



## Little Russian Philokalia: St. Seraphim of Sarov

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Philokalia means, "love of the good--love of the beautiful." It was the name given to the celebrated 18th century Greek collection of Patristic texts on Christian spiritual life, teaching the path to inner sobriety and the fullness of union with God.

Christian spirituality is not a retreat or escape from life. On the contrary, it is a withdrawal from the spirit of a fallen world lying in evil in order to cling to the source of life itself--Christ the true God.

Because of the multitude of outstanding spiritual leaders which have existed in Russia, there have been several attempts to compile a collection from the Russian Fathers similar to that of the Greek *Philokalia*. The teachings of these spiritual Fathers rest in the eternal truths and guiding principles of suffering Christianity, and their counsels are of particular value since--from that fount of eternal wisdom--they offer direction suited to the peculiarities of today's "modern age."

Therefore! it is of no small importance to present the Russian Fathers of recent centuries in an anthology of ascetic texts drawn from the original sources. The LITTLE RUSSIAN PHILOKALIA series serves as an intermediary with the great Fathers of the Greek Philokalia.

In this respect, the humble advice offered by the holy men of the LITTLE RUSSIAN PHILOKALIA series may render an inestimable service to a true seeker of salvation--a follower of Christ's narrow path of unceasing toil and humility. This, after all, was the primary purpose of the original Philokalia.

One of the most beloved Orthodox saints of recent times--St. Seraphim of Sarov (1759-1833)--was a priest, hermit and spiritual guide who, in early 19th century Russia, led many souls along the path of Apostolic Christianity.

The first volume of the LITTLE RUSSIAN PHILOKALIA series contains the Life of St. Seraphim, his "Spiritual Instructions to Laymen and Monks," his soul-saving conversation with Nicholas Motovilov "On the Acquisition of the Holy Spirit" (St. Seraphim's patristic teaching--equal to the ancient Church Fathers)--and his "Diveyevo Mystery"--which, until now, has never been revealed in the English language since its disclosure in 1902.

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