

Transcript of [How to LIVE HOLY WEEK? Here are Met. Neophytos' tips | Orthodox Cyprus - YouTube](#)

"Do whatever you will, but 'live' the Holy Week."

[Giannis, the moderator]: We had talked in the beginning about the position and the power of the Psalter. A question has come which concerns one other recommendation that you have made to the faithful people. **"Your Eminence, your blessing, you have suggested that the first Gospel of Great Thursday, of St. John the Theologian and Evangelist [John 13:31-18:1] should be read often.** Can you explain to us why you made this suggestion?" Yes, beautifully. Let us say this now since we are [in the weeks] before the great celebrations of the Great and Holy Week of Pascha, of the Bright Week and then of Pentecost. For two reasons, I made this recommendation to those who are 'devotees' of the spiritual life.

Apart from the Psalter, study exceptionally [not only during] this period of the Great Lent, but also [during] the period after Pascha and until Pentecost. Thus, that's a big [time] period. Right? When is Pentecost this year [2021], Giorgos? On the 20th of June. Think that [you can read] until June every single day, or every other day, the Gospel of John. Why did I say that?

Our elder in the monastery used to tell us, "I want you to live the Holy Week." That's what he used to tell us: "Do whatever you will, but 'live' the Holy Week." To his spiritual children who were/are married or professionals, he used to tell them, "Keep 10 days of your leave so that you can 'live' 10 days of the Holy Week and afterwards, the Bright Week." Morning, noon and night. It's the fruit. You might say [as soon as you see an orange tree], "What a beautiful orange [tree]!" Agreed, the orange tree is beautiful too, but you cannot eat its leaves.

The fruit of the ecclesiastical life throughout the whole year are those ten days, [the days] of the Holy Week and the days that follow, the Resurrection Liturgies of the Bright Week. Exactly, his words. Just like with the orange tree you can say, "The orange tree has sprouted and it smells so beautiful." Still, you will not eat its orange blossoms [yet]." Then, the orange blossoms will grow. Then, she will make her first small orange fruit. The most you can do is cut it and make a sweet out of it. But how much of it can you eat. You will get [high levels of] sugar if you eat too much of it. The whole purpose of it is to become a [full-grown] orange. Green at first, turns orange at the end. Right?

Thus, you realize that the fruit of the tree, throughout the whole year, are these ten days. Thus, it is important to "exercise" our senses. How do we taste an orange? By eating it, by making orange juice. In a few words, by tasting it somehow. Therefore, we need "good senses." As we have explained, besides the five senses of the body, we also have the five senses of the soul.

The nous, the noesis, the gnome, the fantasy and the aesthesis, according to St. John of Damascus. So, **these senses of the soul and body must be trained, must be exercised. By fasting, we [actually] exercise our senses. Little by little, we get a taste of the Liturgies. Our heart starts feeling the grace.** I previously described with Elder Nicolas, we feel the grace in our hearts. **Whenever we go to a Presanctified Liturgy, whenever we go to a Vesper service, whenever we go to the Salutations of the Theotokos, whenever we pray, whenever we read the Psalter in our home, whenever we do a prostration, an all-night vigil. What are all those things? Tastes! They are tastes!** In the same way you go to the ice cream vendor and tell him, "I want vanilla, ... and chocolate." Those are not my personal tastes. I have two favorites. Cyprus knows them. It's rose water. Remember that old rose water without milk? And the mastic of Chios. Those two. I remembered them now ... during Lent ...

Thus, you realize they are tastes, "spiritual tastes." **Had it not been for these tastes, we would have been stupid. Why would we possibly rush to listen to homilies, attend all-night vigils and lose our sleep [because of it], right? Because the soul desires again and again Services, fasting... It means that the soul is tasting something through the senses we just described. If you exercise your senses all year round, our Elder used to tell us, that [is the] way to acquire "sensible senses."**

St. Porphyrios [moreover] used to say, "Let your senses open." **As soon as the Grace arrives, the senses open.** That is, in the least, you "listen." **You listen to the Liturgy, and you comprehend it. Beforehand, you were unable to comprehend it. You "read" the Psalter, [and] you "feel" it. What does it mean -- your sense has opened! You go to a homily and you have undistracted attention. This not only due to the speaker, but it's also due to that fact that your senses have opened.**

[Giannis]: Elder Nicolas... Exactly, Elder Nicolas. His senses had opened. He managed "to see" the wedding, to enjoy the Holy Light. Thus, our Fr. Symeon in Mavrovouni used to tell us, "My son, you should read every day starting on Clean Monday [first day of Lent] until Holy Thursday, the first Gospel of the twelve that we listen to on Holy Thursday." Such a great thing! The first gospel [John 13:31-18:1]. Most often, we read it inside empty churches. The people arrive later on [during the Liturgy]. Unfortunately so, because Europe made people love theaters, the reenactment. Everybody arrives [at church on Holy Thursday] to listen to "Today He is hanging from a piece of wood." At the moment when we "crucify" Christ [late during the service of Holy Thursday]. [Giannis]: That's the only time when we are moved [by the Passions of Christ] ... Moved a bit. This is a sentimental approach. Our elders disliked such things at all.

I have lived not one, but many Paschas next to Saint Iakovos Tsalikis and Fr. Kyrillos. Fr. Kyrillos [was] also a holy man. My Giannis, I did not see them moved once. Are you listening? Do you think [Saint] Iakovos had no tears [to shed]? [It's just that] it wasn't [meant for him] to whimper inside the church and his snot dripping down. No! Seriousness. All of them used to tell us to read the Gospel of John. The first reason, I told you to read it, is because of St. Simeon.

[The Gospel of John] is the so-called Gospel of the Testament. What does it say? It talks about the love of the God-Father to His Son, to His Christ. Who speaks about this love? Christ. Christ talks to his disciples a bit before His Crucifixion. He describes to them, for the first time, crystal-clear, [that] He is not alone, He is sent by His Father. "He who has seen Me has seen the Father." [John 14:9] Whoever has seen Me has seen My Father. The disciples start to realize [that] Christ has a Father. And God is His Father. What does He say afterwards? "A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me." [John 16:16] For a bit, you won't [be able to] see Me. A bit later, again, you will [be able to] see Me. One disciple turns to him and asks, "What is this 'a little while.' We do not understand what you are talking about." Since the disciples did not have the Holy Spirit yet, how could they understand? Bubbleheads! They still lived in their illiteracy. The letters of God had not yet reached their souls.

Which are the letters of God? The information, the Holy Light. Just like the Gerontissa of Crete [probably referring to Gerontissa Galaktia] who says, "I see a Light, my son, one that is full of information." The Light that Elder Nicolas was seeing and all Saintly people. This Light had not yet reached [them]. They were wondering what He is saying. Then, He tells them the other thing. "Are you going to leave?" "Yes, I am going to leave." They start to worry. "Where will you be going?" "I am going to My Father, but do not be afraid. I will not leave you as orphans." [John 14:18] Won't leave you as orphans?

Listen to what a God we have! How much He loves us! "I will send the other one." "Who is the other one? Is there another one?" "The Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth which will lead you to all truth. He will reveal to you what the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit stand for." Do you realize what he told them? Not even Christ Himself told them everything. "The whole truth will be revealed to you, my Apostles, by the Holy Spirit." This is why all of them waited, after the Resurrection, for the Holy Spirit to arrive. When did the Holy Spirit arrive? On Pentecost. As soon as the Holy Spirit arrived, all of them went out and started talking and the Jews thought that they were drunk. Peter the fisherman was speaking in a way that everyone could listen in his own tongue. The Greeks, the Greek [language], the Arabs, Arabic, the Libyans, the Libyan. The Cretes, the Cretan. This was the beginning of "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations." [Matthew 28:19] In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. And the Church on earth was built.

How the Father is related to the Son and the Son to the Holy Spirit is mentioned in this [very] Gospel. The Gospel of the Testament. Why is it called "of the Testament? Because it's the one where Christ leaves his Testament to the disciples.

My Christina, tomorrow, you might find out that your end is approaching. Since you are a rich Akakiotissa, full of land, and gold sovereigns, should you not think, "I have three children. Let me prepare for them my will." This is what Christ did. The wealth of His Father, the wealth of the Holy Spirit, His wealth, He gave it to the disciples. And what [more] did He say? "You will also give it to the ones who will believe you." That is to us. All these tastes I told you about from the "heavenly ice cream." Exactly, this thing.

"But you will [have to] wait," He tells them, "for the Holy Spirit [to come]." You cannot do it on your own. Without the Holy Spirit, there is nothing you can do, "for without Me you can do nothing." [John 15:5] Exactly like this! This is the Gospel of John.

Romanides, the greatest modern Greek theologian, used to say, "What is the Holy Trinity? It is God who created the universes. It is the truth, the way." If, however, we want to describe in today's language, "What is this Triune God?" Listen to Romanides' (†2001) words, not my words, his. I emphasize his name so that you commemorate him. He says, "The selfless love ... of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Among them, these three divine persons have such a perfect love, since God is perfect, that the only word fitting for this love is "selfless." This adjective [selfless, «Ανιδιοτελής»] is also in Greek. Thus I tell you Greek is the language of theology.

What does "selfless" mean? It has no conditions, no interest for its own. You see Christ, He speaks for His Father and says, "I am nothing."

Pay attention to what real love is: "Whatever My Father tells me, these I tell to you [also]. The commandments of my Father I came to pass on to you." Then, you listen to the Father, the few times He appeared to speak, "This is My beloved Son....Listen to [His] words." [Matthew 3:17, 17:5] Right? This God the Father, the longer time goes on ...

At first, I loved the Holy Spirit. I understood that without the Holy Spirit, the heart of Neophytos will not be cleansed. His nous will be a confused one. His anger will not be tempered; it would be like a volcano. I realized that the Holy Spirit is the one that cleanses. Thus, "Come and abide in us and cleanse us from every impurity" [from the Prayer to the Holy Spirit]. I started a washing machine to cleanse Neophytos, our heart, our nous, our logic, our fantasy.

Where does the Holy Spirit lead you? Instead of loving Him, what does He [the Holy Spirit] say? "Love Christ!" Are you seeing the "selfless love?" Which man can love his wife that much so as to say to her, "You are my light!" And the wife replies to him, "Love Anna as well." What does the Holy Spirit say? I cleanse you so that Christ can come, the second person.

St. Hesychios the Presbyter says ... I found it! Listen to St. Hesychios from Philokalia. "If with a humble spirit and memory of death and self-accusation..." **To accuse ourselves in order to be better and not just look for people to flatter and compliment us.** In case we are looking for these [two] last things, we are a thousand miles away. "If with a humble spirit and memory of death and self-accusation and denial to wicked thoughts..." That is why it is important to tame the carnal [sins]. "and with the invocation of the name of Jesus Christ..." That is the Jesus prayer. "you dwell inside your heart. And if you step on the narrow but pleasant and delightful way of the intellect with the above weapons, [while] having nepsis..." Nepsis is the cleansing. "...you will arrive at holy theories of the Saints."

At this point, it says what I previously told you. "You will feel that with Jesus Christ—that you continuously tell Him, 'Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on Me, Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on Me' —the Holy Spirit jumps in swiftly. "...from which the nous of man is illuminated to see with "xeskepo" meaning revealed face." Nobody, the Scripture

mentions, can say "Lord Jesus Christ" without the help of the Holy Spirit. See ... the Gospel I told you to read says these things. Meaning the Holy Spirit confirms mystically that you have inside you, the living Lord.

"Constant aim of the demons and their fight is to obstruct our soul from living with attention." **The demons want us distracted all the time, [and] our nous to wander and not be focused on the heart. Because if we succeed in that, we start cleansing [our hearts]. And what is it that they do?** Think of the stocks that went up, whether the Cypriot [issue] was resolved, whether someone loves me, get jealous with this one, get angry with the other one. **Their purpose is to obstruct us from having an attentive nous.**

That's why the Saints used to say, "Attention is above prayer." Are you listening? "The attention is above the prayer." The one who is watchful will [manage to] "conquer" prayer as well. **"Constant aim of the demons and their fight is to obstruct our heart from living with attention. Because they know the richness we can gather through this in our soul."** The Gospel of John, I told you, is a richness. It's a Testament which Christ gives to us. He tells us, "Occupy yourselves with Me and the Holy Spirit will come."

As soon as you say, "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me," **the Holy Spirit will rush, will "jump" in front of Christ.** Listen to how humble the Holy Spirit is! "Neophytos, Christ cannot dwell in your soul yet. You still have anger. You still have fantasy. You still have vanity. **Let me cleanse you a bit so that Christ can come and dwell!**" Do you understand?

Then, Christ, as soon as He arrives, He says, "Neophytos, I am only a Son. If I am a Son, it means that I have a Father. Thank the Father." And then you, right away, "Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name." **The "Our Father" [is directed] to the Father, that is the Father of Christ.**

"Show us the Father," [said] the Apostles, the bubbleheads, the illiterates without the Holy Spirit before Pentecost. What did Christ tell them? "Such a long time with me, and still you have not understood me. He who has seen Me has seen the Father." [John 13:9] Whoever has seen Me, has seen my Father. I and My Father are one. Only thing, I have flesh and He does not. Is it not so? Still the Father exists separately. As the Christ exists [separately], and as the Holy Spirit exists [separately]. Three hypostases, one essence. [Giannis]: One energy. And one energy. That is one action. You see a Father. The God-Father is contracting, contracting, contracting and what does He say? The one who is the Father of Christ and the Holy Spirit. He says, "Give glory to Christ! All the judgment, I give it to whom? Christ!" Who will exercise the Final Judgment? The Father? No! Christ will! Surely, where is Christ, there is the Father. Where there is the Father, there is the Holy Spirit. They do not separate.

One time, when I told the Gerondissa of Crete, "My Gerondissa, I like a lot to pray to the Holy Spirit." She tells me, "My bishop, those three are not separate." Are you listening? Meaning, although they are separate, do not separate them. The one lives with the other, with a perfect, selfless love. **Why is the selfless love important? The love of the Holy Trinity teaches us little by little, through the Holy Pascha, how we should love one another ... sacrificially!** Christ, Himself, washes the feet of His disciples. He humbles Himself. He is crucified. He is mocked, He is spit on. He dies. A God dies. Lord have mercy! "The Life inside a grave. You were laid, Christ." But He is resurrected, He beats death. He beats devil. He beats our sin. All these can be found in the first Gospel [of Holy Thursday] better than I explain them to you. You will 'feel' them. Think about, starting tomorrow, reading this Gospel every day [John 13:31-18:1]

I tell you do not stop [reading] on Holy Thursday. As soon as the Bright week ends, go on. Because [this Gospel also] speaks about the Holy Spirit. "I have another Paraclete. I will send Him to you", which [indeed] arrived on Pentecost. The whole theology is fulfilled not on Resurrection Day, but on Pentecost.

For this, I suggest you read this Gospel until Pentecost day. In this way, you will get a small taste of the way of existence of our God. And His life will become our life. This was the first reason [I told you to read this Gospel]. The second reason is because in the ancient church as regards the catechumens. Do not we have 'gynaikonites' [«γυναικωνίτης»] in our churches? How do we call them? [crowd]: The catechumena.

[Morphou]: [At the catechumena in the ancient church] remained the catechumens, that is on the back [of the church]. Just like you have in Peristerona, a narthex. There remained the catechumens. That is the ones that were catechized so they could be baptized. They were baptized on the night of Pascha. That's why on the night of Pascha, we do not say, "Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us." But, "As many have been baptized in Christ, have clothed yourselves with Christ," It was the night of the baptisms. And it went on through the whole Bright week. That's why, again, we do not say, "Holy God", but "As many have been baptized in Christ", it was baptism day. They gathered them all and baptized them [on that day].

What a beautiful thing to be able to do it nowadays, right? Still, how can you convince them, nowadays, to baptize in groups. Let us not go there, let us stay in the beautiful [things] of theology. Hopefully, the beautiful ones can create beautiful desires. They were baptized back then.

The Gospel that you will listen to on the night of the Resurrection, do you know which one is it? Whose Evangelist? Now, [we read] the Gospels of the [other three Evangelists] Matthew, Mark and Luke. As soon as "Christ is risen" is heard [on the Sunday of Pascha] and we enter the church to perform the Liturgy [of Resurrection]. That, **unfortunately, many people leave and do not stay to enjoy this feast of the Resurrection of the Savior Christ.** As soon as they listen to the chant "God is resurrected and his enemies have been scattered" [of the Liturgy of Resurrection], **they rush to eat** ['mageiritsa'] soup [Greek Pascha traditional food] As if we are going to miss food [for the couple of hours the Liturgy lasts]. **You realize what 'temptation' is. All these things are 'of temptation', habits 'of the temptation'.** Should you stay, however, the Gospel you will listen to is the Gospel of John. Think of me as a 20-year-old child. How old are you, my son? -19 Think of me [as a 20-year-old child], next to Saint Iakovos Tsalikis and St. Evmenios [Saridakis] to celebrate Pascha together.

You can listen to St. Iakovos saying the Gospel, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God". [John 1:1] That's how he said it. "All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made". [John 1:3] Holy memories. His voice [still] resides inside my heart. I even tell my deacons, [when you read this Gospel], I do not want you to 'yell'. I train them how to chant it. Slowly enough, so that the sainthood of St. Iakovos 'enters' our ears. Meaning, the sainthood of God.

The sainthood is the energy of God. The Gospel of John starting from the night of the Resurrection goes on until Pentecost. Do you understand? The baptized, "the Gospel of the perfects", as Romanides says, is the Gospel of John. "The Gospels of the catechumens" are the three Gospels, of Matthew, of Mark and of Apostle Luke. Thus, the Gospel, I suggest you, my dear children, is "the Gospel for the perfects". You will ask "But are we perfect?". "Am I perfect?" [No], but **we must seek sainthood.** We must ask seek selfless love. **And according to our seeking, to our desires, Christ will provide His mercies in richness.**

I think we've said much. Thank you for your attention. Today's gathering had an originality. Have a good Pascha.

If, if we prepare ourselves [by reading] the Psalter and the Gospel of John, whatever the numerous infectious disease experts decide... "for your own good"... The New World Order... "for your own good"... **Know that no particle or nanoparticle will enter neither your heart, nor your skin, ... Because you will own "the senses of the Holy Spirit". And wherever the Holy Spirit is and the man of faith 'experiences' it, the [evil] spirits do not approach. Even if a disease arrives, you will bear it for the glory of God.**

As my mother used to say, "In difficult times, my son, ask for mercy. In good times, give glory" Exactly like it. **It's training, it's not punishment, it's training. In this way, whatever arrives, not only we will get through it, but we will also 'experience' it as a pedagogy of God, so we can have the eternal life.** "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" in Holy Spirit. [John 17:3]