

of Christ and of the Holy Spirit, breathes in our heart, under the condition that we have living and fervent faith. In whom? In Christ, as the Lord of History and of our life. I believe, means I entrust myself, I have trust and I present, I leave my life in the hands of Christ, “and let us commit our whole life unto Christ our God”.

Faith in Christ is expressed through my works, which “made tasty by salt” express precisely this faith in the person of Christ and not in someone else. And these works are none other than the implementation of the gospel commandments and the work of the virtues which comprise excellent medicines and help man “in time” to see “the face of God”. The center of this work upon our problematic self is our, with realization and appropriate preparation, frequent participation in the cup of Life, in the Body and the Blood of the Lord. Christ promised us that He would remain with us, all the days of our earthly life and also that whoever of us repents He will take us with them into His kingdom. Heavenly promises! Furthermore He declared infallibly that with him who eats his Body and drinks his Blood He remains with him both in this life, the earthly one, but also unto the ages of ages,

Archim. E. T

SUNDAY OF ST. JOHN CLIMACUS, Synaxis in honor of the Archangel Gabriel, 26 Martyrs in Crimea, Irenaeus the Hieromartyr of Hungary

tone of the week *Grave Tone*

EOTHINON : *Seventh Eothinon*

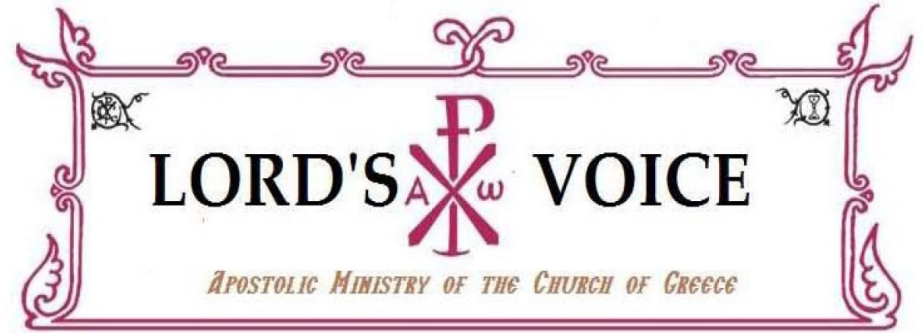
EPISTLE: St. Paul's Letter to Hebrews 6:13-20

GOSPEL: Mark 9:17-31

NEXT SUNDAY, APRIL 2, 2017 SUNDAY OF MARY OF EGYPT. *Titus the Wonderworker, Theodora the Virgin-martyr of Palestine, Amphianos & Aedesios the Martyrs of Lycia*

EPISTLE: St. Paul's Letter to Hebrews 9:11-14

GOSPEL: Mark 10:32-45



65TH YEAR

March 26 2017

PAMPHLET # 13 (3330)

CHRIST KEEPS HIS PROMISES

In today's Epistle Reading, beloved brethren, the Apostle Paul takes an example from the Old Testament, Abraham, to whom God promised in a vow, blessings both to him and to his descendants and he presents him to us as a spiritual example, because Abraham awaited the fulfillment of these promises with longsuffering and patience, without losing his faith. So for this reason also, he remains unto the ages, an unshakable model of faith and patience for all Christians.

The promises

Four times it seems that God promises to Abraham various blessings: He promises him that the land of Canaan, which will reach from Haran of Mesopotamia, will be his, that his descendants will multiply like the sand of the sea, that they will have a child, even though he and Sarah were very advanced in age, and also – after the sacrifice of Isaac which was not realized – that He will exceedingly multiply his descendants (Gen. chapter 12:17: 22).

God promises, but also vows to Himself in order to give “validity” to what He said, using the human tactic of the vow.

ST. PAUL'S FIRST LETTER TO THE HEBREWS 6:13-20

BRETHREN, when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore to himself, saying, "Surely I will bless you and multiply you." And thus Abraham, having patiently endured, obtained the promise. Men indeed swear by a greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he interposed with an oath, so that through two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible that God should prove false, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to seize the hope set before us. We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner shrine behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek..

The longsuffering of Abraham

One point that we must pay attention to, is the clarification which the text gives us, that Abraham "having long suffered, obtained the promise", which means that the promise did not suffice – and furthermore the vowed promise -of God for all these blessings to be fulfilled. He received them to also to his longsuffering and the great patience that he showed. There were times when God was asking from Abraham things which were coming into full opposition with everything that He had promised, for example, to sacrifice his only beloved son, Isaac! And nevertheless, not even then is the faith of Abraham shaken, even though from a human standpoint it is certain that he felt unbearable pain.

So Abraham comprises a model for us, my brethren, because, even though we seem to be working works that are pleasing to God, nevertheless, because we don't see a "result" according to our own judgment, we are oppressed by thoughts of disbelief which are very far from our righteous Father Abraham, who throughout the ages calls us with a trumpet call against disbelief, and spiritual indifference and lethargy which follow. Our Christ said that we should seek first his kingdom and then whatever needs would be added to our life, will come. Consequently our problem is that, consciously or unconsciously, we're not seeking the kingdom of God and we are trapped in the world of senses and appearances, resulting in us losing our orientation. We move, in other words, selfishly and centrifugally, vaingloriously, without opening up to divine love and its mystery.

Furthermore compared to Abraham, we remain defenseless, because he had not come to know Christ and His Church, he did not participate in the Divine Liturgy, nor was he receiving Christ who dwelt and remained in him! A basic difference, we would say. There was no place of gathering of the faithful before Christ. From the incarnation of the Son and Word and His entrance into the History of human cares, hardships and problems, Christ becomes the needle and we thread passed through this needle, which pierces us over the cloth of divine love, granting us our former luster and even more.

Our hope placed before us, Christ

Precisely as God promised and vowed to Abraham, so that with his longsuffering and patience he could see the promises and earthly promises of God realized, thus we also "keeping the faith" of Abraham like other inheritors of his, should anchor ourselves in Christ, through the manner of our life. Now henceforth, from the Resurrection, the Ascension of Christ and Pentecost, the "landscape" has changed and the favorable wind of the presence