

## ASCETICALLY SPEAKING, pp. 45-46

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### DEIFICATION IS BEYOND OUR COMPREHENSION

St. Gregory Palamas

On this account, although we have written at length about stillness, whether enjoined to do so by the Fathers, or at the request of our brethren, we have never dared to write about deification. But now, since there is need to speak, we will speak, reverently, with the Lord's grace, though to describe it is beyond our skill. For even when spoken of, deification remains unutterable: as the Fathers say, it can be identified only by those who have been blessed by it.

### ST. LAWRENCE DIDN'T WANT TO BE LEFT BEHIND

St. Ambrose of Milan

... his bishop led to martyrdom, began to weep, not at his sufferings but at the fact that he himself was to remain behind. With these words he began to address him: 'Whither, holy priest, art thou hastening without thy deacon? Never was thou wont to offer sacrifice without an attendant. What art thou displeased at in me, my father? Hast thou found me unworthy? Prove, then, whether thou hast chosen a fitting servant. To him to whom thou hast entrusted the [distribution] of the Saviour's Blood, to whom thou hast granted fellowship in partaking of the Sacraments, to him dost thou refuse a part in thy death? [Note: St. Lawrence was weeping because he was being left behind.]

### BE COURAGEOUS AND CONFESS ME

Our Lord Jesus Christ

*And I say unto you, my friends. Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more they can do. Also, I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God: but he that denieth Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven. And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer,*

*or what ye shall say: for the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say (Luke 12:8-12).*

## STRUGGLE: ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL FOR SALVATION!

Archbishop Averky of Jordanville

Without the Cross, without struggle, there can be no salvation! This is what true Christianity teaches. The teaching on struggle, on the bearing of the Cross, runs like a scarlet thread through all the Sacred Scriptures and all of the history of the Church, and

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the lives of those holy ones who were pleasing unto God, the spiritual athletes of Christian piety, clearly bear witness to this.

## THE CLERGY DO NOT TEACH: THE HOLY FATHERS DO

St. Nil Sorsky

The Divine Scriptures and the words of the Holy Fathers are as numerous as the sand of the sea. Diligently searching them out, we teach them to those who come to us and who are in need of them. More correctly, it is not we who teach, because we are unworthy to do so, but it is the blessed Holy Fathers who teach from Divine Scripture.

## ALL-HOLY AND GOOD WITH NOTHING OF EVIL

St. Justin (Popovich)

Having become the Church by His incarnation out of an unparalleled love for man, our God and Lord Jesus Christ sanctified the Church by His sufferings, Resurrection, Ascension, teaching, wonder-working, prayer, fasting, mysteries, and virtues; in a word, by His entire Theanthropic life.

## AVOID A LIFE OF SELF-CENTEREDNESS & SELF-SATISFACTION

Fr. Seraphim (Rose)

The life of self-centeredness and self-satisfaction lived by most of today's "Christians" is so all-pervading that it effectively seals them off from any understanding at all of spiritual life, and when such people undertake 'spiritual life,' it is only as another form of self-satisfaction. This can be seen quite clearly in the totally false religious ideal both of the 'charismatic' movement and the various forms of 'Christian mediation': all of them promise (and give very quickly)

an experience of contentment and peace. But this is not the Christian ideal at all, which, if anything, *may be summed up as a fierce battle and struggle* (emphasis supplied).

## THE GOSPEL MEANING OF 'BROTHERS' and 'SISTERS'

Archpriest Seraphim Slobodskoy

'Brothers and sisters' of the Lord, as used in the Gospels, has a meaning completely different than what is meant by brothers and sisters of the Lord in contemporary terms. According to the custom of Eastern peoples of that time, as is now kept in the life of the Arabic people living in Palestine and Asia Minor, 'brothers' meant not only the relation of brother, but also cousins, second cousins and, in general, close relatives. There could not have been any *actual* (emphasis supplied) brothers of the Lord, as the Mother of God bore only one Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and is called by the Holy Church Ever-Virgin because she was so until the birth of Christ, and in giving birth and after the birth of Christ remained the same, as she vowed to God never to enter into marriage. St. Joseph was not a real husband to her, he was only betrothed, the custodian of her virginity.