

rendered equally rich fruits: Each one eagerly offered according to his ability for the especial indigent brothers of Judea. And the presiders also of the ministers of the word, the Apostles Paul and Barnabas themselves, undertook to transport their gifts to the presbyters of the church of Jerusalem. "Do you see," says Saint John "that right away, their faith began bearing fruit, the works of love, even for our brethren who were far away? So much the starvation which ensued benefited. It became the cause of salvation for them, a cause of charity and a cause of many good things".

When one studies these first wondrous steps of the life of the Church, he justifies the exhortation of the Golden-tongued John: "Do not pass over superficially the words of Christ, that on the rock of faith, I will build my Church. Think of what a great thing it is for the entire globe to be filled with so many churches in such a small period of time. To convert so many peoples. To change rooted customs, to abolish customs and superstitions that were handed down by their fathers. To dissolve like dust, the tyrannical authority of the passions and the power of wickedness. To raise up everywhere alters of the only true God. Great therefore, truly great, and having the proof of divine power".

Archim. B. L

**SUNDAY, MAY 26 2019 SUNDAY OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN** *Carpos and Alphaeus, Apostles of the 70, Alexandros the New Martyr of Thessaloniki, George the New of Sofia*  
*Carpos and Alphaeus, Apostles of the 70, Alexandros the New Martyr of Thessaloniki, George the New of Sofia, Augustine, Archbishop of Canterbury.*

**TONE OF THE WEEK :** *Fourth Tone*

**EOTHINON :** *Seventh Eothinon*

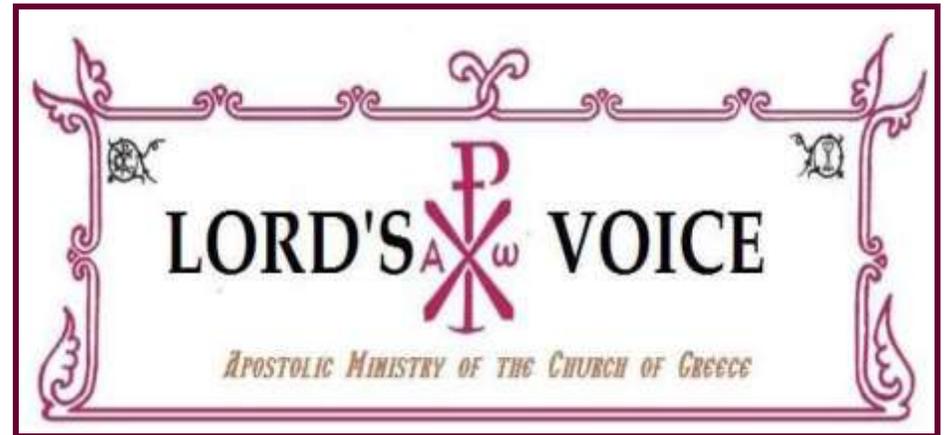
**EPISTLE READING:** *Acts of the Apostles 11:19-30*

**GOSPEL READING:** *John 4:5-42*

**NEXT SUNDAY, JUNE 02, 2019 SUNDAY OF THE BLIND MAN** *Nicephorus The Confessor, Patriarch Of Constantinople, Erasmos Of Ochrid & His Companion Martyrs, Demetrios The New Martyr Of Philadelphia, Constantine The New Martyr Of The Hagarenes*

**Epistle Reading:** *Acts of the Apostles 16:16-34*

**GOSPEL READING:** *John 9:1-38*



**67<sup>TH</sup> YEAR      MAY 26, 2019      PAMPHLET # 21 (3443)**

### **"THE WONDROUS FRUITBEARING"**

What is it that gives life and development to nature? After oxygen, water, naturally. The more the living organisms are watered, all the more they live and develop. The Church however, is enlivened by a very costly and strange watering: the blood of her martyrs. Saint John will say it with his golden mouth: "Abundant watering does not make the gardens so lush, as the blood of the martyrs increases the Church".

### **"Through little ones to great things"**

The blood of the protomartyr Saint Steven did not manage to be shed, and it began giving the first fruits. The persecution against him contributed to the spreading of divine word. Many believers were scattered outside of Judea and reached down to Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch. They were not leaving startled by the persecution, but safeguarding themselves for the continuation of the work of the preaching. And furthermore not with lessened but with greater zeal, which the bright example of the holy protomartyr made fervent. God provides even from the most contrary conditions, to produce benefit, which often surpasses the favorable outcome even of the most perfect human planning. The Apostle Paul will also proclaim it: "To those who love God, everything - even the most negative ones-contribute to a good result" (Rom. 8:28).

## ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 11:19-30

In those days, those apostles who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to none except Jews. But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number that believed turned to the Lord. News of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad; and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose; for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a large company was added to the Lord. So Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul; and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church, and taught a large company of people; and in Antioch the disciples were for the first time called Christians. Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. And one of them named Agabos stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world; and this took place in the days of Claudius. And the disciples determined, every one according to his ability, to send relief to the brethren who lived in Judea, and they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.

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Antioch was then one of the strongest and largest cities of the East, third after Rome and Alexandria. There, some people arrived also, Jews, on the one hand, by descent, but born in Cyprus and in Cyrenean Libya, who were teaching the Gospel to Greek speaking Jews. They were not apostles, but usual ministers of the word or also simple believers. However, no matter how unimportant they were, all the more the grace shone “through little ones, working great things” (sacred Chrysostom). Their preaching, strengthened by the performed miracles, had a rich fruitbearing. The miracles, of course, were not functioning like a magic wand, in order to automatically lead those “in darkness” to the true faith. Let us not forget that many people were seeing the miracles but did not believe. The essential help of the “hand of the Lord” was the unlocking of the hearts, so that they would have

ears to hear” the saving word of God and to freely dare to reject the delusion and to align themselves with Christ.

### Excellent cooperation

The pleasant news reached Jerusalem. And the holy Apostles, “having the universe as one house”, with a sense of responsibility for the believers everywhere, sent the Apostle Barnabas, “a good man full of the holy Spirit and faith”. Who else would be more suitable than he, who –according to the Golden-tongued one – “fervently desired the salvation of the neighbors”? Saint Barnabas, of course, did not have only this gift. His greatest adornment was his humility and the knowledge of his limits. After he was flooded by joy, seeing the progress of the preaching and the multitude of the believers, and after he exhorted them to remain dedicated to Christ with all the disposition of their souls, he was seeking a colleague in his pastoral work. He did not see the fertile “field” of Antioch as a personal “bright arena of glory” and a cause for promotion and authority.

And naturally his mind immediately went to Paul, the sincerity of whose conversion he had first perceived, and so for this reason, he had introduced him to the justifiably reserved apostles. The Apostle Barnabas sought him, he found him in Tarsus and brought him to Antioch. For one year, they worked together in the spiritually fertile city. And so great was the multitude of those who accepted their preaching, that there for the first time, the disciples of the Lord were called “Christians”. How could Chrysostom not break out here in dithyrambs about the main contributor to this fruitbearing, the Apostle Paul? He calls him “athlete, general, gladiator, lion, strong ox, bright lantern, a mouth which sufficed for the entire universe!” And he concludes, disappointed by the poverty of the words: “I don’t know what to say. No matter how many things I say, it will be less than his value”.

### The cultivation of charity

Because however, in periods of great fertility and “favorable weather” the danger of complacency, self satisfaction and haughtiness lurks, God who provides everything for one’s benefit, noted through the prophet Agabus to the newly illumined people of Antioch, that a great starvation is going to appear in the entire universe. Thus in the cultivated fields of Antioch, the seed of charity was also planted, which