

How we respond however, also defines our spiritual condition. Many, obligated, as the Philoptochos tray passes before them, throw some coin, of greater or lesser value, certain that they fulfilled their philanthropic “duty”. Thus they silence their conscience and they fool themselves that they are cosuffering in the pain of those in dire straights. Thus, however, poverty is not defeated, while a fine egotistical train of thought of superiority of him who in this way “offers” is cultivated also.

The Church does not want from us our money! She wants us ourselves, completely! She wants us like Dorcas, who with her par-excellence personal manner, with her own hands, exercised charity. She wants us to consume ourselves, not in actions of avoiding, but in actions of personal offering and self sacrifice. So for this reason also the Church considers as one of her most important parts, the body of her volunteers, who consume themselves in the precious service of their neighbor, establishing this as their personal struggle. Only when charity ends up a personal matter, an existential parameter and spontaneous action, is it activated correctly and lived ecclesiastically. Only then are a multitude of sins covered and death is defeated!

Archim. I. N.

SUNDAY, SUNDAY, MAY 3, 2015 , *Sunday of the Paralytic, The Holy Martyrs Timothy and Maura, Peter the Wonderworker, Xenia of Kalamata the Great Martyr*

TONE OF THE WEEK: Third Tone, Eothinon - Fifth Eothinon

EPISTLE *Acts of the Apostles* 9:32-42

GOSPEL *John* 5:1-15

NEXT SUNDAY, MAY 10, 2015, SUNDAY OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN,
Simon the Zealot & Apostle, Laurence of Egypt, Isodora of Egypt.

EPISTLE *Acts of the Apostles* 11:19-30

GOSPEL *John* 4:5-42



63rd Year

May 3, 2015

Pamphlet # 18 (3231)

CHARITY PUTS DEATH TO FLIGHT

A central place in the Church's existence throughout the ages is taken by the theoretical and practical occupation with charity. It is projected as one of the easiest paths to Paradise, since according to John Chrysostom, with charity the Christian manages “not only to cleanse sins, but also to put death itself to flight”. Not only are sins cleansed with charity, but before it, even death disappears. How, today's Epistle Reading narrates to us.

The charity of Dorcas

If the Apostle Paul wrote the hymn of love (1 Cor. 13:1-13), the Evangelist Luke, the author of the Acts of the Apostles, documents its practical imprint in the person of Dorcas. “Full of good works and charities which she made”, she showed that she had understood the magnitude of love and had made it the aim of her life, or better, love had absorbed her whole being. And nevertheless, this wonderful being had been overtaken and been defeated by death. Then what did the Church of Joppa do? Learning that the Apostle Peter was in their nearby Lydda, they called him to share their grief. And when Peter arrived, something unheard of happened. They didn't begin, as to this day is the custom, the funerary funeral speeches in order to describe the

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 9:32-42

Prokeimenon. Mode 3.

Psalm 46.6,1

Sing praises to our God, sing praises.

Verse: Clap your hands, all you nations.

IN THOSE DAYS, as Peter went here and there among them all, he came down also to the saints that lived at Lydda. There he found a man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden for eight years and was paralyzed. And Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; rise and make your bed." And immediately he rose. And all the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord. Now there was at Joppa a disciple named Tabitha, which means Dorcas. She was full of good works and acts of charity. In those days she fell sick and died; and when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room. Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men to him entreating him, "Please come to us without delay." So Peter rose and went with them. And when he had come, they took him to the upper room. All the widows stood beside him weeping, and showing tunics and other garments which Dorcas made while she was with them. But Peter put them all outside and knelt down and prayed; then turning to the body he said, "Tabitha, rise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. And he gave her his hand and lifted her up. Then calling the saints and widows he presented her alive. And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord.

the dead woman's personality. They avoided all these empty words which rarely are heard in order to edify, usually they flatter the selfishness of whoever is pronouncing the funerary speech and they mainly contain foolish flattery which causes laughter and destroys the spiritual climate of the Funeral Service. On the contrary, the widows in the mournful silence which was only interrupted by their crying, show the tangible signs, not of kindness, but of the self sacrificing offering of Dorcas. They were showing the clothes, which she had woven with her hands, sitting for whole hours, day and night, at the loom, producing, with heavy

patience, a handicraft, not in order to sell it and gain, but in order to give it and to cover the existing and oppressive needs of her brethren.

How does Peter react before this unheard of admission of Dorcas' virtue? He is obligated to do a miracle and after he prayed, as the Lord did at another time with Lazarus, he said commanding: "Tabitha, arise"! While the continuation, is the revelation of the cause of this miracle. Peter calls all the Christians who were around the house and had gotten ready for the funeral. While especially the widows, who felt orphaned, in order to present to them alive her who up to then they were crying for as dead. An odd miracle! No one asked it of Peter. No one spoke. Only the clothing in the hands of the widows spoke and they pressured Peter to do that which the righteousness of God imposed! Or better, Peter's praying based on Dorcas' charity were able to chase death away in order for the living love and loving life to prevail.

The today

Today's Epistle Reading is presented as a censure and cause of self critique of our own attitude today. It is projected as a mirror in order for the idol of our own self to be compared with Dorcas. Why? Because the Church as a loving caring and experienced mother knows the mistakes in which her children can fall into, even in their effort to benefit, and she wants, not with theoretical developments, but with experiential experiences from her life, to train in Christ.

And today there is great need in our society. Poverty prevails, despite all the big-mouthed proclamations of the rulers of our planet, despite all the noble efforts of people of good will, despite all the promises of our technological civilization. And our Church champions in this struggle against poverty, against the deprivations and every type of exclusions. In this many-faceted struggle of hers, she calls each faithful child of hers to participate. And it is consoling that many respond!