

them about life and about death, things that they would want to forget". It is worth it for us to remember that the first fisherman of the Church almost forgot these things, when their faith was tried harshly after Christ's descent to Hades. Then the disciples, as the Eothinon doxastikon wonderfully describes it, full of despondency and disappointment for separation from Christ returned again to their old trade. "And again boats and nets and nowhere a catch". Christ however appeared. And not only did He assure them about His Resurrection, but with a second wondrous fishing, He gave them a "strange supper", reminding them again of their calling to become "fishermen of men".

We, as rational "fish", let us not disappoint them, returning again to the depths of our passions, but let us call them with the words of the hymnodist: "those who drew the mortals with the net of the Word from the depth of lack of knowledge, save me also, storm-tossed and sunk into innumerable transgressions".

Archim. B. L.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2018 1ST SUNDAY OF LUKE ,
The Conception of St. John the Baptist, Xanthippe & Polyxene the Righteous, John the New Martyr of Epiros, Nicholas the New Martyr

TONE OF THE WEEK : *Plagal of Fourth Tone*

EOTHINON : *Sixth Orthros Gospel*

EPISTLE READING: *Galatians 4:22-27*

GOSPEL READING: *Luke 5:1-11*

NEXT SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2018 2ND SUNDAY OF LUKE ,
Gregory the Illuminator, Bishop of Armenia , Mardonios & Stratonikos the Martyrs

EPISTLE READING: *2nd Letter to the Corinthians 9:6-11*

GOSPEL READING: *Luke 6:31-36*



66TH YEAR SEPTEMBER 23 2018 PAMPHLET #38 (3408)

THE FISHING OF SOULS

Some fishermen once needed to transport Saint Dionysios together with other clergymen to the little island which is north of Zakynthos. Because that day their nets had remained empty, they attributed it- as many people usually do unfortunately, "Christians" by name - to the presence of the clergymen and they began grumbling against them. Then the Saint being longsuffering, after he blessed their nets, told them to cast them at a spot where they had never caught anything, resulting in their nets being in danger of ripping from the many fish.

Wherein when does He encounter us?

The likewise disappointed fishermen, whom Christ met at the lake of Gennesaret, after a night with empty nets, not only were not superstitious before people of God, but they eagerly ceded Him their boat, so that he could stand and speak to the gathered multitude. And Christ, according to Saint Theophylactos, "paid them" above and beyond for the small service: not only did He grant them such a multitude of fish, that their boats were in danger of sinking, but He made the high calling to them to change the object of their fishing and instead of fish, to be "fishing" people.

The very sparse scene of the calling of the first disciples of Christ, witnesses that Christ comes to meet us, without demanding

"THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE 5:1-11

At that time, as Jesus was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, he saw two boats by the lake; but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. And when he had ceased speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." And when they had done this, they enclosed a great shoal of fish; and as their nets were breaking, they beckoned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." For he was astonished, and all who were with him, at the catch of fish which they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; henceforth you will be catching men." And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

external luxuries. He desires neither podiums with laurels and palm branches, nor philharmonic orchestras and megaphones. He meets us quietly in our daily life, at the time of our toil and sweat for our daily bread. And in this daily life He agonizes to see if we truly are also awaiting Him. He waits to see if we have the-according to Saint Dionysios the Aeropagite-basic "skill to receive light", in order to recognize Him.

The high calling

The fishermen of Zakynthos possibly did not have such expectations in their poverty. Poverty of heart rather than poverty of their pocket. According to Father Alexander Schmemman, they felt for

the clergyman, the same also towards the cemeteries: they are sacred, they are outside of life and cause fear" and clearly also bad occurrences. On the contrary, the fishermen of Gennesaret, before meeting Christ, had a constant concern for when He would come, who He would be and how they would recognize Him. So for this reason they had become faithful disciples of His Forerunner, of Saint John. Thus, when they recognized Him from the miracle He performed, even if His light revealed to the more intensely their sinfulness-as particularly showed by the reaction of Peter-, not only did they not reject Him, but "leaving everything" (they left everything), they eagerly responded to His calling and followed Him.

With these "fishing achievements Christ fished His first disciples," as Saint Cyril of Alexandria says, showing that creation obeys His most god- befitting beckonings". This however applies unconditionally only for irrational creation. Rational creation, the rational "fish" which the fishermen who were fished by Christ are called to fish, it is not a given that they obey them. If the "fishermen's plate is full few times", rather more rarely the fishermen of men will see "fish" in their nets. So for this reason also, Christ did a miracle, so that – according to Saint Cyril – He could encourage them that "everywhere of course" "their pain will not be without pay nor their striving without fruit", when they will be casting the nets of the "gospel mystagogy".

Irrational and rational "fish"

The obedience of the rational "fish" is not a given, for two main reasons: on the one hand, it depends on their freedom. A freedom which often makes useless their settling in the depths of delusion. And on the other hand, it depends on the ability of the "fishermen" who have gotten used to the darkness of the depth, to believe in the Light of eternal life. Furthermore even the preaching of the skillful "fisherman" Apostle Paul, had a disappointing result in Athens: "the ones, on the one hand, were mocking. While the others, on the other hand, said, we shall hear you again about this" (Acts 17:32).

The "fishermen" of the Church experience naturally today also the same- if not greater- disappointments. The Nobelelist poet Elliot said it very aptly: why would people love the Church? She speaks to