



110. Aug. 23/Sept. 5, 1972. Apodosis of the Dormition

Categories : [Letters](#)

Date : September 2, 2016

Dear Brother in Christ, Nicholas [Eastman],
Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ.

We were happy to hear from you again, and please forgive our very hasty replies to your previous letters. As you see, the Orthodox Christian life is full of trials and temptations, usually of a seemingly very trivial nature. By this the devil tries to weaken our resolve and keep us on a very low level of battle — until he's ready to put a real temptation in our way. Our answer is to try our best to keep on an even, sober path, using the weapons which Christ's Church gives us — the Church services and sacraments, regular evening and morning prayer, spiritual reading, prayer-robe, etc., and in everything trusting not in our own strength but in God's power and grace. Fight as well as you can against all temptations — laxness, impurity, overeating, idleness, judging others. Do not be alarmed if at times your prayer seems dry and unfeeling; that often happens, but feeling will return if you remain constant in your rule of prayer.

Keep the thought of monasticism in your heart, but don't be too concerned about it now. Be resolved to serve God in your life as He wills, and God will soon enough open the path to you to fulfill this resolve, whether as a monk or in the world. Both monasticism and living in the world have their own advantages and trials, and in neither place can one escape the responsibility of striving to live a God-pleasing life. God will show you His will for you.

Of the three books you mention, Unseen Warfare would be the best for you to buy and read now; it is a good guide to the Orthodox Christian life, which is a warfare with the devils and our own passions. The Rudder is dangerous for beginners, because most of the canons concern Church administration and are meant for the clergy who are in charge of this and who know how the canons should be interpreted and applied.

Some of Blessed Augustine's books are better not to read, by the City of God is good, Of course, now with school beginning again you probably won't have much time for reading, and what time you do have is better spent on spiritual reading such as Unseen Warfare.

College life will doubtless give you many temptations. But remember that learning in itself is useful and can be used later in a Christian way. Try to avoid the idle activities and temptations you will meet that serve no useful purpose, so that even in a godless atmosphere you can "redeem the time," as the Apostle Paul says, and make maximum use of the opportunities you are given for learning. What subjects will you be taking?



Pray for us.

With love in Christ our Saviour,
Seraphim, monk