

Immaculate Passion of our Lord (of the Twelve Gospels), when the Crucified One is also processed.

Here due to the limitation of size, let's focus only on phrase of Christ: "There is no servant greater than his master, nor an apostle greater than him who sent him" (Jn. 13:16). And the Lord His whole life not simply "went about benefactoring" (Acts 10:38), but He lived in order to be sacrificed for us and to cleanse us through His Precious Blood, which "was poured out upon the Cross". So if the life and death of Christ was constant actions of self denial and self kenosis, how can we exist in a different way than our Teacher and Deliverer?

Christ is the ruler of delivering sacrifice, and whoever follows Him and imitates Him are not able to be, either an army of slaves, nor an army of mercenaries. They are free people who voluntarily embrace Him, are christified and comprise His body, the Church, living sacrificially, in order to live with Him unto the ages.

Archimandrite I. N

SUNDAY, APRIL 3, 2016 SUNDAY OF THE HOLY CROSS *Nicetas,, Abbot of the Monastery of Medicium, Joseph the Hymnographer, Theodosia and Irene the Martyrs.*

TONE OF THE WEEK: *Third Tone*

EOTHINON *Eleventh Eothinon*

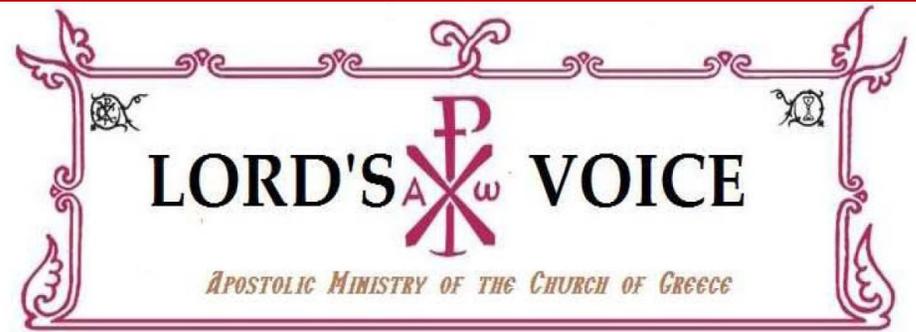
EPISTLE: *St. Paul's First Letter to the Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:1-6*

GOSPEL: *Mark 8:34-38; 9:1*

NEXT SUNDAY, APRIL 10, 2016 SUNDAY OF ST. JOHN CLIMACUS *Terence and his Companions beheaded at Carthage, Gregory V, the Holy Martyr and Patriarch of Constantinople, Holy Father Theona, Archbishop of Thessolonica, 150 and more Righteous Martyr Fathers of the Sacred Monastery of Pantocrator Daou Pentelis*

EPISTLE: *St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 6:13-20*

GOSPEL: *Mark 9:17-31*



64TH YEAR

APRIL 3, 2016

PAMPHLET # 14 (3279)

SPIRITUAL CLARIFICATION

Human history came to know many rulers with various characteristics, many motives and various aims. All of them, however, had a common denominator, the fact that whenever they were not obligating, indirectly or directly, they were vowing, promising cultivating the logic of recompense and stirring up the imagination of whoever was following them, for benefits, gains, enjoyments, which they would render to them after the success of their ruler. Thus, the followers of a ruler, if they were following them out of force, were an army of slaves, while if they were following them from the expectation of whatsoever pay back, they were an army of mercenaries.

In today's Sunday of the Veneration of the Cross, as our Holy Church elevates in the middle of the church the Precious Cross for veneration, for us to draw strength and courage, and to continue to sail the great ocean of the fast, in the middle of which we are, so as she elevates the Sacred Symbol of the Great King of the Lord of glory, of the Slaughtered Lamb, simultaneously she presents today's gospel passage, as most expressive, in the expression of the conditions under which we Christians are following our own ruler, the Bride of our soul. So Christ himself with his mouth, clarifies what He seeks and where He aims.

SUNDAY OF THE HOLY CROSS

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK 8:34-38; 9:1

The Lord said: "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? For what can a man give in return for his life? For whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power

A strange denial

So what does our Christ seek? The first verse of today's gospel reading clearly answers. Whosoever wants to follow me as a disciple, let him deny himself, let him make the firm decision to forbear every affliction and trial unto even crucifactory death, and then let him follow me, imitating my example. A weighty important saying, which humanity does not seem to have understood in its real dimension, nor was it able to absorb, since from then till today a similar saying, so free, crystal clear and deep, has not been expressed. It is the first time that people are called in freedom. They are called to align themselves behind the unique person, the Savior Christ, with conditions of personal responsibility. The "whosoever wishes" is characteristic, since it is not accompanied by threats and consequences for whoever does not want to.

There is a strange condition in our Lord's invitation. The condition of us denying our own self. Why? That which I have and am handling is my own self. That which was given to me and defines me, is my own self. That which sets the boundaries and characterizes me in the society of people, is my own self. Why is Christ asking me to deny it? And furthermore He is not asking me to deny some piece of my own self, even the most sick or rotten piece, but He is asking me to deny in totality, my whole self, even whatever good things I think I have!

Basil the Great dares to interpret the saying of the Lord. He explains that the denial of my own self means "a complete forgetting of the past and a departure from my own wills". In other words, for a person to forget whatsoever pangs, beliefs, views, biases, perceptions he had about the world and man, before coming to know Christ. To forget even his daily habits, in order to hand himself without conditions, to Christ and His Church, to the ecclesiastical ethos and the spiritual manner of life. But also for man to cease claiming and imposing his own will, saying very eagerly, like our Savior: "I'm not seeking my own will, but the will of the father who sent me" (Jn. 5:30).

Christification

However, more genuinely than the most experienced and godly illumined interpreter of Holy Scripture, our Christ himself interprets His saying. And He interprets it in four extensive chapters of the Gospel according to John, from the 13th to the 17th, where the events after the Mystical Supper up to before the Capture are described, and where our Lord both with the last extensive counsels to His disciples, as well as with His high priestly prayer, describes how the person is, who in the end hastens to follow Him, how he in action denies himself and how he embraces the quality of a friend, of the brother of Christ. Large excerpts of these chapters are read on Holy Thursday in the Service of the