

Sanctification of the body, sanctification of man

My brethren, our Church stands with exceptional awe before the human body. Not only because it has the notification from the Apostle Paul that it is the temple of the Holy Spirit, but because also her experience leads her to confess that man's sanctification sets out from the body's sanctification. So for this reason also, our Church implements all her saving Mysteries on the human body. She baptizes the body in the baptismal font, anoints the body with chrism, man opens his mouth and communes the immaculate Body and the precious Blood of our Christ, the holy Unction is implemented on the body, man bows his knee beneath the Spiritual Father's Stole in sacred confession, the ring is placed on the finger and the marriage crown on the head, the ordainee bends his knee again before the Holy Altar Table and submits his head beneath the Bishop's hand in the mystery of the Priesthood. But also with his mouth, man confesses faith, with the leader mind he makes God-loving and holy decisions guiding the body, with the ears and with the mind he accepts the Gospel's delivering message, conforming his life accordingly.

Our body exists for human dignity to be shown forth, for the freedom of the human person to be preserved, for it to end up a habitation of the Holy Spirit.

Archim. I. N.

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*

TONE OF THE WEEK: 2nd Tone, **Eothinon** 2nd Eothinon

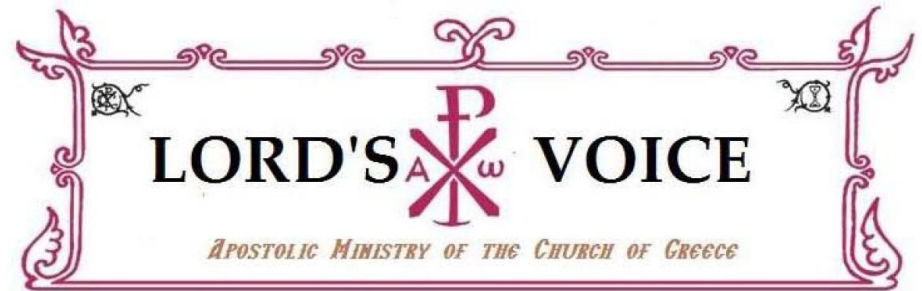
EPISTLE *St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 6:12-20,*

GOSPEL *Luke 15:11-32*

NEXT SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2015 JUDGMENT SUNDAY (MEATFARE SUNDAY), *Onesimus the Apostle of the 70, Our Righteous Father Anthimus the Elder of Chios, Eusebius the Righteous of Syria*

EPISTLE *St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 8:8-13; 9:1-2*

GOSPEL *Matthew 25:31-46*



63rd Year

February 8, 2015

Pamphlet # 06 (3219)

THE HONOR TO THE HUMAN BODY

As we prepare for our introduction to the most contestive and dynamic period of the year, Holy and Great Lent, our Church presents today's Epistle reading, in order to stress on the one hand, that whatever will follow during the dawning spiritual period, aims at killing the passions and not killing the body, on the other hand, that honoring the human body, which it reaches the point of characterizing as a temple "of the Holy Spirit in us", it is rendered in a way that no one had previously managed to.

The ancient pauperization of the human body

Truly, before our Christ and His saving preaching, the human body was faced in various ways without an essential balancing in its perception being achieved. Whoever had transcendental seekings and concerns, faced it as a jail or prison of the soul, as something evil, that prevents the spiritual element from ascending. Whoever again had more materialistic views of life, usually were led to the other extreme, facing the human body in a flesh-worshipping perspective and using it analogously. In the years of the Roman domination when the Apostle Paul wrote what we heard today, the human body and more generally human life had been led to fearful devaluation and humiliation.

St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 6:12-20

Prokeimenon. Mode 1.

Psalm 32.22,1

Let your mercy, O Lord, be upon us.

Verse: Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous.

Brethren, "all things are lawful for me," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be enslaved by anything. "Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food" -- and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two shall become one flesh." But he who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Shun immorality. Every other sin which a man commits is outside the body; but the immoral man sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body and in your spirit which belong to God.

The harsh condition of slavery undermined human value to the state of merchandize, simultaneously making the slave equal to the animal. In the framework of the food customs or even also, forms of worship, in the name of false gods, the human was dehumanized and faced completely in a utilitarian and flesh-worshipping manner. Finally the hardening of humanity's soul by the constant wars, the bloody battles, the slaughters and beastly revenges, combined with the lack of moral barriers and the unhesitating character of the leaders then, had created familiarity

with violent death, murder, suicide and in general with whatsoever destroys human life, makes the body wretched and fragments the conscience, creating vast pain.

We are not benefitted writing the above, it is necessary however, for us to remind in what a contrary climate the Word of God was formulated, how challenging it was in that age, as also in today's, but also in every age, as also how necessary and beneficial for the salvation of humanity from its mistakes, so that we don't say from its crimes. John Chrysostom, when he referred to these confessed, "I'm ashamed saying these things". He continued however, saying that he is forced to say them in order to benefit his listeners, doing whatever the doctor also does, who in his effort to heal the sick person, gets dirty from his blood without being bothered or being ashamed from this.

The Christian sacredness of the human body

So to what view of the human body and more generally of man, did the Word of God guide us? He couldn't have found a better characterization than to indicate it as the temple of the Holy Spirit. In other words, as par excellence sacred and worthy of respect and honor. Sacredness, respect, honor which is not claimed only by the others, but is imposed by the way of man's spiritual life, himself. The Apostle Paul stresses what downgrades the sacredness of the human person and by extension the human body, indicating the looseness concerning sexual morals and the flesh-worshipping train of thought which it creates, as the main culprit. This silences man's conscience, abolishes love, one-sidedly and oppressively shows forth a functioning of the human body to the detriment of every other function, while it abolishes the person's freedom. On the contrary, the blood of Christ, His delivering sacrifice, gives such honor to human nature, that it leads it to glorify God with its sanctification.