



73rd Year

April 27, 2025

Pamphlet #17 (3752)

THE SUNDAY EPISTLE (Acts 5:12-20)

Go... and preach

In those days, many signs and wonders were done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high honor. And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women, so that they even carried out the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and pallets, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed. But the high priest rose up and all who were with him, that is, the party of the Sadducees, and filled with jealousy they arrested the apostles and put them in the common prison. But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out and said, "Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life."

THE PEOPLE, THE PILLAR OF THE CHURCH

Today's Epistle reading comes from the Acts of the Apostles, my brethren. The author of Acts refers to the actions of the Holy Apostles after the Resurrection of Christ. The Disciples, now strengthened by the experience of the

Resurrection, spread the Gospel, experiencing, on the one hand, the acceptance of the ordinary people, and on the other hand, the hostility and hatred of the unrepentant religious leaders of their time. In fact, in the passage, we heard that the Apostles performed miracles by the simple laying on of hands, according to the Lord's promise.

Testimony of the truth

The continuation of the passage describes the starkly opposite attitudes of the people and their religious leadership towards the Apostles. It is the same attitude that was often observed during the earthly ministry of the God-man. The people held great respect for the Apostles, with crowds of individuals approaching and joining them, seeking healing for their ailments, while believing that even the shadow of Peter was enough to bring healing. At the same time, the High Priests decided to imprison the Apostles, unaware that they were under the protection of God, whom no one can surpass or defeat. The Disciples were miraculously freed and continued preaching the truth.

The image described by the author of Acts informs us that "the rulers of the time maintained a negative and persecutory stance towards the Apostles." In contrast to this attitude of the establishment of power, the masses showed signs of approachability towards the new faith that was flourishing, thus creating a foundation at the base of the pyramid, providing positive elements of survival for the Church. Thus, already from its earliest steps, the Church relied on the heart of the people, who embraced this new religious movement with their souls and unbreakably established it.

The establishment of the Church

Authentic sources that we have testify that, as the popular base of the Church continuously expanded, the resistance from people in positions of power was systematically neutralized until, ultimately, even they succumbed to the

historical necessity of the Christian reality emerging from the bleak centuries of three hundred years of persecution.

This fact demonstrates that, aside from the protection of God, the faithful people are the support and strength of the Church. For this reason, the enemies of the Church, throughout the ages, have sought to poison and conquer the conscience of this people, aiming to leave the Church without foundations within society and to dismantle it easily. And this they attempted when they realized that faith cannot be uprooted from the hearts of people through persecution, threats, and torture.

History has shown that when these things occurred, faith became even more firmly established, and the Church emerged stronger from the trials. For this reason, those opposed to Christ and His Church engage in a continuous ideological struggle against the Church, attempting to portray it as unnecessary and outdated. Moreover, they do not hesitate to exploit human weaknesses and the failings of its members in order to manipulate consciences and lead them away from God.

Responsibility and mission

For this reason, we who make up the people of God must have an awareness of our role within the Church and a recognition of the strength our faith in God grants us. We must not allow opposing forces to continue dominating human hearts. These are the same forces responsible for the withering of society, the decline of morals, and the degradation of the spirit in our time.

We are duty-bound to rise to the level of our mission within the Church, repelling the attacks of the world that directly strike against our ecclesiastical conscience. The Church is Christ and all of us. And this is our self-awareness, which constitutes the greatest honor but also a continual responsibility.

Archimandrite E. Oik.

April 27, 2025: Sunday of Thomas (Antipascha)

Inauguration of the weekly recurring feast of Christ's Resurrection and the saving confession of the Apostle Thomas.
Simeon, Bishop of Jerusalem, relative of the Lord (†107).

Eothinon: 1 – Epistle: Acts 5:12-20 – Gospel: John 20:19-31

NEXT SUNDAY: May 4, Sunday of the Myrrh-Bearing Women
Epistle: Acts 6:1-7 – Gospel: Mark 15:43-16:8

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ΜΙΚΡΟ ΕΙΣΟΔΙΚΟ ΣΤΑ ΜΥΣΤΗΡΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑΣ ΜΑΣ ***(A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE MYSTERIES OF OUR CHURCH)***

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Greece

In an era when the Holy Mysteries are degraded by attitudes of vanity and pride into mere social ceremonies, stripped of their liturgical and sacramental character, it is essential and significant to understand what happens in the Church at every moment of worship and liturgical life. First, we learn, then we love, and finally, we believe. For this reason, the Apostolic Ministry has published this catechetical book, which succinctly analyzes the Holy Mysteries, their rituals, and liturgical symbolism. The book follows the monotonic writing system and is richly decorated with illustrative material. It is addressed to young people and families, and, more generally, to the broader readership that eagerly seeks to learn about the faith and the liturgical life.

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