



73rd Year

June 22, 2025

Pamphlet #25 (3760)

THE SUNDAY EPISTLE (Romans 2:10-16)

God does not show partiality

Brethren, glory and honor and peace for every one who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality. All who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified. When Gentiles who have not the law do by nature what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness and their conflicting thoughts accuse or perhaps excuse them on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.

THE POWER OF CONSCIENCE

The Apostle Paul speaks in today's Epistle reading about the role and value of conscience. He teaches that, for those who have not known God's will due to life's circumstances not allowing them, the voice of conscience works, leading them naturally toward the fulfillment of goodness. The way each person utilizes and cultivates conscience, which is innate in all of us, will determine how God judges them "on the Day of Judgment."

Knowledge of the moral law

The Church's teaching on the law of conscience is profoundly insightful. Saint Nektarios notes that "conscience is the notification and knowledge of the moral law which the soul has, to discern between good and evil deeds, and to impartially judge their quality, approving good actions and condemning bad ones. The soul possesses an innate conscience, enabling it to distinguish justice from injustice, truth from falsehood, and good from evil. This inherent ability is granted by God so that the soul may come to know and align itself with the Divine Will." The purpose of this divine gift elevates conscience as an immutable and eternal moral law, requiring complete obedience to God.

Saint Nektarios further distinguishes between a good conscience and a corrupt conscience: "The soul that knows it has not acted unjustly and has not violated the moral law, rejoices, is peaceful, and celebrates. This fact bears witness to the innate longing for goodness. Thus, the soul delights in justice and truth, while it grieves over injustice and falsehood... A good conscience brings comfort to the soul that is suffering for virtue, for what is good, righteous, true, for the salvation of the many..."

Renunciation of one's own will

How, then, is a good conscience obtained within us? The answer is given by Saint Mark the Ascetic: "A good conscience is acquired through prayer, and pure prayer through the conscience. Both prayer and conscience naturally contain one another." (Evergetinos, Vol. III)

In contrast to a good conscience, an evil conscience, belonging to one who violates the moral law, becomes a terrible tyranny. There is no greater torment for a soul that sins than the uprising and censuring of its own conscience. "The tribunal of conscience is impartial and most severe... One who is censured by his own conscience is most unhappy."

As Saint Paisios the Athonite notes, an evil conscience "is possessed by those who reject the Divine moral law and seek the dominance of their own will, of their own ego. A conscience that was perverted by a darkened intellect and the prevailing of sin ceases to stir or protest against transgressions of the moral law. Such a person

has rejected both the law and the Lawgiver. Sin blinds the eyes of the soul so that it no longer sees the light of the moral law, the light of truth. It deafens the ears of the soul so that it no longer hears the word of God. It darkens the intellect so that it no longer understands, and hardens the heart, turning it to stone, so that it does not feel. The conscience of such a person becomes hardened. One with a corrupt conscience dwells in wickedness, thinks deceitfully, desires evil, and works iniquity...". (Homilies I)

Saint Paisios continues: "There is nothing sweeter than having a restful conscience. One feels light within, like wings lifting the soul, soaring!" Thus, we must strive to cultivate this good conscience within ourselves by keeping God's will, living in prayer and repentance, so that its fruits become guarantees of our salvation.

Archimandrite E. Oik.

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June 22, 2025: 2nd Sunday of Matthew

Saint Eusebius, Hieromartyr and Bishop of Samosata († 380);
Saints Zenon and Zenas the Martyrs (master and slave) († 304).

1st Tone – Eothinon: 2 – Epistle: Romans 2:10-16
– Gospel: Matthew 4:18-23

NEXT SUNDAY: June 29, 3rd Sunday of Matthew
Epistle: 2 Corinthians 11:21-12:9 – Gospel: Matthew 16:13-19

From the publications of the Apostolic Ministry:

ΗΣΥΧΑΣΜΟΣ – Ο ΠΟΛΙΤΙΣΜΟΣ ΤΗΣ ΚΑΡΔΙΑΣ **(HESYCHASM – THE CULTURE OF THE HEART)**

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