

About this birthgiving, Paul will speak elsewhere as well, and he will say that it refers to a birthgiving, and furthermore, a repeating birthgiving (“Again”), with real birth pains “until Christ is formulated” in the hearts of the believers (Gal. 4:19). It refers to much stronger birth pains than the natural birth pains, because “there, on the one hand is the pain of the flesh”, whereas here, the strength of soul itself “they tear to pieces”, the golden mouth of the Church, again explains. And “for you to not doubt”, the holy Father continues, “who ever wished, for the sake of his children’s salvation, to himself forbear gehenna, and to be anathema from Christ?”

After these things, can one criticize the Apostle Paul for pride, when he exhorts us, his children, with the words: “I therefore ask you, become ye imitators of me”? What trace of egocentrism may remain in a person where it is completely obvious, that he first has become “an imitator of Christ?”

Archim. B. L.

SUNDAY, JUNE 30, 2019, SYNAXIS OF THE TWELVE HOLY APOSTLES *Michael the New Martyr of Athens*

tone of the week : *First Tone*

EOTHINON : *Second Orthros Gospel*

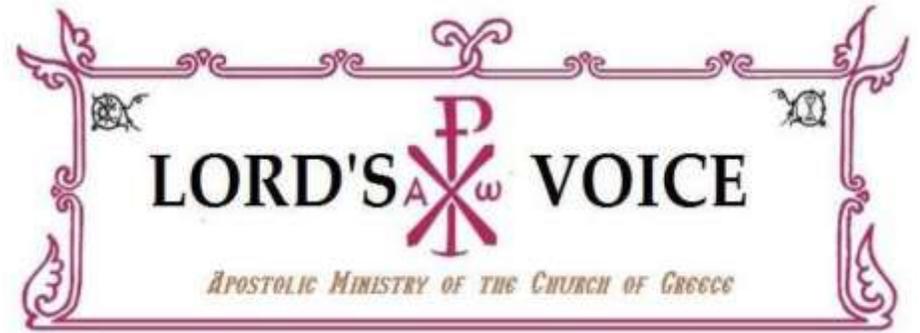
EPISTLE READING: *St. Paul’s Letter to the Corinthians 4:9-16*

GOSPEL READING: *Matthew 10:1-8*

NEXT SUNDAY, JULY 07, 2019 3RD SUNDAY OF MATTHEW ,
Thomas the Righteous of Malea , Kyriake the Great Martyr , Akakios of Sinai, Willibald, Bishop of Eichstatt .

EPISTLE READING: *St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 3:23-29; 4:1-5*

GOSPEL READING: *Matthew 6:22-33*



67TH YEAR JUNE 30 2019 PAMPHLET #26 (3448)

“THE GLORY OF THE APOSTLES”

A distinguished critiquing author, speaking once about a contemporary poet said: “His deepest illness is the illness of most of our erudite ones. They all suffer from egocentrism. And they don’t want to understand, that the world will continue existing even after them. They don’t want to even hear of the unseen contribution to life. And nevertheless, life owes the same things, if not more, to the unseen and humble ones, as also to the personalities”.

Fatal edemas of high-mindedness

The holy Apostles, whom we are honoring today, in opposition to the “wise ones of this world”, neither believed, nor ever felt that they are “personalities”. Having embraced the words of their Teacher “whosoever wishes to be first, let him be the least of all”, as also the “he who is elevating himself shall be humbled”, they hated egocentrism. So for this reason, their primary agony was, on the one hand, to prevent the development of edemas of high-mindedness in the members of the body of the Church, and on the other hand, to cultivate their love for elevating humility. Naturally, this cultivation did not only happen with words, but mainly with their bright example.

Such worrisome symptoms had appeared in Christians of Corinth, who were boasting, the one over the other, each one for his teacher, and for their existing or not gifts. Thus, they were creating personality factions, which took them far from the crucifactory course of the Church. And it seems that these “edemas” had grown

THE GOSPEL ST. PAUL'S FIRST LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS 4:9-16

Brethren, God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute. To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are ill-clad and buffeted and homeless, and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we try to conciliate; we have become, and are now, as the refuse of the world, the off-scouring of all things. I do not write this to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. I urge you, then, be imitators of me.

so dangerously, that the Apostle Paul was forced to use the sharp language of irony, in case he could manage to break them. "Bravo to you", he tells them: "now, henceforth, not only are you satiated and rich in spiritual things, but also - without us, your initial teachers - you gained the kingdom of the heavens". In other words: "You didn't simply become personalities, where without you, the world is not going anywhere, but you also became fellow kings with Christ".

"The last shall be first"

And immediately after, as if he is telling them "come now for me to show you what kingdom we Apostles are also enjoying", he "grounds" them abruptly with today's Epistle passage, which comprises the clearest and most objective image of the life of the holy Apostles. In this, is imprinted their true glory, in all its majesty. It refers, of course, to a glory and to a majesty which is described with the words: "least, sentenced to death, scorned, sick, naked, hungry, thirsty, tired, whipped, cursed, slandered, refuse of the world, and unclean offscourings of society" (1 Cor. 4: 10-13).

And they "are enjoying" all these honors", at the moment when the Corinthians, and those likeminded ones of theirs throughout the ages want to be considered and honored as "wise in Christ, strong and glorious". The root of this ambition, which we all, more or less have, according to the sacred Chrysostom, is that "we made the world and its opinion, our boss. And furthermore, a harsh boss, a real tyrant. It does not need to order us, for us to obey. It suffices for us to understand what it wants, and we immediately yield, without an order. So much, do we consider it. God daily counsels us and we do not listen to Him. The world however, we obey it in everything".

Obviously this is happening because for the world "glory" means acclamations and claps, praises and honors, whereas for Christ "glory" is only the utter humility of the Cross. It is characteristic that the first word in the description of the life of the Apostles, the word "least ones", which comprises also, the summary of all the other characterizations, the Apostle Paul says, that Christ Himself granted it to them as a "proof" and a medal of glory. He lifted them up on the throne of the "least one". For His sake, they underwent all the humiliations which are mentioned in the list. The Golden-tongued one also stresses it: "He did not simply say that we are least ones, but that God made us the least ones." And the most important thing - according to Saint John - greatest is that the Apostles forbear all the humiliations and hardships just like Christ, not grumbling but "rejoicing" and rewarding their persecutors with benefactions.

Fathers with motherly pains

There probably would not be a more effective antidote for the fatal puffed up and "haughty" train of thought of the Corinthians. And it is obvious that the experienced doctor Paul, wants to use it as a medicine, and not in order to put them down, because immediately after the therapeutic sharpness of his irony, he allows his very loving paternal care to show: «I don't want, with these things I'm writing you, to shame you", he tells them, "but as my beloved children, I am advising you. You may have many educators and teachers in Christ. You have only one father, however: Me. I, with the preaching of the Gospel, gave you spiritual birth".