

Author and the Giver of life can determine man's span of life.

There exist several forms of murder — direct, indirect, spiritual, etc. A person is guilty of murder even when he does not commit the murder himself but promotes the murder or allows someone else to do it. For example: a judge condemning an accused to death when his innocence is known; anyone who does not save a neighbor from death when he is fully capable of doing it; anyone who helps another commit murder by his decree, advice, collaboration, or rationalization, or who condones and justifies a death and by that gives opportunity for more killing; anyone who by hard labor or cruel punishment exhausts victims into a weakened state and thus hastens their death.

Abortion is also a form of murder. Several Church laws impose severe penance on women who kill babies in their womb and on those who assist them in this. (Check the 2nd and 8th rule of St. Basil the Great, 21st rule of the Council of Ankir, and the 91st rule of the 6th Ecumenical Council).

cast into hell» (Matthew 5:29). This figurative speech can be rephrased as follows: If someone is as dear to you as your own eye or hand, but tempts you to sin, quickly break off all relations with him or her. For it is better for you to deprive yourself of his or her friendship than of everlasting life.

THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT

«Thou shalt not steal.»

This commandment orders us to respect the property of others. Sins against this commandment include theft, robbery, sacrilege (to misuse that which belongs to the Church), extortion or bribery (requesting money or gifts for services which are supposed to be rendered free of charge), usury (overcharging interest on loans), fraud (to appropriate someone's property by cunning). In general, robbery is committed by him who gives false weight; by him who sells at exorbitant prices; by him who, for love of gain, adulterates provisions in the market; by him who deprives his servants of their wages; by him who pays his employees star-



Besides physical, there exists a spiritual form of murder which is an even more horrible sin because of its eternal consequences: tempting someone. Anyone who lures a person away from his faith in God or seduces to sin, kills him spiritually. The Savior thus said about the severity of the sin of tempting others, *«Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck... Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to the man by whom the offense comes»* (Matthew 18:6-7)!

THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT

«Thou shalt not commit adultery.»

With this commandment God enjoins husband and wife to preserve mutual fidelity, and the unmarried to be chaste in their deeds, words, thoughts and desires. In explaining this commandment, the Lord Jesus Christ added, *«Whoever looks at a woman to lust for her, has already committed adultery with her in his heart»* (Matthew 5:28). In other words, not only actions but all our thoughts and feelings must also be pure. In order to avoid sins related to sexual immorality, one must shun all that evokes unclean feelings, such as unbridled behavior, obscene conversations, music and dancing which arouses lustful desires, watching of indecent movies and magazines, and the like.

To avoid sexual sins, the best remedy is to suppress sinful thoughts and desires at their root, not giving them an opportunity to strengthen and take control over our will. Knowing how difficult it is for us to do battle with carnal temptations, the Lord instructs us to be resolute and unmerciful towards ourselves when confronted by temptations: *«If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be*

vation wages; by him who misappropriates common funds; and by him who forfeits paying a debt, conceals a find, etc.

THE NINTH COMMANDMENT

«Thou shalt not bear false witness.»

By this commandment the Lord God forbids all forms of lying, as for instance: perjury in court, false complaints, slander, gossip, and swearing. In particular, slander should be considered an act of the devil, because the very name «devil» means «slanderer.» Mockery magnifies the shortcomings of another person in a comic and degrading way in order to humiliate that person. It is a sign of a proud spirit and a cruel heart, which are so contrary to what Jesus Christ taught.

THE TENTH COMMANDMENT

«Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife; thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, nor his field... nor anything that is thy neighbor's.»

This last commandment orders us to refrain from envy and avoid all sinful desires. While the preceding commandments spoke preeminently regarding external behavior, this last one turns our attention to our inner world — to our thoughts, feelings and desires. It calls on us to strive towards spiritual cleanliness. It is important to understand that every sinful act starts inside as a sinful disposition of our soul. When a person lingers on a bad thought, it becomes a desire, and as that desire strengthens, it draws the will toward accomplishing the sinful act. That is why, in order to successfully battle against temptations, it is important to learn how to overcome them at the very onset — in our mind.

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MIRACLE IN THE ORTHODOX CHURCH: THE CEREMONY OF THE HOLY LIGHT IN JERUSALEM

This ceremony takes place in the Orthodox Church of the Resurrection in the Holy city of Jerusalem in such a way that bewilders the soul of the Christians. It takes place every single year, at the same time, in the same manner, and on the same spot.

The Holy Sepulchre is the most sacred, ancient, important, magnificent and celebrated monument of the Christian faith.

The church of the Holy Sepulchre is in the center of Jerusalem, in the old city and on the hill of Golgotha. It is build on the site where Jesus Christ was crucified, buried and rose from the dead.

Architecturally the shrine has no consistency but if we study its history we will understand the reason of its present complex pattern. It consists of main buildings linked between them and in the internal we see churches, chapels, pilgrimages, basements, stairs, courtyards, balconies, corridors and offices. The decor is a mixture of Byzantine wall-paintings and statues, sites of renaissance style and also modern mosaics and icons.

The same applies to the exterior. The church stands among houses, monasteries and mosques but its highlight is its the great dome.

The pilgrims who visit the Sacred Tomb come from different doctrines and tribes. All these contrasts are the result of its history and the battles for its survival.

The sacred grounds of the Calvary (Golgotha) and the tomb of Jesus in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre are on the genuine topographic places they took place.

Other pilgrimages are determined as contextual to the events of the crucifixion and the burial, other are located by symbolic and theological relation and others are devoted to a person or event.

On Pascha Saturday, at noon, the Orthodox Patriarch, or any other Orthodox Archbishop, enters the Holy Sepulchre, recites special prayers and remains waiting. Sometimes the waiting is long, sometimes short. The crowd, in the darkened church, repeats continually with a loud voice: «Lord, have mercy.» (Kyrie eleison). At a certain moment the Holy Light flashes from the depth of the Holy Sepulchre in a supernatural way, miraculously, and lights up the little lamp of olive oil put on the edge of it. The Patriarch (or the Archbishop), after having read some prayers, lights up the two clusters of 33 candles he is holding, and begins to distribute the Holy Light to the multitude of pilgrims, who receive it with great emotion, accompanied with the pealing of bells, acclamations, and an unbridled enthusiasm.

The Holy Light is not only distributed by the Archbishop, but operates also by itself. It emits from the Holy Sepulchre having a gleam of a hue completely different from that of natural light. It sparkles, it flashes like lightning, it flies like a dove around the tabernacle of the the Holy Sepulchre, and lights up the unlit lamps of olive oil hanging in front of it. It whirls from one side of the church to the other. It enters to some of the chapels inside the church, as for instance the chapel of the Calvary (at a higher level than the Holy Sepulchre) and lights up the little lamps. It lights up also the candles of certain pilgrims. In fact there are some very pious pilgrims who, every time they attended this ceremony, noticed that their candles lit up on the own accord!

This divine light also presents some special peculiarities: As soon as it appears it has a bluish hue and does not burn. At the first moments of its appearance, if it touches the face, or the mouth, or the hands, it does not burn.

The appearance of the Holy Light is an event which occurs every year in front of thousands of visual witnesses. Nobody can deny it. On the contrary, this miracle can reinforce those who have lack of faith.

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From «Differences between the Orthodox and Roman Catholicism»,
a book by Irene Econimides

