

It suffices for one to invoke, not the spiritual work, which no one can evaluate, but the providential work of the Church of Greece, in order to very evidently show that with such few means, so many things are being realized, thanks to the grateful love of our Christ-loving people and the transparent and honest handling of the responsible ecclesiastical leaders. But also if one considers the multitude of all those people who are employed, working as personnel in Churches and Institutions, again he will be startled from the magnitude of the amounts which are imprinted as necessary.

What is the Apostle Paul pursuing with today's Epistle Reading? For the Corinthians to become honorably grateful, so that his sacrificial work could be supported without disputes. And this doesn't apply only for then. It is the way the Church proceeds throughout time! With mutual trust and respect for one another, in each one's responsibility and offering!

Archimandrite I. N

**SUNDAY, AUGUST 16 2015, 11TH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW, Translation of the Image of Our Lord and God and Savior, Jesus Christ, Diomedes the Physician & Martyr of Tarsus, Timothy of Euripus, founder of the Monastery of Pentele, Nicodemus the New Martyr of Meteora, Gerasimos the New Ascetic of Cephalonia, Holy Monk Penteles, Afterfeast of the Dormition of our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary**

**TONE OF THE WEEK: Tone Two**

**EOTHINON Eleventh Eothinon**

**EPISTLE St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 9:2-12**

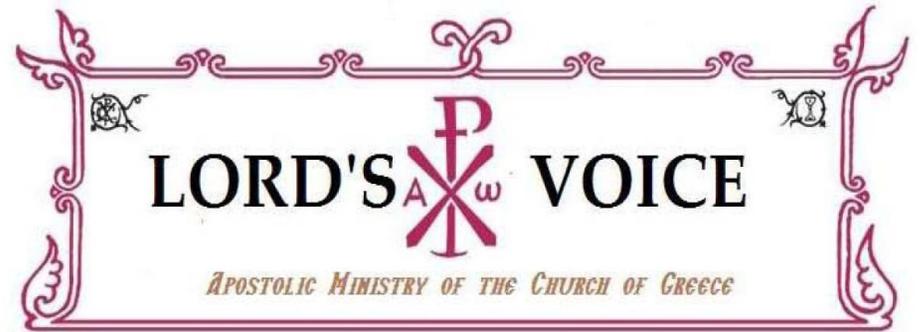
**GOSPEL Matthew 18:23-35**

**NEXT SUNDAY, AUGUST 23, 2015 12TH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW,**

**Apodosis of the Dormition of our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary. Our Holy Father Ireneaus, Bishop of Lyons, Our Holy Father Kallinikos, Patriarch of Constantinople, Lupus the Martyr, Our Righteous Father Nicholas of Sikelion, 38 Martyrs of Thrace, Our Holy Father Ireneaus, Bishop of Sirmium**

**EPISTLE St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 15:1-11**

**GOSPEL Matthew 19:16-26**



63<sup>RD</sup> YEAR

August 16, 2015

PAMPHLET # 33 (3246)

## DEFENSE

A fearful state, the court! Only whoever has gotten mixed up in a trial understands how soul-corrupting and bitter the whole process is, unrelated if he has justice or injustice, unrelated if he has been convicted or has been exonerated. How tragic, however it is for one to dispute not with foreigners and unfamiliar people, but with his brothers, those familiar with him, his own people.

### Those interrogating

The Apostle of the Gentiles appears embittered and frustrated in today's Epistle Reading. And this because the gentiles seem to dispute his apostolic quality. To such a degree the Church of Corinth had been corroded from the pettiness and the competitions, that some people, in order to create and fence off their personal group in the body of the Church, reached the point of disputing him who had led them to the Light of Christ, the Apostle Paul. And this hurt him, not because he was claiming recognition and human praise, but because this functioned as a Trojan horse in order for some people to be led to the conclusion that, since his apostolic quality is being disputed, the content of his preaching, could also comfortably be disputed. Thus however, for

**ST. PAUL'S FIRST LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS 9:2-12**

**Prokeimenon. Mode 2.  
Psalm 117.14,18**

**The Lord is my strength and my song.  
Verse: The Lord has chastened me sorely.**

BRETHREN, you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. This is my defense to those who would examine me. Do we not have the right to our food and drink? Do we not have the right to be accompanied by a wife, as the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living? Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard without eating any of its fruit? Who tends a flock without getting some of the milk? Do I say this on human authority? Does not the law say the same? For it is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain." Is it for oxen that God is concerned? Does he not speak entirely for our sake? It was written for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope and the thresher thresh in hope of a share in the crop. If we have sown spiritual good among you, is it too much if we reap your material benefits? If others share this rightful claim upon you, do not we still more? Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ

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the sake of human pursuits, the word of the truth which Paul was serving, would be wounded.

So for this reason also, the Apostle's reaction was slashing. "If for others I am not an Apostle, for you however, I am! And the proof of my apostolic office is you yourselves! The same ones who dispute me, you are my witnesses that for you I was an Apostle, since I led you to Christ!" And subsequently he enumerates not the holy spiritual benefactions which invaluablely the Grace of the Lord grants through Faith in Christ, but how much the Corinthians were benefitted, in a simple, practical and material level, from Paul himself as an Apostle.

Which are these? Why their benefits, from the way Paul handled his rights as an Apostle. Don't I have the right, he asks, to be sustained by

the Church, since for her I'm working? Don't I have the right to claim that my daily needs be covered by you? Is it only I and Barnabas who must both preach and work in order to live? Which soldier participates in a campaign at his own expense? Who has a vineyard and doesn't eat from its fruit? Who has sheep and doesn't drink from their milk? And these are not the logical inventions of people, but commands of God. Because also in the law of Moses it was written that, you will not muzzle the oxen's mouth which is threshing, not because the concern for God was the protection of the oxen, but in order for it to be understood that each worker, and furthermore the worker of the Gospel, has the right to be sustained from whoever was benefited from his toil. And nevertheless, Paul doesn't claim all these things, so that the slightest obstacle wouldn't exist in the spreading of the Gospel, on account of human misunderstandings, which the claiming of rights would cause. He ascertains however, that in the end, this tactic of his wasn't fruitful, since he didn't avoid that which he wanted to avoid.

**The disputing**

The Apostle Paul's complaint from his being unjustly and pettily disputed, is summarized in one phrase. If we sowed the spiritual seed in hearts and made the true God known to you, teaching dogma and ethos, is it a great thing for us to reap our sustenance as a recompense? When we are offering something so important and precious, is it worth speaking of, for our sustenance to be being bartered? Whoever doesn't understand the inequality of sizes being compared, probably hasn't understood how important it is for the Church to exist in the world.

The Apostle Paul's complaint, we could say, holds throughout time. And this, because in our days, disorderly things and provocations are occurring, even though they ought not to, but also are unjust critiques against the Church, against the handling of the ecclesiastical incomes. The strange thing is, that instead of people of the Church protesting about all the unjust and untrue things they are hearing, as imaginative accusations, those who very rarely and circumstantially visit some Church, are raising their voices and denouncing, subsequently exercising a critique with the tone of a person who knows everything. In this way they are proving the bias which possesses them, their estrangement from the spiritual life and the spirit of anticlericalism which characterizes them, since at least in Greece, the events are proving other things.