

“Salvation is exactly this—the two-fold love of God and of our neighbor.”

- Amma Syncletica

“We carry ourselves wherever we go and we cannot escape temptation by mere flight”

- Amma Matrona

“We must direct our souls with discernment.”

- Amma Syncletica

“Neither asceticism, nor vigils nor any kind of suffering are able to save, only true humility can do that.”

- Amma Syncletica

“Those who are great athletes must content against strong enemies.”

- Amma Syncletica

“In truth, lack of proportion always corrupts.”

- Amma Syncletica

How is does this mirror Jesus' two greatest commandments in Matthew 22: 37-40?

What does this mean to you? Can we ever run away from our own selves? What happens when we try?

What does this mean?

How does it relate to Mark 4:24?

What does "true humility" look like today?

What do you think this means?

In what ways does "lack of proportion" corrupt today?

“If you find yourself in a monastery, do not go to another place, for that will harm you a great deal. Just as the bird who abandons the eggs she was sitting on prevents them from hatching, so the monk or nun grows cold and their faith dies when they go from one place to another.”

- Amma Syncletica

“A teacher ought to be a stranger to the desire for domination, vainglory, and pride. A teacher should not be fooled by flattery, nor blinded by gifts, conquered by the stomach, nor dominated by anger. A teacher should be patient, gentle and humble as far as possible; successfully tested and without partisanship, full of concern and a lover of souls.”

- Amma Theodora

“When you have to fast, do not pretend illness. For those who do not fast often fall into real sickness. If you have begun to act well, do not turn back through constraint of the enemy, for through your endurance, the enemy is destroyed. Those who put out to sea at first sail with a favorable wind; then the sails spread, but later the winds become adverse. Then the ship is tossed by the waves and is no longer controlled by the rudder. But when in a little while there is a calm, and the tempest dies down, then the ship sails on again. So it is with us, when we are driven by the spirits who are against us; we hold to the cross as our sail and so we can set a safe course.”

- Amma Syncletica

What do we have to gain by staying in the same place?

How does it impact others in our community when we move from place to place?

What additional values or character traits do teachers need to have to be respected and effective today?

How do you evaluate if someone is able to teach?

How does this relate to the Christian journey from our early years of faith, through hardships and into Christian maturity?

What are “tempest times”?

“It is good to give alms for people’s sake. Even if it is done only to please others, through it one can begin to seek to please God.”

- Amma Sarah

“I put out my foot to ascend the ladder, and I place death before my eyes before going up it.”

- Amma Sarah

“According to nature I am a woman, but not according to my thoughts.”

- Amma Sarah

“Just as the most bitter medicine drives out poisonous creatures so prayer joined to fasting drives evil thoughts away.”

- Amma Syncletica

“If I prayed God that all people should approve of my conduct, I should find myself a penitent at the door of each one, but I shall rather pray that my heart may be pure toward all.”

- Amma Sarah

“For those capable of it, it is a perfect good. Those who can sustain it receive suffering in the body but rest in the soul, for just as one washes coarse clothes by trampling them underfoot and turning about in all directions, even so the strong soul becomes very much more stable thanks to volunteer poverty”

- Amma Syncletica

What does this say about generosity? Do you agree?

How can being aware of death help deepen our relationship to God?

What does this mean to you today?
What do you think this meant in Amma Sarah's time?

If you have done it before, when was a time that fasting was fruitful for you?

What is the difference between pleasing everyone and being pure toward everyone?

Can poverty be a good thing?
When is it good and when is it bad?

“Many are the wiles of the evil one. If he is not able to disturb the soul by means of poverty, he suggests riches as an attraction. If he has not won the victory by insults and disgrace, he suggests praise and glory. Overcome by health, he makes the body ill. Not having been able to seduce it through pleasures, he tries to overthrow it by involuntary sufferings. He joins to this, very severe illness, to disturb the faint-hearted in their love of God. But he also destroys the body by very violent fevers and weighs it down with intolerable thirst. If, being a sinner, you undergo all these things, remind yourself of the punishment to come, the everlasting fire and the sufferings inflicted by justice, and do not be discouraged here and now. Rejoice that God visits you and keep this blessed saying on your lips: ‘the Holy One has chastened me sorely but has not given me over unto death’ [Ps 118:18]. You were iron, but fire has burnt the rust off you. If you are righteous and fall ill, you will go from strength to strength. Are you gold? You will pass through fire purged. Have you been given a thorn in the flesh? [2 Cor 12:1]. Exult, and see who else was treated like that; it is an honor to have the same sufferings as Paul...”

- Amma Syncletica

“Let us strive to enter the narrow gate. Just as the trees, if they have not stood before the winter’s storms cannot bear fruit, so it is with us; this present age is a storm and it is only through many trials and temptations that we can obtain an inheritance in the kingdom of heaven.”

- Amma Theodora

What is different between our modern understanding of the causes suffering and Amma Syncletica's understanding?

What does it mean: "You were iron, but fire has burnt the rust off you"?

How could this be applied today?

How does this quote make you feel?

Where do you sense agreement and/or resistance with this quote?