

deception concerning whom she had before her. So for this reason also, God accepts and praises this wholehearted approach, full of realization and purity. On the contrary, without revealing Judas as a thief, and furthermore of the money box, the common treasury for maintaining Christ and the disciples, without revealing the pondered betrayal, without scolding the hypocritical, supposed interest for the poor, insisting on waiting for the slightest indication of conversion, the slightest sign of repentance, He tries again to counsel and to teach, so as to take away misunderstandings and to defend His own people.

Brethren, today, as we are entering into the final stretch for Pascha, the Church compares the human attitudes towards Christ. On the one hand, the self seeking, enthusiastic, world dominating ones. On the other hand, the wholehearted faith, the true understanding and the sacrifice. The Lord was pleased with, and defended the second one, rejecting the first ones. We, what attitude will we decide to keep towards Him “who is coming to the voluntary passion”?

Archimandrite I. N

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

tone of the week: Plagal of the Second Tone

EOTHINON Third Eothinon

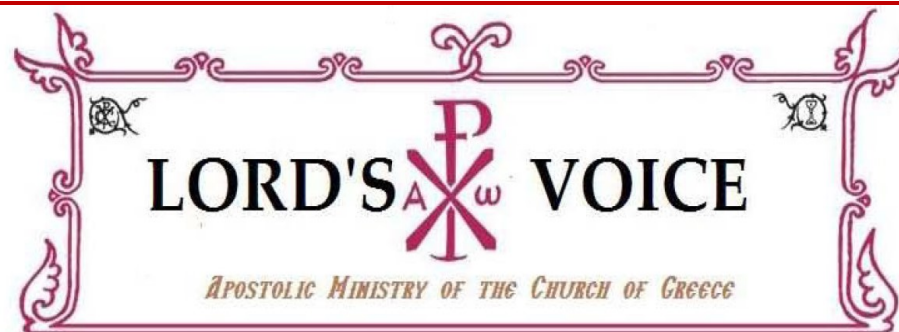
EPISTLE: St. Paul's Letter to the Philippians 4:4-9

GOSPEL: John 12:1-18

NEXT SUNDAY, MAY 1, 2016 GREAT AND HOLY PASCHA, Jeremias the Prophet, New Martyr Maria of Fourni, Mirabella in Crete, Saint Tamara (Tamar), Queen of Georgia, Nikiforos the Monk of Chios, Synaxis of the Three New Righteous Martyrs of the Holy Mountain, Euthymius, Ignatius, and Acacius

EPISTLE: Acts of the Apostles 1:1-8

GOSPEL: John 1:1-17



64TH YEAR

APRIL 24, 2016

PAMPHLET # 17 (3282)

OUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS CHRIST

As another Holy and Great Lent arrived at its end, and while we are at the eve of Holy and Great Week, our Church, with the pastoral discretion and prudence that characterizes her, presents a gospel passage, which, of course, has given its name to today's Sunday, simultaneously, however, it is treated unjustly, because a great portion of it is silenced. And truly everyone focuses on that portion which describes Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, forgetting the first part, where the action of Mary, Lazarus' sister, is described, who took "a pound of costly ointment of pure nard" in order to anoint Christ's feet with this and to subsequently wipe them with her hair. And nevertheless, the Church with realization and conscientiously, does not only present the verses of Jesus' royal reception in the Holy City, but she also presents that which immediately had preceded, not so that the historical and time sequence of the events not be lost, but in order to achieve something else. What? That which naturally arises from the juxtapositional study of the behaviors of the people and of Mary.

Christ's triumphal entry

An earthquake in Jerusalem! A triumphal reception! The people are stirred up! Others cutting branches from the palm trees and waving them triumphally during Christ's entrance into the Holy City. Others spreading down clothes so that not only the feet of the great Teacher not step on the ground, but not even the feet of His beast of burden. Others shouting with shouts of joy and expectation. And everyone squeezing.

PALM SUNDAY

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN 12:1-18

Six days before Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazaros was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. There they made him a supper; Martha served, and Lazaros was one of those at table with him. Mary took a pound of costly ointment of pure nard and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was to betray him), said "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" This he said, not that he cared for the poor but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box he used to take what was put into it. Jesus said, "Let her alone, let her keep it for the day of my burial. The poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me."

When the great crowd of the Jews learned that he was there, they came, not only on account of Jesus but also to see Lazaros, whom he had raised from the dead. So the chief priests planned to put Lazaros also to death, because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus.

The next day a great crowd who had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" And Jesus found a young donkey and sat upon it; as it is written, "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!" His disciples did not understand this at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that this had been written of him and had been done to him. The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazaros out of the tomb and raised him from the dead bore witness. The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign.

around Him, awaiting a beckoning, a command, the signal to proclaim Him king of Israel, with whatever would entail from this then
Why were the majority of people acting thus? Whoever was present when Christ resurrected Lazarus, who had been dead for four days,

related the miracle they lived, with the customary addition of exaggerations and analyses, but also expectations and claims, unrelated to whatever the Teacher had preached up to then. They who were hearing, were becoming enthused, translating everything in a utilitarian way, selfishly and opportunistically. They weren't glorifying God as ruling over life and death. Facing Christ as an object to be used, they were glorifying Israel's "super weapon," Who would resurrect the dead in battles and would heal those wounded, creating an invincible power...

How much superficiality! How much perversion of Christ's motives and dispositions! How much alteration of the ethos that He was preaching! So for this reason also, Jesus is silent! He is not telling them anything. Not because He knows that in a bit, those same ones from the "hosanna" will conclude in "crucify". So for this reason, He has already forgiven them. He remains silent because He does not want to do anything which would be misinterpreted as Himself accepting this alteration, which human selfishness and opportunism reserves towards His preaching and miracles. It is the clearest and most eloquent protest of people's refusal to accept the saving faith and the delivering ethos!

The behavior of Mary and Judas

On the contrary, before all these things, one woman, Mary, Lazarus' sister, as Christ was receiving hospitality with an honorary supper at their home, with Lazarus present and Martha serving, buys three hundred twenty five grams of costly, genuine and pure myrrh, worth as much as the wages for one year, and with this she washes His feet, wiping them with her hair, an indication of gratitude and dedication. And Jesus fully accepts it; He does not react. On the contrary, He defends Mary to Judas's selfish complaints, that so much costly myrrh was poured out badly and that it ought to have been sold off, and the money given to the poor.

Why is Mary behaving thus? Let's remember that sitting "at Jesus' feet she was listening to His words" (Lk. 10:39). Probably she was the only one who understood what was about to occur, so for this reason also, Christ showed it forth, saying that whatever she did, she did as a symbolism and preparation of His body for the day of His burial. Mary was approaching Jesus conscientiously, without human calculations or