

ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΙΚΟΣ ΠΛΗΡΩΜΑΤΟΣ
Apostolic Church of the Pleroma

*Delivered by Tau Phosphoros
to the Parish of St. Ambelain
on Sunday, November 27, 2016*

YEAR A - ADVENT SUNDAY

Greetings brethren, and welcome! It is so good to be back with you after taking a hiatus for the past few months to finish up some very important projects. I am referring of course to the several translation efforts that have been on-going over the past year. These efforts are scheduled to continue indefinitely going forward, but seeing that some of the most important works are completed, the pace will be slowed at least enough to be able to meet with you regularly.

Today is Advent Sunday, marking the beginning of our Liturgical Year, and announcing the forthcoming arrival of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is the hope and expectation of the renewal of the Light. Though our days continue to shorten and darken even now, we have the promise and the assurance of a rebirth of the Light and a lengthening of days. The cyclic periodicity of nature insures that even the darkest of seasons will pass; and although the darkness is as sure to return as the light, the special gifts of Jesus have given us an inner sun to enlighten our way, guaranteeing that if we orient ourselves towards Him the Sun will always be at its zenith.

Our reading from Romans gives the key to the power of this inner Sun, which is Love; namely, Agape. We read: "Agape does not work evil to a neighbor." We would add to this that every man and woman, every member of the human race, is our neighbor. Agape is the only true and reliable light to guide us in all things. If we look to our own "good" at the expense of our neighbor, then it is not really "good" at all, but merely darkness in disguise. It is crucially important for the evolution of humanity, both individually and collectively, to be able to distinguish between the apparent good and the actual good. And this can only be accomplished through a dedicated effort to awaken ourselves, to remain awake, and to help others to rouse from their slumber, just as our reading goes on to tell us: "You know the time, that it is the hour for you to be awakened from sleep."

This awakening from a gloomy stupor into an enlightened awareness is none other than the advent of gnosis. This is why we refer to the Light of Gnosis; it is the intimate knowledge of being and becoming that leads us clearly and soberly into the works of the Spirit. Agape cannot be fully known and exercised without having first attained gnosis. On the other hand, gnosis is in vain unless it leads to actions led by the law of agape. This gnosis is not merely objective observation and analysis of collected facts. It is an intimate understanding that comes from an inner realization of the interconnectedness of all things and beings. In this, a heightened sense of empathy is one of the signs of gnosis. It is not to be carried along listlessly by the whims and emotions or even the strengths of others. It is to know your neighbor as yourself. Only then can one love his neighbor as himself.

Our reading goes on to tell us: "The night has past and the day has drawn near. Let us put away, therefore, the works of darkness, and let us put on the weapons of light." Gnosis and agape are these very weapons of light; the powerful means by which we will advance ourselves and humanity towards the ultimate blessings of the Holy City. Gnosis and agape are the weapons of the knights and warriors of Christ, seeking everywhere and in every way to dispel the darkness of spiritual ignorance; seeking ever to uplift our fellow brothers and sisters, just as we were lifted up before we could stand and walk on our own. This is not an idealism or a wishful thinking; it is a call to put the teachings of Christ into practice constantly and at every level of activity. Many would pay lip service to the message of Christ, but what we do and how we treat one another will reveal our true convictions. Let us put away, therefore, the works of darkness, and let us put on the weapons of light.