

The edifice of the Church

When the Lord Jesus spread out his immaculate hands on the Cross, he included all people, those privileged and not, in one society, in one body, in one common faith in the one true God. He became the rock upon which whoever believed in Him constructed their hopes. And they were not disappointed. Because they built “one holy temple in the Lord”, as the Apostle tells us. The holy temple is the Church of Christ, which sets out from here and passes to the heavens, reaches up to the holy of holies of the Almighty God. The edifice of the Church accepts all people and makes them fellow inhabitants with the saints and the angels. Because among them is the founder of the Church of Christ. And the Great High Priest makes us inhabitants and communicants of the dwelling place of the Almighty God in the life-giving and pacifying grace of the All Holy Spirit.

So let's consider, whoever is still building on the vanity of the world, if whatever we are building will secure for us whatever we are hoping for. Because in our effort to make the world our possession, it happens that we ascertain to our surprise and disappointment, that “we will dwell in the tomb”.

Archim. Ch. N.

SUNDAY December 8th 10th Sunday of Luke , Forefeast of the Conception by St. Anna of the Most Holy Theotokos , Patapius the Righteous of Thebes , Apollo, Tychikos, Sosthenes, Cephas, Epaphroditos, Caesar, & Onesiphoros, Apostles of the 70

Grave Tone, Second Eothinon, -Epistle St.Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 2:14-22 , Gospel Luke 13:10-17

NEXT SUNDAY December 15th 11th Sunday of Luke, Epistle St.Paul's Letter to the **Timothy 1:8-18** Gospel Luke 14:16-24



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THE CORNERSTONE OF PEACE

Christ with His presence on earth had one goal: To pacify men with God. So for this reason also the Apostle Paul says that Christ “is our peace”. Sin as a negation of the divine commandments disturbed spiritual peace between God and men, but also between men. Man didn't only depart from God, but also people from each other. And God's first was to reveal sin through the law, so that the distinction could occur between sin and God's will. The “block” of the Law entered and showed forth the “enmity of aversion both between people as also between God. The Jews had the law which defined their behaviors and the Gentiles “the gentiles which do not have law” (Rom. 2:14-15) had the law of conscience.

The Cross of Christ as a sign of reconciliation

To restore this peace, the enmity which was caused by the presence of sin had to be abolished and for the block to fall, which the law placed and prevented the restoration of peace. And this happened “through the grace of the rebirth of Christ” Basil the Great interprets:

SUNDAY'S EPISTLE St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 6:11-18

BRETHREN, see with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that would compel you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. For even those who receive circumcision do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may glory in your flesh. But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. Peace and mercy be upon all who walk by this rule, upon the Israel of God. Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen.

This means “through the (grace) of the cross” which the Apostle says. The delivering grace of the crucifactory sacrifice of the Lord abolished the enmity between God and man and broke the block of the commandments of the law. Because “in his flesh” the restoration of peace occurred. Jesus pacified people with God and between them on the Cross.

Church: the place of peace

The flesh of Christ is the body of the Church which sanctified it with His precious Blood. In the Church the conciliation and the union of men occurred, Jews and Gentiles, “in one body to God”, because sin does not exist and the works of the law don't apply, but faith and the works of faith. In the Church the “new man” was built, the man who believed in Christ and his work and was united with him in the Church. The person who became pacified with God and his fellow men, based on the “corner stone” which is Christ. He is the stone which

supports, maintains, sanctifies and deifies all the members of the Church, who have one common element: their faith in the person of the Godman Christ and in the work of his salvation.

The believers participate in the edifice of peace

The Prophets and the Apostles based their preaching On Him and the Fathers of the Church followed with their teaching. And we, the Ap. Paul advises us, should build our salvation on these foundations. Let us not build on the sand of delusion, of division and of disturbance, of sin and our vainglory. We need God and this means that we need the Church. If we wish to participate in the sanctification which our Orthodox worship, the sacramental life of the Church offers, then we should place the stone of our hope there. Because he unites with the hopes of all believers, he communes with them and partakes in grace, in peace and in the sanctification of God with boldness and the power of the person of Christ, who is the Son of God.

The human edifices

Development in our age is a common goal of many societies. And many developmental works cause amazement, which demand great technical knowledge, much money. Extremely huge buildings, bridges, dams, arenas, avenues, monuments all struggle to surpass one another. From a first glance they reveal the ability of the human spirit to create, to develop, to produce civilization. A second, however, view reveals man's vainglory to dominate.

If we calculate the innumerable expenditures for these works and simultaneously think of social strata who are struggling to survive, people who are deprived of basic goods, then the human ambition to prevail and dominate is altered to vainglory for the person himself. Because the measure of supporting one another, of unity is missing. The foundation of common participation, of common enjoyment of the goods is missing. Edifices and works don't unite people, if others are enjoying them and others are deprived of them. On the contrary, they create conditions of social and moral destabilization.