



■ On the Occasion of the Commemoration of St. Seraphim of Sarov (19 July, 2 January)

## The Holy Spirit in the Life of the Believer

† His Eminence, Metropolitan  
Cyprian of Oropos and Fili

**T**HE COMMEMORATION of St. Seraphim of Sarov always reminds us of his wondrous and God-inspired teaching that

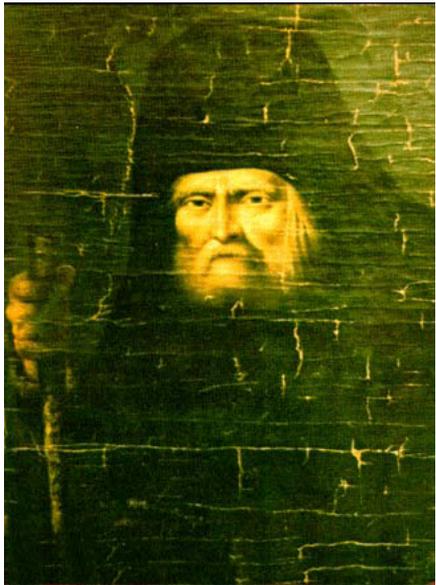
*“the purpose of the Christian life is the acquisition of the Holy Spirit.”*

The foolish virgins in the Gospel did not have any oil; that is, the Grace of the Holy Spirit. They certainly had virtues, but did not seek to acquire the Holy Spirit by means of them.

All of those who believe that they will be saved based solely on the multitude of their good works are in error.

Virtues are not an end in themselves. Our objective must be to practice our virtues in the Name of Christ, in order to receive the Grace of the Divine Comforter.

The soul that has not been animated by the Holy Spirit is dead; it is a *“foolish virgin,”* which will be locked outside of Paradise.



**WITHIN** the blessed Body of Christ our Savior, man is redeemed, transfigured, transmuted, and saved “*through the Mysteries of the Church and through the holy virtues, by the power and the Grace of the Holy Spirit.*”

The unfortunate thing is that not only does the heretical West undervalue the Holy Spirit, but also those Orthodox who throw the weight of their Christian lives into *activity* and *works*, which absorb them and put them on a par with the various *social revolutionaries* of our age, who ultimately cannot give a Christian witness in the Holy Spirit.

Christ’s Gospel, however, is a Revelation, which a person experiences in his life by the illumination of the Holy Spirit; we must be acted upon by the Divine Comforter in order to diffuse the light of Grace. “*No one can say ‘Lord Jesus’ save by the Holy Spirit.*”

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**WE MUST** continuously beseech the All-Holy Spirit, with great yearning and longing and spiritual fervor, to come and abide in us, to fill our existence, to vouchsafe us to utter “*Lord, have mercy*” with deep feeling and contrition, and to help us to have tears of repentance and to sigh as did the Publican in our prayers.

Finally, we must not forget the fundamental truth that virtues are the *tools* and *means* by which we will be purified, so that we might acquire the Holy Spirit; they are never the end, as St. Diadochos of Photiki teaches us:

*“Fasting indeed has its own glory, but not before God; for it is a tool, as it regulates those so desiring to live in chastity. Strugglers for piety must not be puffed up by [fasting], but only await with faith in God for the accomplishment of this end.”*

*19 July 2006 (Old Style)*

*† St. Seraphim of Sarov*

