

**G**OD HAS NEVER SAID TO US, “Because thou art idle, I light not up the sun for thee; because thou doest nothing of real consequence, I quench the moon, I paralyze the womb of the earth, I restrain the lakes, the fountains, the rivers, I blot out the atmosphere: I withhold the annual rains:” but He gives us all abundantly. And to some that are not merely idle, but even doing evil, He freely gives the benefit of these things.

When therefore thou seest a poor man, and sayest, “It stops my breath that this fellow, young as he is and healthy, having nothing, would fain be fed in idleness; he is surely some slave and runaway, and hath deserted his proper master:” I bid thee speak these same words to thyself; or rather, permit him freely to speak them unto thee, and he will say with more justice, “It stops my breath that thou, being healthy, art idle, and practisest none of the things which God hath commanded, but having run away from the commandments of thy Lord, goest about dwelling in wickedness, as in a strange land, in drunkenness, in surfeiting, in theft, in extortion, in subverting other men’s houses.” And thou indeed imputest idleness [*to him*], but I [*impute*] evil works [*to thee*] – in thy plotting, in thy swearing, in thy lying, in thy spoiling, in thy doing innumerable such things.

And this I say, not as making a law in favor of idleness, (far from it; but rather very earnestly wishing all to be employed; for sloth is the teacher of all wickedness:) but it is that I beseech you not to be unmerciful, nor cruel.

St John Chrysostom, On St Matthew’s Gospel,  
Homily XXXV, §5, NPNF, First Series, Vol. X, pp. 235

**I**S IT IN VAIN that we say several times a day the thrice holy “Our Father” and other morning and evening prayers? Are we not cleansed by them from our sins and impurities? Are we not delivered from temptations, misfortunes, and unfavourable circumstances? Is it in vain that we sign ourselves with the sign of the cross? O, no; it continually acts beneficially upon us and upon those who make it with faith, especially when it is the blessing of a priest. Therefore let us continually praise the mercy and power of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hears and saves us, unworthy ones, by His mercy, for His holy name’s sake.

*My Life in Christ*, St. John of Kronstadt,  
tr. Goulaeff, Jordanville, NY, 1984, p. 316

PEARLS FROM THE HOLY FATHERS

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