

The treasure and the heart

If the treasure of our heart is not Christ alone, it will be other things, and these merely are idols, phantasies. With these, man cannot be satiated. They sway him into a condition of false satiation. Idolatry and avarice are synonymous conditions. (Col. 3:5) which contemporary man is suffering from, par excellence. Miserable, he goes around outside of himself, ignoring the interior man, the true homeland.

So he needs to find his lost center, which is Christ. The true father, the true friend, the true brother who proved that he loves us dying on the cross for us. If someone doubts how much God loves him, he merely needs to look at the cross, which proves the measure of God's love for man and consequently He has the first and unique word in our heart.

Archim. E. T.

SUNDAY March 2, 2014 Forgiveness Sunday, Hesychius the Martyr, Our Holy Father Nicholas Planas, Andronikos & Athanasia the Martyrs, Theodotos the Holy Martyr, Bishop of Cyrenia., **Tone 3RD Eothinon 3RD. Epistle** St. Paul's First Letter to the Romans 13:11-14; 14:1-4, **Gospel** Matthew 6:14-21

NEXT SUNDAY March 9, 2014 Sunday of Orthodoxy
The Holy Forty Martyrs of Sebastia , Caesarios the Righteous
Epistle St. Paul's Letter Hebrews 12:1-10
Gospel John 1:43-51



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GENUINE SPIRITUALITY

From today's Sunday, beloved brethren, the fast of Great Lent begins. It is a spiritual "training", a stage of contesting, which will help us reach and live the great feast of Pascha. Already through the Triodion, our Church introduces us to this compunctionate climate, in opposition to the very wild parties which during the same time period, push to the opposite way of life, unfortunately swaying some people who are, in other respects, Christian.

Forgiveness

Christ said that from the love we Christians will have for each other, the other people will understand that we are His disciples. (Jn. 13:35). Many times however, our behavior becomes worse even than those people who say that they don't believe. Christ upon the cross paid off the multitude of our sins and we are not able to forgive our neighbor for something which he was at fault against us. This shows the magnitude of our ungratefulness and our spiritual blindness. So in prayer, we need to ask for strength to be able to forgive.

FORGIVENESS SUNDAY THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW 6:14-21

The Lord said, "If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

"And when you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by men but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Fasting

Is the second virtue about which today's passage speaks. Fasting is "as old as humanity" according to Basil the Great, who says that if we had fasted in Paradise then, we would not need to be fasting now. Fasting is a God-given institution, given by God Himself to the first created humans, as ascesis which would contribute to their spiritual progress. They however, as familiar, making evil use of the God-given

gift of freedom, transgressed God's commandment. Fasting must also be spiritual, that is fasting from evil thoughts, passions, evil desires, which is also much more difficult. Whoever believe that they are "good people" and don't need to fast, are deceived because how did they achieve the difficult thing and they can't manage in the easy thing? Furthermore, when the Church fasts and man is not fasting, without there being a serious reason, for example an illness, in other words, he is not respecting the institution of fasting and is moving egocentrically, then he is excommunicating himself on his own, in the sense that he is going outside the boundaries, outside the body, there where salvation doesn't exist.

Fasting also fights the egocentricity of contemporary man because in fasting he is thinking of some other person for whose sake he is fasting, Christ. A relationship is created. "He comes out" of himself and is thinking of someone else. And this other one takes this seriously in mind and intervenes in the life of the fasting person.

Fasting comprises an important ascesis for children. So for this reason also, parents, first giving the example themselves, ought to teach their children to fast. This small analogous ascesis, will make them be able to pass from the "no" to the foods and to consuming, to the "no" to the "suggestions" of the contemporary merchants of the Nations who later on will approach them.

As regards the matter of fasting and showing off, clearly one should not show off when he is fasting. Gloominess and the "warn out" appearance of someone who is fasting and which sometimes is skillfully cultivated, echoes a pharisaical spirit and we will use the phrase of the blessed Meletios of Nikopolis that pharisaism and its synonymous hypocrisy comprise "psychopathies" of the spiritual life.