

## PRIDE

The proud person is restless inwardly and outwardly noisy, and wants to empty words all the time, the hollow nuts he has, in order to make noise, and if he also has some strong one, and this is also full of egotism (like the broken nut) and when you touch his egotism, that's where all his passions will come out (like ants, when you touch the hollow trunk of the walnut).

Archim. E. L

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2024. SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN AND PHARISEE: TRIODION BEGINS TODAY**, Tarasius, Patriarch of Constantinople, Reginos, Bishop of Skopelos, Holy Martyr Alexander of Thrace, Markellos, Bishop of Apamea.

**EPISTLE READING** : St. Paul's Second Letter to Timothy 3:10-15

**GOSPEL READING** : Luke 18:10-14.

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

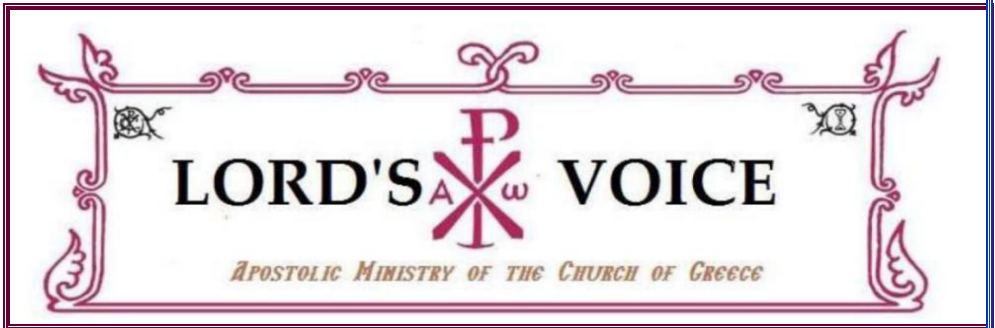
**EOTHINON** Fifth Eothinon

**SUNDAY, MARCH 03, 2024 SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL**

**SON**, The Holy Martyrs Eutropius, Cleonicus, and Basiliscus, Theodoretos the Holy Martyr of Antioch, Nonnita, mother of Saint David

**EPISTLE READING**: St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 6:12-20

**GOSPEL READING** : Luke 15:11-32.



72<sup>ST</sup> YEAR FEBRUARY 25 2024 PAMPHLET # 8 (3691)

### GOD, HAVE MERCY ON THE SINNER

The person who has faith in Christ always wants to meet Him and be with Him. Like the child who loves his father, he wants to feel that He is next to him.

Each of us meets Christ mainly in the Divine Liturgy and in prayer, therefore no matter how holy someone is, he feels he needs to pray more. However, prayer is not the reading or the recitation of psalms and hymns, but our heart's meeting with Christ.

### Two praying people

The two men in today's parable came to the temple to pray, but with a different approach and mood. The one, the Pharisee, stood in the center of the temple and with egotism addressed God to inform Him of what he had done. The other, the publican, stood almost at the

## GOSPEL READING : LUKE 18:10-14

The Lord said this parable, "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I get.' But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

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door, bowing his head and, feeling his sinfulness, asked for God's mercy and surely, he received it. Do you know why? Because the publican was talking to God, while the pharisee with himself. Let's notice the difference between these two people.

The publican comes to the temple crushed, and uncovers, bares himself with sincerity and confesses his sinfulness.

The Pharisee stood in the center of the temple, i.e. in front of God, he made himself a model, and compared himself to the sinful publican, and in the end, rewarded himself. So, for what reason did he come to the temple?

~~What relationship and reference does his prayer have to God? He made himself an idol and asked God to justify him! Egotism in all its glory. Criticism and hypocrisy, furthermore, became a way of praying. How much can the narcissistic person get disoriented?~~

## Repentance and brokenness

We must never forget that the first and greatest sin, is man's egotism. It is the source and womb of all passions. Our faith is not a dry adherence to some spiritual commandments, but a participation and experience of prayer, humility, and love. Dry observance leads to egotism and spiritual death, while lived experience attracts God's grace and mercy and saves us through repentance. That is why Christ emphasizes that "the publicans and harlots precede in the Kingdom of Heaven", because they believed and repented. The egotists, the Pharisees, however, will remain outside, because of their egotism and self-complacency.

All of us, brethren, hide within us the two figures of today's Gospel reading. Both the egotist-hypocrite, but also the -unjust robber, as is the publican. From what it seems, the unjust robber, as is the publican, repents more easily. However, both need repentance and contrition. Repentance saves us and brings us back to our senses, that is, to the natural state of the soul, which seeks Christ. Repentance is what makes a person graceful, sociable, honest, virtuous; that is, a true person.