



ST. ATHANASIUS THE GREAT GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

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STAY FOCUSED

Did you have a chance to watch the Winter Olympics at all? I confess that my pastoral schedule did not allow me to take in a whole lot. However, I did catch a number of glimpses, and I heard reports and interviews on the radio.

One of the more striking statements of faith from the athletes was the response given by the gold medal winner in figure Skating from the USA.

When asked as to the reason for his success he responded in the following manner: "I minded my own business."

What?!?

Upon further reflection involving prayer and fasting, I realized that his answer was the perfect one for him, and, by extension, for us.

Simply stated: He was focused. He did not pay attention to what other skaters were doing, but, rather, he centered on his own work ethic, effort, and presentation. He "went into retreat," so to speak. He did not allow anxiety and the accomplishments and performance of others to influence him into "getting stressed out," and anxious...

I am convinced that there is a great spiritual message here for all of us. When we are centered and focused on Christ, while minding our own business, we can accomplish great spiritual things. This does not mean that we abdicate our responsibility to care for others, especially since Our Lord guides us to love one another... Furthermore, it most certainly ties into the exhortation of Christ when He guides us to go into our room, shut the door, and invest in personal prayer and devotion.

What comes to mind as an example is the Apostle Peter when he paid attention to Christ exclusively as he received the blessing to walk on water. When the first gust of wind came, he became distracted, uncertain, fearful, and insecure. The result was that he lost sight of Christ and he began to sink into the depths...

March is the centerpiece of Great and Holy Lent this year with Easter/Pasch being celebrated on April 4th. Let's focus on our prayer life; let's try to fast as Christ did by raising the bar even higher; let's act in a focused way by being gracious, hospitable, loving, kind, sincere, forgiving, and by helping others. Let's do what we can in thought, word, and deed to act in a Christ-like manner. Amen

- Fr. K

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