



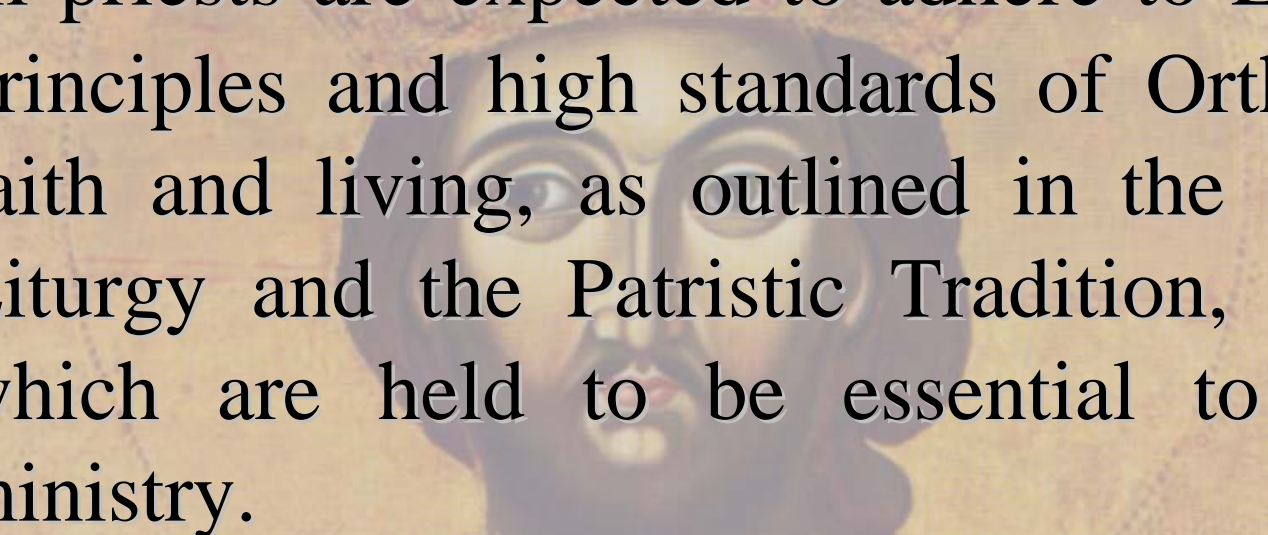
# **Ethics And Ministry**

Fr. Michel Najim

# **"What is the benefit of faith when the life is impure?"**

John Chrysostom

All priests are expected to adhere to Ethical principles and high standards of Orthodox faith and living, as outlined in the Bible, Liturgy and the Patristic Tradition, all of which are held to be essential to their ministry.





# The term “Ethos“ ἦθος

- It is an accustomed place, custom, and habit.
- In the New Testament it denotes:
- A Custom prescribed by the Law.
- A rite or ceremony.
- A custom, habit, manner. ἔθος
- The custom of the priesthood.
- The custom of the feast.
- The personal, social, and national customs, or the inherited customs.

# Ethos according to true nature

κατά φύσιν

- It is not to obey external rules, but to become as person that which one truly is by living according to his true nature.
- Sin is not the transgression of some impersonal laws, but mainly the failure to follow the divine plan for creation παρά φύσιν .



# Dichotomy of Clergy and Laity

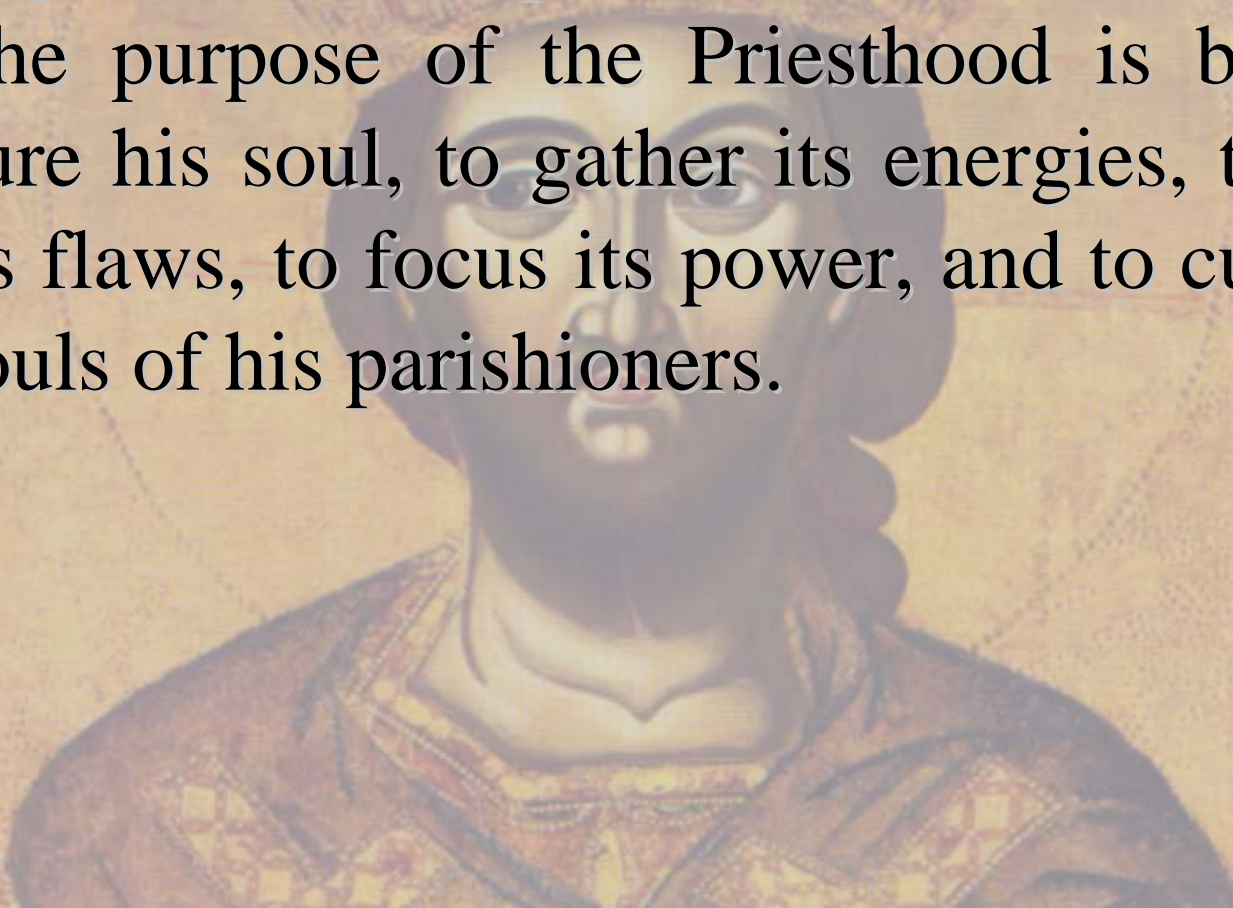
- Some may believe that there are commandments and counsels. Commandments are directed to all the believers, and the counsels are for the minority.
- This attitude introduces an aristocratic division in the Church, and two different spiritualities.
- It introduces two levels of noetic faculties: a lower noetic faculty for all believers, and a higher noetic faculty for clergy and monastic orders.
- We as priests, however, must have a greater response, and a more purified νοῦς according to the gift of God to us to be church leaders. We have special gifts which are entrusted to us for the edification of the faithful. Therefore, we are called to play an ethical role model to our parishioners.



# The Therapeutic Ethos

The priest and his parishioners are ill of soul.

The purpose of the Priesthood is both to cure his soul, to gather its energies, to heal its flaws, to focus its power, and to cure the souls of his parishioners.



## the “nous.” νοῦς

The highest aspect of the soul is the “nous.”

Our pastoral aim is spiritual therapy primarily through:

- The Mysteries (the sacraments).
- Ascetical struggle (prayer, fasting, etc.).
- The transformation of our passions.



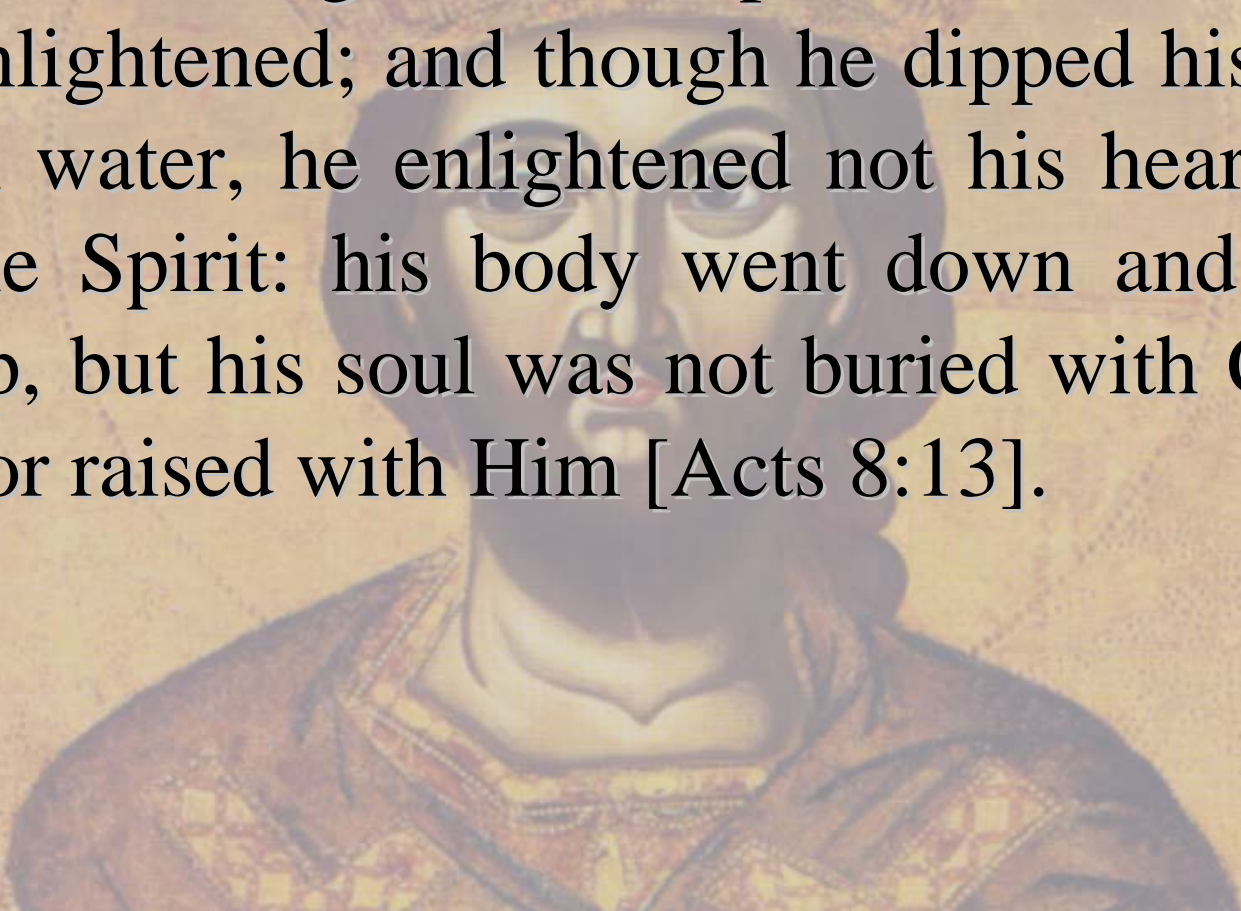
# Hierarchical Church

The three orders of the priesthood, according to Dionysius the Areopagite equal to the three stages of perfection. The deacons purify the catechumens & penitents by giving them ethical instruction. The priests illuminate the laity, who are able to receive the intelligible truth. The hierarchs are those who reached theosis and reached a more perfect life.



# Sacramental transformation

- Simon Magus was baptized, but was not enlightened; and though he dipped his body in water, he enlightened not his heart with the Spirit: his body went down and came up, but his soul was not buried with Christ, nor raised with Him [Acts 8:13].





# The Spiritual Ethos of priestly ministry

- *John Chrysostom says: The work of the priesthood is done on earth, but it is ranked among heavenly ordinances. And this is only right, for no man, no angel, no archangel, no other created power, but the Paraclete himself ordained this succession, and persuaded men, while still remaining in the flesh, to represent the ministry of angels..*
- *The priest stands bringing down, not fire, but the Holy Spirit.*



# The Priestly Character

*The priest should be blameless ἀνέγκλητος .*

- *“O Lord, stretch forth Thy hand from Thy holy place on high, and strengthen me for thine appointed service; that standing uncondemned before Thy dread altar, I may celebrate the bloodless ministry.”*



# *Innocency*

*“I will wash my hands in innocency and I will compass Thine altar... Destroy not my soul with the ungodly, nor my life with men of blood, in whose hands are iniquities; their right hand is full of bribes. But as for me, in mine innocence have I walked; redeem me, O Lord, and have mercy on me...”*



# *Without Condemnation*

- *“Enable us whom Thou hast placed in this Thy ministry, by the power of Thy Holy Spirit, without condemnation or faltering, with the clear witness of our conscience, to call upon Thee at all times and in every place.*
- *“Hear our prayer: cleanse our souls and bodies from every defilement of flesh and spirit, and enable us to stand before Thine holy altar free of guilt and judgment.”*



## *sinful and unprofitable servant*

- *“No one bound by the desires and pleasures of the flesh is worthy to come forth... look favorably on me thy sinful and unprofitable servant, and cleanse my soul and heart from an evil conscience. By the power of Thine Holy Spirit, enable me, clothed with the grace of priesthood, to stand before thine holy Table... Turn not thy face away from me or reject me from among thy children; but let these gifts be offered to thee by me thy sinful and unworthy servant.”*



# Fellow Clergy

- *"Do thou in thy goodness accept these gifts from the hands of us sinners."*
- The phrase "of us sinners" shows that there is a special sense of relatedness to our fellow clergy, a deeply-felt identity with the Apostolic Tradition, and a fundamental loyalty to the Master, Jesus Christ, and to the bishop who is the icon of God the Father.
- *O All-Holy Master, we also, thy sinful and unworthy ser-vants, who have been made worthy to serve Thy sacred Altar Table-not because of our own righteous deeds for we have not done a single good thing upon this earth-but because of thy mercies ..."*



# Liturgy After Liturgy

- We are a Eucharistic community. The Liturgy is the expression of what we express in faith, practice, tradition and moral value.
- The Liturgical life has to be continued in our personal lives and the lives of our community members. The Liturgy is not limited to the walls of the Church, but it is lived as the Liturgy after the Liturgy.



## *Husband of one wife* (Titus 1: 6-9)

μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἀνὴρ

- **Monogamy is the Rule.**
- **Teaching Monogamy or abstinence by Example.**
- There exist many interpretations of the verse "A husband of one wife:"
- 1- No successive polygamy: many consecutive lawful wives.
- 2- No simultaneous polygamy.
- 3- The celebrant ought to have a wife.



# Faithful to their wives

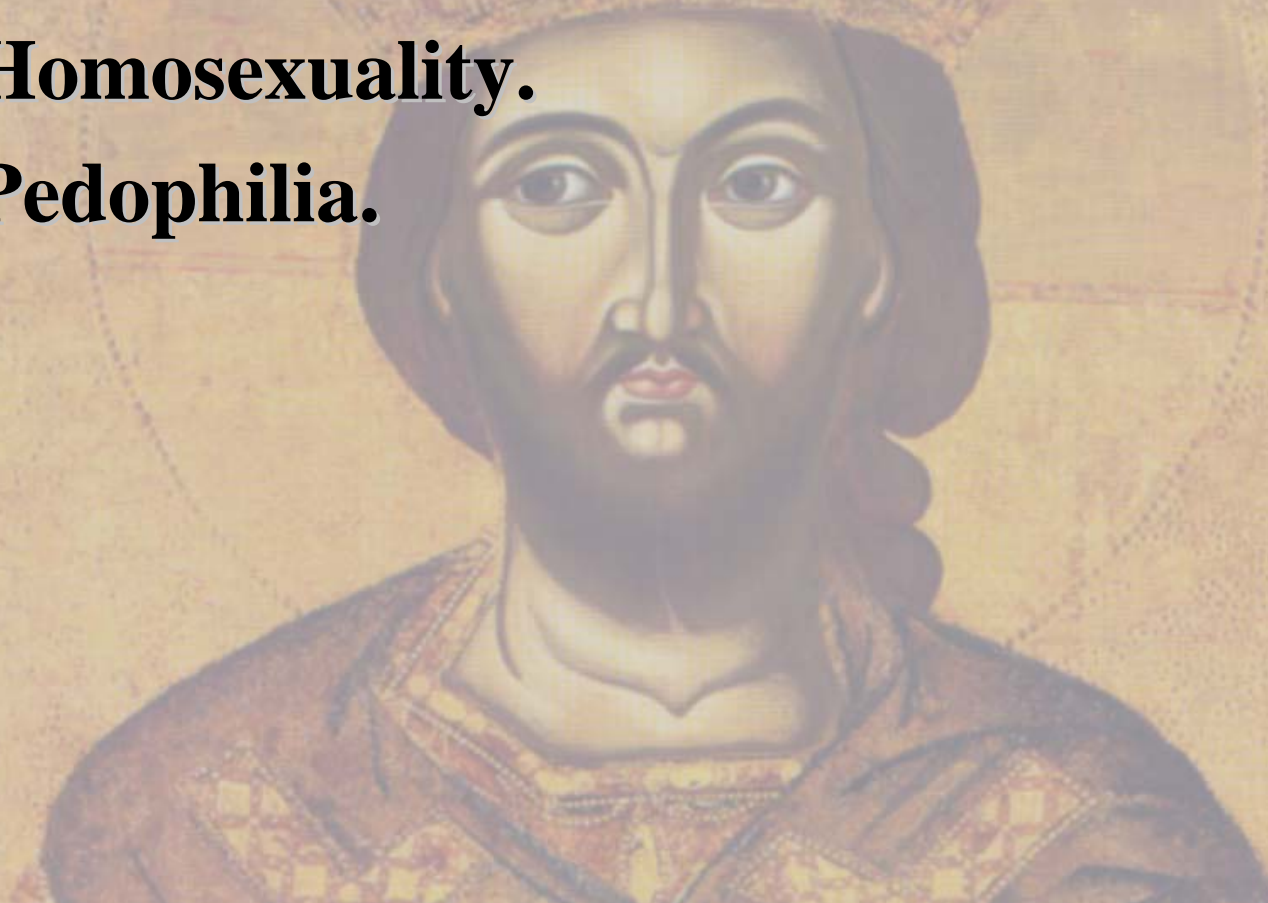
This passage emphasizes that the clergy should be faithful to their wives, and not to have extramarital affairs or in any way be sexually promiscuous.

**Marriage Honorable.** Paul says this to stop the mouths of those heretics who condemned marriage. He shows that it is not an unholy thing in itself, but so far honorable that a married man might ascend the holy throne.



# Sexual Failures

- **Libido.**
- **Homosexuality.**
- **Pedophilia.**



# Policy for Sexual Abuse

- "Sexual misconduct" is defined as one or more of the following:
- Sexual harassment in a situation where there is a pastoral, employment, mentor or colleague relationship between the persons involved;.



# Sexual exploitation

- Sexual exploitation, including but not limited to the development or the attempt to develop a sexual relationship between a clergyman, lay employee or volunteer and a person with whom he or she has a pastoral/professional relationship whether or not there is apparent consent from the individual;



# Sexual abuse

- Sexual abuse or sexual molestation of any person, including but not limited to any sexual involvement or sexual contact with a person who is a minor or who is legally incompetent;
- Sexual relations and/or conduct by a cleric or lay worker which violates the teachings and/or canons of the Orthodox Church and/or violates vows of celibacy and/or marriage



# Ethical Policy

The Church's policy, however, should be preventative, relying on training, educating, spiritually counseling the clergy and guiding them in their lives in all ways possible such as reasonable screening procedures.



*His Children Are Believers, not accused of riot or unruly*

τέκνα ἔχων πιστά μὴ ἐν κατηγορίᾳ ἀσωτίας, ἢ ἀνυπότακτα•

- He who cannot be the instructor of his own children, how could he be the teacher of others?
- If he lives this unity in his micro-Church, he will be able to translate it to the mega-Church.
- Parents should not be faulted if, having taught their children well, these turn out badly later.
- *Priests* are to be thankful in all things even when they have "a prodigal son," "a sick child" or an "ailing spouse."



# God's steward Θεοῦ οἰκονόμον

- The steward governs, supervises and manages the household of God. It is an action done in accord with God's will. It is the divine administration of the Church as his house. Many Fathers interpret it as a "*philanthropic action*" bonding together the believers given to their ministry by God.

# Not Arrogant μὴ αὐθάδη

- Arrogance is a man's aggrandizement of himself by thinking well of the virtues that are in him.
- Pride is a denial of God. It is a flight from God's help.
- It is the source of anger
- The gateway of hypocrisy.



# Not soon angry μὴ ὀργίζλον

- Anger dominates us because we see the other person as an obstacle. The self-centered man wants to see himself alone, he hates to see an obstacle. We want to impose on the others our own point of view by force. Anger comes from an internal refusal of the other person or his ideas. It destroys the community life and separates the brethren.



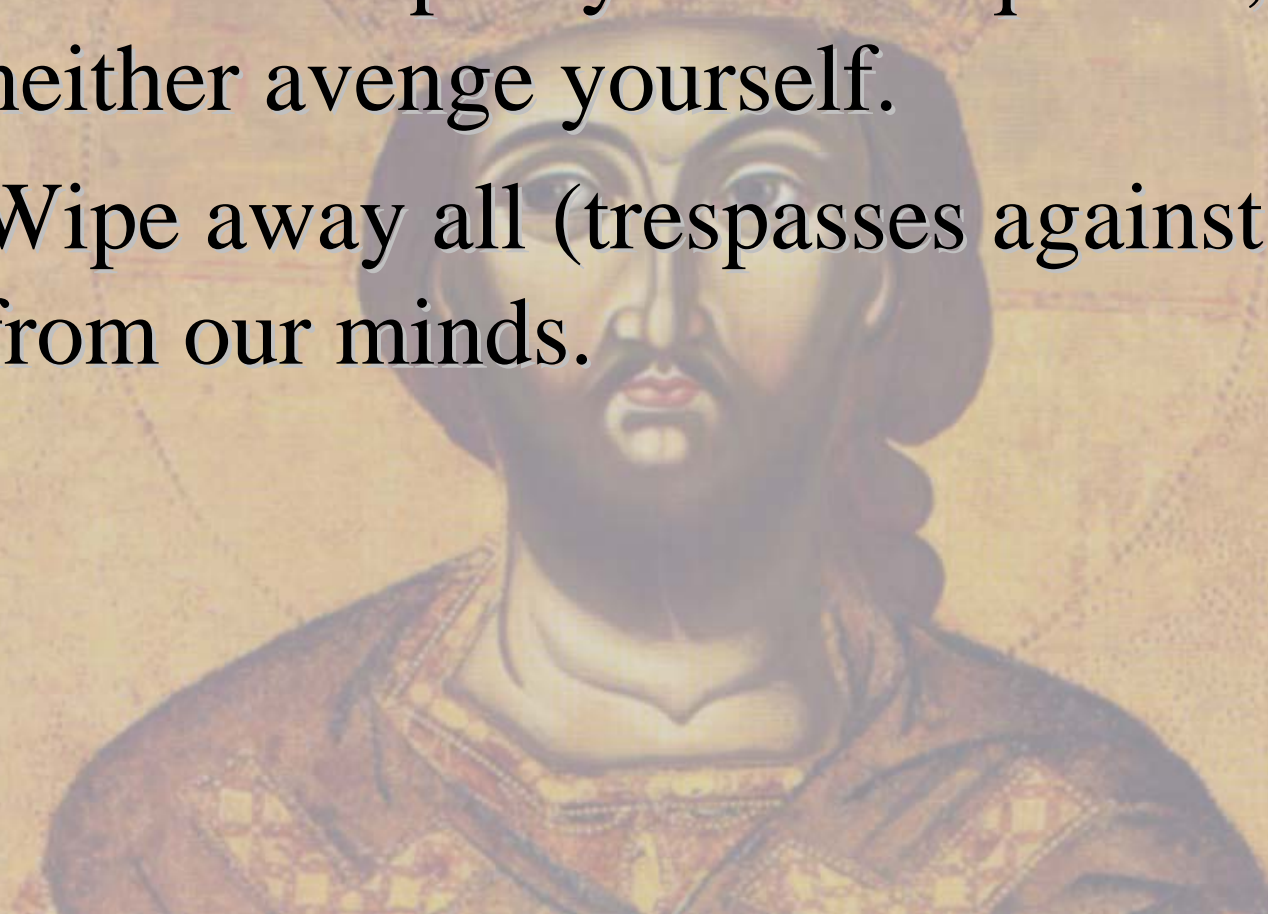
# Anger has three stages

- It starts as grudges within ourselves. Of recklessness is begotten bitterness, and of bitterness anger.
- Then it develops into rage and fury frenzy. The inflammation of the heart takes place improperly and untimely. Passion carries the priest away, and burns within him, and does not let the soul be at rest.
- Finally wrath changes our attitude from one situation to the other. It might lead to violence. Anger might become fierce, and wrath, cruel.



# Wiping Anger

- Stand not up in your own quarrel, neither avenge yourself.
- Wipe away all (trespasses against us) from our minds.



# Nor given to wine μὴ πάροινον

- Addiction is one of the most serious spiritual, physical and pastoral problems facing some clergy today.
- Chemical addiction in all its forms is accepted as a chronic progressive illness. The symptoms of the disease bring devastation to the priest.
- Identification.
- Intervention and treatment.
- Post Treatment Care.



# Not aggressive μὴ πλήκτην

- The physician does not strike. Rather he heals and restores any who might strike him.
- Our Lord has by no means taught us to strike anyone, but, on the contrary, when he was smitten he smote not again, when he was reviled he reviled not again.
- The canons command that the striker should be deposed whether he is a bishop, presbyter or deacon.



# Physical And Emotional Abuse

- Striking a minor is considered physical abuse and should be reported immediately to the authorities. Physical abuse includes any types of physical assaults that caused, or could have caused, serious physical injury to the child.
- Emotional abuse is prohibited which involves any physical or emotional assaults (such as torture or close confinement) that caused or could have caused serious psychological injury to the child.
- Clergy, staff, and volunteers will maintain a professional work environment that is free from physical, psychological, written, or verbal intimidation or harassment at all times.



# Harassment

- Harassment encompasses a broad range of behavior, including but not limited to the following:
- Physical or mental abuse.
- Racial insults.
- Ethnic slurs.
- Unwelcome sexual advances or touching.
- Sexual comments or jokes.
- Requests for sexual favors as a condition of employment, promotion, or compensation.
- Display of offensive materials



**Not greedy for sordid gain** μὴ  
αἰσχροκερδῆ,

- The love of money wounds the center of our vitality, our souls, our very lives, and may overthrow our ministry. Jesus calls mammon “a master,” not because of its own nature, but on account of the wretchedness of those who bow themselves beneath it. So also he calls the stomach a god, not from the dignity of such a mistress but from the wretchedness of those enslaved.



# The welfare and dignity of the clergy

- The welfare and dignity of the clergy should be of primary concern to the Church. Many Churches have formed policy guidelines for Basic "Minimum Monthly" Stipend and Benefits for Full-Time Pastors as economic conditions have changed and as new circumstances have arisen. They have established permanent commissions to review and monitor all clergy benefits to ensure that sufficient funding exists to pay anticipated benefits for retiring clergy, and to offer the best possible insurance and savings plans.



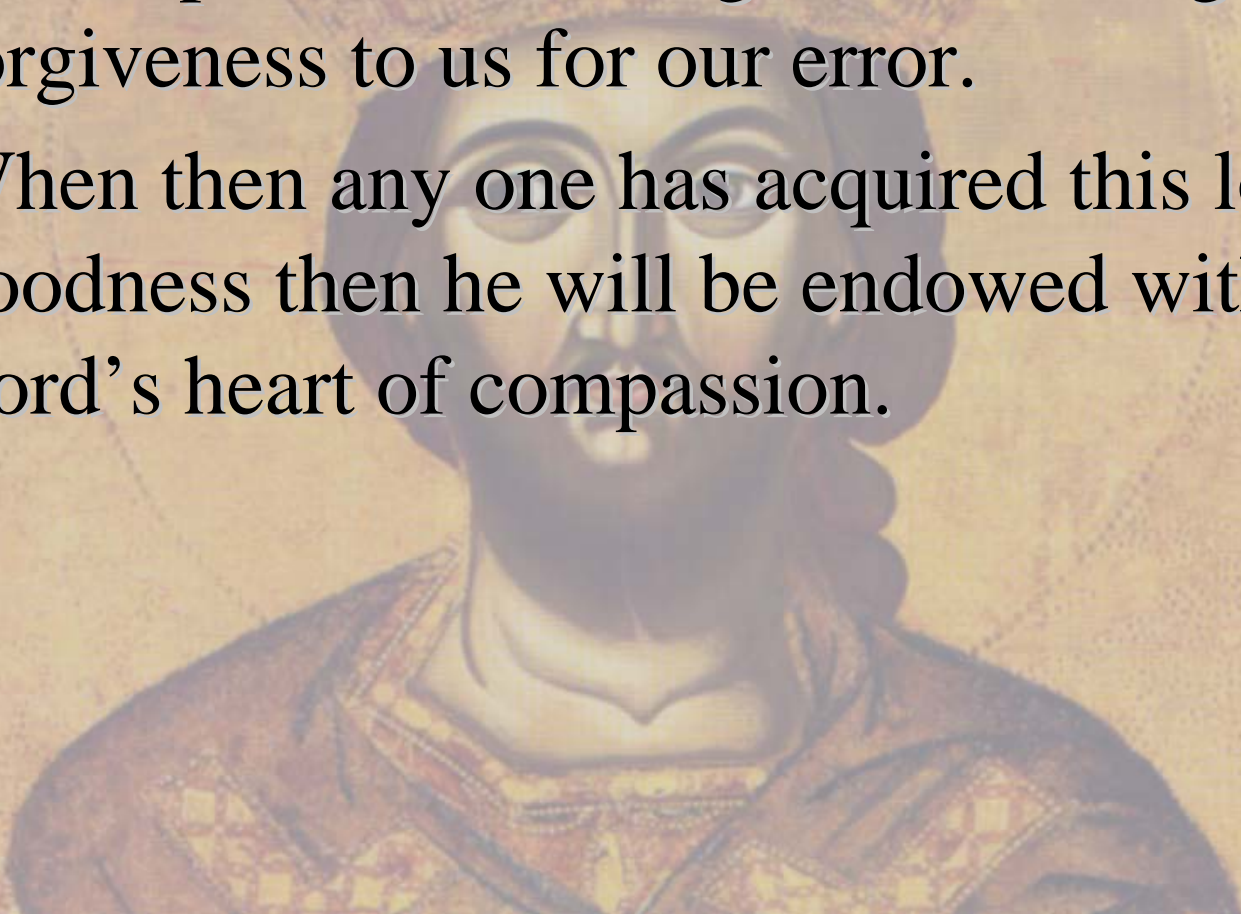
# Hospitable φιλόξενον

- Helping widows,
- Looking after orphans and the needy,
- Rescuing the servants of God from necessities,
- Reverencing the aged,
- Bearing insolence,
- Encouraging those who are sick in soul,
- Not casting those who have fallen into sin from the faith, but turning them back and restoring them to peace of mind,
- Hospitable to visitors, travelers and new comers to the Church.



# **A lover of goodness** φιλάγαθον

- The implanted love of goodness has granted forgiveness to us for our error.
- When then any one has acquired this love of goodness then he will be endowed with the Lord's heart of compassion.



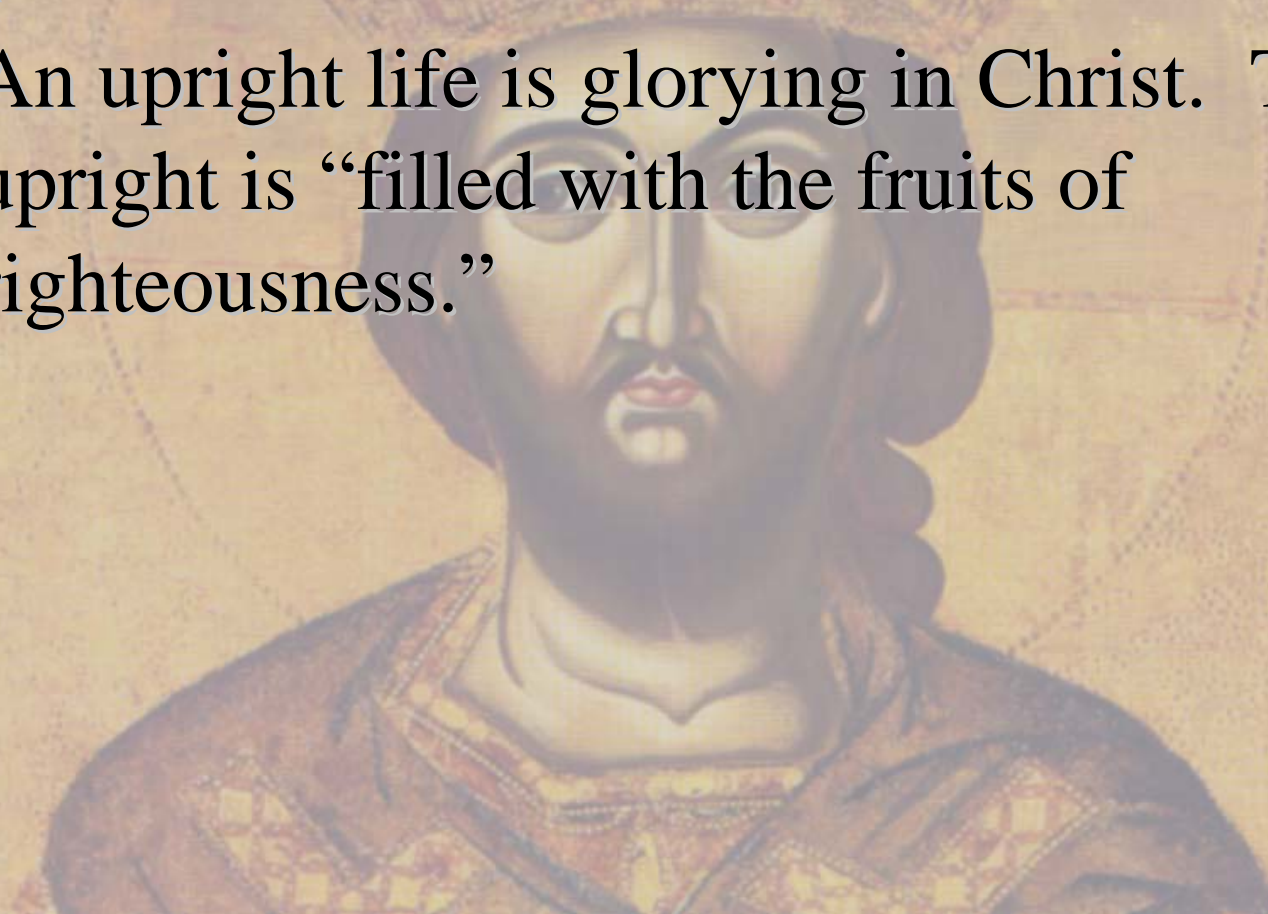
# Prudent σώφρονα

- In the NT it is coupled with: νηφάλιος, δίκαιος, σεμνός, αγνή
- What is the advantage of ministry, unless a priest is at the same time prudent and discreet in “knowing how he ought to answer each one?” (Col. iv: 6.)



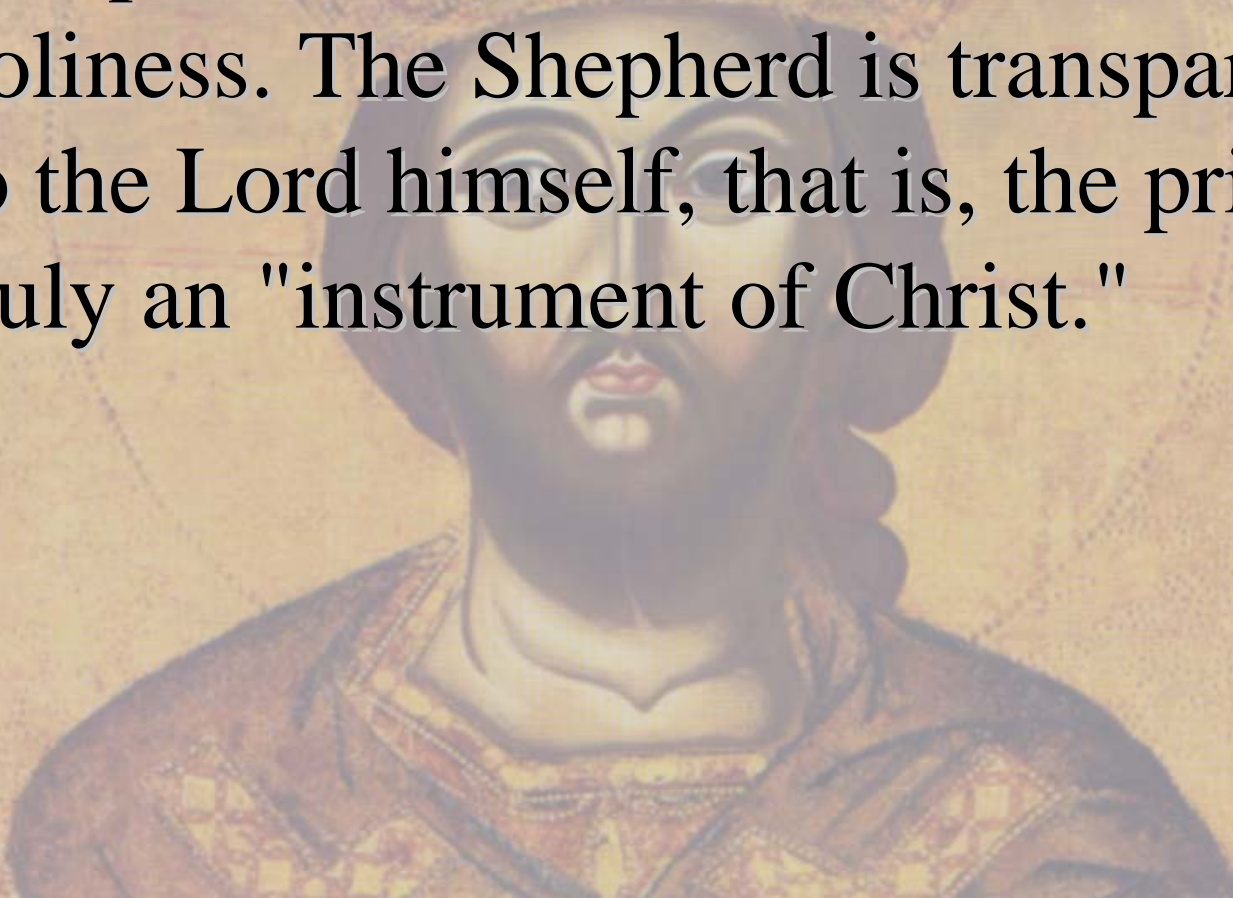
# Upright δίκαιον

- (a man in natural state, as God created him)
- An upright life is glorying in Christ. The upright is “filled with the fruits of righteousness.”



# Devout ὄσιον

- The priest is an icon of Christ in his holiness. The Shepherd is transparent to the Lord himself, that is, the priest is truly an "instrument of Christ."





# Self-controlled ἐγκρατή,

- The term means temperance, continence, abstinence (it is used in conjunction with other virtues, as quality of love).
- Self-control is a necessary preparation to selflessness. It is linked to the angelic life whose aim is to serve God and the others.
- It is a return to the paradise through elevating ourselves to the grace of the Holy Spirit.
- We have to understand the meaning of pain, suffer and misery, and to see the spiritual benefit.
- Some sufferings should be understood as cleansing purging and purifying means.



# Patience

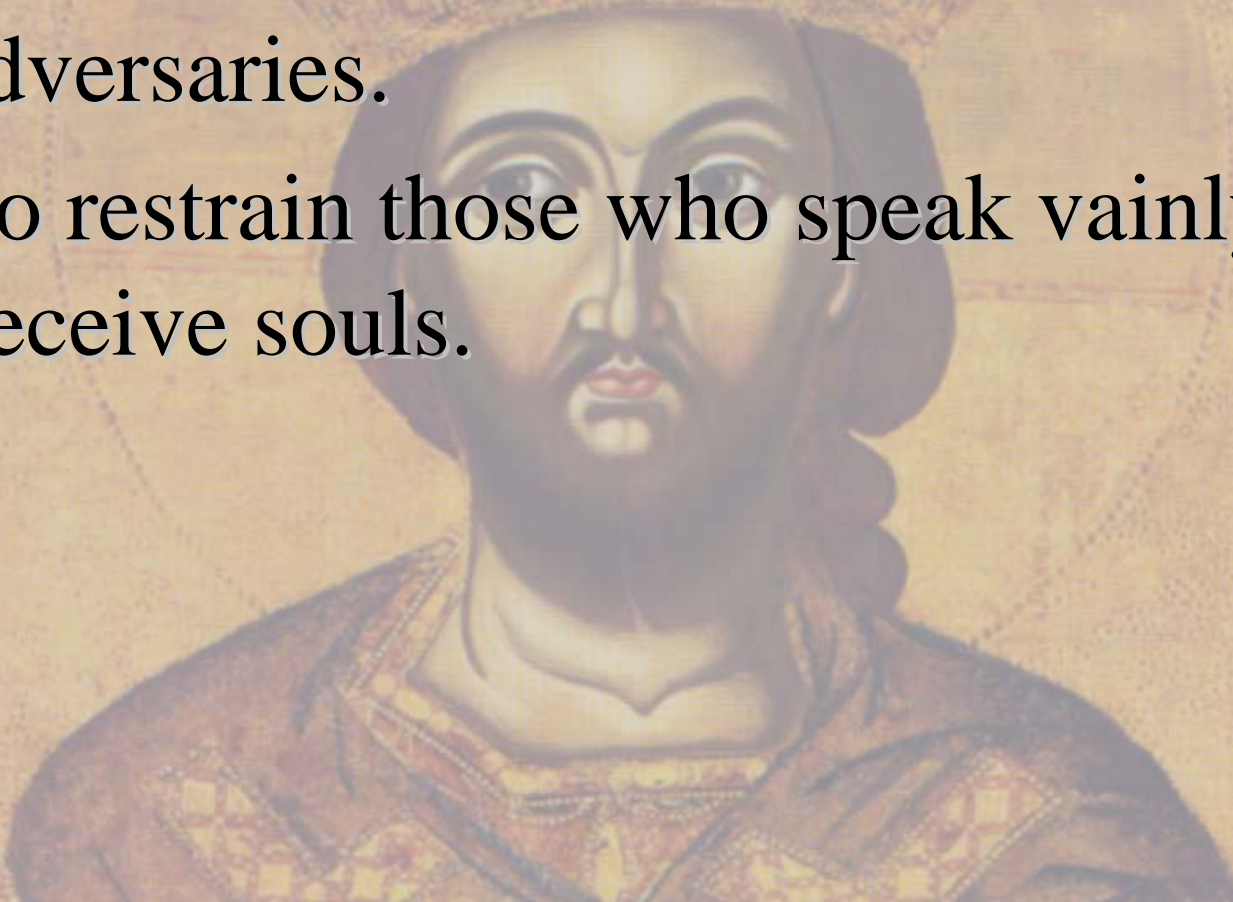
- Patience creates hope which is the supplementary of virtues. Hope creates a confidence in life.
- Through self-control we understand ourselves our reactions.
- Patience during suffering is important in Christianity, it will destroy in us the feeling of despair, anger, and leads us to love and forgiveness.



# Ordained to Teach.

ἀντεχόμενον τοῦ κατὰ τὴν διδαχὴν πιστοῦ λόγου

- He must be able also to refute the adversaries.
- To restrain those who speak vainly and deceive souls.



# Scriptural Knowledge Required

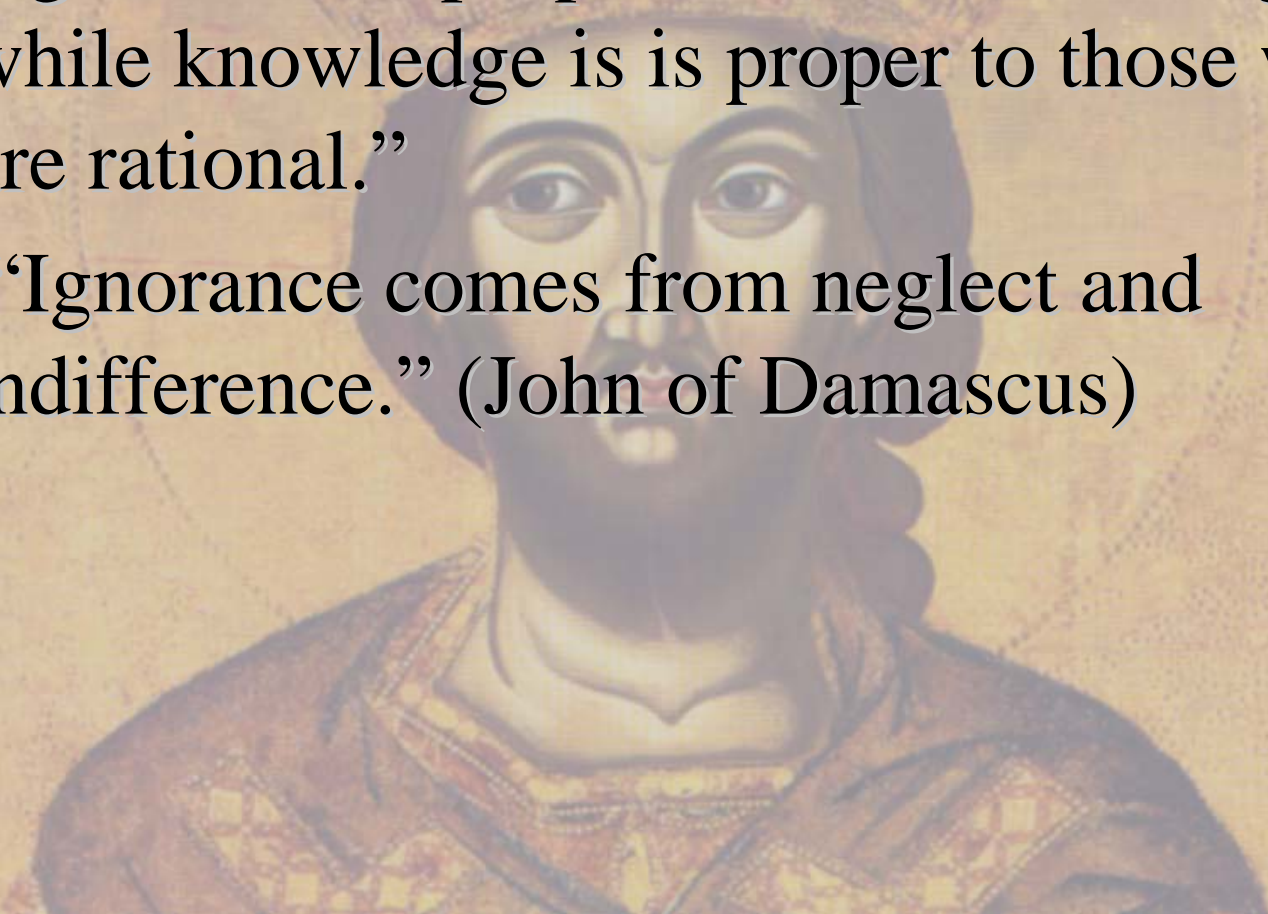
ἵνα δυνατὸς ᾖ καὶ παρακαλεῖν ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ τῇ ὑγαινούσῃ,

- You should strength your spirituality by means of reading the Bible and the Fathers of the Church on daily basis.
- The priest should be careful to seek a knowledge of the Scriptures and the Fathers.



# **Knowledge is the light of the rational soul (John of Damascus)**

- “Ignorance is proper to irrational beings, while knowledge is proper to those who are rational.”
- “Ignorance comes from neglect and indifference.” (John of Damascus)



# Saving Others

- Playing an active role in the missionary activity of the Church. Saint John Chrysostom said; “I do not believe in the salvation of anyone who does not try to save others.” Our mission is bring large sectors of society that are living outside the Church. These are not only the non-believers or the mass of half-hearted Christians in our parishes, but those who have never known, or have lost the “sense of God,” or who lost the understanding of human values.



# Convicting the gainsayers

καὶ τοὺς ἀντιλέγοντας ἐλέγχειν

- The godless system of the heresies is a road with many branches, and whenever a man has strayed from the one straight way, then he falls down precipices again and again.
- The undertaking of refuting heresies is full of labor, and requires extended research.
- As the Fathers refuted the heretical teachings, so the pastor has a duty to keep his flock away from all modern heresies, as from so many pitfalls.
- The priest should be an apologist.



# Drawing to ourselves the true healer

- 1 - Priesthood is not a profession like other professions. It is a divine vocation that transcends all earthly occupations. It is not given to us for obtaining earthly gain, or for reaching high social status, but for the salvation and recovery of our parishioners--our patients. There is no higher mission than the mission of priesthood, that aims to teach our parishioners that the best investment they make is the spiritual investment.
- 2 – It is not possible for us to perform our duties without reaching high spiritual and ethical status. Spirituality is the cornerstone that helps us to treat ourselves and our parishioners-our patients. Without spirituality healing of the “nous” can’t be achieved.
- 3 – If we have the knowledge, but we do not have love, we will be only a “resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.” We have to learn not to share human knowledge, but selfless love, & to remember that the parishioners—our patients need the love of God, so that they may draw to themselves the true healer. We are called to give ourselves and our parishioners a strong medicine, the kind that the discouragements of this life will not make it ineffective, but will be a source of healing.
- 4-The mixture of selfless love and spiritual knowledge is the greatest power to lead our parishioners to the salvation in Christ.
- 5 – All virtues are weapons we carry to fight the evil one, and to live in Christ. If we do not give evidence of all these virtues, but present ourselves unprepared of priesthood, nothing will prevent us also from enduring all kinds of attacks. If we prepare ourselves, He will not permit us to be overwhelmed, even if countless illnesses strike.