

And furthermore for man, God is not simply the creator but just as the Golden-tongued John reminds us, "He adorned us with a rational soul, He created everything for us, He sent prophets and gave the Law for us, He worked a myriad of goods for us, and in the end, He gave also His Only Begotten Son to be sacrificed for our salvation"! So how is it possible for such a God to not also strive for our material needs?

Naturally, this does not mean that man will... cross his hands and will wait passively for heaven-descending solutions. He will work honorably for the daily bread, utilizing to the utmost the gifts which God gave him, but without the faintheartedness and grumbling about his fate, which deforms the joyful and hopeful-work into an anxious chore.

Everything, depends on the purity of the eyes of the soul. When these eyes are preserved pure from the blurriness of the passions, then man's entire life is drenched in the light of free obedience and trust in the only philanthropic Lord, in Christ.

Archim. B.

SUNDAY, JUNE 17, 2018 3RD SUNDAY OF MATTHEW, *Isaurus the Holy Martyr & his Companions of Athens, Manuel, Sabel, & Ishmael the Martyrs of Persia, Righteous Father Botolph, Abbot of the Monastery of Ikanhoe, Alban the Protomartyr of Britain.*

TONE OF THE WEEK : *Tone Two*

EOTHINON : *Third Orthros Gospel*

EPISTLE READING: *Romans 5:1-10*

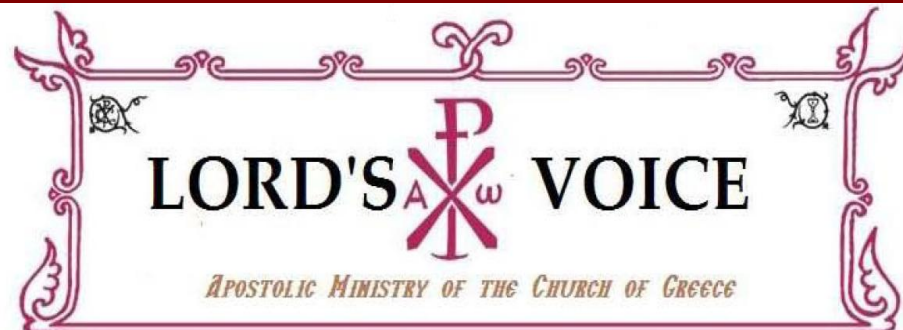
GOSPEL READING: *Matthew 6:22-33*

NEXT SUNDAY, JUNE 24, 2018 4TH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW,

Nativity of the Forerunner John the Baptist, Elizabeth, Mother of the Forerunner, Panagiotis the New Martyr, Athanasios Parios

EPISTLE READING: *Romans 13:11-14; 14:1-4*

GOSPEL READING: *Luke 1:1-25, 57-68, 76-80*



66TH YEAR JUNE 17 2018 PAMPHLET #24 (3394)

"THE EYES OF THE SOUL"

Today's gospel reading is a passage from Christ's "Sermon On the Mount". It seems that it refers to three different things. However, if we pay attention, we will see that all three revolve around the central role of vision in man's life.

The lantern of the body

Christ sets out from the eyes of the body, in order to conclude in the eyes of the soul. Just as in the body, the central entrance of light is the eye, thus also in the soul, the eye is the nous. For the Fathers of the Church, who interpret the passage, "the nous" is not the intellect or the brain, but that optical instrument, with which we see God, and understand how the light of God enlightens our life. The nous is the eye of the soul.

If this eye is pure and allows the light of God to pass through and enlighten everything, then all of man's life is bright. And even the darkest events, a person can make them causes of turning toward the light.

Something like that happened to the holy Bishop Nonnos in Antioch. The saint, seeing on the road, a prostitute with a very cared for appearance, whereas the others were turning their gaze

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW 6:22-33

The Lord said, "The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light; but if your eye is not sound, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O men of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows you need them all. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well."

away, he was persistently looking at her and began crying, saying: "Because we're not striving to adorn our own selves in order to be pleasing to God, as much as she is adorning herself, in order to please her lovers". The Saint's bright gaze made, even this abhorrent site, a cause for repentance.

And Christ concludes, noting the grievous results of the darkening of the nous: if the optical instrument of the soul is darkened, from which you ought to be filling with light, then how much darkness will flood your life?"

Forbidden coupling

The basic cause of the darkening of the mind, is enslavement to passions. Only the truly free mind is able to purely see and thus to preserve its ruling position, in order to correctly guide the powers of the soul.

However truly free, is not he who does not give a report to anyone. Absolute independence does not exist. Man is by nature heteronomous. Truly free is only he who wants and knows to enjoy "the freedom of the glory of the children of God". In the Salutations of the Theotokos, we confess that this only existent and true freedom is comprised, in us unforcedly selecting the philanthropic Lord, instead of the inhuman tyrant. Another choice does not exist. Either we will freely obey Christ, who wants us to be His children and not His slaves, or we will be enslaved to the inhuman tyranny of our passions and the devil.

Often, because we did not strive to taste "the sweetening of the face" of the philanthropic Lord, we allow our eyes to look cross-eyed at the deceptive charm of the passions. And in vain do we try to "marry" the two obediences: both to Christ and to the motivator of our passions, the devil. Christ very clear-cut tells us that such couplings cannot be done. It cannot be done for you to serve two masters. In order to love the one, you must hate the other one. Furthermore, He refers specifically to the very customary, but also very dangerous passion of avarice. Let us not forget that this passion led one disciple of Christ to such a wretchedness, that Christ would reach the point of saying about him: "it would have been better had he not been born"!

Do you not differ from the birds and flowers?

And Christ extending further His teaching about healthy vision, refers to an also customary excuse of cross-eyed looking at avarice: at the sick and anxious care for man's material needs. This excessive care betrays weak faith, which perverts the optical ability of the soul, resulting in that he does not see that a God who strives for the birds and the wild flowers, it is incomprehensible that He would not strive for the crowning of creation, man.