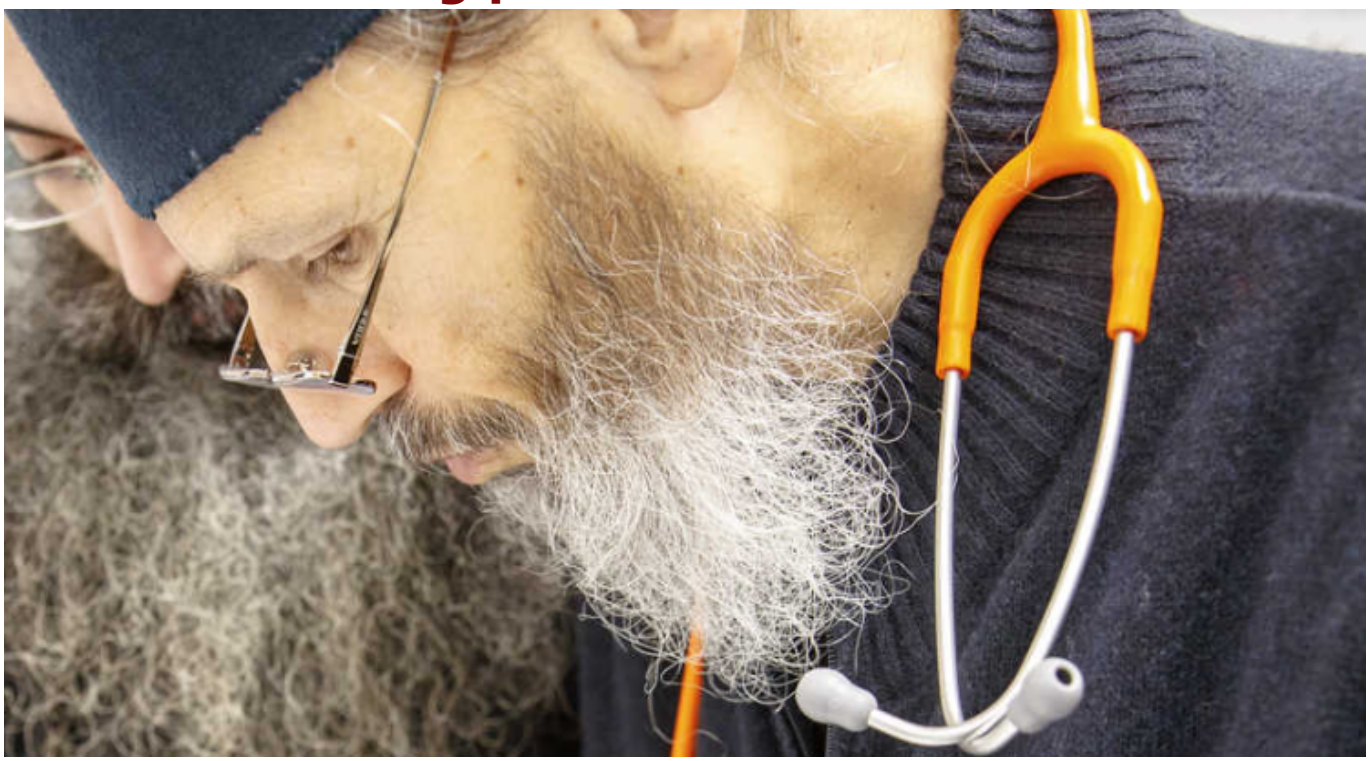
20/03/2020

Christians during pandemic



In the 3rd Century, a pandemic swept across Italy, Africa, and the Western Roman Empire. In retrospective examination, some scholars believe it was the Ebola virus. At its height, this pandemic killed more than 5,000 people every day in Rome. Some cities had their population wiped out by more than 60 percent.

During the pandemic, people panicked. Many people abandoned the sick in ditches and left the dead unburied. People fled areas where there was sickness and abandoned the elderly, the sick, and the disabled.

The letter of Julian the Apostate
But there was one class of people who refused to panic. The last non-Christian Emperor was a man named Julian, and he wrote that, “the recent Christian growth was caused by their ‘moral character, even if pretended’ and by their ‘benevolence toward strangers and care for the graves of the dead.’”

In a letter to another idolatrous priest, he wrote, “The impious Galileans (Christians) support not only their poor, but ours as well; everyone can see that our people lack aid from us.”

Christians during pandemic: the results
During the pandemic, instead of leaving the city, the Christians stayed at great risk

to themselves. They cared for the poor, the sick, and the elderly.

Some historians said that you can trace the rise of Christianity to the three major plagues in the 2nd, 3rd and 6th Century. Historians said Christianity grew because people looked at the incredible witness of Christians during times of crisis who, instead of panicking, demonstrated tremendous faith and compassion.

If you are a believer, this is an incredible opportunity to bear witness, to be people of faith and compassion. Instead of hoarding, give generously. Instead of panicking, respond thoughtfully. It is a time to demonstrate a love that is sacrificial and a hope that no disease can destroy.

We need to have discrimination, though, to be the cure and not the source of the pandemic.

In the photo, a medic monk at Vatopedi monastery, Mount Athos

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