

HOW WE OUGHT TO FAST

“Are you fasting? Prove it to me through your own works. What works does he mean? If you see a poor person, have mercy on him. If you see an enemy, be reconciled with him. If you see a beautiful woman, pass by her. So let not only the mouth fast, but also the eye and hearing, and the feet and the hands and all the members of our body.

Let the hands fast, remaining pure from grabbing and greed. Let the feet fast, going away from roads which lead to sinful sights. Let the eyes fast, exercising themselves in not falling ever lustfully on beautiful faces, nor examining the beauty of others... Let the hearing also fast. And fasting of the hearing is for him to not accept evil speech and slanders.... Let the mouth also fast from lewd words and mockeries. Because what benefit do we have, when we are abstaining from birds and fish, we're biting however and devouring our brothers?"

SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

Archimandrite E. T

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2017 FORGIVENESS SUNDAY *Porphyrius, Bishop of Gaza, The Holy Great Martyr Photine, the Samaritan Women, Holy Martyr Theocletus, John Claphas the new Martyr.*

TONE OF THE WEEK *Third Tone*

EOTHINON : *Third Eothinon*

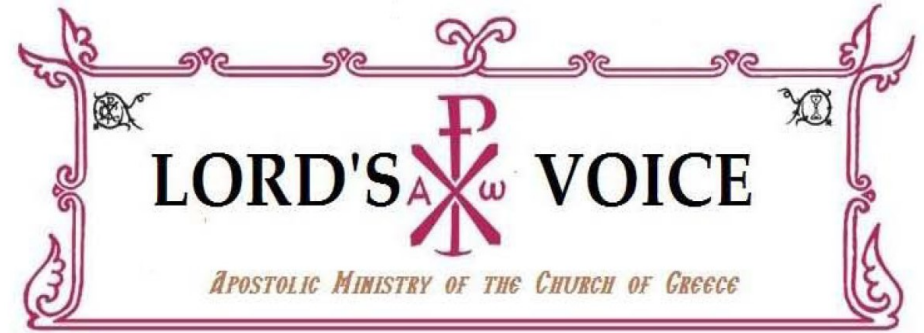
EPISTLE: *St. Paul's Letter to Romans 13:11-14; 14:1-4*

GOSPEL: *Matthew 6:14-21*

SUNDAY, MARCH 5, 2017 SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY *Conon the Gardener, Mark the Ascetic, Righteous Father Mark of Athens, John the Bulgarian, Mark the Faster, Parthenios the New Martyr who contested in Didymoteichos, George the New-Martyr of Rapsani, Eulogios the Martyr, Eulabios the Martyr, Conon the Isaurian, Archelaos the Martyr of Egypt.*

EPISTLE: *St. Paul's Letter to Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-40*

GOSPEL: *John 1:43-51*



65TH YEAR

February 26 2017

PAMPHLET # 9 (3326)

THE DAY OF SALVATION IS TODAY

In today's Epistle passage, my beloved brethren, Paul rings the danger bell for us to not be swayed by forgetfulness, forgetting, in other words, and negligence. And this, because we don't know precisely when the time of death is coming for each one of us, "when our eviction will occur, of us renters", as a simple soul once said. In another Epistle of his the Apostle of the Gentiles stresses it more intensely: "behold now is the acceptable time, behold now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2). Now is the time for us to repent to be saved, not later, because we don't know if we will be given a credit of time.

Works of love without delay

Today's years, where everything is torn down, are a scandalous period for the faith of Christ to shine. On the one hand, we must engage in good works, adorned with the garment of humility, tried by the salt of afflictions and of disputing, works which reveal our faith, our trust in Christ, not in our own self, in our self idol, more precisely. On the other hand, in order for us to be aided, as regards this point, with a charming sense of vanity, written in our soul and body, it is given to us from above, to see all these things through the perspective of the tomb which awaits them. Then the tomb does not scare us, but it becomes a bridal chamber and consolation and joy, which makes the heart constantly more fervently desire Christ and to serve Him with such works of love.

ST. PAUL'S FIRST LETTER TO CORINTHIANS 8:8-13; 9:1-2

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.

Brethren, salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed; the night is far gone, the day is at hand. Let us then cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us conduct ourselves becomingly as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

As for the man who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not for disputes over opinions. One believes he may eat anything, while the weak man eats only vegetables. Let not him who eats despise him who abstains, and let not him who abstains pass judgment on him who eats; for God has welcomed him. Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for God is able to make him stand.

The liturgized person, for us to speak more specifically, with the divine Grace which is poured out and radiated from the Divine Liturgy, embracing everything in the resurrectional Light, lives here also, but also "there", he is informed in him that a place of rest has been prepared for him, of cessation and sabbatiation, for this reason, he does whatever is possible to comfort God and neighbor with the works of virtue.

Let us cast off the works of darkness

It is not easy for someone to ungarb himself, to be able to see his sinful condition, with a very strict spiritual gaze, without flattering the passions and his desires. We need God as a colleague in this titanic effort, for us to not give up. And as a certain faithful intellectual confesses ascertainingly, in a contemporary poetic language, the Orthodox Christian, the ecclesiastical person, at the same moment "rots alive and blossoms dead". We live many resurrections from the dead

daily: on the one hand, our evil self, the old man which is hidden inside us, on the other hand, the touching of the divine Grace which lifts us up and exhorts us to glorify God and to proceed to works of repentance, because "the Kingdom of the heavens arrived". His Kingdom "already and not yet", with the beginning happening from the Divine Liturgy, is among us, brethren.

The humanism of the Fathers is backwards and odd. In all religious systems, man goes towards God in order to understand Him and to expiate Him. In our Fathers, man is inside God and through this experience he sees, he understands and suffers together with his neighbor. Thus also the Apostle, in the Light of Christ which inundated him then in Damascus, altered all his later life.

The night is leaving, the early dawning light of day is coming

The contemporary age does everything in order to push away the fact of death, the only, nevertheless, certainty that we're holding in our hands. Until when will we "delay" the habitation in the tombs through consumerism, unbridled fashion, the moral and spiritual depravity covered also by the law, which wants to alter the spiritual DNA of man? Can you push away death by putting make up on the corpse, taking him far from your home so that you don't mourn him humanly and truly, making bright funerals? The matter is not to paint your prison or to fill it with comforts to a point that you lose the sense that it is a prison, the matter is to go out of the prison. And from the prison of death, only Christ, the victor of death, freed us.

"The night has advanced" the Epistle passage tells us. Time is lost, it is rolling. Is it time veneered with repentance, sewn with prayer and grafted in the body and the blood of Christ? Then it is already also a place of our rest, comfort and consolation. If not, while "the day arrived" for us it will dawn a day of pain, sadness and sighing.

It depends on us toward where we will turn the rudder of our mind, making known to Christ our disposition, that we want to follow Him. From there on, the rest is Christ's. We know that Christ wants all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of truth. What is this truth? That Christ, the Son of God, is the Savior of the world and that he who believes in Him, showing it through his life, reigns unto the ages together with Him.