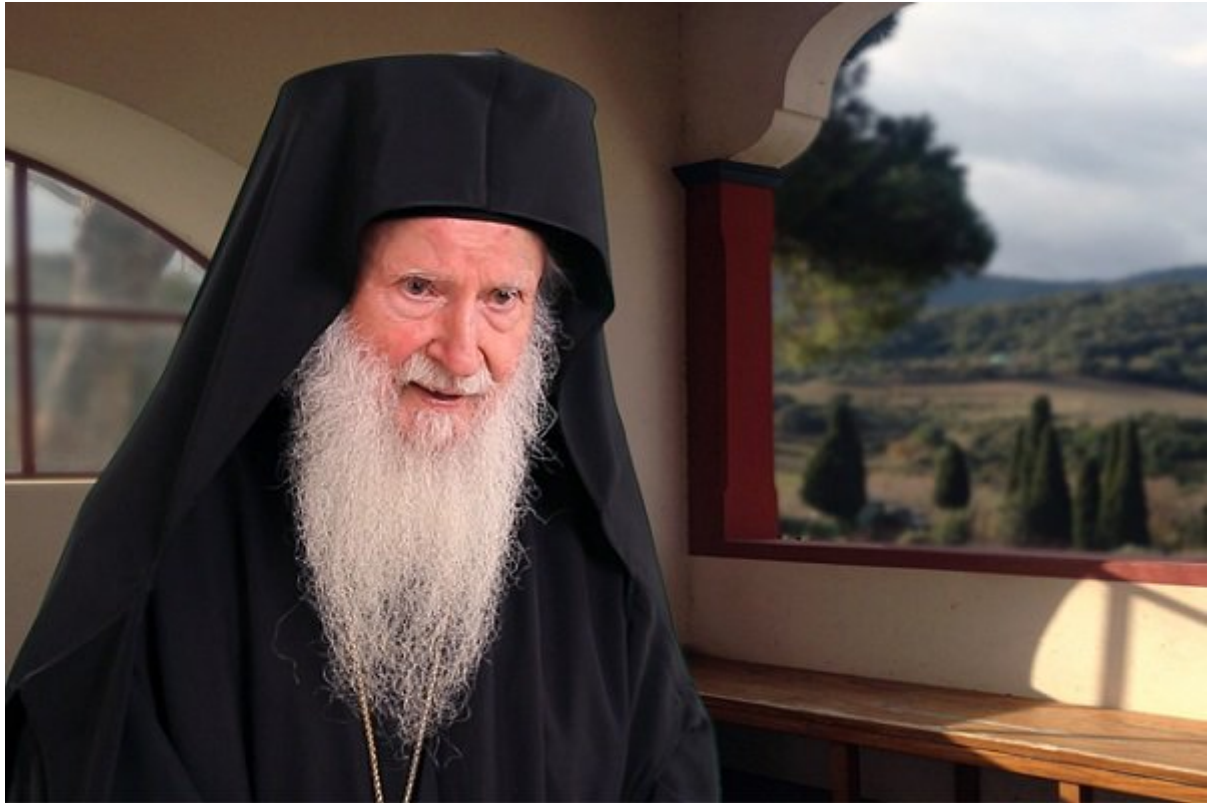


Sermon on the Apostolic Reading for the 11th Sunday of Luke (Colos. 3, 4-11) (Metropolitan of Pisidia Sotirios)

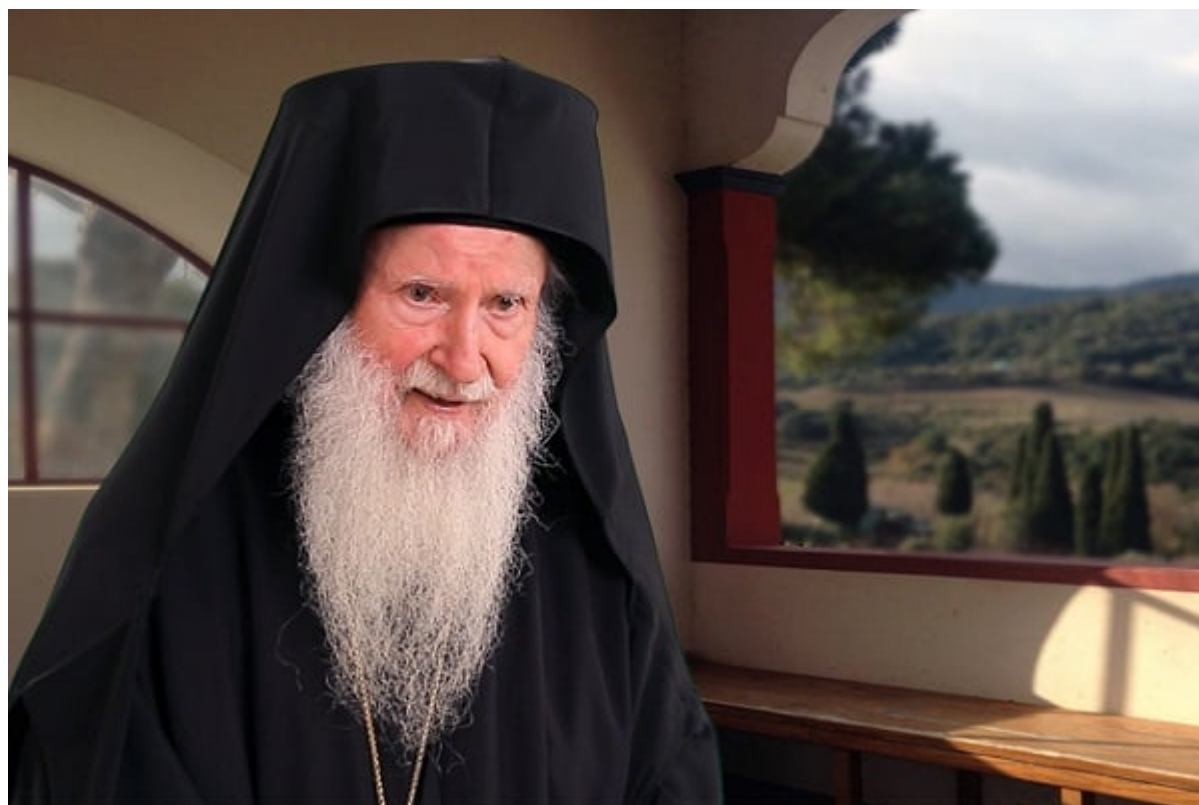
[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)



Christmas is approaching! The coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; the Son of God on earth. It is essential for all faithful to prepare spiritually for this grant event that has an immediate relation with our salvation. Isn't this what the Angel announced to Joseph? "You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins" (Matt.1,21). But it is equally important that each and every one of us personally will try to approach Christ as his Saviour, and with His grace to be redeemed from his sins. Apostle Paul, with today's excerpt from his Epistle to the Colossians, comes to help us identify the major of these sins and eliminate them. The Apostle of Christ does not hesitate to characterize sins with their name. But what kind are they?

Firstly he mentions sins that infect both the body and the soul, such as fornication and all the related unclean fleshly sins. The Lord Himself had clearly stated that "adulteries, fornications defile a man" (Matt. 15,19-20). Besides, we see how many terrible diseases and how many family and social dramas relate to these

lawless relationships. The Christian needs to be very careful not to be seduced by the “modern” spirit of our time, which has overturned moral values and promotes immorality as progress and morality as a setback!



In order to guard against these unclean passions, Apostle Paul says we also need to avoid bad desire, because evil starts from there. And Apostle James further explains: “But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death” (James 1, 14-15). That is why the Lord asks us to dominate our senses in order not to receive stimuli that trigger sinful desires; He even goes as far saying: “whoever looks at a woman to lust of her has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matt. 5,27).

Furthermore there are also many sins of the soul. Some of those mentioned by Apostle Paul here are: greed, which he describes as idolatry. And as the Fathers of our Church further explain, Jesus referred to mammon as lord. he who works solely for mammon and worship him as god of wealth abandons God”(Matt.6,24). And that is why Apostle Paul urges: “not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous or an idolater...” (A’ Corinth.5,11).

Apostle Paul also identifies anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy and filthy language (Col. 3:8), as passions of the soul that we need to deter. We can observe how disturbed are the relationships of people, even within the same family, with anger

and swearing! Even acts of violence and murder occurred in times of anger. But some people do not understand it. They shout, threaten, humiliate, offend the other, and then, if someone reprimands them, they respond with apathy: "Well, nothing serious has happened. We just exchanged words!". Words, yes but as one hurt wife responded: " words which are slaughtering".

Finally restricting ourselves only to those mentioned above, Apostle Paul adds: "Do not lie to one another" Whoever lies mimics the devil who is "the father of lies" (John 8,44). Christ has declared: "I am the truth" (John 14,6). So whoever lies detaches himself from Christ and goes into devil's lineage. Do not be deceived by the wicked one believing that lying is innocent. "Since you have put off the old man and his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in the knowledge according to the image of Him who created him". (verse 9-10).

My brothers and sisters, a Saint of our Church, Saint Jerome had a shocking experience while kneeling on a Christmas Night at the Cave of Nativity in Bethlehem. He asked Jesus: 'What can I offer you my Lord tonight?'

And he heard the voice of Christ replying back to him:

- Jerome, I want your sins. Simply give me your sins!
- My sins? What will you do with my sins my Lord?
- I want your sins so that I can forgive them, since this is why I came to this world, responded Jesus.

Here is the best present that Jesus asks from us for His Birthday. To give Him our sins so that he can forgive them. We all know the "how". So let no man be without going to his spiritual father, the Priest of God, and confess before the Lord all things that weigh down his soul, so that he can be saved and relieved. And in this manner our cleansed souls will be able to feel the presence "of Christ our true God and Saviour who was born at the Cave and was laid at the manger for our salvation" and to truly celebrate Christmas. Amen.