



30 Sep – 6 Oct, 2018

Living Pentecost, part 3

**‘You cannot pray at home as at Church,
where there is a great multitude,
where exclamations are cried out to God as from one great
heart, and where there is something more:
the union of minds, the accord of souls, the bond of charity,
the prayers of the priests’ St John Chrysostom**

The Church and I

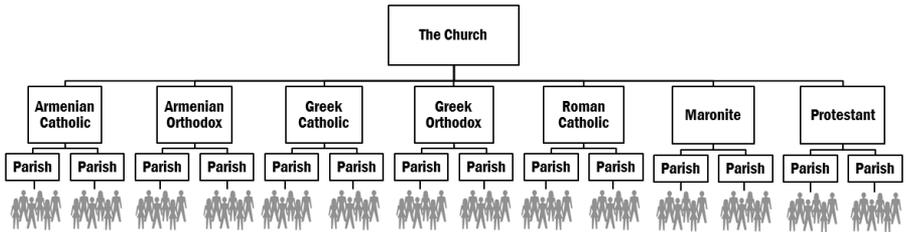
- † **The Church is the sum total of all believers in ages past, present, and future**
- † **All believers who left this world are united with the believers on earth during the Divine Liturgy celebration**
- † **Every individual who puts his or her faith in Christ is a member of the Church**
- † **While the Bible refers to local churches or parishes— like the parishes in Thessalonica or Ephesus or Jerusalem— the emphasis is always on the people who make up the Church across all times and places**
- † **What a great honor and responsibility! Jesus Christ has appointed me to be His partner in building His Kingdom on earth through the Church when He established it *(Mar 9:33-37)***

My role in the Church today is to be an active member in my parish

- † **Active members of the parish improve the community as a whole by**
 1. **enriching a faith-based life through worship within a community**
 2. **They may join the parish leadership to help carry out the parish mission, or the choir, or the parish social activities which provide the community the opportunity to put their faith into action**
- † **The ‘How to’ belong to the parish**
 1. **God has called each one of us to be part of His Body, and everybody has a structure and functions**
 2. **Jesus was obedient and humble. Having the mindset of Christ *(Phi 2:5-8)* makes me obedient and humble *(Mat 13:1-9, 18-23)***
 3. **I do not choose my parish, since God has already chosen it for me**
 4. **The parish is where one is called to continue the work of the apostles**
 5. **The Lord said that in a family, the mother is like a fruitful vine and the children are like solid olive trees *(Psa 128:3-4)*. Mothers need to**

encourage their children to worship the Lord in the parish that the whole family belongs to through the father. This way, there is more room to experience God's blessings as a whole family living in obedience to the Lord through the church's teachings and guidelines

- ✝ **Being inactive in my parish will cause my parish to be less active, eventually leading to its destruction. This leads to the destruction of the whole Church since the parish is its building unit (*Mat 16:18*)**



The Bible uses several images to describe the Church. These include:

- ✝ **branches attached to the True Vine (*Joh 15:1-8; Jer 2:21*)**
 - The Vinedresser does everything to see that the branches bear fruit
 - The Vinedresser is involved in all that concerns the Vine
 1. His pruning is with tender care and it involves protection to the branch
 2. His pruning cleanses and purifies the branch
 3. While pruning, the Vinedresser guides the branch
 - The vine is the source of life for the branches providing nutrients and water
 - The branches are totally dependent on the vine
 - Christ is the True Vine unlike the portrayal of the Israelites as the vine in the Old Testament (*Isa 5:1-7*)
 - The word 'abide' is mentioned 7 times in the 8 verses
- ✝ **house unlike any other (*Heb 3: 1- 6*)**
- ✝ **temple of living stones built upon the One True Stone (*1 Pet 2: 4- 8*)**
- ✝ **But one of the most familiar pictures of the Church is the human body, which we will discuss next week**

'Home is where your heart is' by Ralph Yaacoub

Jesus firmly states in the Gospel: *'For your heart will always be where your riches are' (Mat 6:21; Luk 12:34 GNT)*. Our hearts are in the things we treasure most. When the rich man knelt before Jesus and asked Him, *'What must I do to inherit the Kingdom of God?'* Jesus' answer was, *'Go and sell everything you have, give the money to the poor, and follow Me'*. Hearing this, *the rich man went away sad and gloom spread over his face (Mar 10:22 GNT)*. It is obvious then that God does not want our belongings. Instead He wishes that our hearts belong to Him, and Him only.

And to make matters even harder, Jesus solemnly claims, '*Do not think that I have come to bring peace into the world. No, I did not come to bring peace, but a sword*' (Mat 10:34 GNT). What does He mean by saying this? He means: things can never be gray. From now on, they are either black or white. Many times, I experienced being caught somewhere in the middle...between the altar and the door! My faith tackles my meticulous plans, yet I find myself weak and again I say, 'Your will be done Lord, not mine'. How close can I get to my surrender?

When it came to the issue of the parish, I could not take it anymore. I could not take turning away from God much longer. Complicated circumstances 'did cloud my view', but I had to 'make the right'. We really mean much to God, and at times ...'there's something we must do'. The question remains 'will we trade our dreams for His?'

Many of the quotes are taken from tracks 06-07 and 09 Casting Crowns: The Altar and the Door

Bibliography

1. *Life Application Study Bible KJV* (Tyndale House Publishers, Illinois , 2007), Kindle Edition
2. *NKJV, Know The Word Study Bible, Gain a greater understanding of the Bible book by book, verse by verse, or topic by topic* (copyright Thomas Nelson, 1982) Kindle Edition, 2016
3. *The Orthodox Study Bible: Ancient Christianity Speaks to Today's World* (For the Old Testament text copyright of St Athanasius Academy of Orthodox Theology, 2008 and for the New Testament text the NKJV, copyright Thomas Nelson, 1982), Kindle Edition, 2008

Legend

 Refers to mandatory readings

Verse to memorize

'But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth' Acts 1:8

During the coming week, let us pray expectantly

1. seeking the Lord's will to be done in Lebanon
2. for CrossTalk to find a locale
3. for David, Gisele, Habib and Karim
4. to become more of saints and less of sinners
5. to seek the Lord in every word I say, every act I do and every thought I think
6. to help in building His Kingdom by building His Church on earth
7. to deny ourselves, carry our cross and follow Him

8. to thank Him for creating us and each one around us, on His image and likeness, and choosing us to reveal His splendor
9. to all the sick
10. to all those in prison
11. to the unity of the Christians
12. to one another to be honest and not lack integrity
13. to put all that we have in the Lord's hands trusting His management
14. to all the Christians who are being persecuted, and to those who are persecuting them
15. to all families, that the Lord unites the parents together in His Name and stops all fights
16. to the situation in Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Iraq and the whole region

During this coming week, we will lift the Greek Orthodox Church in prayer

<p>الصلاة الربانية أبانا الذي في السموات ليتقدس اسمك ليأت ملكوتك ليتك مشيئتك كما في السماء كذلك على الأرض خبرنا الجوهري أعطنا اليوم وأترك لنا ما علينا كما نترك نحن لمن لنا عليه ولا نُدخلنا في تجربة لكن نجنا من الشرير أمين</p>	<p>قانون الايمان أؤمن بالله واحد أب ضابط الكل خالق السماء والأرض كل ما يرى وما لا يرى وبرب واحد يسوع المسيح ابن الله الوحيد المولود من الأب قبل كل الدهور نور من نور، إله حق من إله حق مولود غير مخلوق مساو للأب في الجوهر الذي به كان كل شيء الذي من أجلنا نحن البشر ومن أجل خلاصنا نزل من السماء وتجسد من الروح القدس ومن مريم العذراء وتأنس وصلب عنا على عهد ببيلاطس البنطي وتألم وقبر وقام في اليوم الثالث على ما في الكتب وصعد إلى السماء وجلس عن يمين الأب وأيضاً يأتي بمجد لتدين الأحياء والأموات الذي لا فناء لمملكه وبالروح القدس الرب المحيي المنبثق من الأب الذي هو مع الأب والإبن مسجود له وممجّد الناطق بالأنبياء وبكنيسة واحدة، جامعة، مقدسة، رسولية وأعترف بمعمودية واحدة لمغفرة الخطايا وأترجى قيامة الموتى والحياة في الدهر الآتي أمين</p>
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