

ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΙΚΟΕ ΠΛΗΡΩΜΑΤΟΣ  
Apostolic Church of the Pleroma

*Delivered by Tau Phosphoros  
to the Parish of St. Ambelain  
on Monday, January 1, 2018*

YEAR B - NEW YEAR'S DAY

Happy New Year! Yesterday we reflected upon the past year and upon some of our achievements as a church. As our ministry enters this new year, it is now time to look forward, to plan carefully, and to remain steadfast in following through with the execution of those plans, that we might, at year's end, look back once more and give an account of the many accomplishments we've made.

In our readings today there are many elements worthy of note, and there are various correlations to be found among them. In the Gospel reading, Jesus admonishes his followers to feed the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to visit the sick and imprisoned; and that "in as much as you did it to the least of my brothers, you have done it to me"; and likewise that "in as much as you did not do it for one of the least ones, neither did you do it for me." But in our first reading from the Apocryphon of James, Jesus goes even further by suggesting not that they merely relieve suffering, but that they themselves must undergo persecution and Satanic oppression, or their faith is for naught. This is a very important lesson; for as much as we are called to relieve the suffering of others, we are not called upon to seek relief for ourselves. That is to say that it is easy to do Gos's will when fortune favors us. But how much more meaningful is it when we do his will in the face of every adversity?

We are reminded here how short-sighted we can become in considering only you present fleeting happiness. We read: "If you consider how long the world has existed before you and how long it will exist after you, you will see that your life is but a day and your suffering an hour."

We speak frequently on the mysteries of light and life, for these are the qualities that we are to bring into the world. But as initiates we know that the path to this light and life is through the gates of death. We know the adage of the mystery tradition that to be initiated is to learn how to die. This may seem a bit dark to those who merely hover at the periphery of the mysteries but who have not yet pierced its mysterious veil. In this same reading when they complain to Jesus to not speak of the cross and death, Jesus tells them: "Be seekers of death." He says that "when you search out death, it will teach you about being chosen...No one afraid of death will be saved, for the Kingdom of God belongs to those who put themselves to death." This reveals that the religion of Christ is a true mystery religion, for Jesus' command to put oneself to death is in fact a command to become initiated into the mysteries of death.

Now, it may seem odd that I have chosen to speak on death, which is seen as an ending, on this first day of the new year, a symbol of beginnings; but these concepts are intimately connected, bound up in one and the same principle. And this principle is Christ himself, for we read in our second reading from the Apocalypse of Joh, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end." The doors of death are truly the portal to the knowledge of our very origin; and our initiatic path will enable us to cross that threshold.