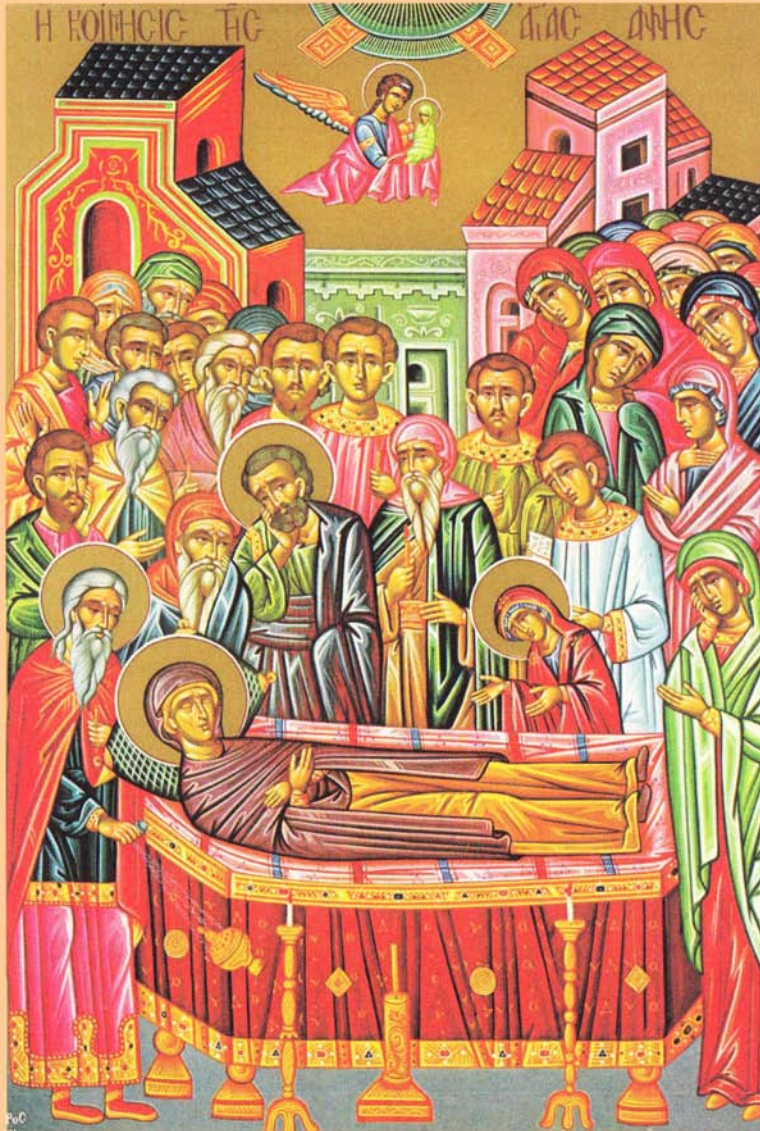


NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
NINTH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW



Icon of the Dormition of Saint Ann -- July 25

Tone 8

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ON THE EPISTLE FOR THE 9TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST – 1 CORINTHIANS 3:9-17

From *A Year of the Lord*, by Fr. Theodore Stylianopoulos

In the Epistle for this Sunday the Holy Apostle Paul speaks to us about the Church. Here, the Apostle is speaking not about the Church as a building but the community of believers as the Church.

The Church is more than a physical building or an organization, it is the People of God built upon the Foundation of Jesus Christ. Using the images of foundation and building, St. Paul has some important things to say about the relationship between Christ and Christians, as well as the relationship between the work of Christians and God. The Apostle teaches three main things in this passage:

1) Christ is the foundation of the Church

This means that Christ provides the unshakable security and ground of hope for everything in the Christian community. Everything done in the Church, all the design and work of Christians, must be anchored on and related to the living Christ, if the community is to hold together and function as what it is meant to be, God's living temple permeated by God's Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16).

2) The Church leaders and by extension all Christians laboring in the Church are "co-workers with God" (1 Cor. 3:9).

The correct translation of *synergoi Theou* (1 Cor. 3:9) is not "co-workers under God" which would mean partners working together for God or fellow workers in God's service. Rather it is "co-workers with God," which means laborers together with God or God's fellow laborers. In other words, Christians are not only brothers and sisters co-operating with one another and working under God's care; they are also God's direct partners, working immediately with God in their various specific acts of service, administration, teaching, helping, giving, guiding, evangelizing, and witnessing. This is a powerful statement of *synergia* (co-operation) between human beings and God.

3) All Christians are accountable to God

The Christian community (the parish church) includes people of different personalities, gifts, strengths, weaknesses, abilities, zeal, commitment and contributions. Their task is not to compete, compare, or critique one another, but to offer all their labors as a gift to God for the up-building of the entire community of Christ. God alone will test and evaluate the work of each person's work on the Day of Judgment.



Read 1 Corinthians 3:9-17

- ❖ What two images does St. Paul use for the Church in Corinth? (vs. 9)
- ❖ What does St. Paul mean by "the gift that God gave me"? (vs. 10) What is this gift?
- ❖ What is his warning about how to build? (vs. 10)
- ❖ Who is the "one and only foundation" of the Church? (vs. 11) What does this imply about the nature of Christ?
- ❖ In practical terms, what is the "gold or silver or precious stones... or wood or grass or straw" in God's eyes as far as the life of the Christian community is concerned? (vs. 12)
- ❖ When the fire comes, what do you think will be standing of your own work? (vs. 13)
- ❖ What new attitudes, new priorities, and specific steps can you adopt as God's partners to make your parish more aware that you all are "God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you"? (vs. 16)

Святкуємо 50-років!

Celebrating 50 Years!

**Українська Католицька Церква Святого Йоана Хрестителя
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Ann, Ancestor of Our Faith

Today we celebrate the dormition of Saint Ann, the falling asleep of the earthly grandmother of our Lord Jesus Christ. This woman was the vessel of the vessel that made possible our salvation. The life of St. Ann and her husband St. Joachim was recorded by St. James in a book not included in the Holy Scriptures called the Protoevangelion of James. According to this account, Saints Ann and Joachim lived a life of constant prayer, humility and moderation, but they could not conceive children. For a couple to be childless in those days meant that people thought you were cursed by God, and therefore considered worthless. Greatly troubled by this, and fearing that they would die childless, they still persevered in their constant prayer and fasting. Finally God provided them with a miracle and St. Ann gave birth to a girl at an advanced age.

Saint Ann is known as the patron saint of grandparents, housewives, pregnant women, women in labor, women who can't bear children, but she is also the patron saint of children's religious education. And what better patron of religious education than a woman who knew her priorities, who knew her duty was to the spiritual growth of her child, and who provided spiritual food for the girl who was to be the greatest woman that ever lived, who was to become the Theotokos.

Christ provides material and spiritual necessities in this life, but it is up to us to work with Him in synergy. St. Ann is a perfect model of the parent who provided the necessities of life for her child - both material and spiritual - in total cooperation with God, in total synergy.