**Slide 1**

**The Desert Fathers**

simple, individualistic, rugged, and concentrated search for salvation and unity with God.

Living Martyrdom

“The desert Fathers speak of sexual desire, envy, greed, jealousy, hate, and the most complex human foibles. They expose to us what is all too familiar and obvious. They let us see with alarming clarity the depth of our depravity and the labyrinths of our sinful inner chasms. And though we probably cannot attain to the fullest extent the virtues by which these holy hermits overcame human depravity, we can see clearly the folly of a modern world seeking goodness, truth, purity, and virtue without first humbling itself before its Creator and the subtle inward world of spiritual truth. Hearing today of virtues, the ancient Fathers show them, by their examples, to be plastic virtues. Seeing today monuments of faith built with stone and mortar, the desert dwellers show us monuments of faith built on flesh and blood.” -GOARCH article

**Slide 2**

**Early Jewish Desert Monastics**

**Slide 3**

**Qumran**

**Slide 4**

**Nazirites**

Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When either man or woman shall separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazarite, to separate themselves unto the LORD: He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes, or dried. All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine tree, from the kernels even to the husk. All the days of the vow of his separation there shall no razor come upon his head: until the days be fulfilled, in the which he separateth himself unto the LORD, he shall be holy, and shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow. All the days that he separateth himself unto the LORD he shall come at no dead body. He shall not make himself unclean for his father, or for his mother, for his brother, or for his sister, when they die: because the consecration of his God is upon his head. ([Numbers](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Numbers) 6:2-8)

**JTB**

In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey. Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. ([Matthew](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Gospel_of_Matthew) 3:1-6)

**Slide 5**

**Christ as a Type of Desert Monasticism**

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. ([Philippians](http://orthodoxwiki.org/index.php?title=Philippians&action=edit&redlink=1) 2:5-8)

**Slide 6**

**Fr Georges Florovsky:**

**THE ASCETIC IDEAL AND THE NEW TESTAMENT  
Reflections on the Critique of the Theology of the Reformation: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DESERT. (**[**http://www.romanity.org/htm/flo.01.en.the\_ascetic\_ideal\_and\_the\_new\_testament.01.htm**](http://www.romanity.org/htm/flo.01.en.the_ascetic_ideal_and_the_new_testament.01.htm)**)**

When our Lord was about to begin his ministry, he went into the *desert.* Our Lord had options but he selected—or rather, "was lead by the Spirit," into the desert. It is obviously not a meaningless action, not a selection of type of place without significance. And there—in the desert—our Lord engages in spiritual combat, for he "fasted forty days and forty nights." ~~The~~ *~~Gospel of St. Mark~~* ~~adds that our Lord "was with the~~ *~~wild beasts~~*~~." Our Lord, the God-Man, was truly God and truly man.~~ Exclusive of our Lord’s redemptive work, unique to our Lord alone, he calls us *to follow him*. "Following" our Lord is not exclusionary; it is not selecting certain psychologically pleasing aspects of our Lord’s life and teachings to follow. Rather it is all-embracing. We are to follow our Lord in every way possible. "To go into the desert" is "to follow" our Lord. It is interesting that our Lord returns to the desert after the death of St. John the Baptist. There is an obvious reason for this. "And hearing [of John the Baptist’s death] Jesus departed from there in a ship to a *desert place* privately" ~~When St. Antony goes to the desert, he is "following" the example of our Lord—indeed, he is "following" our Lord.~~ This in no way diminishes the unique, salvific work of our Lord, this in no way makes of our Lord God, the God-Man, a mere example. But in addition to his redemptive work, which could be accomplished only by our Lord, our Lord taught and set examples. And by "following" our Lord into the desert, St. Antony was entering a terrain already targeted and stamped by our Lord as a specific place for spiritual warfare. There is both specificity and "type" in the "desert." In those geographical regions where there a no deserts, there are places which are similar to or approach that type of place symbolized by the "desert." It is that type of place which allows the human heart solace, isolation. It is the type of place which puts the human heart in a state of aloneness, a state in which to meditate, to pray, to fast, to reflect upon one’s inner existence and one’s relationship to ultimate reality—God. And more. It is a place where spiritual reality is intensified, a place where spiritual life can intensify and simultaneously where the opposing forces to spiritual life can become more dominant. It is the terrain of a battlefield but a spiritual one. And it is our Lord, not St. Antony, who as set precedent. Our Lord says that "as for what is sown among thorns, this is he who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceit of riches choke(s) the word, and it becomes unfruitful." The desert, or a place similar, precisely cuts off the cares or anxieties of the world and the deception, the deceit of earthly riches. It cuts one off precisely from "this worldliness" and precisely as such it contains within itself a powerful spiritual reason for existing within the spiritual paths of the Church. Not as the only path, not as the path for everyone, but as one, fully authentic path of Christian life.

**Christian Underground**

**Slide 7**

**Edict of Milan (Excerpt)** Therefore, we have decreed the following ordinance… that no freedom at all shall be refused to Christians, to follow or to keep their observances or worship; but that to each one power be granted to devote his mind to that worship which he may think adapted to himself, that the Deity may in all things exhibit to us his accustomed favour and kindness. It was just and consistent that we should write that this was our pleasure, that all exceptions respecting the Christians being completely removed…and whatever measures were wholly sinister and foreign to our mildness, that these should be altogether annulled; and now that each one of the Christians may freely and without molestation, pursue and follow that course of worship which he has proposed to himself…

**Toleration and Triumph of Christianity**

Living martyrdom. Softening of morality and virtue, rise of nominal Christianity.

Asceticism as a form of soul-purging martyrdom

**Slide 8**

**Flee to the desert**

**Slide 9: Cells and Sketes**

St Amun, a disciple of St Anthony, settled near Kellia (where the word cell comes from). A semi-anchoritic monastery.

**Types of Desert Dwellers**

**Hermitic:** Solitary, with no relation to any particular place. Utter and extreme solitude.

**Anchorite:**  Tied to a particular place

**Cenobites**

**Paul of Thebes**

*c,* 230 and died [January 15](http://orthodoxwiki.org/January_15), *c,* 341

Fought with his brother, Peter, over inheritance. Saw a funeral of a rich man, fled to the Inner Wilderness. “"What do I have to do then with all the money of this temporal world which I shall leave naked?" He looked to his brother and said to him, "My brother, let us return, for I shall not ask you for anything, not even for what is mine."” He wore only a tunic made of palm fiber. Fed a ½ loaf of bread by a raven for 70 years. When the Lord wanted to reveal the holiness of St. Paul and his righteousness, He sent His angel to St. [Anthony (Antonius) the Great](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Anthony_the_Great), who thought that he was the first to dwell in the wilderness. The angel told St. Anthony, "There is a man who lives in the inner wilderness; the world is not worthy of his footsteps. By his prayers, the Lord brings rain and dew to fall on the Earth, and bring the flood of the Nile in its due season." Raven feeds both. Paul sends Anthony to retrieve a Tunic of Athanasius. When Anthony returns, it becomes his burial shroud.

**Pachomius the Great**

c. 292-346 A.D. Secular education, entered the army. Baptized after he left army in 314. Left for desert in 317. In a vision, along with his elder Palamon, they headed to Tabbenisi to found a monastery. Based on a cenobitic rule. (Previously, all had been hermits). Pachomius' rule balanced the communal life with the solitary life; monks live in individual cells but work together for the common good. Sister becomes a nun. Wonderworker, fighter of demons. In a vision near the end of his life, he saw that monastic zeal would wain. Prostrating himself upon the ground, St. Pachomius wept bitterly, calling out to the Lord and imploring mercy for them. He heard a Voice answer, "Pachomius, be mindful of the mercy of God. The monks of the future shall receive a reward, since they too shall have occasion to suffer the life burdensome for the monk." He directed 3000 monks at the end of his life,

His Cenobitic Rule:

* Monastic attire
* Obedience to the Abbott
* No possessions
* No gifts allowed from family
* Exact obedience to the rule
* Chastisement of the lazy

No one will take vegetables from the Garden; they will receive them from the gardener.  
 No one will just decide to pick up the leaves of the palm tree that are used to weave the baskets, except the person in charge of the palm trees.

Nobody will be able to go to the fields, walk around the monastery or go beyond their place without having been allowed by the chairman of the house.

 It is prohibited to enter in the cell of the neighbor without having knocked first on the door.

The one who is late, after the first of the six prayers in the evening, as well as the one who had whispered with his neighbor or laughed secretly, will do penance according to the established way, during the rest of the prayers.  
 When the brothers are sitting in their houses, they will not be allowed to say worldly words.  And if the chairman teaches any word from Scripture, they will repeat it between themselves taking turns, and will take advantage of what each of them has learned and memorized.

The new arrivals to the monastery will be taught first of all about what they have to observe; then after this first instruction and they has accepted everything, they will be told to learn twenty psalms, or two epistles of the Apostle, or a part of another book from Scripture.  
       If he is illiterate, he will go, at the first, third and sixth hour, to meet the one who can teach him and was assigned for that.  He will keep standing before him and will learn with the greatest attention and gratitude.  Next to that, he will write the letters and syllables, the verbs and nouns, and will be forced to read even if he refuses to do it.  
       In general, no one at the monastery will stay without being able to read or memorize something from Scripture, at least the New Testament and the Psalter.    
      Do not let anyone find excuses for not going to the sinaxis, to the chanting or the prayer.

**Slide 13**

St Theodosius the Great, the Cenobiarch.

(423 AD - 529 AD), and was the founder and organizer of the [cenobitic](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Cenobitic) way of [monastic life](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Monasticism).

born in the province of [Cappadocia](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Cappadocian_Fathers)

devout parents

Yearning for the solitary life, Saint Theodosius settled in Palestine into a desolate cave, in which, according to [Tradition](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Tradition), the three [Magi](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Magi) had spent the night, having come to worship the Savior after His [Nativity](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Nativity). He lived there for thirty years in great abstinence and unceasing [prayer](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Prayer). People flocked to the [ascetic](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Ascetic), wishing to live under his guidance.

When the cave could no longer hold all the [monks](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Monks), St Theodosius prayed that the Lord Himself would indicate a place for the monks to live. Taking a [censer](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Censer) with cold charcoal and [incense](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Incense), the monk started walking into the [desert](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Desert_Fathers). At a certain spot the charcoal ignited by itself and the incense smoke began to rise. Here the monk established the first [cenobitic](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Cenobitic) monastery, or [Lavra](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Lavra) (meaning "broad" or "populous").

It was around this time that Theodosius' friend and countryman [Sabbas the Sanctified](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Sabbas_the_Sanctified) was appointed [Archimandrite](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Archimandrite) of all the isolated monks in Palestine, by Patriarch Sallustius of Jerusalem (486-493). Therefore Theodosius was made the leader of all those [monks who lived in community](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Cenobitic), and this was the origin of his being called "the Cenobiarch", which translates as chief of those living a life in common.

**Slide 14**

**Discussion**