

PRAYERS BY THE LAKE (St. Nikolai of Ochrid and Zica)

Date : Μαρτίου 27, 2007

Who is that staring at me through all the stars in heaven and all the creatures on earth?

Cover your eyes, stars and creatures; do not look upon my nakedness. Shame torments me enough through my own eyes.

What is there for you to see? A tree of life that has been reduced to a thorn on the road, that pricks both itself and others. What else—except a heavenly flame immersed in mud, a flame that neither gives light nor goes out?

Plowmen, it is not your plowing that matters but the Lord who watches.

Singers, it is not your singing that matters but the Lord who listens.

Sleepers, it is not your sleeping that matters but the Lord who wakens.

It is not the pools of water in the rocks around the lake that matter but the lake itself.

What is all human time but a wave that moistens the burning sand on the shore, and then regrets that it left the lake, because it has dried up?

O stars and creatures, do not look at me with your eyes but at the Lord. He alone sees. Look at Him and you will see yourselves in your homeland.

What do you see when you look at me? A picture of your exile? A mirror of your fleeting transitoriness?

O Lord, my beautiful veil, embroidered with golden seraphim, drape over my face like a veil over the face of a widow, and collect my tears, in which the sorrow of all Your creatures seethes.

O Lord, my beauty, come and visit me, lest I be ashamed of my nakedness—lest the many thirsty glances that are falling upon me return home thirsty.