



HOLY MOTHER QUEEN OF ALL (*PANAGIA PANTOVASILISSA*) GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

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To the beloved members of the Holy Mother Queen of All Greek Orthodox Church parish family: Greetings in Christ who dwells in our midst when we treat each other with love and compassion.

United we stand, divided we fall. It is the model of our beloved Commonwealth, and it takes its inspiration from Scripture, for we read in Matthew the sure and certain words of the Lord:

And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand. [**Matt 12: 25**]

Yet, while, in theory, this should seem like such common sense to us that it almost goes without saying, we too often find it hard to put this principle of unity into practice in our dealings with others. In any normal year, we often feel the cold cut of division on any number of political, philosophical, or even theological issues when we dare to discuss them. And 2020 has been anything but a normal year thus far. Indeed, far from worrying about being united with our brothers and sisters, we might simply rejoice to be in one piece ourselves! It has, my friends, been difficult for all of us.

Tomorrow, at least one stressor will be removed from all of our lives: America will vote, and we will no longer be subject to the constant, harassing, and often hateful noise that surrounds modern political campaigns. Some of us will be happy with the result; some of us will be upset. I assure you that no matter what your personal beliefs are, and no matter whom you vote for, I am here to provide spiritual support during one of the most dramatic moments of what has already been a very remarkable year. And I assure you that no matter what separates us ideologically or philosophically pales in comparison to the Eucharistic unity we share together at the Lord's Table. It is imperative that, in our discussions amongst ourselves, we keep this unity at the front of our minds, lest darker thoughts obscure the light of Christ in our hearts.

In the past week, I have had the opportunity to speak to many of my brother clergy throughout the country. Almost without exception they tell stories of issues which would normally be clear becoming clouded by emotion and rancour, and of disagreements that would normally be transient taking on a life of their own amidst a culture consumed by the noise of conflict and frustration. To paraphrase a statement from one of the brother clergy: "In 2020, through a pandemic and an election, the Devil has succeeded in doing what he could not accomplish through the Roman persecutions, the conquering hordes of Islam, and the bloody pogroms of the Bolsheviks: He has divided the Church against herself." I must note that this individual did not intend this as an absolute statement. Indeed, the powers of Hell shall never triumph over Christ and His Church. Rather it was an expression of his disappointment that so many of our people have made it so easy for the enemy to seize their hearts and turn them against their neighbours.

If we have to ask ourselves whether we are being uncharitable, we are likely a long way towards our answer. If we have to consider whether our thoughts come from hardened hearts or rational minds, those thoughts are unlikely to be clear. And there is something more frightening, yet, for when we stop asking these questions altogether, and seek first to cast aspersions at our brothers and sisters, the enemy has already triumphed over us, and the Devil has taken up residence in our hearts. When we speak disparagingly of “those people” God weeps and the Devil laughs at our pronouncements. When our lips curl in contempt, I can assure you that the corners of the mouths of the demons rise into a sinister smile, as they rejoice that the very real and eternal unity that we share in Christ has been obscured by our preoccupation with the ephemeral divisions of the world in which we live.

Knowing that so much of the modern world seeks to extinguish the Christian love in our hearts, and knowing how many things seek to pull us away from our brothers and sisters, I am going to be offering Confession on Wednesday (6–8 PM), and Friday (4:30 PM-7 PM) this week. Confession—the healing sacrament—represents an opportunity to cut the bonds of resentment with which the world seeks to hold us fast, that we might rise together towards the victory which Christ offers all of us when we unite together in Him.

We are called to be in the world but not of it, lest we be found to be in but not of the Body of Christ. Whatever other differences the world and our spiritual foe may seek to sow amongst us, may they pale in comparison to the unity that we share at the Lord’s Table, and may we always remember that we are called to dwell together in His loving arms.

In His service, I am here if you need me, and
I remain,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Fr. William J. Redmon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross symbol at the beginning.

Rev. Fr. William J. Redmon
Presiding Priest