

My brethren, there is no doubt that in our life, moments will exist, when we will need something. God knows and hastens to us, providing everything that we need. However, He also desires us to request, as a cause for our edification and discipleship. In today's gospel we see three presuppositions, necessary for our whatsoever request, to be satisfied by Holy God. First, that it concern another person! Second that it be characterized by firm and persistent faith! Third, that it be accompanied by the power of humility!

In this way, we learn to lean on one another, as the one needs the other's prayers. In this way, we understand why our Church prays "let us commend ourselves and each other and our whole life to Christ our God."

Archimandrite I. N

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2016 SUNDAY OF THE CANAANITE. *Holy Father Auxentius of the Mountain, Cyril, Equal-to-the-Apostles & Teacher of the Slavs, Nicholas the New Martyr of Corinth*

TONE OF THE WEEK: *Tone Four*

EOTHINON *Fourth Eothinon*

EPISTLE: *St. Paul's Letter to the Corinthians.. 6:16-18; 7:1*

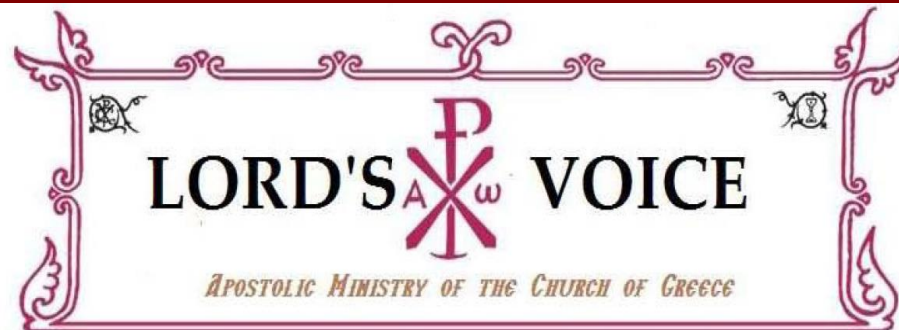
GOSPEL: *Matthew 15:21-28*

NEXT SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2016 SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN AND

PHARISEE: *Triodion Begins Today, Timothy the Righteous, John III, Patriarch of Constantinople, Eustathius, Bishop of Antioch, Zachariah, Patriarch of Jerusalem*

EPISTLE: *St. Paul's Second Letter to Timothy 3:10-15*

GOSPEL: *Luke 18:10-14*



64TH YEAR FEBRUARY 14, 2016 PAMPHLET # 7 (3272)

THE DYNAMIC DEMAND

In our age, we have gotten used to hearing about types of fighting, about demands, about struggles.... Generations and generations grew up nurtured with the perspective of continual demanding, even also with the use of violence, for the satisfaction of "just requests", "a struggle which must be justified", "of unyielding movements". And all together, we live the extended obsession which is cultivated through all these things, that "some" undefined people are treating us unjustly, taking advantage of us, and oppressing us. Thus, in the urban legend, under the rigging of the individualistic feeling of a multiple disadvantage, we are led to react, always under the guidance of some people who "know" and lead and usually reap the fruits and whatsoever benefits, at the same moment when we're losing the essential perspective of life, we are mistaken, swayed by beautiful speech, and we fail, not only to improve our society, but furthermore to also organize our life.

Even worse, overcome by a feeling of victimization and the subjectivity of whatsoever "justice", we don't hesitate to even harm and unjustly treat, substantiating thus that which we think we're undergoing as victims, being in reality victimizers! And all these things, in the name of demands, claims, aims, which many times we do not understand, probably because they are utopian; they fit however, our egotism and our disposition to put ourselves in a good position, whereas they also justify our ambition and ravaging

**Sunday of the Canaanite,
The Gospel according to Matthew 15:21-28**

At that time, Jesus went to the district of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and cried, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely possessed by a demon." But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him, saying, "Send her away, for she is crying after us." He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." And he answered, "It is not fair to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table." Then Jesus answered her, "O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire." And her daughter was healed instantly.

The Canaanite woman

Today's gospel has a tried mother as the topic, but also the way that she claimed and succeeded in gaining the solution to her problem from Christ. A Canaanite woman, in other words, an idol-worshipping woman from Phoenicia, not even an Israelite woman, hastens to the famous teacher and, prevented by the difference of religion, she does not dare approach Him, rather only from afar she shouts and seeks His mercy. The disciples, a little out of sympathy for her problem, a little bothered by her shouts, ask the Lord to do her the favor, so that she ceases following them. Christ however, who does not obey the aims of the moment, nor is He limited by human complacency, behaves with the aim of giving a lesson to His disciples and through them to the universe, showing forth the person who is claiming.

What was the Canaanite woman asking? That Christ have mercy on her! Why? Did she have some issue of her own? Precisely hers, no. Her daughter had a problem. Then why was she asking Christ to have

mercy on her personally? Let no one make the mistake and think that because she was the mother, she was taking on herself her child's issue. Motherly loving care was not automatically implied in the age of the Roman domination and furthermore among idol-worshipping peoples. That which distinguished her and which Christ wanted to show forth with His whole behavior, was the fact that this woman had made someone else's problem, her own personal one, and she was asking for this other person! She was not asking anything for herself, but for the sick one, the one too weak to claim, the one who objectively truly had a problem!

What does Christ do? He gives her a rough time! And not only this, but He seems to also "insult" her! Just as He seemingly also "insulted" His mother, at the wedding of Cana, when she was asking Him to help the people who would be shamed because their wine finished. Why does Christ do this? He wants to show forth the element of persistence in requesting, as the cornerstone of persistent faith, of the deep conviction that we consciously depend on God and His will, and that we're not disturbed by the slightest gust of doubt or disappointment.

But also for another reason. In order to show forth the elevating, almighty humility. He wants to show that man's uttermost power is the power to defeat himself, and to be able to be humbled. Not in order to be humiliated, but because in this way, free of selfishness and egotism, he is able to clearly see the truth and to correctly orient himself toward his Maker and Creator.

The solution

What happens as soon as the persistent faith and humility of the Canaanite woman were presented vividly before everyone's eyes? Christ is crushed! He cannot endure to resist any more, and he breaks out: "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you wish. And her daughter was healed from that moment"! God yields, bends, He aligns Himself to the human demand which has been expressed so dynamically, with all the presuppositions of the spiritual laws. And man obligates God to be obedient to divine love and philanthropy, as he copies it in the same way with which He approaches him.