

take money from anyone. The satisfaction of his needs is done by his personal work, as a tent maker (Acts 18:3). The selflessness and unmoney-lovingness of the shepherd, and more generally of every person, is a guarantee of his godly spiritual constitution.

In fact, at the end of the passage, he also quotes a related unwritten scriptural saying of the Lord, i.e. not recorded in the four Gospels, but preserved by the oral tradition: "It is better to give rather than to receive". And after that, he knelt with them and prayed, knowing, furthermore, that he probably would not see them again. The Apostle leaves a legacy for the ages. For every servant of the Church. The Fathers of the 1st Ecumenical Council proceeded with this legacy. Let all of us believers proceed with this.

Archim. N.K

**SUNDAY, MAY 28 2023 THE SEVENTH SUNDAY OF**

**PASCHA SUNDAY OF THE HOLY FATHERS** Commemoration of the holy Hieromartyr Eutychius, Bishop of Melitene, the holy Martyr Heliconis, Nikitas, Bishop of Chalcedon, Hieromartyr Helladius,

**EPISTLE READING** : *Acts of the Apostles* 20:16-18, 28-36

**GOSPEL READING** : *John* 17:1-13

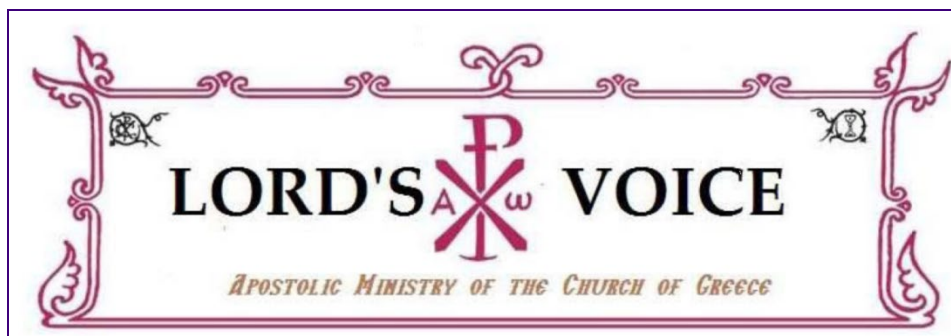
**TONE OF THE WEEK** : *Mode Plagal First*

**EOTHINON** : *Eothinon* 8

**SUNDAY, JUNE 4 2023 PENTECOST SUNDAY** *Our Father Metrophanes, Archbishop of Constantinople, Mary & Martha sisters of Lazarus, Sophia of Thrace, The Mother of Orphans, Lucillian of Byzantium, 4 martyred Youths and Paula the Virgin, Athanasios the Wonderworker, Kevin, Abbot of Glendalough*

**EPISTLE READING** : *Acts of the Apostles* 2:1-11

**GOSPEL READING** : *JOHN* 7:37-52; 8:12



71<sup>ST</sup> YEAR MAY 28 2023 PAMPHLET # 22 (3652)

## THE FIRST ECUMENICAL SYNOD

Today's Sunday is dedicated to the 318 God-bearing Fathers who organized the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea of Bithynia in 325. These Fathers proved to be true shepherds of the people of God, they kept the teaching of the Apostles unadulterated, and freed the Church from the "disease", i.e. the ruin and destruction of heresies.

The Synod confirmed the apostolic faith and experience of the Church, that Jesus Christ is not a creature, as the heretic Arius advocated, nor a creation of God, but is the pre-eternal Son and Word of God the Father, consubstantial with the Father and the Holy Spirit, who incarnated "so that we may be deified", according to the comprehensive definition of Athanasius the Great.

It should be noted that the First Ecumenical Council drew up the first seven articles of the Symbol of Faith, based on older Creeds, while the remaining five were drawn up by the Second Ecumenical Council (Constantinople 381).

## THE SUNDAY EPISTLE (ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 20: 16-18, 28-36)

IN THOSE DAYS, Paul had decided to sail past Ephesos, so that he might not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hastening to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost. And from Miletos he sent to Ephesos and called to him the elders of the church. And when they came to him, he said to them: "Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God which he obtained with the blood of his own Son. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears. And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities, and to those who were with me. In all things I have shown you that by so toiling one must help the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, 'it is more blessed to give than to receive.'" And when he had spoken thus, he knelt down and prayed with them all.

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### The pastoral work of the Apostle Paul

The Epistle passage that is read during of the speech that the Apostle Paul addressed to the presbyters of the Church of Ephesus is presented. He advises them to take care of themselves and the whole flock and to shepherd the Church of God, which the Lord made His own, with His blood. This should be the life-long and restless concern of every pastor. To watch himself first.

To interrogate and judge himself. To ask himself if he has the characteristics of a genuine worker of the Church, as the Apostle shows them in relief. And at the same time, he should watch over his flock, entrusted to him by the Holy Spirit. And sleepless attention is necessary, because the Church will be in danger from "grave wolves" (wild ones). It is the dangers of the various heresies which plot against the faith and the life of the rational sheep of the Christian flock. Heresies and schisms start from the obsession and projecting of man's selfish will against God.

That is why the Apostle points out how this danger can come from the carelessness of both the shepherds, and in general, the people of the Church. Let us not forget that Arius, who with his heretical teaching shook the Church, was a presbyter of the Alexandrian Church. Personal calculation, indiscernible self-confidence, self-interest, the projection of one's own Ego, the lack of the spirit of obedience to the orders of the Gospel and the Church, are some of the reasons that lead them astray from the straight path, and create big problems in the spiritual edification of people.

today's feast, comes from the Book of the Acts of the Apostles. In it, a part

### The selflessness and unmoney-lovingness of the shepherd

Paul, teaching the presbyters of Ephesus, essentially reveals his own self. Since he had reached the highest point of his communion and union with Christ; thus, his pastoral offer is exemplary and authentic. So rightly, justifiably, he asks them to be alert and to remember that for three years, night and day, he did not stop with tears advising them one by one. The sacrifices of the true shepherd extend to the limitation of his individual rights. So, for this reason, he reminds them that he did not wish to