

others, but if I am able to love." The greatness we seek in anticipation of extraordinary opportunities is found in our hands, in everyday simple reality, when we are ready to serve others, without any demand for reciprocation or recognition. Let us remember the Saints of our Church who with their love enliven human societies. And then we will feel more deeply how wonderful is the path that these words of the Lord are paving. "Whoever wants to be great among you, let him be your servant". It is an internal greatness: because it is something that makes us essentially resemble Christ, the Great Servant of people. He who did not come in order to be served but to serve and to give "his soul as a ransom for many". It is about the transformation of our lives according to His own life, for its elevation to its final goal: theosis.

Archim. F. A

Sunday, April 21, 2024 *Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt, The Holy Hieromartyr Januarius and Those With Him, Our Holy Father Maximian, Patriarch of Constantinople, Theodore the Holy Martyr & his mother Philippa of Perge, Alexandra the Martyr, Anastasios the Monk of Sinai, Beuno, Abbot of Clynog*

Epistle Reading: *St. Paul's Letter to Hebrews 6:13-20*

Gospel Reading : *Mark 9:17-31*

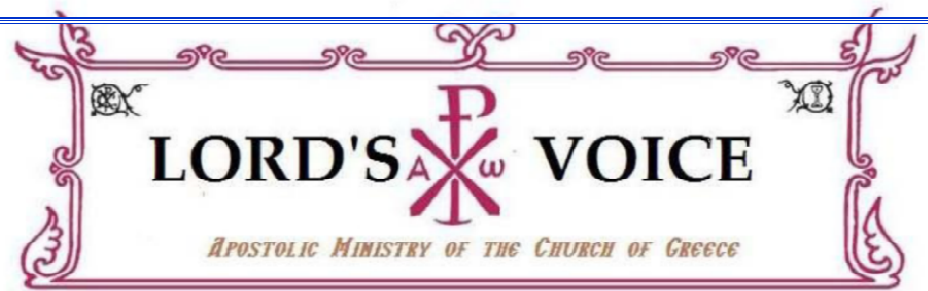
Tone of the Week: Plagal Second Tone

Eothinon Second Eothinon

Sunday, April 28, 2024 *Palm Sunday The Holy nine martyrs of Cyzicus John the Martyr of Romania, Memnon the Wonderworker.*

Epistle Reading: *St. Paul's Letter to Philippians 4: 4-9*

Gospel Reading : *John 12:1-19*



72ST YEAR APRIL 21 2024 PAMPHLET # 16 (3699)

SECURING FIRST PLACES

The Lord, as stated in the Gospel passage of the Fifth Sunday of Lent is walking to martyrdom. On the other hand, His disciples desire "first seats". He foretells His death on the cross and they, without hardly understanding the tragedy of the prophecy, imbued with the worldly attitude of ambition, crave honorary distinctions. James and John hurry to beat the others in securing the primary positions. "Teacher", they tell him, "we want you to do something for us that we will you ask of you". "What do you want?" Christ asks. "There, they answer Him, now that you will be glorified, where you will sit on a royal throne, give us the two first places in your kingdom. Do us the favor for us to sit down, one on your right, and the other on your left." The Lord looks at them very sadly: "You don't know what you're asking for", He answers them with pain. I am talking to you about sacrifices, and you yearn for primary positions".

Eternal glory

The two disciples were asking Christ for glory with human criteria, thinking that His kingdom is tangible and worldly. Christ, however, corrects their erroneous faith, pointing out the

THE SUNDAY GOSPEL (Mark 10:32-45)

At that time, Jesus took his twelve disciples, and he began to tell them what was to happen to him, saying, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death, and deliver him to the Gentiles; and they will mock him, and spit upon him, and scourge him, and kill him; and after three days he will rise." And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him, and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." And he said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?" And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory." But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" And they said to him, "We are able." And Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared." And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant of James and John. And Jesus called them to him and said to them, "You know that those who are supposed to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

real and eternal glory, which passes through the "cup", which is the passion and the cross. How many times is Christ not forced to repeat what He told James and John, to many people, even today? Often, how petty are our desires and requests? We long for honors, distinctions, primacy, power, money, glory, and imposition

in this world. And the tragic thing is that we ask them of Him who

scorned all of this and revealed their nothingness. We often complain that the Lord does not hear our prayer. However, we forget something very important, we do not desire Him but something from Him. Thus, Christ does not respond to our requests because we do not know what we are asking for.

The disease of ambition for first place

The disease of ambition for first place had not only afflicted the two disciples. The indignation that the others expressed against James and John, revealed that the same passion tyrannized everyone. It bothered them that others had beaten them to it. Then Jesus called them to Him and He tells them: "You know that those who are considered the rulers of the nations completely lord it over them, and the great men completely oppress them. However, the same thing will not happen between you. But whoever of you wants to become great, will become your minister, your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you will be the servant of everyone".

The radical overthrow of what was established

Real greatness is not found in conceit, in arrogance and in oppressing others. It is not proven by the titles and the noise. It exists only in humble-minded love, in modest service to the neighbor. This is the sure way to acquire it. This is a radical reversal of what is established. Previously, greatness was measured by how many people one ruled. After Christ, by how many one serves. The criterion of greatness is not power, but sincere service. The armies of the Saints made this revolution of love a reality, putting service in authority and truly beautifying human life. In our age, where egotism and vainglory prevail, people wish and try to give as little as possible and to get as much as possible. The Orthodox position is radically opposed to this tendency. The right request is not "what service can I expect from