



■ † Sunday after Theophany

The “Leaders” in the Battle and the Ultimate Goal*

Yesterday, the Apostle armed with the whole spiritual armor the Christian who sets out on the path of salvation.

Today, for our inspiration in times of hardship, he shows us who are the leaders in this battle procession, and what is the final, glorious goal of everything.

a. The **leaders** are the Priests and teachers whom the Lord has given to the Church. It is through their mouths that the Lord Himself gives the necessary guidance to all, as soon as one turns to such leaders **with faith and prayerful appeal** to the Lord.

Those who walk unselfishly in the way of the Lord know this truth, as do those who struggle without self-pity against the enemies of salvation. They always find help from their pastors and are brought to understanding, while, looking from the outside, such help could not be expected.

For they do not come to men, but to the Lord, Who is always ready to guide and give understanding through such men to anyone who **sincerely and with faith** seeks help from Him.

b. The ultimate goal is *the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ*—the stature of a perfect man



(Ephesians 4:13). We all know what a *perfect man* is in the usual order of things, and we could hardly find a person who would not desire to attain such perfection.

But the meaning of a *perfect man* in the Lord is not known to anyone apart from those who have entered into that stature. This, however, should not cool our zeal to attain such a stature, but, on the contrary, should kindle it even more; for this lack of knowledge is owing to the height of that spiritual perfection which is called a manly stature in a life according to God.

The Apostle defined this as the attainment of the fullness of perfections revealed in the Lord and Savior. Anyone can see that there is reason for us to apply *all diligence* (II Peter 1:5) toward our calling.



(*) St. Theophan the Recluse, *Thoughts for Each Day of the Year According to the Daily Church Readings from the Word of God.*