

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.

8. Eighth teaching.

“Don’t work at all on Sundays, neither sell nor buy, nor take care of your vineyards or field”...



OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, the sweetest master and Lord, the creator of angels and of all intelligible and perceptible creation, saw that the human race didn't know him to believe that he is both in heaven and on earth, and lord and governor of all things. Moreover, without the will of our Christ nothing can be established. And [he] saw that people were being deceived by the devil, who hates good, who had them all under his will and made them his own together with their families. So the compassionate God wanted to embarrass the devil and to free man from him, so that man would receive a great gift from his compassion. Consequently, from the great love which he had for our race, among the many and infinite gifts that he gave us, he condescended and became perfect man from the Holy Spirit and the purest blood of our Lady the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary. This is why he became flesh and became perfect man, so that we may see him and learn about him; that there is no one else beside him in whom we can believe, who'll free us from the abominable hands of the devil and make us sons and heirs of his kingdom to be glad and rejoice together forever with the holy angels in paradise, and not to burn in the accursed hell together with the accursed demons.

Christ's Vineyard

AND YOU, My CHILDREN, should know that this earth in which we live is ruled over by our Lord Jesus Christ as king. He gathers all the royal debts and collects from the fields, from the vineyards, and from men. And he sends his own men and they collect each year. And when they bring the collection before the king, the king is happy and gives them great gifts and has them as beloved friends.

In the same way the earth and the entire world are Christ's vineyard. And he placed in it the twelve Apostles as workers. He blessed them and gave them the grace of the Holy Spirit. They immediately became educated, and learned all the languages, for initially the Apostles were illiterate and they only knew one language.

The Mission of the Apostles

AFTER HAVING BLESSED THEM and having breathed on their mouths, they received grace, and all learned languages. And our Lord Jesus Christ, the true God, sent them to the entire world and he said to them: "Go to every place, to the whole earth, forts and villages, and tell them if they wish to live well on earth and in peace, and for me to put them into paradise, they must believe and be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and keep the commandments of the Holy Gospel."

And in whatever land the Apostles would go, the Lord told them to bless it. But in whatever land the Apostles would go and the people wouldn't accept them, the Lord said to them to shake off the dust even from their shoes and to curse the land and leave.

When the Apostles received the grace and blessing of the Holy Spirit, they immediately ran like lightning into the entire world, and with that grace of the Holy Spirit they cured the blind, the lepers, the sick, and those possessed by demons; and the greatest of all, they commanded the dead in the name of our Christ

and they rose. And in whatever land the Apostles went and people received them, they ordained bishops, priests, deacons, readers, and [built] churches. They blessed that land and it became an earthly paradise, a great joy and delight, a home of the angels, and of our Christ. But in whatever land the Apostles went and people didn't receive them, that land was not blessed. A curse remained and not a blessing. It became a home of the devil and not of our Christ.

Father Kosmas' Blessing

IT IS RIGHT AND PROPER, my brethren, for me also to have had a pure heart like that of the Holy Apostles, so that I would shout in a loud voice that would be heard as far as heaven. But behold how I was found worthy to come to your blessed land and to enjoy you. But because I am a sinner and don't have the grace of the Holy Spirit, I nevertheless, dare and beseech our Lord Jesus Christ to send his grace and blessing from heaven to bless your land and all the Christians, to bless the men and women and your children, your possessions and the work of your hands. And first, my brethren, may our Lord Jesus Christ have compassion on you and forgive you your sins, and find you, my children, worthy to live well here and in peace, and place you in paradise to glorify the Holy Trinity. It is right and proper, my brethren, to begin my teaching from God. And I beg your lordships to listen to my words with great willingness, as I heard them from the Holy Gospel and from the Holy Apostles. When we finish we can thank God.

Translating Love

GOD HAS MANY NAMES, my brethren. The principle and holy name of our God is love. He is called Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one nature, one glory, one kingdom, one God. But we must love God, my brethren, because he gave us such a large earth for so many thousands of people to live on. He gave us grasses, springs, rivers, the seas, fish air, day, night, fire, sky, stars, sun, moon, and he made us human beings and not animals. He made us pious Christians and not heretics. Now I ask you, my children, tell me in all truth, whom do you love, God or the devil?

Right now you love God in your mind. You know this very well my children, and you wish it since you are good and wise. May your blessing be upon me. Only let us see whether this love for God is correct or not. Is it complete or is it defective in any way?

How can we determine this? You have a child, my brother, and I love you, I honor you and speak well of you, but I beat your child, I despise it. I speak ill of it, and I take the bread from its mouth and I eat it. I take its clothes and I wear them. It seems to me that this kind of love isn't love. In order to love the father, we must love the child also. Because whoever loves God loves his brother, his fellow Christian. For we have one Father, God, one faith, one baptism, the holy Sacraments, which we receive. We have one head, our Christ, one faith, one law, one worship, and we are all brothers. You should also know, my brethren, that love has two characteristics, two graces. One strengthens a person in good, the other weakens him towards evil.

Know, my children, that I have a loaf of bread to eat and I have enough to drink, but you don't. What does love tell me? Don't eat alone. Give some to your brethren and you eat the rest. I have two suits of clothes. What does love tell me? Give one to your brother and wear the other. I open my mouth to condemn you, to tell you lies, to trick you; but immediately I remember love and it stops my mouth and doesn't allow me to tell you lies. I stretch out my hand to take your possessions, your money, your entire fortune, but love doesn't allow me to take them from you. You see, my brethren, what characteristics love has.

Why, my children, aren't you educated, to learn what is good and what is evil? What characteristics love has and what evil hatred, and enmity? You should know, my children, that in whatever country, place, village, house there is love, there you will find our Christ's grace. You will find a blessing, health, joy, and gladness and all the good things of the earth. And people live [well], their children, and their animals, their crops of grain, grapes, and every kind which nourish people prosper. And our Christ guards them from every physical and spiritual danger. And when someone dies, his soul goes to paradise.

Hatred's Consequences

BUT IN WHATEVER PLACE, village, house, there is enmity and hatred, people don't prosper, they don't live. Neither do they have children, nor do their animals (give birth), nor do their crops grow. And they plunge into heavy debt. They have no grace and everyone in and around the villages laughs at them, and God sends them hot winds, or hail or little water and the place suffers ruin. Do you see, my brethren, what a great evil hatred is and to how many offspring it gives birth? I beg you not to have any hatred at all, for it is the devil's mother, while enmity is his sister. And whoever loves them will live here on earth badly and despicably, and his soul will be damned.

Education and Faith

WHY, Oh HOLY PRIESTS AND honorable elders, don't you counsel our blessed brethren to establish and build a school in each village, so that the children will receive an education to learn what is good and what is evil? Because I too learned, my brethren, the alphabet in school with the help of our Christ. I also learned a little ancient Greek and a lot of other things: Hebrew, Turkish, French, and something from all the nations with the grace of our Christ. I read a lot and I found all secular knowledge to be false, all inventions and seeds of the devil. In truth, my brethren, I studied as diligently as a jeweler weighs silver and doesn't allow any impurities to remain and then it is shiny and clean and it is bought by people willingly. Similarly, I found the words and commandments of Christ pure, holy, true, bright, and more brilliant than the sun. And whoever believes in Christ and calls him God, and does everything as the holy Gospel tells him, he will be of good fortune and thrice-blessed. He will never be ashamed. This is why you must establish Greek schools, so that people will be enlightened because by reading Greek I found that it enlightens and illuminates the mind of the student as the sun illuminates the earth. Then it is clear and we can see far. In this same way the mind can see the future, all that is good and evil and it is protected from every kind of evil and sin. Schools open the way to the church. We learn what God is, what the Holy Trinity is, what an angel is, what virtues, demons, and hell are. We learn everything in school.

School enlightens people and they are able to open their minds and learn the mysteries of our faith. Brethren are able to read the holy and sacred Bible, the Gospel, and we find that the prophet Elias is alive and that he has been with God for thousands of years. And God means to send prophet Elias to teach the entire world and then the Antichrist will come and kill the prophet. Then the whole world will be destroyed. And by examining, my brethren, and searching the Scriptures and the holy Gospel, we find that prophet Elias has come and that the Antichrist has come and has put prophet Elias to death, and now we neither wait for the prophet Elias nor the Antichrist.

The Antichrists and the End of the World

THE ANTICHRISTS ARE: one, the pope, and the other one, the one who stands over our heads. You understand whom I mean without my saying so. It is sad for me to say this to you, but these Antichrists are lost as they stand now. We practice abstinence, they perdition. We fast, they indulge in gluttony. We practice virginity, they fornicate. We are just, they are unjust.

As the Scriptures tell us to say: today, tomorrow, we can expect hunger, thirst, plagues, deathly events, so that the living won't have time to bury their dead. Today, tomorrow, we can expect earthquakes, wars, and disruptions; the mountains will fall and the entire world will die. Then the all holy Cross will shine in the sky three times brighter than the sun, and the gracious God, the sweetest Jesus Christ, will shine a thousand times brighter than the sun. He will raise the whole world from the grave, bodies and souls. And we'll all be the same age, thirty-three years old.

All the faces of the just will be bright and beautiful like the sun and the angels, while the faces of the sinners will be black, like bogymen and even uglier. He will call the just in a very sweet and very loving voice, like a father who only has one son whom he loves very much. [He will call] the sinners as a frightful judge and will expel them from his presence in a most terrible way. The Lord will create a fiery river as big as an ocean to inflame the impious and sinners who will burn there forever.

He will then say to the pious and just Christians: "Come, my children, enjoy paradise, rejoice and be glad

together with the angels, for you have endured many evils for my love." Now, by the way, what are we, just or unjust? if we're just, we are of good fortune and thrice-blessed. If we're sinners, we must repent now that we have time; we must reform.

The Jesus Prayer and the Sign of the Cross

NOW I TELL YOU TO do this. - Let all of you take a prayer rope. Let it have thirty knots, and pray. Say: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son and Logos of the living God, through the intercessions of the Theotokos and of all your saints, have mercy upon me, a sinner and an unworthy servant." What does one see in the "Lord Jesus Christ," my brethren? The Holy Trinity, our God, the incarnate dispensation of our Christ and all of the saints. With the Cross and the "Lord Jesus Christ" they went to paradise. And whoever says this prayer and makes the sign of the Cross, whether man or woman, he blesses the sky, the earth, and the sea. With the sign of the Cross and with the prayer "Lord Jesus Christ" all illnesses are cured. With the Cross and the prayer "Lord Jesus Christ" the Apostles raised the dead and cured every illness. With the Cross and the prayer "Lord Jesus Christ" a person is blessed and goes to paradise to rejoice and be glad as angels.

So you see, my brethren, how much the honorable and holy Cross helps a person. Whoever makes the sign of the Cross never suffers a loss but is protected from every kind of poisonous thing and from every demonic temptation. And a person has the Cross marked on him. Let him unite the three fingers of his right hand and place them first on his forehead, then on his navel, then on his right breast, then on the left breast, and bow low and then rise.

The Meaning of the Cross

LEARN, MY BRETHREN WHAT is the meaning of the sign of the Cross. When we put our hand on [our] head, it reveals God who is in the sky. When we put it over [our] navel, it reveals that he descended to earth and became incarnate. When we put [our] hand on the right breast, it reveals that he is just and eternal and that he will place the just on his right hand. And when we put it on [our] left side, it reveals that he will judge all the nations and they will stand on his left side and he will put them into hell.

The holy Cross, my brethren, is the wellspring of the whole earth. The holy Cross blesses the entire world, all that is divine and holy in the churches. The Cross blesses the Divine Liturgy and every service. The Cross blesses the saints. The Cross blesses and strengthens baptism. The Cross blesses couples. The Cross chases away demons who flee like lightning. The Cross is a bright weapon, and whoever makes the sign of the Cross is illuminated and is blessed. It is like a double-edged sword to which the demons don't draw near to urge people to commit sin.

Wherever a person sets out to travel, he should first make the sign of the Cross and say the prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ." Whether you go to the fair or to the field, or to the vineyard, or when you eat bread or fruit, or drink wine or water, when you go to sleep, worship God. Make the sign of the Cross over your body and then lie down to sleep. You will then sleep and will rise in the morning strong and happy. So, my brethren, you have understood and now know.

Confession and Confessors

HERE WHERE I HAVE COME to your blessed village, my children, I am both happy and sad. Christians come to me individually and tell me their complaints. But it is not possible for a servant to serve two masters. Therefore, I send them away and my heart breaks like that of a man who has only one child that is intelligent and good and is sick and cannot talk. This is how I am, my brethren. I can't hear all of your confessions one by one, but I shall confess you publicly. Take four hairs from my head and I shall take upon myself your sins. And you explain the four meanings that I tell you and learn them. I'll explain them to you.

First, find a confessor who is practiced and good to confess to, so that you can wash away the filth and sins from Your body. Second, have love [among yourselves] and don't take refuge in the courts of Moslems where you suffer injury. Third, worship God and don't separate yourselves from the Church.

Ask the priest to celebrate the Liturgy in church every day so that your land may be blessed and your sins may be forgiven, and Christ will grant You health and progress.

Priests shouldn't be obstinate. They shouldn't give an ear accusations. They shouldn't cause scandals, or act as witnesses in every affair. [Nor should they become] landowners or captains, or butchers, or merchants, or tax collectors, for priests pray for your souls. They baptize you, give you communion, burn incense before you, evangelize you, give you blessed bread, they betroth you, marry you, bless you with various services: holy Water, holy Unction, supplication, prayers; they uplift you. When sick, they pray for you. They bear the burdens.

Don't require them to pay the poll tax or saddle them with heavy debts. They, in turn, should be humble, prudent; they shouldn't pronounce anathemas, or become enraged, or curse, or hate, or get drunk, but be as bright as the rays of the sun.

Avoid Alien Contacts

HAVE LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER, rich and poor. Don't go to alien courts and be betrayed by the judgments of the Turks. The traitor will be punished by being excluded from communion for twelve years. If you have something against a brother, another Christian, take him to the bishop and not to the Turkish court, because you are committing a grave sin and you'll be damned forever. And you won't be accepted in church because you've gone outside [the Church] and not according to [ecclesiastical] law.

The Sabbath

DON'T WORK AT ALL ON Sundays, neither sell nor buy, nor take care of your vineyards or field, nor should you sweep out your barns. Only read books, learn what is good and about the end of your lives. That is, that we shall all die as we see daily, and whatever we possess, my brothers and sisters, we'll leave behind. Only whatever alms you give will help your soul, and whatever you give to the poor for the love of God, you'll receive one hundred for every one from Christ. Alms, love and fasting sanctify a person, they enrich him physically and spiritually, and he'll have a good end. The body and soul become holy, [so] be rid of pride and become humble. Don't you young and old ladies, or rich and poor, put silver and gold ornaments on your head, nor red and yellow handkerchiefs but only white.

God Visits Abraham and Sarah

THE FOURTH MEANING IS to give alms to the poor and to give comfort to strangers. Give them bread to eat and give them some when they leave with your blessing. Because, listen my brethren, to what the Old Testament says: Patriarch Abraham didn't have a son to inherit his possessions and had a great complaint. What could the blessed man do? He went and built a house and opened three doors. He began to bake bread and whoever passed by he offered them hospitality. It was Ms habit that on whatever day no stranger came to eat, he wouldn't eat either. And the more alms he gave the more his possessions increased. What did the thrice-cursed devil, who always hates, do? He transformed himself into a beggar and went into the streets and whoever walked toward Abraham's house he would tell him: "Where are you going, brother?" He would tell him and the devil would prevent him from going. He would say: "I am a poor man and I heard that in this land of Mambre there is a great man named Abraham. And I was told that he gives alms and that he is very hospitable. And I, poor man, went also to him to give me something, but my luck was such that he didn't have a chance to give me something. Today I went to Abraham's house and asked for a piece of bread. But because of the great many alms that the unfortunate man gave, he became very poor and had neither bread nor water. He became very angry because of his great poverty. And he beat me so much that the whole neighborhood gathered and they saved me. And I am ill from the beating. So don't anyone go."

Hearing this, no one went for three days. And Abraham didn't eat bread for three days, nor did he drink water. Sarah did the same. They were sad because no person came to eat bread. So they worshipped and prayed with all their heart. And they said: "We believe in one God, the Father who created heaven and earth, the sea, sun, stars, and who governs all the elements, all that our eyes see and all that we don't see, and who governs the souls of men. We bes you. our God. don't deprive us. but bid neople to come to our

house so that we can be hospitable and give them alms so that we can be repaid in heaven. For we are without children and our relatives and neighbors will quarrel over our possessions.

Blessed Abraham and Sarah spoke these things, and behold a miracle. God, who loves those who love him and doesn't allow them to be sad, what did he do? Abraham sat in front of his door and Sarah in front of another, they looked to see if perhaps someone would come to eat so that they could eat also.

They saw three young handsome men coming towards them and they entered their home by the three doors. From their joy they said to each other: "God still loves us. Let us slaughter the best and fattest calf."

They did so immediately and placed it in an oven to be baked. The mother of the calf began to moo and went around the oven. Shortly afterwards she stopped and they saw the calf sucking from its mother. They looked into the oven and saw the pan filled with food and they were amazed. Abraham went to speak to the young men and while talking with them the young men told him: "From now on Abraham you will have every joy and you will give birth to a son Isaak." Abraham went to prepare the table to invite them to eat and turning he didn't see them. He realized that God appeared and he kissed the spot where the young men sat. They were the Holy Trinity, God. You see and hear, my brethren, the miracle and you hear of it to the present.

Separation from Christ and the Church

YOU TOO SHOULD DO THE same if you want God to enter your homes and for you to prosper in life. Don't separate yourselves from Christ and from the Church. Listen when the priest rings the bell. Get up immediately, wash, and go to church and listen to the service with attention. Do likewise for the Liturgy and teach your children to avoid sin as much as possible and to go to church to be blessed so that they can have life and prosper. And whatever brother, my brethren, hears the bell -and is too lazy to go to church, he will drown in his sins, as they drowned in the great flood.

Learn this too, my brethren, after building the ark and gathering all the animals into it, Noah would open the ark and they would go out to graze. In the evening he would ring the bell and they would all gather into the ark. The bell that the priests ring dates from that time. The bell is a flag for the people. The priest is the preacher of the ark and the holy Church is the ark. And whatever brethren gather into the church will have their sins forgiven and will not drown from their errors.

The Church is Our Mother

OUR HOLY CHURCH IS like a mother. When her son makes an error she scolds him and then loves him again. Our holy Church is a source which waters all those who thirst. Priests should celebrate the Liturgy each day so that Christ will bless the people and guard their land from every illness and every abuse; so that God will bless your land, your fields, your vineyards, your place, and all the work of your hands. You should all, young and old, pray that the elders of your village live a long time, that God blesses them so they will take care of you well, for an elder is like a father. You should honor your priests and your betters. Wives, honor husbands; husbands, love your wives and your mothers. Daughters-in-law, honor your fathers-in-law and your mothers-in-law. Sons-in-laws, love your in-laws also and with this respect you will, prosper bodily and spiritually and you win partake of all the good things of the earth. And as long as you live on this earth, this temporary and brief life, you will gain all the blessings of paradise in the eternal life. Don't indulge yourselves, don't anathematize, and don't curse. Brethren, may your blessing be upon me, and forgive me so God will forgive you, so that he will find us all worthy to enjoy paradise, to rejoice with the holy angels, and all of the saints. Amen.

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