# Dealing with Sickness (Saint Neofytos Recluse)

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So you should reflect on your sins and say 'Glory to You, Lord, for You're punishing me justly'. Recollect that, before, you'd forgotten God and say: 'Glory to You, Lord, that you've given me cause and reason to remember You frequently'. Think about the fact that, if you'd been well, you probably wouldn't have done anything good and say: 'Glory toYou, Lord, for preventing me from committing sin'. If you deal with your sin in this way and with these thoughts, your burden will become very light.

On the other hand, although illnesses are allowed by God, it's no sin to try and cure them. Because both medical science and medications are also gifts from God to the human race. So if we go to a doctor, we're actually having recourse to God.
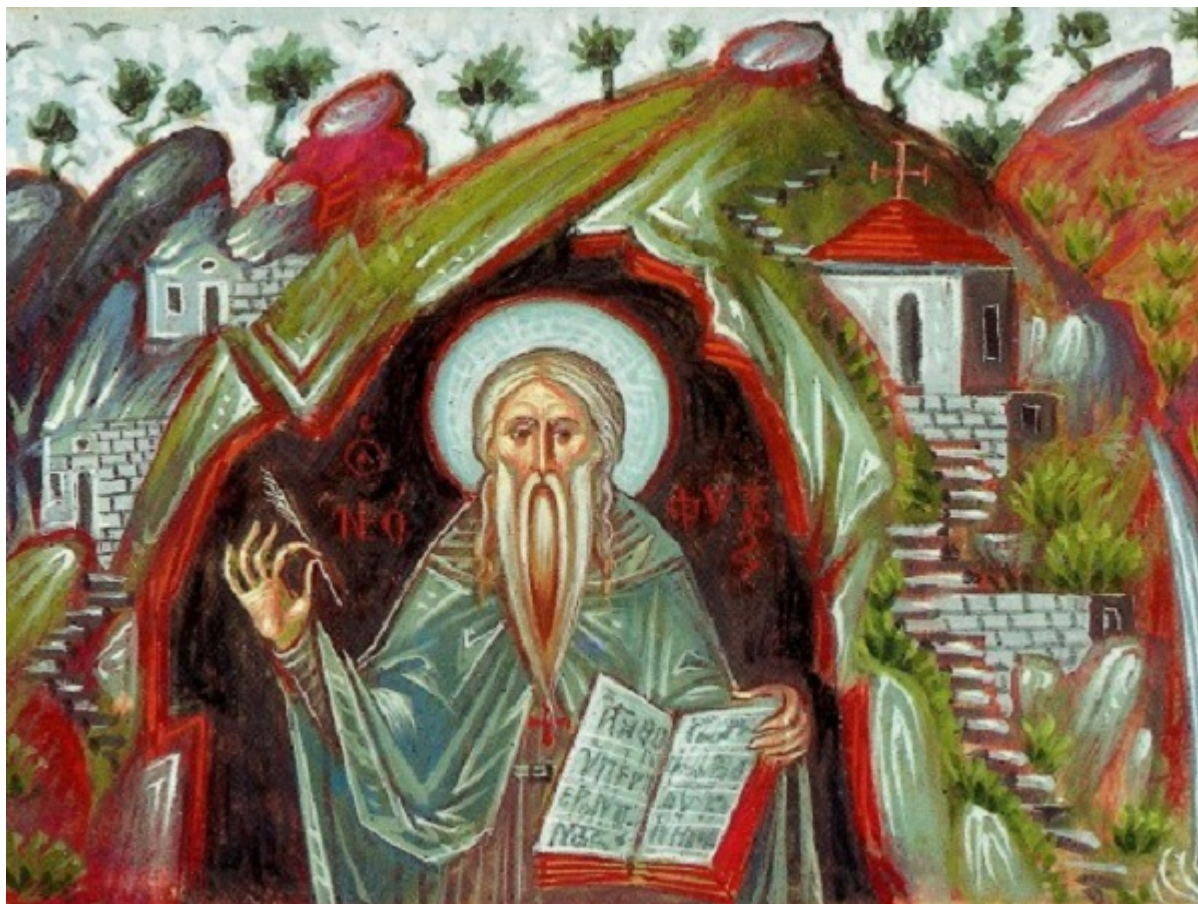
Let us learn through sin and acquire humility, patience, magnanimity and a sense of gratitude towards God. Of course, impatience and pusillanimity are human, but we should expel them as soon as they make their appearance.

All difficult situations involve a burden that we have to shoulder and to bear with patience. If there's no burden, we can't talk about patience. And nor is the wish to be free of the burden sinful in itself. It's a natural need of the soul. We commit a sin when, from this need, we're brought to the point of fretting and complaining. If you feel anything like that within you, get rid of it at once, and thank God for doing so.

If you fall ill through your own fault, confess it to God and beseech His forgiveness for notguarding the gift of health, the gift He gave you. If, on the other hand, your illness was allowed by the Lord- because nothing happens by accident- thank Him from your heart. Illness is also a gift from God, you see, because it humbles us, it softens the soul and frees us from so many cares.

How should we pray when we're sick?

We don't sin when we ask God to cure us. But any time that we ask this, let's add the phrase: 'if it be Your will, Lord'. When we submit completely to the divine will and accept everything as a divine act, then our soul is peaceful and God becomes

more merciful towards us. Then He grants us health, or, at least, comfort and consolation in our pain.

(Saint Theophan the Recluse, Χειραγωγία στην πνευματική ζωή, Holy Monastery of the Paraklitos, 5th ed. pp. 29-31).