

will find that very many times he blesses the catechumen crosswise – infant or adult- the water, the oil, the clothes, the people. In particular, before the triple raising and dunking, he anoints crosswise, with the blessed oil, the portals of the senses of the newly-illuminated person. The mouth, the nose, the ears, the eyes, the hands are crossed, they are blessed with the sign of the cross, so that the newly-illuminated one's course, thought, and decisions, are always identified with the cross. May the rest of Great Lent, but also our whole life, also be blessed!

Archim. A. A.

SUNDAY, MARCH 27 2022 SUNDAY OF HOLY CROSS

Martyr Matrona of Thessalonica , Paul, Bishop of Corinth.

TONE OF THE WEEK : *Grave Tone*

EOTHINON : *Seventh Eothinon*

EPISTLE READING : *St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:1-6*

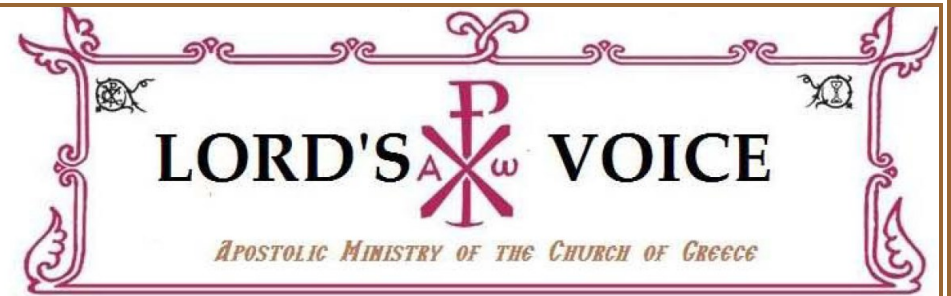
GOSPEL READING : *Mark 8:34-38; 9:1*

SUNDAY, APRIL 3 2022 SUNDAY OF ST. JOHN CLIMACUS

Nicetas, abbot of the Monastery of Medicium, Joseph the hymnographer Theodosia and Irene the martyrs.

EPISTLE READING : *St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 6:13-20*

GOSPEL READING : *Mark 9:17-31*



70TH YEAR MARCH 27 2022 PAMPHLET # 13 (3591)

THE CROSS, THE LIFE-BEARING WOOD

The precious and life-giving Cross of the Lord, the wood of life and immortality, the source of salvation, the presentation of the Resurrection, today, on the Sunday of the Veneration of the Cross, is elevated in the middle of the Church for the faithful to venerate. The angels with the people of God celebrate, the demons and their instruments on earth are mourning and wailing.

We are in the middle of Holy and Great Lent, of the par excellence period of asceticism and temperance, of the wholehearted effort of the Christians to reconnect our lives with Christ. Our Church in her motherly and wisest pedagogical care, elevates the precious Cross in the center of the church and of divine worship, that is, she elevates the banner of peaceful revolution, the most precious wood, the main weapon against the devil, on which the Deliverer of the world spread out His palms, so as to again make salvation possible for all of us. At the same time, with this symbolic action, she repeats the eternal sermon - proposal of life for each of us separately, proposing the lifestyle of the

THE SUNDAY GOSPEL (MARK 8:34-38; 9:1)

The Lord said: "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? For what can a man give in return for his life? For whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power."

Cross, as the only one leading to the joy of communion with the crucified Redeemer and His image in the world, who is man, and furthermore, with the person anywhere on the earth, crucified and scorned and discredited.

Criterion of the friends of Christ

"Whoever wants to follow me, let him deny himself, let him take up his cross and follow me". With these words, the appointed Gospel reading in the Divine Liturgy of today's holy day begins. Its every letter and syllable, its every word and phrase, is also a stone carved by Christ Himself, for the paving of the road that leads us to Paradise.

Let's try a little to touch them, to grasp them, to weigh these stones spiritually. The phrase «whoever wants» characterizes and predetermines both the specific sentence, as well as the text that follows. No imposition, no deprivation of our personal freedom, no abolition of the identity of each of us, is put here. On the contrary, whoever wants to be my close friend and brother, Christ says, let him do it, after he decides two things. He must first renounce the slavish bond with his will, and then putting forth true freedom, to take up the cross which God's providence will allow him to carry.

Then our Christ speaks with the Evangelist Mark's pen, depicting, as an act of salvation, the choice in question, and he assures us that whoever wants to save his soul, to perpetuate his life, that is, needs to lose it, along with the delights of this world. Whoever sacrifices the corrupt things of this life, remaining steadfast in the will of God, which is the lifestyle of the Cross, will save it.

Proposal for the world to live.

The period we are going through, is the Church's proposal for our whole life. The Church with her introductory sacrament, holy Baptism, and in a very practical way, clarifies her call to its members. If one studies carefully and watches, with piety and compunction, what the celebrating priest does during the catechism, the Baptism, but also the Chrismation, he