

a rope. When once they asked a young acrobat how he manages for so long that time to walk on a rope, he answered that he had trained, gazing at the other end of the rope, at his experienced acrobat father. The chief "tightrope walker of faith" Paul calls us to do the same thing: to always have our gaze turned toward Christ, the leader and perfecter of our faith. He, forbearing the dishonorable death by the cross, became the protomartyr of true faith, since – for Him to sit incarnate, at the right of the throne of His heavenly Father- He condescended to "sit" first on the wood of the cross, "scorning shame".

It is quite difficult for us today, to understand what "shame" Christ scorned. In order for us to understand the weightiness of this phrase, we must undress the cross from all the luster which the crucified King of Glory gave to it, and see it only as the punishing instrument of the most painful and shameful mortal execution of the off-scouring of society. Christ however considered this cross His greatest glory. And All the Saints made this their weapon and glory.

Archim. B. L.

SUNDAY, JUNE 23, 2019 THE SUNDAY OF ALL SAINTS ,

Agrippina the Martyr of Rome , Holy Martyrs Aristocleus the Priest, Demetrius the Deacon and Athanasius the Reader, The Holy New Archpriest Martyrs Gerasimus of Crete, Neophytos of Knossos, Joachim of Cherronisos, Hierotheos of Lampi, Zachariah of Sitia, Joachim of Petra, Gerasimos of Rethymno, Kallinikos of Kydonia, Melchizedek of Kissamos, Kallinikos of Diopolos, and those Martyred with Them (1821-1822

TONE OF THE WEEK : *Plagal of the Fourth Tone*

EOTHINON : *First Orthros Gospel*

EPISTLE READING: *St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 11:33-40;*

GOSPEL READING: *Matthew 10:32-33; 37-38; 19:27-30*

NEXT SUNDAY, JUNE 30, 2019, SYNAXIS OF THE TWELVE HOLY

APOSTLES , *Michael the New Martyr of Athens*

EPISTLE READING: *ST. PAUL'S Letter to the Corinthians 4:9-16*

GOSPEL READING: *Matthew 10:1-8*



67TH YEAR JUNE 23 2019 PAMPHLET #25 (3447)

“SHOW ME YOUR PERSON”

Once when the idolater Autolykos asked from Saint Theophilos of Antioch to show him in which god he believes, the Saint answered him: “Show me your person, and I will show you my God”. This answer of the Saint reminds us that theology and anthropology in the history of human culture, are bound to one another. The religious convictions of each person essentially influence his formulation and his entire attitude toward life. The Christian Theophilos wanted to tell the non Christian Aytolykos, that for us, man is the image of the one true God. And this image is true to the degree that the person struggles to resemble the Godman Christ.

“Precious is the death of His saints”

So we could say that the Church, in last week's great feast of Pentecost “showed us her God”, and today, in the feast of All Saints, “she shows us her person”. With Pentecost, the work of divine economy is completed. The Holy Spirit revealed to us “all the truth” about who our God is and He gave us the fullness of divine gifts with which we are able to resemble Him. It is characteristic that the models of the ecclesiastical person, the Saints, do not draw their glory, either from academic achievements, or social offering, nor from a colorless and scentless morality, but from the in Christ victorious dealing with evil. This refers, of course, to a victory which as a rule, cost them a martyrical

THE GOSPEL ST. PAUL'S LETTER TO THE HEBREWS 11:33-40

Brethren, all the saints through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, received promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were killed with the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated - of whom the world was not worthy - wandering over deserts and mountains and in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect. Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith

death. In the contemporary – and not only – culture, “we hide death as if it were dishonorable. As if it were filthy”, as a certain author mentions. The psalmist however tells us that “the death of His saints is honorable before the Lord”. And it is honorable, because “it witnesses to the truth” (Jn. 18:37). It comprises a witness to the truth of Christ. It witness is not about theories, but about events. And par excellence, it witnesses about the foundation of our faith, which is the event of the Resurrection of Christ. The martyrs, according to the former denier of the Resurrection and later eminent preacher of it, the Apostle Paul, “underwent a martyrical death, in order to achieve a better resurrection than the temporal restoration in this life”. They

scorned, not only all the delights of this life, “being deprived, afflicted, harmed”, but even their life itself, giving a triumphant witness that “all that we suffer and endure in this time, are not worthy in comparison to the glory that will be revealed to us” (Rom. 8:18). So for precisely this reason, “the entire world was not worthy of, nor could be compared to, the saints”. To the degree that they were seeing and living as incomparable the first magnitudes (present sufferings – future glory), to the same degree the latter became incomparable (world – saints).

The martyrs and their calling

The former agnostic and later fervent Christian author aptly notes: “Christ did not seek propagandists. He sought martyrs. Faith cannot end up popular slogans. Faith is confessed with martyrdom. And martyrdom is the antipode of propaganda. True martyrdom is the centrifugal power, because it radiates. Bergson had conceived this, when he wrote about the saints: we do not need the saints to do anything else, rather than to merely exist. Their existence alone comprises a calling”.

To the question “what do the saints call us to?” the Apostle Paul answers in today’s epistle passage. They call us to a struggle against our passions, after “we cast off from us, every burden of earthly matters, furthermore sin as well, into which one is easily swayed”. The image is taken from the arenas and the training rinks, where those contesting, cast off every superfluous garment, and entered into the contest lighter. Daily cares, which we constantly multiply, from our insatiability, create a “vain mass”, according to Saint Theophylactos, which does not lead us upwards at all. “Easily ensnaring sin”, causes an even worse fall, which is born by the fact that very easily the eye is lured, the ear is very attracted, the touch is tickled, the tongue slips and the thought quickly moves to what is worse”.

Deifying tightrope walking

All these things remind us, not so much of the athlete who is contesting on firm ground, but of the acrobat, who is trying to walk on