

God's Temple

When Paul said: "Christ is our peace", he added: "He has made two groups one" and by that he meant the Jews and the Gentiles. Jews used to hate Gentile nations as the Scripture said: "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy' (Matthew 5: 43). They understood that only the Jew is your neighbor while strangers are enemies.

The Apostle clarified that this opinion is no longer valid by saying that the Savior destroyed with his body, i.e. his death, the dividing wall of hostility that separated the Jews and Gentiles. Jesus showed that he created "one humanity out of the two" in Himself. This means that, through his death, he made them "one new humanity" after being disputed and made peace between them through his blood and conciliated them in one body by becoming, through their faith in Jesus, one body with God.

They became united through the Cross because they were together in Christ and not far. You became able to pray together to the Father who is the ultimate of everything. The Holy Spirit - that was sent by the Savior after his Ascension to heaven - unites you.

Then, Paul continues his thoughts by saying: "you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household". Before your baptism, you were strangers and not members of God's household; however, now you have become citizens with the saints and one with all believers. The Church has become for you the heavenly home that descended from above.

"You were built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets". By apostles, he refers to the Twelve Disciples and by prophets he refers to the Prophetic Books of the Old Testament that are four Major Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel and Ezekiel) in addition to those who are called the "Minor Prophets" that also wrote books of the Old Testament. He also refers to prophets that didn't write any books.

By the expression "building", Paul means the arch that we build in the east which is made of connected stones that have nothing between them such as lime. Those stones are united together through what the apostle calls "the chief cornerstone" and what we call in common Lebanese language "the closing stone". In such a building, every stone lies on the other and all stones meet in the closing stone.

Paul compares Jesus Christ to this stone because through him all the building is joined together (this is what we do in the eastern building). The building that you have become grows and becomes "a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit". The expression "a holy temple in the Lord" is interchanged with "a dwelling in

which God lives by his Spirit (i.e. the Holy Spirit that dwells in you)”. We have an invisible temple which is the Church that God made it a dwelling for Him. You are this dwelling through the Holy Spirit that lives in every person through Baptism and Myron.

Metropolitan George of Mount Lebanon