



## Brief Patristic Messages



### “There is Nothing More Serious or More Terrible Than to Judge”\*

*His Eminence, Metropolitan  
Cyprian of Oropos and Fili*

**S**INCE, by the Grace of Christ our Savior, we are passing through the holy period of the Great Fast and are preparing ourselves for the worship of the Immaculate Passion and the glorious Resurrection of our Lord, we consider it beneficial to convey to our brethren in Christ the simple, yet so very blessed, advice of Abba Dorotheos on the subject of judgment.

**And this** because most people, unfortunately, pay attention only to material fasting, while their tongues veritably devour their neighbor and tarnish their hearts.

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*There is nothing more serious or more terrible than to judge  
and disparage our neighbor.*

*Why do we not rather judge ourselves and our own faults,  
which we know precisely and about which we shall render an  
account to God?*

*Why do we usurp God's judgment and decision?*

*What do we want from His creature?*

*Should we not tremble, hearing what happened to one great Elder who, upon learning that a certain brother had fallen into fornication, said: "Oh, how shamefully he acted!"?*

*Do you not know what a frightful thing is said about that Elder in the Gerontikon?*

*A holy angel brought the soul of the brother who had sinned to him and said:*

*"Look, he whom you judged has died. Where, then, do you order me to put him: in Paradise or in Hell?"*

*Is there anything more terrible than this burden of judgment?*

*What else could the angel's words to the Elder mean but this: "Since you are the judge of the righteous and of the sinners, what do you determine for this humble soul: Will you show him mercy or punish him?"*

*That holy Elder was so greatly frightened, that he spent the rest of his life groaning, weeping, and performing thousands of ascetic feats, beseeching God to forgive him that sin.*

*And he did all of that even after having prostrated himself at the feet of the angel and having received forgiveness.*

*And this is evident from what the angel said: "Behold, God has shown you how serious it is to judge. Do not do it again!"*

*This shows that he was forgiven. But the Elder's soul could not be consoled from his mourning until the time of his death!*

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**May each** of us, then, pay attention to his own faults.

*"It pertains to God alone to justify or condemn—He who knows each one's state, strength, environment, talents, temperament, and abilities—, and He judges each of these things as He alone knows."*



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\*Source: Άγιος Κυπριανός, No. 155 (November 1981), p. 49.