

The spiritual manner of life of the Christian

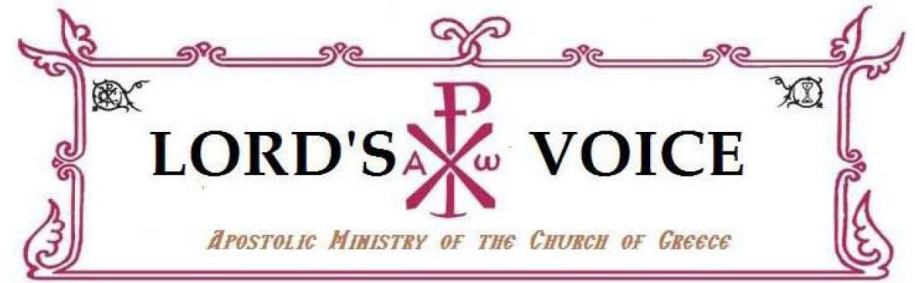
From the moment when the All Holy Spirit with the fruits of the virtues defines our spiritual life, it is obvious that we also ought to attune all the efforts of our spiritual struggle in these sacred frameworks. To follow and call upon the help, the power, the grace which God, through the Holy Spirit grants us, as Saint Photius also advises us. Let us not get disoriented in other ways of life which are so much promoted and advertised in our age. Because they don't grant the grace of God, they don't make us firm in the experience of the presence of God in us. Every spiritual virtue contains grace and draws so much grace that, together with the contribution of the other virtues, they will guide us to life in Christ and eternity. And in this experience of eternity may we be granted to see with the eyes of our soul the unapproachable light of the Holy Trinity.

Archim. Ch. N.

Sunday October 20 7th Sunday of Luke, Nestor the Martyr of Thessaloniki Kyriakos, Patriarch of Constantinople
Grave Tone, Sixth Eothinon, -Epistle St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians 6:16-18; 7:1

Gospel Luke 8:26-39

NEXT SUNDAY October 27 6th Sunday of Luke, Epistle St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians 9:6-11, Gospel Luke 8:41-56



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“THE SPIRITUAL VIRTUES”

Virtue is a quality which shows forth man's personality. Both the physical virtues as abilities, but also the virtues of the soul as internal powers of the soul are natural qualities which formulate and project man as a person.

However aside from the natural qualities, the natural virtues which distinguish men, there also exist the spiritual virtues, those virtues which are a fruit not only of human effort but mainly of the grace and gift of the Holy Spirit. So for this reason also, the apostle Paul calls them “the fruit of the Spirit”.

The presuppositions for cultivating the spiritual virtues

According to saint Nikodemos the Haghiorite there are two presuppositions upon which the spiritual virtues are supported: the power of God and the good opinion - disposition of man. In other words, our own eagerness and diligence does not suffice alone, but of course the help of God is also needed for those spiritual gifts to be developed within us which

formulate our Christian character. This common contribution of God and man is called synergy, because the divine grace, as well as human will synergize simultaneously. "for Him cooperating with the soul, each one is achieved" says Theodoretus. When, in other words, the power of the Comforter cooperates with man's effort, then the divine virtues are achieved one by one.

SUNDAY'S EPISTLE St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians 6:16-18; 7:1

BRETHREN, you are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will live in them and move among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore come out from them, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch nothing unclean; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."

Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, and make holiness perfect in the fear of God.

The basic spiritual virtues

The Apostle enumerates those foundational virtues which comprise the Christian's spiritual life. And he begins with love. Because as Saint John Chrysostom interprets, love is the root for the virtues which follow. It is the foundation upon which the spiritual edifice is built. It is the spring which nourishes the flow of the river of divine grace. How is it possible for the soul to be flooded with spiritual joy and rejoicing, if the heart is not warmed by divine love? How can

the peace of God dwell within us, if we don't first feel love for our neighbor?

Basil the Great, referring to the virtues of goodness and longsuffering, says the first one, on the one hand, widens and makes the heart spacious so that the lenient behavior is opportune and easy toward all our fellow man, imitating God who is "lenient to everyone" (Ps. 85:5). While longsuffering focuses on rendering justice in a beneficial manner and not with an unyielding strictness. It gives time, it also gives another opportunity for correction.

The virtue of goodness includes kindness and meekness and refers to the good-producing grace of the Holy Spirit which is offered in the life of the Church, as the Psalmist mentions: "Do good, oh Lord, in your good pleasure to Zion", in other words, the Church (50:20). The Holy Spirit pours the good-producing mercy of God and makes the soul meek which believes and seeks it with prayer and repentance.

The virtues of faith, meekness and temperance in common, complete the triptych of chastity, which spiritually fortifies man from the temptations of disbelief, of atheism and the influence of the fleshly desires and of anger. For this spiritual fruit to be achievable, presupposes tried, deep and unshakable faith. Not thin faith, in other words weak faith, but to accept with certainty that "what is impossible for men is possible for God" (Luke 18:27).

About spiritual temperance Basil the Great says that it is a virtue which moderates extremes, in other words, unrestrained delight and physical hardship without discretion. While meekness is an exhortation of Christ himself: "Learn from me that I am meek" (Mat. 11:29). While the Holy Spirit is a Spirit of meekness and whoever of the believers became habitations of the Holy Spirit are icons of meekness.