

And the Fathers of the 1st Ecumenical Synod had to confess the truth of the Faith, the truth which some people, egotistically motivated, perverted and offended. And in the way of their confession, they would sadden those some people and would offend them. So motivated, with love as the exclusive criterion and motive, first towards God and then to man, they imprinted the unninovated Faith as the infallible mouth of our Christ handed down, without human additions and falsifications, so that its saving truth be handed down from generation to generation unto the ages and for each person who lives it to have the assurance of salvation. With love as the exclusive criterion and motive, they faced Arius also, indicating his mistakes and, when he would not admit them, ascertaining that on his own, he had, a long time before, taken himself out of the Church. And for this reason also they didn't rejoice...

Today also our Church correctly divides "the Word of Truth". Today also she faces whoever believes that they are higher than Christ, smarter than Him, more enlightened and for this reason justified to correct Him...And trying to make them recover, defending the Truth of Faith, she loves them and faces them! She doesn't fight them ideologically and with gloating, nor does she strive for their natural annihilation. She expects repentance and awaits the return, "till all end up in the unity of Faith" (Eph. 4:13).

Archim. I. N.

SUNDAY, MAY 24, 2015, FATHERS OF THE 1ST COUNCIL, *Symeon the Stylite of the Mountain, Saint Vincent of Lerins, Meletios the Commander & his Companion Martyrs, Gregory, Archbishop of Novgorod.*

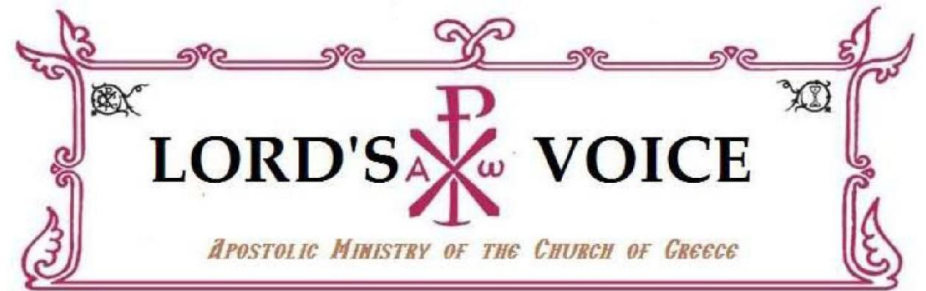
TONE OF THE WEEK: *Plagal of the Second Tone, Eothinon* -Tenth Eothinon, **EPISTLE** *Acts of the Apostles 20:16-18, 28-36*

GOSPEL *John 17:1-13*

NEXT SUNDAY, MAY 31, 2015, HOLY PENTECOST, *Hermias the Martyr at Comana, Eusebius and Haralambos the Monk-martyrs*

EPISTLE *Acts of the Apostles 2:1-11*

GOSPEL *John 7:37-52; 8:12*



63RD YEAR

MAY 24, 2015

PAMPHLET # 21 (3234)

DISCRETION AND DUTY

Dedicated to the Holy Fathers of the 1st Ecumenical Synod, today's Sunday comes to remind us of one of the greatest moments of our Church's glory. And the 1st Ecumenical Synod was the chief moment for many reasons, which our Theology has shown forth, but also for a more special reason which, because the sense of history has been lost, we don't realize it in our day. As the ecclesiastical historians mention, this first ecumenical gathering of Bishops of our Church, was something unique. Shudders of piety and emotion were passing through those present, as they would see the Bishops of the Church, who had just come out of the catacombs approaching with the marks from the persecutions manifest on their bodies.

We remind that the 1st Ecumenical Synod was called together in 325 in Nicaea of Bithynia, while the persecutions had ceased with the Edict of Milan just in 313, although they definitively stopped only after Constantine the Great became sole emperor in 324! So the Bishops came having the manifest signs from the confession of the name of Christ and hardship for Him, as their glory. Others without some member of the body, others with the extremities twisted, others with their faces and bodies "written on" from fiery irons, others with the wounds from the whippings unindellible...They approached with the increased validity of the

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 20:16-18, 28-36

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.

IN THOSE DAYS, Paul had decided to sail past Ephesos, so that he might not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hastening to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost. And from Miletos he sent to Ephesos and called to him the elders of the church. And when they came to him, he said to them: "Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God which he obtained with the blood of his own Son. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears. And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities, and to those who were with me. In all things I have shown you that by so toiling one must help the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, 'it is more blessed to give than to receive.' " And when he had spoken thus, he knelt down and prayed with them all.

martyr, in order to confess undeludedly and to correctly divide the truth of Faith, beyond and above persons, sympathies and aims.

The example of the Apostle Paul

In today's passage, a portion of the journey of the Apostle Paul to Jerusalem is mentioned, where he knew that his martyrical hardship would begin, which would peak in Rome with his beheading. And while the main points of the Epistle are the Apostle Paul's words themselves, it is worth it for us to stand on the detail of the first verse, that Paul passes by Ephesus, so as to not delay in the area and to hasten to Jerusalem, where he wanted to be, on the day of Pentecost.

And who does not enjoy spending his time with friends! Furthermore when these friends are more so Brother Christians! How much would Paul's heart not be aflame with the desire to meet his own people in Ephesus! And nevertheless, he shows unique discretion, judging that he must pass by it, because as Saint John Chrysostom says, if he would go to Ephesus, he would not be able to refuse his stay there and would sadden whoever would insist that he remain, something he didn't want to do. The Evangelist Luke however, the author of the Acts, gives the essential reason. His duty was in Jerusalem and he was hastening there, so as to manage to be at the feast of Pentecost, in which case many people would gather in the city and Paul would have the opportunity both to preach Christ, but also to refute the slanders against him.

Being before the Holy Fathers of the 1st Ecumenical Synod by about two hundred seventy years, he gives the measure of combining discretion and duty. In every case, the basic motive of whatsoever actions is love! Paul loves the Christians of Ephesus, he loves Holy God more and the mission which has been entrusted to him, showing him forth to be an Apostle! Paul weighs matters and undertakes the responsibility of his duty, despite all the consequent dangers. He respects people, so for this reason also, he tries to do whatever he can so as to not sadden them. He obeys God and His Holy Will and does that which he must. He thus gives the tangible example, the measure, in the actions of the people of God.