

Sermon on the Apostolic Reading of the Sunday of Orthodoxy (Hebrews 11, 24-26 & 32-40) (Metropolitan of Pisidia Sotirios)

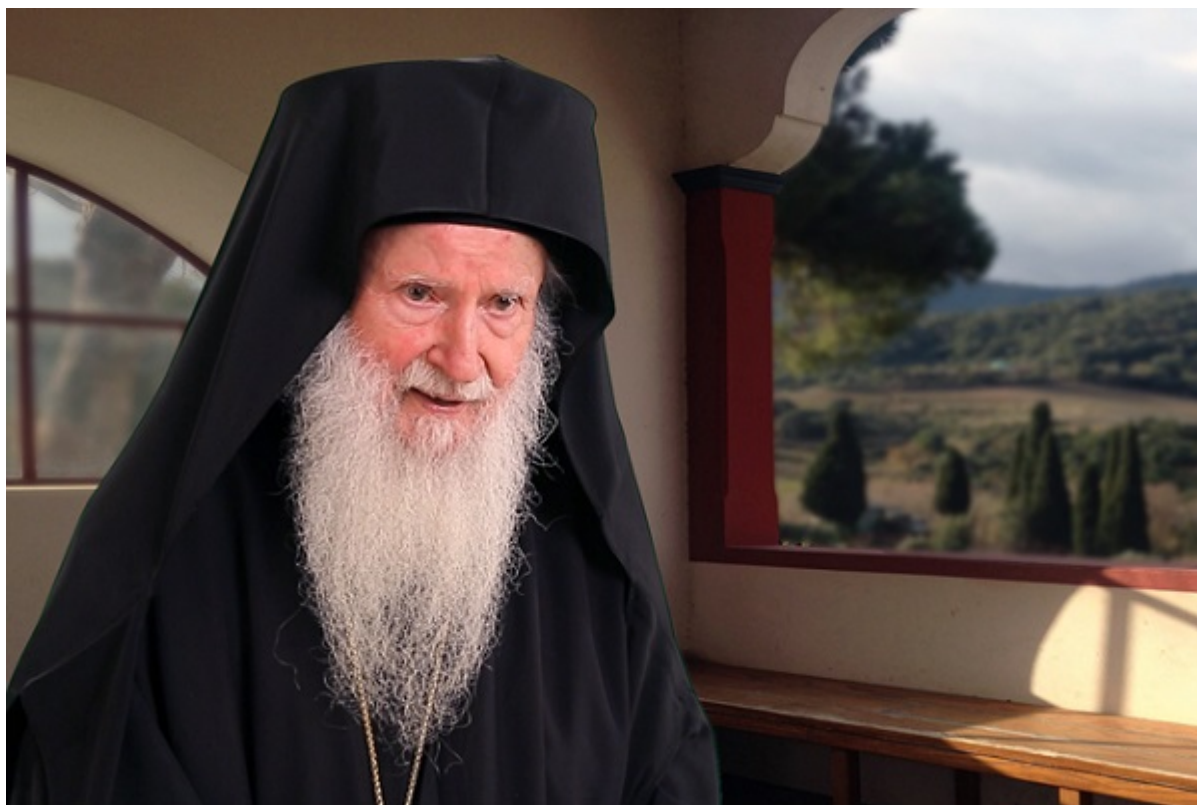
[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)



The meaning of today's great Feast of Orthodoxy is summarized in a hymn sung the Matins, at the Praises:

“A day of jubilee and full of joy has been revealed today. Through the cheerfulness of the true doctrines, the Church of Christ shines brightly, adorned by the restoration of the holy icons... and the faithful enjoy the God- rewarded peace” (Matins 3rd Sticheron).

A joyous day! Today we celebrate the triumph of the Orthodox faith against the heresies that had caused great commotion in the Church of Christ for centuries. The sacred icons have been restored in their place in the holy churches and the “God-rewarded” harmony returns among all the faithful. Thus, the terms Orthodoxy and Orthodox Church were established in order to distinguish the One Catholic and Apostolic Church from various heretical factions, which occasionally wanted to be presented as churches.



Today's Apostolic reading, from St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews, refers to the marvellous results of the faith. It presents examples of persons of the Old Testament who witnessed amazing miracles in their lives through their trust and warm faith in God. Representative of this are the following biblical examples:

- When Moses grew up, he refused to live in the palaces of Egypt as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and preferred to suffer with the people of God, because he was seeking God's reward rather than enjoying the transient sinful life (see verse 24-26).
- Prophet Daniel, who was cast into the pit with the hungry wild lions, was protected by the teeth of the beasts, which then became lambs (verse 33). The same happened later with the holy Martyrs, like Saint Thekla.
- The three godly young men, who did not wish to worship false gods in Babylon,

were sentenced to a horrible death. They were bound and thrown into the burning furnace, and while the flames climbed high, and being in the midst of the fire, they managed to cut off from their bonds and walked between the flames without being bothered at all, instead, they were praising and glorifying God (see Daniel 3: 23).

- Women, like that widow in the village of Sarepta of Sidonia, who hosted Prophet Elias in a time of general hunger, when her son died she received him alive from the Prophet's hands. (3rd Kings, 17:23). Also, the Somanite mother, who had provided a room in her house for the Prophet Elisha to stay in, when her child died she pleaded with the Prophet, and he raised it (4 Kings 4: 35-37).

- Others were cured of fatal diseases like Hezekiah, whose life was extended by God for 15 years. While others, like David and Gideon, defeated multiple enemies in defending their homeland.

- And those who suffered severe persecutions and martyrdom for their faith in the true God they pumped up supernatural power and they faced everything with courage, peace of soul and with the sure hope that at the end of their struggle, the Lord awaits for them to crown them with eternal glory.

Suffice to say that these miraculous events help us establish the fact that strong faith in God is multidimensional and acts beneficially in all circumstances. We could perhaps likened it to electricity: through an electric bulb it illuminates the surrounding space; through a heater it heats up; through an air conditioner it cools; through a washing machine washes up clothes; through a vacuum cleaner it cleans; through a lift it rises high. Electricity activates so many other instruments in hospitals and people's lives are saved. But let us pay attention to something basic. All these machines, devices and instruments operate normally, provided they are connected to an electric generator. If, for any reason, contact is interrupted, i.e. the connection with the power source is cut off, everything becomes dormant. And you have probably seen what happens at times when whole countries are sunk into darkness and everything is dead.

Something similar happens to the person who loses his/her faith and cuts off from the source of the loving power of our Lord and God Jesus Christ. He/she is deadened spiritually.

That is why Apostle Paul sounds the alarm: ***"Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves"*** (2 Cor.13: 5).

My beloved, I hope the bright examples of the people of faith that we studied today will help our faith to grow more and more, as well as our trust and love for Christ,

so that the benevolent grace and help of our loving Almighty Lord to be channelled into us, according to the needs that we shall be facing at certain times.