

WEEKLY MEDITATION

September 24: St. Silouan of Athos

St. Silouan was born in 1866 in the Tambov region in Russia. At the age of 27 he traveled to Mount Athos and became a monk at the vast Russian Monastery of St. Panteleimon. He died on September 24, 1938. Simple and direct in his teaching, he attracted many pilgrims searching for 'a word' of spiritual counsel. His teaching was transcribed, and later edited by his famous disciple Archimandrite Sophrony.

The teaching of St Silouan is associated with an austere asceticism, the practice of unceasing prayer, the cultivation of *hesychia* (inner stillness) and profound humility, the gift of tears and fervent intercessory prayer, and the profound need to love of enemies. Here is a small example of his teaching taken from Fr. Sophrony's book, *Wisdom from Mount Athos: the Writings of Staretz Silouan 1866-1938*.

We must always pray to the Lord for peace of soul that we may more easily fulfill the Lord's commandments; for the Lord loves those who strive to do His will, and thus they attain profound peace in God.

He who does the Lord's will is content with all things, though he be poor or sick and suffering, because the grace of God gladdens his heart. But the man who is discontented with his lot and murmurs against his fate, or against those who cause him offense, should realize that his spirit is in a state of pride, which has taken from him his sense of gratitude towards God.

But if it be so with you, do not lose heart but try to trust firmly in the Lord and ask Him for a humble spirit; and when the lowly spirit of God comes to you then you will then love Him and be at rest in spite of all tribulations.

The soul that has acquired humility is always mindful of God, and thinks to herself: 'God has created me. He suffered for me. He forgives me my sins and comforts me. He feeds me and cares for me. Why, then should I take thought for myself, and what is there to fear, even if death threaten me?'

Fr. Andrew

