

Church, gave her a dowry with His blood, and forged a ring for her with the nails of His crucifixion". God's love for man is so great.

**Do you believe?** Christ never appeals to logic, He does not cite proofs, nor arguments, He does not ask:

"Do you know? Were you convinced? Were you defeated?" The only thing He asks is: "Do you believe?" And to this question only a pure heart can answer: "I believe, Lord, help my unbelief." So, while we are burdened by doubt about the presence of God, at the time when loneliness is weighing us down, only deep humility comes to our aid. This humility makes a person submit his entire being before the Cross of Christ. And then suddenly Christ lifts this burden for us: "Learn from me... for my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:30). And this word is not a deception; it is a light in the hell of today's world

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**Sunday, June 9, 2024** Sunday of the Blind Man, Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria, 3 Virgin-martyrs of Chios, 5 Nuns beheaded in Persia: Thecla, Mariamne, Martha, Mary, & Enmatha, Righteous Father Columba of Iona, Righteous Father Cyril of Belozersk

Epistle Reading: *Acts of the Apostles 16:16-34*

Gospel Reading : *John 9:1-38*

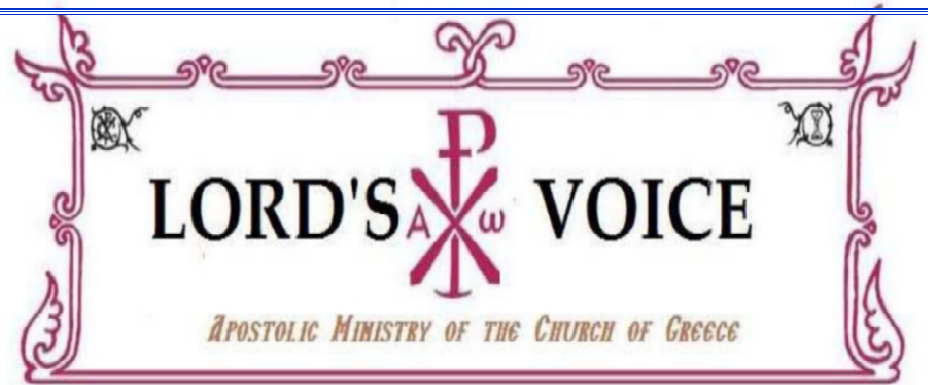
*Tone of the Week : Plagal First Tone*

*Eothinon Eighth*

**Sunday, June 16, 2024** Fathers of the 1st Council Tychon the Wonderworker 40 Martyrs of Rome,, Mark the Just of Apollonia

Epistle Reading: *Acts of the Apostles 20:16, 28-36*

Gospel Reading : *John 17:1-33*



72<sup>ST</sup> YEAR JUNE 9 2024 PAMPHLET # 23 (3706)

### THE ANSWER OF HUMILITY

In the Gospel passage of the Sunday of the Blind Man, a wonderful event is presented. A man born blind regains his sight through the miraculous intervention of Jesus Christ. And the fact of his healing becomes the starting point of salvation, which at the end of the gospel reading is expressed through the confession of his faith. Christ asks him: "Do you believe in the Son of God?". And the blind man then manages to see not only what is earthly, but also the light of the Godhead: "I believe Lord; and he worshipped him. This fact is a blessed opportunity, so that we too, as Orthodox people, can reflect on our faith and renew the promise we gave on the day of our baptism. Many times, disappointed by human and everyday things, we worry about the presence of God in our lives. We ask for signs, to believe. Even when the Lord was on the Cross, people teased Him and blasphemed Him saying: "If You are the Son of God, come down from the Cross and we will believe in You". But the Lord did not answer. He remained, "in silence", on the Cross and died so that man might live, and he resurrected in order to open the door of Paradise and lead man to the life of God.

### The silence of God

The proofs we often ask for in order to believe in God, injure the truth, the loving relationship with God, and that is why the Lord's refusal is direct and categorical (Mark 8:12).

## THE SUNDAY GOSPEL (John 9:1-38)

At that time, as Jesus passed by, he saw a man blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him. We must work the works of him who sent me, while it is day; night comes, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." As he said this, he spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle and anointed the man's eyes with the clay, saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar, said, "Is not this the man who used to sit and beg?" Some said, "It is he"; others said, "No, but he is like him." He said, "I am the man." They said to him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" He answered, "The man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash'; so I went and washed and received my sight." They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know." They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. The Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, "He put clay on my eyes and I washed, and I see." Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" There was a division among them. So they again said to the blind man, "What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet." The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight, and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" His parents answered, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but how he now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age, he will speak for himself." His parents said this because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess him to be Christ he was to

be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, "He is of age, ask him." So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and said to him, "Give God the praise; we know that this man is a sinner." He answered, "Whether he is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I know, that though I was blind, now I see." They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" He answered them, "I have told you already and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you too want to become his disciples?" And they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." The man answered, "Why, this is a marvel! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." They answered him, "You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?" And they cast him out. Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, "Do you believe in the Son of man?" He answered, "And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?" Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and it is he who speaks to you." He said, "Lord, I believe"; and he worshiped him.

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God came into the world, but He is hidden even in His manifestation. God responds with silence, but for those who can understand, can feel in this silence, He declares His love for man. It is God's "foolishness", the incomprehensible respect for our freedom. Every forced proof forces the human conscience, turns faith into simple knowledge. That is why God closes Himself in the silence of His hurting love. God does not give orders. He invites us into a relationship of reciprocity. The Father is a Father, without imposing his paternity. Christ comes to sit at the "table of sinners," and is crucified out of an excess of erotic goodness. "What husband," asks an ascetic writer of the 6th century, "ever died for his wife, and what wife ever chose to marry a crucified one?" The Lord espoused the