

ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΙΚΟΣ ΠΛΗΡΩΜΑΤΟΣ
Apostolic Church of the Pleroma

*Delivered by Tau Phosphoros
to the Parish of St. Ambelain
on Tuesday, May 31, 2016*

YEAR C - VISITATION OF MARY TO ELIZABETH

Greetings, my brethren, on this feast day when we celebrate the visitation of the Virgin Mary to Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptist, wherein the pre-natal John leaps within the womb of his mother in the presence of Mary, newly pregnant with Jesus. I'd also like to note that although we celebrate the founding of the ACP at the feast of Pentecost, the calendar date of the institution of our Church is May 31st. Therefore, the founding of the ACP actually occurred on two feast days, but since the feast of Pentecost is a greater feast, that is the day on which it is principally acknowledged. There is also the tradition of celebrating the institution of the Christian Church as a whole on that day.

Let us then look at some of our readings today. Our first reading from "On the Origin of the World" offers us a beautifully poetic depiction of Paradise and the Trees of Life & Knowledge. The Tree of Life is compared to the Sun and the Tree of Knowledge to the Moon. Now, in the Hebrew scriptures, at least upon a surface reading, the Tree of Life is placed in direct opposition to the Tree of Knowledge; the partaking of the latter utterly barring the partaking of the former. In some Gnostic texts this situation is neatly reversed, where the Tree of Knowledge is salvific, and the so-called Tree of Life is actually the tree of their life - that is the false life of the Demiurge and his archons. But in our present text we have what is in my opinion the most perfect relationship established between these trees, which acknowledges the absolutely crucial and salvific role of the Tree of Knowledge without needing to vilify the true Tree of Life. For, we read here that the Tree of Knowledge is placed in order to "arouse the souls from demonic stupor, so that they might come to the Tree of Life, eat its fruit, and condemn the authorities and their angels."

The correlation of the Sun & Moon to these trees is very apt. We are told that the Tree of Knowledge opens the way to the Tree of Life. If we look at the Qabalistic Tree of Life diagram, this correlated very neatly. The Moon corresponds to the sephirah of Yesod, which is directly above our present position. And the Sun corresponds to Tiphareth. Thus, what our passage describes here is precisely the rising up of the consciousness from Malkuth, our present dwelling, along the middle pillar of the Tree of Life. That is, it is the awakening of the mundane consciousness into Christ Consciousness. And it is this awareness of the Christ-Self that will give, according to our Gnostic scripture, "immortality to the soul."

But this higher awareness must not ever cause us to think ourselves better than our fellow men and women. Our epistle reading from Romans reminds us that, "Agape is unhypocritical." We must remember that we are given the gift of Gnosis in order to help raise up our fellow humanity, not to lord ourselves over it. We do well to follow the words of the Apostle: "Follow the customs of those around you; do not think too highly of yourselves, but be willing to humble yourselves; do not consider yourselves wiser than you are!"