

## With the mind in the heart

Christ commands Zacchaios to come down from the sycamore tree, because He will visit him in his home. Zacchaios obeys and welcomes Him with great joy. The “descend” refers to a downward movement, a movement of humility and drawing someone towards himself. It would not be improper for us to connect this descent of Zacchaios to some other descent: the descent of the humbled mind to the heart of man, where as Christ he meets the grace of Holy Baptism, and where the mind remains united with the heart in the Name of Christ.

When the attention stays for a long time in prayer, the person like another Zacchaios feels that he is offering hospitality to Christ, but he is also receiving hospitality in Christ. Simultaneously he offers hospitality with the grace of repentance and of faith, restoring his relationship with them, all people and particularly those whom he willfully or involuntarily harmed, being a model for us also, beloved brethren.

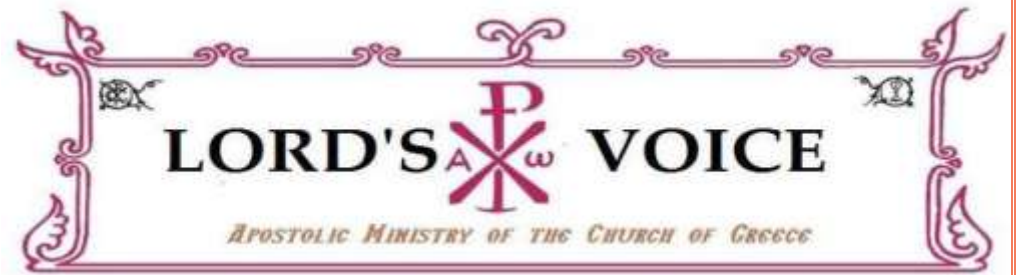
Archim. E. T.

**SUNDAY January 26, 2014 15th Sunday of Luke**, Xenophon & his Companions, Symeon the Elder of Mount Sinai

**Tone** Plagal Second, **Eothinon** Nineth, - **Epistle** St. Paul's First Letter to Timothy 4:9-15, **Gospel** Luke 19:1-10

**NEXT SUNDAY February 2, 2014 The Presentation of Our Lord and Savior in the Temple**, Gabriel the New Martyr of Constantinople, Jordan the New Martyr, Agathodoros the Martyr of Cappadocia.

**Epistle** St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 7:7-17, **Gospel** Luke 2:22-40



62<sup>nd</sup> Year

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## REPENTANCE IN ACTION

Beloved, in today's gospel passage a lesson of deep “heartfelt” repentance is given to everyone. This means a radical cutting off of sinful habits which torture someone and those around him and a simultaneous decision to struggle to not again fall into the same faults.

Zacchaios was a chief tax collector, one would say something like a fellow presiding over the tax collectors of that time, famous and simultaneously having a bad reputation due to many financial irregularities and abuses. However he had heard about Jesus and desired to meet Him, deeply. He wanted a personal relationship with Him. So for this reason, being indifferent to the opinion of the multitude he makes a childlike movement for his position, his age, and his reputation: he goes up onto a sycamore tree to be able to see Him more easily.

### The practical repentance of Zacchaios

Christ distinguishes him from the multitude and personally addresses him. He tells him to quickly get down because on that day He would have to (“see”) him to stay at his house, receiving hospitality

## 15TH SUNDAY OF LUKE, THE GOSPEL OF LUKE 19:1-10

At that time, Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. And there was a man named Zacchaeus; he was a chief collector, and rich. And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not, on account of the crowd, because he was small of stature. So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down; for I must stay at your house today." So he made haste and came down, and received him joyfully. And when they saw it they all murmured, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one of anything, I restore it fourfold." And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man came to seek and to save the lost."

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from him. Zacchaeus quickly came down and received Him with great joy.

Everyone who saw the event began murmuring, criticizing Christ that he visited some sinner. Obviously the "sinful life" of Zacchaeus was the cover for their own envy.

Zacchaeus publicly expresses his repentance: the half of his belongings he distributes to the poor and in case of defrauding some person he gives him a fourfold restoration. We see, in other words, that with this decision of his which comes from his repentant heart, he majorly strikes the passion which troubles him more: avarice, which comprises literally the illness of soul from which "Judas also "became ill", as our Church chants during Holy Week. Then he strikes the criticism against him in the person of the other people. Defamation, criticism and slander comprise similar conditions with defamation

being lighter and slander being graver. By publicly asking for forgiveness for the graver one, he also restores the less serious ones.

## Imitators of Zacchaeus

Everyone can become imitators of Zacchaeus, at least those people with a good disposition, who really thirst to become acquainted with Christ and to seriously take the matters of their salvation. One relates with Christ existentially and with one's whole body, confessing Him with the way of his life (repentance) partaking of the Eucharistic Table, in a way so that the life of Christ is revealed as his own life, as his personal "adventure". In the port of the Church however, one passes the difficulties of the adventure together with Christ and this give meaning to all the difficulties, the hardships, the adversities, but also the fierce battle from his own self, his passions and the devil whom he will encounter. Seeking Christ's embrace in the Church we meet two wounded and bloody hands embracing everyone. The wounds, the prints of the nails, remain perpetually and make us without excuse, because they show us what He underwent out of love for man. However what each one of us forbore for Christ is truly a crucial matter.

Zacchaeus ascended the tree being indifferent to the opinion of the world. We ought to ascend some other tree, and this is none other than the Precious Cross. No matter how many the shatterings, the wounds and the fractions of our being are, let us not be daunted and let us attach them to the fruitful tree of the Cross. There we will meet the crucified body of Christ. Let us hold on tightly, our co-resurrection is certain, from this very life.