

On the spiritual struggle (Archimandrite Georgios Kapsanis, Abbot of the Holy Monastery of Gregoriou †)

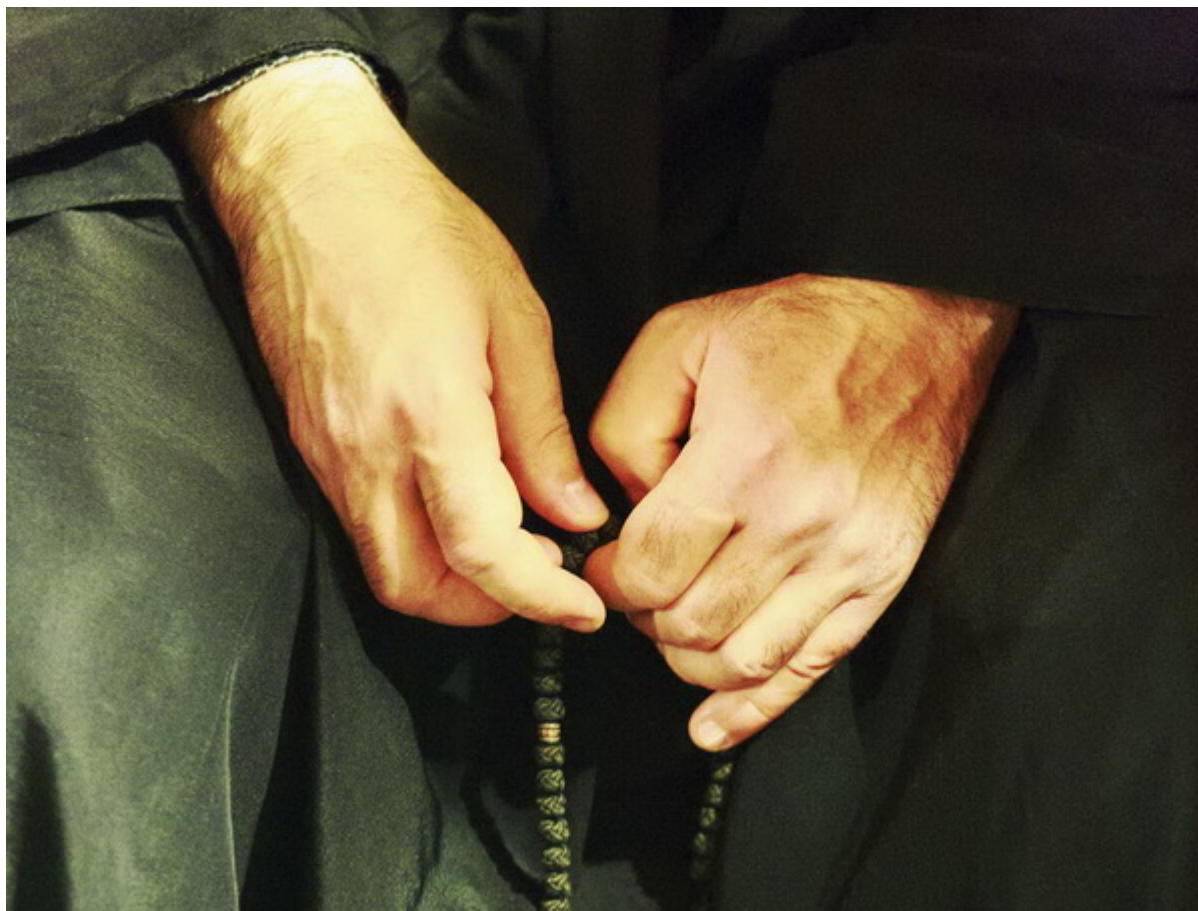
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How can a faithful person be delivered from the old fallen person?

We all feel that we carry the traces of the old person. Its main characteristic is love of self, that is the sick, egocentric 'love' of our self. Self-love doesn't allow us to love God and other people truly and unselfishly. From this self-love are born the passions. Impassioned as we are, we can't relate unselfishly to other human beings and things. Our relationships become impassioned and egotistical and they prevent us from truly loving or enjoying other people and the other things of the world. This eventually leads to loneliness, to emptiness, to an impasse.

Therefore when we say 'the old person', we mean the diseased self-centeredness, from which all of us suffer, to a greater or lesser extent.



How can we be delivered from this heavy spiritual illness which poisons our whole existence?

Only someone free from this sickness would be able to treat us. Only a new person would be able to give to us the chance to overcome the illness of the old person and become renewed – new people.

We all know that this new person is our Saviour Christ, Who, as God and Man, according to the scripture ‘committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth’.

Because of His infinite love for us, Jesus Christ offers Himself to us so that we can be united with Him, and in this way, have His new life transferred to us.

We’re brought to life by Christ and our integration into His Body is achieved through Holy Baptism, Chrismation and Holy Communion,

All Christians who participate in the life of Christ, within His body which is the Church, have, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, received the seeds of the new life. They must, however, also struggle to be cleansed increasingly from the passions and to be adorned with the virtues.

To put it simply: the more that people empty themselves of their pride, the more

they're filled with the true love and Grace of God. The more the old person is restricted, to the same degree the new person grows. This passage from the old person to the new is not easy, because the passions are deeply rooted within us and aren't easy to eradicate. A continual and prolonged struggle is needed if we're to be cleansed of the passions. This is the struggle of repentance. Every day we must repent over our old way of life, that is our sinfulness, our maliciousness, our self-centredness, our inability to love God our Father and other people completely. And every day we're called upon to struggle for love, humility, pure confession, self-control, righteousness, tolerance and prayer.

In this way, a new spiritual birth gradually begins within us: the birth of the new person who is blessed with the Grace of God.

However, just as each birth is accompanied by pains, in the same way, spiritual birth presupposes the pains of repentance. When we crucify the old person it hurts, but that's when the new person is being resurrected within us. We're crucified together with Christ, so that we can rise with Him.

So, with our patience and daily struggle for repentance, we'll be delivered from the old, fallen person and be transfigured into someone new. This has occurred in the lives of our saints, who through their miraculous lives show us the path.