



73rd Year

January 26, 2025

Pamphlet #4 (3739)

THE SUNDAY EPISTLE (1 Timothy 4:9-15)

“Be an example to the believers”

Timothy, my son, the saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance. For to this end we toil and suffer reproach, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe. Command and teach these things. Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. Till I come, attend to the public reading of scripture, to preaching, to teaching. Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophetic utterance when the council of elders laid their hands upon you. Practice these duties, devote yourself to them, so that all may see your progress.

THE CLERGYMAN AS AN EXAMPLE FOR THE FAITHFUL

The Apostle Paul gives pastoral advice to Timothy for the organizing of ecclesiastical work. He calls Timothy to be an example for Christians in word, conduct, love, spiritual life, faith, and holiness of life. Paul highlights the immense responsibility clergy have towards their flock, guiding them towards "salvation in Christ." These apostolic admonitions are, of course, relevant to clergy of all ranks and eras. For this reason, it is good to take a closer look at their content, aiming to draw useful conclusions for everyone.

The manner in which a clergyman speaks and behaves is a field of constant struggle. Our people seek in him the sweet-tongued father, whose private and public behavior proclaims the presence of Christ. In the opposite case, there is a great risk of scandal and devaluation of the priestly office, a fact that unfortunately often occurs due to careless and frivolous clerical behaviors.

Offering love to all

Paul wants the clergyman to be an example of love towards God and man. Love must go beyond the limits of theoretical teaching and become a way of life and imitation of Christ. The shepherd must see Christ himself in the faces of people, rejecting the temptation of discrimination. Every person, regardless of their level of piety, origin, religious faith, or education, is the living image of Christ in the world, towards whom the clergyman is obliged to work with abundant love, trying to meet every need, primarily spiritual, but also material, to the degree possible. Indifference and selective offering of love render the shepherd insufficient.

Cultivation of self-criticism

Special importance is given by the Apostle to the cultivation of the clergyman's spiritual life. This is not separate from the spiritual life of every believer within the Church. However, in the person of the clergyman, it takes on a more demanding character, as he becomes a guide, model, and example of life for everyone. The spiritual life is not related to superficial or circumstantial religiosity; it is not concerned with what others are doing; it does not stand critically or judgmentally against them, but is introspective, personal, and characterized by self-criticism and a disposition for self-examination.

Holiness of life

Finally, the Apostle to the Nations highlights, as a fundamental trait of the good shepherd, the holiness of his life. Holiness must be a life goal. It is not achieved once, but is the fruit of continuous struggle in the field of prayer, observance of divine commandments, liturgical consistency, continuous repentance, and sacrificial offering. A clergyman who does not strive and work for his personal sanctification cannot function as a role model for his flock, for which he will give an account to God.

My brethren, having in mind the above, let us not attempt to pinpoint these attributes in the shepherds of our parish or Diocese, because this endeavor will have two destructive results, mainly for those who are lax and frivolous in faith: The first is the danger of excusing their own spiritual inadequacy. The second is the risk of criticizing priests and slandering, as appearances often deceive. Let it never be forgotten that Paul's exhortations concern all of us, not just the shepherds. We all owe it to cultivate our spiritual lives, to continuously become models of Jesus Christ for our fellow humans outside the Church, and to work towards our personal sanctification. Let us act in this way for ourselves, and we can be sure that we will significantly contribute to the improvement of our shepherds. In the Church, we do not live autonomously. We all live together and influence each other, either positively or negatively. Let us keep these things in mind, so that our progress may be evident in everything. Amen!

Archimandrite E. Oik.

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1st Edition, in Greek, Size 17x24 cm, 544 pages
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January 26, 2025: 15th Sunday of Luke

Xenophon the monk and his brotherhood (6th century);
Clement the monk of Athens († 1111).

Pl. 2nd Tone – Eothinon: 9 – Epistle: 1 Timothy 4:9-15
– Gospel: Luke 19:1-10

NEXT SUNDAY: February 2, The Presentation of the Lord
Epistle: Hebrews 7:7-17 – Gospel: Luke 2:22-40

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ΦΩΝΗ ΕΞ ΟΡΟΥΣ ΚΑΤΑΣΚΙΟΥ – ΣΥΜΒΟΥΛΕΣ ΚΑΙ ΔΙΑΤΥΠΩΣΕΙΣ
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