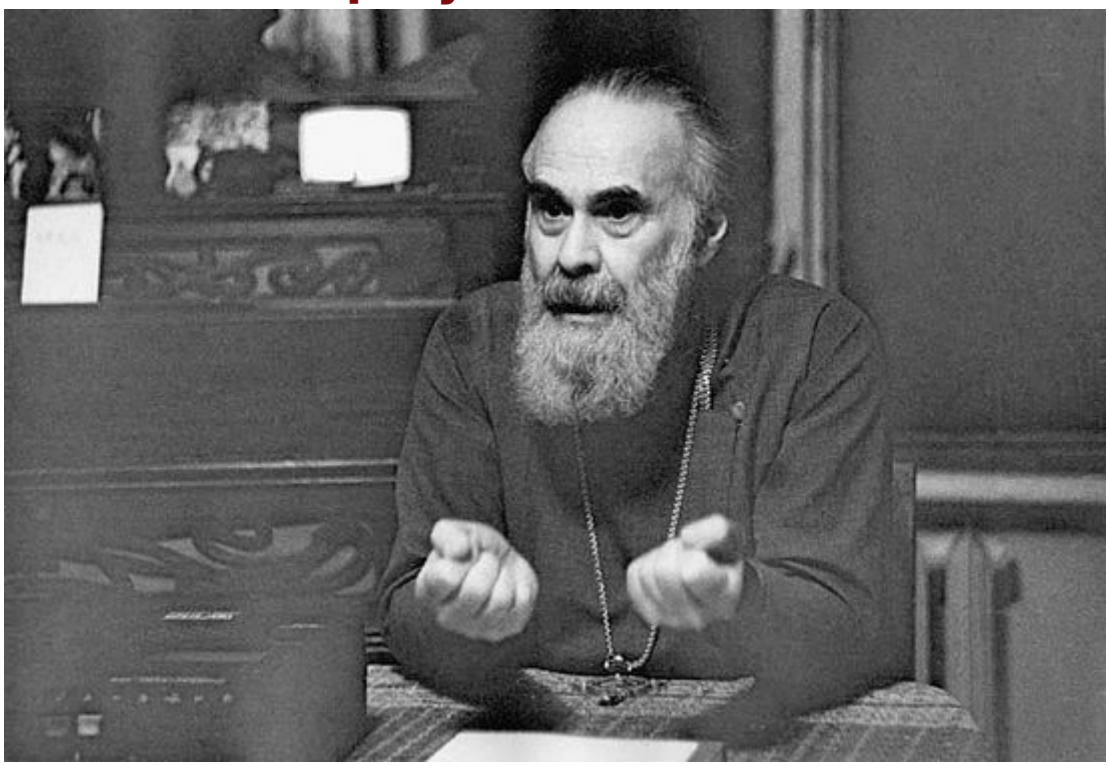
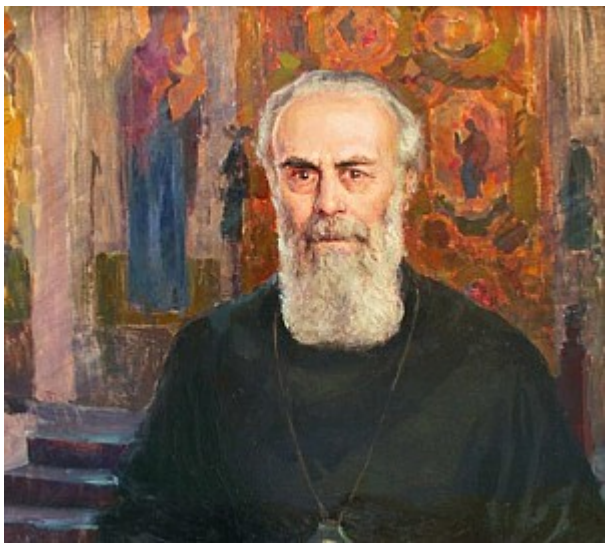
04/08/2020

For whom must I pray?



Metropolitan Anthony (Bloom) of Sourozh was a well known archpastor, preacher, spiritual guide and brilliant writer on prayer and the Christian life. He was, himself, a great man of prayer.

His sermon below is, most likely, the shortest ever recorded. Yet the impact of the same continues to reverberate as an exceptional spiritual reminder and guide to prayer. In fact, the answer to the question, ‘For whom must I pray?’



“One Sunday Metropolitan Anthony Bloom gave a sermon as follows:

‘Last night a woman with a child came to this church. She was in trousers and with no headscarf. Someone scolded her. She left. I do not know who did that, but I am commanding that person to pray for her and her child to the end of his days to God for their salvation. Because of you she may never go to church again.’

He turned around, head down, and entered the Altar. That was the entire sermon.”

Those who choose to exclude someone from their prayers risk offering the vain purity of their prayer, which may well be rejected, like the sacrifice of Cain (Gen. 4:5). For our God is love (I Jn. 4:8), according to St. John the Divine. And who dares to limit the philanthropic love of God?

In like manner, the Holy Bishop Nicholai of Zhicha was heard, by Fr. Miodrag Djurich, praying that the Lord give us as much suffering as we can endure, for when it passes, as with a woman in labor, so does the agony for a new life is born (Jn. 16:21). However, he hastened to add, preserve us from scandal, which, even when it passes, endures in its agony!

Let us pray as did Christ, who first prayed for those whom His Father gave him. Thereafter, pray as He prayed for all and in all, that they may be one (Jn. 17:9, 20-23)!

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