

thoughts and deeds seem. I had never before thought of characterizing myself a sinner. I always held distances from this old fashioned word. Now however, I understood that it fit me absolutely. I realized, finally, that my desire to approach God was being prevented by my pride”.

The “medicine” of humility

What the teachers of the divine Law did not understand, an atheist understood: The basic cause of man’s internal blindness is haughtiness and pride.

In the end, this blindness of the Pharisees, Christ wanted to heal, curing the man born blind. Before this event, He had begun speaking more openly about His divine nature, revealing that He is greater and more ancient than the patriarch Abraham. The result was that they went to stone Him! So in order to calm their anger down, as Saint Theophylactos of Bulgaria notes, He came to heal the blind man, “softening their harshness and disobedience”.

Christ did not impose however, the saving “softness” and “calming” action of His miracles. Only he accepts who freely chants together with the hymnodist....and Francis Colins: “O Compassionate Lord, illumine my noetic eyes, ruined from dark sin, placing in humility and cleansing me with the tears of repentance”.

Archim. B. L.

SUNDAY MAY 13 2018 SUNDAY OF THE BLIND MAN, *The Holy Martyr Glyceria, Sergios the Confessor, Alexandros the Martyr, Pausikakos, Bishop of Synnada*

TONE OF THE WEEK : *Tone Plagal First*

EOTHINON : *Eighth Orthros Gospel*

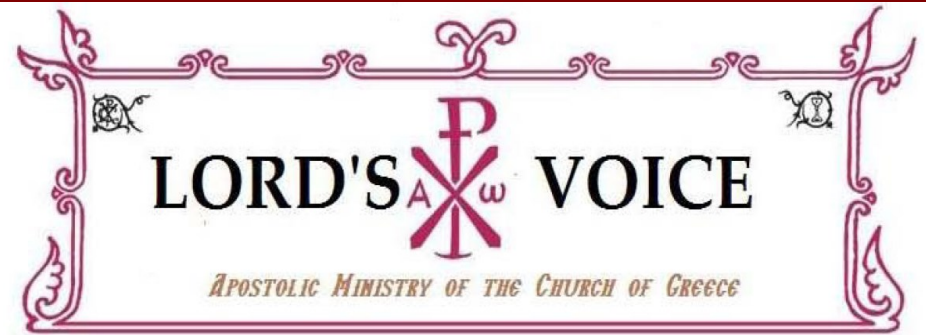
EPISTLE READING: *Acts of Apostles 16:16-34*

GOSPEL READING: *John 9:1-38*

NEXT SUNDAY, MAY 20, 2018, FATHERS OF THE 1ST COUNCIL, *The Holy Martyr Thalleleus, Mark the Hermit, Father Alexis, Metropolitan of Moscow, Lydia of Philippi, Equal to the Apostles, John, Joseph, and Nikitas the Monks of Chios*

EPISTLE READING: *Acts of Apostles 20:28-36*

GOSPEL READING: *John 17:1-13*



66TH YEAR MAY 13 2018 PAMPHLET #19 (3389)

VOLUNTARY AND INVOLUNTARY BLINDNESS

A little before Christ heals the man born blind, He told His disciples: “I am the light of the world”. If today we would hear someone maintaining the same thing, we would say rather that he needs a psychiatrist. There aren’t a few people however who consider themselves self-light. They believe that they don’t need anyone else’s light in their life, aside from their own mind. And together with the poet Chris Christovasilis they gloat saying:

On my own I became whatever I am. I don’t have another greater.

Good, evil, small big. I am the soul of the whole world.

I am god of myself, and even of my god

No one else has made me. My own self has made him!

The skill of receiving light

Fortunately, the man born blind wasn’t suffering from such a luciferian egotism. He had, according to Saint Dionysios the Aeropagite, “the skill of receiving light”, the ability to seek and to receive the true light. This showed from the fact that when Christ sent him to wash in the pool of Siloam, he did not grumble at the oddness of the command. He believed that Christ was at least more enlightened than he and he went. (Thus, before even finding his physical light, the eyes of his soul had begun opening, for him to correctly come to know Christ. And this made Christ seek him out, in order to “wash” also the eyes of his heart”, as Saint Augustine observes, and to grant him also the light of true faith.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN 9: 1-38

At that time, as Jesus passed by, he saw a man blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him. We must work the works of him who sent me, while it is day; night comes, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." As he said this, he spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle and anointed the man's eyes with the clay, saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar, said, "Is not this the man who used to sit and beg?" Some said, "It is he"; others said, "No, but he is like him." He said, "I am the man." They said to him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" He answered, "The man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash'; so I went and washed and received my sight." They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. The Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, "He put clay on my eyes and I washed, and I see." Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" There was a division among them. So they again said to the blind man, "What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet."

The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight, and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" His parents answered, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but how he now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age, he will speak for himself." His parents said this because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess him to be Christ he was to be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, "He is of age, ask him."

So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and said to him, "Give God the praise; we know that this man is a sinner." He answered, "Whether he is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I know, that though I was blind, now I see." They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he

open your eyes? He answered them, I have told you already and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you too want to become his disciples?" And they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." The man answered, "Why, this is a marvel! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." They answered him, "You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?" And they cast him out.

Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, "Do you believe in the Son of man?" He answered, "And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?" Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and it is he who speaks to you." He said, "Lord, I believe"; and he worshiped him.

A great contemporary scientist, the American geneticist, biologist and doctor, Francis Collins, admits that for 26 years he was an agnostic. He says characteristically: "My declaration, 'I don't know if God exists', reality meant, I don't want to know if God exists. It was more comfortable for me to ignore the need to give account to some God. Thus I implemented a manner of thought and behavior which I would call voluntary blindness or voluntary ignorance".

A destructive comfortableness

The Pharisees also suffered from such a voluntary blindness. It suited them also to ignore someone who was uncovering their hypocrisy, even if everything was telling them that He is the awaited Messiah. So for this reason, they did not want to admit what was self evident, that He is not able to not be "from God" He who did such an unheard of miracle. And they freaked hearing the healed blind man becoming their teacher.

On the contrary, the aforementioned American scientist of worldwide fame, accepted an unlettered and unhealed cancer patient in the final stage, to become his teacher! Her living faith, which made her forbear not only uncomplainingly but also glorifying God, led Collins to be disgusted at his voluntary blindness and to open his eyes to an unbiased research for the truth. He himself admits: "The more I understood God's presence and His light enlightened me, all the more darker did my own