

He is completely a "crushed heart", because the only thing he is thinking, is how much he himself saddened God with his sins. He is not judging and is not making comparisons with others. Like the copper of Alexandria, he considers himself worse than everyone.

And what elevates him to the heights and certifies the sincerity of his humility is, as the Golden-tongued Saint John assures us, that with gratitude, he accepts the cursing scorn of the Pharisee. And so he makes the arrow of the enemy his own medicine and cure. The mockery, he makes a praise and the accusation, a crown. Here's the transfiguring and elevating power of humility. So for this reason also, the Publican leaves from the Temple more justified than the Pharisee. He leaves full of the peace of God and the sweet consolation of His mercy.

Archim. B. L.

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 28, 2018 SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN AND PHARISEE: TRIODION BEGINS TODAY** *Ephraim the Syrian, Palladios the Hermit of Antioch, James the Righteous, Isaac the Syrian, Bishop of Ninevah, Theodosius of Totma, Grace the Martyr.*

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

**EOTHINON :** *First Orthros Gospel*

**EPISTLE READING:** *St. Paul's Letter to Timothy 3:10-15*

**GOSPEL READING:** *Luke 8:10-14*

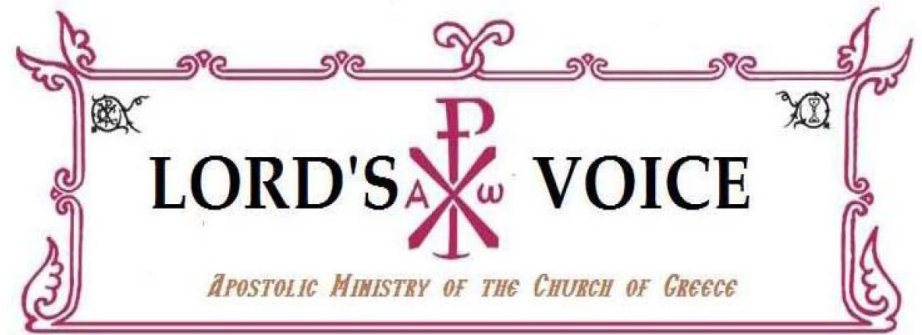
**NEXT SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2018 AFTERFEAST OF THE PRESENTATION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR IN THE TEMPLE, Isidore of Pelusium, Nicholas the Confessor, Hieromartyr Abramius, John the Righteous, Bishop of Irinopolis, Theodosios the Righteous, Joseph the New Martyr of Aleppo,**

**EPISTLE READING:** *First Letter to the Corinthians 6:12-20*

**GOSPEL READING:** *Luke 15:11-32*

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66<sup>TH</sup> YEAR

JANUARY 28 2018

PAMPHLET # 4 (3374)

## IN DESCENDING YOU ARE ASCENDING

God always strives for the "reeducation" of his Saints. Thus, once He sent the professor of the desert, Anthony the Great, to an illiterate cobbler in Alexandria to observe a seminar for advanced people. This was a seminar of humility, which was focused on the witness of the cobbler: "every morning I tell my thought, that all the people in the city will be saved. And only I will be condemned for my many sins". In other words, the truly holy cobbler had so much humility and self censoring, that he was saying it and believing it, that he is the worst sinner in a huge city, where naturally wickedness and corruption were not lacking. This train of thought, showed him forth a professor of the professor of the desert.

## Glory to the "ego"

Entering the Triodion, our Church calls us-through the related parable of Christ-to get lessons of humility from a publican, in other words, from a man whose moral givens of his age, placed him in the same level with the prostitutes. In this parable, Christ reveals to us the clearest x-ray of the soul also of the humble minded one and of the high minded one.

## The Gospel According to Luke 18:10-14

The Lord said this parable, "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I get.' But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

The tragic thing is that the high-minded one is able comfortably to have the false sense that he is a very god-fearing person. The Pharisee of the parable is not a secular person, but a person-we would say today-of the Church. He does not boast about his beauty, his education or his estate. He boasts about his prayers, fasts and charities. However both the one and the other, are expressions of egocentrism.

In the end, the Pharisee with the parable of his "spiritual" achievements, does not glorify God. He glorifies his own self. He prays to his own self, Basil the Great says. He is not praying to God. He has deified his own self. And to him he offers the stenchy incense, the haughtiness for his supposed kindnesses. Instead of saying: if I did something good, I owe it to God, to himself he attached each event and to his own power", says Theophylactos of Bulgaria. To himself he renders everything. Only to his own power. Simply, before the "bravo to me. I achieved them" he places as a curtain of false piety and a "I thank you, my God".

## From the good and from the reverse

And continuing to reveal the sick complexes of the egotist, he begins "burying" all the others, of whom - it is supposed - that he is better, placing on them the signs: the robbers, unjust, adulterers. But not even with this did he satisfy his mania, says Saint John Chrysostom. He rushes to someone who is in the same place for the same purpose and was praying next to him. "He jumps over with much mania" also to the publican who was near him. And the Pharisee completes his fall with a with a bang, with the words: «fortunately I'm neither like that publican».

Furthermore Abba Dorotheos, who is trying to see the Pharisee with leniency, stresses that he was not condemned so much, because he said that he is not like the other people. Mainly he sinned when he turned his gaze at the publican and condemned the disposition of his soul. He condemned his whole life. Let's not forget, of course, that someone may be a Pharisee also from the reverse side, when he says: I'm not like these hypocrites who go to Church and make big crosses. About some such Pharisees - from the reverse side - a certain priest put a sign outside the church with the words: "if that which prevents you from entering in, are the hypocrites that you think you will meet, don't worry. Enter fearlessly. One more fits too."

Here the clarification is necessary: the works of the Pharisee, to the degree that they are a keeping of the commandments of God, we must imitate them and do even more works. We should both fast, and do prayer and charity. What we must hate is his egotistical train of thought, his haughtiness.

## "Be merciful to me the sinner"

On the contrary, the publican, with his physical stance at prayer and with his words, exudes the fragrance of true humility.