Metropolitan Hilarion: Our earthly life should be the striving after God



On 19 October 2014, 19th Sunday after Pentecost, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Moscow Church of the "Joy to All the Afflicted" Icon of the Mother of God in Bolshaya Ordynka Street. Concelebrating with him were clerics of the church.

After the Litany of Fervent Supplication, Metropolitan Hilarion said a prayer for peace in Ukraine.

After the service His Eminence addressed the worshippers with an archpastoral homily, saying in particular:

"In today's Gospel reading we have heard the story of St Luke the Evangelist about the raising of a widow's son in Nain. Having seen the funeral procession and learned about the sorrow of the woman who had lost her husband and had to bid her last farewell to her only son, the Lord had compassion on

her and brought the young man, who had untimely left this world, back to life (see Lk. 7:11-16).

What is the meaning of this miracle and why did the Evangelists find it necessary to tell us about it? First of all, they did it in order to remind us that our Lord Jesus Christ is the Master of life and death and has power to raise people from the dead.

We, Orthodox Christians, believe that a new life is waiting for us beyond the threshold of death. We know from the Lord Himself that He has risen from the dead. We have learned from evangelists and apostles that each of us will raise from the dead. Yet, the quality of our life after death will depend largely on how we lived our earthly life.

Our earthly life should be striving after God. It should be a time during which we must fulfill God's will for us. If people do not walk before God, do not feel His presence and do not strive to fulfill His commandments and build their life in the conformity to God's will, then they will see death as the end of everything, because the sinful experience, accumulated during their life, will hinder them from entrusting themselves completely to God.

If, on the contrary, people during their earthly life remember death and the Day of Judgment, if they keep in mind that all people will raise from the dead and give an answer for every deed and thought, then the true life with God will open to them.

Let us learn from the law of the Lord every day of our life, read the Gospel, and draw the words of life out of it. Let us ask God to help us prepare for the transition from this temporary life to the life eternal, in which He grants us salvation and His Heavenly Kingdom. Amen."

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