

## THE JUDGEMENT OF A MERCIFUL GOD

Archbishop Lazar Puhalo points out that much modern American piety toward God is based in a misconception of God as a ruthless judge. He writes:

*But why do men hate God? They hate Him not only because their deeds are dark while God is light, but also because they consider Him as a menace, as an imminent and eternal danger, as an adversary in court, as an opponent at law, as a public prosecutor and an eternal persecutor. To them, God is no more the almighty physician who came to save them from illness and death, but rather a cruel judge and vengeful inquisitor. You see, the devil managed to make men believe that God does not really love us, that He really only loves Himself, and that He accepts us only if we behave as He wants us to behave; that He hates us if we do not behave as He ordered us to behave, and is offended by our insubordination to such a degree that we must pay for it by eternal tortures, created by Him for that purpose. Who can love a torturer? Even those who try hard to save themselves from the wrath of God cannot really love Him. They love only themselves, trying to escape God's vengeance and to achieve eternal bliss by managing to please this fearsome and extremely dangerous Creator...Do you see, then, that Western theology teaches that our real danger and our real enemy is our Creator and God? How can we have faith in someone who we detest? Faith in its deeper essence is a product of love, therefore, it would be our desire that one who threatens us not even exist, especially when this threat is eternal. (THE IKON AS SCRIPTURE)*