

Resource Sheet 59

The Life of Saint Seraphim of Sarov: Introduction to “On the Acquisition of the Holy Spirit”, by Saint Seraphim of Sarov (2015, Skyros Publishing), 2-3 – Kindle printscreen.

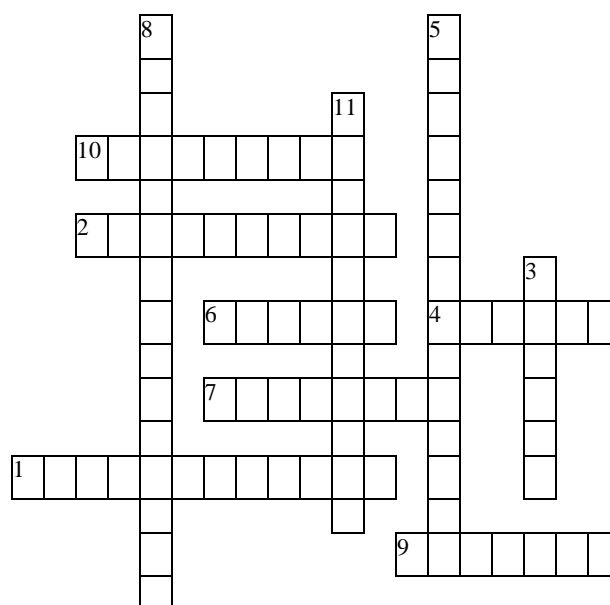
Please read this fragment to the students before asking them to complete the puzzle.

SAINT SERAPHIM OF SAROV WAS born in 1759, in city of Kursk. His parents were pious Orthodox Christians, examples of true spirituality. At the age of ten, Seraphim was miraculously healed from a serious illness by means of the Kursk icon of the Theotokos. As a boy, he immersed himself in church services and church literature. He began monastic life at the hermitage of Sarov at the age of nineteen. He was tonsured as a monk when he was twenty-seven, and soon afterwards was ordained a deacon. The intensity and purity of Seraphim's participation in the Divine services are evident as he was allowed to see angels, and during the liturgy on Holy Thursday, he saw the Lord Himself.

At thirty-four, Seraphim was ordained as a priest, and was assigned as the spiritual guide of the Diveyevo convent. At this time, he also received a blessing to begin life as a hermit in the forest surrounding Sarov. He lived in a small cabin, devoting himself entirely to prayer, fasting, and the reading of the Scriptures and the Holy Fathers. Seraphim would go to the monastery on Sundays to receive Holy Communion; and then return to the forest.

In 1804, Seraphim was attacked by robbers and almost beaten to death. Permanent injuries sustained from this attack caused him to always be bent over and the need of a staff to walk. After this event, the Saint began more fervent prayers, incessant for a thousand days and a thousand nights; spending the better part of his time kneeling on a stone near his cell crying out, “Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner.” He then spent three years in absolute silent seclusion. Obeying the request of the elders of the monastery, Seraphim returned to the monastery in 1810, but continued to live in prayer, and silent seclusion for another ten years. In obedience to a heavenly vision, Seraphim ended his silence and began to speak for the benefit of others. The Saint greeted all who came to him with a prostration, a kiss, and the words of the Pascha greeting: “Christ is Risen!” He called everyone, “my joy.” In 1825, he returned to his forest cell, where he received thousands of pilgrims from across Russia. Granted the gift of clairvoyance, the wonder-working Saint Seraphim of Sarov gave consolation and guidance to all. Saint Seraphim died on January 2, 1833, while kneeling before an icon of the Theotokos.

Saint Seraphim of Sarov's Life – Crossword puzzle

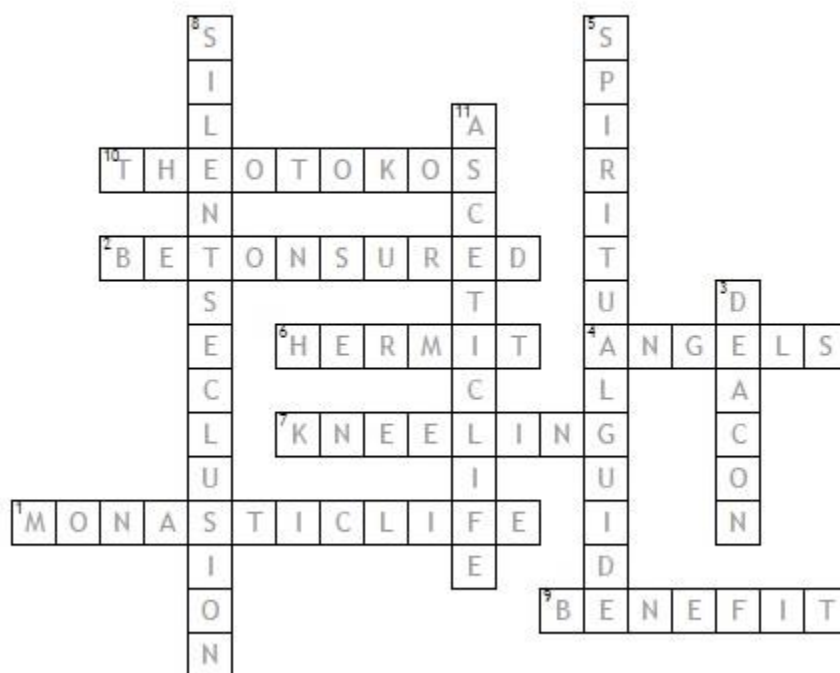


Across

- 1 life as monk
 2 become a monk officially
 4 supernatural beings seen by Saint Seraphim during the Holy Liturgy
 6 a person who lives alone and apart for the rest of society, to be closer to god, like Saint Seraphim, who lived in a forest
 7 the way in which Saint Seraphim prayed on a rock for one thousand days
 9 synonym for advantage, the reason why Saint Seraphim began to speak again
 10 the Greek name for the Mother of God

Down

- 3 before becoming a priest, you must be ordained as a
 5 at the Diveyevo convent, Saint Seraphim was a
 8 the state of being all alone and without talking, like Saint Seraphim spent three years of his life
 11 the kind of life Saint Seraphim of Sarov led

Answers:

A pdf. copy of this crossword is also available.

2. Icons of Saint Seraphim:

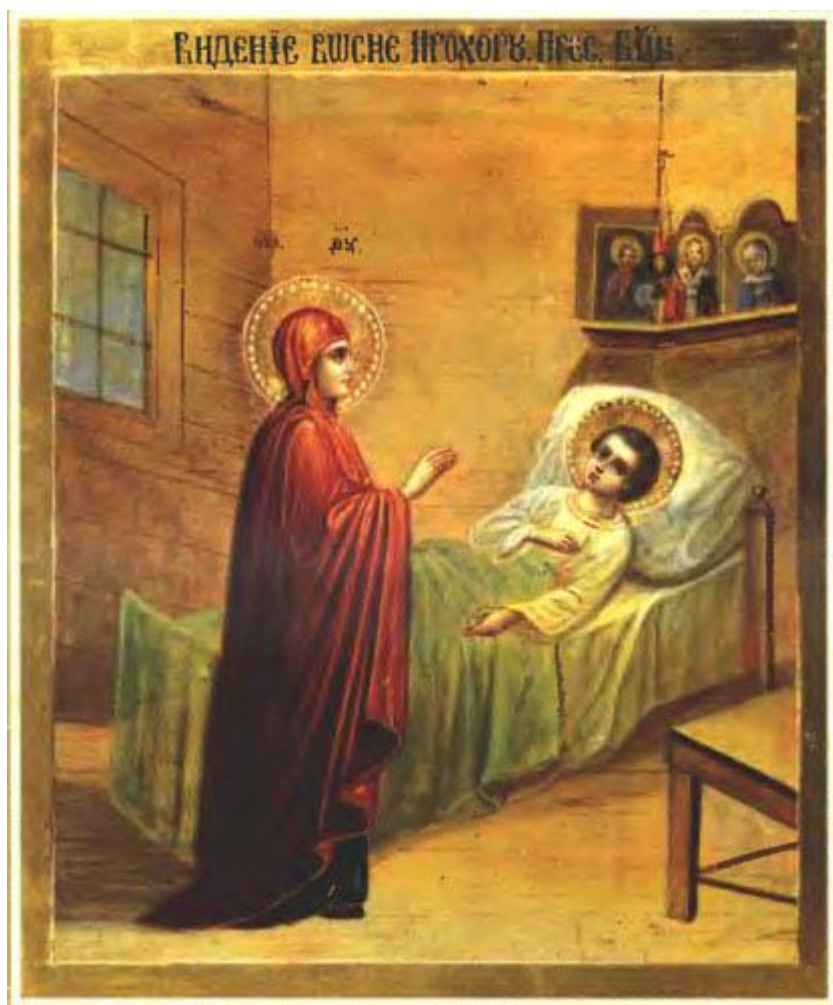
2.a. Saint Seraphim praying to the Theotokos. This is how he reposed.



2.b. Saint Seraphim praying for one thousand days on a rock.



2.c As a child, Saint Seraphim was healed miraculously when he prayed to the Theotokos.



2.d. Saint Seraphim was known to have a special relationship with wild animals, which would never attack him.



2.e. Many people came to Saint Seraphim for advice and consolation. His book, “on the Acquisition of the Holy Spirit”, was not written by him, but recoded by one of the believers who came to see him. That’s how we know about his teachings.

