

Never Lose Hope

During the Great Lent of the year 1980, in a church named after St. Mary in a small village where most of the population were Christians, it came to the knowledge of Father Armia, the church priest, that three of the members of his congregation were on the verge of abandoning their Christian faith, and denying Christ. All efforts to dissuade and deter them went in vain. The priest however, continued unceasingly to raise fervent prayers before God for them, pleading, and asking for the intercession of the Virgin Mary. Liturgies were prayed for those three members, and praises for St. Mary were accompanied with pleas for her help. The three astray persons, however, were determined to continue on their way.

During a Sunday sermon in the Holy Liturgy, Father Armia burst into tears, weeping in grief for his three children who were abandoning their faith. In the midst of this touching sermon of this loving father, members of the congregation noticed that water droplets were trickling from the church pillars, as if joining the priest in his tearful grief. The whole congregation was immediately touched, and joined together in raising their voices and hearts in a tearful prayer. When the three members on the verge of conversion heard about what happened in the church, their hearts stirred in them and they returned to the church repenting their sins.

Likewise, if you see a person drifting away from God, Pray from that person from the heart, asking that he may regret and repent. If this person continues on his way and keep rejecting God, don't get disturbed or lose faith. Just keep praying, enlisting the intercession of the saints, which is capable of shaking the foundations of evil, and softening the hardened hearts.

Offer love to those who go astray, supporting it with prayer and fasting, trusting that your tears shed before God are so precious to him, and that your faith, reflected in your unceasing pleading, will overflow you with God's mercy, richly growing your relationship with him, giving you the opportunity to experience him in your life, further more, your humbled prayers become capable of shaking mountains.

The most powerful prayers are those offered at the time of trouble. Trust that God won't allow a trial that's beyond the persons' ability to endure,

as He intervenes, even at the last moment, to rescue his children, thus your prayers are not lost in vain.

In your daily prayers, don't fail to remember those who are far, in trouble, and those who asked you to pray for them, so that God may have mercy on you and them, and bless you and them.

By our beloved Father Yohanna Baky
Angel of the Church of St. Mark the Martyr and Apostle