

The Cross brings joy-sadness to our life. We are living through the Cross, the path of resurrection and of love for God. If and here is the responsibility of all of us, clergy and laity! To give this witness with faith, works, our life within the Church. For the Cross to become for us also, from a spring up pain, of trial, of death, life and resurrection”.

Fr. T. M.

**SUNDAY, MARCH 22, 2020, SUNDAY OF THE HOLY**

**CROSS**, Basil the Holy Martyr of Ancyra, Kalliniki & Vassilisa the Martyrs, Euthemios the New Martyr

**TONE OF THE WEEK :** Grave Tone

**EOTHINON :** Seventh Eothinon Gospel

**EPISTLE READING :** St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:1-6

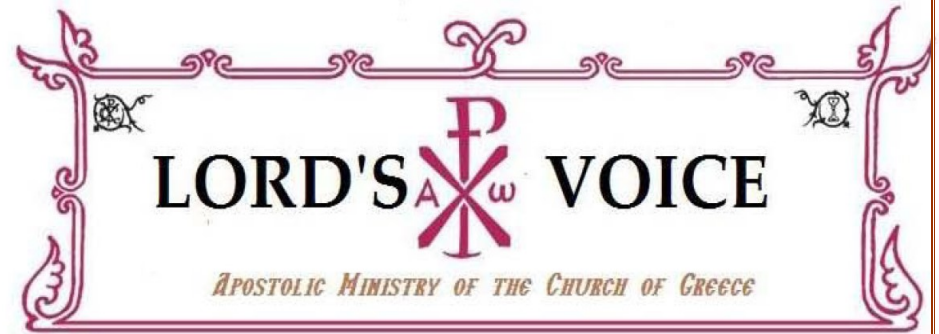
**GOSPEL READING:** Mark 8:34-38; 9:1

**SUNDAY, MARCH 29, 2020 SUNDAY OF ST. JOHN**

**CLIMAGUS**, Mark, Bishop of Arethusa, Martyr Cyril the Deacon and Those with him, The Holy Martyrs Jonas and Barachisus, Eustathios the Confessor, Bishop of Bithynia

**EPISTLE READING :** St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 6:13 - 20

**GOSPEL READING:** Mark 9:17-31



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## THE JOY SADNESS OF THE CROSS

If we ask our people, but also our own self, how we understand the relationship with Christ, we will ascertain that we limit it to the level of “give and take”. We believe in a God for Him to be giving us and we to be receiving. And so we consider that the Cross was the path of God. It is not our own. We have the idea that faith loads the responsibilities both for this world and for eternity onto the crucified God. We don't have to do anything else, other than to believe in Him. To await Him to provide for us. For Him to secure for us the goods of self-sufficiency and the remission of our sins and eternity. However, the Cross of the Lord shows us the true dimensions both of our relationship with Christ, as also what we are in the Church. For me to relate with Christ, it does not suffice for Him to want to have a relationship with me. I need to be seeking Him also. And the relationship is personal and free for each one of us!

### Let's say “Yes”

“Whosoever wishes to follow after me” (Mark 8:34). A word of joy, but also a word of sadness. Where do I belong? Do I want to belong to Christ? If yes, how do I show it in my life? If

## THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK 8:34-38; 9:1

The Lord said: "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? For what can a man give in return for his life? For whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power."

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not, the cross remains inside the church, but not inside my soul. I see it, I venerate it, I honor it, but it does not transfigure me. And probably this is the more difficult step. For me to not be able to be transfigured in love, to not be able to follow Him who is calling me from His Golgotha. But the sadness is not limited there. Even if I say the "yes", I'm not always ready to follow the next steps which Christ is asking of me.

### The denial of our own self

"Let him deny himself". A second word of joy and of sadness. For you to deny yourself, means to not place your "ego" in the position of the center of the entire world, but to be placing God's will, the path of love, of giving up the rights for the sake of the others, the path of ascesis, a virtue, of offering, so

that both in a group-social level, as well as in your relationship with God, to be able to say "I am no longer living, Christ is living in my being" (Gal. 2:20). The relationship with Christ which leads to the denial of our own self, gives the joy of the presence of the Holy Spirit. The person who is contesting in God, struggles to repel his passionate thoughts, to uproot his passions, to not allow the "fleshly train of thought" to overcome him; he lives the joy and the blessing of implementing the will of God, he obeys Him. He is saved, and simultaneously, he saves.

However, such a path hides sadness. We are living in a world which tends to kill God daily. Either altering it into our religion, in other words, into a simple tradition, into customs, into a train of thought "for the good of the year", or seeing it as a higher power, which gives us whatever we ask, because He is able to do it, or awaits us in the next life in order to receive us magically, since we did not do anything bad, we did not bother anyone. Or considering our relationship with Him as a remnant of a childhood innocence, which returns us emotionally to our past, probably also moves us, but does not change our being and way of life. So, keeping of the third saying, demands a struggle.

### Life is a cross

"Let him take up his cross and follow me". There is joy and that we are not alone in carrying our cross and following Christ to Golgotha. It is the joy that the cross is not the end, but the passage from death to life. And death is not only martyrdom or the biological end, as many people think. Death, no matter how much it brings sadness, is a deadening of the passions, is those smaller or greater "No's", which we are called to retort, to the desires of deception. The Cross is for us to be able to forgive all those who do not understand us, who are not as we would want, who make us hurt, who scorn us, because we believe.