

The main thing, there is the certain hope of recompense from the just Judge! We were not made to be permanent in this life of toils and pain, but in order to live in the unending eternity of divine love and presence. And this is so precious and high, that human powers do not suffice for it to be conquered, so for this reason also "it is a perfect gift coming down from above".

Simultaneously however, it is so necessary for man, that he can only merely struggle for this, convincing God to grant it to him.

In the new year, let our longing be God-loving and our life, truly in Christ, so that we draw God's blessing and strength from on high for whatsoever we do. Amen

Archim. I. N.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 4, 2015 SUNDAY BEFORE EPIPHANY, *Synaxis of the 70 Holy Apostles, Our Righteous Father Theoctistus, Abbot of Cuomo 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.*

TONE OF THE WEEK: Tone 5th, **Eothinon** 8th Eothinon

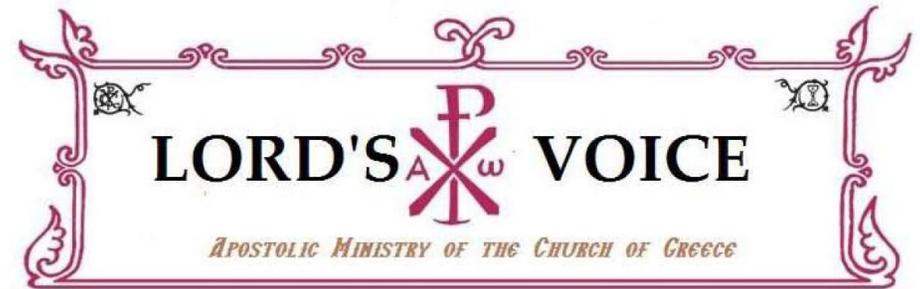
EPISTLE St. Paul's Letter to Timothy 4:5-8

GOSPEL Mark 1:1-8

NEXT SUNDAY, JANUARY 11, 2015 SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY, *Our righteous Theodosius the Cenobiarch, Vitalis of Gaza, Afterfeast of the Theophany of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

EPISTLE St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 4:7-13

GOSPEL Matthew 4:12-17



63rd Year

January 4, 2015

Pamphlet #01 (3214)

THE USE OF TIME

The beginning of one more year in the endless course of time. A beginning which our Church faces as a cause for self critique, for decisions, but also for a grateful evaluation of the gifts of God in our life. And in order to help us in the use of this time, she offers today's Epistle reading, with which an example and an invitation are presented. The example is the way in which the Apostle Paul lived, toiling for that certain hope of the love of our Christ, and the invitation is the exhortation to Timothy, a faithful disciple and follower, to live in the same way. The way "of those who have loved his appearance".

In the previous feast, of Christmas, the incarnate love of God is grasped. He takes on human nature and reforms it in the person of Christ, in order to grant us, not only salvation from the domination of the passions, of corruption, of death, of sin, but also the great gift of Sanctification and of Theosis. And just as we are walking to Theophany, to "our enlightenment", our Church calls us to understand the magnitude of this gift and to be worthy of it with the way of our life in order not only for us, but also for all the others to enjoy its results also.

Why was the time of our life given to us?

Essentially our Church, in the beginning of the year, projects why the time of our life was given to us. It was not given

SUNDAY BEFORE EPIPHANY

ST. PAUL'S SECOND LETTER TO TIMOTHY 4:5-8

Prokeimenon. Mode Plagal 2.

Psalm 27.9,1

O Lord, save your people and bless your inheritance.

Verse: To you, O Lord, I have cried, O my God.

TIMOTHY, my son, always be steady, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil your ministry.

For I am already on the point of being sacrificed; the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

to us for us to be tortured by the happenstances of life or for us to have a good time, being indifferent about everything going on around us. It was not given to us for us to work constantly or to be agonizing hopelessly about tomorrow. It was not given to us for us to chase dreams which are never realized or to fight everyone and everything in the name of utopian ideologies, which tyrannize our soul. It was given to us for us to try Sanctification and to reach Theosis. The expression is theoretical and so for this reason also, the Apostle Paul makes it practical.

“Be vigilant”, he says first of all to Timothy. In other words, keep vigil so that you prevent possible mishaps in the eyes of God and so that whatever you do is a result of right-mindedness and prudence. There is no extra time for superficialities, while much more so, for intentional mistakes. The time of our life is a fearfully precious gift for us to squander, not

only in whatever is not to our advantage, but also in whatever simply does not benefit us.

“Endure suffering”, he says, afterwards. He gives the criteria so that we proceed in the dilemmas of life. When we don't know what path to select, it has been proven that the path of sacrifice, which gives us greater difficulty, is also the most correct, the most effective and worthy one to traverse. Christ first taught us this, by voluntarily selecting the path toward Golgotha.

“Do the work of an evangelist”. Struggle to change the world by changing your own self, inundating him with streams of the Gospel. And this Gospel message, hypostasize it in your daily life with the way of the spiritual life, so that the rest of the people also gain an example.

“Fulfil your ministry”. That which has been entrusted to you, make it full, complete it. Not half jobs, especially in spiritual things. That which God has entrusted to you, do not leave in the middle. If he has given you the struggle of patience, be patient unto the end. If he has given you a family, accept its burdens joyfully. If he has allowed illness, do not cower, do not murmur, live the joy of life in the Lifegiver. If he has allowed anything whatsoever, face it as exams which you are taking in order to be proven worthy of divine love. In any case, do not abandon it, complete it!

The sense of fullness and the experience of holiness

And if all the above occurs, then what happens? The time of life flows for every person. If however, it flows in spiritual dimensions, then there is deep satisfaction, if not of the achievement of the result, for certain of the effort. There is the comfort of the conscience, the experience of the journey in the path which is Christ, the security of the truth of faith, the joy that the struggle was given. In each case there is the sense of fullness, if not also the experience of holiness.