

March 8, 2015 Sermon for the Second Sunday of the Great Fast

*And: <sup>11</sup>You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but you remain; and they will all grow old like a garment; <sup>12</sup>like a cloak You will fold them up, and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will not fail.” <sup>13</sup>But to which of the angels has He ever said: “Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool”? <sup>14</sup>Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation? (Heb. 1:10-2:3) <sup>1</sup>God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, <sup>2</sup>has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; <sup>3</sup>who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, (Heb. 1:1-3).*

In the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit!

Every time, when beginning our prayers to God, either in church or privately, we at first address God or bless ourselves in the name of the Most-holy Trinity.

We don't often ponder this and what this appeal we have sounds like by itself. But, in the meantime, in the very first words of the prayer, by mentioning the Name of God, a special power is precisely included. It is very important to begin a prayer correctly if we desire that it be heard.

When we mention the name of a man familiar to us, the name bears some emotional color in us. We do not simply pronounce the name, but there is also some kind of attitude toward this person.

And this is how it should be in our attitude toward God. What do we feel when we pronounce the Name of the Most-holy Trinity or mention the Name of our Savior Jesus Christ? Or do we feel nothing?

Today the Apostle Paul tells us about our God whom we often address.

*<sup>11</sup>You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands; They will perish, but you remain; and they will all grow old like a garment; <sup>12</sup>like a cloak You will fold them up, and they will be changed; <sup>13</sup>but you are the same, and Your years will not fail.”*

We see from these words that God, Creator of everything visible and invisible in the world, that He always exists, even when everything else that exists has died, that He is the All-powerful God, able to change the entire universe as He desires. In the end, He neither changes nor ceases to exist. It is to such a God that we appeal every time, calling upon His Name! To the Creator of everything visible and invisible, the All-powerful, Unchanging and Eternal God!

We need to pronounce His Name with this kind of reverence every time!

In the very beginning of Epistle to the Hebrews we read about our Savior: *God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who*

*being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when he had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.*

The second Face of the Holy Trinity, the Son of God, through Whom the entire world was saved, Our Lord Jesus Christ, is the heir of all that is in the world. This one is He who is really the shining glory of the Almighty and All-Powerful God and His Word who upholds the entire world. Truly, He, Jesus Christ, accomplished the cleansing of our sins by His death and sat down on the right hand of the great throne in heaven.

This is to Whom we appeal and Whose Name we call to mind!

So let us, before we begin our prayers, learn to concentrate for a few seconds, reminding ourselves every time in front of which God we stand, and to which God we appeal. Let us not hurry. Let us settle ourselves and, unhurriedly, begin our prayers with reverence, keeping in mind that the Lord is directly before us and hears every one of our words.

All of our prayers have one goal – to help us recover the connection with God severed by sin; with God the Almighty, Omnipresent, Eternal, Merciful, Holy, True, our Creator and Redeemer. To be with such a God is a blessing for man.

And this blessing is bequeathed to all of us! The Lord Himself did everything so that we could enter into His joy. So what are we waiting for and why are we wasting precious time for no reason?

Let's go to the Lord! Let's go with our prayers! Let's go with our godly works. Let's go with our repentance and fasting. Let's go with our patience and gratitude.

And, granted, we are weak like the paralytic, but the Lord is so strong! And without fail He helps in any work, internal or external, that is performed with humility in His Holy Name. Only let this realization be clear, that it is before such a God that we labor.

I pray that the Lord will give us all such an understanding. And may God help you in all your physical and spiritual labors through the prayers of His Most-pure Mother and of all the saints! Amen.