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WORK PERSISTENTLY ON OUR SPIRITUAL LIVES EVEN IN TODAY'S LATTER TIMES

Fr. Seraphim (Rose)

Our times, above all, call for humble and quiet labours, with love and sympathy for other strugglers on the path of Orthodox spiritual life and a deep resolve that does not become discouraged because the atmosphere is unfavorable. We Christians of the latter times are still called to work persistently on ourselves, to be obedient to spiritual Fathers and authorities, to lead an orderly life with at least a minimum of spiritual discipline and with regular reading of the Orthodox spiritual literature which Blessed Paisius was chiefly responsible for handing down to our times, to watch over our own sins and failings and not judge others. If we do this, even in our terrible times, we may hope - in God's mercy - of the salvation of our souls.

SOME SCRIPTURAL EVIDENCE THAT THE CHURCH MUST BE ONE!

Scriptural Passages

That they may be one (John 17:11); *One Lord, one faith* (Eph. 4:5); *Be like-minded one toward another* (Rom. 15:5); *Be ye of one accord, of one mind* (Phil. 2:2); *Be ye all of one mind* (I Peter 3:8); *Be ye of the same mind toward one another. Mind not high things... Be not wise in your conceits* (Rom. 12:16).

THE DIVINE PRESENCE IS EVERYWHERE

St. Benedict

We believe that the Divine Presence is everywhere and that 'the eyes of the Lord are looking on the good and the evil in every place'. But we should believe this especially without any doubt when we are assisting at the Work of God. To that end let us be mindful of the Prophet's words, 'Serve the Lord in Fear' and again, 'Sing praises wisely' and 'In the sight of the Angels I will sing praises to Thee.' Let us therefore consider how we ought to conduct ourselves in the sight of the Godhead and of His Angels, and let us take part in the psalmody in such a way that our mind may be in harmony with our voice.

ST. BENEDICT'S RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FATHERS, ESPECIALLY ST. BASIL THE GREAT AND ST. JOHN CASSIAN

St. Benedict in his Rule recommended:

... the collations of the Fathers, and their institutes (comment - presumably St. John Cassian's) and lives, and the rule of our holy Father, Basil - what are they but the monuments of the virtues of exemplary and obedient monks?

ST. BENEDICT BROUGHT THE FAITH OF CHRIST TO THE PEOPLE THROUGH HIS CONTINUAL PREACHING

St. Gregory the Great

The man of God coming hither, beat in pieces the idol, overthrew the altar, set fire to the woods, and in the temple of Apollo, he built the oratory of St. Martin, and where the altar of the same Apollo was, he made an oratory to St. John, and by his continual preaching, he brought the people dwelling in those parts to embrace the faith of Christ.

ST. BENEDICT'S RULE WAS ALWAYS ALIVE IN THE MONASTIC TRADITION OF THE EAST BECAUSE HIS RULE HAD ITS ORIGINS THERE

Orthodox America, St. Benedict

Among Orthodox Christians there was never any need to use the 'Rule' of Saint Benedict, for the teachings of this 'Rule' were always alive in the monastic tradition of the East, from where, indeed, they originally came to Saint Benedict. Therefore, one may say that St. Benedict's Rule was preserved in spirit in the Orthodox east, just as was the memory of the saint himself, whose feast is still kept by the Orthodox on March 14. The ideal of a hidden life of labour and solitude remained continually alive in the Orthodox Church, blossoming like a flower in the desert. In this same spirit, St. Benedict's Rule, with its emphasis on virtue and repentance rather than organisation, contained the very essence of Christ's teachings about other-worldliness.

ST. BENEDICT, THE WONDERWORKER, HAD THE GIFT OF PROPHECY AND RAISED THE DEAD

Orthodox America, St. Benedict

Not only was St. Benedict a great missionary, man of prayer, and spiritual director of souls, but God also vouchsafed him the grace of wonderworking.

Thus, he was able to cast out demons from those possessed, had the gift of prophecy, could read human hearts and thoughts, cure the sick, and miraculously provide money for the poor, but most wonderful of all, he also raised the dead!