



73rd Year

August 24, 2025

Pamphlet #34 (3769)

THE SUNDAY EPISTLE (1 Corinthians 9:2-12)

The exercise of apostolic work

Brethren, you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. This is my defense to those who would examine me. Do we not have the right to our food and drink? Do we not have the right to be accompanied by a wife, as the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living? Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard without eating any of its fruit? Who tends a flock without getting some of the milk? Do I say this on human authority? Does not the law say the same? For it is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain." Is it for oxen that God is concerned? Does he not speak entirely for our sake? It was written for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope and the thresher thresh in hope of a share in the crop. If we have sown spiritual good among you, is it too much if we reap your material benefits? If others share this rightful claim upon you, do not we still more? Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ.

ON THE PRIESTHOOD OF WOMEN

Addressing the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul defends himself in order to refute the detrimental slanders against him, which some false teachers were circulating with the aim of damaging and undermining his apostolic status. They accused

him of peddling the apostolic office, as, they spread, Paul had not personally seen Christ and was not working as an Apostle. Overturning these fabrications, he confesses that he both saw the Lord and worked as an Apostle, a fact proven by the existence of the Church of Corinth, which he himself founded. If, however, he did not exercise some of his inalienable rights as an Apostle, he did so in order to not hinder the progress of the Gospel and give occasion for accusation against him and scandalize the weak brothers.

The female presence in the work of the Church

One of the rights he relinquished was the inclusion of some women, modest and faithful, in his missionary journeys, who would undertake secondary ministries, so that he himself could be undistractedly devoted to his missionary work. And he did this so as not to give cause for accusation to wicked and demonic people who are always looking for an opportunity to react against the workers of the Gospel.

This reference by Paul to the secondary and discreet female presence in the work of the Church provides us with the opportunity to offer some thoughts regarding the so-called priesthood of women, about which, from time to time, a great discussion develops in the Christian world. Indeed, this discussion usually targets the Orthodox Church, which denies women entry into the priesthood, allegedly infringing, in this way, upon women's human rights.

A blessed Primate had responded responsibly and decisively on this issue when the discussion intensified a few years ago. He had characteristically emphasized that "the priesthood of women, often proposed as a counter-argument by the feminist movement, is rather a false dilemma. The priesthood is not a worldly office; it is not considered a profession, but a ministry; it is not an office of power, but an offering and self-sacrifice. Of course, all this cannot be understood according to

the criteria of the world and the problem of individual rights. Because within the Church, we do not demand positions, we do not claim rights. We serve the Church willingly and in various ways, without expecting rewards."

The Virgin Mary teaches with her humility

We could present a series of arguments on which our Church bases this timeless view, related either to theology or its tradition. However, we will limit ourselves to the person of the Most Holy Theotokos, who holds a prominent place in the consciousness of the Church, because she worthily represented the human race and became the vessel of God's grace, through whom Jesus Christ became man and laid the foundations for the salvation of humans. Despite all this, our Church never vested our Lady with the priestly or hierarchical office, nor did she entrust her with missionary work or the responsibility of the spiritual guidance of the members of the early Church. Nor did she herself claim such a status for herself. The Virgin Mary lived in obscurity, teaching such great and wondrous things through her silence, discretion and humility, so as to be hymned and honored more than any other saint in the Christian reality throughout all ages.

However, the faithful, devout, and modest woman can, in a way, serve by dedicating herself to the social and charitable work of the Church, taking the place of the deaconesses of love of the Apostolic era. In this way, she can become a useful instrument of God-pleasing service, alongside the responsible priest and pastor, offering invaluable services to the Body of the Church, maintaining the position that befits her in the Ecclesiastical organization, and at the same time working for her personal spiritual development and perfection. Amen!

Archimandrite E. Oik.

August 24, 2025: 11th Sunday of Matthew

Hieromartyr Eutyches (2nd c.);
New Hieromartyr Cosmas the Aitolian (1779);
Translation of the relics of Saint Dionysius, Bishop of Aegina (1717).

2nd Tone – Eothinon: 11 – Epistle: 1 Corinthians 9:2-12
– Gospel: Matthew 18:23-35

NEXT SUNDAY: August 31, 12th Sunday of Matthew
Epistle: Hebrews 9:1-7 – Gospel: Matthew 19:16-26

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