



■ Again and again, let us pray to the Lord!

The Carnival Festivities and the Phalanx of Evil Spirits*

Below the Athonite Skete of St. Basil, there once lived a monk of the Monastery of the Great Lavra who was assigned to look after the goats they had there who was assigned to look after the goats they had there.

Once, during *Apokries*** before Great Lent, while there was a full moon, and the assigned monk, Father Ephraim, was praying with his prayer rope, he heard a great crowd outside. They were not making any trouble, but were just shouting “Oh! Oh!”

“These people must be strangers who are making merry,” Father Ephraim thought to himself.

So he went outside, but what should he see in the moonlight! Around three hundred demons in a state of restlessness, while their leader was saying:

“Just look at that! This scrawny monk has delayed our phalanx for days, and now we can’t get out into the world in time for the carnival festivities and revelries!”



(*) Elder Paisios the Athonite, *Athonite Fathers and Athonite Matters* (Souroti, Thessalonica: Hesychasterion of St. John the Theologian, 1998), p. 128.

(**) *Apokries*: In Greece during the three weeks before Great Lent it has unfortunately become the custom to hold carnival festivities.