

Saint Seraphim of Viritsa's Spiritual Testament

"This Was From Me"

By Metropolitan Manuel Lemeshevsky

Have you ever thought that everything that touches you touches Me as well? For that which touches you touches the apple of My eye.

You are dear in my eyes, precious, and I have loved you; therefore it is a particular pleasure for Me to educate you.

When temptations arise against you, and the enemy comes like a river, I want you to know— This was from Me.

Your weakness needs My strength, and your safety comes from giving Me the opportunity to fight for you.

If you find yourself in difficult circumstances, among people who do not understand you, who do not take what you like into consideration, who alienate you— This was from Me.

I am God, Who arranges circumstances. It was no accident that you find yourself in the place where you are; this is the place I have appointed for you. Did you not ask that I teach you humility? Well, then, look: I have placed you in precisely that place, in that school, where this lesson is learned. Your surroundings and those who live with you are only fulfilling My will.

If you find yourself in financial difficulty, if you find it hard to make ends meet— This was from Me.

For I have your material means at my disposal. I want you to call unto me, for you to be dependant upon Me. My reserves are inexhaustible. I want you to be confirmed in fidelity to Me and to

My promises. May it not be said to you in your need: You did not believe in the Lord your God.

Are you in a night of suffering? Are you separated from your loved ones and those close to your heart? This was from Me.

I am the Man of suffering, Who has tasted affliction. I have allowed this so that you would turn to Me, so that in Me you would find eternal comfort.

If you have been let down by your friend, to someone to whom you opened your heart— This was from Me.

I allowed this disappointment to touch you so that you would know that your best friend is the Lord. I want you to bring everything to Me and to speak to Me.

Has someone slandered you? Give this to me, and bring your soul closer to Me, your Refuge, to hide from the contradiction of the nations. I shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your judgment as the noonday. If your plans have been destroyed, if you are downtrodden in soul and tired— This was from Me.

You made plans, and brought them to Me, so that I would bless them. But I want you to leave Me in charge of the circumstances of your life, and then responsibility for everything will be Mine, for this is too difficult for you; by yourself you can not manage them, for you are only an instrument, and not the actor.

If unanticipated problems of life have visited you, and if despondency has seized your heart, then know— This was from Me. For I want your heart and your soul to be always aflame before My eyes; to conquer faint-heartedness of the soul in My name.

If you do not hear from your dear ones and friends for a long time, and in your faint-heartedness fall into despondency and grumbling, know— This was from Me.

By this anguish in your spirit, I test the strength of your faith in the surety of My promise and the strength of your boldness in prayer for these dear ones of yours. Was it not you who entrusted them to the Protection of My All-Pure Mother? Was it not you who once entrusted their care to My providential love?

If serious illness, either temporary or incurable, has visited you, and has confined to your bed, then know— This was from Me.

For I want you to know Me even more deeply in you bodily infirmities, so that you would not grumble over this trial sent to you, that you would not try to penetrate My plans through different means for the salvation of peoples souls, but that you would uncomplainingly and submissively bow your neck under My goodness towards you.

If you have dreamed of performing some special deed for Me, and instead haven't fallen onto a bed of sickness and weakness— This was from Me.

Then you would have been immersed in your activities, and I would not have been able to attract your thoughts to Me, for I want to teach you My deepest thoughts and lessons, so that you would be in My service. I want to teach you to recognize that you are nothing. Some of My best co-workers are those who have been cut off from vital activity, that they would learn to wield the weapon of unceasing prayer.

Have you unexpectedly been called to occupy a difficult and

responsible position? Go, place it on Me. I entrust these difficulties to you so that the Lord God would bless you for this in all your deeds, on all your paths, in everything that will be done by your hands. On this day I put into your hands a vessel of holy oil. Use it generously, My children! Every difficulty that arises, every word that insults you, every obstacle to your work that could elicit in you a feeling of annoyance, every revelation of your weakness and inability, shall be anointed with this oil.

Remember that every obstacle is a Divine instruction. Every sting will be dulled when you learn to see Me in everything that touches you. Therefore place the word I have declared to you today in your heart: This was from Me. For this is not an empty matter for you—this is your life.

Translator's note: Inasmuch as the above text was distributed for from hand-to-hand in samizdat form for several decades, printed versions include competing explanations of its authorship and origin. The most common attribution is to St Seraphim of Viritsa, who was said to have written it in 1937 to a certain bishop, his spiritual son, who was at the time in prison. It is almost entirely certain, however, that the author is in fact Metropolitan Manuel (Lemeshevsky) of Kuibyshev and Syzran (1884-1968). It is known that St Seraphim of Viritsa and Metropolitan Manuel were acquainted, and therefore it could be speculated that this meditation represents the latter's record of the saint's spiritual teaching.

Translated from the original Russian by Hierodeacon Samuel, Monastery of St Job of Pochaev, Munich, Germany, for the Orthodox Christian Information Center. Posted on 3/6/2008.