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Papoulakis, Saint Joachim of Vatopaidi (5)

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by Elder Joseph of Vatopaidi



HIS RETURN TO HESYCHIA

When the tempest of the war subsided by the mercy of God, though only after a multitude of casualties in the liberation of the nation, blessed Joachim Papoulakis withdrew to his beloved hesychia. However, he did not return to Athos and Vatopaidi, the monastery of his repentance, but preferred instead the quiet areas of the land of his birth, Ithaki; but this was not by human design. Holy men always speak and act «not by their own will, but as they are moved by the Holy Spirit» (see 2 Peter 1:21). This devout athlete in the spiritual arena and instrument for the

twofold love of God and man not only always disregarded his own interest, but also directed his every action to the benefit of the people; this was his reason for residing outside of Athos. Throughout the entire course of his lifelong struggle, according to those who knew him, he always linked compassion for others with his own personal asceticism. This is why he preferred to live the hesychastic life within the world, binding together these two callings. Having arrived in Ithaki, he chose to reside in the forest called Aphentikos Longos, meaning «Master's Thicket.» He remained there for about five years in strict asceticism, barefoot and half-naked, living in fasting and hardships. [\(περισσότερα...\)](#)