



## ***ACQUIRING THE SPIRIT*** **NEWSLETTER**

October, 2000 Edition

The Right Reverend Father Michael D. Jordan, Editor

### **St. Seraphim's goes: high tech**

St. Seraphim of Sarov Eastern Orthodox Church now has a Web page. Our (Domain Name) Web Address is [www.st-seraphim.com](http://www.st-seraphim.com). Our Web Page was activated on **Friday, September 15, 2000**. We're the **first** Orthodox Church in the Triad area to post a web page on the Internet! On this Web Page you will find all future issues of "Acquiring The Spirit", as well as a current announcements under the "Events" category. You will also find an explanation of what Orthodoxy is under "What is Orthodoxy?" There's a Sermon Library, complete with over 20 sermons. We have a page to explain who we are named "About Us". There's a Reference Library with several standard Orthodox Christian prayers, as well as special prayers. Under the reference section, we will feature Saints and other diocese material. At this point St. Nectarios is the featured Saint. Below the main categories, you will find the Food Pantry link. This page has information about our Outreach Ministry Food Pantry, as well as pictures of our Food Pantry in action. We also have a link to the St. Seraphim Prayer Chain Page, and finally a link to the Newsletter Issue Library. Please log on to the Internet and look up our page at [www.st-seraphim.com](http://www.st-seraphim.com). Pass our Web address to as many people as you can, the more the better. If you have suggestions about things that we can include in the Web Page, please email them to [rfmj@worldnet.att.net](mailto:rfmj@worldnet.att.net). We would like to thank Vitaut Nestohr for his assistance in creating our web page.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

St. Seraphim's is growing! We have totally outgrown our current facility, and seriously need a larger one. We have started a Building Fund, and will be having fund raisers to increase this fund. We are selling Bricks in honor or memory of loved ones - extended information is available on the Website under Events, and the selling bricks link. Basically, for \$2.00 per name, you can donate a brick in honor, or memory of a loved one. The names will be read at the dedication service, and be kept in a register in the Narthex of the new church. If you want to contribute, send a check, with a list of names in honor or memory, made out to St. Seraphim of Sarov - PO BOX 77342 - Greensboro, NC 27417-7342. We will stamp the back of the Check with the 501-C-3 Non-Profit Number for tax filing purposes.

### **BAKE SALE AND CRAFT SALE - OCTOBER 7<sup>TH</sup>**

We are having a "Bake & Craft" Sale on Saturday, October 7th, 2000 from 9:00 AM until all goodies are sold. The Bake Sale will be held in front of Wal-Mart located at 2710 North Main Street in High Point, North Carolina. Proceeds from this Sale will go toward our Building Fund.

### **METROPOLITAN ROMAN TO VISIT ST. SERAPHIM'S OCTOBER 8<sup>TH</sup>**

His Beatitude, Metropolitan Roman will be visiting St. Seraphim's on Sunday, October 8, 2000. During his visit he will be tonsuring Vitaut Nestohr, and Bob Burns as Sub-Deacons. Dwight Edwards will be tonsured a Church Reader during his visit as well. There will be a covered dish luncheon in the basement kitchen area following the Divine Liturgy.

### **IF YOU DO NOT HAVE A COMPUTER**

All future issues of "Acquiring The Spirit" will be posted on our internet web site. For those who do not have a computer, or access to the internet, we can mail you a copy of the "Acquiring the Spirit" Newsletter. Please send us a note letting us know that you do not have access to the Internet. Mail it to: St. Seraphim of Sarov - PO BOX 77342 - Greensboro, North Carolina 27417-7342.

## **ACQUIRING THE HOLY SPIRIT**

By: The Right Reverend Father Michael D. Jordan

In the Gospel of St. Matthew, Chapter 6, beginning with verse 22, Jesus Christ tells us, "The light of the body is the eye; if therefore your eye be single, your whole body shall be full of light. But if your eye be evil, your whole body shall be full of darkness." And in the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans, Chapter 5, verse 5, St. Paul tells us that we are justified by faith, and that the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, which is given to us.

These two Scriptures lessons remind me of the wonderful conversation that St. Seraphim had with Motovilov. The conversation took place on a gloomy Thursday in the winter near St. Seraphim's hermitage opposite the River Sarovka. It was bitterly cold, and snow was falling on top of an already deep accumulation. Motovilov was sitting on a tree stump, and St. Seraphim was squatting in front of him.

During the course of their conversation St. Seraphim and Motovilov were both illuminated by the Holy Spirit to the point that they became oblivious to the cold. They both witnessed an unearthly peace, joy, and lovely aroma. The wonderful state of being that St. Seraphim and Motovilov were permitted to enjoy was spoken of by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Roman chapter 14, verse 7: "The Kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit".

Motovilov had been concerned with a question that had gone unanswered since his childhood. This question was "What is the aim of our Christian life?" The clergy that Motovilov approached gave him obvious answers, but their answers did not satisfy Motovilov. He was told to attend church, pray to God, do the commandments, and do good. Somehow these answers left him wanting a real in-depth explanation of the aim of a true Christian.

St. Seraphim proceeded to tell Motovilov that the true aim of our Christian life is the acquisition of the Holy Spirit of God. St. Seraphim told him that fasts, vigils, prayers, almsgiving and every good work done for Christ's sake is only means of acquiring the Holy Spirit of God.

What St. Seraphim was telling Motovilov was that first of all the belief in Jesus Christ must be there. You must love God with your whole heart, and love your neighbor as yourself, then whatever you do whether it is fasting, vigils, almsgiving; you must do from hearts that are glowing with love for the Holy Trinity. In other words your eye must be single; as the Gospel lesson from St. Matthew teaches, or you must be focused on a single purpose, obtaining the Holy Spirit of God so that the Holy Spirit may bear witness to the truth of the Only-Begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ in your heart.

We are not saved by the works we do, but we are saved by acquiring the Holy Spirit of God, that proceeds from the Father, and bears witness to the Risen Son of God, and His ultimate sacrifice for us. The grace that we receive from the Holy Trinity is the light of the body; it illuminates us from within. It nourishes our spirits so that we are able to accomplish great things in the mighty name of Jesus Christ.

Just as a candle can light another candle without diminishing its own light, so this light we receive from the Holy Spirit is inexhaustible, just as the Holy Eucharist is forever eaten, yet never consumed, and enlightens those who partake of it, The Holy Trinity is a fountain of life-giving energy which flows in us and all who seek to acquire this illumination.

St. Paul said that we are justified by faith, and that the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, which is given to us. We receive this gift of the Holy Spirit when we are Chrismated following our Baptism. The Holy Spirit is the very breath of spiritual life in us. St. Seraphim told Motovilov this about Holy Baptism and Chrismation: "This Baptismal grace is so great and so indispensable, so vital for man, that even a heretic is not deprived of it until his death; that is, until the end of the period appointed on high by the Providence of God as a life-long test of man on earth, in order to see what he will be able to achieve (during this period given to him by God) by means of the power of grace granted him from on high."

We may fall from grace, but we do not lose the ability to find our way back to a state of grace as long as we have life and breath. If we fall, we should hasten to offer repentance for our sins. We should strive to regain the ground we have lost by practicing our faith in pure, God loving hearts.

In this wonderful conversation with Motovilov St. Seraphim tells him "What God requires is true faith in Himself, and His Only-Begotten Son. In return for that the grace of the Holy Spirit is granted abundantly from on high. This grace is available to everyone: "The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him in truth" Psalm 144:18, and "There is no partiality with Him". Ephesians 6:9. As St. Seraphim told Motovilov, "The Lord listens equally to the Monk, and also the simple Christian layman". I encourage you to read the entire conversation between St. Seraphim and Motovilov. In it you will find inspiration, and Godly instructions from St. Seraphim. It is written as if it applies to all who read it, and the benefits spoken of in this conversation are indeed available to all of us.

**"Acquire the spirit of peace, and a thousand souls around you will  
be saved!"**

**St. Seraphim of Sarov**