

philanthropy. Salvation is not a reward for our good works. It is a gift. It is offered freely. Only Christ saves us, granting us the baptism of rebirth which the Holy Spirit activates.

The word “rebirth” shakes the sacred Chrysostom. And with wonder he cries out: “My, my! We were so sunk in wickedness, so that we were not able to be cleansed but we needed rebirth. This is what the word regeneration means. At a house which is ready to fall apart, no one puts a buttress, nor does he connect it to old edifices. He tears it down from the foundations and rebuilds it. God also did the same thing. He did not repair us, but from the beginning He reconstructed us”. And naturally He did not make us a lifeless edifice, but He richly poured out the Holy Spirit upon us”. We blatantly treat our own self unjustly, when we “sadden the Holy Spirit” (Eph. 4:30) with our sins and we again make the house of our soul ready to fall apart. And we restore it every time, when going to commune, we tell Christ: “Lord, I’m not worthy for You to come beneath the roof of the house of my soul, because it is torn down. However, as You condescended to be born in a cave, condescend to enter also into my soiled body”.

Archim. B. L

SUNDAY JANUARY 6, 2019 *The Theophany of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Theophan the Recluse*

tone of the week :

EOETHINON : *Festal*

EPISTLE READING: *Titus 2:11-14;3:4-7*

GOSPEL READING: *Matthew 3:13-17*

NEXT SUNDAY SUNDAY, JANUARY 13, 2019 SUNDAY AFTER

EPHAPHANY, *The Holy Martyrs Hermylus and Stratonicus , Maximos the Righteous of Kapsokalyvia, Mount Athos , Afterfeast of the Theophany of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ .Hilary of Poitiers, Synaxis of the Most Holy Theotokos – Mediatress, Kentigern, Bishop of Glasgow*

EPISTLE READING: *Ephesians 4:7-13*

GOSPEL READING: *Matthew 4:12-17*



67TH YEAR JANUARY 6, 2019

PAMPHLET #1 (3423)

“GOD IS THE LORD AND HAS REVEALED HIMSELF TO US”

“Epiphany” and “Theophany” was from the beginning the most ancient feast of the Lord after Pascha, during which the Nativity was celebrated together with the Baptism of Christ. It was also called “Lights” obviously because it was associated, very early on, also with the Baptism of the catechumens.

The training of rejection

Probably no more appropriate Epistle Reading could be found than this excerpt from the pastoral Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Apostle Titus. After he advises the young pastor of Crete to support his “sheep” with the “healthy teaching”, he reminds him that the source of the renewing power of all people, is the “saving grace of God.” This grace is an invisible power, but it was revealed, “it appeared” in the person of the Incarnate Christ. And it is called “grace”, because we are saved for free, through the deliverance in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 3:24).

However Christ does not grant the “free” salvation to someone who does not want it. In such a case, it would not be salvation, but hell. The Grace of God and man’s freedom must cooperate. The grace of God acts, when man is also synergistically acting, freely accepting to

be trained and to do ascesis. The first gift of grace is that it guides us to this necessary ascesis, which aims to cleanse us

ST. PAUL'S LETTER TO TITUS 2:11-14; 3:4-7

TITUS, my son, the grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all men, training us to renounce irreligion and worldly passions, and to live sober, upright, and godly lives in this world, awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of the great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity and to purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit, which he poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life.

from the passions, and for us to make room, for the Savior Christ to come to be enthroned. It is an ascesis, which demands a definitive cutting off from "impiety and secular desires". In saying "impiety", the Apostle means the deceived teachings. And speaking of "secular desires", he is referring to the impure life. These things we must dynamically deny. The genuine ascetic, Saint John Chrysostom, notes it: "He did not say", he says, "that we should simply avoid impiety and secular desires, but we should deny them, and denial means aversion and hate for them".

Zealots of good works

Let us remember here, that before the "bath of regeneration", in other words, the baptism, to which the Apostle Paul will refer to immediately after, we intensely express the hate for sin, not only rejecting in words, the first worker and promoter of sin, the devil, but also spitting at him with aversion. This hate

springs from the desire that we live "chastely, righteously and piously". And chastity, according to the Golden-tongued one, is not only the abstinence from fornication but also of all the passions. Somewhere furthermore, Saint John, obviously in order to stir up the saving hate against them, composes a "zoology" of passions saying: "why are you telling me that you are a human, when you're kicking like a donkey, grabbing like a wolf, biting like a scorpion, you are gluttonous like a bear, revengefull like a camel, sly like a fox and you have a poison, worse than the viper?" So instead of us being in danger of resembling the rational animals, let us become "zealots of good works" allowing the saving grace of God to train us in the zealous ascesis of chastity, of righteousness and of piety.

Only thus are we granted not only "in the present age" to satiate the presence and "epiphany" of the Lord but also for us to joyfully await the future blessedness which we hope for, and the full revelation of the glory of the Great God and Savior Jesus Christ. We glorify these two Theophanies daily in the service of the matins chanting: "God is the Lord and has revealed himself to us. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord". Our Lord and God came "in meagerness" and He will come again "in glory". He was revealed "in the flesh" and we glorify, here and now, His saving "epiphany" in the life of His Church. And may He be glorified that He will come again "in the name of the Lord" in His second coming, to judge the world.

A free salvation and a bath of rebirth

In His first coming, as He Himself said it" I did not come to judge the world, but to save it". The Apostle Paul stresses it today also: "He sacrificed Himself to deliver us from every iniquity and to cleanse us, so that we become His own select people". Now henceforth the chosen people is not defined by a tribal descent. It is not only He who chooses. We also freely need to choose Him and become "zealots of good works" keeping His will. We must

always remember however, that these are not the works of
righteousness which will save us, but His mercy and His