



## *Fire & Light*

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

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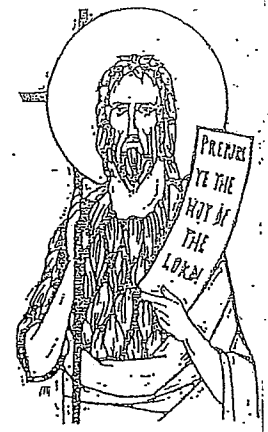
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✠ **January 18, 2015** ✠

### **Sanctity of Life Sunday**

**St. Athanasius the Great (373)**

**St. Cyril of Alexandria (444)**



✠ **Wed. January 21, 6:30pm ~ Inquirer's Class**

➤ **It is a United Appeal Collection Sunday / Ice Skating next Sunday, 4:00pm-6:00pm.**

✠ **Baptism – Sat. January 31, 3:00pm Baby Victoria Wells**

✠ **Baptism – Sat. February 7, 3:00pm Baby Mikhail Landar and Mikhail Ghilan**

✠ **Moving to the New Temple – Weekend of Jan. 31 – Feb. 1 ! Helpers will be needed Jan. 29.**

**Note: Next Sunday will be our last Divine Liturgy in the Old Church....**

#### **From St. Cyril of Alexandria:**

For He (Christ) alone is both the Only-begotten and the First-born; Only-begotten as God; First-born insofar as He became through the salvific union a man among us and among many brothers. By this we also in Him and through Him according to nature and grace have been made sons of God. According to nature insofar as we are one in Him (through the same human nature); by participation and according to grace through Himself in the Spirit.

Thus, through Himself He may transmit to the entire human race the glory of sonship by adoption .... So He has appeared as man before the Father on our behalf that He might restore us to the Father's presence who had been cut off from it by the ancient transgression. He has sat there as Son in order that we, who are like sons, might be designated sons of God through Him. The fact that Christ who sits there is in all things like us, in that He appeared as man ... somehow confers on us the grace of this dignity.

#### **And St. Athanasius the Great:**

"... The incorporeal and incorruptible and immaterial Word of God entered our world. In one sense, indeed, He was not far From it before, for no part of creation had ever been without Him Who, while ever abiding in union with the Father, yet fills all things that are. But now He entered the world in a new way, stooping to our level in His love and Self-revealing to us.

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### **Sanctity of Life Sunday, January 18, 2015**

My beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus,

On December 29th, our Holy Orthodox Church commemorated the 14,000 Holy Innocents, and many of their mothers, who were slaughtered by Herod's soldiers in one day. In the United States, because of a disgusting, satanic "law", we "legally" slaughter an average of over 3,300 pre-born - and occasionally born - babies every year; but we have been doing this ungodly infanticide for the past 42 years, 11 months and 29 days. Therefore we have "legally" killed over 57 MILLION more babies than Herod.

{over}

What has happened to our Nation, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ? How can we continue to ignore the silent screams of God's innocent ones, who are being brutally murdered at an average of one baby every 15 seconds? How can we waste time talking about "global warming" (recently renamed, "climate change"), when so many of our citizens - especially doctors, lawyers, judges, politicians, and not a few "clergy" - are preparing to spend eternity in the lake of fire, prepared for the devil and his demons? Why are we failing to realize that with the murder of every pre-born child, in addition to the demonic 'hit man' (the abortionist) and his/her assistants, there are a number of other souls that are committing spiritual suicide: the baby's parents, the family members and friends who urged the mother to have the abortion, the psychiatrist, psychologist, counselor and/or clergy who supported the decision to have the child offered as a living sacrifice upon the demonic altar of privacy, profit and choice. Do you not see how many souls "die" with every single abortion?

Our Most Sweet Lord Jesus is All-Merciful; and whenever a woman comes to Him with tears of repentance for having allowed herself to abort her child, whenever a doctor repents of his evil actions, whenever a politician comes to himself and changes from being pro-choice to pro-life, such people can receive forgiveness and healing. For our God's love for each one of us is limitless, unconditional and never-ending. Orthodox Christians are blessed with the Sacrament of Holy Confession, during which God, through His priests, grants His forgiveness of this terrible sin to those who come in repentance.

However, as St. Paul reminds us in his Epistle to the Galatians: "***Cease being led astray, God is not mocked; what a man soweth, that also shall he reap.***" [Eph. 6:7] And those who perform and/or support abortion are mocking God; and a Nation that legalizes this horrific infanticide is mocking God! As a Nation we have "sowed" the blood of 57 million innocent babies. What will we "reap" as a Nation? What will those unrepentant abortionists and supporters of abortion be reaping on that terrible Day?

As a priest of the Holy Orthodox Church, the Bride of Christ, I am compelled to make the following statements to all Orthodox Christians: If you are: an abortionist, one who assists in abortions, counsels women to have abortions; a woman who has had an abortion(s); a father who has either demanded his wife/girl friend to abort their child, or supported her decision to do so; a family member, or friends, who either approved of - or were indifferent to - a family member's/friend's decision to have an abortion; a politician who votes in favor of abortion; a lawyer or judge who has defended the ungodly "right to choose" abortion, then you need to beg God for tears of repentance, change your evil ways and seek God's forgiveness through the Sacrament of Holy Confession. And you should not receive Holy Communion until you repent and undergo a soul-healing penance after your confession. If you simply believe that abortion is a woman's "right", and/or consistently vote for people who support abortion, then I strongly urge you not to receive Holy Communion until you can repent of this immoral philosophy, and seek God's forgiveness through Holy Confession.

I know that you hear all kinds of pleasantly phrased statements in which the child in the womb is regarded as a woman's property, or is dehumanized — treated as a non entity. They are all lies! They are all born from the "father of lies": the evil one. Here is the one FACT that all Christians need to believe and proclaim: **Every abortion kills a human being who is created in the image of God!** I was told several years ago that the great and powerful Roman Empire fell 50 years after legalizing abortion. In just 7 more years, the USA will reach the 50 year mark. Will history repeat itself? Will we daily bend the knee of our hearts before Jesus, and beg Him to intervene and deliver us from this demonic slaughter of His babies? Or will we continue to ignore the millions of silent screams that our Lord DOES hear. And how many more of those screams will it take before He replaces His mercy with His righteous judgment? "*He who has ears to hear, let him hear!*"

Archimandrite Demetrios Carellas, Nativity of the Theotokos Monastery, Saxonburg, PA

# Raising Children in Honesty

~ Hieromartyr St. Vladimir Metropolitan of Kiev

{First Bishop-Martyr by the communists, +1918}

“A lie is a foul blot in a man, and yet it will be continually in the mouth of men without discipline” (Ecclesiastics 20:24). “The manners of lying men are without honor: and their confusion is with them without ceasing” (Eccles. 20:26).

Among the virtues which must be planted in the hearts of children with special persistence, honesty has an important and fundamental place. By “honesty” we mean a feeling of love for the truth and repulsion from falsehood.

After obedience, this virtue should be given second place. **If falsehood is the root of all vices, then truth is the beginning and foundation of all virtues.** For this reason the majority of parents' attention should be directed toward planting and cultivating honesty in their children. How should parents nurture this virtue in the souls of their children?

A feeling for truth and the desire to attain it is innate to every person, and therefore to every child. True, because of sin it is weakened; but nevertheless it is not completely extinguished. This striving toward truth manifests itself in the child's inquisitiveness. The child asks about everything, and all that adults say to him, he accepts as total truth until he has been deceived. The innocent, uncorrupted child does not know about falsehood or hypocrisy; on the contrary, he blushes not only when he has told a lie out of negligence, but even when he hears a lie from the lips of another. The feeling of truth is planted in the hearts of children by God Himself. To man is left only the necessity to adhere to this natural voice - to nurture it and strengthen it. This is mostly the duty of the parents. How can they do this? They must first from the cradle plant a deep, pious love for the truth, and secondly, nurture in the child a deep hatred for and an aversion to all falsehood.

a) The first task compels parents to teach their children to love truth on a religious basis, that is, as a result of their loving God and submitting to Him. Children must love the truth, because God (Who is the unchanging Truth) wants us to speak the truth and because He hates all falsehood. Only that love for truth which is based on faith in God and profound respect for Him will withstand all tests.

b) The second task requires that parents interact with their children with frankness, showing that they have full trust in them. Believe every word of theirs until you notice a lie. Don't demand proofs, oaths, or swearing of what they say; be satisfied with the Gospel saying, “let yes be yes and no be no.” If, however, you have a firm reason to doubt their words then on this first occasion, don't let them see that you don't believe them. Try to be absolutely sure that they have lied. When you are certain that they have not told the truth, then call them, whether you are the father or the mother, and seriously and sternly, but with love, look them in the eyes and say: “God forbade lies. He is everywhere and knows not only all our deeds, but all the secrets or our thoughts as well. Deceiving lips are repulsive to God.” The blushing that will show on the faces of the children will compel them to admit to the lie and will serve as a lesson for the future.

c) Parents must also take care to show their children love and piety for truth by their own example. Be honest and without hypocrisy in all your actions and words. Above all, show yourselves to be friends of the divine truths of religion and faith. Avoid indifference in faith, and especially be careful not to show by example that your private life has nothing to do with faith. Unfortunately, in contemporary conversations, one hears frequently the spirit of lies in the very “holy of holies”! If you allow yourself to express these thoughts in front of your children, you not only banish the love and piety of religion from their hearts, but you also kill all feelings of truth in them. If it really does not matter to God whether we have a correct or a false understanding of His essence, or whether we confess the true faith or a false faith, then why should we be concerned about truth in everyday life? And if he who willingly dabbles in false religions and rejects the revelation of a perfect God is just as pleasing to God as one who confesses the true faith, then why should truth have such great value? If, finally, those who say that there is no divinely revealed religion are correct, and if the true God found it not worth His trouble to reveal to us the truth in our dealings with the most important questions of life, then how can one demand of a person (even more so from a child) that he speak the truth in minor situations? This is why, Christian parents, that for your children to love the truth, you must inspire them before all else to love and

respect Divine Truth. Lock up your hearts and the hearts of your children from indifference to religious subjects. If your children notice that you light-mindedly approach religious truths and that you do not believe the Word of God, what hope do you have that they will not have the same approach to truth? Show, therefore, love of religious truths yourselves. Nurture it in the hearts of your children.

In all other aspects of your life, be truthful and fair, flee all falsehood, cunningness, hypocrisy in your dealings with others, If your children see that you allow trickery in your dealing with others, that you resort to slyness, to setting snares, that you are hypocritical and treacherous; if they notice that you are pretending in front of friends, but that in your soul you abhor them and laugh behind their backs, then soon your children will become no better than you. If, on the contrary, in all aspects of your life you reveal that you turn away from falsehood and hypocrisy, from lies and treachery, then your children will carry truth in their hearts, and not have lies or treachery on their lips.

Raising children to love and to honor truth is not easy because we must persistently fight against lies and falsehood. To assist us in this endeavor, these four rules may be of help:

1) Teach your children to hate lies from a religious perspective by turning their attention towards God. Your children must run from lies not out of fear of punishment if caught, but as a result of their realizing that God forbade lying and that every lie is a sin before God. Show your children how repulsive lying is to God by referring to the words of the Holy Scripture: **“A lie is a foul blot in a man...” (Eccl. 20:24); or “lying lips are an abomination to the Lord...” (Prov. 12:22).** Help them to realize that lies have been the work of the devil from the first time he deceived Adam and Eve in Paradise, wherefore the Savior Himself says: “for he is a liar, and the father thereof” (John 8:44). **Therefore, teach your children that when they lie, they imitate Satan and become like him.**

2) Don't allow in your children even the smallest falsehood. If a child makes a mistake and immediately and honestly admits it, then forgive him, “no questions asked”. If the mistake is serious, then lessen the punishment, but tell him that the punishment is lessened because he immediately admitted to his mistake. However, you should not be too lenient, so if the child has a tendency to lie, then he does not take advantage of your leniency. If, on the other hand, the child has done something malicious and denies this, then you should double the punishment, saying that it is not only for the transgression, but for the lies as well. If the child out of revenge or hatred says something abusive about someone else, slandering him, then for this he should not only be given the usual punishment for the offense, but he must also admit to the offence in front of all who heard it. The moral Christian law demands this.

3) It is imperative that parents neither lie, nor deceive anyone else. Don't allow your children to be deceived by those older than them whether they be brothers, sisters, maids, or friends, etc. How often it happens that to stop a child crying or to calm him, the parents trick him or scare him or make promises that they never keep! This causes great harm! The child soon understands that he is being tricked, and his faith in the words of his parents and his feeling for the truth suffers and wanes.

4) Don't create a situation in which your children are compelled deliberately or unintentionally to lie. This is done inadvertently when the father or mother for some reason austere and angrily, sometimes even with a belt in hand, comes up to the child saying: “Tell me who did this!” or: “I'll hit you, if you did this!” etc. Is it surprising that the frightened child will lie? And what of those parents who laugh at the lies of their children or compliment them because they so wittingly and cunningly lie? Worse still, what can we say about those parents who teach their children to lie to administrators or teachers in order to get out of trouble and to escape penalties. These parents, if they even deserve the name of parents, are the tempters of their own children. What surprise is it if these children, as a result of their upbringing, slander, deceive, and rob?

Experience shows that those who think lightly of lying won't think twice about cheating and stealing. Here, my Christian readers, are rules which can be helpful in raising children in the feeling of love and piety toward truth as well as instilling a deep repulsion and hatred toward falsehood! **Teach your children to love the truth primarily by example of your love of truth in all your actions and words.** Teach them how repulsive and vile lying is in the eyes of God. Don't stand for even a grain of falsehood from the mouths of your children; but don't deceive them yourselves, and don't allow others to deceive them. Take heed, finally, not to, intentionally or unintentionally, direct them toward falsehood.

## **Godly parents know how to train their children to find pleasure in the good and pain in what is wrong**

**Mother Raphaela of Holy Myrrhbearers  
Skete, Otego, NY**

***“...We have bought the current slogan that we “deserve” to feel good...”***

Sin is the word the Church uses to describe the morass of combined wrong-doing, mistakes, the resulting guilt, shame and then resentment, the stupidity that traps the fallen world and those who choose to live in it, cutting off love and relationships with both God and mankind. “Slavery to sin” is the Biblical phrase indicating how strong this servitude is for those caught in it.

Yet those caught in it form two very different groups: the addicted whose lives are destroyed on every level even in this world by wallowing in guilt, shame and resentment and on the other hand, those who toss off all responsibility for wrong doing and therefore also all feelings of guilt, shame and resentment. By preying on the guilt and weaknesses of others, these people often live very successfully in this world, while destroying their souls for eternal life and wreaking havoc on everyone and everything that surrounds them in this life.

God has made us creatures with an inborn desire for pleasure and likewise, the desire to avoid pain. Godly parents know how to train their children to find pleasure in the good and pain in what is wrong, mistaken and sinful. Sadly, however, many parents today have decided for whatever reason that it is wrong to train their children at all — Godly parents know how beyond such basics as getting past wearing diapers. As a result, many of us are growing up without an inner compass. Individually and as a society we have bought the current slogan that we “deserve” to feel good, on a very deep level, because it is human to need a moral compass and many today have no other. This sense that we “deserve” to feel good is a trap, however since there are no guarantees that we will always

feel good. When we don't, we feel cheated and this contributes to our downward spiral of guilt, shame and resentment. We may have to hit a very deep bottom before we can get past these feelings and learn to feel true remorse and compunction for our sins and mistakes and thus learn to avoid them.

Over one in one hundred Americans are in prison these days, in large part because without parental guidance, they taught themselves to find pleasure in what is wrong, mistaken and sinful and likewise taught themselves to avoid the pain of accepting the consequences of their own actions and behavior. We often call prisons “Correctional Facilities,” and at best that's what they are: places where society tries to teach adults what they didn't learn as children from their parents or peers.

How much better it is to learn to correct and train children preventatively. Yet this is an art and certainly there has never been a time when society as a whole trained all of its children rightly. There are parents even today who do know how to use unconditional love and compassion to teach their children to take responsibility for their words and actions and to accept punishment and the sometimes painful consequences in order to avoid the greater pain of the sin and wrong-doing that disrupt their relationships with God and neighbor.

Let me use a common example: Although a little girl may feel good when she picks up the pretty scarf left lying on the shelf in the department store changing room by the woman ahead of her mother, our society still calls that stealing. She might pick the scarf up without understanding it isn't hers, seeing that like the apple in Paradise, it is beautiful to look at, and put it in the little bag she is carrying. And the first time that happens, it is an innocent mistake. If she knows she is loved unconditionally, she can be taught — can learn — to handle the pain of recognizing her wrong; owning up to such a mistake before the woman who owns the scarf. In such a way she can be made to understand that she can't have it; that it is wrong to covet and steal no matter how

much she screams and throws things, trying to make her mother let her have it or buy her another one. And if she doesn't learn this lesson, she may well end up in prison as an adult repeat shoplifting offender.

Children who know they are loved no matter what they do can handle these lessons. They can learn that there is a reason to avoid sin, because it cuts them off from this love. Not that their parents cease to love and forgive them any more than God can cease to love every part, every creature, of His universe, but that continuing in sin destroys a person's ability to take responsibility for his life and also destroys his ability to love with true depth and compassion. Thus with love and compassion rather than with violent anger, parents can use punishment and the acceptance of painful consequences rightly, teaching their children to avoid sin and to become wise in love and responsibility.

Whether we change the world around us as a whole is in God's hands, even as He used the

### **Alexander Solzhenitsyn:**

All attempts to find a way out of the plight of today's world are fruitless unless we redirect our consciousness, in repentance, to the Creator of all: without this, no exit will be illumined, and we shall seek it in vain. The resources we have set aside for ourselves are too impoverished for the task. We must first recognize the horror perpetrated not by some outside force, not by class or national enemies, but within each of us individually, and within every society. This is especially true of a free and highly developed society, for here in particular we have surely brought everything upon ourselves, of our own free will. We ourselves, in our daily unthinking selfishness, are pulling tight that noose...

Our life consists not in the pursuit of material success but in the quest for worthy spiritual growth. Our entire earthly existence is but a transitional stage in the movement toward something higher, and we must not stumble and fall, nor must we linger fruitlessly on one rung of the ladder. Material laws alone do not explain our life or give it direction. The laws of physics and physiology will never reveal the indisputable manner in which the Creator constantly, day in and day out, participates in the life of each of us, unfailingly granting us the energy of existence; when this assistance leaves us, we die. And in the life of our entire planet, the Divine Spirit surely moves with no less force: this we must grasp in our dark and terrible hour.

conversion of the Emperor Constantine to bring the world of ancient Rome to the Church. We don't know what the future holds. Certainly the first Christians had no idea that their faithfulness would bring such a change. If God does not will such a change for our world, let us then with St. Seraphim redeem those around us that He can still save if in hope we will take to heart His call to repentance and faith. Let us learn to love Him; to study His ways of truth. Let us seek out the company of those who likewise are believers and come together in worship, thanksgiving and friendship. As an added consolation in these times when we may have little or no fellowship in our journey, we can find the support of those believers who have gone before us in eternal life for millennia, and while as invisible as the atmosphere that surrounds us, are reached through love and prayer in Christ. In these ways, we will find not only true freedom from guilt, shame and resentment, but also the eternal life and love that continually enters our fallen world.       ✠ ✠ ✠

## St. Athanasius the Great



St. Athanasius was born in Egypt of wealthy Christian parents who provided well for his education. He was barely 20 when he addressed to a recent convert two treatises—Against the Heathen and On the Incarnation—benefitting generations of Christians with their concise exposition of the Orthodox Faith.

As a deacon Athanasius accompanied Patriarch Alexander to the First Ecumenical Council where he was recognized as an eloquent and impassioned champion of the Faith against the Arian heresy. Elected Patriarch of Alexandria in 328, Athanasius spent the rest of his life combatting this heresy, for which cause he was viciously persecuted and exiled several times. As a young man he had formed close ties with the monks of the Thebaid (he wrote a Life of St. Anthony, who was his spiritual mentor), and here he found strength in his trials. The Lord granted him a few years of peace with his devoted flock before calling him to his heavenly homeland in 373.

### St. Athanasius ~ On the Incarnation (excerpt)

It was unworthy of the goodness of God that creatures made by Him should be brought to nothing through the deceit wrought upon man by the devil; and it was supremely unfitting that the work of God in mankind should disappear, either through their own negligence or through the deceit of evil spirits. As, then, the creatures whom He had created reasonable, like the Word, were in fact perishing, and such noble works were on the road to ruin, what then, was God, being God, to do? Was He to let corruption and death have their way with them? In that case, what was the use of having made them in the beginning? Surely it would have been better never to have been created at all than, having been created, to be neglected and perish; and, besides that, such indifference to the ruin of His own work before His very eyes would argue not goodness in God but limitation, and that far more than if He had never created men at all.... Was He to demand repentance from men for their transgression? You might say that that was worthy of God, and argue further that, as through the Transgression they became subject to corruption, so through repentance they might return to incorruption again. But repentance would not guard the Divine consistency, for, if death did not hold dominion over men, God would still remain untrue. Nor does repentance recall men from what is according to their nature; all that it does is to make them cease from sinning. Had it been a case of a trespass only, and not of a subsequent corruption, repentance would have been well enough; but when once transgression had begun, men came under the power of the corruption proper to their nature and were bereft of the grace which belonged to them as creatures in the Image of God. No, repentance could not meet the case. What—or rather Who was it that was needed for such grace and such recall as we required? Who, save the Word of God Himself, Who also in the beginning had made all things out of nothing? His part it was, and His alone, both to bring again the corruptible to incorruption and to maintain for the Father His consistency of character with all. For he alone, being Word of the Father and above all, was in consequence both able to recreate all, and worthy to suffer on behalf of all and to be an ambassador for all with the Father.

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Christianity, in its true and original form, is decidedly realistic in its teachings. Bread and wine truly and really become the Body and Blood of Christ, etc. The miracles of Christ are more than moral lessons – they are genuine invasions of this world by the Kingdom of God, the in-breaking of Heaven to earth.

This spiritual realism is the foundation for the sacramental life of the Church as well as all ascetical and mystical practice. Orthodox Christians pray in order to unite themselves to Christ, not to advise Him or persuade Him. Every Feast, like the Sacraments themselves, is present tense, an indwelling of this world by the spiritual reality that it represents.

– Fr. Stephen Freeman

## On Lying - St. Dorotheos of Gaza

"Brethren, I want to remind you of a few things about falsehood. I see that you are not careful about holding your tongue, and - through that - we are easily led astray. You see, my brothers, as I always tell you, a habit can tend towards good or evil. We, therefore, need great vigilance, so that we are not cheated by lies. No one who lies becomes united with God. It is written that 'Falsehood is from the evil one', and also that 'He is a liar and the father of lies' [John 14:6]. You see, He calls the devil the father of lies; while God is the truth. He Himself said: I am the way, the truth and the life' [John 14:6]. See from Whom we are separating ourselves through lies, and to whom we attach ourselves --- clearly the devil. Therefore, if we really want to be saved, we are obliged to love the truth - with all our strength and concern, guarding ourselves from all falsehood - so that we are not separated from the truth and from life."

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## On Resentments - St. Dorotheos of Gaza

"There is also the case of a person who when troubled by someone, after both of them have bowed to each other, is at peace towards his brother, and he retains no bad memory in his heart about him. If, however, after a few days, the same brother says something to him that troubles him, he starts to remember the first offense; and is disturbed not only about the second, but also about the first. This is like a person with a wound. He puts a plaster on it and - through that - temporarily heals it; and it forms a scar. That spot remains sensitive. And if one throws a stone at him, it is more easily struck than the rest of the body and immediately starts to bleed."

"This is what happened to the person as well. He was wounded and put on a plaster, which is repentance, and he temporarily healed the wound: that is to say, in the example given, the anger. He also started to take care of the resentment through trying to obliterate any bad memory from the heart. This is the scar of the wound. However, he was not perfectly healed. He still retained the problem of the resentment, which is like the scar from which the wound is easily opened if it receives a small blow. Therefore, he has to struggle to completely blot out the scar so that hair grows again, no disfigurement remains and you cannot discern where the wound was."

"But how is it possible to achieve this? By praying for the person who upset him, with his whole heart, saying: 'God, help my brother; and through his prayers, help me.' Thus, he prays fervently for his brother, which is evidence of sympathy and love, and - at the same time - he humbles himself by asking for help through his brother's prayers. Where there is sympathy, love and humility, how can anger, resentment or any other passion prevail? As Abba Zosimas said: 'If the devil should use all the tools of his evil and all his devils, all of his efforts become ineffectual and are destroyed through humility --- according to the commandment of Christ.'

Another saintly Father said: **'The person who prays for his enemies has no resentment.'**"