

ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΙΚΟΣ ΠΛΗΡΩΜΑΤΟΣ
Apostolic Church of the Pleroma

*Delivered by Tau Phosphoros
to the Parish of St. Ambelain
on Sunday, February 22, 2015*

YEAR B - FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

O God, make speed to save me. O Lord, make haste to help me. Greetings brethren, today is the first Sunday in our season of Lent. All of our readings today are connected by the theme of Baptism. Our reading from the 24th Ode of Solomon opens, "The dove flew over the head of the Messiah, who was her head, and she sang over him and her voice was heard." This image is repeated in our gospel reading from Mark: "He saw the heavens open and the Spirit descending towards him as a dove. And there was a voice from the heavens, 'You are my Son, the beloved; with you I am well pleased.'" Many Christians have often imagined this voice to be the booming voice of a proud father. But since Gnosticism typically views the Holy Spirit to be a feminine manifestation of the divine, it would logically follow that the accompanying voice would be feminine. Thus, when we read in our first reading that "her voice was heard," it fits perfectly with a Gnostic view of our Lord's baptism.

Our Epistle from 1st Peter also draws upon the theme of baptism, drawing a typological comparison to the flood in the days of Noah. In the reference to the "eight souls...saved through water," we may see therein an indication of a sort of psychic salvation, the "eight souls" or eight psyches, referring to the Demiurge & his seven principal archons. The baptism of John & Jesus likewise acts upon the psychic nature, or soul, by means of Water, which element best represents the fluidity or plasticity of the soul. But the Demiurgic salvation seeks to preserve the soul that it might continue to imprison the pneumatic spark. But our baptism preserves and purifies the soul for its ultimate spiritualization; that we may be, as Jesus was, "made alive in the Spirit."

And just as the element of Water is emblematic of the purification of the soul, Fire represents its spiritualization. And as the Gospel of Philip tells us, "The Fire is the Chrism." Thus, the Chrismation that follows the Baptism initiates this process of spiritualization. This Gnostic Gospel states: "Soul & Spirit have come into being from Water & Fire." That is, the psychic & pneumatic substances are best compared to the archetypal principals of Water & Fire - the so-called "pure" elements. But let us leave the discussion of Chrismation for another time, as our readings today are based around the principle of Water.

This purification by Water is also echoed throughout our Holy Liturgy, first in the Asperges and later in the Lavabo. And of course, there is the water that is mixed with the wine in our Eucharistic celebration. In this context the water is representative of the alchemical Mercury of the Wise which - according to our late venerable brother in the gnosis, and our Parish's namesake, bishop Robert Ambelain - when joined with the wine, symbol of the Sulphur of the Wise, gives rise to the Salt of the Wise, the Spiritual Chrysopage, which is our Eucharistic bread. We may also see the Eucharistic water & wine as images of the Church & Christ which, when united, constitute the reintegration & restoration of the Pleroma. Contemplate these various images throughout the remainder of the Mass.