

receive. Loneliness makes man angry and at the same time melancholy and disappointed. It devours his heart and makes him an enemy to others. Thus, it throws him into the Keada of selfishness, of wickedness, of essential lack of communion.

### **Love and truth**

Christ left from Bethlehem in order to avoid his own Herod. Before people with harshness and wickedness, flight is one solution. If, however, we are not able to avoid them, patience and humility is another way. And, of course, the capability of not rewarding their behavior and attitude of life. The word and censure. The truth. Love that knows how to heal wounds by putting wine on, so that they be cauterized, but also at the same moment, oil for the pain to be sweetened. We are able to build a different culture in our daily life. Leaving aside the devil and wickedness, and opening up our heart. And the born Lord will aid so that our time becomes life and not the awaiting and expectation of death.

Fr.T. M

### **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27 2020, SUNDAY AFTER NATIVITY .**

*Stephen, Archdeacon & First Martyr , Theodore the Confessor, brother of Saint Theophanes the Poet , Theodore, Patriarch of Constantinople*

**-tone of the week** :\_ Fourth Tone

**EOTHINON** : Seventh Eothinon

**EPISTLE READING** : Acts of the Apostles 6:8-15; 7:1-5, 47-60

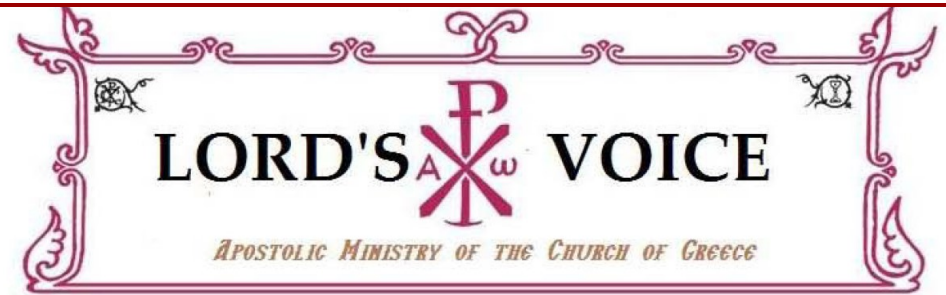
**GOSPEL READING** : Matthew 2:13-23

### **SUNDAY, JANUARY 03, 2021 SUNDAY BEFORE EPIPHANY ,**

*Malachi the Prophet , Gordios the Martyr of Caesarea , Forefeast of the Theophany of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ , Righteous Genevieve of Paris, Righteous Peter of Atroas, Righteous Akakios the Wonderworker, Righteous Thomais of Lesbos*

**EPISTLE READING** : St. Paul's Second Letter to Timothy 4:5-8

**GOSPEL READING** Mark 1:1-8



**68<sup>TH</sup> YEAR DECEMBER 27 2020 PAMPHLET # 52 (3526)**

## **HEROD IN OUR AGE**

In our life we encounter harsh and unjust people. We question many times about the motives of their behavior, not only toward us, but also toward other people. How are they able to do evil? How is it possible for them to feel calm with their own selves and their conscience, when they do not show humaneness, love, support to the rest, but they are ready to harm, to distress, to act with their advantage as the compass, being indifferent about the tears, the pain, and the anger that they cause.

### **Handing oneself over to evil**

Our Church, in celebrating the Birth of Christ, reminds us of one such person, handed over to evil. Referring to Herod, the King of the Jews. She describes to us how he behaved both toward the magi, as also toward the infants of Bethlehem, in his effort to face the danger to his authority, which he believed that Christ represented. "Herod became very angry" (Mt. 2:16). Herod became very angry when he ascertained that his trick to trap the magi and for them to inform him where Christ is, did not succeed. And then, in order to safeguard his throne, he ordered that one of the most abhorrent crimes in human history be done: that of the slaughter of the infants of Bethlehem.

## THE SUNDAY GOSPEL (*Mathew 2:13-23*)

When the wise men departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there till I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." And he rose and took the child and his mother by night, and departed to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt have I called my son."

Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, was in a furious rage, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time which he had ascertained from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they were no more." But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." And he rose and took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaos reigned over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. And he went and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

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His aim, of course, was not achieved. However, aside from killing the innocent infants, he led Christ to the first big persecution: that of being a refugee. He showed thus, that the Lord would not expect acceptance from the powerful of the earth, but rejection. The same with all who follow Him. Herod may have failed, nevertheless, he showed what it means for a person to be dead to God, to be living the spiritual death of the mania for authority, of wickedness, of the absence of prudence. And, as the tradition mentions,

Herod found a dreadful death through a painful illness. The harshness of spiritual death was validated by the physical harshness. His authority lasted for a little. However, it gives us the capability of thinking of the repercussions which his way leaves to time, especially to today, for us to ponder. Because in the end, Herod is not one, but many.

## The contemporary temptations

Today there is the Herod of materialism, and in general, of the way of life of our society. Contemporary culture exiles Christ from the hearts of people, replacing Him with material goods, the right for satisfying every sinful desire, the triumph of the passions and their exoneration, the deification of violence and falsehood and attachment to authority, whether financial, political and televised. And people do not understand that our time is devoured in this way, resulting in the margins for love, humility, and freedom being lessened. Human relationships have the "ego" as the compass and death reigns in our hearts. Thus, hope in the resurrection and eternity is absent.

Today there is the Herod of temptation, of the devil, of the ruler of the world of this age. Our passionate thoughts govern us. We do not want to reject them, but we think that what is right is found in us fulfilling them. Thus, anger prevails when our will is not done. The rejection of the others. The sense that they exist for us to use them and not for them to offer us and for us to offer them love. Human relationships, through the passionate thoughts, become fields of embattlement, prevailing, and authority. The name of God does not move. And the temptation has succeeded in convincing us that he does not exist, whereas he lurks in our pursuits and ambitions, in desires that are not related with love.

Today there is the Herod of loneliness. Man, having his own self as a compass and center of his life, believes that he is alone in the world, since he has built walls around himself, that do not allow him to have a true love, communion with others. He wants the others to be faultless toward him. To hasten to his desires. To understand him. To recognize that he is right. That they be present in his life, without himself needing to be present in their life. And so Christ is also absent from his life, because Christ seeks hearts that open up, and offer themselves, which give, even if they do not