

ALL CHRISTIANS MUST PRAY CEASELESSLY (PART 2)

—by St. Nikodemos the Hagiorite—

St. Gregory Palamas' father, whose name was Constantine, dwelled within the royal palace and was referred to as both the father and teacher of Emperor Andronikos. Despite the fact that daily he was involved with governmental issues, not to mention the matters he had to deal with in his own home, (because he was extremely wealthy and possessed many properties and servants, in addition to having a wife and children), this marvelous man remained so inseparable from God and so preoccupied with ceaseless noetic prayer, that most of the time he would forget what exactly he was discussing with the emperor and the rulers of the palace concerning matters of the kingdom. As a result, he would have to ask again once or twice to be reminded of the topic of discussion. On account of this, often times the other governors present, unaware of the cause of his absentmindedness, would become annoyed and ridicule him for not following the conversation and for interrupting the emperor asking him a second time. However, the emperor who was aware of the reason would defend him saying, "Blessed Constantine is engrossed in his own matters, which prevent him from concentrating on the temporary and vain issues we are discussing. The mind of this blessed soul is focused on the true and heavenly topics, and this is why he easily neglects the earthly ones. His complete attention is on prayer and God." This is why Constantine was highly esteemed and loved by the emperor, the noblemen, and in general by all the governors of the kingdom—just as he was loved by God—and this is why this righteous person of blessed memory even became worthy of performing miracles.

One time while sailing by boat with his family to the region of Galata in order to visit and receive the blessing of a certain hermit who dwelled in that particular area, he asked his servants if they had brought any food with them to offer the elder, with which, in turn, he could also offer them hospitality. They responded that they had neglected to take anything with them because they were in a rush to leave. Blessed Constantine was saddened when he heard this; however, he did not say anything further to them. Instead, he walked toward the front of the vessel, lowered his hand into the sea, and began to pray silently with noetic prayer, entreating the God and Lord of the ocean to send him something to serve as a meal. After a short while—wondrous are Thy works, O Christ, through which you glorify Thy servants!—he lifted his hand out of the water holding an exceptionally large fish. Having tossed it onto the deck, he said the following to his servants, “Look! The Lord was concerned for the elder, His faithful servant, and He sent him something to eat.”

Do you see, my brothers, how Jesus Christ glorifies His servants who always remain with Him through prayer, and who constantly call upon His most-holy and sweet name?