**2017.1.15**

**“Thought for the Week”**

**“ When Christ, Who is our life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.”**

 Our blessed Paul is revealing to us the great mystery of Godliness that is hidden deep inside each one of us who have been baptized into our Lord Jesus. It is Christ Himself who lives in us--the creator of heaven and of earth dwells in us! If He has been given all power in heaven and on earth then we, beloved, have been given this same power. It is the power to bring peace into the world. It is the power to bring forgiveness into the world. It is the power to bring love into the world. Just as this power was hidden in our Lord when He came to this earth, so it is hidden in us. St. Paul tells us clearly in verse 3,which is the immediately preceeding verse of the current epistle; ***“For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”*** His glory was hidden and not manifested to us fully until he died.

 Likewise, if we are to enter into this glory, we must also die. This death is like a seed that must be planted deep within the earth. It must then be watered and cared for as it begins to germinate. We must kill the weeds that try to choke its life. And finally at the right time, when it is fully ready, it will sprout up in a complete and new form-beautiful, perfect, and glorious. Beloved in Christ Jesus, we have all died and have been buried deep within the earth- ***“we were buried with Him through baptism into death”***(Rom 6:4 NKJ) All of our sins were drowned and destroyed in the waters of baptism.

 And yet, by the providence of God, the devil is still allowed to plant weeds on this earth that grow around us. He allows this so that we might grow strong in our personal freedom of choice. We grow strong by killing these weeds that war against us. Remarkably, we kill these weeds by dying ourselves. As a dead person cannot respond if someone insults him, so we must not respond. As a dead person has no use for luxurious clothes, or money, or power, these must not be the goal of our lives. As a dead person never tries to bring attention to himself so let us never seek to glorify ourselves. We must hide with Christ. Let nothing foul pollute our mouths or our minds. Let us set a guard- that is our prayers and our fasts- about our mind and our mouths- so that they be sanctified. We must reject and kill all foul things that come near them. We must destroy anger and judgement. Let us forget the wrongs done to us, for remembering them will harm the life inside of us.

 Beloved in Christ Jesus, as we continue to pull up the weeds around us, we will unfortunately be pricked by the thorns. That is, we will fail and touch sin at times, and we will be wounded. God even allows this to show that it is not our power that saves us but His. When we fail, we should thank God that we have not fallen further and run to our Lord by confession. Let us redouble our efforts for we know that they will not be in vain. We must trust that the Holy Communion will heal us. We must look confidently for our salvation for we know the Lord loves us. Let us rejoice in this love by humbling ourselves and dying to ourselves and our own self-sufficiency. And the unstoppable life within us will begin to burst forth. Glory will shine deep inside of us. And when the Lord appears, in His time, we will also appear with Him-in glory. Let us patiently and persistently seek this with all of our strength. Amen.