



73rd Year

March 30, 2025

Pamphlet #13 (3748)

THE SUNDAY EPISTLE (Hebrews 6:13-20)

The consolation of hope

Brethren, when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore to himself, saying, "Surely I will bless you and multiply you." And thus Abraham, having patiently endured, obtained the promise. Men indeed swear by a greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he interposed with an oath, so that through two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible that God should prove false, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to seize the hope set before us. We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner shrine behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

THE TEACHING OF THE CHURCH ON OATHS

The issue of oaths often troubles the conscience of Christians who find themselves in a difficult position when called to swear an oath, whether in judicial, professional, academic, or other contexts. This matter is addressed in today's Epistle reading, which refers to the oath that God swore to Himself in

order to convince Abraham of His divine promises and assurances.

The oath in Holy Scripture

Oaths were a common practice in the Old Testament. People had not yet received the grace of the Holy Spirit and lived under the framework of the Law. As a result, distrust prevailed in human relationships, and often even toward God, making the oath seem like the only reliable way to overcome it.

However, in the New Testament, there is a radical shift. The Lord embodies all the promises and assurances of God to His people, rendering the oath unnecessary. Furthermore, the Lord strongly denounces oaths and excludes them from the framework of ecclesiastical ethics and spiritual life: "I say to you, do not swear at all" and "Let your word be a clear yes or a clear no." Similarly, James, the brother of the Lord, exhorts Christians: "Above all, my brothers, do not swear – not by heaven, nor by the earth, nor by anything else. Let your yes be yes, and your no, no, so that you may not fall under God's judgment."

Oaths according to the Fathers

The teaching of the Lord regarding oaths is adopted by the Fathers of the Church, who analyze and justify it. Saint John Chrysostom says that "the oath is dreadful and harmful, a destructive medicine, a harsh poison, a satanic arrow, a strong trap. It is the most dreadful of all sins... and both those who keep their oaths and the perjurers will be condemned equally."

Saint Basil the Great considers the oath deadly for the life in Christ: "It brings death to human souls because the one who swears often ends up committing perjury. It is a weapon of deceit. Therefore, the cessation of oaths is imperative, and alternative methods must be devised for ensuring that human testimonies are trustworthy."

Saint Gregory the Theologian advises the avoidance of oaths, which he characterizes as "horrific." At the same time, Saint Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessaloniki, whose name

is synonymous, considers the oath a work of the evil one: "We, who have been commanded not to swear even by a hair do not tremble when we often invoke the supreme head of all, God Himself, and the holy things of God; but alas, the dreadful audacity has progressed so far that even the very sacred symbols of the salvific Passion, the Divine Blood... we place on paper like ink, affirming the oaths, all of which the true Master describes oaths as "a work of the evil one" and so, o woe, we make him who abolished the devil's dominion a colleague of the devil.

Avoidance of oaths

From the above, it becomes clear that oaths contradict the will of God and must be avoided by Christians. Unfortunately, in our time, there is an ease and carelessness in their use. Many Christians resort to swearing oaths, even false ones, without realizing the extent of their fall. Thus, despite the fact that they can experience the grace of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit within the Church, they choose a Jewish mindset, displaying a clear lack of love towards people and a hypocritical faith toward God.

Truth may come at a cost. However, ultimately, it justifies and honors the one who chooses it, for it is an imitation and appropriation of Christ Himself. The Lord sent the message that should establish all of us, His children, in the choice of truth: "I am the way, the truth, and the life."

Archimandrite E. Oik.

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by Metropolitan of Phanariou, Agathangelos,

General Director of the Apostolic Ministry of the Church of Greece

The Apostolic Ministry proceeded with the publication of this spiritual book, which analyzes solitude, silence, and prayer as concepts of Orthodox spirituality

March 30, 2025: 4th Sunday of Lent (St. John Climacus of the Ladder)

Zacharias of Corinth; Euboulia, mother of St. Panteleimon

Grave Tone – Eothinon: 7 – Epistle: Hebrews 6:13-20

– Gospel: Mark 9:17-31

NEXT SUNDAY: April 6, 5th Sunday of Lent (St. Mary of Egypt)

Epistle: Hebrews 9:11-14 – Gospel: Mark 10:32-45

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ΗΣΥΧΑΣΜΟΣ – Ο ΠΟΛΙΤΙΣΜΟΣ ΤΗΣ ΚΑΡΔΙΑΣ ***(HESYCHASM – THE CULTURE OF THE HEART)***

1st Edition, in Greek, Size 14x21 cm, 224 pages
by Metropolitan Andreas (Nanakis) of Arkalochori, Kastelli, and
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As stated in the preface of the book, the Orthodox Church participates experientially, through her Saints – known and unknown, named and anonymous – as well as through the people of God, in the greatest human revelation of the divine mystery. Yet, even we Orthodox only reach a certain extent. The Philokalic Fathers of our Church, also known as Hesychasts, had communion and knowledge of the intellect with Christ, and they experienced the indwelling of Christ in their hearts. With this spirit, this work is presented to readers, with the conviction that the theology of the Church Fathers, particularly the neptic (watchful) and philokalic Fathers, introduces us to methodologies that lead to the healing of human passions.

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