

**TALK 1**  
**NEAR-DEATH AND OUT-OF-BODY EXPERIENCES**

One can find a large number of books in almost any bookstore or library, some of them bestsellers, on “Near-Death Experiences.” Moreover, these experiences are also portrayed on the Internet, on television, and in films. They relate the experiences of people who have nearly died or who in fact have died and then returned to life. Such people often describe meeting a “being of light” that is full of love and non-judgemental. Accounts of these “Near-Death Experiences” have influenced public opinion on matters relating to death and the afterlife.

Many, unfortunately including some Orthodox Christians, feel that this new teaching offers a more enlightened and humane approach towards death and dying. These accounts have even been promoted as a helpful way to prepare the dying for the transition from this life to the next. It is claimed that these accounts remove the fear of death, replacing it with a calm acceptance of, or even an eager anticipation of death and the afterlife.

Some of the topics included in this talk are: ancient civilizations and their belief in the afterlife; why scientists and doctors have become interested in dying and the afterlife; negative opinions about traditional Christian teachings on the afterlife; how modern near-death and afterlife experiences promote suicide; spiritual communism in the West; visions at the time of death; society’s need to help the dying; why many cannot feel emotions without a “movie soundtrack”; does love justify everything?; Ronald McDonald’s “love” for children; is love an excuse for adultery?; society’s objection to the mentioning of hell as a reality; the three types of ESP: natural, divine and demonic.

*Talk Duration: 130 minutes*

*Chanting: 20 minutes*

**TALK 2**  
**THE TRUTH ABOUT DEATH AND DYING**

The Church's teaching regarding death and the afterlife is something everyone should know. Simple observation however, demonstrates that most people, including Orthodox Christians, are not familiar with this essential teaching. Since we will all face death, the question naturally arises: why is there such ignorance and neglect in a matter concerning the eternal salvation of our souls? God desires that all come to the knowledge of the truth and thereby attain salvation. The desire of the demons, however, is to keep us ignorant in order to prevent our salvation, for our salvation is hateful and agonising to them.

Some of the topics included in this talk are: ecumenism beyond the grave; should Christians fear death?; is all contact with the spiritual world evil?; is the Church repressive?; the difference between natural, divine, and demonic apparitions and dreams; can the reposed make contact with the living?; the importance of our Guardian Angel before and after death; the toll-houses; unrepentant sins after death; the importance of commemorating the dead; the importance of being close to a monastery; can good deeds help us after death?; self-condemnation and the ascetic life; why do some people die a violent death?; the pain of soul at the hour of death; the Church's prayers before and after the departure of the soul; why don't some bodies decompose?; the appearance of demons at the time of death; reciting the Creed at the time of death; can the Church release sinners from hell?; helping the dead helps us; suicide and the Church; can denying one a funeral and commemoration prayers be beneficial?; mental illness in the last times.

*Talk Duration: 153 minutes*

*Chanting: 5 minutes*

**TALK 3**  
**CAN WE BE CALLED ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS**  
**WITHOUT READING THE LIVES OF SAINTS?**

More and more lives of saints have become available in English. Many of the Holy Fathers of the Church have said that it is an absolute necessity for one's salvation to read the lives of saints, because they show the Gospel in practice. These statements seem harsh to some: why such an emphasis on reading the lives of saints? Their importance is explained in this talk with examples from the lives of saints.

One such example can be found in the life of the New-Martyr Constantine (June 2). As a Turk, he knew that converting from Islam to Orthodoxy would result in the death sentence. Prepared to lay down his life for Christ, he set out for Mount Athos to receive Holy Baptism. By studying his life, Orthodox Christians are able to see the teachings of the Gospel in practice. One who reads both the Gospels and the lives of saints will know both what Christ taught and accomplished and the way the saints have "put on Christ" by following His saving teachings. Trying to read and apply the Gospels without the lives of saints can lead to heresy and deception.

Topics covered in this talk: visions and dreams; sorcery; conversion of Muslims to Orthodoxy; the attitude of the Orthodox to the non-Orthodox; Islam and Orthodoxy; the devil's tricks; supernatural phenomena in the media; homosexuality; spiritual stubbornness; sociopaths and the mentally ill; being judged according to one's conscience; mediums; ghost chasers; corrupt monastics and clergy; UFOs; does God help the non-Orthodox?; is obedience really that important?; did the Holy Fathers of Mount Athos compromise with Muslim authorities?; to what degree may we judge those who have made compromises in difficult situations?; and more.

*Talk Duration: 106 minutes*

**TALK 4**  
**IS THE DESIRE FOR MARTYRDOM A SIGN OF**  
**MADNESS, EVIL OR LOVE?**

After the events of September 11, 2001, there has been much in the media regarding martyrs, martyrdom, sacrifice, Jihad, etc. Because of this, many Orthodox Christians are confused about what true martyrdom is. This talk outlines what an Orthodox martyr is and the attitude that Orthodox Christians should have towards those of different faiths. It is easy to hate those who wish us harm, but is this allowed for an Orthodox Christian? Should Orthodox Christians be proud that they have the True Faith and, because of this, disdain those of other faiths?

During the Turkish occupation of Greece, those desiring martyrdom by the Turks would often go to Mount Athos to prepare themselves. The Elders responsible for them were very cautious about whom they would bless for martyrdom. From this talk it will be shown that not every desire for martyrdom is spiritually healthy. This desire can in fact come from pride. True obedience to one's spiritual father and the daily acceptance of God's will are higher than even martyrdom.

Topics covered in this talk: counterfeit spirituality; tricks of the demons; are there good ghosts and bad ghosts?; spiritual ignorance; the difference between spiritual fathers and confessors; lack of discernment can lead to spiritual disaster; obedience and humility; the dangers of fantasy; TV superheroes; the bedsores of lounge chair confessors; "holy" liars; the blessedness of seeking God's will; and more.

*Talk Duration: 99 minutes*

## TALK 5

### ARE WE CONFESSING OUR FAITH OR OUR EGO?

Saint Paul says that anyone who wants to live a life in Christ will be persecuted. Are there Orthodox Christians today enduring persecutions for Christ's sake? Is it necessary for those in the West to prepare for persecutions? Orthodox Christians are confused about when to speak up, when to confess the Faith and, in general, what their attitude towards the heterodox (Christians of other faiths) and the non-Christian world should be. In particular, what should our attitude towards those who wish us harm or want to convert us to their faith be?

One can find many examples in the lives of saints of Christians living in the pagan world of the first centuries, who kept their faith secret, many of whom served in the military, the government, and other civil services. Some openly confessed their faith, and were martyred. Others felt that it was God's will that they not express their faith openly and publicly. Did those who did not publicly express their faith thereby betray Christ? Applying these questions to our contemporary world, are we called to express our faith in every circumstance? Does sometimes hiding one's belief mean betraying Christ?

Topics covered in this talk: judging and the Orthodox elite; spiritual ignorance; external Christianity; spiritual pride; Communism; deceptive piety; the roles of husbands and wives; fasting; dealing with the non-Orthodox or the lukewarm; sexual sins; the canons of the Church; lying; does God look at our effort or only our virtue?; is confidence in one's own salvation a good sign?; and more.

*Talk Duration: 126 minutes*

**TALK 6**  
**CAN IGNORANCE BE AN EXCUSE AT THE**  
**LAST JUDGEMENT?**

We live in a time when a great deal of information is available through television, the radio, various publications, and the Internet. Many people do indeed use these sources of information in their everyday life. It would seem that there should be no excuse for ignorance in this world of information overload. In spiritual matters, however, there is in fact so much ignorance that many souls are being damaged and are in danger of being lost.

Are the hierarchy and clergy responsible for this spiritual ignorance? If so, do Christians have a responsibility to seek out the truth for themselves? Due to the popularity of the Internet and the availability of a large variety of Orthodox books in many languages, it is now easier than ever to find answers to one's spiritual questions and problems. Exposure to secular information alone, however, can be catastrophic to Christians both in this life and in the life to come.

This talk covers some very important topics, which many Orthodox Christians are ignorant of, such as: communication with the dead; mediums; living a Christian life in the world; mind-reading; psychics; fortune tellers; exorcisms; blasphemy; prophecies; science fiction; fantasy; what is the danger of separating one's spiritual life from one's daily life?; lunatics; horoscopes; can the devil be forgiven?; how can God be both Love and Judge?; an Orthodox priest confesses the "virtues" of E.T.; the light of Orthodoxy in our everyday lives; can being curious about other people's lives be beneficial?; and more.

*Talk Duration: 99 minutes*

## TALK 7

### SORCERY: FACT OR FICTION?

The world has been inundated for some years now with films and books about the child sorcerer, Harry Potter, and his education in sorcery at Hogwarts. Apart from the millions of children being brought up in the spirit of Pottermania, adults, too, have been drawn into this phenomenon. Saint Cyprian attended various schools of black magic from the age of seven, becoming the greatest sorcerer of his time before turning to Christ. This talk is about his evil capabilities.

Today there are those in the Church, including clergy, who claim that black magic and sorcery are simply products of the imagination or symptoms of mental illness. One also finds those who say just the opposite: that everything in the world is ruled by demons and the black arts. Bearing in mind that Satan's greatest achievement is to convince us that he does not exist, we should take to heart these words of the Holy Apostle Paul: *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places* (Eph. 6:12). These words are especially relevant due to the obvious increase in interest and obsession with the occult and demons.

Some of the topics included in this talk are: the seriousness and effects of going to a sorcerer; dolls used in magic spells; observing an exorcism; the evil eye and jealousy; the symptoms of sorcery; possession and mental illness; black and white magic; witches' brooms; the education of a sorcerer; which sin cannot be forgiven?; does Holy Communion always protect us from sorcery?; and phoney sorcerers.

*Talk Duration: 105 minutes*

## TALK 8

### LET'S NOT FORGET ABOUT SPIRITUAL ABUSE

In the last few decades awareness of the effects of emotional, sexual, and physical abuse, particularly of women and children, has increased. What Orthodox Christians often overlook, unfortunately, is that these forms of abuse have spiritual consequences. There are many practices that the world around us sees as perfectly normal and beneficial but, from a spiritual perspective, are abusive.

Examples are: the unnaturally early school education of infants and toddlers; the encouragement of fantasy; early sex education; exposure of infants and toddlers to television; the promotion of interest in the occult; the upbringing of children using various psychological theories (praise, absence of punishment and reprimand, rewards, body image, self esteem, etc.). These practises have become part of daily life. For a conscious Orthodox Christian, however this constitutes the worst type of abuse: spiritual abuse. In this talk, spiritual abuse is examined, especially with regards to children. Many spiritual problems that adults experience stem from the spiritual abuse they underwent as children.

Among the topics covered in this talk are: the effect of monasticism on society; God's chastisement as a means of love; bishops are not perfect; the devil as a supposed friend; society's disdain for the upbringing of children; why jails and hospitals are full; the benefits of persecution; the Western mentality that "God loves us when everything is going well"; moral education as higher than secular education; Satan's false promises; the emphasis on university education; the "can't feel" syndrome; the appeasement of the devil through sins; the Antichrist and miracles; can the devil heal?; are all sins forgivable?; is all demonic possession bad?; can language be an obstruction to salvation?; are God's judgements always fair?

*Talk Duration: 124 minutes*

## TALK 9

### THE SEXUAL REVOLUTION: ARE WE BETTER OFF?

The Church considers virginity to be one of the highest virtues. Since the sexual and feminist revolutions of the 1960s, however, the Church's teaching that sexual activity is blessed only within the Mystery of Marriage has been mocked and contradicted in every imaginable way in the health system, the educational system, television, radio, the Internet, newspapers and magazines. This has left Orthodox Christians confused about this important topic.

What does the Church teach about virginity and sex? Why have Orthodox monastics voluntarily deprived themselves of something that God has permitted? Why, after fifty years of supposed freedom and progress in the area of sexuality in the West, do we still have a society with so many crimes and illnesses, both mental and physical? Some of these problems include: sexual hang-ups; pornography, especially on the Internet; the dramatic increase in sex crimes, including paedophilia; sexually transmitted diseases; gender disorder; sexual identity crisis; etc.

Among the topics covered in this talk are: the desire to use drugs in order to feel; Baptism and Godparents; the exorcisms before Baptism; two-faced Christians; fallen nature and sexual passions; stalking; the use of sorcery in relationships; Confession without repentance; "parrot" Christians; can there be forgiveness outside Confession?; do holy people sin?; can sin be beneficial?; almsgiving; the fruits of repentance; the dead speaking through mediums; should the Church regard homosexuality as the worst sin?; becoming monastics to escape responsibility; homeschooling; can young children confess the faith?; childhood trauma and its effects in adulthood.

*Talk Duration: 111 minutes*

*Chanting: 30 minutes*

## TALK 10

### THE STRUGGLE OF SAINT XENIA THE FOOL-FOR-CHRIST FOR HER UNREPENTANT DEPARTED HUSBAND

Saint Xenia was happily married to an army colonel who suddenly died while drinking with his friends, without Confession and Holy Communion. In order to repent for her husband's sins, Saint Xenia began to wear his uniform and insist that she be called by his name. Taking up a life of homeless wandering and foolishness for Christ's sake in St. Petersburg, Russia, she endured mockery and abuse, even from Orthodox Christians who did not understand her. She is an example of a woman who loved her husband so much that, after his death, she dedicated the remaining time of her life to struggling for his soul by means of prayer and almsgiving.

Saint Xenia is especially called upon for help with everyday problems, such as finding employment, housing, a spouse, or missing children. She also helps those suffering from alcoholism, marital problems, childlessness, and depression.

Among the topics included in this talk are: the temptations of those who serve the Church - altar boys, readers, chanters, clergy; Christians ignoring their selfishness; not regarding everyday tasks as spiritual; child abuse in the spiritual life; childbearing; the beauty of loving one's spouse; finding a spouse; love beyond the grave; the highest form of love; the "magic" of credit cards; are homosexuals born that way?; should paedophilia be considered one of the passions?; martyrs in hospitals; are there two types of unrepentant Christians?; can good come out of catastrophe?; emotional funerals; can God look over everyone's life simultaneously?; the deception of loving your enemies; nappy rash and ADHD; can women work while raising children?; soul killers; praying for the non-Orthodox; and more.

*Talk Duration: 143 minutes*

*Chanting: 17 minutes*

**TALK 11**  
**BETTER TO MARRY THAN TO**  
**BURN WITH PASSION**

Even though we are living in a time of sexual freedom and “enlightenment”, there is no doubt that we are also living in a time when the number of sexually related problems is at its highest. Pornography, fornication, adultery, paedophilia, and other abnormal sexual practices testify to the truth that sexuality outside of the Church’s teachings has disastrous consequences. Because of the high exposure in our society to sexual immorality, Saint Paul’s advice is a matter of salvation: *If they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion* (I Cor. 7:9).

The Church Fathers teach that in order to avoid fornication, it is better for parents to encourage their children to marry at an early age. The Fathers further teach that the main purpose of marriage is the avoidance of sexual immorality, child-bearing being its secondary purpose. In today’s society, fornication is encouraged and glorified, and, child-bearing and marriage are looked at in a negative way.

Some of the topics included in this talk are: the dangers of married people reading books only on monasticism; the attraction between males and females; is virginity greater than marriage?; the openness of the saints regarding sexuality; the distortion of marriage and sexuality in the media; does the Church regard sex as dirty and sinful?; fornication and adultery; is celibacy unnatural?; children and sex education; repulsion towards marriage; distractions of everyday life; can mental illness be beneficial at times?; differences between marriage and monasticism; blaming the devil for our sins; heterodox marriages; divorce and the Church; heterodox and salvation.

*Talk Duration: 135 minutes*

*Chanting: 21 minutes*