

abounds in me, so that-if you believe as you ought - I'm able to make you, you yourself to heal, not only your child, but also many others as well". The "so great estate of the power of God" is revealed in the life and the miracles of the Saints of our Church.

It was revealed in our century with a wondrous case, not of a faithful parent, who prayed for the cure of his sick child, but of a child who was about to die, who healed his mother from deadly disbelief. The specific mother, grafted from her student years with the sermons concerning "the death of God", lost even the little crumbs of her faith, when she gave birth to a child with a very serious health problem. The natural result was to leave her child unbaptized until he was 13 years of age, when he himself asked to be baptized. A little after his baptism, his health worsened rapidly. And while, on his last martyrical night, his mother was shouting "where is God? God does not exist", the child - before reposing - answered her: "dear mother, God exists". With his so sparse but also so shaking confession of faith, a 14 year old child as he was dying, "resurrected" his mother from the tomb of disbelief. And he led her to a conscientious enlistment in the body of the Church, in the land of the living. Great are the achievements of faith!

Archim. B. L.

SUNDAY MARCH 18, 2018 SUNDAY OF ST. JOHN CLIMACUS *Cyril, Patriarch of Jerusalem Trophimos & Eukarpion, Monk-martyrs of Nicomedeia, Edward the Martyr, King of England*

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

EOTHINON : *Eighth Orthros Gospel*

EPISTLE READING: *St. Paul's Letter to Hebrews 6:13-20*

GOSPEL READING: *Mark 9:17-31*

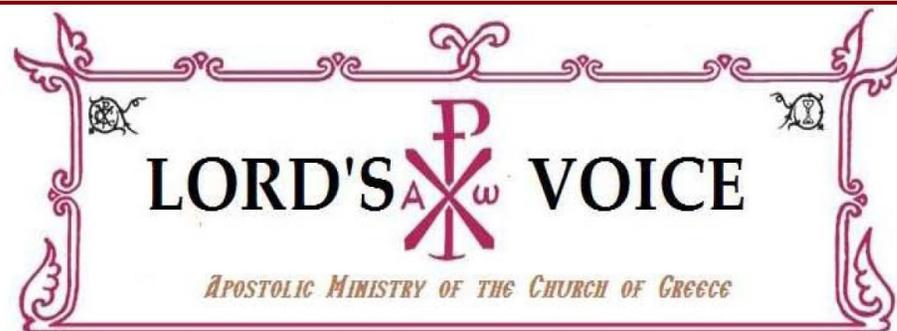
NEXT SUNDAY, MARCH 25, 2018 *Annunciation of the Theotokos*

EPISTLE READING: *St. Paul's Letter to Hebrews 10:11-18*

GOSPEL READING: *Luke 1:24-38*

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66TH YEAR

MARCH 18 2018

PAMPHLET # 11 (3381)

ADD FAITH UNTO US!

The Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Romans makes a very logical observation, that it is not possible to believe in someone- in this case Christ - if you have not first heard what He has to tell you and to offer you. And if not Himself, at least to have heard others speaking about Him. Preaching Him (Romans 10:13). Only from such an experience of personal contact, or even the witness of an eyewitness or person who has heard Him, can a climate of trust be created for the one being preached. Then a person begins being supported in soul, he begins believing in Christ. Faith means trust. This faith in the first stages is called introductory, and is very far from the perfect faith, which Christ awaits us to obtain toward His person.

Endurance with limits

With an introductory and very weak faith, a wretched father also took his possessed son to Christ and tells Him: my child is suffering. If You are able, do something. Christ, hearing that previously he had taken his child to His disciples and they were not able to heal him, expressed - for the first time with an intense manner - His frustration with the words:

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK 9:17-31

At that time, a man came to Jesus kneeling and saying: "Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a dumb spirit; and wherever it seizes him it dashes him down; and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid; and I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able." And he answered them, "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me." And they brought the boy to him; and when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. And Jesus asked his father, "How long has he had this?" And he said, "From childhood. And it has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if you can do anything, have pity on us and help us." And Jesus said to him, "If you can! All things are possible to him who believes." Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!" And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You dumb and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again." And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse; so that most of them said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" And he said to them, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer and fasting." They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And he would not have any one know it; for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of man will be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him; and when he is killed, after three days he will rise."."

"Oh faithless generation! Until when will I be with you? Until when will I put up with you?" Christ does not only get frustrated with the father of the possessed child and His disciples, but-as Saint Theophylactos notes- "He chastises the disbelief of all the Jews". And obviously He chastises all of our lukewarm down to nonexistent faith.

This double "until when?" of Christ, clearly shows that His long suffering has a concluding date. And o woe if we allow - the time of our life - of an unknown duration-to pass, without cultivating genuine and firm faith in Christ. One troparion from the Eight tones resounds the double "until when?" of Christ, calling our soul to wake up and to leave the destructive delays: "until when, my soul, are you insisting in the transgressions? Until when are you receiving the delay of repentance?"

What nourishes faith?

Par excellence works of repentance, in other words, the continual turning and bringing back of soul and body to the love of Christ, are prayer and fasting. Without these ascetes, our faith remains - in the best case - introductory and very weak, if it is not completely quenched. In order to be strengthened, it needs constant watering and fertilizer. It needs much food and cultivation, in order to become strong and to make us "strong in battle" (Heb. 11:34)".

Christ also said it to His disciples, when they asked Him why they were not able to heal the child: in order for someone to do the chief work of faith, to go against, in other words, and to defeat "the rulers of darkness, the spirits of wickedness" (Eph. 6:12), fervent prayer and correct fasting is necessary. Mainly the works of prayer and fasting nourish our faith and increase it, once, of course, they are strengthened with the firm and satiating study of the word of God. How will we invoke Him with strong faith, if we do not first allow Him to speak quite a bit in our heart?

Faith is almightiness

With such nourishment, our faith is able to become so strong, so that everything is possible for it. "Everything is possible to him who believes", Christ answered the weak-believing father, overturning his own miserable request. According to the golden-tongued John, Christ wanted to tell him: "so much strength