



73rd Year

November 30, 2025

Pamphlet #48 (3783)

THE SUNDAY EPISTLE (1 Corinthians 4:9-16)

The apostolic work

Brethren, God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute. To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are ill-clad and buffeted and homeless, and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we try to conciliate; we have become, and are now, as the refuse of the world, the off-scouring of all things. I do not write this to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. I urge you, then, be imitators of me.

THE SPIRITUAL FATHER

As an authentic Spiritual Father, the Apostle Paul speaks to the Corinthians. He points out that although many may speak and teach about Christ, only he is their Spiritual Father, because he gave birth to them in Christ through the sacred Gospel. He is their Father because he endured the spiritual labor, from which

arises a strong and blessed spiritual relationship, even higher than the physical one.

The multidimensional spiritual fatherhood

The person of the Spiritual Father has been firmly established throughout the life of the Church. But who is the authentic Spiritual Father who plays a decisive role in the spiritual journey of the faithful? According to a learned Hierarchy: "The Spiritual Father must truly be 'spiritual,' he must be a father, a priest, able to liturgize, to pray, to know how to lean on God, and not be a mere social worker who is doing a religious 'hobby.' The Spiritual Father is not a counselor who gives advice, nor a teacher who instructs, nor a prosecutor who judges. The Spiritual Father is a father who embraces, a friend who liberates, a brother who forgives; he is a mystagogue who ministers the mystery of the soul. He is not the one who merely knows, but the one who loves God as his Father, and every person as a child of God. The Spiritual Father has the grace of the Priesthood, provided he keeps it warm and active within himself. If he preserves it in this way, then God grants much and in many ways."

The love and recognition we owe to our Spiritual Father must be proportionate to the work he accomplishes in our soul. Related to this, Saint Gregory Palamas teaches: "How greatly must you honor and love the one who became your spiritual father? He is the one who transformed you from mere existence into true "well-being," who imparted to you the illumination of knowledge, who taught you the revelation of truth, who regenerated you through the bath of rebirth, who entrusted to you the hope of resurrection, of immortality, and of the unfading kingdom and inheritance. He made you, from being unworthy, worthy of eternal blessings; heavenly instead of earthly, eternal instead of temporary; a son and disciple not of man, but of the God-Man Jesus Christ, who granted you the spirit of adoption..."

The honor and obedience owed

Because the Spiritual Father plays such an important role in our spiritual life, we owe him honor and obedience, since he serves as the safe path that unites us with God. For this reason, an ever memorable and God-wise spiritual father of countless Christians once said: "It is preferable to fall out with God than with your Spiritual Father. For if you fall out with God, your spiritual father will reconcile you again with Him; but if you fall out with your Spiritual Father, the road to God is cut off."

In our secularized age, the presence of the Spiritual Father in people's lives is considered unnecessary. Even his presentation by the Church as a spiritual authority – provided he always fulfills the necessary conditions for this – provokes irony or even rejection, because our age denies authorities, idolizes egoism, and undervalues the life of the Church. For this reason, to have a Spiritual Father is an act of resistance against the current of the times, to preserve with him a blessed relationship of spiritual freedom and acceptance, seeking spiritual guidance and release from the burden of sins.

The message that the Apostle to the Nations sends today is that in our spiritual life we need a "guide toward Christ," an unfailing guide, a radiant angel, who will safely lead us on the path of our spiritual perfection. Those who already have him should make use of him, renewing and enriching their relationship with him. Those who do not yet have him should acquire one, so that our life may gain true meaning and the perspective of eternity. May it be!

Archimandrite E. Oik.

November 30, 2025: Sunday of Andrew the Apostle, the First-Called

Frumentius, Archbishop of Abyssina (Ethiopia) († 380),
and Alexander of Methymna.

Pl. 4th Tone – Eothinon: 3 – Epistle: 1 Corinthians 4:9-16
– Gospel: John 1:35-52

NEXT SUNDAY: December 7, 10th Sunday of Luke
Epistle: Ephesians 5:8-19 – Gospel: Luke 13:10-17

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