

home of ours, no one is foreign and “a passerby”, but we all become “familiar with God” and “fellow citizens of the saints”, of all the members of the body of Christ, in other words. It refers, in the end, to our paternal home, where our “familiarity” with God becomes a relation of a child to his father. Both the former Jews and the former gentiles are able through Christ “in one Spirit”, in other words, “in the Holy Spirit” to approach and feel God as our only true Father.

And the phrase “through Christ” means that God henceforth “was pleased” for us to call Him “Father”, because in a few days the “motherless one of a Father” his Son will address a woman “Mother”. He condescended for our salvation to incarnate and to be born as a human also now, “fatherless of a mother”, of the Most Holy Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary.

Archim. B. L

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2019 14TH SUNDAY OF LUKE ,

Nahum the Prophet , Ananias the Persian, Philaret the Merciful of Amnia Holy Father Theocletus the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Lacedaemonia , Our Holy Fathers Ananias and Solochon, Archbishops of Ephesus.

TONE OF THE WEEK : Grave Tone

EOETHINON : Second Orthros Gospel

EPISTLE READING: St.Paul's Letter to Ephesians 2 : 14 - 22

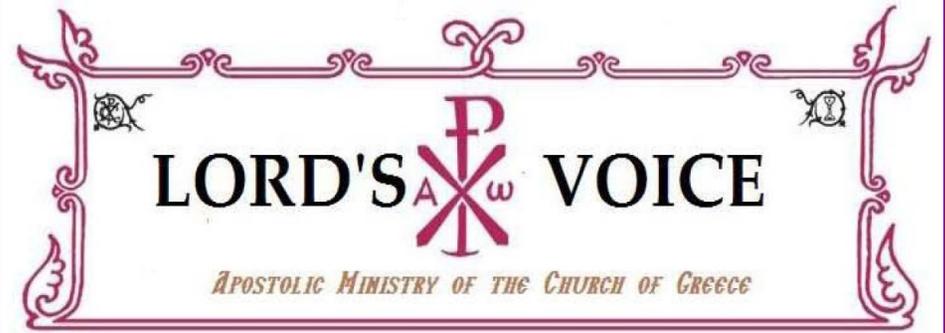
GOSPEL READING: Luke 18 :35 - 43

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2019 10TH SUNDAY OF LUKE ,

Forefeast of the Conception by St. Anna of the Most Holy Theotokos , Patapius the Righteous of Thebes, Apollo, Tychikos, Sosthenes, Cephas, Epaphroditos, Caesar, & Onesiphoros, Apostles of the 70.

EPISTLE READING: ST.PAUL'S LETTER TO EPHESIANS 4:1-7

GOSPEL READING: Luke 13:10-17



67TH YEAR DECEMBER 1 2019 PAMPHLET #48 (3470)

THE DELIVERING TEARING DOWN DOWN

We have already entered into the period of preparation for Christmas. Three weeks about, separate us from the great feast. And rather it is not by chance that one phrase from today's Epistle Reading we will hear in the first idiomelon of the Great Vespers of the feast. The troparion says: “Come let us rejoice in the Lord, relating to present mystery. The dividing wall of hostility is broken....” As the first fruit of the mystery of the Incarnation of the Logos, for which the psalmist calls us to be filled with joy, the tearing down of a wall is put forth, of a hostility and enmity is dissolved.

The two walls

Primarily it refers to the enmity to God and on account of our sins. We became his enemies. “God is never enmitous”, says the sacred Chrysostom. We daily, allow our sins to become a “wall” that separates us from Him. One-sidedly, only from our own egotistic will, this wall is elevated. And furthermore, according to Abba Poimen, it is not only a copper wall between us and God but also an opposing rock”. Barricaded, supposedly, in the wall of our egotistical self sufficiency, we allow the sins, our “I wants” to become rocks, with which we stone God, furthermore.

EPISTLE ST. PAUL'S LETTER TO EPHESIANS 2 : 14 - 22

Brethren, Christ is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby bringing the hostility to an end. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

There exists however also, another – protective initially - wall, which walls in the “select people of God”, the Jews, and safeguards them from the idol-worshipping atmosphere. This wall was the Mosaic Law, which was given by God, so that with its many regulations, it preserve his people in the healthy care of the one true God and in a clearly demarcated faith. In the end however, the protective barrier of the godly given law, due to the inability to completely keep it, and the constant transgressions, ended up in an unsurpassable obstacle and real “curse”, which separated from God. The Mosaic Law was called a wall”, says the golden-tongued one, so that it “walls around. While it became a dividing wall, separating them from God”.

On the other hand, its “literal” interpretation led to making the people of God a ghetto, and the abolition of the promise of God to Abraham, that he would become “a father of a multitude of nations”. For the preeminent Apostle Peter to surpass furthermore, such isolating walls and such biases, and for the impure person to be convinced that no person is defiled or impure, God needed to shake him up with a vision in Joppa (Acts 10:9-16). Incomparably more shaking was, of course, the selection on the part of God, as “apostle to the gentiles” of a

person more biased and an even more fanatic Pharisee than Peter, the former persecutor of the Christians, Saul.

The first fruits of the new life

So it is obvious that this later Apostle Paul, lived in all its majesty, the saving tearing down of the separating wall between Jews and Gentiles. And in an intense glorificational tone, he describes now to the Ephesians its fruits.

Initially, whereas it is implied that every tearing down is a, to some degree, violent action, here the wondrous and odd thing happens, that the tearing down takes place with the exercise of violence upon Him, Who tears down. And furthermore, violence unto death. Christ dissolved both of the enmities, He also tore down the two walls, both the wall due to sin between God and men but also the one between Jews and gentiles,, voluntarily accepting to undergo a death by crucifixion. Three times in three verses, Paul returns to this violence which we exercised to Christ. “In his blood”, “in his flesh”, “through the cross”. And the apostle formulates the fruit of this delivering sacrifice not with anemic expressions but with the, according to Saint John “stronger” word “he killed”. He annihilated, in other words, the double enmity, so that it not be able to resurrect again.

The work of Christ however, as a work of the prince of peace, not only abolished the old condition but also created a new one. “He did not make the Jew a Greek”, Saint Theophylactos observes, “but a new man, uniting them with Himself”, Paul will explain, introducing us to the great Mystery of the Church. The “new man” and the “peace” do not comprise ethical improvements of man through autonomous anthropocentric techniques. They are realized in the body of Christ, in the Church, whose head is Christ.

“Fellow citizens of the saints”

Immediately afterwards, the Apostle will proceed also to the depiction of the Church as an edifice, which has the Apostles and the charismatics of the first Church the (“prophets”) as a foundation, and Christ himself as the cornerstone. In this new