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## Modern Saints (Elder Moses the Athonite)

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Fairly or not, the times in which we live have been criticized for many reasons. And yet, difficult though they certainly are, they've concealed treasures, engendered small and great saints. Apart from those officially recognized, there have also been hidden saints throughout the twentieth century.

Blessed Methodia, from Kimolos (+1908); Saint John, from Kronstadt, (+1908); Bishop Efthymios of Zela (+1921); Bishop Prokopios of Iconium (+1922); Bishop Grigorios of Cydoniae (+1922); Bishop Amvrosios of Moschonisia (+1922); Bishop Chrystostomos of Smyrna (+1922); blessed Anatoly the Younger, the wonderful starets of the Monastery of Optina (+1922); and a host of blessed and new martyrs in Russia, Georgia, Estonia, Poland and other parts of Europe, Asia and America.

Also in the twentieth century we have saints: Arsenios the Cappadocian (+1924); Nikolaos Planas, from Athens, (+1932); Silouan the Athonite (+1938); blessed Savvas in Kalymnos (+1948); blessed Yeoryios Karlidis (+1959), from Drama; hieromonk Anthimos Vayianos (+1960), from Chios, John Maximovitch, Archbishop of Shanghai and San Francisco (+1966), the wonderworker; the Serbian hieromonk Justin Popović (+1979) and the holy martyr Filoumemos the Jerusalemite (+1979).

Some blessed Elders were also famed for their sanctity and highly virtuous lives: Archimandrite Ieronymos, the Simonopetritis (+1957); Iosif the Hesychast, the Cave-Dweller (+1959); Amfilohios Makris, Pro-Abbot of Patmos; Filotheos Zervakos,

Abbot of Longovarda, Paros (+1980); Iakovos Tsalikis, Abbot of the Monastery of Blessed David on Evia (+1991); the discerning and perceptive Elder Porfyrios, the Kavsokalyvitis (+ 1995); the wise Elder Sophrony Sakharov (+1993); the famous monk Païsius the Athonite, who was so filled with grace (+1994); Efraim, the Katounakiotis, so devoted to obedience and prayer (+1998); and others.

The holy life of monasticism challenges and invites us to a heroic stance, greater austerity, simplicity, modesty and humility. We are duty bound to maintain the spirit of Orthodox monasticism unadulterated, vibrant, and pure at any cost to ourselves. We are called to apprenticeship in the patience of earlier generations of Elders.

The beauty of our Church is that it continues, to this day, to produce saints. The world will need sanctity to a far greater extent in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Elder Païsius the Athonite used to say that it simply was not permissible for us to fail to maintain monasticism intact. Sanctity is not a forgotten dream nor a vain hope. The “good life”, secularization, and indolence hinder the growth of the tree of sanctity. Today’s spirit of enjoyment, haste, work with neither effort nor toil, and heedlessness drives away sanctity.

Sanctity is the purpose of life. Sanctity is the prime desideratum. Approaching sanctity will bring peace, joy, sobriety, patience, restraint and the gift of grace. The catalogue of modern saints is growing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Sometimes sanctity is hidden where you would least expect it, in cities and villages, not only on the Holy Mountain. Monasticism is flourishing today. It is the hope of all of us that it will continue to produce saints, travelling the traditional path. Saint Stylianos the Athonite used to say from his own experience: “The Lord loves us to excess and, through prayer, makes us worthy to converse with Him, to repent, and to glorify Him. I cannot describe how much the Lord loves us. Through the Holy Spirit, this love is recognized and the soul of the person praying recognizes the Holy Spirit...”