

NOETIC PRAYER
AS THE BASIS OF MISSION
AND THE STRUGGLE AGAINST HERESY



Archimandrite Ephraim Triandaphillopoulos

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Uncut Mountain Press

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uncutmountainpress.com

Cover Artwork by George Weis.

Scriptural quotations are primarily taken from the King James Version. The translator has emended some quotations to better reflect the original Greek text.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Noetic Prayer as the Basis of Mission and the Struggle Against Heresy—1st ed.

Written by Archimandrite Ephraim Triandaphilopoulos

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ISBN: 978-1-63941-008-8

I. Eastern Orthodox Christian Theology

II. Eastern Orthodox Christian Spirituality

The present work
is dedicated to my revered mother
Despina G. Triandaphillopoulos

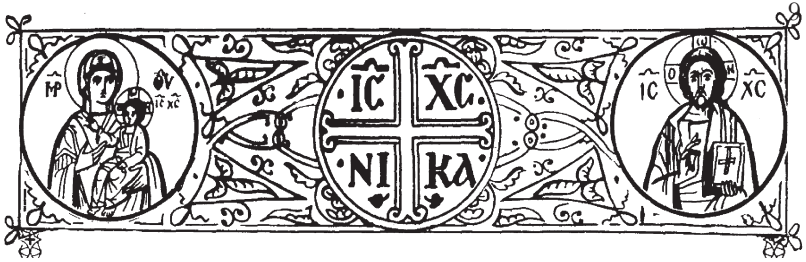


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St. Paul the Apostle



PREFACE

In this present work, appealing to the blessings and prayers of His Eminence Metropolitan Anthony, and despite our spiritual shortcomings, we shall try to prove, by studying heresy and heretics in view of the soul and spirit, that unceasing prayer is a necessary provision in our struggle against heresies—in collaboration with the material and technological means our age offers, of course. The Orthodox Church is fundamentally ascetic. A well-established and sure conclusion of our age-old tradition is that the spiritual work inside us, this mystical labor, comprises the best work within our neighbor, the image of God, and thus within any heretic, atheist, person of another religion, etc.

The word of God, through the mouth of St. Paul, says “for there must also be heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you,”¹ inspiring us in our encounter with heresy, to undergo a trial of faith and experience, but also to enter into unspeakable spiritual joy and gladness upon receiving those who return.

1 I Cor. 11:19.



St. Joseph the Hesychast



CHAPTER I

Heresy as a Spiritual Disorder

In his renowned epistles, Elder Joseph the Cave Dweller vividly describes for us the process by which delusions and heresies are born. In particular, he writes the following in Epistle Thirty-Six:

Take, for example, a spring by the seashore that wells up clean water. Suddenly a storm breaks out, the sea rises, and our little spring is polluted with sea water. No matter how clever you are, you will not be able to separate the sea water from the spring's water. The same thing happens with the nous.

The demons are spirits. Therefore, they are akin to and can be assimilated with our spirit, the nous. The nous is the purveyor of the soul, for it brings every appearance and perception of a noetic movement to the heart, which in turn filters it and gives it to the intellect. Therefore, the nous can be deceived just as the spring was polluted in the example. That is, the unclean spirit stealthily pollutes the nous, which in turn, as usual, gives whatever it has to the heart. If the heart is not pure, it gives the murk to the mind, and then the soul is darkened and blackened, constantly accepting fantasies henceforth instead of theorias. In this manner, all the delusions arose and all the heresies occurred.²

2 St. Joseph the Hesychast, *Monastic Wisdom: The Letters of Elder Joseph the Hesychast* (Florence, AZ: St. Anthony's Greek Orthodox Monastery, 1998), pp. 187-188.