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## Chancellor's Update

### Self-Renunciation – Prayer and Fasting (Mark 9:29)

In last month's Update, we discussed how Our Lord helps the successors of the Apostles to spread the Gospel and succeed in their pastoral duties. This month we quote from Metropolitan Simeon, beloved arch-pastor of the Holy Bulgarian Orthodox Church, a Prelate of our Order, and friend of His Holiness Pope Paul John II ([photo archives of our Order and pictures in the book show the two working together on ecumenical issues](#)). In his book *GOD'S GRACE in the Spiritual Life of the Church Shepherd*, Metropolitan Simeon gives a profound insight why bishops must Fast and do Penance ([Page 87-89](#)).

“In the course of time there arise further trials for the shepherd, caused by the feeling of desolation, initially aroused by God's grace, and by the vacillations of the spirit, which is confronted by various obstacles in the feat of self-renunciation. His soul is penetrated more deeply by the light of grace and it becomes ever more engaged in the struggle against the inner evil.

“The shepherd is afflicted by one temptation, then by another, followed by a third.... Ever closer to him comes the helping grace of God; after the victory over each succeeding temptation, the end of the sufferer's trials comes closer and closer - till the day when God bestows peace on the overstrained soul.

“Human language is incapable of explaining the sweetness of the state of the soul of him who has devoted himself to God, who has labored for God and is now favored with his beneficial visit. It is not fortuitously that this state is described as "sweet" and "lovely" (Song of Songs 5: 16). But while experiencing the sense of peace in his soul, illumined by God's grace, the shepherd in the Church should not imagine that the battle has come to an end. The nature of the battle has simply changed a little, because the good determination to resist sin has cut a beneficial road to his heart and God's grace has driven away from it the enemy's schemings. The devil launches his attacks from afar, in the guise of individual temptations. But it is precisely here that one must be on the alert. Sufficient is just one concession to sin, and all previous vices will be back again with tremendous force and will drag the confused soul down towards sin, and what is more, this time even more spitefully, as sin is taking revenge for its previous defeat. One concession to the treacherous spirit, and it will bring with it the most wicked spirits (cf Matt 12:43-45; Luke 11:24-26; 2 Pet 2:20), will captivate the soul like a rapacious enemy and, with still greater malevolence than before, torture its victim. If only for a minute he forgets about God, the grace, already offended, will withdraw from the shepherd's heart and again within him will start the bitter and futile struggle. He shall have to start all over again the previous efforts, arduous and painful again.

“While searching for God, the soul receives, as a great gift from God, cleansing from the passions, and it is only thus that it will attain union with Him. [Yet he who wants to acquire this gift, must renounce all earthly concerns. The weeding out of the passions does not occur at once, it takes time, efforts and feats.](#) As long as he is under the sway of the passions, the shepherd shall be suffering from sorrows and troubles in his life, and he should therefore learn patience.

“The shepherd must proceed without delay to the cleansing from the passions, because passion does not stay in a state of nascency, but tends to grow incessantly.

“Christian common sense,’ teaches us hieromonach Ambrose of Optino, ‘requires that we should check not only our actions, but even our thoughts and opinions, with the Orthodox canon, with the instructions of the Holy Fathers and, above all, with God's commandments. **And if something in us proves to be at variance with God's commandments and the rules of the Holy Fathers, we must repent for it before God and men, and not invent new rules for our justification.**’

“The shepherd in the Church should be striving not just for the abatement of the passions, but also for their complete eradication. Naturally, however much he may try to eradicate them, he can do nothing without God's help, **because he is weak and powerless.** Hieromonach Ambrose is also stressing this point: ‘... **in the spiritual struggle man is too weak and powerless without God's help.**’ ‘In that struggle,’ says St Mark the Recluse, ‘we have a mysterious helper, hidden in us since the time of our baptism, Christ. He will help us in this fight if we do not only call on Him for help but also obey His life-giving commandments to the best of our power.’”

## “CONSUMMATUM EST” (It is consummated.)

This simple meditation is offered by the vowed members of the *SOVEREIGN ORDER of SAINT JOHN of JERUSALEM – 2009 AD*

A brief meditation on The Sixth Word of Christ on Calvary regarding value.  
St. Ignatius recommends that we should reflect upon ourselves, as follows:

***Yesterday for me, today for thee.*** In a little while, a very little while, my Angel shall whisper to me also: ***“Consummatum est” – it is consummated... Thou canst be steward no longer.*** Suddenly, when I am not expecting it, when I am in the midst of my dreams, ***the cry is raised: Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet Him.***

Prayer for delay or respite cannot now avail: ***The Angel lifted up his hand to heaven and he swore by Him that liveth for ever and for ever, that for me Time shall be no more (Apoc. x.)***

***Now is an end come upon thee; and I shall judge thee according to thy ways (Ezech. vii.). The things of this world are passed away like a shadow (Wisdom v.). God shall judge both the just and the wicked, and then shall be the time of everything (Eccles. iii.)***

Everything shall then have its true value.

“O Blessed Mother of God, pray for us now and in the hour of our death; that we may be able to say, humbly and gratefully, *Thanks be to God Who gave us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ; for we have done the one thing necessary.*”

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