

ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΙΚΟΣ ΠΛΗΡΩΜΑΤΟΣ
Apostolic Church of the Pleroma

YEAR B - THIRD SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

Delivered by Tau Phosphoros
to the Parish of St. Ambelain
on January 25, 2015

Greetings my brethren. Today is the third Sunday after the Epiphany, also called by some churches, the third Sunday in Ordinary Time. Today we conclude our study of the Apocryphon of James, which we began reading the first Sunday after Christmas. In this passage we see that Peter is confused about Jesus' message. Peter, here, is not able to grasp the admonishments of Jesus, receiving only a partial message. This is right in line with many Gnostic scriptures that depict Peter as either ignorant, or only half-enlightened. Now, whether or not Peter himself lacked this spiritual discernment, it is clear that the so-called Church of Peter certainly suppressed the teachings of the gnosis. On the other hand, we can look at writings such as the Second Epistle of Peter, a canonical text, and see therein a magnificently mystical text that extols the virtues of gnosis.

At any rate, further on in our reading from the Apocryphon of James, Jesus says, "Through faith and gnosis you have received life." In other words, gnosis does not replace or supplant faith - in complements it. If you look at our church seal you will see this complementarity graphically represented in the arms of the cross. To the left we have pistis (faith) and to the right is gnosis - the one balancing the other. And the rose blooming upon the cross is indicative of that Life awaiting us.

Our reading concludes with Jesus announcing his departure, and saying, "from now on I shall strip that I may be clothed." That is, he is going to put off the last of his worldly vestments, be they hylic or psychic, that the true vestment - the pneumatic - may be donned in its full glory. In other words, Jesus is going to restore his divine power which he had put off for our sakes.

We talked last week about how Christ set aside his divine prerogatives on account of us, and how he instructed us to likewise do the same lest we become a burden to our brothers and sisters. This theme is carried over not only in our reading from the Secret Book of James, but in our Epistle as well, which continues the reading of 1st Corinthians.

Paul tells us, "may it be for those who have wives as if they have not, and those weeping as if they are not weeping, and those rejoicing as though not rejoicing," etc., etc. In other words, the appearance of the things of this world are a mirror image of the Kingdom of God. And not only do mirrors show a backward image of reality, our mirror is dirty and distorted on top of it! We can thus go right back to our First Reading and do as Jesus has done - strip ourselves of the temporal that we may put on the eternal. This does not mean that we necessarily have to shed our physical garment before we can experience the pneumatic (although that will be inevitable in the final liberation). But we need to free our conscience from the dictates of the lower passions, aligning our mind and will with the Divine Mind and Will that we may truly come into Being.