

## In Search of Sanctity (Sotirios Kollias, D. Th.)

[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)

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According to Fr. Alexander Schmemmann , the sanctity of the saints is no more than the discovery and implementation of the holiness which each of us received on the day of our baptism and which we've all been called upon to increase.

The vision and aim of every Christian who loves God should be to achieve sanctity. This was the goal, the desire, which gave meaning to the life of the first Christians, who had a different outlook from our own. Nowadays, to justify any failing on our part we say: 'Well, I'm no saint!' and probably mean that we don't much care, either. But Scripture calls upon us to be precisely that: 'Become holy as I am holy' (I Pet. 1, 16); and Saint Paul writes to the Corinthians: 'to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints' (I Cor. 1, 2). The modern saint, Porfyrios Kavsokalyvitis often urged: 'Enter the Church, become saints, for only then will there be neither death, nor the devil, nor hell'. Alas, becoming a saint isn't a vision even of those who go to church regularly.



Many people think that achieving sanctity is an elusive dream and so they don't even consider it seriously. Or they think that certain people are destined by God for sanctity and this has nothing to do with the rest of us. But this would mean that God discriminates among His children, in which case why would He have become incarnate? Just so that we'd become good, moral people? Let's be quite clear about this: God has called us to sanctity and nothing less. The phrase: 'the holy things to those who are holy' which the priest says in the Divine Liturgy, just before Holy Communion, means precisely this forgotten desire: that we are assured that we, too, can become saints.

Metropolitan Anthony Bloom said that in the Church we're called upon to carry out an act of God within the world. This is the specific activity of the Church, which means that in all sectors, (political, economic and educational) the role of Christians is very specific and one which is different from all the other operations in the world. We're called upon to be that divine energy through which God reveals Himself to the world and, as such, our destination can only be Christ Himself. With His power and that of the Holy Spirit, we are to complete the task for which His own activity was of crucial importance, but which He did not bring to perfection. In other words, we're called upon to continue Christ's task of transformation and renewal on earth. We have an enormous responsibility and a sublime mission: to be reborn ourselves from above and then to pass on this rebirth to the other people around us. And it's of no importance how many mistakes we make and how many times we

fall. What matters is how much we repent and how often we pick ourselves up, putting the Gospel into practice, hungering and thirsting for the truth of Christ. Because sanctity comes to those who are really seeking the truth.

So let's not be downhearted when we fall into errors and sins, but, conscious of the fact that we're weak people, who, nevertheless are struggling, let's pick ourselves up and make a new beginning with repentance every day. Let's stay on this road until we meet our end, striving and refusing to give up. Saint Nikodimos the Athonite says that those who wish to progress in the spiritual life should love the effort more than the victory. In saying this he wishes to emphasize the supreme importance of the effort and the struggle. And it's just as important for us not to hang on to the mistakes and transgressions of the past and become trapped in guilt over them. With courage and strength, we should move forward, making a new start every time our life takes a wrong turn. The robber on the cross repented at the last minute, just before he died and entered Paradise with Christ, since the Kingdom of Heaven is gained by violence and people of violence seize it (Matth. 11, 12). In other words, he stole sanctity at the very last moment, because he was bold enough to humble himself, repent and ask forgiveness.