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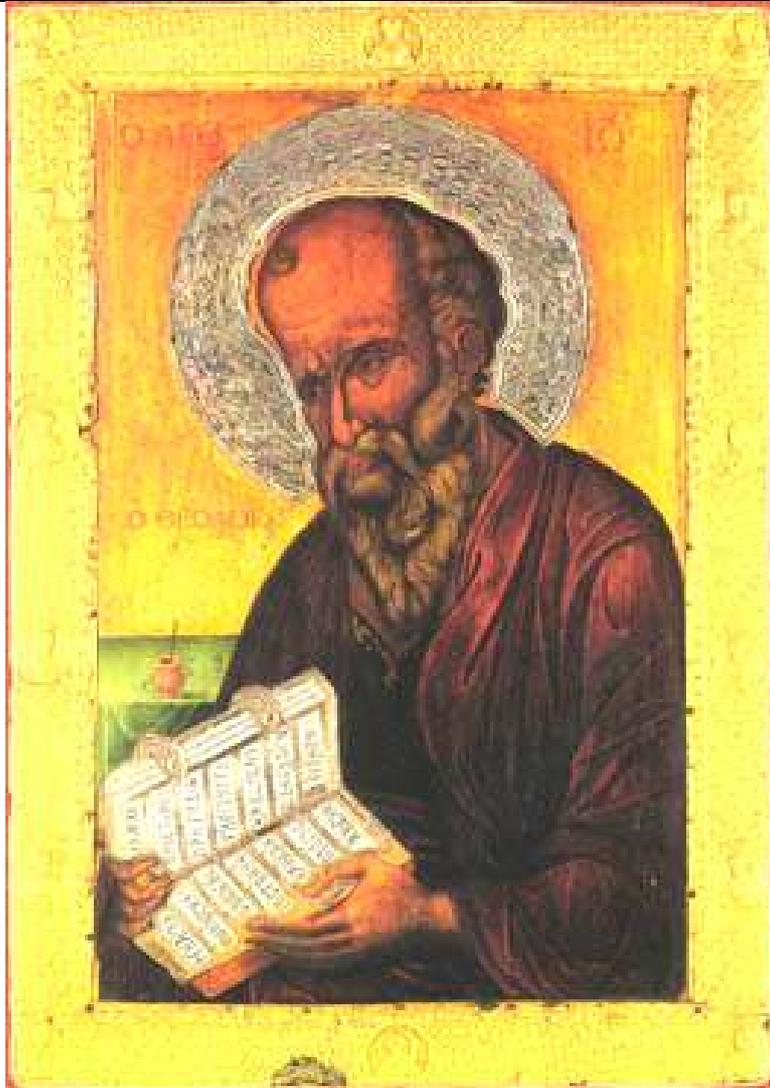
Saint Nestor

CENTRAL YOUTH COMMITTEE MAGAZINE

"I am the Resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live." John 11:25)

BELOVED APOSTLE OF CHRIST OUR
GOD, HASTEN TO DELIVER A PEOPLE

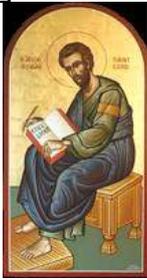
THE PERSISTENT CLOUD OF NATIONS, ASKING
FOR US PEACE AND GREAT MERCY.



WITHOUT DEFENSE. HE WHO PERMITTED YOU TO
RECLINE UPON HIS BOSOM, ACCEPTS YOU ON

BENDED KNEE BEFORE HIM, BESEECH
HIM, O THEOLOGIAN, TO DISPEL

"I am the light of the world. He who follows Me will not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." (John 8: 12)



17th Sunday after Pentecost - 4th Sunday of Luke: The Sower and the Seed

“A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it. Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it. But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a hundredfold.” When He said these things He cried, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” Then His disciples asked Him, saying, “What does this parable mean?” And He said, “To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables, that ‘Seeing they may not see, And hearing they may not understand.’ Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. Now the ones that fell among the thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.” (Luke 8:5-15)

In this Gospel we are told the parable of the sower, which perhaps would more appropriately be called the parable of soils. The sower is our Lord Jesus, and the seed is the Word of God. The soil is the heart of one who hears the Word of God. There are different harvests, because there are different soils, or different kinds of hearts.

There are some hearts that are hardened with their pride and anger, so that they do not listen. Or they may be hardened because they are consumed with the pleasures of this life and have no sensitivity to spiritual things. The hearts that are hard do not even receive the Word of God, so therefore they do not bear any fruit. There is no inclination or movement toward spiritual things, because even as the seed sits in the hardness of their hearts, the devil comes and snatches the Word, lest it should bear fruit.

Then there are hearts that are shallow—the outer part of the heart is able to receive the Word, but the work of repentance has not gone deep. The seed springs forth, but when tribulations come there is no endurance or perseverance. The plant that has grown in the shallow soil of the heart then withers in the heat of the sun and dies.

Jesus also describes a heart that has been plowed, but in which other seeds have been sown. This heart is not vigilant, not united in its search for God, but scattered. Other seeds have been sown in it along with the Word of God. As the Word then springs up and begins to bear fruit, these other seeds also sprout. Jesus describes these seeds as the cares of this life, the pleasures of the flesh. These other seeds grow up and strangle the plant that has been produced by the Word of God, and thus the plant

bears no fruit.

Then, Jesus says, there is one kind of soil. When He speaks to His disciples He describes it as a noble and good heart, a heart that is united in its search for God. The word “noble” here means “single”—not playing games, not devious, not having conflicting goals. This heart receives the Word of God and yields much fruit.

Many things should speak to us from this parable. The most obvious is to look at our hearts and see what kind of heart we have. Do we have a hard heart in which the Word of God sits but cannot penetrate because of our pride, our resentment, our anger, our lust? Do we have a shallow heart, a heart that has been plowed a bit, but on which we have not done the real work of repentance? Do we have a heart that is not watchful, so that many seeds have been sown in it? Or do we have a good and noble heart, a heart that has received the Word of God and is united in the pursuit of God?

We are reminded in this parable that the Word of God, which is thrown out into these various soils, doesn't change. The Fathers say that God's love is for all men, and that God's Word is pronounced to all men. And we see that the Word is life-producing. This is the great encouragement of this parable: we don't have to create the fruit on our own; it is not we who give life to this plant. Our hearts are the soil in which the Word of God grows, but the Word of God is life-giving, and it is the Word of God that produces fruit in our lives.

In the fact that the seed has life and the seed gives life to the plant, we are reminded of the importance of the Word of God. St Paul says in Colossians 3:16, “Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly.” We are to be those who feed on the Word of God.

Holy Scripture has power; it is the Word of God, and we know that the Word of God is living and active. St Paul says in Hebrews 4:12, “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” It separates the holy from the profane. It separates that which is honourable to God from that which is dishonourable. St Athanasios says that the Word of God has life-giving power, and that as we read and meditate on the Word of God and make it our food, the Word itself will inflame our hearts with desire for God.

The Word of God itself will bring us to the point where we hate the things of this world and love the things of God. The Word of God is life-giving and powerful; it produces fruit in their lives. That means that we must be men, women and children who read, study, meditate upon, and memorise the Word of God.

St John of Kronstadt, in his writings, says that “in the old days” (the old days for him—and remember, he was writing a hundred years ago), when you would go into a pious Orthodox home, you would not hear music of the world. You would hear the music of the Church. If you went into their rooms and looked on the nightstands, you would not find worldly magazines. Instead you would find there the Holy Scriptures. If you looked to see what novels they were reading, you would not find the books of this world, but the lives of the saints. If you sat down to the dinner table, and listened to their conversation, they would not be speaking of the events of this world, but of the events of sacred history. The father would be speaking to his children of Moses

(from page 2)

He says that in the evening after dinner, if you went to their drawing room, you would hear them reading to each other from the Psalms. They allowed the Word of God to permeate every part of their family's life. St John then says, "But today, if you go into the homes of the Orthodox Christians, what you hear is exactly what you would hear if you went to the homes of the unbelievers. What they are reading is exactly what the unbelievers are reading." He asks, "Is it any wonder that faith has grown cold? Is it any wonder that we don't see the miracles, the holiness of days gone by, because we have not made the Holy Scripture our own?"

St John's words are given to us today. When I was a child and my parents would read to me, they never read books from the library. I didn't know what a library was, because what my mother would read at night were the stories from the Holy Scripture. When I started to read, I can remember my mother taking the Bible and copying the verses. (I know that she must have simplified it, because it read like, "See Tom run.") The first book I read was the Holy Bible.

Each week my father would make us memorise long passages from Holy Scripture. We would look forward to our allowance, which was given on Saturday. In addition to the chores that we had to do throughout the week, we had to recite passages of Holy Scripture in order to receive our allowance. My family believed in the importance of Holy Scripture. When I got older and I was sure that I knew everything there was in the Bible, then they went out and bought me books. The books they bought me were the lives of Christians. Even though I was raised as a Baptist, from the time I was about eight until I was thirteen, I read every single life of a Christian I could get my hands on.

How can we as Orthodox do any less than those who don't have the riches that we have? It is a great tragedy that in many Orthodox homes the children don't know the stories of the Bible or the lives of the saints. We wonder sometimes why our children are not interested in the Church, why they are most interested in the world. It's because they do not hear the Word of God.

We send our children to school and make sure they read all their homework assignments, and we want them to graduate with good grades. We don't show nearly the same amount of interest in their religious education, in making sure that they have read Holy Scripture and made it their own.

St Seraphim of Sarov used to read all four Gospels every week. St John of San Francisco had memorised all four Gospels. He didn't want to show everybody that he knew the Gospel readings, so in the Liturgy he would come out holding the Gospel book to read the passage, and somebody would notice that the book was upside down. He never looked at it, because he had not only memorised the Gospels, he had memorised each reading for each day of the year.

These were men who loved the Word of God. We look at their lives and we see such love for God. St Seraphim of Sarov knelt a thousand days upon a rock in prayer. We think, "Where did he find the energy and the desire to do that?" He had immersed himself in the Word of God, and it bore fruit in his life.

St John of San Francisco went all day without eating and slept maybe thirty minutes a day, because he couldn't stop praying in his room. He would go to his icon corner

and say, "I'll just say a few prayers, and then I'll sit down to sleep," and it would be morning by the time he was done with his prayers. Where did he find that kind of excitement for prayer? He read and memorised Holy Scripture.

St John Chrysostom, when he would go to his cell at night, before resting would get out the text of Holy Scripture and say, "I need to read just a little bit." His disciple would come in the morning to knock on the door and say, "It's time for prayers, Holy Father," and would hear St John saying, "I need to read just one more page before I rest." St John had such love for Holy Scripture that he never read it sitting down. He said, "This is such a holy text that I must read it standing up," and he would stand the entire night, huddled over a shelf built into the wall with a candle, reading page after page of Holy Scripture.



It is said that St Mark the Ascetic memorised the entire Bible, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation. When St Zosimas went out to meet St Mary of Egypt, she started quoting to him from the Psalms. He said, "Mother, where did you get a Bible?" She said, "Oh, I've never seen a Bible, but the angels have come and taught me the words of Holy Scripture, and I have memorised them."

St Sergius of Radonezh, as a young boy, had trouble learning to read. He wept and wept because he couldn't read, and he so wanted to read Holy Scripture. Through his prayers the Mother of God granted him the gift of learning, and he immediately ran to the church (not everyone in those days had Bibles in their homes), stood by the reader's stand and began to read Holy Scripture.

In the days of Orthodox England, they would leave the Gospel on the analogion in the middle of the Church. The people loved the Word of God so much that the priests had to chain the Gospel book with locks, because people would take it home to read and there would be nothing left. People would come all hours of the night and day so that they might stand and read Holy Scripture.

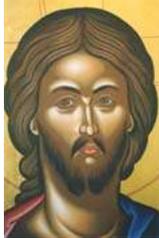
These are our examples. We are shamed by them. Some of us can't even read the Epistle and the Gospel appointed for each day, which takes about three minutes. Days go by and our Bibles sit without being opened. Some of us have never read the entire New Testament. Some of us have never read the Old Testament. Some of us read TV guides, but we don't read the lives of the saints. Some of us watch television every night, and we wouldn't think of missing our favourite show, but it's been months since we read a spiritual book. The examples of our Fathers shame us.

We wonder why we don't have fruit. Why are our lives so empty? Why is it that we have no desire for God? It is because we have not been feeding the fire of love for God. It is because we have not allowed the Word of Christ to dwell in us richly.

As a priest, I long for the day when people love the Word of God. It gives me great joy when I ask children questions and they know the stories, or when I see little ones acting out the stories read to them by their mothers the night before, because I know that these children will be Orthodox, if we teach them to love the Word of God, if we teach them to love the lives of saints. We teach them not only with our words, but through the actions of our lives. Those who heard the Word, who received the seeds with a good and noble heart, said Jesus, bore fruit abundantly.



(Source: Journey to the Kingdom- Reflections on the Sunday Gospels by Fr John Mack, Conciliar Press 1982)



THE GENERAL STRUGGLE

“And all these let us practice at home, with our friends, with our wife, with our children. And, for the present, let us begin with the first and easier things; for instance, with not swearing. Let us practice this one letter continually at home. For, in truth, there are many at

home to hinder this our practice:...sometimes an annoying wife, sometimes an indocile and disorderly child, which urge us on to swearing...

“And with respect to the other passions too, let us do this self-same thing, exercising ourselves against them at home....Let each one, on returning home, call his own wife [or husband], and explain these things, asking for help....And although you fall once, twice, many times in your training, do not despair, but stand again, and wrestle. Do not give up until you have bound around your head the glorious crown of triumph over the Evil One, having stored up the riches of virtue in an inviolable treasure-house for the future life” (St John Chrysostom, Homily 12 on St Matthew).

“The Fathers tell us how we may purify ourselves little by little by examining ourselves carefully every night about how we have passed the day...and by asking God’s forgiveness, if necessary, for any faults we have committed.

“But we really need to examine our conduct every six hours in order to see how we have sinned...and we should say to ourselves: ‘Have I done anything to upset my brother? Have I judged him harshly, hated him, or spoken evil of him?’” (Abba Dorotheos, On Cutting Off Passionate Desires).

DISPASSION

THE GOAL OF THIS warfare with the passions is *dispassion*, that blessed state achieved by many of the saints.

But “a man who has not become free from passions cannot know what passionless is, nor does he believe there can be anyone like this on earth. For if a man has not first renounced himself and has not exhausted his blood for the sake of his truly blessed life, how can he imagine that anyone else has been able to do it?” (St Symeon the New Theologian, Precepts).

“He who has become a lover of God and wishes to participate, however imperfectly, in the passionlessness of God, in spiritual sanctity, serenity, quietness and meekness, and to taste the joy and gladness born of them, must strive to lead his thoughts far away from every passion which may trouble the soul, and contemplate Divine things with a clear and unclouded eye, insatiably enjoying the Divine Light.

“A man who has implanted this atti-

tude in his soul becomes like God, insofar as such a thing is possible, and is loved and welcomed by Him as one who has courageously undertaken this great and difficult work. He becomes capable, in spite of the fact that his nature is joined to matter, of conversing with God by sending Him pure thoughts stripped of carnal passions” (St Basil the Great).

This does not mean that one who is passionless never feels any passions. He still has a fallen nature, and will have it until death. So, since the passions are inextricably part of this nature, they may be conquered, but never uprooted.

“Passionlessness does not mean not being attacked by demons, for if that were the case we would *go out of the world* (1 Cor. 5:10). Rather, passionlessness means remaining unconquered when attacked. And so, just as armoured warriors hear the sound of flying arrows when they are attacked, but remain unharmed because of the strength of their armour, immune in battle, so too ourselves if we are clothed through righteousness in the armour of the light and in the helmet of salvation” (Diadochus).

“Thanks to many kinds of virtues, both seen and unseen, which the saints have acquired, passions lost power over them and so could not be easily aroused to attack them. In this way, the mind no longer needs to keep its attention on the passions; it is filled instead with thinking, studying, and investigating the most perfect contemplations...Whenever passions begin to move and be excited, the mind is suddenly lifted away from them by a perception of Divine things. Thus, the passions remain without effect” (St Isaac of Syria).

“Souls, which have the love of the Lord ardently and insatiably, are meet for eternal life; for which reason deliverance from the passions is vouchsafed to them and they obtain perfectly the shining forth and participation of the unspeakable and mystic fellowship of the Holy Spirit, the fullness of grace” (St Macarius the Great, Homily 10).

“As the heavens are beautiful by the stars, dispassion is adorned by the virtues; for dispassion is nothing else than the inner heaven of the mind, where the tricks of demons are regarded as mere toys.

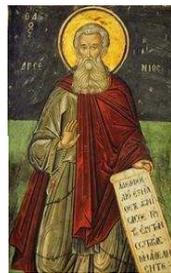
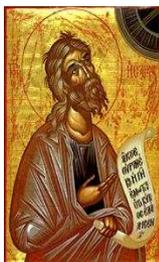
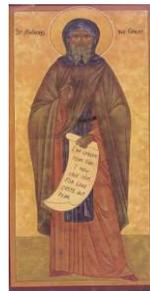
“And so the truly passionless one is he who has...raised his mind above created things and has subdued all of his senses, keeping his soul in God’s presence, always reaching out to Him even beyond his strength....He who has been granted such a state, while still in the body, has God always dwelling within him as his Guide in all his words, deeds, and thoughts....The dispassionate man no longer lives, but Christ lives in him (Gal. 2:20)” (St John Climacus, The Ladder).

Therefore...

Let us awake from sleep, while we are still in the body. Let us sigh and mourn over ourselves from our whole heart, day and night.

(St Anthony the Great)

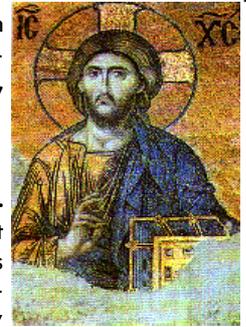
(Source: The Teaching of the Holy Fathers on the Passions, Nikodemos Orthodox Publication Society 2004)





Creative Prayer

vealed. It is a way in which we can educate our intelligence, and gradually learn to have 'the mind of Christ', as St Paul says (1 Co 2:16).



Creative Living

The day itself is blessed by God. Doesn't this mean that everything that it contains, everything that happens to us during it is within the will of God? Believing that things happen merely by chance is not believing in God. And if we receive everything that happens and everyone who comes to us in this spirit, we shall see that we are called to do the work of Christians in everything.

Prayer and Meditation Contrasted

Meditation is an activity of thought, while prayer is the rejection of every thought. According to the teaching of the Eastern Fathers, even pious thoughts and the deepest and loftiest theological considerations, if they occur during prayer, must be considered as a temptation and suppressed; because, as the Fathers say, it is foolish to think about God and forget that you are his presence.

All the spiritual guides of Orthodoxy warn us against replacing this meeting with God by thinking about him. Prayer is essentially standing face to face with God, consciously striving to remain collected and absolutely still and attentive in his presence, which means standing with an undivided mind, an undivided heart and an undivided will in the presence of the Lord; and that is not easy.

Whatever our training may give us, there is always a short-cut open at any time: undividedness can be attained by the person for whom the love of God is everything, who has broken all ties, who is completely given to God; then there is longer personal striving, but the working of the radiant grace of God.

The Purpose of Meditation

The purpose of meditation is not to achieve an academic exercise in thinking; it is not meant to be a purely intellectual performance, nor a beautiful piece of thinking without consequences; it is meant to be a piece of straight thinking under God's guidance and Godwards, and should lead us to draw conclusions about how to live. It is important to realize from the outset that a meditation has been useful when, as a result, it enables us to live more precisely and more concretely in accordance with the gospel.

Whatever we take, a verse, a commandment, an event in the life of Christ, we must first of all assess its real objective content. This is extremely important because the purpose of meditation is not to build up a fantastic structure but to understand a truth.

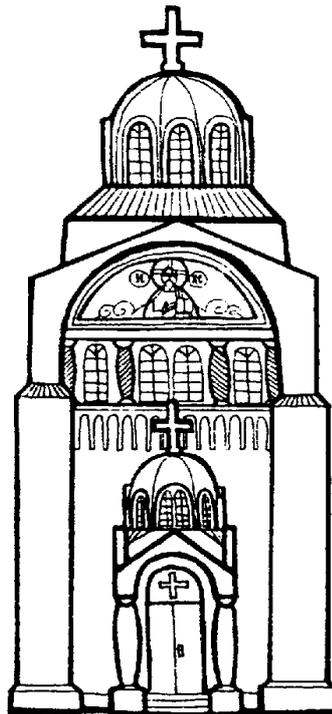
The truth is there, it is God's truth, and meditation is meant to be a bridge between our lack of understanding and the truth re-

Every encounter is an encounter in God and in his sight. We are sent to everyone we meet on our way, either to give or to receive, sometimes without even knowing it. Sometimes we experience the wonder of giving what we did not possess, sometimes we have to pay with our own blood for what we give.

We must also know how to receive. We must be able to encounter our neighbour, to look at him, hear him, keep silence, pay attention, be able to love and to respond wholeheartedly to what is offered, whether it be bitterness or joy, sad or wonderful. We should be completely open and like putty in God's hands. The things that happen in our life, accepted as God's gifts, will thus give us the opportunity to be continually creative, doing the work of a Christian.

Shallow Depths

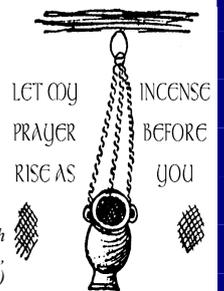
If you watch your life carefully you will discover quite soon that we hardly ever live from within outwards; instead we respond to incitement, to excitement. In other words, we live by reflection, by reaction. Something happens and we respond, someone speaks



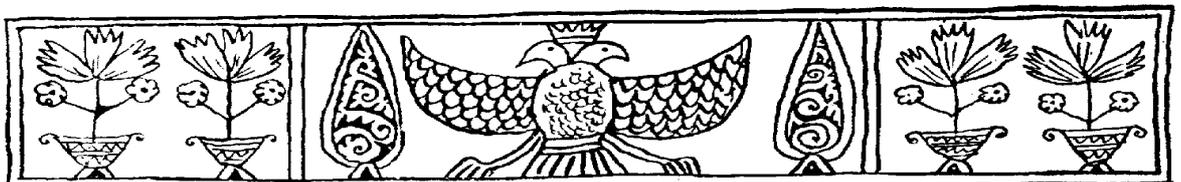
and we answer.

But when we are left without anything that stimulates us to think, speak or act, we realize that there is very little in us that will prompt us to action in any direction at all.

This is really a very dramatic discovery. We are completely empty, we do not act from within ourselves but accept as our life a life which is actually fed in from outside; we are used to things happening which compel us to do other things. How seldom can we live simply by means of the depth and the richness we assume that there is within ourselves.



(Source: Creative Prayer: Daily Readings With Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh, Hugh Wybrow-Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd 2004)



Confronting the Devil, Magic & the Occult: Part 13



Weapons Against Magic **Those Who Live a Sacramental Life** **Uction:**

A priest friend of mine told me the following:

A parishioner of his had his suspicions that spells were being cast against him. So he asked a priest to come and do a Holy Uction service. A few days later, they met on the street and he said to him, "Father. The Uction worked! We've discovered that when you were saying the service, the witch started shouting that some priest or other was binding her hands."

So the sacraments are also weapons against magic.

Confession:

This is a very great weapon against magic. The devil himself tells us, "I'm afraid of that bath that the Christians have in Church."

"Never go to confession," he said himself to a sorcerer's convention.

Holy Communion:

"The thing I'm frightened of most of all," said the devil, "is what the Christians eat and drink in Church, so long as they do so with a clear conscience." Holy Communion is the most deadly weapon against magic. So if you take communion, magic won't affect you.

Conclusion: If you distance yourself from sin and live in the Church, with its sacraments, you have nothing to fear! You'll never, never, be attacked by magic.

Who Are Affected by Magic?

Those Who Live in Sin

The experience of our Church tells us that those who commit sins, especially those of the flesh, are vulnerable to magic. In other words, their sins disarm them completely and they surrender to the appetites of the devil.

But if you wear a cross or have relics or a Gospel at home, how can magic affect you?

As long as Julian the Apostate made the sign of the Cross with unsullied hands, the demons that were attacking him at the behest of a sorcerer disappeared like smoke. But once he'd slaughtered a little child after being told to do so by the sorcerer and had bathed his hands in blood, it didn't matter how many times he made the sign of the Cross. It didn't work and the demons overwhelmed him.

His sin had made him unworthy of divine protection. Therefore, if you commit mortal sins, then neither relics, the Cross, nor the Gospel will be of any avail against magic.

Irregular Church Attendance & Communion

At the Divine Liturgy, people who are possessed howl, "I'm burning, I'm burning." What are they burning from? It is from divine grace, which is "emitted," which wells up, at the Liturgy. Therefore the Divine Liturgy is fire which burns the devil (and magic). So people who

are irregular in their church attendance can be affected by magic. This is why:

- The devil himself, at a meeting of occultists, forbade them to attend the Divine Liturgy.
- St Macarius the Egyptian told a woman who'd been put under a spell that she was never to absent herself from Church.

Irregular Communion

"The magic worked against you because you hadn't had communion for five weeks," St Macarius told the above woman. So, if you don't have communion for a long time, you're giving the devil a stick to beat you with. "... so that by absenting myself too long from Your communion, I may not become a prey to the wolf of souls."

What Should Be Done?

Anyone who's "bewitched" should:

- Cut themselves off from sin.
- Go to church, confess, and partake of the Holy Mysteries.
- Drink blessed water (*Agiasmos*) every day.
- Pray and fast strictly.
- Have the exorcism prayers read once a week.

"You Cannot Serve Two Masters"

(*Matthew 6:24*)

THE PERPETRATORS - The Impostors

- Those lay-people who "remove magic" and say prayers from our Church.
- The fire-walkers who, with the icon of Sts Constantine and Helen (and the power of the devil!) walk barefoot on red-hot charcoal.
- The sorcerer who was killed and the witch who was convicted who had a special room ("oratory") in their house with icons, incense and magic symbols.
- Sorcerers who might give advice to have an unction service read.

Why do they muddle up our pure faith with blasphemous, devilish elements?

They do it in order to deceive naive people and gain their confidence. In other words, who (even atheists!) would dare visit them if, in their rooms, they had only skulls? What if there weren't any icons and incense to be seen? And what if they didn't advise people to have an unction service read?

Are they or are they not charlatans and impostors?

"The Holy Things to Dogs"

Dogs (and pigs) don't know anything about "holy things". They wouldn't know how to use them, to reverence them or to invoke their blessing. Were we to give anything holy, they'd just render it useless. Worse than that, they'd defile it.

Here, the dogs and pigs mentioned in St Matthew's Gospel are people who behave towards holy things as dumb beasts would. In the case in

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Confronting the Devil, Magic & The Occult: Part 13

(continued from page 6)

point, they're the occultists and mediums who, next to their skulls and pentagrams and such, have holy icons or the Precious Cross and in this way defile the holy things. They are people who have the holy things as a bait for their innocent victims instead of for blessing and sanctification. They are people, and they are not alone in this, who mix suspect and treacherous words with the words of the Church.

"An Abomination to the Lord"

What we mentioned above, and every Satanic ritual, is explicitly forbidden by Scripture. And not only that, but "everyone who does such things is an abomination to the Lord." Anyone engaging in such practices is despicable in the sight of the Lord!

Those Who Deny Christ

Such people are not only impostors, they're not only profane, but they deny Christ. How can this not be so when, by their "prayers" they invoke the aid of Satan and not that of Christ?

Repentance

All those who want to escape eternal hell must repent. They have to cut every tie with the works of darkness. Otherwise, on the dread Day of Judgment, the Lord will say to them: "Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and everyone who practices falsehood." They will be thrown into the lake of fire and will burn eternally.

THE VICTIMS

"But They Are Christians"

Naïve Christians, when they visit a medium, for example, put forward the following justification for their actions: "But she's a Christian. She's got icons. She talks about God."

As we've already said, she does this in order to trap you. St John Chrysostom adds, "This is why I hate her and loathe her: she uses the name of God in order to curse Him. While saying that she's a Christian, she actually does what the idolaters do! The demons also referred to God but they were still demons. The Lord upbraided them and expelled them.

Censure

In October 1997, in a neighbourhood of Patras, Greece, the following event took place. A family was facing a particular problem and, instead of going to the Church, had recourse to a medium.

The medium gave them a little bottle of water and advised them to put it in a corner of a room at home and to get a priest to come and read a blessing service. This they did. In the midst of the members of the family, and of friends and relations, the service of the Blessing of the Waters was read. At the end, the family remembered the little bottle of water that the medium had given them and threw that into the water as well. What was the result? The priest's metal Cross, which was still in the water, broke in two.

Everyone was astounded.

God had answered: You can't be with Him and with the devil. If you are with God and the devil, then you are with

the devil alone. Repent!

THE EXTENT OF THE SIN

Suppose you go to one of those dens of Satan. Where do you think you're going? Do you realize that you're going to those whom the Lord can't abide; to those who deny Him, to charlatans? Do you have any idea what you're doing, and how great your sin is?

Saul

King Saul was worried about his future fate, so in order to learn something about it, he had recourse to a witch. However, because he did not turn to God at this difficult moment in his life, God punished him with death!

We would stress this very strongly: God put King Saul to death precisely because he went to a witch and not to God. Saul believed that the witch would be of greater help to him than the Almighty Lord. He believed in the witch rather than the Lord!

The Christian

If the Lord was so angry with Saul - He put him to death - who lived before Christ, how much angrier will He be with a Christian who does these things when he or she should know better? A Christian swears to "renounce Satan and all his pride".

Saul spurned God at a difficult time in his life. Well, any Christian who has recourse to occultists of any description similarly spurns the Lord.

- These people (Christians!) believe in the sorcerer, the astrologer, the medium, rather than Christ.
- They believe that they'll get more help from charlatans than from the Lord.
- They believe in bat's bones, horse shoes, the pentagram and what not, but they don't believe in the Lord and His Precious Cross!

Penance

St Gregory of Nyssa puts the Christian who follows "Satanic pride" in the same category as those who deny Christ. They have to do without communion for at least six years! (Canon 61 Holy 6th Ecumenical Synod).

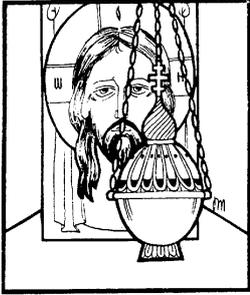
Those who make charms, which they then wear, by invoking the devil are similarly subject to the same heavy penance, six year's abstention from communion.

- See then precisely how you walk, not as unwise people, but as wise ones.
- Redeem the time, for the days are evil.
- Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

(Source: *Confronting the Devil, Magic & the Occult* by Archim. Vassilios Bakoyiannis, Orthodox Book Centre, Athens 2003)

"Lord Jesus Christ,
Son of God, have
mercy on me,
the sinner"





St Triantaphyllos (Timothy) the Husband

from Paraora, Thrace: 29 October 1820

Triantaphyllos was born in the village of Paraora, in the district of Kessane, Thrace. Later he married and became the father of two daughters.

For reasons that we do not know, Triantaphyllos' wife abandoned him and their two daughters, took up with a Muslim, and converted to the Muslim faith. Meanwhile, Triantaphyllos hid his daughters with relatives in a nearby village to protect them from their mother.

After some time had passed Triantaphyllos sent his wife a message urging her to return to Orthodoxy. It appears that she responded positively to his message, for she had repented for having abandoned her family and for her apostasy, but she could not immediately escape from her situation. Consequently, Triantaphyllos presented himself before the *kadi* and asked to be circumcised. In this way he appeared to accept the religion of Islam, but he only did it to be in a position to rescue his wife.

Triantaphyllos then reconciled with his wife, who apparently was able to break the bonds with her Muslim husband. They went to live in Kessane, ostensibly as Muslims but secretly as Orthodox Christians.

After some time they both realized the enormity of their actions. Consequently Triantaphyllos and his wife said goodbye to their daughters and relatives and left. They first went to the city of Ainos, and from there they went on to Kydonies, where his wife entered a nunnery. Triantaphyllos went on to Mt Athos and entered the Great Lavra Monastery, where he laboured as a gardener. Later he became a monk in the same monastery and took the name of Timothy. He remained at the Lavra for six years, and he grew spiritually. Later he moved to the Esphigmenou Monastery where in time, he became a great schema monk and began to prepare himself spiritually for his intended martyrdom.

Finally, Timothy received the blessing of Hegoumenos (Abbot) Euthimios and traveled east to Pro-

pontis. As he neared the village, he did not enter it to visit his daughters, not wishing to disobey the instructions of Hegoumenos Anthimos. He therefore continued on until he reached Hellepont, where he met Germanos the priest, to whom he had introductory letters.



Accompanied by the monastic priest Euthimios, Timothy left dressed as a layman, and traveled the town of Kessane, where he tried to convince apostates to return to the Orthodox Christian faith. But this activity soon came to the attention of the authorities, who took them into custody and placed them in prison in the city of Adrianople. In that city he met another monk named Barnabas, who had been tortured by the Muslims.

Shortly afterwards, Germanos the teacher visited him in jail and brought him Holy Communion. Both suffered many indignities and tortures but remained faithful to their Orthodox Christian faith. The steadfastness of the two Orthodox Christians embarrassed the Muslims, who surprisingly released Euthimios and Barnabas but restrained Timothy, whom they sentenced to death. Soon

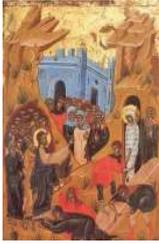
afterwards he was beheaded. Parts of his bloodstained clothing was purchased by Germanos and given to the martyr's daughters. The remainder of his clothing was sent to the Esphigmenou Monastery on the Holy Mountain.

Thus, Timothy, the husband and monk from the village of Paraora, Kessane, Thrace, and Esphigmenou Monastery on Mt Athos, sacrificed his life for the love of Jesus Christ in the city of Adrianople on October 29 in the year 1820.

(Source: Witnesses for Christ - Orthodox Christian Neomartyrs of the Ottoman Period 1437-1860: by Nomikos Michael Vaporis, St Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, New York 2000)



The Importance and Value of Memorial Services: Part 9



ARE MEMORIAL SERVICES BENEFICIAL? The Cases of the Heavily Sinful

Who is capable of knowing which one of us has departed this life while in a state of repentance and who has not? Who can affirm that he is a knower of hearts and thus, prejudice one of his fellow men? How do we know what has taken place from the time it takes to fall from the bridge into the river? A space of time long enough for someone to say, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom" or "Lord, have mercy"? God's salvation plan forbids us to judge anyone. Therefore, let us do whatever we can. Let us help our fellow man as much as possible and the rest we should leave up to the love and charity of God, to which there are no limits. For this reason, our Church does not prejudice anyone, but offers Her love to all of Her members.

The evidence of the benefits derived from the commemorative services celebrated for those who died while in grave sin or who had some binding tie, is reported by St Nectarios of Aegina. He says that "many souls confess to this and especially those whose souls, who, after death, have been freed from the bondage of the punishment of excommunication. For, as we can observe, the dead bodies of these souls are finally able to decompose as a direct result of our prayers".



THE BENEFITS FOR THE LIVING

We derive additional benefits from memorial services. These benefits relate to those who remain alive.

Love is developed between the living and the dead.

The benefit derived is directly related with Christian virtue.

There is reinforcement of the faith in the life beyond the grave.

There is a reinforcement of the hope in God's infinite mercy.

These services preach Christ's continual presence in the world.

They teach that man is a citizen of Heaven. He proceeds from the "Church Militant" of the earth, to the "Church Triumphant" of Heaven.

Christ hears the prayers of all, and He yields to the supplications of the Saints and of the Holy Virgin (Theotokos) Mother of God.



Saint Nestor

The hope in the salvation of the souls of Christians is not lost, even after death.

Forgiveness of sins is granted to those souls for which memorial services are offered, since our Benevolent God hears the Church's prayers.

God's final decision for the future reward, or punishment, has not yet been given. This final decision is reserved for the Second and Frightful Coming of Christ. Until then, the Church is able to offer prayers and supplications for her members.

We come to remember and ponder on death. We are reminded of the futility of the world and of the things of which it is constituted.

Just as in the "Church Militant", the members who are found to be under the Church's punishment for sins which they have committed are deprived of the Sacred Mysteries, so it is in the "Church Triumphant". Those who die with their sins are far apart from the Saints and the Righteous.

Charity and love of mankind is developed.

Those still living and bereaving are alleviated from the pain felt for the death of their beloved relative or friend. Death is so bitter that it creates unbearable grief. It suddenly separates loved ones. Prayer and memorial services are the only manner of communicating with their loved one. There exists no other way of communicating with the person who was so loved by us.

We come to remember and ponder on death. We are reminded of the futility of the world and of things of which it is constituted.

We are induced to proceed towards virtue and the Kingdom of Righteousness. We are encouraged to do acts of benevolence and charity.

"In this way", St John of Damascus points out, "God desires that through the assistance given to others, all will benefit. The living as well as those who have undergone death", since we make the offering to Benevolent God of "Christ Crucified for the benefit of the remission of sins of these souls as well as our own". St Cyril of Jerusalem stresses the same.

It is not best for us to wait until we die, so that others may offer memorial services for the benefit of our soul, but to take care of our immortal soul from this moment on! We now have, at our disposal, all the means of salvation, which our Church offers us.

Therefore, since the day of our death is so uncertain, let us then continuously be prepared just in case today "we find ourselves to be alive but tomorrow to be in the grave".

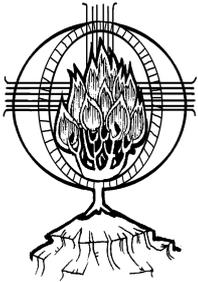
(Source: The Memorial Services & their benefits by Hieromonk Benedict, New Skete, Mt Athos, 2002)



THE CHRISTIAN WAY OF LIFE (part 5)

FORTY YEARS IN THE WILDERNESS

Balaam Prophecies the Greatness of Israel



The Israelites had to go through land belonging to other people in order to reach their Promised Land of Canaan. Sometimes they were not welcomed. Finally they reached a country called Moab which was just across the river from Canaan.

The people of Moab did not like to have so many foreigners camped in their country. They sent to Babylon for a priest named Balaam and asked him to put a curse on the Israelites. Balaam refused because, he said,

"A star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel." (Num. 24:17)

Balaam meant that the Israelites were going to have a great king named David, and they would become a great nation because they had God's protection.

Moses appoints Joshua as his Successor

By the time the Israelites reached Moab, Moses was a very old man. He needed a helper and a man to carry on his work. God told him to appoint a man named Joshua.

Moses took Joshua and stood before the people. He laid his hands on him and said that Joshua would be their leader after he was gone. Then he made a farewell speech. He told the people these things:

"There is no other god who could do for you what your God has done. Be careful to obey His laws."

"You will be scattered and you will be tempted to serve other gods, but you will finally come back to God."

"The land of Canaan will be yours, not because you are perfect, but because the Canaanites are wicked." (They worshipped a false god called Baal).

Then Moses said,

"Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is one Lord, and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might; for you are a people holy to the Lord your God." (Deut. 7:6)

After Moses said this, God led him to the top of a mountain and showed him the land of Canaan. Then God laid him there to rest.

GOD PROTECTS HIS CHOSEN PEOPLE WHEN THEY OBEY HIS LAW — JOSHUA AND THE JUDGES

The Israelites Win the Promised Land

On one side of the land of Canaan was the Mediterranean Sea. On the other side, to

the east, was the Jordan River. The Israelites were camped across the Jordan River, but they could look over into the Promised Land. What they saw was a nice green, grassy plain in which sat a large walled city called Jericho.

Joshua was now the leader of the Israelites. God told Joshua what to do. First he was to lead the people to a place in the plain near Jericho. In order to do this they had to cross the River Jordan. Ahead of the people went the Ark of the Covenant. It was carried by twelve men, one from each tribe. As they approached the river, the waters divided as they had when the Israelites crossed the Red Sea. The Ark was carried across and after it the people followed. Then a man from each of the twelve tribes placed a stone in the river where the Ark had passed. The twelve stones were a monument to stand and remind people of the event.



When the Israelites were camped outside of the city, God sent an Angel to tell Joshua how to enter it. The people should make a procession headed by seven priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant. Each day for seven days they should march around the city. On the seventh day they should march around the city seven times.

The people did as they were instructed. On the seventh day, after they had marched around the city seven times,

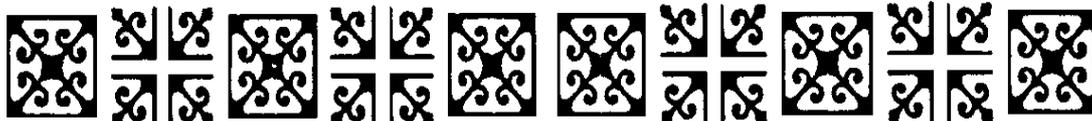
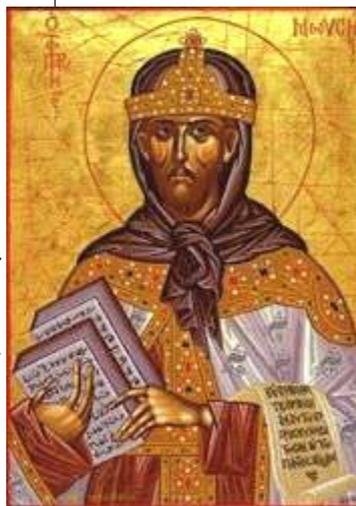
all the priests blew loudly on their ram's horns. Then Joshua said to the people, *"Shout, for the Lord has given you the city!"*

Then the people shouted. The walls fell flat on the ground, and they entered the city rejoicing.

God gave Joshua and his people many cities. Finally Joshua made a thank-offering to God. He built an altar on a mountain called Ebal. He put on it a copy of the law which Moses had received on Mt Sinai. Then he read the law aloud to the people to remind them to be true and faithful to God.

(To be continued)

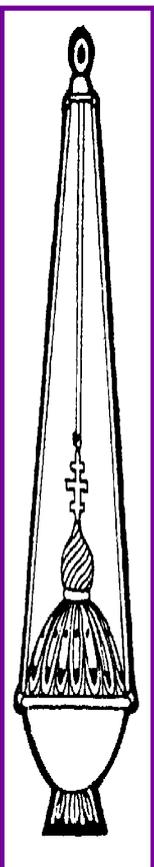
(Source: The Christian Way of Life by Presvytera Frieda Upson Brookline, Massachusetts, 1974)



From the Old Testament - The Psalms

Psalm Fourteen (14)

FOLLY OF THE GODLESS, AND GOD'S FINAL TRIUMPH



THE fool has said in his heart,
 "There is no God."
 They are corrupt,
 They have done abominable works,
 There is none who does good.
 The LORD looks down from heaven
 upon the children of men.
 To see if there are any who
 understand, who seek God.
 They have all turned aside,
 They have together become corrupt;
 There is none who does good,
 No, not one.
 Have all the workers of iniquity
 no knowledge,
 Who eat up my people as they
 eat bread,
 And do not call on the LORD?
 There they are in great fear,
 For God is with the generation
 of the righteous.
 You shame the counsel of the poor,
 But the LORD is his refuge.
 Oh, that the salvation of Israel
 would come out of Zion!
 When the LORD brings back
 the captivity of His people,
 Let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad.

[In the Ninth Hour prayers on Good Friday, at the hour of Christ's death, the Church intones, **The fool said in his heart, "There is no God"** (v. 1). Even the pagan centurion who saw Christ our God crucified on the Cross believed in Him. Only the **corrupt** (v.3) could see Him die and deny that He exists!]

(Source: The Orthodox Study Bible, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, Tennessee 1997)

EVENING PRAYER

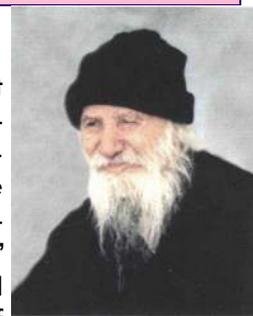
Let my prayer come before you as incense, the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice; Lord, hear me Lord our God.



With Elder Porphyrios

Forgive People

The Elder considered the last thing mentioned, forgiving whoever has harmed us, to be fundamental. He often repeated the verse of the prayer, "First be reconciled to those who grieve you." And in confession, he paid special attention to this spiritual sin of remembering the bad things that another has done to us and holding malice, or bitterness, or animosity against him. He wanted our souls to be free from resentment, full of forgiveness and kindness.



Don't Ask To Be Loved

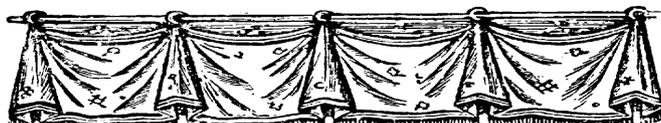
Another day, when I was upset because certain people did not respond to me with love, the Elder said, "Today, people ask to be loved and that is why they are disappointed. The right thing to do is not to care whether they love you or not at all, but rather, whether you love Christ and other people. This is the only way in which the soul is filled.

Love Everybody

The Elder's love didn't have limits; it was boundless. It extended to all of God's children, to all people, both friends and enemies. He told me: "The crown of love towards our friends contains foreign bodies (reckoning, reciprocation, vainglory, sentimental weakness, passionate liking) while the crown of love towards enemies is pure. He also said: "Our love in Christ ought to reach out everywhere, even to the hippies at Matala. I wanted to go there a lot, not to preach to them or to accuse them, but to live amongst them "without sin" and let Christ's love, which transfigures, speak for itself. I saw the hippies and I felt sorry for them. They were like "sheep without a shepherd"

On the matter of social relations, he advised me: "You shouldn't carry out your Christian struggle with sermons and debates, but with real secret love. When we contradict others they react negatively. When we love them, they are moved and we win them over. When we love, we think that we are giving to other people., but really, you are giving to yourself. Love requires sacrifice: to humbly sacrifice something that is ours, but really is God's"

(Source: With Elder Porphyrios- A Spiritual Child Remembers by Constantine Yannitsios Holy Convent of the Transfiguration of the Saviour Athens 2001)



Orthodox Christian Calendar 2008

This monthly (x2) calendar is provided for your information. It aims to give you an insight into the Orthodox Christian Church year of 2008 and hopes to prove useful and beneficial with its indications. The calendar provides you with a day-by-day outlook of the following pieces of information: 1. **The Greater Feast days** (†) celebrated in the Orthodox Christian Church. 2. **The main fasting and non-fasting periods** in the Church and the strictness of each of these fasts. 3. **The schedule of English Divine Liturgies**, where these are held and at what time. 4. **Main Vespers Services** held at each of our Melbourne, VIC Parishes (commence 7p.m.) 5. **Public Holidays** and **other events** held.

Month of October

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 † PANAGIA GORGOEPIKOOS	2 † ST KYPRIANOS THE MARTYR	3 † ST. DIONYSIOS THE AREOPAGITE	4
5 † 2ND SUNDAY OF LUKE	6 † ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE	7	8	9	10	11 ENGLISH LITURGY AT GEELONG MONASTERY, 9.00 – 10.00am
12 † 4TH SUNDAY OF LUKE (THE HOLY THE FATHERS OF THE 7TH ECUMENICAL COUNCIL)	13	14 ENGLISH LITURGY AT ST. EUSTATHIOS, STH MELBOURNE, 7.30–8.45pm	15	16	17	18 † ST. LUKE THE EVANGELIST
19 † 3RD SUNDAY OF LUKE	20 † ST GERASIMOS OF CEPHALONIA & ST ARTEMIOS THE GREAT MARTYR	21	22	23 † ST. JAMES THE APOSTLE & BROTHER OF CHRIST	24	25 VESPERS: ST. DIMITRIOS ASCOT VALE
26 † 6TH SUNDAY OF LUKE (St Dimitrios the Great Martyr)	27 † ST NESTOR THE GREAT MARTYR ***** CYC Monthly Talk: " " by Rev. Fr Timothy Evangelinidis , at St Eustathios, Sth Melbourne, 7.30pm	28 † HOLY PROTECTION OF THE THEOTOKOS "OXI" DAY	29 † ST ANASTASIA OF ROME	30 ENGLISH LITURGY AT TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD, THOMASTOWN, 7.30–8.30pm	31 VESPERS: STS ANARGYRI OAKLEIGH	

Month of November

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
30 † ST ANDREW THE FIRST CALLED OF THE APOSTLES						1 † STS DAMIANOS & KOSMAS THE UNMERCENARIES
2 † 5TH SUNDAY OF LUKE	4 **MELBOURNE CUP DAY** (PUBLIC HOLIDAY)	5	6	7	VESPERS: ARCHANGELS, MENTONE	8 † ARCHANGELS MICHAEL & GABRIEL ***** VESPERS: ST NEKTARIOS, FAWKNER
9 † 7TH SUNDAY OF LUKE (St Nectarios of Pentapolis)	11 † ST MINAS THE GREAT MARTYR	12 † ST JOHN THE MERCIFUL	13 † ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM	14 † ST PHILIP THE APOSTLE	15 ** CHRISTMAS FAST BEGINS ** ***** ENGLISH LITURGY AT GEELONG MONASTERY, 9.00 - 10.00am	
16 † 8TH SUNDAY OF LUKE (St Matthew the Evangelist)	18 ENGLISH LITURGY AT ST. EUSTATHIOS, STH MELBOURNE, 7.30-8.45pm	19	20	21 † THE PRESENTATION OF OUR LADY TO THE TEMPLE	22	
23 † 9TH SUNDAY OF LUKE	25 † ST CATHERINE THE GREAT MARTYR ***** DINNER FOR ARCHBISHOP'S NAMEDAY AT ULTIMA ON KEILOR RECEPTION CENTRE, 7.00 p.m.	26 † ST. STYLIANOS THE RIGHTEOUS (ARCHBISHOP STYLIANOS' NAMEDAY)	27	VESPERS: THE PRESENTATION OF OUR LADY TO THE TEMPLE, NORTH BALWYN	28	VESPERS: ST. ANDREW, NUNAWADING
	VESPERS: ST CATHERINE, MALVERN					

GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AUSTRALIA

SECOND ARCHDIOCESAN DISTRICT OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

Central Youth Monthly Lectures

“Honest Questions and Answers on Living the Orthodox Faith ”

presented by

Rev. Fr Timothy Evangelinidis

On

Monday, 27th October 2008

at the

**Greek Orthodox
Church of
St. Eustathios
221 Dorcas Street
South Melbourne**

***Commencing
at 7.30pm***

**For further
Information
telephone:**



Ἀναχωρηταὶ τῆς Αἰθιοπίας

9690 1595 or 9696 2488

GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AUSTRALIA

SECOND ARCHDIOCESAN DISTRICT OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

Central Youth Monthly Lectures

“Accepting to Suffer as the Means to Salvation”

presented by

Mr Theo Theodorou

on

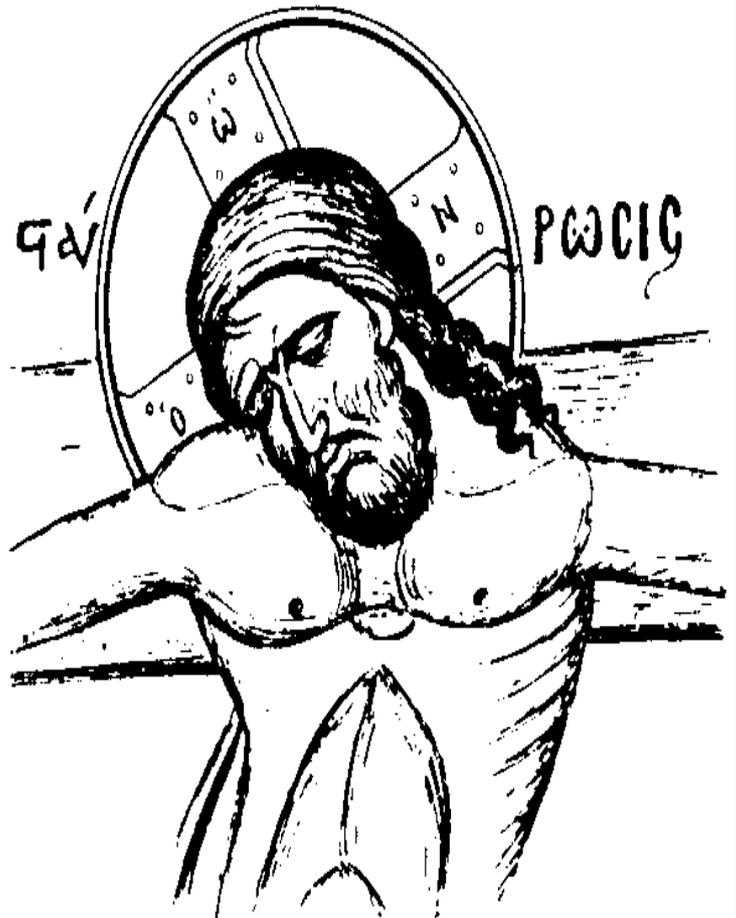
Monday, 17th November 2008

at the
**Greek Orthodox
Church of
St Eustathios
221 Dorcas Street
South Melbourne**

***Commencing
at 7.30pm***

**For further
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telephone:**

9690 1595 or 9696 2488





For subscriptions, article contributions and announcements, change of address, comments or queries, contact:
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Fax: (03) 9696 3583
Email: cyc_secretary@yahoo.com



*Youth Group Meetings
in Victoria*

<p>Ascot Vale: St. Dimitrios <i>Tuesday 7.30 p.m. (9375 1119)</i></p> <p>Box Hill: Holy Cross—1st Sunday of every month straight after Church <i>(9890 9087)</i></p> <p>Brunswick: St. Basil <i>Tuesday 7.00 p.m. (9387 7693)</i></p> <p>Clayton: Three Hierarchs <i>Monday 7.30 p.m. (9544 5706)</i></p> <p>Coburg: Presentation of our Lord <i>Tuesday 7.45 p.m. (9350 5559)</i></p> <p>Dandenong: St. Panteleimon <i>Thursday 7.30 p.m. (9791 8369)</i> (www.dandenongyouth.com)</p> <p>East Keilor: Panagia Soumela <i>Monday 7.00 p.m. (9331 2010)</i></p>	<p>East Malvern: St. Catherine <i>Tuesday 7.30 p.m. (9563 6623)</i></p> <p>Fawkner: St. Nektarios <i>Monday 7.00 p.m. (9359 4404)</i></p> <p>Forest Hill: St Andrew <i>Wednesday 8.00 p.m. (9802 0165)</i></p> <p>Northcote: Axion Esti Monastery <i>Sunday 4.30 p.m. (9481 7826)</i></p> <p>Oakleigh: Sts. Anargyri, <i>Tuesday 7.30 p.m. (9569 6874)</i> (www.sprint.net.au/~corners/)</p> <p>Richmond: Holy Trinity <i>Thursday 7.00 p.m. (9428 1284)</i> parishofholyltrinityrichmond@yahoo.com</p>
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