

Philippines. He was trying in an oppressive manner to Christianize the natives, and with harsh measures, to limit the loose morals. The story has a tragic end: the unyielding scolder of sinners, “missionary,” at a certain moment himself gets derailed morally, and afterwards, in despair, he commits suicide. The fruit of this deviation in western societies was obviously also the slogan that the French students wrote on their walls of the Sorbonne in May of 1968: “What is God? He is an image of the father, who by definition, fulfills an oppressive role”.

For the Apostle Paul and for every true pastor of the Church of Christ, the only “oppressive functioning” to the detriment not of the others, but of their own self, is the “squeezing” of heart, the “anguish of heart” which they feel every time they need to help a lost sheep for him to freely return to the pen fold of Christ.

Archim. B. L

#### **SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2019 1ST SUNDAY OF LUKE**

*Phocas the Martyr, Bishop of Sinope , Phocas the Cyprian, Isaac & Martinos the Martyrs 26 Monk-martyrs of Zographou Monastery martyred by the Latins*

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

**EOCHINON :** *Third Orthros Gospel*

**EPISTLE READING:** *St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians 1:21-24;*

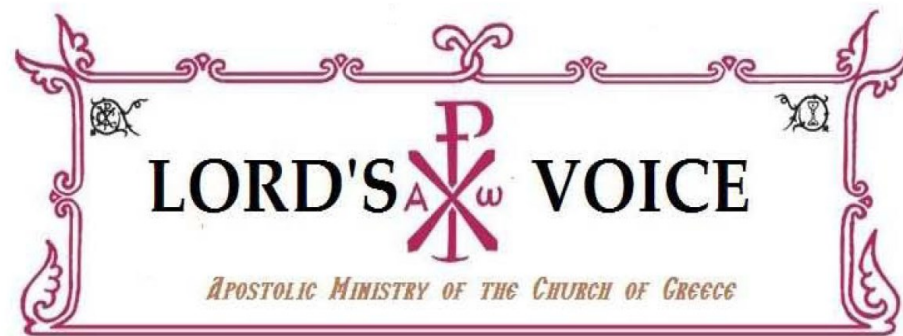
**GOSPEL READING:** *Luke 5:1-11*

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67<sup>TH</sup> YEAR SEPTEMBER 22, 2019 PAMPHLET #38 (3460)

## **RULER OR FATHER?**

Saint Silouan the Athonite tasted the blessing of having a holy father. When once in his youth, Symeon – that’s what they called him the before he became a monk –stayed up prodigally, the next day his father told him in a mild tone: “Where were you yesterday, my child? My heart was hurting”. These mild words of his father were deeply impressed in Symeon’s soul and, when later on, he would remember them, he would say: “There, I want to have such an elder. My father would never get angry and was always measured. He never scolded us in an unsuitable moment, so that he would not upset us”. He implemented, in other words, the words of the Apostle Paul: “Fathers do not anger your children, but bring them up in the training and counsel of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4).

### **Between strictness and longsuffering**

Clearly this pedagogy of the Apostle, sprang from the exercising of his spiritual fatherhood, and this clearly shows in today’s Epistle Reading. The problem of the scandal, which had arisen with the incestuous person in Corinth and greatly embittered Paul. In his 1st letter to the Ephesians, he extensively refers to the matter , while he also exhorts what should happen.

*EPISTLE ST. PAUL'S SECOND LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS 1:21-24:*

Brethren, it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has commissioned us; he has put his seal upon us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

But I call God to witness against me - it was to spare you that I refrained from coming to Corinth. Not that we lord it over your faith; we work with you for your joy, for you stand firm in your faith. For I made up my mind not to make you another painful visit. For if I cause you pain, who is there to make me glad but the one whom I have pained? And I wrote as I did, so that when I came I might not suffer pain from those who should have made me rejoice, for I felt sure of all of you, that my joy would be the joy of you all. For I wrote you out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you.

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So he did not want, to come again to Corinth, not only if the problem had not been taking care of, but also if the tones of egotism had not lowered, of those who were causing arguments and religious false dilemmas.

Primarily he clarifies mainly to whoever still doubts that he is not self-called, but called by God. As he had written also to the Galatians, he became an Apostle "not from man, nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father. However he did not undertake a position of authority, but a command to minister among brothers. Both they and he received, through baptism, the Holy Spirit, with which God anointed them and sealed them, giving them the "betrothal", in other words, the guarantee of the future goods. So his agony, that they not be in danger of losing these goods, is the only criterion of his pastoral care. It is a pastoral care that often made him walk on a tight rope between strictness and leniency. "God knows how much I hurt for you", he

tells them. "I do not want you to experience my strictness. In the beginning the Spirit of God prevented me from coming, whereas I wanted to. Now I also do not want to. And I decided to delay my trip. I would not want to come and experience sadness from those who ought to be giving me joy with their repentance.

### **A partaker in your joy**

The Apostle, when necessary, would become strict and would cause sadness. A holy and saving sadness, however. This shows particularly in his 1<sup>st</sup> Epistle to the Corinthians. Now he feels that he spoke to them quite strictly. He is not a legislator nor a cold judge, but a father. And whatever he does, he does it with the hope of turning their sadness into joy. "We are not your rulers", he tells them. "We want to be only fellow participants in your joy. Not however, in the false joy that the supposed freedom of apostasy from God grants, but in the genuine joy of firm faith and obedience to His commandments." And Paul will continue with the mouth of the sacred Chrysostom: "We are doing everything for your own joy, in which we ourselves participate together. Your joy is also our joy. And know. No one causes me so much joy, as he who is repenting with my words".

Today's passage will close with the confession of the true father and Apostle that, if they are grieved and are sad from his pedagogy, he has hurt incomparably more, with their deviation and lack of repentance. Before he sends them the epistle, he has imbued it with his tears. "Much grief," "many tears" and "anguish of heart" are the cost of genuine paternal love.

### **The pastoral care of authority**

The converse pastoral care of exercising authority has destructive results, which are descriptively imprinted in a fairy tale, which describes the activity of a certain missionary to the