

# Words of the Liturgy

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## ***“Stand Aright”***

We have already reflected on the word “WISDOM” which, minor though it is, is profoundly significant. During liturgy, this word is often followed by the words ***“Stand Aright”***.

In their basic meaning, these words are a call to, and a reminder for, the supplicants to stand straight, to adopt that physical attitude which is conducive to the attentiveness and testifies to the reverence of those who pray to God. Sometimes it is not easy, it can be even tiring, to stand straight for a long time. That very fatigue, however, is a sacrifice we offer to God during the divine service and during prayers.

That is why this fatigue is blessed and beneficial. However, the reminder to stand straight is not limited to its physical meaning. Undoubtedly, this Slavonic word, “prosti” is derived from the word, “prostoi” meaning, “simple”.

This word, then, urges upon us “inner straightness”, simplicity, and collectedness. The words of the Cherubic Hymn call upon us to “put away all worldly care”. For the duration of the service, we must free ourselves from all external, worldly superfluous baggage which frequently and very successfully distracts our minds from the greatness of the religious rite. This “worldly care”, our vanity, our distraction must be left outside the doors of the church; inside the church everything must be directed towards one goal only: **The glorification of the Lord and our immersion in the fullness of our communion with Him.**

In general, simplicity is one of the basic assumptions of spiritual life. It is not without reason that an Optina elder used to take pleasure in saying: “where there is simplicity, there are angels aplenty.” So here also, in the church, where we stand face to face with the ineffable Wisdom of God, which is revealed to us during the divine service, it is good that our hearts, our minds and even our flesh be clothed in SIMPLICITY, holy simplicity, in which there are no barriers, no walls between us and God.

This is also the reason why the original meaning of the words ***“Stand Aright”***- stand straight, stand attentively, stand meekly - is so significant and important. They call us to subject our behavior in the church to a specific spiritual and physical order.

Every divine service is a movement - our movement and the movement of the entire Church - towards God. In this movement we are like a spiritual army. In the words of the hymn we “mystically represent the Cherubim”, and Cherubim's and Seraphim's are called by the Church “the heavenly host”. An army requires an order and a system. In this particular case, it is an order which unites our spiritual being with our physical being.

For this reason, as we participate in the divine service we shall stand sober, we shall stand tall,” we shall attain that state of physical collectedness which will reveal the way to the collectedness and the sobriety of the spirit. “Wisdom, stand aright!