

ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΙΚΟΣ ΠΛΗΡΩΜΑΤΟΣ
Apostolic Church of the Pleroma

*Delivered by Tau Phosphoros
to the Parish of St. Ambelain
on Sunday, June 14, 2015*

YEAR B - PROPER 6

Hello, my brethren. Let me repeat the words that closed our Gospel reading so that we may reflect upon them for a moment: "Except for parables he did not speak to them; privately, however, he explained everything to his own disciples." This statement is very interesting when we consider that the Gospels are primarily a very abbreviated record of Jesus' public ministry. A statement such as this, then, suggests that there was an esoteric doctrine taught privately which would enable one to properly interpret the exoteric parables & allegories.

This esoteric doctrine would certainly have been of two types: exegetical & sacramental, as both of these are required to fulfill the Master's mission. In the very earliest known writings of the Church - that is, in the letters of St. Paul - we see much evidence that these two teachings were closely wedded; and closely guarded, perhaps too much so. We see in Paul's writings the elements of a Gnostic philosophy; very clear about certain matters, but merely hinting at some of the more profound revelations, such as the doctrine of the Demiurge, which would have seemed shocking to many. But it is not great speculation to suppose that Paul spoke of a true God & a lesser, false god. He lays out all of the arguments necessary. One only need to follow his arguments through to their logical conclusions. In this way, he was able to conceal the doctrine while revealing it to those with ears to hear & eyes to see.

When we understand that there was a unified doctrine early on, we can better see how such divergent streams emerged in the Church. Within a couple of generations after Christ, we can see evidence of the continuity & advancement of the esoteric/ exegetical school among the various groups called "Gnostic." On the other side we have the proto-orthodoxy, which emphasized - almost exclusively - the sacramental tradition. This division was to the detriment of both groups. Evidence of this increasingly bitter rivalry is evident within some of the Gnostic texts that speak disparagingly of the apostles & their successors, sometimes condemning the sacramental tradition. The backlash of the proto-orthodoxy was to condemn the whole of the Gnostic doctrine as heresy, coming up with rival exegeses to defend their positions.

The great doctor of the Church, Valentinus, surely recognized this very same problem, for in his teachings we find a very refined Gnostic philosophy coupled with a deep reverence for the sacramental tradition. Had he won the episcopal seat at Rome, perhaps the history of the Church - and of humanity - would have been very different; making rapid advances in spiritual & cultural evolution. We cannot know what might have been. But it is only too appropriate that when Jules Doinel had his visions instructing him to rebuild the Gnostic Church, decades before the discovery of the Nag Hammadi codices, that he should adopt the name Tau Valentin II. And it is as a result of this Gnostic restoration that we, today, are able to claim heirship to the fullness of Christ's teachings & the full depths of the richness of the sacramental tradition. Let us act, therefore, not with animosity, but as ambassadors of Christ's message of reconciliation.