

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 λόγον εἴτε δι' ἐπιστολῆς ἡμῶν [Θεσσ. Β' 2:15]

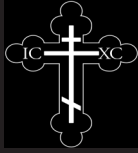
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STAND FAST!

A Sermon By St. John Maximovitch, from "Orthodox America," Vol. XIV, No. 2-3, September-October, 1993.

Stand fast on spiritual watch, because you don't know when the Lord will call you to Himself. In your earthly life be ready at any moment to give Him an account. Beware that the enemy does not catch you in his nets, that he not deceive you causing you to fall into temptation. Daily examine your conscience; try the purity of your thoughts, your intentions.

There was a king who had a wicked son. Having no hope that he would change for the better, the father condemned the son to death. He gave him a month to prepare.

The month went by, and the father summoned the son. To his surprise he saw that the young man was noticeably changed: his face was thin and drawn, and his whole body looked as if it had suffered.

"How is it that such a transformation has come over you, my son?" the father asked.

"My father and my lord," replied the son, "how could I not change when each passing day brought me closer to death?"

"Good, my son," remarked the king. "Since you have evidently come to your senses, I shall pardon you. However, you must maintain this vigilant disposition of soul for the rest of your life."

"Father," replied the son, "that's impossible. How can I withstand the countless seductions and temptations?"

Then the king ordered that a vessel be brought, full of oil, and he told his son: "Take this vessel and carry it along all

the streets of the city. Following you will be two soldiers with sharp swords. If you spill so much as a single drop they will cut off your head."

The son obeyed. With light, careful steps, he walked along all the streets, the soldiers accompanying him, and he did not spill a drop.

When he returned to the castle, the father asked, "My son, what did you see as you were walking through the city?"

"I saw nothing."

"What do you mean, 'nothing'?" said the king.

"Today is a holiday; you must have seen the booths with all kinds of trinkets, many carriages, people, animals..."

"I didn't notice any of that," said the son. "All my attention was focused on the oil in the vessel. I was afraid to spill a drop and thereby lose my life."

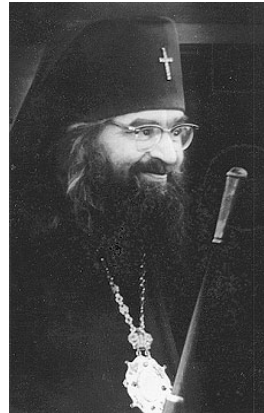
"Quite right, my son," said the king. "Keep this lesson in mind for the rest of your life. Be as vigilant over your soul as you were today over the oil in the vessel. Turn your thoughts

away from what will soon pass away, and keep them focused on what is eternal. You will be followed not by armed soldiers but by death to which we are brought closer by every day. Be very careful to guard your soul from all ruinous temptations."

The son obeyed his father, and lived happily.

Watch, stand fast in the faith, be courageous, be strong. (1 Cor 16:13).

The Apostle gives Christians this important counsel to bring their attention to the danger of this world, to summon them to frequent examination of their hearts, because without this one can easily bring to ruin the purity and ardor



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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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of one’s faith and unnoticeably cross over to the side of evil and faithlessness.

Just as a basic concern is to be careful of anything that might be harmful to our physical health, so our spiritual concern should watch out for anything that might harm our spiritual life and the work of faith and salvation. Therefore, carefully and attentively assess your inner impulses: are they from God or from the spirit of evil? Beware of temptations from this world and from worldly people; beware of hidden inner temptations which come from the spirit of indifference and carelessness in prayer, from the waning of Christian love.

If we turn our attention to our mind, we notice a torrent of successive thoughts and ideas. This torrent is uninterrupted; it is racing everywhere and at all times: at home, in church, at work, when we read, when we converse. It is usually called thinking, writes bishop Theophan the Recluse, but in fact it is a disturbance of the mind, a scattering, a lack of concentration and attention. The same happens with the heart. Have you ever observed the life of the heart? Try it even for a short time and see what you find. Something unpleasant happens, and you get irritated; some misfortune occurs, and you pity yourself; you see someone whom you dislike, and animosity wells up within you; you meet one of your equals who has now outdistanced you on the social scale, and you begin to envy him; you think of your talents and capabilities, and you begin to grow proud...

All this is rottenness: vainglory, carnal desire, gluttony, laziness, malice-one on top of the other, they destroy the heart. And all of this can pass through the heart in a matter of minutes. For this reason one ascetic, who was extremely attentive to himself, was quite right in saying that “man’s heart

is filled with poisonous serpents. Only the hearts of saints are free from these serpents, the passions.”

But such freedom is attained only through a long and difficult process of self-knowledge, working on oneself and being vigilant towards one’s inner life, i.e., the soul.

Be careful. Watch out for your soul! Turn your thoughts away from what will soon pass away and turn them towards what is eternal. Here you will find the happiness that your soul seeks, that your heart thirsts for.



Struggle, my child, as much as you can to become forceful—force yourself in everything, especially in silence and in mournful tears. When silence is practiced with knowledge and maintained with tears, the foundation stone of monasticism is set, on which the secure house will be built wherein the soul will find spiritual warmth and comfort.

It is a bad omen for the soul’s future if silence is not kept, since one who is not silent scatters whatever he gathers; for a monk who is free with his mouth will be disorderly in everything. When we are silent, we have the time for interior prayer, which brings full assurance, and the time for luminous thoughts, which fill the intellect and heart with light. Therefore, my child, compel yourself in everything, for the good beginning is praised, but the negligent beginning is censured, for its end is most lamentable.

Elder Ephraim of Filotheou
From “Counsels from the Holy Mountain”

READING THE BIBLE

By St. Justin Popovich.



The Bible is in a sense a biography of God in this world. In it the Indescribable One has in a sense described Himself.

The Holy Scriptures of the New Testament are a biography of the incarnate God in this world. In them it is related how God, in order to reveal Himself to men, sent God the Logos, Who took on flesh and became man, and as man

told men everything that God is, everything that God wants from this world and the people in it.

God the Logos revealed God's plan for the world and God's love for the world. God the Word spoke to men about God with the help of words insofar as human words can contain the uncontainable God.

All that is necessary for this world and the people in it—the Lord has stated in the Bible. In it He has given the answers to all questions. There is no question which can torment the human soul, and not find its answer, either directly or indirectly in the Bible.

Men cannot devise more questions than there are answers in the Bible. If you fail to find the answer to any of your questions in the Bible, it means that you have either posed a senseless question or did not know how to read the Bible and did not finish reading the answer in it.

What the Bible Contains

In the Bible God has made known:

- (1) what the world is; where it came from; why it exists; what it is heading for; how it will end;
- (2) what man is; where he comes from; where he is going; what he is made of; what his purpose is; how he will end;
- (3) what animals and plants are; what their purpose is, and what they are used for;
- (4) what good is; where it comes from; what it leads to; what its purpose is; how it is attained;
- (5) what evil is; where it comes from; how it came to exist; why it exists—how it will come to an end;
- (6) what the righteous are and what sinners are; how a sinner becomes righteous and how an arrogant righteous man becomes a sinner; how a man serves God and how he serves satan; the whole path from good to evil, from God to satan;
- (7) everything—from the beginning to the end; man's entire path from the body to God, from his conception in the womb to his resurrection from the dead;
- (8) what the history of the world is, the history of heaven and earth, the history of mankind; what their path, purpose, and end are.

The Beauty of the Bible

In the Bible God has said absolutely everything that was necessary to be said to men. The biography of every man—everyone without exception—is found in the Bible. In it each of us can find himself portrayed and thoroughly described in detail; all those virtues and vices which you have and can have and cannot have.

You will find the paths on which your own soul and everyone else's journey from sin to sinlessness, and the entire path from man to God and from man to satan. You will find the means to free yourself from sin. In short, you will find the complete history of sin and sinfulness, and the complete history of righteousness and the righteous.

If you are mournful, you will find consolation in the Bible; if you are sad, you will find joy; if you are angry—tranquility; if you are lustful—continenence; if you are foolish—wisdom; if you are bad—goodness; if you are a criminal—mercy and righteousness; if you hate your fellow man—love.

You will find a remedy for all your vices and weak points, and nourishment for all your virtues and accomplishments. If you are good, the Bible will teach you how to become better and best; if you are kind, it will teach you angelic tenderness; if you are intelligent, it will teach you wisdom.

If you appreciate the beauty and music of literary style, there is nothing more beautiful or more moving than what is contained in Job, Isaiah, Solomon, David, John the Theologian and the Apostle Paul. Here music—the angelic music of the eternal truth of God—is clothed in human words.

The more one reads and studies the Bible, the more he finds reasons to study it as often and as frequently as he can. According to St. John Chrysostom, it is like an aromatic root, which produces more and more aroma the more it is rubbed.

Prayerful Preparation

Just as important as knowing why we should read the Bible is knowing how we should read the Bible. The best guides for this are the holy Fathers, headed by St. John Chrysostom who, in a manner of speaking, has written a fifth Gospel.

The holy Fathers recommend serious preparation before reading and studying the Bible; but of what does this preparation consist?

First of all in prayer. Pray to the Lord to illumine your mind—so that you may understand the words of the Bible—and to fill your heart with His grace—so that you may feel the truth and life of those words.

Be aware that these are God's words, which He is speaking and saying to you personally. Prayer, together with the other virtues found in the Gospel, is the best preparation a person can have for understanding the Bible.

How We Should Read the Bible

Prayerfully and reverently, for in each word there is another drop of eternal truth, and all the words together make up the boundless ocean of the Eternal Truth.

The Bible is not a book, but life; because its *words are spiritual life* (Jn 6:63). Therefore its words can be comprehended if we study them with the spirit of its spirit, and with the life of its life. It is a book that must be read with life, by putting it into practice. One should first live it, and then understand it.

Here the words of the Saviour apply: Whoever, is willing to do it will understand that this teaching is from God: *If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.* (Jn 7:17). Do it so that you may understand it. This is the fundamental rule of Orthodox *exegesis* [*Ed.*, i.e., explanation].

At first one usually reads the Bible quickly; and then more and more slowly, until finally he will begin to read not even word by word, because in each word he is discovering an everlasting truth and an ineffable mystery.

Everyday read at least one chapter from the Old and the New Testament; but side by side with this, put a virtue from each into practice. Practice it until it becomes a habit to you. Let us say, for instance, that the first virtue is forgiveness of insults. Let this be your daily obligation. And along with it pray to the Lord: *O gentle Lord, grant me love towards those who insult me!* And when you have made this virtue into a habit, each of the other virtues after it will be easier for you, and so on until the final one.

The main thing is to read the Bible as much as possible. What the mind does not understand, the heart will feel; and if neither the mind understands nor the heart feels, read it over again, because by reading it you are sowing God's words in your soul. And there they will not perish, but will gradually and imperceptibly pass into the nature of your soul; and there will happen to you what the Saviour said about the man who *casts seed on the ground, and sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows, while the man does not know it.* (Mk 4:26-27).

The main thing is: sow, and it is *God Who causes and allows what is sown to grow.* (I Cor 3:6). But do not rush success, lest you become like a man who sows today, but tomorrow already wants to reap.

Seed in Our Souls

By reading the Bible you are adding yeast to the dough of your soul and body, which gradually expands and fills the soul until it has thoroughly permeated it and makes it rise with the truth and righteousness of the Gospel.

In every instance, the Saviour's parable about the sower and the seed can be applied to every one of us. The Seed of Divine Truth is given to us in the Bible. By reading it, we sow that seed in our own soul. It fails on the rocky and thorny ground of our soul, but a little also falls on the good soil of our heart—and bears fruit.

And when you catch sight of the fruit and taste it, the sweetness and joy will spur you to clear and plow the rocky

and thorny areas of your soul and sow it with the seed of the Word of God. Do you know when a man is wise in the sight of Christ the Lord? It is when he listens to His word and carries it out. The beginning of wisdom is to listen to God's word: *Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man.* (Mt 7:24).

Every word of the Saviour has the power and the might to heal both physical and spiritual ailments. *Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.* (Mt 8:8). The Saviour said the word—and the centurion's servant was healed.

Just as He once did, the Lord even now ceaselessly says His words to you, to me, and to all of us. But we must pause, and immerse ourselves in them and receive them, with the centurion's faith. And a miracle will happen to us, and our souls will be healed just as the centurion's servant was healed. For it is related in the Gospel that *they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick.* (Mt 8:16).

He still does this today, because the Lord *Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever.* (Heb 13:8).

Beware!

Those who do not listen to God's words will be judged at the Dreadful Judgment, and *it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment than for them.* (Mt 10:14-15).

Beware—at the Dreadful Judgment you will be asked to give an account for what you have done with the words of God, whether you have listened to them and kept them, whether you have rejoiced in them or been ashamed of them, the Lord will also be ashamed of you when He comes in the glory of His Father together with the holy angels: *Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.* (Mk 8:38).

There are few words of men that are not vain and idle. Thus there are few words for which we do not mind being judged. *For every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.* (Mt 12:36).

In order to avoid this, we must study and learn the words of God from the Bible and make them our own; for God proclaimed them to men so that they might accept them, and by means of them also accept the Truth of God itself.

Words of the Word

Great is the mystery of the word—so great that the second Person of the Holy Trinity, Christ the Lord, is called *the Word* or *the Logos* in the Bible.

God is the Word (Jn 1:1). All those words which come from the eternal and absolute word are full of God, Divine Truth, Eternity, and Righteousness. If you listen to them, you are listening to God. If you read them, you are reading the direct words of God. God the Word became flesh, became

man: *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.* (Jn 1:14), and mute, stuttering man began to proclaim the words of the eternal truth and righteousness of God.

The Grace-Filled Word

In every word of the Saviour there is much that is supernatural and full of grace; and this is what sheds grace on the soul of man when the word of Christ visits it. Thus, the Holy Apostle calls the whole structure of the house of salvation the word of the grace of God: *Brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.* (Acts 20:32).

Like a living grace-filled power, the Word of God has a wonder-working and life-giving effect on a man, so long as he hears it with faith and receives it with faith: *When ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.* (I Thess 2:13).

Everything is defiled by sin, but everything is cleansed and sanctified by the Word of God and prayer—everything—all creation from man on down to a worm (I Tim 4:5).

By the Truth which carries in itself and by the Power which it has in itself, *the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.* (Heb 4:12) Nothing remains secret before it or for it.

The Birth-Giving Word

Because every Word of God contains the eternal Word of God—the Logos—it has the power to give birth and regenerate men. And when a man is born of the Word, he is born of the Truth.

For this reason St. James the Apostle writes to the Christians that God the Father has brought them forth ... *by the word of truth* (Jas 1:18), and St. Peter tells them that they have been born anew ... *by the word of the living God, which abides forever* (I Pet 1:23).



When someone is wronged in this life, either by men or by demons, God does not worry; because the soul benefits as a result. Many times, however, we say that we are wronged, while—in reality—we are the ones causing harm. We must be careful to distinguish the two.

Elder Paisios the Athonite (+1994)

A PRAYER TO THE THEOTOKOS

By St. Philotheos, Patriarch of Constantinople (could especially be offered in preparing to receive Holy Communion).

Truly immaculate and most-pure Virgin and Theotokos, an awesome miracle to angels, an inexplicable wonder to mankind, or rather—in reality—an awesome and incomprehensible miracle to both: thou art the very beginning of our race, the most pure vessel of divinity, the workplace of our salvation; and—in a way beyond any thought and reason, out of extreme goodness—thou didst bring to us the One of the Trinity, our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is perfect God and perfect man, and Who came to be united to our fallen human nature and thereby to save it and restore it to its original high dignity.

Thou art the restoration of those who fall, and—after the salvific economy of God the Word—thou didst also, without hesitation, deliver me from many dangers, unworthy as I am of any help and providence, for I sin arbitrarily in every way, time and place. Look, now, again upon my wretchedness, and visit me often; for I am overcome and do not know what will happen to me. If I look upon the multitude of my innumerable sins, I see myself far away from [the] dread Mysteries; and altogether unworthy. Again, if I do not draw near for a long time, being afraid to participate unto my condemnation, I become completely subservient to the adversary. Therefore, by throwing the great multitude of my transgressions into the ocean of the inexorable compassion of thy Son and God, and by proposing thee as a strong mediator, I take courage and draw near.

I implore thee, O immaculate Lady, make use of thy motherly boldness before Him; and make Him merciful to me. Yea, O most-pure one, stay before me and do not abhor me, the one who is conquered by many sins, and defiled and abused by deeds, words, movements of mind, and the myriad of devices and designs and well-contrived demonic deceptions through all of the senses. Show thyself to be my co-worker even in this time, by beseeching the Lord—Who is most conciliatory and forgiving—not to reject me and prove me empty of His grace. May He overlook my numerous transgressions, and—through His holy Body and His sacred and life-giving Blood—sanctify, illumine, save and make me a son of light, walking and directing myself towards His holy commandments.

Let me not return again and be defiled by sin, so that I may participate, without condemnation, in the immaculate awesome gift of grace, now and in the future. Let me also receive the most perfect promise: to escape eternal punishment and to be made worthy of eternal life, through thee, who art my sure hope and protectress, that I may glorify and magnify Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the Most-Holy and blessed Trinity unto the ages of ages. Amen.

PROCLAMATION OF PERSONHOOD

A Proclamation by the President of the United States of America, January 14, 1988.

America has given a great gift to the world, a gift that drew upon the accumulated wisdom derived from centuries of experiments in self-government, a gift that has irrevocably changed humanity's future. Our gift is twofold: the declaration, as a cardinal principle of all just law, of the God-given, unalienable rights possessed by every human being; and the example of our determination to secure those rights and to defend them against every challenge through the generations. Our declaration and defense of our rights have made us and kept us free and have sent a tide of hope and inspiration around the globe.

One of those unalienable rights, as the Declaration of Independence affirms so eloquently, is the right to life. In the 15 years since the Supreme Court's decision in *Roe v. Wade*, however, America's unborn have been denied their right to life. Among the tragic and unspeakable results in the past decade and a half have been the loss of life of 22 million infants [*now 55 million*] before birth; the pressure and anguish of countless women and girls who are driven to abortion; and a cheapening of our respect for the human person and the sanctity of human life.

We are told that we may not interfere with abortion. We are told that we may not "impose our morality" on those who wish to allow or participate in the taking of the life of infants before birth; yet no one calls it "imposing morality" to prohibit the taking of life after people are born. We are told as well that there exists a "right" to end the lives of unborn children; yet no one can explain how such a right can exist in stark contradiction of each person's fundamental right to life.

That right to life belongs equally to babies in the womb, babies born handicapped, and the elderly or infirm. That we have killed the unborn for 15 years does not nullify this right, nor could any number of killings ever do so. The unalienable right to life is found not only in the Declaration of Independence but also in the Constitution that every President is sworn to preserve, protect, and defend. Both the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments guarantee that no person shall be deprived of life without due process of law.

All medical and scientific evidence increasingly affirms that children before birth share all the basic attributes of human personality -- that they in fact are persons. Modern medicine treats unborn children as patients. Yet, as the Supreme Court itself has noted, the decision in *Roe v. Wade*

rested upon an earlier state of medical technology. The law of the land in 1988 should recognize all of the medical evidence.

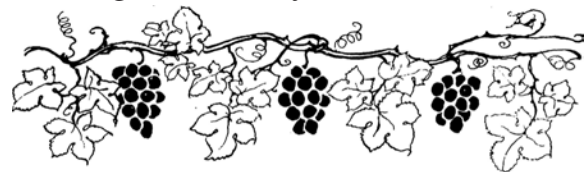
Our nation cannot continue down the path of abortion, so radically at odds with our history, our heritage, and our concepts of justice. This sacred legacy, and the well-being and the future of our country, demand that protection of the innocents must be guaranteed and that the personhood of the unborn be declared and defended throughout our land. In legislation introduced at my request in the First Session of the 100th Congress, I have asked the Legislative branch to declare the "humanity of the unborn child and the compelling interest of the several states to protect the life of each person before birth." This duty to declare on so fundamental a matter falls to the Executive as well. By this Proclamation I hereby do so.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Ronald Reagan, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim and declare the unalienable personhood of every American, from the moment of conception until natural death, and I do proclaim, ordain, and declare that I will take care that the Constitution and laws of the United States are faithfully executed for the protection of America's unborn children.

Upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind and the gracious favor of Almighty God. I also proclaim Sunday, January 17, 1988, as National Sanctity of Human Life Day. I call upon the citizens of this blessed land to gather on that day in their homes and places of worship to give thanks for the gift of life they enjoy and to reaffirm their commitment to the dignity of every human being and the sanctity of every human life.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fourteenth day of January, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twelfth.

Ronald Reagan, President of the USA



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HIEROMARTYR SAVVAS TRLAICH, BISHOP OF GORNJI KARLOVAC

By Fr. Ignatius Shestakov, translated Fr. Andrew Phillips.



The Gornokarlovatsky Diocese of the Church of Serbia is situated on the territory of contemporary Croatia and includes the western most areas settled by Orthodox Serbs in the 15th century. The growth of the Orthodox population there was accelerated at the beginning of the 16th century, when Serbs from neighboring Dalmatia and Bosnia settled there, fleeing from Turkish oppression. Over time, the so-called military region of

Kraina was formed, serving as a protective flank for the Austro-Hungarian Empire from Turkish expansion. The Serbs who lived in Kraina served in the Austrian Army and received special privileges from the Emperors and at that time Kraina was one of the largest and most prosperous dioceses of the Church.

However, Roman Catholic proselytism and the spread of Uniatism down the centuries was a constant danger for the Serbs. On more than one occasion they had to stand up for their privileges and the purity of their faith. The 20th century, during which the Church suffered terrible trials, was no exception to this. During the Second World War, the Gornokarlovatsky Diocese found itself on the territory of the puppet “Independent Croatian State” and suffered in ways that had never been seen before. It seems as if most of the devilish evil of the Croat fascists fell to its lot. Obviously, the tragedy was that the Diocese was located in the very heart of the newly-formed pseudo-State, very close to the Croat capital of Zagreb.

During the genocide which took place between 1941 and 1945, 65 Orthodox priests were murdered by the Roman Catholic Ustashi forces, 116 churches were completely destroyed, 39 others seriously damaged and over 160 parish and monastic libraries were completely or partially destroyed.

The sufferings of the clergy and the people were fully shared in by the bishop of Gornji Karlovac, bishop Savvas Trlaich. In 2000, he was glorified by the Council of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church as a hieromartyr. A true son of his people, he showed himself to be a true pastor, laying down his life for his flock, and his ministry was crowned by martyrdom.

Vladyka Savvas was born on July 6th, 1884 in Mol to the family of Stephen and Elizabeth Trlaich and was baptized Svetozar. After studying at grammar school and then at the

seminary in Sremski Karlovtsy, he graduated from the faculty of law at the University of Belgrade. He was ordained deacon and then priest in 1909. From 1909 to 1927, Fr. Svetozar served as a parish priest. In early 1927 he was appointed to an administrative post at the Holy Synod and then became its secretary.

Widowed, in 1929 he took his monastic vows with the name of Savvas and became rector and archimandrite of the Monastery of Krushedol. He served there until 1934, when he was appointed Vicar-Bishop of Sremski. He was consecrated bishop in Sremski Karlovtsy on September 30th, 1930, by Patriarch Barnabas of Serbia. As Patriarchal Vicar, Vladyka Savvas chaired the diocesan council of the Archdiocese of Belgrade-Karlovtsy until November 1936 and from then until early 1937 he chaired the ecclesiastical court. Then, on September 4th, 1938, he was appointed bishop of Gornji Karlovac, with his residence in Plashkom.

The German invasion of Yugoslavia and the ensuing proclamation of an Independent Croatian State saw Plashkom occupied by the Italians, but at the end 1941, it was handed over to the Croat Ustashi. On this, bishop Savvas and nine priests were taken hostage. On May 23rd, 1941 the Ustashi occupied the bishop’s residence and expelled the bishop. On June 8th, the notorious executioner Josip Tomlenovich appeared at the residence and ordered any diocesan money and papers of importance to be handed over to the Ustashi. Bishop Savvas was ordered to leave the town and head for Serbia. However, he refused to do this and stated that he could not abandon his diocese and his people.

On June 17th, 1941 Vladyka was arrested together with other well-known Serbs and priests who did not wish to leave the place of their ministry. The Ustashi locked their prisoners into a cowshed and set an armed guard. For one month all those arrested, and especially bishop Savvas, were subjected to humiliation and torture on a daily basis. They were then sent to the notorious concentration camp at Gospich. The prisoners were taken from the railway station at Gospich to the local prison and again subjected to further humiliation and torture.

In the first half of August 1941, about 2,000 Serbs were taken from Gospich to Velebita; bishop Savvas among them. It is supposed that he was murdered there, at the same time as about 8,000 other Serbs, in August 1941. The Holy Synod of the Serbian Church constantly, but unsuccessfully, called for the forces of occupation to explain what had happened to bishop Savvas and other Serbian bishops on the territory of the Independent Croatian State and tried to obtain their release.

Unfortunately, we have no exact information about the circumstances of the martyrdom of bishop Savvas. However, the Serbian historian, Velibor Dzhomich in his book, “Ustashi crimes against Serbian priests,” quotes a testimony

which may throw some light on the question. According to this, a Fr Iovan Silashki wrote the following in an issue of “The Banat Herald” newspaper:

In 1941, the Gornokarlovatsky Diocese was under the control of the dreadful Ustashi regime. The bishop and the priests were told that they were undesirables and that they must abandon their flocks. The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Zagreb, Aloysius Stepinac, openly told Vladyka that he must leave “Croatian” Karlovac, otherwise he would be “liquidated.” Vladyka answered him: “Even if it costs me my head, I will not abandon my people!”

Soon it became clear that the Catholic Archbishop was not joking. Vladyka Savvas was arrested and horribly tortured. During the tortures and beatings in Plashkom, the Ustashi used a gramophone to play the hymn, *As many as have been baptized in Christ, have put on Christ*.

When they took Vladyka to his place of execution, his mother stood in front of the church and waited for him. She wanted to see her son for one last time and make her farewells. However, the executioners did not allow her to do this. Vladyka nevertheless blessed his mother, his legs tied, and went to his death.

A few years after this, a stranger walked into the church in Bashaida, where Vladyka had served. He spoke to the postmaster Savvas Saravolets.

“Did you know Vladyka Savvas Trlaich,” asked the stranger, “I heard that he was priest here.”

“Of course, Vladyka was my teacher. I’m grateful to him for everything I have managed to do in life. How do you know Vladyka?”

“I was an eyewitness of his sufferings,” answered the stranger.

“The Ustashi butchers took Vladyka to a clearing and continued to torture him there. They tore his skin off him and then covered him with salt. Then they buried him alive, with just his head protruding, brought an iron harrow and pulled it across his head until he gave up his soul to God. What happened after that, I don’t know. Maybe the Ustashi threw him into one of the many precipices there, which they used as graves for the Serbs. So even in death he wasn’t separated from his people.”

Unfortunately, this is all that we know about bishop Savvas’ martyrdom.

As the result of the devastating losses suffered by the Serbians of this regions (which could never be made up for), after the war the Gornokarlovatsky Diocese could not be restored to its former prosperity. The destruction of its holy places and shrines also continued under the Communist regime, so that churches which had been damaged often fell into total ruin.

Dire tribulations hit the diocese again during the 1991-1995 war. Half a century after the first, a second act of spiritual genocide unfolded for the Serbs. On Orthodox Christmas in 1992, the St. Nicholas Cathedral, built in the 18th century, was blown up by the new Ustashi. Subjected to an artillery bombardment, the bishops’ residence in Karlovtsy, with its library, records and museum, was looted. The bishops’ residence of the Gornokarlovatsky Diocese was destroyed during Catholic Christmas, in 1993. After the Croat attack on the Serbian Kraina Republic, during the “Operation Storm” in August 1995, Serbian people were expelled from their ancient diocese and many of its holy places were desecrated and destroyed. During the war of 1991-1995, 11 churches were destroyed and 45 damaged. After the expulsion of the Serbs, many churches and other church premises were abandoned and neglected.

Notwithstanding the difficulties, the diocese survived and now the situation is returning to normal. Church life is being reborn, ancient churches are being restored and new ones are being built. In 2005, after a long gap, a new bishop was appointed to the Gornokarlovatsky Diocese. He is Gerasim Popovich, a graduate of the Moscow Theological Academy. The memory of Hieromartyr Savvas is kept with special care in the diocese and he is often mentioned in the diocesan journal.

The restoration of Church life in the diocese is faced with many problems, above all the lack of a flock. Twice subjected to ethnic cleansing and expulsion in the 20th century, it is difficult for Serbs to return to where they had lived for centuries. We hope and trust that, despite all the difficulties, through the prayers of Hieromartyr Savvas, the life of this ancient diocese, which has suffered so much, will grow in strength and never be extinguished until the end of time.



When, on a clear autumn night, I gaze at the clear sky—sown with numberless stars, so diverse in size yet shedding a single light—then I say to myself: *Such are the writings of the Fathers!* When, on a summer day, I gaze at the vast sea—covered with a multitude of diverse vessels with their unfurled sails like white swan’s wings, vessels racing under a single wind to a single goal, to a single harbor—I say to myself: *Such are the writings of the Fathers!* When I hear an harmonious, many-voiced choir, in which diverse voices—in elegant harmony—sing a single Divine song, then I say to myself: *Such are the writings of the Fathers!*

St. Ignatius Brianchaninov (+1867)

HONOR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER

By Fr. Seraphim Stephens, based on a talk given during the 1996 Saint Herman Youth Conference in Washington D.C.

H*onor thy father and thy mother* is a familiar commandment from God. It is an integral and unique part of what is called *The Ten Commandments* (Exod 20). To properly understand its importance and special positioning in the list of Ten, it is necessary to briefly review the Ten Commandments.

The Ten Commandments are not the only commandments of God, but are a kind of summary of God's Laws. They might be seen as chapter headings for all of the other laws of God. They are sort of an Old Testament Symbol of Faith, much as our New Testament Creed serves to summarize all of the teachings of Christianity. The Ten Commandments set the limits of our behavior. God knows what brings life and death. The Ten Commandments establish the outer limits of behavior beyond which is death. On the positive side of the Ten Commandments are all the things we are permitted by God to do. These bring life.

The positioning of each of the Ten Commandments is important in understanding the order God has established in His laws. The first four commandments deal specifically with our relationship with God. Our acknowledgement, worship and honor of God and His Creativity are covered in these four commandments. The Fifth Commandment, *Honor thy father and thy mother*, is specially positioned in place five. I will return to that commandment momentarily. The next five commandments treat our relationship with each other, our fellow human beings, setting the limits of acceptable behavior.

Returning to the Fifth Commandment, *Honor thy father and thy mother*, it can be seen that it is a linking commandment between our relationships with God and our relationships with all other people. *Honor thy father and thy mother* is the closest commandment to God that does not directly relate to Him. The highest human relationship, that next to God alone, is our relationship of honor toward our parents.

We can now see that there are three divisions in the Ten Commandments: God and our relationships to Him; father and mother and our relationships to them; the rest of the community of God's people and our relationships toward them.

The Fifth Commandment, being closest to God, is the testing ground for our relationship to Him and a proving ground for our relationship to everyone else in the Kingdom of God. How we relate to our parents greatly impacts on how we honor God and our fellow human beings.

In the case of this Fifth Commandment honor is defined as love and respect. Further, it implies not rebelling against, nor challenging the authority of our parents. Surely, if we rebel against and challenge the authority of our parents, we will also rebel against God and His Authority. In like manner, if our relationship with our parents is poor, then we surely will have difficulty in our relationships to other people: students to teachers, husbands to wives, employees to employers, friends to friends, the young to the elderly. It seems crucial, then, to our spiritual and social survival, that we properly order our relationships with our parents.

I work at an alternative school with young people—many of whom are criminalized. A preponderance of these young people have extremely poor relationships with their parents. These relationship problems spill over into poor relationships in school and with the general civic community. Many of these youths view their parents as “buffoons,” the police as “pigs,” teachers as “powerless,” elders as “worthless,” and anyone in authority as “stinkers.” Virtually none of the most challenged of these young people has any relationship whatsoever with God.

I also serve as a criminologist at a college. In this field of study we have seen an incredible rise in violent crime among teenagers. There has been an increase in illicit drug use and promiscuity among our teenage population. I see these behaviors as directly related to a negative view of authority and all people in authority.

There is an interesting passage in the Old Testament, in II Kings 2:23-24: *And he [Elisha] went up from thence unto Bethel: and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head. And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the Lord. And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them.* If Elisha were responsible for the juvenile justice system here in the United States, I think we would see very few young people getting into trouble with authority figures.

There is also a disturbing Scripture in the New Testament that requires close scrutiny: II Timothy 3:1-5: *This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.*

I particularly draw attention to *disobedient to parents ... unloving ... lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God*. All around us we see treachery today that is directly related to disobedience to parents. Young people are “kicking” off the

protective cover of the parents in order to satisfy insatiable, fleshly desires. We see an entertainment industry that has exploited dishonor and blasphemy and every filthy and brutal behavior known to humanity. Should not this flag a warning to us of the seriousness of this day and time?

Considering the great dishonor referred to above, it is appropriate to conclude that honor brings good things. It might also be generalized that honor and respect of parents is the root of good order in the entire universe. It clearly lays the foundation of our relationship to God and to all other people.

A question for each of us is in order. To what extent have I contributed to the disorder in contemporary society by my dishonor of my parents? This should lead us to make a good confession acknowledging our dishonor of our parents and of God. When we honor our parents that same honor passes on to God. Let us turn to the Mystery of Confession and begin a new life of true honor.



WISDOM FROM THE DESERT

From an Orthodox pamphlet.

One of the fathers related: There was a devout scholar from Antioch who pestered a hermit, urging him to receive him and make him a monk. The old man said to him, "If you want me to receive you, go, sell your possessions, and give to the poor according to the Lord's commandment, and then I shall receive you." Therefore, he went away and acted accordingly.

After this the hermit said to him, "You have another precept to keep, that you not speak." He took heed and for five years did not speak. Some people began to praise him, and his abba said to him, "It is not good for you to be here, so I will send you to a coenobium in Egypt," and he sent him off.

When he sent him, the hermit failed to say whether he was to speak or not to speak, so he continued to obey the command and did not speak.

The abbot who received him, seeking a test to determine whether or not he was mute, sent him on an errand while the river was in flood, so that he would be forced to say, "I cannot cross it." The abbot sent a brother after him see what he did. As he approached the river, he knelt down, being unable to cross, and behold, a crocodile came and took him up and bore him across to the other side. When he had performed the errand and returned to the river, the crocodile again bore him across. The brother who had been sent after him, having come along and seen this, told the abbot and the brothers and they were astonished.

It happened that some time later he died, and the abbot sent a message to the old man who had sent him, saying,

"That man you sent to me may not have been able to speak, but he was like an angel of God."

The hermit then replied, saying, "It is not that he was unable to speak, but obeying the command which I gave him at the outset, he remained silent." And they all marveled and gave glory to God.

Once, there was a monk from the Monastery of St. Paul who had gone to the Church of St. Gerasimos on the island of Kephallonia. During the Divine Liturgy, he stood in the Altar area and was praying with his komboskini (prayer rope) the Prayer of the Heart – "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner" – while the others were chanting. They had also brought a possessed person into the church to be cured by St. Gerasimos. While the monk was saying the prayer in the Altar, the demon was being seated outside and was shouting, "Stop working that string, will you, monk; it is burning me!"

The priest heard it too, and said to the monk, "Pray with your komboskini as much as you can, my brother, so that God's creature can be freed of the demon."

The demon then shouted in great anger, "You, rotten priest, you. What are you telling him to pull that string for? It is burning me!"

The monk then prayed with his komboskini with even greater effort and the possessed man was delivered from the demon.

One of the Fathers telling about Kellia, said there was once a hard-working old man there who wore a mat. He went to find Abba Ammonas, who, when he saw him wearing the mat, said to him, "This is no use to you."

But the old man questioned him in the following way: "Three thoughts occupy me; should I wander in the deserts, or, should I go to a foreign land where no-one knows me, or, should I shut myself up in a cell without opening the door to anyone, eating only every second day?"

Abba Ammonas replied, "It is not right for you to do any of these three things. Rather, sit in your cell and eat a little every day, keeping the word of the Publican always in your heart (*God be merciful to me a sinner*, Lk 18:13) and you may be saved."

Just as the light of the sun attracts a healthy eye, so through Jobedience and love, knowledge of God naturally draws to itself a pure intellect.



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A MIRACLE BY ST. MENAS

By James Drescher, "A Selection of Texts Relating to St. Menas."



And there was a man at the shrine of the holy Abba Menas (a military martyr of Alexandria, early 4th century) whose name was Mark. And he was a brickmaker by trade and was extremely poor. He had been ailing with his liver for a long time and had spent all that he had on the doctors, so that he lacked bread to eat. And this is the reason why he was poor. And he had five children and himself and his wife.

The archbishop of the local diocese asked about him and was told, "he has had a severe illness. But God and your prayers came to his aid and cured him. But he has fallen into extreme poverty."

So the archbishop sent for him and told him to make bricks at the shrine of the holy Abba Menas till it was completed; and he gave him alms. And the workman went and did as the archbishop had told him. And after some days the alms were spent and his children were again in need of bread, for, as we have already said, the man was extremely poor. At that time, the builders and locksmiths received their board and expenses daily, but this poor brickmaker did not; for it was not usual to give brickmakers their board and expenses but only their honorarium [*Ed.*, A voluntary payment that is given to a person for services for which fees are not legally or traditionally required].

And while Mark, the workman, was still working, his wife sent to him from Alexandria, saying, "Why do you labor for nothing? Behold, your little children will starve to death here."

When he received his wife's message, he was exceedingly distressed. He said to his eldest son who was working with him, "Let us leave the work today and find out how things are at home. Blessed be God who requites [*Ed.*, repays] us according to the sins we have committed." And his heart was troubled exceedingly as he thought upon the plight and distress of his children and he began to weep and lament.

And when he had washed his hands in order to go to the city (some 40 kilometers to the northeast), his son said to him: "Father, behold the day is done and we shall not be able to reach the city now. Let us finish our work today. Tomorrow, please God, we shall go." His father said to him, "No, we shall go this moment."

While they were talking together, behold the holy Abba Menas himself came to them, mounted on a white horse

and in the guise of a soldier. He said to him, "Why have you washed yourself today? It is not yet time."

He said to him, "I am a poor man, my lord, and my children suffer from hunger. I wish to go and see them." Abba Menas, in the guise of a soldier, said to him, "Finish your work today and I myself will give you your wages to take home to your children."

And so the man worked till the next day, for he said within himself, "Better I go home with something than that I go empty-handed and my children starve to death through me."

Next day, at the ninth hour, the holy Abba Menas came to him again, still in the guise of a soldier, and the workman bowed and did reverence to him. The saint said to him, "Are you going to the city today?" He said to him, "Yes, if you please. If you had not told me, your servant, yesterday to wait till today, I should have gone yesterday to have news of my children, lest they starve to death."

The holy Abba Menas dismounted from his horse. He took a clay brick from those which the workman had made and said to him, "This is your wages. Take it home and live on it with your children and come back and finish your work."

The man was bewildered. He said, "If you are going to deal with me as you agreed, my lord, why, do so. If not, let me go and see my children so that they may not starve to death through me."

Abba Menas said to him, "This is your wages."

The man said to him again, "If this is my wages, why, I cannot fill my house with bricks." Abba Mena said to him, "Even if you can make them, nevertheless take this with you to the city till I come and give you your wages."

The man said to him, "If this is my wages, what shall I do with it?"

And when the blessed soldier was saying these things and the workman stood arguing with him, his son said to him, "Hush, father. We will take it with us to the city for him lest he beat you and you have a worse illness and we suffer from hunger. If you had not been ill before, this poverty would not have befallen us."

And the brickmaker held his peace. He took the brick and put it in the basket along with his mould. He went his way sorrowing. And when he was a little way from the soldier, he took out the brick, intending to throw it away.

His son said to him, "Nay father, lest he seek after it and not find it and beat us. I believe that he may be a soldier of the august rank who has given us this brick to take to the city for him and he will remember us by it and give us our wages. Unless he had wished to give us our wages because of our poverty, what would be the need of this brick in the city? Scarcely can we drag our bodies there and we are to carry this great burden."

His father answered and said to him, "When we arrive in the city, we shall make a brick for him. Did I not make this one? I shall make this other also from the clay in the holders."

His son said to him, "Do you not know that this clay is different from the clay in the holders? Perhaps he wants this clay for some purpose. Give it to me and I will take it to the city for him; for it is better to bear a burden than bear the wrath of an augustal whom you cannot save yourself from."

And his son took the brick and carried it to the city. And when he got home, his mother spoke very despondently to him, saying: "If only you had been here, you would have drawn water for whomever wished it. We shall find our food from day to day." She also said to them, "Why did you not come the day I sent for you?"

He said to her, "A soldier of the augustal rank cheated us, saying, 'Do your work for me today and tomorrow I will give you your wages.' Afterwards he cheated us of our wages and instead put another burden on us, telling us to take it to the city for him. And behold, it is in our basket along with our mould."

His wife put her hand in the basket and took out the brick, intending in her anger to throw it away. And when she had taken it out of the basket, she said: "You yourself do not know what he gave you, brother. I myself was surprised when you told me that he had given you a brick of clay. Behold now, I see that it is bronze."

Her husband cried out, "As the Lord lives, I made it myself with my own hands."

And while they were saying that it was bronze, behold it was transformed and became beaten gold. At once they knew that it was the holy Abba Menas who had given them the brick.

The man's wife said to him, "Perhaps it was really the augustal soldier and he gave you the gold brick, tempting you."

Her husband said to her, "Sister, do not disbelieve us. This was a clay brick, one of those which I had made along with my son, and the soldier took it in his hands and put it in our basket. And when we had got away from him, I took it out, intending to throw it away; and it was the same sort of brick as at the first. If my son had not stopped me, I would have thrown it away."

On saying this, they rose and prayed together in unison, glorifying the God of the holy Abba Menas.

Later on, the brickmaker went to the local market, approached the goldsmiths and said to them: "Be quick and weigh it." And they found that it weighed 53 litrae. With this gold, he had a gold paten made and a gold chalice and gave them to the shrine of the holy Abba Menas and he then returned and continued at his work.

And it befell that after working till evening he went again to take his basket and he found another brick in it, from

among those which he had made that day. It was of fresh clay and smelled fragrantly. And the man realized at once that the holy Abba Menas had put it in the basket. He again made his way home and when he arrived there he again found the brick to be gold.

The man became very rich and he set to work again with a great joy that gave him no respite day or night. He subsequently reported the repeated marvels to the archbishop, who in turn, informed the emperor. The emperor honored the bricklayer with the rank of stratelates [*Ed.*, driver/leader of the army].

And the people living in Alexandria and those living in Mareotis (the site of St. Menas' martyrion) rejoiced that God had visited his people and wrought great wonders in turning the clay bricks into gold.



What words can describe your divinely-radiant beauty, O Virgin Mother of God? We cannot circumscribe you in our words and thoughts, for everything about you surpasses our speech and understanding. But, with your loving permission, we may sing your praises. In you, all graces find a place. You are the fullness of everything noble and good, a living picture and ikon of all goodness and kindness, for you alone were found worthy of the gifts of the Spirit in their entirety; or rather, you alone had mysteriously dwelling in your womb Him in Whom all these gifts were stored. In a way past understanding, you became His tabernacle; and now, through death, you proceed hence to immortality; and are fittingly translated from earth to heaven—to live with Him forever in the heavenly tabernacles. From there, you care for your inheritance; and by your un-sleeping intercessions, you reconcile us to your Son."

St. Gregory Palamas



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Ὕμνος Εἰς τὴν Κοίμησιν τῆς Θεοτόκου

Ἀπὸ τὸν Φώτη Κόντογλου.

Ἐν τῇ γεννήσει τὴν παρθενίαν ἐφύλαξας, ἐν τῇ κοιμήσει τὸν κόσμον οὐ κατέλιπες, Θεοτόκε.

Μετέστης πρὸς τὴν ζωὴν, Μήτηρ ὑπάρχουσα τῆς ζωῆς. Καὶ ταῖς πρεσβείαις ταῖς σαῖς λυτρομένη ἐκ θανάτου τὰς ψυχὰς ἡμῶν.

† † †

Ὡ, τί παράδοξο θαῦμα! Ἡ πηγὴ τῆς ζωῆς σὲ μνήμα ἀποθέεται, κ' ὁ τάφος σκάλα γίνεται ποῦ πάγει στὸν οὐρανό. Εὐφραίνου Γεθσημανή, ἡ ἁγιασμένη ἐκκλησιὰ τῆς Θεοτόκου. Ἄς κραζοῦμε οἱ πιστοί, ἔχοντες τὸν Γαβριὴλ γιὰ ταξίαρχο: Κεχαριτωμένη, χαῖρε, μὲ σένα εἶναι ὁ Κύριος, ποῦ δωρίζει στὸν κόσμο μὲ σένα τὸ μέγα ἔλεος.

Τὴν κοίμησίν σου δοξάζουνε Ἐξουσίες, Θρόνοι, Ἀρχές, Κυριότητες, Δυνάμεις καὶ Χερουβεὶμ καὶ τὰ φρικτὰ Σεραφεῖμ. Ἀναγαλλιάζουνε οἱ ἄνθρωποι στολισμένοι γιὰ τὴ γιορτὴ σου. Προσκυνᾶνε οἱ βασιλιάδες, μαζὶ μὲ τοὺς Ἀρχαγγέλους καὶ τοὺς Ἀγγέλους, καὶ ψέλνουνε: Κεχαριτωμένη χαῖρε, μαζὶ σου εἶναι ὁ Κύριος, ποῦ δωρίζει στὸν κόσμο μὲ σένα τὸ μέγα ἔλεος.

Στολισμένη μὲ τὴ θεϊκὴ δόξα ἡ ἱερὴ καὶ δοξασμένη, Παρθένη, μνήμη σου, κ' ὅλους τοὺς πιστοὺς τοὺς σύναξε γιὰ νὰ εὐφρανθοῦνε, καὶ μπροστὰ ἀπ' ὅλους πηγαίνει ἡ Μαριὰμ μὲ χορὸ καὶ μὲ τύμπανα, ψέλνοντας τὸν Μονογενῆ σου, γιατί μὲ δόξα δοξάσθηκε.

Τοὺς δικούς σου ὕμνολόγους, Θεοτόκε, ποῦ συγκροτήσανε ἕναν πνευματικὸ θίασο, ἐσὺ ποῦ εἶσαι ζωντανὴ κ' ἄφθονη πηγὴ, στερέωσέ τους. Καὶ στὴ θεϊκὴ δόξα σου, ἀξιώσέ τους μὲ στεφάνια δόξας νὰ στεφανωθοῦνε.

Νικηθῆκανε τῆς φύσης οἱ νόμοι σὲ σένα, Παρθένη ἄχραντε. Γιατί σὲ σένα παρθενεύει ἡ γέννα, καὶ μὲ τὴ ζωὴ σμίγει ὁ θάνατος. Ἐσὺ ποῦ ἀπόμεινες μετὰ τὴ γέννα Παρθένης καὶ μετὰ θάνατο ζωντανή, σῶξε παντοτινά, Θεοτόκε, τὴν κληρονομία σου...

† † †

Περιγραφή τῆς Εἰκόνας
Κοιμήσεως τῆς Θεοτόκου

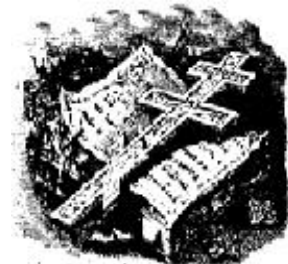
«...Ἐν τῷ μέσῳ ἡ Παναγία κειμένη ἐπὶ τῆς κλίνης νεκρά, ἔχουσα ἐπὶ τοῦ Παναγίου στήθους αὐτῆς ἐσταυρωμένας τὰς θεοφόρους χεῖρας. Καὶ πλησίον

τῆς κλίνης ἔνθεν καὶ ἔνθεν μανουάλια μὲ λαμπάδες ἀνημμένας.

Ὁ δὲ Ἀπόστολος Παῦλος καὶ ὁ Θεολόγος Ἰωάννης παρὰ τοὺς πόδας αὐτῆς ἀσπάζονται αὐτήν, καὶ γύρωθεν οἱ λοιποὶ ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ ἅγιοι ἱεράρχαι, Διονύσιος ὁ Ἀρεοπαγίτης, Ἰερόθεος καὶ Τιμόθεος, βαστάζοντες Εὐαγγέλια, καὶ γυναῖκες κλαίουσαι.

Ἐπάνωθεν δὲ αὐτῆς ὁ Χριστὸς φέρων εἰς τὰς ἀγκάλας Του τὴν παναγίαν ψυχὴν ἐν νεφέλῃ λευκῇ, καὶ γύρωθεν Αὐτοῦ ἀκτίνες φωτὸς καὶ πλῆθος ἀγγέλων. Καὶ ἄνωθεν εἰς τὸν ἀέρα πάλιν οἱ δώδεκα Ἀπόστολοι, φερόμενοι ἐπὶ νεφελῶν.

Εἰς δὲ τὴν δεξιὰν ἄκραν τοῦ ὀσπιτίου, ὁ ἅγιος Ἰωάννης ὁ Δαμασκηνὸς βαστῶν χαρτίον λέγει: *Ἄξιως ἔμψυχον σὲ οὐρανὸν ὑπεδέξαντο οὐράνια, Πάναγγε, θεῖα σκηνώματα*, καὶ εἰς τὴν ἀριστερὰν ὁ ἅγιος Κοσμάς ὁ ποιητὴς βαστῶν καὶ αὐτὸς χαρτίον λέγει: *Γυναῖκα σὲ θνητὴν, ἀλλ' ὑπερφυῶς καὶ μητέρα Θεοῦ εἰδότες, πανάμωμε, οἱ κλεινοὶ ἀπόστολοι...*



Ἄν κάποιος εἶναι νευριασμένος ἢ θυμωμένος καὶ βρίζει, δὲν ἔχει εὐλογία τὸ ἔργο ποῦ κάνει, ἐνῶ ἂν ψάλλει ἢ λέει τὴν εὐχὴ ἁγιαζεται τὸ ἔργο του. Τὸ πρῶτο εἶναι δαμονικὸ, τὸ δεύτερο Θεϊκό.

Αὐτὸ ποῦ ἔχει σημασία εἶναι νὰ ἀναπαύεται ὁ Χριστὸς, ἡ Παναγία καὶ οἱ Ἅγιοί μας σὲ κάθε ἐνέργειά μας καὶ τότε θὰ ἔχουμε τὴν εὐλογία τοῦ Θεοῦ, τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ τῶν Ἀγίων μας καὶ θὰ ἀναπαύεται τὸ Ἅγιο Πνεῦμα σὲ μᾶς. Κανένας ἄδικος τελικὰ δὲν ἔκαμε προκοπή, ἐνῶ τοὺς δίκαιούς τους σκέπτεται ὁ Θεός.

Νὰ ἐλέγχετε τίς σκέψεις σας, νὰ συγκρατεῖτε τὰ λόγια σας, νὰ κυριαρχεῖτε στὰ πάθη σας, νὰ κάνετε ἔργα ποῦ ἀντέχουν στὸ φῶς τῆς ἡμέρας.

Ἡ πνευματικὴ τοποθέτηση εἶναι νὰ χαίρεσαι μὲ τὰ ἀντίθετα ἀπ' αὐτὰ ποῦ χαίρονται οἱ κοσμικοί. Νὰ μὴ ζητᾶς τὴ δικὴ σου ἀνάπαυση. Νὰ κοιτάξεις τί ἀναπαύει τὸν ἄλλο. Τότε ἀναπαύεται καὶ ὁ Θεὸς σὲ σένα. Καὶ ὁ ἄνθρωπος παύει νὰ εἶναι ἄνθρωπος, θεώνεται.

Γέροντας Παῖσιος ὁ Ἀθωνίτης (+1994)

Μοναχός Κωνσταντίνος Καβαρνός (+2011)

Τοῦ πατρὸς Ἀστερίου Γεροστεργίου.

Τὴν 3^{ην} Μαρτίου, 2011, ἔφυγεν ἀπὸ ἀνάμεσά μας ὁ λῆξαν σεβαστὸς καὶ ἀγαπητὸς διδάσκαλός μας καὶ διδάσκαλος τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας καὶ τοῦ γένους τῶν Ἑλλήνων, πλήρους ἡμερῶν, Κωνσταντίνος Π. Καβαρνός. Ἐξῆσε σχεδὸν ἓνα αἰῶνα. Ἀπεβίωσεν εἰς ἡλικίαν 92½ ἐτῶν εἰς τὴν Ἱερὰν Μονὴν τοῦ Ἁγίου Ἀντωνίου Ἀριζόνας, ὅπου καὶ ἐτάφη. Ἐκεῖ διήλθεν τὰ τρία τελευταῖα ἔτη τῆς ζωῆς του ὡς μοναχός. Οἱ πατέρες τῆς Ἱερᾶς αὐτῆς Μονῆς, μὲ τὴν εὐλογίαν τοῦ γέροντος Ἐφραΐμ, μετὰ πολλῆς ἀγάπης ἐφρόντισαν διὰ τὰς ἀνάγκας τῆς πρεσβυτικῆς του ἡλικίας.

Ἐγεννήθη ἐν Βοστώνῃ τὴν 19^{ην} Ὀκτωβρίου τοῦ ἔτους 1918, ἀλλὰ εἰς μικρὰν ἡλικίαν οἱ μετανάσται γονεῖς του Παναγιώτης καὶ Εἰρήνη ἐπέστρεψαν εἰς τὴν νῆσον Λέσβον ἀπ' ὅπου κατήγοντο μαζὶ μὲ τὰ τέκνα των Φραγγούλαν, Ἰωάννην καὶ Κωνσταντῖνον, καὶ ἐγκατεστάθησαν εἰς τὸ χωρίον Τρίγωνα τῆς ἐπαρχίας Πλωμαρίου. Ἐκεῖ ὁ Κωνσταντῖνος ἐπὶ ἕξι ἔτη ἐφοίτησεν εἰς τὸ Δημοτικὸν Σχολεῖον καὶ ἐν συνεχείᾳ ἐκ νέου ἡ οἰκογένεια ἐπανήλθεν εἰς Βοστώνην.

Ἐνταῦθα ἐπὶ ἕξι μῆνας ἐδιδάχθη τὴν Ἀγγλικὴν γλῶσσαν εἰς εἰδικὸν σχολεῖον διὰ μετανάστας καὶ διεκρίθη ἐν αὐτῷ. Μετὰ δὲ τὴν ταχεῖαν καὶ ἀναγκαίαν ἐπιτυχή ἐτοιμασίαν εἰσήχθη εἰς τὸ Ἀγγλικὸν Γυμνάσιον Βοστώνης, τὸ πρῶτον ἰδρυθὲν δημόσιον Γυμνάσιον ἐν Ἀμερικῇ, ἀπ' ὅπου ἀπεφοίτησεν μετὰ πολλῶν ἐπαίνων. Ἐν συνεχείᾳ καὶ κατόπιν εἰσαγωγικῶν ἐξετάσεων εἰσήχθη εἰς τὸ Πανεπιστήμιον Harvard. Αἱ ἀπαιτήσεις τότε διὰ τὴν εἰς τὸ ἐκπαιδευτήριον τοῦτο εἰσαγωγὴν ἦσαν κατὰ πολὺ μεγαλύτεραι ἀπ' ὅτι εἶναι σήμερον.

Κατὰ τὴν διάρκειαν τῶν σπουδῶν του ἐνταῦθα διεκρίθη καὶ ἐβραβεύθη ἐπανειλημμένως. Ἦτο ὑπόδειγμα φοιτητοῦ καὶ προικισμένος μὲ ἰσχυρὰν κριτικὴν διάνοιαν καὶ ἀπέραντον μνήμην. Ἐκτὸς τῆς Ἀγγλικῆς καὶ Ἑλληνικῆς γλώσσης, τὰς ὁποίας κατεῖχεν ἀπταιστως, ἐγνώριζεν εὐχερῶς τὴν Γαλλικὴν, τὴν ἀρχαίαν Ἑλληνικὴν καὶ Λατινικὴν γλῶσσαν.

Αἱ δημοσιευθεῖσαι μέχρι σήμερον ἐργασίαι του εἶναι πολλαί, ἄνω τῶν 100, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀρκεταὶ ἀδημοσίευτοι. Μὲ τὴν ἐργασίαν «Ὁ Βίος τοῦ Ἀτόμου κατὰ τὸν Πλάτωνα ἐν σχέσει πρὸς τὸν Χριστιανισμόν καὶ τὴν νεωτέραν Φιλοσοφίαν» ἐκέρδισεν εἰς τὸ Harvard τῷ 1941 τὸ Francis Bowen Prize. Τὸ αὐτὸ ἔτος συνέγραψε τὴν διατριβὴν του διὰ τὸ πτυχίον B.A. (magna cum laude) τὴν μελέτην «Ἡ Φιλοσοφία τοῦ Πολέμου καὶ τῆς Εἰρήνης» καὶ ἐν συνεχείᾳ ὑπηρέτησεν εἰς τὸν Ἀμερικανικὸν στρατὸν ὡς ἐκπαιδευτὴς ἐν Barksdale, Louisiana κατὰ τὴν διάρκειαν 1942-1944.

Μετὰ τὴν ἀπόλυσίν του ἐκ τοῦ στρατοῦ καὶ κατὰ τὸ ἔτος 1945 ἐκέρδισεν ἐκ νέου τὸ Francis Bowen Prize

διὰ τὴν μελέτην του «Τὸ Πρόβλημα τοῦ Προορισμοῦ τοῦ Ἄνθρωπου ἐντὸς τῆς Φιλοσοφίας τοῦ Πλάτωνος» καὶ τὸ 1947 ἐκέρδισεν τὸ Bowdoin Prize διὰ τῆς γνωστικῆς/μεταφυσικῆς μελέτης του «Διάλογος μεταξὺ Μπέρξον, Ἀριστοτέλους καὶ Φιλολόγου». Τὸ βραβεῖον τοῦτο ἀπονέμει ἡ Φιλοσοφικὴ Σχολὴ τοῦ Harvard εἰς ἐξαιρετικῆς ἀξίας φιλολογικὰ καὶ λογοτεχνικὰ ἔργα.

Τὸ Πανεπιστήμιον Harvard ἀναγνωρίζον καὶ τιμῶν τὸν διαπρεπέστερον σπουδαστὴν του κατ' ἔτος ἐξέλεξεν ὡς Sheldon Fellow τὸν Κωνσταντῖνον καὶ προσέφερεν εἰς αὐτὸν τὴν δυνατότητα νὰ ταξιδεύσῃ εἰς ὠρισμένας χώρας τοῦ ἐξωτερικοῦ μὲ ἔξοδα τοῦ Πανεπιστημίου καὶ δυνηθῆ νὰ μελετήσῃ τὰ διάφορα φιλοσοφικὰ συστήματα καὶ ἔλθῃ εἰς γνωριμίαν μὲ διαφόρους ἐπιστημονικὰς προσωπικότητας. Οὕτω ὁ Κωνσταντῖνος ἐπεσκέφθη τὴν Ἑλλάδα, τὴν Γαλλίαν καὶ Ἀγγλίαν καὶ ἦλθεν εἰς γνωριμίαν μὲ ἐπιστημονικὰς κορυφὰς τῶν χωρῶν αὐτῶν.

Μετὰ ταῦτα ἐπιστρέψας εἰς Βοστώνην ὑπέβαλεν εἰς τὸ Harvard τὴν ἐπιστημονικὴν του διατριβὴν διὰ τὸ πτυχίον τοῦ διδάκτορος Ph.D. «Ἡ Κλασσικὴ Θεωρία τῆς Σχέσεως», ἣτις εἶναι μία ἱστορικὴ καὶ κριτικὴ μελέτη ἐπὶ τῆς μεταφυσικῆς τοῦ Πλάτωνος, Ἀριστοτέλους, καὶ τοῦ Θωμᾶ τοῦ Ἀκινάτου. Κατὰ τὴν προφορικὴν παρουσίαν καὶ ὑπεράσπισιν τῆς διατριβῆς του οἱ καθηγηταὶ του τὸν συνεχάρησαν θερμῶς καὶ τοῦ ἀπένευμον τὸ πτυχίον τοῦ διδάκτορος (Ph.D.). Οὕτω ὁ Κωνσταντῖνος ἀνεδείχθη λαμπρὸς Ἑλληνοαμερικανὸς ἐπιστήμων, τιμήσας τὴν Ἑλληνικὴν του καταγωγὴν καὶ διατηρήσας βαθέως ἐντὸς τῆς ψυχῆς του τὴν Ἑλληνικὴν γλῶσσαν καὶ τὸν Ἑλληνικὸν πολιτισμὸν.

Κατὰ τὰ πρῶτα ἔτη τῶν σπουδῶν του εἰς τὸ Harvard ἐσπούδασεν βιολογικὰς ἐπιστήμας, ὅπως βοτανολογίαν, γενικὴν ζωολογίαν, συγκριτικὴν ἀνατομίαν, φυσικὴν ἀνθρωπολογία καὶ βιοχημίαν μὲ στόχον νὰ ἀκολουθήσῃ τὴν ἰατρικὴν ἐπιστήμην. Ὅμως μετὰ τὸ μέσον τῶν σπουδῶν του ἀπεφάσισεν νὰ ἀλλάξῃ κατεύθυνσιν καὶ σπουδάσῃ φιλοσοφίαν. Ἡ ἀλλαγὴ αὐτὴ εὐηργέτησεν αὐτὸν ποικιλοτρόπως εἰς τὴν μελλοντικὴν ἐπαγγελματικὴν σταδιοδρομίαν. Οὕτω «ἀνατέταλκεν λαμπρὰ καὶ χαρμόσυνος ἡμέρα» διὰ τὴν Ὁρθοδοξίαν καὶ τὸν Ἑλληνισμόν. Τοῦτο πιστεύομεν ἀκραδάντως ὅτι ἦτο ἔργον τῆς Θείας προνοίας νὰ ἐτοιμασθῇ ἄνθρωπος «ὡς σκεῦος ἐκλογῆς» ὅστις ἐπέπρωτο νὰ καταστῆ οἰκουμενικὸς διδάσκαλος τῆς Ὁρθοδοξίας καὶ εὐεργέτης πνευματικὸς ἐν πράξει καὶ θεωρίᾳ.

Ὁ καλὸς Θεὸς ἐνεφύσησεν εἰς τὴν καρδίαν του πνεῦμα ἀγάπης, ἀληθείας, εἰρήνης, ὑπομονῆς, διακρίσεως, ἀνδρείας, ταπεινώσεως, ἐπιμονῆς, τιμιότητος, ἐργατικότητος, λιτότητος, ἐγκρατείας, σωφροσύνης, σοβαρότητος, ἀσκητικότητος, ἀνεκτικότητος, ἀνεξι-

κακίας, καταλλαγής, προσευχής, αγιότητας και πολλών άλλων ἐν γένει χριστιανικῶν ἀρετῶν. Ἐγραψεν και ἐδημοσίευσεν πλῆθος βιβλίων, μονογραφιῶν και ἄρθρων. Ὄταν προσέξῃ κανεὶς ὅλα αὐτὰ τὰ ἔργα θα διαπιστώσῃ ὅτι δὲν προήλθον ἐκ τοῦ γραφείου τοῦ ἐπιστήμονος, ἀλλὰ ὅτι εἶναι καρποὶ τῆς δράσεως τοῦ διδασκάλου. Εἰς τὸ γράφειν ἐξήτει τὸ τέλειον. Πολλάκις τὰ γραφόμενά του τὰ ἐξύγιζεν τόσον ὥστε οὔτε μία φράσις νὰ καθίσταται περιττὴ ἢ ἐλλιπής. Ἐπίσης δὲν ὠμίλει ἢ ἔγραψεν ἐκ τοῦ προχείρου ἀλλὰ κατόπιν πολλῆς σκέψεως και περισυλλογῆς.

Σχεδὸν ὅλαι αἱ διαλέξεις του μετὰ τὸ πέρας αὐτῶν ἦσαν κείμενα ἔτοιμα πρὸς δημοσίευσιν. Κάποτε καθηγητῆς τῆς ἱστορίας τοῦ Harvard ἠρώτησεν τὸν ἀδελφὸν του Ἰωάννην, τὸν ἐπίσης διακεκρωμένον φιλόλογον και ἀπόφοιτον τοῦ ἰδίου Πανεπιστημίου τὸ ἐξῆς: «Ὅλα ὅσα γράφει ὁ ἀδελφός σας Κωνσταντῖνος τὰ πιστεύει;» Καὶ ἡ ἀπάντησίς του ἦτο: «Ναί. Μέχρι και τὸ τελευταῖον κόμμα!».

Ἠγάπα μετὰ πάθους κάθε τι τὸ κλασσικὸν και Ἑλλη-νικόν. Εὔρισκεν ψυχικὴν γαλήνην και ἄφατον χαρὰν και ἀνεπτέρουτο τὸ πνεῦμα του και ὁ ἐνθουσιασμός του μελετῶν τοὺς κλασσικοὺς συγγραφεὶς τῆς ἀρχαιότητος, ἀλλὰ και συγγραφεὶς τῶν μεταγενεστέρων χρόνων, ὅπως τὸν Μέγαν Βασίλειον, τὸν Γρηγόριον Νύσσης, τὸν Γρηγόριον Θεολόγον, τὸν Ἰωάννην Δαμασκηνόν, τὸν Μέγαν Φώτιον, τὸν Εὐγένιον Βούλγαριν και ἄλλους. Εἶναι ἐκεῖνος ὅστις πρὸ δεκαετιῶν ἐμελέτησεν και μετέφρασεν εἰς τὴν Ἀγγλικὴν και τελευταίως ἐξέδωκεν εἰς δύο τόμους ἀνθολογίαν τῆς Φιλοκαλίας τῶν Ἱερῶν Νηπιτικῶν Πατέρων.

Ἀποτέλεσμα τῆς μελέτης αὐτῆς, ἀλλὰ και τῆς φροντίδος και ἀγάπης πρὸς τοὺς φοιτητὰς και πρὸς ὅλους ἐκεῖνους οἵτινες ἐνδιαφέροντο νὰ μάθουν σωστὰ τὴν Ἑλληνικὴν γλῶσσαν συνέταξεν και ἐδημοσίευσεν τὸ γνωστὸν Φιλοσοφικὸν Λεξικὸν εἰς τὴν Ἑλληνικὴν και Ἀγγλικὴν γλῶσσαν. Τὸ δὲ μικρὸν ἔργον του Ὁρθόδοξος Χριστιανικὴ Ὁρολογία (Orthodox Christian Terminology) διέπεται ὑπὸ τοῦ ἰδίου πνεύματος, ἐνδιαφέροντος και ἀγάπης πρὸς ὅλους ἐκεῖνους οἱ ὅποιοι ἐπιθυμοῦν νὰ ἀντλήσουν και γευθοῦν τὴν Ὁρθοδοξίαν και τὴν Ἑλληνισμὸν ἐκ τῶν ἀρχικῶν πηγῶν.

Τὴν ἀγάπην και εὐγνωμοσύνην πρὸς τοὺς εὐσεβεὶς γονεῖς του, ἀλλὰ και πρὸς τὰ ἀδέλφια του τὴν ἀπέδειξεν ὁ Κωνσταντῖνος ἀφιερῶνων μέγα μέρος τῆς ζωῆς του διακονῶν αὐτοὺς προσωπικῶς κατὰ τὰ δύσκολα ἔτη

τοῦ γήρατος και τῶν ἀσθενειῶν των. Ἐπὶ ἔτη ἐφρόντιζεν διὰ τὸν πατέρα και τὴν μητέρα του, τοὺς ἀγαπητοὺς ἀδελφὸν Ἰωάννην και ἀδελφὴν Φραγγούλαν. Δυνάμεθα νὰ εἴπωμεν ὅτι ἡ διακονία του πρὸς αὐτοὺς ἦτο πολλάκις ὄχι ἀπλῶς δύσκολος ἀλλὰ και πολὺ ἐξαντλητικὴ. Ἦδύναντο νὰ εἴπῃ τὸ τοῦ Ἀποστόλου Παύλου: *Αὐταὶ αἱ χεῖρες ὑπηρετήσαν ὑμᾶς.*

Ὁ Κωνσταντῖνος εἶχεν γνωριμίαν και προσωπικὴν φιλίαν και μεγάλην ἐκτίμησιν πρὸς τὸν μέγα σύγχρονον λογοτέχνην και εἰκονογράφον Φώτιον Κόντογλου. Τὸ μαρτυροῦν αἱ 92 ἀνέκδοτοι προσωπικαὶ ἐπιστολαὶ πρὸς αὐτόν. Ἦτο θαυμαστής τοῦ ἔργου και τῶν ἰδεῶν αὐτοῦ καθὼς και τοῦ τρόπου τῆς ζωῆς του, διὸ και εἰς πολλὰ τὸν ἠκολούθει. Ὡς ἐκεῖνος εἶχεν ὡς ἄμβωνα διαδόσεως τῶν ἰδεῶν του τὴν Ἀθηναϊκὴν ἐφημερίδα «Ἐλευθερία», οὕτω και ὁ Κωνσταντῖνος ἐδημοσίευε καθ' ἐκάστην ἐβδομάδα διδασκτικὸν ἄρθρον εἰς τὴν ἐκδιδομένην ἐν Βοστώνῃ Ἑλληνοαμερικανικὴν ἐφημερίδα «Ἑλληνικὸν Χρονικόν» (Hellenic Chronicle). Μάλιστα ἡ ἐφημερὶς αὐτὴ τὸ πρῶτον συνελήφθη και ἐσχεδιάσθη ἐντὸς τῆς οἰκίας Καβαροῦ ἐν Belmont ὑπὸ τῶν ἀδελφῶν Ἰωάννου και Κωνσταντῖνου Καβαροῦ και τοῦ ἐκδότου Παναγιώτου Ἀγριτέλη. Καὶ οἱ τρεῖς αὐτοὶ νέοι συνεδέοντο διὰ φιλίας και εἶλκον τὴν καταγωγὴν ἐκ τῆς νήσου Λέσβου. Τὸ ἰδιαίτερον διὰ τὸν Κωνσταντῖνον ἦτο ὅτι οὐδέποτε κατὰ τὴν ἐπὶ δεκαετιῶν συνεργασίαν των ἔλαβεν ἔστω και ἓνα δολλάριον ὡς ἀμοιβήν.

Τὰ πάντα προσέφερεν διὰ τὴν διαφώτισιν τοῦ ἀναγνωστικοῦ κοινοῦ ἀμισθί.

Κατὰ τὸν ἰδιον τρόπον συνειργάζετο και μὲ ἄλλας ἐφημερίδας και περιοδικὰ, ὡς ἦτο ὁ «Ὁρθόδοξος Τύπος», τὰ περιοδικὰ και ἐπίσημα ὄργανα τῆς Ἐκκλησίας τῆς Ἑλλάδος «Ἐκκλησία» και «Ἐφημέριος». Τὸ αὐτὸ συνέβαινεν και διὰ τὰ μεταφρασθέντα ἔργα του εἰς διαφόρους γλώσσας ὅπως Ἀλβανικά, Ἀραβικά, Φιλανδικὰ, Γαλλικά, Ἰαπωνικά, Ρωσικά, Σερβικά, και Σουηδικὰ. Οὐδέποτε ἐξήτησε κάτι τὸ ὑλικὸν διὰ τὰς μεταφράσεις. Ἡ χαρὰ του ἦτο νὰ βλέπῃ τὰ ἔργα του νὰ κυκλοφοροῦν εἰς παγκόσμιον κλίμακα. Τοῦ ἦτο ἀρετὴ δι' αὐτὸν αὐτὴ ἡ ἀμοιβή.

Ὁ σεβαστὸς διδάσκαλος ἦτο συνεργάσιμος μὲ ὅλους τοὺς ἀνθρώπους καλῆς θελήσεως, οἵτινες προσεπάθουν νὰ ἐργασθοῦν διὰ τὸ γενικὸν καλὸν τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας και τοῦ Ἑλληνισμοῦ. Ἐγραψε χιλιάδας σελίδας, ἀλλ' οὐδέποτε ἐναντίον προσώπων. Ἐσέβετο



τὴν προσωπικότητα τῶν ἄλλων καὶ ἠγωνίζετο διὰ τὰς ἀρχάς του καὶ τὸ «πιστεύω» του καὶ προέβαλλεν αὐτὰ θετικῶς μετὰ δυνάμεως πολλῆς.

Δὲν ἦτο ἀνθρωπάρεσκος. Ἀπεχθάνετο τὴν ἀνθρωπαρέσκειαν καὶ ἐθρῆνει διὰ τὴν κατάπτωσιν τοῦ νεοελληνισμοῦ ἐν σχέσει μὲ τὰς χονδροειδεῖς ἐκδηλώσεις τῶν ὑλιστῶν καὶ ἀπίστων, τὸ κυνηγητὸν τῆς εὐμαρείας, φιλαυτίας καὶ τοῦ εὐκόλου πλουτισμοῦ. Τὸ ζήτημα τῆς καταστροφῆς τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς γλώσσης τὸν ἐπλήγωσε βαθέως. Παρὰ ταῦτα ὅμως ἦτο ἀνθρωπος αἰσιόδοξος καὶ ἔβλεπεν ὅτι μελλοντικῶς οἱ Ἕλληνες θὰ ἀνανήψουν καὶ θὰ ἐκτιμήσουν καὶ θὰ ἀγαπήσουν τὸ ἔνδοξον παρελθὸν αὐτῶν καὶ θὰ ἐργασθῶν φιλοτίμως διὰ τὴν πνευματικὴν των ἀνόρθωσιν.

Ὁ Κωνσταντῖνος πάντοτε προσεπάθει νὰ ὠθήσῃ τοὺς φοιτητάς του νὰ ἀγαπήσουν τὰς κλασικὰς σπουδὰς, αἱ ὁποῖαι καλλιεργοῦν τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐσωτερικῶς καὶ δημιουργοῦν ἀνθρώπους «καλοὺς ἀγαθοὺς». Ἐβλεπεν ὅτι αἱ ἐκλεκταὶ διάνοιαι σήμερον στρέφονται πρὸς τὰς κερδοφόρους καὶ πρακτικὰς ἐπιστήμας καὶ εὐρίσκειτο ἐν ἀγωνίᾳ. Ὁ ἴδιος ἦτο ἀνθρωπος ἀπλοῦς εἰς τὴν συμπεριφορὰν καὶ ἐσαγήνευε τοὺς νέους διὰ τοῦ λόγου του. Εὐαρεστεῖτο νὰ συνομιλῇ πρὸς ὅλους τοὺς λίαν πεπαιδευμένους χωρὶς νὰ παραθεωρῇ καὶ τοὺς πλέον ἀπλοῦς ἀνθρώπους. Εἰς ὅλους εἶχεν κάτι νὰ προσφέρῃ ἀλλὰ καὶ κάτι νὰ διδαχθῇ ἐξ αὐτῶν. Πολλάκις ἔλεγεν, «διδάσκω ἀεὶ διδασκόμενος».

Παρομιώδης ἦτο ἡ ἀπέραντος μνήμη του. Ἐνεθυμῆτο λεπτομερῶς ὄχι μόνον αὐτὰ τὰ ὁποῖα ἐμελέτα, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὅσα ἤκουσεν ἀπὸ τοὺς διδασκάλους του πρὶν δεκαετιῶν. Ἐκείνον δὲ τὸν ὁποῖον ἐξετίμα ἰδιαίτερος, ὡς εἶπομεν ἀνωτέρω, καὶ ἠκολούθει εἰς πολλὰ ἦτο ὁ φίλος καὶ ἐμνευστῆς του Φώτιος Κόντογλου. Ὑπάρχουν εἰς τὸ ἀρχεῖον του μεταφρασμένα εἰς τὴν Ἀγγλικὴν καὶ ἔτοιμα πρὸς ἔκδοσιν πολλὰ ἔργα τοῦ Φωτίου ὡς καὶ λεπτομερῆς λαμπρὰ βιογραφία του. Τὸν ἐθεώρει ἄνθρωπον στερεόν, ἀκλόνητον καὶ γνήσιον τέκνον τοῦ Ἑλληνισμοῦ. Καὶ ἡμεῖς νομίζομεν ὅτι εὐρίσκειται εἰς τὴν σειρὰν Παπαδιαμάντης – Κόντογλου – Καβαρνός.

Ὁ Κωνσταντῖνος εἶναι ὁ νέος ἅγιος τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν ἀλλὰ καὶ Ἀγγλικῶν γραμμάτων. Καὶ ὡς ἐκεῖνοι οὕτω καὶ ὁ σεβαστὸς διδάσκαλος ἦτο γνώστης τῆς Βυζαντινῆς μουσικῆς καὶ συνέγραψεν τρεῖς ἐργασίας περὶ αὐτῆς. Οὕτω ὅσα ἐγράψεν θεωρητικῶς τὰ ἐφήρμοξε πρακτικῶς. Ἐπὶ δεκαετίας ἔψαλλεν εἰς τὸν Ἱερόν μας Ναὸν μελωδικώτατα καὶ κατανυκτικώτατα καὶ εἰς Ἁγιορειτικὸν ὕφος κατὰ τὰς Κυριακὰς καὶ μεγάλας ἑορτὰς καὶ εἰς ἄλλας ἱερὰς ἀκολουθίας.

Ὁ Κωνσταντῖνος ἦτο ἀνθρωπος τῆς προσευχῆς. Ἐκτὸς τῆς δημοσίας λατρευτικῆς προσευχῆς ἐφρόντιζεν καὶ διὰ τὴν κατ' ἰδίαν προσευχὴν πρὸς καλλιέργειαν καὶ τροφὴν τῆς ψυχῆς του. Ἀπαραιτήτως κάθε πρωὶ μετὰ τὴν ἔγερσιν ἐκ τῆς κλίνης εὐρίσκειν δίπλα του τὸ

ἀναλόγιον μὲ τὸ βιβλίον Ὁρολόγιον τῆς Ἐκκλησίας. Ἀνεγίνωσκεν τὸ συναξάριον, τὸ ἀπολυτίκιον, τὸ κοντάκιον καὶ τὸ μεγαλυνάριον τῶν ἑορταζομένων ἁγίων. Τὸ ἴδιον ἐποίει καὶ κατὰ τὸ ἑσπέρας. Δηλαδὴ τὸ σπουδαστήριόν του μετετρέπετο καὶ εἰς κατ' οἶκον Ἐκκλησίαν. Ἐπὶ τῶν τοίχων τῶν δωματίων τῆς οἰκίας του ἦσαν ἀνηρτημένα ἱερὰ εἰκόνες προερχόμεναι ἐκ τῶν χειρῶν τοῦ μέντορός του Φωτίου Κόντογλου καὶ ἄλλων ἁγιογράφων. Πάντοτε δὲ ἐφρόντιζε νὰ εὐρίσκειται ἀνημμένη ἀκοίμητος κανδήλα πρὸ τοῦ Κυρίου καὶ τῆς Ἁγίας Θεοτόκου.

Ὅσοι δὲ ἐπεσκέπτοντο αὐτὸν διὰ συμβουλὴν ἢ ἄλλα θέματα ἠσθάνοντο, ὅτι ἐδῶ ἐγεύοντο τὴν ὑπαρξιν ἐνὸς ἄλλου κόσμου, ἐδῶ ἔπνεε ἄρωμα τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας μας, διὸ καὶ αἱ συζητήσεις ἐλάμβανον τόνον σε μὲν καὶ κατανυκτικόν. Ἀπὸ δὲ τὰ εὐλογημένα χεῖλη του ἠκούετο πολλάκις ἡ εὐχή: «Κύριε Ἰησοῦ Χριστέ ἐλέησόν με». Ἐδῶ εὐρίσκει κανεὶς ἓνα βυζαντινὸν χριστιανικὸν οἶκον μὲ ὀρθοδόξους ἐνοίκους. Ἦκουσα πολλάκις τὸν χαρακτηρισμὸν αὐτὸν ἀπὸ πολλοὺς ἐπισκέπτας του. Οἱ δὲ ἐπισκέπται οὗτοι ἐλάμβανον μεθ' ἑαυτῶν φεύγοντες, ἐκτὸς τῆς κατανύξεως καὶ ψυχικῆς γαλήνης, καὶ δῶρα τινὰ ἐκ τῶν βιβλίων του.

Περὶ τοῦ τρόπου τῆς νηστείας του τί νὰ εἴπωμεν; Ἦτο φοβερὸς εἰς τὸ θέμα τοῦτο. Ἦτο τηρητῆς ὄχι μόνον τῆς φιλανθρωποῦ ἐκκλησιαστικῆς νηστείας, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆς αὐστηροτέρας ἰατρικῆς τοιαύτης. Ὡς προητοιμασμένος ἀρχικῶς νὰ σπουδάσῃ τὴν ἰατρικὴν ἐπιστήμην ἦτο ἐνήμερος περὶ ὅλων ἐκείνων τῶν βλαπτικῶν τροφῶν καὶ τὰς ἀπέφευγεν ὅσον ἦτο δυνατόν. Πάντως ἦτο λιτοδίαιτατος ἀκολουθῶν τὴν ἀγωγὴν τῶν προγόνων μας ἰατρῶν καὶ δὴ τῶν Ἱπποκράτους καὶ Γαληνοῦ, οἵτινες ἐτόνιζον τὸ «πᾶν μέτρον ἄριστον», «τὸ μηδὲν ἄγαν» καὶ «τὸ σῶμα λέπτυνον», δηλαδὴ τὴν προληπτικὴν ἰατρικὴν (preventive medicine). Ὅταν δὲ ἐπρόκειτο νὰ συγγράψῃ κάτι σπουδαῖον ἢ νὰ δώσῃ κάποιαν διάλεξιν ἐτήρει αὐστηρὰν νηστείαν διὰ νὰ ἔχη διαυγῆ νοῦν. Εἰργάζετο νυχθημερόν. Εἰς τὴν προτροπὴν μας νὰ παύσῃ ὀλίγον ἐργαζόμενος καὶ εὐρη ὀλίγην ἀνάπαυσιν ἔλεγεν ὅτι ἠσθάνετο κούρασιν μὴ ἐργαζόμενος, ἐνῶ μὲ τὴν ἐργασίαν εὐρίσκειν ξεκούρασιν καὶ μεγάλην πνευματικὴν εὐφορίαν καὶ χαρὰν.

Εἰς τὴν ἐργασίαν καὶ εἰς τὰς ἀνάγκας του ἦτο αὐτάρκης, μὴ στηριζόμενος εἰς τὰς δυνάμεις καὶ βοήθειαν ἄλλων προσώπων. Εἰς τὴν μακρὰν σταδιοδρομίαν του ἔσχεν γνωριμίαν καὶ συνεργασίαν μετὰ πλειάδος ἡγετικῶν ἐκκλησιαστικῶν προσωπικοτήτων ἐνταῦθα καὶ ἐν Ἑλλάδι. Ἐξετίμα δὲ ἰδιαίτερος τοὺς πατέρας Γαβριὴλ Διονυσιάτην καὶ Φιλόθεον Ζερβάκον, εἰς τοὺς ὁποίους κατὰ καιροὺς ἐξωμολογεῖτο καὶ διὰ τοὺς ὁποίους συνέγραψεν καὶ ἐξέδωκεν εἰς τὴν σειρὰν «Σύγχρονοι Ὁρθόδοξοι Ἅγιοι» (Modern Orthodox Saints) δύο

τόμους περὶ τῆς ἁγίας βιοτῆς καὶ τοῦ πνευματικοῦ ἔργου αὐτῶν ἐν τῇ Ὁρθοδόξῳ Ἐκκλησίᾳ.

Πολλοὶ ἐκ τῶν συνεργα τῶν καὶ φίλων του προ ἔτρεπον τὸν Κωνσταντῖνον νὰ μεταβῆ καὶ ἐγκαταθῆ εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα, ἀλλὰ ὑπερίσχυσεν ἡ γνώμη ἐκείνων, οἵτινες προέτρεπον αὐτὸν νὰ παραμείνῃ εἰς τὴν Ἀμερικὴν καὶ συνεχίσῃ νὰ θέτῃ στερεὰ θεμέλια διὰ τῶν συγγραμμάτων αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν Ὁρθόδοξον Ἐκκλησίαν ἐνταῦθα, ὅπερ καὶ ἐποίησεν. Διὰ τοῦτο σήμερον ὅπου καὶ νὰ κοιτάξῃ κανεὶς εἰς τὸ διαδίκτυον βλέπει μετὰ χαρᾶς πολλοὶ νὰ χρησιμοποιοῦν τὰ ἔργα καὶ τὰς ἰδέας του.

Εἶχε πρόγραμμα καὶ διάθεσιν νὰ προετοιμάξῃ καὶ ἀποστέλῃ τὰ ἔργα του εἰς διαφόρους βιβλιοθήκας τῆς Ἀμερικῆς καὶ τῆς Ἑλλάδος. Οὕτω ἐτύπωνε καὶ ὠρισμένον ἀριθμὸν ἀντιτύπων ἐκάστου βιβλίου πανοδέτων εἰδικῶς διὰ τὰς βιβλιοθήκας. Καὶ μετὰ τῶν βιβλιοθηκῶν αἱ ὁποῖαι ἠγόραζον τὰ βιβλία του ἦσαν καὶ αἱ ἐξῆς εἰς τὰς ὁποίας ὁ ἴδιος ἀπέστελλεν τὰ βιβλία δωρεάν: Ἡ βιβλιοθήκη τῆς πόλεως Μπέλμοντ, τοῦ Πανεπιστημίου Harvard, τῆς Θεολογικῆς Σχολῆς τοῦ Τιμίου Σταυροῦ, τῆς Βουλῆς τῶν Ἑλλήνων, τῆς Μαρσαλείου Ἀμερικανικῆς Ἀθηνῶν, τῆς Μητροπόλεως καὶ τῆς πόλεως Μυτιλήνης, τοῦ Πλωμαρίου, τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριαρχείου Κωνσταντινου πόλεως, καὶ πολλῶν Ἱερῶν Μονῶν τοῦ Ἁγίου Ὁρους καὶ ἐν ταῦθα.

Ὁ καθηγητῆς Κωνσταντῖνος ἔζη τὴν μοναχικὴν ζωὴν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ καὶ πρὶν γίνῃ μοναχὸς εἰς τὸ μοναστήρι τῆς μεναοῖας του, τοῦ Ἁγίου Ἀντωνίου ἐν Ἀριζόνα, ὅπου τώρα ἀναπαύεται τὸ σκῆνωμά του, διὸ καὶ πολλοὶ ἀπεκάλουν αὐτὸν κοσμοκαλόγερον.

Ἡμεῖς πιστεύομεν ἀκραδάντως ὅτι ἠτοιμάσθη ἐκ τῆς Θεῆς Προνοίας ἐκ νεαρᾶς ἡλικίας καὶ ἐδωρῆθη εἰς τὴν Ὁρθόδοξον Ἐκκλησίαν, διὰ νὰ διαλάβῃ εἰς τὸν πνευματικὸν ἀγῶνα, νὰ καταστῆ νέος ἅγιος, ὁ πρῶτος Ἑλληνοαμερικανός, ὁ νέος ἀγιορείτης Νικόδημος τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου Ἐκκλησίας μας ἐν Ἀμερικῇ.

Ὁ μέγας εἰς τὴν σκέψιν, ὁ ἀπλοῦς εἰς τὴν ζωὴν Κωνσταντῖνος, ἐπλούτισεν τὴν Ὁρθοδοξίαν καὶ τὸν Ἑλληνισμὸν διὰ τῶν συγγραμμάτων του. Θὰ γίνῃ αἰσθητὴ ἡ ἀπουσία του ἀπὸ ἀνάμεσά μας, ἀλλὰ συγχρόνως θὰ πληροῖ καὶ τὴν καρδίαν ὄλων χαρᾶς, διότι ὄντως εὐρίσκεται εἰς τὰς ἀγκάλας τοῦ Κυρίου μας, ἐν χώρᾳ ζώντων, ἔχων παρρησίαν ἐνώπιον Αὐτοῦ καὶ πρὸς βεβύλων ὑπὲρ πάντων.

Ἄς εἶναι ἐλαφρὸν τὸ χῶμα τὸ καλύπτει τὸ ἡγιασμένον σκῆνωμά του καὶ νὰ εἶναι βέβαιος ὅτι τὸ ἱερόν του ἔργον ὡς διδασκάλου θὰ συνεχίζεται διὰ μέσου τῶν φίλων, φοιτητῶν καὶ μαθητῶν του καὶ τῶν μυριάδων ἀναγνωστῶν τῶν βιβλίων του καὶ ὅτι θὰ πολλαπλασιάζεται εἰς τὸ διηνεκές. Αἰωνία σου ἡ μνήμη σεβαστὲ καὶ πεφιλημένε ἅγιε διδάσκαλε.

Ἁγία Μαρία ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ

Ἡ πλέον Παρεξηγημένη καὶ Συκοφαντημένη Ἁγία Γυναίκα τῆς Καινῆς Διαθήκης

Τοῦ θεολόγου καὶ ἐκκλησιαστικοῦ ἱστορικοῦ – νομικοῦ Ἰωάννη Σιδηρᾶ.

Τὸ παρὸν κείμενον ἀποτελεῖ μίαν προσπάθειαν συνοπτικῆς ἐνημερώσεως τῶν ἀναγνωστῶν μας γὰρ τὸ ἐξ' ἀγνοίας καὶ ἀμάθειας σπιλωμένο καὶ δυσφημισμένο πρόσωπο Ἁγίας Μαρίας τῆς Μαγδαληνῆς. Τὰ εὐαγγέλια καὶ ἡ ὑμνογραφία τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου ἐκκλησίας μας θὰ καθοδηγήσουν τὴν γραφίδα μας.

† † †

Μεταξὺ τῶν γυναικῶν, οἱ ὁποῖες περιλαμβάνονται ἐν τῇ Καινῇ Διαθήκῃ, ἡ Μαρία ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ καταλαμβάνει περιφανὴ θέσιν. Εἶναι γυναίκα «θαυμασία», κατὰ τὸν χαρακτηρισμὸν τοῦ Νικηφόρου Καλλίστου Ξανθοπούλου. Στὴν δὲ ζωὴν τῆς ὑπάρχουσας πολλὰ θαυμαστά, ὅπως ὁ θαυμαστὸς τρόπος τῆς ἀπαλλαγῆς τῆς ἐκ τῶν ἑπτὰ δαιμονίων, ἡ θαυμαστὴ προσήλωση καὶ διακονία τῆς πρὸς τὸν Ἰησοῦ, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡ θαυμαστὴ ἀγάπη καὶ τόλμη, τὴν ὁποία ἐπέδειξε κατὰ τὴν σταύρωση τοῦ Κυρίου καὶ κατὰ τὴν ἐπίσκεψιν τῆς στοῦ κενὸ μνημεῖο του.

Τὸ πρόσωπο τῆς Μαγδαληνῆς κατέλαβε σπουδαία θέσιν στὶς σελίδες τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς γραμματείας καὶ τῆς ὑμνογραφίας τῆς Ἀνατολῆς καὶ τῆς Δύσεως, ἐπέρασε ἀκόμη καὶ στὴ σφαῖρα τοῦ θρύλου. Ἐθαυμάσθη καὶ ἐξυμνήθη ὑπὸ πολλῶν, ἀλλὰ καὶ παρεξηγήθη καὶ ἐσπιλώθη. Ὑπῆρξε, ὄντως, γὰρ πολλοὺς – τοὺς κυρίως ἁδαιεῖς – ἡ πέτρα τοῦ σκανδάλου.

Ἀπὸ τὰ κακόβουλα μυθεύματα τῆς ραββινικῆς φιλολογίας μέχρι καὶ τῶν μυθιστορημάτων τῆς ἐποχῆς μας, τὸ πρόσωπο τῆς Μαγδαληνῆς ἔγινε ἀντικείμενον βαναύσου δυσφημίσεως καὶ αἰσχροῦ κατασυκοφαντήσεως.

Ἔτσι, οἱ ἄτοπες καὶ φαντασιόπληκτες τῶν δῆθεν ἐμπνευσμένων ζωγράφων εἰκόνες τῆς Μαγδαληνῆς, ὡς πόρνης μετανοούσης, τὰ διάφορα μυθιστορήματα καὶ κινηματογραφικὰ ἔργα, ὅπως καὶ ἡ προσωνυμία τῶν κακόφημων γυναικῶν μὲ τὸ ὄνομα τῆς ἁγίας ἰσαποστόλου Μαρίας τῆς Μαγδαληνῆς, συντηροῦν μέχρι καὶ σήμερον τὴν πεπλανημένην γνώμην περὶ αὐτῆς. Γι' αὐτὸ ἐπαληθεύεται ἡ ρῆσις τοῦ ἀεμνήστου κ. Δυοβουνιώτη, ὅτι «ἡ δυσφημία καὶ ὅταν ἀκόμη εἶναι ψευδής, δυσκόλως ἐξαλείφεται ἀκόμη καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἴδιους τους Ἁγίους».

Ἡ Ἁγία Ἰσαπόστολος Μαρία ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ κατήγετο ἀπὸ τὴν Κώμην Μαγδαλᾶ ἐξ' οὗ καὶ ἡ ὀνομασία αὐτῆς «Μαγδαληνὴ». Προφανῶς ἡ Μαρία Μαγδαληνὴ ἐγνώρισε τὸν Ἰησοῦ κατὰ τὴν μετάβασίν του εἰς τὰ ὄρια τῆς κώμης Μαγδαλᾶν (Μαγδαλᾶ). Ἡ φήμη τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ὡς διδασκάλου καὶ θεραπευτοῦ ὁδήγησε τὰ βήματα τῆς Μαγδαληνῆς νὰ συναντήσῃ τὸν Χριστό, ὁ ὁποῖος τὴν

ἐθεράπευσε καὶ ἀπὸ τὴν στιγμή ἐκείνη τὸν ἀκολούθησε καὶ ἔγινε μαθήτριά του.

Σχετικὰ μὲ τὴν δράση τῆς Μαγδαληνῆς στὴ Γαλιλαία ἐλάχιστες πληροφορίες ἔχουμε. Οἱ περισσότερες πληροφορίες τῶν Εὐαγγελιστῶν γιὰ τὴν Μαγδαληνὴ ἀναφέρονται στὴν δράση αὐτῆς στὰ Ἱεροσόλυμα. Βασικὰ δὲ γεγονότα στὰ ὁποῖα μαρτυρεῖται ἡ παρουσία τῆς Μαγδαληνῆς ἀπὸ ὄλους τοὺς Εὐαγγελιστὲς εἶναι ἡ σταύρωση ἐπὶ τοῦ Γολγοθᾶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ καὶ ἡ συμμετοχὴ τῆς στὸ γεγονός τῆς Ἀναστάσεως τοῦ Κυρίου, ὅταν ἐπεσκέφθη τὸ κενὸ μνημεῖο αὐτοῦ.

Σὲ διάφορες ἄλλες σποραδικὲς περιπτώσεις οἱ Εὐαγγελιστὲς ἀναφέρουν πρῶτο τὸ ὄνομα τῆς ὁσίας Μαρίας τῆς Μαγδαληνῆς μεταξὺ τῶν ὑπολοίπων γυναικῶν. Ὑπάρχουν ὅμως καὶ περιστατικὰ στὰ ὁποῖα Μαρία ἢ Μαγδαληνὴ μνημονεύεται μόνη τῆς. Ὁ Εὐαγγελιστὴς Ἰωάννης συγκεκριμένα ἀναφέρει:

1) Ὅτι αὐτὴ ἦλθε πρῶτὴ στὸ μνημεῖο καὶ εἶδε ἀπομακρυσμένον τὸν λίθο τοῦ μνημείου.

2) Ὅτι ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ ἔσπευσε καὶ ἀνήγγειλε στὸν Πέτρο καὶ τὸν Ἰωάννη ὅτι ἀπεμάκρυναν τὸν Κύριον ἐκ τοῦ μνημείου.

3) Ὅτι ἡ Μαρία Μαγδαληνὴ ἐνῶ ἴστατο πρὸ τοῦ μνημείου κλαίουσα καὶ συνομιλοῦσε μὲ τοὺς ἀγγέλους, εἶδε καὶ ἄκουσε τὸν Ἰησοῦ, νομίζοντας μάλιστα ὅτι εἶναι κηπουρός. Ἀργότερα δὲ ἀναγνωρίζοντας αὐτόν, τὸν προσεκύνησε καὶ ἐνῶ ἀπεπειράθη νὰ τὸν ἀγγίξει ἄκουσε τὸ γνωστὸ «μὴ μου ἅπτου» καὶ ἔλαβε τὴν ἐντολὴ νὰ πληροφορήσει τὸ γεγονός τῆς Ἀναστάσεως στοὺς μαθητὲς.

Μέγα ζήτημα ὅμως γεννᾶται κατὰ πόσο Μαρία ἢ Μαγδαληνὴ ταυτίζεται μὲ κάποια ἐκ τῶν δύο γυναικῶν ποὺ ἤλειψαν τοὺς πόδες τοῦ Ἰησοῦ μὲ μύρο, ἀλλὰ καὶ μὲ τὸ ἐὰν εἶναι ἡ πόρνη γυναίκα ποὺ εὐεργετήθηκε ὑπὸ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ.

Ἡ πλάνη λοιπὸν περὶ τῆς Μαρίας τῆς Μαγδαληνῆς ἔχει τὴν ἀρχὴ τῆς στήν κακόβουλη, χριστόμαχη καὶ θεόμαχη ραββινικὴ φιλολογία, ἡ ὁποία παρουσιάζει συκοφαντικῶς τὴν Μαγδαληνὴ ὡς μοιχαλίδα. Τὸ δὲ γεγονός ἐπιπλέον τῆς μυρώσεως τοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἀπὸ μία γυναίκα κατὰ τὴ διάρκεια κάποιου δείπνου, ἀπετέλεσε τελείως αὐθαίρετα τὴν βάση γιὰ τὴν ταύτιση αὐτῆς μὲ κάποιο ἄλλο γυναικεῖο πρόσωπο. Σημειωτέον ἐν προκειμένῳ ὅτι τὸ γεγονός τῆς μυρώσεως τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἱστοροῦν καὶ οἱ τέσσερις εὐαγγελιστὲς.

Ἔτσι, ἐταυτίσθη τελείως αὐθαίρετα ἡ μυραλείψασα τὸν Ἰησοῦ ἁμαρτωλὴ γυναίκα στήν διήγηση τοῦ Εὐαγγελιστοῦ Λουκᾶ (7:36-50), κατ' ἀρχὰς μὲν πρὸς

τὴν Μαρία, τὴν ἀδελφὴ τῆς Μάρθας καὶ τοῦ Λαζάρου, ἐπειδὴ ὁμοιάζουν περιγραφικὰ τὰ στοιχεῖα τῶν δυὸ μυρώσεων, ἀργότερα ὅμως ἐταυτίσθη πρὸς τὴν Μαρία τὴν Μαγδαληνὴ, ἐπειδὴ αὐτὴ πάντοτε ἐξεδήλωνε ἐνθουσιωδῶς τὴν εὐγνωμοσύνη τῆς πρὸς τὸν Ἰησοῦ, τὸν ὁποῖο ἀκολουθοῦσε παντοῦ καὶ πάντοτε. Ἐφθασε μάλιστα ἡ ραββινικὴ ὑπουλὴ φιλολογία νὰ γράφει ὅτι ἡ ἀπαλλαγὴ τῆς Μαγδαληνῆς ἀπὸ τὰ ἑπτὰ δαιμόνια ἦταν στήν πραγματικότητά ἡ ἀπαλλαγὴ τῆς ἀπὸ τὴν σαρκικὴ ἁμαρτία καὶ ἡ ἐπιστροφή τῆς στήν ὁδὸ τῆς μετανοίας καὶ τῆς ἀγνότητος. Μεγάλῃ ὄντως φαντασιοπληξία.

Ἔνα εἶναι τὸ γεγονός: ὅτι ὄντως ὑπῆρξαν δυὸ γυναῖκες, οἱ ὁποῖες μυράλειψαν τοὺς παναχράντους πόδες τοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ὅτι μία ἐξ' αὐτῶν ὑπῆρξε γυναίκα ἁμαρτωλὴ ποὺ εἶχε μετανοήσει καὶ εἶχε ἀλλάξει βιοτή. Σὲ καμία ὅμως περίπτωση ἡ γυναίκα αὐτὴ, ποὺ τὸ ὄνομά τῆς δὲν μαρτυρεῖται στὰ ἱερὰ εὐαγγέλια, δὲν ταυτίζεται μὲ τὴν ὁσία Μαρία τὴν Μαγδαληνὴ, οὔτε καὶ μὲ τὴν Μαρία, τὴν ἀδελφὴ τοῦ Λαζάρου.

Σημειωτέον ἐν προκειμένῳ ὅτι κατὰ τὸν Στ' αἰῶνα ὁ πάπας τῆς Ρώμης Γρηγόριος ὁ Α' ἐταύτισε τὴν ἁμαρτωλὴ γυναίκα τῆς διηγήσεως τοῦ Λουκᾶ πρὸς τὴν Μαρία τοῦ Λαζάρου καὶ πρὸς τὴν Μαρία τὴν Μαγδαληνὴ. Μέγα λάθος. Ἄλλοι πάλι ἐταύτισαν Μαρία τὴν Μαγδαληνὴ πρὸς τὴν Μαρία, ἀδελφὴ τοῦ Λαζάρου. Καὶ τοῦτο ὅμως εἶναι τελείως ἀβάσιμον καὶ αὐθαίρετο. Σὲ κάθε περίπτωση Μαρία ἢ Μαγδαληνὴ εἶναι τελείως διάφορο πρόσωπο πρὸς τὶς δυὸ προαναφερθεῖσες γυναῖκες.

Ὅσον ἀφορᾷ τὴν προσωπικότητα τῆς ὁσίας Μαρίας τῆς Μαγδαληνῆς ὑπογραμμίσουμε παραπάνω ὅτι δὲν ὑπῆρξε ἁμαρτωλὴ γυναίκα, ἀλλὰ δαιμονιοζομένη, ποὺ ἐλευθερώθη ἀπὸ τὸν Ἰησοῦ Χριστό. Παρέστη δὲ ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ ὡς μαθήτρια τοῦ Κυρίου σὲ ὅλες σχεδὸν τὶς δημόσιες ἐμφανίσεις του, κατὰ τὴν σταύρωση καὶ τὴν ταφή του, ἀλλὰ καὶ στὸ γεγονός τῆς Ἀναστάσεως κατὰ τὴν ἐπίσκεψή τῆς στὸ κενὸ μνημεῖο τοῦ κυρίου, ὅπου ἐπληροφορήθη τὴν ἀνάστασή του.

Στὰ ἱερὰ εὐαγγέλια βεβαίως δὲν ἀναφέρεται ἐὰν Μαρία ἢ Μαγδαληνὴ ἦταν παρθένος ἢ ἕγγαμος, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὴν παράδοση τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου ἐκκλησίας ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ θεωρεῖται παρθένος, διότι στὰ ἱερὰ εὐαγγέλια δὲν ἀναφέρεται ὡς ὑπανδρὸς καὶ μετὰ τέκνων. Ἴσως τοῦτο τὸ γεγονός νὰ ἐξηγεῖ καὶ τὴν συνεχὴ παρουσία αὐτῆς πλησίον τοῦ Ἰησοῦ. Ἀλλὰ καὶ στήν ὑμνογραφία τῆς Ὁρθοδόξου ἀνατολικῆς



Ἐκκλησίας δὲν τίθεται θέμα ἀμαρτωλότητος Μαρίας τῆς Μαγδαληνῆς, οὔτε γάμου αὐτῆς.

Ὁ χαρακτηρισμὸς τῆς Μαγδαληνῆς ὡς «Παρθένου» ἀπαντᾶται καὶ στὴν Ὁρθόδοξη ὑμνογραφία μόνο μιὰ φορὰ στὸ ἀπολυτίκιο αὐτῆς, ποὺ ἀποδίδεται στὸν Ἅγιο Ἰωάννη τὸν Δαμασκηνό. Ὑπάρχει ὁμως καὶ ἄλλος χαρακτηρισμὸς ποὺ ἀποδίδεται στὴν Μαγδαληνή. Ὁ χαρακτηρισμὸς αὐτὸς ἐκφράζεται μὲ τὸν ὄρο «κόρη», ποὺ σημαίνει κοράσιο, παρθένος κοπέλα. Ὁ ὄρος αὐτὸς ἀποδίδεται ἀπὸ τὸν Ρωμανὸ τὸν Μελωδὸ στὴν Μαγδαληνή, σὲ κάποιο ὕμνο του.

Ἀξιοσημείωτο πάντως εἶναι τὸ γεγονός ὅτι ἐπὶ τῆ βάσει τῶν εὐαγγελικῶν μαρτυριῶν πληροφοροῦμεθα τὴν ἐμφάνιση τοῦ Ἀναστάσιου Κυρίου μας πρῶτον ἐνώπιον τῆς Μαρίας Μαγδαληνῆς καὶ ἔπειτα στὶς ὑπόλοιπες μυροφόρους γυναῖκες.

Σύμφωνα λοιπὸν μὲ τὰ παραπάνω, ὅσα γράφονται στὸ πρὸ ὀλίγου καιροῦ τυπωθὲν βιβλίο ὑπὸ τὸν τίτλο «Κώδικας Νταβίντσι» ἀναφορικὰ μὲ τὸ πρόσωπο Μαρίας τῆς Μαγδαληνῆς, καθίστανται μυθεύματα νοσηρῆς φαντασιοπληξίας. Ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡ ἀπεικόνιση τῆς Μαρίας τῆς Μαγδαληνῆς ἀπὸ τὸν γνωστὸ ζωγράφο Λεονάρντο Νταβίντσι μεταξὺ τῶν μαθητῶν κατὰ τὸν Μυστικὸ Δεῖπνο εἶναι ἐπίσης ἀβάσιμη καὶ αὐθαίρετη. Ἐπὶ τόσους αἰῶνες ἡ προπαγάνδα τῆς κακόβουλης ραββινικῆς φιλολογίας, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀβάσιμες καὶ αὐθαίρετες εἰκασίες τῆς παπικῆς αἰρέσεως ἔχουν παγιώσει στοὺς πιστοὺς μία στρεβλωμένη ἄποψη περὶ τοῦ ἄγνωστοῦ προσώπου τῆς ὁσίας Μαρίας τῆς Μαγδαληνῆς.

Εἶναι δὲ χαρακτηριστικὸ ὅτι τόσο μεγάλη ἄγνοια ἐπικρατεῖ, ὥστε πολλοὶ ταυτίζουν ἀκόμη καὶ τὴν γυναῖκα ποὺ ἀναφέρεται στὸ τροπᾶριο τῆς Κασσιανῆς μὲ τὸ πρόσωπο τῆς Μαγδαληνῆς. Εἰς τὸ τροπᾶριο τῆς Κασσιανῆς ἡ γυναῖκα ποὺ ἀναφέρεται εἶναι ὄντως ἡ ἀμαρτωλὴ ἀνώδυμη γυναῖκα τοῦ Εὐαγγελίου ποὺ μυράλειψε τοὺς πόδες τοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἀλλὰ σὲ καμία ἀπολύτως περίπτωση ἡ Μαγδαληνή. Τὸ τραγικότερο εἶναι ὅτι οἱ ἀδαεῖς ταυτίζουν καὶ τὸ ὄνομα ἀκόμη τῆς ὑμνογράφου Κασσιανῆς μὲ τὸ πρόσωπο τῆς ἀμαρτωλοῦ γυναίκας, ἐνῶ ἡ ἀλήθεια εἶναι πὼς ἡ Κασσιανὴ συνέγραψε ἀπλῶς τὸ τροπᾶριο λαμβάνοντας ὡς θέμα τὴν μετανουοῦσα ἀμαρτωλὴ γυναῖκα ποὺ μυράλειψε τοὺς πόδες τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

Εἶναι ἀκροτάτη συκοφαντία, βλασφημία καὶ ἀμαρτία, νὰ χαρακτηρίζεται ἡ ὁσία Μαρία Μαγδαληνή ὡς πόρνη, ἐνῶ εἶναι μία ἐκ τῶν Ἁγίων γυναικῶν τῆς ἐκκλησίας μας ποὺ ἐορτάζουμε τὴν ἱερὰ μνήμη της στὶς 22 Ἰουλίου ἐκάστου ἔτους. Φαίνεται πάντως πὼς ἐπαληθεύεται ἡ γραφὴ τοῦ ἀειμνήστου κ. Δυοβουνιώτη, ὅτι «**ἡ δυσφημία καὶ ὅταν ἀκόμη εἶναι ψευδῆς, δυσκόλως ἐξαλείφεται ἀκόμη καὶ ἀπὸ τοὺς ἴδιους τοὺς Ἁγίους**».

Ἀπολυτίκιον

Ἦχος α΄. Τὸν τάφον σου Σωτήρ.

Χριστῶ τῷ δι' ἡμᾶς, ἐκ Παρθένου τεχθέντι, Σεμνῇ Μαγδαληνῇ, ἠκολούθεις Μαρία, αὐτοῦ τὰ δικαιώματα, καὶ τοὺς νόμους φυλάττουσα, ὅθεν σήμερον, τὴν παναγίαν σου μνήμην, ἐορτάζοντες, ἀνευφημοῦμέν σε πίστει, καὶ πόθῳ γεραίρομεν.

Κοντάκιον

Ἦχος δ΄. Ὁ ὑψωθεῖς.

Ὁ ὑπερούσιος Θεὸς ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, μετὰ σαρκὸς ἐπιφοιτῶν Μυροφόρε, σὲ ἀληθῆ Μαθήτριαν προσήκατο, ὅλην σου τὴν ἔφεσιν, πρὸς αὐτὸν κεκτημένην, ὅθεν καὶ ἰάματα, ἀπετέλεσας πλεῖστα καὶ μεταστάσα νῦν ἐν οὐρανοῖς, ὑπὲρ τοῦ κόσμου προεβέβεις ἐκάστοτε.

Ὁ Οἶκος

Τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου ὁ Χριστὸς, ἀνύστακτον ἰδὼν σου, τῆς πίστεως τὸ ὄμμα, ἀγάπης τε τὸ φίλτρον τὸ ἀναπόσπαστον Σεμνῇ, πρώτη ἐμφανίζει ἐαυτὸν σοι, ἀναστὰς ἐκ τοῦ μνημείου, ὡκιστα ἐλθούση μετὰ μύρων, καὶ προσιούση σὺν δάκρυσι τῷ ἀπροσπελάστῳ, καὶ αὐτὸς σοι ἀμειβόμενος, τὴν τοῦ Πνεύματος θείαν ἐνέργειαν δωρεῖται, καὶ τῆς πρὸς τὸν ἄναρχον Πατέρα ἀνόδου ἐμφανίζει σοι βουλήν καὶ πέμπει δὲ σε, θεία εὐαγγέλια τοῖς κατεπηχόσι Μύσταις τῆς αὐτοῦ ἐγέρσεως ἀπαγγεῖλαι. Διδὸς μεγίστην πρὸς αὐτὸν ἔχουσα παρρησίαν, ὑπὲρ τοῦ κόσμου προεβέβεις ἐκάστοτε.



Λοιπὸν, ἔτσι πράγματι πρέπει νὰ βλέπομαι τὸ Χριστό. Εἶναι φίλος μας, εἶναι ἀδελφός μας, εἶναι ὅ,τι καλὸ καὶ ὠραῖο. Εἶναι τὸ Πᾶν. Ἀλλὰ εἶναι φίλος καὶ τὸ φωνάζει: «Σᾶς ἔχω φίλους, βρέ, δὲν τὸ καταλαβαίνετε; Εἴμαστε ἀδελφία. Βρὲ ἐγὼ δὲν εἶμαι... δὲν βαστάω τὴν κόλαση στὸ χέρι, δὲν σᾶς φοβερίζω, σᾶς ἀγαπάω. Σᾶς θέλω νὰ χαίρεστε μαζί μου τὴ ζωή».

Κατάλαβες; Ἔτσι εἶναι ὁ Χριστὸς. Δὲν ἔχει κατήφεια, οὔτε μελαγχολία, οὔτε ἐνδοστρέφεια, ποὺ ὁ ἄνθρωπος σκέπτεται ἢ βασανίζεται ἀπὸ διάφορους λογισμοὺς καὶ διάφορες πιέσεις, ποὺ κατὰ καιροὺς στὴ ζωὴ τοῦ τὸν τραυμάτισαν.

Ὅταν ἐμεῖς βρῖσκουμε κάποιον θησαυρὸ ἢ ὅ,τι ἄλλο, δὲν θέλομε νὰ τὸ λέμε πουθενά. Ὁ Χριστιανὸς ὁμως, ὅταν βρεῖ τὸ Χριστό, ὅταν γνωρίσει τὸν Χριστό, ὅταν ὁ Χριστὸς ἐγκύψει μέσα στὴν ψυχούλα του καὶ τὸν αἰσθανθεῖ, θέλει νὰ φωνάζει καὶ νὰ τὸ λέει παντοῦ, θέλει νὰ λέει γιὰ τὸ Χριστό, τί εἶναι ὁ Χριστὸς. Ἀγαπήσατε τὸ Χριστὸν καὶ μηδὲν προτιμήσατε τῆς ἀγάπης Αὐτοῦ. Ὁ Χριστὸς εἶναι τὸ πᾶν, εἶναι ἡ πηγὴ τῆς ζωῆς, εἶναι τὸ ἄκρον τῶν ἐφετῶν, εἶναι τὸ Πᾶν. Ὅλα στὸ Χριστὸ ὑπάρχουν τὰ ὠραῖα.

Γέροντας Πορφύριος(+1991)

Τὸ Κράτος εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα Ἀνεγείρει Τζαμιὰ, Ἐνῶ εἰς τὴν Ρωσσίαν Ἱερους Ναοὺς

Ὁ δήμαρχος Μόσχας παραχωρεῖ οἰκόπεδα εἰς τὸ Πατριαρχεῖον, διὰ νὰ ἀνεγείρῃ Ἐκκλησίας καὶ νὰ τὰς ἔχη «ἀνοικτάς» εἰς τοὺς νέους!

Εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα τὸ Κράτος, ἡ κομματοκρατία, ἡ δὴμαρχοι, δημοσιογράφοι βάλλουν ἐναντίον τῆς Ἐκκλησίας, κάμνουν ὅ,τι δύνανται διὰ τὴν ἀπομάκρυνσιν τῶν Θρησκευτικῶν συμβόλων ἀπὸ τὰ δημόσια κτήρια, ζητοῦν τὴν ὑπερφορολόγησιν καὶ τὴν ἀρπαγὴν τῆς Ἐκκλησιαστικῆς Περιουσίας, γλευάζουν τὸ αἷμα διὰ τὴν ἐκπλήρωσιν τοῦ Τάματος τῶν Ἀγωνιστῶν τοῦ 1821, προπαγανδίζουσι τὴν ἀνέγερσιν Τεμένους καὶ Τζαμιῶν εἰς ὀλόκληρον τὴν Ἑλλάδα μὲ χρήματα τοῦ ὑποτιθεμένου χρεοκοπημένου κράτους καὶ ὁ Δήμαρχος Ἀθηναίων ἀπαγορεύει τὸ «Χριστὸς Ἄνεστη».

Τὴν ἰδίαν στιγμὴν ὁ Δήμαρχος Μόσχας ἀνεκοίνωσεν ὅτι θὰ παραχωρήσῃ οἰκόπεδα διὰ τὴν ἀνέγερσιν Ἱερῶν Ὁρθοδόξων Ναῶν, τοὺς ὁποίους ἡ Ἐκκλησία θὰ πρέπει νὰ ἀνοίξῃ εἰς τοὺς νέους, διότι πιστεύει ὅτι ἡ Ἐκκλησία δύναται νὰ ἐπιλύσῃ πολλὰ προβλήματα τῶν νέων. Εἰς σχετικὴν ἀνταπόκρισιν τοῦ Ἐκκλησιαστικοῦ Πρακτορείου Εἰδήσεων «amen» ἐκ τῆς Μόσχας:

Σύμφωνα μὲ τὸν Πατριάρχη Κύριλλο, ἡ Μόσχα θὰ ἀποτελέσει τὸ παράδειγμα γιὰ ὀλόκληρον τὴ Χώρα ὥστε νὰ ἀλλάξῃ σύνολη ἡ εἰκόνα τῆς κοινωνίας γιὰ τὴ θρησκεία. Ὁ Δήμαρχος τῆς Μόσχας ζήτησε οἱ ἐκκλησίες νὰ ἀνοιχθοῦν στοὺς νέους, καὶ νὰ μὴ ἀποτελέσουν μόνον τόπο προσευχῆς. «Δὲν πρόκειται νὰ ὑπάρξῃ καμμία καθυστέρηση ἢ ἐμπόδιο» στὸ σχέδιο ἀνέγερσιν 200 Ὁρθοδόξων ἐκκλησιῶν στὴ Μόσχα, διαβεβαίωσε τὸ Πατριαρχεῖο ὁ Δήμαρχος τῆς Ρωσσικῆς Πρωτεύουσας κ. Σέργιος Σοβιάνιν τὴν 29ῃ Ἀπριλίου μετὰ τὴν ἐπίλυση ὀρισμένων διαφορῶν, ποὺ ἐπηρεασθήσαν τῆς ἐγκρισῆς ἀνέγερσιν νέων τόπων λατρείας. «Τώρα πρέπει νὰ προχωρήσουμε στὴ φάση ὑλοποιήσεως, δηλ. σχεδιασμοῦ καὶ οἰκοδόμησιν τῶν νέων ἐκκλησιῶν», τόνισε ὁ Δήμαρχος, θέτοντας τὰ θεμέλια ἐνδὸς ἐκ τῶν πρώτων Ἱ. Ναῶν ποὺ οἰκοδομοῦνται κοντὰ στὸ Θέατρο Νουμπρόβκα ὅπου τὸ 2002 ἡ κατάληψη ἀπὸ Τσετσένους τρομοκράτες κατέληξε σὲ αἱματοκύλισμα μὲ τὴν ἐπέμβαση τῶν Ρωσσικῶν δυνάμεων ἀσφαλείας.

Μέχρι σήμερον ὁ Δήμος Μόσχας παρεχώρησε στὴν Ὁρθόδοξον Ἐκκλησίαν 15 οἰκόπεδα καὶ σύντομα θὰ παραχωρήσῃ ἄλλα πέντε. Ἔργασίαι ἔχουν ἤδη ξεκινήσει σὲ ἄλλα 80 σημεῖα, προσέθεσε ὁ Δήμαρχος. «Μὲ τὸ τέλος τοῦ χρόνου—δήλωσε ὁ κ. Σοβιάνιν—θὰ ξεκινήσουν ἐργασίαι γιὰ ἄλλες 8 ἢ 9 ἐκκλησίες». Ἀπὸ πλευρᾶς του ὁ Πατριάρχης Μόσχας καὶ πάσης Ρωσσίας Κύριλλος τόνισε πὺς «200 ἐκκλησίες δὲν ἀρκοῦν, γιὰ νὰ ἐπιλύσουν συνολικὰ τὸ πρόβλημα, ἀλλὰ ἡ κατάσταση

θὰ ἀλλάξῃ ριζικὰ, διότι θὰ ἔχουμε τὴ δυνατότητα νὰ διακονήσουμε ἀνθρώπους σὲ ἐκκλησίες, οἱ ὁποῖες θὰ εὐρίσκονται πλέον σὲ κοντινὴ ἀπόσταση».

Γιὰ τὸ Ρωσσικὸ Κράτος, ἡ στήριξη τῆς Ἐκκλησίας εἶναι ἰδιαίτερος σημαντικὴ, γιὰ τὴν καταπολέμησιν πολλῶν κοινωνικῶν προβλημάτων, ὅπως ὁ ἀλκοολισμὸς, ἡ ἐθνοτικὴ βία, οἱ ἐκτρώσεις καὶ οἱ ἀμβλώσεις. Γι' αὐτὸ τὸ λόγο ὁ Δήμαρχος Σοβιάνιν κάλεσε τὴν ἐκκλησιαστικὴ ἡγεσία νὰ καταστήσῃ τὶς ἐκκλησίες ὄχι μονάχα χώρους προσευχῆς, ἀλλὰ ἐπίσης χώρους συνάντησης καὶ στήριξης γιὰ τοὺς νέους ἀνθρώπους καὶ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, ποὺ χρῆζονται ἀρωγῆς καὶ βοήθειας. Κατὰ τὸν Πατριάρχη Κύριλλο, ἡ Μόσχα θὰ λειτουργήσῃ ὡς παράδειγμα γιὰ ἄλλες περιοχὰς τῆς Ρωσσίας καὶ «ἂν ἐπιτύχουμε στὴν ὑλοποίησιν αὐτοῦ τοῦ προγράμματος, σύνολη ἡ θρησκευτικὴ εἰκόνα τῆς Ρωσσίας θὰ μεταλλαχθεῖ ριζικὰ».

Σύμφωνα μὲ στοιχεῖα τοῦ Πατριαρχείου, ἡ ἀναλογία μεταξὺ τοῦ ἀριθμοῦ Ἱ. Ναῶν καὶ Ὁρθοδόξων πιστῶν στὴ Μόσχα εἶναι ἓνας Ἱ. Ναὸς γιὰ κάθε 35 χιλιάδες κατοίκων καὶ σὲ ὀρισμένα δημοτικὰ διαμερίσματα γιὰ κάθε 150 ἢ καὶ 200 χιλιάδες κατοίκων. Ἀπὸ τὴν πτώση τοῦ ἀθεϊστικοῦ κομμουνιστικοῦ καθεστώτος στὶς ἀρχὲς τῆς δεκαετίας τοῦ 1990 μέχρι σήμερον ἔχουν ἐπισκευασθεῖ καὶ ἐκ βάθρων ἀνεγερθεῖ στὴν ἐπικράτεια τῆς Ρωσσίας περισσότερες ἀπὸ 23.000 ἐκκλησίες, ποὺ ἔχουν ἀλλάξῃ ριζικὰ τὴν θρησκευτικὴ εἰκόνα τῆς πάσαι ποτὲ μητέρας τοῦ σύγχρονου ἀθεϊσμοῦ.



Τὰ πρῶτα χρόνια ποὺ γνωρίσαμε τὸν παπα-Ἐφραίμ τὸν Κατουνακιώτη, ἀγωνιζόταν μὲ πολλὴ ζήλο στὴ προσευχή. Μιὰ βραδιὰ ἔπεσε στὸ κρεβάτι νὰ ξεκουραστεῖ λίγο καὶ μετὰ νὰ σηκωθεῖ γιὰ ἀγρυπνία. Οἱ δαίμονες πολλὴ φθόνο εἶχαν μέσα τους. Ἡ προσευχὴ τοῦ πάπα Ἐφραίμ ἦταν φωτιά. Ἔρχονται λοιπὸν, ἓνας ὀλόκληρος λεγεώνας, ἔξω ἀπὸ τὸ κελί του καὶ ἀρχίζουν φωνές.

Ἐυπνὰ τὸ καλογέρι φοβισμένο. Βάζει αὐτὴ, κατάλαβε δαίμονες εἶναι. Ὅλοι μαζί μὲ μιὰ φωνή: « Πόλεμος – Πόλεμος...». Νόμιζαν ὅτι θὰ τρομάξῃ.

Ὅμως τί κάνει τὸ καλογέρι; Σηκώνεται ἀπὸ τὸ κρεβάτι σὰν ἀστραπή. Ἀρπάζει τὸ τρακοσάρι (κομποσοκίνο), καὶ τοὺς ἀπαντᾷ καὶ αὐτὸς μὲ θάρρος καὶ δυνατὰ. «Ναὶ – ναὶ! Πόλεμος – Πόλεμος...».

Καὶ δώστου ἀρχινᾷ ἡ μάχη. « Κύριε Ἰησοῦ Χριστέ, ἐλέησόν με». «Κύριε Ἰησοῦ Χριστέ ἐλέησόν με τὸν ἁμαρτωλό». Ἐβγαλε τέτοια ἀγρυπνία ποὺ τὴν θυμόταν γιὰ χρόνια. Ἐλεγε κι αὐτὸς μετὰ εὐχαριστῶ στοὺς δαίμονες ποὺ τὸν ξυπνήσανε.

Γέροντας Ἀρσένιος ὁ Σπηλιώτης (+1983)

HOLY ZEAL

By Archbishop Averky of Jordanville (+1976).

I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I if it be already kindled? (Lk 12:49)

† † †



The chief thing in Christianity, according to the clear teaching of the Word of God, is the fire of Divine zeal, zeal for God and His glory—the holy zeal which alone is able to inspire man in labors and struggles pleasing to God, and without which there is no authentic spiritual life and there is not and cannot be any true Christianity. Without this holy zeal, Christians are

“Christians” in name only: they only *have a name that they live*, but in reality *they are dead*, as was said to the holy seer of mysteries John (Rev 3:1).

True spiritual zeal is expressed, first of all, in zeal for God’s glory, which is taught us in the words of the Lord’s prayer which stand at its very beginning: *Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*

Those who are true zealots for God’s glory glorify God with their whole heart—both in thought and feeling, both by words and deeds and with their whole life—and naturally desire that all other people should glorify God also in the same way; therefore, they cannot endure with indifference when in their presence, in some way or other, the name of God is blasphemed or holy things are mocked. Being zealous for God, they sincerely strive to please God themselves and serve Him alone with all the power of their being, and they are ready to forget themselves all the way to sacrificing their very life in order to bring all men to the pleasing and the service of God. They cannot calmly listen to blasphemy, and therefore they cannot support communion with and have friendship with blasphemers and mockers of the Name of God and despisers of holy things.

A striking and extremely clear example of such fiery zeal for God’s glory comes to us from the depths of antiquity of the Old Testament in a great Prophet of God, the flaming Elias, who grieved in soul when he saw the apostasy from God of his people, led by the impious King Ahab, who introduced into Israel the pagan worship of Baal in place of the true God. *I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. (1 Kgs 19:10).*

And behold, this holy zeal aroused him, by the power of the grace of God which reposed on him, as a chastisement of Israel which had apostatized from God, to “close the heavens,” so that *there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word. (1 Kgs 17:1; 18:42-45; Jas 5:17-18).*

This same zeal later aroused Elias to *slay the false prophets and priests of Baal (1 Kgs 18:40)*, after the miraculous descent of the fire from heaven on Mt. Carmel, so that these deceivers might no longer turn the sons of Israel away from the true worship of God. By the power of the same Divine zeal, St. Elias brought down fire from heaven, which *consumed the captains and their fifties (2 Kgs 1:9-14)* which had been sent by the king to seize him. That all this was in reality holy zeal which was pleasing to God is testified to by the fact that the Holy Prophet Elias did not die the usual death of all men, but was miraculously *raised up to heaven in a chariot of fire*, as if signifying his authentically fiery zeal for God (2 Kgs 2:10-12).

But even then, in the severe Old Testament, the Lord Himself showed to His true servant that one can have recourse to such severe measures only in extreme cases, for *the Lord was not in the great and strong wind rending the mountains and crushing the rocks, and not in the earthquake, and not in the fire, but in the voice of a gentle breeze (1 Kgs 19:11-12).*

This is why, when James and John, who were especially fervent in their zeal for the glory of their Divine Teacher, wished to bring down fire from heaven, imitating the Holy Prophet Elias (so as to punish the Samaritans who did not desire to receive him when He was walking through the Samaritan village to Jerusalem), the Lord forbade them to do this, saying: *Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them. (Lk 9:51-56).*

And nevertheless (let immoderate lovers of peace pay heed!), the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, Who said, *take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart (Mt 11:29)*, found it sometimes necessary to manifest great strictness and have recourse to severe measures. He taught us by this very fact that meekness and humility do not mean spinelessness and should not yield before manifest evil, and that a true Christian should be far from sugar-sweet sentimentality and should not step away in the face of evil which presumptuously raises its head; instead, he should always be uncompromising towards evil, fighting with it by all measures and means available to him, in order decisively to cut off the spread and strengthening of evil among men.

Let us recall with what harsh accusatory words the Lord addressed the spiritual leaders of the Hebrew people, the Scribes and Pharisees, condemning them for hypocrisy and lawlessness: *Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! (Mt 23:29)* and threatening them with God’s judgment.

And when words turned out to be insufficient, He applied action against the lawless ones in very deed. Thus, finding that in the Temple they, were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and money-changers were sitting, when He had made as it were a scourge of little cords, *He drove them all out of the Temple, the sheep also and the oxen, and the money of the changers He poured out, and the tables He overthrew* (Jn 2:14-15; Mt 21:12-13).

We know many other examples from sacred and Church history when mere words of persuasion turned out to be insufficient; and in order to cut off evil it was necessary to have recourse to more severe measures and decisive acts. But it is essential that in such cases there should really be in a person only pure and holy zeal for God's glory, without any admixture of self-love or any other strivings of human passions which only hide themselves behind a supposedly holy zeal for God!

In the history of the Church, the great hierarch of Christ, Nicholas the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia, whose memory we celebrate in December, has become glorious by just such an authentically holy zeal, with a decisive irreconcilability towards evil. Who does not know this wondrous hierarch of Christ?

The most characteristic feature of St. Nicholas, which has given him such glory, is his extraordinary Christian mercy; many Orthodox people refer to him "Nicholas the Merciful," a title based on the facts of his life and the numberless cases of his help to men. But once this great hierarch, so glorious for his mercy toward his neighbor, performed an act which disturbed many and continues to disturb them even now, even though its authenticity is witnessed by the Church tradition contained in our iconography and Divine services.

According to tradition, St. Nicholas took part in the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea, which brought forth a condemnation of the heretic Arius, who denied the Divinity of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, the Son of God. During the disputes which occurred in connection with this, St. Nicholas could not listen with indifference to the blasphemous speeches of the arrogant heretic Arius, possessed by pride, who demeaned the Divine dignity of the Son of God, and before the whole Council he struck him in the face with his hand.

This evoked such a general consternation that the Fathers of the Council decreed that the bold hierarch be deprived of hierarchical rank. But in that very night they were made to understand by a wondrous vision: they saw how the Lord Jesus Christ gave St. Nicholas His Holy Gospel, and the Most Pure Mother of God placed upon his shoulders the episcopal omophorion. And then they understood that St.

Nicholas was guided in his act not by any evil, passionately sinful motives, but solely by pure, holy zeal for God's glory. And they forgave the hierarch, abrogating their sentence against him.

By citing such a picturesque example, we do not in the least wish to say that every one of us can or should follow this example literally; for any such person wishing to replicate the saint's example must be himself just as great a holy hierarch as St. Nicholas. However, this should absolutely convince us that we do not dare to remain indifferent or be unconcerned about the manifestations of evil in the world, especially when the matter is one of God's glory, of our Holy Faith and Church. Here we must show ourselves to be completely uncompromising, and we do not dare enter into any sort of cunning compromises or any reconciliation, even purely outward, or into any kind of an agreement with evil.

To our personal enemies, according to Christ's commandment, we must forgive everything, but with the enemies of God we cannot have peace! Friendship with the enemies of God makes us ourselves the enemies of God; this is a betrayal and treason towards God, under whatever well-seeming pretexts it might be done, and here no kind of cunning or

skillful self-justification can help us!

It is interesting to note how displeasing this act of St. Nicholas is to all the contemporary consenters to evil, these propagandists of a

false "Christian love." It is this "love" that is being utilized as the pretext to reconciliation not only with heretics, persecutors of the Faith and the Church, but even with the devil himself. All of them conduct their "business" in the name of "universal love" and "the union of all;" they are, after all, the fashionable slogans of our days. For the sake of this, these consenters strive even to refute the very fact of the participation of St. Nicholas in the First Ecumenical Council, even though this fact is accepted by our Holy Church and therefore must be respected by all of us as reliable.

All of this happens, of course, because among contemporary people, even those who call themselves "Christians," there is no longer an authentic holy zeal for God and His glory; there is no zeal for Christ our Saviour, zeal for the Holy Church and for every holy thing of God. In place of this there prevails a luke-warm indifference, an indifferent attitude to everything except one's own earthly well-being. Concurrently, there is an intentional forgetfulness of the just judgment of God which unfailingly awaits all of us, and of eternity which will be revealed after death.

And without this holy zeal, as we emphasized at the beginning, there is no true Christianity, no authentic spiritual life, i.e., a life in Christ. That is why this has been replaced now by all kinds of cheap surrogates, at times quite low ones,

So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth ... I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent! [Rev 3:16, 19]

which however often answer to the tastes and attitudes of contemporary man. And therefore such pseudo-Christians, skillfully covering up their spiritual emptiness by hypocrisy, often have great success in contemporary society, from which authentic spirituality has been rinsed out; at the same time, all authentic zealots of God's glory are despised and persecuted as "difficult people," "intolerant fanatics," "people who are behind the times."

And thus even now before our eyes is occurring the *winning* of the faithful [*Ed.*, an agricultural method developed by ancient cultures for separating grain from chaff]. Some will remain with Christ to the end, and some will easily and naturally join the camp of His opponent, Antichrist, especially when the hour of threatening trials will come for our faith, when precisely it will be necessary to show in all its fullness the whole power of our holy zeal, which is abhorred by many as "fanaticism."

But at the same time one should not forget that, besides true holy zeal, there is also a zeal without understanding—zeal which loses its value because of the absence in it of a most important Christian virtue; that is the virtue of discernment, and therefore, in place of profit can bring harm.

And there is likewise a false, lying zeal, behind the mask of which is concealed the foaming of ordinary human passions—most frequently pride, love of power and honor, and the interests of a party politics. These passions play the leading role in political struggles, for which there can be no place in spiritual life, in public church life, but which unfortunately is often to be encountered in our time. Such unwarranted struggles are the chief instigator of every imaginable quarrel and disturbance in the Church, the managers and instigators of which often hide themselves behind some kind of supposed idealism. In reality, however, they pursue only their own personal aims, striving to please not God but their own self-concern, and being zealous not for God's glory but for their own glory and the glory of the colleagues and partisans of their party.

All of this, it goes without saying, is profoundly foreign to true holy zeal, hostile to it, is sinful and criminal, for it only compromises our Holy Faith and Church!

And so, the choice is before us: are we with Christ or Antichrist? *The time is near* (Rev 22:10)—thus did even the holy Apostles warn us Christians. And if it was "near" then, in Apostolic times, how much "nearer" has it become now, in our ominous days of manifest apostasy from Christ and persecution against our Holy Faith and Church?

And if we firmly resolve in these fateful days to remain with Christ, not in words only but in deeds as well, it is absolutely indispensable right now, without putting it off, to break off even bond of friendship and every form of communion with the servants of the approaching Antichrist. The evil one and his many servants have enlisted so many

of them in the contemporary world, under lying pretexts of universal peace" and "prosperity;" and especially must one free oneself unconditionally from every subservience to them and dependence on them, even if this might be bound up with detriment to our earthly well-being or even with danger for our earthly life itself. Eternity is more important than our brief existence on earth, and it is precisely for it that we must prepare ourselves!

And therefore, only Holy Zeal for God, for Christ, without any admixture or any kind of slyness or ambiguous cunning politics, must guide us in all deeds and actions. Otherwise, a stern sentence threatens us: *Because thou art neither hot nor cold, I will vomit thee out of My mouth.* (Rev 3:16).

Be zealous, therefore, and repent! (Rev 3:19). Amen.



A great while after St. Athanasios of Mt. Athos had started constructing the Great Lavra (c. 961), he faced a great economic difficulty; he had neither the money to pay the craftsmen's wages, nor did he have any food. So he started out for Karyes, the Holy Mountain's capital, to find out what he ought to do.

After he had walked for two hours, suddenly there appeared before him a glorious lady, who asked him, "Abba Athanasios, where are you going? Why have you abandoned the project which you have started, a project which pleases God? Go back and finish it!"

Astonished, he looked at her with awe and asked, "Who are you? My lady, how do you know me, and how do you order me to return? With what can I continue the monastery's construction, since no means are left for it?"

Then she told him that she was the Mother of God. She ordered him to return, and she promised that she would take care of the money and the food supplies. The saint asked her to give him a sign in confirmation of this. "Here, hit with your staff this rock," she told him, and immediately fresh water sprang from the rock—which to this day is still flowing.

Saint Athanasios returned to his monastery where he found money, and his storage bins were full of food, even as the Theotokos had promised. With renewed desire and zeal he continued, and soon the monastery was completed (963), and he gave thanks and glory many times to her blessed name.

From "An Athonite Gerontikon"

[*St. Athanasios of Mt. Athos is commemorated on July 5th*]

ARE CHRISTIANS PREPARED FOR PERSECUTION?

By James Hitchcock, professor of history at Saint Louis University.

From the Editor: Even though this article's author is a non-Orthodox Christian, his views correctly bring to attention the increasingly hostile environment within which Christianity exists today, even in the most democratic of all nations. It is certainly a timely reminder for all those whose duties include leading His flock. Christians all over the world are being subjected to an environment of increasing persecution which is abundantly evident domestically as well. The "free-minded" leaders of this persecutory movements carry on their work with complete disregard as to how this great nation was created and the Christian roots of America's forefathers.

† † †

Authentic religion, precisely because it penetrates so deeply into the being of its adherents, has the capacity to inspire either great love and devotion or great hatred, sometimes one transforming itself into the other. At certain times in history that suppressed hatred bursts out violently, in systematic and frenzied attempts to, as Voltaire is supposed to have urged, "Crush the infamous thing." Such was the French Revolution, the triumph of Communism in Russia, and other episodes.

While particular justifications are offered for this frenzy of annihilation—the privileges of the clergy, ecclesiastical wealth—beneath it all is something which no degree of "reform," nor attempts by Christians to be accommodating, could ever expunge. This something is the hatred of a system of beliefs which calls each man's life into question at every moment, which reminds people of the infinite God who judges their every action. It is this which finally is intolerable to a certain kind of mind, which senses that it will not be at peace with itself until every vestige of this transcendent claim has been eradicated.

The often sadistic violence of the French Revolution seemingly betrayed the cool rationality which the Enlightenment proposed. But not the least of the Enlightenment's inadequacies was that it did not understand the irrational forces which it was helping to unleash. Today the tradition of the Enlightenment appears to have reached its end in the murky half-light of "post-modernism." However, classical Enlightenment critiques of Christianity—that it is superstitious and repressive—are now invoked with more effect than at any time in the past two hundred years, and with the same potential for irrational violence.

Among the numerous "stories" which the media ignore are the acts of vandalism directed at churches, occurrences which seem to have become so common as to be treated almost routinely. To date this is about as far as the enemies of religion have gone in inflicting physical harm.

But the frenzied symbolic assaults on religion are numerous and frightening, revealing as they do the barely suppressed violence which its enemies harbor and which, it is fair to judge, they would eagerly act out in life if given the opportunity.

The hateful blasphemies of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence in San Francisco are merely one example. Frenzied blasphemy—the mocking of sacred symbols, the association of those symbols with the sickest kind of pornography—reveals the depth of the violent hatred because it represents an assault in some ways worse than the desire to do bodily harm. It aims to annihilate the sacred core of the believer's very being. It is a mentality in which the actual killing of individuals would be almost an anti-climax.

It is one of the supreme ironies of an age awash in ironies that it is Christians who are now routinely accused of being hateful, of fomenting violence, even as the guardians of public opinion carefully conceal from view the true mentality of the anti-Christians. (Thus the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence are presented merely as a group of merry pranksters who do what they do in order to raise money for charity.)

One of the results of the style of [Roman Catholic] episcopal leadership which has prevailed in America for three decades is that much, although not all, of this hatred has been diverted away from the Roman Catholic Church and towards those Protestants who can be called Fundamentalists. It is now treated as merely self-evident that the latter are hate-filled and intolerant, while the Roman Catholic Church is assessed in each particular situation, showing promise of change in some areas, intransigent in others. More than one bishop has probably prayed quietly, "Thank God for Pat Robertson. Let them pick on him rather than me."

How is it possible that anti-Christian bigotry is so strong in a society which is apparently the most religious in the Western world? In part the answer is that the very strength of religion inevitably provokes hatred; where it is weak it is simply ignored. On the other hand, Christianity is also not perceived as truly powerful. Thus religion is hated for its alleged oppressiveness but at the same time is not feared, the classic predicament of those Western monarchies where revolution occurred (England in the 1640's, France in the 1790's, Russia in 1917).

The single greatest enemy of a vibrant Christianity in the United States is not its proclaimed opponents but the deep, seemingly ineradicable complacency of its own adherents, a complacency which is to a great extent abetted, even actively fostered, by the clergy themselves. Most American Christians, including some who are ostensibly orthodox, live by the assumption that one espouses a religion in order to make one's life richer and more satisfying. The ultimate test is whether, like everything in the culture is supposed to do, it makes the individual "feel good about himself."

Most professed believers cannot conceive of why it should ever be necessary to make sacrifices for their religion, which is why there is almost total indifference to the fate of persecuted believers during one of the great ages of religious persecution in the history of the world.

Christians are now completely on the defensive in Western society in terms of their beliefs. Public discussion of religion is often casually hostile, and those who profess to believe are often apologetic in the popular sense of that word. As the events at Littleton, Colorado showed, public agencies like schools are tolerant of all kinds of deviant behavior, even as they are increasingly vigilant against the “intrusion” of religion into the public square. While there may be no systematic pattern of discrimination in employment, it would be a brave (or foolish) person who would talk openly in a job interview about deeply held religious beliefs. In the academy, including institutions which are nominally Christian, such discrimination is often taken for granted.

This is merely the beginning of a process which is likely to get worse. Looking at the situation through purely human eyes, it is likely that, as the reality of this hostility finally begins to dawn on comfortable Christians, and the price of their faith keeps getting higher, most will simply fall away, abandoning a faith which has become a handicap instead of a support.

In an important sense the real battle now is not between believers and overt secularists but between orthodox and liberal Christians, a reality which is at its starkest in Protestantism but which is also present in the Roman Catholic Church [*Ed.*, and in the Orthodox Church as well]. Because the Fundamentalists remind them of what they once were, and perhaps ought still to be, liberal Protestant leadership regards their orthodox fellow Christians as the single greatest enemy of the human race. People who boast of their ability to “reach out” towards the despised and rejected have been the most effective soldiers in the war to demonize and marginalize orthodox believers, to the point where the National Council of Churches [*Ed.*, a very liberal organization] is a public apologist for religious persecution throughout the world. Liberal Christianity is finally at the point of abandoning any claim about the unique importance of Jesus Christ in the economy of salvation, and this will merely intensify its view of orthodoxy as dangerous.

Especially in view of the nation’s apparent indifference (if not worse) to the scandalous behavior of its president, some orthodox believers are in a state of discouragement, to the point of urging withdrawal from the public square into a kind of monasticism which will try to keep the faith alive for a better day. But in this atmosphere it is well to recall the Church’s wisdom that not all are called to the monastic life and that the degree to which the monks of the Dark Ages simply huddled in their monasteries has been exag-

gerated—many of them were missionaries, bishops, even royal officials.

One major argument for believers remaining active in the public sphere is the explanation (excuse?) which Evelyn Waugh gave for his seemingly un-Christian behavior—how much worse it would be if there were no active Christian presence. Those who know the truth have an obligation in justice to, for example, the unborn, which they are not free to abandon.

Those who advocate a strategy of quasi-monastic withdrawal also underestimate the strength of the enemy. Jerry Falwell said all that needs to be said on the subject when he explained that Evangelicals began entering politics because the government would not let them alone. There is no place in the modern world where anyone can hide.

Thus Christians are obligated to continue the public struggle, no matter how much obloquy [*Ed.*, calumny] it continues to bring down on them, even as they are obligated to storm heaven with their prayers. A major need is preparing Christians to live in an environment of hostility, increasing discrimination, possibly even of persecution. But this is perhaps the most severe of the many pastoral tasks presently being neglected.



Above all, do not forget prayer. Kneel at night before the icons to say your prayers. Feel that you are condemned by your sins before the feet of Christ, and implore Him: *My Lord, Thou who became man for me, Thou wast reviled, Thou wast mocked, Thou wast spat upon, Thou wast scourged, Thou didst wear a crown of thorns, Thou wast crucified, Thou didst pour out Thy precious Blood: whereas I have defiled Thine image by my sins, I implore Thee and entreat Thee, condemn me not, give me time for repentance and confession, that I may weep for my sins. Help me, O my God, because, by myself, without grace, I can do nothing.*

Every night, before lying in bed to go to sleep, reflect on how your whole day passed. Think if you pleased or grieved God. Your conscience will inform you. If you are not pleased, say, “since I am not pleased with myself, how shall God be?” And try continuously to correct yourself, so that you will not grieve God. A conscience without censure is either pure, or callous and hardened.

Never despair. For God, there is no unforgiveable sin. His compassion and mercy is an abyss. Pride and despair are from the devil. Why despair, since there is a God Who is long-suffering? ... Despair is a great sin, it is unbelief.

Elder Ieronymos of Aigina (+1966)

ABORTION AND THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

By Joe Sobran, "Sobran's Newsletter," August 24, 2000.

In his famous essay "Politics and the English Language," George Orwell analyzed the corrupting influence of dishonest politics on the way we speak and think. There is no better example than the effect abortion has had on our language.

Though abortion—including the killing of viable infants at the verge of birth—is now a sacrament of the Democratic party, nobody admits to being "pro-abortion"; they are "pro-choice." This is an obvious lie. The right to choose anything presupposes the right to live. The child, fetus, embryo, or whatever you want to call the entity growing within its mother's womb has no "choice" about being killed. It will never have a choice about anything.

The pro-abortion side is pro-abortion in the same way that advocates of slavery were pro-slavery. "Oh," they protest, "but we don't insist that everyone get an abortion; we only want people—that is, mothers—to have a choice!" Then nobody was pro-slavery either, since nobody insisted that every white man own a slave; they were "pro-choice." They wanted each white man to be "free" to decide whether to buy slaves; or they wanted every state to decide whether to permit slavery. Of course they overlooked the obvious fact that the slaves themselves had no choice; in their minds this was irrelevant.

The bad conscience of the pro-aborters shows in their studious avoidance of the word kill to describe what abortion is. Why be coy about it? We don't mind speaking of "killing" when we kill lower life forms. Lawn products kill weeds; mouthwashes kill germs; insecticides kill bugs; mousetraps kill mice. If the human fetus is an insignificant little thing, why shrink from saying an abortion kills it? But the pro-abortion side prefers the evasive euphemism that abortion "terminates a pregnancy."

As Orwell noted, dishonest people instinctively prefer the abstract to the concrete. Abstract language avoids creating unpleasant mental images that might cause horror and shame; concrete language may remind us of what we are really doing. This is why military jargon dehumanizes the targets of bombs and artillery: so that soldiers and pilots won't vividly imagine the men, women, and children they are killing. Part of the job of military leadership is to anesthetize the consciences of fighting men. And political leaders (who usually start the wars in the first place) do their part by describing the bombing of cities as "defending freedom."

In the modern world people are trained to avoid looking directly at the effects of violence they commit or sanction. If possible, the killing is delegated to specialists, who themselves are increasingly remote from their victims—as in recent U.S.

bombings of Iraq and Yugoslavia, where American casualties were nearly zero. Most of us don't mind if our military kills people on the other side of the world; we feel no pain, even vicariously. We may even buy the official explanation that our bombs are "preventing another Holocaust." It may seem otherwise to the Iraqis and Slavs on whose homes those bombs are falling.

But just as the news media refrain from showing us what those bombs actually do, they never show us what an abortion looks like. They even refuse to carry ads by abortion opponents, on grounds that pictures of slaughtered fetuses are in "bad taste." They certainly are in bad taste; all atrocities are. But the media are willing to show some atrocities, as in the killing fields of Rwanda a few years ago. Since we're forever debating abortion, why not let us see one? Why the blackout?

The answer, of course, is that the news media themselves are pro-abortion. They adopt the dishonest language of the pro-abortion side: pro-choice, fetus, terminate, and—my favorite—abortion provider (to make the abortionist sound like a humanitarian).

A few years ago NBC produced a sympathetic movie about a woman seeking an abortion—Norma McCorvey, the "Roe" of "Roe v. Wade." But when Mrs. McCorvey later changed her mind and became an active opponent of abortion, did NBC do a sequel? Unimaginable.

We have to keep our guard up at all times against political language, especially in seemingly bland journalism, that is subtly infected with propagandistic purposes.



Unfortunately, western rationalism has had its influence on certain Eastern Orthodox leaders—who are members of the Eastern Orthodox Church only in body. In spirit, they really belong to the West; which they consider to "reign" over the secular world. But if they were to view the West spiritually, to see it in the light of the East, in the light of Christ, then they would be able to discern its spiritual twilight. For the light of the intelligible Sun—the light of Christ Himself—is disappearing in the West; and a deep darkness is slowly setting in.

And all these gatherings and interreligious conferences are the work of the evil one; the leaders are engaging in endless discussions on issues that need no discussion, issues that even the Holy Fathers never addressed in the past. All these are meant to confuse and scandalize the faithful, and drive some into heresies and others to schisms, so that he [the evil one] can gain more ground. Ah! The misery and confusion they [i.e., the conferences, such as those of the WCC] bring to people!

Elder Paisios the Athonite (+1994)

RAISING CHILDREN

An interview Fr. George Romanenko, the priest of a church in the village of Borisovo in Moscow region and a well-known children's psychiatrist. (Source: the web pages of <http://www.pravoslavie.ru>, edited for content).

- **Father, you have been a priest for many years and still practice psychiatric therapy. Do you have a lot of patients?**

- Yes, a lot, but I don't treat them, I only provide some medical consultation and sort of social counseling, and then direct them further: send some to physicians, some to hospitals, and others to visit shrines.

- **Are children's mental illnesses wide-spread nowadays?**

- If we take into account boundary conditions, then many people can be called unwell. The percent of people with serious illnesses, for example, schizophrenia, does not vary, but the number of neuroses grows every year. By the time they reach their teenage, 90% of children have mental problems, either in a light or serious form.

- **And what causes it?**

- Firstly, it is linked with heredity and the state of health of parents; and our gene pool is constantly being undermined. Secondly, it has to do with the method of raising these children. And thirdly, the environment, such as the offensive and low mental capacity TV culture, all those scary cartoons along with meaningless teletubbies [*Ed.*, a late 1990s BBC children's television series—targeted at pre-school viewers—that revolves around the adventures of fictional humanoid beings], etc., discos... and so on; all of it aggravates the condition of those who are unwell.

- **What illnesses are most frequent and most serious?**

- You can't classify them serious or light, they are all serious. One child has terrors, another has habit spasms and someone else has emotional disturbances. A car broke down, and it doesn't matter whether it can't ride because the engine failed or its tires flattened, you still can't use it. By pubescent age the illness gets worse, and the person is already mature enough to produce a new ill generation.

- **Terrible picture. Does it mean that every year things get worse? Mentally unhealthy people can't give life to healthy children?**

- They can be born physically healthy, but the threshold of their excitability gets lower, they find it harder to resist an irritating environment, and their break-downs occur faster.

- **According to statistics, most of the children are sick, but the parents can often be unaware of it, because, judging by what you tell us, illness can often take a hidden form. How could one tell the signs of abnormality, what should parents pay attention to?**

- We should look out for fears, hyperactivity, absent-mindedness, special irritability, fussiness, children's sadism, strange behavior (e.g., a child passionately loves only one toy or constantly draws close to the same object). For example: a boy tortured a dog, a cat, and then decided to revenge his

friends who offended him. He took a stick, hammered nails into it and tried to gouge out their eyes. What to do? Shall we decide that it was just a childish prank and forget about it? Or should we be alarmed and try to find out how to prevent this kind of incident in the future? You should pay attention if a child is simply constantly misbehaving. Maybe you have problems establishing contact with your child, or maybe he or she has intracranial pressure due to, say, complicated birth. If you feel that there are problems in communication between you and your child, turn to an Orthodox-minded psychologist for a start, and if he recommends it and it is truly needed, then take him to a psychiatrist or children's psychoneurologist. Again, if and only if it is truly needed, you would be provided medical prescription and get recommendations on the best regime for your child.

- **What can we do to prevent children's mental illnesses?**

- The only way is raising the child properly.

- **If a teenager gets whimsical, aggressive, does not behave, gets oversensitive and contact with him is broken, but everyone around tells parents that it's alright, they shouldn't take it to heart, everyone used to be like that themselves... Can you trust such advice?**

- No, we didn't use to be like that. The mental state of people for each new generation, including teenagers, worsens. St. John Chrysostom used to say that the teenage years are the most difficult; no one can definitely say what kind of an adult a child will turn into. Only God knows. You should remember that at that stage you shouldn't irritate your kids, but you shouldn't do whatever they want either. There is a golden rule: to bring the kids up strictly but in love. Total control is unacceptable, the child is a free personality being loved by God. Parents should learn to be humble, patient, bear the difficulties in communication with love, but if a child's behavior goes beyond boundaries, a punishment, and at times severe, is called for.

- **Opinions are divided on the subject of punishment; some suggest that a child should never be beaten.**

- You should punish your child only as the last resort. If his behavior is extremely bad, he spits, swears at his mother and father, is careless with icons, you should repeatedly explain to him that such behavior is unacceptable, and if he continues to behave like that, he should be punished. The punishment must be effective and never be applied in anger; you may hit hard, preferably on his bottom, but just a few times and quickly. If you spank him lightly, just pretending you are hitting, he will grow up a masochist. You should do it quick and hard, from the heart. Let him scream, cry, don't talk to him, and later, when he's calmed down, explain to the child that you have to do it because you love him. Never say "oh forgive me it just happened." If after punishments the child doesn't want to change anyway, take him to an Orthodox psychiatrist. Sometimes the children can't control themselves at all, they are already sick.

- What should we avoid while raising our children?

Do not go to extremes. For instance, I once walked down the street and was startled by a woman bawling. I thought somebody was killed or something and ran towards her. Turned out it was a young mother “talking” to her two-year old child who was waddling in the puddle. Poor children, whose mothers spend their whole days shouting: don’t, don’t, don’t!...

A child doesn’t belong to his parents, he belongs to God. It is a separate and unique personality. And you should treat a child and bring him up as an unique personality, in the spirit of love and freedom. The gift of freedom, according to Holy Fathers, is even higher, than the gift of love. Raising a child, we should remember that we have an image and likeness of God in front of us. And while punishing or encouraging the child we should remember the same. Let us raise our children with love, patience, humbleness and gentleness, and not by constantly humiliating, offending, provoking and tempting them.

- Thus, is excessive supervision bad for children?

- Of course, anything excessive is harmful, you must know the limits in everything. It is important not to bully the child, so that he doesn’t become a drug addict, but equally, you shouldn’t let him manipulate you. How can you find the golden medium? How does one know when to punish a child, and when it is better to not do so? Dear brothers and sisters, the only compass, the only beacon you have is your love for your child. You will raise him in a manner that corresponds to your love for him. Your loving heart lets you know when you should punish and when you should forgive. Many people refer to different books, often providing contradictory advice. You cannot bring up a child like that. A child is raised by your heart, and regardless of how many pedagogic books you have read, how many useful lectures have attended, if you don’t love your child truly, you cannot bring him up properly.

Parents need special patience when their kids become teenagers. Try not to nag and control your children without an important reason. You should avoid suppressing the teenager too much. Approximately 90% of marriages that fail early and spouses that leave their home are usually associated with overwhelming parents’ control; this is especially true about mothers. The kids who are suppressed as teenagers, they grow up inadequately, they do not feel freedom, they do not feel God, they turn into a cowed animal. Don’t shout: “I don’t want you to ever meet that girl again!” Gently say ‘I don’t like it, I would like you not to do it, but if you insist on seeing her, well, do it in secret, but it would hurt me... I will pray for you.’ Pray to God about your children, pray in church, take them with you on pilgrimages. Try to become friends with your child.

We are very blessed to belong to our Orthodox Church; we have the Lord, the Absolute Truth, and it is thus easier for us to bring up a child properly. You can give a child a decent upbringing only in a family of believers, or at least people

seeking faith. Because neither psychologists, nor doctors and pedagogues, with all their experience, can grow in the children the spirit of kindness, love, chastity and compassion. Higher values can be imparted only by the Church.

- Father, I know a couple of families, where children have total freedom. They don’t have any duties at home, school-girls are allowed to be out late, they plan their days themselves, do their shopping themselves...

- Would you want your son to marry such a girl? I wouldn’t. Who needs a partner, who can only eat, drink and party? What about duties?

- But they study and are they good students...

- Being a good student is far from all. Once I worked as a paramedic, and I can tell you a story from my work experience. We were called to a home, where the head of the family, an old man, just died. We were met by his son and daughter, both with higher education; in general you could see it was a home of a well educated family. So they told us to take away that “corpse.” We told them that an ambulance does not take away dead people, and that they should themselves prepare their father’s body for funeral. They responded: “We don’t need him here, it is not nice.” We responded in shock: “What do you mean by ‘not nice,’ he is your father!” Then they asked us, if there were any special cases when an ambulance would take away a corpse. We naively told them that we were obliged to pick up a dead person if the body was found in a public place or factory, etc. So they dragged their father to the building’s hallway (where the common stairs of all the apartments are) and said: “Now he is in a public area, you’ve got to take him away.”

That’s “bare” education for you. To allow your child everything is a big mistake, it is a sin, because qualities like sympathy and kindness don’t grow in a person on their own. Watch the kids at school, whether they call each other offensive names, how aggressive they are, how cruelly they fight with each other. Higher experiences, thoughts and feelings have to be imparted on children. What good may possibly come out of a child who grew up totally free? He may grow up a lover of freedom, but without God in his soul. You ought to fight bad tendencies from the very start. A child must know the meaning of the word “no,” that there is some things which are forbidden to him. Of course there is no harm in him asking “May I?” once again.

- What is the best way for a single parent to raise their child?

- In an single-parent family, a child is developing incompletely. It is difficult for a woman alone to bring up a child properly, especially a boy, on her own. She can’t raise a man, because she is a woman. It is equally difficult to raise a daughter without a father as well. How would you give her an idea of a family, of a role of a woman, good relations in the family? Dear parents, treasure your family, your husband—the father

of your children; your wife—the mother of your children. Quite often, a couple breaks up over a worthless argument, matters which could be settled. Make up with your partner for the sake of your children, and God will reward you. If your husband left you, if he found a new family and doesn't want to have anything common with "his past," you should pray for him and try to spend more time with the grandfathers of your children. You should arrange it so that there will be some presence of a man in the house; this is not an invention of psychiatrists and psychologists, it is God's will!

- What is the best method to keep good healthy children the way they are?

- First and foremost there must be peace in the family. And the only way to have peace in the family is for somebody in the family to have humility. Secondly, show your child how you believe in God. Take him to Church, read good books with him. Thirdly, both parents and their children should be open with each other, so that the children wouldn't want to lie to their parents or cajole them. You can achieve this only by setting the example yourself. Don't tell your child that you can't buy him jeans because you have no money, then spend it on something else. You should be honest and tell him that the money you have has to be spent on something more vital; that is why you can't afford it now. It is very important not to lie in the family.

- Is the number of children in a family important for the mental health of a child?.

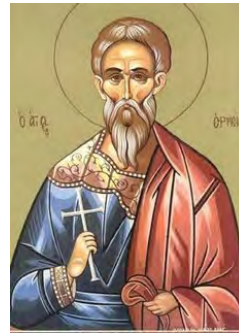
- Three is a necessary minimum. Children grow up as better people if there are many of them in a family. Everything is shared, everything is ours, we are a family. Everyone works, and learns to take care of others. Also, if you have many kids, you have more chances of spending your old age with one of them. If you have only one child, there is little chance that you would meet your old age surrounded by love and care. And in general, women are saved by child-bearing.

And you must remember something else which is important: God provides for the children. There exist no families with many kids that starve; of course this presumes able and willing fathers. God does not abandon children. So don't fear, have more children!

A woman once called me and told me that she was pregnant with her third baby and that her husband wanted her to have an abortion; her mother was also against the baby because of the lack of money. I told her to have her baby and give it away to our parish, we would raise it. Thank God, she had a daughter and named her Mashenka (Maria). The woman's husband was a driver. As soon as his boss found out that his employee had a third baby, he promoted him to his personal driver, the man's salary increased, and now they are much better-off, they have a car and a dacha, all thanks to Mashenka, who they thought would make them starve...

GOD'S REVELATION TO ST. HERMAS

From an Orthodox pamphlet, re-published by request.



One of the Seventy, he is mentioned in the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans (16:14). A Greek by birth, he spent a long time in Rome. He was bishop in Philippoupolis, and finished his life as a martyr. He compiled the very instructive book "The Shepherd" through revelations from the angels of God.

Hermas was a rich man, but fell into extreme poverty through his own sins and those of his sons. A man appeared to him, clad in white and with a staff in his hand, and told him that he was the angel of repentance, sent to him before the end of his life. The angel gave him twelve commandments:

1. To believe in God.
2. To live in simplicity and innocence.
3. To love truth and flee from falsehood.
4. To guard his thoughts in chastity.
5. To learn patience and magnanimity of soul.
6. To know that a good and an evil spirit attend every man.
7. To fear God, but not the devil.
8. To perform every good deed and to restrain himself from every evil one.
9. To pray to God in faith from the depths of his heart, so that his prayer might be heard.
10. To preserve himself from melancholy, the daughter of doubt, and from anger.
11. To try true and false prophecies.
12. To preserve himself from every evil desire.

St. Hermas is commemorated on May 31st. The holy Apostle endured much grief from the pagans for preaching the Gospel, but he died in peace.



The wife expresses love for her husband through obedience. She is *obedient to him exactly as the Church is to Christ* (Eph 5:22-24). It is her happiness to do the will of her husband. Attitude, obstinacy, and complaining are the axes which chop down the tree of conjugal happiness.

The woman is the heart. The man is the head. The woman is the heart that loves. In her husband's moments of difficulty, she stands at his side, just as the empress Theodora stood by the emperor Justinian. In his moments of joy, she tries to raise him up to even higher heights and ideals. In times of sorrow, she stands by him like a sublime and peaceful world offering him tranquility.

Elder Aimilianos of Simonopetra, Mount Athos

THY WILL BE DONE

Translated from "A Treasure Hidden Under a Bushel," by Sergei Nilus (+1930).

If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. [Jas 1:26]

How much self-deception there is on the path of acquiring piety. Some think that piety consists solely in a great number of prayers; others claim it lies in the accomplishment of numerous outward deeds unto the glory of God and for the good of one's neighbor; still others, only in the unceasing desire to attain salvation; some, only in the strict fulfillment of the outward rites or canons of the Church.

All this is good and necessary to a certain degree. But he is deceived who thinks that herein lies the basis and the essence of true piety.

True piety, which sanctifies us and completely dedicates us to God, lies in the fulfillment of God's true will at that time, in that place, in those circumstances in which God has placed us; it lies in the fulfillment of all that He requires of us. However many pious feelings and desires we may have, however many wonderful deeds we may perform, they will have no value in God's eyes and we shall receive a reward for them only when by these feelings, desires and actions we truly fulfill the will of God. Let a servant perform the most exceptional services in his master's house, but if he does not fulfill the master's will, then these deeds which his master does not require of him will be of no value, and his master, in all justness, will say that his servant is negligent in his duties.

True piety requires that we not only fulfill the will of God, but that we do it with love. God desires that all our offerings to Him be made willingly and joyfully. In all His commandments He first of all requires of us a clean heart, filled with love for Him. The love and mercy which our heavenly King and Lord has towards us are so measureless that we must place all our happiness in trying to be His most faithful and totally devoted servants.

This faithfulness and devotion must everywhere and at all times be steadfast, even in times of difficulty, in all that which is contrary to our opinions, intentions, and inclinations. To fulfill God's will we must be ready to sacrifice all our pleasures, our time, our freedom, our glory and finally, our life itself. To nourish within oneself such devotion to God and to express it in deeds; this is true piety. But because we do not always see the reason behind God's will, we are obliged to fulfill it through self-denial, as slaves, in blind obedience; but we must be wise even in our blindness. This obligation is essential for everyone. The most enlightened person, capable of leading people to God, has need of Divine guidance, even if he is completely ignorant of its designs.

Thy Will Be Done, on Earth as It Is in Heaven

Just as here on earth, so in heaven, nothing happens without the will and allowance of God. But people love God's will only when it is in accordance with their own desires. Let us love God's will alone—then earth will be for us like heaven. Let us thank God for everything, for all that is bad as well as for what is good; what seems bad turns into good when we accept it as being sent from God. Let us not complain about the path chosen for us by God's Providence, but let us seek there, according to our strength, signs of God's wisdom and goodness. In the movement of the celestial bodies, in the ordering of the seasons, in the affairs of human life everywhere the will of God is accomplished. Let us pray to God that His will might be fulfilled in us, that we might love His will, that we might delight in it, that it would root out our self-will and become the sole ruler of our hearts. For God's will alone is all good, pleasing, and perfect, and it is our duty to fulfill it.

Our Lord Jesus Christ said of Himself that He always did what was pleasing to His Father. Jesus Christ is our example and His Father is our Father. Let us, therefore, pray to the Lord that He would act in us according to His Father's will, just as He Himself acted; that He would mysteriously unite us to Himself and that we should desire nothing else than to do what is pleasing to His Father. Then everything in us will become a continual sacrifice to God, an unceasing prayer, a constant expression of our love for God.

Thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful... (Lk 10:41)

We seem to think that we have a thousand things to do, while we really have only one thing. If we do this one thing poorly, then everything else, even if it seems successful, will do us no good. Why are we concerned about so many things? Why do we increase our worries? Let us resolve to devote our attention and all our efforts to this one thing which has been given to us; let us, according to our strength, do what God's Providence calls and obliges us to do. Let us leave aside everything that has no relation to "the one thing needful," because it will only hinder its fulfillment.



Abba Moses said, "If a man's deeds are not in harmony with his prayer, he labors in vain." The brother said, "What is this harmony between practice and prayer?" The old man said, "We should no longer do those things against which we pray. For when a man gives up his own will, then God is reconciled with him and accepts his prayers." The brother asked him, "In all the affliction which the monk gives himself, what helps him?" The old man said, "It is written, *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*" (Pss 46:1)

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THE TRUTH OF ORTHODOXY

From "The Holy Fathers of Orthodox Spirituality", *The Orthodox Word*,
Vol. 10, Sept-Oct. 1974.

And when he served the Liturgy, his face became like an angel's and was penetrated with such light that it was not possible to look freely at him His mind was bright, clearly beholding the truth of God. He loved these truths with all the fullness of his heart. Therefore, when he would give a talk his words went from heart to heart and were always effective and fruit-bearing.

[From "The Life of St. Symeon the New Theologian"]

† † †

Never has there been such an age of false teachers as this pitiful 20th century, so rich in material gadgets and so poor in mind and soul. Every conceivable opinion, even the most absurd, even those rejected by the universal consent of all civilized people—now has its platform and its own "teacher"... As a result, philosophy has a thousand schools, and "Christianity" a thousand sects. Where is the truth to be found in all this, if indeed it is to be found at all in our most misguided times?

In only one place is there to be found the fount of true teaching, coming from God Himself, not diminished over the centuries, but ever fresh, being one and the same in all those who truly teach it, leading those who follow it to eternal salvation. This place is the Orthodox Church of Christ, the fount is the grace of the All-Holy Spirit, and the true teachers of the Divine doctrine that issues from this fount are Orthodoxy's Holy Fathers...

The Orthodox teaching of the Holy Fathers is not something of one age, whether "ancient" or "modern." It has been transmitted in unbroken succession from the time of Christ and His Apostles to the present day, and there has never been a time when it was necessary to discover a "lost" patristic teaching. Even when many Orthodox Christians may have neglected this teaching (as is the case, for example, in our own day), its true representatives were still handing it down to those who hungered to receive it.

There have been great patristic ages, such as the dazzling epoch of the fourth century, and there have been periods of decline in patristic awareness among Orthodox Christians; but there has been no period since the very foundation of Christ's Church on earth when the patristic tradition was not guiding the Church; there has been no century without Holy Fathers of its own. St. Nicetas Stathatos, disciple and biographer of St. Symeon the New Theologian, has written: "It has been granted by God that from generation to generation there should not cease the preparation by the Holy Spirit of His prophets and friends for the order of His Church."

Most instructive is it for us, the last Christians, to take guidance and inspiration from the Holy Fathers of our own and recent times, those who lived in conditions similar to our own and yet kept undamaged and unchanged the same ever-fresh teaching, which is not for one time or race, but for all times to the end of the world, and for the whole race of Orthodox Christians.