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SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 13 2022 SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN AND PHARISEE: *Triodion Begins Today , Martinian of Palestine , Apostles Aquila and Priscilla , Eulogios, Patriarch of Alexandria, Symeon the Myrrhbearer of Serbia*

TONE OF THE WEEK : *First Tone*

EOTHINON : *First Eothinon*

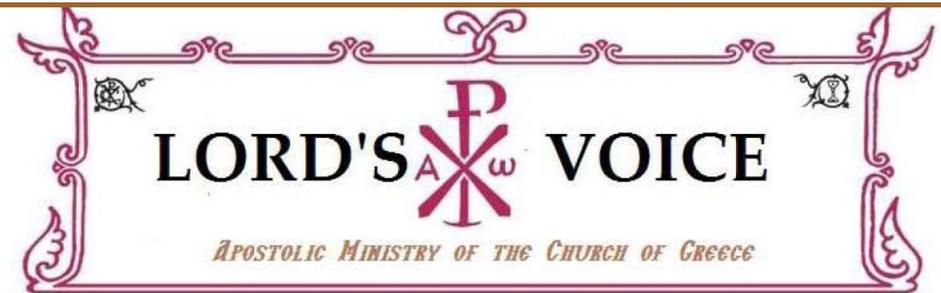
EPISTLE READING : *St. Paul's Second letter to Timothy 3:10-15*

GOSPEL READING : *Luke 18:10-14.*

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 20 2022 SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON
Leo, Bishop of Catania ,Agathus, Pope of Rome , Bessarion the Great , Sadok the Bishop and the 128 other Martyrs of Persia , Plotinus

EPISTLE READING : *St. Paul's First letter to Corinthians 6:12-20*

GOSPEL READING : *Luke 15:11-32.*



70TH YEAR FEBRUARY 13 2022 PAMPHLET # 07 (3585)

A BEGINNING WITH GOOD DISPOSITIONS

"Two men went up into the temple to pray". A critical period, precious in spiritual value, an ascending journey with longing to encounter Christ, opens up today, liturgically and worshipfully before us. The period of the sacred and compunctionate Triodion, the first fruits of which are sealed indelibly by the reading of the Gospel passage during the Divine Liturgy of the first Sunday. This is none other than the parabolic narration of the "Publican and the Pharisee" by our Lord Jesus Christ. Very symbolically it waves the flag for our entrance into Holy and Great Lent, and for our journey towards Pascha and the Resurrection of our Lord. The beginning phrase of today's parable, that, in other words, two people, the one a Pharisee and the other a Publican, ascended to the temple to pray, in a laconic and concise manner declares genuine truths about man, and his seeking of God within him. Let us be taught, however, a little from the first sentence of today's sacred reading. "Two people". Everyone before God is precisely the same, created for salvation, "called to be gods", according to the saying of Athanasios the Great. Personal achievements are only our sins, whereas all the virtues and our good gifts are gifts of God

GOSPEL READING : LUKE 18:10-14

The Lord said this parable, "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I get.' But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.

The Father's awaiting

"Went up". The journey to encounter God, the visit to the Father's house, is always ascending, because it makes the person, who does not have his heart hardened, sense his smallness and unworthiness, always longing for the warmth of the open paternal embrace. Even if this meeting is related horizontally to what Christ is calling us to in the Gospel reference concerning the future judgment, in other words, to the working of love for the brother, then again, the road is upward. "It needs a lot of work" with silence and patience, it needs the abolition of the "ego," with the cutting of our personal will, it needs the putting forth of joy, of necessity, of the desire for the brother.

Use and abuse of freedom

Henceforth, we have in the most sacred area upon the earth,

the revelation of two human characters, but also the unfolding of how each one of the two perceives the freedom of his relationship with God. Two people, two journeys, two choices, with the Bridegroom Christ desiring with fervent eros to lead them into the joy of His kingdom.

The first one, the Pharisee, with the haughtiness of his position, enumerates his good works, choosing unfortunately to fall down the precipice through his highmindedness. "Thinking that he is standing" he sees only the external covering of his good deeds, a very slippery outer covering, resting on his laurels. Whereas he is led to the lowest point, inside the house of the Creator, blaspheming the entire creation, crying out: I thank You, my God, that I'm not like the rest of people".

The other one, the Publican, put down socially due to his job, without boasting of any good deed of his, - or more precisely - without considering that he has even one, in his track record, crushed, seeks the mercy of God, which He grants to him, as the prophet David chants: "God will not put down a crushed and humbled heart". So, for this reason, at the end of the passage, it is verified that this scorned Publican descended from the temple to his home comforted and justified before God rather than that Pharisee.

So let us all listen to the preaching of the Church, and let us all take as a compass for our journey to Lent and in our lives, the kontakion of today's holy day: "Let us flee the highmindedness of the Pharisee, and let us learn the humility of the Publican, in sighs crying out to the Savior: take pity on us O only easily reconcilable one".

Archim. A. A.