

. The most “bothersome preaching”

The par excellence “solid food” that the holy Apostles offered was preaching about the resurrection. For those of a good disposition who “were hungering and thirsting for the righteousness of God” it was a food which “assured the heart”. For the high minded ones and Sadducees who were satiated with self justification, it was not simply something undigestible, but a thorn which bothered the conscience. A conscience that they had in a “winter hibernation”, since they did not believe in the resurrection and in a giving account.

So the “natural” reaction of the Sadducees was to imprison the Apostles, who furthermore, had disobeyed the command, from a while back, of the presbyters, to cease speaking about Christ (Acts 4:18). However He who promised them that “I will be with you all days until the close of the age” sent His angel and freed them from the prison, encouraging them to continue preaching the “liberator of our souls”. He who with His Resurrection liberated us from the eternal prison of hades and of death.

Archim. B. L

SUNDAY, MAY 05, 2019 THOMAS SUNDAY, Irene the Great Martyr , Neophytos, Gaius, & Caianus the Monk-martyrs, The Righteous Martyr Ephraim the Younger

TONE OF THE WEEK : --

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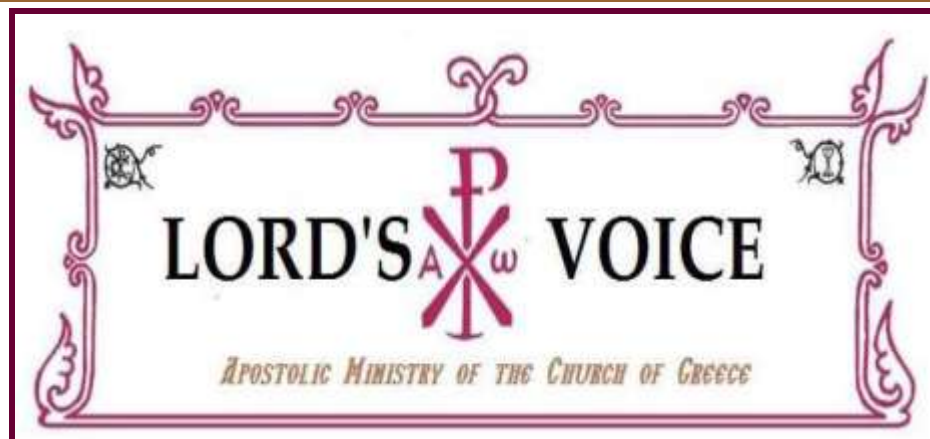
EPISTLE READING: Acts of the Apostles 5:12-20

GOSPEL READING: John 20:19-31

NEXT SUNDAY, MAY 12, 2019 Sunday of the Myrrh-Bearing Women, Epiphanius, Bishop of Cyprus Germanos, Patriarch of Constantinople, Theodorus the Righteous of Cythera, Removal of the Sacred Relics of Saint Joachim “Papoulakis” of Vatopaidi

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

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



67TH YEAR MAY 05, 2019 PAMPHLET # 18 (3440)

“FRUITS OF THE RESURRECTION”

The Epistle Reading today of the Sunday of Thomas is not unrelated to the celebrated event of the touching the Resurrected Christ by the Apostle. Obviously among the hands of the Apostles that were doing miracles at the Portico of Solomon was also “the eager right hand” of Thomas that “investigated the life-granting side” of Christ. Only that the wondrous “investigation” had occurred in a closed area and in front of a few fearing witnesses, whereas the fruits of this verification, the miracles of the holy Apostles, were taking place in a public open area of the Portico. Now henceforth, the former timid disciples were preaching the new teaching with boldness and courage.

Miracles from “fishermen and lay people”

On the one hand the fear that the recent punishment by death of the hypocritical and wicked behavior of Ananias and Saphira caused, and on the other hand, the surprise and wonder for the supernatural events that the apostles were performing, did not leave henceforth the space to any nonbeliever to behave with scorn toward the disciples of Christ. No one dared to put them down with the easy characterization of “unlettered fishermen”. As the sacred Chrysostom also notes “in such a brief duration, so many and so great things had been done by the fishermen and layperson”, meaning their Preeminent Apostle Peter. So

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 5:12-20

In those days, many signs and wonders were done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high honor. And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women, so that they even carried out the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and pallets, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed. But the high priest rose up and all who were with him, that is, the party of the Sadducees, and filled with jealousy they arrested the apostles and put them in the common prison. But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out and said, "Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life."

for this reason the people at large honor them and praise them, and the number of believers was constantly increasing.

The superiority of the Apostle Peter was not limited only to his leadership role among the Apostles but also to his miraculous activity. Here now he surpassed even the Giver of the healing gift, Christ, verifying His prophecy: "whoever believes in me, will do not only the works I do, but even greater ones". For someone to touch the edge of Christ's garment and to be healed, occurred with the hemorrhaging woman. For them to be bringing however, the sick on beds and cots and to be taking them out into the squares where the Apostle Peter would be passing by, believing that merely if his shadow would fall on them they would be healed. "This did not happen with Christ", Saint Theophylactos assures.

Why then and not today?

The question is probably spontaneously created: "Why today aren't, if not such, even as many miracles, as then happening?" Obviously then the need was imposing for the faith of the first members of the newly born Church to be made firm. The Evangelist Mark closes his Gospel writing that after Pentecost the holy Apostles "preached everywhere, with the Lord cooperating and the word verifying, through the signs that followed." And yes, on the one hand, the miracles seal and verify the truth of the preaching. However, the Church never saw the miracles as a result "the revolver to the forehead", for the unbelievers to believe. So for this reason also, the Church never allowed the miracles to become a basic element of her pastoral care. Furthermore, already from the age of Saint Chrysostom, the miracles had been greatly limited. Furthermore, the sacred Father, answering the question "why aren't miracles happening today?" says that this occurs "not with us dishonoring God but also fervently honoring". The lessening of miracles is not an abandoning by God, but an honoring by God. And he explains that in olden times more miracles occurred because the people had a more coarse and thick mind. They were more foolish. And only the physical and tangible things would wake them up to a fruitful pondering".

And this occurred not only with those "recently delivered from the idols" but also with the infant-minded Jews, who forced even the Apostle Paul to hesitate to offer them "solid food" and to "quench them with milk" as "still fleshly" (1 Cor. 3:2). The taking in and "digestion" of the "words of eternal life" demand spiritual maturity and the consumption of a gray substance.* On the contrary, speaking of miracles does not demand toil. Even the contemporary philosopher and speaker about science, Humberto Eko denotes it, that of course it is much more "comfortable to be speaking to the other about the thunderous activity of a miracle" rather than to be sweating, systematically studying the Bible and fighting with the questions about its trustworthiness.