

And the opportunity is none other than the invitation of our Christ itself. The first time, without chasing them away, He does not keep them next to Him, but He gave them time with quiet to think, so that they could decide naturally. Now He himself seeks them and invites them directly. "Directly" they respond also! They show, not a superficial zeal or a superficial enthusiasm, but faith and obedience. Listening to the calling of the Teacher, they don't put it off, nor even delay, but as ready for a while, that which was being kneaded and being prepared in their heart they allow to manifest and blossom. And with unheard of decisiveness, they abandon everything, in order to become "fishermen of men".

The outcome of whatsoever decision, depends on the preparation for its taking, by the maturity in its development, by the persistence in its implementation. The method of Christ, in order to establish the firm decision in His Disciples, is the method of the Church, in her invitation to man, to make the decision of a conscious spiritual life. Acquaintance with Christ cannot be characterized by superficiality or reservation. Christ claims the realization, the maturity and the firmness in our decision to follow Him.

Archimandrite I. N

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 Karesni, Translation of the Holy Relics of our Father Among the Saints Philip, Metropolitan of Moscow.*

TONE OF THE WEEK: *First Tone*

EOTHINON : *Second Eothinon*

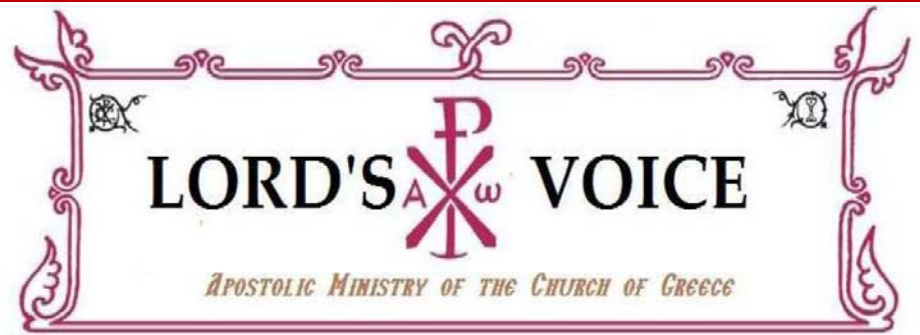
EPISTLE: *St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 11:33-40; 12:1-2*

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

SUNDAY SUNDAY, JULY 10, 2016 3RD SUNDAY OF MATTHEW *45 Holy Martyrs of Nikopolis, Armenia, Our Holy Father Gregory, Bishop of Assa, 10,000 Fathers martyred in Egypt, Apollonios the Martyr, Deposition of the Precious Robe of Our Lord Jesus Christ in Moscow, Righteous Father Anthony of the Kiev Caves, Parthenios and Eumenios of Koudoumas.*

EPISTLE: *St. Paul's Letter to the Romans 5:1-10*

GOSPEL: *Matthew 6:22-33*



64TH YEAR

JULY 3, 2016

PAMPHLET # 27 (3292)

PREPARATION AND DECISION

One of the main characteristics of contemporary man, is the reservation, the hesitation, the fear to make decisions. And this, of course, is not due to the fact that he doesn't trust himself. On the contrary, the individualist person of the 21st century has a big idea about himself. And no matter how much he doesn't admit it, practically he has deified himself. Then, why does he hesitate? Why doesn't he decide, but he observes the development of matters? Out of fear! Out of fear that he not per chance lose some better opportunity than that which, at the given moment, he has before him. He hesitates and he does not decide, that he not per chance lose something higher that may arise, or that he has not yet perceived. The possibility of choices which are offered to him in our age, are so great, that it approaches the infinite. Probably, for the first time in history, human freedom, the right of man to select, is not dissolved by the imitations, but by the super offering of choices which "block" the decision.

What happens when a person- either because he hesitates, either because he does not want, either because he is not able- does not make decisions? The time of life rolls, the opportunities are

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW 4:18-23

At that time, as Jesus walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."

Immediately they left their nets and followed him. And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left their boat and their father, and followed him. And he went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people.

lost, and the person himself "gets stuck in the marsh". He is sunk in the marsh of stationalness, and this is whatever worse, especially for the spiritual life. Fearing to decide, essentially he fears the responsibility that whatsoever decision entails, so for this reason, he reserves himself, resulting in not participating in his own life. In the end, he ends up passively accepting "whatever comes and whatever goes", ending up a simple viewer of history, at the moment when he has been made to be a protagonist.

The preparation of the workers of the Gospel

Today's gospel passage presents an episode in the long series of preparations of the workers of the Gospel. It describes the calling of the first Disciples and Apostles, and the way in which they responded. It focuses however, on the disciples' answer to the invitation of our Christ to follow Him, silencing whatever previously had taken place. And what had taken place previously, the Gospel of Matthew does not tell us. from where today's

passage comes, but the Gospel of John, in order to clearly show that the Gospels, even though four, and written in various places, without the capability of their authors agreeing with each other, do not contradict each other, but add to the information one of the other, since each Evangelist, using his personal tone, and aiming at a different circle of readers, writes, presenting a different side of the same person, of the Godman Jesus!

What happened previously that the evangelist Matthew does not describe, but the Evangelist John documents? After the Lord's Baptism by the Forerunner John, John himself discreetly hastened to connect his disciples with Christ. Thus, he pointed to Andrew and to John to abandon himself and to turn toward Christ. They approached Him and submitted the familiar question to Him "rabbi, where are you staying?", to receive the answer that "the foxes and the birds in the sky have their nests, but Christ however himself, does not have where to lay his head". And this answer was given, so that it could be cleared up from the beginning, that life with Christ for the Disciples and His Apostles would not be a life of comforts, but of toils and dangers. Essentially a suggestion occurs and simultaneously the difficulties are underlined. And all these things occur with complete sincerity and so much respect for human freedom, that there is no suspicion of the disciples conducted, nor even an attempt to "get in good with them".

Acquaintance with Christ

What happens afterwards? Afterwards the Disciples return to their families. They are occupied with their jobs. They work for their daily living. Simultaneously, all these things are working in their souls. What are they pondering, they measure them, they think about them.... The longing becomes big, not emotionally and superficially, but systematically and conscientiously. The seed has fallen in the field of the soul, and awaits the time when it will blossom. In other words, the foundation is created in the soul, and the opportunity is awaited.