

His Eminence Metropolitan Gerosimos
Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco
245 Valencia Street
San Francisco, CA 94103

July 13, 2012

Your Eminence,

After receiving the news about the death of Scott Nevins at St. Anthony's Monastery, I called you four times and left messages each time. My first call was the morning of Scott's death. The receptionist assured me that you would return my call and towards the end of the week she seemed surprised that I had not heard from you because she said you did get the messages and that you do return calls. But you never did.

I am sickened by the tragic loss of Scott. Especially since it was something that could have been avoided. I have known the Nevins family for 7 years now. They first contacted us here at Pokrov when they realized that their son was in a cult and he was in serious emotional and spiritual danger. They saw a complete change in their son after he entered St. Anthony's Monastery.

The Nevins family worked tirelessly to shed light on the practices of the Elder Ephraim and his Monasteries and they met with you in person to try to tell you about the changes they saw in their son and their concerns about his safety at St. Anthony's Monastery. I remember vividly seeing their complete disappointment after meeting with you. They felt that you didn't listen, didn't care and seriously discounted their concerns. They knew they had hit another brick wall when meeting with you. We met with Ashley and Diane for dinner following that meeting. Their concerns about Scott had fallen on deaf ears...yours! You had the power to do something. But Scott continued to be brainwashed and controlled at St. Anthony's Monastery. He continued to decline in emotional and spiritual health under the influence of the Cult of the Elder Ephraim also known as St. Anthony's Monastery. You did nothing.

Some of Elder Ephraim's followers are posting on Orthodox discussion lists saying that Scott Nevins was mentally ill. If that is true, then why did the Elder accept a novice who had mental illness into the rigors of monastic life? And why didn't the monastery provide mental health services for Scott if that was the case? If they couldn't provide the help he needed, why didn't they send him back to his family? Instead they kept him there for six long years of his young life as he continued to decline. The Scott who died at St. Anthony's Monastery is not the same Scott who the Nevins family knew for the first 19 years of his life, before he joined the cult of the Elder Ephraim.

The responsibility for this tragedy falls squarely on your shoulders as the Shepherd of your flock. You did not listen when Scott's parents tried to warn you of their concerns. I must also add that there were many others who spoke out about this monastery. You did not pay attention to any of the warning signs. Surely as a psychologist, you should know what constitutes a cult. The monasteries of the Elder Ephraim are listed on a national cult awareness website. The cult practices at St. Anthony's monastery are far from secret.

Scott Nevins didn't die at his residence in Salem OR. He didn't die in the driveway of his parent's home in CA. Scott Nevins died at St. Anthony's Greek Orthodox Monastery in Florence AZ. His blood is on your hands, it is on the hands of the Elder Ephraim and Father Paisios, his blood is on the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese.

Sadly, the reaction from the Greek Orthodox Church has been to revictimize the Nevins Family. First there is beefed up security for yourself and Archbishop Demetrios at the 41st Clergy/Laity Congress in AZ. What kind of message does that send? What are you so afraid of? Then there were two police reports (that I know of) from the Greek Church. First, two police officers show up on the Nevin's doorstep in CA to question them, and secondly, the police were called to the conference in AZ. Just because this father has been outspoken about what has happened to his son, does not make him a criminal. He's acting the way a real father would act following the death of his son. The Greek Orthodox Church offers no compassion or remorse. Instead, the Church exhibits fear and avoidance in an attempt to shift responsibility from St. Anthony's Monastery and the GOA to the Nevins family. They have lost their son. They are not criminals! Take some responsibility and do the right thing.

At Pokrov we have had countless reports from people who innocently went down to St. Anthony's Monastery only to have their Faith destroyed, their families torn apart and their marriages broken. The most convincing argument for calling this monastery a cult comes from the people who write in support of the Elder Ephraim. They usually start by telling us we are evil and we are damned, we are going to burn in the eternal fire or we are just plain demonic. They explain how it is almost impossible to make it to heaven without the prayers of the Elder Ephraim! The Elder Ephraim calms the animals in the Zoo. Followers willingly drink the water that he washes his feet in and they eat the leftovers off his plate. He is a Saint. He is Holy. He is.... the ELDER EPHRAIM! And for what it is worth, it appears his followers think very little of the bishops.

I believe the lack of spirituality and Christian leadership exercised by the Greek Orthodox Bishops has created a spiritual void that has caused many of the Faithful to flock to the Ephraim Monasteries. They are seekers looking for something more. Unfortunately the Elder Ephraim is ready to fill this void with his toxic extremism.

The Greek Bishops sat back and did nothing about the Elder Ephraim as he freely spread his extreme and toxic fundamentalism across this country. Unfortunately Scott Nevins paid the price with his young life and Scott's parents will spend the rest of their days grieving for their only son. They know they did everything they could to help Scott and

try to expose the cult practices at St. Anthony's Monastery. Unfortunately no one listened. You didn't listen.

Hopefully Scott did not die in vain and this tragedy will shed light on the Ephraim Monasteries and the inaction and dysfunction of the hierarchy of the Greek Orthodox Church.

Cappy Larson

www.pokrov.org

cc

His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios

His Eminence Metropolitan Iakovos

His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios

His Eminence Metropolitan Isaiah

His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios

His Eminence Metropolitan Sava

His Eminence Metropolitan Nicholas

His Eminence Metropolitan Evangelos

Ashley and Diane Nevins

Melanie Sakoda