

for implementation in action of those who probably with a good disposition intercede, but try to implement the life of the Saint, without Christ, in their tragic majority!:

It happens, even with deficient theologians with a biased information, mainly however, who have not tasted divine Grace, who legally and Protestantly judging the Saint, try to dispute his holiness, magnifying his whatsoever serious mistakes before he came to know Christ. The “morality” that they pose is outside the Orthodox world. It is a religiousizing of the mystery of the Church and a laicism which ignores repentance in order to create followers.

Thus, they ignore that the journey of the truly Great Constantine is based on the repentance of the Cross. The Saint embraces us with warmth, in these difficult wintry times of crisis, we feel him fully alive! Instead of trying to “shorten” him so that our own spiritual “dwarfism” can appear as something important, let us ask him for something else, both lay people and clergymen: that he engrace us, so that each one of us not forget his own-by analogy-vision of Damascus, through which our Christ called him near Him, each one, in his life.

Archim. E. T.

**SUNDAY MAY 21, 2017 SUNDAY OF THE BLIND MAN,** *Constantine and Helen, Equal-to-the Apostles, Pachomios the Righteous New Martyr*

**tone of the week :** *Plagal of the First Tone*

**EOTHINON :** *Eighth Orthros Gospel*

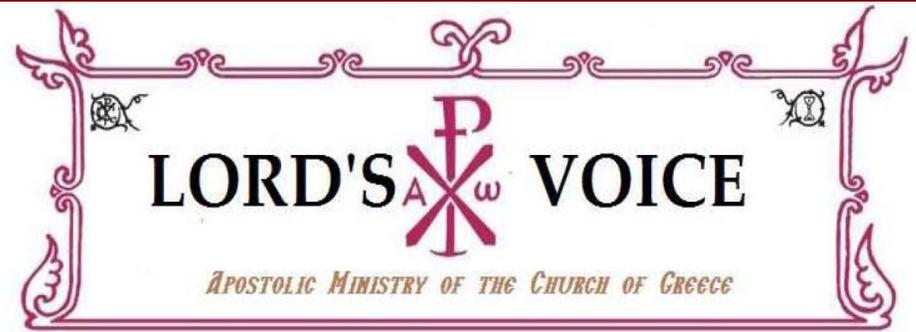
**EPISTLE READING:** *Acts 26:1,12-20*

**GOSPEL READING:** *John 9:1-38*

**NEXT SUNDAY, MAY 28, 2017 FATHERS OF THE 1ST COUNCIL,** *The Holy Hieromartyr Eutychius, Bishop of Melitene, Heladios the Hieromartyr of the East, Nikitas, Bishop of Chalcedon, Eutechios, Bishop of Mytilene, Helikonis the Martyr, Zacharias the New Martyr.*

**EPISTLE READING:** *Acts 20:16-18,28-36*

**GOSPEL READING:** *John 17:1-13*



65<sup>TH</sup> YEAR

May 21 2017

PAMPHLET # 21 (3338)

## THE APOSTLE PAUL AND CONSTANTINE THE GREAT

In today's reading from the Acts, my beloved brethren, a portion of the defense of the Apostle Paul is presented, before Agrippa the newer, where his conversion to the Christian faith is narrated, he, a former harsh persecutor and colleague, by his vote, in the murder of many holy disciples of Christ, as he himself admits. Today however, our Church celebrates also the memory of her “god-crowned kings and equal to the apostles”, Constantine and Helen. If the great Apostle held the name of the Lord, before nations and Kings, and preached Christ to the ends of the universe, Saints Constantine and Helen are “the hands of divine Providence”, as Saint Nektarios writes in his book “The Ecumenical Synods,” with which God embraced the world.

### The vision of Damascus

We know that as the Apostle Paul was going to Damascus, in order to wildly persecute Christians there, he was surrounded by the light of the uncreated Light of Christ, many times brighter than the light of noonday, and in this Light the dialogue took place, between him himself and Jesus Christ, Who reveals Himself to him as God persecuted by him. The shaken Apostle is

IN THOSE DAYS, King Agrippa said to Paul, "You have permission to speak for yourself." Then Paul stretched out his hand and made his defense: "I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. At midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining round me and those who journeyed with me. And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It hurts you to kick against the goads.' And I said, 'Who are you, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. But rise and stand upon your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you to serve and bear witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, delivering you from the people and from the Gentiles—to whom I send you to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.' "Wherefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but declared first to those at Damascus, then at Jerusalem and throughout all the country of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God and perform deeds worthy of their repentance."

---

blinded and remains without food for three days. Afterwards, he is catechized and baptized by the Apostle Ananias, so that "he can learn to see". From there on, the life of Paul undergoes a conversion to such a degree, that he himself becomes an outspoken preacher of repentance and of the Gospel, he characterizes innumerable multitudes during his many journeys, he undergoes unbelievable trials both from Jews and from pagans, whereas he receives amazing interventions of divine Providence during his work, while he concludes in Rome, where he also undergoes a death by martyrdom.

## **"In this be victorious"**

With the analogies kept, Constantine the Great, as he was preparing to face the better armed Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge of the Tiber, at the time of noon, sees in the sky a cross made with stars, writing in Latin "in hoc vinces", our familiar "in this be victorious", in other words, with this symbol you will win. He had, in other words, a vision of God, a revelation, similar to those of purified, kind, sanctified people. Furthermore according to Eusebius of Caesarea, that same night, after the first vision, he also had a second revelation, where Christ advised him to construct a banner with the sign of the Cross and this banner, should precede in battle, in which, in the end, he also won. A little later on, in 313, he signs with Licinius the edict of freedom of religion of Milan, the "Edict of Milan", which favored the Christians, as they were the only ones where, saying that they are Christians, this sufficed for them to be persecuted in the entire empire. Now officially the people are free to believe wherever they want and as they want, so long as they are not harming one another.

Many furthermore, were the benefactions of Saint Constantine to the people: his calling was light, his edicts were light, his legislation, light, his repentance, light for all the things he wrongly committed before coming to know Christ, his life was light. He fought corruption, usury and injustice, he protected widows and orphans, he built churches, he honored with an edict the holiday of Sunday, he strengthened missions, he partook in the first Ecumenical Synod, where out of respect he embraced the hands of the Fathers which had been mutilated by the heretics, he loved the Clergy. God granted him to confess before a group of Bishops, to be baptized and to commune of the Immaculate Mysteries, a little before his death, on the 21<sup>st</sup> to the 22<sup>nd</sup> of May of 337. From then on he did not wear the imperial garment, but the white garment of baptism.

## **A bright field!**

Just like all our saints, thus also Saint Constantine, is a model for all of us to imitate, but also for our politicians. Behold a "bright field"