

“He completely became love”

It is obvious that the ecclesiastical community of Corinth had placed Paul into great agonies. So for this reason also, his writing to them brought out much pain and worry. It is not by chance that before visiting them for third time, he sends them his second Epistle, which he will close with the words: “I fear, that maybe, when I come, I not find you as I want. I fear maybe furthermore, that there exist among you egotisms, disputes, jealousies, arguments and upheavals. I fear that maybe God is humbling me again, and I mourn again for many, who did not repent for their serious sins”. This is the “daily death” of the good pastor and the daily “pains” of the true father, who first himself became an “imitator of Christ”, Probably only the worthy imitator of the Apostle, Saint Chrysostom is able to describe the magnitude of his paternal love: just as iron falling into fire, became completely fire, thus also he who is lit up by the fire of love, completely became love”. Archim. B. L

NEXT, SUNDAY, AUGUST 18, 2019 10TH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW ,
Return of the Body of Bartholomew the Glorious Apostle, Titus the Apostle of the 70 , John the Cappadocian, Epiphanius and Menas, Patriarchs of Constantinople, Holy Father John of Carpathia , Ebba, First Abbess of Coldingham

TONE OF THE WEEK : *First Tone*

EOTHINON : *Tenth Orthros Gospel*

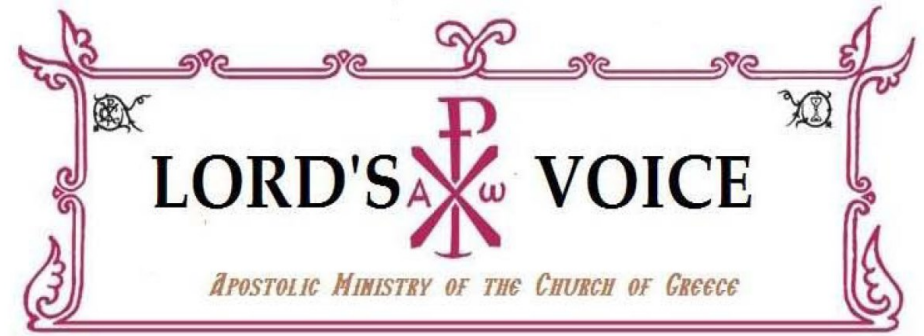
EPISTLE READING: *St. Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians 4:9-16*

GOSPEL READING: *Matthew 17:14-23*

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 2019 ECCLESIASTICAL NEW YEAR,
Symeon the Stylite, Synaxis of the Recovery of the Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos of Miasenae, The 40 Holy Ascetic Virgin Martyrs of Thrace and their Teacher Ammon the Deacon, Holy Martyrs Calliste and Siblings: Euodus and Hermogenes, Righteous Meletius, The Struggler of the Muuiopolis Mountain, Jesus (Joshua) of Navi , Nicholas of Kourtaliotis

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

GOSPEL READING: *Matthew 17:14-23*



67TH YEAR AUGUST 25 2019 PAMPHLET #34 (3456)

PATERNAL “PAINS”

A little before Christ drank the “cup” of His passion, He experienced one more bitter taste of the immaturity and superficiality of His disciples: the sons of Zebedee, James and John asked Him for first seats in His kingdom. And the Lord found the opportunity to speak to them about the abysmal difference between the secular train of thought of selfishness and of godloving humility and sacrificial love for others, that reaches unto even death. Only such a humility and such a love, are able to elevate man to the true glory and to guide him to the Kingdom of God.

“Apostles About to Die”

The Apostle Paul also experienced similar bitterness from the Corinthians, who, swayed by selfish attachments to certain of their teachers, were breaking the unity of the Church, striving for their own projection and domination over the others. What relationship can such pursuits have with Him, who “did not come to be served but to serve, and to give His soul as a ransom for many”? The Apostle wants to imitate Him. So for this reason, he considers it his highest honor that Christ

THE GOSPEL 1ST ST. PAUL'S LETTER TO 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.

“proved” him and the other Apostles “about to die”. He honored them with the calling “daily” to “be dying” for His name and for His glory. This refers to the death first, of their selfish ego, with the deadening of their passions, and then with the submission to indescribable hardships and tortures, which often were not very far from physical death. The imitation of the crucified King of glory, Christ, is completed not simply with a revengeless disposition to their persecutors, but also by them praying for them and answering their slanders with sweet and consoling words.

All these things are “foolishness” for the logic of the world, that thinks that with his luciferian haughtiness he is able to be saved, deifying himself. When once, two writers went to the Holy Mountain, they were saying: “We will put on a yoke like two oxen and will plow the earth”. However after a time, they confessed: “The years passed. We were yoked like oxen and plowed the air”. Fruitful “plowing of the world” cannot be done from the comfortable chairs of a study, but it presupposes “hunger”, thirst,

nakedness, slappings, mockeries and persecutions”. “And all these things, not in the name of a whatsoever obsession, but in the name of the One true God, who for us became a man. And when as a man, He lived the chief agony of death, to a degree that He sweats, He voluntarily submitted His human will to the will of God the Father and He freely accepted to drink all the cup of the Passion for our salvation.

A true father

From this perfect obedience of Christ to His Father, the grace and capability sprung also of our own free obedience to God and of victory against our selfishness. Only thus is not simply a “plowing” of our soul able to occur for the fruitbearing of certain virtues, but our essential rebirth with the deadening of the old man and the “resurrection” of the “new” person in Christ. The Apostle Paul will stress this chief truth to the Corinthians. And lowering the strict tone of his words a bit, he will console them, reminding them that he, as their spiritual father, gave rebirth to them and granted them the new, true and eternal life of Christ.

This refers to a rebirth, which in the end are many, because it includes the repeating experience of birth pangs “until Christ be formed” in the hearts of the believers (Gal. 4:19). And Saint Chrysostom admires, shouting. Where was it heard for “a child, a second time to stretch the motherly womb with birth pangs.” And the preeminent Apostle not only never complaint about these pains, but he reached the point of praying that he himself be deprived of eternal life, so long as his compatriot Jews could gain it. Such a “firm death unto love” “never fails”, Paul will say of his personal experience. And naturally neither can life fall which is based on such a love. So for this reason, the Apostle is not in danger of being accused of haughtiness, when in conclusion he exhorts the Corinthians to become his imitators.