

2024 NATIONAL PHILOPTOCHOS BIENNIAL CONVENTION

Bishop Athenagoras of Nazianzos, Spiritual Advisor

REFLECTION

July 4

Psalm 15

¹ *O Lord, who may abide in your tent?*

Who may dwell on your holy hill?

² *Those who walk blamelessly and do what is right*

and speak the truth from their heart;

³ *who do not slander with their tongue*

and do no evil to their friends

nor heap shame upon their neighbors;

⁴ *in whose eyes the wicked are despised*

but who honor those who fear the Lord;

who stand by their oath even to their hurt;

⁵ *who do not lend money at interest*

and do not take a bribe against the innocent.

Those who do these things shall never be moved.

HOLINESS

Psalm 15 outlines the characteristics of a person who is worthy to dwell in the presence of the Lord, painting a picture of the ideal believer whose life is marked by integrity, righteousness, and truth. The psalmist sets forth a moral and ethical standard that touches upon various aspects of human behavior, emphasizing the importance of uprightness in our walk with God and interactions with others.

In Orthodox spirituality, this psalm is a call to holiness, urging faithful to strive for a life that reflects the divine nature. The emphasis on truth, justice, and righteousness underscores the transformative journey of theosis, where faithful are called to partake in the divine nature through a life of virtue and holiness.

Saint John Chrysostom, in his Homilies on the Psalms, speaks to the transformative power of living according to these precepts:

"He who walks uprightly and works righteousness will be near to God and will dwell in His tabernacle. For it is not only faith, but also a righteous life that brings us close to God."

Saint Gavrilia (Papayannis), a contemporary Orthodox Saint known for her profound spiritual insights, emphasizes the importance of living a life in accordance with God's will:

"The soul that is united with God is naturally full of love, peace, and righteousness. It reflects God's light in the world through its actions and truthfulness."

This psalm challenges us to examine our lives and to cultivate virtues that are pleasing to God. It calls us to a higher standard of living, one that goes beyond mere outward appearances to the very heart of our intentions and actions. The qualities described in

Psalm 15 are not just ideals to aspire to but are essential attributes for those who seek to dwell in the presence of God.

Psalm 15 moves us to desire to live in communion with God. It reminds us that integrity, righteousness, and truth are not only the paths to divine fellowship but also the foundation of a life that is immovable and steadfast in the face of life's challenges. As we strive to embody these virtues, we draw closer to God and reflect His holiness in our daily lives.