



## **Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk: The Lord is always with us, especially at a time of trial**

On August 14, 2010, the eve of the commemoration day of the first martyr Stephan, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations, officiated at All-Night Vigil at the church of Our Lady the Joy to All the Afflicted in Bolshaya Ordynka in Moscow.

After the service, His Eminence Hilarion addressed himself to the congregation with an archpastoral homily:

“Dear brothers and sisters, tomorrow the Church will celebrate the memory of the first martyr Archdeacon Stephan whose story we know from the Book of the Acts. He was the first martyr to suffer for Christ, and being stoned, he saw the Glory of God and the Lord Jesus Christ. This story tells us about the very beginning of the Christian Church when the Church of Christ was built on the feat of martyrs. Archdeacon Stephan, following the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, suffered and died but he was not alone in his suffering because the Lord Jesus Christ Himself gave him strength by His presence and grace-giving power.

Whenever we remember martyrs and learn about their feat and superhuman suffering they endured, we understand that such a feat could be accomplished only if the Lord Himself was present and helped a saint. Just as the holy martyr Ignatius the God-bearer, who faced execution in Rome and wrote to the Churches asking them not to intercede for him and not to try to save him from death, was eager to die for Christ, so many thousands of martyrs in all centuries up to the latest time of persecution took the same path because God's grace and power helped them.

The Lord does not call us to martyrdom but to patience and humbleness. If trials fall to our lot, which do not make up as a rule one thousandth of what martyrs and confessors suffered, then these suffering should be accepted with humbleness. We should remember that the Lord Jesus Christ is always with us, especially at a time of trial. If it seems to us that the Lord is far away, that He has forgotten or abandoned us, it is a mistaken human feeling. The Lord only lets us suffer sometimes to strengthen us in our faith so that we may feel His presence in our life more strongly and fully.

I greet you all on the occasion of the coming Sunday, and may the intercession of the first martyr

Stephan help us on our life journey. Amen!”

*DECR Communication Service*

---

Source: <https://mospat.ru/en/news/56834/>