



73rd Year

October 12, 2025

Pamphlet #41 (3776)

THE SUNDAY EPISTLE (Titus 3:8-15)

Apostolic exhortations

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.

DEALING WITH HERETICS

Concluding his letter to his disciple Titus, the Apostle Paul refers to the way heretics should be dealt with by the shepherds of the Church, for the protection of the flock. He advises pointedly: "Warn a divisive person once, and then warn them a second time. After that, have nothing to do with them..." (Titus 3:10). This reference, by the Apostle to the Gentiles, provides an

opportunity to reflect on the landscape of heresies and para-religious movements as they appear in our time, and the stance we must take as members of the Church toward them. At the same time, it proclaims the wisdom of our Church, which placed this particular Apostolic passage on this Sunday, when we honor the assembly of the Holy Fathers who convened the Seventh Ecumenical Council in Nicaea in 787 “against the Iconoclasts, and anathematized in writing every heresy and the leaders of heresies, and then all the Iconoclasts...” (Synaxarion of the Sunday of the Holy Fathers).

Erroneous teaching

As a learned hierarch points out, “In today’s established theological experience and language, heresy is defined as erroneous teaching that deviates from the genuine faith, and at the same time, any distinct Christian community that disagrees with the doctrinal teaching of the true Church and is cut off from communion and unity with it.” The severance of communion leads to exclusion from the possibility of salvation, since salvation is achieved only within the Church, where the saving teaching of Jesus Christ is preserved in its genuine and authentic form.

Heresies are not a new issue in the life of the Church. They appeared as early as the post-apostolic era and caused numerous problems for the Church which, after the persecutions, was free and called to confront heresiarchs who emerged from within its own ranks and held significant influence over the faithful. However, they also became a catalyst for the shaping and defining of the Church’s doctrinal teachings and for the emergence of the great Holy Fathers and theologians of our faith, who acted and flourished theologically during the period of the Seven Holy Ecumenical Councils.

Newly appearing heresies and para-religious groups

Beyond their religious aspect, however, heresies and the parallel para-religious movements, often having clear financial

and at times criminal foundations, take on dimensions that pose a danger for our society. The late primate of the Church of Greece had pointed out that “the problems arising from the activities of newly appearing heresies and para-religious groups no longer concern only the local Churches, but also the parliaments of European countries and even the European Parliament itself, which regard such activity and its consequences as a very serious social problem.”

The Church’s response to heresies and their leaders is extremely strict, because their actions are divisive and destructive to the life of the Church itself, to the family, and to society. Heresiarchs are considered – and indeed are – demon-driven minds who, with full awareness, corrupt consciences, extract enormous personal financial gain, lead people to spiritual and physical ruin, cause family tragedies and disasters, fund criminal organizations that threaten social and global peace, and wear a religious mask to deceive those who are lukewarm in faith. In the face of such individuals, the Church stands with a denunciatory and absolute voice, fully aware of its pastoral responsibility toward its flock.

However, the victims of heresies – often ordinary people next door – are considered and truly are misled brothers and sisters in need of help and spiritual solidarity. Even if they do not conform to the Orthodox faith despite our repeated efforts, they must never be excluded from our prayers, which should be warm and continuous on their behalf. Even if they respond with irony and arrogance, defending their delusion, we are called to treat them with kindness and love, refusing to succumb to the temptation of vengeance or hatred and religious fanaticism, praying that the God of truth may have mercy on them, enlighten them, and once again lead them back to the secure fold of His Holy Church. Amen!

Archimandrite E. Oik.

October 12, 2025: 4th Sunday of Luke

Commemoration of the God-bearing Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council in Nicaea (787). Martyrs Probus, Tarachus, and Andronikos (†850); Martyr Domnina; Saint Symeon the New Theologian (†1022); the Synaxis of All Saints of Athens.

1st Tone – Eothinon: 7 – Epistle: Titus 3:8-15
– Gospel: Luke 8:5-15

NEXT SUNDAY: October 19, 3rd Sunday of Luke
Epistle: 2 Corinthians 11:31-12:9 – Gospel: Luke 7:11-16

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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.

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