) likened the deception to the sweet water of a spring near the sea, where, if a wave rises up, it gets mixed up with the salty water, and then how can they be distinguished, no matter how "smart" one is? So complicated and serious is the harm to the human mind, when he is deceived. It could be likened to a galloping spiritual leukemia!

**MAY THE SAVING YEAR 2017
BE FULL OF DIVINE STRENGTH AND SPIRITUAL FRUITS
MAY THE LORD GOD GRANT TO EVERYONE HIS
ENLIGHTENMENT RICHLY**

St. Paul's Letter to the Colossians 2:8-12

Prokeimenon. Mode 1: *My mouth shall speak wisdom and the meditation of my heart shall bring forth understanding*

Verse: *Hear this all you nations*

BRETHREN, see to it that no one makes a prey of you by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ. For in him the whole fulness of deity dwells bodily, and you have come to fulness of life in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of flesh in the circumcision of Christ; and you were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.

So precisely because the Apostle, who had never visited Colossae, knows from the local Epaphras who converted to the Christian faith, the founder of the Church of Colossae and teacher there of the Gospel, what is going on in this area, and more generally in the rest of Phrygia, with the false teachers and their efforts to sway the Christians, mainly to a type of angel religion and of super ascetical struggles, for this reason also he stresses the deceptive and human character of these teachings. He juxtaposes to these, Christ himself, in whom all of the godhead dwells physically, but also in the Whom, elsewhere the same Apostle says that "we live and move and are" (Acts 17:28). So one is the Truth, in other words, Christ himself, who is above every authority of both angels and humans.

Filled with Christ

If according to the confession of the Apostle Paul at Areos Pagos of Athens, which was mentioned just previously, we Christians live or ought to be living in Christ. Filled by the grace of his presence, that we understand whatever goes on inside us, but also outside of us, through Christ. Our mind infallible to be seeing and hearing in Christ. Christ, in other words, is in us and we inside him. He "is" and we "exist" we are under his authority. He is the odd "backwards" humanism of the Fathers. We do not go from man to God, but being inside God, through God, we understand our neighbor. Only thus is our neighbor understood

correctly, because then we are not living, but Christ lives in us, a Paulian experience, in other words. Then we freely allow our Lord to enter in, with the doors closed, to our heart and to use our soul, mind and body, for the benefit of our neighbor and for God's glory.

This however, is the result of a long, painful, but also blessed journey of the believer in the body of Christ, which is his Church. We are enlisted in this Body with our Baptism and we also receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit with the sacred Chrism. Thus we become a "planting" that needs protection and "watering" in order to bear fruit. The mild climate of the Church protects us and Divine Communion irrigates the field of our heart. Thus the child of God, reborn with water and Spirit, gets a divorce from sin and is grafted into Christ.

A circumcision not made by hands

In the years of the Law, circumcision was done with a knife and a human hand. It comprised a sign of the Covenant between God and the Israelites. The shadow of the Law passed however, when Grace came. In Grace, circumcision obtains a deeply spiritual and mystical character. A mystical relationship with the Bridegroom is formed in the depths of man's heart, and the believer, buried together through baptism with Christ, is born for a second time, after his natural birth, from the spiritual womb of the Church, which is symbolized by the baptismal font, and he is "cut off" from sin. He arises together, subsequently, with Christ in his Light and lives in the Kingdom of God. The natural circumcision, as an obligatory type, is no longer needed, since Baptism, as an event, took the place of the type, and showed forth the essence of the type.

If the old type foreshadowed the Baptism of Christ, with his coming, his baptism and our own baptism through which we defeat death, the type was abolished. Thus, the adjective "not made by hands" reminds of Baptism and the essential "circumcision" reminds of the type, which Christ kept, fulfilling and not abolishing the Law, in which type, nevertheless, we Christians are no longer obligated, having received the grace of holy Baptism.

In the icon of the Circumcision of Christ, sometimes Basil the Great who celebrates today is also depicted. Let us beseech him from the depths, to bless the new year, as he is "heaven-reaching" and to intercede to our Christ, so that we also be shown forth as icons of grace not made by hand, shining like him, through our faith in Christ, but also through our works, which will prove precisely this faith .

Archimandrite E. T