

THE ICEBERG



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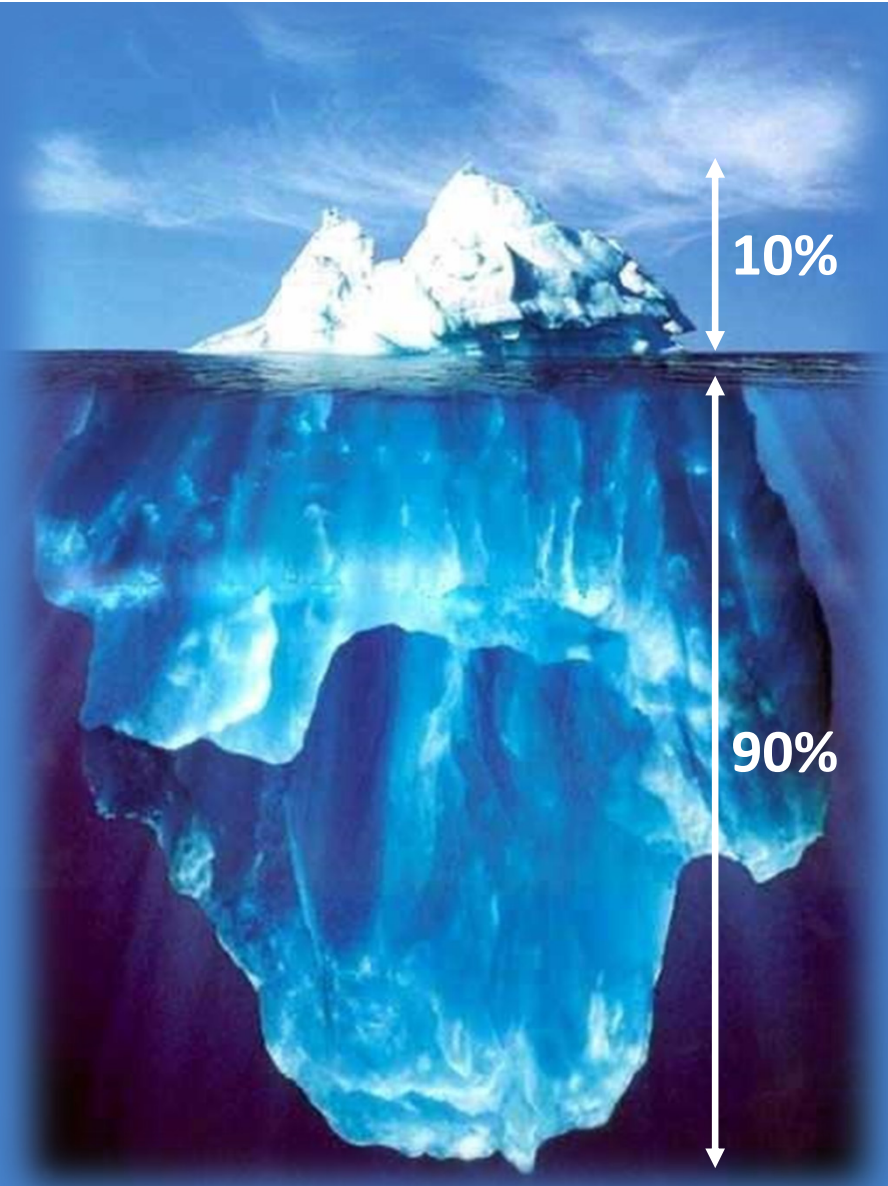
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COPTIC CLUBS RETREAT

THE HIDDEN LIFE

Out of the Shallows
Into the Deep







Man shall draw near,

and the heart is deep;

and God shall be exalted!

Psalm 63(64):7

Rather let it be

the hidden person of the heart,

...which is very precious in the sight of God.

1 Peter 3:4



Fraction to the Father for Advent and the Nativity

O Master, Lord our God, the Creator—

invisible, uncontainable,

immutable, and immeasurable—

who sent His true Light, His Only-Begotten
Son, Jesus Christ, the eternal Logos...



*He has also set eternity
into the human heart;*

*yet no one can fathom what God has done...
from beginning to end. *Ecclesiastes 3:11**

He answered them and said,

*“The Kingdom of God
does not come with observation...*

*For indeed,
the Kingdom of God is within you.”*

Luke 17:20-21

*also set eternity
in the human heart;*

no one can fathom what God has done...

beginning to the end of the world. Ecclesiastes 3:11

*“The Kingdom
does not come*

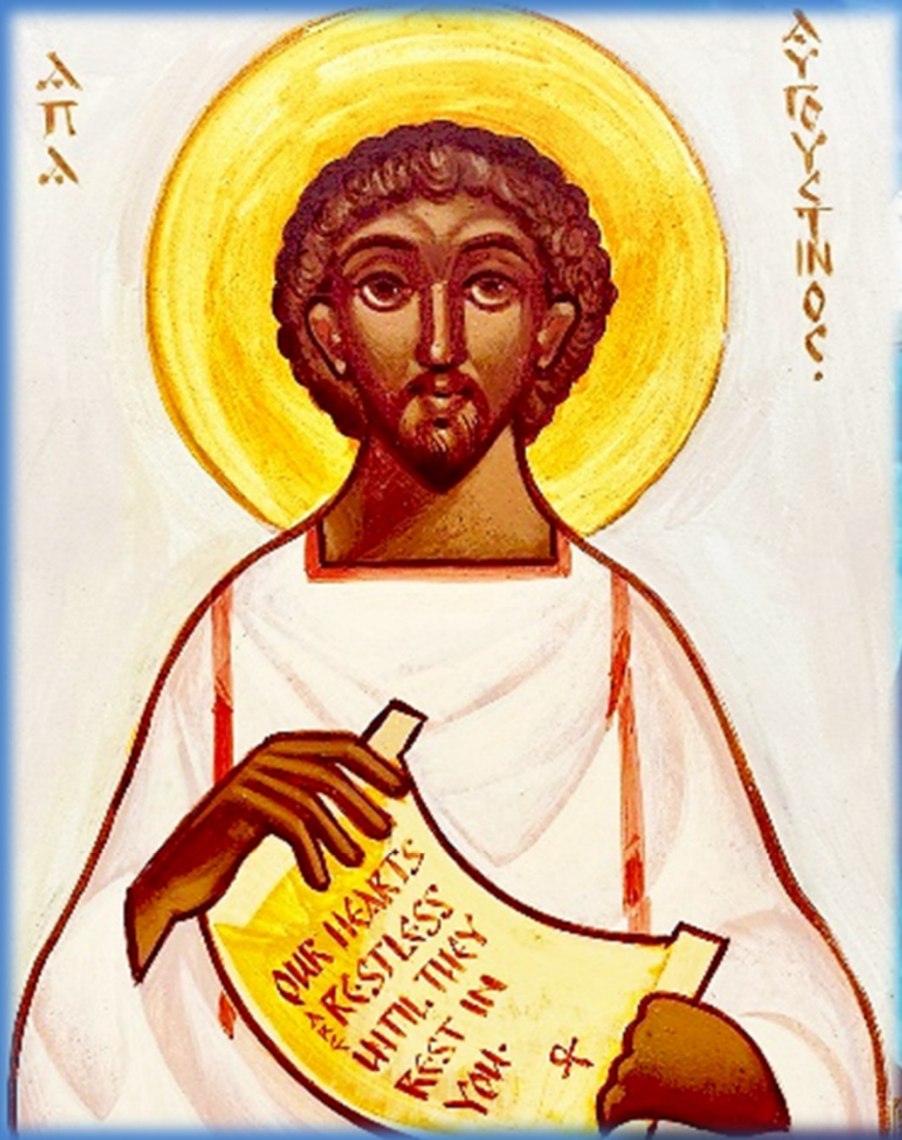
*For indeed,
the Kingdom of God is within you.”*

Luke 17:20-21



*Keep your heart with all diligence
for out of it are the issues of Life!*

Proverbs 4:23



Yet man, this part of Your creation,
You stir man to take pleasure in You,
because You have made us for Yourself, O Lord,
***and our heart is restless
until it rests in You!***

Saint Augustine (The Confessions, Book I)

You were within, but I was outside, seeking there for you.

*And in my unlovely state I plunged into the lovely, created things
which you made.*

You were with me, but I was not with you!

Those lovely things kept me far from you.

*Although if they did not have their existence in you,
they would have no existence at all.*

You called, shouted, and broke through my deafness.

You flared, blazed, and banished my blindness.

You lavished your fragrance, I gasped, and now pant for you.

I tasted you, and I hunger and thirst for You.

You touched me, and I burn for Your peace.



Yet man, this part of Your creation,
You stir man to take pleasure in You,
because You have made us for Yourself, O Lord,

***and our heart is restless
until it rests in You!***

Saint Augustine (The Confessions, Book I)

Blessed are you,
***for the Spirit of glory and of God
rests within you.***

1 Peter 4:14

***My child, give me your heart,
and let your eyes observe My ways.***

Proverbs 23:26

Ἡ ΠΑΡΑΒΟΛΗ ΤΩ ἈΝΩΤΥ ΝΙΟΝ

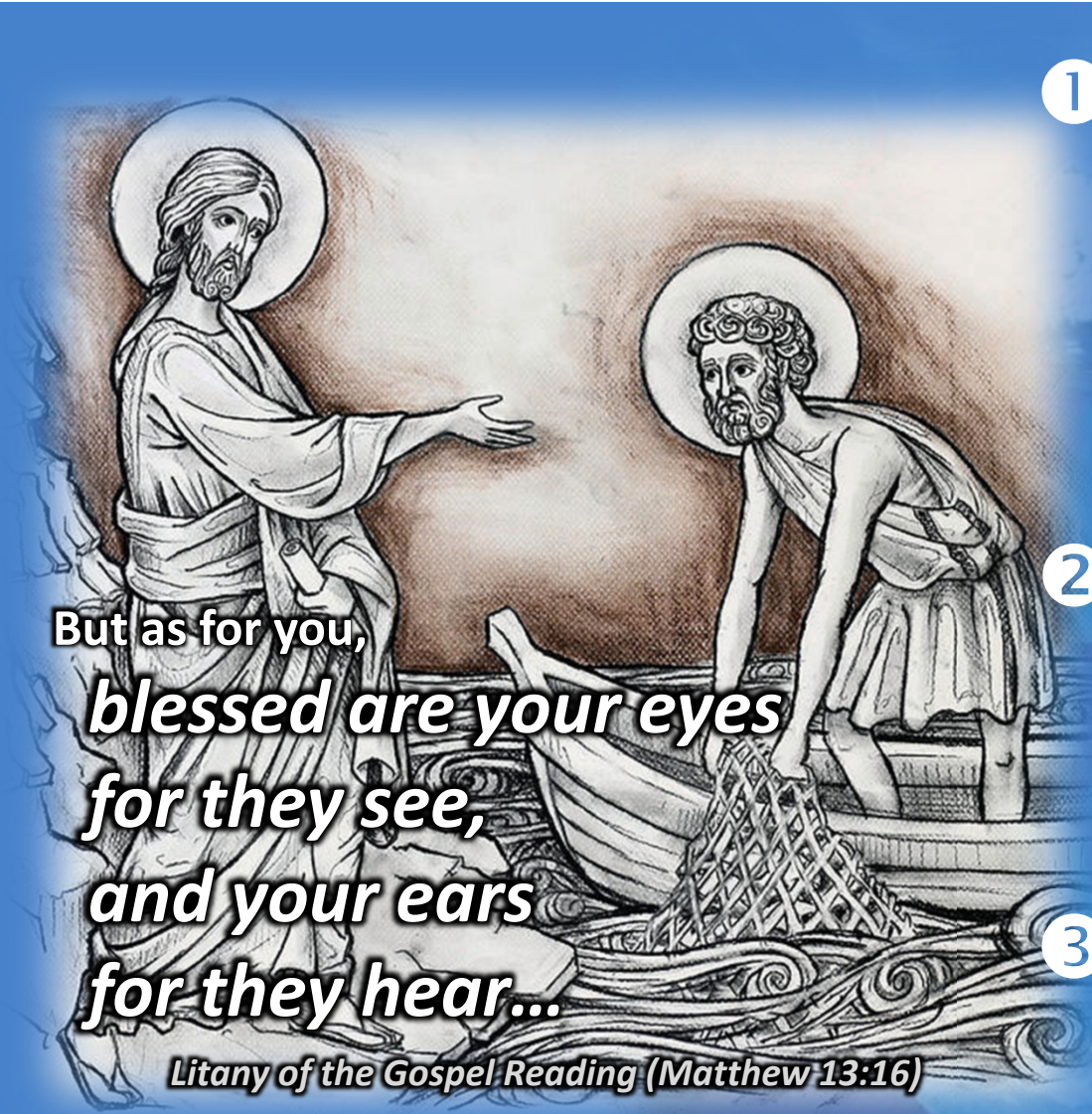












But as for you,
***blessed are your eyes
for they see,
and your ears
for they hear...***

Litany of the Gospel Reading (Matthew 13:16)

① ***Be Listening, and Submit***

He said to Simon, “Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.” ...

But Simon answered, “Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; **nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net.**”

Luke 5:4-5

② ***Recognize God’s Hand***

When Simon Peter saw it,

he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying,

“Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!”

Luke 5:8

③ ***React: Follow Him***

So when they had brought their boats to land,

they forsook all, and followed Him.

Luke 5:11

A man often thinks that the Creator demands great things of him, that the Gospel insists on complete self-sacrifice, on the abolition of one's personhood, etc., as a condition of faith.

A man is so frightened by this that he begins to be afraid of becoming acquainted with God, of drawing near to God, and hides himself from God, not even wishing to look into God's Word.

...**There exists at the entrance to the spiritual realm a "hypnosis of great deeds":** that one must either do some big thing or do nothing. And so people do nothing at all for God or for their souls!

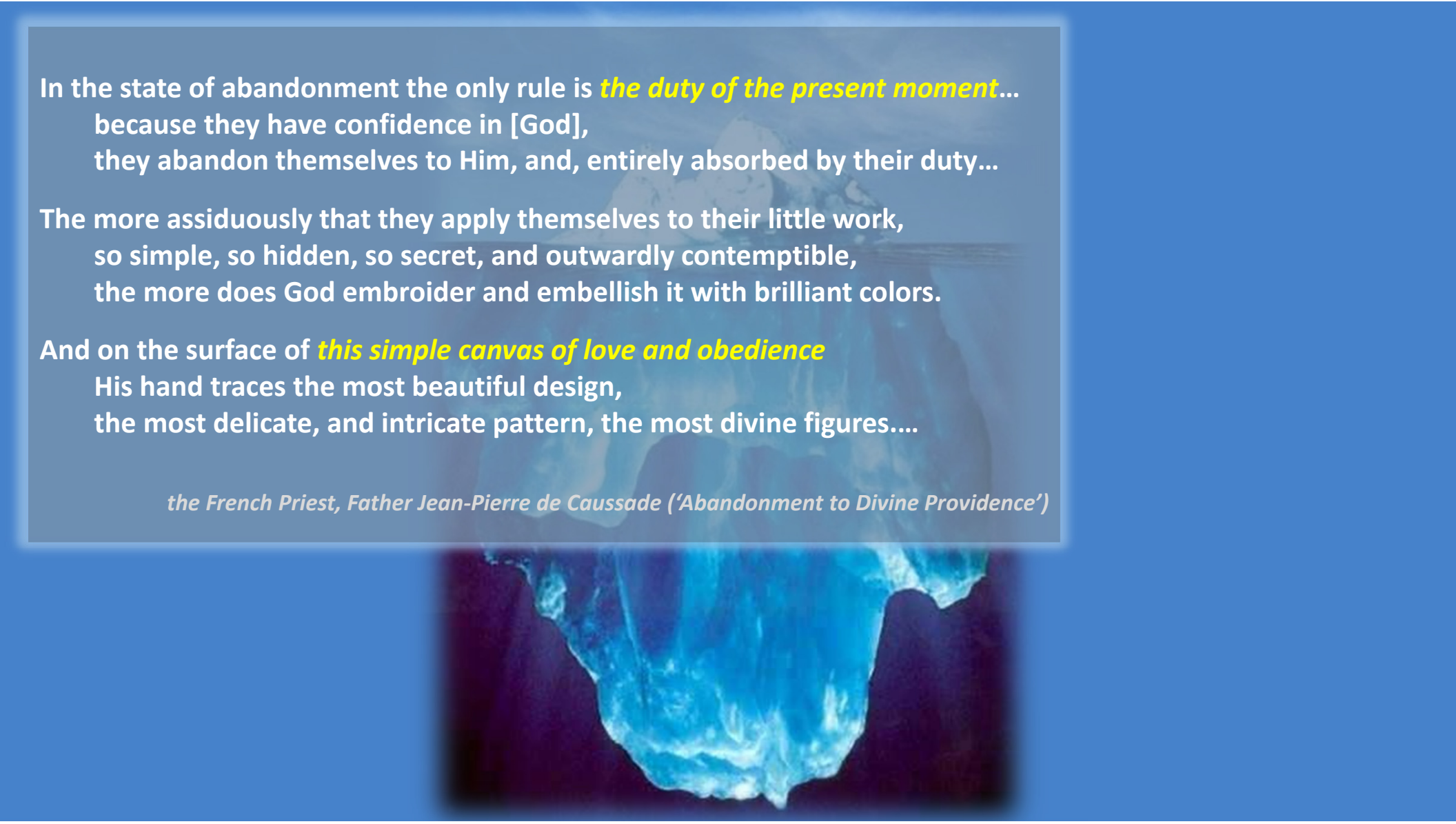
So, many people believe that to live according to the faith and to fulfill the will of God is very difficult.

Actually—it's very easy.

One needs only attend to details, to trifles, and ***try to avoid evil in the slightest and most trivial things.*** This is the simplest and surest way to enter the world of the spirit and draw near to God.

the Russian Saint John Maximovitch





In the state of abandonment the only rule is ***the duty of the present moment...***
because they have confidence in [God],
they abandon themselves to Him, and, entirely absorbed by their duty...

The more assiduously that they apply themselves to their little work,
so simple, so hidden, so secret, and outwardly contemptible,
the more does God embroider and embellish it with brilliant colors.

And on the surface of ***this simple canvas of love and obedience***
His hand traces the most beautiful design,
the most delicate, and intricate pattern, the most divine figures....

the French Priest, Father Jean-Pierre de Caussade ('Abandonment to Divine Providence')

In the state of abandonment the only rule is the duty of the present moment...
Each blow of the hammer on the chisel can only produce one cruel mark at a time,
and the stone struck by repeated blows cannot know, nor see the form produced by them.

It only feels that it is being diminished, filed, cut, and altered by the chisel.

The more...
And a stone that is destined to become a crucifix or a statue without knowing it,
if it were asked, "*What is happening to you?*" would reply if it could speak:

*"Do not ask me, I only know one thing, and that is, **to remain immovable in the hands of my master,**
to love him, and to endure all that he inflicts upon me.*

And on th...
As for the end for which I am destined, it is his business to understand how it is to be accomplished;

I am as ignorant of what he is doing as of what I am destined to become;

all I know is that his work is the best, and the most perfect that could be,

and I receive each blow of the chisel as the most excellent thing that could happen to me,

*although, truth to tell, each blow, in my opinion, causes the thought and feeling
of ruin, destruction, disfigurement.*

*But that is not my affair; **content with the present moment, I think of nothing but my duty,**
and I endure the work of this clever master without knowing, or occupying myself about it." ...*

the French Priest, Father Jean-Pierre de Caussade ('Abandonment to Divine Providence')

In the state of abandonment the only rule is *the duty of the present moment...*

Each blow of the hammer on the chisel can only produce one cruel mark at a time,
and the stone struck by repeated blows cannot know, nor see the form produced by them.
It only feels that it is being diminished, filed, cut, and altered by the chisel.

The more assiduously that it is worked, the more it is diminished, and the more it is diminished, the more it is altered.

And a stone that is destined to become a crucifix or a statue without knowing it,
if it were asked, "Why do you suffer?" would answer, "I suffer because I am being worked."
Yes! give to God what belongs to Him, and **remain lovingly in His hands.**

Hold for certain that what takes place either exteriorly
or interiorly is best for you.

Allow God to act, and abandon yourself to Him.

And on the surface of your heart, to remain immovable in the hands of my master,
to love him, and to endure his work, is the most delicate, and the most difficult, and the most important of all.
His hand traces the most delicate, and the most important of all.
As for the end for which I am destined, it is his business to understand how it is to be accomplished;
I am as ignorant of it as the stone is of the form it is to take.

Let the chisel perform its office, the needle do its work;

all I know is that his work is best for me, let the brush of the artist cover the canvas...

and I receive each blow of the hammer, and each stroke of the needle, as if it should happen to me,

although, truth to tell, every blow of the hammer, and every stroke of the needle, causes the thought and feeling

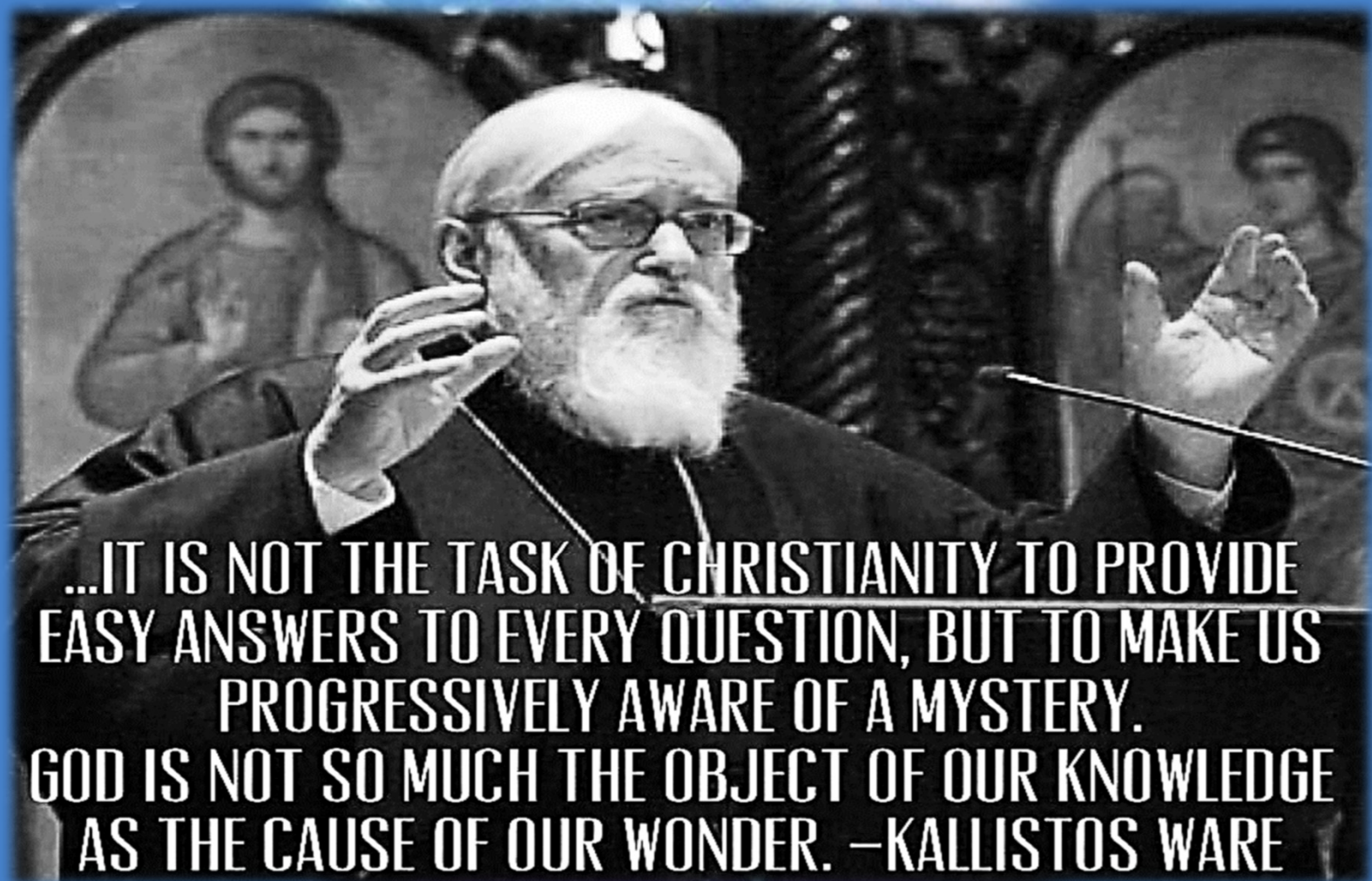
of ruin, destruction, disfigurement, and death.

Correspond with all these Divine operations by
a **simple and constant submission,**
a forgetfulness of self,
and an assiduous application to duty....

But that is not my only duty. I must also seek only the Kingdom of God and His justice **by love and obedience,**

and I endure the work of the hammer, the needle, the brush, and the chisel, **and all the rest will be added to you.**

the French Priest, Father Jean-Pierre de Caussade ('Abandonment to Divine Providence')



**...IT IS NOT THE TASK OF CHRISTIANITY TO PROVIDE
EASY ANSWERS TO EVERY QUESTION, BUT TO MAKE US
PROGRESSIVELY AWARE OF A MYSTERY.
GOD IS NOT SO MUCH THE OBJECT OF OUR KNOWLEDGE
AS THE CAUSE OF OUR WONDER. -KALLISTOS WARE**

Our faith is about learning to live
in *the revealing of things that were hidden.*

True Christianity should never be obvious.
It is, indeed, the struggle *to live out what is not obvious.*
The Christian life is rightly meant to be an apocalypse....

Father Stephen Freeman



Our faith is about learning to live
in the revealing of things that were hidden.

God is not obvious.

True Christian life is about learning to live out what is not obvious.
That which is obvious is an object. Objects are inert, static and passive.

The tree in my front yard is objectively there.

When I get up in the morning and take the dog outside, I expect the tree to be there.

If it is autumn, I might study its leaves for their wonderful color change.

But generally, I can ignore the tree – or not.

That's what objects are good for.

They ask nothing of us. **The freedom belongs entirely to us**, not to them.

This is **the function of an idol – to make a god into an object.**

He/she/it must be there.

The idol captures the divine, objectifies it and renders it inert and passive.

However, the God of the Christians smashes idols.

He will not stay put or become a passive participant in our narcissism.

He is not the God-whom-I-want! ...

Father Stephen Freeman

Our faith is about learning to live
in *the revealing of things that were hidden.*
God is not obvious.

True Christ That which is obvious is an object. Objects are inert, static and passive.

It is, indeed, the struggle to live out what is not obvious.

The Christ *The tree in my front yard is objectively there.*

When I get up in the morning and take the dog outside, I expect the tree to be there.

If it is there, I might study its leaves for their wonderful color change.

But generally **Christ tells us,**
“Ask, and you will receive. Seek and you will find.

Knock and the door will be opened.”

That’s what objects are good for.

They are good for us, not to them.

The very center of the life promised us in Christ
requires asking, seeking and knocking.

This is *the function of an idol – to make a god into an object.*

He/she **The reason is straightforward:**

asking, seeking and knocking are a mode of existence.

But our usual mode of existence is to live an obvious life (a life among objects).

However, *the God of the Christians smashes idols.*

He wants us to live in our narcissism.

He is not **That mode of existence puts us in the place where we become truly human.**

Father Stephen Freeman

Father Stephen Freeman

The basic human problem is that we do not see God.

In fact, *most people cannot see God, but can only seek Him.*

This is because our eyes (both physical and the eyes of our souls) are earthly, they are trained to see, to think about, and to contemplate only physical things and what can be deduced from physically perceptible things, or what directly affects how we feel, that is, the emotional realities that are at work within us.

If, however, we want to see God, where do we begin?

We must *begin with what we can do.* We can seek; *we can come to God with longing.*

However, when we begin to seek God, we ask God to satisfy our desires; and when He doesn't, *we think that He is ignoring us.*

We ask God to realize our hopes, and we are dismayed because they are not fulfilled.

We ask God to let us feel His nearness, and *God seems to stay far away.* ...

Archimandrite Aimilianos, abbot of Simonopetra Monastery (Mount Athos)

God does not answer these prayers because they are all, in a sense, requests to stay where we are, requests for God to strengthen what we already think, already envision, what we desire now. In fact, God does not answer these prayers because we are asking God to strengthen the very things that God, through repentance, wants to lead us out of.

And so **we experience a kind of tribulation**, a kind of suffering that takes us through what feels like a desert of **God's absence**.

But **God is not absent**. God is as near as He has ever been.

God is near and is helping us change our minds, helping us to let go of inappropriate or immature ways of thinking about God and ourselves, helping us to let go of ways of knowing and feeling the nearness of God that rely primarily on our **more shallow feelings** or external serendipitous events that merely confirm our expectations, our hopes and our desires. ...

God is forcing us to go deeper into ourselves, so that we can come to **know God more deeply**.

God is taking away what is familiar so that we can reach out to perceive and know God more as God is, and thus to grow ourselves. ...

Archimandrite Aimilianos, abbot of Simonopetra Monastery (Mount Athos)

God does not answer these prayers because they are all, in a sense, requests to stay where we are, requests for God to strengthen what we already think, already envision, what we desire now.

Ultimately, this is how we begin to see God when we are seeking Him:

we do not begin by seeing God's face or even his back,
but ***we begin by first seeing God's hands.***

We see God's hands as ***God kneads us like dough.***

We see God's hand opposing us, pushing us, kneading us, making us into bread.

And when we can indeed begin to ***see God's hand in all that we do not expect,***

in every disappointment, in every vicissitude of life,

in every uncomfortable change and unexpected outcome,

when we ***see God's fingerprints in everything that humbles us,***

everything that forces us to trust only in the mercy of God,

when we see God's hand here,

we are now beginning to see God,

we are beginning to see the hand of God.

TEN PRACTICAL ELEMENTS OF *THE HIDDEN LIFE*

① Pray Daily

Have a regular prayer rule that includes morning and evening prayer.

② Worship and Participate in the Sacraments

Attend and participate in the Divine Liturgy, receiving Holy Communion regularly as well as regular participation in Confession.

③ Honor the Liturgical Cycle

Follow the seasons of the church, and participate in the fasts and feasts of the Church.

④ Use the Jesus Prayer

Repeat the Holy name whenever possible, throughout the day or night.

⑤ Slow Down and Order Your Life

Set priorities and reduce the stress and friction caused by a hurried life.

⑥ Be Watchful

Give full attention to what you are doing at the moment.

⑦ Tame the Passions

Overcome your habits, attachment to your likes and dislikes, and learn to practice the virtues.

⑧ Put Others First

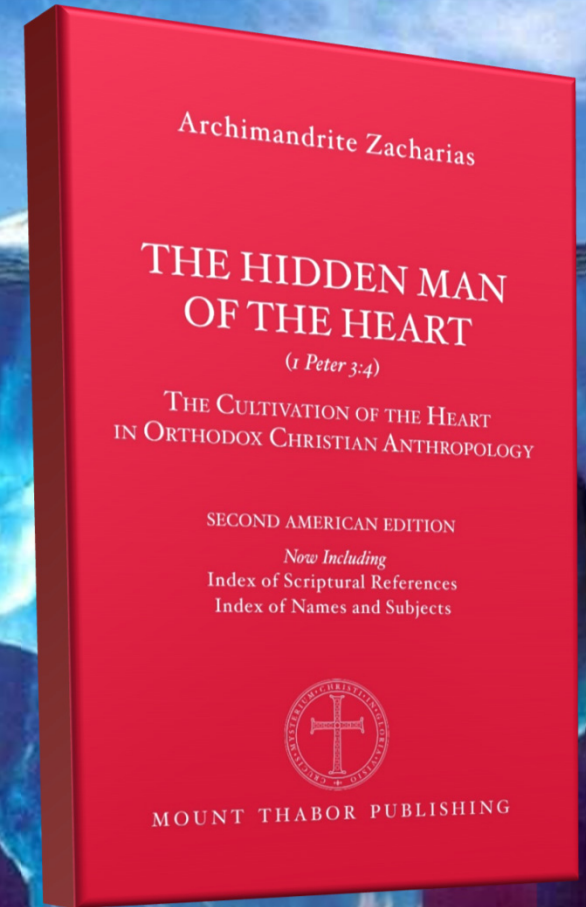
Free yourself from your selfishness and find joy in helping others.

⑨ Seek Spiritual Fellowship

Spend time regularly with other Orthodox Christians for support and inspiration.

⑩ Read the Scriptures and Holy Fathers

Be inspired by the lessons of the Holy Scriptures, the wisdom of the Holy Fathers, and the lives of the Saints of the Church.



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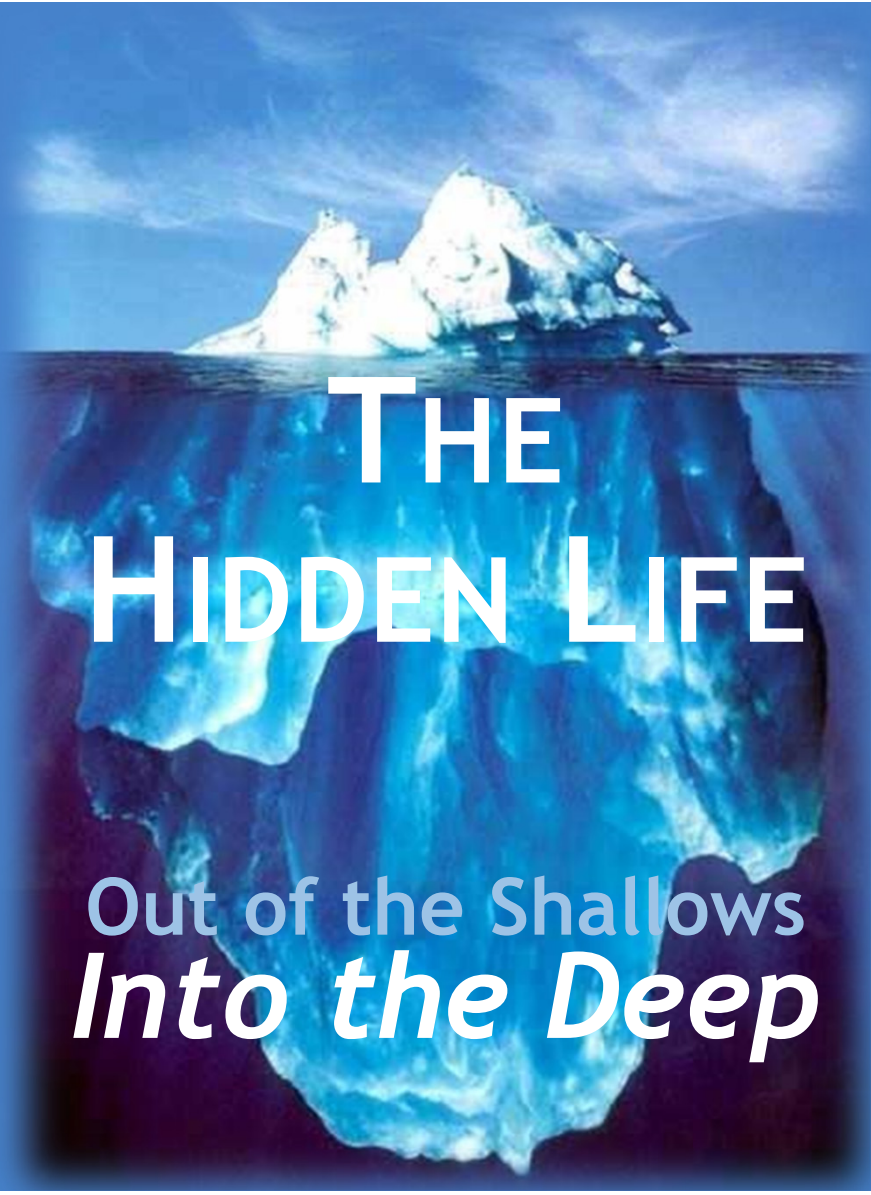
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