

The Priest and His life

The priest is lonely in his parish and is subjected to all temptations of loneliness since we do not have an advisory council in which priests meet and discuss the affairs of pastoral care. The Metropolitan in this archdiocese meets with the priests once a month and some of them sometimes don't attend. The priest is left to his readings that give him the theological knowledge and pastoral research; actually he has a lot of time left once the evening comes and the divine services end. This means that he is aware that counseling comes out from him and that if his spiritual life shines then people would be nourished from it because, today, people want to live in God. They ask this kind of life from their priest. My hope is that our priest won't think that his responsibility ends after finishing the divine services. His main responsibility is first in his holiness and second in nourishing the faithful through the Word of God.

We ask for this through meditating in the Holy Book every day and from other books that were published in the past years (which are around 400 books). The Lord wants the holiness of every one of us and this holiness comes from the continuous spiritual fight especially from the priest's prayer that should be always on his lips and in his heart outside the official prayers. If the priest didn't pray individually, he would be then reciting the prayers in the holy service without feelings. The believer would feel this; the faithful can differentiate between a person that recites a lesson he has read and a person that lives these words in his heart.

They would know from his preaching if this man was flaming, and if they loved him, they shall become closer to the glorified Lord. However, if the priest neglected his duties and subjected his behavior to defect he would be, with no doubt, taking some believers away from the Lord. Stumbles often come from clergymen, and once we recognize this fact we shall work harder on our life.

The priest shouldn't be scared concerning his income. In comparison with the past, parishes have become more sensitive to his needs. However, we didn't reach yet a stage in which all priests are in full comfort. This comfort shall make the clergy go away from the love of money and his integrity shall strengthen people's attachment to him.

It was common for us and for the west for the believer to give the priest an amount of money in different occasions (Baptism, Marriage, and Funeral). This money was named among people "Epitrachelion" because the priest wears the Epitrachelion over his chest while doing these prayers. Then, some of the parish councils thought to cancel this and make it a personal contribution for the church. Even I don't have a choice between these two options. The important point in the midst of this is for the clergy not become a money lover, for the parish council not

to put a defined price for every sacrament and service and for the basis of this process to be the freedom of the faithful. The believer decides the amount and could also decide not to pay. We are not sacrament sellers; a priest might be thrown into greed and put an amount of money as a condition. This is called Simonism and is forbidden in the book of Acts and the Church Canon.

In order not to fall into what Apostle Paul calls “idolatry”, these laic officials decided that the believer pays directly to the church or gives a yearly contribution which the church distributes over the priests.

Whatever was the adopted system, it is important for the clergy to stay in chastity concerning this issue and not nag if he was given a small amount or even if he wasn't given anything. When he does so, he “will be given more, and will have abundance”. In order to uphold the respect of the priest and our love for him, chastity is important as it saves him and his spiritual children.

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