



Brief Patristic Messages



“The Way of Philosophy According to Christ”

“A holy combination: love and humility”

*His Eminence, Metropolitan
Cyprian of Oropos and Fili*

THE DEVIL abhors nothing so much as love between brothers and sisters in Christ, harmony, peace, unity, and concord.

He keeps vigil, machinating the most unbelievable things, in order to break up spiritual bonds, to sow hatred and antipathy, confusion and disturbance, vain suspicions and anguished prejudices.

Christ sacrificed himself “that the scattered children of God be brought together as one” in peace and love, while the homicidal one never rests in his attempt to trouble them and to scatter the children of God, who are gathered together in Christ.

The following incident is very typical, showing that it is satanic energy that fosters anger, impatience, and the rupture of the bonds of love and peace with our brother:

“A certain brother, moved with wrath against another, stood in prayer, entreating [that the Lord aid him] to forbear his brother, passing through the temptation unharmed; and

he straightway saw smoke coming out of his mouth. And at that, his anger ceased.”

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JUST how can one do away with all of the wiles of the trouble-loving enemy? What is the efficacious antidote?

The Holy Fathers teach us that only with love and humility will we be shielded and delivered.

The holy combination of love and humility raises us spiritually above the snares of the evil spirits, and also above all pettiness and misunderstandings, which, for the most part, are caused by our self-love.

Likewise, this holy combination preserves us within the Grace of God, which bestows on us a heart that is peaceful, humble, compassionate, forgiving, and forbearing.

“A holy combination are love and humility,” says St. John of the Ladder; *“for the one exalts, and the other, supporting the exalted ones, never allows them to fall.”*

To be exact, we need to have patience and bravery in the hour of temptation; it is necessary to be prayerfully long-suffering in the face of sorrows and to have forgiving hearts towards those who have grieved us. Let us not be conquered by hatred, but rather conquer it by love.

A sorrow is but a cloud that will shortly be dispelled.... Let us not drive away brotherly love.... Let us be long-suffering and pray.... Let us throw the burden on ourselves.... Let us humbly accept our brother's apology.... Let us remember his kindnesses and virtues and let us not remove him from our hearts....

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ST. MAXIMOS the Confessor beautifully guides us on “*the way of philosophy according to Christ*”:

Do not malign as base and wicked the one whom yesterday you praised and commended as good and virtuous, because your love has turned to hatred.

Do not invoke your brother's shortcoming to justify the evil hatred that has taken hold of you. Rather, even if you are held by resentment, persist in your praises, and then you will easily return to the same salutary love.

Do not, because of your hidden resentment, adulterate your usual praise of your brother in your conversations with the other brethren, surreptitiously intermingling your words with [references to his] shortcomings and condemnation. Instead, make use of unmixed praise and genuinely pray for him, as if you were praying for yourself, and thus you will quickly be delivered from this destructive hatred.

If your brother is again tempted by the Enemy and persists in speaking ill of you, do not depart from your state of love, but repulse the demon that is troubling your mind. And this will occur if you speak benevolently when you are disparaged and show goodness and kindness when you are plotted against.

This is the way of Christian philosophy, and one who does not follow it will not dwell together with Christ.

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THUS, the Devil divides our hearts with pride and hatred and transforms it into a hell.

Conversely, Christ unites brothers with His love and humility and sets up the Kingdom of Heaven in our hearts!

My brother, may you become a philosopher according to Christ!

Calling upon the aid of the *Theotokos*, never allow yourself to be overcome by feelings of hatred for your brother and antipathy.

When you love your brother, you become like unto God—you become a god by Grace. And you exorcise the demon of disturbance, confusion, and discord.

Sixth Sunday of St. Luke
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