

having commemorated hundreds, probably even thousands of names of the living and the deceased, feeling like their father, of all who existed, who do exist and who will exist until Love “closes” the ages, as the preexisting Lord, coming, having come and going to come. The Priest becomes his fellow traveler in this journey. And a foreign conception occurs in the heart of the Priest. He feels the glory of Light coming from the future, from the end times: He lives the end times. He’s completely indifferent toward all the private eschatologies which now lately trouble and torture the people of God. This occurs because a private eschatology comes from a private theology, often with a startling character, foreign to the ecclesiastical event which makes us persons related with each other “in spirit and truth” and not neurotic individuals who go about only around their own self dancing the dance of death already from here.

May the Lord “who was born in a cave and lay in a manger”, with the intercessions of Joseph the betrothed grant us unshaking and unharmed faith, so that already from now and from here, we live the true Christmas in our heart, beloved brethren.

Archim. E. T.

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2014, SUNDAY AFTER NATIVITY, 20,000**

*Martyrs burned in Nicomedia, Holy Martyr Glycerus, Simon the Myrrhbearer, Founder of Simonopetra, Monastery of Mount Athos , Afterfeast of the Nativity*

**TONE OF THE WEEK: Tone 4<sup>th</sup>, Eothinon 7<sup>th</sup> Eothinon**

**EPISTLE** St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 1:11-19

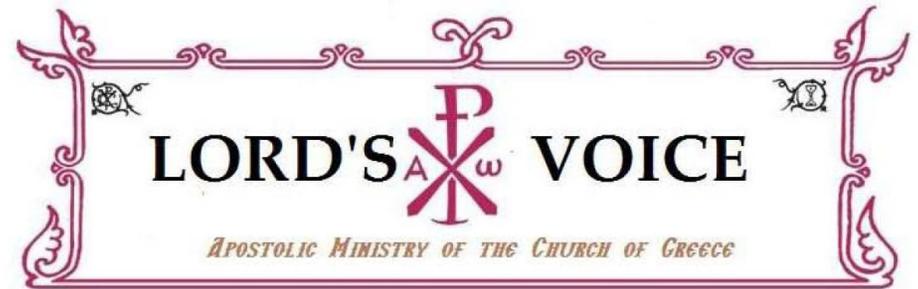
**GOSPEL** Matthew 2:13-23

**NEXT SUNDAY, JANUARY 4, 2015 SUNDAY BEFORE EPIPHANY ,**

*Synaxis of the 70 Holy Apostles , Our Righteous Father Theoctistus, Abbot of Cucomo in Sicily ,Forefeast of the Theophany of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ , Zosimos the Monk and Athanasios the Notary, Righteous Apollinaria the Senator, Martyrs Chrysanthos and Euphemia , Righteous Euthymios the Younger, New Martyr Onuphrios, Righteous Euthymios of Vatopedi, Righteous John Scholarios, Eustathios Archbishop of Serbia.*

**EPISTLE** St. Paul's Letter to Timothy 4:5-8

**GOSPEL** Mark 1:1-8



62<sup>nd</sup> Year

December 28, 2014

Pamphlet #52 (3213)

## CHRIST CAME TO WIN AND HE WILL WIN!

In today's – the last in the series - gospel passage of the year, beloved brethren, the post feast of Christmas, we see Joseph the betrothed coming to the head of the scene as an example of uncomplaining, mainly however unwavering obedience to the divine will. Three times the angel of the Lord appears to him and tells him to proceed to specific actions. And all three times he obeys without protest, certain furthermore that he is also taking part in the plan of divine Economy which is unfolding before him.

They also refer in the text to prophecies of Hosea and Jeremiah about the flight to Egypt and about the slaughter of the infants respectively.

The passage concludes with Joseph with the Theotokos and Christ returning, after Joseph was first assured from above, that they who wanted to murder the divine Infant have now died. In the end, Nazareth is selected as a place of residence and not Judaea, because Herod Antipas, who was the ruler there, was less harsh than Archelaos of Judea. Thus the prophecies are also fulfilled that Christ will be called the Nazarene.

### The seeming defeats

It seems from a first glance that Christ is being persecuted, is being defeated. He knows refugehood. He departs from his homeland. Thus also a Christian in his life, seems to undergo exhausting trials and series defeats, something which the Apostle Paul does not omit to mention also. Our Church itself in her journey.

## SUNDAY AFTER NATIVITY

### THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW 2:13-23

When the wise men departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there till I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." And he rose and took the child and his mother by night, and departed to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt have I called my son."

Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, was in a furious rage, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time which he had ascertained from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they were no more." But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." And he rose and took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaos reigned over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. And he went and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, "He shall be called a Nazarene.

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experienced fearful persecutions from bloodthirsty emperors, but also from unrepentant heretics,

Just precisely as Christ was leaving his last breath upon the cross, knowing in his humanity complete weakness and annihilation, he descended to the tomb as a common mortal, thus also his body, the

Church, seems to be shaken-and truly-from the trials, nevertheless in the end, she wins because she has been founded upon the blood of her innumerable martyrs, who don't do anything else than to continue the life of Christ.

In the end however, as today's Gospel says "those who are seeking the soul of the child have died", and the child proceeds unobstructedly and victoriously to his work. In the end Christ resurrects and dissolves the darkness and the fear of death forever.

### The usefulness of defeat for a Christian

Many times in the life of a Christian, moments come where it seems that God has abandoned him. Moments, where someone feels in his life the mortal presence of the devil. Precisely then, the time has come when a Christian ought to address himself to the only one who is able to save, with a strong cry and tears, and if he persists in this saving cry, victory is certain.

It happens many times during the spiritual life that a believer with the help of fasting, of vigilance and of prayer, but also of a careful life, receives spiritual crowns. However the All-Good God diligently hides the victories from him, which are truly many, and diligently-also-brings before his eyes the defeats he has undergone so that he does not become puffed up. Thus this training of the Lord for man proves very useful, so that humbly and safely he sails without danger in the ocean of the present life for the Jerusalem above.

Merely great patience is necessary and the blessed persistence of a little child, allow us to say, for one to stand attached without wandering to the divine will, just like Joseph the betrothed, who is being commented on, in the gospel text.

### The Divine Liturgy is the true Christmas

The priest in the Divine Liturgy, in a spiritual manner and in a liturgical time and in a noetic place, lives as spiritual changes of age, the whole life of Christ. Truly before the sacred Prothesis he experiences the Nativity, he says the corresponding words and finds himself before the Cave. He swaddles Christ with the precious covers and the aer,