

Raising A Saint



Most of us would be satisfied to raise children who remain faithful believers. It is not always an easy thing and every parent who has such a child should rejoice constantly. There is no method to raise a child to be a saint, for God alone gives the grace that results in the mystery of such wonderful lives. However that may be, I am often struck in reading the writings of St. Silouan by his stories about his father. It would seem that the most fundamental spiritual lessons are not ones he gained from an Elder, but from the simple peasant that was his father – but a simple peasant with the faith of a saint. A small example:

Let us not be distressed over the loss of worldly goods, such losses are a small matter. My own father taught me this early in life. When some misfortune happened at home, he would remain serene. When our house caught fire and the neighbors said, 'Ivan Petrovich, your house is burnt down!' he replied, 'With God's help I'll build it up again.' Once we were walking along the side of our field, and I said, 'Look, they're stealing our sheaves!' 'Aye, son,' more... he answered me, 'the Lord has given us corn and to spare, so if anyone steals it, it means he's in want.' Another day I said to him, 'You give a lot away to charity, while some who are better off than we are give far less.' To which he replied, 'Aye, son, the Lord will provide.' And the Lord did not confound his hope.

From St. Silouan of Mount Athos

There is no better way to teach a child Christianity than to actually live it – truly and from the heart. You cannot teach what you do not live.