



72nd Year

November 10, 2024

Pamphlet #45 (3728)

THE SUNDAY GOSPEL (Luke 10:25-37)

The person of the neighbor

At that time, a lawyer stood up to put Jesus to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you read?" And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." And he said to him, "You have answered right; do this, and you will live."

But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion, and went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; then he set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.' Which of these three, do you think, proved neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" He said, "The one who showed mercy on him." And Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

WE AND OTHERS

Man's earthly life is a complete acceptance of God's love, which must be offered unceasingly to others. This is also the theme of the Gospel parable of the Good Samaritan. The parable does not answer the question of who our neighbor is, but rather defines how each of us can become a neighbor to others, because everyone else is our neighbor, our brother.

Sterile formalism

The occasion for the parable is a lawyer asking about eternal life. He believed he could inherit eternal life, the Kingdom of God, by mechanically implementing the commandments.

The traveler in the parable fell into a trap of robbers, who left him half-dead from the abuse after taking everything. A priest of the Mosaic Law and the Temple of Solomon suddenly appeared. He saw the seriously injured man and walked away without helping. Then came a Levite, another servant of the Law and the Temple, who also saw the gravely injured man, and passed by, continuing his way. Both the priest and the Levite chose "sacrifice" and "burnt offerings," which means a sterile formalism, since the Law forbade the temple servants to come into contact with dead bodies, so as to not be defiled and be "pure" to fulfill their duties.

The one who offers love

Then, the third traveler, a Samaritan, who was a national and religious enemy of the Israelites saw the injured man and despite the fact that he was a Jew, he did not pass by him. He approached him, cleaned his wounds with oil and wine, bandaged them, placed him on his own animal, and brought him to an inn, where he took care of the condition of the wounded man.

When the Lord asked the lawyer which of the three became a neighbor to the unfortunate man who fell victim to the thieves, the lawyer answered: "The one who showed love, interest, and affection for his suffering brother."

God's love

Christ demonstrated this love of God the Father in Himself, down to the point of enduring the cross and death for the salvation of the world. Thus, we also have the symbolic interpretation of the parable: the Good Samaritan is Christ. He who fell into the trap of the thieves is the person who is completely torn apart by sin, which leaves him "half-dead." The inn is the Church, our ark of salvation and healing. The oil and wine are the sacraments of the Church. The two denarii paid by the Good Samaritan are the Old and New Testaments. The Good Samaritan, Jesus Christ, will come again in His Second and glorious Coming to judge the living and the dead.

In an era of individualism, prevailing dehumanization, and indifference, love remains the sole criterion for our authenticity as Orthodox Christians and our entry into the Kingdom of God. Therefore, love is the essence of life and the foundation of the Church, which Saint Ignatius the God-Bearer describes as a unity of faith and love. Faith and hope teach man to scorn material goods. Whereas love unites the soul with God's virtues, seeking the Invisible through the noetic sense, as taught by St. Diadochos of Photiki.

God's love will save the world. However, this love needs to be expressed. As Christians, we are called to express it daily, to radiate it, to make it a message and a hope. This means that our turning toward others cannot be just words, but also actions. It should be a movement that embraces the entire human being. It includes understanding in daily life, acceptance, reconciliation, courtesy, kindness, reciprocity, meekness, and love.

November 10, 2024: 8th Sunday of Luke

Commemorating Saints Olympas, Rodion, Erastus, and Tertius, Apostles from the Seventy (1st century), Saint Orestes the Martyr of Tyana, Cappadocia (+ 304), and Saint Arsenios the Cappadocian (+ 1924)

3rd Tone – Eothinon: 9 – Epistle: Galatians 1:11-19 –
Gospel: Luke 10:25-37

NEXT SUNDAY: November 17, 9th Sunday of Luke
Epistle: Galatians 2:16-20 – Gospel: Luke 12:16-21

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(SMALL INTRODUCTION TO THE MYSTERIES OF OUR CHURCH)

(2nd Edition, in Greek, Size 21x22 cm, 128 pages, full color)

by Agathangelos, Metropolitan of Phanariou,
General Director of the Apostolic Ministry
of the Church of Greece

In an era where the Sacred Mysteries risk becoming mere social ceremonies, stripped of their liturgical and sacramental character due to attitudes of vainglory and empty-glory, it is essential and significant to understand what happens in the Church at every moment of worship and liturgical life.

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