

mystical rod from which the Lord, the “unweathering rose” sprouted.

While the whole Akathist Hymn is full of similar characterizations to the Theotokos. Therefore, the Virgin Mary is the culmination and perfection, the completion of the Old Testament. For the whole world of the Old Testament was being prepared pedagogically by God for that person to be found, that is, the Virgin Mary, who would willingly cooperate with God for the coming of the Savior to the world. For the personal meeting and union of every believer to take place with the incarnate Word, who is "righteousness and sanctification and redemption" (1 Cor. 1:30).

Archim. N.K

**SUNDAY, JULY 2, 2023 4<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF MATTHEW** ,

Deposition of the Precious Robe of the Theotokos in Blachernae, Synaxis of the Most Holy Theotokos of the Orphan, Juvenal, Patriarch of Jerusalem, Cosmas & Damian the Holy Unmercenaries, Constantine the New Martyr of Cyprus, Aaron and Julius the Martyrs of Caerelon, Germanus, Bishop of the Isle of Man

**EPISTLE READING** : *St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 9:1-7*

**GOSPEL READING** : *Matthew 8:5-13*

**TONE OF THE WEEK** : *Third Tone*

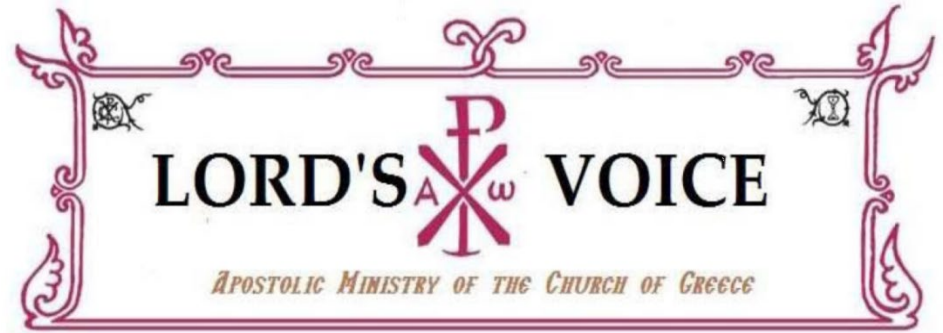
**EOTHINON** : *Fourth Eothinon*

**SUNDAY, JULY 2, 2023 5<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF MATTHEW** ,

*The Holy Hieromartyr Pancratius, Bishop of Tauromenium in Sicily, Dionysios the Orator , Metrophanes of Mount Athos, Methodios the Hieromartyr, Bishop of Lampis , Paternuthius the Monk , Euthymios of Karelia , Michael Paknanas the Gardener*

**EPISTLE READING** : *St. Paul's Letter to the Romans 10:1-10*

**GOSPEL READING** : *Matthew 8:28—34 9-1*



71<sup>ST</sup> YEAR JULY 2 2023 PAMPHLET # 27 (3657)

**THEOTOKOS, EVER VIRGIN THE SHELTER OF PEOPLE**

On today's feast of the deposition of holy Robe, the Church honors the Most Holy Theotokos, who already from the apostolic years is at the center of the believers' piety, precisely because she gave birth to the incarnate Son of God. Regarding the historical foundation of the aforesaid feast, it is preserved that the robe (maphorion, a type of scarf) of the Virgin was brought from Palestine where it was kept to Constantinople, in the year 473. There, and specifically in the Church of Blachernae, Emperor Leo I erected a circular shaped chapel to deposit the sacred relic. Since then, the Church of our Lady of Blachernae became one of the most important pilgrimages of the Queen City, where important historical events took place and many wonderful miracles were performed. There, for example, Saint Andrew the fool for Christ (late 9th – beginning of the 10th century) was granted to see the Theotokos covering the people of God with her sacred robe, a symbol of her maternal love, protection and everlasting loving care. In this perspective, the special honor that the Church from the beginning paid to

**THE SUNDAY EPISTLE ST. PAUL'S LETTER TO THE  
HEBREWS 9:1-7**

BRETHREN, the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly sanctuary. For a tent was prepared, the outer one, in which were the lampstand and the table and the bread of the Presence; it is called the Holy Place. Behind the second curtain stood a tent called the Holy of Holies, having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, which contained a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail. These preparations having thus been made, the priests go continually into the outer tent, performing their ritual duties; but into the second only the high priest goes, and he but once a year, and not without taking blood which he offers for himself and for the errors of the people.

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the Saints and their sacred relics can be understood. These as tangible signs of their presence in the world serve the society of the faithful with Christ and express the "expectation" of the Resurrection.

The objects associated with them are also honored in a similar way. We read in the Acts of the Apostles that the faithful would take even the handkerchiefs of the head or the neck that the Apostle Paul had used, they would put them on the sick who would be cured of diseases and the wicked spirits would leave from them (Acts 19:12).

**"Rejoice tent of God the Word"**

The Epistle reading of the feast has a direct relationship and relevance to the person of the Most Holy Theotokos. Since what refers to the "first tent", that is, to the tent of witness, where God was worshiped by the Israelites before the temple of Jerusalem was built, the altar and the sacred objects that were there, comprise a typos and prefiguration of the Virgin Mary. Symbols that refer to what is symbolized, to Her who is "More honorable than the Cherubim and more glorious than the Seraphim".

More specifically, the tent of witness was divided into two parts, the outer one called "Holy" and the inner and more sacred "Holy of Holies". There, in the Holy of Holies, was the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant, in which was the golden jar of manna, Aaron's rod, which had blossomed miraculously, and the two tablets that contained the provisions of the covenant.

And all these were a shadow of what would follow in the period of the New Testament and prefigurations of the living ark of God, of the Theotokos, who in the service of the Salutations is called "greater than the Holy of Holies", because as the mother of the incarnate Word of God, she is holier than the Holies of the tent of witness. The Theotokos, also became the true tent where Jesus Christ dwelt and, therefore, the authentic witness of His incarnation and of the possibility for man to become a son of God by grace.

That is why the Virgin Mary is called by the sacred hymnographers of the Church, who are at the same time her top theologians, the living altar, the golden censer, the sweet smelling incense, the precious myrrh, the ark gilded by the Holy Spirit, the vase that carries the Bread of life, the