



## *Fire & Light*

### **St. Symeon Orthodox Church**

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Visit [stsymeon.com](http://stsymeon.com)

✘ **November 18, 2012** ✘

Martyr Plato of Ancyra (302) &  
Hieromartyr Roman the Deacon of Palestine (303)

### **The Advent Fast**

*Happy Thanksgiving!*



✘ *Many Years! ...Newly Illumined Child Lucia Wells!*

#### **This Week:**

✘ **Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple:**

✘ **Tues. Nov. 20 6:30pm Vespers with Litiya**

✘ **Wed. Nov. 21 10:00am Divine Liturgy**

Fr. Alex's new e-mail

[Fralexfecn@gmail.com](mailto:Fralexfecn@gmail.com)

⇒ **New Inquirer's Class –Tuesday, November 27 – 6:30pm**

**Four Tuesdays before Christmas – Intro. to Doctrine, Worship, Spirituality and Church History**

#### **Our Gratitude to God ~ St. John Chrysostom**

Let us give thanks to God continually. For it is monstrous that, enjoying as we do God's bounty in deed every day, we should not so much as in word acknowledge His favors; and that, too, through the acknowledgment again yield all its profit to us, since He needs not anything of ours, but we stand in need of all things from Him. Thus our thanksgiving adds nothing to Him, but causes us to be nearer to Him.

For if men's bounties, when we call them to memory, do the more warm us with their love-producing charm, much more, when we are continually bringing to mind the noble acts of our Master towards us, shall we be more diligent in obeying His commandments. For this cause Paul also said, "Be ye thankful." For the best preservative of any benefit is the remembrance of the benefit, and a continual thanksgiving.

For this cause also even the dread Mysteries, so full of that great salvation, which are celebrated at every communion, are called a Eucharist, or Thanksgiving, because they are the commemoration of many benefits, and they show forth the very sum of God's care for us, and in all ways they work upon us to be thankful. For if His being born of a Virgin was a great miracle, and the Evangelist said in amazement, "Now all this was done;" His being also slain, what place shall we find for that? Tell me, I mean, if to be born is called *all this*; to be crucified, and to pour forth His blood for us, and to give Himself to us for a spiritual Feast and Banquet, what can that be called?

**Let us, therefore, give Him thanks continually**, and let this precede both our words and our works. But let us be thankful, not for our own blessings alone, but also for those of others; for in this way we shall be able both to destroy our envy, and to strengthen our love, and make it more genuine; since it will not be possible for you to go on envying those in behalf of whom you give thanks to the Lord.

Wherefore, as you know, when the Sacrifice is set forth, the priest also enjoins us to give thanks for the world, for the former things, for the things that are now, for what has been done to us before, for what shall befall us hereafter. For this is what removes us from earth and transports us into Heaven, and makes us angels instead of men. Because they, too, form a choir, and give thanks to God for His good things bestowed on us, saying,

**"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men!"**

-- On St. Matthew Homily 25

# **Our Temple – On the Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos**

In the Epistle for the Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple, the Apostle Paul tells us how people worshiped in the Jewish Temple. He described it as a Temple where in the main area people sat just as we do in the Orthodox Christian Temple. He said at the end of the room was a curtain to screen off the Holy of Holies, just as we have a curtain behind our royal doors. Behind the Temple was a tent where the Altar of Incense and the Ark of the Covenant were. We have our Altar too, and we offer our prayers there as a sweet spiritual sacrifice, as it says in the Divine Liturgy and we burn candles there. If they are beeswax candles as they are supposed to be, the sweetness of the smell of their burning would immediately be a natural sweet incense to our senses.

The Ark of the Covenant “covered on all sides with gold” was there, and we have on our Altar a golden Tabernacle. The Ark contained manna which fell from heaven to feed the people in the wilderness. Our Tabernacle contains the precious Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, our heavenly food for eternal life. And just as above the Altar in the time of Moses there were cherubim with their wings over-shadowing the Altar of Incense, so over our Altars are processional fans with the icons of cherubim and seraphim on them. Also on the side doors to the sanctuary are portrayed the ministers of the Throne of God, the Archangels, or the human ministers of the Altar, the deacons. Sometimes both are portrayed.

But just as there are some differences between the physical Temple of the Old Testament and the Church building of today, there is also a difference in what we do in the Altar. In the Old Testament, the Altar was entered only once a year by the High Priest. The New Testament priest in the image of Christ, may enter the Altar daily to pray for forgiveness of his own sins and of all the people. As the Psalmist King David said, the sacrifice acceptable to God is not a burn offering, but “a broken and contrite heart.” We life up our hearts to Gad and offer the bloodless, 'reasonable' sacrifice, the sacrifice of peace, the offering of praise, the sacrifice made by Jesus of His Body and Blood.

But why speak of Temples and offerings on the day of the Entrance of the Virgin into the Temple?

In the earliest times, the Jews thought that the first-born child was to be God's child, and they actually offered first-born children to be offered as the sacrifice of all first fruits. We remember the story of Isaac about to be sacrificed, but God stopped Abraham's hand and provided a ram instead. Remember Samuel who heard the voice calling his name called while he was asleep in the Temple? The first born boys would live in the Temple to learn all they could of the Jewish Faith from the priests, scribes, lawyers and other teachers. At the time of their becoming adults, they would go home and live with their families. Girls also were offered for a role in the Temple, often being prepared to be wives of the priests. Thus, the Virgin Mary was presented to the Temple by her parents, the Righteous Joachim and his holy wife Anna. In later times, children were usually redeemed or 'bought back' with an offering of money.

Because God wanted her to be protected, He gave the Virgin Mary to live in the Temple where she learned to live for God. And later she was betrothed to Joseph, an old man in his eighties, so that there would be no chance of her virginity being broken. And when the time came for her to bear a son, the Archangel Gabriel appeared to her in the Temple, as we see on the Royal doors (and if you notice you see that she is usually portrayed inside a building, inside the Temple).

The angels were amazed at the Virgin Mary being led into the Temple, as she is the living temple, the Mother who would bear God, where God would live humanly. As we remember this Feast, let's think about how the Virgin came to live in the Temple, sitting in the house of God, at God's feet, serving there like St. Mary of Bethany, hearing the Word of God and keeping it.

## Are We Seeking Christ? St. John of Kronstadt

The holy Apostle of Christ, Andrew the First-called, was originally a disciple of St. John the Baptist who prepared the people to receive the Messiah. When the Savior came out of the wilderness, the Forerunner told the people: *Behold, the Lamb of God* (Jn 1:36).

Immediately Andrew followed after Him. Turning around and seeing him together with John's other disciples, the Lord asked them: What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou? He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day (Jn 1:38-39). Soon after this the Lord called Andrew and his brother Peter to follow after Him and told them that they were to become fishers of men unto the salvation of many. From that time forth, they remained with Christ; they were faithful to Him to the end and gave their very lives out of love for Him.

**Dear brothers and sisters, on this day I would ask you the same question: What are you seeking? Why did you come to church today? What are we all seeking in our lives? Are we seeking Christ, as He was first sought by the humble fishermen, among whom was the Apostle Andrew?**

What is it that people seek in life? Health, riches, success, acquaintances, friends, prestige, various worldly pleasures, vain knowledge... Only a few Christ the Savior. Some may even think it strange to seek Christ. They say, we call ourselves Christians after Christ, we see His holy Image both in our homes and at church; we pronounce His sweetest name and hear it in God's temple. It appears we have no need to seek for Christ. People seek that which they don't have, that which they need. But we seem to have Christ.

It's true, we have icons of Christ, but we do not have Christ Himself; we have His name, but only on our lips - not in our hearts; we know Him, but only in word - not in deed. Here, beloved, is a big difference; it is the same difference as between a shadow and the object which casts the shadow. It is, however, precisely with the heart that Christ is

truly known, that is, in our inner man—in our soul; because Christ, as God, is Spirit, Who is everywhere and filleth all things.

*The Kingdom of God is within you* (Lk. 17:21), says the Lord. The holy Apostle Paul earnestly desired that through faith, Christ would dwell in the hearts of Christians. He wrote: May God grant you according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith. (Eph. 3:6-17).

We have to admit that most of us do not have Christ in our hearts. Instead, our hearts are occupied with that which is opposed to Christ, our God and Savior, that which is opposed to our own good, which hinders the salvation of our souls. And because of this we do not lead a genuine Christian life.

What is it that occupies our hearts? Is it God alone, Who searchest the hearts and reins (Ps. 7:9), sees what is in our hearts, its attachments? If the Lord granted us to see the full depths of our hearts, we would turn our eyes away in horror from such an overwhelming accumulation of filth. Let each of us look into his heart and say before the witness of our conscience what it is that occupies our hearts most of all. Passions, sins voluntary and involuntary - are these not our heart's constant inhabitants?

But where does Christ dwell? In pure hearts, hearts that are humble and contrite, there where He is not grieved by doubt or unbelief, by indifference towards Him Who is God and Savior; there, where men do not prefer the temporal sweetness of sin; where the idols of the passions have been chased out; where crude materiality is not preferred to the Kingdom of God; where Christians often turn their thoughts to the heavenly, as those created for heaven, for eternity; there, where they seek God's truth, where every day and every hour they are attentive to His commandments. That is where Christ dwells. And what does He do there? If only we knew (some, of course, do know) what He does in souls worthy of His abiding presence —

what rest, comfort and joy He imparts, what paradisaal bliss He gives them to experience while still on this earth ...

Having once embraced Christ, the holy Apostle Andrew became entirely committed to Him, and no matter what difficulties, sorrows, misfortunes and persecutions-unavoidable in preaching the Gospel-came his way, he remained faithful to Christ, enduring everything out of love for Him, even crucifixion.

It is of utmost importance that we seek after Christ-and find Him. Without Christ, who will save us from our sins which ensnare us every day and hour, and from the eternal torments? Only the Son of God has power on earth to forgive sins; He alone has the keys to hell and death, the keys to the kingdom of heaven and life.

To find Christ is not difficult. He is everywhere, filling the world with Himself. God says to us through His Prophet Jeremiah: *I am a God nigh at hand. .. and not a God afar off.* (Jer. 23:23). As soon as He sees our hearts incline to receive His grace, He immediately enters, bringing with Him peace and comfort. I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me (Rev 3:20), says the Lord. Oh, how often He converses with His faithful servants, as with true friends. Christ Himself is seeking you: if you but incline your heart toward Him, you will surely find Him.

But how are we to know if we have found Christ and are close to Him? Those close to Christ often turn to Him in prayer with faith and love; they often pronounce from their heart His sweetest name, often call upon Him for help; they often read or listen to His word with childlike simplicity and love; they seek frequent union with Him in His life-giving Mysteries; they are satisfied with whatever they have and accepting of what happens to them; they strive according to their strength to fulfill Christ's commandments. It happens that they also experience trials which are allowed by the loving Master-in order that their hearts be cleansed of every sinful impurity. Those

who desire to be with Christ must not run away from trials, but even in times of joy, they must not forsake the carrying of their cross.

My dear brothers and sisters! Seek Jesus' Christ with faith and love. Do not forget that He gave His life on the Cross for our sakes, to deliver us from sin and eternal torment, and to dwell in our hearts, that we might have great joy. Do not forget, we have all been bought with the price of His blood, and we should belong to Him, as to our Redeemer.

Our days are numbered. Every stroke of the clock reminds us to seek Him Who created time and Himself stands above the measure of time. He alone is able to pluck us out from the ravaging torrent of time. Every stroke of the clock tells us: Be watchful! You now have one hour less until you must cross the threshold into life after death which knows neither days nor hours. Do not be seduced by the momentary sweetness of sin which vanishes like a dream, leaving the soul empty, ailing, anguishing; it steals away precious time and ruins it forever. Do not waste time in useless occupations or idleness.

Every one of you has a God-given talent to put to use. Busy yourselves in acquiring incorruptible wealth in the kingdom of heaven. Take the example of the thousands who have gone before you, having attained eternal rest and joy through their ceaseless labors in this temporal life, through sweat and tears. Make haste to uproot from yourselves sin in all its various manifestations, through the help of Christ the Savior. Remember, man sows what he reaps (Ga 6:7), according to the immutable law of God's righteousness.

While there is still time, therefore, let us hasten to find Christ and in faith create for Him an abode in our hearts that we not fall prey to the fire of gehenna, as it is written:

If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. On 15:6). Amen.

## Womanhood ~ Fr. Demetrios Carellas

**"Who shall find a virtuous woman? For such a one is more valuable than precious stones" [Proverbs 31:10]**

The most effective way for those in power to enslave the citizens of any Nation under their absolute authority is to strive to undermine - even, if possible, replace - the God-given characteristics of women. After God, what is the keystone in the building of any productive society? The Family Unit. And, after God, who is the cohesive presence that is essential for a family to have order and growth? The Mother.

My beloved sojourners in this temporal sea of life, St. Peter reminds of some of the innate characteristics of all women. He teaches all women, with timeless instructions, *not* allow their "adorning" to become centered upon *"the outward one of braiding of hair, and the placing around of gold, or putting on of apparel, but the **hidden person of the heart, in the incorruptible adorning of a meek and quite spirit, which is of great value before God**" [1 Peter 3:3-4]. That is why women were first to see our risen Lord Jesus. They did not get sidetracked by fallen human reason and remain behind locked doors, as the Apostles did, *"for fear of the Jews."* Within the *"hidden person"* of their hearts, they desired to anoint the Body of their Savior --- in spite of the fact that a squadron of armed soldiers guarded the tomb, in spite of the fact that there was a huge, sealed stone covering the tomb's opening. And the Lord Jesus anointed them with His risen presence, and the words: *"Rejoice ...do not fear!"**

Unfortunately, that heart-centered approach to life seems to be lacking in many of the women in our Nation today --- including the teenage girls. They have been influenced by one of the most prominent, inherent components of this ego-worshipping, entitlement -obsessed, politically-correct, secular-humanistic society: the Feminist Movement --- whose leadership look upon motherhood as an obstruction to having a successful career, and whose ungodly "sacrament" is abortion-on-demand.

It is my firm belief that at least 90% of the women, who either partially - or completely - accept that feminist philosophy, can return to being the women that God created them to be --- someone who *"puts on strength and honor"* [Proverbs 31:25], and is *"a wise woman who is blessed"* [Proverbs 31:30]. That is because every woman - young and old, educated and uneducated, career oriented and family oriented, physically beautiful or externally less attractive - has two *innate and God given characteristics: **the strong desire to nurture and protect her young.***

Permit me to provide you with two examples: (1) Two years ago, a beautiful 30-year old young mother - married, with one toddler - Jessica Council of South Carolina, chose to deny treatment for her cancer, so that the baby within her would have a chance to live; and a tiny girl was born at 23 weeks --- and survived! This personification of true motherhood died minutes after the baby was delivered by C-section. Think of the deep mother's love that is in the very blood of little Jessie! And this is what her husband, Clint, had to say about his wife's decision:

*"God is to be praised, my friends. Do not doubt God; do not be angry with Him for me. I am privileged to have had a wife who was so full of the love of the Father. Rejoice with me, brothers and sisters. God has blessed Jessica in taking her to a place of perfect peace and no pain. I must be thankful for the time I had with her, rather than ungrateful for all the things we never got to do together. We must give thanks in all things, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus."*

(2) The second example was provided for me by my little 3-year old granddaughter, Eleousa. "Ellie" is in speech therapy at the present time. During one of the sessions, the counselor brought in several dolls, and also several smaller dolls, and put them in front of her. Ellie proceeded to put a small doll in the arms of each larger one, and then said: "*A baby needs to be with her mommy!*"

When my daughter, Juliana, related this story to me, I instantly wept. My tears were two-fold in nature: On the one hand, they were tears of joy --- as I marveled that the heavenly desire to nurture and protect their young is present even in a toddler! They were also tears of great sadness, however, as I realized that - somewhere in our Nation, *every 20 seconds* - a woman is choosing to deny what is inherent to her nature, by killing what she has been created by God to nurture and protect!

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## Slavery, Revisited

Walter Williams, concerning a 1972 job interview at the University of Massachusetts:

"During a reception, one of the Marxist professors asked me what I thought about the relationship between capitalism and slavery. My response was that slavery has existed everywhere in the world, under every political and economic system, and was by no means unique to capitalism or the United States. Perturbed by my response, he asked me what my feelings were about the enslavement of my ancestors. I answered that slavery is a despicable violation of human rights but that the enslavement of my ancestors is history, and one of the immutable facts of history is that nothing can be done to change it."

"Slavery is widely misunderstood, and as such has been a tool for hustlers and demagogues. Slavery has been part of the human condition throughout recorded history and everywhere on the globe. Romans enslaved other Europeans; Greeks enslaved other Greeks; Asians enslaved Asians; Africans enslaved Africans; and in the New World, Aztecs enslaved Aztecs and other native groups. **Even the word slave is derived from the fact that *Slavic* people were among the early European slaves.**"

"Though racism has been used to justify slavery, the origins of slavery had little to do with racism. In recent history, the major slave traders and slave owners have been Arabs, who enslaved Europeans, black Africans and Asians.

A unique aspect of slavery in the Western world was the Christian moral outrage against it, which began to emerge in the 18th century and led to massive efforts to eliminate it. It was Britain's military might and the sight of the Union Jack on the high seas that ultimately put an end to the slave trade (Ed: See the excellent movie on the subject, *Amazing Grace*).

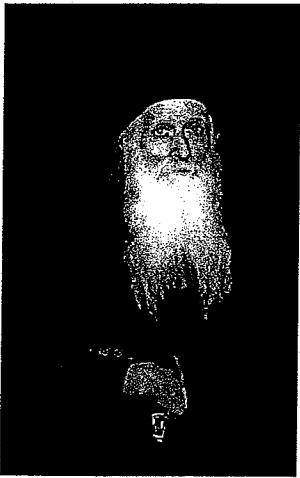
Unfortunately, the facts about slavery are not the lessons taught in our schools and colleges. The gross misrepresentation and suggestion in textbooks and lectures is that slavery was a uniquely American practice done by racist white people to black people. Despite abundant historical evidence, youngsters are taught nothing about how the Founding Fathers quarreled, debated and agonized over the slave issue.

There are certain topics or arguments that one should not bring up in the presence of children or those with little understanding...

*Walter E. Williams is the John M. Olin distinguished professor of economics at George Mason University, and a nationally syndicated columnist.*

## THE "ALCOHOLIC" MONK

Source: From the web pages of «Άγιορείτικο Βήμα» translated by the staff of the Greek Orthodox Brotherhood of St. Poimen.



Once on Mount Athos there was a monk who resided in Karyes. He would drink each and every day and it would not take more than two to three glasses of wine before he was intoxicated. His behavior was the source of scandal to other monastics and his actions would often shock the pilgrims.

One day he passed away. His death brought "relief" among the distraught residents of the area. Following his death, a few

pilgrims visiting Elder Paisios mentioned how glad they are that this "huge problem" is finally resolved.

The holy elder replied that he was already aware of the falling asleep of this monk; he had seen an entire battalion of angels arrive to collect his soul.

The pilgrims were shocked by the elder's response and argued with him; some of them, trying to explain to the holy elder that he may not be aware of whom they were speaking, thinking that he misunderstood them.

Elder Paisios recounted:

—This monk was born in Asia Minor. Shortly before the destruction of the Greek cities of that area, and the subsequent slaughter of the Greek families, the Turks commenced their old practice of kidnapping or forcefully gathering all boys away from their families. In order to save their son, the monk's parents would bring him along to the fields during harvest season. It was necessary, however, that they stop the young baby from crying and thus exposing his presence; they accomplished this by pouring a very small quantity of raki (an unsweetened, anise-flavored hard alcoholic drink) into his milk. The baby would then fall asleep and be saved from abduction by the Turks.

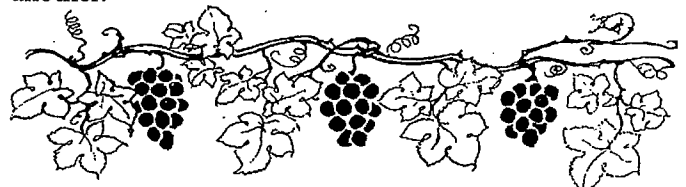
—The prolonged use of this small quantity turned the young lad into an alcoholic. Later on, when his family moved to Greece and he was a young man, doctors advised him against having a family—his alcoholism would be too disruptive for any type of a quality family life. With such advice, along with the young man's love for God and Panaghia, he collected himself and came to the Holy Mountain to become a monk.

—There he found a wonderful elder and right away he confessed that he was an alcoholic. His elder instructed him into a thorough prayer rule that included many prostrations and prayers each night, along with a regular ap-

peal to the Holy Virgin to assist him in his struggle by helping him reduce his alcohol consumption by just one glass per day.

—After a full year, he had been able to reduce his drinking from 20 glasses per day to 19. His struggle, however, was great and he remained faithful to his elder's instructions. Thus, through the intercessions of the Theotokos, in his later years he was consuming 3-4 glasses per day. This quantity however, due to his alcoholism, was sufficient to get him intoxicated. Those around him were unaware of his struggle and his prayers and spiritual warfare. Pilgrims and monks alike in Karyes simply observed a drunken monk that would scandalize many. God however, was observing a warrior that was a feisty fighter and a person who was slow making progress towards conquering this unfortunate passion.

—So I ask you: In the absence of any knowledge of why each one of us does what we do and what efforts a man applies to conquer a passion, is it proper for anyone to judge another?



Take refuge often in our Panaghia. I love our Panaghia very much. You love her also. She is the Mediatrix for our salvation. Every object shines under the light of the sun, according to its form. But the mirror reflects the entire sun. Our Panaghia is a mirror: she reflects all the glory of Christ. She has become the Mother of all Christians. For this reason, all men—because we fear to face Christ on account of our many iniquities—take refuge in our Panaghia, that she might intercede for our sins, even as we run to our mother with much boldness.

Everything depends on our will. My hand is not able to steal if I do not wish to. What you do apart from your own will and volition has no value. A small child takes Communion, and afterwards you tell him to spit, he will do it. [The child] doesn't know, and, consequently, has no responsibility; but he also has no virtue. [He] has to know and not do it, in order to have virtue.

I often marvel at the works of man; the radio, for example. You turn it on, and you hear a voice from America—from the other side of the world. And I think that so it is in the spiritual realm also: we pray to God and He hears us in heaven. This is a great thing, so long as we do not become proud in what we do. We see a beautiful garment. Who gets the praise, the needle or the seamstress? The seamstress, of course. We too are a needle in the hands of God. All things are made by God through us. For this reason, we should not be proud.

Elder Ieronymos of Aigina (+1966)

## Excluding God Linda Bowles, April 27, 1999

In the words of President John Adams, who delivered one of the most powerful and insightful statements ever made about America: **“We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”**

Adams makes the point that the only effective form of control in a nation of free people is self-control. Constitutional laws are incapable of channeling and controlling human behavior.

The only force capable of defeating this evil, aborting it at the very moment of conception, is a deeply ingrained moral sense of right and wrong.

But the culture within which we are all immersed does not refine our moral senses. It breeds immorality and nourishes the worst that is within us. Its pervasive voices and faces have become increasingly brutish, vulgar, vile and violent. Our music, books, movies, sitcoms, soap operas and video games pound out messages of mayhem and depravity, the audience ever younger.

This decadent culture, enabled by a malicious corruption of the law, the courts, and the Constitution itself, has invaded and overwhelmed the church, the family and the school — the conscience-forming institutions of our society.

While using the First Amendment to protect public obscenity, pornography and flag-burning, the Supreme Court has upheld laws that are openly hostile to religious speech and expression, particularly in government schools, where prayer is prohibited, and God, by mandate, is treated as a pariah.

What chance do parents have of prevailing with a view of right and wrong when the entire culture works against them? What chance do parents

have when the government itself has systematically seized control of children by asserting the right to feed them, baby-sit them, give them condoms, arrange abortions for them, and decide where they go to school and what they are taught — including attitudes and values that undermine parental rights and religious convictions?

Government schools are a microcosm of our society. We have erected a wall of separation of God from His children and cleared the way for an unimpeded assault on the traditional standards of decency that stand between degenerates and what they want to do and be.

The basic idea was to liberate the human spirit from the restraints imposed upon freedom and choice by archaic rules, arbitrary standards of conduct and the mean-spirited dictates of religion and its narrow-minded God.

But it hasn't worked. We did not unleash our better angels; we unleashed the beasts within us. Unbridled excesses have filled our lives, not with joy, but with crime, disease and carnage. Eventually, this may require heavy-handed government repression to restore order and quell anarchy. It will be our undoing.

Will and Ariel Durant, in their classic book, “The Lessons of History,” asked themselves this question: “Does history warrant the conclusion that religion is necessary to morality — that a natural ethic is too weak to withstand the savagery that lurks under civilization and emerges in our dreams, crimes and wars?”

This was their answer: “There is no significant example in history, before our time, of a society successfully maintaining moral life without the aid of religion.”

We have declared God *persona non grata* at our peril.