

Church. Let us pray so that a careful glance within us - with the help of God - will show the magnitude of our spiritual insufficiency, to ground us appropriately, without despair for the further alteration that we must undergo, until we meet the person of his Son.

Archim. E. T.

CHRIST IS RISEN!

Today all of nature celebrates, all of creation participates in the light of the Resurrection and all the people pour out with the light of the resurrection burning in the lantern of their being on the streets, in the fields, they transport the light to their home, to their church home. The resurrected Christ is the "Light of the world". Into this joy "enter ye all" . . . Because the Lord accepts the last just as the first.... and the latter one he has mercy on and the first he cures. To him he also gives and to this one he shows kindness".

Agathangelos (Bishop of Phanariou), The yeast of the Gospel, homilies on Gospel pas sages and Feasts, Apostolic Ministry Publications

SUNDAY, APRIL 16, 2017 GREAT AND HOLY PASCHA, *Agape, Chionia, and Irene, the Holy Martyrs, Leonidas and Charissa, Nike, Galene, Kallida, Nounenchia, Vasilissa, and Theodora the Martyrs*

TONE OF THE WEEK

EOTHINON : *Second Orthros Gospel*

EPISTLE: *Acts of Apostoles 1:1-8*

GOSPEL: *John 1:1-17*

NEXT SUNDAY, APRIL 23, 2017 THOMAS SUNDAY. St. George the Great Martyr and Triumphant

EPISTLE READING: *Acts 12:1-11*

GOSPEL READING: *John 20:19-31*



65TH YEAR

April 16 2017

PAMPHLET # 16 (33323)

BE YE GOING UNTO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

In today's Epistle passage, beloved brethren, certain events, words and promises of Christ to His disciples are mentioned by the Evangelist Luke, the author of Acts, a little before his Ascension. He addresses the information of the Book of Acts as well as his Gospel, to a certain official person, whom he calls "the most excellent Theophilus".

Among the disciples

So the Evangelist narrates that, after His passion, Christ appeared in 40 days quite a few times to His disciples, proving to them that He was truly alive. He furthermore exhorts them to touch Him and ascertain really that He has "flesh and bones" (Luke 24:39) and he is not an unincarnate spirit, in other words, a ghost. He asked furthermore to eat, and they offered him roasted fish and honey comb, of which he ate in front of them. During these 40 days Christ, whenever He appeared to the apostles, He was speaking of truths and mysteries which refer to the kingdom of God. Fully alive, but sometimes also in another form, He counseled them, He taught them and He consoled them. Moreover we know that the topic of the eleven Eothinon gospels that are read on Sundays during the service of Matins and repeat every 11 Sundays, are precisely these appearances after the death of the resurrected Jesus, as also what took place during them. The Priest wearing white, at the south of the holy Altar Table, as an angel, proclaims the Resurrection to the believers who are awaiting, whereas in a second action, He himself as the resurrected Christ, stands among the believers, who in the person of the Priest receive and worship Christ Himself, with their lips, the mind and heart. Thus the resurrected Lord, is enthroned in their hearts.

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 1:1-8

IN THE FIRST BOOK, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commandment through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. To them he presented himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days, and speaking of the kingdom of God. And while staying with them he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me, for John baptized with water, but before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom of Israel?" He said to them, "it is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth."

During His appearances, Christ also commanded His disciples to remain in Jerusalem, without departing, because according to the promise He had given them, His Father would be sending them the Holy Spirit.

The baptism of John

Here Christ makes a comparison, underlining the basic difference between the baptism of John the Forerunner and the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which they would be receiving after a few days. That baptism which was done by John in the water of the Jordan, and whose rubric the Lord followed also in his own baptism, was in order for the repentance of those being baptized to be declared publicly. It was a baptism in simple water which did not have the power to give rebirth to those who were being baptized.

The baptism which they would be receiving with the descent of the Holy Spirit was a baptism of remission and of rebirth of the whole person, precisely as occurs in every Orthodox baptism, during which the

baptized person is buried in the baptismal font, is buried together with Christ, and after the three immersions - the three day Burial- he resurrects together with Christ. From the day of his baptism and afterwards the believer, embodied in Christ, is inside his Light. The Light of baptism and the Light of the Resurrection is one and the same with the Light of Divine Communion, where the believer is embodied with Christ and, reborn, he proceeds to "make disciples of all nations" as a witness of the life and of the teaching of Jesus Christ, more especially the Clergyman, garbed with the special grace of the Priesthood of Christ.

The secular way of thought of the disciples

But, precisely because the disciples had not received this power from on high, in which case their mind had not been the enlightened, they were thinking secularly. Upon hearing the words of Christ about a baptism in the Holy Spirit, they filled with secular hopes and thoughts. They wrongly evaluated what was said and began asking Christ, about the restoration of a secular type of kingdom, of power and of glory of Israel. Obviously "they were wandering" in thoughts and imaginations of liberation from the Roman yoke, revolutions and victorious clashes, in which case they seemed to not understand the person of Christ, His teaching and His mission. All this darkening of the mind, after the descent of the Holy Spirit, about which Christ speaks to them here ascending after a little, will be altered into an amazing illumination, brilliance, gladness and unlimited capacity. They will understand incomprehensibly hidden mysteries and will speak in tongues.

Only when thus the Holy Spirit overshadows the believer, can he validly and truly, as an imprint, as a living mould of divine Grace give the living witness of the life and of the teaching of Christ, all over the universe.

The problem is the condition of darkening, into which we have fallen, unfortunately, my brethren, on account of our lack of repentance and our egotism. We are lukewarm Christians of the last times, with fear before deprivations and hardship, spiritual indifference and negligence, in view of the spiritual contests of fasting, of vigil, of prayer and the frequent but careful, to the degree possible, participation in the healing mysteries of our