

lives thus, is not judged, but has gone from death to life, from this very life.

Archim. E. T.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

In the Divine Scriptures the kingdom of God is called the kingdom of the heavens. The angel, when he brings the heavenly message to the Virgin Mary, associates this kingdom with the divine person of Jesus Christ and says that it will be unending. "of this kingdom there shall be no end". Jesus Christ, beginning His work, preaches the coming of the kingdom of the heavens. "The kingdom of the heavens has arrived".

So which and what is the kingdom of God? It is the unconfused unity and communion of the three persons of the Holy Trinity, and by extension the communion of persons, and of them as persons. Only persons, as free beings, can do communion, because that which we call communion is not the mechanical gathering of individuals, but a free relationship and unity of persons. These persons are the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the one God in heaven and the humans on earth. Here we must also add the angels, because the angels also are spiritual personal beings. So the communion of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, of God, of humans and of angels is the kingdom of God.

From the book of the reposed Bishop Dionysius L. Psarianos (Metropolitan of Kozani), *The Divine Liturgy*, Apostolic Ministry Publications.

JUNE 29 THE SUNDAY OF Peter and Paul, the Holy Apostles

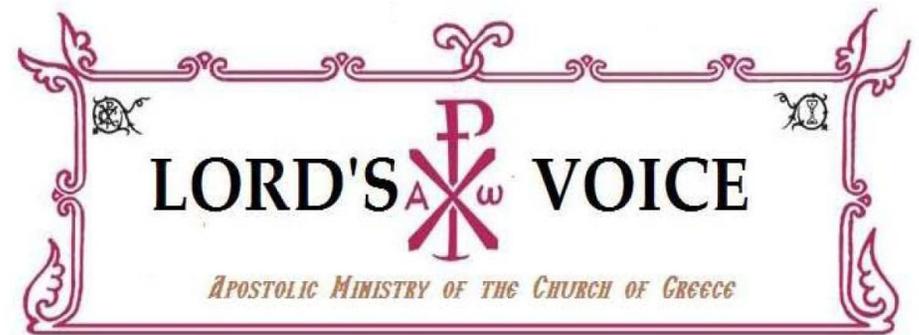
tone OF THE WEEK: Tone Second, Eothinon Third Eothinon

EPISTLE St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians 11:21-33; 12:1-9, **GOSPEL** Matthew 16:13-19

NEXT SUNDAY JULY 6 4th Sunday of Matthew, **Sisoës the Great**, Holy Apostles Archippus, Philemon and Onesimus Loukia the Virgin-martyr, Rixios and the 24 Companion Martyrs

EPISTLE St. Paul's Letter to the Romans 6:18-23

GOSPEL Matthew 8:5-13



62nd Year

July 6, 2014

Pamphlet # 27 (3188)

THE FAITH IN CHRIST OF A CENTURION

Today's gospel passage, beloved brethren in Christ, refers to the healing of the slave of a Roman humble centurion by Christ in Capernaum.

The supplication of the centurion

In the beginning the centurion asks and begs Christ to heal his servant, who is bedridden at home and is being harshly tortured. While Christ answers him that He will go to his home to heal the sick fellow, the centurion resists, because he considers himself unworthy for the Lord to visit him. Even one word of Christ from afar is enough for him and he is certain that the sick fellow will become well. He compares furthermore the curative activity of the words of Christ with the commands which he himself gives the officers under him. Christ admires the faith of the centurion and "advertises" it in the sense that He says that it exceeds the faith even of those Israelites, of the chosen people of God. Afterwards He refers to the future kingdom in which in the end people from all over the world will sit at table with him, while the supposed "son's" will be chased out of it into "the outer fire" – a clear hint of Hell. Immediately after, He addresses the centurion telling him that his servant became well, and he himself can return to his home.

4th Sunday of Matthew

The Gospel of Matthew 8:5-13

At that time, as Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came forward to him, beseeching him and saying, "Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, in terrible distress." And he said to him, "I will come and heal him." But the centurion answered him, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this,' and he does it." When Jesus heard him, he marveled, and said to those who followed him, "Truly, I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such faith. I tell you, many will come from east and west and sit at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth." And to the centurion Jesus said, "Go; be it done for you as you have believed." And the servant was healed at that very moment.

First, prayer

The prayer of the centurion is in the end the first thing which one can pay attention to. It is addressed the Christ Who is before him so that he can find a solution to his problem, which he also briefly presents. His prayer has the form of a supplication, of beseeching, in order to be heard. How many of us address the Lord with such a fervent manner? How many of us have the sense of His closeness? How many of us think only of the words we are addressing to Him, without our mind running to what is nonessential?

Much toil is truly needed, but also the overshadowing and undivided support of divine Grace, so that the mind is concentrated on the words of the prayer, whether they are being pronounced with the mouth, or are being sounded out with the mind to Christ, Who stands invisibly present, ready to hear our whatsoever problem and to give the solution that is correct for us.

Second, humility

His humility is the second thing to which we will refer. He doesn't consider himself worthy for Jesus to visit his home, just as at some time Peter who, seeing the miracle of the catch of many fish, after many nighttime toils, begs Christ to go off his boat because he considers himself sinful (Lu. 5:8).

The Christian keeping vigil many times over the noetic sea of his heart and praying all night long, discovers Christ as "edible fish of dazzling beauty" and the only thing that he can confess is that he feels himself unworthy for such a gift of divine Grace. In this way he is humbled, but also the world of prayer, of ceaseless prayer in the divine name opens up before him and inside him.

If we do not place Christ as the center of our life if it's so that it can be put together around Him, we will always be moving centrifugally, around our own self with all the harms which results from this. The selfishness of contemporary man- and of the Christian naturally- is a guide to spiritual death, to nothing and to Hell. It is the result of a culture which formulated a society of victims, who from now already is living its hell.

The crying and gnashing of teeth

The crying and gnashing of teeth about which Christ speaks are the conditions of a way of existence far from Him. This way of existence sets out from this very life, with man not wanting to live with Christ. Space and time without Christ, become an unbearable twin, a grievous yoke, two monsters. (Saint Justyn Popovich). As time passes and remaining unrepentant, he makes his choice "signing" himself, completely freely, his future habitation "in a place and shadow of death", there were he will not be able to see and live Christ.

It is fearful merely for one to think, of being in the Light, in the Love of Christ and instead of rejoicing from His glory, being adorned, brightened, constantly beautified even more, "he is in pain unto the ages". So for this reason, so long as we're living, we Christians must struggle spiritually, making room in our heart, so that Christ can come inside it and enliven it, healing its paralysis and fever. He who