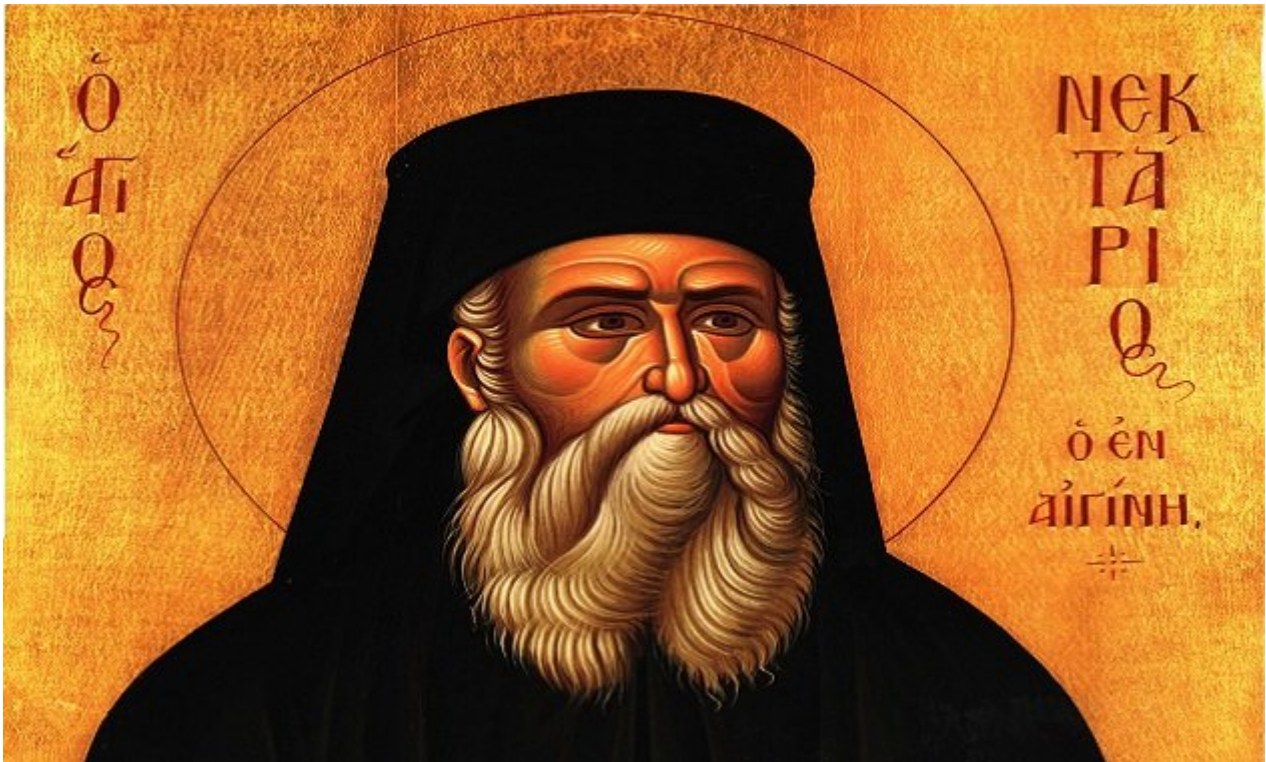


Teachings (3) (Saint Nectarios of Pentapolis)

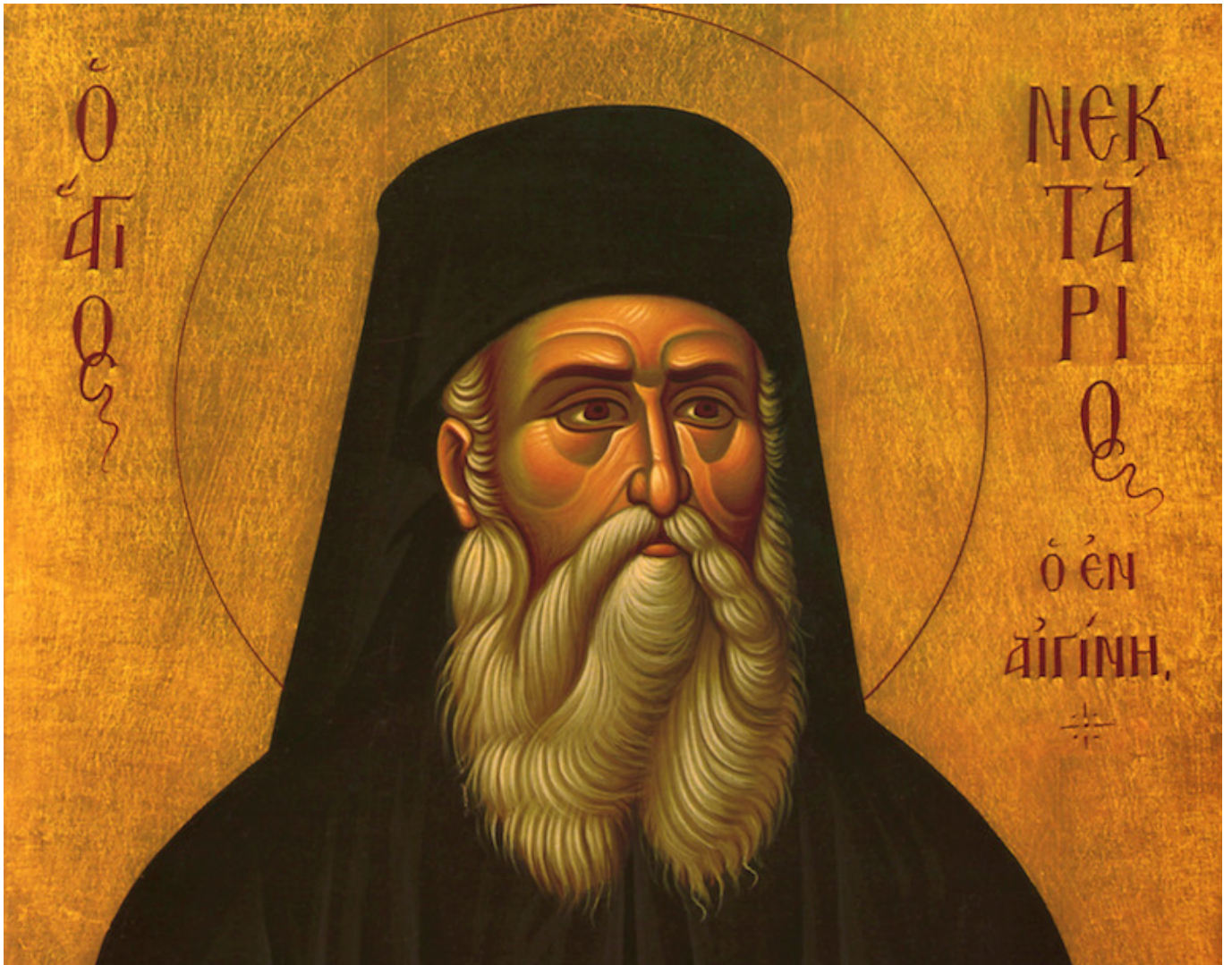
[Ξένες γλώσσες](#) / [In English](#)



Love

Seek love. Every day, ask God for love, because with love comes the whole host of other good things and virtues. Love and you'll be loved by others. Give your whole heart to God, so that you may dwell in love. 'Those who abide in love abide in God; and God abides in them'. (1 Jn. 4, 16). You must be very careful in your interpersonal relationships and respect each other as sacred persons, as images of God. Never be swayed by the body or beauty, but only by the soul.

Beware the feeling of love, because when the heart isn't warmed by pure prayer, love is in danger of becoming carnal and unnatural; it can darken the nous and consume the heart. We must investigate on a daily basis whether or not our love flows from the conjoining of the love we have in common with Christ; whether it springs from the fulness of our love for the Lord. Those who are vigilant and keep their love pure will be safe from the snares of the evil one who tries to gradually transform Christian love into common, emotional love.



Discretion

I urge you to show discretion and circumspection in all things. Avoid extremes. Austerity depends on virtues. Those who don't have an abundance of virtues and try to keep pace with the perfect, attempting to live in privation like the great ascetics, are in danger of becoming proud and then falling. This is why you should proceed with discretion and not exhaust your body with labors beyond your powers. Remember that bodily asceticism simply helps the soul to reach perfection, which is achieved primarily through the striving of the soul. Don't tighten the string more than it'll take. You don't have to force God to grant you his gifts. Anything we receive, we receive from divine mercy.

Don't seek to ascend to the heights through great privations unless you have the commensurate virtues, because you then run the risk of falling into delusion because of conceit and audacity. Those who seek divine gifts and sublime visions while they're yet burdened with passions are foolish and proud and, therefore, deluded. Their first concern should be to cleanse themselves. Divine grace sends

gifts as a reward to those who've been cleansed of the passions. Grace comes to them silently and at a time unknown to them.

Pride

Pride of the intellect is Satanic pride, which denies God and blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, which is why it's so difficult to cure. It's a deep darkness which hampers the eyes of the soul from seeing the light which lies within it and which leads to God, humility and the desire for the good.

Pride of the heart, on the other hand, isn't the product of Satanic pride, but is created by a variety of circumstances and events: riches, praise, honors, spiritual or bodily gifts (high intelligence, beauty, strength, skill and so on). All of these swell the heads of foolish people and they thus become vacuous, though not also atheists. Very often, God has mercy on such people, they're chastised with some form of divine reprimand and come to their senses. Their hearts are shattered, they stop seeking praise and vanities and in this way they're cured.

Your spiritual task is to examine your heart. Does pride nestle there like a poisonous snake, the passion that provokes so much wickedness, which mortifies each and every virtue and toxifies everything? Turn the whole of your attention onto this introverted wickedness. Day and night this investigation should be your constant task.

I think it would be true if I said that the whole of our spiritual struggle consists of seeking out and exterminating pride and all its offspring. If we rid ourselves of it and enthrone humility in our heart, then we'll have everything. Because where there's real Christ-like humility, this is where all the virtues are gathered which elevate us to God.

Christian Noblesse

According to the Lord's commandment, Christians have an obligation to become holy and perfect. Perfection and holiness are first inscribed deep in the soul of Christians and from there are stamped on their thoughts, their desires, their words and their actions. In this way, the grace of God which lies within the soul of a person wells up into the whole of their external character.

Christians should be gracious to everyone. Their words and deeds should reflect the grace of the Holy Spirit which resides within them, as testimony to their Christian life and to the glory of God. Those who are measured in speech are also measured in deeds. Those who think before they speak also think about

the actions they're about to take and will never transgress the bounds of good and virtuous behavior. Christians speak pleasantly, with tact and politeness. This is what engenders love, peace and joy. Idle talk, on the other hand, makes for hate, hostility, sorrow, argumentation, turmoil and even war.

So let us always be polite. Let no wicked words ever pass our lips, words that aren't seasoned with the grace of God; words which are always pleasant, good, testimony to Christ-like civility and to our own spiritual maturity.

Praise

Christians should always praise God, with their body and spirit. Both of these belong to God in any case and so we don't have the authority to dishonor or corrupt them. Given that they are holy and sacred, they must be treated with great gratitude. Those who remember that their body and spirit belong to God have a veneration and mystical fear of them and this makes us keep them pure, free from all contamination and in constant communion with God, by whom they're sanctified and fortified.

We praise God with body and spirit firstly when we recall that we've been sanctified by him and united to him; then when we unite our will with that of God, so that we always do what's in accordance with his good, pleasing and perfect will. If we are such people, we don't live for ourselves, but for God. We work for the kingdom of God on earth. We praise God for everything, in words and deeds. Our actions, which are for the good of other people, are a cause for praising the divine name. Our life, illumined by the divine light, itself shines like a bright light. In this way, our way of life becomes a guide to God for those who don't yet know him.