

but truth, incarnated in the persons of the saints of God, and of all those who faithfully follow Him.

### Crucifactory love

Therefore, Paul elevates us to the length, the height, the width and the depth of crucified Love. Crucified or crucifactory, because it contains in it also, both dimensions of the Cross, the horizontal and vertical. Only thus two dimensional, is our love true, balancing on the cross of Christ. Love for neighbor on the horizontal level, and for God, in the vertical level. Having such love for people, so that together with Paul we say: "I would prefer to be separated from Christ myself, for the sake of my brethren" (Rom. 9:3) and such –also–love for Christ, so that we confess again together with the Apostle of the Gentiles that neither height, nor depth, nor some other creature is able to separate us from the love of Christ (Rom. 8:39). Amen.

Archim. E. T.

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2017** *Sunday before Holy Cross, Menodora, Metrodora, & Nymphodora the Martyrs, Poulcheria the Empress, Afterfeast of the Nativity of the Theotokos*

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

**EOTHINON** *Third Orthros Gospel*

**EPISTLE READING**: *St. Paul's First Letter to the Galatians 6:11-18*

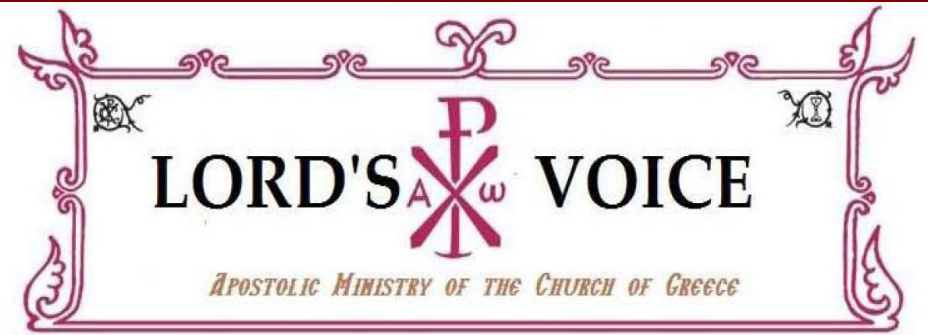
**GOSPEL READING**: *John 3: 13*

**NEXT SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2017 SUNDAY AFTER HOLY**

**CROSS**, *Sophia & her three daughters: Faith, Hope, and Love, Herakleides & Myron, Bishops of Crete, Afterfeast of the Holy Cross*

**EPISTLE READING**: *St. Paul's First Letter to the Galatians 2:16-20*

**GOSPEL READING**: *Mark 8:34-38; 9:1*



65<sup>TH</sup> YEAR

SEPTEMBER 10 2017

PAMPHLET # 37 (3354)

### THE CROSS AS THE CENTER OF OUR BEING

The newly instituted Church of Galatia, that extended much beyond the borders of today's Ankara and which the Apostle Paul had visited twice, was troubled very much by the teaching of the Judaizing false teachers, who insisted in the necessity of circumcision also for the newly illumined Christians, beloved brethren. In this Epistle of his "to the Galatians" Paul revises their teaching and supports the believers.

### The worshipper of the rubric, is man pleasing, self pleasing and un-crucified

When the saving Grace came, the "shadow" of the Law passed. The rubric worshipper is he who rests in keeping the external forms to the detriment of cultivating his heart. He lives and moves in the shadow of self justification, as if the Sun of righteousness, Christ had not shown for him.

Thus they also, who maintained that the Christians should be circumcised, wanting, on the one hand, to lessen the apostolic authority of Paul, moved out of envy, presented him as lower than the rest of the apostles, especially of Peter, of James and of John, whereas, on the other hand, they used the form of circumcision, which was whatever was suitable, for the believers to be confused.

## ST. PAUL'S FIRST LETTER TO THE GALATIANS 6:11-18

Brethren, see with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that would compel you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. For even those who receive circumcision do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may glory in your flesh. But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. Peace and mercy be upon all who walk by this rule, upon the Israel of God. Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen.

Furthermore, it comprised a lawful form of covering their envy. Thus externally, they seemed like impeccable keepers of the Law, however internally, they were full of the impurity of hypocrisy, since furthermore, neither were they keepers of the entire Law. Following their own rhythm in relation to the believers, they appeared self justified, as regards their own self, but also people pleasers, because they strove to please, to a great degree, the Judeaizing false brethren of the same viewpoint: how to satisfy the letter of the Law and not how the neighbor should be adopted and Christ should be glorified. This narrowness of their spirit, prevented them from seeing baptism as a "circumcision not made by hands", in other words, a cutting off of sin, which makes the ritual of Jewish circumcision superfluous.

On the contrary, the Apostle Paul, with his pastoral discretion, in another case, (Acts 16) himself circumcised as Timothy, the child of a gentile and of a faithful Jewish woman, because in those areas there was the fear that the Jews would be scandalized, if he remained uncircumcised, and they would not have approached him to hear his preaching. "Greater therefore than all virtues is discretion", as the sanctified Fathers teach.

But also the word of our Lord is sufficiently informative and the union and communion with Christ and the circumcision or cutting off of the flesh has no value, if the believer is reborn and justified through the crucifactory sacrifice of Christ

## The boast of the Cross

Paul "boasts" carrying the cross of Christ. Saint Gregory Palamas, interpreting the Paul's saying "to me the world is crucified and I to the world", speaks about two types of crucifixion which the Apostle implies. During the first crucifixion, the person departs from the world, in other words, he denies the secular train of thought, he changes his way of life, probably also the location, as for example, in the case of monastic dedication. He furthermore, even changes the company he keeps, so that his new journey consequently would not be prevented. During the second crucifixion, which is also the more essential one, the passions depart from the person through the journey in Christ, which he freely selected.

Consequently, through faith in the life giving Cross of Christ, the person "inscribes" the mystery of the crucifixion in his body and his soul. He affixes his senses and his thoughts upon the Cross of Christ, whereas, through the noetic invocation of divine mercy, with the monologistic ceaseless prayer "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me", his mind, in time, becomes humbled, so for this reason also "it goes lower" and is lead into the area of the heart in the form of burial, where, as if in a narthex, free from the passionate thoughts and fantasies, he ceaselessly invokes help from above, and the illumination of Christ. Encountering later on, the grace of Christ - "within us" - and the light of our baptism, the transfiguring light of divine Grace, which internally and externally shines around Man, we resurrect with and dwell with Him inside our heart.

Precisely thus, Paul lives with Christ, and we are able to understand his other phrase: "It is not I who live, but Christ is living in me". He suggests this way of living to the Galatians, but also to the Christians of all ages, showing that the way of life and keeping company with the Godman Lord is not a type of ideology,