

are done without selfishness. His offering does not become a value in and of itself, but a means of referring to God. And then, he himself becomes a handy vessel for channeling the gifts and benefactions of God.

This way of liturgizing existence shows that love, philanthropy, almsgiving, fraternity, and ministry are liturgical actions, with which the people's connection in Christ is sacredly performed. Since the love that is poured into the Body of the Church starts from God, passes through the hearts of people and ascends to the supracelestial altar, that is to the Lord Jesus Christ, Who accepts it as a blameless sacrifice and fragrant incense. Since from Him "every perfect gift" comes (James 1:17) and in Him it concludes as a gift of praise, as an offering of gratitude, thanksgiving and love.

Archim. N.K

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 8 2023 3RD SUNDAY OF LUKE Pelagia

the Righteous , Pelagia the Virgin-martyr of Antioch, Phillip, Bishop of Gortyna, Taisia the Harlot of Egypt

EPISTLE READING : *St. Paul's 2nd Letter to Corinthians 9:6-11,*

GOSPEL READING : *Luke 7:11-16*

TONE OF THE WEEK : *First Tone*

ETHINON : *Seventh Eothinon*

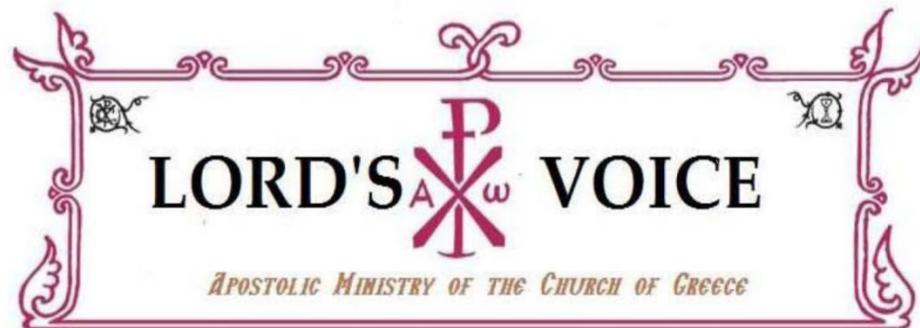
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 15 2023 SUNDAY OF THE 7TH

ECUMENICAL COUNCIL , *Lucian the Martyr of Antioch ,*

Savinos the Bishop of Catania, Barsus the Confessor, Euthymios the New

EPISTLE READING : *St. Paul's Letter to Titus 3:8-15*

GOSPEL READING : *Luke 8:5-15*



71ST YEAR OCTOBER 8 2023 PAMPHLET # 41 (3671)

LOVE IN THE BODY OF THE CHURCH

With today's Epistle passage, the Apostle Paul gives the guidelines for the believer to appropriate the communion of the love of Christ and thus contribute to its uninterrupted circulation in the Body of the Church, in every person, in the whole creation. Because, when man understands that God's love is vast and that while we were spiritually dead because of our transgressions, God gave us life again together with Christ (Eph. 2:5), then he undergoes the "good change". He recognizes that the entire creation and human beings are a gift, a gift of God's love and that man does not belong to himself, but to God. And acceptance of this truth signals a new ethos, a new attitude of life on the part of the believer, so that not only himself, but also nothing of what he has, does he consider exclusively his.

Thus, he feels that dependence on God becomes the reason for experiencing freedom in Christ as a communion of love and offering; as independence from self-centeredness, rationalism, and selfishness

**EPISTLE ST. PAUL'S 2ND LETTER TO
CORINTHIANS 6:16-9; 6:11**

Brethren, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work. As it is written, "He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures for ever." He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your resources and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for great generosity, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God.

The historical context

In the Second Letter to the Corinthians, from which our passage comes, Paul speaks at length about the generous offering of the Churches of Macedonia to the Christians of Jerusalem.

He informs the Corinthians that the Macedonians offered more than what they were able to offer, and even asked as a favor to be allowed to participate in this ministry of love. Thus, the Apostle expresses the certainty that the Corinthians will also not fall behind in this work; he urges them to show the genuineness of their own love for the indigent people of Jerusalem. As a model of love, he projects the Lord himself, who, as he writes, "being rich, became poor for you, so that you may become rich by his poverty" (2 Cor. 8:9). Poverty is the condescension, the incarnation of

the Lord, through which man became rich with the godhead of Christ.

Paul is not asking them to be deprived so that others will be relieved, but that there should be equality for all. And he very aptly underlines that in the present case, their own surplus will be added to the deprivation of the poor Christians of Jerusalem, so that at another time, in the case of an upcoming need, for the opposite to happen.

"God loves the cheerful giver"

When the Apostle Paul writes how God loves the "cheerful giver", i.e. the one who gives with pleasure, with a good mood, he wants to emphasize that whoever loves God and recognizes that he belongs to Him, feels the presence of Christ in his being. Precisely this Presence gives him the fullness of joy (John 16:24), which in the end, gives him the joyfulness of offering to his fellow man. On the contrary, there is also the "he who sows sparingly", that is, he who accepts God's love, keeps it for himself and thus, on account of the clash of love with his egotistical desires, he becomes fainthearted. He demands to receive from the others, but refuses to offer.

Offering as a liturgical act

The person who shares God's love with the poor brothers, includes in him the whole of humanity, for whom he also prays like Christ at Gethsemane. This is how he emerges as a true person, a true hypostasis, as Saint Sophrony of Essex wrote. Therefore, his actions and deeds