

Our spiritual coming of age

The utilization and offering of gifts, makes a decisive contribution to the spiritual maturity of the believer and the acquisition of the unending perfection of which Christ is the measure, as the Apostle says: "in the measure of the age of the pleroma of Christ". Man acquires the sense that his gifts come from the Father of Lights, and so he deposits them at the Holy Altar, where the mystery of Love is celebrated.

Having, therefore, in our hearts, gratitude to the Lord, who grants us various gifts, let us strive to make use of them, to the glory of God, and for the sake of the spiritual edification of our brethren.

Archim. N.K

SUNDAY, JANUARY 08, 2023, SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY ,
George of Hozeva , Domnica the Righteous of Constantinople , Atticus and Cyrus, Holy Patriarchs of Constantinople, Emilianos the Confessor, Bishop of Cyzikos, Gregory of the Kiev Caves , Pega the Virgin, Hermitess of Peakirk

EPISTLE READING: *St. Paul's Letter to Ephesians 4:7-13*

GOSPEL READING: *Matthew 4:12-17*

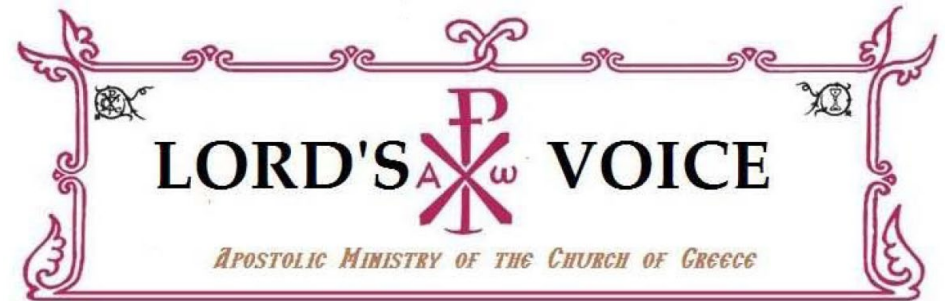
TONE OF THE WEEK : *First plagal Tone*

EOTHINON : *Eighth Eothinon*

SUNDAY, JANUARY 015, 2023, 12TH SUNDAY OF LUKE ,
Paul of Thebes , John the Hut-Dweller , Pansophios the Martyr of Alexandria

EPISTLE READING: *St. Paul's Letter to Colossians 3: 4-11*

GOSPEL READING: *Luke 17: 12-19*



71ST YEAR JANUARY 8 2023 PAMPHLET # 2 (3632)

THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER AFTER THE LIGHTS

Today's Sunday in our liturgical church language is called "Sunday after the Lights [i.e. Epiphany]". This designation is not simply some time determination, but the deposition of the ecclesiastical faith and experience for the transformation and sanctification of time and man.

If the Feast of Lights is about the manifestation of the mystery of the Holy Trinity, in the testimony of the incarnation of the Son of God, and the illumination of all creation, then the believer who is granted to participate in these divine gifts, undergoes the good transformation. He is shown forth as God-bearing and Christ-bearing.

The gifts of the Holy Spirit

That is why the Apostle Paul points out that every believer has been given a special gift, according to the measure that Christ gives. And to establish the distribution of charismata and gifts of the Holy Spirit, he refers, first of all, to

EPISTLE READING: ST. PAUL'S LETTER TO EPHESIANS 4:7-13

BRETHREN, grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it is said, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." (in saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is he who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

the incarnation of the Lord, presenting relevant verses from Psalm 67. After Christ, he says, finished His redemptive work, He ascended again "on high" (with His Ascension) and "captured captivity". That is, as the sacred Chrysostom interprets, He received (with His crucifactory sacrifice and Resurrection) as the captive, "the tyrant", that is, the devil, death, the curse, and sin, and abolished their authority. And then He "gave offerings to the people"; He filled the faithful with the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The aforesaid ascension of the Lord into the heavens, and the granting of gifts, presuppose His descent to earth, i.e. His incarnation. And the incarnation of God the Word reveals that our salvation is founded on the humility and love of God, on the infinite condescension for His creature.

Then the Apostle becomes more specific as to the granting of gifts. He says that to some has given the gift of the apostle, to others, the prophet, to others, the evangelist and to others, the pastor and teacher. And all these, with the aim of edifying the faithful and facilitating the work of the ministry, so that the Body of Christ, i.e. the Church, is built up

Certainly, the greatest gift given to man is the capability for him to participate in life, light, holiness, and the immortality of Christ. This original, "better" gift, is the presupposition for the distribution of the other gifts as well. Therefore, all the members of the Church, analogous to the faith and working of the divine commandments, receive the gift of god-making energy of God, and the abundant giving of divine gifts, since "the performance of the Spirit lies in the will of man", as Saint Maximus the Confessor says.

Utilization of gifts

And precisely because the gifts are given "to the building up of the Body of Christ", it is inconceivable that they should be autonomized and put in a utilitarian context, because then they are altered and distorted. That is why the believer must offer them back to God, with love for God, and thanksgiving and, subsequently, to make the brothers in Christ partakers of these. In this way, the brother-loving, the ministry, and the fitting together of the members of the Church take place. Then the function of the Christian community as a gathering of Christified people, partakers of God's holiness, is realized.