

Where Are All the Theologians?

Or

How to Impress and Intimidate Your Friends and Enemies

by

Metropolitan Ephraim of Boston

Actually, our Church has many theologians. *Millions* of theologians, in fact, and we ask for their intercessions every day in the holy services of the Church.

For example, Saint Mary of Egypt is one of our Church's greatest theologians ("theologian," that is, in the true sense: a person who has seen God or one that speaks with divine authority). At this point, you will think to yourself: Metropolitan Ephraim, have you finally lost your mind totally and completely? Mary of Egypt? A former prostitute? A young woman who was utterly and thoroughly depraved and dissolute? A sex maniac? One of the Church's greatest theologians? Wow!

Now *that* would raise a few eyebrows in some Victorian parlors!

Yet, by her godly remorse and by the grace of God, she reached the point where, despite the fact that she was illiterate, she could recite the Holy Scriptures by heart, *although she had never read them or ever heard them in her life!!*

How many "licensed theologians"* do you know that can pull that one off?

Saint Parthenios of Chios (+1881) is another one of the Church's greatest theologians. By the gift of prophecy that was given him by God, he foretold that a devastating earthquake would destroy his island homeland in the Aegean Sea. In fact, he predicted when this would happen *five months* before it actually occurred, and he even predicted the very *day*, the *hour* and the *minute* when it would happen!

How many "licensed theologians" do you know that can pull that one off?

Saint Seraphim of Sarov foretold *one year ahead of time* the death of a pilgrim — Prokudin of Nizhi-Novgorod — who came to the Saint's monastery.

Well, my friends, the bitter truth is that our "licensed theologians" are not theologians at all. At best, they are what might be called "Philosophers of Religion". At worst, they are what should be called "Hirelings". Their "virtues"

*"Licensed theologians" are those who have a degree from a seminary or a theological academy. A licensed theologian can speak *about* God, perhaps. A true theologian *knows* God.

are the pride and arrogance that so frequently accompany the acquisition of what Saint Isaac of Syria calls "first degree knowledge".

They often display a list of letters after their name, indicating what academic degrees they have received. This display's chief purpose is to impress and intimidate you.

But this list of letters after their names was received from other men, not God. Furthermore, the men that they received these academic degrees from are often sinful, fallen, vain men, like themselves, and more often than not, they are not even Orthodox Christians!

The Church's true theologians, on the other hand, attended the School of the Holy Spirit. The enlightenment they received came directly from God, not fallen men. Indeed, the gifts these Saints received from their Divine Instructor really do impress and intimidate us. Sometimes, these gifts scare us out of our wits in a very gentle and beneficial way, because their real purpose

is "to scare the Hades" out of us — that is to say, to free us from our captivity to Satan and the passions.

"Licensed theologians" can't do that. They are too busy dealing with their own demons.

So, in these difficult times, when virtually everybody is running short of cash, save your pennies, my friends. Forget about shelling out your hard-earned money to pay tuition at some seminary or theological academy, so-called. Get a free theological education by listening carefully to the Church's holy services and by reading the Lives of Saints.

If some of their wisdom and gifts rub off on you, it's a win-win situation: You save your money and gain Paradise to boot!

And pray that God grant us more *true* theologians, because, right now, there seems to be a major shortage.