

# ПАНТЕЛЕИМОНСКИЙ ЛИСТОК

A Newsletter for the Russian Orthodox Community of Saint Panteleimon, Gosford

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## Столетие прославления Преподобного Серафима Саровскаго



*Centenary of the Glorification of Saint Seraphim,  
the Wonderworker of Sarov*

Saint Seraphim was born near the city of Kursk in Russia in 1759. His father and mother, who were good Christians, gave him the name Prokhor. Prokhor's father died when he was only three years old. When Prokhor was seven, a great miracle happened. He was playing at the top of a bell-tower on a church that was being built, and fell to the ground! But God saved him from harm. Not even one of his bones was broken.

When he was around ten years old, Prokhor became very sick. He had a dream in which the Mother of God appeared to him and told him that he would get better. A few days later, the Kursk-Root (Курская-Коренная) Icon of the Mother of God was brought to his village (the same icon that we had with us in Gosford last year). Praying before it with his mother, he was healed of his sickness.

When Prokhor grew up, he wanted most of all to live in a monastery and serve God. His mother blessed him with a cross that he wore for the rest of his life. He went first to the old Christian city of Kiev. A holy monk there told him to go to the monastery of Sarov, where he stayed for the rest of his life.

Prokhor was nineteen years old when he started to live in the monastery. He was given different jobs to do: baking bread and prosphora, woodwork, making little wooden crosses, and making wooden toys for children.

For several years, Prokhor simply lived at the monastery and shared in the work and prayers of the monks. He then became a monk. When one becomes a monk (or nun), there is actually a special church service performed, in which the person promises to live obediently in the monastery all their life, to not eat meat, get married, or try and become rich, and in which they are given a new name. Prokhor's new name was Seraphim (Серафимъ).

As the years went by, the monk Seraphim became a deacon and then a priest. When he was a deacon, our Lord Jesus Christ himself appeared to him in church. Another time, when he was sick, the Mother of God and the Holy Apostles Peter and John appeared to him. During his life, the Mother of God appeared to Saint Seraphim 12 times.

After a few years, Saint Seraphim was allowed to live by himself in the forest close to the monastery, where he could concentrate more on his prayers. He prayed and read holy books most of the day, and spent a little time growing vegetables and keeping bees. All the forest animals would come to his hut. A huge bear even came, and allowed Saint Seraphim to feed him bread.

Once the bear came when Saint Seraphim had some visitors. They were terrified, but Saint Seraphim told the bear to not scare the people, and asked him to bring a treat for the guests. About two hours later, the bear came back with a honeycomb for Saint

Seraphim and his visitors to eat! Saint Seraphim is often depicted together with a bear.

One day, some robbers went to Saint Seraphim's hut, thinking that he would have lots of gold. They bashed him terribly and searched his hut, but found nothing. After that, Saint Seraphim could not stand up straight again. But when soldiers caught the robbers, Saint Seraphim asked that they be forgiven.

Every day of the year, Saint Seraphim would say "Христосъ Воскресе!" ("Christ is Risen!") This is because he was full of happiness that our Lord Jesus Christ had risen from the dead, setting us free from sin and death. His face was always shining with joy. He was full of love for everyone.

Saint Seraphim especially liked to pray in front of two icons. One was the Icon of our Lord Jesus Christ "Not made by Hands" («Нерукотвореннаго») and the other was the beautiful "Tender Feeling" («Умиление») Icon of the Mother of God.

Once, Saint Seraphim kneeled on a rock to pray for 1000 nights and days! In many icons, he is shown kneeling on this rock and praying with his hands lifted up. He prayed, "God have mercy on me, a sinner!"

Saint Seraphim lived a good and holy life. People came in thousands from all over Russia to see him. God allowed him to see into the future, and Saint Seraphim often warned people about the terrible things that would happen in the Russian Revolution in 1917.

Saint Seraphim died on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1833, whilst praying in front of his icons. There were many miracles after he died. In 1903, he was officially recognized as a saint. 350 000 people came to the special church service on that day, including the Tsar, Nicholas II, and all his family.

We remember Saint Seraphim on two days of the year: the day that he died, January 15<sup>th</sup> (January 2<sup>nd</sup> on the Church calendar), and the date that he was declared a saint, August 1<sup>st</sup> (July 19<sup>th</sup>). August 1<sup>st</sup> 2003 is the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Saint Seraphim's official recognition as a saint. This will be a very special day in our Church.

So important is this day that our Synod of Bishops has prepared a special "Epistle of the Synod of Bishops on the 100th Anniversary of the Glorification of Saint Seraphim of Sarov." The Synod has also directed that Saint Seraphim's name be mentioned at the conclusion of each service from the day of the feast up until January 15<sup>th</sup> 2004, the next feast of Saint Seraphim. Vladika Hilarion has also issued a special ukase (or resolution) on the occasion, directing that each parish and monastery liturgically celebrate the feast, and that the Epistle of the Synod of Bishops be read aloud in

church. Although it will not be possible to have a service in Gosford on this occasion, the text of the Synod's epistle is reprinted here in Russian and English. Enclosed as a blessing on this joyous occasion in the life of our Church are copies of an icon of Saint Seraphim and of his beloved «Умиление» Icon of the Mother of God.

## ПОСЛАНИЕ АРХИЕРЕЙСКОГО СИНОДА

к 100-летию со дня прославления преподобного Серафима Саровского

Возлюбленные о Господе клир и паства нашей Русской Зарубежной Церкви,

**Христос Воскресе!**

Многие из нас, рассуждая о темноте современных шатаний человечества, о господствующим в теперешнем мире злобе, ненависти, вражде, разделенных и соблазнах; считают, что во всем этом виноваты «сильные мира сего» и люди, которые нас не понимают, не разделяют наши взгляды. Наблюдая за событиями в мире, который везде страдает и злобствует, мы любим указывать на грехи, ошибки и недостатки окружающих нас людей, наших врагов, забывая, как говорит народная мудрость, «заглядывать в свой огород». Вспомним апостола Павла, который предупреждал древних христиан о том, что многие из-за нас, верующих, не обратятся к Богу, не придут в Церковь, потому что в нас они не видят истинных последователей Воскресшего Христа, которые бы сияли Его святостью, любовью, смирением, милосердием; которые бы в поведении своем, словах и делах насаждали Царство Божие на этой грешной земле. В наших семьях и общинах люди не видят, чтобы они являлись примером, живой и убедительной проповедью православного христианства, которая бы зажигала сердца людей, воодушевляя их на служение Богу. И, действительно, если мы посмотрим на нашу жизнь: жизнь православного человека далеко не сияет добродетелями евангельскими. Мы, хотя и называемся православными христианами, но не стремимся стяжать в себе духа Христова, духа любви, терпения, мира, благорасположения, взаимопомощи.

Но не будем отчаиваться, братие и сестры, а будем, по мере сил, тянуться к Богу, взирая на пример преподобного Серафима, Саровского чудотворца, и стараться «проводить добродетельную жизнь, чтобы люди, увидев добрые дела, прославляли Бога, в день посещения» (I Петр. 2, 12). Из жизнеописания преподобного Серафима видно, что он был примером истинного христианства. Он жил как свидетель Воскресения Христова, как знающий Воскресшего, и провозглашал эту истину своим святым житием, воплощая в жизнь слова апостола Павла: «Поминай Господа Иисуса, восставшего от мертвых...» Он своей пасхальной радостью о Христе Воскресшем, святостью жизни, подвигами и наставлениями привел многих, «отчужденных от жизни Божией» (Еф. 4, 18) к Его благодати, милости и любви. Преподобный всегда наставлял: «Стяжи дух мирен (или спасайся сам), и тысячи вокруг тебя спасутся», исполняя эти слова на деле. Один из пастырей нашей Церкви

рассказывал о том, как один инженер, его прихожанин, работал в каком-то учреждении, где среди людей было много всякой вражды и волнений, а он не знал как себя вести, как бороться с этим искушением. Потом решил: буду молиться, и результаты сказались, скоро не только он успокоился, но стали спокойнее все те, которые с ним общались и чувствовали благоухание его жизни, ибо в нем был мирный дух и молитва мирная. Вот наше призвание - где мрак, где скорбь, где тяжело людям нести свой жизненный крест, мы должны быть светом Христовым, присутствием Его; это может быть скромная свеча, это может быть свет солнечный, подобно преподобному Серафиму, о чем свидетельствует его беседа с Мотовиловым «о цели христианской жизни», но, во всяком случае, будем стараться, активно стремясь к Богу, быть светом для окружающего нас падшего мира, просвещая его и делая его менее злым и мрачным. Мы никогда не должны забывать, что несмотря на нашу греховность и недостойность, мы все-таки являемся посланниками Божиими, и Он нас посылает в этот мир, «во зле лежащий», для того, чтобы его освящать, приносить людям духовную радость о победе Жизни над смертью и ободрять их.

Дорогие о Господе отцы, братие, сестры и дети! С чувством пасхального ликования поздравляем всех вас, чад нашей Зарубежной Церкви; всех наших соотечественников как тех, с которыми мы в общении, так и всех тех, с которыми мы еще чаем единства в Истине, со знаменательным юбилеем 100-летия со дня прославления преподобного Серафима, который будет торжественно отмечаться не только всей Русской Церковью, но и всем православным миром. Апостол Павел пишет: «Поминайте наставников ваших...» (Евр. 13, 7). Повинуясь указанному завету, и мы соберемся на праздничных богослужениях в наших храмах, чтобы почтить молитвами и песнопениями память нашего великого русского святого. Постараемся все изучить его жизнь и вдуматься в эту личность. Ясно, что наши хваления слишком недостаточны, чтобы изобразить всю высоту его славы у Бога и все его значение для нас. И, однако, мы будем воспевать его, ибо это необходимо и важно для нас самих. Важно потому, что, почитая святого, мы невольно сопоставляем свою жизнь с его жизнью и, видя ясно ту резкую разницу, какая лежит между нашей и его жизнью, побуждаемся хотя отчасти подражать ему. А это великая польза для нас, и на такую пользу указывает и апостол Павел, когда прямо повелевает, чтобы мы, помяная наставников своих, подражали вере и жизни их. И надо сказать, что только такое чествование преподобного Серафима, которое, по апостольскому завету, соединится с подражанием его вере и благочестию, его деятельному стремлению к Богу, явится вполне достойным с нашей стороны прославлением его памяти.

Празднуя в сие нелегкое для России и всего мира время славный 100-летний юбилей церковного прославления преподобного Серафима, воззовем из глубины сердец наших: «спасай нас молитвами твоими, Серафиме, преподобне отче наш» (из тропаря). Помолимся ему о том, чтобы в сердце каждого из нас воскрес Христос,

чтобы оно стало Живоносным Гробом, в Котором сияет Божиим светом, светом вечности Воскресший Богочеловек! Да воскреснет Бог и в сердцах всех русских людей! Да расточатся все враги Божии и страждущего Отечества нашего! Да возрадуется и возвеселится Русь о Воскресшем Спасителе своем и о Преподобном своем, призывающем русский народ к покаянию, возрождению, возвращению к своим историческим корням. Да поможет нам Господь внять его призыву: «Стяжи дух мирен...». Услышим же, почувствуем и пойдем.

Молитвенно желаем всем провести этот всерадостный юбилей во здравии и благополучии, в радости духовной и в ощущении победной силы Добра и Красоты, в озарении Света Воскресения Христова, Которого тьма века сего не в силах объять!

С пасхальной радостью о Христе Воскресшем,

**† Митрополит ЛАВР, Председатель Архиерейского Синода**

**† Архиепископ МАРК**

**† Епископ КИРИЛЛ**

**† Епископ АМВРОСИЙ**

**† Епископ ГАВРИИЛ**

**† Епископ МИХАИЛ**

**† Епископ АГАПИТ**

**1/14 мая 2003**

**Св. прор. Иеремии**

**Epistle of the Synod of Bishops on the 100th Anniversary of the Glorification of  
St. Seraphim of Sarov**

**To the Clergy & Flock of Our Russian Church Abroad,  
Beloved in the Lord**

**CHRIST IS RISEN!**

Many of us, when discussing the darkness of mankind's contemporary vicissitudes, the evil, hatred, enmity, divisions and temptations which hold sway in today's world, consider that in all of this the "mighty of this world" are to blame, those who do not understand us, do not share our views. Observing events in the world, which everywhere suffers and is the object of malice, we love to point out the sins, errors and failings of those who surround us, our enemies, forgetting that folk wisdom tells us "to look to our own garden." Let us remember the Apostle Paul, who warned the early Christians that because of us believers many will not turn to God, will not come to the Church, because they will not see in us true followers of the risen Christ who shine with His holiness, love, humility, loving-kindness; who in their behaviour, words and deeds would establish

the kingdom of God in the midst of this sinful world. In our families and communities people do not see that they are supposed to be an example, a living and persuasive preaching of Orthodox Christianity, to enkindle the hearts of men, inspiring them to serve God. And in actual fact, if we look at our life, the life of the Orthodox man is far from resplendent with the virtues of the Gospel. Even though we may call ourselves Orthodox Christians, yet do we not strive to acquire within ourselves the spirit of Christ, the spirit of love, patience, peace, a good disposition, mutual help.

Yet let us not despair, brethren and sisters, but let us, to the extent we are able, strive towards God, looking to the example of Saint Seraphim, the wonder-worker of Sarov, and let us try to lead a virtuous life, that men "may by [our] good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation" (I Pet. 2: 12). It is obvious from the life of Saint Seraphim that he was an example of true Christianity. He lived as a witness to the resurrection of Christ, as one who knew the Resurrected One, and proclaimed this truth by his holy life, embodying in his way of life the words of the Apostle Paul: "Remember the Lord Jesus Who rose from the dead!" By his paschal joy in the resurrected Christ, his holiness of life, ascetic struggles and instructions he led many who were "alienated from the life of God" (Eph. 4: 18) to His grace, mercy and love. The saint always taught: "Acquire the spirit of peace (or, save yourself), and a thousand will be saved around you;" and he fulfilled these words in deed. One of the pastors of our Church has related how a certain engineer, a parishioner of his, was working for some firm where enmity and turmoil was rife among the staff, and he did not know what to do, how to withstand this temptation. Later he decided to pray, and results were immediately forthcoming: he not only grew calm himself, but all those with whom he came into contact grew calmer and sensed the sweet savour of his life, for there was within him a peaceful spirit and peaceful prayer. This is our plea: where there is darkness, where there is sorrow, where it is difficult for men to bear the cross of their life, we must be the light of Christ, His presence. This can be a modest candle, or it can be the light of the sun, like Saint Seraphim, of which his conversation with Motovilov bears witness "concerning the purpose of the Christian life;" but, in any event, we must exert ourselves, actively striving towards God, to be a light for the fallen world which surrounds us, illumining it and making it less evil and dark. We must never forget that, despite our sinfulness and unworthiness, we are still emissaries of God, and He is sending us into this world "which lieth in evil," that we may sanctify it, may bear unto men the spiritual joy over the victory of Life over death, and to give them heart.

Fathers, brethren, sisters and children, dear in the Lord! With a sense of paschal celebration we greet all of you, the children of our Church Abroad, all of our compatriots, both those with whom we are in communion and all those with whom we still hope for unity in the Truth on the remarkable jubilee of the centennial anniversary of the glorification of Saint Seraphim, which will be solemnly marked not only by the whole Church of Russia, but by the whole Orthodox world as well. The Apostle Paul writes:

"Remember those who have the rule over you..." (Heb. 13: 7). Obeying this order, let us also comport ourselves during the festive divine services in our churches so as to honour with prayers and hymns the memory of our great Russian saint. Let us all try to study his life and meditate on his personality. It is clear that our praises are too inadequate to comprehend the full height of the glory he has with God and his full significance for us. Yet let us praise him, for this is essential and important for us. It is important because, in honouring the saint, we, whether we intend to or not, compare our own life with his life; and clearly perceiving the acute difference between our life and his, we are moved, if only a little, to imitate him. And this brings great benefit to us, which the Apostle Paul also points out when he gives us the direct order, that when we remember our instructors, we imitate their faith and their life. And it should also be said that only such honour shown Saint Seraphim as is, according to the Apostle's command, joined with the imitation of his faith and piety, his active striving towards God, is fully consistent with our glorification of his memory.

Celebrating during this time, so difficult for Russia and the whole world, the glorious centennial anniversary of the ecclesiastical glorification of Saint Seraphim, let us cry out from the depths of our hearts: "Save us by thy supplications, O Seraphim our venerable father!" (from the troparion). To him let us pray that Christ arise in the heart of each of us, so that it may become a Life-bearing Tomb in which the risen God-man will shine forth with divine light, the light of eternity. Let God arise also in the hearts of all the people of Russia! Let the enemies of God and our suffering homeland be scattered! Let Rus' rejoice and be glad in its risen Saviour and in His saint, who calls the Russian nation to repentance, rebirth, and return to its historical roots. May the Lord help us to take up his call: "Acquire the spirit of peace..." Let us listen, absorb this, and go forward.

**† Metropolitan Laurus, President of the Synod of Bishops**

**† Archbishop MARK**

**† Bishop KIRILL**

**† Bishop AMBROSE**

**† Bishop GABRIEL**

**† Bishop MICHAEL**

**† Bishop AGAPIT**

**1/14 May 2003**

**Holy Prophet Jeremiah**

Father James tries to prepare this newsletter to coincide with each service at Gosford. Let him know at least a week in advance if there is anything that you would like included (prayer requests, news, announcements). You can call him on 02-9721-2659 or email him at [fr.james.carles@rocor.org.au](mailto:fr.james.carles@rocor.org.au).