

Instructions to Catechumens - Part 2

by St. John Chrysostom

St. John Chrysostom's sermon emphasizes the importance of living out one's faith through good works, understanding one's identity in Christ, and the transformative power of grace in the Christian life.

Scripture: Proverbs 10:19, Ecclesiastes 8:1, Matthew 5:28, Mark 1:24, Luke 3:8, Acts 2:38, 1 Corinthians 7:25, 1 Timothy 2:9

Topics: "Christian Living", "Spiritual Discipline"

Description

John Chrysostom preaches about the importance of living a virtuous life and avoiding worldly temptations such as materialism, superstitions, and sinful behaviors. He emphasizes the need for repentance, self-discipline, and sincere devotion to God, highlighting the significance of the baptismal covenant and the grace received through Christ's sacrifice. Chrysostom urges the congregation to adorn themselves with virtues like modesty, compassion, and charity, rather than with external adornments that lead to vanity and sin. He warns against falling into the snares of Satan through superstitions, charms, and reliance on worldly objects for protection, encouraging a steadfast faith in God's power and grace.

Transcript

Second Instruction

To those about to be illuminated; and concerning women who adorn themselves with plaiting of hair, and gold, and concerning those who have used omens, and amulets, and incantations, all which are foreign to Christianity.

1. I have come to ask first of all for some fruit in return for the words lately said out of brotherly love to you. For we do not speak in order that you should hear simply, but in order that you should remember what has been said, and may afford us evidence of this, by your works. Yea, rather, not us, but, God, who knows the secrets of the heart. On this account indeed instruction is so called, in order that even when we are absent, our discourse may instruct your hearts. And be not surprised if, after an interval of ten days only, we have come asking for fruit from the seed sown.

For in one day it is possible at once to let the seed fall, and to accomplish the harvest. For strengthened not by our own power alone, but by the influence which comes from God, we are summoned to the conflict. Let as many therefore as have received what has been spoken, and have fulfilled it by their works, remain reaching forth to the things which are before. But let as many as have not yet arrived at this good

achievement, arrive at it straightway, that they may dispel the condemnation which arises out of their sloth by their diligence for the future.

For it is possible, it is indeed possible for him who has been very slothful, by using diligence for the future to recover the whole loss of the time that is past. Wherefore, He says, Today if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the day of provocation. And this, He says, exhorting and counselling us; that we should never despair, but so long as we are here, should have good hopes, and should lay hold on what is before us, and hasten towards the prize of our high calling of God.

This then let us do, and let us inquire into the names of this great gift. For as ignorance of the greatness of this dignity makes those who are honored with it more slothful, so when it is known it renders them thankful, and makes them more earnest; and anyhow it would be disgraceful and ridiculous that they who enjoy such glory and honors from God, should not even know what the names of it are intended to show forth. And why do I speak about this gift, for if you will consider the common name of our race, you will receive the greatest instruction and incentive to virtue.

For this name Man, we do not define according as they who are without define it, but as the Divine Scripture has bidden us. For a man is not merely whosoever has hands and feet of a man, nor whosoever is rational only, but whosoever practices piety and virtue with boldness. Hear, at least, what he says concerning Job. For in saying that there was a man in the land of Ausis, he does not describe him in those terms in which they who are without describe him, nor does he say this because he had two feet and broad nails, but he added the evidences of his piety and said, just, true, fearing God, eschewing every evil deed, Job 1:1 showing that this is a man; even as therefore another says, Fear God, and keep his commandments, because this is the whole man.

Ecclesiastes 12:13 But if the name man affords such a great incentive to virtue, much rather the term faithful. For you are called faithful on this account, because you have faith in God, and yourself art entrusted from Him with righteousness, sanctification, cleansing of soul, adoption, the kingdom of heaven. He entrusted you with these, and handed them over to you. Thou in turn hast entrusted, and handed over other things to him, almsgiving, prayers, self-control and every other virtue.

And why do I say almsgiving? If you give him even a cup of cold water, you shall not indeed lose this, but even this he keeps with care against that day, and will restore it with overflowing abundance. For this truly is wonderful, that he does not keep only that which has been entrusted to him, but in recompensing it increases it.

This too he has bidden you do according to your power, with what has been entrusted to you, to extend the holiness which you have received, and to make the righteousness which comes from the laver brighter, and the gift of grace more radiant; even as therefore Paul did, increasing all the good things which he received by his subsequent labors, and his zeal, and his diligence. And look at the carefulness of God; neither did he give the whole to you then, nor withhold the whole, but gave part, and promised part. And for what reason did he not give the whole then? In order that you might show your faith about Him, believing, on his promise alone, in what was not yet given. And for what reason again did he not there dispense the whole, but did give the grace of the Spirit, and righteousness and sanctification? In order that he might lighten your labors for you, and by what has been already given may also put you in good hope for that which is to come. On this account, too, you are about to be called newly-enlightened, because your light is ever new, if you will, and is never quenched. For this light of day, whether we will or no, the

night succeeds, but darkness knows not that light's ray. For the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness apprehended it not. Not so bright at least is the world, when the sunbeams come forth, as the soul shines and becomes brighter when it has received grace from the Spirit and learns more exactly the nature of the case. For when night prevails, and there is darkness, often a man has seen a coil of rope and has thought it was a serpent, and has fled from an approaching friend as from an enemy, and being aware of some noise, has become very much alarmed; but when the day has come, nothing of this sort could happen, but all appears just as it really is; which thing also occurs in the case of our soul. For when grace has come, and driven away the darkness of the understanding, we learn the exact nature of things, and what was before dreadful to us becomes contemptible. For we no longer fear death, after learning exactly, from this sacred initiation, that death is not death, but a sleep and a seasonable slumber; nor poverty nor disease, nor any other such thing, knowing that we are on our way to a better life, undefiled and incorruptible, and free from all such vicissitudes.

2. Let us not therefore remain craving after the things of this life, neither after the luxury of the table, or costliness of raiment. For you have the most excellent of raiment, you have a spiritual table you have the glory from on high, and Christ has become to you all things, your table, your raiment, your home, your head, your stem. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ, did put on Christ. Galatians 3:27 See how he has become raiment for you. Do you wish to learn how he becomes a table for you?

He who eats me, says He, as I live because of the Father, he also shall live because of me; and that he becomes a home for you, he that eats my flesh abides in me, and I in him; John 6:56 and that He is stem He says again, I am the vine, you the branches, John 15:5 and that he is brother, and friend, and bride-groom, I no longer call you servants: for you are my friends; John 15:15 and Paul again, I espoused you to one husband, that I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ; 2 Corinthians 11:2 and again, That he might be the first-born among many brethren; Romans 8:29 and we become not his brethren only, but also his children, For behold, he says, I and the children which God has given me Isaiah 8:18 and not this only, but His members, and His body.

For as if what has been said were not enough to show forth the love and the good will which He has shown forth towards us, He has added another thing greater and nearer still, calling himself besides, our head. Knowing all these matters, beloved, requite your benefactor by the best conversation, and considering the greatness of the sacrifice, adorn the members of your body; consider what you receive in your hand, and never suffer it to strike any one, nor shame what has been honored with so great a gift by the sin of a blow.

Consider what you receive in your hand, and keep it clean from all covetousness and extortion; think that thou dost not receive this in your hand, but also puttest it to your mouth, and guard your tongue in purity from base and insolent words, blasphemy, perjury, and all other such things. For it is disastrous that what is ministered to by such most dread mysteries, and has been dyed red with such blood, and has become a golden sword, should be perverted to purposes of raillery, and insult, and buffoonery.

Reverence the honor with which God has honoured it, and bring it not down to the vileness of sin, but having reflected again that after the hand and the tongue, the heart receives this dread mystery, do not ever weave a plot against your neighbor, but keep your thoughts pure from all evil. Thus you shall be able to keep your eyes too, and your hearing safe. For is it not monstrous, after this mystic voice is borne from heaven -- I mean the voice of the Cherubim -- to defile your hearing with lewd songs, and dissolute melodies?

And does it not deserve the utmost punishment if, with the same eyes with which you look upon the unspeakable and dread mysteries, you look upon harlots, and dost commit adultery in your heart. You are called to a marriage, beloved: enter not in clad in sordid raiment, but take a robe suitable to the marriage. For if when men are called to a material marriage, though they be poorer than all others, they often possess themselves of or buy clean raiment, and so go to meet those who called them.

Do thou too who hast been called to a spiritual marriage, and to a royal banquet, consider what kind of raiment it would be right for you to buy, but rather there is not even need to purchase, yea he himself who calls you gives it you gratis, in order that you may not be able to plead poverty in excuse. Keep, therefore, the raiment which you received. For if you lose it, you will not be able to use it henceforth, or to buy it. For this kind of raiment is nowhere sold. Have you heard how those who were initiated, in old time, groaned, and beat their breasts, their conscience thereupon exciting them?

Beware then, beloved, that you do not at any time suffer like this. But how will you not suffer, if you dost not cast off the wicked habit of evil men? For this reason I said before, and speak now and will not cease speaking, if any has not rectified the defects in his morals, nor furnished himself with easily acquired virtue, let him not be baptized. For the laver is able to remit former sins, but there is no little fear, and no ordinary danger lest we return to them, and our remedy become a wound. For by how much greater the grace is, by so much is the punishment more for those who sin after these things.

3. In order, therefore, that we return not to our former vomit, let us henceforward discipline ourselves. For that we must repent beforehand, and desist from our former evil, and so come forward for grace, hear what John says, and what the leader of the apostles says to those who are about to be baptized. For the one says, Bring forth fruit worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our Father; Luke 3:8 and the other says again to those who question him, Repent ye and be baptized every one of you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts 2:38 Now he who repents, no longer touches the same matters of which he repented. On this account, also, we are bidden to say, I renounce you, Satan, in order that we may never more return to him. As therefore happens in the case of painters from life, so let it happen in your case. For they, arranging their boards, and tracing white lines upon them, and sketching the royal likeness in outline, before they apply the actual colors, rub out some lines, and change some for others, rectifying mistakes, and altering what is amiss with all freedom.

But when they put on the coloring for good, it is no longer in their power to rub out again, and to change one thing for another, since they injure the beauty of the portrait, and the result becomes an eyesore. Consider that your soul is the portrait; before therefore the true coloring of the spirit comes, wipe out habits which have wrongly been implanted in you, whether swearing, or falsehood, or insolence, or base talking, or jesting, or whatever else you have a habit of doing of things unlawful.

Away with the habit, in order that you may not return to it, after baptism. The laver causes the sins to disappear. Correct your habits, so that when the colors are applied, and the royal likeness is brought out, you may no more wipe them out in the future; and add damage and scars to the beauty which has been given you by God. Restrain therefore anger, extinguish passion. Be not thou vexed, be sympathizing, be not exasperated, nor say, I have been injured in regard to my soul.

No one is injured in regard to the soul if we do not injure ourselves in regard to the soul; and how this is, I now say. Has any one taken away your substance? He has not injured you in regard to your soul, but your

money. But if you cherish ill-will against him, you have injured yourself in regard to your soul. For the money taken away has wrought you no damage, nay has even been profitable, but thou by not dismissing your anger will give account in the other world for this cherishing of ill-will.

Has any one reviled you and insulted you. He has in no way injured your soul, and not even your body. Have you reviled in return and insulted? You have injured yourself in regard to your soul, for for the words which you have said you are about to render account there; and this I wish you to know chiefly of all, that the Christian, and faithful man, no one is able to injure in regard to the soul, not even the devil himself; and not only is this wonderful, that God has made us inaccessible to all his designs, but that he has constituted us fit for the practice of virtue, and there is no hinderance, if we will, even though we be poor, weak in body, outcast, nameless, bondservants.

For neither poverty, nor infirmity, nor deformity of body, nor servitude, nor any other of such things could ever become a hinderance to virtue; and why do I say, poor, and a bondservant, and nameless? Even if you are a prisoner, not even this would be ever any hinderance to you as regards virtue. And how this is I proceed to say. Has any of your household grieved you and provoked you? dismiss your wrath against him. Have bonds, and poverty, and obscurity been any hinderance to you in this respect?

And why do I say hinderance? They have both helped and contributed to restrain pride. Have you seen another prospering? Do not envy him. For not even in this case is poverty a bar. Again, whenever you need to pray, do so with a sober and watchful mind, and nothing shall be a bar even in that case. Show all meekness, forbearance, self-restraint, gravity. For these things need no external helps. And this especially is the chief point about virtue, that it has no necessity for wealth, power, glory, nor anything of that kind, but of a sanctified soul alone, and it seeks for nothing more.

And behold, also, the same thing happening in respect of grace. For if any one be lame, if he has had his eyes put out, if he be maimed in body, if he has fallen into the last extremity of weakness, grace is not hindered from coming by any of these things. For it only seeks a soul receiving it with readiness, and all these external things it passes over. For in the case of worldly soldiers, those who are about to enlist them for the army seek for stature of body and healthy condition, and it is not only necessary that he who is about to become a soldier should have these alone, but he must also be free.

For if anybody be a slave, he is rejected. But the King of Heaven seeks for nothing of this kind, but receives slaves into his army, and aged people, and the languid in limb, and is not ashamed. What is more merciful than this? What could be more kind? For he seeks for what is in our own power, but they seek for what is not in our power. For to be a slave or free is not our doing. To be tall, again, or short is not in our own power, or to be aged, or well grown, and such like.

But to be forbearing and kind, and so forth, are matters of our own choice; and God demands of us only those things of which we have control. And quite reasonably. For He does not call us to grace because of his own need, but because of doing us kindness; but kings, because of services required by them; and they carry men off to an outward and material warfare, but He to a spiritual combat; and it is not only in the case of heathen wars, but in the case of the games also that one may see the same analogy.

For they who are about to be brought into the theatre, do not descend to the contest until the herald himself takes them beneath the gaze of all, and leads them round, shouting out and saying, Has any one a charge against this person? although in that case the struggle is not concerned with the soul, but with the body. Wherefore then do you demand proofs of nobleness? But in this case there is nothing of the kind,

but all is different, our contest not consisting of hand locked in hand, but in philosophy of soul, and excellence of mind.

The president of our conflicts does the opposite. For he does not take us, and lead us round and say, Has any one a charge against this man? but cries out, Though all men, though demons, stand up with the devil and accuse him of extreme and unspeakable crimes, I reject him not, nor abhor him, but removing him from his accusers, and freeing him from his wickedness, thus I bring him to the contest. And this is very reasonable. For there indeed the president contributes nothing towards the victory, in the case of the combatants, but stands still in the midst. But here, the President of the contests for holiness becomes a fellow-combatant, and helper, sharing with them the conflict against the devil.

4. And not only is this the wonderful thing that he remits our sins, but that he not even reveals them nor makes them manifest and patent, nor compels us to come forward into the midst, and to tell out our errors, but bids us make our defense to him alone, and to confess ourselves to him. And yet among secular judges, if any tell any of the robbers or grave-riflers, when they are arrested, to tell their errors and be quit of their punishment, they would accede to this with all readiness, despising the shame through desire of safety.

But in this case there is nothing of this kind, but he both remits the sins, nor compels us to marshal them in array before any spectators. But one thing alone he seeks, that he who enjoys this remission should learn the greatness of the gift. How is it not, therefore, absurd that in case where he does us service, he should be content with our testimony only, but in those where we serve him we seek for others as witnesses, and do a thing for ostentation's sake? While we wonder then at his kindness, let us show forth our doings, and before all others let us curb the vehemence of our tongue, and not always be giving utterance.

For in the multitude of words there wants not transgression. Proverbs 10:19 If indeed then you have anything useful to say, open your lips. But if there be nothing necessary for you to say, be silent, for it is better. Are you a handicraftsman? As you sit at work, sing psalms. Do you not wish to sing with your mouth? Do this in your heart; a psalm is a great companion. In this case you shall undergo nothing serious, but shall be able to sit in your workshop as in a monastery.

For not suitableness of place, but strictness of morals will afford us quiet. Paul, at least, pursuing his trade in a workshop suffered no injury to his own virtue. Acts 18:3 Do not thou therefore say, How can I, being a handicraftsman and a poor man, be a philosopher? This is indeed the very reason why you may be a philosopher. For poverty is far more conducive to piety for us than wealth, and work than idleness; since wealth is even a hinderance to those who do not take heed.

For when it is needful to dismiss anger, to extinguish envy, to curb passion, to offer prayer, to exhibit forbearance and meekness, kindness and charity, when would poverty be a bar? For it is not possible by spending money to accomplish these things, but by exhibiting a right disposition; almsgiving especially needs money, but even it shines forth in greater degree through poverty. For she who spent the two mites was poorer than all men, and yet surpassed all. Luke 21:2-4 Let us not then consider wealth to be anything great, nor gold to be better than clay.

For the value of material things is not owing to their nature, but to our estimate of them. For if any one would inquire carefully, iron is much more necessary than gold. For the one contributes to no need of our life, but the other has furnished us with the greater part of our needs, ministering to countless arts; and why do I speak of a comparison between gold and iron? For these stones are more necessary than

precious stones. For of those nothing serviceable could be made, but out of these, houses and walls and cities are erected.

But do thou show me what gain could be derived from these pearls, rather what harm would not happen? For in order that you may wear one pearl drop, countless poor people are pinched with hunger. What excuse will you hit upon? What pardon?

Do you wish to adorn your face? Do so not with pearls, but with modesty, and dignity. So your countenance will be more full of grace in the eyes of your husband. For the other kind of adorning is wont to plunge him into a suspicion of jealousy, and into enmity, quarrelsomeness and strife, for nothing is more annoying than a face which is suspected. But the ornament of compassion and modesty casts out all evil suspicion, and will draw your partner to you more strongly than any bond.

For natural beauty does not impart such comeliness to the face as does the disposition of him who beholds it, and nothing is so wont to produce that disposition as modesty and dignity; so that if any woman be comely, and her husband be ill affected towards her, she appears to him the most worthless of all women; and if she do not happen to be fair of face, but her husband be well affected towards her, she appears more comely than all. For sentence is given not according to the nature of what is beheld, but according to the disposition of the beholders.

Adorn your face then with modesty, dignity, pity, lovingkindness, charity, affection for your husband, forbearance, meekness, endurance of ill. These are the tints of virtue. By means of these you will attract angels not human beings to be your lovers. By means of these you have God to commend you, and when God receives you, he will certainly win over your husband for you. For if the wisdom of a man illuminates his countenance, Ecclesiastes 8:1 much more does the virtue of a woman illuminate her face; and if you consider this to be a great ornament, tell me what will be the advantage of the pearls in that day?

But why is it necessary to speak of that day, since it is possible to show all this from what happens now. When, then, they who thought fit to revile the emperor were dragged to the judgment hall, and were in danger of extreme measures being taken, then the mothers, and the wives, laying aside their necklaces, and their golden ornaments, and pearls, and all adornment, and golden raiment, wearing a simple and mean dress, and besprinkled with ashes, prostrated themselves before the doors of the judgment hall and thus won over the judges; and if in the case of these earthly courts of justice, the golden ornaments, and the pearls, and the variegated dress would have been a snare and a betrayal, but forbearance, and meekness, and ashes, and tears, and mean garments persuaded the judge, much more would this take place in the case of that impartial and dread tribunal.

For what reason will you be able to state, what defense, when the Master lays these pearls to your charge, and brings the poor who have perished with hunger into the midst? On this account Paul said, not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly raiment. 1 Timothy 2:9 For therein would be a snare. And if we were to enjoy them continually, yet we shall lay them aside with death. But arising out of virtue there is all security, and no vicissitude and changeableness, but here it makes us more secure, and also accompanies us there.

Do you wish to possess pearls, and never to lay aside this wealth? Take off all ornament and place it in the hands of Christ through the poor. He will keep all your wealth for you, when He shall raise up your body with much radiancy. Then He shall invest you with better wealth and greater ornament, since this present is mean and absurd. Consider then whom you wish to please, and for whose sake you put on this

ornament, not in order that the ropemaker and the coppersmith and the huckster may admire. Then are you not ashamed, nor do you blush when you show yourself to them? Doing all on their account whom you do not consider worthy of accosting.

How then will you laugh this fancy to scorn? If you will remember that word, which you sent forth when thou were initiated, I renounce you, Satan, and your pomp, and your service. For the frenzy about pearls is a pomp of Satan. For you received gold not in order that you might bind it on to your body, but in order that you might release and nourish the poor. Say therefore constantly, I renounce you, Satan. Nothing is more safe than this word if we shall prove it by our deeds.

5. This I think it right that you who are about to be initiated should learn. For this word is a covenant with the Master. And just as we, when we buy slaves, first ask those who are being sold if they are willing to be our servants: So also does Christ. When He is about to receive you into service, He first asks if you wish to leave that cruel and relentless tyrant, and He receives covenants from you. For his service is not forced upon you. And see the lovingkindness of God. For we, before we put down the price, ask those who are being sold, and when we have learned that they are willing, then we put down the price. But Christ not so, but He even put down the price for us all; his precious blood. For, He says, you were bought with a price. 1 Corinthians 7:25 Notwithstanding, not even then does He compel those who are unwilling, to serve him; but unless you have grace, He says, and of your own accord and will determinest to enroll yourself under my rule, I do not compel, nor force you. And we should not have chosen to buy wicked slaves. But if we should at any time have so chosen, we buy them with a perverted choice, and put down a corresponding price for them. But Christ, buying ungrateful and lawless slaves, put down the price of a servant of first quality, nay rather much more, and so much greater that neither speech nor thought can set forth its greatness. For neither giving heaven, nor earth, nor sea, but giving up that which is more valuable than all these, his own blood, thus He bought us. And after all these things, he does not require of us witnesses, or registration, but is content with the single word, if you say it from your heart. I renounce you, Satan, and your pomp, has included all. Let us then say this, I renounce you, Satan, as men who are about in that world at that day to have that word demanded of them, and let us keep it in order that we may then return this deposit safe. But Satan's pomps are theatres, and the circus, and all sin, and observance of days, and incantations and omens.

And what are omens? says one. Often when going forth from his own house he has seen a one-eyed or lame man, and has shunned him as an omen. This is a pomp of Satan. For meeting the man does not make the day turn out ill, but to live in sin. When you go forth, then, beware of one thing -- that sin does not meet you. For this it is which trips us up. And without this the devil will be able to do us no harm. What do you say? You see a man, and shunest him as an omen, and dost not see the snare of the devil, how he sets you at war with him who has done you no wrong, how he makes you the enemy of your brother on no just pretext; but God has bidden us love our enemies; but you are turned away from him who did you no wrong, having nothing to charge him with, and do you not consider how great is the absurdity, how great the shame, rather how great is the danger? Can I speak of anything more absurd? I am ashamed, indeed, and I blush: But for your salvation's sake, I am, I am compelled to speak of it. If a virgin meet him he says the day becomes unsuccessful; but if a harlot meet him, it is propitious, and profitable, and full of much business; are you ashamed? And do you smite your foreheads, and bend to the ground? But do not this on account of the words which I have spoken, but of the deeds which have been done. See then, in this case, how the devil hid his snare, in order that we might turn away from the modest, but salute and be friendly to the unchaste. For since he has heard Christ saying that He who looks on a woman to desire

her, has already committed adultery with her, Matthew 5:28 and has seen many get the better of unchastity, wishing by another wrong to cast them again into sin, by this superstitious observance he gladly persuades them to pay attention to whorish women.

And what is one to say about them who use charms and amulets, and encircle their heads and feet with golden coins of Alexander of Macedon. Are these our hopes, tell me, that after the cross and death of our Master, we should place our hopes of salvation on an image of a Greek king? Do you not know what great result the cross has achieved? It has abolished death, has extinguished sin, has made Hades useless, has undone the power of the devil, and is it not worth trusting for the health of the body? It has raised up the whole world, and do you not take courage in it? And what would you be worthy to suffer, tell me? Thou dost not only have amulets always with you, but incantations bringing drunken and half-witted old women into your house, and are you not ashamed, and do you not blush, after so great philosophy, to be terrified at such things? And there is a graver thing than this error. For when we deliver these exhortations, and lead them away, thinking that they defend themselves, they say, that the woman is a Christian who makes these incantations, and utters nothing else than the name of God. On this account I especially hate and turn away from her, because she makes use of the name of God, with a view to ribaldry. For even the demons uttered the name of God, but still they were demons, and thus they used to say to Christ, We know you who you are, the Holy One of God, Mark 1:24 and notwithstanding, he rebuked them, and drove them away. On this account, then, I beseech you to cleanse yourselves from this error, and to keep hold of this word as a staff; and just as without sandals, and cloak, no one of you would choose to go down to the market-place, so without this word never enter the market-place, but when you are about to pass over the threshold of the gateway, say this word first: I leave your ranks, Satan, and your pomp, and your service, and I join the ranks of Christ. And never go forth without this word. This shall be a staff to you, this your armor, this an impregnable fortress, and accompany this word with the sign of the cross on your forehead. For thus not only a man who meets you, but even the devil himself, will be unable to hurt you at all, when he sees you everywhere appearing with these weapons; and discipline yourself by these means henceforth, in order that when you receive the seal you may be a well-equipped soldier, and planting your trophy against the devil, may receive the crown of righteousness, which may it be the lot of us all to obtain, through the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, with whom be glory to the Father and to the Holy Spirit for ever and ever -- Amen.

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