

# *The equal to Apostles*

## *Saint Kosmas the Aetolos*

**The teachings of Saint Kosmas (1714-1779) from Aetolia, Greece, who was a Hieromonk on Holy Mount Athos.**

### **4. Fourth teaching.**

*“If we don't forgive our enemies, even if we shed our blood for the love of Christ, we'll go to hell”*

**OUR LORD AND GOD Jesus Christ**, the sweetest master, the creator of angels, my brethren, moved by the compassion and great love which he has for our race, has granted us and continues to grant us each day his immeasurable gifts. Behold how he's made us worthy this evening to glorify and honor him and our Lady the Theotokos. And if the Lord were to forgive us our sins through her intercessions and make us worthy of his kingdom to worship and glorify the All-Holy Trinity, we would rejoice and be glad always.



#### **Adam and Eve**

**GOD PUT ADAM AND EVE** in paradise and they rejoiced as angels. He instructed them not to eat the fruit of a particular fig tree. But they disobeyed God's command and they ate and they did not repent. God expelled them from paradise and they lived in this world for nine hundred and thirty years, shedding black and bitter tears. And after they died, they went to hell and burned for five thousand five hundred years.

The gracious God had compassion for our race and he came down and became flesh by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Ever-Virgin Mary, and became perfect man without sin, and he redeemed us from the hands of the devil he revealed to us our sacred Faith, holy Baptism, the sacred Sacraments so that we know where to walk. On Holy Thursday night the Lord took bread and wine and blessed them and he made the holy Sacraments - his all-holy Body and Blood - and gave communion to the twelve Apostles. Up to here, we have related the story in two teachings and left off. Now, hoping in the compassion of our Christ, and as the Holy Spirit inspires us, we'll begin and tell you the remainder in brief.

#### **The Gospel**

**FIRST, MY BRETHREN**, you must pay close attention to all the teachings of the sacred Gospel because it is all diamonds, treasures, joy, gladness eternal life, and especially to the sacred Sacraments. First, observe what our Christ has done. He didn't allow hatred and hostility to prevent him from giving communion to Judas, his enemy, but just as he gave communion to the eleven disciples, his good friends, so he gave to Judas his enemy.

#### **Saprikios and Nikephoros: the Question of Forgiveness**

**THERE WAS A MAN** named Saprikios who always fasted, prayed, provided money for poor brides, built churches; he never did a harmful thing but loved justice. There was also another man named Nikephoros who never did anything good. In fact, he stole, cheated people, fornicated; he did everything that was bad. He also wanted to murder his brother Saprikios.

One day, the king sent for Saprikios and asked him to deny Christ and to worship idols. Saprikios said: "I'll never deny my Christ.

The king tortured him a great deal, and when he saw that there was no way to defeat him, the king decided to put Saprikios to death. He was handed over to the executioner, who took him to the place of execution.

Nikephoros learned of this and went along the way and said to Saprikios: "Brother, I have done You wrong and I have learned that they're putting you to death. So, I beg you brother, forgive me; I have wronged you."

Nikephoros bent low, begged him again, and kissed his feet.

"Brother," he said, "forgive me for God's sake."

But his brother wouldn't forgive him.

They reached the place of execution where Nikephoros begged Saprikios again, with tears in his eyes, but he wouldn't forgive him.

Once more Nikephoros said to him: "Behold, brother, they're about to kill you, why don't you forgive me? You'll be damned. I forgive you with all my heart."

Saprikios replied: "I'll never forgive you."

And as the executioner lifted the sword to cut off his head, the most gracious God, observing the scene, lifted his grace, and Saprikios asked the soldier: "Why do you want to kill me?"

The soldier said: "You mean to say that after all this time you don't know why? Because you will not worship the idols."

"Is that why you are torturing me?" said Saprikios. "I deny Christ and I'll worship the idols."

As soon as he said this, they stopped the execution. He denied Christ and went with the devil. Nikephoros, seeing the angels who stood by holding a golden crown, said to the executioner: "I'm a Christian and I believe in my Christ."

Then he said to Saprikios: "Forgive me, my brother, and God will forgive you."

And immediately the executioner cut off Nikephoros' head and it was received by the angels who took it to paradise. This is why we also, we who are pious Christians, should love our enemies and should forgive them. We should feed them. We should give them drink. We should pray to God for their souls and then say to God: "My God, I beg you to forgive me as I forgive my enemies." But if we don't forgive our enemies, even if we shed our blood for the love of Christ, we'll go to hell.

### **The Question of Anathema**

DO YOU PRONOUNCE anathemas here? Be careful, my fellow Christians, never pronounce anathemas, because anathema is separation from God, from the angels, from paradise, and leads to the devil and to hell.

It was for that brother's sake that Christ was crucified, to get him out of hell; and you, for an insignificant thing, pronounce an anathema against him? You put him into hell to burn forever? Are you so hard-hearted? But just think how many sins you have committed from the day of your birth; how many sins have you committed with your eyes, your mouth, or in your mind? Do you think you are sinless?

The holy Gospel tells us only Christ is without sin. We human beings are all sinners, so don't pronounce anathemas. This is why, my fellow Christians, if you wish God to forgive you of all your sins and to put you into paradise, let your nobility say three times for your enemies: "May God forgive and have mercy upon them."

### **The Virtues of Forgiveness**

THIS FORGIVENESS, my brothers, has two properties: it illuminates and it burns completely. I told you to forgive your enemies for your own good. And you who have harmed your brethren and have heard me tell them to forgive you, don't rejoice, but indeed weep because your forgiveness has become a fire on your head if you don't make restitution. You should weep and beg God to forgive you your own sins. If all of the spiritual 'men, patriarchs, bishops, the entire world forgive you, you remain unforgiven. For who has the power to forgive you? He who has suffered your injustice.

If we examine the issue carefully, you should return four for one as the holy Gospel says. Only then will you receive forgiveness. If you don't have the money to return it, go and sell your possessions, and whatever you receive give to those you have cheated. If you don't have enough, go and sell yourself into slavery, and whatever you receive give that. It would be better for you to be a slave on earth for five or

ten years and to go to paradise rather than be free on earth and tomorrow to go to hell and burn forever.

So, my brethren, whoever has wronged any Christian, Jew or Turk, return what you have taken unjustly because it is cursed and you'll never get ahead. What you have gained unjustly you use to feed yourself, but it will cause your death and God will put you into hell.

Whoever is willing to make restitution of what he has taken unjustly let him stand up and tell me and I'll ask all the Christians to forgive him. if you put a stolen sheep among one hundred of your own, it will pollute them all because it's accursed and anathematized. I beg you, my fellow Christians, to say to those who are willing to make restitution three times: "May God forgive them and have mercy upon them."

Our first teaching is this: whoever among us has suffered injustice, let us forgive our enemies for our own good; and whoever among us has committed an injustice, let us make restitution.

### **Confession and the Sacraments**

THE SECOND TEACHING is this: if we too wish to benefit from the sacred Sacraments like the eleven good Apostles, and not to blaspheme like the bad one, Judas, we should make a clean confession and receive communion with fear, awe, and reverence. Then we'll be blessed. But if we go to receive holy Communion without confession, polluted with sin, we put fire into ourselves and we burn.

Who can tell me, my brothers, is the sun bright or dark? I believe that all of you know that it's bright and that it illuminates everything. There are, however, some animals called bats and others, owls, who when the sun comes out are blinded and are made dizzy and can't see. They see when it becomes dark. It's the same with the sacred Sacraments. They enlighten the good person and make him like an angel. On the other hand, they confuse the sinner and he becomes like a devil.

Just as fire doesn't burn all things - indeed, gold is brightened and cleansed - while it burns other things, let us too become gold to be cleaned, and not like wood to be burned.

Here where I have come, my fellow Christians, I received a great joy and a great sorrow. I received a great joy from seeing your good disposition and your good repentance. I received sorrow from thinking of my own unworthiness because I don't have time to hear all of your confessions one by one, so that each of You might tell me his sins and so I can advise you as God inspires me. I want to do it, my children, but I can't.

[I am] just like a father who is ill and is visited by his son [who asks] to be comforted, but being unable to do so, the father sends him away. But how does he send him away? With a burning heart. He wants to comfort him, but can't. But again, if you don't want to be deprived completely, I will tell you this. If you wish to heal your souls, you need four things.

Shall we make a bargain? Let me take upon myself all the sins you've committed from the time of your birth until now, And let your nobility hold four hairs. And what will I do [with your sin] ? I have a deep hole and I will throw them into it. What is the deep hole? It's the compassion of our Christ. The first hair is your confession, the first foundation of what we have said: forgive your enemies. Will you do it?

"We will, O saint of God."

You have taken the first hair. The second hair is to find a good confessor, educated and virtuous, so that you can confess to him all your sins. If you have one hundred sins and confess ninety-nine to the confessor and hide one, all of your sins are unforgiven. It is when You commit a sin that you should be ashamed, but when you confess you should feel no shame.

A woman went to confession to an ascetic. The ascetic had a virtuous disciple. The ascetic said to his disciple: "Go and hear the woman's confession."

The disciple went close enough to see her, but didn't listen. The woman confessed and left. Later, the disciple returned and said: "Elder, I saw a strange miracle. When the woman was confessing, I saw small snakes coming out of her. I saw a large one hanging out and it tried to come out but it withdrew again."

The ascetic replied: "Go, and ask her to come back quickly."

The disciple went and found her dead. He returned and told the elder what happened. Unable to

understand the miracle, he prayed to God to make known to him if the woman was saved or damned. A black bear appeared before him and said to him: "I'm the woman who came to confession, but I didn't confess one of the mortal sins I committed. This is why all my sins weren't forgiven. And the Lord ordered me to go to hell and to burn forever."

And immediately there came out of her a stink in the form of smoke and she disappeared before him. That's why, my fellow Christians, when You confess, tell all of your sins Completely. First say to your confessor: "Confessor, I'll be damned because I don't love God and my brethren with all my heart as I love myself."

And then tell him everything that pricks your conscience: if You have committed murder, or fornicated, or swore falsely, or lied, or haven't honored your parents, or similar things. Behold, You have taken the second hair.

The third hair is when you have confessed and the confessor asks you: "Why, my child, have you committed these sins?" You must be careful not to condemn anyone else but yourself and say: "I did these things due to my evil disposition."

Is it a hard thing to accuse yourself? No. So you have taken the third hair. Now the fourth. When the confessor gives you permission to leave, depart with the firm resolve that it would be better to spill your blood rather than to sin.

Will you do this?"

"Yes."

You have taken the fourth hair.

The four hairs are your medicine as we have said. The first is to forgive your enemies; the second, to forgive completely" the third, to condemn yourself; the fourth, to decide not to sin again and if you can, to go to confession every day. If you can't every day, then once a week, or once a month, or at least four times a year.

### **Children and Confession**

GET YOUR CHILDREN in the habit of following the good road, of going to confession from an early age. Those penances which the confessor gives you, the forty liturgies, repentance, fasting, and others are not medicine, but [are given to You] so that you won't fall into sin again. And whoever puts into his heart these four things is saved even if he dies that moment. But without them, even if he does good a thousand times, he'll go to hell.

### **Peter and Paul**

ONCE, MY FELLOW CHRISTIANS, two men came to confession to me: Peter and Paul. Now see whether I helped them or not. I bare my heart to You. Peter said to me: "I have, confessor, from the time of my birth until now fasted, prayed, given alms to the poor, built monasteries, churches, and have done other good works. But I won't forgive my enemies." I sent him to hell.

Paul came and said to me: "From the time of my birth I have never done anything good, but, indeed, I have committed murders, I have fornicated, stolen, I have burned down churches, monasteries; I have done all that is bad, but I forgive my enemy." Look what I did to him. I immediately embraced him and kissed him. I gave him permission to receive communion. Did I do right or wrong? Of course you want to condemn me and tell me: "You sent Peter to hell for such a small thing just because he couldn't forgive his enemy? And Paul, who did so much evil, and because he forgave his enemies you forgave him and gave him permission to receive communion?"

"Yes, my brethren, that's what I did."

Do you want to know what Peter is like? He is like a hundred pounds of flour in which you put a little yeast, which has so much strength that it can turn those one hundred pounds of dough and make it rise. That's what all those good acts Peter did are like. That small dose of hatred, which doesn't allow him to forgive his enemy, changes the flour and transforms it into the devil's poison. That's why I sent him to

hell. On the other hand, what's Paul like? He's like a pile of kindling wood. You put a small lighted candle to the pile and it all burns. Paul's sins are like that pile of kindling wood. The forgiveness which he granted his enemy was like the candle which burned all the wood, that is, his sins. And I sent him to paradise.

### **Fasting and the Hungry**

THE LORD, MY BRETHREN, was surrendered into the hands of the lawless Jews. He was cursed, beaten, crucified according to the flesh. On Holy Wednesday the Lord was sold and on Holy Friday he was crucified. We too, my good Christians, should always fast, but more so on Wednesday because our Lord was sold on that day, and on Friday because he was crucified. Similarly, we are obligated to fast during Lent. The Holy Spirit inspired the holy Fathers of the Church and they legislated that we should fast to put our passions to death, to humble the body, and especially so that we can live easily with little. I can live on six ounces of bread. This bread is blessed by God because it is necessary, but not six and one-half ounces. That extra half ounce is cursed because it is wasted and it belongs to him who is hungry. Do you keep the four lents, my fellow Christians? What do you do here? If you are Christians you must keep them, especially Great Lent. Do you keep the three day (fast)? It is a good and holy thing to observe Clean Monday.

### **Abraham**

ABRAHAM ALWAYS KEPT his door open and all the poor found refuge there. Abraham never sat down to eat without a stranger at his table. The devil was filled with malice and went into the street and stopped passers-by from coming to Abraham's tent. Abraham went out and waited on the street for three days without eating. Seeing his good disposition, the most gracious God [caused] three men to appear. Abraham took them into his tent and he kissed them. Later they disappeared in front of him. He then realized that it was the Holy Trinity, and he glorified God under the typos of the Holy Trinity. Whoever fasts for three days has a reward for his soul. But I don't tell you to do more than you can. There's benefit even if you fast for one day.

### **The World is Like a Jail**

WISHING TO SHOW what a great evil the children of the devil, the Jews, tried to do, God shut off the sun from six o'clock to nine o'clock in the whole world. The rocks split, the whole world trembled. The Lord was placed into the grave and immediately thousands of dead rose, many of whom were dead for thousands of years, and they declared that only Christ is the Son and Word of God and true God, and the life of the dead. We too, my good Christians, must from now on not mourn for those who have died as do those who are irreverent and without faith - those who have no hope in the resurrection. This world, my brethren, is like a jail. When must one rejoice, when he enters jail or when he is freed from jail? It seems to me that when one enters jail he should weep and feel sorrow and when one leaves jail he should rejoice.

### **Mourning the Dead**

Oh, MY BRETHREN, don't be sad for the dead, but if you love them, do everything you can for their souls: liturgies, memorial services, fasting, prayers, and alms, And all of you women who are wearing dirty clothes because of your dead, take them off because you harm yourselves and your dead. It is natural for a person to be born and to die. We should cry when we are born and rejoice when we die.

### **The Death of Children**

INDEED, DON'T CRY FOR THE death of small children, who are like angels in paradise - Your child belongs to God, and when he gave it to you, he honored you. When he has taken it from you, be honored that your child is rejoicing in paradise forever. It is unseemly for you to sit there and cry.

A king asks for your child to make him a vizier and you rejoice. How much more should you rejoice when the most gracious God found you worthy and took the fruit of your stinking womb and placed your child in paradise, and keeps it to present it to you during the Second Coming, more glorious than the sun, so that you can receive your wages and rejoice with him always?

There are some who have the devil in their heart and say that there is no resurrection and that they have never seen anyone rise from the dead. Wasn't everyone here dead before he was born? Just as the Lord was able to raise us from our mother's womb, so he can raise us from the womb of the earth. What difference is there between our mother's womb and the grave? Can't we see the resurrection plainly? When we sleep, aren't we like dead? What is 'sleep'? A small death.

Death is a great sleep. Wheat that falls to the earth, if it doesn't rain for it to spoil and become like jelly, won't grow. So are we who die and are buried in the earth.

If our Christ hadn't been buried in a grave, he wouldn't have watered eternal life and the resurrection. Can't you see clearly how God raises the grass from the earth each year? We don't have the knowledge, my fellow Christians, to see everything. God has given us everything. So for the present, I beg you, my brethren, to say for all the dead three times: "May God forgive them and have mercy on them."

### **The Lord's Day**

THE LORD WENT TO HELL and brought out Adam and Eve and our race. He rose on the third day. He appeared twelve times to his Apostles. There was joy in heaven, joy on earth, and in the entire world. It was poison and a two-edged sword in the heart of the Jews, and especially of the devil. This is why the Jews don't hate any day as much as Sunday, when they hear our priest say: "Christ, our true God, who rose from the dead." Because that which the Jews planned to do in order to erase Christ's name turned against them. We too, my brethren, should always rejoice, but especially on Sunday which is the day of our Christ's resurrection. For Sunday was the day of the Annunciation of our Lady the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary. It is on Sunday that the Lord will raise the entire world. We, too, should work six days for these earthly, fruitless, and false things, and on Sunday we should go to Church and meditate over our sins, death, hell, paradise, and over our souls which are more valuable than the whole world. We should not overeat nor drink excessively nor commit sins. Nor should we work or do business on Sunday. The profit made on Sunday is cursed and damned, and you put a fire and a curse in your home and not a blessing. God may either cause you to die prematurely, or your wife, or your son, or your animal, or he may do some other evil to you. Hence, my brethren, so that no evil may befall you, either spiritual or physical, I advise you to respect Sunday, since it is dedicated to God. What do you do here, my fellow Christians? Do you respect Sunday? If you are Christians respect it.

Do you have sheep here? What do you do with the milk on Sunday? Listen my child, collect it and divide in into seven parts. Keep six for yourself, and the seventh part give as alms to the poor, or to the Church, so that God will bless your possessions. And if you find it necessary and wish to sell your products on Sunday, don't put that profit with the other in your purse because it defiles the rest. Give it as alms so that God will watch over you.

On the fortieth day (after the Resurrection) the Lord blessed the holy Apostles. He ascended into heaven and sat on the right hand of the eternal Father to co-reign eternally and to be worshipped by the angels.

### **The End of the World and the Last Judgment**

THERE'S ONE THING I'll reveal to you, my fellow Christians. I know that I'll make your heart bum. It's terrible and sad, my heart trembles for me to say it. But what can I do since our Christ tells me if I don't reveal it, he will put me to death and place me in hell. The Holy Bible, the holy and sacred Gospel, reveals to us that the end of the world will take place in the eighth (great) century (1500-2500 AD) and this world will be destroyed. And God will send the prophet Elias to teach Christians to guard the faith. The Antichrist, my brethren, is a person who has an evil mind, an evil disposition, and has the devil in his heart. He says he is God and he will put to death the prophet Elias. Having examined the subject, my brothers, I learned and I understood that the prophet Elias and the Antichrist have come and that the latter has killed the prophet. Elias, my fellow Christians, has been alive all these years, and God knows where he has kept him hidden until today. If you wish to know where he is, he is near here, and the words I speak to you belong to him. When the prophet Elias comes to teach, he will not reveal himself to the world, as the Holy Spirit says, so that by coming he will not turn everything upside down.

Thus says the Holy Spirit. so that he'll frighten and shake the world and the earth. I don't want to reveal it

to you Christians. But what is there to reveal, my children? His zeal and his teaching. This, too, the most-gracious God has made me worthy to reveal because of his compassion. And don't expect another Elias to teach you. But what can we expect? It is sad for me to tell you! Today, tomorrow, we can expect thirst, great hunger, when we will offer thousands of gold coins and we will not be able to find a little bread or water. Today, tomorrow, we can expect mortal illnesses, when the living will not have time enough to bury the dead. A world-wide earthquake will take place and the whole earth will become a plain. All the mountains will fall, all the homes, and the sea will rise five yards higher than the highest mountains. The stars will fall from the sky; the sun and moon will be extinguished; the sky which is visible, the earth, everything the entire world will be destroyed. When will all of this take place? Our Christ tells us the time is approaching soon. The knife is touching the bone.

Everything will happen suddenly. It may even happen tonight. Maybe it has begun already? Don't you see that your crops have failed and your animals have died? The rivers and springs have dried up. Today you are deprived of one thing, tomorrow another. God is giving it to us a little at a time, and we stupid people don't understand.

I say this to you and I counsel you, even if the sky were to fall down, even if the earth would rise up, even if the whole world were destroyed, as it is due to do so, today, tomorrow, don't be concerned with what God is going to do. Let them burn your body, let them fry it, let them take your possessions - don't concern yourself. Give them away - they are not yours. You need your soul and Christ. Even if the whole world were to fall apart, no one can take these two things away from you against your will. Guard these two, and don't loose them.

### **Expected Signs**

NOW, My BRETHREN, what sign do we expect? We expect no other signs than to see the holy Cross shine in the sky brighter than the sun, and our sweetest Jesus Christ and God to shine seven times brighter than the sun, together with thousands upon thousands and tens-of-thousands upon tens-of-thousands of angels with divine glory. And the Lord will raise up the whole world, the good as angels and the bad as demons. First, the children of the devil, the Jews, who not only didn't believe in Christ, but crucified him as well. Then they will see our Christ's glory and will believe and worship him, but the faith will not benefit them then at all. Faith is required now. That's why, my brethren, You Christians are the fortunate ones and thrice-blessed, You who believe now. But woe to those unbelievers. It is better for them not to have been born into the world.

Then Christ will separate the just from the sinners as a shepherd separates the goats from the sheep, and he will put the just on his right and the sinners on his left. And he will say to the just: "Come, blessed of my Father, to inherit Paradise. Rejoice with the angels always because you have kept my faith and my commandments." To the sinners the Lord will say: "Go, you accursed, to hell to burn forever together with your father the devil because You have not kept my faith and my commandments."

Then the Lord will open a fiery river, like a sea, and throw in all the impious, unbelievers, heretics, godless, and sinners to burn forever. And he will put the Pious, just, and Orthodox Christians in paradise to rejoice forever.

Therefore, we too, my brethren, should consider what we are, just or sinners. And if we are just, we are of good fortune and thrice-blessed, but if we are sinners we must repent from evil and do good now that we have time. Hell awaits us, when will we repent? Not tomorrow, the next day, or next year, but this moment, because we don't know what awaits us tomorrow. Our Christ tells us we must always be ready. What an evil thing it is, my fellow Christians, for a person to fall into sin and not to repent! Think about it!

### **Faith and Nation**

Enough now, my fellow Christians, I can't tell you any more. I've told you what God has inspired me to say. Let your nobility seek to learn more. You are sober and knowledgeable, you understand your own good and do it. Now what shall we do, my fellow Christians? I advise you but won't your nobility advise me too? My work is your work, it is of our faith, of our nation. I have two thoughts. One says for me to

bless you and for you to bless me and then for me to get up and go to another place so that others who wait for me might hear me. My other thought tells me, no, don't go, but stay as you did in other villages and complete the remainder of the work because what we have said in three talks was brief. It is like a man who builds a church without a roof. What is left to be said is like that roof. What is the roof?

I see our nation which has fallen in many bad ways; these are curses, excommunications, anathemas, oaths, blasphemies and others such as these [of which it is necessary] for Christians to cleanse themselves, to sanctify their villages, and be cleansed in body and soul. The second thing that I urge Christians to do is to make crosses and prayer ropes, and I pray to our Christ that he bless them so that they might serve as the protection of Christians. Third is when I make Christians forgive everyone - living and dead. These then are on my mind. And now do I have your blessing to leave, and will your nobility complete the others?

"No, holy teacher. We beg you to stay with us and finish because we don't know how."  
"Good, for the love of our Christ and you I'll stay."

### **Unction and Free Grace**

ARE THERE MANY PRIESTS HERE? Please take the trouble, holy priests, and stand up so I can see how many there are of you here. Holy priests, will you do me a favor and let us perform a service of holy Unction so that our Christian brothers can be anointed?"

"At your command, O holy one of God."

"I have money to pay you but I won't give you any. I want grace because the grace of God, the Holy Spirit, doesn't operate with money. Because this is what our Christ says: *I give you my grace free, you too must give it freely to our brethren.* Will you do it, holy priests?"

"Of course, O holy one of God."

"I shall ask the Christians here to forgive you because of this grace. Do you want me to ask the Christians to forgive You, or don't you have any sins? And tomorrow I shall make you a gift of a book - not for money, but for a blessing."

"At Your command."

"I beg you, my fellow Christians, to say three times to the holy priest who will perform the holy Unction for you: 'May God forgive and have mercy upon you.' And if your holiness wish also, ask for forgiveness."

"Holy pastor, this evening I need you to get twenty cups and six pounds of oil. My boy has anointers and he will give them to you. And if You will, my priests, go to the various houses and collect about thirty pounds of oil. Use three pounds for the Unction and give the rest to your wife to use. Isn't this satisfactory? Will you do it?"

"I'll do it, O holy one of God."

"If you don't do it tomorrow, I shall declare you a liar and I will shame you. Let ten of You stand up and listen. Five of You make fifteen sacks and you women bring some bread and wheat tonight. And you five will be the committee and you will cut the bread and put it in the sacks. Will you do it?"

"We will, O holy one of God."

"You other five bring five Pots of water this evening so that they will be ready in the morning when we will pray to Christ, so that he will bless them and the faithful may drink holy water. Will you do it?"

"We will, O holy one of God."

"Good, my children, sit so we can finish talking about the rest. Be careful, my children, and don't have pride."

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