

We are living in an age of anxiety. Agony. Fear. We oriented our life to food, to goods, to appearances. We ignored the priorities of the soul, as the spiritual coordinates of our faith indicate. We substituted God's providence of God with material goods, resulting in the powers of this world, having defeated us. And our anxiety lies in survival and our self sufficiency, not in communion with God and neighbor. The change is able to come into each one's heart, even if the world remains in the deifying of its own powers. And whoever changes within him, allowing the providence of God and His love, to open paths, will not be lacking in anything. In this world, faith asks us to be living!

Fr. T. M

SUNDAY, JUNE 28 2020, 3RD SUNDAY OF MATTHEW *Finding of the Relics of Cyrus and John the Unmercenarys, Pappias the Martyr, Righteous Fathers Sergius and Herman, Founders of Valaam Monastery, Synaxis of the Icon of our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos, Paul the Physician of Corinth, Sergios the Magiste.*

-tone of the week : *Second Tone*

EOthinon : *Third Eothinon*

EPistle Reading : *St. Paul's Letter to the Romans 5:1-10*

GOSPEL READING : *Matthew 6:22-33*

SUNDAY, JULY 5 2020, 4TH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW

Athanasius of Mount Athos, Righteous Father Lampadus the Wonderworker, Kyprianos the New Martyr of Koutloumousiou Monastery, Uncovering of the Holy Relics of Our Righteous Father Sergius of Radonezh, Holy New Martyrs Elizabeth the Grand Duchess and the Novice Barbara.

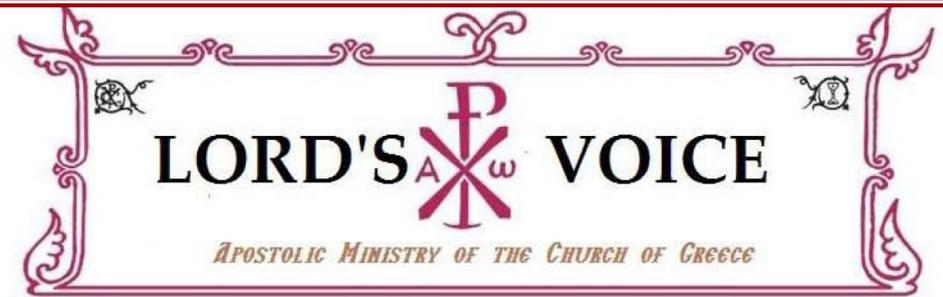
EPistle Reading : *St. Paul's Letter to Galatians 5:22-26; 6:1-2*

GOSPEL READING : *Matthew 8: 5-13*

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68TH YEAR JUNE 28 2020 PAMPHLET #26 (3500)

THE NEEDS OF LIFE AND FAITH

Christ, in His Sermon on the Mount, poses the spiritual coordinates in the person's life who believes, in how he is called to live in the world of cares, anxiety, agony, and fear. "Do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat and what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Isn't the soul more important than the food? And isn't the body more important than the clothing?" (Mt. 6:25). These words, which probably in our day, are more timely than ever, show that survival and happiness in life, can come only through trust in God, in His will and love. These coordinates may seem inconceivable for the rationalistic person, for him who trusts in his own way of viewing the world, his powers, he who deifies his will, but it is the only truth.

The soul and food

The soul is more important than the food." Christ transposes the priority of being, from food and whatever this covers – survival, enjoyment, self-sufficiency -, to the soul, to the spiritual point of existence. The soul is God's gift. The priority of the soul makes a person not be anxious for material food, because he knows that this exists for the extension of life and the putting off of death, without this meaning that he will not work, he will not fight to have it, he will not help whoever is not able to secure it.

THE SUNDAY GOSPEL *MATTHEW 6:22-33*

The Lord said, "The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light; but if your eye is not sound, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O men of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows you need them all. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well."

The person who is not attached to food and material goods, chooses the path of love. And he trusts God, who loves the birds of the sky and maintains them, knowing that He will not abandon him either. He who considers that the soul is more important than food and trusts God, lives the providence of God behind every circumstance, but also every event of his life; there where he himself has not made wrong choices, or has not been voluntarily defeated by his passions. And even when he commits mistakes, again he comes to himself and allows God to trace new prospects.

The body and clothing

"The body is more important than the clothing". Clothing secures man's protection from the weather conditions, but also man's acceptance on a social level. The clothed person is able to form relationships, because the others do not turn away from him, nor do they scorn him, nor do they fear him. Man, of course, changes the clothing into adornments of his being, resulting in deifying his appearance. Characterizing the others analogous to what they're wearing, and so he has anxiety about his clothing. The clothing becomes a showing off of our external world and the aim of our work. However, here also, Christ seeks from us to trust God. None of us is able to essentially change his appearance, to add height to his stature. Our appearance, our body, exist to be given to God, to reveal the priorities of our heart and to not become a cause of pride and offensiveness.

He who considers that the body is more important than the clothing, lives the providence of God, just like the lilies of the field. He glorifies God for the life that He gave him and he sees the value of beauty not in showing off clothing, or in some form of appearance, but in the capability of love and of communion, as these are expressed physically also. With the smile. With tenderness. With looking at the other person. With the offering of charity through his hands. With embracing everyone, even enemies.

The Kingdom and righteousness

So, Christ's final saying obtains another dimension. "For this reason, first of all be seeking the Kingdom of God and the prevailing of His will and all these things will follow" (Mt. 6:33). The Kingdom of God is love and freedom. And righteousness, His will, is related to sharing every good, with the victory of love and not of appearances, with surpassing death and not simply with its putting off. And death is defeated through faith and communion with the God of love and with communion with everyone.