

AN ELDER SAID...



Edifying Stories and Teachings from Ancient and Modern Times

The Demon of Disobedience Brings About Great Afflictions

*From the Life of St. Peter of Atroa the Wonderworker**

(Ninth Century, Commemorated on 3 January)

One day, the Saint sent a Brother on a commission. He recommended him not to stop at the public baths that lay on his way, expressly forbidding him not only not to enter therein, but not even to approach them.

The Brother entered and leisurely took his bath.

Quite some time passed, when suddenly his entire body became covered with leprosy, without anyone understanding the reason why.

St. Peter anointed him with the Holy *Myron* and made the sign of the Cross over him. But his prayer was of no effect.

“What have you done, my child, that makes it impossible for me to heal you? Perhaps you have not confessed a sin you committed?”

Having forgotten his previous disobedience, the Brother replied that his conscience did not reproach him for anything. The Saint was greatly troubled and prayed much for the unfortunate monk. Finally, one day, as he was praying in his cell, he noticed a ghastly child, foul and mangled, who said:

“What have we to do with each other, wicked Elder, that you chase me everywhere, and in particular from the body of that young one whom I covered with leprosy when he disobeyed you by going to the baths that lay on his way?”

The Elder immediately called the Brother and said to him:

“Why, my child, have you not yet made your error known to me?”



The demon of disobedience, who beguiled you, informed me that you became a leper because you transgress my commands.”

The Brother recalled his sin, confessed, and was healed.



(*) Source: *Άγιος Κυπριανός*, No. 324 (January-February 2004), p. 160.

Bernardin Menthon, *The Monasteries and Saints of Olympus in Bithynia*, translated into Modern Greek by Natalia Vasilopilos (Thessaloniki: Ekdo-seis *Ὁρθόδοξος Κυψέλη*, 1980), p. 154.