

IT WAS SAID CONCERNING Abba Agatho that some monks came to find him having heard tell of his great discernment. Wanting to see if he would lose his temper they said to him, ‘Aren’t you that Agatho who is said to be a fornicator and a proud man?’

‘Yes, it is very true,’ he answered.

They resumed: ‘Aren’t you that Agatho who is always talking nonsense?’

‘I am.’

Again they said, ‘Aren’t you Agatho the heretic?’

But at that he replied, ‘I am not a heretic.’

So they asked him, ‘Tell us why you accepted everything we cast at you, but repudiated this last insult.’

He replied, ‘The first accusations I take to myself, for that is good for my soul. But heresy is separation from God. Now I have no wish to be separated from God.’

At this saying they were astonished at his discernment and returned, edified.

*The Desert Christian*, Benedicta Ward,  
Macmillan Publishing, pp. 20–21



ONE DAY SOME ARIANS came to see Abba Sisoës on Abba Anthony’s mountain and they began to speak against the Orthodox Faith. The old man gave them no answer but he called his disciple and said to him, ‘Abraham, bring me the book of Saint Athanasius and read it.’ Then they were silent as their heresy was unmasked and he sent them away in peace.

*The Desert Christian*, Benedicta Ward,  
Macmillan Publishing, p. 217

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