

All these things tend to a point. To indicate God's infinite love for us. To prove him as God the Father. To justify our Christ's saying to His disciples: "do not call any one your father upon the earth. For one is your father, who is in the heavens" (Mt. 23:9). But simultaneously to prove His absolute respect for human freedom. Whatsoever thing, even in the slightest, that may obligate man to proceed toward God, is cast off and abolished. God claims every person, but He seeks for him to respond to His love, with love being the only motive, without obligation or coercion.

So for this reason this divine manner of thinking produces Saints and Martyrs. The Saint is not enlisted with fanaticism to an ideology, but he is following his heart, which is aflame with love for God the Father. "If one loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him» (1 John 2:15). The satisfaction of his soul is not the earthly and material things, but prayer, vigilance, strong supplication and the joy of divine vision [of God] «While I shall rejoice in the Lord» (Ps. 103:34). He absolutely trusts the Father and defends his whole being on Him. He is not able to reject Him because it is it as if he is rejecting his own self. In the end, he dies denying death in order to live the freedom in Christ in the love of God the Father.

Archimandrite I. N

**SUNDAY, JULY 26, 2015, 8TH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW**, *The Holy Hieromartyrs Hermolaus, Hermippus, and Hermocrates, Paraskeve the Righteous Martyr of Rome, St. Prisca, the Righteous Martyr, Moses the Hungarian, Jacob Netsvetov the Enlightener of Alaska*

**tone of the week: Grave Tone, EOTHINON Eighth Eothinon**

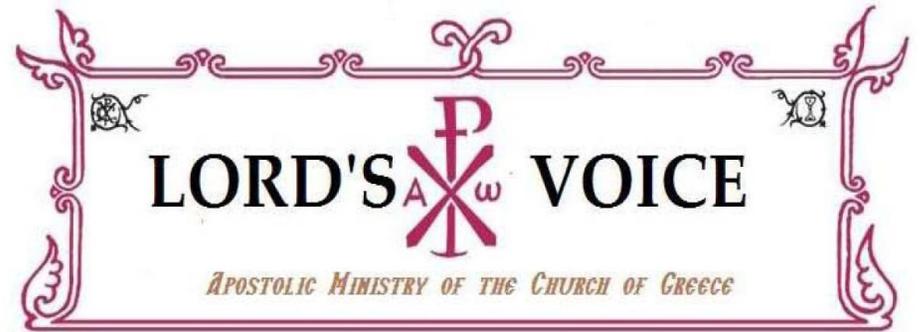
**EPISTLE** *St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 3:23-29; 4:1-5*

**GOSPEL** *Matthew 14:14-22*

**NEXT SUNDAY, AUGUST 2, 2015 9th SUNDAY OF MATTHEW**,  
*Translation of the Relics of Stephen the Protomartyr, Holy Glorious New Martyr Theodore of Dardanelles, Phocas the Martyr.*

**EPISTLE** *Acts of the Apostles 6:8-15; 7:1-5, 47-60*

**GOSPEL** *Matthew 14:22-34*



63<sup>RD</sup> YEAR

July 26, 2015

PAMPHLET # 30 (3243)

## THE ADOPTION OF THE CHRISTIANS

In the celebration of the memory of Saint Paraskevi, our Church honoring the "the chaste one dancing in a chorus in the courts of the Lord", presents an Epistle Reading, which refers in a few lines to the manner in which God enacted our salvation and what, in the end, He granted to us. And this Epistle Reading is presented in order to indicate the way Grace acts and makes a weak female capable, not only of enduring martyrdom, but proceeding to this consciously, refusing to betray, not some idea or a person, but her own self, in which Christ has been "formed".

### The change

When the Prophet Ezekiel wanted to describe what would happen to humans with the coming of Christ and His revelation on earth, he wrote the following: "and I will give them a different heart and a new spirit I shall give in them and I shall break off the stone heart from their heart and I shall give in them a fleshly heart". In the age of Grace, God the Father breaks the stone heart and gives us a sensitive and tender heart towards Him and love for neighbor. We don't have some essential change. We have a change of essence! A new reality is created, with God ceasing to be "the

**ST. PAUL'S LETTER TO THE GALATIANS 3:23-29; 4:1-5**

**Prokeimenon. Mode 4.**

**Psalm 67.35,26**

**God is wonderful among his saints.**

**Verse: Bless God in the congregations.**

BRETHREN, before faith came, we were confined under the law, kept under restraint until faith should be revealed. So that the law was our custodian until Christ came, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a custodian; for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no better than a slave, though he is the owner of all the estate; but he is under guardians and trustees until the date set by the father. So with us; when we were children, we were slaves to the elemental spirits of the universe. But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. and the high pitches of the orators and demagogues are choking the word of the revealed truth, imposing the senseless gossip and the barren juxtaposition with matters which are unworthy of speech.

fearful and punishing one to those transgressing" and ending up compassionate and merciful, good and lenient, truly "Our Father". The old, mechanical relationship is abolished, and we Christians truly become children of God. A unique and unheard of Adoption occurs to each one of us, through Baptism, which makes us "communicants of divine nature". A new, holy humanity is

created, whose life and lifestyle does not stop in the corrupt boundaries of the present world, but extends to the unending one, of the Kingdom of the Heavens.

The Apostle Paul with today's passage places our adoption from the Father, in the plan of worldwide history. Despite all the fall and the wretchedness of humanity, despite all the passing centuries and the successive generations, God the Father did not forget His plan for our adoption, nor did His initial longing for its implementation weaken. And when the wisdom of God judged that people were able to respond to His love, the great and preeternal plan of God became deed and "the Word was incarnated". The Birth of our Christ, reveals that point of history, which according to God's judgment comprises the fulfillment of time. The point from which from then on God does not invite us "by the fear of the present punishment", "nor does he promise a land flowing with honey and milk", in other words, He is not calling us near Him with the fear of hell, nor promising prosperity and recompense. He simply is projecting His love, and is awaiting our response.

**The gain**

For what reason does the Apostle say that "God sent his son?" "So that we might receive adoption". Let no one hurry to interpret: "for us to enjoy the adoption". The "enjoy" means "to receive what is due". So for this reason, Ecumenius interprets: saying "we are enjoying" the Apostle Paul showed that adoption is "from above and from the promise owed to us". Consequently, "for us to receive the adoption which God owed us". For adoption from God himself does not appear as His gift or His favor to us. It appears as His debt to us, because our Father himself promised it to us. Neither through a moral obligation, does God the Father try to pressure us drawing us to Himself. He presents the event of our salvation as His obligation, as His debt to us...