



■ † Sunday before the Nativity of Christ

## Truly Great People\*

**T**he Holy Forefathers—what truly great people! If one were to generalize the thought which defines their greatness, only those who fulfill God's will for the human race—a positive will—are truly great, for there is much that happens only by God's permission.

There are also powerful people who act apart from God's will and even against it. These too can seem great—not in and of themselves, but only because of the great opposition that God's Providence puts forth to efface the evil caused by them.

We know God's direct will concerning eternal salvation, but His plans concerning the temporal sojourn of people on the earth are hidden from us. That is why it is difficult for us to determine who is acting more rightly, more precisely according to God's will.

One can acknowledge only one negative criterion as true: He who acts against what God has determined for our eternal salvation cannot be considered great, no matter how ostentatious his deeds; for it is evident that he is going against the obvious will of God.



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