



Brief Patristic Messages



“Pray Unceasingly”

Part I

*† His Eminence, Metropolitan
Cyprian of Oropos and Fili*

THE FATHERS of our Faith, being illumined by the Holy Spirit and having put into practice (as far as is humanly possible) the commandment of the universal teacher of our Church, the Apostle Paul, to “*pray unceasingly*,” advise us, indeed with particular insistence, to force ourselves in unceasing prayer. They also explain to us why this must be done and *how* our enfeebled selves can achieve it.

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OUR MIND ought continuously to be united with God through prayer; for, in this way, sin is unable to defile it and our heart is softened and is lovingly disposed towards its Creator, removed from earthly loves and attachments.

The mind that does not unceasingly contemplate our Lord becomes either a demon or a beast; that is, it come to be dominated by the irrational passions of the hatred of one’s brother and dissoluteness.

In this condition, the mind finds itself in spiritual darkness: the heart is hardened, lives in anguish, and attempts to find relief in material pleasures. Thus, the image of God within us is buried.

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JUST HOW can we achieve unceasing prayer?

The answer is simple: through prayer!

While praying, we will learn to pray. This means that we must unremittingly and diligently cultivate the sacred work of prayer, while at the same time beseeching our Lord to grant us this gift, through the Most Blessed *Theotokos*.

Wherever we are, we ought to restrain our mind, which has a tendency to wander and to be scattered about by curiosity and enthralled by divers things.

We must turn our mind with piety and yearning to our heart, and, through the heart, to the source of life: our Lord Jesus Christ.

At home, on the road, in the car, at work, at school, everywhere and at all times, we have the capability of doing so, provided that we sincerely wish and long for this sacred work and force ourselves, with the help of our Lady the Theotokos:

“for the Kingdom of Heaven is not [gained by] those living in comfort and the careless, but by those who compel themselves [in spiritual things].”

(St. Synkletike)

It is necessary for us to be steeped in prayer; we must live in a mystical atmosphere of profound inner activity and unceasing prayer.

The Devil is aware of this and rages to deter us. Nothing, however, must impede us in this sacred work, if we desire to acquire the Holy Spirit; and, in this way, to succeed in giving meaning to our life.

“Build, ‘through every prayer and supplication,’ the bridge that will remove you from your carnal ‘ego’ and your scattered concerns in the acquisition of the Spirit. By the dwelling of the Spirit within you, in your heart, complexity

disappears, says St. Basil the Great. Your days henceforth depend on Him Who holds the universe in His hands.”

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, through the intercessions of our Lady the Theotokos, grant us the blessed gift of unceasing prayer!

*† Sunday before the Exaltation of the
Precious Cross, 12/25 September 2005*

