

Letter from Fr. Menas  
to Fr. Mamas

(This letter was not sent because Fr. Mamas  
& his "wife" Eleanor refused to receive any  
more letters from us.)

(Fr. Menas had "wiped-out" portions  
of this letter, so that's why there  
are some gaps.)

To our dear brother,

Mamas Monk,

Shortly after your parting from us the thought came to me to write to you that I might be able to express some feelings, as one never knows what tomorrow will bring, maybe something will happen to me. But then I thought that for me to write anything would be out of order, as I'm not one of the older fathers, and how to say what I feel? Admittedly I'm bit of an emotional person, and not one who is well educated, and so expressing myself becomes a real problem lots of times. But tonight the Elder at Synaxis read a letter of Fr. Ephraim's to you in behalf of the community and mentioned that a couple of other people also wrote, and so once again I feel the need to write.

On the feast of Sts. Constantine & Helen, which was the Sunday before Pentecost Sunday, my brother Daniel came down for services & a visit, later he mentioned to me that he had heard of your parting from the Monastery.

I was surprised to learn that he knew so quickly. I told him then that it had hit me very hard, and that I would not have been more pained had I learned that he himself had suffered some terrible thing.

And so it is dear brother, not only for myself, but all of us here. It is as though a very member of <sup>my</sup> body had been torn off, and a vital member at that. The pain at times seems unbearable, and the hope that its being put back into place seems to be the only comfort and relief.

I believe you know concerning some of my warfares, particularly in the area of carnal warfare. In the past the Elder had asked me to maybe go and speak with yourself as ~~the~~ thought I might be able to speak with you easier than with either himself or Fr. Isaac. For A, B, C reasons I could not then. But now I will as I seem to grasp to a certain extent something that you said in your letter which was an answer to those letters sent to you. This was when you said that the <sup>flaming</sup> sword which kept Adam out of paradise was within himself.

And now I understand<sup>oo</sup> it well. That kind of warfare is a real flame, but also it is not a flame which can extinguish itself either, but one which if it <sup>kept</sup> is burning only increases until there seems no hope to escape. This too I know well.

As we have lived together for over nine years now, you know of course that very often I've been absent from Holy Communion. This has been due to my having fallen into sin with myself time & time again. A weakness and habit of long standing. In the past this "inability" had been a source, or rather an open door to other kinds of temptations, as you know well & remember how the Fathers write, since the devil once he sees a chance to get you works hard at it. Thoughts would come that I'm not humble, I get angry, I'm not assiduous, I don't keep a good prayer rule, others who are younger than I, <sup>and</sup> who have been here <sup>longer times than myself</sup> are passing me by, leading me behind. I'm a failure as a monk. I made a mistake. In this gloomy state I recalled home life, such as it was, if I had gotten married to so & so, we could have had a

a good pious life. Then there would have been a blessed union between husband and wife, and still be receiving Communion. Now I'm a failure at all these, no Communion, not a monk, not married, "O". What am I doing here? By the prayers of the Elder and the mercy of God I was covered; I fell into sin with myself and so as it were the pressure was removed, the picture which the devil had painted was shattered, and reality came back into view.

I am a sinner in need of help. Proud, but in the Ark, unworthy, but by God's loving compassion forgiven. Not <sup>what</sup> a monk should be, but there is hope.

Betrothed to the eternal bridegroom, thought again unworthy, and not to one which turns to worms in the grave, and by the grave is dissolved. And I breath a sigh of relief and say, thank God I'm still here!

As time passes there seems to be a little more strenght. And this strenght has come to me by a certain roate. Once in trying to help me along Fr. Isaac had

suggested I read the chapter of St. Hesychios on watchfulness and holiness, in the Philokalia. In here I read two things which have made a change of things for me, and I have tried my utmost to abide by them. # 55) Guard your mind and you will not be harassed by temptations. But if you fail to guard it, accept patiently whatever trial comes. # 56) Just as the bitterness of absinth helps a poor appetite, so misfortunes help a bad character. The underlined parts are which strengthened me the most. And so I'm trying dear father & brother to be patient and endure not else than my own sinfulness and shortcomings. And I have found a certain peace ever since.

Why do I write these <sup>things</sup> to you, you yourself know. All that is left dear brother is to come home. Remember Mary of Mesopotamia, yea open your mind & heart as we know you are capable <sup>of</sup>, for we all weep for you and your return as her Uncle wept for her.

R: Fr. Ephraim has said

it will truly be Pascha. Come home to us dear father, bring joy to our hearts once again, and <sup>enlighten</sup> our house. Oh that we should see you once more standing in your place for services, the thought alone brings joy and hope.

I wish that I could write eloquent words of inspiration, but I am not able. And so I am left with nothing but to close with this, that as your younger brother I love you with my whole heart, and beg you please come home to us, and I have firm faith and hope that all will be alright. Come home dear brother, come home.

Your loving brother  
Menas Monk.