

Letter of Fr. Athanasios to the  
monastery after he left

Exh. 12

11-<sup>13</sup>/<sub>25</sub>-79

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Athanasios to the  
monastery after  
he left



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This letter reveals Fr. Athanasios's  
mental condition

Fathers:

Asking your forgiveness, I venerate you and  
ask for a prayer.

In our 'modern' age, computer technology  
is fast becoming a very real 'god' for Western  
atheists. It is possible now to publicly surveil  
an individual's actions, words and thoughts and one  
may witness a subdued excitement in the  
disposition and attitude of these, at best, ecumenical  
religionists. At worst the American today is  
a science-worshipping animal, who bends the knee  
to a society controlled by the ancestors of those  
who irrationally hated and crucified our Saviour.  
As an individual participating in this godless  
secular syndrome, I have been both affected and  
damaged, and I must now make an effort to  
recover my spiritual senses and live at a median  
sensibleness as a student.

The major factor that influenced me to  
have both stationery and cards printed is the  
fact that I, the individual, have become  
the focus of national attention; with me,  
those with whom I have and do associate,  
are also surveilled by the U.S. government  
and receive this unwarranted attention from the

public at large. It seems that the 'I have to be great' episode has begun to be fulfilled in that I am deemed worthy to be an individual by whom the Church, our Eastern Orthodoxy, has become known to literally every person in the West. Publicly I am esteemed and hated, praised and mocked, pampered and abused. Regularly something I own is stolen; I am embarrassed by carnal or absurd imaginations; and I use profane words and gestures to manifest my hatred for those who harass me. I both enjoy and hate this notoriety; a sort of officially unpublicized celebrity and specimen have I become.

It is my foremost desire to enjoy a decade of academics — to earn my English degrees, learn Russian and attend Law School. If I am to retain my Orthodox sanity, I must have at least a minimal source of God's grace and mercy. I say a few prayers — please say a prayer for me. The pressures I undergo can be almost unbearable. Forgive me and remember me to our Elder and Bishops. With Great Love in Our Common Hope, Your Servant, Tom Riucci



Beloved Elder:

With profound reverence and gratitude,  
I bow before you and kiss your right hand.

It is with much difficulty that I  
begin to write to you, but God helping me,  
perhaps a letter articulating my thoughts will  
be completed.

As one of your spiritual sons, it is  
clear to me that I could only amend the  
ecclesiastical and personal breach, that has  
taken place with my failure to return to  
the obedience at Holy Transfiguration, if I  
was to relinquish entirely my own sense of  
motivation and subject myself to your  
God-inspired direction and authority. Failure  
to subject myself again as a monastic is not  
symptomatic of a lack of fear of Our Saviour,  
but it may be from a lack of fervent love.  
Fear of God was not absent from my conscience  
when I was taken to California, and it was for  
fear of Our Saviour, as well as love for  
you and the fathers, that I returned in May.  
To my shame and humiliation, and perhaps to  
your grief and mourning, I confess the absence  
of that inner fire of motivation and spiritual  
desire that would draw me unhesitatingly and  
zealously to the cenobium again, and establish  
me as a steadfast monastic. It is clear to  
me that I cannot, that I am literally unable,  
to live as a monastic at the cenobium on Warren

street. Our Church is my primary love, and it is not without dishonour that I recognize our Church as singular and exclusive in the context of salvation, the life of the age to come. This love has been denounced as "crazy" and "old fashioned," and incompatible with the world, by both relatives and friends; and even a minimally Orthodox life-style is considered "square" and without enough "fun" by those who live for excitement and pleasures of the flesh. Salvation, for these, is secondary, and not to be realized.

As an individual I am, more or less, known to many people. However, as a religious individual, I can be understood only by a few. It is my hope that eventually both the motivation to live as a monastic, and the best location, will be vouchsafed to me through your prayers. It would be to my delight and joy to once again receive Divine Communion, but I assume that excommunication is in order unless I return to the monastic order.

In confession of what may be labelled as obvious prelest, it has been my thought that it is in some way good, and the will of Our Saviour, that I continue in the world for a time. Our Church, so new and unknown to the far West, is being introduced to many, and a few respond favorably to the confession of the Church's particular validity. As an Orthodox layman, a potential proselyte can communicate and identify with me; but as a monastic both my appearance and life-style

are strange and extreme. This causes an alienation that is in every way good, from a monastic viewpoint, but detrimental and unnecessary, presently, from my own perspective. I consider this life-style in the world to be temporary for me, moreover, very brief, in the context of my adulthood.

As my Spiritual Father, I think you know that my love, according to God, is genuine and deeply rooted. It is not my intention to cause you grief, and it is my hope to be a source of eventual joy for you. It is with gratitude that I perform any task assigned to me by you or one of the fathers, and if I may in any way assist the community, and you and Vladika Constantine particularly, please do not be hesitant to request my obedience. At work my hours are scheduled from 11 PM to 7 AM, and so any time between those hours I would be grateful to receive a request for work or service. The car I drive is very economical and comfortable, and I would rejoice to provide transportation for anyone, or to loan the car to any one of the fathers, perhaps, for instance, for a trip to Jordanville, Montreal, or the skete in Maine. I feel a need for assurance that I may be worthy of some mercy from Our Saviour, and so anything I may do, for now as a layman, will be performed with zeal, through your prayers.

Closing now, I will request your continued prayers and spiritual love. A son in Jesus Christ,

A.H.....



## HOLY TRANSFIGURATION MONASTERY

278 WARREN STREET  
BROOKLINE, MASS. 02146

August 13/26, 1979

AN ADDRESS to the Elder Fathers listed immediately below:

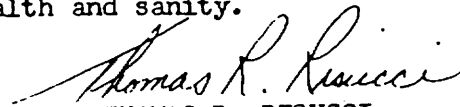
Archimandrite Panteleimon, AKA John Metropoulos  
Ephraim, monk; AKA George Spanos

Haralampos, Priestmonk; AKA Peter Scordakis

Barnabas, Hierodeacon; AKA Kenneth Kudart

Isaac, Priestmonk; AKA John Adondakis

Should it come to your attention that I, Thomas R. Risucci, also known as Athanasios, monk, have by whatever means deviated in the contexts of purely traditional Orthodox ecclesiology and theology by pursuing membership in a non-Orthodox church and have, therefore, seemingly apostasized, you have my urgent and desperate plea to immediately do anything, not sparing physical force and personal violence, to recover my person and restore me to religious health and sanity.

  
THOMAS R. RISUCCI