

to understand that God loves us. We would have no hope of Resurrection! So for this reason also, our own salvation presupposes that we also must forgive our enemies”.

Saint Paisius Velitchkovsky supports us in this saving contest with his practical counsels: “begin praying for him who distressed you with all your heart. Go on your own to find him, when you see that your anger calmed down. Give also some little gift. Behave magnanimously toward him. Speak to him about forgiveness. Show him as much love as you possibly can. Nothing brings a person to his senses as much as, when you are speaking to him with kindness and humility. And nothing enrages him so much, as for you to be criticizing him in whatever he embittered you, to be avoiding him, and to be speaking evil about him to others. Don’t forget, that he who is listening to you, will impart these things to him. This is a great evil. And it applies furthermore, even to the so called “spiritual people”. However the truly “spiritual person” is he who is struggling to save not only his own self, but also his enemy. This is the truly wise person. The perfect contestant”.

Archim. B. L.

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

TONE OF THE WEEK : *First Tone*

EOTHINON : *Seventh Orthros Gospel*

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

GOSPEL READING: *Luke 6:31-36*

NEXT SUNDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2018 3RD SUNDAY OF LUKE, *Sergius & Bacchus the Great Martyrs of Syria, Polychronios the Martyr, Julian the Presbyter & Caesarius the Deacon, John the Hermit of Crete, Jonah of Manchuria.*

EPISTLE READING: *2nd Letter to the Corinthians 11:31-33*

GOSPEL READING: *Luke 7:11-16*



66TH YEAR SEPTEMBER 30 2018 PAMPHLET #39 (3409)

DO YOU WISH TO BECOME A “SON OF THE MOST HIGH”

In Christ’s teaching “on a flat plain”, which the Evangelist Luke hands down to us, irrespective if it is identified with the speech of the “Sermon on the Mount” that the Evangelist Matthew preserves, we hear lessons for “advanced” people. Christ addresses himself, of course, first to his disciples, through them however he is teaching all of us. Let us not forget that once He told them: “he who is hearing you, is hearing me”.

From selfishness to selflessness

In the previous verses He is asking us to love our enemies, to pray for those who curse us, to turn our other cheek also to those who slap us, to also give our shirt to those who want to take our overcoat and other similar things that are somewhat difficult. And because, as is noted by Saint Cyril of Alexandria “it is natural furthermore even for the holy Apostles to consider all these things difficult to achieve”, he tries initially to help us...patting our healthy egotism a bit. Yes, he suggests for us the most egotistical reward for us: the satisfaction of our selfishness. “He accepts as the rewarder the law of the selfishness in us”. In other words, he

"THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE 6:31-36

The Lord said, "As you wish that men would do to you, do so to them. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the selfish. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful."

tells us: "Make a gift to your own self. Love the others, as much as you love your own self! Do you want the others to be unrevenged, longsuffering, meek, suffering together with you? Be yourselves the same thing to them". After however, he stirs our love of honor saying: "Obviously you would not want to remain only in false achievements, which are self evident even for sinners. They also love those who love them, they help those who help them and they lend to those from whom they hope to get them back. I'm calling you to higher peaks: love even those who not only don't love you, but even hate you. Love your enemies. And do good even to those, from whom you don't await, even one thank you".

The contest which deifies

The reward and pay here is not simply a selfish joy and satisfaction but something incomparably higher: you will become sons of my Most High Father, "who is in the heavens", since He also does not hate but also benefactors those who swear at Him.

You will resemble Him so much, that He will recognize you as His own children, despite the fact that the magnitudes are incomparable: you are scorned and mistreated by your fellow servant fellow men. He however, from His creatures, the humans. And naturally, the benefactions which He does to us cannot be compared with those which you do to your fellow men.

Here certainly, we're not dealing with man's moral improvement, which simply solves some social problems of coexistence with the others. Here God grants an ontological transfiguration, resemblance by grace with Him, theosis. And Saint John Chrysostom wonderfully notes: "Christ did not say, if you fast, keep virginity or pray, you will become similar to your heavenly Father. But if you become compassionate and merciful even to your enemies". These things, the sacred Chrysostom, a chief model of fasting, virginity and prayer, says them, not in order to put down these deifying virtues, but in order to stress that moral virtues are not a goal, in and of themselves, but they are necessary steps, for us to reach the peak of love: love even for enemies.

The strategic of perfect love

Martin Nimeler, one of the national heroes of Germany, distinguished as a submarine administrator in the First World War, in 1924 left his military career and became a sacred preacher. He was one of the first who denounced the anti-Christian principles of national socialism and he "paid" for this with seclusion in the dreadful Dachau until the end of the Second World War. Furthermore about his prison experience, he said: I didn't fear so much that one day they would be hanging me on the noose which they had set up in our prison courtyard. More so, I feared that maybe I would react, saying: "God exists and He will show you!" However if Christ died thus, without forgiving His crucifiers, there would be no salvation for us, nor a way for us