Third All-Souls Saturday

Father Simeon Sibenik

"And as He passed on, He saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, 'Follow Me!' And he rose, and followed Him."

Mark 2:14

On this third Saturday of the Great Fast we are again reminded of our mortality. As on the previous Saturday of this sacred season, we are asked to pray for the dead. Once more we are reminded that our life on this earth is passing and that we are on the way to a life of union with God, a life we continue to resist.

Since the dawn of humanity, there has been resistance to that life in union with God. Our first parents, led by the serpent into believing they could be God, shattered their harmonious life with Him. They were deceived, and that same deception continues. We can see it all around us today. It manifests itself in the same pride shown by Adam and Eve. We want to be immortal, healthy, rich, sexy, and loved. But we always look in the wrong direction, seeking to find lasting pleasure in this world. We forget that real happiness comes from God. Are we going to continue to seek happiness in this world or in God's?

When Jesus met the tax collector, He asked him to "Follow Me." Levi dropped what he was doing and immediately followed the Lord. Levi, a man despised by the people because of his involvement with money, power, and worldly concerns, did not hesitate to answer the Lord's invitation. He accepted the call to get back on the right path to God. He moved from earthly concerns toward the Kingdom of Heaven. He found something of lasting value as he was transformed by Jesus into the Holy Apostle Matthew.

The three Saturdays of the Holy Forty-Days Fast which are dedicated to the memory of the dead should remind us of our own passing. But these reminders should be viewed with joy because they help point out the real direction of our lives—union with God in His Kingdom. Like Levi (Matthew), the tax collector, we must be willing to drop the concerns of this world and trust that Jesus will set us on the right path.

SCRIPTURE READINGS: Hebrews 10:31-38
Mark 2:14-17