

# DRESSED TO KILL

by

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Many years ago, a clergyman visiting from Greece told us the following story:

A famous monastery in Attica held its Sunday morning services at a time when many laypeople in the area could easily attend Matins and the Divine Liturgy. The divine offices were performed with reverence and decorum; the two choirs of monks chanted well, and the chief celebrant was an accomplished speaker, fervent in the Orthodox Faith. Consequently, hundreds of people flocked there every Sunday.

One Sunday, a young woman appeared there at the monastery. It was her first visit and, well, to put it as discretely as we can, she was *very* immodestly dressed. As a matter of fact, she looked as though she had stepped right out of a very bad section of town. Her dress, for example, seemed to be a couple of sizes too small.

The women in the congregation glared at her with homicidal looks. The men, in the meantime, were desperately trying to keep their eyes on the holy icons in front of them. It really was pretty bad.

The young woman herself, however, seemed completely oblivious to the spiritual havoc she was causing all around her. It did not help one bit that she happened to be a stunning beauty.

Some monks went to the abbot and demanded that he speak to the young woman, and do something about this right away. He replied, "I'll take care of it."

In fact, he did nothing.

The next week, the stunning beauty turned up again, but this time, she had a bit more on, and a lot of the war paint was gone.

Again the monks protested, and again the abbot, responded, "I'm taking care of it."

But, again, he did nothing.

The following week, our beauty queen appeared again, but on this occasion, she was almost decently covered and her figure was not so much on display. The eye shadow was gone and the perfume that before this had been heavy enough to snuff out the church candles was not in evidence.

The fourth week she made her appearance, she was nicely dressed and very modest looking. Her head was covered with a scarf. In fact, one could say that she looked almost bashful. (And, as an individual, she was now a lot more attractive.)

After the service and the meal were over, she approached the abbot and asked to speak with him.

"Father," she said, "forgive me, but I have a complaint with you."

"A complaint?", responded the abbot.

"Yes, a complaint," she continued. "All this time, I've been coming to the services here, and nobody ever approached me to tell me now inappropriately dressed I was. Why didn't anybody tell me anything, or say something?"

"My child, in fact, people did approach me and asked me to speak to you about this matter. But I understood from your demeanor that if I had spoken to you about this when you first began coming for the services, you would have been very offended, and may well have gone off in a huff, and never stepped into a church again. But by your attendance here, you yourself began to see and hear things that informed you that you were not dressed appropriately. You saw how our other women were dressed; you heard many new (for you) things in the sermons. I saw you taking pamphlets of the Lives of the Saints. In a month, you gained enough insights into spiritual matters to the degree that you are now complaining to me about the way you were dressed!!!"

She was very edified by his response.

### **For Our Parents**

Parents! Teach your children to dress appropriately. They are Christians, not pagans. Your daughters should not be dressed like women of ill repute.\* Your children should not be covered with tattoos, as though they were

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\*See the pamphlets, "Ladies! Dare To Be Feminine!" and "How To Raise A Juvenile Delinquent," published by the Metropolis of Boston.

graffiti-covered walls or fences in a bad neighborhood. If they want to pierce their noses, lips or eyelids for rings, tell them that they have enough holes in their heads already! In a few years, the fashions will change, and your children will be left looking like freaks and suffering from skin infections. It is primarily *your* obligation to teach them these elementary things, *not* the parish priest's.

Disciplining your children is a job that is essentially over by the time they reach the age of *three*. By that time, they should know who is the boss in the house.