

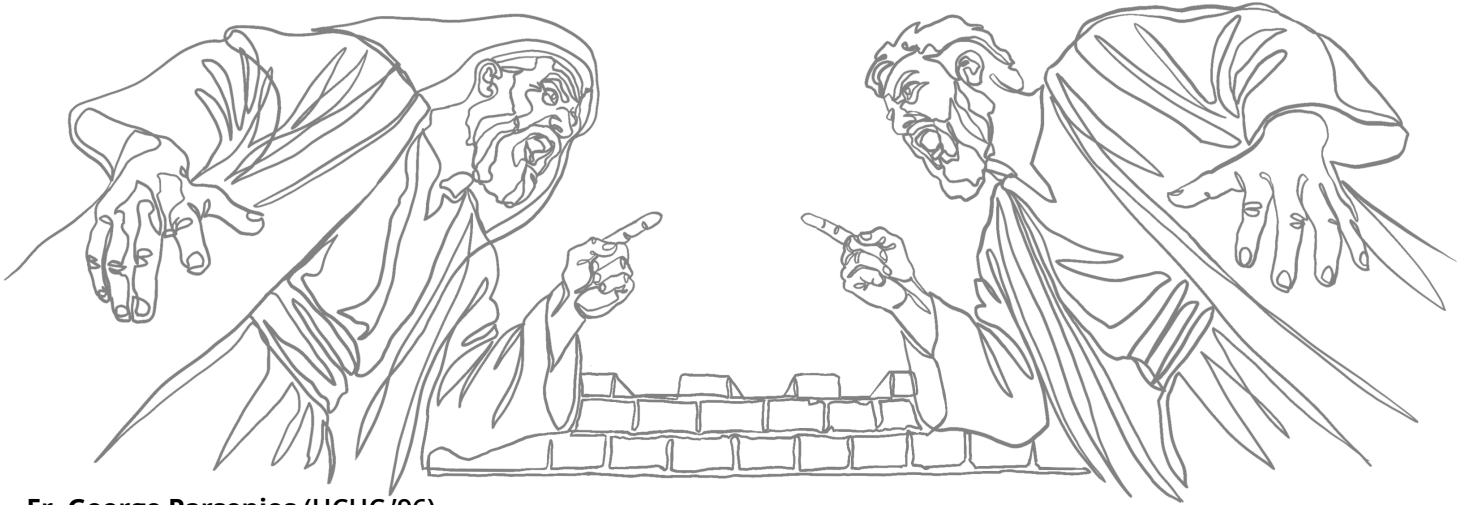


# DIAKONIA

*A National Ministry of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America*

REFLECTIONS FROM TODAY'S READING | *Titus 3:8-15*

***"A little learning is a dangerous thing..."***



**Fr. George Parsenios (HCHC '96)**

Theology is the queen of all learning, and we should devote ourselves eagerly to its study. But as we do so, we should also remember today's reading from the Letter to Titus, where Paul tells Titus to avoid "stupid controversies and...dissensions and quarrels," because they are "useless and futile." This is an odd thing to hear from Paul. He regularly quarreled with people who corrupted the Gospel, and he urged his readers to reject false teaching. Why does he tell Titus to avoid theological controversies? The answer to this question lies in the fact that Titus seems to be overseeing a newly planted Church, full of recent converts who are still learning the rudiments of the faith. Paul writes this warning in order to prevent a problem that commonly afflicts people in the early stages of learning any new subject. Alexander Pope famously said that "a little of learning is a dangerous thing." This is especially true for theology. A little bit

of learning often leads to unnecessary "dissensions and quarrels." As people study theology seriously for the first time, their new learning almost inevitably leads to a touch of arrogance and to a desire to correct and admonish other people. "Knowledge puffs up," says St. Paul elsewhere (1 Corinthians 8:1). The Internet doesn't help. Theological beginners can easily start a podcast posing as experts and then delight in producing "engagement" in the form of dissensions and quarrels. The mature theologian, however, operates like a seasoned physician, able to distinguish between a common cold that can be ignored and a devastating disease that requires intensive surgery. We certainly must defend the Orthodox faith, but most people in our Churches require gentle and careful instruction, not heated argument. The mature theologian knows the difference. Study theology, therefore, but avoid unnecessary dissensions and quarrels.

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*Diakonia is made possible by a generous grant from Leadership 100*

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FROM THE ORIGINAL GREEK: *doxa* (δόξα)

## What does “doctrine” or “glory” mean?

Fr. George Parsenios (HCHC '96)



The Greek word *δόξα* (*doxa*) has two meanings in Christian usage. The first sense is well known, where the word *doxa* means “belief” or “doctrine.” Several important terms in theology use this sense of *doxa*, including the foundational word “orthodox.” The Greek root *orth-* means “correct” or “straight,” so orthodox theology is “correct belief.” Conversely, the Greek word *hetero* means “different” or “other,” so a “heterodox” teaching is a “different belief,” not a true one. Finally, the Greek root

*para-* means “beyond,” so if something is a “paradox,” it is “beyond belief” because it violates standard logic. What is Orthodox is often a paradox, as when we insist that Jesus is fully God and fully man. Alongside this theological sense of *doxa* meaning belief or doctrine lies the biblical and liturgical sense of *doxa*, which means “glory.” *Doxa*, in this sense, translates the Hebrew word *kavod*, which literally means “heavy.” When used for God, it refers to the might of his presence, a palpable presence that inspires awe. When we say, “Glory to God” in our services we acknowledge God’s weighty presence (see 2 Corinthians 4:17). The two different senses of *doxa* are equally important for Orthodox theology.

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### THIS WEEK’S LOOK AT CHURCH HISTORY

## Archbishop Michael (Konstantinides)



*Archbishop Michael on a pastoral visit in Canada. Public Domain.*

#### Ben Malian, MTS-Holy Cross

Archbishop Michael (Konstantinides) faithfully served the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America from 1949–1958. Replacing a larger-than-life predecessor, Athenagoras, and being somewhat overshadowed by his long-serving successor, Iakovos, Archbishop Michael is often overlooked in the history of the Greek Orthodox Church in America. Yet, according to Fr. Demetrios Constantelos, “While others lay the foundations and yet others erected the building, Michael provided the goods with which the structure was filled.”

A well-trained, deeply spiritual theologian and a highly sophisticated administrator, Michael served at a pivotal moment in archdiocesan history. In addition to overseeing the foundation of GOYA, he was the first Greek archbishop to visit South America and the first Orthodox hierarch to participate in a presidential inauguration ceremony. Representing the Ecumenical Patriarchate, he was also elected one of the six presidents of the World Council of Churches at the Second Assembly held in Evanston, Illinois, in 1954.

On July 13<sup>th</sup>, 1958, Archbishop Michael passed away shortly after making a memorable final public appearance at the 14<sup>th</sup> Clergy-Laity Congress in Salt Lake City.

# The Holy Spirit in the Divine Liturgy

Fr. Steven Tsichlis



*...send upon us Divine grace and  
the gift of the Holy Spirit...*

*Photographer: Brittainy Newman*

The Divine Liturgy is a charismatic, Pentecostal event—an event in which the Holy Spirit makes the Risen and Living Christ present among us. In the Liturgy, all things are accomplished by God through Christ in the Spirit. Where the Spirit is, there is Christ; and where Christ is, there is the Spirit. Christ is present in the Divine Liturgy by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit, making the Eucharist the source and summit of the Christian life, what St. Maximos the Confessor (580–662AD) called "the mystery of mysteries." And when we are receiving the Body and Blood of Christ in Holy Communion, we are also participating in what St. Paul and the text of the Liturgy calls "the communion of the Holy Spirit" (2 Corinthians 13:14). In Orthodoxy, the *epiclesis* or invocation, the "calling forth" of the Holy Spirit upon the faithful and the gifts of bread and wine being offered, is an essential element in the Eucharistic action, affirming the fact that it is only in and by the power of the Holy Spirit that the Church worships, lives and acts. The Church is the Body of Christ and it is the Holy Spirit that constitutes the Church on the day of Pentecost, at every baptism and at every Liturgy.

To have received "divine grace and the gift of the Holy Spirit" and be in communion with God means that no matter who we are or whatever language we speak or country we're from, whether we're rich or poor, white, black, red or yellow, God has touched our lives and filled us with the inexpressible joy of His love. God has called us to Himself so that we can become, by His grace, like Him in every possible way. God is good, holy, righteous, merciful, true, forgiving, loving and compassionate—and we, as baptized Christians, are given the gift of the Holy Spirit so that these qualities can blossom in us. St. Paul writes, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Galatians 5:22). Does this describe us? Are we generous and gentle, kind and loving, patient and joyful? Have we allowed the Holy Spirit to be active in our lives so that we can become the living icons of His glory that we're called to be?



## YOUR FAITH IN ACTION

Intentionally practice one fruit of the Spirit—such as patience, kindness, or love—in a situation where it does not come naturally.



COLORING SHEET  
**Prophet Elias**

**Just For Kids!**  
(...and the young at heart)



Prophet Elias (also called Elijah) was a brave prophet in the Old Testament who loved God very much and taught people to trust and obey Him. He prayed with strong faith, and God performed miracles through him, like sending rain after a long drought and feeding him in the wilderness. Prophet Elias is remembered for his courage, his powerful prayers, and his close relationship with God. Orthodox Christians honor him as a holy prophet who reminds us to stay faithful and trust God always. Tomorrow, we celebrate his feast day!