

ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΙΚΟΣ ΠΛΗΡΩΜΑΤΟΣ
Apostolic Church of the Pleroma

*Delivered by Tau Bruno II
to the Parish of St. Ambelain
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YEAR B - PROPER 14

Brethren, last week's homily concerned how some outside of our tradition view us, and how we as Christians, are supposed to present ourselves to the world. We all acknowledge that we are to be Christ-like, this means patient, benevolent, merciful, compassionate, and understanding to all those outside of our tradition. Today's scripture readings are a continuation of that theme. However, they also speak of our responsibilities toward those within our tradition: our fellow Christians.

Our first reading divides those you are responsible to into two distinct groups. For our purposes here we will call them the enlightened and unenlightened. We see this division throughout the first paragraph, but most especially within the first sentence: "Speak of truth with those who seek it and of gnosis with those who have sinned in their error." There is a clear division into two types of people here. The first have already received the divine, revelatory knowledge or gnosis, and need now to be instructed in its truth. The second group still sins in their error, in their ignorance, and needs the divine, revelatory gnosis which the enlightened can reveal. Look at the plight of the unenlightened: they sin in their error, are sick, weary, and asleep. This is why our tradition focuses so much on how we treat those outside of the Christian faith. It should pain each and every one of you to see a fellow human being so destitute in their spirit. We are driven then to aid & succor them.

However, we often then forget to focus on ourselves and our Christian brethren. Becoming enlightened does not mean we have become perfect. Our first reading says, "focus your attention upon yourselves." This plurality shows that not only should you watch and guide "you," but also your brethren. This is further emphasized in our second reading when it states, "Therefore, having put off falsehood, let us speak truth, each one with his neighbor, because we are members of one another."

Here there are two fronts we should be critical of. First, each and every one of us should look at and within ourself & determine what our short-comings and deficits are, as well as what our passions & strengths are. This analysis should be foremost in your mind as you progress through the world. Next we should be aware of what the strengths and weaknesses of our brethren are. Now this is not to be insulting or demeaning, but approached from a dispassionate, critical, almost academic standpoint.

It is important to remember our scripture from last week, "To each of us was given a grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Each of us are unique. Our strengths and weaknesses differ. For this reason, if you are strong in an area where your brother or sister is weak, then shore up their short-coming. But it is wrong to only realize a person's strengths, just as it is wrong to only see their weaknesses. Thus you should be honest with yourself and others. If you have erred, or continue to err, through ignorance or weakness, seek the strength of your brethren. This should be your first action before ever critiquing a brother or sister.

With that said, do not be afraid to be critical of your brethren. We all need the help of another to become more than what we currently are. Is it possible to evolve and grow on your own? Of course. But the level of growth will be miniscule compared to what you could achieve with your brethren. This is why the Christian tradition is an initiatic tradition. The Baptism & Chrism, the ordaining of Holy Orders, even the Rite of Marriage are all initiations. They take the Psyche and Spirit within you, & connect it to the vast egregore of those who have come before you. This opens pathways which you alone were unable to fully open, allowing the gnosis and pleroma of the Lord to fill and enliven you, as well as giving you the ability to open these pathways in others.

To be truly Christ-like we must have patience, compassion, & understanding for all the men & women of the world. Share your gnosis with everyone who needs it, whether it's someone you meet on the road or if they're sitting in the pew beside you. Even more importantly, be receptive to the gnosis others have to offer you, be they stranger or friend, for often times we don't realize we're wandering until someone else has pointed the way.