

# *The* TELLER REVIEW *of* BOOKS

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Nadine L. Jackson, Editor-in-Chief

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THE PHILOKALIA

Kallistos Ware

FR. SERAPHIM ROSE: HIS LIFE AND WORKS

Hieromonk Damascene

THE ORTHODOX VENERATION OF MARY

St. John Maximovitch

GUIDELINES FOR MARRIAGE

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MARRIAGE AS A PATH TO HOLINESS

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ON MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE

Saint John Chrysostom

GETTING READY FOR MARRIAGE

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## **THE TELLER REVIEW OF BOOKS™**

Nadine L. Jackson, Editor-in-Chief

The Teller Review of Books™ (Editor-in-Chief: Nadine L. Jackson) provides succinct overviews and critical reviews of the seminal books shaping contemporary culture in the areas of law, faith, society and public policy. Milestones in political, cultural and religious thought, whether contemporary publications or the classics, form part of the corpus of reviewed works.

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## Table of Contents

|       |   |    |
|-------|---|----|
| I.    | THE PHILOKALIA: THE COMPLETE TEXT (VOL. 1); COMPILED BY ST. NIKODIMOS OF THE HOLY MOUNTAIN AND ST. MARKARIOS OF CORINTH (KALLISTOS WARE)..... | 9  |
| II.   | FR. SERAPHIM ROSE: HIS LIFE AND WORKS (HIEROMONK DAMASCENE) 11  |    |
|       | A. Overview.....  | 11 |
|       | B. Critique .....   | 12 |
| III.  | THE ORTHODOX VENERATION OF MARY: THE BIRTHGIVER OF GOD (ST. JOHN MAXIMOVITCH) .....   | 15 |
|       | A. Overview.....  | 15 |
|       | B. The Early Church’s Practice as Described in Scripture and the Fathers.....   | 15 |
|       | C. “Zeal not According to Knowledge”.....   | 15 |
|       | D. Conclusion: the True Beauty of the Gospel .....  | 18 |
| IV.   | GUIDELINES FOR MARRIAGE IN THE ORTHODOX CHURCH (STANLEY S. HARAKAS).....  | 21 |
| V.    | CROWN THEM WITH GLORY & HONOR: TALKS FOR WEDDINGS (ANTHONY M. CONIARIS).....  | 23 |
|       | A. Overview.....  | 23 |
|       | B. Critique .....   | 23 |
| VI.   | MARRIAGE AS A PATH TO HOLINESS: LIVES OF MARRIED SAINTS (DAVID FORD) .....  | 25 |
|       | A. Saint John of Kronstadt.....   | 25 |
|       | B. Saint John the Emperor .....   | 26 |
|       | C. Saints Justinian and Theodora.....   | 26 |
|       | D. Saints Isaac and Rebecca .....   | 27 |
| VII.  | MARRIAGE: AN ORTHODOX PERSPECTIVE (JOHN MEYENDORFF).....  | 29 |
|       | A. Wedding as a Separate Rite .....   | 29 |
|       | B. “Mixed” Marriages .....  | 29 |
|       | C. Family and Family Planning .....   | 30 |
|       | D. Appendices.....  | 32 |
| VIII. | ON MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE (SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM) .....   | 35 |
|       | A. Overview.....  | 35 |
|       | B. Critique .....   | 41 |
|       | C. Conclusion .....   | 42 |
| IX.   | GETTING READY FOR MARRIAGE IN THE ORTHODOX CHURCH (ANTHONY M. CONIARIS).....  | 45 |





**I. The Philokalia: The Complete Text (Vol. 1); Compiled by St. Nikodimos of the Holy Mountain and St. Markarios of Corinth (Kallistos Ware)**

The Philokalia as translated by G.E.H. Palmer is a POWERFUL spiritual resource for developing humility, patience, and learning how to love and trust in God. It is an important tool for anyone trying to understand the ancient traditions of the Christian East.



## II. Fr. Seraphim Rose: His Life and Works (Hieromonk Damascene)

“Reflections on Hieromonk Damascene’s *Fr. Seraphim Rose: His Life and Works*”

### A. Overview

This biography of Fr. Seraphim Rose brings the reader into intimate knowledge of a man who spent his entire life seeking truth and, when he found in it Christ in the Orthodox Church, spent his life drawing others near to Christ. Fr. Seraphim was indeed a remarkable man. He spent his days in college and at UC Berkeley exploring a wide array of religions and worldviews, especially religions of the Far East. As a young man in high school, he “had no time for trivia,” his mother said (p. 17). Rather, he spent his time exploring truth, reading, and studying languages. “In high school [he] demonstrated a remarkable facility in languages, learning not only German but also French and Spanish” (p.17). In college, he studied the ancient Chinese language and studied the Chinese spiritual tradition, being fascinated by the *Tao Te Ching* of Lao Tzu (p. 67). Yet his youth was a lonely one and at some points verged on an existentialist nihilistic crisis. The only person who really understood him was his college friend Allison. A beautiful portrait of these two young souls is painted.

This book paints the portrait of a man who loved Christ and the Church and taught people the way of humility, asceticism, and drawing nearer to Christ. Fr. Seraphim warns the faithful about religious zeal, about overemphasizing the “outward aspect of Orthodoxy—whether the splendid Church services ..., the outward discipline ..., being “correct” according to the canons, etc.” (p. 808). Yet they can easily miss the point of it all: Christ our Savior. As he wrote to one of his catechumens, “All these [external] things are good and helpful, but if one overemphasizes them one will enter into troubles and trials. You are coming to Orthodoxy *to receive Christ*, and this you should never forget” (p. 808). Fr. Seraphim observed how we can be following “external wisdom” while forgetting about Christ: “It is the fashion now to learn about the Jesus Prayer, to read the *Philokalia*, to go ‘back to the Fathers.’ These kinds of things also will not save us—they are external. They may be helpful if they are used rightly, but if they become your passion, the first thing you are after, then they become externals which lead not to Christ” (p. 829).

Rather, “The true faith in Christ is in the heart, and it is fruitful, humble, patient, loving, merciful, compassionate, hungering and thirsting