



**Now one cannot be a half-hearted Christian,
but only entirely or not at all**

Letter from Father Seraphim Rose

Do not trust your mind too much; thinking must be refined by suffering, or it will not stand the test of these cruel times.

Of course, one can always act wrong even on a clear conscience! But even that is not a fatal mistake as long as one's mind and heart remain open and one keeps first things first.

How much our American Orthodoxy needs more heart and not so much mind! I don't know any answer for it, except more prayer and basic education in Orthodox sources. Orthodox Christians, surrounded by and already swimming in a sea of humanist-worldly philosophy and practice, must do everything possible to create their own

islands, in that sea, of other-worldly, God-oriented thought and practice. Above all, may we all grow in spiritual understanding, not rational understanding—which I fear is the constant plague of all us poor converts!

The two sides quote canons back and forth, when what is needed is love and understanding—and that statement, I realize, could have come straight from the lips of some ecumenist, which only shows how difficult the path of true Orthodoxy has become in our days.

Good heavens! What is happening to people? How easily one gets dragged off the path of serving God into all kinds of factions and jealousies and attempts at revenge. How much hope there is for those who do not trust in themselves too much and are not overly-critical of others! And how little hope for those whose orientation is the opposite!

Psychological trials of dwellers in the last times will equal the physical trials of the martyrs. But in order to face these trials we must be living in a different world. I think about that older generation that is now almost gone, and I want to weep for the young know-it-all who have missed the point. But the understanding comes only through real suffering, and how many can do that?

We must be open rather than closed with regard to the Moscow Patriarchate. The whole question of ecumenism and apostasy cannot be placed simply on the canonical-dogmatic-formal level, but must be viewed first spiritually!

Its obvious that the zeal not according to knowledge is becoming a matter of some concern to [Metropolitan Philaret] and for many of our bishops, and I'm afraid the solution to it, if any, wont be easy I think the quality needed is a certain deep humility of mind that enables one to accept other ways of looking at things, other emphases, as equally Orthodox with ones own.

Try to remember that all real Christian work is local right here and now, between myself and God and my neighbor.

Do you have a notebook for taking down quotes from Holy Fathers in your reading? Do you always have a book of Holy Fathers that you are reading and can turn to in a moment of gloom? Start now—this is essential!

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