

And the second is, that the irrational fish, on the one hand, are caught with the deception of the bait, whereas people are converted with the witness of the truth. This is a witness which has no relationship with the «plots of the Athenians», in other words, with the cloudy teachings of the ancient (and the recent) false philosophers. It is based on the simple and clear preaching of the fishermen apostles, who prove «the much sounding orators» to be “speechless fish”, as we read in the Salutations of the Theotokos.

The only “bait” which the apostles use, is the word of the Cross, the true witness of love for God, who was sacrificed for the salvation of the world. This is also the “gospel of the kingdom”, which Christ first preached and He called the fishermen apostles, to preach it to the nations. In a wonderful way, a troparion of the Paracleteki speaks about this: “by the net of the word, the fishermen overturning the plots of the orators by the reed of the Cross, enlightened the nations, to piously glorify You, the true God”

Archim. B.

**SUNDAY, JUNE 10, 2018 2ND SUNDAY OF MATTHEW,**

*Alexander and Antonina the Martyrs, Timothy, Bishop of Proussa, Our Holy Father Gregory, Bishop of Assos, Theophanes & Pansemne of Antioch, The Holy Martyrs of China.*

**TONE OF THE WEEK :** *First Tone*

**EOTHINON :** *Second Orthros Gospel*

**EPISTLE READING:** *Romans 2:10-16*

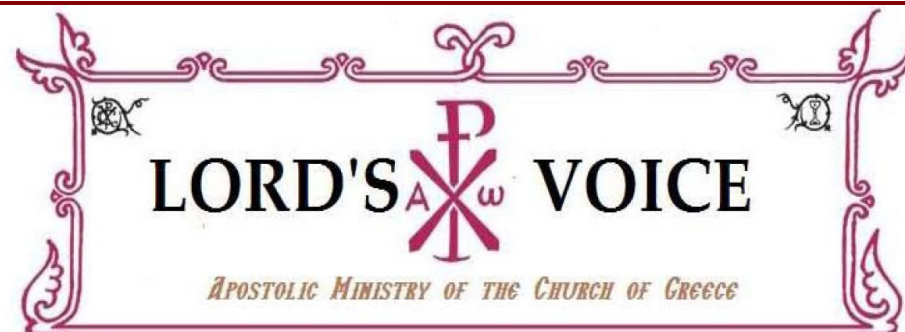
**GOSPEL READING:** *Matthew 4:18-23*

**NEXT SUNDAY, JUNE 17, 2018 3RD SUNDAY OF MATTHEW,**

*Isaurus the Holy Martyr & his Companions of Athens, Manuel, Sabel, & Ishmael the Martyrs of Persia, Righteous Father Botolph, Abbot of the Monastery of Ikanhoe, Alban the Protomartyr of Britain.*

**EPISTLE READING:** *Romans 5:1-10*

**GOSPEL READING:** *Matthew 6:22-33*



**66<sup>TH</sup> YEAR JUNE 10 2018 PAMPHLET #23 (3393)**

## “FISHERMEN OF MEN”

“The fishermen’s plate, 10 times is empty and one time full,” says our people wanting to show that this business is not so profitable. However Christ wanted poor fishermen to be his first disciples, as also poor shepherds were those who were granted first to worship Him. Wealth usually brings haughtiness and a feeling of self sufficiency, which prevent the person, on the one hand, from clearly seeing himself and, on the other hand, from seeking God correctly.

### What are you leaving for Christ?

Two pairs of brothers, Peter and Andrew, James and John, whom Christ first called to become His disciples, were seeking God with longing and sincerity. This shows from the fact that before they met Christ, they were disciples of Saint John the Baptist. And the Precious Forerunner was he who led them to Christ.

Their meeting with Christ, which is described in this gospel passage of Matthew, seems – according to the sacred Chrysostom – to be the second, after that one which the Evangelist John describes (1:35-43). This is documented also “from the quickly obeying and from the leaving everything”.

## THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW 4:18-23

At that time, as Jesus walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." Immediately they left their nets and followed him. And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left their boat and their father, and followed him. And he went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people.

A similar spirit is pushed also by the contemporary culture, which wants the faith to be a private matter, without having a relationship with the life of the community. However, the healthy witness of the believer, comprises an ecclesiastical event, which aims at embracing the whole community. The leaven is small, which has been called to knead the whole dough.

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In order to easily obey someone and, much more so, to leave everything and to follow him, presupposes that he has completely attracted you. And truly, according to the Evangelist John, the two disciples of the Forerunner, Andrew and John, from the first time they heard Christ

preaching, were so drawn by His words, that they asked Him where He lives and they went to stay with Him that day.

And now, they're leaving whatever was for them their life and they're following Christ. It is not important if they simply left a boat and a few nets. These things were for them their whole estate. With these, they were kept alive. And naturally they are not only leaving their material belongings, but also all their relatives! After a little while, they will hear Christ rewarding this disattachment of

theirs with the words: "he who loves his father or his mother more than me, is not worthy of me".

### **"I am your life"**

Probably the demand of Christ seems too costly. However whatever more we leave freely for Christ, all the more space we give Him, for Him to become for us, our life! He himself said it: "I am the way and the truth and the life". The more we empty ourselves from those things we consider that they fill our life, all the more, we fill with Him, who is our true life. And then we see even the simplest elements of our own human life, obtaining their true dimensions and the real beauty.

Four illiterate fishermen, open to surprise and to good charm, understand that without Christ, work, from an expression of healthy love for their own self and the others, ends up a tiresome routine and their relations with relatives, from a community of warmth, fall into a boring coexistence. They see in the person of Christ the true quality of life, and they make a leap of freedom from the little and the small, to the much and the infinite. They realize that for their own life up till now, the little and the small, and for the true life which is found before them the much and the infinite. Thus they leave both their work and their blood relations, and they follow Christ.

### **Become fishermen of men!**

And He honors them with the chief mission: "I will make you fishermen of men"! Thus the prophecy of the Prophet Jeremiah was verified: "behold, I'm sending the many fishermen, says the Lord. And they will fish men" (Jer. 16:16).

The fishing clearly differs from that fishing of men in two basic points: the first is that the fish, on the one hand, are fished, in order to die and to end up...at our table, whereas people are called, in order to live more truly than what they are living.