

CONSTRUCTIONS OF PEACE IN ELDER THADDEUS OF VITOVNICA: GOD'S REVELATION IN A PANDEMIC WORLD

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Abstract

*Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica, in his book *Our Thoughts Determine Our Lives*, uses the word peace and its forms more than 300 times. When analyzing his constructions of peace, one could identify an outwardly oriented discourse which could become the basis for solving any political or social conflict and dispute. Its wording is simple and it is institutionally unaffiliated, but at the same time, strong and immutable. In Elder Thaddeus, inner peace has broad implications in community life. The concept of peace is not limited to the realm of social interactions or one's own perfection, but it is said to contribute even to cosmic harmony, advancing the topic to the level of Eastern Orthodox mystical theology. Prophet Elijah heard the voice of God as a whispering wind and not as a violent storm or destructive fire, therefore, the discourse on peace of Elder Thaddeus is particularly important in a pandemic context. The article argues that God's revelation and God's voice is to be discerned in a state of inner peace, thus acquiring inner peace should be a particularly important concern for Christians in a pandemic turmoil.*

Keywords: Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica, peace, revelation, COVID-19, hesychasm

Context

During the COVID-19 Pandemic, one could notice the excessive amount of disturbing news in the world, "fake news", protests, propaganda, debates or different restrictions on all levels. This includes the life of the Church and, nevertheless, of the individual Christians as well. And it creates a context of turmoil, anxiety and unrest which is more or less a "strong wind" in which God's voice cannot be clearly heard. As we know, Prophet Elijah heard the voice of God as a whispering wind and not as a violent storm or destructive fire¹. Therefore, the discourse on peace is particularly important in an unprecedented pandemic context. Who is

¹ 1 Kings 19:12.