



My Beloved Ones,

This Sunday's Gospel is the parable of the Good Samaritan: *"A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead" (Luke 10:30)*. A Levite and a Priest ignored him, but our Lord says, a Samaritan came *"...and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend'" (Luke 10:34-35)*.

One way of reading the parable is to see the man as humanity on our journey through life, where we are all harmed, physically and spiritually, through sin. Salvation comes to us, not by the letter of the Law, but its spirit, in the person of Jesus Christ. Like the Good Samaritan, Jesus is "the physician of our souls and

bodies", who offers us the wine of the New Covenant and the oil of God's Grace. The inn is the Church, and the two denarii represent Scripture and Tradition, which the Lord has given to us to use wisely until He returns.

On November 8th, the Metropolis of Atlanta was blessed to observe its Name Day. This weekend, we shall once again celebrate our Patronal Feast by honoring two individuals from each community who exhibit the same spirit as Archangel Michael & the Good Samaritan. I kept the Honors Banquet in mind when reading not only the Gospel, but also this week's Epistle, where St. Paul tells the Corinthians, *"...God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work... He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your resources and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for great generosity, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God..." (2 Corinthians 9:7-8; 10-11)*.

We can see how appropriate these readings are for our "Michaels". Like the Good Samaritan, they do not perform their acts to receive the earthly glory of the Priest & Levite, but only because of their love for our Orthodox Church. And also unlike the lawyer, whose testing of our Lord brings out the parable, our honorees truly can be said to *"...love the Lord [their] God with all [their] heart, and with all [their] soul, and with all [their] strength, and with all [their] mind; and [their] neighbor as [themselves]" (Luke 10:27)*. May the same be said of each of us, as we seek to find inspiration from their examples, so that we too may enter the coming season of thanksgiving and light ready to offer spiritual fruits for our own harvest of righteousness.

+ALEXIOS

Metropolitan of Atlanta