

complete dependence on Holy God, as the only One capable not simply to grant healing of body, but furthermore the sanctification of soul as well. So for this reason also, He who knows well the innermost depths of men's hearts and is able to ascertain their genuine and unselfish love for Him, knows how to ascertain not only every need of His creature, but also to intervene according to what is spiritually advantageous and to render to each one whatever he needs.

My brethren, many times the Saints of our faith face illness in their life as a visitation of God, as a cause for a more intense and more fervent prayer, as a cause for patients and the accompanying blessing. Their example exists, in order to teach us how we are able, even in such difficult conditions, like illness, to receive causes for practical philosophy and theology, so that we can approach God even more, understanding human weakness, feeling together that our homeland is the Kingdom of God, not this earth, and our eternal inheritance, our restoration in the embrace of God the Father. Amen.

Archimandrite I. N

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4TH, 2016 10TH SUNDAY OF LUKE, *Barbara the Great Martyr, John the Righteous of Damascus, New Hieromartyr Seraphim, Bishop of the Phanar in Greece, Juliana the Martyr of Heliopolis, Alexander Hotovitzky, New Hieromartyr of Russia, Missionary to America*

TONE OF THE WEEK *Grave Tone*

EOTHINON : *Second Eothinon*

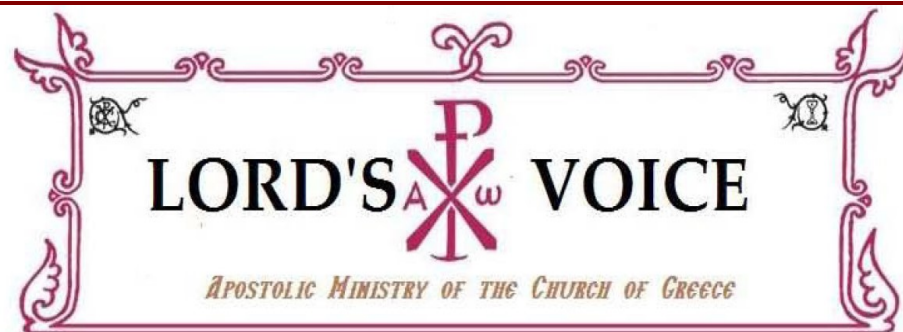
EPISTLE: *St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 3:23-29; 4:1-5*

GOSPEL: *Luke 13:10-17*

NEXT SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2016 11TH SUNDAY OF LUKE, *Daniel the Stylite of Constantinople, Luke the New Stylite of Chalcedon, Holy Martyrs Ascepsia and Aethal, Holy Martyrs Miracus and Barsabas, Leontios the Righteous of Monemvasia, The Glorious King Nikephoros Phokas*

EPISTLE: *St. Paul's Letter to the Colossians 3:4-11*

GOSPEL: *Luke 14:16-24*



64TH YEAR DECEMBER 4 2016 PAMPHLET # 49 (3314)

THE SCANDAL OF ILLNESS

Many times hearing the requests of our Christians and the reasons for which they pray, one distinguishes the request prevailing for health. Thousands of little papers come to the Holy Prothesis of all the churches with this declared request. But also in our daily life, in the turn of speech about all that is happening around us, the conclusion is customary "let us have our health, so that we can make ends meet". The request for health is a strong imperative. And many people, especially of those who have a confused perception concerning the Church and they face her with a dimension of sorcery, declare very clearly, that they go to Church so that God will have them "healthy", considering Divine Grace as a type of shield against the whatsoever illness.

And here the scandal begins. It seems that the request is not heard, since the Churches also are full of sick people, and Christians get sick and finally so many supplications and prayers for health seem to not be heard, just as the corresponding requests are not always fulfilled. So why, whereas, on the one hand, the Church projects the many miracles of our Christ, who granted health to whoever enjoyed them, on the other hand, today it seems that miracles don't occur, or at least as if Holy God is not protecting His own people sufficiently? The answer could be very easy.

The cure of the "hunchbacked" woman

In today's Gospel Christ gives us embossed, a different and πρωτότυπο original answer to that question that we formulated above. The cure of the hunchbacked woman is described, in other

13TH SUNDAY OF LUKE

THE GOSPEL LUKE 13:10-17

At that time, Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. And there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years; she was bent over and could not fully straighten herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your infirmity." And he laid his hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight, and she praised God. But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the sabbath, said to the people, "There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be healed, and not on the sabbath day." Then the Lord answered him, "You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to water it? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?" As he said this, all his adversaries were put to shame; and all the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by him..

How do we ask for the same things with earlier ages, then when the faith of people, genuine and guileless, boiled in their hearts and led them to confessions "unto blood?" Why do we seek miracles when the way of our life and the quality of our habits, excludes them? Let us not forget that the miracle, aside from faith, also needs virtue.

words, that woman who could not at all lifter head upwards, th since her body bent down by the illness obligated are to be constantly bend over. The whatsoever tendency for straightening up brought about fearful pains, which limited to the expanse of her activities. And nevertheless, this woman was not ashamed in her condition to circulate. She did not hesitate to be troubled. And furthermore mainly going to the Synagogue in order to listen to the Law of God and its interpretation.

Many times an illness and its results create an ugly psychology to the patient and lead him to be ashamed of his body or they deprive

him of the appetite for life. If the patient does not have stocks of endurance of soul, which mainly faith in the providence of God increases, usually he is lead to psycho-pathological conditions, even extreme ones, resulting in making life even more torturous for himself and for his relatives. Usually society itself cultivates the related pessimistic thoughts, when it is imbued by unacceptable beliefs of worship of the Nietcheist superhuman, when full of pettiness of soul, society faces sick people as lesser and a burden, when hypocrisy closes the eyes to pain refusing to prepare its members to face it, propagandizing, instead of this, the main pursuit of the empty hope and absolute happiness upon earth.

The hunchbacked woman of today's Gospel however does not behave like that. She confesses her faith and hope in God, mainly with what she does, going, in other words, with toil and pain to the worship of God, participating and drawing strength from there. She does not speak at all so that we could know the content of her prayer, the type of her requests, or even her complaints. It is a rare thing for a sick person to be silent. Usually it means stocks of strength and patience of soul, which dictate to him that he not tire other people, but that he bear alone the cross of whatsoever illness with courage.

Jesus Christ, the "doctor of souls and bodies"

And our Christ, on the other hand, acts in an unheard of manner. He sees the hunchbacked woman and interrupts His sermon, proof of the Creator's interest for His creature. Without the woman speaking to Him or asking anything of Him, Christ Himself, touching her head immediately tells her: women you are loosened and freed from your illness. No one asked anything of Him and nevertheless, Christ acts beneficially. This is the way that, to this day, our Saints act, even to all those whom they do not know, even to whoever had never asked them for anything.

In other cases Christ demands to ascertain the faith of whoever asks Him for a miracle. Here, He does not do it, because He does not need to ascertain anything. Her patience in the illness and the accompanying chiseling of soul, is more than enough to witness the