

# Orthodox Heritage

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

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

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BROTHERHOOD OF ST. POIMEN

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## THE PATH TO OUR SPIRITUAL PERFECTION

By Metropolitan Hierotheos (Vlachos) of Nafpaktos.

The most important work of the Church is to cure man. Therefore the Orthodox Church is a hospital, an infirmary of the soul. This does not mean that the Church disregards other domains of pastoral activity, since she aims at the whole of man, consisting of both body and soul. She cares indeed for the physical, economic and social problems as well; yet the main weight of her pastoral service is put on the soul's therapy, for when man's soul is cured then many other intractable problems are solved.

Some people accuse the Orthodox Church of not being very much involved in social problems. However, the Church does care about all matters which concern man. This is evident in the content of her prayers during worship services as well as in the work and teaching of the Holy Fathers. But just as a medical Hospital is primarily interested in the treatment of the body—and through this therapy it gets involved with the rest of a person's problems—so it is in the Orthodox Church. She cures the core of human personality and through this, she heals the whole person. That is why even during times of social upheavals, when all governmental mechanisms are virtually brought to a halt—even peoples' external freedoms are disrupted—the Church maintains its work: to treat and cure the person.

Healing of man's personality is in fact his progress toward perfection which is actually identified as *theosis*, for in patristic theology *theosis* and perfec-

tion are synonymous terms. And this therapy is absolutely necessary, because man's fall, effected in the person of Adam, constitutes the sickness of man's nature.

In Paradise, before the Fall, Adam was in a state of *theoria* (vision) of God. The study of the book of Genesis reveals that Adam was in communion with God; however it was necessary for him to remain in that state, by virtue of his voluntary struggle, in order for him to become more stabilized and reach perfect communion and union with Him. St. John of Damascus describes this state of primordial "justice" characteristically. Adam was purified and nourished at the same time by the vision of God. His *nous* was illumined, and this signifies above all that he was a temple of the Holy Spirit, and was experiencing unceasing remembrance of God.

"Original" sin consists of the darkening of the *nous* and the loss of communion with God. This, of course, had other repercussions, as well: man was clothed in the fleshly garments of decay and mortality. The *nous* experienced a deep darkness. In other words, man lost the *illumination* of his *nous*; it became impure, impassioned and his body bore corruption and mortality. Thus, from the day of our birth, we bear within us corruption and death: a human life is brought into the world bound for death. Hence, because of the fall we experience universal malady. Both soul and body are sick and naturally, since man is the summation of all creation,—the microcosmos within the megacosmos—corruption also befell all of creation.

*My mind is wounded, my body has grown feeble, my spirit is sick, my speech has lost its power, my life is dead; then end is at the door. What shalt thou do,*

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*then, miserable soul, when the Judge comes to examine thy deeds?* (Great Canon).

In fact, when we speak of original sin and its consequences, we mean three things: first, the malfunction of the *nous*, since the *nous* ceased to work properly; secondly, the identification of the *nous* with reason (and to a certain extent, deification of reason) and thirdly the *nous*' enslavement to the passions, anxiety and the conditions of the environment. And this constitutes man's real death.

He experiences total disorganization; his inner self is deadened—his *nous* is overcome by darkness. And just as when the eye of the body is hurt, the whole body is obscure, so also when the eye of the soul—the *nous*—suffers blindness, the spiritual self as a whole becomes sick. It falls into the deepest darkness. This is what the Lord is referring, when He says: *If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!* (Mt 6:23).

In addition to the disruption of the soul's entire inner workings, original sin resulted also in the disorganization of man outwardly. He now confronts his fellow-men, God, the world and all of creation in a different way. The *nous* is unable to encounter God; so reason undertakes the effort. Thus idols of God are created leading to pagan religions and even heretical deviations.

Incapable of seeing man as an image of God, the *nous* encounters him under the influence of the passions. He

ambitiously exploits his fellow-man, through his love of pleasure and material gain. He regards him as a vessel or instrument of pleasure; at the same time he idolizes all creation, which is what the Apostle Paul describes in his Epistle to the Romans: *Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.* (Rom 1:22-23).

Therefore man needs to be cured, that is to be purified,

to reach the *illumination* of the *nous*—Adam's state before the Fall—and then attain *theosis*. This is achieved precisely through Christ's Incarnation and the entire work of the Divine Economy and of the Church. It is within this frame of reference we must see many liturgical texts according to which Christ is characterised a Physician and Healer of souls and bodies. Moreover, in the

same framework various patristic texts should be studied, where it is apparent that **the work of Christ is first and foremost a therapeutic one.**

After the Fall man needed a cure. This was effected by the Incarnation of Christ and ever since then it has been the work of the Church. She cures and is curing man; she primarily cures his ailing personality—his *nous* and heart. All the Fathers of the Church exhort men to seek to be cured. Man is cured by the energy of God whose source is uncreated and revealed *in the person of Jesus Christ*. Christ's



energy, from which comes man's cure, is granted freely, and for this reason is called divine grace. Therefore, whether we say uncreated energy or divine grace makes no difference; we mean the same thing. The Apostle Paul writes: *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is a gift of God.* (Eph 2:8).

Living within the Church by grace, man must first cleanse his heart of the passions; attain the *illumination* of the *nous*—Adam's state before the Fall—and then ascend to *theosis*, which constitutes man's communion and union with God and is identified with salvation. These are the steps of spiritual perfection—the **foundations of Orthodox spirituality**.

Yet a few things about the divine grace need to be said before we see the stages of spiritual perfection—the method and way of man's therapy—for it is closely connected with *purification, illumination, and theosis*.

In Orthodox spirituality *purification, illumination, and theosis* are not stages of anthropocentric activity, but rather are results of the uncreated energy of God. When the divine grace (energy of God) purifies man from passions, it is called purifying; when it illumines his *nous* it is called illuminating; and when it deifies man it is called deifying. The same grace and energy of God is given various names according to its effects.

Throughout all patristic tradition the Fathers allude to the three stages of spiritual perfection as the three degrees of one's cure. St. Dionysios the Areopagite makes mention of *purification, illumination and perfection*. St. Gregory of Nyssa also makes use of the same distinction. St. Maximos the Confessor refers, as well, to practical philosophy (*purification*), natural *theoria* (*illumination*) and mystical theology (*theosis*). St. Symeon the New Theologian, in his writings divides certain chapters into practical, gnostic, and theological.

In all of Orthodox Tradition these three stages of perfection are frequently mentioned. In this way man is cured and experiences Holy Tradition; he becomes *Tradition* and creates *Tradition*. He is a bearer of *Tradition*. Distinctive is the subtitle of *Philokalia* which is the work of St. Nicodemos, of the Holy Mountain and of St. Makarios, bishop of Corinth. In this work which is a compilation of the writings of the Holy Fathers [from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> centuries], how man cures his *nous* by going through the three stages of spiritual life is discussed. And it is known that the *Philokalia*, which contains the complete method of cure for humans is a fundamental manual of the spiritual life.

† † †

The word *nous* has various uses in Patristic teaching. It indicates either the soul or the heart or even an energy of the soul. Yet, the *nous* is mainly the eye of the soul; the purest part of the soul; the highest attention. It is also called noetic energy and it is not identified with reason.

## WE MUST TRUST IN GOD, NOT IN OURSELVES

By monk Antiochos.

Many people brag and boast, "My hands put food on the table for me and my family ... With my hands, I can support myself."

Such people who trust in their own strength truly think vainly, and speak vanity. They indeed have forgotten God Who created them, and Who bestows health and food to all living things. For anyone who has distanced himself from God and attributes his accomplishments to his own strength suffers from pride. Just as a person who wants to hang from a spider's web comes crashing to the ground, similarly, he who trusts in his own strength and power also suffers a hard fall.

Such people are unaware of Job's declaration: *And if my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand, this also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge; for I should have denied the God that is above.* (Job 31:27-28).

The Ecclesiastes also affirms: *I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.* (Ooh 9:11). He also adds: *Wisdom is better than weapons of war. But one sinner destroyeth much good.* (Ooh 9:18).

Even the Lord gave the following counsel to His disciples: *Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing.* (Jn 15:4-5).

This is appropriate, for He is the Light and the Life of all people: *All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.* (Jn 1:3).

To Him belongs the glory unto the ages of ages. Amen.  
the uncreated light



Neither the spoken word nor my poor written word can praise and glorify the One who transcends all praise, Who transcends all speech. If, in effect, that which is being fulfilled in me, the prodigal child, is unutterable, inexpressible, how would the One, Who is the giver and author of it, how, tell me, would He need to receive praise or glory from us? No, He Who possesses glory cannot receive glory, no more than this sun which we contemplate in the heavens can be illumined or could reflect light.

St. Symeon the New Theologian

## HOLY ZEAL

Source: "The Orthodox Word," May-June 1975 (issue no. 62); originally translated from Saint Elias Publications "Faith and Life," no. 10, 1975.

*I am come to send fire on the earth. and what will I, but that it be already kindled?*

[Luke 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 (*I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.* 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 zealous for God's glory themselves glorify God also in the same way, and therefore they cannot, of course, 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 Almighty*—thus did he exclaim many times, expressing his grief—*because the children of Israel have forsaken Thee: they have dug down Thine altars, and have slain Thy prophets with the sword, and I only am left, and they seek my life to take it.* (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 heaven* (1 Kgs 17:1, 18:42-45; Jas 5:17-18), so that there was neither rain nor dew for three years and six months. This same zeal later aroused Elias to *slay the false prophets and priests of Baal*, 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 (1 Kgs 18:40).

By the power of the same Divine zeal, St. Elias brought down fire from heaven, which burned the captains and their fifties which had been sent by the king to seize him (2 Kgs 1:9-14).



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 Kings 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 of what spirit ye are, for the Son of Man came not to destroy the souls of men, but to save.* (Lk 9:55-56).

And nevertheless, (let immoderate lovers of peace pay heed!), the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, Who said, *Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart* (Mt 11:29), found it sometimes necessary to manifest great strictness and have

recourse to severe measures, teaching us also 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, but 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!* and threatening them with God's judgment (Mt 23:29).

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, *and He cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves.* (Jn 2:14-15; Mt 21:12-13). And 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 on December 6<sup>th</sup> according to our Orthodox calendar, 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: the simple Russian people usually call 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 this one must be himself just as great a holy hierarch as St. Nicholas. But 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 whatever of 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" which is prepared to be reconciled not only with heretics, persecutors of the Faith and the Church, but even with the devil himself, in the name of "universal love" and "the union of all"—slogans which have become so fashionable in 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 Savior, 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, with a forgetfulness of the just judgment of God which unfailingly awaits all of us, and of the 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—a true life in Christ. That is why this has been replaced now by all kinds of cheap surrogates, at times quite low ones, 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; while 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 "winnowing"—some will remain with Christ to the end, and some will easily and naturally join the camp of His opponent, Antichrist. This shall be especially exemplified 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: 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 like that which plays the leading role in political struggles. There can never be any place for such false zeal in spiritual life, in public church life; nevertheless, it is unfortunately often encountered in our time and is a chief instigator of every imaginable quarrel and disturbance in the Church. The managers and instigators of such quarrel often hide themselves behind some kind of supposed idealism but in reality 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?!

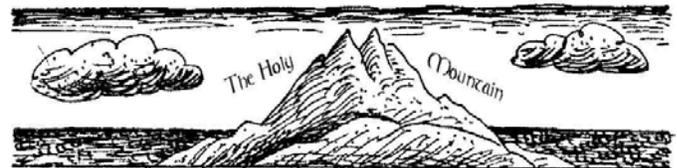
And if we firmly resolve in these fateful days to remain with Christ, not in words only but in deeds as well, it is absolutely indispensable right now, without putting it off, to break off every bond of friendship, every form of communion with the servants of the approaching Antichrist, who has enlisted 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 of 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 lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth.* (Rev 3:16).

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

Amen.



**G**uard yourself from thoughts, which appear holy and inflame an unreasonable zeal for themselves, of which the Lord speaks allegorically: *Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. You shall know them by their fruits.* (Mt 7:15-16). Their fruit is the languishing and breaking of the spirit. Know that everything which draws you away from humility and from inner peace and quiet, however beautiful it may seem, is nothing but false prophets who, under the cover of sheep's clothing, that is, of a hypocritical zeal to do good to their neighbors without discrimination, are in truth ravening wolves who steal you of your humility, peace and quiet, so necessary to every man who desires steady progress in spiritual life.

From "Unseen Warfare," pg. 261

**M**en that seem worthy of confidence, yet teach strange doctrines, must not upset you. Stand firm, like an anvil under the hammer. It is like a great athlete to take blows and yet win the fight. For God's sake above all we must endure everything, so that God, in turn, may endure us. Increase your zeal. Read the signs of the times. Look for Him Who is above all time—the Timeless, the Invisible, Who for our sake became visible, the Impassible, Who became subject to suffering on our account and for our sake endured everything."

St. Ignatius of Antioch

## THE THORNS OF APOSTASY

By Fr. Zechariah Lynch, from "The Inkless Pen," October 19, 2020.

*And that which fell into the thorns, these are the ones who heard, and while they are going on their way, they being choked by the cares and wealth and pleasures of life, and do not bring forth fruit to perfection.*

[Lk 8:14]

† † †

In another place our Lord says a similar thing, *Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.* (Mt 6:21). If the heart is preoccupied with material, passing, things, then it will labor with all its might to preserve them. For the materialized heart, all that exists is physical existence. The preservation of material existence becomes the primary goal of the material-man; indeed it becomes the all-encompassing driving factor.

The fleeting pleasures of mortal life are very seductive and addictive. It is not without reason the modern man, mostly in the "Western" world, has become satiated on pleasures.

He grows ever more numb to old pleasures and tumbles forward seeking new and more tantalizing ones. And the powers that feed this addiction increase relentlessly.

Yet, even a more benign comfort and dependency on pleasure is potentially deadly to the spirit. All these pleasures have the potential to act as chains which will keep a person bound and spiritually impotent. There is a very healthy and balanced enjoyment of earthly life, which in the Christian sense is always framed in the context of Eternity. The root ailment of modernity is that it takes the passing nature of material pleasure to be the end-all of human existence. It perverts something good. A Christian should live in thankful enjoyment to God for all the *fruits of the earth* that are His most gracious gifts to His creature man. (It bears noting here, I am addressing a state of the heart. Wealth or poverty in and of themselves carry no vice or virtue.)

St. Seraphim of Vyritsa, speaking on the days near the end, teaches: *The time will come when there will be no persecution, but money and the attractions of this world will draw people away from God and many more souls will perish than during the period of open militant atheism. On the one hand, they will raise up crosses and gild cupolas, but on the other hand, the kingdom of lies and evil will come. The True Church will always be persecuted. Salvation will only be possible through*

*sorrows and illness, persecutions will take on a very refined and unpredictable character. It will be terrible to live to those times.*

The refined and unpredictable character quite possibly indicates the fact that humanity's addiction to pleasure and comfort will be used as a strong mechanism for control. Few will be ready to sacrifice the comforts of the times. Why? Because for them these material things are truly all they have.

Moreover, for Christians it may well be that few will be willing to sacrifice physical comfort so as to hold to Truth. God understands after all. He doesn't want us to be fanatics. Christians will be unwilling to sacrifice for Truth because they have been cultivated in a field of thorns. It will just seem like "normal" Christian living.

The message of *repent for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand* has been supplanted by the message of "let us build an earthly kingdom of well-being for all humanity." The health and salvation of the soul have been subordinated to the physical preservation and well-being of the flesh and its desires.

The Truth of the Gospel is no longer an all-encompassing eternal standard for the lives of men. Rather, it has been beat back to the realm of the "individual" and what seems good to him. Thus, a false separation has taken place. The needs of mankind have been compartmentalized into the strictly religious, which is viewed in subjective terms, and the socio-political.

It is the latter that is given preeminence in the modern world because it, seemingly, tends the physical needs of man.

Since for modern man the material is the only "real," that which tends to his material cravings and desires is made divine. **Humanity never outgrows idolatry, it only becomes more sophisticated.** Man will always pinch incense on the altar of the gods of physical comfort.

In such a mindset, Christianity, specifically Orthodoxy, becomes a set of predominately outward rites which may be modified and adapted to meet the "needs of men." Truth may be sacrificed for the "greater good" of the physical well-being of humanity. It is, thus, easily molded to promote the gospel of the times, the preeminence of the physical well-being of man in the world. At this point serving as a minister, a priest, becomes just a profession.

Yet if the Church is only an institution primarily concerned with physical well-being, then it is indeed useless



and is sealing its fate as being obsolete. For there are plenty of other organizations that tend to material well-being in a far superior manner.

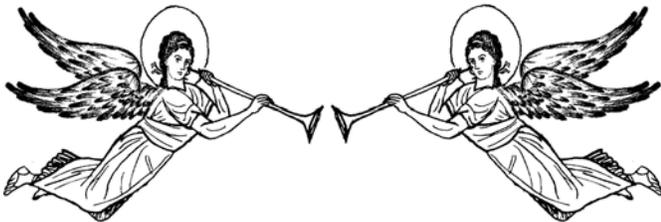
It is precisely the Revealed Truth, which is the essential reality of true Christianity, that guarantees its eternal relevance. Once these treasures are sacrificed in the name of mortal material existence then it truly becomes savorless salt.

In some sense, as “western” Christians, we stand in the most dire of positions, saturated as we are with physical “comforts and pleasures.” We are indeed to be pitied the most! Is our “standard of Western living” simply a prison in which we have become spiritually anemic? Will it be the means by which we softly accept the pillaging of the treasures of faith so to at least maintain external structures?

In a sobering article written in the 20<sup>th</sup> century during the crisis of Communism entitled “The Epoch of Apostasy,” the author, Pr. Boris Molchanov makes this prophetic observation: *The situation is completely different in the West, where people are fully and solely immersed in their material interests. This is leading people unto a total indifference towards faith and submerging them into spiritual blindness. This doesn't allow them to see the tortuous path, which leads towards the Antichrist. God's grace is departing from the bustling and materialistic masses and thus they will fall.*

And so the great danger of the thorns. Those who grow there will believe that such a place is indeed “Christianity.” In reality, all fruit is choked out and the spiritual life begins to die away. “Christianity” becomes indifferentism; as such it begins to *preach another Christ*. (cf. Gal 1:6).

May we of the “West” examine our hearts most diligently. If we find there thorns growing in abundance may we, by the grace of God, begin the labor of weeding them out. *Keep your heart with all watchfulness* (Prov 4:22-23), *honest and good ... held fast in patience*. (cf. Lk 8:15).



**T**he Word of God, the Maker of all things, conquering Satan by means of human nature, and showing him to be apostate, has put him in the power of man. For He says, *Behold, I confer upon you the power of treading upon serpents and scorpions and upon all the power of the enemy*. (Lk 10:19), in order that, as he obtained dominion over man by apostasy, so his apostasy might be deprived of power by means of man turning back again to God.

**St. Irenaeus**

## PROPER ORTHODOX PRIESTLY ATTIRE AND APPEARANCE ACCORDING TO THE SAINTS

From “Orthodox Ethos,” <https://orthodoxethos.com/>.



**N**or may men destroy the hair of their beards, and unnaturally change the form of a man. For the law says: *You shall not mar your beards*. (Lev 19:27).

**Apostolic Constitutions**

**P**riests shouldn't cut their hair... This is because, when the Holy Spirit descends during ordination, the priest is sanctified; even his hair is sanctified... Their nails also would they gather.

**St. Iakovos of Evia**

**I** once met a young archimandrite wearing laymen's clothing at an airport. He was going abroad and introduced himself, “I am Father so-and-so,” he said. “Where is your cassock?” was my answer. Of course, I did not bow to him [to receive his blessing].

**St. Paisios the Athonite**

**I** am proud of the cassock I wear and consider it more valuable and seemly than every other kind of garment, even than the royal purple robes of kings. I consider myself unworthy to dress in such a modest, honorable and holy garb, which was honored by numberless monastic saints, monk martyrs, confessors and saints. I am saddened by and pity those clerics who reject the cassock and who shave their beards.

**Blessed Elder Philotheos (Zervakos) of Paros**

**T**hose men who shave their beard are not possessors of a manly face, but of a womanly face.

**St. Nikodemos the Hagiorite**

**Commentary on the 96<sup>th</sup> Canon of the 6<sup>th</sup> Ecumenical Council**

**T**his excommunication [of the 96<sup>th</sup> Canon of the 6<sup>th</sup> Ecumenical Council] is incurred also by those who shave off their beard in order to make their face smooth and handsome ... or in order to appear at all times like beardless young men.

**St. Nikodemos the Hagiorite, as above**

## BURNING LOVE FOR GOD

By St. Theophan the Recluse (homily no. 52), from *"The Spiritual Life and How to Be Attuned to It,"* published by the Holy Monastery of St. Paisius, Arizona (2017), pp. 210-212.



You are surprised that I spend so much time explaining the very same thing. "Of course," you say, "I need many other things."

Now I have finished. You have only to carry it out. The reason I spent so long explaining everything about remembrance of God is because all the power is in this. Once you are established in this remembrance—not just

barren remembrance, but with reverence and similar feelings toward the Lord—it will compel you to be diligent in everything else, too. You will be diligent in such a way that you will have a certain wondrous beauty, for there is also a crude, awkward sort of diligence. This remembrance will be for you lord, master and executor of all affairs, especially those of your inner life. That which the Apostle Paul prayed for and wished for the Ephesians, and through them for all Christians, will then be fulfilled within you: *That (God) grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.* (Eph 3:16-17). This is what I have been talking about. Saint Paul considered this so important that, when praying about it, he prayed with a special fervor: *For this, I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.* (Eph 3:14). How could I not talk about this with you? Once the remembrance of God has been established in the inner man, then Christ the Lord will dwell within you. The two things go together.

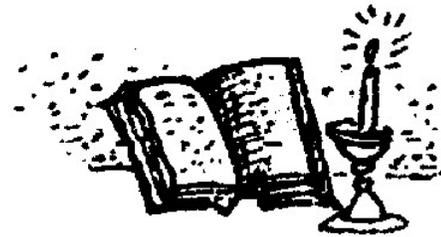
A certain warm feeling toward the Lord will serve as a sign to convince you that this most wonderful thing has begun to operate inside of you. If you carry out everything that has been prescribed, this feeling will soon begin to appear more and more often, until finally it is there continually. Beginning from its first appearance, this feeling sweetly and blissfully arouses the desire to seek after it, so that it will never leave the heart, for in it is Paradise.

Would you like to enter into this Paradise a little sooner? Then do this: When you pray, do not stop praying until you have aroused some sort of feeling toward God in your heart. This can be reverence, or devotion, or thanksgiving, or praise, or humility and contrition, or trust and hope. Do this also when you begin reading during your devotions; do

not stop reading until you have felt the truth that you have read. If you pay attention to yourself, these two feelings (methods), by warming you up, are capable of keeping you under their influence all day. Work at carrying out these two methods precisely, and you will see for yourself what happens.

When something is out under the sun's rays for a long time, it gets very warm; the same thing will happen for you. By keeping yourself under the rays of the remembrance of God and your feelings toward Him, you will be warmed more and more with an unearthly warmth, and then you will become completely fiery, and not just fiery, but ablaze. The following will be fulfilled for you: *I am come to send fire on the earth of human hearts, and I could not wish for more other than that it inflame everyone as soon as possible.* (Lk 12:49).

Apply the following comparison to this: When a spark falls on a hot object, the object begins smoldering gradually; then it catches fire until finally it is engulfed by flame, and, being dark by its essence, it becomes bright and shining on account of the fire that engulfs it. That is how it will be for you. Growing warm gradually, you will begin to glow; the spiritual flame will break out, and, once it has penetrated to all parts of you, will engulf you and make you bright, although you are in and of yourself dark. Recall here how at the beginning we said something about the sheath of the soul, and then about the radiance of the grace-filled soul. That is how it will be with you and inside of you! Truly it will. Ahead of you, however, there is sweat and toil, and how long everything will take is known to God alone, for everything is from Him. Just know that God is not offended and has not forgotten your labor of love.



You wish, or rather, have decided, to remove a splinter from someone? Very well, but do not go after it with a stick instead of a lancet for you will only drive it deeper. Rough speech and harsh gestures are the stick, while even-tempered instruction and patient reprimand are the lancet. *Reprove, rebuke, exhort,* says the Apostle (2 Tim 4:2), *not batter.*

If someone observes that his brothers are satisfied with him, let him not start boasting to himself. There are thieves all around. Remember the warning: *When you have done all that was laid on you to do, say: We are unprofitable servants. We only did what we had to.* (Lk 17:10). We will find out at the time of death what judgment has been passed on us.

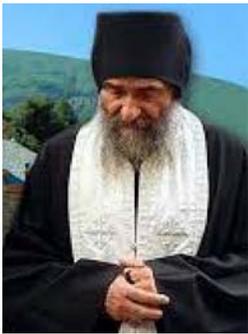
St. John Climacus

## A LETTER FROM HOLY MOUNTAIN TO AN ABBESS CONCERNING THE VACCINES

*By Elder Evthymios of Kapsala, Mt. Athos. Elder Evthymios of the Cell of the Resurrection in Kapsala on Mt. Athos, a disciple of Saint Paisios of Mt. Athos, more than a year after his first letter, now writes a second letter concerning mandatory vaccination in response to questions from an abbess (dated 20 June 2021).*

*Too long has our people been plagued with this painful coronavirus affair. Let them at last leave every one free to act according to his judgement, without pressure.*

† † †



Venerable Abbess, your blessing. I received your letter some time ago, and I beg your pardon for delaying to respond due to a lack of time. It is indeed difficult for me to respond to letters, but, because I saw your concern for all that has been happening in our days and your good disposition to act according to the will of God, I am responding to you.

I do not know you, and it is difficult for you to meet me as you desire. You ask whether you may share my response with others, to which I have no objection. Besides, my views on the coronavirus and the vaccine are well-known, and I say more or less the same things to pilgrims as well, when they ask me.

Every day, *like the waves of a billowy sea*, pilgrims come to Mount Athos and some of them even to our cell. All of them, as well as those who send letters, have but one anxiety and one question: “What will happen with the obligatory vaccine?” All of their other problems which used to inundate them have now been delegated to second place.

In his attempt to deal with the coronavirus epidemic, the Prime Minister of our country has imposed a strict control, which seems to surpass the endurance of our people. He imposed the strictest limiting measures, the greatest fines, and the most extended lockdowns out of all the countries of Europe. He incompetently interfered in the matters of the worship of the Church by closing down the temples and depriving the faithful of the assistance of the sanctifying Mysteries with measures that are exceptionally strict and unfair toward Christians. His actions reveal his inclination to humiliate and weaken the Church.

In fact, in his excessive zeal to deal with the virus successfully, he has proposed a certificate of vaccination and announced that the vaccinated will enjoy privileges. This will not be a simple paper, a usual certificate. If (as we hope not) this is employed, then whoever will not be vaccinated and will not have this certificate will be excluded from ev-

erywhere. The Council of Europe (2361/2021) has ruled that the vaccine is not compulsory and that there should be no discrimination between those vaccinated and those not vaccinated. Behaving despotically, the Prime Minister of Greece becomes, as we say, “kinglier than the king,” he divides the Greek people, and he enforces a dictatorship of the worst kind.

Some bishops have undertaken to apply this anti-constitutional and illegal attempt of the Prime Minister, threatening and blackmailing priests, monks, and the people of God to become vaccinated. Do they have such authority to force them to be vaccinated against their will?

Our Saviour Christ would heal only those that asked for healing. As for the rest, before healing them he would ask them, *Do you wish to be made well?* He neither heals nor saves us without our consent, although He greatly desires our salvation. God does not abolish our freedom. He respects our free will, which He Himself gave to us. According to the holy Chrysostom, *God does not force those that wish not.* (PG 51, 143).

Our present-day “saviours” do not take us into account at all. Under the pretext of health they abolish our freedom. Then, from the fear of the virus we passed on to the terrorism caused by the compulsory vaccination. Unfortunately we are experiencing division, hatred, and the distinction of people into categories. The present-day situation is somewhat reminiscent of Greece at the time of the civil war. It prepares and prefigures the age of the Antichrist. Just as at that time whoever does not have the mark will be excluded from buying and selling, from public positions, and from travel, similarly, if this certificate of vaccination is put into practice, whoever is not vaccinated will be excluded from everywhere. Fear, coercion, surveillance are the common elements.

The topic of the coronavirus is of course, at first glance, a medical matter, but it has become more of political one (the politicians and the journalists speak more), it is also economic, and it has become a perfect means of enforcement and control. To be sure, it is also spiritual, since under its pretext our free will is abolished, while cells from an aborted fetus were used in the preparation of the vaccine.

There are testimonies going around which are continually increasing, according to which at the airports there is a device that recognizes who is vaccinated and also that on certain mobile phones with a certain application a twelve-digit number appears when a vaccinated man approaches. This evidence proves that the vaccinated can be tracked through the vaccine. On all these matters the experts will enlighten us and I believe that God will uncover the whole truth.

Much money has been employed and much advertisement has been done for this vaccine. Many have done it wishing to protect their health. They have every right to do so. We sincerely wish none of the vaccinated to come to any harm.

Nevertheless, they should let the people be, let them free to choose. No one should nor has any right to coerce those that do not wish to do the vaccine to be vaccinated.

We are not against vaccines in general. The old, tried vaccines saved many. The newer ones have many unwanted effects. Regarding this specific vaccine, people are justifiably fearful. This is a vaccine that became compulsory by law even before it was made, of which the producing companies were exempt from responsibilities and compensations, which was put into use so quickly before it was sufficiently tested, which does not fully protect the vaccinated, and every day we learn of serious side-effects and deaths of vaccinated individuals. We learn these facts not only from statistics but also from acquaintances and relatives of ours.

As we lamented for the death of acquaintances and relatives from the coronavirus, so now we lament for the sick and dead from the vaccine. To escape Scylla (the virus), is going to Charybdis (the problematic vaccine) the only solution? Is there no cure for the virus?

I am not a doctor to express an opinion. Nevertheless, I know doctors that have successfully treated patients with the coronavirus using antibiotics, vitamins, and other medicines. A doctor that I know gave antibiotics and other medicine to hundreds of patients and no one died. There is a cure for the virus, but some people do not want

it. They only promote the vaccine. I read the well-known statements of the French scientist Luc Antoine Montagnier, Nobel prize winner, who said, "There are effective cures which are also cheap, such as azithromycin, ivermectin and hydroxychloroquine. The vaccine is not a cure. Research must turn to the therapeutic approach."

If the vaccine was truly sufficiently tested and effectively protected without side-effects and deaths, people would be rapidly informed and all of this propaganda and pressure would be unnecessary. They would ask for the vaccine on their own. Too long have our people been plagued with this painful coronavirus affair. Let them at last leave every one free to act according to his judgement, without pressure.

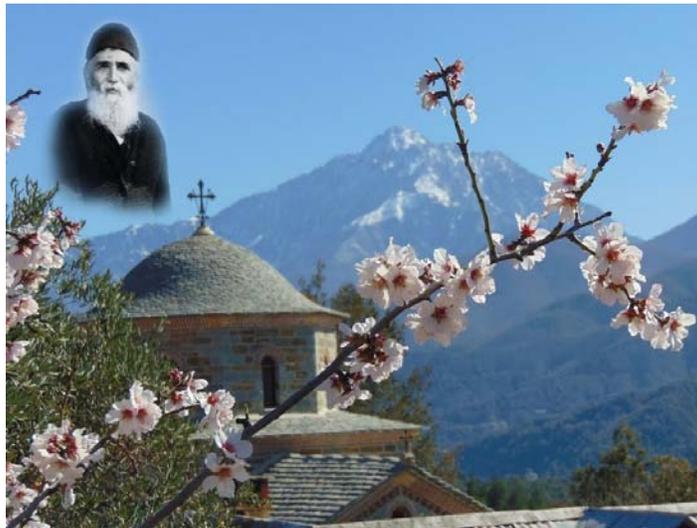
In the difficult years that we are living, more than in any other age, our refuge and salvation is our Church. The Church is not simply the ark that saves us: she is for the difficulties; (i.e., she is particularly meant to help us especially in difficult situations.) Wherever science and human attempts are unable to help, the Church, when she uses her

own spiritual means and her own salvific medicine, makes possible even the impossible and heals every disease. She is able to eliminate any epidemic, no matter how contagious and deadly it may be, as Church history teaches us. Just as Noah's ark, which prefigured the Church, contained both clean and unclean animals, so also our Church contains saints and sinners, righteous and unrighteous, masked and non-masked, vaccinated and non-vaccinated. There is room for everyone in the House of God.

We must not separate people, nor should we consider the vaccinated as marked deniers of Christ. And again, neither should the vaccinated reprove and unbearably pressure those that do not wish to take the vaccine, as is usually the case. In the future, when the truth concerning the vaccine will have been revealed, perhaps many will regret having done it, as some have already regretted it. It has already been announced that two well-known companies have

withdrawn their vaccines as being dangerous. Is it with such vaccines that the Prime Minister is trying to build the much-promoted "immunity wall"? And does he have no responsibility for those who have suffered irreparable damage to their health and for those that have died? Are they playing with people's health and life? How can we still believe that they are interested in our health?

Venerable Abbess! With these short lines I am expressing my pain of heart and replying to your question, which is similar to the anxiety and concern of a multitude of people. I worry over the division of our people. The political parties have always been partitioning and dividing the people. The Church unites us amongst ourselves into one body with Christ as the head. Even the name "Church" [*Ecclesia* – 'congregation'] is a name of unity. History teaches us that whenever the people were divided, disaster followed. Whenever the enemies of our Nation were planning and "meditating evils" for us, they prepared the division of the people beforehand. Before the Fall [of Constantinople] they had divided us with false unions into unionists and anti-unionists, before the Asia-Minor Catastrophe into Royalists and Venizelians, before the civil war into communists and nationalists, and before the Turkish invasion of Cyprus into Macarianists and Antimacarianists. In similar situations the solution is not the submission of the Truth to falsehood for the sake of unity but the selfless struggle for the prevalence of the



Truth which sets us free. We are in need of repentance and prayer that God may grant an end to this trial. The Holy Spirit, Whose descent we are celebrating, “calls all to unity.” Because He is also the Spirit of Truth, may He reveal to us the whole truth regarding the vaccines.

I pray the Trinitarian God grant His grace to all that act with pain of heart and sincerity for the health of men, to all that respect freedom, and to all that struggle for the unity of the people, giving hope and strengthening their faith.

With my love in Christ and boundless wishes,

Priestmonk Euthymios

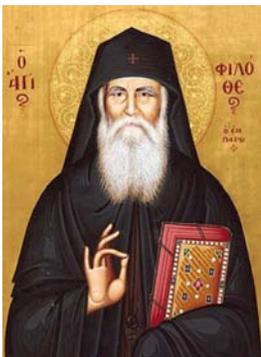
Cell of the Resurrection, Holy Mountain

7/20 June 2021



## PASTORAL CARE FOR MARRIED COUPLES & THE EVIL OF ABORTION

*By the holy Elder Philotheos Zervakos, from “Paternal Counsels” vol. II, published by Orthodox Kypseli, Thessaloniki, Greece, 2005, pages 20-21 & “The Truth About Abortions,” published by Orthodox Kypseli, Thessaloniki, Greece, 2011, page 90-91.*



**B**ecause I saw that it was necessary for me to answer you, I write you the following: Tell the couple about which you wrote, where the husband does not want children whereas the wife wants them, that God’s will must be done and not the devil’s. God allowed marriage for the birth of children and blessed it. Whereas the man-killing devil, when he is not able to murder, puts

brother against brother and advises men to murder. He advises the parents to murder their children inside the womb. The husband who does not want children, who does not listen to God, but prefers to hear the devil and takes his wife and pays the doctors to do abortions, becomes a murderer, not of foreign people, but of his own children. The wife, when she is pregnant, must not listen to her husband and have an abortion and become a murderess, but if her husband forces her, she should protest, she should go to the priest, or to the Metropolitan and seek help, and if her husband insists she should divorce him.

There are two solutions for this matter. The one is that if they do not want children, not to have relations anymore, but to practice chastity and keep continence. This is done with the agreement of both spouses and by economy so that they not become murderers. If they do not like this solution, but prefer to listen to the devil and to murder their children they

should prefer to separate. If they have faith in God, even if they obtain 20 or 50 children, God, Who gives and nourishes the birds of the sky, will provide for them! If the husband does not have faith then he will not be able to provide for his own self and he will be condemned to eternal hell... Let them be very careful and let them listen and do what I tell them so that they will have God’s blessing and inherit the eternal kingdom of the Lord. If again they don’t listen, they will receive a curse from God and will inherit, with the devil, eternal hell. I pray God enlightens them to accept my counsel, because obedience is life, while disobedience is death.

† † †

**T**here is no worse crime than that which happens in Greece, for parents to kill 300,000 children each year before they are born. It exceeds even Communism, and all heresies and evils. Because if they had let their children be born, baptized them, and then killed them with a knife, the children would have gone as Christians and the responsibility of the parents would be less than now (in abortion) where they have also killed the child’s soul. God, of course, will compensate because in the dwellings of the Heavenly Father there are many mansions. Parents, however, reveal their hatred for their children and I wonder why God has not thrown fire the way He did on Sodom and Gomorrah. The sodomites did other terrible things, but they did not reach this level. The parents that agree to abortion, in this way, supersede the evil of Sodom and Gomorrah. So, great wrath will come. Many things happen, especially to big evils.

Lewdness and the abortions that women do such great evil in the world never happened in any age: for mothers to kill 6 to 10 children and not feel any regret of conscience, who, if they had a little shade of repentance and feeling, would open tombs and enter into them to suffer, but they are unfeeling. They confess sometimes, but without repentance. This is one thing and the second is the nakedness of women. Now they walk around bare, and the men are bare also—they are not much better—but more so the women... And this is not possible for God to endure. He endured the sinners of Noah’s time and of Sodom and Gomorrah, but they had not reached this level to walk around naked and to expose their filthy bodies before men, to attract and draw them into sin. God is long-suffering and fore-bearing, but His tolerance also has limits. It is never possible for God—who always punishes sin—to allow such evil to happen without punishment. We should only be ready.

Learn that it is a commandment of God for parents to have as many children as God would be willing to give them. It is also my order and advice. Couples who don’t keep the Divine command—to have as many children as God would give them—will be punished. Also, whoever hinders them from keeping this Divine command will definitely be punished both in this life and also in the next.

## Πώς θα Ἀλλάξουν τὰ Ἀναστημένα Σώματα κατὰ τὴν Δευτέρα Παρουσία;

*Μαρτυρία τοῦ Ἁγίου Συμεὼν τοῦ Νέου Θεολόγου, στὸν ὁποῖον ὁ Θεὸς ἀποκάλυψε πῶς θὰ ἀλλάξουν τὰ ὑλικά σώματα καὶ θὰ ἀφθαρτοποιηθοῦν κατὰ τὴ Δευτέρα Παρουσία τοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. Τὸ κείμενο λήφθηκε ἀπὸ τὸ βιβλίο: «Ἅγιος Συμεὼν Ὁ Νέος Θεολόγος», ὁ βίος τοῦ Ἁγίου, ἀπὸ τὸν Νικήτα Στηθάτο, κριτική ἐκδόση τοῦ Ἀρχιμ Συμεὼν Κουτσα, Ἐκδόσεις «Ἀκρίτας», σελ. 189-193.*

**Μ**ία μέρα, καθὼς προσευχόταν [ὁ Ἅγιος Συμεὼν] μὲ καθαρότητα καὶ συνομιλοῦσε μὲ τὸν Θεό, εἶδε πῶς ὁ ἀέρας ἄρχισε νὰ φωτίζει τὸ νοῦ του, καὶ ἐνῶ ἦταν μέσα στὸ κελί του, νόμιζε ὅτι βρισκόταν ἔξω, σ' ἀνοιχτὸ χῶρο. Ἦταν νύχτα, πὸν μόλις εἶχε ξεκινήσει. Τότε ἄρχισε νὰ φέγγει ἀπὸ ψηλὰ ὅπως τὸ πρωινὸ ροδοχάραμα—ὡ τῶν φρικτῶν ὄπτασιῶν τοῦ ἀνδρός— καὶ τὸ οἶκημα κι ὅλα τ' ἄλλα ἐξαφανίστηκαν, καὶ νόμιζε ὅτι δὲν ἦταν καθόλου σὲ οἶκημα. Τὸν συνέπαιρνε ὁλοτελεθὰ θεία ἔκσταση ἀντιλαμβανόμενος καλὰ μὲ τὸν νοῦ του τὸ φῶς ἐκεῖνο πὸν τοῦ ἐμφανιζόταν. Αὐτὸ μεγάλωνε λίγο-λίγο κι ἔκανε τὸν ἀέρα νὰ φαίνεται πιδ λαμπερὸς κι αἰσθανόταν τὸν ἑαυτὸ του μ' ὁλόκληρο τὸ σῶμα του νὰ βρῖσκεται ἔξω ἀπὸ τὰ γήινα.

Ἀλλὰ ἐπειδὴ ἐξακολουθοῦσε νὰ λάμπει ἀκόμη περισσότερο ἐκεῖνο τὸ φῶς καὶ τοῦ φαινόταν σὰν ἥλιος πὸν μεσουρανώντας ἔλαμπε ἀπὸ ψηλὰ, αἰσθανόταν σὰν νὰ στέκεται στὸ μέσο τοῦ φωτὸς καὶ ὅτι ὁλόκληρος ὁ ἑαυτὸς του μαζί μὲ τὸ σῶμα του ἦταν γεμάτος ἀπὸ χαρὰ καὶ δάκρυα λόγω τῆς γλυκύτητας πὸν τοῦ προξενοῦσε ἡ παρουσία του. Παράλληλα ἔβλεπε ὅτι τὸ ἴδιο φῶς κατὰ τρόπο θαυμαστὸ ἦρθε σὲ ἐπαφή μὲ τὸ σῶμα του καὶ σιγὰ-σιγὰ διαπερνοῦσε τὰ μέλη του. Ἡ ἐκπληξη αὐτῆς τῆς ὄπτασις τὸν ἀπομάκρυνε ἀπὸ τὴν προηγούμενη θεωρία καὶ τὸν ἔκανε νὰ αἰσθάνεται μόνον αὐτὸ τὸ ἐξαίσιον πρᾶγμα πὸν συνέβαινε μέσα του. Ἐβλεπε, λοιπόν, ὅτι τὸ φῶς ἐκεῖνο σιγὰ-σιγὰ εἰσχωροῦσε σ' ὁλόκληρο τὸ σῶμα του, τὴν καρδιά καὶ τὰ ἔγκατά του καὶ τὸν ἔκανε ὁλόκληρο σὰν φωτιὰ καὶ φῶς. Καὶ ὅπως προηγουμένως τὸ οἶκημα, ἔτσι καὶ τώρα τὸν ἔκανε νὰ χάσει τὴν αἴσθηση τοῦ σχήματος, τῆς θέσεως, τοῦ βάρους καὶ τὴν μορφῆς τοῦ σώματος καὶ σταμάτησε νὰ κλαίει.

Τότε ἀκούει μία φωνὴ ἀπὸ τὸ φῶς νὰ τοῦ λέει: «Κατὰ τὸν ἴδιο τρόπο εἶναι ἀποφασισμένο ν' ἀλλάξουν οἱ Ἅγιοι πὸν θὰ ζοῦν καὶ θὰ βρῖσκονται ἀκόμη ἐδῶ κατὰ τὴν ὥρα τῆς ἔσχατης σάλπιγγας, κι ἔτσι μεταμορφωμένοι θ' ἀρπαγοῦν, ὅπως λέει καὶ ὁ ἀπόστολος Παῦλος».

Γιὰ πολλὰς ὥρες ὄντας ὁ μακάριος σ' αὐτὴν τὴν κατάσταση, ἀνυμνώντας μυστικὰ καὶ ἀκατάπαυστα τὸ Θεὸ καὶ κατανοώντας τὴ δόξα πὸν τὸν περιέβαλλε καὶ τὴν αἰώνια μακαριότητα πὸν πρόκειται νὰ

δοθεῖ στοῦ Ἁγίου, ἄρχισε νὰ σκέφτεται καὶ νὰ μονολογεῖ μέσα του: «Ἄραγε θὰ ξαναγυρίσω πάλι στὴν προηγούμενη κατάσταση τοῦ σώματός μου ἢ θὰ ζήσω ἔτσι συνέχεια;»

Μόλις ἔκανε τὴ σκέψη αὐτή, ἀμέσως αἰσθάνθηκε νὰ περιφέρει τὸ σῶμα του σὰν σκιά ἢ σὰν πνεῦμα. Καταλάβαινε ὅτι εἶχε γίνει, ὅπως εἶπαμε, ὁλόκληρος μὲ τὸ σῶμα του φῶς χωρὶς μορφὴ, χωρὶς σχῆμα καὶ ἄυλο. Καὶ τὸ μὲν σῶμα του τὸ αἰσθανόταν ὅτι ὑπάρχει, πλὴν ὁμως χωρὶς ὑλικὲς διαστάσεις καὶ σὰν πνευματικὸ. Αἰσθανόταν δηλαδὴ νὰ μὴν ἔχει καθόλου βάρους ἢ ὄγκο κι ἀποροῦσε βλέποντας τὸν ἑαυτὸ του πὸν εἶχε σῶμα νὰ εἶναι σὰν ἀσῶματος.

Καὶ τὸ φῶς πὸν λαλοῦσε μέσα του, ὅπως καὶ προηγουμένως, τοῦ ἔλεγε καὶ πάλι: «Τέτοιοι θὰ εἶναι μετὰ τὴν ἀνάσταση στὸν μέλλοντα αἰῶνα ὅλοι οἱ ἅγιοι περιβλημένοι ἀσωμάτως μὲ σώματα πνευματικὰ ἢ ἐλαφρότερα καὶ λεπτότερα καὶ πιδ αἰθέρια ἢ παχύτερα καὶ βαρύτερα καὶ πιδ γεῶδη, ἀπὸ τὰ ὁποῖα θὰ καθορισθεῖ γιὰ τὸν καθένα ἡ στάση καὶ ἡ τάξη καὶ ἡ οἰκείωση μὲ τὸ Θεό».

Αὐτὰ ὅταν ἄκουσε ὁ θεοπτικὸς καὶ θεοληπτος Συμεὼν κι ἀφοῦ εἶδε τὸ ἀνέκφραστο θεϊκὸ φῶς κι εὐχαρίστησε τὸν Θεό, πὸν δόξασε τὸ γένος μας καὶ τὸ ἔκανε μέτοχο τῆς θεότητος καὶ τῆς βασιλείας Του, ξαναγύρισε πάλι στὸν ἑαυτὸ του καὶ βρέθηκε ξανά μὲς στὸ κελί του, στὴν προηγούμενη ἀνθρώπινη φυσικὴ κατάσταση. Ὅμως μὲ ὄρκους διαβεβαίωσε ἐκείνους μὲ τοὺς ὁποῖους εἶχε θάρρος καὶ φανέρωνε τὰ μυστικά του, ὅτι «γιὰ πολλὰς ἡμέρες αἰσθανόμενοι αὐτὴ τὴν ἐλαφρότητα τοῦ σώματος χωρὶς νὰ καταλαβαίνω καθόλου οὔτε κόπο, οὔτε πείνα, οὔτε δίψα».

Ἐπειδὴ, λοιπόν, μὲ αὐτὰ ἐνωτόταν μόνον μὲ τὸ Πνεῦμα κι ἦταν γεμάτος ἀπὸ τὰ θεϊκὰ χαρίσματά Του—καὶ φυσικὰ εἶχε καθαρίσει καὶ ὁ ἴδιος πλήρως τὸ νοῦ του— ἔβλεπε ὄπτασις καὶ φρικτὲς ἀποκαλύψεις τοῦ Κυρίου ὅπως παλαιὰ οἱ Προφῆτες. Ἐτσι, ἔχοντας ἀποστολικὴ διάνοια, ἐπειδὴ τὴν ὑπαρξὴ του κατηύθυνε καὶ κινοῦσε τὸ θεῖο Πνεῦμα, εἶχε καὶ τὸ χάρισμα τοῦ λόγου πὸν ἔβγαινε ἀπὸ τὰ χεῖλη του καί, ἐνῶ ἦταν ὅπως κι ἐκεῖνοι ἀγράμματος, θεολόγησε καὶ μὲ τὰ θεόπνευστα συγγράμματα τοῦ διδάσκει τοὺς πιστοὺς τὴν ἀκριβεία τῆς εὐσεβοῦς ζωῆς.

Ἐχοντας ἀνέλθει σ' ἓνα τέτοιο πνευματικὸ ἐπίπεδο, ἀρχίζει νὰ συγγράφει ἀσκητικὸς λόγους κατὰ κεφάλαια γιὰ τὶς διάφορες ἀρετὲς καὶ τὰ πάθη πὸν ἀντίκεινται σ' αὐτές, ἀπὸ ὅσα αὐτὸς ἔμαθε ἀπὸ τὴν προσωπικὴ του ἀσκητικὴ ζωὴ καὶ τὴ θεία γνώση πὸν τοῦ δόθηκε, καὶ περιγράφει μὲ ἀκριβεία τὴ μοναχικὴ ζωὴ γιὰ ὅσους τὴν ἀσκοῦν καὶ ἔτσι γίνεται γιὰ τὸν ἰσραηλιτικὸ λαὸ τῶν μοναχῶν ποταμὸς Θεοῦ γεμάτος πνευματικὰ νερά.

## Ὁ Διωγμὸς τῶν Πιστῶν καὶ ἡ Προδοσία τῆς Πίστεως

Γράφει ο Γεώργιος Κ. Τζανάκης, Ακρωτήρι Χανίων, 10/12/2020. Ἄν καὶ τὸ ἄρθρο χρονολογεῖται ἀπὸ τὸν Δεκέμβριο τοῦ 2020, εἶναι ἐπίκαιρο ὅσο ποτὲ τώρα ποὺ οἱ «ἡγέτες» τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἀνέλαβαν τὸν καινούργιο τους ρόλο ὡς πωλητὰι τῶν ἐμβολιασμῶν. Ἄς μὴ λησμονοῦμε καὶ τὴν ντροπὴ τῆς Σαρακοστῆς, ὅταν ὄχι μόνον ξανα-ἐκλείσαν καὶ πάλι οἱ ἐκκλησίες, ἀλλὰ ἐπέβαλαν τὸν ἐρτασμό τοῦ Πάσχα τὸ Μεγάλο Σάββατο...

Ἀὐτὸ ποὺ ζοῦμε εἶναι διωγμὸς κατὰ τῆς πίστεως ἀπὸ τοὺς δαμιονοκινήτους ἄρχοντες σὲ συνεργασία μὲ τοὺς προδότες τῆς πίστεως, ἱεράρχες καὶ κληρικούς. Φαίνονται βαρεῖα τὰ λόγια αὐτὰ, ἀλλὰ αὐτὰ λένε καὶ διδάσκουν οἱ ἅγιοι πατέρες. Αὐτὰ ἀκούσαμε ἀπὸ τοὺς πατέρες ποὺ γνωρίσαμε καὶ αὐτὰ βεβαιώνονται ἀπὸ τὰ λόγια καὶ τὸ παράδειγμα τῶν ἁγίων.

Οἱ ἐκκλησίες εἶναι κλειστὲς γιὰ δευτέρη φορὰ. Τὴν πρώτη φορὰ οἱ Ἱεράρχες (καὶ ἀκολούθως οἱ ἱερεῖς) εἶπαν ὅτι... αἰφνιδιάστηκαν, ὅτι βρέθηκαν μπροστὰ σὲ πρωτόγνωρες καταστάσεις καὶ μὲ τὸ πρόσχημα τῆς «φιλανθρωπίας», δῆθεν φροντίζοντας γιὰ τοὺς κινδυνεύοντες συνανθρώπους δέχτηκαν ἀδιαμαρτύρητα νὰ κλείσουν οἱ ἐκκλησίες, παραδεχόμενοι ἐμπράκτως ὅσα ἔλεγαν οἱ ἐχθροὶ τῆς πίστεως, ὅτι οἱ ναοὶ καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς τελούμενα εἶναι ἐπικίνδυνα γιὰ τὴν υἰεῖα τῶν ἀνθρώπων. Ἔχουν εἰπωθῆ καὶ ἔχουν γραφτεῖ τόσα, ὅμως οἱ ἄνθρωποι αὐτοὶ ἐκμεταλευόμενοι τὸ ἱερατικὸ σχῆμα καὶ τὴν προβολὴ τῶν ἀπόψεών τους ἀπὸ τὰ πληρωμένα μέσα ἐνημερώσεως καὶ ἀπὸ τοὺς κυβερνητικούς καὶ μὴ μηχανισμούς, συνεχίζουν τὴν ἐξαπάτησι τῶν χριστιανῶν.

Τώρα συννεοῦνται μὲ τοὺς πολιτικούς γιὰ τὸ δῆθεν ἄνοιγμα τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν τὴν περίοδο τῶν Χριστουγέννων, μὲ τρόπους ποὺ θὰ ἐπινοήσουν, ὥστε νὰ φανῆ ὅτι ὑπάρχει μέρμινα γιὰ τοὺς πιστοὺς καὶ ὅτι ἀγωνίστηκαν γι' αὐτό. Καὶ τοῦτο διότι ὁ λαὸς, ὅσο ἀκατήχητος καὶ ἂν εἶναι ἔχει τὴν διαίσθησι, μυρρίζεται τὴν προδοσίαν καὶ φοβοῦνται ἀντιδράσεις, ὅπως φοβοῦνται καὶ οἱ πολιτικοὶ μὲ τὰ ἀλλόκοτα παράλογα καὶ ἀτελέσφορα μέτρα ποὺ ἐφαρμόζουν.

Καὶ ἂν ἀνοίξουν οἱ ἐκκλησίες τὴν παραμονὴ καὶ τὴν ἡμέρα τῶν Χριστουγέννων καὶ τῶν Φώτων καὶ προγραμματιστοῦν περισσότερες τῆς μιᾶς λειτουργίες

κατὰ περίπτωσι, τί θὰ σημαίνει αὐτό; Ἄλλαξε τίποτα; Σταμάτησε ὁ διωγμὸς; Οἱ ἐπίσκοποι ἀγωνίστηκαν ὑπὲρ τῆς πίστεως; Τὰ «προβληματίζομαι» καὶ «ἀγωνιῶ» καὶ «πονῶ» καὶ «θλίβομαι», ποὺ ἀναμασοῦν, δείχνουν κάτι; Γιὰ αὐτὰ ὑπάρχουν οἱ ἐπίσκοποι; Γιὰ νὰ ἐκφράζουν συναισθήματα, νὰ κάνουν δηλώσεις καὶ νὰ γράφουν σχόλια καὶ κείμενα;

Εἶναι δυνατὸν νὰ ἐπικαλοῦνται τὴν κόπωσι καὶ τὴν ἀγανάκτησι τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ νὰ παρουσιάζουν ὑπογραφές καὶ διαμαρτυρίες, προκειμένου νὰ «πιέσουν», δῆθεν, τοὺς κυβερνῶντες νὰ παραχωρήσουν κάποια ψιχία καὶ νὰ τὰ ἐμφανίσουν ὡς ἀγώνα καὶ νίκη; Δὲν ἀντιλαμβάνονται πόσο ἐξευτελίζονται μὲ τὸν τρόπο αὐτόν;

Οἱ κυβερνῶντες βλέποντας ὅτι ὁ κόσμος ἀγανακτεῖ μὲ τὰ παράλογα καὶ καταστροφικὰ μέτρα τους καὶ λόγω τῆς ἀβεβαίας ἐκβάσεως τους ὡς πρὸς τὸ ὑγεινομικὸ σκέλος καὶ τῆς βεβαίας οἰκονομικῆς καταστροφῆς ποὺ ἐπαπειλεῖται, ἀλλὰ καὶ λόγω τῆς κοπώσεως ἀπὸ τὸν ἐγκλεισμό καὶ τὰ κατοχικὰ μέτρα περιορισμοῦ

τῆς ἐλευθερίας, θέλουν νὰ κάμουν ἓνα μικρὸ διάλειμα πρὶν τοὺς ἐμβολιασμούς καὶ ὅτι ἄλλο τοὺς ὑποδείξουν οἱ κινῶντες τὰ νήματα. Οἱ συνεργάτες τους ἐκκλησιαστικοὶ αἰσθανόμενοι τὴν ἀπέχθεια τοῦ λαοῦ, ποὺ σιγά-σιγά συνειδητοποιεῖ τὴν πραγματικότητά τῆς προδοσίας τῆς πίστεως καὶ ἀπομακρύνεται ἀπὸ τοὺς φθορεῖς πνευματικὸς πατέρες, θέλουν καὶ αὐτοὶ κάτι νὰ παρουσιάσουν.

Ὅμως στὴν ἐκκλησίαν οἱ ἀγῶνες δὲν γίνονται ἀπλῶς καὶ γενικῶς ἐν ὀνόματι τοῦ λαοῦ ποὺ ἀγανακτεῖ. Γίνονται ὑπὲρ τῆς πίστεως, ἡ ὁποία πίστις εἶναι τὸ μέγιστο ἀγαθὸ γιὰ κάθε ἄνθρωπο, ἄρα καὶ γιὰ τὸ σύνολο τοῦ λαοῦ. Καὶ σ'αὐτοὺς τοὺς ἀγῶνες ὀφείλουν νὰ πρωτοστατοῦν οἱ ἐπίσκοποι καὶ οἱ κληρικοί καὶ νὰ ἀκολουθῆ ὁ λαός.

Ἀγωνίστηκαν γιὰ τὴν πίστι οἱ πνευματικοὶ μας ἡγέτες; Ὅχι μόνον δὲν ἀγωνίστηκαν, ἀλλὰ ἐξ ἀρχῆς συνέπραξαν μὲ τοὺς ἐχθροὺς τῆς ἐκκλησίας. Αὐτοὶ ἄνοιξαν τὴν πόρτην καὶ ἔβαλαν μέσα τοὺς πραιτωριανούς. Αὐτοὶ πρόδωσαν καὶ τώρα ὁ χριστιανὸς δὲν μπορεῖ νὰ πάη στὴν ἐκκλησίαν γιὰ τὴν σὸν δρόμο κινδυνεύει καὶ οἱ ἐκκλησίες εἶναι κλειστὲς. Αὐτοὶ ἔδωσαν τὸ παράδειγμα τῆς ὑποχωρητικότητος καὶ τοῦ συμβιβασμοῦ ὥστε νὰ ἀκολουθήσῃ καὶ ὁ λαός. Ἐκαμὰν ἀκριβῶς τὸ ἀντίθετο ἀπὸ αὐτὸ ποὺ ἔπρεπε



νά γίνῃ. Ὁ πρωτομάρτυς Στέφανος ἔγινε παράδειγμα ὥστε οἱ μάρτυρες ποῦ θὰ ἀκολουθοῦσαν νὰ ἔχουν ἓνα ἰσχυρὸ στήριγμα τοῦ ζήλου καὶ νὰ μὴν γίνουιν μιμητὲς τῆς δειλίας.

**«Ἴνα οἱ ἐξῆς ἐποικοδομοῦμενοι μάρτυρες ἰσχυρὰν λάβωσι τοῦ ζήλου τὴν ὑποβάθραν καὶ μὴ δειλίας γένωνται μιμηταί».** Ἀστέριος Ἀμασειας, PG40,345.

Οἱ ἱεράρχες ἔκαμαν τὸ ἀντίθετο ἀπὸ τὸν πρωτομάρτυρα Στέφανο. Συνεργάστηκαν μὲ τοὺς πολιτικούς, ἐχθροὺς τῆς ἐκκλησίας, καὶ ἔγιναν παράδειγμα δειλίας καὶ συμβιβασμοῦ γιὰ τοὺς πιστοὺς. Πρόδωσαν ἐξ ἀρχῆς τὴν ἐκκλησία. Δὲν χρησιμοποίησαν οὔτε τὴν δύναμι τῆς πίστεως, οὔτε τὴν δύναμι τοῦ πλήθους τῶν πιστῶν, οὔτε τὰ δικαιώματα τὰ ἐκ τοῦ Συντάγματος τῆς χώρας. Καθαρὴ προδοσία ἀπὸ μέσα. Ἐξ ἄλλου ἀπὸ μέσα πέφτουν οἱ πόλεις. Ἀπὸ τοὺς ἐντὸς προδότες. Τῆς ὀχυρωμένες πόλεις πολλὲς φορὲς τὰ ὄπλα καὶ οἱ μεθοδεῖες τῶν ἀπέξω δὲν κατάφεραν νὰ τῆς πορθήσουν. Ὅμως ἡ προδοσία ἐνδὸς ἢ δύο ἀπὸ τοὺς κατοικοῦντες τῆς παρέδωσαν χωρὶς κόπο στοὺς ἐχθροὺς.

**«Καὶ γὰρ τὰς ὀχυρὰς τῶν πόλεων ὄπλα μὲν πάντα πολλάκις καὶ μηχανήματα τῶν ἐξωθεν οὐκ ἴσχυσεν καθελεῖν, προδοσία δὲ ἐνδὸς ἢ δύο τῶν ἐνδον οἰκούντων πολιτῶν ἀπονητὶ παρέδωκεν τοῖς ἐχθροῖς».** Ἰωάννης Χρυσόστομος (Πρὸς Θεόδωρον Ἐκπέσοντα Β'), PG 47,313.

Ἐδῶ τὴν ἐκκλησία δὲν τὴν πρόδωσαν ἓνας ἢ δύο τυχόντες ἀπὸ τοὺς ἐντὸς. Τὴν πρόδωσαν οἱ ἴδιοι οἱ ποιμένες. Καὶ δὲν ἔγινε ἡ προδοσία τώρα ξαφνικά. Ἔχει ξεκινήσει χρόνια τώρα. Ἡ ἐν Χριστῶ ζωὴ ἀπὸ προσωπικὸς δρόμος ἀγάπης καὶ εὐθύνης ἐναντι τοῦ Χριστοῦ κατήντησε σιγά-σιγά ἔθιμο καὶ συνήθεια καὶ θεσμὸς καὶ στάδιο ἀνέλιξης καὶ ἀνόδου καὶ καριέρας καὶ ἐξουσίας καὶ αὐτοεπιβεβαιώσεως πολλῶν καὶ διαφόρων. Ἀτόνησε τὸ ἀσκητικὸ καὶ ἀγωνιστικὸ καὶ μαρτυρικὸ πνεῦμα καὶ φτάσαμε σὲ ἓναν ἄκοπο ἄνευρο ἄγευστο μαλακὸ ἐγκεφαλικὸ χριστιανισμὸ, δεκανίκι κάθε ἐξουσίας καὶ μοχλὸ χειραγωγῆσεως τοῦ λαοῦ. Κέντρο ἔγινε πλέον ὁ ἄνθρωπος καὶ οἱ ἐπίγειες ἀξίες του καὶ ὄχι ὁ Χριστὸς καὶ ὁ μαρτυρικὸς δρόμος Του. Ποιδὲς ἱεράρχης ἢ ἱερεὺς πλέον ἔχει ὡς κέντρο τῆς διδασχῆς καὶ τοῦ παραδείγματός του τῆς θεῖες γραφῆς καὶ τοὺς θεῖους νόμους καὶ τὸ παράδειγμα τῶν ἁγίων, ποιήσας προηγουμένως ὅσα διδάσκει; (Ἐννοεῖτε ὅτι ἀναφέρομαι στοὺς μηδίσαντες καὶ ὄχι σὲ ὅσους ἀντιστέκονται καὶ διώκονται ἢ χλευάζονται ἢ ἀπειλοῦνται).

Μιλᾶνε γιὰ σοφοὺς, γιὰ ἐιδικοὺς, γιὰ φιλοσόφους γιὰ λογοτέχνες καὶ ἀπὸ ἐκεῖ ἀντλοῦν ἀξίες καὶ

παραδείγματα καὶ διδασχῆς καὶ προτροπῆς. Τί εἶπε ὁ Καμὺ, τί εἶπε ὁ Ρουσσώ, τί ἔγραψε ὁ Καζαντζάκης, καὶ ἡ κάθε μεγάλη διάνοια κατ' αὐτοὺς. Ἀλλὰ αὐτοὶ οἱ ἄνθρωποι οὔτε τὴν ἁμαρτία ξέρουν, οὔτε τὸν διαβολὸ γνωρίζουν, οὔτε τὰ τεχνάσματά του, οὔτε γιὰ τὴν σωτηρία τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ τὴν αἰώνιο ζωὴ ἐνδιαφέρονται. Ἔτσι χάθηκε ἡ ἀσφάλεια ποῦ προστατεῖ ἀπὸ τὴν ἁμαρτία, ἔτσι βρεθήκαμε στὸ βάραθρο τῆς ἄγνοιας, ξεχάσαμε τοὺς νόμους τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ ἔτσι γεμίσαμε αἰρέσεις, ἡ ζωὴ κατήντησε μιὰ διεφθαρμένη κατάσταση καὶ ὅλα γίναν ἄνω κάτω. Νὰ ἡ προδοσία τῆς σωτηρίας. Νὰ καὶ οἱ προδότες ποιμένες (καὶ ἀκολουθήσαμε καὶ μεῖς οἱ λαϊκοὶ, φυσικά),

**«Μεγάλη ἀσφάλεια πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἁμαρτάνειν τῶν Γραφῶν ἢ ἀνάγνωσις, μέγας κρημνὸς καὶ βάραθρον βαθὺ τῶν Γραφῶν ἢ ἄγνοια, μεγάλη προδοσία σωτηρίας τὸ μηδὲν ἀπὸ τῶν θεῶν εἰδέναί νόμων τοῦτο καὶ αἰρέσεις ἔτεκε, τοῦτο καὶ βίον διεφθαρμένον εἰσήγαγε, τοῦτο τὰ ἄνω κάτω πεποιήκεν».** Ἰωάννης Χρυσόστομος, PG48,995.

Ὅταν μένει ὁ λαὸς χωρὶς πραγματικὴ ἀρετὴ, ἀλλὰ μαθαίνει στὸν τυποποιημένο εὐσεβισμὸ, στὴν ἐπίπλαστη εὐσέβεια, στὴν φαυλότητα τοῦ βίου τότε ἡ πόλις τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἔχει ἤδη προδοθῆ. Ἐδῶ νὰ ἀναζητηθῆ ἡ προδοσία, ποῦ σήμερα εἶναι ὀλοφάνερη σὲ ὅλους, ἐκτὸς ἀπὸ τοὺς ἱεράρχες καὶ τοὺς πνευματικοὺς ποῦ ἐπιμένουν νὰ ζητοῦν ὑπακοὴ καὶ νὰ προπαγανδίζουιν τὴν συμμόρφωσι σὲ καθε δαιμονικὸ καθεστωτικὸ κέλευσμα προσθέτοντας... στῶμεν καλῶς, στῶμεν μετὰ φόβου Θεοῦ!...

**«Ἀσφάλεια γὰρ πόλεως, οὐκ οἰκοδομῆς ἀρμονία, οὐδὲ λίθων μέγεθος, ἀλλ' ἡ τῶν ἐνοικούντων ἀρετὴ. Ὅπερ οὖν καὶ προδοσία πόλεως οὐκ οἰκοδομημάτων σαθρότης, ἀλλ' ἡ τῶν πολιτῶν φαυλότης».** Ἰωάννης Χρυσόστομος, PG64,793.

Ἔνα ἀπλὸ, ἀλλὰ κραυγαλέο, παράδειγμα ἀπομακρύνσεως ἀπὸ τὴν διδασκαλία τῶν πατέρων, εἶναι τὸ Κολυμπάρι καὶ ἡ, ἄς ποῦμε, σύνοδος ποῦ ἔγινε ἐκεῖ. Μόνον ἐθελοτυφλοῦντες ἢ ἀσπόνδυλοι δογματικῶς δὲν καταλαβαίνουιν τί συνέβη. Ἐκεῖ ἀναγνώρισαν ὡς ἐκκλησίες κάθε αἰρετικὸ μὲρφομα, παπιστῆς καὶ προτεστάντες καὶ δὲν συμμαζεῦεται, ἐνῶ ἔχει εἰπωθῆ μυριάκις ἀπὸ τοὺς ἁγίους πατέρες ὅτι αὐτὸ ἀποτελεῖ δαιμονικὴ μεθοδεῖα, ὥστε παρουσιάζοντας καὶ ὀνομάζοντας πολλὲς ἐκκλησίες ὁ διάβολος, ἢ καλύτερα στήνοντας εἰδῶλα ἐκκλησιῶν σὲ ὅσους πειστοῦν σ' αὐτὸν, τοὺς κάνει νὰ ἀποταχθοῦν ἀπὸ τὸν Χριστὸ. Ὅπως παλιὰ τοὺς ἀπομάκρυνε ἀπὸ τὸν Θεὸ μὲ τὰ εἰδῶλα, ἔτσι καὶ τώρα διὰ τῶν λεγομένων ἐκκλησιῶν τοὺς ἀπομακρύνει ἀπὸ τὴν ὄντως ἐκκλησία. Μὲ τέτοιες μεγάλες ἐπαγγελίες συνηθίζει

ὁ διάβολος νὰ ἐξαπατᾷ. (Σήμερα μὲ τὴν «ἀγάπη» γιὰ τοὺς εὐπαθεῖς συνανθρώπους μὴπως τοὺς κολλήσουμε ἀρρώστια).

**«Ὁὐ παύεται (ὁ διάβολος) ἀπατῶν τοὺς ἀστηρίκτους ὡς γὰρ πρὸ τοῦ εἶδωλα μετονομάσας θεοὺς ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄντως θεοῦ ἀπεπλάνησε τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, οὕτως καὶ νῦν πολλὰς ἐκκλησίας ὀνομάσας, μᾶλλον δέ, εἰ δεῖ τὸ ἀληθὲς εἰπεῖν, εἶδωλα ἐκκλησιῶν ἀναστήσας τῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἀποταγῇ τοὺς πειθόμενους αὐτῷ, ἵν' ὡσπερ τότε διὰ τῶν λεγομένων θεῶν ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀπέστησεν, οὕτως καὶ νῦν διὰ τῶν λεγομένων παρ' αὐτοῖς ἐκκλησιῶν τῆς ὄντως ἐκκλησίας ἀποσπάσῃ. Ἔθος γὰρ τῷ διαβόλῳ διὰ μεγάλων ἐπαγγελιῶν ἀπατᾶν».** Ἀμφιλόχιος Ἰκονίου (Ἐναντίον Αἰρετικῶν), στὸ TLG, 60,75.

Δὲν τὰ ξέραν αὐτὰ οἱ ἅγιοι πατέρες ποὺ πῆγαν ἐκεῖ, στὸ Κολυμπάρι; Τὰ ξέραν, φυσικά. Ἄν δὲν τὰ ξέραν τότε δὲν κάναν γιὰ αὐτὴ τὴν δουλειά. Ἄλλα ἦταν ἐκεῖ καὶ οἱ πράκτορες τῆς CIA καὶ ἡ κυρία Ἑλισάβετ Προδρομοῦ—μετὰ τῶν ἄλλων γυναικῶν τοῦ Πατριάρχου, ὅπως ἔγραφαν οἱ ἐφημερίδες—καὶ εἶχαν τὴν ἴδια νεοεποχίτικη ἀτζέντα ποὺ ἔχουν καὶ τώρα ὅλοι αὐτοὶ οἱ ψευδοποιημένες.

Ὅταν λοιπὸν ἔτσι καθοδηγεῖται ὁ λαὸς, ἔτσι γυμνάζεται, ἔτσι ἐκπαιδεύεται ἀπὸ τοὺς πνευματικούς του, μὲ φιέστες, χάπενινγκ, συνέδρια, κουβέντες, ἐκδρομὲς, πολιτιστικὰ κέντρα, ὁμιλητὲς στὴν νεο(α)πατερικῶν ἀστέρων, λείψανα καὶ εἰκόνες ποὺ πηγαίνουν πέρα δῶθε καὶ χιλιάδες φωτογραφίες καὶ μπουρδολογίες στὰ κοινωνικὰ μέσα καὶ πάσα νόσος καὶ πᾶσα μαλακία νὰ γίνεται πρότυπο πνευματικοῦ βίου τότε τί περιμένουμε; Οἱ ἄνθρωποι, οἱ πιστοὶ προσκολλημένοι στὸν κάθε ἱκανὸ ἢ ἀνίκανο ὀργανωτικὰ πνευματικὸ, ὡς ὀπαδοὶ ἢ ἀκόλουθοι ἢ θαυμαστὲς, σὰν μέλη συλλόγου, σὰν ὀπαδοὶ ὀμάδας, σὰν θαυμαστὲς εἰδώλου τῆς σύγχρονης βιομηχανίας τοῦ θεάματος, ἀλλὰ ἐντελῶς ἄσχετοι καὶ ἀπὸ παράδειγμα καὶ ἀπὸ βίωμα καὶ ἀπὸ ἐμπειρία καὶ στόχευσι ὀρθοδόξου βίου, τί θὰ μπορούσαν νὰ κάμουν μπροστὰ σ' αὐτὰ ποὺ ἦρθαν;

Ἐλεγε ὁ ἅγιος Ἰωάννης ὁ Χρυσόστομος: «Ἄν συμβῆ, ποὺ μακαρὶ νὰ μὴν συμβῆ, πόλεμος ἐναντίον τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ διωγμὸς σκέψου πόσο γέλιο θὰ πέσει καὶ πόσες κοροϊδίες. Καὶ εἶναι πολὺ φυσικὸ. Ὅταν κανεὶς δὲν γυμνάζεται πῶς θὰ παρουσιαστῇ λαμπρὸς στοὺς ἀγῶνες;»—**«Εἰ τοίνυν γένοιτο, ὃ μὴ γένοιτο, μηδὲ συμβαίῃ ποτὲ, γενέσθαι πόλεμον Ἐκκλησιῶν καὶ διωγμὸν, ἐννόησον πόσος ἔσται ὁ γέλως, πόσα τὰ ὀνειδίδη. Καὶ μάλα εἰκότως ὅταν γὰρ ἐν τῇ παλαιστῆρα μηδεὶς γυμνάζεται, πῶς ἐν τοῖς ἀγῶσιν ἔσται λαμπρός;»** Ἰωάννης Χρυσόστομος (Ἐρημηγία στὸ κατὰ Ματθαῖον Εὐαγγέλιον). PG57,395.

Καὶ ὁ διωγμὸς ἦρθε καὶ μαζὶ ἢ ἀναπόφευκτη γελοιοποίησις. Καὶ τὸ γελοιωδέστερον; Ἐπιμένουν οἱ Ἰεράρχες ὅτι δὲν εἶναι διωγμὸς. Φυσικὸ εἶναι γι' αὐτοὺς, διότι ἀφοῦ εἶναι συνεργοὶ θέλουν νὰ ἀποσεῖσουν τὶς εὐθύνες τους. Καὶ ἂν δὲν εἶναι διωγμὸς σεβασμιώτατοι τί εἶναι; Ἐκκλησίες κλειστὲς, μυστήρια συκοφαντημένα, ἢ πίστις λειωρεῖται, οἱ πιστοὶ διώκονται καὶ δικάζονται. Ποιὸς ἀκόμη τολμᾷ νὰ λέει ὅτι ἐτοῦτος ὁ καιρὸς εἶναι εἰρηνικὸς γιὰ τοὺς χριστιανούς καὶ ὄχι διωγμὸς; Καὶ μάλιστα διωγμὸς ποὺ ποτὲ δὲν ἔγινε μέχρι τώρα οὔτε ἄλλος θὰ κάμη παρὰ μόνο «ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀνομίας»;

**«Ἄρα τίς ἔτι τολμᾷ λέγειν τὸν καιρὸν τοῦτον εἰρηνικὸν εἶναι Χριστιανῶν καὶ οὐ μᾶλλον διωγμὸν; καὶ διωγμὸν, οἷος οὔτε πώποτε γέγονεν οὔτε τάχα τις ποιήσει ποτὲ τοιοῦτον εἰ μὴ ἄρα ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀνομίας».** Μέγας Ἀθανάσιος, PG25,785.

Τολμοῦν καὶ τὸ λένε οἱ ἴδιοι οἱ ἐπίσκοποι τῆς ἐκκλησίας καὶ οἱ πνευματικοὶ ποιμένες τοῦ λαοῦ. Καὶ κατηγοροῦν καὶ ἀπὸ πάνω ὅσους δὲν ἀκολουθοῦν τὴν προδοσίαν τους, καὶ μάλιστα προσπαθοῦν νὰ τὰ στηρίξουν ὅλα αὐτὰ πατερικῶς, διασ-τρεβλώνοντας τὰ πάντα.

Μὴν πλανᾶσθε, πλανημένοι ποιμένες. Κύκλω οἱ ἀσεβεῖς περιπατοῦσι. Ἔχουν γίνεαι καὶ ξαναγίνεαι ὅλα αὐτά. Πράγματι ὁ διωγμὸς γίνεται γιὰ τὶς ἁμαρτίες μας, ἀλλὰ αὐτὸ δὲν σημαίνει—ὅπως ἐσεῖς τὸ ἐρμηνεύετε παραπλανῶντας τοὺς ἀνθρώπους—νὰ μείνουμε μὲ σταυρωμένα χέρια, δειλοὶ καὶ φοβισμένοι, ἐφαρμόζοντας ἐκουσίως τὶς ἐντολὰς τῶν τυράννων ποὺ διώκουν τὴν πίστι, ὥστε νὰ μὴ φαίνεται ὁ διωγμὸς ὅτι εἶναι διωγμὸς ἀλλὰ ὅτι πεισθήκαμε καὶ ἔτσι ἢ ντροπὴ καὶ ὁ ξευτιλισμὸς μας νὰ εἶναι μεγαλύτερος ἀπὸ τὸν κίνδυνον τῶν ἀπειλῶν τῶν τυράννων.

**«Πειθοῦς ὄνομα προσεῖναι τῷ γινομένῳ, μὴ τυραννίδος, ὡς ἂν μείζον ἢ τοῦ κινδύνου τὸ τῆς αἰσχύνης ἀθαιρέτως χωροῦσι πρὸς τὴν ἀσέβειαν».** Γρηγόριος Θεολόγος (Ἐπιτάφιος εἰς Καισάριον), PG35 768.

Καὶ βλέπουμε ὅτι συνεχίζεται ἡ συνεργασία σας μὲ τοὺς διώκτες καὶ ἀνακοινῶνουν δημόσια ὅτι «ἡ ἐκκλησία θὰ συμμετάσχη στὴν ἐκστρατεία ἐμβολιασμοῦ» (Κικίλιας 9/12). Στὴν ἐκστρατεία ἐμβολιασμοῦ! Μὲ τί ἐμβόλια; Παρὰ τὰ ὅσα λένε οἱ ἐπιστήμονες (ὄχι οἱ ἐπιταγμένοι καὶ πληρωμένοι) καὶ τὶς ἐπιφυλάξεις ποὺ διατυπώνουν... Καὶ καλὰ οἱ ἐπιστήμονες. Ὅποτε θέλουν καὶ ὅποιους θέλουν ἀκοῦν καὶ ἐπικαλοῦνται. Τουλάχιστον νὰ ἀκούγαν λιγάκι καὶ τοὺς ἀγίους; Προλέγει ὁ ἅγιος Παῖσιος: **«Τώρα πάλι παρουσιάσθηκε μιὰ ἀρρώστια, γιὰ τὴν ὁποία βρῆκαν ἓνα ἐμβόλιο ποὺ θὰ εἶναι ὑποχρεωτικὸ καί, γιὰ νὰ τὸ κάνη κανεὶς, θὰ τὸν σφραγίσουν».**

Άγιος Παΐσιος Άγιορείτης, Λόγοι Β' (1999), Σουρωτή Θεσσαλονίκης, σελ.181

Άλλα τὸν ἅγιο Παΐσιο θὰ ἀκούσουμε ἑμεῖς; Ἐμεῖς εἴμαστε ἡ ἱεραρχία. Καὶ τότε ποὺ ζοῦσε τὰ ἴδια γινόταν: «**Ἐκάθαρα τὰ γράφω στὸ φυλλάδιο “Σημεῖα τῶν καιρῶν”, ἃς ἐνεργήσῃ ὁ καθένας ἀνάλογα μὲ τὴν συνείδησή του. Βέβαια μερικοὶ εἶπαν: “Ἐ, αὐτὰ εἶναι μιὰ γνώμη ἐνὸς καλοῦ ἄνθρωπου δὲν εἶναι ἡ θέση τῆς Ἐκκλησίας”. Ἐγὼ ὅμως δὲν εἶπα δική μου γνώμη, ἀλλὰ διατύπωση ἀπλὰ τὰ λόγια τοῦ Χριστοῦ, τοῦ Εὐαγγελίου, γιατί τὴν δική μας γνώμη πρέπει νὰ τὴν ὑποτάσσουμε στὸ θέλημα τοῦ Θεοῦ, ποὺ ἐκφράζεται μέσα στὸ Εὐαγγέλιο.**» Άγιος Παΐσιος ὁ.π. σελ. 184.

Ὁ καλόγηρος βέβαια ἀγιοκατατάχθηκε, δηλαδή ἀναγνωρίστηκε καὶ ἐπισήμως ἡ ἀγιότης του καὶ ὀρίστηκε ἡμέρα ἑορτῆς του. Ἀλλὰ μέχρι ἐκεῖ. Ἐδῶ δὲν ἀκοῦν οὔτε Χριστὸ, οὔτε ἀποστόλους, οὔτε τοὺς παλαιοὺς ἀγίους πατέρες. Θὰ ἀκούσουν τὸν φτωχὸ καλόγερο; Ὅσοι τὸν γνώρισαν καὶ ὅσοι τὸν ἐμπιστεύονται ἐλπίζω νὰ ξέρουν τί θὰ ἀκολουθήσουν. Οἱ ὑπόλοιποι κινδυνεύουν νὰ πᾶνε ὑπάκουοι καὶ φασκιομένοι: «**Λυστυχῶς, καὶ πάλι ὀρισμένοι “Γνωστικοὶ” φασκίωνουν τὰ πνευματικά τους τέκνα σὰν τὰ μωρά, δῆθεν γὰ νὰ μὴ στενοχωριοῦνται. “Ἄν πειράζει αὐτό: δὲν εἶναι τίποτε. Ἀρκεῖ ἐσωτερικὰ νὰ πιστεύετε.”**»!... Άγιος Παΐσιος ὁ.π. σελ. 191.



**Κ**ι ἂν μὲς τὸ σπίτι σου δὲν πιστεύει κανεὶς, οὔτε ὁ ἄνδρας οὔτε τὰ παιδιὰ σου, καὶ μένεις ἕνας μὲς τὸ σπίτι, ἐξακολουθεῖ νὰ πιστεύεις στὸν Θεό.

Κι ἂν μέσα στὴν κοινωνία, τὴν πόλη, τὸ χωριό, τὴν Ἀθήνα πέσουν καὶ προσκυνήσουν τὸν διάβολο, ἕνας νὰ μένεις μέσα στὴν Ἀθήνα, ἐσὺ νὰ μὴν ἀρνηθεῖς τὸν Χριστό.

Κι ἂν ὅλη ἡ Ἑλλάδα—ὅ μὴ γένοιτο—γονατίσει στὸν διάβολο κι ἀρνηθεῖ τὸν Χριστό, ἕνας νὰ μένεις στὴν Ἑλλάδα, μὴν ἀρνηθεῖς τὸν Χριστό.

Κι ἂν ὅλος ὁ πλανήτης ἀρνηθεῖ τὸν Χριστό κι ἕνας μείνει στὸν πλανήτη, μείνε ἐσὺ μὲ τὸν Χριστό.

Γιατὶ ὁ ἕνας θὰ νικήσει, ὁ Ἰησοῦς Χριστό!

**Μακαριστὸς Ἐπίσκοπος πρῶην Φλωρίνης  
Αὐγουστίνος Καντιώτης (+2010)**

## Ὁ θυμὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ δὲν ἔπεσε μόνο στὰ Σόδομα, Ἀλλὰ Μπορεῖ νὰ Πέσει καὶ σὲ Χριστιανικὲς Πόλεις Παρόμοιες μὲ τὰ Σόδομα!

Ἀπὸ τὸ βιβλίο: «Δὲν Φτάνει μόνο ἡ Πίστη», *Τεραποστολικὲς Ἐπιστολὲς Β', Ἀγίου Νικολάου Βελμιροβιτς.*



**Σ**’ ἕνα κάτοικο τοῦ Ζέμου, γὰρ τὴν καταστροφὴ τῶν Σοδόμων: «Γιατὶ ὁ Θεὸς κατέστρεψε τὰ Σόδομα;», ρωτᾶτε. Μὰ δὲν σὰς κατέστη σαφὲς ἀπὸ τὴν ἴδια τὴ Γραφή τοῦ Θεοῦ; «**Εἶπε δὲ Κύριος κραυγὴ Σοδόμων καὶ Γομόρρας πεπλήθυνται πρὸς με, καὶ αἱ ἁμαρτίαι αὐτῶν μεγάλαι σφόδρα**»

(Γεν. 18:20). Καὶ ὅτι ἡ ἁμαρτία Σοδόμων ἦταν ὄντως πολὺ μεγάλη καὶ σφοδρὴ, φαίνεται καὶ ἀπὸ τὸ ὅτι δὲν εἶχαν βρεθεῖ οὔτε δέκα δίκαιοι. Διότι στὴν ἐρώτηση τοῦ δίκαιου Ἀβραάμ, ἐὰν θὰ καταστρέψει τὴν ἁμαρτωλὴ πόλη, σὲ περίπτωσι ποὺ βρεῖ σ’ αὐτὴ δέκα δίκαιους, ὁ Κύριος ἀπάντησε καὶ εἶπε: «**Οὐ μὴ ἀπολέσω ἕνεκεν τῶν δέκα.**» (Γεν. 18:32).

Ἀλλὰ δὲν βρέθηκαν οὔτε δέκα. Ὅλοι οἱ πολῖτες ἦταν σὲ πόλεμο ἐναντίον τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ ἐναντίον τῆς φύσης. Οἱ ψυχὲς τους ἦταν νεκρὲς ἐνὸς τὰ σώματα ἐκφυλισμένα. Γι’ αὐτὸ χτύπησε «**θεῖον, καὶ πῦρ**» (Γεν. 19:24), τὸ σύμβολο τῆς βρώμας καὶ τῆς ἔξαψης τῶν παθῶν τους, καὶ ἀπὸ τὰ Σόδομα δὲν ἔμεινε τίποτα πλὴν τοῦ κακοῦ ὀνόματος καὶ τῆς φρικιαστικῆς ἀφήγησις.

Ὅμως δὲν ἔπεσε ὁ θυμὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ μόνο στὰ Σόδομα, ἀλλὰ καὶ σὲ πολλὲς ἄλλες πόλεις, ὅπου ἡ ἁμαρτία εἶχε κάνει τοὺς ἀνθρώπους δύσμορφους σὲ τέτοιο βαθμὸ, ὥστε νὰ μὴν μοιάζουν καθόλου πιά μὲ τὸ ἔργο τοῦ οὐράνιου Δημιουργοῦ. Καὶ ἐφόσον ἔτσι ἔγινε μὲ τὶς κακὲς πόλεις, στὶς ὁποῖες δὲν εἶχε ἀκουστῆ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, πὼσω μᾶλλον μπορεῖ νὰ συμβεῖ μὲ τὶς χριστιανικὲς πόλεις—τὶς ἐφάμιλλες ἢ παρόμοιες ὡς πρὸς τὸ κακὸ μὲ τὰ Σόδομα—τὶς βαπτισμένες στὸ... ὄνομα τοῦ Κυρίου Υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ;

Διαβάστε τὴν ἀπειλὴ τοῦ Σωτήρα πρὸς τὴν πόλη Καπερναοῦμ: «**Καὶ σὺ Καπερναοῦμ, ἡ ἕως τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ὑψωθεῖσα ἕως ἄδου καταβιβασθήσῃ ὅτι εἰ ἐν Σοδόμοις ἐγενήθησαν αἱ δυνάμεις αἱ γενόμεναι ἐν σοί, ἔμειναν ἂν μέχρι τῆς σήμερον.**» (Ματθ 11:23).

Καὶ πράγματι, ἡ προφητεία ἐκπληρώθηκε: ἐκεῖ ὅπου κάποτε στεκόταν ἡ ὑπερήφανη πόλη τῆς Καπερναοῦμ τώρα εἶναι ἀδιαπέραστος θαμνώδης τόπος, πέτρες καὶ φωλιὲς φιδιῶν. Μὲ τὰ μάτια τους τὸ εἶδαν καὶ μὲ τὴν καρδιὰ ἔτρεμαν ὅλοι οἱ προσκυνητὲς τῶν Ἁγίων Τόπων.

## Ἡ Εὐλογία Ἀνησυχία Ἐνός Χαριτωμένου Γέροντα

Γράφει ὁ Ἡλίας Καλλιώρας.

**Ἄς κάνουμε ἐμεῖς τό πρώτο βῆμα καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς  
θὰ ἀναλάβει τὰ ὑπόλοιπα**

† † †

**Χ**θὲς μὲ κάλεσε ἀπροσδόκητα ἕνας γεμάτος χάρι γέροντας ἀπὸ τὴν Ἡπειρωτικὴ Ἑλλάδα. Ὁμολογῶ ὅτι πράγματι ξαφνιαστήκα ἀπὸ αὐτὸ τὸ τηλεφώνημα! Διότι, ἡ ἐν λόγῳ ἁγία ψυχὴ δὲν συνηθίζει νὰ κάνει κάτι τέτοιο. Κάθε ἄλλο μάλιστα. Τὸ ἀντίθετο ἰσχύει.

Σὰς κοινοποιῶ, στὴ συνέχεια ἐν συντομίᾳ, κάποια ἀπὸ αὐτὰ πού μοῦ εἶπε καὶ ὑπογράμμισε ὁ ἐν λόγῳ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ Θεοῦ:

«Παιδί μου, ὁ Κύριος εἶναι πάρα πολὺ θλιμένος.

Ὅσο, ὁμοίως, καὶ ἡ Μητέρα Του, ἡ Κυρία Θεοτόκος, μὲ ὅλα αὐτὰ πὺ γίνονται στὶς μέρες μας, στὸν ἅγιο τόπο μας. Θλίψη μεγάλη γεμίζει τὴν ψυχὴ μου, πὺ ὑπάρχουν σήμερα ἱεράρχες μὲ αὐτὲς τὶς πνευματικὲς θέσεις, κοσμικὲς συμπεριφορὲς καὶ ἀνθρώπινη στάση ἀπέναντι κυρίως στὰ ἐμβόλια. Εἶναι ἀπαράδεκτο λ.χ. νὰ πιέζουν κάποιοι ἀπὸ τὸν ἅγιο Ἄμβωνα γιὰ νὰ ἐμβολιαστοῦν οἱ ἄνθρωποι. Νὰ ἐμβολιασθεῖ, δηλαδή, ὅλο ἀνεξαιρέτως τὸ ποίμνιό τους.

Πάρα πολὺς πόνος στεναχωρεῖ καὶ ματώνει τὴν καρδιά μου, παιδί μου, γιὰ τὴ σημερινὴ Διοικοῦσα Ἐκκλησία καὶ τὶς μὴ πατερικὲς τῆς θέσεις ἀπέναντι στὰ θέματα καὶ τὶς ὑποχρεώσεις τῆς ἁγίας μας Ἐκκλησίας, εἰδικῶς ἀπὸ πέρουσι τὸν Μάρτιο καὶ τὴν πρώτη φάση τοῦ κορωνοϊοῦ. Ὅπως εἶναι γιὰ παράδειγμα, τὸ κλείσιμο ἱερῶν ναῶν, ἡ ἀπαγόρευση ἢ τὸ σταμάτημα τῶν λιτανειῶν, ἢ ἐπιβολὴ τῶν μασκῶν μέσα στοὺς ἱεροὺς ναοὺς, καὶ πολλὰ ἄλλα.

Μπορεῖς, παιδί μου, νὰ μοῦ πεῖς, γιατί τὰ κάνουν ὅλα αὐτὰ τὰ ἁμαρτωλά, τὰ φρικτὰ καὶ ἀπαράδεκτα οἱ ἅγιοι δεσπότες μας; Δὲν καταλαβαίνουν ὅτι τὰ δῆθεν ἐμβόλια εἶναι ἀργὸς θάνατος γιὰ πολλοὺς ἀπὸ τοὺς συνανθρώπους μας; Τί ἄραγε συμβαίνει; Μὰ ἐδῶ γίνεται μία ἄνευ προηγουμένου γενοκτονία! Δὲν τὸ καταλαβαίνουν μήπως αὐτὸ οἱ ἱεράρχες μας; Γιατί ἄραγε δὲν τὸ αἰσθάνονται κάτι τέτοιο καὶ πάρα πολὺ μεγάλο κακὸ πὺ ἀφορᾷ ὀλόκληρη τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα;

Μπορεῖς νὰ μοῦ πεῖς, ἀκόμη, γιατί ἡ κυβέρνησις ὅσο καὶ ἡ ἐπιτροπὴ τῶν εἰδικῶν τοῦ κράτους ἐπιμένει τόσο πολὺ στὸ νὰ γίνουν μὲ κάθε κόστος, ἄμεσα καὶ πάση θυσία τὰ ἐμβόλια; Μὰ, δὲν τὸ λένε οἱ ἴδιες οἱ ἐταιρεῖες πὺ παράγουν αὐτὰ τὰ «ἐμβόλια» ὅτι τὰ ἐμβόλιά τους εἶναι, κατὰ πρῶτον, πειραματικὰ καὶ ἔχουν, ἐπίσης, δεύτερον, μόνον προσωρινὴ ἄδεια χρῆσις;

Ἀλλά, ἐν τούτοις ὅμως, δόξα τῷ Τριαδικῷ Θεῷ εὐτυχῶς ὁ Κύριός μας εὐλόγησε καὶ φώτισε πάρα πολλοὺς Ἑλληνας καὶ οἱ ἴδιοι βγήκαν, σὲ ὀλόκληρη πλέον τὴν χώρα, μὲ δυναμικὲς πορεῖες, μεγάλες συναθροῖσεις, ἀνθρώπινη ἀντίστασις καὶ μὲ πολλὲς καὶ συγκεκριμένες διαμαρτυρίες κατὰ τῶν ἐμβολιασμῶν.

Παιδί μου, μία εἶναι ἡ ἀλήθεια: Εἶναι ἔγκλημα κατὰ τῆς ἀνθρωπότητας ὁ ἐμβολιασμός! Καὶ εἰδικὰ τῶν παιδιῶν! Μεγάλο κακὸ καὶ μέγα ἔγκλημα!

Ἔχεις τὴν εὐχή μου, παιδί μου, νὰ κάνεις καὶ ἐσὺ ὅτι εἶναι ἀνθρωπίνως δυνατὸν νὰ ξεσηκωθοῦν στὴ συνέχεια ὅλο καὶ περισσότεροι Ἑλληνας κατὰ τῶν κυβερνητικῶν ἐγκλημάτων καὶ ὄλων ὄσων διαπράττουν ἐκουσίως ἢ ἀκουσίως ἐγκλήματα κατὰ τοῦ ἀνθρώπινου γένους!

Εἶναι πάρα πολὺ μεγάλη ἀνάγκη νὰ βρεθοῦν στοὺς δρόμους τὰ Ἑλληνόπουλα, ξανὰ καὶ ξανά!

Πρέπει νὰ συνεχίσετε μαζικότερα καὶ δυναμικότερα, γιατί δὲν ἔχετε ἄλλο τρόπο προστασίας, ἀντίστασις καὶ ἀντίδρασις κατὰ

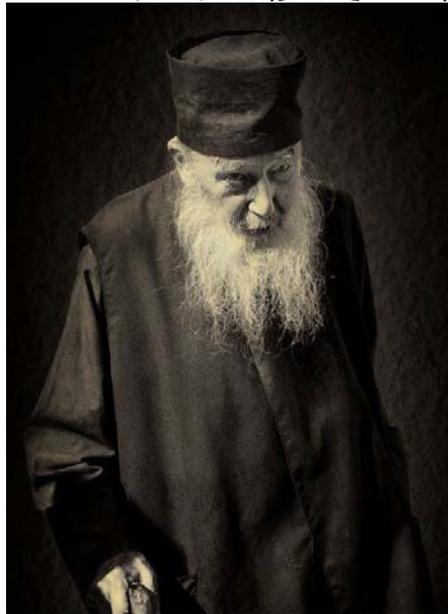
τῶν ζῶν τῶν ἀθῶν παιδιῶν μας!

Νὰ συγκεντρωθεῖτε, νὰ φωνάξετε, νὰ διαμαρτυρηθεῖτε, νὰ κλείσετε ὅλους τοὺς δρόμους, πάλι καὶ ξανά!.. Χωρὶς τέλος!

Τὸ ξαναλέω! Κινδυνεύουν ἢ Ἑλλάδα καὶ εἰδικότερα τὰ ἀθῶα καὶ ἁγνὰ παιδιὰ μας!

Ἔχετε, παιδιὰ τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μας, τὴν εὐλογία μου καὶ τὴν εὐχή μου νὰ πολεμήσετε καὶ νὰ ἀνατρέψετε τὴν ἐγκληματικὴ αὐτὴ κατάστασις, φρικτὴ στάσις καὶ κατηφορικὴ ἐθνικὴ πορεία. Εἶναι ἐθνικὴ ἀνάγκη.

Ὅσο γιὰ μένα, ἐὰν φτάσουμε στὸ σημεῖο νὰ μοῦ ποῦν νὰ μπαίνουν στὸ ἅγιο Μοναστήρι μου ἀποκλειστικὰ καὶ μόνον οἱ ἐμβολιασμένοι, κάνω πολὺ προσευχὴ στὴν Παναγία μας, νὰ μοῦ ἐπιτρέψει καλύτερα νὰ τὸ κλείσω παρὰ νὰ ξεχωρίσω τὰ παιδάκια μου, πὺ ἔρχονται στὴν Ἱερὰ Μονή, ὅπου διακονῶ τὸν Κύριό



μου και Θεό μου για πολλές δεκαετίες, για να βρουν οι ίδιοι αγία αγαλλίαση, ουράνιες ευχές, θεϊκές ευλογίες και έσωτερική ειρήνη και χαρά!

Τὸ ξαναλέω για μία ακόμη φορά και σᾶς ευλογῶ! Νὰ ἀντισταθεῖτε! Δυναμικά. Καὶ ὄλο και περισσότεροι νὰ συναθροίζεστε και νὰ διαμαρτύρεσθε τὴν κάθε ἐπόμενη φορά. Ὅλο και περισσότεροι οἱ συναθροισμένοι.

Οἱ σκοτεινὲς δυνάμεις δὲν θὰ σταματήσουν ἐδῶ τὰ φρικτὰ τους σχέδια. Κάντε κάτι και ἐσεῖς. Ἔστω και κάποια πράγματα μικρὰ ἢ και μηδενικῆς ἀξίας. Καί, στή συνέχεια, ὁ γλυκύτατος και Πανάγαθος Ἰησοῦς μας θὰ κάνει ὅλα τὰ ὑπόλοιπα. Θὰ ἐπέμβει!..».

Κλείνοντας, τέλος, θὰ σᾶς καταγράψω αὐτὸ πὸν εἶπε πολὺ γνωστὸς ἀγιορείτης γέροντας στὸν Διονύση Μακρῆ, πὸν βρέθηκε στὸ Ἅγιον Ὄρος πρὶν λίγες μέρες: «Πρέπει νὰ δώσετε πολλαπλὴ και δυναμικὴ μάχη. Χρειάζεται πολλοὶ νὰ κάνουν ἀγωγές, μὴνύσεις, ἐξῶδικα, κλπ, κατὰ τῶν ἀρχῶν τοῦ κράτους, ὥστε κάποιοι νὰ φοβηθοῦν τὶς νομικὲς και λοιπὲς συνέπειες και νὰ ὑποχωρήσουν στὰ ἐμβόλια, κλπ.».



**Π**αλιά, ὅταν γινόταν ἕνας πόλεμος, ἦταν ἐν ἀμύνη κανεῖς και πηγαινε νὰ ἀγωνισθῆ, νὰ πολεμήσῃ, για νὰ ὑπερασπιστῆ τὴν Πατρίδα του, τὸ ἔθνος του. Τώρα δὲν πᾶμε νὰ ὑπερασπίσουμε τὴν Πατρίδα μας ἢ νὰ ἀγωνισθοῦμε, για νὰ μὴ μᾶς κάψουν οἱ βάρβαροι τὰ σπίτια μας ἢ νὰ μὴ μᾶς πάρουν τὴν ἀδελφή μας και μᾶς ἀτιμάσουν, οὔτε πᾶμε για ἕνα ἔθνος ἢ για μία ιδεολογία. Τώρα πᾶμε ἢ για τὸν Χριστὸ ἢ για τὸν διάβολο.

Εἶναι καθαρὸ μέτωπο. Στὴν Κατοχὴ γινόνταν ἥρωας, γιατί δὲν χαιρετοῦσες ἕναν Γερμανό. Τώρα γίνεσαι ἥρωας, γιατί δὲν χαιρετᾶς τὸν διάβολο. Πάντως θὰ δοῦμε φοβερὰ γεγονότα. Θὰ δοθοῦν πνευματικὲς μάχες. Οἱ Ἅγιοι θὰ ἀγιασθοῦν περισσότερο και οἱ ρυπαροὶ θὰ γίνουν ρυπαρώτεροι. Νιώθω μέσα μου μία παρηγορία. Μία μπόρα εἶναι και ὁ ἀγώνας ἔχει ἀξία, γιατί τώρα δὲν ἔχουμε ἐχθρὸ τὸν Ἄλλῃ Πασά ἢ τὸν Χίτλερ ἢ τὸν Μουσουλίνη, ἀλλὰ τὸν διάβολο. Γι' αὐτὸ θὰ ἔχουμε και οὐράνιο μισθό.

Ὁ Θεὸς ἂς ἀξιοποιήσῃ τὸ κακὸ σὲ καλὸ σὰν Καλὸς Θεός.

**Ἁγίου Παΐσιου τοῦ Ἀγιορείτου**

## Ὁρθοδοξία και Παπισμός

*Ἐκ τοῦ περιοδικοῦ «Ὁ Ὁσιος Φιλότητος τῆς Πάρου» τεύχος 20, Μάιος-Αὔγουστος 2007. Ἐκδόσεις «Ὁρθόδοξος Κυψέλη». Κείμενο τοῦ Ὁρθόδοξου συγγραφέως και ὁμολογητοῦ Φώτη Κόντογλου. Ἄν και γραμμένο μισὸν αἰῶνα πρὶν και ἀναφέρεται στὰ τότε γεγονότα, ὅμως εἶναι ἄκρως και δραματικὰ ἐπίκαιρο. Ἴσως διότι πάντοτε ἡ προδοσία θὰ εἶναι τὸ ἴδιο δαιμονικὴ ἐνῶ ἡ Ὁμολογία τὸ ἴδιο Θεοδίδακτη. Ἄς διαφυλάξουμε τὸ μυστήριό τῆς Ὁρθοδοξίας μας.*

**Μ**εγάλο, πολὺ μεγάλο και σπουδαῖο εἶναι ἕνα ζήτημα πὸν δὲν τοῦ δώσανε σχεδὸν καθόλου προσοχὴ οἱ περισσότεροι Ἕλληνες. Κι αὐτὸ εἶναι τὸ ὅτι ἀπὸ καιρὸ ἀρχίσανε κάποιοι δικοὶ μας κληρικοὶ νὰ θέλουν και νὰ ἐπιδιώκουν νὰ δέσουν στενὲς σχέσεις με τοὺς παπικούς, πὸν ἐπὶ τόσους αἰῶνες μᾶς ρημάξανε. Γιατί σ' ἀληθινά, δὲν ὑπάρχει πιδὸς μεγάλος ἀντίμαχος τῆς φυλῆς μας, κι ἐπίμονος ἀντίμαχος, πού, σώνει και καλὰ θέλει νὰ σβῆσει τὴν Ὁρθοδοξία.

Οἱ δεσποτᾶδες πού εἶπα πὸς τοὺς ἐπίασε, ἄξαφνα κι ἀναπάντεχα, ὁ ἔρωτας με τοὺς Λατίνους, λένε πὸς τὸ κάνουμε ἀπὸ «ἀγάπη». Μὰ αὐτὸ εἶναι χονδροειδεστάτη δικαιολογία και καλὰ θὰ κάνουμε νὰ παρατήσουνε αὐτὰ τὰ ροσόλια τῆς «ἀγάπης», πὸν τὴν κάναμε ρεζίλι.

Ὁ διάβολος, ἅμα θελήσει νὰ κάνει τὸ πιδὸς πονηρὸ παιγνίδι του, μιᾶ, ὁ ἀλιτήριος για ἀγάπη. Ὅ,τι εἶπε ὁ Χριστός, τὸ λέγει κι αὐτὸς κάλπικα, για νὰ ξεγελάσει. Τώρα, στὰ καλὰ καθούμενα, τοὺς ρασοφόρους μας στὴν Πόλη, τοὺς ἐπίασε παροξυσμὸς τῆς ἀγάπης για τοὺς Ἰταλιάνους, πὸν στέκονται, ὅπως πάντα, κρύοι και περήφανοι και δὲν γυρίζουνε νὰ τοὺς δοῦνε αὐτὸς τοὺς «ἐν Χριστῷ ἀδελφούς», πὸν ὅσα τοὺς κάνανε ἀπὸ τὸν καιρὸ τῶν Σταυροφόρων ἴσαμε τώρα, δὲν τοὺς τάκανε μῆτε Τοῦρκος, μῆτε Τάταρος, μῆτε Μωμαχετάνος.

Ἴσως κι οἱ δικοὶ μας νὰ κάνουν ἀπὸ παρεξηγημένη καλοσύνη. Ὅπως εἶπα, οἱ περισσότεροι δικοὶ μας δὲν δώσανε καμμιά σημασία σ' αὐτὲς τὶς φιλοπαπικὲς κινήσεις, πὸν εἶναι θάνατος για τὸ γένος μας και πὸν τὶς κινήσανε οἱ καταχθόνιες δυνάμεις πὸν πολεμᾶνε τὸν Χριστὸ και πὸν με τὰ λεπτά τους ἀγοράζουνε ὄλους, δὲν δώσανε λοιπὸν καμμιά σημασία, γιατί τὰ θεωροῦνε τιποτένια πράγματα, ἂν δὲν εἶναι κι οἱ ἴδιοι ἀγορασμένοι...

Τώρα τὰ μυαλὰ γινήκανε φαρδειά, και καταγίνονται με ἄλλα, κοσμοϊστορικὰ προβλήματα! «Θὰ καθόμαστε νὰ κυττάζουμε τώρα παπάδες και Ὁρθοδοξίες»; Μὰ αὐτοὺς δὲν τοὺς μέλλει κι ἂν ἐξαφανισθεῖ ἀπὸ τὸν κόσμο κάθε ἑλληνικὸ πρᾶγμα. Καὶ θὰ ἐξαφανισθεῖ ὄχι τόσο εὔκολα με τὸν ἀμερικανισμὸ πὸν πάθαμε, ὅσο ἂν γίνουμε στὴ θρησκεία παπικοί. Γιατί γι' αὐτοῦ πᾶμε.

Παπική Ἑλλάδα θὰ πεῖ ἀξαφάνιση τῆς Ἑλλάδας. Νὰ γιατί εἶπα πὼς εἶναι πολὺ σπουδαῖο ζήτημα αὐτὲς οἱ ἐρωτηροπίες ποὺ ἀρχίσανε κάποιοι κληρικοὶ δικοὶ μας μὲ τοὺς παπικούς, κι ἡ αἰτία εἶναι το ὅτι δὲν νοιώσανε τί εἶναι Ὁρθοδοξία ὁλότελα, μ' ὄλο ποὺ εἶναι δεσποτάδες. Τὸ κακὸ εἶναι πὼς ὁ λαὸς δὲν πῆρε, καλὰ - καλὰ, εἶδηση γιὰ τὴ συνωμοσία. Ποιὸς νὰ τὸν πληροφορήσει ἀφοῦ οἱ γραμματισμένοι τὰ θεωροῦνε αὐτὰ τὰ πράγματα ἀνάξια γιὰ τὴ μοντέρνα σοφία τους, καὶ τρέχουν σημαιοφόροι σὲ κάθε νεωτερισμὸ; Ἀπὸ τότε ποὺ ἀρχίσανε οἱ λυκοφιλίες ἀνάμεσα στοὺς δικούς μας καὶ στοὺς παπικούς (καὶ σημείωσε πὼς οἱ δικοὶ μας φαγωθήκανε πρῶτοι νὰ πιάσουνε σχέση μὲ τοὺς Λατίνους σὰν νὰ πήρανε ἀπὸ κάπου διαταγή, κι ὁλοένα μιλάνε γιὰ «τὸν διάλογο μαζί τους», δίχως νὰ ξέρουνε καλὰ - καλὰ τί λένε), ἀπὸ τότε λοιπὸν, ἀκοῦμε, κάθε τόσο κάτι πράγματα θεατρικά, ἄνοστα, ἀνόητα, δίχως καμμιά σοβαρότητα, ὅπως εἶναι ἡ λεγόμενη «Διάσκεψις τῆς Ρόδου», τὰ νέα παρεκκλήσια τοῦ Βατικανοῦ, κ.λ.π.

Στὴ Ρόδο πήγανε οἱ δικοὶ μας μὲ σκοπὸ νὰ πουλήσουν τὴν Ὁρθοδοξία, γιατί γι' αὐτοὺς εἶναι καθυστερημένη μορφή τοῦ Χριστιανισμοῦ, δηλαδή ἕνας βλάχικος χριστιανισμὸς καὶ νὰ ἀρχίσουν τὸν «διάλογον», ποὺ νὰ τὸν πάρει ἡ εὐχή αὐτὸν τὸν «διάλογον». Καὶ τί κάνανε; Τίποτα! Λόγια πολλὰ καὶ χαμένα, ποὺ νὰ ντρέπεται κι ὁ τελευταῖος Ἕλληνας Ὁρθόδοξος. Προχθὲς πάλι μάθαμε πὼς ὁ Πάπας ἐγκαινίασε ἕνα νέο παρεκκλήσιο στὸ Βατικανὸ καὶ ἔβαλε γιὰ εἰκόνες (μὴ χειρότερα!) τὶς φωτογραφίες τοῦ Πάπα καὶ τοῦ Ἀθηναγόρα, «ὁ ὁποῖος ἴσταται ὀπισθεν τοῦ Ποντίφηκος»! Φαντασθεῖτε παρεκκλήσιο μὲ φωτογραφίες (τί ἀκαλαίσθητα πράγματα!).

Ὁ Πάπας λοιπὸν θὰ προσεύχεται μπροστὰ στὶς δικές του φωτογραφίες! Δηλαδή τρελλάθηκαν οἱ ἄνθρωποι! Αὐτὰ δὲν τὰ κάνανε μήτε οἱ ἀραπάδες τῆς Ἀφρικής. Συλλογίζομαι πόση σοβαρότητα ἔχουν οἱ Μουσουλμάνοι στὴ θρησκεία τους, καὶ ποῦ καταντήσανε τὴ θρησκεία τοῦ Χριστοῦ αὐτοὶ οἱ ἀθεόφοβοι Ἰταλιάνοι, ποὺ προσκυνᾶνε ἀγάλματα τῆς Παναγίας μὲ κοκκινάδια, μὲ σκουλαρίκια καὶ μὲ δαχτυλίδια. Κι ἐμεῖς οἱ Ὁρθόδοξοι ποὺ φυλάξαμε τὸ βαθὺ μυστήριον τῆς εὐσεβείας, τώρα, στὰ καλὰ καθούμενα, πᾶμε νὰ γίνουμε ἕνα μ' αὐτοὺς ποὺ γελοιοποίησανε τὸν Χριστὸ ὅσο κανένας ἄθεος.

Ἀλλά, ἀπὸ ποῦ νὰ πιάσει κανένας καὶ πολὺ νὰ τελειώσει; Ὅσοι ἦταν ἕως τώρα ἀδιάφοροι γιὰ τὴ

θρησκεία καὶ γιὰ τὴν Ἐκκλησία, καὶ ποὺ πολλοὶ ἀπ' αὐτοὺς τὴν περιπαίζανε μάλιστα, ὅλοι αὐτοὶ γινήκανε ἔξαφνα παπόφιλοι, καὶ μασᾶνε σὰν μαστίχι τὴν ψεύτικη λέξη «ἀγάπη». Μεγαλύτερο ρεζιλίκι δὲν ἔγινε. Ἐμεῖς οἱ ἄλλοι ποὺ εἴμαστε κολλημένοι ἀπὸ νεότητος στὴν Ἐκκλησία μας, εἴμαστε στενοκέφαλοι, μοχθηροί, γυμνοὶ ἀπὸ ἀγάπη κι ἀπὸ ἀληθινὴ εὐσέβεια. Ἡ μόδα εἶναι τώρα νὰ φαίνεσαι ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἐποχῆς μας, ποὺ ἐνοίωσε τὰ «αἰτήματά» της. [...]

Πίστη ἀσάλευτη στὴν Ὁρθοδοξία, ποὺ ἐμεῖς οἱ προκομμένοι τὴν πήραμε κληρονομία καὶ τὴν πουλάμε «ἀντὶ πινακίου φακῆς» καὶ ἀσπασμοῦ τῆς παντόφλας τοῦ Πάπα! Μὰ σὲ τέτοιο σημείο ἐκφυλισθήκαμε; Αἰτία εἶναι ἡ ἔμφυτη ματαιοδοξία μας, ποὺ μᾶς κάνει νὰ θέλουμε νὰ φαινόμεστε ἔξυπνοι συγχρονισμένοι, προοδευτικοί, κι ὄχι καθυστερημένοι. Μὲ τὴ συναίσθηση τῆς κατωτερότητας ποὺ ἀποχτήσαμε,

φοβόμεστε σὰν τὸν διάβολο μήπως μᾶς ποῦνε «παλιὰ μυαλά, παλιομερολογίτες, τάχα καθυστερημένους». Καὶ τρέχουμε νὰ πᾶμε πρώτη σὲ κάθε κίνηση ποὺ περνᾶ γιὰ «μοντέρνα», θέλεις μίμηση τῆς «ἀφηρημένης ζωγραφικῆς», θέλεις αὐτὲς τίς ἀκαταλαβίστικες

«λογοτεχνίες» (καημένη λογοτεχνία, ποῦ κατάντησε!), θὲς φιλοπαπισμὸς, θὲς φιλοαμερικανισμὸς, στὰ πάντα, στὰ ντυσίματά μας (πρὸ πάντων τῆς νεολαίας), στὸν τρόπο ποὺ μιλάμε καὶ σκεπτόμαστε, ἀκόμα καὶ στὶς χειρονομίες. Δηλαδή, καταντήσαμε μαῖμοῦδες τοῦ ἀνθρωπίνου γένους «ἐν ὀνόματι τῆς προόδου καὶ τῆς θαυμάσιας ἐποχῆς μας»...



Πρέπει νὰ γίνης γενναιότερος. Νὰ παραταχθῆς στῆθος πρὸς στῆθος πρὸς αὐτοὺς τοὺς ἄσαρκους (δαίμονες). Μὴν τοὺς φοβῆσαι. Ἐσὺ δὲν βλέπεις μὲ κάθε εὐχήν, ὅπου λέγεις, πόσοι πίπτουν, πόσοι στρέφουν τὰ νῶτα. Σὺ μόνον βλέπεις πόσον ἐσὺ πληγώνεσαι. Ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτοὶ δέρνονται. Καὶ αὐτοὶ φεύγουν. Εἰς κάθε ὑπομονὴν ὅπου κάμνομεν, φεύγουν ἀλματωδῶς, καὶ εἰς κάθε εὐχήν πληγώνονται σοβαρῶς. Λοιπὸν μὴ θέλῃς ἐν καιρῷ πολέμου νὰ ρίπτῃς ἐσὺ σφαῖρες καὶ βόλια καὶ αὐτοὶ νὰ σοῦ ρίχνουν λουκουμία καὶ σοκολάτες.

Ὅσιος Ἰωσήφ ὁ Ἡσυχαστῆς

## ALEKSANDR SOLZHENITSYN'S ANSWER TO AMERICA'S PROBLEMS

By Bill Connor, "The Christian Post," September 30, 2020. Bill Connor, an Army Infantry colonel, author and Orangeburg attorney, has deployed multiple times to the Middle East. Connor was the senior U.S. military adviser to Afghan forces in Helmand Province, where he received the Bronze Star.

*Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (1918 – 2008) won the Nobel Prize in literature in 1970. He was pivotal in revealing what life was like in the days of the atheistic communist Soviet Union. He is the mind behind his powerful book Voice from the Gulag.*

† † †

*Men have forgotten God; that's why all this has happened.*

[Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn]

† † †



With the 2019 Pew Research Poll showing the percentage of Christians in America dropping from 77% in 2009 to 65% in 2019, the religious transformation of Americans cannot be ignored. For many Americans, religion is seen as a personal matter which should be disconnected from public life. Many of the political left assert Christian values are a danger to public decision making. Amy Coney Barrett was grilled by Democratic Senators about the potential dangerous role her religious beliefs might play during the 2018 Appeals Court confirmation hearings. The reality is that the level of religion in a nation is of utmost importance to the future of the nation. The prophetic warning of the danger of national Spiritual decline, by author and Soviet dissident Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, is what America desperately needs right now. Let me explain.

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn was born in Russia in December 1918. Though Baptized in a Russian Orthodox family, Solzhenitsyn experienced the anti-Christian fervor of the Soviet Union growing up and he became a militant atheist communist. During World War II, Solzhenitsyn served as an Artillery Captain and was thrice decorated for bravery fighting Nazi Germany. Despite heroism in the Red Army, in 1945 Solzhenitsyn was given an 8-year sentence to a Soviet Gulag due to private criticism of Stalin. It was during that period the Solzhenitsyn experienced a religious conversion back to the Orthodox Christian faith of his youth. He came to see the hatred of Christianity at the heart of Communism, and came to better understand the ultimate reason for the horror of 60 million dead in the Soviet Union. As Solzhenitsyn wrote, it took root due to the nation turning from God.

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Solzhenitsyn was released from the Gulag in 1953, and attempted to publish works critical of the Gulag system and the Soviet Union. After persecution by the Soviet authorities, Solzhenitsyn was ultimately stripped of his Soviet citizenship and expelled from Russia. He lived in America from 1976 until after the fall of the Soviet Union, when, in 1994, he returned to his home country of Russia. While in America, due to his international acclaim as a writer and dissident Solzhenitsyn was invited to give many speeches to various Western audiences. In 1978, Solzhenitsyn shocked liberal Harvard University by warning of the danger of the materialism and rising secularism he saw pervading and corroding the West. Solzhenitsyn compared the horrible consequences of state enforced atheism in Communism Soviet Union to the secularism and materialism he saw in America.

It was at his 1983 address when receiving the Templeton Award that Solzhenitsyn succinctly explained the reason for the Bolshevik Revolution and the barbarity and atrocities it wrought on the world: "Men have forgotten God, and that's why all this happened." This was the ultimate explanation for the horrors of Socialism. Solzhenitsyn was also providing warning that America could experience the same by "forgetting God."

According to Solzhenitsyn, violent revolution followed Godlessness and increased Godlessness: "It was Dostoevsky, once again, who drew from the French Revolution and its seeming hatred of the Church the lesson that 'revolution must necessarily begin with atheism.' That is absolutely true. But the world had never before known a godlessness as organized, militarized, and tenaciously malevolent as that practiced by Marxism. Within the philosophical system of Marx and Lenin, and at the heart of their psychology, hatred of God is the principal driving force, more fundamental than all their political and economic pretensions. Militant atheism is not merely incidental or marginal to Communist policy; it is not a side effect, but the central pivot. To achieve its diabolical ends. Communism needs to control a population devoid of religious and national feeling, and this entails the destruction of faith and nationhood."

Solzhenitsyn went on to explain the counter to the Marxism and secularism of his day. Prophetically, this provides the answer to the rising Marxism and anarchy we find growing in America today. As Solzhenitsyn explains, contrary to the group, racial, and class divisions of Marxism, America must look to God, both as a nation and as individuals:

"All attempts to find a way out of the plight of today's world are fruitless unless we redirect our consciousness, in repentance, to the Creator of all: without this, no exit will be illumined, and we shall seek it in vain. The resources we have set aside for ourselves are too impoverished for the task. We must first recognize the horror perpetrated not by some outside force, not by class or national enemies, but within

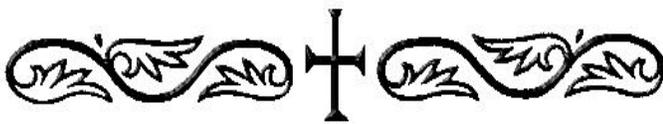
each of us individually, and within every society. This is especially true of a free and highly developed society, for here in particular we have surely brought everything upon ourselves, of our own free will. We ourselves, in our daily unthinking selfishness, are pulling tight that noose.”

In America today, we see the increasing attacks on the foundations of our traditional Christian faith and our nation by groups like antifa and BLM and ideas like Critical Race Theory and the 1619 project. Whether by destruction of statues and memorials to the nation and Church, or by shaming national history through fraudulent alternative historic narratives. Solzhenitsyn’s answer to this is the unbeatable power of Christianity.

“The centralized atheism (Soviet Union) before whose armed might the whole world trembles still hates and fears this unarmed faith (Christianity) as much today as it did 60 years ago. Yes! All the savage persecutions loosed upon our people by a murderous state atheism, coupled with the corroding effect of its lies, and an avalanche of stultifying propaganda—all of these together have proven weaker than the thousand-year-old faith of our nation. This faith has not been destroyed; it remains the most sublime, the most cherished gift.”

After his conversion from Communism to Christianity in a Soviet Gulag, Solzhenitsyn always foresaw the ultimate triumph of Christianity. Joseph Pearce put it best of Solzhenitsyn’s life and our hope in Christianity: “Little could Solzhenitsyn have known when he languished as one of the many millions in the Soviet prison system that he would outlive the Soviet system and, furthermore, that his own courage would play an important part in that very system’s collapse.”

Like Solzhenitsyn, let us put our faith in the power of Christianity to triumph over the modern darkness seeking to envelop our nation and let us never forget God.



Over a half century ago, while I was still a child, I recall hearing a number of old people offer the following explanation for the great disasters that had befallen Russia: “Men have forgotten God; that’s why all this has happened.” Since then I have spent well-nigh 50 years working on the history of our revolution; in the process I have read hundreds of books, collected hundreds of personal testimonies, and have already contributed eight volumes of my own toward the effort of clearing away the rubble left by that upheaval. But if I were asked today to formulate as concisely as possible the main cause of the ruinous revolution that swallowed up some 60 million of our people, I could not put it more accurately than to repeat: “Men have forgotten God; that’s why all this has happened.”

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (+2008)  
From “Voice from the Gulag”

## DE-MYSTIFYING THE COVID VACCINE

*Monk Paul of the Holy Mountain, Biologist, MD Molecular Biology and Biomedicine.*

It is with sorrow and wonder that we are observing an event unprecedented in world history. In the name of “love” for the elderly and the more vulnerable, vaccination is being scheduled for all people worldwide, in order to exterminate the implacable “invisible enemy,” known as Corona virus SARS-Cov2 (Covid-19):

- A necessary legal framework that will abolish the right to individual choice and will “defend” the benefit-right to public health (Law 4675/2020 for Greece).
- An accompanying governmental authoritarianism to enforce it.
- Creating demand and expectation for the vaccine (terrorism-brainwashing by the media with the dilemma of “vaccine or social incarceration-isolation”).
- Unilateral funding for the production of the vaccine, for controls by clinical trials, for mass-production in vast quantities and for delivery to every corner of the planet—at the expense of research for finding and producing specialized antiviral drugs.

These are just some of the steps in the protocol already being implemented in order to reach this milestone event. Businessmen, journalists, government officials, and international Non-Governmental Organizations are almost daily propagating the vaccine like a magic wand that will supposedly allow humanity to return to the pre-Covid era. On the other hand, instead of the scientific community (with the exception of an excessively projected, vaccine-obsessed elite), stigmatizing this misinformation, it has been keeping a “fishy silence” about what people should really expect from the vaccine, with the exception of a few inspired instances, such as Professor Dr. Yannis Ioannidis. In fact, this specific “pandemic” anything BUT justifies worldwide vaccination. Let’s see why:

1. The particularly low mortality rate of the disease, but also its distribution by age, clearly denote that vaccination, whenever it becomes feasible, must be targeted. This percentage is fictitiously over-evaluated for the time being (~2.5%): on the one hand, due to the over-representation of severely positive cases of the virus, and on the other, given that the death toll from Covid-19 has also included the deaths of cases found positive for Covid-19 but with other, underlying diseases (not the SARS respiratory syndrome). Recent studies which have estimated the number of deaths in relation to the actual number of people exposed to the virus—based on serological tests (antibody tests) in a specific geographical area—have determined that this percentage is of the order of magnitude of seasonal flu (certainly <1%).

It should be noted that even if the epidemic returns, as is the case with influenza, the health system will deal with it more effectively, as now there is experience in managing the disease (more ICUs). Hence, mistakes of “Italy’s kind” will not be repeated, leading to a further reduction of the mortality rate. Based on the above, even if a truly safe and effective vaccine is produced (something especially difficult for corona viruses’ biology), it can be justified for administering it only to high-risk groups, as is done with the seasonal flu vaccine. Needless to say that it is not justified for administering it to children—who are in their vast majority asymptomatic, nor to people who have been exposed and are immune to the virus (positive antibody test), given that they already have what the vaccine would have given them.

2. The Covid-19 virus, as opposed to influenza, mainly affects people in the third and fourth age groups, where the phenomenon of immune senescence occurs—that is, the reduction in size, quality and duration of their immune response-protection—which can occur, after being vaccinated. In other words, the vaccine-induced active immunity may not be capable of protecting the elderly, who are the par excellence “target” of the corona virus; hence, the finding of an anti-viral therapy should be a priority—assuming that the protection of the elderly is in fact what is desired.

3. Related to the above, is that with seriously ill patients, acute respiratory failure occurs through an immuno-pathological mechanism (a “storm” producing inflammatory cytokines and reducing CD4 and CD8 T-mediated immune response). There are serious concerns that vaccination will exacerbate this immune complication in the event of a subsequent viral infection and will consequently worsen the patient’s clinical course. A similar effect was observed with the FeCoV coronavirus vaccine, which affects cats and causes peritonitis.

4. The logic of eradicating an infectious disease through global vaccination, on the one hand presupposes the existence of a very safe and very effective vaccine, and on the other hand, most importantly that there be no other hosts of the virus in the natural environment. That is, man has to be the only species that can host the virus. This is true of the polio virus, but it does not apply to the coronavirus, because all research suggests that the virus originated from bats. Unknown and controversial remains the intermediate link (host?) which had transported it from the bats’ caves of Wuhan city.

In any case, the disappearance of the virus through global vaccination would only be temporary—in other words, a terrible waste of resources, inasmuch as it could transfer from its natural refuge (the bats or the intermediate host) to the human population at any given moment, capably

mutated for bypassing the existing herd immunity and initiating a new pandemic.

5. Coronaviruses, being RNA viruses, mutate rapidly, gaining genetic and therefore antigenic diversity. This diversity, especially for coronae, also increases through RNA recombination, due to the particularly inconsistent mode of transcription of viral RNAs. Two types have already been identified for SARS-Cov2, S and L. It is doubtful that a vaccine can provide both equal coverage for all strains of the virus that emerge, as well as permanent protection over time, hence underlining one more time the importance and priority of finding anti-viral drugs against coronavirus. It is quite likely, therefore, that over time, **a global vaccination evolve into regular global vaccinations.**

Could this perhaps be the aim? Perhaps the corona is the long-awaited pretext for launching the universal transition to a hybrid human biology, where the human body will be protected, strengthened and ultimately dependent on platform technologies (genetic engineering, digital interfacing) through regular vaccinations-updates. But why all the rush for a vaccine that not only does not promise much, but is the cause for concern in the scientific community, especially if it is produced in a hurry and implemented en masse? Finally, do the pharmaceutical industries serve man, or does the opposite apply?

The reality is that ~ 99% of people infected with coronavirus survive. Emphasis (i.e., funding) should be placed on how to target the 1% of those who do not survive, in spite of a host of pharmaceutical options (immunomodulators, monoclonal antibodies, RNA polymerase inhibitors, proteases, etc.). Already, the first results from the form of hydroxychloroquine-azithromycin as well as from a monoclonal antibody that targets the superficial glycoprotein S of the virus are very encouraging.

Of course, part of an anti-viral strategy is also the development of a safe and effective vaccine. However, as analyzed, its forced production (1 year instead of at least 6 years) with so many gaps in the knowledge of the biology of the corona is not indicated—much less its mandatory mass implementation. It is a tragic scientific forfeiture (if not absurdity) in the age of Molecular Biology—whose aim is to provide Medicine with specialized (even personalized) treatments minimizing any side effects—that there is discussion solely about intervention in 100% of the human population, in order to “protect” 1% of it from a flu-like virus, with a suspicious pharmaceutical half-measure. Quite simply, this is a **wrong** approach, certified by the fact that for so many years there has never been any global vaccination against the flu virus—which would have been far more plausible, inasmuch as it strikes all age groups.

Man, as a rational being with critical thinking, has the ability to voluntarily choose whatever is recommended by medicine and biotechnology in favor of his health, while simultaneously undertaking the consequences of those choices, given that interventions in the human body are rarely without side-effects. Vaccines are not exempt of this rule. The choice of not being vaccinated does not endanger public health, as long as it does not abolish another person's right to receive the vaccine—and with it, any protection it provides.

It is therefore self-evident that the final decision-responsibility for receiving a vaccine belongs to the person being vaccinated, since he will necessarily have to live with any complications that may arise. No eventual compensation can restore irreversible damages to a person's physical and mental health. Consequently, that which is condemnable is every kind of complaisance that criminalizes a person's stance towards living in a body free of suspicious vaccines, and which transforms societies from democratic, to herds of undecided and expendable animals.

One can perceive from the aforementioned that the law pertaining to compulsory vaccination and the related propaganda in favor of the vaccine—with the Covid-19 virus pretext—have no scientific origin and reference. They do not defend but rather undermine the good of public health, and they enable the monstrous financial interests involved, as well as the obscure agenda of certain “big brothers” with power-loving appetites. Finally, they militate against the freedom of a person's spirit and body. As such, they should be retracted at a scientific, legal and mainly at a spiritual level.

The clime in which these schemes are developed and consolidated is fear. The Mass Media of Intimidation carefully create and maintain this clime. Fear is a mighty inner force of man; it can paralyze his will, but it can even steel it. The question is in which direction a person directs that fear. If he turns it towards God, *the only One worthy of being feared* (Lk 4:5), then he will receive enlightenment in return, boldness and courage—according to His words: *Be of courage, for I have overcome the world.* (Jn 6:33).

If a person remains focused on the phobias of this age, he will receive in return even more anxiety, confusion and cowardice, according to the Psalm: *They covered in fear, where there was no fear.* (Pss 5:5). The intentional persis-

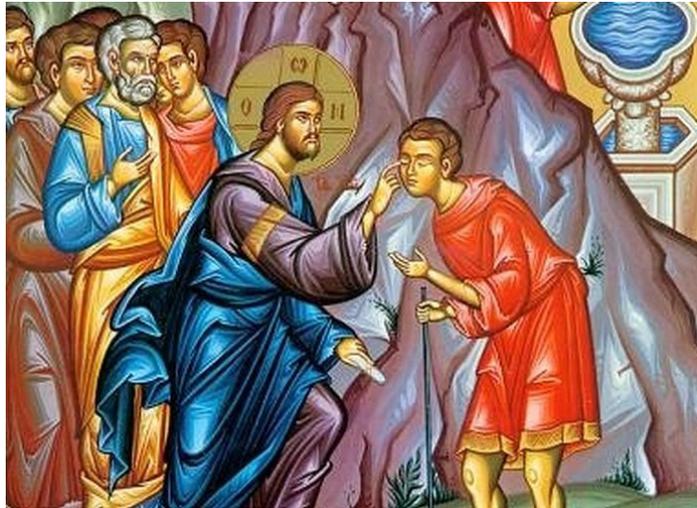
tence to de-sanctify the Sacrament of Holy Communion is not by coincidence; its purpose is to elicit and generate fear that will support the myth of the vaccine—as is the case throughout the ages, with all fictitious concoctions that lack any logical grounds.

Every time there is mention of saliva, spoons and the like—by those who have targeted Holy Communion—the miracle comes to mind of the born blind man (Jn 9). The Lord, with a “sanitarily unacceptable” action, restored the eyes of the blind man! He mixed His saliva (a means of spreading viruses and bacteria) with soil (a source of millions of germs) and “smeared” the clay mixture over the eye sockets of the blind man (mucosal conjunctiva: a point of entry for germs and the onset of infection). We are familiar with what ensued, just as we know that no science is able to reproduce that result. Quite simply, if it

had taken place today, **apart from the Pharisees of that time, among Jesus' accusers would also be certain narrow-minded infectious disease specialists.**

I pray from the depth of my heart that God will make them worthy of experiencing the Power of the Sacrament. The Lord is there, and invites them. He will never obligate them!

Hagiorite Monk Paul  
Biologist, MD Molecular



Biology and Biomedicine  
Vouleftiria, Holy Mountain.



**I**mmediately—starting this next Sunday—our bishop should start visiting the congregations of this diocese every weekend, to convey strong messages of hope and reassurance. He should preside at the Sacred Mysteries openly, without regard to personal danger. He should appear conspicuously without the disgrace of a surgical mask. He should make a point of avoiding even the slightest appearance of apprehension.

**A bishop must never, under any circumstances, convey fear.** He should stride into our churches with the manly majesty of an Apostle, gather God's People into his arms, press them to his pastoral breast, and protect them from the social and political demons that are currently destroying the Church.

**Fr. Patrick Reardon** (retired Antiochian priest)  
On “*What Must Bishops Do During This Present Crisis*”

## THE LAST SPIRITUAL WILL AND TESTAMENT OF ST. LUKE OF CRIMEA

*Saint Luke Archbishop of Symferoupolis and Crimea, a professor of surgery. From a publication of the holy monastery of Sagmata of the Transfiguration of Christ, near Thebes, Greece.*

Some of the Saint Luke's remarkable life highlights are as follows:

**1877:** He was born in Kerts, in the Crimea. He grew up in Kiev where in addition to his studies; he studied also art in the School of Fine Arts.

**1898-1903:** He studies medicine and majors in surgery.

**1904-1905:** He was a volunteer military doctor in the Russian-Japanese War. He was married to Anna Vasilievna and they were blessed with four children.

**1905-1917:** He worked in various district hospitals. He prepares his dissertation on the importance of scientific studies.

**1917:** He moves to Tashkent. He is appointed as a university professor in the field of topographical anatomy and surgery.

**1919:** His first arrest took place. His wife Anna dies.

**1921:** He is ordained a priest.

**1923-1926:** He is ordained a bishop. He is arrested a second time and exiled to Siberia.

**1924:** He attempts his first kidney transplant from an animal to a human.

**1930-1933:** He is arrested for a third time and exiled to northern Russia.

**1934-1937:** His famous study is circulated on "A Study on Festering Sicknesses." He works intently on scientific discoveries. His investigations bring him very close to discovering penicillin.

**1937:** He is arrested for a fourth time. He suffers two years of difficult interrogation in Tashkent.

**1939:** He is exiled to Siberia.

**1941:** He is assigned to be the first surgeon at the military hospital in Krasnogiarsk.

**1943:** He is elected Archbishop of Krasnogiorask.

**1944:** He is transferred to Tambof as the chief medical doctor and Archbishop.

**1946:** He is decorated with the first prize of Stalin. He is assigned as Archbishop of Symferoupolis and in the Crimea. He slowly loses his eyesight.

**1961:** He fell asleep in the Lord on June 11 in Symferoupolis having served the people of God as Chief Shepherd

and doctor in sacrificial love and self-denial. His memory is commemorated on June 11.

† † †

**To my three sons, my daughter, my grandchildren and my great grandchildren, my spiritual will:**

I am now 79 years old. My heart is weak and my strength is failing me and it is evident that my time of departure from this world is near. St. Paul left a will to all the Christians. "Become followers of me, as I am of Christ." I certainly do not dare to say this to all the Christians but to you, my children; I can say follow my example just as I have followed the example of the Apostle Paul. My life has been tough and difficult but never did I pray to God to make it easy. Because *narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.* Mt 7:14.

For more than twenty-five years my life was identified with the work of a rural surgeon and professor of surgery. And for eleven years I suffered persecution for the name of Christ by being jailed and exiled. From 1944 I combined the toilsome ministry of being a Bishop along with the healing the wounded at Tambor and only in 1946 did I stop being a surgeon and I continued as a Bishop.

Amongst most of the people it was inconceivable to understand how a great surgeon, who was honored with the First Prize of Stalin, could abandon a profession in surgery and become a Bishop. Yet there was nothing unusual about that because from

my youthful years, the Lord destined me to the high position of service to Him and to the people.

When I finished High School I received from the dean of the school my high school diploma. I placed this in the Book of the New Testament. I had read the New Testament before but now, when I read it again, I heard the words of Christ that were directed to the Apostles say: *The harvest is truly plentiful, but the laborers are few, therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.* (Mt 9:37-38) My heart responded and I cried out in silence: "Oh Lord! Are you lacking workers?"

Many years went by. I became a doctor of medicine and I thought that I would write the book "A Treatise on Surgery in Treating Festering Wounds." When I made that decision, the following strange thought came to mind: "When that book is finished, it will be signed by a Bishop." I could not understand from where that thought came. But a few years later, I understood that it was a thought that was sent to me by God because after my first arrest, in the office of the



head jailer, the first edition of my book was published and on the facing page I wrote: "Bishop Luke, 'A Treatise on surgically treating festering wounds.' "

Two more years went by. I was in my first exile to Siberia, in the city of Geniseisk. A monk suddenly came to meet me from Krasnogiarsk. In this city, all the priests had compromised the faith and the faithful of the canonical Church had sent the monk to be ordained a priest but not to me at Geniseisk but to Minousinsk, to a non-canonical Orthodox bishop. But there was an unexplainable force which directed him to me at Geniseisk. When this monk saw me, he was startled and froze. He could not speak. He revealed to me, that when he saw me, he knew clearly that I was the same hierarch that he saw in an unforgettable dream ten years ago. That Bishop ordained him to the priesthood. At that time, I was just a country doctor in the city of Perezlavl, Zaleski.

The Lord God has blessed me with different talents. In High School, I finished my studies in the School of Fine Arts in Kiev. I was very talented in artist and I decided to enter the Academy of Fine Arts in Leningrad. But in the middle of exams, I abandoned this effort because I thought that I should serve God and His people, in work that is more beneficial than art. Even though at that time it was clear to me the direction my art would take if I didn't abandon it; it would purely be a religious direction or I would follow in the footsteps of V. Vasnetsov and Nesterov.

From that time theological issues concerned me very much. The driving force in my character was a strong desire to serve God and His people, only because of that. But in spite of my opposition toward the physical sciences, I took exams for medical school at the University of Kiev and I graduated with honors.

My talent was revealed at the university in anatomy and surgery and my fellow students didn't want to hear that I desired to become a rural doctor. They had decided unanimously that I would become a professor of anatomy or a surgeon. From what you now know, they had prophesied my future correctly.

As a rural doctor, I worked for thirteen years twelve to fourteen hours a day. I was thinking seriously of abandoning the rural hospital in order travel to distant villages where the people were poor and dying because of the lack of medical help. But the Lord had decided differently for me. He sent me to Tashkent where I was one of the organizers of the University of Middle Asia and became a professor of topographical anatomy and the chief surgeon. This was at the beginning of the decade of the 1920s.

During the years of the antireligious demonstrations during which they derided the Lord Jesus Christ, my heart was saying: "I cannot keep silent." At that time there was a clergy-laity congress taking place in Tashkent. I was pres-

ent and during the discussions on some important issues I made an impassioned speech. That speech made a great impression on Bishop Innocent of Tashkent and at the end of the congress he said to me; "Doctor, you must become a priest." That was something that was completely unexpected by me but the words of the Hierarch brought forth a calling through his lips and I did not hesitate one second in answering him: "Of course, Your Eminence, if that is the will of God, I will become a priest." And the following Sunday, I, the professor of medicine, with a borrowed robe, appeared before the Bishop who was standing on his throne and I was ordained a sub-deacon and then during the course of the Divine Liturgy I was then ordained a deacon. Within two weeks I became a priest and the pastor of the Cathedral Church.

One and a half years before that great event in my life, my wife and your mother died. The smallest of you, Valentine, was then six years old and the oldest was fourteen.

Two years and four months later, the Lord made me worthy of being elevated to the rank of Bishop. It was divine providence for me and for you, my children that was revealed to us at that time when the Lord called your mother to eternal life by allowing her to get sick with tuberculosis. By this happening to her the road was opened for me to enter monastic life and the hierarchical ministry. All the responsibility for you, my children, I gave over to the care of the Lord and truly, I was not made a liar by believing in Him. Your care and upbringing was provided for by sending me an unknown woman, Sofia Sergakevna Veletskagia, who during the times I was jailed and the three times I was sent into exile she provided for your care. With a great deal of self-sacrifice and love she lifted the heavy cross for your care during those years of the plague. She raised you successfully and gave you a good education.

Later on all three of you and my daughter, with the protection and the help of your guardian angels, completed your advanced studies. Michael for some time now has become a professor, while Aliosa and Valia are teachers in the medical and biological sciences and in a little while they will become professors.

The Lord accepted all the sacrifices which I have offered Him and not only did He accept them but He changed and corrected many of them. I abandoned doing any more surgeries so that I could spend more time preaching about Jesus Christ. I was not concerned with the fame of a surgeon which certainly I deserve. While this glory is important and belongs to God, the new freedom I had increased the power and content of my sermons. My well-known and famous book "The Treatise on Surgery for Festering Wounds" was completed while I was in exile and when I was Archbishop. My determination to sacrifice everything

for the glory of Him, the Lord gave me another talent, that of preaching. The nine volumes of my sermons have been recognized by the Spiritual Academy of Moscow as unique in contemporary ecclesiastical theology and a treasure of commentary on the Holy Bible. And I, a self-taught theologian was chosen to be a member of the Spiritual Academy of Moscow. For the Church, my sermons will have greater meaning than my "Treatise on Surgery for Festering Wounds."

In addition to this, the miraculous events which I spoke about earlier which were directed by the Lord without my realizing it led me mystically to the Hierarchical ministry. I often physically felt the presence of God in my communion with Him, in my spiritual life and in my prayers.

But if I have not said enough for any of you to convince you of these things then I think his (Michael's) involvement with the physical sciences have bewitched him so much that he does not want to hear those things that I have lived; the things I have undeniably felt many times.

In other words, I will tell you just the way it is, how astonishing and clearly the Lord God reveals His desire for those who fear Him and love Him. When I was in Leningrad for an operation, during the time of a memorial service, the Lord in a miraculous and shocking way caused me to tremble with fright when He gave me this command: *Shepherd my sheep, feed my lambs*. The years have since gone by and I, under the spell of a cunning diabolical spell, forgot that command of God and Satan again placed in my soul that great urge to return to surgery. And this is why the Lord punished me by allowing the retina in my eye to tear. My eye was operated on twice unsuccessfully by professor Ontintsof because God's punishment had to remain with me.

The day after the second operation, when I was lying flat with my eyes bandaged, the strong urge to do surgery again overwhelmed me when the Lord sent me a shocking dream: I was in a Church without lights. The only lit up place was the altar. A little beyond the altar was a casket of a saint. They had placed on the altar a wooden board and on this was a naked human body. In the back and next to the altar I saw students and doctors smoking cigarettes and I was teaching them anatomy of the human body.

I was then startled by a noise and when I turned my head, I saw that the covering of the saint's casket fell off. The saint sat up in the casket, he turned and looked at me with a look of pain and shock. I finally realized the great burden of my sin, of my disobedience to the command of the Lord Jesus Christ to *shepherd my sheep and feed my lambs*. For the last fourteen years I begged the Lord Jesus Christ to forgive me remembering clearly my dramatic dream with the body and the dead person lying on the Holy Altar. Lately I have been informed by God that my sin has been forgiven. Day after

day, I see the body less and less on the Holy Altar where it finally disappeared completely.

And now, my children let me offer to you my last will and testament. I believe deeply in God and I have built my whole life upon His commandments. And I bequeath to you that you offer your lives to God and build all things upon the commandments of Christ.

For a long time and with great determination I sailed through life against the current of the world and to you my children I bequeath that you sail against the current, as difficult at that may be. Turn your attention and your heart away from the great majority of human beings who pursue not the higher goals but those which are easy to acquire. Do not accede to the great majority of people who live according to their own thinking and with the mind of their leaders. They anchor their lives not with the commandments of Christ but on the directives of people who have the power to lead them not to the Kingdom of Heaven but to the riches of the earthly kingdom.

The purpose of life is to seek after the highest truth and to never divert from that road even when they force you to serve the purposes of the lowest form of truth by trampling upon the truth of Christ.

You should be ready even to be martyred since you are sailing against the current. Keep your faith firmly in your thoughts, in your husbands and in your wives just the way I kept it.

In your scientific endeavors and in your efforts to study the mysteries of nature, you should not look for your own glory but only to lessen the pain of your sick and helpless fellow human beings.

Remember that I, your father, sacrificed all my life in doing these things. Imitate me just the way I imitated the Apostle Paul and do not work for your stomach but to help those who without your help cannot free themselves from the tortures of poverty and lies.

If you fulfill all these things that I bequeath to you, the blessing of God will come upon you in harmony with the words of David the prophet: *But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children's children, to such as keep His covenant, and to those who remember his commandments to do them.* (Pss 103:17-18.)

I have always prayed for that blessing and grace of God in my life for you my children, my grandchildren and my great grandchildren and surely I will always pray for your eternal life when I will stand before the throne of my God and your God, my Creator and your Creator. That time is most likely near because my heart and my strength have been weakened.

Your father

Alousta, July 22, 1956

## TRAITORS INSIDE THE CHURCH

*By the saintly and prophetic Elder Athanasios Mytilinaios (+2006), one of the most distinguished, dynamic and beloved Orthodox preachers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This is a homily by the Elder, translated and transcribed by Fr. Peter Heers; the original homily in Greek is available at [https://youtu.be/Y\\_CeTsfuORU](https://youtu.be/Y_CeTsfuORU). Sadly, the Elder's prophetic words herein on "secretly conducted divine services" did take place in Greece and even in the US or Canada or Australia during the various horrific lockdowns some of which are still going on.*

Then as I said, Apostle Peter asked them to be quiet. A very serious problem arises here, which has been troubling me for years now. Since you and I are inside the Church, and we are the Church, this is the problem: The secrecy of the issues of the Church by the faithful.

The Church was once a closed circle. A relic of this closed circle that has remained to this day is when we say: *The doors! "The doors!* In other words: "Close the doors." Of course, today we don't close the doors because there's supposedly no reason to close the doors and we have given to the contemporary interpreters of the Holy Liturgy a new, metaphorical so to say, dimension to this: "Close the doors to the soul which represents the five senses," for example. Your eyes shouldn't be staring or looking about in a strange way when attending a service. Your eyes should avoid listening to whatever shouldn't be heard, etc. In other words, close whatever distracts you from concentrating on the Holy Liturgy.

Yet, this isn't a spiritual order at all; it's clearly a technical order. Just like: *Wisdom. Arise.* There's a full pause after *Wisdom* and another one after *Arise*. This means that the *Evangelion* (Gospel) is *Wisdom*. When the Priest says *Wisdom*, there should be a pause. A pause to signify the full stop and then, *Arise* and pause again. This means that the *Evangelion* (Gospel) is the Wisdom of God so you should stand up from your seat. Because the faithful had the option of sitting even from ancient times.

Just like today, we have seats inside the church, maybe not enough for everybody, but people could sit in the old days too. They had stools that were called *scymbous*. (Let me say something strange here, concerning our language. *Scymbous* was a Greek word meaning "Stool." This word travels to Europe and came back as "Escabeau" (This word is used today).

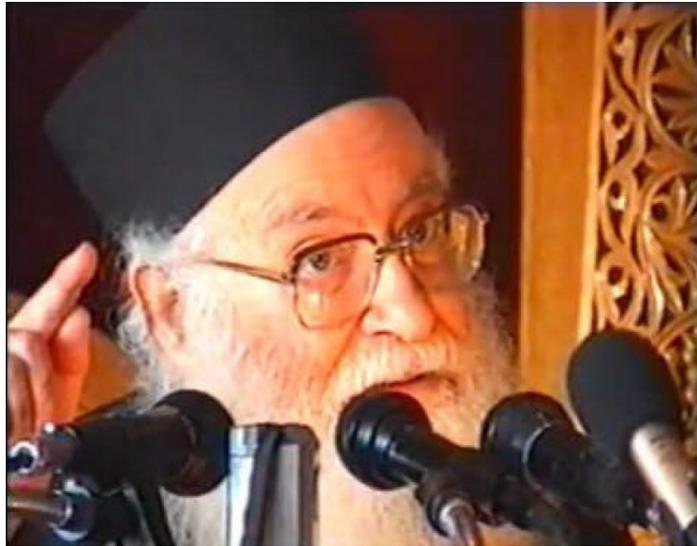
So ... people could sit if they wanted to. So at that time they had to get up, to stand up. This is just a practical order. And all these matters were taken care of by the Deacons or others who had such a responsibility.

So, here, again, with *The doors* what we mean is "Close the doors." A technical order. Why? Because the Church was a closed issue. You couldn't enter the Church if you hadn't been baptized. The Catechumen can enter the Church but they had to leave before the Sanctification of the Holy Gifts (i.e. after the Sermon).

During the persecutions, the Church was in hiding. Those who had nothing to do with the Church should never find out the activity of the Church. This should never happen. This secrecy of early Christianity was kept meticulously. I have talked to you in the past and I'm going to remind

you again when we read the teaching, the *catechesis*, of St. Cyril (of Jerusalem).

There is a quote outside but it's not by St. Cyril but by someone else: "Be careful, for this is not to be delivered to the uninitiated." St. Cyril, in his first *catechesis*, clearly states: "Mind you, that if you have come here to spy on us and see what we are doing here, God is spying on you instead." And St. Cyril keeps stressing how careful a Christian should be because it was an absolute necessity



that spies should be kept away, and no one should be spying on what they did during the services. This should never take place because Christians were persecuted. Therefore, keeping the secrets was an absolute necessity for everyone, both clergy and laity.

Now, how could a priest go out in public? There is something that has been done, will be done, and is being done, take it as you will. Namely, the following:

Let's assume that one day I stop wearing the priest's garment (the cassock or *rassa*), not under the influence of modernism but because of a strict prohibition. Thus, I'm not allowed to wear my Priest's garment and my dress is the same as a layman's, or a person in the world, and nobody knows that I am a priest.

By the way, I just remembered that I had been offered a tiny *epitrachelion* a few days ago. I thought: This is to be worn underneath my shirt so that no one can see and I can do the work! This is actually something I have already done, I've listened to people's confession on the street! In the street—can you imagine? Or at the entrance of a block of

flats! And wearing my *epitrachelion* underneath my black cassock, today we are allowed to wear our black *rassa*, but there may come a time when we won't be allowed to wear them, so an *epitrachelion* could be worn as a shirt underneath.

Thus, to summarize, a very small *epitrachelion* could be worn and you could start (the confession on the street) by saying: "Well George, how are you? How is everyone at home?"—Whispering, "go ahead and say your sin." Then, George replies: "How's work?," in other words, some words to be heard out loud and others whispered, pretending to have a conversation while one is quietly confessing.

Now, can you imagine in this case if that person who confessed later went and said to other people, "Brother, you know, Father Athanasios took my confession on the street ... Of course, he didn't wear a robe or a priest's cassock..." Note that everything is done in secret because it's a time of persecution and I don't know if this is the second, third or tenth person to hear this story from George. For, certain people lack the virtue of discretion and keeping a secret and so they could openly point to the priest and say: "That is a truly a priest and a Father-confessor who performed in secret." So, then they go and arrest Father Athanasios with the charge of being the father confessor and therefore a priest.

If you think these things belong to the distant future, allow me to tell you that five or six years ago we read in the newspaper the following event: A high ranking official of the Russian synod (during Soviet times, *Ed.*) was found dead in a train. He was there for an inspection concerning the bookkeeping. As I said he was a high-ranking official and he had a small briefcase always with him. So the man had a heart attack and died on the train. When they opened the briefcase, do you know what they found? A Bishop's vestment! He was a secret Bishop. This happened recently, in our days. Tomorrow, things may be worse, we don't know, there will be retrogressions of phenomena.

A question: Is there any confidentiality between the faithful? When Apostle Peter asked them to be quiet, could anyone have shouted out to their neighbors: "Do you know something? We saw Peter... etc." No, not a word, not a peep! Are you listening? Unfortunately, among the faithful today there are frivolous people; indiscreet, shallow, and irresponsible. And these people, without looking deeply into things, are capable of harming the Church enormously.

For example, (let's suppose that) fifty of us are gathered somewhere to perform a secret Divine Liturgy. In other words, we are hiding from the authorities (to do so). And

then one of the faithful goes to a neighbor and says: "What a wonderful Divine Liturgy that was!" .. And they ask, "where...how... what...?" Can not such a secret be kept?!... The news goes around and the second time we go there, they come and arrest us.

And there, what is there to do? What can we do now? This problem has always been troubling me. If difficult times come how can a priest perform his priestly obligations when there's so much frivolity all around? For, I have to tell you that in time of persecution this issue, which is, in fact, a problem, is almost insurmountable. It is a great problem. This is why, dear children of God, the faithful must acquire what is called an *ecclesial conscience* and a responsible attitude towards the Church, so they don't get to the point of harming the Church.

Let's not forget that, in the end times, when the Divine Liturgy won't be an easy thing to perform, what do you think, when Christians retreat to the mountains, when the Antichrist comes or just before that, that you won't face such a problem? This is something very important, extremely important: how to be able to perform the Divine Liturgy in secret, or perform your duties as an Orthodox Christian in secret.

In those days the ones who are not serious, the ones who are frivolous and reveal secrets, who are ready to "spill the beans,"



**The holy monastery of Komnineiou in Stomion, Greece (re-established by the Elder—previously abandoned) and the Tomb of the Holy Elder**

to reveal what is to be kept secret, then God—this is how I understand it—will **allow these people to bow down before the Antichrist among the first.** You may ask why. It is very simple: because they'll get arrested. After this frivolity, which brought them to this situation, in order to avoid any kind of maltreatment, they'll resort to denying Christ. Therefore they bow down before the Antichrist. This is something that awaits those who cannot keep a secret.

So, please, try to do some work (on yourself) concerning this issue. Let's try to be very careful and serious and discreet in Church matters. Let's not be ready to go out and tell whatever crossed our minds. And, lots of time we distort things we hear in Church. Of course, such a person, whether he realizes it or not, turns into a traitor. And unfortunately, as the Holy Spirit informs us in the holy writings of the Apostle Paul: in the end times, there shall be traitors around. In his letter to Timothy, 3:4, St. Paul says: *In last days men shall be truce-breakers, ... Traitors.* "Truce-breaker" is someone who, interpreted... isn't stable in his friendship, nor true to what he agrees. These people show a frivolity in regard to agreements they promise to keep. These are the truce-breakers, the ones who break a truce (lit. "not the same confederacy" in Greek).

Therefore these are the people who break the agreements, and the Apostle Paul calls them *traitors*. Pay attention: *Traitors!* And this is a major issue, indeed, the issue of treason (or betrayal) and of traitors. One may become a traitor out of frivolity. Just like some children, after some pressure, were forced to reveal where the Bishop of Smyrna, St. Polykarpos, was hiding. These children showed the authorities where Bishop Polykarpos was hiding and they found him and arrested him. But sometimes, a person truly has the disposition of being a traitor.

Unfortunately, this element of treason (or betrayal) has never been eliminated. Either for obtaining benefits, or whatever may be the reason. In any way, a traitor is the one who could even get to the point of betraying his fellow men, those belonging to his own faith but also to his own people at home, his family, and relatives. Just like our Lord said to us: *that a father will betray his child, etc., in difficult times.*

Also, traitors are the ones our Lord mentioned, that one will be betraying the other because of different personal interests. Also, betrayal inside the Church has unfortunately a broader character. For example, a person who is baptized into the Orthodox Church, and he writes a book in favor of Ecumenism, an ecumenistic book, trying to mislead the believers concerning the heresy of Ecumenism. Isn't this person a traitor of our faith?...

This is why we should be very careful and never forget that **traitors exist in the environment of a decadent of spirituality.** Because **the person who has a booming, a flourishing, a thriving of spirituality prefers to be a martyr rather than a traitor.**

## NEW HERESIES

By Metropolitan Augoustinos Kantiotes of Florina (+ 2010).



Of late, certain theologians, under the influence of contemporary, world-wide currents, have begun to savour the words "ecumenicity," "ecumenical spirit," and "ecumenical movement," as if they were hard-candy. Ecumenicity; what a beautiful word! And yet, behind these words, lay hidden a most fearful danger for Orthodoxy. What is this danger? We will show you by means of an example.

Imagine a woman, a woman faithful to her husband, a woman who will allow no third party to enter into their relationship, ever mindful of the promises which she had made before God and before men. She is a woman of exceptional beauty, drawing the eye of many a man. On account of her uprightness, however, anyone who dares to touch, or to proposition her, immediately meets with her anger. Should such a one persist, this honourable woman will deliver a strong slap to his face in order bring him to his senses.

Those men who are learned in this vile business, however, will try another method. These will try to uncover what it is that this woman likes; does she perhaps love poetry, or philosophy, or art? By means of these things the secret admirer will trap her. With great deftness he will begin having innocent conversations with her on those subjects that are beloved to her. "What a wonderful poem!"; "What a beautiful painting!"; "What a wonderful play!"; "How sweet a piece of music!" And thus begins the dialogue.

Gradually the unsuspecting woman is lured into longer conversations with the deceiver who, while his tongue speaks of philosophy and art, his heart leaps at the hope of taking the woman for himself. Finally, after an air of great familiarity and mutual understanding has been achieved through these conversations, the door is opened to the foul deed, the shameful union. Just as the most-evil serpent succeeded in beguiling Eve by means of a simple conversation, in like manner the seed of shameful union was sown.

Did you catch what we are trying to say, beloved? We have spoken in a parable.

The woman concerning which we have spoken is our Orthodox Church. She is this beauty. She is the woman who, according to the Book of Revelation is *clothed in the Sun*, who wears *upon her head a crown of twelve stars*, and who has *the moon under her feet*. (Rev 12:1-2). It is the Orthodox Church which has remained faithful to the Lord, to the eternal bridegroom. It is she who has kept pure the tradition of the Lord and of the Apostles—both written and unwritten—in accordance with the God-inspired call to, *stand fast, and hold*

*the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle. (2 Thess 2:15).*

It is she, the Orthodox Church, which for nineteen centuries has fought the hard and bloody battle against various deceptions, against the various heresies which have sought to pollute and corrupt her holiness. One of the worst of these heresies is Papism, which, on account of its delusions, its authoritarian spirit, and its atrocities, caused the rise of Protestantism and the fracturing of all of Christendom. Yes, the Papists are heretics. The enemies of the Orthodox Church, including Papism to be sure, know well that she has persevered in the faith of her Fathers. Yet, having been persuaded through many examples that they cannot conquer that fortress which is Orthodoxy by means of a frontal attack, these enemies have recently begun trying by other means. They have begun a new war, a war of peace, a war worse than the Crusades. Do you not hear the voice of the serpent, seeking to corrupt the minds of Orthodoxy, leading us away from our simplicity? *But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. (2 Cor 11:3).*

Here is what the serpent says: O, Orthodox Church! Why do you keep your distance? Why are you afraid of me? I am no dragon; I am a sweet angel bearing the message of love. I am not going to hurt you. Keep your dogmas and your traditions. Leave these things to the theologians... I invite you into my room to discuss other matters. Let us make a common stand against hunger, against poverty, against atheism, against communism, against war. Do these matters not move you? Does this proposition not excite you? Come then, let us begin our conversation on high, on the level of ecumenicity, on the level of mutual understanding. You will see just how beautiful our coming together can be!

O, Orthodox Church! Our suffering mother! Will you accept this proposition? Will you enter into dialogue with Papism? Can you not see the danger inherent in this proposition? That those who ineptly and unworthily represent you are creating conditions favorable to your enemies to such a fearful degree that you, without even taking notice, will fall into the arms of Papism. And what will follow then? A union, a pseudo-union, spiritual adultery, a most vile act; something which ought never to have occurred, and which will require centuries of repentance from those Orthodox who played the role of pimp for the Orthodox Church. The hour will come when these will sigh and say: "Let the language which we spouted concerning 'ecumenicity' and 'mutual understanding' cease; let these feet which ran to bring together Orthodoxy and wolves in sheep's clothing become leprous; let these hands which signed ecumenical epistles and documents fall off!"

This, my beloved, is the famous 'theory of ecumenicity' which our leaders savour!

We repeat: the Ecumenical Movement, under whose umbrella gather all manner of heresies, represents a danger to the Orthodox Church. It deprecates the importance of the dogmas which, having been miraculously articulated in the brief definitions of the Ecumenical Councils, and which are the skeleton, the backbone without which the body becomes a limp and formless lump. It deprecates the Holy Canons, which the ecumenists call obsolete, rusty weapons. To put it concisely, the ecumenists deprecate the Orthodox Church as a whole, saying that it is self-centered, that it is a blasphemy for us to consider her to be the one true Church, possessing the genuine truth of Divine Revelation. Within this context the dogmas and the moral life, inseparably joined in the Orthodox Church, tend to evaporate, leaving behind nothing but a fraudulent version of love. The theory of ecumenicity, the theory which calls all different peoples to live together in the name of some tenuous peace, a theory supported within worldly and political circles in our century and which has already been applied to the spiritual sphere where compromise is unacceptable, will ultimately lead to conflict and turmoil, truly, to Babel.

Leaven, if it becomes contaminated, loses its ability to make things rise; Orthodoxy, the most excellent leaven, the leaven of truth, is capable of leavening the whole lump, but only so long as it remains unpolluted by foreign ingredients, so long as it remains pure. For this reason the followers of this theory of ecumenicity are the enemies of Orthodoxy. For this reason we do not hesitate to call this movement—the Ecumenical movement—a new heresy, from which the Orthodox Church must be protected.

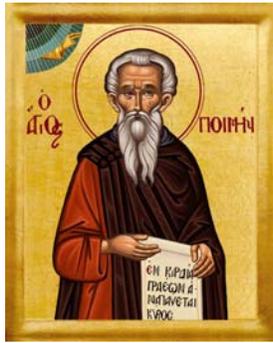
In conclusion, during these critical moments when the Orthodox Church stands in danger, we call out to the faithful from our own watchtower: "Orthodox faithful! Remember that Church, of which you are children. Remember the rivers of blood our Fathers spilled to keep our Faith unadulterated; not one iota did they permit to be subtracted or added to our Faith. Remember the rallying cry of the heroes of the Revolution of 1821. These men—may their memory be eternal—struggled first for the faith, and then for their homeland. All of these heroes and martyrs, known and unknown, call to us from their graves: "Stand firm upon the bulwark of Orthodoxy!"



Compel yourselves, my children, in the spiritual struggle. Do not forget the vast experience of the devil and our own weakness. Just as a leaf in autumn falls at the slightest wind, likewise we fall at the slightest temptation or trial when the grace of God does not assist us. And when does the grace of God assist us? Only when humility guides our every thought and deed.

**Saintly Elder Ephraim of Filotheou and Arizona (+2019)**

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## A SAINTLY BISHOP OF OUR DAYS

*From the strongly recommended webpages of Fr. Kosmas of Australia, "Orthodox Talks," <https://www.orthodoxtalks.com/>.*



In these difficult times of forced restrictions in the churches due to Covid-19, the life of Metropolitan Augoustinos is a great inspiration not only for bishops and priests, but for all the faithful.

His Eminence Metropolitan Augoustinos (Kantiotis; 1907–2010) was bishop of the Holy Metropolis of Florina in northern Greece. He was a defender of traditional Orthodox beliefs

and Greek nationalism, as well as a highly productive writer, and many of his spiritual works have been translated into different languages. Metropolitan Augoustinos contributed greatly to the spiritual rebirth of Greece and the renewal of traditional Orthodox theology. He also preached countless sermons, which have been printed and distributed worldwide.

As a hieromonk he was a fiery preacher, and travelled throughout Greece, stirring the people to a greater love for Christ and their suffering nation. But this was during the war years, and the messages he preached were not popular with the German and Italian occupants and later, during the Civil War, with the Communists. Fr Augoustinos' life was filled with many trials and tribulations and he miraculously escaped death on many occasions.

Loved and revered by the populace, by divine providence he was elected metropolitan of Florina in 1967, where he energetically continued to care for the spiritual and material needs of his flock.

Metropolitan Augoustinos was known for his conservative activism and ideals, and he staunchly opposed ecumenism, believing it to be contrary to the basic principles of Orthodoxy. This brought him great popularity, not only in Greece, but in the Greek *diaspora* throughout the world. But his immense popularity and his opposition to corruption and heresy often disgruntled those in power. Metropolitan Augoustinos was subjected to considerable persecution and slander, including a failed attempt by the government (and even some bishops) to have him officially declared insane.

But none of these persecutions deterred him in his quest to uphold the Truth. He inspired a great number of people and affected countless lives until his repose in 2010, at the advanced age of 104.

Even today his bold example, the numerous books he authored, and his sermons published in print and audio format continue to inspire people to a higher moral standard. His wonderful books in English can be purchased from the Institute for Byzantine & Modern Greek Studies (<https://ibmgs.org/chatechetic.html>).

There exists a superb two-video series in English on the holy Metropolitan's life at: (1) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=38\\_ngNqKTg8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=38_ngNqKTg8), and (2) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4DWvTdp405c>.