**2017.1.29**

 **“Thought for the Week”**

**“Brethren, you are the temple of the living God; as God said, “I will live in them and move among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”**

Our blessed St. Paul today makes an astounding claim- that the Lord, Whom heaven cannot contain, dwells inside of us. The whole context of this claim is the comparison of the temple of God with the temples of idols. The verse immediately preceding the epistle for today asks the question ***“And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? (2Co 6:16 NKJ)*** Now, usually, when we think of a temple we think of a building made of stone or concrete and when we think of an idol we think of a statue made of stone or other material. But St. Paul in this beautiful passage tells us that God does not live in stone structures made with hands but in the living human being that he has created. Beloved in our Lord, we can never forget our high calling and our royal birth. We are sons and daughters of the King of the Universe. We are called to share in the Divinity of the all-knowing, all-powerful, all-loving God. He is our God and we are His people!

Conversely, my dear ones in Christ Jesus, an idol is not essentially a stone statue, but rather anything that lives in us that takes the place of our King. An idol is when our true goals, our true hopes, and our ultimate confidence lies in any other thing or person but the living God. When earthly pleasures, comfort, physical health, education, self-esteem, human glory, human honor, or material wealth replace God as our ultimate hope, then this is idolatry. Our hearts will become stone temples, indeed, for they will become as hard as stone. Things made of stone cannot contain the living God.

Therefore, our calling is clear- we, who belong to Christ, must separate ourselves in our minds and in our hearts from the ideals and methods of this world. ***“Come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean.”***  Let us offer our God holiness, purity, and good thoughts so that we might indeed gain good health. Let us humble ourselves, so that true honor and glory can be ours. Let us love others unconditionally and sacrificially, so that love will soften our hearts-giving us real pleasure and comfort. If we offer all of the gifts that God has given us in this way, they will become to Him a living and sweet-smelling sacrifice and for us great spiritual power. As we offer Him our meager gifts, the One who loves us will bestow everything He has on us! He will make of us ***“a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people.***”(1Pe 2:9 NKJ). My beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ, let each of us recognize and utterly rejoice in the royal calling that has been given to us. Let us make it our own by pursuing it with all of our hearts. Amen.