

father's longing to safeguard the ethos and the spiritual condition of his children.

What does our Church want to tell us today with all these things? She wants, in completing the spiritual exhortations and the teachings of a whole ecclesiastical year, to underline that all that was preached, all that was indicated, all that was offered as the Word of God, served under the unbreakable condition of love, the non fulfillment of which, nullifies whatsoever effort and creates missing the marks, failures and provocations.

Aptly and summarily the sacred Augustine had said: "love and do whatever you want"! When love exists and is achieved, all the necessary and sufficient conditions are fulfilled for spiritual progress and holiness. When it is lacking, everything is condemned to failure. Let's always act with love and this suffices to safeguard us, to direct us correctly, and to make us very fruitful and with good fruits in God. Amen.

Archimandrite I. N

SUNDAY, AUGUST 30, 2015 13TH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW, Apodosis of the Feast of the Forerunner, Alexander, John, and Paul the New, Patriarchs of Constantinople, Phantinos the Righteous of Calabria, 16 Monk-martyrs of Thebes, 6 Martyrs of Melitene, The Synaxis of the Holy Hierarchs of Serbia, The Holy New Martyrs of Serbia.

TONE OF THE WEEK: Tone Four

EOTHINON *Second Eothinon*

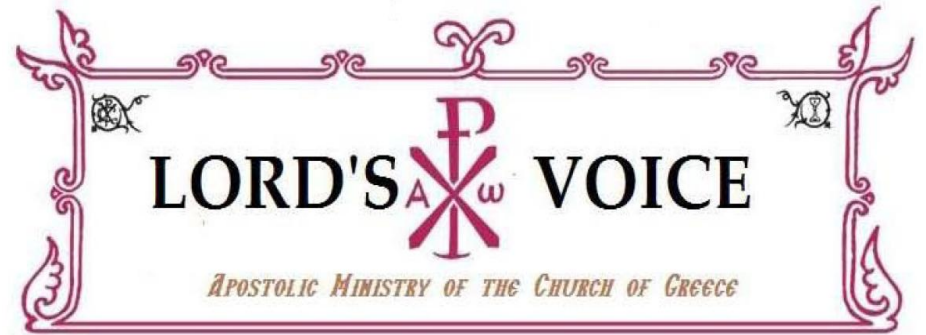
EPISTLE *St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 16:13-24*

GOSPEL *Matthew 21:33-42*

NEXT SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2015 14TH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW, The Commemoration of the Miracle Wrought by Archangel Michael in Colossae (Chonae), Holy Martyr Calodote

EPISTLE *St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 1:21-24*

GOSPEL *Matthew 22:2-14*



63RD YEAR

August 30, 2015

PAMPHLET # 35 (3248)

THE DEFINITION OF LOVE

The final Sunday of the summer and simultaneously the final one of the ecclesiastical year. And our Church comes to seal the spiritual period which is being completed, with a strong spiritual reminder, as a final exhortation on all that she has genuinely taught. She presents the end of the first Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians, an Epistle which is characterized by strictness, since Paul is attempting to uproot tares from the field which he has sown with so much hope. Truly, the toil of the Apostle with his counsels, day and night, to the Christians of Corinth, seem to be put to naught, since, human theories and weaknesses but also influences from the secular and immoral atmosphere of the city, were coming to darken the unadulterated truth of the gospel word.

What is self evident

What does the Apostle Paul do? He exhorts! He tries to convince! He sets boundaries! Even there where he seems strict, he does not force anyone, nor does he impose himself. He refuses to lead by the hand or to be crafty!

Respecting each one's freedom, he calls him to place himself, defining simultaneously what behavior gives meaning to the ecclesiastical train of thought and characterizes the spiritual life, and what doesn't.

While in the conclusion of his Epistle, he summarizes all that he had previously written, with a series of commands, like another general who is directing an army set for battle. Be careful like vigilant guards,

ST. PAUL'S FIRST LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS 16:13-24

Prokeimenon. Mode 4.

Psalm 103.24,1

○ Lord, how manifold are your works.

You have made all things in wisdom

Verse: Bless the Lord, O my soul.

BRETHREN, be watchful, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love. Now, brethren, you know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints; I urge you to be subject to such men and to every fellow worker and laborer. I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicos, because they have made up for your absence; for they refreshed my spirit as well as yours. Give recognition to such men. The churches of Asia send greetings. Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in their house, send you hearty greetings in the Lord. All the brethren send greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss. I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. If any one has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed. Our Lord, come! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

remain firm and upright in Faith, struggle like brave ones, stand with strength and courage! Simultaneously, he defines his adjutants, who have the more specific responsibility of some duty and act under his directions. To these Christians of Corinth they must hasten, in order to be coordinated in the spiritual struggle. He names, in general, the house of Stephanas, while more specifically Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaikos, who were also the bearers of the Epistle to the Corinthians.

And after he methodically organizes everything in the spirituals battle, so that the Word of God not be altered, but also whichever Christians desires to honor their attribute [as a Christian] by struggling, fighting in the security of truth, he makes a threat, which in reality functions as an observation. Whoever approaches the Church with selfish

motives, but also out of love for Christ, let him be anathematized, in other words, estranged from the Body of the Church! It is a cry of frustration for the human inability to respond to the divine majesty. So for this reason also, the ecclesiastical writer Zygavenos interprets that Paul wants to say: "God descended so much and you not even a little are you being elevated?"

The divine

Paul however doesn't just do the above. If he only did these things, he would not differ from the systematic preacher of some theory or ideology who claims exclusiveness in the human method of thought and dictates the way of life, fighting every differentiation. He does something which comprises the qualitative difference and unreels the organicalness to spirituality or also he consecrates the human group into the Body of Christ, into the Church.

He dictates love, as the cornerstone of every behavior, as the foundation of every decision, as the motive of every action! "Let all you do be done in love"! Everything that you do and are your own actions, let them be done with love! Christianity never appears so imposing and respected, as when the love of Christians becomes felt even by enemies. But also never before was a Christian able to feel so comforted, as when he acts out of love, with love and for the love of Christ. So he may be vigilant, "stand in the faith", is brave, full of power and courage, under the unbreakable condition that he is moved out of love, characterized by love and acts with love.

And the Apostle Paul proves this even when he sends out the dreadful phrase "let him be anathema". He can't bear to complete his epistle with a threatening phrase, since the mark of the spiritual father is not only to direct with counsels, but also to help with prayers. So for this reason also, after he calls upon the Grace of the Lord Jesus for the Corinthians, as capitulating every good, with his own hand he writes to them: "my love be with all of you in Christ Jesus. Amen." And Chrysostom explains: "he shows, that what was written, was not from anger or wrath, but from caring". The living love, even also sternness may be altered to paternal loving care, which simply expresses the