

of the 1st Ecumenical Synod, so that it may clearly show that the person of Christ is not simply of the highest importance for the Church, but the unique path which leads to God the Father, the fullness of knowledge, the fullness of communion of God and man, eternal life! Every alteration of the person of Christ, every human perversion and deviation, invalidates this path, this experience, this knowledge. "Heresy" means preference and gives meaning to man's preference of another path, not true, not saving, not of Christ. So for this reason, the Church also has sensitivity to the topic of heresies, because, on the one hand, they invalidate the unique path to salvation which the person of Christ validated for the sake of the human race, on the other hand, they try to "pass" the human belief and construction, as of God, making fun of God and deceiving humans.

Many people, dealing with the Orthodox Church and its expressions on earth, wonder at the lack of some visible center, of some visible rule that regulates and administrates. We're not Papists to have the Pope as a monarch, we are not Protestants to have anarchy and chaos. We have the truth of the Orthodox Faith, which knows as its only center and rule, our Lord Jesus Christ, who is visibly present, the head of the Church, the Leader of our salvation

Archimandrite I. N

SUNDAY, JUNE 12, 2016 SUNDAY, JUNE 12, 2016 FATHERS OF THE 1ST COUNCIL, *Onuphrius of Egypt, Peter the Athonite, Holy Martyr*

Antonine, John the Soldier of Egypt.

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

EOTHINON : *Tenth Eothinon*

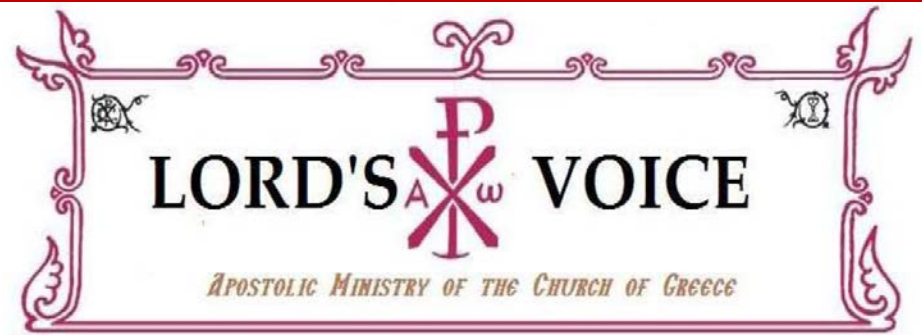
EPISTLE: *Acts of the Apostles 20:16-18, 28-36*

GOSPEL: *John 17:1-13*

NEXT SUNDAY, JUNE 12, 2016 SUNDAY, JUNE 19, 2016 HOLY PENTECOST *Thaddeus (Jude) the Apostle & Brother of Our Lord, Holy Martyr Zosima, Our Righteous Father Zenonus, Paisius the Great of Egypt.*

EPISTLE: *Acts of the Apostles 2:1 – 11*

GOSPEL: *John 7:37-52; 8:12*



64TH YEAR

JUNE 12, 2016

PAMPHLET # 24 (3289)

ETERNAL LIFE

As we are proceeding from the feast of the Ascension to the feast of Pentecost, essentially as we are passing from the feast of the glory of human nature to the feast of its enlightenment, the Church comes to interject, on today's Sunday, the memory of the Holy Fathers who comprised the 1st Ecumenical Synod in Nicaea of Bithynia, a feast which has par excellence to do with the truth of faith. Not however, with the faith as an ideology, as a theoretical development which the brain approaches and handles with logic or with memorization. With faith in its real dimension, in its essential hypostasis, real truth.

Eternal life as knowledge

Today's gospel passage comprises the starting excerpt of our Lord's high priestly prayer. Our Christ prepares for his voluntary sacrifice and prays. The start of his prayer is characteristic: "the time has come". The time arrived for which his incarnation took place. The revelation of the Lord on the earth served many goals. The most important one of all, however, was this, to ascend to the height of the Cross and to pour out his Precious Blood for us sinners. Christ incarnated to taste death, so for this reason also, very characteristically, in the icon of His Nativity he is depicted as an infant wrapped not only in swaddling clothes, but burial shrouds, whereas the manger, which normally

FATHERS OF THE 1ST COUNCIL
THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN 17:1-13

At that time, Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him power over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work which you gave me to do; and now, Father, you glorify me in your own presence with the glory which I had with you before the world was made.

"I have manifested your name to the men whom you gave me out of the world; yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you; for I have given them the words which you gave me, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you did send me. I am praying for them; I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are mine; all mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me; I have guarded them, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to you; and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves."

is wooden, is depicted in iconography as marble, and resembles more to a tomb.

And whereas "the time has arrived" for the unique sacrifice, our Christ is praying not for himself, but for his Church, for each

person of his, for every believer. And whereas he is proceeding toward death, for the earthly in Spirit manner of being of us all, with eternal life as the main perspective. The Lord of all before tasting death, orients us toward eternal life, without preaching or simply speaking about it. He merely prays for this, as the unique goal of our life. The first time that Christ refers with such clarity and longing to eternal life is his high priestly prayer!

And there he defines eternal life as knowledge! "While this is eternal life that they may know you...". Cyril of Alexandria will interpret: for the knowledge of life as holy, giving the birth pangs of the power of the mystery and reaping the partaking of mystical theology, through which we become light also to the living and life-giving Word". Knowledge is defined not as something dryly intellectual, cold logic or informational data. But as experience, conscious communication and sacramental encounter with God as the source of life! So for this reason also, knowledge is identified, in one meaning, with faith! Further more the present "that they may know" is used to show the constant increasing of this knowledge. Just as God is infinite, life with Him is also eternal, thus His knowledge will be also constantly increasing, without reaching boundaries.

The "knowledge" of Jesus Christ

Of what matter of knowledge does eternal life offer? Not of a thing, since it does not have to do with theorems and admittances, but with a person! "While this is eternal life that they may know you the only true God and whom you sent Jesus Christ" (Jn. 17:3). The knowledge of eternal life passes from the experience of God and the person of Christ. The knowledge of Jesus Christ in this passage appears literally and explicitly as equal to knowing God. Or better yet, the knowledge and communion seems to be achieved through the knowledge and communion with Christ, as a necessary and needed presupposition. So for this reason also, the person of Christ is so crucial to the Church.

So for this reason also, the specific gospel passage is selected to be read today, when reference is made to the Fathers and to the Christology