

emanate (Matthew 15:18-19). For example, if a person avoids murder, but keeps in his heart hatred, disgust, and anger towards his brother, it does not mean that he has avoided sin; rather, he transforms the love owed to his neighbor, into selfishness, malice and hostility.

However, the Blood of Christ redeems us from this burden of sin, it enlightens us and deifies us. May our whole life be a perpetual praise to Him, who, nourishes us, as nursing infants, with His precious Blood, "the antidote so as to not die" (St. Ignatius the Godbear

Archim. N.K

**SUNDAY, APRIL 2, 2023 SUNDAY OF SAINT MARY OF EGYPT**, Titus the Wonderworker, Theodora the Virgin martyr of Palestine, Amphianos and Aedesios the martyrs of Lykia

**EPISTLE READING:** St. Paul's Letter to Hebrews 9: 11 – 14

**GOSPEL READING** : Mark 10: 32-45

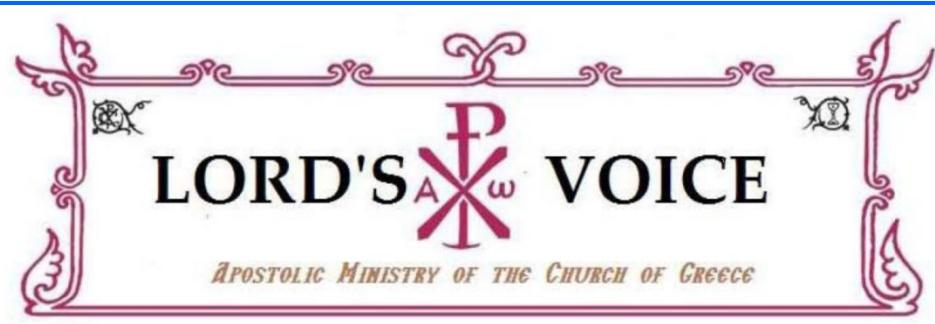
**TONE OF THE WEEK** : First Tone

**EOTHINON** : Eighth Eothinon

**SUNDAY, APRIL 9, 2023 PALM SUNDAY** The Holy Martyr Eupsychius of Caesarea Raphael, Nicholas, Irene, & Olympias of Mytilene Vadim the Righteous of Persia

**EPISTLE READING:** St. Paul's Letter to the Philippians 4:4 9

**GOSPEL READING** : John 12: 1-18



71<sup>ST</sup> YEAR APRIL 2 2023 PAMPHLET # 14 (3644)

## THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIS AND THE HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS

The closer we get to Holy Week, the more the Church helps us with her divine worship and word, to approach the Lord's immaculate Passion, the Crucifactory Sacrifice and Resurrection. This approach is inspired by faith, hope and love towards the person of Christ; and it takes place with the ardent desire to experience the mystery of Christ, through prayer, repentance, and brother-loving.

In this context, the image of Saint Mary of Egypt is presented as a bright example of deep repentance and sanctification. She fell into the abyss and darkness of debauchery; however, she was granted by God, with the power of the life-giving Cross, and the intercession of the Virgin, to experience the incomparable mystery of the love of Christ, and the cleansing of her conscience from her works of sin.

Her life, as an upward path of Christian ascesis, is very edifying, and deserves to be studied by every person. Furthermore, in the Epistle reading, it is pointed out that the

## THE SUNDAY EPISTLE HEBREWS 9:11 - 14

BRETHREN, when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

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sacrifice of Christ, His holy Blood, "cleanses your conscience from the dead works in worshiping the living God", (Hebrews 9:14). The Blood of Christ cleanses the human conscience from the dead works of sin. However, what is the conscience, and what is its criterion? In very simple words, the conscience is the viewpoint that a person can form about the moral character of his actions and the ability to distinguish good from evil. It is the perception about whatever manifests itself within in his soul, the marking of the inner workings of the mind, such as knowing, willing, intending, doubting, etc. It is, in a word, the natural law which God poses for man's natural progress.

The Holy Gospel is the criterion, now, for the formation of a healthy conscience, for those who believe in Christ. That is, the manifestation of God's truth and love in the world. Very aptly, the sacred Chrysostom emphasizes

that "then the conscience, the criterion of our soul is ill,... which, when it does not have the balance of its reasonings, fixed and oriented with precision on the law of God, it cannot judge the facts correctly, but wanders and is swayed".

### The cleansing of the conscience from dead works

No created power can penetrate the depths of man's conscience and cleanse it of sin. This is performed only by the uncreated energy of Christ, when a person with faith and repentance asks for forgiveness. Christ, with His infinite love, can fit in the heart of every believer who willingly opens the door of his soul. With the conscious and the prepared participation in the sacrament of the Eucharist, and the cultivation of the spiritual life, the power of sin is abolished, the soul is cleansed and man is reborn.

That is why Paul exclaims that "we have redemption through his blood" (Eph. 1:7), while the sacred Chrysostom says that the Blood of Christ "having been poured out, washed the whole world".

### The burden of sin

If, in the Old Testament, sin is understood mainly as a transgression of the moral law and religious regulations, in the New Testament, Christ revealed that the burden of sin, lies in man's interior, from where all its hideous forms