

with man's deeper need to share and love, but with the advantages of those in power at every time. It sees faith as useful only for life after death or to face man's material needs. It refuses to recognize the fact that faith is spiritually feeding man and that the values and ways of life that it suggests and is living, are building a society, based on love and freedom, in other words, on man's existential change with the aim of being able to be delivered from the bonds of egocentrism and of death. It replaces faith with a false humanism, that crumbles before the advantages of those in power.

Our Church calls us to open our heart to the spirit that liberates. To limit the hypocrisy that makes us not recognize the gifts of God, with us proclaiming ourselves as evaluators of everything. Only thus will we be able to have a new starting out in our life and in our society.

Fr.T. M

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 06 2020, 10TH SUNDAY OF LUKE

Nicholas the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Myra , Nicholas the New Martyr of Asia Minor

TONE OF THE WEEK : First Tone

EOTHINON : Fourth Eothinon

EPISTLE READING : St. Paul's Letter to **Hebrews 13:17-21**

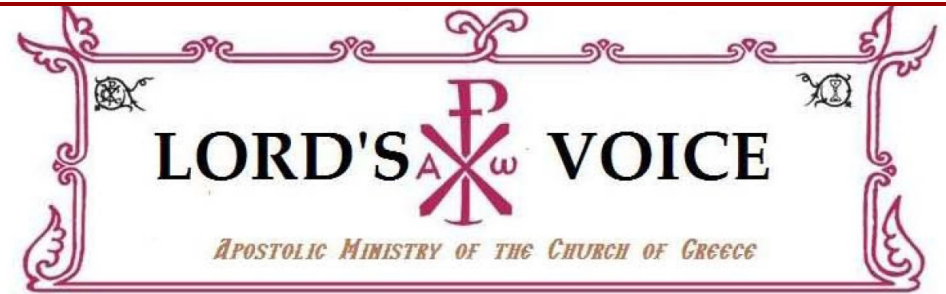
GOSPEL READING : **Luke 13 : 10 - 17**

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2020 11TH SUNDAY OF

LUKE *Herman the Wonderworker of Alaska & First Saint of America, The Holy Martyrs Eustratius, Auxentius, Eugene, Mardarius, and Orestes of Greater Armenia, Lucia the Virgin-martyr, Gabriel the Hieromartyr, Archbishop of Serbia.*

EPISTLE READING : St. Paul's Letter to **Hebrews 11 :9-10, 32-40**

GOSPEL READING : **Luke 1:1-25**



68TH YEAR DECEMBER 06 2020 PAMPHLET # 49 (3523)

THE RULER OF THE SYNAGOGUE AND HYPOCRISY

Christ speaks against the hypocrisy of the ruler of the synagogue after the cure of the hunchbacked woman on the Sabbath day. The ruler of the synagogue did not rejoice with the miracle. His heart did not have love, but he remained attached to keeping the law and its commandments to the letter. And instead of glorifying God for the blessing that He gave to an afflicted being, he measured Christ's movement with the measure of hypocrisy. The cure ought to have happened on another day and not on the Sabbath. The cure for him was work, not a spontaneous gift of God, not a recreation of the woman's being and her capability to start out her life from the beginning. His spiritual eyes were closed. He could not see a woman hunchbacked from the burden of the illness, but also a soul distressed for 18 years, he could not rejoice for the big change. His weakness to love his fellow man causes disappointment. And he gives cause for us to ponder related to the hypocrisy of someone seeing and making the letter of the law absolute and refusing to see the spirit that liberates.

The letter and the spirit

The Law for the people who believe in God are His commandments, the Gospel. The commandments are followed with the precision that is described in the canons of the Church. And the precision imprints

THE SUNDAY GOSPEL (*Luke 13 : 17 - 21*)

At that time, Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. And there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years; she was bent over and could not fully straighten herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your infirmity." And he laid his hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight, and she praised God. But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the sabbath, said to the people, "There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be healed, and not on the sabbath day." Then the Lord answered him, "You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to water it? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?" As he said this, all his adversaries were put to shame; and all the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by him.

the letter of the law. However, in reality, without the letter being scorned, there is also the path of economy. Of seeing the commandments under the spirit of God, which is love, forgiveness, the acceptance of repentance. Thus, we Christians often suffer from the illness of the ruler of the synagogue, hypocrisy. Because we are keeping, as regards our behavior, the commandments of God, we're not seeing our heart. We're not seeing our thoughts, sometimes our hidden ones. That we want to appear proper to people, however, in our private life, we are not keeping the commandments, in reality. At other times we happen to remain on the details of precisely keeping the laws, on fasting, on prayer, on charity, on good behavior, however, our heart does not have love. It is easy in condemning and rejecting the other person. We compare our behavior with the other's attitude and justify ourselves, resulting in us lacking humility in our

life and us being unable to rejoice with whatever good is happening to the sinner.

Just like the ruler of the synagogue, sometimes we have the feeling that we possess the truth and are reaching the point of claiming for our own selves the role of God's lawyer, the role of the crusader champion of the "rights" of God before all the others. We put burdens difficult to bear on the shoulders of people, in order to justify our own selves. And when God indicates to us in various ways that our course is not correct, we are ready to reject even God himself. We claim the role of the "Great Examiner" (Dostoyevsky) who wants to correct God and the Church, and we think that we possess the truth with our pharisaism.

We share joy and sadness

For this reason, we also forget that the joy of our brother, as also his sadness, is our own joy and sadness. That for this reason, we were called to the life of God and of the Church. So that we can come out of our own self, to pray and support those tried, to console them with our love, but also to partake in the joy and blessing that they received in their life, with the generous heart and not with misery and asterisks. If we consider our own selves alright before God, then we easily close our heart and forget that whatever we do in our life, happens with God's help! So for this reason, in order for the spirit of hypocrisy to be defeated, our heart has to become open to love and easy in aiding others in their cross, but also in rejoicing together with their resurrection.

A new starting out

Our culture both before God, and before our fellow man, is today a culture of hypocrisy. It presents laws, that do not have to do