

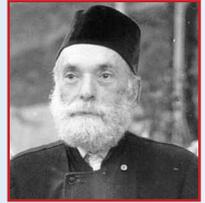
# “Interventions”



**Nicolae Steinhardt**

**Doctor of Constitutional Law**

**N**icolae Steinhardt was a twentieth century writer who was arrested by the Communist Party of Romania in 1959 when he refused to testify against a colleague. Sentenced to years of forced labor in a gulag-like prison, he decided to be baptized an Orthodox Christian, “under the nose of the guards,” on March 15, 1960, by fellow convict Mina Dobzeu, a well known Bessarabian hermit.



**F**ollowing his imprisonment, Steinhardt joined the Rohia Monastery, in northern Romania, where he was tonsured a monk on August 16, 1980. He attributed his entry into the monastic life to his experience in prison. He writes:

● “**We** should not confine ourselves to words, believing that the poor and suffering exist only in our imagination; rather, we should comfort Christ in the person of our neighbor, the one who is pain before our very eyes and is waiting here and now for our compassion. It is not wrong to wish in general for the good of mankind and to speak about the rights of the poor and the working class. But that is the easy part.

● “**What** is difficult is to carry your paralyzed fellow convict to the prison ‘toilet’; to give the sick inmate who cannot get out of bed whatever he wants; to endure the snoring of the person next to you without waking him up; to listen patiently to the insufferable one who never stops recounting his misfortunes and pain.

● “**We** have to help our neighbor—the one who is covered with sores, and perhaps shortcomings, insolence, ingratitude, filth, stubbornness, obstinacy, and demands; the one who is not satisfied by anything; the one who looks on the good we do him with resentment and sarcasm, if he does not insult us on top of everything.

● “**I** entered prison a blind man, and I am coming out with my eyes wide open. I went in as a spoilt, pampered person, and I am coming out healed of all whims, airs, and fastidiousness. I went in as a grumpy, irritable, fussy person, and I come out with no care for it all. Before I entered, the sun and life did not mean much to me. Now I know how to enjoy the smallest slice of bread. I come out feeling friends with everyone: with those who love me and with those who hate me.”

Presented by

† **Metropolitan Cyprian**

November 18, 2018 (Old Style)

† Holy Martyrs Platon and Romanos

