

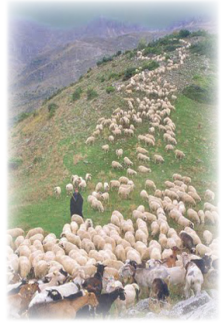


■ We should have trust in Divine Providence

“For My Own Good!”*

**“Glorified be Thy Name, O Lord.
Whatever comes from Thee is good”**

Manolios Sphiakianakes tends some two hundred sheep near a village in the region of Chania, Crete. Every Sunday, after feeding his sheep, he leaves them in their enclosure and goes down to the village for the Divine Liturgy, to pray for his “young'uns,” his wife, and his animals.



Manolios is a man of faith. Just as he calls out to his sheep, so he repeats the Jesus prayer: “Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me.” Sometimes he says it aloud, sometimes silently, in his heart. Whether good or bad befalls him, he always glorifies God, saying: **“Glorified be Thy Name, O Lord. Whatever comes from Thee is good.”**

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Once Manolios became very ill and went to Chania in search of treatment. The doctors told him that he would have to go to Athens for heart surgery. Manolios, as always, simply repeated the phrase:

“That is for my own good!”

One day, he lost track of time as he was shopping for something, when he noticed that he would have to run to the harbor to catch the boat. Suddenly, he tripped on a rock, fell down, and broke his right leg. He was once again taken to the hospital. The doctors splinted his leg and settled him in a cot. There, he constantly repeated to himself:

“Glorified be Thy Name, O Lord! That is for my own good!”



A nurse overheard him, was puzzled, and asked him with curiosity:

“What are you mumbling, Uncle?”

“Well you see, my girl, I broke my leg this morning and am glorifying God, because I believe it is **for my own good!**”

“Have you lost your mind, Manolios? You broke your leg, missed the boat, and so will have to stay at least a month! **All** of that is for your own good?”

“I am not at all upset, my dear. **I** believe that everything that our good God gives us is **for our own good!**”

The next day, the same nurse ran into the patient's room.

“Manolios! **M**anolios!”

“Why are you shouting, sister? **I**s something wrong?”

“Yes, you are a very fortunate person! **G**o light a candle your size in thanks!”

“Why, sister? **W**hat happened?”

“**Y**ou haven't heard the news?”

“**N**o, no!”

“The ferryboat ‘Heraklion’ sank just off Falkonera island [December 1966]. **M**any people drowned! **Y**ou have a Saint protecting you, Manolios!”

Manolios froze. **H**e repeatedly made the sign of the Cross while murmuring: “**G**lorified be Thy Name! **I** broke my leg and escaped death! **I** would have been among the dead now!”

“Didn't I tell you, sister? **A**m I not right? **W**hatever comes from **G**od is for our own good!”

□

(*) Theodore K. Bgontza, *Thank You for the Pain!* [in Greek](Lychnia: 2009), pp. 151-152.