

ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΙΚΟΣ ΠΛΗΡΩΜΑΤΟΣ
Apostolic Church of the Pleroma

*Delivered by Tau Phosphoros
to the Parish of St. Ambelain
on Sunday, June 25, 2017*

YEAR A - PROPER 7

Greetings, my brethren, welcome everyone. We spent the past three weeks discussing various points on the concept of egregores. There is still much to be said on the matter, but we should move on to other topics. All other discussion of egregores will need to take place outside this setting. But it is truly a fascinating topic, worthy of deep examination.

Our First Reading today is from Trimorphic Protennoia, and we find right off some themes very common in Gnostic literature. In particular it is discussing how the Logos took on the forms customary to each realm. That is, among the angels he appeared as an angel, among the archons he appeared as the son of the chief archon, and among humans, of course, he appeared in the form of Jesus. There are many themes, such as this, that are found so universally across the various so-called schools, that it is not at all difficult to establish a core Gnostic doctrine, and to separate out elements that are not universal, and which are, therefore, subject to the interpretation of individuals or certain "schools."

For example: Did Jesus die on the cross? Some would say, "yes, at least his physical body"; others would say, "no, there was a substitute," or "no, his physical form was illusionary"; yet others might say, "we don't really know," etc. So, do these differences make one person or group less Gnostic than the other? Of course not. But that does not mean that Gnosticism means whatever you want it to mean. This should, of course, go without saying. But there are some deep misunderstandings of what Gnosticism is, and even of what gnosis is - which are two different things - not only among those outside of our Tradition, but even among some who claim to be Gnostics themselves, but who simultaneously seem to hold a disdain for everything Gnostic.

I know...this sounds impossible. But I just recently read a small publication from a group whom I shall not name, but who consider themselves as a Gnostic church. Yet, they dismiss the whole of the Nag Hammadi corpus, claiming that it does not really represent Gnosticism broadly speaking. They seem to think that the Sethians, the Valentinians, the Basilideans, etc., were are radical dualists, which can be easily refuted, though we have not the time here. Their "sacraments" make no mention anywhere of Jesus, Christ, or even the Logos; practice no baptism or chrismation; the "liturgy" has nothing close to words of institution; major orders conferred "at a distance"; etc., etc. In short, this is neither Gnostic nor a church by any reasonable definition. Now, I'm not saying that what they're doing is "wrong" or even that it has no value, but I just want you all to be aware that there are groups out there who want to wear the label of "Gnostic" without actually adhering to the ancient and established tenets of the religion. For, while gnosis may be a matter of personal revelation, Gnosticism does not mean simply whatever one wishes it to mean, or else it means nothing at all.

One final note, beginning next Sunday I will be handing over the duties of the Mass to Tau Bruno II for a period of time. I know that we all look forward to his return to the Altar.