

mixture, of one body and one blood with him, our mind is enlightened, we surpass, in other words, the darkening which the passions and the demons create in our soul and body. And as we partake in the life of Christ communing his body and blood, aside from the grace which our body receives, our mind is healthy and "becomes new" which is born continually in the womb of the Church of Christ. Thus the life of the Christian becomes a continual Annunciation, a constant "opening of room" for divine Grace to be drawn and reach our heart. This real arrival of divine Grace is the definition of real repentance.

The body and blood of Christ heal the affliction of sin, the fear of guilt, the disorder of passionate thoughts, the evil habits, they chase away pessimism, they wipe out depression, they make prayer strong, they strengthen the will, they fortify the disposition for good works, they become for each one whatever he really lacks, so that each person, there where he is, reveals with his life and his behavior in general the glory of Christ and of his saints

Archim. E. T

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

**tone of the week** *Plagal of the Fourth Tone*

**EOTHINON :** *Eighth Eothinon*

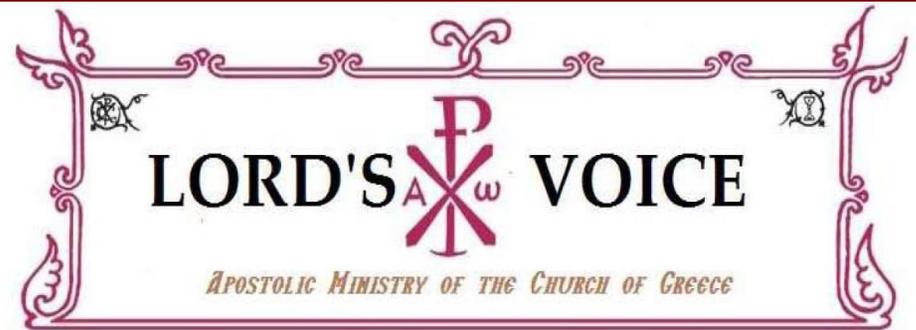
**EPISTLE:** St. Paul's Letter to Hebrews 9:11-14

**GOSPEL:** Mark 10:32-45

**NEXT SUNDAY, APRIL 9, 2017 PALM SUNDAY** *The Holy Martyr Eupsychius of Caesarea, Vadim the Righteous of Persia, Raphael, Nicholas, Irene, & Olympias of Mytilene*

**EPISTLE:** St. Paul's Letter To The Philippians 4:4-9

**GOSPEL:** John 12:1-18



65<sup>TH</sup> YEAR

April 2 2017

PAMPHLET # 14 (3331)

## THE INCOMPARABLE SUPERIORITY OF THE CROSS AND OF THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

In the spirit of the previous epistle passages, brethren, as we approach the great feast of Pascha, here a clear reminder is made of the incomparable superiority of the crucifixional sacrifice of Christ, in relation to the sacrifices of the high priests of the old Law.

### The High Priests of the Law

The High Priests of the Old Testament would enter only once a year into the Holy of Holies, on the day of Expiation, they would offer the blood of oxen for their own self, since they themselves were sinners, and the blood of oxen for the sins of the people, as Leviticus (chapter 16) explains to us. Furthermore, the tent of witness was made by hands, constructed by the architect Beseleil and a group of craftsmen, the book of Exodus narrates to us (chapter 31). These sacrifices were not desired in and of themselves by God, but became acceptable by concession, due to

## **ST. PAUL'S FIRST LETTER TO THE HEBREWS 9:11-14**

BRETHREN, when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

---

the sacrifice of Christ which they depicted, both of the historical sacrifice upon Golgotha, as well as of the Divine Liturgy, where the body and blood of Christ are sacredly ministered. They did not cleanse the filth of soul, but only the defilement of the body. They were not able to deliver man from the burden of guilt and of pangs of conscience. In all the victims of the sacrifices of the Old Testament sheep, cow, calf, heifer, the one foreshadowed by them is our Savior.

### **The High Priest of the New Testament**

Christ offered his blood to cleanse all people from their sins. He did not offer the blood of oxen and cows, nor was he offered a sacrifice for his own self, since He Himself was sinless with a human mortal body, in which all of the godhead dwelt. His body, as regards matter, was coessential with our own, but as regards the manner of its composition it was "a construction of the Holy Spirit", since it was united hypostatically with God the Word. This body comprises the tent not made by hands, which was not created by human hands.

He came as a High Priest on earth, He first without succeeding another and He remains continually a High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek, fatherless, motherless ungenealogised. With the tent, not made by hands, of his body, which was foreshadowed by the handmade tent of witness and with his crucifictional sacrifice which was foreshadowed by the sacrifices of the Law, He entered once for all into the Holy of Holies of the Temple. Furthermore voluntarily, of His own free will, Christ was crucified for us, in order to grant us remission of sins, whereas the irrational victims, involuntarily and many times by force were led to the altar. So much higher than the High Priests of the Old Testament is Christ, as God is higher from men and as higher is his blood than the blood of the irrational animals.

### **In the Church of the Great High Priest**

We Orthodox Christians are privileged to have an edible and drinkable God in his Church, and this gladsome beyond the mind, reality, comprises a "primacy of service" and not of authority for us, so that other rational sheep may enter into the saving sheepfold of our Christ, brethren.

Today's epistle passage speaks of future goods. They are the qualities and gifts of divine Grace to all those who "make room" in their life for Christ "to find" them. They are called "future" in terms of time, in relationship to the years of the Old Testament, because the unincarnate Word takes flesh and becomes a gift giver of these goods in the years of the New Testament. But also now when we are living in the years after the Resurrection and the Ascension of Christ to the heavens and we are members of his Church, some of these goods we taste now and others are placed in a future time, either in time, or in eternity which awaits us.

The Great High Priest, our Christ, in the Divine Liturgy more especially, is mixed together with us, we become one