

both these giants of holiness (as also regarding many others) this gospel became the starting point of their wondrous dedication to Christ.

In times of poverty due to the financial crisis, probably many people will maintain that this gospel passage does not have many things to tell us. However, it is not only the many estates that keep us bound and don't allow us to follow Christ. Abba Dorotheos is not speaking of dangers when he advises: "Believe me, my brethren. If someone has handed himself over to merely one passion, he is in danger of losing his soul. You may do ten good works, and the one evil will be defeating them, into which you have been enslaved. Precisely like the eagle, if he completely escapes from the trap and is caught merely by his nail, he does not escape, thus also the soul. If it has been bound even by merely one passion, whatever hour the enemy wants, he defeats it". The priest Saprikios is a characteristic example, who, whereas he endured tortures for his faith in Christ, he not only lost the crown of martyrdom, but also his soul, due to his persistent revenge toward his friend and later holy martyr Nicephorus, who was begging him for forgiveness.

After these things, if we also "being very surprised" ask together with the Lord's disciples "who therefore is able to be saved?" Let us be consoled with His answer – invitation to more fervent faith: "Everything is possible for God".

Archim. B.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 19, 2018 12TH SUNDAY OF

MATTHEW, *Andrew the General & Martyr & his 2,593 soldiers, Holy Martyrs Timothy, Agapius and Thecla, Theophanes the New Wonderworker of Macedonia, Eutychianos and Strategios the Martyrs, Afterfeast of the Dormition of our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary*

TONE OF THE WEEK : *Tone Three*

EOTHINON : *First Orthros Gospel*

EPISTLE READING: *I Corinthians 15:1-11*

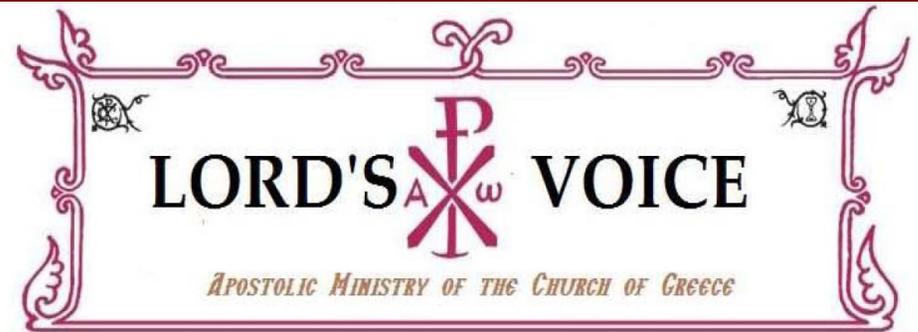
GOSPEL READING: *Matthew 19:16-26*

NEXT SUNDAY, AUGUST 26, 2018 13TH SUNDAY OF

MATTHEW *The Holy Martyrs Adrian and Natalie, Our Righteous Father Joseph*

EPISTLE READING: *I Corinthians 16:13-24*

GOSPEL READING: *Matthew 21:33-44*



66TH YEAR AUGUST 19 2018 PAMPHLET #33 (3403)

WHO CAN BE SAVED?

A strange youth

It is, to begin with, obvious that the quite unusual youth, who approached Christ in today's gospel passage, didn't have a wicked disposition. He didn't go "tempting", like that lawyer and some Pharisees. He was sincere. This is presumed also by the fact that hearing Christ's final exhortation "he departed" saddened". He was really seeking the kingdom of God. So for this reason also, the Evangelist Mark "completes" Matthew, saying that "Jesus having looked upon him loved him".

Young and rich, and being anxious about eternal life is a rather rare phenomenon. Young people historically don't do too well with the sacred preachers. Today's young people furthermore, and not only, when they hear someone speaking to them about eternal life, answer usually with the proverb "it's better to have five in the hand, than ten which you are waiting for". However, from what it seems, the youth who went to Christ, didn't settle even for the "ten" but he wanted much more and furthermore here and now. From a young child he kept his conscience clean, keeping to his ability, the divine will, which he knew well. It is certainly not small, for a young person to be doing a conscientious struggle to implement God's commandments.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW 19:16-26

At that time, a young man came up to Jesus, kneeling and saying, "Good Teacher, what good deed must I do, to have eternal life?" And he said to him, "Why do you call me good? One there is who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments." He said to him, "Which?" And Jesus said, "You shall not kill, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother, and You shall love your neighbor as yourself." The young man said to him, "All these I have observed; what do I still lack?" Jesus said to him, "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions.

And Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly, I say to you, it will be hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." When the disciples heard this they were greatly astonished, saying, "Who then can be saved?" But Jesus looked at them and said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

Furthermore however, it is more impressive that, despite his not unusual toils, he had not sunk either into self satisfaction nor into vainglory. Thus, realizing that he had rather achieved quite a few things for eternal life, he didn't say "bravo to me", but he asked "what do I still lack?" This question is a sign of maturity and prudence, virtues hard to find in young people.

What do I still lack?

Precisely with the opposite egotistical train of thought, another young fellow, to the exhortation of a great Christian writer to come to know Christ and to make Him the guide of his life, answered: "I fear

that Christ with His commandments will castrate my abilities and will cut off my wings for me to realize my dreams". Then the faithful Nobelista told him: "If you come to know Christ correctly and enter into the arena of ascesis of His Church, He will not leave you alone until you utilize your gifts to the utmost".

When a person asks Christ "what do I still lack?" He sets the firmest foundation of genuine spiritual progress. Saint Sisoës, making this question the daily springboard for new struggles, reached to the height of high-rising humility. He was seeing Christ coming "in glory" to take his soul, and he was asking Him to allow him to live a little more, so that he could set a beginning of repentance. On the contrary, whoever rests in his supposed virtues and admires himself about his moral achievements, in the best case, falls into the marsh of a dangerous stagnation, in order to wake up some night and to hear together with the foolish rich man: "while those things that you prepared, whose shall they be?"

Your heavenly treasure

The, in other respects, noteworthy youth who went to Christ, while he had not gotten stuck in the marsh of self satisfaction, had gotten caught in the trap of a passion, of possession-loving. And from what it seems, he had gotten firmly hooked in the love of his estates. Even the sacred Chrysostom is amazed seeing him who with such joy and eagerness approached Christ, when He asked him to leave everything and to follow Him, not finding the courage "even to answer, but being silent and becoming gloomy, to depart". And for one to think that Christ's suggestion was utterly attractive. "Did you see how many rewards, how many crowns, he places to this arena?" the golden-tongued one asks. It is not a small thing for Him to be telling you that you are just one step away from perfection. It is not negligible for Him to be promising you "treasure in the heavens".

If the young fellow had thought of it better, he would have realized that in the end, not only would he not have lost anything, but Christ would have added to him "not simply more, but also so many greater things, as greater is heaven than earth". If he had followed Christ, probably he also would have reached the measures of the holy Apostles or of Anthony the Great and Basil the Great, since regarding