

reason also, they must censure them, indicating how destructive they are. On the other hand, in the very next verse he says that these works, especially all that is done secretly, is so lewd, that for one to merely speak of them brings shame. And all these things, after he has previously stressed that whoever is a “child of light”, is characterized by the fruits of the spirit which are every type of expressions of kindness and righteousness and truth.

What do we understand through all these things? First, that Paul wants to project the key attitude of our Church that we reject sin, but we love the sinner. Our aim is not the brother’s rejection, putting down and crushing, but his repentance and his salvation! Second, that Paul wants to focus attention on the danger from the sin, without however, advertising it. Truly, many times in our effort to chastise forms of sin, essentially we are teaching them and cultivating related passionate thoughts in whoever is listening to us. Third, that Paul even when he is referring to the need for censuring, puts forth shame, kindness, righteousness and truth as necessary presuppositions to attempt any censuring whatsoever.

Brethren, the capability of articulating censuring speech, presupposes great spiritual measures and much virtue. So for this reason also, it cannot be the work of anyone whatsoever. Discretion must prevail.

Archimandrite I. N

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2015 13TH SUNDAY OF LUKE**, *Paramonus, Philumenus, and their 370 Companion Martyrs in Bithynia, Our Righteous Father Nicholas, Archbishop of Thessalonica, Dionysios, Bishop of Corinth, Akakios of Sinai who is mentioned in The Ladder*

**TONE OF THE WEEK: First Tone**

**EOTHINON** *Fourth Eothinon*

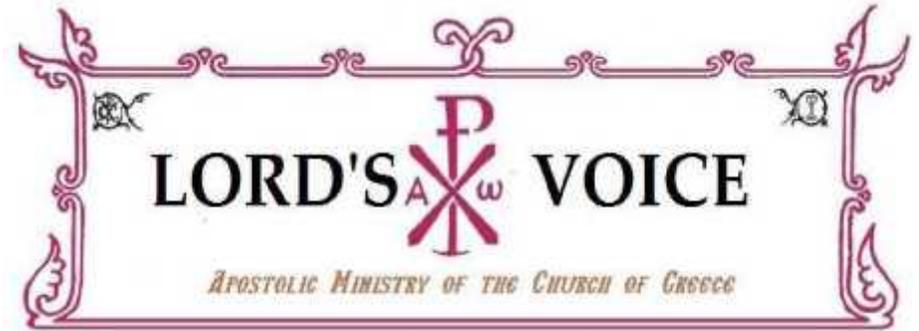
**EPISTLE** *St. Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians 5:8-19*

**GOSPEL** *Luke 18:18-27*

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2015: 10TH SUNDAY OF LUKE**, *Nicholas the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Myra, Nicholas the New Martyr of Asia Minor.*

**EPISTLE:** *St. Paul’s Letter to the Hebrews 13:17-21*

**GOSPEL:** *Luke 13:10-17*



**63<sup>RD</sup> YEAR NOVEMBER 29, 2015 PAMPHLET # 48 (3261)**

## CONTRADICTION OF LOVE

One of the characteristic elements of a society becoming decadent historically, is its fragmentation and division. The discord is heightened in an introverted polemic, not always with an expression of violence, but nevertheless with denouncing speech dominating. Demagogues rise up and manipulate the multitude taking advantage usually of the lack of education, at the same moment when they are undermining institutions for the sake of their own interest. Historically, the conclusion is always social decomposition itself.

Unfortunately, similar phenomena are observed sometimes also in ecclesiastical surroundings. Even in our day, many insist on squandering powers fighting not against the tragedy of the darkness of this age, but against other brothers. At a time when the world has so much need, sterile inner ecclesiastical controversies with very grave phrases, on account of words or deeds which obviously are explained differently. As if we forget the incisive word of the Apostle Paul to the Galatians, “if you are biting and devouring one another, see that you not be consumed by one another” (Gal. 5:15), as also his corresponding complaint to the Corinthians, “<sup>3</sup>for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?” (1 Cor. 3:3).

*ST. PAUL'S LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS 5:8-19*

**Prokeimenon. Mode One  
Psalm 32.22,1**

**Let your mercy, O Lord, be upon us.**

**Verse: Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous.**

Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is a shame even to speak of the things that they do in secret; but when anything is exposed by the light it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it is said, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light." Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart.

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## **Censuring speech**

Many people give the reason for censuring tactics by calling on moments when even the preaching of the Lord became censuring, or again they take refuge in the example of the Forerunner or of John Chrysostom. However, they pass over the fact that attacking speech was an exception and for this reason something noteworthy. While especially Saint John the Forerunner, who was truly stern, but also full of love, was censuring, even Herod, not with cruelty and rejection, but in a holy spiritual inspired manner. So for this reason also in Mark we read that Herod respected John more so, because he knew that he is a

righteous and holy person. And when he once heard him in prison, he did many of the things which John advised him. And each time Herod met him he listened to him with pleasure (Mark 6:20). The censured Herod listened with pleasure to the Precious Forerunner who was articulating a denouncing word against him! So a characteristic of the spiritual censuring speech is not the putting down and the crushing of him whom he is addressing, but the causing of respect, the understanding of what is just and correct and of course, sweetness from the preacher's loving and painful approach.

An example of this is the discretion with which the Ancient Church dealt with Paul. Paul as Saul was he who guarded the clothes of whoever was stoning the holy Protomartyr and Archdeacon Stephen (Acts 7:58). How does the Church judge him? She doesn't say anything against him, rather she only safeguards herself so as not to undergo worse things, whereas also in the Acts of the Apostles the documentation concerning Saul as a persecutor of the Church is real in its threatening, without emotional charging and demerit. (8:3) While Ananias' attitude in converting Saul and presenting him as Paul is hesitant, on the one hand, on account of all that he had heard concerning the man, without however, including condemnation, rejection or suspicion (9:10-18). Subsequently Paul goes to Jerusalem where he faces the fear towards him, of the Church there, but not accusation, hard heartedness or putting down (9:26-28).

## **"Censure in every goodness and righteousness and truth"**

The above attitude of the Church towards Paul, an attitude of safeguarding the flock without hate for the plotter, causes him to write today's Epistle Reading, not only in order to exhort and teach, but also in order to express his grateful experience from all he received as ecclesiastical behavior.

In order furthermore for his experience to be imprinted he uses contradiction. On the one hand, he exhorts the brothers to not become fellow communicants and fellow guilty people in the works of sin, because they don't bring a beneficial fruit, so for this