



73<sup>rd</sup> Year

August 3, 2025

Pamphlet #31 (3766)

---

## **THE SUNDAY EPISTLE (1 Corinthians 1:10-17)**

### **Unity in Christ**

*Brethren, I appeal to you by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree and that there be no dissensions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brethren. What I mean is that each one of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispos and Gaius; lest any one should say that you were baptized in my name. (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized any one else.) For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.*

---

## **THE FRAGMENTATION OF THE CHURCH'S UNITY**

Paul seeks to heal the behaviors threatening the unity of the Church of Corinth in his First Epistle to the Corinthians. He calls for harmony and unity, while expressing sorrow over the discord caused by selfish attitudes and conduct. He teaches that we all belong to Christ, having been baptized in His name, and therefore it is impermissible to be attached to individual persons

whose various gifts impress us who are entrusted with our spiritual guidance.

The issue of division has troubled the Church from the very beginning, as many undermined her unity. This same problem continues throughout her historical journey, validating our Lord's profound concern, who, in His hour of deep agony, prayed fervently for the preservation of unity within her fold (John 17:11). Drawing from Paul's words, we will highlight the factors that act destructively upon the unity of the Church.

### **Schisms and heresies**

The first factor of division is schism. These are fractures of an administrative nature, stemming from the egotism of their instigators but also from the cultivation of a climate of religious fanaticism and an unjustified ultraconservatism. Such attitudes lead to the questioning of ecclesiastical order and to disobedience toward the canonical Church leadership. Even if schisms do not directly damage the unity of faith, they distort the very nature of the Church and injure love. That is why Saint John Chrysostom observes that: "Nothing provokes God more than the division of the Church; there is nothing worse than strife, conflict, and the rending of the Church and of Christ's tunic, which even the thieves crucified alongside Him dared not tear and divide into many pieces." He further stresses that "not even the blood of martyrdom can erase the sin of schism."

The second factor is heresy. Heresies violate the principles of faith and distort right doctrine, as preserved in Holy Scripture and Sacred Tradition. They lead to error, which destroys the prospect of salvation. A late university professor once remarked, "Nothing threatens our faith and salvation more than error." Error – every kind of error – obscures or falsifies the faith, leading to a form of "belief" that cannot save, cannot unite a person with the uncreated grace of the Triune God, because it functions as blasphemy. There is the "spirit of truth," which comes from God, and the "spirit of deception," which comes from

the devil (1 John 4:6). The purpose of pastoral ministry of our Church is to safeguard man from the “spirit of error.” For, as Saint James the brother of God says (5:20), “he who brings a sinner back from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.”

## **Elderism as a factor of division**

The third contributing factor is elderism. This refers to the tendency to group members of the Church, not under the protection of Christ, but around a single elder – a spiritual father who is considered the ultimate authority, whose word is treated as “gospel.” Often, this phenomenon is stoked by the elders themselves, who thereby gratify their vainglory. However, the role of an elder should not be to create followers, but to lead his spiritual children toward Christ. He himself ought to be the ladder that unites the faithful to Christ, breaking down the walls raised between them by sin.

From the above, it is concluded that great discernment and attentiveness are needed to avoid the temptations that threaten the unity of the Church and that take on various forms at different times. Let’s not forget that we do not belong to humans but to the Savior Christ. We do not follow fanatical or subjective human teachings, but the Gospel of Christ, which lives and remains uncorrupted through the ages.

Archimandrite E. Oik.

---

### **From the publications of the Apostolic Ministry:**

#### **THE NEW TESTAMENT**

The original text according to the edition of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, with a Modern Greek rendering by Emeritus Professor Christos Voulgaris.

August 3, 2025: 8th Sunday of Matthew

Venerable Dalmatus, Faustus, and Isaacius; Venerable Theoklito;  
Salome the Myrrhbearer; Theodora of Thessaloniki

Grave Tone – Eothinon: 8 – Epistle: 1 Corinthians 1:10-17  
– Gospel: Matthew 14:14-22

NEXT SUNDAY: August 10, 9th Sunday of Matthew  
Epistle: 1 Corinthians 3:9-17 – Gospel: Matthew 14:22-34

### **From the publications of the Apostolic Ministry:**

***ΧΑΙΡΟΙΣ, ΠΑΝΤΕΥΛΟΓΗΤΕ ΜΑΡΙΑΜ***  
***(REJOICE, O ALL-BLESSED MARY)***

1st Edition, in Greek, Size 17x24 cm, 696 pages  
By the Metropolitan of Beroia, Naousa and Kampania,  
Panteleimon Kalpakidis

A collection of homilies centered on the Mother of God, delivered between the years 2014–2024, commemorating: The Nativity of the Theotokos, the Entrance into the Temple, the Annunciation, the Akathist Hymn and the Salutations to the Theotokos, the feast of Panagia Soumela, the Life-Giving Spring, and the Protection of the Theotokos. Also included are festal encyclicals for the feasts of the Annunciation and the Dormition of the Theotokos. This volume represents the third collection of texts dedicated to the Theotokos, following the two prior volumes from the previous two decades of the esteemed Metropolitan's archpastoral ministry (1994–2014), published under the title "O All-Hymned Mother." The publication is prefaced by: His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and His Beatitude Archbishop Jerome of Athens and All Greece.

---

Follow the Program of the Radio Station of the Church of Greece:

**[www.ecclesia.gr](http://www.ecclesia.gr)**

---

*VOICE OF THE LORD*, a weekly pamphlet of Orthodox faith and life of the "Apostolic Ministry of the Church of Greece". Iasiou 1, 115 21 Athens. Publisher – Director: Metropolitan of Phanariou, Agathangelos. Editorial office, tel. 210.7272.331. Processing, tel. 210.7272.388. Through the holy churches, it is distributed free of charge. From the Printing Office of the Apostolic Ministry.

---

The *VOICE OF THE LORD* worldwide via the Internet:

**[www.apostoliki-diakonia.gr](http://www.apostoliki-diakonia.gr)**

---