

Saint Daniel of Katounakia: The power of blessing



There was a young monk/brother who was puffed up with pride about his abilities. He was very strong, with a lot of dexterity and, hence, he could work a lot and, also, do a lot of prostrations.

The fathers counseled him that he didn't do well to be so proud—but he continuously answered them, saying, “You just envy me” or “We must be a shiny example for others”—things like that.

Alone, he also began to do a lot of prayers and prostrations, helped by demonic energy. He did thousands and thousands of prostrations each day; however, he left the door of his cell open a little when he did them, in order for others to see his “shiny example.”

The fathers were pretty upset about this situation, especially because they couldn't find a solution to this problem. Suddenly, they remembered Saint Daniel of Katounakia and said that “only he can solve the problem.”

They went to him and expressed their situation. Indeed, the Saint came to the young monk in question, and said, “Well, my brother, I heard you are a very ascetic and famous brother who does a lot of prayers and prostrations each day.”

Then, the brother replied, smiling, “Oh, my, I am a very humble and simple man, my Elder. But, with the help of God, each day, I do three thousand prostrations easily.”

Then, the Saint said, “Glory to God! You do a lot of them! However, I give you the blessing to do only twenty-five (25) prostrations each day.”

The brother said, “Twenty five? My Elder, that’s a piece of cake for me! That’s nothing!”

However, because before he did the prostrations without any blessing and only to fuel his pride, the devil helped him. Now, when God’s grace appeared through blessing, the demonic energy went away and the brother couldn’t manage to do not even those twenty-five. He came later and begged the Saint to reduce the number from twenty-five because it was way too much for him.

The Saint reduced the blessing to twenty—a number that is very low for a young and healthy Athonite monk—in order to keep him humble and to show him the power of the blessing.

In this photo, Metropolitan Arsenios of Austria is blessing the crowd during Divine Liturgy at the feast of Saint Evdokimos, Vatopedi monastery.

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