

differentiates them from the rest of relationships of respect, which developed in human society. And He demands, His person to live Him more than even those of the members of his family, placing the relationship of God and man in the center of his being, as the quintessence of his living experience.

And this differentiates the Lord and sets Him much higher than the common teachers. Once Aristotle reached the point of saying: "Plato is a friend, on the one hand, while truth is very beloved," in order to show that he sacrifices the love of friendship, for the sake of truth. Christ does not tell us to sacrifice the love of our whatsoever family, for the sake of truth. He does something higher. He says we should sacrifice for His personal sake, for Him, the whatsoever love, even the greatest, the most correct [love], to consider it much lower in relation to His own, since He is not only the Truth, but also the Way and the Life!

Today, Sunday of All Saints, our Church does not project only all those who became instruments of grace and citizens of heaven, but along with this, she presents in her own unique pedagogical manner, the truth which All the Saints embraced experientially, and it showed them forth. Their essential and unbreakable focusing on the Gospel of Christ, as a projecting of their definitive relationship with God the Father.

Archimandrite I. N

SUNDAY, JUNE 26, 2016 THE SUNDAY OF ALL SAINTS

David the Righteous of Thessalonika, Appearance of the Icon of Our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos of Tikhvin

tone of the week: Plagal of the Fourth Tone

EOTHINON : *Firtst Eothinon*

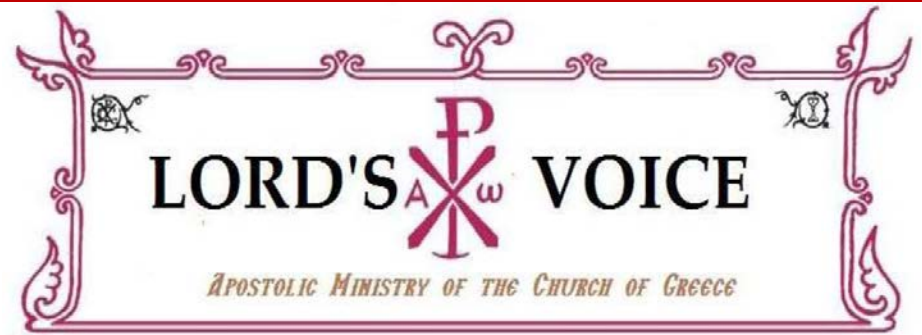
EPISTLE: *St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 11:33-40; 12:1-2*

GOSPEL: *Matthew 10:32-33; 37-38; 19:27-30*

SUNDAY, JULY 3, 2016 2ND SUNDAY OF MATTHEW *Hyacinth the Martyr of Caesarea & Theodotos and Theodota the Martyrs, Anatolius, Patriarch of Constantinople, Gerasimos the Holy Martyr of Karenesi, Translation of the Holy Relics of our Father Among the Saints Philip, Metropolitan of Moscow.*

EPISTLE: *St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 11:33-40; 12:1-2*

GOSPEL: *Matthew 10:32-33; 37-38; 19:27-30*



64TH YEAR

JUNE 26, 2016

PAMPHLET # 26 (3291)

THE JOY OF BEING A CHRISTIAN

The feast of All Saints comes as a natural succession of the feast of Pentecost. And this because, if on the previous Sunday we saw the breath of the Spirit, today we must see the fruits of the Spirit. The Church wants to honor the totality of her Saints, which as a cloud, surrounds the throne of Holy God and proves to what heights his very eager affirmation of the God's invitation to become a Father and he a son of His, by grace, elevates him. Thus, the Church doesn't simply remember the history of the coming of the All Holy Spirit, but really lives and imprints experientially what it means for its life, for the Comforter's presence on earth, but also how it can act upon man and how incomprehensible to the human mind is the final majesty, to which holiness confers him.

However, no matter how beautiful these things seem, the Church also has the realization that the journey to obtain them, on account of the crafts of the good-hating devil, is very harsh. She knows that the battle with the hater of good, is dreadful and exceptionally fine and sly, because the trophy of this battle is each person, as a unique and unrepeatable personality. And today's gospel reading comes to show this harshness, focusing mainly on each person's choices.

THE SUNDAY OF ALL SAINTS

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW 10:32-33; 37-38; 19:27-30

The Lord said to his disciples, "Every one who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven; but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny him before my Father who is in heaven. He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and he who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me." Then Peter said in reply, "Lo, we have left everything and followed you. What then shall we have?" Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of man shall sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life. But many that are first will be last, and the last first."

Cooperation of God and man

The expression of the verse is impressive: "who so ever shall confess in me before men, I shall also confess in him before my father who is in the heavens". Normally it ought to be saying: "who so ever the shall confess me.... I shall also confess him..." (Mt. 10:32). That the idiom is not a mistake, is proven by the fact that the continuation is grammatically correct: "who so ever denies me before men, I will also deny him..." Why this intentional differentiation in expression?

The answer which is implicit is catalytic about how Christ perceives his own people. Chrysostom will interpret: "it proves that whoever confesses the faith, does not do it with his own powers (he means either the personal beliefs, or the stubbornness,

or the fanaticism or the enthusiasm of each one), but aided and inspired by the divine grace. Whereas for whoever denies him, he did not say "in me", but "me", so that the abandonment of soul and it's estrangement from the gift of God can show, which leads to denial". Consequently, the confession of faith is proof of an engraced soul, in which Christ dwells and characterizes it, whereas on the contrary, denial is a result of the abandonment of soul, due to its abandonment by God, on account of human attachment to what so ever comprises an obstacle to an essential relationship of love with Him.

In other words, the chief spiritual condition which Paul defines when he confesses: "it is no longer I who live, rather Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20) is described. And this condition is imprinted by Saint John Chrysostom with a characteristic example which shows how Christ dwells in man, without him realizing it, without enslaving him, without abolishing him. The Saint says, take a piece of iron and place it in the fire. After a little bit it will become red. Did it cease being iron? No! It is, however, henceforth fire also! Thus God and man cooperate, thus they are joined together, thus they coexist, to a point where the one cannot be separated from the other one!

"For my sake"?

What result does this relationship of God and man have? With what else than for it to reside and claim a crucial superiority in the life of man. For this reason also, the continuation of today's Gospel may seem, in human terms, harsh and absolute, in its essence however, it is nothing other than honorable, sincere and clear-cut. God claims absolute priority in man's heart, as the height of his value scale!

Our Christ uses the verb "I befriend" and not the verb "I love" to show the deep loving care, the complete giving, and the anxious interest, which exists in family relationships and