

Research project

Jacob's struggle

Bose, 9-12 September 2009

XVII International Ecumenical Conference

on Orthodox spirituality

Next Conference planned for 2009 is dedicated to the image of the **spiritual struggle**. Tradition, at least since Origen, has recognized that the metaphor of the spiritual struggle best reflects a Christian's need to be daily converted

XVII International Ecumenical Conference on Orthodox spirituality

Bose, Wednesday 9 - Saturday 12 September 2009

SPIRITUAL STRUGGLE

IN THE ORTHODOX TRADITION

Holy Scripture evokes the following of Christ, the narrow path of the cross that leads to the joy of the resurrection, through various metaphors: athletic race, crossing of the desert, going up to Jerusalem, ascent of the mountain, loving search of each other by bride and bridegroom, spiritual struggle.

This year's Conference is dedicated to the image of the spiritual struggle. Tradition, at least since Origen, has recognized that the metaphor of the spiritual struggle best reflects a Christian's need to be daily converted. Monks and nuns from Antony the Great onwards have refined the rules of the spiritual struggle, which involves the asceticism of the body and of the heart.

We shall initially reflect on the teachings of the Scripture regarding the spiritual struggle, on the relation between the sacraments of Christian initiation and the spiritual struggle, and on the relation between the purification of the heart and combat against the Devil.

We shall then examine some aspects of the spiritual struggle and the remedies against the vices: gluttony and bodily continence, sorrow and tears, the dangers of extreme forms of asceticism which compromise man's physical and mental health.

However, the spiritual combat does not end with the struggle against the vices; it aims, with the grace of God, at receiving the finest gifts of the Holy Spirit: prayer and charity. We shall recall the testimony of two twentieth-century saints who were examples of dedicated charity and of resistance to evil through an active love of their neighbour.

The Conference will conclude with a reflection on our spiritual struggle for church unity in the contemporary world. Numerous shorter talks will help us probe deeper the ways possible today of initiation into the spiritual struggle.

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE:

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