



Metropolitan Hilarion: In our every step we should be guided by the will of God



On August 9, 2015, the commemoration day of the Protomartyr and Healer Panteleimon, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate department for external church relations, celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the church of Our Lady the Joy to All the Afflicted-in-Bolshaya-Ordynka, in Moscow. Among the clergy who assisted him were Hegumen Mitrofan (Shkurin), vice-chairman of the synodal department for religious education and catechism, and Archpriest Alexy Yastrebov, rector of the Parish of the Holy Myrrh-Bearing Women in Venice.

After the liturgy, Metropolitan Hilarion addressed the congregation with a homily putting emphasis on the power of faith: “The faith in Jesus Christ as God and Saviour, who is not someplace far away but here, among us, and the faith that He does wonders also by our sinful and feeble hands – this faith is the basis of our life and our hope. This faith cannot be acquired through human efforts alone or studies or reading books. This faith is a gift of God and it is not given to anyone. There are people who read books and study philosophy and thumb through the Bible but the Lord does not give them faith... Therefore if one has received the gift of faith, one should remember that it is a gift that comes from God”.

His Eminence also spoke about the faith as not only a conviction that there is God and that He is

merciful. "Faith is a way of life and God's presence in one's life should affect his entire behaviour, the way of his life and prayer... If one believes but not prays it means that one's faith remains a dry, cold and purely intellectual. This kind of faith cannot influence his life and fill it with meaning. Therefore, only if one comes to stand before God with prayer and hears His response, then one comes in communion with God, which cannot happen in any other way.

"God is not an abstract principle, as some think, saying: There is a good power that works in the world. Yes, there is such power, and we call it God. And God is not only power but also personality, and He as personality wishes to communicate with us as human personalities. He waits for us to turn to Him with prayer, and if we ask for something with prayer, the Lord will give us what we ask for, as He Himself promised us to do".

Metropolitan Hilarion also spoke about praying and fasting as simple rules that the Lord has given us.

"We should begin each day with prayer and finish it with prayer. We should pray to God for His blessing before each task we are to accomplish, and in each of our steps we should be guided by the will of God... It is through prayer and fasting that our faith is expressed and through it the Lord prepares our souls for accepting His grace".

In conclusion of his homily, Metropolitan Hilarion spoke about St. Panteleimon, who was a physician in his earthly life. "But now he is a doctor of a special kind: he heals the illnesses that cannot be cured by ordinary doctors. We turn to him in prayer and often can see that our prayers are heard.

"Let us ask the Lord that He may give us steadfast faith and obedience to His Holy Church, that He may teach us to pray and help us to accomplish the feat of fasting and, if a physical illness befalls us, that we may be healed by His mercy and through the interception of the Holy Protomartyr Panteleimon".

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