

Sunday of the Fathers

The sections of the epistle and Gospel carry the content of the Sunday of the Fathers, the Sunday before the nativity of the Lord. The epistle names characters from the Old Testament, Gideon, Barak, and others, in addition to the prophets that spoke in a way or another about the Savior. While the section of the Gospel is taken from Matthew who mentions a lot of important characters that descend from Abraham and that Lord Jesus comes from and ends with Joseph Mary's betrothed. It ends with Joseph because the descent is for the person who's believed to be the father as Luke says about him in his ascending list of descent which starts with Joseph and ends with Adam.

The epistle speaks about the virtues of those: "they worked righteousness, obtained promises, escaped the edge of the sword, and out of weakness were made strong", it also spoke about their spiritual fight "they wandered in deserts and mountains", "And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, that they should not be made perfect apart from us". This means that there is no perfection until Christ's advent, and the key word here is faith.

Faith is also a character of those mentioned in the introduction of Matthew's Gospel; the content of this introduction that we are reading is faith. Matthew started with Abraham the father of the faithful since he is the first person that believed in one God. After that, Moses' Law comes, and then David the father of Christ.

Why all of these names? Matthew wanted to show that there is a sequence of faithful generations before Christ who didn't come to destroy but to fulfill. Jesus, in his human nature, descended from a faithful offspring and faith was fulfilled through him.

After mentioning all these descents, Matthew tells the story of the nativity of the Lord from Mary. The virgin shall be with child, and this has been said by prophet Isaiah, and bear a Son and they shall call his name Jesus (Joshua in Hebrew) which means "God saves" through this child who's not born by the will of man but of his Father who is in the heavens.

Joseph did not know Mary physically before giving birth. He also didn't know her after that, and she remained a virgin. She is the "ever virgin" as the fifth ecumenical council called her; and the expression "The brothers of Jesus" refers in the Hebrew language to his relatives,

and does not necessarily mean that they are from one mother. Here we do not have a chance to expand our talk about it; this is the faith of the church.

How should we welcome Jesus' nativity? It is a nativity of the salvation that we obtain through his death and resurrection. This is why the church called it "the small feast" and called Pascha "The big feast". Jesus was born from a virgin and wants to be born everyday spiritually from a virgin soul, i.e. a soul free from sins. The person that loves sin or wants it doesn't accept Jesus in his soul. The Lord was, physically, related to Abraham and his offspring. The important thing is to be related to Christ through your pure soul. Christmas, then, is accomplished everyday in you if you accepted to remove every deception, lie, impurity, hatred, revenge, and pride. If you gathered the beauties of virtue in your self, Jesus will come out from it to the world to illuminate the world with his grace.

Do not celebrate only by giving gifts to children; there is one gift the Father gave to all humans and it is Christ. If you obeyed him then you abide in him and he abides in you. When you carry the Lord inside your entity he will make you a gift for people. Love is the gift.

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