

weight of earthly cares and secular things which inundate us, make us cold and take us away from wakefulness, with which we ought to safeguard our heart and examine its wicked movements, that which our Fathers call “nypsis”.

The Divine Liturgy is for the Orthodox Christian the area where he repents, crying bitterly over his indescribable wretchedness, but also where his manner is blessed and sanctified, he unites with God, he partakes of his uncreated energies, he becomes Christified, illumined, deified, engraced, he is washed in a flood of divine qualities. Thus he becomes innocent like the dove, in other words, simple in heart, but also shrewd like the snake, in other words, sharp-minded, quick to love and helping his suffering neighbor person, slow to wrath and revenge, “looking towards”, in other words, looking with his faith at the person of Christ alone. His attachment with faith to Incarnate love gives flesh and bones to our spiritual struggle and grants us the joy of the Kingdom of God, already from here and now.

Archim. E. T.

**SUNDAY, JUNE 11, 2017 THE SUNDAY OF ALL SAINTS** *Bartholomew the Holy Apostle Barnabas the Holy Apostle, Revelation of the Hymn Axion Estin to a monk on Mt. Athos by the Archangel Gabriel*

**TONE OF THE WEEK :** Plagal of the Fourth Tone

**EOTHINON :** *First Orthros Gospel*

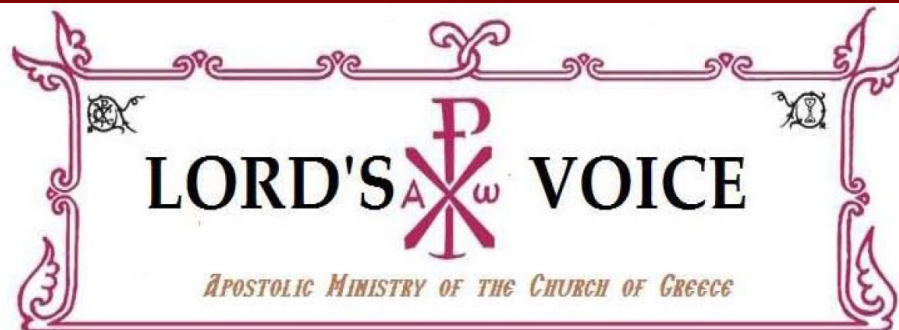
**EPISTLE READING:** *Acts 11:19-30*

**GOSPEL READING:** *Matthew 10:32-37-38, 19:27-30*

**NEXT SUNDAY, SUNDAY, JUNE 18, 2017 2ND SUNDAY OF MATTHEW,** *Leontius, Hypatius, & Theodulus the Martyrs of Syria, Leontios the Myrrh-Streamer of Argos, Aitherios the Martyr of Nicomedia*

**EPISTLE READING:** *Romans 2:10-16*

**GOSPEL READING:** *Matthew 4:18-23*



65<sup>TH</sup> YEAR

June 11 2017

PAMPHLET # 24 (3341)

## THE GRACE OF FAITH

We all know, beloved brethren, the definition of faith that the Apostle Paul gives, when he describes as “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” in another spot of his Epistle to the Hebrews. To be living, in other words, spiritual realities, which escape the world of the senses, as graspable. Consequently faith is Grace which informs Man’s heart from above and inwardly. It does not obligatorily happen from Apologetics and dialogue, but it is a mystical notification which enlightens the whole of Man with its truth.

### I believe means I entrust

Regarding faith in Jesus Christ, I believe Him, means I entrust Him to such a degree that I follow Him throughout life without “reservations” and presuppositions. Furthermore, he who believes is not interested by all means to prove this faith of his, unless it is asked of him with a good disposition, in which case, then he tries to give to them who are asking it of him, something of what he is living and which they perceive in his life and works. I believe, also means I confess that which I am living together with Christ.

## ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 11:19-30

Brethren, all the saints through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, received promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were killed with the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated - of whom the world was not worthy - wandering over deserts and mountains and in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect. Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.

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So Paul in today's passage from the Epistle to the Hebrews, weaves the praise of all those who entrusted God, from the years even of the Old Testament, and in a multitude of trials proved to be experienced athletes of faith. David, Gideon and Samuel parade noetically before us along with the wondrous events of the life of those same people, but also of many other righteous ones of the years before Christ who were called "friends of God", friends of the unincarnate – still – Word of the Father, comprising a model for us latter ones, who are living after Christ. How moving it shows, that they surpassed, through the grace of God, all these "Christians" prior to Christ, together with our saints after Christ, trials of fighting with beasts, of fire, of the sword, of illness, of wars, of mockeries, of whippings, of imprisonments, of stonings, preferring a martyrical death, in order to resurrect in Christ. One is brought to compunction even more, when he thinks that the

"friends of God" before Christ underwent the toils of a virtuous life without the place of Gathering yet the existing, as in the years after Christ.

## Believing and "unbelieving"

We must pay attention, brethren, to the easy characterization "unbelieving" which we "believers" attach to other people. This, many times hides egotism, a lack of self knowledge. One could think holy things, like a person of God, in which case "he is grounded": "the brother does not have the grace of Christ, faith in His Person, so for this reason, he is attacked by thoughts and the convictions of unbelief, which Grace I have, glory to God. If I also did not have this Grace, I would be worse than him, and if he had this Grace, he would certainly be better than me, admiring it certainly more than me". "Nothing is truer than this", brethren!

Elsewhere, Paul stresses our spiritual attention saying: "he who thinks he is standing let him watch that he not fall" (1 Cor. 10:12), having in his mind how Man falls and that we should not take exceeding courage in the spiritual life, because the traps are many. Furthermore, in the familiar passage from the Evangelist Mark, of the cure of his child by Christ, the father asks him: "I believe, O Lord, but support me for my unbelief", showing us in a certain manner, that matters in man are so passing, so that sometimes the believer resembles and feels like an "unbeliever", but also the opposite. So for this reason also, we constantly need the grace of faith to strengthen us. Then, having the knowledge of our personal wretchedness, we will ascertain, like saint Porphyrios of our day that "we are one also with those who seem to be outside the Church. The issue is eros for Christ".

## Easily ensnaring sin

Sin is called «easily ensnaring» because it is committed easily, since all of us slip easily, but many «opportunities» appear for this. The "volume" that the Apostle mentions, hints at the