



## 20<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost

### Prophet Hosea / St Andrew of Crete

17 / 30 October

**Resurrection Tropar, Tone 3:** Let the heavens rejoice / let the earth be glad / for the Lord has shown strength with His arm! / He has trampled down death by death! / He has become the first-born of the dead! He has delivered us from the depths of hell / and has granted the world great mercy.

**Troparion of the Prophet Hosea tone 3:** Thou wast a mirror of the Comforter, O Prophet Hosea, / and hast received the light of grace. / Thou dost shine on the world with the knowledge of things to come. / Intercede with Christ our God to grant us His great mercy.

**Troparion of St Andrew tone 4:** Thou wast trained in asceticism on the mountain / and didst then destroy the hosts of evil spirits with the weapon of the Cross. / Thou didst courageously destroy Copronymus with the sword of faith. / As monk and martyr thou wast crowned by God, / O righteous and glorious Andrew.

**Resurrection Kondak, Tone 3:** On this day thou didst rise from the tomb, O Merciful One, / leading us from the gates of death / On this day Adam exults as Eve rejoices. / With the prophets and the patriarchs they unceasingly praise the divine majesty of Thy power.

**Kontakion of the Prophet Hosea tone 8:** O Seer enlightened by God, thou wast found worthy of the gift of prophecy and didst proclaim the promise of grace. / Thou art a dwelling-place of glory; / save from all misfortune those who cry to thee: Rejoice, Hosea, vessel of prophecy.

**Kontakion of St Andrew tone 3:** The Church is celebrating the glorious feast / of thine illustrious memory / and is inviting all the faithful. / She rejoices to hold the treasure of thy much afflicted body, / O Andrew, light of Orthodoxy.

#### Epistle: Galatians 1:11-19

But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, To reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, Nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother.

#### THE GOSPEL WHICH WAS PREACHED BY ME IS NOT ACCORDING TO MAN

Observe how diligently he affirms that he was taught of Christ, who Himself, without human intervention, condescended to reveal to him all knowledge. And if he were asked for his proof that God Himself thus immediately revealed to him these ineffable mysteries, he would instance his former manner of life, arguing that his conversion would not have been so sudden, had it not been by Divine revelation. For when men have been vehement and eager on the contrary side, their conviction, if it is effected by human means, requires much time and ingenuity ...For my violence even reached your ears, and the distance between Palestine and Galatia is so great, that the report would not have extended there, had not my acts exceeded all bounds and endurance ...Observe how he does not shrink from aggravating each point: not saying simply that he has 'persecuted' but 'beyond measure' and 'made havoc of it,' which signifies an attempt to extinguish, to pull down, to destroy, to annihilate the Church ...Here his object is to show that it was by some secret providence that he was left to himself for a time ...It is evident that God had some hidden reason for this delay. What this purpose was, you are eager to learn from me perhaps ...I must entreat your love not to require all things from me, but to search for it by yourselves and to beg of God to reveal it to you ...God indeed says that He called him on account of His excellent capacity, as He said to Ananias, 'for he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings' (Acts 9:15).

*St. John Chrysostom. Chapter I. Commentary on Galatians. B#57, pp. 9-10.*

## THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE 8: 5-15

THE LORD SAID THIS PARABLE: "A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it. Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it. But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a hundredfold." When He had said these things He cried, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" Then His disciples asked Him, saying, "What does this parable mean?" And He said, "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables, that 'Seeing they may not see, And hearing they may not understand.' "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.

### THE SOWER

Brothers and sisters! Did you know that there exists a psychological law by which under the influence of thought, a feeling, a desire is kindled; and from desire comes action. This law was discovered back in the first centuries by the Fathers of the Church, and then it passed on into secular life. In any sphere of life, there isn't a single action which is not provoked by feeling and desire. And in their turn, feeling and desire are kindled by thought; just as any flammable substance will catch fire if, for a sufficient length of time, one holds over it a magnifying glass through which a ray of sun is concentrated. And so: thought—feeling—action.

Both readings for this Sunday, the Apostle and the Gospel, are in a wonderful way connected with this law. Even more: without this law we wouldn't even be able to understand them in all their depth. The Gospel tells us about the Sower, the seed, and the ground. Different kinds of ground are mentioned: the ground by the wayside, the stony ground, the ground overgrown with weeds, and finally, good ground.

The Sower is the Lord, the seed is the Word of God, and the ground is the listener — you and I, our hearts. And this parable ends with the words: "But that on the good ground are they which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience" (Lk. 8:15). This means that the purpose is such: we must accept the Word of God with all our being, with all our mind, with a good and pure heart. And it is impossible to express this good, pure heart in stronger words than in the words of the Apostle Paul in today's reading: "For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2:19-20). This is what we should strive for; here is the purpose of our life.

But who among us can honestly repeat these words of the Apostle: 'Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me'? And if we do not feel what the Apostle felt, it means that our life is not fully Christian, and we are not bearing those fruits which the Lord expects from us. What is the matter? The Word of God is as powerful today as in the days when the Saviour Himself was preaching it; and yet our lives do not reflect this His Word. For if our deeds would conform to the teaching of Christ, then the whole world would turn to Christ, because our lives would be more eloquent, more strong than any sermon.

But alas, they are not like this. Our deeds are not like this because our feelings are not the feelings of Christ; they have not yet died to the law of earthly life— futile, temporary—in order to live for God, as the Apostle says. And our feelings are not like this because our thoughts are busy with unnecessary things. Only rarely are they directed toward Christ, Who loved us and gave Himself for us. Are they not wandering more often on the highways of our futile earthly life? Do they not bring our hearts into a state of stoniness, absorbed only with the cares of our temporary, materialistic welfare? Do they not get stuck between our sinful desires, as between weeds?

Let us examine ourselves. And if this is so, let us bring about a revolution within ourselves. And let us start with our thoughts; because every sin passes through thought into our feeling, and through feeling into action. This means that our main struggle with sin goes on in the thoughts. This is where we have to destroy it; then it will not even touch our heart and will not pass into action. Yes, but our thought is already infected by sin. What are we to do? From a thought, as from a hole in the ground, little snakes are constantly darting out—sinful thoughts—and they bite and poison our feelings. But this is what we must do: run to Christ with repentance. He is our Saviour from sin. In His first appearance after His Resurrection, He said to His disciples: "Receive ye the Holy Spirit. Whosoever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven" (Jn. 20: 22-23). Let us start with this. Let us take our sinful thoughts to confession, and we will receive absolution. And then new thoughts and new deeds will begin. A new life.

This is when we too will be able to say together with the Apostle: "Nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Then too the seed, the Word of God, will fall on good ground, and we will be able to keep it in a pure heart and bring forth fruit in patience. And in this "keeping" we will find a new life and a new joy.

*Archbishop Andrei, The One Thing Needful*

## Saints of the week

**17 / 30 October - The Holy Prophet Hosea** - The son of Beeri of the tribe of Issachar, he lived and prophesied more than eight hundred years before the birth of Christ. His inspired words are found in his book, which contains fourteen chapters. He strongly rebuked Israel and Judah for their idolatry, foretold God's punishment for their sin, the destruction of Samaria and Israel for their apostasy but the showing of God's mercy on the tribe of Judah. He foresaw the end of the sacrifices of the Old Covenant, and the coming of the Lord and the rich gifts that He would bring to earth. He lived to great old age, and entered peacefully into rest; The Holy Martyrs Cosmas & Damian, the Unmercenaries; Our Holy Father, the Martyr Andrew; St. Lazarus the Four Days-Dead; Martyrs Ethelred & Ethelbert, princes of Kent, England (c.640).

**18 / 31 October - The Holy Apostle and Evangelist Luke** - Born in Antioch, he applied himself in his youth to the study of Greek philosophy, medicine and art. At the time that the Lord Jesus was at work upon earth, Luke came to Jerusalem, where he saw the Saviour face to face, heard His saving teaching and was a witness of His wonderful works. Coming to belief in the Lord, St Luke was included among the Seventy and sent forth to preach the Gospel. Together with Cleopas, he saw the risen Lord on the road to Emmaus (Lk. 24). After the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles, Luke returned to Antioch and there became a fellow-worker with the Apostle Paul, with whom he travelled to Rome, bringing Jews and pagans to the Christian faith. 'Luke the beloved physician salutes you', writes the Apostle Paul to the Colossians (4:14). At the request of the Christians, he wrote his Gospel in about the year 60. After the death by martyrdom of the great Apostle, Luke preached the Gospel all over Italy, Dalmatia, Macedonia and elsewhere. He painted three icons of the most holy Mother of God and also icons of the Apostles Peter and Paul, and is regarded as the founder of Christian iconography. In old age, he visited Libya and Upper Egypt, and thence returned to Greece, where he set himself with great zeal to preach the Gospel and bring men to Christ, disregarding his great age. St Luke wrote both his Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles, and dedicated them both to Theophilus, governor of Achaia. He was eighty-four years old when wicked idol-worshippers put him to torture for the sake of Christ and hanged him from an olive tree in the town of Thebes in Beothia. The wonderworking relics of this wonderful saint were taken to Constantinople in the time of the Emperor Constantius, son of St Constantine; St Peter of Cetinje, Metropolitan of Montenegro; Ss Julian and Didymus the Blind.

**19 October / 1 November - St. John of Kronstadt, priest, wonderworker** - A married priest, he served in the Cathedral of St. Andrew's in Kronstadt, a busy port near St. Petersburg. A great man of prayer, he served Divine Liturgy every day and read the entire cycle of daily services. He visited the poor and the sick, generously giving alms, himself often going without. He and his matushka lived as brother and sister. He taught and advised all those who came to him, young and old, rich and poor. Such was the love of the people for him throughout Russia that the Kronstadt post office had a special section just for St. John! Even during his lifetime hundreds were healed through his holy prayers. In 1906, he became very ill and suffered with this sickness until his death. Nevertheless, he continued to serve daily. On December 20, 1908, he quietly reposed in the Lord. A crowd of 60,000 attended his funeral, an unprecedented event in Russia. He was formally glorified as a saint by the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad on June 3, 1964. Holy blessed Father John, pray to God for us!

Tropar, 4th Tone: With the apostles thy sound hath gone forth unto the ends of the world; / with the confessors thou didst endure sufferings for Christ; / thou didst liken thyself unto the holy hierarchs in the preaching of the Word; / and with the venerable hast thou shone forth in the grace of God. / Therefore, the Lord hath exalted the depths of the humility higher than the heavens, / and hath given us thy name as a source of most wondrous miracles. / Wherefore, O wonderworker, who livest in Christ forever, / lovingly have mercy upon those amid misfortunes, / and hearken unto thy children that call upon thee with faith, / O Righteous John, // our beloved pastor.

Kontakion, 4th Tone: O thou who from infancy wast chosen by God, / and in childhood didst miraculously receive from Him the gift of learning, / and wast gloriously called to the priesthood in a vision during sleep, / thou didst prove to be a wonderful shepherd of the Church of Christ, / O Father John, namesake of grace. / Pray to Christ our God // that we all be with thee in the kingdom of the heavens.

**The Holy Prophet Joel** - The second in order of the Minor Prophets, Joel was the son of Phaniel, of the tribe of Reuben. He lived eight hundred years before Christ, and foretold the misfortunes of the Israelites and their captivity in Babylon for the sins that they had committed against God. He called the people to fasting and the priests to penitent and tearful prayer that God would have mercy on them: Sanctify ye a fast and cry unto the Lord' (1:14); 'Let the priests weep between the porch and the altar' (2:17). Joel also prophesied the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles, and the outpouring of His grace on all the faithful (2:28). He foretold and described the Dreadful Judgement of God, and also the glory of God's holy Church; The Holy Martyr Varus; Our Holy Father Prochorus of Pchinja;

**St. Frideswide of Oxford, abbess (c.735)** - the daughter of Didian, a Mercian prince whose lands included the upper reaches of the River Thames. She took a vow of perpetual virginity. A local prince named Algar refused to accept that she would not marry him. He pursued the saint, only to be struck blind. His sight returned once he had renounced his plan to make her forsake her vow. Frideswide had hidden herself from Algar in a village near present-day Oxford called Binsey. Eventually she founded a nunnery there and became its first abbess. There she lived until her death around the year 735. The nunnery flourished and her name was not forgotten. In the twelfth century her nunnery was refounded, this time as a convent for Augustinian canons. In 1180 in the presence of the Archbishop of Canterbury and King Henry II of England her remains were translated to a new shrine in the monastery church. A yet greater shrine was built nine years later. Countless pilgrims visited her relics. Twice a year the University of Oxford held a solemn feast in her honour and came to venerate her bones. In 1440 the Archbishop of Canterbury declared her patroness of the university. Then in 1525 Cardinal Wolsey suppressed St Frideswide's monastery. Two decades later the monastery church became the new cathedral of Oxford. But the shrine containing Frideswide's relics had been broken up by Protestant reformers. The stone was used for building; but happily some Catholics preserved the saint's bones. Meanwhile the wife of the Protestant professor Peter Martyr had been buried in

the Cathedral. In 1561, in an extraordinary burst of fanaticism a canon dug up her bones and mixed them with those of Saint Frideswide, adding the epitaph *Hic jacet religio cum superstitione* ('Here lies religion with superstition'). Today the place where her remains finally rested is marked with four elegant candlesticks in Christ Church.

**20 October / 2 November - Fast Day - The Holy and Great Martyr Artemius** - This glorious saint was Egyptian by birth, and the commander-in-chief of the army of the Emperor Constantine the Great. When the victorious Cross, encircled by stars, appeared to the Emperor, Artemius also saw it, came to faith in Christ the Lord and was baptised. Later, in the time of the Emperor Constantius, Constantine's son, he was sent to Greece to take the relics of St Andrew and St Luke from Patras and Thebes respectively to Constantinople, which charge Artemius carried out with joy. After that, he was appointed governor and imperial representative in Egypt, in which appointment he remained throughout the reign of Constantius and for a certain time under Julian the Apostate. When this renegade Emperor went to war against the Persians, he stopped for a time in Antioch, and summoned Artemius and his army to join him there. Artemius went. At that time, the Emperor gave two Christian priests, Eugenius and Macarius, over to torture. Seeing this, St Artemius was profoundly alarmed, went to the Emperor and said to him: 'Why are you so inhumanly torturing these innocent and dedicated men, and why are you putting pressure on them to turn back from the Orthodox faith?' He also prophesied to the Emperor that his end was near. The furious Emperor sent the two priests into exile in Arabia, where they soon died, and stripped Artemius of his Military rank, ordering that he flogged and whipped. All wounded and covered with blood, Artemius was thrown into prison, where the Lord Christ Himself appeared to him, healing and comforting him. After that, the Emperor ordered that he laid on a flat stone and that another stone he put on him, so crushing his body like a board. Finally, he was beheaded (c. 362); The Emperor Julian then went out against the Persians and perished in a dishonourable way, as St Artemis had foretold. Our Holy Father Gerasim the New. Our Holy Father, the New Martyr Ignatius; **St. Acca, bishop of Hexham, England, (c. 740)** - From his youth he had been close to the great saints of the time, brought up in the household of Saint Bosa of York, accompanying Wilfrid to Rome (and there, says Bede, 'learning many valuable things about the organisation of the church which he could not have found out in his own country'). After serving for several years as chaplain to the redoubtable Saint Wilfrid, Bishop of Hexham in Northumbria, Acca succeeded to the bishopric on Wilfrid's death. Acca believed that the English church needed to include the beauties of the Roman liturgy rather than the Roman legal system. 'He invited a famous singer named Maban, who had been trained by the followers of Pope Gregory's disciples in Kent, to come and teach him and his clergy,' wrote the Venerable Bede. This man taught church music for twelve years - reviving old forgotten chants as well as bringing new ones. Acca also sang beautifully, says Bede (who knew him), and encouraged this revival by his own example. He loved and studied the Scriptures. He refurnished the churches with sacred vessels and lights. Above all he enlarged and beautified the cathedral of St Andrew at Hexham. He built up a fine library to which scholars and students were drawn, all of whom received the patronage of Bishop Acca. For some reason Acca was forced out of his diocese in the year 732. He was exiled to Withern, Galloway; but he returned before his death in 742 and was buried at Hexham.

**21 October / 3 November - Our Holy Father Hilarion the Great** - As a rose growing among thorns, so was this great saint born of pagan parents in the village of Tabatha near Gaza in Palestine. His parents sent him to study in Alexandria, where the gifted youngster quickly assimilated both secular learning and spiritual wisdom. Coming to know Christ the Lord and receiving baptism, he desired to serve the Lord with his whole heart. With this desire, Hilarion visited St Antony the Great in the desert and became his disciple. He then returned to his homeland and lived in asceticism near Maiuma, not far from Gaza. Demons tried to frighten him with various terrors, but he, with prayer to God and the sign of the Cross, overcame them all and drove them away. A great many who were desirous of the spiritual life gathered around him, and St Hilarion became for Palestine what St Antony was for Egypt. A divine teacher, a strict ascetic, a marvellous wonderworker, Hilarion was revered not only by Christians but also by pagans. He, though, fearing the praise of men and crying out through his tears: 'Woe is me, for I am getting my reward in this life!', fled from place to place simply to hide from men and remain alone with his soul and God. He therefore settled and lived for a time in Egypt, Sicily, Dalmatia and finally in Cyprus, where his life of great toil came to an end in about 372, when he had reached the age of eighty. Hilarion's wonderworking relics were taken by Ezekiel, one of his disciples, to Palestine and laid in the monastery that he had founded; St Hilarion, Bishop of Meglin; Our Holy Father Philotheus.

**22 October / 4 November - Fast Day - The Kazan Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos** - commemorating the deliverance from the Poles in 1612. St Abercius, Equal to the Apostles - In the time of the Emperor Antoninus (138-161), St Abercius was bishop in the city of Hierapolis in Phrygia. The great majority of the town's inhabitants were pagans, and St Abercius governed his little flock with a heart greatly saddened by the great number of pagans and idolaters, and with fervent prayer to God that He would bring them to the true Light. At the time of a rowdy idolatrous festival, Abercius became inflamed with godly zeal and went into the temple, smashing all the idols. When the furious pagans tried to kill him, three young madmen fell down before the man of God, foaming at the mouth and bellowing. The man of God drove the demons out of them, and they were healed and became calm. Seeing this, the fury of the pagans turned to marvelling at Christ's wonderworker, and five hundred of them were immediately baptised. Little by little, everyone in the city of Hierapolis came to believe in Christ and was baptised. The proconsul of the region, Publius, had a blind mother whose sight Abercius restored by prayer, and both Publius and his mother came to faith in Christ, along with many other people. In old age, Abercius was summoned to Rome, where he healed the Emperor's mad daughter. The Lord Christ appeared to His faithful follower, St. Abercius, several times. People from far and near came to him for help in chronic sickness, and the demons not only feared him but were obedient to his commands. At the order of the Lord Himself, he preached the Gospel throughout Syria and Mesopotamia, and went to his beloved Lord in great old age, in the city of Hierapolis at the end of the second century; Our Holy Father Lot.

**23 October / 5 November - St. Demetrius Saturday (Commemoration of the Departed) - The Holy Apostle James, the Brother of the Lord - He** is called 'the Lord's brother' because he was the son of righteous Joseph, the betrothed of the most holy Mother of God. When Joseph was dying, he shared out his goods among his sons and wanted to leave a share to the Lord Jesus, the Son of the most holy Virgin Mary, but his sons opposed this, not reckoning Jesus to be a brother of theirs. James, though, loved Jesus greatly and announced that he would include Him in his share, counting himself to be indeed brother to the Lord. James was, from the first, devoted to the Lord Jesus. According to tradition, he went to Egypt with the most holy Virgin and Joseph when Herod tried to kill the new-born King. As soon as he heard Christ's teaching, he began to live by it. It is said that, during the whole of his life, he ate neither fat nor oil, but lived only on bread and water, and he was chaste to the end of his days. He often kept a vigil of prayer at night. The Lord included him among his Seventy apostles, appearing to him after His glorious Resurrection, as the Apostle Paul testifies (I Cor. 15:7). He was bishop in Jerusalem for thirty years, and governed the Church of God with zeal. On the Lord's instructions, he composed the first Liturgy, which was far too long for later Christians and was shortened by St Basil and St John Chrysostom. He brought many Jews and Greeks to the Christian faith, and even unbelieving Jews marvelled at his justice, nicknaming him James the Just. When Ananias became High Priest, he decided, along with other of the Jewish elders, to kill James as a preacher of Christ. One day, at Pascha, when many people were gathered in Jerusalem, the elders told him to climb up onto a roof and speak against Christ. St James climbed up there, and began to speak to the people about Christ as the Son of God and the true Messiah, and of His Resurrection and eternal glory in heaven. The infuriated priests and elders cast him down from the roof, and he was badly injured though still alive. A man then ran up and gave him such a vicious blow on the head that his brains spilled out. Thus this glorious apostle of Christ died a martyr's death and entered into the Kingdom of his Lord. James was sixty-three years old when he suffered for Christ. St Ignatius, Patriarch of Constantinople; The Holy Martyr James of Borovitz; St. Ethelfleda, abbess of Romsey; St. Oda of Amay, foundress of churches (Neth.).

### **HOMILY** **on the festering wounds of sin**

*My wounds are foul and festering because of my foolishness (Psalm 38:5).*

The prophet speaks of the wounds of sins that he himself committed, and from which he sensed in himself the stench of sin. As much as this acknowledgment reveals the impurity of previous sins, so is the subsequent purity of the repentant one also shown. For as long as man follows the corrupt path of sin, he does not sense its suffocating stench; but when he withdraws from this path and sets off on the pure path of righteousness, he senses the inexpressible difference between purity and impurity, between the path of virtue and the path of vice. Imagine a man who has spent the night in a stinking tavern and finds himself in a garden of roses the next morning. In the former there was stench, poison, debasement of soul and body, anger, discord, and the tormenting of himself and others. In the latter is God's great sun overhead, beautiful flowers everywhere, fresh air, wondrous fragrance, serenity and health. Imagine this, and understand that there is an even greater difference between the path of sin and the path of God. *My wounds are foul and festering.* Thus the great king describes the fruits of his sinful past. Nothing is as foul as sin, nothing festers as much and nothing spreads as much as sin. The stench of bodily wounds suggests, in only a small way, the unbearable stench of a sinful soul. That is why every holy thing distances itself from such a soul. The pure heavenly spirits hide from such a one, and the impure spirits of hades seek its company. Every new sin is a fresh wound on the soul; every sin is corruption and stench. How does sin arise? From *my foolishness* explains the prophet. A mind derailed from its divine track leads man to sin. Until the mind is cleansed, man cannot be cleansed. *But we have the mind of Christ* (I Corinthians 2:16), says the Apostle. In other words, we have a mind put back on track, as was Adam's mind before the sinful stench. Hence brethren, all Orthodox teaching on asceticism concentrates on one main point: on the mind of man; on the cleansing and correcting of the mind.

O Lord Jesus Christ, Purity and eternal Source of purity, help us to reject our foolishness; help us to reason according to Thy mind.

**To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.**