

The holy Altar Table comprises really both Golgotha and the Tomb, "a place" of crucifixion and resurrection together, of ascension and a real Pentecost of those participating.

During the Great Entrance we also are really accompanying Christ in His journey to Golgotha. This journey of our cocrucifixion with Him, is followed by our coburial "through" the Holy Altar Table in a manner which extends and embraces our mind in His "burial" in our heart. After the cocrucifixion and coburial with Christ communing His body and blood, our coresurrection follows with Him from here and unto the ages.

Thus the Cross of Christ becomes literally the gate, the strait through which we encounter our living Christ and God, with our heart, body and our soul.

Archim. E. T.

SUNDAY, SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2014 Sunday before Holy Cross, The Forefeast of the Nativity of the Theotokos, Sozon the Martyr, Kassiani the Hymnographer, Euodos and Onesiphoros, Apostles of the 70, John the Wonderworker of Novgorod.

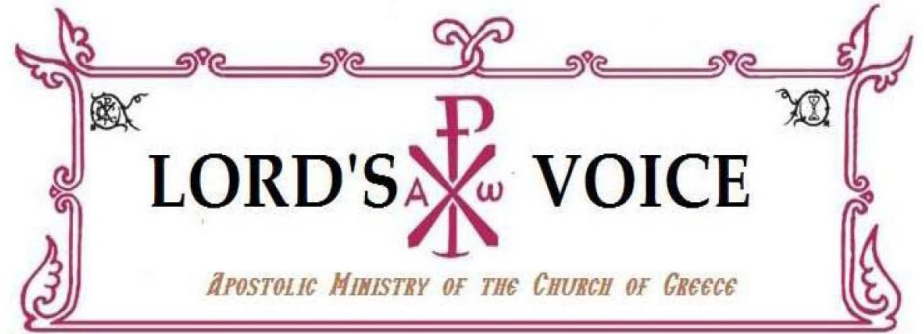
TONE OF THE WEEK: Tone Fourth **Eothinon** Second Eothinon

EPISTLE St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 6:11-18,, **GOSPEL** John 3:13-17

NEXT SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2014 The Elevation of the Venerable and Life-Giving Cross Commemoration of the 6th Ecumenical Council

EPISTLE St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 1:18-24

GOSPEL John 19:6-11, 13-20, 25-28, 30



62nd Year

SEPTEMBER 7, 2014

Pamphlet # 36 (3197)

THE CROSS OF CHRIST AS THE CENTER OF OUR LIFE

This Sunday, beloved brethren, is called the "Sunday before the Elevation" and the following Sunday is called "after the Elevation". This occurs because between, the following Sunday, we will celebrate "the Universal Elevation of the Precious and Lifegiving Cross" and as an event the Elevation shadows, colors the festive atmosphere of the whole week. The Lord in the beginning mentions that there was no person who ascended to heaven and learned, felt, saw the heavenly realities and taught them to man, except only God who incarnated, in other words Jesus Christ Himself (P. Trembelas).

The copper snake

Subsequently the passage refers to the miraculous episode of the Old Testament (Numbers 21), during the journey of the Israelite people in the desert, deadly snakes appeared which were killing the ungrateful people. Many died resulting in the remaining people repenting. They asked Moses, and he asked God and He gave a strange commandment to Moses. He told him to construct a copper snake and to attach it on a pole. Subsequently.

Sunday before Holy Cross

The Gospel of John 3:13-17

The Lord said, "No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him."

to elevate it on a high place. Whatever Israelite would be bitten by the snake and would elevate his eyes to the copper snake, would become well from the poisonous bite

The correspondence of the foreshadowing is obvious: just as the copper snake which is hanging is dead, thus dead also is the crucified body of Christ, since also as regards sin it is dead. And just as the Israelites were being healed from the venomous bites of the poisonous snakes, thus also every Christian, with faith gazing at the crucified body of the Lord, is healed from some other "bites", much more dangerous, which the demons and passions cause us. Thus, he who with such a manner believes in Christ, he, in other words who takes His Cross and alters it to an event of his personal adventure is not lost, but gains eternal life together with Christ.

Another correspondence can also be made: giving attention to the advice of the snake in Paradise Eve, and keeping it

subsequently together with Adam, they lost Paradise and together with them the whole human race which came from them.

A strange foreshadowing

It is a little strange and daring for our Christ to be foreshadowed with a snake. Let us not be scandalized! "Just as the snake was elevated in the desert, thus the Son of man must also be elevated." The snake is a likening of Christ, not real and consequently without poison. In the same manner Christ put on human flesh and condemned human sin in his own sinless flesh. He became "a curse" for us in order to save us from the curse (Gal. 3:13). A wretched sight and hearing upon the Cross is the sinless God, in order to save us from sin. He became a mother, father, brother, sister, and friend for us. (Sacred Chrysostom). And as the Apostle Paul says, God allowed Christ who did not come to know sin from experience, to be condemned as a sinner for our sake, so that through our union with Him, for us to also become the righteousness of God. (2 Cor. 5:21).

Precisely at the moment of His death on the Cross, He brought about a triumphant victory against the devil and the opposing powers of darkness. It is the moment of His greatest glory, so for this reason we don't consider the Crucifixion an offensive but a glorified Elevation.

The union with Christ

In the Divine Liturgy we are united with Christ. We believers live the whole life of the Lord from His birth up to even the Ascension and Pentecost. The Cross has a central position in this spiritual feast, where the heavenly and the earthly contain each other. One can think of how many times we do the sign of the cross during the sacred services.