

AN ELDER SAID...



Edifying Stories and Teachings from Ancient and Modern Times

Why, then, do you grumble and not give thanks to God?*

A contemporary monk's charismatic homily of life and truth

Holy Mountain, 2 July 1945

Come, my good and beloved little sister, and may I once again soothe your sorrow. Come, my heart, the little nurse of my soul, and my ever helper, spiritual collaborator, my good and beloved little sister, and we shall bless God with a heartfelt sweet voice, exclaimed by the mouth and resounding with the mind, saying: Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His Holy Name!

Do you see how much the Lord loves us? Do you see how fortunate we ungrateful ones are? Turn your mind, my golden darling, to your homeland, your village: How many people there were who were better than us, but God was not blessed by them. Recall how many good Christians there were there, but our sweet Christ did not look on them. Instead, His goodness looked on our own small and poor hut, which was barren of anything but blasphemy—and yet, great is the mercy of the Lord! Truly, it is a wonderful miracle for one to see, in our days, God being glorified by us, and the Lady and Mistress of all, our sweet and true Mother, rejoicing!

Is it not marvellous? That our village's Patron Saint, the Venerable Forerunner, did not chose another house from among the truly beautiful in our village, but instead our own, as God revealed it to me fourteen years ago: that he had taken me upon himself, that he was keeping guard, and that you should ask of Him whatever you want... and that I should have him as a Protector and Guide, a Guardian, an Elder. He is the one to whom my little hut is dedicated. He is our Father and the *Panagia* is our Mother!

Truly, greatly marvellous! But to whom [did this occur]? To a scurvy knave, to a nobody, destitute of all good! What good did the Lord see in me to grant me so many good things?

You should do the same thing, my little sister: Review your life; exam-

ine how you spent it; recall the many benefactions of the *Panagia* and her most sweet Son and our Savior, and in this manner be patient in temptations. God always helps, He attends to everything, but He wants our patience. He hears us immediately when we call out, but not according to your own way of thinking. You think that your voice did not immediately reach the Saints, God, or the *Panagia*. Before you called out, the Saints ran to D.'s aid, knowing that you would call on them and ask for their protection. But you, unseeing, unknowing, want him to be made well as quick as lightning.

But it is not like that. The Lord demands patience, in order to see your faith. It is not just a matter of prayers one might repeat like a parrot, but prayer must be supported by all that follows.

A man, He says, without patience, is a lamp without oil. Lo, D. came, but it was to your detriment because you did not have the forbearance to wait for him with faith, in which case you would have profited doubly.

Now you are angry about B. I am telling you that sooner or later you will see her close to you once again as you desire. If that which you are seeking and your soul longs for is pleasing [to God], it will come to pass without fail. But prayer from your whole heart is needed, and await it with patience. It does you no good if you despond, if you get upset, if you speak your mind. Instead, you must shut your mouth; no one should catch on to you, even should smoke come out of your eyes, if not out of your nose.

As for me, my sister—the Lord, Who destroys all those who speak a lie, be my witness—, I have profited much by the things I am telling you; and [the temptations were] such that you would think the soul would leave the body as in a furnace of fire from the pain of it.

But then, once it has passed, such consolation arrives: as if you were in Paradise without a body. Christ loves you, the *Panagia* sweetly kisses you, and all of the Holy Angels rejoice over you—they marvel at you!

Do you see how many good things tribulations bring about? If you wish to see Christ's love, endure whatever comes to you. Not however you like it, but however the Lord wishes to test you. That which we do at will is nothing, while everything sent to us by the Lord against our will is infinitely superior.

Bone for bone and blood for blood—so much does the enemy war against man, when God so allows, until he flows and melts like wax. But when the trial passes, you are filled with joy, are surrounded by a dazzling light, and you see mysteries about which no tongue can speak; and then you thirst for the time when temptations will come again, since they already are of such benefit.

This is the path according to the truth, and the writer bears witness to

you of the truth from experience.

Take courage, then, my beloved little sister, and be strong in the Lord, enduring all that comes, and receiving calm and the Grace of God after pain; and you are what I call a dove, and not a raven, as you tell me.

Go with D. to see a person whom I have spiritually nourished for many years. She has had me from the beginning as a father. E. I., ... Street, No. ..., Athens.

Best wishes, your brother Joseph.

I repeat, and am once again adding a continuation, my dear little sister.

This E., whom I am telling you to visit, is from Thessaloniki, but on account of the instability [of the times], she came to Athens with her husband and two small children.

Take her to the Church of [Metropolitan Chrysostomos of] Florina, because she does not know of it. He is a true pearl of Christ. Let D. come along to instruct her husband with some spiritual words.

Let me also now write you the reason why I have returned to our beloved Hierarch [Metropolitan Chrysostomos (formerly) of Florina].

I had been persuaded by the words that Fr. Akakios [Pappas] wrote us here; i.e. that the first Hierarchs had betrayed the [Old Calendar] struggle, and many other things against them.

Owing, then, to the fact that I am always shut up inside and do not go anywhere outside of my door, none of the others came to tell me the truth of the matter. That is why I was like the rest of them, believing that they [the first Hierarchs] were not as they should be. But I was not hostile, as some are here, who insult them and rant and rave.

That is why our very good God, seeing my ignorance, did not leave me in error, though every so often the followers of Matthew [of Vrestheni] would come and tell me the usual, while I, to the contrary, would tell them that schism is the worst thing of all, and that harmony is a commandment of God and brings about good results. In the end, seeing my soul, God indicated to me vividly and most conclusively that I had been wrong and that all of the Matthewites and the others that had separated themselves [from Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Florina] were in error and were creating a harmful schism to the detriment of their proud souls, since nothing but their own egotism was to blame.

I do not have time to write you the miracle that happened to me, on account of which I called Fr. Antonios [Moustakas] to explain to me what the situation was, and I saw that I had indeed erred out of ignorance. So you see the goodness of the Lord: Man often strays out of ignorance or

because others have led him astray, but when he is of upright soul, the Lord does not abandon him, but will in many ways bring him to enlightenment.

This makes me become dirt, ashes, a worm of the earth! Who was I, the blind one, devoid of all goodness, and what good have I done to my Creator, Who has such concern for me that I not be damned, Who has loved me more than the others of my generation, and Who grants me His Grace abundantly for me to speak, pray, write, and to recount His words!

Do you not marvel, my beloved little sister, remembering my life in the world? Was I cut out to be a Monk?

Why, then, do you grumble, and not give thanks to God?

If I were to write you the temptations from which I suffer, you would not be able to bear it. And yet, the Grace of the *Panagia* dispels them all!

Do not push D. to become a Monk. He is on the right path. Pass on to him my many best wishes and kisses, and I will write to him now separately, lest the envelope be overstuffed and get lost. And be patient, because the Queen and *Theotokos* and Lady of all does not abandon us; She prays for us!

You have not written how M., M., and the rest are.

Again, best wishes, Joseph.



(*) Source: Ἅγιος Κυπριανός, No. 333 (July-August 2006), pp. 318-320.