

Orthodox Heritage

So therefore, brethren, persevere, and grasp the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or by our epistle [2 Thess. 2:15]

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Ἄρα οὖν, ἀδελφοί, στήκετε, καὶ κρατεῖτε τὰς παραδόσεις ἃς ἐδιδάχθητε, εἴτε διὰ λόγου εἴτε δι' ἐπιστολῆς ἡμῶν [Θεσσ. Β' 2:15]

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PAPISM AS THE OLDEST PROTESTANTISM

By St. Justin Popovich.

What are, on the other hand, the fruits of the God-Man society [the Church]—Saints, Martyrs, and Confessors. That is its goal, that is its meaning and design, that is the proof of its indestructible strength. Not books and libraries, systems and cities—all things that are here today and gone tomorrow. The various pseudo-Christian humanisms fill the world with books, while Orthodoxy fills it with the hallowed.

† † †

In the European West, Christianity has gradually transformed into humanism. For a long time and arduously, the God-Man diminished, and has been changed, narrowed, and finally reduced to a man: to the infallible man in Rome and the equally “infallible” man in London and Berlin. Thus did Papism come into being, taking everything from Christ, along with Protestantism, which asks the least from Christ, and often nothing.

Both in Papism and in Protestantism, man has been put in the place of the God-Man, both as the highest value and as the highest criterion. A painful and sad correction of the God-Man's work and teaching has been accomplished. Steadily and stubbornly Papism has tried to substitute the God-Man with man, until in the dogma about the infallibility of the pope—a man, the God-Man was once and for all replaced with ephemeral, “infallible” man; because with this dogma, the pope was decisively and clearly declared as something higher than not only man, but the holy Apostles, the holy Fathers, and the holy Ecumenical councils.

With this kind of a departure from the God-Man, from the ecumenical Church

as the God-Man organism, Papism surpassed Luther, the founder of Protestantism. Thus, the first radical protest in the name of humanism against the God-Man Christ, and his God-Man organism—the Church—should be looked for in Papism, not in Lutheranism. Papism is actually the first and the oldest Protestantism.

We should not do this ourselves. Papism indeed is the most radical Protestantism, because it has transferred the foundation of Christianity from the eternal God-Man to ephemeral (lasting for a very short time, *Ed.*) man. And it has proclaimed this as the paramount dogma, which means: the paramount value, the paramount measure of all beings and things in the world. And the Protestants merely accepted this dogma in its essence, and worked it out in terrifying magnitude and detail.

Essentially, Protestantism is nothing other than a generally applied Papism. For in Protestantism, the fundamental principle of Papism is brought to life by each man individually. After the example of the infallible man in Rome, each Protestant is a cloned infallible man, because he pretends to personal infallibility in matters of faith. It can be said: Protestantism is a vulgarized Papism, only stripped of mystery (i.e., sacramentality), authority and power.

Through the reduction of Christianity, with all its eternal God-Man qualities, to man, Western Christianity has been turned into humanism. This may seem paradoxical, but it is true in its irresistible and unerasable historical reality. Because Western Christianity is, in its essence, the most decisive humanism; and because it has proclaimed man as infallible, and has turned the God-Man religion into a humanist religion. And that this is so is shown by the fact that the God-Man has been driven to

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Orthodox Heritage may, at times, bring up issues or present articles that some consider controversial. Such material is presented so that a distinction is made between salvation and the 20th century heresy of ecumenism. These are confusing times for the Orthodox faithful, and political correctness must be sacrificed so that His truth be brought forth.

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the heavens, while his place on earth has been filled with his replacement, Vicarius Christi—the pope.

What a tragic piece of illogic: to establish a replacement for the everywhere-present God and the Lord Christ! But this piece of illogic has been incarnated in Western Christianity: the Church has been transformed into a state, the pope has become a ruler, bishops have been proclaimed princes, priests have become leaders of clerical parties, the faithful have been proclaimed papal subjects. The Gospel has been replaced with the Vatican’s compilation of canon law; Evangelical ethic and methods of love have been replaced with casuistry, Jesuitry and the “holy” Inquisition. What does all this mean? With the systematic removal and destruction of everything that does not bow to the pope, even with forced conversions to the papal faith, and the burning of sinners for the glory of the meek and the mild Lord Jesus!

There is no doubt that all these facts converge into one irresistibly logical conclusion: in the West there is no Church and no God-Man, which is why there is no true God-Man society in which men are mortal brothers and immortal fellows. Humanistic Christianity is actually the most decisive protest and uprising against the God-Man Christ and all the Evangelical, God-Man values and norms. And even here is evident European man’s favored tendency, to reduce everything to man as the fundamental value and the fundamental measure. And behind that stands one idol: *Menschliches Allzumenschliches** (Human, All Too Human, *Ed.*).

With the reduction of Christianity to humanism, Christianity has been no doubt simplified, but also at the same time—destroyed! Now that the *gleichaltung* of Christianity with humanism has been accomplished, some in Europe are seeking a return to the God-Man Christ. [*gleichaltung* is the

act, process, or policy of achieving rigid and total coordination and uniformity (as in politics, culture, communication) by forcibly repressing or eliminating independence and freedom of thought, action, or expression: forced reduction to a common level: forced standardization or assimilation, *Ed.*]. However, the cries of individuals in the Protestant world—“*Zuruck zum Jesus!* Back to Jesus!”—are empty cries in the dark night of humanistic Christianity, which has abandoned the values and the measures of God-Man and is now suffocating in desperation and impotence. While from the depths of centuries past reverberate the bitter words of the melancholic prophet of God, Jeremiah: *Accursed is the man who puts his confidence in man!*...

In a broader historical perspective, the Western dogma about man’s infallibility is nothing other than an attempt to revive and immortalize dying humanism. It is the last transformation and final glorification of humanism. After the rationalistic Enlightenment of the 18th century and the shortsighted positivism of the 19th century, nothing else was left to European humanism than to fall apart in its own impotence and contradictions. But in that tragic moment, religious humanism came to its aid with its dogma about the infallibility of man saved European humanism from imminent death. And, although dogmatized, Western Christian humanism could not help absorbing all the fatal contradictions of European humanism, which are united in one single desire: to exile God-Man from the earth. Because **the most important thing for humanism is for man to be the highest value and the highest measure. Man, not God-Man.**

According to our own Orthodox feeling: Christianity is only Christianity through the God-Man, through His God-

Man ideology and God-Man methods. That is the fundamental truth for the sake of which no compromises can be made. Only as the God-Man is Christ the highest value and the highest measure. One should be truthful and consistent to the end: if Christ is not the God-Man, then he is the most impudent fraud, because he proclaimed himself as God and the Lord. But the Evangelical historical reality irrefutably shows and proves that Jesus Christ is in everything and in all things the perfect God-Man. Therefore, one cannot be a Christian without a belief in Christ as God-Man and in the Church as His God-Man Body, in which He left His entire Miraculous Person. The saving and life-giving power of Christ's Church lays in the eternally-living and all-present personality of the God-Man. Any substitution of the God-Man with a man, and any winnowing of Christianity in order to pick out only that which pleases a man's individual preference and reason, turns Christianity into shallow and impotent humanism.

The outstanding importance of Christianity lies in its life-giving and unchangeable God-Manhood, by which it models humanity as a whole, bringing it from the darkness of non-being to the light of Pan-being. Only by its God-Man power is Christianity the salt of the earth, the salt that saves man from rotting in sin and evil. If it dissolves into various humanisms, Christianity becomes bland, becomes salt that has turned flat, useless, fit to be tossed out and trod on.

Any tendency or attempt at a *gleichaltung* of Christianity with the spirit of the times, with ephemeral movements and regimes of certain historical periods, takes away from Christianity that specific worth which makes it the singular God-Man religion in the world. In the Orthodox philosophy of society, **the rule above all rules is this: do not accommodate the God-Man Christ to the spirit of the times, but rather accommodate the spirit of the times to the spirit of Christ's eternity—Christ's God-Manhood.** Only in this way can the Church preserve the life-giving and irreplaceable personality of the God-Man Christ and remain a God-Man society; in such a God-Man society, people fraternize and live with the help of Divine love and justice, prayer and fasting, meekness and humbleness, goodness and wisdom, charity and faith, love of God and love of one's brother, and all the other Evangelical virtues.

According to the God-Man philosophy of life and the world, man, society, nation, and state are to accommodate themselves to the Church as the eternal ideal, but the

Church must never accommodate itself to them—much less submit to them. A nation has true worth only inasmuch as it lives the Evangelical virtues and incarnates in its history the God-Man values. What applies to the nation, applies to the state as well. The goal of the nation as a whole is the same as the goal of the individual: to incarnate in one's self Evangelical justice, love, sanctity; to become a *holy people—God's people*—which in its history proclaims the Divine values and virtues (1 Pet 2:9-10; 1:15-16).

† † †

They will ask us: where are the concrete fruits of this God-Man society? How was it that precisely on the field of Orthodoxy's radiation came about the appearance of "the most radical secularism in human history?" (Josef Pieper—a German Catholic philosopher whose views are rooted primarily in the Scholasticism of Thomas Aquinas and in the teachings of Plato, *Ed.*) Does there not also exist an Eastern "Humanism" (e.g., Caesaro-Papism, etc.)? Thus, the enemies of Orthodoxy ask: The success of atheistic social humanism on the soil of Orthodoxy: is that not proof of the "inability of Orthodoxy" to solve the most elementary social problems?

It is a fact that this world lies in evil and sin. The reduction of everything to man is in fact the atmosphere in which sinful human nature and man in general—no matter where he is located—lives and breathes, and something

toward which they strive. It is, therefore, no wonder that the tides of this sinfulness, just like the tides of European pseudo-Christian poisons, from time to time wash over the Orthodox peoples as well. However, one thing is irrefutably true: the Orthodox Church has never ecclesialogically dogmatized any sort of humanism, whether we are talking about Caesaro-Papism or any other "ism."

The Holy Orthodox Church, with the strength of its genuine and uncorrupted God-Manhood and Evangelical truthfulness, and through its constant call for repentance regarding everything that is not from God-Man, it has preserved, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the wisdom and the chastity of its heart and its soul. And by this it has remained and continues to be the "salt" of the earth, man and society.

On the other hand, the tragedy of Western Christianity lies precisely in the fact that it, either by correcting the image of the God-Man, or by denying it, has attempted to once again introduce demonized humanism, so characteristic of sinful human nature, to—where? Into the heart of the God-Man organism itself—the Church, whose essence lies precisely



in the freeing of man from it. And through it into all regions of life, person and society, proclaiming it as the supreme dogma, as the universal dogma. With this, the demonized intellectual pridefulness of man, hidden under the cloak of the Church, becomes the dogma of a faith without which there is no salvation! It is horrible to think it, much less say it: with this, the sole “workshop of salvation” and graduation to God-Manhood in this world, is gradually turned into a demonized “workshop” of violence over consciousness and dehumanization! A workshop of the disfigurement of God and man through the disfigurement of the God-Man!

The Orthodox Church has proclaimed no poison, no sin, no humanism, no earthly social system as dogma—neither through Councils, nor through the “Body” of the Ecumenical Church. While the west, alas, does nothing but that. The latest proof: the Second Vatican Council.

The Orthodox Faith: in it, repentance is a necessary holy virtue; and it always calls for repentance. In the West: the pseudo-Christian faith in man does not call for repentance; on the contrary, it “clerically” obligates a maintaining of its fatal-to-man homo-idolization, its pseudo-Christian humanisms, infallibilities, heresies, and it pridefully considers that in no case are these things for which one should repent.

Contemporary atheistic social humanism—ideologically and methodologically—is in everything a fruit and an invention of pseudo-Christian Europe, wed with our own sinfulness. They ask us: how did it arrive on the soil of Orthodoxy? It is God trying the endurance of the righteous, visiting the children for the sins of their fathers, and announcing the strength of His Church by taking it through fire and water. Because, according to the words of the wise-in-God Macarius of Egypt, that is the only path of true Christianity: *Wherever the Holy Spirit is, there follows, like a shadow, persecution and battle... It is necessary that the truth be persecuted.*

What are, on the other hand, the fruits of the God-Man society?—Saints, Martyrs, and Confessors. That is its goal, that is its meaning and design, that is the proof of its indestructible strength. Not books and libraries, systems and cities—all things that are here today and gone tomorrow. The various pseudo-Christian humanisms fill the world with books, while Orthodoxy fills it with the hallowed. Thousands and hundreds of thousands, even millions of martyrs and newly martyred, fallen for the Orthodox faith—there is the fruit of God-Man society. Thus does the famous Francois Mauriac, a Roman Catholic, on the dark horizon of the contemporary world, with each day more and more pushed into the darkness of born-in-Europe, soul-losing homo-idolatry, see **only one bright spot, that gives hope for the future of this world: the bathed in the blood of the martyred and newly-martyred faith. The Orthodox faith.**

But in the West? They neither know the Church, nor the path, nor the way out of the hopelessness; all is sunk in

soul-losing idolatry, in love of pleasure, love of self, and love of lust. Hence in Europe we see the renaissance of polytheism. The “False Christs,” false gods that have flooded Europe and are exported from it to all the marketplaces of the world, have for their main assignment the killing of the soul in man—that unique treasure of man in all the worlds, and in that way make impossible the very possibility of a genuine society.

In writing this, we are not writing the history of Europe, its virtues and faults, nor the history of the European pseudo-churches. We are merely laying out the entelechy of its ontology (the realization of potential of its ontology, *Ed.*), descending into the path and essence of European intellectual pridefulness, into its demonic underground, where its black sources are, whose water threatens to poison the world. **This is not a judgment of Europe but a heartfelt prayerful call to the solitary path of salvation, through repentance.**

† † †

[*]: *Menschliches Allzumenschliches*, “Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits,” (German: *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches: Ein Buch für freie Geister*) is a book by 19th century philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, originally published in 1878. Nietzsche sets out his unsettling views in a series of 638 aphorisms—assessing subjects ranging from art to arrogance, boredom to passion, science to vanity and women to youth. This work also contains the seeds of concepts crucial to Nietzsche’s later philosophy, such as the will to power and the “need to transcend conventional Christian morality.” Nietzsche thus sets the modern pathway to western atheism and stands in direct contrast to any and all Orthodox Christian values, principles and dogma.



Let everyone find out then where he is: how many milestones he has passed on the road. We ought not only to examine ourselves every day but also over a period of time, every month, and every week. “The first week I was a prey to such and such a fault—how do I stand now?” Similarly over a period of time: “Last year I was overcome so many times by such and such a fault—how about now?”

And likewise we ought to examine for ourselves each of our faults—whether we have made a little progress or are in the same condition, or have become worse. For so long as we have not uprooted our evil tendencies, may God give us the strength not to give them free reign but to hold them in check. For it is a very grave thing to let loose our passions and not to check them.

St. Dorotheos of Gaza

THE GOSPEL ON MANY CARES AND SUDDEN DEATH [Lk 12:16-21]

A homily by St. Nikolai Velimirovic, bishop of Ochrid, from "Homilies, vol. Two," pp. 269-276.

Jesus spake a parable unto them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully; and he thought within himself, saying: 'What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?' And he said: 'This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul: Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years: Take thine ease: eat, drink and be merry!' But God said unto him: 'Thou fool; this night shall thy soul be required of thee; then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?' So is he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich towards God."

† † †

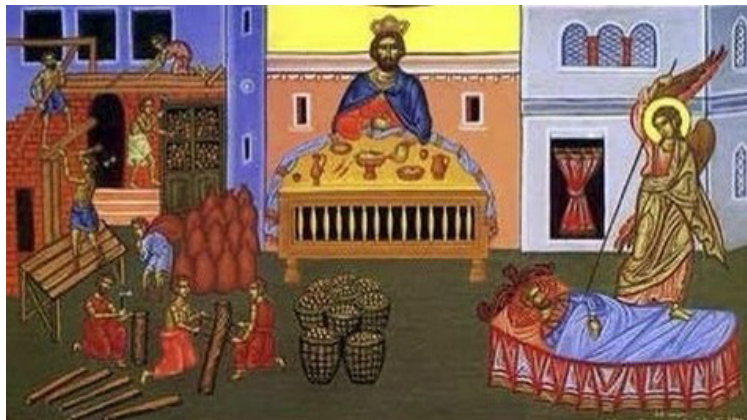
The Lord Jesus Christ came among men to heal their souls from thieving tendencies, for these tendencies are a grave sickness of the human soul.

Does a son steal from his father? No; but a servant steals from his master. At the moment that Adam turned his spirit of sonship into a spirit of servanthood, his hand stretched out to the forbidden fruit. Why does a man steal what is another's? Is it because he needs it? Adam had everything, and was lacking in nothing, but even so he went to steal. Why does a man steal from a man, and a servant from a servant? Because they had first learned to steal from their masters. Men always first steal from God, and then from one another. The forefather of mankind first stretched out his hand to steal what was God's, and then, as a result, his descendants began to steal from one another.

Men steal from God and from men, from nature and from themselves. A man steals not only with all his senses but with his heart, soul and thoughts. There is, moreover, never an act of theft in which the devil is not man's ally. He is the prompter and instigator of all theft; he is the leader and initiator of all thieving thoughts. No thief is ever alone in the world. There are always at least two who go together to steal, and a Third sees them. Man and the devil go to steal, and God sees them. As Eve did not steal on her own, but in company with the devil, so no-one has ever carried out an act of theft alone, but always in company with the devil. The devil, though, is not just the leader and fellow-participant in the theft, but the reporter of the theft. He is

not interested in the things stolen but in the destruction of a man's soul, in dissension and hatred among men and in the destruction of the whole human race. He does not go to steal for the sake of stealing, but *as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.* (I Pet 5:8). That it is *the devil* who arouses the soul to every evil act, and *sows every tare in the soul*, is made clear by the Lord Himself (Mt 13:39). With every act of theft that a man performs, the devil steals a part of his soul. The soul of a habitual thief is more and more shrunken, withered and ruined, like a lung riddled with tuberculosis.

For a man to keep himself from this thieving tendency, he must look on all he possesses as God's and not as his. When he makes use of his possessions, he must reckon that he is using what is God's, not his. Eating bread at his table, he must render thanks to God, for the bread is not his but God's. For a man to be healed of the sickness of stealing, he must look on others' possessions as God's, and must know that when he steals from men he steals from God. Is it possible to



steal from Him whose eye is ever open? For a man to chase away his wicked fellow in thieving, the sower of every evil, he must be vigilant over his soul, that the devil may not sow thieving desires and thoughts in it; and when he finds them sown there, he must apply himself at once to burning them out with the fire of prayer. Is

a man not crazy who runs after the worse when he has known the better? Is a thief not crazy and ridiculous to visit another's house at night to steal bales of cotton cloth, when he can see his friend driving up to visit him with a wagon full of gifts of silk and velvet?

The Lord Jesus, the Lover of mankind, brought with Him and opened to men innumerable and incomparable heavenly gifts, and invited them to take them openly and freely, on one condition: that they first wrest their souls away from corruptible earthly goods. Some men obeyed Him, took His gifts and enriched themselves; others, though, did not obey Him, but remained with their corruptible and stolen riches. As a warning to these latter, the Lord told the parable that is recounted in today's Gospel:

Jesus spake a parable unto them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully; and he thought within himself, saying: 'What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?' He was not just rich; he had such a yield from his harvest that he did not know where to store it. Looking at his wheat-covered fields, and his orchards

and vineyards whose branches were weighed down by fruit, his gardens overflowing with all kinds of vegetables and his hives full of honey, this rich man did not look towards heaven and cry out with joy: “Glory and praise to Thee, O most high and most merciful God! How great an abundance Thou hast, in Thy power and wisdom, brought forth from the black earth! Thou hast, through the sun’s rays, poured sweetness into all the fruits of the earth! Thou hast given every fruit a wonderful form and particular flavour! Thou hast rewarded me a hundredfold for my small labours! Thou hast had mercy on Thy servant, and hast poured such gifts from Thy full hands into his lap! O my most wondrous Lord, teach me to give joy to my brethren and neighbors with these Thy gifts. May they, together with me, rejoice and thankfully glorify and praise Thy holy name and Thine inexpressible goodness.”

Does he say all this? No; instead of remembering the Giver of all these gifts, he first worries about where to heap them up and keep them, like a thief who finds a bag of money in the road does not wonder where it came from or whose it is, but first worries about how to hide it. This rich man is in reality a thief. He cannot say that all this abundance has come from his own efforts. A thief takes pains over his thieving, using his skill and intelligence; he often exercises a great deal more skill and intelligence than a plowman or sower does. The rich man had done nothing, nor could he do anything, about the sun, rain, winds and earth. These are the four main elements—earth, air, fire and water—that, by God’s will, give fruit to plants and trees. This abundant fruit, then, is neither his nor the result of his futile efforts, nor his by the right of possession, for he is not the owner of the sun, the rain, the winds or the earth. This abundant fruit is the gift of God. A man appears grotesque in the eyes of all when he, receiving a gift from another, neither says “Thank you” nor pays any attention to the giver, but hastens only to hide it in a safe place. A decent beggar, on receiving a crust of black bread, thanks the giver, but this rich man does not spare a single thought or a single word to thank God for such a rich harvest, nor have a single smile of joy for such a marvel and so great a grace from God. In place of prayer and thanksgiving, hymns to God and joyfulness of heart, he is immediately seized on by worries about how to gather such gifts and bestow them in such a way that not a single grain may remain for the birds of the air or a single apple fall into the hands of his poor neighbors.

And he said: “This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.” See here the great labours of a man without understanding! Instead of striving to kill the old man in himself and raise up the new man, he invests all his efforts in the pulling down of his old granaries, barns and farms and building new ones. If his harvest is as abundant the

following year, he will again have to labour to extend his old granaries or build yet more. And so his granaries will, from year to year, become larger and newer, and his soul will become narrower and older, and his old grain will rot away like his soul. He will be surrounded by envy, and curses will be heaped on him, for poor men will look with envy on his riches, and the hungry will curse him for his hardness and selfishness. And so his wealth will bring ruin to him and to his neighbors. His soul will be destroyed by hard-heartedness and selfishness, and those of his neighbors by envy and cursing. See how a man without understanding can use God’s gift to both his own and others’ ruin. God gave him his riches to be blessing and salvation both to him and his neighbors, but he made use of them to bring a curse on himself and others.

Saint John Chrysostom advises all who are open to advice: “Have you eaten your fill? Remember the hungry. Have you quenched your thirst? Remember the thirsty. Are you warm enough? Remember the frozen. Do you live in a richly-furnished house? Bring the homeless into it. Have you made merry at a party? Bring merriment to the sad and sorrowful. Have you been honoured as a rich man? Visit and relieve those in need. Have you come out joyful from your master? Make sure all your servants are joyful. If you are merciful and indulgent towards them, you will yourself be shown mercy when your soul leaves your body.”

It is said of two great ascetics in the Egyptian desert that they prayed to God to reveal to them whether there was anyone in the world who served Him better than they did. And this was indeed revealed to them: they were told to go to a certain place and to a certain man to find out what they wanted to know. They came to the place revealed to them, and found a simple man, Eucharistos by name, who kept cattle. The ascetics, seeing nothing remarkable about this man, asked him how he tried to fulfil God’s will. After long hesitation, Eucharistos told them that he divided all that he earned from his cattle into three parts: he gave one to the poor and needy, one he used for entertaining guests and the third he kept for himself and his chaste wife. Hearing this, the ascetics praised his benevolence and returned home. See how much greater and more pleasing to God charity is than strict asceticism. But this greedy rich man described in the Gospel had no thought for God, his soul or charity. His one thought was how to extend his barns and how to gather all the fruits from his lands. What, though, will he do when he has done all this? Let him tell us himself:

“And I will say to my soul: ‘Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years: Take thine ease: eat, drink and be merry!’” How can the soul eat and drink? The body eats and drinks the harvest of the lands, not the soul. The rich man is thinking of his body when he speaks of his soul. His soul has so completely grown into his body and become one with it that

he no longer knows it by its name. No clearer expression could be found for the destructive triumph of the body over the soul. Imagine a lamb in a dog's den, trapped and forgotten in this den. The dog hurries around and drags food into the den for itself. When it has filled its den with meat, offal and bones from a variety of carrion, it calls to the hungry lamb: "Now, my dear lamb, eat, drink and be merry; here's food for many days!" Having said this, the dog will fall to, but the lamb will remain hungry and die of hunger. This rich man behaves in the same way with his soul as the dog does with the hungry lamb.

The soul is not fed with food that decays, but he offers it such food. The soul yearns for its heavenly homeland, where its granaries and the source of its life are to be found, but he nails it to the earth and vows it that he will keep it thus nailed down for many years. The soul rejoices in God, but he never has God's name on his lips. The soul is nourished by justice and mercy, but it does not occur to him to use his riches to bring justice and mercy to the needy, the poor and the deformed around his house. The soul desires pure, heavenly love, but he pours oil on the flames of the passions, and censes the soul with the filthy smoke that they produce. The soul seeks its adornment: *love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance* (Gal 5:22-23); he, though, decks it with drunkenness, gluttony, adultery and vanity. How can a vegetarian lamb not die in the company of a carnivorous dog? How can the soul not die when pressed down by the heavy cadaver of the body?

Not all the rich man's folly, though, consists in his offering meat to a lamb or, rather, bodily food to the soul, but also in his making himself the lord of time and of life. We see that he prepares himself food and drink *for many years*. Hear, then, God's reply:

"But God said unto him: 'Thou fool; this night shall thy soul be required of thee; then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?'" Thus spoke the Lord of life and of the world, the Commander of time and death, *in whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind.* (Job 12:10). You foolish man, why do you not think with your mind instead of with your belly? As it was not in your power to determine the day of your birth, neither have you control over the day of your death. The Lord lit the candles of your earthly life when it seemed good to Him, and He will extinguish them when He so determines. As your riches could not hasten the hour of your coming into the world, so they cannot delay the hour of your leaving it. Do dawn and dusk depend on you? Does the wind's blowing and dying down depend on you? To the same degree does the span of your earthly life depend on you. And also your granaries and cellars, and your sheepfolds and enclosures. All this belongs to God, as your soul does. Every day and every hour, God can take what is His from you and give it to others.

All is His during your lifetime, and it will still be His after your death. Your life and your death are in His hands. Why, then, do you speak of many years to come? Your life is counted to the minute, O man, and your last minute could tick away this very day. Do not, therefore, take thought for the morrow: what you will eat or drink, or what you wear; but take thought, far more thought, for the soul with which you come before God, your Creator and Lord. Take more thought for the Kingdom of God, for this is the food of your soul (Mt 6:31-3).

The Lord ended this parable with the words: *So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.* How shall it be for him? He shall suddenly be parted from his riches, and his soul from his body. His riches will be given to others, his body to the earth and his soul to a place blacker than the earth, where there is *wailing and gnashing of teeth*. No single good work will be there to welcome him into the heavenly Kingdom that his soul might find a place there. His name will not be found written in the Book of Life, and it will neither be known nor named among the blessed! He has received his reward on earth, and God's heavenly riches will not be revealed to his spirit.

Oh, how terrible is sudden death! When a man thinks himself to be firmly established on earth, it can suddenly open and swallow him up as it swallowed up Dathan and Abiram (Num 16:32). When a God-forgetting merry-maker makes ready to go on as such for many years, fire descends and devours him like Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19:24). When a man thinks he has well-insured himself with God and man, he will fall dead like Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:5, 10).

A sinner sustains a twofold loss from a sudden death: to himself and to his family. To himself, for he dies unrepentant, and to his family, for it stuns his kinsfolk with an unexpected blow and he leaves unfinished work behind him. Blessed are they who experience sickness before their deaths, enduring pain and suffering. Such a one is given the opportunity to look back over the whole of his life, to survey and count his sins, to repent of all the evil he has done and all the good he has not done, to weep with repentance and lament before God, cleansing his soul with tears, and to beg God for forgiveness; also to forgive all who have insulted or done evil to him during his lifetime, to bless all his friends and enemies, to remind his children to fear God, remember the hour of their death and enrich their souls betimes with faith, prayer and acts of charity.

Look how those pleasing to God, the righteous, died in the Old Testament: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses and David. They were all sick before their deaths, and during their sickness the name of God did not leave their lips. They all left good testaments to their descendants and blessed them. This is the death of a righteous person. But

you will say: have not many of the righteous died unprepared in battle? No; the righteous never die unprepared. They always prepare for death, and await from day to day their parting from this life. Their hearts are constantly filled with repentance and confession to God, and the glorifying of His name. The righteous do this in times of peace and prosperity; and even more in times of war, violence and temptation. Their whole life is a constant preparation for death, and so they never die unprepared.

To prepare oneself for death also means to *enrich oneself in God*. Only those who truly believe in God and in a life beyond this life prepare for death, for that other life. The unbelieving never prepare for death. They prepare for as long a life as possible here on earth. They are afraid of thinking about death, and make little effort to enrich themselves in God. He who prepares for death prepares for eternal life, and the nature of this preparation for eternal life is known to every Christian.

A wise man confirms his faith in God every day, and guards his heart from unbelief, doubt and malice, as a wise householder guards his vineyard from destructive midges (small flies, *Ed.*) and grasshoppers. A wise man exercises himself every day in the fulfilling of God's commandments by acts of forgiveness, charity and love, and he is thus enriched in God. A wise man does not keep that which is dearest and most precious to him in granaries and corn cribs, but confides it to God's keeping. This most precious thing is his soul. It is his greatest possession; the only thing that does not decay and die. A wise man has his accounts with the world balanced every day, and he is ready to lie down and die with the firm faith that he will live and come before the face of God.

Saint Anthony the Great says: "Reflect within yourself and say: 'I shall not remain in this world longer than today', and you will never sin against God."

There is nothing more light-minded than to say: "Let me die suddenly, so that I may not feel my death!" Thus speak the foolish and godless. The wise and devout say: "May God's will be done!" Better to be sick for years and to have growths and cramps from our sickness than to die unprepared and unrepentant. The pains of this world quickly pass, as do its joys. In the other world, though, there is nothing ephemeral and transitory, but all is eternal, whether torment or joy. It is therefore better to suffer a little here than there, for there the measure of both pain and joy is incomparably greater.

May God's will be done! We pray our all-seeing God not to send sudden death on us in the midst of our sins and misdeeds, but to spare us as He spared King Hezekiah (Isa 38:1-5), and give us time for repentance. By His mercy, may He give us some indication of our approaching death, that we may hasten to do some further good and save our souls

from eternal fire; that our names may be found in the Book of Life, and that our faces may be seen among the righteous in the Kingdom of Christ our God. To Him be glory and praise, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit—the Trinity consubstantial and undivided, now and forever, through all time and all eternity. Amen.



There have been great lights in the world who illumined it with their miracles just as the sun does with its beams. Some say that in a monastery (in Gaul) there was a monk who was diligent in praying and reading with the others according to the rules of monasteries. But secretly and in private he offered the sacrifices of prayers to the omnipotent God. For after he completed the schedule of prayers in the oratory, he secretly slipped away from the presence of the brothers and went among the thick brambles, boxwoods, and oak trees, where he hoped that no one but God alone would see him. There he knelt in prayer. After he had knelt and prayed to the Lord for a long time, he stood up from the ground, lifted his palms and eyes to heaven, and silently recited a series of psalms. He looked to heaven with such remorse that streams of tears gushed from his eyes.

When one of the brothers carefully followed him and saw what he was doing, he did not keep it from the abbot.

The abbot noted when the pious monk hurried off again to do this and followed at a distance; kneeling on the ground, he watched what the faithful disciple was practicing. As the abbot watched from a distance, he saw a great miracle. For a flame extended from the monk's lips and gradually was stretched to a great distance and rose above him like a rope. Without interruption the flame gave off a bright light and seemed to ascend all the way to heaven. And although the flame grew and was extended into the air from his hair, it did not harm his head.

The abbot was amazed by the sight but restrained himself a bit longer. At the end of his prayers, the monk returned to the monastery. The abbot followed by a different road.

A short time later he reproved the monk with many reprimands in order to discipline "his vain glory," but he never mentioned what he had seen.

Gregory of Tours
Glory of the Confessors, 37

THE WAY OF THE CHURCH'S HOLY FATHERS

By St. Paisios The Athonite, from "Epistles," Holy Monastery "Evangelist John The Theologian," Souroti, Thessaloniki, Greece (2002), Pages 133-138.

In former days, the Holy Fathers first withdrew into the desert, becoming themselves a desert void of their passions by struggling, without plans or programs of their own, left in the hands of God, avoiding honors and power, even when they arrived at measures of sanctity—unless Mother Church had need of them. They did obedience to the will of God and they glorified the name of God with their holy life. They became spiritual blood donors, for they had acquired good spiritual health in the desert, with good spiritual food and vigilant patristic watchfulness.

In our days, however, many of us, who are unfortunately influenced by worldly love, which can make no spiritual pledge, supposedly venture to do good, to donate blood, but our blood is full of spiritual bacteria and we do more harm than good.

If, however, we were living patristically, we would all have spiritual health, which even all the heterodox would envy, leaving their sick delusions aside to be saved without preaching. Now, however, they are not moved by our Holy Patristic Tradition, for they want to see how we continue the Patristic Tradition, to see our true kinship with our saints.

Unfortunately, nowadays, words and books have multiplied and experiences have diminished, because the worldly spirit, which pursues all conveniences and avoids all bodily effort, influences people. Most of us find rest in much reading but little or no implementation. We simply marvel at the holy athletes of our Church without realizing how much they had labored, for we have not toiled so as to be able to understand their toil, to love them and to struggle out of *philotimo* in order to imitate them.

Those, however, who do struggle with *philotimo* and do not give themselves rest, removing their ego from every one of their actions, they help our world very positively. For, only then are the souls in need of help given rest, and only then will their own souls find inner rest, in this life as well as in eternity.

Those who pursue power while being overpowered by passions, who pass off their personal interests as spiritual, and who resort to worldly authorities in order to solve their ecclesiastical problems are left abandoned by the Grace of God. Do not let the devil fool you with the words *I appeal unto Caesar*

because Apostle Paul was submitted to Caesar's authority, and since God had previously informed him that he would preach Christ in Rome as well, he asked Caesar to transport him to Rome (to pay his way). When someone tries to settle ecclesiastical matters in an Orthodox way, but his goal is to better establish himself, how can he be blessed by God?

Neither should anyone be impressed by those who settle ecclesiastical matters exceptionally well—even "orthodoxically"—if these same people are not well situated in the life of the Church, but rather trouble Her with imprudent excessiveness or frivolity.

The two extremes always weary Mother Church, as well as those who hold to them, because the two extremes as a rule stab one another. In other words, it is as if the one extreme is held by a possessed man who is spiritually insolent (and feels contempt for everything), and the other extreme is held by a madman who is childishly zealous with narrow-mindedness. God forbid—these two ends could strike at one another continually and *an end to it all* no one will find. Those who will be able to bend these two extremes and make them unite, will be

crowned by Christ with two imperishable crowns.

We should neither create problems in the Church nor magnify the minor human disorders that occur, so as not to create greater evil and the wicked one rejoice. He who is irritated about a minor disorder and abruptly rushes to ostensibly correct it passionately and with ill tem-

per resembles the light-headed sacristan who sees a candle dripping and abruptly dashes to fix it, stumbling over people and candlesticks, and thus causing an even greater disorder during the Divine Service.

Unfortunately, in our days, there are many who weary Mother Church. Among these, those who are educated have grasped the dogma with their mind and not with the spirit of the Holy Fathers. Others, who are unlearned, have grasped the dogma with their teeth, which explains why they grate their teeth when discussing ecclesiastical themes. Hence it is that they cause more serious harm to the Church than the enemies of our Orthodoxy.

There are people who justify their wickedness by examining others and not themselves, or by publicizing predicaments of the Church to the world—even things that should not be said in public—using as a pretext the *tell it unto the church* of the Gospel (Mt 18:17). Let them do this first for their small church, their family, or their brotherhood; if they think this is good, let them then disgrace Mother Church as well. Good children, I believe, never accuse their mothers. Unfortunately,



however, many inconsiderate people offer a wealth of live ammunition to heretics, enabling Jehovah's witnesses and other heretics to seize Orthodox cities and villages and expand their missionary work.

It is well known to discerning spiritual Fathers that this demonic practice (namely, deriding the local church's clergy and the Church at large) has turned many people into Jehovah's witnesses. It is also known to the whole world that not even one Jehovah's witness has become Orthodox in this unorthodox way.

The Good God, on the other hand, endures us lovingly without ridiculing anyone, even though, as the Beholder of hearts, He knows our pitiful state well. The same thing applies to saints who never insulted a sinful person in the presence of others, but with love, spiritual nobility, and in a hidden way, helped in the correction of the evil. We, notwithstanding that we are sinners, do the opposite (like hypocrites).

Only a man possessed by a demon is justified to mock people in the presence of others and tell them about their past (in as much as the demon has rights, of course), in order to make weak souls falter. The unclean spirit, naturally, does not reveal people's virtues, but only their weaknesses. Those who are liberated from their passions, however, since they no longer possess wickedness, correct the evil by their kindness. If sometimes they see a little uncleanness that is not easily cleaned, they cover it up with a plate, in order for the others who might see it not to be disgusted by it. Those, on the contrary, who reinvestigate the rubbish, resemble scavengers.

An honest and straightforward person is neither he who speaks the truth to your face, nor he who publicizes it, but rather such a one is the person who has love, lives a true life, and speaks with discernment, when he should, saying the right word at the right time. Those who admonish others without discernment are spiritually darkened and hardened and haplessly view people as lifeless logs. And, although they hack at them unmercifully, and the people suffer, they rejoice over the "rectangle" they've made out of their lifeless logs (cubism!).

Those who rush to play the role of the spiritual Father, while still being filled with many spiritual toxins, resemble the unripe, sour quince fruit: no matter how much sugar one adds, sufficient sweetness cannot be produced, or if it is produced, it quickly turns sour. Sweet words and great truths have value when they come out of truthful mouths and find a place within good-intentioned souls and those great people who have pure intellects. The internal purity of the beautiful soul of the true man beautifies his external person as well, and the divine sweetness of God's love sweetens even his countenance. The internal beauty of the soul, apart from spiritually beautifying and sanctifying man externally, with Divine Grace revealing him to others, also beautifies and sanctifies the ugly clothes the graced man of God wears.

Of greater worth is the blessed man who has changed internally and been sanctified also externally, than those who continually change externally (their clothes) but internally maintain the old man with his "antiquated" sins. Of greater value is one word of a humble man, who has spiritual experience, coming with pain from the bottom of his heart, than a whole array of learned words from a superficial man, coming with great speed from his learned tongue. His tongue does not enlighten souls for it is fleshly and not that fiery tongue of Holy Pentecost.



Indivisible division is also at the very core of the mystery of the Divine Eucharist as well. After all, what is the prayer that the Bishop (or Presbyter) reads after the consecration of the Precious Gifts? Don't they say, *broken is the bread of life, which being broken yet is not divided, being ever eaten, never is consumed*. But what does that mean? Since Christ's human nature also shares in the New Testament mystery of God's presence, Christ's human nature is now the means by which God is present in our midst and manifests Himself to us. Now even His human nature is *indivisibly divided among individual creatures*.

In the same way, we know from the experience of *theosis* that one simple energy of God *is indivisibly divided among individual creatures*. We also know that the Incarnation is the source for what takes place during the Divine Eucharist. After the Lord's Resurrection, we no longer know Christ according to the flesh—we only know the glorified Christ or Christ in His glory. But this does not mean that Christ does not have flesh. Christ does have flesh and a complete human nature, which now after His Ascension has been glorified.

Now when we commune of the Lord's Body and Blood, we do not receive only a piece of Christ Who is then within us, but each communicant receives Christ in His entirety. But this does not mean that there are many Christs. There is only one Christ and He dwells in His entirety within every believer who has communed of the Immaculate Mysteries. When the priest cuts into pieces the Lamb on the holy paten/diskos, Christ is not cut into pieces. He *is multiplied without being multiplied among many*. In other words, Christ in His entirety is in every pearl or in each piece of Divine Bread. This is the mystery of God's presence to man.

Now this same mystery was also at work before Christ assumed flesh, when He appeared to the Old Testament prophet. While the Word or the Angel was manifesting Himself to the prophet, He was at that very moment simultaneously present throughout the rest of creation as well. The Angel of God was present with both the prophet and the rest of creation at the same time.

Protopresbyter John Romanides
From "Patristic Theology"

PATERNAL ADVICE FROM A SAINT'S DEATHBED

By Elder Philotheos Zervakos (+1980), "Autobiography, Homilies and Miracles," *Orthodox Kypseli Publications* (2006), pp. 171-175.

What man will live and not see death?

Who was born and did not see death!



I am ninety-four years old now, and because I am growing old and death is approaching I thought I would leave you a few paternal requests.

Above all is love for God and for one another, for where there is love there is God, where love is lacking there is the tempter. When you have love between you, you also love God. When, however, there is no love between you,

you cannot love God; for Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself says: *He who loves me keeps my commandments, and, if a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar.* (Jn 14:21-23, 1 Jn 5:20).

You must be careful not to depart from our loving God; do not leave Him, but love Him. Our Savior and God-Man Jesus Christ gave us the commandment to love one another. He said unto the Holy Apostles a few days before departing bodily from this world: *A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another* (Jn 13:34), and *these things I command you that ye love one another.* (Jn 15:17).

Therefore, strive to acquire the love that is genuine and not the love that is with words, with the tongue, or with the lips. Loving with the whole heart unites with God and makes one a son of God by grace. St. Augustine tells us that a man comes to resemble that which he loves. If you love God you will become a god; not by nature but by grace. If you love the flesh and say that this is your life and existence, and think that it will save you, then you will become flesh ... and if again you love the devil, then you will become a devil. How does someone come to love the devil? By doing his works. When they have pride, and especially when they have envy, jealousy, and hatred for their neighbor, then they become a devil. Therefore, for this reason strive to love God. As the Holy Fathers say in the *doxastikon* of the Saints, where we chant: *You have loved God, preferring nothing to His love, prefer nothing more than the love of God; so that when He comes in all of His Glory, we may find rest with*

all the saints. We must love God, so that we can find rest there where the saints are.

Therefore take care to have love and obedience, for he who is obedient imitates Christ, while he who is not obedient, but disobeys and contradicts, imitates the devil. Do not be contradicting unless it is because the presiding nun asks you to do something that will grieve God, then do not listen to her. If however she tells you to do something, which in your opinion is not good, then it is better to cut your will and do that which was indicated.

Our Lord Jesus Christ—who is God—cut His own will: *I came down from heaven, He says, not to do My own will but the will of Him that sent Me.* He became obedient unto death; even death on the Cross. One should be obedient unto death, then he will become worthy of the Eternal Kingdom and of the Eternal Life. Never neglect your spiritual duties, because only with diligence you will be victorious, by God's grace, over all enemies. For this the Lord tells us: *Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when He cometh, shall find watching* (Lk 12:37). And the Church chants: *Behold the Bridegroom is coming in the night and blessed is the servant whom He shall find watching, and unworthy is the one whom He shall find heedless.*

Of the ten virgins, five were foolish, and the other five were prudent, having oil in their lamps. The lamps represent the soul. When the Bridegroom came (i.e., at the hour of death), they left and went together with the Lord to the Heavenly bridal chamber. The foolish virgins, however, remained outside the bridal chamber because they were neglectful; they did not have oil, nor did they have love, they were tired and slept, and they did not take care. When death came, they repented and knocked on the door that He would open it unto them, but the Lord said unto them, *Go, I do not know you.*

Therefore, we must not be neglectful, for negligence is dreadful and repentance is great. Struggle when you feel drowsy and sluggish. The body always wants rest, it wants sleep, and it wants good food. The soul, however, wants fasting, vigil, and prayer. Woe to the person who allows his soul to be subjected to the flesh, and who does the will of the flesh. (cf. Gal 5:14-21). The flesh wants comfort, and whenever possible to sleep, but we must resist this. The spirit must be victorious and subject the body; not allowing it to become that which the flesh seeks, but that which God desires, for the flesh desires to do the will of the devil. For this reason the Apostle James tells us: *Resist the devil and he will flee from you.* (Jas 4:7). We must resist him as much as we can; for only with labor and pain are the good things achieved.

The Saints did not make it to Paradise easily, but labored and struggled against three enemies: the flesh, the world, and the ruler of the world (the devil). But, because they

were eager and serious, they overcame the devil, the desires of the world, and the desires of the flesh.

Thus, prayer and watchfulness are necessary. *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit is indeed willing but the flesh is weak.* (Mt 26:41). The Apostle Peter because he was not careful for just one moment, denied the Lord. But he repented and was saved. For this he wrote the following beautiful words to make us and everyone careful: *Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.* (1 Pet 5:8). Be vigilant, careful, and watchful. Do not stay at all idle, for the devil is prowling about, looking for someone to devour, but seek the aid of God; and God, when we approach Him will help us.

The devil many times uses hypocrisy, slyness, and wickedness to fool people. Many times he transforms himself as an angel of light; and he has deceived many because they accepted him, obeyed him, and were not careful. Therefore, great care is needed. As I told you, go to a spiritual father for confession, and if he is not there, tell your thoughts to the Abbess and you will be greatly benefitted.

Take care especially for love and humility, for where there is humility, the devil flees from there. *But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word.* (Isa 66:2). Upon whom does He say He shall look? Upon him who is humble, upon him who is meek. For this reason, all the saints were sanctified through humility; for humility gives birth to love and to all the virtues. The humble person is a dwelling place of God and the gifts of the Holy Spirit: the humility of the Most Holy Theotokos pleased God, *the Wholly Uncontainable*, to dwell in her womb. The Panagia boasting in the Lord, not in herself, says: *For He hath regarded the low estate of His handmaiden...* (Lk 1:48).

If all virtues exist but humility is lacking, they are insufficient, unbeneficial and are most likely hazardous: Magdalene the nun was prideful; she became a dwelling place of the devil, doing whatever he told her to do. She forgot about the good things and did as the devil bid her. Because St. Nektarios did (and still does) miracles, she was envious and wrote a book against the saint: among her other blasphemies, she said that the Sacraments are not performed by the Holy Spirit, but by the Old Calendar, and that if they are not performed by the Holy Spirit on the Old Calendar then the Sacraments are invalid. She also said that whoever considers St. Nektarios to be a Saint should have the curse of all the Ecumenical Synods, etc. She cursed God and the great saints of our days without thinking about it; God had made them saints because of the humility, the faith, and the love they had.

Be very careful to hate pride, which the devil sows continually in the mind of man, whispering to him that he is

something, that he does something and he arrives at the point where he accuses others for not performing so well.

May the grace of our Lord, who for us men and our salvation became man and rose again, raise our souls unto new life, and grant us eternal life and the Heavenly Kingdom.

Love must take root in our hearts, and it will take root when we continuously remember God; whether walking or working, in bed resting or sleeping, the recollection of God and the short prayer must never be absent. And in this way, God will always be here with us in this temporal life, and shall take us with Him to the Eternal one. Go with the Panagia's blessing, and May God always be with you.

Amen.



EXCERPTS FROM OUR LITURGICAL TRADITION [REFERENCING THE TOLL HOUSE]

Noetic roaring lions have surrounded me, seeking to carry me away and bitterly torment me. Do thou crush their teeth and jaws, O pure One, and save me. (Ode 3, Troparion 2).

Behold, terror has come to meet me, O Sovereign Lady, and I am afraid of it. Behold, a great struggle awaits me, in which be thou unto me a helper, O Hope of my salvation. (Ode 4, "Both Now").

They that shall lead me hence have come, holding me on every side. But my soul shrinks back and is afraid, full of great rebelliousness, which do thou comfort, O pure One, by thine appearance. (Ode 7, "Glory").

O thou that gavest birth to the Lord Almighty, when I come to die, do thou banish from me the commander of the bitter toll-gatherers and ruler of the earth, that I may glorify thee unto the ages, O holy Theotokos. (Ode 8, Troparion 3).

And from a canon at the departing of the soul from the body, for those who have suffered a long time, by St. Andrew of Crete:

Come all you that have gathered together, who have lived your lives in piety, and lament the soul bereft of the glory of God, for shameful demons are striving to enslave it. (Ode 1, Troparion 1).

Behold, a multitude of evil spirits are standing about, holding the handwriting of my sins, and they cry out exceedingly, shamelessly seeking my lowly soul. (Ode 1, "Glory").

Sovereign Lady! O Sovereign Lady! Have mercy now on my perplexed soul looking to thy protection only, and do not disdain me, O Good One, who am being given over to demons. (Ode 4, "Both now").

Have mercy on me, O all-holy Angels of God Almighty, and deliver me from all the evil toll-collectors, for I have no good deeds to balance my evil deeds. (Ode 7, Troparion 2).

St. Tikhon's "The Book of Needs"

Ἡ Ἐωσφορική Ὑπερηφάνεια τοῦ Παπισμοῦ

Τοῦ πρωτοπρεσβυτέρου π. Διονυσίου Τάτση, Ὁρθόδοξος Τύπος, 31/7/2015.

Συνήθως μιλάμε γιὰ τὸν ἐγωισμό καὶ τὴν ὑπερηφάνεια ἑνὸς προσώπου καὶ δυσανασχετοῦμε, γιὰτὶ δὲν μποροῦμε νὰ ἐπικοινωνήσουμε μαζί του. Πρόκειται γιὰ ἄνθρωπο πὸν ὅλα τὰ «γνωρίζει», ἀλλὰ καὶ ὅλα τὰ στηρίζει στὸν ἑαυτὸν του. Σὲ κανένα δὲν ἀναγνωρίζει κάτι ἀνώτερο πὸν νὰ μὴ τὸ ἔχει ὁ ἴδιος. Εἶναι πάντα ἐπικριτικός, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀπαιτητικός ἀπὸ τοὺς ἄλλους νὰ τὸν δέχονται καὶ νὰ τὸν ἐπαινοῦν.

Δυὸ ὑπερήφανοι δὲν μποροῦν νὰ συνεργαστοῦν οὔτε νὰ συνυπάρξουν, γιὰτὶ ὁ καθένας ἐπιμένει στὴ γνώμη του καὶ ὅταν ἀκόμα εἶναι ὀφθαλμοφανῶς ἐσφαλμένη. Ἐπίσης ὁ ὑπερήφανος εἶναι φιλόδοξος καὶ φθονερός. Θέλει μόνο αὐτὸς νὰ δοξάζεται καὶ ὅλους τοὺς ἄλλους πὸν ἔχουν προσόντα, ἱκανότητες καὶ ἐπιτυχίες τοὺς φθονεῖ. Καὶ αὐτὸ εἶναι τὸ μυστικὸ του μαρτύριο. Διέπεται ἀκόμα ἀπὸ τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀνατροπῆς καὶ τοῦ νεωτερισμοῦ.

Ἡ ἔωσφορική ὑπερηφάνεια, ὅταν μπεῖ στὸ χῶρο τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, νοθεύει τὴ διδασκαλία τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ὀδηγεῖ στὴν αἵρεση. Αὐτὸ συνέβη πολλές φορές ἀνὰ τοὺς αἰῶνες. Τὸ πιὸ ὅμως χτυπητὸ παράδειγμα ὑπῆρξε ὁ παπισμός, ὁ ὁποῖος ἔχει αἰχμαλωτίσει ἑκατομμύρια Χριστιανῶν στὸ ἔρεβος τῆς αἵρεσης. Ὁ Πάπας ἔγινε ὁ μεγάλος αἰρετικός, ὁ ὁποῖος συνεχίζει νὰ ἀπομακρύνεται ἀπὸ τὸ δρόμο τοῦ Θεοῦ, γιὰτὶ συνεχῶς ἐπινοεῖ νέες αἱρέσεις, προκειμένου νὰ στηρίξει... τίς παλιές, πὸν στίς μέρες μας ἀμφισβητοῦνται καὶ ἀπὸ πολλοὺς παπικούς.

Ὁ Φώτης Κόντογλου, πὸν ἀγαποῦσε τὴν Ὁρθοδοξία καὶ πικραίνονταν ἀπὸ τὴ δράση τῶν αἰρετικῶν, ἔλεγε γιὰ τὸν παπισμὸ ὅτι «ἔχει ἔωσφορικήν ὑπερηφάνεια, ἡ ὁποία ἐκδηλώνεται εἰς κάθε περίστασιν. Ἀπὸ αὐτὴν καὶ μόνην ἐάν κριθῆ, ἀποδεικνύεται ὅτι δὲν ἔχει σχέσιν μὲ τὸν Χριστιανισμόν, τοῦ ὁποῖου τὸ θεμέλιον εἶναι ἡ ταπείνωσις: Πρωτεῖα, ἀλάθητα, καισαρισμοί, πλοῦτη ὑλικά, ἐμφανίσεις αὐτοκρατορικά, ὅλα τὰ χαρακτηριστικὰ τοῦ παπισμοῦ εἶναι ἀνάποδα ἀπὸ ὅσα δίδαξε καὶ ἔκαμεν ὁ Χριστός, πὸν εἶπε: *Εἴ τις θέλει πρῶτος εἶναι, ἔσται πάντων ἔσχατος καὶ πάντων διάκονος.*» (Μάρκ. 9:35).

Καὶ διερωτᾶται: «Πῶς εἶναι δυνατὸν νὰ παρουσιάζεται ἡ ἔωσφορική ἀλαζονεία, ὡς ὀδηγὸς τῶν Χριστιανῶν; Τί ἄλλο χρειάζεται, διὰ νὰ ἐξηγηθοῦν ὅλοι οἱ νεωτερισμοὶ καὶ αἱ ἀντιχριστιανικαὶ καινοτομίαι, εἰς τὰς ὁποίας προέβη κατὰ καιροὺς ὁ παπισμός; Ὁ ἅγιος Ἐφραίμ ὁ Σύρος λέγει: *Ἡ ὑπερηφάνεια ἀναγκάζει ἐπινοεῖν καινοτομίας, μὴ*

ἀνεχόμενη τὸ ἀρχαῖον.» («Τι εἶναι ἡ Ὁρθοδοξία καὶ τι εἶναι ὁ Παπισμός», 1992, σελ. 9-10).

Παρόλα αὐτὰ ὅμως, τὸ Οἰκουμενικὸ Πατριαρχεῖο καὶ ἰδιαίτερα ὁ Οἰκουμενικὸς Πατριάρχης κ. Βαρθολομαῖος, μιλάει γιὰ τὴν «ἐκκλησία» τοῦ Πάπα, τὸν ὁποῖο ἀποκαλεῖ ἀγιώτατο καὶ πεφιλημένο ἀδελφὸ του. Δὲν τὸν θεωρεῖ αἰρετικό, γι' αὐτὸ καὶ συναντᾶται συχνὰ καὶ συμπροσεύχεται καὶ συνευφραίνεται. Τὸ θέμα εἶναι σοβαρότατο καὶ προκαλεῖ ἀνησυχία στοὺς Ὁρθόδοξους, οἱ ὁποῖοι βλέπουν τὸν οἰκουμενισμό νὰ διαβρώνει συνειδήσεις καὶ σὲ λίγο θὰ μιλάμε γιὰ ἔνωση τῶν «ἐκκλησιῶν» καὶ κοινὸ ποτήριο, χωρὶς νὰ ἔχουν ἐγκαταλειφθεῖ ἀπὸ τοὺς αἰρετικούς τὰ ἔωσφορικά τους δόγματα.

Εἶναι καθήκον τῶν Χριστιανῶν νὰ διαφωνοῦν δημοσίως μὲ τοὺς οἰκουμενιστὲς καὶ νὰ ὑπερασπίζονται τὴν Ὁρθοδοξία. Ἀλίμονο ἂν τοὺς ἀκολουθοῦμε λόγω κακῶς νοοῦμένου σεβασμοῦ πρὸς τὸ Οἰκουμενικὸ Πατριαρχεῖο καὶ τοὺς ἐν Ἑλλάδι ψοφοδεεῖς μητροπολίτες, οἱ ὁποῖοι «διαφωνοῦν συμφωνοῦντες», δηλαδὴ μεταξὺ τους διαφωνοῦν, ἀλλὰ δημοσίως συμφωνοῦν μὲ τὸν μεγάλο ποιμένα καὶ δεσπότη, τὸν Οἰκουμενικὸ Πατριάρχη! Αὐτὴ τὴν ἀξιοκατάκριτη τακτικὴ θὰ μπορούσαμε νὰ τὴ χαρακτηρίσουμε μὲ μιὰ παραβολικὴ φράση: **«Ἡ μεταμόρφωση τοῦ λιονταριοῦ σὲ βάτραχο!»**.

Ὑπάρχουν ὅμως καὶ μητροπολίτες μὲ παρηρησία, πὸν λένε τὰ πράγματα μὲ τὸ ὄνομά τους καὶ σ' αὐτοὺς πρέπει νὰ ἔχουμε ἐμπιστοσύνη. Ἔχουμε ἀκόμα καὶ τὸ παράδειγμα τῶν συγχρόνων γερόντων, οἱ ὁποῖοι ἦταν ἀντιοικουμενιστὲς καὶ ἀντιπαπικοί.



Καὶ πρέπει ἡμεῖς οἱ Ὁρθόδοξοι νὰ παραιτηθῶμεν παντὸς διαλόγου πρὸς αἰρετικούς, κατὰ τὴν ὀρθὴν συμβουλὴν τοῦ Θεορρήμονος Ἀποστόλου Παύλου, **«Αἰρετικὸν ἄνθρωπον μετὰ πρώτην καὶ δευτέραν νουθεσίαν παραιτοῦ, εἰδὼς ὅτι ἐξήστραπτεν ὁ τοιοῦτος ἀμαρτάνων ὧν αὐτοκατάκριτος...»**.

Πρὸς τί λοιπὸν ἡ τόση προθυμία πρὸς μεταβάσιν εἰς Ρώμην, πρὸς τί ἡ ἐπίμονος ἐκζητήσις ὑφ' ἡμῶν διάλογον; Πρὸς τί τόσον ἡ κακοπαθοῦσα καὶ παραποιομένη κατὰ Θεὸν ἀγάπη; Δὲν μᾶς σωφρονίζουν τὰ παθήματα τῆς Φερράρας καὶ τῆς Φλωρεντίας; Δὲν ἐλάβομεν εἰσέτι πείραν τῆς Λατινικῆς στρεψοδικίας καὶ τῆς ὑπερηφανεῖας; Δὲν διεκρίναμεν τὰ ὄρια μεταξὺ ἀληθείας καὶ ὑποκρισίας ἐν τῇ πίστει;

Γέροντος Γαβριὴλ Διονυσιάτη (+1983)

Ἡ Παναγία, τὸ Λάδι καὶ τὸ Ψωμί [Μία ἀληθινὴ ἱστορία]

Γιάννη Πρόφη, λαογράφου-συγγραφέα.



Ἡ κυρα-Μαρία, ἡ «Καραβίδαίνα», νεωκόρος, «κλησάρισσα» στὴν ἐνορία τῆς «Παναγίας τοῦ Κουρσαλά» στὸ Κορωπί, μπῆκε στὴν παγωμένη ἐκκλησιὰ ἐκεῖνο τὸ βροχερὸ χειμωνιάτικο ἀπόγευμα τῆς Κατοχῆς. Ἡ ἐκκλησιὰ ἦταν σκοτεινὴ καὶ ἔρημη. Τὸ λιγοστὸ φῶς ποὺ ἔμπαινε ἀπὸ τὰ πλαϊνὰ παράθυρα

δὲν ἦταν ἀρκετὸ γιὰ νὰ φωτίσει τὸ μέσα μέρος τῆς, στὴ μεριά τοῦ τέμπλου. Οὔτε καντήλι οὔτε κερὶ ὑπῆρχε ἀναμμένο. Ποῦ νὰ βρεθεῖ λάδι; Εἶχε περάσει σχεδὸν μία βδομάδα καὶ τὰ καντήλια ἦταν ὅλα σβηστά. Κι ἡ ἴδια ἡ κλησάρισσα, χήρα γυναῖκα, ἦταν νηστικιὰ ἐδῶ καὶ τρεῖς μέρες. Δὲν εἶχε λίγο ψωμί νὰ βάλει στὸ στόμα τῆς, οὔτε ξεροκόμματο.

Καμμιά δουλειὰ δὲν εἶχε νὰ κάνει στὴν ἐκκλησιὰ ἐκεῖνο τὸ ἀπόγευμα ἡ κυρα-Μαρία. Τὶς δουλειὲς τὶς εἶχε κάνει ὅλες ἀπὸ τὸ πρωί. Στὴν ἐκκλησιὰ μπῆκε μόνο καὶ μόνο γιὰ νὰ κάνει παρέα στὴ φιλενάδα τῆς, τὴν Παναγία τοῦ τέμπλου, καὶ νὰ κλάψει τὸν πόνο τῆς. Πῆγε ἓνα σκαμνί, κάθισε μπροστὰ ἀπὸ τὴν εἰκόνα καὶ βυθίστηκε στὶς σκέψεις τῆς. Ἡ εἰκόνα ἦταν σκοτεινὴ, μόνο ἓνα ἀντιφέγγισμα στὸ ἀσημένιο τῆς φωτοστέφανο φαινόταν. Κι ἄλλες φορὲς εἶχε καθίσει ἔτσι κοντὰ στὴν Παναγία, ἀλλὰ τότε ἡ εἰκόνα ἦταν φλύαρη, τῆς μιλοῦσε καὶ τῆς ἔλεγε πολλά.

Σήμερα ὅμως ἦταν ἐντελῶς σιωπηλὴ καὶ ἀμίλητη. Ἡ κυρα-Μαρία κατάλαβε: Ἡ Παναγία ἦταν στενοχωρημένη, γιατί... τὸ καντήλι τῆς ἦταν σβηστό. Σηκώθηκε ἀπὸ τὸ σκαμνί καὶ γονάτισε μπροστὰ Τῆς. Σὰ βρῦση τρέξαν ἀπὸ τὰ μάτια τῆς τὰ δάκρυα.

— Ἄχ, Παναγιά μου Ἀσημένια [Ἀρβανίτικα: *Shërmëri ergjënde*= Παναγία Ἀσημένια], ψιθύρισε, κἄνε τὸ θάμα σου! Στείλε μου λίγο λάδι νὰ σ' ἀνάψω τὸ καντήλι σου, γιατί κι ἐγὼ δὲν μπορῶ νὰ σὲ βλέπω νᾶσαι μέσα στὸ σκοτάδι. Μοῦ μαυρίζε ἡ καρδιά μου. Ὅσο γιὰ μένα, ἓνα μικρὸ κομματάκι ψωμί μοῦ φτάνει. Ἐσὺ ὅλα τὰ μπορεῖς, κἄνε τὸ θάμα σου!

Ἐδῶ ἡ κυρα-Μαρία τελείωσε τὴν προσευχὴ τῆς, σηκώθηκε ὄρθια, σκούπισε τὰ δάκρυά τῆς καὶ περιμένε ἀπόκριση. Περιμένε, περιμένε, ἀλλὰ τίποτα, ἄκρα σιωπὴ, οὔτε ἓνας ψίθυρος δὲν ἀκούστηκε ἀπὸ

τὴν εἰκόνα. Ἀπελπίστηκε ἡ κυρα-Μαρία. Ἐπίασε τὸ κεφάλι τῆς ἀνάμεσα στὶς παλάμες τῆς καὶ θρήνησε:

— Ἄχ, Παναγιά μου Ἀσημένια, ξανάπε, μόνι! Πῶς καταντήσαμε ἔτσι ἐμεῖς οἱ δύο; Ἐσὺ χωρὶς λάδι κι ἐγὼ χωρὶς ψωμί [Ἀρβανίτικα: *Ti ra val edhe u ra bukë*= Ἐσὺ χωρὶς λάδι κι ἐγὼ χωρὶς ψωμί].

Πῆγε καὶ ξανακάθισε στὸ σκαμνί καὶ περιμένε μὴπως ἀκούσει κάτι.

Κι ὅσο περνοῦσε ἡ ὥρα τόσο τὴν ἔπνιγε ἡ ἀπελπισία. «Δὲν μπορεῖ, κάτι θὰ γίνεῖ», σκέφτηκε σὲ μία στιγμή, γιὰ νὰ παρηγορήσει τὸν ἑαυτὸ τῆς. Καὶ νά, μέσα σ' αὐτὴ τὴ σιωπὴ, κάτι τῆς φάνηκε ὅτι ἀκουσε, σὰν κάποιος νὰ γύρισε τὸ χερουλί τῆς πόρτας. Ἀλλὰ ὁ ἦχος ἦταν τόσο ἐλαφρὺς καὶ σιγανός, ποὺ νόμισε ὅτι τ' αὐτὴ τῆς τὴν ξεγέλασε. Δὲν ἔδωσε σημασία καὶ παραδόθηκε καὶ πάλι στὶς μαῦρες σκέψεις τῆς. Ὅμως τώρα τῆς φάνηκε πῶς ἀκουσε μέσα στὴν ἐκκλησιὰ ἀνάλαφρα βήματα, σιγανὰ καὶ ἤρεμα, ποῦρχονταν πρὸς τὸ μέρος τῆς. Γύρισε καὶ κοίταξε πίσω τῆς. Εἶδε μία σκοτεινὴ γυναικεία μορφή μὲ μαντήλι στὸ κεφάλι. Τρόμαξε λίγο, μὰ ἀμέσως μπόρεσε νὰ ξεχωρίσει στὸ πρόσωπο τῆς γυναίκας ἓνα μικρὸ χαμόγελο καὶ ἡσύχασε. «Κάποια γνωστὴ θᾶναι», σκέφτηκε κι ἀμέσως ρώτησε:

— Ποιὰ εἶσαι, θέλεις τίποτα; Ἡ ἀπόκριση ἦρθε ἀμέσως:

— Ἡ Κοῦλα εἶμαι, Μαρία μου... Ἡ Κοῦλα τοῦ Ἡλία τοῦ Πρόφη. Εἶναι σκοτάδι ἐδῶ μέσα, γι' αὐτὸ δὲν μὲ γνώρισες.

— Ἄ, ἡ Κοῦλα εἶσαι; Καλῶς τηνε...», τῆς εἶπε ἡ κλησάρισσα καὶ συνέχισε:

— Καὶ πῶς ἦρθες τέτοια ὥρα ἐδῶ, μόνι Κοῦλα; Ἀπόψε δὲν ἔχουμε Λειτουργία.

— Τὸ ξέρω, ἀλλὰ ἦρθα νὰ σοῦ φέρω αὐτά, εἶπε ἡ γυναῖκα κι ἀμέσως ξεκρέμασε ἓνα μικρὸ ταγάρι ποῦχε στὸν ὦμο τῆς καὶ τῷδωσε στὴν κλησάρισσα.

— Καὶ τί 'ναι αὐτὰ ποὺ ἔφερες; Ξαναρώτησε αὐτὴ μὲ λαχτάρα, καὶ τὸ μυαλό τῆς πῆγε στὸ λάδι καὶ στὸ ψωμί.

— Σ' ἔφερα ἓνα μικρὸ μπουκάλι μὲ λάδι καὶ μισὸ καρβέλι ψωμί, ἀπ' αὐτὸ ποὺ ἔψησα σήμερα στὸ φούρνο, ἀπάντησε ἡ Κοῦλα.

— Καὶ πῶς σηκώθηκες νᾶρθεις ἐδῶ, μόνι Κοῦλα, μὲ τέτοιο νερόχιονο ποὺ ρίχνει ἔξω; Ρώτησε αὐτὴ παίρνοντας στὰ χέρια τῆς τὸ ταγάρι.

Ἡ Κοῦλα κάθισε καὶ σκέφτηκε, δὲν εἶχε ἔτοιμη ἀπάντηση νὰ δώσει, ἀλλὰ στὸ τέλος τῆ βροῆς:

— Δὲν ξέρω, ἀλλὰ νά, ἐκεῖ ποὺ καθόμουνα στὸ τζάκι μόνι μου, σὰν κάποιος νὰ μὲ ἔσπρωξε καὶ νὰ μοῦ 'πε: «Σήκω καὶ πήγαινε στὴν Παναγία, νὰ δώσεις λάδι καὶ ψωμί στὴ Μαρία τὴν κλησάρισσα.» Γι' αὐτὸ σοῦ τὰ ἔφερα.

Ἀκούγοντας αὐτὰ τὰ λόγια ἡ κυρα-Μαρία ταραχτήκε. Τὰ μάτια της πλημμύρισαν καὶ πάλι μὲ δάκρυα. Πῆγε μπροστὰ στὴν εἰκόνα κι ἔκανε ἀμέτρητα σταυροκοπήματα. Κι εὐχαριστοῦσε τὴν Παναγία μὲ λόγια ποὺ δὲν μπορούσε νὰ καταλάβει κανεῖς. Κι ὅταν τελείωσε, γύρισε καὶ εἶπε στὴν Κοῦλα:

—Ἐγὼ ξέρω, μοὶ Κοῦλα, ποιὸς σ' ἔστειλε. Νά, αὐτὴ ἡ Παναγία, ἡ Ἀσημένια, σ' ἔστειλε. Τὴν ὥρα ποὺ ἐσὺ καθόσουνα στὸ τζάκι, ἐγὼ ἔκανα προσευχὲς καὶ τῆς ζητοῦσα νὰ κάνει τὸ θάμα Της, νὰ στείλει λίγο λάδι ν' ἀνάψω τὸ καντήλι Της καὶ μία μπουκιὰ ψωμί γιὰ νὰ φάω κι ἐγώ... Καὶ νὰ ποὺ ἔκανε τὸ θάμα! Ἔστειλε ἐσένα νὰ τὰ φέρεις... Σ' εὐχαριστῶ, Παναγία μου, καὶ σένα Κοῦλα μου!

Ἡ Κοῦλα δάκρυσε τώρα ἀπὸ χαρὰ. Δὲν τολμοῦσε οὔτε νὰ τὸ φανταστεῖ πὼς ἡ Παναγία τὴν εἶχε διαλέξει νὰ ἐκτελέσει τὴν ἐπιθυμία Της. Ἦτανε πολὺ μεγάλη αὐτὴ ἡ τιμὴ ποὺ τῆς ἔκανε. Πῆγε καὶ γονάτισε μπροστὰ στὴν εἰκόνα καὶ μὲ τὴ μελωδική της φωνὴ ἔψαλε ταπεινὰ μία προσευχή:

—Τὴν πᾶσαν ἐλπίδα μου εἰς σὲ ἀνατίθημι...

—Ἔλα τώρα ν' ἀνάψουμε τὸ καντήλι της, ἀλλὰ δὲν ξέρω ἂν ἔχουμε σπύρτα, εἶπε τώρα ἡ κλησάρισσα στὴν Κοῦλα.

—Φέρε ἐσὺ τὸ καντήλι καὶ σπύρτα ἔχω ἐγὼ μαζί μου, ἀπάντησε αὐτή.

Ἔβαλε ἡ κυρὰ Μαρία τὸ σκαμνὶ κάτω ἀπὸ τὴν καντήλα, ἀνέβηκε πάνω καὶ κατέβασε τὸ ποτήρι τοῦ καντηλιοῦ. Ἡ Κοῦλα τὸ γέμισε μὲ λάδι. Βάλανε καινούργιο λουμίνι, τὸ ἀνάψανε καὶ ἡ κυρα-Μαρία ἀνέβηκε καὶ πάλι πάνω στὸ σκαμνὶ καὶ ξανάβαλε τὸ ποτήρι στὴ θέση του. Ἀνάψανε μετὰ καὶ τὸ καντήλι τοῦ Χριστοῦ, δεξιὰ ἀπὸ τὴν Ὁραία Πύλη. Ἡ ἐκκλησιὰ φωτίστηκε ὁλόκληρη. Ποτὲ ἄλλοτε δὲν τὴν εἶχανε δεῖ τόσο φωτισμένη. Ἡ Παναγία στὴν εἰκόνα τῆς φαινότανε τώρα εὐχαριστημένη. Στὰ χεῖλη της διακρίνανε ἓνα μικρὸ χαμόγελο. Ἡ ἐκκλησιὰ ζεστάθηκε ἀπότομα κι ἡ παγωνιά κι ἡ θλίψη ἔξαφανίστηκαν. Οἱ δύο γυναῖκες γονάτισαν τώρα μαζί μπροστὰ στὴν Παναγία καὶ ψιθύριζαν προσευχὲς. Ἔψαλαν στὸ τέλος, «*Τὴν τιμιωτέραν τῶν Χερουβείμ καὶ ἐνδοξοτέραν ἀσυγκρίτως τῶν Σεραφείμ*». Σηκώθηκαν μετὰ ὄρθιες, φίλησαν τὶς εἰκόνες τοῦ τέμπλου καὶ στάθηκαν ἀρκετὴ ὥρα νὰ τὶς κοιτάζουν.

—Τώρα ἂς πηγαίνουμε», εἶπε σὲ κάποια στιγμή ἡ κυρα-Μαρία.

Κάνανε γιὰ τελευταία φορὰ τὸ σταυρό τους, προχώρησαν μαζί πρὸς τὰ ἔξω κι ἔκλεισαν τὴν πόρτα τῆς ἐκκλησιᾶς. Τώρα ἔξω εἶχε σκοτεινιάσει ἐντελῶς. Χαιρετηθήκανε, φιληθήκανε κι ἡ κάθε μία ἐτοιμάστηκε ν' ἀναχωρήσει γιὰ τὸ σπίτι της.

—Νᾶσαι καλά, μοὶ Κοῦλα, ποὺ ἦρθες, γιατί πῆρες ἀπὸ πάνω μου μεγάλη σταναχώρια. Ἀπόψε θὰ κοιμηθῶ ἡσυχη, εἶπε ἡ κλησάρισσα.

—Δὲν ἔκανα καὶ τίποτα σπουδαῖο, ἀλλὰ θέλω καὶ σὲ παρακαλῶ νὰ μὴν πεῖς σὲ κανένα τίποτα, ἀπάντησε ἡ ἄλλη φεύγοντας.

—Ἐννοια σου καὶ δὲν θὰ τὸ πῶ, τὴν καθησύχασε ἡ κυρα-Μαρία.

Ἡ κλησάρισσα δὲν κράτησε τὸν λόγο της. Κάποτε διηγήθηκε αὐτὸ ποὺ συνέβη στὴ θείσα Ἐλένη τοῦ Λουκά τοῦ Πρόφη. Κι ἐκείνη τὸ εἶπε στὶς κόρες της. Κι οἱ κόρες της μᾶς τὸ διηγήθηκαν ὅταν ἔγινε τὸ μνημόσυνο τῆς μαμᾶς, σαράντα μέρες μετὰ τὸν θάνατό της καὶ πενήντα χρόνια μετὰ τὸ γεγονός. Καὶ τότε, ὅλοι τότε νιώσαμε νὰ γεμίζει ὁ ἀέρας γύρω μας μὲ μίαν «*ὁσμὴ εὐωδίας πνευματικῆς*».



Ἡ συνειδησις, ὦ ἡ συνειδησις! Ἀκούγεται μέσα στὸ σκοτάδι ποὺ καλύπτει τὴ γῆ, ἀκούγεται σὰν τὸ λάλημα τοῦ πετεινοῦ τὴ νύχτα τῆς Μεγάλης Πέμπτης.

Ἔτυχε ποτὲ νὰ κοιμηθῆτε σὲ ἓνα ἐξοχικὸ μέρος, ὅπου τὴ νύχτα ἐπικρατεῖ ἡσυχία; Πόσο καθαρὰ ἀκούγεται τὸ λάλημα τοῦ πετεινοῦ! Ἀλλὰ ὅταν ἐκεῖ φυσήξει ἄγριος ἄνεμος καὶ τὰ κλαδιὰ τῶν δέντρων σείωνται καὶ γίνεται θόρυβος μεγάλος, τότε τὸ λάλημα τοῦ πετεινοῦ πνίγεται καὶ δὲν ἀκούγεται. Ἔτσι συμβαίνει καὶ μὲ τὴ συνειδησις. Πάντοτε λαλεῖ. Ἀλλὰ ὅταν τὰ πάθη ξεσηκώνονται σὰν θύελλες καὶ καταιγίδες καὶ δημιουργοῦν τεράστιο θόρυβο μέσα στὸ ψυχικὸ μας κόσμο, τότε ἡ φωνὴ τῆς συνειδήσεως πνίγεται καὶ δὲν ἀκούγεται.

Ἀλλὰ μία μέρα ὅπωςδήποτε θ' ἀκουστῆ. Μακάρι ν' ἀκουστῆ. Σ' αὐτὸ τὸν κόσμο. Γιατί ἄλλιῶς θ' ἀκουστῆ στὸν ἄλλο κόσμο. Καὶ τότε τὸ «κατηγορῶ» τῆς συνειδήσεως θάναι ἀδιάκοπο καὶ ἀνυπόφορο. Θάναι αἰώνια κόλασις. Ὅπως λέει ὁ ἱερός Χρυσόστομος, καλύτερα νὰ σὲ κεντήση σκορπιός, παρὰ νὰ σὲ κεντήση ἡ συνειδησις.

Ἀπὸ τὸ φυλλάδιον «*Σταχυολογήματα τοῦ Ἐπισκόπου Ἀὐγουστίνου Καντιώτου*», Ἐκδόσεις «*Ὁρθόδοξος Κυψέλη*»

Ένας Κόσμος Άχαρις, Κατάλληλος Μόνο για ...Άγίους και ...Ευνούχους!

Γράφει ο Σάββας Ηλιάδης, Δάσκαλος, Κιλκίς, 19-6-2019.

Έναν παραλογισμό ζει σήμερα ο άνθρωπος. Έναν άκραίο παραλογισμό, ο οποίος μοιάζει να είναι κληρονομιά από τον δαιμονισμένο του Ευαγγελίου. Έκείνον τον Γαδαρηνό, που δεν έμενε σε σπίτι, που τον έδεναν με τις άλυσίδες, αλλά τις έκοβε και έτρεχε γυμνός στις έρημιές και στα μνήματα. Εκείνον που ήταν ο φόβος και ο τρόμος των συγχωριανών του. Μέχρι που τον θεράπευσε ο Χριστός και κάθισε δίπλα του «*ίματισμένος και σωφρονών*».

Κύριο χαρακτηριστικό αυτού του παραλογισμού είναι η φοβερή αντιφατικότητα, η οποία έχει πηγή και αίτια το γυναικείο φύλο, τη γυναίκα. Και μάλιστα τη γύμνια της, το ...καμάρι της! Διότι, όταν μιλάμε για ντύσιμο, έννοούμε το ντύσιμο—μάλλον το ξεγύμνωμα!—της γυναίκας. Ένα φαινόμενο, το οποίο κατέκτησε όλες τις ηλικίες των γυναικών. Όλες τις κατηγορίες. Αρχίζοντας από αυτές που «έχουν ήθικες άρχες και δεν τις παραβαίνουν με τίποτε», μέχρι τις προοδευτικές, τις ελεύθερες, των «έλευθέρων ήθων», όπως τις έλεγαν κάποτε.

Και λοιπόν δεν συμβαίνει τίποτε. Δεν πειράζει... Πότε θα τα φορέσει αυτά, σου λέει; Άς τα φορέσει τώρα που... είναι μικρή, νέα, να τα χαρεί. Έτσι λένε, όταν τις ρωτήσει κάποιος τις μητέρες ή τις γιαγιάδες, αφού βέβαια και αυτές είναι, κατά πάσα πιθανότητα, παρομοίως ένδεδυμένες. Αυτή είναι η απάντηση.

Καημένες μου, όταν θα μεγαλώσει με αυτή την συνήθεια, τότε θα τρέχετε και δεν θα συμμαζεύεται! Τα πάθη λειτουργούν άμφίδρομα και στα δύο μέρη της ύπαρξης! Και θροιάζουν και ριζώνουν και τρέφονται και αναπτύσσονται και δεν ξεριζώνονται εύκολα πιά! Σώμα και ψυχή είναι άλληλοεξαρτώμενα!

Το πιό όδυνηρό όμως είναι πως η απάντηση αυτή ακούγεται και από στόματα γυναικών που έχουν σχέση με την πίστη. Που εκκλησιάζονται, εξομολογούνται, κοινωνούν. Αναρωτιέται κανείς: Άγνοούν πως αυτό δεν είναι άπλως θέμα ήθικό αλλά σωτηριολογικό; Δεν συναισθάνονται τη σοβαρότητα του πράγματος; Την καταστροφική δύναμη της άσεβους αυτής συμπεριφοράς; Δεν ξέρουν πως σκοπός της ζωής είναι ο άγιασμός του ανθρώπου; Δεν ξέρουν πως ο άνθρωπος είναι πλάσμα σύνθετο; Πως έχει ψυχή και σώμα και πως δεν μπορεί να αγιάσει μόνο το ένα μέρος της ύπαρξής του; Πως αγιάζουν όμοιο σώμα και ψυχή. Τέλος πάντων, δεν τους τα λένε οι πνευματικοί τους ή κάνουν άνυπακοή και μένουν στο θέλημά τους;

Και ποιά η θέση του άνδρα απέναντι σ' αυτήν την κατάσταση; Ποιά θα μπορούσε να είναι; Στέκονται

ως άπλοι κομπάρσοι στο έργο. Δεν είναι δυνατόν να συμφωνούν όλοι μ' αυτήν την κατάσταση, αλλά αφού την έχουν στα χέρια τους οι γυναίκες, δυστυχώς, δεν έχουν και πολλά περιθώρια να σταθούν γενναίως. Πρώτα να τις έμποδίσουν ως συζύγους ή ως θυγατέρες ή ως συγγενείς. Άλλα και να προστατέψουν τους έαυτούς τους από τον πειρασμό.

Πως και από που να φυλαχτεί ο άνδρας από έναν τέτοιο δαιμονικό πειρασμό, από ένα σκάνδαλο «παντοκρατορικό»; Ούτε στην προπρωτική παραδείσια κατάσταση ζούμε ούτε την αγιότητα βιώνουμε! Άλλα και ο ευνουχισμός είναι άδύνατος. Είναι παραλογισμός, έγκλημα, φυγομαχία και φοβερή άμαρτία. Άλλά, παρεμπιπτόντως, όλη αυτή η κατάσταση που οδηγεί τάχα; Μήπως δεν έχουν ευνουχιστεί οι νέοι ήδη, αφού η γυναίκα κατέστη άνεραστη; Έγινε προκλητική μεν και έλκυστική σαρκικά, όχι όμως ψυχικά. Έχασε την φυσική χάρη του θήλεος. Την ντροπαλότητα, την αιδώ, τη συστολή, τη σεμνότητα, πράγματα που την καθιστούν όντως πλάσμα θηλυκό και έράσιμο. Και δεν πείθει. Κατά συνέπεια, έχασε και ο άνδρας εκείνο το ξεχωριστό, το γλυκό, το όνειρώδες, το πλήρες αισιοδοξίας ένδιαφέρον για το άλλο φύλο.

Βέβαια, η φυγή μακριά από τη «φωτιά» και η φυλακή των αισθήσεων είναι η μία λύση, αλλά όχι πάντοτε έφικτή. «*Εγώ δε λέγω υμίν ότι πās ό βλέπων γυναίκα προς τον έπιθυμῆσαι αυτήν ἤδη εμοίχευσεν αυτήν εν τη καρδιά αυτού.*» (Ματθ. 5,28), λέει ο Χριστός. «*Φεύγετε την πορνείαν*», λέει ο άπόστολος Παύλος. Όμως, η συχνή συνάντηση και συνεργασία άνδρων και γυναικών στους χώρους έργασίας, οι κοινωνικές υποχρεώσεις σε διάφορους χώρους, σε συνδυασμό με την έλευθεριότητα και το θλιβερό φαινόμενο άπαξίωσης του θεσμού της οικογένειας από όλους τους οργανωμένους φορείς, από το Κράτος μέχρι τον τελευταίο όλιγομελή Σύλλογο, αφήνουν όρθάνοιχτο το δρόμο για το στραβοπάτημα και την άρχη της καταστροφής. Την άρχη του πόνου, σωματικού και ψυχικού. Της άπόγνωσης και των κατά συνέπεια έπακολουθούντων άπονενοημένων πράξεων.

Πως, λοιπόν, εκθέτουν άναιδώς σε δημόσια θέα τα μέλη του σώματός τους οι γυναίκες, τα όποια ο Θεός δημιούργησε για ιερό σκοπό; Κατ' άρχάς είναι θέμα άξιοπρέπειας. Έσύ, γυναίκα με προσωπικότητα, με σοβαρότητα, με μόρφωση, με έγωισμό, με ύπερηφάνεια, ναί, με ύπερηφάνεια και έγωισμό, πως καταδέχεσαι να ευτελίζεσαι, εκθέτοντας μέρη του έαυτού σου, τα όποια φυλάσσονταν άνέκαθεν ιερώς άποκεκρυμμένα, προσφέροντάς τα ως θέαμα στον όποιοιδήποτε «καλοπροαίρετο» θεατή; Πως «δίνεσαι» στα μάτια του οίουδήποτε; Τα μέλη εκείνα,

τὰ ὅποια εἶναι προορισμένα νὰ συνεργαστοῦν μὲ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ νὰ ἀποδώσουν καρποὺς ἱεροῦς; Τὰ μέλη ἐκεῖνα, τὰ ὅποια εἶναι προορισμένα νὰ τὰ ἀκουμπήσει μέσα στὸ μυστήριο τοῦ γάμου μόνο ἓνα ἄλλο σῶμα, τὸ σῶμα τοῦ συζύγου. Νὰ ἐνωθοῦν καὶ νὰ καρπίσουν εὐλογία; Τὰ μέλη ποῦ θὰ προσφερθοῦν ἀπὸ τὴ μάνα νὰ ἀναθρέψουν ψυχούλες, τοὺς καρποὺς τῆς τεκνογονίας, τὰ εὐλογημένα γεννήματα, τὰ παιδιά; Τόση ἀπαξίωση στὸ σῶμα, ἐνῶ εἶναι ὄργανο ποῦ ἐπιτελεῖ ἅγιο ἔργο!

Ἄλλὰ καὶ ἂν εἶσαι Χριστιανή, πῶς γίνεσαι αἰτία πειρασμοῦ στὸν ἀδελφό σου; Σ' αὐτόν, μὲ τὸν ὅποιο θὰ προσευχηθεῖτε μαζὶ στὸν ναὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ θὰ πᾶτε νὰ κοινωνήσετε ἀπὸ τὸ ἴδιο ἅγιο ποτήριο; Δὲν τοῦ κλείνεις τὸ δρόμο γιὰ τὴν πνευματικὴ του προκοπή; Κι ἂν ἐσὺ λὲς πῶς δὲν ἔχεις πρόβλημα, δὲν σκέφτεσαι τὸν ἐν Χριστῷ ἀδελφό σου καὶ πηγαίνεις καὶ στέκεσαι μπροστὰ του ἀκόμη καὶ τὴν ὥρα τῆς Θείας Λειτουργίας, φορώντας τὰ ἀρώματά σου καὶ τὰ προκλητικὰ ἐνδύματά σου; Δὲν τὰ σκέφτεσαι αὐτά; Δὲν ξέρεις τί λέει τὸ Εὐαγγέλιο: «Ὅς δ' ἂν σκανδαλίση ἓνα τῶν μικρῶν τούτων τῶν πιστευόντων εἰς ἐμέ, συμφέρει αὐτῷ ἵνα κρεμασθῇ μύλος ὄνικος εἰς τὸν τράχηλον αὐτοῦ καὶ καταποντισθῇ ἐν τῷ πελάγει τῆς θαλάσσης. Οὐαὶ τῷ κόσμῳ ἀπὸ τῶν σκανδάλων ἀνάγκη γάρ ἐστιν ἔλθειν τὰ σκάνδαλα· πλὴν οὐαὶ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ ἐκεῖνῳ δι' οὗ τὸ σκάνδαλον ἔρχεται.» (Ματθ. 18:6-7). Μετάφραση: «Ὅποιος ὅμως σκανδαλίζει καὶ παρασύρει στὴν ἁμαρτία ἓνα ἀπὸ τοὺς μικροὺς καὶ ἀπλοῖκοὺς αὐτοῦς, ποῦ πιστεύουν σὲ μένα, εἶναι προτιμότερο γι' αὐτόν νὰ κρεμαστεῖ στὸν τράχηλό του μυλόπετρα ἀπὸ ἐκεῖνες ποὺ γυρίζουν ὁ ὄνος (τὸ γαϊδουρι) στὸν μύλο, καὶ νὰ καταποντιστεῖ στὴν ἀνοικτὴ θάλασσα. Ἀλίμονο στὸν κόσμο ἀπὸ τὰ σκάνδαλα· διότι ἐξαιτίας τῆς διαφθορᾶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων, κατ' ἀνάγκη θὰ ἔλθουν σκάνδαλα καὶ πειρασμοί. Ἀλίμονο ὅμως στὸν ἄνθρωπο ἐκεῖνο, ἀπὸ τὸν ὅποιο ἔρχεται τὸ σκάνδαλο».

Ὁ καθένας ἀπὸ τὴ θέση του ὀφείλουμε νὰ τὰ λάβουμε ὑπόψη αὐτὰ καὶ νὰ προσπαθήσουμε μὲ φιλότιμο νὰ τὰ βάλουμε στὴ ζωὴ μας, γιὰ νὰ ἔχουμε προκοπὴ καὶ ἐμεῖς ἀλλὰ καὶ ὅσοι στὸ διάβα τῆς ζωῆς μας θὰ βρεθοῦν κοντὰ μας.



Ἐὰν εἴπωμεν ὅτι ἁμαρτίαν οὐκ ἔχομεν, ἐαυτοὺς πλανῶμεν καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἡμῖν.

Ἰωάν. Α' 1:8

«Φοβοῦμαι ὅτι θὰ Δοῦμε στὴ Μητρόπολη τῶν Ἀθηνῶν Ἐνα Καρδινάλιο σὰν Κόκορα...»

Ἀπὸ τὸ βιβλίο τοῦ Μητροπολίτου Φλωρίνης π. Αὐγουστίνου Καντιώτου «Κόρακες τοῦ Οἰκουμενισμοῦ ἐξέλθετε τῆς Κιβωτοῦ», ἔκδοση 2016, σελ. 4.



Ο Ὁρθόδοξος λαὸς τῆς Ἀνατολῆς, ἀλλὰ ἰδιαίτερος τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἔγινε στόχος ἀγρίας πρωτοφανοῦς ἐπιθέσεως. Ἐχθροὶ τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου

πίστεως ὑλισταί, ἄπιστοι, ἄθεοι, ἀλλὰ καὶ αἰρετικοὶ παλαιότεροι καὶ νεώτεροι, ποικιλώνυμοι, πτερωτοὶ δράκοντες τῆς Ἀποκαλύψεως, βαρεῖς λύκοι καλυπτόμενοι μὲ τὴν δορὰν τοῦ προβάτου ἔχουν ἐπιδράμει στὸν δυστυχημένο μας λαό. Οὐνίται, Παπισταί, Ἐπισκοπιανοί, Πρεσβυτεριανοί, Πεντηκοστιανοί, Ἀβδεντισταί (Σαββατισταί) Πλημμυούθιοι, Χιλιασταί καὶ ὅλα τα εἶδη τῶν αἱρέσεων εὐρίσκονται καὶ δροῦν ἀνάμεσά μας.

Οἱ σκοτεινὲς δυνάμεις ἔχουν βραχυκυκλώσει τὸ ταλαίπωρον Ἔθνος μας καὶ εἶναι σὰν ἀετὸς στὸ κλουβί. Ἐμπρὸς νὰ σπάσουμε τὴν φυλακὴν αὐτὴ καὶ ὁ ἀετὸς νὰ πετάξει πάλι ψηλά, πολὺ ψηλά, μέχρι τ' ἄστρα τοῦ οὐρανοῦ.

Μᾶς ἔρχεται στὴν Ἑλλάδα ἐκτός τῶν ἄλλων κακῶν ὁ παπισμὸς. Ὁ παπισμὸς εἶναι θηρίον τῆς Ἀποκαλύψεως. Τί ἐστὶ παπισμὸς; Σύνολο αἱρέσεων. Καὶ φοβοῦμαι δυστυχῶς, ὅτι θὰ δοῦμε στὴ Μητρόπολη [τῶν Ἀθηνῶν]—ἐγὼ δὲν πηγαίνω στὴ Μητρόπολη—θὰ δεῖτε τὴν ἐπίσημη ἐορτὴ τῆς 25^{ης} Μαρτίου, μπροστὰ-μπροστὰ, πρῶτον σὰν κόκορα, μὲ τὰ φτερὰ του τὰ κολωτὰ νὰ στέκεται δίπλα στὸν πρωθυπουργό, δὲν ξέρω ποιὸς θὰ εἶναι τότε, ἓνας καρδινάλιος. Ἀπὸ ὥρα σὲ ὥρα ἐτοιμάζουν νὰ μᾶς φέρουν καρδινάλιο, γιὰ νὰ φορέσουμε κουστοῦμι!

Ἡ Ἑλλὰς τοὺς μοιρῖζει χωριατίλα καὶ θέλουν νὰ μᾶς φορέσουν Εὐρωπαϊκὸ κουστοῦμι! Μά, χίλιες φορὲς μὲ φουστάνελα, χωριάτες, μὲ χωριάτικο κουστοῦμι καὶ Ἑλλάδα στὴν καρδιά. Ἐμεῖς θέλουμε νὰ μείνουμε Ἑλληνες καὶ μόνον Ἑλληνες, Ὁρθόδοξοι Χριστιανοί.

† † †

Σημ.: Ἡ ἀνωτέρω φωτογραφία ἐλήφθη τὴν 25^η Μαρτίου 2017 ἐντός τοῦ Μητροπολιτικοῦ Ναοῦ τῶν Ἀθηνῶν! Δυστυχῶς, ἡ προφητεία τοῦ ἀοιδίου Μητροπολίτου Φλωρίνης Αὐγουστίνου Καντιώτη ἐκπληρώθηκε ἐπακριβῶς!

Ἐπιστολή Ἁγίου Παΐσιου τοῦ Ἀθωνίτου κατὰ Οἰκουμενιστῶν καὶ Φιλενωτικῶν

«Άγνωστη ἐπιστολή πόνου κατὰ οἰκουμενιστῶν καὶ φιλενωτικῶν», I. M. Σταυρονικήτα Ἁγίου Ὁρους 23-1-1969, Θεοδρομία IB3 (Ιούλιος-Σεπτέμβριος 2010), σελ. 420-423. (Ἡ ἐπιστολή αὐτή στάλθηκε πρὸς τὸν Ἀρχιμανδρίτη Χαράλαμπο Βασιλόπουλο, προηγούμενο τότε τῆς Ἱερᾶς Μονῆς Πετράκη).

Σεβαστὲ πάτερ Χαράλαμπε:

Ἐπειδὴ βλέπω τὸν μέγαν σάλον ποὺ γίνεται εἰς τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν μας, ἐξ αἰτίας τῶν διαφορῶν φιλενωτικῶν κινήσεων καὶ τῶν ἐπαφῶν τοῦ Πατριάρχου μετὰ τοῦ Πάπα, ἐπόνεσα κι ἐγὼ σὰν τέκνον Τῆς καὶ ἐθεώρησα καλόν, ἐκτὸς ἀπὸ τὶς προσευχῆς μου, νὰ στείλω κι ἓνα μικρὸ κομματάκι κλωστή (ποὺ ἔχω σὰν φτωχὸς μοναχός), διὰ νὰ χρησιμοποιηθῆ κι αὐτό, ἔστω καὶ γιὰ μιὰ βελονιά, διὰ τὸ πολυκομματιασμένον φόρεμα τῆς Μητέρας μας.

Πιστεύω ὅτι θὰ κάμετε ἀγάπην καὶ θὰ τὸ χρησιμοποιήσετε διὰ μέσου τοῦ θρησκευτικοῦ σας φύλλου. Σᾶς εὐχαριστῶ.

Θὰ ἤθελα νὰ ζητήσω συγγνώμη ἐν πρώτοις ἀπ' ὅλους, ποὺ τολμῶ νὰ γράφω κάτι, ἐνῶ δὲν εἶμαι οὔτε ἅγιος, οὔτε θεολόγος.

Φαντάζομαι ὅτι θὰ μὲ καταλάβουν ὅλοι, ὅτι τὰ γραφόμενά μου δὲν εἶναι τίποτε ἄλλο παρὰ ἓνας βαθύς μου πόνος διὰ τὴν γραμμὴν καὶ κοσμικὴν ἀγάπην, δυστυχῶς, τοῦ πατέρα μας κ. Ἀθηναγόρα.

Ὅπως φαίνεται, ἀγάπησε μίαν ἄλλην γυναῖκα μοντέρνα, ποὺ λέγεται Παπική Ἐκκλησία διότι ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος Μητέρα μας δὲν τοῦ κάμνει καμμίαν ἐντύπωσι, ἐπειδὴ εἶναι πολὺ σεμνή. Αὐτὴ ἡ ἀγάπη, ποὺ ἀκούσθηκε ἀπὸ τὴν Πόλι, βρῆκε ἀπήχησι σὲ πολλὰ παιδιὰ του, ποὺ τὴν ζοῦν εἰς τὰς πόλεις. Ἄλλωστε αὐτὸ εἶναι καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἐποχῆς μας: ἡ οἰκογένεια νὰ χάσῃ τὸ ἱερὸ νόημα τῆς ἀπὸ τέτοιου εἶδους ἀγάπης, ποὺ ὡς σκοπὸν ἔχουν τὴν διάλυσιν καὶ ὄχι τὴν ἔνωσιν.

Μὲ μιὰ τέτοια περίπου κοσμικὴ ἀγάπη καὶ ὁ Πατριάρχης μας φθάνει στὴ Ρώμη. Ἐνῶ θὰ ἔπρεπε νὰ δεῖξῃ ἀγάπην πρῶτα σὲ μᾶς τὰ παιδιὰ του καὶ στὴ Μητέρα μας Ἐκκλησία, αὐτός, δυστυχῶς, ἔστειλε τὴν ἀγάπην του πολὺ μακριά. Τὸ ἀποτέλεσμα ἦταν νὰ ἀναπαύσῃ μὲν ὅλα τὰ κοσμικὰ παιδιὰ, ποὺ ἀγαποῦν τὸν κόσμον καὶ ἔχουν τὴν κοσμικὴν αὐτὴν ἀγάπην, νὰ κατασκανδαλίσῃ ὅμως ὅλους ἐμᾶς, τὰ τέκνα τῆς

Ὁρθοδοξίας, μικρὰ καὶ μεγάλα, ποὺ ἔχουν φόβον Θεοῦ...

Μετὰ λύπης μου ἀπὸ ὅσους φιλενωτικούς ἔχω γνωρίσει, δὲν εἶδα νὰ ἔχουν οὔτε ψίχα πνευματικὴ οὔτε φλοιό.

Ξέρουν ὅμως, νὰ ὀμιλοῦν γιὰ ἀγάπην καὶ ἐνότητα ἐνῶ οἱ ἴδιοι δὲν εἶναι ἐνωμένοι μετὰ τὸν Θεόν, διότι δὲν Τὸν ἔχουν ἀγαπήσει.

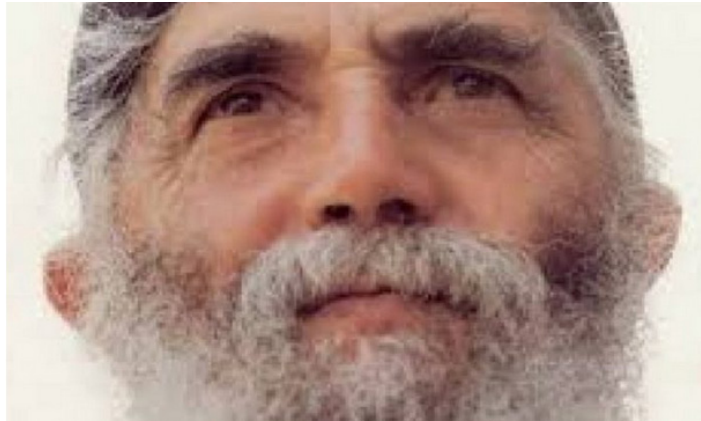
Θὰ ἤθελα νὰ παρακαλέσω θεορμὰ ὅλους τοὺς φιλενωτικούς ἀδελφούς μας:

Ἐπειδὴ τὸ θέμα τῆς ἐνώσεως τῶν Ἐκκλησιῶν εἶναι κάτι τὸ πνευματικὸν καὶ ἀνάγκην ἔχουμε πνευματικῆς ἀγάπης, ἃς τὸ ἀφήσουμε σὲ αὐτοὺς ποὺ ἀγαπήσανε πολὺ τὸν Θεόν καὶ εἶναι θεολόγοι, σὰν τοὺς Πατέρας τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, καὶ ὄχι νομολόγοι ποὺ προσφέρανε καὶ προσφέρουν ὀλόκληρο τὸν ἑαυτὸν τους εἰς τὴν διακονίαν τῆς Ἐκκλησίας (ἀντὶ μεγάλης λαμπάδας), τοὺς ὁποίους ἀναψε τὸ πῦρ τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ ὄχι ὁ ἀναπτήρας τοῦ νεωκόρου.

Ἄς γνωρίζωμεν ὅτι δὲν ὑπάρχουν μόνον φυσικοὶ νόμοι, ἀλλὰ καὶ πνευματικοί. Ἐπομένως, ἡ μέλλουσα ὀργὴ τοῦ Θεοῦ δὲν μπορεῖ νὰ ἀντιμετωπισθῆ με συνεταιρισμὸν ἀμαρτωλῶν (διότι διπλὴν ὀργὴν θὰ λάβωμεν), ἀλλὰ με μετάνοιαν καὶ τήρησιν τῶν ἐντολῶν τοῦ Κυρίου. Ἐπίσης, ἃς γνωρίσωμεν καλὰ ὅτι ἡ Ὁρθόδοξος Ἐκκλησία μας δὲν ἔχει καμμίαν ἔλλειψιν. Ἡ μόνη ἔλλειψις, ποὺ παρουσιάζεται, εἶναι ἡ ἔλλειψις σοβαρῶν Ἱεραρχῶν καὶ Ποιμένων με πατερικὲς ἀρχές.

Εἶναι ὀλίγοι οἱ ἐκλεκτοί. Ὅμως δὲν εἶναι ἀνησυχητικόν. Ἡ Ἐκκλησία εἶναι Ἐκκλησία τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ Αὐτὸς τὴν κυβερνάει. Δὲν εἶναι Ναός, ποὺ κτιζεται ἀπὸ πέτρες, ἄμμο καὶ ἀσβέστη ἀπὸ εὐσεβεῖς καὶ καταστρέφεται με φωτιὰ βαρβάρων, ἀλλὰ εἶναι ὁ ἴδιος ὁ Χριστός. «Καὶ ὁ πεσὼν ἐπὶ τὸν λίθον τοῦτον συνθλασθήσεται· ἐφ' ὃν δ' ἂν πέσῃ, λικμήσει αὐτόν. Καὶ ἀκούσαντες οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι τὰς παραβολὰς αὐτοῦ ἔγνωσαν ὅτι περὶ αὐτῶν λέγει». (Ματθ. 21:44-45).

Ὁ Κύριος, ὅταν θὰ πρέπη, θὰ παρουσιάσῃ τοὺς Μάρκους τοὺς Εὐγενικούς καὶ τοὺς Γρηγόριους Παλαμάδες, διὰ νὰ συγκεντρώσουν ὅλα τὰ κατασκανδαλισμένα ἀδέλφια μας, διὰ νὰ ὁμολογήσουν τὴν Ὁρθόδοξον Πίστιν, νὰ στερεώσουν τὴν Παράδοσιν καὶ νὰ δώσουν χαράν μεγάλην εἰς τὴν Μητέρα μας.



Εἰς τοὺς καιροὺς μας βλέπομεν ὅτι πολλὰ πιστὰ τέκνα τῆς Ἐκκλησίας μας μοναχοὶ καὶ λαϊκοί, ἔχουν, δυστυχῶς, ἀποσχισθῆ ἀπὸ αὐτήν, ἐξ αἰτίας τῶν φιλενωτικῶν. Ἔχω τὴν γνώμην ὅτι δὲν εἶναι καθόλου καλὸν νὰ ἀποχωριζόμεθα ἀπὸ τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν κάθε φοράν ποὺ θὰ πταίῃ ὁ Πατριάρχης. Ἀλλὰ ἀπὸ μέσα, κοντὰ στὴν Μητέρα Ἐκκλησία ἔχει καθῆκον καὶ ὑποχρέωσι ὁ καθένας ν' ἀγωνίζεται μὲ τὸν τρόπον του. Τὸ νὰ διακόψῃ τὸ μνημόσυνον τοῦ Πατριάρχου, νὰ ἀποσχισθῆ καὶ νὰ δημιουργήσῃ ἰδικήν του Ἐκκλησίαν καὶ νὰ ἐξακολουθῆ νὰ ὀμιλῆ ὑβρίζοντας τὸν Πατριάρχην, αὐτὸ νομίζω, εἶναι παράλογον.

Ἐὰν διὰ τὴν α' ἢ τὴν β' λοξοδρομήσῃ τῶν κατὰ καιροὺς Πατριαρχῶν χωριζόμεθα καὶ κάνωμε δικές μας Ἐκκλησίες—Θεὸς φυλάξῃ—θὰ ξεπεράσωμε καὶ τοὺς Προτεστάντες ἀκόμη. Εὐκόλα χωρίζει κανεὶς καὶ δύσκολα ἐπιστρέφει...

Δυστυχῶς, ἔχουμε πολλές «ἐκκλησίες» στὴν ἐποχὴ μας. Δημιουργήθηκαν εἴτε ἀπὸ μεγάλες ὀμάδες ἢ καὶ ἀπὸ ἓνα ἄτομο ἀκόμη. Ἐπειδὴ συνέβη στὸ καλύβι τῶν (ὀμιλῶ διὰ τὰ ἐν Ἁγίῳ Ὅρει συμβαίνοντα) νὰ ὑπάρχῃ καὶ ναὸς, ἐνόμισαν ὅτι μποροῦν νὰ κάνουν καὶ δική τους ἀνεξάρτητη Ἐκκλησία.

Ἐὰν οἱ φιλενωτικοὶ δίνουν τὸ πρῶτο πλήγμα στὴν Ἐκκλησία, αὐτοί, οἱ ἀνωτέρω, δίνουν τὸ δεῦτερο.

Ἄς εὐχηθοῦμε νὰ δώσῃ ὁ Θεὸς τὸν φωτισμὸν Του σὲ ὅλους μας καὶ εἰς τὸν Πατριάρχην μας κ. Ἀθηναγόραν διὰ νὰ γίνῃ πρῶτον ἢ ἔνωσις αὐτῶν τῶν «ἐκκλησιῶν», νὰ πραγματοποιηθῆ ἢ γαλήνη ἀνάμεσα στὸ σκανδαλισμένο Ὁρθόδοξο πλήρωμα, ἢ εἰρήνη καὶ ἡ ἀγάπη μεταξὺ τῶν Ὁρθοδόξων Ἀνατολικῶν Ἐκκλησιῶν καὶ κατόπιν ἄς γίνῃ σκέψις διὰ τὴν ἔνωσιν μετὰ τῶν ἄλλων «Ὁμολογιῶν», ἐὰν καὶ ἐφ' ὅσον εἰλικρινῶς ἐπιθυμοῦν νὰ ἀσπασθοῦν τὸ Ὁρθόδοξον Δόγμα.

Θὰ ἤθελα ἀκόμη νὰ εἰπῶ, ὅτι ὑπάρχει καὶ μιὰ τρίτη μερίδα μέσα εἰς τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν μας. Εἶναι ἐκεῖνοι οἱ ἀδελφοί, ποὺ παραμένουν μὲν πιστὰ τέκνα Αὐτῆς, δὲν ἔχουν ὅμως συμφωνίαν πνευματικὴν ἀναμεταξύ τους. Ἀσχολοῦνται μὲ τὴν κριτικὴν ὁ ἓνας τοῦ ἄλλου καὶ ὄχι διὰ τὸ γενικώτερον καλὸν τοῦ ἀγῶνος. Παρακολουθεῖ δὲ ὁ ἓνας τὸν ἄλλον (περισσότερον ἀπὸ τὸν ἑαυτὸν του) εἰς τὸ τί θὰ εἰπῆ ἢ τί θὰ γράψῃ διὰ νὰ τὸν κτυπήσῃ κατόπιν ἀλύπητα. Ἐνῶ ὁ ἴδιος ἂν ἔλεγε ἢ ἔγραφε τὸ ἴδιο πράγμα, θὰ τὸ ὑπεστήριζε καὶ μὲ πολλές μάλιστα μαρτυρίες τῆς Ἁγίας Γραφῆς καὶ τῶν Πατέρων.

Τὸ κακὸ ποὺ γίνεται εἶναι μεγάλο, διότι ἀφ' ἑνὸς μὲν ἀδικεῖ τὸν πλησίον του, ἀφ' ἑτέρου δὲ καὶ τὸν γκρεμίζει μπροστὰ στὰ μάτια τῶν ἄλλων πιστῶν. Πολλὲς φορὲς σπέρνει καὶ τὴν ἀπιστία στὶς ψυχὰς τῶν ἀδυνάτων, διότι τοὺς σκανδαλίζει.

Δυστυχῶς, μερικοὶ ἀπὸ ἐμᾶς ἔχουμε παράλογες ἀπαιτήσεις ἀπὸ τοὺς ἄλλους. Θέλουμε οἱ ἄλλοι νὰ ἔχουν τὸν ἴδιο μὲ ἐμᾶς πνευματικὸν χαρακτήρα. Ὅταν κάποιος ἄλλος δὲν συμφωνεῖ μὲ τὸν χαρακτήρα μας δηλαδὴ ἢ εἶναι ὀλίγον ἐπεικῆς ἢ ὀλίγον ὀξύς, ἀμέσως βγάσωμε τὸ συμπέρασμα ὅτι δὲν εἶναι πνευματικὸς ἄνθρωπος.

Ὅλοι χρειάζονται εἰς τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν. Ὅλοι οἱ Πατέρες προσέφεραν τὰς ὑπηρεσίας των εἰς Αὐτήν. Καὶ οἱ ἥπιοι χαρακτήρες καὶ οἱ αὐστηροί.

Ὅπως διὰ τὸ σῶμα τοῦ ἀνθρώπου εἶναι ἀπαραίτητα καὶ τὰ γλυκὰ καὶ τὰ ξινὰ καὶ τὰ πικρὰ ἀκόμη ραδίκια (τὸ καθένα ἔχει τὶς δικές του οὐσίες καὶ βιταμίνες), ἔτσι καὶ διὰ τὸ Σῶμα τῆς Ἐκκλησίας. Ὅλοι εἶναι ἀπαραίτητοι. Ὁ ἓνας συμπληρώνει τὸν πνευματικὸν χαρακτήρα τοῦ ἄλλου καὶ ὄλοι εἴμεθα ὑποχρεωμένοι νὰ ἀνεχώμεθα ὄχι μόνον τὸν πνευματικὸν του χαρακτήρα, ἀλλὰ ἀκόμη καὶ τὶς ἀδυναμίες ποὺ ἔχει σὰν ἄνθρωπος.

Καὶ πάλιν ἔρχομαι νὰ ζητήσω εἰλικρινῶς συγγνώμην ἀπὸ ὅλους, διότι ἐτόλμησα νὰ γράψω. Ἐγὼ εἶμαι ἓνας ἀπλὸς μοναχὸς καὶ τὸ ἔργον μου εἶναι νὰ προσπαθῶ, ὅσο μπορῶ, νὰ ἀπεκδύωμαι τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον καὶ νὰ βοηθῶ τοὺς ἄλλους καὶ τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν, μέσω τοῦ Θεοῦ διὰ τῆς προσευχῆς.

Ἀλλὰ ἐπειδὴ ἔφθασαν μέχρι τὸ ἐρημητήριό μου θλιβερές εἰδήσεις διὰ τὴν Ἁγίαν Ὁρθοδοξίαν μας ἐπόνεσα πολὺ καὶ ἐθεώρησα καλὸ νὰ γράψω αὐτὰ ποὺ ἔνοιωθα.

Ἄς ευχηθοῦμε ὄλοι νὰ δώσῃ ὁ Θεὸς τὴν χάριν Του καὶ ὁ καθένας μας ἄς βοηθήσῃ μὲ τὸν τρόπον του διὰ τὴν δόξαν τῆς Ἐκκλησίας μας.

Μὲ πολὺν σεβασμὸν πρὸς ὅλους,

Ἐν Ἁγίῳ Ὅρει τῆ 23ῆ Ἰανουαρίου, 1969

Παῖσιος μοναχός



Ὅσοι τὰ βάζουν μὲ τὴν πίστη δὲν πρέπει νὰ μᾶς τρομάζουν. Δὲν τὰ βάζουν μὲ μᾶς. Τὰ βάζουν μὲ τὸν Θεό. **Κύριος ὁ Θεὸς πολεμήσει ὑπὲρ σοῦ.** (Σοφ. Σειρ. 4:28) Καὶ ὅσοι τὰ βάζουν μὲ τὸν Θεὸ κάνουν γκάφες καὶ αὐτογελοιοποιοῦνται, ἀλλὰ ὁ Θεὸς καὶ τὸ κακὸ τὸ χρησιμοποιεῖ γιὰ τὸ ἀγαθό.

Ἅγιος Παῖσιος ὁ Ἁγιορείτης
«Μαρτυρίες Προσκυνητῶν» Β' τόμος, σελ. 359.

Πικρές Ἀλήθειες

Τοῦ μακαριστοῦ Μητροπολίτου Φλωρινῆς π. Αὐγουστίνου Καντιώτη (+2010).



Αγαπητοί, πρέπει νὰ ὁμολογήσουμε μία πικρὰ ἀλήθεια. Οἱ πιστοὶ ποὺ ἀγωνίζονται γιὰ νὰ κρατήσουν τὴν Ὁρθοδοξία εἶναι ὀλίγοι. Τὸ ρεῦμα τὸ μεγάλο καὶ τὸ ἀπέραντο εἶναι ἐκεῖνο ποὺ σιγὰ-σιγὰ ἔχουν ἀπομακρυνθεῖ ἀπὸ τὴν Ὁρθόδοξο πίστη.

Θὰ πῶ ἓνα λόγο, ποὺ ποτὲ δὲν τὸν εἶπα. Θὰ τὸν πεῖτε ἐγωιστικὸ, ἀλλὰ σὰς δίνω μία ζυγαριά, γιὰ νὰ ζυγίσετε παπᾶδες, δεσποτάδες καὶ ὄλο τὸν κληρὸ καὶ ὄλους τοὺς θεολόγους. Ἡ ζυγαριὰ αὐτὴ ποῖα εἶναι; Ποιὸ εἶναι τὸ γνώρισμα τοῦ παπᾶ; Νὰ μαζεῦει πρόσφορα; Νὰ κάνει ὠραῖες ἀκολουθίες; Νὰ κηρύττει χαριτωμένα καὶ νὰ χρηστολογεῖ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἄμβωνος καὶ νὰ δακρῦζουν τὰ μάτια μερικῶν δεσποιναιρίων γιὰ τοὺς στοχαστικούς του λογισμούς; Ποιὸ εἶναι τὸ γνώρισμα τοῦ παπᾶ καὶ τοῦ δεσπότη σ' αὐτὰ τὰ δύσκολα χρόνια;

Τὸ γνώρισμα τοῦ δεσπότη καὶ τοῦ παπᾶ εἶναι ἡ μαχητικότης, ἡ παρηγοσία. Εἶναι ἐκεῖνο ποὺ εἶπε ὁ ἀπόστολος Παῦλος, ὅτι «Οἱ θέλοντες εὐσεβῶς ζῆν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ διωχθήσονται». (Β' Τιμ. 3:12).

Ἄν δεῖτε παπᾶ, ἂν δεῖτε θεολόγο, ἂν δεῖτε μητροπολίτη καὶ ἀρχιεπίσκοπο ποὺ δὲν διώκεται ἀλλὰ ἀπολαύει τῆς ἀγάπης καὶ τῆς ἐκτιμήσεως ὄλων, τότε ἔχει ἐφαρμογὴ ὁ λόγος τοῦ Χριστοῦ: «Οὐαὶ ὅταν καλῶς ὑμᾶς εἴπωσι πάντες οἱ ἄνθρωποι» (Λουκ. 6:26)· νὰ ξέρετε πολὺ καλὰ ὅτι αὐτὸς δὲν βαδίζει καλῶς.

Ἡ ἂν λέγεται Ὁρθόδοξος καὶ δὲν θέλει νὰ ἀντιμετωπίσει τὸ ρεῦμα, τὴν χιονοστιβάδα αὐτὴ ποὺ κατέρχεται γιὰ νὰ διαλύσει τὸν κόσμο. Ὁ παπᾶς ὁ Ὁρθόδοξος πάει κόντρα μὲ τὰ ρεύματα. Ὁ Μέγας Ἀθανάσιος ἓνας ἦτο, ἀλλὰ κράτησε στοὺς ὦμους του ὡς Ἄτλας ὀλόκληρη τὴν Ὁρθοδοξία. Ὁ Μάρκος ὁ Εὐγενικός ἓνας ἦτο, ἀλλὰ ἐπίσης κράτησε στὰ χέρια τοῦ ὀλόκληρη τὴν Πίστη μας. Ὁ ἱερός Φώτιος τὰ ἴδια.

Ὀλίγοι εἶναι, ἀλλὰ δὲν νικάει μὲ τὰ νούμερα, νικάει μὲ τὴν πίστη. Γιατί ὅσο ἀξίζει ἓνας πιστὸς παπᾶς, ὅσο ἀξίζει ἓνας πιστὸς ἐπίσκοπος, ὅσο ἀξίζει ἓνας πιστὸς ἀρχιεπίσκοπος, ὅσο ἀξίζει ἓνας λαϊκὸς καὶ μία γυναίκα δὲν ἀξίζει ὀλόκληρος ὁ νουνιάς. Λοιπὸν νὰ μὴ πτοοῦμεθα διότι γίνεται αὐτὴ ἡ προδοσία τῆς Πίστεως μᾶς δεξιὰ καὶ ἀριστερά.

Ἐνα σὰς συνιστῶ. Μὴ μοῦ λέτε, ὅτι αὐτὸς εἶναι καλός, αὐτὸς εἶναι θεολόγος σπουδαῖος, αὐτὸς κάνει διαλεκτικὴ, αὐτὸς ἀνοίξε ἀκαδημία τοῦ Πλάτωνος καὶ ἅμα τὸν ἀκούσεις εἶναι θαῦμα!... Μέτρησέ τον ἂν ἔχει μία σπίθα ἀπὸ τὸ Μάρκο τὸν Εὐγενικό, ἂν ἔχει μία σπίθα ἀπὸ τὸν ἱερὸ Φώτιο, ἂν ἔχει μία σπίθα ἀπὸ τὸν Κηρουλάριο, ἂν ἔχει μία σπίθα ἀπὸ τὸν Παπουλάκο (ὁ ἀγράμματος αὐτὸς στάθηκε ἀπέναντι ὀλόκληρου τοῦ κόσμου).

Τὰ λέγω αὐτὰ ἔχων ἐπίγνωση τῆς θέσεώς μου ὡς Ἕλληνας καὶ ὡς ἐπισκόπου ἔχοντος τεράστια εὐθύνας. Εἴμεθα ἔτοιμοι τὰ πάντα νὰ θυσιάσωμεν. Τολμῶ, ἴσως γιὰ τελευταία φορὰ ἀπὸ τοῦ βήματος αὐτοῦ, νὰ πῶ: Ὅσοι ἀγαπᾶτε τὸ Χριστό, ὅσοι ἀγαπᾶτε τὴν Ἐκκλησία, ἔχουμε τὴν Παναγία μαζί μας, ἔχουμε μαζί μὲ ὄλους ἐκείνους ποὺ ἀγωνίστηκαν καὶ ἀγωνίζονται γιὰ τὴν Ὁρθόδοξο Πίστη μας.

Ὅσοι εἶναι μὲ τὸ διάβολο, νὰ κάτσουν κάτω, νὰ κλείσουν τὰ στόματά τους. Διότι διάβολος εἶναι ἡ δειλία των, διάβολος εἶναι ἡ δελεαστικότης των, διάβολος τὰ ἐπιχειρήματά των, ποὺ ζητοῦν νὰ ψυχράνουν μία χούφτα ἀνθρώπων οἱ ὁποῖοι βασανίζονται καὶ τυραννιοῦνται καὶ διώκονται γιὰ τὴν Πίστη τοῦ Χριστοῦ μας.



Εν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις θέλει εἶσθε μῖσος, φθόνος, φιλονεικία, μάχαι εἰς τὰ Κοινόβια μέχρι φόνων, ὡσαύτως καὶ ἐν ταῖς Λαύραις ἰδιορρουθμίαι...

Ἐκ τῆς κακίας τοῦ ἐνὸς πρὸς τὸν ἄλλον καὶ διὰ τὸ ὅτι ἡμελήθησαν οἱ Ἱεροὶ Κανόνες ἀλλὰ καὶ οἱ πνευματικοὶ ἀγῶνες, θέλουν προχειρίζεσθαι ἡγούμενοι καὶ ποιμένες αὐτῶν ἄνδρες ἀδόκιμοι ἀρετῆς, ἄπιστοι ἀπρόκοποι, ἀνωφελεῖς, ἀγροῖκοι, μὴ διακρίνοντες τὴν δεξιάν ὁδὸν ἐκ τῆς ἀριστερᾶς, ἀμελεῖς καὶ ἀσυντελεῖς, φιλομέριμοι, καὶ τὰς διανομίας ἀναιδῶς μεταχειριζόμενοι, τὰ πρωτεῖα μὲ δῶρα ἀρπάζοντες καὶ ἐπεμβαίνοντες εἰς τὴν ἡγουμένην μὴ γινώσκοντες κατηχεῖν καὶ νοθετεῖν τὸ ποίμνιον τῆς ἀδελφότητος καὶ μὴ γνωρίζοντες ὅτι εἶναι αὐτοὶ τύπος καὶ παράδειγμα ὠφελείας εἰς τοὺς ἀκολουθοῦντας τὴν ἀρετὴν καὶ μὴ νοοῦντες ὅτι αὐτοὶ θὰ δώσωσιν λόγο τῷ Θεῷ ἐν Ἡμέρᾳ Κρίσεως ὑπὲρ τοῦ ποιμνίου αὐτῶν.

Ἐκ δὲ τῆς τοιαύτης ἀμελείας καὶ καταφρονήσεως τῶν ποιμένων ἀπολοῦνται. Μέλλουσιν δὲ κολάζεσθαι οὐ μόνον οἱ ἀμελεῖς καὶ ῥάθυμοι, ἀλλὰ καὶ οἱ ἐγκρατεῖς καὶ ἐνάρετοι ἀδελφοί.

Ἀββᾶ Μωϋσέως τοῦ Αἰθίοπος
«Λειμωνάριον τὸ Παλαιὸν», σελ. 78-79

A PROPHECY OF FUTURE LAWLESSNESS

By St. Anatoly the Younger (+1922) [Optina Monastery].

Heretics will seize power over the Church. And from that heresies will spread everywhere and deceive many people. The enemy of the human race will act with cunning in order to draw into heresy, if possible, even the elect.

He will not begin by crudely rejecting the dogmas of the Holy Trinity, the divinity of Jesus Christ and the virtue of the Theotokos, but he will begin imperceptibly to distort the teachings and statutes of the Church and their very spirit, handed down to us by the Holy Fathers through the Holy Spirit.

Few will notice these wiles of the enemy, only those more experienced in the spiritual life. Heretics will seize power over the Church and will place their servants everywhere; the pious will be regarded with contempt. He (the Lord) said, by their fruits ye shall know them, and so, by their fruits, as well as by the actions of the heretics, strive to distinguish them from the true pastors.

These are spiritual thieves, plundering the spiritual flock, and they will enter the sheepfold (the Church), climbing up some other way, using force and trampling upon the divine statutes. The Lord calls them robbers (cf. Jn 10:1). Indeed, their first task will be the persecution of the true pastors, their imprisonment and exile, for without this it will be impossible for them to plunder the sheep.

Therefore, my son, when you see the violation of patristic tradition and the divine order in the Church, the order established by God, know that the heretics have already appeared, although for the time being they may conceal their impiety, or they will distort the Divine Faith imperceptibly, in order to succeed better in seducing and enticing the inexperienced into the net.

The persecution will be directed against not only pastors but against all servants of God, for all those ruled by heresy will not endure piety. Recognize these wolves in sheep's clothing by their proud dispositions and love of power. They will be slanderers, traitors, everywhere sowing enmity and malice; therefore the Lord said that by their fruits you will know them. True servants of God are humble, love their neighbor and are obedient to the Church.

Monastics will be greatly oppressed by the heretics and monastic life will be scorned. Monasteries will become scarce, the number of monastics will decline, and those who remain will endure violence. These haters of monastic life, however, having only the appearance of piety, will strive to attract the monks to their side promising them protection and worldly goods, and threatening those who oppose them with expulsion.

These threats will cause great despair among the fainthearted, but you, my son, rejoice that you have lived until that time, for then the faithful who have not shown any other virtues, will receive crowns merely for standing firm in the faith, according to the word of the Lord (cf. Mt 10:32).

Fear the Lord, my son. Fear to lose the crown prepared (for you), fear to be cast by Christ into the outer darkness and eternal torment. Stand bravely in the faith, and if necessary, endure persecution and other sorrows, for the Lord will be with you... and the holy martyrs and confessors, they will look upon you and your struggle with joy.

But woe to the monks in those days who will be bound with possessions and riches, who because of love of peace will be ready to submit to the heretics. They will lull to sleep their conscience, saying, "We are preserving and saving the monastery and the Lord will forgive us." The unfortunate and blind ones do not at all consider that through heresy the demons will enter the monastery and then it will no longer be a holy monastery, but merely walls from which grace will depart.

God, however, is mightier than the enemy, and He will never leave His servants. True Christians will remain until the end of this age, only they will choose to live in secluded, deserted places. Do not fear sorrows, rather fear pernicious heresy, for it strips us of grace and separates us from Christ. This is why the Lord commanded us to consider the heretic as a pagan and a publican.

And so my son, strengthen yourself in the grace of Jesus Christ. Hasten to confess the faith, to endure suffering as a good soldier of Jesus Christ (cf. 2 Tim 2:13), Who has said, *Be faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.* (Rev 2:10). To Him, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be honor, glory, and dominion unto the ages of ages. Amen.



The suffering and misfortune that the Lord allows to fall on the righteous is not the work of evil but a medicine, both for the righteous themselves and for those around them who understand that their suffering is sent from God for their good. The suffering that comes from the attacks of evil spirits on man, or as a consequence of sin, is evil. But the suffering that God allows to fall on men, in order to cleanse them completely from sin, pluck them out from under the devil's tyranny and bring them close to Himself - this purifying suffering neither comes from evil or is in itself evil, but is from God and for the good of men. *It is good for me that I have been in trouble, that I may learn Thy statutes* (Pss 118:71), says the discerning King David.

St. Nikolai Velimirovich

ST. JOSEPH THE HESYCHAST

By Elder Ephraim of Philotheou and Arizona, from "My Elder: Joseph the Hesychast and Cave-dweller," *Saint Anthony's Greek Orthodox Monastery* (2013), pp. 663-671.

His Legacy

Our Holy Elder Joseph was a poor hermit who lived in caves far from society, yet he became one of the Church's most influential figures of the twentieth century by kindling a revival of the Jesus prayer—a prayer he recommended for both monastics and laymen. He was not interested in cleaning *the outside of the cup* (cf. Mt 23:25 & Lk 11:39) but worked at the internal cleansing of his heart. Geronda ploughed deeply with his labors and *ascesis*. He sowed plentifully with unceasing prayer and *theoria*. He watered abundantly through streams of sweat and floods of tears. And he didn't despair waiting for the harvest, but patiently endured all his internal and external trials.

However, the fruit of his labors appeared primarily after his repose. *Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.* (Jn 12:24). In other words, after he died his labors began to blossom. What was this blossoming? His spiritual children. Geronda tilled, sowed, and watered, and we, his children, have entered into his labors. We are merely harvesting the fruits of that heavenly man. His disciples inherited abundant grace, which attracted many people to them.

When Geronda went to the Holy Mountain in 1921, there were 5,500 monks there. When he reposed in 1959, there were only half as many. Not only was the population decreasing dramatically, but also the average age was significantly higher. In other words, the few monks remaining were decrepit old men for the most part. Young monks were not coming, and the old ones were dying off. Thus in 1971, there were only 1,145 monks left—a mere fifth of what the population had been just fifty years earlier. The situation had become so alarming that many people thought that monasticism would soon disappear from the Holy Mountain.

Things started turning around when Geronda's disciples began repopulating the monasteries of the Holy Mountain. Many well-educated young men, yearning for noetic prayer, gathered around Geronda's disciples and formed large brotherhoods. Because of the large size and good

reputation of these brotherhoods, they were asked to move into the monasteries, which had only a few old monks living in them. Thus the brotherhood of Papa-Haralambos repopulated Dionysiou Monastery, the brotherhood of Fr. Joseph the Cypriot repopulated Vatopedi Monastery, and my disciples repopulated the monasteries of Philotheou, Xeropotamou, Konstamonitou, and Karakallou. [Note: Elder Ephraim was also asked by the Governing Council of the Holy Mountain to repopulate the monastery of the Great Lavra, but he declined.] Moreover, Geronda's disciples have repopulated and established dozens of women's monasteries with hundreds of monastics throughout Greece, Cyprus, the United States, and Canada. Meanwhile, the laymen who are grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren of "Pappou" Joseph number in the thousands.

What is even more amazing is that Geronda himself foresaw this renewal. Once, when we were still at the Small Skete of St. Anne, a layman from Ouranoupolis, named John Bitsios, came to visit him. He loved Geronda very much, because Geronda had helped him. After speaking briefly with Geronda, he saw his three disciples working (Fr. Joseph the Cypriot, Papa-Haralambos, and me) and asked: "How nice! Geronda, are these young monks your disciples?"

Geronda paused for a moment. Then he smiled and replied with a twinkle in his eye: "You see these young monks? They will take over the Holy Mountain! He foresaw our future, and that is why he told us to separate after his death so that each

one of us could form our own large brotherhood. [Note: Elder Sophrony, who came to the Holy Mountain a decade after Elder Joseph did, witnessed the same decline and wrote: "Noetic work, which constitutes the core of genuine monastic life, is now at an extreme low."].

Furthermore, there has also been a spiritual reawakening due to Elder Joseph. In his days, a spiritual drought prevailed; no one was interested in noetic prayer. Nowadays, though, so many people come to us, his disciples, and say: "We read the letters of Elder Joseph and were deeply moved. Tell us about noetic prayer. Teach us how to pray." Thus, Geronda continues to inspire people around the world through his letters that have been translated into almost a dozen different languages.

I can say authoritatively that if it weren't for Geronda, almost no one on the Holy Mountain today would be oc-



cupying himself with noetic prayer. As my spiritual brother, Fr. Joseph the Cypriot, said:

The spiritual renewal on the Holy Mountain—may my fellow Athonites allow me to put it like this—is largely due to Geronda. Back then, Mount Athos was decaying, and the inner spiritual work of monasticism, which constitutes genuine theology, was neglected. If this spiritual work is flourishing on the Holy Mountain, it is primarily due to Elder Joseph the Hesychast and Cave-dweller, whose immense impetus brought back to the Athonite environment the true meaning and continuation of the theology of St. Gregory Palamas.

Professor Georgios Mantzaridis also realized the significant impact of Geronda on Athonite monasticism and wrote:

Elder Joseph was a simple and humble monk who, through his austere asceticism and silence, left traces of his presence very clearly at the Holy Mountain. If we have a new flowering of Athonite monasticism today, this is due to a certain extent to Elder Joseph the Hesychast.

Today many writings of the holy Fathers about noetic prayer have been published, and many monastics and laymen thirst for it. Unfortunately, though, now that we have this flowering of interest in noetic prayer, Geronda is gone. If Geronda were alive now, he would be swarmed by pilgrims! This is because he was the only worker of noetic prayer and because many more pilgrims visit the Holy Mountain nowadays. But Geronda is gone, and no one has reached his level. Who, today, can keep vigil in prayer all night every night, weeping not for just himself but for the entire world? Who can do his kind of *asceticism*? Who can pray and weep as he did?

One day when we were still at the Small Skete of St. Anne, Geronda came out of his cell after his vigil. I don't know what lofty state of grace he had just experienced, but he looked up to the sky, raised his arms up in the air; and exclaimed with tears running down his face: "Oh, my dear God! There is so much treasure; there are so many riches, but there is no one to inherit them! All I have is two young monks."

At the time, I was just an infant in terms of my spiritual growth, and I couldn't fathom or grasp the deep meaning of what Geronda was saying. But now I understand. After all, he would say the Jesus prayer noetically for seven or eight hours while keeping his nous within his heart. Can you imagine how much grace of the Holy Spirit, how much divine illumination, how much Uncreated Light he experienced?

What were the riches he was talking about? The riches of the grace of the Holy Spirit. He once described these riches as follows:

The waves of revelations amaze my mind; my tongue grows numb and cannot speak, unable to utter the

words in time. The noetic siphons gush forth dew in torrents—however, there is but little soil in our days. The riches of our Lord are many, but unfortunately there are few heirs. To inherit them requires a bloody struggle, but here there is only laziness. Thus I am compelled to open the ducts unto the world; for there is hope that pure souls will receive the word, and then I shall receive the reward of love. So listen to my words, lend me your ears.

Even though for years Geronda could not find heirs for his riches, later in life he said to Gero-Arsenius:

Arsenius, now I can be at rest and say to the Lord: *Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.* (Lk 2:29). We lived such a hard life together; we even shed blood to find God within. Yet my constant grievance all these years was this: Many people spent time with us; benefitted, and left, unable, however, to follow our spiritual work. I thought that I would depart with this grievance. But look; now in my old age God brought these young monks. Mark my words: The entire Holy Mountain will rely on these monks.

His Sanctity

Elder Joseph is an exceptional phenomenon in these contemporary days of spiritual poverty, and his life emits the fragrance of sanctity. The providence of God arranges that there will be such heroes in every generation so that there will always be inspiring examples. Although reading the lives of saints who lived centuries ago is also a source of inspiration, having a contemporary example is much more inspiring.

People sometimes wonder: "Is it possible to live the gospel in modern times? Is it really possible today to live a lofty spiritual life?" They sometimes think that the answer to these questions is "no," and they become discouraged. After all, times are constantly changing, and living a pure life is becoming more and more difficult. But thanks to God's providence, spiritual giants like Elder Joseph confirm that indeed *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.* (Heb 13:8).

Papa-Ephraim of Katounakia had this to say about Geronda:

Elder Joseph was a spiritual giant and a teacher of noetic prayer taught by God. His love for our dear Panagia was unmatched. For her sake he patiently endured everything, and it was from her that he received the great charisma of prayer of the heart. He was counted worthy of seeing her many times in his temporal but angelic life. Alas! Where are people like him nowadays to tell you heavenly words full of grace? His pure heart said the prayer without ceasing: *Lord Jesus Christ; have mercy on me,* and the Holy Spirit was upon his head.

I believe that Elder Joseph reached higher levels than St. Silouan the Athonite—much higher, in fact.

Nowadays there are no figures like him anymore; he was the last one.

People have told me to write to the Ecumenical Patriarchate that Elder Joseph was a saint. I told them, “We shall not do that. God will do that, through the prayers of holy Elder Joseph.” Other people will recommend that the Church examine whether these signs of sanctity are indeed divine signs that he was a saint and should be canonized and celebrated. We won’t make this suggestion ourselves, since they might consider us biased as his spiritual children.

Nevertheless, our conscience tells us that he is a saint. Not only does our conscience say this, but so does the conscience of pious people throughout the world. This is manifest in the faith with which they invoke his prayers, as well as in the demand for his written counsels. It can also be seen in the numerous icons of him that people everywhere have painted. My spiritual brother, Fr. Joseph the Cypriot, has already prepared a service for our *Venerable and God-bearing Father, Joseph the Hesychast*.

Likewise, several others have also composed *troparia* for him.

In Heaven

Now that Geronda is up in Heaven with the angels, he sees things very clearly. He sees the beauty of heaven that surpasses description, and he knows what hell is. He is probably saying, “I wonder what my spiritual grandchildren are doing?” and he is looking down to see. He was never idle in this life, so he is not about to be idle now. He comes and observes how we are working out our salvation. He provides for us; he helps us; he prays for us; he visits our monasteries; and he is constantly interceding with God so that we do not fail. That is why the demons scream: “Joseph turned into a ghost and goes to the monasteries to help them!”

He entreats God to take special care of us because he knows that we don’t have his *asceticism* and aren’t at his spiritual level. He sees the dangers we face; he sees our mistakes; he sees our passions. He sees everything and begs God’s mercy for us.

For his prayers to be more effective, all we need is reverence towards this great man. He left this life, yet he is alive and grants us life and grace by visiting us and delivering us—without our seeing him—from many evils that the demons want to inflict on us. His prayers and his presence rescue us miraculously from great harm, even though we don’t realize where this help comes from. For example, once in my sleep I saw three demons disguised as monks, and they were approaching me in order to harm me. One of them was about to kill me, but then Geronda stepped in front and drove them away. When I woke up, I said to myself, “This is Geronda’s protection.”

We are blessed to have such a contemporary intercessor in Heaven. It is a great honor for us, a tremendous benefaction from God. We are unworthy of this, and especially I, who

knew him first-hand. God counted me worthy of burying him. It is a great blessing for a disciple to be counted worthy of burying his elder, because in this manner he becomes his successor. It is an honor for us to be blessed to have a patristic inheritance from this man.

Now Geronda is in Heaven, in the sea of God’s Love, and he is enjoying the reward of the labors of his ascetical life and is receiving the consolation for his tears. He shed rivers of tears not just for his own sins but also for the sins of many people. He also shed tears of immense and unbounded love for God our Father.

† † †

So this is my portrayal of my blessed elder. Geronda told us many things about his life so that we would ponder them and continually benefit from them. He left these true stories to us as a spiritual inheritance from his labors, and now I have passed them on to you. We must now take all these examples from his life and make them our own as much as we can. We must try to resemble him in his love for God and man, and in his *asceticism*—primarily in terms of his spiritual *asceticism*: through vigil, prayer, and chastity with a spiritually enlightened mind. For since we have a spiritual kinship with him, we have a sacred duty to follow in his footsteps as much as we can. Geronda will be delighted if we try to imitate him; even in a plain and simple manner.

We firmly believe that he has great boldness before God. God took him so that he would intercede for us and prepare a place for us. Let us invoke his prayers. Let us entreat him to make us, too, experience a small part of the spiritual states he had when he was in this life. May we also know God as he knew Him. For this is our goal in life: to know God and to be united with Him. It’s not just a matter of believing in Him the way we do now, but we need to see Him in another way—to see Him through the lens that only people who have contact with Him can.

May Geronda’s intercessions help us to struggle alongside him and have a little bit of his bravery and peace of conscience so that we may depart from this life to the next life painlessly and peacefully. He is waiting for us!



Cry out the prayer without ceasing. May God grant you a blessed beginning! May it not abandon you, or rather, may you not abandon the prayer—the life of the soul, the breath of the heart, the sweet-scented springtime which creates a spiritual spring in the struggling soul.

My children, prayer and humility are the all-powerful weapons which we must keep continuously in our hands with sleepless attentiveness, because these, with God’s help, will give us the victory against the demons.

**From “Counsels from the Holy Mountain”
The Letters and Homilies of Elder Ephraim**

GLORIFYING CHURCH SCHISM

By Fr. Zechariah Lynch; Fr Zechariah is an Orthodox priest in Pueblo, Colorado, at the Archangel Michael Orthodox Church.

*“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem ...” or we may now lament,
“O Constantinople, Constantinople!”*

Once you were a defender of true Orthodoxy, and now you have begun to promote worldly political agendas. Once you preached the heavenly homeland, and now you are grasping at earthly power!

Rise up! Not in defense of your own rights and powers but rather in the humble defense of Truth and Orthodoxy. Then we will gladly follow you!

My Grandmother is a full blooded Greek. My lineage on this side goes back to Cappadocia where my ancestors lived for ages (they left during the exchange of populace). It is a great encouragement to know that many Greeks (including my ancestors) stood like an anvil in Holy Orthodoxy under the relentless hammer of Turkish Muslim rule.

Did they endure persecution, the seizure of property, and even death for the Ecumenical Throne of Constantinople? Or was it rather for the Truth of Holy Orthodoxy? Yes, ultimately, it was for love of Christ Jesus and His Church, Orthodoxy, that they endured.

Orthodox Greeks, do you not see your fellow Orthodox brothers and sisters in Ukraine suffering valiantly, as once did your ancestors? They have been persecuted by the Government forces, heretics, and radical nationalists. They have lost church buildings, they have been forced out of homes, they have been beaten—all for the same Holy Truth for which your ancestors stood. Now, will you not stand with your Orthodox brethren? Or will your own ancestors condemn you and your silence? Does not the blood of Christ Jesus in Holy Communion bind all Orthodox together in a manner greater than ethnic bloodlines (as great as they may be)? Are we not all of the “Orthodox race” through holy baptism?

With great grief and sadness I read the news that the Ecumenical Patriarchate (EP) intends to give the “Athenagoras human rights” award to the schismatic and false “metropolitan” Epiphany of the illegitimate “orthodox church of Ukraine.” This act is endorsed by the Greek Archdiocese of America and its Hierarch, Archbishop Elpidophoros, together with a Jesuit like group called the “Archons.”

It seems now that all one has to do is “support the Ecumenical Patriarch” (with no questions asked) and one is a human rights hero (does the EP now stand for all of humanity too?).

I have no ill will towards the EP but the EP is not Orthodoxy, nor is it the sole standard thereof, nor a “first without equals.” The EP is called, as every Patriarchate and every Bishopric, to uphold the standard of Orthodoxy. This

standard is not directly equated with any one Patriarch or Bishop. Every Patriarch, Bishop, Priest, Monk, and Laymen is subject to the Gospel and Holy Orthodoxy. (Let one recall the numerous times that the EP, and other Patriarchates, have espoused heretical teaching.) The EP is currently promoting a false “church” as a true one; this action is both erroneous and detrimental to the True Church.

In a number of previous articles, I have outlined how nefarious the false church in Ukraine is.

You shall know them by their fruits, says our Lord (Mt 7:16). The testimony of the fruit of the false church in Ukraine, which is supported by the EP, is that it is not Christian. Its “hierarchs” are indeed wolves in sheep’s clothing, mercenaries in pastoral garb.

Does the EP have the authority to override the Gospel? Does it have the power to turn stones into children of Israel? It does not. (Only true repentance can truly change a man by grace.)

Why is a lie being promoted as truth? The claim is that “In Ukraine he (Mr. Epiphany) has already provided the Solomon-like wisdom that was needed to reunify the Church, return to Eucharistic unity, and establish it as an integral member of the group of autocephalous Orthodox Churches worldwide.”

This is a preposterous and outright deceptive claim; every point in it is false. The facts are that Epiphany (and those under him) has caused greater division and promoted persecutions; he has acted in an altogether unchristian manner. May we now be heathen in vestments as long as we work “as a defender of the religious freedoms of the Ecumenical Patriarchate ...”? What does it say of such “freedoms” when it enlists false christians to defend it?

Has the EP replaced Christ the Lord as the standard of Holy Orthodoxy and the Head of the Church? Has the goal of maintaining the perceived honor and prestige of the EP replaced the true Christian vocation of being a humble servant of Christ the Lord and His Church?

A dispute also arose among the disciples as to which of them ... was the greatest. And Jesus said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you. Rather, let the greatest among you become the youngest, and the leader as one who serves.” (Lk 22:24-26).

The giving of this “award” to the false “Metropolitan” Epiphany is an absolute disgrace and travesty. How can an uncanonical “Bishop” with an illegitimate “ordination” who heads a “church” that actively persecutes (with violent acts) the long-standing true and canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church be given a “human rights” award from an Orthodox Patriarch?

The Scripture says, *If anyone says “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother*

whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. (1 Jn 4:20).

Are we so in love with our own selves that the Scriptures are no longer relevant? Are we simply going to praise white-washed tombs because they serve worldly political agendas and aggrandizement? Will we be silent as true Christians suffer and false ones are exalted? Woe to us if we lose our salt, for we will be trampled underfoot even in our pretty vestments. Woe to us when we call evil good. And such an action is calling that which is evil—schism, division, and persecution—good. Or as another priest has already said, “somehow this looks completely demonic.”

Those that promote and agree with these actions are in fact participators in them. They themselves are also facilitators of the persecution of the True Church in Ukraine; their hands are also stained with blood. The entering into unity with a schismatic group means that there is a communing of the same spirit.

The glorifying of schismatics is heresy.

Will other Orthodox Hierarchs (around the world, but most of all in America where the award is to be given) speak against this new machination of the EP? Will we stand with the true Hierarchy of Ukraine, His Beatitude, Metropolitan Onufry? Will Orthodox Greeks honor their laudable ancestry and heritage by speaking out in defense of their true Orthodox brethren in Ukraine? Or will they become like new Turks: participators in the active persecution of fellow Orthodox?



With the “rationale” for accepting the Tomos of “Autocephaly” of the Schismatic Church of Ukraine, we are in danger of possibly also being led in the future to the sacramental acceptance of Papism and other heresies without the fundamental conditions of repentance and the renunciation of their dogmatic delusions, something that Ecumenism attempts today, not only in theory but already in practice. So we wonder, essentially, whether the spiritual institutions within our Church have begun to “function” devoid of their spiritual foundation. We wonder whether in recent decades a “new ethos” has been introduced with the hidden aspiration to become the habitual ethos also in customary law, which will undermine the Canonical Tradition of the Church. Historically, we know that when such a mentality was consolidated in the West, the Western Church was led to Papism—with all its dogmatic deviations—and ended up cut off from the One and only Church.

Dr. Demetrios Tselengidis

Professor of Dogmatic Theology at the University of Thessaloniki, from his letter to the Holy Synod of Greece about the Ukrainian Schismatic Church

A PRAYER OF REPENTANCE

By Rev. Joe Wright.

This prayer burst into the public consciousness back in January of 1996, when the Rev. Joe Wright, senior pastor of the 2,500-member Central Christian Church in Wichita, was invited to deliver the opening prayer at a session of the Kansas House of Representatives. On that occasion he offered the following “Prayer of Repentance:”

Heavenly Father, we come before you today to ask your forgiveness and seek your direction and guidance.

We know your Word says, “Woe to those who call evil good,” but that’s exactly what we’ve done.

We have lost our spiritual equilibrium and inverted our values.

We confess that we have ridiculed the absolute truth of your Word and called it moral pluralism.

We have worshipped other gods and called it multiculturalism.

We have endorsed perversion and called it an alternative life-style.

We have exploited the poor and called it the lottery.

We have neglected the needy and called it self-preservation.

We have rewarded laziness and called it welfare.

We have killed our unborn and called it choice.

We have shot abortionists and called it justifiable.

We have neglected to discipline our children and called it building esteem.

We have abused power and called it political savvy.

We have coveted our neighbors’ possessions and called it ambition.

We have polluted the air with profanity and pornography and called it freedom of expression.

We have ridiculed the time-honored values of our forefathers and called it enlightenment.

Search us O God and know our hearts today; try us and see if there be some wicked way in us; cleanse us from every sin and set us free.

Guide and bless these men and women who have been sent here by the people of Kansas, and who have been ordained by you, to govern this great state.

Grant them your wisdom to rule and may their decisions direct us to the center of your will. I ask it in the name of your son, the living savior, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Rev. Wright read the prayer at the opening of the legislature on January 23rd, 1996 and then departed, unaware of the ruckus he had created until his church secretary called him on his car phone to ask him “what he had done.” His prayer had apparently “offended” a great number of House Democrats, some of whom characterized his prayer as a “message of intolerance” and one that “reflects extreme and radical views.”

This took place in 1996. One cannot help but wonder: what would they do or say nowadays?

MODERN MAN'S SECULAR SPIRIT AND ATHONITE HOLINESS

By St. Paisios the Athonite, excerpt from "Athonite Fathers and Athonite Matters," a concise recount of many fathers of Mount Athos who were holy people, who were alive (or recently reposed) around the time when Elder Paisios was beginning his monastic journey (more specifically, probably during the 1950s and 1960s).

I am much troubled by my conscience for not having kept detailed notes about the virtuous fathers who lived in these latter days, and about whom I was told by devout elders when I was a mere beginner as a monk. As I am also troubled at my great negligence for not retaining, even in my memory, all the divine events which these holy elders experienced and told me about in their simplicity, to help me spiritually.

The fathers of those days had great faith and simplicity. Although most of them were basically illiterate, they, nevertheless, received constant divine enlightenment because of their humility and zeal for spiritual combat. While, in our own days, knowledge has increased, unfortunately, logic has shaken people's faith from the foundations and filled their souls with questions and doubts. So, it is only natural that we should be deprived of miracles, because miracles are experienced and cannot be explained by logic.

This terribly secular spirit which prevails in modern man, who has turned his entire attention towards living better, with greater ease and less effort, has, unfortunately, affected most spiritual people; they, too, are also attempting to become saints with less effort—but it can never happen, because *the saints gave blood and received spirit*. While we rejoice now at the great shift towards the holy fathers and monasticism, and admire the worthy young people who dedicate themselves with high ideals, at the same time, we hurt because we see all this good material not finding the appropriate spiritual leaven; hence, this spiritual dough does not rise and ends up like unleavened bread.

In the old days, even only twenty years ago, simplicity still abounded in the *Garden of the Mother of God*. The fragrance of simplicity of the fathers drew God-fearing people like bees and nourished them, while, they, in turn, transmitted this spiritual blessing to others for their benefit. Wherever you went, very simple stories of miracles and heavenly events were heard, because the fathers considered them perfectly natural.

Living in this spiritual atmosphere of grace, it never occurred to you to doubt what you heard, because you were living part of it yourself. Neither would it ever occur to you to make notes of these heavenly events, nor retain them in your memory for coming generations, because you thought that this patristic way of living would continue. How could anyone have known that in a few years most people would become deformed by too much education—since they are being taught in the spirit of atheism and not in that of God,

which can sanctify external education, too—and faithlessness will reach such a point that miracles will be considered fairy-stories from bygone days? Naturally, when the doctor is an atheist, however many tests he performs on a saint with his scientific equipment (X-rays and so on), he will not be able to discern the grace of God. Whereas if he, too, has holiness in him, he will see divine grace radiating.

To give a more vivid picture of grace so that readers can better understand the patristic spirit that reigned a few years ago, I felt it would be a good thing to refer to cases of simple elders of that time as living examples.

When I was a beginner at the Monastery of Esphigmenou, I was told by the God-fearing Elder Dorotheos that an elder of great simplicity used to come to help at the monastery infirmary. He thought that the Ascension, the feast which the monastery celebrates, was a great saint, like Saint Barbara, and when he prayed with his *komboskini* he used to say *Saint of God, intercede for us!* One day, a sickly brother had arrived at the infirmary and since there wasn't any nutritious food there, the elder hurried down the steps leading to the cellar, stretched his hand out of a window overlooking the sea and said, *Saint Ascension, please give me a little fish for the brother*. What a miracle! A large fish leapt out into his hand. He took it quite naturally, as if nothing had happened, and happily went off to prepare it so as to strengthen the brother.

The same elder told me of another father (Pachomios, I think), who had gone to *Kapsala* to live in stricter *ascesis* and had reached great spiritual heights. One day, one of the fathers of the monastery put aside two fish which he cleaned, in order to go and see him and offer them to him as a blessing. As he was cleaning them, however, a raven suddenly snatched up one of the fish and took it to Father Pachomios in *Kapsala* (a distance of five and a half hours on foot). Father Pachomios had received information from God about the brother's visit and just as he was wondering what to treat him to, the raven dropped the fish. Later, when the brother came and heard about this, he also glorified God, Who, in our own times, also feeds His people through a raven, as He did the Prophet Elijah.

A few years ago, there lived an elder, Fr. Charalambos, at the Monastery of Koutloumousiou. He was very simple but also a man of "great violence," not only in his spiritual duties, but also in his monastic tasks. A most willing man in all things, Father Charalambos would have done most jobs, because in his day only a few old fathers remained in the monastery. He was also assigned at the Library, but was removed from this task because he would never lock the door. He used to say: "Let people read the books." It never even occurred to him that there are also people who steal books. He was of great purity and simplicity.

Apart from his many monastic tasks, he even planted trees as well for future generations, because he believed that the

Monastery of Koutloumousiou would once again be filled with monks. While his hands were forever at work for others, his mind and heart were working at his spiritual duties, through the unceasing prayer *Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon me*. He was always first for the services. He actually directed one of the choirs which are on either side of the church. And when the canonarch was going across to the other choir to intone to them, Father Charalambos would say the Jesus Prayer very rapidly, so as not to interrupt his unceasing prayer.

And so he lived, very hard-working and very spiritual, without ever letting up. Unfortunately, a terrible dose of flu knocked him off his feet, and the doctor told the fathers not to leave his side, because his life would soon end. Father Charalambos heard him from under the bedclothes and answered: What are you talking about? I am not dying till Pascha comes so I can say *Christ is Risen*.

Indeed, about two months went by and Pascha came. He said Christ is risen, received Communion and then rested in peace. The simple elder, so full of *philotimo*, had really become a child of God and together with God had arranged the date of his death.

In the Skete of Iveron, Elder Nicholas of the Markiani Brotherhood told me about a father who also had childlike simplicity; once, when their well had dried up, he let down an icon of Saint Nicholas into the dry shaft with the rope tied to the ring and said: "Saint Nicholas, you come up together with the water, if you want me to light the icon lamp for you; you can do it. You see, so many people come and we don't even have some cold water to give them."

What a miracle! The water gradually began to rise and the icon of the saint floated on the top until he was able to hold it in his hands, kiss it reverently and take it into the church. (This happened some fifty years ago.)

In the same skete, a little higher up from this hut, there is the Cell of the Holy Apostles, where two brothers now live. Elder Pachomios also belonged to this brotherhood; one could clearly detect the holiness radiating on his face. The elder was very simple and completely illiterate but full of grace. When he came to the central church of the skete for the service on feast days, he never sat on a *stasidi*, but always remained standing, saying the Jesus Prayer, even during all-night vigils. Whenever anyone asked him what point had been reached in the service, he would reply: "The Psalters, the fathers are reading the Psalters."

He called everything Psalters. He knew absolutely nothing about chanting, apart from Christ is Risen, which he chanted at Pascha. He was always willing to do the will of others, without having any will of his own.

No matter how many worries you had, you needed only to look at Father Pachomios and they would go away. Everyone loved him, even the snakes, which trusted him and didn't slither off when they saw him. There were a lot of snakes in the area

around the hut, because there was water there. The other two fathers were very afraid of the snakes, but Father Pachomios would go near them with a smile, pick them up and put them outside the fence.

One day, when he was hurrying to the hut of the Markiani Brotherhood, he came across a large snake in his path. He wrapped it round his waist like a belt, so that he could finish what he had to do first and then put it outside their grounds. Father James took fright at the very sight of it, which made Father Pachomios wonder.

He later told me: "I don't know why they are afraid of snakes. There is our own Father Andrew, who is even afraid of scorpions! I just scoop them up in the palms of my hands from the walls and throw them outside the hut. Now that my hands tremble so much with Parkinson's disease I just drag the big snakes outside."

I asked the elder: "Why don't the snakes bite you, Father Pachomios?"

He answered: "Christ writes on a piece of paper somewhere that if you have (the) Faith, you can pick up snakes and scorpions and they will not harm you."

This saintly elder had rested in the Lord on October 22, 1967, one year before Elder Tychon passed away. I shall write later about him, as well as about other righteous fathers who strove with *philotimo* in the Garden of Our Most Holy Lady and were purified with the aid of the Good Mother, the Pure Virgin. They became soldiers of Christ, conquered their passions, and exterminated the enemy, the devil. These "Commandos" of our Church have been crowned by Christ with an incorruptible crown.

I knew many of them at first hand, but unfortunately have not imitated them, which is why I am now so far behind them. I wish with all my heart that those who read about their godly exploits will imitate them and also beg them to pray for me, wretched Paisios.



Let no one deceive you, brother: without holiness, as the Apostle says, no one can see God (cf. Heb 12:14). For the Lord, who is more than holy and beyond all purity, will not appear to an impure person. Just as he who loves father or mother, daughter or son (cf. Mt 10:37) more than the Lord is unworthy of Him, so is he who loves anything transient and material. Even more unworthy is the person who chooses foul and fetid sin in preference to love for the Lord; for God rejects whoever does not repudiate all filthiness: *Corruption does not inherit incorruption*. (1 Cor. 15:50).

St. Theognostos

"The Philokalia," vol. 2; Faber and Faber, pg. 375

ON THE ECUMENIST POST-PATRISTIC THEOLOGY

By Elder Athanasios Mitilinaios (+2006), from one of his homilies in November 1982, translated from Greek by Constantine Zalalas. This article has been circulated in many websites and periodicals in Greece; many have commented on the elder's prophetic gift based on this.

The Antichrist will officially declare the commencement of a new age on earth which will succeed the Christian age possibly creating a third covenant. We have the Old Testament, the New Testament, and he will most likely create a third testament. This *cacodox* dogma about a third covenant is very old. Saint Gregory the Theologian even refers to this. Do not let this surprise you because it is nothing more than what we are witnessing in our days.

What is the nature of this third covenant, this third testament? It is the widespread perception, cultivated excessively in our days about an antiquated Christianity. This perception flourishes among secular Christian circles and worldly people with an ecumenist mentality. These secular and ecumenist church leaders claim that traditional Christianity is antiquated and bankrupt. It does not offer anything to the heart of the modern man. It needs to be modified. The old traditional Christianity is somehow powerless. Therefore, according to these modern Christian minds it is necessary to create a new dimension and in reality, a third covenant.

As we mentioned, this state already exists. Besides, what else did the Prophet Daniel mean when he wrote, *He will think to change times and law. He will alter the law of God.* This is the third covenant. The Church Fathers and the Saints of the Church will be out of season and considered very old fashioned. In much sadness, we may ask, could the Antichrist be reigning in Christian nations as we are speaking? Saint John Chrysostom refers to something to this effect. This does not refer to the final Antichrist because Saint Cyril of Jerusalem already said, God forbid! The secular Christian nations will serve as agents and servants of the Antichrist.

In Orthodox Christian lands, we are not immune to heretical ecumenist clergy hidden behind high chairs. They can be bishops, patriarchs, archimandrites, and members of the Masonic Lodges who often make their neo-Orthodox heresy very public. They go on to claim that the holy canons are out of season, inapplicable. The Rudder of Saint Nicodemos is meaningless and worthless. Fasting should be abrogated and abstinence is reminiscent of the dark ages. They claim that we live in a new era and we must see our youngsters in a different light. They can co-habitate before marriage; they can lead their sexuality freely, without any canonical repercussions and so on.

Since this spirit is prevalent today, even among Orthodox clergy, is it not possible that the agents of the Antichrist are also working in today's Orthodoxy? Do we see now why God has His Saints at every age and in every century? Simply to tell

the faithful that we cannot claim that the Saints are a thing of the past and their teachings are inapplicable. God gives us many Saints in each century. During the twentieth century, we have many saints such as Saint Silouan, Saint Nektarios, Saint John Maximovitch, Saint Nikolai Velimirovich, and so many others. In Greece, Saint Nektarios has been labeled the Saint of our century, the twentieth century.

By the way, it is not by accident that the deluded Old Calendarist "Abbess" Magdalene, is blaspheming and cursing Saint Nektarios. This is the reaction of Satan who is working through this pitiable and demon-possessed woman. Our church was forced to excommunicate this woman so I can speak freely about her.

This is an indication that the Antichrist will not tolerate the existence of Saints because he will maintain that sainthood is a thing of the past, somewhat mythical and medieval and much like the Gospel and such a Gospel cannot possibly produce Saints. This is precisely why God will provide us with Saints in every generation to shut the lips of those who like to speak about an antiquated Gospel. Saint Ephraim the Syrian further adds, "During those days (of the Antichrist) the faces of the God loving Christians will be full of tears and they will be fervently asking for God's word. **The people will be desperately searching for an Orthodox sermon and the reply will be, there is no such sermon anywhere.**



Worldly stress is the result of worldly happiness, of worldly pleasures and self-indulgence. Educated externally and being full of anxiety, hundreds of people (even young children) are driven to psychoanalysis and psychiatrists. New psychiatric hospitals are being built and young psychiatrists go on for post-graduate studies. Many of them do not even believe in God, or accept the existence of the soul. How can these people help the human soul, when they themselves are full of anxiety? How can one feel truly comforted, if he does not believe in God and in the true and eternal life after death?

When man grasps the deeper meaning of this true life, stress goes away—divine consolation comes and he is healed... The answer to our anxiety is not drugs, alcohol, tranquilizers or psychiatric treatment. It will not be cured by Yoga or some new age or eastern meditation practice. The problem is that we have lost God as the center of our lives. Once we make our love of God the primary focus of our lives and allow His grace to work through us, then no matter what circumstance we encounter in life we will be comforted and embraced in His love. All anxiety disappears. This is the aim of the Orthodox way of life: to put God first and seek the Holy Spirit. The anxieties of modern life are only symptoms of our separation from God.

St. Paisios the Athonite

WHO IS A HERETIC?

By Constantine Zalalas.

On the Sunday of the Fathers of the 4th Ecumenical synod, we commemorate the victory of Orthodoxy over heretical and schismatic members, a title used by the Orthodox Study Bible New Testament and Psalms on page 506. The Holy Fathers anathematized Dioskoros and Eutiches and all Monophysites from the Body of Christ and articulated the Chalcedonian definition which affirms that Christ is perfect God and perfect Man. The two distinct natures were united in the one Person of Christ (the person of the Logos), *without confusion, without change, without division, and without separation*. Without confusion and change excludes any notion of Monophysitism. Without division and separation defends and immunizes the faithful against Nestorianism.

On this particular Sunday and in commemoration of the 600 Holy Fathers the Church strategically chose the Epistle Reading from the 3rd Chapter of Saint Paul's letter to Titus, verses 8 to 15, regarding heretical and schismatic members, a heading used by the Orthodox Study Bible. I will refer specifically to verse 10 which is correctly translated by King James from the Greek, and I quote: «*Αἰρετικὸν ἄνθρωπον μετὰ μίαν καὶ δευτέραν νοουθεσίαν παραιτοῦ*», *A man who is a heretic after the first and second admonition reject*. (Tit 3:10).

The word heretic has been softened by the New English translations due to political correctness perhaps or ecumenistic friendships and dialogues. The word heretic sounds a bit "harsh" and "medieval," so a new and softer term is mostly used: a man who is divisive, or factious, or a man who loves to argue. The Greek, however, cannot be changed; thus, the Ecumenist hierarchs who recently preached on this verse and posed the question: "Who is a heretic?" And proceed to answer: "The Monophysites, the Protestants, and all our non-denominational Christian brothers and sisters (of the World Council of Churches)? No, they are not heretics, they simply did not accept this or that Ecumenical Synod. These are churches that did not accept the Fourth or Fifth or Sixth, or some Ecumenical Synod. Heretics are the Jehovah's witnesses, the Mormons, and perhaps the Scientologists, and the modern day adherents to Arianism."

Tragically, this mindset is totally foreign and irreconcilable to that of our Holy Fathers throughout Church history and contradicts the Spirit of the Scriptures. Mormons, Jehovah's witnesses, and all adherents of Arianism who reject the Doctrine of the Trinity and the Incarnation of the Second Person of The Holy Trinity are not at all Christians since they do not believe in the Doctrine of Christ. According to Saint John the Evangelist, *Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father*

also. (1 Jn 2:23). So an atheist is not only the person who does not believe in the existence of God but he who does not accept the God-Human Person of Christ. Saint John repeats again in his Second Universal Epistle: *Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son*. (2 Jn 1:9). The term heretic was always applied to Christians who adulterated and betrayed *the faith which was once delivered unto the saints*. (Jude 1:3).

The filioque, the primacy and infallibility of the Popes, created grace, are heretical teachings that adulterate and betray the Orthodox Faith. Iconoclasm, the elimination of all Holy Tradition, Sola Scriptura, the elimination of the Holy Mysteries and especially of Divine Liturgy are terrible heresies created by human reason, the same reason which spawned the Reformation and divided Christianity into thousands of pieces in the West.

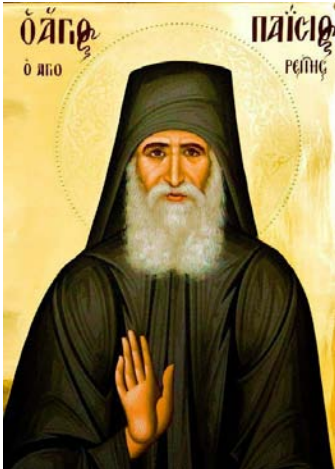
As Orthodox Christians we respect all people, including our enemies. We will help, feed and clothe anyone of our needy neighbors regardless of creed. We will be careful not to be divisive at work or in public and we can use the word non-Orthodox if you will, in our missionary endeavours. Saint Paul did precisely the same thing when he was teaching in Athens. He was very respectful to the Athenian idolaters. He called them God-fearing people, although his spirit was churning inside from all the demonic energy of the Athenian idols. There he was doing missionary work. But in his aforementioned Epistle to Titus, he is doing pastoral work, where he instructs his co-workers and future Bishops of the Church. So there is a difference between missionary work, and pastoral work. Pastoral work has to do with teaching our own, with safeguarding our Orthodox people from destructive heretical teachings and cacodoxies.

Saint Paul in the course of this Epistle, instructs Titus and all his co-workers and likely future Bishops of the Church that a man who is a heretic, after a first and second admonition let him be. Do not spend months and years to try convince him differently. The weed of heresy is a disease. Elsewhere Saint Paul calls heresy gangrene that will overtake the entire body if it is not cut off quickly. Unfortunately, Papism, Protestantism, Monophysitism and Nestorianism are not some benign customs but heretical teachings that impede our good neighbors from reaching their God given potential, robbing them from the potential of *theosis* or Holiness which is the highest privilege for a created being. *Be ye holy; for I am Holy*. (1 Pet 1:16). Holiness cannot be achieved without true faith (*Orthodoxia*) and true practice (*Orthopraxia*).

We will close with the greeting of the Apostle of Truth and Love: *Grace, mercy, and peace will be with you from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, and truth and love*. (2 Jn 1:3).

CHRISTIANS MUST WITNESS THEIR FAITH, SPEAK UP, AND RESIST EVIL

By St. Paisios the Athonite.



If Christians do not begin to witness their faith, to resist evil, then the destroyers will become even more insolent. But today's Christians are no warriors. If the Church keeps silent, to avoid conflict with the government, if the metropolitans are silent, if the monks hold their peace, then who will speak up?

The spirit of lukewarmness reigns. There is no manliness

at all! We have been spoiled for good! How does God still tolerate us? Today's generation is the generation of indifference. There are no warriors. The majority are fit only for parades.

Godlessness and blasphemy are allowed to appear on television. And the Church is silent and does not excommunicate the blasphemers. And they need to be excommunicated. What are they waiting for? Let us not wait for someone else to pull the snake out from its hole so that we can live in peace.

They are silent out of indifference. What is bad is that even people who have got something inside have begun to grow cool, saying: "Can I really do anything to change the situation?" We have to witness our faith with boldness, because if we continue to be silent we will have to answer in the end. In these difficult days each must do what is in their power. And leave what is out of their power to the will of God. In this way our conscience will be clear.

If we do not resist, then our ancestors will arise from their graves. They suffered so much for the Fatherland, and we? What are we doing for it?...

If Christians do not begin to witness their faith, to resist evil, then the destroyers will become even more insolent. But today's Christians are no warriors. If the Church keeps silent, to avoid conflict with the government, if the metropolitans are silent, if the monks hold their peace, then who will speak up?...

Make War Against Evil

You see, if we do not begin to make war against evil, to expose those who tempt believers, then the evil will grow larger. If we throw aside fear then the faithful will be emboldened a bit. And those who wage war against the Church will have a harder time.

In the past our nation lived spiritually, so God blessed her, and the saints helped us in miraculous fashion. And we were victorious against our enemies, who always outnumbered us. Today we continue to call ourselves Orthodox Christians, but we do not live Orthodox lives...

Beware of Lukewarm Clergy

A lukewarm clergy lulls the people to sleep, leaves them in their former condition so they will not be upset. "Look", they say. "By all means do not say that there will be a war, or the Second Coming, that one must prepare oneself for death. We must not make people alarmed!"

And others speak with a false kindness, saying: "We must not expose heretics and their delusions, so as to show our love for them." Today's people are water-soluble. There is no leaven in them.

If I avoid upsetting myself to protect my fleshly comfort then I am indifferent to holiness! Spiritual meekness is one thing, and softness and indifference are quite another. Some say: "I am a Christian and therefore I have to be joyful and calm." But they are not Christian. They are simply indifferent. And their joy is only a worldly joy.

He in whom these worldly seeds are present is no spiritual person. A spiritual person consists of nothing but pain. In other words, he is in pain at what is going on, he is in pain for people's condition. And divine comfort is bestowed upon him for his pain.



It was said concerning Abba Agathon that some monks came to find him having heard tell of his great discernment. Wanting to see if he would lose his temper they said to him: "Aren't you Agathon who is said to be a fornicator and proud man?" "Yes, it is very true," he answered.

They resumed. "Aren't you that Agathon who is always talking nonsense?" "I am." He responded.

Again they said, "Aren't you Agathon the heretic?" But at that he replied: "I am not a heretic."

So they asked him, "Tell us why you accepted everything we cast you, but repudiated this last insult."

He replied: "The first accusations I take to myself, for that is good for my soul. But heresy is separation from God. Now I have no wish to be separated from God."

At this saying they were astonished at his discernment and returned, edified.

From the Desert Fathers

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THE VALUE OF THE JESUS PRAYER

By Elder Aimilianos of Simonopetra (+2019).



We should read one of the Fathers of the Church. Ten minutes are enough, but even five minutes if you want. And read another five or ten minutes from the Holy Scriptures. From the Old Testament first, because the Old Testament is the foundation. It is the support, the foundation of the Church and of our lives. And our peace. If we don't know the Old Testament, we will

never understand God. Because God revealed Himself there. And then He revealed to us saying: *I am what I say there, in the Old Testament. And here I write about that.* If we do not identify these places, we will not be able to understand them.

If you tell me the words "foreign occupation," and if I know nothing about this, I saw no war at all, I am a king in my house... How shall I understand it? But when I cross the border and I see the church that they have locked and destroyed, and they burned its tiles and everything, and it's now a ruin... And I see the houses there, deserted, with the windows open, fallen to the ground, damaged... Then I understand what "foreign occupation" means...

I need to make the connection: "Oh, that's the meaning of this, isn't it?" So that's what happens with the Old Testament!

God revealed many things there. And the correspondents are in the New Testament and in the lives of the saints of our Church.

Let us read a little bit and learn to say the Prayer. One hundred thousand words of read prayer do not replace the few words of the prayer: *Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me!* Look, five little words! [This prayer has only five words in Greek, *Ed.*]

This is doxology, thanksgiving, supplication, confession, theology, witness. This prayer encompasses everything.

God understands even if we do not understand it.

I can say unceasingly: *Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me* and I may not understand anything, but God understands. So we should say the prayer!

It's a very easy thing, my beloved! If we take care of it, you will see, in a month, no doubt, that, as I told you, your heart will rejoice! There is no man who asked something from God and didn't receive. Otherwise, He wouldn't be God!

So when we say to him: "Give me, Lord, the prayer!" "Put it in my heart!" Will He not do it?

He will give us happiness.

He will give us peace.

He will give us festive joy.

He will give us tears.

He will give us everything.

Whatever you want to acquire through these words, from heaven and from earth, you will see, it will be so for you. Whether it be a hidden thing or a visible one, you will receive it, God will give it to you!