

## WEEK OF EXTERNAL MISSION

Witness of faith and hope

The Office of External Missions of the Apostolic Ministry of the Church of Greece strives for the following:

- Spreading the word of God, especially in the countries of Africa and Asia.
- Monthly payment of native clergymen.
- A monthly bonus for widows of reposed native clergymen.
- A monthly bonus for clergymen and lay people from Greece who are working in a missionary manner in Africa and Asia.
- The erection and supplying of churches, missionary establishments, schools, small hospital units.
- The translation of sacred services and catechetical books in local languages of the African continent.
- The publication of books in which matters of health are described, as well as the manner of prevention and facing endemic illnesses in the countries of Mission Work.
- Informing and training colleagues of missionary groups.
- Organizing the Week of External Missions.
- Student scholarships.
- Missionary Seminar.
- "Panta ta Ethni" [i.e. "All Nations"]: a tri-monthly missionary magazine.
- We thank you for your support of our missionary work. The number of the bank Account of the National Bank: 146/558074-94.

**SUNDAY, MARCH 1, 2015 SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY**, *The Holy Righteous Martyr Eudocia the Samaritan, Andonina the New Martyr.*

**tone of the week:** Plagal 1<sup>st</sup> Tone, **Eothinon** 5<sup>th</sup> Eothinon

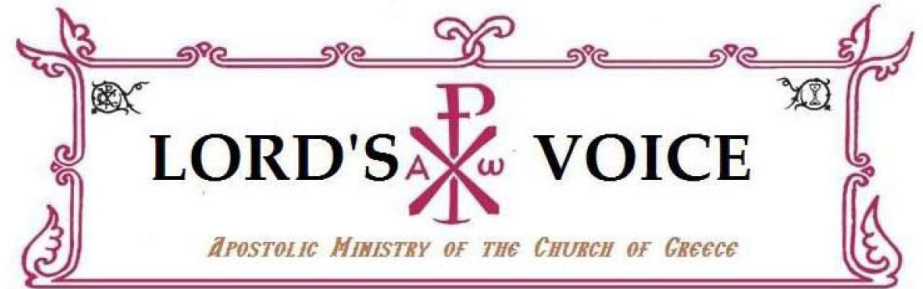
**EPISTLE** St. Paul's First Letter to Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-40

**GOSPEL** John 1:43-51

**SUNDAY, MARCH 8, 2015 SUNDAY OF ST. GREGORY PALAMAS**, *Theophylact the Confessor, Bishop of Nicomedia, Hermas the Apostle of the 70, Paul the Confessor, Dometios the Righteous*

**EPISTLE** St. Paul's First Letter to Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-40

**GOSPEL** John 1:43-51



63<sup>rd</sup> Year

MARCH 1, 2015

Pamphlet # 09 (3222)

## THE ATTITUDE OF SACRIFICE

Just as Orthodoxy celebrates her triumph "against all the heresies", the Epistle reading gives the measure of celebration. It does not turn in a scolding manner against the heresies, nor does it speak triumphantly rewarding the tributes to the protagonists of victory. Furthermore, according to the Church's self conscience, she has no reason to do it. The first ones, whoever fell into heresy and persist in it, are a cause for mourning for the loss of their immortal soul, but also because they become cause for others to fall, who are weak spiritually, who hasten to follow them on the path of altering the divine Revelation. The second ones, whoever struggled for Orthodoxy, are not doing it in order to enjoy an earthly "bravo", but in defending the truth they had in their mind God's judgment, from whom they also await the good absolute reward, of divine Grace. Thus the Epistle reading focuses on that which comprises the prerequisite in the life of the Church and makes it the Body of Christ. On the attitude of sacrifice. The attitude which is taught in a perfect manner on Golgotha and radiates throughout time in the life of the Saints, the people of God.

### Logic beyond logic

In a world which claims not justice, but it's comfortable life, the Church comes to project the way of life of the Saints. The Apostle Paul calls upon the example of Moses, who prefers to also suffer the afflictions of his people, rather than to feast and to have a good life in the royal palaces taking advantage of the title of son and daughter of Pharaoh. And furthermore he reaches the point of denying his title and privileges, considering suffering for the sake of Christ a greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, even before Christ appears on earth! Weighing matters he placed on the one side

## St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-40

Prokeimenon. Mode 4.

Daniel 3.26,27

Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of our fathers.

Verse: For you are just in all you have done.

Brethren, by faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to share ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.

And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets -- who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, received promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign enemies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated -- of whom the world was not worthy -- wandering over deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

And all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

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of the scale the worst conditions of hardship for the sake of faith and on the other side, the best conditions of enjoying this world. And when the scale turns in favor of suffering hardship, showing it heavier, in other words of greater value and more precious, then Moses does not hesitate, even for one moment, to abandon Egypt and its goods, he hastens to embrace the more precious treasure, the true faith, not as a theoretical acceptance, or brain exercise and ideology, but as the attitude which dictates principles and way of life. A way of life which is proven essentially to be the only true one. What would have happened if Moses had preferred the way of life of

Egypt? At most he would have become one more king in a long line of people who handled authority and simply were documented by history, since earlier or later on, all rulers, rich, those eminent in worldly value, are surpassed, forgotten and are covered by layers of forgetfulness or also by negative emotions according to their actions.

What did Moses gain? The "recompense" to which he "aimed". "He aimed", in other words, he had his gaze firmly fixed on his longing, turning his gaze away from everything else which could break him away. That inconceivably precious "recompense", in other words, which the blood of our Christ secures us. And because our Christ secures something inconceivably precious, He does not ask few things, nor does He ask many things, He asks for everything! So for this reason also, the Apostle Paul, after Moses refers to whoever sacrificed everything for the sake of faith and its experience, who defeated methods of torture, murderous instruments, radical ways of death, natural phenomena, social obsolescence and marginalization, deprived of every comfort in this life. And all these things, not because they strove for them, but so that it shows how and human the persecutors of Christ, of faith and of truth end up, but also with how much rage they move against whoever desires life in Christ. Simultaneously however, also for it to show how much divine Grace protects against every human machination which tries to break the person of God off from His love, making the whatsoever machination paper thin, unimportant, and ineffective.

### The challenge of life

In the end, what message does our Church want to pass, today on the Sunday of Orthodoxy? She wants to show forth the fact that if for the earthly, temporal, temporary things we struggle so much, so that fighting for survival chokes us, for the eternal, spiritual, divine things how much more so should we struggle! And when the time of decisions comes, who dictates what will happen? The conscience, as faith, the truth of God and the divine will that is most advantageous for man have formulated it! And if other people stand as an obstacle in every means and way in our effort to approach God, to come to know Him and love Him? Then we have a very good opportunity to prove the genuineness of our dispositions, the guilelessness and sincerity of our faith and the heroic attitude to which the Church already calls with our baptism! The spiritual life is a life of constant struggle without agony. In the most spiritual period of the year and celebrating her victory, our Church calls us to never forget it!

Archim. I. N.