

only encountering on the cross of Christ, His crucified body. In no other way. Only the cross of Christ comprises the unique guarantee for the validity of our sacrifice. No other cross. Only the cross of Christ saves, no other cross. To the degree that we understand our personal crosses through the one and unique cross of Christ, do our toils and sacrifices and offerings obtain meaning. Far from the cross of Christ we toil in vain and even worse, if we do not crucify ourselves, we will obligatory be the crucifying the others. Whereas, when a person in Christ is crucified, it comprises a blessing, a healing, a beneficial and blessed presence in the world, for the world to be able to live.

Then, just as the greatest of the apostles, comprises a sign of the presence of God in the midst of His people, the consolation of Christ, the dew of Hermon, the dough which in a godpleasing manner kneads the whole paste of creation, salt which preserves the body of the Church, a cleansing tear which cleanses and consoles it, victory against death. Let us wish for this, my brethren!

Archim. E. T.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2017 SUNDAY BEFORE EPIPHANY, *Apodosis of the Nativity of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, Melania the Younger, Nun of Rome, The Martyr and Presbyter Zoticus of Rome, Patron of Orphans*

TONE OF THE WEEK : *Plagal of the First Tone*

EOTHINON : *Eighth Orthros Gospel*

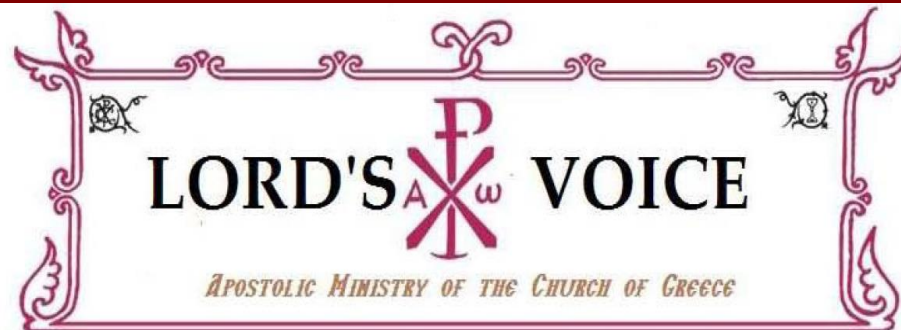
EPISTLE READING: *St. Paul's Second Letter to Timothy 4:5-8*

GOSPEL READING: *Mark 1:1-8*

NEXT SUNDAY, JANUARY 7, 2018 SYNAXIS OF JOHN THE HOLY GLORIOUS PROPHET, BAPTIST, & FORERUNNER, *Afterfeast of the Theophany of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Cedd, Bishop of Scotland, Fursey, Abbot of Lagny*

EPISTLE READING: *Acts 19:1-8*

GOSPEL READING: *John 1:29-34*



65TH YEAR

DECEMBER 31 2017

PAMPHLET # 53 (3370)

DO WE SACRIFICE OURSELVES FOR CHRIST?

In his Second Epistle to Timothy, brethren, the Apostle Paul is in Rome after his second imprisonment and is awaiting with fortitude and with a calm conscience his martyrly death. So he gives spiritual counsels to Timothy; he calls Timothy furthermore in a hurry to go near him. He exhorts Timothy to preach and to suffer hardships for Christ, something that he himself also did.

Vigilance, hardship, evangelizing people

He exhorts him to be vigilant. Vigilance means attention. A vigilant person is not only the careful person but simultaneously also the praying person. It is he who, as a pastor, pays attention to all the changes and fluctuations that the pastoral work that the Church entrusted to him presents, in relation also to the difficulties and the succours of grace.

It is a fact that only attention which is combined with prayer has meaning, but also prayer without attention is also a vain work. The more a person prays, with repentance and implementing the commandments of God in his life, with the cultivation of the practical virtues, in other words, fasting, vigilance and ceaseless prayer, so much more, he seeks the divine mercy, so much more, he dedicates himself and participates even

ST. PAUL'S SECOND LETTER TO TIMOTHY 4:5-8

TIMOTHY, my son, always be steady, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil your ministry.

For I am already on the point of being sacrificed; the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

deeper in divine worship, so much more so and clearly, his steps are identified with the steps of God in History, all the more eloquent does his presence become as a sign of the grace of God among His people, all the more, he comforts the compassion of God. He himself becomes God's imprint, God's epistle of love to his people, which his people easily reads.

The pastor suffers hardship for Christ to be imprinted in the hearts of the rational sheep whom God entrusted to him. Paul also suffers hardship. He also exhorts Timothy to imitate him. Counseling and at other times scolding, flying high theologically and at other times shedding tears, rejoicing, and at other times going through the pains of childbirth, so that the grace of the Holy Spirit can be planted in the hearts of his spiritual children, Paul exhorts his underling Timothy, but also us throughout the ages, to not keep anything for our own self and to give everything to Christ.

He himself became a living, speaking Gospel, carrying the cross of Christ. A living evangelization of the people. Precisely thus, God wants the missionary: brave, in other words, spiritually

brave, not sparing toils and sacrifices, daily fighting against death, and furthermore martyrical death in this case.

Spiritual libation

In antiquity they would usually sacrifice animals to the gods and with their blood they would sprinkle the altars but also the area around the altar. Some would pour wine, honey, aromas etc. And all these things, in honor of the gods. The unfortunate Christian who voluntarily deposits his gifts and wealth of soul to his passions and to the demons, offers a type of spiritual libation to these. There are many people who, their acquaintances, their knowledge and skills, their material goods, their wealth, they unsparingly scatter in the narrow little streets of sin. Thus many of us are lost, Christians only by name.

There are also others, who, before their wealth of soul and material goods, put a positive sign, a crucifactory vote, because they deposit both in the Table of Life. Their entire self, in short, they offer as a libation to Christ. These "deposits" in time "gain interest". The person of God deposits and God disposes according to His will. The Apostle Paul also having done thus, remains calm in the prison of Rome, awaiting his martyrical death. "He fulfilled his ministry", which means that he brought to a favorable end, the exceptionally difficult mission which God entrusted to him to impart the gospel of joy to the, till then, known universe and now he awaits the crown of righteousness, his rest, in a short time, in the bosom of Abraham, sabbatizing eternally after affliction and great trial. He exhorts Timothy and us to do the same thing.

The choice

It remains to each one to make a choice. To make himself a libation to Christ, or to someone else. We sacrifice our own self