

didn't die for something worthy of love or respect. He died for the human nature which had enraged Him when it betrayed Him and turned its back on Him in order to hand itself over to sin! And nevertheless, he didn't abandon this human nature to its fate, to its hardships, to its despair...Proving an inconceivable love, He sacrifices Himself and cleanses us with His Precious Blood.

Where does the Apostle Paul conclude? If, then when we were in the dishonor of sin, our God felt us to be so precious so as to provide for His Son to die for us, now that the Blood and the Sacrifice of our Christ has justified us, now that we have been reconciled and conciliated with God, is there a case where He could abandon us? Even if the afflictions are raging, and even if they are trying to choke us. We have a support in our more than certain hope, the saving love of our Father!

Archimandrite I. N

SUNDAY, JUNE 21, 2015 3RD SUNDAY OF MATTHEW, *Julian the Martyr of Tarsus Terentios, Bishop of Iconium , Nikitas the New Martyr of Nisyros.*

TONE OF THE WEEK: Tone Second, Eothinon Third Eothinon

EPISTLE St. Paul's Letter to the Romans 5:1-10

GOSPEL Matthew 6:22-33

NEXT SUNDAY, SUNDAY, JUNE 28, 2015 4TH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW,

Finding of the Relics of Cyrus and John the Unmercenaries, Pappias the Martyr, Righteous Fathers Sergius and Herman, Founders of Valaam Monastery

EPISTLE St. Paul's Letter to the Romans 6:18-23

GOSPEL Matthew 8:5-13



63RD YEAR

JUNE 21, 2015

PAMPHLET # 25 (3238)

OUR REASSURANCE

And who hasn't tasted

bitterness in his life! And who hasn't lived affliction and furthermore in that form that strains man's heart and leaves room only for the gravest pessimism! And who hasn't felt the loneliness, the abandonment, the scorn! And who is ever absolutely satisfied with his life! And who is able to say that he spent even one day without the slightest complaint being born in him! The word of our Lord is true: "but take courage, I have defeated the world" (Jn. 16:33)!

The Apostle Paul as Preeminent of the Apostles, in other words, the excellent disciple of the only Teacher, and for this reason, uniquely capable of imparting and explaining His teachings, comes today, not to console us with consoling and common types of words from those which the deceivers of peoples or those scared of duties usually use, but for him to explain to us precisely what happens with the afflictions in our life and how we can take advantage of them, so that from these, the comforting of the soul arises, the sweetness of peace. He prepares us to endure, when all the others are cultivating illusions.

The scaling

That Paul preaches the word of God authentically, is proven by the manner in which he poses the topic. He says that...we boast of the afflictions! Indomitable magnanimity of soul! He doesn't

ST. PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS 2:10-16

Prokeimenon. Mode 2.

Psalm 117.14,18

The Lord is my strength and my song.

Verse: The Lord has chastened me sorely.

BRETHREN, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God. More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us. While we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Why, one will hardly die for a righteous man -- though perhaps for a good man one will dare even to die. But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we are now justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

wish for afflictions, he recognizes however, that they are unavoidable, and he notes how they should be faced. He calls to something analogous to that which the war veterans do, who boast of their achievements, they mention their experiences with the satisfaction of someone who managed to do them, without wishing for the repetition of all that they lived. And he calls to this even before the affliction sets out.

Affliction is considered to be the unavoidable lot of each person and mainly of the Christian, so for this reason also, Paul doesn't recommend patience in a stoic manner. He recommends patience as a work, as a derivative of affliction. And this is very different. He doesn't recommend that we remain inactive, suffering the affliction. He exhorts that the affliction be treated, in other words that it produce patience with systematic development. Photius the Great will interpret that he means, that which occurs with gold during it's treatment, it's smelting, in which case also with its melting it is cleansed from the impurities and is restored crystal clear and precious. When sad things surround someone and he faces their offensiveness with bravery, then he is proven tried and experienced, just as the trying fire burns up whatever superfluous and useless thing overpowers man's life and it teaches him to give priority to whatever is genuinely true.

And what is the peak in this scaling, of dealing with affliction? Hope! Not hope in human things, in promises, transactions or tactics. Hope in the infinite love of God, who delivers us and justifies us. And this firm love, whose proof is the presence of the Holy Spirit, assures us that God will never abandon us, will never cease being our father, will never turn his back on us.

The guarantee

What guarantee do we have for this? Our experience itself from our relationship with God! From His relationship towards us! The Apostle Paul stresses. When we were weak from our own choice, and we needed much help as it was impossible from us on our own to defeat our ailment. When we were completely incapable of helping our own self, as we had lost the path of salvation. When our condition was mournful and almost despairing, then, at the appropriate time Christ came and died for us impious ones. And thus He saved us!

Heavy words! And the Apostle Paul speaks even more gravely. Just barely will someone be found to sacrifice himself for the sake of a righteous person. With difficulty will someone decide

to die for the sake of some good person. And nevertheless, Christ came and sacrificed Himself for us while we were sinners! He