

ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΙΚΟΣ ΠΛΗΡΩΜΑΤΟΣ
Apostolic Church of the Pleroma

*Delivered by Tau Phosphoros
to the Parish of St. Ambelain
on Sunday, May 1, 2016*

YEAR C - SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

The Lord is risen! Greetings everyone. Our Gospel reading to day contains a significant message that is crucial to the founding and continuity of the Church. Here, Jesus promises that the Father will send the Holy Spirit after Jesus is gone in order to remind us of what Jesus taught and to give new teaching. This has profound implications, as it implies both a conservatism and progressivism. Now, I do not mean this in any political sense of these words. What I'm talking about here is the relationship between Tradition and the Living Gospel.

The conservative side of the Holy Spirit not only reminds us to keep true to the teachings of Jesus, but also provides the pneumatic gifts that allow us to preserve the sacraments. The sacraments are the very backbone of the Church. They are the solid structure upon which the Church is built and operates. And it is the Holy Spirit that operates through the priests and bishops in order to operate the sacraments. And the Holy Spirit today is the same as the Holy Spirit yesterday and tomorrow and in eternity. The Holy Spirit is thus the preserver of Tradition in the Church. Without this Tradition, that is the Sacramental Tradition, the Church is no longer the Church, for it will have failed in the principal duties for which it was created to fulfill.

But our Christian Tradition is also a Living Tradition. From its earliest days it has been a source of revelation and continued instruction. Our Gospel today tells us that the Holy Spirit will teach us "all things." And since the knowledge of God is infinite, there is the potential of infinite instruction and infinite revelation. This is the progressive side of the Holy Spirit. In this, the Holy Spirit is the catalyst for true spiritual insight and vision. All the great mystics of the Christian Tradition have been guided by this same Spirit. In our Gnostic tradition we openly embrace this side of the Holy Spirit as something to be sought after by all. But by no means do we have an exclusive right to mystical revelation. All of Christianity has produced great mystics: Eastern Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, and even some of the more traditional Protestant sects, from where the Rosicrucian tradition largely stems. But we cannot have just one aspect of the Holy Spirit and expect any sort of stable yet living Church. For if the conservative side is adhered to strictly, while suppressing the mystical revelations of that same Spirit, then the structure becomes rigid and ultimately fragile, or else fixed in a tomb-like state. Conversely, if the Sacramental Tradition is abandoned in favor of a loose atmosphere where everybody is "led by the Spirit" then the Holy Spirit will ultimately abandon them since there is no suitable vessel of expression. In this latter case, the movement will be infiltrated by false spirits or by their own ungrounded imaginations.

It is therefore only in embracing both the conservative and progressive aspects of the Holy Spirit that we are able to maintain an institution in which this Spirit will be pleased to dwell and continue to guide us rightly.