15 Φεβρουαρίου 2010

Praying and fasting in our Orthodox Christian life…

Ξένες γλώσσες / In English



We all understand how important prayer is for the spiritual life of an Orthodox Christian. But how are we to pray? Two forms of prayer are evident in the Orthodox Christian life: private prayers said at home and unified Church prayer. Each has certain special characteristics. Our Saviour gave instructions in the Gospel about private prayer: “When you pray, go into your room and shut the door, pray to your Father Who is in secret; and your Father Who sees in secret will reward you openly” (Mt.6:6). Of course, home prayers are basic to us. Prayer is deeply intimate and heartfelt. Everyone who has sincerely searched for heartfelt and moving prayer, knows well how easy and natural it is to pray in solitude, in silence and peace. Moreover, our Lord firmly warns us against hypocritical prayer done for show, to elicit praise from people.

When a Christian prays to God, he must strive to contemplate the words of the prayers which he reads, and to concentrate his thought on the content of the. Everyone knows how difficult it is to struggle against the pressure of outside thoughts and images which tiresomely besiege the person who is praying. This comes to us both from our personal distraction and from the indirect action of the evil-one. The task of a Christian is to apply all his powers to persistently shake off

all these side thoughts (which are sometimes impure) that torment him, and to pray piously and with concentration. One should remember that an extra pressure of thoughts and images—often vile and blasphemous—comes to us directly from Satan, and the struggle of resisting these thoughts is a direct struggle against evil. Consequently, one receives great benefit from such a struggle. (περισσότερα…)