

8 Οκτωβρίου 2009

The Elder Joseph the Hesychast (+1959) Struggles, Experiences, Teachings (2)

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Part I: The Life

1. Childhood and Youth

The Elder's homeland was Paros in the Cyclades; a small island, but peaceful and, at that time, a place with strict moral standards. His parents were simple people and not well off, so that the children were obliged to work for a living from a young age. His father, George, did not live to bring up all his family. So the children, already poor, were now orphans as well – something not that uncommon in poor families. His mother Maria, a real woman of God in all her natural and acquired character traits, was, in the words of the Lord, 'an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile' (Jn 1.48). This blessed soul had such simplicity and integrity that many times in her life she saw supranatural phenomena, and believed that everyone else must be seeing them too. This happened especially when she went into churches, whether for services or just to take care of the church.

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