

Spirit: these are what comprises the loan. In the area of the Church we are called to utilize them and increase both the talents which each one of us received, as well as the gifts and the heavenly grants which we receive, in the best possible manner. At the end of the spiritual journey or also in between, the believer offers his whole being sanctified to God. This is tantamount to the paying off of the loan. In the journey, mistakes, and missing the mark, and falls, are not unlikely, through which one is humbled. The humble person will not despair, but he will quickly hasten on bended knees to the all-compassionate God saying again the "be longsuffering with me and I will render everything to you".

Let us imitate the philanthropy and compassion-loving of the king of the parable and let us remain, beloved brethren, far from mechanical worship, which comprises the spiritual cancer of today's age, argumentativeness and harshness and unyielding before the letter of the ecclesiastical law. The letter kills, the spirit and Grace enliven. Recognizing this spirit, we will learn to be longsuffering and the temptation to put down and condemn our neighbor "for whom Christ died" will remain to the degree possible, far from us.

Archim. E. T.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 24, 2014 11th Sunday of Matthew, Eutyches the Hieromartyr & Disciple of St. John the Theologian, Saint Cosmas of Aetolia, Equal to the Apostles, The Translation of the Relics of Dionysios of Zakynthos, Bishop of Aegina, The Translation of the Holy Relics of Saint Peter, Metropolitan of Moscow

tone of the week: Tone Second **Eothinon** Eleventh Eothinon

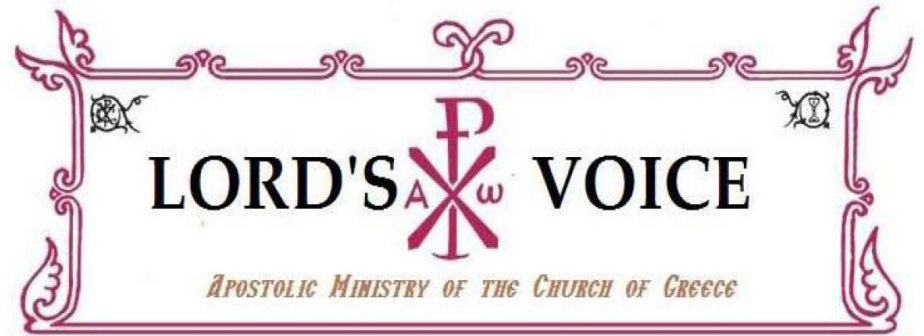
EPISTLE St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 9:2-12

GOSPEL Matthew 18:23-35

NEXT SUNDAY, AUGUST 31, 2014 12th Sunday of Matthew The Placing of the Honorable Sash of the Most Holy Theotokos, Cyprian the Hieromartyr & Bishop of Carthage, Gennadius Scholarus, Patriarch of Constantinople.

EPISTLE St. Paul's Letter to Hebrews 9:1-7

GOSPEL Matthew 19:16-26



62nd Year

AUGUST 24, 2014

Pamphlet # 34 (3195)

LOVE FOR GOD AND NEIGHBOR

In today's gospel reading, beloved brethren, Christ relates the parable of the ungrateful servant. A certain king wanted to settle accounts with his servants. He called the first one, who owed him 10,000 talents. He didn't have them, however, to return them to him. Then the king said that he, his wife, his children and whatever he had, should be sold, in order to pay off the debt. The servant knelt and begged the king to give him a little time to render whatever he owed him. And so it happened. Upon returning, the servant meets, on the road, a colleague of his, who owed him an unimportant amount. He began forcing him, literally placing a noose on his neck, for him to return them to him. The latter, not being able to respond, asked him for a little deadline, but the first servant was unyielding and locked him in prison, until he would pay it off. The other servants who saw the event and were also witnesses of the king's leniency to the first servant, went and mentioned in detail to the king, what happened. The king called the uncompassionate servant and asked him why he did not have mercy on his brother, since he also, a little while before, received mercy from his master. Furthermore the amount was much smaller. Then he handed him over to the torturers until he would render what was owed. Christ in conclusion says that neither will our heavenly Father forgive us if we do not forgive our brethren.

11th Sunday of Matthew

The Gospel of Matthew 18:23-35

The Lord said this parable: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began the reckoning, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents; and as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him the lord of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. But that same servant, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat he said, 'Pay what you owe.' So his fellow servant fell down and besought him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' He refused and went and put him in prison till he should pay the debt. When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you besought me; and should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his lord delivered him to the jailors, till he should pay all his debt. So also my heavenly Father will do to everyone of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."

Pharisaical faith

In the previous sermon we spoke about the benefit of prostrations. Here, we see the ungrateful servant kneeling before his master, in order to receive what he longed for, but in the end his heart remains firmly directed towards unyielding and harshness. Neither did the prostrations, nor the king's philanthropy and compassion, change him.

Many, by analogy, are those Christians who rest in external piety, but internally they're full of pride, puffiness, egotism, arrogance, conceit and this shows in their relationship with their neighbor, before whom they show a legalistic type of harshness and the self satisfaction which leads them from a spiritual viewpoint, without the psychological parameters being missing, to a private type of theology of putting down their neighbor and of acclaiming themselves to be infallible.

The crucifactory sacrifice of Christ

Upon the Cross, Christ tore up the manuscript of our sins once and for all. Our sins are innumerable. The blood of the Lord which painted the Precious Wood, wiped out our debts. The body and blood of Christ which we receive in the Divine Liturgy, with the sufficient preparation according to our ability, washes off every stain and filth from us. Before such a great gift of God, what do we do? We're not able to forgive the small or the big mistake of our neighbor, even toward us? How will Christ forgive us?

When we recite the "Our Father", let's pay attention to the words we are saying: We are begging the Lord to remit our debts, having however as a given that we also are forgiving the debts of our neighbor toward us no matter which and how many these are. In comparison with those which Christ has forgiven us, those which we are called to forgive are "a drop in the ocean". Consequently, if someone would maintain that we are saying lies in the "Our Father," he would clearly not be wrong.

The unpaid off loan

Saint Gregory Palamas mentions that we are all able to come to the position of the ungrateful servant. The word of God is the unpaid off loan. When we participate in the sacramental life of the Church, we are adorned with the annointings of the Holy