

Written in the desert by Father Matta El-Meskeen (Matthew the Poor) a monk and spiritual father of 120 monks in the monastery of St Macarius the Great, Wadi El-Natroun, Egypt

"But faith in Christ will ever remain powerless until we meet Him face to face within ourselves. In all patience, long-suffering, and courage, we must bear the shame that will cover us when our souls are stripped naked before God's pure and searching eyes. It is only then that we will emerge with an authentic spiritual experience and renewal for our souls. We will then gain a true knowledge and awareness of the holiness and kindness of Christ."

The Philokalia - Volume 2 - St Maximos the confessor

*69. Some of the brethren think that they are excluded from the Holy Spirit's gifts of grace. Because they neglect to practice the commandments they do not know that he who has an unadulterated faith in Christ has within him the sum total of all the divine gifts. Since through laziness we are far from having an active love for Him - a love which shows us the divine treasures within us - we naturally think that we are excluded from these gifts.

70. If, as St Paul says, Christ dwells in our hearts through faith (cf Eph. 3 : 17), and all the treasures of wisdom and spiritual knowledge are hidden in Him (cf Col. 2 : 3), then all the treasures of wisdom and spiritual knowledge are hidden in our hearts. They are revealed to the heart in proportion to our purification by means of the commandments.

71. This is the treasure hidden in the field of your heart (cf. Matt. 13 : 44), which you have not yet found because of your laziness. Had you found it, you would have sold everything and bought that field. But now you have abandoned that field and give all your attention to the land nearby, where there is nothing but thorns and thistles.

72. It is for this reason that the Saviour says, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matt. 5 : 8): for He is hidden in the hearts of those who believe in Him. They shall see Him and the riches that are in Him when they have purified themselves through love and self-control; and the greater their purity, the more they will see."

