

the fruit of the tree of the "knowledge of good or evil", but she subsequently proceeds to him and subdues him, offering him the same fruit and ordering him: "Eat"! Before sinning toward God, the First created humans, sinned, the one against the other. And before the offense was completed against God, the offense had been performed against man.

Today's passage comes to cure this dissension of sin, without even speaking about sin! It reverses the process of the fall, and projects the event of man's good journey towards man, as the first fruits and assurance of his good journey toward God the Father. Whoever preserves the dissension of man from man, is not able to maintain that he is united with God. On the contrary, whoever cares and proceeds lovingly towards man, also covers the distance which separates him from God! So for this reason also, as an excellent conclusion, the disciple of love writes: "if one says that I love God, and simultaneously he hates his brother, he is a liar. Because whoever does not love his brother, whom he sees, how is he able to love God, whom he has never seen?" (1 John 4:20). This is the perspective of our occupation with the last things, love for neighbor as the measure of love for God!

Archimandrite I. N

SUNDAY, MARCH 6, 2016 JUDGMENT SUNDAY (MEATFARE SUNDAY),

42 Martyrs of Amorion in Phrygia, Finding the Precious Cross by St. Helen, Hesychios the Wonderworker

TONE OF THE WEEK: Grave Tone

EOTHINON Seventh Eothinon

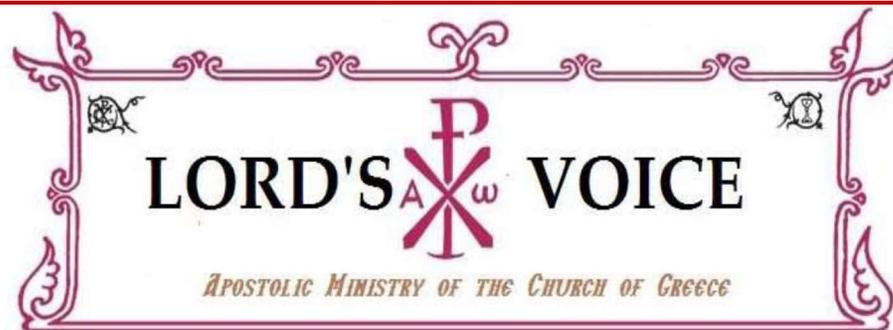
EPISTLE: St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 8:8-13; 9:1-2

GOSPEL: Matthew 25:31-46

NEXT SUNDAY, MARCH 13, 2016 FORGIVENESS SUNDAY, *Removal of the relics of Nicephorus, Patriarch of Constantinople, Pouplios the Martyr, Bishop of Athens*

EPISTLE: St. Paul's Letter to the Romans 13:11-14; 14:1-4

GOSPEL: Matthew 6:14-21



64TH YEAR MARCH 6, 2016 PAMPHLET # 10 (3275)

THE NEIGHBOR, MY SALVATION

One of the greatest problems of Orthodox spirituality in recent years is the perversion which Orthodox eschatology is undergoing, the prophetic word, in other words, concerning the last things. And it is a customary phenomenon for people who are spiritually immature, without a realization of what Orthodoxy means and what its majestic essence is, hastening to be systematically occupied, without the necessary spiritual presuppositions, with whatever has been documented, either as the word of the Lord, or as the word of some Apostle or Saint, in relation to the last things of the world. Furthermore, the main characteristic of most of them is, that without them having ever studied the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles of Paul and of the other Apostles, in other words, without them having even at a glance been occupied with the basic texts of Christianity, they attach themselves to the Revelation of John, claiming the right to analyze and to authentically interpret a book "tightly sealed with seven seals", about which one of the greatest interpreters of the Holy Scripture, Basil the Great, confessed his absolute inability to proceed to its analysis!

While because the described images in the Revelation of John and the general eschatological texts of our Church, are very clear and graphic, they have the ability, especially when they are Christians to be forewarned, that many and fearful things will occur in human history, in the framework of a raging war against the Orthodox Church and the true faith. In the end however, as eternal king, Christ will win, and whoever remains faithful to Him will "co-reign and be coeternal".

JUDGMENT SUNDAY (MEATFARE SUNDAY)

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW 25:31-46

The Lord said, "When the Son of man comes in his glory and all the holy angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.' Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?' Then he will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me.' And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

reproduced superficially, to cause fear and to stir up the fantasy. Thus the fact that the Church does not use fear as its pastoral tool, is violated, nor does she want man to proceed toward God out of fear and to build a relationship with Him out of necessity. Furthermore, the purpose for which these texts were given to us, is overlooked, which is for us

The judgment

Today's gospel passage presents the genuine word of our Lord concerning the last things. Why is this text today? Because many passages preceded with the two previous ones, of the Publican and of the Pharisees and of the Prodigal Son being the chief ones, which elegantly presenting divine love, may lead us to overlook divine justice. So the manner with which God will judge us is described, for us to understand that no one escapes divine judgment, but also so that we may fruitfully ponder about the only event which is a cause for worry, not of agony, to the soul of each person of God, of how he will stand before the dreadful judgment seat and will give "the good defense".

What is the strange thing in the judgment of God? Nowhere is there talk about sins and transgressions, but it seems that everything depends on each one's attitude towards the other person, the needy person, the neighbor. And furthermore, with the Lord's intense assurance that whatever we are doing for our brother, we are doing it personally to the Lord. "You did it to me"!

The wound and the cure

Why is there no talk about sin? Let's recall how the ancestral sin was performed and sin and death entered into the world. The evil-originating snake isolates Eve and sways her to discuss with him. Eve, instead of calling Adam as well, so that the human race could face the tempting offense, continues on her own, a dialogue, with the main characteristic being the alteration of man's perception concerning the good God and the purposefulness of His law. The beginning of sin was the breaking up of the unity of the First created humans, of the affinity of the man and woman, of the loving dependence of the one on the other! So the subsequent development of sin was natural, when Eve again, on her own, ignoring Adam and invalidating his presence, not only tastes