

SAINT PORPHYRIOS

—The Testimony of Nikos Sotiropoulos (Professor of Theology)—

I had been hearing amazing and extraordinary things about Elder Porphyrios for many years, but I never really gave much attention to it. I assumed they were exaggerations, because sometimes rumors and narratives begin to circulate about certain elders; and I viewed them as exaggerations. But they were not at all exaggerations.

One day, a colleague of mine, a theologian and philosopher, called me. He was a rationalist. He was quite a disbeliever. Whenever he would hear of miraculous events, he would smirk, he would make sarcastic comments—even though he was a theologian. He was a good man, a serious fellow; but very disbelieving. So, this rationalist and doubting theologian called me one day on the phone, and with great enthusiasm told me, “Niko, I met an amazing Elder. He is a great soul, he is very charismatic. You must meet him as well. I was very edified. He changed my life. I made a 180 degree turn!” “Who is this amazing Elder, Vangeli?” I asked. “It is Father Porphyrios!” So I told him, “I have been hearing about this marvelous Elder that you are referring to, but I thought people were exaggerating.” “They are not at all exaggerations! I have a personal experience. I visited him with other colleagues, professors, and they were awestruck. Miracles took place, which I saw with my own eyes. It’s not possible for me to describe what a great man he is. You absolutely have to meet him.” I said to him, “Vangeli, I always thought they were exaggerations; but since you, who used to make fun of these things, are telling me that you witnessed them, I am fully convinced that things are exactly as you are saying and as I have been hearing.”

From the very first day I went to see him, I witnessed a miracle. I went to visit him with Vangeli and one more person who drove us. The Elder asked the driver, whom he knew, if his vehicle was outside. “Yes,” replied this gentleman. “Well then, let’s take a drive to Chalcis, because I have to meet some person.” We drove to the city, and we stopped at a certain town square; he called the person he wanted to see and they stayed in the vehicle to speak. A good distance away in the square, there were trailer homes with French tourists. We

noticed flames coming out of one of the parked trailer homes. We stood and watched, thinking that it was likely the stove; but that was not the case. Elder Porphyrios who was in the vehicle on the opposite side of the town square suddenly shouted to the driver who was outside the vehicle, “my child, let’s leave because there is a fire....” Elder Porphyrios didn’t see the fire with his eyes, because he was at a distance and looking away from us. He saw it with the gift he had from God. So, he said, “let’s go, my child, because there is a fire.” The driver asked him, “where is there a fire, Elder?” “In one of the trailer homes.” The driver told him, “it may be the stove.” “No, it’s not the stove. It’s an entire propane tank.” Me and the other professor with me, in the meantime, were standing next to that trailer and looking on. In actuality, it was the propane tank that had caught fire, and we were standing right next to it. The people were trying to put it out without success. By the time the fire trucks arrived, the fire had died down. Afterwards we realized that the tank should have exploded, in which case we would have been blown to smithereens. The Elder prayed and prevented the accident from occurring. Some time later, I discretely asked the Elder about this, and he told me, “yes, my child. It was a miracle. God saved us and He saved the people in the trailer from being killed.”

That same day, I witnessed his prophetic gift as well. As we were returning from the town, it was March and a beautiful, sunny day. The person in the vehicle with us told the Elder, “tomorrow I am free, and I will come to the Monastery to help with the construction.” “No, don’t come tomorrow,” replied the Elder. “Why, Elder?” he asked. “I am free tomorrow and I can come help.” “I told you, don’t come,” replied the Elder again. A few minutes later, this person persisted, “Elder I can come tomorrow....” and again the Elder said, “I told you, don’t come.” He asked three-four times, and finally he questioned the Elder, “Why can’t I come? I am free tomorrow.” “Tomorrow it is going to snow,” replied Elder Porphyrios. I made a mental note of this, and after we dropped the Elder off at the monastery and left, on our way back I asked the other people with me, “What did the Elder say? That it will snow tomorrow? It’s a warm sunny day...” They told me that whatever the Elder said, that’s what will happen. I was still questioning his prediction, “come on... how can it snow tomorrow?” Well, the next day it snowed in that region of the monastery. Whatever Elder Porphyrios said, would happen.

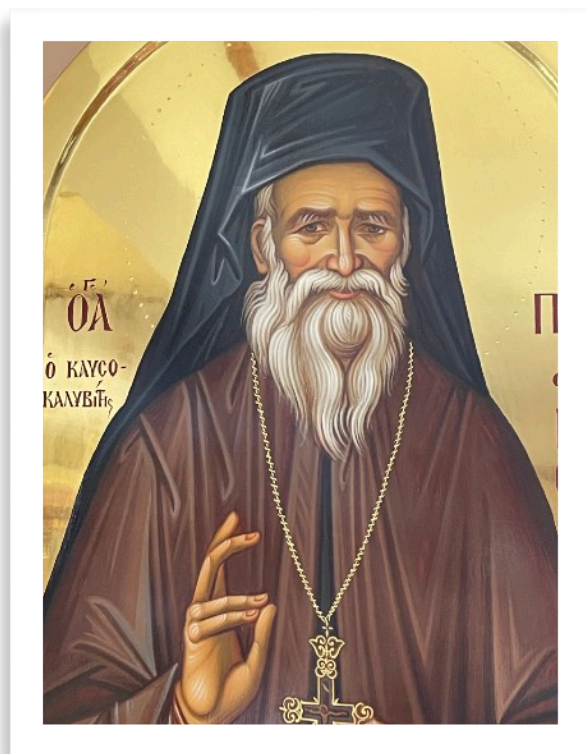
I know very many cases of his prophetic gift. I have personal experience of this and also experiences of family members and friends, who asked me to take them to Elder Porphyrios, in order to speak to him about their problems and to ask for his help.

He would see your thoughts, your problems, your sins, your good qualities and your bad qualities, your illnesses. He would see everything. One time, I had become seriously ill. I had eaten something that caused me excruciating pain, and I decided to call the Elder to pray for me. When the lady who answered the phone gave him the message, he revealed to her the cause of my illness. He told her, “what he ate yesterday caused this problem.” After I became better, I went to visit him. I had a small amount of discomfort, still. But after the excruciating pain I had experienced, I didn’t pay much attention to it. I told him, “Elder, thank you for praying for me, for my condition.” He asked me, “Are you better now?” I said, “Yes, I am well.” “Are you in pain?” he asked. I had a small amount of pain, but I considered it insignificant, and I told him that I was not in pain. He asked me again, “You’re not in pain?” And I said, “no, I have no pain.” “None?” “None.” Then he said, “Come here.” As I went next to him, he pointed to a specific location in my abdominal region and asked me, “don’t you feel a little bit of pain in this exact spot?” I smiled and said, “I have a little bit of pain there.” “Then why didn’t you say it?” he asked. I told him, “it’s so small, it’s almost insignificant.” “I see it,” he told me. “You have a little bit of pain at this spot.”

Another time, I had a pain in my left hand that lasted for 2-3 months, and I began to get concerned. When I went to see him, he told me, “come, come next to me.” He was in the final years of his life at the time and he had gone blind, so he could not see. But he could see things with the gift he had from God. I had told him that my left hand hurts, but he pointed to a spot on my back and said, “don’t you feel pain radiating to this location?” I said, “yes I do.” “Well, this is where it stems from,” he said. And he told me to do a certain exercise, and it went away.

Another time, three-four ladies had come to visit him. But they were dressed quite immodestly. This had taken place before he lost his vision. These ladies were half-naked, they had a very indecent appearance, and I became very angry within me. I thought to myself that we come here reverently in awe to

speaking with this Elder, and these ladies have the nerve to appear before him so shamelessly. But not only did I become furious with them, I also became upset with Elder Porphyrios because he had not said anything to them. I was scandalized to a degree, because I thought, “this is a holy man... shouldn’t he have admonished them?” I was thinking all these things in my mind. I didn’t say anything, but my soul was fuming. After Elder Porphyrios had finished speaking to these ladies and they left, he looked at me straight in the face, and said, “Mr. Niko, I am not as strict as you are.” “What are saying?” I replied. “You are more strict, and greater, and more spiritual than all of us.” “No... no. I am not strict like you.” “Why are you saying this?” I asked him. “Well, these ladies came here dressed inappropriately and indecently, and I did not say anything to them about it; I didn’t reprimand them.” He saw how scandalized and irritated my soul had become. I became embarrassed. He continued, “I have another method. If I had shown disapproval or advised them about the way they were dressed, they would not have listened to me, because they are worldly ladies. I try to gradually bring them to the faith, to make them believe in Christ... and when they believe in Christ, they will understand their mistake on their own. If I had advised them to correct themselves, they would not have listened to me. This is the method I use.”



Saint Nektarios Monastery
—Roscoe, NY—