



My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

In this Sunday's Gospel, Christ famously tells His followers, *"You are the light of the world... Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven"* (Matthew 5:14;16). Here, our Lord clearly gives us our sense of responsibility, if we are to truly be considered members of His Body. This statement is not simply a philosophical theory, but a statement of practical action.

This Sunday our Church also commemorates the Holy Fathers who participated in the Fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon in 451, which affirmed our understanding that Christ has two natures: that He is both fully God and fully Man. As St. Paul instructs Titus in this week's Epistle, *"I desire that you insist on these things, so that those who have come to believe in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works; these things are excellent and profitable to everyone. But avoid stupid controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless... And let people learn to devote themselves to good works in order to meet urgent needs, so that they may not be unproductive"* (Titus 3:8-9;14). Clearly, the Fathers were not occupying themselves with quarrels—they were addressing a heresy which threatened to divide the Church--but the spirit of Saint Paul's words still applied, then and now: we must devote ourselves to good works, and not simply words.

As both God and Man, Jesus Christ did not simply end His lesson by proclaiming us to be the light of the world. He admonishes His followers to keep the Commandments and the Law, *"Whoever then relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but he who does them and teaches them shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven"* (Matthew 5:17-19). Christ, who as God willingly took on flesh to dwell among us, practiced what He preached. He Himself glorified the Father through His own good works: healing the sick, feeding the hungry, and even raising the dead during His earthly life and ministry.

My Brothers and Sisters, this is the reason we have the Church as both an institution, and as the Body of Christ. The Church guides us towards closeness with God, helping us to keep His Word, and glorifying Him through our thoughts and deeds.

+SEVASTIANOS
Metropolitan of Atlanta