**9 25 16*”THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK”***

***“Brethren, it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us; He has put his seal upon us and given us His Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee. ”***

St. Paul on this 1st Sunday of Luke tells us who we are as Christians. It also states clearly that it is God who has given us our identity. Very often we seek to find our identity in our work or in our roles in various activities of our daily lives. Some seek to identify themselves with their nation or culture. Most recently, our culture in a misguided spirit of what is perceived to be fairness and compassion, has even tried to give every deviation from the norm and every perversity a noble identity. But we must be certain that, as those who belong to our Lord, we can find our true identity nowhere else but in Christ Jesus.

One may ask, how and when was this identity given to us? Here, St. Paul is quite clear that our identity was given to us when we were baptized and anointed with the Holy Chrism; when we were sealed in the act of holy chrismation. By this action we have been made an intimate part of His body-the Church. The word for seal also means to be branded. That is we are branded with the stamp of Jesus Christ. We are identified as sheep who belong to Him and Him alone. But just what does this mean? With what identity have we been anointed? Beloved, we have been anointed as Kings, as Priests, and as Prophets. Today, I would like to focus on what it means to be a King.

In the Old Testament God ordained that the kings were anointed with oil to receive their authority. Saul was so anointed and so was David at the hands of Samuel the Prophet. So we must also understand that as Christians we are made to be Kings by God. We are Kings because we have been given authority to rule over our bodies, our thoughts, and our actions. We are no longer slaves to our material needs and neither are we slaves to sin. We can determine our thoughts and rule over them- they do not rule over us. No evil spirit has authority over us. St. Paul says this clearly in 2nd Corinthians; ***“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.”***

Beloved in Christ Jesus, our identity as Christians is a royal identity. But we must stirve to take up this identity and realize our calling. We must strive to live our lives worthy of this calling. We must bear fruits worthy of repentance. All of these fruits we will indeed bear if we humble ourselves before God and commit ourselves and all of our life to Him. If we strive to please Him with every word and action. If we jealously guard love, compassion, and forgiveness deep in our hearts. This is what we should strive for, and it is in this striving, that we become Kings against whom no power or spirit of this world can stand. Amen.