

table and coming up will serve you" (Luke 12:37). I will wear an apron, I will put you to sit down, and will serve you. Today I brought salvation to this home. For this reason, I came to the world: in order to seek and to save my lost sheep.

God's spirit says in the Revelation of John: "blessed and holy is he who takes part in the first resurrection. Upon these, the second death does not have authority". In other words: the second death, the final separation of the unrepentant person from God during his Second Coming, will not threaten any one of those who are struggling dynamically and firmly here and now for their "first resurrection" in Christ. The resurrection of their constant repentance.

Archim. B. L.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 21, 2018 15TH SUNDAY OF LUKE, Maximus the Confessor, Neophytos the Martyr of Nicaea, Martyrs Neophytos, Agnes, Patroclus, Maximus the Greek and Eugene of Trebizond.

TONE OF THE WEEK : *Plagal of the Fourth Tone*

EOTHINON : *Eleventh Orthros Gospel*

EPISTLE READING: *St. Paul's Letter to Timothy 4:9-15*

GOSPEL READING: *Luke 19:1-10*

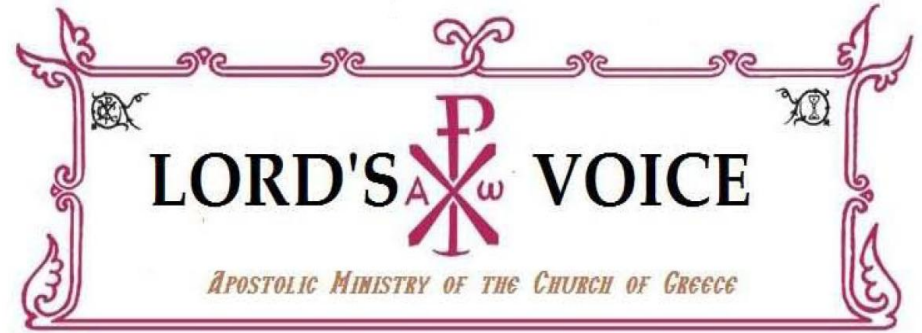
NEXT SUNDAY, JANUARY 28, 2018 SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN AND PHARISEE: TRIODION BEGINS TODAY Ephraim the Syrian, Palladios the Hermit of Antioch, James the Righteous, Isaac the Syrian, Bishop of Ninevah, Theodosius of Totma, Grace the Martyr.

EPISTLE READING: *St. Paul's Second Letter to Timothy 3:10-15*

GOSPEL READING: *Luke 18:10 - 14*

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66TH YEAR

JANUARY 21 2018

PAMPHLET # 3 (3373)

THE FIRST RESURRECTION

What is the greatest miracle of Christ? The resurrection of Lazarus, most would answer. Abba Isaac the Syrian disagrees, saying: he who feels his sins and repents sincerely, is higher than he who resurrects the dead. The resurrection of a sinner from the deadness of sin is higher than the resurrection of the body of a dead person.

Of course, all the physical resurrections are amazing miracles of Christ or of his Saints and they witness his victory over death and about the "common resurrection" of our bodies, which he will grant us during his Second Coming. However our participation in the eternal glory of his Kingdom presupposes the incomparably more amazing miracle of the resurrection of man from the death of sin.

Our cooperation is necessary

One such miracle we observe in today's gospel passage. And we see that, in order for such a resurrection to be performed, the authoritative command of Christ does not suffice. Man's cooperation is necessary also. Lazarus did not cooperate with Christ for his resurrection. How could he furthermore, being in

The Gospel According to Luke 19:1-10

At that time, Jesus was passing through Jericho. And there was a man named Zacchaeus; he was a chief collector, and rich. And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not, on account of the crowd, because he was small of stature. So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down; for I must stay at your house today." So he made haste and came down, and received him joyfully. And when they saw it they all murmured, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one of anything, I restore it fourfold." And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man came to seek and to save the lost."

the tomb. Christ resurrected Lazarus because He himself alone wanted to.

Zachaeus however worked hard for his own resurrection. He set out from an intense desire to meet Christ, hearing that he is someone who at least does not see sinners racially. He ignored the comments - probably the mockeries also - of the people, when due to the crowding, he ascended to a sycamore tree to see Christ, because he was short. And the most expending thing: he imposed on himself the harshest probably "payback deal" in the history of human economy, when he saw the people murmuring about the fact that Christ, didn't simply turn to look at him, but called him by name, and wanted to receive hospitality at his home. The "payback deal" included the offering of half of his estate to the poor and the restoration of whoever he had mistreated, fourfold.

The journey of repentance

This such radical uprooting of the passion of avarice, was the fruit of the spiritual resurrection of Zachaeus and the witness of his dynamic repentance. How does it happen that a person who was dependent on the love of money, to a degree that he wouldn't hesitate to oppress the others, such a callous person, to go from the death of sin to life in Christ?

God does not save man either magically nor by force. He awaits, on the one hand, man's invitation and, on the other hand, his firm repentance. Saint Macarius the Egyptian says that, no matter how much man's soul is beaten up by the passions, no matter how much he becomes weak, that is, without a pulse, nevertheless he has the capability of seeking the true doctor, precisely like the infant, who didn't yet take his first steps, even if he is not able to walk towards his mother, nevertheless "he rolls and shouts and cries" seeking his mother "in pain and cries".

So Zachaeus was seeking a "motherly" embrace. Or rather, he was seeking the embrace of Him, which is warmer even than the embrace of a mother. He Himself said that "even if a mother forgets her children, I will not forget you" (Is. 49:15). So for this reason, like a little child, the head publican climbed up the sycamore tree, in order for the silent crying of his pained soul to be heard more loudly.

The seeking of the "lost sheep"

And Christ showing that essentially for him He passed by Jericho, told him: Zachaeus, quickly come down. Today I must stay at your house. In other words, He told him: you freely opened to me the door of your heart. This is the most important thing. Without this response, I would not be able to save you. I have need of this cooperation. This is your uplifted hand, in order for me to hold you and to resurrect you. And this, for Me, is an invitation to enter into your home. And there, in the end, you will not take care of me, but I shall gird myself and make you recline at