

power of virtue and holiness correctly and positively censures a person's existence and draws up the image of God, hidden by sin, which he carries within him.

Finally, with his usual paternal love, Paul advises the believers to pay attention to their way of life; to properly use their time, and to be filled with the Spirit of God, so that they can glorify the Lord from their heart with psalms, hymns and spiritual odes. Thus, they will become poles of attraction and silent preachers of the Gospel.

Archim. N.K

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3 26, 2023 14TH SUNDAY OF LUKE,**

*The Holy Prophet Sophonios, Our Righteous Father John, Bishop and Hesychast, Holy Martyrs Agapius and Seleucius, Theodore Archbishop of Alexandria, Angelis the New Martyr, Karpos the Hieromartyr.*

**EPISTLE READING :** *St. Paul's Letter to Ephesians 5:8-19*

**GOSPEL READING :** *Luke 18:35-43*

**TONE OF THE WEEK :** *First Tone*

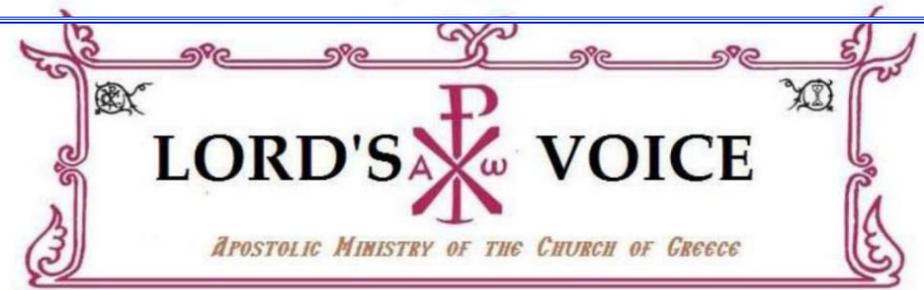
**ETHINON :** *Fourth Eothinon*

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10 26, 2023 10TH SUNDAY OF**

**LUKE,** *Means, Hermogenes, Eugraphos, Martyrs of Alexandria. Thomas the Righteous of Bithynia.*

**EPISTLE READING :** *St. Paul's Letter to Ephesians 6:10-17*

**GOSPEL READING :** *Luke 13:10-17*



71<sup>ST</sup> YEAR DECEMBER 3 2023 PAMPHLET # 49 (3679)

## THE LIFE OF THOSE WHO ARE GUIDED

### BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Apostle Paul, being aware of his responsibility as a preacher of the Gospel and a teacher of the Churches, recommends to the Christians of Ephesus to live as people who belong to the light. The Apostle is accustomed to using the images of light and darkness, to describe faith or unbelief, piety, virtue or impiety. That is why he emphasizes that the life of those who are guided by the Holy Spirit is distinguished by some characteristic features, which make them people of faith, piety, and virtue, so that their existence radiates from light and God's grace.

These traits are, first of all, kindness, which, according to the sacred Chrysostom, means meekness and long-suffering, leniency, kindness. Next is justice, i.e. virtue that repels injustice and greed, which is idolatry (Col. 3:5) and, therefore, a practical denial of the only true God. And, finally the truth, which the same Father, who is aptly called "Paul's mouth", understands as the rightness of life in all levels, as internal and external sobriety, i.e. purity of soul and body from all defilement and sin.

## **EPISTLE ST. PAUL'S LETTER TO EPHESIANS 5:8-19**

Brethren, walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is a shame even to speak of the things that they do in secret; but when anything is exposed by the light it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it is said, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light." Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart, given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.

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According to the above, those who have the light of God's grace are able to examine what is pleasing to the Lord. That is why the Apostle exhorts every believer not to participate in the dark and unbeneficial works of others, but with his virtuous life to reveal them, because necessarily where the light shines every dark work is revealed.

### **The fruitless works of darkness**

And here is precisely the root where the unfruitful works of darkness grow, which gradually lead man to burnout, mental and physical illness, unhappiness, disappointment, and

isolation. It is characteristic that the Apostle avoids naming even some of the works of darkness, given that in his time, these works were done in secret, so that a person not be stigmatized from a social viewpoint. In our years, however, not rarely a person, not infrequently boasts about his sins, which he projects as achievements, and provokes the social whole, with the aim of showing his alleged value and his works from a negative side. Unfortunately, the sense of shame, morality and dignity tends to disappear not only from many younger people, but also from people of a mature age.

### **Censuring with discernment and the spirit of God**

Censuring, which the Apostle recommends that believers use, does not constitute an aggressive action of words and actions with the aim of tearing down sinners. The motivation and content of censuring, must be an act of love for the straying person. In this way, censuring is not necessarily also criticism, since it comes from sympathy for the brothers who are sinning, and it aims at their correction. Besides, we believers must not forget that for all of us, the danger of straying into sin and darkness, lurks, as Paul says: "let him who thinks he is standing see that he not fall" (1 Cor. 10:12).

Therefore, censuring must be done with a lot of discretion, evangelical love, prayer and the Spirit of God. Never on impulse, arrogance, a disposition to criticize and zeal "without knowledge" (Rom. 10:2). That is why it is safer that the very life of the true Christian become a silent censuring of those who are in the darkness of sin. Since the