



72<sup>nd</sup> Year

July 7, 2024

Pamphlet #27 (3710)

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## **THE SUNDAY GOSPEL (Matthew 4:18-23)**

### **The calling of the Apostles**

*At that time, as Jesus walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." Immediately they left their nets and followed him. And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left their boat and their father, and followed him. And he went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people.*

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## **THE COMMUNITY OF THE CHURCH**

The Holy Scripture teaches us that God the Father willed the salvation of people and therefore sent His Son into the world. Christ delivers His Gospel to the Apostles, whom He makes fishers of men. A collaborator in this work is the Holy Spirit, which reveals the mystery of Christ to the Apostles and enlightens them to witness it to the world. In another place of the Holy Scripture, it is again said that some Apostles with their preaching sow the divine seed, and others water it. However, the one who grows the seed is God (1 Cor. 3:6). The work of the mission is

completed with the establishment of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, which is also the work of the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28).

## **The greatness of the priesthood**

The priesthood is a ministry given by God to priests as a "divine gift." And although it is exercised on earth, it belongs to the order of the heavenly things, which is why the priestly office is characterized as "angelic." The function of the priesthood was established neither by an angel, nor by any other created power, but by the Comforter, the Holy Spirit. And while the priests are weak people, the Holy Spirit made them capable of performing an angelic work. The supreme work of celebrating the Divine Eucharist and the sacred Mysteries is performed by the All-Holy Spirit through the hand and tongue of the priests, says St. Nicholas Cabasilas.

## **The Church and the Bishop**

The Bishop is the guardian of the apostolic tradition "in the Church and through it," but not without it. The gift of the truth that St. Irenaeus attributes to the Bishops, is not an individual gift of the Bishop, but is considered by him as an authentic expression of the apostolic tradition which is experienced by the Church, while it is proven by the uninterrupted apostolic succession of the Bishops.

The Bishop is considered as the representative of Christ in the Church, not in the sense of legal representation, but of depictive representation, because the Church does not represent Christ, it is Christ on earth. "Wherever the bishop is seen, there will also be the multitude, just as where Christ is, there is also the Catholic Church" (Saint Ignatius the God-bearer). That is why the Bishop also is the visible head of the Body of Christ in every local Church.

Who remembers or knows today, that when the Bishop enters the Church to liturgize, this event is a great liturgical event, because it represents the coming of Christ into the world,

both in His First as well as in His Second Coming? (Saint Maximus the Confessor)

## **Our unity in Christ**

The unity of the Bishop with the local Church is based on the model of the unity of Jesus Christ with the Church, and that is why Ignatius the God-bearer orders the faithful that "the Lord did not do anything without the Father, united as He is, neither through Himself nor through the apostles; neither do you do anything without the bishop and the presbyters...", but "submit yourselves to the bishop and to one another, as Christ to the Father according to the flesh, and the apostles to Christ and the Father and the Spirit, so that the unity be carnal and spiritual..."

So let us pray for our pastors, and let us ask Holy God to grant us a spirit of discipleship and obedience to those who serve the mystery of the Divine Economy.

† F. A.

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## **The need for sanctified priests**

"The priest", Father [Paisios] used to say, "in addition to the grace of the Priesthood, must also have the grace of God. Not just to sanctify the believers, but also to be sanctified himself, so that he helps doubly. How much our Church needs such pious priests! Unfortunately, a small percentage, about twenty out of a hundred, are worthy of the Priesthood. What can one say about those who not only do not help, but also scandalize? However, the believers remain faithful. This shows that He who governs the Church is Christ". We, however, owe respect to all priests. This is how Father [Paisios] also behaved, censuring or advising them accordingly. In fact, when a Bishop-turned-Patriarch let his beard grow, Father [Paisios] said: "How good it would be if he let his hair grow too!"

The Elder said to a certain priest: "Look, Father Nicholas, sacrifice everything for Christ; don't sacrifice Christ for anything!"

When priests ask me how to help the parishioners, but also to all those who have a pastoral responsibility, I emphasize one thing: that they look to do work on themselves, to do their necessary spiritual duties, and something more, so that they always have a spiritual reserve. The spiritual work on ourselves is a silent work on the neighbor, because the example speaks, and then people imitate the good they see and correct themselves. If we do not acquire spiritual wealth so that we can support ourselves with spiritual interest, when we work freely for others, we will be the most unhappy and pitiable ones.

That is why we should not consider it a waste of time, when we work on ourselves, whether for a short period of time, or for a long time, or forever, in our whole life, because the secret work has the property of secretly preaching the word of God in the souls of people. The graceful man of God transmits divine grace and transforms carnal people. He frees them from the slavery of the passions and in this way brings them closer to God and they are saved.

(From the book of the Apostolic Ministry:  
*Anthology of Counsels of Saint Paisios the Hagiorite*)

July 7, 2024: 2ND SUNDAY OF MATTHEW  
† Kyriake the Great Martyr (4<sup>th</sup> c.), Righteous Thomas of Malea (1<sup>st</sup> c.)  
Tone: 1 – Eothinon: 2 – Epistle: Gal. 3:23-4:5 – Gospel: Matt. 4:18-23  
NEXT SUNDAY: July 14, Holy Fathers of the 4<sup>th</sup> Ecumenical Synod  
Epistle: Titus 3:8-15 – Gospel: Matt. 5:14-19

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