

to prevent the work of God. A sign, nevertheless, of the spiritual progress of a Christian, is the appearance of these obstacles.

And thus the Apostle, addressing his spiritual child Timothy, forewarns him of the spiritual delusions of people, who will influence other people also, and he urges him to remain unshakable in the teaching which he, Paul, himself as a spiritual father, handed down to him, which is none other than the teaching of the Church. He advises him to “remain” in whatever was handed down to him, in other words, in Christ Himself, handed down alive throughout the ages. Furthermore from a young age, Timothy knows the Scriptures and the true saving wisdom has been imparted to him. So the Apostle Paul calls him, to some degree, to become an imitator of his, as he also calls all of us, through the present Epistle passage, to become imitators of Saint Timothy, with daily prayer and reading of the divine Scriptures, with participation in the holy Mysteries and with a titanic effort that our works go along with our words.

Thus the believer comprises the living mould of Grace, of the manner of life of Christ and the place of meeting everyone in Christ, that is a living Church.

Archimandrite E. T

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2017 SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN AND PHARISEE: TRIODION BEGINS TODAY**, *Agatha the Martyr, Polyeyuktos, Patriarch Of Constantinople, Antonios the New Martyr of Athens, Theodosios, Archbishop of Chernigov, Afterfeast of the Presentation of Our Lord and Savior in the Temple, Theodosios of Antioch*

**TONE OF THE WEEK** *Plagal of the Fourth Tone*

**EOTHINON :** *Eleventh Eothinon*

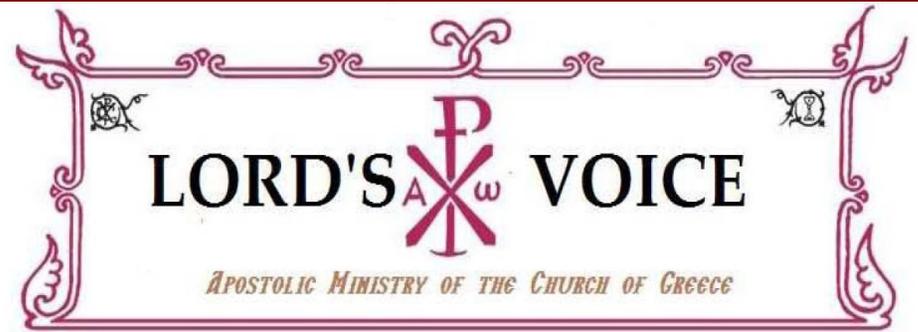
**EPISTLE:** *St. Paul's Second Letter to Timothy 3:10-15*

**GOSPEL:** *Luke 18:10-14*

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2017 SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON**, *Meletius, Archbishop of Antioch, Antonius, Archbishop of Constantinople, Christos the New Martyr, Meletios of Ypseni.*

**EPISTLE:** *St. Paul's First Letter to Corinthians 6:12-20*

**GOSPEL:** *Luke 15:11-32*



65<sup>TH</sup> YEAR

February 5 2017

PAMPHLET # 6 (3323)

## THE JOURNEY OF THE CHRISTIAN IS CRUCIFACTORY

In the difficult conditions of the prison of Rome, beloved brethren, the Apostle Paul writes to Timothy, wanting, from his own example, to encourage in the difficulties of pastoral work and more generally “the adventures” of life in Christ, which come both from our own self, as well as from external obstacles which oppose the work of the evangelization of souls, the work of the Church throughout the ages.

### Faith and firmness

The teaching of the Apostle is based on his pure disposition for the word of God to be spread, so that other souls can also be saved. His enlightened faith is that which crowns, but also precedes his efforts. His teaching furthermore, is expressed through his behavior, but also his behavior comprises the incarnation of this teaching. So for this reason also, today's Christians ought to pay attention to the problem of the distance between faith and our works, or otherwise that which in theological language which we call the distance of dogma – ethos,

## ST. PAUL'S SECOND LETTER TO TIMOTHY 3:10-15

**Prokeimenon. Plagal 4. Mode.:** Make your vows to the Lord our God and perform them.

**Verse:** God is known in Judah; his name is great in Israel.

TIMOTHY, my son, you have observed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions, my sufferings, what befell me at Antioch, at Iconion, and at Lystra, what persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. Indeed all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil men and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceivers and deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

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the deviation among what is believed and what is practiced. We are not able to be saying some things and doing other things, to be saying some things and for us to be other things, because then we show that we neither respect God, nor our neighbor, nor our own self. When a Christian behaves thus, and furthermore unrepentantly, he has a heretical train of thought even if he is fighting the heretics. In all heresies, God, being dispassionate, is not altered at all, but the person is completely wounded psychosomatically and spiritually. Anthropology suffers, not theology.

Paul toiling - on the contrary - to comprise a safe model for the believers, of agreement of words and works, through great struggle and dreadful trials, in this matter, admittedly excels and comprises for all Christians, an infallible spiritual guide of longsuffering, of love and of patience.

**Christ always hastens**

The imprisoned author of the Epistle, boasting elsewhere with the good boasting about his bonds, enumerates his persecutions to his disciple Timothy, mentioning his sufferings in Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. From all these dreadful persecutions, he admits that the Lord saved him. Thus he gives courage to Timothy and through him to all Christians of all ages, his words furthermore, attain particular weightiness to us Christians of the "eighth age", those of the last times, who are characterized by lukewarmness and anemic faith. A characteristic of our age, is that many of us speak of persecutions, of the harms and the dreadful end times which are approaching, sewing untimely fear to the whole body of the believers. In the eschatological literature of recent years, which sometimes approaches the boundaries of delirium under a religious cloak, one finds much egotism, insecurity and anxiety, consequently lack of faith and trust in divine providence and impiety to the Church of lay people and clergymen.

The question which arises is, what will we do if we face the persecutions of the first Christians? Why do we pass over the gift of God with so much ingratitude with the multitude of sacred churches around us, where daily the Divine Liturgy is celebrated and we are able to be united with God, without anyone being able to prevent us, except our own self? What "end times" and which "destructions"? How would it seem to us if we were living in countries where systematically and demonically, we would say, Christianity is persecuted today and where massacres of Christian Neomartyrs appear? This "literary" occupation of ours with the "end times" is a triumphant proof that we are not living the end times as the Church means them, and consequently our faith, not having eschatological depth, witnesses not only a lack of trust in God, but also resembles some of the various ideologies of our time.

## Persecutions will always exist

The life of a Christian has a crucifactory seal, journey and character. He who wants to live piously, will face insurmountable – sometimes-difficulties, which are due both to the illness and the pathology of human nature, as well as to external difficulties, obstacles, and dangers. People and demons many times ally themselves in order