

Fear not, little flock;
for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

Luke 12:32

For where two or three are gathered together in My Name,
there am I in the midst of them.

Matthew 18:20

WHERE ARE THEY who reproach us with our poverty, and boast themselves of their own riches; who define the Church by numbers, and scorn the little flock; and who measure Godhead, and weigh the people in the balance, who honor the sand, and despise the luminaries of heaven; who treasure pebbles and overlook pearls; for they know not that sand is not in a greater degree more abundant than stars, and pebbles than lustrous stones – that the former are purer and more precious than the latter? . . .

* The Arians who had seized control of the church buildings.

These men* have the houses, but we the Dweller in the house; they the Temples, we the God; and besides it is ours to be living temples of the Living God, lively sacrifices, reasonable burnt-offerings, perfect sacrifices, yea, gods through the adoration of the Trinity. They have the people, we the Angels; they rash boldness, we faith; they threatenings, we prayer; they smiting, we endurance; they gold and silver, we the pure word.

St Gregory the Theologian, Oration XXXIII,
Against the Arians, and Concerning Himself, NPNF, Second Series, pp. 328–9, 333

EVERYTHING HAPPENS according to the Lord's foreknowledge, and man cannot add or subtract one tiny bit. Those who do not wish to perish are better insured from perdition, and one may say that hell will only exist for those who desire it themselves. And so let this truth be a first consolation and encouragement for those who are made despondent by current events. Of course our deprivation of God's churches and of magnificent divine services the way they used to be, with multitudes of worshippers, with resplendent assemblages of clergy, with the angelic chanting of choirs, and so forth – of course this is sad and a pity. But we have not been deprived of inner service to God in quietness and compunction and inner concentration of spirit.

Our service books are an inexhaustible wellspring of spiritual consolations, and who is there that does not have the possibility of making use of them? The *Psalter* alone is invaluable: like a groundwork it permeates all our other prayer books and hymns. And so do not weaken, do not lose heart, and God's goodness will be with you. Amen.

Excerpts from *A Pastoral Letter of New Martyr Joseph, Metropolitan of Petrograd*
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