

## **Sermon on the Apostolic Reading for the 9th Sunday of Luke (Ephesians 4: 1-7) (Metropolitan of Pisidia Sotirios)**

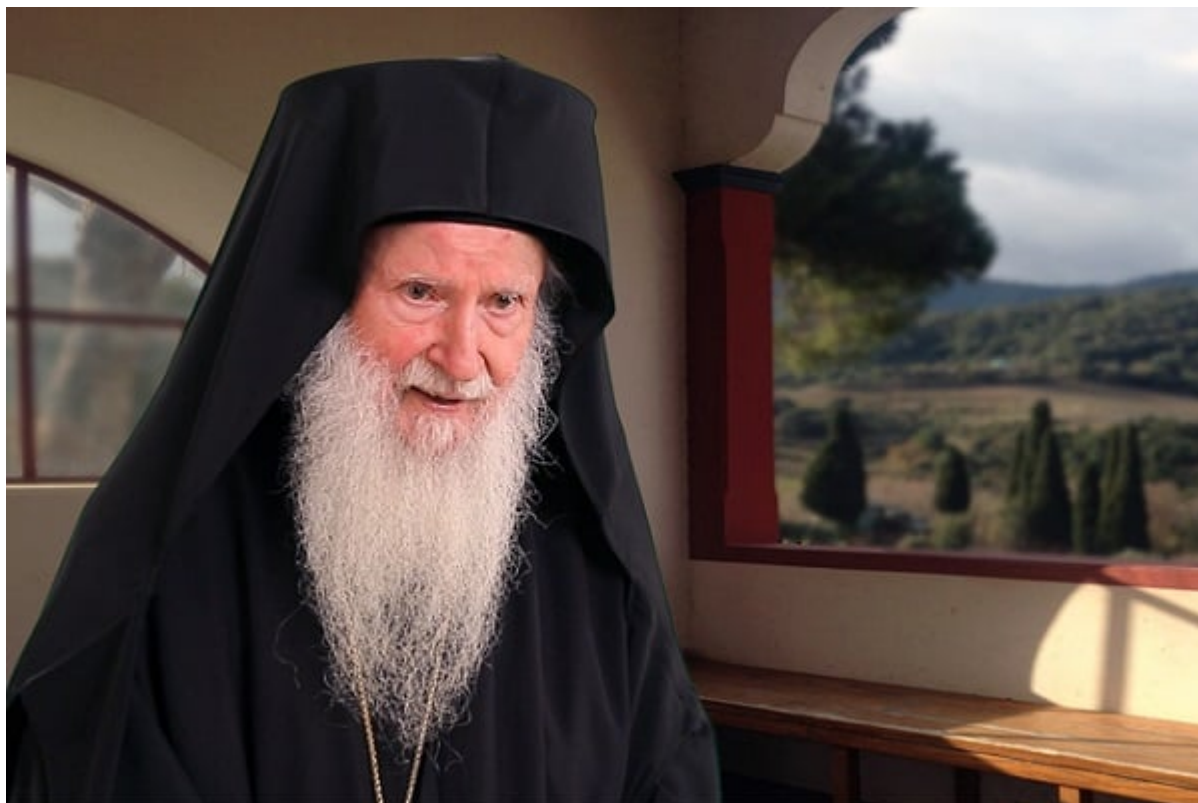
[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)



Today's passage from the Apostle Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians emphasizes the unity of the One Holy Church of Christ. This unity is needed for the baptized members of the Church among themselves, and with the body of the Church.

The unity that the Apostle Paul speaks of is supported by the fact that:

First, there is One Faith in the Church. The right faith, as Christ has taught, and the Apostles of Christ have shared. This faith we have received from our Fathers, should in our present day be passed on to those who come after us, free of misinterpretations and alterations. Unity among Christians with different dogmatic beliefs cannot exist. We see it in the heterodox, who interpret the Gospel each in their own way. Thousands of pieces (denominations) are the result, totally different from each other and in some cases, with conflict between them.



Second, One is God the Father, one is our Lord. Christ is the head of the Church. With it, all members of the Church are organically united and they all form one body of the Church. From Him all believers receive life. “One is Holy, one is Lord Jesus Christ,” we confess in the Divine Liturgy.

Third, all Christians from all nations throughout history have received one and the same Baptism, and are united with the one Lord, Jesus Christ. We have all become equal members of the Church of Christ and have been born in the same way, through that Baptism. Because we are all children of the same Father God and members of the same Body of the Church of Christ, there must be unity among us. This unity between us is in the embrace of the Holy Spirit.

However, in order to preserve this unity, our own desire for it is necessary. God has given us the gift of free will. We are not necessarily forced to accept what He offers us. He has called us to sit with Christ in the heavens and to cooperate with Him. This will become clear if we want to walk the way that God tells us to achieve this glorious purpose; if you “walk worthy of the calling with which you were called” as the Apostle Paul writes (verse 1), and then pleads (not commands) the faithful to live:

-In Humility. Humility is the basis of all virtues, since it attracts the grace of God: “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble” (1 Peter 5:5). The appeal of the Apostle for Christians to be humble is not just for external acts like words and a

few deeds, but internal and to honestly cover all aspects of the believer's life. That is why he says "with all lowliness" (verse 2).

-With All gentleness. "Learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart" (Matthew 11:29), the Lord said. The Apostle Peter as a model exemplifies the gentleness of Christ: "Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps...Who, when He suffered, He did not threaten" (1 Peter 2: 21&23). Reading the Holy Gospels, we are amazed by the gentleness with which Christ has faced contempt, injury, being stripped and crucified. We are urged to imitate the Apostle Paul in this action.

-With longsuffering, you must deal with difficult situations, the Apostle Paul adds. The Lord assured us: "He who endures to the end will be saved" (Matthew 10:22).

-Bearing with one another in love. To tolerate one another with love, as the Apostle Paul asks us. There are frequent conflicts between faithful Christians which are not easy to live with, except with tolerance and love. To overlook offensive speech, injustices and indiscriminate behavior, even from people who have benefited from us. We will not find the answer with logic, but only with this love and tolerance will we ease the situation and allow the Almighty God to guide the other person in realizing the evil they caused.

My brothers and sisters, if by the grace of the Lord we try to live in accordance with these teachings given to us by the Apostle Paul, it is certain that there will be unity. In this unity, we are united with Christ and will arrive peacefully to our final destination, the joy of the Heavens. Amen.