

In such a battle those who “make noise” in general in the Church have given in and unfortunately been defeated, imbued by this spirit which today’s epistle passage, calls “zeal without understanding”. Whereas the Church, the body of Christ, with Her whole functioning and on a level of institutions, shows them the road and furthermore there is the infallible promise of our Savior that the gates of hades shall not prevail over Her, our specific brothers act like a crew who alone have the privilege of “worrying” about the journey of the vessel, as the rest are excluded from it.

What else is this mindset and Pharisees than a hypocrisy of the age of the years of our Christ which is surviving after Christ, something even more tragic? So for this reason, let us be careful, my brethren, of our self, so that we not be led, due to such a zeal, into a state of drowning, and furthermore in the port, the Church of Christ.

Archim. E. T.

**SUNDAY, JULY 9, 2017 5TH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW** *Metrophanes of Mount Athos , The Holy Hieromartyr Pancratius, Bishop of Tauromenium in Sicily, Dionysios the Orator, Paternuthius the Monk, Metrophanes of Mount Athos, Euthymios of Karelia, Methodios the Hieromartyr, Bishop of Lampis, Michael Paknanas the Gardener.*

**TONE OF THE WEEK :** *Tone Four*

**EOTHINON :** *Fifteenth Orthros Gospel*

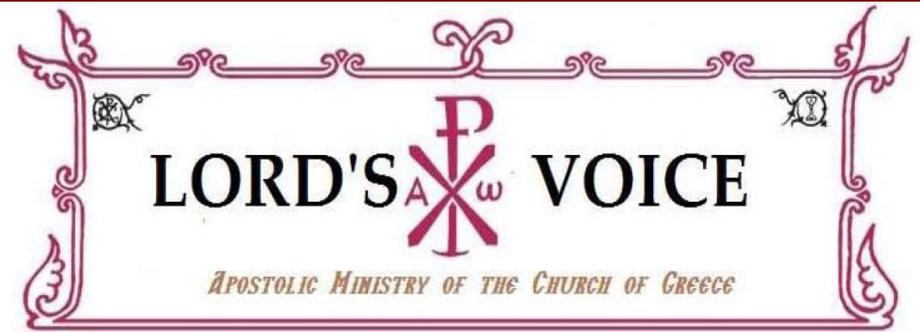
**EPISTLE READING:** *Romans 10:1-10*

**GOSPEL READING:** *Matthew 8:28-34, 9:1*

**NEXT SUNDAY, SUNDAY, JULY 16, 2017 SUNDAY OF THE HOLY FATHERS,** *Athenogenes the Holy Martyr of Heracleopolis , Julia the Virgin-martyr of Carthage, 1,015 Martyrs in Pisidia, Helier the Hermit, Martyr of Jersey.*

**EPISTLE READING:** *Titus 3:8-15*

**GOSPEL READING:** *Matthew 5:14-19*



65<sup>TH</sup> YEAR

JULY 9 2017

PAMPHLET # 28 (3345)

## THE JUSTIFICATION OF GOD

The Apostle Paul in today’s passage from the Epistle to the Romans, beloved brethren, confesses that he fervently desires the Israelites to be saved, even though they were estranged from the Lord, because they had zeal without understanding. They overestimated the Law and believed that through the Law one is justified. They insisted in their own viewpoint concerning justification, without submitting their own self to the justification which only God through Jesus Christ grants.

### “Zeal without understanding”

That the Israelites were deceived in the end from their ritualism is a phenomenon that is repeated also in Christians of our day. The zeal that the former ones had was not directed by the correct knowledge concerning God. I know God means I’m united with Him and I theologize. But knowledge is one thing and opinion is another. If, before my insufficiency to know God I elevate my opinion, then my theology is a reselling and private, uncompassionate, unmerciful, authoritative and crippling for my neighbor and for me myself. It comprises a theological phantasm-ghost and not the source of life and grace, like the works and the words of our Saints.

## ST. PAUL'S LETTER TO ROMANS 10:1-10

BRETHREN, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but it is not enlightened. For, being ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. For Christ is the end of the law, that every one who has faith may be justified. Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on the law shall live by it. But the righteousness based on faith says, Do not say in your heart, "Who will ascend into heaven?" (that is, to bring Christ down) or "Who will descend into the abyss?" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart (that is, the word of faith which we preach); because, if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved.

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Thus this danger is graspable today also, where "zeal without understanding" has abounded, which yes, on the one hand, grants some sense of self justification and emotional euphoria to those "struggling" like that, but with the absence of humility, its fans are essentially also troubled and by extension the entire Church. There are not a few times when quite a few people imbued by such a type of zeal themselves construct threats against which they are fighting, without realizing it.

### Law and Grace

"The shadow of the law has passed, since graces has come" our Church very didactically chants. The Law was a shadow. A shadow which in a way "hid" God, in what sense? It was not possible to be implemented entirely, and this because no human would be able to keep it entirely. In something he would be at fault, no matter how much he tried. The word of God here however comes like a blow. He who will

keep everything while he "transgresses" in one thing became guilty of all" (James 2:10). So who could boast that he surpasses his whatsoever neighbor, since everyone somewhere has transgressed and consequently we are all guilty in everything?

So Christ comes, "empties" from his glory, He is emptied, the Sinless one puts on our poverty, descends from the heavens to the earth, descends even deeper, down to the underworld. He also preaches there "the good news of joy" shining brilliantly in the uncreated fire of His godhead, and He gives joy thus to the good-intentioned ones of all ages. Henceforth with His grace we are saved. Freely. Without His grace we are "guilty of all". The shadow of the Law remains to us.

On the contrary, believing Him and consequently doing the works which show our faith-trust in Him, we live with Him in our heart. There He Himself is revealed together with His Father and the Holy Spirit. Living as members of His Church, we confess Him with the lips of our mouth. We taste Him as a food which makes incorrupt and a very sweet drink, but also our confession with the lips, in time becomes a confession of the noetical lips of the heart, a confession of life. It cannot occur otherwise.

### Only our own self an obstacle

The devil ragingly uses our passions with the left or right battles in order to turn us away from this journey. There are, of course, according to our Fathers also battles in another sense: from in front (fears about coming harms in the future), from behind (despair for our past, mainly when a complete repentance not exist in the struggling person), from above (the struggle without discretion to achieve "ideals") and from below (the battle from man's lower instincts), which seek to tear down the climbing and governing mind at every moment.

Yes, on the one hand, the battle from the left is dangerous, but visible and uncovered, because it comes with the appearance of the whatsoever sin, in which case the spiritually mindful person fights with the grace of Christ as an ally and usually comes out victorious, that battle however which is exceptionally dangerous is the one from the right, with a façade of piety.