

person of Christ. The acceptance of love on the part of man, is demonstrated by its counteroffer through other people to the source of its origin, that is, God.

However, the more the grace of Christ strengthens man, all the more he feels his own weakness and surrenders himself wholeheartedly to God's love. In such a course, man acquires spiritual maturity and modesty which helps him to regard his neighbor with affection and understanding. Thus, he tries to approach and compensate for the weaknesses of others, just as the Lord did, who, in order to save man, gave up self-sufficiency and the unneediness of His divinity and took upon His shoulders the burden of human sins.

Archim. N.K

SUNDAY, JULY 23, 2023 7TH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW ,
Phocas the Holy Martyr, Bishop of Sinope , Ezekiel the Prophet , Pelagia the Righteous of Tinos , Trophimos & Theophilios and the 13 others martyred in Lycia , St. Anna of Leokadio , The Icons of the Most Holy Theotokos of Pochaev ,Icon of the Mother of God.

EPISTLE READING : *St. Paul's Letter to Romans 15:1-7*

GOSPEL READING : *Matthew 9:27—35*

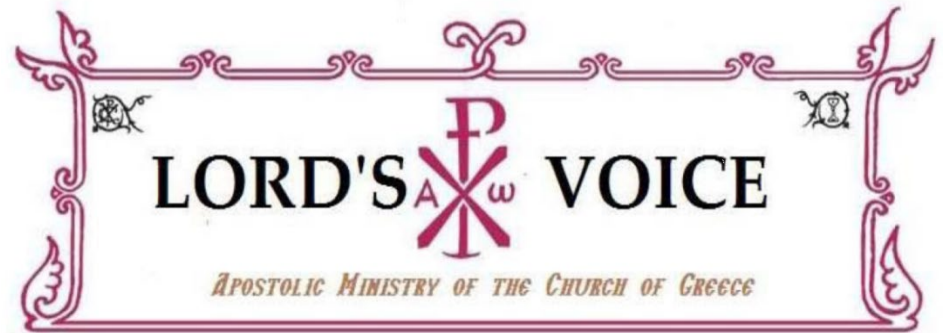
STONE OF THE WEEK : *Plagal Second Tone*

EOTHINON : *Seventh Eothinon*

SUNDAY, JULY 30 2023 8TH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW ,
Silas, Silvan, Crescens, Epenetus and Andronicus the Apostles of the 70 , Julitta of Caesaria

EPISTLE READING : *St. Paul's 1st Letter to Corinthians 1:10-17*

GOSPEL READING : *Matthew 14:14—22*



71ST YEAR JULY 23 2024 PAMPHLET # 30 (3660)

ON THE UNITY OF CHURCH MEMBERS

In today's Epistle passage, the Apostle Paul points out, in particular, the ethos that must be cultivated by those who are steadfast Christians in faith towards their weak and unstable brothers in the faith. "We who are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak", he writes to the Romans.

This issue, which ultimately concerns the true unity of the members of the Church, exceeds the usual social conditions and the contractual relationships that characterize even faithful people in their daily lives. That is why the Apostle seeks to orient the believer's conscience to the person and example of Christ himself. He knows that logical arguments, without the light of Christ, are not enough to convince them of this lifelong spiritual contest of love and acceptance on their part, of the weakness of their fellow human beings, so that unity in Christ can be achieved.

EPISTLE ST. PAUL'S LETTER TO ROMANS 15:1-7

Brethren, we who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves; let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to edify him. For Christ did not please himself; but, as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached thee fell on me." For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Welcome one another, therefore, as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

Therefore, he contrasts the following figure: just as Christ "did not please himself", that is, he did not seek what was pleasing to himself, in a similar way, the believer must also strive to be pleasing to his neighbor for the good and for his spiritual edification.

Strong and weak ones

Trying to approach the meaning of the definitions, strong and weak, as they are used in the present reading, we can note that strong here is certainly not, of course, the one who has a physical robustness, but he who has strong faith and is committed to life in Christ. Strong is the person who unequivocally confesses the divinity and infinite power of Christ, and recognizes his own weakness and his inevitable shortcomings in faith, hope, and love. Strong is the person

who commits himself with trust in the love of God and, like Paul, he feels joy "in his sufferings" (Col. 1:24), that is, in hardships and exhaustion for the sake of Christ, and exclaims "for when I am weak then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12:10).

Christians, therefore, who have a strong faith and have progressed in the spiritual life, ought to "bear the infirmities of the weak". By infirmities, we must mean wrong viewpoints or improprieties, which come from the weak and unstable faith of "weak" Christians who are easily shaken in their faith or who also depart from the Christian life.

Benefitting those weak in faith

The point is to benefit the person weak in faith, and not to harm him spiritually, by approving his harmful actions or consenting to his dark pursuits. If we become people-pleasing, for the sake of a so-called love, then we are not true servants of God. Since we have a duty to point out, after much discernment, the error, the sin, and the failure "by telling the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15), expressing the truth with love. In this way, we show ourselves accomplices in the work of edifying in Christ, our brothers and also in their spiritual benefit. At the same time, we contribute to the edification of the Christian community with the proper functioning of the neighbor as a living member of the Church.

The Apostle Paul does not want love to be transformed into a moral or religious truth, which aims at the fulfillment of some human needs, but he connects the loving unity of believers with salvation. That is why he underlines the enhypostatic character of love, which is manifested in the