

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.

## 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 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**

**TONE OF THE WEEK :** *Third Tone*

**EOTHINON :** *Third Eothinon Gospel*

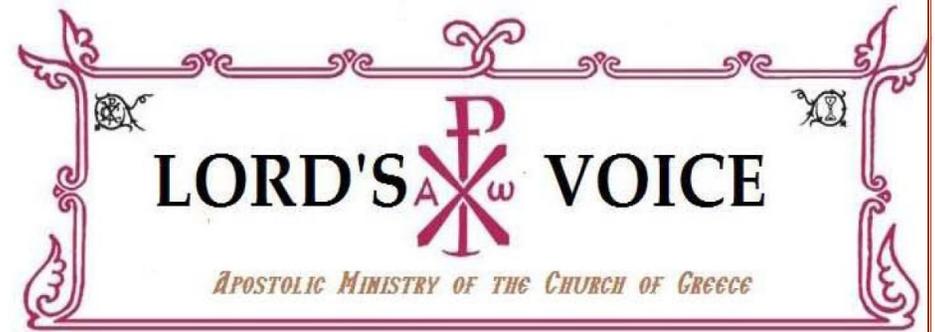
**EPISTLE READING:** *St. Paul's First Letter to Corinthians [8:8-13](#);*

**Gospel Reading:** *Matthew 25:31-46*

**SUNDAY, MARCH 01 2020, FORGIVENESS SUNDAY, The Holy Righteous Martyr Eudocia the Samaritan , Andonina the New Martyr, David the Archbishop**

**EPISTLE READING:** *St. Paul's Letter to the Romans 13:11-14; 14:1-4*

**GOSPEL READING:** *Matthew 6:14-21*



68<sup>TH</sup> YEAR      FEBRUARY 23 2020      PAMPHLET #08 (3482)

## THE EXPECTATION OF ETERNITY

The experience of the Church eschatological. From the moment when Christ ascended to the Heavens, the Church does not cease awaiting His return to the world. This eschatological expectation appears in various ways in the believers of each age.

### Christ "a sign disputed against"

Some await Christ as Him who will reward them for the toils they underwent in this world, who will justify them for the witness they presented before people, for the faith, who will grant them to live eternally with joy and happiness. Others await Christ as the punisher of man's sins, as Him who will restore divine justice in the world and who will make every meaning of injustice and wickedness be written off from the horizon. Others, finally, await Christ as the beloved one, Him who will wipe out from the world, the condition of people's separation from Him and will set up the universe in a constant communion with God and men, without the obstacle of sins standing between the Creator and the creation.

There are, however, also those who do not await Him, either because they don't believe in Him, or because they don't want Him to come again, because they foresee that their life has no relationship with His commandments. There are also those who fought Him, and who are fighting Him, and where His coming will comprise their crushing. All these categories of people choose either indifference or fear or disbelief toward Him. They would prefer if He did not exist or if He would not come again.

### The response to death

This eschatological expectation, which is imprinted in the Symbol of Faith with the phrase "I await the resurrection of the dead and the life of the future age", comprises a challenge for everyone, whether they believe or not. And this because it gives the definitive

## GOSPEL (MATTHEW 25:31-46)

The Lord said, "When the Son of man comes in his glory and all the holy angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.' Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?' Then he will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me.' And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

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answer to the existential enigma of death. Without the resurrection of the dead, which our Church considers inseparable with the Second Coming, man will be constantly defeated by time and death. Consequently, if we believe in Christ, then we cannot but expect His Second Coming. If we don't believe in Christ, death is our end and, consequently, no matter what we do, in essence, it will be in vain, since it will not have the perspective of eternity. It will probably be enough to make us pass the "now" well, but it will not have "forever and unto ages of ages".

### The criterion of love

The overturning that Christ preached, lies in the fact that people will be judged with the unique compass of love. How much we saw His person in our brother. Everything that appears as duties of the faithful person, Christ, with revolutionary speech, casts it aside. If we do not love, no matter how proper we were in our life in relation to all that is appointed in the Church, our journey is "unto eternal damnation".

And here it is worth us pondering. All that the Church asks us to keep, in action, comprise ways for us to learn to love, and to fight with everything that separates us from the love of Christ. The mysteries, charity, asceticism, fasting, repentance, attending church, fighting against thoughts, are methods that lead to the training of love. These are ways with which we learn to abandon our egocentrism and to allow our eyes to open, in order to meet the other person. If they become the aim, in and of themselves, we will suffer whatever those will suffer who, being on the left, protest that they did not come to know Christ. Probably they kept the external things. However, their heart was not led to the journey of love, because the external things became the aim of their life, in and of themselves, and a way of Pharisaical justification. Love for Christ is not a theory. It is a struggle of life! And let us not forget that we live only once!

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 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