



72<sup>nd</sup> Year

July 14, 2024

Pamphlet #28 (3711)

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## **THE SUNDAY GOSPEL (Matthew 5:14-19)**

### **The Life of Christians**

*The Lord said to his disciples, "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Whoever then relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but he who does them and teaches them shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."*

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## **THE STRUGGLE FOR CORRECT FAITH**

The "Sunday of the Holy Fathers" is dedicated to the memory of the Fathers who comprised the Fourth Ecumenical Council. To those who confessed Christ, to those who struggled for the testimony of the truth against the universal falsehood and the half-truth, to those who tried to preserve the integrity, dignity, and unique value of the human person.

## **Citizens of Paradise**

Unfortunately, from the time of the persecutions, from the time of the convening of the ecumenical and local Synods, from then until today, we continue to struggle with the crippled images of truth, to fight against a universal falsehood in the name of a half-truth, to interpret and change our faith into an ideology and idea, so that we do not feel the world as a home and homeland, but rather as a colony, so that we do not feel like residents, but rather as colonists of Paradise.

## **The Mystery of the Church**

It is obvious that at the center of this confusion is a tragically misunderstood meaning and experience of the mystery of the Church. That is why the place of authentic ecclesiasticism is taken up by various substitutes – to make up for its absence.

The Church is Christ extending through the ages; it is a theanthropic organization; it is the mystical Body of Christ. The characterization of the Church as the "Body of Christ" is most appropriate and essential in order to express its theanthropic nature, as much as this is possible. It is closer to the essence of the Church, because it connects the Church to the mystery of the Incarnation and identifies the Church with it. Because, in the mystery of the Incarnation, God manifested Himself in flesh, became flesh and made the Church His Body, and the Church is a continuation, protraction, extension, and fulfillment of the mystery of the Incarnation. Christ incarnate "took on the flesh of the Church" and became the beginning of the Body of the Church and its Head.

Now we can understand why faith is not a religion, but an experience; because the truth of the Church is not my opinion, but Christ Himself, Who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life; because the Orthodox ethos does not cultivate an individual conscience, but it is cultivated within the society of persons; because church life is not experienced within organized forms, even the best, but in the parish church community; because the preaching of the Church is not moralistic or only social or simply

spiritual, but it is a deeply ecclesiological and eschatological speech, the word of Christ and not the word about Christ; because the Divine Liturgy is the mystery of the assembly and not a private matter.

For all these reasons we honor the holy Fathers. Because they struggled for the Truth, lived in the Truth, served and celebrated the mystery of our salvation, remaining faithful to the tradition and teaching of our Church.

## **Christ of the Church**

What is required is for us to live the Truth in the liturgical and sacramental life of our Church. And to pray to know the Christ of the Church, the Christ of the Gospels, as the Church preserves Him on the Holy Altar Table, as He was known and loved by the lovers of perfect love, the Holy Fathers. May their intercessions cover and accompany us all the days of our earthly struggle.

† F. A.

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## **The right conscience informs man correctly**

There is no greater thing in man than a rested conscience. It's a big thing for your conscience to not bother you, that you could have done something else, and you didn't do it. Then the person has a continuous inner joy, and his whole life is a festival. This inner joy gives spiritual strength.

"Elder, how will one understand that what he is doing is pleasing to God?"

"The person has an internal notification."

"Is his own notification enough or is the testimony of others also needed?"

"I'm talking about someone who has a right conscience; I'm not talking about someone who has a wrong conscience. The right conscience informs man correctly. Then the person feels certainty and hope, and he says with humility: 'I am not for Paradise; I am for hell, but I believe that God's love and mercy

will not leave me.' He feels this, because he struggles; he does not sit, doing nothing, and rest his thought saying: 'God will save me.' The conscience..., dreadful! There is no greater fire, no greater hell than the burning of the conscience. There is no more terrible and torturous woodworm than the woodworm of the conscience. The ones in hell will suffer eternally, because they will be tormented by the thought of how they lost the goods of Paradise for a few years of earthly life, even though these were full of regrets and anxiety. The passions then will not be satisfied, and this will be another torture."

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

July 14, 2024: SUNDAY OF THE HOLY AND GODBEARING FATHERS OF  
THE 4<sup>th</sup> ECUMENICAL COUNCIL IN CHALCEDON (451)

† Aquila the Apostle, Justus the Martyr, Joseph the Archbishop of  
Thessalonica, Nikodemos the Haghiorite († 1809)

Tone: 2 – Eothinon: 3 – Epistle: Titus 3:8-15 – Gospel: Matt. 5:14-19

NEXT SUNDAY: July 21, 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Matthew  
Epistle: Romans 6:18-23 – Gospel: Matthew 8:5-13

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