

thing occurs, in other words, the illness which comes from sin, in the end, wipes out the sin. So for this reason also, Christians don't murmur in the trial of the illness, but with fortitude, they forbear the difficulties and the pains, knowing that the furnace of the illness, wiping out even the last traces of the passions from their heart, makes them "more precious utensils", more easily usable in the Palladium of the heavenly habitations.

So for this reason, they ask not for God to deliver them from the illness, but to give them His Grace for them to forbear and glorify, just like the Apostle Paul, who accepted with abundant patience, the thorn which was torturing him, even though three times he asked Christ to take it away from him (2 Cor. 12:9), without his request, in any case, being heard.

Archim. E. T.

THE PROPHET ELIJAH

In the choir of Prophets of the Old Testament, the Prophet Elijah has an eminent place, whose memory the Church celebrates today. The fact that in the New Testament his name is very often mentioned, that it was he who appeared during the Transfiguration next to Christ together with the Prophet Moses, the fact furthermore that many people in that age were taking Christ for the Prophet Elijah, all these things show his exceptional place among the Prophets and the piety and honor which the people had towards him. The Prophet Elijah is the most characteristic example of a man, who is aflame with divine zeal, whose whole being is a lit furnace of faith and dedication to God. People, like the Prophet Elijah don't know compromises and giving in. They give everything for everything. Their life is fiery and their death an ascension as to heaven "upon a fiery chariot".

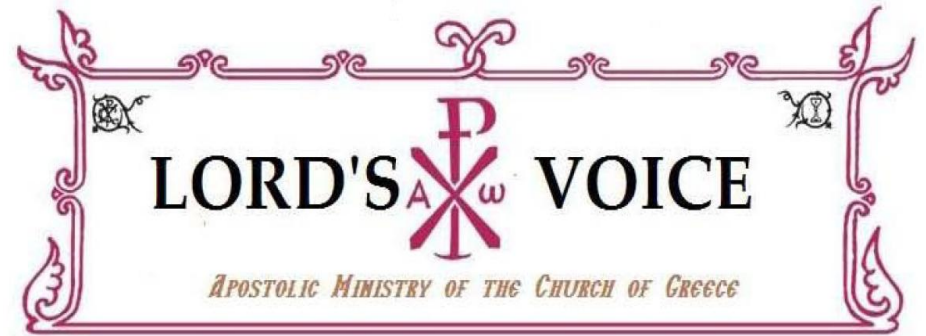
(From the publication of Apostolic Ministry, Small Synaxaristes, by the blessed Bishop Dionysios L. Psarianos)

SUNDAY July 20 6th Sunday of Matthew, The Glorious Prophet Elias

TONE OF THE WEEK: Tone Plagal First Eothinon Sixth Eothinon

EPISTLE St. James' Universal Letter 5:10-20 **GOSPEL** Matthew 9:1-18

NEXT Sunday, July 27, 2014 7th Sunday of Matthew, Panteleimon the Great Martyr, & Healer, St. Nicholas of Novgorod, the fool-for-Christ, Anthoussa the Righteous Confessor Martyrs of Thrace who were drowned, Manuel the Righteous.



62nd Year

July 20, 2014

Pamphlet # 29 (3190)

FAITH IN THE PERSON OF CHRIST HEALS

Today's gospel passage beloved brethren, refers to the healing of a paralytic by Christ. He seeing the faith of those who were transporting him, He encouraged him and forgave his sins. This actions of His troubled the Scribes and filled them with evil thoughts, which the Lord discerned and He asked them why "they are thinking evil" in their hearts. Maybe it would have been easier for Him to say "get up take up your bed and walk"? He truly tells the paralytic to do precisely this, and the paralytic, obeying got up, walked and went to his home, while the multitude of those present glorified God.

Fervent faith does miracles

It impresses us that the text says that Christ "saw" the faith of those who were transporting the paralytic. Many times God, hearing the petitions of some people, does miracles to others for whom they prayed: "the prayer of a righteous person avails much" (James 5:16). The "idolater, furthermore-Canaanite woman is such an eloquent example, who prayed to Christ, asking for the apostles' mediation first, for her absent possessed daughter, and not for herself, and she was granted the fulfillment of her request.

6th Sunday of Matthew

The Gospel of Matthew 9:1-8

At that time, getting into a boat Jesus crossed over and came to his own city. And behold, they brought to him a paralytic, lying on his bed; and when Jesus saw their faith he said to the paralytic, "Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven." And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, "This man is blaspheming." But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say 'Rise and walk?' But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins" he then said to the paralytic -- "Rise, take up your bed and go home." And he rose and went home. When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men.

Faith in whom?

There are many people "who are anxious and troubled about many things", with unexpected and many gaps in their, as regards the other things, advertized education who in speaking about the miracles of Christ, which they also clearly don't accept, refer to suggestions, auto-suggestions, self convictions etc.

Even though in cases of anxieties, light phobias, some harmful habits etc., self-conviction, auto-suggestion, the strong influence which a trusted person of a strong character exerts on us, or even also the influence on our own self, can play a temporary suspending role, what do the specific disputants have to tell us about the cures of the blind, the lame, the paralytics, the deaf and dumb, the lepers etc. which Christ performed? With suggestions, faith in their own selves, did they regain their sight, their speech, the lost members of their body or did they even return back to life? It would be silly for one to even think of it! Thus the person ends

up, who refuses to believe in the miracle he sees before him, showing the wickedness of his disposition.

In the end, it is the specific faith in the specific person, in other words, in Jesus Christ, the Son of God and God, which works miracles and not an abstract faith in "someone", "somewhere". This faith they, who were also transporting the paralytic of today's Gospel, also had, why not the paralytic also.

Sin and sickness

Christ associates the sin with the sickness, He relates them, in a way so that everyone understands, that the paralysis of the sick fellow of today's Gospel, is due to his sins. This does not always happen. Elsewhere the Lord, when He was asked about the cause of the blindness of the man born blind, said that neither he had sinned, nor his parents, but this occurred "so that the works of God could be revealed in him" (Jn. 9:2).

The first paralytic upon the earth was Cain, because he murdered his brother Abel. God told him that from that moment, he would be sighing and trembling upon the earth (Gen. 4:12). The cause of Abel's paralysis was the murder of his brother.

From Adam's disobedience and after, sin entered the human race and became cause of the general and widespread henceforth corruption, with the final result being the physical – at least – death: "for the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). So for this reason, Christ here, forgives first the cause of death, sin and then He grants health to the paralytic. First He renews him spiritually, and then physically.

The "great resourcefulness" of God

So the first cause in general of illnesses is sin. However God is "very resourceful", or rather very skillful according to Saint Chrysostom. This means that He uses a misfortune as is illness, sickness, for the advantage of the sick person, in other words, it improves him spiritually, it familiarizes him with the coming and always present Kingdom of His, and grants him eternity. The odd