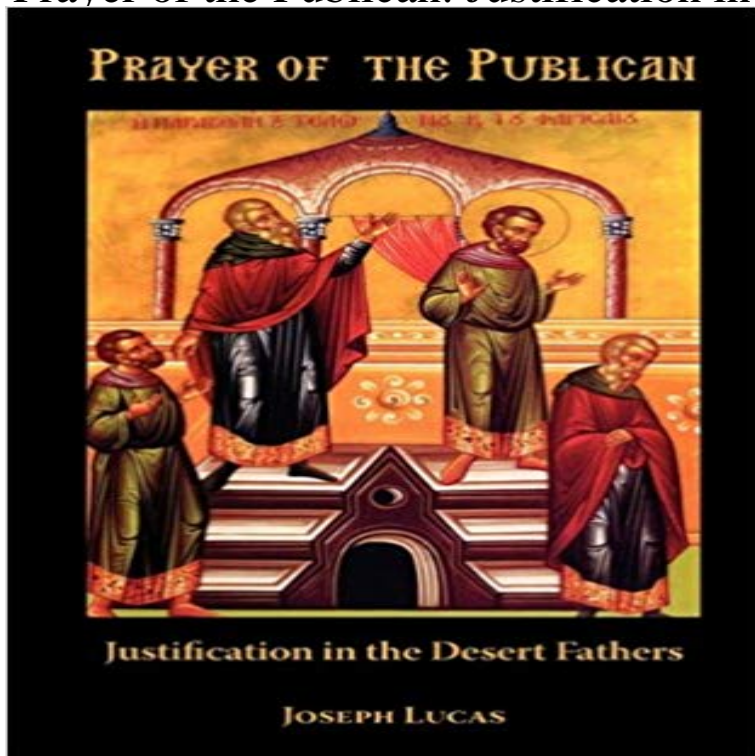


## Prayer of the Publican: Justification in the Desert Fathers



The Sayings of the Desert Fathers has inspired Christians for generations. In *Prayer of the Publican*, Joseph Lucas takes a fresh look at this classic text to see what these ancient sages tell us about dikaiosyne - the righteousness of man and Gods justification. From the workshop of the desert comes an approach to justification with implications for both personal spiritual renewal and ecumenical dialogue.

What do the Fathers of the Christian East say about the meaning of justification and righteousness? Whereas justification became an important doctrine in the Roman Catholic Church and in the various Protestant denominations, the Eastern Orthodox Church did not develop such a teaching. And yet the language of dikaiosyne is common to both the Septuagint and the New Testament, read and interpreted by all the Greek Fathers. In *Prayer of the Publican*, Joseph Lucas explores the usage and understanding of dikaiosyne in the Sayings of the Desert Fathers. In the Semitic mindset, the search for truth is manifested in doing the truth (the Greek ???????? is more important than to be). These monastic fathers and mothers interpreted Scripture through the lens of the ascetic life, developing a view of justification exemplified in the Parable of the Publican and the Pharisee: to be justified by God, you must actively condemn yourself. The mortification of self-love and egocentricity - those sources of biological death - leads to the rebirth through baptism and repentance unto life in the kingdom. - Rt. Rev. Dr. Maxim (Vasiljevic), Bishop of the Serbian Orthodox Western American Diocese

Joseph Lucas has provided a very welcome and illuminating study of dikaiosyne in the writings of the Desert Fathers. His study offers a very fine treatment of the varied meanings of dikaiosyne in these writings, as well as the role of dikaiosyne in the spiritual lives of the Desert Fathers. His

appendix on the reception of the Desert Fathers is an added bonus. - Rev. Dr. John D. Jones, Department of Philosophy, Marquette University

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