



No Trespassing!

The sign at the corner of my neighbor's yard reads "No Trespassing"! In the Past, they had some problems with thugs coming to visit and so my neighbor posted the sign so they could have unwanted visitors arrested and hauled away!

The sign seems a little unfriendly to passers by that don't know the whole story. It is definitely not a warm welcome or a "let's sit down and have a glass of tea" invitation, but the sign is effective and is easy to read with its' big reflective letters! Signs provide for us information. Even here in our church we use signs. We have a street sign, donation sign and an infant care sign, just to name a few! And at times, we all wear a "No Trespassing" sign around our necks! We are hurt and offended when someone crosses our property line of safety or if someone hurls insults at us with their slingshot of oppression and we become less hospitable!

Here in this hospital of Orthodoxy, we all fall short of perfection. We are all here because we are sick and hurt. Sin can be an immobilizing infection. But we are called to try to nurture and love others despite our bleeding wounds. We do not want to seem unwelcoming to passer-bys on this road to salvation! Saint Nikolaj Velimirovic, a former bishop in Serbia said: "He who has no patience with us when we sin does not love us." He further states, "Patience, forgiveness and joy are the three greatest characteristics of divine love ... Without these three characteristics love is not love. If you give the name love to anything else, it is as

though you were giving the name sheep to a goat or a pig.”

All of mankind needs the forgiveness of our loving God and we must seek it! Our God is a merciful God and we must offer thanksgiving and praise and make a healthy attempt to live a righteous lifestyle! Suffering and dying on the cross, Christ says these words: **“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”** [Lk. 23:34] What better example do we need?

Forgive those armed with slingshot tongues and may the blood seeping from your wounds be the healing blood of Christ to all humanity. And hopefully the reflective letters on our sign will no longer read “No Trespassing” but will read a hearty “WELCOME”.

Fr. Gabriel Weller 8/8/13