



A Homily on the Repentance of King David

By St. Nikolai Velimirovich

"And David said to Nathan: 'I have sinned against the Lord'" (II Samuel 12:13).

"My tears have been my food day and night" (Psalm 42:3).

King David sinned against God and repented, and God forgave him. The king's sin was great, but greater still was his repentance. He was guilty before God of two grave sins: adultery and murder. But when Nathan the prophet of God denounced him, he cried out in anguish: "I have sinned against the Lord!" Thus he confessed his sin and repented bitterly, most bitterly.

Grief-stricken, he prayed to God, weeping, fasting, lying on the ground, and enduring meekly the terrible blows that God sent upon him, his house and his people because of his sins. In his penitential Psalms he says: "I am a worm and not a man" (Psalm 22:6); "Because of the sound of my groaning, my bones cling to my flesh" (Psalm 102:5); "I lie awake ... for I have eaten ashes like bread and mingled my drink with weeping" (Psalm 102:7, 9); "My knees are grown weak through fasting" (Psalm 109:24).

Here is true repentance; here is a true penitent! He did not become hardened in sin nor did he fall into despair, but, hoping in the mercy of God, he repented unceasingly. And God, Who loves the penitent, showed mercy upon this model of penitence. God forgave him and glorified him above all the kings of Israel; He gave him the great grace to compose the most beautiful penitential prayers and to prophesy the coming into the world of the Holy Savior, Who would be of his seed.

Brethren, do you see how wonderful is God's mercy toward penitents? So much mercy did God have on this repentant David that He was not ashamed to take upon Himself flesh from David's seed. Blessed are they who do not become hardened in sin and who do not fall into despair because of sin. Repentance saves both the one and the other from evil.

O Merciful Lord, soften our hearts with tears of repentance. To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.

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