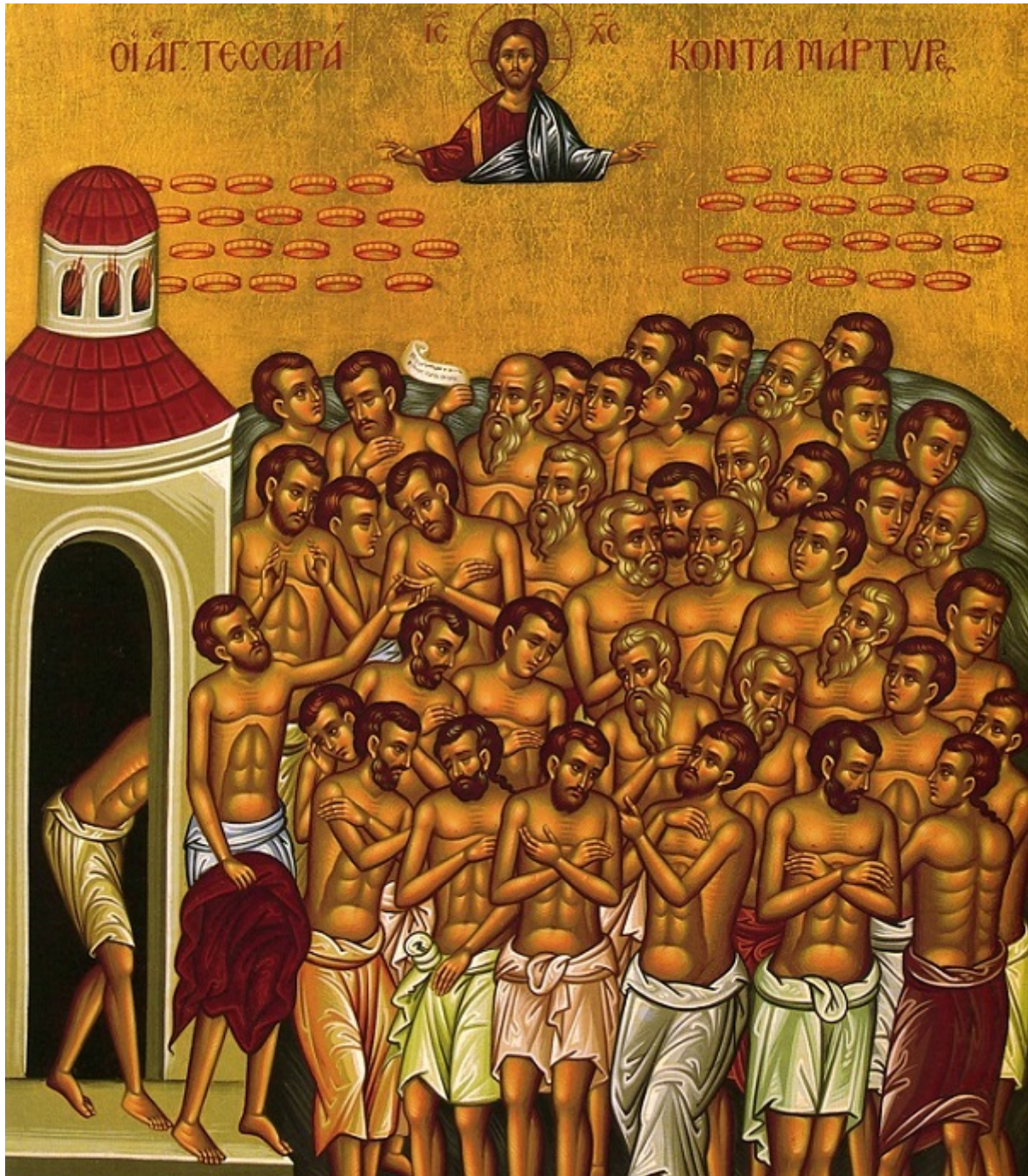


The Period Between Birth and Death (Metropolitan of Toronto Sotirios)

[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)



NEW YEAR'S ENCYCLICAL

We were born and we will one day pass on from this life. This is certain. On this earth, there is no immortality. Immortality and the endless age exists only to life

after death. At that point, we will live eternally, whether in Paradise or in Hell.

For everyone born on earth, in the image and likeness of God, the earthly part of life is of great importance. It is so incredibly significant because the eternal joy or permanent desolation we will experience in the endless life after death depends on our conduct here on earth.



The concept of time cannot be defined in a precise manner. However, we experience the passage of time from the moment we are born until we fall asleep and pass from this life. This period of time is very important both in terms of worldly and spiritual matters.

In terms of acquiring material possessions and worldly fame, a person will be more successful in life the sooner he begins to use time efficiently. If time is used properly during the period of one's studies, professional achievement will come much faster, providing many benefits on a personal level, and perhaps even to society at large. The same holds true in one's spiritual life. There is one key difference however between the worldly and spiritual spheres: that is the central role played by repentance in our spiritual well-being. With repentance, whatever we may have lost in the past matters not. Whatever evil deeds we may have committed cease to count against us with repentance. God relieves us of the burden of our sins.

Now for some practical advice. An ancient Greek maxim prompts us to "Use time carefully" (χρόνου φείδου). Let us not then waste time. We know not how much time we have left. Let us not wait to repent and erase our sinful past, since we cannot predict when we will pass on and leave this earth. Death comes unexpectedly, "as a thief in the night".

Let us turn around and look behind us. We need to evaluate our past. As descendants of ancient Greek philosophers, we should question ourselves and our lives. Let us ask ourselves: In all the time I have lived on this earth, what good deeds have I done? What wrongdoing have I committed? What was I supposed to do and never did?

Plan ahead for the future. Put things in order. Work out a program to transform yourself, and strictly adhere to it. And at the end of the year, the harvest will be great.

Although you live on earth and know that one day you will leave for somewhere different, think always of the heavenly, the imperishable, the unending.

My beloved Christians, in this New Year, let us progress all together, hand in hand. Let us leave all manner of evil behind us. Let us be passionate about our faith, for our faith will save us. Faith anchors our lives.

I wish us all a blessed journey in this New Year, with faith in God, with hope in our capacity to change, with love in our hearts towards all, with an open hand to act as

good Samaritans.

With fatherly love and blessings in the Newborn Christ,

Metropolitan Archbishop Sotirios

Head of the Greek Orthodox Church in Canada