

Psalm 50/51

For the end, a Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came to him, when he had gone to Bersabee.

(edited from <http://www.ecmarsh.com/lxx/Psalms/index.htm>)

1 Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your great mercy; and according to the multitude of Your compassions blot out my transgression. 2 Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. 3 For I am conscious of mine iniquity; and my sin is continually before me. 4 Against You only have I sinned, and done evil before You: that You might be justified in Your sayings, and might overcome when You are judged. 5 For, behold, I was conceived in iniquities, and in sins did my mother conceive me. 6 For, behold, You love truth: You have manifested to me the secret and hidden things of Your wisdom. 7 You shall sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be purified: You shall wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow. 8 You shall cause me to hear gladness and joy: the afflicted bones shall rejoice. 9 Turn away Your face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit in my inward parts. 11 Cast me not away from Your presence; and remove not Your Holy Spirit from me. 12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation: establish me with Your directing Spirit. 13 Then will I teach transgressors Your ways; and ungodly men shall turn to You. 14 Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation: and my tongue shall joyfully declare Your righteousness. 15 O Lord, You shall open my lips; and my mouth shall declare Your praise. 16 For if You desire sacrifice, I would have given it: You will not take pleasure in whole-burnt-offerings. 17 Sacrifice to God is a broken spirit: a broken and humbled heart God will not despise. 18 Do good, O Lord, to Sion in Your good pleasure; and let the walls of Jerusalem be built. 19 Then shall You be pleased with a sacrifice of righteousness, offering, and whole-burnt-sacrifices: then shall they offer calves upon Your altar.

St. Ezekiel Chapter 18

(edited from <http://www.ecmarsh.com/lxx/Jezekiel/index.htm>)

18:1 And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 2 Son of man, what do you mean by this parable among the children of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten unripe grapes, and the children's teeth have been set on edge? 3 As I live, says the Lord, surely this parable shall no more be spoken in Israel. 4 For all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son, they are mine: the soul that sins, it shall die. 5 But the man who shall be just, who executes judgment and righteousness, 6 who shall not eat upon the mountains, and shall not at all lift up his eyes to the devices of the house of Israel, and shall not defile his neighbor's wife, and shall not draw nigh to her that is removed, 7 and shall not oppress any man, *but* shall return the pledge of the debtor, and shall be guilty of no plunder, shall give his bread to the hungry, and clothe the naked; 8 and shall not lend his money upon usury, and shall not receive usurious increase, and shall turn back his hand from injustice, shall execute righteous judgment between a man and his neighbor, 9 and has walked in my commandments and kept mine ordinances, to do them; he is righteous, he shall surely live, says the Lord. 10 And if he beget a mischievous son, shedding blood and committing sins, 11 who has not walked in the way of his righteous father, but has even eaten upon the mountains, and has defiled his neighbor's wife, 12 and has oppressed the poor and needy, and has committed robbery, and not restored a pledge, and has set his eyes upon idols, has wrought iniquities, 13 has lent upon usury, and taken usurious increase; he shall by no means live: he has wrought all these iniquities; he shall surely die; his blood shall be upon him. 14 And if he beget a son, and *the son* see all his father's sins which he has wrought, and fear, and not do according to them, 15 and *if he* has not eaten on the mountains, and has not set his eyes on the devices of the house of Israel, and has not defiled his neighbor's wife, 16 and has not oppressed a man, and has not retained the pledge, nor committed robbery, has given his bread to the hungry, and has clothed the naked, 17 and has turned back his hand from

unrighteousness, has not received interest or usurious increase, has wrought righteousness, and walked in mine ordinances; he shall not die for the iniquities of his father, he shall surely live. 18 But if his father grievously afflict, or plunder, he has wrought enmity in the midst of my people, and shall die in his iniquity. 19 But you will say, Why has not the son borne the iniquity of the father? Because the son has wrought judgment and mercy, has kept all my statutes, and done them, he shall surely live. 20 But the soul that sins shall die: and the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, nor shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the iniquity of the transgressor shall be upon him. 21 And if the transgressor turn away from all his iniquities which he has committed, and keep all my commandments, and do justice and mercy, he shall surely live, and shall by no means die. 22 None of his trespasses which he has committed shall be remembered: in his righteousness which he has done he shall live. 23 Shall I at all desire death of the sinner, says the Lord, as I *desire* that he should turn from *his* evil way, and live? 24 But when the righteous man turns away from his righteousness, and commits iniquity, according to all the transgressions which the transgressor has wrought, none of his righteousness which he has wrought shall be at all remembered: in his trespass wherein he has trespassed, and in his sins wherein he has sinned, in them shall he die. 25 Yet you have said, The way of the Lord is not straight. Hear now, all the house of Israel; will not my way be straight? Is your way straight? 26 When the righteous turns away from his righteousness and commits a trespass, and dies in the trespass he has committed, he shall *even* die in it. 27 And when the wicked man turns away from his wickedness that he has committed, and shall do judgment and justice, he has kept his soul, 28 and has turned away from all his ungodliness which he has committed: he shall surely live, he shall not die. 29 Yet the house of Israel say, The way of the Lord is not right. Is not my way right, O house of Israel? Is not your way wrong? 30 I will judge you, O house of Israel, says the Lord, each one according to his way: be converted, and turn from all your ungodliness, and it shall not become to you the punishment of iniquity. 31 Cast away from yourselves all your ungodliness wherein you have sinned against me; and make to yourselves a new heart and a new spirit: for why should you die, O house of Israel? 32 For I desire not the death of him that dies, says the Lord.

Gospel of St. John Chapter 6

After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is *the* Sea of Tiberias. ² Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased. ³ And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples. ⁴ Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near. ⁵ Then Jesus lifted up *His* eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" ⁶ But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do. ⁷ Philip answered Him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little." ⁸ One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, ⁹ "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?" ¹⁰ Then Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. ¹¹ And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed *them* to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted. ¹² So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, "Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost." ¹³ Therefore they gathered *them* up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten. ¹⁴ Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world." ¹⁵ Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone. ¹⁶ Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea, ¹⁷ got into the boat, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was already dark, and Jesus had not

come to them. ¹⁸ Then the sea arose because a great wind was blowing. ¹⁹ So when they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near the boat; and they were afraid. ²⁰ But He said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." ²¹ Then they willingly received Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land where they were going. ²² On the following day, when the people who were standing on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other boat there, except that one which His disciples had entered, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with His disciples, but His disciples had gone away alone— ²³ however, other boats came from Tiberias, near the place where they ate bread after the Lord had given thanks— ²⁴ when the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they also got into boats and came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus. ²⁵ And when they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, "Rabbi, when did You come here?" ²⁶ Jesus answered them and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. ²⁷ Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him." ²⁸ Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" ²⁹ Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent." ³⁰ Therefore they said to Him, "What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do?" ³¹ Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" ³² Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." ³⁴ Then they said to Him, "Lord, give us this bread always." ³⁵ And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. ³⁶ But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe. ³⁷ All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. ³⁸ For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. ³⁹ This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. ⁴⁰ And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." ⁴¹ The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven." ⁴² And they said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, 'I have come down from heaven'?" ⁴³ Jesus therefore answered and said to them, "Do not murmur among yourselves. ⁴⁴ No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. ⁴⁵ It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me. ⁴⁶ Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father. ⁴⁷ Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. ⁴⁸ I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹ Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. ⁵⁰ This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. ⁵¹ I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world." ⁵² The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this Man give us *His* flesh to eat?" ⁵³ Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. ⁵⁴ Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. ⁵⁵ For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. ⁵⁶ He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. ⁵⁷ As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. ⁵⁸ This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever." ⁵⁹ These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum. ⁶⁰ Therefore many of His disciples, when they

heard *this*, said, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?" ⁶¹ When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, "Does this offend you? ⁶² *What* then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before? ⁶³ It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and *they* are life. ⁶⁴ But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him. ⁶⁵ And He said, "Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father." ⁶⁶ From that *time* many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. ⁶⁷ Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?" ⁶⁸ But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." ⁷⁰ Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?" ⁷¹ He spoke of Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve.

I Corinthians Chapter 13

13 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. ² And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³ And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. ⁴ Love suffers long *and* is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; ⁵ does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; ⁶ does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; ⁷ bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁸ Love never fails. But whether *there are* prophecies, they will fail; whether *there are* tongues, they will cease; whether *there is* knowledge, it will vanish away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part. ¹⁰ But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. ¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. ¹² For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. ¹³ And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these *is* love.

The Life of St. Sebastian of Jackson (1863-1940)

(from <http://www.westsrbdio.org/en/events/canonization/hagiography/966-the-life-of-st-sebastian-of-jackson>)

This apostle of North America was the first American born Orthodox priest. His parents, Ilija and Jelena Dabovic, were the first recorded immigrants on the West Coast. They lived in San Francisco, operated a small shop, and were blessed with seven children. St. Sebastian was their fourth child who at baptism received name John. He was born on June 21, 1863. His ministry in the Church started at early age. After he finished high school he served his parish as a reader and teacher. Before he was sent to Russia, he spent time in Sitka, Alaska, assisted with parish ministries at St. Archangel Michael Cathedral. After three years of study at the St. Petersburg and Kiev Theological Academies, John was tonsured a monk and received monastic name Sebastian in 1887.

That same year he was ordained a hierodeacon. He served as deacon at the San Francisco Cathedral until Bishop Nicholas ordained him a priest on August 16, 1892. As newly ordained Hieromonk Fr. Sebastian tirelessly preached the Gospel, served Divine Liturgies, counseled and established many parishes throughout the country. During his life he conveyed the light of liturgical certainty and calm to a world that was spiritually hungry and suffering. Archbishop Tikhon asked Fr. Sebastian to lead a Serbian mission in the North American diocese, elevated him to archimandrite on August 15, 1905, and sent him to Chicago, Illinois, where this holy man

served as parish priest. In 1910, he asked for release from the parish so that he could return to missionary work. Having spent three years at the newly opened St. Platon Seminary in Tenafly, New Jersey, he went back to Serbia to serve as a chaplain in the Serbian army in the Balkan Wars and WW I. After his brief visit to the United States of America in 1915 and 1917, the rest of his life he spent in Serbia where he peacefully reposed in monastery Zicha on November 30, 1940, having his earthly remains laid to rest there until they were exhumed and translated to Jackson, California, on September 1, 2007, at St. Sava Church, the oldest and one of many Serbian Orthodox Churches in America that he founded in 1894. Fr Sebastian built up souls, organized the Church, erected houses of prayer, and was devoted to charitable work. In addition to establishing many churches, St. Sebastian also wrote many articles and sermons. His last spoken words and wish were: The Heavenly Kingdom without end! Meaning: the kingdom of the virtues whence the miracle of eternal surprises bursts forth. The Holy Assembly of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church during its regular session held from May 14-29, 2015 inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit decided that his name be added to the Diptych of saints of the Holy Orthodox Church. From the Holy archimandrite Sebastian Dabovich (1863-2013) we realize how historical predicaments become a starting point for knowledge of God and spontaneous praise.

From the celebration of the glorification of Sts Mardarije and Sebastian may droplets of consolation fall upon the heart of those who, living in the heart of America, seek what is fair and honest.

The Life of St. Mardarije of Libertyville (1889-1935)

(from <http://www.westsrbdio.org/en/events/canonization/hagiography/965-the-life-of-st-mardarije-of-libertyville>)

Born in village of Kornet, Ljesani County, in Montenegro, on November 2, 1889, to pious parents Petar and Jela Uskokovic, he was baptized in his village church dedicated to St. George and received his baptismal name Ivan. His mother was from the well-known Bozovic family. Both of his parents were well respected in their community holding the office of leadership and particularly his father was a captain of their clan.

Considering his parents' status, young Ivan was sent to further his education, first in Rijeka Crnojevic, Cetinje, and then in Belgrade, Serbia. While in Belgrade, young Ivan advanced his childhood desire to serve God and the Church, and so from there he headed to monastery Studenica where after a short period of novice life he gets tonsured to monasticism having received the name Mardarije. With the decision of the Holy Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church, now young hierodeacon Mardarije is sent to Russia where he spent twelve years (1905-1917) furthering his theological education and growing in wisdom. From there, the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church sent him to the United States of America to organize the Serbian Orthodox Church. On December 1, 1923, now archimandrite Mardarije is appointed as administrator of the Serbian American-Canadian diocese with the see in Chicago and that same year he purchased around ten acres of land in Libertyville, Illinois, where later St. Sava monastery was built. He was elected by the Holy Assembly of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church as the first bishop for the newly established diocese in America on December 7, 1925, and his consecration took place on Palm Sunday, the Feast of the Entrance of Our Lord Jesus Christ into Jerusalem, on April 25, 1926.

From then on His Grace Bishop Mardarije, the first bishop of the Serbian Orthodox Church in North and South America, labored tirelessly in building churches, St. Sava monastery in Libertyville, sowing Christian love, spread peace, preached and witnessed the Gospel of Christ throughout his diocese. In spite of inescapable worldly trends, he lived spontaneity of truth and a provision of grace, just because Life has dawned from the Tomb, and is dawning still. Having labored as bishop for a little over nine years he died peacefully on December 12, 1935, hospitalized in Ann Arbor, Michigan, while writing his last Nativity Encyclical to his beloved flock.

His earthly remains were laid to rest at St. Sava monastery in Libertyville. The Holy Assembly of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church during its regular session held from May 14-29, 2015 brought forth a decision that his name be added to the Diptych of saints of the Holy Orthodox Church.

From the Holy Hierarch Mardarije, we see how the grace of God reaches the heart of our cities, bringing to the confusion of the world the breeze of the Spirit and the serenity of the Age to come.

[From <http://orthochristian.com/103399.html>]: "In preparation for his glorification ceremony, St. Mardarije's relics were recently opened and found to be incorrupt from the knees up, with skin and hair still intact, bearing witness to the sanctity of this holy God-pleaser, already confirmed by his inclusion among the ranks of the saints. St. Mardarije joins the ranks of St. John Maximovitch and St. Alexis Toth, whose incorrupt relics are already treasures for Orthodox Christians in America."

St. Porphyrios of Kafsokalivia (1906-1991)

(from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Porphyrios_\(Bairaktaris\)_of_Kafsokalivia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Porphyrios_(Bairaktaris)_of_Kafsokalivia))

Saint Porphyrios (Bairaktaris) the Kapsokalyvite (7 February 1906 – 2 December 1991) was an Athonite hieromonk known for his gifts of spiritual discernment, a type of clairvoyance which he sometimes called "spiritual television."

He was born February 7 in the little village of St. John Karystia, in the province of Evia. His parents, Leonidas and Eleni Bairaktaris (daughter of Antonios Lambrou), baptized him Evangelos. He was fourth out of five siblings.

He was tonsured a monk at the age of fourteen or fifteen with the monastic name Nikitas. He served in the Athonite skete of Kafsokalyvia, in the Cell of St. George, under two spiritual fathers: Fr. Panteimon and Fr. Ionnakios. Forced by pleurisy to depart the Holy Mountain, he returned to his birthplace, where he was unexpectedly elevated to the priesthood at the age of 21 by Porphyrios III, Archbishop of Mount Sinai and Raithu.

With the outbreak of World War II he became a hospital chaplain in Athens, in which post he continued for three decades (1940–1970). His later years were devoted to the construction of the Holy Convent of the Transfiguration of the Savior.

After 1984 he returned to Mount Athos, occupying the same cell which he had earlier in life been forced to abandon. Through his role as spiritual father, Elder Porphyrios became known to an ever-wider circle of Orthodox followers. Several compilations of stories and sayings attributed to him have been published.

His sainthood was declared by the synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate on November 27, 2013. In 2017 the holy synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church formally approved the inclusion of St. Porphyrios the Kavoskalyvite into the Church's calendar on December 2 as well, including his troparion, kontakion, Synaxarion, and icon.

Quotes [of St. Porphyrios]

This is the way we should see Christ. He is our friend, our brother; He is whatever is good and beautiful. He is everything. Yet, He is still a friend and He shouts it out, "You're my friends, don't you understand that? We're brothers. I'm not...I don't hold hell in my hands. I am not threatening you. I love you. I want you to enjoy life together with me."

Love Christ and put nothing before His Love. He is joy, He is life, He is light. Christ is Everything. He is the ultimate desire, He is everything. Everything beautiful is in Christ.

Somebody who is Christ's must love Christ, and when he loves Christ he is delivered from the Devil, from hell and from death.

The life of the parents is the only thing that makes good children. Parents should be very patient and 'saintlike' to their children. They should truly love their children. And the children will share this love! For the bad attitude of the children, says father Porphyrios, the ones who are usually responsible for it are their parents themselves. The parents don't help their children by

lecturing them and repeating to them 'advices', or by making them obeying strict rules in order to impose discipline. If the parents do not become 'saints' and truly love their children and if they don't struggle for it, then they make a huge mistake. With their wrong and/or negative attitude the parents convey to their children their negative feelings. Then their children become reactive and insecure not only to their home, but to the society as well.

St. Paisios of Mount Athos (1924-1994)
(from https://orthodoxwiki.org/Paisios_of_Mount_Athos)

Our venerable and God-bearing Father Paisios of Mount Athos or Paisios the New, of the Holy Mountain (July 25, 1924 – July 12, 1994), also known as Elder Paisios (Greek: Γέροντας Παΐσιος ο Αγιορείτης), was a monastic of Mount Athos. An ascetic, he was known by his visitors for his gentle manner and acceptance of those who came to receive his advice, counsel, and blessing. His words of counsel continue to be published. Elder Paisios was canonized on January 13, 2015, by the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. The Church commemorates St. Paisios on July 12.

Arsenius Eznepidis was born on July 25, 1924, to pious parents in the town of Farasa, Cappadocia of Asia Minor, shortly before the population exchange between Greece and Turkey following the Greco-Turkish War of 1919-1922. Arsenios' name was given to him by St. Arsenios the Cappadocian, who baptized him, named the child for himself and foretold Arsenios' monastic future. Very shortly after his baptism the young Arsenios and his family were forced to leave Asia Minor in accordance the peace Treaty of Lausanne. St. Arsenios guided his flock along a 400-mile trek to Greece. The Eznepidis family finally settled in the town of Konitsa in Epirus in northwestern Greece. As he had prophesied, St. Arsenios reposed forty days after the group settled in Greece, leaving, as his spiritual heir, the infant Arsenios. Arsenios grew up in Konitsa and learned carpentry after completing intermediate public school.

During the civil war in Greece following World War II, Arsenios served as a radio operator. While concerned about his compatriots who had family, he didn't worry for himself because he was single and had no children. He was noted for his bravery, self-sacrifice and moral righteousness. After the civil war ended, he wanted to enter a monastic life, but had to consider his sisters, who were as yet unmarried. By 1950, he had provided for his sisters' future and was free to begin his monastic vocation.

He arrived on Mount Athos in 1950, first to Fr. Kyril, the future abbot of Koutloumousiou Monastery, and then to Esphigmenou Monastery. In 1954, Arsenios, having been a novice for four years, was tonsured a monk and was given the name Averkios. He was a conscientious monk, finding ways to both complete his obediences (which required contact with others) and to preserve his silence, so as to progress in the art of prayer. He was always selfless in helping his brethren. He was unwilling to rest while others worked (though he may have already completed his own obediences) as he loved his brothers greatly and without distinction. In addition to his ascetic struggles and the common life in the monastery, he was spiritually enriched through the reading of soul-profitable books. In particular, he read the lives of the Saints, the Gerontikon, and especially the Ascetical Homilies of St. Isaac the Syrian.

Soon after his tonsure, monk Averkios left Esphigmenou and joined the then idiorhythmic brotherhood of Philotheou Monastery, where his uncle was a monk. He placed himself under obedience to the Elder Symeon, who gave him the Small Schema in 1956, with the new name Paisios. Fr. Paisios dwelt deeply on the thought that his own spiritual failures and lack of love were the cause of his neighbor's shortcomings, as well as of the world's ills. He harshly accused himself and pushed himself to greater self-denial and more fervent prayer for his soul and for the whole world. He also cultivated the habit of seeking the "good reason" for a potentially scandalous event and for people's actions. In this way he preserved himself from judging others. For example, pilgrims to Mt. Athos who had been scandalized by the strange behavior and stories

told by a certain monk would when they met Elder Paisios, asked him what was wrong with the monk. He warned them not to judge others, and that this monk was actually virtuous and was simply pretending to be a fool when visitors would come, so as to preserve his silence.

In 1958, Elder Paisios was asked to spend some time in and around his home village so as to support the faithful against the proselytism of Protestant groups. He greatly encouraged the faithful there, helping many people. Later, in 1962, he visited Sinai where he stayed for two years. During this time he became beloved of the Bedouins who benefited both spiritually as well as materially from his presence. The Elder used the money he received from the sale of his carved wooden handicraft to buy them food.

In 1964, on his return to Mt. Athos, Elder Paisios took up residence at the Skete of Iviron before moving to Katounakia at the southernmost tip of Mt. Athos for a short stay in the desert there. The Elder's failing health may have been part of the reason for his departure from the desert. In 1966, a part of his lungs was removed during an operation. It was during this time of hospitalization that his long friendship began with the young sisterhood of St. John the Theologian in Souroti, just outside of Thessaloniki. During his operation he greatly needed blood and it was then that a group of novices from the monastery donated blood to save him. Elder Paisios was most grateful, and after his recovery, he did whatever he could, materially and spiritually, to help them build their monastery.

In 1968, he resided at the Monastery of Stavronikita helping with its spiritual as well as material renovation. While there he had the blessing of being in contact with the ascetic Elder Tikhon who lived in the Hermitage of the Holy Cross, near Stavronikita. Elder Paisios stayed by his side until his repose, serving him selflessly as his disciple. It was during this period that Elder Tikhon clothed Fr. Paisios in the Great Schema. According to the wishes of the Elder, Fr. Paisios remained in Elder Tikhon's hermitage after his repose. Fr. Paisios stayed there until 1979, when he moved to his final home on the Holy Mountain, the hermitage Panagouda, which belongs to the Monastery of Koutloumousiou.

It was at Panagouda that Elder Paisios' fame as a God bearing elder grew, drawing to him the sick and suffering people of God. He received them all day long, dedicating the night to God in prayer, vigil, and spiritual struggle. His regime of prayer and asceticism left him with only two or three hours each night for rest. The self-abandon with which he served God and his fellow man, his strictness with himself, the austerity of his regime, and his sensitive nature made him increasingly prone to sickness. In addition to respiratory problems, in his later days he suffered from a serious hernia that made life very painful. When he was forced to leave the Holy Mountain for various reasons (often due to his illnesses) he would receive pilgrims for hours on end at the women's monastery at Souroti. The physical effort which this entailed in his weakened state caused him such pain that he would turn pale. He bore his suffering with much grace, confident that, as God knows what is best for us, it could not be otherwise. He would say that God is greatly touched when someone who is in great suffering does not complain, but rather uses his energy to pray for others.

In addition to his other illnesses he suffered from hemorrhaging which left him very weak. In his final weeks before leaving the Holy Mountain, he would often fall unconscious. On October 5, 1993, the Elder left his beloved Holy Mountain for the last time. Though he had planned on being off the mountain for just a few days, while in Thessaloniki he was diagnosed with cancer that needed immediate treatment. After the operation he spent some time recovering in the hospital and was then transferred to the monastery at Souroti. Despite his critical state he received people, listening to their sorrows and counseling them.

After his operation, Elder Paisios had his heart set on returning to Mt. Athos. His attempts to do so, however, were hindered by his failing health. His last days were full of suffering, but also of the joy of the martyrs. On July 11, 1994, he received Holy Communion for the last time. The next day, Elder Paisios gave his soul into God's keeping. He was buried, according to his wishes, at

the Monastery of St. John the Theologian in Souroti. Elder Paisios, perhaps more than any other contemporary elder, captured the minds and hearts of the Greek people. Many books of his counsels have been published, and the monastery at Souroti has undertaken a great work, organizing the Elder's writings and counsels into impressive volumes befitting his memory. Thousands of pilgrims visit his tomb each year.

Elder Paisios was glorified on January 13, 2015, by the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. He is commemorated each year on July 12.

**The Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America
Response to Racist Violence in Charlottesville, Virginia
Friday, August 18, 2017**

(from <http://www.assemblyofbishops.org/news/2017/response-to-racist-violence-charlottesville-va>)

The Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America stands with all people of good will in condemning the hateful violence and lamenting the loss of life that resulted from the shameful efforts to promote racial bigotry and white supremacist ideology in Charlottesville, Virginia.

The Orthodox Church emphatically declares that it does not promote, protect or sanction participation in such reprehensible acts of hatred, racism, and discrimination, and proclaims that such beliefs and behaviors have no place in any community based in respect for the law and faith in a loving God.

The essence of the Christian Gospel and the spirit of the Orthodox Tradition are entirely and self-evidently incompatible with ideologies that declare the superiority of any race over another. Our God shows no partiality or favoritism (Deuteronomy 10:17, Romans 2:11). Our Lord Jesus Christ *broke down the dividing wall of hostility that had separated God from humans and humans from each other* (Ephesians 2:14). In Christ Jesus, the Church proclaims, there can be *neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male or female, but all are one* (Galatians 3:28). Furthermore, we call on one another *to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather to expose them* (Ephesians 5:11). And what is darkness if not hatred? *The one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness* (1 John 2:11)!

Furthermore, in 1872, Hierarchs from around the world assembled in Constantinople and denounced all forms of xenophobia and chauvinism (*phyletism*). They agreed that the promotion of racial or national supremacy and ethnic bias or dissension in the Church of Christ is to be censured as contrary to the sacred teachings of the Christian Gospel and the holy canons of the Church. It is formally condemned as heresy, the strongest category of false teaching.

Finally, such actions as we have witnessed in recent days, by self-proclaimed white supremacists, neo-Nazis, and various racists and fascists, betray the core human values of love and solidarity. In this, we pray wholeheartedly for the families of those who lost their lives or suffered in these tragic events. In like manner, we cannot condone any form of revenge or retaliation by any group or individual. Therefore, we fervently appeal to every person of good will, and especially the leaders of our great nation, to consider and adopt ways of reconciling differences in order to rise above any and all discrimination in our history, our present, and our future.

"Humility" from Fr. Thomas Hopko, "The Orthodox Faith: An Elementary Handbook on the Orthodox Church--Volume 4: Spirituality—The Virtues"

In the Orthodox tradition, humility has often been called the "mother of all virtues," and pride has been named "the cause of all sin." The wise and honest person is the one who is humble.

Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.

It is better to be of a lowly spirit with the poor, than to divide the spoils with the proud.

A man's pride will bring him low, but he who is lowly in spirit will retain honor (Prov 16.18, 16.19, 29.23).

According to the Gospel, in the Song of the Virgin, the Lord scatters the proud in the imagination of their hearts and exalts those who are humble and meek (cf. Lk 1.51–52). This is the exact teaching of Jesus.

For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted (Lk 14.11, 18.14, Prov 3.34).

Humility does not mean degradation or remorse. It does not mean effecting some sort of demeaning external behavior. It does not mean considering oneself as the most vile and loathsome of creatures. Christ Himself was humble and He did not do this. God Himself, according to the spiritual tradition of the Church, has perfect humility, and He certainly does not act in this way.

Genuine humility means to see reality as it actually is in God. It means to know oneself and others as known by God—a power, according to Saint Isaac, greater than that of raising the dead! The humble lay aside all vanity and conceit in the service of the least of God's creatures, and to consider no good act as beneath one's dignity and honor. Humility is to know oneself, without the grace of God, as dust, sinful and dead.

God is humble because He cares about the least: the birds in the air, the grass in the fields, the worst of sinners (cf. Mt 6.25–30). Christ is humble because He associates with the lowly, becoming the slave of all in taking on Himself the sins of the world.

If I then, your Lord and Master have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you (Jn 13.14–15).

You know that the rulers of the pagans lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave; even as the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many (Mt 20.25–28).

All Christians are to follow the example of Christ in His divine humility. Saint Paul teaches:

Do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which you have in Christ Jesus, who though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil 2.3–11).

The exaltation of Jesus as a man depended entirely on His self-emptying humility. True greatness, divine greatness, is the ability to be the least and to the least with the absolute certitude that it is externally and divinely important, that it is an imitation of God Himself.

True humility for the sinful man is to know that indeed, according to one's own possibilities and gifts, each one is truly the first and greatest of sinners (cf. 1 Tim 1.15), for each one has sinned in his own way "like no other man" (Saint Andrew of Crete, 7th c., Penitential Canon). The truly humble person is the one who, confessing his sins, is "faithful over little," and doing so, is exalted by the Lord and is "set over much." Only such a person will "enter into the joy of his Master" (Mt 25.14–23, Lk 19.17).