



■ Noetic Prayer (or “Prayer of the Heart”) and Spiritual Fatherhood

The “Jesus Prayer” in Today’s World*

“...an unceasing Heavenly gladness
which cannot be described in words..”

In a city of the Peloponnese, I once met a Christian man, some thirty-two years of age, who gave off a sweet scent of something akin to rosemary.

My astonishment increased yet further when he began to speak about the Jesus Prayer—“Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me”—and I understood that the ineffable fragrance of the All-Holy Spirit was coming forth from his mouth.

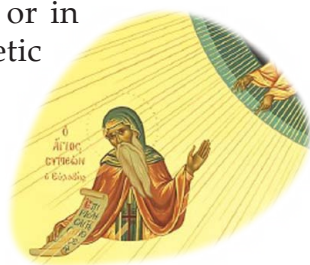
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He had learned how to use a prayer rope and to recite the Jesus Prayer on the Holy Mountain [of Mt. Athos] years before, and thenceforth he would say it unceasingly, day and night, oftentimes without stopping to take a break, even during the night. The Prayer made up for his natural need for sleep.

Thus, the Jesus Prayer gradually became spiritual and noetic in his heart, and he partook of its glorious fruits. **H**e was not, however, able to explain just how the Prayer was being said in his heart, filling him with a great sense of sweetness, without his consciously saying it either aloud or in his thoughts. Such is the greatness of noetic prayer.

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Once, in such a state, he was so overwhelmed by the Grace of God that, in his own words:



● **“I** completely forgot myself; it was as if I had disappeared, when suddenly I felt that my soul was in the open hands of my spiritual Father, Father G. K., who was praying in front of a Heavenly and radiant throne, filled with the Light and Glory of God.

● **S**oon—when exactly, I do not know—my spiritual Father became bathed in this Heavenly Light to such an extent that I felt that I closed the eyes of my soul. **H**ow I saw and how I closed them, I do not know.

● **T**ightly bound as my soul was in my spiritual Father’s embrace, I could hear him praying to our Lord Jesus Christ for me. **I** dared not raise the eyes of my soul, but I could nevertheless feel the resplendent luminosity wash over me, such that I was literally bathed in it, and I was filled with joy, gladness, peace, wonder, and rejoicing.

● **A**t some point, I came to myself. I felt myself in the air, and the prayer of the Name of Jesus Christ continued of itself infinitely within me: ‘My Jesus... my Jesus... my Jesus...’

● **F**or three or four days I neither ate nor drank a drop of water, nor did I sleep, but only experienced an unceasing Heavenly gladness which cannot be described in words, and sweet tears streamed continually down my face....”



(*) The Jesus Prayer for Those Living in the World, Protopresbyter Stephanos K. Anagnostopoulos (Piraeus: 2007) p. 77. Translated from the original Greek.