

strong and effective, but also how necessary weapons, prayer and fasting are in the Christian's spiritual struggle. After all, isn't the entire spiritual life a constant struggle against the devil and his instruments?

At the same time, however, the Lord reveals to us how prayer and fasting are related and closely connected to faith. In the tradition of our Church, prayer and fasting are not ends in themselves, a kind of peculiar championship to which we are called as Christians to embrace. Any effort we make at this arena, has no meaning, if it does not proceed from faith, and refer to God himself, to whom we look. We must have this awareness, if we want to experience the greatest miracle, which is none other than repentance, and our return to the paternal embrace of God. Amen

Archim. A. A.

**SUNDAY AUGUST 21 2022, 10<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF MATTHEW**

*The Holy Apostle Thaddaeus, The Holy Martyr Bassa and Her Sons: Theognis, Agapius, and Pistus, Athanasios Patelaros, Patriarch of Constantinople. Afterfeast of the Dormition of our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary.*

**EPISTLE READING:** *St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 4:9-16*

**GOSPEL READING:** *Matthew 17:14-23*

**TONE OF THE WEEK** : *First Tone*

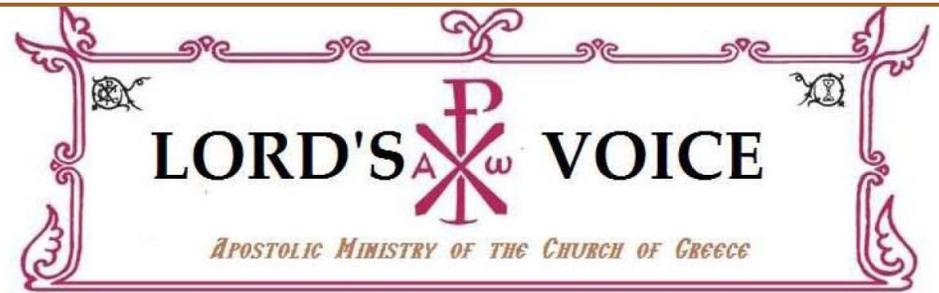
**EOTHINON** : *Tenth Eothinon*

**SUNDAY, AUGUST 28, 2022, 11<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF MATTHEW**

*Moses the Black of Skete, Diomedes & Laurence the Martyrs, 43 Martyrs of Nicomedeia, Job of Pochaev, Synaxis of the Kiev Cave Fathers.*

**EPISTLE READING:** *St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 9:2-12*

**GOSPEL READING:** *Matthew 18:23-35*



70<sup>TH</sup> YEAR AUGUST 21 2022

PAMPHLET # 34

(3612)

## THE GREAT PHYSICIAN

Another miraculous cure among the many that Jesus performed during his earthly presence, today's gospel passage narrates to us. The Lord, yielding to the persistent pleas of a tortured father, frees his son from the terrible demon that was oppressing him, and had made his life a constant hell. However, the unsuccessful attempt of the Disciples of the Lord to heal the demon-possessed fellow had preceded. The reason for this failure, is explained to us by Christ himself, in the continuation of the gospel passage

### The power of faith

The position of today's narrative is in correspondence with the chronological sequence of events, as narrated by the evangelist Matthew. Christ, accompanied by the Apostles, has just come down from the mountain, on which the great event of of the

### **THE SUNDAY GOSPEL READING: MATTHEW 17: 14- 23**

At that time, a man came up to Jesus and kneeling before him said, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and he suffers terribly; for often he falls into the fire, and often into the water. And I brought him to your disciples, and they could not heal him." And Jesus answered, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him here to me." And Jesus rebuked him, and the demon came out of him, and the boy was cured instantly. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" He said to them, "Because of your little faith. For truly I say to you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move hence to yonder place,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you. But this kind never comes out except by prayer and fasting." As they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him, and he will be raised on the third day."

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Transfiguration, that we celebrated a few days ago, when the father of the demoniac turns to Him imploringly, asking Him to free his child. He had submitted the exact same request earlier to the present Disciples of the Lord, who however, did not manage to cure the demon-possessed fellow. And yet, Jesus had already granted them this authority, as we are again informed by Matthew, at the beginning of the tenth chapter. It is therefore reasonable for the Apostles to wonder why they themselves did not seem capable of exercising in action this authority. Jesus' answer was silencing: "Because of

your unbelief".

The power of God is indestructible, but it does not impose its presence; it is irresistible, but it does not coerce with its power. As "the voice of a minute breeze" it appears wherever and whenever man appeals to it with faith, that is, with complete trust and unshakable certainty in God's love and mercy.

The faith of man, from whatever position and with whatever situation he invokes the intervention of God, is a necessary presupposition for the manifestation of divine help. All the miracles and all the healings that the Holy Gospel tells us about, were performed by Christ in cases of people who expressed this faith in various ways, but also with absolute clarity. After all, this was also the reason why Jesus refrained from performing many miracles in His hometown, Nazareth, as He knew in advance that His fellow countrymen were extremely skeptical and suspicious of Him.

### **Prayer and fasting**

However, the Lord refers even more specifically to the presuppositions of the specific cure: "This generation does not come out except in prayer and fasting". How many times have we not heard that prayer and fasting are something obsolete, that they do not have anything to offer the person of the twenty-first century, because they do not suit the modern way of life, because they were invented by other societies in other ages. Sometimes they are even discredited and rejected rashly, even by people who otherwise claim to believe in God, and even profess to be Christians. Behold, though, that the Lord sets the right dimension of things, showing how