

the hope of the magi, in whose person, the eternal expectation of all of humanity is imprinted. Herod fears because he understands that this newly born infant, concerning whom he had read so much in the prophecies, is coming, rejecting his authority, destructuring its importance, without revolting, simply orienting man to his eternal destination, giving new meaning to his life, and offering the quality of the citizen of the Kingdom of the Heavens.

After this infant's historical appearance, the emperors and kings of the world lose the "divine quality" which they invoked, in order to beckon and impose as "gods upon earth" their authority, undisturbed. People, even in a farsighted perspective, find the power to stand critically before the phenomenon of authority, in all its dimensions. They have now broken the bonds which limit man to this world, since the hope and perspective of eternity in the Divine Kingdom offers a new prison for viewing everything. And this, "the ruler of darkness of this age" (Eph. 6:12) never endured.

Today's gospel passage is a forewarning that always "those who think they rule over the gentiles" (Mk. 10:42), overcome by an irrational and selfish fear, will persecute, either outright or in a hidden manner, not henceforth the infant, but his Church.

Archimandrite I. N

NEXT SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2016 THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST, *The Adoration of the Magi: Melchior, Gaspar, & Balthasar. The Commemoration of the Shepherds in Bethlehem who were watching their flocks and came to see the Lord*

TONE OF THE WEEK

EOTHINON :

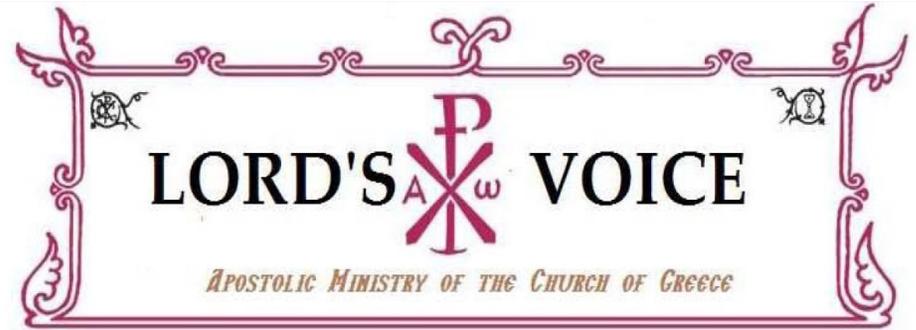
EPISTLE: St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 4:4-7

GOSPEL: Matthew 2:1-12

NEXT SUNDAY, JANUARY 1, 2017 CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST *Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, Gregory, Bishop of Nanzianzos, Father of Gregory the Theologian, Peter the New Martyr of the Peloponnesos, Theodotos the Martyr, Righteous Theodosios of Triglia, Emmelia, Mother of Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, Makrina, and Peter of Sebaste, Telemachos the Martyr Fulgentius, Bishop of Ruspe.*

EPISTLE: St. Paul's Letter to the Colossians 2:8-12

GOSPEL: Luke 2:20-21, 40-52



64TH YEAR DECEMBER 25 2016 PAMPHLET # 52 (3317)

THE FEAR OF AUTHORITY FOR THE TRUTH

It is Christmas today and as the bells of our Churches announce the joyous message "to "all people, that the savior was born unto us today" (Lk. 2:10 – 11, our Holy Church, consistent with her tactic to make people ponder in order to wake a person up, presents on the day of the Metropolis of feasts, the gospel reading, in which it is not "the born king" of the whole world, who is presented but mainly his seekers. She does this, of course, because in the framework of her liturgical wealth and the appointed Services of the Royal Hours, she already presented all the gospel passages, which describe the events of the birth of Christ and consequently the narrative piece has been fully covered.

Again however, the reading of a passage, which is deprived of characteristic elements of the glory of Christmas, since angels, shepherds, the cave, and the manger are lacking from it, whereas on the contrary there are, on the one hand, the stars and the magi, but in a secondary position, as Herod and his mania to seek to find "the child" seem to be the protagonists, causes a question about the purposefulness of its reading. So what does our Church want to clarify with today's gospel passage in her great feast?

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST

THE GOSPEL MATTHEW 2:1-12

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him." When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it is written by the prophet: 'And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will govern my people Israel.'"

Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star appeared; and he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him bring me word, that I too may come and worship him." When they had heard the king they went their way; and lo the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy; and going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

The awaiting for the Messiah

All of us in preparing for Christmas, have, of course, read texts, not only Old Testament ones, but also other people's, which prove the world's expectation of the Messiah. God's promise to send the Savior and Deliverer is a common historical recollection of humanity.

Throughout the ages, there were many who paid attention that, maybe in their age, the related prophecies would be realized, and in any case, everyone awaited with various emotions the materialization of this promise. Even though they were awaiting however, they did not

understand what the one who would come from God, would be. So for this reason also, the magi from the East define him as "king of the Jews" and they offer him their royal gifts, without examining the continuation of his life, or the manner of the fulfillment of his mission. They accept him as they see him, they feel him without understanding him, they respect him, they honor him, they confess him and in the end they depart.

Alongside this seeking, this good-intentioned and blessed seeking, one more also develops. That of Herod and his instruments. It is not done with a good disposition, nor without guile. It is dominated by fear and agony. The sacred text writes it without mincing words: "Herod the king having heard was disturbed, and all of Jerusalem with him". As soon as Herod heard about the born king of the Jews, he was filled with disturbance and together with him, the whole city of Jerusalem was disturbed, because knowing Herod's malice, they realized what freaky things would follow, until Herod would feel that he is not being threatened. And nevertheless, all this disturbance, is nothing other than an irrationality. The 70 year old Herod fears and trembles an undefended infant, who in order to be able to threaten him, years would have to pass, probably many more than the rest of his life. Only the fear of the rest of the people is logical, because they knew from previous events the harsh face of the authority of Herod...

The kingdom of hope

The prevailing belief of many, is that authority secures whoever has it. The ruler commands and the rest obey. And nevertheless, both today's gospel passage, as well as the historical truth, come to reassure, that authority not only does not secure, but on the contrary it creates insecurities to whoever and to whatever portion possesses it, precisely because fear lurks that he might lose it. This leads him to suspicion and to enlist every proper and improper means in order to safeguard the position of authority, so for this reason also, in the end, whoever exercises it, easily ends up hateful.

In today's gospel passage however, something else is stressed. Herod's fear is not projected in the framework of some sociological approach of the phenomenon of authority. Herod's fear is juxtaposed to