

ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΙΚΟΣ ΠΛΗΡΩΜΑΤΟΣ
Apostolic Church of the Pleroma

Homily delivered by Tau Phosphoros
to the Parish of St. Ambelain
on Sunday, December 7th, 2014

YEAR B - SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Today we celebrate the second Sunday in the Season of Advent. If you remember, last Sunday we talked about how the Advent Season is about preparation for the Day of the Lord; when the Light will enter the darkness of this world; the dawning of Gnostic illumination.

In Eastern Orthodox theology they teach the doctrine of Theosis - the divinization of Man, that he might partake in the Divine Nature. This is a concept not at all foreign to the Gnostic. Now there are certainly differences between the theological doctrines of the Gnostic and the Orthodox that explain what exactly is happening during the process of Theosis; but the experience is the same, regardless of how one wishes to rationalize it in order for it to comfortably conform to some pre-conceived dogma.

The Orthodox theologians of old have divided the process of Theosis into three principal stages: Catharsis, a stage of purification; Theoria, wherein one is granted a vision of divinity; and Thesis itself, wherein full divinization is realized. As Gnostics, we like to align our thoughts with the latter stages of illumination. But as our own teachings reveal to us, perfection cannot be realized without purification. And the Season of Advent draws our attention to this purification.

In both our Epistle and Gospel readings this week, we are drawn toward a contemplation of purification. Our Epistle is from 2nd Peter - the very text that lays the foundation for the doctrine of Theosis. In this passage we read of the elements being dissolved in fire, only to reveal a more perfected form - an image reminiscent of the alchemical process to be sure. And in the Gospel we read of John's baptism of water, and of the baptism in the Holy Spirit to come.

But the images are all very abstract. They are representations of the process of purification, but they are not the thing itself. It is true that Baptism and Chrismation do effect an actual purification of the soul; but these sacraments initiate a process, they do not create a once-and-for-all transformation of one's character. And while we are encouraged to study and meditate upon the message of scripture, real purification can only be brought about through the world of action. The inner and the outer do not function independently of one another. The two must be brought into alignment in order to effect the regeneration of the whole being.

If we dedicate ourselves to thoughtful contemplation and unlock the mysteries of the universe, but do nothing in our lives to express that attainment, then it is for naught, for "faith without works is dead." If, on the other hand, we offer every outward sign of goodness and charity, but yet harbor hatred, jealousy, and every other sort of enmity in our heart, then our actions are without meaning. It is only by harmonizing the inner with the outer, in thought, word, and deed, that we may hope to achieve the necessary purification that will allow for genuine illumination and eventual regeneration and reintegration.

So let us not only contemplate and meditate upon these things. Let us strive to be that which we desire to see in the world. Let our inner contemplation and meditation build for us a foundation of faith. And let that faith be justified in our works.