

The silence of the humble person

So, it is worth it, finally, for us to stand in the presence of the poor Lazarus. One is his characteristic: his silence. He does not complain. He does not protest. Not even at the dogs. But neither also in eternity do we hear his voice. Silent and humble, he is consoled and rejoices in the bosom of Abraham, without rejoicing for the suffering of the rich man and his loneliness. That he forbears silently... And this seemingly unimportant gift for society, which, very likely, today would be his great weakness which would make him socially cast out and cast aside, leads him to paradise.

The parable of the rich man and of Lazarus is not simply a cause for us to philosophize our life, or to think that God wants us charitable, or that there exists a reality after death. It is an invitation on the side of the Church for us to again see where we are, both towards God, as also before people. Are we at the gate in order for us to enter into the home of the wealth of the passions, of self-sufficiency, of pleasure-loving, or are we at the big door of the world, struggling to keep humility, silence and patience, and to turn our gaze to the other age, that "of Paradise" (D. Solomos), which sets out from the present, and seeks from us to entrust ourself to God's will, who gives us a name for eternity and endurance in the hardships of the present world?

Fr. T. M

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1 2020, 5TH SUNDAY OF LUKE, *Cosmas and Damian the Holy Unmercenaries of Asia, and their mother Theodota, David the Righteous of Evia*

TONE OF THE WEEK : *Fourth Tone*

EOTHINON : *Tenth Eothinon*

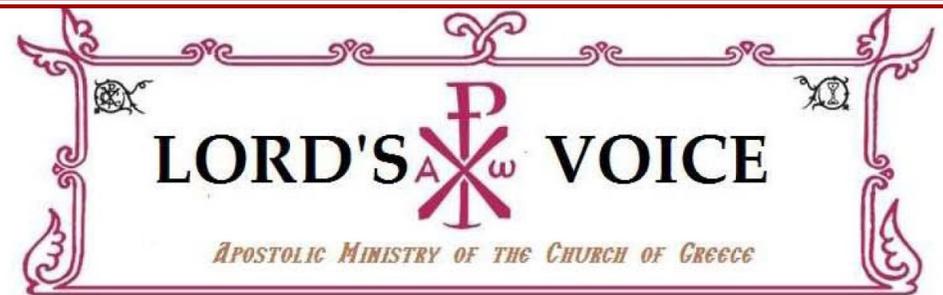
EPISTLE READING : *St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 12: 27-31;*

GOSPEL READING : *Luke 16:19-31*

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 01, 2020, 7TH SUNDAY OF LUKE, *Synaxis of the Archangel Michael & the other Bodiless Powers: Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel, Salaphiel, Jegudiel, & Barachiel*

EPISTLE READING : *St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 2:2-10*

GOSPEL READING : *Luke 8 : 41-56*



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THE GATE OF PARADISE

One of the great sins which accompany wealth is also seeing other people, especially the poorer ones, as anonymous. The rich people have a name. People are speaking about them. They are able to spend and to offend. They are jealous of them because they are enjoying their life. And the rich people seem like they don't intend to die ever.

The anonymous rich man

In one of the most moving, in teachings, parables, Christ reverses things. The rich man does not have a name. The poor man is called Lazarus. The rich man is enjoying his life, without paying attention to the poor man, who is fed by the trash of the rich man, and his company are the little dogs who are licking his wounds. In eternal life, however, the lonely Lazarus is transported by the angels, and goes to the bosom of Abraham, where "he is comforted", consoled and rejoices, whereas the rich, man who is enjoying the company of people both in his life, and in his burial, completely alone, without someone accompanying him, is tortured in Hades, in hell. There he himself realizes that he does not have a name, even though, while he was living, everyone knew him. In reality, however, the person becomes a face with a name and identity who has communion with God and his.

THE SUNDAY GOSPEL (*LUKE 16:19-31*)

The Lord said, "There was a rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, full of sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table; moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried; and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes, and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus in his bosom. And he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy upon me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.' And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.' But Abraham said, 'They have Moses, and the prophets; let them hear them.' And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if some one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' He said to them, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced if some one should rise from the dead.'"

fellow man, even if this does not show in the time of our life

The rich man, however, remains unrepentant. He initially is seeking a little refreshment. He wants Lazarus to be his servant, even in eternity. And when he realizes that each one is responsible for his life, he seeks a miracle for his five anonymous siblings: let the servant Lazarus resurrect, to forewarn him that the strength and the enjoyment of wealth stop at death. However, Abraham shows him that God does not save with miracles, but with free obedience to his

word, as he documents in Moses and the prophets of the Old Testament, as also in the Gospels of the New Testament.

Freedom accompanies us in eternity

Through the parable, Christ gives us the opportunity to ponder about our own life. It shows us that man does not change after his exit from the present time and world. If his heart is closed to love, both to God as well as to his fellow man, he will remain alone in eternity. God will absolutely respect man's free choice to be alone. Just as he did not love in life, he will not want to love after death either, and he will continue seeing the others indifferently, or as his servants. The torture in hell, will be a person living the fire of God's love, not as life, illumination, joy and warmth, which sanctifies his being, but as a hardship which will remind him that man is not almighty, that he is not able to enjoy his passions, that the neighbor is his enemy.

The rich man's attitude in the present life interprets his loneliness in the eternal one. The rich man did not feel that he was a handler of the goods that God allowed him to have, but their possessor. This happens with every good that the Lord gives us, whether material, whether in the form of a gift. Whichever of us insist on keeping his gifts, only for his own self, on being indifferent towards the others, to be closing the door of his heart to them, and to be placing the meaning of his life in clothing, in his appearance, and in the enjoyment of the table, making his being flesh, in essence, dissolves every opportunity, not only for the good actions or offering to others, but in order to realize his joy being shared. And whoever distributes, takes the definitive step to meet God, who is the Gift-giver of everything. Whoever remains "in his own things", in essence is alone in the present life. And his loneliness will continue eternally, because he will not have allowed his being to open up.