

WEEKLY MEDITATION

Today a memorial service will be sung after the conclusion of Liturgy at the Cathedral for the newly-departed servant of God Alexander Solzhenitsyn, who reposed on Sunday, August 3 at the age of 89. Once one of the Soviet Union's most prominent and dangerous dissident voices, Alexander Solzhenitsyn ultimately became one of Russia's national treasures. A writer of great courage and enormous moral authority, based largely on his experience in the Gulag (the Soviet labor camp system), his works led to a critical re-evaluation of communism in many western intellectual and cultural circles and helped hasten the collapse of the Soviet Union and its client states. An Orthodox Christian, Solzhenitsyn was an important (and sometimes controversial figure) in church life. May his memory be eternal!

Here are two extracts from *The Gulag Archipelago*:

.... It was only when I lay there on rotting prison straw that I sensed within myself the first stirrings of good. Gradually it was disclosed to me that the line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties either, but right through every human heart, and through all human hearts. This line shifts. Inside us, it oscillates with the years. Even within hearts overwhelmed by evil, one small bridgehead of good is retained; and even in the best of all hearts, there remains a small corner of evil.

.... If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart?"

~Fr. Andrew

