

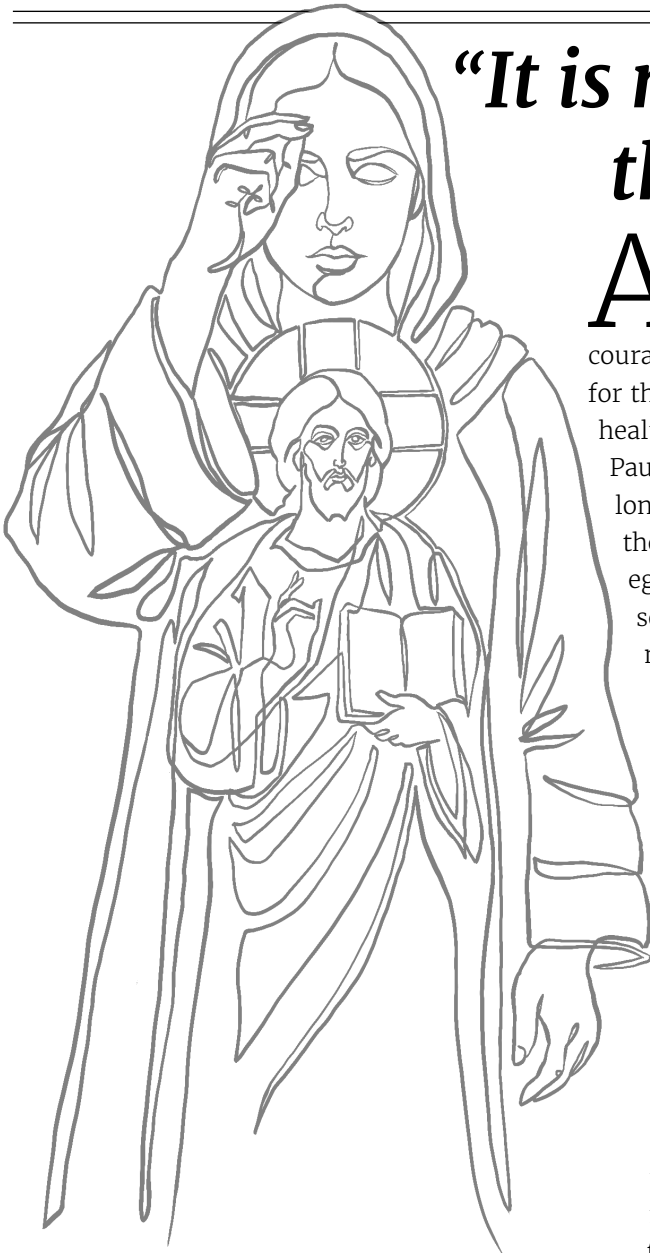


DIAKONIA

A National Ministry of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

REFLECTIONS FROM TODAY'S READING | *Galatians 2:16-20*

Fr. George Parsenios (HCHC '96)



**“It is no longer
the ‘ego’ that lives.”**

A healthy, balanced ego is essential for being a healthy, balanced Christian. God does not want his followers to be timid souls filled with self-loathing. He wants strong and courageous personalities who are so confident in the love of God for them that they share His love generously with others. But a healthy ego is not egotistical. And removing egotism is what St. Paul has in mind in today's epistle reading when he says, “It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me” (Gal. 2:20). Here, the word “I” is in Greek *egô*. Distinguishing between a healthy ego and unholy egotism requires wisdom and a great deal of self-examination. Two things are helpful to consider. First, we must remember to pray for our enemies. St. John Chrysostom says that St. Paul prayed more for his enemies than others pray against their enemies. Egotism makes us think that crimes against us are unforgivable. A healthy ego will defend itself against abuse, as both Jesus and St. Paul did during their ministries. But Christ said from the cross, “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.” In the same spirit, St. Paul said, “When reviled, we bless.” Praying for enemies crucifies egotism. Second, we must imitate the example of Christ, who came not to be served, but to serve (Mark 10:45). The world does not exist to be dominated but to be served. Do we always need to point out where others are wrong? Can we not rather find ways to respect others with differing opinions? Do we squeeze every penny from business transactions? Should we not instead strive to find ways to be fair to all sides? St. Paul would rather be wronged than disturb the harmony of the Church (1 Cor 6). We must do likewise.

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FROM THE ORIGINAL GREEK: *Dioikêsis* (Διοίκησις)

What does “Diocese” mean?

Fr. George Parsenios (HCHC '96)



The English word “diocese” is a compound of two Greek elements: the prefix *dia*, “for the sake of” and the term *oikos*, “house.” In its most basic sense, *dioikêsis* refers to “household administration,” and it eventually came to mean simply “administration” of any kind. At the height of the Roman Empire, the term *dioikêsis* was a label for administrative territories, especially districts organized for the collection of taxes. When the Roman Empire became a Christian empire following the conversion

of St. Constantine, church administration imitated imperial administration. Christian bishops had always been connected to particular cities or regions, and soon the term that defined the region of a bishop carried the name “diocese,” borrowing the language of imperial administrative units. The term “diocese” is not used, however, in the Greek-speaking Church today; instead, the words “metropolis” or “eparchy” designate episcopal regions. In English-speaking countries, however, the Orthodox Church often follows standard English usage by employing “diocese” and “archdiocese” for episcopal sees.

THIS WEEK’S LOOK AT CHURCH HISTORY

The Maliotis Cultural Center (MCC)

Ben Malian, MTS–Holy Cross 2026

On September 19th, 1976, a ribbon-cutting ceremony was held for the Maliotis Cultural Center (MCC) at Hellenic College Holy Cross. Costing roughly one million dollars to construct, the new multi-purpose center—brilliantly wrapped in Pentelic marble and featuring a 350-seat auditorium, two 150-seat lecture halls, and a spacious 3,250 sq. ft. lobby—represented a significant investment in the future of Hellenic College Holy Cross. Its grand opening also marked a major milestone for the large Greek Orthodox community of Boston, evidenced by the attendance of Sen. Edward Kennedy (MA), Rep. Thomas O’Neill (MA), Rep. John Brademas (IN), and the Ambassadors to the U.S. of Greece and Cyprus.

Costas “Charles” Maliotis emigrated from Crete as a young man in 1915. After serving in the U.S. Army in WWI, he organized several successful business ventures and became a pillar of Boston’s Greek Orthodox community. Alongside his wife, Mary, Maliotis was responsible for funding numerous philanthropic endeavors both here and abroad. Recently renovated, MCC remains a treasured venue for hosting academic conferences, exhibiting art installations, and celebrating Hellenic culture.



Brademas, Kennedy, Archbishop Iakovos, Mrs. and Mr. Maliotis, and O’Neill. Donald Hay, Orthodox Observer, Sept. 1976.

Baptism Requires a Personal Response

Fr. Anthony M. Coniaris (1926–2023)

Baptism demands a personal response on the part of the baptized child when it grows up. The child must accept what God did for him or her in baptism. Baptism is not a divine pass that will get us into heaven automatically. Dr. Nikos Nissiotis, a well-known Orthodox theologian, once said, “A baptized Christian—especially in the Churches in which infant baptism is practiced—needs to make a personal decision regarding the Christian faith which he has passively inherited from his Christian environment.”

Any relationship must be developed by two parties. The baptized infant has not yet developed a relationship with God. But one party in the relationship has already taken the initiative: God loves us from the first moment of our conception. He takes the initiative to establish the relationship. Infant baptism is an expression of God's wooing love from the first moment of life.

As the child becomes aware of faith in Jesus Christ, he looks back and realizes that something or someone led him to this act of faith. Eventually, he realizes that it all began back there in baptism when God came to him. At that moment the he must make a personal response to God, committing his life to Him.

One does not become a Christian automatically. Fr. Alexander Schmemmann, a respected Orthodox theologian, said, “It is not mere belonging to the Church that saves, for there is no magic in Christianity, but the acceptance of the Spirit of



Christ.” St. Peter said, “Repent, and every one of you must be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). To become truly a Christian, one must agree freely to be converted, to repent, to turn to Christ, and accept His Holy Spirit.

There is no end to baptism; it is ongoing – a lifelong journey. The sins committed following baptism also need to be washed away by water, but this time it is the water of our tears, the tears of repentance. As we renounced the evil one in baptism and united ourselves to Christ, so we need to keep saying “yes” to Jesus and “no” to Satan many times each day as we go through life.



YOUR FAITH IN ACTION

Take one minute today to renew your baptism by saying: "Lord Jesus Christ, I choose You again today. Help me say 'yes' to You and 'no' to sin in my thoughts, words, and actions." Then make one specific choice that reflects that commitment.



COLORING St. John the Theologian

St. John the Theologian, celebrated on September 25, was one of Jesus Christ's twelve disciples and one of His closest friends. He is often called "the Beloved Disciple" because of his special love for Jesus and his faithful service to Him. Saint John followed Jesus throughout His ministry, listened to His teachings, and witnessed many miracles. He was present at important events, including the Transfiguration of Christ and Christ's Crucifixion. Before Jesus died on the Cross, He asked John to care for His mother, the Most Holy Theotokos. Saint John wrote the Gospel of John, three letters found in the New Testament, and the Book of Revelation. He is called "the Theologian" because he taught so clearly about who Jesus is: the Son of God who came to save the world.

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

