



The Anonymous Christian

“Let your light shine in the sight of all others, so that by seeing your good works, they may praise your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16)

Consider the spiritual light within you. Maybe you are not thinking of it, you may have forgotten, perhaps you never even knew you had a light to illumine others. But why would the good Lord ask from you something that He knew wasn't in you? Your light then is not from you originally, but the gift and present of the Holy Spirit. You've had it in a special way since baptism. You shine with much more brilliance than the brightest jack-o-lantern on Halloween—or at least you ought to do so.



Photo by Galina Halaeva, <http://forum.pravmir.ru/foto/>

I thought of this while speaking to a man who considers himself a serious Christian; however, he finds it difficult to relate to his church and its clergy. Like so many in our times, he feels it more helpful to his soul to hold his faith within, to pray daily, but only in private. It's commonplace today to discover such anonymous Christians. America upholds the right of each citizen to privacy. Nothing can be more private than the way a person worships. Or doesn't.

Jesus told us to act towards others the way we wish to be treated (Matthew 7:12). Always behave towards others in positive ways. Do what is best for them. And nothing is better than to help them in gaining their salvation. How do you do that? The only sure way is to show them what salvation is like. Set an example.



Use every opportunity to be yourself a show-and-tell model of the Lord's mercy, forgiveness and love. This is not a good idea: It's an obligation imposed upon and expected from each Christian.

Everything in nature praises God by its very existence; but nothing created by God is as capable of giving Him glory as that creature made in His image. Giving God glory is what you are, because you are an Orthodox Christian. You do it not by talking about it, much less by boasting of it, but by your good works.

The Greek has two words for our English term, good: *agathos*, meaning a good thing, and *kalos*, meaning what is beautiful and appealing. *Kalos* is what Jesus is saying here in the Beatitudes. Good works, yours and mine, are to be attractive—attracting others to our life style, our beliefs, and our motivations. What we do must come from who we are. It's not so much a matter of having the true faith, but of proving it by what we do with our doctrines.

Not by accident are the saints in our icons surrounded by gold, especially encircling their heads. A glow radiates from the true Christian, and all who look at them know it when they see it. Recall the woman in the crowd crying out in a loud voice: "*Blessed is the womb that bore You and the breasts that nursed You*" (Luke 11:27). His presence radiated goodness and truth for all to recognize.

St. Paul wrote to the Philippians (4:9), "*Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put into practice.*" Every Christian soul, not only clergy or monastics but each one of us, ought to be able to repeat with conviction the same advice. Nothing is as wasted as the words: "Do as I say, not what I do."

Each Christian is proof of the answer Cain once made to the Lord after killing his brother, Abel: "*Am I my brother's keeper?*" (Genesis 4:9). The answer: "*Yes!*"

Source: [Orthodox Church in America](#)