

## Constant love for Christ

If we love Christ, we ought to be keeping His commandments. Christ is the head of the Church. The Apostle Paul advances this truth more, saying that he who does not love Christ and consequently is not keeping His commandments, is separated from the body of the Church, which is His own body. He is not able, consequently, to live outside the body. He is condemned to die spiritually.

Truly this apostolic excerpt, functions as a slap for many of us, Christians of the latter years, of the many words without works. And of the many works, without the fervent alteration of faith in our heart. Let us pray, my brethren, that the Father of lights grants us, with the intercessions of the Apostle Paul, the gift of lifelong repentance, amen!

Archim. E. T.

### **SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2017 13TH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW,**

Anthimus, Bishop of Nicomedeia, Holy Father Theoctistus and his fellow struggler Euthymius the Great, Polydorus the Martyr of New Ephesus, Translation of the relics of St. Nectarius the Wonderworker, Bishop of Pentopolis Chariton the Martyr, Phoebe the Deaconess

**TONE OF THE WEEK :** *Tone Four*

**EOTHINON** *Second Orthros Gospel*

**EPISTLE READING:** *St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 16:13-24*

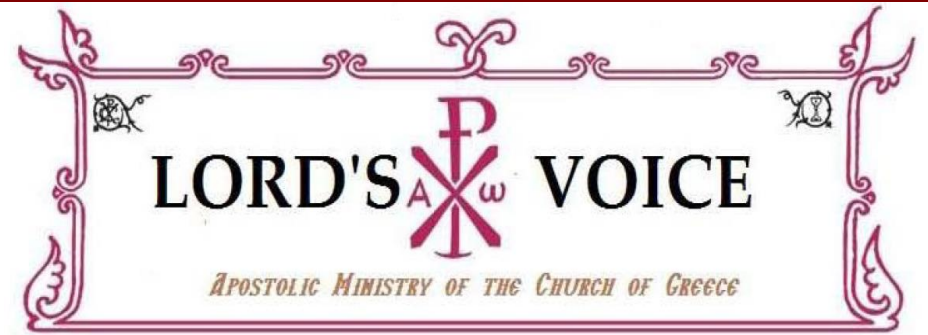
**GOSPEL READING:** *Matthew 21: 33 - 42*

**NEXT SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2017** *Sunday before Holy*

*Cross, Menodora, Metrodora, & Nymphodora the Martyrs, Poulcheria the Empress, Afterfeast of the Nativity of the Theotokos\_*

**EPISTLE READING:** *St. Paul's First Letter to the Galatians 6:11-18*

**GOSPEL READING:** *John 3: 13*



65<sup>TH</sup> YEAR

SEPTEMBER 3 2017

PAMPHLET # 36 (3353)

## ACTION AS REVELATION OF FAITH

In today's passage, beloved brethren, the Apostle Paul is speaking, not so much about what must be believed, in other words, these things which we must believe as Christians, about which, quite a few times, he has already spoken, but more so, he's mentioning the views of action, which make faith tangible, and manifest.

How, in other words, faith becomes incarnate, and the ecclesiastical gathering becomes the "place" and the "manner" of this incarnation. Faith and works combine, and contain one another.

### Spiritual struggle

To begin with, he exhorts the Corinthians to have not unfounded and naive courage, but courage that will be based on love. Spiritual vigilance is demanded in the struggle, both spiritual, as well as psychosomatic, nypsis, as the sacred Nyptic fathers say, in other words, sleepless attention to observe the "deviations and distractions" of their mind and to bring it back to the straight paths. Deviating from the one side, the mind is in danger, and as a result, the entire person, when he is overly optimistic and underestimates the power of the passions and of the devil.

## ST. PAUL'S FIRST LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS 16:13-24

Brethren, be watchful, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love. Now, brethren, you know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints; I urge you to be subject to such men and to every fellow worker and laborer. I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicos, because they have made up for your absence; for they refreshed my spirit as well as yours. Give recognition to such men. The churches of Asia send greetings. Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in their house, send you hearty greetings in the Lord. All the brethren send greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss. I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. If any one has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed. Our Lord, come! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

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His "joy" and his courage then have a "maniacal", we could say, character, which leads to various types of precipices. Deviating from the other side, we are in danger, when despair makes its appearance in our heart, and then we must painfully and intensely seize the whip of prayer and constantly and ceaselessly cast the poisonous breaths of the wicked spirits out from the holy of holies of our heart. Despair is never able to help man advance spiritually, because it cuts the nerves of the soul, and the believer weakens spiritually, losing every disposition for spiritual struggling.

Consequently, the vigilance, which, here the divine Apostle is implying, is associated with the unshakable persistence in what is believed, power, courage, with love crowning all three. The Fathers say that a moderate degree of grief or mourning for how much we have saddened holy God with our behavior and unrepentance, when of course, they are associated with the guileless joy that we feel, sensing that God always accepts us, comprises the healthy dipole upon which our spiritual life is founded. which is none other than the patristic joy-

sadness. Not unbalanced enthusiasms, but calm, peaceful joy, this joy which "no one takes from us". Not despondency, beneath the mask of the humble appearance, but real humility.

## Let each person be joy for his neighbor

Subsequently the Apostle makes reference to the family of Stephanas, who first of everyone in Achaia believed in Christ, and dedicated itself and their life to serving the Christians, who were in need. He exhorts the rest to respect and submit, to obey these people, but also every other believer who cooperates and toils in such a type of god-pleasing works. These believers comprise the example also for the rest, so for this reason, they also demand the respect of the rest, both then and now.

In Ephesus, from where Paul is writing his Epistle to the Corinthians, Stephanas, Fortunatos and Achaikos have also gone. The presence of all three of them serves for Paul as a gladness and the gladdening inclusion of all the Corinthian believers near him. This is the way for one to exist ecclesiastically and not to be religious privately. He feels, in other words, as if he is with everyone, together with the believers of Corinth, without some type of deficiency troubling him. He speaks furthermore, of making up by the three aforementioned ones, of his deprivation of being far from the church of Corinth. This making up, becomes synonymous with the spiritual comfort that he feels and the comfort, both of Paul himself, as well as of the Corinthian believers, who will receive this epistle from the three brothers, who are now with Paul.

This is the expression of love in the Church: for everyone to comfort everyone. It is the "all together" (with one heart) of the first Christians, which is described eloquently in the book of Acts. That "they had everything in common" is an underlining of the ecclesiastical way of being, which means that the presence of the one, was cause of comfort, consolation and glorification of God, for the other one. The Apostle is describing precisely this experience, when he refers to making up of the deprivations, which occurs on both sides and "there" we are called to all reach, by attending church, the mysteries of our Church, good works, prayer, and studying the word of God.