

Erudite clergyman (bishops, archimandrites and priests) were the authors of the written sermon, while the content of the pamphlet aims at the edification of its readers in matters of Orthodox faith and life. During this period, the "Voice of the Lord" remained firmly attached to its initial aim: to be a brief and contemporary edifying pamphlet about life in Christ.

We glorify our philanthropic Lord, because with the intercessions of the Most Holy Theotokos and His Saints, the Apostolic Ministry has been granted to perform this offering for 68 years already. We fervently thank our colleagues in this ministry, and promise to continue our effort, with the grace of the Holy Trinity.

Whoever of the readers, desire and are able to strengthen our effort, are able to deposit their offering – no matter how small it is – to the account number of the National Bank of Greece: 146/558 073-04, IBAN: GR9101101460000014655807304

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SUNDAY, JANUARY 26, 2020 15TH SUNDAY OF

LUKE *Xenophon & his Companions, Symeon the Elder of Mount Sinai*

TONE OF THE WEEK : *Grave Tone*

EOTHINON : *Tenth Orthros Gospel*

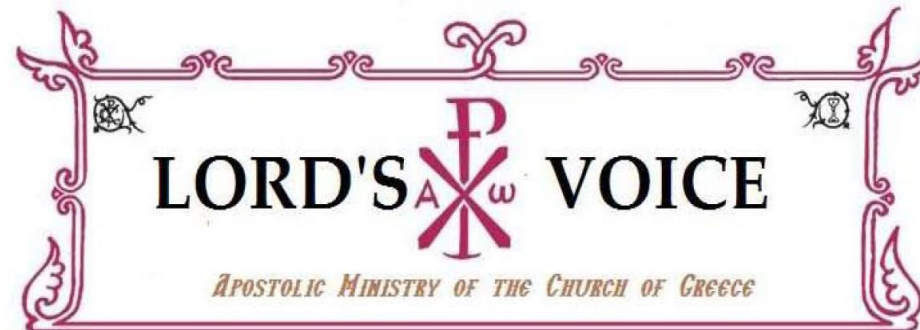
EPISTLE READING: *St. Paul's Letter to Timothy 4:9-15*

GOSPEL READING: *Luke 19:1-10*

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2020 THE PRESENTATION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR IN THE TEMPLE, *Gabriel the New Martyr of Constantinople, Jordan the New Martyr, Agathodoros the Martyr of Cappadocia.*

EPISTLE READING: *St. Paul's First Letter to Hebrews 7:7-17*

GOSPEL READING: *Luke 2:22-40*



68TH YEAR JANUARY 26 2020 PAMPHLET #04 (3478)

THE TEMPTATION OF SECULARIZATION

Christ's visit to the house of a sinful publican in Jericho, of Zacchaeus, is an overturning movement for everything that the world, in which Christ came, was awaiting. The sinful person was considered defiled and the Saint was not allowed to keep company with him. So for this reason also, in Christ's movement to enter into the house of Zacchaeus, the reaction of everyone was the murmuring "And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner" (Lk. 19:7). They themselves, because they were keeping the ritual regulations of the Mosaic law, did not consider themselves sinful. They protested however also, about the fact that it was possible for such a distinct personality, as they considered Christ, to make such a step. How could a God behave in such a way that overturns the law that He himself had given.

Practical repentance

Christ enters into the house of the sinner because He perceives something that the others were not able to see: his repentance. Zacchaeus expresses his repentance practically. He feels gratitude to Christ who is honoring him, coming to his home. And this visit is the beginning of a new life. The presence

THE SUNDAY GOSPEL LUKE 19:1 - 10

At that time, Jesus was passing through Jericho. And there was a man named Zacchaeus; he was a chief collector, and rich. And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not, on account of the crowd, because he was small of stature. So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down; for I must stay at your house today." So he made haste and came down, and received him joyfully. And when they saw it they all murmured, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one of anything, I restore it fourfold." And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man came to seek and to save the lost."

of Christ changes the way with which Zacchaeus sees the world. He no longer wants to be having a good time to the detriment of the others. The relationship with God becomes a distribution of the goods, a restoration of everyone whom he deceived and the keeping of the commandments of Him who is visiting him. So for this reason, Christ also will comment before everyone who have previously murmured against him, that Zacchaeus and his family – because it is not only himself who is starting out a new journey, but also all his family – have been saved. The Son of man came to seek and to save everyone who have lost the way and their orientation toward God and His will.

Seeking the meaning

With today's criteria, we would say that Zacchaeus was a secularized person. He was living and implementing the ethos

of its age and culture. He was aiming at material goods, at authority and his individual self-sufficiency, without paying attention to the word of God and to the fact that he was unjustly treating his fellow men. And he may have had the disapproval from the common opinion. However, the organization of the society of that age allowed him to live in this way. He had written God off from his daily life. It seems however, that in the end, he himself was not pleased. He understood that the meaning was elsewhere. And the presence of the person of Christ opens to his soul, the path which, down deep, he longed for. His first movement was to seek to see who Christ is. His second movement, to ascend the sycamore tree, overlooking both his natural weakness, as well as the possible mockeries of the crowd and his humiliation, due to the fact that he was familiar to them. And the third movement, to hasten to respond to Christ's invitation and to open up his home and his heart.

The hope that Christ brings

The repentance of Zacchaeus did not change the secularized manner of life of that age. It changed himself, however. Christ did not come to the world in order to lead humanity to a social and moral reformation, making Himself the leader of a change that would be imposed from heaven. He came in order to seek and to save every sinner, every person who feels that he has lost his road and he wants meaning and purpose in his life, that will surpass sin. Without denying the teaching to everyone, Christ shows that for God, what is important is each one of us personally. And here lies the great hope. That in the end, even if the world is living in sin, each one of us is able to be led to salvation and at the same moment, with the salvation of each one of us, the world itself is also led to hope.

Fr. T. M.