

devil and sins with his own responsibility and condemns himself to perdition.

The influence from contemporary heresies

In our age contemporary heresies are presented with a mask. They don't present themselves with an intense religious element, but as groups with a social character and a Christian covering, without an offensive projection, or even with an intense pagan manner of approach. They aim at the psychological freedom of young people mainly, and they present solutions to their existential impasses or their youthful questions, flattering or even sanctifying their weaknesses as supposed gifts and virtues. Of course, this effort presents an ephemeral satisfaction, but subsequently leads to footpaths whose impasses are henceforth unsurpassable and to a feeling of despair and of losing hope before the gates of their existence.

The spiritual and compunctionate atmosphere of the worship life of our Orthodox Church really offers to those young people with a good disposition who are seeking meaning, truth and quality of life in their lives, an infallible knowledge of the Truth, certainty of faith, understanding, loving care and fatherhood with the life-giving grace of the Holy Spirit which constantly breathes, and enlightens and comforts, through the sacred services and the mystery of the Divine Liturgy.

Archim. Ch. N.

SUNDAY October 13 Sunday of the 7th Ecumenical Council

4th Sunday of Luke, Carpus, Papyrus, Agathodorus, & Agathonica, the Martyrs of Pergamus, Benjamin the Deacon, Chryssi the New Martyr of Greece

Grave Tone, Fifth Eothinon, -**Epistle** St. Paul's Letter to Titus 3:8-15,
Gospel Luke 8:5-15

NEXT SUNDAY October 20 6th Sunday of Luke, Epistle St.

Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians 6:16-18; 7:1, **Gospel** Luke 8:26-39



61st Year October 13, 2013 Pamphlet # 41 (3150)

“HERESY AS A DECEPTION OF THE DEVIL”

In today's Epistle reading the Apostle Paul advises us to not lose time being occupied with heretics, when they persist in their deceptive beliefs and don't show a disposition to change. And thus we are given the opportunity to refer to the hot topic of heresies.

From the first apostolic years heresies appeared that concerned and still concern the Church. Judaizing heresies, agnostic and gnostic ones, Manichaeans, Nikolaites, Montanists and others, had as a purpose, the falsification and perversion of the “healthy teaching” of the Gospel (Tit. 2:8). The great heresy of Arianism and the heresies of Nestorianism and Monophysitism concerned and tortured the Church of Christ for a long time, trying to pervert the Orthodox faith in the Triune God and the person of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But also later on heretical beliefs and interventions in the divinely inspired dogmas of faith and worship caused schisms in the body of the one, holy Apostolic Church, many of which are preserved to this day. The Apostles and Fathers, monastic saints and confessors, were persecuted and underwent various trials and tortures to keep the Orthodox teaching of the holy Church of Christ without deception. And with the gathering of the holy Ecumenical Synods they made Orthodoxy firm for the glory of Holy God and for the enlightenment of the believers.

SUNDAY'S EPISTLE **St. Paul's Letter to Titus 8:5-15**

TITUS, my son, the saying is sure. I desire you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to apply themselves to good deeds; these are excellent and profitable to men. But avoid stupid controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels over the law, for they are unprofitable and futile. As for a man who is factious, after admonishing him once or twice, have nothing more to do with him, knowing that such a person is perverted and sinful; he is self-condemned. When I send Artemas or Tychicos to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. Do your best to speed Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way; see that they lack nothing. And let our people learn to apply themselves to good deeds, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not to be unfruitful.

All who are with me send greeting to you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen.

The main cause of heresies

Heresy is a deception, in other words, a perversion of the truth about God, as this was revealed and taught by Jesus Christ, as it was preached and documented by the holy Apostles and Evangelists, as it was preached and handed down by the god-bearing Fathers of the Church, and as it is confessed by our Orthodox Church. The words of our Lord are characteristic: "See that no one deceive you" (Matt. 24:4). Let us be careful that someone not stray us from the truth, which is Christ, and he project to us some other "Christ" who has no relationship with Him. Because, as the Lord continues, "many shall come in my name saying, I am the Christ, and they shall deceive many" (verse 5). They shall use the name of Christ to project and set up the deception.

The anti-Christian heresies used and continue to use this method. They project falsehood with the covering of Christ. In other words, they present the Antichrist in the form of Christ. And this methodology of the heretics betrays the craftiness of the devil. This means that behind the deception and the heresy Satan always exists,

the father and creator of falsehood and of deception. The Evangelist John notes it to us: "Who is the liar except he who denies that Jesus is not the Christ?" (1 Jn. 2: 22). In other words, whoever denies the divine and the human nature of Christ, he is lying, even if he is calling on the name of Christ. Because as Saint John again tells us, "every spirit which does not confess Jesus Christ having come in the flesh is not of God" (4:3). Whichever person or even angel does not confess that the Son of God and Lord Jesus came to the earth and took human flesh (became man), he is not of God, but he is urged by the Antichrist himself. Because he denies the Son of God, he does not believe in God the Father either (2:23). This is the mark of the Antichrist who deceives people: "This is the Antichrist, who denies the Father and the Son (verse 22).

Persistence in deception a sign of the devil's presence

The Apostle Paul very wisely advises his disciple and Apostle Titus to not delay with the heretics if they do not have a disposition to change. "After the first and second counsel give up" he notes to him. From the moment efforts are put forth so that the deceived heretic perceives his deception and knows the truth, but he is not delivered from the deception, then he has voluntarily been swayed by the demon of deception.

The Apostle Paul in his first Epistle to Timothy writes that the Holy Spirit says literally and clearcut, that in the latter times some will apostatize from the faith and will pay attention to spirits of deception and to teachings dictated by the demons. And it is almost impossible for the heretics to be turned from their deception. As the fathers of the desert mention in the Gerontikon (i.e. Sayings of the Desert Fathers) the demons of deception bring great resistance, they have stubbornness and do not accept whatsoever convincing word, even though they themselves believe and tremble in the presence of Christ. They do not allow, however, the person who they are influencing to recover. So for this reason also, the Apostle Paul in today's Epistle reading says that "such a one is perverted and sins being self condemned", in other words, the unconvincable heretic has been perverted spiritually with the influence of the deception of the