



■ At the Monastery of Iveron (Mt. Athos)

The Blessing of God Comes When We Give Blessings* Christ the Beggar

Elder Sabbas from the Monastery of Philotheou told me how, during the famine of 1917, the Fathers of the Monastery of Iveron, seeing their storehouses emptying, **cut back on their customary hospitality**.

In fact, a particularly tight-fisted monastery Elder got his way and completely discontinued it.

Consequently, Christ also put an end to His every blessing on the monastery.

The Fathers then began to go hungry and to complain to Christ and the *Panagia* that They did not take care of Their monastery. Unfortunately, the monks did not understand their error.

One day, then, Christ appeared to the monastery's doorkeeper in the form of a poor man and asked for a little bread.

Saddened, the doorkeeper replied:

“We do not have any bread, my brother, which is why we have stopped giving hospitality. Wait a moment, though, and I will bring you the piece of bread I have in my cell for myself.”

He went to his cell and brought his own piece of bread and gave it to Him.

But then he saw the face of the Beggar become radiant.

He took the piece of bread and said to the doorkeeper:





“Do you know why this misfortune has befallen the monastery? Because you expelled from your monastery both “give” and “receive.”

With those words, He vanished in a brilliant light that dazzled the doorkeeper.

In his fright, the doorkeeper ran to the monastery Elders and recounted what had happened.

At first, the Fathers were at a loss to remember what people they had expelled.

Eventually, however, they understood that the Beggar was none other than Christ Himself, and they understood His words from His Gospel: “Give, and it shall be given unto you.”

They repented of their error, and **as soon as they began giving to the poor from the little they had, God sent upon them His abundant blessings.**



(*) Elder Paisios of Mt. Athos, *Athonite Fathers and Athonite Matters*, published by the Convent of the Evangelist John the Theologian (Souroti, Thessaloniki: 1998). pp. 135-136. Translated from the original Greek.