

THE FIFTEENTH FLOWER: CIRCUMCISSION OF THE FLESH OR OF THE SOUL?

I listened to your words, O Lord, and I followed your voice. Your voice is directing my way, but the baggage that I am carrying is heavy and it is not yet empty. It is the baggage that I inherited from my own understanding, culture and different concepts.

I do have in my mind, my heart, my soul and my flesh, accumulated desires and passions that are not yet destroyed and not yet replaced completely by my desire and passion towards you, the gift of dispassion. This is the baggage that holds me from advancing more rapidly toward you. It creates disagreements and quarrels. It is the function of what I know and not what is revealed to me through your Church.

How many times, when I listen to your words, do I create incorrect concepts? My personal understanding should not be different than any other member of the Church. We are all in one mind, the mind of Christ,¹ not of our own minds. My own mind may depend on the baggage that I am carrying, but the conciliar and collective minds certainly will avoid any wrong interpretation if “the Church [is growing] in accordance with the depth of its life in the fullness and truth of Christ.”²

It is important, therefore to assemble together and discuss when in doubt, counseling the different interpretations in the light of the Word of God and to declare with one accord³ what seems good to the Holy Spirit.⁴

This sets a guideline for living and forms a parameter that Christians should not trespass. It avoids quarrels and disputes, and all the members shall live in conformity of these guidelines.

The Holy Spirit directed the assembly into a decision that seemed good to the Him. He revealed the importance of the work of the Holy Spirit instead of the work of men. He directed the assembly to focus on the Word of God and His revelation and the impact of the work of the Holy Spirit upon the people.⁵ He taught the assembly that the physical

¹ 1 Corinthians 2: 16.

² *Fear Not*, Fr. Cyrille Argenti, (Alexander Press, Montreal 2006), p. 290.

³ Acts 15: 25.

⁴ Acts 15: 28.

⁵ Acts, 15: 8

circumcision is an outer surgical change but what is required from the person is an inner surgery, a transformation of the inner self that will illumine others. The physical change is a hidden and a selfish one, it will not change the attitude of the person. It might oblige the person to follow some rules and to abide to some rituals, but it will not create an impact on the people around him and does not develop a relationship between the circumcised and God.

Your words are directing my steps, O Lord, but I will get lost if I act alone and not in the midst of the assembly. Your Church is my safety from error and hypocrisy. Your words in the Church unite and do not divide. They unite the different parts of the body as they unite the different members of the Church; all the parts will be working in harmony and following the Head of the body, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Therefore, the unity of the Church shall unite the world in your Name as Fr. Cyrille Argenti suggests: "If the Church is a witnessing community, then her unity will prepare the way of the unity of the world."⁶

⁶ *Fear Not*, Fr. Cyrille Argenti, (Alexander Press, Montreal 2006), p. 287.