

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: GR910110146000014655807304

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 09, 2020 SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN AND PHARISEE: TRIODION BEGINS, TODAY *Leavetaking of the Presentation of Our Lord and Savior in the Temple, Nicephoros the Martyr of Antioch, Markellos, Philagrios, & Pankratios the Hieromartyrs, Teilo, Bishop of Llandaff.*

TONE OF THE WEEK : *First Tone*

EOTHINON : *First Eothinon Gospel*

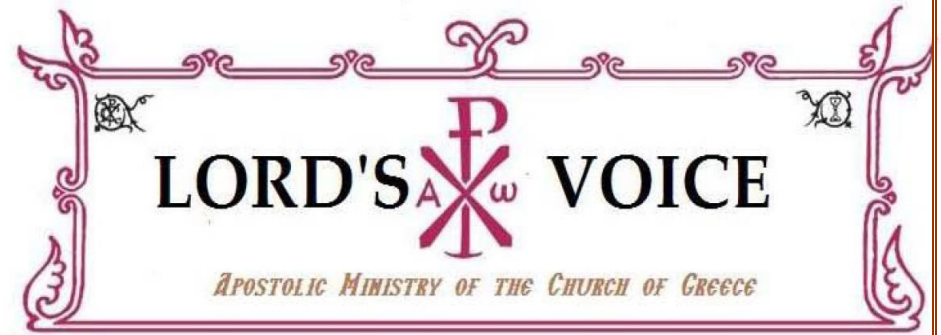
EPISTLE READING: *St. Paul's Second Letter to Timothy 3:10-15*

GOSPEL READING: *Luke 18 : 10 - 14*

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2020, SUNDAY OF PRODIGAL SON, *Pamphilus the Martyr & his Companions, Flavianos, Patriarch of Constantinople, Romanos the Younger.*

EPISTLE READING: *St. Paul's First Letter to Corinthians 6:12-20*

GOSPEL READING: *Luke 15:11-32*



68TH YEAR FEBRUARY 9 2020 PAMPHLET #06 (3480)

PRAYER FOR OUR OWN SELF

Prayer comprises for whoever deeply believes, a deep need of being. It is not a mechanical process, mainly before sleep, but a sign of life and hope. When we feel insecurity, when we see difficulties that we are facing, both us and our relatives, then we hasten to entrust our expectations for help in God, about whom we are certain that He both loves us and is able to give us what we desire. What God would He be, furthermore, if He did not have such a capability?

In the gospel passage however, with which the beautiful, compunctionate and extremely didactic period of the liturgical year, the Triodion, begins, Christ refers to two people, the Pharisee and the publican, who have no challenge before them, nor are they going through difficulties. Their prayer is not even for the others. Before God, they reveal themselves. Christ is speaking about a prayer that surpasses fears, anxieties, insecurities, and becomes a prayer of the heart

He does not owe to God

The Pharisee is looking at his life, and feels that he does not owe anything to God. First he compares himself with the other people, and there he ascertains that he is not a sinner, like

THE SUNDAY GOSPEL (LUKE 18 : 10- 14)

The Lord said this parable, "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I get.' But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted

them, and particularly the publican, whom it seems that the Pharisee knew. Afterwards, he compares himself with God, and there he ascertains that he is keeping the commandments of the law. He ascertains thus, that in relation both to people as well as to God, he is blameless. Christ mentions that God could not justify such a person, because the Pharisee did not need anyone. His prayer was not a movement of love, but a justification of himself. He was looking outside himself, he was looking inside himself, and was glorifying his ego.

Admitting sinfulness

On the contrary, the publican is not seeing the others, but he is standing far from them. He does not dare look even at God. The only thing he sees, is himself, and there he ascertains that not only does he not have anything to boast about, but his life is full of sins. His inner emptiness however, leads him to justification. Because, ascertaining his weakness, he accepted it with humility, and did the only thing that could truly help him. He invoked the mercy and compassion of God, admitting his

sinfulness. "God be merciful to me the sinner" (Luke 18:13). Christ assures that in the end, the publican was justified, and was forgiven by God, because with his will, he accepted his weakness and humbled himself. He was seeing only within him, and left himself to God.

Today's publicans and Pharisees

These two human types are encountered both in the life of the Church, as well as of the world. The type of the Pharisee, we find in those persons who claim that they themselves are the authority and the truth. They thank their God, who is none other than their ego, because they are distinguished from the others, and demand their justification, because only they know, and are implementing whatever is correct. The type of the publican, we encounter in those persons who say the truth, and do not consider that their own self is the truth. It is they who entrust themselves to God and seek His compassion, because they know that on their own, they do not suffice. These are, in the end, they who for their own selves say a beautiful prayer of an ascetic of Egypt, of Abba Macarios: "Lord, as you know and as you wish, have mercy on me".

As we enter into the Triodion, let us study in which human type we resemble. Christ's comment shows us what God wants from us. So let us pray, aside from the fact that we have need, that God give us love and condescension before the others, that we turn within us and understand that, even if we are progressing spiritually and secularly, before God and whoever loves us, in other words, the Saints, we are sinners. Thus prayer will become a path to the resurrection of our heart.

Fr. T. M.