

He shows forth the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit as a cornerstone in man's journey toward God, since the command is that man should be convinced and not be obligated to follow God and His will. In other words, Paul desires to cause holy decisions and not to institute "holy obligations."

So for this reason also, the censuring of the brother, is for the spiritual person, a cause of bitterness unto tears. Because he perceives it as the usurping of God's rights, as the doubting of the illumination of the Holy Spirit in the other person, as an offense to the God-given right of the other person to decide freely. He accepts it, of course, as the final chastising and exhorting means, but after he first attempts to avoid it, and nevertheless he exercises it with pain of soul.

Archimandrite I. N

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

**tone of the week:** *Plagal of the First Tone*

**EOTHINON** *Third Eothinon*

**EPISTLE** *St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 1:21-24; 2:1-4*

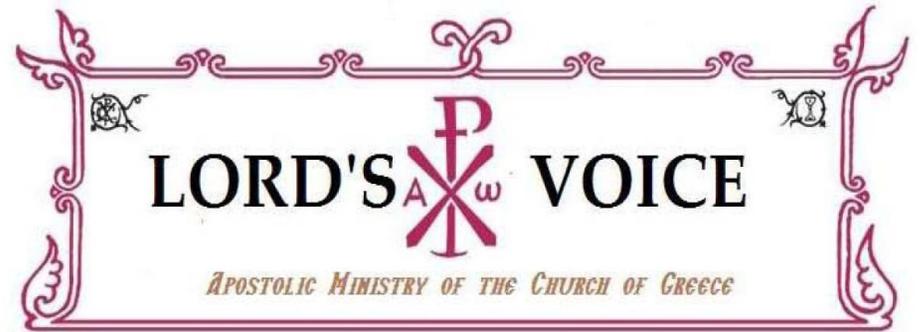
**GOSPEL** *Matthew 22:2-14*

**NEXT SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2015 SUNDAY BEFORE HOLY CROSS,**

**FOREFEAST OF THE ELEVATION OF THE HOLY CROSS, *The Consecration of the Church of the Holy Resurrection (Holy Sepulchre), Cornelius the Centurion & Martyr, Aristides the Philosopher, Hierotheos the Righteous of Iveron Monastery, Mount Athos.***

**EPISTLE** *St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 6:11-18*

**GOSPEL** *John 3:13-17*



**63<sup>RD</sup> YEAR    September 6, 2015    PAMPHLET # 36 (3249)**

## GENUINE CENSURING

We have said it before. Our age is filled with the words! Words empty of meaning, full of gossip, stinking of disorder and causing a lack of orientation, since the way with which, at least on a mass level, contemporary speech is presented, it aims at swaying and not at enlightening contemporary man. So for this reason also, the most important way of presenting contemporary speech is denouncing. Denouncing, which does not aim at correcting what is badly placed, but at the stigmatization of him who is denounced, to his pushing out of public life, to his moral and social annihilation.... And denouncing speech, having a long time before become divorced from vigilance and prudence, results in corrupting society, division, the securing of the death of love.

And this is not only grasped in the social dimension of the contemporary historical occurrence, but unfortunately it is also ascertained in the ecclesiastical occurrence, to such a point, that our definition as Christians is directly offended, since our relative witness in the world, especially from our relationships with each other, differs from the loving unto death perichoresis of Christ.

**Prokeimenon. Mode Plagial 1.**

**Psalm 11.7,1**

You, O Lord, shall keep us and preserve us.

Verse: Save me, O Lord, for the godly man has failed.

BRETHREN, it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has commissioned us; he has put his seal upon us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

But I call God to witness against me - it was to spare you that I refrained from coming to Corinth. Not that we lord it over your faith; we work with you for your joy, for you stand firm in your faith. For I made up my mind not to make you another painful visit. For if I cause you pain, who is there to make me glad but the one whom I have pained? And I wrote as I did, so that when I came I might not suffer pain from those who should have made me rejoice, for I felt sure of all of you, that my joy would be the joy of you all. For I wrote you out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you.

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## **Discretion in censuring**

**The Corinthians are among the beloved children of the apostle Paul. Not because he sent them the two preserved Epistles, and one more which was lost, but because he did not give up training them, even when this ended up being very difficult! And the Corinthians gave such a hard time to Paul, that he was forced to scold, to appear stern, to make them be careful! And he wasn't lenient with them...**

But... When Paul was forced to do the above, he did if not do it with joy, nor with a feeling of self justification. He did it with pain of soul and such hurting, that it led him to tears. Not tears of sadness for the sin of his brother Corinthians, but to tears of pain, because he was forced to use speech as a double-edged sword, a censuring sword which cuts off everything rotten and harmful.

This shows from today's Epistle Reading, and furthermore from

the last verse: "Don't think that for the censuring which I wrote to you in that Epistle of mine I didn't experience any sadness. Because I wrote you, flooded with grief and distress of heart, with many tears, not so that you would be saddened, but so that you could come to know the excessive love which I have for you". The censuring Paul, is self censured and defends himself for the censure which he exercised, not calling upon his related responsibility as Apostle and founder of the Church of Corinth, but as a father who is hurting for that which he is forced to do, when he doesn't have any other choice.

But also in the beginning of today's Epistle Reading, the Apostle Paul, calling, the Most High God, furthermore, as his witness, , declares to his beloved Corinthians, that he is not visiting them because there is danger that with his sternness, he would sadden them: "I call upon the knower of hearts, God, for Him to see the depths of my soul, and to witness the truth, that I did not yet come to Corinth, because I pity you and don't want you to experience my sternness". There's not a trace of rejoicing over evil for the mistakes of the others, nor a suspicion of their disapproval or rejection, nor speech about breaking bonds and relationships, about cutting off the communion of love. On the contrary, so that the slightest embittering not occur, Paul prefers to be distressed, rather than to distress. He prefers to not visit his beloved Corinthians, rather than to cause them sadness, with censuring words during his visit there. He prefers to undergo, rather than to cause pain!

## **The betrothal**

What is the source of such discretion? The fact that every person, but especially every Christian, is not by chance. He has "been sealed with the betrothal of the Spirit", in other words, with the guarantee from God for the divine gifts. Even he who is not a Christian, constantly has the possibility, so long as he is alive, to end up a member of the Church and to enjoy the divine promises. Consequently, aside from the voice of each one's conscience, there is furthermore also, the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, as a seal with which God validates that we are His and He secures our guidance in the journey of our life upon the earth. Once more Paul stresses that he did not end up an Apostle in order to rule over the faith and the trains of thought, or to force people into a way of life.