

## Distilling One's Cave (Metropolitan of Toronto Sotirios)

[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)



Two thousand and seventeen years ago, our Lord chose to renew his covenant with the world and to penetrate deep into the innermost essence of human nature. In this way, we can say that God incarnate sought to be born in the 'cave' of men, both symbolically and literally. Unfortunately, the cave of men was impure at the time. And unsurprisingly, access to where foreigners usually stay when they travel abroad, the local inn, was closed to Him upon His Nativity. Instead, the God-Man was born in a manger, the lowliest of caves in the world, a place meant for livestock.

Two thousand and seventeen years later, we may ask ourselves how the current state of 'humanity's cave' has evolved? Because Christ desires not only to be born there, but to "dwell and walk there." However, this place needs to be first distilled of impurities for Him to enter: "Blessed are the pure in heart...".



Seven billion persons live in our world today. Of those, five billion are not Christian. Approximately two billion are Christians of various denominations. Theoretically at least, Christ was born and now lives and walks about in the souls of Christians. But how true is this claim? Let us examine how different categories of people live out their faith in the world today.

How pure is the cave – that is the hearts, the souls – of hierarchs, priests, deacons, sextons and others who have formally been entrusted to serve the Church?

Without a doubt, there are many truly worthy and virtuous servants of the Church. Yet, when hierarchs refuse to cooperate – as occurred on the occasion of the Holy and Great Council – thus ripping apart the seamless robe of Christ, can we say that they are acting with a clean heart? Can Christ, Who is perfectly pure by His very nature, live in such hearts and walk about in them? Similar questions can be raised with respect to the other servants of the Church.

Do the servants of the citizenry – Prime Ministers, Premiers, Ministers, Members of Parliament and Legislative Assemblies, Municipal Councillors, and all manner of civil servants (from most senior to most junior) – exemplify a ‘cave’ which is pure and untainted? Do they always act with a clean heart and good intentions? Do they serve the people, or do they proverbially suck their blood? Are they true Christians in every aspect of their lives, or merely Christians only according to their baptismal certificate? What an oxymoron to exclaim yourself a Christian through baptism, yet

to embrace atheism in everything you do.

There are many other professional categories: scientists, professors, business people... Do they always cultivate a pure cave with which to receive the Lord? Do they exercise their various professions honourably, with love for Christ and fellow man?

We will refer to one more group. There are brash television personalities who have taken it upon themselves to serve the destitute, the sick, the needy, and do so by speaking seemingly on their behalf with tears in their eyes. Do these television hosts have a pure heart? Have they sufficiently prepared their cave to receive the Savior? What percentage of the funds they gather truly go to the destitute, and how much is spent on inflated salaries and other misappropriations?

In regards to the over two-thirds of the world population who have not met Christ, will they be judged with more leniency in the Final Judgment when compared to some Christians? "He who knows and does nothing will be punished much, while he who does not know and does not do will be punished less."

Let us now turn our attention to you and me. Do you and I have a pure cave, an innermost dwelling suitable for the Lord to reside? Do we act with a clean heart and soul? Christ stands outside and knocks on the door of our hearts. He does not break in and enter. He waits patiently. The door to our heart will open when it is ready, when it has been properly distilled. Only then will Christ enter to live and walk there. Can we fathom, just for a moment, the joy and blessing of Christ being born and living and walking within our souls and hearts? And how great this joy will be after death, in eternity!

My beloved Christians, let us celebrate this Christmas with Christ solidly entrenched within the cave, firmly cemented within our hearts and souls. A Merry and Blessed Christmas to all, with Christ in our hearts and souls! With love. With faith. With health. With mercy.

With fatherly love and blessings in the Newborn Christ,

Metropolitan Archbishop Sotirios

Head of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Toronto (Canada)