

Delightful teachings

Throughout the week I have been reading from a book about the life and sayings of Father Seraphim of Sarov, one of the monks of the Russian Orthodox Church in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century (1759-1833 AD). In fact, there is a great collection of spiritual experiences and teachings in his biography and sayings. I thought of sharing the delight of these teachings with as many readers as possible. Therefore, I selected some excerpts of this book to present it in this article:



+ God is fire, warming and igniting the heart and inward parts. So, if we feel coldness in our hearts, which is from the devil (for the devil is cold), then let us call the Lord: He, in coming, will warm our heart with perfect love, not only towards Himself, but to our neighbors as well. And the coldness of the despiser of good will run from the face of His warmth.

+ Everything coming from God is peaceful, healthy and leads a person to the judgment of his own imperfections and to humility.

+ God shows us His love for man not only in those instances when we do good, but also when we affront Him with our sins and anger Him.

+ Above all, we must believe in God because He exists and is the source of all goodness for those who search for Him. True believers are [living] stones in the church of God.

+ The works of faith are love, peace, longsuffering, mercy, humility, bearing one's cross and life by the spirit. True faith cannot remain without works. One who truly believes will also surely perform good works.

+ If a person does not have superfluous care for himself, out of his love for God and for virtuous deeds, and knows that God will take care of him, then this hope is true and wise. But if a person places all his hope in his works, and turns to God in prayer only when unforeseen misfortunes befall him, then he, seeing that he lacks the means of averting them in his own abilities, begins to hope for help from God - but such a hope is trivial and false.

+ He who has acquired perfect love for God goes through this life as if he did not exist. For he considers himself a stranger to all that is visible, and awaits with patience that which is unseen. He is completely transformed into love for God and has abandoned all worldly attachments.

+ If we do not attribute visible blessings to Him, which we enjoy in this life, then how can we expect those blessings from Him which are promised in the future?

+ A person in his body is like a lighted candle. The candle must burn out, and a person must die. But as our soul is immortal, so our cares should be directed more toward the soul than the body.

+ We should take care of our souls; one should take enough food everyday to strengthen the body. How is the soul nourished? It is nourished by the word of God, according to Saint Gregory the theologian: "Because the word of God is the bread of angels and it feeds the souls who are hungry for God"

+ We must also nurture the soul with the teachings of the church, how it has been preserved from the beginning till today, and how much she suffered! We need to know this, not to lead others, but to answer those who ask us, and in particular, for the benefit of our souls so we may acquire the peace of the soul.

+ He who lives in peace reaps the gifts of grace.

+ When a man acquires peace, he over flows unto others with peace.

+ If a man doesn't detest this world, he can not reap peace. Peace is acquired through tribulations. He who wants to please God must go through many trials.

+ Nothing so aids the acquiring of inner peace as silence, and as much as is possible, continual discussion with oneself and rarely with others.

+ In this way, we must direct all our thoughts, desires and actions toward obtaining God's peace, and always cry out with the Church: "O king of peace, grant us your peace, render unto us your peace."

+ It is necessary by all means to try to keep one's spiritual peace, and not to become provoked by insults from others. To do this, it is necessary always to restrain oneself from anger, and by careful watch to guard the mind and heart from unclean wavering.

+ If it is impossible for us not to become indignant, then we should at least restrain our tongue to preserve the peace.

+ In order to keep our inner peace it is necessary to avoid judging others in any way. It is also necessary to watch our physical senses, especially sight, so we are not distracted.

Next week, we will continue with more excerpts from these delightful teachings. The peace of Christ may be always with you.

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