

The patristic tradition sees in the person of the older son, those “justifying themselves” Pharisees, of the then, and obviously of every age, who murmur, seeing Christ “celebrating” every time that His prodigal children return. And if they’re not careful, these not prodigal ones, are also able to lose their salvation, because they did not realize that the basic presupposition of staying in the Ark of Salvation, is the never failing love. A love that rejoices particularly for the repentance of the sinful brother.

This moving parable is able very well to be called also the Parable of the Compassionate Father, since it presents to us so clear-cut, all the range of the love of the heavenly Father. The love that was heightened at the sacrifice of the Only Begotten by nature Son of his, so that there exists “a lot of calf”, “always eaten and never squandered”, the family table, being, in other words, always full for the feast of the paternal home

Archim. B. L.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2018 AFTERFEAST OF THE PRESENTATION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR IN THE TEMPLE, Isidore of Pelusium

Nicholas the Confessor, Hieromartyr Abramius, John the Righteous, Bishop of Irinopolis, Theodosios the Righteous, Joseph the New Martyr of Aleppo,

TONE OF THE WEEK : *Second Tone*

EOTHINON : *Second Orthros Gospel*

EPISTLE READING: *First Letter to the Corinthians 6:12-20*

GOSPEL READING: *Luke 15:11-32*

NEXT SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2018 JUDGMENT SUNDAY

(MEATFARE SUNDAY) *Blaise the Holy Martyr of Sebastia, Theodora the Empress Finding of the relics of Zachariah the Prophet, Father of the Holy Forerunner, George the Serbian*

EPISTLE READING: *First Letter to the Corinthians 8:8-13; 9:1-2*

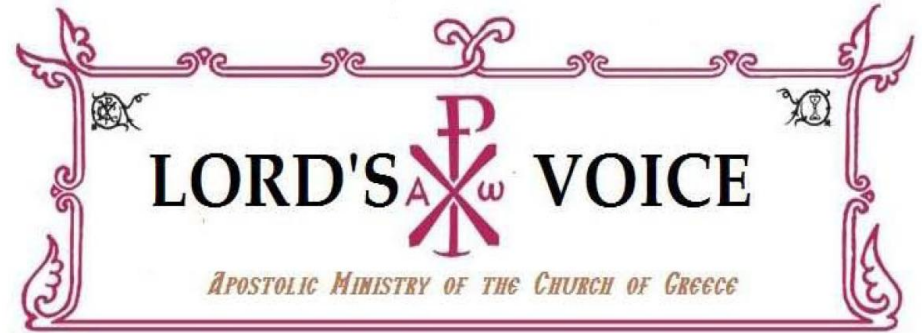
GOSPEL READING: *Matthew 25:31-46*

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66TH YEAR

FEBRUARY 4 2018

PAMPHLET # 5 (3375)

THE PARABLE OF THE COMPASSIONATE FATHER

It would be salutary for us, if in reading the Parable of the Prodigal Son, the same thing would happen, at least as whatever happens when a small child first looks at himself in the mirror: in the beginning he looks in the mirror indifferently. Afterwards however, he is startled, recognizing his own self.

And I prodigal?

Prodigal is not only whoever “eats up” his father’s estate “with prostitutes”. Prodigal is everyone who takes God out of his life, in order to supposedly enjoy his life, as his persistent egotism and the “inventors of the passions, demons” indicate to him. Thus he completely squanders his huge wealth of the gifts which God gave him abundantly, such as life, health, powers of soul and body, material goods, social and natural atmosphere, living egocentrically “as an atheist in the world”.

Sooner or later however, it is revealed that “the gospel of the snake” that says that God and His commandments are an obstacle for someone to enjoy his life, is a fairy tale. It is proven that with such “gospels” not only does man not rejoice and he is not saved, but he also ends up a slave to disobeyed your command; yet you never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your living with harlots, you killed for him the fatted calf! And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours.

The Gospel According to Luke 15:11-32

The Lord said this parable: "There was a man who had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that falls to me.' And he divided his living between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took his journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in loose living. And when he had spent everything, a great famine arose in that country, and he began to be in want. So he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have filled his belly with the pods that the swine ate; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired servants.' And he arose and came to his father. But while he was yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and make merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to make merry. Now his elder son was in the field; and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants and asked what this meant. And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him safe and sound.' But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, but he answered his father, 'Lo, these many years I have served you, and I never

It was fitting to make merry and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found."

foreign bosses, trying to satiate himself with the food of the pigs. Foreign bosses are his passions and the demons, whose inhumane tyranny has no relationship with the saving obedience to the commandments of the only Philanthropic God. Here it is voluntary obedience to a loving-caring Father. An obedience which is the source of the only existing and true freedom, the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

Return to freedom

This true air of freedom, is what the prodigal son was also nostalgic for. An air which is not without importance, but comprises "a food assuring the heart" of the person, hungry for genuine life. And he made the absolutely realistic thought: how many paid servants of my Father are satiated with bread and they have extra? And I'm trying to deceive my hunger with carobs. This waking thought of the prodigal son, ought to also awaken and censure us as well, who want to say that we are staying in the house of our heavenly Father. It ought to make us ask ourselves: how many people would wake up and turn toward the Church, if they would see us really being satiated by the presence of God in our life, and furthermore for His grace to be overflowing from our own witness and life.

Since the prodigal son, after such an adventure, made the decision to return to the paternal home, to the Church, with genuine repentance, that is, with the feeling that he is not worthy of being considered a son but a slave of his Father, way before he arrived, the Father came out to embrace him. He accepts him again as his child, he dresses him well with the "first garment", restoring him to his first position of son and inheritor, and he slaughters "the fatted calf", to celebrate.

Why are you avoiding the feast?

However not everyone is participating in the feast. The older son, returning from the fields, learned the news, and scandalized by the Father's forgiveness of his former prodigal brother, he became stubborn and did not want to even enter the house. And the Father is again forced to come out of the house, to gather up now, not the prodigal son, but the-supposed - fine son of his, who had never been a rascal. And with the same love and tenderness that he showed the younger son, he opens his son's eyes to realize that the feast is happening, because in their home they have the resurrection of a dead person.