



■ Almsgiving gives relief to the souls of the departed

**“You Delivered Me From Hell!” \***

**A** few decades ago, in a village in Eleia [Western Greece], there lived a woman filled with the Grace of God, Kyra [Mrs.] -Katerina.

Though completely illiterate, she was a Divinely-illuminated person, with unswerving, vibrant faith of the kind possessed by the first Christians, who would go through fire and water for Christ, so as not to deny Him.



And so it was that the words of our Lord were fulfilled in Kyra-Katerina: “All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive” (St. Matthew 21:22).

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**In July**, if the sky were to darken with rainclouds and it rained, with the sheaves of wheat waiting to be processed on the threshing floor, the harvest would be in danger of destruction. Thus, the villagers would run to Kyra-Katerina to ask her to pray that it would not rain. She would then stand before the Icon of Christ, pray, and the clouds would disperse!

If anyone were to fall ill, they would, once again, turn to Kyra-Katerina, that she might make the sign of the Cross over them and pray. If the sick had faith, a miracle would take place.

Never did this holy woman accept money or gifts. She did everything selflessly, with great simplicity and natural humility. Her thoughts were pure; she was not sullied by vanity or pride. For this reason, then, right up to the end of her beautiful life, she did not lose her gift from God.

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**At one point**, the village Priest, struck by the results of this woman’s prayers, called for her and asked her privately: “Katerina, my child, what prayer do you say before the Icon of Christ?”



And she answered, in all her simplicity: “Father, as you know, I am unlettered. I say a prayer which my grandmother taught me. I say: ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God!’”

The Priest was astonished at hearing the first verse from the Gospel according to St. John. Having thus been assured of her guilelessness and her simple and profound faith, he said to her: “Keep praying, my child. Keep praying as you pray now.”

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**During** the terrible German occupation of 1941, when the Greeks were condemned to starvation and people were dying of hunger, the greatness of Kyra-Katerina’s soul shone forth all the more.

Her deceased husband had left her a sizeable fortune that he had inherited from his father, Kyr [Mr.]-Alexis. Among other things, the cellar of their house contained one thousand *okas* [one *oka* equals 1280 grams] of wheat and two large jugs of oil, which Kyra-Katerina began distributing to the hungry. She had a deep container, which she would fill and from which she would give generous portions.

When those receiving alms thanked her, she would reply: “Do not thank me. The wheat is from my father-in-law’s property. Say ‘O God, forgive Kyr-Alexis.’”

She had distributed five hundred of the *okas* when she saw her father-in-law in a dream. Now, it had been said that this man was a miser, even though he was rich. She saw him in the form of a convict, with hair reaching the ground, in a terrible state.

Kyra-Katerina then took scissors, cut his hair, cleaned him up, and the face of the deceased lit up! He then turned to her and said with relief: “May you be blessed, my dear Katerina! By your almsgiving you delivered me from hell, my child!”

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**The above** was recounted with deep emotion by the blessed Kyra-Katerina’s son and his wife, when they were on pilgrimage to the *Panagia* of Varnakova, during Bright Week of 2009.

● **Here** we have yet one more example that demonstrates what great relief almsgiving brings to the souls of the reposed, just as do prayers said for them in Church and by relatives.

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(\*) Source: Manifestations of the Spiritual World: Heavenly Messages, Miraculous Events [in Greek] (Dorida: 2009).