



Metropolitan Hilarion: Life without faith is an illusion

[gallery]

On 20 June 2010, the 4th Sunday after Pentecost, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Church of "Joy to All the Afflicted" Icon of the Mother of God in Bolshaya Ordynka Street.

The Moscow Synodal Choir conducted by the merited artist of Russia Aleksei Puzakov sang at the Liturgy. They sang pieces by Sergei Rachmaninov and "The Cherubic Hymn" by Metropolitan Hilarion. In his homily the archpastor commented on the Gospel reading about the healing of a centurion's servant by the Saviour. He reminded the worshippers that the servant was healed according to centurion's faith. The centurion did not even ask Christ to come to his house, saying: 'Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only speak the word, and my servant will be healed' (Mt 8:8). And the Lord performed the miracle according to the centurion's faith.

Metropolitan Hilarion underscored: "This story reminds us of the importance of faith in human life. St. Paul says that 'faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen' (Heb 11:1). The unbelievers would ask us to prove the existence of God. We have neither ready proofs, nor logical arguments that could have brought them to faith. We can only answer them that we believe because God is manifesting Himself in our lives in various ways every hour. We believe because we feel the presence of God when we come to church, pray at the Divine Liturgy, and partake of the Holy Mysteries of Christ. We believe because we feel the Providence of God in our life. This is 'the conviction of the things not seen,' as St. Paul teaches us.

"It was this faith that helped the saints to perform miracles throughout centuries. It gave strength to the confessors and martyrs to stand firmly for Orthodoxy in the times of persecutions even if it cost them their life. This faith inspired the prophets, apostles, and all those who worked for spreading the good tidings, teaching people Divine truths and laws. This faith transforms and sanctifies our life even today.

"As the apostle said, faith is 'the assurance of things hoped for.' Although we know that we shall have the eternal life and hope that the Lord, by His ineffable mercy, will grant us the Heavenly Kingdom after our earthly life, we partake of the Heavenly Kingdom during our temporal life on the earth. 'The assurance of things hoped for' takes place here, the Kingdom of God is present in our midst, and we partake of it.

"We partake of the Heavenly Kingdom every time we come to the Divine Liturgy to partake of the Holy

Mysteries of Christ, as through communion God unites with us. Not only He comes to us, looks at us, and shows His benevolence to us, but He becomes a part of our spiritual and physical nature. He permeates our bodies. His blood runs in our veins, and our human nature is renewed by His Divine grace.

"This is what faith gives us. Life without faith is an illusion of life. Many people who lack faith think that they live. It seems to them that they are rejoicing and enjoying, but these delights will soon pass, and man who rejoices today will sorrow tomorrow not understanding the meaning of his life.

"The believers are people who know what for they live. Their lives have spiritual orientation. They understand that they should live not only for themselves, but for the others, too. They should store up treasures, which 'neither moth nor rust' can consume (Mt 6:20), the incorruptible treasures, which are good deeds.

"We should pass God's grace received in church to our neighbours. This is the core of our faith. We believe that God exists, we recognize His actions in our life, and we should be able to hand this faith over to other people. We should be able to hand it over without using any logical arguments or proofs, but through our Christian way of life.

"Let us beseech the Lord to grant us such a faith that would never exhaust in our hearts but enlighten our entire life so that we could pass it to all who are dear to us: our parents, brothers and sisters, children and grandchildren, our colleagues and all people with whom we meet in our life. May the Lord help us to be true believers not only in word, but also in deed."

On Saturday, Metropolitan Hilarion celebrated the All-Night Vigil at the Church of "Joy to All the Afflicted" Icon of the Mother of God.

Source: <https://mospat.ru/en/news/57078/>