**7 30 17*"THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK"***

***“Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”***

Beloved in our Lord, St. Paul’s statement in 1st Corinthians, Chapter 1 warns us that if we are to be truly members of the Church that we must have one essential characteristic- unity. We must be perfectly joined together in the same mind (nous) and in the same judgement (gnome). This does not mean that we each can’t have our own opinions or viewpoints on certain matters in the Church. But it does mean that our opinions must be expressed in the context of the one mind that we are all striving to acquire- and that is the mind of our Lord Jesus Christ. This mind for which we are striving exists in the unity of the Church.

St. Paul expresses this clearly in the next chapter of Corinthians- ***“But we have the mind of Christ.***”(1Co 2:16-1 NKJ) When he says “we” he is speaking of the Church. There is only one Church as there is only one body of Jesus. It is obvious that Christ cannot have many bodies and so there can only be one Church. When St. Paul warns that there be no “divisions” the word he uses is “schisma” or schisms. That is when we divide ourselves from each other- we actually divide ourselves from the Church. We are no longer living members but dead branches. We become playthings of the devil. Division is satan’s marriage feast. The evil one has no greater joy than when we are divided!

Beloved in our Lord Jesus, let us each strive to acquire the “mind of Christ”. It is a mind of love. It is a mind of self-sacrifice. It is a mind of that is lowly and humble. It is a mind that will do anything to build up our neighbor, even at our own expense. And more than anything it is a mind that forgives everyone everything. For if Christ did not forgive us how could we be saved? When we forgive someone who has wounded us, both of us are saved!

Therefore let us each certainly have our own opinions but let us express this only with the one mind and the one heart of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us ***“Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another”*** (Rom 12:10 NKJ). This is the mind that our Lord Jesus has already given to us who belong to the Church -a mind of peace, of joy, and of unity. Amen.