

Christ they were not able to deny Him because something like that would be tantamount to denying their own self.

It is presented however, also for one more reason. In order to stress that no one is shown forth a martyr, if he first doesn't traverse this path of spiritual preparation. The martyr does not become a saint with the martyrdom, but he shows forth with the martyrical death, the holiness which he has previously achieved with the manner of his life. Paul, writing to the Church of Rome, describes essentially from his experience, his own journey in holiness, whereas simultaneously preparing the Church there for his move to Rome, he also implies the end of his life on earth, the martyrdom, for which he is proceeding, prepared.

Many are they who depart from this life with a violent death. This makes them sympathetic, primarily in the eyes of God, who also has the right of judgment. It does not make them however, by necessity martyrs also. The martyr of our Church is characterized by the fact that he's not dragged, but proceeds to the sacrifice freely and of his own will, in order to deposit in this manner his own witness about the love of God to his creature and the superiority of spiritual life. Neither fanaticism, nor stubbornness, nor a psychological forcing and guiding have a place in this journey. The love of our Christ and the confession of the experience of this love has the only place

Archim. I. N.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2015 SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN AND

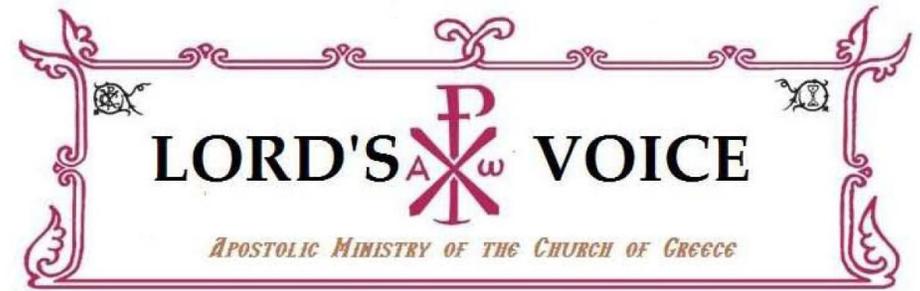
PHARISEE: *Triodion Begins Today, Forefeast of the Presentation of Our Lord and Savior in the Temple, Trypho the Martyr, Perpetua & her Companions, Timothy the Confessor, Bridget of Ireland, Our Holy Father Basil, Archbishop of Thessalonica, Anastasios the New Martyr of Nafplion.*

tone of the week: First Tone, **Eothinon** 1st Eothinon

EPISTLE St. Paul's Letter the Romans 8:28-39, **GOSPEL** Luke 18:10-14

NEXT SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2015 SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON,

Theodore the Commander & Great Martyr, The Holy Prophet Zacharias (Zachariah), Nicephoros & Stephanos the Martyrs, Afterfeast of the Presentation of Our Lord and Savior in the Temple **EPISTLE** St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 6:12-20 **GOSPEL** Luke 15:11-32



63rd Year

February 1, 2015

Pamphlet # 05 (3218)

THE EXPERIENCE

Thick in meanings today's epistle reading, which is presented in honor of the holy glorious martyr Tryphon, but also the rest of the Martyrs who concelebrate. Its purpose is to describe the new life which the Holy Spirit grants to whoever casts off fleshliness and end up sons of God by grace. And its difficulty lies in that conditions are described comprehensible and approachable only to whoever has similar experiences.

Truly, the condition of spiritual life is not understood, but it is realized. It is a living experience and not brain knowledge. The Chrysostomian language in order to show the difficulty of the matter said: "I cannot describe the sweetness of honey to whoever has never eaten honey and he won't be able to understand what I'm telling him. He simply needs to eat honey, in order to understand about what thing we're speaking". And whoever has not tasted the spiritual life, cannot through a theoretical text, understand about what thing we're speaking. He has to live in order to taste its sweetness and the comfort which it offers man.

Man's effort to approach God

The Church presents the specific text, not only because it juxtaposes the "future glory" to the "sufferings of the present time", but also because it is a text which laconically describes man's difficulties in his effort to approach God, as also the benefits

St. Paul's Letter the Romans 8:28-39

Prokeimenon. Mode 4. Psalm 15.3,8

Among the saints who are in his land, the Lord has been wondrous.

Verse: I see the Lord before me continually.

Brethren, we know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

What then shall we say to this? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, will he not also give us all things with him? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies; who is to condemn? Is it Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, "For thy sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

which arise for everyone from this approaching. The danger of fleshliness is noted, in other words, for man to live under the terms of fleshly desires only for the here and now, whereas it is underlined that this chases away the Spirit of God and abolishes spirituality, but also the results of the Resurrection. The abolition

of the spirit of servitude is stressed in our relationship with God and its replacement with the event of our adoption, so that the fear can be wiped out and God can be lived as a Father. The submission of creation to corruption and death is described darkly, in order for the hope of its freedom to be shown forth in the condition of "the glory of the children of God", in other words, in holiness, a proof that man's spiritual condition does not only concern himself, but also his atmosphere, living and lifeless.

The admission of human weakness occurs, merely in order for the assurance to be presented that "the Spirit also helps our infirmities", and furthermore enlightens in the what and how man should pray, since many times we also are ignorant of this.

Afterwards it is ascertained that whoever loves God, is only benefited, since everything even contrary conditions, lead to "good". Love for God makes us "conform" to Christ, since we are called to his faith, in order to end up righteous and inheritors of the heavenly glory. Subsequently it is underlined that from there on God greatly defends his own people against every "affliction or distress, or persecution or starvation or nakedness or danger or sword." "Nevertheless we defeat everything through him who loved us". When holiness is lived, no power is able to separate us from the love of God, since the absolute defeats the related, everything defeats the nothing, fullness abolishes the emptiness.

The completion of the spiritual journey with the crown of martyrdom

Why is such a theoretical reading presented in the memory of martyrs? Naturally, in order to explain the how and why they were able to defeat the fear of death and, just like our Christ, voluntarily and of their own will they sacrificed their lives for this love of Christ. The intense spiritual experience, that they ended up "conformed" to Christ, led them to the completion of their spiritual journey with the crown of martyrdom. Having lived