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## † Orthodox Advices

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### **About pornography, pollutions and monasticism**

#### **A reply for a stranger who could be just anyone of us**

I do not know if you remember me anymore. I was complaining that I was mastered by the Internet passion. At that time I was not very precise. I would like to write again some things about me in order to let you know about some aspects that concerned my life until now: Even from the high school, being an introverted character- very self conscious (like many teenagers), I began watching erotic movies and magazines. After a short time I began to practice masturbation also. After I passed my university admission exams I met the people from ASCOR (The Association of Orthodox Christian Students from Romania ). I signed in this association and I accommodated to them very well. During the pilgrimages that we have done together, I had the occasion to meet many monks from various monasteries and hermitages from all around the country. When I had my first confession , after a long time, I quit all of a sudden the smoking and the masturbation. It was not quite easy. As

repercussion followed the night pollutions which are happening even in this period. To be honest , I m sick of this, they do not stop anymore (and it is well known the bad mood which comes from that).

Since two years I keep thinking to monasticism. To be more precise, I m attracted by the monastic life. But inside me there is a state of permanent agitation.

Coming back to the Internet , I said that it became a passion because a watched and I still watch obscene things. Even if a practice an often confession I' keep committing this sin. I started by looking all sort of vulgar scenes but I was bored quite rapidly, so I passed to a more artistic eroticism.

I began cultivate this sensuality and this is not good. I conscious of this. Now I m not satisfied so easy , in Freud terms I could say that this leads to higher libido.

But the problem is another one. Before watching those vulgar scenes, in my mind I still have the possibility to choose: I can refrain from watching or I watch and I satisfy my flesh desires. Why in those moments I forget about Got and everything? Why must I satisfy the flesh desires? I am the slave of my body desires and I do not like this at all. In the same time, watching all these I think that I commit fornication with my mind , and I don't like this thing either. I m sick of repeating this sin again and again. I loose my hart when I see that I can't stand it. I start abandoning the thoughts about the monastic life and I think that is better to be in the world and to think of monastery than being in monastery and thinking of the world.

I still have to finish my University classes and then I will make my decision, but in this very moment I m very bewildered. On the one hand I m very tormented by my flesh desires (night pollutions and the erotic movies and pictures

watching ), on the other hand there is a fight with all the thoughts that pass through my mind. Now, I m completely bewildered, I do not know what to think and what to do. I will try too stay near my confessor as much as I can. But here there is a problem also. I speak with his holiness only at the confession but I would like to talk with him more at leisure and to tell him everything I feel and everything I think. If you want and if you can, please help me somehow and I would be grateful to you.

R:

Your worries remind me of an old story from like those from "Pateric" which is full of monastic life. One evening, after the evening meal, a monastery brother took me aside and he told me that he want to ask me something. This brother was staying in monastery for 5 years but he was not a monk yet because he was too young. When we gone away on the dark walk alley and nobody could hear us he asked me: "What should I do - because the body passions are tormenting me and I m thinking that maybe I should not become a monk, maybe God wants me married? ." I did not think too much and I slapped him with a direct sentence: "But imagine that they will die and the worms will eat them. Under their soft skin they have a pot of bowels" and other like these.

To all these, the brother replied peacefully: "I read the PATERIC myself, I know this kind of theological stories but when I look to a woman I forget of PATERIC and even of GOD ."

When you are peaceful these remedies seem to be convincing but when you are full of passion they do not help you anymore.

I also heard some people advancing consolations like: "What did you find at them?" Don't you see their ugly make up, don't you see how disgusting they are? How can you like watching those disgusting creatures, don't you realize

that there were so many that got filthy with them?

But then what I get in my mind are the words from the Holy Bible : “And the human lads saw that the men’s daughters are beautiful and they entered to them(Creation 6)”

So , you see, the Holy Spirit says that they are beautiful. They are beautiful not disgusting.

They are beautiful because they are also churches of God, that’s why they are beautiful. Listen to what I was thinking about when I was reading the old “Psalm book” the one with Slavic letters - I like reading Psalms using that old language, to join the old time prayers chorus.

And as I was reading, I blocked myself in a line that I considered being like this: “Their daughters embellished and decorated like the temple’s faces ” - this was making me think of idols, considering also the fact that in this psalm they are talking about the stranger’s daughters from which hand David asked to be relived.

It seemed all very clear to me: the stranger’s daughters even if they are embellished they are false as their idols. But in the old Psalm Book , this line had a different sense: “Their daughters were alike the Church”.

I was thinking about 2 days what meaning could I give to the fact that “strangers daughters” are beautiful and they are alike the Church and not alike the temple’s faces.

Until the end I obtained an answer which gave me peace. I had the revelation of the orthodox monasticism sense. The monk is not that person who became a monk because he thought that the beauty of the human’s daughter is ugly - but that person who even if he saw the beauty of the human’s daughters he did not entered to them. Like Joan “Golden Mouth” said in the “Treatise of virginity” : “Which is the big deal that the heathen’s maidens accomplished when they gave up the wedding for the reason that it was

bad? Isn't it normal to get rid of the things that you don't like? This is why the Christian maidens deserve to be esteemed because knowing that the wedding is blessed they keep themselves away from it for the name of Christ. "

Yes, the men's daughters, even the debauched ones, are beautiful alike the Church. Nobody can persuade us of the contrary when not only our eyes but also our heart and soul tell us that this is the bare true. Even if our mind will continuously argue that we don't like them their beauty remains. Even David said that they are beautiful not only alike the Church but like the Church itself.

This is making me think at the soviet period, when the Churches were not all destroyed, some of them were transformed in museums, pleasure halls some even in gyms or warehouses. When you took a look from outside they seemed to be real Churches but when you entered inside they were not real Churches anymore.

This is how is like with the women beauty. They are beautiful, they are made to measure of their creator because he made them to be his Churches. But they are dead, they are closed like the Churches from soviet period because there is no Liturgical Service in them. This is their only problem that there is no mass in them anymore. Although, God feels offended when we curse them because

they are his creatures. He made them and not us. That why God relieves the flesh passion upon those who judges the easy women - to show them that they are not far away from them.

I myself met some monks that reprimanded other brother when he was talking to a woman saying that he was talking with the devil. But until the end those great "ascetics" married with the "devil" and the other brothers continued to take care of their ascetic life.

So there is nothing wrong if you like their

beauty. God likes it itself. But when the passion conquers you try to see them like icons of God. Because you could not think of an icon the way you are doing when you are wandering on Internet!?

You can reproach me that is so hard!? In fact it is impossible. This is why . Because we cannot see them with pure eyes it is better not see them at all.

If we ourselves would have the permanent Liturgical Service inside us, the One that they do not possessed, we would be like God, who, even if he sees those things that you are talking about and many other, he does not desire. The flesh passion, being specific to our nature, can be over crossed only with the help of Holy Spirit through Mass. That is why , we, sinners, which haven't became perfect shrines yet, do not look of them in order not to become mockers of Holy things and mockers of ourselves which must be churches too.

To escape from this attraction you have to plan an ascetic period for yourself. Is not absolutely necessary to fast roughly and to avoid sleeping. Eat anything you want ,but just a little, and get rest just as much as it takes for not being nervous or unable to work. Try to avoid the useless discussions and the TV watching and the music. All these are breaking up your mind and are weakening your attention. For the flesh passion we have to keep our attention awake because the flesh passion comes through our thoughts which we can stop and get rid of the passion.

In this period try not telling anybody about your impressions and feelings

but only to your confessor (or to some other spiritual person which would be able to help you). I think that in a short time, if you will keep doing this full of hope and meekness you will feel the Liturgical work inside you. Read a

catisma in the morning, one in the evening and one at 2 o'clock in the night if you can.

To be well rested go to bed at 10 o'clock in the evening and pray all time in this way "Lord Jesus Christ have mercy of me, the sinner". But you have to pass over any conventionality during your prayers. Place yourself in front of God exactly the way you really are; don't try to seem better (maybe would be better if you haven't desire this in that very moment) just throw yourself on the ground in your room after you turned off the light and say:

"Look God it is You and me now. Look at me, what have I become, what have left from Your creation. Look at me and cry for me because I can't cry anymore. I do not understand you and I do not want you anymore; I found myself another life which seems to me more interesting and attractive. Go away from me because I am a sinner. I have never loved you and not even obeyed you. I know you are here but I do not feel you and I do not recognize you. But please don't go far away please wait me until I get up, help me to get up because you have created me and you can do anything you want with me. Don't drop me from your face and don't take your Holy Spirit far away from me. Cause look it is just you and me. Only us have left. Don't be disgusted of my sins and do not go away. Stay with me even if I don't see you, I don't feel you and I don't obey to you. Please stay even when I will not want You to stay. Cause You are The One Who give us life and Who will raise us from the deaths . Without You we are nothing, God. And to You, The Merciful One we all, thank You God-to Father, Son and Holy Spirit now and forever. Amen."

Tell everything that bothers you using few and simple words and if it possible not using words at all. Stay only on the ground in the dark room and think that God is everywhere so it must be

in your room also. He can't be missing from your room. IT is not allowed. Fight with God like Jacob did and let yourself be wounded by him. And tell him and ask him explanations, ask him about everything you do not understand and about all you want to reproach to Him. Tell Him and listen to his quiet understanding to his patience and to the love that loves you with. But listen especially to His incapacity to help you because of your will. Don't be surprised and don't be mistaken by these words. We made God to be helpless for us. Think that He is always walk around us like a hurt dog, bagging for our help to save us.

If you will pray like this it is impossible not to be covered by Holy Spirit, not to met the meekness full of joy and not to fill you with good hope.

And this state you have to cultivate inside yourself to be able to take her and walk with her outside your dark room and she will protect you from all the sensual or spiritual temptations. Take the Eucharist as often as possible even every Sunday if it is possible. Ask this from your confessor. If for the ones who are possessed by the devil the canons recommend often Eucharist in order to drive away the devil which stranger for our nature, also and much more we will need often Eucharist to escape from our passions which are our nature itself.

You need a change in your environment, an escape from all that is around you.

The human nature is accommodating very fast that is why you have to find an opposite alternative to what you see on Internet. It is not compulsory to stay in this praying regime which frighten many people but to make from him a springboard for normality. Then you do as much as you can but do not stay away from Eucharist more than two weeks.

When you will see that the old habits attack you again practice again few days of ascetic life and



Eucharist. Our body is so lazy, as being afraid of hard work, will be content to stay within the normal rhythm without throwing you in the passions that you were talking about (only not to be tired with this ascetic work). A little ascetic practice is needed to feel more intensively the Eucharist, the joy.

The irritation that you have is a prelude for despair. Because of your passion you think that God is not listening to your prayers and you have not courage. But Jesus said : "Have courage I defeated, the world " . This urge is addressed to all human not even to The Saints from calendar. The faith in God is not limited only to the acceptation that He exists and entered the history but also refers to the fact that he exist for You and works and wants to work for you. This is what men can not believe - that a seed of faith can move the mountains. You must know that the often pollutions are because of your nervousness. Some think that the often pollutions are a sign of virility but the true is exactly the opposite. The virility can be used in a way or another. The masculine potency, as we know so well, is not depending on biological but on psychic, on will power. This is why the men with a greater potency can stand more effective against the sexuality's attacks, which they exploited ones with the same good results. You can read in "The life of the Saints" about how many dangerous robbers or fearless soldiers became monks and reached the total victory against the passions.

I once knew a monk who in the first half year from his entrance in monastery had more pollutions every night. He was getting up, genuflecting and then he was going to sleep again. You could think that he was some kind of Rambo but the true is opposite: he was thin, nervous, whiner and always threatening that he would go home to marry. In time, things got

changed , he became more man and the things got also more peaceful. He got rid of nervousness and the often pollutions. You can read about pollutions in the Ioan(Joan) Casian 's rules. References are made there about the power of the passion which is greater for some and smaller for others.Saint Ioan (Joan) said that: "The greater passion is the suited for monasticism you are "

The same thing is said by Ioan Gura de Aur (Joan Golden Mouth) who explain the words of our Savior: There are eunuchs who were born eunuchs, there are eunuchs made by men and there are eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs for the Kingdome of God" . So, God told it Himself. It seems to be a paradox cause we were used to think that in monasteries were going only the impotent persons and the disabled persons. The impotent persons, said Saint Ioan Casian(Joan Casian) can not practice the virginity trial anymore, they have to grow up in other good deeds. And this is a proper thing for a God like ours who offers everybody a fair judgement. Thus the ones who are kind from nature will not take the victory coronet but the ones who are ferocious and will became kind by their fight against madness will take the victory coronet.

This is how the things are with all the virtues. And again The Saint Ioan Casian (Joan Casian) gives the example of an Abbot who for a period happened to have pollution exactly before the Eucharist. But when the Old Council gathered, they decided to make an exception and give him the permission to Eucharist because this thing was the intrigue of the devils, the monk living a saint life.

Many times, the devils free this calamity against the beginners in order to make him despair. It is something like "You see, you are a big fornicator but you want to appear like a big Christian. Let

it go, live like everybody if you want not to get sick and have hormones disturbances.”

If you do not pay them attention is like it never happened. Wash yourself, genuflect 50 times, tell the 50th Psalm and be like nothing happened. Be sure that only for these this sin will be forgiven, there is a Canon who tells that. Do you think that the women feel better at the monthlies period?

But can they change it? Let's look to our human nature as it is with all his weaknesses and incapacity.

Pollutions could happen because of the cold weather - if you sleep in a cold room, because of the stupid laughing, because of the sweet or fat dishes or when your drunk. A cause could be the consuming of liquids in the night which can lead to the contracting of the muscles which retain the liquid.

So there are more reasons which could generate pollutions: some are from the devils some from the absent-mindedness and some from the human nature. No one of this must be a disturbance cause.

In that book it is written that even the great hermits without any passions , still have pollution. This is the price that must be paid to the nature. Though, after a ascetic period the pollutions happen without erotic dreams and without any sensation. I think that God arranged the things that way that nobody be too proud.

Even the married men have pollutions. Do you think that they feel better afterwards especially when their women is pregnant? They are more “smart” practicing masturbation in this period! They don t have any peace from their marriage either. Only the monks know the real peace. This is because the monks reach to peace through the accumulation of Holy Spirit. The entire nature is changing inside the monk and he become the wearer of the inside Mass (of which

I was talking about at the beginning).  
A little beat of work is needed, is true, but is possible. In the mystery of monasticism, God put a special gift, which the average men can not even imagine. This gift protect the monks from the brutal invasions of the passion. For a monk everything is easier, because he fought in only one night all the hardness that a normal person fought in an entire life. This hardness is the fear and the tremble before the night of the monasticism initiation. But when the voting is done, the gates are closing behind you and the hole world is enlighten by a new light that you would not change for any other beauty.

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