**2017 3 17**

**“Thought for the Week”**

***“Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”***

On this Sunday of the cross, St. Paul gives us a crucial perspective in living our spiritual life. This must be a balanced perspective. We must balance the mercy of God with His justice and we must balance the love of God with the Fear of God. St. Nikolai Velimerovic wrote ***“the love of God without the fear of God subtly leads us to pride; but the fear of God without the love of God leads us to despair.”*** We should note that these are the two greatest sins- pride and despair (which itself is the ultimate form of pride because we only trust ourselves and not God).

The good news beloved is that now is the time of mercy and grace. This is what Jesus meant when He said in the Gospel of John ***“for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world,”*** He means now, while we are living on this earth- for now it is time for us to repent and be forgiven by the mercy of God. Now is the time to change our lives for the throne of grace is open to each one of us to help us in our time of need. It is only by grace that we can live purely and in holiness. It is only by drawing near to our Lord in our thoughts and actions that we can change our hearts. He will give us a new heart, which can be filled with love.

And yet there will be a time of judgement- that is after we fall asleep. This is what he meant when he said “***"For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son" that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father.*** The judgment seat of Christ is indeed dread- for all things will be revealed as they are. What is in our hearts will be manifest. If we come before the Son with the new heart He has given us and we have made our own, we indeed honor Him. If we are striving for love, trusting Him with our weaknesses, and confident in His mercy then we indeed fear God. This fear of God cannot be separated from the love of God.

Therefore my beloved in Christ Jesus, let us not waste any time- let us wake up from sleep. For ***“Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” (2Co 6:2 NKJ)*** Let us love one another, forgive one another, and help one another that we may honor our Lord. Let us flee from all impurity, hostility, and boasting. Let us be self-controlled and moderate in all that we do. Let us fear God in this way and we will not be afraid anymore- for it is perfect love that casts out fear. The only love that is perfect is the love of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is the love that He has already bestowed upon us-It is the love that was poured out on all of us on the cross. It is the love that will never flee from us if we do not flee from it. Amen.