



## **The Priest and the American Tourist**

A Protestant woman from Tacoma, Washington, was on vacation with her husband in the Greek city of Athens. Each day she walked to a small sidewalk cafe near the hotel for her coffee and watch the locals pass by. One of these locals was an Orthodox priest who'd pass by the cafe on his way to his parish church. The woman would smile, and the priest would nod, smiling back, and continue on his way.

One day this Greek priest, who spoke English, noticed that the American woman had a sad look on her face, and he walked over to her table and asked if something was troubling her. She burst into tears and told the priest about her husband's medical problems and that she feared for the worst. The priest sat down with her and prayed for [her] and her husband.

Each day he'd stop to sit at her table, praying for her husband's recovery. A few weeks past and the husband recovered from his illness and returned to the United States with his wife.

The memory of this priest's compassion for a foreign woman has remained with her all these many years. She shared her memories with her doctor, who is a friend of mine, and I now share her memories with you.

What a true disciple and servant of the Lord was this kindly priest! May we, like this priest, be atuned to those who are in need of, and whom the Lord places before, us. May we reach out with open hearts and bring healing to those who are suffering, letting them know that we care and that they have a friend during their time of sorrow, need, and despair.