

who died on the Cross to save you? Or perhaps were you baptized in the name of Paul?"

### **Christ the savior of mankind**

The believers should not forget that the Lord is the redeemer and savior. The spiritual shepherds and teachers of the faith are instruments and ministers of God. In no case are they allowed to appropriate the spiritual authority of Christ, or to encourage the flock to attribute the fruition of the spiritual work to the abilities of their shepherds.

The gifts come from God. In fact, experience teaches us that no matter how much a spiritual work peaks, when elements of person worship, division, strife, etc. are interjected, then it fails miserably and causes a great scandal.

The work of Christ is a work of unity. In His person, He unified man with God, angels with men, and the created with the uncreated. With baptism and the Divine Eucharist, He gathers us all into His body. May we always have these theological truths and may they support the struggles for the "unity of faith and the communion of the Holy Spirit".

Archim. N.K

**SUNDAY, JULY 30 2023 8<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF MATTHEW** ,  
*Silas, Silvan, Crescens, Epenetus and Andronicus the Apostles of the 70, Julitta of Caesaria*

**EPISTLE READING** : *St. Paul's 1<sup>st</sup> Letter to Corinthians 1:10-17*

**GOSPEL READING** : *Matthew 14:14—22*

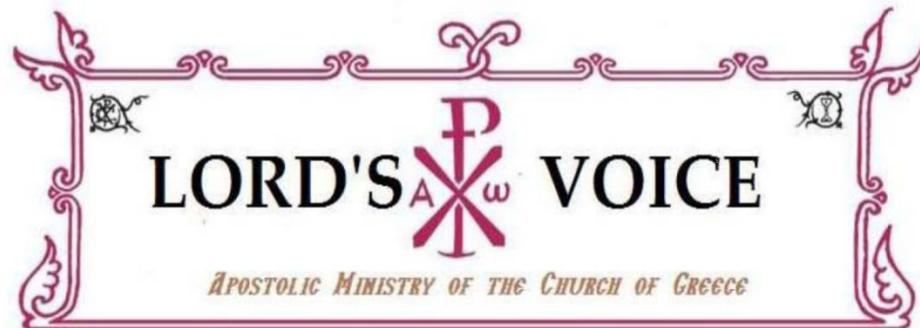
**TONE OF THE WEEK** : *Grave Tone*

**EOTHINON** : *Eighth Eothinon*

**SUNDAY, AUGUST 6 2023 Transfiguration of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.**

**EPISTLE READING** : *St. Peter's Second Universal Letter 1:10-19*

**GOSPEL READING** : *Matthew 17:1—9*



71<sup>ST</sup> YEAR JULY 30 2024 PAMPHLET # 31 (3661)

### **THE OVERCOMING OF DIVISIONS**

In today's Epistle reading, the Apostle Paul speaks of the disintegration of the Church's unity and the creation of schisms. He pleads with the believers of Corinth, and furthermore, in the name of Christ, that they all agree with each other, and that there be no divisions among them, but that they be united with one thought and one mind. The divisive forces of egotism and selfishness push the division of human society from within, and this powerful force often enters the area of the Church.

Paul sees the seriousness of this existential issue, and helps man to heal it and overcome it with his own inner regeneration. This is done with communion of love in Christ, from which the freedom of the person springs.

#### **The Apostle Paul as regards the problem**

Divisiveness and division in the area of the Church are often due to a personality cult, which groups of believers cultivate. However, such incidents reveal a carnal train of thought, spiritual immaturity, self-centeredness and essentially ignorance of the mystery of Christ. Certainly man, despite

**EPISTLE ST. PAUL'S 1<sup>ST</sup> LETTER TO CORINTHIANS  
1:10-17**

Brethren, I appeal to you by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree and that there be no dissensions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brethren. What I mean is that each one of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispos and Gaius; lest any one should say that you were baptized in my name. (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized any one else.) For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

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his rebirth in Christ, does not cease carrying within him the seeds of sin, which germinate also in the forms of distance and division, and furthermore, when the spiritual life weakens and human weakness prevails. That is why the faithful are called to constantly strive to observe "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3).

Unity as an inner state and as an ecclesiological experience is the most basic element of spiritual life, because it is not found in theoretical principles or ideas, but in the person of Christ who unites believers as members of His body. Given that in the body of Christ, the believer

overcomes the division of his nature and finds his ontological unity. The location of his new hypostasis is the Church, and the others are the area of its manifestation.

### **The Apostles unite the believers**

As we saw in our reading, some Christians of Corinth were separating themselves into groups and were quarreling, saying that one of them belongs to Paul, another to Apollos, another to Cephas, and another to Christ. This attitude of theirs filled Paul's soul with pain, who labored very much for the foundation and unity of the Church of Corinth.

Of course, the Church is not divided, but people are divided from her with their egotistical autonomous actions. The Apostle Paul, Apollos, Cephas are united with Christ, with the people God and each other with the unbreakable bond of love and peace. They have the conscience that they are God's colleagues in the struggle to maintain ecclesiastical unity. They cultivate the field of the Church and know that God is "the one who increases" (1 Cor. 3:7). Therefore, the responsibility for creating schisms and divisions belonged to the aforesaid groups of believers.

They, moved by passion, fanaticism, childishness in thought and lack of spiritual knowledge and training, without realizing it were opposing the spirit of apostolic unity, peace and concord. That's why Paul wants to wake her up their Christian conscience, and although he was the founder of the Church of Corinth, he does not connect the Church with his person, but with the person of Jesus Christ. And he tells them: "So was Christ divided?" Maybe is it Paul