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40 DAY CHALLENGE Week 3: Faith and Good Works (Evangelos Sotiropoulos, political scientist, freelance columnist)

[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)



As we continue our Journey to Pascha in the “arena of virtues” known as Great Lent, this week’s installment of our 40 Day Challenge focuses on two inseparable attributes of the Christian life: Faith and Good Works. There are countless Bible passages and sayings of the Church Fathers that deal with these two virtues.

On faith, we will hear, for example, on Lazarus Saturday, Christ saying to Martha: “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?”



On good works, we read the following in the Book of James: “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also” (2:26).

Our faith in Christ and His Church must be strong, like gold tested in a fire ... but it must not be in isolation. Like the parable on the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30), we must use and grow our faith for good works to the glory of God.

Good works should play a central role in the life of every Christian ... but we must be careful not to misidentify the source of our good works (which is God) and be puffed-up with pride. More, we must be careful not to substitute good works for our faith in Christ and need to follow His commandments.

Faith and Good Works should complement and be conjoined to one another, like a tree’s roots to its branches. As we grow in our faith, our zeal in the Lord and desire to do good will grow, creating a virtuous and indissoluble cycle of faith working through love.

The example par excellence of this ideal is the God-man (Theanthropos) Jesus Christ. Our Holy Orthodox Church also offers the faithful the example of the Most Holy Theotokos, as well as all the saints for the faithful to imitate in their own lives.

One such example commemorated today — the Second Sunday of Great Lent — is St. Gregory Palamas. This Saint, who lived in the 14th-century, contended

courageously for the true dogmas of the Church. Through both his strong faith and good works he defended the correct teachings of the Fathers.

Thus, let us imitate the life of St. Gregory Palamas so that we may live a God-pleasing life and be on the road to salvation. Let us intensify our efforts during this blessed time of Lent; let us increase our faith in Christ and multiply our good works by using our God-given talents. Let us pray more and study Holy Scripture. Let us smile at a neighbour, visit a lonely person, and contribute our time and money to advance and grow our parishes across the country.

Let us remember, above all, our connection to, and relationship with, Christ, Who said: "For without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

Source: gometropolis.org