

Sermon on the Apostolic Reading for the 6th Sunday of Luke (Galatians 2: 16-20) (Metropolitan of Pisidia Sotirios)

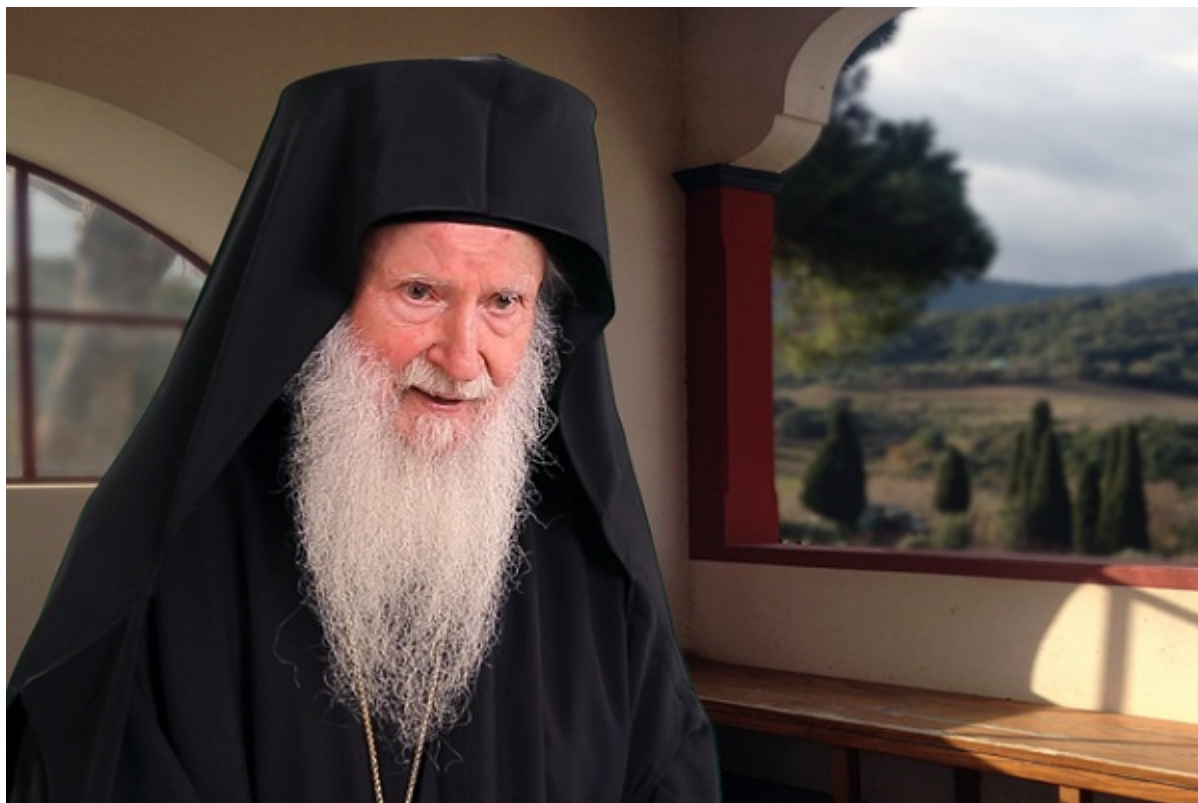
[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)



“It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me” (verse 20)

What we hear today in the Apostolic Reading, is an address by the Apostle Paul to the Galatian Christians.

Galatia was a Province of the Roman Empire located in the center of Asia Minor, with Ankara as its capital. The Apostle Paul, during his Apostolic Journey, preached the Gospel there and founded Christian Churches. Shortly after, false teachers began to work in the area. They were fanatical Judaizers, teaching the Christians that in order to be saved, they had to be circumcised and obey the provisions of Jewish Law. They also declared that people should not accept what Paul teaches, because he was not one of the original 12 Apostles of Christ, and that what he is teaching them is wrong! Obviously, this created a stir among the Galatian Christians.



Unfortunately, my brothers and sisters, it happened not only at that time, but other times, even to the present day. There are people who are seen as having “a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge” (Romans 10:2). These people without right knowledge, as the Apostle Paul describes them, disturb the Church with their fanaticism. In a variety of ways, they promote themselves as authorities on the Orthodox Faith. They judge and condemn all, even priests, bishops and Patriarchs. They do not hesitate to call them traitors of Orthodoxy and heretics, and only consider those who agree with them as pillars of Orthodoxy! They have the vanity to set themselves up and look down on the Great Holy Synods of Orthodox Bishops around the world, rejecting their teachings. Some are received into the Holy Orthodox Church, and in their selfishness and fanaticism, come to see themselves as the only genuine Orthodox! As in Galatia at that time, so in our days we see such sad examples of religious fundamentalism. That is why we need to be careful not to be swept away by fanaticism, which takes us away from the spirit of the Gospel of Christ, and cuts us off from our Holy Church.

The Apostle Paul, when he learned about the trouble caused by these false teachers, was compelled to write to the Galatians this letter to reassure them. Among other things, he stresses that if the letter of Jewish Law could save Man, then there was no need for the Son of God to become human, be so humiliated, persecuted and ultimately die on the cross as a criminal! In order for Paul to help the Christians realize this, he writes these incredible words: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (2:20).

With these words, the Apostle Paul is declaring to the Galatians: what I am teaching is not mine; I received it from Christ and am merely telling you. My own will is dead, and the will of God rules my life. I have opened my heart to Jesus Christ, my Lord and my God, and He dwells in me. Whatever Christ wants, I do; what he reveals to me, I teach. So have absolute trust in what I am teaching you. What will save you is not the observance of rules or laws but faith, devotion, love, and obedience to Jesus Christ, the true God. The Apostle adds: "the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (verse 20).

My brothers and sisters, let us also imitate the fiery Apostle Paul in his devotion to Christ. Let us also open our hearts like him, so that Christ may come to us. Let us allow Christ to direct our lives and our focus. To subordinate our own will to the will of Christ. Let us want what He wants. And be sure that Christ, who died on the Cross from love for us as God Almighty, will always guide us on the right path for our own benefit. Amen.