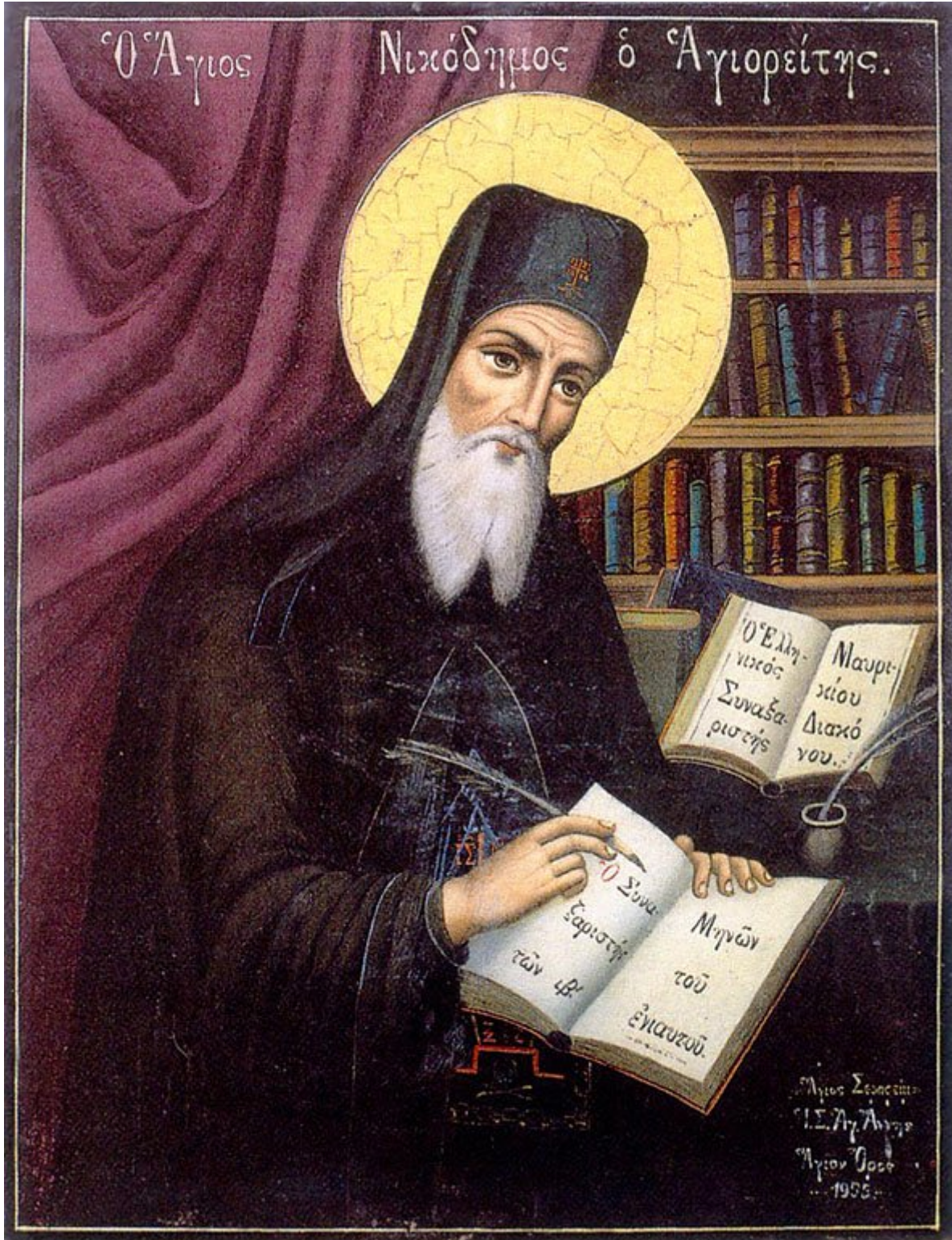


## Bad habits and their cure (Saint Nicodemus the Hagiorite)

[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)



A. Examine the bad habits and proclivities you've accumulated over the course of your life. If they're long-standing, they'll need more effort if you're to defeat them; less if they're more recent. Just as it takes greater effort to cut down and uproot an ancient, sturdy tree than it does a sapling.

B. Examine the cures you need to apply for these bad habits and proclivities. The first of these is that you have to want to rectify your condition, not half-heartedly, but decisively. Because bodily ailments can be remedied without any effort of will, but those of the soul can't be cured so easily. That's because they require a firm intention on the part of the person suffering if they're to be cured. And the proper means and tools have to be employed for the cure to be effective. These means and tools are the two which the Lord revealed to us when he freed the man who'd been possessed from childhood: 'This kind cannot be driven out except by prayer and fasting' (*Mark 9, 29*).



whatever's necessary for salvation, because he himself said: 'Ask and it will be given, seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened. For everyone who asks, receives; and everyone who seeks, finds' (*Matth. 7, 7-8*). He also gave the example of the widow and the hard hearted judge, to teach us to pray at length and not complain when we don't receive an immediate answer to our requests. He told this parable so that people would continue to pray and not lose heart. Since it's impossible that God should go back on his word and prove to be untrustworthy, so it's impossible that you won't be heard at the right time, if you continue to pray without ceasing and entreat him in the manner we've described. Apart from this, you have to ask the help of the Most-Holy Virgin, the mother of God and of all Christians, to intercede for grace and for whatever it is you're asking. Because if the Son is our father and brother and also the Spirit, it follows that she is our sweetest grandmother and mother, who's been given to us as a help and advocate precisely for this reason: to intercede with her Son on our behalf, as the Mother of mercy. And if Sirach can say of Eve that 'sin started from a woman and because of her we shall all die' (*Wis. 25, 24*), we, with greater justification can say about Our Lady, the Mother of God, that our salvation started from a woman and because of her we're all given new life. And so, in every instance and need, we can turn to her in all confidence. And finally, in order to make your prayer more active and to receive what you're asking from God, you should prepare through confession and Holy Communion, because these two sacraments are like the conduits through which all blessings from Christ come to us.

D. Then, examine yourself as regards your fasting- and when I say fasting I mean every kind of restraint and abstinence from food and drink, clothing, and material conveniences, as well as bodily comforts. Deprivation of these is either because of a penance and chastisement for previous sins or as a prevention and forestalling of future ones. Because if you give all sorts of pleasures and enjoyments to your body, if you want soft mattresses on your bed and a variety of food on your table; and if you want to attend all manner of entertainments and gatherings of your friends and waste your time on these things at the first excuse; and if, to be brief, you choose to indulge your passions and not avoid any of the dangers which the saints so assiduously evaded; if, I say, this is what you want, how will it be possible for you to root out the passions and bad habits you've fallen into? Saint Isaac says: 'When will the root of a tree wither if it's watered every day? Or when will a vessel be empty if it receives liquid every day?'. So if you give your body all the creature comforts, on what basis do you suppose you're going to straighten yourself out?

**Source: [agiazoni.gr](http://agiazoni.gr)**