

Catechism & Theology Course

Session I, Class I

9/12/23

“To the churches of Galatia:

Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom *be* glory forever and ever. Amen.

I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.

For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.

But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught *it*, but *it came* through the revelation of Jesus Christ”.

- *St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 1:3-12*

“See that no one cause you to err from this way of the Teaching, since apart from God it teaches you.... Whosoever, therefore, comes and teaches you all these things that have been said before, receive him. But if the teacher himself turn and teach another doctrine to the destruction of this, hear him not;”

- *Didache: The Lord's Teaching Through the Twelve Apostles to the Nations*

“Moreover, in the Catholic (καθολικός (*katholikos*), “according to the whole”; not ‘universal’) Church itself, all possible care must be taken, that we hold that faith which has been believed everywhere, always, by all (*quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus*). For that is truly and in the strictest sense Catholic...”

- St. Vincent of Lerins (5th c.)

“Jesus said to him, “I AM the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

- *The Gospel According to St. John 14:6*

Sources & Truth

Jesus Christ

- The Hermeneutical Key & Revelation
- Not an Idea or Thing...Person

Church (*Ecclesia*) & Holy Spirit

- Place for Encounter w God
- Communal, Visible, Guide
- Authority
- Saints & Martyrs
- Teachings

“Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions (παράδοσεις) which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.

- *St. Paul's Second Letter to the Thessalonians 2:15*

Scripture & Holy Tradition

“Antiquitas non es veritas...” (antiquity is not truth)” – St. Cyprian of Carthage

- As Originally Written: Hebrew Scriptures and New Testament
- The Word of God
- Not Traditionalism
- History

Worship & Prayer

- Guide, Encounter, & Common Action
- Liturgy
- Eucharist & Doxology

Councils & Creed: For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us...” Acts 15:28

- Dogma, Definitions, & Doctrine
- Seven Ecumenical Councils
- Not sophistry
- Canons
 - o Not Commandments, but Medicine
 - o Authority within the Church
 - o Not Legalism or Fundamentalism
 - o Vs. a Sectarian/Rigorist Mindset
 - o Understanding ἀκρίβεια, (*akriveia*), lit. 'accuracy, exactness, preciseness' and οἰκονομία (*oikonomía*), "economy," dispensation

“Speaking of theology is not merely an exercise in rational thinking, intellectual theorizing, or mental reflection on metaphysics. Theology is divine revelation – God’s revelation of Himself, by Himself, to those whose spiritual eyes have been purified to receive His Divine Light.”

- His Eminence Saba, Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America

Writings and Lives of the Church Fathers & Mothers

- Proof text quoting vs. Scopos
- ‘100% of the Church Fathers are correct, %80 of the time’
- ‘Go back to the Fathers,’ Fr. John Romanides

Spiritual Guide

“And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet. Then the Spirit said to Philip, “Go near and overtake this chariot.” So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, “Do you understand what you are reading?” And he said, “How can I, unless someone guides me?”

- *Acts of the Apostles* 8:27-31

- Geronda, Starets, Confession
- Danger of Cult of Personality
- Healthy Obedience & Monasticism