



73<sup>rd</sup> Year

March 9, 2025

Pamphlet #10 (3745)

---

## **THE SUNDAY EPISTLE (Hebrews 12:1-10)**

### **The cloud of witnesses**

*Brethren, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And have you forgotten the exhortation which addresses you as sons? "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor lose courage when you are punished by him. For the Lord disciplines him whom he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives." It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers to discipline us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time at their pleasure, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness.*

---

## **OUR ORTHODOX SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS**

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews attempts to strengthen the faith of young Christians who came from a Jewish background and experienced doubt and opposition from their former co-religionists. He refers to great figures of the Old Testament. These were the ones who, through the power of faith, performed acts of righteousness, achieved the fulfillment of God's promises, bore witness, and shed their blood for their faith in the one true God.

### **Orthodox spiritual life**

In today's reading, the Epistle calls on us to cast off the burdens of sin and to struggle in the arena of Orthodox spiritual life, having as our supporters the Martyrs of the Old Testament. Along with them, let us also rely on the martyrs of the New Testament, such as those we honor today – the Forty Martyrs who were martyred in the Lake of Sebaste.

This specific apostolic narrative aligns with the spirit of today's celebration, during which our Church commemorates the triumph of Orthodox faith and its spread to the ends of the world. In this faith, lived through the Orthodox spiritual life, we will dedicate the following thoughts, making note of three non-negotiable truths concerning our Orthodox self-awareness.

### **The identification of truth with Orthodoxy**

The late Fr. George Kapsanis speaks about the identification of truth with Orthodoxy: "The unparalleled and completely incomparable superiority of our faith, compared to all other religions and philosophical worldviews, lies in the fact that Christ does not simply save as a moral teacher of a new morality or as a mere moral model. Christ, as the God-man, gave us the opportunity to become members of His Holy Body, His Church, and thus participate in His Divine Transfiguration and Resurrection, to achieve the purpose of our lives, which is our

union with God. We are Orthodox Christians because we have tasted the truth of the Orthodox faith, the only true faith in Christ, the faith of the Apostles, the Martyrs, the Monastic Saints, the pure faith of the Holy Fathers. We do not boast of our own virtue. We do not boast of our personal holiness. However, we boast 'in the Lord' for our faith, the true faith of the true God."

### **The unchanging Orthodox faith**

A former Protestant pastor, now an Orthodox priest in America, notes about the unchanging nature of Orthodox faith: "In Orthodoxy today, as in the past, the fundamental elements of Christian doctrine, worship, and governance are not ever offered for re-negotiation. For example, one cannot be an Orthodox Priest and reject the divinity of Christ, the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection, the Ascension into heaven, or the Second Coming. Simply put, the Church has not deviated from its course for nearly two thousand years. It is One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic; it is the Church of the New Testament. The gates of Hades have repeatedly tried to overcome it, but they have not succeeded."

### **The interweaving of Hellenism and Orthodoxy**

The third truth is emphasized by a great Greek statesman and refers to the shared journey of Hellenism and Orthodoxy in our homeland: "Orthodoxy, enriching the brilliant cultural tradition of classical antiquity, formed together with it the strong spiritual and ethical foundation of Hellenism, its cohesive essence, its guiding light, and its source of strength. Orthodoxy illuminated the steps of the Nation and directed its course through the long night of subjugation. For this reason, the concepts of Hellenism and Orthodoxy became inseparably intertwined in the consciousness of the Nation."

One could mention even more truths about our faith, which we are divinely blessed to experience and enjoy within the Orthodox Church. We owe it to this faith to be worthy, honoring

the struggles and sacrifices of all those who worked and continue to work for its glory and dignity.

Archimandrite E. Oik.

---

March 9, 2025: 1st Sunday of Lent (Sunday of Orthodoxy)

Commemoration of the restoration of the holy icons (843).  
Commemoration of the forty holy martyrs who were martyred in the Lake of Sebaste († 320).

4th Tone – Eothinon: 4 – Epistle: Hebrews 12:1-10  
– Gospel: John 1:44-52

NEXT SUNDAY: March 16, 2nd Sunday of Lent (St. Gregory Palamas)  
Epistle: Hebrews 1:10-2:3 – Gospel: Mark 2:1-12

### **WEEK OF MISSIONARY WORK ABROAD**

(March 9–15, 2025)

The Office of External Mission of the Apostolic Ministry of the Church of Greece strives for the dissemination of the Word of God, particularly in the countries of Africa and Asia, the monthly salaries of native clergy, and much more. We thank you for your support of our missionary work.

International Bank Account Number (**IBAN**) at the **National Bank of Greece: GR050110146000014655807494**

We kindly ask that after any deposit, you contact the Office of External Mission at Tel. +30 210-7272315, 316.

---

Follow the Program of the Radio Station of the Church of Greece:

**[www.ecclesia.gr](http://www.ecclesia.gr)**

---

*VOICE OF THE LORD*, a weekly pamphlet of Orthodox faith and life of the "Apostolic Ministry of the Church of Greece". Iasiou 1, 115 21 Athens. Publisher – Director: Metropolitan of Phanariou, Agathangelos. Editorial office, tel. 210.7272.331. Processing, tel. 210.7272.388. Through the holy churches, it is distributed free of charge. From the Printing Office of the Apostolic Ministry.

---

The *VOICE OF THE LORD* worldwide via the Internet:

**[www.apostoliki-diakonia.gr](http://www.apostoliki-diakonia.gr)**

---