

Joy through the cross

So if Christ “who is reconciling Himself with the world” but forebore for this purpose, a death by Crucifixion, could not His preminent servant of this mystery, conduct himself “in rest and spaciousness”. The Teacher had forewarned His disciples: “If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.” And in today’s passage, the Apostle again finds the opportunity, without any vainglory or disposition for self projection, to refer not only to “which persecutions he forebore” (2 Time. 3:11), but also to the toils, the fasts, the vigils, in longsuffering and in his unhyprocritical love to everyone. And naturally to those, who – doubting him – force him to do this undersirable for him “talking about himself”.

Archim. B. L

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 06, 2019 3RD SUNDAY OF LUKE, *The Holy and Glorious Apostle Thomas, Eroteis the Martyr of Cappadocia, Makarios the Righteous of Chios*

TONE OF THE WEEK : Grave Tone

EOTHINON : Fifth Orthros Gospel

EPISTLE READING: St. Paul’s Second Letter to the Corinthians 6:1-10

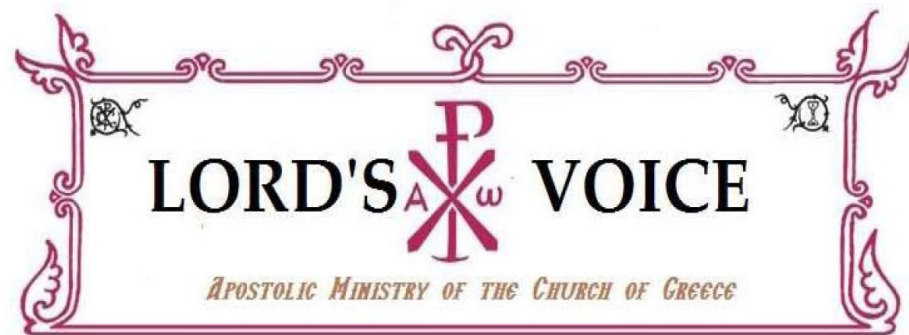
GOSPEL READING: Luke 7:11-16

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2019 SUNDAY OF THE 7TH

ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, *Carpus, Papyrus, Agathodorus, & Agathonica, the Martyrs of Pergamus, Chryssi the New Martyr of Greece, Benjamin the Deacon, Florentios the Martyr of Thessaloniki, Meletios of Pegas, Patriarch of Alexandria.*

EPISTLE READING: St. Paul’s St. Paul’s Letter to Titus 3:8-15

GOSPEL READING: Luke 8:5-15



67TH YEAR OCTOBER 06 2019 PAMPHLET #40 (3462)

THE COST OF RECONCILIATION

When our relationships with someone are disturbed from his own fall, it is probably justified for us to grumble with whomsoever comes and urges us to make the first step of reconciliation. When however, the blame is completely our own, we ought on our own, without expecting some urging and without any delay, to hasten to seek forgiveness. It would be, consequently, a great shame for us to force the person whom we wounded to put mediators for us to make up. Much more so we should be moved by the fact that he himself is coming and is asking us for this.

“Do not accept the grace in vain”

If this applies for the relationships between people, how much more so should we be shaken by God’s initiative that “we be reconciled” with Him, at the moment when the breaking of our relationships is due exclusively to us. To our own sins. “God did not become our enemy” the sacred Chrysostom will say “we became His enemies by our apostasy. For God is never enmitous”.

In today’s reading, the Apostle Paul, after he has already spoken to us about the honor that God gave him to entrust to him the “ministry of reconciliation”, he stresses again that he is God’s

EPISTLE ST. PAUL'S B LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS 6:1-10

Brethren, working together with him, we entreat you not to accept the grace of God in vain. For he says, "At the acceptable time I have listened to you, and helped you on the day of salvation." Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. We put no obstacle in any one's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, tumults, labors, watching, hunger; by purity, knowledge, forbearance, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

colleague in this saving work of our reconciliation with Him. And imitating the humility and love of Christ, who condescended to ask us and exhort us in this work, he repeats for a third time the word "we beseech", he also urging us to not scorn this gift of God. This is a truly free reconciliation. We are not sacrificing something. To Him however it cost His death on the Cross. The Sinless One accepted to die as a convict, in order for us to be justified and saved. For us to be able to again become His children and His "friends". (Jn. 15:14).

And nevertheless, despite the fact that with His own sacrifice He granted us the invaluable gift of our salvation, we neglect to utilize it. A chief example to avoid, who accepted "in vain the grace of God", is Judas, who from a friend became not simply an enemy, but "a slave of the enemy". A prostitute "was

being delivered from (the hell of her passions), and he was becoming a slave of the enemy", says a troparion of Holy Wednesday. "The sinful woman rejoiced emptying the costly myrrh, while the disciple was hastening to sell the invaluable one. Indolence is harsh".

Not delays and scandals

This dreadful indolence, that led a disciple of Christ to eternal perdition, has - according to the sacred Chrysostom - its beginning in delaying. So for this reason also, Paul reminds us of the saying of the Prophet Isaiah: "Behold now is an acceptable and suitable time. Behold now is the day of salvation". Justifiably even the enemy of delaying and tireless worker of the commandments of God, Basil the Great, will ask: Who, remaining idle at his home or sleeping at the time of sewing, filled his embrace with the crops, when the harvest came? Who picked grapes from a vineyard that he did not plant, and that he did not get tired to cultivate himself?»

The Apostle however, is not limited to supplications and recommendations to others, but he is vigilant and censures his own self to not give the slightest cause for scandal, but in order for the ministry of reconciliation that God entrusted him with, to not be accused in the slightest. The false brethren and false apostles were lying in wait to find something to accuse him of and to shake his validity as an Apostle. They always remember that Paul "persecuted the Church of God", something that however, he himself admitted with compunction, having written in his previous Epistle to the Corinthians that "I'm not capable of being called an Apostle". But even if he considered himself an "abomination", he did not forget the shaking manner with which Christ "hunted him" in order for them to be reconciled on the way to Damascus.