



## On the Stench of Demons and Sin

By St. Nikolai Velimirovich

Among other mysterious perceptions from the world of spirits, the saints also had perceptions of sweet fragrances from good spirits and foul stenchs from impure spirits.

During every appearance of luminous, pure spirits, a life-giving and sweet fragrance wafted about; and during every appearance of dark and impure spirits, a suffocating, unbearable stench filled the air.

The saints were able to discern which passion possessed a man by the kind of stench he emanated. Thus it was that St. Euthymius the Great recognized the stench of the passion of adultery in the monk Emilian of the Lavra of St. Theoctistus. Going to Matins one morning, Euthymius passed by Emilian's cell and smelled the stench of the demon of adultery. Emilian had not committed any physical sin, but had adulterous thoughts that were being forced into his heart by the demon, and the saint already sensed it by its smell.

The power of this perception once revealed itself even more wondrously in St. Hilarion the Great. A certain avaricious miser had sent some of his vegetables to Hilarion. When they were brought to Hilarion for a meal, the saint said: "Take these away from here. I cannot stand the stench that comes from these vegetables! Do you not smell how they reek of avarice?" When the brethren were amazed by these words, Hilarion told them to take the vegetables to the oxen, and they would see that not even the oxen would eat them. Indeed, the oxen merely sniffed at them, and turned their heads away in disgust.

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