

# PRODUCTION AND REPRODUCTION OF WORDS OF POWER IN THE MODERN DIGITAL ERA: THE CASE OF THE HEALING PRAYER TO SAINT JUDE THADDEUS

**Haralampos Passalis**

*External Researcher at the Centre for the Greek Language (KEΓ);  
Teacher at the First Model College of Thessaloniki, Greece.  
harapass168@gmail.com*

**Abstract:** Jude Thaddeus is associated with a sacred yet enigmatic figure, a saint and Apostle of Jesus Christ, who is venerated as “the patron saint of impossible or hopeless causes.” Due to the shared name with Judas Iscariot, the Apostle who betrayed Christ, Jude Thaddeus has often been overlooked or marginalized in the Christian tradition. The restitution of his veneration is closely linked, on the one hand, to a religious legend that distinguishes him from Judas Iscariot, and on the other, to a widely circulated prayer characterized by a structured form and embedded within a specific ritual context. From the perspective of charm studies, it constitutes a particularly interesting case, offering scholars not only the opportunity to examine the interconnection between “words of power” and belief narratives, but also to observe how well-known recurrent patterns related to taxonomies and distinctions such as charm vs. prayer, official vs. unofficial, accepted vs. unaccepted are produced and reproduced in the modern digital era. The paper traces the dissemination and veneration of the prayer to Saint Jude Thaddeus, drawing on oral and digital testimonies from its performers in contemporary Greece. At the same time, it lays the groundwork for a potential cross-cultural comparative study, as variants of the same text and similar performative contexts are attested today in many Christian countries around the world.

**Keywords:** Saint Jude Thaddeus, prayer, magic, belief narratives, words of power, charm, digital transmission, modern religiosity, popular/lived religion, New Age.

## INTRODUCTION

The contemporary landscape of global interconnectedness and digital communication has profoundly reshaped the ways in which “words of power”<sup>1</sup>, often referred to as charms, are circulated, adapted, and integrated into diverse contexts of belief and practice. A telling example is the prayer to Saint Jude Thaddeus, which, although rooted in Roman Catholic devotional tradition, has long transcended its original setting to become a widely disseminated ritual text. Its trajectory — from a localized invocation of divine assistance in desperate or hopeless circumstances to a globally recognized expression of faith — illustrates the transformative potential of ritual words in a fluid and interconnected world. The cross-cultural diffusion of this prayer reopens classic anthropological questions concerning the construction and negotiation of boundaries between magic and religion, prayer and charm, and official and unofficial devotion, inviting a renewed examination of these taxonomies within today’s expanded communicative environment.

Particularly compelling is the prayer’s reception and adaptation within the Greek Orthodox context, a domain that traditionally draws clear theological and liturgical boundaries with its Catholic origins. Nonetheless, the incorporation of this Western devotional text into Orthodox practice highlights the ability of sacred texts to traverse confessional lines, responding to shared spiritual needs and illustrating the fluidity of religious expression. Building on this observation, the paper examines the ways in which the prayer acquires new functions and forms of authorization as it is adapted to different media and devotional environments. In doing so, it highlights both the trajectory of the prayer within Greek Orthodoxy and the broader mechanisms through which “words of power” are continually reinterpreted and legitimized in an interconnected and digitally shaped religious world.

The research on which this article is based draws on a combination of oral testimonies, digital sources, and printed devotional material. Oral accounts from individuals who engage with the prayer to St. Jude Thaddeus were gathered through informal interviews and personal communication.<sup>2</sup> In parallel, digital materials were examined across platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, TikTok, and Greek Orthodox devotional websites, with attention to personal narratives, perceived efficacy, circulation patterns, and the place of the prayer in the wider public dialogue — both official and informal (Appendix C). Furthermore, printed materials including booklets, photocopied sheets, and devotional cards

were collected, enabling a comparative analysis of textual variants and the ritual instructions that accompany them.

## THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT: HISTORICAL ROOTS AND GLOBAL EXPANSION

The veneration of St. Jude Thaddeus, popularly known as St. Jude, has traversed centuries and continents, evolving from a relatively obscure devotion into a nearly global religious phenomenon.<sup>3</sup> While the modern revival of devotion is often traced to early 20<sup>th</sup>-century America, its roots and subsequent expansion reflect a complex interplay of historical, cultural, and devotional factors that span Europe, Latin America, Asia, and Africa.<sup>4</sup> Central to this devotion is the prayer to St. Jude, a widely circulated text that appeals to the saint's intercession in moments of despair and crisis. This prayer has become a key ritual component of his veneration, connecting personal religious practice to broader patterns of religious culture.

During the Middle Ages in Europe, the veneration of St. Jude Thaddeus was actively encouraged by St. Bernard of Clairvaux and St. Bridget of Sweden. According to St. Bridget's visions, Christ himself urged her to seek Jude's intercession, emphasizing the Apostle's unique role as a helper in times of need.<sup>5</sup> However, this early devotion began to wane in subsequent centuries, largely due to the confusion between St. Jude and Jude Iscariot, the betrayer of Christ, a misunderstanding that cast a long-lasting shadow over his devotional legacy.<sup>6</sup> Despite an earlier decline, devotion to St. Jude Thaddeus was revived in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. This revival occurred mainly in Catholic countries, where he is honored as a relative of Jesus, one of the Twelve Apostles, and the author of the Epistle of Jude in the New Testament.<sup>7</sup> His feast day is celebrated on October 28. He is typically depicted with a flame above his head, symbolizing his presence at Pentecost, holding either a club, a medallion, or a cloth bearing the image of Christ.<sup>8</sup> This iconographic motif is rooted in the early Christian legend according to which Jude brought to King Abgar of Edessa<sup>9</sup> the *Mandyllion*, a cloth miraculously imprinted with the face of Jesus, through which the king was cured of a severe illness.<sup>10</sup>

The contemporary prominence of St. Jude's veneration can be traced to the early decades of the twentieth century, when the Claretian Missionaries<sup>11</sup> first introduced his veneration in Santiago, Chile.<sup>12</sup> The devotional center they established there quickly attracted increasing

attention and soon became a focal point of popular piety. From this initial base, the devotion expanded throughout Latin America, inspiring the emergence of additional shrines and new expressions of communal religious practice. The movement gained even greater visibility in 1929 at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Chicago<sup>13</sup>, situated in a working-class, predominantly immigrant neighborhood deeply affected by the Great Depression. Under Claretian leadership, the parish became a fertile ground for spiritual renewal and communal solidarity (Orsi 1998: 1–39).<sup>14</sup> Building on this early success, as well as on their later achievements in the United States, the Claretians continued to expand their missionary outreach globally, playing a key role in promoting the devotion to St. Jude across diverse cultural contexts. In Mexico, the Claretians began promoting the saint's veneration, and their efforts culminated in the remodeling of the Temple of San Hipólito in Mexico City.<sup>15</sup> In the Philippines, devotion to the saint flourished at the National Shrine of St. Jude Thaddeus in Manila, where students and laypeople regularly seek his help.<sup>16</sup> In this setting, the prayer acquired new layers of meaning, often closely tied to personal aspirations, while its digital dissemination — through social media — amplified its circulation.

The saint's image as an intercessor for those facing desperation or crisis has proven effective in transcending national and cultural boundaries, serving as a unifying religious text across diverse linguistic and cultural traditions. Indicative of the spread of his veneration, and consequently of the prayer associated with him, is the fact that the prayer has been translated, with some minor modifications, into many European languages.<sup>17</sup> The extensive spread of St. Jude's veneration cannot be attributed solely to missionary outreach. More fundamentally, it reflects the saint's capacity to address widely shared human experiences of crisis and need. His identity as the patron saint of hopeless causes positions him as a symbol of enduring hope in situations marked by suffering and uncertainty.

## THE ENIGMATIC APOSTLE: AMBIGUITY AND THE EMERGENCE OF DEVOTION TO ST. JUDE THADDEUS IN THE GREEK POPULAR ORTHODOX RELIGION

St. Jude is an enigmatic figure in the Orthodox Church, as his identification with a specific person remains unclear and ambiguous. In the New Testament, besides Jude Iscariot, two other saints bear the name

Jude: Jude, the brother of Jesus, and Jude Thaddeus or Lebbaeus, one of the Twelve Apostles (Bairaktaris 2019: 9).<sup>18</sup> While in Catholicism these two figures are often identified as the same individual,<sup>19</sup> the official Orthodox tradition distinguishes them, assigning them different feast days and genealogies. Jude, the brother of Jesus (Ιούδας ο Αδελφός), is traditionally held to be one of Joseph's children from a previous marriage. To this figure is attributed the Epistle of Jude, written against false teachers infiltrating the Christian community (Bairaktaris 2019: 13–20).<sup>20</sup> His feast is celebrated on June 19 according to the Orthodox liturgical calendar<sup>21</sup> and iconographic depictions often show him holding this epistle.

Jude Thaddeus, the Apostle, is described in Orthodox tradition as a devout Jew who encountered the teachings of Jesus during a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. According to hagiographical accounts, he first asked to be baptized by John the Baptist and subsequently became one of Christ's twelve Apostles. In Mark (3:16), he is listed as Thaddeus or Lebbaeus, while Luke (6:16) and Acts (1:13) refer to him as Jude of James. In the Gospel of John, during the Last Supper, he is further clarified as "Jude, not Iscariot" (John 14:22–23).<sup>22</sup> His feast is celebrated on August 21.<sup>23</sup>

Even though they represent two distinct figures, in popular religious practice the differentiation between them is often blurred. A telling sign of this blurring is that in certain churches both saints are commemorated on both feast days, or one saint is celebrated on the other's date, in a reversal of the official attribution of these feasts in the Orthodox calendar.<sup>24</sup> This merging of identities is also evident in the iconographic depictions, where both saints are shown holding the epistle (originally attributed, according to official Orthodox teaching, to Jude, the brother of Christ).<sup>25</sup> This is not accidental: in the context of popular religion, the specific historical identity of the saint becomes less significant. Both figures are perceived as members of Christ's sacred circle, and the name "Jude," despite its negative associations with Jude Iscariot, is reinterpreted as a channel of spiritual power and mediation. This reclamation goes beyond symbolic restoration; it plays a vital role in lived religion.<sup>26</sup>

As devotion to Saint Jude grows, so does a body of narratives aimed at restoring his dignity and clearly distinguishing him from Jude Iscariot. Among these is an orally transmitted religious legend in which the saint expresses sorrow over having been forgotten:

"Saint Jude, Thaddeus, the brother of Christ, went to Christ and said to him: My Lord, no one is baptized in my name, no

one invokes my name, no one prays to me, there is no church and no monastery dedicated to me, no service is held for me, no one speaks of me, because my name is associated with the name of Jude Iscariot. Christ listened to Jude Thaddeus and, moved, said to the saint that from now on whoever honors him and invokes his name may have the grace to achieve the resolution of his request, no matter how difficult this request may be.”<sup>27</sup>

This legend articulates a theology of restitution, wherein Christ restores the dignity and power associated with Jude’s name, while also affirming the saint’s mediatory role. By attributing the promise of grace directly to Christ’s affirmation, the legend further explains and legitimizes the efficacy of prayer.<sup>28</sup>

The emergence and early dissemination of the prayer in Greece can be traced to the early 2000s, when E. Kotsiometis, a physician and associate professor at the University of Athens, published a booklet in March 2003 titled *Απόστολος του Χριστού. Άγιος Ιούδας Θαδδαίος, ο Θεάδελφος Μαθητής του Κυρίου μας. Ο Βίος, η Παράκλησις και οι Χαιρετισμοί του* [= *Apostle of Christ. Saint Jude Thaddeus, the Brother and Disciple of Our Lord. His Life, Supplicatory Canon and Salutations*] (Figure 1). As the title indicates, the booklet included not only the prayer itself but also a short biography of the saint, as well as the Supplicatory Canon (Παράκλησις) and the Salutations (Χαιρετισμοί) to St. Jude, which were composed by the author. It is worth noting that three years later, in 2006, the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece approved the Supplicatory Canon.<sup>29</sup>

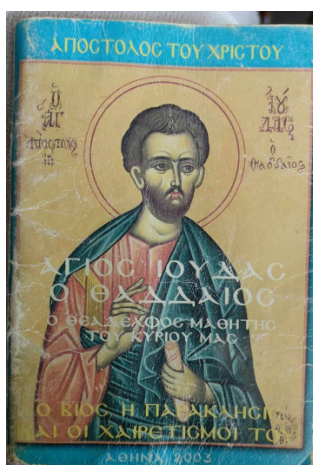


Figure 1. Cover of the first booklet on St. Jude Thaddeus published in Greece (2003). Photograph by Haralampos Passalis, 2025.



Although the prayer has never received official approval from the Church of Greece, it has circulated outside formal ecclesiastical circles and has experienced a steadily growing dissemination. Indicative of the expanding veneration of St. Jude Thaddeus and the growing recourse to the prayer is the foundation of the first church dedicated to him in Lavrio, which began as a chapel in 2000 and was officially inaugurated in 2015. Several other churches and chapels have since been dedicated to him, mainly in Attica (Lavrio, Menidi–Acharnes, Heliopolis), but also in various other parts of Greece and Cyprus.<sup>30</sup> In some cases, chapels are dedicated to St. Jude together with another saint, such as Saint Ephraim (in Menidi–Acharnes and Cyprus) or Saint Phanourios (in Paros), further embedding him within the Orthodox system of sacred mediation.

## STRUCTURE AND PERFORMATIVE CONTEXT OF THE GREEK PRAYER TO ST. JUDE THADDEUS

The Greek prayer to St. Jude Thaddeus constitutes a compelling example of a contemporary ritual text, simultaneously anchored in traditional Christian modes of supplication and dynamically shaped by modern media and evolving patterns of devotional expression. Although recent in appearance, its structural composition, ritual logic, and mode of performance places it firmly within the broader continuum of “words of power” in modern religious practice. Its textual history, morphological design, and performative setting reveal how sacred texts function as a resource for hope in times of distress, especially when other channels of intervention are perceived as ineffective.

The Greek version of the prayer is a translation of the English text,<sup>31</sup> albeit with specific modifications. The original English text was adapted to fit the Greek cultural and ecclesiastical context, particularly within the framework of the Orthodox Church. A comparative examination of the text reveals several modifications: the reference to St. Simon in the English text is omitted in the Greek translation, while references aligned with the theological vocabulary and devotional patterns of Orthodoxy were added (see Appendix A). This reflects a deliberate effort to integrate the prayer into the Orthodox ecclesiastical framework. The modifications aim not only to ensure theological consistency but also to cultivate a sense of spiritual familiarity for the Orthodox faithful engaging with it.

Although several versions of the prayer circulate in Greece today, they all stem from a single textual prototype. Its first printed appearance (A) dates to March 2003, in the booklet on Saint Jude Thaddeus, as previously mentioned (Kotsiometis 2003). From this prototype (A), several variants emerged:<sup>32</sup>

B (Church of St. Isidoron, Lycabettus)<sup>33</sup>: A slightly modified version that incorporates a reference to the Holy Cross, while remaining structurally identical to Version A.

C (Digital versions)<sup>34</sup>: Found online, these contain the base text (A) with additional frame elements.

Structurally, the prayer takes the form of a framed supplication, a familiar pattern in Christian ritual language. Its key components include the following:

Introductory Frame (in C): invocation to Jesus Christ for mercy, often accompanied by the Jesus Prayer (“Κύριε Ιησού Χριστέ [...]”), recited optionally multiple times.

Main Supplication: a) invocation: Address to St. Jude Thaddeus as Apostle and “brother of the Lord,” b) petition: Expression of crisis and plea for intervention, c) votive promise: The speaker promises to spread the saint’s name or perform acts of gratitude in return.

Reinforcement layers: invocation of the Holy Trinity, Jesus, the Holy Cross, the Virgin Mary, and St. Jude Thaddeus, supplemented with the Lord’s Prayer and excerpts from the Salutations to the Virgin Mary.

Concluding Frame (in C): Repetition of the initial invocation to Jesus Christ, creating a rhetorical and devotional closure.

All variants instruct the performer to repeat the text for nine consecutive days, a structure drawn from the Catholic novena tradition.<sup>35</sup> The ritual instructions in A explain:

“This prayer is to be said when we encounter problems or when there seems to be no help and things almost despaired of. The nine-day prayers must be recited seven times per day. Prayers are answered on the ninth day or earlier and have never yet



failed. You will receive the grace you ask for, however unrealizable it may seem”<sup>36</sup>

## TRANSMISSION AND DIFFUSION OF THE PRAYER TO ST. JUDE THADDEUS IN GREECE

The prayer to St. Jude Thaddeus is transmitted and disseminated in Greece through both printed and digital audiovisual media, reflecting a dynamic interplay between traditional devotional forms and contemporary communication technologies. Its distribution mirrors the growth of the saint’s veneration in the country, especially since the early 2000s.

a) Printed forms. The prayer first appeared in printed form in Greece in 2003 (Variant A), as already noted. A similar version of the booklet began to circulate in subsequent years, reproducing the same texts but omitting any identifying publication information (e.g., author, publisher, date, or place) (ΣΒΠΘ). In addition to bound booklets, photocopied versions and printed cards<sup>37</sup> of the prayer are widely circulated. These usually contain only the prayer text, performance instructions, testimonies of its miraculous power, and contact details of the person distributing it. In all cases, the structure of the text and the ritual framework remain consistent.

According to oral testimonies, printed prayer materials circulate not only within ecclesiastical settings, such as monasteries, often through the initiative of nuns or confessors, but also in secular everyday spaces such as workplaces, professional environments, hair salons, hospitals, and private homes. The largest proportion of those who make use of the prayer consists of women, typically over the age of forty, who have often undergone a critical or transformative life experience, such as a serious illness. Nonetheless, the presence of men is by no means rare.

b) Digital platforms: social media, websites, and audiovisual testimonies. The prayer is also widely disseminated through digital means, including websites, social media, and video-sharing platforms. A simple search for “Thaddeus prayer” in Greek yields hundreds of results, revealing its widespread presence on Greek Orthodox websites and online forums. These websites range from officially affiliated ecclesiastical pages to more informal, unofficial devotional platforms, and often allow for PDF downloads of the prayer for personal use.<sup>38</sup>

Since around 2017–18, hundreds of videos have been uploaded online, some of which exceed one million views. These videos typically feature the recitation of the prayer (often by clergy) and testimonies of

its miraculous effectiveness.<sup>39</sup> Content related to the prayer has also appeared on Facebook, Instagram, and even TikTok, with users sharing personal experiences and encouraging others to pray to the saint.<sup>40</sup>

The perceived miraculous efficacy of the prayer is affirmed by numerous testimonies, both online and circulating orally. These testimonies cover a wide range of personal needs and experiences: healing from serious illnesses, protection from danger, obtaining employment, financial relief, passing exams, success in relationships and fertility (e.g., marriage or conception). Such testimonials, frequently found in the comment sections of YouTube videos or prayer websites, function as publicly shared expressions of gratitude for perceived miracles.

Public expressions of gratitude often take the form of votive offerings (*tamata*), commonly metallic plaques embossed with symbolic imagery (e.g., eyes, limbs, babies, houses, etc.).<sup>41</sup> These are placed before icons or shrines dedicated to the saint. A notable example can be seen in the Church of Panagia Eleftherotria in Kifisia (Attica), where an icon of St. Jude has been adorned with a silver halo (Figure 2) and later with silver representations of the saint's hands (Figure 3). These votive offerings function as visible, material confirmations of the saint's intervention and the efficacy of the prayer.



Figure 2. The icon's halo is covered with silver revetment. Church of Panagia Eleftherotria, Kifisia (Attica). Photo by Haralampos Passalis, 2025.



Figure 3. Later addition of silver revetment on the hands of the icon of St. Jude Thaddeus. Photo by Haralampos Passalis, 2025.

The diffusion of the prayer parallels the expansion of the saint's veneration. The prayer is not only a medium of communication with the divine but also the fulfillment of a spiritual promise or vow. Such vows demonstrate how prayer is intertwined with the logic of reciprocity that underlies many forms of popular religious practice.<sup>42</sup> The act of praying is both a petition and a promise, an invocation of grace and a commitment to promote the saint's name. The restoration of his veneration, therefore, cannot be separated from the expanding circulation of this prayer, which is now shared not only in booklets and churches but increasingly through digital platforms. In this way, the continuous spread of the prayer in modern Greece functions as both an indicator and a confirmation of the saint's miraculous charisma and enduring relevance in contemporary Orthodox devotional culture.

## BOUNDARIES OF ACCEPTABILITY: PRAYER VS CHARM, RELIGION VS MAGIC, AND ECCLESIASTICAL REACTION

The widespread dissemination of the prayer to St. Jude Thaddeus in Greece has triggered a notable wave of ecclesiastical concern, largely centered on its perceived alignment or misalignment with Orthodox doctrine and liturgical norms. Reactions from clergy and theological commentators, documented in published articles, social media, and oral testimonies, reveal deep-rooted anxieties over the boundaries between legitimate and illegitimate religious practices. These reactions reproduce normative distinctions rooted in historically charged binaries

such as magic vs. religion, charm vs. prayer, Orthodox vs. heterodox, and ultimately, official vs. unofficial ritual practice.<sup>43</sup>

Institutional critiques often highlight the prayer's foreign origin and non-Orthodox features. In a widely circulated article dated September 7, 2022, the author denounces the prayer as an imported innovation from American Catholic circles:

“From distant Chicago in the USA, it appears that we have finally imported the notorious or, according to many experts of the Orthodox liturgical tradition, infamous nine-day prayer dedicated to Saint Jude Thaddeus, which has recently taken on extraordinary proportions in our country.”<sup>44</sup>

The prayer's adoption in Orthodox contexts is perceived as a distortion: “Someone borrowed it from the heretics, translated it into the modern Greek language and gave it Orthodox citizenship!”<sup>45</sup> Such reactions foreground concerns not only about content but also about ecclesial boundaries and devotional legitimacy.

In parallel, the prayer has also been interpreted through the lens of New Age syncretism, which Orthodox commentators often treat as a theological and ideological threat. The revival of Jude Thaddeus as a powerful intercessor is read by some as a symptom of alternative spiritualities that conflate early Christianity, hidden knowledge, and mystical revelation:

“In the end, it seems that the New Age is trying to confuse us with Jude and the brothers of the Lord (with all the reverence we owe to Jude Thaddeus and the Apostle James) who in some way represent a lost faith or a forgotten Church that must be revived in our days in order to return to the so-called roots of Christianity. A little secret gospel, a little Da Vinci Code, a little of everything [...].”<sup>46</sup>

The reference here to New Age tropes and esoteric revivalism links the prayer to broader cultural phenomena that threaten Orthodox theological coherence. Moreover, institutional suspicion intensifies when the prayer is promoted through charismatic sanctuaries and non-traditional figures, such as healers and lay distributors—who appear to bypass canonical authority:

“This surge is due to the excessive promotion it receives from the ‘miraculous’ chapel of the Holy Isidoros church in Lycabet-

tos, as well as through a specific website that has practically assumed a ‘contractual’ role in showcasing miracles and miraculous events [...].”<sup>47</sup>

In religious contexts, the legitimacy of practices such as petition, invocation, and intercession derives from their authorization by clerical institutions, which exercise a monopoly over the means of salvation (Bourdieu 1994: 109; 1991: 12). This institutional control generates a persistent tension at the core of the dichotomy between the sacred and the profane, as well as between officially sanctioned religious practices and those relegated to the realm of magic or sorcery, frequently conceptualized as subordinate or inverted expressions of religion.

In addition to these concerns, another recurring point of criticism centers on its performative and functional resemblance to magical practice. The prayer’s fixed format, repeated seven times daily for nine consecutive days with a promise of guaranteed success, is seen as introducing a procedural logic that departs from conventional Orthodox devotional norms.<sup>48</sup> As it is formulated in one critique:

“It is as if I am coercing God to act: a) absolutely, b) on any issue, and c) whenever I want.”<sup>49</sup>

“It is a fallacy. A prayer without elements of Orthodox origin, instead with Catholic elements. The fact of a guaranteed result in a certain period of time refers at best to anthropocentric secularism or, at worst, to white magic.”<sup>50</sup>

This aligns with a broader discomfort with devotional practices that frame prayer as a means to control divine action, thus blurring the line between supplication and magical coercion. These assessments align with a historically entrenched Orthodox position that views formulaic, result-oriented rituals as superstitious or even spiritually dangerous.

In response to such criticisms, the anonymous author of a later published booklet that includes a reprint of the prayer (ΣΒΠΘ) seeks to mitigate this tension. He addresses concerns regarding the use of “magical” numbers and the seemingly coercive structure of the prayer, writing:

“The number seven is a sacred number and the Church Fathers, such as Saint Chrysostom, consider it the number of the fullness of God. It is no coincidence that the Bible mentions the number seven many times, e.g. seven days of creation. [...] The number nine mentioned symbolizes the nine orders of the Heavenly

Angelic Powers [...] and that is why we want to symbolically honor them [...] Therefore, the purpose of the prayer mentioned above is not quantitative but symbolic. What is important is that the person prays with humility, faith and with his heart”.<sup>51</sup>

The use of numbers is thus reinterpreted through patristic and liturgical tradition as a symbolic act and spiritual discipline aimed at fostering concentration, humility, and faith. According to the anonymous author of this booklet, what truly matters is not the quantity but the quality of prayer performed “with humility, faith, and heartfelt sincerity.” This represents a strategy of legitimizing what may be perceived as marginal or borderline devotional expressions by transforming potentially magical elements into symbolically meaningful and theologically acceptable spiritual tools.

Testimonies, also shared on digital platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, and TikTok, position the prayer not as a charm or magical instrument, but as a source of profound spiritual encounter. One especially vivid account from TikTok illustrates this divergence:

“I have also had an experience with Saint Jude Thaddeus. Some years ago, I was given a prayer. I recited it every day, until people told me it was a lie, and so I burned the prayer. Yet, in my sleep, I began to recite the prayer of St. Jude Thaddeus by heart, and suddenly I found myself holding his head, burnt and scarred, as he shouted to me, ‘No! I’m not a lie.’”<sup>52</sup>

This dream-vision, anchored in emotional intensity and personal revelation, reflects an experiential mode of religious validation that, in the context of lived religion<sup>53</sup>, operates independently of doctrinal approval. An additional oral testimony, aligned with these accounts, describes a devotee who reported perceiving the figure of Saint Jude Thaddeus on the wall while reciting the prayer and subsequently capturing it with her mobile phone camera (Figure 4).<sup>54</sup> The prayer’s authenticity, in this experiential register, is thus confirmed not through theological conformity but through lived intimacy with the divine.<sup>55</sup>





Figure 4. Light formation described by the informant as the figure of Saint Jude Thaddeus during her recitation of the prayer. Photo by Synthia Metaxatou, 2020.

Rather than resolving the controversy, these testimonies further complicate the issue by foregrounding the classificatory ambiguity of the St. Jude prayer. Is it a charm, a heterodox ritual, or a legitimate prayer adapted to modern needs? To label it as “magic” is not a neutral analytical act but a disciplinary intervention that asserts institutional jurisdiction over acceptable forms of religiosity. In contrast, practitioners defend the prayer’s legitimacy by appealing to its affective force, its practical efficacy, and its role in sustaining spiritual resilience.<sup>56</sup> Particularly in moments of crisis—illness, unemployment, anxiety—the prayer provides a rhythmic, embodied tool for hope and transformation. It becomes, in effect, an “affective technology”: a ritual practice through which individuals seek not merely solutions but a sense of divine nearness.<sup>57</sup>

At its core, the debate over the St. Jude prayer is not solely about textual content or devotional propriety; it concerns the very grounds upon which spiritual authority is claimed, challenged, and reconfigured in the contemporary religious system. The prayer has emerged as a contested node in broader negotiations between charismatic innovation and institutional order, between vernacular piety and liturgical orthodoxy. It reveals a devotional system where globalization, digital mediation, and theological pluralism intersect, and where boundaries between prayer and charm are continually negotiated and contested.

## CONCLUSIONS

The case of the prayer to St. Jude Thaddeus reveals how ritual words, or “words of power”, remain a vibrant and transformative force in contemporary religious life, not despite modernity and technological progress but because of them. Its wide circulation across media platforms, from printed booklets, photocopies, and prayer cards to YouTube videos, Instagram posts, and TikTok testimonies, exemplifies how sacred texts adapt to evolving communication technologies. In Greece, the integration of this prayer into Orthodox devotional practice, despite its origins in Catholic tradition, attests to both its emotional resonance and perceived efficacy. Whether framed as a prayer, a charm, or something in between, its performative structure enables the faithful to articulate desperation, seek intercession, and reaffirm their faith in moments of crisis.

Simultaneously, the ecclesiastical controversy surrounding the prayer reflects broader tensions over spiritual authority, religious boundaries, and the categorization of ritual practice. The distinctions between “legitimate” prayer and “magical” charm, or between Orthodox and heterodox expressions of faith, are not merely descriptive but also deeply political. As this study shows, such taxonomies are actively negotiated, resisted, or reimagined by practitioners, who often appeal to affective experiences, personal testimony, and miraculous outcomes as alternative modes of religious validation.

Ultimately, the prayer to St. Jude Thaddeus serves as a lens through which to explore the hybrid, transnational, and media-mediated nature of contemporary “words of power”. Its growing popularity within the Greek Orthodox context highlights the fluidity of devotional forms and the persistent need for ritual speech that addresses existential vulnerability. By tracing the prayer’s diffusion within contemporary Greek religiosity and examining its adaptation across multiple media platforms, this study demonstrates the enduring role of “words of power” as mediating agents between the human and the divine in a world increasingly shaped by pluralism and digital interconnectedness. At the same time, it lays the groundwork for broader comparative and cross-cultural investigation, as textual variations and analogous performative contexts continue to emerge across diverse Christian traditions worldwide.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> For terminological discussions, see Passalis 2011: 34–37; 2016: 257–60. In this study, the term “words of power” is used as defined by Borsje (2008: 134).

<sup>2</sup> Interviews were conducted with approximately fifty participants residing in Athens and Thessaloniki, the two largest urban centers in contemporary Greece. Fieldwork took place between 2022 and 2024. The informants represented a wide range of social backgrounds, with a high proportion holding advanced academic qualifications. Women constituted approximately 70 percent of participants, and ages ranged from 40 to 80 years. Acknowledgments are due to all those whose contributions were essential to this study.

<sup>3</sup> The full trajectory of the transmission, dissemination, and expansion of this devotion requires specialized inquiry. In this paper, the discussion is limited to outlining the broader framework through which the prayer and the saint’s veneration entered the religious life of the Greek Orthodox faithful.

<sup>4</sup> Tasoulas 2013: 8. One noteworthy indication of this diffusion is that the prayer has been translated into many European languages; see note 17.

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix C: 14a.

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix C: 14b.

<sup>7</sup> See Appendix C: 1a, 15. See also note 19.

<sup>8</sup> For typical Catholic depictions of the saint, see Appendix C: 3. See also note 7.

<sup>9</sup> The Hellenistic-era name of the city now known as Urfa in southeastern Turkey.

<sup>10</sup> For this tradition and its authenticity, see also Tasoulas 2003: 29–38 and Lekkos 2003: 32–40.

<sup>11</sup> The Claretians are a Catholic religious congregation for men, founded in 1849 by Fr. Antonio María Claret. Based in Rome, they serve as missionaries in over 70 countries. See Appendix C: 5.

<sup>12</sup> See Appendix C: 23.

<sup>13</sup> It is worth mentioning here that several institutions have adopted Saint Jude as their patron saint, including the Chicago Police Department, the Brazilian soccer team Clube de Regatas do Flamengo, and various hospitals—most notably St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee (Appendix C: 1a).

<sup>14</sup> According to Orsi (1996), this devotion particularly resonated with Catholic women, who often turned to St. Jude during personal and family crises such as illness, poverty, and war. Women wrote thousands of thank-you letters to the saint, which were frequently published or displayed in churches. See also Appendix C: 14c.

<sup>15</sup> See Appendix C: 8.

<sup>16</sup> See Appendix C: 13.

<sup>17</sup> Translations in the following European languages are provided as indicative examples: Italian (Appendix C: 4), Russian (Appendix C: 6), Spanish (Appendix C: 7), French (Appendix C: 16), Romanian (Appendix C: 18), Finnish (Appendix C: 19), Bulgarian (Appendix C: 21).

<sup>18</sup> According to Bairaktaris (2019, 9), seven figures bearing the name Jude are mentioned in the New Testament, the most prominent being Jude Iscariot, Jude Thaddeus, and Jude the brother of the Lord.

<sup>19</sup> See Appendix C: 15. The identification of Jude Thaddeus with a specific historical figure in both Western and Eastern Christian traditions is a subject of specialized research and lies beyond the scope of the present study.

<sup>20</sup> For biographical information, see Bairaktaris 2019: 7–13. See also Lekkos 2003: 11–18.

<sup>21</sup> ΜΣΟΕ 1997: 244–45; Lekkos 2003: 18.

<sup>22</sup> For a detailed presentation of the saint’s biography, see Tasoulas 2003: 13–48. See also Lekkos 2003: 7–10; ΜΣΟΕ 1996: 359–60.

<sup>23</sup> ΜΣΟΕ 1996: 359–60; Lekkos 2003: 7.

<sup>24</sup> Appendix C: 9a.

<sup>25</sup> In most iconographic depictions, Saint Jude Thaddeus bears the title of Apostle, which reflects the most widespread representation of the saint in Greek Orthodox iconography. For common iconographic depictions of the Saint, see Appendix C: 22.

<sup>26</sup> The term “lived religion” is used in contemporary religious studies to denote the ways individuals engage with religious belief and practice in their everyday lives (Orsi 1997: 7; 2002: xxix). This concept moves beyond the notion of “popular religion,” which often implies a distinction between everyday religious practices and forms of “official” or “normative” religion, and permits a more holistic approach to religious phenomena (Orsi 2002: xxxii). For a discussion of the development and application of the term in the analysis of contemporary religious experience, see Knibbe and Kupari 2020: 157–76.

<sup>27</sup> Oral testimony recorded in the area of Attica. This religious legend appears to have its origin in printed sources; see Kotsiometis 2003 (“Αντί προλόγου” [= Instead of a Prologue], unpaginated).

<sup>28</sup> On the etiological function of myths in relation to “words of power” explaining their origin and legitimizing their effectiveness, see Nadel 1968: 191; Passalis 2019: 375–76; and Eliade 1963: 24–28.

<sup>29</sup> See Appendix C: 20.

<sup>30</sup> See Appendix C: 9b, 12, 24.

<sup>31</sup> See Appendix A, where the English original (App. C: 2) of the Greek translated prayer is provided.

<sup>32</sup> See Appendix B, which includes the Greek text together with its English translation. Italics indicate the variants found in version B, while the text placed in parentheses corresponds to additions introduced in the digital version (D).

<sup>33</sup> According to the oral testimony of the priest serving the chapel, “the saint appeared to him in a dream and revealed the prayer.” This variant circulates on printed cards distributed by the chapel.

<sup>34</sup> Appendix C: 9b, 25.

<sup>35</sup> The *novena* (from Latin *novem*, “nine”) is a devotional practice in Christianity—especially prominent in Roman Catholicism—involving prayer or acts of devotion over nine consecutive days; see Appendix C: 1b.

<sup>36</sup> Kotsiometis 2003: 5. My translation.

<sup>37</sup> A printed version of the prayer is also available from the Holy Monastery at Saint Paraskevi (Women's Monastery) in Domiros–Rodolivos, Serres; see Appendix C: 11.

<sup>38</sup> See Appendix C: 25.

<sup>39</sup> See Appendix C: 26a.

<sup>40</sup> A general survey of Greek social media platforms (YouTube, Facebook, TikTok, Instagram) confirms the wide diffusion of the saint's veneration and the frequent testimonies attributed to the prayer's miraculous efficacy.

<sup>41</sup> Votive offerings (*τάματα*) constitute a long-standing devotional practice in Greece, extending from antiquity to the present. These include metallic plaques placed beneath icons, as well as silver or gold revetments covering parts of an icon—often all but the face—as expressions of gratitude for the fulfillment of a vow. For discussions of the practice, see Antzoulidou-Retsila 1984: 15–19; Kenna 1985: 345–368; Pouchner 2024.

<sup>42</sup> An additional indication of the spread of his veneration is the preparation of a special votive pie (*πίτα*, i.e., a ritual sweet cake) dedicated to the saint, known as Thaddaïopita, analogous to the widely popular Phanouropita (pie for Saint Phanourios). See Appendix C: 26b.

<sup>43</sup> For negative reactions to the use of the prayer within official ecclesiastical circles, see the following digital sources: Appendix C: 9d, 10, 20, 26c.

<sup>44</sup> See Appendix C: 20a. My translation.

<sup>45</sup> See Appendix C: 20b. My translation.

<sup>46</sup> See Appendix C: 17. My translation.

<sup>47</sup> See Appendix C: 20a. My translation.

<sup>48</sup> See Appendix C: 9d.

<sup>49</sup> See Appendix C: 17. My translation. On the distinction between prayer and charm, see Skorupski 1976, 131, who describes this as a model of “prescriptive compulsion.” According to this framework, the charm functions as an instrument of power designed to achieve a specific outcome, whereas prayer constitutes a request and an end in itself. See also Sebeok and Ingemann 1956, 301; Webster 1952, 111–12; Thomas 1971, 41; Passalis 2016, 231–237.

<sup>50</sup> See Appendix C: 17. My translation.

<sup>51</sup> ΣΒΠΘ: 14–16. My translation.

<sup>52</sup> Appendix C: 9b.

<sup>53</sup> For the notion of “lived religion”, see note 26.

<sup>54</sup> Oral testimony communicated to me during the data-collection phase of this study. The informant (female, S.M.) residing in the area of Kifissia (Attica), regularly visits the Church of Panagia Eleftherotria, where an icon of Saint Jude Thaddeus (Figure 2, 3) is venerated. The photograph is published here with her kind permission.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. the following comments under a video (Appendix C: 26c) where the speaking priest urges the faithful not to use the prayer, claiming that it constitutes white magic: “We must listen to those who declare they have been saved through this prayer — and they are many!”, “I have seen only good come from this prayer to this great Saint. [...] Let's not demonize everything that seems unfamiliar to us. Nor can we dismiss the many miracles that occur through this prayer”; “How can anyone call a prayer

to Saint Jude Thaddeus white magic? So much negativity about a prayer [...] Just because it supposedly originates from the Catholic Church? So, what, everything from the Catholic Church is automatically worthless, without discernment? Are all Catholics bound for hell?” My translation.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Tambiah 1990: 82–83: “The now puzzling duality of magic will disappear only when we succeed in embedding magic in a more ample theory of human life in which the path of ritual is seen as an indispensable mode for man anywhere and everywhere of relating to and participating in the life of the world”. See also Frankfurter 2002: 160. For the history of the terms “magic” and “religion”, see Bremmer 2002a: 1–11; 2002b: 267–271. For an analytical discussion about the same terms and categorization in traditional society, see Passalis 2011: 34–37.

<sup>57</sup> On the psychotherapeutic effectiveness of symbolic ritual systems, their ability to alleviate anxiety and individual distress, as well as their function as a mechanism of coordination in situations of tension (homeostatic control), see Harris 1968: 423–24, 438. Thus, the recourse to symbolic acts is transformed from a process of “semiotic fallacy” into an act of “semiotic therapy” (Nöth 1990: 190–191). See also Douglas 1979: xix. For the reduction of anxiety and distress, see Shirley-Romney 1962 and Felson-Gmelch 1979: 589.

## APPENDIX A – ENGLISH TEXT OF THE PRAYER TO SAINT JUDE THADDEUS WITH NOTES ON MODIFICATIONS IN THE GREEK TRANSLATION

English version (Appendix C:2)	Modifications/additions in the Greek text (see also Appendix B)
<p>*1</p> <p><i>Most holy Apostle, Saint Jude, faithful servant and friend of Jesus, the Church*<sup>2</sup> honors you as member of the saint community with Saint Simon, Apostle, on October 28*<sup>3</sup> and invokes you universally, as the patron of hopeless cases, of things almost despaired of. Pray for us, we are*<sup>4</sup> so helpless and alone. Make use, we implore you, of that particular privilege given to you by God to bring visible and speedy help where help is almost despaired of.</i></p>	<p>*1: (Addition) introductory formula: Invocation to Jesus Christ and a request to help and have mercy on the performer → invoking Jesus Christ and asking for His mercy through the mediation of Jude Thaddeus.</p> <p>Repetition of <i>Κύριε Ιησού Χριστέ, ἐλέησον με</i> [= Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me].</p> <p>*2: <i>the Orthodox Church throughout the world</i></p> <p>*3: The reference to Saint Simon and the date of his commemoration is missing.</p> <p>*4: Instead of “for us, we are”, the Greek text reads “for me, I am”.</p>



<p><u>Come to our assistance <i>in our necessities, creative work, tribulations and sufferings, particularly (here make your request), so that we may be better able to know, love and serve God with you and with all of God's people forever in accordance with God's Divine Will.</i></u><sup>*5</sup></p> <p>We promise you, Oh blessed Saint Jude, to be ever mindful of this great favor, to honor you as our special and powerful patron, and to gratefully encourage devotion to you, as favored servant to Jesus.</p> <p><u>May the most blessed heart of Jesus be adored as the Priest ordained Sacramental Presence in the Eucharist, and be received by the faithful Body of Christ throughout the world and through the Holy Spirit bring God's creation, including us undeserving servants, to perfection in God's Name. Amen.</u></p> <p><u>May the most sacred heart of Jesus be praised and glorified with the Father and Holy Spirit as One God in Holy Trinity, now and forever. Amen.</u></p> <p><u>Blessed be the immaculate heart of Mary, Mother of God, assumed into heaven, anticipating our bodily resurrection, and eternally glorified in Body and Soul with Her Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.</u><sup>*6</sup></p> <p>Our Father [...]</p> <p><sup>*7</sup></p>	<p><sup>*5</sup>: so that I may receive the consolation and help of the Holy Trinity in all my needs, tribulations, and sufferings - (here make your request) - and so that I may be able to praise Jesus Christ with you and with all Orthodox Christians</p> <p><sup>*6</sup>: The Greek text begins with a blessing of the Holy Trinity, followed by a blessing of Jesus Christ. It then includes repeated blessings of the Name of Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, and Saint Jude Thaddeus. See Appendix B.</p> <p><sup>*7</sup>: The Greek text continues with an excerpt from a well-known Greek hymn to the Theotokos and concludes with a repetition of the introductory formula.</p>
---	--

## APPENDIX B – GREEK PRAYER TEXT WITH VARIANTS (A, B, C) AND PARALLEL ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The main text (in regular font) represents variant A. Italics indicate additions or modifications found in variant B, while text in parentheses represents additions from the digital variant (variant C).

Greek text	Translation in English
<p>(Κύριε Ιησού Χριστέ, Υιέ του Θεού, διά της μεσιτείας του Αγίου και ενδόξου σου Αποστόλου Ιούδα του Θαδδαίου, ελέησον με τον αμαρτωλό. Κύριε Ιησού Χριστέ, ελέησόν με τον αμαρτωλό.)</p> <p>Αγιότατε Απόστολε, Άγιε Ιούδα Θαδδαίε, πιστέ υπηρέτη και φίλε του Ιησού, η Ορθοδοξία σ' όλον τον κόσμο σε τιμά και σε επικαλείται ως Προστάτη των απελπισμένων υποθέσεων, αυτών για τις οποίες έχει χαθεί κάθε ελπίδα.</p> <p>Προσευχήσου για μένα. Είμαι τόσο απελπισμένος/η και μόνος/η. Σε ικετεύω, κάνε χρήση αυτής της ιδιαίτερης χάρις που σου έχει δοθεί, να φέρνεις ορατή και γρήγορη βοήθεια όπου δεν υπάρχει καμία σχεδόν ελπίδα βοήθειας.</p> <p>Βοήθησέ με τούτη την ώρα της ανάγκης, για να μπορέσω να λάβω την παρηγοριά και την βοήθεια της Αγίας Τριάδος, σ' όλες μου τις ανάγκες, δοκιμασίες, και βάσανα – (εδώ εκφράζετε το αίτημά σας) – και να μπορώ, σε κάθε στιγμή της ζωής μου, να σε ευγνωμονώ και να υμνώ τον Χριστό μαζί με σένα και με όλους τους Ορθόδοξους Χριστιανούς. Υπόσχομαι, ω ευλογημένε Άγιε Ιούδα Θαδδαίε, να ενθυμούμαι πάντοτε αυτή τη μεγάλη Χάρη, να σε τιμώ πάντοτε, ιδιαίτερα ως τον πιο δυνατό προστάτη μου, και με ευγνωμοσύνη να ενθαρρύνω την ευλάβεια προς εσένα. AMHN.</p> <p>Είθε το όνομα της Αγίας Τριάδος να λατρεύεται και να υμνείται απ' όλους τους Ορθόδοξους Χριστιανούς, στους αιώνες των αιώνων. AMHN.</p> <p>Είθε το όνομα του Κυρίου ημών Ιησού Χριστού, να υμνείται και να δοξάζεται τώρα και παντοτινά. AMHN.</p> <p>Άγιε Ιούδα Θαδδαίε, δέησου για μας και άκουσε τις προσευχές μας. AMHN.</p>	<p>(Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, through the intercession of your holy and glorious Apostle Jude Thaddeus, have mercy on me, a sinner. Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me, a sinner.)</p> <p>Most holy Apostle, Saint Jude Thaddeus, faithful servant and friend of Jesus, the Orthodox Church throughout the world honors you and invokes you as the patron of hopeless causes, those for which all hope has been lost.</p> <p>Pray for me. I am so desperate and alone. I implore you to make use of this special grace which has been given to you, to bring visible and swift help where there is almost no hope of help.</p> <p>Help me in this hour of need, so that I can receive the consolation and help of the Holy Trinity, in all my needs, tribulations and sufferings – (here make your request) – and so that in every moment of my life, I may be able to praise and express my gratitude to Jesus Christ with you and with all Orthodox Christians.</p> <p>I promise, O blessed Saint Jude Thaddeus, to be ever mindful of this great favor, to honor you as our special and powerful patron, and to gratefully encourage reverence for you. AMEN.</p> <p>May the name of the Holy Trinity be venerated and praised by all Orthodox Christians, forever and ever. AMEN.</p> <p>May the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ be praised and glorified now and forever. AMEN.</p> <p>Saint Jude Thaddeus, pray for us and hear our prayers. AMEN.</p>

<p>Ας είναι ευλογημένο το όνομα του Ιησού Χριστού.  Ας είναι ευλογημένο το όνομα του Τιμίου και Ζωοποιού Σταυρού.  Ας είναι ευλογημένο το όνομα της Υπεραγίας και Αειπαρθένου Μαρίας.  Ας είναι ευλογημένος ο Άγιος Ιούδας ο Θαδδαίος σ' όλον τον κόσμο και σ' όλους τους αιώνες. AMHN.  Πάτερ ημών [...]. AMHN.  Χαίρε Μαρία Κεχαριτωμένη, ο Κύριος μετά Σου.</p> <p>Ευλογημένη συ εν γυναιξί και ευλογημένος ο καρπός της κοιλίας σου, ο Ιησούς. Υπεραγία Θεοτόκε πρέσβευε υπέρ ημών των αμαρτωλών νυν και αεί και την ώρα του θανάτου ημών.  (Κύριε Ιησού Χριστέ, Υιέ του Θεού δια της μεσιτείας του Αγίου και ενδόξου σου Αποστόλου Ιούδα του Θαδδαίου, ελέησον με τον αμαρτωλό.)  Απολυτίκιο: “Ἦχος α΄. Τον τάφον σου Σωτήρ.”</p>	<p>May the name of Jesus Christ be blessed.  May the name of the Holy and Life-giving Cross be blessed.  May the name of the Most Holy and ever Virgin Mary be blessed.  May Saint Jude Thaddeus be blessed throughout the world and in all ages. AMEN.  Our Father in heaven [...]. AMEN.  Rejoice, Mary, full of grace; the Lord is with thee.</p> <p>Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, pray for us, the sinners, now and at the hour of our death.  (Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, through the intercession of your holy and glorious Apostle Jude Thaddeus, have mercy on me, a sinner.)  Apolytikion: “Tone 1. Your tomb, O Savior.”</p>
--	--

## APPENDIX C – ONLINE SOURCES AND WEB REFERENCES

(Numbered / alphabetical by website name; last accessed 11/29/2025)

1. Catholic Online:  
a) “St. Jude Thaddaeus,” [https://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint\\_id=127](https://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=127)  
b) “Novena,” <https://www.catholic.org/encyclopedia/view.php?id=8568>
2. Catholic-saints: <https://www.catholic-saints.info/catholic-prayers/prayer-to-saint-jude-thaddeus.htm>
3. CatholicSaintMedals: “St. Jude,” <https://catholicsaintmedals.com/saints/st-jude/>
4. ChurchPop: “Preghiera a San Giuda Taddeo,” <https://it.churchpop.com/preghiera-a-san-giuda-taddeo-per-i-casi-disperati-e-senza-speranza/>
5. Claretians: <https://www.claret.org/claretians/>
6. Claret.ru: “Молитва святому Иуде Фаддею,” [https://claret.ru/liturgy/sm\\_lit\\_taddeus.htm](https://claret.ru/liturgy/sm_lit_taddeus.htm)
7. Devocionario: “Oración a San Judas Tadeo,” [https://www.devocionario.com/santos/judas\\_1.html](https://www.devocionario.com/santos/judas_1.html)
8. El Pais: “Mexicans rush to see the relics of Saint Jude, the ‘most miraculous’ saint”, <https://english.elpais.com/international/2024-08-15/mexicans-rush-to-see-the-relics-of-saint-jude-the-most-miraculous-saint.html>
9. Ekklesia Online:

- a) “Άγιος Ιούδας Θαδδαίος: Όλες οι Εκκλησίες του Αγίου Ιούδα του Θαδδαίου” [= Saint Jude Thaddeus: All the Churches of Saint Jude Thaddeus], <https://www.ekklisiaonline.gr/ekklisiaonline/agios-ioudas-thaddeos-oles-i-ekklisies-tou-agiou-iouda-tou-thaddeou>
- b) “Προσευχή στον Άγιο Ιούδα το Θαδδαίο” [= Prayer to Saint Jude Thaddeus], <https://www.ekklisiaonline.gr/proseyches/prosefchi-ston-agio-iouda-to-thaddeo/>
- c) “Ο Άγιος Ιούδας Θαδδαίος μας βλέπει όλους” [= Saint Jude Thaddeus watches over everyone], (Video, TikTok), <https://www.tiktok.com/@ekklisiaonline/video/7136889553180232965>
- d) “Προσευχή Ιούδα Θαδδαίου – ΠΡΟΣΟΧΗ: Σχεδιασμένη παγίδα πιστών” [= Prayer to Jude Thaddeus – WARNING: A crafted deception targeting the faithful], <https://www.ekklisiaonline.gr/nea/prosefchi-iouda-thaddeou-prosochi-schediasmeni-pagida-piston/>
10. Iera Mitropolis Neas Smirnis:  
“Ο άγιος Ιούδας ο Θαδδαίος και η προέλευση της δήθεν θαυματουργικής προσευχής” [= Saint Jude Thaddeus and the Origin of the So-Called ‘Miraculous’ Prayer], Holy Church of St. Nicholas of Alimos, <https://www.sostis.gr/blog/item/2971-o-agios-ioudas>
11. im-agparaskevis: <https://www.im-agparaskevis.gr/product/proseychi-ston-agio-iouda-ton-thaddaio/>
12. Mystagogy Resource Center: “15 Orthodox Shrines Dedicated to the Holy Apostle Jude Thaddeus,” <https://www.johnsanidopoulos.com/2019/08/15-shrines-dedicated-to-holy-apostle.html>
13. National Shrine of St. Jude Thaddeus: <https://www.stjudemanila.com>
14. National Shrine of St. Jude:
  - a) “History of St. Bridget of Sweden,” <https://shrineofstjude.org/learn/saints/st-bridget-of-sweden/>
  - b) “Patron of Hope and Difficult Causes,” by Father John M. Lozano, CMF, <https://shrineofstjude.org/saint-jude-thaddeus-lozano/>
  - c) “History of the Shrine,” <https://shrineofstjude.org/the-shrine/history-of-the-shrine/>
15. New Advent: “Epistle of St. Jude,” <https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08542b.htm>
16. Neuvaine.ca: “Neuvaine à Saint Jude”, <https://neuvaine.ca/>
17. Orthros:  
“Προσευχή στον Άγιο Ιούδα τον Θαδδαίο ή έντεχνα σχεδιασμένη παγίδα πιστών μετά κεκαλυμμένης μαγείας;” [= Prayer to Saint Jude Thaddeus or a skillfully designed trap involving concealed magic?], [bit.ly/4rAOA6X](https://bit.ly/4rAOA6X)
18. Ortodox.md: “Rugăciune către Sfântul Apostol Iuda Tadeu,” <https://ortodox.md/rugaciune-catre-sfantul-apostol-iuda-tadeu-pentru-situatii-disperate>
19. Ort.fi: “Pyhä apostoli Juudas Taddeus,” <https://ort.fi/synaksario/pyha-apostoli-juudas-taddeus-herran-veli/>
20. Orthodoxyia:  
“Απίστευτες ακρότητες στο όνομα της Εκκλησίας” [= Unbelievable Excesses in the Name of the Church], <https://orthodoxia.info/news/parapoioun-apofaseis-tis-synodoy/>
21. Pravoslaviето: “Свети апостол Юда, брат Господен,” [https://www.pravoslaviето.com/life/06.19\\_sv\\_ap\\_Juda\\_brat\\_Gospoden.htm](https://www.pravoslaviето.com/life/06.19_sv_ap_Juda_brat_Gospoden.htm)
22. Saint: “Saint Jude Thaddeus,” <https://www.saint.gr/827/saint.aspx>
23. Santuario Nacional de San Judas Tadeo Santiago, Chile:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20131012050426/http://www.sanjudas.cl/paginas/santuario.html>

24. Vima Orthodoxias: “Άγιος Ιούδας Θαδδαίος: Όλες οι Εκκλησίες του Αγίου Ιούδα του Θαδδαίου” [= St. Jude Thaddeus: The Six Churches and Chapels in Attica], <https://www.vimaorthodoxias.gr/nea/agios-ioudas-thaddaios-oi-exi-ekklisies-tou-stin-attiki/>

25. Xristianos: “Προσευχή στον Άγιο Ιούδα το Θαδδαίο” [= Prayer to Saint Jude Thaddeus], <https://xristianos.gr/proseuxi-ston-agio-iouda-ton-thaddeo/>

26. YouTube videos:

a) “Θαύματα του Αγίου Ιούδα του Θαδδαίου, Αποστόλου του Χριστού. Ομιλία του π. Δημήτρη, ιερέα των Αγίων Ισιδώρων Λυκαβηττού” [= Miracles of Saint Jude Thaddeus, Apostle of Christ: A Sermon by Fr. Dimitrios, Priest of the Saints Isidore of Lycabettus], <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MWGAxF-Q3Jo>

b) “Θαδδαιοπίτα και η προσευχή στον Άγιο Ιούδα Θαδδαίο” [= The Thaddeus Pie and the Prayer to Saint Jude Thaddeus], <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W5PdZD9h-3I>

c) “Η προσευχή στον Άγιο Ιούδα τον Θαδδαίο” [= The Prayer to Saint Jude Thaddeus], <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KY0pBQR8ZRE>

## REFERENCES

- [Antzoulatau-Retsila] Αντζουλάτου-Ρετσίλα, Ε. 1984. Το ελληνικό τάμα στο πέρασμα των αιώνων [=The Greek votive offering through the centuries]. *Μυριόβιβλος* 5, pp. 15–19.
- Borsje, J. 2008. Druids, Deer and ‘Words of Power’: Coming to Terms with Evil in Medieval Ireland. In Katja Ritari & Alexandra Bergholm (eds.), *Approaches to Religion and Mythology in Celtic Studies*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 122–149.
- Bourdieu, Pierre 1991. Genesis and Structure of the Religious Field. *Comparative Social Research* 13, pp. 1–44.
- Bourdieu, Pierre 1994. *Language and Symbolic Power*. Oxford: Polity Press.
- Bremmer, Jan N. 2002a. “The Birth of the Term Magic.” In Jan N. Bremmer & Jan R. Veenstra (eds.) *The Metamorphosis of Magic from Late Antiquity to the Early Modern Period*. Leuven, Paris, Dudley (MA): Peeters, pp. 1–11.
- Bremmer, Jan N. 2002b. “Appendix: Magic and Religion”. In Jan N. Bremmer & Jan R. Veenstra. (eds) *The Metamorphosis of Magic from Late Antiquity to the Early Modern Period*. Leuven, Paris, Dudley (MA): Peeters, pp. 267–71.
- Douglas, M. 1979. An Introduction: Thirty Years after Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic. In M. Douglas (ed.), *Witchcraft. Confession and Accusation*. London: Tavistock Publications, pp. xiii–xxxviii.
- Eliade, M. 1963. *Myth and Reality*. New York: Harper and Row Inc.
- Farhadian, Charles E. 2012. *Armenian Christians*. In Mark A. Lamport, Mitri Raheb (eds), *The Rowman & Littlefield Handbook of Christianity in the Middle East*. New York, London: Rowman & Littlefield, 276–86.
- Felson, Richard B. & Gmelch, G. 1979. Uncertainty and the Use of Magic, *Current Anthropology* 20, pp. 578–89.

- Frankfurter, D. 2002. "Dynamics of Ritual Expertise in Antiquity and Beyond: Towards a New Taxonomy of Magicians", in Paul Allan Mirecki and Marvin W. Meyer (eds.) *Magic and Ritual in the Ancient World*, Leiden: Brill, pp. 159–178.
- Harris, Marvin 1968. *The Rise of Anthropological Theory: A History of Theories of Culture*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Kapaló, James A. 2011. Genre and Authority in the Scholarly Construction of Charm and Prayer: A View from the Margins, *Incantatio* 1, pp. 79–101.
- Kenna, E. Margaret 1985. Icons in Theory and Practice: An Orthodox Christian Example. *History of Religions* 24 (4), pp. 347–368.
- Knibbe, Kim & Kupari, Helena 2020. Theorizing Lived Religion: An Introduction, *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 35/2, pp. 157–176.
- [Kotsiometis] Κοτσιομήτης, Ευάγγελος 2003. *Απόστολος του Χριστού. Άγιος Ιούδας Θαδδαίος, ο Θεάδελφος Μαθητής του Κυρίου μας. Ο Βίος, η Παράκλησις και οι Χαιρετισμοί του* [=Apostle of Christ. Saint Jude Thaddeus, the brother of God and Disciple of our Lord. His Life, Supplicatory Canon, and Salutations]. Athens: Self-published, March 2003.
- (ΜΣΟΕ): Μέγας Συναξαριστής της Ορθοδόξου Εκκλησίας [=The Great Collection of Synaxaria of the Orthodox Church]. Αθήνα: έκδοση Επισκόπου Οινόης Ματθαίου Λάγγη. Τόμ. ΣΤ' (Ιούνιος [= June]), 1997. Τόμ. Η' (Αύγουστος [= August]), 1996.
- [Lekkos] Λέκκος, Ευάγγελος Π. 2003. Άγιος Ιούδας ο Θαδδαίος (και ο Αδελφόθεος και ο Βαρσαββάς) [=Saint Jude Thaddeus (also the Brother of the Lord and Barsabas)]. Αθήνα: Σαΐτης.
- [Bairaktaris] Μπαϊρακτάρης, Στυλιανός 2019. *Ο άγιος Ιούδας Θαδδαίος και η θεόπνευστή Επιστολή του* [=Saint Jude Thaddeus and his divinely inspired Epistle]. Αθήνα: Καινούργια Γη.
- Nadel, S. F. 1968. Malinowski on Magic and Religion. In Raymond Firth (ed.), *Man and Culture. An Evaluation of the Work of Bronislaw Malinowski*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, pp. 189–208.
- Nöth, Winfried 1990. *Handbook of Semiotics*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Orsi, Robert 1996. *Thank You, St. Jude: Women's Devotion to the Patron Saint of Hopeless Causes*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Orsi, Robert 1997. Everyday miracles. The study of lived religion. In Hall, David D. (ed) *Lived Religion in America: Toward a History of Practice*. Princeton (N.J.): Princeton University Press, pp. 3–21.
- Orsi, Robert 2002. *The Madonna of 115th Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem, 1880-1950*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- [Passalis] Πασσαλής, Χ. 2016. *Νεοελληνικές επωδές. Η δύναμη του άρρητου λόγου στην ελληνική λαϊκή παράδοση* [=Modern Greek charms. The power of unspoken speech in Greek Folk Tradition]. Θεσσαλονίκη: Ρώμη.
- Passalis, H. 2011. Genres and Categories of Verbal Magic: Towards a Holistic Approach. *Revista de Etnografie și Folclor / Journal of Ethnography and Folklore*, new series 1–2, pp. 33–46.
- Passalis, H. 2014. From Written to Oral Tradition. Survival and Transformation of St. Sisinnios Prayer in Oral Greek Charms. *Incantatio* 4, pp. 111–138.
- Passalis, H. 2019. The Etiology of a Disorder (Dis-ease) and the Restoration of Order (Therapy). A Case of a Greek Belief Narrative Connected with Charms against Abdominal Diseases. *Acta Ethnographica Hungarica* 64(2), pp. 374–394.



- Passalis, H. 2010. *Clerics and Ambiguity: Social Control and Religious Identity Formation in Greek Traditional Culture*. In *Clerics and the Vernacular*, SPIN, University of Amsterdam 8–9 July 2010 (online: [https://www.academia.edu/93978326/Clerics\\_and\\_Ambiguity\\_Social\\_Control\\_and\\_Religious\\_Identity\\_Formation\\_in\\_Greek\\_Traditional\\_Culture](https://www.academia.edu/93978326/Clerics_and_Ambiguity_Social_Control_and_Religious_Identity_Formation_in_Greek_Traditional_Culture), last accessed 11/29/2025).
- [Pouchner] Πούχνερ, Βάλτερ, 2024. Το φανταστικό στον λαϊκό πολιτισμό της Ελλάδας και της Βαλκανικής – Δ' ΜΕΡΟΣ. *Περί ου*, 14 Δεκεμβρίου 2024 (<https://www.periou.gr/valter-pouchner-to-fantasiako-ston-laiko-politismo-tis-elladas-kai-tis-valkanikis-d%ce%84-meros/>, last accessed 11/29/2025)
- ΣΒΠΘ: Σύντομος βίος και Προσευχή εννεαημέρου του αγίου Θαδδαίου του θαδέλφου, [=Brief Life, Prayer, and Novena Prayer to St. Thaddeus the brother of God], (booklet without date of publication or editorial information).
- Sebeok, Thomas A. & Ingemann, Frances, J. 1956. *Studies in Cheremis: The Supernatural*. [Viking Fund Publication in Anthropology 22], New York: Wenner-Gren Foundation.
- Shirley, Robert W. & Romney, Kimball 1962. Love Magic and Socialization Anxiety: A Cross-Cultural Study, *American Anthropologist*, 64/5, pp. 1028–1031.
- Skorupski, John 1976. *Symbol and Theory. A Philosophical Study of Theories of Religion in Social Anthropology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sutcliffe, Steven J. – Ingvild Sælid Gilhus (eds.) 2014. *New Age Spirituality: Rethinking Religion*. New York: Routledge.
- Tambiah, Stanley Jeyaraja 1990. *Magic, Science, Religion, and the Scope of Rationality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [Tasoulas] Τασούλας, Μανουήλ 2013. *Ο Άγιος Απόστολος του Κυρίου και Θεάδελφος Ιούδας ο Θαδδαίος*. Αθήνα: Επτάλοφος.
- Thomas, Keith 1971. *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Toporkov, A.L. (ed.) 2017. Сисиниева легенда в фольклорных и рукописных традициях Ближнего Востока, Балкан и Восточной Европы [=St Sisinnius' legend in folklore and written traditions of the Near East, Balkans, and Eastern Europe]. Москва: Индрик.
- Toporkov, Andrey L. 2019. St Sisinnius' Legend in Folklore and Handwritten Traditions of Eurasia and Africa (Outcomes and Perspectives of Research). *Studia Litterarum* 4 (2), pp. 312–341.
- York, Michael 2001. New Age Commodification and Appropriation of Spirituality. *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 16/3, pp. 361–372.
- Webster, Hutton 1952. *La Magie dans les sociétés primitives*, traduction de Jean Gouillard. Paris: Payot.

## BIO

**Dr. Haralampos Passalis** is a teacher of Greek language and an external researcher at the Centre for the Greek Language (Κέντρο για την Ελληνική Γλώσσα, ΚΕΓ), Department of Medieval Greek Lexicography, in Thessaloniki, Greece. He has been a guest lecturer at the University of

Amsterdam and has taught Greek in Greek-language schools in Amsterdam, The Hague, and Utrecht. He currently teaches at Model College in Thessaloniki and serves as chief editor of the Epitome of Emmanuel Kriaras' Dictionary of Medieval Vernacular Greek Literature (1100–1669). His research interests include historical lexicography, the teaching of Greek as a foreign language, and verbal charms. His principal scholarly contribution is the monograph *Νεοελληνικές επωδές. Η δύναμη του άρρητου λόγου στην ελληνική λαϊκή παράδοση* (Modern Greek Charms: The Power of Unspoken Speech in Greek Folk Tradition).