

he was married and had two children. Later on, his wife and his two children reposed, and John decided to realize his initial longing, which was to dedicate himself completely to Christ. The purity of his life and his blessed journey were so distinct, that he was recommended to be Archbishop of Alexandria. Whereas he refused in the beginning, after many pressures, he accepted to ascend to the Patriarchal throne of Alexandria. His Patriarchy, for quite a few years was brilliant and blessed. The seven churches which he found in the beginning, became 70, and the area was filled with hospitals, clinics, orphanages, poor houses for the poor and the needy.

The gift of his charity was expressed richly, in a manner that, in cooperation with his clergymen, but also others, an army of love was created which served in all the spots of his diocese, with a firm decision to fight against hunger and misfortune. The saint very richly distributed charity to the poor, so for this reason also, he received the surname "charitable". He was so venerable, that even the idolaters respected him and sought to meet him. He handed over his soul, in a blessed manner, to God in the year 620. May we have his prayers and intercessions, my brethren. Amen!

Archim. E. T.

**SUNDAY NOVEMBER 12, 2017 8TH SUNDAY OF LUKE**, *John the Merciful, Patriarch of Alexandria, Nilus the Ascetic of Sinai, Martin, Bishop of Tours, Leondos Styppi, Patriarch of Constantinople*

**tone of the week** : *Plagal of the Second Tone*

**EOTHINON** : *First Orthros Gospel*

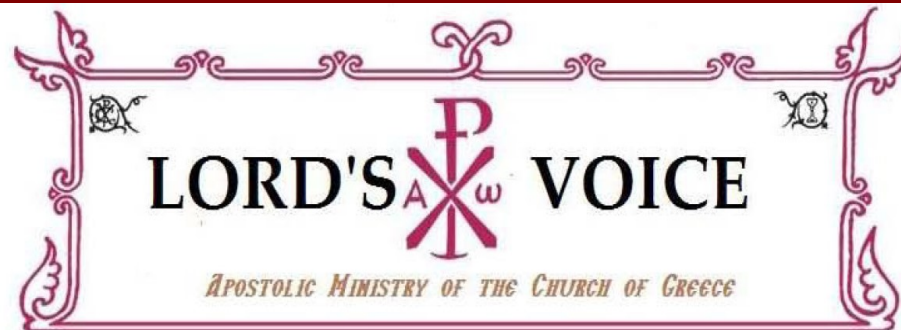
**EPISTLE READING**: *St. Paul's Letter to Corinthians 9:6-11*

**GOSPEL READING**: *Luke 10:25-37*

**NEXT SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2017, 9TH SUNDAY OF LUKE**, *Obadiah the Prophet, Martyrs Barlaam of Caesarea and Heliodorus, Anthimos, Thallalaeos, Christopher, Euphemia & her children, the Martyrs*

**EPISTLE READING**: *St. Paul's Letter to Ephesians 2:14-22*

**GOSPEL READING**: *Luke 12:16-21*



65<sup>TH</sup> YEAR

NOVEMBER 12 2017

PAMPHLET # 46 (3363)

## THE GIFT OF CHARITY

In today's Epistle passage, beloved brethren, from the Second Epistle which Paul addresses to the Corinthians, he speaks about the virtue of charity- furthermore the Corinthians also, aside from Macedonia, contributed quite a bit, to help the poor Christians of the Church of Jerusalem - and about its spiritual importance in the life of believers.

### **You sew abundantly, you harvest abundantly**

In the spiritual life, diligence plays a great role. The word of God is clear, reminding us that "accursed is whoever does the works of the Lord negligently" (Jer. 31:10). Consequently, whether we are referring to charity which has to do with spiritual goods, or to charity which refers to material goods, that which distinguishes the believer, is generosity, joy and the granting of help, consolation and support in whatsoever needy person's difficulty, with all his strength. In such a heart, God sets up his own dependency of love. If he gives charity in this way, "he lends" to God (Prov. 19:17), the Scripture tells us, in a human manner, in order to show us what a pleasing act, charity is to God. It happens often however, that we grumble and we do not give charity with our heart.

## **ST. PAUL'S LETTER TO CORINTHIANS 9:6-11**

Brethren, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work. As it is written, "He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures for ever." He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your resources and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for great generosity, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God..

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This is due to our egotism and avarice, because the sacred Gospel brings before our eyes the two pence of the widow, who deposited all her estate in the treasury for the poor and she was blessed by the Lord (Luke 21:4). Furthermore, the passing around of the tray, synonymous to the collection of the first Christians, at a certain point of the Divine Liturgy, for the needs of the ecclesiastical body, is furthermore a deeply ecclesiastical action. It is not possible for us to feel complete in Christ, to be communing Christ, when some of our brothers are hungering and thirsting in various manners. The passing of the tray consequently, does not comprise an interruption of their spiritual condition, as some people maintain, as if we are interrupting them from a type of worldly nirvana, but it is a logical outcome and a natural continuation of their prayer in the Church. Consequently, if they are grumbling, let them ask themselves about "this spiritual condition" of theirs. The natural thing spiritually would be for them to be rejoicing and to be impatient for this opportunity to express love and sympathy to those who are being tried, who, whoever and whichever and whatever they are, in a natural manner, they are seeking shelter in the embrace of the Church.

## **Material and spiritual charity**

Furthermore, even in the marriage service, we pray for the new couple to enjoy an abundance of material goods, in order for them to impart, to offer also, to whoever does not have, to the indigent. This shows how imbued with the spirit of charity, the liturgical and sacramental life of our Church is. He who gives charity to the needy person, receives grace from that which he disposes, on account of his difficulty, in other words, the person giving charity receives spiritual charity, making up for per chance spiritual deficiencies, while the person receiving charity receives charity materially. Thus what is said in the Scripture is verified, that he who gathered much manna did not have any extra, but also he who gathered less was not deprived (Ex. 16:18).

There also is another category of praiseworthy people, my brethren, who don't have, we would say, material comfort-if they have it, even better for them to contribute in a pleasing way from a material viewpoint to those in need. It is they who either at midnight, or at dawn, kneel both internally and externally, and pray for many hours for all those who have need: the poor, the afflicted, the abused, the oppressed, the slandered, the sick, the prisoners, those flooded, the earthquake victims, the alcoholics, the unemployed, the spiritually disturbed, the drug addicts, the orphans, the widows, those bankrupt, the divorced, the refugees, those enlisted in the army, the invalids, people with special needs, those struggling, those deceived, but also all the souls – "ruins of life"-parade in a God-pleasing manner in the heart of those praying Christians and before God. It is this charity, which presupposes a crucified mind and a crucified train of thought!

## **John the Merciful, the Saint of practical love**

The surnamed person of the gift of charity, is the Saint whom our Church celebrates today. He lived in the time of the Emperor Heraclius. He was a Cypriot and grew up in the training and counsel of the Lord of praiseworthy parents. In the beginning