

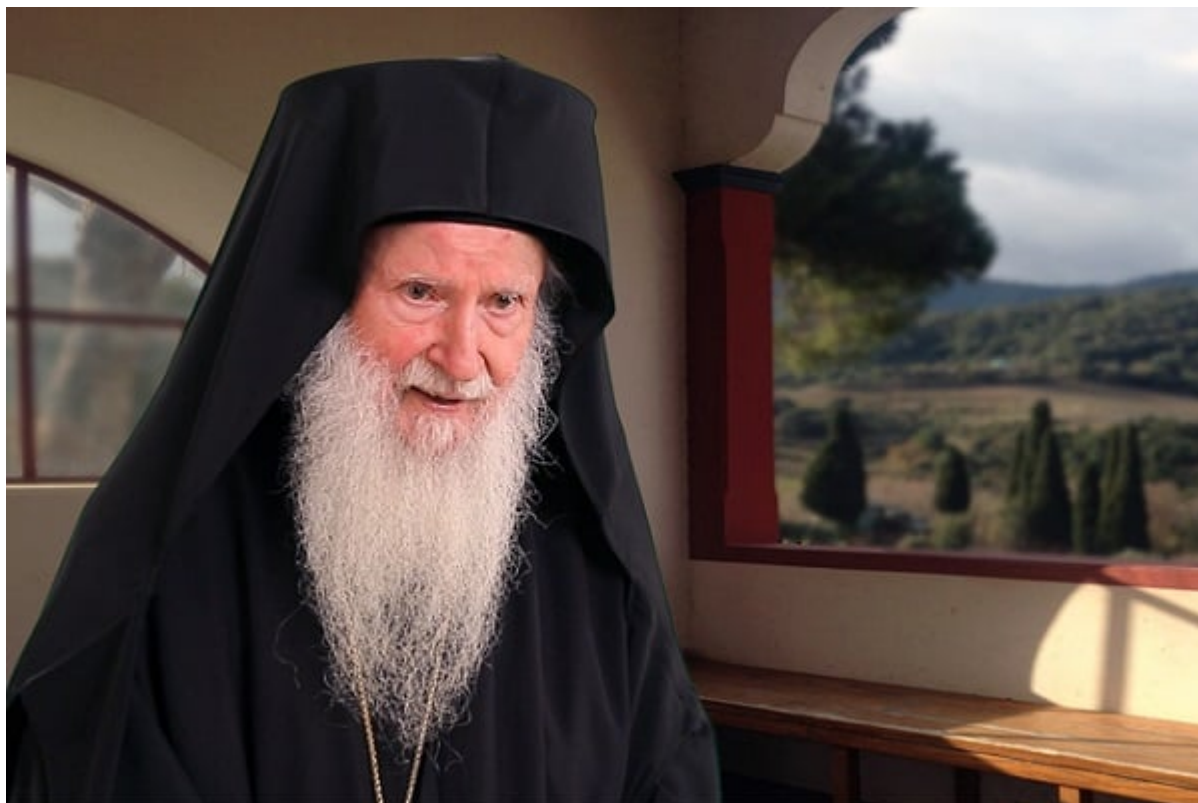
13 Ιανουαρίου 2019

Sermon on the Apostolic reading for the Sunday after Theophany(Ephesians 4:7-13) (Metropolitan of Pisidia Sotirios)

[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)



In today's passage from the Epistle to the Ephesians, the Apostle Paul revisits the great topic of the unity of the faithful and their spiritual perfection.



First of all, the Apostle Paul wants to eliminate any jealousy that may exist among Christians due to the diversity of gifts that are given to each by God. We all know from personal experience how easy it is to be envious of another person, especially one who is distinguished for their gifts. This envy usually leads us to try to diminish this person and make them feel inferior to us. If by chance this person makes a mistake, we tend to seize the opportunity to exaggerate it in order to reduce and potentially harm their good reputation. How often do we see this in our society today, within families and between siblings! Where there is jealousy between Christians, besides other evils, peace is destroyed and the unity of the Church is harmed. For that reason, the God-inspired Apostle explains that these gifts, just as the word “gift” itself indicates, are given to us by Christ. Our Lord give to each of us according to His wisdom, the gift that suits every person. Beyond that, it should not matter to the Christian how society values or classifies this gift, whether they view it as superior or inferior. The Christian is content with the gifts they have received. The most important thing, is that they use what they have in the best possible way.

Let us remember the parable of the talents. We see the man of that parable giving to his servants: “to the one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his ability” (Matthew 25:15). His intention was that the servants would make good use of what they had been given. Look at this part in particular: “according to his ability.” The gifts of God we receive create

responsibilities. The bigger the gift, the more responsibility we have. Instead of being jealous of other people's gifts, we should make good use of what Christ has given us to the best of our abilities. Even if what we have received is but a little, we know by the parable that we will all receive the same reward from Christ. The Lord said the same words to the one who had gained two talents and the one who had gained ten talents: "Well done, good and faithful servant...Enter into the joy of your Lord" (Matthew 25:21&23).

As he continues, the Apostle explains that these gifts are not given for personal benefit or the boasting of the recipient, but for a particular purpose. God gives abundantly in various ways. Especially here (in this passage), the Apostle mentions the gifts given in the Church. They are given to equip Christians spiritually for ministry, for the edification of the body of Christ (verse 12). And Paul mentions that Our Lord gave some to be apostle, some prophets and some evangelists. He gives in every season, to those He chooses, the gift of the shepherd and teacher (the Bishops and priests), to spiritually guide the faithful and teach them the truths of faith. This is in order for believers to get to know more deeply the Son of God, increasing their faith in Him and unity with one another.

This was always the deepest desire of the Great Apostle for the Churches he had founded; to constantly increase in unity among them, and to not be alarmed by those who attempt to break this unity. He writes to the Philippians: "Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, and not in any way terrified by your adversaries" (Philippians 1:27-28).

I would like to end today's sermon with the following words which the Apostle Paul addresses to the Philippians to incite them to unity: "Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy; fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind" (Philippians 2:1-2). Amen.