

The house of God

Only in Church, in the house of God, which is our father, are we able to satisfy our hunger for freedom and meaning of life. God loves us and offers us life, gifts, recognition, and joy. He does not get angry with us for our ungratefulness. He waits. And when, in the return of each prodigal son, an older one in age, appears, he who feels the relationship with the Father as a relationship of necessity, of obligation, of recompense, and protests because the Father does not enlist the justice of punishment, but the love of forgiveness and of restoration, the Father shows that only love in relationship with Him, truly liberates.

So let's look at what is hunger in our life, even if, as regards our heart, we are like the younger son, even if we belong to the category of the older son.

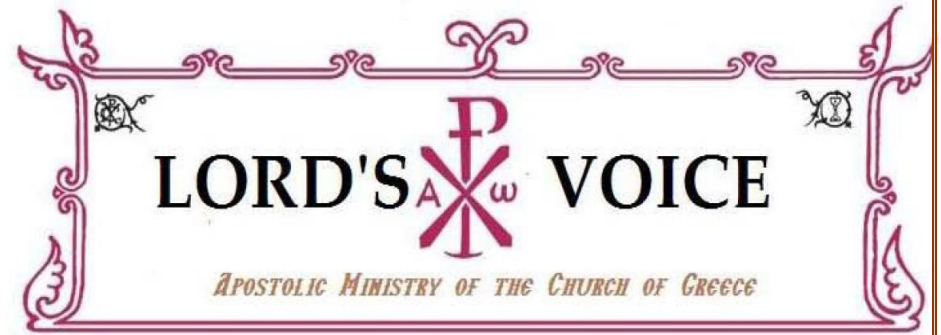
Fr. T. M.

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

TONE OF THE WEEK : Second Tone
EOTHINON : Second Eothinon Gospel
EPISTLE READING: St. Paul's First Letter to Corinthians 6:12-20
GOSPEL READING: Luke 15:11-32

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2020, JUDGMENT SUNDAY (MEATFARE SUNDAY), Polycarp the Holy Martyr & Bishop of Smyrna, Proterios, Archbishop of Alexandria, Gorgonia the Righteous, sister of Gregory the Theologian

EPISTLE READING: St. Paul's First Letter to Corinthians 8:8-13;9:1-2
GOSPEL READING: Matthew 25:31-46



68TH YEAR FEBRUARY 16 2020 PAMPHLET #07 (3481)

HUNGER FOR FREEDOM

The parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32) is for the Church, one of those most characteristic narrations of the Gospels, that witness what God is, what man is, and in the end, what the Church herself is. One of the keys for us to interpret the parable is hunger.

False-autonomy

Hunger for freedom, for life without commitments, for life without censuring, the younger son of the parable is living. This hunger is what makes him seek, probably also in an audacious manner, from his father, "the due portion of the estate". This hunger is what makes him depart "to a faraway country". In order to satiate this hunger, he scatters his substance "living prodigally". And this hunger will make him not leave anything for himself, for the future. He will live them all "here and now".

He ascertains however, that the enjoyments, the ephemeral relationships, showing off, exhausts him, without lasting forever. Then he understands that he is hungry for something else: for the good of the meaning, the "why am I living?" in his paternal home the meaning of life was included in love for the father and in the father's love for him, in the relationship that is fatherhood and sonship. The younger

THE SUNDAY GOSPEL Luke 15:11-32

The Lord said this parable: "There was a man who had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that falls to me.' And he divided his living between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took his journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in loose living. And when he had spent everything, a great famine arose in that country, and he began to be in want. So he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have filled his belly with the pods that the swine ate; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired servants.' And he arose and came to his father. But while he was yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and make merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to make merry. Now his elder son was in the field; and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants and asked what this meant. And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him safe and sound.' But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, but he answered his father, 'Lo, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command; yet you never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your living with harlots, you killed for him the fatted calf!' And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with

me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to make merry and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.'

son wants to live freely, without a father. The only thing he sees however, in front of him, in the end, is death. He will try to not return, grazing pigs. He will be led to satisfy his hunger with whatever worse existed, from a moral and ethical viewpoint. But not even there will he find food, since no one will give him, not even carob seeds. His hunger for freedom led him to the utter point of enslavement. Subjected to material things, not having even these either. ,

The path of repentance

So, "after he comes to his senses", he understands that he is not able to live without the relationship with his father. Of course, he is not seeking his restoration to the "ancient beauty", but a little of the extra bread that his father's workers are eating. From enslavement to his own self, to the enjoyments of life and to prodigality, he will prefer working at his father's home. From hunger, the humble relationship, in which however, he will not be spending whatever was given to him, but he will be struggling in order to receive it. And he will take the path of repentance, the path of return.

His father however, will surpass, with his attitude, every expectation. Without even speaking, merely hugging and kissing his son, he offers them all again. He restores him, giving him the best clothing, he gives him freedom with the ring. He offers him nobility with the shoes. And he satiated his hunger, not with whatsoever food, but with the fatted calf, with the most choice and official food that he could offer him.