



“The essence of Orthodox pastoral care,  
which is bound up with the Hesychastic Tradition of the Church”

## The Antichrist and Chrismation\*

*“Hence, the Shepherds of the Church must not speak only about the Antichrist and his forerunners, but first and foremost they must help Christians to live in such a way that the Grace of Baptism and Chrismation is activated, by the keeping of Christ’s commandments and doctrines, by experiencing these in one’s life in an Orthodox manner, by repentance, and by inner noetic prayer of the heart; for in this way they will be able to distinguish between the energies of Christ and the energies of the Antichrist.”*

*By Metropolitan Hierotheos  
of Nafpaktos and Hagios Vlasios*

**F**ROM time to time, we hear talk about the coming of the Antichrist and what he will bring about among people and in the world. Indeed, there are those who would even determine the specific time period in which he would appear.

Many people ask us about this subject, but the answers are to be found in Holy Scriptures, and especially in the Epistles of St. John the Evangelist, the Apostle Paul, and the Revelation of St. John, and in all of the pastoral practice of the Church.

In what follows, I would simply like to make some suggestions, primarily on how one is to deal with this situation.

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**1. In his** First Catholic Epistle, St. John the Evangelist speaks about the coming of the Antichrist, and also about the activity of antichrists; indeed, he writes to the Christians that the hour is at hand.

In particular, he writes:

*“Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that the antichrist shall come, even now there are many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time”* (I St. John 2:18).

According to the interpretation of St. Nikodemos the Hagiorite, who uses texts by ecclesiastical writers, apart from the Antichrist, who will appear towards the end of the world and near the Second Coming of Christ, there are also many antichrists, who are already implementing the work of the Antichrist, both in his age and in every age, and who

*“are forerunners and heralds of the one who is intrinsically, primarily, and truly called the Antichrist.”*

Just as there were Prophets before the coming of Christ, so, also, before the coming of the Antichrist, his own forerunners, the false prophets, will appear.

Thus, according to the interpretation of many, antichrists are called *“the impious heresiarchs,”* who uphold and defend *“the profane doctrines of the Antichrist.”*

This is the reason why St. John the Evangelist, in the following verse, writes:

*“They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us”* (I St. John 2:19).

These were those Christians who had learned revealed truth and the Angelic way of life, but, since they were enslaved to sensual pleasures, were unable to comprehend

*“the majesty of the heavenly good things, the beauty of the noetic world, and the bliss and truly ineffable joy of the ages to come,”*

according to St. Nikodemos the Hagiorite.

They therefore returned to the life of apostasy,  
“and did not desire to become true devotees of the pure life in Christ.”

• **Consequently**, before the coming of the Antichrist, the forerunners of the Antichrist manifest themselves: that is, the various heretics, but also those Christians who, instead of living the life in Christ with purity of heart and true faith of mind, live with passions and weaknesses, without inner prayer or true faith in God.

**2. St. John** the Evangelist, however, does not confine himself to speaking about the Antichrist and his forerunners, but also speaks about how we must deal with the Antichrist and his forerunners. This is why, immediately following the previous lines, he writes:

“But ye have an anointing from the Holy One, and ye know all things” (I St. John 2:20).

In other words, Christians have received *anointing* from God and know how to distinguish between the energies of the Antichrist and antichrists and the energies of Christ. This does not come about by the reading of books, but by the *anointing* that exists in the heart and that teaches.

St. Nikodemos the Hagiorite, once again explaining what this *anointing* is, writes:

“that is, you have received the Grace and energy of the Holy Spirit in your hearts from the Master Christ, the Holy of Holies.”

And further on, referring to how one receives the *anointing* of the Holy Spirit, he writes:

“Christians receive the Grace and energy of the Holy Spirit through Holy Baptism, and indeed through the anointing of the Holy Myron, and perhaps this is why the Grace of the Holy Spirit is called anointing and sealing, having the same name as the anointing and sealing of the Holy Myron; wherefore when the Priest anoints Christians with it, he concludes with these words: ‘the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit.’”

The *anointing* of the Holy Spirit is the *seal* of the Holy Spirit

that takes place during the Mystery of Chrismation through the Holy *Myron*, on the day of our Baptism.

In what follows, in the same chapter, St. John the Evangelist once again states that the holy anointing received by the Christian at Holy Baptism teaches him to distinguish between truth and falsehood.

He writes:

*“But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him”* (I St. John 2:27).

According to the interpretation of St. Nikodemos, who uses texts by the Fathers and writers of the Church, the *anointing* that man has received is the Grace of the Holy Spirit, which abides in the hearts of Christians, and according to the words of St. John the Evangelist, Christians are exhorted

*“to abide unchanging and unalterable forever in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love and faith.”*

And, as is his wont, St. Nikodemos writes: *“how and in what manner”* does man remain unchanging with regard to the gift of the Holy Spirit? This happens when man abides steadfastly in the doctrines of Theology and of the Incarnate Economy, not just rationally, but also existentially.

• **Thus**, whoever speaks about the Antichrist and his forerunners should make reference to all of the passages in St. John the Evangelist, and should specify primarily what St. John says about the manner in which we must confront the Antichrist and his forerunners.

**Christians distinguish true prophets from false prophets and Christ from the Antichrist only by the activation of *Chrismation*, which they have received from God and which works in their hearts.**

**3. The** Apostle Paul, also, speaks about the *anointing* of the

Holy Spirit, which is also called a *seal*.

To be precise, in his [Second] Epistle to the Corinthians, he writes:

*“Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts”* (II Corinthians 1:21-22).

It is most clearly apparent, here, that God is the One Who gives *confirmation* to Christians. He is the One that *anoints* us. *Anointing* is identified with *sealing*, and this is done by God, Who gives us the *earnest of the Spirit* in our hearts.

If one examines other similar passages from the Apostle Paul to discover the meaning of the *earnest of the Spirit* and what it means for one to sing hymns and spiritual songs in his heart, then he will understand that this *anointing* and *seal* is *noetic prayer of the heart*, which is an expression of the love that man feels for God.

The *Name of Christ* has been written on the person that has received the *seal* of the Holy Spirit.

St. John the Evangelist mentions this subject in his Revelation.

*“And I saw another Angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four Angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, ‘Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.’ And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed a hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel”* (Revelation 7:2-4).

It is unambiguous, here, that the Angel who had “*the seal of the living God*” sealed the servants of God on their foreheads.

A similar passage is found in another chapter of Revelation:

*“And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on Mount Sion, and with Him a hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father’s name written on their foreheads”* (Revelation 14:1).

In other words, the saved, who stood with the Lamb—Christ—, had the *Name* of Christ and His Father written on their fore-

heads. And as the text then says, they sang a “*new song*” before the throne of God, the content of which they alone knew.

• **Thus**, the *sealing* of Christians with the *Name* of Christ and His Father is bound up with the “*new song*”; that is, *noetic prayer*, which is unknown to people who have no experience of this condition.

**4. All** of this means that, with the Mystery of Holy Chrismation, which is bound up with the Mystery of Holy Baptism, we received the gift of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, through the sealing of the parts of our body, when the Priest said: “*the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*”

This *anointing* in the heart acts as *illumination of the mind*: as inspiration, as love for God, as prayer, as hope in eternal life, and as *the earnest of the Spirit*.

The confession of the Martyrs and the martyrdom that follows is the activation of Holy Chrismation, by means of which the Martyr beholds God; this is why the martyrdom of the Saints is not a simple matter of a rational process, sentimental excitement, or an impetuous action, but it is the fruit of the *vision of God and deification*.

When we commit some sin, however, then the *anointing* in the depths of our hearts is activated through repentance. In other words, repentance that is expressed as an inclination to change one’s life, as love for God, and as prayer, is the activation of the Grace of Holy Chrismation. This *anointing*, moreover, is activated by *noetic prayer of the heart*, which is the “*new song*” that is sung by those who are regenerated by the Holy Spirit.

When a person, however, denies Christ, departs from the Orthodox Church, and adopts heretical confessions and religions, he then loses this gift. And when he returns to the Orthodox Church, he must once again receive the *anointing* of the Holy Spirit through the Mystery of Chrismation.

• **Hence**, the **Shepherds of the Church must not speak only**

about the Antichrist and his forerunners, but first and foremost they must help Christians to live in such a way that the Grace of Baptism and Chrismation is activated, by the keeping of Christ's commandments and doctrines, by experiencing these in one's life in an Orthodox manner, by repentance, and by inner *noetic prayer of the heart*, for in this way they will be able to distinguish between the energies of Christ and the energies of the Antichrist.

Otherwise, they will confuse uncreated with created energies and, what is worse, they will regard the energies of the Antichrist as the energies of Christ, and *vice versa*.

This discretion constitutes Orthodox pastoral care. And its essence is what is called the Hesychastic Tradition.

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**ALL** of those who are vouchsafed the *anointing* of their hearts by the Holy Spirit—that is, the writing of the Name of the Lamb of the Revelation and of His Father in their hearts—will escape from being *sealed* by the Beast of the Apocalypse and his father, just as they will escape his forerunners.

This is the essence of Orthodox pastoral care, which is bound up with the Hesychastic Tradition of the Church.

This is why the preservation of Orthodox monasticism is of great importance. Every alteration to the Hesychastic spirit of Orthodox monasticism helps the forerunners of the Antichrist to do their job well and deceive the people.



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