

Sunday, September 11, 2011

## The Intercession of the Saints

+ The intercession of the saints is a reality experienced by the children of the Orthodox Church as a living faith which they touch its practical effects in their daily lives. The saints who departed to heaven are not the dead part of the church, but rather they are her pulsing heart and the vital members within the mysterious body of Christ.

+ The saints are continuously present in the Church; she raises their beautiful icons and conducts their commemorations, feasts, and glorifications. She calls for their intercessions, honors their relics, follows their example, and become enlightened by their spiritual practices as the Bible commands: **“Remember those... whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.”** (Hebrews 13:7)

+ The saints are biblical in their way of life; they loved the Bible, kept its teachings, meditated on its words day and night, and interpreted it in their lives and conduct before they preached it. That is to say, he who wants to understand how to live the divine commandment should look at the saints and will find its practical application in their lives. Thus, they support the faith of the church without philosophical arguments or the mere literal interpretation of the commandment.

+ A saint becomes who he is not because he performed some miracles, but because he applied the commandment of the Bible in his life. He who lives the commandment is the saint. And he who plants himself by the streams of the divine grace and becomes sanctified by prayers, the word, and the sacraments, the Spirit will act within him. Thus his feelings, thoughts, vigor, or rather his entire life becomes sanctified and becomes a saint.

+ When the saints walk with God and the mysteries of His love and magnificent beauty become revealed to them, they would long that the whole world enjoys with them the indescribable fellowship with God. They would also desire the salvation of every soul from the dominion of the enemy and to enter the divine kingdom which brings joy to the heart. Therefore, they always pray for the salvation of the world, and intercede for the sinners so that the divine mercy come to them. They make every effort to urge the heedless and the resistant to repentance for the sake of their eternal lives. Herein, we find that the saints who have been liberated from the bonds of the flesh have more zeal in ministering to the lost souls than the servants who are still under the bonds of flesh with limited vigor.

+ Finally, the saints are our spiritual family among which we live. They are the cloud of witnesses that overshadow us (Hebrews 1:12), and they are the lights that surround us and encourage us to strive and to be steadfast in the narrow way. They are members with us in the mysterious body of Christ; they support our weakness, guide us with their experiences, pray for us, and rejoice in our repentance and spiritual growth.

We are delighted to belong to this great family which is interconnected in one body where Christ is the head, and we are honored to be sanctified members of that body.

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