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## Can sins be forgiven through vows? (Dr. Nikolaos Koios)

[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)



The age we live in is full of contradictions. On the one hand, people are stubbornly indifferent towards their relationship with God, but on the other, references to superstitions, zodiac charts and para-religious phenomena abound. You've got people who consider those who start their day with prayer or the sign of the Cross to be bizarre, yet they themselves will spit three times if they see a black cat on the street•.

This mechanistic way of seeing things which are, in fact, metaphysical has unfortunately affected even those people who wish to have a relationship with the Church. One such instance is the belief on the part of some people that the spiritual life is exhausted merely by fulfilling a vow or completing a pilgrimage. Saint Paisios the Athonite, that great spiritual figure of our century, condemns this habit and

calls it the devil's art.

If we are to progress in the spiritual life and find genuine contentment, we need repentance, confession and the spiritual struggle. In other words, we need to act in conjunction with Divine Grace, expressing our free will and making an ascetic effort. The Church has never countenanced magical recipes to gain salvation. It wants us to be free collaborators with God in the task of salvation.