

# THE MONASTIC LIFE

Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Fili



Translated by  
Archbishop Chrysostomos of Etna  
and Bishop Auxentios of Photiki

CENTER FOR TRADITIONALIST  
ORTHODOX STUDIES

# THE MONASTIC LIFE

A Most Beneficial Dialogue Between  
an Orthodox Monk and a  
Contemporary Theologian

by  
Metropolitan Cyprian  
of Oropos and Fili

Translated by  
Archbishop Chrysostomos of Etna  
and Bishop Auxentios of Photiki

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*“Christ, the light of the Angels; Angels, the light of monastics;  
the monastic way of life, the light of all men.”*

The Ladder of Divine Ascent

*From the Icon Studio of the Holy Monastery of  
Saints Cyprian and Justina, Fili, Attika (1997)*

## Prologue

*“How beautiful and good the practice of silence. Indeed, how beautiful and good. So sweet its yoke, so light its burden. A sweet existence, a practice of delight.”*

Evagrius the Monk

The Holy Fathers of our Orthodox Faith, “being destitute, afflicted, tormented, of whom the world was not worthy..., wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth,” and offered themselves up as vessels of the Holy Spirit; they excelled as brilliant illuminators, “interpreted the Mysteries of Holy Scripture and established Canons, elucidated matters dogmatic,” warred against heretics, and were thus shown forth as pillars and exemplars of holiness.

Through fasting, vigils, and prayers, living in monasteries or amidst the wild and inhospitable crags of the deserts, “nested” within these spiritual eagles’ haunts, far from the world, conversing with the “friend of the desert,” sweet Jesus, they succeeded, by His Grace, in being united to the Holy Trinity, in becoming gods.

Today, however, as we pass through a fearful age of confusion and apostasy, we see not only atheists, but Christian believers, too—whether out of ignorance or out of a willful desire not to see the truth—, rallying forth against this Divinely-established institution of monasticism, wishing to see monastics removed far from their spiritual arena, the desert. They wish to see them in the world, in order to “benefit” those living therein, and to see them cease being so-called “social parasites,” “bums,” and “useless entities.”

In our efforts to enlighten, by the Providence of the Lord, those who have, in embracing such a view, failed to grasp the truth, we have recounted in this little book a conversation between a brother of our monastery (whose name herein is fictitious) and a young theologian on the subject in question.

Hoping that my brothers in Christ will be benefited by the reading of this book, I ask that they beseech the Lord that monasticism might once again shine forth in all of its glory and cease to be unjustly slandered and considered a supposedly outmoded institution which has no meaning whatever today for the sinful world.

Also, I would ask that the reader pray for me and for our Brotherhood in Christ.

*At the Holy Monastery of Saints Cyprian and Justina  
in Fili, Attika*

*September 26, 1970 (Old Style)*

*The Feast of Saint John the Theologian*

*The Abbot,  
Archimandrite [Metropolitan] Cyprian  
[of Oropos and Fili]*

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**THE MONASTIC LIFE****Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Fili**

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“In the history of the Orthodox Church, there have always been, during times of trial, those who have maintained the Faith unadulterated. To be sure, as we see the Orthodox Faith tried today by the modern spirit of disbelief and materialism, there are those who have spoken out. They have spoken out with outrage. They have condemned things that invite condemnation. But few have spoken out with the love and moderation that mark the words of the renowned Greek Old Calendarist zealot, Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Fili. He is among the few who seem to express the spirit of the Fathers of the past, filled as he is with uncompromising faith but uncondemning love. Rather than attack others for error, he has attempted to give them an example of correctness, calling them back to the health of Holy Tradition. He has been condemned, slandered, and belittled for his protest within the Church. He has, nonetheless, remained moderate, refusing to deny to those in error a place within the Church, consistently beckoning them even in the face of their attacks. He has also been praised by circumspect and serious Churchmen—even by the very modernists whom he calls from error. And this praise has not once caused him to withdraw from his stand of resistance against error. Who, then, better than Metropolitan Cyprian could write a proper defense of monasticism in the face of modern anti-monastic propaganda? His ecclesiological witness, one of chastising those in error and yet of calling them with his scourge of love—this witness is true monasticism made manifest!”

*Father Gregory Telepneff*