

The more the person longs, is eager to live and to partake in the Divine Liturgy, all the more he becomes liturgized, a “machine” of divine Grace. With the help of the Holy Spirit, heading heavenward, he leaves the things below, he thinks the things above, “he is joined with the things above, those things he thinks”. He becomes of age spiritually, and analogous to the measure of “what he can contain” he ceases to be spiritually an infant who is led and brought by deluded teachings of men, and he arrives at the measures of a high spiritual maturity and ceaseless progress, which begins from here and continues also here, in the herein, but also there, in the hereafter.

He is not disturbed by eschatological ravings of many supposed “enlightened people” that abound in our days, because by experience he knows that Christ defeated death and, because he is united with Christ, he is ready to depart, certain that a place of comfort, refreshment, rest and Sabbatization was prepared for him. Thus, in the embrace of the Church, he lives at every moment the last things, so for this reason, he also lives the present things as much as anyone else. Consequently he does not startle the others with the harms which are coming, but, without his attention leaving from them also, he shakes the earth of his heart and the heavens with his flaming prayer consoling his brothers.

Archimandrite E. T

**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*

**tone of the week** *Tone Four*

**EOTHINON :** *Seventh*

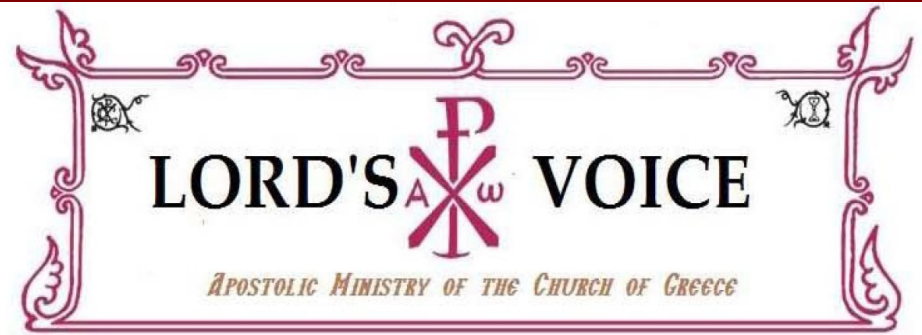
**EPISTLE:** *St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 4:7-13*

**GOSPEL:** *Matthew 4:12-17*

**NEXT SUNDAY, JANUARY 15, 2017 12TH SUNDAY OF LUKE**, *Paul of Thebes, John the Hut-Dweller, Pansophios the Martyr of Alexandria*

**EPISTLE:** *St. Paul's Letter to the Colossians 3:4-11*

**GOSPEL:** *Luke 17:12-19*



65<sup>TH</sup> YEAR

January 8 2017

PAMPHLET # 2 (3319)

## INFINITE IS THE VARIETY OF GIFTS

In today's Epistle passage, my beloved brethren, the Apostle addressing the Ephesians, speaks about the variety of gifts, which as breaths of the Holy Spirit befit and edify the body of the Church.

### To each one separately

In a different manner, “in various ways”, God has adorned each person. The different inheritance given to each one. This however does not occur so that intensities and clashes can be caused, jealousies and oppositions which wound the body of the Church, Christ himself, but in order so that people can complete each other. That which the one does not have, the other one has. Thus, in the Church “we meet each other” in the same place, consequently we edify one another in the person of Christ. This furthermore, presupposes that each one discovers his gifts. And this is a work of Grace.

To one he gives wisdom, another interprets the Scriptures, another interrogates the passionate thoughts, and others speaks many languages, another has an amazing memory, another has an artistic nature, and other has ceaseless prayer, another shows enviable patience in difficult conditions, and other is very graceful

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

**Prokeimenon. Mode 1:** Let your mercy, O Lord, be upon us

**Verse:** Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous.

BRETHREN, grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it is said, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." (in saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is he who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

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and strengthens those having a difficult time, another gives charity to those in need, and other studies a lot and with ease, another writes, another has the gift of tears, another keeps vigil, another is a model of humility, and other has a constant memory of death, and other pastors and administrators, another preaches and prophesies, another works miracles with word and deed.

Of course, the handling of gifts is not an easy matter. One is safeguarded, when he deposits them in the bank of Life and humbly entrusts the Lord to guide him.

### A cause for doxology

In this manner, the gifts of one become cause for us to glorify God, for us to thank Him who entrusted them to us and to ask Him to dispose, as He thinks better, our "deposits". Man deposits and God disposes in a manner that He knows. The aim is, as the text tells us,

"the edification of the Christians" (4:12), so that with this ministry, the body of Christ may be edified, that is His Church.

Thus the person proceeds in the, in the likeness, and entrusting the Lord, he becomes a small god upon the earth. Just as the gift-giving Lord "captured captivity", in other words, He completely defeated Satan and death, thus also the gift-receiving believer, the struggling Christian, in the person of Christ, surpasses death and the demonic traps, and becomes a cause himself, for the people near him, find in him the joy and grace of Christ. For this reason also, Saint Seraphim of Sarov, saying that the aim of the Christian's life is the acquisition of the Holy Spirit, and being himself "completed" with his gifts, recognizing furthermore the Christ-likeness of his gifts, was addressing each person, using the victorious victory song: "Christ is risen, my joy"! The vertical opposition to the existential philosopher Chartre, who would often say "the other is my hell", must perplex us, not for him, but for us, placing in a saving questioning our own spiritual condition. So for this reason, the fervent supplication of the Apostle comforts us for the account of the Ephesians and consequently for our own also, in the infinite glory and the infinite wealth of the Lord to send out the Holy Spirit for us to fill our inner person with strength.

### The unity of faith

Man being humbled and suffering, forbearing with an ecclesiastical, not a religious, egotistical, selfish, Pharisaical manner basically himself, and then the various trials and difficulties which he encounters during life, finds the grace of Christ as inexhaustible consolation.

In the Divine Liturgy, we unite with God, and consequently, with each other we become relatives "by blood", since the blood of the Lord flows in our body and soul. With one common faith, one Baptism, under one common Lord, in one common vessel, "the ship which saves from the flood", we sail the area and the ages and "already and not yet" we partake of the Kingdom.