

gaze to the «Governor» of our life, Christ, is needed with faith and humility. And naturally such a gaze is not achieved without the firm study of the Divine Scriptures and without patience and persistence in prayer. These presuppositions, even before the Incarnation of the Word, granted to the Church bright examples of helmsmen, like the holy priest Eleazar, who celebrates on August 1. In order to keep the godly fast and to not eat defiled things, eating food sacrificed to the idols, not only did he himself forbear a martyrical death, but also his seven disciples Macabees, together with their mother, Saint Solomone followed him upright in the storm of martyrdom.

The text says characteristically: “the thought of our father Eleazar, as an excellent governor, steering the helm of the vessel of piety in the ocean of passions and fighting with the storms of hardships kept the helm of obedience firm, in the will of God, until he reached the port of immortal victory” (4 Mac. 7:1). May his intercessions and those of his entourage accompany us in our own storms

Archim. B.

**SUNDAY, JULY 29, 2018 9TH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW**, *The Holy Martyr Callinicus, Theodota the Martyr and her Children, Holy Virgin Martyr Theodota, Pious King Theodosius the New, Seraphima the Virgin-martyr of Antioch, Constantine III, Patriarch of Constantinople, Olaf of Norway*

**-tone of the week :** *Plagal of the Fourth Tone*

**EOTHINON :** *Nineth Orthros Gospel*

**EPISTLE READING:** *I Corinthians 3:9-17*

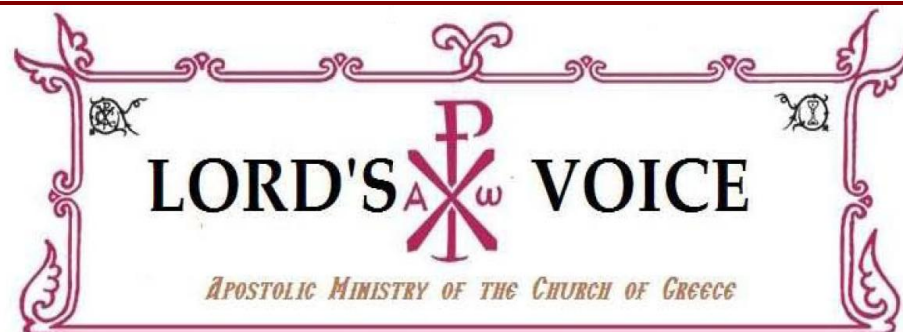
**GOSPEL READING:** *Matthew 14:22-34*

**NEXT SUNDAY, SUNDAY, AUGUST 5, 2018 10TH SUNDAY OF**

**MATTHEW**, *Forefeast of the Transfiguration of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Eusignius the Martyr of Antioch, Our Righteous Father Eugene of Aitola. Euthymios, Patriarch of Constantinople, Christos the New Martyr of Prevezis, Oswald the Martyr, King of Northumbria.*

**EPISTLE READING:** *I Corinthians 4:9-16*

**GOSPEL READING:** *Matthew 17:14-23*



**66<sup>TH</sup> YEAR JULY 29 2018 PAMPHLET #30 (3400)**

## TO SAILORS

The proverb “the good captain shows in the storm” is familiar. Consequently it was not possible, “the select staff”-that is, the disciples-who were going to become the first governors of the Ark of salvation, in other words, of the Church, to not go through a “harsh training”.

### Exercises of fortitude

It's not the first time that the disciples of Christ are facing a harsh sea storm. They've already passed the first exercise. Then they were more imperfect. And so for this reason, Christ was with them on the boat “unto consolation”, as the sacred Chrysostom notes. When it is difficult, of course, they needed to wake Him up, because He was sleeping. Now however, exercising them “unto greater patience”, He has left them alone at sea, going to the mountaintop to pray privately. And He allows a great storm to arise, so that not having Him near them, they become more longsuffering.

In such moments, when the one minute is as if it is an entire century, one can suspect what “he did not immediately appear to them” means. Christ delays. Sometimes He doesn't seem to be so

## THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW 14:14-22

At that time, Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up into the hills by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but the boat by this time was many furlongs distant from the land, beaten by the waves; for the wind was against them. And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear. But immediately he spoke to them, saying "Take heart, it is I; have no fear."

And Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, bid me come to you on the water." He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus; but when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me." Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "O man of little faith, why did you doubt?" And when they entered the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God." And when they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret.

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quick-hearing. And naturally, He who is the only truly most merciful one, does it out of philanthropy. Even when He decides to come to help them He "brings about other rougher hardships". It is something that He usually does. "For he forever does this", obviously to those who are advanced. There where you are awaiting for the end of one trial, a worse one comes. The fear from the storm, is succeeded by the fear of a ghost, whom they see walking on the waves. And this fear of theirs, was so much greater, that "they cried out". They broke out into cries of dread. Christ only reveals Himself then when to them and calms them down with the words: "have courage. It is I. Do not feare trains us, according to the Golden-tongued one, for us to not seek "a quick solution to the difficulties", but for us to forbear with bravery and fortitude. And if this applies to the passengers of the Ark, how much

more so is it necessary for the candidate governors, the Apostles. But also".

### Faith and humility

Peter, always spontaneous and expressive, asks Him "call me", not "walk upon the water", but "to come to you". The first, according to Saint Theophylactos of Bulgaria, would be a sign of showing off, whereas the second, is an indication of love for Christ. And Christ for his sake "leveled the sea" and Peter began walking on the water. However not for long. In a bit, he started sinking, not account of the strength of the wind, but due to his little faith. So for this reason, Christ, stretching out His hand and grabbing him, scolded not the wind, but his weak faith: Oh you of little faith, why did you cower?

It is worth us repeating that Peter began sinking not, for some tendency of his for showing off to be scolded, but only due to his lack of strong faith. Peter did not have such a train of thought. Bearers of the spirit of delusion were those heretics, who - perverting the meaning of the miracle of Christ - once went to the Coenobium of Pachomius the Great and we're challenging him for them to walk with him on the water of the river, so that it would show who has greater boldness to God. And the Saint frustrated, answered them: "my struggle and my whole striving is not to pass this river walking on the water, but how with the power of God, I will jump over such satanic traps, and how I will avoid the divine condemnation due to my sins."

For the holy Fathers, genuine faith in God and healthy humility proceed together. The progress of one presupposes the increase of the other. The miracles of Christ and of His Saints have the unique goal of strengthening the faith in His person and His glorification. No Saint strove to become a miracle worker. Many, furthermore, seeing the gifts that God was giving them, we're asking Him to take them away from them, so that they not be in danger from haughtiness and vainglory. For the true Saints, the storm from the specific passions, comprises the greatest danger of shipwreck.

### The governor thought of the Saints

But also to avoid shipwrecks from all the passions as well as from the storms of misfortunes and the sea storms of sad things, the fixed