



61st Year

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THE CHRISTIAN ETHOS

The apostle Paul calls all Christians to behave to all people without exception with kindness. "May your meekness be made known to all people" (Phil. 4:5). Kindness as an expression of sympathy, leniency, understanding and support to one's neighbor is a sign of the Christian ethos. Because it springs from the cultivation of our faith in Christ, who is Merciful and Philanthropic. It is the common virtue of the Christian character which has been trained in the virtues of the Gospel. It is a sign of the ecclesiastical ethos.

The root of the Christian ethos

As Basil the Great mentions "the root of our actions which are expressed with the motions and the actions of the body is the will which we have in the heart". In other words, the disposition, the eagerness and the desire of the heart define our behavior as Christians. If it is inspired and directed by the grace of Holy Spirit then the fruit will be good. If it is swayed by the flame and the desire of the passions then the fruit will be evil. Because the content of the heart pollutes or sanctifies our behavior.

Four foundational virtues which cultivate the Christian ethos

In order for the Christian ethos to be supported, we need to pursue basic virtues, as the Apostle Paul defines them. The first pursuit is: "Whichever are true". As St. Nicodemos interprets, evil is falsehood, because it comes from the father of falsehood, the devil. Whereas the virtue of kindness comes from the Spirit of truth, who is God. For this reason, we must confess the truth and put forward our activities with truth as the compass. Let us not be hypocritical and say lies in order to become pleasing to others. Because we do not become colleagues of God, but the devil.

The second pursuit is: "Whichever are chaste". Unseemly behavior chases the grace of God away and insults and pushes the others away. Immodest movements, lewd words, the lack of respect

do not support the Christian ethos but come from an impious way of life. On the contrary, chaste behavior witnesses a soul which respects God and her fellow man. Such a behavior is cultivated in the area of divine worship by the believers with fear, faith and love. And it is poured out onto society.

The third pursuit is: "Whichever are pure". Pure are the works of chastity, the ascesis of temperance of the senses and the God-imitating virtue of virginity. Basil the Great stresses that purity sets out from a pure mind. When our thoughts are pious, then the heart also follows and wills the good and man does the good thing. On this the apostle Paul says "these things you think... these things you do" (Phil. 4:9). If we think with truth, with chastity and with purity, then we do deeds in the same manner. Because the root of evil deeds is the thought of man (St. Nicodemos). In other words, the desire of the heart and the thought of the mind formulate the Christian ethos.

The fourth pursuit: "Whichever are beloved". Only the works which are beloved to God are pleasing before Him and comfort the conscience of the believer. Because they contain the grace of the Holy Spirit. And what is more beloved to God than His Gospel, since there the will of God is documented. In other words, if we harmonize our way of behavior with the teaching of the Gospel, then with the grace of the Holy Spirit we also become beloved, accepted by God. Christ is the good pleasure of the Father who exhorts us to listen to Him: "be listening to him".

If we seek to formulate our life contrary to the will of God, then we have a clash both with our conscience as well as with the others. But also with God himself. The many "why my God's" many times don't find their answer. We must harmonize ourselves more to the divine will. Only He knows the criterion of God about what is truly good, much more so than us. We should always have in our mind the "not as I want, but as you do" which Christ said in His prayer before His passion. With this phrase the Lord formulated the ethos of the Church, the Christian ethos. An ethos which is associated with the good disposition, the sense of righteousness and of sacrifice.

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