

How a monk begins, lives and succeeds - photo journal from a tonsure at a cell



The man who has come to hate the world has escaped sorrow. But he who has an attachment to anything visible is not yet delivered from grief. For how is it possible not to be sad at the loss of something we love?

Vigilance

We need to have great vigilance in all things. But we must give our whole attention to this above everything else. I have seen many people in the world, who by reason of cares, worries, occupations and vigils, avoided the wild desires of their body. But after entering the monastic life, and in complete freedom from anxiety, they polluted themselves in a pitiful way by the disturbing demands of the body.

The narrow way

Let us pay close attention to ourselves so that we are not deceived into thinking that we are following the straight and narrow way when in actual fact we are

keeping to the wide and broad way. The following will show you what the narrow way means: mortification of the stomach, all-night standing, water in moderation, short rations of bread, the purifying draught of dishonor, sneers, derision, insults, the cutting out of one's own will, patience in annoyances, uncomplaining endurance of scorn, disregard of insults, and the habit, when wronged, of bearing it sturdily; when slandered, of not being indignant; when humiliated, not to be angry; when condemned, to be humble. Blessed are they who follow the way we have just described, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

The three renunciations

No one will enter the heavenly bridechamber wearing a crown unless he makes the first, second and third renunciation. I mean the renunciation of all business, and people, and parents; the cutting out of one's will; and the third renunciation, of the conceit that dogs obedience.

The rewards

'Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate,' said the Lord, 'and touch not the unclean world.' For who amongst them has ever worked any miracles? Who has raised the dead? Who has driven out devils? No one. All these are the victorious rewards of monks, rewards which the world cannot receive; and if it could, then what is the need of asceticism or solitude?

Based on Saint John of the Ladder

The photos are from a tonsure service at the Cell of Prophet Elijah, Vatopedi Monastery, Mount Athos





























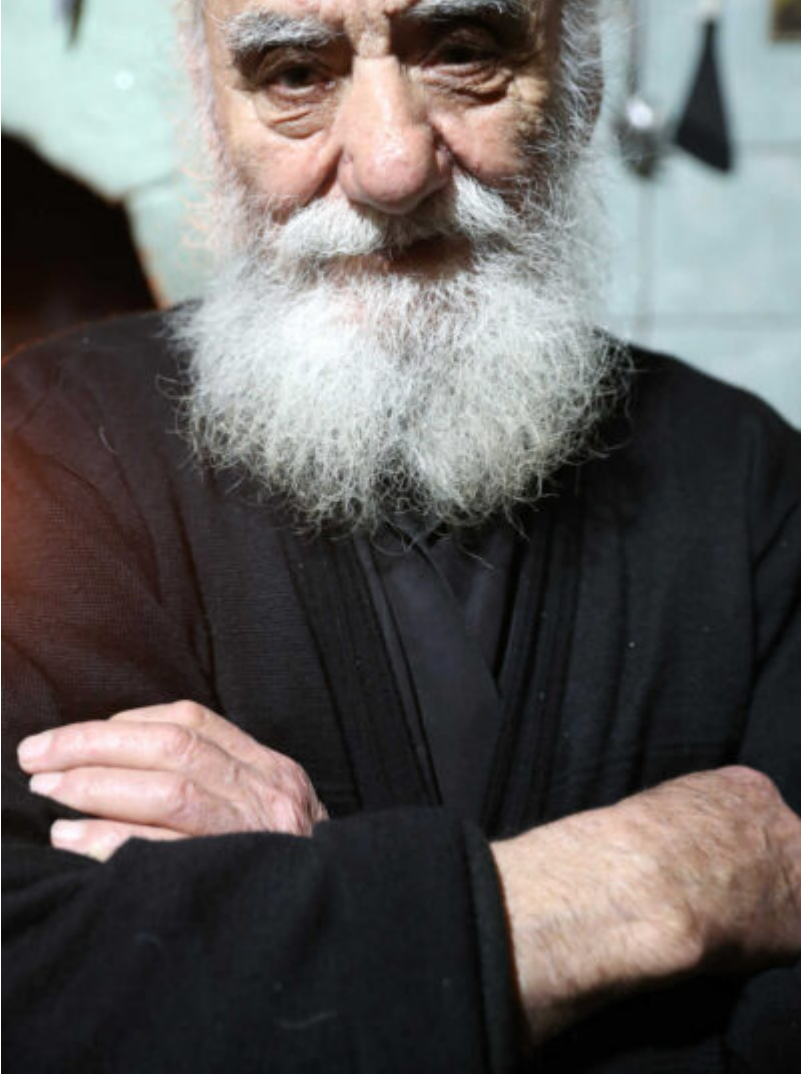






































































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