

the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the salvation of the "all those born of Adam", the entire human race.

The holy Myrrhbearing Women and those who buried the Lord, whom we are honoring today, are witnesses of these saving events, which constitute the institution of the Church. This testimony of theirs, perhaps is also the most essential act of philanthropy, because, on the one hand, it reveals the truth about Christ and His Church and, on the other hand, it teaches us in practice, the courage of self-sacrificing love for God and man. So, it is worth it for us to also make every effort to follow in their footsteps, in an era, in fact, where lack of daring and cowardice, individuality and egotism, abound.

Archim. N.K

SUNDAY, APRIL 30, 2023 SUNDAY OF THE MYRRH-BEARING WOMEN, *James the Apostle and brother of St. John the Theologian, Argyra the New Martyr, Clement the Hymnographer, Jason and Sosipater the Apostles of the 70 and their Companions, Holy Martyr Cercyra, Our Holy Father John of Kaloktenos, Metropolitan of Thebes, Basil, Bishop of Montenegro, Nektarios the New Martyr of Optina*

EPISTLE READING : *Acts of the Apostles 6:1-7*

GOSPEL READING : *Mark 15:43-47; 16:1-8*

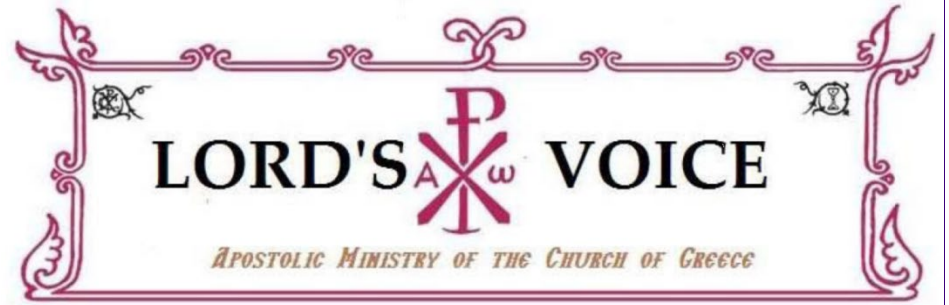
TONE OF THE WEEK : *Mode 2.*

EOTHINON : *Eothinon 4*

SUNDAY, MAY 7, 2023 SUNDAY OF THE PARALYTIC, *Commemoration of the Precious Cross that appeared in the sky over Jerusalem in 351 A.D. Cyril, Archbishop of Jerusalem, Akakios the Centurion of Byzantium. The Holy Martyr Quadratus and those with him, our devout Father John Psychaites, the Confessor, the holy Martyr Maximus.*

EPISTLE READING : *Acts of the Apostles 9:32-42*

GOSPEL READING : *John 5:1-15;*



71ST YEAR APRIL 30 2023 PAMPHLET # 18 (3648)

MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH

Today's Epistle passage describes, with disarming honesty and simplicity, an issue that arose among the believers of the first ecclesiastical community of Jerusalem. Specifically, of these, the Hellenists began to complain against the Jews with the rationale that in the daily distribution of food, their widows were cast aside.

Hellenists were the Jews who were born outside of Palestine, and they spoke the Greek language. By Jews are meant the Judeans who had been born in Palestine and spoke Aramaic. Many from both portions came to Christianity, probably though, there were more Jews, despite the resistance that the Gospel encountered among the Judean circles.

Although the first Christians lived in an uninterrupted supply of their beings with the "new life", which the Risen Lord offered, and they participated "in naivete of heart" in the Eucharistic Gatherings, nevertheless, there was no lack of difficulties and temptations among them. Here we must underline that the first believers were neither, nor did they immediately become perfect.

THE SUNDAY EPISTLE (ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 6:1-7)

In those days, when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists murmured against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. And the twelve summoned the body of the disciples and said, "it is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brethren, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." And what they said pleased the whole multitude, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochoros, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaos, a proselyte of Antioch. These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands upon them. And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.

They were struggling and trying to walk towards perfection, which is unending. So, in this struggle of theirs, it was natural for them to manifest weaknesses, and for unpleasant incidents to occur, with the risk of breaking the love and unity in Christ. The above disagreement between the two sides must have taken on dimensions, that is why the Apostles in a timely manner strove to take the appropriate measures to resolve it.

They considered that it would be wrong to leave the preaching of the word of God, so that they themselves be dealing with the rationing of food. So, they asked from the faithful to choose seven men from among themselves, with a

good reputation, "full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom" (Acts 6:3), to whom the Apostles subsequently entrusted, after prayer and the laying on of their hands, the ministry of philanthropic work, so that they could dedicate themselves exclusively to prayer and the work of preaching.

Philanthropy

It is known that from the beginning, the Church showed a special philanthropic interest not only for widows, but more generally, for every person who was in difficulty. And this, because philanthropy in the Church, means to be interested in the needs of your fellow human beings, both the spiritual and material ones, inspired by the incomparable divine Love.

When the Church offers philanthropy, it manifests the Lord's presence among people and that God's love is circulating and enlivening human existence. It furthermore, reveals that Christ is revealed in the person of every fellow human being, who has been honored with the inestimable value of the image of God, and that he experiences real communion, unity and harmony between people; a fact that ultimately contributes in the end, to the transformation in Christ of the interpersonal relationships and the prevalence of righteousness and truth. That is why Saint Chrysostom emphasizes that the truly philanthropic person is not the one who wounds and then heals, but he who heals those who have been wounded by others.

Therefore, works of love, for the Church, do not have the character of social welfare alone, but they express the living faith and practical love of those who are doing them. While they are founded on the philanthropy that God shows towards man, that is, in the incarnation, the crucifixion, and