

To the “Fortune Hunters” Surrounding Me (Fr. Cornel Todeasa)

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Recently, after

finishing my meal at a Chinese restaurant, I received a very interesting fortune cookie that said, “You are surrounded by fortune hunters!”

I don’t believe these fortune cookies tell any true fortune. I read them just for fun. When I first read mine, I thought the words were very amusing. “I am a priest,” I laughed to myself. What kind of “fortunes” can people seek around me in the places I go or the things that I do?”

I am either at church performing public services or private services and prayers; or I am visiting the sick, the poor and the distressed. Since many people believe that going to church is a waste of time, they choose to do other things instead. Many others even choose to work on Sundays. They are truly the “fortune hunters” of this world. And since the majority of my visits are made in response to a variety of crises, I know many of my parishioners are happy that it isn’t necessary for me to visit them.

Then, this brings me to ask the question, “What kinds of fortunes are we hunting?”

Truly, there is no greater fortune in this life than our own health—both physical and spiritual. Our Lord, to Whom we pray and in whose House (the Church) we often dwell, is the doctor not only of our bodies, but also of our souls. We come to Him, not as a regular doctor, but as the “Doctor of all doctors.” Just as when we visit the Church, we visit it not just as a hospital, but as the “Hospital of all hospitals.”

We are also fortunate in life when we acquire peace. When we pray in the Church, we ask for peace in many forms: peace among the world, within our own Church and other Churches, and peace within ourselves. True peace, the “peace that passes all understanding,” comes from the Lord. It is the “peace from above.”

At the Lord’s Resurrection, He greeted his disciple by saying, “Peace be with you,” (John 20:19, 21)! and promised to leave us His peace.

I can continue to mention the many good “fortunes” we hunt for in this lifetime. The “greatest fortune” of all, however, is not of this world, but is of the Kingdom of Heaven. It is the fortune of the promised “estate”—an estate in which we can find peace, love and everlasting joy.

Indeed, the people surrounding me cannot hunt the fortunes of this life, like gold or silver. All of these earthly fortunes eventually disappear and we cannot take them with us. Our Lord teaches us, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasure on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. . .” The fortune hunters that surround me seek the treasures of Heaven. They obey the Lord who also says, “. . . but lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6: 19-21).

I’d like to encourage the “fortune hunters” who surround me to continue the quest for the true fortunes. While minding my own quest, I ask God to open my heart, enlighten my mind and strengthen my will so I can continue to be an inspiration to them.

Fr. Cornel Todeasa

This article was taken directly from the chapter “To the fortune hunters surrounding me,” from Fr. Cornel’s book Seek First the Kingdom. This book can be purchased from Regina Orthodox Press by clicking their link here: <http://www.reginaorthodoxpress.com/sefiki.html>

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