

he departs into the icon and concelebrates and co-liturgizes with the depicted persons. He obtains a liturgical ethos, he becomes a liturgized person.

Thus the in the image is “cleansed”, the darkened image of God in us. It is darkened from the marks of the transgressions, from yielding to the wicked thoughts and the many and unnamable passions and lewd desires. It is a dirtied icon which, precisely just as when we find an old, dark and, smoky, corrupt icon, we do not throw it away, but we put all our good disposition into cleaning it, so that its original beauty can appear, thus also, every believer struggling in the spiritual arena of the Church, realizes in time that, no matter how sinful he is, as he is being cleansed of his passions, he has a suspicion: behind all this dust and the maelstrom of his sins, like a precious ruby, the ancient beauty, the incorruptible beauty, the ineffable glory of God, is hidden, to which the holy icons refer, and which, despite this, the sinner comprises their icon also. He is armed then, with the thought of repentance and of bravery, and does everything to find this precious treasure in the depth of his heart, trusting the “faithful word” of the Savior Christ.

Archim. E. T.

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2017 SUNDAY OF THE 7TH ECUMENICAL COUNCIL**, *Lucian the Martyr of Antioch, Savinos the Bishop of Catania, Barsus the Confessor, Euthymios the New Martyr*

**TONE OF THE WEEK** : *Second Tone*

**EOTHINON** *Eigth Orthros Gospel*

**EPISTLE READING**: *St. Paul's Letter toto Titus 3:8-15*

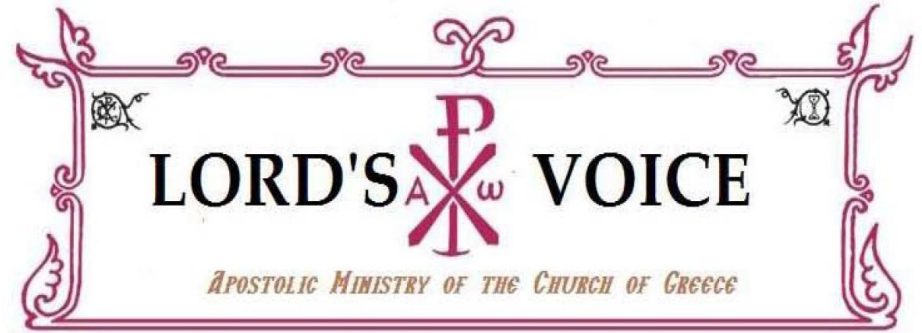
**GOSPEL READING**: *Luke 8:5-15*

**NEXT SUNDAY, SUNDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2017 ,6TH SUNDAY OF LUKE**

*Abercius, Equal-to-the-Apostles and Wonderworker of Hierapolis, Seven Holy Martyred Youths of Ephesus, Cecilia the Martyr*

**EPISTLE READING**: *St. Paul's Letter to Galatians 1:11-19*

**GOSPEL READING**: *Luke 8:26-39*



65<sup>TH</sup> YEAR

OCTOBER 15 2017

PAMPHLET # 42 (3359)

## THE REFORMATION OF THE ANCIENT BEAUTY

On the present Sunday, we celebrate the God-bearing Fathers of the 7<sup>th</sup> Ecumenical Synod in 787, beloved brethren. In this synod, Saint John Damascene shone, the champion of the honor and the veneration of the holy icons, who borrowed the phrase of Basil the Great that the honor of the icon goes to the prototype, in other words, the honor we render to the holy icons, as also the veneration which we render them, go to the depicted persons and do not comprise worship toward the material or to the colors, of which the icon is comprised. It is clearly possible and very well done, that Christ, the Theotokos and all the holy persons are depicted. Thus, the icon becomes the worshipping vessel of the Church and with its depicting manner, it reveals to us the liturgical ethos of the Church.

### “The word is faithful”

Is the first phrase of today’s Epistle passage, which the divine Paul addresses to his disciple Timothy, who was a Christian from a pagan background, who did not undergo circumcision, after Paul’s decision, as a reaction to the Judaizers. Furthermore, he accompanied Paul and Barnabas to the Apostolic Synod of Jerusalem.

## ST. PAUL'S SECOND LETTER TO TITUS 3:8-15

Titus, my son, the saying is sure. I desire you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to apply themselves to good deeds; these are excellent and profitable to men. But avoid stupid controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels over the law, for they are unprofitable and futile. As for a man who is factious, after admonishing him once or twice, have nothing more to do with him, knowing that such a person is perverted and sinful; he is self-condemned.

When I send Artemas or Tychicos to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. Do your best to speed Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way; see that they lack nothing. And let our people learn to apply themselves to good deeds, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not to be unfruitful.

All who are with me send greeting to you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen

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Which word is faithful, in other words, trustworthy? That Christ set us up as inheritors of eternal life. Who is a faithful Christian? He who trusts all, that the infallible mouth of Christ said. With His utter condescension and with the way of His life, He justified us and gave us rebirth. Do we have, consequently, something better to do, than to traverse in His life bearing footsteps?

The faithful-trustworthy word of our faith says that Christ is the Son of God and God, He came among us, worked miracles, was crucified, was buried, resurrected, ascended, He sent the Holy Spirit. The faithful Christian lives all this journey of the life of Christ, existentially, as his own life. The life of Christ is revealed as the life of the believer himself. With the help of God and in the body of Christ, which is His Church, the believer "cleanses" the

"in the image" and proceeds to the "in the likeness", in other words, in resembling God.

### The "in the image" and the holy icons

The holy icons, and furthermore with the Byzantine style, somewhat seem to be foreign to the contemporary selfish man. As if they are "slapping" his logic, as if they are escaping from him—even as works of art—and they upset him, because they do not flatter the senses and the secular taste.

Their symbolism however, is very deep, my brethren, and it is worth the trouble to observe them. To begin with, in the icon there is no depth, this false sense, which seems to "pierce" the level artistic surface, without respecting it. The Orthodox Iconographer, instead of bending the perspective, opens it without "depth" furthermore, he hands himself to the infinity of God's love. He escapes from the trap of the false sense, which I just mentioned, and encounters the light of Christ. So for this reason also, in the Orthodox icon, shadows do not exist, but only light, which centrally and "from within" illumines all the depicted persons and objects. The faces look at us directly, aside from Judas, who is turned sideways, in a shadow, because he is not in communion with the light. Nor is there the sense of time, because some events, unrelated to the main topic they are depicting, make their appearance in various spots. This is because the time of the icon is the eternal present, the eternity, in which past, present and future are joined together.

So the faces are presented in such a manner, that they invite us to surpass our earthly train of thought and weightless,\* for us to hand ourselves over to the grace, in order for us to resemble them!

### Icon, a window into eternity

Thus the grace of the holy icons functions. They initiate us into the mystery of our faith, of the "faithful word" of our Christ, and they show us where we are called to reach. The believer considers that sometimes the icon comes to his side, at other times