Metropolitan Hilarion: The Holy Spirit is the main treasure of the Christian soul

On August 1st, 2021, on the 6th Week after the Pentecost, the day of remembrance of the Holy Fathers of the six Ecumenical Councils and the feast of the meeting of the relics of St. Seraphim of Sarov the wonderworker, the Chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Moscow church of "Joy to All the Afflicted" icon of the Mother of God on Bolshaya Ordynka street.

Clergymen of the church assisted the archpastor.

During the Litany of Fervent Supplication, petitions were offered up for deliverance of the coronavirus infection.

After the Litany, Metropolitan Hilarion lifted up a prayer recited at the time of the spread of baneful pestilence.

At the end of the Divine Liturgy, the Archpastor addressed the audience with a following sermon:

"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit!

I congratulate all of you, dear fathers, brothers and sisters, on Sunday, as well as on the day of remembrance of our Venerable and God-bearing Father Seraphim, the wonderworker of Sarov.

This great Russian saint lived at the beginning of the XIX century, at a time when various revolutionaries were already acting in our Holy Rus', both those who wanted to enlighten the people in a liberal spirit and those who said that happiness is contained not in the life of the church, but in progress, in moving forward – towards liberal and European values.

At the time when Russia had to choose its own path, St. Seraphim appeared as a prophet who was sent fr om God to announce to people the way to salvation and eternal life, to show them where to go in order to be saved.

St. Seraphim said that the goal of Christian life is to acquire the Holy Spirit of God. However, not everyone understood what the Saint was talking about.

Even Nikolai Alexandrovich Motovilov, with whom the monk talked on this topic, did not immediately understand what he was talking about. Then St. Seraphim explained to him: the whole life of people is based on them acquiring something, the whole life of people is connected with the process of buying and selling. People buy property, material goods, food... Of course, I am retelling in my own words what the St. Seraphim explained to Motovilov. But the most important acquisition that a person can make is the Holy Spirit of God.

In the Christian life, St. Seraphim said, many things are necessary: prayer, fasting, vigil, and the fulfillment of God's commandments. The Saint himself spent a thousand days and nights in prayer on a stone, standing on his knees. He was distinguished by such abstinence that contemporaries were surprised how his soul still held in the body. But all this, said St. Seraphim of Sarov, is not the goal of the Christian life, but only auxiliary means. The goal is to acquire the Spirit of God.

How can a person acquire the Holy Spirit? If he gives up his whole life to God, if he devotes all his affairs to the Lord, even ordinary earthly cares, turning them into a prelude to God. This may seem very simple, but it is also very difficult at the same time, because our head and our heart are often filled with

worldly cares. We have acquired one, and immediately begin to think about acquiring another. Like people who collect paintings or icons, or antiques: they acquire one item and immediately start chasing after another. It is the same in our life: as soon as we acquire one thing, we immediately begin to want something else.

And St. Seraphim says that a person needs to acquire only one thing: the presence of the Holy Spirit in his life. If a person makes this acquisition, then everything else will be added to it. Perhaps this is what the Lord Jesus Christ spoke about in the parable of the pearl, when he reminded that the most important thing in a person's life is the Kingdom of God. And what is the Kingdom of Heaven like? It is like a pearl that a person found in a field, and in order to acquire it, he bought the whole field, selling his own estate for this. In the same way, the Holy Spirit is the pearl, having acquired which, together with the field wh ere it is located, we will receive everything necessary for our life.

The field is an image of the Church of Christ. It is here that a person acquires the Holy Spirit of God: through participation in Church life, in divine services, through communion of the Holy Mysteries of Christ, through participation in other church Sacraments and through what many call the Liturgy after the Liturgy, when at the end of the service we go out into the world, but our heart remains filled with the grace of God. We return to ordinary worldly affairs and cares, but the prayer of Jesus continues to live in our hearts, and our Lord Jesus Christ Himself is present, along with the Holy Spirit, whom He sends from the Father to His disciples and followers.

This is what the authors of the holy books of the Old Testament meant when they said that this or that person walked before God. What does this mean? This means that a person lives in a constant sense of the presence of God, and whatever he does, even ordinary earthly affairs, he dedicates to God. He prays before the beginning of any work and thanks the Lord at the end of it, perceiving his whole life as an offering to God.

This is what the Lord calls us to do, and the great saint, St. Seraphim of Sarov, also tells us about it. Live in the presence of God, remember that the Lord is always near; devote all your deeds and labors to Him. Pray in your heart with the Jesus prayer. Participate in Church life and in the Sacraments of the Church. Partake of the Holy Mysteries of Christ, and the Lord will be near you, and the Holy Spirit will be within you.

Let us pray to the great saint of the Russian land, our Venerable Seraphim, the wonderworker of Sarov, so that he will teach us to walk the path of a virtuous life and bless us for further labors. So that each of us, through a prayer, will acquire the main treasure of the Christian soul, its main pearl – the Holy Spirit of God. Amen.

I congratulate all of you on today’s feast!"

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