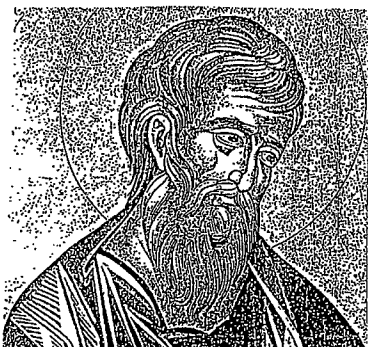


## *Fire & Light*



### **St. Symeon Orthodox Church**

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✠ **October 23, 2011** ✠

**19<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost**

**Holy Apostle James, Brother of the Lord**

**Blessed James of Borovichi, Novgorod (1540)**

Fill your soul with Christ,  
with divine longing, with joy.  
The joy of Christ will heal you.  
~ Elder Porphyrios



✠ **Sat. Oct. 29 3:00pm + Holy Baptism + ~ Lucas Elie Liliac**

✠ **Sun. Nov. 6 2:00pm Holy Matrimony ~ Michael Harper and Karen Franklin**

### **The Holy Apostle James, Brother of the Lord**

St. James is called the Lord's Brother because he was the son of the Righteous Joseph, the Betrothed of the Most-Holy Theotokos. When the Righteous Joseph was near death, he divided his estate among his sons, and wanted to leave a portion to the Lord Jesus, the son of the Most-holy Virgin, but all the other brothers opposed this, not regarding Jesus as their brother. James greatly loved Jesus and declared that he would include Jesus in his share. That is why he is called the Lord's brother.

From the beginning, James was devoted to the Lord Jesus. According to Tradition, he traveled to Egypt with the Most-holy Virgin and Joseph, when Herod sought to slay the newborn King. Later, as soon as he heard Christ's teaching, James lived by it. It is said of him that he never ate fat or oil, but lived on just bread and water, and was a virgin to the end of his life on earth. He often kept vigil at night and prayed to God. The Lord numbered him among His Seventy Apostles.

Following His glorious Resurrection, the Lord appeared to him especially, as the Apostle Paul testifies (I Corinthians 15:7). He was Bishop of Jerusalem for thirty years and zealously governed the Church of God. At the instruction of the Lord, James compiled the first Liturgy, which seemed very long for later Christians, and St. Basil and St. John Chrysostom shortened it. He converted many Jews and Greeks to the Christian Faith, and even the unbelieving Jews were amazed at his righteousness, referring to him as "James the Just."

When Ananias became High Priest, he and other Jewish elders determined to kill James for being a preacher of Christ. Once, during the feast of Passover, when many people had gathered in Jerusalem, the elders forced James to climb onto the roof of the Temple, and tried to make him speak against Christ. He climbed up and spoke to the people of Christ as the Son of God and the true Messiah, of His Resurrection and His eternal glory in the heavens. The infuriated priests and elders pushed him off the roof; he fell and was severely injured, but was still alive. Then, one man ran up and struck him on the head with a fuller's club and killed him. Thus, this most glorious Apostle of Christ died a Martyr's death, and went to live eternally in the Kingdom of his Lord. St. James was sixty-six years old when he suffered for Christ.

### **The Idolatry of the Passions**

✠ [Our spiritual situation today] is similar to what happened in the days of idolatry. Back then, if you reviled the idols, they would stone you or put you to a miserable death. Now in our times, every passion has taken the place of an idol. And if you reprove or criticize the passion that you see overcoming each person, they all shout, "Stone him, because he has reviled our gods!"

- Elder Joseph the Hesychast (+1959), cited at Fr. Benedict Crawford's Blog,  
*Seeking the Kingdom*

## Pearls of the Holy Fathers 3:2

If a man cannot bear being reviled, he will not see glory. St. Barsanuphius the Great

Never seek consolation that lies outside the heart. Raise yourself above all consolation that the senses provide, so that you may be accounted worthy to receive that [consolation] which is within, beyond the senses. St. Isaac the Syrian

Who is as strong as the lion? And yet, because of his greed he falls into the net, and all his strength is brought low. Abba John the Dwarf

I have come from the All-night Vigil. . . O Lord, what happiness! What marvellous words are proclaimed to us in church! Peace and quiet, the spirit of sanctity are sensibly felt in church. St. Nikon of Optina

When someone asks something of you, even if you do violence to yourself in giving it to him, your thought must take pleasure in the gift according to that which is written, "If someone asks you to go a mile, go two miles with him." That is to say, if someone asks something of you, give it to him with your whole soul and spirit. Apophthegmata Patrum (Anonymous Sayings of the Fathers)

He who esteems life in this world and judges its values as worth protecting does not know how to discern what is his own from what is alien to himself. Nothing transitory belongs to us. St. Gregory of Nyssa

If the demons attempt to capture a man's spirit through his own impetus, they draw him in this manner until they lead to an invisible passion. Then, at that point, if the spirit returns and seeks after God and if it remembers the eternal judgment, immediately the passion falls away and disappears. It is written, "In returning and rest you shall be saved." (Isaiah 30:15) Abba Cronius

See my child, how good obedience is when it is undertaken for the Lord. . . Oh, obedience, salvation of the faithful! Oh, obedience, mother of all the virtues! Oh, obedience, discloser of the Kingdom! Oh, obedience, opening of the Heavens, and making men to ascend there from earth! Oh, obedience, food of all the Saints, whose milk they have sucked, through you they have become perfect! Oh, obedience, companion of the Angels! Abba Rufus

Lord, Thou continually conquerest hell in me, in accordance with my prayer; and if I am not yet in hell, it is through Thy mercy, O Conqueror of hell, my Lord! Glory to Thee, our Benefactor, our Saviour! St. John of Kronstadt

If your hands are cramped from work, just wash them with prayer. Elder Feofil, the Fool for Christ of Kiev

"The infant, who runs with yearning to the embrace of its mother to breast-feed and is filled with her sweet love and affection, is smarter than us adults when we avoid union with God through prayer --- which we often consider drudgery." Blessed Elder Paisios of Mt. Athos

Our humility is our surest intercessor before the face of the Lord. It is by virtue of humility and penance that the last shall be first. St. Macarius of Optina

# Prayer for Enemies

*by St Nikolai Velimirovich*

Bless my enemies, O Lord. Even I bless them and do not curse them.

Enemies have driven me into Your embrace more than friends have. Friends have bound me to earth, enemies have loosed me from earth and have demolished all my aspirations in the world.

Enemies have made me a stranger in worldly realms and an extraneous inhabitant of the world. Just as a hunted animal finds safer shelter than an unhunted animal, so have I, persecuted by enemies, found the safest sanctuary, having ensconced myself beneath Your tabernacle, where neither friends nor enemies can slay my soul. Bless my enemies, O Lord. Even I bless them and do not curse them.

They, rather than I, have confessed my sins before the world.

They have punished me, whenever I have hesitated to punish myself.

They have tormented me, whenever I have tried to flee torments.

They have scolded me, whenever I have flattered myself.

They have spat upon me, whenever I have filled myself with arrogance.

Bless my enemies, O Lord. Even I bless them and do not curse them.

Whenever I have made myself wise, they have called me foolish.

Whenever I have made myself mighty, they have mocked me as though I were a dwarf.

Whenever I have wanted to lead people, they have shoved me into the background.

Whenever I have rushed to enrich myself, they have prevented me with an iron hand.

Whenever I thought that I would sleep peacefully, they have wakened me from sleep.

Whenever I tried to build a home for a long and tranquil life, they demolished it and drove me out.

Truly, enemies have cut me loose from the world and have stretched out my hands to the hem of Your garment.

Bless my enemies, O Lord. Even I bless them and do not curse them.

Bless them and multiply them; multiply them and make them even more bitterly against me - so that my fleeing to You may have no return; so that all hope in men may be scattered like cobwebs; so that absolute serenity may begin to reign in my soul; so that my heart may become the grave of my two evils twins: arrogance and anger; so that I might amass all my treasure in heaven; ah, so that I may for once be freed from self-deception, which has entangled me in the dreadful web of illusory life.

Enemies have taught me to know - what hardly anyone knows - that a person has no enemies in the world except himself. One hates his enemies only when he fails to realize that they are not enemies, but cruel friends.

It is truly difficult for me to say who has done me more good and who has done me more evil in the world: friends or enemies.

Therefore bless, O Lord, both my friends and my enemies. A slave curses enemies, for he does not understand. But a son blesses them, for he understands. For a son knows that his enemies cannot touch his life. Therefore he freely steps among them and prays to God for them.

Bless my enemies, O Lord. Even I bless them and do not curse them.

## **Wisdom of St. Seraphim of Sarov**

Acquire the spirit of peace and thousands around you will be saved.

Where there is God, there is no evil. Everything coming from God is peaceful, healthy and leads a person to the judgment of his own imperfections and humility.

When a person accepts anything Godly, then he rejoices in his heart, but when he has accepted anything devilish, then he becomes tormented.

The devil is like a lion, hiding in ambush (Ps 10:19, 1Pe 5:8). He secretly sets out nets of unclean and unholy thoughts. So, it is necessary to break them off as soon as we notice them, by means of pious reflection and prayer.

It is necessary that the Holy Spirit enter our heart. Everything good that we do, that we do for Christ, is given to us by the Holy Spirit, but prayer most of all, which is always available to us.

Excessive care about worldly matters is characteristic of an unbelieving and fainthearted person, and woe to us, if, in taking care of ourselves, we do not use as our foundation our faith in God, Who cares for us! If we do not attribute visible blessings to Him, which we use in this life, then how can we expect those blessings from Him which are promised in the future? We will not be of such little faith. By the words of our Savior, it is better first to seek the Kingdom of God, for the rest shall be added unto us (see Mt. 6:33).

True hope seeks the one Kingdom of God and is sure that everything necessary for this mortal life will surely be given. The heart cannot have peace until it acquires this hope. This hope pacifies it fully and brings joy to it. The most holy lips of the Savior spoke about this very hope: "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Mt. 11:28)."

Oh, if you only knew what joy, what sweetness awaits a righteous soul in Heaven! You would decide in this mortal life to bear any sorrows, persecutions and slander with gratitude. If this very cell of ours was filled with worms, and these worms were to eat our flesh for our entire life on earth, we should agree to it with total desire, in order not to lose, by any chance, that heavenly joy which God has prepared for those who love Him.

The reading of the word of God should be performed in solitude, in order that the whole mind of the reader might be plunged into the truths of the Holy Scripture, and that from this he might receive warmth, which in solitude produces tears; from these a man is wholly warmed and is filled with spiritual gifts, which rejoice the mind and heart more than any word.

God is a fire that warms and kindles the heart and inward parts. Hence, if we feel in our hearts the cold which comes from the devil—for the devil is cold—let us call on the Lord. He will come to warm our hearts with perfect love, not only for Him but also for our neighbor, and the cold of him who hates the good will flee before the heat of His countenance.

When I am dead, come to me at my grave, and the more often the better. Whatever is in your soul, whatever may have happened to you, come to me as when I was alive and kneeling on the ground, cast all your bitterness upon my grave. Tell me everything and I shall listen to you, and all the bitterness will fly away from you. And as you spoke to me when I was alive, do so now. For I am living and I shall be forever.

## Darwinism, sort of...

### Trouble at the Mind-Matter Interface

Fred Reed, June 12, 2011

***We do not know enough about the unknown to know that it is unknowable.***

The theory of evolution does not stand alone. It is part of a vast synthesis which fits all of existence into a coherent whole: The Big Bang, the formation of stars and planets, the chance appearance of life in primeval seas, the evolution of that life, the Pyramids, Space Shuttle, and Renoir. It is an imposing intellectual edifice, mechanistic, easily comprehended, self-assured, with only the details to be worked out. Or so we are told.

This agglomeration of everything under one theoretical roof appeals powerfully to minds that need an overarching explanation of everything. The great intellectual divide perhaps is not between those who believe one thing and those who believe another, but between those who need to believe something—I am tempted to say believe almost anything—and those who are comfortable with uncertainty and even the unknowable. Adherents of Christianity (*Orthodoxy being exceptional, is comfortable with mystery – ed.*), atheism, scientism (as distinct from science) and classical evolutionism fall into the first category; the agnostic of every sort, into the second. Unshakable belief seems to alleviate unease with the unfathomed, the anxiety that naturally comes of not knowing where we came from, or why, or whither.

In the following, unfairly but conveniently, I use “scientist” to mean the sort who needs to think that all of existence is understandable, if perhaps not yet understood. The distinction between “understandable” and “understood” is crucial. The scientist (again, of the sort I speak of) regards existence as one might regard a difficult and unfinished crossword puzzle. The puzzle may be challenging. The solver may have struggled for days to find a seven-letter word meaning “ancient Sumerian perfume bottle.” But he knows that the puzzle

can be solved, that there is an answer, and he understands the rules of crossword puzzles. The scientist sees the universe as he would see the puzzle. It is only a matter of time, he thinks, until everything is understood.

This is very different from seeing the world as profoundly mysterious, as in many ways being beyond our understanding, as containing questions that have no answers.

And so he sees everything as mechanical, as physics. The Big Bang, if any, was a monumental eruption following the laws—“fitting the descriptions of” might be a better phrase—of physics. Chemistry, a subset of physics dealing with the interactions of atoms, next came into play and then, with the advent of life, biochemistry, a subset of chemistry dealing with reactions in living things. Evolution, the study of the interactions over generations of those physical systems we call life with each other and their physical environment, is thus itself a subset of physics. According to this view, nothing happens, or can happen, that does not accord with physics.

This approach, mechanistic and deterministic, works well as long as the observer is not taken into account. Astrophysics predicts with near exactitude the motions of planets. Solid-state physics describes accurately the behavior of electrons in microcircuits. In textbooks of biochemistry one reads of stereochemistry and charged groups and catalysis and so on that in fact describe what happens. It all works.

Grave problems arise when you take the observer—the scientist, you, me—into consideration. The obvious first problem is that of consciousness. Your brain is a complex structure undergoing complex reactions, but all of these reactions follow the laws of physics. Yet nonetheless you are conscious. Is this something outside of physics? If so, then we have the sciences on one hand, and Something Else on the other, and the question becomes how they interact. Or is consciousness a physical variable, like

gravitation? If I give you a large injection of Demerol, you will lose consciousness, and the biochemical mechanism can be given—but that doesn't explain what consciousness is.

Then there is the vexed question of volition. The end points of physical systems are determined by the starting conditions: The final positions of balls on a pool table depend entirely on the initial velocity of the cue ball, elasticity, coefficient of friction, and so on. The same determinism applies to chemistry: mix identical quantities of identical chemicals under identical conditions, and you get statistically identical results. If this weren't true, chemical engineers would be in a heckuva fix.

So how can you choose to do one thing instead of another? Why is your "decision" not completely determined by the starting configuration of your brain? This is certainly true of computers which, given the same program and the same inputs, will always produce the same results.

Evolutionists espouse the mechanistic and deterministic view, though more as metaphysics than science. Selective pressures, plausible though not measurable, defined, or confirmed, push evolution in certain directions. Much of it is wonderfully questionable, but we will pass over this. The evolutionist, again meaning the sort for whom evolution must explain all human behavior, falls into difficulties when he considers humanity.

Consider morality. For the evolutionist, everything must be explained in terms of maximizing the production of offspring so that, for example, honesty serves to promote cohesion in hunting bands, making them more efficient and therefore having more children. Right and wrong do not exist, nor Good and Evil, as these have no meaning within evolutionism unless they can be tied to fecundity.

Which leads the evolutionist into logical swamps. I have asked such people why I should not make a hobby of torturing to death the genetically feeble-minded. In evolutionary terms, killing them is a good idea, as it reduces the diversion of resources in maintaining them and raises the average intelligence of the group.

How they are killed has no evolutionary importance, and in any event executing them with a blowtorch would consist merely in substituting certain chemical reactions for others: Pain has no existence in physics.

Of course if I actually did such a thing, the evangelists of scientism would be horrified. They are not immoral. They just can't explain why they are not.

The other place where evolutionism breaks down is in human reproduction. All through evolutionism runs the idea of maximizing reproduction. Women have big breasts to attract men so that they can make more babies. Men are big and strong so that they can get the women and make more or better babies. People cooperate in bands so they can stay alive and make more babies. On and on.

Yet now we have whole societies which by choice are not having babies. Japan, Italy, Spain, Russia, Germany and so on are breeding at below replacement. In Mexico the birth rate falls like a rock, even though nutrition has improved and health is better. The drop is easily explained in human terms. Why do you, the reader, not want fifteen children? The same answers apply in Mexico.

Interestingly, the drop in procreation is steepest among the most intelligent, educated, and wealthy—that is, among those most able to support large families. There is no evolutionary explanation. When I ask, I encounter silence or vague mumblings about how there must be some mutation or, well, something.

True believers are true believers.

## Marriage: A Sacred Institution

Marriage is one of the oldest and most enduring institutions of every culture on earth. They all have it in one form or another and many cultures view it as a sacred commitment, blessed by God. But that does not mean that it is easy. Statistics say that more than 50% of marriages in America will end in divorce. The rate of success goes down for second and third marriages. Why? Is there anything that we can do to strengthen our marriage?

To help us find a solution we first must understand the problem. Each marriage has its own specific circumstances that make it challenging but in a broad brush stroke we can point to a few general obstacles that make married life difficult. Overcoming these obstacles can transform marriage into truly one of the most beautiful things in life that we can do. My good friend once told me "If I had known how great marriage is, I would have done it when I was 10." Of course it may not have been so great at 10, but you get the point.

By all accounts, Mary Todd Lincoln, the wife of Abraham Lincoln was a very difficult person. It is reported that she once threw a drink in the face of her husband at a party because she was so upset with him.

Once when a man was very offended by her after a difficult encounter, he went to the President to complain. Lincoln gave this answer: "Young man, you can endure for 15 minutes, what I have had to endure for 15 years." The point is that Lincoln faced some of the greatest challenges of any president in history with over 650,000 of his own citizens killed in the Civil War. If he could not hold up to a difficult marriage how could he possibly hope to withstand the kind of pressure he was under as President? We may be tempted to think that "If only I was married to someone else, I could really soar." Irma Bombeck quips, "The grass is not greener on the other side of the fence; it is greener where you water it." The fact is we cannot change another person, we can only change ourselves. God hasn't asked us to change anyone else; that is His job. Our job is to become like Him.

First let us be clear that physically or emotionally abusive relationships are not in the image of God's love and professional help and guidance is needed immediately if you find yourself in this situation. However, that is not the context for most marital breakups; more often it is disillusionment, false expectations, self-destructive behavior, or the mere fact is that two imperfect persons are being joined together and asked to love each other and live together with all their faults and shortcomings. How can this not be a formula for disaster?

To begin with, we must examine our **expectations** for marriage. It begins with "falling in love". Those two words in the same sentence, 'love' and 'falling', give you a clue as to where this is headed. Falling usually is something uncontrolled and results in some sort of pain or destruction. Not the word you want to associate with "love". But, nonetheless, it is the timeless expression used to capture that feeling of bliss that draws us together in the first place. Without it we may never have the temerity to get married. So not all together a bad thing, but it can't stop there.

In order for marriage to mature from infatuation to the lasting love it is meant to be, the nature of the relationship must be transformed from a love that takes to a love that gives. Infatuation does feel good but it is a very ego centric experience, the equivalent of some sort of drug or narcotic that takes us away from this mundane world into a "perfect world" where everything is beautiful and we are happy. That is why it is said that "Love is blind-but marriage is a real eye opener". Sound familiar? We see it played out over and over in Hollywood. When two starlets meet up for the perfect marriage, happy ever after, I usually give it two years at the most. They are drunk on infatuation and when it wears off and the wine of real commitment matures they call it 'sour grapes' and quit. We see it all the time. There is a reason that in the Orthodox Church we read from Ephesians during the marriage service. God is giving the husband and wife the key to success in marriage, but it can only be understood in practice.

~ Fr. Anthony Salzman, St. Philothea Church, Athens, GA

# Can't Buy Love: Materialism Kills Marriages

By Courtney Hutchison, ABC News Medical Unit | Good Morning America

Focusing too heavily on the "for richer" part of the nuptial vows could spell disaster for a marriage, according to research published today by Brigham Young University. In a survey of 1,700 married couples, researchers found that couples in which one or both partners placed a high priority on getting or spending money were much less likely to have satisfying and stable marriages.

"Our study found that materialism was associated with spouses having lower levels of responsiveness and less emotional maturity. Materialism was also linked to less effective communication, higher levels of negative conflict, lower relationship satisfaction, and less marriage stability," said Jason Carroll, a BYU professor of family life in Provo, Utah, and lead author of the study.

Researchers gauged materialism using self-report surveys that asked questions such as to what extent do you agree with these statements? "I like to own things to impress people" or "money can buy happiness." Spouses were then surveyed on aspects of their marriage. For one out of every five couples in the study, both partners admitted a strong love of money. These couples were worse off in terms of marriage stability, marriage satisfaction, communications skills and other metrics of healthy matrimony that researchers studied.

The one out of seven couples that reported low-levels of materialism in both partners scored 10 to 15 percent higher in all metrics of marital quality and satisfaction. Interestingly, the correlation between materialism and marital difficulties remained stable regardless of the actual wealth of the couple.

## The Things That Money Just Can't Buy

Study authors and marriage experts noted that the findings probably have to do with the personality traits that go along with materialism. "The finding does not necessarily mean that it is the materialism itself that damages their relationships. ... A materialistic orientation may be associated with other unidentified factors, such as childhood deprivation or neglect, which might play a more pivotal role in adult marital satisfaction," said Don Catherall, professor of clinical psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Northwestern University in Chicago. "Of course, it may also simply mean that people who are more focused on making money have less energy and interest left to invest in their marriages."

Other studies have shown that materialism is correlated with a host of personality traits and interpersonal skills that might hinder a marriage. "People who are materialistic tend to be narcissistic and concerned with impressing people," said Susan Heitler, a Denver-based clinical psychologist and creator of marriage resource site [Poweroftwomarriage.com](http://Poweroftwomarriage.com). "They have a tendency to be anxious, depressed, have relatively poor relationship skills and have low self-esteem. These qualities in turn can cause marital problems."

Heitler recalls one patient who said that whenever she felt empty in her relationship, she would "fill up the hole" by buying lots of things and this would make her feel better. Her husband, who didn't share this love of buying, would then "kindly return all of it because they couldn't afford what she had bought," Heitler recounted, "and the wife was grateful that he would return it because she didn't really want the stuff in the end, but she got satisfaction from the purchasing."

Such a pattern highlights another dynamic researchers found, when one partner is highly materialistic and the other is not. Relationships usually fair better when partners share priorities and values, but researchers found that the opposite was true in this case. When only one partner was materialistic and the other not, the non-materialistic partners seemed to buoy the marriage, resulting in higher levels of satisfaction, communication and stability in marriages made of mismatched couples when compared to dual-materialistic ones.

"Spouses that are mismatched on materialism may do better in their relationships than spouses with shared materialistic values because at least one spouse may possess more 'other-centeredness' and 'emotional readiness,'" said Laura Frame, assistant professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York City.