

Athanasios the Great interpreting salvation in Christ tells us: "Because our Lord Jesus is the God who exists before the ages, through whom also God the Father created the ages, our life should not have been founded on anyone else, except Him alone, so that we could also inherit (with certainty) eternal life". Our boasting in the Cross of the Lord is a sacred heritage and proves the genuineness of our faith, that in other words, our faith is apostolic. It certifies that we are keeping the sacred heritage of this faith and worship in the person of Christ, until we render our confession before Him on the day of judgement. No hesitation and shame ought to disorient us, so that we lose the heritage of grace which Christ gave us with His crucifactory sacrifice. With our constant presence in the worship life of the Church, "we preserve in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" which the Lord handed to us, entrusted to us. Whether as priests, whether as simple believers we will render account in common, for the struggle which we put forth, so as to keep it intact, alive. And the crown-giver Jesus will give us a heavenly reward for this honorable struggle of ours. Our reward will be that we become eternal communicants of his glory.

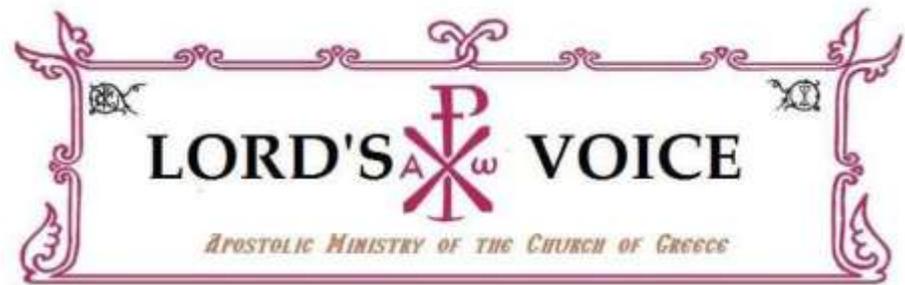
Archim. Ch. N.

SUNDAY December 15th 11th Sunday of Luke, Sunday of

Forefathers, Hieromartyr Eleutherius, and His Mother **Evanthia**,
Saint Paul of Latros, The Holy Martyr Eleutherius Cubicularius.

PLAGAL of the Fourth Tone, Third Eothinon, -Epistle St.Paul's Second Letter to Timothy 1:8-18, Gospel LUKE 14:16-24

NEXT SUNDAY December 22nd Sunday before Nativity, Epistle St.Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 11:9-10; 32-40, Gospel Matthew 1:1-25



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THE SACRED HERITAGE

Our Lord Jesus Christ, before the passion of the Cross and the Passover of the Jews (the day of unleavened bread), expressed his desire to eat together with His disciples. And with His own providing, a supper was prepared in "a great upper room spread". There the Mystical Supper took place, where the Lord gave the sacred heritage of His Body and Blood to the Apostles. It is the New Testament, the new agreement between God and men, sealed with His Blood. It is the sacred heritage of faith and worship of the true God in the person of Christ. He gave them the commandment, so that they preserve this heritage undeviatingly in His remembrance, for the salvation of all people until the close of the age.

The preserving of the sacred heritage

The Ap. Paul, faithful to the commandment of the Lord, says boldly to His disciple and apostle Timothy, that the power of Jesus Christ is the guarantee and certainty for the preservation of this sacred gift which he received from Him: "(Christ) is able to preserve my heritage in that day".

SUNDAY'S EPISTLE ST. PAUL'S SECOND LETTER TO TIMOTHY 1:8-18

TIMOTHY, my son, do not be ashamed then of testifying to our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel in the power of God, who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not in virtue of our works but in virtue of his own purpose and the grace which he gave us in Christ Jesus ages ago, and now has manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. For this gospel I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, and therefore I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me. Follow the pattern of the sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus; guard the truth that has been entrusted to you by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us.

You are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me, and among them Phygelos and Hermogenes. May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphoros, for he often refreshed me; he was not ashamed of my chains, but when he arrived in Rome he searched for me eagerly and found me - may the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord on that Day and you well know all the service he rendered at Ephesos..

And he means the mystery of the divine Eucharist, but also the faith, the confession, the teaching of the Gospel with which they are unbreakably associated as also the grace which the Apostle received from the All Holy Spirit to be an Apostle of the Church of the Godman. He bases this certainty on the fact that he was not ashamed, "I am not ashamed" he writes characteristically, not only to accept but also to preach, to confess continually the crucifactory death of Christ. And this

he advises to the Apostle Timothy, to not feel shame to confess and project the martyrdom of Christ on the Cross: "do not therefore be ashamed of the martyrdom of our Lord". Because the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross is a cause of their salvation and their calling, "who saved us, and called with a holy calling". The sacrifice upon the Cross has divine power, "according to the power of God", to abolish sin, to justify man, to draw the grace of Christ and to impart it to the believers who are not ashamed to confess it. Furthermore upon the Cross the heritage of Jesus was certified to His disciples. There His precious Blood was poured out, with which he ransomed us from the curse of the law and the slavery of sin and abolished death. With the Cross the gate of eternity opens, so that we obtain life and incorruption.

The sacred obligation of the believers

So the sacrifice of the Crucified Christ, is that which makes the preservation and imparting of the sacred heritage of the salvation of men, a sacred apostolic duty and preserves the genuineness of the Ap. Paul as a Preacher, Apostle and Teacher of the Gentiles. This great theological office applies for all the Apostles, the Fathers of the Church, the monastic saints and righteous ones of our Church and for each one of us Christians, who are struggling the good struggle of faith. It is a sacred duty of all believing Christians to confess the saving work of Jesus Christ, without being ashamed. Because it is the preeternal revelation of the divine will for the world to be saved, as the Apostle says, "by his own disposition and grace", with His own presence on the earth. Consequently, "through the manifestation of our Saviour Jesus Christ" and with His Crucifixion and Resurrection He gave life and incorruption to the race of men.