



Fire & Light **St. Symeon Orthodox Church**

3101 Clairmont Ave. Birmingham, AL 35205

Church Tel. 205-930-9681 / 205-907-9447

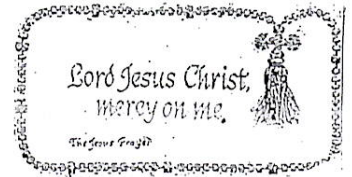
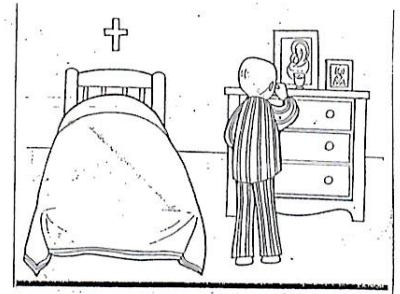
Visit stsymeon.com

August 27, 2017

St. Poemen the Great

St. Hosius of Cordova (359)

St. Poemen of Palestine (602) St. Caesarius of Arles (543)



➤ **No Vespers – Saturday, September 2**

➤ **Annual Parish Assembly – Sunday, September 17**

➤ **October 8, 2017 – St. Symeon's 40th Anniversary ~ with Archbishop Alexander**

Anniversary Photos: Send 10 of your favorite parish life photos, old and new, for inclusion in the 40th anniversary commemoration to st.symeon.orthodox.church@gmail.com. Please include a description of who, what and when for each photo. If you don't have digital copies, you may give original carefully labeled photos in an envelope to Shea Cole, who will scan them and return them to you.

Thought for the New Church Year: *What is repentance?* Repentance is a change of one's way of life; it is discarding the old man and all of his evil habits and turning toward God, toward the Truth. Repentance means becoming quiet, peaceful, humble, and meek. Everyone knows that it is very pleasing to be in the company of a person who is meek, peaceful, and kind. A person who has no peace generates restlessness and radiates it all around, so that in the company of such a person we feel unsettled, and we too become restless. This is because we have not united with the Lord through unceasing prayer.

Elder Thaddeus of Serbia (+2003)

The soul needs spiritual food and only the Word of God and the writings of the Holy Church Fathers can nourish it. Worldly knowledge dulls the mind and creates instability of thought. There is no restraining of the searching thoughts. Those who turn away from God put themselves as a foundation of their life and work. Recoiling from God and the fullness of His Grace, they hasten to fill the created void. The falling away from God evokes in them an unquenchable thirst, undefinable, but never-ending. In a word, they become a bottomless pit. They spend a whole life in sweat and toil and great tribulations. From this we understand that a person can never be in himself, but always outside himself in worldly, troubling things. He has fallen away from God Who is the plenitude of all. He is empty in himself and immerses himself in various interests and lives for them. This is how a sinner constantly thirsts, and is concerned about things outside himself, outside God. Thus, a characteristic feature of the sinful life is undue worries without concern for salvation (Luke 10:41).

Fr. Nikolai Deputatov

✠ *St. Paisios responds to the question:*

'Geronda, how can I, who have so many passions, ever be saved?'

"With love and humility. As soon as these two virtues are nurtured, pride and evil will become malnourished; and the passions will start to perish. In this way - one by one - all of the passions will gradually disappear, and the rest of the virtues will come on their own. Therefore, direct all of your efforts towards love and humility."

This and That

“The church is not a group of people groping for a philosophy of life appropriate to modern conditions but a living body already being shaped by apostolic teaching.”

~ Thomas Oden

Tolerance as the Highest Value ~ *Value-free Relativism*...

“It has been frequently observed by competent thinkers that Americans have abandoned the morality engendered by what the Declaration of Independence called the “Laws of Nature and of Nature's God.” The Declaration confidently proclaimed as its first principle the “self-evident” truth that “all men are created equal” and “endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights;” among them “Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” As part of a created (and therefore intelligible) universe, rights cannot be something private or subjective; they are part of an objective order. The idea that every right has a corresponding duty or obligation was essential to the social compact understanding of the American founding. Thus whatever was destructive of the public good or public happiness, however much it might have contributed to an individual's private pleasures or imagined pleasures, was not a part of the “pursuit of happiness” and could be proscribed by society. Liberty was understood to be rational liberty, and the pursuit of happiness was understood to be the rational pursuit of happiness—that is to say, not only a natural right but a moral obligation as well.

Over the past century and more, this morality grounded in the American founding has been successfully eroded by Progressivism. This erosion is manifested today in the morality of value-free relativism. According to this new morality, all value judgments are equal. Reason cannot prove that one value is superior to or more beneficial than another, because values are not capable of rational analysis; they are merely idiosyncratic preferences. In this value-free universe, the only value that is “objectively” of higher rank is *tolerance*. Equal toleration of all values—what is called today a commitment to diversity—is the only “reasonable” position. And note that it is always called a commitment to *diversity*. It is a commitment because it cannot be rational in any strict sense—it exists in a value-free world from which reason has been expelled. The only support it can garner under such circumstances is the simple fact that it is preferred.

With respect to the commitment to diversity, the tolerance of those who are willing to tolerate you does not earn you much credit - it doesn't require much of a commitment or sacrifice. If, however, you are willing to tolerate those who are pledged to kill you and destroy your way of life, tolerance represents a genuine commitment. Only such a deadly commitment confirms that tolerance is the highest value in a universe of otherwise equal values. Only such a deadly commitment signals a nation's single-minded devotion to tolerance as the highest value by its willingness to sacrifice its sovereignty as proof of its commitment. The common-sense citizen is forgiven for think this train of thought insane...” - Edward J. Erler, PhD, *Imprimus*

“The West is dying in part because we are not reproducing ourselves. The birth rate in the US is now the lowest on record. Europe has been ahead of us in this race to oblivion, of course. From an entirely Darwinian point of view, we are declining because we are “spectacularly failing to pass [our] genes on to the next generation. ... This is because fewer and fewer people want to sacrifice personal happiness for a goal larger than themselves. The fact is, raising children requires real sacrifice. Parents know they have to die to themselves to a large degree, so that their children might flourish. Religious people — authentically religious people — know how to do this, and expect to do this as a normal part of life.”

~ Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

“You lose religion, you lose the family. But you also lose society, because the success of all societies depends on its altruists — on those who are willing to suffer personally for the greater good.”

– Rod Dreher

“The church is imperiled when it becomes intoxicated with the spirit of its particular age, committed more to serve the gods of that age than the God of all ages.”

- Thomas Oden

“Political ideologies read history as an opportunity for empowerment. Classic Christianity reads history as an opportunity for living the truth revealed in history. “

- Thomas Oden

“Since under conditions of modern freedom the individual thinks only of his rights, he does not refer his action to the external frame of obligation.”

- Richard Weaver



ON THE MEANING OF THE CHURCH LITURGICAL NEW YEAR
By a Monk of the Eastern Church

Each year, on September 1st, the Orthodox Church begins to lead the faithful into a cycle of prayers and commemorations that constitute the "liturgical year" or the "church year." What does this liturgical year mean, exactly?

One could think of the liturgical year as if it were a picture of the services and feast days during a cycle of 365 days, from September to September: in short, the liturgical year could be reduced to a practical diagram, to a calendar, but simply to identify it with a calendar would be totally inadequate.

One could also say that the purpose of the liturgical year was to bring to the minds of the believers the teachings of the Gospel and the main events of Christian history in a certain order. That is true, but this educational, pedagogical, function does not exhaust the significance of the liturgical year.

Perhaps we could say that its aim is to orient our prayer in a particular direction and also to provide it with an official channel which is objective, and even, in a certain way, artistic. This, too, is true, but the liturgy is more than a way of prayer, and it is more than a magnificent lyric poem.

The liturgy is a body of sacred "signs" which, in the thought and desire of the Church, have a present effect. Each liturgical feast renews and in some sense actualizes the events of which it is the symbol; it takes this event out of the past and makes it immediate; it offers us the appropriate grace, it becomes an "effectual sign," and we experience this efficacy to the extent that we bring to it a corresponding inclination of our soul. But still, this does not say everything.

The liturgical year is, for us, a special means of union with Christ, for in it He is "both He who offers and who is offered," in the same way that every prayer, being the prayer of the members of the mystical body, share in the prayer of Him, who is the head of the body and the only one whose prayer is perfect.

In the liturgical year, we are called to relive the whole life of Christ: from Christmas to Pascha, from Pascha to Pentecost; we are exhorted to unite ourselves to Christ in His nativity and in His growth, to Christ's suffering, to Christ dying, to Christ in triumph and to Christ inspiring His Church. The liturgical year forms Christ in us, from His birth to the full stature of the perfect man. According to a medieval Latin saying, the liturgical year is Christ Himself, *annus est Christus*.

It is not only the commemoration of the events in the life of the Lord Jesus that forms Christ in us. In addition to the cycle of feasts that bear directly on our Lord, the liturgical year includes the cycle of the feasts of the saints. These two cycles, however, should not be thought of as two strands that run parallel to, or separate from each other, for the saints are the glorified members of the body of Christ. Their holiness is but an aspect, a shining ray of the holiness of Christ Himself. To celebrate the feast of a saint is to celebrate a special grace that flows from Christ to that saint and so to us; it is to celebrate that aspect of our Lord which is specially evidenced by the saint, it is to enter (for our profit) into the relationship of prayer which unites that saint to Christ. It is still

more.

In the same way that the feasts of our Lord in a mysterious way renew the events of His life, so the feasts of the saints make their lives, their merits and their deaths mysteriously actual, in as much as they participate in the life, the merits and the death of the Lord Jesus. Thus commemorations of the martyrs somehow renews the grace of their violent deaths, so that, as these were a participation in the passion of Christ, it is this passion which is relived in remembering the martyrs. The liturgical year has but one and the same object, Jesus Christ; whether we contemplate Him directly, or whether we contemplate Him through the members of His body.

Great graces and great spiritual opportunities are offered us through the liturgical year. It provides a frame and support for Christian piety; it gives it a style which is sober and objective; it maintains a bond of unity among believers. And, above all, it communicates an inspiration, it transmits a life.

One should however, beware of excessive "liturgicalism" which would seek to enclose prayer in ritual frames. Liturgical life is not an end in itself; it is but a means which "is within us." Our taking part in the liturgical year, with the many feasts, differing Lents, various services is empty and illusory if the outward cycle is not matched by an inner cycle, and if the events of Christ's life that each feast represents do not find themselves mysteriously renewed in our soul. The liturgical year acquires its true meaning to the extent it becomes an adoration in spirit and in truth.



THE BEHEADING OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST – AUGUST 29TH

In Matthew 14:1-12 we read about the cruel death of St. John the Baptist. The saint had publicly reprimanded Herod for taking his brother's wife as his own, so Herod had him imprisoned. Although Herod really wanted John dead, he feared the many people who believed John to be a prophet. During his riotous birthday party, Herod was so pleased with the dancing of his wife's daughter Salome, that he promised her anything she wanted. Her mother prompted her to say, "the head of John the Baptist on a platter." Even though Herod regretted his promise, he had to abide by it because his guests had heard him. So he commanded that John be beheaded and the head be given to Salome, who in turn, gave it to her mother.

This day is kept as a "strict fast day." This means we do not partake of meat, dairy, or fish. Wine and oil are permitted. The meaning of "a strict fast day," is lost to many people. It's authentic meaning is that one fasts all day until sunset and has a small meal in which wine and oil may be used. We fast on this feast as a reminder that we are to live a different style of life than Herod. In memory of this event, some Orthodox Christians keep the custom of not using dishes on this day, since St. John's head was served on a dish/platter. Instead, only bowls are used. Also, the food that is served on this day should not require the use of a knife, since a sharp instrument was used to behead the saint. The keeping of a fasting day, using bowls and the eating of food that is not cut, are time honored customs that aid us in understanding and celebrating the feast.

Among some Slavic Orthodox Christians, this feast day is also a day to commemorate departed Orthodox Soldiers.



TRUE WISDOM

Hieromartyr Onuphry of Kolyma (1938) Tobolsk, 1928. An ageless article that certainly applies to our life in today's world of materialism and comforts.

One local Orthodox priest in his sermon said: "In the first centuries of Christianity, in times of persecution, the faithful prayed in the catacombs, hidden in the damp underground. Faithful Christians came to these catacombs to offer prayers despite the darkness, dampness, and frightful cold, away from their persecutors... Presently, in this church where we are praying it is warm and bright, even when it is dark and freezing outside. We are able to peacefully sing hymns of praise to God, have discussions on lessons of faith, and to partake of the Communion of the Holy Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ. However, in these days of peace and quiet our churches are becoming devoid of people."

This is how Batiushka spoke, and I was struck by the truth and simplicity of his words! Really, what justification can lazy and light-minded Christians possibly have to depart from God the Source of all that is great and beautiful? What can the empty, sinful world give them? There is nothing more beautiful or perfect than God! The Word of Truth is in the Orthodox Church!

But outside of it are lies and, at best, futile and deceitful philosophies. In the world outside we find emptiness, a spirit of languor, as well as dissension, hate, and instability. Here, in the Christian world, we find tenderness, truth, love, joy which is real and stable for all time.

The light-mindedness of this Batiushka's parishioners became more apparent when I compared them to those in other cities. Here in the town of Tobolsk, for twenty thousand residents there are more than ten Orthodox churches. But in Kharkov, where I lived before, for half a million residents there were but two tiny Orthodox churches. In Sverdlovsk, the capital of the Ural provinces, there is also but one Orthodox church. On feast days, when I served in Kharkov, crowds of the faithful had to stand outside in the rain and frost, while those inside were fainting from lack of oxygen... and so many believers did not have the good fortune to be able to attend an Orthodox church at all!

For a period of seven months I was not able to pray in the temple of God. For this reason I understand from experi-

ence how criminal and terrible it is for those unfortunate light-minded people to neglect this great Sacred House of God, so valuable and easily attainable for them! My thoughts are then transported to people of other faiths, who are still unaware of the beauty of Orthodox services, the truth of Her teachings, and the joy of life in the Grace of the Church, which is freely given to the faithful in the Seven Mysteries of God through the Orthodox Church. And I came to the conclusion that, were they to accept Orthodoxy, people of other faiths would value Orthodoxy much more than we do. The unwitting words of our Saviour come to mind: *And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.* (Mt 8:11-12).



There can be no justification for the negligence of these parishioners. Right here in these Orthodox churches that same Christ God proclaims His teachings and offers to partakers His Most Holy Body and Blood. Here, in the town of Tobolsk, a mere ten years ago people could not help but see true miracles with the revelation of the relics of Saint John, Wonderworker of Tobolsk and all Russia. I hear the echoes of other, frightening words of our God and

Saviour to these lazy servants: *If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin... If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin.* (Jn 15:22, 24). The Lord uses all possible means to unite people to His Church and eternal blessedness, but people remove themselves from His Truth, and thus from eternal happiness.

Amid the turmoil and instability of our lives, amid major and minor events, amid human joys and sorrows there occurs, my beloved, an unseen spiritual process by which some people approach God's Kingdom, and by which others fall away from His Kingdom, according to their own volition; this is the most important activity of our earthly lives. **The world exists as long as there are still people who are able to attain eternal life.** The word of God clearly tells us that the present world will cease to exist specifically when the number of faithful Christians dwindles to a minimum: *When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?* (Lk 18:8).

Many people have forgotten God and have become immersed in today's culture outside the Church. They do not know, poor souls, they do not understand what is most important: the word of God and Christian life. Undoubtedly man's genius will, with time, produce great achievements in the realm of science and culture. Yet how confused and horrified will all those unbelievers be when, at the very height of man's culture—Alas!—at a time of total scarcity of faith on the earth, all their achievements will be destroyed and will perish with the rest of the world. They will see the advent and the glory of that Son of man, of Whom they did not want to know, Who is and always was the Master of heaven and earth.

His Apostles, while they were alive, as well as the pastors of the Church, perpetually spoke of this: *All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.* (Mt 28:18). Blessed and truly wise is he who, with the eyes of faith, sees this inner process of people joining God and His eternal kingdom, who responds to the call of God, hastens to join His Holy Church and, with Her guidance, with the help of the Grace of God, endeavors with fear and trembling to fulfill Christ's commandments, who sees the ways of evil and in every way turns away from them (cf. Pss 1:1-4).

In this is true wisdom! But being oblivious to and straying from the path of Christ, becoming immersed only in humanistic thoughts and deeds, is ignorance and eternal death for mankind. That true man of wisdom and ascetic of Christ, the Venerable Anthony the Great says: *People are generally called intelligent through a wrong use of this word. The intelligent are not those who have studied the sayings and writings of the wise men of old, but those whose soul is intelligent, who can judge what is good and what is evil; they avoid what is evil and harms the soul and intelligently care for and practice what is good and profits the soul, greatly thanking God. It is these alone who should properly be called intelligent.*



Those who really speak about the end times are those who practice hesychasm, not relaxation. Genuine Orthodox eschatology is hesychasm.

Fr. John Romanides (+2001)

The things of the past are shadow; those of the present icon; the truth is to be found in the things of the future.

St. Maximus the Confessor

ON THE ANTICHRIST

By Saint John Chrysostom, his explanation of the 2nd Thess. epistle of Apostle Paul, Chap. 2 verses 3-12.

Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming. Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

[2 Thes 2:3-12]

† † †



He tells us: *Let no one of you be deceived by any means, that if the apostasy does not appear first to reveal the man of sin, the son of perdition, the one who opposes and exalts himself above all that is God or that is worshipped, so that he as God sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.*

Here he talks about the antichrist and reveals great mysteries. What is this *falling away*, this *apostasy*? The antichrist himself he calls apostasy, because he will lead many to perdition and separate them from the faith, so that, he says, if possible to scandalize even the elect. He also calls him *man of sin*. Because he will perform uncountable sufferings but he will also induce others to do the same. He calls him also son of perdition, for he will be led to perdition.

But who is he really? Is he Satan? Of course not, but a man who will receive all his energies. *And the man will be revealed* he says, *who exalted himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped* meaning the antichrist. For he will not bring some idolatric religion but he will be anti-God and he will remove all Gods and he will command that he

be worshipped as God and he will move in the temple of God, not only the one in Jerusalem, but he will be trying to prove that he is God. For he will perform great deeds and wondrous signs.

Later, wishing to show who he is, whose appearance will happen through the energies of Satan, he says *by all means, signs and monstrous lies*. In other words, he will demonstrate all manner of miraculous capabilities, but nothing will be true but they will all be done to deceive. These things he foretold, that the Christians of his time, not be deceived. "And monstrous lies he says, meaning that with miracles they will be led to lies. *And by every deception of injustice to perdition.*"

Why would God permit—one could ask—such an event to happen? And what type of divine economy is this? What would be the gain from the appearance of that antichrist, since he will come to hurt us? Fear not, my dear, but listen to him who says that he will have authority only on those who will be lost anyway, who even if he did not come (the antichrist) they would not have believed.

You ask therefore what would be the gain? He comes therefore to screen them. So that they may not say, that because Christ was saying that He is God—even if nowhere did He say so openly—but because He was declared to be so by His followers, "that is why we did not believe. Because we heard that God is one by whom everything was created, that is why we did not believe in Christ." The antichrist will therefore exactly refute their excuse. For when he will come and they shall believe in him as he does not represent anything right but everything unlawful, they will then be silenced. For if you do not believe in Christ, so much more you should not have believed in the antichrist. For He said He was sent by the Father, he (the antichrist) however the opposite. That is why Christ said, *I came in the name of the Father and you did not receive Me. If someone else will come in his name, him you will receive.* (Jn 5:43).

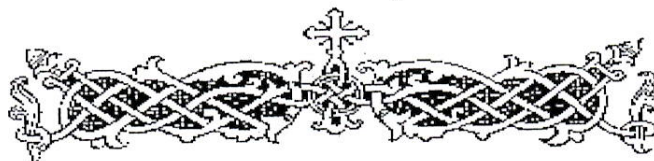
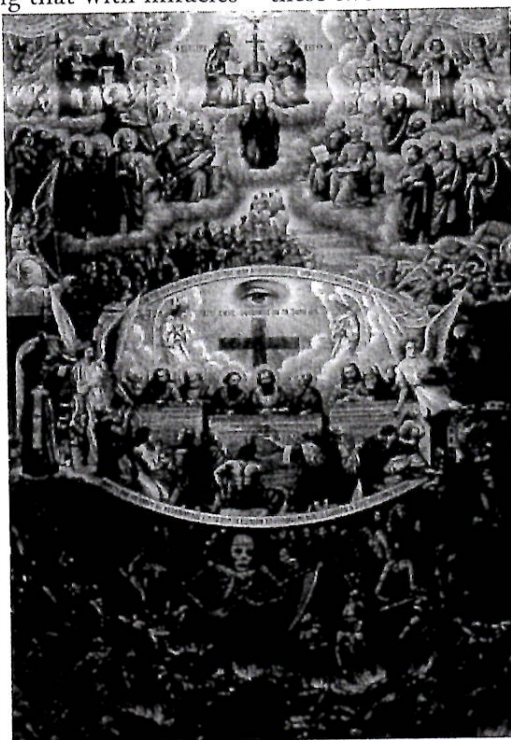
But they will say, we have seen signs. However even by Christ many and great signs were made. So much more you should not have believed in him (the antichrist). Of course much has been foretold, that he will be unlawful, the son of perdition, that his presence will be through the energies of Satan, while about Him the contrary that He is the Saviour, and the bearer of good works...

For they would not receive the love of truth, to save themselves. For this, God will send them deceit to believe in falsehood, to judge all those who did not believe in the truth but prosper in injustice. *That they be judged.* He did not say "that they be cursed" for even without Him they were cursed but *to be judged* namely to be condemned in front of the dread seat of judgment for they will be unrepentant. Who would they be these people? He explained it Himself, adding *those who did not believe in the Truth. For they He says, did not accept the love of Truth.* For **it was both love and truth.** For these two He came to this world and because He is a lover of mankind and to reveal the truth...

The antichrist instead will come to fault the people and to destroy them. And what does he then intend to do? He will agitate everything and he will shake everything and because of them that he will shake and because of them that he will be ordering and because of the fear he will create. He will be fearsome to all, by his authority, by his brutality, by his illegal orders.

Fear not though, his authority will be in force, He tells them, on those that are doomed to be lost. For then will come Elijah to protect the faithful. This was told by Christ: *Elijah will come and restore everything...* Exactly as John was the forerunner of the first appearance of Christ, so would Elijah will be the forerunner of His second glorious appearance

and for this he has not died but is preserved.



There will be a part that holds the true faith as it was passed down by the Holy Apostles and is preserved in the Orthodox Church, but even of these a not inconsiderable part will be Orthodox only by name, but in their hearts they will not have that order that is demanded by faith, but they will love the present age. Although the name of "Christian" will be heard everywhere, and everywhere there will be seen churches and church orders, all this will be only appearance, while within there will be complete apostasy. On this soil the kingdom of the Antichrist will be born—and it will grow in the same spirit of appearance.

St. Theophan the Recluse (+1894)

St. Paisios of Mt. Athos: Love and Humility – *Like loving twin siblings...*

“True love and humility embrace each other like loving twin siblings. Love cannot be separated from humility. Love contains humility and humility contains love. For me, the foundation of spiritual life is love and humility. Where there is love, Christ dwells within. For He is Love. And where there is humility, the Grace of God becomes the *rent-controlled tenant*. God, therefore, reigns everywhere, and earth is transformed into Paradise. However, the devil - the enemy - takes up residence wherever love and humility are absent, so that people live in hell with him from this present life — constantly making worse their place in the other life.

“The easiest means to Salvation are love and humility; they are what we will be judged for. These two virtues move God, so that He condescends to bend low over His creature and lift him to Heaven.

These two insignia - love and humility - enable the holy Angels to: distinguish the children of God; receive them with love; lead them, without fear, through the aerial toll booths; and elevate them to God — the lovingly tender Father.”

St. Paisios responds to the question: ‘Geronda, what is the measure of love?’

“To ‘Love one another, as I have loved you’ [cf. John 13:34; 15:12]. What Christ means with this is that we should always sacrifice ourselves for others, as He sacrificed Himself for us.”

St. Paisios responds to the question: ‘Geronda, can sacrifice contain willfulness?’

“Yes, it can. I remember, when I was still a layman, there was a man in Konitsa, who - right after the Resurrection service - would say out loud for everyone to hear: ‘I will go up to the Monastery of Panaghia to light the vigil oil lamps.’ But by the way he said it, one could see that he had pride, willfulness... So he would go up at night to the Monastery, walking two hours there and two hours back. And that road was rough! The small church in that Monastery was in such a shambles that it was impossible for anyone, let alone him, to find wicks and floats for the vigil oil lamps. So, in the end, he made all that effort for nothing.”

St. Paisios responds to the question: ‘In other words, Geronda, it is possible for one to make a sacrifice out of pride?’

“Of course it’s possible! He can even sacrifice his very life, as St. Paul says, and not have love [cf. I Cor. 13:3]. Does such a sacrifice have any value? Don’t you remember what St. Paul said? ‘If I have not love, I am nothing’ [cf. I Cor. 13:2]. In order for a sacrifice to be directed towards God, it must be free of human elements — self love, pride and so forth. When one sacrifices himself humbly, it means he has love. And then, God is moved. When I speak of love, I am speaking of true love — authentic love, which has a noble bearing. Although one might take solace in thinking that he has love, because he gives everything, he - however - does not have love. Because within his love is his own self. In other words, he has an eye on his own personal interest.”

“For our love to be genuine, we must purify it; we must take our self out of our love. And when everyone takes their own self out of their love, then each one of us is in the other and we become one — ever united by the one love of Christ. Moreover, within Christ, all of our difficulties are resolved, because the love of Christ dissolves all difficulties.”

St. Paisios responds to the question: ‘Geronda, I face everything with a certain narrow-mindedness.

Could it be that I do not have heart?’ “How can you, of all people, say that you do not have heart? Do you have any idea of the heart you have? The problem is that you allow it to be choked by your narrow-mindedness, and then you torment yourself. The broad-hearted person puts up with everything, whereas the narrow-hearted person is easily devastated — whether it is caused by either a simple comment or an unpleasant event. He just cannot bear it.”