

## **Final Exam—Prayer and Spirituality in the Early Church (THE710; Spring 2018)**

Supply definitions for the following twelve technical terms, which are of fundamental importance to the study of early Christian spirituality.

### *The Organization of Monastic Life*

(1) cenobium-- monastery where monks live in community in obedience to a common rule of life, engaging in common labor, taking common meals and engaging in common worship.

(2) lavra-- a row or cluster of solitary cells around a common center (including a church and a bakehouse), where the ascetics would assemble on weekends for a common meal and common worship, spending the weekdays in their individual cells.

### *Repentance*

(3) penthos--(lit. "mourning"="contrition") godly sorrow for sin engendered by repentance and arising from the recognition of one's alienation from God, who is seen as supremely desirable.

(4) compunctio-- being pierced to the heart by regret for past sin (cf. Acts 2:37); often leads to keeping silent before God and weeping or shedding tears over one's previous departure from God.

### *Spiritual Warfare*

(5) antirrhesis--(lit. "counter-statement") a method of spiritual warfare which consists in answering an evil suggestion or evil thought with an appropriate text from Scripture (cf. Mt. 4:3-12) in order to combat the thought or drive it away.

(6) akedia -- a general uneasiness of the soul, combined with mental and spiritual torpor, weariness or despondency, and a lack of interest or care in regard to the practice of Bible reading, prayer to God and other spiritual disciplines.

### *Spiritual Guidance*

(7) exagoreusis logismôn ("manifestation of thoughts")-- the questioner reveals to a trusted and experienced spiritual guide the dynamics of his inner life and asks questions regarding

- the persistent thoughts or reasonings (logismoi) introduced into the mind (esp. by the powers of evil to tempt one) and
- the passions, sicknesses (unbalanced and excessive emotions) and disordered movements which affect the soul.

(8) discretio (in Cassian)-- Discernment, i.e. a clear spiritual insight into

- a person's thoughts and actions,
- the demonic activity underlying the temptation, and
- insight into what needs to be done to resolve the issue.

This allows the disciple to rely on the spiritual father's judgment even when the latter

prescribes the relaxing or invigoration of one's ascetic regimen.

*Prayer*

(9) monologistic prayer-- constant repetition of and meditation upon a brief formula of prayer (typically the name of Jesus or a phrase or short sentence, such as "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me") to focus the mind on God, avoiding distractions and dangerous thoughts.

*Communion with God*

(10) hesychia-- (lit. "quiet, stillness, tranquility") contemplation in tranquility and silence, often involving a withdrawal from normal community life and its accompanying responsibilities in order to be free to experience spiritual reality more directly and intensely.

(11) apatheia-- "passionlessness"--the disordered and disturbing passions are resolved into a state of abiding calm, peace and purity of heart, which is necessary to engage in continuous communion with God through imageless prayer.

(12) epektasis--(lit. "reaching out after, stretching forward to"--"stable movement") the soul that has subdued the agitation of the passions is able to rest in Christ but this 'rest' does not consist in immobility but rather in unending progress toward greater communion with God, who is both

- a) infinite (so that one can never grasp the whole of God's being or character) and
- b) infinitely desirable (so that one's love for God can never cease to grow as one comes to know more of God and God's character).