

## THE SAINTS IN HEAVEN HEAR OUR PRAYERS

—by St. Silouan the Athonite—

"I love them who love Me, and I will glorify them who glorify Me," says the Lord (cf. Pr. 8:17 & 1Kg. 2:30). God is glorified by His Saints, and, in turn, the Saints are glorified by God.

The glory that God gives to the Saints is so great, that if people were to see a saint as he truly is, they would fall to the ground on account of reverence and fear, because physical man cannot endure the glory of such a heavenly appearance. Do not marvel at this. The Lord loved man, whom He created, to such an extent that He poured the Holy Spirit abundantly upon man, and through this Holy Spirit man became like unto God.

The Lord gave His grace to the Saints, and they loved Him and completely devoted themselves to Him, because the sweetness of God's love surpasses the love for the world and its beauty. And if things are so here on the earth, then in Heaven the saints are even more closely united with the Lord through love.

God is love, and the Holy Spirit is love for the saints. With the Holy Spirit the Lord becomes known. With the Holy Spirit, the Lord is magnified in the heavens. With the Holy Spirit the Saints glorify God, and with the Holy Spirit the Lord glorifies the Saints—and this glory has no end.

To many people it seems as though the Saints are far away from us. In reality, they are far from those people who have distanced themselves from the Saints; whereas, they are very close to the people who keep Christ's commandments and who have the grace of the Holy Spirit.

In Heaven, everything lives and moves in the Holy Spirit. But even on the earth, we have the same Holy Spirit. This Holy Spirit lives in our Church. The Holy Spirit unites everyone, and for this reason the Saints are close to us. And when we pray to them, they hear our prayers through the Holy Spirit, and our souls sense and feel their intercessions for us.

The Saints live in another world where they behold, through the Holy Spirit, the divine glory and beauty of the Lord's face. Through this same Holy Spirit they also see our lives and our deeds. They are familiar with our sorrows, and they hear our fervent prayers. While on the earth, they were taught the love of God by the Holy Spirit. And whoever has acquired love on the earth proceeds with it to the eternal life in the Kingdom of Heaven, where this love increases until it becomes perfect. And if on the earth love cannot forget about its fellow man, then even more so the Saints in Heaven do not forget about us, and they pray for us.

The Lord granted the Holy Spirit to the Saints, and they love us with the Holy Spirit. The souls of the Saints know the Lord and His compassion for man, and this is why their souls burn with love for the people. When they lived on the earth, it was not possible for them to hear of a sinful person without feeling pain in their heart, and they would shed many tears when they prayed for such people. The Holy Spirit selected them to pray for the entire world, and He granted them streams of tears. The Holy Spirit pours upon His chosen ones such great love, that their souls are aflame with the desire for all people to be saved and to see the glory of the Lord.

Through the Holy Spirit, the Saints envelop the entire world with love. They see and know that we grow weary from sorrows, that our hearts have become dry, and that despondency has paralyzed our souls; for this reason, they intercede ceaselessly to God for us. The Saints rejoice when we repent, and they are sad when people abandon God and, in this manner, become similar to irrational animals.

Pray with faith to the Mother of God and to the Saints. They hear our prayers, and they are even aware of our thoughts. Don't let this surprise you. All the Saints in heaven live with the Holy Spirit, and nothing in the entire creation is unknown to the Holy Spirit. Previously, I could not understand how the Saints who dwell in heaven can see us. When, however, the holy Mother of God censured me for my sins, I realized that the Saints see us through the Holy Spirit, and that they are aware of our entire life.

The Saints hear our prayers, and they have received the power from God to help us. This is known to the entire generation of Christians.

Fr. Romanos told me that when he was a boy he had to cross the Don River in winter. Unexpectedly, his horse fell through the ice and was just about to go under, dragging the sled with it. He was a little boy at the time, and he cried at the top of his voice: "St. Nicholas, help me pull the horse out!" And he tugged at the bridle and pulled the horse and sled out from under the ice.

And when Fr. Matthew, who came from my village, was a little boy he used to graze his father's sheep. At the time, he was no bigger than a sheep himself. His older brother was working on the other side of a large field, when suddenly he saw a pack of wolves rushing at Misha (Fr. Matthew's name in the world). Then, little Misha cried out, "St. Nicholas, help!" No sooner had the words left his lips than the wolves turned back and did no harm either to him or his flock. And for a long time after that, the villagers would smile and say, "Our Misha was terribly frightened by a pack of wolves, but St. Nicholas rescued him!"

All of us know a multitude of such instances where the Saints come immediately to the aid of people. From all this, it is clearly evident that our prayers are heard in heaven.