



Metropolitan Hilarion: Our resurrection will come from the life-giving tomb of our Saviour

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On April 1, 2010, the Great Thursday, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations, celebrated matins with the reading of the Twelve Gospels at the church of Our Lady the Joy to All the Afflicted.

After the service, His Eminence Hilarion addressed himself to the congregation with an archpastoral homily, saying in particular,

All that we have heard today has a direct bearing on our salvation and our life because the then drama of human lives in face of human malice, betrayal, unfaithfulness and perfidy is going on in our days as well. It happens in our days too that evil triumphs, a righteous one suffers without guilt and one can be condemned unjustly, with a crowd mocking at him. To this day killings occur and to this day innocent people suffer and perish. Jesus Christ took upon Himself the human suffering, and today when people suffer they know that they are not alone if they believe in Chris, for the Lord is with them.

Whenever we listen to the sacred story of the Holy Passions of our Lord Jesus Christ, we think of the place in which we would have found ourselves at that moment. We think about our own life, our meager human power and our feeble love of the Lord. We understand that perhaps like Peter we would have repudiated our Lord at a moment of trial. We understand that we might have dispersed in fear, like the Saviour's disciples did, if we had seen Him put to death.

We stand before Christ's Cross, remembering His passions and death. We think about how His passions and death relate to our own life, how this sacred story told by the four Evangelists relates to our own experience. We understand that it is a story about our own life since what happened at that time also happens today: the battle between good and evil that broke out at that time also happens today, and every one of us may find oneself on this or that side of good or evil. There is only one guiding star that can prompt us on all days of our life and in any situation where good is and where evil is; where we should go and where we should not go, what we should do and what we should not do. This guiding star is the Cross of Christ. If we pray to our Lord the Saviour, if we look at His holy Cross and ask Him to help us to be His faithful servants and His faithful disciples, He Himself will teach us where good is good and where evil is and help us to withstand the trials of life. And at a critical moment when we face a choice to be with Christ or to renounce Him, He Himself will help us not to repudiate Him.

Human powers are very meager, and we all know this. Even more meager are human spiritual powers. Sometimes we find it difficult to endure the physical tests or illnesses that befall us. Sometimes we find it difficult even to stand through a service because our feet hurt or head aches or body is dead tired, but it is even more difficult for one to endure spiritually the grieves and trials falling to one's lot. And we have seen that our Saviour's disciples during His last days on earth proved unequal to their apostolic calling. He prayed in the garden of Gethsemane while they were sleeping. He was arrested and they did not rush to defend Him. Only one of them pulled out his sword but was stopped by the Saviour; but this disciple, too, renounced Christ a few minutes or hours later.

Standing before the Cross of Christ today, we should once again ask ourselves: What or who do we rely on? We should tell ourselves that our human resources are never sufficient for us to live a life of virtue, to be faithful disciples of Christ. For this reason we should turn to our Lord Jesus Christ Himself who suffered and died for us with a prayer that He may be our helper and intercessor, that His death may become the source of life for us, that we may receive from his life-giving tomb the spiritual nourishment and spiritual power necessary to perform the feat of life.

Our Saviour suffered for each of us and He is always with us in our suffering and hardships. If our power, physical and spiritual, grows meager, let us ask the Lord to replenish it, to pour out grace from His divine Cross, to give us our salvation from His life-giving tomb.

Today we remember the passions and death of our Saviour, but we also anticipate his Resurrection. His death was temporary, and we know that our death will be temporary too because we will die for earthly life but will rise for future life. And this fills our hearts with hope for salvation, for our ability to live this earthly life in a worthy way.

Let us revere the Cross of Christ and ask the Lord to give us the power to perform our feat of life. Let us solicit that we may not renounce Him like Peter did in our hour of need, that we may not disperse like other disciples did but like His Most Holy Mother and His beloved disciples we may come to stand at Christ's Cross and that the Lord may be our Saviour and Helper in all days of our life.

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