

Saint Mark the Ascetic: self-justification and humility exclude one another



He who secretly mingles his own wishes with obedience is an adulterer, as the Book of Proverbs indicates (cf. Prov. 6:32-33); and because of his stupidity he suffers pain and dishonor.

Just as water and fire cannot be combined, so self-justification and humility exclude one another. He who seeks forgiveness of his sins loves humility, but if he condemns another he seals his own wickedness.

Do not leave unobliterated any fault, however small, for it may lead you on to greater sins.

If you wish to be saved, welcome words of truth, and never reject criticism uncritically.

Let us not forget that words of truth converted the 'progeny of vipers' and warned them 'to flee from the anger to come' (Matt. 3:7). To accept words of truth is to

accept the divine Word; for He says: 'He that receives you receives me' (Matt. 10:40).

The paralytic let down through the roof (cf. Mark 2:4) signifies a sinner reprov'd in God's name by the faithful and receiving forgiveness because of their faith.

However, it is better' to pray devoutly for your neighbor than to rebuke him every time he sins.

The truly repentant is derided by the foolish – which is a sign that God has accepted his repentance.

Those engaged in spiritual warfare practice self-control in everything, and do not desist until the Lord destroys all 'seed from Babylon' (Jer. 27:16).

Based on Saint Mark the Ascetic

In the photo Metr. Hierotheos of Nafpaktos during his visit at Vatopedi, Mount Athos

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