

In Memory of Metropolitan Laurus
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*Where can I go from Your Spirit?
Or where can I flee from Your presence?
If I ascend into heaven, You are there;
If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there.
If I take the wings of the morning,
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
Even there Your hand shall lead me,*

Last year, when our beloved Metropolitan Lavr reposed, members of his grieving flock banded together to read the Psalter for him. Each person would read one and the same kathisma every night, and thus, with 20 people reading, the entire Psalter would be read for him daily. I chose the 19th kathisma to read – completely at random.

The only text from Holy Scripture that I remember Vladyka Lavr ever quoting specifically and privately to me, when I was a summer boy at Holy Trinity Monastery and he was still a hieromonk, were the words I have quoted above...and they were in the kathisma I had chosen! It was as if Vladyka Lavr had spoken to me again; it was very sweet and really brought me to tears – the very words he once spoke to me: “Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?”

I vividly remember him quoting those words to me, although I cannot recall exactly how the conversation started. But he was saying to me that "God is everywhere, and there is at once no getting away from Him, but He is also always there when we need Him." I seem to think that he went on to say that those words and their spiritual connotation were indeed one of the reasons he chose monastic life!... I could be confused, but I know for sure that he quoted those very words of Holy Scripture to me and I can hear him and even see him saying them, as he did then, so many, many years ago.