

the patriarch Abraham said to the rich man of the parable- "even if they see one resurrected from the dead, neither then will they believe".

There is however, also the very usual unbelief of the hypocrite "believer", who-according to the Prophet Isaiah- "honors God only with the lips, whereas his heart is very far from Him". He is - according to the Apostle Paul - "the listener of the law", who did not strive to become also a "doer of the law" of God. He looked at himself a little in the mirror of the law of God -as the brother of God, Saint James, tells us-he saw his deficiencies, but he departed and forgot how he was.

Only if someone makes the commandments of God his firm reference and train of thought, which truly liberate man from sin, is he able to become a doer of the law of God and to obtain a genuine and firm faith in Him. Then he does not have need, either to see with his physical eyes nor to touch the resurrected Christ. He has lived the power of His Resurrection in his personal life, because - with the struggle of his repentance - he was co-crucified, co-buried and co-resurrected with Christ. And thus he was granted the beatitude: "Blessed are they who have not seen and have believed"!

Archim. B. L.

SUNDAY, APRIL 15, 2018 THOMAS SUNDAY *Leonidas, Bishop of Athens, Crescens the Martyr, The 9 Monk-martyrs of Corinth, Michael the New Martyr of Smyrna, Padarn, Bishop and Founder of Llandabarn Fawr*

-tone of the week : -----

EOETHINON : *First Orthros*

EPISTLE READING: *Acts of Apostles 5:12-20*

GOSPEL READING: *John 20:19-31*

NEXT SUNDAY, APRIL 22, 2018 SUNDAY OF THE MYRRH-BEARING WOMEN, Theodore of Sykeon, Nathaniel, Luke, & Clemente the Apostles, Nearchos the Martyr, Gregory Gravanos of Nisyros

EPISTLE READING: *Acts of Apostles 6:1-7*

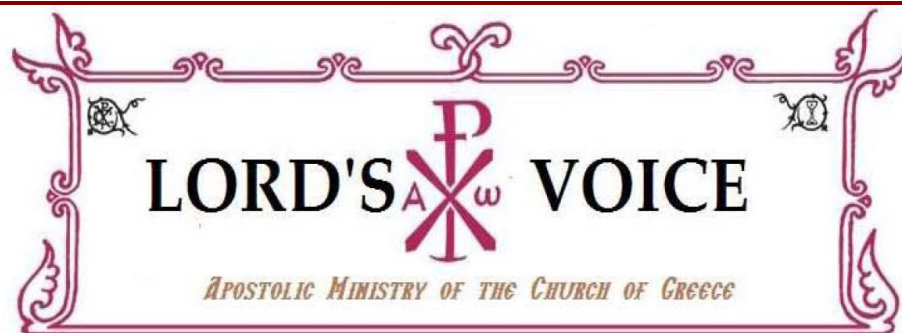
GOSPEL READING: *Mark 15:43-47; 16:1-8*

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66TH YEAR APRIL 15 2018 PAMPHLET #15 (3385)

"BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO HAVE NOT SEEN"

Today, Sunday of Thomas,-some people say joking – "the unbelievers are celebrating". Today every type of unbelief is not also a virtue for us to rejoice over and to spend a lot of time over those who have it. No matter if some troparia consider Thomas' unbelief "good", it does not cease being a fault. Thus Saint John Chrysostom characterizes it, who-referring to the Evangelist John-says: "look at what lovers of truth the apostles are, who do not hide the faults, neither their own, nor of the others, but they write them down with much sincerity".

He long suffers being touched

And for this reason, he notes that Christ's exhortation to Thomas to touch Him and to not be unbelieving but believing, does not comprise simply a recommendation but a scolding. "Strongly scolding", he says," he used the words". And another interpreter, Zygavenos, observes that justly Thomas came out criticized, because he did not believe his "fellow disciples", the most trustworthy witnesses of the Resurrection. Of course, the other disciples also did not believe the myrrhbearing women, when they told them that they first met the resurrected Christ.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN 20:19-31

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them: "Peace be with you."

When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side.

Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them: "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him: "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them: "Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in his side, I will not believe."

Eight days later, his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. The doors were shut, but Jesus came and stood among them, and said: "Peace be with you." Then he said to

Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side; do not be faithless, but believing."

Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe."

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.

But Christ continues even after His resurrection condescending to the faults of his disciples. And He appears to them, in order to support them in the correct faith. And the one, who was missing the first time that He appeared to them, He leaves for eight days to hear the same things from the disciples, so that his longing to see

Him could light up more" says Saint John Chrysostom. And He appears again, in order to assure him also of His Resurrection: "He appears, in order to save even the one". And He does not wait for Thomas to ask Him, but "He previously" calls him to touch Him.

"Understand the philanthropy of the Master"! Chrysostom concludes admiring. And we together with him chant:

Philanthropic One, great and unheard of is the multitude of Your compassions, for You long suffered being touched by the apostle".

The good unbelief

Certainly Thomas' unbelief differs from the many degrees and various excuses of unbelievers, which we can find in today's world. Thomas had believed that Christ is the Messiah. He had strengthened his faith with his daily companionship with Him, by hearing His preaching and with the experience of His divine power, which was revealed in His so many miracles. He trusted Him and loved Him so much, so that understanding that He is going for the last time to Jerusalem, he said: "let us also go to die with Him".

However the events rolled in a different way. Thomas, after Christ's capture, abandoned Him together with the other disciples and hid from fear. He felt a deep disappointment and falsification of his hopes. Where is "the one who would deliver Israel?" The cross and the death of Christ tore down his faith in His godhead. So for this reason, when the other disciples told them that they saw Him Resurrected, feeling that it is a bit difficult for him to consider -the words" of 10 fellow disciples of his "a delusion," «he settled" to ask not only to also see Him himself, but also to touch Him.

Presupposition of faith

Today there are not a few who- even if they see miracles- don't believe. A little, the secularized way of life, a little, their passions, a little, absolute trust in logic and in the supposed almightiness of academia, have blinded them so much, that-just as