

“Not thus shall it be among you”

Christ however, in today's Gospel is clearcut. These things don't have a place among you. Ignorance, or rather negligence about knowledge of matters of faith, of the Orthodox ethos, of the ecclesiastical way of life, of the habit, goals foreign to the Gospel, the wrong motives for approaching Christ, they don't have a place in the heart of whoever wants to be called a Christian. The person of God can't proceed towards heaven and simultaneously be being dragged in the mud of the earth. Or rather, it is a sign of spiritual illness and weakness for you to not be able to be clearcut in his train of thought, longing and his decisions.

We should underline that holiness and secularism, heavenly and earthly claims, a spiritual way of life and earthly occupation cannot coexist. And this becomes clear a little before the completion of Holy and Great Lent, as an effort of reminding the Christians as Holy Week is approaching, that they will live great and important, holy and saving, sacred and venerable things, which they are not allowed to mix together with selfishnesses, aims, habits, entanglements, delusional beliefs “of the darkness of this age”.

Brethren, He who came to serve us and to give His life as a ransom for many to be expiated and liberated from sin and death, has the right to claim that we be clear-cut and conscientious in our relationship with Him
Archimandrite I. N

SUNDAY, APRIL 17, 2016 SUNDAY OF ST. MARY OF EGYPT *Symeon the Holy Martyr and Bishop of Persia, Makarios, Bishop of Corinth, Agapetos of Rome*

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

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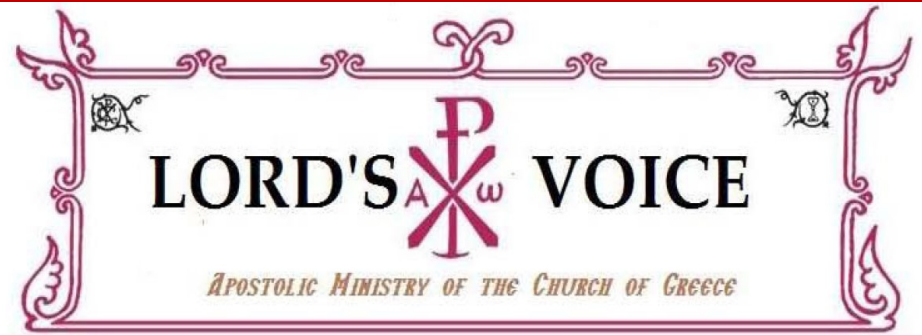
EPISTLE: *St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 9:11-14*

GOSPEL: *Mark 10:32-45*

NEXT SUNDAY, APRIL 24, 2016, PALM SUNDAY, *Elizabeth the Wonderworker, Savvas the General of Rome*

EPISTLE: *St. Paul's Letter to the Philippians 4:4-9*

GOSPEL: *John 12:1-18*



64TH YEAR

APRIL 17, 2016

PAMPHLET # 16 (3281)

OUR IGNORANCE

Our Church today also presents a holy personality, this time however, not because she wrote some important book, but because she left a precious example. We're talking about Saint Mary of Egypt, whose life is particularly didactic. And that which primarily characterizes it, is repentance. Repentance, not as a momentary event, but as a constant condition of body and soul, since the Saint, claiming the overturning of all the things that enslaved and were destroying her, embraced prayerful ascesis, as a contest capable of altering everything, and with body and soul of doing ascesis together, to uproot, in her, every ugly thing, in the eyes of God, in order to receive the grace of the Holy Spirit as an undetractable eternal inheritance.

And she made this decision of lifelong prayerful ascesis, as a proof of longing for repentance, which had lit up in her heart, in a very characteristic manner. Approaching, not with piety, but indifference, because “that's what everyone was doing” and with a soul burdened by fleshliness, to venerate the Precious Cross which, in those days was being elevated triumphally in Jerusalem after it was regained from the Persians, she felt an invisible power preventing her. And whereas all the others were able and were proceeding and entering into the area where the Precious Wood was, Mary remained affixed, prevented by the power of the Cross. Understanding why, she lifted up her eyes, beseechingly, to the icon of the Lady Theotokos, she asked for her mediation, she gave back the decision to radically change her way of life. and only then was

SUNDAY OF ST. MARY OF EGYPT

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK 10:32-45

At that time, Jesus taking the twelve again, he began to tell them what was to happen to him, saying, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death, and deliver him to the Gentiles; and they will mock him, and spit upon him, and scourge him, and kill him; and after three days he will rise." And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him, and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." And he said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?" And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory." But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" And they said to him, "We are able." And Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared." And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant of James and John. And Jesus called them to him and said to them, "You know that those who are supposed to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

she allowed to proceed and to venerate the Precious Cross, in order to leave afterwards for the desert and to live venerably.

"Ignorance"

Today's Gospel continues the description of Christ's journey toward Jerusalem, where "knowingly" He was going to be crucified voluntarily. Today furthermore, the third time is described where He is forewarning His disciples about precisely what He will suffer in Jerusalem. And when He finishes His words, moving in a completely other spirit, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, approach Him, in order to ask a favor of Him. And what they are asking reveals that they didn't understand what their Teacher had just told them! Because whereas He was speaking about the life giving Passion, Burial and the Resurrection, the disciples not only the two, but all of them, influenced by the perverted interpretation concerning the Messiah, which had been cultivated in Israel, believe that they were proceeding toward earthly glory and were claiming leadership privileges and a portion of authority...

Let us not hasten to criticize the disciples. Not because the Fathers interpreting the specific excerpt, justify them, and focus on the fact that they had not yet received the inbreathing of the Holy Spirit, which inbreathed on the day of Pentecost and enlightened them "into all the truth". But also because this characteristic of the disciples, for them to not be able to understand, the mistaken belief, the lack of attention, is something which furthermore characterizes most of us, Christians of the 21st century. Because, how many of us enter conscientiously "with faith, piety and the fear of God" into the church? How many of us pray with a realization of Whom we are referring our prayer to, and what we're asking Him. How many of us claim the title of Christian, whereas we aren't doing anything to be worthy of it? How many of us conscientiously deal the matters of faith and of spiritual life and not in a shallow superficial way, with a sense that "we know these things"? Or again, like Saint Mary of Egypt, how many of us don't keep some external forms of ecclesiastical life, because "that's what everyone is doing" and with thick fleshliness as a garment of the soul as a fact!