

Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you" (Mt. 28:19). He doesn't order them to continue to work miracles, he doesn't give them counsels about how to handle the political authority. He distances Himself both from the miracles and from the cooperation with the authority in the framework of mission work. He merely tells them: "Go ye, and standing speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life". Use the place of Worship in order to preach the truth of faith which is life for man. The Lord entrusted the Apostles to "baptize and teach" as a work. The angel reminds them to "worship and teach". This is the way of the Church's existence throughout the ages! This is the methodology of mission work which secures the genuineness and authenticity of the preaching word, whereas it also guarantees the saving results in the life of man.

My brethren, already from her beginnings, our Church didn't put forward in approaching men, neither the impressing from the miracle, nor the coercion of political authority. She selected obedience to the word of the Lord to convince people with the preaching of the truth and to comfort them with her rational worship. Let us admire the Church's respect for the human person and let us obey her saving invitation for eternal life.

Archim. I. N.

SUNDAY, APRIL 19, 2015 , *Thomas Sunday, The Holy Hieromartyr Paphnutius, George the Confessor*

TONE OF THE WEEK: *Grave Tone, Eothinon - First Eothinon*

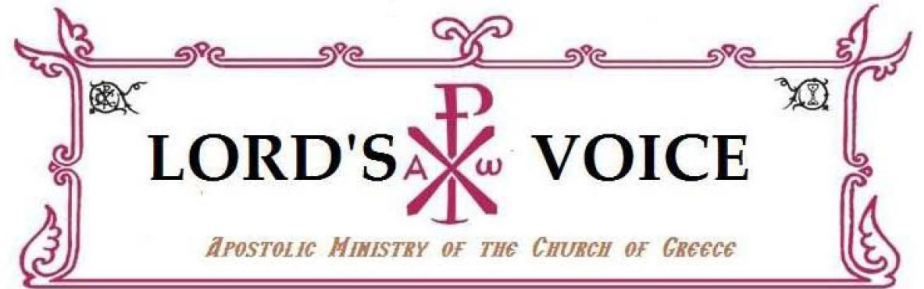
EPISTLE *Acts of the Apostles 5:12-20*

GOSPEL *John 20:19-31*

NEXT SUNDAY, APRIL 26, 2015 , *Sunday of the Myrrh-Bearing Women ,Hieromartyr Basil of Amaseia, Glaphyra the Righteous*

EPISTLE *Acts of the Apostles 6:1-7*

GOSPEL *Mark 15:43-47; 16:1-8*



63rd Year

April 19, 2015

Pamphlet # 16 (3229)

THE SHADOW OF PETER

In the echo of the great feast of the Resurrection, today Sunday of Thomas, the Church selects a passage from the Acts of the Apostles, which concerns the activity of the Apostles in Jerusalem, before they scatter to the lengths and widths of the earth to preach the Gospel to the whole universe. With what criterion does she select this passage to be read today? Not of course, in order to do an ecclesiastical history lesson and furthermore in the middle of the Divine Liturgy, nor again with the aim of beautifying situations, especially as regards the activity of the Holy Apostles. She merely wants to show forth how foundational and pivotal is the resurrectional preaching for the spreading of the faith and the salvation of the world, as also how blessed the Church is unrelated to other activities, to focus on preaching and worship.

Human actions

In today's Epistle Reading, initially human actions and reactions are described. What is documented first? The great impression a series of miracles of the Apostles made. Furthermore it underlines that many sick people were lying down at the length of the road from where the Apostle Peter would pass by, so that merely his shadow could fall on them to cure them. Why is this?

Acts of the Apostles 5:12-20

Prokeimenon. Mode 4.

Psalm 146.5;134.3

Great is our Lord, and great is his power.

Verse: Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good.

IN THOSE DAYS, many signs and wonders were done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high honor. And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women, so that they even carried out the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and pallets, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed. But the high priest rose up and all who were with him, that is, the party of the Sadducees, and filled with jealousy they arrested the apostles and put them in the common prison. But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out and said, "Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life."

Why does Peter appear in the viewpoint of people, stronger even than our Christ himself? A miracle which our Lord's shadow performed is never mentioned! Peter's shadow, however works miracles. The impression the miracle causes is stressed so that its results can be admired. What are these? "So henceforth no one dared prevent them, but the people magnified them. While furthermore believers were added to the Lord, a multitude of men and women". Christ as a disputed sign! Some people avoid the Apostles and the Church, while some others embrace them and are

baptized. Contradictory behaviors! The miracles are obvious to everyone, no one denies them, however, they don't suffice to gain everyone without objection. In every case both the spiritual hesitation is documented about the unquestioning enthusiasm which they bring about, without this meaning, in any case, that the Church may deny the miracles. Of course, they function as a proof of God's active power, however the right is preserved, however, of whoever doesn't want to accept them, even when they don't doubt the very obvious miracles.

On the other hand, the reaction of the political authority and furthermore of the group of the Sadducees is documented, on whose religious pedestal the unequivocal rejection of the Resurrection dominates, not only of the Lord, but of the whole human race. They capture the Apostles, who were proving the divine power with the so many miracles, and they place them in prison. And the Apostles don't turn this divine power against their persecutors! They don't fight according to human measure, the enmitous to them political authority, but they leave themselves to divine providence, proving with this manner that the miracles aren't activated by them themselves to facilitate their personal matters. They clarify also, that they insist on our Christ's viewpoint, who disassociated His work from whatsoever dissension or even disposition of worldly authority! But also they refuse to use diplomacy, so as to "get along" with the political rulers, precisely to show that the Gospel's work is from God and not from men!

The actions of God

At the end of the Epistle Reading, it describes how an angel of the Lord opened the prison gate at night and saved the Apostles. The emphasis is not in the angel's appearance, but to that which the angel orders the Apostles. He assures them of the Lord's command "be ye going make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy