

What does the Prodigal son subsequently do? He comes back to his father's home! He does not take refuge where so ever they promise him comfort, but there where there is the certainty of comfort. And he comes back, having decided to confess the mistake and to break off his relationship with his past. What happens afterwards? His restoration is realized, through a wonderful dialogue between the son who has come to a realization and the always awaiting Father. Regret, return, restoration, the three stages of repentance which denote spiritual life and maturity.

My brethren, the pre-eternal experience of the Church forewarns of the bitterness and destructiveness of sin. However superficial man believes that "he knows better"... Instead of drawing from the spiritual experience, he scorns teachings, principals and values, and proceeds offensively with haughtiness and egotism as his weapon. It is a matter of time for him to end up a victim of the good-hating devil, to hurt and taste the disappointment and despair of sin. Of course, God always awaits and His infinite love knows how to heal everything. So let us reject the irrationality of the adventure of sin, and let us pay attention to the forewarnings of divine love

Archimandrite I. N

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2016 SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON *Basil the Confessor, Kyranna the New Martyr of Thessaloniki, Jonah the Righteous Martyr of Lerios*

TONE OF THE WEEK: *Plagal of the Second Tone*

EOTHINON *Sixth Eothinon*

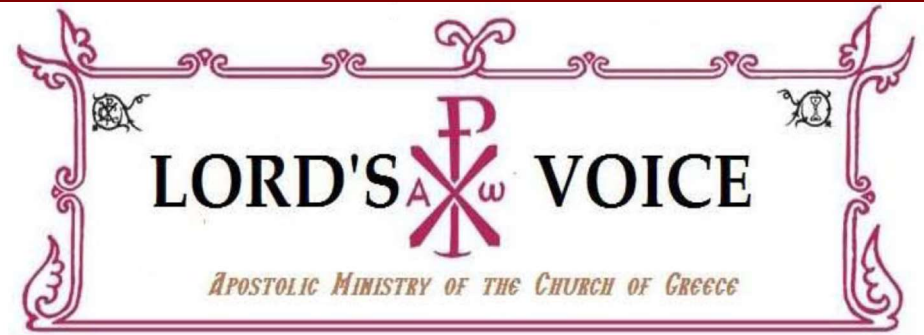
EPISTLE: St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 6:12-20

GOSPEL: Luke 15:11-32

NEXT SUNDAY, MARCH 6, 2016 JUDGMENT SUNDAY (MEATFARE SUNDAY), *42 Martyrs of Amorion in Phrygia, Finding the Precious Cross by St. Helen, Hesychios the Wonderworker*

EPISTLE: St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 8:8-13; 9:1-2

GOSPEL: Matthew 25:31-46



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THE IRRATIONALITY OF SIN

A grievous ascertainment, our age having forgotten God, also forgets His Law, His will, the Gospel itself! The many, swayed by a society which encourages immorality, charmed by technological and other capabilities which push to a new ethos without principles and limitations, believing the "sermons" concerning man's absolute freedom, proceed in their life not considering the experience of the past, ignoring the forewarnings of spiritual dangers and moral consequences, rejecting values and ideals. The result? Never before in human history was there documented so much human pain, such dread from unheard of crimes, constantly increased surprise about what man can devise...

And nevertheless, recent history grants sufficient indications about where man ends up when he overlooks the divine will and follows his own imperfect and passionate one. Merely the 20th century has two world wars to show with **the carnages of millions of victims and constant wounds to this day. It has documented infinite stories of man's abuse by man, either on a level of governments, for example colonialization. On a level of nations, for example, genocides. Or on a level of persons, for example, fleshly sins, narcotics, deceptions etc.. And nevertheless, contemporary man insists on embracing varied sin, instead of fighting it, refusing to admit that this is his destruction.**

"The due portion of the estate"

Today the Gospel presents, through, probably the most familiar parable, the irrationality of sin. And this is imprinted already from the beginning.

SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE 15:11-32

The Lord said this parable: "There was a man who had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that falls to me.' And he divided his living between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took his journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in loose living. And when he had spent everything, a great famine arose in that country, and he began to be in want. So he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have fed on the pods that the swine ate; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired servants.' And he arose and came to his father. But while he was yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and make merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to make merry. Now his elder son was in the field; and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants and asked what this meant. And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him safe and sound.' But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, but he answered his father, 'Lo, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command; yet you never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your living with harlots, you killed for him the fatted calf!' And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to make merry and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.'"

The younger son addresses his father with a commanding manner and, without even asking, he orders him to give whatever is due to him as a portion from the paternal estate! Attention! The father is alive and consequently, there is posed no issue of inheriting the estate. So long as the parent is alive, he is the lawful owner of his estate and whatsoever child of his, has no right to claim all that he may possibly inherit after his parent's death. And nevertheless, the younger son raises the demand, there where there is no right... It is man's basic mistake. He forgets that the world belongs to the Creator God and he acts like a usurper.

How does the father react? "He he divided his living between them"! He divides the estate and realizing that the demanding son will not listen to words, theoretical counsel will not benefit him, but he must suffer in order to learn, so that he can be healed subsequently! Consequently, the younger son having trust only in himself, and considering that he is able to do everything "after not a few days, gathering everything, he departed to a faraway country". Thus is realized, the first step toward sin, that which the Fathers call "departure", that is departing far from God and His will.

What is the result? As the Fathers interpret, and as is described in the parable, wretchedness follows. Sin always causes spiritual demise, which is characterized by offending the value of man. The bait of such an initial delight is followed by the hook of pain, of martyrdom of soul. Whoever believes that hell is lived only in the next life, makes a very big mistake. The experience of sin, is the living of hell, and the viewing of life as a dreadfulness without end. So for this reason also, the untroubled conditions in daily life, for this reason also, the multiplying of psychopathological phenomena in our age, for this reason also, the escalation of the martyrdom of contemporary man.

"Coming to himself"

How is man freed from all these things? The parable tells us that the Prodigal son recovered to himself, in other words he realized his condition, not so much of the material, external wretchedness, as of the internal, spiritual demise, as a result of egotistical choices. Thus regret begins, an unripe, first form of repentance, which nevertheless, must develop and mature, because otherwise there lurks the danger of man being trapped in self pity, and in a peculiar egotism of grief for the aimless mistakes into which he fell, and because he embittered Holy God.